

ARISTOPHANES' APPRENTICESHIP

The basis of this article is a reconsideration of some old and familiar problems about Aristophanes' early career.¹ In the course of trying to supply firm solutions to these problems I hope also to present evidence for an early and inconspicuous stage in Aristophanes' development as a comic dramatist, and as a reflection on the resulting picture I shall make some general observations on our understanding of the relationship between the various activities involved in the creation of a comic production in the fifth-century theatre. Practically all the material I shall deal with comes from the plays themselves, and I should state at the start that I both work with and hope to justify the principle that Aristophanic disingenuousness does not normally operate where hard facts of chronology, law, and theatrical conditions are concerned.

In an attempt to explain why Aristophanes did not himself apply for a chorus for any of his own plays before *Knights* in 424, Σ Tzetzes on *Clouds* 518 refers us to what he claims was an Athenian law in which it was prescribed μήπω τῶν ἐτών λ' γεγονότα μήτε δρᾶμα ἀναγνώσκειν ἐν θεάτρῳ μήτε δημηγορεῖν. Partly because we know from independent evidence that a statutory minimum age did exist at Athens for some kinds of political service,² though apparently not for δημηγορεῖν,³ and partly because at *Clouds* 530 Aristophanes, talking of the circumstances in which *Banqueters* was produced in 427, says κοῦκ ἐξῆν πῶ μοι τεκεῖν,⁴ this theory of a legal explanation for the fact that Aristophanes did not produce his early plays himself has strongly attracted a number of modern scholars too.⁵ Others have remained agnostic, but open to the possibility.⁶ Those few scholars who have rejected the idea have found in the practice of other poets, and indeed of Aristophanes himself, some good reasons for scepticism, but their arguments are not conclusive enough to have settled the issue.⁷ Yet the

¹ I am very grateful for the suggestive criticisms of a draft of this article that I received from Sir Kenneth Dover and Mrs. Barbara Mitchell.

² Aristotle, *Atb. Pol.* 4. 15 gives thirty as the minimum age for bouleutai and for those who hold τὰς ἄλλας ἀρχάς — which includes dicasts (cf. 63. 3.). Cf. Xen. *Mem.* 1. 2. 35.

³ Pace K. J. Dover on *Clouds* 530–2. Xen. *Mem.* 3. 6. 1 does not suggest a statutory age for speaking in the assembly, just a general assumption that an essential qualification was age and experience: cf. Aeschines i. 23, and see W. Wyse on Isaeus 7. 41. 4.

⁴ 'οὐκ ἐξῆν is not "it was impossible" but "it was contrary to the rules" (Dover, ad loc.). I should prefer 'circumstances did not allow it', a vague insinuation of propriety. For my interpretation of this whole passage see n. 23 below.

⁵ e.g. U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff,

'Über die Wespen des Aristophanes', *Sitzungsberichte der königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (1911), p. 461 (reprinted in *Kleine Schriften* (1935), i.284 ff., where the pagination of the original article is given in the margin); V. Steffen, 'De Aristophane a Cleone in ius vocato', *Eos* 47 (1954), 9 f.; V. Coulon, Budé edn. of Aristophanes, *tome i*, p. II.

⁶ e.g. G. Kaibel, *RE* ii. 972–3; G. Murray, *Aristophanes* (Oxford, 1933), p. 14; R. A. Neil, edn. of *Knights*, p. V n. 2; K. J. Dover on *Clouds* 530–2; T. Gelzer, *RE* Supp.-Band xii. 1396.

⁷ See W. Schmid and O. Stählin, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* i. 4 (1946), 177 and n. 7 there; A. Lesky, *A History of Greek Literature* (Eng. trans., 1965), p. 427; A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, *Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, 2nd edn., revised by J. Gould and D. M. Lewis (Oxford, 1968) (hereafter *DFA*²), 84 f.

question will permit of a clear answer, and the crucial piece of evidence is to be found in one of the passages very often cited in connection with this issue. It is *Knights* 512 ff.:

“Α δὲ θαυμάζειν ὑμῶν φησιν πολλοὺς αὐτῷ προσιόντας
καὶ βασανίζειν πῶς οὐχὶ πάλαι χορὸν αἰτοίη καθ’ ἑαυτόν,
ἡμᾶς ὑμῖν ἐκέλευε φράσαι περὶ τούτου. φησὶ γὰρ ἀνὴρ
οὐχ ὑπ’ ἀνοίας τοῦτο πεπονθὼς διατρίβειν, ἀλλὰ νομίζων
κωμωδοδιδασκαλίαν εἶναι χαλεπώτατον ἔργον ἀπάντων.

These lines, which will prove relevant to some other parts of this enquiry as well, introduce a passage which certainly contains some Aristophanic irony; it is not a wholly ingenuous account of the reasons for the poet’s *σωφροσύνη* (cf. *Kn.* 545). However, these lines themselves are only intelligible on the assumption that in 427 and subsequent years Aristophanes had a real choice, legally at any rate, whether to apply for his own chorus.⁸ The implication is reinforced by the particular choice of words, especially *θαυμάζειν*, *πολλοὺς*, *οὐχὶ πάλαι*. *πάλαι* carries us back to 427, when an Aristophanic play was produced for the first time; and the idea that Aristophanes could have done differently *from the start*, if he had wanted to, is also strongly suggested by *διατρίβειν* (515). Aristophanes is bragging to his audience, and there is no doubt some hyperbole here (see below on *πολλοὺς*), but the passage would make a pointless piece of nonsense if in fact he had been prevented by law from producing his own plays before 424. There is no strength in the objection that most of the audience would not know the poet’s age, and so would not know how he stood in relation to any law there might have been regarding *κωμωδοδιδασκαλία*. If the audience were aware of a law of the kind in question, they would naturally assume when they heard *Knights* 512 ff. that Aristophanes had been above the minimum age since at least 427. The lines, in other words, dictate this supposition to the audience.

