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Power and Opposition in the Ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean World

edited by Mait Kõiv and Vladimir Sazonov

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Power and Opposition in the Ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean World

The Politics of Power: The Rise and Fall of the Deinomenid Dynasty in Fifth-century Sicily

Lynette G. MITCHELL[*]

Abstract. *In the Greek world, power was based on charismatic aretē, excellence. For that reason, rulers had to prove their charismatic qualities in order to rule. However, maintaining charismatic rule over generations was difficult, especially as the successor had to show himself to be more charismatic than his predecessor. In this chapter, we will consider the rule of the Deinomenids in late sixth- and early fifth-century Sicily. We will see how power was established through the charismatic activities of the older brother (Gelon), and how the younger brother (Hieron) then had to assert his position in relation to his elder brother. Drawing on Graeber and Sahlins' model of the metaperosn, this chapter will argue that in the dynastic succession between the Deinomenids, Hieron struggled to maintain charismatic legitimacy, which meant that power was lost, and the dynasty was overthrown.*

Rezumat: *În lumea greacă, puterea era fundamentată pe excelența (*aretế*) carismatică. Din acest motiv, conducătorii trebuiau să se dovedească posesori ai unor calități carismatice pentru a putea domni. Totuși, înșiruirea unor domnii carismatice pe parcursul mai multor generații era dificilă, în special în condițiile în care succesorul trebuia să dețină mai multă carismă decât predecesorul său. În studiul de față vom ava în vedere stăpânirea Deinomenizilor asupra Siciliei la sfârșitul secolului al VI-lea î.Hr. și începutul celui de-al V-lea î.Hr. Vom observa felul în care puterea a fost instalată prin intermediul acțiunilor carismatice ale fratelui mai mare (Gelon) și cum Hieron (fratele lui mai mic) a fost nevoit să-și consolideze puterea în raport cu predecesorul său. Plecând de la modelul oferit de Graeber și Sahlins, acest articol va scoate în evidență faptul că în succesiunea dinastică a Deinomenizilor, Hieron nu a reușit să-și legitimeze puterea prin intermediul carismei, ceea ce a dus la pierderea ei și la înlăturarea dinastiei.*

Keywords: power, charismatic rule, Deinomenids, Gelon, Hieron.

David Cannadine has said: 'Power is like the wind: we cannot see it but we feel its force'.[1] As anthropologists have long recognised, what constitutes power, and how it is achieved is culturally specific and different cultures understand power in different ways. In this essay I want to look at royal power in the Greek world: how it is created and manipulated and how it is lost. I will begin with a brief overview of kingly power, then in the second part of the essay

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[1] CANNADINE 1987, 1.

look at the specific case- study of the Deinomenids, a ruling dynasty in Sicily at the very beginning of the fifth century, whose hold on power was gained and lost within twenty-five years, and the reasons why that was so.

The nature of royal power

In the Greek world, royal power was based on excellence (*aretē*), that is, it was based on personal charisma, and had to be made visible and tangible through the symbols of excellence which demonstrated the existence of royal power. This proved the legitimacy of rule and motivation for the ruler's subjects to follow the ruler willingly. Derived from the ideologies of Homeric epic, having an excess of excellence suggested reserves of strength, especially military strength, which had the potential of being used, perhaps violently, but did not need to be used still to have potency. In the fourth century BC, Xenophon, one of the political thinkers who tried to theorise the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, says in his *Cyropaedia* (3.1.20): 'If people think others are better than themselves, they will generally obey them willingly without compulsion.'

As well as actual military victories, another route to a display of excellence and power was victories in the games, especially the stephanitic games, or 'crown' games at Olympia, Delphi, Nemea and Isthmia. Lesley Kurke, in fact, has shown how victory in war and victory in the games was seen as suggesting the same kind of power about the individual, and attracted memorialisation through hero-cult.[2] In the same way, city-founding was also seen as heroic. In Pindar's *Pythian* 5, for the victory of Arcesilas of Cyrene in the chariot race in 462 BC, Aristoteles/Battus, the founder of the dynasty is celebrated (89-95):

> He founded larger sanctuaries for the gods
> and laid down a paved road, straight and level,
> to echo with horses' hoofs,
> in processions that honour Apollo
>   and bring succour to mortals. And there, at the end of the agora he has
>   lain apart since his death.
> He was blessed while he dwelt among men,
> and afterwards a hero worshipped by his people (*herōs ... laosebēs). (Transl. Race)

The kind of cult offered to these heroes of war, games and city-founding was chthonic (so not Olympian: Alexander the Great was probably the first man truly to demand universal Olympian status, although others like his father had hinted at it before),[3] but it did give a kind

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[2] KURKE 1993.

[3] Lysander, the Spartan nauarch at the end of the Peloponnesian War, was said by Douris to be the first man for whom an altar was built and paeans sung, as if for a god (*FGrHist* 76 F71; cf. F26), and that the Samians celebrated a

of immortality to those awarded it in so far as these heroes were remembered in perpetuity by games, songs, poems and monuments, which bound the honourand and the community to each other by tight bonds.[4] Furthermore, as Currie has argued, hero-cult could be anticipated in life through epinician poetry, which itself suggested the heroic status of the honourand through the comparison with mythical heroes, in order to begin the process of immortalisation that hero-cult could bring to mortals.[5]

Indeed, this excess of *aretē* itself could hint at divinity. From an anthropological perspective Graeber and Sahlins have argued that rulers, by the very fact of ruling, were set apart from their communities and become 'metapersons'.[6] On the one hand, this meant kings could become the sacrificial scapegoats for the community, or on the other that they could become divine. In Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* the estate-owner Ischomachus tells Socrates that even the best men will not have learned the art of ruling unless they have something of a *basilikos* nature (cf. 3.5), and that the ability to win willing obedience is more than mortal but a divine thing (21.10-12).

