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THE HERO, THE REALPOLITIKER AND THE CAREERIST – A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL APPROACH TO THE EARLY FOREIGN POLICIES OF DEMOSTHENES

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Abstract: The study explores the difficulties research has experienced in distancing itself from the 19th-century view of Demosthenes, rooted in the romantic cult of genius. The approach offers a retrospective view of the young Demosthenes and his early political activities. Assessment of his work – and in some cases, the excuses created for its shortcomings – is influenced by the image of the later leader of anti-Macedonian politics and the speeches *On the False Embassy* and *On the Crown*. Based on Demosthenes's speeches *For the Megalopolitans* and *On the Liberty of the Rhodians*, the study will argue – building on statements made by Badian and Wooten – in favour of redefining the typical image of the young politician and, by extension, not looking for consistent political aspirations where none were to be found.
Keywords: Demosthenes, Historiography, *For the Megalopolitans*, *On the Liberty of the Rhodians*

Historical and historiographical context

Concluding his monumental work, *Demosthenes und seine Zeit*, Schaefer paints the grandiose image that after years of being a misunderstood youth, in the shadow of the Macedonian threat, Demosthenes steps forward as the unwavering guardian of democratic institutions and the saviour of all Greece:

> "Mit gutem Gewissen konnte er auf sein redliches Streben zurückblicken, so bitter es ihn auch schmerzen musste dass die Zukunft alle seine Besorgnisse rechtfertigte und das Übel was er hatte abwenden wollen reifen liess. Ein Perserkrieg ward dem Rathe des Demosthenes gemäss vermieden: aber im Peloponnes, in Thrakien, auf Rhodos nahmen die Athener ihrer Aufgabe nicht wahr, und diese ihre Verblendung und Schlaffheit bahnte an entscheidenden Punkten dem Makedonenkönige Philipp den Weg: er stand bereit sich zum Mittler und Schirmherrn der Hellenen aufzuwerfen."[1]

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Research has only gradually begun to move away from an unquestioningly positive view of Demosthenes in the last fifty years. Cawkwell was the first to raise the possibility, building on the example of *On the Crown*, that the success of Demosthenes's politics is a far cry from the judgement of his work.[2] Badian claims that the evident inconsistencies in the early speeches paint the image of a well-intentioned but aspiring young politician who did not consider the challenges of Athenian foreign policy in detail but was instead driven by a youthful desire for action and the betterment of Athens.[3] Wooten went even further.[4] He sees Demosthenes as a clear careerist, a politician driven by personal ambition.

To understand the broader context of the two speeches in the focus of the current paper – *For the Megalopolitans* and *On the Liberty of Rhodians* – and the reasons behind the assessments quoted above, it is worth briefly reviewing the changes in political power that occurred in the 4th century BC in the mainland areas of Hellas.

After the Peloponnese War ended in 404 BC, Athens – the leader of the Delian League – dropped from the major powers of the region for thirty years following

and Innovation Fund. I would like to thank Professor Németh for his constructive comments; any remaining mistakes are my own.

[1] Schaefer 1885, 528.

[2] Cawkwell 1969, 180. "Demosthenes was right to say nothing about 336 to 330 in his reply. His chosen policy had ended in disaster. It was better to dwell on the struggles of the 340s, about which memories were inexact and where there was ample play for oratory. Modern students of Demosthenes also will turn to those years and continue the debate about this decisive period. Could defeat by the Macedonians have been avoided? That is the central question. But when we address ourselves to this question, if we find that Demosthenes was not so clearly right as his fame has made him, the conclusion need not shock us when we reflect on Demosthenes' policy in those years about which the de Corona maintains so discreet a silence." To what extent the previous positive view determined the focus and questions of research, and its fundamental attitude towards the opponents of Demosthenes is also a noteworthy question. For example, the changes in the judgement of Aeschines, cf. Harris 1995.

[3] Badian 2000, 36. "The conclusion is inevitable, and Athenian politicians must have seen it, just as we do: Philip, as an enemy, was no more serious in Demosthenes' eyes than Sparta or the Rhodian oligarchs. The impassioned rhetoric of the Philippic could not be taken any more seriously than his wild forecasts of a revival of Spartan power or his vague hints about the King's intentions (15,12–13) and optimism about Athens' ability to defeat him (15,23–4), contrasting with what he had advised a few years earlier, in Symmories. They were all patently devoid of real conviction. He wanted to become a leader in glorious action, but had no basic policy of his own, no assessment of political and strategic priorities." Badian (2000, 33.) offers a similar but shorter opinion: "it belongs in a context of a young and ambitious orator's seeking a cause in which he can advocate Athenian activism: against Sparta, against Philip, against Caria or even the King."

