

The Dating of Plato's *Ion*

John D. Moore

THE SMALL DIALOGUE called *Ion* has provoked more than its share of bewilderment, embarrassment and outrage. Goethe found its representation of poetry so unsympathetic that he called it "eine offenbare Persiflage," and claimed that "mit der Poesie hat das ganze Gespräch nichts zu thun."¹ Schleiermacher thought it either a puzzling early work or spurious or perhaps an early sketch by Plato later reworked by a student.² Ast and Ritter pronounced it spurious, as did Wilamowitz for many years.³ When Wilamowitz ultimately changed his mind, he still judged it a poor and puzzling piece of work, an intolerant satire more than a dialogue. He found Socrates' lecturing inconsistent with the question-and-answer technique of the early dialogues; he considered it the earliest of the dialogues, one of three written during Socrates' lifetime. Plato's intolerance towards poetry resulted then from his recent conversion by Socrates from poetry to philosophy.⁴

In general those scholars who accept the *Ion* as genuine agree in placing it among the first of Plato's writings.⁵ But together with its

¹ Goethe was outraged by F. Stolberg's "Vorrede" to his 1795 translation of *Ion* and some other dialogues. He responded with two delightful letters to Schiller, another to von Humboldt, and his only essay on a Platonic dialogue, "Plato als Mitgenosse einer christlichen Offenbarung" (1796) (ed. Weimar I 41³, 169); all are collected by E. Grumach, *Goethe und die Antike* (Berlin 1949) 758–62. Most of Goethe's comments on the strange Aristophanic character of the *Ion* were repeated by Wilamowitz (*infra* n.4). Goethe's views and their importance for XVIII and XIX-century critics of the *Ion* are well discussed by H. Flashar, *Der Dialog Ion als Zeugnis platonischer Philosophie* (AkadBerlin, Schr. 14, Berlin 1958) 1–3 [henceforth: FLASHAR]. However much they may differ from him on individual points, all students of the *Ion* will benefit from Flashar's thorough and well-documented study.

² F. Schleiermacher, *Platons Werke* I.2 (1804) 262–66; in the "Zusatz" to the second ed. (1818) p.267, Schleiermacher agreed with Bekker's judgement that *Ion* is spurious.

³ Full references to these and other doubters in J. Geffcken, *Griechische Literaturgeschichte* II (Heidelberg 1934) 47, Anm. pp.38–39 n.58, and Flashar 5–8. Notable among skeptics of *Ion* are E. Zeller, *Plato and the Older Academy* (London/New York 1888) 86, and recently R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford 1968) 55 n.4.

⁴ *Platon* I (Berlin 1919) 129–33, II (1920) 32–46. For Wilamowitz's earlier rejection of *Ion*, see e.g. *Aristoteles und Athen* I (Berlin 1893) 188 n.4, *Hermes* 44 (1909) 458 (= *Kl. Schr.* IV 236).

⁵ See e.g. W. Janell, "Quaestiones Platonicae," *Njbb Suppl.* 26 (1901) 324–36; H. von

“youthful imperfections” the *Ion* shares with more mature works a surprising number of important Platonic themes or thought-patterns. Notable among these are (a) several passages in which *τέχνη* and *ἐπιτήμη* are contrasted with skill acquired *θεία μοίρα* (*Ion* 533D, 534B–C, 535A4, 536C,D, 542A; cf. *Meno* 99E, 100B, *Phdr.* 244–45, 265B), (b) the linking together of poets and seers as divinely inspired interpreters (*Ion* 534C–D; *Meno* 99B–100A; *Phdr.* 244–45A, etc.), (c) the division of human activities into distinct *τέχναι* for purposes of evaluation and classification (*Ion* 532C–533A, etc.; *Prtg.* 312cff; *Grg.* 448ff; *Resp. passim*; and most later dialogues), (d) the distinction between poetic and practical activity (*Ion* 540D4–541D; *Resp.* 600C–D) and between poetic/rhetorical skill and substantive *ἐπιτήμῃ* / *τέχναι* (*Ion* 536E–541B; *Prtg.* 312cff; *Grg.* 448ff; etc.).⁶ Some of these coincidences result no doubt from the fact that *Ion* is devoted to a recurrent Platonic subject, i.e. poetry, or the interpretation and use of poetry. Even so, Plato's method of discussion and his choice of topics and devices seem both wide-ranging and sophisticated for a dialogue placed first in the corpus and generally considered a rather poor beginner's effort at that.

It is not surprising, then, that the question of *Ion*'s authenticity, dormant for a time, has once more arisen. J. Moreau found the compendium of developed Platonic themes in *Ion* incompatible with its early date; he also noted that unlike other early dialogues it is not aporetic—Socrates contributes speeches on *ἐνθουσιασμός* which dispel his interlocutor's *ἀπορία*, in the manner of later dialogues. Moreau concludes that *Ion* was compiled by a student of Plato who used the *ἐνθουσιασμός* passages of the *Phaedrus* as his starting point.⁷ More

Arnim, “Sprachliche Forschungen,” *SBWien* 169.3 (1912) 234; H. Raeder, *Platons philosophische Entwicklung* (Leipzig 1905) 92; L. Méridier, ed. *Platon: Oeuvres complètes* V.1 (Budé, Paris 1931) 26–28 [henceforth: MÉRIDIER]; P. Friedländer, *Plato III* (London 1969) 451, 456. Cf. H. Thesleff, *Studies in the Styles of Plato (ActaFenn 20, Helsinki 1967)* 19 n.2.

Some exceptions are St. G. Stock, *The Ion of Plato* (Oxford 1909) x–xi (after *Resp.*); M. Pohlenz, *Aus Platons Werdezeit* (Berlin 1913) 186–89 (contemporary with *Meno*); A. Diès, *Autour de Platon* (Paris 1927) 287 (contemporary with *Resp.*); E. Wyller, “Platons *Ion*,” *SymbOslo* 34 (1958) 38 (contemporary with *Grg.*, *Meno*); L. Stefanini, *Platone I*³ (Padova 1949) 113–18 (after *Meno*); P. Vicaire, *Platon: Critique littéraire* (Paris 1960) 10, 31, 33 (after *Meno*).

⁶ This list is given only *exempli gratia*; it does not pretend to exhaust either recurrent themes present in *Ion* or passages in middle and later dialogues where such themes recur. Some of the above (and some additional ones) have been noted and discussed by others; see the next two footnotes, and esp. Flashar 26–95, 101–39 *passim*; P. Shorey, *What Plato Said* (Chicago 1933) 96–99, 476–77. On the close parallels with Xenophon's *Symposium* see e.g. Wilamowitz, *Platon II* 34–35, who finds the relative chronology impossible to determine.

