

344 BC

THE SECOND PHILIPPIC

Demosthenes

translated by Thomas Leland, D.D.

Notes and Introduction by Thomas Leland, D.D.

Demosthenes (383-322 BC) - Athenian statesman and the most famous of Greek orators. He was leader of a patriotic party opposing Philip of Macedon.

The Second Philippic (344 BC) - The second in a series of speeches in which Demosthenes attacks Philip of Macedon. Demosthenes urged the Athenians to oppose Philip's conquests of independent Greek states. Cicero later used the name "Philippic" to label his bitter speeches against Mark Antony; the word has since come to stand for any harsh invective.

THE SECOND PHILIPPIC

INTRODUCTION

To the Second Philippic

THE Greeks thought it proper to confirm, or at least not to oppose, Philip's admission into the council of Amphictyons, where he immediately assumed a despotic power. In every enterprise he armed himself with one of their decrees, and, under pretence of executing them, made a merit of oppressing several states of Greece.

The Thebans opened him an entrance into Peloponnesus, where, from their inveterate hatred to the Lacedaemonians, they were constantly fomenting divisions.

They solicited Philip to join with them the Messenians and the Argians, to reduce the power of Lacedaemon, which, without any right but that of the strongest, had erected itself into a kind of sovereignty, to the prejudice of the neighboring states.

Philip willingly listened to an overture which agreed so well with his own views.

He proposed, or rather dictated, a decree to the Amphictyons, that the Lacedaemonians should suffer Argos and Messene to enjoy an absolute independence; and, under the pretence of supporting their authority, at the same time marched a great body of forces towards those parts.

The Lacedaemonians, justly alarmed, applied to Athens for succor, and strongly urged by their ambassadors the conclusion of a league which was necessary for their common safety. All the powers interested in crossing this league used their utmost diligence to that end. Philip, by his ministers, represented to the Athenians that they could not with justice declare against him; and that, if he had not come to a rupture with the Thebans, he had in this done nothing contrary to his treaty with Athens. And this, indeed, was true with respect to the public articles of the peace, whatever private assurances he might have given their ambassadors. The representatives of Thebes, Argos, and Messene pressed the Athenians on their part, and reproached them with having already too much favored the Lacedaemonians, those enemies of Thebes, and tyrants of Peloponnesus. The strength of those remonstrances somewhat staggered the Athenians. They were unwilling to break with Philip; and then, on the other hand, could not but see danger to themselves in the ruin of Lacedaemon. They were therefore in doubt what answer to give to the Lacedaemonian ambassadors: on which occasion Demosthenes pronounced the following oration.

THE SECOND PHILIPPIC

Pronounced in the Archonship of Lyciscus, two years after the Oration on the Peace
 ATHENIANS! When the hostile attempts of Philip, and those outrageous violations of the peace, which he is perpetually committing, are at any time the subject of our debates, the speeches on your side I find humane and just, *(1) and that the sentiments of those who inveigh against Philip never fail of approbation: but as to the necessary measures; to speak out plainly, not one hath been pursued, nor anything effected even to reward the attention to these harangues. Nay, to such circumstances is our state reduced, that the more fully and evidently a man proves that Philip is acting contrary to his treaty, and harboring designs against Greece, the greater is his difficulty in pointing out your duty.

The reason is this. They who aspire to an extravagant degree of power are to be opposed by force and action, not by speeches: and yet, in the first place, we public speakers are unwilling to recommend or to propose anything to this purpose, from the fear of your displeasure; but confine ourselves to general representations of the grievous, of the outrageous nature of his conduct, and the like.

Then, you who attend, are better qualified than Philip either to plead the justice of your cause, or to apprehend it, when enforced by others: but as to any effectual opposition to his present designs, in this you are entirely inactive. You see then the consequence, the necessary, the natural consequence; each of you excels in that which hath engaged your time and application: he, in acting; you, in speaking. And if, on this occasion, it be sufficient that we speak with a superior force of truth and justice, this may be done with the utmost ease: but if we are to consider how to rectify our present disorders, how to guard against the danger of plunging inadvertently into still greater; against the progress of a power which may at last bear down all opposition; then must our debates proceed in a different manner; and all they who speak, and all you who attend, must prefer the best and most salutary measures to the easiest and most agreeable.

