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ERATOSTHENES ON PLATO COMICUS: DIDASCALIAE OR PARABASIS?

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- 44 φ[ηcì δὲ]¹ καὶ Ἐρατοcθέ-
νης περὶ Πλάτωνoc ὅτι
ἕωc μὲν [ἄλ]λοic ἐδίδου τὰc
κωμωιδίαιc εὐδοκίμει, δι'
48 αὐτοῦ δὲ πρῶτον διδάξαc
τοὺc Ῥαβδούχοuc καὶ γενό-
μενοc τέταρτοc ἀπεώcθη
πάλιν εἰc τοὺc Ληναϊκοὺc.

E. Lobel's publication of P. Oxy. 2737 in 1968 was followed by a number of articles focusing mainly on the interpretation of column ii lines 10-17.² Because of its apparent relevance to official procedures of dramatic production in fifth century Athens, this fragment was greeted with an understandably great amount of enthusiasm. On the one hand, the statement that Plato placed fourth with his *Rabdouchoi* supplied Luppe with corroborating evidence for his thesis that the number of comic entries was never reduced from five to three as had previously been assumed on the basis of information in the hypotheses to Aristophanes' plays.³ On the other, Gelzer, Mastromarco and Sutton deduce a rule or some other kind of official procedure which the archons followed when awarding choruses to comic poets. Their hypotheses depend on the biographical notice that Plato was "driven back to the Lenaea" after failing with *Rabdouchoi*.⁴ Indeed a significant amount of literary history seems to hang on the interpretation of this fragment. The scholiast included these remarks to explain an Aristophanic passage⁵ and attached to both pieces of evidence the name Eratosthenes, a man whose distinction among Alexandrian scholars, not to mention his treatise in at least twelve books entitled Περὶ τῆc ἀρχαίαιc κωμωιδίαιc, has instilled confidence as to the veracity of the information contained in the papyrus. Furthermore, the inclusion of the previously unattested title *Rabdouchoi* and the notice of its fourth place showing give further reason to believe that our evidence here derives from the most dependable kind of sources, namely the Aristotelian didascaliae.

Despite these signals of an authoritative background, in the most recent treatment of the problem Rosen concludes that Eratosthenes based his comments on information he found in a parabasis of Plato's in which the poet spoke at length on a professional misfortune that was unique to his own career and involved the decision of a single archon (*ZPE* 76 [1989] 223-8, esp. 226-8). Rosen's focus on a single Platonic event has the merit of avoiding complications that exist in all reconstructions of an actual rule. I subscribe to Rosen's position with few reservations and wish, in the first place, to offer support for his conclusions by reintroducing Fraenkel's identification of *Peisandros* as the play from which Eratosthenes' comment derives. Based on this identification I then hope to account for one feature of Eratosthenes' statement which remains a potential objection to Rosen's argument. By this I mean the apparent evidence of didascalie research. Though not without its own problems,⁶ Eratosthenes' didascalie re-

¹ Luppe (*APF* 21 [1971] 105) is quoted in the apparatus of Kassel and Austin's edition (*PCG* III.2 Aristophanes fr. 590).

² All further references to the papyrus are according to the text in *PCG*.

³ W. Luppe, *Philologus* 116 (1972) 53-75, esp. 55-6. His thesis is slowly replacing previous dogma, e.g. N. Dunbar, *Aristophanes, Birds* (Oxford 1995) 480-1; D. M. MacDowell, *Aristophanes and Athens* (Oxford 1995) p. 9. For criticism see N. Slater, *ZPE* 74 (1988) 43-57 and Luppe's response, *ZPE* 77 (1989) 18-20.

⁴ T. Gelzer, "Aristophanes", *RE Suppl.* XII (1970) col. 1564; G. Mastromarco, *RhM* 121 (1978) 19-34, and *ZPE* 51 (1983) 29-35; D. F. Sutton, *BASP* 13 (1976) 125-7 and *ZPE* 38 (1980) 59-63. For criticism cf. Luppe's responses, *ZPE* 46 (1982) 147-59 and 54 (1984) 15-16.

⁵ The play has been identified as *Anagyros*, cf. W. Luppe, *ZPE* 11 (1973) 275-88.

