**Plutarch’s Life of Demosthenes**

1 1 The author of the encomium upon Alcibiades for his victory in the chariot-race at Olympia,[1](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note1) whether he was Euripides, as the prevailing report has it, or some other, says, O Sosius,[2](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note2) that the first requisite to man's happiness is birth in "a famous city"; but in my opinion, for a man who would enjoy true happiness, which depends for the most part on character and disposition, it is no disadvantage to belong to an obscure and mean city, any more than it is to be born of a mother who is of little stature and without beauty. 2 For it were laughable to suppose that Iulis, which is a little part of the small island of Ceos, and Aegina, which a certain Athenian was urgent to have removed as an eye-sore of the Piraeus,[3](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note3) should breed good actors and poets,[4](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note4) but should never be able to produce a man who is just, independent, wise, and magnanimous. 3 The arts, indeed, since their object is to bring business or fame, naturally pine away in obscure and mean cities; but virtue, like a strong and hardy plant, takes root in any place, if she finds there a generous nature and a spirit that shuns no labour. 4 Wherefore we also, if we fail to live p5and think as we ought, will justly attribute this, not to the smallness of our native city, but to ourselves.

2 1 However, when one has undertaken to compose a history based upon readings which are not readily accessible or even found at home, but in foreign countries, for the most part, and scattered about among different owners, for him it is really necessary, first and above all things, that he should live in a city which is famous, friendly to the liberal arts, and populous, in order that he may have all sorts of books in plenty, and may by hearsay and enquiry come into possession of all those details which elude writers and are preserved with more conspicuous fidelity in the memories of men. 2 He will thus be prevented from publishing a work which is deficient in many, and even in essential things. But as for me, I live in a small city, and I prefer to dwell there that it may not become smaller still; and during the time when I was in Rome and various parts of Italy I had no leisure to practise myself in the Roman language, owing to my public duties and the number of my pupils in philosophy. It was therefore late and when I was well on in years that I began to study Roman literature. And here my experience was an astonishing thing, but true. 3 For it was not so much that by means of words I came to a complete understanding of things, as that from things I somehow had an experience which enabled me to follow the meaning of words. 4 But to appreciate the beauty and quickness of the Roman style, the figures of speech, the rhythm, and the other embellishments of the language, while I think it a graceful accomplishment and one not without its pleasures, still, the careful practice necessary for attaining this is not easy for one like me, but appropriate for those who have more leisure and whose remaining years still suffice for such pursuits.

3 1 Therefore, in this fifth book[5](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note5) of my Parallel Lives, where I write about Demosthenes and Cicero, I shall examine their actions and their political careers to see how their natures and dispositions compare with one another, but I shall make no critical comparison of their speeches, nor try to show which was the more agreeable or the more powerful orator. 2 "For useless," as Ion says, "is a dolphin's might upon dry ground," a maxim which Caecilius, who goes to excess in everything, forgot when he boldly ventured to put forth a comparison of Demosthenes and Cicero. But really it is possible that, if the "Know thyself" of the oracle[6](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note6) were an easy thing for every man, it would not be held to be a divine injunction.

3 In the case of Demosthenes and Cicero, then, it would seem that the Deity originally fashioned them on the same plan, implanting in their natures many similarities, such as their love of distinction, their love of freedom in their political activities, and their lack of courage for wars and dangers, and uniting in them also many similarities of fortune. 4 For in my opinion two other orators could not be found who, from small and obscure beginnings, became great and powerful; who came into conflict with kings and tyrants; who lost each a daughter; who were banished from their native cities and returned with honour; and who, after p9taking to flight again and being captured by their enemies, ended their lives as soon as their countrymen ceased to be free. 5 So that, if there should be a competition between nature and fortune, as between artists, it would be difficult to decide whether the one made the men more alike in their characters, or the other in the circumstances of their lives. But I must speak of the more ancient first.

4 1 Demosthenes, the father of Demosthenes, belonged to the better class of citizens, as Theopompus tells us, and was surnamed Cutler, because he had a large factory and slaves who were skilled workmen in this business. 2 But as for what Aeschines the orator says of the mother of Demosthenes,[7](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note7) namely, that she was a daughter of one Gylon, who was banished from the city on a charge of treason, and of a barbarian woman, I cannot say whether he speaks truly, or is uttering slander and lies. 3 However, at the age of seven, Demosthenes was left by his father in affluence, since the total value of his estate fell little short of fifteen talents;[8](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note8) but he was wronged by his guardians, who appropriated some of his property to their own uses and neglected the rest, so that even his teachers were deprived of their pay. 4 It was for this reason, as it seems, that he did not pursue the studies which were suitable and proper for a well-born boy, and also because of his bodily weakness and fragility, since his mother would not permit him to work hard in the palaestra, and his tutors would not force him to do so. 5 For from the first he was lean and sickly, and his p11opprobrious surname of Batalus is said to have been given him by the boys in mockery of his physique. 6 Now Batalus, as some say, was an effeminate flute-player, and Antiphanes wrote a farce in which he held him up to ridicule for this. But some speak of Batalus as a poet who wrote voluptuous verses and drinking songs. 7 And it appears that one of the parts of the body which it is not decent to name was at that time called Batalus by the Athenians. 8 But the name of Argas (for they tell us that Demosthenes had this nickname also) was given him either with reference to his manners, which were harsh and savage, the snake being called "argas" by some of the poets; or with reference to his way of speaking, which was distressing to his hearers, Argas being the name of a composer of vile and disagreeable songs. So much on this head.

