NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

THE CLASSICAL DEFINITION OF ΡΑΨΩΙΔΙΑ

Despite numerous investigations into the origin and semantic history of ῥαψῳδία and its cognates, we do not have an adequate definition of these important pre-Alexandrian literary terms. Usually rhapsodes are conceived on the model of Plato's Ion: they are professionals who give dramatic performances of memorized epic texts, particularly Homer.[1] Yet in a number of relatively early sources we find ῥαψῳδός, ῥαψῳδία, and ῥαψῳδεῖν used of performers who do not merely recite the poetry of others but also create their own, and who perform poetry other than epic.[2] A reconsideration of the use of these words reveals that ῥαψῳδία, the art of the ῥαψῳδός, comprised a wider range of poetry than just epic, and that it is best defined as the performance of poetry without a μέλος. If this use of the words can be established, speculations about the prehistory of the terms will be, if still uncertain, at least on firmer ground.

The earliest history of these words is obscure. We first find ῥαψῳδός in the fifth century (*GDI* 5786 [Dodona], Soph. *OT* 391), but the name and practice may be older: there are evident paraphrases of the term in pseudo-Hesiod and Pindar (frag. 357 M.–W.; *Isthm.* 3 [4]. 56–57, *Nem.* 2. 2), and Herodotus (5. 67) refers to rhapsodes active in sixth-century Sicyon.[3] In the absence of direct evidence from the archaic period, scholars have sought the original meaning of ῥαψῳδός in its etymology. The results have not been conclusive, but some long-held beliefs may now be put aside. We now reject as phonologically impossible the most popular ancient derivation, from ῥάβδος, signifying the staff wielded by rhapsodes while performing their unaccompanied recitatives.[4] The first element in these words must rather be referred to ῥάπτειν, "to sew or stitch together."[5]

1. See, e.g., W. Schmid and O. Stählin, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur,* vol. 1 (Munich, 1929), pp. 156–57; A. Lesky, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* (Bern, 1957), p. 24; R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship: From the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 8–9.

2. The definitions of these words in LSJ are heavily qualified; e.g., ῥαψῳδός is defined as "*reciter of Epic poems,* sts. applied to the *bard who sang his own poems* . . . but usu. *professional reciters,* esp. *of the poems of Homer.*" I leave out of account here the meaning of ῥαψῳδία given at LSJ s.v. II ("Portion of an epic poem fit for recitation"), which is attested later (Plutarch and Lucian) and seems to belong to the Hellenistic disposition of these poems into books; cf. S. Koster, *Antike Epostheorien,* Palingenesia 5 (Wiesbaden, 1970), pp. 125–27.

3. That earlier texts do not mention the rhapsode has been attributed to the fact that the word's presumed epic form, *ῥαψαοιδός, cannot fit into a dactylic rhythm; see T. Bergk, *Griechische Literaturgeschichte,* vol. 1 (Bonn, 1872), p. 490, n. 25.

4. See Pind. *Isthm.* 3 [4]. 56–57 Snell-Maehler; Callim. frag. 26. 5 Pf.; schol. Pind. *Nem.* 2. 1d, *Isthm.* 4. 63d (pp. 29. 19–30. 4, 232. 26–233. 4 Drachmann); schol. Pl. *Ion* 530A; Eust. ad *Il.* p. 6. 4–7 van der Valk; Phot. *Lex.* p. 484. 23–25 Porson (= *Suda* P 71 [4. 287 Adler]); cf. Dion. Thrax *Gramm.* 5 (p. 8 Uhlig), *Lexeis rhetoricae* p. 300. 3–6 Bekker, *Etym. mag.* p. 703. 32–35. Modern upholders of this etymology include F. G. Welcker, *Der epische Cyclus* (Bonn, 1865), pp. 335–37, and W. Schadewaldt, *Von Homers Welt und Werk* (Stuttgart, 1965), p. 56; cf. W. Aly, "ῥαψῳδός," *RE* 1A (1914): 245.

