

The Foundation of the Oracle at Delphi in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*

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λέγεται δὲ πολλὰ μὲν καὶ διάφορα ἐς αὐτοὺς τοὺς Δελφούς,
πλείω δὲ ἔτι ἐς τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος τὸ μαντεῖον (Paus. 10.5.5)

THE FOUNDATION MYTH of the oracle at Delphi is variously recorded in many literary sources. In all but two extant versions—the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* and Alcaeus' *Hymn to Apollo* (fr.142 Page)—the god succeeds other deities—Gaia or Themis or both¹—who administered the oracle before Apollo's arrival at Delphi.² Apollo's succession to power is represented either as a peaceful process³ or as in-

¹ Gaia is called *πρωτόμαντις* in Aesch. *Eum.* 2. She predates Apollo also in Plut. *Mor.* 402C–E and Theopompus *FGrHist* 115 F 80. In Paus. 10.5.6 the oracle belonged to Gaia and Poseidon, and in Ephorus *FGrHist* 70 F 31b it was founded by Apollo and Themis. Themis precedes Apollo in Eur. *Or.* 163–164; Apollod. 1.4.1; Men. Rh. 441 Spengel. Cf. Lucan 5.79–85; Ovid *Met.* 1.320–321 and 4.643. In Pindar *Pyth.* hypoth. a, Dionysus is also said to prophesy prior to Apollo. On the relation between Apollo and Dionysus see B. C. Dietrich, “Divine Madness and Conflict at Delphi,” *Kernos* 5 (1992) 41–58; M. Detienne, “Forgetting Delphi between Apollo and Dionysus,” *CP* 96 (2001) 147–158. For Gaia's cult at Delphi see G. Roux, *Delphes: Son oracle et ses dieux* (Paris 1976) 19–34. For a history of the sanctuary at Delphi and the succession of divinities see E. Suárez de la Torre, “Les dieux de Delphes et l'histoire du sanctuaire,” *Kernos* Suppl. 8 (1998) 61–89, at 63–82.

² A list of all Greek and Roman sources that relate the oracle's foundation can be found in C. Sourvinou-Inwood, “Myth as History: The Previous Owners of the Delphic Oracle,” in J. Bremmer (ed.), *Interpretations of Greek Mythology* (London 1987) 215–241, at 235 n.1.

³ E.g. Aesch. *Eum.* 1–20 (5, οὐδὲ πρὸς βίαν τινός); Paus. 10.5.6; Aristonous *Pai.Apol.* 21–24 (*FD* III.2 191); Diod. 16.26.1–6; *Orph.Hymn.* 79; Ephorus F 31b; schol. Eur. *Or.* 164.

volving the use of force, when Apollo slays the serpent that guards the oracle.⁴ In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, as in Alcaeus' *Hymn*,⁵ the god does not encounter other oracular deities at Delphi. Instead, Apollo himself lays the foundations of the oracle while mortals finish the construction (294–299). After the oracle is built, Apollo slays a serpent, which, in contrast to the other sources where it guards the oracle, lives by a spring nearby and poses a threat to humans and their flocks (300–304). Moreover, the foundation of Apollo's oracle in the *Homeric Hymn* follows upon the god's failed attempt to build a temple at Telphousa, an episode that is not found in any of the other versions.

The discrepancy among the variants of the foundation myth has been an object of debate. For some scholars, the versions about the succession of prophetic deities at Delphi reflect the history of the site and suggest continuous cultic activity, while the *Hymn's* narrative echoes the propagandistic views of the Delphic priesthood, which redeem the god as the only founder of Delphi.⁶ Other scholars, in the absence of archaeological

⁴ E.g. Pind. fr.55 *πρὸς βίαν*; Eur. *IT* 1235–1283.; Apollod. 1.4.1; Paus. 10.6.3; Plut. *Mor.* 417F, 421C; Men. Rh. 441–444. Later rationalistic versions replace the serpent with a villain named Python (Ephorus F 31b, cf. Paus. 10.6.3).

⁵ In Himerius' paraphrase of Alcaeus' hymn (*Or.* 14.10 ff.) there is no explicit reference to the foundation of the oracle. Zeus sends Apollo to Delphi as a prophet of justice. The god instead visits the Hyperboreans and spends one year there before he moves to Delphi, where no other deities are found. For comparison of Alcaeus' *Hymn* and the *Homeric Hymn* see D. Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus* (Oxford 1959) 249–250; E. Suárez de la Torre, "La 'rationalité' des mythes de Delphes: les dieux, les héros, les médiateurs," *Kernos* 15 (2002) 155–178, at 162.

⁶ Bibliography in Sourvinou-Inwood, in *Interpretations* 235 n.2. On the poet's conscious suppression of the other versions see K. Förstel, *Untersuchungen zum Homerischen Apollonhymnos* (Bochum 1979) 235; O. Panagl, "Stationen hellenischer Religiosität am Beispiel des Delphischen Sukzessionsmythos," *Kairos* 11 (1969) 161–171, at 164–169; J. Defradas, *Les thèmes de la propagande delphique* (Paris 1954) 61–62, 64–67; J. S. Clay, *The Politics of Olympus: Form and Meaning in the Major Homeric Hymns* (Princeton 1989) 61–63,

evidence that shows a continuity of cults, propose that the version in the *Hymn* represents the earliest cultic myth, while the later variants are adaptations that serve literary purposes.⁷

This article steps away from the debate over whether the *Hymn* promotes Delphic propaganda or Delphic theology—that is, whether it recreates or reproduces the history of Delphi⁸—and examines the wider religious and literary connotations of the myth's variant in the *Hymn*. It will be argued that the foundation myth of Delphi is shaped by the religious perspective of the *Hymn*, which emphasizes the balanced reciprocal relationships between humans and gods—the precondition for the foundation of a new cult—and the beneficial role of a god, who is introduced for the first time into a new region. The theme of reciprocity is highlighted throughout the *Hymn* and is also evident in the other major *Homeric Hymns*, where gods engage in reciprocal relationships with mortals.

The poet of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*⁹ provides a variant of

and “The Silence of the Pythia,” in Lucia Athanassaki et al. (eds.), *Apolline Politics and Poetics* (Athens 2009) 5–16, at 13–14. On chthonic oracles at Delphi see B. C. Dietrich, “Reflection on the Origins of the Oracular Apollo,” *BICS* 25 (1978) 1–18, at 5.