5 1 The origin of his eager desire to be an orator, they tell us, was as follows. Callistratus the orator was going to make a plea in court 848on the question of Oropus,[9](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note9) and the trial was eagerly awaited, not only because of the ability of the orator, who was then at the very height of his reputation, but also because of the circumstances of the case, which was notorious. 2 Accordingly, when Demosthenes heard the teachers and tutors agreeing among themselves to be present at the trial, with great importunity he persuaded his own tutor to p13take him to the hearing. 3 This tutor, having an acquaintance with the public officials who opened the courts, succeeded in procuring a place where the boy could sit unseen and listen to what was said. 4 Callistratus won his case and was extravagantly admired, and Demosthenes conceived a desire to emulate his fame, seeing him escorted on his way by the multitude and congratulated by all; but he had a more wondering appreciation of the power of his oratory, which was naturally adapted to subdue and master all opposition. 5 Wherefore, bidding farewell to his other studies and to the usual pursuits of boyhood, he practised himself laboriously in declamation, with the idea that he too was to be an orator. 6 He also employed Isaeus as his guide to the art of speaking, although Isocrates was lecturing at the time; either, as some say, because he was an orphan and unable to pay Isocrates his stipulated fee of ten minas,[10](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note10) or because he preferred the style of Isaeus for its effectiveness and adaptability in actual use. 7 But Hermippus says that he once came upon some anonymous memoirs in which it was recorded that Demosthenes was a pupil of Plato and got most help from him in his rhetorical studies. He also quotes Ctesibius as saying that from Callias the Syracusan and certain others Demosthenes secretly obtained the rhetorical systems of Isocrates and Alcidamas and mastered them.

6 1 However this may be, when Demosthenes came of age he began to bring suits against his guardians and to write speeches attacking them. They devised many evasions and new trials, but Demosthenes, after practising himself in these exercises, as Thucydides says,[11](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note11) not without toil and danger, won his cause, although he was able to recover not even a small fraction of his patrimony. However, he acquired sufficient practice and confidence in speaking, and got a taste of the distinction and power that go with forensic contests, and therefore essayed to come forward and engage in public matters. 2 And just as Laomedon the Orchomenian — so we are told — practised long-distance running by the advice of his physicians, to ward off some disease of the spleen, and then, after restoring his health in this way, entered the great games and became one of the best runners of the long course, so Demosthenes, after applying himself to oratory in the first place for the sake of recovering his private property, by this means acquired ability and power in speaking, and at last in public business, as it were in the great games, won the first place among the citizens who strove with one another on the [•](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/secondary/SMIGRA*/B.html" \l "Bema" \t "index)bema.

3 And yet when he first addressed the people he was interrupted by their clamours and laughed at for his inexperience, since his discourse seemed to them confused by long periods and too harshly and immoderately tortured by formal arguments. 4 He had also, as it would appear, a certain weakness of voice and indistinctness of speech and shortness of breath which disturbed the sense of what he said by disjoining his sentences. 5 And finally, when he had forsaken the assembly and was wandering about dejectedly in the Piraeus, Eunomus the Thriasian, who was already a very old man, caught sight of him and upbraided him because, although he had a style of speaking which was most like that of Pericles, he was throwing himself away out of weakness and lack of courage, neither facing the multitude with boldness, nor preparing his body for these forensic contests, but suffering it to wither away in slothful neglect.

7 1 At another time, too, they say, when he had been rebuffed by the people and was going off homewards disconcerted and in great distress, Satyrus the actor, who was a familiar acquaintance of his, followed after and went indoors with him. 2 Demosthenes lamented to him that although he was the most laborious of all the orators and had almost used up the vigour of his body in this calling, he had no favour with the people, but debauchees, sailors, and illiterate fellows were listened to and held the bema, while he himself was ignored. 3 "You are right, Demosthenes," said Satyrus, "but I will quickly remedy the cause of all this, if you will consent to recite off-hand for me some narrative speech from Euripides or Sophocles." 4 Demosthenes did so, whereupon Satyrus, taking up the same speech after him, gave it such a form and recited it with such appropriate sentiment and disposition that it appeared to Demosthenes to be quite another. 5 Persuaded, now, how much of ornament and grace action lends to oratory, he considered it of little or no use for a man to practise declaiming if he neglected the delivery and disposition of his words. 6 After this, we are told, he built a subterranean study, which, in fact, was preserved in our time,[12](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note12) and into this he would descend every day without exception in order to form his action and cultivate his voice, and he would often remain there even for two or three months together, shaving one side of his head in order that shame might keep him from going abroad even though he greatly wished to do so.

8 1 Nor was this all, but he would make his interviews, conversations, and business with those outside, the foundation and starting point for eager toil. For as soon as he parted from his associates, he would go down into his study, and there would go over his transactions with them in due order, and the arguments used in defence of each course. 2 And still further, whatever speeches he chanced to hear delivered he would take up by himself and reduce to propositions and periods, and he would introduce all sorts of corrections and changes of expression into the speeches made by others against himself, or, contrariwise, by himself against others. 3 Consequently it was thought that he was not a man of good natural parts, but that his ability and power were the product of toil. And there would seem to be strong proof of this in the fact that Demosthenes was rarely heard to speak on the spur of the moment, but though the people often called upon him by name as he sat in the assembly, he would not come forward unless he had given thought to the question and was prepared to speak upon it. 4 For this, many of the popular leaders used to rail at him, and Pytheas, in particular, once told him scoffingly that his arguments smelt of lamp-wicks. To him, then, Demosthenes made a sharp answer. 5 "Indeed," said he, "thy lamp and mine, O Pytheas, are not privy to the same pursuits." To the rest, however, he made no denial at all, but confessed that his speeches were neither altogether unwritten, nor yet fully written out. 6 Moreover, he used to declare that he who rehearsed his speeches was a true man of the people: for such preparation was a mark of deference to the people, whereas heedlessness of what the multitude will think of his speech marks a man of oligarchical spirit, and one who relies on force rather than on persuasion. 7 Another circumstance, too, is made a proof of his lack of courage for an emergency, namely, that when he was interrupted by the clamours of the people, Demades often rose and spoke off-hand in his support, but he never rendered such a service to Demades.

9 1 How, then, some one might say, could Aeschines call him a man of the most astonishing boldness in his speeches?[13](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note13) And how was it that, when Python of Byzantium[14](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note14) was inveighing with much boldness and a great torrent of words against the Athenians, Demosthenes alone rose up and spoke against him? Or how did it happen that, when Lamachus the Myrinaean had written an encomium on Kings Philip and Alexander, in which many injurious things were said of Thebes and Olynthus, and while he was reading it aloud at Olympia,[15](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note15) Demosthenes came forward and rehearsed with historical proofs all the benefits which the peoples of Thebes and Chalcidice had conferred upon Greece, and, on the other hand, all the evils of which the flatterers of the Macedonians had been the cause, and thereby so turned the minds of the audience that the sophist was terrified at the outcry against him and slunk away from the festival assemblage?

