It is often pointed out that we are in a disadvantageous position when we question Plato's view of Socrates, because in most cases there is no way to verify or falsify his claims. But with Ion, who died when Plato was about seven years old, we have a chance to keep Plato honest. Do we dare?[26]

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[26] I shared a draft of this paper (which was not my formal presentation) with participants in the Symposium Antiquae Philosophiae in Samos, Greece, in July 2005; I am grateful for comments from them, especially those of Carl A. Huffman.

# ANNOTATED INNOVATION IN EURIPIDES' *ION*

Scholars have long sensed an artistic self-awareness in Euripides' plays that is usually associated with Hellenistic poets and their Roman heirs. Wilamowitz[1] noted the clever double entendre in the *Heracles* when the presentation of Lycus and his back-story in the play (26–34) also seems to be a staging of Euripides' introduction of a new character into the Heracles tradition. Euripides annotated his innovation, G.W. Bond suggested,[2] by describing Lycus as *kainos* in a way that alludes to the tyrant's dual role as an upstart in both the plot of the play as well as in the Heracles narratives that Euripides had inherited. A fuller investigation of Euripides' proto-Hellenistic self-referential gestures can be found in E. McDermott's 'Double meaning and mythic novelty',[3] where she discusses moments in the *Supplices* and *Hecuba* in which the poet's own mythic innovation is marked by a conspicuous *kainos* or *neos* that does double-duty by describing an appearance that is 'new' or 'recent' in two ways: novel or unexpected for the characters in the unfolding action of the play as well as for the audience members who are taken by surprise as they witness Euripides' transformation of mythic tradition first hand. Since Euripides' will to innovate is nowhere more evident than in the *Ion*, a play which is also 'self-referential to a degree unparalleled anywhere else in Euripides',[4] it is reasonable to expect some knowing nods to the inventive revision that is underway.

Euripides received, and elsewhere adopted, a tradition that named Xuthus as Ion's father. Both Hesiod (fr. 10a) and Herodotus (7.94; 8.44) record this parentage as does Euripides himself in a fragment of the *Wise Melanippe* (481 N).[5] Another Euripidean deviation – and possible innovation – is the transfer to Xuthus of the military prowess elsewhere attributed to Ion.[6] Even if Euripides did not invent the idea of Apollo as Ion's father, the fact that later versions of the story revert to the standard Xuthus lineage shows that he was making a radical departure. The dramatic masterstroke of the *Ion* is to build the conventional genealogy into the plot instead of suppressing it.

[1] *Euripides: Herakles* (Berlin, 1895), 2.112.
[2] *Euripides: Heracles* (Oxford, 1981), xxviii.
[3] *TAPA* 121 (1991), 123–32.
[4] T. Cole, 'The *Ion* of Euripides and its audience(s)', in L. Edmunds and R.W. Wallace (edd.), *Poet, Public and Performance in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore, 1997), 87–96.
[5] K.H. Lee, *Euripides: Ion* (Warminster, 1997), 38.
[6] By Herodotus in the above passages and by Aristotle *Ath. Pol*. 3.2 and fr. 1.

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Euripides' new tradition (Apollo as father) even includes an aetiology for the usual version of the myth (Xuthus as father). The two fathers/potential traditions are present in the drama, but the poet wryly suggests that the story of Xuthus' paternity is a saving fiction foisted on both Xuthus in the play as well as on those in the audience who accept this prevalent version of Ion's past.

Euripides has the characters in the *Ion* transmit myth in a way that demonstrates the plasticity of the material that the poet is in the midst of reshaping. Creusa's initial exchange with Ion gives her a chance to validate and expand upon the stories about her family that Ion has already encountered. Creusa's version of the early Attic myths studiously uncovers the gaps and inconsistencies in these traditions (265–74):

*Ιων πρὸς θεῶν, ἀληθῶς, ὡς μεμύθευται βροτοῖς*
*Κρ. τί χρῆμ' ἐρωτᾶις, ὦ ξέν', ἐκμαθεῖν θέλων;*
*Ιων ἐκ γῆς πατρός σου πρόγονος ἔβλαστεν πατήρ;*
*Κρ. Ἐριχθόνιός γε· τὸ δὲ γένος μ' οὐκ ὠφελεῖ.*
*Ιων ἦ καί σφ' Ἀθάνα γῆθεν ἐξανείλετο;*
*Κρ. ἐς παρθένους γε χεῖρας, οὐ τεκοῦσά νιν.*
*Ιων δίδωσι δ', ὥσπερ ἐν γραφῆι νομίζεται*
*Κρ. Κέκροπός γε σώιζειν παισὶν οὐχ ὁρώμενον.*
*Ιων ἥκουσα λῦσαι παρθένους τεῦχος θεᾶς.*
*Κρ. τοιγὰρ θανοῦσαι σκόπελον ἥιμαξαν πέτρας.*[7]