⁶ Since inscriptional evidence and ancient testimonia provide no support for the inclusion of procedural matters in di-

search has been played as a trump card by adherents of the rule theory. However, I believe these elements can be explained completely within the context of an ancient commentary on the *Peisandros* parabasis. Finally, I will propose an alternative context for Plato's biographical comment to that of an archon's refusal of a chorus.

Rosen's suspicion of a parabasis lurking behind Eratosthenes' statement was already acknowledged to varying degrees by previous commentators (e. g. W. Luppe, *ZPE* 46 [1982] 155-6), and in his publication of the papyrus Lobel included in a footnote Fraenkel's suggestion that Eratosthenes "derived his information from the παράβασις of the Πείσανδρος" (p. 44 n. 1). However, apart from passing mention here and there,⁷ in the three decades of scholarship following the papyrus' publication no one seems to have given this proposition the attention it deserves. Since Fraenkel's theory was never worked out fully, the following paragraphs will set out the evidence for this connection.

Fraenkel's hypothesis was inspired by a cluster of texts explaining the proverb Ἀρκάδας μιμούμενος, now collected under Plato fr. 106 in the edition of Kassel and Austin (*PCG* VII). The fullest of these by Photius reads as follows: παροιμία ἣ κέχρηται Πλάτων ἐν Πεισάνδρῳ. ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλοις ταλαιπωρούντων. μαχιμώτατοι γὰρ ὄντες αὐτοὶ μὲν οὐδέποτε ἰδίαν νίκην ἐνίκησαν, ἄλλοις δὲ αἴτιοι νίκης πολλοῖς ἐγένοντο. καὶ ὁ Πλάτων οὖν διὰ τὸ τὰς κωμωιδίας αὐτὸς ποιῶν ἄλλοις παρέχειν διὰ πένιαν Ἀρκάδας μιμεῖσθαι ἔφη. Since these scholia indicate that Plato used the proverb in reference to a professional arrangement whereby he allowed others to produce his plays for him,⁸ the likely inference is that this fragment belongs to the play's parabasis. Perhaps Plato discussed his career in the manner of Aristophanes in the five earliest surviving comedies. As can be seen, the details of his career to which Plato here alludes have a direct correlation with the statement attributed to Eratosthenes in the papyrus. In both cases it is stated that Plato made use of associates who produced his plays for him. Similarities in wording support this connection: Pl. fr. 106 KA, τὰς κωμωιδίας... ἄλλοις παρέχειν (ἐκ-διδόναι Eust.); Ar. fr. 590.46-7 KA, ἄλλοις ἐδίδου τὰς κωμωιδίας.⁹ Though the rather non-specific nature of these phrases and the absence of any really striking diction common to both passages prevents

dascal records (cf. J. C. Gibert, *CQ* 47 [1997] 88) the issue of Eratosthenes' knowledge of a rule turned to the possibility of a deduction based either on a more limited consideration of parabolic material (W. Luppe, *APF* 21 [1971] 106 and *ZPE* 46 [1982] 155-6) or a systematic appraisal of the didascal entries in their entirety (G. Mastromarco, *RhM* 121 [1978] 22, cf. D. F. Sutton, *ZPE* 38 [1980] 60). Eratosthenes' didascal fragments from his work on comedy are few in number (explicit only in fr. 7, 38, 48, 97 of Strecker's edition (*De Lycophrone, Euphronio, Eratosthene comicorum interpretibus* [Greifswald 1884]) and, far from supporting the hypothesis of a systematic examination, provide evidence only for queries of a restricted nature.

⁷ E.g. Mastromarco, *RhM* 121 (1978) 23 n. 6, Luppe *ZPE* 46 (1982) 154 n. 18.

⁸ For the meaning of διὰ τὸ τὰς κωμωιδίας κ.τ.λ. compare *Σ W.* 1020 where it is clear from *Σ* 1018a and 1019b that the scholiast has in mind producers.

