

Praise, Past and Ponytails: The Funeral Oration and Democratic Ideology in the
Parabasis of Aristophanes' *Knights*

Abstract: In the *parabasis* of *Knights*, Aristophanes makes his chorus of aristocratic horsemen echo the democratic discourse in funeral orations in order to exhibit the hypocrisy of this social class. However, this attack upon the aristocracy is mainly a means of attacking the democratic leader Cleon, since the chorus tries to inscribe itself and its merits into the democratic past of the *polis*, thereby silencing the actual military merits of Cleon.

Abstracto: En la parábasis de *Los Caballeros*, Aristófanes recurre al coro de caballeros aristocráticos para reproducir el discurso democrático de las oraciones fúnebres y así exponer la hipocresía de dicha clase social. Sin embargo, el ataque a la aristocracia sirve principalmente de herramienta para atacar al líder democrático Cleón, ya que el coro intenta inscribirse, junto con sus méritos, en el pasado democrático de la polis, silenciando así los incuestionables logros militares de Cleón.

Keywords: Aristophanes, Chorus, *Knights*

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Hippês or *Knights* was staged in 424 BC. As the title suggests, Aristophanes has for his chorus chosen the aristocracy, metonymically represented by the cavalry that in the comic (and to some extent elsewhere too) world represented a luxurious lifestyle and a cowardly manner of fighting.¹ Nonetheless, the Athenians were, of course, not always loathing their cavalry; in fact the *polis* spend a vast amount of resources on the corps,² which did play a minor part in the defence of Attica and retaliation raids on the Peloponnese during the first decade of the hippic force's reformation. Not to mention, that "the cavalry had a greater role in festal processions than other parts of the army"³ and could be seen gallantly parading on the Parthenon Frieze.⁴ Thus this chorus could be displaying its processional character rather than its military qualities, since there is not the slightest mention of any arms of any sort to be found in the text.⁵

The chorus of *Knights* has never received much attention except for the possible historical dispute between the cavalymen of Athens and Cleon alluded to throughout the play and elsewhere.⁶ The ancestry of Cleon is basically unknown but the picture we get of his family is clearly that it was

¹ For discussion and sources, Spence 1993, 180-216, esp. 191-210; it may perhaps have been the case as Spence argues "that the climate of opinion was generally favourable to the cavalry" (212). I nonetheless argue that the cavalry is the object of satire in this play. As a synthesis of Spence's and my own argument, it could be argued that the cavalry is made fun of *because* of their growing popularity. See Pritchard 2013, 134-6 for a splendid discussion of the Athenian view on the cavalry's usefulness and vices. Nonetheless, a playwright of Old Attic comedy would of course focus on the vices of his artistic creations.

² See Pritchard 2015. Spence 2012, 123 sees the thought of the cavalry as an expensive luxury as one of the main barriers for the Athenians to have their own cavalry; perhaps we should turn the argument around and say the because of this luxury the Athenians reformed their cavalry force, to show their opponents that they had the power and money to do so.

³ Spence 1993, 187.

⁴ See Stevenson 2003.

⁵ The weapons of other choruses are clearly displayed and used (e.g. *Ach.* 184, 236, 295, 341-6; *Vesp.* 225-6, 420, 1062(?), 1075; *Av.* 348, 364).

⁶ e.g. Bugh 1988, 112-14; Henderson 2013.

well off.⁷ Aristophanes thus creates an opposition between two groups of rich: the cavalrymen and the nouveau riche democratic leaders. Whether or not Cleon was the guiding hand behind the taxations in the middle of the Archidamian war,⁸ it looks, at least, as if he was held responsible for them by Aristophanes (e.g. 248, 305), and that is of course (in a comic universe) a completely legitimate reason for hating him (226, 400, 510).⁹ In *Knights*, taxation of the rich and of the empire is one of the political focal points connected with the character “Paphlagon” (likewise in *Wasps* 923-6), the other being Cleon’s unexpected success at Pylos. Both were apparently popular with the *demos*, but very likely quite disturbing for the more well off; being victims of Cleon’s taxation, the rich may have hoped that his adventure at Pylos failed; however, when he returned, his power over the *demos* had grown, and so had the likelihood that he would continue the war and the taxations for supporting it (792-809).¹⁰ In this paper I argue that the chorus in *Knights* uses the discourse of the democratic funeral orations wishing to inscribe their corps into the eternal glory of Athens in order to outdo the surprising glory of the capture of Pylos by Cleon. Aristophanes seems to show that neither the aristocrats of the cavalry nor the demagogue, Cleon, may hold such glory for themselves: the glory is that of democratic Athens, not particular groups or individuals.¹¹

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⁷ Davies 1971, 318-20 no. 8674. MacDowell 995, 81 is too suspicious of his wealth; Cleon as rich, cf. Connor, 1971 151-2; If Ober 1989, 75 is right in arguing that “those who ended up being ostracized were members of the elites”. *Knights* 855 implies that Cleon at least could be seen as elite.

⁸ Kagan 1974, 145. On the economy of Athens during the Peloponnesian War, Pritchard 2015.

⁹ Henderson 2013 discusses Aristophanes’ motivations for using the cavalry as Cleon’s adversary.

¹⁰ On the costing of the war and the taxation, see Pritchard 2015.

¹¹ Of course, victories could be *connected* with the strategos, e.g. Cleon here in *Knights*, and celebrated (Hölscher 2003), and Cimon’s stone herms (though his name was not on the herms), but it does not seem likely that the different military units were singled out, thus the chorus righteously (*pace* Henderson (2013, 292)) feel bamboozled by the Paphlagon in 267-8. Regardless of military or civic status, all casualties in war were buried according to phyle in *demosia semata*, se Low, 2010.

