

A Survey of the Concept of Zeus
in the Theology of the Iliad

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Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to determine exactly what Homer's¹ idea of the power of Zeus, the chief god of the Greek pantheon, is. This will be done in three steps: the first being an anthropological investigation of the origin of the idea of Zeus; the second being an analysis of the functions and powers of Zeus as viewed in the Iliad; and the third being a study of the relation between Fate and the power of Zeus to control destiny as it is described in the Iliad.

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Chapter I:

The Origins of the Idea of Zeus

The archeological work of Schliemann has destroyed the concept of the Homeric poems as the work of primitive Greece. Soon after 1500 B.C., the eastern portions of Greece, the islands, and the coast of Asia Minor were highly civilized. Literary evidence for this lies in the fact that Homer's noblemen are not primitive men. Their life styles are the result of a long development with Eastern and Egyptian influences. Scenes of luxury and mentions of luxurious items are common in Homer.¹ (As examples of this, we might cite Il. II, 42-45 and Il. VI, 497-99.) The origin of the Greek idea of Zeus, then, is not to be found in this period. We must go back far beyond Homer to do so.

A common speculation among historians of Greek religion, one which linguistic and literary evidence seems to corroborate, is that the idea of Zeus originated from a most primitive worship of the sky, which was seen as a living being with absolute power over man's well-being. Arthur Cook presents an admirable exposition and defense of this position in his work Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion:

When those who first used the word Zeús went out into the world and looked abroad, they found themselves over-arched by the blue and brilliant sky, a luminous Something fraught with incalculable possibilities of weal or woe. It cheered them with its steady sunshine. It scared them with its flickering fires. It fanned their cheeks with cool breezes.

or set all knees a-tremble with reverberating thunder. It mystified them with its birds winging their way in ominous silence or talking secrets in an unknown tongue. It paraded before man's eyes a splendid succession of celestial phenomena, and underwent for all to see the daily miracle of darkness and dawn. Inevitably, perhaps instinctively, they would regard it with awe -- that primitive blend of religious feelings -- and would go on to conciliate it by any means in their power.²

The fact that the name "Ζεός" is derived from the Indo-European root dī, meaning "to shine", lends credence to this argument. The existence of a whole series of related words in Indo-European languages meaning "day" or "sky" further strengthens this position. These words include the Greek ἔνδιος ("at mid-day"); εὐδίας ("clear sky"); the Latin sub divo ("under the open sky"); dies ("day"); Welsh diw ("day"); Breton dez ("day"); Cornish det ("day"); Irish indiu ("today"); Gothic sin-teins ("daily"); Lithuanian dienà ("day"); Slavonic dini, ("day"); Albanian dite, ("day"); Armenian tiv, ("day"); and Old Indian divá, ("on the day"); divám ("day, sky").³ Furthermore, from the adjective ἔνδιος are derived the verbs ἐνδιόχειν ("to take a mid-day nap"), ἐνδιῆν ("to live in the open air"), and ἐνδιόθν, ("to grow up in the open air"). "ἔνδιος itself is probably related to ἐν Δίῃ in the same way as ἐννόχιος is related to ἐν νυκτί or ἐνάλιος to ἐν ἁλί. Therefore, ἔνδιος probably originally meant "in the Zeus" or "in the bright sky", then passing into the sense "in broad daylight", or "at mid-day".⁴

Closely akin to the noun Ζεός is the adjective δῖος, which properly means "belonging to Zeus". In the tragedians it bears this meaning, e.g. βοδλευμα μὲν τὸ Δῖον, Ἡφαίστου δὲ χεῖρ,

(Prometheus Bound) 619); ἀνάθημα Δίου παίδος (Ion 1144). But in Homer, why does it mean "bright or "glorious" without necessarily any restriction to a property of a personal Zeus?⁵ Cook claims that the reason the word bore this more general meaning in Homer is that it was formed before Zeus became a personal god; he was still the Zeus, the radiant sky with an impersonal life of its own. At first, δῖος meant "belonging to the bright sky"; a vestige of this primary meaning is still to be found in the frequent Homeric phrases αἰθέρος ἐκ δῖης (Il. XVI, 365; cf. Od. XIX, 540) and ἥως ὅτε δῖα φανήη (Il. XXIV, 417; cf. Il. IX, 240, 662; XI, 723; XVIII, 255; Od. IX, 151, 306, 436; XI, 375; XII, 7; XVI, 368; XIX, 50, 342). The transition in meaning from brightness to glory or splendor in general is not hard to follow. Then, when Zeus came to be considered a personal sky-god, the way was open for δῖος to take on the more restricted meaning "of the god Zeus".⁶

In his History, Herodotus describes a cult of the sky which the Persians practiced. The similarity between what he describes and the sky-worship we have postulated is striking:

Πέρσαι δὲ οἶδα νόμοισι τοιοῖσιδε χρεαζόμενους, ἀγάλματα μὲν καὶ νηοὺς καὶ βωμοὺς οὐκ ἐν νόμῳ ποιευμένους ἰδρύεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖσι ποιέειν μαρτήν ἐπιφέρουσι, ὡς μὲν ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν, ὅτι οὐκ ἀνθρωποφυέας ἐνόμισαν τοὺς θεοὺς κατὰ περ οἱ Ἕλληνας εἶναι· οἱ δὲ νομίζουσι Διὶ μὲν ἐπὶ τὰ ὑψηλότεα τῶν ὀρέων ἀναβαίνοντες θυσίας ἔρδειν, τὸν κύκλον πάντα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ Δία καλέοντες· θύουσι δὲ ἡλίῳ τε καὶ σελήνῃ καὶ γῇ καὶ πυρὶ καὶ ὕδατι καὶ ἀνέμοισι. τοῦτοι μὲν δὲ θύουσι μόνον αἱ ἀρχαὶ, ἐπιμεμαθήκασιν δὲ καὶ τῇ οὐρανῇ· θύειν, παρὰ τε Ἀσσυρίων μαθόντες καὶ Ἀραβίων...

