

XENOPHON'S *HIERO* AND THE MEETING OF THE WISE MAN AND TYRANT IN GREEK LITERATURE

The *Hiero* is an account in Socratic conversational form of a meeting between Simonides the poet and Hiero the tyrant of Syracuse; it was written by Xenophon of Athens in the fourth century B.C., but is set in the fifth, when the historical Simonides and Hiero lived and met.¹ The subject they are portrayed discussing is the relative happiness of the tyrant and private individual. Plato also makes this a topic of discussion in his *Republic*.² However, whereas Plato writes a regular Socratic dialogue, Xenophon does not, for though he represents his characters using Socratic conversation, Socrates himself does not appear; the characters of the *Hiero* are Simonides and Hiero, poet and tyrant. This is the problem of the *Hiero*. It requires explanation.

The action of the *Hiero* is initiated by Simonides and begins in the following way:

Simonides the poet once came to the court of Hiero the tyrant. When they were both at leisure, Simonides said, 'Would you be willing to tell me, Hiero, something you are likely to know better than I?' And Hiero said, 'What is it that I should know better than you, who are such a wise man?' He replied, 'I know that you were once a private individual and are now a tyrant. Since you have experienced both conditions, you are likely to know better than I how tyrannical life differs from private life in respect of men's pleasures and griefs' (1.1–2).

The identification of Simonides as a wise man who nevertheless seeks wisdom from others establishes his Socratic nature from the start. Further Socratic features emerge in the course of the subsequent discussion. For example, when Hiero takes up Simonides' challenge and asks him to refresh his memory about private experience, and Simonides replies by describing what private men feel (1.1.4–6), Simonides uses the typical Socratic manner, 'thinking' and 'supposing' things are as he describes them.³ But the main Socratic feature is Simonides' irony. When Hiero presses him for his view about private experience compared with tyrannical experience, Simonides presents the view that tyranny is happier because of its greater sensual pleasure. Hiero roundly refutes that (1.1.4–38). Simonides accepts defeat but dismisses the tyrant's sensual deprivations as trifles, and goes on to argue that tyranny is better off for material possessions. Hiero refutes that too (2–6). Simonides again accepts defeat, but tries to say that tyrants have the advantage in the honour they win. Hiero again proves him wrong (7.1–10). He is even able to explain why tyrants do not lay their power

¹ For the historical background of the *Hiero*, H. A. Holden's edition (London, 1883) xiv–xxx is still best. He also gives good literary background. There have been a wide variety of views about the purpose and audience of the dialogue. See Holden, *op. cit.* esp. xi; E. C. Marchant (ed.), *Xenophon: Scripta Minora* (Loeb, 1925), xiii; J. Hatzfeld, 'Note sur la date et l'intention de l'Hiéron', *REG* 59 (1946), 54–70, p. 66; J. Luccioni, *Les Idées Politiques et Sociales de Xénophon* (Paris, 1947), 260; also his *L'Hiéron* (Ophrys, 1947), 18–20, 21–28; G. D. Aalders, 'Date and intention of Xenophon's *Hiero*', *Mnem.* 546 (1953), 208–15; H. Breitenbach, 'Xenophon' P-W *RE* IX A² (1967), cols 1742–6; M. Sordi, 'Lo Hierone di Senofonte, Dionigi e Filisto', *Ath.* 58 (1980), 3–13, p. 6. Other general studies like E. Delebecque, *Essai sur la Vie de Xénophon* (Paris, 1957) 411ff., J. K. Anderson, *Xenophon* (London, 1974), 192–3, W. E. Higgins, *Xenophon the Athenian* (New York, 1977), 60ff. have nothing to add to the specialist studies.

² *Rep.* 571–580c.