[4] Wooten 2008, 10. note 9 cites Wooten 1983, 20. "Having created for himself a major role, both as a courtroom advocate and as a politician, in the democratic city-state that he so admired, Demosthenes was determined to defend at all costs the system in which he could best function, that is, in which they could use oratory to his greatest advantage."

the loss of its territories outside Attica and its fleet (X., *HG.* 2,2,19–23.). The victorious Sparta took its place. After the ordeals of the Corinthian War (395–387 BC), Sparta secured its influence on the mainland and Asia Minor through the Peace of Antalcidas in 387. The treaty was negotiated between the king of Achaemenid Persia and the Greeks. Nevertheless, the treaty was also the first step towards Athens regaining its former influence. The islands Lemnos, Imbros and Scyros again fell under Athenian rule. The three held particular esteem in Athenian politics as they were located along the maritime grain route.[5] The third dominant city of the 4th century BC, Thebes, won its independence in 379 BC when revolting Thebans expelled the Spartan garrison with Athenian support.[6] The following year, Sphodrias of Sparta launched an unsuccessful attack on Piraeus and Athens (X., *HG.* 5,4,20–24.). As the Spartans acquitted Sphodrias for violating the Peace of Antalcidas, Athens gathered its allies against Sparta and thus brought the Second Athenian League to life in 378 BC as a "renewal" of the Delian League, the previous maritime alliance created by Athens.[7] In the 370s BC, Thebes reorganised the Boeotian League, which was disbanded after the Peace of Antalcidas, and together with Athens, carried out several successful attacks against Sparta.[8] In 371 BC, at the Battle of Leuctra, Epameinondas dealt a decisive blow to the attacking Spartan forces with his echelon formation, ending years of Spartan hegemony with a Theban victory.[9] In order to limit Spartan ambitions to the Peloponnese for the next few years, Thebes provided support for both the Arcadians and the Messenians, thus creating the Arcadian Alliance. On the initiative of Lycomedes of Mantineia in the centre of the peninsula, a newly founded city, Megalopolis became the league's centre, while Messene played a similar role in the south-west of the peninsula.[10] With Theban influence growing to such an extent, Athenian interests also changed. Fearing the influence of Thebes, in 369 BC, Athens allied with its former enemy, Sparta (X., *HG.* 7,1,1–14; Diod. Sic., 15,67,1.). The relationship between Athens and Thebes soured

[5] X., *HG.* 5,1,31. In 374/73 BC, the taxes of the three islands mentioned, i.e. the right to collect taxes, were sold by Athens to ensure the necessary grain quantity to feed the population. For the caption and detailed commentary, see Stroud 1998.

[6] X., *HG.* 5,4,1–16; Diod. Sic., 15,25–27. see also Sealey 1993, 282. fn. 10.

[7] IG II^2 43. See the founding document with a detailed introduction and reference literature in Rhodes–Osborne 2007, No. 22. On the history of the event see Cargill 1981; Radicke 1995, 11–20.

[8] For the antecedents and operations of the Boeotian League, see Németh 1999, 302–305; and for contemporary event history, Sealey 1993, 50–69; Rhodes 2006, 195–197.

[9] On the Battle of Leuctra see X., *HG.* 6,4,1–15; and event history up to the Battle of Mantinea Sealey 1993, 69–78., 82–88., 93–96; Rhodes 2006, 198–200.

[10] On the operations of the Arcadian League see Németh 1999, 305–306; on Lycomedes X., *HG.* 7,1,23–24; on the foundation of Megalopolis Diod. Sic., 15,72,3–4; Paus., 8,27,8–9; and on Messene Diod. Sic., 15,66,1–6; Paus., 4,32,4–6.

permanently when Thebes occupied Oropus within the Athenian sphere of influence.[11] The short Theban hegemony lasted until the Battle of Mantinea in 362. Epameinondas intervened due to internal tension in the Arcadian League. However, the Theban commander lost his life in the battle. In the final lines of *Hellenica*, Xenophon writes:

> "…but the deity so ordered it that both parties set up a trophy as though victorious and neither tried to hinder those who set them up, that both gave back the dead under a truce as though victorious, and both received back their dead under a truce as though defeated, and that while each party claimed to be victorious, neither was found to be any better off, as regards either additional territory, or city, or sway, than before the battle took place; but there was even more confusion and disorder in Greece after the battle than before." (X., *HG.* 7,5,26–27., trans. Carleton L. Brownson)[12]

Even accepting Theban claims, the victory was Pyrrhic. Epameinondas was so intertwined with Theban aspirations of power that his death resulted in the decline of the city's influence. Based on the above, one would expect that the laughing third party's, Athens's time had come. Nevertheless, according to Xenophon, Athens faced myriad troubles itself. In 357 BC, several members of the Second Athenian League revolted due to increasing dissatisfaction under the leadership of Rhodes and Chios. In 355 BC, and exhausted Athens lost the war and its naval allies. In parallel, its interests on the mainland were also undermined. Athens was fighting wars on several fronts. In 357 BC, the Phocians began working some sacred land owned by the Sanctuary of Delphi. When the *Delphic Amphictyony* fined the Phoenicians, they refused to pay the punishment imposed on them and instead occupied Delphi, in response to which the *Delphic Amphictyony* declared war on them.[13] In the resulting Third Sacred War (356–346 BC), Thebes supported the *Delphic Amphictyony*; thus, Athens sided with Phocis.