εὐλογῆσαι βουλόμεσθα τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν, ὅτι
ἄνδρες ἦσαν τῆσδε τῆς γῆς ἄξιοι καὶ τοῦ πέπλου,
οἵτινες πεζαῖς μάχαισιν ἔν τε ναυφάρκτῳ στρατῷ
πανταχοῦ νικῶντες ἀεὶ τήνδ' ἐκόσμησαν πόλιν·
οὐ γὰρ οὐδεὶς πώποτ' αὐτῶν τοὺς ἐναντίους ἰδὼν
ἠρίθμησεν, ἀλλ' ὁ θυμὸς εὐθύς ἦν ἀμυνίας·
εἰ δέ που πέσοιεν εἰς τὸν ὄμιον ἐν μάχῃ τινί,
τοῦτ' ἀπεψήσαντ' ἄν, εἴτ' ἠρνοῦντο μὴ πεπτωκέναι,
ἀλλὰ διεπάλαιον αὐθις. Καὶ στρατηγὸς οὐδ' ἂν εἶς
τῶν πρὸ τοῦ σίτησιν ἦτησ' ἐρόμενος Κλεαίνετον·
νῦν δ' ἐὰν μὴ προεδρίαν φέρωσι καὶ τὰ σιτία,
οὐ μαχεῖσθαί φασιν. ἡμεῖς δ' ἀξιοῦμεν τῆ πόλει
προῖκα γενναίως ἀμύνειν καὶ θεοῖς ἐγχωρίοις.
καὶ πρὸς οὐκ αἰτοῦμεν οὐδὲν πλὴν τοσοῦτον ἰμόνον·
ἦν ποτ' εἰρήνη γένηται καὶ πόνων παυσώμεθα,
μὴ φθονεῖθ' ἡμῖν κομῶσι μηδ' ἀνεστλεγγισμένοις.¹²

We want to praise our fathers for being
men worthy of this land and the Robe,
who in infantry battles and naval expeditions
were always victorious everywhere and adorned our city.
For not one of them ever reckoned the enemy's numbers,
but as soon as he saw them his spirit was defiant (or of Amynias).
If in any battle they happened to fall on their shoulder,

¹² The headbands is based on an emendation made by Van Leeuwen, and defended by both A. Sommerstein and N. Wilson. *Contra Imperio* 2004, 243. The meaning of *stlengides* is disputed, but van Leeuwen's emendation is preferable because the whole verse would then refer to the appearance of the chorus, instead of referring to bathing which was not a privilege of the aristocracy. In *Clouds* (991), the traditional education despises baths, but the discussion at 1044-54 implies that bathing was not something unusual.

they would slap off the dirt, deny they'd fallen,
and get back into the match. And not a single general
of yore would have applied to Cleaenetus for state subsidy;
whereas now, if they don't get front-row seats and free meals,
they refuse to fight! But we want only to fight
nobly and for free for the city and for its native gods.
We ask of nothing more, except for only this little thing:
if peace ever comes and our toils are ended,
don't begrudge us our long hair and us wearing headbands.
(565-80, trans. J. Henderson with minor adjustments)

The epirrhematic syzygy of the *parabasis* consists of two odes and two *epirrhemes* intertwined and thematically connected. The gods Poseidon and Athena are called upon in hymnic fashion, but the *epirrhemes* leave the gods aside, and turn to praise of the inhabitants of Athens – just as Olympians are not mentioned in funeral orations.¹³ However, just as the praise of the former generations of comedians in the *parabasis* proper was ironic and only worked as a vehicle of buttressing the playwright's own excellence and denigration of Cratinus, this choral praise is equally ambiguous.¹⁴ Since the cavalry in the contemporary Athenian discourse in martial matters was defined negatively against the fleet and the democracy¹⁵ (though no doubt exaggeratedly by Aristophanes), there seems to be a discrepancy between the horsemen's belief in their own value and Athenian history in this play.¹⁶ The navy and the hoplites are still the real defenders of Athens.¹⁷ The strong hoplite ethos

¹³ Pl. *Men.* 283b; Dem. 60.30. Parker 1983, 64-65.

¹⁴ See Biles 2001; Biles 2002; Biles 2010; Ruffell 2002; Bakola 2008; Teló 2014.

¹⁵ e.g. Ar. *Eq.* 1369-72; Lys. 14.7, 11-12, 14-15; 16.13. See Blanshard 2012, 215-18.

¹⁶ Pritchard 2013, 136 concludes: "Cavalry service, then, serves as a clear point of comparison to the democracy's treatment of athletics. Both were publicly subsidised by the democracy and favourably assessed in its popular culture. But of these two activities only cavalry service attracted regular and substantive criticism in the democracy's public discourse."

was during these years under pressure from the growing self-confidence of the navy (e.g. 1184-8).¹⁸ The cavalry, however, was consistently considered an unmanly and relatively secure way of fighting.¹⁹ The cavalry will surely have been acting as support troops,²⁰ on more occasions than Thucydides cares to mention, and the presence of the cavalry at Athens in these years must have been a fact of everyday life, as it was used to harass intruders on attic soil,²¹ but this does not buttress the omnipresence evoked by the chorus of cavalymen: Solygeia was *de facto* the only major success to date where the cavalry had played an important part. This success, however, was only possible because the Corinthians had no cavalry at all (Thuc. 4. 44, see discussion of this battle below):

χρόνον μὲν οὖν πολλὸν ἀντεῖχον οὐκ ἐνδιδόντες ἀλλήλοις· ἔπειτα (ἦσαν γὰρ τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις οἱ ἰππῆς ὠφέλιμοι ξυμμαχόμενοι, τῶν ἐτέρων οὐκ ἐχόντων ἵππους) ἐτράποντο οἱ Κορίνθιοι.

So for a long while they both stood firm and did not yield to one another. Then, since the Athenians had the advantage of cavalymen supporting, *while the others had no horses*, the Corinthians were routed.

Thus, while *Knights* at first seems to celebrate the cavalymen of Athens,²² the comic chorus continuously deconstructs the portrait, which they as “the cavalry” paint of themselves. In the end

¹⁷ See Pritchard (forthcoming).

¹⁸ For a thorough discussion of the hoplite ethos and the cavalry in this period, see Spence 1993, 164-216; Spence 2012, 118, 123; Crowley 2012. For a discussion of the evolving of a more democratic mode of courage, see Ballot 2012. However, during the Archidamian war, Aristophanes seems to buttress the hoplite ethos, (e.g. *Ach.* 696-7; *Eq.* 781, 1334; *Nub.* 985-6; *Vesp.* 711). The high-status cavalry thus suffered from the same prejudice as the low-status light infantry, see Trundle 2012, 141-2.

¹⁹ See Blanshard 2012.

²⁰ Spence 1993, 140-151.

²¹ Spence 1993, 127-33, see below.

