Authorial Collaboration in the Athenian Comic Theatre

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LITERARY HISTORIANS are strongly inclined to assume a rather pure notion of authorship for the texts with which they deal. For many types of writing this is doubtless entirely defensible. But where 'literature' denotes the texts of works designed for staged performance, there are practical reasons, varying according to the particular theatrical circumstances of the time, why the authorship of the words actually spoken by actors may be less than entirely the responsibility of a single person. While there have been periods in which dramatic collaboration has been commonly practised and even openly acknowledged,[1] the contingencies of theatrical production can readily turn such activity into an inconspicuous and, so to speak, 'backstage' matter. The principal aim of this article is to present and interpret a collection of evidence that will allow us to infer that authorial collaboration did sometimes take place between Athenian comic poets in the latter part of the fifth century. In the process, a number of suggestions will be made about the careers of four playwrights: Phrynichus, Aristophanes, Eupolis, and Plato Comicus. The enquiry will inevitably prove speculative at certain points, but the speculation will be carefully controlled and is anyway worthwhile as part of the attempt to draw attention to a phenomenon neglected by students of the classical Athenian theatre.

In independent articles published in 1979 and 1980,[2] Giuseppe Mastromarco and I argued for a fresh interpretation of lines 1018–20 of the parabasis of Aristophanes *Wasps*, where the chorus describes one—and apparently the earliest—way in

[1] The clearest English instance is the Elizabethan-Jacobean theatre: see G. E. Bentley, *The Profession of Dramatist in Shakespeare's Time 1590–1642* (Princeton 1971) 197–234: Bentley estimates that perhaps half of the 1500 plays known from this period involved some authorial collaboration.

[2] G. Mastromarco, "L'esordio 'segreto' di Aristofane," *QuadStor* 10 (1979) 153–96; *cf.* his *Commedie di Aristofane* I (Turin 1983) 45–59; S. HALLIWELL, "Aristophanes' Apprenticeship," *CQ* NS. 30 (1980: hereafter 'Halliwell') 33–45.

which the poet purports to have previously served Athenian audiences:

> τὰ μὲν οὐ φανερῶς ἀλλ' ἐπικουρῶν κρύβδην ἑτέροισι ποιηταῖς,
> μιμησάμενος τὴν Εὐρυκλέους μαντείαν καὶ διάνοιαν,
> εἰς ἀλλοτρίας γαστέρας ἐνδὺς κωμῳδικὰ πολλὰ χέασθαι.

These lines have conventionally been taken to refer to the first three known plays written by Aristophanes (*Banqueters* of 427, *Babylonians* of 426, *Acharnians* of 425), as well as, presumably, to the unidentified Aristophanic comedy staged at the Lenaea in 426—all of them works produced by a διδάσκαλος other than the poet, probably Callistratus in the first three cases.[3] On this reading, these lines, with their unequivocal κρύβδην and the imagery of ventriloquism, evidently imply that the authorship of those early plays had been deliberately suppressed at the time; they were taken for the work of Callistratus not Aristophanes.[4] Partly because there are reasons for doubting the sense of this implication, and partly for other reasons, Mastromarco and I suggested that the lines should rather be understood much more at face value, as expressing at least a claim by Aristophanes to have 'helped', or collaborated with, 'other poets' in the writing of scripts for comic performance.

I do not wish here to re-address the whole of this particular Aristophanic issue, though one or two details of it will recur. But if this alternative interpretation has any cogency, these lines from *Wasps* might prompt us to wonder whether they presuppose an actual and perhaps even familiar phenomenon of poetic collaboration in the world of the Athenian theatre, or would have struck an Athenian audience as fanciful and ludicrously implausible. A confident answer can in fact be given to this question, for we have sufficient evidence to establish that at any

[3] For the possibility that Philonides, not Callistratus, produced *Banqueters* see Σ^{N} Ar. *Nub.* 531, with D. Welsh, *CQ* N.S. 33 (1983) 51–55, who also posits collaboration on the script: *cf.* n.15 *infra*. We do not know who produced the Lenaea 426 play alluded to at Ar. *Ach.* 1154f (*cf.* Halliwell 44f).