I do not believe we can be at all confident about Aristophanes’ date of birth.⁹ I therefore do not infer from *Kn.* 512 ff. that a law prescribing a minimum age for *κωμωδοδιδασκαλία* was not in force during the latter part of the fifth century – though I think it very unlikely. What I do take to be shown is that the issue of such a law should cease to matter to our understanding of Aristophanes’ early career.

The fact that Aristophanes did not apply for a chorus in his own name before 424 has long posed a problem about the business referred to at *Acharnians* 377–82 and 502 f. At those two places Dicaeopolis speaks in the first person on behalf of someone whom Cleon had ‘dragged before the boule’ in the preceding year. The audience must have known who was meant. Was it the author or the producer of *Babylonians* who got into trouble? There is now probably a consensus that it was Aristophanes himself, but the issue has not been properly settled and it is still

⁸ In the course of composing this article I have noticed three references, themselves obviously disregarded in recent times, to this implication of *Kn.* 512 ff.: J. van Leeuwen, *Prolegomena ad Aristophanem*, p. 39 n. 4; B. B. Rogers, edn. of *Acharnians*,

p. vii; R. G. Kent, *CR* 19 (1905), 153 f.

⁹ For the possibilities, or some of them, see Kent, art. cit., pp. 153–5, Gelzer, op. cit. 1396, and the apt caution of Dover, edn. of *Clouds*, p. xix n. 1.

possible for a leading Aristophanic scholar to consider the matter insoluble and to opt for the cautious opinion that both author and producer are likely to have had a share in the trouble.¹⁰ This last view cannot be refuted, and indeed may well be right. However, I wish to argue that all the evidence that we do have is evidence for the prosecution (I imply nothing specific by that term¹¹) of the author of *Babylonians*, and that it is decisive evidence.

We must start with two passages from the parabasis and the so-called second parabasis of *Wasps*, lines 1015–59 and 1284–91, and with the observation, restricted by MacDowell to 1017–22 but applicable to the larger passages indicated, that the utterances made in these places are unintelligible ‘unless the audience knows that the author is Aristophanes’.¹² MacDowell goes on from this observation to argue that *Wasps* must have been produced in Aristophanes’ own name, and not by Philonides, as the first Hypothesis to the play states.¹³ I shall tackle MacDowell’s case radically below, and in particular his positive reasons for believing that where author and producer were different the author’s name would not be made public, but I want first to give some reasons for retaining the testimony of the Hypothesis and consequently for believing that the first audience of *Wasps* must have been informed before the performance of the separate identities of author and producer. In the first place MacDowell’s supposition runs counter to the likelihood, established on the evidence of inscriptions, that the poet who applied for a chorus in someone else’s name nevertheless received the prize himself and had his name recorded in the document drawn on for the compilation of *IG* ii². 2325.¹⁴ But the strongest reason for believing that a poet’s identity was known even where he did not produce his own play lies in two lines from the passage of *Knights* that I considered above. For it is an obvious but unnoticed implication of *Kn.* 512 f. that in the period before 424 Aristophanes was known as the author of those plays which were produced in the name of Callistratos. MacDowell is aware of the threat to his own position from *Kn.* 512 f.,

¹⁰ Dover, *Maia* 15 (1963), 15; but cf. his *Aristophanic Comedy*, p. 13. For details of the controversy in earlier days see Excursus V (pp. 274 f.) in W. J. M. Starkie’s edn. of *Acharnians*. See also n. 30 below.

¹¹ The nature of the clash between Aristophanes and Cleon remains a subject for speculation: cf. Gelzer, op. cit. 1398 f. That Cleon brought a *γραφὴ ξενίας* against Aristophanes at any point, as schol. *Ach.* 378 asserts and as many have believed, seems to me highly improbable. I believe that the idea arose from an amalgamation of two things: the attack on Aristophanes after *Babylonians*, and the notion, inferred from *Ach.* 654, that Aristophanes was an Aeginetan. But the poet’s citizenship seems proved by the information about his father in the lives and elsewhere, and by *IG* ii². 1740 line 40: cf. *The Athenian Agora*, vol. xv, p. 33. Nor do I believe that *Wasps* 1284 ff. refer to a clash with Cleon later than *Knights*. MacDowell’s reason for taking it this way is the word *νῦν* in 1291: D. M. MacDowell, edn. of *Wasps*, p. 299. But we

must consider the whole unique phrase *εἶτα νῦν*, and also the fact that *ἐξηπάτησεν* (1291) is aorist, not perfect as we should expect if MacDowell were right. On *ἐκνύσε* in 1286 MacDowell comments: ‘The aorist perhaps implies that there was one occasion . . .’ There is an equivalent implication in *ἐξηπάτησεν*, and its past reference rules out the possibility that *Wasps* itself is meant. Consequently I take *νῦν* in 1291 in its atemporal sense (‘after all’: cf. *LSJ* s.v. I.4) and translate the whole line: ‘But then, after all, the pole (Ar.) deceived the vine (Cleon).’ The reference is to *Knights*. I think that the caution of *Ach.* 502 ff. squares with the allusion at *Wasps* 1284 to some sort of concession by Ar. after the trouble over *Babylonians*.

