

Athens and Rome

Oratory and Rhetoric

Athens

- Rhetoric then may be defined as the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever. This is the function of no other of the arts, each of which is able to instruct and persuade in its own special subject; thus, medicine deals with health and sickness, geometry with the properties of magnitudes, arithmetic with number, and similarly with all the other arts and sciences. But Rhetoric, so to say, appears to be able to discover the means of persuasion in reference to any given subject. That is why we say that as an art its rules are not applied to any particular definite class of things. (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.2.1)
- But, because there has been implanted in us the power to persuade each other and to make clear to each other whatever we desire, not only have we escaped the life of wild beasts, but we have come together and founded cities and made laws and invented arts; and, generally speaking, there is no institution devised by man which the power of speech has not helped us to establish. (Isocrates, *Antidosis* 254)

The difference between oratory and rhetoric

- The wrath sing, goddess, of Peleus' son, Achilles, that destructive wrath which brought countless woes upon the Achaeans, and sent forth to Hades many valiant souls of heroes, and made them themselves spoil for dogs and every bird; thus the plan of Zeus came to fulfillment, [5] from the time when first they parted in strife Atreus' son, king of men, and brilliant Achilles. Who then of the gods was it that brought these two together to contend? The son of Leto and Zeus; for he in anger against the king roused throughout the host an evil pestilence, and the people began to perish, [10] because upon the priest Chryses the son of Atreus had wrought dishonour. For he had come to the swift ships of the Achaeans to free his daughter, bearing ransom past counting; and in his hands he held the wreaths of Apollo who strikes from afar, on a staff of gold; and he implored all the Achaeans, [15] but most of all the two sons of Atreus, the marshallers of the people: "Sons of Atreus, and other well-greaved Achaeans, to you may the gods who have homes upon Olympus grant that you sack the city of Priam, and return safe to your homes; but my dear child release to me, and accept the ransom [20] out of reverence for the son of Zeus, Apollo who strikes from afar."

Oratory and democracy

- Sicily: overthrow of tyranny (Thrasybulus 465 BC) and growth of democracy
- The Sophists (Corax, Tisias, Gorgias, Socrates)

The Canon of Ten Attic Orators

- Antiphon
- Andocides
- Lysias
- Isocrates
- Isaeus
- Aeschines
- Demosthenes
- Hyperides
- Lycurgus
- Dinarchus

Isocrates versus Plato

- Isocrates: imitation of good models (*Antidosis*, *Against the Sophists*), *doxa*
- Plato's opposition to rhetoric in the *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*, dialectic v rhetoric (= flattery)

Demosthenes



Demosthenes

- Many speeches are delivered, men of Athens, at almost every meeting of the Assembly, about the wrongs that Philip has been committing, ever since the conclusion of peace, not only against you but also against the other states, and all the speakers would, I am sure, admit in theory, though they do not put it in practice, that the object both of our words and deeds must be to check and chastise his arrogance; yet I perceive that all our interests have been so completely betrayed and sacrificed, that—I am afraid it is an ominous thing to say, but yet the truth—even if all who address you had wanted to propose, and all of you had wanted to pass, measures that were bound to bring our affairs into the worst possible plight, I do not think they could have been in a worse condition than they are today. (Dem. 9 *Third Philippic* 1)

Demosthenes

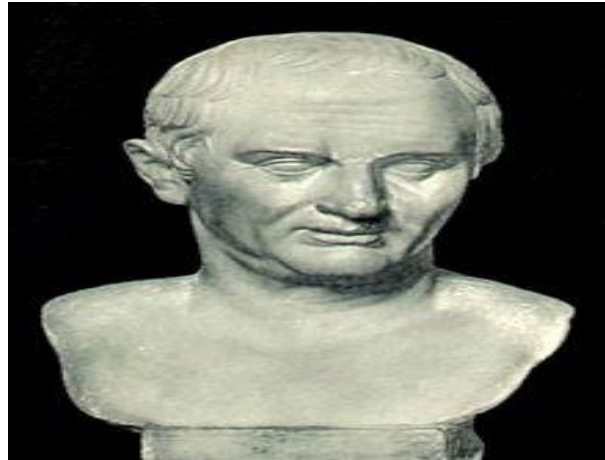
- Evening had already fallen when a messenger arrived bringing to the presiding councillors the news that Elatea had been taken. They were sitting at supper, but they instantly rose from table, cleared the booths in the marketplace of their occupants, and unfolded the hurdles, while others summoned the commanders and ordered the attendance of the trumpeter. The commotion spread through the whole city. At daybreak on the morrow the presidents summoned the Council to the Council House, and the citizens flocked to the place of assembly. Before the Council could introduce the business and prepare the agenda, the whole body of citizens had taken their places on the hill. The Council arrived, the presiding Councillors formally reported the intelligence they had received, and the courier was introduced. As soon as he had told his tale, the marshal put the question, Who wishes to speak? No one came forward. The marshal repeated his question again and again, but still no one rose to speak, although all the commanders were there, and all the orators, and although the country with her civic voice was calling for the man who should speak for her salvation; for we may justly regard the voice, which the crier raises as the laws direct, as the civic voice of our country. (Dem. 18, *On the Crown* 169-70)

Aristotle

- Aristotle, *Rhetoric*. His three means of persuasion: logos (inductive reasoning and examples; deductive reasoning and enthymeme = rhetorical syllogism), pathos, ethos.
- Aristotle's three genres: deliberative (future), forensic (past), epideictic (present)
- Aristotle's commonplaces, or topics

