

The Common Foe

Perceptions of Persia and Macedon in Demosthenes' public speeches.

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Index

Introduction	3
Chapter I: Setting the Stage	4
Chapter II: Persian Prominence	8
Chapter III: Measuring Macedon	21
Chapter IV: An Awkward Alliance	26
Conclusion	33
Bibliography	35

Introduction

As is evident from the title above, the concept of a 'common foe' is the subject of this essay. This phrase denotes the sociological implication that people who identify themselves as a community often indulge in the portrayal of an external community as different, or 'other', which has the potential to lead to a polarization between 'us' and 'them'. It is safe to say that this concept is embedded in human nature, for we have encountered it constantly across the ages since the dawn of civilization. Our present-day community is surely no exception. Speaking for the Netherlands, we still find a superficial animosity towards Germany on the basis of acts done in the past. Taking a broader view, the ordinary citizens of the 'West' still enjoy regarding the former Soviet sphere as backwards, and to portray its inhabitants as vodka-slurping mongrels. The latest addition to the 'others' is certainly the Islamic middle-east, which is commonly seen as mostly consisting of religious fanatics whose prime purpose in life is the destruction of the 'West'.

Needless to say, these views are far from realistic. Evidently that is not their purpose; rather they are instrumental in defining one's community. Every community is inherently ethnocentric, and the supposed existence of a common foe is highly valuable in strengthening a common identity. This is not hard to understand; it is easy to extol one's own virtues by holding degrading views of those who do things otherwise. Therefore it is hardly surprising that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to find a community that does not have a common foe of sorts – provided they have knowledge of other communities.

This essay will concentrate on the aforementioned thematic in the context of fourth-century Athens. Through the eyes of Demosthenes (384 – 322 BC) we may attempt to reconstruct the popular Athenian views towards the 'other', the Persian empire in this case. Naturally, it is not a coincidence that the focus is on the works of Demosthenes. Apart from the obvious reasons – his surviving corpus – he also witnessed the rise to power of Macedon, and he certainly did not regard this with indifference. His career is chiefly defined by his agitation against Macedon, and this, in turn, has consequences for his perceptions of Persia. In a recent study, Peter Hunt has pointed out that Demosthenes explicitly reverses his opinion of Persia throughout his career. He states that 'amoral calculations of interest (...) go a long way towards explaining Demosthenes' reversal on Persia.'¹ Though it is hard to disagree with Hunt's assessment, as we shall see, there is more to be said about this reversal. The aim of this essay, then, is to trace this reversal; how did Demosthenes manage to sustain his political integrity whilst completely reversing his opinion on such a, for historical reasons, delicate subject as the Persian empire? And to what extent can this reversal be

¹ Peter Hunt, *War, Peace, and Alliance in Demosthenes' Athens* (Cambridge 2010), 83.

attributed to the threatening rise to prominence of Philip II of Macedon?

In order to fully understand Demosthenes' perceptions, a short historical context is necessary against which Demosthenes' views may be judged; what was the common Greek attitude towards the Persian empire? This will be the starting point of the essay, after which Demosthenes' public speeches will be treated in chronological order with a clear emphasis on his depictions of Persia.

Chapter I: Setting the Stage

To reconstruct the common Greek attitude towards the Persian empire accurately is a highly problematic task. Immediately one is confronted with a variety of difficulties; was there such a thing as a 'common Greek' attitude? To what extent do our surviving literary sources represent the conceptions of the proverbial man in the street? How decisive are political factors in the creation of an identity of the Persian 'other', as opposed to cultural factors? To address these problems, and related difficulties, adequately and in detail is a substantial research on its own, and I shall make no pretences of accomplishing such a feat in the few words devoted to this subject. However, it is possible to sketch a concise overview of the dominant Greek attitudes towards Persia. In fact, this is even mandatory, for we cannot judge Demosthenes' perceptions towards Persia without a proper context. Not only would Demosthenes himself be influenced by the dominant views of Persia, but the same applies for his audience, and any successful orator would have little choice but to pay heed to the conceptions of his audience. Thus I shall attempt to touch briefly on this subject, making allowances for the lack of depth.

It is useful to employ the distinction between action-based and status-based perceptions; in rough terms, a state's attitude and conduct toward other states can depend on what they do (action) and what they are (status).² Naturally, the two correspond, and this is certainly the case with Persia. The status of Persia as antithetical to the Greeks derives from their actions in the Greco-Persian Wars (490-479). These wars were the defining moment concerning Greek perceptions toward Persia, which is reflected in both literary and archaeological evidence. Herodotus is our prime literary source on the Persian Wars; in his *Histories* he set out to ensure that the 'marvellous deeds' done in the Persian Wars would 'not be forgotten in time' (Hdt. 1.1.1).³ However, he accomplishes much more than that. Throughout his work, one of his recurring themes is the antithesis of freedom versus slavery; the first embodied by the Greeks, the second by the Persian barbarians. He describes

2 Peter Hunt, *War, Peace, and Alliance*, 72.

3 Herodotus, *Histories* with an English translation by A.D. Godley (Cambridge 1920). Found in full text at www.perseus.tufts.edu

how the Persian soldier-slaves, far from adept at fighting, were driven forward by the whips of their masters (Hdt. 7.223.3) and generally fought in confusion and bereft of strategy (Hdt. 8.86). For all their gargantuan numbers, the barbarian horde had to bite the dust when engaging in combat with the brave Greeks, who fought valiantly to preserve their freedom and their way of life, threatened as these were by the barbarians.

This train of thought was certainly not restricted to Herodotus; it was also evident in the architectural developments in Athens. In 480, Athens was sacked by the Persians and the public buildings on the Acropolis were utterly destroyed. To the Athenians, this was sacrilege of the most dire form, and it contributed significantly to their contempt of these savage barbarians. In response to the destruction, they swore an oath (the so-called Oath of Plataea) to leave their temples in ruins as a reminder of Persian barbarism.⁴ The Peace of Callias of 449, in which the Athenians finally concluded a peace treaty with the Persians, provided the eventual justification for commencing the rebuilding of the temples of the acropolis. The centrepiece of this project was the Parthenon, built between 447 and 432. Of particular significance to us are the Parthenon's decorative metopes, depicting the victories of order and civilization over disorder and barbarism.⁵ Though this thematic was illustrated with mythological examples, as was traditional, it should come as no surprise that it was a reference to the Greek victory over the Persian barbarians. In a sense, then, the Parthenon was a concrete reminder of Persian barbarism and literally set the antithesis of Greek-Barbarian in stone.

Approaching the fourth century, we encounter possibly the most famous champion of pan-Hellenism in his day; Isocrates (436-338 BC). Though his reputation is, to a large extent, based on his skills as an orator and speech-writer (he is part of the canonical 'ten attic orators', to which Demosthenes also belongs), when it comes to politics he is chiefly known for his appeals to pan-Hellenism. His ideal was an united Greek world, free from the petty strife that has plagued it since the end of the Persian Wars. With this historical example in mind, Isocrates' main argument for advocating pan-Hellenism was a crusade against the Persian empire. This leads to his embracing, and indeed expounding, of the stereotypical attitude versus Persia. In his *Panegyricus*, dated to 380 BC, we encounter the following passage which is reminiscent of the mentioned theme of Herodotus:

(...) for it is not possible for people who are reared and governed as are the Persians, either to have a part in any other form of virtue or to set up on the field of battle trophies of victory over their foes. For how could either an able general or a good soldier be produced amid such ways of life as theirs? Most

4 John Pedley, *Sanctuaries and the Sacred in the Ancient Greek World* (Cambridge 2009), 191.

5 Ibid. 70.

of their population is a mob without discipline or experience of dangers, which has lost all stamina for war and has been trained more effectively for servitude than are the slaves in our country. (Isoc. 4.150)⁶

Here Isocrates emphasizes the slavish character of the Persians, which leads to their incapability in matters of war, as Herodotus noted earlier. The experiences of the Persian Wars still resonated in the Greek world in the early fourth century, as is also evident by Isocrates depiction of the Persians as 'natural enemies' and 'hereditary foes' (4.184). Whether Isocrates chose to exploit anti-Persian sentiments for his advocating of pan-Hellenism is, in this context, academic.

Another author who provides us with insights into the common attitude towards Persia was Xenophon (ca. 430-355 BC). It has been commonly assumed that Xenophon was, like most Greeks, inherently hostile towards Persia. This assumption is based upon several passages of his works, such as the famous epilogue of the *Cyropaedia*, where Xenophon comments on the continuous moral decline seen in Persia since the death of Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire (Xen. *Cyrop.* 8.8.1 ff.). However, Steven Hirsch has devoted a study to this subject which argues against such simplifications of Xenophon's thought. According to Hirsch, Xenophon's attitude towards Persia was ambiguous, even including 'considerable respect and admiration'.⁷ However, when discussing a passage in Xenophon's *Agesilaus* where the author contrasts the luxury, greed, and despotism of the Persian king with the moderation, fairness, and justice of Agesilaus (Xen. *Ages.* 9.1-5), even Hirsch has to admit that Xenophon apparently 'could bring himself to play upon anti-Persian sentiments', which in turn 'says something about him as well as about the mood in contemporary Greece'.⁸ The fact that the *Agesilaus* was written after the death of king Agesilaus II of Sparta in 360 BC proves the longevity of the Persian status as the opposite of everything the Greek *ethnos* stood for; such sentiments were apparently still actual well into the fourth century BC, regardless of Xenophon's endorsement.