Nevertheless, there was an inbuilt fragility in Greek rulership because in reality the gap between the ruler and the ruled in terms of excellence or power, or anything else, was not necessarily very wide, at least in the archaic and classical periods. As well as other men who won success in the games, men who were not rulers, could become city-founders and receive hero-cult, such as Hagnon of Athens in 435 BC, and that while he was still alive (Th. 4.102.3, 5.11.1). There was always the risk, therefore, that one's rule might be threatened by another man whose excellence was shown to be greater, especially if the threat came from inside the ruling family. The stakes were raised even higher in a polygamous royal family,[7] or if a younger contender seemed to have a stronger charismatic claim.

Even at Sparta, at the end of the sixth century, trouble erupted because brothers quarrelled over who had the greatest right to rule. Although it was not customary for the Spartan *basileis* to take more than one wife (Hdt. 5.40.2), the Spartan king Anaxandridas took a second wife because he did not want to divorce his first wife when the ephors required him to because she was childless (Hdt. 5.39-41). His first wife then fell pregnant after he had married his second wife, and she also bore him a son, Cleomenes who was in fact the eldest of the

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festival in his honour, the Lysandreia. Pausanias also saw a statue for Lysander at Olympia erected by the Samians, and inscribed in his honour because of Lysander's 'reputation for *aretē*' (6.3.14); see HABICHT 2017, 1-3. On Philip II and the Philippeum at Olympia, see CARNEY 2000, 213: 'Philip offered those who visited the Panhellenic shrine a way to think about the power he had come to exercise. The Philippeum did not assert that this power was divine, but it implied that it might be and that this power was *like* the power of the gods.'

[4] BURASELIS et al. 2004.

[5] CURRIE 2005, esp. 57-9, 406-14, although note also NICHOLSON 2016, who takes a rather different view of the role of epinician poetry in the community.

[6] GRAEBER – SAHLINS 2017.

[7] On polygamy among Greek ruling families in the archaic and classical periods, see L. MITCHELL 2013a, 100-105.

sons. Even though Spartan custom was for the eldest son to rule (Hdt. 5.42.2), Dorieus (the eldest son of the first wife – she had at least three sons: Hdt. 7.205), although junior to Cleomenes, was sure he would succeed his father both because of his *andragathia*, his 'manly courage', and the fact that he was the 'first' (*prōtos*) among his peers. Nevertheless, on their father's death, Cleomenes as eldest did succeed, and so Dorieus left Sparta, notably to found a colony in Sicily (although he and most of his companions died there: Hdt. 5.42.2-46.1).[8]

The intensely personal and charismatic nature of rule could create other problems with succession. Aristotle recognised the problem for a ruler if he handed rule to his children, which he notes does not always turn out well (*Pol.* 3, 1286b22-7). In Macedon, where kingship was owned by the ancient royal house of the Argeads, the succession moved through different branches of the royal family rather than by linear descent, in order to accommodate the need for successive charismatic kings, though even this also caused an intrinsic uncertainty and instability in the changeover between kings.[9] Graeber has argued that in dynastic royal families, because there is a tendency for the founder of a dynasty to rank higher than his descendants, one solution for descendants is to achieve feats so outstanding that 'their ancestors vanish'.[10] Even though Alexander the Great had obviously inherited the charismatic qualities of his father Philip II (and his father seems to have indicated very clearly that he was the preferred son for the succession by including Alexander and his mother in the statue group in the Philippeum at Olympia),[11] he clearly felt very insecure about the succession, and for that reason he (or his mother) might conceivably have been implicated in the assassination of his father in the theatre at Vergina in 336 BC.

Weber, who also wrote about charismatic kingship and the problems of succession, argued that in order to enable a stable succession, charismatic leadership has to be 'routinised' in some way, perhaps by dissociating charisma from the individual and attaching it instead to the office.[12] Clifford Ando has argued that this was the case in Rome, and that Augustus imbued the title of Imperator with charismatic qualities: 'Augustus bequeathed more than his name to the office that he had created: his legacy simultaneously attached a degree of charisma to that office and demanded charismatic appeal from its occupant'.[13]

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[8] Cleomenes (it was said) was not mentally stable and was on the verge of madness (Hdt. 5.42.2; cf. 39.1), which OGDEN 1997 argues was part of a tradition which explained archaic rulers' extraordinary power by exteriorising it as something pestilential and dangerous. OGDEN 1997, 124-5 describes Cleomenes as exhibiting many 'tyrant-like' features, by which he captures what Graeber (GRAEBER – SAHLINS 2017, 75) describe about scapegoat kings: 'turning the king into a fetish or a scapegoat—often operate (whatever their immediate intentions) as a means of controlling the obvious dangers of rulers who feel they can act like arbitrary, petulant gods.'

[9] L. MITCHELL 2007.

[10] GRAEBER in GRAEBER – SAHLINS 2017, 431-52.

[11] Carney argues that the dynastic conception of the Philippeium was Philip's, and not an addition made by Alexander after Philip's death: CARNEY 2013, 212.

[12] WEBER 1947, 366.

[13] ANDO 2000, 30.

The same could be said in Achaemenid Persia, at least from the rule of Darius, which itself marked a major rupture in the succession. While on his tomb at Naqši-e Rustam Darius makes the claim for his personal charisma (for example, he says: 'I am skilled both in hands and in feet. As a horseman, I am a good horseman. As a bowman, I am a good bowman, both on foot and on horseback. As a spearman, I am a good spearman, both on foot and on horseback; These are the skills which Ahuramazda has bestowed upon me and I have had the strength to bear them' [DNb §2h-i] transl. Kuhrt),[14] this inscription is repeated virtually verbatim by his son Xerxes (XPl), and other symbols of Achaemenid royal ideology have a generic quality which emphasise the charismatic nature of Achaemenid kingship rather than the personal charisma of individual kings. Margaret Cool Root says that 'a particularly intriguing aspect of Achaemenid art is the consistent portrayal of the king in a *dynastic* rather than a *personal* image' [her italics].[15]