⁷ J. Moreau, “Les thèmes platoniciens de l'*Ion*,” *REG* 52 (1939) 419–28; in response

recently, H. Dille was puzzled and disturbed by the strange combination in *Ion* of mature Platonic content and crucial omissions where that content would lead us to expect more (e.g. the lack of reference to *μίμησις* where the discussion in *Ion* otherwise closely approximates the mimetic classification found in *Republic* 2 and 10). To reconcile these discrepancies and to account for several allusions to events contemporary with Plato's youth, Diller inclines to revive Schleiermacher's alternative position—viz., that *Ion* is an early, incomplete sketch of a dialogue begun by Plato and ultimately completed by a student.⁸ Neither Moreau nor Diller found anything spurious in the thought of the *Ion*—it is the composition of the whole which is suspect, the unlikely juxtaposition of the youthful and mature. In each case the contents of *Ion* are approved and retained while their container is judged faulty and rejected.

But without a dialogue to contain them, a formless heap of derivative Platonic thoughts cannot be estimated or interpreted. If the whole is but a patchwork quilt of Platonic remnants, how are we to judge whether Plato meant to criticize poetry,⁹ or the interpretation of poetry,¹⁰ or whether his theme was *ἐνθουσιασμός*, or some variation on any or all of these?¹¹ To the problems raised by Moreau, H. Flashar has proposed an interesting if somewhat bold solution.¹² He affirms that *Ion* is authentic, dates it early as probably the first of Plato's dialogues, and explains its abundance of mature views by seeing in it the germ of what were to become Plato's central doctrines. In the

W. J. Verdenius wrote his important and influential interpretation of the dialogue: "L'Ion de Platon," *Mnemosyne* SER.III 11 (1943) 233–62.

⁸ H. Diller, "Probleme des platonischen Ion," *Hermes* 83 (1955) 171–86. E. Wyller's article, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.5) is, in part, a reply to Diller.

⁹ Herodicus of Babylon (*apud* Athen. 506A) thought that "in the *Ion* Plato maligns *πάντας τοὺς ποιητάς*." See also Goethe, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1), and Wilamowitz, *Platon* I 132, who do not take *Ion* seriously. But cf. Méridier 14–16; Friedländer, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.5) II 132–36; J. Geffcken, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 48.

¹⁰ See e.g. R. C. Collingwood, "Plato's Philosophy of Art," *Mind* 34 (1925) 165, and esp. W. J. Verdenius, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7).

¹¹ For a survey of some recent suggestions, see H. Cherniss, "Plato 1950–1957," *Lustrum* 4 (1959) 101–03, to which add now E. Wyller, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.5), and E. N. Tigerstedt, *Plato's Idea of Poetical Inspiration* (*CommFenn* 44.2, Helsinki 1969) 13–29, a lively and valuable analysis of *Ion* and representative views upon it.

¹² In its earlier version with the same title: *Der Dialog Ion als Zeugnis platonischer Philosophie* (Diss. Tübingen 1954), Flashar's work preceded and apparently gave impetus to Diller's article. Diller read the typewritten dissertation before its subsequent publication as a monograph; see Diller, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.8) 173. Flashar then referred to Diller in his published version.

relation between *ἐνθουσιασμός* and *ἐπιεικὴμη / τέχνη* Flashar finds a youthful Platonic insight which forms, as his title indicates, a precocious "Zeugnis platonischer Philosophie," various points of which would be gradually refined in many subsequent dialogues.¹³ Certainly Flashar's analysis has affirmed the significance of the dialogue's content. Though he may overstress the direct connection of many passages in *Ion* with more or less parallel passages in later dialogues, Flashar has established that there is a relation of some kind between Socrates' puzzling treatment of an idiotic rhapsode and certain vital distinctions Plato draws between the knowledge of philosophers, prophets and craftsmen.

Ion's virtual isolation¹⁴ as the first of Plato's writings could explain its formal nonconformity with other early dialogues as well as its imperfections; the accident of seminal subject-matter could account for its apparent maturity. It hardly needs to be pointed out that Flashar reads a great deal into the *Ion*, and finds therein a very precociously developed, unitarian portrait of the youthful Plato. This is not a portrait that all Platonists will accept.¹⁵ And despite important modification, the designation of the *Ion* as an initial 'Zeugnis' is somewhat reminiscent of Schleiermacher's long-discredited designation of *Phaedrus* as an initial *Programmschrift* of Plato's philosophy. Nor does the accident of subject-matter account satisfactorily for *Ion*'s mature methodological techniques (e.g. the classification of mimetic *τέχναι*)¹⁶ or its repeated emphasis on certain themes (e.g. *θεία μοῖρα*) which are striking in such dialogues as *Gorgias*, *Meno*, *Republic* and *Phaedrus*. As long as we accept an extremely early date for the *Ion*, the problems raised by Moreau and Diller are likely to remain unsolved; and the purpose and meaning of this strange little dialogue is likely to remain elusive.

As a preliminary to a reassessment of *Ion*'s significance and place within the Platonic corpus, I propose now to examine the reasons for dating it so problematically early in Plato's career.

¹³ Flashar, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1); for dating see esp. 96–105; on the "Zeugnis" theory, esp. 94–95, 104–05, ch. II *passim*, esp. 133–39.

¹⁴ Flashar (103) associates *Ion* closely with *Hp.Mi.*; cf. Janell, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.5), Méridier 26–27. It is interesting that Arnim dated *Hp.Mi.* considerably later.

¹⁵ For various criticisms see Diller, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.8) 173; reviews of Flashar by H. Baldry, *CR* n.s. 10 (1960) 113–15; H. Koller, *Gnomon* 36 (1964) 654–58; also Tigerstedt, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.11).

¹⁶ See Diller, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.8) 180–81, 186.

I

On the chronology of *Ion* the stylometrists have little to offer: Ritter found its style unplatonic and banished it from the corpus; Arnim discovered that its style resembles only the *Protagoras*, which he considered Plato's first work; Janell judged it similar in style and form to *Hippias Minor*, and dated both among Plato's earliest works.¹⁷ The disagreement among stylometrists is hardly surprising, since their methods are admittedly capable of yielding only broad distinctions. Besides, in measuring a small dialogue of somewhat unusual form their sparse statistical counts of more or less justifiable criteria can produce no scientifically viable result.¹⁸

The principal subjective reasons, I suspect, for placing the *Ion* as early as possible are these: (1) it is thought to be poorly constructed, and hence unworthy of Plato's mature achievements; (2) its extravagant caricature and farcical argument are not characteristic of Plato's mature work; (3) it is a small work, and small works tend to precede larger ones; (4) it is a nasty attack on poetry which can best be ignored by attributing it to Plato's youth.¹⁹ The last assumption is the crucial one, although it involves a view of the dialogue's purpose which I, with many scholars, do not share; in any case, where on this basis would we place *Republic* 2 and 10? The remaining assumptions are either doubtful, false, or beg the question.