⁷ P. Amandry, *La mantique apollonienne à Delphes* (Paris 1950) 211–214; Sourvinou-Inwood, in *Interpretations* 219; Dietrich, *Kernos* 5 (1992) 43–44; C. Morgan, *Athletes and Oracles: The Transformation of Olympia and Delphi* (Cambridge 1990) 148–149; W. Furley and J. M. Bremer, *Greek Hymns* (Tübingen 2001) I 96–98; A. Avagianou, “Ephorus on the Founding of Delphi's Oracle,” *GRBS* 39 (1998) 121–136, at 126–127.

⁸ On the issue of whether myths reflect or construct reality see R. Buxton, *Imaginary Greece: The Contexts of Mythology* (Cambridge 1994) 182–184.

⁹ The composition of the *Hymn to Apollo* is debated. The parallel scenes between the first and the second halves along with the closing nature of line 165 after the Delian festival has led scholars, starting with D. Ruhnken, *Epistola critica I. in Homeridarum hymnos et Hesiodum* (Leipzig 1782), to suggest that the *Hymn* is either the compilation of two separate hymns on the Delian and the Pythian Apollo respectively (Ruhnken) or that it is the outcome of the continuation and expansion of an independent hymn to Delian Apollo (Wilamowitz, *Die Ilias und Homer* [Berlin 1916]). Following A. M. Miller, *From Delos to Delphi: A Literary Study of the Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (*Mnemosyne*

the foundation myth of Delphi, in which mortals play a significant role and define their relationship with the divine. Thus, before Apollo builds his temple and oracle, he addresses humans¹⁰ and describes the reciprocal relationships he will establish with them, which entail the exchange of prophecies for sacrifices (287–293):

ἐνθάδε δὴ φρονέω τεύξαι περικαλλέα νηὸν
 ἔμμεναι ἀνθρώποις χρηστήριον, οἷτε μοι αἰεὶ
 ἐνθάδ' ἀγινήσουσι τελέεσσας ἑκατόμβας,
 ἦμὲν ὅσοι Πελοπόννησον πείριαν ἔχουσιν,
 ἦδ' ὅσοι Εὐρώπην τε καὶ ἀμφιρύτας κατὰ νήσους,
 χρησόμενοι: τοῖσιν δ' ἄρ' ἐγὼ νημερτέα βουλήν
 πᾶσι θεμιστεύοιμι χρέων ἐνὶ πιονι νηῶ.

Here I intend to build a beautiful temple to be an oracle for humans, who will always bring perfect hecatombs here to me, both those who inhabit fertile Peloponnese and those who inhabit Europe and seagirt islands, in order to request oracles: to all of them therefore I would deliver infallible counsel prophesying in a rich temple.

Suppl. 93 [1986] 111–117 and 174 n.2 (with bibliography), W. G. Thalmann, *Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Epic Poetry* (Baltimore 1984) 64–73, Clay, *Politics of Olympus* 17–19, and N. Richardson, *Three Homeric Hymns* (Cambridge 2010) 10–13, I favor the unitarian view and treat the *Hymn* as a coherent and unified composition. For the view of the Analysts see A. Aloni, *L'aedo ei tiranni* (Rome 1989) 11–31; R. P. Martin, “Synchronic Aspects of Homeric Performance: The Evidence of the Hymn to Apollo,” in Ana M. González de Tobia (ed.), *Una nueva visión de la cultura griega antigua* (La Plata 2000) 403–432; M. Chappell, “The Homeric Hymn to Apollo: The Question of Unity,” in A. Faulkner (ed.), *The Homeric Hymns: Interpretive Essays* (Oxford 2011) 59–81. The Delian hymn is dated by Janko to 655 B.C. and the Pythian to the beginning of the sixth century: see A. Hoekstra, *The Subepic Stage of the Formulaic Tradition* (Amsterdam 1969) 22–25, and R. Janko, *Homer, Hesiod, and the Hymns: Diachronic Development in Epic Diction* (Cambridge 1982) 102 ff.; M. Chappell, “Delphi and the Homeric Hymn to Apollo,” *CQ* 56 (2006) 331–48, at 331–335.

¹⁰ The foundation of cults and the gods' offerings to humans are typical themes in hymns. See William W. Minton, “The Proem-Hymn of Hesiod's Theogony,” *TAPA* 101 (1970) 357–377, at 362.

The god promises that he will prophesy (*χρέων* 293) infallible counsel to those who will offer hecatombs and will seek his prophecies (*χρησομένοι*). Thus, the reciprocal relationship between humans and the divine is reflected in the diction in the active and middle forms of the same verb. The interlocking gestures of offering and reciprocation stress the interdependence between the divine and his worshippers. The temple's function relies on humans' offerings, and humans' knowledge in turn depends on Apollo's prophecies.¹¹ The god will alleviate the human state of ignorance as long as the temple's visitors provide offerings that allow them to request divination. Thus the foundation of the temple inaugurates a new mode of communication with the divine.¹²

This communication is based on a *quid pro quo* relationship, or balanced reciprocity;¹³ it dominates Greek cult practices, where offerings are expected to be reciprocated,¹⁴ and governs interpersonal and ritualized relationships of *philia*, where a bond may be established through the exchange of goods between partners from different social units.¹⁵ The social conventions of friendship and the religious norms of Greek cults are trans-

¹¹ Cf. Ephorus' version F 31b, where Apollo establishes his oracle with Themis in order to benefit humans.

¹² Clay, *Politics of Olympus* 63.

¹³ For a categorization of different types of reciprocity see M. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago 1972) 193–196.

¹⁴ As R. Parker points out, "Pleasing Thighs: Reciprocity in Greek Religion," in Christopher Gill et al. (eds.), *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece* (Oxford 1998) 105–126, at 105, without this ideal of reciprocity the rationale of Greek cult practice disappears.

¹⁵ G. Herman, *Ritualized Friendship and the Greek City* (Cambridge 1987) ch. 2. On the predominance but also the problematization of reciprocal relationships in social and ritual practices in Homer see R. Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual: Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-State* (Oxford 1994). While Seaford (5) suggests that the Homeric poems display different views on reciprocity since they are "the end product of a long process of development influenced by various and sometimes contradictory interests," in the *Homeric Hymns* the perspectives on reciprocity are quite consistent.

ferred to the narrative of reciprocity between the god and humans in the *Hymn*, where the two parties through their interdependent needs and the nature of their offerings assume a quasi-parity and form a lasting bond. As Walter Burkert writes, “the rules of society and of religion are taken to be homologous.”¹⁶ By employing the principle of reciprocity, which according to Burkert (154–155) creates a stable, sensible, and acceptable world on the basis of equilibrium and regularity, the poet crafts an optimistic portrayal of a god always willing to offer his service to humans in exchange for their sacrifices. Moreover, the continuous circulation of offerings between Apollo and the visitors of the oracle secures the long duration of these relationships and the popularity of the god’s cult.

