

-phrōn Epithets of *thumos**

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An examination of compound psychic epithets found with psychic organs reveals interesting evidence. First, twelve different *-phrōn* epithets are found with *thumos*. Second, only three *-phrōn* epithets occur with all other psychic organs. Third, other compound psychic epithets are rare with psychic organs. The frequency of *-phrōn* epithets with *thumos* may shed light on the meaning of this psychic organ. *Thumos* has a wide range of meaning in Homer (performing intellectual, volitional, and emotional activities), but seems in later authors to become principally an organ of emotion. The frequency of *-phrōn* epithets found with *thumos* suggests that *thumos* may have had for the Greeks a basic function (probably emotion) but often extended its range by sharing in activities more often associated with *phrēn*.

Introduction

Although in Homer psychic organs overlap greatly in activity, certain organs appear to have a basic function. *Phrēn*, e.g., acts principally as an organ of deliberation and *noos* as an organ of insight¹). The chief function of *thumos*, however, is less clear. It occurs in Homer as the chief psychic entity, appearing very frequently as an organ of emotion, will, and intellect. But later in Hesiod, the lyric poets, and the writers of the fifth century, its function becomes chiefly, though not exclusively, emotional²). It is possible that the basic function of *thumos* is emotional, even though instances in Homer and later writers show that its range of meaning can be much wider³).

*) My thanks to the Canada Council for the Research Grant that allowed me to work on this article in Oxford.

¹) The scope of this paper does not allow a full discussion of psychic organs. On *noos* and *phrēn* see my article, "Noos Precedes Phren in Greek Lyric Poetry", forthcoming in *L'Antiquité classique* (1977) for bibliography and discussion. See also T. B. L. Webster, "Some Psychological Terms in Greek Tragedy", *JHS* 77 (1957) 149-54; S. Darcus, *The Notion of Self in Xenophanes and Heraclitus* (Diss. U. of Toronto 1973) for a treatment of *phrēn* and *noos* in Homer and the lyric poets; D. Sansone, *Aeschylean Metaphors for Intellectual Activity*, *Hermes Einzelschriften* 35 (Wiesbaden 1975).

²) For a discussion of *thumos* see my article "Thumos and Psyche in Heraclitus B 85" (submitted for publication), especially notes 8-10, 17; Webster (note 1) 151-52; Sansone (note 1) 45-66; B. Snell, *Tyrtaios und die Sprache des Epos*, *Hypomnemata* 22 (Göttingen 1969). For bibliography on *thumos* see Darcus (note 1) 486 n. 131.

³) See, e.g., B. Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, trans. T. G. Rosenmeyer (Oxford 1953) 9; E. L. Harrison, "Notes on Homeric Psychology", *Phoenix*

Examination of compound epithets derived from psychic organs (e.g., *πρόφρων*, *εὔνοος*, *εὐθυμός*) in extant Greek literature from Homer to Aristophanes gives some interesting evidence about *thumos* and other psychic organs. First, a rather large number of different -*phrōn* epithets (12) are found with *thumos*; in contrast only three -*phrōn* epithets appear with all other psychic organs⁴). Second, other compound epithets are quite rare both with *thumos* and other psychic organs. Why then should so many -*phrōn* epithets be found with *thumos*? Do they suggest a special relationship between *phrēn* and *thumos*? Do they suggest something about the basic meaning of *thumos*? A discussion of these epithets may make the difficult nature of *thumos* itself more clear.

I. -phrōn Epithets of thumos

Twelve different -*phrōn* epithets are found in 28 instances in all. These are presented, as follows, in tabular form with a brief comment on the passages. In the case of -*phrōn* epithets, as with other compound epithets, the authors considered were: Homer, Hesiod, the lyric poets, the Presocratics, the Greek tragedians, Herodotus, Thucydides, and Aristophanes.

1. ἀσίφρων

Instances: Hom. *Od.* 21.302: ἀσίφρονοι θυμῷ

Hes., *W.&D.* 315, 335, 646: ἀσίφρονα θυμόν

Comment: This expression, appearing in each case at the end of the line, may be formulaic. In each passage the epithet, meaning "flighty", "volatile", or "weakened in will", indicates a negative state of *thumos*.

