

NOSTALGIA, POLITICS AND PERSUASION IN DEMOSTHENES' *LETTERS*

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INTRODUCTION: THE VOLUNTARY EXILE

In the winter of 324/3 BCE,¹ fourteen years after the Macedonian defeat of the Greek alliance at Chaeronea and six years after the delivery of his most celebrated speech *On the Crown*, Demosthenes was convicted and fined by an Athenian jury for appropriating funds left in trust in Athens by Alexander the Great's absconding treasurer, Harpalus.² Guilty or not, Demosthenes could not pay the fine, and retreated into a self-imposed 'exile' at places including Aegina, Troezen and Calauria.³ From this period of several months in mid-323 there survive four *Letters*, numbered I to IV, which have been convincingly reordered chronologically as III–II–IV–I⁴ and which are now normally thought authentic.⁵ I proceed here on the assumption that they are.⁶

In this chapter I aim to show that an important part of Demosthenes' persuasive strategy in the *Letters* – a strategy aimed constantly at effecting his restoration, regardless of individual letters' subject matter – consists in generating nostalgic⁷ emotions in his audience for an ideal Athens which resembles the city as it was prior to defeat by Philip at Chaeronea in 338.⁸ This was the period when Demosthenes was Athens's most prominent policymaker, and his own political standpoint much clearer-cut, with the current problems of dealing with Alexander and his subordinates not yet on the horizon.⁹ He invites his audience to apply this

1 All subsequent dates are BCE unless otherwise noted.

2 See Worthington (2013) 310–25 for an account.

3 For these locations: Plut. *Dem.* 26.5 and *Dem. Epist.* II.19–20.

4 Goldstein (1968) 45–63; Clavaud (1987) 19–50; Worthington (2006) 101; MacDowell (2009) 414. Otherwise unmarked Roman numerals in this chapter refer to the Demosthenic *Letters*.

5 Goldstein (1968) 3–5; Clavaud (1987) 7; Worthington (2003) and (2006) 99–101; MacDowell (2009) 408. Some remain unconvinced: Lehmann (2004) 217; Carlier (2006) 311; Will (2013) 224 note 3. We have two other *Letters* (V and VI) set respectively in the 350s and in 322; these do not enter this chapter.

6 This chapter concerns literary dynamics, however, and does not require the author to be Demosthenes, as opposed to an artistically skilled and historically knowledgeable imitator.

7 'Nostalgia' defined (*OED* 2a) as 'sentimental longing for or regretful memory of a period of the past, esp. one in an individual's own lifetime; (also) sentimental imagining or evocation of a period of the past'. For other definitions, see Sedikides *et al.* (2015) 194–201.

8 Clavaud (1987) 27.

9 Demosthenes as collaborationist, at least post-330: Goldstein (1968) 80–1; Worthington (2013) 313–16.

nostalgic vision to his whole career up to the present by careful restaging in new contexts of arguments which audience members could identify as typically (though not necessarily exclusively) Demosthenic, including arguments from his self-defence against Aeschines in *On the Crown* (of 330), which he encourages audience members to recollect. He cannot have expected many people to remember the arguments in detail; it must therefore be their Demosthenic flavour, and the fact that they worked in 330, and could work again, that matters most,¹⁰ regardless of how they may have fared if he also used them in court in 323. As we shall see, he complements these dynamics by projecting his *own* nostalgia both for his (conjured) past and for Athens and the Athenians *tout court* in emotive ways. Demosthenes' repackaging of his old arguments for the present – a revisionary tool to affect perceptions of events in his recent career – is also supported by a conscious engagement with key *topoi* of the collective post-Chaeronea rhetoric of those who had previously opposed Philip, especially Lycurgus and Hyperides.¹¹

In the *Letters*, we find Demosthenes seeking to evoke a variety of emotions in his audience (pity, shame and guilt among them), but these texts' overall emotional profile can also be characterized by talking in terms of the nostalgic experience (which itself can involve a range of emotions). The idea that in these *Letters* Demosthenes communicates nostalgic affect which is personal (or at least projected as personal) via typically Demosthenic routes, and thereby encourages similar affect in audience members, can be supported by recent psychological and sociological research on nostalgia as a social emotion.¹² A vital function of nostalgia (as opposed to simple homesickness, which is clearly in play here too but is rightly considered separately in modern psychological scholarship),¹³ is the fostering of feelings of social value or connectedness in nostalgic subjects which then allow them to cope with one or more of a range of types of identity challenge which the real, lived present offers: social threat, exclusion, marginalization, or loss of status or significance (perceived or actual), or indeed mortality itself.¹⁴

Two forms of this that matter here are, first, the discontinuity imposed by moving to a new place for career or other life reasons – i.e. Demosthenes' 'exile' – and, second, and more importantly, the loss of political independence (and status on the world stage) which the Athenians had experienced since Chaeronea in

10 Goldstein (1968) 29–30, 73–4.

11 See Todd (2009); Herrman (2009); de Martinis (2012). An example is the participation of *Letters* IV and I in the wider understanding – common to *On the Crown*, Demosthenes' *Funeral Oration* (esp. 19–21), and Hyperides' *Against Diondas* (137v–136r) – that Chaeronea's outcome was the result purely of Fortune (see e.g. Todd (2009) 170–1 and note 33). It also exemplifies the much broader cultural nostalgia of the Lycurgan period; see Lambert (2010) and Azoulay and Ismard (2011) for orientation in this area.

