RHETORIC AND POLITICS IN FOURTH-CENTURY ATHENS

P. HARDING

DEMOSTHENES' REPUTATION is suffering one of its periodic reversals. Earlier in this century Georges Clemenceau described Demosthenes as a "burning furnace of irresistible powers," a man who "would have saved his country had it consented to be saved."[1] A similar eulogistic attitude pervades Werner Jaeger's Sather Lectures, which appeared shortly before the beginning of the Second World War.[2] Since then, however, Demosthenes has been out of favour. What has been written about him has been critical of both his integrity and his policy. It has been rediscovered that Demosthenes could lie and it is everywhere accepted that he took bribes, from individuals and from nations.[3] His testimony is not to be trusted. His policy too was misguided. It is no longer naively maintained, as it was by German scholars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, that Demosthenes was an anachronism, striving to preserve the outdated notion of the city-state's particularism in the face of the unity and stability offered by Philip of Macedon; rather, it is now felt that, if Greece was to be saved, it was not by the policy that led to the battle of Chaironeia, but by some more cautious system of alliances, such as was promoted by Euboulos and Aischines.[4]

This change in the modern attitude to Demosthenes is nothing new. A similar thing happened in antiquity[5] and again in the eighteenth century, when interest in Philip of Macedon was stimulated by the career of Frede-

[1]G. Clemenceau, *Demosthenes*, tr. C. M. Thompson (London 1926) 10.

[2]W. Jaeger, *Demosthenes: The Origin and Growth of his Policy* (Berkeley 1938).

[3]See, for example, J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families* (Oxford 1971) no. 3597, XXI.

[4]Cf. G. L. Cawkwell, "Demosthenes' Policy after the Peace of Philocrates," *CQ* NS 13 (1963) 120–138 and 200–218. See also his *Philip of Macedon* (London 1978) 114–137.

[5]A favourable view of Philip is to be found in Ephoros (*via* Diodoros 16). It was continued by Polybios (5.10, 18.14, and 22.16). The arguments on both sides are set out in Polybios 9.28–33. Theopompos liked neither: see below, n. 8, for his view of Philip and, on Demosthenes, Plutarch *Demosthenes* 13.1. See, in general, E. Drerup, *Demosthenes im Urteil des Altertums* (Würzburg 1923). Of course Demosthenes had opponents at home, too, notably Aischines, but the issue between them was what policy to adopt towards Philip. Their disagreement evolved into the "Macedonian Question" for the next few generations of Athenians, at least between the Lamian and Chremonidean Wars. For the Nationalists, like Demochares, Demosthenes and Lykourgos were heroes, while the perfect model of a collaborator was created in Phokion, probably by Demetrios of Phaleron—see C. Bearzot, *Focione tra storia e trasfigurazione ideale* (Milan 1985). After that, for most of antiquity and the early part of modern history the political issue between Philip and Demosthenes was ignored; see P. Harding, "Orations . . . most nedeful to be redde in these daungerous dayes," *ECM* 23 (1979) 51.

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rick the Great.[6] In fact, the attitude to Demosthenes has always reacted sharply to shifts in the approach to Philip.[7] Demosthenes has only himself to blame for this, since he characterised the clash between them in strongly antithetical terms. He personalised the war between Athens and Macedon for supremacy in Greece into a contest between Philip and himself, and elevated the issues involved to the highest principles of morality and politics —the wise, incorruptible adviser of a democratic state that championed freedom and liberty against the depraved and corrupt proponent of outright military autocracy.[8] For this reason it is not surprising that later ages have conceived the history of this period in these terms. Especially since the eighteenth century a great debate has ensued between those who have taken one side or the other of the political issue.[9] It is, in fact, a truism that most studies of Demosthenes are more indicative of the author's own reaction to his contemporary situation than reflective of the reality of fourth-century history.[10]

That this is possible is, of course, because Demosthenes is the main source

[6]See, for example, J. Gillies, *A View of the Reign of Frederick II of Prussia: with a Parallel between that Prince and Philip II of Macedon* (London 1789). Eighteenth-century attitudes to Demosthenes are excellently discussed by U. Schindel, *Demosthenes im 18. Jahrhundert* (Munich 1963, *Zetemata* 13).

[7]Or *vice versa*. That this principle continues to operate is nowhere more obvious than in the works of J. R. Ellis, *Philip II and Macedonian Imperialism* (London 1976) and G. L. Cawkwell (above, n. 4), who after years spent criticising Demosthenes eventually produced an *encomium* on Philip. See the review of the latter book by P. Harding, *Phoenix* 33 (1979) 173–178.

[8]For Demosthenes' characterisation of himself as a σύμβουλος see below, n. 41. For Philip's political immorality (perfidy and injustice) see, for example, *Second Olynthiac* 5 f. For his private immorality (excessive drinking and sexual depravity) 17–20 of the same speech. Theopompos (*FGrHist* 115 FF 224, 225a and 225b, and 236) accused Philip of debauchery in much the same terms as Demosthenes. See the good note on *Second Olynthiac* 18–19 in J. R. Ellis and R. D. Milns, *The Spectre of Philip* (Sydney 1970) 50, n. 27. For Theopompos' attitude towards Philip see G. Shrimpton, "Theopompos' Treatment of Philip in the Philippica," *Phoenix* 31 (1977) 123–144.

