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Sommario/riassunto

Before they were written down, the poems attributed to Homer were performed orally, usually by rhapsodes (singers/reciters) who might have traveled from city to city or enjoyed a position in a wealthy household. Even after the Iliad and the Odyssey were committed to writing, rhapsodes performed the poems at festivals, often competing against each other. As they recited the epics, the rhapsodes spoke as both the narrator and the characters. These different acts—performing the poem and narrating and speaking in character within it—are seldom studied in tandem. Homer in Performance breaks new ground by bringing together all of the speakers involved in the performance of Homeric poetry: rhapsodes, narrators, and characters. The first part of the book presents a detailed history of the rhapsodic performance of Homeric epic from the Archaic to the Roman Imperial periods and explores how performers might have shaped the poems. The second part investigates the Homeric narrators and characters as speakers and illuminates their interactions. The contributors include scholars versed in epigraphy, the history of art, linguistics, and performance studies, as well as those capable of working with sources from the ancient Near East and from modern Russia. This interdisciplinary approach makes the volume useful to a spectrum of readers, from undergraduates to veteran professors, in disciplines ranging from classical studies to folklore.