12 For this formulation: e.g. Sedikides *et al.* (2015) 206; (2008) 306; (2006) 198.

13 On this separation: Sedikides *et al.* (2015) 193–4; (2004) 202.

14 Sedikides *et al.* (2015) 208–49, esp. 218–32 and 240–4; Zhou *et al.* (2012) 40; Routledge *et al.* (2008); Wildschut *et al.* (2006) 979–82, 984–6; Sedikides *et al.* (2006) 205–10; Sedikides *et al.* (2004) 206–8; Davis (1979) 32–7, 69. Compare Kaplan (1987) 485 on pathological nostalgia as a 'screen affect'.

338.¹⁵ This outcome was what Lycurgus's past-facing policies were aimed at negotiating,¹⁶ but also what Demosthenes was known for having tried to prevent prior to Chaeronea, and this past policy stance continued to be fundamental to his political personality in the 330s and 320s. Moreover, nostalgia may (as Demosthenes does in these *Letters*) look to the past (or rather the imagined past) for its material, but it is also orientated towards dealing with present circumstances and anticipating future ones.¹⁷ Demosthenes uses it persuasively, the goal being his restoration and his positive message for the Athenians in the present being that they can be strong again one day: this is what Boym has termed 'restorative nostalgia', operating at both a personal and a collective level.¹⁸ Finally, while often ambivalent (or 'bittersweet') in its overall experiential complexion, nostalgia for the most part organizes itself in (positive) 'redemption' sequences (things were bad, but they got better) rather than 'contamination' sequences (things were good, but they deteriorated).¹⁹ This seems key to Demosthenes' persuasion here: in attempting to transmit his own nostalgia to his audience, he is encouraging them to complete the 'redemption' narrative and relive the time of his (and their own) prestige by restoring him now. He could have placed the accent on the deterioration of their prestige (a pragmatic point, and the one Aeschines makes in *Against Ctesiphon*, his prosecution speech in the Crown trial, blaming Demosthenes for it);²⁰ but here, as in *On the Crown*,²¹ the positive status for Athens which follows logically from accepting Demosthenes' version is where the emphasis lies, and the point (as in Demosthenes' Assembly speeches) becomes one about the potential of past glories to translate into dynamism in the present and future if interpreted – and enacted – correctly.²²

The evocation of a generalized nostalgic *tone* – rather than making focused appeals to pity (which do occur, but only at points) also helps Demosthenes respond to the difficulties facing him in writing these *Letters*. First, his great civic achievements were fifteen years in the past (and their persuasiveness possibly jeopardized by the arguments of the prosecutors at the Harpalus trial).²³ Second, his exile itself was self-imposed, as indeed he admits at one point (III.39–40). Finally,

15 Personal discontinuity: Davis (1979) 41, pursued by Sedikides *et al.* (2006) 203–5 and (2004) 208–10. Wider cultural discontinuity: Davis (1979) 101–6; Lowenthal (1989) 20.

16 Lycurgus as past-facing: esp. Azoulay (2009). Compare Davis (1979) 141: 'mass nostalgia reactions are most likely to occur in the wake of periods of severe cultural discontinuity'; see also Boym (2001) 15–17.

17 Routledge *et al.* (2008) esp. 137–8; Davis (1979) 10–12; Lowenthal (1989).

18 Boym (2001) 41–5, 77.

19 Sedikides *et al.* (2015) 201–2, 205, 207; (2008) 305; Wildschut *et al.* (2006) 976–82; Sedikides *et al.* (2006) 203; (2004) 204–5.

20 See e.g. Aeschin. 3.134.

21 Seen especially in the 'paradoxical argument': Dem. 18.199–208; Yunis (2000) – Demosthenes' argument as the one which preserves Athenian reputation.

22 See Sanders (this volume) 64–5 on the discourse of hope in deliberative oratory.

23 Din. 1, e.g. §§28–36. Note also Demosthenes' relative inactivity since 338: Worthington (2000). (NB, though, Hyp. Dem. 12, which seems to attest his continued prominence – but this may be ironic.)