¹² Edn. of *Wasps*, p. 124.

¹³ Hypothesis I, line 32.

¹⁴ See E. Capps, *AJP* 28 (1907), 179 ff., and *Hesperia* 12 (1943), 3 n. 5. There is, as Capps shows, a strong possibility that the formula *ὁ δεινὰ ἐδίδαξε διὰ τοῦ δεινός* is an ancient one: cf. *IG* xiv. 1098 line 9.

and tries to effect a reconciliation by asserting, quite fairly, that in *Kn.* 512 'πολλούς may mean merely "a number of his friends"'.¹⁵ MacDowell is making full allowance, as I did above, for hyperbole, but he fails to notice that this is immaterial to the implication of the passage. Aristophanes may indeed be claiming something quite fictional, but we must distinguish here, and not for the first or last time, between on the one hand whatever reality did or did not lie behind the claim, and, on the other, the intelligibility of the remark to the original audience. Now the audience of *Knights* could only have made sense of what Aristophanes (or rather the chorus) was talking about if they knew that he had written the plays produced by Callistratos during the past three years; and Aristophanes could only have written the lines in this way if he was sure that his audience knew this. The minimum requirement by this argument is that the authorship of Aristophanes' early plays should have been disclosed at some stage prior to the first performance of *Knights*. But we can surely go further than this, for how could this disclosure have been made if not at the first performances of the plays concerned?¹⁶

If the above reasoning is valid, then there is no reason to reject the statement of the Hypothesis to *Wasps* that the play was produced *δια Φιλωνίδου*. Instead we should conclude that the separate identity of author and producer was known, and that the relevant references in the two parabases were naturally understood as applying to the poet, Aristophanes, as on any argument they must have been. The consequences for *Ach.* 377–82 and 502 f. are apparent: the audience will have taken these passages as references to the author, not the producer. The two parts of my thesis are inseparable: if Aristophanes was known as the author of *Acharnians*, assertions about the ποιητής (633, 644, 649, 654) or first-person references in connection with *Babylonians* would have to be understood as applying to him; and for such references to be taken satisfactorily in this way, the poet's identity would have to have been known in the first place. As far as *Acharnians* itself is concerned, this leaves one difficulty. Why do the chorus talk about ὁ διδάσκαλος ἡμῶν in line 628, and what does the whole of that line refer to? Dover has suggested: 'It may well have been a convention that the chorus in the parabasis should speak of the διδάσκαλος of the play as if he were also the ποιητής, whether or not he was.'¹⁷ This seems highly implausible to me; surely the very reverse was the case. More often than not the roles of didaskalos and poet were combined, and so we should not be surprised to find that it was possible to refer to the poet who produced his own play by either term. This is in fact what we find in the parabases of *Knights* and *Peace*. Both passages are reminiscent of *Ach.* 628 ff. In *Knights* Aristophanes is first called κωμωδοδιδάσκαλος (507), then ποιητής is used from 509 onwards (509, 519, 548). *Peace* shows an even freer variation of terms: κωμωδοποιητής (734), κωμωδοδιδάσκαλος (737), διδάσκαλος (738), ποιητής (772). Given the practices of the fifth-century theatre this freedom is perfectly intelligible. The facts do not at all lend credibility to the idea that the producer of someone else's play could be called ποιητής; but they do tend, I think, to support the possibility that at *Ach.* 628 Aristophanes could be intelligibly called διδάσκαλος by the chorus, even though

¹⁵ Op. cit., p. 124.

¹⁶ Most likely at the Proagon, for it appears from Plato, *Symp.* 194 a that each poet made an appearance with his unmasked

actors on that occasion. Cf. *DFA*² 67 f.

¹⁷ Edn. of *Clouds*, p. xix. See also his *Aristophanic Comedy*, p. 14 n. 5.

he was not officially the producer of this play. As to the significance of the line as a whole, I shall return to this problem below in my general remarks on the various components in the preparation of a comedy for production in the fifth century. For the real solution to this problem lies, I believe, in a refinement of our understanding of the general theatrical background and of the development of Aristophanes' career.

I want now to return to the positive side of MacDowell's case for the proposition that an author's identity was not made public when he did not produce his plays himself. The basis of MacDowell's case is an interpretation, which it is fair to call orthodox,¹⁸ of *Wasps* 1018–22. In this passage, so the orthodox interpretation runs, Aristophanes is drawing a contrast between his practice during the period 427 to 425, when he did not produce his own plays officially, and the period from 424 onwards when he started to take full responsibility for at least some of his own comedies. One immediate objection to this interpretation – that Aristophanes uses a plural, *ἐτέροισι ποιηταῖς*, in line 1018, even though he seems to have used only *one* producer before 424 – has often been acknowledged, and a variety of solutions have been proposed.¹⁹ It is significant that MacDowell finds it difficult to endorse any of them. But even if a satisfactory solution to this problem were to be agreed on, there remain several other major obstacles in the way of the orthodox interpretation of the passage. These have not, so far as I can see, been given any airing; I set out below what seem to me to be the most important:

