

# Apollo's Fraternal Threats: Language of Succession and Domination in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*

Sarah E. Harrell

APOLLO'S PRESENCE IN THE *Hymn to Hermes* at first strikes the reader as odd, even intrusive. Why, in a format designed to celebrate Hermes, should Apollo play such a prominent rôle? Some critics have found in the confrontation between Apollo and Hermes evidence of a cultic rivalry between the two gods; others emphasize the comic nature of their feud.<sup>1</sup> Although cultic realities and comic concerns might account for the prominence of Apollo here, a more immediate answer may lie in the poetic traditions to which the *Hymn* refers. Apollo's first words to Hermes, in which he threatens to hurl the young god into Tartarus, reveal a specific connection between the conflict of Apollo and Hermes on the one hand, and on the other, Zeus' establishment of his power on Olympus. Further examination will show that the theogonic connotations of the brothers' struggle are appropriate to a hymn that not only tells the story of the birth of Hermes, but also represents a crisis for the Olympian order: a new god's entrance into the pantheon.<sup>2</sup>

When Apollo discovers through an omen the identity of the thief who has stolen his cattle, it becomes clear that this conflict is one between siblings (213ff):<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. S. CLAY, *The Politics of Olympus* (Princeton 1989: hereafter 'Clay') 100-03, provides an overview of the discussion. Clay herself argues that "the reconciliation of Apollo and Hermes ultimately represents their necessary complementarities and interdependence" (102).

<sup>2</sup> C. A. SOWA, *Traditional Themes and the Homeric Hymns* (Chicago 1984) esp. 157-72, recognizes the themes of the Succession Myth and the Feud within the *Hymn to Hermes* as aspects of a young god's consolidation of his power, but she is more concerned with the humorous realization of these themes.

<sup>3</sup> Apollo and Hermes are both described as sons of Zeus throughout the *Hymn*, but here the poet places their similar titles at the line-ends of consecutive verses: cf. 227, 230, where the same wording is used, separated by two lines.

οἰωνὸν δ' ἐνόει τανυσίπτερον, αὐτίκα δ' ἔγνω  
 φηλητὴν γεγαῶτα Διὸς παῖδα Κρονίωνος.  
 ἔσσυμένως δ' ἤϊξεν ἄναξ Διὸς υἱὸς Ἀπόλλων.

Apollo immediately searches out his newborn brother and demands that Hermes reveal the location of the cattle. If Hermes does not obey quickly, Apollo will hurl him to Tartarus (254–59):

ᾠ παῖ ὃς ἐν λίκνῳ κατάκειαι, μήνυέ μοι βοῦς  
 θᾶπτον· ἐπεὶ τάχα νῶϊ διοισόμεθ' οὐ κατὰ κόσμον.  
ρίψω γὰρ σε βάλων ἐς Τάρταρον ἠερόεντα.  
 εἰς ζόφον αἰνόμορον καὶ ἀμήχανον· οὐδέ σε μήτηρ  
 ἔς φάος οὐδὲ πατὴρ ἀναλύσεται, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ γαίῃ  
 ἐρρήσεις ὀλίγοισι μετ' ἀνδράσιν ἡγεμονεύων.

As their first direct communication, this speech sets the stage for the sparring that ensues between the two brothers. The poet hints at the importance of this exchange later in the poem, when Hermes complains to Zeus of Apollo's harsh treatment: πολλὰ δέ μ' ἠπειλήσε βαλεῖν ἐς Τάρταρον εὐρύν (374). The repetition of the threat raises the question of what associations these words, as well as the image of hurling to Tartarus, might have had for the poet and his audience.

Beyond the humor of the brothers' quarreling, the poet's use of the Tartarus motif suggests a more serious connection between their relationship and the underlying issue of the *Hymn*: Hermes' acquisition of *time* as he assumes his place in the divine hierarchy.<sup>4</sup> That connection can be found in Zeus' earlier struggles to create the order that Hermes wishes to join and potentially alter in some way. The motif of hurling to Tartarus occurs in Homer and Hesiod at moments when Zeus' control of the Olympian hierarchy is threatened. The *Hymn to Hermes*, therefore, refers to the Olympian power structure with an allusion that would have had specific connotations for an ancient audience steeped in theogonic and heroic epic traditions. For, as Clay argues, the mythological framework encompassing all periods of Olympian time would have been clear to the ancient audience and would have informed their

<sup>4</sup> For the element of humor see Sowa (*supra* n.2) 157–72 *cf.* Clay 133–36.

understanding of the hymnic narrative.<sup>5</sup> In this paper, I shall not attempt to determine who composed first: Homer, Hesiod, or the hymnist.<sup>6</sup> Instead, I shall examine parallels to the Tartarus motif that appear in Hesiod and the *Iliad*, that point to a tradition from which the hymnist also drew.<sup>7</sup>

There are striking dictional similarities between the *Hymn to Hermes* and lines in the *Theogony*, two Hesiodic fragments, and the *Iliad*:

(1) ῥίψω γὰρ σε βαλὼν ἐς Τάρταρον ἠερόεντα (*Hymn. Hom. Merc.* 256)

(2) ἢ μιν ἐλὼν ῥίψω ἐς Τάρταρον ἠερόεντα (*Il.* 8.13)

(3) ῥίψε δὲ μιν θυμῷ ἀκαχῶν ἐς Τάρταρον εὐρύν (*Th.* 868)

(4) τὸν δὲ λα]βῶν ἔρριψ' ἐς Τ[ά]ρταρον ἠερόεντα (Hes. fr. 30.22 M.–W.)

(5) τὸν ῥα [χ]ολω[σ]άμ[ενος/ ῥίψειν ἤμελ]λεν/Τ[ά]ρταρον ἔς (Hes. 54a.4f M.–W.)

All these poets use essentially the same elements to express the idea of hurling someone into Tartarus: the verb *rhipto* com-

<sup>5</sup> Clay 13; see also her introduction (3–16) and conclusion (267–70), where she discusses the rôle of divine time in hymn, theogonic epic, and heroic epic. She connects these complementary genres not in terms of their relative dates of composition but in terms of the periods of Olympian time that each represents. Theogonic epic describes how Zeus establishes his rule, through succeeding his father and defeating the Titans and Typhoeus; his new position of authority is symbolized by his division of *timai* among the other gods. By the time of Trojan war, the period covered by heroic epic, the other gods have received their *timai* and no longer pose any serious threat to Zeus' ultimate dominion. The Homeric Hymns occupy the period intervening. They depict the actual working out of the *timai* of individual gods, which the *Theogony* does not represent in detail and which has already occurred by the time of the *Iliad*.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of this problem see R. Janko, *Homer, Hesiod, and the Hymns* (Cambridge 1982), with the reviews of N. Postlethwaite, *JHS* 104 (1984) 192f; R. L. Fowler, *Phoenix* 37 (1983) 345ff; A. Hoekstra, *Mnemosyne* SER. 4 39 (1986) 158–64.