he had the obvious problem of distance to confront, so had to make a virtue of the epistolary form.²⁴ *Letters* I–IV can be analysed in similar ways to deliberative and forensic speeches²⁵ – the epistolary ‘genre’ is notably porous to others²⁶ – but with the help of the nostalgia strategy Demosthenes capitalizes emotionally upon his *non*-presence, concentrating on developing an imaginary present Athens where each *Letter* is being publicly read live,²⁷ and shaping it in such a way as to make patent its potential for resembling the pre-Chaeronea Athens if he is restored. The possibility of his being there delivering a speech instead is dwelt on (I.2–4), and he even contributes moments that look set up for real-time oratorical *deixis*.²⁸ At a more general level, typical Demosthenic arguments are made with particular emphasis, and Demosthenes’ overwrought foregrounding of his advancing age and precarious situation figure him as a commodity at risk of exhaustion – implying that the Athenians need to use him again before that happens.²⁹ By a process of stylistic play, he dramatizes a phenomenon which his audience are free to diagnose as deterioration, but which is accompanied by the familiar virtuosity in other areas of presentation.³⁰ This works as a means of arousing pity (‘what is absence/‘exile’ *doing* to our great orator?’) and also interest: it simultaneously prompts nostalgic recollection of the great man in his prime and seeks to validate the consequent speculation that only the returned original, whatever his transgressions, will do. This creative use of the epistolary form – to foster tension and provoke concern – invites comparison with Ovid’s exile poetry, and in particular Williams’s demonstration of the poetic use to which Ovid puts his ‘pose of creative decline’ – announcing his deterioration (and indeed his metamorphosis into a Getic rather than a Roman poet) while simultaneously ‘delivering’ at a high level of technical skill.³¹ But there was also an archetypal literary example of the nostalgic wasting away in ‘exile’ which Demosthenes himself could imitate creatively: the Homeric Odysseus.³²

24 Well-summarized by Reed (1997) 186–90, Trapp (2003) 38–42, and Morello and Morrison (2007) vi–xii.

25 See e.g. Goldstein (1968) 97–132 esp. 101–17; Clavaud (1987) 7, but also 17–18.

26 Hodkinson (2007) 283–8; Ceccarelli (2013) 291–2 on Isocrates.

27 If indeed in the Council and/or Assembly, probably by a clerk: MacDowell (2009) 417–18. This might emphasize the letter’s writtenness: Ceccarelli (2013) 268 with note 14; but cf. Clavaud (1987) 18–19. I assume here that these texts *were* read in their desired performance context; but the important thing is that the dynamics I trace are clearly meant to conjure that atmosphere.

28 Most impressively III.42: ‘if you look [προσβλέπετε] to the famous [περιφανὲς] prestige of the Areopagus Council’. See Clavaud (1987) 30 and 178, with e.g. Harpocration *s.v.* Προπόλαια, and Hobden (2007).

29 Advancing age: II.13, and especially III.37. This may also respond to Hyperides’ highlighting of Demosthenes’ age (i.e. ‘old enough to know better’) at the Harpalus trial (*Dem.* 21–2).

30 And indeed arrogance: Goldstein (1968) 172–3 on II.

31 Williams (1994) esp. 50–99, 153.

32 Odysseus is often a starting-point in psychological scholarship on nostalgia: e.g. Sedikides *et al.* (2015) 191; (2008) 304; Wildschut *et al.* (2006) 975.

ATHENS IN VIEW: DEMOSTHENES' PERSONAL NOSTALGIA

In the *Odyssey*, the pain involved in Odysseus's nostalgia as he languishes on Ogygia and 'longs for death' (Athene's words: *Od.* 1.59) consists not purely in homesickness, but in the damage being done to his own potential for proper (and paternal, marital etc.) self-expression while he remains with Calypso. Demosthenes' wider evocation of audience members' nostalgia for former Athenian prestige has to come from calculated emotive projection of his own nostalgic feelings for his own prestige among them, and in *Letter II* he mediates that by what looks like an invitation to the audience to apply the key Homeric passage from *Odyssey* Book 5 (151–3, 156–9):³³

She found him sitting on the shore. His eyes were wet with weeping, as they always were. Life with its sweetness was ebbing away in the tears he shed for his lost home.... The days found him sitting on the rocks or sands, torturing himself with tears, groans and heartache, and looking out with streaming eyes across the watery wilderness.³⁴

Demosthenes' use of location is crucial. Attica can certainly be glimpsed from Poseidon's sanctuary on Calauria (modern Póros), and like Odysseus, Demosthenes says he looks out to sea constantly, projecting his own goodwill (εὖνοια) onto the opposite coastline (II.20: 'from here each day I can gaze [ἀφορῶ] at my country, towards which I know I have as much affection as I pray I may have from you').³⁵ (His tears, to match Odysseus's, will follow in II.25.) The fact that, unlike Odysseus at this point in *Odyssey* 5,³⁶ Demosthenes can even clearly see his country serves to sharpen the pathos, as does the contrast in the same paragraph between Odysseus's complete (if stultifying and debilitating) security while on Ogygia and the precariousness of Demosthenes' existence on Calauria: 'I settled [here] ... for my safety, which I hope is assured me because of the god (I am not certain about that; for the safety of a man in jeopardy is weak and unclear when it is in the hands of others who may do as they wish)'.