⁹ Halliwell notes the similarities, but rejects the connection between the two fragments, *GRBS* 30 (1989) 524-6. Halliwell distinguishes the two passages by arguing that in Eratosthenes' statement the professional relationship is that of using producers while in fr. 106 the note of subservience (ἐπὶ τῶν ταλαιπωρούντων) points to a time when Plato was an anonymous author or coauthor. His arguments largely depend on the term εὐδοκίμει (which, contrary to Halliwell I think an ancient scholar was more likely to use when extrapolating generally from a text, e.g. *Σ Kn.* 521 and 526), and also on a comparison to features in the early career of Aristophanes. (For Halliwell's view on Aristophanes' early career see "Aristophanes' Apprenticeship", *CQ* 30 [1980] 33-45 *contra* D. M. MacDowell, *Aristophanes and Athens* [Oxford 1995] 34-41 with bibliography.) While it is just possible that Aristophanes' κωμωιδικὰ πολλά (*Wasps* 1020) permits the interpretation "comic material rather than whole plays" (Halliwell, *CQ* 30 (1980) 40, but see also *Wasps* 1047 for an ambiguous term referring to *Clouds*), the testimonia on Plato in fr. 106 state quite clearly that he wrote and handed over complete plays: τὰς κωμωιδίας αὐτὸς ποιῶν ἄλλοις παρέχειν, as Aristophanes did with his first complete plays. With Aristophanes where we have several connected passages from his plays, there is enough information to at least argue that the ancient commentators were wrong in taking the references as allusions to producerships. However in Plato's case we have only scholiastic testimonia and therefore it would be haphazard to adopt the same premise in trying to get beyond their statements as does Halliwell in his treatment of the proverb τετράδι γενέσθαι (*GRBS* 30 [1989] 521-2). I therefore see no reason to distinguish the two passages on Plato. Rather, I might suggest that comparison of Aristophanes' ἐπικουρῶν κρύβδην ἐτέροις ποιηταῖς (*Wasps* 1018, an important element in Halliwell's argument [*CQ* 30 (1980) 37-8]) might look to the same reference point as Plato's allusion to the Arcadians as ἐπικούροι, i.e. to producerships and not coauthorship. In general, comic distortion is an element not adequately accounted for in Halliwell's arguments.

a conclusive appraisal of their shared dependence on the parabasis of *Peisandros*, these similarities are curious, especially if, as appears to be the case, the two passages derive from separate traditions of ancient scholarship: Eratosthenes' apparently from exegetical discussion of a matter concerning Plato's biography; that of fr. 106 from paroemiographic sources. Taken separately the similarities of the two passages might be explained as merely coincidence, but their combined evidence points to derivation from the same source. *Prima facie* there is good reason to believe that some connection exists between Eratosthenes' statement and the parabasis of *Peisandros*.

The points of comparison do not end here. The central issue of both passages focuses on Plato's victories and losses as they depend on his role in the production of his comedies. Eratosthenes speaks explicitly of Plato's fine record of success while he allowed others to produce his comedies in contrast to his fortunes when he produced *Rabdouchoi* on his own. The sources for fr. 106 provide a parallel relationship in Plato's use of the proverb "imitating the Arcadians" who, according to the testimonia, likewise never won a victory on their own, but were responsible for the victories of others in acting as ἐπίκουροι. In *Peisandros* Plato evidently used the proverb of the Arcadians as a metaphor for his professional career, but it may be that in designating the phrase a παροιμία, the scholiasts misrepresent the situation slightly.

In the first place none of them demonstrate the least knowledge of any other poet or author but Plato using this phrase. Historically, the Arcadians were famous for hiring themselves out as ἐπίκουροι,¹⁰ so it is likely that any proverb would derive from this essential fact. This might be reflected in the sources for fr. 106 in the way their explanations all begin with the restricted comment that the proverb refers to those toiling away for others: ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλοις ταλαιπωρούντων.¹¹ The proverb would thus point to the simple irony of a person willingly giving himself over to slavery, and this is also all that can be understood from Aelius Dionysius' contribution to fr. 106 in which he compares another proverb used of those toiling for others. In turning to the issue of victories the scholiasts leave a simple notion of subservience far behind. In fact, if all this business about winning and losing was built into the saying it would make for a fairly complex proverb, and one that, contrary to the purpose for which proverbs are intended, could rarely ever be applied accurately.¹² Plato would have been fortunate indeed in finding a proverb that so accurately reflected his own biography. However, I think it more likely that Plato exploited an originally simple proverb while making certain additions which had more to do with features of his own career than the historical facts that naturally served as the starting point for the proverb's genesis. Another quality that points to the proverb as Plato may have developed it is the hyperbole evident in the adjectives μαχιμώτατοι and αἴτιοι, as well as the adverb οὐδέποτε. The function of these words within the explanation is apparently to create a strong sense of irony, and this would be more at home in a developed and distorted passage in a comedy than anywhere else. In the context of a professional review, the ironic elements of the statement make perfect sense, for of course Plato would choose to play up his own role as playwright (αἴτιοι) and declare his own superiority to any other comic poet (μαχιμώτατοι).¹³