II

We come now to the only objective reason given for dating the *Ion* among Plato's earliest works. The dialogue contains three references which, taken in combination, are thought to suggest a dramatic date of 394–391 B.C. Since the referents in each case are of ephemeral significance it has been alleged that the *Ion* was written in the same

¹⁷ C. Ritter, *Untersuchungen über Platon* (Stuttgart 1888) 15–16, 95ff. H. von Arnim, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.5). W. Janell, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.5); with the latter *cf.* Méridier 26–27.

¹⁸ On the limitations of stylometry applied to small dialogues, see the otherwise extreme views of W. Lutoslawski, *The Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic* (London 1905) 194, for its general limitations: P. Kretschmer, *Glotta* 20 (1932) 232; J. Geffcken, *op. cit.* (*supran.* 3) Anm. p.139; D. J. Allan, *Plato: Republic, Book I*² (London 1953) vi–vii.

¹⁹ Most of these assumptions are widespread: see, e.g. Wilamowitz, *Platon* I 129–32, II 36; Janell, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.5) 333; and *cf.* Méridier 27. Assumption 3 is difficult to pin down precisely, but see e.g. Lutoslawski, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.18). Mostly it seems an implied and probably unconscious assumption.

year as it was dramatically dated. Allowing for a decent interval after Socrates' death in 399, it has seemed reasonable to suppose that Plato began writing *ca* 395, and that he may then have begun with the *Ion*.²⁰ Let us first set forth the evidence and reasoning upon which these conclusions are based, and then subject them to a critical examination. For convenience of reference I designate the three pieces of internal evidence with alphabetic symbols:

A. *Ion* 541c3–5. (Since Ion, as the best of rhapsodes, knows Homer thoroughly, he claims that he could be equally successful as a *στρατηγός*. In answer to Socrates' question—why, then, does he travel about as a rhapsode when there is great need among the Hellenes for generals—he replies:) *ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἡμετέρα, ὦ Σώκρατες, πόλις ἄρχεται ὑπὸ ὑμῶν καὶ στρατηγεῖται καὶ οὐδὲν δεῖται στρατηγοῦ, ἡ δὲ ὑμετέρα καὶ ἡ Λακεδαιμονίων οὐκ ἂν με ἔλοιτο στρατηγόν· αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἶεσθε ἱκανοὶ εἶναι.*

Ion's city is Ephesos (530A2); hence the dialogue is supposed to occur at a time during which Ephesos *ἄρχεται ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀθηναίων* and its military forces are commanded by Athenians. This would be true: (1) during the Peloponnesian War (Thuc. 4.50) until shortly before the general Ionian revolt from Athens in 412²¹ (Thuc. 8.14ff); and (2) in the years 394–391 when Ephesos, together with Rhodes, Samos, Knidos and Iasos supposedly formed a defensive alliance friendly to Athens.²²

B. *Ion* 541c7–D4. (Socrates responds to Ion's excellent reply by naming three foreigners whom the Athenians have employed as

²⁰ Flashar 100–01, 104, and further references *infra*.

²¹ Some scholars (e.g. Flashar 98, Méridier 23) set 415 as *terminus ad quem* for Athenian rule, apparently on the basis that "Die Ephesier schicken keine Schiffe den Athenern zur Hilfe nach Sikilien" (Bürchner, "Ephesos," *RE* 5 [1905] 2790). But Ephesos was, unlike Chios, one of those tribute-paying subjects which did not provide ships (Thuc. 7.85.2, 57.4; cf. Dover's comments *ad locc.* in Gomme, Andrewes, Dover, *Historical Commentary on Thucydides* IV [Oxford 1970]). It seems likelier that Ephesos first revolted in the general Ionian uprising of 412; cf. e.g. W. S. Ferguson in *CAH* V 314, and *ATL* I 277, II 80.

²² See Méridier 23, Flashar 98; both rely upon Bürchner, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.21) 2791. The evidence for this maritime alliance is a series of coins from various cities stamped on the obverse with an infant Herakles strangling snakes and the legend ΣΥΝ[μαχικόν]. See e.g. G. F. Hill, *Historical Greek Coins* (London 1955) 157–58. According to the interpretation of W. Judeich, *Kleinasiatische Studien* (Marburg 1892) 80 and n.2, it was a Bund "der als Ganzes wohl mit Athen in freundschaftliche Beziehung trat, aber die neuerrungene Freiheit und Selbstständigkeit in vollem Umfange geniessen wollte." For recent controversy, see nn.40, 41 *infra*.

generals:) First is Apollodoros of Kyzikos, ὃν Ἀθηναῖοι πολλάκις ἑαυτῶν στρατηγὸν ἤρηνται ξένον ὄντα· καὶ Φανοσθένη τὸν Ἄνδριον καὶ Ἡρακλείδην τὸν Κλαζομένιον, οὓς ἦδε ἡ πόλις ξένους ὄντας, ἐνδειξαμένους ὅτι ἄξιοι λόγου εἰσί, καὶ εἰς στρατηγίας καὶ εἰς τὰς ἄλλας ἀρχὰς ἄγει· Ἴωνα δ' ἄρα τὸν Ἐφέσιον οὐχ αἰρήσεται στρατηγὸν καὶ τιμήσει, ἐὰν δοκῇ ἄξιος λόγου εἶναι;

Since other mentions of Apollodoros—by Aelian (VH 14.5) and Athenaeus (11.506)—derive from *Ion* 541, this passage contains all we know about the man. Phanosthenes of Andros has been identified as a commander sent out to replace Konon in 408/7 (Xen. *Hell.* 1.5.18); it is assumed that he was granted Athenian citizenship at some point before that command.²³

The key figure for our purposes is Herakleides of Klazomenae. Apart from this passage, he is known to us definitely by a mention in Aristotle and conjecturally by a decree granting certain privileges to a Herakleides whose ethnic is missing: (1) At *Ath. Pol.* 41.3 we learn that after Agyrrios had instituted pay of one obol for assembly attendance, Herakleides ὁ Κλαζομένιος raised it to two obols, and Agyrrios outdid him by raising it again to three obols. Since the institution of assembly pay postdates the restoration of the democracy, these events probably occurred in the mid-nineties of the fourth century—certainly before 392 (cf. *Ar. Eccl.* 102 schol., 183, 380). Obviously Herakleides had become an Athenian citizen at some time before his emergence in assembly debate. (2) In *IG II² 8* (= *SIG³ 118*, Meiggs-Lewis 70) a certain Herakleides is granted the status of *πρόξενος* and *εὐεργέτης* and the privileges of *ἀτέλεια* and *ἔγκτησις* for services rendered (apparently) to an Athenian embassy to a king. According to its lettering the inscription seems to have been cut early in the fourth century (Kirchner, *IG II² 8*). P. Foucart in the *editio princeps* (*BCH* 12 [1888] 163–69) identified the man as Herakleides of Byzantium (cf. *Dem.* 20.58ff) and the event as the King's Peace (387/6). But U. Köhler identified the man as Herakleides of Klazomenae and the event as the Peace which he dated 423.²⁴ Köhler's identification has

²³ See A. E. Raubitschek, "Phanosthenes," *RE* 19 (1938) 1786; B. D. Meritt, *Hesperia* 14 (1945) 129–30; *SEG* X 131. But E. Meyer, *Forschungen zur alten Geschichte* (Halle 1899) II 174–75, had thought Phanosthenes received citizenship ca 403 with the group of Andrians mentioned by *Andoc.* 1.149; cf. n.53 *infra*.