At stake in II.20, then, and underlined by this concern about the future, is Demosthenes' construction of a fragile and trouble-ridden persona which is at odds with his obvious continuing virtuosity as a writer. In different ways, the two halves of his description of his sojourn at Calauria here – a place where (like Odysseus on Ogygia) he does not want to be, and yet has chosen to be – are meant to evoke pity and point to his absence, encouraging his audience to contemplate how their present circumstances could be improved were he there in person. Were he there, they would not have to grapple with the tensions he confronts them with: restoring him would cancel out the exigencies imposed not only by physical but also by literary distance, and reminding them of his goodwill (εὖνοια) towards them (just as he does after a tirade in *Letter III*: §44) explicitly invites them to

33 First noted by Neupert (1885) 31; Goldstein (1968) 165 note 178.

34 Trans. Rieu (2003) 66–7. Other *Odyssey* passages are relevant too, e.g. 9.27–8.

35 All translations from Demosthenes' *Letters* are from Worthington (2006).

36 As opposed to the poignant moment when he comes briefly within sight at *Od.* 10.29–30.

make this happen, not least as it recalls the formula for crowning distinguished statesmen, as we see in the speeches from the Crown trial – a trial which disputed the legality of Demosthenes' *third* such crowning, we may note.³⁷ The language in II.20, then, consciously stimulates recollection of Demosthenes' services, echoing official decrees even as it professes to give a sincere account of Demosthenes' emotional state. A little further on, he openly declares that 'what faces me now ... are grief and tears, a yearning [πόθος] for my country and for you, and the thought of what I have suffered, all of which make me grieve' (II.25).

Unlike *Letter II*, the other three are ostensibly about things other than Demosthenes' exile: III is about the sons of Lycurgus (imprisoned because they could not pay a fine supposedly incurred by their dead father – another nakedly political business);³⁸ IV is about a calumny against Demosthenes from a certain Theramenes; I is about the encouragement of political harmony the better to confront the international situation after Alexander's death. But all are actually just as much about Demosthenes' restoration as *Letter II* overtly is, and continue to develop the interplay between personal nostalgia and provoked nostalgia: in III, Demosthenes describes Lycurgus's career in such a way as to recall himself (namelessly) too; in IV, he responds to Theramenes in a way reminiscent of his defence in *On the Crown* against his detractors of the 330s; and in I it is palpable that the missing ingredient needed for Athens to regain its position is his presence. In each of these four texts, Demosthenes ensures that the past – even the quite recent past – presses close, and that alternatives to the present recommend themselves as part of an alternative, Demosthenic, vision of Athens.

This overall vision remains consistent across the individual *Letters*. Versions of Athens – her glorious history and timeless values – had been essential to Demosthenes' framing of political issues in both his Assembly and lawcourt speeches right from his 350s debut onwards. One of the key points at stake in his two great court clashes with Aeschines had been which orator could provide the more compelling and meaningful version of whichever aspects of the city's past were being treated.³⁹ In *On the Crown*, Demosthenes had gone a step further: his contrast between his own consistent activity on Athens's behalf even through the crisis of defeat by Philip, and Aeschines' marginal role in the same period, culminates in a grand and compelling self-assimilation to the roll of great Athenian leaders, asserting Demosthenes' primacy in the present generation and consequently his place in the *longue durée* of the very Athenian civic past on which he and Aeschines had drawn for their key examples and parallels (319–20):

37 *Eunoia* in the Crown trial: see Aeschin. 3.246 and Dem. 18.54 for the formula (one of twenty-six appearances of the noun in Demosthenes' speech), with Cook (2009) esp. 36–47. Sanders (forthcoming) argues that protestations of *eunoia* towards the *dēmos* in forensic (primarily defence) speeches are intended to arouse a reciprocal goodwill from the *dēmos* towards the speaker.

38 Clavaud (1987) 22.

39 On this feature see esp. Clarke (2008) 252–61; Hesk (2012) 219–26; and for Aeschines, Steinbock (2013).

So you too, scrutinize me in comparison to the politicians of this generation, in comparison to yourself, in comparison to anyone at all. I yield to no one.⁴⁰ When the city was still in a position to choose the best policy, and there was competition among all to show loyalty to the state, I was recognized as offering the best advice of all politicians, and everything was handled through my decrees, laws and diplomacy.⁴¹

Of importance here is that the moment being referred to ('when the city was still in a position to choose the best policy') is autumn 339, when Philip seized Elatea, provoking panic at Athens and an Assembly debate where Demosthenes took the lead, advocating making common cause with Thebes and ultimately cementing the alliance that opposed Philip at Chaeronea. This was a critical moment in *On the Crown* as well, capping a famous passage of dramatic description and replaying of his speech at the Elatea debate (18.169–78) with a summary of his major contribution (179: 'I did not deliver the speech without moving a proposal, nor did I move a proposal without serving as envoy, nor did I serve as envoy without winning over the Thebans'). Echoing and reworking *On the Crown* in the *Letters* in 323 was worth Demosthenes' while because its framings of issues could still crystallize what he had to offer (and remind listeners of his past services) in an economical and compelling way. The epistolary form, though, turns these echoes into effective persuasion. The distance evoked and exploited by the *Letters* becomes in a sense analogous to the distance between the addressees and the events of the 330s: allowing Demosthenes back will enable them to close this other gap too. I now turn to two case-studies of how this works in detail: how the nostalgic vision is evoked in the two longest *Letters*, and how the form and exigencies of the letter itself make a difference to the emotional texture and traction of Demosthenes' appeals.

