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Rhetorical Actors and Other Versatile Hellenistic Vocalists

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1. PERFORMING JUDICIAL MIME

A single complete and fascinating judicial speech survives from the Hellenistic period, more precisely from the first third of the third century BC. The speech is delivered by a metic residing on the island of Kos, who prosecutes another in what he labels a *δίκη αἰκείας* for abducting and sexually assaulting one of his slaves and damaging the property he rents. The speech assumes the physical context of a *dikasterion* on Kos, which was at that time an independent ally of the Ptolemaic empire.¹ It is complete with a jury (its opening words apostrophize the listening *andres dikastai*), a water clock, a clerk of the court who recites the laws, the presence and intrusive reactions of the defendant, and a silent slave whose injuries are used as visual evidence.² The oration itself closely adheres to the structure familiar from the surviving, canonical fifth- and fourth-century legal speeches concerned with similar crimes; it includes the familiar elements of the discussion of the characters, allies, and civic contributions of both prosecutor and defendant, ethnic slurs, praise of the lawgiver, an appeal to pity, an *amplificatio* with mythological references, flattery of the jurors and their city, and a gnomic conclusion. From the claim that birth, wealth, and reputation should hold no weight before the law (ll. 1–30; cf. Dem. 21.143; Isoc. 20.19) to anticipation of possible

¹ See Sherwin-White (1978: 90–131, esp. 92–3).

² Veneroni (1971: 233).

arguments which could be used by the defence (*prokatalēpsis* or *antikategoria*; ll. 16–20; cf. e.g. Dem. 21.160), every detail has a forerunner in classical Greek forensic speeches. Yet this Hellenistic prosecution speech was not written by a rhetorician, nor ever delivered in a court: indeed, no complete performed Hellenistic oration of any kind now exists.³ This is a burlesque of a judicial speech and it was created as a form of dramatic entertainment by the poet Herodas. Although it is not direct evidence for Hellenistic oratory, it is certainly evidence for what it was that Hellenistic people thought was potentially funny about the performance of oratory.

The text is the second of Herodas' *Mimiambos*, 'mimed iambic poems', or 'iambic mimes', that is, mimes in the choliambic or 'lame iambic' metre, the ancient metre of Hipponactean invective. At least some earlier mime had been in prose, and it may therefore have been Herodas' own innovation to fuse this particular medium of entertainment with the genre of the iambic lampoon. The speaker is named Battaros, or 'Stutterer',⁴ a suitably unsuitable name for an individual performing an oration. Indeed, it is just possible that 'Stutterer' is a precious surviving representative of a once familiar stock character-type in mime, the incompetent orator. The fifth-century Sicilian mime-writer Sophron seems to have portrayed an individual called Boulias ('Deliberator') delivering a speech which contained obvious internal inconsistencies.⁵ But Battaros is also a self-proclaimed *kinaidos* (see below), which suggests that his name is intended to call to mind Demosthenes' nickname 'Batalos' (see e.g. Aeschines 1.126, 131, 2.99, Plut. *Dem.* 4.5),⁶ especially since Demosthenes was ridiculed on the grounds of the supposedly effeminate deportment and habits which had incurred the nickname in the first place.⁷ As if this is not a rich and multi-layered enough caricature already, the effeminate Battaros is also a brothel-keeper on the island of Kos, a *pornoboskos* who as a character type would obviously be at home in Hellenistic comedy. So would the ship's captain and merchant he is prosecuting, another Koan metic named Thales (surely a

³ See Introduction p.00; also Vanderspoel (2010: 127).

⁴ From *βατταρίζειν*; see Hipponax fr. 155 ed. Degani (1991: 152).

⁵ Sophron fragments 23–4 KA; see Zanker (2009: 51).

⁶ Cf. also the reading *Βάτταλος* in Dem. 18.180; see brief discussion in Yunis (2001: 211).

⁷ On the allegations and the nickname, which may be connected with a word for the anus, see the exhaustive references in Jacoby et al. (1999: 418–23).

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bathetic choice of owner for the distinctive name of one of the eastern Aegean's most esteemed Greek intellectuals). The slave-woman who is displayed naked, so that her depilated genital area can be inspected, is however perhaps more reminiscent of the allegorical females and prostitutes in Old Comedy, for example Reconciliation in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* and the depilated dancing girls offered to Xanthias at *Frogs* 516.

The complexity of Herodas' project is already becoming apparent—it is the creation of an amusing performance in the mouth of a stereotypical comic stage character, probably with additional features designed to make the audience think of Demosthenes. The performance requires awareness in the intended audience not only of the niceties of conventional forensic rhetoric, but of archaic and classical literary culture and historic metrics. The one hundred and two 'limping iambic' lines would have taken perhaps ten minutes to recite, depending on the amount of 'stage action', fun with gait and gesture, and spontaneous audience interaction. But in the hands of a skilled mimiambic *kinaidos*-impersonator it could have transcended its intellectual complexity to produce, at least in an audience who shared its author's worldview and cultural touchstones, side-splittingly funny entertainment.

The text has received less attention than most of Herodas' nine *Mimiamb*s since they were discovered on a Fayum papyrus and first published in 1891,⁸ perhaps because its speaker is not one of the outrageously lewd female characters and dildo-retailers with whom Herodas is most popularly associated. Its arch and absurd distortion of the idiom and tropes of classical forensic rhetoric therefore needs to be illustrated here briefly, rather than just paraphrased.

The most absurd moment, and perhaps one with explicitly Demosthenic echoes given Demosthenes' insistent warnings to the Athenians about Macedon, comes when Battaros argues that the citizens of Kos will endanger the very freedom, security, and autonomy (*τὴν αὐτονομίην*) of their city if Thales gets away with abducting prostitutes (ll. 25–7). Subsequently, Battaros officiously demands that the clerk of the court read out the law relating to assaults on female slaves, a law he attributes to Charondas, a revered sixth-century figure, attested elsewhere (Arist. *Pol.* 1252b), who drew up laws for

⁸ Kenyon (1891).

new cities in Magna Graecia. Then Battaros continues his own speech (ll. 48–68):

ταῦτ' ἔγραψε Χαιρώνδης,
ἄνδρες δικασταί, καὶ οὐχὶ Βάτταρος χηρίζων
Θαλῆν μετελθεῖν. ἦν θύρην δέ τις κόψῃ
μν. ἦν τινέτω, φησί. ἦν δὲ πύξ ἀλοιήσῃ,
ἄλλῃν πάλι μνῆν. ἦν δὲ τὰ οἰκί' ἐμπρήσῃ
ἢ ὁ. ροῦς ὑπερβῆ, χιλίας τὸ τίμημα
ἔν. εἰμε, κῆν βλάψῃ τι, διπλόον τίνειν.
ὠικεὶ πόλιν γάρ, ὦ Θάλης, σὺ δ' οὐκ οἶσθας
οὔτε πόλιν, οὔτε πῶς πόλις διοικεῖται,
οἰκείς δὲ σήμερον μὲν ἐν Βρικινδήροις
ἐχθρὸς δ' ἐν Ἀβδηρήροις, αὔριον δ' ἦν σοι
ναῦλον διδοί τις, ἐς Φασηλίδα πλώσῃ.
ἐγὼ δ' ὅκως ἄν μὴ μακρηγορέω ὑμέας
ἄνδρες δικασταί, τῆι παροιμίῃι τρύχω,
πέπονθα πρὸς Θάλητος ὅσσα κῆν πισσῃ
μῦς. πύξ ἐπλήγῃν, ἢ θύρῃ κατήρακται,
τῆς οἰκίης μιν, τῆς τελέω τρίτην μισθόν,
τὰ ὑπέρθυρ' ὀπτά. δεῦρο, Μυρτάλη, καὶ σύ·
δείξον σεωντῆν πάσι μηδὲν' αἰσχύνειν·
νόμιζε τούτους οὓς ὀρήις δικάζοντας
πατέρας ἀδελφοὺς ἐμβλέπειν.