²² This is basically the consensus, see e.g. Spence 1993, 211-12. There is (*pace* Slater, 2002, 72) no reason at all to believe that Aristophanes had to “tread carefully in his representation of them”, since he obviously does not do so towards Cleon, even when at his highest of political power.

of the *parabasis* proper, after an extensive use of nautical metaphorical expression (541-44), the coryphaeus exclaims:

Τούτων οὖν οὔνεκα πάντων,

ὄτι σωφρονικῶς οὐκ ἀνοήτως εἰσπηδήσας ἐφλυάρει, 445

αἴρεσθ' αὐτῷ πολὺ τὸ ρόθιον, παραπέμψατ' ἐφ' ἕνδεκα κώπαις,

θόρυβον χρηστὸν ληναίτην,

ἵν' ὁ ποιητὴς ἀπίη χαίρων

κατὰ νοῦν πράξας,

φαιδρὸς λάμποντι μετώπῳ. 450

So for all these reasons,

that he acted discreetly, and didn't leap mindlessly in and spout rubbish,

raise a big wave of applause for him, and give him an eleven-oar cheer

worthy of the Lenaea,

so that our poet may go away

happy and successful,

gleaming to the top of his shining head!

(trans. J. Henderson)

If the poet of the play will leave the theatre gloriously “gleaming to the top of his shining head” – apparently alluding to the real Aristophanes’ baldness – this baldness sets the poet apart from the aristocratic, longhaired (580, 1121) cavalymen, just as the extensive use of nautical imagery expressions of the navy must have done. The Coryphaeus then orders the audience to join the chorus in celebrating Aristophanes’ anticipated victory at this competition as a great achievement by alluding to Phormio and his eleven ships, who by their supreme skill vanquished the enemy at the battle of Naupactus,²³ alluded to through an Aeschylean echo from no other play than the

²³ As argued in Lech 2009.

Persians.²⁴ Aristophanes thus makes his own claim of poetic superiority harmonize with the self-proclaimed ideological superiority of the Athenian navy. By contrast the cavalry will in this syzygy, in wordings reminiscent of the democratic public praise at the annual funeral oration – though the horsemen are of course still very much alive²⁵ – proclaim their own superiority by trying to harmonize their merits with that of the rest of army, the hoplites and the navy, through a widely fantastic historical narrative.

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In Old Attic Comedy, the wish to praise anyone is unusual (εὐλογῆσαι βουλόμεσθα):²⁶ Praising someone is usually confined to the *parabasis* proper and there directed at the playwright himself (e.g. *Ach.* 633; *Pax* 738), just as the preceding anapaests of the *parabasis* show (509-10). Nonetheless, the general theme of this *parabasis* is praise and merit, though nothing has hitherto in the play been praiseworthy in the actions of the Sausage-Seller or the Paphlagon, and the question of the *parabasis* is thus whether there is anything praiseworthy in the history of the cavalry. The fact that the cavalry of one thousand upper class citizens (225) was a rather new invention in Athens is not mentioned,²⁷ and that blurs the epirrhema's distinction between the aristocratic praise²⁸ and the democratic public praise of the annual funeral oration.²⁹ The passage carefully

²⁴ Aeschylus, *Persians* 951-2: Ἰάων ναύφαρκτος Ἄρης; 1028: ναύφρακτον ... ὄμιλον.

²⁵ On praising the dead, see Hunt 2010, 241.

²⁶ On praise in Aristophanes, see Harriot 1986, 46-67, esp. 58-67. Contrast *Ach.* 676-7; *Nub.* 575-6; *Vesp.* 1016.

²⁷ For the history of the cavalry, see Spence 2010, 113-123.

²⁸ Through symposiac or epinician echoes, e.g. 276-7, see Pütz 2007, 103-11 on symposiac language in *Knights*.

²⁹ On this institution, see Loraux 2006; Low 2010; Pritchard 2010, 33-46.

echoes such speeches³⁰ without denigrating Athenian history³¹ – Aristophanes is balancing on a knife’s edge here. We can detect the following *topoi*:

- 1) eulogy, *epainos* (e.g. Dem. 60. 1-3, 10-13, 15, 33; Lys. 2. 1; Thuc. 2.35.2, 36.2)
- 2) merit, *axiotes* or *arete* (e.g. Dem. 60.9, 30-1, 34; Lys. 2. 6, 61, 80; Thuc. 2.36.2)
- 3) historical narrative (e.g. Lys.2.3-66; Pl.Men.239a-246b; Dem.60. 6-11.)
- 4) fathers, *progonoi* (e.g. Dem. 60. 4-7, 12; Lys. 2. 6, 17, 20, 23, 26, 32, 62, 69; Thuc. 2.36.1)
- 5) defence, *amynia* (e.g. Dem. 60. 7, 31; Thuc. 2.36.4; Pl. Men. 241b, 244b)
- 6) never afraid of the numbers of enemies (e.g. Lys. 2. 23, 50, 63; Pl.Men.241b-c)
- 7) envy, *phthonos* (e.g. Thuc. 2.35; Lys. 2. 80; Dem. 60.23)

Beginning emphatically with praise, the chorus mentions “our fathers” (τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν) and while this clearly echoes the timelessness of “we” and “our” in the public funeral orations,³² the pronoun ἡμῶν does not denote “all Athenians”, but correlates to the implicit subject of the verb (βουλόμεσθα).³³ our fathers are thus the former aristocrats, the “eternal” cavalry.

The chorus continues by a spatial and thematically implication, ἄνδρες ἦσαν τῆσδε τῆς γῆς ἄξιοι καὶ τοῦ πέπλου, in which the *peplos* works as a metonymy for the Panathenaic festival and, by implication, for Athenian cultural extravagance. The presentation of the new *peplos* to the goddess was one of the major events of the great Panathenaic festival and the *peplos* was embellished with a depiction of Athena’s victory in the Gigantomachy, possibly in connection with Nike (as on the

³⁰ 781-85 actually refer directly to funeral orations, and it is noteworthy that both Marathon and Salamis are mentioned.

³¹ On the historical narrative of the funeral orations and ”historical” accuracy, see Thomas 1989, 196-237.

³² Loraux (2006, 184-7.

³³ Pace Edmunds 1987, 40ff. and thus opposed to Pericles’ “we”, see Loraux 2006, 177.

eastern metope nr. 4 of the Parthenon).³⁴ Thus, the *peplos* had become a historical, ideological and spatial marker that frames this verse democratically in opposition to the fundamental aristocratic frame of the choral voice: the eulogy moves from “we” the aristocrats to “we” the Athenians, as in Pericles’ oration, with an ideological clash erupting.³⁵

This conceptual discontinuity (or script opposition in modern humour theory³⁶) becomes clear as the chorus continues their praise of their fathers (topos 4) (οἴτινες still syntactically correlates with τοὺς πατέρας) and alludes to Marathon and Salamis (πεζαῖς μάχαισιν ἔν τε ναυφάρκῳ στρατῷ πανταχοῦ νικῶντες) – battles in which the Athenian cavalry played no part – in language of a higher register (see above, contrast with *Vesp.* 684-85). Marathon and Salamis were victories of the hoplite army and the navy, and by having the cavalry praising these battles, the chorus humorously undermines its own merit.

