

# Hellenistic Oratory

*Continuity and Change*

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and  
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## Preface

This volume had its genesis in a conversation about future research projects held in the corridor of the Classics Department at Royal Holloway, University of London, at the end of April 2007. The topic of 'Hellenistic oratory' mystified us at first: they were not two words you would expect to find in the same sentence. Yet as we discussed the topic further, we thought there might be ample scope for exploration; gradually our interests evolved into a full-scale plan for a conference: *After Demosthenes, Continuity and Change in Hellenistic Oratory*, held in London, 2–3 July 2009. This conference was generously supported by the Classical Association, the Hellenic Society, the Institute of Classical Studies, and Royal Holloway University of London, for which we should like to give thanks. We are also grateful to a number of senior colleagues for their generous support and encouragement: in alphabetical order, Chris Carey, Mike Edwards, Edith Hall, Jonathan Powell, Lene Rubinstein, and Graham Shipley. They have all been extremely helpful, from the inception of the conference idea through to the arduous process of editing this volume.

The conference would not have been the same without the input of our enthusiastic and insightful participants, who engaged in friendly but lively debates after the papers, during the breaks, and over dinner. We hope that the papers in this volume capture something of the conference's atmosphere. One result of the conference was that it broadened the way we thought about oratory in the Hellenistic period and we wanted that to be reflected in the title of the published collection of papers. As will become clearer in what follows, Hellenistic Oratory should not be defined only by its relationship to its Classical heritage, but is a subject worthy of study in its own right.

Oxford University Press embraced the idea for this volume enthusiastically. We are thankful for the positive feedback we received from the anonymous readers for the Press and believe that the volume has

included within the scope of this volume, but their contribution to the conference and the development of our ideas is hereby acknowledged. In addition to our contributors, whose cooperation and patience throughout has been appreciated, we should like to extend our thanks to three extremely efficient individuals at OUP: Hilary O'Shea, Cathryn Steele, and Taryn Das Neves.

Finally, we should like to single out two people whose support of all kinds has made this project possible: Tasos Aidonis and Katerina Sinopidou. The arrival of Yannis Kremmydas in the midst of the editing process caused a few changes to the original schedule but, on the whole, injected even more fun into what has been a thoroughly enjoyable five years of working together on this project.

London, 1 June 2012

C.K. & K.L.T

## Table of Contents

<i>A Note on Abbreviations</i>	ix
<i>List of Contributors</i>	x
Introduction: Exploring Hellenistic Oratory <i>Christos Kremmydas and Kathryn Tempest</i>	1
<b>PART I: HELLENISTIC ORATORY IN RHETORICAL THEORY AND LITERATURE</b>	
1. Oratory in Polybius' <i>Histories</i> <i>John Thornton</i>	21
2. Dionysius and Isaeus <i>Michael J. Edwards</i>	43
3. The Art of Persuasion in Jason's Speeches: Apollonius of Rhodes, <i>Argonautica</i> <i>Eleni Volonaki</i>	51
4. Praise and Persuasion: The Role of Rhetoric in Theocritus' Poetry <i>Gunther Martin</i>	71
5. Rhetoric in (the other) Menander <i>Christopher Carey</i>	93
6. Rhetorical Actors and Other Versatile Hellenistic Vocalists <i>Edith Hall</i>	109
<b>PART II: ORATORY IN THE HELLENISTIC SCHOOLS AND ASSEMBLIES</b>	
7. Hellenistic Oratory and the Evidence of Rhetorical Exercises <i>Christos Kremmydas</i>	139

8. Spoken Words, Written Submissions, and Diplomatic Conventions: The Importance and Impact of Oral Performance in Hellenistic Inter-polis Relations <i>Lene Rubinstein</i>	165
9. <i>Paradoxon, Enargeia</i> , Empathy: Hellenistic Decrees and Hellenistic Oratory <i>Angelos Chaniotis</i>	201
PART III: CONTINUITY AND CONVERGENCE: FROM GREECE TO ROME	
10. The Embassy of the Three Philosophers to Rome in 155 BC <i>J. G. F. Powell</i>	219
11. Stertinian Rhetoric: Pre-Imperial Stoic Theory and Practice of Public Discourse <i>Jula Wildberger</i>	249
12. Oratory on the Stage in Republican Rome <i>Gesine Manuwald</i>	277
13. Hellenistic Oratory at Rome: Cicero's <i>Pro Marcello</i> <i>Kathryn Tempest</i>	295
14. Hellenistic Oratory and Paul of Tarsus <i>Stanley E. Porter</i>	319
Afterword: Hellenistic Oratory in Context <i>Graham Shipley</i>	361
<i>Bibliography</i>	369
<i>General Index</i>	407
<i>Index of Passages Discussed</i>	414

### A Note on Abbreviations

The references to ancient writers for the most part follow *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (third edition) and H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (ninth edition with revised supplement), Oxford 1996, apart from some abbreviations, such as biblical references, which should be self-explanatory. References to periodicals follow *L'Année Philologique*.

The Art of Persuasion in Jason's Speeches:  
Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica*<sup>1</sup>

*Eleni Volonaki*

1. HELLENISTIC RHETORIC: ELEMENTS OF  
NEW EMPHASIS IN THE *ARGONAUTICA*

Rhetorical training was fundamental in political debate and civic context; epideictic or ornamental speeches were delivered in the Assembly, the law court, the lecture hall, and the diplomatic embassy. Arbitration by third-party mediators became more widespread in the Hellenistic period in the resolution of conflicts as well as in the refinement of diplomatic affairs.<sup>2</sup> Literacy and writing displaced oral traditions and influenced the culture of the elite. Rhetorical handbooks of this period give examples attesting to the prevalence of elite members in the rhetorical schools, who pursued their oratorical skills and made a public display for their careers. Due to the massive increase in the importance of rhetorical training for the elite, there is a growth not only in the number of schools and handbooks but also in the numbers of teachers, *rhetores* (authors of books on the nature of rhetoric and the devices used by orators), and adults, who displayed their oratorical skills at almost every public occasion.

<sup>1</sup> I wish to express my gratitude to the editors of this volume, Chris Kremmydas and Kathryn Tempest, for their valuable contribution to the completion of this paper. I would also like to thank Professor G. Vasilaros for his useful remarks.

<sup>2</sup> Mori (2007: 460). Judges or individual mediators were invited from one city to another to handle a large number of cases, concerning debt, property disputes, loans, or contract settlements.