That is what Chairondas wrote,
Gentlemen of the jury, not a mere Battaros intending
to prosecute a Thales. 'If anyone batters down a door,
let him pay a mina', he says, and 'if anyone gives another a beating
with his fists,
let him pay another mina again.' If anyone burn the house of another
or trespass, he set the fine at one thousand drachmas,
and if anyone cause any damage, he ruled that he had to pay double.
For he was founding a city, Thales, but you have no idea
either of a city or how a city is governed,
but today you live in Brindikera,
yesterday in Abdera, and tomorrow, if someone
gives you the fare, you'll sail to Phaselis.
But as for me, in order not to exhaust you by long speechifying
and with digression, gentlemen of the jury,
I have suffered at the hands of Thales the proverbial fate of the mouse
in tar: I was punched about; the door of my establishment,

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for which I pay a third of its value in rent, was battered down;
my lintel got a roasting. –Myrtale, you must come here, too.
Reveal yourself to all; don't be ashamed before anyone;
consider that in the jurymen whom you see judging this case
you are looking upon your fathers, your brothers.⁹

This passage alone, which constitutes less than a fifth of Herodas' entire versified oration, reveals in every line a parodic appropriation of a type of phrase or sentiment which can be paralleled in extant classical oratory. Some of the appropriations may even echo specific passages in texts by famous orators very familiar to at least the more educated members of Herodas' intended audience, who would have studied and indeed learned off by heart the canon of classical Athenian oratory, especially speeches by Lysias, Isocrates, and Demosthenes.¹⁰

The first feature to notice is the repetition and explication of the cited law (ll. 50–4), leading into the negative comparison between the legal opponent and a responsible figure from history. This is followed by the second-person address to the opponent and the aspersion cast on his failure to contribute to civic life (ll. 55–6). The apostrophe culminates in the characterization of Thales as an itinerant vagabond and the catalogue of places he has lived in, or will live in, if it is financially profitable to him (ll. 57–9; subsequently, at ll. 37 and 100, Battaros alleges he is actually not Greek at all but a Phrygian). The association of Abdera with loutish behaviour is made, for example, in [Demosthenes] 17.23, where an Athenian political faction is said to use the type of bullying tactics to be expected of Abderites. Battaros then turns to the jurors again, making a formulaic statement of his desire not to extend his oration unnecessarily nor introduce irrelevant material (ll. 60–1; cf. e.g. Dem. 14.41) before launching his (comically) truncated narrative, which he punctuates with a reference to a popular fable (ll. 62–3), as recommended by Aristotle at *Rhet.* 1394a. Indeed, this very fable is used in [Dem.] 50.26.¹¹

From Thales and the jury, Battaros now turns to and summons his silent witness, the slave who has allegedly been injured, in order to display her wounds (ll. 65–6). This is a theatrical response to the histrionic nature of the displays of battered bodies during trials at

⁹ Translated by Zanker (2009: 45–7).

¹⁰ Vanderspoel (2010: 128–9).

¹¹ ἄρτι μὲν πύττης γέβεται. Cf. Theocritus, *Idyll* 14.51.

Athens in the classical heyday of legal oratory,¹² for example in [Dem.] 47.41, and to the use of silent slaves as ‘atechnic proofs’, such as the frail old slave named Antigenes exhibited at Dem. 37.44.¹³ But the scenario must also have drawn to the minds of at least some of Herodas’ audiences the notorious ruse said to have been used by Hyperides at the trial of Phryne. Indeed, some scholars have held that this passage directly parodies Hyperides’ speech on that occasion,¹⁴ or at the very least that the mimiambic plotline was specifically a parody of the Phryne story, reported by both the author of the pseudo-Plutarchean *Lives of the Ten Orators* (849e) and Athenaeus (13.590e). These ancient authors both claim that Hyperides revealed Phryne’s breasts to the jury while weeping piteously himself. A fragment of Posidippus, a third-century comic poet, also uses the tradition that something sensational went on at Phryne’s trial (*Ephesian Woman* fr. 13 KA).

There have been two broad lines of approach to Herodas’ fascinating text. Some have looked at it from the perspective of the rhetorician, and argued that it is a deliberate and systematic burlesque of a typical forensic speech, indeed of a prosecution speech, perhaps even specifically of Demosthenes’ *Against Conon*.¹⁵ The best available reading, however, is by Robert Ussher,¹⁶ who sees that the wellspring of all the humour is the characterization of Battaros as a would-be logographer in whom a little education is shown to be a dangerous thing, or, rather, too little education turns out to be worse than none: he ‘has listened to and learned from orators but he cannot co-ordinate and apply his scraps of learning in a way that any court would find convincing. His trite philosophising evokes no pity, the farrago of *formulae* and *topoi* is uttered without order or coherence: there is no comparison, overall, with the carefully elaborate construction of a Demosthenic speech.’¹⁷

Yet Herodas’ most recent editor, Graham Zanker, makes a strong argument that all the parodic use of forensic clichés serve just one purpose: ‘the rhetorical commonplaces used by Battaros are on closer inspection subservient to the real aim, which is the characterization of

¹² So Cooper (1995: 314–15). ¹³ See Hall (2006: 377).

¹⁴ Thus Cooper *loc. cit.* ¹⁵ Massa Positano (1971: 8 n. 5)

¹⁶ Ussher (1985: 50–3) drawing some of his material and conclusions from Hense (1900).

¹⁷ Ussher (1985: 52).

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the outrageous old brothel-keeper'.¹⁸ Zanker approaches the poem from the perspective of a drama scholar, and therefore regards Herodas' theatrical purpose as somehow prior. But this is to overlook the formal incorporation of character-portrayal, or *ethopoia*, into rhetorical theory, instruction, and practice. I think it is possible to argue that in Battaros we have a burlesque, using a character typology which certainly has features in common with that of the traditional brothel-keeper of New Comedy, not simply of forensic rhetoric but specifically of *rhetorical* character-construction. It ridicules the methods of rhetorical *ethopoia*. Battaros has taken too closely to heart the advice of the character in Menander's *Hymnis* who said, 'It is the demeanour (*tropos*) of the speaker which persuades, rather than his speech (*logos*)' (fr. 362.7 KA).

The logographer regarded by the ancient critics as the supreme exponent of character construction (*ethopoia*) in oratory was Lysias¹⁹ and indeed Battaros resembles the 'invalid' of Lysias 24 as well as Isaeus' Kephisodotos (5.11) in that he points out aspects of his appearance and clothing—his shabby cloak and shoes—to prove his poverty (l. 23). He also acknowledges that he has long hair in comparing himself with the proverbial Samian boxer, who despite his long hair and effeminate appearance could knock out opponents (l. 73; see [Plut.] *Prov.* 2.8); here Herodas may be thinking of another famous detail of Lysianic character-construction, when the young knight Mantitheus asks his jury to overlook the connotations of his long hair (16.18).

The rhetorical handbooks describe techniques whereby speech-writers could construct for the clients a plausible personality, an *ethos*, through their language, and Battaros is an example of this tactic going to extremes, even to creating a scatological joke out of the mechanics of the water-clock (ll. 42–5). Aristotle states that the character must be credible, inspire confidence in the jury, and be appropriate to the individual speaker's age, gender, and ethnicity (*Rhet.* 1356a 1–13, 1408a 25–31). This is almost identical to his prescription in the *Poetics* that tragic characterization must conform to gender and status (1454a 16–25): it would be implausible, for example, for a female to be characterized as either courageous or intelligent. If this principle is stretched to the absurd extremes of the

¹⁸ Zanker (2009: 51).

¹⁹ Dion. Hal. *De Lysia* 8–9; see Devries (1892), Usher (1965).

mime tradition, it would be implausible for a brothel-keeper to be characterized as anything other than lewd. Thus, in a sense, when Battaros is at his most repugnant, he is at his most convincing as a character.