So far we have established that the Persian stereotypes (weak, slavish, effeminate, cowardly, decadent and the like) were, to some extent, still embraced by the Greeks at the time that Demosthenes started his political career in 354/3. Cartledge notes that it was 'in the fourth century [that] the more articulate and conservative Greeks began to formulate a theory of the relationship

6 Isocrates. Isocrates with an English translation in three volumes, by George Norlin (Cambridge 1980). Found in full text at www.perseus.tufts.edu

7 Steven W. Hirsch, *The Friendship of the Barbarians. Xenophon and the Persian Empire* (U.S.A. 1985), 140.

8 Ibid. 141.

between Greeks and their barbarian neighbours that enshrined the negative, slavish stereotype'.⁹ The theory he is referring to is that of pan-Hellenism as embodied by Isocrates, but also by Xenophon. Nevertheless, through the literary sources and architecture presented here, we gain access to the thinking, or rather prejudice, of 'ordinary Greeks'. In the words of Cartledge; 'confirmation that this is indeed the standard view is easily found in a wide range of Athenian literature, for example the plays of Aeschylus and Euripides, (...) and speeches delivered before mass juries in the Athenian popular jury-courts.'¹⁰

However, this assessment is all the more remarkable if we consider the sphere of practical politics; the Persian monarch had played an influential role in Greek politics since the latter half of the fifth century, and this role was certainly not restricted to being on the receiving end of derogatory words. In fact, there are several examples of the Greeks vying for the support of the Persian king in their wars, and more often than not such support could tip the balance in the favour of the party in question. The most illustrative example is found at the end of the Corinthian War (395-386 BC), in which Sparta managed to cling on to its hegemony. The victorious Spartan general Antalcidas reached an agreement with Tiribazus, the Persian satrap of Sardis, that laid the foundation for a peace treaty under Persian sponsorship.¹¹ As such, the peace treaty is known as the Peace of Antalcidas, or, alternatively, the King's Peace. Xenophon provides us with an epitome of the treaty:

“King Artaxerxes thinks it just that the cities in Asia should belong to him, as well as Clazomenae and Cyprus among the islands, and that the other Greek cities, both small and great, should be left independent, except Lemnos, Imbros, and Scyros; and these should belong, as of old, to the Athenians. But whichever of the two parties does not accept this peace, upon them I will make war, in company with those who desire this arrangement, both by land and by sea, with ships and with money.” (Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.31)¹²

There can hardly be a more concise passage that illustrates just how influential the Persian monarch was in Greek affairs. Also, the King's Peace was renewed several times over the following decades; a testimony to the widespread support for its general principles (most notably the 'independent', or '*autonomia*' clause), notwithstanding the fact that king Agesilaus II of Sparta used the Peace as a

9 Paul Cartledge, *The Greeks. A Portrait of Self and Others.* (New York 2002), 58.

10 Ibid. 56.

11 John Buckler and Hans Beck, *Central Greece and the Politics of Power in the Fourth Century BC.* (New York 2008), 9.

12 Xenophon. Xenophon with an English translation in Seven Volumes, by Carleton L. Brownson (Cambridge 1921). Found in full text at www.perseus.tufts.edu

'tool to forge Spartan ascendancy in Greece'.¹³ It is evident, then, that the ideological barrier between the Greeks and the Persians was very real and actual, yet on no account impregnable. To return to the principles of 'status-based' and 'action-based' orientation, we can signify that both were at work simultaneously. On the one hand, the Persians had the status of quintessential other; barbarians with all the negative connotations implied. On the other hand, the Greek *poleis* had no trouble looking beyond this status, since Persia also had the capability to provide balance-tipping support. Demosthenes himself also signifies this trend, and he says the following on the subject:

All during the past Greece was divided into two camps, the Lacedaemonians' and ours, and of the other Greeks some took their orders from us, others from them. The king of Persia, in himself, was equally distrusted by all, but by taking up the cause of the losing side in the struggle, he retained their confidence until he could put them on an equality with the others; but thereafter he was no less hated by those he had saved than by those who had been his enemies from the beginning. (Dem. 10.51)¹⁴

Demosthenes assesses that the search for Persian support was purely pragmatic, and as such did not prevent the Greeks from keeping the ideological high-ground, looking down at Persian barbarism. I think this is exactly right; the Greek ethnocentric conceptions consistently put the Persians in the corner of barbarism, despite the influential role the Persian monarch played in contemporary Greek politics. For the 'ordinary' Greeks, Persia remained the 'hereditary foe', to use Isocrates' phrase, and it is safe to say that the Athenian Ekklesia was no exception. It is in this context that Demosthenes made his political debut in 354/3, and we shall see that this is not without consequences.

Chapter II: Persian Prominence

Now we come to the proper subject of this essay; the speeches of Demosthenes. Before looking at these in detail, it is necessary to say a few words about the nature of our sources. First off, it must be said that only his public speeches, that is, the speeches to the Ekklesia, will be treated here. Demosthenes' surviving corpus of sixty-one speeches has traditionally been sub-divided by category, in which the first seventeen orations belong to the category of his public speeches. The

¹³ Buckler, *Central Greece*, 71-73.

¹⁴ Demosthenes, Demosthenes with an English translation by C.A. Vince and J.H. Vince (London 1926). Found in full text at www.perseus.tufts.edu

exception is Oration 12, which is in fact a letter of Philip II of Macedon. Also, most scholars believe that Orations 7 and 17 are probably not written by Demosthenes, so those will be omitted here as well. There are a few other speeches of which the authenticity is disputed, most notably Oration 10,¹⁵ but I shall avoid an elaborate discussion on this subject, save for a few brief notes when arriving at the speeches in question. Thus only Oration 7 and 17 will be rejected outright on grounds of authenticity.

Furthermore, the written speeches as we have them may not correspond fully to the speeches that were actually delivered.¹⁶ Demosthenes probably prepared his speeches on paper before delivery, and since the comfort of one's private residence differs significantly from the atmosphere of the Pnyx, where some six thousand citizens may cheer or reproach the speaker at will, chances are Demosthenes may have had to digress from his prepared work. It is equally possible that Demosthenes revised his speeches for publication after he delivered them. This explains a few known instances of references by other orators to passages of Demosthenes' speeches which are all but absent in the speeches as we have them. Naturally, marginal differences between the actual words spoken and the written words we work with are but a minor inconvenience, but a fundamental difference would seriously compromise our use of the speeches as sources reflecting popular Athenian thinking. Though certainty on this dilemma is impossible, it is my conviction that the differences are probably more superficial than fundamental. It is hard to believe that any orator would get away with saying one thing in the Ekklesia, and publishing something completely opposed to it shortly afterwards; even in our present-day democracies this is frowned upon.

Lastly, some words must be said about the transmission of the Demosthenic corpus. There are two names particularly important in this respect; Dionysius of Halicarnassus (ca. 60 BC – 7 BC) and Didymus Chalcenterus (ca. 63 BC – 10 AD). Both of them have written extensively on Demosthenes' speeches and provide a valuable insight into the state of the Demosthenic corpus in the Augustan age.¹⁷ Dionysius is mainly important for his work on the dating of most of the public speeches of Demosthenes. Unfortunately, he provides little to no justification for the dates he gives, but his work is valuable nonetheless. Subsequent historical research in the nineteenth and, to a lesser extent, twentieth century has proven his overall correctness.¹⁸ As with the question of authenticity, I shall omit most of the discussion on the dating. Only with speeches in which the

15 See for example: Douglas M. MacDowell, *Demosthenes the Orator* (Oxford 2009), 354-355, Peter Hunt, *War, Peace, and Alliance*, 274-275 and Raphael Sealey, *Demosthenes and His Time. A Study in Defeat*. (New York 1993), 230-241.

16 Ian Worthington, 'Greek Oratory, Revision of Speeches and the Problem of Historical Reliability' in: *Classica et Mediaevalia* 42 (1991), 55-74.

17 Sealey, *Demosthenes*, 225-228.

18 R.D. Milns, 'The Public Speeches of Demosthenes' in: Ian Worthington (ed.) *Demosthenes. Statesman and Orator*. (Cornwall 2000), 206.

dating is highly problematic shall I touch on the issue and expound my views.

