

A CASE FOR ARISTOMENES (IG II² 2325)

Recent discussions of Aristophanes' early career raise again the question who was recognized as a victor with the *Babylonians* and the *Acharnians* and his name officially recorded, Aristophanes the poet or Kallistratos his didaskalos.¹ This old-new controversy has brought back into focus the City Victors' list (IG II² 2325) and the reconstruction of 'API[in the second column of the comic poets. The inscription itself has not been studied anew and the reader is referred to earlier examinations of it, especially to two articles of E. Capps and to the verdict of A. Pickard-Cambridge, who maintains that it is needless to follow the controversy in detail: 'For the fifth century, the name of Aristophanes is restored with practical certainty in the list of victors at the Dionysia, between those of Hermippus and Eupolis, it now being proved that the first victory of Aristomenes, the other candidate for the place, fell much later.'² One can hardly blame Pickard-Cambridge and others for evading the intricate calculations and boring details. Yet, it seems that they deserve, or rather require a re-examination, for Capps, although a meticulous and distinguished epigraphist, had the tendency to jump easily to rash conclusions. Indeed, his frankness in readily admitting his mistakes and recanting untenable positions evokes admiration, but, since his work belongs to a period in which hypotheses were more easily advanced and less rigorously defended than today, an attempt should be made to take a look at his arguments and see whether they are still valid.

Capps' restoration of Aristophanes' name rests chiefly on the following arguments presented at length in his article of 1907.³ (a) Lysippus' victory in 410/09 (IG xiv 1097) is not his first, therefore his name should be restored in the City Victors' list above that of Pherekrates; as a result, (b) the interpretation of IG xiv 1097 on the basis of c. 56 letters to each line⁴ is proved correct. Such a long line allows the restoration of Aristomenes' name in 1097 below that of Lysippus and excludes the possibility of restoring his name on the City Victors' list for an early victory preceding that of Eupolis. (c) The *Babylonians* won a first prize at the City Dionysia in 426 B.C. The exclusion of Aristomenes clears the way for the restoration of Aristophanes' name on the City Victors' list on account of the *Babylonians*. And now for the details:

¹ cf. G. Mastromarco, 'L'esordio "segreto" di Aristofane', *QS* 10 (1979), 153–96; S. Halliwell, 'Aristophanes' Apprenticeship', *CQ* 30 (1980), 33–45; D. M. MacDowell, 'Aristophanes and Kallistratos', *CQ* 32 (1982), 21–6.

² A. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*², revised by J. Gould and D. M. Lewis (Oxford, 1968), p. 85 and n. 9 with bibliography; cf. Halliwell, art. cit. (n. 1, above), 35 and n. 14, and Mastromarco's more extensive bibliographical notes (n. 1, above), 186 nn. 12–13. Mastromarco himself chiefly endorses H. Oellacher's arguments in *WS* 38 (1916), 81–157, maintaining (wrongly) that they have been accepted by *all* scholars. Oellacher's article, however, predates the pertinent piece of evidence published by Capps in 1943 (see below nn. 7 and 9), and consequently some of his calculations are erroneous and his statistics naive. It is no wonder that Geissler failed to understand them, cf. P. Geissler, *Chronologie der altattischen Komödie* (Berlin, 1925), p. 6 n. 1.

³ E. Capps, 'Epigraphical Problems in the History of Attic Comedy', *AJPh* 28 (1907), 179–99.

⁴ Which Capps discussed in his article 'Roman Fragments of Athenian Didascaliae', *CPh* 1 (1906), 201–20; for the text cf. L. Moretti, *Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae* (Rome, 1968), no. 216; cf. also pp. 184–5.

(a) Lysippus is mentioned as victorious in *IG* xiv 1097, line 7, but his name is not preserved on either of the Victors' lists of the comic poets. The joining of line 7 to line 8, proposed by Körte (who postulates a line of 30–2 letters) and seconded by Wilhelm,⁵ yields the statement that he was victorious in 410 or 409. If it was his first victory, his name must appear on one of the lists in a chronologically appropriate position. If it is impossible so to place him, it would follow that line 7 cannot be joined to line 8, that the number of letters to a line was greater, and that in the longer lacuna between the lines a previous victory was recorded. Such a conclusion will necessitate our finding for Lysippus a place on one of the lists indicative of an earlier victory.