[4] D. MacDowell, "Aristophanes and Kallistratos," *CQ* N.S. 32 (1982) 21–26 at 22f, says that κρύβδην need only mean that Aristophanes' authorship of these plays was not generally known: this seems an unwarrantable dilution of the adverb. MacDowell's request for an explanation of why, on the alternative interpretation, *Aristophanes* wished collaboration to be secret is misplaced: the need for such secrecy would reflect the wishes of those announced as the authors of the given works. F. Perusino, "Aristofane e i registi-poeti," *Helikon* 20–21 (1980–81) 63–73, also rejects the new reading of *Vesp.* 1018ff, but she does not answer the point about κρύβδην (acknowledged at 65).

rate the *idea* of collaboration on dramatic scripts was not a new one at this date. Most of Aristophanes' audience in 422 would have heard similar things before, since it is precisely in comedy that the idea is attested, more often than not in the form of allegations or imputations against other poets. As this evidence has not, so far as I know, been previously gathered and scrutinized,[5] it will be useful to set it out for convenient reference. For reasons that will emerge, the following table records not only direct references to collaboration but also some related material, including accusations of poetic plagiarism. Though my chief concern is with comedy, I have cited some pertinent items that refer to tragic collaboration and plagiarism too. The ordering of the material is approximately chronological:[6]

A1: Cratinus fr.502 (335 K.), Χοιριλεκφαντίδης, apparently served to express the gibe that his rival Ecphantides (active in the 450's, and perhaps both earlier and later) was helped by Choerilus, the latter said by Hesychius (*s.v.* ἐκκεχοιριλωμένη) to have been a servant of Ecphantides who collaborated (συμποιεῖν) with him: it looks likely that we have traces here of more than one comic reference to the matter. The poet's collaborator-servant is a motif that parallels the case of Euripides and Cephisophon (**A2**).

A2: Telecleides frr.39–40 K. (likely to date from the 430's or early 420's), intimates that Socrates (? and Mnesilochus) has something to do with the composition of Euripides' plays. Euripides was regularly exposed both to broad insinuations of influence on his work, and to rather blunter aspersions: Callias fr.15 (12 K.; *ca* 430–424?), Ar. *Ran* . 944, 1408, 1452f, frr.392 (376 K.), 596 (580 K.), the last using συμποιεῖν; *cf. V. Eur.* 12–17, 78–80 (Méridier), Satyrus *V. Eur.* (*P.Oxy.* IX 1176) fr.39.xvi.17–29. For the dubious idea that Cephisophon was a slave-collaborator see *V. Eur.* 92 and *cf.* **A1**.

A3: Hermippus fr.64 (64 K.), dating from *ca* 425, ridicules Phrynichus Comicus: ὡς ἀλλότρια ὑποβαλλομένου ποιήματα.

[5] Partial treatments can be found in C. G. Cobet, *Observationes criticae in Platonis Comici reliquias* (Amsterdam 1840) 65ff; E. Stemplinger, *Das Plagiat in der griechischen Literatur* (Leipzig 1912) 12ff.

[6] Comic fragments are cited where possible from R. Kassel and C. Austin, edd., *Poetae Comici Graeci* (Berlin 1983– : *PCG*); K.=T. Kock, ed., *Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta* (Leipzig 1880–88).

This has been taken to impute plagiarism,[7] but the verb (a metaphor from supposititious children: *e.g.* Ar. *Thesm.* 340, *cf.* LSJ *s.v.* II) suggests rather the charge of presenting in his own name plays composed by another: possible if speculative contexts for this idea will present themselves (see *infra*).

A4: Cratinus fr.213 (200 K.), from *Putine* of 423, speaks of Aristophanes ὡς τὰ Εὐπόλιδος λέγοντα . This has naturally been supposed to allude to Aristophanes' putative collaboration with Eupolis on *Knights* (**A10–11** *infra*).

A5: Plato Com. fr.72 (70 K.) mocks the tragedian Sthenelus ὡς τἀλλότρια ἐπισφετεριζόμενον—a straightforward accusation of plagiarism, it would seem.

A6: Plato Com. frr.106-07 (99–100 K.), from his *Peisander* (date uncertain), claims to have been induced by poverty to "supply others" (ἄλλοις παρέχειν) with plays he had written, and uses the proverbs Ἀρκάδας μιμεῖσθαι and τετράδι γεγονέναι in this connection; *cf.* on **A9** *infra*.

