Aspects of Rhetoric and Form in Greek Hymns

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This article will explore certain formal and rhetorical features in the corpus of Greek hymns—in both poetry and prose. The word ‘rhetorical’ is used in the broad sense to include both generic and stylistic commonplaces, and the word ‘hymn’ is also used in the larger sense of any sustained address to divinity, whether a separate entity (as in the Homeric Hymns, or those of Callimachus, Theocritus, Aristides, etc.) or embedded in longer works. I focus on three aspects of Greek hymns which make rhetorical demands on the hymnist and which demonstrate the continuity of the entire tradition. These include (1) finding the ἀρχή, (2) establishing χάρις, and (3) elements of the request. Although some of the topoi in these categories enter the tradition only in the Hellenistic period or later, most make their appearance in our earliest authors, and the later hymns often help to clarify procedures only adumbrated in the earlier ones. Of particular value for illuminating certain features of earlier hymns is the treatise of Menander the Rhetor Περὶ Συμφωνίων.¹

I. The ἀρχή

As a general rule, hymns open in one of two ways. Either the god is addressed in the vocative (often with an imperative—‘du-Stil’) or his name (or title) is given in an oblique case (‘er-Stil’). For ex-

ample, Theognis opens his collection with a version of the former (1–2):

ω ἄνα Λητοῦς νιέ, Δίως τέκος, οὕποτε σεῖο
λήσομαι ἀρχόμενος οὐδ' ἀποπανόμενος . . . .

Hesiod begins the Theogony with an example of the latter (1):

Μοντάμων Ἐλικονιάδων ἀρχώμεθ' ἀείδειν,
αἰ θ' . . . .

Regardless of the type of opening, both poets address the issue of the ἀρχή of the hymn (ἀρχόμενος Theog., ἀρχώμεθ' ἀείδειν Hes.) by positing the god himself as the starting point or subject of the hymn.

But there is a second type of ἀρχή in Greek hymns, which occurs when the hymnist begins telling about the god after having introduced him as the subject of his song. The hymnist can, of course, begin his narrative directly (usually with a simple relative clause), but frequently he pauses at this point in hesitation (ἀπορία, dubitatio) and pretends not to know how or where to begin. Such hesitation, often in the form of priamels, can occur in many places in hymns to amplify the coming theme and engage the sympathy of the audience, but its occurrence here is so frequent that it constitutes a separate topos.

The first clear use of the topic occurs in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo (19–25).

πῶς γάρ σ' ύμνήσω πάντως εὖμυνον ἑοντα;
πάντη γάρ τοι, Φοῖβε, νομὸς βεβλήται φθής.

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3 These two senses of ἀρχή are neatly distinguished in the opening of Callim. Dian.:

"Ἀρτεμίν (οὐ γάρ ἐλατφόν ἀειδόντεςς) λαθέσθαι
ὑμνόμεν, τῇ τόξα λαγψωβλαία τε μέλουται
καὶ χορὸς ἀμφιλαφής καὶ ἐν οὐρεσιν ἐφιάσθαι,
ἀρχόμενοι ὡς ὅτε . . . ."

In the first three verses the poet establishes the subject of his hymn, but he must then make a new beginning in order to start his narrative. This scheme is apparent in the proems to the Iliad and Odyssey, where the Muse is invoked to provide the starting-point: ἔξ' σοι δὴ τὰ πρῶτα (ll. 1.6) and τῶν ἄμθεν γε (Od. 1.10). An interesting feature is presented in Theogony 1–36. Hesiod opens the hymn with the Muses as his ἀρχή, but because of the long digression of verses 22–35, he must make a fresh beginning: τῶνicer, Μοντάμων ἀρχώμεθα (36). For a brief discussion of this digression and return to the main theme, see "Some Digressions and Returns in Greek Authors," CJ 76 (1980) 1–8.