- i. The description puts a very heavy emphasis on secrecy – something much more severe than the absence of official or public recognition of Aristophanic authorship. After *οὐ φανερώς ἀλλ' . . . κρύβδην* comes the ventriloquism simile, and the point is remade by *καὶ φανερώς* in 1021. If this is a description of the production of Aristophanes' early plays, we have no choice but to suppose that the poet's identity was quite unknown not only at the first performance of the plays but at least until after the Lenaea of 425. MacDowell seems well aware of this when he talks about 'spectators who thought that *Banqueters*, *Babylonians* and *Acharnians* were all written by Kallistratos'.²⁰ No convincing explanation of the reasons for this putative secrecy has ever been given, but it is in any case hard to give credence to in simple practical terms. There is, for example, the difficulty of reconciling such secrecy with the reasonable supposition that, in Dover's words, 'the written and circulated version of the play . . . would bear the name of the poet'.²¹ There is also the Proagon, and the poet's customary appearance at it, to be kept in mind.²² But there is the further and more important problem that if it was not known until after *Acharnians* that Aristophanes was the author of *Banqueters* and *Babylonians*, then how are we to suppose this revelation to have been made? For by the time of *Knights* Aristophanes, as we have seen, could certainly count on his audience's familiarity with the facts.
- ii. The passage contains a strong suggestion of artistic subordination to other poets. *ἐπικουρῶν* is a strikingly self-effacing term, and Aristophanes is not

¹⁸ It starts with the scholion on *Wasps* 1018 and was subscribed to by, among others, Kock, Wilamowitz, Merry, Starkie, Rogers, and van Leeuwen.

¹⁹ See MacDowell ad loc.

²⁰ MacDowell, p. 124.

²¹ Edn. of *Clouds*, p. xvii n. 2.

²² See n. 16 above.

noted for modesty. What point could there be in equating his role as author of those earlier plays with one of 'assisting other poets'? MacDowell fairly glosses 1022: 'exercising full control over his own artistic activities, instead of merely assisting other people's.' How could Aristophanes have offered this as a way of talking about plays he had written himself? Surely since 427 the *Μούσαι* (1022) had been his all along; it was the *ἡνίοχος* that had changed. But our passage talks of the reverse of this. Where Aristophanes certainly is taking about those earlier plays, as at *Clouds* 528–33, the emphasis is different. He explains that he was not officially responsible for the production (*τεκεῖν*, 530) of *Banqueters*: he does not pretend that the play was not really his, or that he was merely giving Callistratos a bit of help.²³

- iii. On *Wasps* 1023 ff. MacDowell comments: 'Ar. refers primarily to the success of *Knights* . . .' Indeed he must, for the interpretation to be consistent; for how could the poet refer to the success of earlier plays by *ἀρθείς δὲ μέγας κτλ.* when he has just told his audience that his identity was not known to them until after *Acharnians*? But the orthodox interpretation suggests an odd purpose, for it makes Aristophanes switch from disowning responsibility for at least one first prize to describing as *μέγας καὶ τιμηθεὶς ὡς οὐδείς* his record during a two-year period in which he had suffered what we know he felt as the ignominy of a third place.²⁴ We should expect Aristophanes, I submit, to be bragging about all his success before *Wasps*.
- iv. Wilamowitz, who subscribed to the orthodox reading of the passage, remarked on what seemed to him the crucial significance for his interpretation of the qualification *ὅτε πρῶτον γ' ἤρξε διδάσκειν* at line 1029.²⁵ Without it, Wilamowitz correctly observed, Aristophanes would seem to be implying that his vendetta with Cleon was later than *Knights*. That qualification does look important; it ought to matter in the sequence. According to Wilamowitz's suggestion, though, Aristophanes has organized the narrative somewhat ineptly, and has had to introduce a saving qualification to avoid a misleading impression. I believe that the clause should and can be given a more natural function in the sequence of thought.
- v. At *Clouds* 528 f. Aristophanes implies that his identity as author of *Banqueters* was known to at least part of the audience at the time of the first performance of the play, or not long after. The second half of line 528, *οὐς ἡδὺ καὶ λέγειν*,

²³ *Clouds* 530–2 is patently the basis of the scholiast's assertion on *Frogs* 501 that Aristophanes was still a *μειρακίσκος* in 427, and of the scholion on *Clouds* 518 (discussed in the text above) regarding a law on *κωμωδοδιδασκαλία*, though the scholiast on *Clouds* 530–2 itself more sensibly talks in terms of *αἰδώς* and *εὐλάβεια*. My own view is that by *παρθένος*, which it is vital to realize refers only to 427 and the circumstances in which *Banqueters* was produced, Aristophanes means to signify his newness as a dramatist and his consequent lack of status in the eyes of the archon, but that he is not necessarily saying anything about his practical involvement in the production. I

would not accept that *ἐτέρα τις λαβοῦσ' ἀνείλετο* implies that *Banqueters* was passed off as Callistratos's own play. We have to decide how strictly to understand Aristophanic metaphors on the basis of all the available evidence. If we took *Clouds* 531 really strictly, we should be bound to believe not just that *Banqueters* was presented as Callistratos's own, but that the production of the play was accidental – for the play was a 'foundling' – and that in no sense was it on behalf of or for Aristophanes.

²⁴ Cf. *Clouds* 524 f.

²⁵ Wilamowitz, art. cit., pp. 465 ff.

makes it clear that Aristophanes has not the general class of σοφοί spectators in mind but a specific group of real individuals. This is brought out well by Dover's paraphrase: 'It is agreeable <to me now> even to mention them <let alone know them personally and hear their praise>'.²⁶ If these people received well Aristophanes' first play in a way which meant something to the dramatist, it is hard to imagine how the identity of the author can have been all that much of a secret or why he should later have wanted to talk of his early success and good reception as though it did not belong to him.