A7: Plato Com. is said by Eratosthenes (*P.Oxy.* XXXV 2737= Ar. fr.590.46f) to have "given" some of his Dionysia plays, apparently in the earlier part of his career (420's?), "to others" (ἄλλοις ἐδίδου τὰς κωμωιδίας). The relation of this datum to the apparently similar **A6** (note too the language of Eup. fr.89 [**A11**]) will call for further examination (*infra*).

A8: Ar. *Vesp.* 1018–20, quoted *supra*, claims that Aristophanes had "helped other poets secretly" in producing comic material for the theatre.

A9: A group of comic fragments—Aristonymus fr.4 K., Ameipsias fr.28 K., Sannyrion fr.5 (5 K.)—refer, with the proverb τετράδι γεγονέναι, to Aristophanes' quasi-Heraclean behaviour of "labouring for others." Plato Com. fr.107 (**A6**), which has the same proverb, is usually, but I think wrongly, added to these. There are no firm dates for the three fragments: one, perhaps two, of them seem likely to be late in the century, though Ameipsias' career went back at least as early as Dionysia 423. On the relation between the subject of these fragments and **A8** see *infra*.

A10: Ar. *Nub.* 553–56, from the revision of *ca* 420–417, accuses Eupolis of having modelled his *Maricas* of 421 closely on

[7] *E.g.* J. D. Denniston at *OCD*[2] 838 *s.v.* "Plagiarism."

Aristophanes' own *Knights* of 424, and of having also imitated a scene from an earlier (unidentifiable) comedy of Phrynichus.[8] This item, to which Ar. fr.58 (54 K.) has been thought to be related in content, is usually interpreted in conjunction with **A4** and **A11.**

A11: Eup. fr.89 (78 K.), from the parabasis of *Baptae* (*ca* 416–415?), claims to have assisted (συμποιεῖν) Aristophanes with the composition of *Knights* and to have "given" the play to him (*i.e.*, allowed him to produce it in his sole name). This is sometimes taken as a reply or retort to **A10**:[9] but that begs a question about (Eupolis') knowledge of the revised text of *Clouds.*

A12: Ar. *Ran.* 73–79 suggests that Iophon (whose career was already some thirty years old)[10] had been previously helped by his father, Sophocles.

A13: As a testimony to comic sensitivity over accusations of plagiarism, and the correlative desire to lay claim to originality, note Lysippus fr.4 (4 K.): οὐδ' ἀνακνάψας καὶ θειώσας τὰς ἀλλοτρίας ἐπινοίας.[11]

Although almost every item in this list is to some degree elusive, it is immediately striking that there is a concentration of material derived from, and/or relating to, comic drama of roughly the last third of the fifth century. The most obvious inference to be drawn from this is simple: gibes and countergibes of collaboration, plagiarism, and the like, had by this date (and perhaps much earlier, when our evidence is thinner: **A1** is suggestive here) become a stock comic *topos*—a recurrent motif in the twin techniques of self-promotion and denigration of others that played an explicit part in the rivalry of comic poets competing for public prizes. The subject is complementary, as already noted under **A13**, to the claims to poetic

[8] On this last point *cf.* Perusino, "Aristofane e il *Maricante* di Eupoli," *RivFil* 109 (1981) 407–13, who posits a form of 'contaminatio'.

[9] *E.g.* Cobet (*supra* n.5) 84, assuming an available text of the revised *Clouds*; K. J. Dover, *Aristophanes, Clouds* (Oxford 1968) *ad* 554; A. H. Sommerstein, *CQ* NS. 30 (1980) 52; Halliwell 40 n.31.

[10] *IG* II² 2318 col. iv: see A. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*² (Oxford 1968: hereafter *DFA*²) 105.