Recognizing these elements as aspects unique to Plato's treatment of his career thus provides two specific points of comparison between the parabasis of *Peisandros* and Eratosthenes' testimony. Plato was victorious while using others as producers, but suffered defeat when he produced on his own. These similarities make it hard to believe that Eratosthenes' statement is not related to *Peisandros*. His com-

¹⁰ Hdt. 8.26, Thuc. 3.34.2, 7.57.9, Hermip. fr. 63.18 (PCG V).

¹¹ This also seems to be the basis of the humor in Hermippus' treatment of the Arcadians (fr. 63.18) where mercenary activity is characterized as the Arcadians' national export.

¹² Though we are hampered by limited historical knowledge, what evidence we have suggests that the complexities of the proverb are patently false since in the recorded incidents (see n. 13) the Arcadians' allies were actually defeated. At Thuc. 7.57.9, the Arcadians were on a winning side, but this is only because they were employed both by the Athenians and the Syracusans.

¹³ Boasts of superiority are a standard feature in Aristophanes' self-presentations: e.g. *Ach.* 628-9, 644-5, *Kn.* 515-6, *Cl.* 522, 545-62, *W.* 1023, 1029-30, 1046-7, *P.* 736-8, 748-50.

ments could then either be an explanation of Plato's paroemiographic self-allusion or simply restate a further element in the parabasis. And even if one rejects my arguments for identifying the complex elements of the proverb as Plato's own additions, it must at least be admitted that they are essential to the scholiasts' understanding of Plato's use of it. Since no one else served as a source for the proverb the scholiasts probably relied on Plato for their explanations of the proverb. Either way, the link between *Peisandros* and Eratosthenes' statement stands.¹⁴

Eratosthenes' connection with the parabasis of *Peisandros* does not disprove the use of didascaliae, but additional considerations make it reasonable to argue that further research on the points at issue in his statement was unnecessary. The first point I would like to make concerns the phrase ἀπεώθη πάλιν εἰς τοὺς Ληναίους which was the starting point for all the rule theories (above, n. 4). The ambiguity of the phrase suggests that what was in all likelihood originally a carefully worded statement by Eratosthenes has suffered in transmission under the scholiast's stylus.¹⁵ But assuming that the scholiast only (over)simplified the explanation by reduction while still borrowing from Eratosthenes' vocabulary, it is likely that the verb ἀπεώθη belongs to the original wording. It is certainly difficult to understand why the scholiast would substitute a verb which in this succinct statement, at least, is so difficult to understand.¹⁶ Granting that the term is ambiguous as concerns Plato's biography and its evidential value for any procedure of chorus awards, the phrase as a whole creates a rather lively image and exhibits a high degree of subjectivity; characteristics not easily reconciled with an inference, however simple or complex, based solely on didascalie records.¹⁷ Consider the meaning of this verb: "reject", "drive away", "spurn"—not at all what we might expect in a more or less factual account of dramatic productions. In combination with πάλιν and εἰς, motion is implied, thus pointing to a vivid physical description.¹⁸ The

