In chapter 12 of *Poetics* (1452b14–27), Aristotle proposes an analysis of tragedy that differentiates between the following constituents: prologue, episode, exodus, and choral song (*khorikon*). A choral song, in turn, will be either a parodos (entrance song) or a stasimon (standing song)—that is, all songs following the parodos in which the chorus takes its place in the orchestra. It should be noted that variants such as monodies and exchanges between chorus and actors (*kommos* and *amoibaios*, respectively) are not found in every tragedy. The term *prologue* is defined as the entire sequence prior to the entrance of the chorus. Taken as a whole, all the material between choral songs is termed an *episode* (*epeisodion*), while the *exodus* is the final sequence beyond the point where no choral songs remain.  

1 Until recently many scholars had appealed to the authority of Aristotle in analyzing the form and structure of Greek comedy. Indeed, the extant tragedies have long been forced into the Procrustean bed of Aristotelian definition with little regard for the stage action and the structure that it suggests. Owing perhaps to the loss of Aristotle’s treatment of comedy in the second book of the *Poetics*, the genre has been spared the abuses endured by tragedy.  

2 Freedom from Aristotelian taxonomy has especially facilitated the study of the structure and formal peculiarities of Aristophanic comedy. Thaddeus Zielinski’s morphology of comedy has remained fundamental to the structural analysis of Old Comedy. His contribution has
been extended and deepened by the studies of Mazon\textsuperscript{4} and Händel.\textsuperscript{5} The last fifty years have seen the publication of a series of monographs devoted to individual constituent elements (\textit{Bauformen})\textsuperscript{6} and their morphology: the epirrhematic agon,\textsuperscript{7} parabasis,\textsuperscript{8} second parabasis\textsuperscript{9} as well as the various choral parts.\textsuperscript{10} Although the prologue has also been subjected\textsuperscript{11} to structural analysis, the main emphasis in the study of this element has been on its function in plot development.

The structure of a fifth-century comedy arises from the interaction between chorus and actors. While the lyric (sung) parts belong to the chorus, the actors express themselves in the iambic trimeter and other spoken meters appropriate to their respective characters. The trimeter approximates the spoken word quite closely in terms of variety and flexibility (\textit{Poetics} 4.1449a21–24). When chorus and actors engage each other in dialogue, they usually employ a recitative\textsuperscript{12} featuring an iambic, trochaic, or anapaestic tetrameter catalectic. Monodies, or solo arias, are usually found within paratragic contexts where authentic ritual song is out of the question (\textit{Acharnians} 263–279, \textit{Lysistrata} 1247–1272, 1279–1294, 1296–1315). The monody is especially prominent in the two plays concerned in extenso with tragedy (\textit{Thesmophoriazusae} 1015–1054, \textit{Frogs} 1264–1277, 1309–1328, 1331–1363, cf. also \textit{Wasps} 317–323).\textsuperscript{13}

Thus, in terms of performance, a fifth-century comedy resembles an opera rather than modern play.\textsuperscript{14} Owing to the prevalence of trochaic, iambic, and anapaestic rhythms, comic verse differs from that of Sophocles and Euripides and is more comparable to the verse of Aeschylean tragedy.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{4} Mazon (1906).
\textsuperscript{5} Händel (1963).
\textsuperscript{6} So termed by Jens (1971).
\textsuperscript{7} Gelzer (1960).
\textsuperscript{8} Sifakis (1971a); Hubbard (1991); A.M. Bowie (1982).
\textsuperscript{9} Totaro (1999).
\textsuperscript{10} Zimmermann (1985a, 1985b).
\textsuperscript{11} Cf. especially Koch (1968); Kloss (2001, 204–285).
\textsuperscript{12} Greek \textit{parakatalogé}; cf. Perusino (1968, 23–28); M.L. West (1992a, 40).
\textsuperscript{14} For musical arrangement of Greek dramas of the classical age, cf. Zimmermann (1993a, 1993b).
\textsuperscript{15} Cf. Zimmermann (1985a, 253–257). With all necessary precaution, one would be able to explain the remarkable coincidence between Aeschylus and Aristophanes in their use of so-called epirrhematic composition by pointing out that only in the year 486 was comedy included in the festive program of the Great Dionysia. That is, from the point