5. Ῥαψῳδός may be explained as a compound of the τερψίμβροτος type, joining a verbal element and a nominal element, with the oxytone accent of agent nouns (e.g., ἀοιδός), perhaps influenced by

The rhapsode's activity seems, then, to be connected with stitching; but interpretations of the "stitching singer" have in general taken two very different directions. On the one hand, it has been maintained that the title (or slur) "rhapsode" marked the degenerate, memorizing heirs of the truly creative ἀοιδοί.[6] The "stitching" in their name refers to their mode of composition, variously explained as reciting memorized patches of epic, or piecing together inferior sequels to the epics,[7] or even stitching one's own piece onto a preceding piece at rhapsodic contests.[8] It is, however, unwarranted to attribute to the archaic age a clear and significant distinction between creative singers and mechanically imitative rhapsodes. The historical information that we have about earlier rhapsodes, such as Cynaethus of Chios, suggests that they could make their own poems as well as reproduce favorite pieces.[9] More generally, what we have learned since Parry about the dynamics of oral composition and performance suggests that in archaic poetry little premium was placed on separating out the original contributions of a performer from the traditional elements.[10] Classical usage bears this out: Plato does call Ion a rhapsode, but he also calls Phemius one in the same dialogue (*Ion* 533C), and he elsewhere speaks of both Homer and Hesiod as "rhapsodizing" (*Resp.* 600D, *Leg.* 658D).

On the other hand, stitching has been interpreted as a figure for poetic creation.[11] In epic, ῥάπτειν metaphorically describes ingenious machination, novel contrivance,[12] and in pseudo-Hesiod (frag. 357 M.-W.) the ἀοιδοί Hesiod and Homer stitch "new" songs (ἐν νεαροῖς ὕμνοις ῥάψαντες ἀοιδήν). This interpretation avoids the pitfalls of viewing the rhapsodes' performances merely as imitative "patchworks." But in the article most often cited today, H. Patzer points out that ῥαψῳδός must mean something more specific than the "stitcher" (i.e., composer) of songs;[13] for all poets compose or contrive their songs, but rhapsodes are almost always only epic poets. "Weaving poetry," for example, is

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analogy with purely nominal compounds like κιθαρῳδός and αὐλῳδός; see G. F. Else, "The Origin of ΤΡΑΓΩΙΔΙΑ," *Hermes* 85 (1957): 28.

6. Cf. Schmid-Stählin, *Geschichte,* 1:157: "von Haus aus als Spottname gemeint." For the view of rhapsodes as less creative than the Homeric singers, see esp. F. A. Wolf, *Prolegomena ad Homerum* (Hildesheim, 1963), pp. 71–76, and his letter to Heyne of 9 Jan. 1796, pp. 288–89 (English translation by A. Grafton, G. W. Most, and J. E. G. Zetzel, *Prolegomena to Homer* [Princeton, 1985], pp. 104–7, 241–43). The view persists, with some nuances, esp. in G. S. Kirk, *The Songs of Homer* (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 97, 318–19.

7. Cf. schol. Pind. *Nem.* 2. 1d (p. 30. 5–8); Eust. ad *Il.* p. 6. 30–33; E. Meyer, "Die Rhapsoden und die homerischen Epen," *Hermes* 53 (1918): 330–36; E. Schwartz, "Der Name Homeros," *Hermes* 75 (1940): 1–9.

8. Cf. Dionysius of Argos (*FGrH* 308 F 2) ap. schol. Pind. *Nem.* 2. 1d (p. 30. 8–31. 7); Eust. ad *Il.* p. 6. 33–35; A. Pagliaro, "La terminologica poetica di Omero e l'origine dell'epica," *Ric. Ling.* 2 (1951): 43–45; Else, "Origin," pp. 27–32; G. Tarditi, "Sull' origine e sul significato della parola rapsodo," *Maia* 20 (1968): 137–45; C. Del Grande, "Aedi e Rapsodi," in *Filologia minore* (Milan and Naples, 1967), pp. 53–58.

9. For Cynaethus, see schol. Pind. *Nem.* 2. 1c (p. 29. 12–18). Aly ("ῥαψῳδός," col. 246) lists a number of other "Dichter und R[hapsoden] in einer Person" before 500 B.C.

10. This point has recently been made à propos of ῥαψῳδός by B. Gentile, *Poesia e publico nella Grecia antica* (Rome and Bari, 1984), pp. 6–9.

11. See Philochorus (*FGrH* 328 F 212) ap. schol. Pind. *Nem.* 2. 1d (p. 31. 7–9); Hsch. III p. 424. 163–64 Schmidt; Eust. ad *Il.* p. 6. 30; cf. Bergk, *Literaturgeschichte,* 1:489–90.