³ See very early on (1.4–7), establishing the identity of Simonides, his use of phrases like *δοκῶ μοι καταμεμαθηκέναι... δοκοῦμεν... κρίνοντες ἥδεσθαι... δοκοῦμεν ἥδεσθαι... δοκῶ μοι αἰσθάνεσθαι... ἀγνοεῖν*. Cf. similar phraseology in Socrates' mouth, e.g. *Oec.* 16.6–19.15.

aside: it is that they dare not, for fear of subsequent retaliation (7.11–13). During this argument, which takes up the whole first part of the dialogue, it becomes quite clear that Simonides' view that tyranny is happier than private life for its sensual pleasures, its possessions and its honour, is one he does not truly hold. It is ironic. Xenophon establishes his irony at the start of the dialogue when Hiero is surprised that Simonides should be seeking knowledge, since he is a wise man and should already have it. Simonides plausibly offers Hiero's experience as justification, but in appealing to his experience he compounds the impression of irony. Wise men were meant to know, and to base that knowledge on their intellect, which was supposed to be their main guide. Hiero later emphasises that when he expresses astonishment that the wise Simonides should be championing the popular view of tyranny and saying that it is better off for material goods.

I am not at all surprised that the masses of men, Simonides, are deceived by tyranny. The mob does seem to me to form opinions that some are happy and some wretched purely on the evidence of its eyes. Tyranny spreads the goods that seem to be worth having unfolded before the public gaze, but its miseries lie hidden in the souls of the tyrants, where happiness and unhappiness truly reside for men. As I said, I am not surprised that the masses are mistaken about this. But your ignorance of it, you who have the reputation of getting a better perception of most matters by using your intellect rather than your eyes, this does surprise me (2.3–5).

Both here and at the outset Xenophon has Hiero identify Simonides as a wise man who has a superior knowledge of most matters. Here he is specifically identified as one who uses his intellect rather than his eyes. It is perverse not to accept the heavy implication that Simonides is being ironic in championing the view of appearances. His appeal to Hiero's experience rather than the intellect is ironic too. This irony is thoroughly in keeping with the rest of his Socratic manner. In the second part of the dialogue he shows that he does indeed believe that tyranny can be happier than private life, but not at all for the reasons the masses of men believe. Hiero had argued against the popular view that tyranny could not enjoy its evident advantages in sensual pleasure, material goods and honour, because of its lack of love. Simonides eventually shows him how he can turn his tyranny into the sort of rule that will attract love, and then he will be able to enjoy those pleasures if he wants (8–11).

Simonides' irony and his other manifestations of the Socratic manner mark him out as a Socratic wise man and he conducts himself just as Socrates might have. It is true that the action of the dialogue does not approximate to the classic Socratic action as we understand it, in which Socrates used irony to test the knowledge of his interlocutor, found it wanting, convicted him of ignorance and reduced him to *aporia*, clearing the way for real knowledge. In fact, Simonides' own knowledge appears to be tested and found wanting, though it is clear that this is only an apparent defeat, not a real one. The action of the *Hiero* could be forced into a classic pattern if it could be accepted that Hiero's condemnation of tyranny was somehow an admission of his ignorance of how to be happy, and that his victory in the argument was somehow a sort of defeat, but that is perverse.⁴ In any case, to judge from the other Socratic conversations Xenophon writes, which are the ones that count in judging his *Hiero*, though he can portray the classic action, he also writes dialogues of other types far simpler, in which the irony is no more than a mere mannerism, the use of the questioning mode for its own sake as a substitute for assertion.⁵ The action of the *Hiero*

⁴ L. Strauss, *Xenophon on Tyranny* (repr. Ithaca, 1972) is as perverse as one could be.

⁵ In this dialogue between Socrates and Euthydemus, *Mem.* 4.2, Socrates twice reduces Euthydemus to *aporia* (4.2.28, 39) in this way, and Euthydemus is a classic Socratic 'victim', priding himself on his wisdom. But cf. 4.5 for another sort of irony and action. Xenophon

is unusual in that the interlocutor inflicts an apparent defeat on the Socrates figure and uses the Socratic method to inflict it, like the questioning mode. It is also odd that the interlocutor employs classic Socratic arguments, like the insistence on the importance of the soul (2.4). Yet this need not be beyond the bounds of the Socratic dialogue as Xenophon understood it. If one allows for novelty, the *Hiero* does have the look and feel of Socratic dialogue. Yet the problem remains: Socrates does not appear and Simonides is the wise man.