Furthermore, the spatial (πανταχοῦ) and temporal (ἀεὶ) deictics (both exaggerated) in connection with the poetic metaphor ἐκόσμησαν generates a mythical textual world saturated with Athenian ideology.³⁷ The phrase is ideological charged not only through their above-mentioned use, but also because of Cimon’s famous three herms at the agora all inscribed with epigrams connecting his victory at Eion in Thrace in 479 (in the cleansing out of the Persians after their final defeat) with the only Athenian hero of the Homeric epics, Menestheus.

³⁴ On the imagery of the *peplos*, see Mansfield 1985; Shear 2001 173-186.

³⁵ I find it significant that the cavalrymen are not shown as fighting in any of the sculptures of the Parthenon, whereas unnamed hoplites are seen just below the western pediment which depicts Athena and Poseidon quarrelling over who is to be the city’s patron divinity. Thus, when democratic Athens had depicted its ideology so forcefully on the Acropolis, it was easy for Aristophanes to play with the imagery. See also Blanshard 2012, 208.

³⁶ For modern humour theory and its use in Aristophanic studies, see Robson 2006; Ruffell 2011, 54-111, on *Knights* in particular, see 65-77, 179-213.

³⁷ An allusion to Pericles’ funeral speech in Thuc. 2. 41 (πανταχοῦ δὲ μνημεῖα κακῶν τε κάγαθῶν ἀίδια) seems obvious, also at 2. 42: αἱ τῶνδε καὶ τῶν τοιῶνδε ἀρεταὶ ἐκόσμησαν. See also *Frogs* 1026-7 (Aeschylus speaking): Εἶτα διδάξας Πέρσας μετὰ τοῦτ’ ἐπιθυμεῖν ἐξεδίδαξα νικᾶν ἀεὶ τοὺς ἀντιπάλους, κοσμήσας ἔργον ἄριστον; Melanthius fr. 1D.

Plutarch has preserved the epigrams of which the two shorter, each a pair of elegiac couplets, employ epic language to describe the ordeals of the men who fought at Eion and the example they have set for the future.³⁸ The second epigram speaks of the εὐεργεσίας καὶ μεγάλων ἀγαθῶν of the Athenian commanders on a par with the spirit found in the funeral orations, but it also reveals the importance of the reward (ἡγεμόνεσσι δὲ μισθὸν Ἀθηναῖοι τάδ (viz. the stone herms) ἔδωκαν), which is one of the focal points of *Knights*.³⁹ The third epigram emphasizes the link between Cimon and Menestheus:

ἔκ ποτε τῆσδε πόλιος ἄμ' Ἀτρείδησι Μενεσθεὺς
 ἡγεῖτο ζάθεον Τρωικὸν ἐς πεδίον·
 ὃν ποθ' Ὅμηρος ἔφη Δαναῶν πύκα θωρηκτάων
 κοσμητῆρα μάχης ἔξοχον ὄντα μολεῖν.
 οὕτως οὐδὲν ἀεικὲς Ἀθηναίοισι καλεῖσθαι
 κοσμηταῖς πολέμου τ' ἀμφὶ καὶ ἡγορέης.

Once from this city Menestheus, with the Sons of Atreus,
 led his men to the divine plain of Troy;
 Menestheus, whom Homer said was an outstanding *kosmeter* of battle
 among the well-armored Achaeans who came to Troy.
 Thus there is nothing unseemly for the Athenians about being called
kosmetai, both of war and of manly strength.

Consequently, the use of κοσμεῖν here, I argue, leads to a mythico-ideological frame where Menestheus⁴⁰ plays a decisive role, not as a marshal of hippic attacks (cf. *H. II.* 2. 554), but as an

³⁸ Plut. Cim. 7. 4-6.

³⁹ e.g. 1066, 1367.

⁴⁰ See entry Menestheus in *LIMC*; No archaeological evidence for a cult of Menestheus has yet been unearthed, but Pausanias (1. 1. 2) saw a sanctified spot at the harbour of Phaleron, from whence Menestheus left for Troy, and Theseus left for Crete. This seems to buttress a naval relevance for the both of them.

Athenian soldier and sailor. There is no allusion to any equine activity in our passage, and the focus is entirely on the bravery of the “real” army of Athens. The Athenian conceptualisation of war hardly includes hippic warfare, and not even a recent success could change that.⁴¹

Echoing topos (6), the ambiguity of how to interpret “of them” in the phrase οὐδεις πώποτ’ αὐτῶν anticipates the coming punch line (see below). The continuous use of unspecific temporal deictics makes local and historical specificity impossible and strengthens the idea of timelessness (see above). This timelessness is also felt in the semantics of the imperfect “ἦν” denoting repeated actions: the θυμός (spirit, an elevated word, perhaps mirroring the prosaic equivalent, ἀρετή⁴² and/or ψυχὴ) was always of defiance (on *Amyntias*, see below). However, there seem to be a crux of meaning here. If they really grew bold every time they saw the enemy, who is “they” then? The reference can only be to the Athenian army in general, but the οὐδεις αὐτῶν correlates with οἵτινες (none of those), which clearly correlates to the chorus’ fathers. And though the chorus depicts their fathers as Athenian soldiers in general, the exclusion of hippic activities generates a conceptual discord; the cavalry were *not* Athenian soldiers in general. However, the punch line of the paragraph is a pun playing on both meanings; the “real” army and the hippic force. The pun lies in the word ἀμυνία, which plays on the meaning *defence* and the name, Amyntias (meaning the defender or the like).⁴³ A certain Amyntias is known, not flatteringly, from other plays, and he is conspicuously associated with hippic class, selling wheels (*Nub.* 31), being effeminate and shirking his military duty (*ibid.* 689-2), gaming (*Vesp.* 74-5), evading πόνοι and having long hair (*ibid.*

⁴¹ Of the 21 major battles including the Athenian cavalry listed in Spence 1993, 138-9, only eight were victories, and of these eight, only Solygeia during the Archidamian War. This might explain the public reluctance to accept the cavalry, in which they indeed spend a vast amount of money each year, see above.

⁴² See Yoshitake 2010, 363-69.

⁴³ On this name, see Molitor 1973.