In contrast to the other versions, where Apollo either employs force to take over the oracle or simply succeeds gods, in the *Hymn to Apollo* he proclaims a balanced reciprocal relationship with mortals that encapsulates the function of his temple and his new role as a god of prophecy.¹⁷ While humans as agents of exchange are excluded from the other versions,¹⁸ in the *Hymn* they participate in fair and balanced reciprocities, just as mortals in the other major *Homeric Hymns* contribute directly or indirectly to the gods’ acquisitions of their honors and spheres of power.¹⁹ In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, for example, the goddess establishes the Eleusinian Mysteries after her interaction with humans in Eleusis and the failed immortalization of Demophoon. In the *Hymn to Aphrodite* Aphrodite’s honor among

¹⁶ W. Burkert, *Creation of the Sacred: Tracks of Biology in Early Religions* (Cambridge 1996) 130.

¹⁷ In Paus. 10.5.6 reciprocity takes place between gods: Apollo offers Poseidon Calaureaia in exchange for his share of the oracle.

¹⁸ Cf. Ephorus F 31b.

¹⁹ On the theme of honors in the major *Homeric Hymns* see Clay, *Politics of Olympus* 8–16; R. Parker, “The *Hymn to Demeter* and the *Homeric Hymns*,” *G&R* 38 (1991) 1–17; J. Rudhardt, “A propos de l’hymne homérique à Déméter,” *MusHelv* 35 (1978) 1–17; R. Nickel, “The Wrath of Demeter: Story Pattern in the *Hymn to Demeter*,” *QUCC* 102 (2003) 59–82, at 62.

humans relies on Anchises' secrecy. Hermes in his *Hymn* becomes the god of exchange, after a series of reciprocities with Apollo that are instigated by a mortal's testimony of Hermes' theft. Likewise, Apollo in his *Hymn* would never have become the god of prophecy without the collaboration of humans, including the builders of his temple but also the oracle's future visitors and Apollo's priests.

Similar *quid pro quo* reciprocities between gods and humans at the god's arrival in a new territory can be found in the other *Homeric Hymns*. In the *Hymn to Demeter*, for example, the building of a temple inaugurates a series of exchanges (270 ff.). The goddess requests from the whole community (*πᾶς δῆμος*) a temple (*ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι νηὸν τε μέγαν καὶ βωμὸν ὑπ' αὐτῷ / τευχόντων πᾶς δῆμος*), promising as a reciprocation the establishment of her rites (*ῥογία δ' αὐτῇ ἐγὼν ὑποθήσομαι*), which will secure her benevolence as long as they are performed properly (*εὐαγέως ἔρδοντες ἐμὸν νόον ἰλάσκοισθε*). The initial reciprocal exchange of the temple with rites instigates a second exchange in which the goddess' favorable disposition responds to proper ritual practices. As with Apollo, the nature of balanced reciprocity secures the continuity of the cult. In the *Hymn to Aphrodite*, where another episode of a god's first appearance to humans occurs (100 ff.), Anchises promises an altar and sacrifices to the woman whom he identifies as a goddess (*σοὶ δ' ἐγὼ ἐν σκοπιῇ, περιφαινομένῳ ἐνὶ χώρῳ, / βωμὸν ποιήσω, ῥέξω δέ τοι ἱερὰ καλὰ / ὥρησιν πάσῃσι*). In exchange for this offering, he requests (*δός*) a prosperous life and a descendant (*ποιέει δ' ἐξοπίσω θαλερὸν γόνον*), whom Aphrodite eventually grants at the end of the *Hymn* with the request that Anchises keep their relationship a secret (281–290).²⁰ Thus in the major *Hymns to Apollo, Demeter, and Aphrodite*, intertwined exchanges between

²⁰ J. F. García, "Symbolic Action in the *Homeric Hymns*: The Theme of Recognition," *ClAnt* 21 (2002) 5–39, at 22–24, suggests that Anchises is rewarded for his earlier piety toward the goddess in disguise and this is why his wish is granted.

the new god and his/her followers take place in a consecrated (or to-be-consecrated) space marked by an altar (promised), temple, or oracle and in the ritual context of prayers, rites, and sacrifices.²¹ The language of reciprocity is particularly appropriate for the genre of the major *Homeric Hymns*, since they function themselves as offerings to the gods.²² The god is expected to respond to a request in exchange for the musical pleasure he receives.²³ Thus the rhetoric of prayers and hymns, which is based on the *da quia dedi/dedisti, da quia hoc dare tuum est, do ut des, or da ut dem* formulas,²⁴ shapes the narrative portion of the *Homeric Hymns*.

In the context of reciprocity, the humans' participation in the building of Apollo's temple marks their agreement to participate in a *quid pro quo* relationship with the divine. The god sets the marks of his construction by laying the foundations of the temple, while the legendary architects Trophonius and Agamedes add a stone threshold and a group of men finish the building (294–299):²⁵

²¹ In the *Hymn to Hermes* the god promises to a farmer good vintage as long as he does not betray him for the theft of the cattle (91–93). This reciprocal relation does not have ritual references since it entails neither an epiphany of Hermes nor the foundation of a cult.

²² C. Calame, *Masks of Authority: Fiction and Pragmatics in Ancient Greek Poetics* (Ithaca/London 2005) 27, and “The *Homeric Hymns* as Poetic Offerings: Musical and Ritual Relationships with the Gods,” in *The Homeric Hymns: Interpretive Essays* 334–358; W. Furley and J. M. Bremer, *Greek Hymns* (Tübingen 2001) I 16. Cf. the closing lines of Ar. *Thesm.*, which end with the request that Demeter and Persephone grant favors in exchange for the play (1229–1230).

²³ As Calame notes, *Masks of Authority* 26, in the *Homeric Hymns* the greeting χαίρει at the closing of the poems has the literal meaning “take delight,” presumably in the *Hymn* itself.

²⁴ J. M. Bremer, “Greek Hymns,” in H. Versnel (ed.), *Faith, Hope and Worship* (Leiden 1981) 193–215.

²⁵ As C. Sourvinou-Inwood shows, “The Myth of the First Temples at Delphi,” *CQ* 29 (1979) 231–251, at 247–248, the gradation god/heroes/mortals echoes the myth about the first temples at Delphi, four in succession, made of laurel, then beeswax (by birds), bronze (by Hephaestus and

ὡς εἰπὼν διέθηκε θεμέλια Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων
 εὐρέα καὶ μάλα μακρὰ διηλεκές· αὐτὰρ ἐπ' αὐτοῖς
 λάινον οὐδὸν ἔθηκε Τροφώνιος ἦδ' Ἀγαμήδης,
 υἱέες Ἐργίνου, φίλοι ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν·
 ἄμφι δὲ νηὸν ἔνασσαν²⁶ ἀθέσφατα φῦλ' ἀνθρώπων
 ξεστοῖσιν λάεσσιν, αἰδιμον ἔμμεναι αἰεὶ.

