

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Didymus Chalcenterus and Aristophanes' two *Plutus* plays

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Abstract

A variety of ancient sources suggest that there was more than one Aristophanic play entitled Πλοῦτος, and the scholia on the extant *Plutus* show that one ancient commentator erroneously thought that he was working on a comedy of 408 BC when in reality he had the comedy of 388 BC in front of him. This error, which most likely arose because there were two similar versions of the late *Plutus*, has often been attributed to the first-century BC scholar Didymus Chalcenterus. It is here argued that the basis for this ascription is weak and that there are in fact substantial counter-arguments. Instead of Didymus, a later commentator such as the second-century AD scholar Symmachus may have been responsible for the mistake, which probably had more to do with the evolving transmission history of Aristophanes' comedies than with careless scholarship.

Keywords: ancient scholarship; Aristophanes; Didymus Chalcenterus; *Plutus*; Symmachus

I. Introduction

Recent years have seen a growing interest in the development, methods and concerns of ancient literary scholarship as well as in its leading figures. There has also been an increasing awareness of the danger of measuring the ideas of our ancient predecessors by our own standards, and of focusing on their (perceived) shortcomings rather than their achievements. Ancient Aristophanic scholarship is no exception here. The modern reader of the extensive scholia on the 11 plays may well feel disappointed if even famous men like Aristarchus sometimes failed to appreciate the intricacy of Aristophanes' art or voiced 'obviously' wrong opinions. However, we must always remember how much easier philological work has become today and never diagnose ancient errors without first asking (a) what their factual and/or conceptual basis may have been and (b) whether what looks like a mistake to us cannot merely have been turned into one by the hazards of a transmission that was particularly complex and, due to the wish of ancient readers and copyists to abbreviate, condense and select, fundamentally unreliable.

A prime illustration of this wider issue is provided by the problem discussed on the following pages. They propose a fresh look at what one might initially regard as the single biggest howler of ancient Aristophanic scholarship: the curious belief, propagated in a number of scholia, that Aristophanes' last extant play, the *Plutus*, was in reality a homonymous comedy composed in the middle of the author's career, just after *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae* and just before *Frogs*. More specifically, we shall ask whether the

person to whom this error is conventionally imputed, Didymus Chalcenterus, really deserves to be blamed for utter carelessness and whether, by thus criticizing a scholar whose significance for Aristophanic philology can hardly be overstated, we are not rather guilty of sloppiness ourselves. As we shall see, there are good reasons to believe that the error at stake is nothing but a consequence of some unfortunate but forgivable post-Didymean misunderstanding. That this misunderstanding deserves to be resolved rather than perpetuated is all the more true since the way in which we untangle things not only impacts on our reconstruction of this domain of ancient scholarship, and of the transmission history of Aristophanic comedy in antiquity, but also directly bears on a key question concerning Aristophanes' literary output itself: should we believe that the playwright ever recycled, towards the end of his life, substantial chunks of thematic or other material he had first used a long time before?

II. *Plutus I* and *Plutus II* in the ancient sources

Given the complexity of the issues involved, we had best start by familiarizing ourselves with the primary sources that do point to the existence of more than one Aristophanic play entitled Πλοῦτος ('Wealth'), before briefly looking at how modern scholarship has sought to make sense of this source material (section III). Against this background, it will be easier to understand what Didymus (sections IV–V) and other ancient commentators (section VI) may or may not have read, thought and written on the matter.

Although most of our discussion will focus on the scholia, these are not the *only* witnesses for the erstwhile existence of two *Plutus* plays. Firstly, the Ἀριστοφάνους γένος καὶ κατάλογος τῶν αὐτοῦ ποιημάτων, which is prefaced to some Aristophanic manuscripts, has an entry Πλοῦτος β' (= 'Plutus 2x'), paralleling the entries Αἰολοσίκων β', Θεσμοφοριάζουσαι β' and Νεφέλαι β' (*Proleg. de com.* XXX^a Koster = *Ar. test.* 2a KA). Secondly, a second-century AD papyrus from Oxyrhynchus, which contains a somewhat incomplete list of the plays of various comic poets, adds α' to the Aristophanic entry Πλ[οῦτ]ο[ς]; and because such a number is not found with other titles (such as the preceding Ὅρνιθες and Προ[αγών]), save that the line for *Clouds* also reads Νε]φέλαι β', we must in this case assume that the point of the added α' was not to 'count' the number of *Plutus* plays, as could potentially be argued for Νε]φέλαι β', but rather to specify that '*Plutus I*' is meant, in implicit opposition to '*Plutus II*', whatever the reason for the absence of the latter from the list (*P.Oxy.* 2659 fr. 1 col. i.13 + fr. 2 col. i = CGFP 18 = *Ar. test.* 2c KA).¹ Thirdly, the Byzantine grammarian Choeroboscus, in his commentary on the metrical handbook of Hephaestion, at one point observes that there is a first and second Αἰολοσίκων 'just as there is a first and second Πλοῦτος' (in *Hephaestionis enchiridium* 9, p. 236 Consbruch, Αἰολοσίκων δρᾶμα γέγονε πρῶτον καὶ δεῦτερον Ἀριστοφάνους, ὡς καὶ ὁ Πλοῦτος πρῶτον καὶ δεῦτερον); and, somewhat earlier, both a scholion on *Il.* 23.361 based on Herodian and a passage in Athenaeus explicitly cite lines from 'our' *Plutus* as belonging to the Πλοῦτος δεῦτερος (schol. (A) Hom. Ψ 361a¹ with *Ar. Plut.* 991; Ath. 9.368d with *Ar. Plut.* 1128; cf. *Ar. Plut. test.* ii KA).

Much more informative, meanwhile, is the testimony of several Aristophanic scholia. The first of these explains a passage in *Frogs* where Dionysus is remembering the fun he had watching the torch race at the Panathenaea and seeing how the people from the deme

¹ Since at least the Λήμνιαι, Νεφέλαι α', Πελαργοί and Ταγηνισταί are also left out (cf. Austin (1973) 8), [t]he omissions are too many to allow us to suppose that the fragment is from some handbook of literary history or from a catalogue of the Alexandrian Library—an abridgement of Callimachus' πινάκες τῶν ἐν πάσῃ παιδείᾳ διαλαμπάντων καὶ ὄν συνέγραψαν, for example. More probably it is the catalogue of some provincial library or a reading list' (Parsons et al. (1968) 70).

of Kerameis stood at the gate and slapped with the flat of the hand (Ar. *Ran.* 1096, ταῖσι πλατείαις) some untrained, fat and slow straggler:

[1] ... καῖθ' οἱ Κεραμῆς
 ἐν ταῖσι πύλαις παίουσ' αὐτοῦ
 γαστέρα, πλευράς, λαγόνας, πυγὴν. (Ar. *Ran.* 1093–95)

DIONYSUS: And then, at the gate, the people from Kerameis hit his belly, sides, flanks, backside ...

schol. Ar. *Ran.* 1093a/1093b/1096b Chantry:² καῖθ' οἱ Κεραμῆς VME: οἱ τὸ Κεραμεικὸν οἰκοῦντες. VMEΘBarb(Ald) δῆμος δὲ τῶν Ἀθηναίων. ἐκεῖ γὰρ ὁ ἀγὼν ἐγίνετο. RVEMΘBarb(Ald) καὶ ἐν "Πλούτῳ πρώτῳ". "τῶν λαμπαδηφόρων τε πλείστων αἰτίαν τοῖς ὑστάτοις πλατειῶν." τοῦτο δὲ φησιν Εὐφρόνιος, ὅτι ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐν τῷ Κεραμεικῷ ἀγῶνος τῆς λαμπάδος. VEΘBarb(Ald) καὶ τοὺς ὑστάτους τρέχοντας ἀπὸ τῶν ἀγοραίων τύπτεσθαι πλατειαῖς ὑπὸ τῶν νεανίσκων³ χερσὶ, καὶ λέγονται αἱ τοιαῦται "Κεραμεικαὶ πληγαί". VMEΘBarb(Ald) ἐμφαίνεται δὲ ἀπὸ τούτων VEΘ(Ald) ὅτι παρὰ τοῖς Κεραμεικοῖς τοῦτο μάλιστα γίνεται. VEΘBarb(Ald)

And then the people from Kerameis: Those who live in the Kerameikos. This is an Athenian deme; for it is there that the race took place. <Cf.> also in the first *Plutus*: 'the cause of very many slaps for the last of the torch-runners'. On this Euphronius says that it refers to the torch race in the Kerameikos. And that those who are trailing at the end are slapped by those loitering around, by the teenagers, with the flat of the hand; and such slaps are called 'Kerameikos slaps'. From this it becomes evident that this happens above all among the people in the Kerameikos.

The parallel passage quoted here does not occur in the extant *Plutus*. The latter must therefore, by implication, be assumed to be a/the *second Plutus* in the eyes of whoever wrote this note on *Frogs* (cf. further section V).

However, the real nut to crack is no less than four scholia on the extant *Plutus* itself, which differentiate between two plays of this name (nos [2], [3], [4], [7] below). What is so odd about these, and has generated much scholarly discussion, is that they unambiguously express the belief that the play they are commenting on is the *first* of the pair, to be dated to 408 BC, in contrast to the *second* belonging to 388 BC. The same view is shared by two further *Plutus* scholia (nos [5], [6] below), which do not actually refer to two homonymous comedies, but at least one of which would make no sense either if there were not also a *Plutus* of much later date:⁴

² The text printed is that of Chantry (1999) 133–34, except that Chantry, following his usual practice, splits up what is a single annotation in the manuscripts; the connector δὲ at the start of schol. Ar. *Ran.* 1093b (δῆμος δὲ τῶν κτλ.) has thus been reinserted. Other than that, the manuscript reading has been reintroduced in one place: cf. n.4 below. Translations are my own; within these, material inserted for clarification of the intended meaning is enclosed in angled brackets.

³ While the general sense is clear, the detail is not. Perhaps ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγοραίων should be read, to which ὑπὸ τῶν νεανίσκων would constitute a slightly misplaced apposition or gloss. I see little advantage in the transposition (ἀπὸ τῶν νεανίσκων ... ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγοραίων proposed by Fritzsche (1845) 353 and accepted by Chantry (1999) 134, nor do I believe that the ἀπὸ phrase, with or without ἀπό, belongs with τρέχοντας rather than τύπτεσθαι (cf. Kassel and Austin (1984) 245).