466):⁴⁴ all these phenomena apply to the chorus in *Knights* as well. Here the joke is generated by the obvious contradiction between this man's name and his nature: there is no defiance in him, only running away, and thus Amyntias becomes the opposite of the Athenian heroes alluded to in the preceding passage. Furthermore, one script speaks of the Athenian army and navy as defiant and eternally brave, but is at the same time being juxtaposed with a script conveying the idea that the cavalry runs away like girl⁴⁵ every time there is some hardship to endure (579: *πόνων παυσώμεθα* is a nice circumscription of this theme). Furthermore, we may detect a jibe here on the Periclean tactics of which the cavalry played an important part, but the tactics were mainly defensive, just as Hermippus (fr. 47) criticized Pericles for not taking action against the invaders.⁴⁶

Taking up the ambiguous "they", the chorus transforms the aristocratic frame of hippic activities and generates two opposing images of which the democratic hoplite dominates. Using the war/sports-metaphor employed in their description of Crates (540), the imagined battleground becomes the *palaistra*, instantly making it an impossible locus of hippic activities: no one falls off a horse and denies it. Falling in the dust in a wrestling match and in a real battle is more likely to be relevant here. The double perspective enhances the idea of the strong valiant hoplites, while emphasizing the role of the aristocratic: fight in the *palaistra*, that is what aristocrats do after all, this is the place where they endure *πόνοι* (hardship).⁴⁷ Thus, the imagery used here pin-points the

⁴⁴ cf. Imperio 2004, 241 for more sources; however, she denies a reference to a person here, buttressing her point by reference to Campagner 2001, 70-1 who argues that that the word denotes athletics. However, the frame of athletics is irrelevant at the moment and ἀμυνεῖν is perfectly normal as a military term (e.g. 577; *Vesp.* 383). An athletic frame is first generated later. Amyntias was clearly well known and it seems clear to me that the neologism puns on his name and his nature.

⁴⁵ Which the chorus eventually becomes, 1300-15.

⁴⁶ Notice that also Hermippus mentions Cleon as fierce. Thucydides describes the growing disquiet of the passivity in 2.20-22; 59-65.

⁴⁷ For a discussion of *ponoi*, see Pritchard 2013, 176-84, though it seems that Pritchard understands "comparable toils" of athletes and soldiers as "identical toils", which they were obviously not; then war would be sport, and vice versa. He understates the metaphor WAR IS SPORT/SPORT IS WAR, see e.g. Pinar Sanz (2005); Charteris-Black (2004), 114-16.

paradox of sport under the Athenian democracy: though athletics were mainly elite activities, the non-elite Athenians held sport in high regard.⁴⁸

Having then introduced the idea of aristocratic athletics, the chorus finally gets to the point of the *epirrhema*: the question of merit, repeating the “*axios*” and thus creating a sort of ring composition from their fathers worth to their own. Who will receive the honour of dinner at the Prytaneion and *prohedria* in the theatre? While the old *stratego*i (such as Cimon, Pericles and Phormio) were from aristocratic families, the new stock like Cleon had non-aristocratic origins and supposedly lesser education, but nonetheless enjoyed honours, having done nothing (766, or like the Paphlagon by stealing others merits, e.g. 52-7, 741-2, 817-9). The chorus refers vaguely to the former generals and generates a picture of the past that juxtaposes the contemporary situation of “Cleon” who engulfs the democracy, with the former generation of Cleaenetus, Cleon’s father, who did not venture to harass the *stratego*i: it was the democracy that honoured those who served it well, whereas now the Athenian democracy *is* Cleon. This has clearly been shown by the character and acts of his dramatic counterpart, the Paphlagon (e.g. 58-60).

It is interesting that in this part of *epirrhema* the main characters, the chorus and Cleon, are being defined with reference to their fathers and referred to through them. The picture of the aristocracy of yore, however, was shattered and it is reasonable to assume that the mentioning of Cleaenetus, besides being a stab at Cleon, is parallel; if Cleaenetus is a “nonentity”,⁴⁹ what does that imply for Cleon (perhaps verses 186-7 answers this question)? There is no suggestion here that Cleaenetus had any real powers to bestow any honours on anyone, though the reference to him here can not only be explained by his being the father of Cleon: the audience would have to know him for the verse to make sense. On the other hand, he is strongly contrasted with his son, to whom the other generals allegedly must lower themselves in order to get beaten up (e.g. 5, 60, 64-70, 355-8, 878-

⁴⁸ See Pritchard 2013.

⁴⁹ Sommerstein 1981, 175 ad 574.

80). Furthermore, and even more degrading, these generals (including Cleon) deny fighting at all unless they receive honours from the state.⁵⁰ This strongly contrasts the imagery of the *palaistra*/battlefield where both aristocrats and hoplites deny the short moment of their falling and strike back, while the new stock of generals simply refuse to fight at all, and with the inscribed text of the second stone herm on the agora:

μᾶλλον τις τάδ' ἰδὼν καὶ ἐπεσσομένων ἐθελήσει

ἀμφὶ περὶ ξυνοῖς πράγμασι δῆριον ἔχειν.

all the more will future generations be willing

for the common cause to go to war.

The opposition between words and deeds could not be contrasted more strongly.⁵¹ So while the Paphlagon has curtailed the Demos by giving him food (46-52, 213-18, 788), the democracy is forced to feed its generals to make them take action, which creates a spiral of democratic degeneration (766 μηδὲν δράσας of the politicians and μηδὲν δρῶντι of the People in 905 sum it up).

The members of the chorus, then, returning to their now conspicuous self-praise, describe themselves as a contrast to the modern generals and their claims for honours and echoing the beginning of the passage, they claim concern for the city. They will defend the city and they will do it for free (576-7). They are seeking the opposite of Cleon, while associating themselves with the brave *persona* of the poet (511: γενναίως πρὸς τὸν Τυφῶ χωρεῖ - 577: γενναίως ἀμύνειν).⁵² However, whereas their poet attacked (χωρεῖ) the evils, they will merely defend (ἀμύνειν)

⁵⁰ Neither the slaves (representing generals? On this question, see Henderson 2003; Ruffell 2011, 182, 185) nor the chorus will in fact: both groups make the Sausage-Seller do the hard work. See also *Ach.* 593-622.

⁵¹ The fact the Cleon actually did go to war is reduced to mere theft of honour, e.g. 55-6, 353-5.

⁵² Perhaps we can even detect an echo of Pericles' words in Thuc. 2.41.5: γενναίως...μαχόμενοι ἐτελεύτησαν.

themselves against them, their spirit being only suited for defence (ὁ θυμὸς εὐθὺς ἦν ἀμυνίας) – and the orders of Pericles of course.

