

Demosthenes' Manipulation of the Rhetoric of Enmity in the Crown Oration

This paper argues that in the Crown Oration (*Dem.* 18) Demosthenes uses the Athenian rhetorical *topos* of personal enmity in order to position his adversary Aeschines as not a private enemy of Demosthenes but a public enemy of the Athenian state. I examine Demosthenes' use of the words *echthros* and *polemios* (and their related cognates) and argue that his manipulation of these terms allows him to maintain and publicly display his enmity for Aeschines on the grounds that he is sharing in public enmity against an enemy of the state rather than waging a private feud against a personal enemy.

The role of private enmity in Athenian litigation has received much attention in the scholarly record. The popular Athenian sentiment of “helping one’s friends and harming one’s enemies” could be used as evidence that Athenians were willing to use whatever means possible, including the court system, to act out private animosity. David Cohen argues that Athens is similar to “feuding societies;” that “the preferred strategy [for acting out feuds] seems to have been to make the courts the instrument of one’s vengeance” (Cohen 1995). While this line of thought has been predominant (Rhodes 1998, Phillips 2008, Cairns 2015 all concur in some way), Asako Kurihara makes a distinction between private suits (*dikai*) and public suits (*graphai*). Though it was acceptable to prosecute a private case out of personal enmity and also admit this enmity in court, there was a “normative expectation that public suits should not be motivated by private enmity” (Kurihara 2003). I follow Kurihara’s suggestion that in public suits such as the Crown case orators generally are not supposed to be motivated by personal enmity, while also examining enmity in accordance with Cohen’s dictum: “Enmity, in rhetorical terms,

was a *topos*, grounded in the normative expectations of the audience, to be manipulated according to the exigencies of the particular case.”

Demosthenes’ strategy of branding Aeschines a public enemy begins by defining friends (*philoï*) as those who have interests (*ta sumpheronta*) in common. While he does not outright state this, the flipside to this statement is that enemies (*echthroï*) are those who have interests in opposition. He then notes that Aeschines is a *philos* of several Macedonians, whom Demosthenes says are public *echthroï* of Athens. If Aeschines is a *philos* of Athenian *echthroï*, that means he has interests in common with them, and thus his interests are in opposition to Athens’, so he is actually an *echthros* of Athens despite being a citizen. After noting Aeschines’ common interests with Athenian enemies, Demosthenes increase his rhetorical pressure by calling Aeschines not just an *echthros* of Athens but a *polemios*. Though these two words certainly overlapped in common parlance, Ammonius (*De adfinium vocabulorum differentia* §63V) tells us the precise difference between them: “An *echthros* is one who was formerly a friend, while a *polemios* is one who marches against those nearby under arms.” By calling Aeschines a *polemios* for associating with Macedonians and pro-Macedonian Athenians, Demosthenes casts Aeschines in the role of a hostile invader. By branding him as such, Demosthenes is allowed to vent the full force of his own enmity (*echthra*) upon Aeschines, since, as his rhetoric allows him to claim, Demosthenes is engaged in no personal quarrel but is simply representing Athens in a public case against a public enemy, even though he himself is speaking for the defense, not the prosecution.

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