⁴ The presentation of the scholia follows Chantry (1994), except that connectors found in the manuscripts are again reinserted. The Aristophanic text printed before the scholia is the one the scholia seem to be commenting on, not necessarily the one modern editions give. Especially in *Plut.* 119–20 the transmitted text is commonly changed (to ΠΛ. ὁ Ζεὺς μὲν οὖν οἶδ' ὡς ἂν ἐπιτρίψει μ' εἰ | πύθοιτο τοῦτ'. ΧΡ. ὃ μῶρε, νῦν δ' οὐ τοῦτο δρᾷ etc.; cf. for example Sommerstein (2001) 54, 141; Wilson (2007b) 278).

- [2] Χρ.: οἶμαι γάρ, οἶμαι—σὺν θεῷ δ' εἰρήσεται—
ταύτης ἀπαλλάξειν σε τῆς ὀφθαλμίας,
βλέψαι ποιήσας. (Ar. *Plut.* 114–16)

CHREMYLUS: For I think, I *think*—god permitting, it must be said—I will free you from this eye disease, making you see.

schol. Ar. *Plut.* 115a/115b Chantry: ταύτης R ... τῆς ὀφθαλμίας REAld: “τῆς πῆρωσεως” RMEMatrBarbRsV⁵⁷Ald [“τῆς τυφλώσεως” VN]. ιδίως δὲ “ὀφθαλμίαν” τὴν πῆρωσιν φησι RVEBarbAld τῶν ὀφθαλμιῶν V διὸ καὶ ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ μεταπεποιήται: “τῆς συμφορᾶς ταύτης σε παύσειν ἧς ἔχεις”. RVEBarbAld

From this eye disease: <that is,> from blindness. But he specifically says ‘eye disease’ (ὀφθαλμία) for a disablement of the eyes. In the second <*Plutus*>, <the line> has therefore been changed to ‘I will put an end to this affliction you have’ [= Ar. fr. 458].

- [3] Πλ.: ὁ Ζεὺς μὲν οὖν εἰδὼς τὰ τούτων, μῶρ', ἔμ' εἰ
πύθοιτ' ἂν ἐπιτρίψειε.
Χρ.: νῦν δ' οὐ τοῦτο δρᾷ,
ὅστις σε προσπαίοντα περινοστεῖν ἔῃ; (Ar. *Plut.* 119–21)

PLUTUS: Knowing how things are with these people, Zeus would destroy *me*, you idiot, if he found out.

CHREMYLUS: And now he doesn’t do it, given that he lets you wander and stumble around?

schol. Ar. *Plut.* 119a/119b Chantry: ὁ Ζεὺς μὲν οὖν εἰδὼς Ald: “τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων πάντα εἰδὼς”, ἐπεὶ οὐδὲν αὐτὸν λανθάνει μεταπεποιήται δὲ καὶ τοῦτο ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ. RVMatrBarbAld

Knowing ... Zeus: <In other words> ‘knowing all the things of the people’, since nothing is hidden from him; but this has also been changed in the second <*Plutus*>.

- [4] Χρ.: τὸ δ' ἐν Κορίνθῳ ξενικὸν οὐχ οὗτος τρέφει; (Ar. *Plut.* 173)

CHREMYLUS: And isn’t it he who maintains the mercenary force in Corinth?

schol. Ar. *Plut.* 173b Chantry: ὡς αἰεὶ ξενικὸν τι ἐχόντων τῶν Κορινθίων, καὶ οὐχ ὡς ἰδίως [ὡς ἔνιοι V] κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον. VENAld δῆλον δέ, ἐκ τοῦ ἐν δευτέρῳ φέρεσθαι, ὃς ἔσχατος ἐδιδάχθη ὑπ' αὐτοῦ εἰκοστῷ ἔτει ὕστερον. εἰ μὴ, ὅπερ εἰκός, ἐκ τοῦ δευτέρου τοῦτο μετενήνεκται. ἐκεῖ γὰρ ὀρθῶς ἔχει ἤδη γὰρ ὁ Κορινθιακὸς πόλεμος συνέστη τρισὶν ἢ τέτρασιν ἔτεσιν πρότερον Ἀντιπάτρου ἐφ' οὗ ἐδιδάχθη. καὶ τὸ συμμαχικὸν ἐπανήθροιστο ἐν Κορίνθῳ, τὸ δὲ Λακεδαιμονίων ἐν Σικυῶνι. VEAlld

Because the Corinthians always had a mercenary force, not specifically [*or*: as some say] at that time. <This> is evident from the fact that <the line> is included in the second <*Plutus*>, which was produced last by him [= Aristophanes] 20 years later; unless, as is likely, this has been transferred from the second <*Plutus*>. For there it is appropriate: the Corinthian War had already begun three or four years before

<the year of> Antipatros, under whom <the second *Plutus*> was produced; and the allied army was assembled in Corinth, the Spartan army in Sicyon.

[5] Χρ.: ἐρᾶ δὲ Λαΐς οὐ διὰ σὲ Φιλωνίδου; (Ar. *Plut.* 179)

CHREMYLUS: Doesn't Laïs love Philonides because of you?

schol. Ar. *Plut.* 179a Chantry: ἐρᾶ δὲ Λαΐς: ὅτι Ἀριστοφάνης οὐ λέγει σύμφωνα κατὰ τοὺς χρόνους: ληφθῆναι γὰρ αὐτὴν φασιν ἐν Σικελίᾳ, πολυχίνιου τινὸς ἀλόντος ὑπὸ Νικίου, ἐπτέτιν, ὠνηθῆναι δὲ ὑπὸ Κορινθίου τινός, καὶ πεμφθῆναι δῶρον τῇ γυναικί εἰς Κόρινθον. ἐὰν δὲ ἐπὶ Χα[β]ρίου τις ταῦτα γενέσθαι δῶ, ὅτε εὖ ἔπραττον Ἀθηναῖοι ἐν Σικελίᾳ, ἔστι δὴ ἕως Διοκλέους ἔτη 1'δ', ὥστε ἄλογον αὐτὴν δι' ὀνόματος ἐπαίρειν. ἐμφαίνει δὲ καὶ Πλάτων ἐν "Φάωνι", <ὄς> ἑπτακαίδεκάτῳ ἔτει ὕστερον δεδίδακται ἐπὶ Φιλοκλέους, ὡς "μηκέτι αὐτῆς οὕσης". δύνεται μέντοι καὶ αὐτῆς ζώσης λέγεσθαι. EAlD

Doesn't Laïs love: <Note> that Aristophanes <here> says something that does not suit the chronology; for they say that she was captured in Sicily, when some small town was taken by Nicias, at the age of seven, and that she was then bought by some Corinthian man and sent as a gift to his wife in Corinth. Now if one accepts that this happened in the year of Charias [415/14], when the Athenians were doing well in Sicily, this makes 14 years until <the year of> Diocles [409/8], so that it is illogical to talk of her by name <already>. Reference <to her> is also made by Plato <Comicus> in the *Phaon*, which was produced 17 years afterwards in the year of Philocles [392/1], <mentioning her> as 'no longer being'; yet, it is possible that <this> was said when she was still alive.

[6] Χρ.: τί δ' ἔστιν; ἢ που καὶ σὺ συκοφάντρια
ἐν ταῖς γυναιξίν ἦσθα;

Γρ.: μὰ Δί' ἐγὼ μὲν οὐ.

Χρ.: ἀλλ' οὐ λαχοῦσ' ἔπινες ἐν τῷ γράμματι; (Ar. *Plut.* 970–72)

CHREMYLUS: What's the matter? Presumably you too were an informer among the women?

OLD WOMAN: No, by Zeus, I wasn't.

CHREMYLUS: So you were drinking by the letter without being selected?

schol. Ar. *Plut.* 972a/972fβ/972i Chantry: ἀλλ' οὐ λαχοῦσ' ΕΘΝAlD ἔπινες ΘAlD: παρ' ὑπόνοιαν, ἀντὶ τοῦ "ἐδίκαζες". RVEΘNBarbLutRsAlD ὅτι δὲ κατὰ γράμματα ἐκληροῦντο προεῖρηται [v. 277]. οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐβούλευον οὕτως, τῷ πρὸ τούτου ἔτει ἀρξάμενοι· φησὶ γὰρ Φιλόχορος: "ἐπὶ Γλαυκίππου καὶ ἡ βουλή κατὰ γράμμα τότε πρῶτον ἐκαθέζετο· καὶ ἔτι νῦν ὁμνύουσιν ἀπ' ἐκείνου καθεδεῖσθαι ἐν τῷ γράμματι ᾧ ἂν λάχωσιν". VEΘNBarbAlD

You were drinking without being selected: <This is a> *para prosdokian* <joke>, <with 'you were drinking'> instead of 'you were sitting as a juror'. That they were appointed by lot according to letters has been said before [*Plut.* 277]. In fact, they were also sitting in Council in this way, having started the year before this; for Philochorus says: 'In the year of Glaucippus [410/9] the Council was also meeting for the first time according to

letter; even now they are still taking an oath on that basis, that they will be meeting in the letter <group> they are allotted to’.

- [7] Ἐρ.: ἔπειτα τοῦτόν γ’ αὐτὸς ἄν κατήσθεις.
 Κα.: οὐ γὰρ μετεῖχες τὰς ἴσας πληγὰς ἐμοί,
 ὁπότε τι ληφθεῖν πανουργήσας ἐγώ.
 Ἐρ.: μὴ μνησικακίης, εἰ σὺ Φυλὴν κατέλαβες. (Ar. *Plut.* 1144–46)

HERMES: And then you would eat it [= the cake promised to Hermes] all by yourself!

CARION: Yes, after all you also didn’t get an equal share of blows whenever I was caught pulling some job.

