

LISTENING TO THE FIRST *PHILIPPIC* (DEMOSTHENES 4.5–9)

JUDSON HERRMAN

I FIRST MET ALBERT IN FALL 1992, when I was a student in the department's first iteration of Greek 201, a course intended to bring new graduate students up to speed reading substantial chunks of Greek quickly. We were a small group, meeting in a dark windowless room (in Robinson, not the windowless 3B of the old Boylston Hall), and in my memory Albert stood out at the head of the table as if he were under a spotlight. We were all more or less intimidated and enthralled as he raced us through the *Ajax* and the *Frogs*, Thucydides 2, and the *Symposium*. The mixture of poetry and prose was typical of Albert's fascination with everything Greek, and the culmination of that mix came one day when we thought we were to translate Agathon's speech in the *Symposium*. "No, no," cried Albert as the first nervous translator began, "in Greek!" With a mixture of relief that we didn't have to translate, and fear of his reaction to our pronunciation, we spent the entire class-period reading the speech aloud in Greek, while Albert delighted in the poetic rhythms and Gorgianic devices of the passage.

The sound of Agathon's speech has been discussed frequently; for this reflection I want to move from it to Demosthenes' first *Philippic*, which I read for the first time with Albert not long after we read Agathon aloud. Albert showed the same delight in the sound of the Greek, and I realize (now that I have been working through older commentaries as I write green and yellow notes for Demosthenes) that, unusually, he approached Demosthenes' very different prose in much the same way as he did Agathon's speech. I remember his exuberant stress of the rough breathing of Philip ἄνθρωπος (Dem. 4.9), his propulsive plosives as he pointed to the alliteration in τὰ παρόντα πεπηγένην πράγματα ἀθάνατα

(4.8), and his energetic gesticulation as he explained the metaphor in κατέπτηχε and περιστοιχίζεται by acting like a cowering bird or an ensnaring hunter (4.8, 9). He relished the parallelism, rhyming, and antithesis in φύσει δ' ὑπάρχει τοῖς παροῦσι τὰ τῶν ἀπόντων, καὶ τοῖς ἐθέλουσι πονεῖν καὶ κινδυνεύειν τὰ τῶν ἀμελούντων (4.5), and never missed a chance to inquire about Demosthenes' avoidance of tribrachs ("Blass's Law").

To be sure, Albert also taught me to read prose differently from poetry. One of his favorite stylistic metrics was sentence length; every day as we read long stretches of Thucydides and Plato he would challenge us to identify the colons and periods with fewest and most words. I am certain that Thucydides' τεκμήριον δέ· (2.39.2, 50.2) was the shortest colon that semester, twenty-five years ago, in Greek 201, and now I hope that my ongoing work on Demosthenes may provide adequate τεκμήριον for Albert's inspiring influence.