12. Cf. H. Fränkel, "Griechische Wörter," *Glotta* 14 (1925): 3–6, largely anticipated by M. Croiset, *Histoire de la littérature grecque*[3], vol. 1 (Paris, 1910), p. 407, n. 3.

13. "ΡΑΨΩΙΔΟΣ," *Hermes* 80 (1952): 314–25.

an established figure of speech from Indo-European times;[14] but whereas Pindar and Bacchylides freely speak about weaving (ὑφαίνειν) their own poetry, they never "stitch" it.[15] Patzer concluded that only the epic poet is called a rhapsode because of the unique "'monostichische' Prinzip" of epic, which strings together line after line of dactylic hexameter.

Patzer's view has itself, inevitably, been criticized,[16] and the quest continues for the specific differentia of epic that "stitching" denotes.[17] But the problem is that all these views are predicated on the standard definition of rhapsody and assume that its primary sense is the performance or composition of epic poetry.[18] Yet it is questionable whether the notion of "epic" was the basis of naming rhapsody at all. It is not clear that the Greeks of the archaic period would have felt our need to demarcate "epic" poets from others, any more than they would have cared to define "memorizing" poets. The other names for poetry that we have from archaic Greece—names like θρῆνος, ὑμέναιος, τραγῳδία—are based not on literary notions like genre or authorial originality but on concrete aspects of the performance or occasion.

Moreover, the words ῥαψῳδός and ῥαψῳδία, which we first find only sporadically in the fifth century, are already being used in the fourth century for performances of poetry other than epic. A notable case is the *Ion* itself, where Socrates describes rhapsodes as "passing their time with many other good poets, and especially with Homer the best and most divine" (530B; cf. Isoc. *Paneg.* 18, 33). These "other good poets" turn out to include not only Hesiod but also Archilochus (531A; cf. 532A).[19] That Archilochus belonged in the rhapsode's repertoire is suggested also by a fragment of Heraclitus; punning on the etymology from ῥάβδος, he groups Archilochus with Homer as a poet unfit to be performed at contests (21 B 42 D.-K.): τόν τε Ὅμηρον ἔφασκεν ἄξιον ἐκ τῶν ἀγώνων ἐκβάλλεσθαι καὶ ῥαπίζεσθαι καὶ Ἀρχίλοχον ὁμοίως. Rhapsody of nonepic poetry also appears in *Timaeus* 21B, where Critias recalls that as a boy (i.e., in the mid-fifth century) he and other children sang the poems of Solon in rhapsodic contests (ἆθλα . . . ῥαψῳδίας) at the Cureotis. Critias allows that in general the poetry of Homer or Hesiod was more esteemed (21D), but it is easy to imagine that at such events the fledgling citizens could render a suitably patriotic elegy by the great Athenian poet (e.g., 4, 13 West).[20] In this vein we

14. Cf. R. Schmitt, *Dichtung und Dichtersprache in indogermanischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden, 1967), pp. 298–301; Schmitt adduces ῥάπτειν in this context, but no cognates of the verb with this extended meaning occur outside of Greek.

15. E.g., Pind. *Nem.* 4. 44–45, Bacchyl. 5. 9–10; cf. H. Maehler, *Die Lieder des Bakchylides,* erster Teil: *Die Siegeslieder,* vol. 2 (Leiden, 1982), p. 90.

16. Cf. Z. Ritoòk, "Rhapsodos," *AAntHung* 20 (1962): 226, who finds it farfetched and derived from the printed page.

17. M. Durante, e.g., views epic as quintessentially narrative and the rhapsode as one who "threads" the story together, in "Ricerche sulla preistoria della lingua poetica greca," *RAL* 15 (1960): 241–44, followed by Gentile, *Poesia,* p. 8.

18. So F. Càssola, *Inni omerici* (Milan, 1975), p. xxvii.

19. J. A. Notopoulos' explanation of this passage, that Archilochus wrote epic poetry now wholly lost, is not convincing: "Archilochus, The Aoidos," *TAPA* 97 (1966): 313–14.

