

ARCHILOCHUS, THE AOIDOS

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In his recent study, "Archilochus and the Oral Tradition," Professor D. Page has shown that Archilochus was an oral poet, composing his lyric poems with the traditional diction of oral poetry.¹ Prior to the publication of his study, which sets Archilochus in a new perspective, I had independently reached the same conclusion on the basis of a formulaic study of Archilochus' fragments.² I wish now to supplement Page's study with some evidence which not only corroborates his conclusion but also indicates that Archilochus was an epic poet.

Before examining the evidence for this a question should be asked: could Archilochus be the oral poet that Page has shown him to be without assuming some training and practice in epic poetry which forms the texture of his own poetry, whose diction and sentiments are largely Homeric? *Nihil ex nihilo fit* still holds. We can no longer accept the traditional views about early Greek poetry which work with concepts of evolutionary and developing genres and cannot conceive of the same poet as both epic and lyric. The Homeric ἀοιδός is also a singer of non-epic verse;³ Xenophanes composed both epic and elegiac poetry;⁴ Aeschylus composed both tragedies and elegies.⁵

¹ Fondation Hardt, *Entretiens sur l'antiquité* 10: *Archiloque* (Geneva 1964) 117-63. The ancient *testimonia* noted the close relationship of Homer and Archilochus. The author of *De sublimitate* calls Archilochus ὁμηρικώτατος (13.3); *P. Hibeh* 173 notes some parallel passages between the two poets; cf. *Archiloque*, ed. F. Lasserre and A. Bonnard (Paris 1958) 52-54; cf. also Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 6.6.1 ff.

² Cf. J. A. Notopoulos, "Studies in Early Greek Oral Poetry," *HSCP* 68 (1964) 73, note 58.

³ *Il.* 24.720-21; *Od.* 8.266 ff.

⁴ *Diog. Laert.* 9.18.

⁵ The *Suda*, s.v. Αἰσχύλος; B. Meritt, "Epigrams from the Battle of Marathon," in *The Aegean and the Near East: Studies Presented to Hetty Goldman* (New York 1956) 268-280; "The Marathon Epigrams Again," *AJP* 83 (1962) 294-98.

We can no longer believe, as Page has shown, that elegy and trimeter poetry are new with Archilochus. The perfection of form exhibited in them presupposes a long tradition behind it. The perfection of the oral style in Archilochus' lyric poetry raises the possibility, which hitherto has been excluded by the absence of epic fragments in the Archilochus corpus, that Archilochus could have been an oral poet of both epic and lyric.

We have evidence to support this. An epigram (21) of Theocritus unequivocally tells us that Archilochus was both an iambic and an epic poet:

Ἀρχίλοχον καὶ στᾶθι καὶ εἴσιδε τὸν πάλαι ποιητάν,
τὸν τῶν ἰάμβων, οὗ τὸ μύριον κλέος
διήλθε κ' ἥπὶ νύκτα καὶ ποτ' ἄω.
Ἡ ῥά νιν αἱ Μοῦσαι καὶ ὁ Δάλιος ἡγάπουν Ἀπόλλων,
ὥς ἐμμελής τ' ἐγένετο κήπιδέξιος
ἔπεά τε ποιεῖν πρὸς λύραν τ' αἰεῖδεν.

"Επεα here, as LSJ⁹ shows, can only be epic poetry,⁶ and the reference in line 4 to the Muses and Apollo can only be interpreted in the context (1) of the *Margites*, fragment 1: αἰοιδός / Μουσάων θεραπόντων καὶ ἐκηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος, (2) of *Homeric Hymn* 32, 19–20: αἰοιδοί / Μουσάων θεραπόντες ἀπὸ στομάτων ἐροέντων, and (3) of *Hesiod, Theog.* 100: Μουσάων θεραπόντων κλέεα προτέρων ἀνθρώπων. In fact the Paros inscription on Archilochus refers to him as such: Τίς σὲ τὸν ἐμ πέτρῃ Μουσῶν θεράποντ' ἐχάραξεν,⁷ and a similar reference is found in *Galen, Protr.* 9, where the Pythia addresses the slayer of Archilochus: Μουσάων θεράποντα κατέκτανες.⁸ In the light of all this we must re-examine the meaning of Archilochus' fragment (1D):

εἰμὶ δ' ἐγὼ θεράπων μὲν Ἐνναλίοιο ἀνακτος
καὶ Μουσέων ἐρατὸν δῶρον ἐπιστάμενος.

⁶ The natural word here, if elegiacs were meant, would be

ἐλεγεία ποιεῖν πρὸς λύραν τε αἰεῖδεν.