Didymus Chalcenterus has provided extensive commentary on Demosthenes' speeches, in particular to questions of authenticity. Though Dionysius also touched on this subject, Didymus is the more valuable source in this respect since he names the sources on which he bases his conclusions. His insights proved tremendously valuable in later times. While Oration 10 was generally regarded as non-genuine in the nineteenth century, it was Didymus' work that proved otherwise and as such was the basis of further research out of which a new consensus emerged; that Oration 10 is most likely authentic after all.¹⁹

This concludes the assessment of the source material. I shall now proceed with the public speeches of Demosthenes in chronological order, highlighting the passages which shed light on his perceptions of Persia or otherwise contribute to our understanding of his views on foreign policy, interstate relations, ethnic divisions and all other matters that can influence his treatment of the Persian Empire.

*On the Symmories*²⁰ (Oration 14)

The speech *On the Symmories* is the first extant public speech to the Ekklesia by Demosthenes. It is probably the first speech he ever made to the Ekklesia, for it is hard to believe he held an earlier oration without written preparation since, at this stage, he was still an inexperienced orator (though, it must be added, an experienced speech-writer due to his experience in writing private speeches for others to use in their lawsuits). The occasion on which this speech was delivered is impossible to reconstruct in detail since we have no other references to it except for this speech, and Demosthenes himself does not go into these details,²¹ as he was an orator and not a historian. The speech was held in 354/3 and deals with a possible Persian invasion. Athens was apparently alarmed because of a rumour that the Persian king, Artaxerxes III, was preparing a military expedition. This expedition was in fact not aimed at the Greeks, but probably directed at Egypt which had been in turmoil for several years at this point.²²

Since the subject of the oration is, at least in part, the Persian Empire (the middle section of the speech, 14.15-29, consists of concrete proposals to reform the symmories, that is, groupings of

19 See n.15

20 The translation I have used for the Demosthenic corpus chooses to entitle this speech 'On the Navy-boards'. I have chosen for the more accurate, and indeed more common, translation of 'On the Symmories', since the modern term of 'navy-boards' does not encompass the full meaning of 'symmories'; the 'symmories' also include a contribution to the war-tax, as well as supervising the navy.

21 Lionel Pearson, *The Art of Demosthenes* (Meisenheim am Glan 1974), 113.

22 MacDowell, *Demosthenes the Orator*; 142.

citizens responsible for supervising the navy and contributing to the *eisphora*, the extraordinary war-tax), it provides us with a plethora of information on Demosthenes' attitude towards Persia. It is evident that those who spoke before Demosthenes argued for military action, not omitting the heroic examples of history. Demosthenes himself argues for a more cautious policy and warns the Athenians not to provoke the Persian king, but rather to improve their military preparations for any possible threat. After a short introduction, Demosthenes continues:

(...) first giving you briefly my views about our relations with the Great King. I admit that he is the common enemy of all the Greeks; yet I would not on that account advise you to undertake a war against him by yourselves apart from the rest, for I observe that the Greeks themselves are by no means common friends of one another, but that certain of them repose more confidence in the King than in some of their neighbors. (Dem. 14.2-3)

The first comments Demosthenes utters on the Persian king are clearly ideological in nature. He 'admits' that the king is in fact the common enemy of the Greeks. The reason he has to admit this rather than state it, is not, in my view, the possibility that he does not actually believe that, but rather to justify his subsequent insistence on caution. If he omitted any reference to Persia as the common enemy, whilst the previous speakers surely would have emphasized it, then his political opponents would not hesitate to accuse him of 'medism'²³ and betraying his fellow Greeks. Also, we must not forget that this is in all likelihood Demosthenes' first public speech; surely he wanted to make a good impression and confirm the conceptions of his audience.

He then proceeds to advise caution because not all Greeks see Persia as the common enemy. There are those that would gladly sell out their fellow countrymen to Persia for private gain. His audience would not have found this hard to believe; surely the examples named in the previous chapter would not have been alien to them. Also it would confirm them in the generally accepted notion that Athens was superior to other Greek cities.²⁴ Thus, right from the start we see Demosthenes balancing ideological conception with practical politics; Persia is the common enemy but Athens must not start a war 'apart from the rest'. However, Athens does have a responsibility:

For indeed, as regards your policy towards the King, I see that you are by no means on the same footing as the other Greeks; for many of them it is, I suppose, possible to

23 The term 'Medism' was a linguistic legacy of the Persian Wars. The term was used in an accusatory sense against those who collaborated with the Persians. See for example Thucydides 1.95.5

24 J.W. Roberts, *City of Sokrates. An Introduction to Classical Athens* (New York 1998), 68.

pursue their private interests and abandon the cause of their countrymen, but for you, even when wronged by them, it would not be honorable to exact such a penalty from the wrong-doers as to leave any of them under the heel of the barbarian. (Dem. 14.6)

Here Demosthenes elaborates on the ideological conception; Persia is the antithesis of everything what is Greek. Thus Athens has a moral duty in keeping the Greeks free from barbarian occupation. Even if some Greeks would be so narrow-minded as to prefer Persia to their fellow Greeks, to leave them 'under the heel of the barbarian' is too harsh a punishment. The classical conception that Persia is antithetical to Greece is still very much alive in Demosthenes' oratory at this point, though he concedes, grudgingly, that this point of view is not universally shared, or at least practised, among the other Greeks.

He then continues to argue that Athens should make military preparations against both their fellow Greeks and a possible Persian invasion, but on no account make any provocations. For if the King attacks Greece, then the other Greeks will come flocking to Athens in search of aid, whereas if Athens is the aggressor, many of the potential allies will refrain from lending any assistance (14.11-13). Having spooked his fellow Athenians enough with the possibly disastrous consequences of ignoring his advice, he continues to employ some refined oratory to downplay the actual threat that Persia poses. There are two passages in particular in which he argues this point that demand further attention. After eulogizing the heroic battle of Salamis (14.28) and thus stating that the King will have little chance against the Athenian fleet, he continues:

But indeed, if he bases his confidence on his wealth, he will find this too a less sure foundation than yours. He is bringing, they say, gold in plenty. But if he disburses it, he will look in vain for more; for even springs and wells have a way of failing, if one draws from them constantly and lavishly. But he will hear that our resources consist of the ratable value of our country, and how we can fight in defence of it against invaders from his land, those ancestors of his who fought at Marathon best know; but as long as we are victorious, there is surely no prospect of money failing us. (Dem. 14.29-30)

Demosthenes here assesses the Athenian financial resources as superior to those of the Persian King. It is hard to believe that Demosthenes genuinely believed this; I think his sole intention is to reassure his audience. His statement is evidently untrue, for surely the Persian financial resources exceeded one big withdrawal and the King could always collect more money from his extensive

domains. His next passage carries the same fictitious semblance:

Again, what frightens some of you—that his wealth will attract a large mercenary army—does not strike me as true. For although I believe that many Greeks would consent to serve in his pay against the Egyptians and Orontes and other barbarians, not so much to enable him to subdue any of those enemies as to win for themselves wealth and relief from their present poverty, yet I do not think that any Greek would attack Greece. For where would he retire afterwards? Will he go to Phrygia and be a slave? (Dem. 14.31)

This passage contrasts significantly with his earlier lack of trust in his fellow Greeks. If we compare them, the conclusion is that though some Greeks may look to Persia for private gain in the event of a war, they will not go so far as to take up arms against their countrymen. This passage thus strengthens the ideological division which Demosthenes expounded earlier. However, it is again evidently untrue. There are plenty of historical examples of Greeks siding with Persia against other Greeks in times of war, such as the Ionians fighting against the Lacedaemonians in the battle of Salamis (Hdt. 7.85). Equally feeble is his argument of where the traitor Greeks would retire. Surely they could count on a comfortable existence in Greece after the conquest was successfully brought to a close.

If we assume that the aim of both these passages was to reassure the Athenian audience then their reaction would be of the utmost importance. We can only make an educated guess. On the one hand, I find it hard to believe that the audience, which surely did express its opinions during a speech as is evident from frequent appeals of Demosthenes in future speeches to 'hear him out' before passing judgement, would believe the mentioned passages. On the other hand, it could very well be that the atmosphere in Athens at the prospect of a Persian invasion was decidedly grim, and that remarks such as these were more than welcome. Perhaps the other orators that spoke before Demosthenes also expounded such views. At the very least it is indicative of a positive response that Demosthenes did not exclude these passages in his possible revision of the written form afterwards. Alternatively, he may even have added these passages in order to demonstrate his literary and compositional abilities,²⁵ and thus the present question is a futile one. Regardless, Demosthenes continues his ideological arguments:

25 Ian Worthington, 'History and oratorical exploitation' in: Ian Worthington (ed.) *Persuasion: Greek Rhetoric in Action* (New York 1994), 115-116. Unfortunately, I do not have the space here to digress fully on why these select passages could contribute to the compositional arrangements of the full speech. See Worthington for further reading.