HERMES: Don’t remember old wrongs, if you’ve seized Phyle.

schol. Ar. *Plut.* 1146a/1146d Chantry: μὴ μνησικακίης Ε εἰ σὺ Φυλὴν ΕΘΝBarbAld κατέλαβες ΕΘΝAld: ὅτι μετὰ τὸ κατελθεῖν τοὺς μετὰ Θρασυβούλου Φυλὴν καταλαβόντας καὶ νικήσαντας ἐν Πειραιεῖ τοὺς Λ', ψηφίσασθαι ἔδοξε “μὴ μνησικακῆσαι ἀλλήλοις καθάπαξ τοὺς πολίτας”. ἀλλὰ ταῦτά γε οὐπω ἐπέπρακτο, οὐδὲ τὰ ἐπὶ τῶν Λ' ἦδη ἦν, ἀλλὰ καί, ὡς Φιλόχορος φησι, πέμπτω ἔτει ὕστερον, “μάχης μετὰ Θρασυβούλου γενομένης, Κριτίας ἐν Πειραιεῖ VEΘNBarbLutAld τελευτᾷ”· τοῦτο οὖν ἔοικέ τις ἐκ τοῦ δευτέρου “Πλούτου” μετενεγκῶν ἐνθάδε ὀλιγορῆσαι τῆς ἀλογίας αὐτῆς, ἢ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ ποιητῆς ὕστερον ἐνθεῖναι. VEΘNBarbAld

Don’t remember old wrongs, if you’ve seized Phyle: After the men around Thrasybulus had returned, having seized Phyle and defeated the Thirty in the Piraeus, the decree was passed ‘that the citizens should not in one single case remember old wrongs against each other’. But this had not yet happened, nor had the events under the Thirty taken place yet, but, as Philochorus says, four years later ‘after the battle with Thrasybulus took place, Critias dies in the Piraeus’. So it seems that someone transferred this here from the second *Plutus* and <by doing so> paid no attention to the illogicality; or else, that the poet himself inserted it later.

III. The case for a διασκευή

The existence of two Aristophanic plays sharing the same title reveals little about the relationship between them. Thinking of the first and second *Clouds*, where we know that the extant *Clouds II* was a revised version (διασκευή) of the unsuccessful *Clouds I* (cf. below), with *Clouds II* never actually seeing the stage (in Athens itself, that is), we may envisage a similar connection between *Plutus I* and *Plutus II*; yet, if in the case of *Thesmophoriazusaē I* and *Thesmophoriazusaē II* two much more, or entirely, independent plays seem likely,⁵ that too is a possibility worth reckoning with for the two Πλοῦτοι.

Having said that, sources [2] and [3] favour the διασκευή hypothesis. The two versions referred to there cannot have been fundamentally different from each other if the annotator was able to single out specific and, at least in the case of [2], ostensibly insignificant⁶ divergences; it would not have made sense for him to note that lines 115 and

⁵ Cf. for example Emonds (1941) 317; Austin and Olson (2004) lxxvii–lxxxix; Mureddu and Nieddu (2015) 67–69.

⁶ Though hardly insignificant enough to justify the claim that the συμφορᾶς version (Ar. fr. 458) never stood in any original text (thus Ludwig (1890) 91; van Leeuwen (1904) iv; Holzinger (1940) 25–26; Wilson (2007a) 201; Chantry (2009) 226; cf. also Rau (1967) 207, according to whom something like the συμφορᾶς text might have been a tragic model parodied in *Plut.* 115). For further discussion see Laible (1909) 70–71; Totaro (2017) 174–79; Caroli (2021) 72–76.

119 'have been changed' in *Plutus II* unless the rest of the passage in which these lines stood was by and large identical in the two texts compared. A similar conclusion is intimated by sources [4] and [7] because the suspicion that the topical allusions to a mercenary force in Corinth and to the Phyle episode might have been transferred from *Plutus II* presupposes that they occurred there in an identifiably similar context; otherwise one would not speak of a transfer. As for [5], no mention is made of a first or second *Plutus*, but if the point is that the *Plutus* under consideration, which is believed to be *Plutus I* as the other passages show, contains an anachronistic prosopographical detail about a well-known courtesan, the commentator may well have thought of a situation parallel to the one in [4] and [7], and hence again of some form of 'transfer' from *Plutus II* (cf. section IV).

While these considerations suggest a considerable degree of similarity, it would however be wrong to deny the need to think of *Plutus II* as a substantially reworked play. It is true that the scholia just discussed do not prove more than that there were alternative readings in this or that line, the kind of difference usually designated in the scholia by the note γρ[ἀφεται] X. Yet, the very fact that the responsible scholiast did not resort to this procedure means that, although the passage in which, for example, *Plut.* 115 and 119 occurred was hardly affected by the revision, other parts must have been, and to an extent that justified the labelling of the two versions as *Plutus I* and *Plutus II*, just as was the case with *Clouds I* and *Clouds II*, the latter of which, according to the hypothesis, 'is the same play as the earlier one, but has been revised in part because the poet wanted to stage it again, without in the end doing so for whatever reason' (*argum.* I Ar. *Nub.*: τοῦτο ταῦτόν ἐστι τῷ προτέρῳ, διεσκευάσται δὲ ἐπὶ μέρους, ὡς ἂν δὴ ἀναδιδάξει μὲν αὐτὸ τοῦ ποιητοῦ προθυμηθέντος, οὐκέτι δὲ τοῦτο δι' ἦνποτε αἰτίαν ποιήσαντος). In fact, the differentiation in the same *Clouds* hypothesis of two types of interventions, namely (i) a relatively unintrusive διόρθωσις of 'more or less every part of the play' (σχεδὸν παρὰ πᾶν μέρος) in which some things were removed and others rearranged as far as the order and the distribution of speaking parts were concerned, vs (ii) a more fundamental διασκευή affecting entire sections of the play (namely the parabasis, the agon and the final scene), would correspond well with what we may have to assume for *Plutus*, too, on the basis of the above reasoning.⁷ Moreover, the handful of fragments which are ascribed in various lexicographical sources to the *Plutus*, but which do not overlap with anything in the text we have and therefore stand a good chance of belonging to the 'other' *Plutus*, are compatible with the same scenario.⁸ Alongside these, the only fragment of *Plutus* that does not belong to the extant play and presupposes a revision process which went beyond some superficial rewording is Ar. fr. 459 from schol. Ar. *Ran.* 1096b (= [1] above). But as long as we have to accept some changes of substance anyway, in order to justify the repeated scholiastic reference to two different Πλοῦτος compositions, this too cannot invalidate the economical διασκευή hypothesis.

A bigger problem arises when we turn to the question of chronology. As already noted, sources [5] and [6] unambiguously assign the production of the earlier *Plutus* to the archonship of Diocles, or 409/8 BC: [6] does so by designating the year 410/9, when Glaucippus was the eponymous archon as 'the year before this', and [5] implies as much

⁷ For a full discussion of the *Clouds* hypothesis and the two versions of that play, see Dover (1968) lxxx–xcviii. The situation with *Peace I* and *Peace II* may have been similar: see Emonds (1941) 315–17; Olson (1998) xlvi–li; Mureddu and Nieddu (2015) 62–67. Cf. also Caroli (2020) on the evidence for Euripidean διασκευαί.

⁸ These are Ar. fr. 460 on ἀναπηρίαν ('mutilation') (from *Suda* α 2014, and cf. Antiatticista α 28 Valente; because of *Scrinus* fr. 179 = Poll. 2.61, a misattribution to Aristophanes is conceivable), fr. 461 on γρᾶζειν ('to pour out the scum of boiled milk') (from Antiatticista γ 37 Valente; cf. especially *Plut.* 1204–07), fr. 462 on ἐπικρούσασθαι (or ἐπικρούσαι) ('rebuke') (from Poll. 9.139; cf. especially *Plut.* 548), fr. 463 on ἐμπαίξιν ('laugh at') (from Antiatticista ε 88 Valente; cf., for example, *Plut.* 886, 973), fr. 464 on ζυγοποιεῖν ('make yokes') (from Poll. 7.115; cf. *Plut.* 513–14), fr. 465 on ῥοφήσαι ('sup up') (from Antiatticista ρ 5 Valente; cf. for instance the context of *Plut.* 694–95); for further discussion of these fragments and some possible *addenda* of a similar kind, see Caroli (2021) 82–119.

when it highlights the absurdity that a girl who was 14 years old in 409/8 could have been famous enough to be mentioned by name in a comedy. While maintaining the revision hypothesis, we might therefore attribute *Plutus I* to 409/8 BC and its διασκευή *Plutus II* to 389/8 BC.⁹ Along these lines, Douglas MacDowell proposed that, in creating *Plutus II*, Aristophanes merely removed the songs and all the topical allusions that had gone out of date, and then inserted a number of new ones, mainly in one short section (*Plut.* 170–80).¹⁰ However, in an incisive critique of this theory, Alan Sommerstein has highlighted that it not only overlooks various formal and linguistic signals of ‘lateness’ throughout the text, but that it is also undermined by the scholiastic evidence itself, around which it revolves:

MacDowell holds that the commentator ... had both the 408 and the 388 text available to him, at least at one stage of his work, and mistook each for the other. Since no one could have made such an error had he actually read through the two texts, MacDowell is forced to suppose that whereas at 115 and 119 this commentator ‘had both versions in front of him’ and compared them in detail, by the time he wrote his notes on 173 and 1146 ‘he did not bother to check the other version to see whether these lines were in it too, or perhaps ... the other version was no longer available to him’. This supposition, however, is in conflict with the text of the scholium on 173, which argues for a particular interpretation of that line *on the ground that it is present in the ‘second’ Wealth*.¹¹

Sommerstein’s own solution to the conundrum is therefore the one already argued for by Benjamin Rogers and Karl Kunst:¹² namely that, effectively, there were *three* texts that went under the name of *Plutus*. The first of these, of 408 BC, would have been lost relatively early, certainly before the comments that have reached us through the scholia on the extant comedy came into being (though not before it could be excerpted by the source of [1], whose Aristophanes fragment Rogers and Sommerstein believe to be taken from the real *Plutus I*); while the second, of 388 BC, would have been staged in a first version (= *Plutus IIa*) and then revised, perhaps for another venue outside Athens (= *Plutus IIb*).¹³ Unlike *Plutus I*, both *Plutus IIa* and *Plutus IIb* would have survived long enough to be read by our commentator, who however also knew of the erstwhile existence of *Plutus I*. Having before him two (admittedly similar) scripts under the title *Plutus*, he would have (mis-)inferred¹⁴ that one must be the play of 408 BC and the other that of 388 BC; and this would explain how he could in good faith comment on the late *Plutus* as if it were the

⁹ This was already the take of Ritter (1828), who stressed that ‘our’ *Plutus* has to be a late composition; cf. the surveys of earlier literature in Wölflé (1981) 5–74 and Caroli (2021) 8–14, next to Wölflé’s and Caroli’s own studies, Torchio (2001) 250–54, and Mureddu and Nieddu (2015) 70–76 (whereas Zanetto (2010) 205–07 leaves the matter open).