4 The exact relationship of the hesitatory priamel at Hymn.Hom. 1.1–7 to the beginning of the hymn is not clear, but it probably did not involve the topic under discussion.
As in all the other examples, the hesitation begins with a question. Here the problem is how to sing of a god who is so famous (πάντως εὕμμον, 19), and after sketching in verses 20–24 the extent of Apollo’s worship (πάντη, 20) and sway (πᾶσα, 22), the poet proposes (tentatively with ἢ, 25) the subject with which he will begin—appropriately enough, the birth of the god. The word πρῶτον (25) serves to mark the ἀρχή itself.

The same form is adapted by Hellenistic authors. At the beginning of his Hymn to Delos (an imitation of the Homeric Hymn to Apollo), Callimachus duly introduces and amplifies Delos as the subject of his song (1–27), and then pauses before beginning his narrative (28–30):

εἰ δὲ λήπν πολλές σε περιτροχώστην ἀοιδαί,
ποίη ἐνυπέλεξο σε; τὶ τοι θυμήρες ἀκούσας;
ἡ ὄς τὰ πρῶτιστα μέγας θεὸς οὐρα θείων . . .

At the same point in his hymn to the Dioscuri, Theocritus raises the question, with which god should he begin? (22.23–26):

ὡς ἄμφως θυητοῦσι βοηθοῖ, ὡς ἐν ρόις ἄμφως,
ἰππής καθαροτάτης ἀεθητήτης ἀοιδοὶ,
Κάστωρ ή πρῶτον Πολυδέικεος ἀρξομ’ ἀείδειν;
ἀμφοτέρους ύμνέων Πολυδέικεα πρῶτον ἀείσω.

5 As will become clear, disjunctive ἢ is correct. It is a mannerism of this τοπος to present the final choice as a disjunctive question whether or not other options precede (as at Hymn.Hom.Ap. 208–15). The practice continues in prose even as late as Aristides, τίς οὖν δὴ γένοιτ’ ἂν ἀρχή; ἢ ωσπέρ . . . (39.4 Keil), and Julian, τίς οὖν ὁ πρῶτος ἐσται τῶν ἐπαίνων; ἢ δὴ ὅτι . . . (Helios 132b).

6 For a sensitive analysis of the rhetoric of this passage see A. M. Miller, “The ‘Address to the Delian Maidens’ in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo: Epilogue or Transition?” TAPA 109 (1979) 184–86.

7 Cf. τὸ πρῶτον in the parallel passage at line 214. The use of πρῶτον to indicate the ἀρχὴ begins with ll. 1.6 (supra n.3) and still finds its traditional place in the proem to Herodotus’ Histories (πρῶτον, 1.5.3). There is a perfect adaptation of this topic to prose encomia in Pericles’ Funeral Oration, ἄρξομαι δ’ ἂτῳ τῶν προγόνων πρῶτον (Thuc. 2.36.1), cf. also Hyperides Epitaph. 6 and esp. 9, ἄρξομαι δ’ πρῶτον ἂτῳ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ.

8 This adaptation is very masterful. πάντως εὕμμον becomes λήπν πολλές . . . ἀοιδα. Gone is the grand scope of the geographical amplification, but Callimachus has instead chosen the verb περιτροχώστην to indicate the abundance (to the point of vulgarity?) of song. ποίη is the equivalent of πῶς, while the following question τὶ τοι θυμήρες reflects the concern with the god’s pleasure hinted at with ἀοιδ (Hymn.Hom.Ap. 22).
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Since there is such equality between both gods (ἀμφω), the poet does not wish to give any real precedence in his ἀρχή, so he will sing of both (ἀμφοτέρους) but will begin with Polydeuces.\(^9\)