²⁴ U. Köhler, "Herakleides der Klazomenier," *Hermes* 27 (1892) 68–78 [henceforth: KÖHLER]. He thought an original 5th-cent. decree had been destroyed by the Thirty and later recut as our extant 4th-cent. inscription.

been accepted without much question until recently.²⁵ In any case, at the top of this stone traces remain of another inscription: Köhler hypothesized that the lost inscription was a decree granting Athenian citizenship to Herakleides, that an earlier decree of 424/3 had been recut beneath the new one, that Herakleides was granted citizenship for services rendered to the democratic exiles—hence, shortly after the restoration of 403. Dittenberger (*SIG*³ 118: “paulo post 403”) accepts this hypothesis as well as Köhler’s restoration of two non-existent lines which would connect the two inscriptions.²⁶

In summary then we know that Herakleides of Klazomenae was a politically active, democratically inclined Athenian citizen by the mid-nineties of the fourth century. If we accept Köhler’s identification of this man with the Herakleides of *IG* II² 8, we assume that he had been rewarded for valuable services performed *ca* 424/3. If we accept Köhler’s other hypotheses about the lost inscription, we can suppose that Herakleides became an Athenian citizen shortly after 403, a date which would then serve as *terminus post quem* for his election as a στρατηγός.

C. *Ion* 530A5–7. (When Socrates learns that Ion has come to Athens from the Asklepieia at Epidauros, he asks:) *Μῶν καὶ ῥαψωδῶν ἀγῶνα τιθέαειν τῷ θεῷ οἱ Ἐπιδαύριοι; ἸΩΝ. Πάνυ γε, καὶ τῆς ἄλλης γε μουσικῆς.*

Keil interpreted Socrates’ apparent surprise at the discovery that rhapsodic contests were held in Epidauros to mean that such contests had been inaugurated shortly before the dramatic date of *Ion*.²⁷ In this innovation he saw an “Erweiterung des Festes” of Asklepios and suggested that such an enlargement might reasonably coincide with the completion of the new fourth-century Asklepieion in Epidauros. Keil expanded upon earlier arguments for setting the dramatic date of *Ion* in 394, and then dated the building of the temple 399–394. From building records it has been determined that the temple was

²⁵ D. Stockton, *Historia* 8 (1959) 74–79, has argued for Foucart’s identification, *i.e.* Herakleides of Byzantion, and presented a strong case against Köhler’s arguments. For a good summary of opinion on both sides of the question, see J. Pečírka, *The Formula for the Grant of enktesis in Attic Inscriptions* (*Acta Carol* 14, Prague 1966) 22–25, Pl. 1. Pečírka thinks “we cannot identify Herakleides with any certainty” (25). In addition to the literature he cites, see also R. Meiggs and D. Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions* (Oxford 1969) no.70. Further discussion *infra*, Sec. III.

²⁶ Köhler (76) restores the missing two lines of the lost inscription as follows: [. . . τὸ δὲ ψήφισμα τὸδε κ][αὶ τὸ πρότερον γενόμενον Ἡρακλείδῃ]. Further comment *infra* nn.48, 49.

²⁷ B. Keil, “Die Rechnungen über den epidaurischen Tholosbau,” *AthMitt* 20 (1895) 75–79.

constructed over a period of four years and eight months;²⁸ by 394 it could be completed just in time to coincide with Ion's rhapsodic contest. Since Keil was basically concerned to date the Asklepieion and used an accepted dramatic date of the *Ion* for that purpose, his interpretation of *Ion* 530A5–7 depends upon the prior assumption of its dramatic date as 394, not to mention other assumptions. As an independent argument for dating the *Ion*, this would be a glaring *petitio principii*.

But more recently, M. S. Ruipérez, acknowledging that Keil's argument reverted to its initial assumption, claimed to follow "el camino inverso" to a similar conclusion.²⁹ He begins by assuming with Keil that Socrates' expression of surprise proves that μουσικοί ἄγωνες were introduced shortly before the dramatic date of *Ion*, and that such an introduction indicates a reorganization of the Megala Asklepieia, which in turn coincides with the completion of the temple at Epidaurus. Ruipérez then quotes M. Nilsson, who dated the construction of the temple at Epidaurus "in der allerersten Jahren des Jahrhunderts,"³⁰ and on this formidable authority, Ruipérez subtracts four and one-half years from 399 to derive an independent textual witness for the dating of *Ion* between 394 and 391.

But upon closer examination, it seems likely that Ruipérez has begged precisely the same question as Keil. Nilsson gives neither argument nor evidence to support his dating of the Asklepieion in the first few years of the fourth century—as Keil had done.³¹ Recent scholars have almost unanimously argued for a date considerably later than 399–395.³² In any case, I can see no reason for accepting any of the other assumptions upon which Keil and Ruipérez based their

²⁸ *IG IV*² 1.102. For full details of inscriptions and other matters related to the building of the Asklepieion, see A. Burford, *The Greek Temple Builders at Epidaurus* (Liverpool 1969) *passim*; App. I 207–21, on the inscriptions.

²⁹ M. S. Ruipérez, "Sobre la cronología del *Ion* de Platon," *Aegyptus* 33 (1953) 241–46.

³⁰ Ruipérez, *ibid.* 244–45. See M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion I*³ (Munich 1967) 807–08.

³¹ Nilsson, *ibid.* 807 n.7, laments the lack of a good full-scale treatment of the temple since the already outdated work of Kavvadias (1900) and continues: "Die sehr zersplitterte archäologische Literatur kann hier nicht einzeln zitiert werden. Die Baurechnungen für den Tempel und für den Tholos in *IG. IV: 1*², 102ff."

³² The present consensus seems to favor a date between 380 and 370; e.g. Burford, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.28) 54 and *passim*; P. Bernard, "Note épidaurienne: la datation du temple d'Asclépios et l'*Ion* de Platon," *BCH* 85 (1961) 402 n.1; K. Schefold, *Gnomon* 25 (1953) 312. Additional references in Flashar 99 n.2.

theory. Since Paul Bernard has recently disposed of them effectively,³³ it is unnecessary for me to argue here that Socrates' surprise does not indicate an inauguration of rhapsodic contests at Epidauros, but only that Socrates is ironically puffing up the poor rhapsode for the deflating contest to come. Nothing in the passage suggests either a reorganization of games or a connection with temple building.