<sup>7</sup> The similarities in theme and diction in all of its occurrences suggest a common source for the motif; cf. R. Martin, "Hesiod, Odysseus, and the Instruction of Princes," *TAPA* 114 (1984) 29–48, who argues that the presence of the same two and a half lines in both Homer and Hesiod provides evidence that the two passages share a parallel common source; he locates this 'source' in the genre of speaking rather than in one particular text. Martin argues (30ff) that in oral poetics "similar themes create similar diction." See also G. Nagy, *Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore 1979) 1–6.

bined with an aorist participle, in the first half of the line, and in the second half a formulaic description of Tartarus: ἐς Τάρταρον ἠερόεντα or ἐς Τάρταρον εὐρύον. Their language, however, also displays a certain degree of flexibility. The position of the participle and verb varies from line to line, as does the tense of *rhipto* and the choice of participle, demonstrating that the line can be modified to encompass multiple shades of meaning. This flexibility suggests, instead of quotations from a fixed text, allusions to a common tradition, utilized slightly differently in each instance, depending on the constraints of context and genre.<sup>8</sup> Examination of the contexts of this line in other genres can help determine what that tradition might have been and how it influenced the hymnist's depiction of the relationship between Apollo and Hermes.

Apollo's speech in the hymn appears to depart from the usage of Hesiodic and Homeric poetry, where Zeus alone hurls or intends to hurl someone to Tartarus. There seems to be a further distinction between performing this action and merely threatening to do so. The significance of Apollo's unfulfilled threat to Hermes, along with his appropriation of Zeus' language, will become clearer when we explore the theogonic context of Zeus' actual dispatch of a victim to Tartarus and, in the heroic context of the *Iliad*, his threats to do so.<sup>9</sup>

The earliest instance of the motif, in terms of mythological time as we know it from preserved texts, describes Zeus hurling Typhoeus to Tartarus in order to prevent the monster from ruling Olympus. Typhoeus represents the last threat that Zeus must dispose of before he can establish his regime: for after Zeus has defeated the Titans, he recognizes that Typhoeus, son of Gaia and Tartarus (*Th.* 820f), is about to assume the rule over gods and mortals alike (836ff):

<sup>8</sup> Cf. S. Shelmerdine, "Odyssean Allusions in the Fourth Homeric Hymn," *TAPA* 116 (1986) 49–63, who discusses (49ff) Homeric aspects of the *Hymn*, not as intentional imitation, but as allusions to a common Odyssean tradition.

<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the difference between the occurrence of this action in theogonic narrative and in heroic speeches has to do with genre, strict narrative being more characteristic of theogonic epic, speeches being a major element in heroic epic. This raises the question of how we should categorize the *Hymn to Hermes*, which is notable among the other hymns for its emphasis on speeches. For the importance of speeches in epic see R. Martin, *The Language of Heroes* (Ithaca 1989) esp. 1–42.

καί νύ κεν ἔπλετο ἔργον ἀμήχανον ἥματι κείνῳ,  
καί κεν ὄ γε θνητοῖσι καὶ ἀθανάτοισιν ἄναξεν,  
εἰ μὴ ἄρ' ὄξυ νόησε πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε.

Zeus attacks Typhoeus with his characteristic weapons of thunder and lightning, βροντήν τε στεροπήν τε καὶ αἰθαλόεντα κεραυνόν (854). Finally, angered in his heart, Zeus hurls Typhoeus into wide Tartarus (868). After a description of the winds that result from this action (869–80), the poet describes Zeus' attainment of sovereignty (881–85):

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ῥα πόνον μάκαρες θεοὶ ἐξετέλεσσαν,  
Τιτῆνεςσι δὲ τιμῶν κρίναντο βίηφι  
δῆ ῥα τότε ἄτρυνον βασιλευμένῃ δὲ ἀνάσσειν  
Γαίης φραδμοσύνησιν Ὀλύμπιον εὐρύοπα Ζῆν  
ἀθανάτων· ὃ δὲ τοῖσιν ἐν διεδάσσατο τιμάς.

By the will of Gaia, the other gods urge Zeus to rule (ἀνάσσειν), as Typhoeus would have done without his intervention (ἄναξεν, 837). The destructive whirlwinds emanating from the defeated Typhoeus reveal the chaotic world that would have resulted if he had been victorious, “a world as turbulent as Tartarus.”<sup>10</sup> But Zeus creates order in place of this chaos by eliminating Typhoeus and dividing *timai* among the rest of the immortals. Although the poet explicitly links Zeus' new position to his defeat of the Titans, the delay of this description until after Typhoeus' annihilation suggests that the monster's removal is an equally important step towards Zeus' kingship.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> J.-P. Vernant, “The Union with Metis and the Sovereignty of Heaven,” in R. L. Gordon, ed., *Myth, Religion, and Society* (Cambridge 1981) 9; Vernant claims that his parentage, and his very nature, makes Typhoeus an agent of Chaos. Gaia represents the chthonic powers originally opposed to the Olympians; Tartarus, by association with Erebus and Night, represents Chaos (8f). See also Clay 66–71, who discusses this passage in connection with the *Hymn to Apollo*.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. R. Mondi, “The Ascension of Zeus and the Composition of Hesiod's Theogony,” *GRBS* 25 (1984) 325–44, who argues that the Titanomachy, Typhonomachy, and the defeat of Kronos represent separate, traditional narratives that Hesiod has joined together for the first time. This accounts for the inconsistencies in the narrative as a whole, such as the postponement of the division of *timai*, which could occur after the defeat of Kronos (453–500). The subsequent Titanomachy and Typhonomachy, however, would then be irrelevant. If we consider the Typhonomachy in Hesiod to be a reworking of a traditional song, it is conceivable that the hymnist knew of such a song also,

Thus in the *Theogony* this motif has associations of both physical and political power. Zeus uses physical force, in the form of hurling Typhoeus to Tartarus, to defeat successfully a threat and achieve political authority. Once he has achieved this authority he can apportion out the *timai* in “acknowledgement of his own *time* as the new θεῶν βασιλεύς.”<sup>12</sup>

The two Hesiodic fragments, probably from the *Catalogue of Women*, represent a period later in Zeus’ regime, when direct rebellion to his authority still occurs but is doomed to failure. The first, fr. 54a M.–W. (=P.Oxy. XXVIII 2495 fr. 1a), is very poorly preserved:<sup>13</sup>

οὐ π[ατρός  
 βρόν[την  
 Ζεὺς [..]οιβροντ[  
 τόν ῥα [χ]ολω[σ]άμ[ενος ]να  
 ῥίψειν ἤμελ[λεν ἀπ’ Ὀλύμ]που  
 Τ]άρατον ἔς, [θῆς νέρθε καὶ ἀτρυγέτιο θα]λάσσ[ης  
 σκ]ληρ[ον] δ’ ἐ[βρόντησε καὶ ὄβριμον, ἀμφὶ δὲ γαῖα  
 κ[ι]νήθ[η ]ρα  
 πάντες δ[’ ἔδδειςαν ]ς  
 ἀθάνατ[οι ]  
 ἔνθά κεν Ἀ]πόλλωνα κατέκτανε μητίετα Ζ]εὺς  
 εἰ μὴ ἄρ’]

Lobel, the original editor, determined its context by comparing the account in Apollodorus.<sup>14</sup> After Zeus has destroyed

---

one that used similar diction to describe Tartarus. Clay points out (13ff) the relevance of this scene and Zeus’ establishment of *timai* to the question of *timai* in the hymnic genre as a whole.

<sup>12</sup> Mondì (*supra* n.11) 342. The Titans too are eliminated as a threat by being imprisoned in Tartarus (*Th.* 713–25). In their case, however, the Hundred-Handers send them into the underworld by Zeus’ command. The verb is not *rhipto* but *pempo*.

<sup>13</sup> R. Merkelbach and M. L. West, *Fragmenta Hesiodica* (Oxford 1967).