CASE STUDY 1: *LETTER III (CONCERNING THE SONS OF LYCURGUS)*

Demosthenes' priority is to represent his own contribution in the 340s and 330s as the paramount one: the past he presents to his audience needs to be first and foremost a *Demosthenic* past. This nostalgic 'rewriting' of a much more complex period serves both to depict a Demosthenes attempting to comfort himself (nostalgia here as a psychological coping mechanism to respond to loss of status and physical marginalization) but also to remind his hearers of Athenian prominence before 338 (thus playing into wider cultural nostalgia). This is important to *Letter III*, which comes first in chronological sequence. Lycurgus – whose posthumous reputation is on the line in the imprisonment of his sons – is carefully bleached of special characteristics by Demosthenes,⁴² such that he can easily serve as the latter's proxy:⁴³ what are stressed are his outstanding qualities as a statesman.⁴⁴

40 Note Yunis's (2001) 286 rationale for this vigorous translation of οὐδέν' ἐξίσταμαι.

41 All translations of *On the Crown* are from Yunis (2005).

42 Clavaud (1987) 26–7.

43 Another Demosthenic proxy in a very similar context is Euphraeus of Oreus: Dem. 9.59–62.

Twice at least in III we get the motif that the *dēmos* has a habit of showing its affection for a man only as long as he is useful to it, marginalizing him once his utility value expires.⁴⁵ This is meant to encourage in Demosthenes' audience feelings of shame and pity not only for Lycurgus (the obvious referent at III.9) but for Demosthenes himself too, and is reinforced by a contrast between the Athenians' cruel treatment of Lycurgus's sons and Philip's gracious treatment of the Athenian captives at Chaeronea – striking given the Athenians' pre-eminent reputation for civilized behaviour (*paideia*: 11–13). This treatment gains added point from referencing Demosthenes' blackly humorous demolition in *On the Crown* of Aeschines' pretentious invocation of the concept of *paideia* in his peroration; this may well have been memorable.⁴⁶ Demosthenes seeks to channel a memory of this 330 political flashpoint which has room only for a single ideal model of the glorious Athenian past, with Demosthenes as its latest instantiation, which had prevailed over a version flawed precisely because it was Aeschines mediating it.

In the idealized penumbra of 338, Philip's noble actions are cast as just as much part of the positive civic narrative as the display of Athenian prowess on the battlefield itself (and indeed actually respond to it).⁴⁷ It works well that Philip is presented here (as he had been in Demosthenes' *Second Philippic*) as particularly attuned to his opponents' civic history (and as ready to honour it as any Athenian).⁴⁸ Philip's death in 336 will have left him susceptible to idealizing interpretations by 323 which would have been unthinkable, say, before Chaeronea, but it is key to Demosthenes' strategy here that distance be created between the domestic problems of the present and the uncomplicated demonstration of virtue which he can suggest the Athenians had been capable of in 338. This strategy is typical of the wider persuasive deployment of nostalgia: applying constructed pasts to present needs, and above all stressing the contrast between them.⁴⁹

A similar rupture is created later in the letter between the services of numerous recent popular politicians and generals and their current situation: dead or cashiered by the *dēmos* they served (III.31). The first category lists Lycurgus as its final member, but Demosthenes situates himself emphatically at the end of the second ('you yourselves have exiled'⁵⁰ others, such as Charidemus, Philocles and

44 III.4: 'he held firm to policies that he thought were in the best interests of the people, and from then on he was conspicuous in saying and doing [καὶ λέγων καὶ πράττων] the right thing.' The words given in Greek here recall the formula for Demosthenes' own crowning in 330: Aeschin. 3.49, 50, 237; Dem. 18.54 (with Cook (2009) 34).

45 III.9, 15.

46 Aeschin. 3.260; Dem. 18.127.

47 Compare his tears over the dead of the Sacred Band: Plut. *Pel.* 18.7.

48 Dem. 6.8–11; see also [Dem.] 12.7.

49 Davis (1979) 10–12; Chase and Shaw (1989) 9; cf. Howard (2012) 643; Sedikides *et al.* (2004) 203.

50 The word used here, προῆσθε, really means 'abandon': cf. Braccisi (1967) and Clavaud (1987) 173.

myself⁵¹). This arrangement serves to focus his disapproval specifically on the present day, the present political line-up, and what its members encourage the *dēmos* to do (and why); the main point is that he is not there with them to show them what they ought to be doing. Demosthenes sets himself up, as he had done repeatedly in his Assembly speeches, as a fundamental enabler of self-criticism in the arena of popular politics,⁵² a point he would make again explicitly in *Letter II* (§11), this time in a context where his restoration is explicitly in point. But the list at III.31 has a further specific nostalgizing function. The perception that contemporaries or consociates are following individuals' own biography plays a noticeable role in nostalgic reminiscence,⁵³ just as collective nostalgia itself binds generations,⁵⁴ and piecing together the named individuals' biographies reveals that here Demosthenes is effectively mourning the passing of a large part of his own generation of popular politicians (*δημοτικῶν*); most of these men were born roughly c. 400–c. 380.⁵⁵ The elegiac tone of this roll-call not only projects his own sense of sorrow at the transformation of the political landscape, but invites the audience to consider how the gap left by these men and what they represented can be filled. What the list itself simultaneously implies is that restoring those in a position to be restored (Demosthenes and Philocles – incidentally, the two men on the list who were convicted in the Harpalus affair) may help achieve that.