[9]For the eighteenth century see U. Schindel (above, n. 6). The nineteenth century has yet to be treated thoroughly, but for the motives behind the reaction against Demosthenes amongst the German scholars see J. Knipfing, "German Historians and Macedonian Imperialism," *AHR* 26 (1920) 657–671. The British view, probably as a result, was equally excessive in the other direction, as I intend to show elsewhere. In the early twentieth century, while scholars in most countries held to a favourable view of Demosthenes, the Germans continued to be hostile for much the same reason. Typical of the French view is the work by Clemenceau cited above; of the English, A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, *Demosthenes and the Last Days of Greek Freedom* (New York and London 1914); of the German, E. Drerup, *Aus einer alten Advokatenrepublik* (Paderborn 1916, Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums 8). The advent of Hitler and the *diaspora* of German scholars saw a change, exemplified by the work of W. Jaeger (above, n. 2). Since the Second World War Demosthenes has been strangely out of favour amongst scholars in the western democracies, with the single exception of P. Cloché, *Démosthène et la fin de la démocratie athénienne* (Paris 1957).

[10]Pointed out by A. Brink, *De demokratie bij Demosthenes* (Groningen 1939).

for his own biography, and Philip's too, and he has, consequently, wielded a tremendous influence over their *Nachleben*. Even in his own day he imposed upon his political opponents within Athens the character of their opposition to him by his representation of himself as the incorruptible, wise adviser, who alone saw the danger that threatened his state and alone knew how to combat it. Anyone who was not wholly with him was against him and, it followed, must be on the side of the enemy. The charge of treachery was levelled against many of his contemporaries by Demosthenes, but against none so frequently as Aischines.[11] In defending himself Aischines could only respond in like measure.

Thus to Demosthenes' claim that he had been Philip's opponent from the beginning and had consistently maintained the policy of active resistance, Aischines charged Demosthenes with being Philokrates' closest ally in the negotiations for peace (2.18–20). Again, in the matter of the correctness of Demosthenes' policy and its conclusion in the battle of Chaironeia, Aischines reminded the Athenians how the democracy had prospered in time of peace (2.171–178) and indicted the battle of Chaironeia and all that led up to it as a disaster for Athens (3.106–158). The notion that Demosthenes was Athens' champion or bulwark against Philip was ridiculed: when he had the chance to speak up to Philip, he lost his voice (2.34–35). Likewise, in battle, despite all his rhetoric, he was a cowardly runaway (3.152, 159), a charge that became enshrined for posterity in the commemorative epigram (Plut. *Demosth.* 30):

> If only your strength had been equal, Demosthenes, to your wisdom,
> Never would Greece have been ruled by a Macedonian Ares.

Aischines, on the contrary, was fond of recording how many times he fought for the state, like a good citizen (2.167–170). Athenian citizenship was, in fact, something Demosthenes had no right to claim, Aischines pointed out. By virtue of his Scythian grandmother he was a barbarian (2.23; 3.171–172). Furthermore, it was Demosthenes, not Aischines, who had accepted bribes (see, e.g., 2.23). This latter charge was developed with great vigour by Deinarchos and Hypereides at the time of the Harpalos-scandal. Indeed, Demosthenes' supposed involvement with Harpalos destroyed his credibility with his contemporaries and has been used against him ever since. But it was

[11] In all his public orations Demosthenes accuses his opponents of treachery and self-interest. This was, of course, a common theme of political rhetoric. Most vigorous is his attack on Aischines throughout the speeches *On the False Embassy* and *On the Crown*. For the nature and purpose of his portrait of Aischines in the latter see G. O. Rowe, "The Portrait of Aischines in the *Oration on the Crown*," *TAPA* 97 (1966) 397–406. He extended his charge beyond Athens to include the leaders of many other city states (*On the Crown* 43, 48, 295), for which he earned the disapproval of Polybios (18.14). On this see Walbank's note *ad loc.* in *A Historical Commentary on Polybios* 2 (Oxford 1967) 566.

only so damaging because of his repeated claim to incorruptibility. Thus Aischines and other opponents developed the adverse characterisation of Demosthenes not *in vacuo* but in response to his claims about himself and his accusations against others.

Just as then, so now Demosthenes dominates his own reputation and the only way people find to disagree with him is to agree with his opponents. Once a crack has been found in that monolithic façade of assumed virtue, the whole edifice crumbles and the man within is revealed as the self-righteous, sanctimonious fraud his political opponents knew him to be. No wonder the high-principled youth of this generation shrink from studying a man of whom, in the words of William Mitford, "even his admirers seem to have acknowledged that his temper was uncertain, his manners awkward, that he was extravagant in expense, and greedy of gain; an unpleasant companion, a faithless friend, a contemptible soldier, and of notorious dishonesty, even in his profession of an advocate."[12] If we turn now to Clemenceau's impassioned appeal, invoking the bust of Demosthenes ("Men of Athens, do you recognise him?"), we should picture them hanging their heads in shame, not because of their own failure, but at the thought that such an odious character ever lived in Athens and commanded their votes in the assembly.

