UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

Demosthenes

de Bakker, M.P.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

DEMOSTHENES

M.P. de Bakker

> When there were many areas of politics to choose from, I chose Greek
> affairs (*tēn peri tas Hellēnikas praxeis*) as my province. Therefore I am
> justified in drawing my proofs (*apodeixeis*) from them.[1]
>
> (*On the Crown* 18.59)

Thus Demosthenes motivates his focus on supra-regional politics and
diplomacy in his oration *On the Crown*, delivered in 330 BCE, eight
years after his anti-Macedonian politics had foundered at Chaeronea.
The words are indicative of the difference in the use of spatial refer-
ences between Antiphon, Isaeus, and (→) Lysias, who almost exclusively
deal with urban affairs, and Demosthenes, who often looks beyond the
Attic borders, especially in his political speeches. This difference can be
explained by their backgrounds. Lysias, for instance, wrote most of his
speeches on behalf of Athenians who were involved in private lawsuits
against fellow citizens. As a consequence, his spatial references tend to
zoom in on the urban space of Athens which allows his narratees views
into the Athenian streets or even into private houses. When Demos-
thenes deals with Athenian affairs, similar views are found, though on a
less descriptive scale than in the *Corpus Lysiacum*.[2] His predominant spa-
tial backdrop is the supra-regional world of foreign diplomacy and war-
fare between the Greek states and their northern neighbours in Macedo-
nia and Thrace.

This wider, panoramic spatial setting helped Demosthenes in creating
an image of a dedicated, reliable and patriotic statesman with a solid

---

[1] The translations of the Demosthenes passages are, with minor modifications, taken
from the Loeb edition with the exception of the speech *On the Crown*, for which I used
Usher's translation (1993), and the speech *Against Meidias*, for which I used MacDowell's
translation (1990). Unless indicated otherwise, examples are taken from the speeches that
Usher 1999 considers genuine.

[2] An example can be found in the second speech *Against Aphobus*, where Demos-
thenes graphically describes the decisions that his father took in his dying hours which
included placing himself 'on the knees' of Therippides, one of the later guardians (28.16).
The *emotive* function of this detail is evident.

knowledge of the events beyond the borders of Attica. He needed this image to make his audience trust the adequacy of his foresight.[3] It also posed a challenge to him, however, as he had to transfer the complex topography of the Hellenic world and beyond to the confinements of the Assembly and the law courts and bring it across in language that was brief and recognizable so that it could be understood by as many people as possible. As an intermediary between outer and inner space, he uses a variety of methods in his spatial referencing some of which I will return to in this chapter.

Like (→) Lysias, Demosthenes aims at conciseness in his narratives and often confines himself for the sake of clarity to the spatial essentials that are needed. This is exemplified by his speech *Against Zenothemis*, who had sued Demosthenes' uncle Demo regarding a cargo of grain. In the first part of the narrative (32.4–9), the orator describes Zenothemis' voyage from Syracuse to Massalia and then via Cephallenia back to Athens. A full description of the merchant vessel is lacking. Instead, Demosthenes only mentions the spatial aspects that play a crucial role in the narrative: the hold, the deck (32.5) and the lifeboat (32.6). The stations of the voyage he indicates by their toponyms, omitting further spatial specification of the kind that is often found in (→) Herodotus or adjectives relating to their appearance as are sometimes found in (→) Thucydides. Later, when he relates the arguments that had arisen between the parties concerned upon the return of the ship in Athens (vaguely referred to with *deuro*, 32.14), Demosthenes authenticates his narrative by the use of direct speech (32.15–16, 31–32) without referring to the Piraeus, where these conversations took place. Instead, he prefers a pun on the adjective *eisagōgimos* 'admissable/importable', pointing out to the jury that it would be a surprise if they admitted a case to court about a cargo of grain that Zenothemis had tried to prevent from being imported into Athens. Thus the speech *Against Zenothemis* shows Demosthenes' concise use of spatial information and his preference for leaving the spatial backdrop implicit. In the meantime, we also witness the technique of drawing links between the spatial confinements of the law court and the world that lies beyond by his pun on *eisagōgimos*, which can be

---

[3] In a similar way Demosthenes highlights the knowledgeability of his clients in cases that deal with events farther away from Athens. In the speech *Against Aristocrates*, for instance, Demosthenes makes the plaintiff Euthycles say in the proem that he 'sailed to the Hellespont as a trireme commander' (23.5), thus securing goodwill and authority for the speaker by presenting him as a man who was familiar with the area where the events that mattered in this speech had taken place.

conceptualised in both spatial and forensic terms. The deictic iotas that refer to his opponent (32.2, 4) function in a similar way, as they point out to the jury that it was this very Zenothemis, present in the court, who conspired to sink his ship during the voyage across the sea far away from Athens.

A key to the success of Demosthenes as an orator was his ability to draw links between the space outside the law courts and the Assembly and the space of those venues themselves where the speeches were delivered (as I call it, the performative space). In the forensic speeches, testimonies of eyewitnesses—the *pistis atekhnos*—were instrumental as they bridged these two worlds. The orator faced the task of accommodating their accounts into his narrative and argumentation—the *pistis entekhnos*—and enabling his audience to visualise the events that had happened outside the law court. The combination of narrative and testimony turned his speeches into vivid re-enactments of the crucial events within the performative space. Demosthenes refers to this method as *epideixis* or *apodeixis* as in the above example from the speech *On the Crown*.[4]

In this chapter I will discuss the ways in which Demosthenes presents the two spatial backdrops that figure in his speeches: the performative space of the political venues of the Assembly and the eliastic lawcourts that he addresses and the realms that lie beyond them. To the latter category belong references to the immediate surroundings of the venues, the urban space of Athens with its monuments, temples and inscriptions, and to the more distant Hellenic world, the Aegean, and beyond. The clever way in which Demosthenes makes these spatial realms interact heightens the persuasive impact of his words and helps him in characterizing both speaker and opponent, as will be exemplified by an analysis of his speech *Against Meidias* at the end of this chapter.