I know that the Persians follow these customs. It is not their way to make and set up statues, temples, or altars. On the contrary, they consider those who do so to be fools, since, as it seems to me, they do not regard the gods as being human in form, in distinction to the Greek idea. It

is their practice to go up to the highest peaks of the mountains to offer sacrifice to Zeus, by which name they call the whole orb of the sky. It is their practice to offer sacrifice to the sun, to the moon, the earth, to fire and water and the winds. To these alone have they sacrificed from the beginning; they have now learned to sacrifice to the Heavenly Woman. This practice was acquired from the Assyrians and the Arabs.⁸

It is generally assumed that Herodotus calls the supreme Persian deity "Zeus" sheerly out of habit. But it is possible that in his travels, he heard in Persia a name for the sky god so similar to "Zeus" that he thought Zeus to be the actual name of the Persian sky god. It is, in fact, most probable that the Persians worshipped the sky under the name of Dyaus.⁹

Homer's manner of referring to meteorological phenomena provides further argument for the hypothesis that the Greeks originally called the whole arc of the heavens "Zeus". Homer rarely uses the impersonal "It snows" or "It rains"; most frequently he says "Zeus snows" or "Zeus rains". Several examples follow:

...ὅτε τ' ᾠρετο μητίετα Ζεὺς
 νιφέμεν, ἀνθρώποισι πιφασκόμενος τὰ ἄ κῆλα·
 κοιμήσας δ' ἀνέμους χέει ἔμπεδον, ὄφρα καλύψῃ
 ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων κορυφὰς καὶ πρόονας ἄκρους

...when Zeus the counselor bestirs himself to snow, showing his darts to men. Having hushed the winds, he pours forth snow steadily, until he has hidden the peaks of the highest mountains and the lofty cliffs. (Il. XII, 279-82)

ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἂν Ἀστράπτῃ πόσις Ἥρης ἡΰκόμοιο,
 τεύχων ἢ πολὺν ὄμβρον ἀθέσφατον ἢ χάλαν
 ἢ νιφετόν...

Just as when the lord of Hera of the fair tresses lightens, making much terrifying rain, or hail, or snow... (Il. X, 5-7)

...ὅς δ' ἄρα Ζεὺς
συνεχές...

Zeus rained continuously... (Il. XII, 25 f.)

It remains for us now to trace the transition from Zeus as the bright sky to Zeus as a personal god. Anthropomorphism had its starting point in animism. Animism is that manner of conceiving of the gods which models their inner nature after that of man.¹⁰ Animism arose when primitive man perceived a natural phenomenon, which either by its rarity or by its connection to his own interests, struck his mind very strongly. Knowing no movement that is not caused by will power, primitive man tended to postulate a person who, by an exercise of his will, caused the phenomenon to occur. Besides assuming that all natural phenomena are caused by some human-like will, primitive man also assumed that frequently recurring effects are to be attributed to the same living and volitional producers. Man then came to attribute human passions, designs, instincts, and inclinations to them in their capacity of exercising effective power. These gods then became objects of wonder and admiration; love or fear were accorded them, depending on whether their operations were beneficial or harmful. Man felt especially compelled to win the favor and avert the potential hostility of the great natural forces (e.g., the sun, the sky, waters, etc.). Likening these powers to his earthly masters, he essayed to invoke their protection by thanking them for their past benefactions and by begging their forgiveness when he feared he might have offended them. ¹¹

Objects of nature worship were multiplied almost ad infinitum. Forests, waters, and fields were full of them. But primitive man also came to understand that his welfare was dependent on things other than sense-objects. Illness would seize him -- then depart. Game would become scarce -- then plentiful. His emotions would cause him to do things which he otherwise would not do.¹²

Two other developments further refined the Greek idea of the gods. Once primitive thought had endowed the gods with human-like wills and emotions, it was easy to attribute human form to them also. (Some suggest that the development of the plastic arts played a significant role in the attribution of human form to the gods.¹³) This, of course, was a slow process. Only when man's culture had advanced to that stage where he could take pride in his manner of life -- only when he had progressed past the state of living in semi-starvation could he imagine the gods to be similar to himself.¹⁴ The gradual development of culture also brought about the drawing of a distinction between man and the animals; man is set above the animals, and it becomes repugnant for men to visualize the gods in animal form. When this stage is reached, anthropomorphism either comes to the fore, or else, as happened in Egypt and India, it blends with the conception of the gods in animal and other shapes. Anthropomorphism then is partially external -- in its manner of visualizing the gods -- and partly internal -- in its conception of the gods' psychology and history.¹⁵

The other important refinement in the Greek idea of the gods was the separation of divine spirits from the objects of nature worship. Instead of worshipping volitional and conscious bodies of nature, man came to worship spirits and gods whose habitation is confined to a natural object, which they supposedly used as their instruments. Thus the identification between the god and the external object was destroyed; they were then related as tenant and abode. The god becomes more independent of the destiny of the object; his sphere of operations is no longer confined to it, but he obtains an allowance of free action.

Several verses of the fifth Homeric Hymn, which is dedicated to Aphrodite are very important in regard to this separation of god and natural object:

τὸν μὲν, ἐπὴν δὴ πρῶτον ἶδῃ φᾶος ἡελίοιο,
 Νύμφαι μιν θρέψουσιν ὄρεσσι βροτοῖσι βαθυκόλποι,
 αἳ τόδε ναιετάουσιν ὄρος μέγα τε χάθεόν τε.
 αἳ δ' οὔτε θνητοῖς οὔτ' ἀθανάτοισιν ἐπονται.
 δῆρ' οὖν μὲν ζῶουσι καὶ ἄμβροτον εἶδ' ἔδουσι
 καὶ τε μετ' ἀθανάτοισι καλὸν χορὸν ἐρρώσαντο.
 τῇσι δὲ Σειληνοὶ καὶ ἑσπερίος Ἀργεϊφόντης
 μέγαν ἐν φιλότῃ μυχῷ σπείων ἐροέοντο.
 τῇσι δ' αἶψ' ἡ ἐλάται ἢ δρύες ὑψικάρηνοι
 γεινομένησιν ἐφθσαν ἐπὶ χθονὶ βατιανεΐρη,
 καλαί, τηλεθάουσαι, ἐν οὔρεσιν ὑψηλοῖσιν.
 ἔσταν ἡλίβατοι, τεμένη δὲ ἐκικλήσκουσιν
 ἀθανάτων· τὰς δ' οὔ τι βροτοὶ κείρουσι σιδήρῳ.
 ἀλλ' ὅτε κεν δὴ μοῖρα παρεστήκη θανάτοιο,
 ὀχάνεται μὲν πρῶτον ἐπὶ χθονὶ δένδρεα καλά,
 φλοῖδες δ' ἀμφιπεριφθινύθει, πίπτουσι δ' ἅπ' ὄχοι,
 τῶν δὲ θ' ὁμοῦ ψυχὴ λείπει φᾶος ἡελίοιο.