<sup>14</sup> *Bibl.* 3.10.4: Ζεὺς δὲ φοβηθεὶς μὴ λαβόντες ἄνθρωποι θεραπείαν παρ’ αὐτοῦ βοηθῶσιν ἀλλήλοις, ἐκεραύνωσεν αὐτόν [Asclepius]. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὀργισθεὶς Ἀπόλλων κτείνει Κύκλωπας τοὺς τὸν κεραυνὸν Διὶ κατασκευάσαντας. Ζεὺς δὲ ἐμέλλησε ῥίπτειν αὐτόν εἰς Τάρταρον, δεηθείσης δὲ Λητοῦς ἐκέλευσεν αὐτόν ἐνιαυτὸν ἀνδρὶ θητεῦσαι. ὁ δὲ παραγενόμενος εἰς Φεράς πρὸς Ἄδμητον τὸν Φέρητος τούτῳ λατρεύων ἐποίμαине, καὶ τὰς θηλείας βόας πάσας διδυμοτόκους ἐποίησεν.

Asclepius, Apollo retaliates by killing the Cyclopes. In language similar to the fragment, Apollodorus says that Zeus was about to hurl Apollo to Tartarus: Ζεὺς δὲ ἐμέλλησε ρίπτειν αὐτὸν εἰς Τάρταρον. The use of *rhipto* in particular suggests that Apollodorus was familiar either with this text or with the tradition that lies behind the Tartarus motif. We cannot recreate for certain the larger context of the Hesiodic fragment; but if we accept the connection to Apollodorus' version of the story, βρόντην (2), relates to the overall theme of Zeus' authority. By killing the Cyclopes, Apollo destroys those who make his father's thunder and lightning, the symbols of Zeus' physical and political preeminence. As we have already seen, these weapons play an important rôle in Zeus' ability to dispose of Typhoeus (*Th.* 854). Since the names of the Cyclopes are the same as those of the weapons, Apollo attempts to annihilate the very instruments that allowed Zeus to establish and maintain his regime.<sup>15</sup> Apollo's actions constitute a threat to the power structure on Olympus, and only Leto's intervention saves him from a fate similar to that of Typhoeus.<sup>16</sup> Apollo's punishment is instead a year's servitude as the herdsman of Admetus' cattle.<sup>17</sup>

A second Hesiodic fragment varies the Tartarus motif: Zeus punishes a mortal by hurling him to Tartarus. This story does not directly comment on struggles within the Olympian cosmos, but it does represent the theme of an attempted incursion into Zeus' realm of power. Again Lobel determined the context of the fragment (*P. Oxy.* XXVIII 2481 fr. 1) through

<sup>15</sup> M. L. West, ed., *Hesiod, Theogony* (Oxford 1966) 207; cf. *Th.* 139ff for the importance of the Cyclopes to Zeus.

<sup>16</sup> The averted confrontation between father and son recalls *Hom. Hymn. Ap.* 1–9, where Apollo seems to threaten the Olympians with his bow, which Leto unstrings before any violence can occur. See Clay 19–29 for an examination of the critical debate surrounding this episode; she concludes that Apollo's threatening entrance and the subsequent diffusion of that threat evokes both the terror and joy of his epiphany.

<sup>17</sup> Perhaps the hymnist alludes to this story not only through the Tartarus motif, but also through his focus on Apollo's cattle as the issue that sparks the conflict between the two brothers; see n.33 *infra*. This less severe form of punishment also recalls *Il.* 21.441–60, where we learn that Zeus made Apollo and Poseidon slaves to Laomedon before the Trojan War. Both events occur at a time in Zeus' regime when permanent banishment to the underworld is no longer necessary; the shame of servitude to a mortal is enough to neutralize opposition to Zeus.

verbal similarities to Apollodorus' account,<sup>18</sup> where Salmoneus, a king in Thessaly, claims to be Zeus and demands that Zeus' sacrifices now be paid to him. Salmoneus even attempts to make his own thunder and lightning with cauldrons and leather hides. The king's impiety, like Apollo's actions, results from a desire to usurp the symbols of Zeus' power. Apollodorus does not mention Tartarus; he tells us only that Zeus punishes Salmoneus and all those in his settlement by striking them with a thunderbolt. But in the Hesiodic version Zeus singles out Salmoneus for the ultimate retaliation: he hurls him to Tartarus (fr. 30 M.-W. [= *P. Oxy.* XXVIII 2481 fr. 1.15–23]):<sup>19</sup>

βῆ δὲ κατ' Οὐλύμποιο [χο]λούμενος, αἶψα δ' ἴκανε  
 λαοὺς Σαλμωνῆος ἀτ[ασ]θάλου, οἳ τάχ' ἔμελλον  
 πείσεσθ' ἔργ' αἰδέηλα δι' ὑβ[ρ]ιστὴν βασιλῆα·  
 τοὺς δ' ἔβαλεν βροντῆι [τὲ κ]αὶ αἰθαλόεντι κεραυνῶι.  
 ὡς λαοὺς ἀπε]τίνεθ' ὑπερβ[ασίην] βασιλῆος.  
 ..... [...].ς παιδάς τε γ[υν]αῖκά τε οἰκῆάς τε,  
 ..... πόλιν καὶ δώμα[τ' ..]ίρρυτὰ θῆκεν αἰστώς,  
 τὸν δὲ λαβὼν ἔρριψ' ἐς Τ[ά]ρταρον ἠερόεντα,  
 ὡς μή τις βροτὸς ἄλλος [ἐ]ρίζοι Ζηνὶ ἄνακτι.

The poet states Zeus' motivation for punishing Salmoneus, the ὑβριστὴν βασιλῆα: Zeus wishes to ensure that no other mortal will ever compete with him in this way (23).<sup>20</sup> This admonitory

<sup>18</sup> *Bibl.* 1.9.7: Σαλμωνεύς δὲ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον περὶ Θεσσαλίαν κατόκει, πάραγενόμενος δὲ αὐθις εἰς Ἥλιον ἐκεῖ πόλιν ἔκτισεν, ὑβριστῆς δὲ ὢν καὶ τῷ Διὶ ἐξισοῦσθαι θέλων διὰ τὴν ἀσέβειαν ἐκολάσθη· ἔλεγε γὰρ ἑαυτὸν εἶναι Δία, καὶ τὰς ἐκείνου θυσίας ἀφελόμενος ἑαυτῷ προσέτασσε θύειν, καὶ βύρσας μὲν ἐξηραμμένας ἐξ ἄρματος μετὰ λεβήτων χαλκῶν σύρων ἔλεγε βροντᾶν, βάλλων δὲ εἰς οὐρανὸν αἰθομένας λαμπάδας ἔλεγεν ἀστράπτειν. Ζεὺς δὲ αὐτὸν κεραυνώσας τὴν κτισθεῖσαν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ πόλιν καὶ τοὺς οἰκῆτορας ἠφάνισε πάντας.

<sup>19</sup> Vergil (*Aen.* 6.577–94) also places Salmoneus in Tartarus.

<sup>20</sup> Note the dictional similarity between 30.17f M.-W. and *Th.* 514f:

ὑβριστὴν δὲ Μενόϊτιον εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς  
 εἰς Ἐρεβος κατέπεμψε βαλὼν ψολόεντι κεραυνῶι.

