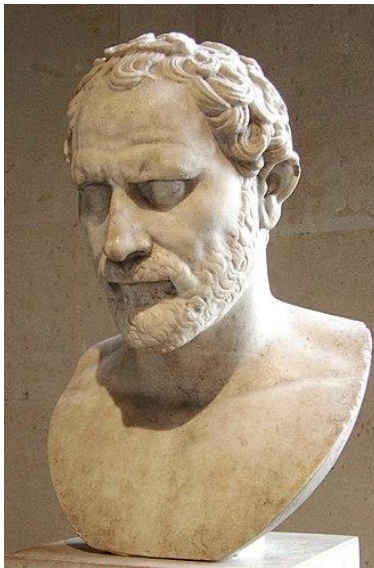


346 BCE- Demosthenes 'On the Peace'

Figure 1: Bust of Demosthenes
(Image from: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Demosthenes_orator_Louvre.jpg)



In the latter half of the 4th century, Demosthenes was viewed as one of the most influential Athenian rhetors (Engels and Weifsenberger, 2006). This was managed due to his prowess as an orator in the Athenian courts giving him a good reputation of someone who knew their craft and knew it well (Engels and Weifsenberger, 2006).

Demosthenes was not willing to advocate for the renewal of war and was largely in favour of peace- these sentiments were what the speech revolved around (MacDowell, 2009, p.327; Dem. 5 24). As such, *On the Peace* was a speech delivered to the assembly in which Demosthenes speaks of caution and advises the Athenians to accept the *Peace of Philokrates* (MacDowell, 2009, p.314; Howatson, 2011; Hunt, 2010, p.1). The speech also centres around Philip, and the legitimacy of his Amphiktyonic League participation,

alongside how the Amphiktyonic League should not be provoked by Athens into war (MacDowell, 2009, p.328; Dem. 5 14). This is due to the fact that Athens were not satisfied with the peace treaty as it stood, but Demosthenes knew that to provoke war would lead to the detriment of the polis as the states could align themselves together against Athens (MacDowell, 2009, p.328).

Demosthenes' stance on the arguments involved would not have been popular ones, this may contribute to reasons as to why scholars like MacDowell think explains why the contents of the speech are actually shorter than his usual oration pieces (MacDowell, 2009, p.327). This idea, although sound, is hindered slightly by the fact that his arguments were listened to (MacDowell, 2009, p.327). His points are short, but still powerful and the notion of peace is presented as the just response: "I think we ought so to act as to do nothing unworthy of Athens and yet avoid war; we ought to show to all men our good sense and the justice of our claims" (Dem. 5.24). If it were just a matter of persuading an unpopular opinion, it would likely have been a much longer piece. Demonstrating further the fact that although Demosthenes knew that the notion of peace was not popular, it was of his strong opinion that peace would be the best solution to their current situation and he was respected enough that his opinions would be recognised (MacDowell, 2009, p.327; Dem. 5 13). In the end, the *Peace of Philokrates* did remain, which proves Demosthenes' great oration skills, as his advice was not only considered, it was heeded (MacDowell, 2009, p.328).

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