[11] Date uncertain; Lysippus appears to have been active as early as 438 and as late as 409: see the testimonia in *PCG* V; Meineke (*FCG* 216) and Cobet (*supra* n.5: 15) think Lysippus is retorting to Cratinus.

originality, ingenuity, and technical accomplishment (σοφία) that many comic poets thought it worthwhile to make.[12]

Where the theme is applied to tragedians, a cognate inference is available: to allege that a poet was influenced or helped by others in composing his work was a ready-made way of belittling, or throwing doubt on, his achievement. But the two items in this category give us some reason for making discriminations that go beyond this simple level. The passages concerning Euripides (**A2**) and Iophon (**A12**) are distinct in character. The former constitutes a much more extensive comic matter: it encompasses the translation of an observation on Euripides' (supposed) intellectual affinities into the picturesque terms of practical help from Socrates, as well as a much more personal aspersion, conceivably dependent on details of gossip now lost to us, concerning Euripides' relations with the obscure character Cephisophon. *Frogs* 73–79, by contrast, is a single reference in a specific context (the recent death of Sophocles), and it depends crucially on the important cultural phenomenon of families of dramatic poets in Athens.[13] This is not to say that the innuendo against Iophon is meant to be more seriously taken. It is, I think, implausible that real doubts about his authorial independence should have existed at this advanced stage of his career; but a son's pursuit of the same *métier* as his distinguished father plays conveniently into the hands of the cynical satirist.

When we turn back to the comic material, it would be reductive to suppose that everything can be thrown into a single basket. Boasts that one has assisted other playwrights, and charges of dependence on help from others, can, like most forms of comic statement, be self-sufficient and entirely fictitious vehicles of amusement. Equally, however, such things may have some factual foundation in particular cases. If the actuality of poetic collaboration was quite unknown, it would be somewhat surprising that the idea of it became so frequent a theme in comedy during this period, and especially surprising that the verb συμποιεῖν should have developed the specific sense of collaborating in poetic composition.[14] So the evidence I have tabulated needs sifting, and may repay closer attention.

[12] I deal with this topic and its significance in "Aristophanes, his Predecessors, and his Rivals" (forthcoming).

[13] See D. F. Sutton, "The Theatrical Families of Athens," *AJP* 108 (1987) 9–26.

[14] In addition to **A1–2**, **A11**, *cf.* Ar. *Them.* 157f.

Let us begin with the case of Aristophanes, and with *Vesp.* 1018–20 (**A8**), for whose interpretation I have already indicated the existence of radically divergent possibilities. Without restating the arguments put forward by Mastromarco and myself, I intend to work with the *prima facie* sense of the passage, *i.e.*, to accept that Aristophanes is claiming involvement in one or more instances of poetic collaboration. Given that premise, there is a positive reason for supposing that we are not here faced with sheer fiction: namely that the passage belongs to an account of the playwright's career to date, and while the entire context is marked by hyperbole, mock-heroics, and exaggeration, it would be peculiar if Aristophanes had invented a complete phase of his development as a comic poet. This gives us, then, an immediate if defeasible warrant for inferring that before he wrote plays of his own, Aristophanes had indeed been involved in some kind of collaboration on comic scripts, and that he expected his audience in 422 to understand *Vesp.* 1018–20 as stating precisely this.

How, if at all, are the fragments cited under **A9** to be related to this suggestion? Received opinion, following the ancient view recorded in the poet's *Vita* (p.133.7–10 Koster), has treated them as referring to the putative fact that the credit for Aristophanes' early plays (those of 427–425) went to their producer(s), not to the poet. It is now usual to link Plato Com. fr.107 (**A6**) to this group, but the absence of any reference to Aristophanes in the attestation makes this highly dubious. Fr. 106 shows that Plato discussed his own career in the parabasis of *Peisander*, and said something about "imitating the Arcadians," *i.e.*, working for others' victories: it is therefore much more likely that fr.107 belonged to the same passage and spoke only of Plato. If so (and I shall return to Plato's career *infra*), we are left with the hard fact of three comic contexts in which the proverb τετράδι γεγονέναι was expressly applied to Aristophanes. We must register at once what is commonly overlooked, that the link between this fact and Aristophanes' use of independent *didaskaloi* for his early plays need have been no more than an ancient inference: as such, it would have rested on the belief (independently attested in the scholia *ad loc.*) that *Vesp.* 1018ff also referred to plays of the years 427–425. But if I am right in suggesting that this connection, and the picture of Aristophanes' early career to which it belongs, is only conjectural, it is open to us to dispense with it, as I am already committed to doing by my acceptance of the alternative reading of *Vesp.* 1018ff.