The precision of the *ethopoia*, or rather the precision of the satirical parody of the techniques of *ethopoia*, is best demonstrated by Battaros' staged 'extempore' response to Thales' laughter. Battaros has claimed that if he were not so old, he would have been able to beat Thales up. He now addresses his opponent (ll. 74–8):

γελᾷς; κίνα[ι]δός εἰμι καὶ οὐκ ἀπαρνεῦμαι,
καὶ Βάτταρος μοι τοῦνομ' ἐστὶ κὼ πάππος
ἦν μοι Σισυμβρᾶς κὼ πατὴρ Σισυμβρίσκος,
κῆπορνοβός[κ]εν πάντες, ἀλλ' ἔκητ' ἀλκῆς
θαρσέων λε.[.]..[.]οιμαν εἰ Θαλῆς εἴη.

You laugh? Yes, I'm a *kinaidos*, I won't deny it,
and my name is Battaros, Sisymbra was my
grandfather and my father was Sisymbrioskos,
and they were all brothel-keepers, but as far as strength goes
I'd confidently [strangle] a lion if it were Thales.

Here Battaros carefully suggests that he is responding, spontaneously, to his opponent's intervention, consisting of laughter at the idea that such an effeminate individual could hurt him. Part of the humour is created, of course by Battaros' very admission that he is an effeminate, coming from a long line of brothel-keepers with effeminate, floral names,²⁰ in a parody of the roll-call of distinguished ancestors which is such a feature of classical Athenian oratory. But a discerning listener would observe the archness of the artificial self-interruption, an attempt to simulate the authentic 'in-character' response of the speaker to an unexpected interaction, or in the technical language of the rhetoricians, the appearance of *autoschediasmos*.²¹ Having admitted that he is an effeminate, and attempted to recover some ground by

²⁰ Battaros' forefathers' names derive from *sisymbria*, 'mint-blossom', which is indeed actually the name of a prostitute in the comic dramatist Theophilus (fr. 11.2 KA).

²¹ See the papyrus fragment preserving part of a treatise, perhaps dating from the early fourth century, which recommends not only using 'common phrases not written ones' in addresses to the jury, but an ingénue and spontaneous effect (*POxy* 410, ed. Grenfell and Hunt (1903), col. i.5–7 and iv.114–23).

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his frank admission of his true nature, and by his sincerity, Battaros works up to a climax in which, somewhat like Aeschines offering his own body up for execution if his slaves should not corroborate his testimony (2.126), he histrionically offers up his own body to put to the torture as well (ll. 86–9). This is a tacit admission of non-citizen, slave status.

The intended performance style, personnel, and venue of Herodas' *Mimiamb*s have been much disputed. His fragmentary *Mimiamb* 9, in which he reports his own dream featuring rites of Dionysus and also claims a literary relationship with Hipponax, shows that he saw himself as combining theatrical and invective genres. But no agreement has been reached on the precise manner in which his innovative works were actually performed; speculative scenarios have ranged from symposium performance, by a single unmasked entertainer who took all the 'roles', to fully staged productions with props, costumes, and 'extras'. My own view, given the high reputation Herodas seems to have enjoyed in antiquity (at *Letters* 4.3.3 Pliny the Younger equated his ability with that of Callimachus), is that his mimes were probably performed on many occasions with different degrees of theatrical elaboration depending on circumstances and available personnel. This *mimiamb* would have been particularly suitable entertainment to hire an artist to perform at a symposium of practising lawyers!

Despite the uncertainties surrounding Herodas' enigmatic 'judicial *mimiamb*', if I may so describe it, two conclusions can be drawn which may throw light on the remainder of the evidence to be considered here. First, the writer of this kind of entertainment can assume in his audience a sophisticated grasp of rhetorical method as enshrined in the canonical Athenian orators who formed part of the curriculum in the rhetorical schools of the era. It was possible and clearly fun to recast one formulaic type of serious and somewhat elevated discourse in the idiom of a less decorous form of public performance, and put it into the mouth of a stereotypical comic effeminate and pimp. A major characteristic of all Hellenistic poetry is experiment with new inter-generic fusions,²² and the cocktail of elements in Herodas' *mimiambic* take on forensic rhetoric must be one of the most experimental.

²² See above all Fantuzzi and Hunter (2002).

The second inference is that performing Herodas 2 would require a vocalist of technical agility and versatility. This text will simply not work in performance if the artist is not ‘fluent’ in the high-flown and solemn type of vocal delivery required by some of the idioms of the orators, as well as in handling the distinctive limping metre of Herodas in his outrageous comic innuendos, in both deadpan and suggestively knowing tones. Several of the jokes require simultaneous ‘recognition’ in the audience of a standard forensic rhetorical trope and a double entendre more characteristic of Old Comedy.

2. RHETORICAL TRAGEDIANS

It is actually rather paradoxical that our clearest Hellenistic evidence for the wholesale dramatic appropriation of rhetoric and for versatile vocalists who could shift easily between rhetorical and theatrical registers should be represented in the uncouth genre of the *mi-miamb*,²³ since there is also evidence that the more elevated genre of tragedy in Hellenistic times had become identifiably ‘rhetorical’. Certain key fourth-century texts already document a shift in the perceived relationship between tragic theatre and oratorical performance, a shift which was related to the rise of Macedon and the professionalization of the theatre industry as well as its metastasis from Athens and manifestation in festival competition culture across the Greek-speaking world. This shift created the conditions for the emergence of the new cultural formations characteristic of the Hellenistic era, which were to be reflected in all literary genres and performance media and the relationships between them.²⁴ Aristotle’s *Poetics*, for example, creates a theory of tragedy suitable for an art form that had recently divorced itself, to an extent, from its Athenian festival context and was taking the performance of theatrical poetry to cities wherever Greeks settled.²⁵

The relationship between all the fundamental branches of oratory—judicial, political, or epideictic—and tragic theatre, a relationship already apparent in the earliest plays of Aeschylus, was also subject

²³ For this ‘code-switching’ see also paper by Carey in this volume.

²⁴ See the classic books of Webster (1964) and Sifakis (1967).

²⁵ Hall (1995), (2007*a*), and (2007*b*).

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to change at the time of the emergence of Hellenistic social formations. The remainder of this essay will consider two avenues of approach to this evolving relationship. The first is based on the surviving examples of Hellenistic tragedy, and the second on the evidence relating to vocal performers during the same era. Only a partial and confusing picture emerges from these two categories of data. But the evidence does all point in the same general direction as Herodas' 'Battaros' mimiamb—the distinctions between different genres of vocal performance, both sung and spoken, became more fluid and unstable than in the classical period. A new type of versatile vocalist emerged who could exploit his voice in more than one type of performance arena. Since Hellenistic comedy is addressed elsewhere in this volume by Carey, I henceforward largely confine myself to tragedy and satyr play, except in the case of evidence for vocalists who crossed boundaries between genres which included comic theatre.

The key texts standing at the transition between the 'classical' and Hellenistic relationships between oratory and tragedy are Aristotelian. They are often cited, but their full significance is difficult to appreciate on account of the paucity either of tragic texts surviving from later than the fifth century or of eye-witness accounts of actual performances given by tragic actors or orators in any period of antiquity. First, in the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle says that the three most important elements in delivery are volume, harmony, and rhythm (1403b):

τὰ μὲν οὖν ἄθλα σχεδὸν ἐκ τῶν ἀγώνων οὗτοι λαμβάνουσιν, καὶ καθάπερ ἐκεῖ μείζον δύνανται νῦν τῶν ποιητῶν οἱ ὑποκριταί, καὶ κατὰ τοὺς πολιτικοὺς ἀγῶνας, διὰ τὴν μοχθηρίαν τῶν πολιτῶν.

Those who use these properly nearly always carry off the prizes in dramatic contests, and as at the present day (*νῦν*) actors (*ὑποκριταί*) have greater influence on the stage than the poets, it is the same in political contests, owing to the corruptness of our forms of government.