Their proclaimed contrast to Cleon, while echoing the times where none had to beg for honour, is shattered when the chorus proceeds to beg for nothing but a change in the ways the society looks at them (almost the entire verse emphasizes this little wish). Representing the entire aristocracy, the chorus reflects as a growing disapproval among the elite of the democratic warmongering.⁵³ However, this needs not to be the view Aristophanes takes – *Knights* is not a peace play – for by getting peace, the chorus wishes to have their hair long and to wear their headbands (as on parade on the Parthenon Frieze) without everyone begrudging them (showing φθόνοϛ, topos 7). This social recognition stands in clear contrast to the visual representation of the chorus: the chorus already had long hair (also in 1121) and possibly wore the headbands as well. What the chorus in fact asks for is to continue their aristocratic lifestyle without annoying interruptions of war imposed on them by the democracy and Cleon’s policies in particular. Consequently, the cavalrymen would simply confirm their stereotypicality in the eyes of the comic audience and thus they come to reflect effeminacy and cowardice, themes, which Aristophanes openly exploits in the second *parabasis* (1300-15).⁵⁴

The effect of the final verse is a clash between points of view within the text. The subject of μὴ φθoveῖθ’ is apparently the audience, but the object of the verb is clearly embedded in the fiction, the chorus in character as cavalrymen. But the proposition of the cavalrymen is so absurd (don’t begrudge us) that the spectators can only deny the possibility of it; this spectator-intrusion into the fiction thus underlines the impossibility of their wish. By negating the φθόνοϛ, the chorus simply underlines the solidity of the social barrier of democratic Athens.⁵⁵

⁵³ Boegehold 1982.

⁵⁴ See Anderson 2003.

⁵⁵ This is a question about how the chorus frames their position. Aristophanes makes them choose the negative framing which will make it quite difficult for them to break the frame of envy, see Lakoff 2004, e.g. 4.

Antepirrhema:

Ἄ ξύνισμεν τοῖσιν ἵπποις, βουλόμεσθ' ἐπαινέσαι.
ἄξιοι δ' εἶσ' εὐλογεῖσθαι· πολλὰ γὰρ δὴ πράγματα
ξυνδιήνεγκαν μεθ' ἡμῶν, εἰσβολάς τε καὶ μάχας.
ἀλλὰ τὰν τῆ γῆ μὲν αὐτῶν οὐκ ἄγαν θαυμάζομεν,
ὡς <δ' > ὄτ' εἰς τὰς ἵππαγωγούς εἰσεπήδων ἀνδρικῶς,
πριάμενοι κώθωνας, οἱ δὲ καὶ σκόροδα καὶ κρόμμυα,
εἶτα τὰς κώπας λαβόντες ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς οἱ βροτοὶ
ἐμβalόντες ἄν ἐφρυάξανθ'· «ἵππαπαῖ, τίς ἐμβαλεῖ;
ληπτέον μᾶλλον. τί δρῶμεν; οὐκ ἔλᾱς, ᾧ σαμφόρα;»
ἐξεπήδων τ' εἰς Κόρινθον· εἶτα δ' οἱ νεώτατοι
ταῖς ὀπλαῖς ὄρυττον εὐνὰς καὶ μετῆσαν βρώματα·
ἦσθιον δὲ τοὺς παγούρους ἀντὶ ποίας Μηδικῆς,
εἴ τις ἐξέρποι θύραζε κάκ βυθοῦ θηρώμενοι·
ὥστ' ἔφη Θέωρος εἰπεῖν καρκίνον Κορίνθιον·
«Δεινά γ', ᾧ Πόσειδον, εἰ μὴδ' ἐν βυθῷ δυνήσομαι
μήτε γῆ μήτ' ἐν θαλάττῃ διαφυγεῖν τοὺς ἵπέας.»

We want to praise what we saw our horses accomplish.

They deserve our eulogy, for they've borne us many
hardships, invasions and battles.

But we aren't too amazed at their actions on land,
considering how they jumped manfully aboard the horse transports
after buying canteens and rations of garlic and onions,
then sat to their oars like we humans,
dipped their blades, and raised a snort of "Heave Horse!

Who'll dip his blade? Stroke harder! What are we doing? Pull harder, S-brand!"

They jumped ashore at Corinth, and the colts made
dugouts with their hooves and foraged for fodder.

Instead of Persian clover they ate crabs, whenever
any crawled ashore and even fishing them from the deep.
So Theorus claims a Corinthian crab said, “Lord Poseidon,
it’s awful if even here in the deep I cannot succeed
either by land or by sea in escaping the Knights!”
(595-610 trans. J. Henderson with minor adjustments)

Following up on the eulogy for their fathers – and ultimately themselves –, the chorus turns to their horses and creates a comic counterpoint to the praise of the forebears. There, the chorus focused on men at arms in action, trying to include themselves, but faltered by their comic need to look good and the concluding disjunction becomes relevant for the theme and overall tone of the *antepirrhema*. However, as in the *epirrhema*, the deconstruction of the narrative once again puts the cavalrymen in the centre of the actual eulogy: “*laudatores* and *laudandi* are identical.”⁵⁶

Knowing the qualities of their steeds, the cavalrymen want to celebrate the actions of their horses (τοῖσιν is a possessive pronoun here, “our”) and echoing the *epirrhema*, they state that the horses deserve a commemoration for their value to the city (βουλόμεσθ’ ἐπαινέσαι. ἄξιοι δ’ εἶσ’ εὐλογεῖσθαι 595-6 – εὐλογῆσαι βουλόμεσθα ..., ὅτι ... ἄξιοι). Thus, the aristocratic fathers were worthy, and the cavalrymen, deeming themselves worthy too, now play with the epinician (and aristocratic) genre of praise as they turn to the medium of their alleged worth, their horses.⁵⁷ They claim that their horses have joined them at many occasions of invasions and battles. However, the language here is very ambiguous (echoing the antistrophe, 587), for not only are πολλὰ γὰρ δὴ πράγματα (596) a weak expression without any sort of notion of what these cases might be,⁵⁸ but

⁵⁶ Harriott 1986, 64.

⁵⁷ e.g. Pi. *O.* 1, 18, see later in *Eq.* 1265-6 with a clear reference to epinician lyric.