Firstly Capps sets out to prove that Lysippus' name cannot be restored on the Lenaeian list at the bottom of column I, as proposed by Körte, where there are six lost names – he assumes 440 as the lower limit for the establishment of the comic contest at the Lenaea. Capps excludes this possibility since it requires what he terms 'an extremely improbable assumption', namely that 'all the victories of the first nine poets, except the second of Aristomenes, were won before the fifteenth poet gained his first' to which should be added two victories of Aristophanes (425, 424 B.C.), one for each of the next three poets on the list, and two or three extra victories for one of the unknown poets on the list (he forgot to mention here the victory of Philonides which he himself postulates), or 'we should be forced to assume that between Philonides (423) and Lysippus (410) only three poets gained a place, leaving 10 years to be occupied by second or subsequent victories (p. 187. 'Philonides (423)' is a *lapsus calami*; on p. 199 Capps gives the correct date 422).

That all the victories of the first nine poets, but the second of Aristomenes, were won before 410 is not such an extremely improbable assumption. When the victories of the years 440–426 (the year of Eupolis' first victory) are subtracted from the total, there is an overflow of just seven victories that have to be placed after 426, and these include the two other victories of Eupolis, which must be placed before 410, since he died before that date. Capps himself postpones till after 426 one of Kratinus' victories, two of Hermippus and the second victories of Pherekrates and Phrynichus. Kratinus won his first victory at the Dionysia in the mid 450s (*IG* ii² 2525 col. 1), and is referred to as dead in Arist. *Peace* 700–3 (421). For the interpretation of this passage see Sommerstein ad loc. (as against Sharpley and Platnauer). There is no indication that Kratinus remained active after 423, and Lucian, who relates that he died shortly after his victory with the 'Wine Flask' (*Macr.* 25), perhaps echoes an existing tradition pertaining to the date of his death. Hence we may safely assume that he won his last victory at the Lenaea before 410. We know that Pherekrates produced the *Agrioi* at the Lenaea of 420 (Pl. *Prt.* 327d; Ath. 5, 218b and 11, 505f), and this could have been his second victory. This leaves only one victory of Phrynichus and two of Hermippus unaccounted for. Capps suggests that one of the six names lost in the lacuna at the end of col. 1 is Aristophanes with two victories and another Philonides with one victory. One of the three unknown poets could be Archippus, if the single victory he won according to the *Suda* in Ol. 91 (415–412) was a Lenaeian victory,⁶ and each of the two other unknown poets must have won at least one victory. This leaves us with only five years unaccounted for before 410, and not ten as Capps has claimed, and I see no difficulty in assuming that they were occupied by second or subsequent victories. They can be filled with the still unplaced two victories

⁵ cf. A. Körte, *RhM* 60 (1905), 425–47; A. Wilhelm, *Urkunden dramatischer Aufführungen in Athen* (Wien, 1906), pp. 195–208.

⁶ Capps prefers to consider it a City victory, see below; and cf. K. J. Dover, 'Archippus', *OCD*²; Geissler, op. cit. (n. 2, above), p. 11.

of Hermippus and one of Phrynichus and two additional victories of the unknown poets. Or, we may also assume that each of the unknown poets (and Philonides) had won more than a victory or two and postpone the victories of Hermippus and Phrynichus till after the year 410. Be that as it may, there is no apparent reason for barring Lysippus from occupying the 15th place in col. 1.

Next Capps sets out to prove that Lysippus' name cannot be restored at the end of col. 3 of the City Victors' list. These calculations, however, are no longer valid thanks to the evidence Capps himself published in 1943. In his article 'A New Fragment of the List of Victors at the City Dionysia'⁷ Capps published a part of *IG* II² 2318 (a fragment of marble found in 1937 in the excavation of the Areopagos), on the basis of which the victory of Hermippus recorded on it can be dated to 436/5. In the list of Comic Victors at the Dionysia (*IG* II² 2325, col. 2), Hermippus' name comes after that of Pherekrates and its position confirms Dobree's emendation (which Capps terms a 'happy guess') of Anon. *de com.* (Kaibel, *CGF*, I, p. 8)⁸ *Φερεκράτης Ἀθηναῖος νικᾷ ἐπὶ Θεοδώρου (θέατρον MS.)*, and the date 438/7 for Pherekrates' victory at the Dionysia. In spite of that Capps deems his detailed arguments in *AJPh* 28 (1907), to which he refers the reader, 'to retain their validity still' (p. 3 n. 5), although there he has firmly rejected Dobree's emendation and placed Pherekrates' first victory not in 438/7 but in 431 (p. 197). Needless to say, calculations based on the erroneous date can no longer be considered as retaining their validity. Between Hermippus in 436/5 and Eupolis there is a vast range of possibilities for the placing of *ἈΠΙ*.⁹