After he spoke thus Phoebus Apollo laid out the foundations broad and very long without a break and upon them Trophonius and Agamedes, the sons of Erginus, dear to the immortal gods, placed a wooden threshold. And around [it] the countless tribes of men with polished rocks built the temple to be famous in song forever.

The gradation in significance of the oracle's builders from Apollo to the two legendary architects to a countless crowd is reflected in the *Hymn to Demeter*, where Celeus presides over the construction of Demeter's temple and the whole community participates (πολυπείρονα λαόν 296; cf. πᾶς δῆμος 271).²⁷ The neutral phrase πολυπείρονα λαόν, with local ties dismissed, parallels the *Hymn to Apollo's* ἀθέσφατα φῦλ' ἀνθρώπων (298).²⁸ The participation of mortals at large in both Eleusis and Crisa²⁹ reflects the gods' wide appeal to humans and an-

Athena), and finally stone (by Trophonius and Agamedes). For sources on the myth of these temples see Sourvinou-Inwood 231 n.1.

²⁶ The meaning of the verb ἔνασσαν as 'built' is *hapax legomenon*. Richardson, *Three Homeric Hymns*, following Blumenthal's suggestion, places line 299 before 298. With this emendation the lines read: "with well-wrought [or well-set] stones, to be sung of forever. And around the temple dwelt the countless tribes of men." See Richardson ad loc. for other emendations. If that rearrangement of lines is accepted then there is a repetition between λάινον οὐδὸν and ξεστοῖσιν λάεσσιν, where a stone threshold is placed with stones. The parechysis on the other hand of νηὸν ἔνασσαν echoes a similar one in πίονα ναὸν ποιῆσαι (*h.Dem.* 297–298).

²⁷ See H. Foley, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Princeton 1993) 142, on the limited role of Celeus and the representation of the cult as given to all.

²⁸ In Paus. 10.5.7 the builders of the temple come from the Hyperboreans.

²⁹ Morgan, *Athletes and Oracles* 145, notes that the *Hymn* stresses the passive

ticipates the broad effect of the Eleusinian Mysteries (*h.Dem.* 470 ff.) and the Delphic oracle respectively across genders, ethnicities, ages, and social groups.³⁰ Just as Apollo offers his prophecies to all humans, who provide sacrifices,³¹ so Demeter grants privileges to all initiates. The inclusivity of their cults showcases their Panhellenic aspect.

Panhellenic references are found as well in all four major *Homeric Hymns*. The decreased emphasis on local cults, the extensive travels of the gods, and their wide appeal contribute to the Panhellenic nature of these poems. In this light, the foundation myth is also Panhellenic,³² that is, acceptable to all Hellenes,³³ since, as scholars have aptly pointed out, it avoids explicit reference to other prophetic cults, emphasizes the diversity of the oracle's visitors (290–291), represents the oracle as an Olympian institution with Apollo being the prophet of Zeus, assigns to the priesthood a Cretan origin avoiding the local Crisan ties to Delphi, and lays the foundation of Delphi after Apollo's journey that covers a wide range of locations.³⁴

role of the inhabitants of Crisa, in contrast to the activity of Apollo, who built his own temple and selected his own servants from a distant region. The *Hymn*, however, makes no reference to Crisans either because the location was uninhabited or because the poet delocalizes his narrative.

³⁰ See similarly the Delian festival in *h.Ap.* 147–155, where Ionians of all ages and genders venerate Apollo through songs and games. Miller, *From Delos* 81, also points out that the range of participants (god/heroes/the generality of men) emphasizes the universality of Apollo.

³¹ Note the potential optative *θεμιστεύοιμι*, which makes Apollo's promise less secure.

³² On Panhellenic versions that avoid the conflicts of local versions see G. Nagy, *Pindar's Homer: Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* (Baltimore 1990) 66. Morgan, *Athletes and Oracles* 145, notes the break with the local community in the case of the Cretan priests: "it is almost as if temple servants were deliberately selected from a distant part of the Greek world to break the link with the local population." Cf. the Panhellenic version of the *Hymn to Demeter*: Foley, *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 177.

³³ Nagy, *Pindar's Homer* 60.

³⁴ See Miller, *From Delos* 81; Clay, *Politics of Olympus* 9–10, 62; Suárez de la

Moreover, although the poet is familiar with the local traditions of Apollo's cults as he provides aetiologies for the cults of the Pythian, Telpousian, and Delphinian Apollo, he attaches Panhellenism to a local context as the three cults are founded in the aftermath of the establishment of the Panhellenic oracle and in close proximity to it.³⁵ Conversely, the "Previous Owners" myth has a local registry focusing on Delphi³⁶ and establishing the superiority of Apollo's cult in the region over his (fictional or not) predecessors or even contemporaneous oracles, which cannot claim the antiquity of Delphi.³⁷ In the *Hymn to Apollo*, Apollo's reciprocity with all humans emphasizes the Panhellenic and inclusive aspect of his cult. It remains therefore to explore further why the theme of reciprocity, with its Panhellenic allusions and its anthropocentric emphasis, dominates a foundation narrative.

The foundation of the oracle and the establishment of Apollo

Torre, *Kernos Suppl.* 8 (1998) 74–75. L. G. Mitchell, *Panhellenism and the Barbarian in Archaic and Classical Greece* (Swansea 2007) 6–7; Morgan, *Athletes and Oracles* 144–145; E. Stehle, *Performance and Gender in Ancient Greece: Nondramatic Poetry in its Setting* (Princeton 1997) 194–196. Recently the notion of Panhellenism has been questioned as a modern invention by M. Scott, *Delphi and Olympia: The Spatial Politics of Panhellenism in the Archaic and Classical Periods* (Cambridge 2010) ch. 9.

³⁵ On the relation between Panhellenism and local cults in tragedy see A. Lardinois, "Greek Myths for Athenian Rituals: Religion and Politics in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* and Sophocles' *Oedipus Coloneus*," *GRBS* 33 (1992) 313–327. See also Isoc. *Paneg.* 28–29, where the Athenians take pride in propagating the gifts of Demeter to Greeks.

