ION OF CHIOS: THE CASE OF A FOREIGN POET IN CLASSICAL SPARTA

χαιρέτω ἡμέτερος βασιλεύς σωτήρ τε πατήρ τε·
ἡμῖν δὲ κρήτηρ’ οἴνοχοί θέρατες
κυρνάντων προχύταισιν ἐν ἀργυρέοις· ἧ δὲ χρυσὸς
όινον ἔχον χειρῶν νιζέτω εἰς ἕδοφος. 

† ἡμῖν δὲ κρήτηρ’ Ἡρακλεί τ’ Ἀλκμήνη τε,
Προκλεί Περσείδαις τ’ ἐκ Διός ἀρχόμενοι
πίνωμεν, παίζωμεν· ἤτο διὰ νυκτὸς ἀοιδή,
ὄρχεσθο τις ἐκῶν δ’ ἄρχε φιλοφροσύνης,
όντιος δ’ ἐνειδῆς μίμνει θήλεια πάρευος,
κείνος τὸν ἄλλον κυδρότερον πιεῖ.

May our king rejoice, our saviour and father; let the attendant cup-bearers mix for us a crater from silver urns;† Let the golden one with wine in his hands wash to the base; Pouring libations piously to Heracles and Alcmena, Procles and the sons of Perseus and Zeus first of all, let us drink, let us play, let our song rise through the night. Dance someone, willingly begin the festivities. And anyone who has a fair girl waiting to share his bed will drink more like a man than all the others.

(Ion, fr. 27 West = fr. 90 Leurini)

INTRODUCTION

Ion of Chios (died c.422/1 B.C.) is one of the most intriguing poets of the fifth century. As a tragedian Ion was at the centre of poetic life at Athens. A contemporary and rival to Euripides and Sophocles, he was victorious at least once at Athens and was fondly remembered after his death by Aristophanes.† Yet, to Callimachus he was also a model for versatility, composing works in both verse and prose in a bewildering array of genres.‡

The poem quoted above describes the successive stages of a symposium and, in doing so, is broadly similar to Xenophanes, fr. 1 West, with which it is quoted by Athenaeus. Like Xenophanes’ elegy, most of the content of Ion’s work is generally applicable to the experience of dining anywhere in the Greek world. This is probably deliberate if Ion envisaged re-performance at multiple symposia or on other occasions. At the same time, however, Ion seems also to evoke a specific context through the
invocation of the mysterious unnamed king of line 1. As early as 1862, Haupt concluded that the poem was composed in Sparta and contained in its opening a reference to a Spartan king. Neither claim has been universally accepted. Objections to a Spartan context tend to rely on two assumptions: first, that Ion the tragedian was too loyal to Athens to praise a Spartan king; and, second, that Spartans and their kings were too austere to contemplate the sort of drinking party Ion has in mind. Whitby has even argued on this basis that the poem was written for an international symposium held by the Eurypontid descendants of Demaratus in Asia Minor. Yet, recent years have seen a growth in interest in the performance of poetry at Sparta. In addition, it is now increasingly recognized that poets frequently presented themselves as ‘wanderers’ and, moreover, that travel could form an important part of their work in the archaic and classical periods. New and continuing research into the existence and function of networks between Greek cities should encourage us to attempt to situate Laconia within a broader circuit of Panhellenic gatherings. Ion’s Athenian connections need not automatically rule out a link to Sparta if Greek festival culture can be said to transcend political divisions and if, as I suggest, Sparta was still an important destination for wandering poets in the fifth century. It may not be inappropriate, then, to revisit this poem to see what it can tell us about Spartan μουσική and its connections with the broader Hellenic ‘song-culture’.

At stake is our understanding of both Ion’s career and Spartan society in the classical period. Sparta’s importance not only as a poetic centre but also as a destination for foreign poets alongside Athens deserves more attention than it has previously received. In the process, we should also reassess some of our assumptions regarding the

3 M. Haupt, ‘Index lectionum hibernarum 1862’, in Opuscula (Leipzig, 1876), 207–17.
4 The former objection led Wilamowitz to attribute the elegy to Ion of Samos, rather than his Chian namesake: see U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, Timotheos. Die Perser. Aus einem Papyrus von Abusir (Leipzig, 1903), 75 n. 1, and ‘Lesefrüchte’, Hermes 62 (1927), 276–98, at 282–3. This suggestion is refuted, however, by M.L. West, Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus (Berlin and New York, 1974), 173. On Ion’s connections with Athens, cf. F. Jacoby, ‘Some remarks on Ion of Chios’, CQ 41 (1947), 1–17, at 7. On Spartan austerity, cf. A. Katsaros, ‘Staging empire and other in Ion’s sympotika’, in V. Jennings and A. Katsaros (edd.), The World of Ion of Chios (Leiden, 2007), 217–60, at 225: ‘one might well wonder whether a Spartan—king or not—would have thought [this poem] entirely appropriate’. See also N.R.E. Fisher, ‘Drink, hybris and the promotion of harmony in Sparta’, in A. Powell (ed.), Classical Sparta: Techniques behind her Success (London, 1989), 26–50, at 34–5, who questioned whether the presence of foreigners may have rendered the royal sýssition less austere than usual.
5 M. Whitby, ‘An international symposium? Ion of Chios fr. 27 and the margins of the Delian League’, in E. Dąbrowa (ed.), Ancient Iran and the Mediterranean World (Krakow, 1998), 207–24, at 215, citing Xen. Hell. 3.16 and An. 2.13, 7.8.17.
6 See most recently C. Nobili, ‘Threnodic elegy in Sparta’, GRBS 51 (2011), 26–48; G. D’Alessio, ‘The name of the dithyramb: diachronic and diatopic variations’, in P. Wilson and B. Kowalzig (edd.), Dithyramb in Context (Oxford, 2013), 113–32, at 123–31; C. Nobili, ‘Performances of girls at the Spartan festival of the Hyakinthia’, in S. Moraw and A. Kieburg (edd.), Mädchen im Altertum / Girls in Antiquity (Münster, 2014), 135–48; E.L. Bowie, ‘Cultic contexts for elegiac performance’, in L. Swift and C. Carey (edd.), Iambus and Elegy: New Approaches (Oxford, 2016), 15–32, at 25–7; C. Nobili, ‘Choral elegy: the tyranny of the handbook’, in L. Swift and C. Carey (edd.), Iambus and Elegy: New Approaches (Oxford, 2016), 33–55, at 41–51.
7 See R. Hunter and I. Rutherford (edd.), Wandering Poets in Ancient Greek Culture: Travel Locality and Panhellenism (Oxford, 2009); E. Stewart, Greek Tragedy on the Move: The Birth of a Panhellenic Art Form c.500–300 B.C. (Oxford, 2017), 43–63.
8 See e.g. I. Malkin, A Small Greek World: Networks in the Ancient Mediterranean (Oxford, 2011), 3–20; C. Taylor and K. Vlassopoulos, ‘Introduction: an agenda for the study of Greek history’, in C. Taylor and K. Vlassopoulos (edd.), Communities and Networks in the Ancient Greek World (Oxford, 2015), 1–18, at 5.
performance of elegy as a genre. Since Bowie’s influential article of 1986, we have tended to divide elegiac poetry into shorter works composed for (private) symposia and longer (‘historical’) elegy designed for competitive festival performance.9 Ion’s poem, however, may evoke a third and intermediate site of performance: a public meal within the context of a (Spartan) festival. As such it serves as an excellent example of what Budelmann and Power have recently termed ‘the inbetweeness of sympotic elegy’.10