- vi. There is no evidence outside *Wasps* which suggests that Callistratos was himself a comic dramatist.²⁷ To call him a poet, in singular or plural, would therefore be strange.

The above objections to the orthodox reading of *Wasps* 1018 ff. constitute, it seems to me, good grounds for seeking a fresh interpretation of the passage. In doing so we ought, I believe, to take note of the other description which Aristophanes offers us of the development of his artistic career, that at *Knights* 541–44:

Ταῦτ' ὀρρωδῶν διέτριβεν αἰεὶ, καὶ πρὸς τούτοισιν ἔφασκεν
ἐρέτην χρήναι πρῶτα γενέσθαι πρὶν πηδάλιους ἐπιχειρεῖν,
καὶ τ' ἐντεῦθεν πρῶρατεῦσαι καὶ τοὺς ἀνέμους διαθρήσαι,
κατὰ κυβερνᾶν αὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ.

The striking feature of this passage is the complexity of the nautical metaphor for what ought by the orthodox understanding to be the poet's purpose. If Aristophanes' early career fell into two neat stages – writing but not producing, then taking on both jobs – why does he here employ an analogy with three, or maybe even four, stages of a nautical career?²⁸ This is perhaps to expect too strict a correlation, but there surely is about this passage a definite impression of *gradual* development to full κωμωδοδιδασκαλία, and of what we might call a complex apprenticeship. We have here a clue, if we need one, to the true sense of *Wasps* 1018 ff. I suggest that these lines should be understood much more literally than is usual. Aristophanes is revealing to his audience the fact that even before he was known to them as a comic poet and was having his own plays produced, he was actually providing them with entertainment in the form of comic material contributed to the plays of other dramatists.²⁹ The advantages of this theory for our understanding of the whole passage, *Wasps* 1018–29, are considerable. The emphasis on secrecy, the modest suggestion of subordination to others (ἀλλοτρίων . . . Μουσῶν, 1022) now make natural sense. 1023 ff. (ἀρθεῖς δὲ μέγας κτλ.) can now easily be taken as referring to all Aristophanes' dramatic successes before *Wasps*, from *Banqueters* onwards, and the temporal

²⁶ Dover ad loc., working with Blaydes's very necessary emendation.

²⁷ Contrary to what is sometimes asserted: see e.g. P. Ghiron-Bistagne, *Recherches sur les acteurs dans la Grèce antique* (Paris, 1976), p. 129, with a reference to Kirchner, *PA* 8127, where it is admitted that no evidence exists for this belief. Poor old Callistratos was divined to be a 'wretched poetaster' by Starkie, edn. of *Acharnians*, p. 248. See *AJP* 28 (1907), 89 together with *IG* ii² 2318 col. 5 and *DFA*² p. 118 for the

better restoration Κά[νθαρος] in *IG* ii². 2325.

²⁸ See Neil's note ad loc.

²⁹ About the details we can only guess, but it seems an attractive possibility that Philonides was involved. We know him to have been a comic poet in his own right: see *PA* 14904 and *IG* ii². 2325 (*DFA*² p. 112). He seems also to have belonged to a circle which contained a number of well-to-do friends of Aristophanes: see Sterling Dow, *AJA* 73 (1969), 234 f.

qualification in 1029 (ὅτε πρῶτόν γ' ἤρξε διδάσκειν) fits perfectly into the sequence of argument by marking a further stage in the career, the assumption of full κωμωδοδιδασκαλία. I would add that on my interpretation κωμωδικὰ πολλὰ (1020), which suggests comic material rather than whole plays, perhaps makes easier sense. One detail alone seems to pose a difficulty for my reading, the phrase καθ' ἑαυτὸν in 1021. Aristophanes uses the same phrase at *Kn.* 513, where he is describing application for a chorus through someone else rather than 'in his own name'. However, the precise contrast made by καθ' ἑαυτὸν in each case can only be determined by reference to the context. At *Kn.* 513 the point is quite clear. In *Wasps* 1021, though, καθ' ἑαυτὸν must represent the opposite of what is described in 1018 and 1022, and if the reasons given above for taking the reference to be to collaboration with other poets and not to the production of Aristophanes' early plays are good ones, then κινδυνεύων καθ' ἑαυτὸν must mean 'taking a risk with one of his own plays' — that is, bringing out *Banqueters* in 427.

I believe, then, that in *Wasps* 1018 ff. we have some little noticed evidence for an early stage in Aristophanes' apprenticeship as a comic dramatist.³⁰ It is important here, however, to reinvoké a principle used earlier in this article — that there is a logical distinction to be drawn between the reality behind the authorial assertion and the intelligibility of the assertion to the original audience. It is the area of overlap between them that concerns us. At *Wasps* 1018 ff. Aristophanes is expecting his audience to understand him to be claiming to have contributed to the work of other poets. He uses the plural 'other poets' even though he may in fact, for all we know, have helped only one man. But though that detail may be an exaggeration, the manner of the claim seems to me to guarantee that there was *something* behind it. If we were dealing with an attempt to invent an achievement or to glorify the poet's image, we should expect a racier presentation with a colourful and perhaps detailed dressing. Comparison with the exchange of allegations of plagiarism between Aristophanes and Eupolis is instructive.³¹ There detailed claims are thrust at the audience, and the satirical