But the fact is that the Athenians were not ashamed of Demosthenes or his policy. After Chaironeia they chose him to pronounce the Funeral Oration over the dead;[13] later, in 330, when Demosthenes' whole career was called in question, they gave him a resounding vote of confidence, and some time after his death, despite the scandal of the Harpalos-affair, they voted to erect a bronze statue of him and decreed "that the eldest member of his family should be maintained in the *prytaneion* at the public expense."[14] These signs of public approval should be a warning to us not to accept too readily the hostile interpretation of his opponents. If he could lie, so could they. After all, they were playing the same game and it is methodically unsound to accept their version in preference to his. They, no less than he, were *rhetores*, practitioners of the art of persuasion—in our terms, politicians.[15]

Fundamental to the study of the ancient politician is the study of the art of persuasion, but not as it is found in the technical handbooks with discussions of parts of orations and figures of speech. Rhetoric is a *psychagogic* art and it stands to reason that before one can lead a soul one must know the soul one wants to lead. Ancient oratory, like ancient comedy, was a popular medium. The one attempted to entertain, the other to convince the majority of the Athenians. In both, the level of appeal was to popular opinion and

[12]W. Mitford, *The History of Greece*[2] (London 1838) 6.342.

[13]Aisch. 3.152; Plut. *Demosth.* 21.

[14]Plut. *Demosth.* 30; *Moralia* 550 f.

[15]For the definition see M. H. Hansen, "The Athenian 'Politicians', 403–322 B.C.," *GRBS* 24 (1983) 33–55.

popular prejudice. The remarkable similarity in the basic attitudes assumed by a comedian like Aristophanes and an orator like Demosthenes suggests that the majority, whether in the law-courts, the assembly, or the theatre, formed a fairly homogeneous entity throughout the fifth and fourth centuries. They were, in essence, the peasant-farmers of Attika, though it is doubtful that their opinions, on many matters, differed greatly from those of the artisans and shopkeepers of the city.[16] These men were literate, intelligent, witty, but, in argument, less concerned with accuracy than impression. The essential point about an argument was that it should appear reasonable. Their yardstick was opinion, and opinion was moulded by prejudice.

Typical of the prejudices of this element in Athenian society was pride in Athenian citizenship. It was the wealthy who had felt free to marry outside Attika. Pericles' citizenship-law of 451/0, which required that both parents be Athenian citizens,[17] pandered to this prejudice. The law was reaffirmed by Aristophon at the end of the century.[18] The many references in fifth-century comedy and fourth-century oratory to a man's foreign origin and, therefore, ineligibility for citizenship reflect this. Most of them should be taken with a pinch of salt, but they rarely are. Hyperbolos is a case in point. Frequent references in the comic poets claimed that his mother and father were foreign, though there was some disagreement about the extraction.[19] The testimony was so unanimous that it was not even questioned by Theopompos (*FGrHist* 115 F 95), a historian who had a poor opinion of Athenian veracity. Only a little-known Athenian antiquarian, Androtion, gave the correct parentage, but his voice was drowned out.[20] The discovery of an *ostrakon* with Hyperbolos' father's name on it has put the record straight.[21] He was an Athenian citizen with full credentials. So there was no basis to the accusations, but this did not stop their being made. There is no reason to assume that there was any more truth behind Aischines' charge

[16]See P. Harding, "In Search of a Polypragmatist," *Classical Contributions* (New York 1981) 41–50. Specifically on Athenian society of the time of Demosthenes see A. H. M. Jones, "The Athens of Demosthenes," in *Athenian Democracy* (Oxford 1957) 23–38. For another view of the peasant farmer (as an *apragmon*) see now L. B. Carter, *The Quiet Athenian* (Oxford 1986) 76–98.

[17]Aristotle *Ath. Pol.* 26.4; Philochoros, *FGrHist* 328 F 119; Plutarch *Per.* 37.3–4. For a different interpretation of the citizenship law see C. Patterson, *Pericles' Citizenship Law of 451/0 B.C.* (diss. University of Pennsylvania 1976).

[18]Karystios *apud* Athenaios 13.577b.

[19]J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families* (Oxford 1971) no. 13910, has a good summary.

[20]*FGrHist* 324 F 42. The fact that he proposed the rider to *IG* 1^3 85 should have settled the matter, but see M. Platnauer (*Aristophanes: Peace* [Oxford 1964] 126 *ad* 681), "a low-born and possibly half-foreign tradesman."

[21]See the addendum to H. Bloch, "Studies in Historical Literature of the Fourth Century B.C.," part 2, *HSCP* Supp. 1 (1940) 354–355. Cf. Meiggs and Lewis, *GHI* 46.

that Demosthenes was a barbarian through his grandmother. Had this been so, his citizenship would really have been in question and his political career impossible (*Ath. Pol.* 42.1). This type of attack was merely one facet of the political invective of the time and should be appreciated as such. Demosthenes gave as good as he got.