20. Athenian boys rhapsodize "those brave in war" after dinner at Ar. *Eccl.* 677–79; in a similar scene at *Peace* 1298–99, Archilochus' anti-heroic elegiacs concerning his shield (5 West) cap the heroic recitations.

may take Diogenes Laertius at his word when he says (9. 18) that Xenophanes "rhapsodized" his hexametric, iambic, and elegiac poetry.[21]

These exceptions, when noted, are dismissed as examples of "general" or "loose" usage.[22] Yet the kinds of poetry subsumed under rhapsody in these passages form a distinctive and coherent class: the passages never refer to the performance of melic poetry but embrace the range of poetry that can be spoken. In metrical terms, ῥαψῳδία comprises the meters that, even when performed without musical accompaniment, remain vividly perceptible as verse: hexameters, elegiacs, iambo-trochaic lines, and probably also their combinations, such as those we find in the *Margites*.[23] This suggests that rhapsody should be defined in Greek terms as a kind of performance, irrespective of originality: it was the solo presentation, in public, of a poetic text without musical accompaniment.[24]

These same pieces could of course at times be set to music: Terpander apparently set the poetry of Homer to the citharodic nome, and elegiac poems could be performed at symposia as aulody.[25] Nevertheless, as the story of Solon's performance of his *Salamis* illustrates, a poet could stand up in public without a lyre and give a serious presentation of poetry.[26] The name for this kind of recitation, which could be used for a broad but definite range of texts, was ῥαψῳδία.[27]

A conclusive example of this meaning of ῥαψῳδία can be found in a vexed passage from the first chapter of the *Poetics* that has not yet been brought to bear on the discussion. In a digression on the shortcomings of naming kinds of poetry according to their meter, Aristotle notes that such a system would have no name for Chaeremon's *Centaur*, a μικτὴν ῥαψῳδίαν ἐξ ἁπάντων τῶν μέτρων (1447b22). Aristotle cannot mean that the *Centaur* was "an epic mixed out of all the metra." Such a description would be unintelligible on its face: in Aristotle's view epics were and ought to be composed in hexameters (1460a2–3). Nor are we helped by the little we know of the dramatist Chaeremon and his work: Athenaeus quotes five trimeters in tragic style from the *Centaur* (= frags. 10, 11

21. The passage is often dismissed; but for a study of Xenophanes' life and poetry as a rhapsode, see K. Reinhardt, *Parmenides und die Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie* (Bonn, 1916), pp. 134–37.

22. So, e.g., Patzer, "ΡΑΨΩΙΔΟΣ," p. 320, n. 1.

23. Cf. *Certamen* B p. 227. 55–56 Allen: ποιήσαντα γὰρ τὸν Μαργίτην Ὅμηρον περιέρχεσθαι κατὰ πόλιν ῥαψῳδοῦντα.

24. Though rhapsody was thus quite distinct from lyrical performance, the actual intonation of rhapsodes is likely to have been somewhere between true singing and bare speech; cf. J. Herington, *Poetry into Drama: Early Tragedy and the Greek Poetic Tradition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985), pp. 13, 224–25, and M. L. West, "The Singing of Homer," *JHS* 101 (1981): 113–29.

25. Citharody and rhapsody may be seen as alternative treatments of the same poetic texts; cf. U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Timotheos "Die Perser"* (Leipzig, 1903), p. 91. Recent work on elegy has tended to assign as much of it as possible to sympotic aulody: so, e.g., E. L. Bowie, "Early Greek Elegy, Symposia and Public Festivals," *JHS* 106 (1986): 13–35; but the *Salamis* remains a signal exception.

26. Probably the pieces were, like the *Salamis*, of a certain length; thus *Anth. Pal.* 9. 369 distinguishes rhapsody in elegiacs from epigram: πάγκαλον ἐστ' ἐπίγραμμα τὸ δίστιχον· ἢν δὲ παρέλθῃς / τοὺς τρεῖς, ῥαψῳδεῖς, κοὐκ ἐπίγραμμα λέγεις.

27. This interpretation has to my knowledge been advanced only by K. O. Müller, *History of the Literature of Ancient Greece*, trans. G. C. Lewis (London, 1847), pp. 32–35, a passage ignored in the literature.