Where, then, would this leave the fragments of **A9**? Though we cannot be confident of how Aristonymus, Ameipsias, and Sannyrion used the proverb in speaking of Aristophanes, two fresh possibilities are worth considering. One is that they do indeed allude to the same subject as *Vesp.* 1018ff (with πονοῦντα ἄλλοις corresponding to ἐπικουρῶν ... ἑτέροισι ποιηταῖς), but that this subject, as Mastromarco and I have maintained, was not the use of independent *didaskaloi*, but the help given by Aristophanes to other poets in the writing of plays subsequently staged in the latter's names. The second possibility, supported by the import of τετράδι γεγονέναι, is that these fragments refer to the *whole Heraclean self-portrait* in the parabasis of *Wasps*. It can at least be said of these alternatives that they have no less support than the traditional understanding that I am contesting. Moreover, the second of them, which is perhaps to be preferred, has this in its favour, that it would allow the passages of the three comic poets to be deriding Aristophanes for the extravagant imagery with which he had glorified himself not once but twice (in the material repeated in *Peace*).[15] On the traditional view, by contrast, I find it hard to descry a motive for rival poets repeatedly to advertise, in effect, the fact that Aristophanes had failed to get credit for successes that were actually due to him. But whatever is made of these alternatives, the essential observation remains this: the fragments of **A9** do not lend any *independent* support to the traditional reading of *Vesp.* 1018ff; at the most, the understanding of them can be correlated with interpretations of that passage.

The idea of collaboration between Athenian comic poets on the script of a play is most familiar from the famous case of Aristophanes and Eupolis. A crucial factor here is the chronology of the three pertinent items (**A4**, **A10**–**11**). The earliest is Cratinus' remark, made at Dionysia 423 and therefore referring to productions earlier than this, that Aristophanes had "said things that belonged to Eupolis." This could, I suppose, be an idle charge of plagiarism, but it looks much too pointed a formulation for that, and it is only reasonable to regard it in relation to

[15] Welsh (*supra* n.3) 53ff, who presents the conventional reading of these fragments (and who ignores both articles cited in n.2 *supra*), thinks that the Heracles gibes *antedated*, and prompted, the Heraclean imagery in *Wasps*: quite apart from the larger issues discussed in my text, this is chronologically improbable, especially for Sannyrion: P. Geissler, *Chronologie der altattischen Komödie*[2] (Dublin 1969) 67 with XVII, *cf.* 51, places Sannyrion's *Gelos* late in the century; *cf.* also Meineke, *FCG* 263.

the two subsequent passages in which Aristophanes alleged that Eupolis had reworked ideas from *Knights* in composing his *Maricas*, and Eupolis for his part asserted that he had helped Aristophanes with the composition of *Knights*. I earlier noted that **A11** need not be a retort directly to **A10**; to be such, Eupolis would have needed to know what Aristophanes had written in the partially revised parabasis of *Clouds*. But if, as has sometimes been thought, Ar. fr.58 (54 K.) also contained the gibe about *Maricas*, then the controversy may have been aired on other occasions too.

It remains clear, in any case, that the Cratinus passage is independent of both of the others, and this, together with the specific thrust of its charge, gives us one ground to suspect here something more than a mere exchange of fictional slanders between rival poets: Cratinus, on this supposition, would have obtained personal information soon after the event, presumably deriving from Eupolis, about cooperation between the two leading poets of the younger generation. The other main reason for accepting that collaboration of some kind *had* taken place between Aristophanes and Eupolis, concerning the conception or the composition of *Knights*, is indeed the preciseness of Eupolis' own claim in fr.89 (78 K.): if Eupolis had merely wished to be derogatory about his rival's achievement at the Lenaea of 424, it seems implausible that he would have done so by the arrant and audacious fiction of claiming some of the credit for it. One point to be remembered is that Eupolis did not compete against *Knights*; one circumstantial objection to the hypothesis of collaboration thereby evaporates. Beyond this it is hardly possible to go; certainly the ancient belief that Eupolis' hand could be identified in the second parabasis of *Knights* is no longer respectable.[16] Besides, acceptance in principle of some Eupolidean involvement in *Knights* does not automaticaly rule out conceivable justification for Aristophanes' allegation over *Maricas*: the balance of probabilities is that Eupolis' help had been slight or limited to some suggestions, rather