As for the child, when he shall first see the light of the sun, the buxom, mountain-bred Nymphs who dwell on this great and holy mountain shall nourish him. They are ranked neither among the mortals or the immortals; indeed, they live long and eat the food of the gods, and tread the beautiful dance among the immortals. The Silenidae and the sharp-sighted slayer of Argus lie with them in love deep inside pleasant caverns. At their birth pines or high-crowned oaks spring from the earth that nourishes man, beautiful, flourishing on the highest mountains. They stand on the

heights, and are called the groves of the gods, and no mortal hews them down with his iron axe. But when the fate of death has drawn near, first the beautiful trees wither up in their earth, their bark rots, their branches fall off, and the spirit of both leaves the light of the sun at the same time.¹⁷

From this hymn, Gomperz draws the conclusion that there was a time when the tree itself was worshipped and personified. Then came a period when the spirit of the tree's life was regarded as a separate being, but one whose destiny was still bound up with that of the tree. Finally, the being of the spirit and that of the tree were completely severed, and the spirit came to be seen as an indestructible being hovering over the object of its care.¹⁸ Even in Homer, we still find this ancient failure to distinguish between a natural object and the god connected with it. One example of this is the lack of distinction between the geographical *Ὠκεανός* and the god *Ὠκεανός*. In fact, in *Il.* XIV, 311, Hera says: *οἴχομαι πρὸς δῶμα βαθυπρόβου Ὠκεανοῖο*. (If I should depart for the house of deep-flowing Okeanos.) There is so little distinction, in other words, between god and body of water, that the god can be given the epithet "deep-flowing", which of course is properly applied only to the geographic *Ὠκεανός*. Again, in *Il.* XXI, Xanthus is both a river, and a river-god, at the same time.

After Zeus had come to be seen in anthropomorphic terms, he was further delineated in Homeric times as one who possessed ruling power similar to that of the Homeric nobles. In the *Iliad*, we find that, like Agamemnon, Zeus ruled over a troop of wilful

and refractory vassals, each of whom is pursuing his own designs. The feudal picture is completed by the cosmogonic legend which describes Zeus as sharing the rule of the universe. Zeus' portion is the heavens and the clouds, but by right of his birth, he rules over all. Zeus must occasionally resort to violence and threats to make the gods conform to his will; he must, however, show regard for the wishes of the other gods. He often does so with an ill-conceived reluctance.

The divine community is almost a carbon copy of the society of Homeric nobles. The seat of the gods is an acropolis, Olympus. (Il. I, 221 f., 605-608) On its summit, Zeus summons the council of the gods. (Il. VIII, 2-3) The city of the gods lies there, but all its buildings are outshone by Zeus' palace. The city is surrounded by a wall; its gates, guarded by the Horai, open of their own accord. (Il. V, 749 ff.) The households of the gods are filled with servants: the Horai, Iris (Il. II, 786 and passim), Deimos (Il. IV, 440), Phobos (Il. IV, 440; XI, 37; XIII, 299; XV, 119), Hebe (Il. IV, 2; V, 722, 905), Themis (Il. XV, 85, 93; XX, 4), and the physician Paeon. (Il. V, 401, 899).

Life among the gods was like that of some royal court where constant entertaining took place. We need not be too critical of this idea of the blessedness of the gods; centuries later, it was no more refined.¹⁸

In this chapter, we first showed that it appears most likely that Zeus was first a name for the bright sky which man came

to worship when he sensed the benefits and the woes that the sky brought him. Our evidence for this was chiefly etymological, but also partly from internal evidence in the Iliad. We then proceeded to show the transition from Zeus conceived of as the sky to the anthropomorphic idea of Zeus. We noted that a personal will power was generally attributed to natural phenomena; that is, in primitive man's mind, the phenomenon happened because it wanted to happen. The phenomena were then conceived of as being moved to act by human-like emotions and inclinations. Man then felt compelled to win the favor of the great natural forces, just as he would attempt to win the favor of his earthly masters. Three further developments refined the Greek idea of the gods: the first being the realization that man's welfare depended on things other than sense objects; the second being the visualization of the gods as possessing human form; the third being the abstraction of the divine spirit from the object of nature which it was formerly identified with. By Homer's time Zeus and the gods were viewed as living after the manner of the contemporary Greek nobility.

Chapter II will more fully consider Homer's view of Zeus as it is exemplified in the Iliad.

Chapter II:
The Role of Zeus in the Iliad

When one reads the Iliad, one is struck by an extreme lack of clarity in the Homeric mind as to the precise nature of Zeus. We will make no effort to reconcile Homer's contradictory statements on Zeus, but will only strive to point out the varying ideas of Zeus which occur in the Iliad.