Vanderspoel<sup>3</sup> characteristically concludes: 'in the Hellenistic period, rhetoric came of age'.

In the Hellenistic period, the model of the Homeric bard, whose narration was an art of memory and repetition, changed to meet the new conditions of a world in which poets were no longer the principal repositories of communal values. Instead, Hellenistic verse reached its audience through the medium of the written word: knowledge of the past and present was to be found in books, and readers were in a position to recall references to earlier forms of literary genres when reading poetry.<sup>4</sup>

Apollonius of Rhodes' poetry uses the tradition instead of being used by it. By invoking the Muse or Apollo, he creates the illusion that divine inspiration was the source for the bonds between himself as a narrator, his character, and his audience. It may not be a coincidence that the name of the god he invokes is related to the poet's own name. Apollonius' technique aims to create correspondences between his narrative persona and his epic figures, but does not involve the element of strong emotion. Apollonius draws on the traditional phenomenon of divine inspiration with its emotional effects in order to add immediacy and authority to his planned poetry.<sup>5</sup> The new prominence of the narrator in Hellenistic epic poetry enhances the intertextual approach for its readers.

The epic poem *Argonautica*, composed by Apollonius of Rhodes in the third century BC, is the product of a period that presents the personal and emotional element, and as such the epic poem departs from the archaic heroic ideals (e.g. *kleos* and *time*). Toohey<sup>6</sup> has argued for 'the "discovery" in this period of such internalised states as melancholia, depression, boredom and passive love-melancholy', which play an important role in creating the emotional tone of the *Argonautica* and the characterization of Jason. Nevertheless, Hellenistic poetry did not break radically from the past but re-arranged the emphasis, introducing new elements and themes within the pre-existing form of material.<sup>7</sup>

The present paper will focus on the lines of argumentation used by Jason, addressing different persons on various occasions, taking into consideration matters of structure, length, style, and the rhetorical

<sup>3</sup> Vanderspoel (2007: 136).

<sup>4</sup> Hunter (2001: 94).

<sup>5</sup> Albis (1996: 16–34).

<sup>6</sup> Toohey (1994: 163).

<sup>7</sup> Hunter (2001: 105).

techniques of his speeches. It will further explore the extent to which Jason's oratorical skills depart from or continue the principles of rhetoric in the Classical period while employing the new elements of emphasis in Hellenistic poetry. It will be argued that, apart from Jason's charm and appearance, his distinct quality throughout the poem is his rhetorical agility: his craft as an orator is emphatically presented as fixed, persuasive, and successful.

The importance of rhetorical training in this period is reflected in the strategy and heroic ideals of the *Argonautica*; the success of the Argonautic expedition is largely dependent on Jason's powers of persuasion. The principal hero of this poem is different from the Homeric hero in his position and behaviour: he is equal among equals and shows weakness and embarrassment in difficulties—the main reason for being characterized as an 'anti-hero'.<sup>8</sup> His prominence is based upon the rhetorical strategies and tactics employed mostly for consolation and persuasive appeal. Nevertheless, Jason does reflect a number of Homeric models and figures; thus, one can notice that Jason recalls Priam and Achilles in the last book of the *Iliad*, later his model is Odysseus, leading his comrades through the dangerous voyage, and he also recalls Agamemnon and other figures during the Argonautic expedition.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the qualities of many Homeric heroes contribute to the characterization of Apollonius' characters.

Jason fits comfortably into the *Argonautica* and he is the hero within that narrative. It is the poem itself which is altered in the face of the epic tradition; the paradoxical element in Apollonius' creation is that, by denying what is characterized as Homeric, he maintains the sense of Homer throughout.<sup>10</sup> Jason's novelty as a hero is that his personality and psyche are a matter of general concern. His role, however, should be placed in the traditional mythical context, and his words and actions should be viewed in this light. He is, for example, often characterized with ἀμηχανίη ('lack of resource/s') for having doubts and feeling despair,<sup>11</sup> thus recalling

<sup>8</sup> Vasilaros (2004: 13 n. 45).

<sup>9</sup> For Apollonius' use of allusion in making comparisons between his characters and Homer's, often by using words or formulae associated with a particular figure in Homer, cf. Knight (1995: 26–7).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Beye (1969: 34–7).

<sup>11</sup> For example, before setting out, the Argonauts pass the night in feasting on the shore (1.450–9), but during this symposium 'the son of Aeson, quite self-absorbed (ἀμύχανος εἰν εἰς αὐτῷ), was pondering on everything, looking like one depressed'.

the insecurity of the tragic hero Orestes, another young man who was assigned difficult tasks by the oracle and who required support in order to achieve his divine orders.

Another departure from the Homeric model is the comparatively sparing use of direct speech in the *Argonautica*. According to Toohey, 'this absence of direct speech must surely be taken as a deliberate choice', through which 'Apollonius is deliberately attempting to stress the gulf between deeds and words, between reality or actualisation'.<sup>12</sup> Also, Toohey suggests that there may be a link between the lack of direct speech and a passively registered view of the world.<sup>13</sup> Hunter adduces further reasons:<sup>14</sup> the change from oral to written epic, the hero's withdrawal from the field of action, the constant movement forward through action, the insistent authorial voice, which does not allow the characters to speak for themselves; rather, it is the narrating poet who is always present and who has control over words and actions.

## 2. THE SPEECHES

Jason delivers thirty direct speeches within the four books of the *Argonautica*, varying from four-line speeches to rather extended ones of thirty lines.<sup>15</sup> They are delivered at crucial points of the plot and are usually related to the moments of decision-making within the context of fulfilling the Argonauts' principal and only goal: the acquisition of the golden fleece and the return back to Greece. The speeches depict Jason's strategy and rhetorical approach in order to get whatever he needs on each occasion, and they could thus be taken to indicate some elements of Jason's characterization. Nevertheless, it is the narrator who comments on Jason's manner, psychological state, and the rhetorical effect of his words upon the addressees.