---

[4] For the orator's direct references to his own *epideixis* (or, in a few instances, the absence of it on the part of his opponent, on which see below) in the corpus, see 8.33; 18.95, 142; 19.177, 178, 180, 203, 212; 20.142; 21.7, 12; 22.11, 20, 22, 23, 24, 29; 23.3, 18, 22, 102, 144; 24.15, 152; 27.12, 18, 23, 24, 34, 35, 47, 51, 52; 28.2; 29.5, 6, 10, 14, 21, 22, 28, 44, 46, 55, 57; 30.14, 25; 33.4; 34.40; 35.9, 17; 36.2, 19, 42; 37.2, 17, 21, 47; 38.10, 14; 39.37, 39; 40.60; 42.4, 17; 43.2, 17, 18, 32, 73; 45.2, 5, 8, 9, 54; 47.1, 31, 67; 48.39; 51.3, 7; 54.6, 42; 55.21; 57.7, 19, 31, 35, 36, 40, 46, 59, 62, 66, 67, 69; for *apodeixis*, see 18.42, 300; 30.4, 25; 55.12; 58.7. All of these are forensic speeches but elements of *epideixis* are present in the political speeches as well. In the *First Philippic*, Demosthenes demands his audience to 'be judges' (*kritai … esesthe*, 4.15) of the anti-Macedonian policy which he advocates. Later in the speech he presents a 'list of resources' (*porou apodeixis*, 29).

The Performative Space

Demosthenes' political speeches were addressed to the Assembly on the Pnyx and his forensic speeches to various, mainly eliastic, law courts.[5] It is especially in the latter category that numerous deictic references to the ambience are found.[6] Second person pronouns, deictic iotas,[7] forms of address and the pronouns *hode* and *houtos* indicate that the orator addresses or points out individuals within this performative space. They include, in decreasing order, his opponent(s), witnesses, individual members of the audience, colleagues and individuals amongst the spectators.[8] References are also made to the audience as a whole, for instance when the orator asks them not to 'make a din' (e.g. *mē thorubēsēi*, 5.15).[9]

Within the law court, two categories of objects are mentioned. The first category is when the orator refers to documentary evidence such as testimonies, laws, decrees, treaties and agreements, inventories, letters, oracles and poems that are read out during the case.[10] These documents played an important role in the *epideixis* of the orator. This holds primarily for testimonies of witnesses which are read out and approved by the

---

[5] An exception is the speech *On the Trierarchic Crown* (51), which Demosthenes delivered for the *boulē*. I have not included the *Epitaphios* (60) here; it was held at the *dēmosion sēma* in the Ceramicus. The speech contains fewer references to its spatial environment than (→) Lysias' equivalent. The references to the Clisthenic tribes of Athens (60.27–31), their mythological origin included, evoke the tribal organisation of the Athenian democracy and military in a metaphorical rather than spatial way.

[6] The exact location of the law courts is unknown. Archaeological remains of fourth-century law courts have, however, been found on the northern and southern sides of the Agora (cf. Lang and Camp 2004), whereas the homicide courts of the Palladion and the Delphinion were located on the other side of the Acropolis near the Olympian Zeus temple.

[7] Deictic iotas need not necessarily refer to persons or objects within the law court. In the forensic speech *Against Aristocrates* a deictic iota refers to Philip, who is not present (*toutoni ton Makedona*, 23.111). Compare *For the People of Megalopolis* 16.4, where Demosthenes refers to the Thebans (*Thēbaious toutousi*).

[8] Opponent: *passim* in all forensic speeches; witnesses: 27.18; 41.7, 11; individual members of the audience/jury: 23.13; 37.48; 54.34; 55.2; colleagues: 18.15, 83; 36.2; individuals amongst the spectators (no jury): 18.196; 37.44.

[9] For references with a deictic iota to the audience as a whole, see 29.36, and to the Assembly as a place of venue, see 15.22. On *thorubos* in the Athenian law courts, see Bers 1985, and in the Assembly, see Tacon 2001.

[10] For instances of testimonies, see the string of seven *marturiai* in *Against Aphobus II* (28.10–13); for instances of laws, see 23.82, 86, 87; 24.19; 43.62; of decrees, see 8.6, 22, 35; 18.142, 222; 20.70; 34.16; 47.20; of treaties and agreements, see 19.61–62; 35.10–13; of inventories, see 41.28; 42.16; of letters, see 4.37; 18.221; 19.38, 51, 187; of oracles, see 19.297; of poems, see 19.243, 245, 247, 255.

witnesses themselves with a nod but it also applies to other documentary evidence. Reading out a law, for instance, is not a bureaucratic necessity that interrupts the argumentation but an integrated part of the theatre in the law court, as witness the following instances from the speeches *Against Leptines* (20) and *Against Aristocrates* (23):

> Turn now to the decree passed in honour of Chabrias. Just look and see (*hora dē kai skopei*); it must be somewhere there.   (20.84)

> Have we any statute left? Let me see it (*deixon*). Yes, that is the one (*houtosi*); read it.[11]   (23.82)

The orator found it useful to point out the documents that were part of the argumentation before they were read out and make them explicitly part of his *epideixis*. This reveals that he appeals to the power of making the evidence visible.[12] In a similar way, Demosthenes charges his opponents for failing to produce visual evidence. This is an important argument in his speeches against his guardians whom he accuses of lying as they fail to support their claim to have returned the estate to Demosthenes with evidence (*ouk ekhei epideixai*, 29.46).