The topic also occurs in prose hymns. At 43.6 (a hymn to Zeus), Aristides calls upon the Muses to help him find an ἀρχή for his vast subject: ἄγ' ὁ πάντ' εἰδώλα, πόθεν ἀρχώμεθα; τί τολμήσομεν εἰπεῖν περὶ Δίως; And in his model hymn to Sminthian Apollo, Menander the Rhetor elaborates on the topic: εἰ μὲν οὖν ἦρων τινὸς ἐμελλὼν λέγειν ἐγκώμιον, οὐκ ἂν διηπόρησα περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς, οὐδ' οθεν δει πρῶτον τὴν ἀρχήν τοῦ λόγου ποιήσασθαι (437.27–30). After his (supposed) consultations with the Pythia failed to provide an answer, the orator decides to follow Pindar’s lead\(^10\) in posing his question: ἀναφώρωμιγι μὴν, πόθεν με χρή τὴν ἀρχήν ποιήσασθαι; δοκεὶ δ’ οὖν μοι πρῶτον ἀφεμένῳ τέως τὸν γένους μὴν εἰς αὐτὸν ἀνα­φθέγκασθαι (438.6–9). Thus the orator decides to make his beginning with the god himself (eἰς αὐτὸν).\(^11\)

II. χάρις

If there is one dominant concern common to all Greek hymns, it is surely the notion of χάρις. No other word epitomizes so well the relationship which the hymnist tries to establish with the god—one of reciprocal pleasure and goodwill. For that reason, many hymns begin and end with χαίρε, which, as Bundy reminds us, is much stronger than just ‘hail’ or ‘farewell’, and is part of the general concern of the hymnist to please the god.\(^12\) As Plato says, since we do not know the real names of the gods, we customarily use names that please them (οὐτινὲς τε καὶ ὀπόθεν χαίρουσιν ὄνομαξόμενοι, Κρα. 400ε; cf. Aesch.

\(^9\) The phrase ἀρξώμεν' ἀείδειν· (25), which usually occurs at the opening of the hymn, here indicates the beginning of the narrative, adding further justification to the distinction between two ἀρχαι argued above. There is an adaptation of this topic at Aristides 38.1–5, where the orator does not know which of the two Asclepiades to praise first; he finally decides to make Apollo the ἀρχή (5). It is apparent from Aristides 38.5, 39.4, 43.6, and Julian Helios 132b that the procedure established by the Homeric Hymn to Apollo became a standard topic to exercise the ingenuity of the orator. There is, I think, already a hint of mannerism in the Theocritean version.

\(^10\) This allusion indicates that Pindar’s aporetic opening of Ol. 2 had come to be a model for the ἀρχαι of hymns.

\(^11\) The question with which Callimachus begins his Hymn to Zeus provides a variation of the topic of beginning with the god himself (θεὸν αὐτὸν, 2). Both in Callimachus and in Menander the topic of naming the god immediately follows.

\(^12\) Cf. Bundy (supra n.1) 49–52. For χάρις, χαίρειν, and χάρμα in Greek hymns see Keyssner (supra n.1) 170 s.v. and esp. 132.
Ag. 160ff). Even the χαίρε in the formulaic endings of the Homeric hymns is sometimes ambiguous. The frequent καὶ σὺ μὲν οὔτω χαίρε (1.20, 3.545, 4.579, etc.) “And so, farewell” (H. G. Evelyn-White, LCL), can become, with a slight addition (9.7, 14.6, etc.), καὶ σὺ μὲν οὔτω χαίρε θεαὶ θ’ ἀμα πᾶσαι ἁοὶ ῃ. Although the traditional translation of this verse is “farewell . . . in this song,” surely ἁοὶ ῃ could just as well be taken as the usual dative with χαίρω, meaning “take pleasure in the song.” This interpretation would be consonant with the other formulaic endings: ἄλαμμε δὲ σ’ ἁοὶ ῃ, “I seek your favor with my song” (19.48, 21.5); δος δ’ ἵμερόκεσσαν ἁοῖδήν, “Grant a pleasing song” (10.5, Hes. Theog. 104); and χάριν δ’ ἀμ’ ὀπασσον ἁοίδή, “And also make the song pleasing” (24.5). The dual nature of χαίρω is also evident at 26.11–12:

καὶ σὺ μὲν οὔτω χαίρε πολυντάφυλ’ ὡ Δίωνυσ’
δος δ’ ἡμᾶς χαίροντας ἐς ὁρας αὐτις ἰκέσθαι . . . .

and at Theocritus 15.149: χαίρε, Ἄδων ἄγαπάτε, καὶ ἐς χαίροντας ἀφικνεᾶ. In these cases the hymnist’s hope is that the god’s pleasure (χαίρε) will be matched in the human realm (χαίροντας).