Mori has recently produced a very informative account of the narrator's commentary on Jason's sweet, smoothening, gentle and

seductive words, his beauty, manner of speaking, smile, kindly voice, and all the other means used for diplomacy, flattery, and negotiation.<sup>16</sup> It becomes obvious that Apollonius anticipates an interpretation of Jason's speeches by underlining the points of characterization and rhetorical appeal he wishes to, and it is to be noted that in most cases the narrator's remarks are consistent with the content of the speeches. Three of the most frequently remarked upon features of Jason's character are his introspection, his passivity in the face of events, and the absence of anger.<sup>17</sup>

Jason's speeches are logically sequenced talks and consist of a mixed and mostly cyclical (*κυκλική*) structure presenting an elaborate style and eloquence; there may be a kind of stylistic unevenness in Jason's speeches, depending on the circumstances of each one separately, but this feature could also be seen as a characteristic of Hellenistic poetic experimentation.<sup>18</sup> Based on an analysis of four extended and descriptive speeches of the *Argonautica*, one of which is Jason's speech to Medea (3.975–1007), Toohey rightly indicates that Apollonius applies a tripartite structure, including the three features of *exordium*, plea, and benefaction;<sup>19</sup> this pattern, either simplified or enriched, is generally employed in many of Jason's speeches, particularly the lengthy ones. But in many speeches we can also notice the feature of *κύκλος*, starting with a specific appeal or idea and closing with the same one.<sup>20</sup> Some of Jason's speeches can be easily classified: e.g. the prayer (1.411–24), the farewell speeches (1.295–305, 1.888–98), the supplication speech (2.1136–9, 3.386–95, 3.975–1007), and the consolation speech (3.1120–30). There are also speeches which cannot be classified in one category alone because they combine elements of exhortation (3.1143–6, 4.190–205), appeal (1.332–40), consolation (4.395–409), information (4.1347–62), and reconciliation (1.1337–43), such as the leader's speeches toward his comrades. Given the structure of Jason's speeches on the one hand and the difficulty in classifying clear types of speeches on the other, we shall approach the lines of argumentation in speeches addressed to certain groups or individuals to examine whether Jason adopts a

<sup>12</sup> Toohey (1994: 168).

<sup>13</sup> Toohey (1994: 164).

<sup>14</sup> Hunter (1993b: 141).

<sup>15</sup> 1.295–305, 332–40, 411–24, 836–41, 888–98, 1337–43; 2.411–418, 438–42, 622–37, 886–93, 1136–9, 1160–7, 1179–95; 3.171–93, 386–95, 427–31, 485–8, 492–501, 568–71, 975–1007, 1079–101, 1120–30, 1143–6; 4.95–8, 190–205, 395–409, 1333–6, 1347–62.

<sup>16</sup> Mori (2007: 458–72); cf. Clare (2002).

<sup>17</sup> Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004: 107–13).

<sup>18</sup> Hunter (2001: 122).

<sup>19</sup> Toohey (1994: 162–9).

<sup>20</sup> E.g. 1.295–305, 1.411–24, 2.622–37, 2.1179–95, 3.492–501, 4.190–205.

similar or different rhetorical approach to women, kings (Aietes), gods (Apollo), suppliants (Phineus, the seer, Phrixus' sons, the suppliants), and finally his comrades.

### 2.1. Jason's prayer to Apollo (1.411–24)

It is worth starting with Jason's prayer to Apollo, since it is indicative of Jason's rhetorical strategy with regards to his narratees. Jason is telling Apollo that he is responsible for the voyage. It is not clear, however, how or why Apollo is responsible and readers of the *Argonautica* can thus draw alternative conclusions: it could either be that Apollo is the cause only in Jason's opinion, or that Apollo actually told Jason that he was the cause of the expedition in his oracular response.<sup>21</sup> It is striking that Jason uses an element of prehistory to serve his rhetorical aims and make his address to Apollo realistic and effective.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, Jason emphatically presents his decision to embark on his voyage as dictated by the oracle of Apollo and in this sense his leading role, from the very beginning, obtains an authoritative and divine nature.<sup>23</sup>

The concept of retribution and gratitude is best illustrated in Jason's prayer to Apollo just before the Argonauts depart for the expedition (1.411–20). The prayer presents an elaborate style and consists of four parts: the address to Apollo, the reminder, the benefaction, and the request.<sup>24</sup> In the introduction, Jason addresses the god with special reference to his name and relation to the city of Aisonis. Jason starts with the typical imperative (*κλύθι*) and the address is made to Apollo, as the king of the city (*ἄναξ*). Jason further reminds Apollo that he had consulted the oracle and the god had

<sup>21</sup> For earlier passages that refer to the oracular response by Apollo, cf. 1.208–10, 300–2.

<sup>22</sup> It is to be noted that Apollonius begins his epic poem with an invocation to Apollo differentiating his position from that of the epic poets of the Archaic and Classical periods; cf. Albin (1996: 19–27).

<sup>23</sup> For the use of prehistory in Jason's speeches, cf. Berkowitz (2004: 25–7).

<sup>24</sup> In his book, Mpezantakos (1996) categorizes all speeches delivered during the Homeric battle based on criteria of structure, repetition, verbal expression, etc. The prayers constitute one of these categories and either present no specific structure or a structure comprising three parts: address, reminder, and request (Mpezantakos 1996: 187–95). Apollonius' prayer here appears even more complex and elaborate, since it also includes the part of benefaction, the promise of offering sacrifices in return.

promised to guide the journey safely to its completion—a promise which Jason asks him to keep. In the section of benefaction, Jason promises to make sacrifices in all different places (e.g. Pytho, Ortygia) together with whomever returns back home safely. The last section emphasizes the request from the god to bring them favourable terms upon their sailing in return for their sacrifice. The speech closes with wishful statements, as reflected in the use of optatives (*λύσαιμι, ἐπιπνεύσειε*). The tactical effectiveness of Jason's prayer is based upon the concept of mutual relations between gods and humans, which was widely used even from the archaic period;<sup>25</sup> the hero builds an altar and offers sacrifices, expecting to receive divine assistance in return. The explicit relationship between Apollo and Jason rhetorically stresses the importance of the hero's mission and reinforces his authority as the leader of the expedition.

### 2.2. Jason's speeches to Alcimede (1.295–305), Hypsipyle (1.836–41, 900–9), and Medea (3.975–1007, 3.1120–30, 4.395–409)

Through his speeches to the three women, Alcimede (his mother), Hypsipyle (the queen of the Lemnian women), and Medea (the Colchian princess), Jason attempts to console, calm them down, and appeal to their emotions in order to get what he needs from them. One significant argument that is used for this purpose rests on Jason's concept of the relations between humans and gods. A typical characteristic of Jason's rhetorical approach to the women with whom he is intimately involved is his use of controlled and gentle speech in order to calm their emotional explosions.<sup>26</sup>

The speech addressed to Alcimede (1.295–305) starts and ends with a negative imperative, with which Jason bids his mother first not to cause him too much bitter pain (*μὴ μοι λευγαλέας ἐμβάλλεο, μῆτερ, ἀνίας*), and at the end not to act as a bad omen for the ship (*μηδ' ὄρνις ἀεικελίη πέλε νηί*). Furthermore, Jason's requests are

<sup>25</sup> There are many examples of exchange relationships between gods and humans in the Homeric poems, as for example in *Odyssey* 1, when Athena herself asks Zeus to save Odysseus in return for all the sacrifices he has offered; on three different degrees of mutual dependence in the relationships between gods and humans as reflected in the prayers delivered during the Homeric battles, cf. Mpezantakos (1996: 191).

