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THE TYRANT'S HAPPINESS AS A PARODY OF TRUE HAPPINESS (PLATO, *REPUBLIC*, IX; XENOPHON, *HIERO*, IX-XI)

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1. Introduction

This contribution examines the relationship between the education of desires and the attainment of happiness in Xenophon and Plato. I will focus on Xenophon's *Hiero*, a text in which the connection between desire and happiness is analyzed in relation to the figure of the tyrant. In turn, the analysis of *Hiero* will lead us to address Plato's account of the tyrant in the IX book of the *Republic.* A comparison between both texts will allow us to see that they present a compelling argument regarding the relation between happiness and friendship. But why do both Xenophon and Plato connect the problem of desire and happiness to the figure of the tyrant?

If one observes carefully the statements regarding tyranny of some of the characters of Plato's dialogues, such as Gorgias in *Gorgias* or Thrasymachus in *Republic*, it can be inferred that, in the second half of the 5th century B.C., a particular depiction of the tyrant was spreading in some Athenian intellectual milieus: according to this depiction, the happiest man is he who exerts a tyrannical power, which allows him to fulfill all his desires, without being accountable for any possible crime committed in the process. However, both Xenophon and Plato are aware that this undisciplined lifestyle has awful drawbacks. First of all, one spends one's time being afraid and fearing even one's own relatives; sometimes, even his own children. Secondly – and this is a crucial point of the analysis of tyrant's life that Xenophon undertakes in *Hiero* – the unlimited fulfilment of desires makes the tyrant lose the ability to feel pleasure. Now,

how do Xenophon and Plato explain this incongruence between the common favorable opinion of tyranny and their own rejection of it?

In the final chapters of *Hiero*, Xenophon seems to suggest that the tyrant can indeed be happy, provided that he follows the recommendations of a wise counselor. It seems at first sight that the tyrant could be happy without having to give up his lack of self-restraint, as long as he adopts some clever measures, such as bestowing awards upon deserving subjects, while tasking others with punishing rebellious subjects (IX 1-5) or assigning his personal army to assist citizens in danger (X 4-5). In this way, the tyrant is able to transform his citizens' discontent into respect for him, so that he will not only stop fearing for his life, but will also deserve the friendship of his subjects. Friendship is an essential condition of happiness and Semonides seems to promise the tyrant that he will have plenty of friends, without the need of refraining from his regrettable pleasures. This would mark a stark contrast with Plato's conception of tyranny, such as it appears in the IX book of the *Republic*; however, in my opinion, Xenophon does not believe that such a promise can be actually fulfilled, and there are several hints in *Hiero* which support this interpretation.[1] If this interpretation is correct, there would be no true disagreement between Xenophon and Plato regarding the relation between desire, happiness, and tyranny. In fact, and by taking into account the common features shared by both texts, it can be reasonably argued that there is an underlying agreement between them regarding the relation between friendship and happiness.

But before turning to the analysis of the four last chapters of *Hiero*, it is useful to take into consideration some of Hiero's statements about his discontent with being a tyrant, which appears in the first chapters. This will allow us to better understand Semonides' proposal for over-

[1] Recently Dorion has stated that one should not search within *Hiero* for references to other Xenophon's works, first of all because it is far from evident that *Hiero* chronologically follows works such as *Memorabilia* or *Cyropaedia* (Dorion 2020, 24). Even if the comparison, put forth by S. Schorn (2005, *passim*) of the passages of *Hiero* to what Xenophon states on the same subject in other works is followed to some extent in these pages, one cannot dismiss Dorion's objection to this approach as something unessential. This is the reason why it is extremely important to show that, even without drawing upon references to other Xenophon's works, the evidence that Hiero cannot become happy lies within the text itself.

coming Hiero's dissatisfaction and to see why this proposal is necessarily destined to fail. As a result, we can see that for Xenophon, as for Plato, the tyrant is essentially unhappy.

2. Hiero: the tyrant and his advisor

In I 19, 2-4, Hiero offers a reply to Semonides' praise of the tyrants' life, which is based on the amount and the quality of the food tyrants usually eat (I 16). According to Hiero, the tyrant lacks the capacity to experience pleasure from food, since tyrants, not allowing hunger to grow, have eliminated the cause of the pleasure which derives from eating.[2] So far in the dialogue, the reader has the impression that Semonides is more tyrannical than Hiero himself: in fact, Hiero's statement about lack of self-restraint in eating seems to suggest that he has realized that excess destroys pleasure.[3]

Furthermore, Hiero complains about the fact that the love between the tyrant and his beloved one is poisoned by the suspicion that the beloved one indulges his lover (the tyrant) not because he truly loves him, but only because he fears him. Hiero claims:

> I love about Dailochus what human nature (ἡ φύσις ἀνθρώπου) forces us to demand from good-looking people, but what I yearn for, I really want to obtain in friendship (μετὰ μὲν φιλίας) from someone who wants (παρὰ βουλομένου); in fact, I personally think it is the most pleasant thing of all to take from enemies against their will (παρὰ μὲν γὰρ πολεμίων ἀκόντων λαμβάνειν); on the other hand, the favors coming from lovers who want to please are very sweet (παρὰ δὲ παιδικῶν βουλομένων) (I 33-35).