³⁶ Thus the emphasis on Athens in Apollo's journey to Delphi in Aesch. *Eum.* 9–13 and Ephorus F 31b. On pro-Athenian biases see Avagianou, *GRBS* 39 (1998) 132; M. Vamvouri Ruffy, "Apollo, Athena and Athens at Delphi," in *Apolline Politics* 521–546, at 526–532, who also notes (537–541) in the *Hymn to Apollo* allusions to Athena's links to Delos and Delphi.

³⁷ On the antiquity of Delphi and its competition with other oracles see Morgan, *Athletes and Oracles* 148–149. Clay, in *Apolline Politics* 5–16, argues that the poet does not mention other oracular shrines because the poem was composed at a time when Delphi had surpassed its competitors.

as the god of prophecy are presented, as I have shown, in the context of reciprocity. The rhetoric of mutual exchanges is employed not only to regulate in myth the irregular in reality reciprocal relationships between gods and humans, but also to alleviate the anxiety that stems from the god's introduction into a new territory and consequently from a new ritual life, particularly since the construction of a temple marks the transformation of the landscape from secular to sacred.³⁸ In the case of a new city or a new god's importation from elsewhere, ritual space must be found, and confiscation of fields was one way of dealing with the need for space.³⁹ Similarly, when a sanctuary had to be enlarged, space that was reserved for human habitation might have to be appropriated. In the case of a new colony, one lot of land was devoted to the god and could not be exploited by humans.⁴⁰ At Delphi, land for pasture was also dedicated to Apollo and remained uncultivated.⁴¹ The *Hymn to Apollo*, as I will show, acknowledges the tensions from the transformation of a conventional space into a sacred one but also emphasizes the beneficial consequences of such transformation.

As Robert Parker notes, a god may receive land either by gift

³⁸ D. Birge, "Sacred Groves and the Nature of Apollo," in J. Solomon (ed.), *Apollo: Origins and Influences* (Tucson 1994) 9–19, notes that Apollo's groves "marked the point at which the natural environment was brought into the domain and control of the Greek social and religious system" (18). Similarly F. Polignac, *Cults, Territory and the Origins of the Greek City-State* (Chicago 1995) 20, points out that the building of a temple "symbolized the insertion of the sacred universe into the earthly countryside."

³⁹ S. G. Cole, *Landscapes, Gender, and Ritual Space: The Ancient Greek Experience* (Berkeley 2004) 39–40.

⁴⁰ On echoes of colonization in the *Hymn to Apollo* see I. Malkin, "La fondation d'une colonie apollonienne: Delphes et l'*Hymne homérique* à Apollon," in Anne Jacquemin (ed.) *Delphes cent ans après la grande fouille* (Athens 2000) 69–77.

⁴¹ T. Howe, "Pastoralism, the Delphic Amphiktyony and the First Sacred War: The Creation of Apollo's Sacred Pastures," *Historia* 52 (2003) 129–146.

or by confiscation.⁴² Apollo chooses the latter option not only at Crisa but also at the spring Telphousa, where he first attempted to build his oracle. In fact, his declaration to begin the establishment of a temple at Crisa (247) is identical to his announcement to Telphousa (*ἐνθάδε δὴ φρονέω τεύξαι περικαλλέα νηὸν*, 287). The difference between the two scenes is the rhetoric of reciprocity, which alleviates the anticipated opposition in Crisa. In the case of Telphousa, though, Apollo does not present any benefits from the dramatic change his temple will cause and thus faces the spring's resistance; she claims that her location is inappropriate, as she lacks the serenity of cult sites (257–266). She redirects Apollo to Crisa, where visitors would provide their *δῶρα* undistracted by noisy chariots (267–274). The episode at Telphousa thus prepares for the narrative of balanced reciprocity that dominates the foundation myth and showcases that Apollo's choice of a location for his oracle aims at securing a great amount of offerings and consequently maximizing his personal honor.⁴³ In this light, the rhetoric of reciprocity at Crisa presents in a positive way the god's desire to satisfy his own interests, since they are intertwined with the satisfaction of human needs. Apollo's collaboration with mortals through balanced reciprocity emphasizes the counter-balanced need to offer and reciprocate between gods and worshippers, with the understanding that proper ritual activity and submission to the divine are likely to be rewarded. In contrast, the episode at Telphousa, and also her destruction later by Apollo as punishment, showcase the negative implications of resistance to satisfying the gods' need for honor, which is encapsulated in his need for sacred space.

The contrast between successful and unsuccessful reciprocities has a double function: on the one hand, it criticizes resistance to submitting to the divine by not participating in a

⁴² R. Parker, *Miasma* (Oxford 1990) 163.

⁴³ According to Miller, *From Delos* 73–75, the criteria for Apollo's choice are tranquility, accessibility, and poverty of natural resources.

quid pro quo reciprocity even when the gods' gifts are not immediately apparent. After all, the honor of being chosen by the god for the location of his temple should be a sufficient incentive to comply. On the other hand, it emphasizes the benefits of devotion to gods in the context of reciprocity. Moreover, Apollo's failure to employ reciprocity in Telphousa, unlike Leto's successful balanced reciprocity with Delos,⁴⁴ showcases that Apollo is not ready to establish a cult until he demonstrates his ability to perform reciprocity properly. In fact, when he punishes the spring after the foundation of his oracle, he is then able to articulate the benefits of the new use of her space as another popular sacred location where all (πάντες 386) will pray calling upon Telphousian Apollo. The building of the βωμός (384), the marker of Apollo's cult, and the destruction of Telphousa, which annuls her previous role, signify the new ritual character that the god provides to the area. Similarly, the Cretan sailors have to abandon their everyday endeavors and their family lives in order to assume their sacred role as administrators of the oracle (474–501).

The Telphousa episode illustrates as well the positive outcome of the land's transformation into sacred space: a new honorary status, which is also granted to the oracle's priests (485). Since the rivalry between Apollo and the spring was about κλέος as Apollo says (ἐνθάδε δὴ καὶ ἐμὸν κλέος, ἔσσεται οὐδὲ σὸν οἴης, 381), it becomes apparent that the honor a cult site carries—that is, the honor that is provided by a god—overrides the private honor of conventional places that have a use value rather than a symbolic one. Considering that the *Hymn* narrates the foundation of a cult and presumably promotes it, the Telphousa episode elaborates on the implications of dedicating land to gods and thus is not necessary in any of the other versions of the foundation myth that have different or no religious perspectives.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ For comparison of the two scenes see Miller, *From Delos* 76–77.

⁴⁵ Clay, in *Apolline Politics* 5–16, has argued that the Telphousa episode corresponds to the “Previous Owners” myth.