<sup>26</sup> Mori (2007: 464).



rhetorically emphasized by the explicit or implicit use of common views on prejudice, such as that grief could only cause other miseries or bad luck to the voyage. The main arguments of consolation involve the role of the gods and their relations with humans: gods are presented as responsible for the unexpected and thus inescapable pain brought upon humans, but gods are also those who can assist and save humans from their miseries. Jason comforts his mother with the promise that she will be favoured by Athena and Phoebus, together with the assistance of the heroes.

There is a similar argument concerning the rule of the gods over human affairs in his farewell speech to Hypsipyle. When Jason and his men are about to leave her palace in order to continue their journey, Hypsipyle reminds Jason that the throne will still be available on his return, and she asks for instructions in case she gives birth to his child (1.888–98).<sup>27</sup> In response, Jason appeals to the divine power dictating his fate and he offers specific and practical instructions for the future; his understanding is comforting and supportive. Moreover, Jason states that his only wish is to be delivered by the gods from the present trials and for Pelias to allow him to live in Iolcus.<sup>28</sup>

Jason's tone is far more personal when he addresses Medea, since he attempts to win over her trust and love in order to get her help. The scene between Jason and Medea at the temple of Hecate is modelled upon the supplication of Nausicaa by Odysseus in *Od.* 6.147–97.<sup>29</sup> In both scenes the supplications are made from a distance with no physical contact. Both heroes, Odysseus and Jason, offer compliments to the young women, Nausicaa and Medea respectively, and promise them fame in the future. The flattering approach is present throughout Jason's supplication (3.974, 3.1102) and brings success for him. The success of Jason's supplication is reflected in Medea's initial silence and later response, showing no hesitation but willingness to help out of love. Jason underlines that his

<sup>27</sup> Scholars have suggested that the relationship between Hypsipyle and Jason anticipates the one between Medea and Jason, which will follow in Book 1; cf. Vasilaros (2004: 283).

<sup>28</sup> Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004: 106–31) have convincingly argued that no anger is attributed to Jason's character; based on this passage, they indicate that Apollonius gives very little prominence to the fact that Pelias has committed a wrong against Jason, since this calls forth no anger or thirst of revenge; cf. Vian (1976: 260); Vasilaros (2004: 284).

<sup>29</sup> Plantinga (2000: 115).

supplication is stronger since he is coming both as a *ξείνος* and as an *ικέτης* (3.987). The *topos* used here is that the person supplicated is the only one who can help the suppliant, who is under the protection of Zeus. Jason employs language traditionally used to describe the wishes of the *ξείνος*,<sup>30</sup> even though his requests exceed the normal demands of hospitality (3.985–9). Apollonius obviously draws on the epic *topoi* of supplication but adapts them to the given circumstances of his figures and plot; he may deliberately omit physical contact in order to describe and underline the situation of the suppliant.<sup>31</sup>

Jason's arguments are mostly based on the principles of gratitude, exchange, and mutuality. He needs to persuade Medea of his reliability and therefore applies a series of promises in exchange for her favour. He is manipulative of her emotions and this becomes clear from the very first moment of their encounter, when Jason asks her not to fear or be ashamed but ask him freely whatever she wishes (3.975–1007).<sup>32</sup> The narrator has remarked in advance that Jason had realized that 'some divinely-sent affliction was upon her' (*ἄτη ἐνιπεπτηνίαν θευμορίη*)—a statement which most probably indicates Jason's motivation. We should also note that even before they met Jason was advised to use subtle words to obtain the drugs which would boost his strength: this was Mopsus' final piece of advice before Jason arrived at the prearranged meeting-place at the temple of Hecate.<sup>33</sup> It seems therefore that artful oratory was an accepted, and even expected, means of achieving one's own goals. Odysseus used his rhetorical skills to his own ends and even employed false speeches in order to succeed in his plan of revenge against the suitors. Nevertheless, in the *Argonautica*, the hero's resort to tactical speech is openly pre-stated and highlighted: Jason is actually encouraged by the Argonauts to use persuasive words to appeal to Medea; it is striking that the rhetorical importance of Jason's approach is emphasized by the narrator, who underlines the effect of his words upon the persons.

The same argument of reciprocity is emphasized in the speech at 3.1120–30, where Jason demonstrates his skill at calming down

<sup>30</sup> cf. 3.719, 3.988.

<sup>31</sup> Plantinga (2000: 126–7).

<sup>32</sup> Jason's first speech to Medea (3.975–1007) has been fully analysed by Toohey (1994: 165), who applies the pattern of tripartite structure, *exordium*, plea, and benefaction.

<sup>33</sup> Clare (2002: 278).

disruptive emotions.<sup>34</sup> Medea cries when she thinks of a future apart from Jason, and Jason immediately comforts her pain, as reflected in his address 'δαιμονίη' ('my poor friend'). The speech is logically sequenced and consists of sections of plea and benefaction, but in terms of content there is an unexpected element. The proposal of marriage is reaffirmed at the crucial moment when Medea leaves her father's palace and goes to the Argonauts, still harbouring doubts as to whether she should get the fleece or not. Furthermore, Jason takes a respectful oath on the names of Zeus and Hera that he will make her his legitimate wife as soon as they return back to Greece. The narrator comments that Jason encouraged Medea with his warm words.<sup>35</sup> The rhetorical effect of Jason's proposal here is based upon the commitment both on divine and human laws as the reward for Medea's help.