[2] The relevance here ascribed to the lack (the hunger in this case) in order to experience the pleasure of being filled is worth noting, since this thesis is upheld by Socrates in *Mem.* IV 5, 9, 4-9.

[3] The ἀκρασία is the lack of self-restraint in the pleasures of eating, drinking, sleeping and sex, whereas the ἐγκράτεια is the self-control allowing to enjoy these pleasures in a healthy and measured way; cf. Stavru forthcoming. Ἐγκράτεια, despite not being virtue itself, is the irreplaceable prerequisite to virtue and to practicing dialectics (*Mem*. IV 5, 1-2; cf. Chame 2021, below, 396-415).

This passage states that Hiero would like to obtain sexual satisfaction willingly from Dailochus, getting rid of the suspicion that he fulfills his desires only out of fear. These lines are especially relevant because of the appearance of the term φιλία: it is friendship, from the loved one but also from the citizens, which Hiero so desperately needs. At first sight, Hiero appears to be attentive to the feelings of others: he wants his beloved one to satisfy him only if the love between them is reciprocal. However, there is an element in this passage which does not allow for such a favorable assessment of Hiero's attitude. Until the end of the first chapter, he only tells Semonides how beautiful it would be if he were truly loved, and not feared. But Hiero never mentions his duties towards Dailochus. According to the rules of pederastic love, the lover, older than the loved one, should care for him as a guide, helping him enter the world of adult citizens.[4] The fact that Hiero focuses on his own needs, without taking into account his duties, casts shadows on any favorable impression of Hiero which the reader may have. Hiero wants his loved one to let him benefit willingly from his bodily beauty; however, there is no concern for what Hiero should do to benefit Dailochus.[5]

In the third chapter Hiero complains about the lack of friendship that tyrants find in their own families. The tyrants are always in fear that their own relatives, even their children, may kill them to seize their power. Therefore, tyrants often kill the members of their own family in order not to be killed (III 8). On the contrary, Hiero states that when he was still a private citizen, his life was characterized by friendship and lack of fear; moreover, he could drink to drunkenness without fearing to be poisoned: «I used to spend time at banquets, [...] often to the point of mixing my soul with songs, dances and choirs (τοῦ ᾠδαῖς τε καὶ θαλίαις καὶ χοροῖς τὴν ψυχὴν συγκαταμιγνύναι), often to the point that my desire and that of the bystanders dozed off (μέχρι κοίτης ἐπιθυμίας ἐμῆς τε καὶ τῶν παρόντων)» (VI 2).

Hiero is saying that what he misses the most of his life as a private citizen is getting drunk at banquets in order to be unrestrained until

[4] For this subject in other Xenophon's works, we refer to: Hubbard 2003, 55-68; Dorion 2017, 95-118.

[5] In *Mem*. I 2, 29-31, Xenophon's Socrates disapproves of men assigned to public tasks who practice the love for boys; cf. Schorn 2005, 188-189.

the loss of consciousness.[6] This is the irrefutable evidence that he is an acratic man. According to Xenophon's Socrates, the *akrasìa* is the foremost hindrance to an authentic friendship:

> Tell me, he [Socrates] said, if we needed a good friend, how would we look for him? Should we not first look for one who has dominion over the stomach, over the love of drinking, lust and sleep? (ὅστις ἄρχει γαστρός τε καὶ φιλοποσίας καὶ λαγνείας καὶ ὕπνου καὶ ἀργίας;). In fact, he who is dominated by them could not do what is best for himself or a friend (ὁ γὰρ ὑπὸ τούτων κρατούμενος οὔτ᾽ αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ οὔτε τὰ δέοντα πράττειν) (*Mem.* II 6, 1).

In fact, this seems to be Hiero's case. He is dominated at least by two of these pleasures: love and wine. He wants to have Dailochus beauty always at hand, irrespective of how this may in turn benefit Dailochus, and he enjoys getting drunk and unrestrained until he dozes off.[7] What now prevents him from experiencing the pleasures of the banquets is only the fear of being murdered (VI 3).

Hiero is an acratic man, and this would clearly be the case even if he were not a tyrant. It is likely that his *akrasìa* is to blame for his lack of true friends, and not the fact that he is a tyrant. His tyrannical power simply amplifies his natural debauchery. According to the Socrates of *Memorabilia*, an acratic man is someone bound to always make the wrong choices, damaging himself as well as all those who surround him. The only way in which such an unrestrained person can find true friends is by ceasing to be unrestrained, that is, doing away with his *akrasìa*. However, Hiero does not seem to understand that the source of his lack of friends is the *akrasìa*, and Semonides, as it will be clear in the following chapters, has no interest in helping Hiero understand this fact.