¹⁴ Eratosthenes' interest in the *Peisandros* parabasis might even be evident in one testimonium in fr. 106. The full citation of Eustathius' passage begins as follows: ἰστέον δὲ ὅτι ἐν τοῖς Πausανίου φέρεται, ὅτι τε Ἀρκὰς κυνὴ ἐλέγετο τις ἦτο Ἀρκαδικὸς πῖλος, διὰ τὸ ἔχειν ὡς εἰκὸς τι διάφορον πρὸς τὰ ὁμοειδῆ, καὶ ὅτι φελλός τις ἐφέρετο Ἀρκὰς καὶ ὅτι Ἐρατοσθένης παρὰ Ἀρκάσι φησὶ φελλὸν μέσον τι πρίνου καὶ δρυός, ὃ ἐνίουσθι λυπρινὸν καλεῖν, καὶ ὅτι παροιμία ἦν τὸ Ἀρκάδας μιμούμενος ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλοις ταλαιπωρούντων κ.τ.λ. (302.27-303.1). The passage is an array of information regarding Arcadian lore which Eustathius was prompted to include by the references to that region in *Iliad* 2. 603-14. Pausanias was obviously his source for the information Ἀρκὰς κυνὴ... ἐφέρετο Ἀρκὰς, but the structure of the sentence (ὅτι τε... καὶ ὅτι... καὶ ὅτι... κτλ.) suggests *prima facie* that Pausanias is also the source for what is ascribed to Eratosthenes. Once Eratosthenes is mentioned it is possible that all that follows, up until the next source is mentioned (ἕτερος δὲ ῥήτωρ), derives from him. On the basis of Eustathius' patterned references to the two atticists Pausanias and Aelius Dionysius it is certain that the following "the other rhetor" is the latter (cf. H. Erbse, *Untersuchungen zu den attizistischen Lexika* [Berlin 1950] 16-20). This suggests that Eratosthenes was cited within Pausanias' lexikon for his knowledge of Arcadian lore. Because the grammarians appear to have used Eratosthenes' geographical works only very rarely, Strecker (*De Lycophrone, Euphronio, Eratosthene comicorum interpretibus* (Greifswald 1884) 27) assigns this fragment to his work *On Comedy*, where the reference to Plato would also have been found. Since the simple additive character of the list leaves room to doubt, I merely hold it out as a possibility that Eratosthenes was Pausanias' source for this last notice as well.

¹⁵ So Luppe, review of Lobel, *Gnomon* 43 (1971) 118: "Der letzte Satz ist mißverständlich kurz (vielleicht gekürzt)", on which Luppe later expanded, attributing the same sort of redaction to πρῶτον διδάξαι τοὺς Ἀβδόουχους, *ZPE* 46 (1982) 153-4. Cf. Mastromarco, *RhM* 121 (1978) 20-21 and Rosen *ZPE* 76 (1989) 227.

¹⁶ Though see Luppe *ZPE* 46 (1982) 154: "diese mißverständlich Ausdrucksweise allerdings nicht die Diktion des Eratosthenes sein dürfte". However, in the original, expanded statement all ambiguity inherent in the verb itself might never have existed.

¹⁷ Indeed, it was the subjective nature of the phrase which persuaded Luppe that behind everything lay a personal choice of the poet to refrain from entry at the Dionysia, *ZPE* 46 (1982) 156-7. Of course, Eratosthenes or his redactor could only have had access to such a subjective history via a source like a parabasis.

¹⁸ Cf. LSJ. Usage in the majority of examples makes it clear that the primary meaning of the verb is physical repulsion. Even under the less vivid definition "reject", several of the examples (e.g. Hdt. 1.199; S. *Tr.* 216) point to a strong refusal of concrete objects which is clearly related to the root meaning, and those which are more conceptual (e.g. Thuc. 5. 22; Pl. *R.* 366a, 571c; Hdt. 1.95; S. *Phil.* 1122) imply an emotional or even violent response. Otherwise, several examples are poetic (S. *Tr.* 216 (lyr.) and 1249, *Phil.* 1122 (lyr.); E. fr. 789) and point to a more colorful lexical register. Why any standard procedure or commentary on such a procedure should carry such a strong and, in the context we are dealing with, derisive tone is puzzling. Based on the lexical evidence, an interpretation which claims a simple rejection of Plato's application for a chorus according to procedure would also imply an unevicenced use of the verb.

hostile tone and conviction in this statement are suspicious and some explanation for the term seems to be required.

There is an instructive parallel case where colorful language is employed in a didascallic context; however, consideration of the passage in question suggests a source quite different from official records. The author of the second hypothesis of *Clouds* began by speaking in a manner characteristic of one who had didascallic information at his elbow, as he provided the names, entries, and places of the poets competing against the play he was commenting on.¹⁹ With the second sentence, however, he has quite obviously put these records aside in preference for some other source. For it is hardly likely that there was a record of Aristophanes' personal reasons for revising *Clouds* for a second production. With this shift comes the rather striking term ἀπορριφθεῖς used in reference to the judges' rejection of *Clouds* in 423. Now, where did the author get this information and why did he choose such an odd expression? The answer seems clear: a parabasis—more precisely the revised parabasis of the second *Clouds*, with perhaps additional use of the parabasis of *Wasps*. Both of these include Aristophanes' comments on his reaction to this failure and could therefore serve to elucidate matters surrounding the second version. In both parabases Aristophanes states in clear terms his wish to fault the audience (*Cl.* 518-9, 525, *W.* 1016), and the scholiast's note of unexpectedness or unfairness (παράλογως) in *Clouds*' failure underlies the composition of both parabases, but comes out clearly at several points, especially *Clouds* 524-5: εἴτ' ἀνεχώρουν ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν φορτικῶν ἡττηθεῖς οὐκ ἄξιός ὢν (cf. *W.* 1017, 1043-7). These passages account generally for the author's knowledge of subjective elements in the hypothesis and provide specific sources for nearly everything mentioned in the second sentence.