A different kind of argument is used in Jason's last speech to Medea (4.395–409). Medea is furious and angry at the prospect of being left behind by the Argonauts, as part of an agreement they have made with the Colchians to escape safely from their ambush: she wishes to set fire to their ship and destroy everything. Jason, in fear, tries to calm her anger, addressing her with 'honey-sweet words' (394: *μειλιχίους ἐπέεσσιν*). Jason's arguments are logically sequenced, as he tries to convince Medea that this plan is their best chance of avoiding battle and part of a ploy to trap and kill her brother, Aspyrtos. Jason's words stress the contrast between the personal worries of an individual and the anxieties on behalf of the group of comrades, and, as such a leader, Jason resembles Agamemnon (*Il.* 10.1 ff.) or Odysseus.<sup>36</sup>

Jason tries to control Medea by flattering, misleading, and taking advantage of her ignorance. His manipulative comment that Medea will be admired like her famous cousin Ariadne, who had helped Theseus defeat the Minotaur (3.997–1007), is striking to the reader. Jason does not, of course, mention that after Ariadne had helped Theseus he abandoned her on an island. But Apollonius' readers would most probably have been familiar with the outcome of Euripides' *Medea*.

<sup>34</sup> Mori (2007: 464).

<sup>35</sup> The narrator uses before and after Jason's speech the verb *προσπύξατο θάρυνέ τε* (4.94: 'embraced and spoke to her with warm words of encouragement') ~ *θάρυνέν τ' ἐπέει και ἰσχανεν ἀσχαλώσαν* (4.108: 'spoke to her encouragingly and supported her in her distress'). It is interesting that right afterwards they sailed the swift ship without delay to the sacred grove, so that they could thwart Aietes by spiriting the fleece away while it was still night (4.100–2).

<sup>36</sup> Hunter (1993: 21).

Thus, it is difficult for the reader not to suspect that Jason had planned all along to use Medea just as Theseus had used Ariadne.<sup>37</sup> It is made quite obvious to the reader that Jason's speech here is a false one: his rhetorical weapons are deception and false promises in order to persuade Medea for his own purposes. The intertextuality in the presentation of the myth of Medea in drama and epic enhances the reader's knowledge and insight into his character.

### 2.3. Jason's speeches to the king Aietes (3.386–95, 3.427–31)

The tactic of coming to terms of agreement in order to find the means of solving a situation was also adopted by Jason when Aietes had challenged him. The notion of negotiation rather than violence is central to the supplication speech. There are no gestures or positions of suppliants; nevertheless, the use of the language of supplication (3.391: *χάρις* and *ἄντομαι*), the exposition of the trouble of the visitors, and the promises in acknowledgement of the reciprocity of the relationship between host and guests indicate the suppliant nature of the speech.<sup>38</sup>

Jason does not specify the exact nature of his request but mostly focuses on the king's false assumptions about the potential threats to his throne. Jason's attempt to calm Aietes down and the opportunity he presents him to play the righteous king (in contrast to the arrogant Pelias, who has burdened the Argonauts with his cruel demand) have been extensively discussed by scholars.<sup>39</sup> His speech (3.386–95) is also indicative of Jason's tactic of flattery and diplomacy: as the narrator remarks, Jason spoke to him with 'sweet-honey words' (3.385: *μειλιχίσιον*) and he concluded 'smiling with a gentle voice' (3.396 *ὑποσσαιίνων ἀγανῆ ὀπί*). In presenting Jason's attempt to win over the king, Apollonius here draws on the features of a traditional supplication speech in epic and drama from the Classical period.

Jason emphatically points out that they have all come under divine compulsion and at the command of an arrogant king; it is fate and necessity that has led Jason to Aietes' palace rather than any other

<sup>37</sup> Mori (2007: 467).

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Plantinga (2000: 112–13).

<sup>39</sup> Hunter (1993: 24); Clare (2002: 276); Mori (2007: 486).

motivation.<sup>40</sup> He then presents his request begging Aietes to grant them the golden fleece, promising in return to spread his divine renown throughout all of Greece, and offering a swift requital in war.<sup>41</sup> His words remind the reader of Odysseus' attempt to persuade the Cyclops to spare the lives of his comrades; the contrast between the Cyclops, who was uncompromising, and Aietes, who made a demanding request offering the hero a chance of survival, reflects the way in which Apollonius recalls Homeric motifs while making his own innovations.

Jason's reaction to Aietes' challenge is silence and embarrassment (423: ἀφθογγος, ἀμηχανέων κακότητι; 432: ἀμηχανίη βεβολημένος); his subsequent reply is brief and very sharp (3.427–31).<sup>42</sup> Firstly, he recognizes the king's right to impose any constraint upon him, thus acknowledging Aietes' authority while buying himself time to find the means of accomplishing his labour.<sup>43</sup> Secondly, Jason draws again on the concept of fate and necessity to justify his choice of acceptance. This line of argumentation, with respect to situations that have been imposed upon Jason by others, determines all of his speeches from the very beginning of the expedition to its end.

Jason's flattering and diplomatic approach does not evidently bring the desired result in this instance. The king is not interested in the suppliants' identity nor in their intentions; he does not pay attention to Jason's offer of fame in Hellas and help against his enemies. Instead, he sets impossible tasks for Jason to accomplish in order to

<sup>40</sup> In order to strengthen his statement of confidence he uses a rhetorical question to imply that no one would have taken such a risk out of aspiration for kingship: 'Who would be so reckless as to choose to cross so great a stretch of sea to take another man's possessions?' However, Hunter (1993a: 24) suggests that the answer would be, 'every Argonaut except Jason', and argues that Jason does not present the same intelligence and supernatural skills as his comrades, whereas the difference between them is one of freedom of action.

<sup>41</sup> Clare (2002: 276) underlines that 'Jason makes basically the same offer as that conveyed in Argus' earlier attempted negotiation... but he is much more concise in his address to the Colchian king.' Jason's offer is rhetorically effective since it reflects the Argonauts' good will and commitment; furthermore, Mori (2007: 468) identifies Jason's offer with an opportunity given to Aietes to play the role of the good king in contrast to the presumptuous Pelias.

<sup>42</sup> For the disjunction between speech and narrative frame, cf. Clare (2002: 277), who observes that here the narrator gives considerable attention to Jason's pondering of the dilemma and his response is glossed beforehand as manifesting craftiness, whereas the speech itself is nothing more than agreeing in the most morose fashion possible to Aietes' terms.