Essential to building the desirability of the alternative political situation that Demosthenes is trying to sketch in *Letter III* are three persuasive features. The first is Demosthenes' choice repeatedly to co-opt nebulous 'other Greeks' as witnesses of what the Athenians are doing and will do – not clarifying who these are allows him all the more easily to displace his own criticisms onto a category of people whose opinions are thus very hard to dismiss.⁵⁶ This comes under the rhetorical heading of *fictio personarum* (creating a non-present speaker),⁵⁷ and this form of it – invoking the absent as a check on others' actions in the present – is used both in deliberative and (often more vividly)⁵⁸ in forensic contexts. Here, it

51 Compare his devious self-insertion into a list of worthies at *Third Olynthiac* 21, a quarter-century earlier.

52 See Mader (2007).

53 Davis (1979) 52–3; cf. Holak and Havlena (1992) 384–6; Havlena and Holak (1991) 324.

54 Davis (1979) 111–16.

55 Demosthenes himself: born 384/3. Nausicles: an age-mate of Aeschines (Aeschin. 2.184), so c. 390: Harris (1988) 214; Chares: born c. 400: Davies (1971) 569; Diotimus, a rich trierarch in 348 (Dem. 21.208), and, like Demosthenes, anti-Macedonian and demanded by Alexander in 335 (Arr. *Anab.* 1.10.4): see MacDowell (1990) 413; Menestheus: born early-mid 380s: Davies (1971) 249–50; Ephialtes: born by 380/79, as he was *stratēgos* in 350/49 (Androtion *FGrH* 324 F 30); Lycurgus: born c. 390: Davies (1971) 351; Charidemus: born c. early 390s: Davies (1971) 571. Philocles is the odd one out: Davies (1971) 540 ('born not much later than 370'). We cannot calculate the birth-dates of Eudoxus and Euthydicus.

56 III.1, 5, 7–8.

57 Goldstein (1968) 135 note 14, 139.

58 Contrast, for example, Aristotle's Assembly speaker Cydias and his concern for Greek opinion (Arist. *Rh.* 2.6, 1384b32–5) with Hyperides (*Dem.* 22), who indicates *real* visiting Greeks observing the trial. Forensic oratory can co-opt the dead to play a similar role: cf. Dem. 19.66; 23.210; Lys. 12.99–100; Andoc. 1.148.

helps foster nostalgia because it stimulates audience members directly to contemplate the similarities and differences between speech and letter, and thus the gap of Demosthenes' absence. That this is a major concern, especially in III, is made clear by the way that he opens the section of the letter which is explicitly about him (35–45) (35: 'If I were present, I would explain these things to you with my own voice, but since I am in a position in which I wish anyone who slandered me might find himself, I have written what I want to say in a letter'); and by his assertion of paradoxical power as (absent) master of the relevant information, giving some details and withholding others (7–8). In *Letter II*, he does something very similar but specifies the critics, claiming that various Troezenians were criticizing Athens but that his response to them was restrained, which led to their honouring him for his integrity (19). What Demosthenes is capitalizing on in all this is the field of persuasive possibilities of non-presence: he is in a sense 'there' with them giving the advice, but not physically present so cannot be refuted face to face; and second, he is hard to refute in the abstract because exile could reasonably be thought to have put him in touch with wider Greek opinion, just as he claims. Emphasizing that the default Troezenian proclivity was to think well of Athens (18–19) motivates his audience to feel shame at their current behaviour and to contemplate a time when Athens's credit was much higher (post-Persian Wars; see below).

Another unifying element in *Letter III* is that Demosthenes makes careful bids to maintain his command of events, even in exile where he cannot possibly have a full picture of the political situation at home. When he claims (25) to be able to talk authoritatively about what is happening 'now' ('In those cases none of those who now protest [τῶν νῦν βοώντων] said that the laws were being subverted'), he does so in general terms and with recourse to examples from the recent but not immediate past (24–6). Being denied physical presence certainly forces him to talk mainly in terms of the past and, of course, the future; but even though he may have had very up-to-date knowledge of events in the city,⁵⁹ it matters for his chosen exilic pose that he should not seem *too* up-to-date.

Third, he encourages recollection of his Assembly speeches, and the vein of optimism amidst severe criticism which was one of their hallmarks,⁶⁰ by reassuring his audience of his goodwill towards them (44), just as in the Assembly speeches he expressed his commitment to getting the Athenians to recover their *natural* brilliance – one validated by the sweep of great ancestral achievements – and negate recent backsliding by positive action. This often meant a quiet conclusion,⁶¹ and, like his *Olynthiacs* and *Philippics*, *Letter III* caps a dramatic denunciatory passage (42: 'remember the trial of Aristogeiton and hang your heads in shame') with a much milder epilogue (44: 'Do not think that I am angry when I say this, for I would not feel that way towards you').⁶² Again, the fostering of nostalgia consists in inviting reminiscence of his past stern criticism of the *dēmos*