Various words related to χάρωs abound in Greek hymns. At the beginning of fr. 2 (L–P) Sappho assures Aphrodite that her grove is “pleasant” (χαίρεν . . . ἀλησο). In the Paean to Asclepius (PMG 934) there is the progression χάριν (4), χαίρε (19), and χαίροντας (22). The first and last words of Isidorus’ Hymn to Isis 2 are forms of χάρις: χαίρε (1), χαίροντας (2), χαίροντας (24), and χάριτα (34). Menander begins his hymn to Sminthian Apollo with the χάρωs which men owe the gods (437.8, 11, cf. 444.19) and ends it with concern for the god’s pleasure in his titles (446.8, cf. 440.13) and requests that the

13 The same juxtaposition occurs in the anonymous Paean to Asclepius (PMG 934; I.Erythrai 205) 19–22: χαίρε μου . . . δος δ’ ἡμᾶς χαίροντας. Particularly interesting is the progression at Hymn.Hom.Ap. 12–14:

χαίρε δὲ τε πότνια Λητώ,
οὔνεκα τοξοφόροι καὶ καρπερόν νῦν ἐπτκτεν.
χαίρε μάκαρ ὦ Λητώ, ἐπεὶ τέκες ἁγιά τέκνα . . . .

Leto “is glad” that she bore Apollo, and the poet then tells her to “be glad” because she bore her splendid children. Surely the χαίρε (and sometimes at the beginning) of hymns also retains a strong sense of ‘pleasure’.  

14 Cf. IG II² 499.2 (Raubitschek, Dedications 290), τε δ’ ἠδη χαίρεν (of his dedication), and χαρέντα at ll. 1.39.

15 V. F. Vanderlip, The Four Hymns of Isidorus and the Cult of Isis (AmStudPap 12 [1972]) 34–35; E. Bernand, Insr. mètr. de l’Egypte 175.II. The last occurrence of χάρις is in fact a statement by the hymnist that the god indeed heard his prayer and granted him his "favor." Cf. the progression at Ar. Thesm. 972–83: χαίρε (972), χαρέντα (981), and χάριν (983).

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God bestow "grace" on his words (νευςιν δὲ καὶ χάρων τοṣ λόγους, 446.12). In the Orphic hymns we find κεχαρηστὶ θαμῶ (1.10), χαῖρων . . . κεχαρηστὰ (18.18–19), χαρείς (19.20), κεχαρισμένη (27.14), χάριστιν (28.12), κεχαρισμένα (29.2, 46.8), κεχαρισμένος (52.13), χαίρουσιν ἐπ᾽ ἔργους (66.11), and χαρέντα (82.6).

χάρως is, of course, one of a multitude of words used to seek the benevolence of the deity, but its many forms make it the most versatile, and probably the most important, term of its kind in Greek hymnology. The rhetorical τέλος of a hymn is, then, to secure the god’s pleasure by a ‘pleasing’ choice of names and titles (especially prominent in the Orphic hymms) and by the ‘proper’ narration of his powers and exploits (especially prominent in the longer Homeric hymns, Callimachus’ hymns, and the prose hymns of Aristides and Menander). And after finding a fitting ἀρχή, and giving a ‘pleasing’ account of the god’s powers, the hymnist is prepared to make his petition.

