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**Katabasis and anabasis as means of satire in Aristophanes and Lucian**

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*Katabasis* (ascent) as a narrative theme is already encountered in *Nekyia* and the myth of Er in Plato’s *Republic* (10.614b-621d): the protagonist descends to the Underworld so as to become acquainted with the order that prevails after death. *Katabasis* is accompanied by (and thus closes with) with an *anabasis* (ascent) to the world of the living (Nesselrath, 2018: 260); this means that the protagonist has now seen the end that awaits everyone after they die and is urged to narrate it all to those that are still alive. In both the aforementioned cases, though, the *anabasis* occurs rather hastily, especially in *Nekyia*, as Odysseus faces his fear of an imminent death (Karanika, 2011: 10) after seeing Persephone carrying Medusa’s head (633-635). The *katabasis* and *anabasis* are additionally used in Xenophon’s *Anabasis* in order to depict the course to and from the coasts during the campaign of the Ten Thousand (e.g. *Anab*. 5.5.4).

However, the aforementioned references do not imply that *katabasis* and *anabasis* are only used in a metaphysical context: Aristophanes and Lucian employ the *katabasis* and *anabasis* themes as means of satire regarding the political and intellectual climate of their era. Both writers not only creatively use the *katabasis* and the *anabasis* in a metaphysical geography environment (the Underworld – the sky), but also emphasize the *anabasis* part of the *katabasis* narrative and often use it as a separate plot (e.g. Aristophanes’ *Birds* or Lucian’s *Charon*). Through the lens of reception, the use of *katabasis* and *anabasis* in both Old Comedy and Lucian’s satire (or comic dialogues according to Peterson, 2010: 4), the expansion of the meanings of *katabasis* and *anabasis* by Aristophanes and Lucian in order to fulfil their dramatic and narrative needs, and the new significance that is given to *anabasis*, which is not encountered in *Nekyia* or the Myth of Er, are examined along with the influence of Aristophanes to Lucian regarding the use of these themes.

**Keywords**: *katabasis*, *anabasis*, Aristophanes, Lucian, reception
Essential Bibliography