It was this apparent routinisation of kingship that led to the relative stability of the Achaemenid royal house over 150 years, whatever happened to individual kings: Xerxes I was assassinated in 465 (Ctesias F13(33), cf. (24); Diod. 11.69), Ochus/Darius II emerged from the succession crisis of the late 420s after the assassination of his brothers Xerxes (II) and Sogdianus (Ctesias F15(48-51)), and Darius III succeeded as king (even though he was not in line for the succession) apparently after the assassination of Artaxerxes III/Ochus and Artaxerxes IV/Arses (Diod. 17.3-5).[16] The death of the king, even by the extreme disruption of assassination seems to have been a local court affair, and did not affect the office of kingship which continued successfully until Alexander's conquests in the 330s.[17]

However, in the Greek context there was a great deal of uncertainty surrounding any individual's ability to claim the right to rule. Aristotle thought that kingship was not appropriate for his own time since there was no man of great enough standing to be fit for kingship (*Pol.* 5, 1313a2-8). However, he does concede the possibility (*Pol.* 3, 1284a3-11):

> ... if there is any one man so greatly distinguished in outstanding virtue, or more
> than one but not enough to be able to make up a complete state, so that the virtue of
> all the rest and their political ability is not comparable with that of the men

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[14] KUHRT 2007, 505.

[15] ROOT 1979, 310.

[16] BRIANT 2002: 227, 588-9 (for the assassinations of Ochus and Sogdianus); for the alleged assassination of Artaxerxes III and Artaxerxes IV by the eunuch, Bagoas, see KUHRT 2007, 418-19, 424.

[17] Another practices that suggests Achaemenid kingship was routinized is the seclusion, or separation, of the king. Although most of our evidence for this practice is from Greek sources, there is enough other evidence to confirm that access to the Persian king was strictly limited and controlled through court protocol (cf. ALLEN 2005). However, this practice of seclusion, although sometimes assumed to be a feature of 'Orientalist' royal ideologies may have been particular to the Persians. For example, KERTAI has recently argued that seclusion is not an appropriate frame of reference for understanding the Assyrian court and palaces (2015, 5-9).

mentioned ... it is no longer proper to count these exceptional men a part of the state; for they will be treated unjustly if deemed worthy of equal status, being so widely unequal in virtue and in their political ability: since such a man will naturally be as a god among men.

Aristotle, however, also did not think that it was desirable for such a man to rule, since because of his humanity he would not be able to rule (as law could rule) without passion (*Pol.* 3, 1287a18–32).

Other Greek authors also reveal a deep anxiety about the possibility that rulers might try or want to hide the fact that they were no better than those they ruled. Herodotus tells the (ideologically charged) story of Maeandrius at Samos (3.142–43), who he says wanted to secede from his autocratic rule because he did not want to rule over men like himself (*andres homoioi*); rather Maeandrius wanted to establish *isonomia*, political equality for all. This anxiety over the inequalities implicit in kingship was often expressed through the perceived contrast with Asian kingship, where it was said that the king was generally secluded from public view and access to his person was limited.[18] Herodotus says of Deioces, who he claims is the first ruler of the Medes (although the story itself is a very Greek one and almost certainly not historical),[19] that he had a palace built for himself of seven concentric defensive circles, and that he laid down the following rules (1.96-101): that no one could go into the presence of the king, that all business would be conducted through messengers, that the king would be seen by no one, and that no one could laugh or spit in his presence. 'He exulted in these things about himself so that his peers (*homēlikes*), who had grown up with him and whose houses were of the same status, might not, if they saw him, become irritated and plot against him. But if they could not see him, he would seem to them to have become of a different kind' (Hdt. 1.99.2).

By the fourth century, the contrast between Persian kingship (which was remote and hidden) and the accessibility and availability of Greek kings had become embedded as a way of defining Greek rulership. In Xenophon's fourth-century encomiastic text, *Agesilaus*, Agesilaus (the Spartan king) is directly contrasted with the Persian king: 'First of all the Persian was proud to be seen rarely, but Agesilaus took pleasure in being always being visible, thinking that it was appropriate for a life of shame to be lived in the shadows, but for a life that was lived for nobility the light provided ornament' (Xen., *Agesilaus* 9.1).[20]

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[18] See n. 17 above.

[19] There is now an extensive bibliography on Herodotus' ahistorical (even unhistorical) accounts of the so-called Median Empire and its kings in the sixth century. As an entry point to the discussion, see the seminal article by SANCISI-WEERDENBURG 1988.

[20] This does not mean, however, that there were never controls put upon the person of the king. In Sparta, for example, where kingship was institutionalised in a way never achieved anywhere else in the Greek world control of the king's person and especially his body was important, especially when he was 'on tour' with the army (when his

Even at the Macedonian court accessibility remained an important value. Although there are few palaces for rulers in Greece, the Macedonians from the end of the fifth century did engage in palace-building. In discussing the palace of Phillip II, Alexander the Great's father, Kottaridi demonstrates its openness to the community, and the extent to which it was a communal building for communal dining, public administration and cult activities.[21] It was accessible from the street and open to all those who wanted to enter. In this sense it is reminiscent of the house of the Homeric ruler of Phaeacia, Alcinous, which also fulfilled all these public functions (Hom. *Od.* 7.81-102).[22]

The king had to be accessible to his subjects not only because he had to display his excellence, but also because he had to demonstrate that there existed between him and those he ruled a relationship of mutual trust. Aristotle notes that the seventh-century Cypselids of Corinth were one of the longest archaic dynasties because Cypselus, the founding dynast, did not have a bodyguard, but instead made himself approachable to the people (*Pol.* 5.1315b22–9). Whether the anecdote is actually true, it does give a sense of how the ideal relationship between ruler and ruled was conceived. Indeed, in the fourth century kingship (*basileia*) was theorised in opposition to tyranny because a king was protected by law and the citizens, while a tyrant who ruled outside law needed a foreign bodyguard (*Pol.* 3.1285a24-9, 5.1311a7-8).