Capps admits that Eupolis' first victory 'may have fallen in any of the years between 429 and 421 except 423 and 422',¹⁰ and yet he refuses to consider an earlier date than 424 for Eupolis' first victory, basing his refusal on an appeal to 'statistics':

...it is inconceivable that for twenty years of the great period of the Old Comedy all but five of the victories were won by new poets, and that these, with the exception of Eupolis and Ameipsias, gained only one each before 409. So low an average of victories to the poet as this assumption implies can be paralleled in no other section of the Victors'-lists where the number of victories is recorded (*ibid.*).

The information afforded by the inscriptions is too limited and fragmented to allow valid statistical computations of victories' distribution.¹¹ Fortunately, however, the City Victors' list of the Comic poets offers a clear refutation of Capps' appeal. In col. 1, the four poets following Magnes gained only one victory each, whereas the five poets immediately following them gained together the impressive number of 22

⁷ *Hesperia* 12 (1943), 1–11.

⁸ = Koster III, 2; cf. *Scholia in Aristophanem*, I 1A: *De Comoedia*, ed. W. J. W. Koster (Groningen, 1975). Koster inserts Dobree's conjecture in his text, and quotes Capps' confirmation of it in his apparatus criticus.

⁹ This is not the first time Capps changed his mind on this issue. Formerly he accepted Dobree's emendation, cf. *AJPh* 20 (1899), 393; Oellacher's calculations are also based on a rejection of Dobree's emendation as are those of Geissler (n. 2, above). This error leads Geissler to place Hermippus' first victory not long before 426, *op. cit.* (n. 2, above), p. 11; Hermippus' name is no longer restored in *IG* II² 2318, col. 5, line 2 for a victory in 422 (cf. Capps, *art. cit.* (n. 3, above), 196, following Wilhelm, *op. cit.* (n. 5, above), p. 21). Although Capps proposed to restore Kantharus in *IG* II² 2325 col. 1, *art. cit.* (n. 3, above), 199, he did not see its implications for *IG* II² 2318, and it was left to Oellacher to reach this conclusion, *art. cit.* (n. 2, above), 116.

¹⁰ Capps, *art. cit.* (n. 3, above), 196; Kratinus won in 423 according to *Hyp. Ar. Clouds*, he won 4 victories, one of them in 421 (*Hyp. Ar. Peace*), and died before 410.

¹¹ It cannot be reached by simple calculations of averages, cf. Oellacher's attempt at finding out the averages, *art. cit.* (n. 2, above), 109–10.

victories. Such an 'unreasonable' and 'illogical' distribution of victories only proves that nothing is inconceivable, and that the argument that a different distribution of victories on the two lists is 'intrinsically improbable' is, of course, unsound. Capps himself (p. 197) deems possible what he terms earlier (p. 196) 'inconceivable', if it is postulated only for one of the lists and not for both. But we need to restore the name of Lysippus only on one of the lists in order to overturn Capps' edifice, although it is possible to restore it on both, for I see no reason for Capps' refusal to consider a first victory of Eupolis earlier than 424 other than that it will exclude the restoration of Aristophanes' name above that of Eupolis. If one does not harbour such *a priori* desires and places Eupolis' first victory in 426, it allows the restoration of Lysippus' name in col. 3 after Kephisodorus.¹² Capps' preferred restoration of Archippus forces him to emend the numeral in the Suda so as to give Archippus a victory not in the uncomfortable years 415–412, but in 403–400 (p. 199).