For the objects at stake in a war against the barbarian are nothing less than our country, our life, our habits, our freedom, and all such blessings. (...) Moreover, it is not even to the King's advantage that mercenaries should beat the Greeks, for the men who shall beat us have been his masters long ago. No; his object is not, after destroying us, to find himself in the power of others, but to rule all the world, if he can, or if not, at least those who are now his slaves. (Dem. 14.32)

Here we find the antithesis of Greece-Persia in its most unmitigated form; Persia is portrayed as the quintessential other of everything the Greek culture stands for. What is more interesting about this passage however, is the fact that Demosthenes assigns an expansionist ideology to the Persian King; he wishes to rule the world if he can. The value this has for constructing an absolute antithesis is hard to underestimate; it adds a feeling of constant threat. After all, it was one of the fundamental assumptions George Kennan argued for in his 'Long Telegram' of 1946, portraying the Soviet Union as inherently expansionist and in the process kick-starting the ideological battle of the Cold War. Thus such arguments are highly instrumental in dividing the world into mutually exclusive ideological spheres.

Approaching the end of his speech, Demosthenes once again returns to the subject of the fellow Greeks. He employs some historical arguments, claiming that as long as all the Greeks were of one mind in opposing the Persian King they 'could count on many advantages', but as soon as they started to approach him as a friend they 'suffered such disasters as no one would have devised for them' (14.36). Thus he contrasts the unity of the Persian Wars with the fragmentation and chaos of later times, such as the Peloponnesian War. The implication is that one must not indulge in seeking the assistance of the arch-enemy. However, Demosthenes immediately adds that the Athenians should do the King no wrong either, 'both in our own interests and in view of the unrest and disloyalty of the other Greeks' (14.36). Once more, Demosthenes is walking the oratorical tightrope, balancing ideology and practical politics precariously. In his final words he cannot help but to deliver one more insult towards the Persian King; falsehood and perjury are as respectable to him as they are disgraceful to the Greeks (14.39).

In conclusion, *On the Symmories* is first and foremost an ideological speech when it comes to Persia. Demosthenes' portrayal of the Persians is entirely status-based (simply because there were no concrete Persian actions to mention yet, nor would they come to be in any event) and it thus fits with the common ideological perceptions that the Greeks had towards Persia. The speech also carries touches of pan-Hellenism; advocating that Persia is the common enemy and that the

Greeks should approach Persia as the quintessential other. Even though this is all contrasted by his advice of caution, he is insistent on arguing that this caution is based only on practical politics. This implies that he would not hesitate to advocate an all-out war against Persia if all the Greeks were of the same mind. Between his preaching of pan-Hellenism and his recalcitrant cautious advice, he must have made quite an impression.

For the Megalopolitans (Oration 16)

In 353/2 Demosthenes delivered his next public speech; *For the Megalopolitans*. The context was Sparta's disregard of the common peace of 362/1, signed after the battle of Mantinea. Hostilities between Sparta and the Arkadian federation, which had Megalopolis for its headquarters, continued. In 353/2, envoys of the Arkadian federation arrived in Athens to seek an alliance, shortly followed by Spartan envoys who naturally argued against such an alliance. Demosthenes claims impartiality; he wishes to please neither party but only advance Athens interests (16.1). This reeks of rhetorical deception, for in the end he does argue for an alliance with the Arkadian federation, which is in Athens' best interest according to him. As can be expected, there are no references to Persia to be found in this speech. I have chosen to include it for another reason, for Sealey convincingly argues that the speech reveals two lasting features of Demosthenes' thought on public affairs as he matures in his speeches.²⁶

The first point is Demosthenes' adherence to what may be called, anachronistically, *realpolitik*: 'But the proper course is in all things to find out what is right and then do it, though at the same time we must take care that what we do is expedient as well.' (16.10). He concedes that it is important to do 'what is right', thus allowing morality to penetrate into politics, but it must be advantageous as well. This is also evident in *On the Symmories*, where he argued that Athens has a moral duty to keep the Greeks free from barbarian occupation, though it would be unwise to unleash a full-scale war against Persia for that reason. In the eternal fight between morality and pragmatism, we find Demosthenes rooting in the corner of pragmatism. This stance could have serious implications for his perception of Persia as he found himself a new arch-enemy in Philip of Macedon.

The second recurring feature is Demosthenes' tendency to pick the side of the weaker party in disputes, the Arkadians in this particular case. In this Demosthenes certainly was not alone; some forty years earlier Andocides expressed his discontent over 'our old, old fault of invariably abandoning powerful friends in preference for weak, and of going to war for the sake of others

²⁶ Sealey, *Demosthenes*, 129.

when, as far as we ourselves are concerned, we could perfectly well remain at peace.' (Andoc. 3.28).²⁷ This, too, is something to be kept in mind as we progress through the Demosthenic corpus. Will this inclination towards the weaker party be able to overcome ideological barriers in the Persian case, or personal animosity in the case of Philip of Macedon?

First Philippic (Oration 4)

The *First Philippic* is the first of a series of speeches in which Demosthenes tries to incite the Athenians to take action against Philip of Macedon. In 359, Philip ascended to the Macedonian throne and quickly made a name for himself with impressive military expeditions. He first came into conflict with Athens when he besieged and took the city of Amphipolis in 357, which had originally been founded by the Athenians. Though the city had long since asserted its independence, the Athenians still laid claim to it. However, Athens did not come to the aid of Amphipolis, possibly because Philip said that he would hand it back to the Athenians, which was an empty promise if true. This is certainly a possibility, for Philip's reputation in clever diplomacy became as legendary as his reputation for military prowess. Athens did send ambassadors to Philip afterwards, and it is suggested that in secret negotiations they made a deal to exchange Pydna for Amphipolis.²⁸ In any event, no such exchange took place. In the following years, Philip continued his conquests in Thrace and the Thermaic gulf, gradually diminishing Athens' influence in the region with little to no resistance (Athens did send some half-hearted expeditions, all of them arriving too late). In the *First Philippic*, Demosthenes had had enough of the Macedonian upstart. Thus he embarked on a political collision course with Philip, a course which came to be the defining feature of Demosthenes' career.²⁹

The date of the *First Philippic* has proven to be difficult to establish. Dionysius dates it to the archonship of Aristodemos, 352/1, a date which is acceptable with regard to the events named in the speech. MacDowell agrees with this date, and further specifies it to the last couple of months of 352/351.³⁰ Demosthenes starts his speech by claiming that Philip's prominence is nothing more than the result of Athens' idleness. The Athenians have the power to effectively curb Philip's rising star, if only they wanted it so. If Athens made a stand, Philip would soon be vanquished. Thus, once again Demosthenes is eulogizing the power of Athens, contrasting it sharply with her current

27 Andocides. Andocides with an English translation by K.J. Maidment (Cambridge 1968). Found in full text at www.perseus.tufts.edu

28 Pierre Carlier, *Démosthène* (Paris 1990), 95-96.

29 Cf. T.T.B. Ryder, 'Demosthenes and Philip II' in: Ian Worthington (ed.) *Demosthenes. Statesman and Orator*. (Cornwall 2000), 45.

30 MacDowell, *Demosthenes the Orator*, 212-213.

inactivity. Though he does not name the Persian Wars, chances are that his audience would have glanced north-eastwards at his words to gaze at that grand monument of the victory over the barbarians; the Parthenon.; a huge concrete reminder of what Athens was capable of if she set her mind to it. And now, another barbarian threat has risen; surely a similar response would be in order?

It can be argued that Demosthenes implies that the threat of Macedon is similar to that of Persia in days long gone, though he is careful not to name it. Still, I believe this implication cannot be too far-fetched, for this is not the last time he makes such allusions. The reason why he does not name the Persian Wars is because he is berating the Athenians for their sloppiness, and does so with pardonable exaggeration:

But you, Athenians, possessing unsurpassed resources—fleet, infantry, cavalry, revenues—have never to this very day employed them aright, and yet you carry on war with Philip exactly as a barbarian boxes. The barbarian, when struck, always clutches the place; hit him on the other side and there go his hands. He neither knows nor cares how to parry a blow or how to watch his adversary. (Dem. 4.40)

This passage is mostly known for its famous barbarian boxer comparison, but it is equally interesting that Demosthenes exclaims that the Athenians 'have never to this very day employed' her armed forces 'aright'. Such utterances are invariably hard to reconcile with the battle of Marathon or Salamis, and since the subject is Philip and not Persia, Demosthenes chooses not to refer to those days directly.

Another point to note in this speech is his insistence on more citizen activity in the military, rather than relying on mercenaries, for mercenaries cannot be trusted: 'They cast a casual glance at the war for which Athens has hired them, and off they sail to join Artabazus or anyone else' (Dem. 4.24). In other words, they are prone to defection, whilst the Athenian citizens are incorruptible in their loyalty to their city. Never will any Athenian defect to the Persians (save the occasional ostracised politician or expelled tyrant, a fact best avoided in this context).

In conclusion, it is with this speech that Demosthenes starts his agitation against Philip of Macedon. However, he chiefly focuses his attention on his fellow Athenians and the activities they should undertake. There is, as of yet, little ideological argument against Philip; a Macedonian upstart is not worthy of such questionable honours.