In the second category, mention is made of specific instruments, like the water-clock (*klepsydra*), the sealed box with all the documents related to the evidence (*ekhinos*), and the speaker's platform (*bēma*). Given the fact that the presence of these objects during the case is self-evident, they are only mentioned for rhetorical purposes. The water-clock, to begin with, is typically referred to in *praeteritio* of the kind 'there is not enough water left to tell all the crimes'[13] or to underline that the orator has spoken properly within the allotted time so that the water left can be poured out (*exera to hudōr*, 36.62; cf. 38.28). The sealed box is mentioned when evidence is lacking on the part of the opponent (47.16 cf. 40.21) or to prove, when evidence is absent, that it has been tampered with. This is the

---

[11] Compare 20.84; 23.82, 87; 42.26–27. As for the political speeches, in *On the Chersonese* Demosthenes refers with a deictic iota to decrees that the Assembly had ratified (8.6), which suggests that he kept them in his hands during his speech.

[12] For this 'empirical' attitude that those in court are invited to maintain, see also the speech *Against Euboulides* 57.4, where Demosthenes blames his opponent's party for not stating 'things of which they have accurate knowledge' (*hos' isasin akribōs*) but relying on 'hearsay' (*akoēn*). Demosthenes is also keen to stress the presence of witnesses in the setting of his narratives. In the speech *Against Zenothemis*, for instance, he indicates their presence by mentioning 'one of the bystanders' (*tōn parontōn tis*, 32.15) but often enough he mentions them outright in his narratives with the phrase 'in the presence of witnesses' (*enantion marturōn*, 30.19, 27; 33.20; compare 33.12; 42.28).

[13] 27.12, cf. 40.38; 41.30; 43.8–9; 45.47, 86; 54.36, 44.

case in the speech *Against Stephanus I*, in which the plaintiff Apollodorus maintains that the defending party has forged the will of his father Pasio as it has not been deposited in the box (45.17, 20, 57–58; compare 54.31). Thus both water-clock and box are used for the purpose of *ethopoiia* of the speaker and of the opponent respectively.

The speaking-platform (*bēma*) is the only physical object mentioned that both the political and the forensic venues have in common. It too is mentioned for the sake of *ethopoiia*. Appealing to the sentiment that the place is solemn and those who mount it should respect proper rules of conduct,[14] Demosthenes refers to the platform to secure goodwill for himself, underlining his modesty with the 'I would not have mounted the *bēma* had I not been forced to' topos by which he opens his *First Philippic* (4.1) or in order to blacken his opponent, as in the case *Against Androtion*, who is told to 'bawl from the platform in the Assembly' (22.68).[15] Furthermore, the *bēma* is referred to as a *lieu de mémoire* to evoke previous political meetings in which crucial proposals were made. Thus a direct link between events in the past and the present is established. We find an example of this rhetorical technique in the *First Olynthiac*:

> When we returned from the Euboean expedition and Hierax and Stratocles, the envoys of Amphipolis, mounted this platform (*touti to bēma*) and bade you sail and take over their city, if we had shown the same earnestness in our own case as in defence of the safety of Euboea, Amphipolis would have been yours at once and you would have been relieved of all your subsequent difficulties. (1.8)

By indicating the *bēma* Demosthenes underlines his point that the response to the Amphipolitan ambassadors was inadequate. A better response is to be made this time to the ambassadors from Olynthus so as to prevent Philip from conquering the place.[16]

---

[14] See Plato (*Prt.* 319c) for the practice of interrupting unskilled speakers by shouting (*thorubos*) and by escorting them from the platform. Compare Aristophanes *Ach.* 45–54 for the mock-removal of Amphitheus.

[15] For the same strategy of blackening the opponent's behaviour at the speaking-platform, see *On the Crown* 18.123 and the (non-Demosthenic) *Against Aristogeiton* 25.9, 47, 64, and, in more generic terms, Aeschines *Against Ctesiphon* 3.2–4.

[16] Compare *First Philippic* 4.45, where Demosthenes refers to earlier, fruitless decisions that the Assembly took to secure Athenian interests against Philip as 'empty decrees and mere aspirations of this platform (*bēmatos*)' with *Second Philippic* 6.30, where Demosthenes refers to the speeches that were made on the *bēma* in which Philip's territorial aspirations were mitigated.

The Urban Space

From the law courts and the Assembly space on the Pnyx we move to
their immediate urban environment, the political and religious centre of
the city and its monuments. Whereas it was previously thought that this
immediate urban environment played no obvious role in Greek oratory,[17]
it was Fiona Hobden who recently pointed out that

> [i]n speeches composed by Demosthenes …, spaces, buildings, and mon-
> uments all become manifestations of the values, spirit, and character of
> the Athenian *polis*.   (2007: 497)

As Demosthenes habitually refers to objects and monuments in this
urban space, Hobden is justified in speaking of a 'forensic technique' that
could be used for various purposes (2007: 497–498). As this part of the
city was known to all politically active citizens, and therefore to the juries
and assemblies, references to it had an *emotive* function and could be
used to manipulate the feelings of the audience. The Agora, for instance,
is a place of trade and free speech where Athenians and non-Athenians
of all origins and ranks could mix and freely discuss politics.[18] Therefore
arresting a citizen and dragging him away from it without good reason
can be considered an attack upon Athenian democratic institutions. In
this respect, Demosthenes mentions the Thirty—though less often than
(→) Lysias—and their seizure of citizens in public spaces as a negative
example (22.52; 24.164).

Within the Agora, there were numerous monuments that played an
important role within the Athenian democratic ideology. One of them
was the Altar of the Eponymous Heroes, where proposals for decrees,
laws and prosecutions were advertised in advance of the decision by the
jury or the Assembly. In the speech *Against Timocrates* Demosthenes
makes the plaintiff accuse Timocrates of ignoring this rule when he
submitted his proposal to change the laws on theft of state-property
(24.18, 25). He thereby presents the plaintiff as a champion of democ-
racy and hints at anti-democratic sympathies on the part of his oppo-
nent.