In the VII chapter, Hiero claims that the honors offered to tyrants by common people are as inauthentic as the love of the tyrant's loved ones;

[6] The addiction to banquets and their pleasures is typical, as we will see below, of the tyrannical men in Plato's *Republic.*

[7] However, it seems that for Hiero sleeping is not a natural way to recover one's strengths, but a way to forget, at least for some hours, one's concerns. Therefore, his pleasure in sleeping is sick.

these honors are provided because of the fear tyrants instill, not because of the esteem people have for them (VII 1-7). Furthermore, tyrants cannot renounce to their tyrannical power; otherwise, they should account for all the crimes committed during their tyranny (VII 12-13). So Hiero claims that he cannot stop being a tyrant, even if it is this, in his opinion, which causes him to not have any friends. The lack of friendship and the subsequent unhappiness seems to be, in his case, irredeemable.

From the VIII chapter until the end of the dialogue, Semonides leads the discussion. Although he only provides Hiero with useful political advice from the IX chapter onward, chapter VIII deserves particular attention. Semonides addresses Hiero:

> […] no wonder, Hiero, that you are now discouraged by tyranny, since, yearning to be loved by the people (ἐπιθυμῶν φιλεῖσθαι ὑπ᾽ ἀνθρώπων) you think it is an obstacle to this. I believe, however, that I can instruct you on how power in no way prevents you from being loved; indeed, it has a greater part of it than being private (ἐγὼ μέντοι ἔχειν μοι δοκῶ διδάξαι σε ὡς τὸ ἄρχειν ἀποκωλύει τοῦ φιλεῖσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ πλεονεκτεῖ γε τῆς ἰδιωτείας). While investigating whether this is really the case, we do not yet consider whether the one who commands, having more power, can also bring more benefits (μήπω ἐκεῖνο σκοπῶμεν, εἰ διὰ τὸ μεῖζον δύνασθαι ὁ ἄρχων καὶ χαρίζεσθαι πλείω δύναιτ᾽ ἄν). Consider instead, if the private and the tyrant do the same thing, who of them will receive more gratitude for the same actions (ἀλλ᾽ ἂν τὰ ὅμοια ποιῶσιν ὅ τε ἰδιώτης καὶ ὁ τύραννος, ἐννόει πότερος μείζω ἀπὸ τῶν ἴσων κτᾶται χάριν) (VIII 1-2).

In these lines, Semonides lays the ground for the measures which he will propose in the last chapters. He says that Hiero must focus on the diverse amount of gratitude that a tyrant and a private citizen receive for the same benefit, whereas the investigation on the benefits that the tyrant can provide to his people is postponed; but, although this investigation is announced by Semonides, nothing is said in the rest of the dialogue on how Hiero can really benefit his subjects. The same as in Dailochus' case occurs; both Dailochus and the subjects must offer their friendship to Hiero, but it is doubtful if Hiero would really benefit them in return.

In the following lines Semonides clarifies what he means:

> It seems to me that honor and favor from the gods accompany the man who commands (ἐκ θεῶν τιμή τις καὶ χάρις συμπαρέπεσθαι ἀνδρὶ ἄρχοντι). Not only does it [the power] makes them more beautiful, but we also look upon the same man with more pleasure when he is in the position of command than in the condition of a private citizen, and we pride ourselves on speaking to those who are honored more [than us] than to those who are our peers (διαλεγόμενοί τε ἀγαλλόμεθα τοῖς προτετιμημένοις μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς ἐκ τοῦ ἴσου ἡμῖν) [...]. Being honored itself adorns them [ugliness and old age] together very much, so as to conceal the unpleasant aspects and make the beautiful ones appear brighter (αὐτὸ γὰρ τὸ τετιμῆσθαι μάλιστα συνεπικοσμεῖ, ὥστε τὰ μὲν δυσχερῆ ἀφανίζειν, τὰ δὲ λαμπρότερα ἀναφαίνειν) (VIII 5-7).

Semonides claims that power itself makes powerful men look handsome, even if they are not. People are proud of being in contact with a powerful man, much more than with a private citizen like them. Semonides knows that power does not change people; it only makes them appear to be better than others. This passage is crucial because Hiero complained several times in the previous chapters about the illusory nature of his power (II 1-9; VII 12-15). However, Semonides suggests that Hiero should benefit from the illusory perception the subjects have of his power in order to make them his friends. The last lines of this passage could not be clearer: power is a cosmetic, which plays up qualities, while playing down defects. Semonides seems to be saying the following: "if your power is an illusion, take advantage of this illusion".[8] Semonides appears to believe that Hiero cannot become a person worthy of the power he exerts; otherwise he should tell Hiero that, in order to make his illusory power an effective one, he should stop being acratic. Thus the only way Hiero has to dispel the fear of being murdered is manipulating the perceptions of his own subjects.

[8] This is clearly at odds with what Cyrus claims in *Cyropaedia* (VII 5, 78), where he states that a ruler, if he wants to keep his power, is bound to be better than his subjects. Consequently, he must have more self-restraint in yielding to pleasures and be more able to endure pain than the subjects themselves.