Meanwhile, the northern interests of Athens progressively fell under Macedonian rule: In 357 BC Amphipolis, and Pydna, in 356 BC Potidaea, then in 354 BC, Methone, in 352 BC Pagasae, and in 351 BC, Philippus carried out rapid attacks against Pylae, Chersonesus, and Olynthus.[14] In the light of these events, in the mid-350s BC, mainland Hellas was in chaos. Three weakened states – Athens, Sparta, and Thebes – sought to maintain, at least, their spheres of influence through their perceived or real alliance systems.

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[11] X., *HG.* 7,4,1; Diod. Sic., 15,76,1. The trauma is a recurring theme in Athenian orations cf. Dem., 5,10; 6,30; 18,99.

[12] For a full description of the battle, see X., *HG.* 7,5,1–27.

[13] Buckler 1989 gives the most detailed presentation and analysis of the war.

[14] The history of Macedonian expansion is covered in most detail to the present day in Hammomd – Griffith 1979, 216–328.

For the Megalopolitans

Sparta tried to utilise the chaos and take revenge on the Arcadians. In 353 BC the city launched an attack against Megalopolis. Both Megalopolis and Sparta sent envoys to Athens, this is when Demosthenes gave his speech known as *For the Megalopolitans* in the assembly. The summary given by Libanius is an interesting addition to the goals of the envoys:

> "But later, when the Spartans had been liberated from danger and had come back into power, they set out against Megalopolis in Arcadia and called on the Athenians through an embassy to join them in the war. But the Megalopolitans have also sent ambassadors to Athens, calling on them to join their side." (Lib., *Hyp.* 15,2., trans. Craig Gibson)

Based on this, the Spartans also asked for military aid while respecting the former – originally – defensive alliance. The Megalopolitans, fearing the growing strength and advancement of Sparta, were hoping to win Athens over to their cause. The literature tends to reject Libanius's statement and argue for compliance with the previous contract, i.e., no military excursion.[15] It was under these circumstances that the young Demosthenes rose to speak. Young citizens were never the first speakers and opinion leaders. Thus, Demosthenes presumably joined the camp favouring support for the Megalopolitans in the second half of the debate, towards its end. At the beginning of his speech, Demosthenes states emphatically that, unlike the speakers before him, he will indeed address what serves the best interests of Athens (Dem., 16,1–3.). MacDowell notes[16] how annoying this must have been for the Athenians, as Demosthenes was not one of the first to speak; his speech was likely filled with several recurring, redundant phrases. The views of the young speaker are both realistic and absurd. Demosthenes formulates a departure from previous Athenian foreign policy. Since the loss of Oropus in 366 BC, a strong dislike of Thebes had defined Athens, but Megalopolis enjoyed the support of Thebes. This meant that following Demostheneses's proposal would have meant Athens indirectly supporting Thebes against its ally Sparta. While not honouring previous alliances may seem absurd, there is some rationale behind the idea. Lord Brougham was the first to praise Demosthenes's recognition that Athens's interests would best be served if both Sparta and Thebes were weakened.[17] He claims that Demosthenes's foreign policy goals can be described with the modern concept of balance of power, i.e.,

[15] Sealey 1993, 129; while not ruling out the possibility entirely, Trevett's wording (2011, 275), clearly indicates that he does not consider the possibility likely.

[16] MacDowell 2009, 207.

[17] Dem., 16,4–5. cf. Brougham 1838, IV. 440.: "Thus, the well-known and much admired speech for Megalopolis is a calm and judicious statement of the sound principle of foreign policy,

decision-makers need only consider whether a particular political decision contributes to limiting the ambitions of a neighbouring state or not.

This statement has led to the idea of balance of power being intertwined with *For the Megalopolitans*. It is safe to say that barely any study published about the oration has failed to mention the term. Nevertheless, a detailed analysis of the subject is yet to be written.[18] Hunt examines the concept itself in an ancient context.[19] In a recent study,[20] Cross also analyses the concept and speech in detail, convincingly arguing that the speech cannot be interpreted solely from the notion of balance of power. Morals and matters of principle must also be considered. Both authors are clear that the modern idea of balance of power does not fully correspond to the ancient phenomenon emerging from the sources. The interests of each state are the deciding factors; no planned system of international relationships can be observed. Cross uses the well-place term *(im)balance of power* in the title of his study, while Lane Fox has previously used the phrase *balance of weakness* to explain the phenomenon.[21] These phrases emphasise the unquestionable aspect that Demosthenes is not speaking in favour of maintaining the *status quo* but finding an advantageous position.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that *balance of power* must be replaced. Jaeger's England parallel, though not explained in detail, is illustrative.[22] In the 19th century, English politics aimed to maintain a balance between the major dominant powers of Europe to stabilise its own position. The famous words of Lord Palmerston best characterise these policies:

> "We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow."