2 But although Demosthenes, as it would appear, did not regard the other characteristics of Pericles as suitable for himself, he admired and sought to imitate the formality of his speech and bearing, as well as his refusal to speak suddenly or on every subject that might present itself, as if his greatness was due to these things; but he by no means sought the reputation which is won in a sudden emergency, nor did he often of his own free will stake his influence upon chance. 3 However, those orations which were spoken off-hand by him had more courage and boldness than those which he wrote out, if we are to put any confidence in Eratosthenes, Demetrius the Phalerian, and the comic poets. 4 Of these, Eratosthenes says that often in his speeches Demosthenes was like one frenzied, and the Phalereanº says that once, as if under inspiration, he swore the famous metrical oath to the people:—

|  |
| --- |
| "By earth, by springs, by rivers, and by streams."[16](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note16) |

5 Of the comic poets, one calls him a "rhopoperperethras," or *trumpery-braggart*,[17](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note17) and another, ridiculing his use of the antithesis, says this:—

|  |
| --- |
| (First slave) "My master, as he took, retook."  (Second slave (?)) "Demosthenes would have been delighted to take over this phrase."[18](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note18) |

6 Unless, indeed, this, too, was a jest of Antiphanes upon the speech of Demosthenes concerning Halonnesus,[19](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note19) in which the orator counselled the Athenians not to take the island from Philip, but to retake it.

10 1 Still, all men used to agree that Demades, in the exercise of his natural gifts, was invincible, and that when he spoke on the spur of the moment he surpassed the studied preparations of Demosthenes. 2 And Ariston the Chian records an opinion which Theophrastus also passed upon the two orators. When he was asked, namely, what sort of an orator he thought Demosthenes was, he replied: "Worthy of the city"; and what Demades, "Too good for the city." 3 And the same philosopher tells us that Polyeuctus the Sphettian, one of the political leaders of that time at Athens, declared that Demosthenes was the greatest orator, but Phocion the most influential speaker; since he expressed most sense in fewest words. 4 Indeed, we are told that even Demosthenes himself, whenever Phocion mounted the bema to reply to him, would say to his intimates: "Here comes the chopper of my speeches." 5 Now, it is not clear whether Demosthenes had this feeling towards Phocion because of his oratory, or because of his life and reputation, believing that a single word or nod from a man who is trusted has more power than very many long periods.

11 1 For his bodily deficiencies he adopted the exercises which I shall describe, as Demetrius the Phalerian tells us, who says he heard about them from Demosthenes himself, now grown old. The indistinctness and lisping[20](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note20) in his speech he used to correct and drive away by taking pebbles in his mouth and then reciting speeches. His voice he used to exercise by discoursing while running or going up steep places, and by reciting speeches or verses at a single breath. Moreover, he had in his house a large looking-glass, and in front of this he used to stand and go through his exercises in declamation.

2 A story is told of a man coming to him and begging his services as an advocate, and telling at great length how he had been assaulted and beaten by some one. "But certainly," said Demosthenes, "you got none of the hurts which you describe." Then the man raised his voice and shouted: "I, Demosthenes, no hurts?" "Now, indeed," said Demosthenes, "I hear the voice of one who is wronged and hurt." 3 So important in winning credence did he consider the tone and action of the speaker. Accordingly, his own action in speaking was astonishingly pleasing to most men, but men of refinement, like Demetrius the Phalerian, thought his manner low, ignoble, and weak. 4 And Hermippus tells us that Aesion,[21](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note21) when asked his opinion of the ancient orators as compared with those of his own time, said that one would have listened with admiration when the older orators discoursed to the people decorously and in the grand manner, but that the speeches, of Demosthenes, when read aloud, were far superior in point of arrangement and power. 5 Now, it is needless to remark that his written speeches have much in them that is harsh and bitter; but in his extempore rejoinders he was also humorous. For instance, when Demades said "Demosthenes teach me! As well might the sow teach Athena." "It was this Athena," said Demosthenes, "that was lately found playing the harlot in Collytus." 6 And to the thief nicknamed Brazen, who attempted to make fun of him for his late hours and his writing at night, "I know," he said, "that I annoy you with my lighted lamp. But you, men of Athens, must not wonder at the thefts that are committed, when we have thieves of brass, but house-walls of clay." 7 However, though I have still more to say on this head, I shall stop here; the other traits of his character, and his disposition, should be surveyed in connection with his achievements as a statesman.

12 1 Well, then, he set out to engage in public matters after the Phocian war[22](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note22) had broken out, as he himself says,[23](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note23) and as it is possible to gather from his Philippic harangues. 2 Some of these were made after the Phocian war was already ended, and the earliest of them touch upon affairs which were closely connected with it. 3 And it is clear that when he prepared himself to speak in the prosecution of Meidias[24](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note24) he was thirty-two years old, but had as yet no power or reputation in the conduct of the city's affairs. 4 And his fears on this score were the chief reason, in my opinion, why he compromised his case against the man he hated for a sum of money:

|  |
| --- |
| "For he was not at all a sweet-tempered man or of gentle mood,"[25](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note25) |

p31but vehement and violent in his requitals. 5 However, seeing that it was no mean task and one beyond his power to overthrow a man like Meidias, who was well hedged about with wealth, oratory and friends, he yielded to those who interceded in his behalf. 6 For it does not seem to me that the three thousand drachmas of themselves could have dulled the bitter feelings of Demosthenes if he had expected or felt able to triumph over his adversary.

7 But when he had once taken as a noble basis for his political activity the defence of the Greeks against Philip, and was contending worthily here, he quickly won a reputation and was lifted into a conspicuous place by the boldness of his speeches, so that he was admired in Greece, and treated with deference by the Great King; Philip, too, made more account of him than of any other popular leader at Athens, and it was admitted even by those who hated him that they had to contend with a man of mark. 8 For both Aeschines and Hypereides say thus much for him while denouncing him.