1. THE IDENTITY OF THE KING

There are two reasons generally given for locating the symposium Ion describes in Sparta: first, the choice of heroes who receive libations (lines 4–5) and, second, the opening greeting to a king (line 1).11 The libation to Procles has unmistakable resonances with the Eurypontid house of Sparta. In fact, all four libations, to Heracles, Alcmene, Procles and the sons of Perseus seem to be connected. They are related to the Heraclids, who founded kingdoms in Argos, Messenia and Laconia. Procles was the son of Aristodemus, the great grandson (according to Hdt. 6.52) of Hyllus, the son of Heracles. He and his brother Eurysthenes were twins, hence the origin of the Spartan diarchy. The libations, then, provide a subtle yet definite hint to a Laconian connection.

The same could be said of the opening line. During Ion’s lifetime, only five individuals claimed the title of king: the rulers of Persia, Macedonia, Molossia and Sparta. The libation to Procles points to the third option. The Eurypontid successor of Procles who reigned through the better part of Ion’s adult life, and is therefore the most likely candidate, is Archidamus (469–428 B.C.). This second claim—that Ion is referring to a real king of Sparta in the first line—has, however, been disputed. There are four other possibilities: a symposiarch, wine, the god of wine Dionysus and Zeus.12 The first, a symposiarch, is the least likely: as Haupt noted, the titles ‘saviour and father’ seem too strong for such an office, even though symposiasts can be addressed as ‘kings’.13 Wine, our second option, is more plausible. Elsewhere Ion himself refers to ‘the wine that is king’ (βασιλεὺς οἶνος, fr. 26.12 West). However, the identification of wine as a king is not made explicit in this fragment and again the combination of epithets tells against this possibility. If the king of our poem is a god, then Zeus is a much more likely candidate than Dionysus. Ion, in a similar elegy, does invoke ‘father Dionysus’ (πάτερ Δίονυσε, fr. 26.13 West), where he is also styled ‘leader of the hearty symposia’ (εὐθυμον συμποσίου πρύτανι, fr. 26.14 West). However, Dionysus is not one of the gods receiving libations in line 5 and this

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9 E. Bowie, ‘Early Greek elegy, symposium and public festival’, *JHS* 106 (1986), 13–35.
10 F. Budelmann and T. Power, ‘The inbetweeness of sympotic elegy’, *JHS* 133 (2013), 1–19.
11 See Haupt (n. 3), 209–10, who is followed broadly by U. Koehler, ‘Aus dem Leben des Dichters Ion’, *Hermes* 29 (1894), 156–8; Jacoby (n. 4), 7–8; G. Huxley, ‘Ion of Chios’, *GRBS* 6 (1965), 29–46, at 31–3; M.L. West, ‘Ion of Chios’, *BICS* 32 (1985), 71–8, at 74–5; Fisher (n. 4); K. Bartol, ‘Ion of Chios and the king’, *Mnemosyne* 53 (2000), 185–92, at 185–6.
12 Wine or Dionysus: F.G. Welcker, ‘Review’, *RhM* 4 (1836), 424–51, at 439–40; West (n. 4), 173; D.A. Campbell, *Greek Lyric*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, MA and London 1992), 363 n. 1; Katsaros (n. 4), 222–3; F. Valerio, *Ione di Chio. Frammenti Elegiaci e Melici* (Bologna, 2013), 86–7; Zeus: Whitby (n. 5), 210; for further bibliography, see A. Leurini, *Ionis Chii. Testimonia et Fragmenta* (Amsterdam, 2000), 53.
13 Haupt (n. 3), 210.
combination of epithets is nowhere else applied to Dionysus. The only god who is consistently styled king, saviour and father is Zeus. The king of the gods had a strong connection with the symposium. Three craters were generally drunk: the first was dedicated to the Olympians, the second to the heroes and the third to Zeus the saviour (σωτήρ).\(^\text{14}\)

The first crater could also be dedicated to Zeus.\(^\text{15}\) In Ion’s poem, we find that the first libation with which the symposium begins is made to Zeus (ἐκ Δίως ἄρχόμενοι, 6).

However, although gods can be addressed in the third person, we might expect the second person χαίρε, as is the case in Ion’s address to Dionysus in fragment 26.\(^\text{16}\) The imperative χαίρετοι is more often used dismissively in the sense of ‘let us leave him to rejoice’.\(^\text{17}\) Bartol has understood the word in this way, meaning ‘let us stop praising the king’. He sees this as a response to an earlier sympotic offering by one of Ion’s fellow guests, presumably an encomium for Archidamus.\(^\text{18}\) In addition, the possessive adjective ‘our’ (ἡμέτερος βασιλεύς) would be an unusual way to address Zeus, who is king and father of all gods and men.\(^\text{19}\) Zeus is only addressed as ‘our king’ by another god, Athena, in Homer, and in this case Zeus is understood as ‘king of the gods’.\(^\text{20}\) This, I suggest, is the exception that proves the rule.