However, how can taking advantage from an illusion be the solution to the unhappiness of someone who suffers precisely from his illusory power and the insincerity of his relationships? Hiero is an acratic man and is not aware that this is the source of his unhappiness, whereas Semonides provides him with suggestions which do not address the core of Hiero's problems. At the end of Semonides' speech, Hiero argues that there are several negative aspects of his power which are impossible to hide to his subjects, for example the ongoing need for money: money for military expeditions, for defense and, most importantly, for his personal mercenary army, which demands impressive expenses. In addition, he must impose punishments to criminals (VIII 8-9).[9] The measures Semonides advises Hiero to undertake serve the purpose of helping the tyrant face these negative aspects, so as to allow him to manipulate his subjects' perception of his power without actually putting it at risk.

Semonides begins by addressing the issue of punishments. Semonides says that Hiero should assign to others the deliverance of punishments, while Hiero himself should only be present at agreeable events, like the bestowal of prizes:

> I argue that a man who commands must order others to punish those who need coercion, while he himself must deliver the prizes (ἀνδρὶ ἄρχοντι τὸν μὲν ἀνάγκης δεόμενον ἄλλοις προστακτέον εἶναι κολάζειν, τὸ δὲ τὰ ἀποδιδόναι αὐτοῦ ποιητέον) [...]. In these cases [in choir competitions], therefore, what is pleasing passes through the leader, what is hostile through others (ἐν τούτοις τὸ μὲν ἐπίχαρι διὰ τοῦ ἄρχοντος ἐγένετο, τὰ δ' ἀντίτυπα δι' ἄλλων) (IX 3-4).

Obviously, it is always Hiero who punishes, even when other people carry out the punishment. Magistrates assigned to criminal justice can impose punishments because they answer to a higher power (that of Hiero), which has authorized them to punish people. But by distancing himself from the actual execution of the punishment, Hiero manages to change the subjects' perception of him: by turning up only in fes-

[9] Basing on what has been said so far, it is inferable that these criminals are, above all, those who try to kill Hiero.

tive occasions and assigning others to carry out unpleasant tasks, Hiero makes his subjects associate him only with what is enjoyable and good. In sum, the measures suggested by Semonides must serve the final purpose of manipulating his subjects' perception, so that they never truly understand what kind of person Hiero actually is. Regarding taxes, Semonides suggests that Hiero should bestow awards upon those who pay their taxes in time (IX 7, 1-3). The idea of awarding prizes to deserving citizens is essential in chapter IX; by way of different prizes which correspond to all kinds of fields (military discipline, financial relationships, trade, and so on), Hiero can arouse the citizens' ambitions, so that everyone would try to stand out in their respective field. Semonides claims:

> So if someone announced to them [the citizens] as well as to the choirs prizes for good armament, discipline, riding ability, courage in war and justice in contracts (οὐκοῦν εἴ τις καὶ τούτοις ὥσπερ τοῖς ᾄθλα προτιθείη καὶ εὐταξίας καὶ ἀλκῆς τῆς ἐν δικαιοσύνης τῆς ἐν συμβολαίοις), it is likely that they would practice all these things intensely because of their love for victory (εἰκὸς καὶ πάντα διὰ φιλονικίαν ἐντόνως ἀσκεῖσθαι) (IX 6).

Citizens' ambitions must be roused in such a way as to make them willing to undergo impressive expenses in order to receive the desired award (IX 11); accordingly, this longing for awards should foster a great circulation of money, which is an irreplaceable condition for these measures to work. It seems that only thanks to the financial wellness of his people Hiero can establish these measures, but the problem is that Semonides takes this wellness for granted, and says nothing on how to obtain it in the first place, or how to regain it in case this wellness ends. Once again, even in Semonides' suggestion, what matters is only what others must do for Hiero, whereas he does not seem to have a duty towards anyone. Furthermore, on account of their ambition, citizens will be too busy to care for politics. Thus Hiero could carry on exerting the power despite his ineptitude.

In chapter X, the focus shifts to the mercenary army. Hiero asks Semonides if, thanks to the measures proposed so far, he may do without its expensive assistance (X 1). But Semonides dissuades Hiero from

getting rid of the mercenaries; they will be useful for instilling fear in the rebellious subjects, who are never too few, especially where financial means are substantial (2-4). Even if the measures suggested are aimed at diminishing Hiero's fear to be killed, he himself cannot give up inspiring this same fear to his subjects. His power is intrinsically unjust; even if he manages to manipulate his subjects' perception, there will always be someone willing to kill him. Therefore, fear and threat are arms he simply cannot give up. To make the presence of mercenaries within the city more acceptable to his subjects, Semonides prompts Hiero to assign them to the defense of citizens and use them in war instead of his subjects (6-7). In this way, the subjects themselves would be willing to financially support this army:

> If people realize that these (the mercenaries) do nothing wrong to those who commit no injustice, while they obstruct those who want to commit crimes, help those who suffer injustice, care about citizens and defend them, why shouldn't one spend with the greatest pleasure to sustain them? (ὅτι οὗτοι κακὸν οὐδὲν ποιοῦσι κακουργεῖν τὸν μηδὲν ἀδικοῦντα, τοὺς δὲ βουλομένους κωλύουσι, βοηθοῦσι δὲ τοῖς ἀδικουμένοις, προνοοῦσι δὲ καὶ προκινδυνεύουσι τῶν πολιτῶν, πῶς οὐκ ἀνάγκη καὶ εἰς τούτους ἥδιστα;) (8).