The ideas of the *Hiero* are Xenophon's own and he is using the dialogue as a vehicle for their expression, whatever else he is doing. He presents three views on tyranny, first the popular view of it, ironically espoused by Simonides and Socratically demolished by Hiero, then the view of Hiero himself that emerges in the course of that argument, that tyranny is a miserable condition, and finally the view of Simonides that tyranny can still be happy if it is properly managed. The popular view is based on appearances, the tyrant's view on experience and the wise man's view on the intellect. The two main ideas expressed by Hiero and Simonides also occur in Xenophon's other works. The contrast between 'despotic' tyranny over unwilling and unloving subjects, which is a hell on earth, and 'archic' tyranny over willing and loving subjects, which is a heaven, occurs at the end of the *Oeconomicus*.⁶ There is a more complete endorsement of rule over willing subjects in the *Cyropaedia*.⁷ Xenophon was clearly very keen to express these ideas, and that may have influenced his choice of the types of characters in the *Hiero*. For instance, he may have decided that the most effective indictment of despotic tyranny would have to come from the mouth of the despot himself. Therefore he was bound to introduce a tyrant into the dialogue. Once he had done that, he may have felt that Socrates was an inappropriate figure to argue for enlightened tyranny, perhaps because they were not his views, or perhaps because it was well known that he did not consort with tyrants in real life. He therefore cast about for another suitable wise man to pair with his tyrant. Xenophon's desire for effective presentation of his ideas would then have overridden the normal requirement of the Socratic dialogue form, that Socrates should figure in it. His presentation certainly was effective. The personal participation of the tyrant gave additional force to the argument he was to make against the popular view of tyranny, for it was the tyrant himself first-hand who made it. The tyrant's use of the Socratic method gave the ultimate seal of approval to both his refutation of the popular view and his own statement on the misery of tyranny, at least in Socratic circles. Xenophon may even have decided that he wanted a tyrant in his dialogue on the relative happiness of tyranny as a reaction against Plato's presentation of the same subject in his *Republic*. Plato made his statement on the miseries of despotic tyranny by introducing an anonymous judge into the discussion, called up by Socrates out of thin air to deliver it.⁸ This judge is admittedly one with the best credentials, for his intellect is supposed to have pierced the shell of the tyrant and to have seen the true state of his soul, but the evidence he gives is still second-hand. In the end Socrates and his interlocutors pretend that they are themselves this judge and themselves deliver the indictment of tyranny. Plato's presentation might have struck Xenophon as odd and he may have decided to improve on it by having the tyrant participate in person. The *Republic* is usually thought to pre-date the *Hiero*, and the evident similarities between this section

explicitly refers to Socrates' irony at *Mem.* 1.2.36, where he is accused of asking questions to which he already knows the answers.

⁶ *Oec.* 21.2–12, esp. 12.

⁷ *Cyrop.* 1.6.19–25.

⁸ *Rep.* 577ff.

of the *Republic* and Hiero's statement on tyranny do suggest a relationship and even a reaction on Xenophon's part.⁹ This may be one solution to the problem of why Socrates does not appear in the outwardly Socratic *Hiero*. It does not in itself explain the choice of Hiero as tyrant, however, or Simonides as wise man.