¹⁰ MacDowell (1995) 324–27.

¹¹ Sommerstein (2001) 31–32.

¹² Rogers (1907) vii–xiii; Kunst (1919) 58–59; pace Caroli (2021) 58–63, the papyrus fragment BKT 9, 66, fr. B^f, ll. 7–11 can hardly be used in support of this theory (since even if the reading Πλοῦ]τος καὶ Νεφέλαι δύο διεσ[κευάσθησαν ὑπὸ Ἀριστοφάνους were correct, δύο does not equal δίς).

¹³ Possibly in order to promote Aristophanes’ son Ararus; thus Rogers (1907) ix, referring to *argum.* III *Plut.* and the *Vita Aristophanis = Prolegomena de comedia* XXVIII.58–61 Koster (but neither source mentions a second production); cf. now also Caroli (2021) 33–40.

¹⁴ For mis-inference it must be, despite the bold attempt by Mureddu and Nieddu (2015) 76 to absolve him by accepting that he was working on a play of 408 BC, which had indeed been contaminated by insertions from a 388 BC version.

early one: he simply tried to do his best when facing an awkward situation, even if that meant coming up with implausible transfer assumptions like those in [4], [7] and perhaps [5] (cf. section II).

IV. Careless Didymus?

One great advantage of the Rogers–Sommerstein theory is that it frees the commentator in question from the imputation that he was so incompetent as to mistake a play of 408 BC for one of 388 BC, and vice versa, *when both were accessible to him*. We are thus already moving towards the kind of sympathetic assessment of the activity of ancient scholars advocated in section I. As we shall see in due course, we may be able to go even further here; but before doing so, we first have to tackle the issue of who it was that made the mistake.

While Rogers and Sommerstein are cautious enough not to give any name, in other discussions of the matter the first-century BC scholar Didymus Chalcenterus has regularly been suspected.¹⁵ It is commonly held, for good reasons, that Didymus' comprehensive *ὑπομνήματα* on Aristophanes' comedies by and large superseded earlier commentaries by Alexandrian scholars such as Euphronius, Callistratus, Aristarchus and Apollonius, until they were in their turn replaced, in the second century AD, by the works of Symmachus, the single most major *direct* source of the medieval scholia. Famous for his encyclopaedic knowledge and prolific output, Didymus was (and is) also known for a certain negligence, however, which earned him the nickname βιβλιολάθας, the 'man who forgets [his own] writings' (cf. Ath. 4.139c; Quint. *Inst.* 1.8.20). Someone with this profile could, one may believe, easily err also when working on Aristophanes, especially if the error was indeed prompted by the unavailability of a crucial piece of primary material (here: *Plutus I*, according to the Rogers–Sommerstein scenario).

However, Didymus' alleged scholarly shortcomings alone cannot of course justify the indictment. The real case for it has been made by Pierre Boudreaux in his classic treatment of the history of Aristophanic scholarship in antiquity, which therefore must be the starting point for any new discussion of the matter. Having admitted that Didymus' 'nom n'est mentionné qu'une fois (par Symmaque semble-t-il) dans les scolies qui portent sur ce point', and that in a scholion whose 'texte est corrompu de tel sorte qu'on ne peut guère en tirer parti' (namely schol. Ar. *Plut.* 550e Chantry; cf. [9] in section V), Boudreaux continues:

Mais quelques indices concordants permettent d'attribuer à Didyme l'innovation malheureuse dont il s'agit: ce n'est pas seulement la présence de deux μήποτε, mais aussi l'accord d'une de nos scholies avec un passage d'Athénée et un passage d'Harpocrate qui proviennent de la Λέξις κωμική [i.e., the *Lexicon of Comic Words* which Didymus compiled in addition to his commentaries on the individual plays]; c'est enfin, pour négliger un fait difficilement utilisable, la citation des λίαν ἐπιτετηδευμένα ὑπομνήματα.¹⁶

¹⁵ Thus Polak (1902) 173–76; van Leeuwen (1904) xxiii n.5; Körte (1911) 310; Laible (1909) 92–93 (with the proviso 'Didymus utrum falsam sententiam ex commentariis a se adhibitis cognoverit, an ipse eam inuenerit, disceptari nequit'); Boudreaux (1919) 134–36; Kunst (1919) 59 n.1; Kraus (1931) 55; Kassel and Austin (1984) 244; Chantry (1994) 158; Torchio (2001) 254. While Benuzzi (2020) does not broach the topic, Caroli (2021) 78 dissents, with mainly aprioristic reasoning (his central point being that the text of 408 BC must still have been available to Didymus). The earlier idea of Ludwig that all ancient scholars, starting with Lycophron (cf. Ludwig (1890) 85–86), misdated the *Plutus* has (understandably) found no adherents; for a refutation see Laible (1909) *passim*, especially 4–14, 91–92.

¹⁶ Boudreaux (1919) 135.

Let us look at each of these points, starting with the last:

- (i) The citation of the ‘excessively detailed commentaries’ occurs in a scholion we have not yet considered because it does not really provide much help in untangling the problem of the two *Plutus* plays:

[8] Βλ.: ὁρῶ τιν’ ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος καθεδούμενον
 ἰκετηρίαν ἔχοντα μετὰ τῶν παιδίων
 καὶ τῆς γυναικός, κοῦ διοίσοντ’ ἄντικρυς
 τῶν Ἡρακλειδῶν οὐδ’ ὅτιοῦν τῶν Παμφίλου. (Ar. *Plut.* 382–85)

BL EPSIDEMUS: I see someone who is going to sit down on the tribune, holding a suppliant branch, in the company of his children and wife, and looking not at all different from Pamphilus’ *Children of Heracles*.

schol. Ar. *Plut.* 385b Chantry: τὸν Πάμφιλον μὲν Καλλίστρατος καὶ Εὐφρόνιος τραγωδιῶν ποιητὴν φασὶ καὶ διδάξαι “Ἡρακλείδας”. τὰ δὲ λίαν ἐπιτετηδευμένα ὑπομνήματα διστάζει πότερον τραγικὸς ποιητὴς ἢ ζωγράφος, ὃν καθηγῆσασθαί φασιν Ἀπελλοῦ. ἐν μέντοι ταῖς διδασκαλίαις πρὸ τούτων τῶν χρόνων Πάμφιλος οὐδεὶς φέρεται τραγικὸς. γραφὴ μέντοι ἐστίν· “οἱ Ἡρακλείδαι καὶ Ἀλκμήνη καὶ Ἡρακλέους θυγάτηρ Ἀθηναίους ἰκετεύοντες, Εὐρυσθέα δεδιότες”, ἥ τις Παμφίλου οὐκ ἔστιν, ὡς φασιν, ἀλλ’ Ἀπολλοδώρου· ὁ δὲ Πάμφιλος, ὡς ἔοικε, καὶ νεώτερος ἦν Ἀριστοφάνους. VEΘMatrBarbAld

Callistratus and Euphronius say that Pamphilus is a writer of tragedies who produced <a play> *Children of Heracles*; whereas the excessively detailed commentaries are undecided on whether he is a tragic poet or a painter, who is said to have been the teacher of Apelles. However, in the *didaskaliai* no tragic poet Pamphilus is listed before this time. There is a painting *The Children of Heracles, Alcmene, and Heracles’ daughter supplicating the Athenians, being afraid of Eurystheus*, which however is *not* by Pamphilus, as they claim, but by Apollodorus; Pamphilus, it seems, was also later than Aristophanes.

That the information in this note goes back to Didymus is likely not just because it refers to *λίαν ἐπιτετηδευμένα ὑπομνήματα* in a way which Boudreaux takes to be typical of Didymus.¹⁷ There is also much agreement that, whenever the scholia cite early Aristophanic commentators like Euphronius and Callistratus, Didymus is the likely intermediate source. Moreover, the learning which transpires from the consultation of the *didaskaliai* and, above all, the correction of the (at least allegedly) erroneous ascription of the painting seem typical of him; and if that is so, the last sentence too may well be his. However, the only aspect that is of potential chronological relevance in all this is precisely the final remark, and it is difficult to see why the observation that Pamphilus was (according to some) ‘later (or: younger) than Aristophanes’ could not have belonged to a commentary on a play of 388 BC as much as to one on a much earlier comedy. Even if it could be ascertained¹⁸ that *in reality* the painter Pamphilus’ activity postdated only 408 BC, but not 388 BC, that would still tell us nothing about what Didymus (?) and/or his sources thought about the matter; nor should it be overlooked that the statement is about the chronological relationship between

¹⁷ Cf. Boudreaux (1919) 56 n.2.

¹⁸ Which it cannot; see Lippold (1949) 351 (‘Die Zeit bestimmt sich ... nur ungefähr auf Mitte des 4. Jhdts.’).

Pamphilus and Aristophanes, not between Pamphilus and a specific play of Aristophanes.