Even if Hiero assigned his mercenaries to the assistance of his subjects, his mercenaries would still only truly answer to him. Tasking mercenaries with the defense of subjects and using them instead of his subjects in war does not turn these mercenaries into a civic army. They have Hiero as their only chief, and if he commanded them to kill a large amount of his own subjects, they would obey him. Again, the only difference lies within his subjects' perception of Hiero. And thanks to this measure, they should be willing to pay the taxes which they otherwise would not pay.

In chapter XI Semonides prompts Hiero to use his wealth and the people's taxes to improve the city; Hiero in fact should fortify it, provide it with a fleet and harbors (1-3). This is the first place, after ten chapters, in which it is suggested that Hiero also has duties towards his people. But Semonides only deals with what pertains to war. No other aspect

of politics is addressed, so that the only duty Hiero has seems to be the reinforcement of the military power of the city. In chapter X Semonides suggested that Hiero could employ his mercenaries instead of civic troops to make more acceptable the presence of the mercenary army within the city; however, if the importance of the citizens in war is so reduced, it follows that advising Hiero to enhance the military power of the city is the same as advising him to enhance his personal military power. Even in this last suggestion the subjects' interest disappears and the only thing which matters is Hiero's personal profit. If he implements these measures, Semonides says, everyone will love him:

> […] and you should not court good-looking young people; on the contrary, you would have to bear to be courted by them, and you would not be afraid, but you would give others reason to fear that something unpleasant might happen to you (καὶ τοὺς καλοὺς οὐ πειρᾶν, ἀλλὰ πειρώμενον ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν ἄν σε δέοι, φόβον ἀνέχεσθαι οὐκ ἂν ἔχοις ἄλλοις παρέχοις μή τι πάθῃς) (XI 11).

Being courted by beautiful young ones and not having to court them himself is for Hiero a seductive mirage, which would definitely convince him to implement Semonides' suggestions, and the poet is well aware of this fact. Hiero, it goes without saying, cannot help being captivated by this idea, which reveals how acratic and selfish he is in erotic relationships. The last advice Semonides gives to Hiero consists in benefiting his friends. By doing so, he will finally be happy:

> If you outweigh your friends in benefits, there is no danger that your enemies will resist you (οὐ μή σοι δύνωνται ἀντέχειν οἱ πολέμιοι). If you do these things, know this, you will acquire the most beautiful and happiest of human riches: although you are happy, you will not be envied (πάντων τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις κάλλιστον καὶ μακαριώτατον κτῆμα κεκτήσει: εὐδαιμονῶν οὐ φθονηθήσῃ) (XI 15).

These lines are quite ambiguous: who are the friends Semonides is referring to at these lines? They could be the friends who Hiero hopes to have thanks to Semonides' suggestions. But if they were instead the

friends that Hiero already has, we should note that they are the worst men in the city: the unjust, the acratic men like him and the slavish in nature. In fact, in V 1-2, Hiero complains about the fact that, to keep his power and avoid being killed, he must kill the best men in the city, that is to say, the wise, the brave and the just. As a consequence, the only friends he can afford to have are the worst men, because only the worst among the citizens want Hiero to keep his power. If this is the correct understanding of this passage, such an advice would not make Hiero happy. In fact, Hiero says that this kind of friends bring him only suffering, and that he would like to have virtuous friends instead. However, he cannot afford this kind of friends for the reasons explained above. Unfortunately, we cannot be completely sure of the exact meaning of Semonides' advice: nevertheless, considering the tone of the previous chapters, the suspicion remains that Semonides advises Hiero to benefit the worst men in the city in order to strengthen his power.

Based on what has been argued so far, it could be said that the measures suggested by Semonides fall short of making Hiero really happy, and that probably Semonides has no interest in his happiness. Hiero is an acratic person; hence, he can neither have nor keep any kind of authentic friendship. Instead of prompting Hiero to change, Semonides advises him to benefit from the false expectations his power provokes in people in order to get friends. Semonides is not interested in improving Hiero, and Hiero, in turn, ignores the true source of his persistent lack of true friends, which is the cause of his unhappiness.

For all these reasons, we can conclude that the happiness that Semonides promises to Hiero is based upon a double ignorance: that of the people blinded by his power, but who also ignore its illusory nature, and Hiero's own ignorance, who expects to free himself from his suffering ignoring its true origin.[10] Given the illusory nature of Hiero's happiness, it seems that Xenophon's dialogue on tyranny, far from showing how a tyrant can become happy, can be fruitfully compared with the book IX

[10] Gray 2013 has convincingly argued that others' happiness is an irreplaceable part of leader's happiness, so that even the most selfish of the leaders is bound to care for others' wellness, if he truly wishes to be happy. However, she seems to hold that Semonides' suggestion really can help Hiero become happier and get true friends (Gray 2013, 11-12).

of Plato's *Republic*, in which the tyrant's unhappiness is emphatically stated.

