

**THE FOURTH ORATION OF
ISOCRATES, CALLED THE
PANEGYRIC: AS BEING
ADDRESSED TO THE UNIVERSAL
ASSEMBLY OF ALL GREECE**

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The Fourth Oration of Isocrates, Called the Panegyric: As Being Addressed to the Universal assembly of all greece by Henry Frank Isocrates

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HENRY FRANK ISOCRATES

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⊙ THE FOURTH
ORATION OF ISOCRATES,
CALLED THE
PANEGYRIC,

*AS BEING ADDRESSED TO THE UNIVERSAL
ASSEMBLY OF ALL GREECE,*

EXHORTING THE GRECIANS TO CONCORD, AND UNDER-
TAKING JOINTLY A WAR AGAINST
THE PERSIANS.



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THE

FOURTH ORATION OF ISOCRATES.

I HAVE often wondered that those who have convoked public assemblies and instituted athletic games, should have regarded the good habit of the body worthy of such great reward, but have paid no honor, to those who in a private capacity have labored for the interest of the commonwealth, and have so prepared their minds that they became able to assist even others; for whom greater regard ought to have been held.

For, were combatants possessed of twice their strength, no advantage would accrue from it to others; but if a man possess a noble mind, all who are willing to seek his company would be benefited by the results of his study. Yet, I was not discouraged because of this neglect, nor did I yield to idleness; but, judging that the glory which would accrue from the composition of this oration would be sufficient return for my labor, I came to give my advice about engaging in a war against the Barbarians, and forming an alliance among ourselves.

Still I am not unaware that many men, who have pretended to be sophists, have undertaken this task before me; but I hope at once so far to excel them that they may ever appear to others to have said nothing important about these topics. Then, too, I have judged those to be the noblest discourses, which touch upon the most important subjects, which most clearly display the ability of the speaker and render the greatest advantage to his audience; of such a character is the present oration. Then, too, the favorable opportunities have not yet passed away, so that it is vain to recount these deeds. For it is time that a speaker should cease, when either the affairs have come to their natural close, and it is no longer

necessary for him to advise about them, or when he feels that his subject has been so thoroughly exhausted that nothing has been left for others to surpass. But, while circumstances continue to be constantly the same, and all speeches on these topics come to be of slight account, why should I not contemplate and study such an oration, which, if it once succeeds, will release us from our civil commotions, from our present disorder, and from the greatest calamities which can befall us? Besides, if it was impossible to speak of public affairs but in a single manner (and there were not different characters of eloquence), one might be able to suspect that it was superfluous for one, speaking in the exact manner of others, to give new trouble to his hearers. But as orators possess such inspiration that they can speak appositely and several times upon the same subjects, can even make old things appear new, and give an air of antiquity to what is modern, therefore I ought not to shun those topics about which others have formerly spoken, but rather ought I endeavor to surpass them in their efforts. For actions which have transpired in ages past are transmitted as common property to us all; but to use these properly, to deliberate judiciously upon each, and to clothe them with beautiful expressions, this is the property only of those who are wise. For I think that other arts as well as philosophic eloquence would receive the greatest addition, if we should admire and praise, not those who are the first to recount those deeds, but such only as have finished, in the best manner, each of their undertakings; not those who strive to treat of what no one before has ever spoken, but those who are able to speak with such eloquence that no one else can approach them.

Some indeed blame those which are above the common standard of the vulgar, and are labored to great perfection. They are so greatly mistaken as to measure them by such as are prepared for an assembly of private deliberations: just as if there were not a wide difference between these two kinds of oratory; one of which has in view cautionary plans, and the other mere ostentation; or as if it did not always follow, that he who can speak accurately can also express himself in the plain language of men of business. It surely does not escape our notice that these persons praise only such as they deem themselves capable of imitating. But I address my words

not to such as are easily contented, but to those who will receive nothing which has entered into the vain discourses of others, but grow indignant and seek in my speeches for something which they will not discover in those of others. To these for a short time I will address myself in even a still higher strain of vanity, with regard to my personal affairs. I have observed some in the beginning of their discourses to attempt to win the favor of their hearers, and to apologize for their orations; some have I heard affirm that their performances were extemporaneous; and others that it was difficult for them to find words equal to the dignity of their subject. But if I do not acquit myself in a manner worthy of my topic, my reputation, and the time not only that I have employed in this composition but also of all my life,—if, I say, I will not do all this,—I will not ask to be allowed any apology, but to be laughed at and scorned by all. For I shall certainly deserve this, if, having made such great promises, I shall in nothing excel the efforts of others. And this is all I thought proper to premise concerning myself. Those who speak of public affairs in such an assembly as this, immediately, in the beginning of their orations, inform their hearers that, omitting all intestine quarrels, they ought, in alliance, to turn their arms against the Barbarians (Persians), and number over the calamities which occur from mutual warfare, and the great advantages which accrue from an inroad into an enemy's country; they say indeed the truth, but do not lay the foundation of their discourse upon a solid basis, which would answer fully their intention.