In most cosmogonies, the pair 'Ouranos and Gaia are central. They are seen as the primal elements which united and gave rise to all creation. From this marriage, the legend says, there sprang all manner of daimons and supernatural beings, the most important of whom were the Titans. Wearied with incessant child-bearing, Gaia connived with Kronos, her youngest son¹, that he might castrate Ouranos.² This he did, and subsequently married his sister Rhea, who bore him Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Poseidon, and Zeus. Kronos swallowed all the males except Zeus, for whom Rhea had, on her parents' advice substituted a large stone wrapped in swaddling clothes. Later Gaia caused Kronos to vomit up all those he had swallowed. A violent battle ensued, Kronos was defeated, and Zeus became the supreme god. According to Rose, this story is so unlike normal Greek mythology that it must be pre-Hellenic.³ This hypothesis of Kronos as a pre-Hellenic god is strengthened by what we know of his cult. It was an

open-air mountain cult, which shows that it was extremely ancient.⁴ The possibility of human sacrifice having been offered to Kronos is another indication of the ancientness of his cult.⁵ The fact that the cult was practiced in so many localities and that these localities are connected in no way with the historical dispersal of the Greek races leaves us with the hypothesis that Kronos was originally the supreme⁶ god of the pre-Greek races, and that his worship was retained in various places in a very simple form. The fact that there is no suitable Greek root for the name "Κρόνος" tends to strengthen this hypothesis. "Κρόνος" is probably a Hellenization of the pre-Greek god's name.⁷ The legend of Zeus' descent from Kronos can probably be best explained as a result of evolution in the history of religion. A compromise was made between the cults of the new and old gods. Kronos was overcome by his son, but not entirely displaced.⁸

There is a theory that "Κρόνος" is derived etymologically from "χρόνος", which is most likely false. First of all, its originator began with the pre-conceived aim of proving the essentially monotheistic nature of Greek religion. Ζεὺς Κρόνιον supposedly meant "Zeus, son of Time," which signified that Zeus was originally the one high godhead. Kronos as a separate god was supposedly a later abstraction. What we have stated above about the ancientness of the cult of Kronos tends to vitiate this hypothesis.⁹ Moreover, it is unlikely that the mere misunderstanding of a word would give rise to such an extensive body of legend concerning the sonship of Zeus.¹⁰

Homer generally ascribes the parentage of Zeus to Kronos and Rhea. (For examples of this, see Il. IV, 59; V, 721; VIII, 383; XIV, 194, 243; XV, 187.) But on other occasions, Homer traces the descent of the gods from Okeanos, as in Il. XIV, 301-302:

ἔρχομαι ὄψομένη πολυφόρβου πείρατα γαίης,
Ὀκεανόν τε, θεῶν φένεσιν, καὶ μητέρα Τηθύν.

I am setting forth to visit the ends of earth, the nourisher of many, and Okeanos, from whom the gods spring, and mother Tethys....

Il. XV, 184-206 states that the rule of the universe was divided by lot between Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades. But Zeus has certain rights as first-born, and these are protected by the Erinyes, the avenging deities who guard the moral order:¹¹

Τὴν δὲ μέγ' ὀχθήσας προσέφη κλυτὸς ἐννοσίγαιος·
"ὦ πόποι, ἦ ῥ' ἀγαθὸς περ ἔδ' ὑπέροπλον εἶπεν,
εἴ μ' ὁμότιμον ἔδοντα βίῃ ἀέκοντα καθέξει.
τρεῖς γάρ τ' ἐκ Κρόνου εἰμὲν ἀδελφοί, οὓς τέκετο Ῥέα,
Ζεὺς καὶ ἐγὼ, τρίτατος δ' Ἀΐδης, ἐνέροισιν ἀνάσσω.
τριχθὰ δὲ πάντα δέδασται, ἕκαστος δ' ἔμμορε τιμῆς·
ἦ τοι ἐγὼν ἔλαχον πολιτὴν ἅλα ναιέμεν αἰεὶ
παλλομέων, Ἀΐδης δ' ἔλαχε ζόφον ἡρόεντα,
Ζεὺς δ' ἔλαχ' οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἐν αἰθέρι καὶ νεφέλῃσι·
γαῖα δ' ἔτι ξυνὴ πάντων καὶ μακρὰς Ὀλύμπου.
τῷ ῥα καὶ οὐ τι Διὸς βέομαι φρεσὶν, ἀλλὰ ἔκηλος
καὶ κρατερὸς περ ἔδ' ἐνέτω τρίτῃ ἐνὶ μοίρῃ.
χεροὶ δὲ μή τί με πάγχυ κακὸν ὥς δειδισσέσθω·
θυγατέρεσσιν γάρ τε καὶ υἱᾷσι βέλτερον εἶη
ἐκπᾶγλοις ἐπέεσσιν ἐνισσέμεν, οὓς τέκεν αὐτός,
οἳ ἔθεν ὀτρύνοντος ἀκούσονται καὶ ἀνάγκη."
Τὸν δ' ἡμείβετ' ἔπειτα ποδὴν ὤκεία Ἴρις·
"οὕτω γάρ δὴ τοι, γαίῃσιν κυανοχαῖτα,
τόνδε φέρω Διὶ μῦθον ἀπηνέα τε κρατερὸν τε,
ἦ τι μεταστρέψεις; στρεπταὶ μὲν τε φρένες ἐσθλῶν.
οἴσθ' ὥς πρεσβυτέροισιν Ἑρινύες αἰὲν ἔπονται."
Τὴν δ' αὖτε προσέειπε Ποσειδάων ἐννοσίχθων·
"Ἴρι θεά, μάλα τοῦτο ἔπος κατὰ μοῖραν εἶπες·

Greatly troubled, the renowned lord of earthquakes [i.e. Poseidon] addressed her: "Oh woe, mighty though he is, he has spoken arrogantly, if he will restrain me by force when

I am unwilling, I who am his equal in honor. For we were three brothers born of Kronos, three whom Rhea gave birth to: Zeus, myself, and Hades, lord of those who dwell beneath the earth. And all things have been divided into three shares, and each holds his own share. I received the grey sea to dwell in forever when the lots were shaken, Hades received the murky gloom, and Zeus received the broad heavens, among the aether and the clouds. Earth and great Olympus are yet the common right of all. Therefore, I will not live in accord with his word, but untroubled let him remain in his third share, more powerful though he may be. But by no means let him try to frighten me by the strength of his hands, as if I were a coward. It would be better for him to reproach his daughters and sons with violent words, those whom he begot--they will obey his commands." Then wind-footed, swift Iris answered him, "O dark-haired earth-enfolder, am I then to bear this unyielding and harsh message to Zeus, or will you turn back your mind? For the hearts of the good can be turned. You know that the Erinyes are ever at the service of the elder-born." Then Poseidon, lord of the earthquake, answered her, "Goddess Iris, you have spoken this word full rightly...."