³⁰ I have discovered a number of scholars who have noticed the implications of *Kn.* 541–4 and dissented from the orthodoxy on *Wasps* 1018 ff., but none of them puts the full case against the orthodoxy or gives more than a hint at an alternative reading. Most confuse the matter, in my view, by introducing reference to Eupolis fr. 78 (see the following note): cf. Kaibel, *RE* ii. 973; Kent, art. cit., p. 154; Schmid und Stählin, op. cit., p. 179. I am very grateful to CQ's referee for alerting me to the review-article by E. Hiller in *Phil. Anzeig.* 17 (1887), 361 ff. Hiller suggests a reading of *Wasps* 1018 ff. very similar to my own: see pp. 366 f. He also discusses many of the other points raised in my article and reaches some similar conclusions, though he differs from me notably on καθ' ἑαυτὸν at *Kn.* 513 and on *Wasps* 1029. I have made no changes in my text since reading Hiller.

³¹ See *Clouds* 554 with Dover's note, and

Eupolis fr. 78, which is a reply to the Aristophanic gibe. I can see no evidence regarding a collaboration between these two poets which cannot be traced back to these jokes, and no reason at all for taking the Eupolis fr. as itself evidence of collaboration. As for the jokes made by Ar.'s rivals involving the proverb τετράδι γέγονας, which are sometimes treated as confirming the view that the authorship of Ar.'s early plays was not known, and that the prize for a play did not go to its author when he was not full κωμωδοδιδάσκαλος, I must protest that the frs. in question, in their unspecific and contentless form, tell us next to nothing about anything. See Gelzer 1396 f. for the references and a statement of the customary interpretation. It may be significant that Sannyrion fr. 5 is to be dated to 410 or later; P. Geissler, *Chronologie des altattischen Komödie* (1925), p. 67. I hope to discuss Plato Com. frs. 99 and 100 elsewhere.

purpose behind them does not require us to believe what they assert. *Wasps* 1018 ff. is very different. Despite an admixture of humour and exaggeration, Aristophanes has a real aim, to remind the audience of his past achievements, justify *Clouds* and the standards of comedy it represented, and generally impress on his audience the quality of his plays. The framework of references to events in his career hitherto therefore needs to be substantially accurate, as we know it to be as far as *Knights* and *Clouds* are concerned. At 1018–20 Aristophanes is describing a stage in his career, and relating it to something the audience have first-hand knowledge of, his subsequent development as an independent poet (1021 ff.). If we resist the assumptions of the orthodox reading, the sequence yields the sense I have outlined above, and the context demands that we take Aristophanes' words seriously.

If I am right in finding at *Kn.* 541–44 and *Wasps* 1018 ff. references to a more complex development to full *κωμωδοδιδασκαλία* in Aristophanes' early career than has commonly been imagined, then some important questions are raised regarding the preparation of plays for production in the fifth-century theatre. I wish now to make some remarks about the theatrical background as involved in and affecting the apprenticeship and early career of a new dramatist, though some of my points are, I believe, of wider importance. Fortunately an increase in scholarly interest in the practical aspects of ancient theatre-production prevents most of us from visualising the origins of Aristophanes' dramatic career simply in terms of the force of genius, patriotism, and personality, important though these may have been.³² However, these origins have generally been dealt with in recent times on the basis of a rather inflexible model of the distinction between the roles of poet and producer. If we wish to understand the evidence which Aristophanes provides us with for the beginnings of his career in the theatre, we need to refine this poet/producer model. The terms translate, of course, *ποιητής* and *διδάσκαλος*. These translations are convenient and perhaps unavoidable, but by evoking the conditions of our own theatre they carry with them the danger of a simplified understanding of the reality they represent. It is convenient to assert that Aristophanes did not produce his early plays himself, that he was not his own producer in the years 427 to 425. But what are we committing ourselves to when we say such things? It is often supposed that the key to Aristophanes' early career lies in the fact that though he could write plays capable of being produced in the theatre he did not yet have the practical experience to produce them. (A caution is normally added to take care of the fact that he did not always take full responsibility for his own plays later in his career.³³) This way of looking at the matter seems to me to be only a partial truth. If we are to get nearer to an appreciation of the conditions in which Aristophanes developed into a practising comic poet, a full *κωμωδοδιδάσκαλος*, I believe we should attend to the following factors:

- a. We should not underestimate the complexity of activities involved in the preparation of a comedy for production. We need to separate conceptually the request for a chorus, the practical running of rehearsals, and the more general business of finance and overall supervision, including dealings with the choregos, who might not always be as accommodating as the defendant of

³² Cf. the romanticizing speculations of van Leeuwen, *Prolegomena* etc., pp. 19 ff.

³³ See e.g. *DFA*² pp. 84 f., Gelzer 1517.

Antiphon VI.³⁴ It seems never to have been sufficiently emphasized that at *Kn.* 513 the chorus refer to the fact that for the past three years Aristophanes has not been *asking for a chorus in his own name*. We should not glibly assume that this must necessarily have entailed taking no other part in the preparation of the play for production, or that *χορὸν αἰτεῖν* is a straight synonym for what *we* mean by 'to be the producer', though certainly *Kn.* 515 f. and *Wasps* 1029 show that it was not simply the request for a chorus that Aristophanes had performed vicariously from 427 to 425.