The stories of Erichthonius and Erechtheus were relatively inchoate when Euripides produced the *Ion* (*c.* 413?).[8] Earlier sources mention 'Erechtheus', but 'Erichthonius' does not surface until 440/430, when differentiation also begins to appear in sources that have Erichthonius as the father or grandfather of Erechtheus.[9] Ion's queries about these figures thus pointedly enact the confusion that Euripides would find in the tradition when he was writing his play. The ambiguity of line 267 (*ἐκ γῆς πατρός σου πρόγονος ἔβλαστεν πατήρ;*) points to the presence of contradictory traditions since *πρόγονος* (male ancestor/forefather) can mean that Erichthonius is either the father or grandfather of Erechtheus.[10] The interchangeability of these names and narratives is also revealed by the inconsistent accounts of Athena as caretaker. Homer (*Il.* 2.547–8) and Herodotus (8.55) have Erechtheus as Athena's charge while here (267–70) and on vase painting Athena attends to Erichthonius.[11] Ion may therefore be making a sidelong reference to this source variation when he mentions visual representations (*ὥσπερ ἐν γραφῆι νομίζεται* 271) that could very well be an anachronistic reference to vase paintings in circulation in the fifth century. Creusa again shows the fluidity of her family history when she suggests to Ion that Erechtheus sacrificed all of his other daughters, which is at odds with other accounts, most notably Euripides' *Erechtheus*.[12] The characters, like the poet, are

[7] The text used is the OCT of Diggle.

[8] Since references to Attic legends and heroes were relatively scarce in Homer and Hesiod, Athenian dramatists had a seminal role in formulating Athenian mythology. Stories of the early autochthons were not full-fledged mythological cycles, as Plato's *Critias* reveals when Cecrops, Erechtheus and Erichthonius are given as evidence of ancients whose names have been preserved without 'any memorial of their deeds' (110A).

[9] R. Parker, 'Myths of early Athens', in J. Bremmer (ed.), *Interpretation of Greek Mythology* (London, 1987), 187–214. See also C. Collard, M.J. Cropp and K.H. Lee, *Selected Fragmentary Plays of Euripides I* (Warminster, 1995), 152.

[10] Parker (n. 9), 212, n. 60., Lee (n.5), ad loc.

[11] Parker (n. 9), 201.

[12] Lee (n. 5), ad loc.

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self-consciously singling out the disparate strands of mythical tradition while they are in the midst of weaving them together into what will become a new source for these myths: Euripides' *Ion*.

Euripides has Creusa foreground the instability of Attic mythic tradition yet again when she relays another Attic tale with an unexpected twist. In her plotting session with the Old Man, Creusa presents Athena as the slayer of Gorgon, a variant that may be first brought into the tradition by Euripides in these very lines (987–95):[13]

*Κρ. ἄκουε τοίνυν· οἶσθα γηγενῆ μάχην;*
*Πρ. οἶδ', ἣν Φλέγραι Γίγαντες ἔστησαν θεοῖς.*
*Κρ. ἐνταῦθα Γοργόν' ἔτεκε Γῆ, δεινὸν τέρας.*
*Πρ. ἦ παισὶν αὐτῆς σύμμαχον, θεῶν πόνον;*
*Κρ. ναί· καί νιν ἔκτειν' ἡ Διὸς Παλλὰς θεά.*
*Πρ. ἆρ' οὗτός ἐσθ' ὁ μῦθος ὃν κλύω πάλαι;*
*Κρ. ταύτης Ἀθάναν δέρος ἐπὶ στέρνοις ἔχειν.*

The Old Man's hesitant question about this version at 994 hints at its novelty (*ἆρ' οὗτός ἐσθ' ὁ μῦθος ὃν κλύω πάλαι;*) as does Creusa's evasive answer. His use of *μῦθος* here, along with Ion's use of the related verb at 265 (*ὡς μεμύθευται βροτοῖς*) and the chorus member's at 196–7 expands the semantic sphere of the word in this play to encompass not only casual speech but also mythic tradition. This word therefore generates meaning at two levels when Euripides has Xuthus claim to be Ion's father with loaded language that points to Ion's conventional mythological pedigree (*οὔ· τρέχων ὁ μῦθος ἄν σοι τἀμὰ σημήνειεν ἄν*. 529). The meta-literary resonance of *μῦθος* is even more pronounced when the Priestess starts to reveal the secrets of Ion's Apollonian lineage. Ion exclaims that a new *μῦθος* is being brought forth to explain his origins (1340): *τί φήις; ὁ μῦθος εἰσενήνεκται νέος*. A new *μῦθος* is unveiled by the Priestess in the play just as it is being introduced into Attic mythology by the poet.

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[13] Lee (n. 5), ad loc.

## NOTHING TO DO WITH PHAEDRA? ARISTOPHANES, *THESMOPHORIAZUSAE* 497–501

*εἰ δὲ Φαίδραν λοιδορεῖ,*
*ἡμῖν τί τοῦτ' ἔστ'; οὐδ' ἐκεῖν' εἴρηκέ πω,*
*ὡς ἡ γυνὴ δεικνῦσα τἀνδρὶ τοὔγκυκλον*
*ὑπαυγάσ' οἷόν ἐστ',*[1] *ἐγκεκαλυμμένον*
*τὸν μοιχὸν ἐξέπεμψεν, οὐκ εἴρηκέ πω.*

But if he abuses Phaedra, what is that to us? Nor has he said anything about this, how the woman, while showing her husband her cloak to see by the light, sent her lover away with his head swathed; he hasn't said anything about that.

The bulk of the disguised Mnesilochus' defence of Euripides against the charge of slandering women is a catalogue of the female iniquities which the tragedian does *not*

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