The need to continually prove one's supremacy over others meant that there was also always the possibility of violence. Graeber, drawing ultimately on Schmitt's theory of sovereignty, shows how kingship always contains within it the threat of violence.[23] But violent resistance could come from a number of directions: from competitors for the position of ruler, from the ruled who no longer believed in the excellence of the ruler, or from the ruler himself who might push-back violently if he felt his position was being threatened.

However, those who had an excess of virtue such that they replicated or shared in the divine, were in any case dangerous, as having qualities which could also set them apart from usual norms of society and allow them the ability to carry out arbitrary violence. In the Greek

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royal powers were less prescribed: cf. Thuc. 8.5.3). Then he had with him 'tent companions' (Xen. *Hell.* 4.5.8; *Const. Lac.* 13.1; cf. *Hell.* 6.4.14) and also 'the Thirty' (Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.2), who acted as his advisers (Diod. 15.33.1). These were replaced on an annual basis (Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.20), suggesting they were supposed not only to support, but also to limit, the powers of the king. Further, the king's person, in terms of his bloodline as a genuine descendant of Heracles, was necessary to perform the sacrifices (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 15.2). On the death of the king, his person had to be returned to Sparta, and if not his person, then an effigy of his person had to be buried at Sparta (Hdt. 6.58.3), and probably received cult (Spartan kings were considered founders: Isoc. 4.61, 65).

[21] KOTTARIDI 2011.

[22] KOTTARIDI (2011), however, points out that in Philip's palace there are no living quarters. She guesses that Philip's family lived in the city; since he had seven wives and there was a Greek preference for the women in relationship with one man to live in different houses (or even different cities), they may not have been under one roof: see OGDEN 1999, esp. 273-7.

[23] GRAEBER in GRAEBER – SAHLINS 2017, ch. 2; cf. SCHMITT 1985, 5 ('Sovereign is he who decides on the exception.')

world this anxiety was recognised in the stereotype of the tyrant, the ruler who ruled arbitrarily outside law, and Currie has shown how behind claims of royal divinity lurked the threat of tyranny.[24] In Herodotus, even the idealised Cyrus, who on his final campaign thinks he has become more than mortal, meets the kind of death which in Herodotus is typical of Asian tyrannical and absolute kings.[25]

Successful rulership in the Greek world depended on the personality of the king, and his personal charisma and excellence, which he had to demonstrate through his martial accomplishments in war, victories at the games, and city foundations.[26] For this reason, it was important for him to be on display, so that his personal qualities could be manifest. Further, to have and to hold ruling power, and to pass it on, presented rulers with a political game to play, a political negotiation with their subjects and their potential rivals. In the *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon says that Cyrus the Great ruled through a balance of virtue (e.g., 1.6.22-6) and kindness, and punishment of wrong-doers and fear (e.g., 1.1.5, 6.1.136, 8.1.29). The *Cyropaedia*, however, is a work of fiction and political theory. In the rest of this essay, I intend to look at a specific case study, the Deinomenid dynasty of Sicily who seem to demonstrate the precariousness of ruling power in Greece, the delicate balancing act and the political accomplishment needed, to acquire and then to hold onto power, and the ease with which it could slip away, resulting in the complete rejection of the dynasty and their claims to divine, or metaperson, status.

The Deinomenids of Sicily

The 'dynasty' of the Deinomenids might more accurately be called a 'ruling family', since it comprised four brothers, their wives (at least one of them very significant), and their children, although only one of the children ever actually held a ruling position, and then with a regent.[27] The family seems originally to have been established in Sicily by Deinomenes who also founded the cult of Demeter and Persephone, and been among the original settlers in the eighth century (Lindian Chronicle, *BNJ* 532 F 3.28, schol. Pind. *Pyth.* 2.27b, both with Dunbabin 1948: 64 and n. 6).

The eldest of the four brothers was Gelon. He became ruler in Gela in 491 BC. Gela as a civic and political centre was founded by the sons of the Olympic victor Pantares, Cleander

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[24] CURRIE 2005, 195; see also OGDEN (1997) and n. 8 above.

[25] L. MITCHELL 2013b.

[26] See L. MITCHELL 2013a, 57-90. Note also GEHRKE 2013.

[27] On ruling families, see L. MITCHELL 2013a, 91-118. It is very tempting to see the names of the four brothers as some kind of regnal names: Gelon ('Man of Gela'); Hieron (Sacred One), Polyzalus ('Full of Glory') and Thrasyboulus ('Bold in Counsel'). The use of political names was not unknown in Sicily, especially among royal families: Dionysius I of Sryacuse named his daughters Arete ('Excellence'), Dicaeosyne ('Justice') and Sophrosyne ('Moderation') (Plut. *De Alex. Fort.* 5.338c). The son of Hieron, who ruled with a regent at Aetna, was Deinomenes, surely a reference back to the original founder as well as his grandfather.

and Hippocrates, at the end of the sixth century.[28] Herodotus says that Cleander ruled in Gela first, but was assassinated, and then succeeded by Hippocrates (see Hdt 7.154.1-155.1; cf. 6.23.2-3), although some kind of shared rule (or 'family rule') might have been possible. By the time of Hippocrates' death in battle in 491, the brothers controlled a large part of eastern Sicily, but had not been able to take Syracuse (Hdt. 7.154.2). Meanwhile Gelon had served among Hippocrates' elite cavalry corps, and seems to have been already popular at the time of Hippocrates' succession (schol. Pindar, *Nemean* 9.95b), so that he may have even have used his influence to help Hippocrates establish his power. He also distinguished himself in Hippocrates' campaigns against neighbouring cities, and Herodotus says that because of his *aretē* he became the commander of Hippocrates' cavalry (7.154.2).