- b. In the theatrical milieu of the fifth century, where the focus of dramatic activities was the single public performance of a play, it is misguided to imagine the text and the production as two quite separate things. We know that alterations were sometimes made in the script relatively late on in the preparations for performance.³⁵ When the poet himself supervised rehearsals, he would clearly have had full control over the interaction between script and production. But if, to take an important example, the text of *Frogs* was altered in places at a late stage in the preparations for performance in response to the death of Sophocles,³⁶ it was done despite the fact that Philonides was the official didascalos. We should therefore not lightly assume that when the responsibilities of production were shared with someone else the author's role would necessarily be confined to producing a script, handing it over to a producer, and then taking no further part himself in the production. We cannot be sure that this did not ever happen, but we must beware of simply accepting without question that this was the procedure when a poet applied for a chorus through someone else.
- c. To produce a dramatic text capable of production within the strict limits of the available resources and prevailing conventions implies in itself some degree of practical theatrical knowledge. Those who wish to maintain that Aristophanes could write *Acharnians* unassisted but could not produce it without help should be explicit about what it was that production entailed which the author could not manage, and should explain how the poet grew sufficiently in practical experience to produce *Knights* if he was not involved at all in the production of his earlier plays.
- d. We do not know on what basis the archon allotted choruses, and in particular what personal factors may have been involved.³⁷ Where a new poet was concerned, the help of influential or experienced friends might well have been invaluable. The fact that it is *χορὸν αἰτεῖν* which Aristophanes refers to at *Kn.* 513 may carry a good deal of significance.
- e. d. raises wider questions of patronage or backing in the fifth-century theatre.³⁸ This is a subject about which, of course, we know singularly little, but I think it is worth considering the possibility that what we have at *Clouds* 528 f. is a reference to some form of patronage. Whatever form the support of the σοφοί

³⁴ Antiphon 6. 11–14.

³⁵ On the relation between the stage of *χορὸν αἰτεῖν* and the time of performance see the remarks of Gelzer 1517 f.

³⁶ The case is put best by Wilamowitz, *Einleitung in die griechische Tragödie* (1910), pp. 2 f., and Dover, *Aristophanic*

Comedy, pp. 180 f. For arguments against see L. Radermacher's edn. of *Frogs*, pp. 254 f.

³⁷ See *DFA*² p. 84.

³⁸ I should perhaps note that by 'patronage' I mean mainly to suggest forms of support other than financial.

took, it seems to have been the act of a group of individuals to whom Aristophanes thought it worthwhile to show his gratitude by a special mention. The likelihood that we have here a form of patronage would be increased if the good reception which the σοφοί gave to *Banqueters* was prior to the public performance of the play. There are, I believe, indications in the text that this might have been so:

ἐξ ὅτου γὰρ ἐνθάδ' ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν, οὓς ἡδὺ καὶ λέγειν,
ὁ σῶφρων τε χῶ καταπύγων ἄριστ' ἤκουσάτην,
κἀγώ, παρθένος γὰρ ἔτ' ἦν κοῦκ ἐξῆν πῶ μοι τεκεῖν,
ἐξέθηκα, παῖς δ' ἐτέρα τις λαβοῦσ' ἀνείλετο,
ὕμεις δ' ἐξεθρέψατε γενναίως κἀπαυδεύσατε, κτλ.

(*Clouds* 528–32)

Aristophanes here seems to describe a temporal sequence of events: first the backing of the σοφοί, then the decision to apply for a chorus through someone else, then (notice the switch from the particular ἄνδρες of 528 to ὑμεῖς, the general audience, at 532 f.) the public performance of the play.

There is obviously a great deal that we do not know about Aristophanes' early career, but if we keep the above factors in mind I believe we can construct an outline derived from the evidence to be found in the poet's own plays. The progression to full κωμωδοδιδασκαλία involved a number of stages, and this is the reason why at *Kn.* 541–4 Aristophanes chooses to use a metaphor that suggests a complex development. Part of the apprenticeship entailed contributing to the plays of others – a collaboration which may have been an established way of encouraging new dramatists, and which is not to be thought of as purely literary but rather as experience in the creation of a dramatic script for production. By 427 Aristophanes was in a position to provide a whole play for performance, and it was one which may have gained him some patrons even before it was publicly produced. The task of applying for a chorus was given to Callistratos, who probably also had a large hand in the preparations for the production; but no attempt to conceal the identity of the author was made, and Aristophanes will have received the appropriate official recognition. The poet was not to attain to full κωμωδοδιδασκαλία until 424, but the impression given by *Kn.* 541–4 is of a gradually increasing involvement by the author in his own productions. It therefore seems very likely to me that Aristophanes took part in the rehearsals of his own plays from the start, and that he did not simply leave to Callistratos all the work of preparation which the poet-didascalos would normally perform. It is this kind of background, I think, which we must visualize to make sense of *Ach.* 628:::

ἐξ οὗ γε χοροῖσιν ἐφέστηκεν τρυγκοῖς ὁ διδάσκαλος ἡμῶν, κτλ.