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on which the modern doctrine of the balance of power rests – that the only point for a nation's consideration is, whether any given course of conduct will tend to help or to prevent a dangerous neighbour's aggrandizement; and that no former conduct of any state should operate as a reason for or against helping it in its struggle with a common and formidable enemy. This oration has no figures, nor any impassioned bursts, or other striking passages; and there is no reasoning in it, except perhaps where the orator tries to reconcile the conduct which he recommends, of helping the Arcadians against Sparta, with the aid formerly given to Sparta herself, by shewing that the former, like the present policy, was governed by the principle of protecting the weak against oppression."

[18] Blass 1893, III.1. 291. note 5.; Kennedy 1893, 207; Pickard-Cambridge 1912, 46; Jaeger 1938, 88; Sealey 1993, 129; Lane Fox 1997, 18; Trevett 2011, 276; MacDowell 2009, 208 (although he does not mention the term *balance of power*, he praises the same view under *practical arguments);* Worthington 2012, 100.

[19] Hunt 2010, 168–180.

[20] Cross 2019.

[21] Lane Fox 1997, 18.

[22] Jaeger 1938, 88.

Demosthenes says something very similar towards the end of his speech when he takes stock of each opportunity, when, with whom, and why Athens should enter an alliance:

> "Those who seem to speak with most justice say that the Megalopolitans should take down the inscribed pillars relating to Thebes, if they are to be our firm allies. The Megalopolitans, however, express the view that it is not inscribed pillars but mutual advantage that make friendship, and they think that those who help them are their allies. If that is their opinion, here is mine. I say that they should decide to take down the pillars and that at the same time the Spartans should keep the peace. And if either side refuses, then we should immediately take the side of those who are willing to do so." (Dem., 16,27.)

But how can the coveted goal be achieved according to Demosthenes? This is where the absurd elements appear in an otherwise logical framework. Demosthenes builds his argumentation on the utterly irrational assumption that Sparta has almost regained its previous strength. Consequently, after Sparta is victorious over Megalopolis and the Arcadian League, their next target would be Messene (Dem. 16. 4, 8, 16–17, 20, 22, 28, 30.). Demosthenes then continues to predict a threat against and even the fall of Athens (Dem., 16,18.). To add weight to his claims and magnify the Spartan threat, he uses half a sentence to recall memories of the horrors of the turn of the century – the defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian War, the oligarchic turns of the city, the coup of the Four Hundred in 411 BC and the rule of the Thirty Tyrants in 404 BC.[23] In Demosthenes's view, a resurgent Spartan hegemony can only be avoided by Athens supporting Megalopolis, an ally of Thebes, in this matter.

Moreover, in his view, this decision should not be postponed, as Athens will be forced into war with Sparta sooner or later, as in the event of a Spartan attack, the city would have to aid Messene according to the alliance agreed at the beginning of the Third Sacred War (Dem., 16,9. cf. Paus., 4,28,1–2.). Therefore, it would be better, strategically speaking, to enter the current conflict, since if Megalopolis and Messene fall, Athens would be forced to join with Thebes against the Spartans (Dem., 16,20–21.). The goals of foreign policy also support the view. If the Megalopolitans owe their escape to Athens and not to Thebes, Thebes could lose one of its allies, strengthening Athens' position (Dem., 16,30–31.). As the speech progresses, the argumentation filled with logical points on

[23] Dem., 16,22. Oligarchy as a deterring prior experience in Athens, is a recurring element in its early speeches of Demosthenes, either before the ecclesia or before the courts, cf. Dem., 15.: the opposition of democracy and oligarchy is a recurring theme. Dem., 22,32, 51–52: gives the impression that Androtion wants to create an oligarchy. Dem., 20,15: He introduces Leptines's law as if it would restrict the functioning of democracy; Dem., 24,58, 75–76, 102–107, 152–154, 163–164: The claim that the nature of the law would return the city to the years of the Oligarchy is repeated several times in opposition to the law proposed by Timocrates.

foreign policy is gradually augmented with elements not foreign to Athenian political thinking in the slightest,[24] eternal moral considerations, and finally, Demosthenes concludes his speech with the following:

> "…I do not think that anyone would deny that when our city rescued the Spartans, and before that the Thebans, and most recently the Euboeans, it always had one and the same purpose in doing so. What was that purpose? It was to save those who were being wronged." (Dem., 16,14–15.)

> "My advice to you is not to give up the Megalopolitans, nor, in general, to abandon any weaker state to a stronger one." (Dem., 16,32.)