However, the transition in rule from Hippocrates to Gelon was not entirely straightforward. Herodotus says that on the death of Hippocrates the Geloans themselves wanted an end of one-man-rule in their city; Gelon initially defended the claim of Hippocrates' sons but then made himself ruler of Gela. Herodotus accuses him of 'robbing the children of Hippocrates' (Hdt. 7.155.1), but it is difficult to see how the apparently untried sons of Hippocrates could have withstood the experienced cavalry commander and their former champion. In any case, Gelon soon reinforced his position with an Olympic victory in the four-horse chariot race (the quadriga) in 488 (Paus. 6.9.4; cf. *IvO* 143).[29]

In 485, Gelon took advantage of civil war in Syracuse to support the land-owning elite (the *gamoroi*) against the *dēmos,* the common people, who Herodotus says surrendered the city to Gelon (7.155.2). He then moved his court to Syracuse and gave Gela to his brother Hieron to control. He also set about increasing the size of the city by forced immigration which he balanced with the reward of citizenship. Firstly, he moved the whole population of the city of Camarina and half the citizens of Gela (Hdt. 7.156.2), and gave them all citizen rights at Syracuse. He then laid siege to the Megarians, and when they surrendered to him he brought the wealthy (the *pachees*) to Syracuse and gave them citizen rights. Herodotus says that the *dēmos* of the Megarians, the non-elite, were enslaved and sold abroad, and he did the same with the population of Sicilian Euboea (7.156.2-3), although it has been suggested that at least some of these were probably left on the land to work it in order to avoid economic disruption.[30] In any case, these enforced displacements of population groups were clearly targeted at bringing the elite on-side and suppressing the disaffected.

Even if he held tight control on elite display,[31] Gelon's rule in Syracuse was popular, based at least in part on his military skill (cf. Diod. 11.67.2). He seems to have been elected in 480 to

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[28] DE ANGELIS 2016, 94-102.

[29] SCOTT 2010, 176 ('One of the most impressive [of the athletic victory statues at Olympia] was that of the tyrant Gelon, who dedicated the sanctuary's second life-size chariot group following his victory in 488 BC.')

[30] DE ANGELIS 2016, 182; cf. 279.

[31] On Gelon's sumptuary laws: DE ANGELIS 2016, 184-6.

lead the army against a Carthaginian attack on Himera in support of his ally Theron of Acragas (Diod. 13.94.5), and for this victory he was acclaimed, according to Diodorus (11.26.6), benefactor (*euergetēs*), saviour (*sōtēr*) and *basileus* (king).[32] Nevertheless, he treated his enemies leniently, and as part of the peace settlement (which is said to have been brokered by his wife Demarete),[33] he required the Carthaginians to build two temples to Demeter and Persephone (Diod. 11.26.2), the principal deities for Sicily (Diod. 5.2.3), and for which he already held the hereditary priesthood in Gela (Hdt. 7.153.2-154.1).

He also issued a coin series that identified himself closely with the Syracusan elite while at the same time making a reference to his Olympic victory in 488. The series is similar to the Syracusan pre-Gelon coinage (dated by Rutter to about 490)[34] which had a quadriga on the obverse (which must be a reference to the elite interests of the *gamoroi*) and a portrait of the nymph Arethusa, the nymph associated with the founding of Syracuse, set within an incuse square (which was produced as tetradrachms and didrachms, so fairly high value currency). An inscription on the obverse gives the name of the citizens (SYRAKOSION or SYRA) as the issuing body.

Gelon's currency issue enlarged the head of Arethusa on the reverse, turned the square into dolphins and inscribed the name 'SYRAKUSION'. On the obverse, he retained the quadriga, but added a small figure of Nike, the goddess of victory, which is generally agreed to have referred to his success at the Olympic games in 488 (which pre-dated his takeover of Syracuse). As well as tetradrachms and didrachms (the tetradrachms had four horses, the didrachms had two), the issue also contained an obol which had Arethusa on the reverse and a four-spoked wheel on the obverse, referring metonymically to the larger denominations.[35]

As a means of understanding how Gelon was trying to build a relationship between himself and the community of the Syracusans, it is important that this smaller denomination carried the same ideological message as the larger denominations. The larger issues were probably used for taxation and paying the mercenaries, but the smaller issue (an obol was worth a sixth of a drachm, and in the early fourth century at Athens four obols could comfortably feed a family for a day)[36] would have been the currency in more general circulation. Gelon's rule connected him to the Syracusans and their elite interests – the coinage continued the imagery of the pre-Gelon issues and was also issued in the name of the Syracusans, but by connecting his personal status as 'victor' to the coins on the obverse he was making a connection to his metaperson status. He was favoured by the gods as was

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[32] On the face of it, these titles may appear anachronistic (cf. HORNBLOWER 2011, 47-8), but as titles of praise they do appear in Pindar so may well be genuine: L. MITCHELL 2013a, 85 n. 68.

[33] On Demarete, see L. MITCHELL 2012, 13-14.

[34] For the first coins of Syracuse: RUTTER 1997, 123-4.

[35] For the Deionomenid Syracusan tetradrachm, didrachm and obol, see RUTTER 1997, 123-32.

[36] MARKLE 1985.

shown by his victories, both military and on the racecourse. His temple-building and his priesthood added to his sanctity. Gelon was a man set apart.

In fact, Diodorus says that Gelon was a man of the people (even if that was an engineered political community of the local elite, wealthy deportees and mercenaries – Diodorus says that he enrolled 10,000 foreign mercenaries as citizens: 11.72.3). Diodorus also says he treated everyone fairly, and that this was his temperament, but he particularly wanted to make everyone his 'own' through his acts of goodwill (11.25.4), that he spoke in the assembly without his armour or even his *chitōn* (11.26.5) – indicating among other things that he did not need a body guard – and, through his mildness, that he won great approbation among the Sicilians (11.67.2). Diodorus is clearly drawing on a positive source (perhaps Timaeus of Sicily) or himself wanted to read Gelon positively (Diodorus was also Sicilian, and says that through his *aretē*, Gelon set Sicily free: 14.66.1). However, Gelon does seem to have been popular among the Syracusans. When Gelon died he was buried grandly on the estate of his wife and awarded hero-cult (Diod. 11.38.4-5, cf. 14.63.3), a sign of his 'immortal remembrance' (Diod. 11.38.6). Diodorus says the entire population accompanied his body the four kilometres to his tomb (11.38.4). Even Herodotus, who is generally hostile to Gelon, says that his deeds were said to be the greatest, and he was by far the most important of the Greeks in his day (7.145.2).