Closely related to this casting of aspersions upon an opponent's origin were what one might call "mother-jokes." It was another prejudice of Athenian society that a freeborn Athenian woman should avoid the public eye.[22] She should certainly not have a trade, least of all one that took her to the *agora*. This type of prejudice most likely reflected the snobbery of the landed peasant as opposed to the tradesmen in the city. It resulted in a great number of jokes on the theme that this man's or that man's mother sold something in the *agora*. Hyperbolos' mother was satirised as a bakerwoman (above, note 20). Euripides' mother is a more notorious example. Aristophanes was fond of abusing her as a seller of greengrocery.[23] What little we know of Euripides' family suggests that it was both respectable and wealthy.[24] So the story is most unlikely to be true. It misses the whole point to claim that there must have been something behind it for Aristophanes to hope to raise a laugh. It was all the funnier because it was untrue.

Demosthenes' attack upon the parentage of Aischines is a masterful combination of these two themes. Furthermore, since it descends from the merely abusive to the scurrilous, it provides a useful test case. In the speech *On the False Embassy* (281) Aischines' parents are denigrated on the prejudicial grounds that they were employed in lowly professions. Aischines' father, Atrometos, was a school teacher, while his mother, Glaukothea, was a minor priestess, possibly of Dionysos. There is only light innuendo that there was something improper about her conduct. Later, in *On the Crown* (126–131), Demosthenes takes a different tack: he asserts that Aischines' father was a foreign slave, Tromes by name, who worked for a schoolmaster, Elpias. He had gone around with shackles on his feet and hands and a wooden collar round his neck. By the clever addition of two syllables he had given his name a respectable Athenian ring. Likewise, Aischines had given his mother the august name Glaukothea, though everyone knew (Demosthenes is always least to be believed when he refers to common knowledge)[25] that she was really called Empousa. That bogeywoman, known to every Athenian child, was reputed to be able to adopt various shapes, just as Aischines' mother, in her profession as a prostitute, was adept at performing

[22]Stated most memorably by Perikles in Thuc. 2.45.

[23]The jibe is first found at *Acharnians* 478.

[24]His family held an ancestral priesthood of Apollo Zosterios and, according to Aristotle (*Rhet.* 3.15), Euripides was wealthy enough to be challenged to an exchange of property (ἀντίδοσις).

[25]Cf. K. J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality* (Oxford 1974) 14.

in a variety of positions. She was set upright out of the gutter by another slave, Phormion.

At all this the commentators cluck with disapproval.[26] Demosthenes is convicted out of his own mouth of employing the most unprincipled methods of base invective. We are advised that lamentably such practices were all too common in the Athenian lawcourts. Of course they were, but we should not take them so seriously. The audience that could laugh at such things in the theatre was not likely to react differently in the lawcourts or the assembly. Humour is one way in which the politician holds his audience's attention. Even in the political exchanges of modern Parliamentary democracies one might find the odd flash of it amidst the name-calling and the crudity. It is easy to forget that the *rhetor* in ancient Athens did not make his speech in an elegant building before a small number of his peers but in the open air in front of an audience of at least six thousand,[27] and, at that, without the theatrics and support staff of a Nürnberg rally. If only two hundred shuffled their feet or fifty unwrapped their sandwiches or, say, a flock of migratory storks went overhead at the climax of his argument, an ancient politician's goose could be cooked. A touch of humour used astutely could help keep attention, gain sympathy, and, of course, put one's opponent on the defensive. Imagine the response of the audience if Aischines got up to deny that his mother was called Empousa! Of course, in mass oratory of this sort the humour must descend to the level of the majority of the audience. Hitler knew this, so did Churchill. In his public addresses he played upon the ordinary Englishman's prejudice against foreigners and foreign names and developed his Schicklgruber-jokes.

That such raillery as has been described above could give an orator a momentary advantage is obvious from the fact that it was used. Equally, it had no lasting effect upon the victim's career, since many of the charges, if substantiated, would have resulted in disqualification from politics. Likewise, it was open to a politician to put the most unfavourable interpretation

[26]For example, W. W. Goodwin, *Demosthenes on the Crown* (New York 1905) 77, describes this passage as "full of offensive scurrility," while A. N. W. Saunders and/or T. T. B. Ryder, *Demosthenes and Aeschines* (Penguin 1974) 288, n. 60, say that the contrast between this passage and others on Aischines' parentage makes it possible "to see the effects of allowing irrelevant and personal considerations to carry weight in a suit of this kind." See further the exhaustive discussion of this passage by H. Wankel, *Demosthenes: Rede für Ktesiphon über den Kranz* (Heidelberg 1976) 2.687–715. More appreciative of the diabolical humour is Dover (above, n. 25) 30–33.