Omitting C, then, we are left with two internal clues for the dramatic dating of *Ion*: A = a time when Ephesos was "ruled by" Athens, *i.e.* either A₁ = before 412, or A₂ = 394–391; and B = a time when Herakleides of Klazomenae could have been elected an Athenian general, possibly shortly after 403. While A₁ and B are both compatible with Socrates' lifetime (d. 399), they are not compatible with each other. Hence it has been argued that Plato wanted to indicate a dramatic date between 394–391 when it would be simultaneously true that Ephesos was ruled by Athens and that Herakleides had served as *στρατηγός*.³⁴ The fact that Socrates participates in a dialogue set at least five years after his death is no obstacle; we are reminded that other anachronisms occur in the dialogues.³⁵

From this dramatic dating Bergk and after him others drew a further conclusion about the *Ion*'s date of composition.³⁶ Noting that the persons alluded to (in B *supra*) are not lastingly notorious, Flashar says: "Freilich ist 394 nur terminus post quem für die tatsächliche Abfassungszeit des Dialoges; aber da die historischen Anspielungen von grössenteils ephemerem Charakter nur sinnvoll wirken, wenn sie aktuell sind, wird man annehmen müssen, dass Platon den Dialog *Ion* auch um das Jahr 394 geschrieben hat."³⁷

³³ Bernard, *ibid.* 400–02. Keil's argument had already been dismissed by Wilamowitz, *Platon* II 32, 37, and doubted by both Méridier (28 n.1) and Flashar 99. It is, of course, possible that Socrates' question was inspired by some later event that brought it to Plato's mind; but that would not affect the dialogue's dramatic date.

³⁴ See *e.g.* Keil, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.27) 75–76, Méridier 23–24, Flashar 96–98, Ruipérez, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.29) 242–43. On citizenship as a requirement for *strategia*, see Sec. III *infra*.

³⁵ Méridier (24 n.7) says simply: "Notons l'anachronisme: Socrate est mort en 399." Flashar (100 and n.6) claims that the anachronism "für Platon nicht ungewöhnlich ist," and refers us to the treatment of this subject in Ueberweg-Praechter, *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie* I² (Berlin 1926) 201–03. But this is no ordinary anachronism; see my discussion *infra*, Sec. III.

³⁶ Th. Bergk, *Griechische Literaturgeschichte* IV (Berlin 1887) 454–55; Keil, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.27) 75–78; Flashar 100–01; *cf.* Diller 172.

³⁷ *Ibid.* Flashar quotes with approval (101 n.1) part of Bergk's pronouncement (*ibid.* 454): "Diese Dialog ist unzweifelhaft in demselben Jahre geschrieben und veröffentlicht, in welchem er gehalten sein soll, Ol. 97.3 [= 390], unmittelbar nach der ersten Publikation

III

I propose to demonstrate that these arguments are invalid, that they are based upon assumptions and inferences which will not stand up to scrutiny. I shall begin by arguing that passage A (541c3–5) cannot refer to the years 394–391, and that it must refer to a period during the Peloponnesian War before the Ionian revolt of 412. Ion’s language is unambiguous: ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἡμετέρα . . . πόλις ἄρχεται ὑπὸ ὑμῶν καὶ στρατηγεῖται states clearly that Ephesus is ruled by Athens (in foreign affairs) and her military forces are commanded by Athenian officers. The phrase seems designed to suggest the Athenian ἀρχή of the fifth century. His further point—ἡ δὲ ὑμετέρα καὶ ἡ Λακεδαιμονίων οὐκ ἂν με ἔλοιτο στρατηγόν—indicates a time when the cities of the Greek world were polarized either in the Athenian or the Spartan camp. No mention is made of Thebes, Syracuse, the Thracians, or even the Persians, any of whom might have used the services of a good general in the early fourth century.³⁸ If a defensive maritime alliance friendly to Athens actually existed during the years 394–391, it is still much too strong to say on that basis that Ephesus was “ruled by” Athens.³⁹ Nor does the exclusive mention of Athens and Sparta as self-sufficient militarily suggest a period notable for the emergence of other states and for the growing prominence of mercenary soldiers. Both phrases, individually and in tandem, make sense only during the Peloponnesian War; neither fits the known circumstances of 394–391.

der Bücher vom Staate.” More on the ephemeral character of these references *infra*, Sec. v.

³⁸ Xenophon and his *Anabasis* colleagues are the most obvious examples of mercenary generals who did serve various states including Sparta during these years. For other examples see H. W. Parke, *Greek Mercenary Soldiers* (Oxford 1933) 20–72 *passim*. As Parke makes clear, mercenary soldiers and their *στρατηγοί* were emerging as a prominent force during the first decade of the fourth century. The Spartan employment of mercenaries in the 390s (see Parke 37–48) would also invalidate Ion’s further point about Athenian and Lacedaemonian self-sufficiency: *αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἴεσθε ἱκανοὶ εἶναι* (541c6).

³⁹ Certainly Judeich’s interpretation of 394–391, to which Keil and others refer, would not permit Ion’s description; see n.22 *supra*. Bergk, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.36), very much overstated the case: “Ephesos, die Vaterstadt des Ion, war damals [394–387] wieder den Athern unterthan.” Keil, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.27) 77 n.1, in spite of his similar conclusions, criticized this statement as an example of Bergk’s “sachlichen Fehler.” K. Praechter, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.35), expressed some reservations about the connection of *ἄρχεται ὑπὸ ὑμῶν* with the ‘alliance’ of 394–391: “obwohl dieser Anschluss nicht ohne eine gewisse Übertreibung als *ἄρχεσθαι* bezeichnet werden kann.”

A further, albeit superfluous, objection to the received view is the very uncertainty of the 'Maritime Alliance' of 394–391. The sole evidence for its existence is the series of ΣΥΝ coins issued by Ephesos, Rhodes, Samos, Knidos, Iasos, Byzantion, Kyzikos, Lampsakos and (possibly) Thebes. The nature of the alliance is unknown, its date is conjectural. The obverse device of infant Herakles strangling snakes is a traditional Theban one and may well mean that the alliance was oriented more to Thebes than to Athens.⁴⁰ In a recent controversy on this issue J. M. Cook has suggested that the coins represent a pro-Spartan alliance dating from 391.⁴¹ Without judging the merits of the various possibilities, we may note that there is no evidence whatever to indicate that Ephesos was "ruled by" Athens in 394–391 or indeed that it had any formal ties with Athens at all. But on any interpretation of the ΣΥΝ coins, Ion's statements would still describe most ineptly a defensive alliance of sovereign cities in 394. We should require far more than this before assuming that Plato meant to set his dialogue five years after Socrates' death.