<sup>43</sup> Mori (2007: 468).

get the fleece. Jason's speech, however, is not unsuccessful, since they are not killed by the king immediately. At this point Apollonius is manipulating the supplication motif to highlight his hero's excellence in strategy; the king had announced in his previous speech that 'he would not cut off their tongue and hands out of respect for the ritual bond between him and his visitors created by the sharing of the table' (3.377).<sup>44</sup> In this way, Apollonius is using the traditional epic motif in order to validate the persuasive force of Jason's rhetorical performance. Diplomacy and respect for the gods' will are the virtues highlighted by Jason in the crucial scenes with King Aietes, as well as in the other speeches in the poem, rather than the martial heroism widely exemplified in the *Iliad*. Odysseus' virtues in the *Odyssey* may resemble those of Jason's, but he had also shown bravery and audacity when he confronted Circe, Cyclops, Teiresias, and other figures on his return journey. Conversely, it is Jason's versatility as an orator and his ability to negotiate upon which we are left to ponder.

#### 2.4. Jason's speeches to the suppliants: Phineus (2.411–18, 438–42) and Phrixus' sons (2.1136–9, 1160–7, 1179–95)

In the course of the *Argonautica*, Jason receives as suppliants the seer Phineus, who is being harassed by the Harpies, and the sons of Phrixus, who are shipwrecked on the island of Ares. The main rhetorical appeal in Jason's encounter with the suppliants rests, in each case, on the belief in divine providence and its rule over humans: namely, that the suppliants encountered the Argonauts when they were in need of a god-driven event. But as it turns out, the Argonauts are benefited by suppliants as well: Phineus encourages them to pass successfully through the Dark Rocks and gives them prophecies about their safe arrival in Aia, while Phrixus' sons join the Argonauts in their expedition. Moreover, it is later Argus, the son of Phrixus, who secures Medea's help for Jason.

Jason's speech to Phrixus' sons—a combination of consolation and exhortation—takes place following the sacrifice they make at the temple of Hares and their subsequent feast (2.1179–95). First,

<sup>44</sup> εἰ δέ κε μὴ προπάρουθεν ἐμῆς ἤψασθε τραπέζης, / ἢ τ' ἀνὰ γλώσσας τε ταμῶν / καὶ χεῖρε κείσασσιν / ἀμφοτέρως, οἷοισιν ἐπιπρόεργα πάδεσσιν, / ὥς κεν ἐρητύοισθε καὶ ὕστερον ὀρηθῆναι, / οἷα δὲ καὶ μακάρεσσιν ἐπεφύσασθε θεοῖσιν (3.378–82); cf. Plantinga (2000: 113).

he draws on the concept of divine power, in particular Zeus' rule, from which no mortal can ever escape, reminding the suppliants that they and their antecedents were saved by Zeus himself. Jason's aim is to attract Phrixus' sons to join his crew in order to have their help in Aia. In this context, Jason further underlines the divine nature of Argo, originally built by Athena, and compares it with their ship, which was destroyed before even getting to the Dark Rocks. In sequence, Jason makes his request and proposes that Phrixus' sons join in their expedition; in particular, he asks them to become their assistants (*ἐπίρροθοι*) and their leaders (*ἡγεμονῆες*). His offer is rhetorically persuasive since it both secures them a divine means of continuing their journey and flatters them with an authoritative role.

Jason's closing statement that 'his expedition is to atone for the attempted sacrifice of Phrixus, which has brought Zeus' anger on the descendants of Aeolus (2.1192–5), provides details about the Argonautic prehistory. However, as Berkowitz argues, this reference to prehistory is distorted by Jason's aim of persuading the sons of Phrixus to go back to Colchis as his allies.<sup>45</sup> Jason is careful to point out that the Argo can complete their plans and overpass all obstacles. By referring to Zeus, Jason obligates the Phrixids to accept his request for assistance, and Zeus' role in rescuing the four men is meant to add validity to Jason's arguments. It is likely that Jason himself invented the story about Zeus' anger against Aeolus' descendants (1195), as it is also likely that Pelias had invented the sacrificial offerings of Phrixus to Jason to manipulate the latter's religious fears and facilitate his removal (1.15–17). The references to Zeus' anger and the sacrificial offerings of Phrixus advance Jason's rhetorical goals with the Phrixids, just as they might have served Pelias' purposes with Jason.

### 2.5. Jason as a leader: the speeches to his comrades

Jason's speeches to his comrades reflect his position as a leader, as well as his tactics and rhetorical strategy as a whole. Apollonius celebrates a new heroism of the whole group rather than the individual heroic ideal of the Homeric world. The Argonautic virtues are the loyalty, solidarity, and communal mutuality. Jason is *primus inter pares*, and as such he attempts to persuade the Argonauts to elect the

<sup>45</sup> Berkowitz (2004: 27–35).

best man as their leader before their departure for the expedition (1.332–40).<sup>46</sup> The speech is characterized by its brevity and even its harshness:<sup>47</sup> it constitutes an appeal of exhortation and advice. The narrator describes Jason as prudent and wise (*εὐφρονέων*). As an introduction, Jason draws the attention to the necessity of sailing immediately, as soon as the winds are favourable, since everything else is ready for the voyage. Thus, he shows a practical mind and determination. He then appeals to the idea of communal solidarity and emphasizes that the voyage and the *nostos* are of common interest. The best leader is defined as the one who can conduct both their quarrels and agreements with foreigners. The implication is that the best leader for the expedition could only be Jason, if, as Hunter states, 'arete consists in the possession of appropriate qualities for a particular task and involves notions of what is fitting in a particular context'.<sup>48</sup>

The most obvious and immediate choice of leader is Hercules, but he refuses and imposes the election of Jason, to whom the epithet 'warlike' (*ἀρῆμιος*) is given, and who accepts 'joyfully' (*γηθόσυνος*). Hunter remarks that both Jason and Hercules 'base their appeal not on a strict hierarchy of absolute worth but rather on a recognition of what is fitting and appropriate'.<sup>49</sup> Jason, however, has the appropriate qualities to lead the expedition, such as the sense of responsibility for the group as a whole, in contrast to the isolation and idiosyncratic nature of Hercules.

Jason's superiority and excellence as a leader are based upon the absence of anger and revenge. As regards anger, Jason resembles Homer's Odysseus more than his Achilles. According to the Aristotelian terms, Jason is an effective orator who knows how to manage anger and pity in order to persuade his audience: he is capable of managing the emotional outbreaks of his comrades. When, for example, the volatile Idas rebukes the other Argonauts for their decision to put their trust in women rather than arms, no one speaks against him (3.558–63). Instead, Jason ignores the outburst and urges

<sup>46</sup> The whole assembly is reminiscent to those in the heroic years, where Agamemnon, the leader of the Greeks in the Trojan war, appears as first among equals; cf. Vasilaros (2004: 182–3).