⁵⁸ The particle δὴ either emphasises the πολλὰ “many indeed” (Denniston 1959, 205: iii), or emphasises γὰρ and arrests “attention at the opening of a narrative” (Denniston 1959, 243, 1); the latter seems more likely. If the relevance of

the explanation (εἰσβολάς τε καὶ μάχας) seems to be more of an afterthought.⁵⁹ Thucydides seldom relates hippic battles on the plains of Attica (2. 19; 2. 22; 3. 1.),⁶⁰ though as Iain Spence has demonstrated more must have taken place.⁶¹ However, Thucydides describes one successful hippic battle (probably the reason for including the story in the first place). It seems that Thucydides did not go as far to criticise the cavalry, which in its form and tactics was the design of Pericles.⁶² On the other hand, the lack of references to the cavalry indicates that the historian had difficulties in finding any reasons to write about them. Imperio (2004 *ad loc*), on the other hand, argues that the chorus is referring to the battle at Corinth the year before and thus takes “invasions and battles” as a hendiadys. This, however, cannot be the point of the text, since the chorus makes a clear distinction between the actions on land (τὰν τῆ γῆ μὲν), and those marvels the horses performed at sea.⁶³ The fact that the engagement of Solygeia was a hoplite battle⁶⁴ on land is suppressed by the chorus, who depicts the incident as a raid from the seaside. Thus the audience would not yet know what actions the chorus might be talking about, and the invasion of Corinth is postponed so as to become the comic – and fantastic – point of the *antepirrhema*.

Cimon’s herms in the *epirrhema* is correct, perhaps this expression echoes ἀμφὶ περὶ ξυνοῖς πράγμασι δῆριον ἔχειν of the second herm, Plut. *Cim.* 7. 5.

⁵⁹ Sommerstein 1981, 176 ad 597 argues that the “invasion and battles” refer to the invasion of foreign forces on Attic soil in the beginning of the Archidamian war and that the battles refer to the defensive fights put up by the cavalrymen to protect the country. Thus the invasions have a suppressed subject (the enemy) while the battles have the cavalrymen as subject. However, such a construction seems to force the Greek. It is hard to believe that any spectator in the audience would think that the defence put up by the cavalry under the framework of Periclean tactics could be counted as εἰσβολάς τε καὶ μάχας, since the power of the cavalry was its ability to harass raiding troops; but to refer to this ability as raids and battles seems to be stretching the evidence.

⁶⁰ At 2. 19 and 22 the Athenian cavalry are routed, while at 3.1 it keeps the light infantry of the Spartans from doing any significant harm to the fields.

⁶¹ Spence 1990; Spence 1993, 103.

⁶² For an account of Pericles’ tactics, see Spence 1990; 2012.

⁶³ Wilson 2007 inserts a ὡς <δ’> ὅτ’.

⁶⁴ Notice Thucydides’ emphasis on close combat καὶ ἦν ἡ μάχη καρτερὰ καὶ ἐν χερσὶ πᾶσα (4.43.3.1).

What might then be the point of the vagueness of reference to actual warfare? Like the choral endeavour in the *epirrhema* to write itself into the history of Athenian martial success, the chorus now nonchalantly assumes that the audience accepts this as true, and thus the εἰσβολὰς τε καὶ μάχας should refer to the retaliation raids on the Peloponnese carried out by none else than the union of the navy and the hoplites; occasionally the cavalry did join these raids in their horse transports, but we are only explicitly told so twice; Epidaurus in 430 (Thuc. 2. 56.) and Solygeia 425. However, the creation and maintenance of horse transports⁶⁵ suggest that they were employed on other occasions as well, though the cavalry never was the decisive factor on the battlefield.⁶⁶ Solygeia in 425 was *de facto* the only major success of the Athenian cavalry to date, and this only because the Corinthians had no cavalry at all (see above).

It seems then that Aristophanes has constructed the *epirrhema* and the *antepirrhema* to represent a connected narrative as following:

Epirrheme, past

progonoi, our fathers (565)

Salamis & Marathon (567-8)

the cavalry as an defensive force (576-7)

Antepirrheme, present

contemporary raids on the Peloponnese (597)

⁶⁵ Thuc. 2. 56. 1; ἦγε δ' ἐπὶ τῶν νεῶν ὀπλίτας Ἀθηναίων τετρακισχιλίους καὶ ἰπέας τριακοσίους ἐν ναυσὶν ἰπαγωγῶς πρῶτον τότε ἐκ τῶν παλαιῶν νεῶν ποιηθείσας·

⁶⁶ e.g. with Hagnon at Poteidaia likewise in 430 (2.58; that this force included the cavalry is first acknowledged in 6. 31) and obviously with Xenophon at the disastrous defeat at Spartolus (2.79) in 429. The casualty list in Thuc. 3. 37 lists 300 cavalrymen on duty to die of the plague in 430-26 and renders a larger use of the cavalry abroad than we are told by the historian probable.

the new victory at Solygeia (599-610)

The obvious lack of mentioning of the victory at Pylos here is stunning, though not surprising since the choral voice despise Cleon, and thus Aristophanes enables his chorus to silence the shouting of Cleon/Paphlagon. This I believe is one of the strongest satirical attacks in the play. It will not last the play out, but it is thrown into relief among the splendours of Athens, Salamis and Marathon. But the satire is double-edged, for the Athenian cavalry's endeavour to inscribe their glory into the city's glory – like Cleon is trying to inscribe his victory into the history of Athens (see below) – is shown to be completely without justification.

The growing ambiguity about the exact value of the cavalry reflects a contemporary tension towards the expensive – but rarely decisive on the battlefield - cavalry, which Aristophanes exploits through a satirical and negative lines – to account for the victory at the Corinthian battle and, I assume, contemporary aristocratic attitudes towards the incident. Cleon's marvellous victory at Pylos was the ultimate democratic humiliation of the hoplites of Sparta: finally, the Athenian hoplites were reversing the traditional weight of Sparta's invincible phalanxes, and taken together with Phormio's naval supremacy, the democratic warmongering looked as if it would in fact carry the day. However, Nicias' victory at Solygeia near Corinth was a victory still, but it was not the victory of the aristocratic cavalry who joined the fleet and hoplites there, it was just another victory symbolising how the democracy now ruled both land and sea (basically the themes of the parabatic odes). Consequently, the chorus though representing the aristocracy undermines this social group by singing its own ironic praise: the more the aristocracy is ridiculed, the stronger the non-Cleonic democracy stands, a democracy that in the comic world of Aristophanes needs to be revived through magical means.