The Athenians eventually opted for neutrality and did not intervene in support of either side. Argos, Messene, Sicyon, and finally Thebes sided with Megalopolis, allowing the city to maintain its independence without Athenian assistance.[25]

How can Demosthenes's *For the Megalopolitans* be evaluated? Schaefer and Blass, and the turn-of-the-century English translators following in their footsteps, Kennedy and Pickard-Cambridge, driven by the romantic cult of the genius, see Demosthenes as a wise and forward-thinking statesman and do not highlight the irrational elements of the speech.[26] Modern research paints a more nuanced, two-sided picture. As seen above, several researchers have praised the speech for its recognition of the importance of the balance of power, which later became a defining theme of Demosthenes's politics. However, the oration has also been heavily criticised for its utterly unfounded view of Sparta and lack of effort in improving relations with Thebes.[27] Following the above-quoted views from Ba-

[24] And., 3,28. "What I'm most afraid of, Athenians, is the mistake we keep on making: we always let our stronger friends go and give preference to the weaker ones, and we make war for other people when we could stay at peace for ourselves." (trans. Douglas M. MacDowell) Andocides gave his speech before the Athenian ecclesia in 391 BC in connection with a peace to be agreed with Sparta.

[25] Diod. Sic.,16,39,1–8; Paus., 8,27,9–10.

[26] Schaefer 1885, I. 512–519, especially 518–519.: "Das sind die Ratschläge welche Demosthenes nicht mit leidenschaftlichem Eifer, aber mit der lebendigen Kraft warmer Überzeugung in seiner Rede den Athenern anempfiehlt: sie bildet ein Denkmal seiner edlen Gesinnung und seiner Einsicht in die hellenischen Staatsverhältnisse." Blass 1893, III.1. 288–291, especially 291. "Inhaltlich also ist die Rede ein Denkmal grosser Staatsklugheit und Voraussicht." Kennedy (1893, 204–216) offers a positive opinion; Pickard-Cambridge (1912, 46), while noting the speech is slightly optimistic, does not draw further conclusions from this point.

[27] Jaeger (1938, 84–85) notes the problem of transforming the system of alliances, but does not criticise it, unlike Sealey 1993, 129. cf. Trevett 2011, 276; Badian 2000, 31. A perfect example of a later rational assessment of the situation is his speech *On the Peace*, in which Demosthenes can do nothing but argue in support of the Peace of Philocrates.

dian and Wooten, it is worth moving away from the 19th-century romantic evaluation of Demosthenes and considering the possibility that these are not the words of a hero of Athenian democracy but those of a young, ambitious politician to whom Macedonian expansion will finally bring success.[28]

On the Liberty of the Rhodians

After the Social War, two political groups competed for power in Rhodes. With the support of the Satrap of Mausolus, the oligarchic group emerged victorious, and the pro-democracy party turned to their former ally, Athens, for aid. When did these envoys reach Athens, and when did Demosthenes give his speech?

The exact date is disputed. Based on the speech, it is certain that the *terminus post quem* is 353/532 BC, the death of Mausolus,[29] which is clearly stated in the speech by Demosthenes himself (Dem. 15:27). The *terminus ante quem* is 351/350 BC, the death of Artemisia,[30] as Demosthenes speaks of her as an active political figure (Dem. 15.11–12). Dionysius of Halicarnassus, writing in the 1st century BC, gives a more exact date, claiming the speech was given before the ecclesia in 351/350 BC (Dion. Hal., *Ad Amm.* 1,4.). Although prominent members of the academic community have accepted this dating,[31] several others have questioned it due to Demosthenes's remark on Philip:

> "I see that some of you frequently despise Philip as being of no consequence but are afraid of the King on the ground that he is a formidable enemy to whomever he chooses. But if we are to take no measures against the former on the ground that he is insignificant, and are to yield in every respect to the latter on the ground that he is formidable, against whom, men of Athens, are we to take the field?" (Dem., 15,24.)

The source of the uncertainty is the inconsistency of Demosthenes's politics. Accepting the dating of Dionysius of Halicarnassus – 351/0 BC – would mean that Demosthenes gave the speech *On the Liberty of the Rhodians* after the *First Philippic* – 351 BC. This would result in a major self-contradiction and make a conclusion in favour of politics without conviction a possibility. How could Demosthenes suggest that Athens direct its attention and resources to Rhodes when, less than a year previously in the *First Philippic*, he had stressed the importance of a

[28] Badian 2000, 33, 36. cf. Wooten 2008, 10. note 9 cites Wooten 1983, 20.

[29] Satrap of Caria between 377 BC and 353/352 BC, see Hornblower 1982 about his person.

[30] She succeeded her husband and brother, Mausolus, as the Satrap of Caria between 353/352 BC and 351/350 BC, cf. Hornblower 1982, 39–41.