- (ii) What Boudreaux himself calls a ‘fait difficilement utilisable’ is another scholion on *Plut.* 173 which, in a discussion of the presence of Athenian allied forces to secure Corinth against Sparta after the Peloponnesian War, says ἦν δὲ ὁ καταστήσας τοὺς ξένους ἐν Κορίνθῳ Κόνων ὁ Ἀθηναίων στρατηγός, καθελὼν Λακεδαιμονίους ὅπως φυλάττοι τὴν ἔφοδον αὐτῶν (‘The person in charge of organizing the allied forces in Corinth was the Athenian general Conon, who had removed the Spartans, so as to prevent them from attacking’, schol. Ar. *Plut.* 173e Chantry). Since this agrees with the information given in an entry of Harpocration’s lexicon of the ten Attic orators (Harpocration, s.v. ξενικὸν ἐν Κορίνθῳ, where the *Plutus* is referenced alongside Demosthenes’ Φιλίππικά), which may well be based on Didymus’ commentary on Demosthenes, Didymus could also be the source of the scholiastic remark. Though hypothetical, all this is correct, but it still cannot really indicate that Didymus was misdating our play. To write at length about the Athenian ξενικόν in Corinth after the Peloponnesian War either (a) makes better sense if one believes that the passage one is commenting on is *not* talking about a permanent presence of a ξενικόν in Corinth (= the first option envisaged by [4]) or (b) is equally sensible whether one believes that one is commenting on a passage ‘transferred’ from a play of 388 BC (= the second option envisaged by [4]) or on the play of 388 BC itself.
- (iii) The ‘agreement’ Boudreaux diagnoses between Ath. 13.592d, Harpocration, s.v. Ναΐς (cf. *Sud.* v 16) and schol. Ar. *Plut.* 179a Chantry (= [5] above) is of the following kind. In [5] we learn that the courtesan Laïs cannot reasonably have been named in a play of 408 BC. Both Athenaeus and Harpocration observe that in *Plut.* 179 the name Ναΐς might be read instead of Λαΐς, thereby establishing a connection with a different *hetaera*, who was also mentioned in a speech of Lysias (*fr.* 299 Carey). Given the likelihood that this proposal goes back to Didymus’ Λέξις κωμική, Boudreaux argues that whereas the extant scholion presents the chronological ‘problem’, Athenaeus and Harpocration preserve Didymus’ ‘solution’ to it. However, [5] also underlines that a passage from a play of Plato Comicus of 392/1 BC, which apparently said that Laïs ‘no longer is’ (*fr.* 196), need not be taken at face value (presumably because it may simply mean that Laïs is past her prime). This needs to be stressed if one is dealing with a mention of Laïs in a play thought to *postdate* 392/1 BC. In other words, what the scholion, as we now have it, may be getting at is a structure of the type ‘X is *not* possible in 408 BC, but it is possible in 388 BC’, exactly as in [4] and [7]. In those two instances, the (or one of the) solution(s) envisaged is a textual transfer from the later version, and such a hypothesis has therefore been suggested to lurk behind [5] as well (cf. section III). That cannot be proved, of course, but neither can we affirm that a textual emendation (Λαΐς → Ναΐς) was advocated instead. In fact, for all the unpredictability of the epitomization processes that led to the scholiastic corpus in its current form, the absence of *any* hint at such an emendation in the extensive scholia on our passage (as well as in schol. Ar. *Plut.* 304a/304b Chantry), which persistently talk of the Corinthian Laïs, rather speaks against it. In other words, even if we grant that Didymus in the Λέξις κωμική wondered about changing the text of *Plut.* 179, for whatever reason,¹⁹ and that he therefore *might* have done the

¹⁹ The passage from Plato Comicus, for example, could have triggered such reflection and led to the conclusion that either (a) Plato need not be taken literally (as observed in [5]) or (b) *Plut.* 179 might be referring to a different *hetaera*. On the prosopographical problems surrounding Laïs, which are of little relevance to our discussion, see

same also in his *ὑπόμνημα* on *Plutus*, he cannot have done it in a way that settled the matter once and for all. Consequently, as long as the *Λαΐς* reading remained on the table, any *post*-Didymean commentator could also be the person who got worried about (perceived) chronological issues relating to it.

- (iv) The background of Boudreaux's reference to two uses of *μήποτε* ('perhaps') in the relevant dossier is the observation that, to judge by the scholia one may confidently attribute to Didymus, he frequently used this adverb in his explanations. As Boudreaux himself stresses elsewhere, this can never be a watertight criterion of attribution.²⁰ For instance, in schol. Ar. Av. 303a we read *μήποτε οὐχ ἓν ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ δύο, φησὶν ὁ Σύμμαχος* ('perhaps it is not one <bird> but two, says Symmachus'). On the face of it, *μήποτε* should here be attributed to Symmachus; and even if this scholion merely referenced Symmachus, although the latter had in reality copied Didymus (so that *μήποτε* would remain Didymus' word), the case would still demonstrate that any Didymean *μήποτε* note was potentially subject to later editing. Hence, the presence of *μήποτε* could at best be used as an indication of Didymean authorship only of that part or sentence of a scholion, or set of scholia, in which the adverb occurs. More importantly, meanwhile, neither of the two *μήποτε* Boudreaux is talking about is to be found in any of the scholia with a distinct bearing on our discussion (nos [2]–[7]). Instead, they belong to the wider context of the one *potentially* relevant scholion whose text, in Boudreaux's own judgement, is 'so corrupt that one can hardly make use of it' (cf. above, on schol. Ar. *Plut.* 550e, which follows schol. Ar. *Plut.* 550c/550d, in which the *μήποτε* occurrences are found). To now treat the same source as if it did provide positive evidence for Didymus regarding our *Plutus* as a play of 408 BC is paradoxical.

V. Blameless Didymus

All in all, it seems fair to say that the case for Didymus having been the scholar responsible for the dating error in the *Plutus* scholia is weak. Obviously, the fact that a case is weak need not mean that it is wrong. However, we should at least also ask whether there are any counter-arguments. In what follows, an attempt will be made to adduce some. Admittedly, none of them is unassailable on its own either, but when taken together they still seem sufficient to redeem Didymus' name.

- (i) We start with a closer look at the piece of evidence just mentioned, on whose elusiveness one must agree with Boudreaux:

[9] Χρ.: οὐκ οὐκ δὴ πού τῆς Πτωχείας Πενίαν φαμέν εἶναι ἀδελφήν;
Πε.: ὑμεῖς γ', οἵπερ καὶ Θρασυβούλῳ Διονύσιον εἶναι ὅμοιον. (Ar. *Plut.* 549–50)

CHREMYLUS: So don't we say that Poverty is a sister of Beggary?

POVERTY: Yes, you say that, just as you say that Dionysius is similar to Thrasylbulus!

schol. Ar. *Plut.* 550a Chantry: ὑμεῖς γ' RΘ οἵπερ καὶ Θρασυβούλῳ REΘAld <Διονύσιον> [φατ'] εἶναι ὅμοιον M: τὰ μὴ ὁμοιά φησὶν αὐτοὺς ὁμοιοῦν ὡς εἴ τις λέγει Διονύσιον τὸν ἐξώλη τύραννον εὐοικένας Θρασυβούλῳ τῷ Λύκου,

Geyer (1924); Holzinger (1940) 50–62; Orth (2009) 150–51. The suggestion of Capovilla (1922) and Caroli (2021) 20 that Aristophanes mentioned Nais in a *Plutus* of 408 BC and changed this to *Lais* in the *Plutus* of 388 BC is unconvincing.

²⁰ Boudreaux (1919) 112–13.

RVMEΘAld ἀνδρι φιλοπόλιδι VMEΘAld καὶ παντὸς κρείττονι λόγου, διὰ τε τὰς ἐπιφανεῖς αὐτοῦ κατὰ τῶν πολεμίων νίκας καὶ διότι κατέλυσε τὴν τῶν Λ' τυραννίδα· VMEAld εὐπορος γὰρ ὢν, καὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐκπεσὼν, μετὰ ταῦτα Φυλὴν καταλαβὼν καθεῖλεν αὐτούς. EAld

You say that, just as you say that Dionysius is similar to Thrasybulus: She is saying that they treat as similar things that are not similar; as if someone said that Dionysius the abominable tyrant resembles Thrasybulus son of Lycus, a patriotic man beyond description (?), both because of his illustrious victories over the enemy and because he brought the reign of the Thirty to an end: for being wealthy, and exiled by them, he subsequently took Phyle and deposed them.

schol. Ar. *Plut.* 550c/550d/550e Chantry: [550c] (ἄλλως) VEAld μήποτε EAld ὁ μὲν ἀξιωματικὸς καὶ RVEAld αὐθάδης VEAld [μέγας R], ὡς Στράτις ἐν τῷ “Κινησίᾳ”. EAld Διονύσιος δὲ μαινόμενος, RVEAld καὶ ὡς ἔοικε [ix]θροπώλης. VEAld Πολύζηλος· “Χὼ μαινόμενος ἐκείνοσι Διονύσιος | χρυσοῦν ἔχων ἴχραιδόναί καὶ τρυφήματα | ἐν τῷ μύρω παρ’ Ἀθηναίων βαυκίζεται”. V [550d] μήποτε δὲ καὶ περὶ τὴν ὄψιν ἐπισκώπτει, ὡς ὁμοιούντων σφόδρα ἀνομοίους. VEAld

[550e] μᾶλλον δὲ ἂν τις ὑπονόησειεν ἕτερον Διονύσιον, Θρασυβούλου τοῦ Κολ<λ>υτέως ‘ἀδελφόν’. ἔγγιστα συγγενείας ἐστί. †καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἰλιάδι† σαφέστερον οὐδὲν [ms. οἶδεν] ἢ κατὰ Δίδυμον. EAld

(Differently:) Perhaps the one [= Thrasybulus] is dignified and arrogant, as Strattis <says> in the *Kinesias*, and Dionysius crazy and, seemingly, a fish-seller [or: incense-seller?]; cf. Polyzelus: ‘And that crazy Dionysius, who with his golden bracelet (?) and his luxuries gives himself airs on the perfume market *vis-à-vis* (?) the Athenians’. But perhaps he is also jokingly referring to their looks, <implying> that they assimilate people who do not look similar at all.

However, one might rather suspect <that> another Dionysius <is meant>, a ‘brother’ of Thrasybulus of Collytus; he is a very close relation. †also in the *Iliad*† nothing/not at all clearer [MS: knows more clearly] than according to Didymus.