13 1 Wherefore I do not know how it occurred to Theopompus to say that Demosthenes was unstable in his character and unable to remain true for any length of time to the same policies or the same men. 2 For it is apparent that after he had at the outset adopted a party and a line of policy in the conduct of the city's affairs, he maintained this to the end, and not only did not change his position while he lived, but actually gave up his life that he might not change it. 3 For he was not like Demades, who apologised for his change of policy by saying that he often spoke at variance with himself, but never at variance with the interests of the city; nor like Melanopus, who, though opposed politically to Callistratus, was often bought over by him, and then would say to the people: "The man is my enemy, it is true, but the interests of the city shall prevail"; 4 nor like Nicodemus the Messenian, who first attached himself to Cassander, and then again advocated the interests of Demetrius, but said that he was not contradicting himself, for it was always advantageous to listen to one's masters. We cannot say such things of Demosthenes also, as of one who is turned from his course and veers to and fro either in word or deed — nay, he followed one unchangeable scale, as it were, and ever held to one key in politics. 5 And Panaetius the philosopher says that most of his speeches also are written in the conviction that good alone is to be chosen for its own sake, as, for instance, the speech "On the Crown,"[26](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note26) the one "Against Aristocrates,"[27](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note27) that "For the Immunities,"[28](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note28) and the Philippics;[29](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note29) 6 for in all these he does not try to lead his countrymen to do what is pleasantest or easiest or most profitable, but in many places thinks they ought to make their safety and preservation secondary to what is honourable and fitting, so that, if the loftiness of his principles and the nobility of his speeches had been accompanied by such bravery as becomes a warrior and by incorruptibility in all his dealings, he would have been worthy to be numbered, not with such orators as Moerocles, Polyeuctus, Hypereides, and their contemporaries, but high up with Cimon, Thucydides, and Pericles.

14 1 At any rate, Phocion, among his contemporaries, though he took the lead in a policy which is not to be commended, and though he had the reputation of favouring Macedonia, nevertheless, by reason of his bravery and integrity, was held to be in no wise inferior to Ephialtes and Aristides and Cimon. 2 Demosthenes, however, was not worthy of confidence when he bore arms, as Demetrius says, nor was he altogether inaccessible to bribes, but though he did not succumb to the gold which came from Philip and Macedonia, that which came down in streams from Susa and Ecbatana reached and overwhelmed him, and therefore while he was most capable of praising the virtues of earlier generations, he was not so good at imitating them. 3 For certainly the orators of his own day (though I leave Phocion out of the account) were surpassed by him even in his life and conversation. And it is manifest that beyond them all he reasoned boldly with the people, opposed himself to the desires of the multitude, and persistently attacked their faults, as may be gathered from his speeches. 4 And even Theopompus[30](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note30) tells us that, when the Athenians nominated him to conduct a certain impeachment, and, on his refusal, raised a tumult against him, he rose and said: "Men of Athens, I will serve you as a counsellor, even though you do not wish it; but not as a false accuser, even though you wish it." 5 Moreover, the measures which he took in the case of Antiphon[31](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note31) were exceedingly aristocratic in their spirit. Antiphon had been acquitted by the assembly, but Demosthenes arrested him and brought him before the council of the Areiopagus, and making no account of the offence thus given to the people, convicted him of having promised Philip to set fire to the dockyards; and Antiphon was given up to justice by the council and suffered death. 6 He also accused the priestess Theoris of many misdemeanours, and particularly of teaching the slaves to practise deceit; and by fixing the penalty at death he brought about her execution.

15 1 It is said, too, that the speech which Apollodorus used in order to secure the conviction of Timotheus the general in an action for debt was written for him by Demosthenes, and likewise the speeches which Apollodorus used against Phormio and Stephanus, in which cases Demosthenes properly won discredit. 2 For Phormio contended against Apollodorus with a speech which Demosthenes had written for him,[32](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note32) the orator thus simply selling to the disputants, as it were from one and the same cutlery-shop,[33](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note33) the knives with which to wound each other. 3 Moreover, of his public orations, those against Androtion[34](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note34) and Timocrates[35](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note35) and Aristocrates[36](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note36) were written for others to pronounce, before he had as yet entered public life; for it appears that these speeches were produced when he was twenty-seven or twenty-eight years of age. But he himself delivered the speech against Aristogeiton,[37](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note37) as well as the one "On the Immunities,"[38](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note38) at the instance, as he himself says, of Ctesippus the son of Chabrias, but as some say, because he was wooing the mother of this young man. 4 However, he did not marry this woman, but had a certain woman of Samos to wife, as Demetrius the Magnesian tells us in his work "On Persons of the Same Name." 5 Whether the speech denouncing the treacherous embassage of Aeschines[39](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note39) was delivered or not, is uncertain; and yet Idomeneus says that Aeschines got off by only thirty votes. But this would seem to be untrue, if we are to judge by the written speeches of both orators "On the Crown."[40](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note40) 6 For neither of them speaks clearly and distinctly of that contention as one which came to trial. This question, however, will have to be decided by others.

16 1 The political attitude of Demosthenes was manifest even while peace still lasted, for he would let no act of the Macedonian pass uncensured, but on every occasion kept rousing and inflaming the Athenians against him. 2 Therefore Philip also made most account of him; and when Demosthenes came to Macedonia in an embassy of ten,[41](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note41) Philip listened indeed to them all, but took most pains to answer his speech. 3 As regards all other marks of honour and kindly attention, however, Philip did not treat Demosthenes as well as the others, but courted rather the party of Aeschines and Philocrates. 4 And so when these lauded Philip as most powerful in speaking, most fair to look upon, and, indeed, as a most capable fellow-drinker, Demosthenes had to say in bitter raillery that the first encomium was appropriate for a sophist, the second for a woman, and the third for a sponge, but none of them for a king.