Rome

- *Rhetorica ad Herennium*



Cicero

- Cicero, *De Inventione* (cf. Middle Ages and Renaissance), *De Oratore*, *Topics*, *Brutus*, *Orator* (style), *De Optimo Genere Oratorum*, *De Partitionibus Oratoriae*
- The ‘ideal orator’ versed in all branches of learning (liberal arts)

Cicero

- But still I will first put this question to her herself, whether she wishes me to deal with her strictly, and gravely, and according to old-fashioned notions of right and wrong; or indulgently, mercifully, and courteously? If I am to proceed in the old-fashioned way and manner of pleading, then I must summon up from the shades below one of those bearded old men,—not men with those little bits of imperials which she takes such a fancy to, but a man with that long shaggy beard which we see on the ancient statues and images,—to reproach the woman, and to speak in my stead, lest she by any chance should get angry with me. Let, then, some one of her own family rise up, and above all others that great blind Claudius of old time [censor 312 BC]. For he will feel the least grief, inasmuch as he will not see her. And, in truth, if he can come forth from the dead, he will deal thus with her; he will say,—“Woman, what have you to do with Caelius? What have you to do with a very young man? What have you to do with one who does not belong to you? Why have you been so intimate with him as to lend him gold, or so much an enemy of his as to fear his poison? Had you never seen that your father, had you never heard that your uncle, your grand-father, your great-grandfather, your great-great-grand-father, were all consuls? Did you not know, moreover, that you were bound in wedlock to Quintus Metellus, a most illustrious and gallant man, and most devoted to his country? who from the first moment that he put his foot over his threshold, showed himself superior to almost all citizens in virtue, and glory, and dignity. When you had become his wife, and, being previously of a most illustrious race yourself, had married into a most renowned family, why was Caelius so intimate with you? Was he a relation? a connection? Was he a friend of your husband? Nothing of the sort. What then was the reason, except it was some folly or lust? Even if the images of us, the men of your family, had no influence over you, did not even my own daughter, that celebrated Quinta Claudia, admonish you to emulate the praise belonging to our house from the glory of its women? Did not that vestal virgin Claudia recur to your mind, who embraced her father while celebrating his triumph, and prevented his being dragged from his chariot by a hostile tribune of the people? Why had the vices of your brother more weight with you than the virtues of your father, of your grandfather, and others in regular descent ever since my own time; virtues exemplified not only in the men, but also in the women? Was it for this that I broke the treaty which was concluded with Pyrrhus, that you should every day make new treaties of most disgraceful love? Was it for this that I brought water into the city, that you should use it for your impious purposes? Was it for this that I made the Appian road, that you should travel along it escorted by other men besides your husband?” (Cicero, *Pro Caelio* 33-34)

Cicero

- However, we will say nothing of these things, which are acts of a more hardy sort of villainy. Let us speak rather of his meaner descriptions of worthlessness. You, with those jaws of yours, and those sides of yours, and that strength of body suited to a gladiator, drank such quantities of wine at the marriage of Hippias, that you were forced to vomit the next day in the sight of the Roman people. O action disgraceful not merely to see, but even to hear of! If this had happened to you at supper amid those vast drinking-cups of yours, who would not have thought it scandalous? But in an assembly of the Roman people, a man holding a public office, a master of the horse, to whom it would have been disgraceful even to belch, vomiting filled his own bosom and the whole tribunal with fragments of what he had been eating reeking with wine. But he himself confesses this among his other disgraceful acts. Let us proceed to his more splendid offenses....Your colleague was sitting in the rostra, clothed in purple robe, on a golden chair, wearing a crown. You mount the steps; you approach his chair, (if you were a priest of Pan, you ought to have recollected that you were consul too;) you display a diadem. There is a groan over the whole forum. Where did the diadem come from? For you had not picked it up when lying on the ground, but you had brought it from home with you, a premeditated and deliberately planned wickedness. You placed the diadem on his head amid the groans of the people; he rejected it amid great applause. You then alone, O wicked man, were found both to advise the assumption of kingly power, and to wish to have him for your master who was your colleague and also to try what the Roman people might be able to bear and to endure. [86] Moreover, you even sought to move his pity; you threw yourself at his feet as a suppliant; begging for what? to be a slave? You might beg it for yourself, when you had lived in such a way from the time that you were a boy that you could bear everything, and would find no difficulty in being a slave; but certainly you had no commission from the Roman people to try for such a thing for them.
- Oh how splendid was that eloquence of yours, when you harangued the people stark naked! what could be more foul than this? more shameful than this? more deserving of every sort of punishment? Are you waiting for me to prick you more? This that I am saying must tear you and bring blood enough if you have any feeling at all. I am afraid that I may be detracting from the glory of some most eminent men. Still my indignation shall find a voice. What can be more scandalous than for that man to live who placed a diadem on a man's head, when every one confesses that that man was deservedly slain who rejected it? (Cicero, *Second Philippic* 63, 85-86)

Quintilian (c. 35 – c. 100 AD)

Institutio oratoria



The five canons of rhetoric

Invention

Arrangement

Style

Memory

Delivery

Trivium and Quadrivium

- The trivium: rhetoric, grammar and logic;
- the quadrivium: geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, music.
- Combining the trivium and quadrivium leads to the seven liberal arts of classical study. The trivium is implicit in the *De nuptiis* of Martianus Capella (fifth century AD).

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