That is, in both dramatic contests and political debates, vocal performance is now (*nun*) a more significant factor in determining the victor than the content of the speeches delivered. The word 'now' implies that Aristotle is documenting a clearly perceptible shift between the performance styles current in the world of the user of his *Rhetoric* and those of an earlier, unfortunately unspecified period. He says that the same tendency towards the precedence of delivery, and in particular effective use of volume, harmony, and rhythm, can be

discerned ‘nowadays’ in the case of the performances of both actors and political orators. The increased importance of delivery in Aristotle’s time is probably reflected in Theophrastus’ statement that *hypokrisis* is ‘the most important element of persuasion’, and his authorship of a textbook, *On Delivery*.²⁶ In that work he certainly compared the art of the orator and the actor when he said that a speaker whose gaze remains fixed on a single point is as ineffective as ‘an actor with his back turned’.²⁷

If both the actor and orator had become more important than the texts they delivered, it seems that acted texts had also become more ‘rhetorical’. For the other important Aristotelian text, in terms of the evolution of the relationship between tragedy and oratory during the transition from classical to Hellenistic culture, is a notoriously problematic passage in the *Poetics*, also written at some time in the mid-fourth century BC, where the key word is, once again, ‘now’ (*vûv*). When discussing the representation of intellectual activity (*dianoia*) in tragedy,²⁸ that is, ‘the ability to say what is relevant and fitting’, Aristotle describes it as follows (*Poet.* 1450b 5–7):

ὅπερ ἐπὶ τῶν λόγων τῆς πολιτικῆς καὶ ῥητορικῆς ἔργον ἐστίν: οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀρχαῖοι πολιτικῶς ἐποίουν λέγοντας, οἱ δὲ νῦν ῥητορικῶς

‘this is the task of the arts of politics and rhetoric, since the old tragedians made their characters speak politically (*πολιτικῶς*), but those now make them speak rhetorically.’

Scholars have wrangled over every aspect of this sentence, some even trying to argue that ‘those now’ include Euripides, the most conspicuously rhetorical of the canonical fifth-century tragedians, in contrast with ‘old’ tragedians such as Aeschylus. This interpretation ignores the fact that Sophocles died later than Euripides; they were almost exact contemporaries. But it also fails to identify accurately the shift which Aristotle here perceives. His tragedians ‘now’ are more likely to be the generation who flourished in the half-century leading up to the death of Alexander, traditionally the moment when the ‘Hellenistic’ age ensued. This generation of tragic poets included Aeschylus’ great-grandson Astydamas, who won his first victory in 372, Theodectes,

²⁶ Theophrastus fr. 712 ed. Fortenbaugh (1992); Diog. Laert. *Vitae* 5.48.

²⁷ Fr. 713 ed. Fortenbaugh (1992).

²⁸ I have argued elsewhere that this term includes what Aristotle elsewhere calls ‘deliberation’, τὸ βουλευέσθαι: see Hall (2012).

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who first won in 368, and Aphareus, who put on his first production in 369/8 (*IG* ii² 2325). Some of the plays by these authors, such as Theodectes' *Lynceus*, were important enough to be discussed in detail in the *Poetics* (1455b 29). All three of these playwrights were pupils of Isocrates, and therefore self-evidently interested in rhetoric. Indeed, the scraps of these mid-fourth-century writers do demonstrate use of familiar rhetorical figures, commonplaces, and conventions, as Xanthakis-Karamanos demonstrated more than thirty years ago.²⁹ But neither these fragments nor those of Hellenistic tragedies themselves necessarily imply that political affairs, broadly conceived, were inherently of less interest to tragedians—indeed, as we shall see, there seems to have been a revival of interest in the 'history' play. My suspicion is that, when in the notoriously compressed and elliptical text of the *Poetics* Aristotle contrasts the characters in old tragedies who spoke 'politically' with those 'nowadays' who speak 'rhetorically', he is trying to define a shift between two branches of oratory, namely the symbouleutic and the judicial.

This interpretation is congruent with one of the few inferences that can be drawn from the evidence of the fragments of post-fifth-century plays. Two fragments of tragedies dramatizing themes made famous by Euripides reveal a little of how rhetoric is used in them. First, let us take the example of Carcinus' *Medea*. We do know, again from Aristotle, that Carcinus made his filicidal heroine more conspicuously litigious than she is in Euripides' archetypal play. In her first long speech, Euripides' *Medea* speaks to the women of Corinth as civic agents, on the subject of what they have in common, even though, paradoxically, she is stressing the limitations of their freedoms (ll. 214–66). Her speech is an attempt to create a group identity which she and the women of Corinth can share and which will transcend their group solidarity based on being members of Corinthian citizen families, unlike the alien *Medea*. In her other famous monologue, the idiom is overtly deliberative—what are the arguments for and against a certain course of action (ll. 1019–80)? However personal the material, the actual branch of rhetoric to which these two speeches belong is therefore more akin to political and symbouleutic oratory than to judicial. But in Carcinus' fourth-century *Medea*, the Colchian woman had a scene, after the murders, in which she defended herself against

²⁹ Xanthakis-Karamanos (1979); more recently McDonald (2010: 485–7) with further bibliography.

the charge of filicide using an argument from probability—surely it would have been irrational to kill the children while leaving Jason alive (Aristotle, *Rh.* 1400b). Here, perhaps, in the difference between Euripides' and Carcinus' depiction of Medea, we are seeing the difference between Aristotle's 'political' and 'rhetorical' representations of intellectual activity.

We do not know the precise date of Carcinus' *Medea*. Although it antedated Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and is therefore not officially 'Hellenistic', its elaborately judicial quality may offer clues as to the direction in which the tragic genre was travelling. But one of the few tragic fragments of any length that may be from either a fourth-century or more likely, in my view, a Hellenistic tragedy, shows that it covered the same story as Euripides' *Phoenician Women* (*TrGF adesp.* F 665 = PSI 1303). In the scene from which the fragment derives, Eteocles and Polynices confront one another in the presence of Jocasta, just as they do in Euripides' *Phoenissae* (ll. 446–637).³⁰ But the author of the derivative version has made efforts to make the relationship between Jocasta and her sons more intense and perhaps more believable. With maternal authority she demands that they both hand over their swords, and she retains them throughout the argument. She also makes Polynices promise to abide by her decision, as if the future of the Theban dynasty would be decided by a hothead's promise to his mother. The fratricides plunge into a brawl in snappy, clever, vituperative *stichomythia*, a more informal way to open their debate scene than the solemn and definitively 'political' symbouleutic orations with which the equivalent dialogue commences in the Euripidean *Phoenician Women* (469–525).

Another fragment survives of a play of Hellenistic date about Heracles and Atlas. This was probably a tragedy,³¹ although its first editor assumed it was a satyr drama,³² and it displays one remarkable quality which may even point to a provenance as a rhetorical exercise: all sixty lines or parts of them achieve the feat, difficult in ancient Greek, of avoiding the letter sigma altogether. In technical terms it is a 'lipogrammatic' text, avoiding one of the most frequently occurring and disparaged consonants in the language, which the model orator

³⁰ There is an English translation of the papyrus fragment in Page's edition (1942: 172–81).

³¹ West (1976).

³² Turner (1976).

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Pericles was traditionally said to have avoided.³³ Sigmatism was one of Euripides' favourite rhetorical devices, but Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who is very much writing in the tradition of Hellenistic rhetorical theory,³⁴ calls it 'graceless' and 'displeasing' (*De Comp. Verb.* 14.80). In excess, he says it causes great pain. The Heracles and Atlas text certainly looks like an experiment or exercise in which a vocalist was deliberately given the opportunity to recite a text entirely free of the offensive letter, but we can only speculate for what purpose or performance venue it was designed. We can't assume that this self-consciously asigmatic dramatic verse *necessarily* shows the new influence of rhetorical experimentation on the Hellenistic theatre, since both much earlier lyric poets (Lasus of Hermione and Pindar³⁵) and the Hellenistic poet Aratus at times self-consciously composed poetry with no sigmas or far fewer than their contemporaries.³⁶

A further substantial fragment which is almost certainly from a Hellenistic tragedy is the so-called 'Gyges' papyrus fragment (*POxy* 2382, = *TrGF* fr. 664). Some scholars have argued that the fragment comes from a fifth-century tragedy. I think it far more likely, however, that it represents evidence that Hellenistic writers enjoyed converting famous passages in historiography into tragic poetry, regardless of whether this fragment comes from a whole play or was written self-consciously as a fragment or excerpt. Herodotus was an extremely popular author in Hellenistic times,³⁷ and here one of the most remarkable and memorable scenes from his Lydian *logos* (ll. 8–13) is dramatized. The wife of Candaules, the night after she was seen naked by Gyges, addresses a speech of at the very minimum seventeen lines (ll. 18–33) to a chorus of barbarian attendants, probably females, and tells them what had happened; at the end of the third and last column of the fragment a dialogue with Gyges seems to ensue. Although in Herodotus she is given direct speech, her voice is not heard in this story until her dialogue with Gyges, but this does indeed take place *after* she confides in her women what had happened the night before. The scene in the tragedy dramatizes just a few words in Herodotus (1.11.1–4: 'But in the morning, as soon as day broke, she hastened to choose from among her retinue such as

³³ Sedgwick (1931: 153).