### III. The Request

When there is a petition at the end of a hymn, it must of course be consonant with the god’s powers as established in the body of the hymn, and follow naturally from the goodwill established between the god and man. It is at this point that the hymnist tries to establish the closest relationship between himself and the god, between the god’s wellbeing and human needs, between the god’s present pleasure and continued benefits. A dedicatory inscription presents this relationship in brief scope:

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16 Cf. Bundy (*supra* n.1) 50–51. Most common are forms of ἀνμικ, εὐμένεις, γηθέω, and εἴδοφροφων. The frequent κλόθε and ἔρχεο (ἐλθέ), often qualified by one of these words, always carries the connotation of ‘listen’ or ‘come’ favorably. In her hymn to Aphrodite Sappho is careful to point out that in the past the goddess heard her (ἐλθες, 7) and came (ἡλθες, 8) smiling (μεδιαίσασατο), 14), thus requesting a similar reception this time (ἐλθε μου καὶ νῦν, 25). Cf. Anacreon 380 (PMG), χαίρε, φίλον φῶς, χαρίν μεθιῶν προσώπων, and 348.7, χαίρουσιν.


18 For example, in his prayer at II. 1.37–42 Chryses invokes Apollo as ἀργορόπος (37) and requests that he pay back the Achaeans with his shafts (βέλεστιν, 42). Likewise, the hymnist frequently tries to ‘please’ the god with ‘local’ (πατρώϊον) cult and place names in order to make special claims on the god’s goodwill. Cf. Callim. Ap. 69–71; Aristocles *Hymn* Dem. 1–8 (Ael. NA 11.4); Isidorus *Hymn*.Is. 1.14–24, where the list of titles culminates in the local (cf. πατρώϊα, 17) cult name Thius; and Menander 440.13–15 and 443.32–444.2. A thorough study of hymnal petitions is needed, only a few aspects of which have been treated here.

19 *IG* II² 650; Raubitschek, *Dedications* 40.
If, in your pleasure may you keep on granting,” neatly summarizes the relationship between the god and the worshipper whose future success depends upon the god’s favor. The request at the end of Hymn.Orph. 19.20 presents a variation: ἀλλὰ χαρεῖς λοιβᾷς δίδων φρεσίν ἀύσμα πάντα . . . Of a similar nature, I believe, is the very frequent formula in which χαίρε is followed by an imperative (usually of δίδωμι), as in Hymn.Hom. 15.9: χαίρε ἄναξ Δίος ὑε’ δίδου δ’ ἀρετήν τε καὶ διβοῦ. 20

Although the substance of the request can vary greatly from hymn to hymn, there are two general concerns which are continually expressed, especially in the ‘public’ hymns: that the hymn (including the dance) succeed in pleasing the god and that the people or city fare well (cf. ll. 1.472–74). Prayers for the success of the song are found in the Homeric Hymns (1.18–19; 6.20, ἐμὴν δ’ ἐντυνον ἄωην; 7.58–59; 10.5, δὸς δ’ ἰμερόεσσαν ἄωην; 25.6, ἐμὴν τιμήσατ’ ἄωην), Callimachus (Dian. 268, εὐανττγον ἄωην), Theocritus (22.214–15, ἡμετέρως κλέος ὑμνοὺς ἐσθίον δεὶ πέμποιτε), and Aratus (Phaen. 18, τεκμήρατε πάσαν ἄωην). 21

Often prayers for the success of the song are coupled with requests for the wellbeing of the community. In the Homeric Hymn to Demeter (490–94) the poet hopes that his song will succeed in eliciting the bounty of Demeter and Persephone: ἀλλ’ ἄγ’ . . . πρόφρονες ἀντ’ ὕδης βίοσον θυμήρε’ ὅπαξειν. 22 At 24.4–5 the poet requests that Hestia come into his house (that is, bless it with her presence) and grace his song (χαίρην δ’ ἄμ’ ὅπαξευν ἄωην). Hymn 13.3 links both