2. ἄφρων

Instances: Hom., *Od.* 21.105; *H. Ven.* 286: ἄφρονοι θυμῷ

Comment: Again the expression, appearing at the end of the line, may be formulaic. The epithet indicates a negative state of *thumos*: it is "senseless" or "foolish".

14 (1960) 65; H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums*² (Munich 1962) 85–86; A. W. H. Adkins, *From the Many to the One* (Ithaca, N.Y. 1970) 17.

⁴) Epithets were taken from C. D. Buck and W. Petersen, *A Reverse Index of Greek Nouns and Adjectives* (Chicago 1944). These were all checked in concordances and indices of the different authors as well as in Liddell, Scott, Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon*⁹ (with supplement). The psychic organs examined were: ἦτορ, καρδίη (καρδία), κέαρ, κῆρ, νόος (νοῦς), πραπίς, θυμός, φρήν, ψύχη.

3. *γυναικόφρων*

Instance: Eur. fr. 362.34 (Nauck²): *γυναικόφρων . . . θυμὸς ἀνδρὸς
οὐ σοφοῦ*

Comment: A negative state of *thumos* belonging to a foolish man: he has a "womanish-minded *thumos*".

4. *εὐφρων*

Instances: Hom. *Od.* 17.531: *θυμὸς εὐφρων*

H. xxx. 14: *εὐφροني θυμῶ*

H. Ven. 102; Theognis 765: *εὐφρονα θυμὸν ἔχουσα (ἔχοντες)*

Comment: Whether at the end of the line as in the first two instances or with *ἔχω*, the expression may be formulaic. In all cases *thumos* is positive: it is "cheerful" or "happy"⁵).

5. *κρατερόφρων*

Instance: Hes. *W. & D.* 147: *κρατερόφρονα θυμὸν*

Comment: A description of *thumos* in men of the Bronze Age: their *thumos* is "mighty-minded".

6. *ὁμόφρων*

Instances: Hom. *Il.* 22.263; *H. Mer.* 391; *H. Cer.* 434; Theognis 81:

ὁμόφρονα θυμὸν (followed by some 3-syllable form of *ἔχω*)

Comment: A formulaic expression with a three-syllable form of *ἔχω*, appearing at the end of the line. The *thumos* of different people is "like-minded".

7. *πρόφρων*

Instances: Hom. *Il.* 8.39–40 (= 22.184–85): *θυμῶ πρόφροني*

Hom. *Il.* 24.140; *Od.* 16.257; Hes. *Theog.* 536: *πρόφροني*

θυμῶ

Ep. ii.2: *θυμὸς πρόφρων*

Comment: *Thumos* is here in a positive state: it is "eager" or "ready"⁶).

8. *σαόφρων* (*σώφρων*)

Instances: *H.* vii. 49: *σαόφρονα θυμὸν*

Theognis 754: *σώφρονα θυμὸν*

Comment: In each case *thumos* in positive: it is "sound-minded"⁷).

⁵) Cf. also *Od.* 10.465; 6.156; Stesichorus S 148 (Page); Theognis 1256; Pindar, *Is.* 7.3; Bacch. 3.83; Aesch. *P. V.* 538. See also J. Latacz, *Zum Wortfeld „Freude“ in der Sprache Homers* (Heidelberg 1966) 162–173.

⁶) Cf. *H.* xxx 8.

⁷) Cf. Pind. *Is.* 8.26.

9. *σιδηρόφρων*Instance: Aesch. *Se.* 52: *σιδηρόφρων θυμός*Comment: In this description of the Argives *thumos* is in an appropriate state for war: it is "iron-minded".10. *ταλασίφρων*Instance: Tyr. 5.5 (West): *ταλασίφρονα θυμόν*Comment: *Thumos* is positive. The Spartans fought against Messene, having a "stout-hearted *thumos*".11. *ὑψηλόφρων*Instance: Eur. *I.A.* 919: *ὑψηλόφρων . . . θυμός*Comment: Achilles gives a positive description of his *thumos*: it is "lofty-minded".12. *ὠμόφρων*Instance: Aesch. *Choe.* 421–422: *ὠμόφρων . . . θυμός*Comment: Electra describes her *thumos* negatively: it is "savage-minded".II. -*phrōn* Epithets of Other Psychic Organs

There are only four instances of -*phrōn* epithets with all other psychic organs, two with *kardia*, one with *phrenes*, and one with *psychē*⁸). These instances show that -*phrōn* epithets of other psychic organs are rare.