Here Zeus sends Menoetius, son of Iapetus and brother of Prometheus and Atlas (all rebels against Zeus), into Erebus because he is “insolent” (ὑβριστής) like Salmoneus. West (*supra* n.15: 310) points out that although Hesiod does not elaborate on Menoetius' offense, his nature alone may threaten Zeus' preeminence. Although the verb *rhupto* does not appear here and Menoetius goes to Erebus, this form of punishing insolence seems to be a variation on the Tartarus motif.

principle could also apply to the immortals whom Zeus hurls, or intends to hurl, into Tartarus. The act is effective on two levels. Physically, Zeus deprives his opponents of strength and banishes them permanently from Olympus. Symbolically, his victims serve as reminders of the irrevocable consequences, and ultimate failure, of any attempt to defy him. They become a warning against future rebellion.

In the *Iliad* we move into 'heroic time', a period in which the other gods may intend to oppose Zeus' will but abandon their opposition before Zeus inflicts any punishment. The Tartarus motif now takes on the symbolic function foreshadowed by the Salmoneus episode: it refers to the earlier theogonic time when Zeus actually did throw into Tartarus those who threatened his authority. But by the time of the Trojan War such threats no longer exist; Zeus' rule has been stabilized.<sup>21</sup> At the beginning of Book 8, Zeus gathers an assembly of the gods to warn them not to help either the Trojans or the Greeks in battle: anyone whom Zeus perceives (νόησω, 10) going apart from the gods will be punished.<sup>22</sup> He will either strike the culprits as they return to Olympus, "in no orderly fashion" (οὐ κατὰ κόσμον, 12; cf. *Hymn. Hom. Merc.* 255); or he will hurl the errant god or goddess into Tartarus (8.13–17):

ἢ μιν ἐλὼν ῥίψω ἐς Τάρταρον ἠερόεντα  
 τῆλε μάλ', ἦχι βάθιστον ὑπὸ χθονός ἐστι βέρεθρον,  
 ἔνθα σιδήρειαί τε πύλαι καὶ χάλκεος οὐδός,  
 τόσσον ἔνερθ' Ἀΐδεω ὅσον οὐρανός ἐστ' ἀπὸ γαίης·  
 γνώσεται ἔπειθ' ὅσον εἰμὶ θεῶν κάρτιστος ἀπάντων.

Zeus emphasizes the significance of threatening the gods with banishment to Tartarus by adding a three-line description of this region of the underworld (14–16).<sup>23</sup> This elaboration points to the theogonic connotations inherent in the threat itself. Commentators have noted that aspects of this conception of

<sup>21</sup> See Clay 12; Vernant (*supra* n.10) traces this stability to Zeus' consumption of Metis (*Tb.* 886–900): Zeus now embodies all the *metis* that others might employ in disputes over succession, "And so sovereignty ceases to be the prize in a perpetual struggle; it becomes a stable, enduring state" (2f).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *Tb.* 838, where Zeus perceives (νόησε) Typhoeus as a threat.

<sup>23</sup> For a discussion of this speech as the epitome of *mythoi* in the *Iliad* and on the evidence of Zeus' successful use of imagery and elaboration see Martin (*supra* n.9) 54f.

Tartarus resemble Hesiod's own account of the underworld in the *Theogony*:<sup>24</sup>

τόσσον ἔνερθ' ὑπὸ γῆς, ὅσον οὐρανός ἐστ' ἀπὸ γαίης·  
τόσσον γὰρ τ' ἀπὸ γῆς ἐς Τάρταρον ἠερόντα (720f; cf. 16)

ἔνθα δὲ μαρμάραι τε πύλαι καὶ χάλκεος οὐδός (811; cf. 15).

Instead of explaining these similarities as direct quotations, we should consider the possibility that both poets took these details, in addition to the *rhipto* motif, from a common tradition. We can imagine that this tradition was originally theogonic, since Tartarus plays a direct rôle in the actual theogonic narrative as the prison of the Titans and Typhoeus and the symbol of the end of the succession attempts.

Moreover, apart from this passage, Tartarus is named only one other time in heroic epic, again in a theogonic context. We can assume that its very presence in Zeus' speech would alert the audience to these allusions. At the end of Book 8, Zeus taunts Hera, saying that he would not care about her anger even if she should wander to the depths of Tartarus, where Iapetos and Kronos dwell (8.477–83):

ὡς γὰρ θέσφατόν ἐστι· σέθεν δ' ἐγὼ οὐκ ἀλεγίζω  
χωμένης, οὐδ' εἴ κε τὰ νείατα πείραθ' ἴκηαι  
γαίης καὶ πόντοιο, ἴν' Ἰάπετός τε Κρόνος τε  
ἦμενοι οὔτ' αὐγῆς Ὑπερίονος Ἡελίοιο  
τέρποντ' οὔτ' ἀνέμοισι, βαθύς δέ τε Τάρταρος ἀμφίς·  
οὐδ' ἦν ἔνθ' ἀφίκηαι ἀλωμένη, οὐ σευ ἔγωγε  
σκυζομένης ἀλέγω, ἐπεὶ οὐ σέο κύντερον ἄλλο.

With mention of Iapetos and Kronos, foremost of the Titans, Zeus refers to the Titanomachy and his elimination of theogonic threats to his power. The only inhabitants of Tartarus are those, like Iapetos and Kronos, whom Zeus imprisoned before or

<sup>24</sup> W. Leaf, ed., *The Iliad*<sup>2</sup> I–II (London 1900–02) I 324, comments on the striking similarities between this passage and the *Hymn to Hermes* (in terms of the *rhipto* motif), and concludes, “The author of one of these passages must have had the other before him—it is hard to say which. So with the unmistakable echoes in Hesiod: *Tb.* 720, 726, 732, 811.” Cf. West (*supra* n.15) 358f, 378.

during the establishment of his reign.<sup>25</sup> Tartarus is referred to once more in the *Iliad*, with the adjective ὑποταρταρίος (14.279). Hera swears an oath, calling by name all those beneath Tartarus who are called Titans. Here again, by associating Tartarus with the Titans, the poet recalls the theogonic succession story. In the context of heroic epic, Tartarus alludes to the violence that Zeus employed in the past in order to ensure the stable Olympian order that exists in heroic time.<sup>26</sup>

We can see that in the *Iliad*, the mention of Tartarus even without any threat recalls theogonic myths. There is additional evidence that the combination of *rhipto* and Tartarus would suggest former punishments of Zeus both to the poem's internal audience and to the poet's external audience, familiar with oral traditions. Elsewhere in the *Iliad* Zeus ejects from Olympus those who disobey him: he casts Hephaestus to Lemnos (1.590–94); he nearly tosses Hypnos into the sea (14.247–60); he would hurl to earth any of the gods who try to save Hera, whom Zeus has hung from Olympus with anvils tied to her feet (15.18–33);<sup>27</sup> and he casts Ate to the world of men (19.91–133). All these punishments that have actually been executed took place before the Trojan War and revolve around Hera's attempts to destroy Heracles.<sup>28</sup> All use a form of the verb *rhipto* to characterize Zeus' actions or intended actions: ῥίψε (1.591), ῥιπτάζων (14.257), ῥιπτασκον (15.23), ἔρριπεν (19.130). Lang considers the Heracles stories to be part of an older tradition. If we accept her analysis, *rhipto* in these passages, as well as in the theogonic setting centered on Tartarus,

<sup>25</sup> See Clay 12, who interprets this passage, following Leaf, to mean that Zeus would not care if Hera attempted to raise a revolt in Tartarus. I would suggest further that Zeus implies that Hera would only be wandering in Tartarus if she were banished there.