In Il. IX, 457, Homer speaks of a curse being fulfilled by

Ζεύς τε καταχθόνιος καὶ ἐπαινή Περσεφόνεια. This instance of Zeus being referred to as the god of the underworld is unique in Homer.¹² It is possible that Hades was originally a specialized form of Zeus, the lord of the whole universe. Indeed, it is very likely that Poseidon was originally Zeus seen under a different aspect. Cook argues that the Greeks held Zeus to be present in the rains that fell from the sky, and hence also in the rivers and the sea. He argues for the derivation of the name Ποσειδών from πόσις (lord) and Δών. Δών is Boeotian for Ζεύς; Boeotia was one of the oldest and most important centers of the cult of Poseidon. The name "Poseidon" then would simply mean "Lord Zeus".¹³

As ruler of the universe by right of his birth, Zeus is pictured as the all-powerful god, against whom the other Olympians

cannot prevail. Il. VIII, 1-27 illustrates this:

Ἦώς μὲν κροκόπεπλος ἐκίδνατο πᾶσαν ἐπ' αἶαν,
 Ζεὺς δὲ θεῶν ἀγορὴν ποιήσατο τερπικέραυνος
 ἐκροτάτη κορυφῇ πολυδαιράδας Οὐλύμποιο·
 αὐτὸς δὲ σφ' ἀγόρευε, θεοὶ δ' ὑπὸ πάντες ἄκουον.
 "κέκλυτέ μευ, πάντες τε θεοὶ πᾶσαι τε θέαι ναι,
 ὅφρ' εἴπω τὰ με θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι κελεύει.
 μήτε τις οὖν θήλεια θεὸς τό γε μήτε τις ἄρσιν
 πειράτω διακέρσαι ἐμὸν ἔπος, ἀλλ' ἅμα πάντες
 αἰνεῖτ', ὅφρα τάχιστα τελευτήσω τάδε ἔργα.
 ὃν δ' ἂν ἐγὼν ἀπάνευθε θεῶν ἐθέλοντα νοήσω
 ἐλθόντ' ἢ Τρώεσσιν ἀρηγέμεν ἢ Δαναοῖσι,
 πληγαῖς οὐ κατὰ κόσμον ἐλεύσεται Οὐλομπόνδε·
 ἢ μιν ἐλὼν ῥίψω ἐς Τάρταρον ἡερδεντα,
 τῆλε μάλ', ἢ χι βάθιστον ὑπὸ χθονὸς ἐστὶ βέρεθρον,
 ἔνθα σιδήρειαί τε πύλαι καὶ χάλκεος οὐδός,
 τόσσον ἔνερθ' Ἀΐδεω ὅσον οὐρανὸς ἐστ' ἀπὸ γαίης·
 γνώσεται ἔπειθ' ὅσον εἰμὶ θεῶν κάρτιστος ἀπάντων.
 εἰ δ' ἄγε πειρήσασθε, θεοί, ἵνα εἴδετε πάντες.
 σειρὴν χρυσεῖν ἐξ οὐρανὸθεν κρεμάσαντες
 πάντες τ' ἐξάπτεσθε θεοὶ πᾶσαι τε θέαι ναι·
 ἀλλ' οὐκ ἂν ἐρύσαιτ' ἐξ οὐρανὸθεν πεδίονδε
 Ζῆν' ὕπατον μῆστωρ, οὐδ' εἰ μάλα πολλὰ κάμοιτε.
 ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ καὶ ἐγὼ πρόφρων ἐθέλοιμι ἐρύσσαι,
 αὐτῇ κεν γαίῃ ἐρύσαιμ' αὐτῇ τε θαλάσῃ·
 σειρὴν μὲν κεν ἔπειτα περὶ ῥίον Οὐλύμποιο
 δησαίμην, τὰ δὲ κ' αὐτε μετήορα πάντα γένοιτο.
 τόσσον ἐγὼ περὶ τ' εἰμὶ θεῶν περὶ τ' εἰμ' ἀνθρώπων."

Now saffron-robed Dawn was spreading across all the earth, and Zeus, the hurler of the thunderbolt, called an assembly of the gods on the highest peak of many-bouldered Olympus. He himself addressed them, and all the gods listened to his words: "Hear me, all you gods and goddesses, so that I may speak what my spirit in my breast bids me. Let no god or goddess attempt to thwart my words but all ye assent to it at once, so that I might fulfill this work most quickly. Whomever of the gods I shall perceive willing to go to aid the Trojans or Greeks, beaten in no way fitting a god shall he return to Olympus, or else I will take him and hurl him into gloomy Tartarus, far, far, off, where the deepest gulf beneath the earth is, with its iron gates and bronze threshold, as far beneath Hades as heaven is above earth, and he will know by how far I am the mightiest of all the gods. But come, try me, ye gods, that you may all know. Hang a golden rope down from heaven, and all you gods and goddesses take hold of it. You would never drag Zeus, the counsellor most high, from heaven to earth, even if you labored mightily. But if I should draw with a will, then I would draw you up with the earth and sea as well. I would then bind

the rope about the peak of Olympus, and all things would be hanging in space. By so much am I above gods and men."

An actual occasion of a god being punished by Zeus is mentioned in Il. XV, 18-24. when Zeus recalls the punishment he meted out to Hera when she drove Heracles off his homeward course:

ἤ οὐ μέμνη ὅτε τ' ἐκρέμω ὑψόθεν, ἐκ δὲ ποδοῖν
ἄκμονας ἦκα δύνω, περὶ χερσὶ δὲ δεσμὸν ἱήλα
χρῦσεον ἄρρηκτον; σὺ δ' ἐν αἰθέρι καὶ νεφέλῃσιν
ἐκρέμω· ἡλᾶστεον δὲ θεοὶ κατὰ μακρὸν Ὀλυμπον,
λῦσαι δ' οὐκ ἐδύναντο παρασταδόν· ὃν δὲ λάβοιμι
ρίπτασκον τεταγῶν ἀπὸ βηλοῦ, ὅφρ' ἂν ἱκηται
γῆν ὀλιγπηλέων....

Or do you not remember how you were once suspended from on high, with two anvils hanging from your feet, and how I bound your hands with unbreakable golden chains? And you were hanging amid the aether and the clouds. The gods were raging impotently throughout great Olympus, but they could not draw near and loose you. But whomever I caught, I would seize and hurl from the threshold of Olympus, so that he would fall to earth with hardly the strength to move....