<sup>47</sup> Vasilaros (2004: 182).

<sup>48</sup> Hunter (1993a: 18).

<sup>49</sup> The concept of the heroic ideal is far different in Alexandrian epic poetry from in the Homeric poems; cf. Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004: 129–31), Vasilaros (2004: 184).

the rest to proceed: 'Let Argus leave the ship, then, since this proposal is pleasing to everyone' (3.568–9).<sup>50</sup>

Another example of Jason's skill at calming emotional explosions is well illustrated in a kind of reconciliation speech with Telamon, a comrade who had attacked him for neglecting Hercules (1.1337–43). The structure is linear and focused upon Jason's criticism of Telamon's behaviour. Jason's superiority as a leader is reinforced by his decision not to nurse a bitter wrath (*ἀδευκέα μῆνιν*), even though he has felt pain. Here, the reader unavoidably recalls Agamemnon at the beginning of the *Iliad*, who, instead of compromising and uniting his army, reacted with an intense emotional outburst against Achilles and the other Greeks when they expected him to give up Chryseis. Apollonius evidently distances his central hero's characterization from that of the Homeric king by emphasizing his ability to calm and control anger. Nevertheless, it appears that 'the poet has created a fusion of the quarrel of *Iliad* 1 with the *synkrisis* of Achilles and Odysseus in a powerful exploration of the dynamic tensions within a group'.<sup>51</sup> The depiction of Jason here reflects Apollonius' tendency to rewrite earlier literary figures, in particular the Homeric characters.

It is interesting that Jason attempts to explain and understand Telamon's motivation of anger (*μενέγνας*)<sup>52</sup>—a new element of approach that would most probably fit the Hellenistic world and is closely connected with the virtue of loyalty, which Jason expects in return from Telamon in the future.<sup>53</sup> The anxiety and despair of a leader, when he worries primarily for the life of his comrades, is best demonstrated in Jason's 'testing' speech, as glossed by the narrator (2.622–37). Jason appears regretful and weak at the end of the major dangers of the outward journey and his speech is tailored rhetorically in order to reassert his position as a leader exactly at the beginning of the Colchian section of the poem.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Thus Mori (2007: 464).

<sup>51</sup> Hunter (2004: 116).

<sup>52</sup> Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004: 116).

<sup>53</sup> For Telamon's loyalty toward Jason, as will be proved in 3.196, 1176, cf. Vasilaros (2004: 329–30).

<sup>54</sup> Hunter (1993: 20–1) notes that 'the scene is a vital confirmation of the Argonauts' willingness to press on with the task they have begun, and it takes the form of a reprise of the scene of Jason's election.'

The last speech to examine here is Jason's speech in the assembly,<sup>55</sup> which was held prior to meeting Aietes (3.171–93). This speech is highly significant because it aims to reinforce Jason's position as a leader: it demonstrates his programmatic statements and is used to give advice and encourage the Argonauts.

The structure and style of the speech demonstrate his ability as an orator. First, in what Hunter calls a 'programmatic rejection of Odyssean behaviour',<sup>56</sup> Jason announces his strategy and submits the matter to the decision of the group, appealing again to their communal solidarity and mutual interdependence. What is important to note is that the emphasis is placed upon the common right of speech, which will increase the chances of a safe return. Next, Jason explains that he will use speech rather than violence to probe King Aietes' intentions (3.179: *πειρήσω δ' ἐπέεσι*). In this way, Jason believes that the Argonauts will be able to decide whether to engage with Aietes in war, or whether 'some other device' can help them win the king over (184: *μήτις ἐπίρροθος*). To strengthen his point, he uses a general statement, referring to the success of diplomatic negotiations in the past, when 'arguments have smoothed the way and achieved what manly strength could hardly accomplish' (3.188–9: *πολλάκι τοι βέα μῦθος, ὃ κεν μόλις ἐξανύσειεν ἡγορέη, τόδ' ἔρεξε κατὰ χρέος, ἥπερ εἴκει, πρηΰνας*), before referring to the example of Phrixus who was also received by Aietes in times past. Given the Argonauts' connection with Phrixus, this particular example stresses their hope for a friendly reception—a hope which is also conveyed by Jason's reference to Xenios Zeus at the close of his speech.<sup>57</sup> It is striking that the narrator comments on this speech by saying that 'the young men all swiftly approved his words' (3.194: *ἐπήνησαν δὲ νέοι ἔπος Αἰσονίδαο*); it demonstrates that Jason's skill as an orator has succeeded in renewing and reaffirming his leadership.

Jason's position as a leader is different from that of the other Argonauts because he does not have freedom of action. On the other hand, Jason often appears *ἀμήχανος* rather than *πολυμήχανος* because he does not possess intelligence or the supernatural skills of

<sup>55</sup> This assembly echoes the divine assembly, which opens *Iliad* 8, and stresses Jason's authority; cf. Hunter (1989: 118).

<sup>56</sup> Hunter (1993a: 24–5).

<sup>57</sup> Hunter (1989: 119) notes that 'Jason's words also recall the plea of the shipwrecked sons of Phrixus to the Argonauts themselves (2.1131–3).

the most famous Argonauts. Jason eventually imposes his authority on them through his silence, control of anger, and the rhetorical appeals to communality and *homonoia*.

### 3. JASON'S RHETORIC: INFLUENCE FROM THE CLASSICAL PERIOD AND INNOVATION

The use of direct speech is significantly limited in the *Argonautica* (29%), yet it is rhetorically powerful and contributes significantly not only to the crucial moments of decision-making in the poem, but also to the characterization of the principal hero, Jason. According to Aristotle (*Rh.* 1356a) there are three kinds of rhetorical proofs: *ethos*, concerning the character and personality of the persons involved in a discourse; *pathos*, involving appeals to certain emotions or to widely accepted ideas; and *logos*, rational arguments (including arguments from probability, *kata to eikos*). As has been shown, Jason mainly employs arguments from *pathos*: he manipulates the emotions and psychological state of women; he appeals to common views on solidarity and mutual independence when addressing his comrades and demanding their loyalty; finally he expresses views on divine force, fate, and reciprocity when making a request from a king, suppliants, or any other person involved in a kind of exchange.