17 1 And when matters were inclining at last to war, since Philip was unable to keep quiet and the Athenians were being stirred up by Demosthenes, in the first place, he urged the Athenians to invade Euboea, which had been brought into subjection to Philip by its tyrants; and it was on his motion that they crossed over to the island and drove out the Macedonians. 2 In the second place, he came to the aid of the citizens of Byzantium and Perinthus when Macedonian was making war upon them, by persuading the Athenian people to remit their hatred and forget the wrongs committed by each of these cities in the Social War,[42](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note42) and to send them a force, — the force which saved them. 3 Next, he went on an embassy to the Greek states, and by arguing with them and pricking them on brought almost all of them into a league against Philip, so that they raised a mercenary force of fifteen thousand foot and two thousand horse, apart from the citizen soldiery, and readily contributed money to pay them. 4 It was at this time, as Theophrastus says, when the allies were demanding that their contributions be fixed within limits, that Crobylus the popular leader said: "War has no fixed rations."[43](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note43)

5 Greece was now in suspense as it thought of the future, and its peoples and cities were leaguing themselves together, Euboeans, Achaeans, Corinthians, Megarians, Leucadians, and Corcyraeans. But the most important struggle still remained for Demosthenes in bringing the Thebans to join the alliance, for they had a territory bounding that of Attica and a force ready to take the field, and at that time were accounted the best soldiers in Greece. 6 But it was no easy matter, in view of the recent benefits with which Philip had cultivated their favour during the Phocian war, to make the Thebans change sides, and especially because in the petty quarrels brought on by their proximity to Athens the differences which made for war between the two cities were all the while stirred up anew.

854 18 1 Philip, however, elated by his good-fortune in the matter of Amphissa,[44](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note44) surprised Elateia and occupied Phocis. This step drove the Athenians out of their senses: no one ventured to ascend the bema and no one knew what ought to be said, but perplexity and silence reigned in the assembly. Then it was that Demosthenes, and he alone, came forward and advised the people to cling to Thebes; and after giving them courage in other ways and buoying them up with hopes, as he was wont to do, he was sent with others as ambassador to Thebes. 2 Philip also, as Marsyas tells us, sent Amyntas and Clearchus of Macedonia, Daochus of Thessaly, and Thrasydaeus, to speak in opposition to the Athenians.

Well, then, the Thebans, in their calculations, were not blind to their own interests, but each of them had before his eyes the terrors of war, since their losses in the Phocian war[45](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note45) were still fresh; however, the power of the orator, as Theopompus says, fanned up their courage and inflamed their honourable ambition and obscured all other considerations, so that, casting away fear and calculation and feelings of obligation, they were rapt away by his words into the path of honour. 3 And so great and glorious was the orator's success seen to be that Philip at once sent an embassy and asked for peace, while Greece was confident and up in arms to aid Demosthenes for the future; and not only did the Athenian generals assist him and do what he ordered, but also the Boeotarchs. He managed at this time all the assemblies of the Thebans no less than those of the Athenians; he was beloved by both peoples and exercised supreme power, not illegally nor unworthily, as Theopompus declares, but rather with perfect propriety.

19 1 But it would seem that some divinely ordered fortune in the revolution of affairs, which was putting an end at this time to the freedom of the Greeks, opposed their efforts, and showed forth many signs of what was to come. Among these were the dire prophecies which the Pythian priestess made known, and an ancient oracle which was recited from the Sibylline books:—

|  |
| --- |
| "From the battle on Thermodon may I be far removed,  To behold it like an eagle in clouds and upper air.  Tears are for the conquered there, and for the conqueror, death." |

2 Now, the Thermodon, they say, is in my native territory, in Chaeroneia, being a little river which empties into the Cephisus. But I know of no river bearing this name at the present time; I conjecture, however, that the stream now called Haemon then p47bore the name of Thermodon. For it flows past the Heracleum, where the Greeks had their camp; and I judge that after the battle the river was filled with *blood* and corpses and therefore received its present name in exchange.[46](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note46) 3 Duris, however, says that this Thermodon was not a river, but that some soldiers who were pitching a tent and digging a trench about it, found a small stone figure, an inscription upon which signified that it was Thermodon,[47](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note47) carrying in its arms a wounded Amazon. They say also that in reference to this another oracle is recited as follows:—

|  |
| --- |
| "For the battle on Thermodon wait thou, all-black bird;  There thou shalt have in abundance the flesh of men." |

20 1 How this matter really stands, then, it is difficult to decide; but as for Demosthenes, he is said to have had complete confidence in the Greek forces, and to have been lifted into a state of glowing excitement by the strength and ardour of so many men eager to engage the enemy, so that he would not suffer his countrymen to give heed to oracles or listen to prophecies; nay, he even suspected the Pythian priestess of being in sympathy with Philip, reminding the Thebans of Epaminondas and the Athenians of Pericles, 855and declaring that those great leaders regarded things of this kind as pretexts for cowardice, and therefore followed the dictates of reason. 2 Up to this point, then, he was a brave man; but in the battle[48](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note48) he displayed no conduct that was honourable or consonant with his words, but forsook his post, cast away his arms, and ran away most disgracefully, nor was he ashamed to belie the inscription on his shield, as Pytheas said, whereon was written in letters of gold, "With good fortune."

3 Immediately after his victory, then, Philip waxed insolent for joy, and going forth in revel rout to see the bodies of the slain, and being in his cups, recited the beginning of the decree introduced by Demosthenes, dividing it into feet and marking off the time:—

|  |
| --- |
| "Demosthenes, son of Demosthenes, of Paeania, thus moves;"[49](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note49) |

but when he got sober and realized the magnitude of the struggle in which he had been involved, he shuddered at the power and the ability of the orator who had forced him to hazard his empire and his life in the brief span of a single day. 4 And the family of this orator penetrated even to the Persian king, who sent letters to his satraps on the coast, bidding them to offer money to Demosthenes, and to pay more attention to him than to any other Greek, since he was able to distract and detain the Macedonian[50](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note50) with the troubles which he raised in Greece. 5 These things, now, were discovered at a later time by Alexander, who found at Sardis certain letters of Demosthenes and documents of the King's generals, which disclosed the amount of money they had given him.

