

The Encroachments of Philip

by Demosthenes

From the Second Philippic delivered at Athens, 344 B.C.

Men of Athens, if any one regard without uneasiness the might and dominion of Philip, and imagine that it threatens no danger to the state, or that all his preparations are not against you, I marvel, and would entreat you every one to hear briefly from me the reasons why I am led to form a contrary expectation, and why I deem Philip an enemy; that, if I appear to have the clearer foresight, you may hearken to me; if they, who have such confidence and trust in Philip, you may give your adherence to them.

What did Philip first make himself master of after the peace? Thermopylæ and the Phocian state. And how used he his power? He chose to act for the benefit of Thebes, not of Athens. Why so? Because, I conceive, measuring his calculations by ambition, by his desire of universal empire, without regard to peace, quiet, or justice, he saw plainly that to a people of our character and principles nothing could he offer or give that would induce you for self-interest to sacrifice any of the Greeks to him. He sees that you, having respect for justice, dreading the infamy of the thing, and exercising proper forethought, would oppose him in any such attempt as much as if you were at war. But the Thebans, he expected, would, in return for the services done them, allow him in everything else to have his way, and, so far from thwarting or impeding him, would fight on his side if he required it. You are judged by these to be the only people incapable of betraying for lucre the national rights of Greece, or bartering your attachment to her for any obligation or benefit. And this opinion of you he has naturally formed, not only from a view of present times, but by reflection on the past. For assuredly he finds and hears that your ancestors, who might have governed the rest of Greece on terms of submitting to Persia, not only spurned the proposal when Alexander, this man's ancestor, came as herald to negotiate, but preferred to abandon their country and endure any suffering, and thereafter achieved such exploits as all the world loves to remember,--though none could ever speak them worthily, and therefore I must be silent, for their deeds are too mighty to be uttered in words. But the forefathers of the Thebans either joined the barbarian's army or did not oppose it; and therefore he knows that they will selfishly embrace their advantage, without considering the common interest of the Greeks. He thought then if he chose your friendship, it must be on just principles; if he attached himself to them, he should find auxiliaries of his ambition. This is the reason of his preferring them

to you both then and now. For certainly he does not see them with a larger navy than you, nor has he acquired an inland empire and renounced that of the sea and the ports, nor does he forget the professions and promises on which he obtained the peace.

I cannot think that Philip, either if he was forced into his former measures, or if he were now giving up the Thebans, would pertinaciously oppose their enemies; his present conduct rather shows that he adopted those measures by choice. All things prove to a correct observer that his whole plan of action is against our state. And this has now become to him a sort of necessity. Consider. He desires empire; he conceives you to be his only opponents. He has been for some time wronging you, as his own conscience best informs him, since, by retaining what belongs to you, he secures the rest of his dominion. He knows that he is plotting against you, and that you are aware of it; and supposing you to have intelligence, he thinks you must hate him; he is alarmed, expecting some disaster, unless he hastens to prevent you. Therefore he is awake and on the watch against us; he courts certain people, who from cupidity, he thinks, will be satisfied with the present, and from dullness of understanding will foresee none of the consequences.

I imagine that what Philip is doing will grieve you hereafter more than it does now. I see the thing progressing, and would that my surmises were false, but I doubt it is too near already. So when you are able no longer to disregard events, when, instead of hearing from me or others that these measures are against Athens, you all see it yourselves and know it for certain, I expect you will be wrathful and exasperated. I fear then, as your ambassadors have concealed the purpose for which they know they were corrupted, those who endeavor to repair what the others have lost may chance to encounter your resentment, for I see it is a practice with many to vent their anger, not upon the guilty, but on persons most in their power. Had you not been then deceived there would be nothing to distress the state. Philip would certainly never have prevailed at sea and come to Attica with a fleet, nor would he have marched with a land force by Phocis and Thermopylæ; he must either have acted honorably, observing the peace and keeping quiet, or been immediately in a war similar to that which made him desire the peace. Enough has been said to awaken recollection. Grant, O ye gods, it be not all fully confirmed! Though he may deserve death I would have no man punished to the damage and danger of the country.

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