1. *δύσφρων*Instances: Soph. *Ant.* 1261: *φρενῶν δυσφρόνων*2. *πρόφρων*Instances: Hom. *Il.* 10.244: *πρόφρων κραδίη*Aesch. *Supp.* 345: *πρόφρονα καρδία*3. *σώφρων*Instance: Eur. fr. 388.2 (Nauck²): *ψυχῆς δικαίας σώφρονος κάγαθῆς*

III. Other Compound Psychic Epithets with Psychic Organs

Epithets of -*ētor*, -*noos*, and -*thumos* are found. These instances show that compound psychic epithets with psychic organs are quite rare.

1. -*ētor*:

μεγαλήτωρ: in 16 passages of Homer as an epithet of *thumos*; the expression is formulaic at the end of lines⁹).

⁸) Cf. pseudo-Hesiod, *Scutum* 428: *μελίφρων θυμός*.

⁹) See G. Prendergast, *A Complete Concordance to the Iliad of Homer*² (Darmstadt 1962) and H. Dunbar, *A Complete Concordance to the Odyssey of Homer*² (Darmstadt 1962).

2. -*noos*:

ἄνοος: Hom. *Il.* 21.441: ἄνοον κραδίην

εὐνοος: Alcaeus Gl. 9 = 129 (LP): εὐνοον θυμόν

Soph. *Ph.* 1281: εὐνοον . . . φρένα

Soph. fr. 88.1 (Nauck²): ψυχῆ εὐνοος

3. -*thumos*:

εὐθυμος: Aesch. *Per.* 372: εὐθύμου φρενός

δυσθυμος: Soph. *El.* 218: δυσθύμω . . . ψυχῆ

Conclusion

The evidence shows the following: 1. -*phrōn* epithets appear frequently with *thumos*. 2. -*Phrōn* epithets appear rarely with other psychic organs. 3. Other compound epithets are rare with psychic organs.

The frequent appearance of -*phrōn* epithets with *thumos* suggests, I believe, an important feature of this psychic organ. On the one hand, the Greeks clearly assumed that *thumos* had a wide range of activity. In Homer it is an organ of emotion, intellect, and will with no specific emphasis on any of these activities; later it is principally an organ of emotion, though it can retain its other functions. On the other hand, the use of -*phrōn* epithets suggests that the wide range in meaning of *thumos* resulted from an extension of its basic meaning. *Thumos* may well have been associated in the Greek mind with a specific activity, probably emotion¹⁰); when *thumos* later becomes principally an organ of emotion, it reveals this essential meaning. The -*phrōn* epithets indicate that *thumos* at certain times went beyond its basic activity by sharing in the activity of *phrēn*. *Thumos*, often located in the *phrenes*¹¹), could also apparently absorb some of the range of *phrēn*. The wide extent of activity, then, that *thumos* was capable of was partly due to its sharing in some way in activities usually ascribed to *phrēn*. Other compound psychic epithets with psychic organs may indicate the same phenomenon but the number of instances of -*phrōn* epithets with *thumos* in extant Greek literature from Homer to Aristophanes certainly suggests that *thumos* in particular broadened its range to some extent with characteristics drawn from *phrēn*.

¹⁰) See above note 3.

¹¹) See, e.g., *Il.* 9.462, 10.232, 13.280, 19.178, 21.386, 22.357, 24.321; *Od.* 15.165, 15.486, *Bacch.* 17.22–23. Cf. also the frequent expression in Homer: κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν. See also Theognis 1050, and Aesch. *Per.* 767 where is found the striking expression: φρένες γὰρ αὐτοῦ θυμόν ψακοστρόφονν.