In other passages, Zeus' power seems to be quite limited. The gods often upbraid Zeus for the stands he has taken. Zeus even seems to fear the scoldings of Hera, his wife, as Il. I, 517-23 shows. It is addressed to Thetis, and takes place after Zeus had promised her that he would do honor to Achilles to avenge the insult of Agamemnon:

Τὴν δὲ μέγ' ὀχθήσας προσέφη νεφεληγερέτα Ζεὺς·
"ἦ δὴ λοίγια ἔργ' ὃ τέ μ' ἐχθοδοπήσαι ἐφήσεις
Ἥρη, ὅτ' ἂν μ' ἐρέθῃσιν ὄνειδείοις ἐπέεσσιν.
ἦ δὲ καὶ αὐτως μ' αἰεὶ ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι
νεικεῖ, καὶ τέ μέ φησι μάχη Τρώεσσιν ἀρήγειν.
ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν νῦν αὖτις ἀπόστιχε, μή τι νοήσῃ
Ἥρη...."

Then, greatly troubled, Zeus, the cloud-gatherer, spoke to her: "This will truly be baneful work since you will bid me to incur the enmity of Hera, for she will taunt me with reviling words. And even if I had not done so, she always ..

reproaches me among the immortal gods, and says that I am helping the Trojans in battle. But go back again, lest Hera find out anything....

Nor does Zeus exercise full control over the actions of the other gods. His orders are continually defied, as, for example in Il. XIII, 347-57:

Ζεὺς μὲν ῥα Τρώεσσι καὶ Ἑκτορι βόυλετο νίκην,
κυδαίνων Ἀχιλλῆα πόδας ταχύν· οὐδέ τι πάμπαν
ἤθελε λαὸν ὀλέσθαι Ἀχαιῶν Ἰλίοθι πρό,
ἀλλὰ θέτιν κύδαινε καὶ υἷα καρτερόθυμον.
Ἀργείους δὲ Ποσειδάων ὀρόθυνε μετελθών,
λάθρη ὑπεξαναδὲς πολιῆς ἁλὸς· ἤχθετο γάρ ῥα
Τρωσὶν δαμναμένους, Διὶ δὲ κρατερῶς ἐνεμέσσα.
ἢ μὲν ἀμφοτέροισιν ὁμὸν γένος ἦδ' ἱα πάτρη,
ἀλλὰ Ζεὺς πρότερος γέγονει καὶ πλείονα ἦδη.
τῷ ῥα καὶ ἀμπαδίην μὲν ἀλεξέμεναι ἄλεινε,
λάθρη δ' αἰὲν ἔγειρε κατὰ στρατόν, ἄνδρι ἑοικώς.

Now Zeus wished victory for the Trojans and Hector, in order to give glory to Achilles, swift of foot. But he did not wish the whole Achaean people to perish before Troy, but he gave glory to Thetis and her stout-hearted son. But Poseidon went among the Argives and urged them on, rising secretly out of the grey sea. It grieved him that the Greeks were being overpowered by the Trojans, and he was powerfully angry with Zeus. For both were of the same race and one parentage, but Zeus came to be first and he was also wiser. Therefore, he shrank from giving open aid, but continually went among the troops, in the form of a man, urging them on.

Moreover, it is only with difficulty that Zeus can impose his will on the other gods, as Il. XV, 222-28 shows:

ἦδη μὲν γάρ τοι γαίηοχος ἐννοσίγαιος
οἷχεται εἰς ἅλα δῖαν, ἀλευάμενος χόλον αἰπὸν
ἡμέτερον· μάλα γάρ κε μάχης ἐπύθοντο καὶ ἄλλοι,
οἳ περ ἐνέρτεροί εἰσι θεοί, Κρόνον ἀμφὶς ἐόντες.
ἀλλὰ τόδ' ἡμὲν ἐμοὶ πολὺ κέρδιον ἢ δέ οἱ αὐτῷ
ἔπλετο, ὅττι πάροιθε νεμεσσηθεὶς ὑπέδειξε κεν
χεῖρας ἐμάς, ἐπεὶ οὐ καὶ ἀνιδρωτὶ γε τελέσθη.

For now the earth-embracer and lord of the earthquake has gone into the bright sea avoiding our utter wrath. Many surely would have heard of our strife, even the gods below, who are with Kronos. But this turned out better both for me and for him, that before this he yielded to my hands,

for not without sweat would the matter be settled.

Zeus seems to have knowledge of the future, as his prophecy of the deaths of Sarpedon, Patroclus, and Hector in Il. XV, 64-68 indicates. But on the other hand, the gods often trick Zeus. In Il. XIV, 159-360, Hera overpowers Zeus through the charms of love, and lures him to sleep with her on Mount Ida, so that Poseidon, in the meanwhile, may violate Zeus' order with impunity and aid the Achaeans in battle. The god ὕπνος has also come to Mount Ida in the form of a mountain bird. Zeus is completely unaware of his presence, and is soon put in a deep slumber. Thus the connivance of the other Olympians has thwarted the will of the ruler of the universe, who is blissfully lying on Mount Ida ὕπνῳ καὶ φιλότῳ δαμείσ (conquered by love and sleep-- Il. XIV, 353).

Perhaps the most telling argument which Homer delivers against the belief in an all-powerful Zeus which he champions in other passages is the rebellion of the gods mentioned in Il. I, 396-406:

πολλάκι γάρ σεο πατρός ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἄκουσα
εὐχομένης, ὅτ' ἔφησθα κελαινεφέϊ Κρονίωνι
οἷη ἐν ἀθανάτοισιν ἀεικέα λοιγὸν ἀμύναί,
ὅππότε μιν ξυνδῆσαι Ὀλύμπιοι ἤθελον ἄλλοι,
Ἥρη τ' ἠδὲ Ποσειδάων καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη.
ἀλλὰ σὺ τὸν γ' ἐλθοῦσα, θεά, ὑπελύσας δεσμῶν,
ὥχ' ἐκατόγχειρον καλέσας ἐς μακρὸν Ὀλυμπόν,
ὃν Βριάρεων καλέουσι θεοί, ἄνδρες δέ τε πάντες
Αἰγαιῶν· ὃ γὰρ αὐτὲ βίη οὐ πατρός ἀμείνων·
ὃς ῥα παρὰ Κρονίῳ καθέζετο κύδει γαίῳν·
τὸν καὶ ὑπέδδειςαν μάχας θεοὶ οὐδέ τ' ἔδρσαν.