<sup>26</sup> See also *Il.* 5.898, with Leaf's comments (*supra* n.24: I 254) on ἐνέπτερος Οὐρανόων.

<sup>27</sup> See C. Whitman, "Hera's Anvils," *HSCP* 74 (1970) 37–42, for the cosmogonic and theogonic implications of the imagery in this story.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. M. Lang, "Reverberation and Mythology in the *Iliad*," in C. A. Rubino and C. W. Shelmerdine, ed., *Approaches to Homer* (Austin 1983) 140–61; Lang argues that the motif of hurling is particularly associated with the disposing of immortals (160). She explains (152) that the tales describing the wrath of Hera against Heracles are examples of an older tradition of Heracles as the "object of divine favor and hostility," which the poet of the *Iliad* used to suit his own purposes.

reveals a traditional mode of describing Zeus' punishments.<sup>29</sup> The wording of Zeus' threat in Book 8 would therefore recall not only theogonic imprisonments in Tartarus, but also other instances when he violently removed rebellious immortals from Olympus.

Zeus makes clear that the purpose of his speech to the assembled gods is to demonstrate his power (8.17, 27). Without specific mention of Typhoeus or the Titans, the image of Tartarus recalls the series of punishments that allowed Zeus to establish and consolidate his rule in the theogonic past. Yet he no longer needs to hurl anyone to Tartarus; instead he merely reminds his audience that his political standing is based upon former acts of physical force, acts that could be repeated in the future. Slatkin sees a similar function in the appearance of Briareos, one of the Hundred-Handers, in *Il.* 1.394–412. There Achilles recalls how the attempt of Hera, Poseidon, and Athena to bind up Zeus was thwarted by Thetis, who called up Briareos to sit beside Zeus on Olympus. The gods yielded immediately. Briareos did not need to harm them physically; his presence was a reminder of the theogonic succession myth in which the Hundred-Handers helped Zeus overthrow the Titans by placing them in Tartarus.<sup>30</sup> In this pre-Trojan War episode the sight of Briareos, together with his theogonic associations, dissuades the gods from once again trying to tie up Zeus. In the assembly of Book 8, Zeus averts not a direct physical threat, but rather defiance of his commands through a verbal recollection of the past. Succession attempts are obsolete, but Zeus can still refer to them to make his authority clear. The other gods do

<sup>29</sup> When recounting how Hera threw him from Olympus (the other instance of the motif of hurling from Olympus in the *Iliad*), Hephaestus says he fell "by the will of his mother"; *rhipto* is not used (*Il.* 18.395ff). But in the *Hymn to Apollo* (311–30), Hera recalls this same incident, using *rhipto* to describe her own actions (318). Perhaps she attempts thus to equate her power with Zeus', for the point of this speech is that Zeus did not respect her position when, apart from her, he gave birth to Athena. Hera now intends to assert her equality by bearing a preeminent child without Zeus (323–30). That child will be Typhoeus. Cf. Clay 67f.

<sup>30</sup> L. Slatkin, "The Wrath of Thetis," *TAPA* 116 (1986) 1–24, argues that "One can see Briareos' narrative function as a mirror of his dramatic function: as a reminder. The binding element in itself is a sufficient allusion to the succession myth, so that Briareos is included as a multiplication of the motif" (11). Cf. Clay 11 on the theogonic connotations of this episode.

not misunderstand his reference: they are struck to silence at the end of his speech, marvelling at its power (28f).<sup>31</sup>

Zeus' threat does not require a clear intention to enforce it in the future: instead it recalls a period in the past during which he performed similar actions. It refers to the moment in Olympian time when Zeus began to rule the gods and institutionalize their place in the cosmos through their *timai*. When Zeus says he will hurl someone to Tartarus, he alludes to his rôle as the supreme authority of the Olympian cosmos.<sup>32</sup> If the wording of this threat comes from a traditional source, and the audience of the *Iliad* was familiar with theogonic stories such as those preserved in Hesiod, Zeus' threat becomes all the more effective. The use of the Tartarus motif in one context would remind the audience of other similar stories originating from sources now lost to us.

What then does it mean for Apollo to threaten Hermes with Zeus' words in the *Hymn to Hermes*? On one level, it adds to the comic nature of the relationship between Apollo and Hermes. Apollo's use of Zeus's words, with all their connotations of physical and political power, highlights the incongruity of the hymnic setting. Apollo addresses Hermes lying in his cradle as "boy" (παῖ, 254). Hermes cannot be considered an audience on the scale of the assembled Olympian gods, nor an opponent on par with Typhoeus. Moreover, Apollo's elaboration of the threat does not contain the terrifying description of Tartarus that Zeus employed. Instead, he pictures Hermes in the underworld leading a group of little men: ἐρρήσεις ὀλίγοισι μετ' ἀνδράσιν ἡγεμονεύων (259). Where are Iapetos and Kronos? In Apollo's speech, Tartarus is used to mock Hermes rather than to frighten him, especially given that an important aspect of Hermes' *time* will be to lead the souls of the dead to the underworld. In fact at the end of the *Hymn* we learn that he alone of all the gods will be the messenger to Hades (572f). Therefore being in the underworld in charge of little men is a fate more fitting for Hermes than for any other Olympian.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. also Hera's reaction to Zeus' later mention of Tartarus; she does not respond (8.484). Note also that following the assembly of Book 8, the three gods who demonstrate their opposition to Zeus' command are Hera, Poseidon, and Athena, the same three gods who in an earlier time had attempted to bind Zeus.

<sup>32</sup> Martin (*supra* n.9: 54) points out that Zeus' use of symbolic rhetoric demonstrates his mastery of the "poetics of power": "The *muthos* of what 'might' happen is actually a projection of the current power configuration on Olympus."

Apollo assures Hermes that, once in Tartarus, neither his mother nor his father will be able to release him to the light (257f)—a particularly ironic warning when we remember that Hermes' father is Zeus, and that Zeus alone banishes rebels to Tartarus in the manner described by Apollo. If anyone could rescue Hermes from Tartarus, it would be Zeus.

We would expect such a ridiculous inversion of Zeus' threat to prove ineffectual, and we are not disappointed. In contrast to the assembled gods whom Zeus impresses with his infernal imagery, Hermes displays no fear at Apollo's rhetoric. Far from being speechless with awe, Hermes replies to Apollo with "cunning words" (μύθοισιν κερδαλέοισι, 260). He proceeds to lie, pleading ignorance about the cattle that Apollo has just commanded him to reveal (261–77). Apollo seems to admit defeat in this round; he replies to Hermes' speech with laughter (281). Apollo's words do not carry the weight of past deeds, the factor that makes Zeus' threat terrifying. Although in a position superior to Hermes, Apollo cannot refer to a political system in which he has sole authority. As the 'trial' scene later in the hymn demonstrates, Apollo and Hermes both must accede to Zeus' judgment (391–96). Ultimately Apollo too lives under the sway of the one whom he tries to imitate. This irony would be especially clear to an audience familiar with the tradition of Zeus' punishments, and perhaps even the story that Zeus once came close to casting Apollo into Tartarus, a punishment he avoided by serving as Admetus' herdsman.<sup>33</sup> Apollo's inversion of Zeus' threat adds to the humorous characterization of the god as an adolescent, brutish older brother unable to outwit the devious baby Hermes. His attempts to bully Hermes are ultimately as ineffectual as his intention to do violence to the child, thwarted by Hermes' strategic fart (293–98).<sup>34</sup>

Yet these comic elements do not satisfactorily explain the force of the theogonic imagery inherent in Apollo's threat. Why should Apollo in particular recall the former struggles of Zeus in this present conflict with Hermes? Perhaps we need to

<sup>33</sup> I owe this observation to Jenny Clay. Indeed, according to Antoninus Liberalis (23), Apollo was tending both his own and Admetus' cattle at the time of Hermes' theft. Apollo's confrontation with Hermes would, in this chronology, have occurred directly after his own confrontation with Zeus. Cf. Clay 112 n.57; see also *supra* n.17.