Simonides is of course a worthy and proper substitute for Socrates. Even within the dialogue Xenophon describes him as a poet and Hiero calls him a wise man. Poets were traditionally thought to be wise.¹⁰ Plato regularly attacks Simonides for his lack of wisdom, but that just establishes the identification, since Plato attacks poets precisely for their wise reputation, which he thought unfounded.¹¹ In effect, Simonides was a canonical sage.¹² Hiero was also a worthy choice as tyrant since he was exceedingly powerful. His tyranny hardly needs to be documented.¹³ It has been suggested that Hiero was chosen for his Syracusan connexions because Xenophon was aiming his *Hiero* at a Syracusan audience,¹⁴ but a Syracusan audience was bound to be a narrow one and does not strike me as a plausible one for a work involving so much effort. A better explanation of the choice of Hiero would be that he was a well-known tyrant already talked about in philosophical circles. There is some evidence of this in a story told by Aristotle and referred to by Plato before him, about a meeting between Simonides and Hiero's wife and of how she asked the wise man whether it was better to be wise or rich and was told, 'Rich – for the wise wait at the doors of the wealthy'.¹⁵ This not only demonstrates that philosophical circles were interested in the tyrannical family of Hiero, which surely means that they were interested in Hiero himself as well, but also indicates that they paired Simonides and Hiero as wise man and tyrant. Plato's fondness for attacking Simonides also testifies to the interest such circles had in Simonides. Xenophon was linked to these circles and might have been familiar with their interest and their pairing of Simonides and Hiero as wise man and tyrant, and that may explain why he chose Hiero for the tyrant he required, then paired him with Simonides as wise man. Plato tells of Simonides' meeting with Hiero's wife as if it were well known.

Yet this explanation of how Xenophon came to portray Simonides and Hiero rather than Socrates and some other interlocutor involves several assumptions. The first is that Xenophon set out to write a normal Socratic dialogue, then realised it set limits on the effectiveness of the ideas he wanted to convey. It assumes that he thought a tyrant the most effective vehicle for the denunciation of despotic tyranny and the refutation of the popular view. It assumes that the tyrant's presence ruled out the presence of Socrates as being inappropriate. It assumes that Xenophon then cast about for a suitable tyrant figure and found Hiero, and a suitable substitute wise man and found Simonides. All this seems reasonable enough, but is it exact? There is another way of looking at the form of the *Hiero* that involves considerably fewer assumptions about the workings of Xenophon's mind. It is to imagine that his plan for the work arose not from a desire to write a Socratic dialogue, but from a desire to write an altogether different type of work, which took on the guise of a Socratic dialogue for very good reasons. The type of work to which I refer was based on the model of the

⁹ Luccioni, *L'Hiéron*, does not think there is a direct relationship. Cf. J. Adam, *The Republic of Plato* (Cambridge, 1965), 339, who believes that Hiero's statement is a 'diluted commentary' on the *Republic*.

¹⁰ See R. Harriott, *Poetry and Criticism before Plato* (London, 1969).

¹¹ Plato, *Rep.* 331e–336a; *Protagoras* 339a–347c.

¹² Plato, *Rep.* 335e, where he is listed along with Bias and Pittacus as a wise man.

¹³ See D.S. 11.38, 48–9, 51, 53, 67.

¹⁴ See Sordi, *op. cit.* n. 1.

¹⁵ *Rep.* 489b; *Rhet.* 2.16.2.

story of the meeting of the wise man and tyrant, which is attested elsewhere in Greek literature. Simonides and Hiero could easily figure in this type of story, and there are remarkable similarities between such stories and Xenophon's *Hiero*.