Often have I heard you boasting in the Father's halls, and saying that you alone of the gods warded off shameful fate from cloud-gathering Kronion, when the other Olympians wished to bind him up--Hera, and Poseidon, and Pallas.

Athene. But when you came, goddess, you loosed him from his bonds, and quickly called the hundred-handed one to great Olympus--him whom the gods call Briareon, but all men call Aigaion, for he is greater in strength than his father. He then sat by Kronion, exulting in his glory. The blessed gods trembled before him, and bound not Zeus.

As chief god, Zeus commands a certain amount of reverence.

The typical formula at the beginning of a prayer to Zeus in the Iliad shows this:

Ἦτορ ἔφαθ', οἱ δ' εὖχοντο Διὶ Κρονίῳ ἀνακτι·
ὦδε δέ τις εἶπεσκεν ἰδὼν εἰς οὐρανὸν εὐρύν·
"Ζεῦ πάτερ, Ἰδῆθεν μεδέων, κύδιστε μέγιστε,

Thus he spoke, and they prayed to Zeus Kronion, the king, and men would look up to the broad heaven and say: "Father Zeus, ruling from Ida, most glorious, most great... (Il. VII, 200-202))

Il. VI, 266-68 states the necessity of purification of oneself before making prayer to Zeus:

χερσὶ δ' ἀνίπτοισιν Διὶ λείβειν αἶθερα οἶνον
ἄλκομαι· οὐδέ πη ἔστι μελαμνεφέϊ Κρονίῳ
αἵματι καὶ λυθρῷ πεπαλαγμένον εὐχετάσθαι.

I hesitate to pour a libation of sparkling wine to Zeus with unwashed hands. And by no means should one pray to Kronion when he is befouled with blood and gore.

Il. XVI, 233-35 mentions the Selloi, a college of prophets of Zeus who sleep on the ground and never wash their feet. These practices indicate an especial sanctity of the Selloi, since, in their case, religious conservatism perpetuates the barbaric practices of a far-off past.¹⁴

Very often, however, not much reverence is evident in worship of Zeus; the cult takes the form of a crude exchange of offerings for supernatural aid or power. This is the case in Il. IV, 43-49, 101 ff., 119 ff.; XXII, 168-72; XXIII, 546 f., 768 ff.,

862 ff.; XXIV, 33 f., 66-70.

The honor shown to the chief natural phenomena, however, is at least equal to that given Zeus. Homer speaks of *ἱερὸν ἥμαρ* in *Il.* VIII, 66 and XI, 84; and of *ἱερὸν κνέφας* in *Il.* XI, 194, 209 and XVII, 455. According to Cunliffe's *Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect*, by giving Day and Dusk the epithet *ἱερός*, Homer is "half-personifying them as divine controlling powers."¹⁵

The goddess *Νύξ* is shown especial reverence. In *Il.* VII, 279-82, the single combat between Hector and Aias is broken up by heralds, who seem to invoke a taboo against nighttime fighting: *νύξ δ' ἤδη τελέθει· ἀγαθὸν καὶ νυκτὶ πιθέσθαι* (But night is already upon us; it is fitting to follow night's behest.--*Il.* VII, 282) Especially interesting is the relation between Zeus and Nyx as shown in *Il.* XIV, 256-61. The god Sleep has been asked by Hera to lull Zeus to sleep, and he demurs, saying he put Zeus to sleep against his will once before, and only narrowly escaped grievous punishment:

...ὁ δ' ἐπεγρόμενος χαλέπαινε,
 ῥιπτάων κατὰ δῶμα θεοῦς, ἐμὲ δ' ἔξοχα πάντων
 ζήτει· καὶ κέ μ' αἴστον ἄπ' αἰθέρος ἔμβαλε πόντῳ,
 εἰ μὴ Νύξ δμῆταιρα θεῶν ἐσάωσε καὶ ἀνδρῶν·
 τὴν ἰκόμην φεύγων, ὁ δὲ παύσατο χωόμενός περ.
 ἄζετο γὰρ μὴ Νυκτὶ θοῇ ἀποθύμια ἔρδοι.

But Zeus, when he was awakened, was angered greatly, and flung the gods about his palace, and especially sought me, and he would have hurled me to my destruction from heaven into the sea, had not Night, who bends to her will both gods and men, saved me. I came to her in my flight, and Zeus refrained himself, in spite of his wrath. For he feared doing anything displeasing to swift Night.

Homer himself provides no explanation for this seeming contradiction. According to the article under "Nyx" in Pauly-Wissowa,

however, Night was looked on in ancient times as a power which was the source of all evils; this might serve as a partial clarification.¹⁶

The form of oaths which men and gods use in Homer provides further evidence for the high reverence given the primal natural powers. The most sacred oath is not one to which Zeus is called to witness; rather, it is one sworn by Earth, Heaven, and Styx, as in Il. XV, 36-38:

ἴστω νῦν τόδε Γαῖα καὶ Οὐρανὸς ἐβρύς ὑπερθε
καὶ τὸ κατειβόμενον Στυγὸς ὕδωρ, ὃς τε μέγιστος
ὄρκος δεινότατός τε πέλει μακάρεσσι θεοῖσι.

To this now be Earth my witness and the broad Heaven above, and the down-flowing water of Styx, which is the greatest and most dread oath of the gods....

Zeus, as god of the sky, frequently employs thunder and the flight of birds as a means of showing his will to men. Two examples follow.

ὥς ἔφατ' εὐχόμενος, τοῦ δ' ἔκλυε μητίετα Ζεὺς.
αὐτίκα δ' αἰετὸν ἦκε, τελειότατον πετεηνῶν,
μόρφον θηρητῆρ', ὃν καὶ περκνὸν καλέουσιν.
ὅσση δ' ὑπορόφοιο θύρῃ θαλάμοιο τέτυκται
ἀνέρος ἀφνειοῦ, ἐὺ κληῖσ' ἀραρυῖα,
τόσσ' ἄρα τοῦ ἐκάτερθεν ἔσαν πτερὰ· εἶσατο δέ σφι
δεξιὸς αἶξας διὰ ἄστεος· οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες
γῆθησαν, καὶ πᾶσιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θυμὸς ἰάνθη.