First, then, Athenians! if there be a man who feels no apprehensions at the view of Philip's power, and the extent of his conquests; who imagines that these portend no danger to the state, or that his designs are not all aimed against you; I am amazed! and must entreat the attention of you all, while I explain those reasons briefly, which induce me to entertain different expectations, and to regard Philip as our real enemy; that if I appear to have looked forward with the more penetrating eye, you may join with me; if they, who are thus secure and confident in this man, you may yield to their direction.

In the first place, therefore, I consider the acquisitions made by Philip when the peace was just concluded: Thermopylae, and the command of Phocis. What use did he make of these?— He chose to serve the interest of Thebes, not that of Athens. And why? As ambition is his great passion, universal empire the sole object of his views; not peace, not tranquillity, not any just purpose; he knew this well, that neither our constitution nor our principles would admit him to prevail upon you (by anything he could promise, by anything he could do) to sacrifice one state of Greece to your private interest; but that, as you have the due regard to justice, as you have an abhorrence of the least stain upon your honor, and as you have that quick discernment which nothing can escape; the moment his attempt was made, you would oppose him with the same vigor as if you yourselves had been immediately attacked. The Thebans, he supposed (and the event confirmed his opinion), would, for the sake of any private advantage, suffer him to act towards others as he pleased; and, far from opposing or impeding his designs, would be ready at his command to fight upon his side. From the same persuasion he now heaps his favors upon the Messenians and Argians. And this reflects the greatest lustre upon

you, my countrymen! for by these proceedings you are declared the only invariable assertors of the rights of Greece; the only persons whom no private attachment, no views of interest, can seduce from their affection to the Greeks.

And that it is with reason he entertains these sentiments of you, and sentiments so different of the Thebans and the Argians; he may be convinced, not from the present only, but from a review of former times. For he must have been informed, I presume, he cannot but have heard, that your ancestors, when, by submitting to the king, they might have purchased the sovereignty of Greece, not only scorned to listen, when Alexander, *(2) this man's ancestor, was made the messenger of such terms, but chose to abandon their city, encountered every possible difficulty; and, after all this, performed such exploits as men are ever eager to recite, yet with the just force and dignity no man ever could express: and therefore it becomes me to be silent on this subject: for in reality their actions are superior to the power of words. As to the ancestors of the Thebans and the Argians, the one, he knows, fought for the barbarian; the others did not oppose him. *(3) He knew then that both these people would attend but to their private interest, without the least regard to the common cause of Greece: should he choose you for allies, you would serve him so far only as justice would permit; but if he attached himself to them, he gained assistants in all the schemes of his ambition. This it is that then determined him, this it is that now determines him, to their side rather than to yours: not that he sees they have a greater naval force *(4) than we; or that, having gained the sovereignty in the inland countries, he declines the command of the seas, and the advantages of commerce; or that he hath forgotten those pretences, those promises which obtained him the peace.

But I may be told, It is true, he did act thus; but not from ambition, or from any of those motives of which I accuse him; but as he thought the cause of Thebes more just than ours. *(5) This of all pretences he cannot now allege. Can he, who commands the Lacedaemonians *(6) to quit their claim to Messene, pretend that, in giving up Orchomenus and Coronea to the Thebans, he acted from regard to justice? But now comes his last subterfuge. He was compelled; and yielded these places quite against his inclinations, being encompassed by the Thessalian horse and Theban infantry. Fine pretence!- Just so, they cry, he is to entertain suspicions of the Thebans: and some spread rumors of their own framing that he is to fortify Elatea. *(7) Yes! these things are yet to be, and so will they remain, in my opinion; but his attack on Lacedaemon, in conjunction with the Thebans and Argians, is not yet to be made. No! he is actually detaching forces; supplying money; and is himself expected at the head of a formidable army. The Lacedaemonians, therefore, the enemies of Thebes, he now infests. And will he then restore the Phocians, whom he hath but just now ruined? Who can believe this? I, for my part, can never think, if Philip had been forced into those former measures, or if he had now abandoned the Thebans, that he would make this continued opposition to their enemies. No! his present measures prove that all his past conduct was the effect of choice; and from all his actions it appears, that all his actions are directly levelled against this state. And there is in some sort a necessity for this.