It is clear that the second sentence is dependent on parabolic material and the remaining term ἀπορριφθεῖς must also have come from the same source. We might hypothesize that the striking and memorable image of childbirth and exposure used in *Cl.* 530-2 to refer to Aristophanes' career suggested the odd verb to the author of the hypothesis.²⁰ The failure to record *Clouds*' specific place at the contest indicates how far from the didascalicae the author was at this point. Here, against the principles of modern scholars, the ancient scholar evidently considered the comic text to be a more valuable source than the official records to which he obviously had access. What looked like a possible analogue for Eratosthenes' odd diction within a didascallic context therefore gives every indication of being inspired by parabolic material. This comparison certainly reinforces the impression that Eratosthenes was himself influenced by the parabasis of *Peisandros*, and also suggests that the use of parabolic material for didascallic purposes may not have been uncommon.

Further explanation depends on a peculiar relationship between the title of the play and the main verb of the clause which has not been appreciated. Notice has already been made of the ambiguity in ἀπεώσθη within this summary statement and to the lively image it creates with respect to the poet's alleged relegation to the Lenaea. By comparing this image with that produced by consideration of the group of rod-wielding men who must have composed the chorus of the comedy referred to here,²¹ one

¹⁹ Hyp. II (Dover): αἱ πρῶται Νεφέλαι ἐδιδάχθησαν ἐν ἄκτει ἐπὶ ἄρχοντος Ἰσάρχου, ὅτε Κρατῖνος μὲν ἐνίκᾳ Πυτίνῃ, Ἀμειψίας δὲ Κόνωνι. δι' ὅπερ Ἀριστοφάνης ἀπορριφθεῖς παράλογως ὠήθη δεῖν ἀναδιδάξαι τὰς Νεφέλας τὰς δευτέρας καταμέμψασθαι τὸ θέατρον κ.τ.λ. See Dover, p. lxxxii for overall problems in this hypothesis. Luppe (*ZPE* 46 [1982] 156) and Mastromarco (*RhM* 121 [1978] 26) also examined this passage, though with quite different results.

²⁰ The process of contamination from text to commentary which I am suggesting, is also evident at *Cl.* 529-31 and Σ 529a. As an alternative explanation I suggest that serious consideration should be given to the variant ἀποκριθεῖς which is printed in Dover's apparatus. A comparison can be made to the scholia on those passages of the parabasis of *Wasps* where the previous year's failure is recalled: Σ 1012, τὰς πρῶτας Νεφέλας διδάξαι ἀπεκρίθη; Σ 1045a, παρεκρίνατε; Σ 1050b, ἀποκριθεῖς ὑπὸ τῶν κριτῶν. As I have argued, these passages influenced the composition of the second hypothesis and therefore it would not be surprising if the terms which the scholiasts used to describe *Clouds*' failure are the same in hypothesis and commentary.

²¹ The term *rabdouchoi* permits several possibilities for identification in Classical Athens. Σ *Peace* 734 supposes that they are either a group of officials who maintained order during the dramatic festivals or that the term refers to the judges of the contests who carried rods as symbols of their authority. For differing opinions here see Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens* (Oxford² 1988) 273 and M. Platnauer, *Aristophanes Peace* (Oxford 1964) 130-1. S. D. Olson

arrives at a likely explanation for the specific passage which Eratosthenes had before him. In a parabolic recollection of the misfortune he suffered at the contest where he produced *Rabdouchoi*, Plato employed the major image of that play as a metaphor for the reality surrounding its reception, namely his own rejection by the judges. The poet imagined himself being thwarted from victory by the very chorus he had created in the hopes of attaining that victory. Apart from the comic value of such a presentation, there is a certain logic to it as well, in that a play can easily be thought of as responsible for its own failure or success.²² No objection can be made to Plato's mention of the actual title in a parabasis since we have parallels from other comic poets (*Cl.* 553-4, *Eup.* fr. 89, *PCG* V).