Herodotus' account of the meeting between Solon and Croesus is a typical example of the story.¹⁶ It is often classified as a Warner story, in which a warning is given and ignored and suffering ensues, and it is indeed a story of that type, for Croesus does ignore Solon's advice about happiness to his great cost. Yet it is also a more general type of story, widespread in Greek literature, in which a wise man converses with a powerful and kingly man.¹⁷ Herodotus begins by identifying Solon as a wise man who goes travelling the world and visits the court of Croesus (1.29). There he meets the tyrant and talks with him about happiness. Croesus recognises him as a wise man from the outset and asks him to name any man he knows who is completely happy. He confidently expected that Solon would name him, for he had shown the wise man all his wealth and was of the opinion that happiness was wealth. Yet Solon named Tellus as most happy and gave details of his happiness intended as a lesson to the king. Croesus ignored them and asked for the name of the second happiest man, expecting to carry off that prize at least, but Solon named Cleobis and Biton and gave the details of their good fortune too. Croesus was angered that the happiness of these private men had been preferred to his tyrannical wealth (1.32.1). Even when Solon spelled out his message that wealth would not last, Croesus dismissed him and sent him packing, still believing in his own supreme happiness. Subsequently he lost all that wealth and all good fortune, when he was encouraged by the god's ambiguous oracles to attack Cyrus of Persia. Herodotus says that he was ruined precisely because of his belief that he was happy, which brought on the envy of the gods (1.34.1).

Later in his narrative Herodotus tells another story of this type in which Croesus has been made wise by his suffering and so takes on the role of wise man, with Cyrus as a tyrant (1.87–90). Attacked by Croesus, Cyrus had retaliated and captured both his person and his city, and had tied him on a pyre with fourteen Lydian youths, to be burnt alive. As the fire was lit, Croesus cried out the name of Solon three times, provoking Cyrus to ask about the identity of the man. Croesus replied that he was one who should speak to all tyrants, further interesting Cyrus, who was himself a tyrant. Croesus eventually told Cyrus about Solon's advice on happiness and how it had proved true and was applicable to all men but especially those who believed themselves happy. Cyrus tried to put out the fire, seeing the truth about happiness not lasting right before his eyes, in the shape of the man who had once thought himself so happy, but it had too firm a hold. It was up to the god to save him, and so he did, sending a cloudburst to quench the flames. Croesus then conveyed to Cyrus all the lessons of his suffering and henceforth appears in Herodotus' account always as a wise adviser at Cyrus' side.¹⁸ This represents a happier version of the story, in which advice is accepted rather than ignored, but it is still a story of a meeting of a wise man and tyrant.

¹⁶ Hdt. 1.30–33.

¹⁷ H. Bischoff, *Die Warner bei Herodot* (diss. Marburg, 1932); R. Lattimore, 'The wise advisor in Herodotus', *CP* 34 (1939), 24–35. See K. H. Waters, *Herodotus on Tyrants and Despots* (*Hist. Einz.* Heft 15, Wiesbaden, 1971) for further bibliography. For the view that it is a conversation between the wise and the powerful, O. Regenbogen, 'Die Geschichte von Solon und Krösus', *Hum. Gymn.* 41 (1930), 1–20, accepted by D. Fehling, *Die Quellenangaben bei Herodot* (Berlin, New York, 1971), 152, at the end of his section on Warners, pp. 145ff. He says: 'Herodot siedelt sie an einem historische Ort an; die Situation des Weisen im Gespräch mit Krösus könnte ihm als typische Form schon vorgegeben sein' (152).

¹⁸ Hdt. 1.155–6, 207; cf. 3.36 with Cambyes, 6.37.

