ZACHARY BILES

ERATOSTHENES ON PLATO COMICUS: DIDASCALIAE OR PARABASIS?


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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. 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. 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. 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 passage 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 Peri tis arxaias koumoudias, 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 didascalieae.

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 didascalic research. Though not without its own problems, Eratosthenes' didascalic 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.
5 The play has been identified as Anagyrus, 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 Πεισάνδρος" (p. 44 n. 1). However, apart from passing mention here and there, 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 Ἀρκάδος μιμομένος, 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 ἢ κέχρηται Πλάτων ἐν Πεισάνδρῳ. ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων τα- λαιπαρώντων, μαχαίριστοι γὰρ ὄντες αὐτοὶ μὲν οὐδέποτε ἦσαν νίκην ἐνίκησαν, ἄλλως δὲ αὐτοί νίκης πολλοῖς ἐγένοντο. καὶ ὁ Πλάτανος ὄν ὡς τὰς κομωδίας αὐτὸς ποιῶν ἄλλοις παρέχειν διὰ πενήντα Ἀρκάδος μιμεῖται ἔριον. 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, 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 κομωδίας... ἄλλοις παρέχειν (ἐκ- διδόναι Eust.); Ar. fr. 590.46-7 KA, ἄλλοις ἐδίδον τὰς κομωδίας. Though the rather non-specific nature of these phrases and the absence of any really striking citation common to both passages prevents a deduction based either on a more limited consideration of parabatic material (W. Luppe, APF 21 [1971] 106 and ZPE 46 [1982] 155-6) or a systematic appraisal of the didascalic entries in their entirety (G. Mastromarco, RHM 121 [1978] 22, cf. D. F. Sutton, ZPE 38 [1980] 60). Eratosthenes' didascalic fragments from his work on comedy are few in number (explicit only in frs. 7, 38, 48, 97 of Strecke'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.

8 For the meaning of διὰ τὸ τὰς κομωδίας 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 ταλαιπαρώντων) 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' κομωδίαι πολλά (W. asps 1020) permits the interpretation “comic material rather than whole plays” (Halliwell, CQ 30 [1980] 40, but see also Wasp 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 κομωδίας αὐτός 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 producers. 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 τετράδιον γενέθθαι (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' ἐπίκουρον κρύβην ἐπέρου οἰπτης (Wasp 1018, an important element in Halliwell's argument [CQ 30 (1980) 37-81]) might look to the same reference point as Plato's allusion to the Arcadians as ἐπίκουροι, 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 paroemigraphic 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 ἄλλων τάλαμπαρόρούντων.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 μακριμοστύτιοι and α-hopioi, as well as the adverb οὐδεποτε. 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 (αhopioi) and declare his own superiority to any other comic poet (μακριμοστυτοι).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.\textsuperscript{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 ἀπεισόθη πάλιν εἰς τοὺς Αρκαδικοὺς 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.\textsuperscript{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 ἀπεισόθη 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.\textsuperscript{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 didascalia records.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{18} The

\textsuperscript{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: ἵσετον δὲ ὅτι ἐν τοῖς Παυσανίοντι φέρεται, ὅτι τε Ἀρκάδια κυνὴ ἐλέγετό τε τὶς ἡξοτ Ἀρκαδικὸς πλοῦς. Διὰ τὸ ἥχειν ὡς εἰκόσ τι διδόμοι πρὸς τὰ ὠρατά, καὶ ὅτι σφόδροι τὶς ἐφέρετο Ἀρκάδα καὶ ὅτι Ἐρατοσθῆνης παρὰ Ἀρκάδει φησὶ σφόδροι μέκον τι πρῖν καὶ δρῦς, ὃ ἐνίου ἠθλητὴρον καθελὼν, καὶ ὅτι παροιμία ἐν τὸ Ἀρκάδαι μιμομένοιν ἐπὶ τῶν ἁλλῶν τελασιποροῦντον 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 Ἀρκάδα κυνὴ... ἐφέρετο Ἀρκάδα, 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 (ἔτερος δὲ ἔρως), derives from him. On the basis of Eustathius' patterned references to the two attics 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, Streckers (De Lycophronre, Eurypion, Era-


\textsuperscript{16} Though see Luppe ZPE 46 (1982) 154: "diese mißverständlich Ausdrucksweise allerdings nicht die Diktion des Era-

\textsuperscript{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.
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 didascalic 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 didascalic 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 (παραλόγως) in *Clouds*’ failure underlies the composition of both parabases, but comes out clearly at several points, especially *Clouds* 524-5: εἰτ’ ἀνεχώρουσιν ὑπ’ ἀνόδρομων φορτικῶν ἡττήθησθε σὺν ὧν ἡξυός ὄν (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 parabatic 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 didascaliae 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 didascalic context therefore gives every indication of being inspired by parabatic material. This comparison certainly reinforces the impression that Eratosthenes was himself influenced by the parabasis of *Peisandros*, and also suggests that the use of parabatic material for didascalic 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 ἀπεκρίθη 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

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19 Hyp. II (Dover): αἱ πρώται Νεφέλαι ἐδιάδωθησαν ἐν ἀκτεὶ ἐπὶ ἄρρητοι Ἰκάρχοι, ὥστε Κροτίνος μὲν ἐνίκα Πυτι- νη, Ἀμειωτα δὲ Κόννοι. δι’ ὅπερ Ἀριστοφάνης ἀπορριφθεῖς παραλόγως ἠττήθη δεῖν ἀναδιδάξας τὰς Νεφέλας τὰς δευτέρας κατομμφεθαι τὸ θέατρον κ.τ.λ. See Dover, p. lxxxi for overall problems in this hypothesis. Luppe (ZPE 46 [1982] 156) and Mastromarco (RPh 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 ἀπορριφθεῖς 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 πρώτας Νεφέλας διδάξας ἀπεκρίθη; Σ 1045α, παρεκρίνετε; Σ 1050β, παρεκρήθη ὡς τος κρίτων. 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* (Oxford 1968) 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 parabatic 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 re-
jection 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. 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. 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. 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 ἀπέεικοθη, 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. 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 δέ γένομα·
ταύτης μέμνηται Πλάτων ὁ κωμικὸς ἐν Πεισάνδρῳ. λέγεται διὰ Ἦρακλεα· τετράδι γὰρ γεννηθεὶς καὶ πάντων ἐπιφανέστατος καὶ ἄνδρειότατος γενόμενος ἔταλασπώρε όμως ὑπ’ Εὐρισθέου ἐπιπαττό-
μενος. 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. 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 τὸν Ἀθηναῖον (sc. ἀγώνα) 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 intrudes 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 races also points to the pun involved in Plato's account: γενέθαι τέταρτοι = γενέθαι 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. 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 parabatic self presentation. Since the issue of ἀπεικόνισθη 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. 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.

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