An address to ‘our king’ would be more appropriate for a mortal ruler, and moreover one who is being compared to Zeus. The transference of Zeus’s epithets to a human ruler is easily explained. Monarchs are regularly compared to Zeus, who is their patron deity. In Homer kings are nurtured by Zeus, while in Hesiod kings come from Zeus.\(^\text{21}\) The Muses, Hesiod says, are the gods of poets and Zeus is the god of kings. In his hymn to Zeus, Callimachus (Hymn 1.79) quotes Hesiod, in order to make the same point. Mortal rulers can also be compared directly to Zeus. Cratinus compared Pericles to Zeus and Aspasia to Hera.\(^\text{22}\) Satyrus interpreted a reference to Zeus in Euripides’ poetry as an allusion to King Archelaus of Macedon.\(^\text{23}\) Xenophon similarly conflated Zeus the King and the King of Persia in the interpretation of a dream (An. 3.1.12). Theocritus (Id. 17.1–4) sets the mortal Ptolemy II next to Zeus. Moreover, the kings of Macedonia were styled as ‘saviour’ in inscriptions on a series of small altars that date, in at least some

\(^{14}\) Three craters: Eubulus, fr. 93 K.–A.; Suda Κ 2338; Zeus and libations: Callim. Hymn 1.1–3; Zeus the saviour and third libation: Pind. Isthm. 6.1–9; Σ Isthm. 6.4 (p. 251 Drachmann); Aesch. Supp. 26; Αγ. 1384–7; Ευμ. 758–9; fr. 55 TrGF; Soph. fr. 425; Αθ. Deipn. 692f–693a; Suda τ 1024; for the third libation as a metaphor in tragedy, see P. Burian, ‘ΖΕΥΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ ΤΡΙΤΟΣ and some triads in Aeschylus’ Oresteia’, AJPh 107 (1986), 332–42.

\(^{15}\) E.g. Aesch. fr. 55 TrGF; Diphilus, fr. 70 K.–A. connects the bowl of water for washing hands at the start of the meal with Zeus Soter.

\(^{16}\) Fr. 26.15 West = 89.15 Leurini. The second person is the usual form of address to gods, especially in hymns (e.g. Hymn. Hom. Bacch. 58) and elegy (e.g. Simon. fr. 11.19 West); Eur. Ion 403 is a rare exception.

\(^{17}\) E.g. Aesch. Ag. 252; Ευρ. Med. 1048, Συγ. 363–4; Theoc. Ιδ. 16.64–7.

\(^{18}\) ΖΕΥΣ ΦΙΛΕ, ΘΕΟΜΑΤΩ ΣΕ: ΣΕ ΓΙΑΡ ΠΑΝΤΕΣΙΟΝ ΟΝΗΣΙΑΣΙ, Θηγ. 372; cf. ὁ δὲ πάντων τύραννος, Gorg. fr. 11.20 DK.

\(^{19}\) ὁ πάτερ ἡμέτερος Κρονιόδη ὑπατε κρεντοντων, Ι. 8.31, Οδ. 1.45, 24.473; cf. ΖΕΥΣ ᾽ΑΘΑΝΑΤΩΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ, Θηγ. 1120, 1346.

\(^{20}\) διοτρεφέων βασιλέων, Ι. 1.176; ἐκ δὲ ΔΙΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ, Ησ. Θεος. 96; cf. Hymn. Hom. Mus. et Ap. 4.

\(^{21}\) Fr. 258 K.–A., cf. Plut. Per. 3.4; fr. 259 K.–A. See M. Heath, ‘Aristophanes and his rivals’, G&R 37 (1990), 143–58, at 148.

\(^{22}\) Fr. 911 TrGF; [Ζῆνι σμήμει[ξον] ὁρίμαν, ἱερόνον, ἱεροτοικόν ἐφιάλην τῶν ἑμοῖροι, Satyrus, F6 (p. 108 Schorn) = Ρ.Οσγ. 1176 fr. 39 col. 18. On fr. 911, see S. Schorn, Satyros aus Kallatis. Sammlung der Fragmenten mit Kommentar (Basel, 2004), 322–4.
cases, from as early as the fourth century. Theodora Jim has recently argued that private individuals used the altars for sacrifices to living monarchs, in gratitude for specific acts of benefaction or liberation. We may also note that the Spartan kings held hereditary priesthoods of Zeus (Hdt. 6.56).

Individual kings, however, only rule over their own lands, while Zeus is unique in being the supreme ruler of the cosmos: hence the qualification of the possessive adjective. Callimachus claims different kings have more power than others. He cites Ptolemy II, who has outstripped other rulers, as proof, referring as he does so to ‘our ruler’ (ἡμετέρῳ μεδεσθάντα, Hymn 1.86). In this way, Callimachus’ ‘our king’ is easily identifiable as a mortal ruler. A Spartan king is just as likely to have been referred to in this way. Ion may have been following Tyrtaeus who described the Spartan king Theopompus as ‘our king’ (ἡμετέρῳ βασιλῆ, fr. 5.1 West).

Ion’s choice of epithets for the king, when taken together, suggest that a mortal ruler, Archidamus, is meant here. Is the king actually present at the symposium? The stress laid on the fact that it is ‘our king’, together with the libations referring back to the royal line, suggest that the king is understood to be very much included in the festivities. If so, this explains the unusual third-person imperative χαίρετω as part of the series of third-person imperatives that structure the poem. Ion progresses through the various stages usual in a symposium in the usual order. The servants prepare a crater, but before the guests drink, libations are poured. Then comes the wine and its accompaniments: song, dancing and general merriment as the company become steadily more inebriated. The first thing that must happen, Ion seems to be telling us, is that the king should be welcomed into the gathering.

Such a use of the third-person is paralleled in the wedding hymn of Sappho, where it is the bridegroom whom she bids to be joyful (χαίρετω δ’ ὁ γάμβρος, fr. 117 Voigt). Rather than dismissing the king, as Bartol believed, Ion includes him as a prominent and integral part of the assembly, like a bridegroom who comes as the honoured guest to a wedding feast. This is appropriate to a Spartan context, since we are told by Herodotus that the kings were always seated and served first at any public occasion (6.57.1):

Whenever a sacrifice is held at public expense, the kings are the first to take their seats at the meal and are served first, and they distribute twice as much to each king as the other diners; and they hold the role of leaders of the libations and receive the hides of sacrificial victims.

Ion may reflect here the Spartan custom whereby the kings are seated (ἵξειν) first. This would make the references to Zeus all the more pertinent, as in Homer all the gods rise upon the entry of their king to the symposium on Olympus (II. 1.533–6). The entry of the kings must also come before the libations if they hold the privilege of leading this ritual (σπονδαρχίας). Spartan kings may at times also have fulfilled the similar role of symposiarch. Plutarch tells an anecdote in which King Agesilaus himself appears in this capacity (Apophth. Lac. 208C). That Spartans appointed symposiarchs, in common with other Greeks, is confirmed by Xenophon (An. 6.1.30).