Consider: he aims at empire, and from you alone he expects opposition. He hath long loaded us with injuries; and of this he himself is most intimately conscious; for those of our possessions which he hath reduced to his service he uses as a barrier to his other territories: so that if he should give up Amphipolis and Potidaea, he would not think himself secure even in Macedon. He is therefore sensible that he entertains designs against you, and that you perceive them. Then, as he thinks highly of your wisdom, he concludes that you must hold him in that abhorrence which he merits: hence is he alarmed; expecting to feel some effects of your resentment (if you have any favorable opportunity), unless he prevents you by his attack. Hence is his vigilance awakened; his

arm raised against the state: he courts some of the Thebans, and such of the Peloponnesians as have the same views with him; whom he deems too mercenary to regard anything but present interest, and too perversely stupid to foresee any consequences. And yet persons of but moderate discernment may have some manifest examples to alarm them, which I had occasion to *(8) mention to the Messenians, and to the Argians. Perhaps it may be proper to repeat them here.

“Messenians!” said I, “how highly, think ye, would the Olynthians have been offended if any man had spoken against Philip at that time when he gave them up Anthemus, *(9) a city which the former kings of Macedon had ever claimed? when he drove out the Athenian colony, and gave them Potidaea? when he took all our resentment on himself, and left them to enjoy our dominions? Did they expect to have suffered thus? had it been foretold, would they have believed it? you cannot think it! Yet, after a short enjoyment of the territories of others, they have been forever despoiled of their own by this man. Inglorious has been their fall, not conquered only, but betrayed and sold by one another. For those intimate correspondences with tyrants ever portend mischief to free states.” “Turn your eyes,” said I, “to the Thessalians! think ye, that when he first expelled their tyrants, when he then gave them up Nicaea *(10) and Magnesia, that they expected ever to have been subjected to those governors *(11) now imposed on them? or that the man who restored them to their seat in the Amphictyonic council, would have deprived them of their own proper revenues? yet that such was the event the world can testify. In like manner, you now behold Philip lavishing his gifts and promises upon you. If you are wise, you will pray that he may never appear to

have deceived and abused you. Various are the contrivances for the defence and security of cities; as battlements, and walls, and trenches, and other kind of fortifications; all which are the effects of labor, and attended with continual expense.

But there is one common bulwark, with which men of prudence are naturally provided, the guard and security of all people, particularly of free states, against the assault of tyrants. What is this? Distrust. Of this be mindful: to this adhere: preserve this carefully, and no calamity can affect you.” “What is it you seek?” said I, “Liberty? And do ye not perceive that nothing can be more adverse to this than the very titles of Philip? every monarch, every tyrant, is an enemy to liberty, and the opposer of laws. Will ye not then be careful, lest, while ye seek to be freed from war, ye find yourselves his slaves?” But although they heard these things, and loudly expressed their approbation; though the like points were frequently urged by the ambassadors while I was present, and probably were afterward repeated, yet still they have no less dependence on the friendship and the promises of Philip. But it is not strange that the Messenians and some of the Peloponnesians should act contrary to the dictates of nature, reason, and reflection. Even you, who are yourselves fully sensible, and constantly reminded by your public speakers, that there are designs forming against you, that the toils of your enemies are surrounding you, will, I fear, be plunged by your supineness into all those dangers that threaten you: so prevalent is the pleasure and indulgence of a moment over all your future interests. But as to the course necessary to be pursued prudence requires that this be debated hereafter among yourselves. At present, I shall propose such an answer to these ministers as may be worthy of your concurrence.... *(12) It would be just, Athenians! to call the men before you who gave those promises which induced you to conclude the peace. For neither would I have undertaken the embassy, nor would you (I am convinced) have laid down your arms had it been suspected that Philip would have acted thus, when he had obtained a peace. No! the assurances he then gave were quite different from his present actions. There are others also to be summoned. Who are these? The men who, at my return from the second embassy (sent for the ratification of the treaty), when I saw the state abused, and warned you of your danger, and testified the

truth, and opposed with all my power the giving up Thermopylae and Phocis;- the men, I say, who then cried out that I, the water-drinker, was morose and peevish; but that Philip, if permitted to pass, would act agreeably to your desires; would fortify Thespia and Plataea; restrain the insolence of Thebes; cut through the Chersonesus *(13) at his own expense; and give you up Euboea and Oropus, as an equivalent for Amphipolis. That all this was positively affirmed, you cannot, I am sure, forget, though not remarkable for remembering injuries. And to complete the disgrace, you have engaged your posterity to the same treaty, in full dependence on those promises; so entirely have you been seduced.