³⁴ Grube (1965: 207).

³⁵ See especially Porter (2007).

³⁶ See further Clayman (1987).

³⁷ Murray (1972).

she knew to be most faithful to her, and preparing them for what was to ensue, summoned Gyges into her presence.’). In Herodotus, she then tells Gyges that he must either kill Candaules or die himself. The first column of the papyrus fragment, however, scripts a dialogue between the Lydian queen and her chorus of women of the same age (*xunelikas*, l. 17), who perform *proskynesis* before her after the fashion of barbarian choruses in tragedy (l. 9)³⁸ and extract a pledge from her that she will tell them the whole story (l. 13). The second column contains the fulfilment of that pledge: the queen tells the chorus how she was disturbed by Gyges, kept her silence, and in the morning sent her husband off to do his kingly business (l. 30), before summoning Gyges:

Γύ[γην σαφῶ], σε(ί)σείδον, [ο]ὐκ εἰκάσματι,
 ἔδρεια μὴ φόνου τις ἔνδον ἦ<ι> λόχ[ο]ς,
 ὅποια τὰπίχειρα ταῖς τυραννισιν·
 ἐπε]ῖ δ’ ἔτ’ ἐγρήσσοντα Κανδαύλην ὄρω,
 τὸ δρασθὲν ἔγνων κα[ί] τίς ὁ δράσας ἀνήρ· 5
 ὡς δ’ ἀξυνήμων καρδί[ας] κυκωμένης
 καθείρξα σί[γ’ ἄ]πυσ[τον] αἰσχύν[ης] βοήν·
 ἐν δεμνίωι [δὲ φρον]τίσιω στρωφωμένη<ι>
 νύξ ἦν ἀτέρ[μων ἐξ] ἀυπνίας, ἐμοί·
 ἐπεὶ δ’ ἀνήλ[θε] παμ]φαῆς Εωσφόρος, 10
 τῆς πρωτοφεγ[γους ἦ]μέρας πρ[ο]άγγελος,
 τὸν μὲν λέχους ἦγειρ[α] κάξεπεμφάμην
 λαοῖς θεμιστεύοντα· μῦθος ἦν ἐμοί
 πειθοῦς ἐτοίμο[ς οὖ]το[ς], ὅστ[ι]ς οὖ]κ ἐᾷ<ι>
 εὔδειν ἄνακτα πάν[νυχ’], ὦι λαῶν μέλει. 15
 Γύγην δέ μοι κλητῆρες[ι] . . .

[When] I saw clearly, not by guess, that it was Gyges, I was afraid of a plot for murder in the palace; for such are wages of a monarch’s state. But when I saw that Candaules was still awake, I knew that had been done and what man had done it. Yet as if ignorant, despite the turmoil in my heart, I bridled in silence my dishonour’s cry, to be unheard. My night was endless for want of sleep, as in my bed to and fro I turned in anxious thought. And when the brilliant star that brings the dawn arose, forerunner of the first gleam of day, I roused Candaules from bed and sent him forth to deliver law to his people: Persuasion’s tale was ready on my lips, the one that forbids a King, the guardian of

³⁸ Hall (1989: 96–7, 156).

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his people, to sleep the whole night through. And summoners [have gone to call] Gyges to my presence . . .³⁹

From the perspective of the rhetorical flavour of Hellenistic tragedy, we can note the queen's lucid, concise narrative of the past events, the gnomic phrase relating to the conditions under which kings must live, her references to her shifting emotions, the self-conscious reference to her own ability to persuade her husband with her words (*μῦθος . . . περὶ θοῦς*, λλ. 30–1), and the dignity of her demeanour as textually conveyed through elevated diction, formal tone, and theatrical *ethopoia*. It is disappointing that the dialogue between the queen and Gyges is missing, especially since the reference to gold in line 39 may suggest that she asked whether he had been bribed. Perhaps Gyges delivered in response a speech in his own self-defence which would have helped us understand Hellenistic tragic and judicial rhetoric better.

Like Herodas' Battaros mimiamb, the evidence of these actual texts of Hellenistic tragedy, such as they are,⁴⁰ therefore imply that the tragedians were susceptible to styles and techniques that were developed in several branches of oratory. They also reflect the increasing cross-fertilization, to be expected given the rapid development of Hellenistic literary culture, between tragedy and other genres, such as historiography. But the evidence of the texts of Hellenistic tragic drama, so depressingly slight in quantity, can fortunately be enriched by looking at a type of evidence that is in sorely short supply for the fifth-century heyday of classical drama and that is evidence pertaining to the real-world individuals who excelled in vocal performance.

3. VERSATILE VOCALISTS

Well before the Hellenistic period, in the late fifth century BC, Athens was enduring the reign of terror of the so-called Thirty Tyrants at the end of the Peloponnesian War, and the prominent democrats of Athens were in exile. They raised an army and won a victory, after which their spokesman Cleocritus addressed the defeated aristocrats

³⁹ Text and translation from Page (1951: 3).

⁴⁰ See Fantuzzi (2002).

in a wonderful speech reported by the historian Xenophon (*Hellenica* 2.4.20):

ἄνδρες πολῖται, τί ἡμᾶς ἐξελάνετε; τί ἀποκτεῖναι βούλεσθε; ἡμεῖς γὰρ ὑμᾶς κακὸν μὲν οὐδὲν πώποτε ἐποιήσαμεν, μετεσχῆκαμεν δὲ ὑμῖν καὶ ἱερῶν τῶν σεμνοτάτων καὶ θυσιῶν καὶ ἐορτῶν τῶν καλλίστων, καὶ συγχορευταὶ καὶ συμφοιτηταὶ γεγενήμεθα καὶ συστρατιῶται, καὶ πολλὰ μεθ' ὑμῶν κεκινδυνεύκαμεν καὶ κατὰ γῆν καὶ κατὰ θάλατταν ὑπὲρ τῆς κοινῆς ἀμφοτέρων ἡμῶν σωτηρίας τε καὶ ἐλευθερίας.

Fellow citizens, why are you keeping us out of Athens? Why do you seek our deaths? For we have never done you any harm. We have taken part alongside you in the most hallowed rituals and sacrifices, and in the finest festivals. We have been your co-dancers in choruses and co-students, as well as your co-soldiers. We have been in dangerous situations with you on both land and sea in defence of our mutual security and freedom.

Cleocritus concluded this speech by pointing out that despite the intense bonds fostered by their joint experiences as fellow citizens, the divisive civil strife had meant terrible bereavements which had caused tears to flow on both sides. Group identity, which used to lie in co-participation in ritual, education, and defence of the state, now lies in co-participation in sorrow (2.40.22):

ἀλλ' εἶ γε μέντοι ἐπίστασθε ὅτι καὶ τῶν νῦν ὑφ' ἡμῶν ἀποθανόντων οὐ μόνον ὑμεῖς ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἔστιν οὓς πολλὰ κατεδακρῦσαμεν.

Yet for all that, be well assured that for some of those now slain by our hands not only you, but we also, have wept bitterly.