Herodotus has other versions of meetings between the wise and the powerful, like that between Croesus as tyrant and Bias of Priene as wise man, in which the advice offered is strategic rather than philosophic (1.27). His later conversations between Croesus and Cyrus are strategic too (1.155–6, 207). Diodorus Siculus refers to stories of meetings between Croesus as tyrant and Solon, Bias, Pittacus and Anacharsis as wise men.¹⁹ Some of these are taken direct from Herodotus, but not all. It is logical to conclude that later writers changed the characters and some of the detail but retained the basic format of the story, producing versions of what became a traditional story format. It is even possible this had already happened when Herodotus was writing, for he says the story at 1.27 was attributed to both Bias and Pittacus as wise men. Diodorus' story of the meeting of Anacharsis of Scythia as wise man and Croesus as tyrant is a typical illustration of how the story was adapted (9.26). Croesus shows Anacharsis his wealth and asks him to name the bravest, then the most just, then the wisest creature. He expects to be named but is disappointed, for Anacharsis characteristically names the wild beasts as bravest, most just and wise. The character of the wise man has been changed, and the detail of the conversation, but the format is the same as in Herodotus' story of Solon, which Diodorus tells next (9.27). Aristotle and Theopompus told a version of the same story that concerned Midas as tyrant and Silenus as wise man.²⁰ In Aristotle's version the advice offered by Silenus is the same as that offered by Solon in Herodotus. Diodorus tells versions of the story that concerned Dionysius I as tyrant of Syracuse and Philoxenus the poet and Plato as wise men.²¹ Philoxenus and Dionysius discuss the tyrant's poetry rather than his happiness, but the format is still the same and the story accommodated different sorts of conversation. The more relevant story of Plato and Dionysius is given in a fuller form by Plutarch; Plato tells Dionysius that his life lacks virtue and justice, a clear and direct criticism of tyrannical happiness, for which the philosopher was allegedly sold into slavery.²²

All these examples represent a rich tradition in which the story of Solon and Croesus served as model for later writers. If Anacharsis could be imported into the story, and even Midas and Silenus, there is no reason why it could not be told of Simonides and Hiero as well. This brings us back to the *Hiero*, and to the common ground it shares with stories of this type. Taking Herodotus' story of Solon and Croesus as the archetype, consider the similarities. Simonides visits the court of Hiero, just as Solon visits the court of Croesus. Hiero identifies Simonides as a wise man at the outset of their conversation; Croesus identifies Solon similarly. Both accounts of the meetings are given in largely conversational form. The difference is that the *Hiero* is in a special conversational form: Socratic dialogue. But the subject they discuss is in both cases the same: the relative happiness of tyrant and private individual. It is not a set topic for conversation in Herodotus as it is in the *Hiero*, but in asking Solon to name the happiest man and in expecting to be named himself for his tyrannical wealth, Croesus is initiating a discussion in which the nature of happiness is the central issue, and in naming private men like Tellus, and Cleobis and Biton, as most happy, Solon is delivering a judgement on the relative happiness of the tyrant and private individual, in the same way as the *Hiero* does. This theme is indicated by Croesus' rage at being compared with private men (1.32.2). Herodotus has his wise man and tyrant express

¹⁹ D.S. 9.12.2, 26–7 in particular, also 9.2.1–4.

²⁰ Jacoby, *FGrHist* 115 F 75 b&c; Aristotle, *Frag.* (ed. V. Rose, Teubner, 1886) F.44. See Regenbogen (n. 17) for comment.

²¹ D.S. 15.6–7.

²² D.S. 15.7; Plut. *Dion* 5.

views on tyranny quite different from those Simonides and Hiero express in the *Hiero*, but the types of characters who appear and meet, the circumstance of their meeting, the topic they discuss, and the generally dramatised way they discuss it, these are all traits that the story and the *Hiero* have in common. This sets the *Hiero* alongside the other stories of the same sort derived from Herodotus but told about different characters. The resemblances seem to me not at all accidental but proof that the tradition is influencing Xenophon's work.

There is further evidence that stories about meetings of wise men and tyrants were anciently recognised as a tradition, and that Simonides and Hiero figured in it, which makes the *Hiero* part of that tradition. The evidence is Plato's Second Letter to Dionysius II, who ruled Syracuse intermittently 367–346 B.C. The letter is very likely late and forged, but that does not affect the sort of argument I want to develop.²³ The letter says that the Greeks were talking about the relationship between Plato and Dionysius, which was never totally sunny, because relationships like theirs between the wise and the powerful had always been a common topic of interest among the Greeks. It then offers some examples of how such relationships were portrayed.²⁴

When men talk about Hiero or Pausanias the Lacedaemonian, they love to bring in Simonides' meetings with them, what he did and said to them. And they regularly celebrate Periander of Corinth and Thales of Miletus together in the same breath, and Pericles and Anaxagoras, and Croesus and Solon too, as wise men, and Cyrus as ruler. And in imitation the poets bring together Creon and Teiresias, and Polyeidus and Minos, Agamemnon and Nestor, Odysseus and Palamedes – it seems to me that the earliest men also linked Prometheus with Zeus in this sort of way – and some of these men they depict in conflict, and others as friends, others still friends at first, then in conflict, and sometimes of like mind, but other times in conflict.