[16] See Sommerstein (*supra* n.9) 51ff and his edition of *Knights* (Warminster 1981) *ad* 1225, 1288f. But his argument that Eup. fr.89 is an exaggerated *tu quoque* to Aristophanes' earlier charge leaves the specificity of the fragment unexplained, as Mastromarco, *apud* n.33 of Sommerstein's article, points out. I now disavow what I wrote in 1980 (n.2: 40 n.31).

than entailing extensive writing, thus leaving Aristophanes with an intact sense of his own originality and independence.[17]

What such a reconstruction suggests, if it is on the right lines, is that Eupolis may have stood to *Knights* in a similar relation to that in which Aristophanes stood to the unknown play or plays to which, on the reading put forward by Mastromarco and myself, *Vesp.* 1018ff refers—the crucial difference being that whereas Aristophanes, though boasting, needs to withhold personal details, Eupolis exploits a private arrangement by exposing it for satirical effect and gain. So too, on this interpretation, did a third party, Cratinus (**A4**), though it remains unclear how much he gave away. Cratinus' swipe at Aristophanes is paralleled by Hermippus' at Phrynichus (**A3**). Can we afford to believe that there was something behind this allegation as well? Here, restricted to a single piece of evidence, one can only be frankly speculative, but I have already pointed out that the verb ὑποβάλλεσθαι in Hermippus' fragment (which may derive from parabatic anapaests) does not express an ordinary charge of plagiarism (*cf.*, *e.g.* **A5**). I am therefore inclined to suppose that Hermippus may have gathered something about Phrynichus' collaborative relation to another comic poet, and it was this that he was (mis)representing in the fragment we have.

While it can be only guesswork that there may even have been a connection between Phrynichus' putative collaborations and Aristophanes' claim at *Vesp.* 1018ff to have helped other poets, or alternatively between the activities of Phrynichus and Plato Com. (*cf.* **A6** and *infra*), it is nonetheless relevant to note the chronological proximity of all the material in items **A3–4, A6–11**, since this lends cumulative weight to the case for believing in authorial collaboration as a real phenomenon in the comic theatre of this period. Before suggesting how the phenomenon could have fitted into the larger picture of theatrical conditions, I want to return briefly to the career of Plato Comicus, which poses a number of extremely intricate and vexed difficulties. In order to attempt clarification of some of these, I must limit myself to the evidence contained in **A6–7**. From the latter I propose the following series of deductions: (1) that more

[17] I cannot forbear to draw attention to the plural possessive ἡμέτερος at *Nub.* 554: not only is this a conspicuous contrast to the reiterated singular at 559ff, it would be, so far as I can see, a unique use of ἡμέτερος in reference to Aristophanes himself (as opposed to his choruses, *e.g. Eq.* 588, *Ran.* 354). I therefore record, without knowing what to make of it, the heretical suggestion that we have here an allusion (for those who knew) to some Eupolidean involvement in *Knights*.

than one of Plato's earlier plays was produced at the Dionysia δι' ἑτέρου; (2) that, since Eratosthenes says that under this arrangement Plato εὐδοκίμει, the poet must have received some credit for the success of these works, which eliminates any question of concealed authorship; (3) that, as other evidence would indeed lead us to believe, the didascalic records on which Eratosthenes based his claims must have shown both the poet's and the producer's names;[18] (4) that Plato's early successes, if they antedated the one recorded in the victors' lists (*IG* II² 2325), cannot have been first prizes.[19]