[27]See M. H. Hansen, "How many Athenians attended the *ecclesia*?" *GRBS* 17 (1976) 115–134. It is ironic that most of those who have admired Demosthenes in the past have been the advisers of kings or the great Parliamentarians, who would have been dismayed to realise that his performance on the βῆμα probably more closely resembled that of a bible-thumping evangelist than their "stately" style. See, in general, on the relationship between *rhetor* and audience M. I. Finley, *Past and Present* 21 (1962) 3–24.

upon an opponent's action or advice in order to discredit him at the time, not in the expectation of eliminating him from politics altogether. Once again popular prejudice was often the key. For example, it was a common belief then, as now, that public officials were corrupt. Both at home and abroad they were lining their own pockets. This attitude is evident in both the comic poets and the orators. It underlies Aristophanes' attacks upon Kleon's management of affairs at home (*Knights*, *passim*), and it is a basic assumption by Dikaiopolis in the prologue of the *Acharnians* that ambassadors to foreign places accepted bribes. Similarly in the *Olynthiacs* Demosthenes attacked Euboulos for corruption in public office because he and his followers had private homes that were more luxurious than any public building (*Third Olynthiac* 25 f.); and all orators accused anyone who advocated a policy different from theirs of being in the pay of the enemy. When a group of ambassadors returned from a foreign embassy, there were frequently mutual recriminations that led to charges of bribery, particularly if the embassy had been unsuccessful. This was only natural, since no one wanted to take the blame for the failure. No doubt on a few occasions bribes really had been taken, but this was not true in the vast majority of cases.[28] Charges of this sort, like Demosthenes' inference that Euboulos' wealth was proof of corruption, could only seem reasonable because they were expected.

Behind this prejudice lay a class-antipathy that resulted from socio-economic inequality. It is a well-documented feature of classical Athenian society that a few, very wealthy, families had a virtual monopoly of political positions—they provided the *rhetores* and *strategoi*, the *tamiai* and the ambassadors.[29] The less wealthy majority resented their wealth and the power it gave them. Their resentment is evident in the lawcourts, the assembly, and the theatre.[30]

The real objection to wealth was the excess, the licence, in Greek terms the ἀκολασία that was associated with it. This theme was harped upon in the

[28]See S. Perlman, "On bribing Athenian Ambassadors," *GRBS* 17 (1976) 223–233. His conclusion is not refuted by J. Cargill, "Demosthenes, Aischines, and the Crop of Traitors," *Ancient World* 11 (1985) 75–85, unless one is prepared to accept that, for example, Demosthenes received a talent from the people of Oreus and was in the pay of the Amphissans (Aisch. 3.103–105 and 114).

[29]This was demonstrated for the fourth century long ago by J. Sundwall, *Epigraphische Beiträge zur sozial-politischen Geschichte Athens im Zeitalter des Demosthenes* (Leipzig 1906, *Klio* Beiheft 4). His work has been supplemented by J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families* (Oxford 1971) and, more recently, by the same author, *Wealth and the Power of Wealth in Classical Athens* (New York 1981).

[30]See D. Brown, *Das Geschäft mit dem Staat: Die Überschneidung des Politischen und des Privaten im Corpus Demosthenicum* (Hildesheim 1974) *passim*. Most of the same points are brought out by Dover (above, n. 25), though he treats the larger issue of morality and does not restrict himself to prejudice.

fourth century in the writings of the rhetorician Isokrates, most notably in his *Areiopagitikos*. This work is a mélange of conservative platitudes, embodying (or parodying?) most of the ideals of popular morality. For, as one might expect, the true conservatives in Athenian society were not the wealthy few, but the less wealthy majority. Looking back with nostalgia to the good old days, which of course never existed, Isokrates describes how the wealthy used their money to help the poor instead of spending it upon themselves. Magistrates did not seek office with a view to increasing their private purses from the public treasury. As for the young, they did not spend their time, as they did in his day, in the gambling dens or in the company of flute girls. They did their best to avoid going down to the *agora* and, if they ever had to do so, behaved with modesty and self-restraint. Why, in those days not even a respectable servant ate or drank in a tavern!

When we turn to the world of real politics, we find the same themes used to create prejudice against an opponent. A litigant in the lawcourts or a politician in the assembly constantly felt the need to justify his wealth in order to counteract the hostility of his audience. The best way to do this was to point to the conscientious, if not extravagant, way in which he performed his liturgies, thus demonstrating how he had put his money to the service of the state and, indirectly, to the advantage of the majority. At the same time he wanted to show that he had not flaunted his good fortune before his fellows. On the other hand he tried hard to demonstrate that his opponent or opponents concealed their wealth or had attempted by some other means to avoid performing the obligations of the wealthy. In this way he created the impression that they were unworthy of political trust (Brown, above, note 30).

On the broader theme of the immorality of wealth we can cite, for example, the vivid description of the inebriated behaviour of the defendant in the suit *Against Konon* (Dem. 54.7–13). The clear implication of the passage is, "Look at the way these licentious playboys abuse a decent law-abiding citizen." Of course, the plaintiff, Ariston, is himself a member of the liturgical class, but in the *exordium* he pointedly draws a distinction between himself and his assailants. "There is much I could say, men of the jury, to show that we are useful citizens, both ourselves and our father, so long as he lived, by our performance as trierarchs and our campaigns and our carrying out your orders, while neither he [*sc.* Konon] nor any of his group has done any such thing" (54.44).