From the explicit character of Ion's historical references, we might agree that Plato intended in these lines to indicate a chronological setting for the conversation between Ion and Socrates. But for the reasons given, that indication could only be "at a time during the war between Athens and Sparta, before the Ionian revolt."⁴²

The reference in passage B (541c7–D4) to three foreigners employed as generals by the Athenians is a slightly different kind of allusion from the preceding one. For that describes a state of affairs (the Athenian empire) which is supposed to exist at the time of the conversation. Within general limits such a state could no doubt be

⁴⁰ See e.g. C. Seltman, *Greek Coins*² (London 1955) 157: "Our literary authorities are one and all silent about this confederacy, the existence of which is known to us from the coins alone; but the coins record eight states . . . who marked their temporary union against Sparta by the issue of currency with a pro-Theban obverse type." For photographs, see Seltman, Pl. xxxii 4–12. Recent discussion is well summarized by J. P. Barron, *The Silver Coins of Samos* (London 1966) 117–18 (see also pp. 105, 113), who refers particularly to G. L. Cawkwell, "A Note on the Herakles Coinage Alliance," *NC* 16 (1956) 69–75.

⁴¹ J. M. Cook, "Cnidian Peraea and Spartan Coins," *JHS* 81 (1961) 66–72. Cf. Cawkwell's reply, "The ΣΥΝ Coins Again," *JHS* 83 (1963) 152–54. Cawkwell's theory of a Persian sponsored anti-Spartan alliance seems to me the most plausible interpretation, but on any view there seems no justification for supposing an ἀρχὴ τῶν Ἀθηναίων.

⁴² In the very explicitness of these references we may discern a part of the restrictive design which marks the whole dialogue and gives a clue to its purpose. I have discussed these matters briefly in my "Limitation and Design in Plato's *Ion*," *Pacific Coast Philology* 8 (1973) 45–51, and I plan a more thorough study of the dialogue.

dated roughly by the average reader of a Platonic dialogue even after the passage of many years. The definition might take approximately the form I have suggested. The latter reference differs in two ways: (a) it is relative to the state described above in that it alludes to events that either have happened or are happening within the span already defined; (b) it refers to individuals of no great prominence, whose *curricula vitae* might well be blurred by the passage of not many years. If, to make his point, Plato chose an example in B that was inapplicable to the period defined by A, it would not be surprising so long as the example was distant enough to *seem* applicable. But in any case an illustrative example, even if it prove anachronistic, ought not to be considered a reliable witness to the date of a fictitious conversation set in the past.

The problem in passage B, then, is not to determine the supposed dramatic date of the *Ion*—that is defined by passage A—but rather to determine whether the reference to Herakleides is anachronistic, and if so, how glaring an anachronism it would be. In the present state of our knowledge, a decisive answer to this question seems unlikely, but I offer the following three hypotheses:

1. Herakleides may have been granted Athenian citizenship shortly after 403, as Köhler guessed.⁴³ In that case he could have been elected *στρατηγός* within Socrates' lifetime, particularly if his citizenship grant resulted from military services rendered in behalf of the democracy. The reference would then be mildly anachronistic relative to the period defined by A, but would not make of the dialogue a posthumous farce. This was essentially the view of Raeder and Wilamowitz; and muddled chronological details in *Protagoras* and *Gorgias* provide ample parallel. As evidence in support of this thesis we have the information from *Athenaion Politeia* 41.3 that Herakleides was a citizen before 393, and from various sources that citizenship was granted to a number of metics after the return of the democratic exiles in 403.⁴⁴ But we do not know whether Herakleides was a member of the group so honored.

2. Herakleides may have been granted citizenship at some time

⁴³ See *supra* n.24.

⁴⁴ See A. Diller, *Race Mixture among the Greeks* (*IllStud* 20.1–2, Urbana 1937) 110. For a fuller discussion of the literary and epigraphic evidence and the date see A. E. Raubitschek, "The Heroes of Phyle," *Hesperia* 10 (1941) 284–86. Epigraphic evidence: *IG II²* 10= *SIG³* 120; cf. M. N. Tod, *Greek Historical Inscriptions II* (Oxford 1948) no.100.

during the Peloponnesian War in return for services rendered and/or anticipated. He could then have served as *στρατηγός* equally well before as after the Ionian revolt. The optimum, but by no means only possible time for such a grant would be shortly after 415 when the Sicilian expedition had severely drained Athens' military manpower, a period well suited to the supposed dramatic date of the *Ion*. In addition to ancient evidence proving that the Athenians granted citizenship to individuals during the war,⁴⁵ it is generally assumed that the Phanosthenes mentioned in this *Ion* passage is a documented example of this practice.⁴⁶ If Herakleides of Klazomenae is in fact the man honored in *IG II² 8* and if he was honored so handsomely for services rendered in 424/3, he would be a prime candidate for a citizenship grant whenever he chose to emigrate to Athens and take advantage of his new privileges, including the right to own property at Athens without taxation.

Against the basic assumption of an earlier citizenship grant, we have only Köhler's hypothesis that the lost inscription above *IG II² 8* also contained a decree honoring Herakleides of Klazomenae, and that it was a decree granting citizenship for services rendered to the democratic exiles, therefore datable shortly after 403. But Köhler's hypothesis is far from certain. A number of scholars recently have questioned the identification of Herakleides of Klazomenae as the man named in the partially preserved inscription.⁴⁷ Even less certain is the subject of the lost decree.⁴⁸ The name 'Herakleides' does not

⁴⁵ On naturalization in Athens, see A. Diller, *ibid.* 100–14; Busolt-Swoboda, *Griechische Staatskunde*³ (Munich 1926) 945–48; A. Billheimer, *Naturalization in Athenian Law and Practice* (Diss. Princeton 1922). For the war period, the principal evidence is Andoc. 1.149, 2.23; Isoc. 8.88–89; *IG I³ 110+* (Meiggs-Lewis, *GHI* 85). On Andoc. 1.149 see MacDowell's note, *Andokides: On the Mysteries* (Oxford 1962) 165, and on Isoc. see Diller, *ibid.* 111.

⁴⁶ See e.g. G. Busolt, *Griechische Geschichte* III.2 (Gotha 1904) 1581 n.1; K. J. Beloch, *Griechische Geschichte*³ II.2 (repr. Berlin 1931) 251 n.1; A. E. Raubitschek, *RE* 19 (1938) 1786; A. Diller, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.44) 114 n.60. But see nn.51, 53, 54 *infra*. Busolt seems to think that Herakleides was granted citizenship for services rendered, as was Phanosthenes.