There is no evidence that the victory Ameipsias won at the Dionysia in 414 (Hyp. Arist. *Aves*) was his first. Wilhelm, for example, thinks it was his second.¹³ Neither is it possible to conclude from Lysias 21, 4 that the victory which Kephisodorus won in the Archonship of Eukleides (403/02) was his first. Hence, the restoration of his name in col. 3 after Theopompus does not exclude the possibility of restoring Lysippus' name after it for a victory in 410/09.

Since it is not impossible to restore Lysippus' name not only on one but on both lists in a place commensurate with a 410/09 victory, it is no longer necessary to accept Capps' restoration of his name above that of Pherekrates in the City list for a victory c. 435 (p. 197). Such a date is not only unnecessary, but also, as mentioned above, based on the erroneous assumption that Pherekrates' first victory was in 431.

(b) Capps needed this restoration not *per se* but in order to prove that Lysippus' early victory was recorded in the lacuna at the end of line 7 in *IG* xiv 1097, and that it was prior to 410/09, and so to refute Körte's hypothesis of 30–2 letters to a line (see above). Capps admits that the indications offered by the Roman fragments of the Athenian comic didascaliae (1097, 1098, 1098a) cannot by themselves confirm hypotheses regarding the original length of line, and that a confirmation derived from outside sources is required.¹⁴ Without such a confirmation his hypothesis of a line length of 56 letters is, of course, untenable, and consequently there is no place on 1097 for the addition of Aristomenes' name after that of Lysippus and no case for excluding Aristomenes from the City Victors' list.¹⁵ Although the case can rest at that point, nevertheless further examination of the specific grounds on which Capps bases the introduction of Aristomenes' name in lines 10–14 of 1097 may underline their unacceptability.

¹² On the basis of the traces reported by Wilhelm, *op. cit.* (n. 5, above), p. 116.

¹³ cf. Wilhelm, *op. cit.* (n. 5, above), p. 115; cf. also Geissler, *op. cit.* (n. 2, above), p. 11.

¹⁴ Capps, *art. cit.* (n. 4, above), 208.

¹⁵ W. A. Dittmer's hypothesis of a line length of 74(!) letters, which he advanced in his dissertation *The Fragments of Athenian Comic Didascaliae found in Rome* (Leiden, 1923) written under the supervision of Capps, has even less to commend it; and cf. Capps, *art. cit.* (n. 4, above), 212 on the improbability of a line longer than the one he has suggested; Moretti, *op. cit.* (n. 4, above), p. 185, who tends to accept Dittmer's line length, but nonetheless rejects as rigid and artificial the calculations of all scholars – Dittmer's included – since they did not take into account any additional material which might have been included in the didascaliae, such as notes *de comoediarum fortuna, de histrionibus, de musica, vel sim.* But if Moretti's line of reasoning is consistently followed, no line length can be established and consequently all the restorations should be rejected, including that of Aristomenes' name for a first victory in 395/4 (Capps' restoration followed by Moretti).

Capps argues (1) that Lysippus' first appearance must have preceded that of Aristomenes in 447, which gives Lysippus too long a career of *c.* 57 years, and (2) that the titles in 1097 lines 10 and 14 are of Aristomenes' plays.¹⁶ But, (1) Capps' computations rest on assumptions he himself rejected a year later, namely those of a Lenaeon victory by Kephisodotus in 402 (rejected in *AJPh* 28 [1907], 180), and of a first Lenaeon victory for Xenophilus *c.* 449 (cf. *ibid.*, p. 187). The rejection renders his Composite Victors list, including the dates of Aristomenes and Lysippus, valueless; Capps also admits that his calculations based on col. 2 of the City Victors' list, of which he saw a glimpse before Wilhelm's book was published, were inexact (cf. *ibid.*, p. 197 n. 1). (2) Capps admits that the title *Dionysus* can prove little. Therefore his entire argument centres on *Κολοφόροις* in line 14. He maintains that the unusual title is palaeographically near to the title of the play with which Aristomenes was third at the Lenaea under the archon Stratokles (424), and is reported in the didascalical notice of the *Knights* as *Υλοφόροις* (V) and *Όλοφύροις* (F, Θ, Ald), that it appears in 'a category certainly Lenaeon and almost as certainly devoted to exhibitions which won third prize, and finally in the year of an archon whose date may quite well be 424, and the genitive of whose name ends in -ους'.¹⁷ However, plays ending in -φοροι are not so unusual, and palaeographically *Κολο-* is hardly near *Υλο-*. Capps' suggestion that 'The first source of the error was doubtless due to the initial K being written like U'¹⁸ is unacceptable. Only by assuming a length of line of 52 letters, for which there is no basis (see above), and by filling the long lacunae with whatever is needed to fit his hypothesis, can Capps show what is not certain at all, that the category is Lenaeon and the section devoted to exhibitions which won the third prize. Apseudes, the archon of 433/2, whose name ends in the genitive in -ους, fits the entry after Morychides in 439 better than Stratokles.

