

The Classical Review

<http://journals.cambridge.org/CAR>

Additional services for *The Classical Review*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)



The Constitutional Position of Gelon and Hiero

J. B. Bury

The Classical Review / Volume 13 / Issue 02 / March 1899, pp 98 - 99

DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X0004258X, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X0004258X

How to cite this article:

J. B. Bury (1899). The Constitutional Position of Gelon and Hiero. The Classical Review, 13, pp 98-99 doi:10.1017/S0009840X0004258X

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

THE CONSTITUTIONAL POSITION OF GELON AND HIERO.

SOME NEW LIGHT FROM BACCHYLIDES.

THERE is no doubt that the elder Dionysius held his power at Syracuse under cover of the constitutional office of *στραταγός αυτοκράτωρ*. Diodorus, who records his appointment to meet the Carthaginian invaders in B.C. 405, cites the precedent of Gelon; or rather states that the precedent of Gelon was cited by the adherents of Dionysius (xiii. 94, 5, *στρατηγούντος Γέλωνος αυτοκράτορος*). This suggests that Gelon also sheltered his tyranny under the same office, and a passage of Polyaeus—a writer whose statements must be used with circumspection—points the same way. Polyaeus (i. 27, 1) says that, having been elected *στρατηγός αυτοκράτωρ* at the Carthaginian crisis, Gelon resigned office, gave in his accounts, and was elected general again: *οὕτω δὲ παρακληθεὶς δεύτερον στρατηγήσαι ἀντὶ στρατηγού τυράννος ἐγένετο Συρακουσίων*. As Mr. Freeman remarked (*Sicily*, ii. p. 500), ‘the whole circumstances are misconceived; but Polyaeus must have found the title of *στρατηγός αυτοκράτωρ* applied to Gelon somewhere.’ Mr. Freeman was distinctly inclined to believe that Gelon exercised authority through the office of general. He thought that in the case of one, who, like Gelon, seems to have come in under some kind of compact, ‘a formal title is more likely than in the case of those tyrants who rose to power or violence within the city.’

There is another piece of evidence which Mr. Freeman might have adduced in favour of this view. Gelon desired to bequeath his power to two of his brothers, Hiero and Polyzelus, and in his will he left his wife and the *στραταγία* to Polyzelus. We learn this from a scholium on Pindar *Ol.* ii. 29, which rests upon the authority of Timaeus. This accords with and confirms the inference from Diodorus and Polyaeus, that Gelon held the office of *στραταγός*.

But we have now some further and contemporary evidence. The opening lines of the earliest of the three epinician Odes of Bacchylides in honour of Hiero shed a welcome ray of light which may suffice to dispel any lingering suspicions that the statements of the comparatively late compilers were due to some error or misconception. The poet addresses the tyrant thus (v. 1, 2)

εὖ μοιρε Συρακοσίων
ἱπποδινήτων στραταγέ,

and I think we can hardly hesitate to see in *στραταγέ*, not a mere general word for chief-tain (*στραταγός* does not occur elsewhere in the extant works of Bacchylides or in those of Pindar), but a definite reference to the formal title *στραταγός αυτοκράτωρ*. The two years or thereabouts which elapsed between the death of Gelon and the Olympian victory of Hiero's horse (478–6) had been marked by a contest between the two brothers whom Gelon had fondly destined to be bearers of a joint rule. Such an arrangement Hiero could not accept; and it is clear that, though he was ready to use his brother's military abilities by entrusting him with temporary commands, he would not commit to Polyzelus the post and title of *στραταγός αυτοκράτωρ*. Polyzelus backed by the forces of his father-in-law, the lord of Acragas, was defeated. In an ode composed not very long after the conclusion of this episode—the ode of Bacchylides must belong to the second half of 476—there was some point in laying a special emphasis on the *στραταγία* of Hiero.¹

More difficult is another question which is directly suggested by the will of Gelon. If Gelon's wishes had been carried out, if Polyzelus had become *στραταγός αυτοκράτωρ*, what position and title would Hiero have held? Would his tyranny have been disguised by any constitutional name? Diodorus says (xi. 38) that Gelon *τὴν μὲν βασιλείαν παρέδωκεν Ἱέρωνι*. This brings us to an old question: did Gelon, and Hiero after him, possess the title of *βασιλεύς*? The fact that Diodorus speaks of *ὁ βασιλεὺς Γέλων* in the same chapter is probably due to the writer's misconception of the import of the greeting which was accorded to the tyrant in the moment of excitement after the battle of Himera (Diodorus xi. 26; Freeman, *op. cit.* p. 501). It is of more importance that in Herodotus (vii. 161) the Greek envoys address him as *ὦ βασιλεῦ Συρηκοσίων*—words which Mr. Freeman regards as ‘more or less sarcastic’; and this taken along with Pin-

¹ Observe that in [Pyth.] ii. 58 (date: 476 or 477) Pindar addresses Hiero as *πρῶταν κύριε...στρατοῦ*, an accurate paraphrase of *στραταγέ αυτοκράτωρ*.

dar's designation of Hiero as Συρακόσιον (V; other older MSS. Συρακουσίων) βασιλῆα (B.C. 476; *Ol.* i. 23) and ὃς Συρακόσσαισι νέμει βασιλεύς (Pyth. iii. 70), might seem to support the belief of Diodorus. Whether Hiero possessed the title by right or not, βασιλεύς was a name which he would assuredly have liked to hear from the mouth of a poet, and therefore we cannot ascribe much importance to the passages of Pindar. But all the more important is the negative evidence furnished by the three odes of Bacchylides. Not once does Bacchylides style the tyrant βασιλεύς; had Hiero borne the title, he would hardly have failed to do so.