It hardly needs stressing how confused much of this is, especially the last part; any translation can only be tentative. But one or two observations are in order. Firstly, in this group of scholia consideration appears to be given to two competing approaches to the Aristophanic line: either (a) that the Dionysius and the Thrasybulus who are mentioned are the famous Sicilian tyrant and the equally famous Athenian general and democratic politician, respectively [550a/550c/550d]; or (b) that some lesser namesakes are meant [550e]. Moreover, option (a) is divided into two parts, one of which (a¹) concentrates on the political divergences between Dionysius and Thrasybulus [550a] whereas the other (a²) suspects some behavioural and/or visible differences in addition [550c/550d]. As long as one accepts the μήποτε argument (cf. section IV), (a²) should go back to Didymus. For our discussion this is of relevance because adhering to (a) is chronologically incompatible with believing in a composition date of 408 BC for the line in question: Dionysius only came to power in Syracuse two or three years later, a fact which might explain why some other voice, firmly believing in the 408 BC date, then thought the intrinsically unattractive (b) option had to be promoted instead.

Furthermore, even if we cautiously disregard the μήποτε point, we should note that the last scholion [550e] ends by contrasting something, or some point of view, with what Didymus maintained (σαφέστερον ἢ κατὰ Δίδυμον), no matter whether the doubtful text contained a negative (cf. Holwerda's conjecture σαφέστερον οὐδέν) or not (cf. the awkward σαφέστερον οἶδεν of the manuscript). Unfortunately, the preceding phrase καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἰλιάδι is of little help here, since equally corrupt.²¹ However, the scholion does not actually terminate with ἢ κατὰ Δίδυμον, as Chantry's presentation suggests. In reality the text continues in manuscript E (the only witness, apart from its reproduction in the Aldine edition) with ... ὡς εἴ τις λέγοι Διονύσιον τὸν ἐξώλη τύραννον εἰκέναι Θρασυβούλῳ τῷ Λύκου, ἀνδρὶ φιλοπόλιδι καὶ παντὸς κρείττονι λόγου, διὰ τε τὰς ἐπιφανεῖς αὐτοῦ κατὰ τῶν πολεμίων νίκας καὶ διότι κατέλυσε τὴν τῶν Λ' τυραννίδα, in other words a repeat of what we also read in schol. Ar. *Plut.* 550a. So, whatever one may think about the *beginning* of schol. Ar. *Plut.* 550e, the most natural translation of the final ... ἢ κατὰ Δίδυμον ὡς εἴ τις λέγοι Διονύσιον τὸν ἐξώλη τύραννον κτλ. would be '... than, according to Didymus, "as if someone said that Dionysius the abominable tyrant etc."'; and that would imply that the best part of schol. Ar. *Plut.* 550a is Didymean information as well, again despite its *prima facie* incompatibility with a 408 BC chronology. In the end, the evidence of [9] may thus indeed be inconclusive, but if one *had* to extract something from it, it could only be that Didymus placed our *Plutus* late in time.²²

- (ii) As already mentioned, there has been general agreement, ever since Moritz Schmidt discussed the matter in detail,²³ that whenever the Aristophanic scholia record opinions of Hellenistic grammarians, including the early commentators Euphronius and Callistratus, this knowledge has been channelled through Didymus. Boudreaux concurs with this: 'Le domaine de Didyme s'élargit encore si l'on admet que la plus grande partie des citations des grammairiens antérieurs lui sont dues. La démonstration en a été apportée pour Lycophron, Euphronius, Eratosthène, Ammonius. Il serait aisé de la poursuivre pour Aristophane de Byzance, Callistrate, Aristarque, etc.'²⁴ In other words, scholia that engage with one of those Hellenistic voices are to be taken as Didymean at their core. One such scholion is [1], the note on the Κεραμεικαὶ πλῆγαί which cites (and depends on) Euphronius. But [1] is also our only source that explicitly attributes a quoted passage to 'the first *Plutus*' (Ar. fr. 459), and it does so within the line of thought that leads to the Euphronius reference. This annotation therefore contains almost

²¹ Or did the sequence 'ἀδελφόν': ἔγγιστα συγγενείας ἐστί. †καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἰλιάδι† intrude from a separate scholion on ἀδελφὴν in *Plut.* 549, explaining that ἀδελφὴν was used there as a cover term for any close blood relative, just as Homeric ἀδελφεός can apply to a non-uterine sibling (*Il.* 13.695)? In that case, the first part of schol. Ar. *Plut.* 550e would contrast Thrasylbulos of Collutus with a son of his called Dionysius; and the second part, starting with σαφέστερον οὐδέν *uel sim.*, would simply reject this as a pointless alternative to Didymus' approach (cf. below).

²² Cf. further schol. Ar. *Plut.* 290c/290d, where the Cyclops part in the song of Carion and the chorus (*Plut.* 290–301) is understood to parody a song written by Philoxenus of Cythera as a veiled attack on the tyrant Dionysius: again it is difficult to see how this could have survived without qualification in Didymus' commentary if Didymus had found it implausible. Schol. Ar. *Plut.* 515b, which must also have been authored by someone who knew that he was dealing with a late play (ἤδη τὸ ἔπος τοῦτο τῆς μέσης κωμωδίας ὄζει, 'the line already smacks of Middle Comedy') is too insignificant to make much use of.

²³ Schmidt (1854) 291–96; he thereby opposed the theory of Schneider (1838), who had less plausibly thought of Symmachus as the principal compiler of previous views.

²⁴ Boudreaux (1919) 107.

incontrovertible *e contrario* evidence for Didymus regarding ‘our’ *Plutus* as the second *Plutus*.²⁵

- (iii) In a similar vein, mention should be made of one further scholion, on *Plut.* 1194, whose Didymeian pedigree is again virtually certain because it cites Eratosthenes:

[10] Χρ.: ἀλλ’ ἐκδότω τις δεῦρο δᾶδας ἡμμένας,
 ἴν’ ἔχων προηγῆ δεῦρο τῷ θεῷ σύ. (*Ar. Plut.* 1194–95)

CHREMYLUS: But someone bring out here lighted torches, so you can take them and lead the procession for the god.

schol. *Ar. Plut.* 1194 Chantry: ἀλλ’ ἐκδότω τις ΕΘΝΑld δεῦρο Αld δᾶδας Ν: ὅτι ὁ Λυκόφρων, ὡς Ἐρατοσθένης φησίν, ῥήθη πρῶτον δᾶδας τοῦτον ἤτηκέναι. πεποίηκε δὲ καὶ ἐν “Ἐκκλησιαζούσαις” αὐτό· ἀλλὰ γὰρ Στράττις, πρὸ ἀμφοτέρων τούτων τοὺς “Ποταμίους” διδάσκων, εἰς Φιλύλλιον ἀναφέρει τὸ πρᾶγμα· “ὕμεις τε πάντες ἔξιτ’ ἐπὶ τὸ Πύθειον, | ὅσοι πάρεστε, μὴ λαβόντες λαμπάδας, | μὴδ’ ἄλλο μὴδὲν ἐχόμενον Φιλυλλίου”. VEΘNBarbAld

But someone bring out here torches: <To note> that Lycophron, as Eratosthenes says, thought that this one [= Chremylus] had been the first to ask for torches; yet he [= Aristophanes] also did it in *Ecclesiazusae*. However, Strattis, who was staging his *Potamioi* before both of these <plays>, refers the practice to Philyllius: ‘All of you who are here, go out to the temple of Pythian Apollo, without torches nor anything else that has to do with Philyllius’.

Since Eratosthenes’ point in citing Lycophron must have been to correct or improve on him,²⁶ the reference to *Ecclesiazusae* of 393/2 BC (that is, to *Eccl.* 1149–50) will have been his already. Accordingly, although the subject of *πεποίηκε* in the second sentence must be Aristophanes, *τοῦτον* in the first sentence should designate Chremylus, not Aristophanes: after all, the fact that a similar stage motif also occurs in *Ecclesiazusae* would not otherwise contradict Lycophron’s claim. However, upon digging out this piece of information, presumably from Eratosthenes’ *Περὶ τῆς ἀρχαίας κωμωδίας*, Didymus in his turn corrected Eratosthenes by pointing to a comedy by Strattis, which in his view serves as an even earlier *terminus ante quem*. Now, if Didymus had believed that the *Plutus* was a play of 408 BC, the parallel in *Ecclesiazusae* would have been irrelevant to him for dating purposes. At best,

²⁵ To hold instead that some later scholar (like Symmachus) might have inserted the quotation into an otherwise Didymeian note is difficult not only because the quotation is well-integrated, but also because it would mean that Symmachus, despite being deeply indebted to Didymus (*cf.* Schauenburg (1881)), correctly identified the first and second *Plutus* when writing the note, yet did not correct the errors in [2]–[7] when annotating the *Plutus* itself. On Symmachus, see further section VI.

²⁶ As is regularly the case when we hear of these two early scholars’ opinions at the same time: *cf.* schol. *Ar. Vesp.* 239a; schol. *Ar. Pax* 199b; schol. *Ar. Pax* 702a; Hsch. κ 1590 (on *Ar. Lys.* 722); Ath. 4.140a and 11.501d; Strecker (1884) 5; Laible (1909) 7–8; Mureddu (2017) 158–60, 164–65. For further discussion see Orth (2009) 183–85, Broggiato (2019) and Caroli (2021) 44–47, but note that Orth’s suggestion that ‘die Uneinigkeit zwischen Lycophron und Eratosthenes könnte dabei auch in einer Verwechslung des ersten *Plutos* von 408 mit dem zweiten von 388 v. Chr. ihre Ursache haben’ implausibly presupposes that Lycophron dated the *Plutus* to 408 BC, Eratosthenes operated with the right chronology and Lycophron’s error was then repeated later on (*cf.* similarly Caroli (2021) 46–47).

one might argue that he mentioned it simply because it was highlighted in Eratosthenes (who himself, incidentally, must by implication have placed the extant *Plutus* after *Ecclesiazusae*). But in that case, it would still have been more natural to continue by saying, ‘However, Strattis, who was staging his *Potamioi* even before *Plutus* (which in fact is earlier than *Ecclesiazusae*) ...’, rather than to group *Plutus* and *Ecclesiazusae* together, despite believing them to be separated by 15 years. And what is more, all we know of Strattis’ dramatic career strongly speaks against his having produced plays before the last decade of the fifth century;²⁷ but if he did not, Didymus, who had access to and consulted the *didaskaliai* (cf. section IV and below), would not have maintained the opposite by emphatically placing the *Potamioi* before a play presumed to be of 408 BC.