Perhaps the best example of the way the whole gamut of popular prejudice against the wealthy could be employed in an attempt to destroy a politician's credibility is the speech *Against Androtion*. Androtion was a wealthy man, son of one of the Four Hundred. At the time of the trial, 355/4, he had been a servant of the state in various capacities for about thirty years. He was accused by his personal enemies on a technical charge of "unconstitutional

proposal" (γραφὴ παρανόμων). Demosthenes wrote the speech for one of them, Diodoros. Since the charge was rather weak, the emphasis of the attack was upon Androtion's personal integrity and political morality. There were three main points. (1) Androtion's father had been imprisoned as a public debtor and, instead of paying off the debt, had escaped from prison. By the law against public debtors Androtion was excluded from a career in politics.[31] (2) Androtion had been a male prostitute (ἑταίρησις). For this reason, too, he could not take part in public affairs (Dem. 22.21). (3) In his carrying out of his duties, particularly his exaction of arrears of εἰσφορά from delinquent taxpayers, he had behaved outrageously, treating decent (and decidedly less wealthy) Athenian citizens with utmost contempt (22.42–64).

Either of the first two charges, if substantiated, would have meant an end to Androtion's career. The charge of ἑταίρησις, for example, was later used with success by Aischines in his *Against Timarchos*. The third was calculated to make the jury ill-disposed to him. Yet Androtion was acquitted, as can be seen from the fact that he was chosen by the *demos* to serve as ambassador to Mausolos of Karia in the very next year. He continued as an active politician for almost ten more years.[32] So the charges were unfounded and the blatant attempt to stir up the prejudice of the jury was unsuccessful. Nevertheless the charges were made and have been taken seriously.[33] Statements in the orators that are based upon this type of prejudice must always be viewed with scepticism.

Another common device in Greek oratory is the use of historical precedent to illuminate a point about the present or the future. As Andokides put it: "It is necessary to use what has happened before as evidence for the things that are going to be."[34] It was not necessary to be too fussy about the facts. As Thucydides knew all too well,[35] the Athenians were not very concerned with accuracy of detail (ἀκρίβεια) about the past. An orator could, therefore, distort a reference to suit his point, sometimes even invent one altogether. As long as it sounded reasonable, it was likely to be accepted. The important thing to remember is that both in the lawcourts and in the assembly the orator had a captive audience. It was not possible to slip out and check a

[31]The imprisonment and escape, Dem. 22.56 and 24.125. The consequent legal disqualification of Androtion from politics, Dem. 22.33–34.

[32]For the details of Androtion's career see P. Harding, "Androtion's Political Career," *Historia* 25 (1976) 186–200. For indications of immaturity and inexperience in Demosthenes' speech see L. Pearson, "The Development of Demosthenes as a Political Orator," *Phoenix* 18 (1964) 95–109, esp. 100 f.

[33]See, for example, Pickard-Cambridge (above, n. 9) 112–115.

[34]Andokides, *On the Peace* 2. On the universal nature of the appeal to the past see M. I. Finley, *The Ancestral Constitution* (Cambridge 1971).

[35]Thuc. 6.53.3–54.2. See on this L. Pearson, "Historical allusions in the Attic Orators," *CP* 36 (1941) 209–229.

reference. Decisions had to be made and votes cast on the basis of the information provided at the moment. Afterwards, it was not likely that anyone but an antiquarian would bother to confirm whether Demosthenes was right in ascribing this or that law to Solon or whether it was Drakon's instead, or if the First Sacred War had really begun the way Aischines said it had. Proof of this can be seen in the notorious passage from Andokides' speech *On the Peace* (3–9). Andokides set out to demonstrate by a historical review that Athens had prospered more in peace-time than in war. There is hardly a detail in it that is not either wrong or distorted.[36] Far from being ridiculed and thrown out of court, however, it survived to be imitated almost word for word by Aischines in the speech *On the False Embassy* (172–176).

One facet of this use of historical precedent is more frequently employed than any other and has had a pernicious effect upon the study of Athens in the fourth century. It is the appeal to the Athenians' πρόγονοι, the "ancestor-theme." It was part of Athenian national propaganda that had been fostered by the whole tradition of the Funeral Oration that Athens' great period was the time of the Persian Wars.[37] Then Athens had championed the freedom and liberty of Hellas against the foreign invader. The men who had fought at Marathon and Salamis became the ideal for Athenians to live up to. That this was a popular notion already in the fifth century is obvious, once again, from Aristophanic comedy. In the *Acharnians* and the *Lysistrata* the grand old men-of-Marathon represent the values of old Athens. Of course, the comedian cannot help poking fun at the tradition, but the tradition existed.