Possibly Hiero (and Gelon) held a civil office under the constitution. This is suggested by Pindar's θεμοστῆιον ὃς ἀμφέπει

σκᾶπτρον (*Ol.* i. 12) and Bacchylides' [τεθμ]ίου σκᾶπτρον Διὸς [ἔχοντ]α (iii. 70).

One point more. The metaphor ἱέρωνι φέρων εὐδαιμονίας πέταλον in Bacchylides v. 186 suggests that the use of πέταλα at Syracuse for voting was older than the introduction of the form of banishment known as 'petalism.' We may infer that πέταλα were used in the Syracusan Assembly for the election of officials. And we may take the expression in Bacchylides as a confirmation of the probable view that under Gelon and Hiero at Syracuse, as under Pisistratus at Athens, the outward forms of the constitution were maintained. For a phrase suggestive of abolished freedom would have been infelicitous.

J. B. BURY.

PLATO, *REPUBLIC* VI. 507 D AND 507 B.

THE first passage upon which I propose to comment runs as follows: Ἐνούσης πον ἐν ὀμμασιν ὄψεως καὶ ἐπιχειροῦντος τοῦ ἔχοντος χρῆσθαι αὐτῇ, παρούσης δὲ χροᾶς ἐν αὐτοῖς, εἰ μὴ παραγένηται γένος τρίτον ἰδίᾳ ἐπ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο πεφυκός, ὁσθα ὅτι ἡ τε ὄψις οὐδὲν ὀφεται τὰ τε χρώματα ἔσται ἀόρατα.

Plato is drawing a distinction between the sense of sight and all other senses. Whereas hearing (for example) requires only ἀκοή and φωνή (507 C), sight requires, besides ὄψις and χροᾶ, a third γένος viz. light. For whereas we can hear in the dark, we cannot see except where there is light.

The meaning of the sentence which I have quoted above is clear enough, except so far as the words ἐν αὐτοῖς are concerned. If the text is sound, ἐν αὐτοῖς can only mean ἐν τοῖς ὀμμασιν; and so Schneider understands the passage. No recent critic, so far as I know, has followed him in this interpretation, which cannot be reconciled either with the rest of Plato's analysis or even with *Tim.* 67 C, if I understand the passage correctly. Both here and in the *Timaeus* l.c., colour is viewed as something inherent in things rather than in the eyes (although, according to the *Timaeus*, it ἐμπίπτει εἰς τὴν ὄψιν in an act of sight): see 508 C ὦν ἂν τὰς χροᾶς τὸ ἡμερινὸν φῶς ἐπέχη.

By Schmelzer and Jowett and Campbell αὐτοῖς is interpreted as τοῖς ὁρατοῖς 'from τοῦ ὁρατοῦ supra.' But the grammatical difficulty is considerable, and in any case

Plato could hardly have expressed himself in so ambiguous a fashion.

A great variety of emendations has been suggested. Stallbaum, who takes αὐτοῖς as τοῖς ὀμμασιν, would expunge ἐν or (with Ast) read ἐπ' αὐτοῖς. Biehl (*Die Idee des Guten* 52) boldly conjectures ἐφ' ἣ ἔστι instead of ἐν αὐτοῖς. The latter remedy is, of course, absurd, but Biehl deserves credit for seeing that χροᾶ is here looked upon as the proper object of the sense of sight. Other suggestions are ἐν αὐ τοῖς <ὁρατοῖς> (Richards in *Cl. Rev.* viii. 25), and ἐν αὐτοῖς <τοῖς ὁρωμένοις>, which I ventured to submit in the foot-notes to my edition of the text, comparing 508 C and 509 B.

Further study of the passage leads me to think that the error is much less extensive and its cure much easier.

It will be observed that in the last line of the sentence the objects of sight are spoken of as χρώματα and nothing more: cf. *Tim.* 67 C ff. and Arist. *de An.* ii. 7, 418^a 26 ff. If, however, we interpret ἐν αὐτοῖς as ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῖς ὁρωμένοις or anything of the kind, we introduce a fourth term, viz., τὰ ὁρώμενα distinct from χροᾶ, as well as from ὄψις and the γένος τρίτον. It is true, of course, that Plato constantly speaks of 'things seen' without meaning colours, but it would be extremely awkward to distinguish between χροᾶ and ὁρώμενα in the middle of a sentence which ends by treating colour as *itself* the ὁρατόν (τὰ τε χρώματα ἔσται ἀόρατα). Plato is speaking scientifically, and from the scientific