24 For a full survey of the evidence, see T. Jim, ‘Private participation in ruler cults: dedications to Philip Sōtēr and other Hellenistic kings’, CQ 67 (2017), 429–43.
Lines 3–4 might have clarified whether the king was present at the symposium, but unfortunately the text is corrupt. Two interpretations are possible. First, the line may refer to a servant who provides the bowl of water to wash the hands of the guests. Campbell has suggested that the first omicron of οἶνον could be changed to a delta giving δίνο (a drinking goblet). This change has the advantage of contrasting the crater prepared for the assembled guests (ἡμίν δὲ κρητηρ, 2) and their silver cups with the single golden cup held by this unidentified figure. He therefore has proposed ὁ δὲ χρυσοῦν | δίνον ἐχον χεροῖν νιζέτω εἰς ἐδόφος, which he translates as ‘and let him who holds in his hands the golden jug wash our hands on to the floor’. This is possible, although the sense is still imperfect. The meaning of εἰς ἐδόφος remains uncertain, since there is no reason why the act of washing should take place on the ground.

Second, these lines may refer back to the king from line 1. In amending the text to include a golden cup, Campbell is following Haupt who went even further in restoring the line to ὁ δὲ χρυσοῦν | δίνον ἐχον χεροῖν νιζέτω εἰς ἐδραόν. In doing so he removes a single nu which could easily have been added by mistake after χεροῖν/χειρόν. Whitby attempts to retain ἐδάφος by taking ιζέτω as a transitive verb with δίνον as its object, meaning ‘while another with a golden basin in his hands sets it on its base’. However, I know of no instance where ἐδάφος is used to refer to a raised platform or stand of the kind Whitby envisages. The change from ἐδάφος (‘base’ or ‘bottom’) to ἐδραόν (‘seat’) better fits the identification of the subject in line 3 as the king, who is seated first at the meal.

Alternatively, Alan Sommerstein has suggested ἐδεος to me as a rare alternative for ‘seat’ that would better explain the corruption, while fitting the metre. The word is given by Hesychius as term for a Thessalian ‘seat’ (θρόνος). His source may have been the Hippocratic corpus, since a passage in the De Articulis uses the term ἕδος θεσσαλικὸν. Is it possible that the text of De Articulis originally read ἕδεος, but that this was mistakenly changed by a later copyist to the common form ἕδος? A similar change in Ion’s text would also explain the corruption of the line, as later editors struggled to make the verse scan. This suggestion may be speculative but at least it would make good sense as ‘may he, holding a golden cup in his hands, take his seat’. The article (ὁ δὲ) in line 3, in that case, refers back to a previous subject, the king. Ion is taking note of the Spartan custom that the king, when present, must be welcomed and seated first. The king’s cup and those of his subjects are filled in preparation for the libations, which the king will lead, as is his prerogative. The Athenian Lycurgus (Leoc. 107) knew of a tradition in which elegies, those of Tyrtaeus, were performed in the tents of Spartan kings on campaign. Perhaps Ion’s ode was similarly intended for a royal audience.

25 Campbell (n. 12), 363.
26 This phrase is generally included with verbs of destroying to mean ‘raze to the ground’: see LSJ s.v. 2.
27 Haupt (n. 3), 214; χρυσοῦν M.L.West, lambi et elegi graeci ante Alexandrum cantati, vol. II (Oxford, 1992), 80.
28 Whitby (n. 5), 209.
29 Hesych. ε 439 Latte; Hippoc. Art. 7.37. Latte amended the text to ἕδεος. However, the word is given in a list of words beginning ἐδε and the original manuscript-reading is likely to be correct.
2. WHY SPARTA?

We have seen that some connection with Sparta is highly probable given the libation to Procles. I hope to have shown that an address to a Spartan king is at least plausible, given the internal evidence of the text. But is there any reason why Ion chose to celebrate a Laconian symposium rather than a diplomatic mission to the descendants of Demaratus, as Whitby suggested? It is usually believed that he visited Sparta in the company of one of his Athenian acquaintances: either Cimon in 463 or the 450s, or Thucydides son of Melesias around 440 during a period of peace between Athens and Sparta.30 Plutarch relates an anecdote in which the fourth-century sophist Hecataeus was invited to the royal syssition, which suggests that distinguished foreigners or ambassadors could be admitted as guests.31 But what was the purpose of his journey to Sparta? Though connections with either Cimon or Thucydides might have afforded an introduction to the king, this does not explain why he made the journey in the first place. And even though Ion had met and admired Cimon in his youth, there is no evidence that the great man adopted the young and then unknown Chian as his protégé.

I suggest that he was there to attend, and most probably perform at, one of the many festivals of Laconia. The region was already celebrated in the fifth century for its long-standing tradition of festivals and choral dances.32 Most important were the three festivals for Apollo: the Hyacinthia, the Gymnopædia and the Carnea. Each of these gatherings were held over several days and seem to have involved multiple events.33 Xenophon states that the chorus of men was permitted to compete on the final day of the Gymnopædia of 371.34 Given that only one chorus is specified, it is likely, as Bölte supposed, that an uncertain number of rival choruses had performed on previous days.35 The designation of this chorus as a chorus of men (τοῦ ἀνδρικοῦ χοροῦ) points to competitions in other age-categories. Other sources refer to performances by three choruses of old men, young men and boys, but it is uncertain whether they refer to separate competitions in different age-categories or a simultaneous performance by three choruses.36 It has been suggested that Alcman’s maiden dances took place within

30 Koehler (n. 11); Jacoby (n. 4), 6–8; West (n. 11), 74.
31 Plut. Lyc. 20.2.1–3 = Apophth. Lac. 218B: Ἀρχιδαμίας δὲ μεμοριμένων τινών Ἑκαταίρων τήν σφοιστήν ὅτι παραληθέεις εἰς τὸ συσσίτων οὐδὲν ἔλεγεν, ὃ εἰδώς, ἔφη, ὅλον καὶ κατὶ οἴδεν. Jacoby, FGrHist IIIa p. 33 identifies Archidamidas with Archidamus IV; on foreigners at syssitia, see Fisher (n. 4), 34.
32 E.g. Pratinas 709 PMG = fr. 4 TrGF = Ath. Deipn. 633a; Eur. Alc. 445–52; Hel. 1465–70; Ar. Lys. 1305–15.
33 Xenophon (Hell. 6.14.16) indicates that the Gymnopædia lasted for more than one day in the fourth century. According to Polycrates (FGrHist 588 F 1), who was quoted by Didymus, the Hyacinthia lasted for three days and involved a period of ritual mourning for Hyacinthus, followed by celebrations on the second day that included musical performances, though a larger-scale event may have been held in the classical period: see N. Richer, ‘The Hyacinthia of Sparta’, in T.J. Figueira (ed.), Spartan Society (Swansea, 2004), 77–102, at 80. According to the second-century b.c. scholar Demetrius of Scepsis (fr. 1 Guede = Ath. Deipn. 141e–f), the Carnea was nine days in length, though whether this was true in the classical period is uncertain.
34 τῶν μέντοι χορον οὐκ ἔχονταν, ἀλλὰ διαγωνισθασαί εἰον, Hell. 6.14.16.
35 F. Bölte, ‘Zu lakonischen Festen’, RhlM 78 (1929), 124–43, at 126.
36 Performances by at least two choruses of men and boys are suggested by the text of Sosibius, FGrHist 595 F 4 = Ath. Deipn. 678b–c (χοροὶ δ’ εἰσίν τὸ μὲν πρὸς παιδίων, τὸ δ’ εξ ἀρίστου τοῦ ἀνδρίου), though unfortunately the text is corrupt; for the various conjectures, see Jacoby’s apparatus criticus and Bayliss’s commentary at BNJ 595 F 5. Three choruses: Polli. Onom. 4.107 = Tyrtaios, BNJ 580 T 16, τριχορίαν δὲ Τυρταίος ἔστησε, τρεῖς Λακώνων χοροὺς, καθ’ ἤλικιαν ἔκκαστην, παιδίας
a competition. The Dorian phylae may have provided the competing choruses, a form of organization perhaps alluded to by Alcman.