An anapaest is as likely, perhaps, as a tribrach metrically. A study of the word ἔπεα in Westermann's *vitae* of Greek poets, which were the products of Alexandrian scholarship, shows that it regularly refers to hexameter poetry.

⁷ Diehl, *fr.* 51, p. iv B, 10.

⁸ *Archiloque*, ed. Lasserre and Bonnard, Introduction, p. cvii, 14a; cf. *Dio Chrys. Or.* 33, p. 397 M.

The δῶρον of the Muses is not merely figurative speech for the gift of poetry; it is the gift of epic poetry which the Muses gave to him, according to the Parian marble.⁹ They stole his cattle which he was going to sell in the market and replaced it with the lyre which is associated with epic poetry, as

ἔπεά τε ποιεῖν πρὸς λύραν τ' αἰεῖδεν

shows. In this fragment we must see Archilochus as the warrior-*aidos* that Achilles is in *Iliad* 9.186 ff.

τὸν δ' εὔρον φρένα τερπόμενον φόρμιγγι λιγείῃ. . .
τῇ ὃ γε θυμὸν ἔτερπεν, αἶειδε δ' ἄρα κλέα ἀνδρῶν.

Archilochus too knew how to sing of the κλέα ἀνδρῶν as well as his own personal feelings.

We also have evidence from Plato that Archilochus was an epic poet. The *Ion* deals with the rhapsode of the same name, a professional reciter of Homer. The dialogue deals exclusively with the rhapsodic art. A study of the word ῥαψωδός in Plato shows that it is, as in the *Ion*, normally used of epic poetry.¹⁰ In the *Laws* (658B) Plato goes so far even as to distinguish between epic poetry (ῥαψωδία) and lyric poetry (κιθαρωδία). It is important to grasp this distinction if we are

⁹ Lasserre and Bonnard (above, note 8) cv–cvi, 11a. The Boston pyxis (L. Caskey and J. D. Beazley, *Attic Vase Paintings in the Museum of Boston*, I, No. 37 Pl. 15) offers an iconographic coordinate with the Theocritus epigram. A. Rumpf has shown that it represents the encounter of the Muses and Archilochus. In his study "Archilochos und Paros," (*Entretiens Hardt* 10 [above, note 1] p. 48) N. M. Kontoleon remarks, "Die Binde, die sie in der Hand hält, konnte sehr gut eine Papyrus-rolle sein: Die ἔπεα waren auch den Musen heilig—nicht nur die Music in unserem Sinne: Archilochos war, nach dem theokritischen Epigramm, ἐπιδέξιος / ἔπεά τε ποιεῖν πρὸς λύραν τ' αἰεῖδεν."

¹⁰ Cf. references cited in D. F. Ast, *Lexicon Platonicum* (Leipzig 1836) 2.232. Hesiod is the first to speak of his alleged contest with Homer at Delos as ῥάψαντες ἀοιδὴν (fr. 265, and for the meaning of this phrase cf. *HSCP* 68 [1964] 57–59). Pindar calls epic poets ῥαπτῶν ἐπέων . . . αἰδοί (Nem. 2.2). The Pindar scholium on Nem. 2.2 defines a ῥαψωδός as a reciter of epic poems, sometimes applied to a bard who recited his own poem, e.g. Hesiod. By the time of Herodotus (5.67) and Plato a rhapsode is a professional reciter of the poems of Homer, such as Ion. The use of ῥαψωδεῖν to refer to recitation of all kinds of poetry (LSJ⁹ s.v. ῥαψωδέω II,2) is later (cf. Aristotle, *Poetics* 1447B22). No support for this meaning can exclude epic poetry. The remark in Diog. Laert. that Xenophanes ἐρραψώδει τὰ ἑαυτοῦ is preceded by a statement that he also composed epic poetry. Clearchus' fragment (fr. 92 Wehrli [Athen. 14.620C]): τὰ Ἀρχιλόχου, φησὶν, Σιμωνίδης ὁ Ζακύνθιος ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις ἐπὶ δίφρου καθήμενος ἐρραψώδει, is ambiguous and could refer to Archilochus' epic as well as lyric poetry.

to understand the argument of the *Ion*. The point of the dialogue is that the rhapsode who has knowledge of the part (Homer) must also have knowledge of the whole (other epic poets). At this point of the argument Socrates asks Ion (531A): *Πότερον περὶ Ὅμηρου μόνον δεινὸς εἶ ἢ καὶ περὶ Ὑσιόδου καὶ Ἀρχιλόχου*; Pursuing this questioning further, Socrates asks Ion (531CD):