⁴⁷ See n.25 *supra*. Doubts have been voiced recently by Gomme, Stockton, Mattingly and Pečírka as against Wade-Gery and Andrewes—references in Pečírka, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.25). A. E. Raubitschek, *GRBS* 5 (1964) 156, dates the treaty mentioned in *IG II² 8* to 415. The strongest argument in favor of Köhler's identification is that the ethnic *Κλαζομένιον* fits the lacuna in line 6, while *Βυζάντιον* (alone) falls short by two spaces. A third Herakleides, ethnic unknown, is also a possibility.

⁴⁸ Pečírka, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.25) 152, dates the decree "Ca. 424/3? 390? 387/6?," and says (24): "The parts of the inscription which have been preserved give us nothing to go on as to how the two decrees were connected. We do not know whether the second decree continued, and if so in what way. If both decrees referred to the same person (Köhler), it does

occur in the scant remains of the upper inscription, though Köhler wrote two lines which 'restored' it. There is nothing to support Flashar's quoting of Köhler's restored introductory lines without brackets and with the claim that they are preserved on the stone.⁴⁹

In summary, there is no direct evidence to indicate when Herakleides became an Athenian citizen. But since there is ample evidence for grants of citizenship for foreigners during the war, and since Plato tells us in this passage of *Ion* that Herakleides had served as a *στρατηγός*, the only reasonable conclusion seems to be that he had served in that capacity before the dramatic date of *Ion*, i.e. at some time before 412. In the absence of contradictory evidence I can see no reason why Plato's straightforward statement should not be considered a valid witness. It is unlikely that it would ever have been doubted if Bergk had not first drawn from passage A his unjustified conclusions about the posthumous dramatic date of the dialogue.

3. Herakleides may have been appointed to one or more limited military commands *extra ordinem*, though he was not at the time an Athenian citizen. If this could have happened at all, it could have happened equally well before as after the Ionian revolt. In this case, of course, we should have to assume that Plato was using the word *στρατηγία* in a broad sense to include various specialized or emergency military commissions. Against such a view is the widespread assumption that within this period *στρατηγοί* in any sense are duly elected members of the board of ten generals, and *a fortiori* Athenian citizens.⁵⁰ But in his discussion of Menandros and Euthydemos at Thuc. 7.16.1, K. J. Dover has recently exposed this assumption to question: "The appointment of Menandros and Euthydemos cannot have been made at an ordinary election . . . but this creates no real difficulty. The Athenians could give temporary and local military commands to anybody; Kleon's appointment to command at Pylos in 425 (iv. 28ff) did not mean that Nikias or any other of the ten generals resigned his office . . . or that the board of generals in 425/4 was

not follow from this who that person was or was not." We might add that it does not follow that the earlier decree recorded a citizenship grant or that we can guess to what year it referred. For the known types of multiple inscriptions on a single stone see W. Larfeld, *Griechische Epigraphik*³ (Munich 1914) 108, 122–26.

⁴⁹ For Köhler's restoration see n.26 *supra*; cf. Flashar 97: "Der allein erhaltene Schluss dieser Inschrift besagt, dass 'der Schreiber auch den früher über Herakleides gefassten Beschluss aufschreiben soll' (καὶ τὸ πρότερον . . .)."

⁵⁰ See W. Schwahn, "Strategos," *RE* 6A (1935) 1080.60–1081.4, and references in n.46 *supra*.

regarded as having eleven members . . . Apollodoros of Kyzikos, Phanosthenes of Andros, and Herakleides of Klazomenai, mentioned in Pl. *Ion* 541c–d as examples of foreigners appointed to command Athenians, were no doubt *στρατηγοί* in the generic, not the specific, sense.”⁵¹

In support of this view we may adduce two other pieces of possible evidence: (a) A decree (*IG I² 106*) honors three exiles living in Athens who were sent with a trireme to assist and advise the Athenian generals operating in the Hellespont *ca* 409/8, presumably because they had lived in that area and could provide expert advice.⁵² (b) Phanosthenes of Andros was sent out with four triremes in an emergency to replace Konon at Andros in 408/7 (*Xen. Hell.* 1.5.18), but he is not named among the ten newly elected *στρατηγοί* for that year (*Xen. Hell.* 1.5.16–17).⁵³ If these are examples of extraordinary *στρατηγίαι*, they would also indicate at least one sphere to which such commissions might be confined: the men involved are dispatched on a temporary or subordinate mission with a small force to operate in their former home area where their special knowledge and/or influence would be most useful. Other possible commissions might include subordinate commands over detachments of exiles, mercenaries or metics;⁵⁴ in the case of proven ability, in time of need less limited commissions might be possible. But in the absence of more specific evidence this can only be a matter for speculation. I merely suggest that *Ion* 541c–d may well be, as Dover has taken it to be, yet another possible piece of evidence for extraordinary military commands. If, in fact, Socrates was referring to previously naturalized

⁵¹ K. J. Dover, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.21) 391–92.

⁵² For restoration and discussion of *IG I² 106* see A. Wilhelm, *JÖAI* 21–22 (1922–1924) 152–56. On the dating see A. Andrewes, “The Generals in the Hellespont,” *JHS* 73 (1953) 8. The men’s names are Polykles, Peiraieus and Aristoboulos; their home city is unknown, but as Wilhelm points out (154), it must have been a city in the area of the Hellespont.

⁵³ E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums* IV.2 (ed. 4 rev., Basel 1956) 337–38 with notes, in a very ambiguous comment says that Phanosthenes was probably not a regular *στρατηγός*, though he later became one. See also T. Sauciuc, *Andros (SonderschrÖAI* 8, Wien 1914) 68–69, and Meyer, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.23). Cf. nn.46, 50 *supra*.

⁵⁴ The evidence for military and naval service by metics is assembled and discussed by M. Clerc, *Les métèques athéniens* (Paris 1893) 38–75. Clerc argues that for metics the highest positions were “les officiers inférieurs . . . même les *λοχαγοί*, qui étaient nommés non à l’élection, mais par les stratèges” (56). But evidence is extremely sparse and somewhat ambiguous; nor would Clerc’s view be inconsistent with extraordinary individual commissions at a more responsible level, provided these were also appointive rather than elective.

Athenian citizens who were elected as regular *στρατηγοί*, they would provide a poor example for emulation by the non-citizen Ion,⁵⁵ unless we are to suppose that Ion's demonstration of talent would soon lead to a grant of citizenship.

In short, only one of these three possibilities would necessarily make the references to Herakleides anachronistic. And even though in that case the anachronism would be slight, there is no evidence to support its existence at all. For that reason and for others given, the first hypothesis seems to me the weakest. The second and third hypotheses seem about equally viable. None of the three would support a posthumous dramatic date for the dialogue.

The strangest feature of the traditional theory about a posthumous date for the dialogue is that it necessitates ignoring the only absolute chronological clue in the *Ion*—i.e. that Socrates, evidently alive and well in Athens, is the principal speaker of the dialogue. That this fact should have been accounted less significant than the reconciliation of a minor historical allusion with an illustrative example seems puzzling in the extreme.