21 Compare the refrain of the Hymn of the Curetes (I.Cret. III ii 2), χαίρε μου, Κρόνειε . . . ἔρπε καὶ γέγαμθι μολᾶ.

22 On this passage see the remarks of N. J. Richardson, The Homeric Hymn to Demeter (Oxford 1974) 321–24. It is apparent that ὅπαξεων is a synonym for δίδων, and the variation at Hymn.Hom. 30.17–18 shows that χαίρε can be substituted for the ἄλλ’ ἄγ’ of 490 here. The ‘pleasure’ word πρόφρονες (494) must of course be taken with ὅπαξεων (“give cheerfully”), but it can also be taken closely with ἀντ’ ὕδης, “cheerfully in return for song.” At any rate, goodwill, song, and bounty are closely combined in this verse.

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... elements succinctly: \( \chiαιρε \thetaεα \kappaαι \tauηνδε \sigmaαυν \πωλιν, \alphaρχε \delta \αυ-\deltaης \).23 Here Demeter is asked to be the \( \alphaρχη \) of his hymn (the source, ruling principle, theme), to take pleasure in it (\( \chiαιρε \)), and to safeguard “this city.”24 Menander the Rhetor concludes his prose hymn with the following words, which well sum up the tradition: \( \nuευνον \delta \kαι \χαριν \tauους \λογους; \) \( \piαρα \) \( \sigmaων \) \( \γαρ \) \( \kαι \) \( \ι \) \( \lambdaογου \) \( \kαι \) \( \η \) \( \πολις \).25

A number of formal elements which frequently occur in requests deserve more notice than they have received. A good model is the ending of Aristonous’ Paean to Apollo (Powell 164) 41–48:

\[
\text{αλλ' ω Παρνασσού γυάλων}
\text{ευδρόσου στ Κασταλίας}
\text{να[σ]μος σον δέμας εξαβρύ-}
\text{νων, ιη iε Παιαν,}
\text{χαρεις ύμνους ήμετέρους,}
\text{δλβον εξ όσίων διδούς}
\text{αει και σφόζων εφήπους}
\text{ημας, ω iε Παιαν.}
\]

With the exception of the frequent demonstrative \( δδε \), this hymnal conclusion contains virtually all the formal elements normally found in requests. \( \text{αλλ}' (\omega) \) is a formulaic return to the god and signals the petition.26 \( \text{χαρεις ύμνους ήμετέρους,} \) as we have seen, does the double duty of securing the god’s goodwill in song and bidding him a favorable farewell. This \( \text{χαρις} \) is then followed by a form of \( \text{δίδωμι,} \) the common \( \sigmaφοζω, \)27 and the imperative (here the more polite optative,

### Notes

23 At the end of Callim. *Jov.* there are two separate ‘farewells’. The first, \( \chiαιρε \muέγα \ldots (91–93) \), is concerned with the god’s reception of the song and apologizes for (what the god might perceive as) a scant treatment of his deeds (\( \tauεα \delta \epsilonργματα \tauις \kappaεν \aeιδος \)). The second, \( \chiαιρε, \tauάτερ, \chiαιρ \alphaυθε \ldots (94–96: \text{note the intensification)}, \) requests (\( \text{δίδωμι} \) the full measure of wealth and excellence—obviously for the community represented by Ptolemy Philadelphus, who is praised in the preceding verses (85–90).

24 This demonstrative occurs very frequently in petitions (e.g. Theogn. 782, Callim. *Cer.* 134, Philodam. *Scarp.* *Paeon Dion.* 154–56 [Powell 169], and Menander Rhet. 446.10). It vividly marks the recipient of the god’s bounty.

25 446.11–13. Compare the petition at the end of Bacchyl. *Dithyr.* 17.130–32, that from the god’s pleasure in song may flow bounty for the Caeans: \( \Deltaλλε, \chiρωις \text{Κηφων} \) \( \phiρεια \) \( \αινθεις, \) \( \οπαζε \) \( \κοχυδομον \) \( \ετθηκων \) \( \τυχαν \).