And now, to what purpose do I mention this? and why do I desire that these men should appear?- I call the gods to witness that, without the least evasion, I shall boldly declare the truth!- Not that, by breaking out into invectives, *(14) I may expose myself to the like treatment, and once more give my old enemies an opportunity of receiving Philip's gold; nor yet that I may indulge an impertinent vanity of haranguing. But I apprehend the time must come when Philip's actions will give you more concern than at present. His designs, I see, are ripening; I wish my apprehensions may not prove just; but I fear that time is not far off. And when it will no longer be in your power to disregard events; when neither mine, nor any other person's information, but your own knowledge, your own senses, will assure you of the impending danger; then will your severest resentment break forth.

And as your ambassadors have concealed certain things, influenced (as they themselves are conscious) by corruption, I fear that they who endeavor to restore what these men have ruined may feel the weight of your displeasure: for there are some, I find, who generally point their anger not at the deserving objects, but those most immediately at their mercy.

While our affairs, therefore, remain not absolutely desperate; while it is yet in our power to debate; give me leave to remind you all of one thing, though none can be ignorant of it. Who was the man *(15) that persuaded you to give up Phocis and Thermopylae? which once gained, he also gained free access for his troops to Attica and to Peloponnesus; and obliged us to turn our thoughts from the rights of Greece, from all foreign interests, to a defensive war, in these very territories; whose approach must be severely felt by every one of us: and that very day gave birth to it: for had we not been then deceived, the state could have nothing to apprehend. His naval power could not have been great enough to attempt Attica by sea, nor could he have passed by land through Thermopylae and Phocis.

But he must have either confined himself within the bounds of justice, and lived in a due observance of his treaty, or have instantly been involved in a war equal to that which obliged him to sue for peace.

Thus much may be sufficient to recall past actions to your view. May all the gods forbid that the event should confirm my suspicions! for I by no means desire that any man should meet even the deserved punishment of his crimes, when the whole community is in danger of being involved in his destruction.

NOTES

To the Second Philippic

*(1) An opposition to the growing power of Macedon the orator ever affects to consider as the cause of liberty, of justice, and of Greece. The interest of the nation, that is, of the whole assemblage of the Grecian states, was professedly the first great object of regard to every member of every community. This was their most extensive affection. The distinction of Greek and barbarian, precluded the rest of mankind from a just share in their philanthropy; at least it was not generally considered as a duty to extend their benevolence farther than the boundaries of their nation. These included all that were really considered of the same kind: and hence it is, as I conceive, that the love of their countrymen was called, by the most extensive term, the love of mankind. The word, therefore, in the original (philanthropous) which is rendered humane, the translator understood as expressive of a regard to the general welfare of Greece. Nor was it owing to any design of concealing his ignorance that this explanation was not originally allowed a place in the notes on this oration. What is, or is imagined to be, clear to us, we are apt to flatter ourselves must, at first glance, appear to others exactly in the same light; just as we sometimes suppose that the difficulty we ourselves cannot conquer is, in itself, absolutely insuperable.

*(2) The reader may find the history here alluded to in the eighth and ninth books of Herodotus. The expressions in the original are as contemptuous as possible; ο τούτων, or, as some editions have it, ο τούτων προγονος, the ancestors of these wretches the Macedonians; and then, not πρεσβευς, ambassador, but ΚΕΡΥΞ, herald or crier, the slave or menial officer of his master Mardonius.

Avec le titre d'ambassadeur (as Tourreil translates it) suggests the honorable idea which Demosthenes takes such pains to keep out of view.

*(3) The readiness with which the Thebans granted earth and water, the tokens of submission, to the Persian, the regret with which they joined Leonidas at Thermopylae, their joining openly with Xerxes, when his arms had the appearance of success, and other circumstances, confirmed by the united testimony of historians, all warrant the assertion of Demosthenes. The Argians were engaged to a neutrality by an artifice of the Persians, who pretended to derive their descent from Perseus, the son of Acrisius, one of the kings of Argos. This pretence, how gross soever, was sufficient for a people who chose to be deceived, and would not reflect that this monarchy had not the title of Persian till the reign of Cyrus. Their infidelity to the cause of Greece they concealed under the veil of ambition; for they professed themselves ready to concur in the common defence, provided that they were admitted to an equal share of the command with Lacedaemon: which proposal was rejected, as they desired.