For some parts of Greece are dependent on us, and others on the Lacedæmonians; the different forms of government under which they live, in this manner particularly distinguishes them. Whoever thinks that the rest of Greece will unite in the common cause before the principal cities are friends, shows great simplicity, and is far from holding an acquaintance with public affairs. But it becomes those who make not only pompous discourses, but are willing also to see some good effect produced by them, to seek for those reasons which may persuade the two leading cities to be contented with equality, and divide the supreme command: in a word, to gain those advantages over the Barbarians that they now endeavor to gain over the rest of Greece. It would be

✓ no difficulty to bring our city to a just composition: but it
 will be more difficult to persuade the Lacedæmonians; for
 they have entertained a false opinion that the supremacy of
 Greece is their natural right and property. But should any
 one be able to convince their prejudice, that this honor
 belongs rather to our city than to theirs, they would lay aside
 49 jealous disputes and concur in the common good. Others,
 therefore, ought to have begun here, and not have given
 advice about what was allowed by all before, but have recon-
 ciled these fatal differences. I shall in this view, for the com-
 mon good, employ the chief part of my discourse to this end,
 that I may gain this point, may promote the general interest,
 and, after I have healed our intestine quarrels, persuade us to
 a confederate war against tyranny and the common enemy.
 But, if this should be impracticable, that I may show who are
 the impediment of so much good to Greece, and make it man-
 ifest to all, that in former ages our city, governed by the sea,
 even now claims, without injustice, a national precedence.
 For this I shall make evident that, if it is just that every one
 should be most honored in that in which he has had the most
 experience and is the best qualified for, then, indisputably, we
 have a right to the chief command, which we formerly enjoyed
 by common consent; for none will ever show me a city which
 has so excelled in land wars as ours has done in the greatest
 dangers by sea, for the common cause of Greece. But should
 72 this not appear a just reason for some, because in the course
 of things changes in power and title must happen (no govern-
 ment continuing always in the same state), yet they will allow,
 at least, principality or chief authority, like other honorary
 titles, to be either the property of the first possessors or of those
 23 who have been eminently the benefactors of Greece. I per-
 suade myself that in all these regards we have the advantage;
 for the farther any one investigates, the more visibly we will
 leave our enemies behind in their pretensions. It is admitted
 on all sides that our city is the most ancient, the largest, and
 the most renowned of Greece. And, though this is the noblest
 foundation for honor, we have still further pretensions to it,
 for the following reasons: we possess, I affirm, this territory
 without the expulsion of others; we neither found it at first
 V. desert, or mixed of several collected nations, but as naturally
 as gloriously had our origin from this very part of the earth

which we now occupy; and therefore may justly be called the lawful natives of the place from the first order of the primeval world: and we may reasonably give our city the dearest names of relation; for we alone of all the Greeks may call our city our nourisher, our native soil, and mother. Now it certainly becomes those who, without a blush, can glory in their original, to put in a reasonable plea for chief authority, frequently boast of their paternal titles, as they are able to appeal to all history for the truth of such a noble beginning. The grandeur of our nation, I affirm it again, and the privilege of fortune in the original of our state, give us no less cause than I have mentioned of just glory and lofty sentiments.

But, to prove the glorious benefactions of our ancestors, we must examine into the periods of time from the beginning, and give the history of our political actions; for we shall by this means find our city the inventor of all the advantages and preparations of war, and almost the source of every art and science by which our lives and states are rendered more happy and secure. But I shall not mention the lesser benefits received from our nation, which time (as being of less moment) has obscured; but such as on account of their excellence are mentioned in history, allowed and praised by all men. I assert it, that what both Greece and humankind stand most in need of, was first known and made common by our city; and though this may seem fabulous by its antiquity, yet it is proper to mention it here: for Ceres coming into our country, when she followed her ravished daughter, and being benevolently disposed toward our ancestors for their hospitality (but the particulars are unlawful to be told, except to the initiated), she gave them two gifts which are of the noblest nature,—the art of propagating corn, and covering the fields every year with rich harvests, which drew mankind from a savage life; she likewise taught them her sacred mysteries, in which whoever are initiated have good hopes in regard to life, death, and futurity. Now, our city was not only grateful to the gods, but such a lover of mankind that, possessed of such superior happiness, it envied not this felicity to others, but made all partakers of its privileges; and even now we have of this an annual remembrance. I have acquainted you with the advantages, benefits, and public goods which have accrued from our