21 1 At this time, however, when their disaster fell upon the Greeks, the orators of the opposing party assailed Demosthenes and prepared reckonings and indictments against him; 2 but the people not only absolved him from these, nay, they actually continued to honour him and invited him again, as a loyal man, to take part in public affairs. Consequently, when the bones of those who had fallen at Chaeroneia were brought home for burial, they assigned to him the honour of pronouncing the eulogy over the men; nor did they show a base or ignoble spirit under the calamity which had befallen them, as Theopompus writes in his inflated style, but by the special honour and respect which they paid to their counsellor they made it manifest that they did not repent of the counsels he had given them. 3 The oration, then, was pronounced by Demosthenes, but to the decrees which he proposed he would not put his own name, but rather those of his friends, one after the other, avoiding his own as inauspicious and unfortunate, until he once more took courage upon Philip's death. 4 And Philip died, surviving success at Chaeroneia only a short time;[51](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note51) and this, it would seem, was foretold by the last verse of the oracle:—

|  |
| --- |
| "Tears are for the conquered there, and for the conqueror, death." |

22 1 Now, Demosthenes had secret intelligence of Philip's death, and by way of inspiring the Athenians with courage for the future, he came forth to the council with a glad countenance, declaring that he had had a dream which led him to expect some great blessing for Athens; and not long afterwards the messengers came with tidings of p53Philip's death. 2 At once, then, the Athenians proceeded to make thank-offerings for glad tidings and voted a crown for Pausanias. 3 And Demosthenes came forth in public dressed in a splendid robe and wearing a garland on his head, although his daughter had died only six days before, as Aeschines says,[52](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note52) who rails at him for this and denounces him as an unnatural father. And yet Aeschines himself was of a weak and ungenerous nature, if he considered mournings and lamentations as the signs of an affectionate spirit, but condemned the bearing of such losses serenely and without repining.

4 For my own part, I cannot say that it was honourable in the Athenians to crown themselves with garlands and offer sacrifices to the gods on the death of a king who, in the midst of his successes, had treated them so mildly and humanely in their reverses; for besides provoking the indignation of the gods, it was also an ignoble thing to honour him while he was alive and make him a citizen of Athens, but when he had fallen by another's hand to set no bounds for their joy, nay, to leap, as it were, upon the dead, and sing paeans of victory, as if they themselves had wrought a deed of valour. 5 However, for leaving his domestic misfortunes and tears and lamentations to the women and going about such business as he thought advantageous to the city, I commend Demosthenes, and I hold it to be the part of a statesmanlike and manly spirit to keep ever in view the good of the community, to find support for domestic sorrows and concerns in the public welfare, and to preserve one's dignity far more than actors do when they take the parts of kings and tyrants; for these, as we see in the theatres, neither weep nor laugh according to their own inclinations, but as the subject of the action demands.

6 And apart from these considerations, if it is our duty not to allow the unfortunate to lie comfortless in his sorrow, but to address him with cheering words and turn his thoughts to pleasanter things (like those who tell people with sore eyes to withdraw their gaze from bright and hard colours and fix it upon those which are soft and green), how can a man obtain better consolation for his domestic griefs than by blending them with the general welfare of a prosperous country, thus making the better things obscure the worse? 7 These things, then I have been led to say on seeing that many have their hearts softened to effeminate pity by this discourse of Aeschines.

23 1 The cities of Greece, under the incitations of Demosthenes, now formed themselves into a league again. The Thebans, whom Demosthenes had helped to provide with arms, fell upon their Macedonian garrison and slew many of them; while the Athenians made preparations to go to war along with them. 2 Demosthenes reigned supreme in the assembly, and wrote letters to the King's generals in Asia stirring them up to make war upon Alexander, whom he called a boy and a Margites.[53](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note53) When, however, Alexander had settled the affairs of his own country and came in person with his forces into Boeotia, prone lay the courage of the Athenians, and Demosthenes was extinguished, while the Thebans, betrayed by their allies, fought by themselves and lost their city.[54](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note54) 3 Then, in the midst of the great confusion which reigned at Athens, Demosthenes was chosen and sent with others as an ambassador to Alexander, but fearing the wrath of the king he turned back at Cithaeron and abandoned the embassy.[55](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note55) 4 Then straightway Alexander sent to Athens a demand for the surrender to him of ten of their popular leaders, according to Idomeneus and Duris, but according to the most and most reputable writers, only eight, namely, Demosthenes, Polyeuctus, Ephialtes, Lycurgus, Moerocles, Demon, Callisthenes, and Charidemus.

5 It was on this occasion that Demosthenes told the Athenians the story of how the sheep surrendered their dogs to the wolves, comparing himself and his fellow-orators to dogs fighting in defence of the people, and called Alexander "the Macedonian arch-wolf." 6 Moreover, he said further: "Just as grain-merchants sell their whole stock by means of a few kernels of wheat which they carry about with them in a bowl as a sample, so in surrendering us you unwittingly surrender also yourselves, all of you." Such, then, is the account which Aristobulus of Cassandreia has given.

The Athenians were deliberating on this demand and were at a loss how to treat it, when Demades, for five talents which he had received from the men demanded,[a](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note:bad_English_text) agreed to go on an embassy to the king and entreat him in their behalf; either because he relied on the friendship of Alexander, or because he expected to find him sated, like a lion glutted with slaughter. At any rate, Demades persuaded the king to let the men off, and reconciled him with the city.

857 24 1 So when Alexander went back to Macedonia, Demades and his associates were high in power, but Demosthenes acted a humble part. It is true that when Agis the Spartan was active in revolt Demosthenes once more made a feeble effort in his support, but then he cowered down, since the Athenians would not join in the uprising. Agis fell in battle, and the Lacedaemonians were crushed.[56](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note56)

2 It was at this time that the indictment against Ctesiphon in the matter of the crown came up for trial. It had been prepared in the archonship of Chaerondas a little before the battle of Chaeroneia, but came on for trial ten years later[57](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note57) in the archonship of Aristophon. It became the most celebrated of all public causes, not only on account of the fame of the orators, but also because of the noble conduct of the judges, who, though the prosecutors of Demosthenes were then at the height of power and acting in the interests of Macedonia, would not vote against him, but acquitted him so decisively that Aeschines did not get a fifth part of their ballots.[58](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note58) 3 Consequently, Aeschines forsook the city at once, and spent the p61rest of his life as a teacher of rhetoric in Rhodes and Ionia.