On Gelon's death in 478 BC, Hieron, the second son of Deinomenes and Gelon's brother, whom Gelon had installed as ruler of Gela, succeeded him in Syracuse. It is possible (perhaps even probable) that a third brother, Polyzalus then became ruler in Gela. However, there were problems with the succession in Syracuse because Polyzalus was very popular. He probably won a chariot victory at Delphi in 478 (the year of Gelon's death) and possibly made a dedication of the famous Delphic charioteer (*F. Delphes* iii.4.452).[37] Diodorus says that Hieron saw that he was popular with the Syracusans (Polyzalus also seems to have held a special relationship with the army: Timaeus, *FGrHist* 566 F 93b), and Hieron thought he wanted to seize the *basileia*, and so was keen to get rid of him (Diod. 11.48.3). Hieron then employed mercenaries and gave himself a bodyguard, and sent Polyzalus on what Hieron hoped would be a death campaign (Diod. 11.48.4). Polyzalus, realising what was intended, fled to Gelon's old ally, Theron of Acragas (Diod. 11.48.5), who was also now his father-in-law since Polyzalus married Demarete, formerly the wife of Gelon, and Theron's daughter.[38] Theron, however, now had troubles of his own and decided the most expedient course of action was to make peace with Hieron (Diod. 11.48.6-8). The relationship with Polyzalus was apparently patched

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[37] It is still uncertain whether the famous Delphic charioteer was a dedication made by Hieron, or by his brother Polyzalus; see L. MITCHELL 2013a, 94-5, 113-14 n. 21.

[38] Endogamous marriages, including marriage between half-brothers and sisters, was an important strategy for later Sicilian dynasties: see L. MITCHELL 2013a, 97-8.

up, and Diodorus says that Polyzalus was restored to the position of 'goodwill' he previously enjoyed (11.48.8), and so may have returned to Gela. However, he is never heard of again.

Hieron, in spite of – or perhaps because of – the uncertain start at Syracuse went to great efforts to solidify his position. He assumed the family priesthood that had been held by Gelon (Hdt. 7.153-4; Pind., *Ol.* 6.94-6), and was probably involved in temple-building (perhaps including the temple of Athena which has been incorporated into the seventh-century AD cathedral in Syracuse).[39] In 474 he had a significant military victory against the Etruscans when he sent help to the city of Cyme, for which he made dedications of armour at Olympia (OR 101).

His foundation of the city of Aetna was marked in Pindar's *First Pythian*, which also celebrated his chariot victory in 470 at Delphi. The city was created by up-rooting the people of Catana and Naxos and sending them to Leontini and resettling Catana with 10,000 of his supporters. He changed the name of the city to Aetna (Diod. 11.49.1-2; Pindar, *Pyth.* 1.29-33, 60-5), and his son Deinomenes was given it to rule (Pindar, *Pythian* 1.58, 60-1), supported by another Deinomenid collaborator, the panhellenic victor and war hero, Chromius (Pind., *Nem.* 1, 9). Diodorus says that Hieron founded Aetna so that he might have supporters ready at hand in case of need, and also so that he might receive hero-cult (and so that kind of immortality), which he did on his death (11.49.2). The foundation of Aetna was celebrated with vase paintings depicting myths related to the founding, coins (two issues, both with a seated Zeus on the reverse, and one of them very obviously Olympian Zeus), and poems by Simonides, Pindar and Bacchylides, and a play, *Aetnaeans*, by the Athenian tragedian Aeschylus (*Vit. Aesch.* 9) in 476.[40] It is also said that Aeschylus' *Persians* was performed at Hieron's court (schol. Ar. *Ran.*1028f), perhaps even before it was produced at Athens, a play which Bosher argues in this context would have resonated with themes of 'good' and 'bad' kingship.[41] Pindar's *First Pythian* of 470, on face value an encomium of good kingship, certainly ends with a warning in the cautionary tale of Phalaris of Acragas (95-8).

Hieron was also a victor at various panhellenic games, which were celebrated in epinician poetry: the single horse race at Olympia in 476 (Pindar, *Ol.* 1; Bacch. 5) and in 472,[42] the chariot race at the Pythian games [Delphi] in 470 (Pindar, *Pyth.* 1; Bacch. 4), and at Olympia in 468 (Bacch. 3). In *Olympian* 1 (celebrating the victory in the single horse race of 476), Pindar says that the horse-loving *basileus*, Hieron, 'gains the peaks of every *aretē*' (13). In the *First Pythian* (written in celebration of the chariot victory of 470), Pindar praises Hieron for delivering

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[39] See DE ANGELIS 2016, 188.

[40] On the internationalisation of Hieron's court in art and culture, see DEARDEN 2012, 274-5.

[41] BOSHER 2012. Even it was not performed in Syracause as early as BOSHERER thinks, it does perhaps shed some light on the interest of the Syracusan elite in the Athenian rhetoric surrounding the developing constitutional form of democracy and its opposition to tyranny, a rather puzzling aspect of the play's (possible) production at Hieron's court.

[42] For this victory, see MORETTI 1957, 92 no. 234.

Hellas from the 'deep slavery' of the Carthaginians on the one hand (with Gelon at Himera), and on the other Hieron's own victory over the Etruscans at Cyme.[43] The poet prays that the Carthaginians may not return since the sons of Deinomenes have defeated them though their valour (*aretē*) (71-80). Similarly, in the *Second Pythian* (celebrating another chariot victory, although the date is uncertain) Hieron is thanked for bringing through his power (*dynamis*) an appearance of security (*asphalēs*) to the maidens of Zephyrian Locri after their war (8-20), and for this reason is called *euergetēs*, benefactor, and is said to excel everyone else in wealth and in honour, *timē* (59-61; cf. Bacch. 3).