On the Freedom of the Rhodians (Oration 15)

Demosthenes probably delivered his next public speech, *On the Freedom of the Rhodians*, in 351/0. Again, this is the date given by Dionysius, and though it has sparked some debate, most scholars agree.³¹ Rhodes was in internal strife between two factions, whom Demosthenes calls 'oligarchs' and 'democrats'. Though we have no additional information on the views of these factions, the names assigned to them are self-explanatory. Originally, Rhodes was a member of the Second Athenian League, but asserted her independence during the Social War (357-355 BC). Hereafter the oligarchs took control, supported by Mausolus, the ruler of Karia who was a subordinate of the Persian king. In 353 Mausolus died and was succeeded by his daughter, Artemisia, who continued the policy of her father. The democrats turned to Athens for support, and it was on this occasion that Demosthenes made his speech. After the customary introduction, Demosthenes has the following to say:

I am surprised to see the same men urging the city, in the interests of the Egyptians, to oppose the King of Persia, but dreading him where the Rhodian democracy is concerned. Yet everyone knows that the Rhodians are Greeks, while Egypt is a division of the Persian Empire.
(Dem. 15.5)

With Persia once again connected to his subject, Demosthenes wastes little time returning to the ideological argument. He expresses his surprise that there are those who would sooner assist the Egyptians than the Rhodian Greeks, especially since it is the same enemy in the background in both cases. Also returning is his appeal to pan-Hellenism; surely Greeks must help fellow Greeks!

This passage naturally reminds of his *On the Symmories* speech a few years earlier. Demosthenes is the last to deny that; 'My present speech, then, is the sequel of my former one' (15.7). Indeed, he also returns to the moral argument:

Now if you make it a general principle, men of Athens, to abandon to the King all places that he has got into his power, whether by surprise or by deceiving some of the inhabitants, then your principle

31 See: Christos Karvounis, *Demosthenes: Studien zu den Demegorien orr. XIV, XVI, XV, IV, I, II, III* (Tübingen 2002), 175-192, Jan Radicke, *Die Rede des Demosthenes für Freiheit der Rhodier* (Stuttgart 1995), 33-43, MacDowell, *Demosthenes the Orator*, 219.

is, I think, a wrong one; but if you feel that in the cause of justice you are bound to go to war and face the consequences, then, in the first place, the more you are determined on such action, the less frequently will it be necessary, and secondly, you will be showing the proper spirit. (Dem. 15.8)

It is revealing that Demosthenes is rather consistent in his moral approach when it comes to dealing with Persia, all the more so since we have already established that his tendencies toward *realpolitik* are recurrent features in his political thinking. Clearly Persia was a case apart, not least because of the ideological legacy established in chapter 1. Also note how Demosthenes claims that the King gains territory either by surprise or by deception; not by military prowess. This is another stereotype; the Persians live under a monarchical rule, which makes them slaves, which makes them less than able in combat situations. Demosthenes himself re-emphasizes the point of slavery later in his speech. The Rhodians, he says, have 'spurned an alliance with you who are Greeks and their betters, and now they are slaves of barbarians, slaves of slaves, whom they admitted into their citadels' (15.15). The fact that their fighting skills are utterly contemptible is proven by the fact that 'if ever the King has gained some slight advantage over our city, he has done it by bribing the most worthless of the Greeks, the traitors to their cause, and never in any other way (15.23). Indeed, whenever the Persians tried their luck in 'any other way', they met with disasters such as Marathon or Plataia.

So he has never beaten us in the field, nor have his intrigues gained him any advantage. I observe that some of you are wont to dismiss Philip as a person of no account, but to speak with awe of the King as formidable to those whom he marks as his enemies. If we are not to stand up to the one because he is contemptible, and if we yield to the other because he is formidable, against whom, Athenians, shall we ever marshal our forces? (Dem. 15.24)

Here Demosthenes sums up his views on both Philip and the Persian King in a most eloquent manner. As we have seen, in *On the Symmories* Demosthenes already made the point that the Persian King is not as powerful as the Athenians might think. In the *First Philippic*, he argued that Philip is a very real threat which cannot be ignored. And so, in this passage he connects the two points, trying to incite the Athenians into action. However, there is no valid reason for mentioning

Philip in this speech as he has nothing to do with the subject at hand. The fact that Demosthenes chooses to do so anyway implies that Philip, in the eyes of Demosthenes, became increasingly threatening; so much so that he is named in one breath with the Persian King. Indeed, as far as Demosthenes was concerned, there was less of a difference between these two threats than the average Athenian might believe.

There is one last passage in this speech that deserves attention, because Demosthenes allows himself to approach the Persians in a less ideological, more pragmatic way. Indeed, he undermines his earlier remarks to some extent:

The Greeks have two treaties with the King, one made by our city and commended by all; and the later one made by the Lacedaemonians, which is of course condemned by all; and in these two treaties rights are diversely defined. Of private rights within a state, the laws of that state grant an equal and impartial share to all, weak and strong alike; but the international rights of Greek states are defined by the strong for the weak. (Dem. 15.29)

First off there is the mention of treaties with the King; he is likely referring to the Peace of Callias of 448 as the treaty made by Athens, and certainly to the Peace of Antalcidas, or the King's Peace, of 387 as the treaty made by the Lacedaemonians.³² There is no mention here of the King as the quintessential other, his imperialistic ambitions or anything of the sort. If Demosthenes would choose to be fully consistent he would have to condemn both treaties; surely the King could not be trusted to keep his word. But no: he only condemns the treaty made by the Lacedaemonians, and as such also undermines his earlier Panhellenic appeals. This is the first instance in which Demosthenes approaches the Persians without hostility; this is reserved for the Spartans in this case. Upon comparing this with the earlier passage on the previous page (15.24), it can be argued that Demosthenes is slowly changing course, adapting his rhetoric to the international developments. The Persians are losing their status as the arch-enemy, vacating a position which Philip is more than able to fill. In this respect the latter half of *On the Freedom of the Rhodians* forms a watershed in Demosthenes' perception of Persia; future references to that enemy of old will be less hostile than we have seen thus far.

³² Demosthenes, *Demosthenes with an English translation by C.A. Vince and J.H. Vince* (London 1926). Found in full text at www.perseus.tufts.edu

Chapter III: Measuring Macedon

The previous chapter dealt mostly with passages concerning Persia directly or indirectly. However, in his subsequent speeches, Demosthenes scarcely refers to that empire on the other side of the Aegean Sea, choosing instead to employ his rhetorical repertoire against Philip of Macedon. In the long run, this has clear consequences for his dealings with Persia, to which we will return in chapter four when dealing with his final speeches. Thus, the current chapter will be more concise than either the preceding or the following chapter, but will grant us a more thorough understanding of the development of Demosthenes' view on Persia through his dealings with Philip of Macedon.

First, Second, and Third Olynthiacs (Orations 1, 2, and 3)

The Chalkidian league was a federal state situated in Thrace, adjacent to Philip's territory. Its principal city was Olynthus, and in 357/6 Philip concluded an alliance with them, possibly so that he would have his hands free for conquests elsewhere. The Olynthians, perceiving Philip's increasing power with a due sense of dread, chose to enter negotiations with Athens, much to Philip's dismay. In 349, Philip decided to mount a full-scale invasion and the Olynthians sent ambassadors to Athens to ask for support. In his *Olynthiac* orations,³³ all held in early 349/8,³⁴ Demosthenes urges the Athenians to provide the requested support. There is no direct reference to Persia in all the *Olynthiacs* for obvious reasons, but they are valuable nonetheless since they shed more light on Demosthenes' views of Philip. Thus we shall concentrate on the passages which deal with the theme of the character of Philip.

The *First Olynthiac* opens with a brief overview of crisis in the north, and then continues with the following assessment of the situation of Olynthus:

The eyes of the Olynthians are opened to the fact that they are now fighting not for glory, not for a strip of territory, but to avert the overthrow and enslavement of their fatherland. They know how he treated those Amphipolitans who betrayed their city and those

33 It must be said that the order in which Demosthenes delivered these orations is disputed. The uncertainty derives from the fact that Demosthenes is relatively vague in these speeches. For structural reasons, I shall abide by the order as denominated by the numbering.