25 1 Not long afterwards Harpalus[59](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note59) came out of Asia to Athens. He had run away from Alexander, because he was conscious that his prodigality had led him into criminal practices, and because he was afraid of his master, who was now become harsh to his friends. 2 But after he had taken refuge with the Athenian people and put himself in their hands with his ships and his treasures, the other orators at once fixed their longing eyes upon his wealth, came to his aid, and tried to persuade the Athenians to receive and save the suppliant. 3 But Demosthenes, in the beginning, counselled them to drive Harpalus away, and to beware lest they plunge the city into war upon an unnecessary and unjust ground; a few days afterwards, however, while they were making an inventory of the treasure, Harpalus saw that Demosthenes was eyeing with pleasure a cup of barbarian make, with a keen appreciation of its fashion and of the ornamental work upon it. He therefore bade him poise it in his hand and see how heavy the gold was. 4 And when Demosthenes was amazed at its weight and asked how much it would amount to, Harpalus smiled and said, "For you it will amount to twenty talents;" and as soon as night was come he sent him the cup with the twenty talents. 5 Now, Harpalus was skilful in detecting the character of a man who had a passion for gold, by means of the look that spread over his face and the glances of his eyes. For Demosthenes could not resist, but was overcome by the bribe, and now that he had, as it were, admitted a garrison into his house, promptly went over to the side of Harpalus. Next day, after swathing his neck carefully in woollen bandages, he went forth into the assembly; and when he was urged to rise and speak, he made signs that his voice was ruined. 6 The wits, however, by way of raillery, declared that the orator had been seized overnight, not with an ordinary quinsy, but with a silver quinsy. And afterwards, when the whole people learned that he had been bribed, and would not permit him, when he wished it, to have a hearing and make his defence, but were angry and raised a tumult against him, someone rose and said jokingly: "Men of Athens, will you not listen to the man who holds the cup?"[60](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note60)

7 At that time, then, they sent Harpalus away from the city, and fearing lest they should be called to account for the moneys which the orators had seized, they made a zealous search for it, and went round to their houses on the quest, except that of Callicles the son of Arrhenides. 8 For his house was the only one which they would not allow to be searched, since he was newly married and his bride was within, as Theopompus relates.

26 1 But Demosthenes put a bold face on the matter and introduced a bill providing that the case should be referred for investigation to the council of the Areiopagus, and that those should be brought to trial who were found guilty there. 2 He was himself, however, among the first condemned by the council, and came before the court for trial, where he was sentenced to a fine of fifty talents and delivered over to prison in default of payment. 858But out of shame at the charge under which he lay, as he says,[61](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note61) and owing to the weakness of his body, which could not endure confinement, he ran away, through the carelessness of some of his keepers and the connivance of others. 3 At any rate, we are told that when he was in flight at a short distance from the city, he learned that some of the citizens who were his enemies were in pursuit of him, and therefore wished to hide himself; and when they called upon him loudly by name, and came up near to him, and begged him to accept from them provision for his journey, declaring that they were bringing money from home for this very purpose, and were pursuing him only in order to get it to him; and when at the same time they exhorted him to be of good courage and not to be pained at what had happened, Demosthenes broke out all the more into cries of grief, saying: 4 "Surely I must be distressed to leave a city where my enemies are as generous as I can hardly find friends to be in another."

5 And he bore his exile without fortitude, taking up his quarters in Aegina and Troezen for the most part, and looking off towards Attica with tears in his eyes, so that utterances of his are on record which are not generous or consonant with his spirited efforts as a statesman. 6 We are told, namely, that as he was leaving the city he lifted up his hands towards the acropolis and said: "O potent Guardian of the City, Athena, how, pray, canst thou take delight in those three most intractable beasts, the owl, the serpent, and the people?" 7 Moreover, when young men came to visit and converse, he would try deter them from public life, saying that if two roads had been presented to him in the beginning, one leading to the bema and the assembly, and the other straight to destruction, and if he could have known beforehand the evils attendant on a public career, namely, fears, hatreds, calumnies and contentions, he would have taken that road which led directly to death.

27 1 But while he was still undergoing the exile of which I have spoken, Alexander died,[62](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note62) and the Greek states proceeded to form a league again, while Leosthenes was displaying deeds of valour and walling Antipater up in Lamia, where he held him in siege. 2 Accordingly, the orators Pytheas and Callimedon (called the Stag-beetle) fled from Athens and joined the party of Antipater, and travelling about with the regent's friends and ambassadors tried to prevent the Greeks from revolting or attaching themselves to Athens; 3 but Demosthenes, joining himself to the ambassadors from Athens, used his utmost efforts in helping them to induce the cities to unite in attacking the Macedonians and expelling them from Greece. 4 And Phylarchus states that in Arcadia Pytheas and Demosthenes actually fell to abusing one another in an assembly, the one speaking in behalf of the Macedonians, the other in behalf of the Greeks. 5 Pytheas, we are told, said that just as we think that a house into which asses' milk is brought must certainly have some evil in it, so also a city must of necessity be diseased into which an Athenian embassy comes; whereupon Demosthenes turned the illustration against him by saying that asses' milk was given to restore health, and the Athenians came to bring salvation to the sick.

6 At this conduct the Athenian people were delighted, and voted that Demosthenes might return from exile. The decree was brought in by Demon of Paeania, who was a cousin of Demosthenes; and a trireme was sent to Aegina to fetch him home. 7 When he set out to go up to the city from Piraeus, not an archon or a priest was missing, and all the rest of the people also met him in a body and welcomed him eagerly, It was at this time, too, as Demetrius the Magnesian says, that he lifted his hands towards heaven and blessed himself for that day, since he was coming home from exile more honourably than Alcibiades did; for he had persuaded, not forced, his fellow-citizens to welcome him. 8 It is true that his pecuniary fine remained standing against him (for it was not lawful to remit an assessment by act of grace), but they found a device to evade the law. It was their custom, namely, in the case of a sacrifice to Zeus the Saviour, to pay a sum of money to those who prepared and adorned the altar, and they now gave Demosthenes the contract to make these preparations for fifty talents, which was just the amount of his assessment.

28 1 However, he did not enjoy his native city for long after his return from exile, but the cause of Greece was speedily crushed, and in the month of Metageitnion the battle at Crannon took place,[63](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note63) in that of Boëdromion the Macedonian garrison entered Munychia, and in that of Pyanepsion Demosthenes died, in the following manner.