- (iv) As a complement to our consideration of [1] with its reference to ‘the first *Plutus*’, neither should we forget the two sources mentioned in section II which correctly attribute a word from the extant *Plutus* to the Πλοῦτος δεύτερος: the Herodian-based schol. (A) Hom. Ψ 361a¹ on the optative μεμνήτο and a passage of Athenaeus (9.368d) discussing the word κωλῆ (‘ham’). Given the lasting influence of Didymus’ work on subsequent ancient Aristophanic scholarship, it is difficult to imagine that Herodian and Athenaeus, both working two centuries after Didymus, would have assigned such material (correctly) to the second *Plutus* if the leading authority in the field had maintained that the play they were excerpting, whether directly or indirectly (for instance via Didymus’ Λέξις κωμική), was the first *Plutus*.²⁸
- (v) While less specific, the last point is in some ways the most fundamental. We must ask what could have prompted Didymus to misdate the extant play to 408 BC. There are two options to consider. Either (a) he might have been misled by some text-internal evidence, or else (b) some external trigger might be involved.

As for (a), it should first be stressed that the text does not contain anything that looks like a plausible reason to overturn the overwhelming evidence that speaks for a late date. Even so, some scholars thought that (a) was the right assumption. According to them, *Plut.* 972 and the scholion on that line (= [6]) are key. Given the learned quotation from Philochorus, it is indeed plausible that something is Didymean here. Hence, Jan van Leeuwen and Boudreaux argued that Didymus came across the passage in Philochorus in which reference is made to a novel institutional arrangement of 410/9 BC, whereby not only the composition of the law courts but also that of the Athenian Council was organized by sortition amongst individuals previously assigned to letter classes, brought this together with *Plut.* 972 and concluded that the line must be alluding to this innovation and therefore written at a date as close to it as is possible, hence in 408 BC.²⁹ To impute such reasoning to anyone is bold, especially if that person so clearly recognizes what chronological difficulties his alleged conjecture entails and has to disregard that *Plut.* 277 already referred to the organization of the law courts by letter classes (cf. scholl. *Ar. Plut.* 277b–f, the

²⁷ See Orth (2009) 18–20, who observes that ‘sein erster (und wahrscheinlich einziger) Lenäensieg auf etwa 390 v. Chr. (mit einem Spielraum von 5–10 Jahren in beide Richtungen) zu datieren [ist]’.

²⁸ Again, the only way to overturn this conclusion would be to argue that Didymus’ erroneous ordering had been corrected by an even more authoritative figure. However, the only person who *might* be invoked is Symmachus, and then the contradiction outlined above in n.25 would arise once more. Moreover, we do not even know for certain that Symmachus’ activity sufficiently predated that of Herodian and Athenaeus. The only real dating criterion we possess for Symmachus is the fact that Herodian cites him once, in *Περὶ μονήρου* λέξεως 2, p. 945 Lentz (cf. Montana (2003)), but the nature of Symmachus’ work would also make him a plausible contemporary of Herodian under the reign of Marcus Aurelius.

²⁹ See van Leeuwen (1904) xxii–xxiii; Boudreaux (1919) 135–36.

core of which is itself of Didymean origin).³⁰ But what is more, the presentation of [6] effectively disproves the van Leeuwen–Boudreaux theory. The Philochorus passage with its information about the Council is here introduced as an *additional* remark (οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ) designed, not untypically for Didymus, to display great learning, yet not as something that would invalidate the more crucial acknowledgement with which the scholion starts, namely that ἔπινες takes the place, παρ’ ὑπόνοιαν (‘by *para prosdokian* humour’), of ἐδικάζεις (not: ἐβούλευεις!). In other words, there is no doubt about [6] correctly decoding *Plut.* 972 in parallel with *Plut.* 277 (to which line it even adds something of a cross-reference); and if that is so, its source cannot have based any dating, however speculative or ill-judged, on what Philochorus had to offer.

That said, we are left with option (b), that there might have been some text-external inducement for Didymus to date the play to 408 BC. Since Didymus was not in general overly impressed by what his predecessors thought, it is implausible that he would have simply made some earlier scholar’s mistake his own; and, of course, such an assumption would in any case only shift the issue slightly back in time. Alternatively, though, one might think of the *didaskaliai*,³¹ whose book edition by Aristotle Didymus could no doubt still consult just as easily as Aristophanes of Byzantium did when he wrote the first dramatic *hypotheses*. If the *didaskaliai* recorded an Aristophanic Πλοῦτος in the year 408 BC, and if both ‘our’ *Plutus* and another version Didymus had access to both fit that date rather poorly, but ‘ours’ was (comparatively speaking) a less problematic match, that could have been an incentive to misplace it (while leaving the other version to 388 BC; cf. section III). However, not only are we operating with two unknowns here, but there are also, again, considerations of plausibility that speak against such a solution. A theory like this could only work reasonably well if the play of 408 BC had been lost not just before Didymus began to deal with Aristophanes, but much earlier, before Aristophanes of Byzantium could edit it³² and Euphronius, Callistratus, Apollonius and all the other Hellenistic commentators of Aristophanes were able to annotate it; for otherwise we would have to postulate that, in addition to the play itself disappearing, any ὑπόμνημα on it must also have been lost before Didymus gathered together his source material. After all, if one has a commentary on Play X, one does not need to see Play X itself in order to decide whether or not ‘Play Y = Play X’ is true. Yet, apart from the fact that Ar. fr. 459 (in [1] above) could not then belong to the *real* first *Plutus*, because it was accessible to someone, we should also expect that such an early loss would have been known and discussed (cf. *argum.* II Ar. *Pax* on the other *Peace*, as well as the οὐ σῶζεται/σῶζονται notes which were ‘probably taken over from [Callimachus] *Pinakes* into Aristophanes’ *hypotheses*).³³ Furthermore, it would be an odd coincidence anyway if precisely this play had suffered a worse fate than the rest of Aristophanes’ output, including the two *Thesmophoriazusae* or the two versions of *Clouds*.

³⁰ See Montana (1996) 74–75. Laible (1909) 95 also objects that an autoschediastic explanation like this should have led to a dating of the *Plutus* to 410/9, but it would seem reasonable to assume that the institution was introduced in one year and comically reflected only the year after.

³¹ With Kraus (1931) 55.

³² Polak (1902) 176 comes close to admitting this, although he does see in Ar. fr. 459 a remnant of the first *Plutus*.

³³ Pfeiffer (1968) 288; see *argum.* Eur. *Med.* (on the satyr play *Θεριστοί*), *argum.* I Ar. *Ach.* (on Cratinus’ *Χειμαζόμενοι*).

VI. What about Symmachus?

Although the above evidence shows that the suspicion that it was Didymus who misdated the extant *Plutus* is ill-founded, the fact remains that *somebody* did do it. As a complement to the preceding discussion, we may therefore ask who else it could have been. At first sight, it may look as if the last of the points made above similarly invalidated any alternative identification. If we mean to exonerate Didymus by arguing, among other things, that without pertinent text-internal or text-external evidence for a date of 408 BC no serious scholar could have erred like this, would the same argument not also apply to any other suspect? On closer inspection, the answer to this is a mere, ‘Yes, but ...’.

Firstly, it is worth noting that the earlier four points (i–iv) are not applicable to any post-Didymean Mr X.³⁴ In that sense, Didymus’ case would still be stronger on balance. Secondly, and more crucially, the parameters that are of relevance to point (v) may in fact have changed over time in such a way that the argument eventually loses its force. In order to demonstrate this without too much vagueness, from this point on I will *tentatively* replace ‘Mr X’ with ‘Symmachus’, not because proof of such an identification is possible, but merely because Symmachus appears to be the most likely alternative culprit if we want a specific name. Whoever made the mistake must have been an influential Aristophanic scholar as his opinion surfaces so prominently in the scholia; and after Didymus, Symmachus is the only known figure of whom this is true.³⁵ Moreover, a scholion on *Plut.* 1011, according to which Symmachus (unhelpfully) contradicted Didymus’ explanation of the hypocoristic diminutives *νητάριον* (‘little duck’) and *φάττιον* (‘little ringdove’) in that line, does suggest that Symmachus did not regard the *Plutus* as belonging to the very end of Aristophanes’ career; for he sought to bolster his own opinion that these are actually two personal names, *Νιτάριος* and *Βάτος*, with a reference to ‘subsequent plays’ in which a *Νιτάριος* would be lampooned:

[11] schol. Ar. *Plut.* 1011a Chantry: *νητάριον ... καὶ φάττιον*] Δίδυμος· ὑποκορίσματα πρὸς γυναῖκας. MEΘNBarbAld
schol. Ar. *Plut.* 1011d Chantry: *Νιτάριον* MEΘNAlD ἂν Ald καὶ Βάτιον ΘAlD: Σύμμαχος φησιν· VEΘNBarbLutAld *Νιτάριος* πολὺς ἐπὶ μαλακίᾳ ὄνειδιζόμενος ἐν τοῖς ἐξῆς δράμασιν· καὶ Βάτος ...

<Little duck ... and little ringdove:> Didymus: Terms of endearment addressed to women.

Nitarios and Batios: Symmachus says: *Nitarios* <is> a person who is frequently attacked for his effeminacy in the subsequent plays; equally, *Batos* ...

Whereas Didymus ostensibly had at his disposal a singularly well-stocked library, in all likelihood that of Alexandria, the same need not be true of Symmachus (let alone of any other, more minor, Aristophanic scholar of the Imperial age). In particular, it is by no means clear that Symmachus, in the second century AD, could still access all the Aristophanic plays that had been collected in Alexandria: the selection and canonization process that eventually led to a restriction of the Aristophanic corpus to a mere 11 plays will have been under way by then. So, in comparison with Didymus’, Symmachus’ ability to cross-check any piece of information he came across would have been seriously curtailed. We must assume that what he was working from when writing his own commentaries on

³⁴ He has to be post-Didymean because his opinion would otherwise not have made it into the scholiastic tradition without being challenged by Didymus.

³⁵ The one other post-Didymean commentator on Aristophanes whose name we know is the shadowy (Late Antique?) Phainus, who is cited as a source (alongside Symmachus) in the *subscriptions* to the scholia on *Clouds* and *Peace*, but whose scholarly contributions were modest, to judge by the few notes attributed to him: cf. Boudreaux (1919) 161–64; Montana (2015).