Kathryn Morgan argues that this praise-poetry reflects early attempts to theorise a particular view of kingship.[44] Pindar says that Hieron wields a *themisteion skaptron*, a sceptre of lawfulness (*Ol.* 1.12; cf. 6.93), recommends that he guides the people with a just rudder (*dikaios pēdalios*) (*Pyth.* 1.86), connects Hieron as *basileus* with the Dorian Heracleidae, good order, the 'divinely built freedom of Hyllus' (*Pyth.* 1.60-5), and says that as leader (*agētēr anēr*), he instructs his son that by apportioning honours to the people he might turn them to harmonious quiet (*symphōnos hēsuchia*) (*Pyth.* 1.69-70).

Morgan has argued that the contrast between 'good kings' and 'bad kings' goes back to Homer and Hesiod.[45] It is probably significant that it is within this view of kingship that Hieron wanted himself to present himself, since Zeus as king (*basileus*) of the gods provided the model (Hes., *W&D* 668, *Theog.* 886). Human kings (*basileis*) on the other hand were 'from Zeus' (Hes., *Theog.*, 96), to whom Zeus gave the sceptre and the *themistes* (customary judgements) (e.g., Hom., *Il.* 9.96-9). The 470s and 460s were uncertain times when this kind of kingship was being challenged, especially by an elite who wanted a share in power. Not only was democracy at Athens developing a dangerous rhetoric that defined its constitution by opposition to one-man-rule,[46] but also other ruling contemporaries were under pressure.

Arcesilas IV of Cyrene, in particular, in the 460s was also using victories at the games and epinician poetry to support his rule, and we have already seen how *Pythian* 5 deliberately juxtaposes the foundation of Cyrene by his ancestor, Battus, and his victory. This ode celebrates Arcesilas' wealth, his *aretē*, his wisdom to bear well god-given power (*hē theosdotos dunamis*), especially as a king (*basileus*) who walks in the way of justice (*dikē*) (1-16). However, the position of the Battiads had already been seriously shaken during the reign of Arcesilas' great-grandfather, Battus III, when the Cyrenean *dēmos* were able to limit the powers of an

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[43] The correlation of the battle of Plataea and the battle of Himera is already one that Gelon seems to have been willing to establish with a dedication of a golden tripod at Delphi after his victory at Himera (Diod. 11.26.7); see SCOTT 2010, 88.

[44] MORGAN 2015, 2-3.

[45] MORGAN 2015, 14-15; cf. HAUBOLD 2000, who has shown how the *Iliad* in particular critiques the role of leaders in relation to the people (*laoi*) in epic.

[46] On the association between tyranny and the development of Athenian constitutional ideology shortly after Marathon, see AZOULAY 2014, esp. 43-8.

already weakened ruling house. The Cyreneans were able to bring in the law-giver Demonax of Mantineia to restructure the constitution, so that the role of the king was reduced to only religious functions (Hdt. 4.161). Battus' successor, Arcesilas III, attempted to regain his power, but was assassinated, although his mother, the formidable Pheretime, restored the ruling house with Persian support (Hdt. 4.165-167).[47] In the 460s Arcesilas IV himself seems to have been under pressure from the local elite,[48] and his own rule crumbled (although it possibly survived to the 440s; he appears to have died at the city he founded, Euesperides (schol. Pindar, *Pyth*. 5.12, 34; Arist. fr. 611.17).[49]

As well as making a statement about kingship and its relationship to the gods, it was also prudent for Hieron and Arcesilas to emphasise the ancient, Homeric, and 'traditional' role of kings in their communities, which was ordained and authorised by Zeus. In this way they could attempt to bolster their position against these new politically subversive movements by creating create a sense of timeless authority about their roles which not only projected themselves into an immortal future but also embedded them in an ancient past.

The politics of power

Dougherty has rightly made much of the way that Hieron pulled together complementary ideological tools,[50] especially commissioned praise-poetry, victories at panhellenic games, the foundation of the new city of Aetna and the iconography of the coins, to support his rule. In Pindar's *Pythian* 1, the poet invokes Zeus with his thunderbolt and 'sleeping' eagle as ruler of the volcanic mountain of Aetna, the newly founded city of Aetna, and the victory at which the foundation itself was announced (29-33):

> Grant, O Zeus, that I may please you,
> you who rule that mountain, the brow of a
> fruitful land whose neighbouring city that bears
> its name was honoured by its illustrious founder,
> when at the racecourse of the Pythian festival
> the herald proclaimed it
> in announcing Hieron's splendid victory
> with the chariot. (Transl. Race)

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[47] See B. MITCHELL 1966; id. 2000.

[48] See CHAMOUX 1953, 173-5; B. MITCHELL 1966, 108-10; id. 2000; BRASWELL 1988, 2-6.

[49] See CHAMOUX 1953, 202-9; B. MITCHELL 2000, 95-6.

[50] DOUGHERTY 1993, 83-102.

Nicholson has argued that the athletes/victors of epinician are not heroes, separated from the community, but are rather 'fundamentally part of the polis community'.[51] However, in *Pythian* 1, Hieron, by drawing together his city foundation and his victory is pointing to his heroic status and so setting himself apart. While he does not make a claim to divinity, he is pointing to the ways in which he is a king like Zeus, and that his kingship is authorised by Zeus.

However, unlike Gelon, much of Hieron's activity was not generally directed at a local Syracusan audience. Instead, unlike his elder brother, he chose to play to a much wider field and to position himself among the elite of southern Italy (especially Cyme and Epizypherian Locri) and the Greek mainland by spending money and developing his presence at the panhellenic centres of Olympia and Delphi. It is also significant that the founding of Aetna was announced at the games at Delphi, and that one of the Aetnaean coin issues used the iconography of an explicitly Olympian Zeus with his eagle on the sceptre together with the quadriga driven by Athena and accompanied by Nike. The praise-poetry of Pindar and Bacchylides was probably also performed at the festival where the victory was won as well as at local festivals (and elite events) in Sicily but was in any case aimed at a panhellenic audience.[52] Gelon also had an Olympic victory and made a dedication of a golden tripod at Delphi after his victory at Himera (Diod. 11.26.7), which made an explicit connection to the Greek victory against the Persians at Plataea,[53] as well as starting the construction of a treasury at Olympia which was completed by Hieron.[54] However, he was conspicuously less interested in other Greek affairs, and declined to take part in the Persian Wars of 480 when asked by the mainland Greeks (Hdt. 7.158-62). Rather, his interests were more focussed on Sicily.[55]

Hieron also made other dedications at Delphi, including a life-size statue of himself (Plut. *De Pythiae oraculis* 8), which Scott says 'ensured an imposing spatial presence in all parts of the sanctuary.'[56] Hieron, however, seems to have wanted to match the achievements of his elder brother, and also to surpass them,[57] and to do this set his sights on a bigger stage and to make Syracuse an important 'Greek' centre, not just a Sicilian one.