3. The tyrant and the lack of friendship in Plato

In the book IX of *Republic*, Plato discusses the psychological genesis of the tyrannical man, while in the VIII book he focuses on his political origin. In both cases this kind of man originates from a state of disorder. In the first place, from a sort of political disorder, due to the fact that the worst among the citizens become so strong as to impose their will to their fellow citizens. In the second place, Plato refers to a sort of disorder of the soul, due to the fact that within the soul of the tyrannical man the worst part has seized power, whereas the part suitable for commanding remains in a slavish condition. In Plato's vision, political disorders and the disorder of the soul are but two sides of the same coin. Given that a discussion of the relation between the tyrannical man and the political reality of the city goes beyond the scope of this work, I will focus on the behavioral and psychic features of the tyrannical man.

The first assessment of the tyrannical nature is provided by Socrates in *R*. IX 573c7-9: «Then a man becomes tyrannical in the full sense of the word, my friend, I said, when either by nature or by habits or by both he has become *inclined to drunkness, love and melancholy* (μεθυστικός τε καὶ ἐρωτικὸς καὶ μελαγχολικός)».

Regarding melancholy, it should be said that it has nothing to do with sadness and aboulia: in this case, melancholy indicates an inclination towards irritability, agitation, and even towards violent attacks of rage.[11] This violent rage develops into murderous rage when the tyrannical man, having become an actual tyrant, starts killing all those

[11] In *Aphorisms* (VI 23) attributed to Hippocrates, the author stresses the feeling of sadness and discouragement in melancholy. Nevertheless, in *Epidemics* (III 2) he highlights the irritability and the agitation typical of those who suffer from this disease. Aristotle uses Aiax, son of Telamon and Heracles, as examples of melancholy in *Pr.* XXX 10-25. The former killed himself because of his madness; the latter butchered his own children in a rage. It is noteworthy that the author of the text ascribes to the wine the power to provoke melancholy (33-36). This is quite interesting, considering that Hiero and Plato's tyrannical man are both addicted to wine.

he mistrusts, irrespective of whether he is right to fear them or not (567a4-b1). At first sight, this murderous rage does not appear to be a characteristic of Hiero, who seems to be melancholic because of his discontent rather than because of a form of fearsome violence. But if we look closely, we can see that this feature is also present in Hiero's personality. In fact, in *Hier.* V 1 he claims that tyrants kill the wise, the just and the courageous *because of fear*, even if these people have not done anything against them. Given that Hiero, in talking about tyrants in general, is also talking about himself, it can be inferred that he has killed subjects without evidence of betrayal, guided only by fear and suspicion. Therefore, Hiero and the tyrannical man in Plato share this fearsome and violent rage, which in extreme cases becomes murderous violence guided by an uncontrolled fear, so that this kind of melancholy turns out to be more similar to paranoia than to depression.

Plato' tyrannical man is also undisciplined in erotic relationships. It has been observed above that Hiero's love for Dailochus is selfish and acratic. Socrates, addressing Adeimantus, states the following:

> Socr.: "But, by Zeus, do you not think, Adeimantus, that such a man would come to beat his mother, his long-standing friend and relative (τὴν πάλαι φίλην καὶ ἀναγκαίαν μητέρα), for a stranger to him of whom he has recently become lover, and would do likewise with his father in old age, his closest and oldest friend (τὸν ἄωρόν τε καὶ ἀναγκαῖον πρεσβύτην πατέρα καὶ τῶν φίλων ἀρχαιότατον), for a handsome young man who has recently entered into his good graces? And don't you think that he would enslave his parents to them, if he led them to the same house?". "Yes, by Zeus", he [Adeimantus] answered (IX 574b9-c4).

This tyrannical man can kill even his own parents, if he suspects that they can become a hindrance to the fulfillment of his pleasures. Parricide is depicted as a feature typical of the tyrant also in *Hier.* III 8; nevertheless the passage of *Republic* quoted above presents a specific feature of Plato's tyrannical man, which is not present in Hiero's personality. Plato's tyrannical man is someone who, on account of his association with wrong people and of a wrong education, develops an uncontrolled love for power and pleasures. Due to this love, he will try to do

away with what prevents him from fulfilling his desires, and potential hindrances come from his family, the political regime of the city and the right opinions about what is good which were learned during his youth. This aspect is quite interesting; the tyrannical man will destroy all of his own experiences and opinions which would prevent him from fulfilling his whims.[12] The tyrannical man is willing to destroy the best part of his past life: the murder of his parents is but a consequence of the assassination of his past. Moreover, the quoted lines show how the tyrant sacrifices some of the most important relationships in life in order to please someone he, soon or later, will also get rid of. His love of power and of the limitless satisfaction of pleasures condemns him to lose the φιλία of those who should love him more than anyone else.[13]

Furthermore, Plato's tyrannical man is, as well as Hiero, an impressive drinker and lover of banquets; in fact, Plato's tyrant seems to strengthen his tyrannical love for power and pleasures during this kind of parties:

> If the other pleasures, buzzing around it [the tyrannical love], filling it with incense, perfumes, wines and all the pleasures that are left free in similar banquets (θυμιαμάτων τε γέμουσαι καὶ μύρων καὶ στεφάνων καὶ οἴνων ἐν ταῖς τοιαύταις συνουσίαις ἡδονῶν ἀνειμένων) to enhance and nourish it to the extreme, generate in the drone the sting of greed, at which point this head of the soul is escorted by madness and rages (τότε δὴ δορυφορεῖταί τε ὑπὸ μανίας καὶ οἰστρᾷ οὗτος ὁ προστάτης τῆς ψυχῆς) [...] (*R.* IX 573a4-b4).