<sup>34</sup> Clay (132f) sees much of the comedy in the brothers' relationship in the conflict between *bie* and *metis* that they represent.

modify our original question and ask not only why the hymnist pits Apollo against Hermes, but also why he pictures two brothers vying for power in a hymnic setting. If we think of the problem in fraternal terms, the theogonic allusions take on greater significance especially for the issue of *time*, the issue that most concerns Hermes in the *Hymn* (cf. 172–75).

The Olympian power configuration depicted in the *Iliad* provides a parallel to the fraternal conflict between Apollo and Hermes, in the form of a dispute between two brothers: Zeus and Poseidon. Poseidon is the only god who defies Zeus' prohibition against fighting among mortals; he alone seems unconvinced by Zeus' references to Tartarus and former punishments.<sup>35</sup> Poseidon has been aiding the Greeks in the form of the mortal Chalkas, and the narrator characterizes this rebellion as that of a younger brother acting against his older sibling (13.354–57):

ἦ μὰν ἀμφοτέροισιν ὁμὸν γένος ἦ δ' ἴα πάτρη,  
ἀλλὰ Ζεὺς πρότερος γηγόνει καὶ πλείονα ἦδη  
τῷ ῥα καὶ ἀμφοδίην μὲν ἀλεξέμεναι ἀλέεινε,  
λάθρη δ' αἰὲν ἔγειρε κατὰ στρατόν, ἀνδρὶ ἐοικώς.

The narrator connects the course of the human fighting to the opposition between Zeus and Poseidon, “two powerful sons of Kronos” (345). Their fraternal relationship defines the two gods in this setting, yet they clearly do not have an equal standing. The discrepancy in their power is accounted for by their birth order: although they have the same parentage, Zeus was born earlier and knows more (354f). Moreover, because of their unequal position, Poseidon avoids a face-to-face contest with Zeus; instead, he fights among the Greeks secretly (λάθρη, 352, 357). As a younger, inferior brother, Poseidon chooses an indirect mode of rebellion. Here we can see a parallel to Hermes' status as thief: one who acts at night and literally covers his tracks (see e.g. *Hymn. Hom. Merc.* 13ff). Like Poseidon, another ‘younger brother’, Hermes lacks the authority, familial or political, that would allow him to enter into an open contest with Apollo. Deceit is an appropriate weapon for him to employ.

<sup>35</sup> Hera is forced to end her opposition when Zeus awakens after she has seduced him. He reminds her of the time when he suspended her from Olympus with anvils attached to her feet. See *supra* n.27.

If we recall the implications of the Tartarus motif, we realize that the poet's explanation of Zeus' superiority over Poseidon only tells part of the story. In Book 13 the poet stresses that Zeus presides over Poseidon by virtue of his earlier birth, yet elsewhere in the *Iliad* we have seen allusions to the theogonic period in which Zeus attained his power through such acts of physical force as hurling Typhoeus to Tartarus. He becomes king at the urging of the other gods (*Th.* 883) in order to end the cycle of violence and discord. Furthermore, after defeating the Titans, Zeus swallows Metis (*Th.* 886–90), thus appropriating her essence and preventing the possibility of a further succession.<sup>36</sup> Zeus knows more not only because he is older, but also because he has absorbed the intelligence embodied in Metis.

Further, any reference to the family history of Zeus and Poseidon recalls the highly unusual circumstances surrounding their births. In the theogonic tradition as Hesiod presents it, Zeus was not the first but the last born son of Kronos (*Th.* 453–58). Zeus becomes the oldest only when the other children, including Poseidon, are swallowed by Kronos, while Zeus remains free to overthrow his father.<sup>37</sup> The representation of Zeus as eldest son of Kronos inevitably alludes to the manner in which Zeus succeeded his father as ruler of Olympus. We should therefore be wary of taking at face value Zeus' claim to an authority based on seniority.

The poet pits Zeus and Poseidon against one another as brothers, while suggesting also that their relative positions of power result not from the accident of their births, but from Zeus' specific actions and intelligence. The fraternal imagery recurs when Zeus, having lost patience with Poseidon's lack of respect for his threat, tries to get Poseidon off the battlefield. Zeus sends down Iris to urge his brother to reconsider his opposition to one clearly superior to himself (15.158–67):

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Clay 13, 67; Vernant (*supra* n.10) 1–6.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. West (*supra* n.15) 293: "The idea that the regurgitation was a second birth may have been developed so that Zeus, who grew up before any of these secondary births, could be counted as the eldest as well as the youngest." Cf. also *Hymn. Hom. Ven.* 22f, where Hestia is called both the first born and youngest child of Kronos, *i.e.*, she was the first whom Rhea bore and the first whom Kronos swallowed, and therefore the last to be vomited up. See Clay 161f.

βάσκ' ἴθι, Ἴρι ταχεῖα, Ποσειδάωνι ἄνακτι  
 πάντα τάδ' ἀγγεῖλαι, μηδὲ ψευδάγγελος εἶναι.  
 παυσάμενόν μιν ἄνωχθι μάχης ἠδὲ πτολέμοιο  
 ἔρχεσθαι μετὰ φῦλα θεῶν ἢ εἰς ἄλα δῖαν.  
 εἰ δέ μοι οὐκ ἐπέεσσ' ἐπιπέισεται, ἀλλ' ἀλογήσει,  
 φραζέσθω δὴ ἔπειτα κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν  
 μή μ' οὐδὲ κρατερός περ ἔων ἐπιόντα ταλάσση  
 μείναι, ἐπεὶ εὐ φημι βίη πολὺ φέρτερος εἶναι  
 καὶ γενεῇ πρότερος· τοῦ δ' οὐκ ὄθεται φίλον ἦτορ  
 ἴσον ἐμοὶ φάσθαι, τόν τε στυγέουσι καὶ ἄλλοι.

Zeus admits that Poseidon is κρατερός, but describes himself as φέρτερος πολὺ βίη (164f).<sup>38</sup> If we understand φέρτερος as a term that denotes preeminence in social or political standing, the claim to be “better by far in force” would refer to Zeus’ position as ruler of the Olympians, as well as the physical force he used to attain that position. Zeus adds that he was born before Poseidon (166), manipulating the familial imagery employed earlier by the narrator, and alluding to the succession myth associated with his birth.