27 For \( \text{σφοζω} \) cf. *IG IV* 129.11–15 (PMG 937), \( \chiαιρετε \ldots \) \( \sigma\chiετε \) \( \tauονδ' \ldots \) \( \nuον \), and Macedonius’ Paean to Apollo and Asclepius (Powell 139) 23–30, \( \chiαιρε \ldots \) \( \text{διδου} \)
The god’s pleasure is foremost in the hymnist’s consideration (χαίρε μου, Ἴλαος), and the epithet εὐρύχορον suggests that the poet also intends his song to be in the god’s thoughts. And as the god is enjoined to visit the city’s celebration, he is asked to bring its citizens joy (ἡμᾶς χαύροντας), fame, and health.

Two prayers from Pindar will demonstrate the consistency of this formal tradition. The first concludes Pindar’s praise of Corinth (Ol. 13.24–27):

ampler, εὐρύ ἀνάσων
Ολυμπίας, ἀφθόνητος ἐπεσσων
γένοι χρόνον ἀπαντα, Ζεὺς πάτερ,
καὶ τόνδε λαὸν ἀβλαβῆ νέμων . . . .

Here is the direct address to the god with honorific titles. ἀφθόνητος ἐπεσσων is litotes for χαίρες ἤμων; χρόνον ἀπαντα is a periphrasis for αἰεί; and τόνδε λαὸν ἀβλαβῆ νέμων is equivalent to σφῶν εἴθεπτος ἤμας. The second prayer occurs at Ol. 2.12–15, after Pindar has praised Theron’s clan:

... ἤμων ἡμῖν ἀταλλοῦν . . . σφῶν, which together contain most of the formal elements under discussion. ἤμων also appears frequently in the Orphic hymns.

This climactic juxtaposition of the god (second person) and man (first person) dramatizes the desire of the hymnist to bring together god and man in common delight. Cf. the similar expressions χαίρε μου, κλύθι μεν (μοι κλύθει), δός δ' ἡμᾶς, λέσσωμαι σε, and δαθή μου.

28 Cf. Aristonous Hymn. Vest. (Powell 165) 11–17, where the request includes perpetual dance: δίδου ... ἡμᾶς ... αἰεί ... χορευεῖν.

29 Cf. Aristonous Hymn. Vest. (Powell 165) 11–17, where the request includes perpetual dance: δίδου ... ἡμᾶς ... αἰεί ... χορευεῖν.

30 It is interesting that medicine plays no rôle among the δυνάμεις of Apollo in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo, but it appears climactically at Callim. Ap. 46. With the fourth century and later there is an increasing emphasis on medicine and health as the most important power of the god. Cf. Ariphron (PMG 813) 1, Philodamus Paean to Dionysus (Powell 169) 153, and frequently in the Orphic hymns.
RHETORIC AND FORM IN GREEK HYMNS

Here is the formulaic address to the god with ἀλλ' ὃ Κρόνιε παι Ἄεας, ἔδος Ὅλυμπου νέμων ἀέθλων τε κορυφὰν πόρον τ᾽ Ἀλφεοῦ, ἴαυθεὶς ἄοιδαῖς εὐφρῶν ἁρουραν ἑτὶ πατρίαν σφίστων κόμμουν λοιπῷ γένει.

In conclusion, I have tried to show the close connection between the rhetorical intention of the hymnist to create a hymn which will please the god and the formal expression of that intention. Sometimes, as in the case of finding an appropriate ἀρχή, the topic can eventually become a mere mannerism to exercise the rhetorical ingenuity of the hymnist. But at its best, the hymnal song (and dance) can unite god and man in a reciprocal relationship of χάρις such as that described in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo (146–64) or more personally in the announcement at the end of one of Isidorus’ hymns to Isis (2.33–34):

ἐὐχῶν ἥδ᾽ ὧμων τε θεοὶ κλόντες ἐμείο, ἀνταπέδωκαν ἐμοὶ εὐθυμίαν χάριτα.

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