ΣΩ. Τί οὖν ποτε περὶ μὲν Ὅμηρου δεινὸς εἶ, περὶ δὲ Ὑσιόδου οὐ, οὐδὲ τῶν ἄλλων ποιητῶν; ἢ Ὅμηρος περὶ ἄλλων τινῶν λέγει ἢ ὧν περ σύμπαντες οἱ ἄλλοι ποιηταί; οὐ περὶ πολέμου τε τὰ πολλὰ διελέλυθεν καὶ περὶ ὁμιλιῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀνθρώπων ἀγαθῶν τε καὶ κακῶν καὶ ἰδιωτῶν καὶ δημιουργῶν, καὶ περὶ θεῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλους καὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους ὁμιλούντων, ὡς ὁμιλοῦσι, καὶ περὶ τῶν οὐρανίων παθημάτων καὶ περὶ τῶν ἐν Αἰδοῦ, καὶ γενέσεις καὶ θεῶν καὶ ἡρώων; οὐ ταῦτά ἐστι περὶ ὧν Ὅμηρος τὴν ποίησιν πεποιήκεν;

ΙΩΝ. Ἀληθῆ λέγεις, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. Τί δὲ οἱ ἄλλοι ποιηταί; οὐ περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν τούτων;

ΙΩΝ. Ναί, ἀλλ', ὦ Σώκρατες, οὐχ ὁμοίως πεποιήκασιν καὶ Ὅμηρος.

What we have here are the *κοινοὶ τόποι*, the traditional themes of oral poetry.¹¹ That Archilochus is specifically mentioned as part of the *ἄλλοι ποιηταί* is seen in Socrates' further question (532A3-7):

Οὐκοῦν σὺ φῆς καὶ Ὅμηρον καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ποιητάς, ἐν οἷς καὶ Ὑσιόδους καὶ Ἀρχιλόχους ἐστίν, περὶ γε τῶν αὐτῶν λέγειν, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὁμοίως, ἀλλὰ τὸν μὲν εὖ γε, τοὺς δὲ χεῖρον;

From this it is evident that *σύμπαντες οἱ ἄλλοι ποιηταί* (531C3) and *οἱ ἄλλοι ποιηταί* (531D3) and *τοὺς ἄλλους ποιητάς* (532A5) can refer only to epic poets who compose their poems with these traditional themes. The fact that Archilochus sings *περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν* (i.e. battles, converse of gods and men, gods and gods, visits to Hades, genealogies of heroes) shows that Plato is not referring to Archilochus' lyric poems which contain none of these themes. He can only have reference to Archilochus the epic poet. Here we have independent evidence which corroborates Theocritus' epigram.

No fragments from Archilochus' epic poetry survive. However, we have evidence in *testimonia* of some themes from his lost epics. Dio Chrysostom, the Scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius, and the

¹¹ HSCP 68 (1964) 31 ff.

Scholiast on the *Iliad* all tell of a poem of Archilochus which dealt with incidents in the story of Herakles, Nessus, and Deianeira.¹² Malalas tells of a poem of Archilochus which related how Lynceus made war on King Danaus, slew him, and took his kingdom and his daughter.¹³ Hesychius informs us that, according to Archilochus, Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles, danced for joy at the slaying of Eurypylus.¹⁴ All this is epic material and could not have come from his lyric poetry which, as the fragments show, is personal and non-epic. It must come from his lost epics. Whether he composed epic poetry prior to his composition of lyric poetry or coordinate with them is uncertain. Xenophanes tells us that epic themes were part of the symposium.¹⁵ Archilochus could well have earned his livelihood with a repertory of both lyric and epic poetry. That he survives by reason of his colorful and highly individualistic lyric poetry is understandable. What must also be understood now, in view of Page's study, is that without training and practice in epic poetry Archilochus could not have applied successfully the oral technique to the composition of oral lyric poetry. The evidence from Theocritus' epigram, Plato's *Ion*, and the above *testimonia* makes this suggestion an hypothesis with which the historian of early Greek literature must deal seriously.

¹² Dio Chrys. *Or.* 60, "Νέσσοσ ἢ Δηιάδνευρα"; Schol. *ad* Ap. Rh. 1.1212; Schol. Ven. B. *Iliad* 21.237.

¹³ Malalas, *Chron.* 4, p. 68 Dindorf.

¹⁴ Hesychius s.v. πυρρὺς χίλιν.

¹⁵ *Elegy* 1.20-24. Though there is no specific reference to epic poetry in these lines it is unlikely that epic themes were narrated in prose at this time.