

CLCS4009

READING ANTIQUITY: A SURVEY
OF ANCIENT LITERATURE

Lecture 11 Workshop:

Greek speeches, Power and Politics:
Demosthenes and Aeschines

Dr. Crystal Addey

The Background

- 359BC: Accession of Philip
- 357 BC: Capture of Amphipolis
- 356-346 BC: Third Sacred War
- 346 BC: Peace of Philocrates between Philip and Athens
- 340 BC: Athenian declaration of war against Philip
- 340-338 BC: Fourth Sacred War
- 338 BC: Philip's victory over Athens, Thebes and others (battle of Chaeronea)
- 336 BC: Assassination of Philip
- 352 BC: First Philippic
- 349 BC: Three Olynthiacs
- 346 BC: On the Peace
- 344/1 BC: Second/Third Philippic
- 343 BC: On the False Embassy
- Against Timarchus
- On the Embassy

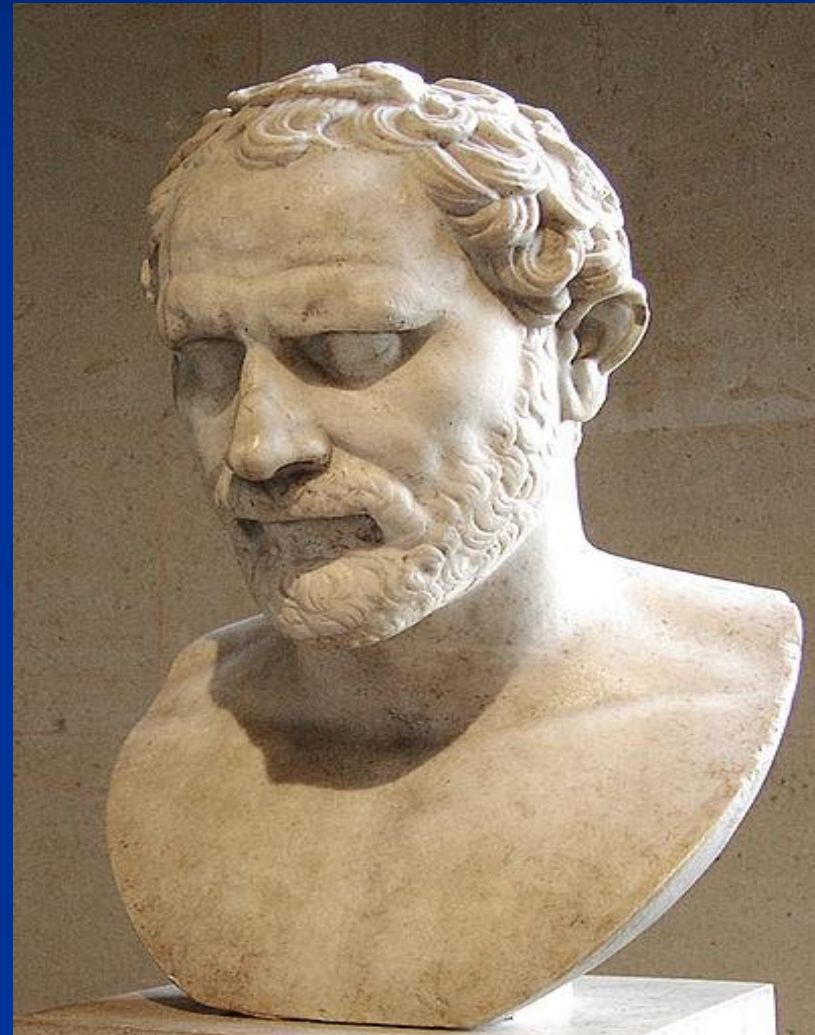
Demosthenes and Aeschines

Demosthenes (384 –355 BC)

- Orphaned, guardians siphon from inheritance.
- Sues guardians
- Trains under Isaeus
- Politics
- Logographer (speech-writer)
- Cicero et al: “the perfect orator”

Aeschines(389 –314 BC)

- Actor/army/clerkships
- Ambassador
- Politics



Demosthenes vs. Aeschines

On the False Embassy/On the Embassy

- 343 BC: Demosthenes, despite being an advocate of the Peace, condemns Aeschines for taking bribes from Philip II of Macedon:
- Aeschines defends himself in *On the Embassy*

On the Crown/Against Ctesiphon

- 336 BC: Ctesiphon proposes to give a golden crown to Demosthenes as a mark of respect to the orator.
- 330 BC: (Politically safer) Aeschines prosecutes Ctesiphon on the grounds that this was illegal.
- 330 BC: Demosthenes defends himself.

Chiding of the Athenians/Flattery

■ Hence the result is that in the Assembly your self-complacency is flattered by hearing none but pleasant speeches, but your policy and your practice are already involving you in the gravest peril. Therefore, if such is your temper now, I have nothing to say; but if, apart from flattery, you are willing to hear something to your advantage, I am ready to speak. For though the state of our affairs is in every way deplorable, and though much has been sacrificed, nevertheless it is possible, if you choose to do your duty, that all may yet be repaired. [...] But in fact it is your indifference and carelessness that Philip has conquered; your city he has not conquered. Nor have you been defeated—no! you have not even made a move. Demosthenes *Third Philippic*

Credentials of Advisor: Politics

[3] Nevertheless, although this is so, I have come forward in the belief and confidence that, if you will consent to still the noise of faction and listen with the attention that befits men who are debating the most important interests of the state, I shall be able to offer you advice which will ameliorate our present condition and redeem our past losses. While I am well aware, Athenians, that to talk in this assembly about oneself and one's own speeches is a very profitable practice, if one has the necessary effrontery, I feel that it is so vulgar and so offensive that, though I see the necessity, I shrink from it. I believe, however, that you will form a better judgement of what I am going to propose, if I remind you of a few things that I have said on former occasions. Demosthenes *On the Peace*. 3-4

Credentials of Advisor: Service

- Aeschines, *On the Embassy*
- Do you believe that I would have held his friendship more precious than the safety of these children? By what lust have you seen me conquered? What unworthy act have I ever done for money?
- I fought in the battle of Mantinea, not without honour to myself or credit to the city. I took part in the expeditions to Euboea, and at the battle of Tamynae as a member of the picked corps I so bore myself in danger that I received a wreath of honour then and there

Follow up Reading

- All of the articles in the following books are useful; however, those articles chosen for following up reading relate to Speeches and Politics. Feel free to explore the other articles at your leisure.
- Worthington, I. (ed.) *Demosthenes statesman and orator*. London: Routledge, 2000, pp. 114-58.
- Roisman, J. 'Speaker-Audience Interaction in Athens: A Power Struggle', in I. Sluiter and R. M. Rosen (eds.) *Free Speech in Classical Antiquity*. Brill: Leiden, 2004, pp. 261-78.