In addition, the fifth-century or fourth-century inscription of Damonon lists athletic contests at no fewer than nine festivals held in Laconia or its environs. One of these, the Paparonia, held in the contested area of the Thyreatis, is said by Hesychius to be a site for choral performance. Another site of Damonon’s victories is a celebration for Athena, conceivably connected to the temple of Athena Chalkioikos on the Spartan Acropolis. If so, it is possible that the chorus of Euripides Helen are referring to this festival when they imagine the heroine rejoining the Leucippidae before the temple of Pallas (πρὸ ναοῦ | Παλλάδος, 1466–7). The ode to Athena at the close of Aristophanes’ Lysistrata (1320–1) may similarly allude to choral performances for the goddess. Finally, it has been suggested that the Eleusinia, a sanctuary dedicated to Demeter and the site of yet another family victory, also played host to dithyrambs sung by female choruses.

The Laconian sanctuaries of Artemis are likely to have hosted choral performances from the archaic period. In Pausania’s time, choruses of maidens performed annually (κατὰ ἔτος, 3.10.7) at the shrine of Artemis at Caryae. Pausanias (4.16.9) believed that these dances dated as far back as the wars against Aristomenes in the seventh century. This notion receives support from Athenaeus’ reference to a work by the early fifth-century poet Pratinas, entitled Καρύατιδες or Δυμαίναι, which may well have concerned this festival (Ath. Deipn. 392f=711 PMG=TrGF I 4 F 1). The Dymainai, one of the Dorian tribes, appear in Alcman as chorus members, while the term is also applied by Hesychius to female Bacchic dancers in Sparta. Similar maiden dances are likely to have taken place, perhaps from the time of Alcman, at the sanctuaries of Artemis Orthia, of Artemis Limnatis on the Messenian border and conceivably also at those of Artemis Corythalia at Cleta and of Helen at Therapnae.
This summary is by no means exhaustive and, in any case, our evidence is hardly sufficient for a complete survey. Yet, it should be evident that musical performances and competitions were a frequent occurrence throughout the Spartan year, much as they were at Athens. At this point we may wonder how the Lacedaemonians maintained such a busy festival programme. The question is all the more pressing, because we know of no native Spartan poets from the classical period. Athenaeus and other later authors do at least indicate that by their time the Spartans possessed a substantial corpus of traditional Laconian ‘old songs’. Some later re-performances of local poems could have taken place at festivals, as Polycrates and Sosibius suggest in their accounts of the Hyacinthia and the Gymnopaedia respectively. Pausanias similarly states that the dance of the maidens at Caryae was of a peculiarly ‘local’ kind. He also mentions a Spartan Gitiadas, the creator of the statue of Athena, who also composed Dorian songs and a hymn to the goddess. Yet, although re-performances of traditional music may have provided Spartan festivals with a distinctive local character in the Hellenistic and the Roman eras, it seems improbable that the old songs alone could have been enough for so many choral performances each year and in all periods.

It is likely, therefore, that the Spartans depended to some extent on foreign poets and musicians. In hosting festivals, few cities can be said to have relied purely on local talent alone. At the Athenian contests, a substantial proportion of the poets who directed the choruses, as well as the aulos-players who accompanied the dancing, were non-citizens. In his list of dithyrambic poets, Sutton includes only six Athenians from the classical period. By contrast, we know of as many as twenty non-citizens who were active at Athens. Like Athens, Sparta could have offered the aspiring poet a range of opportunities to display his abilities.

One might object that Sparta was not the same as Athens and that we need to take into account not only the possibility of Spartan exceptionalism but also ancient reports of Laconian hostility towards foreigners, particularly artisans and other specialists. Yet, there is good evidence that foreigners could attend Spartan festivals in the classical period. A spin-off of Laconian hostility towards foreigners, particularly artisans and other specialists, was the claim of Spartan uniqueness: see S. Hodkinson, Ancient Sparta: A Re-Examination of the Evidence (Manchester, 2003), 402.

44 Some later re-performances of local poems could have taken place at festivals, as Polycrates and Sosibius suggest in their accounts of the Hyacinthia and the Gymnopaedia respectively. Pausanias similarly states that the dance of the maidens at Caryae was of a peculiarly ‘local’ kind. He also mentions a Spartan Gitiadas, the creator of the statue of Athena, who also composed Dorian songs and a hymn to the goddess. Yet, although re-performances of traditional music may have provided Spartan festivals with a distinctive local character in the Hellenistic and the Roman eras, it seems improbable that the old songs alone could have been enough for so many choral performances each year and in all periods.

45 Alcmane e l’amore omoerotico femminile nei tiasi spartani’, QUCC 22 (1976), 59–67, who proposed Aphrodite, and C. Calame, Les chœurs de jeunes filles en Grèce archaique II: Alcman (Rome, 1977), 121–8, who argues for the cult of Helen at the Platanistas. Artemis Limnatis: see Paus. 4.4.2, Strabo 8.4.9, Calame (n. 37), 142–9; dancers for Corythalia: see Hesych. κ 3689 Latte: κουβαλίστρον οί κορεύουσι τῇ Κορυθαλίᾳ θεά; for Artemis Corythalia: see Paus. 3.18.6; for the festival of Tithenidia at Artemis Corythalia: see Polemon, fr. 86 = Ath. Deipn. 139a, Calame (n. 37), 169–71; Therapnae: see Alcman, fr. 7 PMGF, Calame (n. 37), 193–201.