There are similarities between Jason's rhetorical approach and the tactics used by the Homeric heroes or tragic figures from the Classical period: they all attempt to manipulate the feelings of others in order to achieve their own goals. Thus, for example, Odysseus begs Circe to keep her promise and give him instructions for the journey to the Hades, while he encourages his comrades to set off with 'honey-sweet words' (*Od.* 10.466-560: *μειλιχίους ἐπέεσσαι*), as he also flatters Nausicaa in order to get her help in the land of the Phaeacians (*Od.* 6.119-26, 149-85). Hector, on the other hand, when addressing Andromache before his death in battle, appeals to the views of duty and divine will in order to persuade her to support his decision and to calm her down (*Il.* 6.381-502). Appeals to emotions (*pathos*) are widely used in the speeches of tragic heroes in Classical tragedy too. In particular, emotional pleas used to achieve one's goals and manipulate others, such as Jason usually employs, can be found in

Euripidean tragedy; for example Medea's speech, in which she laments the situation of her marriage and appeals to the Corinthian women for their support (*Eur. Med.* 214-66), or Jocasta's speech, which aims to persuade Polyneices and Eteocles to stop their quarrel (*Phoen.* 469-585). There are many more parallels of rhetorical emotional appeals in epic poetry and tragedy from the Classical period with which to compare Jason's strategy; the reader of the *Argonautica* was doubtless able to identify similar rhetorical patterns.<sup>58</sup>

At the same time, however, Jason's rhetorical strategy stands at some distance from that of earlier heroes. He employs stereotyped arguments of common themes, such as divine rule, fate, reciprocity, supplication, consolation, *homonoia*, prevention of violence, etc., but he shifts the emphasis from his own expectations to focus on his addressees and their needs. Tactical oratory in the *Argonautica* is openly recognized and attributed to Jason's character, and it is employed for the sole purpose of the expedition's success, i.e. to get the golden fleece and return safely. Rhetorical persuasion is a granted means of success, and diplomacy is a central element in Jason's heroic presentation. He is not a brave or a passionate hero fighting for glory (*kleos*) or for his own family; rather, he is appointed as the leader of the expedition and he acts out of necessity, instead of from his desires or ideals. He stands out due to his two marked qualities: beauty and oratorical versatility.

The poem is concerned with Jason's rhetorical dynamics and throughout the poem there is a marked preference for negotiation over open aggression; as Mori observes, 'much of the dramatic focus has shifted, oddly in a heroic epic, from martial to verbal exploits'.<sup>59</sup> A network of rhetorical acts of persuasion is used to subvert the will of Aietes, to win Medea's love and assistance, to reinforce *homonoia* among the Argonauts, and finally to kill Medea's brother and get away safely from King Aietes.

An innovation of the *Argonautica* is to be seen in the prominent role of the narrator's presence with regards to the art of persuasion. The narrator determines the reader's interpretation of and response towards Jason's speeches: Apollonius exemplifies the hero's method,

<sup>58</sup> This is not the place to explore more parallels, but one can think of the speeches made by Nestor, Achilles, Agamemnon, Patroclus in the *Iliad*, as well the speeches by Telemachus, Penelope, Athena, Calypso, etc. in the *Odyssey*.

<sup>59</sup> Mori (2007: 458).

and underlines in advance the success of Jason's speeches and their rhetorical effectiveness upon the other person. Thus, his ability as an orator is given and it guarantees the outcome. However, the reader is not being invited to recognize the patterns of rhetorical art but to understand where the emphasis is placed. As Mori reminds us, 'the study of persuasive speech historically included not only an analysis of the structure and strategy of political rhetoric, but also an exploration of the entire discursive domain'.<sup>60</sup> Rhetorical handbooks containing illustrative examples were available for students of the elite classes who needed to improve their oratorical skills to participate in political debate and diplomacy.

Thus, a new heroism is prevalent in Jason's speeches, based upon the group mentality, the absence of anger and revenge, and most importantly the power of persuasion over violence. Jason does not express his own feelings, nor does he show passion, anger, or desire for revenge, even though he deals with impossible trials and demanding persons. Jason does not have any emotional outbursts; on the contrary, he is exemplary in the way he calms other people, controls their anger, and succeeds in reaching an agreement with them. Contrast Homer's Achilles, who was characterized by his desire for revenge, his pain, and his passionate nature, or Odysseus, who most closely anticipates Jason's leading role as a gifted speaker, and who appears depressed, sensitive, and weak in Calypso's island. Even the version of Jason in Euripides' *Medea*, though he may seem to be reserved, is much more aggressive than he is in the *Argonautica* (*Med.* 446–64); he does not flatter Medea but is indifferent (*Med.* 522–75); he is much more selfish (*Med.* 1323–50). In short, Jason of the *Argonautica* is always calm, he controls the disruptive emotions of his companions and the people he encounters, and he is keen to establish *homonoiia* among his men. He has a strong sense of responsibility as a leader and his silence attributes an element of wisdom. Jason's means of persuasion are consistent with the prevalence of negotiation and diplomacy in the Hellenistic world.

<sup>60</sup> Mori (2007: 463).

## 4

## Praise and Persuasion: The Role of Rhetoric in Theocritus' Poetry

Gunther Martin

A cliché of literary history has it that the transition to the Hellenistic period, the end of the independent *polis*, is marked by a withdrawal from the political to the private sphere, away from the literary genres that invited participation of large sections of the citizen body at community-sponsored events.<sup>1</sup> This model explained why rhetoric lost its visibility not just as an independent genre but also as an element in other types of writing. As a consequence there is a dearth of scholarship on the topic.<sup>2</sup> Since this volume is effective in countering the idea that the lack of extant rhetorical products from the Hellenistic era reflects a cessation of relevant activity, I shall undertake to look at the literary side—to see if the low profile of oratory in the direct transmission is equally deceptive in the literature of the period. My focus will be on some changes in the attitude to, and the use of, rhetoric in Theocritus. This poet seems, at first glance, exemplary for the prejudices against his time, symbolizing the withdrawal from the public into a reclusive circle and, at least on the surface level, taking refuge from the urban and civic sphere in the primitive world of shepherds and flocks.

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Hose (1999: 137–40).

<sup>2</sup> The index of Blackwell's *Companion to Greek Rhetoric* (Worthington 2007) does not have entries on Theocritus, Aratus, Posidippus or Herondas; Callimachus is mentioned twice, but never in a specifically rhetorical context. The exception is Apollonius of Rhodes, to whom an entire article is dedicated and whose speeches receive attention elsewhere, e.g. Hunter (1993a: 138–51) and Eleni Volonaki in this volume.