The explanation for this emphasis on familial imagery can be found in Poseidon’s reply to Iris. When she repeats Zeus’ words to Poseidon (181ff; cf. 165ff), Poseidon’s response focuses on his fraternal connection with Zeus. He does not mention the familiar theogonic succession story, but appeals instead to their common parentage as proof of his equality with Zeus (185–99):

ὦ πόποι ἦ ῥ' ἀγαθός περ ἔων ὑπέροπλον ἔειπεν  
 εἴ μ' ὁμότιμον ἔοντα βίη ἀέκοντα καθέξει.  
 τρεῖς γάρ τ' ἐκ Κρόνου εἰμὲν ἀδελφoί οὓς τέκετο Ῥέα  
 Ζεὺς καὶ ἐγώ, τρίτατος δ' Ἀΐδης ἐνέροισιν ἀνάσσω.  
 τριχθὰ δὲ πάντα δέδασται, ἕκαστος δ' ἔμμορε τιμῆς·  
 ἦτοι ἐγὼν ἔλαχον πολὴν ἄλα ναίεμεν αἰεὶ  
 παλλομένων, Ἀΐδης δ' ἔλαχε ζόφον ἠερόεντα,  
 Ζεὺς δ' ἔλαχ' οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἐν αἰθέρι καὶ νεφέλῃσι·  
 γαῖα δ' ἔτι ξυνή πάντων καὶ μακρὸς Ὀλυμπός.  
 τῷ ῥα καὶ οὐ τι Διὸς βέομαι φρεσίν, ἀλλὰ ἔκηλος

<sup>38</sup> Cf. the opposition drawn by Nestor between Agamemnon and Achilles (1.280f). Nestor advises Achilles not to fight against Agamemnon; even though Achilles is κρατερός, Agamemnon is φέρτερος because he rules over many.

καὶ κρατερός περ ἑὼν μενέτω τριτάτη ἐνὶ μοίρῃ.  
 χερσὶ δὲ μή τί με πάγχυ κακὸν ὡς δειδισσέσθω·  
 θυγατέρεσσιν γάρ τε καὶ υἷασι βέλτερον εἶη  
 ἐκπάγλοις ἐπέεσσιν ἐνισσέμεν οὐς τέκεν αὐτός,  
 οἱ ἔθεν ὀτρύνοντος ἀκούσονται καὶ ἀνάγκη.

Poseidon calls himself equal in *time* to Zeus (ὁμότιμος, 186). He then refers to the three (τρῆς) brothers born of Kronos (187), and the corresponding three-way (τριχθὰ) division of *time* between them (189). Poseidon stresses that each of the brothers received their realm by lot: παλλομένων (191), ἔλαχον (190), ἔλαχε (191f). He takes great pains to avoid the impression that any specific individual controlled the apportionment of *timai* among the brothers (cf. the passive δέδασται, 189). It was a matter of luck, in which personal attributes of age or strength played no rôle.<sup>39</sup> According to Hesiod's theogonic account, as we have already seen, *Zeus* was responsible for the distribution of *time* among the immortals after his defeat of the Titans and Typhoeus. In the *Theogony*, *Zeus* offers to honor those gods who help him overthrow the Titans, whether they already had *timai* under the rule of Kronos, or have been without privileges up to this point (*Th.* 392–96; cf. West [*supra* n.15] 274ff). Even if the three brothers received their honors by lot during the reign of Kronos, their possession of *timai* in the heroic time of the *Iliad* ultimately results from *Zeus*' reconfiguration of the cosmos (*Th.* 112, 885). Moreover in the *Iliad*, *Zeus* clearly controls all the gods and Olympus, despite Poseidon's assertion here that the earth and Olympus are common to the three brothers. In fact Poseidon earlier refuses to fight against *Zeus*, saying that he is πολὺ φέρτερος (8.211). In less heated moments, Poseidon recognizes *Zeus*' supremacy.

<sup>39</sup> Clay sees a connection between these lines (187–95) and Hermes' distribution by lot of the portions of his feast/sacrifice (κληροπαλεῖς, *Hymn. Hom. Merc.* 129). According to Clay (121), "the casting by lots presupposes a community of equals and ignores the existence of hierarchical differences among its members." She points out (122) in relation to both Poseidon and Hermes that "the appeal to lots is most effective in the mouth of an underdog." While I accept Clay's comparison of the two passages, I suggest that their connection goes beyond the feast/sacrifice scene. See also Nagy (*supra* n.7) 127–34, for the relationship between a feast (*dais*) and the verb *dedastai*, and for discussion of the related terms *aisa* and *moira*, which also occur in this passage. Cf. Callimachus' ironic elaboration of the difference between the Hesiodic and Homeric accounts at *Jov.* 60–67.

Poseidon characterizes the relationship between himself, Hades, and Zeus, as one of brothers joined in equality. He does this at the moment when he is being summoned by the sovereign power of heaven and the entire cosmos, and must admit defeat in the face of Zeus' superior will. Poseidon presents a selective explanation for how he obtained his *time* in order to gloss over the evident imbalance of power between himself and Zeus. Iris, however, chides Poseidon for his speech. She asks if he really wants her to report his words to Zeus. Her words bring us back to the *Hymn to Hermes* (201–04):

οὕτω γὰρ δὴ τοι γαιήοχε κυανοχαίτα  
 τόνδε φέρω Διὶ μῦθον ἀπηνέα τε κρατερόν τε,  
 ἧ τι μεταστρέψεις; στρεπταὶ μὲν τε φρένες ἔσθλων.  
 οἶσθ' ὡς πρεσβυτέροισιν Ἐρινύες αἰὲν ἔπονται.

Iris calls Poseidon's speech a *μῦθον ἀπηνέα* (202). she lets him know that his claims of equality to Zeus are unwise. To apply the adjective "hard" to the marked word *mythos* draws attention to the rashness of Poseidon's words.<sup>40</sup> The only other instance in Homer and the *Homeric Hymns*, as well as Hesiod, in which *apeneus* is applied to *mythos* occurs in the *Hymn to Hermes*. Hermes' reply to Apollo's threat to hurl him to Tartarus begins: Λητοῖδῃ τίνα τοῦτον ἀπηνέα μῦθον ἔειπας (261). The speeches of Poseidon and Apollo as thus described display similarities, since both speak unreasonably. In an arrogant tone Poseidon asserts his equality to Zeus in a world where Zeus has the ultimate authority. Apollo tries to appropriate some of that authority by using a threat that, as we have seen in other instances, belongs to the realm of Zeus. As both Iris' and Hermes' replies demonstrate, the speeches of Poseidon and Apollo fail. The speakers lack the force—Zeus' force—that they attempt to assert.

In pointing out to Poseidon the inevitability of his acquiescence to Zeus, Iris presents this imminent subjugation as the

<sup>40</sup> For Zeus to receive this *mythos* would conflict with the power structure of Olympus. According to Martin (*supra* n.9: 48ff), Zeus issues the most frequent command-*mythoi* in this poem, and no one ever directs such a *mythos* towards him. Poseidon's wish that Zeus remain in his own realm, and threaten only his children, would constitute such an unprecedented command if Iris were to relate his speech to Zeus.

natural result of Poseidon's position within the family. She invokes the Furies in their capacity as defenders of familial relationships by reminding Poseidon that the Furies always follow elders (πρεσβυτέροισιν, 204).<sup>41</sup> Here the adjective can be translated as 'older brothers'. Again this form of the adjective appears in the *Hymn to Hermes*, and nowhere else in Homer, Hesiod, and the *Hymns*. Apollo urges Hermes to teach him to play the lyre, saying (456–62):

νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ οὖν ὀλίγος περ ἔων κλυτὰ μῆδεα οἶδας,  
 ἴζε πέπον καὶ μῦθον ἐπαίνει πρεσβυτέροισι.  
 νῦν γάρ τοι κλέος ἔσται ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι  
 σοὶ τ' αὐτῶι καὶ μητρί· τὸ δ' ἀτρεκέως ἀγορεύσω·  
 ναὶ μὰ τόδε κρανέϊνον ἀκόντιον ἧ μὲν ἐγὼ σε  
 κυδρὸν ἐν ἀθανάτοισι καὶ ὄλβιον ἡγεμονεύσω,  
 δώσω τ' ἀγλαὰ δῶρα καὶ ἐς τέλος οὐκ ἀπατήσω.

