

Typical Structure of a Comedy

Aristophanic comedies have a more elaborate structure than the typical tragedy.

The chorus is also larger: 24 (as opposed to 12-15).

Prologue page 350: As in tragedies. Sets the conflict.

Parodos (Entrance Ode) page 372: As in tragedies, but the chorus takes up a position either for or against the hero.

Episode one page 383: a scene of action

Agôn (Contest) page 389: Two speakers debate the issue (typically with eight feet per line), and the first speaker loses. Choral songs may occur towards the end.

Episode 2 page 402: action continues

Parabasis (Coming Forward): After the other characters have left the stage, the chorus members remove their masks and step out of character to address the audience.

First the chorus leader chants in anapests (eight per line) about some important, topical issue, typically ending with a breathless tongue twister. **Anapest:** a metrical foot consisting of two short or unstressed syllables followed by one long or stressed syllable.

Next the chorus sings, and there are typically four parts to the choral performance:

- 1. Choral Ode 1 page 403:** Sung by one half of the chorus and addressed to a god.
- 2. Epirrhema (Afterword) page 404:** A satyric or advisory chant on contemporary issues by the leader of that half-chorus.
- 3. Antode (Answering Ode) page 404:** An answering song by the other half of the chorus in the same meter as the ode.
- 4. Antepirrhema (Answering Afterword) page 407:** An answering chant by the leader of the second half-chorus, which leads back to the comedy.

Episode 3 page 407: Primarily elaborating on the outcome of the agon.

Lyric scene 1 page 415: Poetry sung by the chorus.

Episode 4 page 417: Action continues

Choral Ode 2 page 436: An ode and antode without epirrhema and antepirrhema.

Choral Ode 3 page 439: An ode with episodic characteristics.

Lyric scene 2 page 450: Poetry sung by the chorus

Exode (Exit Song) page 451: As in tragedy, but with a mood of celebration and possibly with a riotous revel, joyous marriage, or both.