*(4) Athens, as a maritime power, was superior to all the other Greeks. At the battle of Salamis, of the three hundred vessels which composed the Grecian fleet, two hundred were Athenian. Three hundred ships sailed from the port of Athens on the expedition to Sicily; and their fleet was afterward increased to four hundred.

*(5) The union of Philip with the Thebans had a very plausible color; that of espousing the cause of Apollo, and punishing the sacrilegious profaners of his temple. It was not convenient to display this at large, and therefore he cuts it short by one vague expression; for the art of an orator appears no less in suppressing such things as may prove unfavorable to his design, than in dwelling on those points which may assist it.

*(6) Because the pretensions of each were of the same nature, Lacedaemon assumed the supreme power in Peloponnesus. Thebes affected the like power in Boeotia.

*(7) This was the most considerable city in Phocis; and by its situation very well fitted to keep the Thebans in awe. So that some time after, when Philip perceived that the Thebans were growing cool to him, his first step was to take possession of Elatea.

*(8) When Philip first began to interest himself in the disputes between these states and Lacedaemon, the Athenians sent an embassy to endeavor to weaken his interest in Peloponnesus, and to dissuade the Messenians and Argians from accepting of his interposition. On this occasion it was that Demosthenes made the oration from which he now quotes this passage.

*(9) This city of Macedon had been possessed by the ancestors of Philip from the earliest ages; for we learn from Herodotus, that about two hundred years before Amyntas made an offer of Anthemus to Hippias, the son of Pisistratus.

*(10) The city of Locris had been given up to Philip by Phalecus, at the conclusion of the Sacred War.

*(11) The tyranny said to have been imposed by Philip on the Thessalians is in the original of this passage called a government of ten; yet in the third Philippic it is styled a tetrarchy, or government of four. Hence, there are grounds to presume that an error has crept into the ancient copies. Unless it be supposed that Philip divided the country of Thessaly into four districts, and over each of those established ten governors; if, by such a supposition, the authority of the copies may be preserved.

*(12) [Though none of our editors take notice of it, in this place the proper officer must have proposed the orator's motion in form: unless we suppose that this oration has descended to us imperfect; for, as the text now stands, there is a manifest want of connection between this sentence and what follows.- Note by Olivet.] *(13) When Cersobleptes had given up the Chersonesus to the Athenians, it became perpetually exposed to the incursions of Thrace. The only way of putting a stop to them was to cut through the isthmus, for the Thracians had no ships; and this Philip promised to do in favor of the Athenians and their colonies.

*(14) Wolfius, whom the translator here follows, has been severely censured for this interpretation by the Italian commentator, who renders the former part of the sentence thus: "Eos non ideo vocari velim, ut qui olim convitiis dehonestatus fui, aequae nunc mihi a vobis famam conciliem."- Par umin ought not to be rendered a vobis, but apud vos; or, as the translator, who follows Lucchesini's authority, has justly explained it in his note, in your presence. But my objection to this interpretation does not arise from grammatical nicety, but from a regard to the context, the surest comment. If Demosthenes, instead of the disgraceful treatment he formerly received, both from the partisans of Macedon and from the people, was now to be received with applause, and to triumph over his opposers, how could these have another opportunity of receiving Philip's gold? Such wages were only paid when earned. They were bestowed, not on ineffectual efforts, but real services; and these his friends could not perform if disgraced and discouraged by the assembly. The whole sentiment of the orator, as translated by Wolfius, is this: "I do not wish that these men may appear, in order to indulge my indignation and resentment against them, that so they may retort my accusations with double virulence (as was the case when we first returned from our embassy), and thus, by once more gaining your favor, and triumphing over me, they may have an opportunity of boasting their services to Philip, and obtaining their reward." The passage manifestly alludes to the transactions of the assembly, when the ten ambassadors returned who had been sent to treat with Philip about a peace; and which are particularly described by

Demosthenes in his oration on the embassy: and we may safely appeal to the reader who consults that oration, as to the propriety of the present interpretation.

*(15) The person pointed at is Aeschines. These two statesmen accused each other when the bad consequences of this treaty came to be universally felt and acknowledged.

THE END OF THE SECOND PHILIPPIC