---

[17] Vasaly 1993: 26 argues that 'appeal to the visible milieu seems to have played
practically no role in ancient Greek rhetorical practice' and appears to be a Roman
invention.

[18] For a summary of the evidence of the Agora as a political centre in Athens, see
Vlassopoulos 2007: 39–47.

   A similar emotive function can be ascribed to Demosthenes' pointing at the monuments on the Acropolis above the Agora. As they represent Athenian power and greatness he encourages his audience to reflect upon the conditions that enabled the city to build them a century ago and to be proud and protective of the democratic stateform and ideology with which these monuments were closely associated.[19] In the *Philippics*, for instance, references to the Parthenon and the Propylaea of the Acropolis (3.25) are meant to evoke the maritime empirical policy of Pericles that brought wealth, power and prestige to the Athenians.[20] As *lieux de mémoire*, they acquire a protreptic function in Demosthenes' political speeches, instructing the Assembly to stop spending the state budget on domestic affairs and relying on underpaid mercenaries abroad and, instead, to embark on active naval resistance against the Macedonians. The same holds for the forensic speeches. In the speech *Against Androtion*, for instance, the plaintiff includes amongst past Athenian naval successes those undertaken by 'the men who built the Propylaea and the Parthenon' (22.13). The visible ambience of the speech is meant to encourage the jury to reflect upon the duty of the Athenian state and its officials to take care of the number and maintenance of their triremes. Androtion's proposal to award the parting *bouleutai* a honorific reward in spite of their proven negligence in this respect is presented as an unpatriotic act that undermines the collective state-interests that the members of the jury are supposed to protect.[21]

   A different emotive function can be assigned to the state-prison (*desmōtērion*), a building (euphemistically indicated as an *oikēma*) in the vicinity of the Agora—and possibly within view from the law courts. In the speech *Against Timocrates* Demosthenes makes the plaintiff point at 'yonder building' (*oikēmati toutōi*, 24.131, 135), arguing that those who are charged with theft of state-property should be imprisoned until they

---

   [19] References to the statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton function in a similar way. See 20.70 and 21.170.
   [20] Compare 13.14, 28; 22.13, 76; 24.184; 36.15–16. In the forensic speech *Against Aristocrates*, in many ways a precursor to the *Philippics*, Demosthenes makes his plaintiff Euthycles refer to the Propylaea (*propulaia tauta*) and the stoas along with Piraeus and the docks (23.207). For a similar evocation of the port with all its nautical facilities, see 8.45. In the speech *On the Crown* Demosthenes dramatically points at *touton ton hēlion* 'yonder sun' (18.270).
   [21] The rhetorical strategy of making the opponents appear as if they act against the interests of the democratic institutions and laws is found elsewhere in the speech *Against Meidias* too. Cf. Aeschines *Against Ctesiphon* 3.1–8; Hobden 2007: 491–492.

repay their debts, a law that Timocrates proposed to abolish. This time, the orator does not evoke feelings of pride and patriotism but by pointing to the prison alludes to the law and order that are needed to uphold the integrity of the democratic institutions and to which every citizen, regardless of his origins and wealth, should obey.

In this context, mention should further be made of the inscriptions to which Demosthenes at times refers. They were erected both in the vicinity of the law court and elsewhere. By mentioning their existence in stone the orator again draws a link between the inner and outer space of the law court. This once more serves his *epideixis* but he also underlines the eternal value of the laws and decrees and endows them with gravity and authority. It is in particular in the speech *Against Leptines*, who had proposed a law to end exemption from taxes for benefactors, that inscriptions play an important role. One of the benefactors that Demosthenes mentions in this speech is Leucon, who had been instrumental in safeguarding Athenian trading interests in the Bosporus and was honoured as a benefactor of the state:

> Take and read … the decrees touching Leucon. … How reasonable and just was the immunity which Leucon has obtained from you, these decrees have informed you, gentlemen of the jury. Copies of all these decrees (*stēlas antigraphous*) on stone were set up by you and by Leucon in the Bosporus, in the Piraeus, and at Hierum. Just reflect to what depths of meanness you are dragged by this law, which makes the nation less trustworthy than an individual. For you must not imagine that the pillars (*stēlas*) standing there are anything else than the covenants (*sunthēkas*) of all that you have received or granted; and it will be made clear that Leucon observes them and is always eager to benefit you, but that you have repudiated them while they still stand (*hestōsas akurous*); and that is a far worse offence than to pull them down; for when men wish to traduce (*blasphēmein*) our city, there will stand the pillars to witness to the truth of their words. (20.35–37)

As Vince notes in his translation, the feminine plural *hestōsas akurous* enables Demosthenes to fuse the spatial and the conceptual aspect of the honorific inscription on Leucon's behalf (*stēlas* vs. *sunthēkas*). Demosthenes points at the eternal value of these highly visible testimonies for the security of the city as they guarantee Leucon's commitment and make him an example. Altering the conditions attached to his honours is presented as an act of desecration (note *blasphēmein*) that will be monumentalised instantly by the same inscriptions and endanger the city. For the same purpose Demosthenes refers to *stēlai* that record the honorific decrees on behalf of the Thasian Ecphantus and the Byzantines

Archebius and Heracleides (20.63–64) for their services to the Atheni-
ans in the Hellespont. A variation is found in the case of Conon, who was
instrumental in restoring the Athenian empire after expelling the Spar-
tans from the Aegean in 394 BCE and rebuilding the walls. Demosthenes
refers to his bronze statue on the Agora and quotes the inscription that
celebrates him as the 'liberator of the allies of Athens' (20.69). Later in
the speech he refers to honorific inscriptions in the portico of Hermes
(20.112) and stresses the epigraphical nature of his evidence in his argu-
mentation against Leptines' proposal (20.127–128) and in his peroration
(20.159). Apparently, Demosthenes believed that a strategy that empha-
sised the perpetuity and sanctity of the honorific decrees would make
the jury condemn his opponent for drafting an illicit decree.[22] His use
of epigraphical material attests to the spatial conceptualisation of laws
and decrees as they are presented as an integral part of the monumental
urban space that surrounded Athens' political venues and could be seen
and checked by all.[23]