59 This is suggested by I.5, which is still vague.

60 As e.g. at Dem. 1.25, 3.33 and 8.77.

61 As e.g. at Dem. 3.36, 4.51 and 9.76.

62 II.25–6 works the same way.

in Assembly situations (cf. II.11) – he constructs himself as the critic from afar who is still as mindful for the health of the Athenian citizen body as he ever was – and in this case the positive action recommended is, of course, Demosthenes' own restoration. But his capitalization on the porous character of the epistolary form – at times (e.g. III.44–5) conferring an overtly deliberative feel; at times (e.g. III.1–8) sounding more identifiably forensic; and at times concerned to mark the current communication off very clearly as a letter not a speech (III.35) – has a key role to play in ensuring that his audience are left with a series of interpretative quandaries and only one real point of clarity: that voting to restore Demosthenes will change things for the better.

CASE STUDY 2: *LETTER II (CONCERNING HIS OWN RETURN)*

In *Letter II* – where Demosthenes' restoration is the avowed aim in writing – this nexus is communicated even more overtly, plotting a narrative of great events in Demosthenes' career explicitly with reference to their place in the narrative of the city's relationship with Philip. At II.10 he recalls his victory in debate with the famous intellectual Python of Byzantium, Philip's envoy, in 344: 'The older men would know – and it's only right that you tell the younger ones – about the Assembly meeting for Python of Byzantium, when he came with the envoys from the Greeks, to show that the city was acting wrongly, but left when he achieved the opposite effect, after I alone of the speakers at that time [μόνου τῶν τότε ῥητόρων] defended your rights in the matter'. This version of the episode makes two things clear: first, that the city was still on course in 344; and second, that Demosthenes alone was keeping it there. Again, Demosthenes is plumbing for two things: for his resentment at being marginalized – and with this kind of service to his credit – to be recognized; and for the audience to crave a return to the kind of situation in Greek interstate relations where defiance was a viable option, and where an envoy from Philip could simply be stymied in debate by a paradigmatic product of Athenian intellect, rhetorical skill and non-negotiable commitment to political freedom – and this result could simply be accepted by the beaten party.

Demosthenes' decision to feature this episode – rather than, say, his successful eleventh-hour embassy to Thebes in 339, mentioned above – reveals his wider strategies. First, the suggestion that the younger men will need to be informed may respond to a realistic requirement, but above all develops Demosthenes' pose of self-marginalization in the present, as well as reinforcing the separate identity of his 'alternative Athens': it is now set apart not only by the literary and physical distance implied in Demosthenes' construction of it but also by an explicit generational one, highlighting the gap for audience members of roughly Demosthenes' age and encouraging them to dwell on its positive associations. Second, the passage recalls a similar section of *On the Crown* (136: 'as Pytho[n] grew brazen and poured forth a flood of accusations against you, I did not retreat. I stood up, [and] spoke against him'), confirming its place as part of Demosthenes' core

narrative about himself – it may have been used in the Harpalus trial too. Third, it recalls another notable moment in Demosthenes' Assembly career: in *On the Peace* (of 346/5) Demosthenes asserts that he was the only speaker to oppose the 348 expedition to Euboea, and was proved right by the outcome (5: 'I was the first, indeed the only one to come forward and oppose it [πρῶτος καὶ μόνος παρελθὼν ἀντεῖπον], and I was virtually torn apart by those who were trying to persuade you, for the sake of small profits, to commit many great errors').⁶³ By prompting audience members to 'recall' these other moments, as well as 344 itself, Demosthenes invites them to consider (with despondency) the reduced possibilities for this kind of ideal Athenian democratic *parrhêsia* in the Macedonian-dominated present. This seeks to stimulate a complex of emotional reactions, among them resentment (indeed perhaps suppressed anger) about the situation, respect for Demosthenes' former efforts, and embarrassment about the *dêmos*'s role in Demosthenes' exile – but it is important that all Demosthenes asks of his audience is that they *remember* the debate with Python in 344. This is not a call for revolt. In order to stimulate the audience to contemplate his restoration, Demosthenes seeks to transmit the usefulness to him of his own reminiscences – his personal story – as part of a personal coping mechanism while in exile, to his Athenian audience, as a way for them to envisage a better future. Demosthenes' appeal for his restoration holds out the possibility that Athenian freedom of action does not have to be consigned to the past – carefully eliding the pragmatic, collaborationist character of his actual political behaviour of the preceding decade or so.