The positive aspects of a land's transformation into a sacred site are also evident in the case of Delos. The preeminence of Delos over the other islands that rejected Leto when she was in search of a location to give birth and Delos' wide popularity in the aftermath of the establishment of Apollo's temple underscore its new Panhellenic appeal.⁴⁶ In a similar way, Apollo's reference to his oracle's popularity at Crisa indicates the reputation that Crisa will receive as it becomes a Panhellenic site.⁴⁷ Both Delos and Crisa, then, become Panhellenic centers for the traffic of worshippers. Both are rocky locations⁴⁸ and both turn into a sacred space after a process of reciprocity.⁴⁹ Apollo thus not only provides a new and sufficient way of predicting the future, but he also transforms isolated locations into popular destinations for worshippers from across Greece. Moreover, by means of his Panhellenic effect, he alters the relation between humans and land, since in the case of the Delians and the Cretan priests, they will live off sacrifices, avoiding manual labor. In the *Hymn* therefore, the transformation of landscape

⁴⁶ De Polignac, *Cults* 20, notes that the topographical importance that a sanctuary receives shows that an everyday environment is given a new order by the establishment of cult sites, which are objects of concern and pride for the community.

⁴⁷ The parallel scenes of Delos and Crisa are two of many episodes that echo each other in the first and second halves of the *Hymn* and thus provide according to analysts an argument for multiple authorship (i.e. one poet imitates the composition of another poet). For parallel passages between the Delian and the Pythian Hymn see M. L. West, "Cynaethus' Hymn to Apollo," *CQ* 25 (1975) 161–170, at 162; C. A. Sowa, *Traditional Themes and the Homeric Hymns* (Chicago 1984) 178–182.

⁴⁸ Delos is covered with vegetation after Apollo's birth (135–136).

⁴⁹ The two cult places and focuses of the *Hymn* have been explained by the proposed setting for the *Hymn's* performance: a festival on Delos organized by Polycrates in 523/2 B.C., which was held in honor of both the Delian and Pythian Apollo. See W. Burkert, "Kynaithos, Polycrates and the Homeric Hymn to Apollo," in *Arktouros: Hellenic Studies presented to Bernard M. W. Knox* (Berlin 1979) 53–62, at 59–62; Janko, *Homer, Hesiod* 112–114; F. de Martino, *Omero Agonista in Delo* (Brescia 1982) 49–55; Aloni, *L'aedo* 107–131.

into sacred space and the provision of Panhellenic fame are the utmost benefits by Apollo, which through a nexus of reciprocal exchanges aim to eliminate opposition to his forceful entrance into new territories.⁵⁰

The reconciliatory effects of the rhetoric of reciprocity are evident in another episode in the *Hymn to Apollo* where the god acquires priests in the same way that he acquires sacred space. Just as he confiscates the lands of Telphousa and Crisa, Apollo seizes the boat of some Cretan sailors,⁵¹ and after a series of transformations convinces them to become his priests by proposing a deal, another incident of *quid pro quo* reciprocity. The violent and overpowering nature of the god is counterbalanced by his willingness to establish balanced reciprocities, showcasing thus the double nature of his power. According to this *quid pro quo* relationship, the Cretans will hold Apollo's rich temple and learn the gods' plans, and in turn they will be honored forever (478–485). Reciprocity is once more reflected in language. The god prophesies that the oracle will be *τίμιον* (483) by all people and the priests will be honored (*τιμήσεσθε*) forever (485); their honor thus is tied to that of the oracle in an interdependent way.⁵² As long as the oracle thrives, the Cretans will hold the prestigious priesthood, and as long as the Cretans

⁵⁰ Cf. Apollo's violent entry to the assembly of the Olympians at the beginning of the *Hymn*.

⁵¹ For Cretan elements in Apollo's cult see Sourvinou-Inwood, in *Interpretations* 225. See also Defradas, *Les thèmes* 74–76, on the appropriation of the Cnossian cult of dolphins. The choice of Cretans as priests attests Panhellenic elements according to most scholars (e.g. Morgan, *Athletes and Oracles* 145), while for a few it is ironic, e.g. A. Aloni, "The Politics of Composition and Performance of the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo*," in *Apolline Politics* 55–65. Aloni (61) argues that the poet challenges the credibility of the Delphic oracle, since Cretans are rendered as liars who provoke laughter. The poet aims according to Aloni to satisfy his patron, Polycrates, who organized a festival on Delos against the prescriptions of the oracle's prophecy.

⁵² As Miller, *From Delos* 97, has shown, Apollo's gift of priesthood functions as a compensation for the abduction of the sailors and their forced retirement from a normal life.

tend the temple and know the will of the gods, the oracle will flourish. Ultimately, Apollo will be a part of this interlocking relationship, since Crisa turns into the location where he will also be honored by many people (*πολλοῖσι τετιμένος ἀνθρώποισι*, 521). The reciprocal exchange between Apollo and humans leads again to the establishment of a cult, that of the Delphinian Apollo, since the Cretans after receiving the offer of priesthood build an altar and offer sacrifices (486–510).

The episode of the Cretan priests reflects the successful reciprocities in Crisa and Delos, but also echoes Telpousa's opposition. While in Telpousa Apollo did not make an offer of benefits, in the episode with the Cretan priests he makes an inadequate offer, which he then modifies. His promise of perpetual honor does not satisfy the pragmatic needs of mortals, who, unlike Delos and Telpousa, cannot survive on honor. Apollo's offer is based on his own divine need for *τιμή*. The complaint of the Cretans, who when they arrive at Crisa realize that the land is not fertile nor rich in pasture (526–530), signifies the gap between them and the god and exemplifies the difference in their nature, which may lead to complications when it comes to reciprocal relations. The quasi-parity assumed in balanced reciprocal relationships is overturned as the superiority of Apollo does not allow him to understand the needs of the opposite party. Even though Apollo—like Demeter, Aphrodite, and Hermes—descends to the level of humans, interacts with them on earth, and takes the shape of a human, he cannot completely understand the mortal nature. The inappropriateness of Apollo's offer and the mortals' objection to it warn against an idealized reciprocity and showcase that divine offers are not always appropriate for their recipients.⁵³ As Yunis notes, “the belief that the gods react to men on the basis of some form of reciprocal relationship does not at all exclude the irrational element from the divine, or make the gods easily intelligible or entirely predictable. It rather excludes

⁵³ On the gifts of gods see Thalmann, *Conventions of Form*, ch. 3.

the possibility that the gods are utterly irrational, unintelligible, or unpredictable.”⁵⁴

Apollo, after reproaching the Cretans,⁵⁵ modifies his initial offer and promises that the priests will never have to toil on the land, but will live off the sacrifices that worshippers will offer (532–537), as was the case with the Delians.⁵⁶ The Cretans’ opposition is therefore eliminated by a second *quid pro quo* exchange: priesthood in exchange for extensive provisions.⁵⁷ An offer that satisfies the recipient’s needs is more likely to be accepted,⁵⁸ as at Delos. The discourse of reciprocity promulgates divine benefits for humans and negotiates the complications arising from the gods’ interaction with them.