34 Sealey, *Demosthenes*, 139.

Pydnaeans who opened their gates to him. And a despotism, I take it, is as a rule mistrusted by free constitutions, especially when they are near neighbors. (Dem. 1.5)

There are three points of note here. First off, what is at stake for Olynthus is not something trivial; their fatherland will be overthrown and enslaved if they are unable to rise to the occasion. This is typical of a barbarian threat; the whole way of life is in danger. Whereas fellow Greeks normally come to some sort of agreement when a war is decided in favour of one of the parties (making allowances for the occasional exceptions), the barbarians do not dabble in such niceties; the fate of Athens in 480 is testimony to this fact. Secondly, Philip clearly cannot be trusted. There are those who have opened his gates to him in the past and their fate was to be overthrown and enslaved. Thus Philip is a master of deception, not unlike the Persian King as we have seen in a previous passage (15.8).³⁵ Thirdly, there is a principal distrust between despotism and free constitutions, 'especially when they are near neighbors'. Thus it would apply to more far-off regions as well, be it with less intensity. Naturally, Persia belongs to the category of a despot as well. Here we see Demosthenes bestowing onto Philip the questionable honour of becoming an ideological opposite; he is a barbarian, he is a despot, and he is untrustworthy. It is revealing that Demosthenes' arguments for endowing Philip with this status are equally applicable to Persia.

In the *Second Olynthiac*, Demosthenes continues to blacken Philip's character:

It is impossible, men of Athens, impossible to gain permanent power by injustice, perjury, and falsehood. Once in a way and for a brief season such things endure, and fed with hopes make, it may be, a brave show of blossom, but at the last they are detected and fall to pieces. For a house, I take it, or a ship or anything of that sort must have its chief strength in its substructure; and so too in affairs of state the principles and the foundations must be truth and justice. There is no vestige of these today in the power that Philip has built up. (Dem. 2.10)

Here we encounter the same principle as in the previous passage. Philip is portrayed as the embodiment of everything opposed to the Greek world. The similarities with Persia also return; particularly his use of the words 'perjury' and 'falsehood'. In *On the Symmories*, we have seen how Demosthenes argued that these two feats are as respectable to the Persian

³⁵ See p. 18-19

King as they are disgraceful to the Greeks (14.39); it appears the same goes for Philip.

The climax of the *Olynthiac* orations is undoubtedly found in the *Third Olynthiac*, where Demosthenes, displaying his masterful rhetorical abilities, asks the following questions:

Why, what better time or occasion could you find than the present, men of Athens? When will you do your duty, if not now? Has not your enemy already captured all our strongholds, and if he becomes master of Chalcidice, shall we not be overwhelmed with dishonor? Are not those states actually at war which we so readily engaged in that event to protect? Is not Philip our enemy? And in possession of our property? And a barbarian? Is any description too bad for him?
(Dem 3.16)

This passage sums up the *Olynthiac* orations perfectly. In it, we find Philip described as an enemy, a barbarian. Athens has a 'duty' to engage him in warfare and defeat him utterly. This reminds one of the previous occasions we have seen in which Demosthenes referred to the duty the Athenians have for meeting any barbarian threats head-on (14.6, 16.10). In conclusion, we can safely say that Demosthenes has transplanted his morally-charged ideological argument, previously restricted to Persia, to Macedon.

Second Philippic (Oration 6)

Before looking at this speech, some words must be said about the developments between Athens and Philip in the years following the *Olynthiac* orations. After the successful conquest of Olynthus by Philip, he proceeded further south towards Thermopylae in 346. Due to circumstances which are not entirely clear³⁶, the Phocians ignored both Spartan and Athenian offers of assistance and presumably chose to align themselves with Philip. Since Thermopylae could no longer be defended, meaning the security of Athens was jeopardized, the Athenians decided to send a peace embassy to Philip. The leader of the embassy was Philocrates, but Demosthenes was also part of the embassy, presumable to represent those opposed to peace. In any event, the result of the embassy was a peace treaty between Philip and Athens in 346, commonly referred to as the Peace of Philocrates.

In 344/3, Demosthenes delivered the *Second Philippic*. The occasion was an embassy from

36 Cf. George Cawkwell, *Philip II of Macedon* (Boston 1978), 91.

Philip, through which he complained that the Athenians were being untrue to him with regards to the peace; scolding Philip for not keeping promises which he claims he never made. However, Didymus' commentary mentions that there was also an embassy from Persia in Athens that year. On these grounds, Sealey mentions the scholarly debate on the objection that since there are no references to the other embassy in the speech, it should be dated later.³⁷ MacDowell convincingly argues that such objections carry little weight; since the meeting of the Ekklesia was concerned with the Macedonian embassy, there is no reason why Demosthenes should make any references to the Persian embassy.³⁸ I feel I can supplement this argument further; it would not be in Demosthenes' interest to mention Persia at this point in time. Since his aim in this stage was, as we have seen, to elevate Philip to the position of the new quintessential other, it would not be wise to distract the audience from this aim by mentioning the Persian king; Philip's predecessor in this respect.

However, this does not prevent Demosthenes from skilfully using the known history of the Persian Wars to further strengthen his argument against Philip:

For I suppose he learns from history and from report that your ancestors, when they might, at the price of submission to the Great King, have become the paramount power in Greece, not only refused to entertain that proposal, conveyed to them by Alexander, an ancestor of Philip's line, but chose to quit their homes and endure every hardship, and thereafter wrought those deeds which all men are always eager to relate, though no one has ever been able to tell them worthily; and therefore I shall not be wrong in passing them over, for they are indeed great beyond any man's power of speech. (Dem. 6.11)

Here we find a moral argument, derived from history, which also insinuates that the threat to Athens from Philip now is comparable to the threat from the King of Persia long ago.³⁹ He tells the Athenians that their ancestors were of such character that they would rather endure every hardship than submit to the barbarian; surely a feat that every Athenian now should try to emulate, especially since it was such a noble feat that it was beyond any man's power of speech. Also note how Demosthenes points out that it was Philip's ancestor who made this proposal, contrasting the proud resolve of the Athenians with the 'medism' of Macedon.

Continuing his speech, Demosthenes asserts that Athens is Philip's chief rival (6.16),

37 Sealey, *Demosthenes*, 307 n. 33

38 MacDowell, *Demosthenes the Orator*, 329.

39 MacDowell, *Demosthenes the Orator*, 330.

claiming that all of Philip's intrigues are in fact aimed against Athens. He also reiterates the untrustworthiness of Philip, based on past experiences (6.23). However, Athens does not need to fear, provided they embrace the following statement:

But there is one common bulwark which the instinct of sensible men possesses within itself, a good and safe one for all, but invaluable for democracies against tyrants. And what is that bulwark? It is mistrust. Guard that; hold fast to that. If you preserve it, no harm can touch you. What is your object?" I said. "Freedom. Then do you not see that Philip's very titles are utterly irreconcilable with that? For every king, every despot is the sworn foe of freedom and of law. Beware," said I, "lest, seeking to be rid of war, you find a master. (Dem. 6.24-25)

Again we find the argument of the irreconcilability between despotism and democracy, though it is in a more extreme form. Every king is the sworn foe of freedom, and it is noteworthy that Philip has become the symbol of everything a democracy is opposed to, rather than the Persian King, who had held that dubious limelight for a long time. Thus we can conclude that Demosthenes pursues the course he initiated in the *Olynthiac* orations, by systematically portraying Philip as the new quintessential other.

Obviously, this course is potentially dangerous in the political atmosphere of democratic Athens. The status of Persia as the antithesis of the Greek world was firmly established; it had rooted itself in the Greek ethnocentric conceptions for close to 150 years. To undermine this well-grounded belief, and indeed replace it with a suitable alternative, would require the utmost care and precision of the most meticulous kind. Demosthenes was clearly up to this challenge; though the Athenians may not have followed his advice, he was certainly not permanently booted off the political stage. In 352/1, in his *First Philippic* speech, Demosthenes started his agitation against Philip with a notable lack of ideological arguments. A year later, in the latter half of *On the Freedom of the Rhodians*, he proceeded to mitigate the ideologically-charged viewpoint he previously took against Persia by extolling the Peace of Callias. In the *Olynthiac* orations, held in 349/8, Philip is increasingly portrayed as a hostile barbarian and thus endowed with the status of an opposite to the Greek world. Finally, in the *Second Philippic*, Philip is directly compared with the threat of the Persian Kings during the Persian Wars and thus takes their place in the us-and-them spectrum of Greek sociological conceptions.

This overview leaves us with an impression of a crafty Demosthenes who had this entire

process planned out from the start. We must be wary of drawing such conclusions; often their straightforwardness fails to correspond to the complexities of historical reality. If we move to the other extreme in the spectrum of possibilities, the alternative is that Demosthenes proceeded with this ideological transplant in an ad-hoc fashion, making it up as he went along. I think this view is much too simplistic; the truth is to be found, as so often, in the middle, though it is my conviction that it is closer to the former than the latter. Demosthenes' aim, from the *First Philippic* onwards, is to convince the Athenians of the significant threat that Philip poses. Seeing as his practical arguments found little resonance in the Ekklesia, at least too little to convert them into action, it is likely that he would conclude that another line of argument might be more feasible. He would have remembered the debate on the Ekklesia which was the occasion of his *On the Symmories* speech; those who spoke before him certainly made much use of ideologically-charged arguments to incite the Athenians into action against Persia. Thus we find more ideological appeals in Demosthenes' subsequent speeches on Philip. Since the Macedonian king continued his rampage in the north, much to the dismay of Athens, there was a fertile ground for constructing such an ideological bulwark. Thus, in my opinion, this was probably a thought-out strategy by Demosthenes, which flourished in the wake of Philip's political actions; a necessary precondition. However, it must be admitted that further research into this possibility is required in order to achieve a larger measure of certainty; research that unfortunately falls outside of the scope of this essay.