46 There is no evidence that by their time the Spartans possessed a substantial corpus of traditional Laconian ‘old songs’. Some later re-performances of local poems could have taken place at festivals, as Polycrates and Sosibius suggest in their accounts of the Hyacinthia and the Gymnopaedia respectively. Pausanias similarly states that the dance of the maidens at Caryae was of a peculiarly ‘local’ kind. He also mentions a Spartan Gitiadas, the creator of the statue of Athena, who also composed Dorian songs and a hymn to the goddess. Yet, although re-performances of traditional music may have provided Spartan festivals with a distinctive local character in the Hellenistic and the Roman eras, it seems improbable that the old songs alone could have been enough for so many choral performances each year and in all periods.

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48 D.F. Sutton, Ancient Sparta: Comparative Approaches (Swansea, 2009), 417–72; ξενηλασία: Ar. Av. 1012–13, Thuc. 1.144.2, Xen. Lac. Pol. 14.4; for full references, see T.J. Figueira, ‘Xenelasia and social control in classical Sparta’, CQ 53 (2003), 44–74, 45 n. 6; absence of foreigners owing to a lack of currency: Plut. Lyc. 9.3–4; cf. Arist. Pol. 1272b15–20. Figueira has argued that this did not amount to a sustained policy of xenophobia that could prevent foreigners from visiting Sparta; see also K.M.T. Chrimes, Ancient Sparta: A Re-Examination of the Evidence (Manchester,
period. Xenophon records that a certain Lichas became famous for hosting foreign visitors at the time of the Gymnopaedia.\(^{51}\) Plutarch, in noting that the news of the defeat at Leuctra arrived while the festival was being held, claims that the city was full of foreigners (\(\xi\varepsilon\nu\nu\nu\nu\, \omicron\upsilon\sigma\alpha\, \mu\varepsilon\sigma\tau\iota\), \textit{Ages.} 29.2) while the choruses were performing in the theatre. As at the Athenian festivals, some of these foreigners may have been present in an official capacity. Thucydides (5.23.4–5) states that the truce in 421 between Sparta and Athens was to be renewed each year, with the cities sending delegations to the Spartan Hyacinthia and the Athenian Dionysia respectively. These festivals were chosen presumably because both the Hyacinthia and the Dionysia were attended by international visitors from allied states. The same logic is likely to lie behind the decision to publicize the treaty with \textit{stelae} at the Panhellenic sanctuaries at Olympia, Delphi and the Isthmus (5.18.10).

Laconian xenophobia does not seem then to have extended to Sparta’s festivals. This is hardly surprising, since gatherings of this kind were one of the few places where Greeks from hostile polities could regularly meet. Similarly, poets and athletes regularly travelled unmolested through the territory of warring cities.\(^{52}\) But is there any evidence to suggest that foreign poets actually came to Sparta to compete? Later sources credit the establishment of the great Laconian festivals entirely to outsiders. Terpander, from Lesbos, was known as the first victor of the Spartan Carnea, which was believed to have been founded in the first quarter of the seventh century.\(^{53}\) According to pseudo-Plutarch (\textit{[De mus.]} 1134B–C), a second generation of foreign poets, which included Thaletas of Crete, Xenodamus of Cythera, Xenocritus of Locri and Sacadas of Argos, were associated with the establishment of the Gymnopaedia. Although these traditions are mostly recorded in later sources, the founding myths date to at least the fifth century. The fifth-century historian Hellanicus of Mytilene recorded Terpander’s success in his catalogue of victors at the Carnea (\textit{FGrHist} 4 F 85a). The existence of such a work suggests that the Carnea was recognized as an ancient festival of Panhellenic importance by the fifth century.

Hellanicus’ catalogue may also have been designed both to celebrate the success of performers from his home-island of Lesbos and to justify their continuing special status at Sparta in the citharodic contest. One fifth-century poet who is likely to have cultivated this myth is Aristocleitus, or Aristocleides, who was active at around the time of the Persian Wars and is said to have claimed descent from Terpander.\(^{54}\) According to the Aristotelian \textit{Sp. Constitution} (fr. 545 Rose), both he and Terpander were connected with the saying ‘after the Lesbian poet’. This is attested first by Cratinus (fr. 263 K.–A.) and was explained as a reference to the right of the descendants of Terpander to compete first at Sparta. Phrynis of Mytilene, another performer from Lesbos and pupil of Aristocleitus, is said to have performed at Sparta. Plutarch illustrates Spartan conservatism in music by an anecdote, in which an ephor threatens to cut the additional

\(^{51}\) \textit{Mem.} 1.2.61; cf. Plut. \textit{Cim.} 10.5.

\(^{52}\) Note, for example, that the actor Aristodemus was sent as an Athenian ambassador to Philip in the fourth century because of his easy access to the king owing to his profession (\(διά τήν \gammaνόσν και \φιλανθρωπίαν τής \τέχνης\), \textit{Aeschin.} 2.15.8–9).

\(^{53}\) Hellanicus, \textit{FGrHist} 4 F 85a = Ath. \textit{Deipn.} 635e–f; date: Sosibios, \textit{FGrHist} 595 F 3= Ath. \textit{Deipn.} 635e–f.

\(^{54}\) \textit{Σ Ar.} Nub. 971a (Holwerda I 3.1 p. 187); \textit{Suda} φ 761.
strings off the lyre belonging to Phrynis. This story is likely to be apocryphal, since he applies the same anecdote to Terpander and Timotheus of Miletus, the leading poet of the New Music (Inst. Lac. 238C). Yet, it is an example of how legends surrounding earlier legendary poets from the archaic period could be transferred to fifth-century performers. As Power has suggested, later citharodes were probably responsible for propagating these myths, as part of an attempt to situate themselves within an older and grander tradition.

The story of how Thaletas cured the Spartans of plague was also told by Pratinas of Phlius, a contemporary of Aeschylus. Pseudo-Plutarch uses this anecdote to illustrate the capacity of music to benefit a city, and it is possible that Pratinas may have drawn a similar moral from his tale. The career of Pratinas seems to have resembled that of Ion in the following generation. At Athens, he was a foreigner who also produced tragedies. At the same time, he seems to have composed non-dramatic lyric poetry and may have had links with Sparta. In addition to the work Δυσμαίναι or Καρυτίδες, which is likely to have involved Spartan chorale poetry in some way, he is known to have celebrated the Spartan chorale tradition with his reference to ‘the Laconian cicada, well suited for the chorus’.

In Bacchylides’ sixth dithyramb we may possess at least one example of a poem intended for performance by a Spartan chorus. Its opening lines allude to a dance by Spartan maidens (20.1–3 = Dith. 6 Maehler):

\[ \Sigmaπάρτας ποτ’ ἐν ἐ[ὐρυχ]ῶρῳ ξανθὰ | Ἄκεθα|μονίοιν τοιόνδε μὲλος κ[ε]λάδησαν παρθένοι
Once in Sparta [of the wide dancing grounds] golden haired [maidens?] of the Spartans [sang?] such a song.