It is in the context of reciprocity that we should also view the episode of the serpent-slaying, which follows immediately upon the foundation of the oracle.⁵⁹ The gender and the location of

⁵⁴ H. Yunis, *A New Creed: Fundamental Religious Beliefs in the Athenian Polls and Euripidean Drama* (Göttingen 1998) 53.

⁵⁵ Cf. *h.Dem.* 256–257.

⁵⁶ L. Kurke, “Aesop and the Contestation of Delphic Authority,” in C. Dougherty and L. Kurke (eds.), *The Cultures Within Ancient Greek Culture: Contact, Conflict, Collaboration* (Cambridge 2003) 77–100, at 86–87, notes the positive Delphic ideology of the *Hymn* where Apollo’s provision of effortless prosperity is the affirmation of his power. For Aesop (*Vita* G 124–125), according to Kurke, “‘to feed from another’s hand’—in parasitic dependence on sacrificial offerings—represents an indictment of the authority and autonomy of Delphic priesthood” (86).

⁵⁷ Apollo’s threat at the end of the *Hymn*, that if the priests commit *hybris* they will be under the rule of humans, showcases the double nature of the divine, since Apollo both rewards reverence and punishes defiance. Similarly, Aphrodite at the end of her *Hymn* threatens Anchises that Zeus will strike him with a thunderbolt if he violates her orders. On the relation of Apollo’s threat to the sacred war see Janko, *Homer, Hesiod* 120–121; Chappell, *CQ* 56 (2006) 331–335.

⁵⁸ See Arist. *Eth.Nic.* 1164b.

⁵⁹ On myths about Apollo’s combat with a serpent see T. Schreiber, *Apollon Pythoktonos* (Leipzig 1879); J. Fontenrose, *Python* (Berkeley 1959) 13–22. The killing of the snake in Ephorus (F 31) and Plutarch (*Mor.* 293C) is an *aition* for the S(t)epherion ritual. On this see Fontenrose 453–461; Roux,

the serpent are peculiar to the *Hymn*.⁶⁰ The female *drakaina*,⁶¹ unlike in other versions where it guards the oracle of Themis or Gaia, lurks at a spring near the oracle and poses a threat to humans and their flocks.⁶² In the “Previous Owners” myth, Apollo’s killing of the serpent is a self-interested act, since it becomes the precondition for undertaking the oracle, which is controlled by Apollo’s opponents. As Parke and Wormell state, “the slaying of the serpent is the act of conquest which secures his possession.”⁶³ In the *Hymn* the two episodes, the foundation of the oracle and the death of the serpent, are not intertwined, since Apollo has already established his temple before he proceeds to the slaying of the monster.⁶⁴

Delphes 166–168; W. Burkert, *Homo Necans*² (Berlin 1997) 144–147. For examples of myths involving combats against monsters see Sowa, *Traditional Themes* 148. The death of the serpent is also related to the Pythian games, where it was represented musically through the Pythian *nomos*: Pind. *Pyth.* hypoth. a, Strab. 9.3.10; cf. D. Kolk, *Der pythische Apollonhymnus als aitiologische Dichtung* (Meisenheim 1963) 41–47. N. Richardson, “In Search of an Oracle: The *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*,” in *Apolline Politics* 45–54, at 49, connects the epic version of Apollo’s fight in the *Hymn* with the early sixth-century versions of the Pythian *nomos*.

⁶⁰ In some Hellenistic sources the serpent is female too; see Fontenrose, *Python* 14 n.4. Stehle, *Performance and Gender* 191, notes that the gender of the serpent denotes that the episode stresses the defeat of a female.

⁶¹ Clay, *Politics of Olympus* 78, suggests that the male and the Olympian overpower the chthonic and the female, and this is why the serpent is female. H. W. Parke and D. E. W. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle* (Oxford 1956) I 7, suggest that the nameless female snake has the implication that Apollo’s worshippers were not at peace with Gaia’s worshippers.

⁶² The serpent is first named Python in Ephorus’ version. In the *Hymn* it is aptly nameless, since as Defradas observes (*Les thèmes* 66) this allows Apollo to name the location where he establishes his sanctuary.

⁶³ Parke and Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle* I 5. Defradas, *Les thèmes* 68, holds that the poet avoids presenting Apollo’s establishment as a conquest so that the god appears as a champion of morality and purity.

⁶⁴ Schreiber, *Apollon Pythoktonos* 7, claims that the two legends, the foundation of the oracle and the serpent-slaying, are juxtaposed without any rationale. On a similar view with respect to the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* and

The *drakaina* episode has been regarded as an example of the motif of “combat with a monster before founding a city,” of which the myth of Cadmus is an example.⁶⁵ Apollo, like Heracles or Theseus,⁶⁶ is the liberator of mankind from a menace.⁶⁷ Clay sees another mythological pattern that she detects in all the major *Homeric Hymns*. The *Hymn to Apollo*, according to her, stresses the new Olympian order founded by Zeus and supported by Apollo, particularly since Apollo kills a female serpent that according to the poet raised a monster, Typhaon, who was born to Hera as revenge for the birth of Athena (314, 323–330).⁶⁸ The female serpent, by being connected with Typhaon,⁶⁹ the potential usurper of Zeus’ power, encapsulates disorder and opposition to Zeus’ authority.⁷⁰ The foundation of the oracle consequently corresponds symbolically

the organization of the episodes see Parker, *G&R* 38 (1991) 1–17, at 11: “in a ‘theogonic’ and aetiologial poem, the reader can indeed make sense of the narrative, but in terms less of motives than results.” Demeter, for example, goes to Eleusis because she is worshipped there.

⁶⁵ Chappell, *CQ* 56 (2006) 341. For the connection between the foundation of a city and the serpent killing see T. J. Trumpf, “Stadtgründung und Drachenkampf,” *Hermes* 86 (1958) 129–157; Förstel, *Untersuchungen* 256–257.

⁶⁶ Avagianou, *GRBS* 39 (1998) 133, connects benevolent Apollo as he is represented in Ephorus with Theseus and further with the hero’s idealization in Isocratean panegyric.