It is true enough that Plato sometimes intermingled allusions to persons and events that do not fall within the same time span; *Protagoras* and *Gorgias* provide examples of such 'anachronistic' allusions, but all fall within Socrates' lifetime.⁵⁶ It is also possible that in some dialogues Plato alluded to events that occurred after Socrates' death;⁵⁷ the only certain instance of this, however, is *Menexenus* 245, where Socrates summarizes Athenian history down to the King's

⁵⁵ For what it is worth, Herodotus (Athen. 506A), apparently taking the passage to mean that the *στρατηγοί* were being described as non-citizens, accused Plato of maligning them—presumably by false representation. The language of 541c–d is ambiguous (perhaps purposely so): on Apollodorus, the words Ἀθηναῖοι . . . ἐαυτῶν στρατηγὸν ἤρρηται suggest election as one of the ten *στρατηγοί* commanding Athenians. In the other two examples Socrates substitutes ἄγειν + εἰς for αἰρεῖσθαι, πόλις for Ἀθηναῖοι and *στρατηγίας* for the title ἐαυτῶν *στρατηγός*. The word order and the addition of a qualifying phrase (ἐνδειξαμένους κτλ.) seems also to stress that the latter two were "brought in for military commands and other duties *although* they were foreigners, *since* they had shown themselves worthy." But in the next line Socrates again uses the verb αἰρεῖσθαι and *στρατηγός* with the qualifying formula when he applies these examples to Ion. It is conceivable that Apollodorus represents an ultimate status of reward for ability to which the rhapsode might aspire, while Phanosthenes and Herakleides represent an intermediate stage. The passage is printed *supra*, Sec. II.

⁵⁶ These were also pointed out by Herodotus (Athen. 217d f). The temporal inconsistencies of *Grg.* are summarized by E. R. Dodds, *Plato: Gorgias* (Oxford 1959) 17–18, those of *Prt.* by J. and A. Adam, *Platonis Protagoras* (Cambridge 1893) xxxvi–xxxvii.

⁵⁷ For a full list of suspected allusions to events after 399, see Ueberweg-Praechter,

Peace. But even this does not mean that we are expected to 'date' his speech to that year, it seems rather that we are meant to sense a vital discrepancy between a setting during Socrates' lifetime and his startling mention of future events. The *Ion* according to the common theory would be the only dialogue purposely dated to a time after Socrates' death, and yet no advocate of the theory, as far as I know, has attempted to explain why.

IV

The imagined date of the conversation between Socrates and Ion is limited in the broadest sense by Socrates' death in 399. It may be that Plato meant it to be restricted to the time before the Ionian revolt. But it is also possible that the latter restriction enters only as an accidental result of the point Plato was making at *Ion* 541c–d. For the date of the conversation seems of no consequence in itself, while allusions to contemporary persons and events may be vitally significant within the context of the dialogue. Allusions are introduced like similes and various kinds of specific examples to render a general argument more vivid, to illustrate an important point, to document a theory, etc. Hence they can provide an important index to Plato's intentions, and it is in this light that we should view the historical allusions in *Ion*.

Ion 541c–d emphatically concludes a passage that begins at 541a. Several immediate observations will confirm that Plato attached some importance to the point he was making here: (1) It forms the final argument of the dialogue, followed only by a brief ironic epilogue. (2) It is the concluding and climactic point in the analysis of ἡ ῥαψωδικὴ τέχνη, which occupies the last half of the *Ion* (536d8–541e). (3) It serves as a decisive *ad hominem* touchstone for Ion's theoretical pretensions. (4) It is, by the standards of this dialogue, an exceptionally long, deliberate and detailed argument rendered vivid by precise references to Ion himself, his city and three named individuals. (5) In thought and expression it closely parallels an important passage

op.cit. (*supra* n.35) 201–03. Besides *Ion* and *Menex.* these include *Meno* 90a and *Resp.* 336a, where Ismenias of Thebes is mentioned, and *Symp.* 193a, where Aristophanes alludes to a *diokismos* of Arkadians. But little is known about Ismenias, and recent critics doubt that anachronism; see R. Bluck, *Plato's Meno* (Cambridge 1961) 345f, J. Morrison, *CQ* 36 (1942) 57f. K. Dover has argued for anachronism in the *Symp.* passage, *Phronesis* 10 (1965) 2–20, but an alternative still seems possible: see Wilamowitz, *Platon* II 176–78, and H. B. Mattingly, *Phronesis* 3 (1958) 31–39. On *Menex.* see esp. C. Kahn, *CP* 58 (1963) 220–34.

on poetic *mimesis* in *Republic* 10 (esp. *Ion* 541b7–8: *Resp.* 600d5–6).⁵⁸ We cannot doubt that Plato chose these allusions because he wanted forcefully to underline a distinction between Ion the rhapsode of Ephesos, who had not been able to show himself ἀξιός λόγου, and three other men from similar states who had. When related to the rest of the dialogue a distinction so elaborated and so emphatically placed may give a vital clue to Plato's enigmatic purpose in the *Ion*.⁵⁹

V

Since Ephesos was not ruled by Athens in 394–391, it is not possible to date the composition of *Ion* by finding in it references to that span which are 'aktuell'. This was never a good argument in any case; the references to Ephesos and the generals are self-contained and fully self-explanatory whether or not the reader has ever heard of them before.⁶⁰ What then can we say about the *Ion*'s date of composition?

Nothing in the dialogue indicates an absolute date. And to determine a relative date would require another essay. Here I wish only to suggest: (1) that the traditional arguments used to date the *Ion* dramatically after its protagonist's death are invalid; (2) that the contemporary allusions in *Ion* are more valuable clues to the purpose than to the date of the dialogue; (3) that the *Ion* was not necessarily the first or among the first of Plato's works and should not be judged spurious because its mature thought conflicts with an assumed date. In order to assess its authenticity and its relative position within the Platonic corpus, we must forget the traditional date of the *Ion* and consider carefully its affinities with other dialogues in form, method and content.⁶¹

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

June, 1974

⁵⁸ As H. Diller, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.8), has pointed out, Socrates uses against Ion the same argument he uses against the 'rhapsodes' Homer and Hesiod in *Resp.* 10—viz., if they were really able to make a useful contribution to society, the Greeks "would not allow them to run around rhapsodizing."

⁵⁹ See n.42 *supra*.

⁶⁰ See n.37 *supra*. Arguments about the ephemeral significance of persons and events are based in any case upon our ignorance of detailed information from the period. We cannot judge how long such references might be pertinent, nor what contemporary events might have recalled earlier ones to mind.

⁶¹ I am most grateful for detailed criticisms of this essay by W. M. Calder III and A. E. Raubitschek; each has saved me from some errors and suggested improvements from which I have profited. For any errors or distortions which remain, only I am responsible.