Cleocritus' emotive speech proved effective, and the democracy was soon restored. He had the advantage of a beautiful speaking voice and was already known to all the citizens as the herald who made announcements during the rituals at the Eleusinian Mysteries (ὁ τῶν μυστῶν κήρυξ, 2.40.20), a ceremonial role. The gift of vocal brilliance was therefore a versatile one which could apparently be used to advantage in quite different social, political, and indeed ritual contexts. A few decades later, the tragic actor Aeschines embarked on a second career in politics, and it is clear from Demosthenes' need to deride his acting skills that Aeschines' voice was a considerable asset on the orator's platform (see e.g. Dem. 18.259). He could also imitate his opponent's rhetorical style to comic effect (Dem. 18.232). It is interesting, also, that the two parts we know he had acted—Creon in Sophocles' *Antigone* (Dem. 19.246–50) and almost certainly Polymestor in Euripides'

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Hecuba—both require the actor to sing in lyric metre to *aulos* accompaniment as well as to speak iambic trimeters (see below). Both parts also require extended symbouleutic (Creon) or judicial rhetoric (Polymestor) in addition to brisk *stichomythia*.

Cleocritus was a political orator who also performed public duties as a herald. Aeschines was a tragic actor turned orator. In Hellenistic times, we can complete the triangle with a herald who was also a tragic performer. In the first quarter of the first century BC, an inscription records that a man from Thespieae, Nikoteles son of Kapon, competed in the sacred games at the Charitesia at Boiotian Orchomenos, as both a κήρυξ (herald) and a τραγωιδός (*tragoidos*).⁴¹ This is particularly interesting because the term is ‘tragic singer’ rather than ‘tragic actor’ (*tragikos hupokrites*), implying that Nikoteles not only put on a mask to perform tragic texts, but sang excerpted passages from tragedy such as those which have been found on several musical papyri: these contain, for example, excerpted lyrical highlights from *Iphigenia in Aulis* (*PLeid.* 510, from the third century BC), or songs sung by Neoptolemus in an otherwise unknown play (the ‘Oslo Papyrus’: *P.Oslo* 1413).⁴² These tragic singers cultivated voices of great intensity and above all power, as attested by both their admirers and detractors (Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 5.9; Lucian, *De Salt.* 15). The large voice required of the herald was also a gift associated with the performance of songs from tragedy, just as the emotive range of the tragic actor’s voice was admired and imitated by rhetoricians.

It was therefore possible not only for actors to become orators, but for actors to compete in competitions as heralds—a form of public speaking, in prose, more akin to oratory than to the recitation of poetry, and associated with the summons of the trumpet rather than the accompaniment of the *aulos* or cithara. Performing as an actor, a herald, and an orator were three related ways in which a man could earn prestige and money by performing with his voice, as attested by the inscriptions related to the sacred games at festivals, collected in I. E. Stephanis’ pathbreaking *Dionysiakoi Technitai*.⁴³ There were, of course, several different sub-categories of actor—the tragic singer and the tragic *hypokrites*, the *komoidos* and the comic *hypokrites*, as well

⁴¹ IG VII 3196 cols. 5 and 20; Stephanis (1988: no. 1870). See Buckler (1984).

⁴² See further Hall (2002: 12–15 with fig. 2).

⁴³ Stefanis (1988).

as the actor of satyr drama. The ranks of such theatrical voice performers were in due course joined by various types of mime and mimiamb performer and by the pantomime vocalists. The last category included speaking actors interacting with the silent pantomime dancer, heralds to announce the plot of the pantomime before it commenced (Augustine, *De Doct. Christ.* 2.38.97), and solo singers (AP 9.542), in addition to choruses.⁴⁴

Pantomime's emergence is traditionally dated to the early first century BC, and it certainly took a good deal of time to gain sufficient respectability to be added to the sacred contests. But there is evidence that pantomime as a form of entertainment actually emerged rather earlier, in the third or second centuries.⁴⁵

There were also several different categories of non-theatrical singer, all frequently attested in the festival inscriptions—the singers of hymns and paeans and dithyrambos, and of course the highly paid and mightily respected citharodes or rhapsodes. In certain circumstances a good singer could compete in several different types of acting and singing: the opportunities for exhibiting such versatility may have evolved gradually over the centuries. Several less specific types of 'poet' also appear in the festival epigraphy, including the performer of the 'epic encomium'. One inscription, for example, tells of an Amphipolitan who was victorious with an *egkomion epikon* at the Amphiaraiia and Romaia at Oropos in the late second or early first century BC.⁴⁶ This event is important to my argument because it provides a contrast with the 'rhetorical encomium' (*egkomion logikon*) performed by Moschos, son of Anaxippos, of Prusa: he was victorious at the Amphiaraiia and the Romaia at Oropos in the first quarter of the first century BC.⁴⁷ It would be very helpful to know more than we do about the 'spoken' encomium. Presumably Moschos' performance was much more akin to that of an orator or sophist than it was to the 'epic encomium'. However, in the current state of our knowledge it is impossible to say how poetic or histrionic the impact of the vocal performances created by either 'epic encomiasts' or 'rhetorical encomiasts' could be.

The performance of citharody was closer to oratory. The important figure here is the citharode Timotheus, who flourished in the late fifth

⁴⁴ Hall (2002: 29–30). ⁴⁵ Hall (2008: 11–13).

⁴⁶ Stephanis (1988: no. 1488).

⁴⁷ IG VII 419.12; Stephanis (1988: no. 1749).

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and early fourth centuries, but became a canonical poet much performed in the Hellenistic period: Polybius (4.20.8–9) tells us that in the second century BC, his works were on the syllabus of all young boys in Arcadia. Timotheus' citharodic dithyramb *Persians*, which we know was performed by a singer named Pylades at the Nemean Games in 205 BC (Plutarch, *Philopoemen* 1.11),⁴⁸ required neither mask nor costume. Timotheus had reinvented his own 'act' in response to the tragic theatre. The citharodes, like the tragic actors, adopted increasingly mimetic gestures and postures as well as mimetic vocal tricks.

Lyric and epic citharody, as unmasked musical performance types (see further below), occupied territory that lay somewhere between theatrical performance and oratory, even though these performance genres were accompanied at least semi-continuously by the cithara. Yet there was a strong perception that the rhapsodes, tragic actors, and rhetors practised fundamentally parallel if technically distinct professions. This is clearest in the fragment of Dio Chrysostom 19, when he describes an incident in Cyzicus during his exile in the first century AD. His admirers had apparently wanted him to deliver a speech on the subject of his travels, but he was saved from having to perform, he says, by the timely appearance in town of a rhapsode, one of the best of the time. This performer attracted an audience of more than three thousand. Dio's opening (19.3) was apparently meant to introduce a comparison, of which unfortunately only a few sentences survive, of the experiences of listening to prose oratory and to verse, whether epic or tragic. But these few sentences are extremely revealing; he says that he has always been like one of the animals in Orpheus' train whenever a musician or a sophist performs:

... δοκῶ μοι, πρῶτος ἂν ἐπηκολούθουν, εἰ καὶ ἔδει μετὰ νεβρῶν τινῶν ἢ μῶσχων, οὐδὲν αἰδούμενος· ἐπεὶ καὶ νῦν ταῦτ' οὗτο πάσχω πολλάκις, ἐπειδὴν εἰσαφίκωμαι σοφιστοῦ, διὰ τὴν προσοῦσάν μοι ἀκρασίαν περὶ τοὺς λόγους...

I fancy that I should have been the first one to follow in his train, even though I should have been obliged to mingle with a drove of fawns and calves; and I should have felt no shame. For even now I am often affected as they were, whenever I attend a sophist's lecture, on account of the uncontrolled craving which possesses me for the spoken word...

⁴⁸ See further Hall (2006: 274).