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[51] NICHOLSON 2016.

[52] CURRIE 2005, 16-18.

[53] See n. 43 above.

[54] On the treasury, see SCOTT 2010, 191.

[55] This focalisation on Sicily was not necessarily because of a potential Carthaginian threat: a number of commentators have pointed out that the Sicilians' wars with the Carthaginians usually arose out of squabbles between local dynasts rather than Carthage actually representing a continuous danger: e.g., HANS 1983. For the suggestion that Sicily formed a strong local and inward-looking identity through the fifth century: L. MITCHELL 2016.

[56] SCOTT 2010, 89.

[57] Hieron dedicated a similar tripod to Gelon's at Delphi, possibly for his victory at Cumae (SCOTT 2010, 88 and n. 65).

Hieron died in 466 after a long illness. Diodorus says that Hieron did not have the same relationship with the Syracusans as Gelon had done, but was greedy for wealth (*philarguros*) and violent (Diod. 11.67.3-4), and that the Syracusans had only restrained themselves during Hieron's lifetime out of respect for Gelon. Aristotle says that as a means of control Hieron had secret police who attended meetings and public events (*Pol.* 5, 1313b12-16); whether or not this was actually true it does show how his rule was remembered. After his death the Catanians, who had once lived in what had become Aetna, returned there (driving out the Aetnaeans, who relocated to Inessa) and tore down his tomb (Strabo 6.2.3). Thrasyboulus, another brother, only ruled for 10 months on Hieron's death after being evicted by the Syracusans. It is said that they called their new regime a democracy,[58] and established a cult of Zeus Eleutherius (Diod. 11.72.2), but these revolutionaries were in fact those who could claim to be 'original citizens' (*archaioi politai*)[59] (Diod. 11.72.3, 76.5), so probably none other than the *gamoroi* or their descendants whom Gelon had used as the centre of his power network.[60]

Power in the Greek world was based on personal charisma which was displayed through military victory, success in the games, especially on the panhellenic circuit and the founding of cities. Gelon seems to have used his understanding of this dynamic to build his power base using tight personal connections with the Sicilian elite. As a result, he was remembered positively, and was honoured with hero-cult on his death, achieving a kind of immortality of memory, even though it is in fact hard to see some of his tactics as anything but brutal.

Hieron, on the other hand, does not seem to have been as effective at playing the game of power politics, at least in the longer term. The succession was difficult not only because of the great success of his elder brother, with which, implicitly at least, he had to compete, but also because he had to compete with his charismatic younger brother. In order to establish his own charismatic rule, the strategy he seems to have pursued was to position himself within a wider panhellenic audience. Hieron was not necessarily trying to 'routinise' his rule and shift the burden of charisma from his person to his office, but in trying instead to make his kingship charismatic on a panhellenic scale, Hieron lost the connection with the Syracusans and so the support of his core constituency and effectively destabilised the dynasty. His activities were still charismatic in scope but depended less on his personal

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[58] It may have been a little early for their new regime to be given this name, as *dēmokratia* as a political label may have only emerged at Athens in the middle to late 460s. The term was probably coined about the time of Aeschylus' *Suppliants* (cf. 604, *dēmou kratousa cheir*), although the debate over the date of the play is still not settled. Many think that *POxy* xx 2256 makes a date after 467, or specifically 464/3, certain, while others still maintain that on stylistic grounds it must be earlier than this (e.g. SCULLION 2002).

[59] The claim of the *archaioi politai* could be verified, RUTTER suggests (2000, 146 with 138), by the lists of citizens held at the temple of Zeus (Plut. *Nic.* 14.6).

[60] One might ask whether this was really a democracy (RUTTER 2000), although the language of constitutional revolution probably proved very convenient for the Syracusan elite.

relationship with those he ruled. Indeed, he seems to have alienated them, at least to a certain extent. Although he was awarded hero-cult on death, the dynasty was brought down, and his tomb desecrated. Ironically, his memory was perpetuated, not as a good king, but rather as a bad one. He was shown not to be a metaperson after all.

The politics of royal power in the Greek world was based around anxiety and fear. In the first place this fear centred on the fact that the violence of the ruler could be unconstrained, that the ruler might become a bad king, a tyrant. Even the very display of power necessary to prove one's right to rule contained within it the potential for unlawful and unconstitutional violence,[61] especially if associated with claims to the kind of quasi-divinity associated with hero-cult. In the second place, rulers themselves were in a danger from those around them: potential rivals from inside the family, or from members of the elite who could compete with them in wealth and what it could bring with it, displays of *aretē*. However, there was also the risk of violence from the community itself, especially in retribution when the violence of the ruler was then turned against him, and he became the scapegoat or the sacrifice.

Despite his actual violence, Gelon as an astute and artful player of the game of royal power-politics was a winner, especially in his local milieu, so that even Herodotus could grudgingly praise him. Hieron, on the other hand, played his hand differently, perhaps anxiously, and lost the immortality of honour and praise. Power is like the wind: it blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going.

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[61] In the later fifth century, this was something that the Athenians feared about Alcibiades: he showed his power through multiple victories at the Olympic Games, but there was something in the excess of his private life that made them think he was aiming at tyranny (Thuc. 6.16.2 with 6.15.4, 27.1-28.2; cf. Ar., *Frogs* 1422-5).

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