(c) The *Babylonians* was performed by Kallistratus in 426 (The Suda iv 318, 7–9). The *communis opinio* that it was performed at the city Dionysia rests on the scholiast's remarks *ad Achar.* 378, which interpret 'because of last year's comedy' as a reference to the *Babylonians*, a play produced 'in the presence of foreigners', namely at the Dionysia. It is not certain which prize the play won, but it has become customary to rely in these matters on the almost canonized authority of Pickard-Cambridge, and he has no doubts, although he does not state on what grounds he maintains that 'Aristophanes' first victory was doubtless with the *Babylonians* produced by Kallistratos in 426'.¹⁹ However, since he refers the reader to Capps' article in *AJPh* 26 (1907), it seems that he accepts Capps' assertion that 'We can no longer reasonably doubt... that Aristophanes won a City victory early in his career (*AJP* xx, p. 396), as well as the City victory of 405' (p. 198). Capps refers the reader to a prior article of his in *AJPh* 20 (1899) as if the issue has been proved there, but all he says there is that Aristophanes was let down by the audience when the *Clouds* flopped: 'Indeed, the depth of his indignation at his defeat would almost lead one to infer that he had already won a victory at the City festival and knew his own powers.' But the intensity of Aristophanes' indignation as assessed by Capps cannot serve as a definitive measure for deciding which prize the *Babylonians* won. What Aristophanes says in *Clouds* 533 is that he received from the audience *ῥηκία* 'pledges'. Dover in his commentary *ad loc.* explains the passage as follows: 'the judgement passed by the audience on *Banqueters* is in his eyes a pledge given to him of equally favourable

¹⁶ Capps, *art. cit.* (n. 4, above), 215–16.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 216.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 216 n. 3.

¹⁹ Pickard-Cambridge, *op. cit.* (n. 2, above), p. 85 n. 9.

judgement (γνώμη) in the future.' (cf. also Starkie ad loc. 'sure pledges (of your judgement), viz. the reception which you gave the *Daetales*'.²⁰) Dover's interpretation of the pledges' content, an 'equally favourable judgement' in future competitions, seems to me correct. Since the *Banqueters* won a second prize, it means a pledge of the same reception (a second prize), but not of a worse, the third disappointing prize awarded to the *Clouds*.²¹ The *Babylonians* is not mentioned and not even hinted at in this passage. Aristophanes' complaint, that a promise made to him has not been kept, links the *Banqueters* directly with the *Clouds* as if there was nothing in between. Such linking makes sense if the *Babylonians* was not presented at the City Dionysia at all (*Achar.* 378 may very well be a fictional invention of Aristophanes, and the scholiast's remarks a piece of 'evidence' derived from the play),²² or if it won the second prize (falling within the promised 'pledges'). Had the *Babylonians* been awarded a first prize Aristophanes would probably not have referred to a former play which won a second one. This means, as Russo rightly points out,²³ that Aristophanes had to wait a long time for his first Dionysian victory. It is, of course, a pity that our wish to award him an earlier victory cannot accomplish the feat without a solid piece of supporting evidence. Unfortunately we are not in possession of such evidence – there is no proof whatsoever that Aristophanes won a City victory with the *Babylonians*.

With Pherekrates' victory established at 437/6 and Hermippus at 436/5, the years from 435 till the first victory of Eupolis are left open for the poet whose name begins with 'API'. Wilhelm, who restores in this place the name of Aristomenes, maintains that the position of the name indicates a date rather before 430 than after. Fortunately we have some evidence to support such a date. The Suda reports in its

²⁰ cf. MacDowell's interpretation of lines 528–32, art. cit. (n. 1, above), 23.