Chapter IV: An Awkward Alliance

We now approach Demosthenes' last public speeches, held between 342 and 338; the year of the famous battle of Chaeronea. In many respects this battle forms the zenith of Demosthenes' political career. We have seen how he argued for years that Macedon was an imminent threat which needed to be opposed, and in these years the majority of the Athenians finally came to share his opinion. The Persian Empire also returns in these last speeches of Demosthenes, after being absent in the speeches treated in chapter three. However, Demosthenes' approach to the Great King in these speeches is markedly different - indeed a far-cry - from the ideological attitude we have seen in the speeches treated in chapter two.

On the Chersonese (Oration 8)

Demosthenes delivered his *On the Chersonese* oration in the spring of 341.⁴⁰ Philip had sent a letter of complaint to Athens concerning her activities in the Thracian Chersonese (the present-day Gallipoli peninsula). This was an area of utmost importance for Athens; it was a vital site along the grain-route to the Black Sea. One of the most important cities in the area was Kardia. Relations between Athens and Kardia soured during the 350's,⁴¹ and in 346 the Kardiens allied themselves with Philip. In 342, the Athenians sent a group of cleruchs, accompanied by the general Diopithes, to the area in order to strengthen Athenian influence. Diopithes certainly made his mark by hiring mercenaries and raiding the region, even penetrating into areas Philip claimed to control. Obviously, these developments were much to Philip's dismay, and thus he proceeded to send a letter of complaint to Athens. It is evident that there were speakers in Athens - though they remain nameless - who argued that Diopithes' activities compromised the Peace of Philocrates and, in consequence, he should be recalled to Athens and put on trial.⁴² Naturally, Demosthenes had a different view of the matter.

From the outset, Demosthenes argues that Philip, to whom he significantly refers as 'our national enemy', is trying to forestall the Athenians in the neighbourhood of the Hellespont (the present-day Dardanelles); this is the heart of the matter, and the Athenians must not get distracted by 'clamorous accusations about extraneous matters' (8.3). He continues:

and if it is proved that from the first, even before Diopithes set sail with colonists, whom they now accuse of having started hostilities, Philip has unfairly taken much that is ours, about which your decrees denouncing him still stand good, and that he is all the time repeatedly seizing the property of the other Greeks and of the barbarians, and so equipping himself for an attack upon us, what do they mean by saying that we must either make war or keep peace? (Dem. 8.6)

As far as Demosthenes is concerned, the question of whether Diopithes infringed the peace or not is a futile one; war with Philip is coming, one way or the other, and it is better to fight him in the Chersonese than to wait for him to reach Attica (8.18). This line of thinking is hardly surprising considering Demosthenes' attitude towards Philip, but he does introduce one new element in this

40 MacDowell, *Demosthenes the Orator*, 347.

41 In 352 Demosthenes called the Kardiens 'your enemies' (Dem. 23.169)

42 MacDowell, *Demosthenes the Orator*, 347.

speech. Philip is not only a threat to the other Greeks, but also to the barbarians, the most prominent of these obviously being the Persians. There are two instances in this speech in which he specifically states this; the first is the aforementioned passage, the second is the following:

because you are indifferent to these advantages and allow them to be taken from you, Philip is prosperous and powerful and formidable to Greeks and barbarians alike, while you are deserted and humiliated, famous for your well-stocked markets, but in provision for your proper needs, contemptible. (8.67)

This innovation Demosthenes introduces in his agitation against Philip has two consequences. First, it elevates Philip to the position of an universal threat. The antithesis of Greek-Barbarian is all-encompassing, and stating that Philip is a threat to both is the equivalent of saying he is a threat to all. Also, it dislodges Philip from the categorization of a barbarian and puts him in a category of his own; he is even more contemptible and dangerous than any other barbarian. Secondly, it is implied that both the Greeks and the barbarians face the same threat and they thus have a common ground. Demosthenes is paving the way for a possible reconciliation with the barbarians, specifically Persia, following the maxim 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend' which suits Demosthenes' *realpolitik* tendencies.

The speech *On the Chersonese* may be described as a watershed in Demosthenes' perceptions of Persia. The customary hostility with which the barbarians were usually approached has been replaced by a subtle sympathy; they too are being threatened by the Macedonian aggressor. However, there is no concrete proposal to initiate an alliance with the Persians as of yet. This can be attributed to the political subtlety of Demosthenes as we have established at the end of chapter two; when treading on potentially volatile ground, one had better tread carefully.

Third Philippic (Oration 9)

The *Third Philippic* was delivered in the summer of 341, not long after *On the Chersonese*. The occasion was, yet again, a letter of Philip in which he asserted that he was not at war with Athens (9.16-17, 27).⁴³ However, the oration does not appear to be closely linked to an immediate situation, but is rather about the Athenians' policy towards Philip in the longer term, concluding

⁴³ Sealey, *Demosthenes*, 181.

that they should prepare for war.⁴⁴ There are also various passages to be found concerning the barbarians in general and Persia specifically, in which Demosthenes continues his reconciliatory attitude and indeed expounds on it.

The first reference to Persia is found relatively early in the speech:

Tell me now: when he sends mercenaries to the Chersonese, your claim to which has been recognized by the king of Persia and by all the Greeks, when he admits that he is helping the Cardians and writes to tell you so, what does he mean? (Dem. 9.16)

Demosthenes here asserts that the Athenians claim on the Chersonese is justified, and indeed legitimated, not only by the Greeks but also by the king of Persia. Obviously, naming the king of Persia in this context is a deliberate action and emphasizes the influential position the Persian monarch has in international affairs. For the very first time, Demosthenes directly portrays the King as an ally, be it purely in a legitimizing sense. It also implies that Philip's actions are violating the interests of the Persian king, an argument already found in *On the Chersonese*. This argument also returns in a more direct manner; 'neither the Greek nor the barbarian world is big enough for the fellow's ambition' (9.27).

Equally interesting is the following passage:

Yet they have no such qualms about Philip and his present conduct, though he is not only no Greek, nor related to the Greeks, but not even a barbarian from any place that can be named with honor, but a pestilent knave from Macedonia, whence it was never yet possible to buy a decent slave. (Dem. 9.31)

Here Philip is asserted to be a barbarian of the worst kind, whose pretences to a Greek heritage cannot stand the light of day. Indeed, he is not even a barbarian from any honourable place. The obvious implication is that there are also honourable barbarians, or at least barbarians from honourable places. It should come as no surprise that this is a reference to the Persian empire, which has the honour of receiving an implicit positive adjective in Demosthenes' rhetoric for the first time. However, Demosthenes remains ever vigilant; he does not directly say that the Persians are honourable, for that is still a bridge too far. Rather, he stresses the loathsome character of the land

⁴⁴ MacDowell, *Demosthenes the Orator*, 349.

of Macedon; though it may not be the end of the world, one could certainly see it from there.

Elsewhere in the speech, Demosthenes describes Philip by using the phrase 'our common foe' (9.35). This remark epitomizes the notion that Philip has definitely taken the ideological place of the absolute opposite, hitherto reserved for the Persian king. The possible consequence is that the Persian king should no longer be approached with heavy ideological baggage, but rather with an open mind as a potential ally. This possibility was indirectly opened up in *On the Chersonese*, and here Demosthenes follows up on it:

Then having completed all these preparations and made our purpose clear, we must lose no time in calling upon the other Greeks, and we must inform them by sending ambassadors [in every direction, to the Peloponnese, to Rhodes, to Chios, to the Great King—for even his interests are not unaffected if we prevent Philip from subduing the whole country—] so that if you win them over, you may have someone to share your dangers and your expenses when the time comes, or if not, that you may at least delay the course of events. (Dem. 9.71)

At first sight, this passage seems to imply that the Persian king could be a valuable ally in the coming struggle, but by now we should be thoroughly aware of Demosthenes' characteristic subtlety in this matter. Indeed, this passage is not as straightforward as it may seem. Demosthenes argues for calling in the help of the 'other Greeks', and the following remark about having 'someone to share your dangers and your expenses when the time comes' is solely directed at the other Greeks, not the Persians. However, Demosthenes does say that Athens should send ambassadors 'in every direction', which he specifies to include the Great King, but he immediately adds a specific reason to legitimise this inclusion; the other areas he names (the Peloponnese, Rhodes, and Chios) do not require such an additional remark since they are all Greeks. The reason for including the Persian king is given as: 'for even his interests are not unaffected if we prevent Philip from subduing the whole country'. This is a rather vague reason; not only it is a negative reasoning borne from the speculative assumption that Philip will be prevented from conquering Greece, it also does not specify what exactly the interests of the Persian king are. It allows no other conclusion than the unsatisfactory assertion that the coming battle between Philip and the Greeks will have some sort of impact on the interests of the Persian monarch, and that he should be involved in the preceding diplomacy. With characteristic care, Demosthenes introduces the notion of diplomatic relations with Persia concerning the Macedonian threat, but his omission of any further specifics, such as an

alliance, is revealing. Apparently the time was not yet right for such a daring proposal, though in the *Third Philippic* another step in this direction has been taken, continuing where *On the Chersonese* left off.