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[12] *R.* IX 573b1-3: οἰστρᾷ οὗτος ὁ προστάτης τῆς ψυχῆς (*scil.* ὁ ἔρως τύραννος), καὶ ἐάν τινας ἐν αὐτῷ δόξας ἢ ἐπιθυμίας λάβῃ ποιουμένας χρηστὰς καὶ ἔτι ἐπαισχυνομένας, ἀποκτείνει τε καὶ ἔξω ὠθεῖ παρ' αὐτοῦ, ἕως ἂν καθήρῃ σωφροσύνης, μανίας δὲ πληρώσῃ ἐπακτοῦ: «then indeed this champion of the soul has madness as its bodyguard and runs amok, and if it should lay hold of any wholesome beliefs or desires in him that still make him feel guilty, it kills them and thrusts them away from him until he is purged of good sense and filled with an alien madness» (tr. C.E. Jones, W. Freddy).

[13] This man tends to abandon his friends; therefore he is ἄπιστος, "untrustworthy". When he needs anything from one of his acquaintances, he pretends to be a great friend of them; after obtaining the favour, he forgets them, as if they did not exist. Cf. IX 575e2-576a3.

The rage and madness which emerge during these banquets recalls the loss of control which Hiero experienced during banquets. Indeed, in both *Hiero* and *Republic*, the main characters are depicted as people who above all want to lose all forms of self-control; both texts introduce a deep connection between the tyrannical power over other people and the desire of losing control over oneself.[14] Because of this degenerated sort of unrestrained desire which pushes the tyrannical man to mistreat his parents, to betray his supporters and to be unjust towards his fellow citizens, he will never experience true friendship; he wants to prevail over all others, even the gods.[15] Accordingly, in his vision, other men are but slaves, because otherwise he would be the slave of someone else: «[…] they live without being anyone's friend, but always being someone's master or servant to someone else (ἀεὶ δέ του δεσπόζοντες ἢ δουλεύοντες ἄλλῳ); tyrannical nature never tastes freedom and true friendship (ἐλευθερίας δὲ καὶ φιλίας ἀληθοῦς τυραννικὴ φύσις ἀεὶ ἄγευστος)» (*R*. IX 576a4-6).

His lack of friends depends on a more dangerous lack of friendship within himself, that is to say, the friendship among the parts of his soul. On account of his wrongdoings, the part of his soul most suitable for ruling has been enslaved, whereas «the craziest and most evil» (577d3-4) has seized the power. As Socrates argues:

> Now, if one claims that it is convenient for this man to be unjust and he does not need according to justice, we answer him that this is equivalent to saying that it is better to grow and strengthen the multiform monster (τὸ παντοδαπὸν θηρίον)[16] together with the lion and his entourage (τὸν λέοντα καὶ τὰ περὶ τὸν λέοντα),[17]

[14] In *Grg.* 491d3 Socrates asks Callicles, a character traditionally considered as tyrannical, if those who must rule others must also rule themselves. Those who rule themselves are ἐγκρατεῖς (491d13-14). Callicles answers that, if one wants to be really happy, one must get rid of any master (491e7-8), even if the master, one can guess, is oneself.

[15] Cf. IX 571c3-d3.

[16] The part of the soul which longs for the fulfillment of bodily desires; also the παράνομοι desires, mentioned in 571b, originate from this part of human soul.

[17] This part represents courage, rage and in general those emotions promoting the affirmation of the values upheld by the subject. This part of the soul is extremely

> and on the other hand to starve and weaken the man, so that he lets himself be dragged wherever the one or the other of the two wild beasts lead him (τὸν δὲ ἄνθρωπον λιμοκτονεῖν[18] καὶ ποιεῖν ἀσθενῆ, ὥστε ἕλκεσθαι ὅπῃ ἂν ἐκείνων ὁπότερον ἄγῃ), without accustoming these natures to cohabitation and mutual friendship (μηδὲν ἕτερον ἑτέρῳ συνεθίζειν μηδὲ φίλον ποιεῖν), but letting them bite, fight and devour each other (IX 588e3-589a3).