Moving away from the immediate urban centre of Athens, Demos-
thenes refers to other places that represent the Athenian state and deserve
protection, like the Lyceum, the Academy, the Cynosarges and other
gymnasia (24.131). A more prominent role is played by the Piraeus, the
port that connects the urban space of Athens to the overseas world. Here
many contracts are sealed and negotiations are conducted that play a role
in the narratives of Demosthenes' speeches (e.g. 19.209; 32.10; 34.37).
Like (→) Lysias, Demosthenes refers at times to the Piraeus as a *lieu
de mémoire* from where the Athenian democracy was restored after the
overthrow of the Thirty. In the case of Thrasybulus, the plaintiff in the
speech *Against Timocrates* claims that he was 'one of the heroes of the
march from Phyle and Piraeus' (24.134) but despite his reputation was
imprisoned for offences against the state.

A final spatial concept that Demosthenes uses in the context of urban
space is the opposition between public and private space. Both are in

---

[22] For a parallel to this strategy, see Aeschines *Against Ctesiphon* 3.183–190, where the
orator invites the jury to join him on an imaginative (note *tēi dianoiēi*, 186) perambula-
tion around the Agora to study monuments and inscriptions that reflect the democratic
spirit by which the Athenian collective performed some of its greatest feats. See Hobden
2007: 495–497.

[23] For parallels, see 9.41–42; 19.270–272; 20.127. Connected to this is the spatial
conceptualisation of a mortgage upon a property indicated by the erecting of *horoi* (31.1;
41.5, 6, 16, 19). Tampering with inscriptions—an accusation made against Aristogeiton
(22.72–73)—is considered a grave sin.

their own ways sacred and require specific rules of behaviour of which the transgression reflects badly upon the character of the opponent. Breaking into someone's house, especially into women's quarters, is considered a violent crime.[24] According to Demosthenes it was Meidias' incursion into his house that laid the foundations for their long-standing enmity which explains his detailed narrative:

> His brother and he burst (*eisepēdēsan*) into my house because they were proposing an exchange for a trierarchy … First they broke down (*kateskhisan*) the doors of the rooms … next, in the presence of my sister, who was still at home then and was a young girl, they used bad language … and hurled abuse, decent and indecent, at my mother and me and all of us.
>
> (21.78–79)

Whereas this is an example of Demosthenes' *deinotēs*, he uses the motif in a more frivolous manner in the speech *Against Androtion*. The way in which Androtion handled his duties as a tax-commissioner is presented as too intrusive and Demosthenes makes his plaintiff Diodorus describe the consequences of his actions in terms that resemble slapstick:

> What if a poor man, or a rich man for that matter who has spent much money and is naturally perhaps rather short of cash, should have to climb over the roof to a neighbour's house or creep under the bed, to avoid being caught and dragged off to gaol … or should be seen thus acting by his wife, whom he espoused as a freeman and a citizen of our state?[25]   (22.53)

Distanced Space

Demosthenes presented himself as a *connoisseur* of the non-Athenian world and especially of those places that belonged to the Athenian 'alliance'. In his speeches, and especially in his *Philippics*, he often focuses upon the north of the Aegean and the Hellespont, an area of great economical interest for the city as it imported its grain from the Black Sea area and possessed estates, allies and trading colonies along the Thracian and Macedonian coasts. Furthermore, he is concerned with the central Greek states Thessaly, Thebes and Phocis and with Euboea, the crown colony of the Athenians where their interests clashed with those of Philip.

---

[24] See also (→) Lysias, who uses this topic more often.
[25] For other examples of the topos of breaking into someone's privacy, see 18.132; 21.78–79, 118–119; 24.162; 37.45–46; 47.52–59, 81–82.

In general, Demosthenes offers hardly any spatial orientation when he mentions toponyms in these areas but simply lists their names often in rapid succession without further specifications:

> First he seized Amphipolis, next Pydna, then Potidaea, after that Methone, lastly he invaded Thessaly. Then having settled Pherae, Pagasae, Magnesia, and the rest of that country to suit his purposes, off he went to Thrace, …
>
> (*First Olynthiac* 1.12–13)

Possibly, Demosthenes assumed that his audience was familiar enough with these places so that they needed no further explanation.[26] A rhetorical reason, however, can not be denied. More spatial orientation could have interrupted the flow of his argumentation and forced him into digressions that would have distracted his audience from the essence of the case. But the rapid succession of these names also adds to his image of a matter-of-fact statesman who exactly knew which places in the area were of interest to the Athenians and listed them without much ado as if he was reading them out from a tribute list or from a map.[27] Most importantly, however, Demosthenes heightens the rhythm of his narrative here as much as possible in order to present Philip as an imminent danger to Athens. In the above example, we move from Amphipolis (north of the Chalcidice) approximately 180 km west to Pydna, on the east coast of the Gulf of Therme, then return eastwards, to Potidaea on the other side of the gulf, next back westwards to Methone near Pydna and then further south, deep into Thessaly, before returning to the far northeast in Thrace. With this random order, Demosthenes underlines Philip's ability to strike wherever he wants at any time. His war is presented as a *Blitz* and is contrasted with the slow response on the part of the Athenians whom Demosthenes urges on to organise an apt military response. It is a narrative technique that Demosthenes uses throughout his career in his *Philippics* and, ultimately, also in his speech *On the Crown*:

---

[26] Though in the *First Philippic* he encourages his audience to study the topography of the northern Aegean (4.31). In his *Fourth Philippic* he concedes that not all Athenians may have heard of Serrium and Doriscus (10.8).