Eratosthenes either quoted the verb from the actual passage or chose his words in accordance with the images of the parabasis, somewhat in the manner of the author of the *Clouds* hypothesis, on the view I have taken. In this scenario the reference "back to the Lenaea" might only be a matter of chronology within the larger résumé which, on the suggestion of the reference to Plato's earlier practice of using directors, may have framed the parabasis.²³ Either *Rabdouchoi* was a Dionysian play and the Lenaea was the next opportunity for the poet to produce another play, or it was simply the occasion or occasions on which he happened to produce next.²⁴ While I recognize that without further evidence my explanation must remain hypothetical in its details, if on a more general level it is on the right track, then we not only begin to understand the situation behind the troublesome term ἀπεώθη, but also gain perspective on the methodology underlying Eratosthenes' statement.

If by now it seems likely that a considerable influence from the parabasis of *Peisandros* underlies Eratosthenes' statement, there is still the mention of Plato's fourth place loss. This looks like the kind of information that an ancient scholar would most easily obtain from the didascaliae, while it seems less likely that poets would refer to their actual placement so explicitly.²⁵ An alternative explanation, and one which is consistent with the pattern that has emerged so far, is possible on the evidence of another fragment of *Peisandros* preserved by Zenobius. Plato fr. 107 (*PCG*) reads as follows: τετράδι γέγονα· ταύτης μέμνηται Πλάτων ὁ κωμικὸς ἐν Πεισάνδρῳ. λέγεται διὰ Ἡρακλέα· τετράδι γὰρ γεννηθεὶς καὶ πάντων ἐπιφανέστατος καὶ ἀνδρειότατος γενόμενος ἐταλαιπώρει ὅμως ὑπ' Εὐρυκθέως ἐπιταττόμενος. From other instances of this proverb in jokes about Aristophanes, the immediate temptation is to classify this fragment with them and to suppose that a reference to Aristophanes is involved here as well. However, I believe Halliwell is right to distinguish the instance in Plato from the others (*GRBS* 30 [1989] 521). Plato is not mentioned in the *Vita Aristophanis* or the scholion on *Apology* 19 C where the other three examples are preserved. Also, it is clear that in the parabasis of *Peisandros* Plato was discussing his own career, while there is no indication that Aristophanes or any other poet came in for mention. To these lesser considerations it may be added that the explanation of the proverb given by the scholiast, with its emphasis on those who toil under the authority of another, is immediately comparable to the explanation given for fr. 106, thus suggesting that the two should be taken closely together as part of a unified statement in the parabasis.²⁶ I therefore submit that in the parabasis of *Peisandros* Plato

(*Aristophanes Peace* [Oxford 1998] 217) proposes that the reference at *Peace* 734 is to officials at athletic contests. Whatever their exact identification here may be, there can be little doubt as to what the rods were used for or *could* be used for in the context of a comedy (e.g. *Cl.* 541-2, cf. *P.* 637 with scholia).

²² The phenomenon here is comparable to the treatment of the first version of *Clouds* in the surviving parabasis, in the way the first play becomes a living entity in the fantastic history surrounding the initial production and subsequent revision.

²³ Rosen also favors an extensive, biographical parabasis, *ZPE* 76 (1989) 227.

²⁴ Because the passage focuses only on comic productions, Luppe (*Nikephoros* 2 [1989] 123, cf. *ZPE* 46 [1982] 151-2) objected to Rosen taking εἰς τοὺς Ληναίκοις (sc. ἀγῶνας) as meaning a single Lenaean festival, since, on his own interpretation, the plural should refer to a number of comic contests at the Lenaea over several years and not to all the contests of a single festival. A high degree of specificity might be thought necessary if the fragment belongs to the analytical work of an Alexandrian scholar; however, in the context of a parabasis the shift to plural is far less striking.

²⁵ Cf. Mastromarco *RhM* 121 (1978) 23: "non è verosimile che Platone desse nella parabasi del *Pisandro* anche il risultato ufficiale dei *Rabduchi*".