²¹ Dramatic competitions, which award second and third prizes (and in the case of comic poets in some periods, even fourth and fifth, as in 434, when Kallias won a fifth place, *IG* xiv 1097), differ essentially from competitions which award first prize only. For in competitions in which you either win or lose a second place is no less disappointing than the last one. It is said in praise of Sophocles that he won twenty victories and was often second, but never third (*Vita* 8). Even the third prize meant a success of sorts, for one could have been refused a chorus altogether and lose the chance of even being placed third, see Pickard-Cambridge, op. cit. (n. 2, above), p. 84 (*Birds* 445–7 is a plea in the middle of a performance and cannot be considered as evidence of attitudes). Hence *Wasps* 1023 need not be interpreted as referring 'primarily to the success of the *Knights*' (MacDowell ad loc.), for which Aristophanes won the first prize at the Lenaea of 424, but also to the plays for which he won the second prize.

²² The statement that Dikaiopolis is speaking *ex persona* is problematic and has no parallels elsewhere. Dover assesses correctly the difficulty and offers, to my mind, the only acceptable interpretation, namely that the 'I' is the 'I' of the comic hero, see K. J. Dover, 'Notes on Aristophanes' *Acharnians*', *Maia* 15 (1963), 15 = *Greek and the Greeks* (Oxford, 1987), p. 296. It is not stated in the Suda at what festival the *Babylonians* was produced. It could have been performed at the Lenaea of 426, and at the Dionysia of that year Kallistratos could have produced another play, the one referred to in the parabasis of the *Acharnians*. For the *Acharnians* was performed in the secret period of Aristophanes' career, when he was unknown to the general public. MacDowell, art. cit. (n. 1, above), 24, does not like the term 'ghost writer', but nevertheless has refuted persuasively the recent attempts of Mastromarco and Halliwell to revive Kent's (and others') tripartite division of Aristophanes' early career (cf. R. G. Kent, 'The Date of Aristophanes' Birth', *CR* 19 [1905], 154); MacDowell is clearly right when he maintains that the man in question in *Ar. Ach.* 628 'has had charge of several comic choruses before...since Aristophanes was not in charge of any chorus before *Knights*...it follows logically that the man described in the parabasis of *Acharnians* is not Aristophanes but Kallistratos', and cf. D. Gilula, 'A Career in the Navy (*Arist. Knights* 541–4)', *CQ* 39 (1989), 259–61.

²³ cf. C. F. Russo, *Aristofane, autore di teatro*² (Florence, 1984), p. 35; the belief that the *Babylonians* was victorious is according to Russo 'una superstizione'. He postulates instead a first City victory in 425 with an unknown play, see pp. 40–1 and 405.

entry on Aristomenes that he was a poet of the Old Comedy of the second period, the writers contemporary with the Peloponnesian war, Ol. 87 (= 431–428). Capps, following Wilhelm, asserts that all such notices refer to the Dionysia.²⁴ Capps himself, before he had decided to expel Aristomenes from the City Victors' list, cited the notice of the Suda, commenting on it that 'The catalogue of Lenaeon victors makes it certain that the first appearance of this poet was several years before 431, and that this date in Suidas is to be considered rather his acme, or of his first victory at the Dionysia.'²⁵ He entirely 'forgot' to refer to this evidence in his discussion of *IG* xiv 1097 in *CPh* 1 (1906), 200–20. 'If we approach the study of this inscription with a mind free from preconceptions' – to use Capps' phrase in this article (p. 216) – and if we are ready not to feel disappointed on account of our darling Aristophanes, it seems that we cannot any longer deny that the name of Aristophanes is not restored with practical certainty in the list of the City Victors, and that there is a case for Aristomenes. He was a poet and he certainly satisfied the interests of the compilers of the Victors' lists, even if they were purely literary.²⁶ The restoration of Aristomenes' name, however, excludes the possibility of using the City Victors' list as an evidence for settling the controversy pertaining to the question who was recognized officially as a victor, the poet or his didaskalos.

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²⁴ Capps (n. 3, above), 186, 189.

²⁵ E. Capps, 'Chronological Studies in the Greek Tragic and Comic Poets', *AJPh* 21 (1900), 52–3.

²⁶ Pickard-Cambridge, *op. cit.* (n. 2, above), 85 n. 9.