[27] In this sense Demosthenes presents the Aegean world from a cartographic perspective and thus differs from (→) Herodotus, (→) Thucydides and (→) Xenophon, who prefer to make temporal and spatial progression go hand in hand and often topographically orientate themselves in the guise of a wandering or seafaring traveller. On this so-called *hodological* perspective, see Janni 1984 and Purves 2010.

> I put the question to you, Aeschines, dismissing for the moment every-thing else—Amphipolis, Pydna, Potidaea, Halonnesus. I have no recollec-tion of those places. Serrium, Doriscus, the sack of Perapethus, and all other injuries of our city—I ignore them utterly.[28]   (18.69–70)

Apart from his habit of curtly referring and listing, Demosthenes also uses other techniques, especially in his *Philippics*, to present the outer Athenian world to his local audience. One of these is to avoid toponyms altogether and choose deliberately vague anaphoric adverbs like 'here' (Athens) versus 'there' (anywhere in the area that is under threat from Philip). This is part of his strategy in the *First Olynthiac* oration where he stresses that Athenian negligence of their overseas allies 'will bring the war from there to here' (*ton ekeithen polemon deur' hēxonta*, 1.15, cf. 1.25, 27).[29] Another technique is the use of metaphors like the 'circle' (*kuklos*) that Philip has cast like a net around the city, which is found in the *First Philippic*:

> he is always taking in more, everywhere casting his net round us (*kuklōi pantakhēi … peristoikhizetai*), while we sit idle and do nothing.   (4.9)

In this particular case the circle metaphor with its military associations[30] gains saliency as Demosthenes has just previously used it to describe the circular form of the possessions that Athens once held around the Gulf of Therme:

> we too, men of Athens, once held Pydna, Potidaea, and Methone and had in our own hands that entire territory in a circle (*kuklōi*) …   (4.4)

Demosthenes uses a metaphor with spatial connotations to highlight the dramatic reversal in Athenian fortune, previously a powerful stakeholder in the northern Aegean but now under threat from invasion herself.[31]

---

[28] For other instances, see 1.9; 4.48; 5.10; 6.30; 8.18, 64–66; 9.17–18, 26–27; 10.8–10; 18.79; 19.204, 334. In the Speech *On the Crown* Demosthenes applies the technique to his own diplomatic successes, summarising asyndetically every city that allied itself with Athens thanks to his efforts (18.237, cf. 244).

[29] For instances in other speeches, see 3.9; 4.50; 5.8; 8.44–45; 9.53.

[30] We can think of the circle here as a metaphor for the walls that protect a city (see *On the Crown* 18.300) or, in Thucydides' case, the Athenian camp in Syracuse (6.98–99). Compare Demosthenes' description of cities as *epiteikhismata* 'forts', 'outposts' (4.5; 14.12; 18.71, cf. 18.299) and of deceit as *toikhōrukhein* 'dig through a wall' (35.9, 47).

[31] For a variation of the metaphor, see *Second Philippic* 6.27 'you are ensnared' (*periteikhizesthe*) and *Third Philippic* 9.29, where Demosthenes compares Philip to a 'recurrence (*periodos*) or attack of a fever or some other disease'.

In the case of the Macedons, Demosthenes tends to avoid their name or their region in his speeches and concentrates instead upon its leader Philip. In the Olynthiac orations and the first, second and third *Philippics*, Philip is named 86 times and Macedonia and its inhabitants eight times.[32] As a consequence, Demosthenes' speeches come across as personal invectives against an individual who threatens the Greek states—either indicated by the name of their cities or by the name of their inhabitants—in a similar way as the Persian King once had done. Philip is compared to a tyrant intent on ending the freedom of the Greek states (*Second Philippic* 6.25) and, worse, eager to establish tyrannies in subject cities at the expense of the *dēmos*. This is exemplified by his overthrow of the Euboean democracies, which Demosthenes spins out in his *Third Philippic* (9.17, 27, 33, 58; cf. 8.36) so as to uphold Philip as an imminent threat to the Athenian constitution.[33]

Demosthenes knew that his audience was sensitive about the Waterloos in Athenian history such as the battle of Aegospotami, which sealed the fate of the city in the Peloponnesian War, and the battle of Chaeronea, which ended her ambitions against the growing Macedonian power. As a consequence, like (→) Lysias, he avoided naming them explicitly, choosing shrouded terms instead like *sumphora* (18.287; 20.42) and *atukhēma* (22.15). In his speech *Against Androtion* he makes the plaintiff Diodorus reflect upon this shrouded referencing explicitly, for the purpose of *ethopoiia*:

> For I suppose no one would deny that all that has happened to our city, in the past or in the present, whether good or otherwise—I avoid an unpleasant term (*hina mēden eipō phlauron*)—has resulted in the one case from the possession, and in the other from the want, of war-ships.
>
> (22.12)

By avoiding explicit references to lost sea-battles in the past the plaintiff creates an impression of himself as a man who understands the sen-

---

[32] That Demosthenes uses the name 'Macedon' with a negative connotation is proven by a passage in the *First Philippic*: 'could anything be worse than a Macedonian man who defeats the Athenians and rules Greek affairs?' (4.10); cf. *Third Philippic* 9.31: 'cursed Macedon'.

[33] In his speech *For the Liberty of the Rhodians* (15) Demosthenes employs the same technique, referring to the powers that threaten Rhodes by the names of their leaders Mausolus, Artemisia, the Persian King and Philip. The opposite happens in the case of the speech *On the Symmories* (14), in which Demosthenes tends to avoid naming toponyms within Attica and thus stresses the unity of the *polis*.

sitivities of his audience and remains discrete about painful events in Athenian history.