²⁶ For similar reasons Halliwell also assigns fr. 107 to the parabasis (*GRBS* 30 [1989] 521). In fact, one might object that this second proverb intruded into the scholiastic tradition of Plato's *Peisandros* through their very similarity. At first

used both proverbs in reviewing his career. If it is objected that the two proverbs are so similar as to be almost redundant, this is not itself reason to discount the theory, and may be more a question of our not knowing exactly how the proverbs were used. Based on the testimony attributed to Eratosthenes, I am inclined to believe that with the proverb "born on the fourth", Plato was making a clever allusion to the fact that he had "placed fourth" when he produced *Rabdouchoi*. Perhaps the proverb about the Arcadians served to characterize the author's career up to and including *Rabdouchoi*, and following his account of that play's failure, he included in quotation the remark of someone commenting on this misfortune (maybe even the judges'): "you have come in fourth!" On this interpretation, redundancy in the two proverbs is avoided, since the second proverb carries the biographical notice one step further. Certainly the other two elements of the second half of Eratosthenes' statement (i.e. title and verb) appear to be organic to a parabasis, to say nothing of the overall parallels with the treatment of Plato's victories and losses in *Peisandros*. Comparison to Alcibiades' notice concerning his successes at Olympia in the chariot races²⁷ also points to the pun involved in Plato's account: γενέσθαι τέταρτος = γενέσθαι τετράδι. When faced with a passage that obviously treated of Plato's professional career, and specifically with arrangements for producers and resulting fortunes or misfortunes, Eratosthenes could easily understand what Plato was implying. This was all the more simple since in discussing his *Rabdouchoi* the important point was an embarrassing loss, and this probably meant fourth or fifth place.²⁸ His dependence on *didascaliae* need not have entailed anything beyond a familiarity with the number of contestants, and for this, as distinct from our own era of scholarship, no research specific to *Rabdouchoi* was necessary if he was sharp enough to take in Plato's paroemiographic allusions.

These last arguments only suggest that Eratosthenes did not have to refer to the *didascaliae*, and cannot prove that he actually did not. In the end we will never know for sure without further evidence. However a point which exists separately from this matter is the issue of Eratosthenes' statement. The verb is semantically connected to the play's title, and the combination is highly suggestive of Plato's parabolic self presentation. Since the issue of ἀπεώθη κ.τ.λ. might then be fully organic to the parabasis alone, we should probably depend on what we know about its content to shape our interpretations. Eratosthenes' statement and the fragments of *Peisandros* suggest a parabasis that treated Plato's fortunes at the dramatic competitions at some length, while there is no evidence that he turned his attention to applications for choruses. It should then be taken as a possibility that Plato created the image of his chorus driving him from the stage as nothing more than a vivid illustration of the play's loss.²⁹ If the image turned out to be misleading this was probably the fault of Eratosthenes' redactor who did not have a text of *Peisandros* and therefore confused the Alexandrian's comment.³⁰

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glance one of the scholia under fr. 106 appears to substantiate this theory. Eustathius' discussion of "imitating the Arcadians" concludes with a citation from the atticist Aelius Dionysius who made a comparison to this second proverb, making it possible to conjecture that another scholiast using the same source as Eustathius confused the explanation for another citation from *Peisandros*. The result: a new fragment of *Peisandros* (see n. 14). Against this, however, there is no evidence in the wording of the two explanations in Eustathius and Zenobius which points to a single source behind them both.

²⁷ Thuc. 6.16.2: Having entered seven chariots in the Olympian games, Alcibiades bragged: ἐνίκησα δὲ καὶ δεύτερον καὶ τέταρτος ἐγένόμην.

²⁸ Cf. Luppe, *Philologus* 116 (1972) 66-8. Eratosthenes might also have been prompted to keep his eye out for didascalical allusions in this parabasis if, as for the scholiast on *Peace* 734, the image of the chorus members implied an association with the judges or other officials at the festival.

²⁹ Interpretations based on choral awards connect Eratosthenes' statement with the lemma cited from Aristophanes' play at lines 27-9 of the papyrus which clearly alludes to archon decisions (e.g. Rosen, *ZPE* 76 [1989] 226-7). However, the lemma which directly precedes Eratosthenes' statement is less clearly concerned with these issues, and the lacuna here may conceal a verb which created another odd expression for competition at the festivals that recalled the phrase in Plato; i.e., verb + πρὸς τὴν πόλιν = ἀπεώθη εἰς τοὺς Ἀθηναίους.

³⁰ Special thanks are owed to John Gibert for his careful reading and helpful advice throughout the research and writing of this article.