Dio then produces one of the few sustained comparisons between the impact of the vocal performance of oratory and the impact of the vocal performance of poetry to be found in the ancient sources. It is so valuable that Dio's date—a century too late to qualify him as 'Hellenistic'—should not deter us from taking it into consideration, especially since the culture of the festivals at which *mousikoi agones* took place was inherently conservative; indeed, making innovations in the programmes could prove difficult.⁴⁹

Dio is enthralled 'when listening to sophists and orators. Just as beggars, on account of their own destitution, envy the moderately well-to-do, so I admire and applaud those who are in any way at all proficient in speech, because I myself am lacking in such proficiency.' (19.4) But then he continues to assert that the performance of the citharodes and tragic actors (19.4–5):

οὐ παρ' ὀλίγον μοι δοκεῖ διαφέρειν πρὸς ἡδονήν. <ἦ> τε γὰρ φωνὴ μείζων καὶ δῆλον ὅτι ἐμμελεστέρα ἢ τε λέξις οὐκ αὐτοσχέδιος, ὥσπερ ἡ τῶν ῥητόρων ἐξ ὑπογύου τὰ πολλὰ πειρωμένων λέγειν, ἀλλὰ ποιητῶν ἐπιμελῶς καὶ κατὰ σχολὴν πεποιηκότων. καὶ τὰ γε πολλὰ αὐτῶν ἀρχαῖά ἐστι καὶ πολὺ σοφωτέρων ἀνδρῶν ἢ τῶν νῦν· τὰ μὲν τῆς κωμωδίας ἅπαντα· τῆς δὲ τραγωδίας τὰ μὲν ἰσχυρά, ὡς εἶοικε, μένει· λέγω δὲ τὰ ἰαμβεῖα· καὶ τούτων μέρη διεξίαισιν ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις·

... is in no small degree superior in the pleasure it gives. For their voices are louder and undoubtedly better modulated, while their language is not extempore like that of the orators, who generally try to speak without preparation; but poets have composed painstakingly and at their leisure. And the most of what they give us comes from ancient times, and from much wiser men than those of the present. In the case of comedy everything is kept; in the case of tragedy only the strong parts, it would seem, remain—I mean the iambics, and portions of these they still give in our theatres.

Dio thinks that the performers of poetry give more pleasure because their voices are louder and better modulated; because they do *not* extemporize, and because the poetry possesses the status of all time-honoured classics.

Dio is clear that orators, citharodes, and actors were all required to possess *megalophonia*, and they were indeed criticized if their voices were too weak or thin. Of course, it was actually heralds who required

⁴⁹ On the legitimacy of using Dio to illustrate trends in Hellenistic rhetoric, see Vanderspoel (2010:127).

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the loudest voices of all, and the proclamations that heralds delivered must frequently have been somewhat ‘rhetorical’ in periodic structure and style. When Plutarch speaks of the funeral of Timoleon in Syracuse in 337 BC, he says that the herald with the loudest voice (*megalophonotatos*) delivered an elegant proclamation, with its accumulation towards a climax of clauses emphasizing the number and variety of advantages which this benefactor had conferred on the people (39.4):

ὁ δῆμος ὁ Συρακουσίων Τιμολέοντα Τιμοδήμου Κορίνθιον τόνδε θάπτει
μὲν διακοσίων μνῶν, ἐτίμησε δ’ εἰς τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον ἀγῶσι μουσικοῖς,
ἵπτικοῖς, γυμνικοῖς, ὅτι τοὺς τυράννους καταλύσας καὶ τοὺς βαρβάρους
καταπολεμήσας καὶ τὰς μεγίστας τῶν ἀναστάτων πόλεων οἰκίσας
ἀπέδωκε τοὺς νόμους τοῖς Σικελιώταις.

The people of Syracuse inter Timoleon, the son of Timodemus, the Corinthian, at the common expense of two hundred minas, and to honour his memory for ever, by the establishment of annual prizes to be competed for in music, and horse-races, and all sorts of bodily exercise; and this, because he suppressed the tyrants, overthrew the barbarians, replenished the principal cities, that were desolate, with new inhabitants, and then restored the Sicilian Greeks to the privilege of living by their own laws.

The big-voiced herald who uttered these phrases looks not wholly dissimilar to a big-voiced orator delivering an encomium. Nor will Dio’s attempt to distinguish thespian, citharodic, and rhetorical performances on the criterion of the possibility of extemporization hold. At least one of the Hellenistic musical papyri suggests that extemporization was in fact not only tolerated but admired in some of the more specialized tragic performers.⁵⁰ Cassandra deliriously describes Hector’s last stand against Achilles, but the papyrus includes the word ‘song’ (ὠιδή) on seven occasions before verses delivered by her. These seem almost certain to be directions to the actor playing Cassandra to improvise cadenza-like preludes to the words he *did* have to memorize.⁵¹

⁵⁰ P.Oxy 2746.

⁵¹ Similarly, the Laurentian manuscript’s instruction to Polyphemus in Euripides’ *Cyclops* at 487 to ‘sing from within’ (ὠιδῆ ἔνδοθεν) may even go back as far as Euripides. The papyrus burlesque of an escape tragedy, featuring a young woman named Charition escaping from barbarians in India (POxy 413), implies that there was considerable room for improvisation in that medium as well: see further Hall (2010).

Dio, moreover, is being disingenuous. The derision of rival performance attractions by rhetoricians was an established convention. In saying that performances of poetry give him more pleasure than other rhetors, Dio is probably playing a sophisticated and self-regarding game. But his are interesting distinctions, not least because they are by no means the formal ones which any modern generic theorist or specialist in Performance Studies would produce if asked to produce a taxonomy of ancient vocalists. If asked to distinguish specifically between actors and orators, there are four far more obvious differences. The first consideration is the different religious affiliation of the two professions. The late Hellenistic *Orphic Hymn to Hermes* implies that orators regarded Hermes Logios, rather than Dionysus, as their patron divinity.⁵² The other three differences lie in the wearing of the mask, the use of metre, and the use of a recognizably distinct form of voice production which is denoted by verbs which we translate as ‘sing’ rather than ‘speak’. In the remainder of this essay I therefore want to think about oratory, at least epideictic oratory, as part of a larger category of ancient vocal performance. First, I want to explore some of the points where the distinctions between the categories were more vulnerable to disintegration. And secondly, I would like to look at some more evidence, mostly epigraphic, that men with fine voices did indeed sometimes achieve distinction in more than one category of vocal performance.

Orators did not wear masks, whereas tragic singers and tragic dancers did, at least when performing formally in public. Yet the distinction is not so hard and fast as it may seem.⁵³ Speeches from Menander were also performed, unmasked, at symposia for hundreds of years after Menander’s own lifetime: according to Plutarch, one might object to hearing Old Comedy at a polite dinner party, but as to New Comedy, ‘it has become so completely a part of the symposion that we could chart our course more easily without wine than without Menander’ (*Quaest. Conv.* 7.8 = *Mor.* 712a–b). So, indeed, were prose texts including Aesopic fables (which must have included some

⁵² As god of eloquence, Hermes is often represented with chains of gold hanging from his lips, whilst, as the patron of merchants, he bears a purse in his hand. Aristophanes’ *Wealth* 1110 may suggest that the tongue of sacrificial animals was sometimes offered to Hermes Logios as a marker of his special interest in eloquence.

⁵³ Cf. Ar. *Equi.* 529–30, *Nub.* 1371–2, *Vesp.* 579–80; on Alexander the Great’s recitation of speeches from Euripides’ *Andromeda* see Plut. *Alex.* 51.8 and Athen. *Deipn.* 12. 537d–e.

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element of extempore adaptation, as we can see from Philocleon's conduct just after the symposium in *Knights*⁵⁴ and Platonic dialogues (Plut. *Mor.* 711 b–c).⁵⁵

There was, moreover, a genre of theatre which the evidence suggests was sometimes or even usually performed unmasked, and that was mime. Since some mimes were composed in prose rather than verse,⁵⁶ they present us with speech performed without song, metre, or mask. Mime tends to be colloquial, and is therefore not a medium in which rhetoric seems generally to have played an important role, and yet there are significant exceptions including Herodas' *Mimiamb* 2, with which this essay began. The vocalist who impersonated Battalus did so without a mask and probably without any music, but he still spoke in verse. Maximus of Tyre claimed that his rhetorical teaching could provide *all the skills necessary* for the composition of poetry, *except* for metre (*Philosophoumena*, 1.7g (Hobein)). Yet recitations of Plato at dinner parties, which were unmasked and neither sung nor accompanied musically, were in prose rather than verse. Dio Chrysostom's perception that the tragic actors were direct rivals to the orators (see above) seems to be connected with the fact that, by his day, the iambic trimeter was almost the exclusive metre of tragic and comic theatrical performances, to the exclusion of lyric metres. Iambics were of course the metre which most often occurred spontaneously in ancient Greek speech, and this made them sound 'natural', according to Aristotle (*Poet.* 1449a 26; *Rhet.* 3.1408b 33–5), and therefore presumably more like non-theatrical public speakers of prose, such as orators and heralds.