In a theatrical context διδάσκαλος is a term for the poet. We have in fact no evidence relevant to the fifth century which suggests that when a poet applied for a chorus through someone else or shared the responsibilities for production he relinquished the title of διδάσκαλος.³⁹ However, even if that were normal

³⁹ Even fourth-century practice may not tell us anything about the fifth century; *Dem. Meid.* 58 proves little, for by that date a greater separation of the roles of

poet and producer seems probable. There is a reference in *P. Oxy.* 2737 fr. 1 col. II lines 21 f. (= C. Austin, *Comicorum Graecorum Fragmenta in Papyris Reperta*,

practice, a reference to Aristophanes as διδάσκαλος in *Acharnians* would still be possible. If the poet's involvement in his productions was by this stage almost complete, as my argument suggests, the fact that it was Callistratos who had applied for the chorus would surely not automatically entitle him to be called διδάσκαλος. An Athenian audience would not expect to hear the 'voice' of anyone other than the poet in a parabasis; they had already heard the author speaking at 377-82 and 502-3. διδάσκαλος would at once suggest the poet, and if anyone did happen to be momentarily puzzled the ensuing series of references to the ποιητής (633, 644, 649, 654) would make the meaning clear. *Ach.* 628 perhaps represents Aristophanes' first attempt to claim for himself the full status of κωμωδοδιδάσκαλος.

In the above discussion I have been using the phrase 'the early plays of Aristophanes' to refer to the phase of the dramatist's career from *Banqueters* to *Acharnians*. In addition to the three plays securely dated in this period, it has sometimes been thought that there was a fourth play, produced at the Lenaia of 426.⁴⁰ This belief is an inference from *Ach.* 1154 f., where the chorus abuse one Antimachos, a choregos, and give as justification: ὅς γ' ἐμέ τὸν τλήμονα Λήναια χορηγῶν ἀπέλυσ' ἄδειπνον. The validity of this inference has been questioned by Dover,⁴¹ but I wish here to try to reestablish it by some detailed considerations.

Dover has argued that in the given line ἐμέ refers to 'the comic choreutes' and implies nothing about either Aristophanes himself or the members of the chorus in the first performance of *Acharnians*. That nothing is implied about the individual members of the chorus cannot be disputed. Rather more challenging, though, is the belief that the chorus of *Acharnians* could speak for 'comic choreutai in general', or rather, as Antimachos presumably *was* a choregos in 426, for the chorus of some other comedian than Aristophanes (some, of course, might have said 'than Callistratos'). Dover draws an analogy with Athenian juries: it was possible to address a particular jury as though its membership were co-terminous with that of the whole citizen body in its judicial aspect. Consequently, individual jurors could find themselves being addressed as though they had taken decisions in cases in which they had not actually been involved. But the case of Athenian juries is explicable in terms which are simply irrelevant to comic choruses. All juries were taken functionally from the body of male citizens of the polis; the representativeness of the individual jury is a principle of the whole democratic system. It is pertinent to recall Aristotle's definition of a citizen: ὃ . . . ἐξουσία κοινωνεῖν ἀρχῆς βουλευτικῆς ἢ κριτικῆς.⁴² In the case of individual choruses and 'comic choreutai in general' this relationship is not established, and the line from *Acharnians* with which we are dealing is not sufficient to establish it. On the evidence of the extant plays of Aristophanes we can assert that when the chorus refers to itself in the first person it must be characterising itself in one of the following three ways:

fr. 56*, lines 55 f.) to τούτους τοὺς νέους διδασκάλους. It follows closely on a reference to poets' having their plays produced by others, but I can see no compelling reason not to take διδάσκαλος in the standard sense of 'poet' here.

⁴⁰ e.g. C. F. Russo, *Aristofane Autore di Teatro* (Florence, 1962), p. 26; Gelzer, *op. cit.* 1408.

⁴¹ *Maia* 15 (1963), 23.

⁴² *Politics* 3, 1275^b 18 f.

- i. as a dramatically defined group of Acharnians, knights or whatever.
- ii. as a body of representative members of the polis of Athens.
- iii. as the Aristophanic chorus, which is assumed to be a constant entity because of the influence and identity of the author and despite the varying dramatic character of the chorus and the presumable change from year to year in the actors or dancers who make it up.

The first of these types of reference is too common and obvious to need illustration. Examples of the other types can be found in the parabasis of *Acharnians*. In line 628 *ἡμῶν* means 'we the chorus of the poet Aristophanes', and not 'we the comic chorus', as *ὁ διδάσκαλος* shows. In line 631, where *ἡμῶν* occurs again, the chorus undoubtedly speak simply as members of the polis, representative Athenian citizens. Perhaps the closest an Aristophanic chorus comes to speaking in the way that Dover attributes to them at *Ach.* 1154 is in the quasi-parabatic passage in the parodos of *Frogs* (354 ff.). The term *χορός* is used ambivalently in this passage of both the comic chorus and the band of initiates. Leaving aside this, though, what prevents us from finding support here for Dover's thesis is the way in which the context makes evident the special nature of the chorus's status at this moment. Firstly there are the plurals: *χοροῖσιν* (354), *χοροῖς* (370). Secondly, the references to Cratinus (357) and to general service in a comic chorus (356). These details define the peculiar role of the chorus here as a mouthpiece for the genre. This is not at all equivalent to a chorus representing all comic choruses when simply making a first-person reference. Indeed, even the chorus of *Frogs* no more acquires *that* identity in the parodos than it does when in line 686 it makes a general comment on the political function of *τὸν ἱερὸν χορόν*. A chorus can speak in a manner which acknowledges the existence of other comic choruses; but there are no grounds for supposing that without warning or explanation an Aristophanic chorus could speak for a particular chorus belonging to a different poet, or speak as if its identity were the same as that of all other comic choruses. I therefore conclude that the inference from *Ach.* 1154 f. that Aristophanes had a play produced at the Lenaea of 426 is a valid one.

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