When «the man in the soul», namely the rational part, becomes unable to lead the other parts, the very possibility of friendship disappears, both in the soul and in the larger political landscape; it is only the rational part which can establish friendly relations between the diverse parts of the soul. However, in the case of the tyrannical man the part which is least suitable for bringing about friendship rules, so that this part cannot help but provoking civil wars within the soul. The contrary occurs in the soul in which the rational part stays in command:

> Therefore, he who says that justice is good would say that one must do and say those things by which the inner man will be the strongest (ἐγκρατέστατος) within the man, will take care of the creature with many heads like a farmer, who feeds and cultivates domestic plants and prevents the wild ones from coming to light (τοῦ πολυκεφάλου θρέμματος ἐπιμελήσεται ὥσπερ γεωργός, τὰ μὲν ἥμερα τρέφων καὶ τιθασεύων, τὰ δὲ ἄγρια ἀποκωλύων φύεσθαι) [...], and finally, by caring for all [the parts of the soul] in common, making them friends both of each other and of himself (φίλα ποιησάμενος ἀλλήλοις τε καὶ αὑτῷ), will feed them? (IX 589a6-b6).

The justice Plato is talking about is not a mere form of correct behavior,

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important and ambiguous as well: it naturally would assist the rational part; nevertheless, if the individual undergoes a wrong education in his youth, as it happened to the tyrannical man, this part of the soul, instead of assisting reason, could join the forces with the παντοδαπὸν θηρίον.

[18] This λιμοκτονεῖν is a technique used during sieges consisting in starving people within the walls, so as to oblige the enemy city to surrender. The use of the word in this context allows Plato to create the atmosphere of war he searches for to depict contrast within the soul.

but the condition in which every part of the soul, as well as every citizen in the *pòlis*, carries out its own natural tasks,[19] without invading those of the other parts.[20] Consequently, an education which fosters justice in the soul strengthens that part which is able to promote friendship and collaboration among the diverse parts themselves. If the tyrant is unable to keep true friends because of the civil war in his soul, it follows that those whose soul is ruled by the rational part, thanks to the inner friendship, will be able not only to keep friends, but also to provide friendship to the others, bringing about in the world around them the balance and the collaboration they have in themselves.

4. Conclusion

The passages which we have seen clearly state that the lack of friends is one of the main causes which makes the tyrannical man miserable and unhappy. In Plato, one can observe a more complex attention to the link between the relationship of the parts of the soul and the relationships with others; the tyrannical man harms the others because he has done away with the hierarchy which should exist in his soul, and establishes one which is completely wrong and necessarily harmful.

However, this link between the relationship within oneself and the relationships to others is not absent in Xenophon; in fact, in *Mem*. II 6, 1, it is clearly stated that an acratic «man could not do what is best for himself or a friend». The acratic man will fail to benefit himself; as a consequence, he will fail to benefit the others too.

A further feature which is present in both authors is the damaging role of the excessive fulfillment of some pleasures, such as wine and sex. Hiero exceeds in these pleasures, as does the Platonic tyrannical man. Even if Plato never uses the word *akrasìa* in book IX, it is clear that even for him the excesses in some pleasures produce a state of disorder in the soul which culminates in injustice and in the resulting lack of friendship to himself and to others as well. An interesting point

[19] This is the idea of the οἰκειοπραγία described in IV 434a-435b; cf. Sassi 2007, X-IX.

[20] The injustice consists exactly in this trespassing.

shared by Plato and Xenophon is that it does not seem possible to treat oneself in a way and others in another one: if there is hostility, disorder or even war in one's own soul, to say it in Plato's term, sooner or later this disorder will end up affecting the relationships with other human beings.

In the end, both texts seem to suggest that friendship (both to oneself and to the others) is an irreplaceable component of a happy life. On the basis of what has been said so far it can be concluded that, despite numerous differences, the book IX of *Republic* and Xenophon's *Hiero* share a common philosophical substrate, which, perhaps, could be traced back to the historical Socrates himself. According to this shared substrate, friendship (both to oneself and to the others) is necessary for happiness, and those who have an excessive desire for power and for the fulfillment of pleasures – a desire which goes beyond any right measure – end up harming themselves and losing the friendship within themselves. And, by losing the friendship to themselves, they lose the ability to benefit others and make them their friends. The excess of the tyrant harms all surrounding people, and makes them incapable of forming true friendship and, as a consequence, of attaining true happiness.

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Keywords

happiness; friendship; desire; pleasures; *akrasìa*; power

Abstract

This article presents a comparison between book IX of *Republic* and Xenophon's *Hiero*. At first sight, these texts seem to reach opposite outcomes: for Plato, the tyrant is necessarily the unhappiest of all men because of his lack of friendship (to others and to himself), whereas for Xenophon the tyrant can in fact have authentic friends and be happy, provided that he carries out a clear set of political measures. But upon closer scrutiny, we can see that both texts have in fact many points of contact. The crucial fact to take into account is that the measures that Semonides proposes to Hiero *do not* provide him with the friends and the happiness he longs for. The cause is that Hiero ignores the true source (the *akrasìa*) of his lack of friends in his life, and Semonides does not help him to acknowledge the origin of his unhappiness. If we adopt this reading, we can establish a fruitful comparison between *Hiero* and book IX of *Republic*, since in both texts the tyrant falls short of true friendship and true happiness, because of his irredeemable lack of self-restraint.

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