[31] Schaefer 1885, 481–487; Sealey 1993, 133; Radicke 1995, 33–43; Kavournis 2002, 175–192; Worthington 2013, 123. For a summary of older literature, see Radicke 1995, 33–34. note 122.

campaign against Philip to the assembly due to the continuous advance of Macedon since 357 BC?[32] Prior research has attempted to clarify this contradiction by examining the relationship between Artemisia and Artaxerxes III and the passage on the Persian campaign in Egypt.

> "I do not believe that even Artemisia would be opposed to our taking this action, if the city is fully committed to it. As for my reasoning, listen for a moment and judge whether or not it is correct. In my view, if the King were being quite as successful in Egypt as he hopes to be, Artemisia would have tried very hard to make Rhodes over to him, not out of goodwill towards the King but from a wish to do him a considerable favor, since he is in the vicinity, in order to induce him to treat her as amicably as possible." (Dem., 15,11.)

According to Judeich, the ideas outlined by Demosthenes are more in line with Artemisia's policies on her ascension to the throne when she attempted to win the favour of the Great King Artaxerxes III through her *do ut des* attitude, and thus secure her position. Judeich also dates the Persian campaign mentioned in the speech to 353 BC. Following this logic, he dates the speech to 353/352 BC.[33] Opposed to the above, Focke placed the campaign slightly later, in 352 BC, and the speech in the second half of 352 BC, based on the Persian events.[34] Nearly a hundred years later, building on the research of Judeich and Focke, Lane Fox argued that Demosthenes gave the speech at the beginning of 352 BC, as the mentioned Egyptian campaign occurred not in 351/350 BC but 353/352 BC. [35] Thus, the quoted passage is linked to the beginning of Artemisia's reign, and the question connected to the *First Philippic* is also solved. Although Judeich's suggestion in connection to Artemisia seems entirely logical, on the same basis, her conduct could be seen as a resolution of any subsequent, even unknown differences or frictions. Thus, the argument is not conclusive. However, the issue of the Persian campaign is more complex. Diodorus Siculus reports on the campaigns of Artaxerxes III in the 16th book of his historical work. Nevertheless, the chronology is inaccurate on several points. Furthermore, the unsuccessful campaigns that proceeded the conquest of 343 BC are barely mentioned, with no concrete details added. As a result, the various chronologies – regardless of whether they argue in favour of dating to 351 BC or earlier – stand on shaky ground. Thus, modern researchers generally accept the 351 BC date.[36]

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[32] Dem., 4,16–50. For these, see Wooten 2008 ad loc. and MacDowell 2009, 210–218.
[33] Judeich 1892, 186–189.
[34] Focke 1929, 18–21. Followed in Jaeger 1938, 230. note 41.
[35] Lane Fox 1997, 187–191.
[36] Diod. Sic., 16,40,1–16,52,8. For previous failures, see Diod. Sic., 16,44,1., 16,48,1. For details on the issue of dating, see Radicke 1995, 36–38. in contrast to Lane Fox 1997, 187–191. and quoting the work of Lane Fox Trevett 2011, 258. note 2.

Another branch of recent research aims to resolve the contradiction between *On the Liberty of the Rhodians* and the *First Philippic* not by changing the dating of the speech but by citing a current political event from 351 BC. Based on the *First Philippic*, Trevett argues that it would be more logical to date the speech to 353/352 BC, the very beginning of Artemisia's reign. However, he also notes that news of Philip's illness and possible death may have raised legitimate doubts in the Athenians about the danger Philip posed.[37] This suggestion, however, ignores the fact that Demosthenes argued that the Athenians should respond to the Macedonian conquests regardless of Philip's condition. MacDowell also notes the tension between the two speeches. If the claims made by Dionysius of Halicarnassus are considered true, it would mean that Demosthenes made no distinction between Sparta, the oligarchy of Rhodes, and Philip.[38] But he immediately resolves this strongly critical conclusion by adding – almost naively – that the subject of the meeting at hand was the situation in Rhodes, not Philip.[39] The main problem with both MacDowell's and Trevett's solutions is that neither of them considers the fact that in this case, Demosthenes would seem not necessarily consider Philip to be a great threat, despite his successful conquests. An intervention in Rhodes would naturally place significant strain on the Athenian treasury and draw forces away from the city's defence and its northern sphere of influence.