Apollo placates Hermes: despite his small size, Hermes knows great things. But now he should honor the words of his elders (or again elder brothers). Both Iris' and Apollo's statements have the appearance of generalized sayings to promote respect for elders: "the Furies always follow elders," "honor the words of your elders."<sup>42</sup> Such general 'truths' account for the gods' inferior positions by placing them within a hierarchy based on age and birth order. Yet the players in both poems know well the means through which Zeus created the Olympian order and his position at its head. Apollo's assurances that honoring his speech will lead to fame and gifts for Hermes and his mother overlook the fact that no such generosity would be possible without the intervention of Zeus.

The poet of the *Iliad* chooses to describe Zeus' victory over Poseidon as the respect an older brother deserves from a younger brother. The familial construct makes it easier for Poseidon to become reintegrated into the assembly of gods who obey the commands of Zeus, albeit with varying degrees of willingness. While surrendering to Zeus' clear physical and political superiority, Poseidon can still claim, however weakly, that he and Zeus as brothers are "equal in portion" (ἰσόμορον)

<sup>41</sup> Leaf (*supra* n.24) II 118; see also I 404.

<sup>42</sup> Martin (*supra* n.9: 42) contrasts Poseidon's *mythos* with Iris' words, identified as *epea* by Poseidon. Martin suggests that such gnomic statements are characteristic of *epea*.

and have been allotted an equal share of honor (ὁμῆ ἄσῃ, 209). The picture of familial division of *timai* has been superimposed upon the mythological explanation for Zeus' dominance not only over Poseidon, but over all the gods. For we have seen the poet alluding, both here and elsewhere in the *Iliad*, to Zeus' theogonic victories over those who challenged him. The two explanations are not necessarily contradictory. They differ in their emphasis on whether Zeus became preeminent because of his age or his personal attributes and past deeds.

Therefore when the hymnist accounts for the division of power between Apollo and Hermes as the result of their fraternal relationship, he invokes an image that other poets have used to make the (re)integration of a god into the Olympian order more palatable. Although Hermes' place in the Olympic pantheon cannot equal Apollo's, for political (or from the hymnist's point of view cultic) considerations, this discrepancy can be explained as his predetermined allotment as the most youthful member of a family. Hermes seems to recognize this when he charms Apollo with his lyre. Hermes sings a theogony (427–33), in which he describes the issue most vital to him, how the gods obtained their apportionment of honor (428). He celebrates the gods according to their seniority (κατὰ πρέσβιν, 431).<sup>43</sup> Hermes' theogony does not refer to the succession myths or to Zeus' exertion of physical force and subsequent distribution of *timai*; instead it recalls the births of all the gods in order of their age. Hermes' own portion of *time* then, particularly in relation to Apollo, is a function of his age, not any inherent weakness or inferiority.

As in the story of the distribution of realms between Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades, familial connections play an important rôle in the hymn's central concern: Hermes' *time*. When Apollo attempts to assert as his own the power by which Zeus rules Olympus, we realize that the metaphor for this authority is at once political and familial. At the beginning of the *Hymn*,

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Clay 138: "Hermes' theme is nothing less than the ordered cosmos and the pantheon, in which each god possesses his own share of *moira*. Organized as it is on the principle of seniority, the song must end with the culminating event of theogony: Hermes' own birth and his accession to his own destined *moira* within the pantheon. The song itself is the vehicle of its own ends, for it will bring about the exchange that will form the basis for Hermes' *timai*."

Hermes has stated his desire to obtain *time* equal to Apollo's (172–75):

... ἀμφὶ δὲ τιμῆς  
κἀγὼ τῆς ὀσίης ἐπιβήσομαι ἧς περ Ἀπόλλων.  
εἰ δέ κε μὴ δώσησι πατὴρ ἐμός, ἦ τοι ἔγωγε  
πειρήσω, δύναμαι, φηλητέων ὄρχαμος εἶναι.

Hermes assures his mother that if his father does not grant him these honors, he will steal what he can from Apollo, becoming the prince of thieves. Hermes' desire to enter into the Olympian order is stated in terms of a dissatisfied younger sibling, wanting his father to treat him as an equal of his brother. That Hermes' ultimate goal in defying his brother is his integration into the Olympian order becomes clear when he requests that their conflict be brought to Zeus (312; Clay 134f). On their way to Olympus, the fraternal connection of Apollo and Hermes is stressed; for the first time they are explicitly joined as brothers (322f):

αἴψα δὲ τέρθρον ἴκοντο θυώδεος Ὀυλύμποιο  
ἐς πατέρα Κρονίωνα Διὸς περικαλλέα τέκνα.

Also for the first time, Hermes will gain access to his father's house and the recognition of his paternity that will lead to his acquisition of *timai*: familial and political acceptance are inextricably linked.

Familial imagery is apparent both in Apollo's misguided attempt to assume the position of his father in relation to his younger brother, and in Hermes' desire to gain his father's favor and achieve equality with his older brother. Here we have the motivation for the hymnist's (or the tradition's) choice to begin the hymn with the opposition of these two, in a context that we would expect to glorify Hermes primarily. Apollo and Hermes' fraternity symbolizes the overarching concern not only of this hymn, but indeed of all the *Homeric Hymns*.<sup>44</sup>

The comparison of Apollo and Hermes' fraternal relationship to that between Zeus and Poseidon reminds us finally of their differences. As we have seen, Zeus holds a unique position within the Olympian family and within the cosmos. His power

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Clay 15: "At the core of each [hymn] lies a concern with the acquisition or redistribution of *timai* within the Olympian cosmos."

is absolute, whereas the superiority of Apollo over Hermes has limits. Ultimately Zeus has control over both Apollo and Hermes; their reconciliation comes only after they approach their father. He puts an end to their quarreling with the nod of his head (395f), and he orchestrates and gives his approval to their friendship, which continues until the present day, after the exchange of the staff for the lyre (508–12, 574f). Most importantly it is Zeus who grants Hermes his *timai* at the end of the hymn (569–73).<sup>45</sup> The king of the Olympians acts as the father of two rebellious sons who must learn to accept one another in order to ensure the stability of the family.

Fraternal sparring signals the crisis that occurs when the order of the cosmos must be shifted in some way. As eldest son, Apollo cannot hope to emulate his father too closely, for that would lead to another succession. On the other hand, Hermes, like Poseidon, can never achieve equality with his older brother, the only god who knows the counsel of Zeus (*Hymn. Hom. Merc.* 535ff). This familial metaphor highlights the sort of accommodation of individual gods characteristic of hymnic time, in contrast to the finality and violence of theogonic transitions.<sup>46</sup>

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY  
*July, 1992*

<sup>45</sup> See T. W. Allen *et al.*, edd., *The Homeric Hymns* (Oxford 1936) 348: there is a lacuna after 568 and a main verb must be provided: "The subject can hardly be other than Zeus." See also Clay 149f, who sees Zeus' presence here as affirming the Olympian orientation of this hymn.

<sup>46</sup> I would like to thank Jenny Clay and Leslie Kurke for their comments and suggestions for improving this paper, and to give special thanks to Richard Martin for his generous criticism of several earlier versions.