Nauck[2]) and describes it as a δρᾶμα πολύμετρον (608E). The phrase μικτὴν ῥαψῳδίαν has defied interpretation:[28] D. W. Lucas in his commentary says simply, "What Aristotle means by μικτὴν ῥαψῳδίαν is unknown."[29]

But surely Aristotle means here that in his "mixed rhapsody" Chaeremon used not all meters—which is inconceivable—but all the meters that may be spoken. This is clear if we read the phrase ἐξ ἁπάντων τῶν μέτρων in light of chapter 24 of the *Poetics,* where we see that Aristotle limited the term μέτρα to the nonlyric meters: metra are rhythms cut into pieces (1448b21–22; cf. *Rh.* 1408b26–30), as in hexameters, trimeters, tetrameters, and elegiacs.[30] In *Poetics* 24 Aristotle limits his discussion of metra to the proper use of heroic, iambic, and trochaic meters (1459b–60a) and concludes by adducing Chaeremon again as one who mixed them (1460a2). The implication is that he combined only these, the meters that could be spoken. We may have some traces of this melange: E. G. Turner has plausibly suggested that the fragmentary hexameters by Chaeremon in *PHibeh* 2. 224 (= Pack[2] 1613) should be ascribed to the *Centaur.*[31]

Returning to chapter 1 of the *Poetics,* we note that the phrase μικτὴν ῥαψῳδίαν is very pointed in its context, which is a survey of the kinds of poetry according to the means of imitation. At 1447a28 Aristotle takes up the kinds of poetry that use λόγοι and μέτρα but not μέλος. (Poetry that is sung, in part or entirely, is not considered until 1447b24–29, where the dithyramb, nome, and drama are mentioned.)[32] Poetry that is not sung comprises two subclasses according to whether a composition mixes several kinds of metron or uses only a single kind: καὶ τούτοις εἴτε μιγνῦσα μετ' ἀλλήλων εἴθ' ἑνί τινι γένει χρωμένη τῶν μέτρων. At this point Aristotle notes the defects of naming imitations according to meter, offering an example from each subclass: first, ἐποποιός and similar coinages can name poems written in a single meter, but they cannot distinguish the imitative poetry of Homer from the versified physics of Empedocles; second, when several different metra are mixed together, the work is unnameable. Chaeremon's *Centaur* was a perfect example of such a polymetric poem and a good illustration of how poetry may mix several metra together.

Because of its brevity and Chaeremon's reputation as a dramatist, Athenaeus may have taken the *Centaur* for a drama. Aristotle, however, is analyzing poetry according to its use of language, meter, and music: for him the *Centaur* was the kind of work that could be read out loud (ἀναγνωστικός: *Rh.* 1413b13) by a single person to full advantage; it did not require the musical talents of a ὑποκριτής to be presented fully. Hence it belongs in the category of ῥαψῳδία, distinct from drama in its performance because it lacked the metrical and musical variety requiring a professional singer. Accordingly, Aristotle uses ῥαψῳδία several times to distinguish the performance of epic, as unmelodic

28. It was excised by Tyrwhitt, Gomperz, and Else; for discussion, see G. F. Else, *Aristotle's "Poetics": The Argument* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), pp. 57–59.

29. *Aristotle: "Poetics"* (Oxford, 1968), p. 61. Most recently, S. Halliwell speaks of the "somewhat mysterious 'mixed rhapsody' of Chaeremon," *Aristotle's "Poetics"* (Chapel Hill, 1986), p. 277.

30. Demonstrated by Else, *Aristotle's "Poetics,"* pp. 55–57.

31. For discussion, see C. Collard, "On the Tragedian Chaeremon," *JHS* 90 (1970): 22–23.

32. At *Poet.* 1449b28–31 Aristotle makes it clear that tragedy, as opposed to epic, uses not only μέτρα (in its spoken passages) but also μέλος.

poetry, from the performance of poetry that requires musical virtuosity, especially tragedy (see *Rh.* 1403b23, 1404a23, *Poet.* 1462a6–7; and cf. Pl. *Resp.* 395A, *Leg.* 658B).

Confirmation for this reading of Aristotle and for the sense of ῥαψῳδία proposed here can be found in Athenaeus (620C–D), who culls from a number of grammarians and Peripatetic historians passages suggesting the same sense of the term:

> Κλέαρχος δ' ἐν τῷ προτέρῳ περὶ Γρίφων "τὰ Ἀρχιλόχου," φησίν, "[ὁ] Σιμωνίδης ὁ Ζακύνθιος ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις ἐπὶ δίφρου καθήμενος ἐραψῴδει." Λυσανίας δ' ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ περὶ Ἰαμβοποιῶν Μνασίωνα τὸν ῥαψῳδὸν λέγει ἐν ταῖς δείξεσι τῶν Σιμωνίδου τινὰς ἰάμβων ὑποκρίνεσθαι. τοὺς δ' Ἐμπεδοκλέους Καθαρμοὺς ἐραψῴδησεν Ὀλυμπίασι Κλεομένης ὁ ῥαψῳδός, ὥς φησιν Δικαίαρχος ἐν τῷ Ὀλυμπικῷ.