Ultimately, Demosthenes' reluctance to convey topographical information and his habit of confining himself to toponyms, anaphoric adverbs or metaphors may be explained as the result of adapting his speeches to his democratic audience, the Athenian juries drawn by lot and the Assembly on the Pnyx. It is hardly imaginable that all these Athenians had a similar grasp of the topographical details in the northern Aegean. In fact, many of them may never have been abroad at all and may have listened to the toponyms that Demosthenes mentioned without any sense of their whereabouts. In order to keep his audience involved and attentive he had to rely on a high rhythm in his narrative and avoid any kind of distraction such as topographical digressions. Meanwhile, he had to bring his message across in an understandable manner so as to attain clarity (*saphēneia*). He probably selected toponyms that were well-known to the Athenians and ones that mattered to them for empirical, military, historical or religious reasons.[34] Alternatively, he sought refuge in metaphors or anaphoric adverbs so as to present the world in easily understandable bipolar terms like 'there' and 'here'.

An exception to this narrative habit is the early speech *Against Aristocrates* (352 or 351 BCE) which Demosthenes drafted for Euthycles, who was involved in a lawsuit against the man who had proposed to render Charidemus (a mercenary commander in the north Aegean) inviolable. Euthycles describes the opposition which he met from Charidemus when he tried to restore Athenian interests in the Chersonese:

> we went to Alopeconnesus, and that is in the Chersonese and used to belong to you—a headland running out towards Imbros, a long way from Thrace; a place swarming with robbers and pirates—when we got there and were besieging these gentry, he marched right across the Chersonese—your property, every yard of it—attacked us, and tried to rescue the robbers and pirates.   (23.166–167)

The brief topographical description may have been inserted to make the narrative appear as authentic as possible and thereby forestall the argument of the defendant that Euthycles and his Athenian ships were

---

[34] Instances of places of empirical interest are Olynthus (4.17; 9.56; 23.107–109), Potidaea (18.61–62; 23.107–109), the Chersonese (4.17; 23.1), Euboea (9.57–58); of prime military interest: Thermopylae (4.41; 6.7; 19.77, 180); of historical interest: Marathon (4.34; 14.30), Plataea (6.30; 16.4), Pylos (40.25); of religious interest: Delphi (9.32; 19.65), Nemea (21.115).

a threat to Charidemus' employer Chersobleptes, the king of Thrace. But the orator may also have wished to familiarize his jury with a less familiar area in the Chersonese. This didactic approach is visible in other parts of this speech, for instance in the lengthy summary of the statutes concerning homicides and Athenian lawcourts where these cases were brought to trial (resp. 23.22–65 and 23.66–81) and in the comparison of Cardia on the Chersonese with Chalcis on Euboea, a place closer to Athens and probably better known:

> Indeed by its situation the city of the Cardians occupies a position in the Chersonese in relation to Thrace analogous to the position of Chalcis in Euboea in relation to Boeotia. Those of you who know its situation cannot be unaware of the advantage for the sake of which he [Chersobleptes] has acquired it for himself …[35]   (23.182)

These topographical explanations are exceptional within Demosthenes' speeches. It may have been the orator's wish to characterize Euthycles as a knowledgeable and authoritative commander that explains their presence[36] or he decided to omit topographical explanations in his later speeches as he found them rhetorically ineffective.

The Characterizing Function of Space: The Case of Meidias

Like in (→) Lysias, space often acquires a characterizing function and furthers *ethopoiia*. We have already seen some examples above, but Demosthenes' technique is better illustrated by a more extensive treatment of one of his speeches. For this purpose I have selected the impressive speech *Against Meidias* (21), part of a long-standing feud dating back to Demosthenes' early manhood when Meidias and his brother had broken into his house and used abusive language in the presence of his mother and sister. In 348 BCE, their hostility surfaced at the city's Dionysia where Demosthenes acted as *khorēgos* on behalf of his tribe. Meidias attempted to sabotage his production and punched him in the face in the theatre on the day of the performance.[37] Demosthenes

---

[35] For a similar example of enlightening the less familiar by a comparison to the more familiar, see 23.102–103, where Euthycles describes a successful strategy in Thrace by drawing a comparison to Athens' politics in relation to Thebes and Sparta.

[36] Compare the proem of this speech, where Euthycles emphasises his personal experiences in the north of the Aegean (23.5).

[37] The punch is also attested by Aeschines in his *Against Ctesiphon* 3.52.

charged him with offences related to the festival and secured a vote of condemnation in the Assembly before drafting a speech that was to be held at an eliastic court in the subsequent year, 347 or 346 BCE.[38]

The speech focuses entirely upon the character of Meidias whose violent crimes and obnoxious scheming are spun out far beyond the incidents at the Dionysia. Step by step Demosthenes reveals a link between Meidias' offences against him and the city as a whole so that an image emerges of a man who poses an imminent danger to the democratic constitution. During his portrayal of Meidias Demosthenes makes use of spatial backdrops that enable the jury to visualise and evaluate his opponent's behaviour.

The first backdrop is the political and religious centre of Athens. In the proem of the speech, Demosthenes claims that

> the more men he has annoyed by canvassing (I saw what he was doing in front of the courts this morning), the more I expect him to get his deserts.
> (21.4)

By referring to Meidias' lobby in front of the law court, Demosthenes anticipates his account of the bullying that he and his chorus suffered in the theatre of Dionysus the previous year. This he describes in much detail, evoking the theatre as a backdrop and thereby enabling his jury to visualise the incidents as if they are sitting in the audience:

> he shouted, he threatened, he stood beside the judges while they were taking the oath, he blocked and nailed up the side-scenes (*paraskēnia*), though they are public property (*dēmosia*) and he held no official position (*idiōtēs*)—I can't tell you how much harm and trouble (*kaka kai pragmata amuthēta*) he caused me, continually. And as far as concerns the incidents … before the judges in the theatre all of you are my witnesses, men of the jury. Indeed the most reliable statements are those whose truth the audience can attest for the speaker.   (21.17–18)

To underscore the trustworthiness of his detailed account, Demosthenes appeals to the members of the jury that have witnessed the incident. In making it seem as if they have all watched the spectacle unfold and have shared his focalisation, he draws them into his camp. This is all the more important as this passage contains the motif on which Demosthenes'

---

[38] Aeschines' version of the conflict in his *Against Ctesiphon* (3.51–52) has led to the belief that the speech was not delivered and that the conflict was settled after arbitration, but conclusive evidence is lacking. See the discussion in MacDowell 1990: 23–28.

argumentation is built. In his lobby against his enemies, Meidias has shown no regard for the sanctity of public property—not even at a religious festival—and does not refrain from assaulting a state-official, for it was in his capacity of *khorēgos* that Demosthenes was acting.