Yet, to add to this complex picture in which categories of vocal performance threaten to dissolve, some tragic actors both spoke and sang. A papyrus fragment of Carcinus' *Medea*, for example, in which (as we have seen above) Medea was given a quasi-judicial speech in which she defended herself on the charge of filicide, shows that some of Medea's part was at some historical point certainly set to music, and sung. The papyrus comes from the second century AD, by which time we know from other sources that actors often sang iambic trimeters from tragedy as well as lyric sections.⁵⁷ But my suspicion

⁵⁴ See Hall (forthcoming).

⁵⁵ See Handley (2002:169; Jones (1991: 192–3).

⁵⁶ E.g. Cunningham (2004: nos. 2 and 3).

⁵⁷ This is a musical papyrus acquired by the Louvre in 1891; see West (2007).

is that the music is a product of the increasingly elaborate Hellenistic performance culture, when specialist tragic singers developed a repertoire of tragic ‘arias’ to perform in concert situations on the international festival circuit;⁵⁸ Taplin believes it may even be fourth-century and have been composed by Carcinus himself.⁵⁹

Indeed, the tragic actors who specialized in singing, in addition to or instead of speaking iambic dialogue, do raise a rather different question. Technically speaking, just how different was the vocal delivery of the singer and the orator? Volume may be one criterion, although, even here, there are occasional criticisms of big-voiced singers who ‘bawl like heralds’ instead of producing more seductive and alluring noises (Timotheus, *PMG* 791.218–20). Pitch may be another important distinction, although not one drawn explicitly in the ancient sources very often: tragic singers are praised for their high voices, whereas orators are often admired for their deep ones. Yet the great orator could presumably vary both volume and pitch to suit the occasion: Aristotle already strongly asserted that the volume and the pitch of the voice needed to be modulated in accordance with the emotional response it was meant to elicit.⁶⁰ The most important factor in considering the difference between the orator and the tragic *singer* seems, however, to have been the firmness of the *hold* on particular pitches—that is, what we would call the vocal cords’ hold, with the use of even, sustained emission of breath, on particular *notes*.⁶¹

‘Singing’ was certainly something associated later with the detraction of the Asianic style of oratory. Perhaps this refers to the type of melody that the musical papyri show were preferred by tragic singers; these generally rose and then fell again in pitch, moving stepwise to an adjacent note, creating a sinuous effect of constant motion. Occasionally this type of melody is suddenly interrupted by dramatic leaps or dives of up to a ninth, designed to create an emphatic special effect.⁶²

⁵⁸ Hall (2002:12–14).

⁵⁹ Taplin (2013).

⁶⁰ *Rh.* 1403b 27–32; see Fortenbaugh (1986).

⁶¹ Aristoxenus, an early Hellenistic musicologist writing at the end of the fourth century BC, adopts this as a clear criterion for distinguishing speech from song: he held that speech was continuous, whereas song moved in discrete intervals. This theory, according to the arithmetician Nicomachus five hundred years later, was first originated by the Pythagoreans (*Encheiridion harmonikes*, 4).

⁶² Hall (2002:19–20).

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The boundaries between different genres of vocal performance could therefore be very fragile, unless audience expectations and the performance context (for example, a specific competition or a celebratory symposium) helped to maintain the distinctions. It is therefore scarcely surprising that we find evidence of men with great voices, which made them distinguished heralds or orators, sometimes using them in other ways, as well. These might even include singing as well as speaking. We looked earlier at Nikoteles son of Kapon, who competed in the sacred games at the Charitesia at Orchomenos as both a herald and a *tragoidos*. But even crossing the boundaries between comic acting, tragic acting, and rhapsody became possible in the Hellenistic period. In Plato's *Republic* Socrates is able to assume that people agree with him when he says that a dramatist cannot be proficient at writing both tragedy and comedy. Nor can the same performers be simultaneously rhapsodes and actors. Even more specifically, Socrates then suggests that the same actors are not *capable* of performing in both tragedy and comedy (3.395 a2–b1). But some of the individuals who competed at the sacred games in the ensuing centuries would have given Socrates pause for thought.

Consider the case of the astonishingly versatile Athenian Praxiteles Theogenou, who competed as a comic supporting actor (*συναγωνιστής*) at Delphi in 105 BC; eight years later, in 97 BC, he performed as a singer of the paean and the chorus as well as in the capacity of *τραγωιδός*. But he also won a victory as a *κῆρυξ* at the Sarapieia in Tanagra, where he came second as *τραγωιδός*.⁶³ This Praxiteles, a comic actor, tragic actor, and herald to boot, may well have known another Athenian herald-singer, Philotas son of Theocles, who was victor in the Mouseia at Thespieae as *κῆρυξ*, and probably participated in paean singing at Delphi in 127 BC.⁶⁴

There are some other even more intriguing vocal performers whose 'acts' included both rhetorical pieces and poetry (let alone rhetoric in conjunction with *aulos* performance,⁶⁵ athletic running in conjunction with heraldic performance,⁶⁶ or, rather later, in Oxyrhynchus,

⁶³ *FD* III 2, 49.30 with 48.36; *IG* VII.540; Stephanis (1988: no. 2137).

⁶⁴ *BCH* 19 (1895: 336, 8.12); *FD* III.2, 47.10; Stephanis (1988: no. 2573).

⁶⁵ Philiscus of Miletus, a famous aulete who later became a rhetor: Stephanis (1988: no. 2505).

⁶⁶ Phorystas son of Triax, from Tanagra, won the herald's competition and competed as well in running at the Olympics in the third century BC. See Stephanis (1988: no. 2580).

rhetoric in conjunction with heraldic performance⁶⁷). A verse inscription found on a stele in Parion, Mysia, of the second or third century BC, was first published in 1884. It honours the egregious Ortyx of Parion in his home town. Ortyx ('Quail', a bird famous for its loud, distinctive, three-note song) seems to have been an auto-didactic orator as well as a composer of poetry and moreover a performer of the poetry of the ancient masters:

*Εἰμὶ μὲν ἐκ Παρίου Ὀρτυξ σοφὸς αὐτοδίδακτος
Γράτου τοῦ Μεγάλου, ὃς πάντα λόγοις ὑποτάσσει
τοὺς τε ποιητογράφους καὶ τοὺς παλαίοντας ἀγῶνι.*⁶⁸

I am Ortyx, of Parion, wise, self-taught,
of the Great Gratus who subjects all through words,
both the poets and those wrestling in a contest.

Yet the prize of honour in this brief survey of astonishingly versatile Hellenistic vocalists must surely go to Ariston son of Akrisios of Phocis. He was honoured in about 145 BC by Athenian cleruchs in Delos as a leader of the embassy of youth. A *ποιητῆς ἐπῶν* who sang hymns to Apollo and the other gods, Ariston could also deliver encomia 'both in the *ecclesiasterion* and in the *theatron* in numerous aural exhibitions.'⁶⁹ In Ariston's performances, some of which took place in the beautiful theatre on Delos overlooking the sea, the distinction between the vocal delivery of sung hymns in praise of Apollo and the other gods and of spoken encomia in praise of human achievements—epideictic oratory, surely—seems, at least in the ears of the Athenians who honoured him for his *akroaseis*, aural exhibitions, to have come close to disappearing altogether.

⁶⁷ Besammon, son of Sarapammon, Oxyrhynchite: a *ρήτωρ* and *κῆρυξ* according to the (supplemented) *POxy* 2338.70. He competed at Naucratis in AD 282/3 (Stephanis 1988: no. 522) and also appears in *POxy* 2338, a fragmentary register of various persons listed as heralds, poets and trumpeters. See Coles (1975:199).

⁶⁸ *IK* 25.53; Stephanis (1988: no. 1962).

⁶⁹ *Inscr. Délos* 1506; Stephanis (1988: no. 384).