However, the contradiction can be resolved without changing the dating or finding excuses in current political events. One must only accept that the dominant figure of later anti-Macedonian policies, famous for his speeches against Philip, did not always pursue consistent policies. Sealey has previously noted that despite its captivating momentum, and vigour *On the Liberty of the Rhodians* lacks any grounding in reality, and with this, raised the possibility that Demosthenes may only have aimed to stand out among the young speakers with his speeches.[40] As quoted at the beginning of the paper, Badian goes even further,

[37] Trevett 2011, 257–258. cf. Dem., 4,11.: "«Is Philip dead? » «No, by Zeus, but he is sick.» What difference does it make to you? Even if something were to happen to him,14 you would soon create another Philip, if this is how you apply yourselves to the situation..." (trans. Jeremy Trevett) Later, Demosthenes also reflected on this news in the *Olynthiacs*. Dem., 1,13., especially 3,5. "For when it was announced that Philip was sick or dead—both were reported—you thought that you no longer needed to send a relief force and disbanded the expedition. But this was the moment of opportunity: if on that occasion we had enthusiastically sent a relief force there, as we had voted, Philip, even if he survived, would not now be bothering us." (trans. Jeremy Trevett)

[38] MacDowell 2009, 219.

[39] MacDowell 2009, 219. "All we should say is that Rhodes, not Philip, was the topic for discussion at the meeting of the Ekklesia for which Demosthenes prepared this speech."

[40] Sealey 1993, 132–133. "Filled with passion, the speech For the Liberty of the Rhodians was deficient in realism...Perhaps when Demosthenes delivered the speech his main aim has to enhance his prominence by distinguishing himself from other orators."

claiming that the early speeches clearly show the image of a young, ambitious politician entering the political scene to fight for Athenian prosperity but without firm cornerstones when it comes to policies.[41] Despite Demosthenes's inconsistencies and indecision, Badian does not condemn the young orator, concluding that he wished to be seen as the leading figure of a noble cause.[42] Wooten's interpretation is a point worth noting against this position, even if it should not be accepted in its entirety. Wooten did not see Demosthenes as a guardian of Athenian democracy and thus dared to raise the issue of his personal ambitions.[43]

Almost the entirety of the speech is imbued with a sense of naive optimism. Demosthenes argues that it is in Athens' best interests to help the Rhodians. After the traumas of the unsuccessful Social War, such a proposal certainly went against Athenian public opinion. Demosthenes thus pretends to represent the will of the majority at the beginning of the speech:

> "And until now my difficulty has never been to advise you what is the best policy to pursue—to tell the truth, I think that you all already know what it is—but to persuade you to do so."[44] (Dem., 15,1.)

He then continues with an attempt to contradict the arguments against intervening in Rhodes point by point. He begins his argument with the phrase "you owe a debt of gratitude to the gods."[45] (Dem., 15,2.) He sees intervention as Rhodes as an opportunity.[46] He then blames Mausolus, the Satrap of Caria, for the Social War, thus absolving the previously allied state. Finally, he claims that Athens would unquestionably attain the recognition of the entire Greek world, should it support Rhodes, implicitly evoking the golden age of Athens, the 5th century BC (Dem., 15,3–4.).[47]

As in his *On the Symmories* given in 354/353 BC, Demosthenes had argued – in part – that Athens could not go to war with the Great King,[48] he brings the campaign led by Timotheus in 366/365 BC as an example of why Athens

[41] Badian 2000, 31–33.

[42] Badian 2000, 36.

[43] Wooten 2008, 10. note 9 cites Wooten 1983, 20.

[44] He repeats the same argument in caput 30.

[45] „ἔστι μὲν οὖν ἓν ὧν ἐγὼ νομίζω χάριν ὑμᾶς τοῖς θεοῖς ὀφείλειν"

[46] A recurring topos regarding the goodwill of the Gods in Athenian public thinking, cf. Martin, 2009, 229. Opportunity (ὁ καῖρος) also became the organizing theme of *the First Olynthiac cf.* Dem., 1,2–15 see also Jaeger 1938, 130–134.

[47] For a construction of a glorious past, see Westwood 2019.

[48] For an introduction to the speech see MacDowell, 2009 142–147; Trevett 2011, 240–244. However, the Athenian ecclesia rejected the main points of the speech and the proposal to reform the symmoria system. For a comprehensive overview of the symmoria, see Ruschenbusch 1978, and for the possible problems of the system, see Cawkwell 1984.

would not breach the terms of the treaty agreed in 386 BC. In the agreement, the Greek islands were outside the Persian sphere of influence, and thus an Athenian intervention in this matter would not be considered a direct attack on the Persian Empire (Dem., 15,5–10.). Demosthenes then continues by attempting to prove that it would not be in the best interests of Mausolus's successor, Artemisia, to prevent a possible Athenian intervention due to the failed Persian campaign (Dem., 15,11–13.).