This is a clear reference to the stories of meetings of wise men and tyrants. The stories of Solon and Croesus and Cyrus are recognised as part of a tradition of such stories, of which the letter gives further examples. Whoever wrote the letter and however late, he probably had more Greek literature to judge from than we have, so his opinion should not be lightly dismissed. Of course, he is making a point about the relationship of Dionysius and Plato, and could be making it all up to illustrate that point, but he seems to be right about the accounts of meetings of Solon and Croesus and Cyrus, which are in Herodotus and do conform to his general description, and that gives one confidence in his judgement. The writer also says that Simonides and Hiero figured in this tradition; indeed, he names them as his first pair of wise man and tyrant. It is possible and even probable that he had Xenophon's *Hiero* chiefly and perhaps exclusively in mind. In that case, he sees the *Hiero* not principally as a Socratic dialogue, but as a story of a meeting of wise man and tyrant, and provides evidence to support the case I am making. He does generalise and suggest that there was more than one version of meetings of Simonides and Hiero, but this may be a product of his tendentiousness. Still, the story of the encounter between Simonides and Hiero's wife in Plato and Aristotle need not be just elaboration on Xenophon's story of the meeting between Simonides and her husband, and that story is probably earlier than the *Hiero* in any case, for Plato refers to it as well known in the *Republic*, which is usually thought to predate the *Hiero*. Nevertheless, the main point is that the writer of the letter says that stories of meetings of Simonides and Hiero were part of the tradition of the meeting of the wise man and the tyrant, and Xenophon's *Hiero* conforms to his description, just as it conforms to the original Herodotean format of

²³ Ep. 2, 310b–311c. G. R. Morrow, *Plato's Epistles* (Indianapolis & New York, 1962) discusses the matter of authenticity.

²⁴ Ep. 2, 311a–b.

the story of Solon and Croesus. It moves from playful, ironic conflict toward friendship, conforming to the description in this respect, too, just like the other stories.

What emerges so far is that Xenophon's *Hiero* does indeed have the look of a Socratic dialogue but also fits into the tradition of accounts of meetings between wise men and tyrants in Greek literature. It has been seen earlier that the distance that separated the Socratic dialogue from the form Xenophon has produced in his *Hiero* was quite considerable and littered with assumptions. The distance that separates the traditional account of the meeting between wise man and tyrant from what Xenophon has produced is far smaller and involves only one single step. The *Hiero*'s setting, its characters, the subject of discussion and the basically dramatic form, all conform to the story tradition. The main difference is that Xenophon has 'Socratised' the dialogue. He seems to have adapted the story, as other writers certainly did, and in a particularly interesting way.

Xenophon was no stranger to experiment in literary form. His *Anabasis* is the first work of its type. His *Cyropaedia* set one of the patterns for the Greek novella with its love story and was one of the earliest self-contained biographical works.²⁵ His *Agésilas* was in the forefront of the development of the encomium.²⁶ His *Apologia Socratis* was an early example of the flourishing literary industry of *apologiai* and *kategoriai* of Socrates.²⁷ His technical treatises are part of a new development too.²⁸ But his *Memorabilia* were perhaps the most original of all and the most interesting comparison for the *Hiero*. Their form is totally new and it is now accepted that they represent an experiment in biographical form based on the *dokimasia* law court speech.²⁹ This type of speech readily lent itself to biographical purpose since it allowed the speaker to speak at length on the character and career of the defendant, and Xenophon adapted it for a biographical treatment of Socrates. But what is most striking about this experiment is that it represents a marriage of that form and the form of the Socratic dialogue. The stories that the *dokimasia* speech told in narrative form to illustrate the defendant's virtue are now told in the form of Socratic conversations. This is Xenophon's most striking formal novelty. It is not surprising to discover that he has created another formal novelty in the *Hiero*, for he does seem to have taken a traditional story form and married it to the form of the Socratic dialogue. It is in keeping with his marked tendency toward formal novelty in literature.