In fourth-century oratory the theme is developed *ad nauseam*. The Athenians are constantly being urged to prove themselves worthy of this great period in their past and equal the valour of the men of that time. Obviously, if one has set up a certain period in history and the men who took part in it as ideals, it follows that the men of the present are not so good. The orator's task is to persuade them that they must make the effort to become so. This has led to the traditional misconception that the Athenians of the fourth century were not making the effort and were, for that reason, inferior to those of the fifth century, particularly the men of the Persian

[36]*Pace* W. E. Thompson, "Andocides and Hellanicus," *TAPA* 98 (1967) 483–490. For a detailed discussion see K. J. Maidment, *Minor Attic Orators*[1] (Cambridge, Mass. 1941) *ad loc.* For some alterations of Andokides by Aischines that can be demonstrated see G. Bugh, "Andocides, Aeschines, and the Three Hundred Athenian Cavalrymen," *Phoenix* 36 (1982) 306–312 and W. E. Thompson, "Andocides and the Peace of Conon," *Phoenix* 38 (1984) 216–220, 216.

[37]The basic work on the ancestor-theme is K. Jost, *Das Beispiel und Vorbild der Vorfahren bei den attischen Rednern und Geschichtsschreibern bis Demosthenes* (Paderborn 1936). For the Funeral Oration as the medium of Athenian national propaganda see now N. Loraux, *L'Invention d'Athènes* (Paris 1981). Of course the Athenians did not stop at the Persian Wars. By the time of Isokrates' *Panegyrikos* they had projected their virtues back into the mythical past.

Wars. One can hardly open a book on Demosthenes without finding a chapter devoted to the theme of the degeneracy of the Athenians in the fourth century and the accusation that this was why they had lost to Philip of Macedon. Typical is Clemenceau's statement (above, note 1, 20) that Demosthenes "knew defeat only through the weakness of his soldiers."

One who is familiar with the history of the fourth century knows this impression to be deceptive. Less than ten years after the defeat in the Peloponnesian War Athens was in conflict with Sparta in the Corinthian War and actively trying to rebuild her empire. From then on she was almost continually campaigning somewhere or other, not only for her own advantage (though usually), but also for the principles of the *Koine Eirene*, freedom and autonomy for all.[38] It was no sign of degeneracy that she came more and more to use mercenary soldiers. Other states were doing the same thing. The increasing professionalism in the art of war was the reason. But the citizens did their share. In 352 they stopped Philip at Thermopylai, they fought at Chaironeia, and they fought again in the Lamian War. That they lost to Philip at Chaironeia was more a reflection of Philip's skill as a general than their degeneracy.[39] Thus, once again, a lack of sensitivity to rhetorical technique and the methods of the politician has obviated our understanding of the history of this period.

What the ancestor-theme has done for Athens in the Western tradition, Demosthenes' own characterisation of himself as a politician did for him already in his own generation and has continued to do. While it is surely true that few actors become successful politicians, most politicians need to be good actors. They must choose a role and create an image.[40] Demosthenes chose to play the role of the adviser (σύμβουλος). He developed this idea over his years in politics,[41] but expressed it most forcefully in the speech *On the Crown* (18.66). Clearly the man who approached his fellow citizens in this role had to demonstrate that his advice was the best[42] (i.e., he was "wise") and not subject to unwanted influence (i.e., incorruptible). This is why the Harpalos-affair was doubly devastating to Demosthenes' reputation. It hurt his future that he was convicted of accepting bribes (albeit there was no proof), it hurt his present that the handling of Harpalos had been

[38]Though probably not to the extravagant extent claimed for them by J. Cargill, *The Second Athenian League* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London 1981).

[39]Cf. W. K. Pritchett, "Observations on Chaironeia," *AJA* 62 (1958) 307–311.

[40]This was just as necessary in ancient democracy as it is today. Kimon cultivated his aristocratic image through his largesse, Perikles' aloofness was essential to his chosen role as leader (Thuc. 2.65.9), while Kleon, sensing a new mood in the *demos*, chose a more popular style. Cf. W. R. Connor, *The New Politicians of Fifth-Century Athens* (Princeton 1971).

[41]Demosthenes uses the verb and the noun throughout his political orations more than 50 times, usually referring to himself. Aischines, by contrast, hardly used the word at all, except to take a shot at Demosthenes (cf. Aisch. 3.158).

[42]This was, of course, the very reason why Ktesiphon proposed to crown Demosthenes.

conducted on his advice and had turned into a great embarrassment for Athens.[43]

This is not, of course, the whole story. One does not need to have read many inscriptions to be aware that the Athenians could be very concerned with ἀκρίβεια in their everyday business. This should not surprise us. While very few Athenians of the Chaironeia-generation could claim ancestors who had fought at Marathon, or even in the Peloponnesian War,[44] most were well informed about contemporary affairs. From their own personal experience on campaign, or their involvement in the decision that led to the campaign in the first place, or from the communications of generals and ambassadors from abroad and directly on their return (all of which were read in the *Boule* and often in the assembly), or from their service on the *Boule* (perhaps as often as twice in a lifetime) and from numerous other roles they performed in the operation of full democracy the Athenian males of the fifth and fourth centuries were particularly knowledgeable about the state's business, both at home and overseas. Contrary, therefore, to his practice when dealing with generalised themes of a prejudicial nature, when he was talking about specific events that were common knowledge, the *rhetor* had to show that he was conversant with the details, if he was to maintain his credibility as a political adviser. That is not to say, however, that he was precluded from putting his own interpretation on the facts.