This is followed by a strongly worded criticism of the Rhodians. Demosthenes stresses that they should see this as a lesson and recognise this as a possibility to learn from their mistakes – that is, the Social War – if Athens were to help them in this matter. In anticipation of possible rebukes, he further states that he has no connection with the Rhodians and is purely driven by the political best interests of Athens and not personal gain (Dem., 15,14–16.). Then, in the longest section of the speech, Demosthenes portrays Athenians as guardians of democracy and truth, who have previously acted against oppressors, a course of action that should be continued (Dem., 15,17–29.). To give this "Athenian role" more emphasis, he pushes the opposition of democracy and oligarchy to the extreme on both the concrete and abstract levels of his argumentation and even raises the possible threat to Athenian democracy:

> "I am surprised if none of you sees that, with Chios and Mytilene ruled by oligarchies, and now Rhodes and almost the whole world reduced to this form of slavery, our own constitution is also at some risk; or that if oligarchies are set up everywhere else, they will surely not allow us to retain our democracy." (Dem., 15,19.)

> "…but I urge you to regard anyone who overthrows constitutional forms of government and changes them to oligarchy to be the common enemy of all who desire freedom." (Dem., 15,20.)

After the idealistic arguments about the opposition of democracy and oligarchy and then acting virtuously, Demosthenes's following words are entirely unexpected:

> "…men of Athens, if everyone were set on acting justly, it would in my view be shameful for us to be the only ones to refuse to do so; but when everyone else is preparing to do wrong, I consider it not justice but cowardice for us alone to offer justice without getting anything in return." (Dem., 15,28.)

Breaking with the moral considerations of the 19th century,[49] Jaeger argues that the defence of democratic principles that permeates through the speech is nothing more than spouting platitudes or the use of *catchwords*, which Demosthenes sees as a political tool:

> "But for Demosthenes, this is no matter of sentiment or of democratic principles, but only a matter of «politics» – which at present means nothing more to him than an occasion for clear-headed Machiavellian calculation…The truth is that Demosthenes' sole intention is to prevent those who oppose his foreign policy, the unyielding nonintervenionists, from utilising the pernicious and shortsighted impulses of the mob…to keep the Athenian people from taking an active part in foreign affairs."[50]

In his reading, Demosthenes is a ruthless Machiavellian who only deals with Rhodes and the Persian Empire because the opposing political circles of Athens force his hand, while he has been most wary of the Macedonian threat since 352 BC.[51] After the lost Social War, it was entirely irrational to suggest that Athens could reorganise the Athenian League against the Persian Empire through influence gained by supporting the pro-democracy party in Rhodes. While Jaeger turned away from the moralising view of the 19th century, he did not leave the retrospective view of Demosthenes as a leading political figure behind, as he sought to glean the principles of Demosthenes' politics from the orators' later speeches. Then, under the spell of this approach rooted in romanticism, he moves on to the next chapter of his book, *The North-Grecian Problem and the First Philippic*, with the following lines:

> "He no longer speaks as their representative and spokesman; their ears are deaf to him. He must now turn directly to the people: *flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo*."[52]

According to Badian, it is with this harsh statement that Demosthenes becomes a ruthless realpolitiker.[53] This reading is contradicted by Trevett's remark[54] that

[49] The statements made by Schaefer and Blass working in his footsteps are most notable in this regard, cf. Schaefer 1885, I. 475–480; Blass 1893, III.1. 305–309 (especially 308–309); and their English-speaking followers cf. Kennedy 1893, 189–203; Pickard-Cambridge 1912, 56–67.

[50] Jaeger 1938, 94.

[51] Jaeger 1938, 94–97. For the main actors and parties of Athenian politics after the Social War, see Sealey 1955; 1993, 116–120. Two larger groups can be distinguished, the so-called peace party, led by Isocrates and Eubulus, and the group that supported more active foreign policies and would later be led by Demosthenes.

[52] Jaeger 1938, 97.

[53] Badian 2000, 32. "The moralist has turned into an unashamed *Realpolitiker*." Here Badian criticises 19th-century German research and its followers, the Schaefer quote at the beginning of the study can be seen as a summary of these.

[54] Trevett 2011, 260.

this statement contradicts the introduction of the speech – "You ought to be delighted by the present opportunity, since if you make the right decision, you will dispel the slanders of those who criticize the city and will also win for yourselves a glorious reputation." (Dem., 15,2.) However, based on the entirety of the speech, the conclusion seems more like the wild claim of a cynical idealist than the birth of a ruthless, Machiavellian realpolitiker. Nevertheless, before his concluding remarks, in which he again reminds the citizens of Athens about the cities glorious past, Demosthenes formulates strong criticism against his fellow citizens (Dem., 15,34–35.). In his opinion, the biggest problem in Athens is the lack of efficacy, which can be traced to foreign influence and bribery. In these grave sentences, Pickard-Cambridge discovers the future vehemence of later speeches against Philip,[55] while Badian emphasises that this argument will significantly impact Demosthenes' subsequent policies and rhetoric – consider *On the False Embassy*.[56] Linking the two claims, it can be said that Demosthenes does indeed take a step towards becoming a ruthless realpolitiker, but he is only at the beginning of this path.

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[55] Pickard-Cambridge 1912, 56–57.

[56] Badian 2000, 33.

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