⁶⁷ Defradas, *Les thèmes* 66–67, 84, notes that the *Hymn* celebrates the role of Apollo as ἀλεξίκακος, since the death of the serpent symbolizes the victory of good over evil, emphasizing the role of Apollo as the protector of order and justice. See also Roux, *Delphes* 44.

⁶⁸ On the chthonic allusions of the serpent-slaying see F. Càssola, *Inni omerici* (Milano 1975) 89–90. In Limenius’ *Pai.Ap.* 27 (Powell 149–150) the serpent is the son of Earth. In Hesiod, Typhoeus (another name for Typhaon) is the son of Gaia (*Theog.* 821). Stesichorus (*PMG* 239), like the poet of the *Hymn*, presents the monster as the son of Hera. In the *Hymn* the poet uses the genealogy to best advantage to present Hera in a negative light as a mother and thus contrast her with the ideal mother, Leto.

⁶⁹ Both are characterized as πῆμα and κακόν (304, 352, 354.)

⁷⁰ Sourvinou-Inwood, in *Interpretations* 227. According to Miller, *From Delos* 83, the story about the birth of Typhaon amplifies the serpent’s wickedness.

to the establishment of Zeus' reign.⁷¹ Zeus' role, however, is quite minimal in the *Hymn*, and more emphasis is given to Apollo's personal struggle to establish his cult in the region. Even though some common narrative themes can be found, it is important that we view the episode of the serpent in the context of the religious connotations of the *Hymn*, which require that Apollo (unlike Heracles or Theseus) benefit only his followers⁷² and (unlike Cadmus) establish not a city but a sanctuary and a cult—that of Pythian Apollo.⁷³

The postponement of the slaying of the serpent allows the poet to present the foundation of Apollo's temple as a peaceful act of collaboration between Apollo and humans. The slaying of the serpent, an established episode in Apollo's saga,⁷⁴ displays in the *Hymn* not only Apollo's physical power and his expertise in archery—as in the other versions—but also his benevolence towards mortals, who are benefited by the elimination of the menace of the *δράκαινα*.⁷⁵ Therefore, as Defradas points out, the serpent is the enemy not of Apollo but of humans.⁷⁶ In terms of reciprocity, since Hera's self-im-

⁷¹ Clay, *Politics of Olympus* 63–72.

⁷² This is why although Apollo is the benefactor of mortals, he nevertheless destroys Telphousa, a spring of vital importance for mortals where they can water their animals. In a way, he takes away from Telphousa her beneficent role in humans' life and assigns it to the spring near the oracle.

⁷³ Apollo's benevolence is much more vivid in Ephorus' version (F 31b), where the god founds his oracle with Themis in order to benefit humans.

⁷⁴ In Paus. 2.7.7 the serpent-slaying is connected with the purification of Apollo, which is omitted in the *Hymn*'s version.

⁷⁵ The image of Apollo as a benevolent god in the serpent episode has been extensively discussed by Defradas, *Les thèmes* 66–67, who argues that the hymnist serving Delphic propaganda presents Apollo in a new way, not as the god of death in the *Iliad* but as the god of order and benevolence.

⁷⁶ Defradas, *Les thèmes* 66. Cf. Ephorus' rationalistic and euhemeristic version (F 31b), where Apollo kills the brigands Tityos and Python, the latter nicknamed *δράκων* (Plut. *Mor.* 294F). In Men. Rh. 441 as well, Apollo kills the serpent Python in order to benefit humans. On Apollo's enemies at Delphi in various versions see Fontnerose, *Python* 22–69. In Ps.-Hesiod *Shield*

pregnation with Typhaon is a reciprocal revenge that takes the same form as the offense against her (Zeus' birthing of Athena), Apollo's violent act, the slaying of Typhaon's nurse, is justified as an indirect reciprocal punishment against Hera who opposed Zeus' authority and also obstructed Apollo's birth at the beginning of the *Hymn*. The *quid pro quo* exchange of injuries reestablishes the lost order, which was first challenged by the birth of a cripple god, Hephaestus,⁷⁷ who did not match the glory of Athena. Thus not only the birth of Athena, which violates Hera's conjugal rights,⁷⁸ but also the disparity between the two gods (Athena and Hephaestus) instigates Hera's wrath and revenge.⁷⁹ The imbalance of status of the children reflects the imbalance of the status of their parents (Zeus vs. Hera). Eventually Typhaon too is another failure in seeking to outstrip Zeus' glory and thus the serpent who receives and raises Typhaon becomes an accomplice of Hera and an opponent of Zeus.

In the context of the foundation of the oracle, the death of the serpent, the counterpart of Typhaon, signifies not only the reestablishment of justice and order but also Apollo's protection of his worshippers, who will be able to provide hecatombs safely. His benevolence thus is not a sign of a free gift, a generous act with no expectation of return. Apollo's bravery aims at facilitating his balanced reciprocity with the future visitors to the oracle. Moreover, like the destruction of Telphousa, the serpent-slaying eliminates resistance to the estab-

58 ff. Cynus, the son of Ares, impedes free passage to Delphi by fighting against Apollo's followers. In Menander Rhetor the serpent impedes the passage to Themis' oracle, which therefore is deserted.

⁷⁷ For Hera as sole parent of Hephaestus see Hes. *Theog.* 927. According to Homer (*Il.* 14.338–339, *Od.* 8.312) Hephaestus is the son of Zeus and Hera. In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* the pronoun *αὐτῆ* (317 ὃν τέκον αὐτῆ) is understood as intensive (i.e. herself; see T. W. Allan et al., *The Homeric Hymns* [Oxford 1936] ad loc.) rather than as "alone."

⁷⁸ Miller, *From Delos* 86.

⁷⁹ Clay, *Politics of Olympus* 68.

ishment of Apollo's oracle.⁸⁰ Thus, the reciprocal revenge employed by Apollo in the serpent-slaying is represented in a positive way as an act of justice but also as benevolence for humans, who will now venerate securely the cults of Pythian and Telphousian Apollo.

Overall the poet of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* praises the god for his capacity to benefit mortals in exchange for offerings and positively transform landscapes in order to facilitate the provision of such offerings. This *quid pro quo* relationship is encapsulated in the closure of the *Hymn* where the poet invites the god to rejoice (*χαίρει*) presumably in the hymn itself and promises in return that he will remember him in another song. Thus the function of the hymn as an offering that awaits reciprocation requires that the narrative of Apollo as founder of Delphi portrays a god who reciprocates positively with his worshippers and secures everlasting balanced exchanges.

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⁸⁰ Clay, *Politics of Olympus* 78, regards the story of Hera and Typhaon but also the episode of Telphousa as reflections of the hostility between Olympian and chthonic, and male and female.