One example will suffice. Early in 348 B.C., while still concerned with the defence of Olynthos, for which Demosthenes was canvassing vigorously, the Athenians became involved in Euboia. An expedition was sent under the general Phokion to aid Ploutarchos, tyrant of Eretria. With Phokion were Meidias and Aischines. No doubt Euboulos was also in favour of intervention in Euboia. The *demos* certainly approved. Demosthenes did not. The campaign may not have been an unqualified success, though Phokion did win some sort of victory at Tamynai.[45] The campaign was a fact, known to many from their personal participation. The degree to which it was successful in achieving its aim is less clear, largely as a result of the way it was represented (or misrepresented) by Demosthenes in a speech delivered only a few years later (*On the Peace* 5). Carefully avoiding the trap of attaching any blame for the expedition to the *demos*, Demosthenes criticises the policy by attacking its advocates. His denigration of the Euboian expedition is achieved through a masterly use of derogatory expressions, while at the

[43]See the good analysis of the Harpalos-affair and its effect upon Demosthenes' reputation (especially the development of the charge that he was a "jinx") in J. A. Goldstein, *The Letters of Demosthenes* (New York and London 1968) 37–94.

[44]Most references in the fourth-century orators to military service on behalf of the state go no further back than the Corinthian War.

[45]For the campaign see Cawkwell, *Philip of Macedon* (above, n. 4) 88–89 and G. T. Griffith in N. G. L. Hammond and G. T. Griffith, *A History of Macedonia* 2 (Oxford 1979) 318–319.

same time he enhances his own position by the allusion to his solitary opposition, even at the risk of personal injury—an opposition that, he claims, the people have come to see was right.

In the first place, men of Athens, when, at the time of the disturbances in Euboia, you were being urged to assist Ploutarchos and to undertake an *inglorious* and *costly* campaign, I came forward *first* and *unsupported* to oppose this action, and was almost *torn in pieces* by those who for the sake of their own *petty profits* had induced you to commit *many errors*; and when only a short time had elapsed, along with the *shame* you incurred and the treatment you received—*treatment such as no people in the world ever before experienced* at the hands of those whom they went to assist—there came the recognition by all of you of the *baseness* of those who had urged you to the course, and of the *excellence* of my own advice.

From this brief analysis it should have become apparent that there is no trick or deception known to modern politicians, no arrogant denial of involvement in dirty dealings, when the involvement is on record, no proud claim to have participated in successful enterprises, where the evidence is against them, no slanderous analysis of an opponent's motives or character, no base appeal to popular prejudice or overt attempt to arouse patriotic fervour that was not also known to the ancient *rhetor*. In short, they were liars and cheats and their words cannot be trusted on any topic, unless supported by independent evidence. But it is naive to have expected otherwise, and naive to turn away from them in Platonic horror. Rather, one should approach the *rhetores* in a positive spirit, intending to find in their works what they have to offer, namely an insight into the lively cut and thrust of real political life in the ancient world—at least to the extent that the extant speeches approximate to what was actually said, since the majority of them were probably edited for publication.

And that is not all. Because rhetoric is a psychagogic art, the speeches of the fourth-century *rhetores* are like a mirror to the *psyche* of fourth-century Athens. To use an analogy: the modern historian of Nazi Germany cannot fail to read the speeches of Hitler.[46] But he does not do so in the hope of finding historical snippets that he can extract and use as evidence for this or that event (as we so often do with references in Demosthenes or Aischines); he does so rather to understand how that individual managed to move so many people, and conversely, to probe the "unconscious" of the German people, an unconscious that Hitler knew so well how to "liberate" by "expressing its innermost aspirations" and touching "each private wound on the raw."[47]

[46]See, for example, the exemplary use made of Hitler's speeches by A. Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (Harmondsworth 1962).

[47]Otto Strasser, *Hitler and I* (London 1940) 77.

But the analogy must stop there, lest by mentioning Hitler one really does raise the spectre of Plato. After all, it is important to remember that the art of persuasion was, and is, an essential feature of the democratic constitution and that its use is a *de facto* acknowledgement of the sovereignty of the people. Hitler was able to pervert it, because he spoke unopposed and before an audience that was comparatively unversed in its ways. This possibility was not open to the ancient *rhetor*. In the first place he could be sure that someone, as skilled as himself, would argue on the other side and, in addition, by the time of Demosthenes and Aischines, if not well before, the *demos* had been thoroughly exposed to the tricks and devices that could be used to sway its vote and was on its guard. Indeed, the record of the Athenian people in regard to the decisions they made in the law-courts and the assembly during the fourth century, when intense political strife made its way into the courts and foreign policy became so complex it often seemed as though no decision was the right one, is ample proof that oratory did not have the evil effects its opponents believe it had.[48]

Department of Classics
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, B.C., V6T 1W5

[48]A similar defence of the role of oratory and orators in a direct democracy can be found in Finley's article on "Athenian Demagogues" (above, n. 27), but it appears to need repeating.