That it is his personal past – or an imagined version of it – is essential. The world he is trying to conjure is the world of the 340s, when he was rising to prominence and gaining growing support for his resistance to Philip post-346 – and when suppressing Philip's territorial ambitions still looked achievable. As we have seen, projected nostalgia works by fashioning pasts for present needs, so whether he was *in fact* the only opposing speaker in the two Assemblies is not the point – he is using this layered illustration in *Letter II* to remind his audience of what it is that he has that nobody else has: supreme integrity allied to supreme rhetorical ability, with the result that he was content to be the 'only' opposing speaker when that opposition mattered, just as he was the 'only' Greek politician to resist Philip's blandishments (μόνος again, II.8, as in *On the Peace* 5).⁶⁴ Other parts of the letter are also concerned with emphasizing the authoritativeness both of Demosthenes' presentation of his *own* past and of the validity and functional importance of his versions of the longer past. At II.16, we read: 'I have never done you any wrong, as the gods and heroes testify. And all time down to this very moment is my witness...' This strongly recalls his claim in *On the Crown*

63 Trans. Trevett (2011) 92. Demosthenes' emphasis on his singularity here also corresponds interestingly with Davis's idea that nostalgic reminiscence fastens particularly on moments in individuals' pasts where they felt acutely the uniqueness of their own identity: Davis (1979) 40–3 (cf. Kaplan (1987) 476 on the intensity with which pathological nostalgic patients 'constantly repeat an assortment of nostalgic activities and fantasies that represent the most poignant conflicts and pleasurable experiences of their life').

64 See Goldstein (1968) 241 on Hegesippus's role.

(172) that he was the right person to take a policy-directing role at the approach of Philip in 339 because he had been the only statesman who had correctly evaluated the situation from the beginning.⁶⁵

Even more importantly for his self-representation, Demosthenes explains at II.18 that his very rationale for going to Troezen was historical: he knew Troezen had taken in Athenian evacuees in the Persian Wars ('I did not go to a city in which I was likely to perform outstanding services but to one where I knew our ancestors had gone when faced by the danger from Persia').⁶⁶ Lurking within this nexus must be the historical Athenian Demosthenes enjoys citing most in his speeches, Themistocles⁶⁷ (and perhaps Alcibiades too).⁶⁸ In both Themistocles' and Alcibiades' cases, exile fundamentally altered their relationship with the city, and both ended up in Persia. Demosthenes seems to dissociate himself carefully from them here. This might well have been necessary given that Demosthenes' relations with Darius are a commonplace in his opponents' attacks in 330 and 324/3,⁶⁹ but in any case the striking picture that then emerges is of a Demosthenes who stands alone as an embodiment of the Athenian state of 480 itself, temporarily in exile. In creating the impression that the 'real' city, effectively reposed in him, has gone to Calauria, he encourages his audience to seek reunification, as it were, 'with itself', in taking him back. At the least, his self-presentation as someone who naturally pursues the legacy of Athenian glory in aspects of his own life – and stays true in spite of ill-treatment – serves to recommend him as a leader Athens still needs: who has the past, present and future in mind in everything he does. As elsewhere in the *Letters*, his concentration upon these themes while emphasizing his non-presence and gesturing to his literary detachment serve as protreptic to the audience to close both gaps.

CONCLUSION

In directing these *Letters* to the Athenian Council and Assembly, Demosthenes aims both to remind the *dêmos* of why it put foreign policy in his hands for three climactic years, of his special virtues as a statesman, and specifically of his gifts and his personal integrity as an Assembly speaker, and to sum up what he would like them to feel they have lost. He does so by placing his political record in a rich, explicitly nostalgized, hinterland of civic achievement which aims to efface the humiliation incurred during the Harpalus trial, and by exploiting the gap between his oratorical presence and physical absence, marked and problematized by the epistolary form. We can add that this is a strategy pursued at no cost to himself – this is no forensic situation, with an opponent waiting to upend Demosthenes' emotive versions of the past. Authority-creation in this case goes unchal-

65 And compare III.45 and especially I.4, which uses the same vocabulary as Dem. 18.172.

66 See also Hyp. *Ath.* 31–2, and Hdt. 8.41.1 and Plut. *Them.* 10.3.

67 See in particular Dem. 20.73–4, 18.204, 23.205.

68 Note Demosthenes' own comparison of his return with Alcibiades' at Plut. *Dem.* 27.7.

69 Aeschin. 3.239–40, 258–9; Din. 1.10, 18; Hyp. *Dem.* 17, 25.

lenged in a direct way; speakers may have risen to use arguments to reject Demosthenes' pleas, but it is unlikely that they troubled to engage much with his strategy. The nostalgic glow remained.

We know that none of the *Letters* succeeded in their object, and are ignorant about key aspects of how they reached their recipients, and who those recipients actually were. But as persuasive texts intended at some level for a conceptualized Athenian *dêmos*, they seek to conjure a better alternative version of reality by looking to evoke in their recipients a range of emotions, especially desire for the better times with which that fictive and in some senses carefully rose-tinted alternative reality could be associated. Demosthenes situates himself at the heart of that, motivating his addressees to realize that all that is required to make that reality a genuine one again is to restore him, closing the very gap which the *Letters* themselves exploit for their emotive effects. In the end, perhaps appropriately, it took an active decision from the 'exile' himself – to abandon his carefully-chosen writing-space for the 'real' world again, joining Athenian embassies in the Peloponnese at the outbreak of the Lamian War and performing as if he had never been away – to bring this to pass.⁷⁰

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70 Plut. *Dem.* 27.3–6. Given an atmosphere of festivity which ironically foreshadows a disastrous eventual outcome (with a large fleet involved in both cases), the last part of Plutarch's account (the sending of the trireme to Aegina) might be intended to recall Thuc. 6.32.2; the presence of Alcibiades nearby (27.7: admittedly in a different connection) may support that.

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