To these deductions can be added a highly significant inference of a different kind, namely that if Eratosthenes' testimony in **A7** was sound, it cannot have referred to the same plays as does Plato frr.106–07 (**A6**);[20] whatever we may make of Plato's presentation of himself as having, like the Arcadians and Heracles, toiled for others, this can scarcely have been meant to describe his action as a comic poet using *didaskaloi* for the production of plays with which he was authorially credited. That **A6** and **A7** contain some similar wording (ἄλλοις παρέχειν/ ἄλλοις ἐδίδου) has proved, I believe, a false if seductive scent, and it should not be allowed to obstruct the inference just stated. The two contexts—one referring to Plato's "poverty" and to the fact that he did not personally enjoy the success of what he had written, the other clearly stating that Plato εὐδοκίμει—show that we are dealing with distinct matters. Plato frr.106–07 point, I therefore submit, to something other than the poet's use of *didaskaloi*. While the fragments of *Peisander* cannot necessarily be taken at face value, what confronts us here appears to be a claim of a similar kind to that made by Aristophanes in the parabasis of *Wasps* (**A8**); and for much the same reasons as applied there, it is implausible to suppose that this is a case of entire comic fiction: though the motive of sell-

[18] See *DFA*² 85f; Mastromarco (*supra* n.2) 160–65. For Eratosthenes' use of didascalic documents see Mastromarco, *RhM* 121 (1978) 19–24; discussion of *P.Oxy.* 2737 in relation to Plato's career can be pursued through this article and the same author's in *ZPE* 53 (1983) 29–35: I differ from Mastromarco by dissociating Plato fr.106 (**A6**) from Eratosthenes' testimony (**A7**), but also by taking εὐδοκίμει in the latter to cover only Dionysia plays, hence my inference (4). *Cf.* now R. M. Rosen, *ZPE* 76 (1989) 223–28.

[19] See *DFA*² 112, noting with 116 (foot) that the date given for Ameipsias, the entry before Plato, is only approximate and might be earlier than 414.

[20] It is hardly conceivable that Eratosthenes was basing himself not on didascalic information (*cf. supra* n.18) but on the parabasis of *Peisander*; this would leave the use of εὐδοκίμει unexplained.

ing plays out of poverty has the look of distortion or exaggeration, my larger argument gives us grounds for discerning and entertaining the underlying possibility of Plato's involvement in the creation of comic scripts not produced in his name. Though I do not wish to speculate beyond this point,[21] I conclude that here too we have traces, albeit scrappy and tantalising, of activities that can be classified as authorial collaboration.

I have been contending, then, that a number of references to authorial collaboration between Athenian comic poets in the latter part of the fifth century allow us glimpses of a real theatrical phenomenon, despite the fictional fabric of boasts and insults that undoubtedly colours the detail of several of the relevant passages. If I am correct, the practice is one which at various times, and doubtless in differing ways, concerned Aristophanes, Eupolis, Phrynichus, and Plato, as well (presumably) as other poets: it deserves, consequently, to be much more explicitly acknowledged by theatre historians than has been the case in the past.

What authorial collaboration represents, as I indicated at the outset, is the existence of much more uncertain and even tangled compositional processes than notions of pure literary authorship admit. It will help, I think, to make sense of this idea if I conclude by relating it to the larger institutional complexity entailed in the official procedures and the theatrical circumstances of creating, rehearsing, and performing a play at a major public festival. Aristophanes colourfully reflects something of the character of this situation in his use of an elaborate nautical metaphor at *Eq.* 541–44 to describe the various levels of practical participation in, and responsibility for, a comic production.[22] Though this passage refers primarily to matters of direction and production, and whatever its precise implications for Aristophanes' own early career, it does help to conjure up the involved nature of theatrical organisation at this date. Against this general

[21] That Plato actually sold plays has certainly been believed: see *e.g.* *DFA*² 85. A. Giannini, "Platone comico: questioni cronologiche e tematiche," *Dioniso* 22 (1959) 194ff, believes that Plato's *Symmachia* was produced under the name of Cantharus in 422—hence the first prize recorded for Cantharus in *IG* II² 2318.115 (*DFA*² 105) and 2325.60 (*DFA*² 112); *cf.* Geissler (*supra* n.15) XIV.