Aristophanes was (i) the texts of the comedies that were still commonly read in his day, which may have been significantly fewer than the 40+ plays held on record; (ii) Didymus' comprehensive commentaries on the same plays (but presumably few if any of those written by Didymus' Alexandrian predecessors); (iii) various minor post-Didymean *ὑπομνήματα* as well as a haphazard selection of primary and secondary literature (including reference works like Didymus' *Λέξεις*); and (iv) his own literary intuition and judgement. Against such a background, the question of whether there could have been a text-external trigger for Symmachus to misdate the *Plutus* to 408 BC looks rather different from Didymus' situation.

If we assume, with Rogers and Sommerstein (*cf.* section III), that Symmachus came across two similar but not identical versions of the play of 388 BC, but that there was no didascalical information to explain this duplication, it would have been natural for him to infer that only one of them could really belong to 388 BC (as attested by the extant hypothesis) and that the other must therefore belong to some other year. The comic text itself would not have helped with this issue; and as long as we hold that the Didymean *ὑπόμνημα* did not misdate the *Plutus*, it too should not in principle have tripped up Symmachus. However, we have already seen that Didymus' commentary did contain one entry which could, if misinterpreted, suggest an alternative production date: namely the entry on *Plut.* 972 (= [6]) with its information about the Council's organization by letter classes. If Symmachus had disregarded the redundancy of the Didymean reference to Philochorus in the same way it has been disregarded by some modern scholars (*cf.* section V), he could have thought that Didymus' citation must be of greater relevance than it actually was and extrapolated that the play he was looking at should therefore be dated to as soon after 410/9 BC as possible. The phrase *τῷ πρὸ τούτου ἔτει ἀρξάμενοι* would then be his own addition to the basic information taken over from Didymus: there is, after all, no reason to think that he must have copied Didymus' note verbatim.³⁶

The autoschediasm such a theory presupposes does, however, represent a major drawback. No matter how strong the wish to find a production date might have been, would anyone have built so much on so little? One way of getting around the assumption would be instead to suspect a misunderstanding of more limited scope.³⁷ For example, if Symmachus had read in Didymus that the Council's organization by letter classes had begun 'the year before', he might have erroneously taken this to mean 'the year before the present play was staged', when in reality what was meant was 'the year before the dicastic courts were (also) organized by letter classes'. Since ancient commentators constantly rephrased what they found in predecessor works, he might then, in all innocence, have replaced an earlier formulation such as *ἔτει πρότερον ἀρξάμενοι* by his own *τῷ πρὸ τούτου ἔτει ἀρξάμενοι*.

On balance, though, a third, even simpler, scenario seems more attractive still, as it entails no misunderstanding of a Didymean note at all. The only reason for placing so much weight on [6] alone is that either of the preceding theories would allow us to deny altogether the erstwhile existence of a different *Plutus I* of 408 BC. Some scholars have indeed done so,³⁸ but most do not and it may mean going one step too far. If Aristophanes

³⁶ *Cf.* van Leeuwen (1904) xxiii, except that he did not speak of Symmachus. Even Laible (1909) 94, who does not share van Leeuwen's doubts about an early play (*cf.* n.38 below), concedes the possibility that 'Recentiores uero eius [sc. grammatici qui schol. v. 972 scripsit] uerba cum parum intellexissent, inde effecerunt in Pluto fabula respici morem recens natum'.

³⁷ The following suggestion is owed to one of the reviewers for this journal.

³⁸ See especially van Leeuwen (1904) v–xxiv, apparently followed by De Cristofaro (1959) (*non uidi*, but see the summary in Wölflé (1981) 59–62). Chantry (2009) 354 also expresses sympathy for the theory.

did stage one *Plutus* in 408³⁹ and another 20 years later, this could easily be gleaned, even in Symmachus' day, from Aristotle's compilation of the *didaskaliai*.⁴⁰ The default assumption in that case should be that Didymus' rich library contained both comedies (cf. point (ii) in section V, on [1] with Ar. fr. 459) and that he also wrote a commentary on both, just as he did for the other Aristophanic plays. However, as noted above, between the days of Didymus and those of Symmachus some plays (together with the corresponding commentaries) may have stopped circulating widely.⁴¹ At the same time, it is perfectly plausible that the text of *Plutus II* (the play of 388 BC) that found its way into Symmachus' hands was somewhat different from the one Didymus had read and worked on. Exactly how different we cannot tell: it could have been a matter of only the odd line here or there diverging,⁴² but it is at least as likely that Didymus still dealt with a full version of the comedy, including all the choral songs with topical references. In either case, when consulting Didymus' commentary next to his own script of *Plutus II*, Symmachus would have noticed these divergences *even without having two copies of the play in front of him*. The lemmata in Didymus' commentary alone would have been sufficient to demonstrate that the identity was not complete. Now, knowing from the *didaskaliai* that there was a *Plutus I* of 408 BC and knowing from Didymus' commentary that the play Didymus had looked at belonged to 388 BC, but *not* knowing that the real *Plutus I* of 408 had 'disappeared' in the meantime, Symmachus could reasonably infer from the fact that there were divergences between 'his' *Plutus* and the *Plutus* of Didymus' commentary that 'his' *Plutus* must be the earlier play. Yet, this apparent play of 408 BC did of course show such substantial overlaps with the text Didymus' commentary reflected that (a) certain 'transfer' hypotheses became unavoidable (cf. [4], [5], [7]), while (b) in other cases it was sufficient to diagnose that a line had been altered in the later version, as inferable from Didymus' commentary lemmata (cf. [2], [3]). Finally, as for [6], while the substance of this note with its quotation of Philochorus would still be owed to Didymus, the phrase τῶ πρό τούτου ἔτει ἀρξάμενοι would again be Symmachus'; yet, far from being an autoschediastic addition in the strict sense, it would be a sensible attempt to highlight the significance of the institutional innovation mentioned by Philochorus for a play thought to be produced so soon afterwards.

All in all, then, it is possible to conclude that Symmachus, being less well equipped than Didymus, is both *a priori* a more likely source of the fundamental error that found its way into the scholia and a scholar whose mistake, however it may have arisen, is more easily forgiven than it would be in Didymus' case. Of course we might still find that Symmachus

³⁹ Or if a *Plutus* by Aristophanes was at least recorded in Aristotle's *didaskaliai*: could a basic error have crept into these, whereby Aristophanes' name replaced that of Archippus, for whom a *Plutus* is independently attested (Archippus fr. 37–41) and whose chronology would fit such a hypothesis (cf. Miccolis (2018) 12–13)? *Vita Aristophanis = Prolegomena de comedia* XXVIII.66–67 Koster suggests that there was some confusion between Aristophanes and Archippus also with regard to some other plays. However, our source [1] intimates that Euphronius, or at any rate Didymus, already thought of the play in question as a 'first *Plutus*' of Aristophanes.

⁴⁰ That the hypothesis of the extant play (*argum.* III Ar. *Plut.*) fails to mention the existence of another *Plutus*, contrary to what *argum.* II Ar. *Pax* (tentatively) does for *Peace*, is no strong counter-argument; not only may something be lost (cf. Laible (1909) 81), but if *Plutus II* were no mere διασκευή of *Plutus I* and the situation thus different also from that of *Clouds* (cf. section III on *argum.* I Ar. *Nub.*), the matter might have seemed irrelevant.

⁴¹ This also explains why other authors of the second and third centuries AD can cite the extant *Plutus* as either the Πλοῦτος δεύτερος (cf. section II on Herodian and Athenaeus) or simply as the Πλοῦτος: the latter, though less precise, would no longer have confused anyone by then (cf. Ath. 2.67d, 4.170d, 6.229e–f, 13.592d, with *Plut.* 720, 1005, 812–15, 179; Poll. 2.59, 7.71, 9.101, 10.48, 10.103, 10.156, with *Plut.* 635, 729, 816, 545, 710, 815(?); Antiatticista β 4 Valente with *Plut.* 325). Bare cross-references to the Πλοῦτος are of course common also in the scholia on other Aristophanic plays: cf. scholl. Ar. *Ach.* 394a (with *Plut.* 1085), 469a (with *Plut.* 544), 910b (with *Plut.* 33); schol. Ar. *Pax* 923c (with *Plut.* 1197–98); schol. Ar. Av. 534b (with *Plut.* 924–25); schol. Ar. *Ran.* 490b (with *Plut.* 817).

⁴² Cf. for instance [11], where Symmachus must have had Ντ(τ)άριον and Βάτ(τ)ιον (*uel sim.*) in the text, just as the medieval manuscripts do, whereas Didymus was still able to recognize the diminutives νητάριον and φάττιον.

(or whoever it was) should not be excused either because, for all the misgivings he had about the 408 BC date (cf. [4], [5] and [7]), he preferred to build spurious ‘transfer’ theories rather than thoroughly rethink the conclusion he had reached. However, we must not forget that, if something like our last scenario were correct, doing so would have meant calling into question the few certainties he had: that there was an Aristophanic *Plutus* of 408 BC and that the *Plutus* he was reading could not, as such, be the 388 BC play that Didymus had authoritatively annotated. In modern scholarship, too, there are few who would take such a step lightly.

VII. Conclusion

To sum up, it has been argued here, first and foremost, that the curious ancient misdating of the extant *Plutus* to 408 BC must not be blamed on Didymus Chalcenterus, as has often been done. None of the arguments adduced in support of this ascription is cogent and there are several mutually independent counter-arguments. It has also been suggested that a more plausible candidate for the mistake would be the second-century commentator Symmachus, who may have been misled by partial discrepancies between the text of the *Plutus* he read and the *Plutus* Didymus had commented on. Whether we should therefore doubt the real existence of a (truly separate) first *Plutus* of 408 BC is a question the available evidence does not currently allow us to answer. However, one possible way of accounting for the error is to accept that such a play did exist, was recorded in the *didaskaliai*, survived until Didymus’ day, but then went out of circulation, just as other Aristophanic plays did. This cannot be independently verified, but it enables us to postulate that no ancient scholar who was actually in a position to read two *Plutus* plays mixed up their dates or mistook one for the other. We thus avoid imputing an unusual degree of carelessness or lack of philological rigour to any of the major figures of Aristophanic scholarship in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

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