It is remarkable that the poets named by Athenaeus exemplify precisely the range of composition defined above and even include the spoken, if nonmimetic, poetry of Empedocles.[33]

These texts provide a coherent sense of ῥαψῳδία that accounts for all occurrences of the word and its cognates. Though this sense is most clearly enunciated in Aristotle and thereafter, there is no reason to consider it a later departure from a presumed original sense of ῥαψῳδία as epic performance; in fact, of the three fifth-century occurrences of ῥαψῳδός, only one (Hdt. 5. 67) definitely refers to the performance of epic poetry.[34] The references to nonepic rhapsody cited here come mostly from the fourth century, but Heraclitus fragment 42 suggests that the usage may not have been foreign to the fifth, which is to say, as early as our evidence goes.

Moreover, the use of ῥαψῳδία to denote poetry that was not sung is, if not demonstrably the original sense of the word, at least a soundly archaic way of defining poetry, insofar as it is based on an obvious aspect of the performance rather than a literary conception of genre. The difference in performance between lyric poetry and poetry that was recited would have been evident from the outset, and this difference had been implicitly defined at least since Greek lyric poets began to refer to their compositions (words and music together) as μέλος (e.g., Alcman 14a Page, Pind. *Pyth.* 2. 4; cf. Pl. *Resp.* 398D). Poetry that was not sung referred to itself at this time by using either ἔπεα in a restricted sense ("poetical speech") or ἀοιδή in a loose sense ("unmelodic song").[35]

As is well known, however, more specific names for kinds of songs arose in the archaic period in connection with particular occasions. It may be that such a name was given to rhapsodes at Argos. Dionysius of Argos claims that an earlier name for ῥαψῳδοί was ἀρνῳδοί because they competed for the prize of a lamb

33. For Empedocles as a traditional problem in generic classification, see A. Gudeman, *Aristoteles: "ΠΕΡΙ ΠΟΙΗΤΙΚΗΣ"* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1934), pp. 91–92.

34. It has been suggested that the Sphinx is called a ῥαψῳδὸς . . . κύων (*OT* 391) because her riddle was in hexameters; but Sophocles does not tell us this, nor is the meter of the riddle relevant to the context. For a survey of interpretations, see Z. Ritoòk, "Rhapsodos," pp. 227–29.

35. See M. L. West, *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus* (Berlin and New York, 1974), pp. 6–7. Hence, when rhapsodes are sometimes said to "sing" (ᾄδειν, as opposed to λέγειν), this does not imply that they gave lyrical performances; see R. Renehan, *Studies in Greek Texts,* Hypomnemata 43 (Göttingen, 1976), pp. 88–92.

(schol. ad Pind. *Nem.* 2. 1d). There is no confirmation of this, but it is conceivable that at Argos ἀρνῳδοί was an epichoric name given to performers who in Greece at large, with its various contests and prizes, became known by the more general term ῥαψῳδοί.

The suggestion that ῥαψῳδία and its cognates were either formed or disseminated in connection with poetic competitions has much to commend it. At formal poetic contests ῥαψῳδός and ῥαψῳδία would complement κιθαρῳδός (-ία) and αὐλῳδός (-ία) as terms specifying a certain kind of performance with certain musical characteristics. When no particular text was prescribed, the rhapsode might chant elegies that he had sung at symposia or recite epic without the benefit of the cithara. In this he would be guided not by a sense of generic purity but by the rules of the contest and the ethos of the occasion. To be sure, we do not find ῥαψῳδός alongside κιθαρῳδός until Plato *Laws* 658B. Yet ῥαψῳδοί are early associated with agonistic contexts (e.g., Heracl. 21 B 42 D.-K., Hdt. 5. 67). If the word was an official designation, it would not have been pejorative; certainly Ion is proud to be called a rhapsode, and in the fifth century a certain Terpsicles did not scruple to proclaim himself a ῥαψῳδός on his dedicatory tripod (*GDI* 5786). In later state inscriptions victors in rhapsodic competitions are regularly announced under the title ῥαψῳδός (e.g., *SIG*^{4} 389, 424, 509, all third century).