The papyrus preserves the title ‘Idas for the Spartans’ (Ἰδας Λακεδαιμονίως). Idas is associated with the abduction of Marpessa from a chorus and, in one tradition, with the story of the first rape of Helen (usually attributed to Theseus). Bacchylides’ poem appears to have concerned Marpessa. As Maehler has noted, such a theme would be suitable for performance at Sparta, given the association of the cults of Artemis at Caryae and other sanctuaries with myths of rape. A scholium on the Alcman papyrus notes that the Spartans in the time of its author used foreign poets / chorus-trainers.

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55 Agis 799F–800A; Apophth. Lac. 220C; De prof. virt. 84A.
56 T. Power, The Culture of Kitharôidia (Washington, DC, 2010), 320–3.
57 Pratinas, fr. 713iii PMG = Plut. [De mus.] 1146B.
58 See TrGF 1.8.
59 See Plut. [De mus.] 1133E, 1134C, 1146B, where he is cited primarily as an authority on lyric poetry. His largest extant fragment is described by Athenaeus (Deipn. 617B) as a hyporchêma. R. Seaforth, ‘The “hyporchêma” of Pratinas’, Maia 29–30 (1977–8), 81–94, at 84–94 argued that it forms part of a chorus from a satyr play.
60 Δάκων ὁ τέττις εὔτυκος ἐς χορόν, fr. 4 TrGF = 709 PMG = Ath. Deipn. 633a.
61 Marpessa: Ίδας ὁ Ἀφράτης καὶ ἄρτάσας ἐς χοροῦ ἐφηγεν, Plut. Parallel. Min. 315Ε; Helen: Plut. Thes. 31.1. The Helen episode was depicted on the throne at Amyclae (Paus. 3.18.15), while the cult of Helen was prominent at Sparta and may have been honoured with choruses; see Calame (n. 37), 197–201.
62 H. Maehler, Bacchylides: A Selection (Cambridge, 2004), 219; see also D. Fearn, Bacchylides: Politics, Performance, Poetic Tradition (Oxford, 2007), 226–34, who prefers one of the Spartan festivals for Apollo.
63 καὶ νῦν ἐπὶ [ξε]νικῷ κέρατῳ τα μεθοσκάλῳ χοροῦ. P.Oxy. 2506 fr. 1 col. 3.37–8; for the text, see G. Bastianini, Alcman. Commentaria et Lexica Graeca in Papyris Reperta (Berlin, 2013), 143.
The Bacchylides dithyramb suggests that this was indeed the case in the fifth century. Moreover if, as is argued by Bowie and Nobili, Simonides’ elegy on the battle of Plataea was another work composed for a Spartan audience, then perhaps Bacchylides accompanied his uncle on the journey from Ceos to the banks of the Eurotas.64

While the evidence is admittedly far from conclusive, it is conceivable that for Ion, as perhaps for Pratinas and Bacchylides, both Athens and Sparta formed important centres in a network of festivals covered by travelling poets, tourists and pilgrims. They, like their forebears in the archaic period, were probably attracted, as Nobili has put it, ‘by the long series of musical festivals which characterized Spartan religious life and by the enlightened community which gave much importance to music’.65 He is likely to have toured some of these festivals from early on in his career. In his Epidemae, Ion recalled a conversation he had had with Aeschylus while watching the boxing at the Isthmian games. This must have taken place before Aeschylus’ final departure for Sicily at some point after 458.66 It may therefore have coincided with a visit to Athens in the 460s, where in his youth Ion attended a banquet at which Cimon was also present.67 Ion could easily have extended such a tour to include Sparta, either on this occasion or later in his career. It may be significant that the Isthmia took place in the spring, roughly between the Athenian Dionysia and the Spartan Hyacinthia.68

3. DINING AT FESTIVALS

Let us now return to the poem with which we began. We have seen that if Ion did visit Sparta it was most likely on the occasion of one of the great Laconian festivals. Yet, fr. 27 West describes the progress of a symposium. Those who have accepted the likelihood of a Spartan context have assumed that we have here a description of the royal syssition, to which Ion gained access as a friend of a prominent Athenian. There is, however, another possibility: that Ion is recalling the king’s presence at a public meal held as part of a city festival.

We have already noted the special privileges granted to the Spartan kings on the occasion of a public sacrifice (θυσίη τις δημοτελής, Hdt. 6.57.1). Foreigners appear to have also partaken of such meals and sacrifices. Cratinus (fr. 175 K.–A.) mentions a type of Spartan meal (κοπίς) held in tents at which foreigners would be feasted. This fragment is preserved by Athenaeus (Deipn. 138e) in a discussion of Spartan dining-practices. It is followed by a lengthy description of the Hyacinthia festival.69 Another quotation from a fifth-century comic poet, Epilycus, indicates that a feast, which Athenaeus terms a κοπίς, is to take place at the temple of Apollo in Amyclae: the location of the Hyacinthia.70 The Carnea also involved feasting in tent-like structures

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64 See Nobili (n. 6 [2011]), 26–7; Bowie (n. 6), 25–7.
65 Nobili (n. 6 [2011]), 41–2.
66 Plut. De prof. virt. 79E = FGrHist 392 F 22 = T3 and fr. 108 Leurini. See West (n. 11), 72.
67 Plut. Cim. 9.1–5 = FGrHist 392 F 13 = fr. 106 Leurini. Jacoby (n. 4), 1–2 dates this visit to the 460s in the period between the battle of the Eurymedon and Cimon’s exile. He suggests 465 for the dinner at Laomedon’s house; cf. T.B.L. Webster, ‘Sophocles and Ion of Chios’, Hermes 71 (1936), 263–74, at 264. Leurini (n. 12), 68 favours an earlier date around 477/6.
68 Isthmia: Thuc. 8.7–9; Hyacinthia and Isthmia: Xen. Hell. 4.5.11; see Richer (n. 33), 85.
69 139d–f = Polycrates, FGrHist 588 F 1.
70 ἐν Ἀμύκλαισιν παρ’ Ἀπέλλα, fr. 4 K.–A.; cf. Polemon, fr. 86 Preller = Ath. Deipn. 138f ἐπὶν ἀεὶ κοπίζωσι, πρῶτον μὲν δὴ σκηνής ποιώνται παρὰ τὸν θεόν. Hyacinthia: Thuc. 5.23.5; Paus. 3.19.1–5;
in which, according to a Hellenistic epigram by Trypho, Terpes (or Terpander of Lesbos?) was singing when he died from choking on a fig.\textsuperscript{71} There is no reason why Ion’s description of a symposium would have been inappropriate for a Spartan audience in the fifth century. Communal drinking was as important to Spartan society as any other Greek city, though with certain modifications designed to discourage total inebriation and a loss of self-control.\textsuperscript{72} In the Spartan ‘mirage’, as it is presented to us by Xenophon and Plutarch, Spartans are exceptional not for eschewing wine but for being moderate drinkers.