2 When Antipater and Craterus were reported to be advancing upon Athens, Demosthenes and his associates succeeded in escaping by stealth from the city, and the people, on motion of Demades, passed sentence of death upon them. 3 Since they dispersed themselves to different places, Antipater sent his soldiers about to arrest them, under the command of Archias the so‑called Exile-hunter. This man was a native of Thurii, and the story goes that he was once a tragic actor; indeed, it is recorded that Polus of Aegina, the best actor of his time, was a pupil of his. But Hermippus states that Archias was one of the pupils of Lacritus the rhetorician; while Demetrius says that he belonged to the school of Anaximenes. 4 This Archias, then, finding that Hypereides the orator and Aristonicus of Marathon and Himeraeus the brother of Demetrius the Phalerean had taken refuge in the sanctuary of Aeacus at Aegina, haled them away and sent them to Antipater at Cleonae. There they were put to death, and Hypereides, it is said, also had his tongue cut out.

29 1 Moreover, on learning that Demosthenes had taken sanctuary in the temple of Poseidon at Calauria, Archias sailed across to the island in small boats, and after landing with Thracian spearmen tried to persuade the fugitive to leave the temple and go with him to Antipater, assuring him that he would suffer no harsh treatment. 2 But it chanced that Demosthenes, in his sleep the night before, had seen a strange vision. He dreamed, namely, that he was acting in a tragedy and contending with Archias for the prize, and that although he acquitted himself well and won the favour of the audience, his lack of stage decorations and costumes cost him the victory. 3 Therefore, after Archias had said many kindly things to him, Demosthenes, just as he sat, looked steadfastly at him and said: "O Archias, thou didst never convince me by thine acting, nor wilt thou now convince me by thy promises." And when Archias began to threaten him angrily, "Now," said he, "thou utterest the language of the Macedonian oracle;[64](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note64) but a moment ago thou wert acting a part. Wait a little, then, that I may write a message to my family." 4 With these words, he retired into the temple, and taking a scroll, as if about to write, he put his pen to his mouth and bit it, as he was wont to do when thinking what he should write, and kept it there some time, then covered and bent his head. 5 The spearman, then, who stood at the door, laughed at him for playing the coward, and called him weak and unmanly, but Archias came up and urged him to rise, and reïterating the same speeches as before, promised him a reconciliation with Antipater. 6 But Demosthenes, now conscious that the poison was affecting and overpowering him, uncovered his head; and fixing his eyes upon Archias, "Thou canst not be too soon now," said he, "in playing the part of Creon in the tragedy and casting this body out without burial.[65](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note65) But I, O beloved Poseidon, will depart from thy sanctuary while I am still alive; whereas Antipater and the Macedonians would not have left even thy temple undefiled." 7 So speaking, and bidding someone support him, since he was now trembling and tottering, he had no sooner gone forth and passed by the altar than he fell, and with a groan gave up the ghost.

30 1 As for the poison, Ariston says he took it from the pen, as I have said; but a certain Pappus, from whom Hermippus took his story, says that when he had fallen by the side of the altar, there was found written in the scroll the beginning of a letter, "Demosthenes to Antipater," and nothing more; 2 and that when men were amazed at the suddenness of his death the Thracians who had stood at the door told the story that he took the poison into his hand from a cloth and put it to his mouth and swallowed it; and they themselves, strange to say, had supposed that what he swallowed was gold; and that the little maid who served him, when inquiries were made by Archias, said that Demosthenes had long worn that cloth girdle as a safeguard against his enemies. 3 And even Eratosthenes himself says that Demosthenes kept the poison in a hollow bracelet, and that he wore this bracelet as an ornament upon his arm. 4 But the divergent stories of all the others who have written about the matter, and they are very many, need not be recounted; except that Demarches the relative of Demosthenes says that in his opinion it was not due to poison, but to the honour and kindly favour shown him by the gods, that he was rescued from the cruelty of the Macedonians by a speedy and painless death. 5 And he died on the sixteenth of the month Pyanepsion, the most gloomy day of the Thesmophoria,[66](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note66) which the women observe by fasting in the temple of the goddess.

It was to this man, a little while after his death, that the Athenian people paid worthy honour by erecting his statue[67](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note67) in bronze, and by decreeing that the eldest of his house should have public maintenance in the prytaneium. And this celebrated inscription was inscribed upon the pedestal of his statue:—

|  |
| --- |
| "If thy strength had only been equal to thy purposes, Demosthenes,  Never would the Greeks have been ruled by a Macedonian Ares." |

6 Of course those who say that Demosthenes himself composed these lines in Calauria, as he was about to put the poison to his lips, talk utter nonsense.

31 1 Now, a short time before I took up my abode in Athens, the following incident is said to have occurred. A soldier who had been called to an account by his commander, put what little gold he had into the hands of this statue of Demosthenes. 2 It stood with its fingers interlaced, and hard by grew a small plane-tree. Many of the leaves from this tree, whether the wind accidentally blew them thither, or whether the depositor himself took this way of concealing his treasure, lay clustering together about the gold and hid it for a long time. 3 At last, however, the man came back, found his treasure intact, and an account of the matter was spread abroad, whereupon the wits of the city took for a theme the incorruptibility of Demosthenes and vied with one another in their epigrams.

4 As for Demades, he had not long enjoyed his growing reputation when vengeance for Demosthenes brought him into Macedonia, whose people he had disgracefully flattered, only to be by them justly put to death. He had been obnoxious to them even before this, but now fell under a charge from which there was no escape. 5 A letter of his, namely, leaked out, in which he had urged Perdiccas to seize Macedonia and deliver the Greeks, who, he said, were fastened to it only by an old and rotten thread (meaning Antipater). 6 And when Deinarchus the Corinthian denounced him for this, Cassander[68](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note68) flew into a rage and slew the son of Demades as he stood close by his father's side, and then ordered that Demades should be likewise killed. Demades was now learning amid his extremest misfortunes that traitors sell themselves first, a truth of which Demosthenes had often assured him, but which he would not believe.

7 And so, Sosius,[69](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html#note69) thou hast the promised Life of Demosthenes, drawn from such written or oral sources as I could find.