

Timoleon's Adaptation of Democratic Anti-Tyranny Language in Sicily

The political aspects of anti-tyranny sentiments in democratic Athens have long been discussed by scholars. Podlecki (1966) examined the growth of Harmodios and Aristogeiton from vengeful killers of a tyrant's brother into destroyers of tyranny. More recent scholarship (Ober 2009 and Teegarden 2013) has focused on anti-tyrannical references, symbols, statues, and laws in democratic *poleis* and the creation of an anti-tyranny "language" through the implementation of these. As Teegarden has argued, this language could be used to help safeguard a democracy by promoting the idea that anyone and everyone could be a tyrant-killer. While Corinth had a long history of opposition to tyranny, its oligarchic nature stifled the development of anti-tyranny language in the city. It would have been potentially dangerous for the ruling elites to promote the idea that anyone could and should remove an autocrat, especially since democratic anti-tyranny language often equated oligarchies with tyrannies. Corinth instead relied on members of its elites to handle the threat of tyranny. One such example of this was the selection of Timoleon, one of Corinth's most notable tyrannicides, to remove Dionysius II from Syracuse, a city-state requiring such help from its metropolis.

In the mid-twentieth century, Westlake generally delved into Timoleon's mission to Sicily (1949) and his activities and legacy (1952). Talbert (1974) mainly narrowed his work to Timoleon's actions after he had already overthrown Dionysius II, including the post-tyranny Syracusan government which the oligarchic tyrannicide set up. Expressing a similar idea as Talbert had earlier, Rhodes (2006) noted that Timoleon's powers in Sicily were very similar to that of a tyrant, most likely under the position of a *strategos autokrator*. Given the long history of tyrants and tyrant-killers themselves becoming tyrants throughout Sicily, Timoleon would have been required to promote his status as a tyrannicide in order to gain the trust of the

Syracusans and other Sicilians. Without a strong, native anti-tyranny language, this oligarchy-approved tyrannicide looked towards democratic examples with which he could promote himself. This paper will explore Timoleon's adoption and adaptation of democratic anti-tyranny language, specifically the memory of Harmodios and Aristogeiton and the practice of erecting statues of tyrant killers, in order to advance his own image as an anti-tyrant.

Bibliography

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