Fourth Philippic

The *Fourth Philippic* belongs to the year 341, and was probably delivered not long after the *Third Philippic*.⁴⁵ The exact occasion of the speech is not known, but it is without a doubt connected with the growing tension between Philip and Athens. The authenticity of this speech has long been disputed. This is due to the fact that significant parts of the speech show a striking similarity to parts of *On the Chersonese*; 8.38-67 reappears in two parts as 10.11-27 and 10.55-70.⁴⁶ Though the dilemma of the authenticity was resolved early in the twentieth century by the discovery of a papyrus fragment by Didymus, from which it is evident that he had no doubts about the authenticity of the speech, it has raised some new questions. The issue revolves around the possibility that Demosthenes added the problematic passages in his revision of *On the Chersonese*, taking them from the *Fourth Philippic*, which he never intended to publish.⁴⁷ However, I am more inclined to side with Carlier, who claims that 'commentators who assert that the Athenian people would not have accepted such repetitions at a few weeks' interval have obviously never followed a political campaign'.⁴⁸ Regardless, the issue remains and probably will not be resolved soon as we have no way of knowing whether repetition was tolerated, or even customary, in the Ekklesia.

The *Fourth Philippic* is the climax of this essay. We have seen how Demosthenes, in his previous speeches, carefully paved the way for reconciliation with the Persian Empire, and in the *Fourth Philippic* Demosthenes follows up on this course. He does so in several continuous passages, which deserve to be quoted in full in this context:

The one thing that remains and that ought to have been done long ago, though even now the chance is not lost, I will tell you. There is nothing that the State needs so much for the coming struggle as money. Some strokes of good fortune we have enjoyed without our design, and if we make the right use of them, the desired results may perhaps follow. For first, the men whom the

45 Further precision is a matter of continuous debate; Cf. MacDowell, *Demosthenes the Orator*, 354; Sealey, *Demosthenes*, 182.

46 MacDowell, *Demosthenes the Orator*, 354.

47 Stephen G. Daitz 'The Relationship of the *De Chersoneso* and the *Philippa quarta* of Demosthenes' in: *Classical Philology* 52 (1957), 145-62.

48 Carlier, *Démosthène*, 200.

king of Persia trusts and has accepted as his “benefactors,” hate Philip and are at war with him.

Secondly, the agent who was privy to all Philip's schemes against the king of Persia has been kidnapped, and the king will hear of all these plots, not as the complaint of Athenians, whom he might suspect of speaking for our own private advantage, but from the lips of the very man who planned and carried them out, so that their credit is established, and the only suggestion for our ambassadors to make is one which the king would be delighted to hear,

that the man who is wronging both parties should be punished by both in common, and that Philip is much more dangerous to the king if he has attacked us first, for if we are left to our own resources and anything happens to us, he will soon be marching confidently against the king. I think you ought to send an embassy to put all these matters before the king, and you ought to drop the foolish prejudice that has so often brought about your discomfiture—“the barbarian,” “the common foe of us all,” and all such phrases. (Dem. 10.31-33)

Finally, the Persian King is directly named as a potential ally, especially in the financial sphere. Some clarification concerning this passage is necessary however. The 'benefactors' Demosthenes names included especially Mentor of Rhodes, who at this time was acting as a Persian satrap in Asia Minor, and the 'kidnapped' man was certainly Hermias, the ruler of Atarneus.⁴⁹ It is significant that they are both not named; could Demosthenes really expect his audience to know whom he meant? Questions such as these have also contributed to the debate on the authenticity of the speech, but for all we know there may have been much talk about them in Athens. In particular the news that Hermias had been arrested and sent to Susa may have reached Athens only a few days before the *Fourth Philippic* was delivered, so that it was quite topical.⁵⁰

Regardless, these events significantly improve Athens' chances at an alliance with Persia in the eyes of Demosthenes; already Persian satraps were at war with Philip, and now that the King hears of Philip's schemes against him from an independent source, he shall be more willing to prevent Philip from subduing Greece. Thus Demosthenes provides clarification here on the vague 'interests' of the King he mentioned in the *Third Philippic*.

49 MacDowell, *Demosthenes the Orator*, 356.

50 Ibid. 356.

Most interesting about this passage is Demosthenes' radical departure from the anti-Persian ideology. This was already anticipated by his lack of derogatory remarks in the Persian's direction since the *Olynthiac* orations early in 349/8, and this trend find its culmination in this passage. Demosthenes argues that the Athenians should drop the 'foolish prejudice' towards the Persian king, such as observing him to be the 'common foe of us all'. The ideological tables have turned in the most radical of manners; these remarks are a far-cry from Demosthenes' admittance that the Persian King is the 'common enemy of all the Greeks', to quote his *On the Symmories* speech of 354/3 (14.3). Of course this is due to Philip's threatening rise to power, and it is highly significant that this threat was of such a severe kind that it could break through ideological barriers – notwithstanding Demosthenes' tendency towards *realpolitik*.

Conclusion

It is safe to conclude that there is an evident trajectory along which Demosthenes' perceptions of Persia traveled. In his political debut speech *On the Symmories* of 354/3, Demosthenes firmly aligned himself with the prevailing Greek conceptions of Persia in which the Persian Empire was perceived as the absolute antithesis of the Greek world. Though his advice was one of caution, Demosthenes nevertheless approached Persia in the customary ideological sense of the quintessential other. However, the threatening rise to power of Philip of Macedon quickly got Demosthenes' relentless attention, and in his *First Philippic* of 352/1 he started his agitation against Philip with a noticeable lack of ideological arguments. In the latter half of his next speech, *On the Freedom of the Rhodians* of 351/0, Demosthenes mitigates his ideological stance against Persia somewhat, and subtly introduces the notion of Philip as a new ideological opposite by naming him in the same breath with the Persian King.

This course is continued in the *Olynthiac* orations, which he held in 349/8. Demosthenes pursues his agitation against Philip by elevating him to the position of the quintessential other; he is a barbarian, a despot, and he is untrustworthy. In short, Philip has become everything that Persia once stood for. Indeed, 'is any description too bad for him?' (3.16). In his *Second Philippic* of 344/3, Demosthenes repeats his point in an even more extreme form, insinuating that the threat from Philip is comparable to the threat from the King of Persia during the Persian Wars. Demosthenes' hostility towards Philip grows ever more intense; no doubt that the deep dissatisfaction Demosthenes felt at the

conclusion of the Peace of Philocrates in 346 plays a respectable part in explaining this.

In his *On the Chersonese* of 341, Demosthenes insinuates that the Persians are being threatened by Philip as well, and it is noteworthy that this insinuation is used sparingly and does not lead to a proposal of initiating an alliance with Persia. However, there is no trace left of the hostility against Persia with which Demosthenes' started his public career. Not long afterwards, in the summer of 341, Demosthenes delivered his *Third Philippic* in which he introduces the notion of diplomatic relations with the Persians with regards to the Macedonian threat, though he is deliberately vague on what these relations should entail. This is but a build-up to his *Fourth Philippic*, delivered not long after the *Third Philippic*, in which Demosthenes directly names the Persian King as a potential ally, even going so far as to condemn the derogatory phrases which the Greeks usually employ to describe the Persian King; phrases which Demosthenes had not hesitated to use in his political debut. Thus, throughout his public career, Demosthenes' perceptions of Persia evolved from customary hostility to outright friendliness.

There can be little doubt that Philip of Macedon was the principal cause of this evolution. Demosthenes places Philip on the throne of the ideological opposite; a throne which was hitherto reserved for the Persian King. This demonstrates the seriousness with which Demosthenes perceived the threat from Philip; his boundless ambition would never induce him to be satisfied with his possessions, and thus his conquest - if left unchecked - would never cease. In this Demosthenes certainly was right; this tendency of Philip even proved to be hereditary for at least one generation.

Above all, the trajectory of some fifteen years outlined in this essay demonstrates the subtlety with which Demosthenes hoped to convince his audience to follow his changing perceptions. This, in turn, signifies just how well-grounded the customary hostility towards Persia was. Demosthenes literally proceeded step-by-step, and with meticulous care and precision dismantled the ideological bulwark that was directed at Persia, only to rebuild it in the direction of Macedon. There can be only one common foe, and as far as Demosthenes was concerned this title should go to the imminent threat of Philip rather than the hereditary threat of Persia. Though the Athenians may not always have believed Demosthenes, he could take consolation in the fact that history proved him right.

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