There was already a good deal of common ground between the story of the meeting between wise man and tyrant and the Socratic dialogue. The topic of discussion between the characters in many of the stories was the relative happiness of the tyrant, and that was also a topic of Socratic dialogue, for instance, Plato's *Republic*. The stories were normally in conversational form and that could easily be converted to Socratic conversation. A marriage was a likely prospect. No stranger to traditional story,³⁰ or to Socratic dialogue, Xenophon took the opportunity and forged the bond, and produced a distinctly new form of literature. One of the effects of the marriage

²⁵ See S. Trenkner, *The Greek Novella in the Classical Period* (Cambridge, 1958), 26–7, for the influence of the *Cyrop.* Also B. Perry, *The Ancient Romances* (California, 1967), 169–74. For the biographical aspect, A. Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography* (Harvard, 1971), 46–62.

²⁶ Momigliano, op. cit. (n. 25) 50–51.

²⁷ A.-H. Chroust, *Socrates Man and Myth* (London, 1957), 69–100.

²⁸ Xen. *De Re Equ.* and *Hipp.* Cf. Simon, *On Horses*.

²⁹ H. Erbse, 'Die Architektonik im Aufbau von Xenophons Hellenika', *Hermes* 89 (1961), 257–87, adopted by Momigliano op. cit. (n. 25) 52–4.

³⁰ See op. cit. (n. 25). Consider also e.g. the Warner story about Alcibiades at *H.G.* 2.1.25–6.

was to modernise the old story. The characters now live in Xenophon's world, equipped with the ideas and methods of that world. The wise men of the old story usually denounced tyranny while the tyrants praised it, and though often allusive and indirect, they were never Socratic. The tyrants in other versions hardly mustered an argument at all, let alone arguments of the Socratic sort, as Hiero does. The fifth-century setting of the story might have made the Socratic and modern aspect of it even more noticeable to its audience. Yet it was still a recognisable version of the Herodotean format, one in which the tyrant eventually took the good advice of the wise man, for Hiero does actually seek out his advice just before the story reaches its climax. He asks what to do about the problem caused by his mercenaries (10.1).

The reason why Xenophon invented this new form was not a simple desire for literary innovation, though he did achieve that. It was rather a desire for a more effective presentation of his ideas on tyranny. The story of the meeting of wise man and tyrant in its usual form allowed him to present only two views on tyranny, that of the wise man and that of the tyrant. By introducing a Socratic form of conversation and making the wise man outright ironic instead of merely allusive and indirect, Xenophon was able to present a third view as well. Not only could he have the tyrant argue against despotic tyranny and the wise man in favour of enlightened tyranny, but he could demolish the popular view of tyranny too, having the wise man ironically argue for it and the tyrant against it. The traditional story gave him the tyrant who could personally express the misery of despotic tyranny and by his personal endorsement make the presentation of that idea effective. The Socratic presentation enabled the tyrant to express his view using the Socratic technique and give the ultimate seal of approval to it. Similarly, the tyrant's personal participation gave cogent force to the refutation of the popular view on tyranny, because it came from the horse's mouth, and the Socratic presentation further strengthened it. Thus the combination of the traditional story and the Socratic dialogue both broadened the scope of the ideas that could be presented and increased their effectiveness. Xenophon had produced a highly original and highly suitable vehicle for his ideas. This is what really explains the oddity of its form, a Socratic dialogue without Socrates.