What the agonothetes might have understood by the metaphor is no more certain now than it was to Pindar, who offered both etymologies (*Nem.* 2. 1, *Isthm.* 3 [4]. 56–57). But "stitching" could signify a clearly audible difference between poetry that is sung and poetry that is not. The rhythms of lyric poetry are organized in complex strophes unified by the μέλος; it is the music that weaves the rhythms into a whole fabric of song, however variegated it may be. In poetry that is not sung, roughly uniform pieces of rhythm are simply added together; there is no larger, unifying pattern. To join independent pieces end to end, without modifying their internal structure, is like stitching.

To be sure, in time rhapsody became more and more associated with epic and with Homer, as "the best and most divine of poets" became the author most often requested in a rhapsode's repertoire and a required text at certain rhapsodic contests (cf. Lycurg. *Leoc.* 209, Ath. 620A, Hsch. pp. 344–45 Latte). In Xenophon, as in the *Ion,* to be a rhapsode it suffices to know the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (*Symp.* 3. 6). Homer was especially well established in Athens, and hence it is not surprising that our witnesses (who are mostly Attic) speak so often of rhapsodic performances of Homer. But it by no means follows that rhapsodic performance per se was originally identical with Homeric or even epic performance.

The search for the original ῥαψῳδός has overlooked or obscured an important fact about the usage of the Greeks. A study of the texts shows that ῥαψῳδοί were recognized not by the genre of their songs or by their ability to memorize but by their way of performing; the term ῥαψῳδία demarcated a particular body of poetry that could be performed without singing. In this class of performance epic became the dominant form, and those who could recite well-loved passages from Homer became especially popular. But behind these developments lies an earlier and persistent sense of the word which embraced all poetry that was not

sung. The name for this class of poetry would have been useful in the archaic literary lexicon, perhaps emerging, as I have suggested, in the context of formal poetic competitions, and it continued to be used as a technical term by Aristotle and Peripatetic literary historians.[36]

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36. I wish to thank the Editor and referees of *CP* for their helpful suggestions.

A NOTE ON AESCHYLUS *AGAMEMNON* 332

πρὸς οὐδὲν ἐν μέρει τεκμήριον

The basic meaning of this phrase is clear enough, albeit difficult to render gracefully in English: the nighttime wanderings of the Greek victors in Troy as they search for food are governed by no clear sign or principle of apportionment but are determined solely by chance. The phrase is, however, both somewhat odder and somewhat more significant than people have realized.

What is initially intriguing is why Aeschylus has Clytemnestra use this phrase. The answer lies, I believe, in the obsessions and subplots that here, as so often in this play, lurk behind Clytemnestra's words. When later in the play, for instance, she speaks of her chastity through the image of dipping bronze (611–12) or of her concern for her husband through the images of nets and cloaks (866–73), her language on both occasions clearly reveals what is really on her mind: her upcoming murder of Agamemnon.[1]

In Clytemnestra's speech at 320–50 she is, on the surface, simply evoking, with characteristic vividness, scenes suggested by the recent news that Troy has fallen. At the same time, however, she is in the major portion of this speech (330–50) implicitly setting the lax and thoughtless disarray of Agamemnon's troops in Troy against the calculated, military precision of her own preparations for Agamemnon's homecoming—a comparison that of course coheres with her determination throughout the play to establish her ascendancy over Agamemnon in word as well as in deed. She has just paraded before us in detail the efficiency of her beacon-relay (281–316); now, in abrupt contrast, she evokes for us the chaos that reigns in Troy—the babel of incompatible sounds (322–25), the agonies of the vanquished (326–29), and, her climactic point, the careless and carefree disorganization of the victors, the host of dangers that lurk for them even in triumph (330–50). At several points her description of the Greeks in Troy echoes her beacon speech in such a way as to underscore her implied comparison. Whereas the Greeks in Troy will sleep the night through (336–37), Clytemnestra's beacon-watcher guards against sleep (290–91), and her beacon

1. On 611–12, see A. Lebeck, *The "Oresteia": A Study in Language and Structure* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), p. 191, n. 22, and E. Fraenkel, *Aeschylus: "Agamemnon,"* vol. 2 (Oxford, 1950), p. 305. On 866–73, see R. F. Goheen, "Aspects of Dramatic Symbolism: Three Studies in the *Oresteia*," *AJP* 76 (1955): 120–21.