Large-scale public meals of this kind were a common part of festivals elsewhere in the Greek world. They also seem to have imitated the practices of the symposium and included the drinking of wine.\textsuperscript{73} A symposium, with the priest of Dionysus in attendance, takes place as part of the rural Dionysia in Aristophanes’ \textit{Acharnians} (1085–94). Cnemon in Menander’s \textit{Dyscolus} (448–9) imagines that those wishing to sacrifice at a rural shrine for the Nymphs will bring jars of wine (σταμνα) with them for their own consumption. According to Athenaeus (\textit{Deipn.} 3f), Ion awarded each of the Athenians with a present of wine following his victory at the Dionysia. In the first century A.D. a similar allowance of free wine was granted to those gathered for the festival of Apollo Ptoios in Boeotia.\textsuperscript{74} Public dining-rooms have been discovered at the sanctuary of Heracles on Thasos, among other sites: Bowie has suggested that shorter elegies could have been performed there following the main festival contest.\textsuperscript{75}

Elegy had been performed at festival competitions from the archaic period. It is likely that such poems were also recited at symposia held as part of public festivals. In another fragment of elegy Ion praises Dionysus (and his wine) as the \textit{raison d’être} for foreign sages (or poets?) in precisely these types of venues (fr. 26.2–3 West):

\[
\alphaυη \gammaαρ \ προφασεις \ παντοδαπων \ λογιων, \\
\nu τε \ Πανελληνων \ αγοραι \ θαλιαι \ τε \ ανακτων
\]

For this is the reason for learned men from all parts, where there are Panhellenic gatherings and the banquets of rulers (transl. Campbell).\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{71} Trypho, \textit{Anth. Pal.} 9.488 = \textit{FGE} 380–3. σκιάδες: Ath. \textit{Deipn.} 141e; Pettersson (n. 70), 57.

\textsuperscript{72} These include the prohibition of toasts (Critias, fr. B 6.1–4 DK) and the rule that Spartiates were not allowed to leave the \textit{syssition} with a torch (Xen. \textit{Lac.} 5.4–7; Plut. \textit{Lyc.} 15.3). See A. Rabinowitz, ‘Drinking from the same cup. Sparta and late archaic commensality’, in S. Hodkinson (ed.), \textit{Sparta. Comparative Approaches} (Swansea, 2009), 113–91.

\textsuperscript{73} For arguments against any rigid distinction between the ‘private’ symposium and the ‘public’ festival banquet, see P. Schmitt Pantel, ‘Sacrificial meal and symposium: two models of civic institutions in the archaic city’, in O. Murray (ed.), \textit{Sympotica: A Symposium on the Symposion} (Oxford, 1990), 14–33; M. Vetta, ‘Convivialità pubblica e poesia per simposio in Grecia’, \textit{QUCC} 54 (1996), 197–209, at 203–4.

\textsuperscript{74} IG VII 2712.64–7; see P. Schmitt Pantel, \textit{La Cité au Banquet: Histoire des Repas Publics dans les Cités Grecques} (Rome, 1992), 343.

\textsuperscript{75} Bowie (n. 6), 23–4.

\textsuperscript{76} On line 2, \textit{λογίων} could conceivably be neuter plural meaning ‘learned speeches’. However, it more probably refers to poets / sages in the masculine. For such a use, see Pind. \textit{Pyth.} 1.94, \textit{Nem.} 6.45; Hdt. 1.1.1 and 2.3.1. This is the view taken by most editors: Leurini (n. 12), 50: ‘\textit{viri res gestas dicendi periti}’; Valerio (n. 12), 69; cf. Wilamowitz (n. 4), 279–81; Katsaros (n. 4), 229–30. The meaning of line 3 is similarly uncertain. I follow Edmonds’s conjecture, also printed by Campbell, of \textit{ἠ} West (fr. 26), Leurini (fr. 89) and Valerio (fr. 1) preserve the original manuscript-reading \textit{α}. Leurini (n. 12), 98 translates this sentence as ‘e da allora vi sono riunioni panelleniche e feste di re’.
Ion here juxtaposes festivals and meals at which rulers are present. A passage attributed to Theognis suggests that his works may also be re-performed in similar contexts (Thgn. 236–8 West):

σοὶ μὲν ἐγὼ πτέρ’ ἐδώκα, σὺν οἷα ἐπ’ ἀπείρονα πόντον
πλήθησι καὶ γὴν πᾶσαν ἀειρόμενος
ῥηθὼς. θοίνης δὲ καὶ εἰλαπίνησι παρέσσῃ
ἐν πάσαις, πολλῶν κείμενος ἐν στόμασιν,

I have given you wings, with which you will fly, rising with ease, across the boundless sea and all the earth. And you will be at every banquet and feast, lying on the tongues of many.

It is often assumed that Theognis is referring here to re-performance at the symposium in general. Yet, as Budelmann and Power note, the words θοίνης δὲ καὶ εἰλαπίνησι point to ‘a more public and more large-scale event than the symposium’. They suggest that what Theognis has in mind here is the later celebration of Cyrnus in choral lyric or festival contests of elegy sung to the aulos: ‘symptotic elegy, Theognis’ claim would be, turns into public elegy’. But why can symptotic elegy not be public elegy, especially if it is performed at a festival meal? In bidding the assembled company to prepare for dinner, Ion’s poem might perhaps be an ideal work with which to round off a musical contest.

CONCLUSION

Fr. 27 West is best understood within the context of a Spartan festival, perhaps one of the great Laconian gatherings for Apollo. It certainly evokes a Spartan event and probably contains an address to an actual Euryponid king, almost certainly Archidamus. Ion may perhaps also allude to the honours and privileges due to Spartan kings at public sacrifices. Sparta would be a natural destination for Ion given its large festivals and long-established tradition of choral performance. He would also be following a pattern well established by previous generations of itinerant poets, including Pindar and Simonides, who commonly portrayed themselves as guests at the tables of great men. This poem is thus but one piece of evidence for Laconia’s importance as a Panhellenic centre that attracted both spectators and performers from across the Greek world.

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77 Budelmann and Power (n. 10), 4.