

Was Sokrates' Brother a 'Filthy' Rich Tragic Poet?

At *Wealth* 83-5 (388 BC) Aristophanes pokes fun at a certain Patrokles, a wealthy Athenian with allegedly poor personal hygiene:

CHREMES. *Tell me, how come you are walking about looking so dirty?*

WEALTH. *I have just left the house of Patrokles, who hasn't had a bath since the day he was born.*

A scholiast to the passage adds an allusion to Aristophanes' lost comedy, *Storks* (F 455), that to protect his wealth and frugal life-style Patrokles would allow no-one to come near him. As *Storks* belongs to the 390s, we may conclude that in the early years of the fourth century there was a rich miser at Athens named Patrokles whose personal habits were well-known enough to make him a target for the comic poet.

Identifying this Patrokles is complicated in that among the thirty men of that name documented in PAA – the *komoidoumenos* is PAA 768605 – there are at least five reasonable candidates who could be the rich miser with unpleasant habits. These include: (i) a former archon *basileus* involved in financial dealings following the fall of the Thirty in 403/2, (ii) a *tamias* of Athena in 377/6, (iii) a president of the assembly in 421/0, (iv) from the deme Alopeke a judge at the Panathenaia of 406, and finally (v) the younger half-brother of Sokrates, known from Plato's *Euthydemos* (297e).

Critical analysis ranges from Sommerstein's (2001: 140) conclusion that "our man might be any or none of them" to Nails's (2002: 218-9) conflation of (i), (iv), and (v) into a single individual whom she identified with the man made fun of by Aristophanes. I propose to re-examine these various identifications, particularly Nails's two key assumptions that Sokrates' second husband (Chairedemos) belonged to the same

deme as her first (Sophroniskos) and that the two half-brothers were close enough for Patrokles to have emulated Sokrates' distinctive personal habits, including infrequent bathing.

Also found in the scholia is the confident statement that Patrokles the miser was a tragic poet. On that basis Snell included him as *TrGF* I 57, as well as a better attested tragic poet from a later period, Patrokles of Thurioi (*TrGF* I 58). I shall argue that this identification is likely to have been the result of the scholiast's confusion of the miserly Athenian of the early fourth century with the later tragic poet and that the comic Patrokles does not belong to ranks of the tragic poets.

Bibliography

D. Nails, *The People of Plato: a Prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics*

(Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002)

B. Snell (ed.), *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, vol. I (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck &

Ruprecht, 1971) [= *TrGF* I]

A.H. Sommerstein, *Aristophanes Wealth* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 2001)

J.S. Traill, *Persons of Ancient Athens* (Toronto: Athenians, 2005) [= *PAA*]