The self-praising of the aristocracy seems to be simple bragging (cf. 271, see above). To the delight of the democratic part of the audience, the chorus moves their imaginary space from land to sea by shifting from land-battles to the fleet, though this time it is not the common people of the navy who embark on the triremes, but the horses themselves. As opposed to all other martial incidents retold by the chorus this movement in space and ideology is specific, so specific that the coryphaeus quotes the actual voices of the “rowing horses”: the exaggeration is glaring.⁶⁷ The chorus now focuses entirely on one specific occasion as opposed to all other martial reference in their eulogies, the Corinthian bay. The cavalrymen are proud of it and it may be a fact that the aristocratic group in Athens saw this victory as a good chance of getting to grips with the democracy and their leaders. If any Athenian aristocrat thought that the aristocracy could earn some points of goodwill because of this victory, Aristophanes, through his own aristocrats, has surely tried to make such hope obsolete. Since the chorus has spoken mostly in dual voices, so to speak, one giving their own point of view and the other that of the democratic audience, a deliberate irony seems to rise from the ambiguity. This makes the statement of G.W. Dobrov true of comic choruses as well: “The Aristophanic character ... is entirely on display to the point where the spectators are aware of more about him and the meaning of his words than is the character himself.”⁶⁸ For instance, as the cavalry, the comic chorus wants to celebrate the poet, but by alluding to Phormio, who represents the most democratic part of the army, the navy, the *choreutai* undermine their fictive character as aristocratic cavalrymen. On the other hand, wanting to celebrate themselves through their fathers and their

⁶⁷ Consequently, we have a conjunction of at least three incongruous aspects: the cavalrymen representing aristocracy, the rowing signifying the labours of democracy, and the horse to connect them. This connection becomes possible through the double nature of Poseidon as Hippios and Thalassios and generates an almost mythical setting of the equine sailors (notice the use of the lyric-tragic βροτοί, 601, normally demarcating human from gods, not humans from animals). The mythical background recalls how Poseidon once turned himself into a stallion to have sex with Demeter (Paus. 8. 25. 5.). The offspring of Poseidon’s caper was a horse called Areion who in some of the versions of the myth had the ability to speak like humans and is mentioned as early as the *Iliad* (23. 346).

⁶⁸ Dobrov 2001, 35.

steeds, the “cavalrymen” say one thing (namely how worthy they are), while the *choreutai* say another (the exact opposite). This is not particularly strange, since the persona “Aristophanes” often relies on an irony between what he claims and what he does (e.g. *Vesp.* 54-66; *Nub.* 534-62). Thus, as noticed, the eulogy of this passage should be taken *cum grano salis*: It is simply a means of satirical humour here. However, among the *laudandi*, Cleon conspicuously fails to be mentioned. And this I believe is the satirical point of the *parabasis*: the silence on Cleon’s success.

There can be no doubt about Cleon’s political success in these years (e.g. the reassessment of the taxation of the empire and several victories associated with his policies),⁶⁹ and the Pylos episode only buttressed his power over the *demos*.⁷⁰ In the *parabasis* of *Knights*, however, there are only three indirect references to Cleon (and the first is ambiguous, since it could refer to Cratinus as well): first, the imagery of the monster Typho at 511,⁷¹ second, through his father, Cleaenetus, a theme Aristophanes has touched upon on more occasions already (e.g. 180-6, 333-4, 411-28), and third, through his associate Theorus, emphasising politics, but not without a hint of corruption.⁷² These are all themes that have run through the play so far. While being silent about his adversary, Aristophanes still aims his tacit satire at him.

⁶⁹ See Schultz 2009, 151-4 and Kallet 2009, 105-8 for discussion and sources.

⁷⁰ For the mechanisms behind inciting the Demos to desire war, see Raaflaub 2001, 218-20; Hunt 2010, 231-2.

⁷¹ In verse 75-9, Cleon is described as a monster of almost godly size, in verse 137, his voice is compared to the thunders (626) of a river (Cycloborus punning on Cyclops?), in verse 197, he is a mythic eagle (of leather, of course), in verses 223-4 everyone fears him, and in 248 he is again, firstly a violent stream, secondly, a creature of myth, Charybdis. See Teló 2014.

⁷² From the chorus’ point of view, this Solygeian adventure shows their worth to the city and is an aristocratic counterpoint to the Cleonian democracy, of which Theorus plays a part. That the companion of Cleon, Theorus, is mentioned last in the passage (608) emphasises the competitiveness of getting the good jobs as envoys, which Theorus was accused of in *Acharnians* as well (134ff.) The scholia (VEΓΘM), I believe, are quite right when they describe the character of Theorus: ὡς μοιχρὸς δὲ κωμωδεῖται ὁ Θέωρος καὶ ἰχθυοφάγος καὶ πονηρὸς. περὶ Κόρινθον οὖν διέτριβεν, ἴσως διὰ τὰς ἐκεῖ πόρναις: “Theorus is ridiculed as an adulterer, fish-glutton and wicked. He is thus hanging around in Corinth, perhaps because of the whores there.”

On the other hand, Aristophanes alludes to the victory of Phormio, one of the old sorts of soldier, and the golden *Nikai* connected with him, and, if I am right, Aristophanes also refers to Cimon's *stelai* describing the valour of Menestheus and his Athenians. These references are clearly circumscribing the success of Cleon at Pylos and his commemoration of his own feats with the Athena Nike temple. As Schultz (2009) has persuasively argued, the Northern frieze of this temple depicted the battle of the Heraclidae against Eurystheus, which should mirror the recent Athenian victories, but by alluding to Menestheus, Aristophanes plays a mythological game in the *epirrhema*; just as the *stratego*i of old were better than the new politicians, the Homeric *and* indigenous Menestheus and his historical embodiments (Cimon and Phormio in particular) stand above the migrant Heraclidae as exploited by Cleon's policies and taken to the extreme in the character Paphlagon.⁷³

Another aspect of the epirrhematic syzygy of the *parabasis* is how theology, ideology and space are interwoven in a chiasmic structure that explicitly fails to recognise the space both physically and ideological of the cavalry: the first ode to Poseidon emphasises the sea and thus the navy, while the *epirrhema* centres on the battlefield and politics; next, the ode to Athena reinforces the *epirrhema* but emphasises the ideal Athenian society and turns the cavalrymen into a chorus – not in any way degraded, but not particularly martial either⁷⁴ – while the *antepirrhema* leaves the battlefields aside and turns to the sea in a structure wholly opposite to the ode to Athena: the cavalry (or rather – most magically their horses) in a classic comic routine, namely the “high-brow” as “low-brow” sailors; a classic topsy turvy routine.

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⁷³ The hypothesis of Lippman *et al.* 2006 may be of further interest here, though it is beyond the scope of the paper.

⁷⁴ Especially if joining a city chorus exempted you from military service, Macdowell (1985).

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