[22] The metaphor has been newly explicated by D. Gilula, *CQ* N.S. 39 (1989) 259ff; to the evidence cited there might be added Arist. *Pol.* 1276b23f. On the relation of the passage to Aristophanes' career see Halliwell 41–44. An important glimpse of the practical preparations for theatrical production is given by Antiphon 6.11f: *n.b.* the use of διδάσκειν of the choregus.

background we need to situate the way in which the closely interdependent functions of playwright, actor, and producer in the Athenian theatre of the mid-to-late fifth century were served by shifting and evolving patterns of career. Thus, for example, some playwrights continued what was presumably an old but probably no longer standard tradition of beginning their careers as actors; in addition to Crates and Pherecrates, it is possible that Aristophanes should be counted among their number.[23] As regards the status of *didaskalos*—a term we cannot even translate unequivocally, since it refers to responsibility for rehearsing a play but tends to be used as virtually synonymous with 'dramatic poet'—this appears to have been in a transitional phase in which the poet-producer and the independent ('professional') *didaskalos* existed side by side.[24] Some *didaskaloi*, furthermore, were, or had once been, actors too.[25] What this all amounts to is that, while there was perhaps a late fifth-century tendency towards increasing specialisation, all possible combinations of the three functions of poet, producer, and actor were to be found in the comic theatre of this period.

This general theatrical context should make it less (if at all) surprising that authorial collaboration could be sometimes practised by comic poets. But there is one further factor that bears precisely on this question. The numbers of poets competing at the City Dionysia and the Lenaea were fixed by the state; during the Peloponnesian War, moreover, they were subject to some reduction.[26] In such circumstances it is not difficult to see

[23] Crates: see the testimonia in *PCG* IV 2f; Pherecrates: W. J. W. Koster, ed., *Prolegomena de comoedia* (Groningen 1975) 8, III.29. That Aristophanes acted in *Acharnians* has recently been reargued by N. Slater, "Aristophanes' Apprenticeship Again," *GRBS* 30 (1989) 67–82: I agree that this hypothesis (71) best explains the key passages in *Ach.*

[24] On the term διδάσκαλος see Perusino, "Aristofane poeta e didascalo," *Corolla Londiniensis* 2 (1982) 137–45; Halliwell 43f; J. Herington, *Poetry into Drama* (Berkeley 1985) 24–27, 183f; equivalence to 'poet' remains clear even in some fourth-century uses: *e.g.* Isoc. 8.14, 12.168; Arist. *De An.* 406b17, *Eth. Eud.* 1230b19, *Poet.* 1449a5. Independent *didaskaloi*: in addition to Plato's case (A7 and *supra* 524), see Cratinus fr.17.3 (15 K.); Eup. test. 15; Pl. *Ion* 536A; Dem. 21.58f; of the two used by Aristophanes, Callistratus seems not to have been a poet, though *cf.* *PCG* IV 56 and Ar. fr.591.62. Note also the implication of the revival within the fifth century of plays by dead playwrights: for Magnes see test. and frr. in *PCG* V, with H. Emonds, *Zweite Auflage im Altertum* (Leipzig 1941) 356. Fourth century revivals: *DFA*² 99ff.

[25] *Didaskalos*-actors: Ar. test. 23a–b, d (Callistratus and Philonides).

[26] See Mastromarco, *Belfagor* 30 (1975) 469–73, with references to other views.

why collaboration might suggest itself as worthwhile, especially where young poets were concerned: and it is striking that the main items of evidence earlier considered all relate to poets (Phrynichus, Eupolis, Aristophanes, Plato) in the early parts of their careers. Yet collaboration could never, it would seem, be 'official'; competition demanded that an individual author be announced for each work. What this leaves us with, of course, is the possibility that the official facts of a particular production, as eventually enshrined in the didascalic inscriptions, might well conceal all sorts of cooperations and compromises in the preparation of plays for staged performance: it is partly for this reason, I suspect, that the relations of Aristophanes and Philonides to two plays produced at Lenaea 422 have become probably irrecoverable; and a similar reason may lie behind some of the other cases of Old Comedies of disputed authorship.[27] In our general dealings with drama we do not question individuality of authorship, and that is because we have no alternative. But where comedy at any rate is concerned, the genre contains enough hints to the contrary to make us realise that what we read in our texts will not always have been the product of a single imagination.

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[27] I have deliberately not attempted to integrate this fraught subject into my argument; I would say here only that some excessively confident judgements have been made in irremediably obscure cases. For contrasting views of one particular case, the titles ascribed to both Ameipsias and Phrynichus, see Geissler (*supra* n.15) 37, 54, echoing suggestions of Bergk, and K. J. Dover at *OCD*[2] 829 *s.v.* "Phrynichus (2)."