The image of Meidias as an obnoxious schemer in Athens' public and sacred democratic space runs through the remaining part of the speech as a theme. Demosthenes tells how he hired Euctemon, a notorious syco-phant, to charge the orator publicly with desertion and to write it on the *pinakes* on the Altar of the Eponymous Heroes (21.103). At the time of the murder inquiry against Aristarchus, Meidias 'hovered around the agora' (*periiōn kata tēn agoran*, 21.104) to lobby against Demosthenes, even addressing the victim's relatives to point them into the orator's direction. When this plot faltered, he tried to intimidate the Athenian *boulē*, urging them to arrest Aristarchus and thereby weaken Demos-thenes' position. Quoting Meidias' words in direct speech, Demosthenes again enables his jury to visualise his opponent's interruption:

> Are you still delaying and investigating? Are you out of your minds? Won't you put him to death? Won't you go to his house and arrest him?
>
> (21.117)

Later, it is related that he 'cleared his path' (*sobei*, 21.158) across the agora accompanied by an escort of 'three or four slaves'. Meidias, Demosthenes claims, is so big that 'the city can not hold him' (*hē polis auton ou khōrei*, 21.200).[39] Thus the image arises of Meidias as a danger to the Athenian *dēmos*. For this purpose, Demosthenes inserts a reference to Harmodius and Aristogeiton and the *stēlē* that accompanied their statues on the Agora (21.170). As champions of the *dēmos* and 'killers of insolent tyrants', they behaved exactly the opposite to Meidias, whose gang of sycophants are described as his 'mercenaries' (21.139) who threaten the stability of Athens' democracy.

The second, less obvious, spatial backdrop that Demosthenes uses is the world of Greek interstate diplomacy and warfare. Demosthenes presents himself as a staunch representative of the *dēmos* in referring to

---

[39] For parallels of unusual behaviour on the Agora, compare Demosthenes' descrip-tion of Aeschines in the speech *On the False Embassy* (19.314) and the (non-Demosthenic) speech *Against Aristogeiton* where the plaintiff describes how the accused 'makes his way through the market-place like a snake or a scorpion with sting erect, dart-ing hither and tither, on the look-out for someone on whom he can call down disaster or calumny or mischief of some sort, or whom he can terrify till he extorts money from him' (25.52).

his activities as leader of the *theōroi* in Nemea (21.115) and as a sponsor
of the campaigns to Euboea and Olynthus (21.161), whereas he claims
that Meidias made a shambles of his cavalry duties (21.132–135), tried
to evade his trierarchy (21.163–167) and damaged the diplomatic rela-
tions with Cyzicus (21.173). In holding up, as it were, the map of Athe-
nian foreign interests as a backdrop to his argumentation, Demosthenes
attempts to make his audience aware of the delicate relationships that
Athens entertains with various cities to which Meidias poses an immi-
nent threat.

As in other cases, the key to Demosthenes' strategy of persuasion in
the speech *Against Meidias* lies in the connection between the spatial
backdrops that help him in portraying Meidias' crimes and the here and
now of the setting of the speech in the eliastic law court. Thus he links
visualisation with visibility and makes it seem plausible that Meidias
poses a threat to the state. To underline this, he points out the arbitrator
Strato whom Meidias had disfranchised on illegal grounds and who was,
despite his services to the Athenian state, not allowed to speak in court
but only to stand up and be seen (21.95–96). Furthermore, he anticipates
his opponent's apology, predicts more false charges on the part of Meidias
against individuals (21.193) and the Athenian *dēmos* as a whole (21.196)
and addresses the wealthy supporters of Meidias that are members of
the jury and whom he fears to be the victim of his bullying and lobbying
(21.208, 213). Thus Demosthenes uses the performative space of the law
court as a theatre to re-enact the crimes of Meidias and to incriminate
him on the spot.[40]

Conclusion

Whereas the influence of Thucydides is generally assumed within
Demosthenes' style, the orator took a wholly different approach in his
presentation of spatial material. Evidently the fact that his texts served a
direct, rhetorical aim within the political and forensic arenas of Athens
overrode any inclination to include elaborate spatial or topographical
descriptions such as are found in the historians. Demosthenes' main pur-
pose was to enable his public to visualise the events that had happened
elsewhere against the visible backdrop of the performative space itself,
linking the two worlds, in his *epideixis*, by way of testimonies, references

---

[40] Cf. MacDowell 1990: 36 on this theatrical effect.

to monuments and inscriptions in the nearby urban space and by clev-
erly employing the objects within the performative space for the pur-
pose of *ethopoiia*. Demosthenes' summary spatial references to the non-
Athenian world (evoked in his speeches on a much wider scale than in
those of other orators like Lysias) are generally meant to clarify his argu-
mentation, to create an image of himself as a knowledgeable statesman or
to characterize political and military developments. Repeating, in quick
succession, names of fallen cities like Olynthus, Amphipolis, Pydna and
Potidaea, he presents them as soundbytes, reminding his audience time
and again of the imminent danger of Philip. Thus he comes across as a
populist orator *avant-la-lettre*, in the guise of a staunch democrat who
knows how to manipulate his audience.