Thus he [Priam] spoke in prayer, and Zeus the counsellor heard him. At once he sent an eagle, the surest omen among winged birds, the dark one, the hunter, which men call the dappled eagle. As wide as is the door of the high-roofed treasure-chamber of a rich man, well fitted with bolts, even so wide did his wings spread on this side and that. He appeared to them on the right, darting across the city. When they saw him, they rejoiced, and the hearts of all were gladdened in their breasts. (Il. XXIV, 314-21)

καὶ τότε ἄρα Κρονίδης ἔλετ' αἰγίδα θυσσανόεσσαν
μαρμαρέην, Ἴδην δὲ κατὰ νεφέεσσι κάλυπεν,
ἄστράνας δὲ μάλα μεγάλ' ἐκτυπε, τὴν δ' ἐτίναξε,
νίκην δὲ Τρώεσσι δίδου, ἐφόβησε δ' Ἀχαιοῦς.

And then the son of Kronos took up his gleaming tasselled aegis and hid Mount Ida in clouds, lightening and thundering violently; he shook the aegis, giving victory to the Trojans, but putting the Achaeans to rout. (Il. XVII, 593-6)

The sending of omens, however, is not entirely restricted to Zeus. There is one most curious passage (Il. XI, 45), in which Hera and Athene thunder to show honor to Menelaus, thus usurping a function properly belonging to the sky god.

Perhaps the most clearly stated function of Zeus in the Iliad is the guardianship he exercises over the moral order. In fact, Zeus' protection of the ἀρετή of Achilles is central to the whole theme of the Iliad. This ἀρετή is fundamental to the entire Greek way of life.

Etymologically, ἀρετή comes from the root ἀρ, from which are also derived the words ἀριών and ἀριοςτος.¹⁸ The broadest meaning of ἀρετή is some sort of excellence, whether it be the power of the gods (Il. IX, 498), or the spirit and speed of well-bred horses (Il. XXIII, 276, 374). In Homer, the usual meaning for ἀρετή is physical power; only rarely does it refer to spiritual or moral qualities.¹⁹ We must further recall that in ancient times, human worth was judged on the basis of the good it did for the whole society. 'Αρετή was originally an objective description of the worth of its possessor. 'Αρετή is unique in each individual; it is that which makes him a whole and complete man.²⁰

An essential concomitant of ἀρετή is honor. Among the primitive Greeks, honor was inseparable from merit and ability. Honor was not the external image of a man's inner values,

reflected in the criticism of his fellows; Homeric man could estimate his ἀρετή, which was his worth to society and his human perfection, by the opinions others held of him. This is why the heroes always treat each other with such great respect; each man's self-concept, and indeed, the whole Homeric social system is based on such respect. The great man seeks honor not as a payment for services he has rendered, but rather because he aspires toward what Jaeger calls "that ideal and supra-personal sphere in which alone he can have real value".²¹ Zeus is the guarantor of this system. When Agamemnon violates it by taking Briseis from Achillēs, Zeus punishes the Achaeans and gives honor to Achilles by giving victories to the Trojans while Achilles does not fight.²²

A most important indication of the guardianship Zeus exercises over the moral order is the epithet διοτρέφης (from δι + τρέφω, meaning "nourished by Zeus") constantly given to kings and chiefs. Examples of this occur, among other places, in Il. I, 176; V, 463; and VII, 109.

As defender of the social order, Zeus fulfills several other functions. He is the guarantor of oaths, as the most common Homeric formula for oaths shows: ὅρκια δὲ Ζεὺς ἴστω, ἐρίγδουπος πόσις καὶ ἦρως. (Be Zeus witness to our oaths, the loud-thundering lord of Hera. -- Il. VII, 411; cf. Il. X, 329; XIX, 258) It is interesting to note that the perjurer was considered to have offended the gods not only because he had called on them to witness to a falsehood, but also because by doing so, he brought oaths

in general into disrepute.²³

Zeus' defense of the sacredness of oaths, however, is not without contradictions in Homer. In Il. IV, 64-104, Zeus sends Athene to move the Trojans to violate the cease-fire which they had sworn to uphold in Il. III, 276-301. Zeus has pleased Hera by making it necessary for the Trojans to be punished, but he has himself violated the moral order by sending Athene to tempt a mortal to break the oath.

On page 14, we alluded to Il. IX, 457, in which Ζεὺς κατα-χθόνιος (Zeus of the underworld) fulfills a curse. In this passage, the old man Phoinix is telling how his father cursed him for having had intercourse with one of his mistresses. Zeus, in fulfilling the curse, seems to be upholding the father's rights in the family, and his absolute power over it.

Zeus is shown in two other aspects as defender of the moral order. The first is his capacity as upholder of the rights of guests and hosts. A selection from a speech by Menelaus, who has been robbed of his wife, Helen, by Paris illustrates this:

ἄλλης μὲν λῶβης τε καὶ αἵσχεος οὐκ ἐπιδευεῖς,
ἦν ἐμὲ λωβήσασθε, κακαὶ κύνες, οὐδέ τι θυμῷ
Ζηνὸς ἐριβρεμέτω χαλεπὴν ἐδείσατε μῆνιν
ξείνιου, ὃς τέ ποτ' ἔμμι διαφθέρσει πόλιν αἰπὴν.

And you have no lack of ability for other outrages or insults, with which you wronged me, you evil bitches, and you had no fear in your heart for the grievous wrath of loud-thundering Zeus, the god of hospitality, who shall someday destroy your high city. (Il. XIII, 622-25)

While Zeus sides momentarily with the Trojans because the ἀρετή of Achilles has been violated, the point of the Homeric epics is that Zeus punished the Trojans for Paris' violation of the rights

of his host.

In Il. XVI, 384-88, Zeus is described as punishing unjust judges:

ὥς δ' ὑπὸ λαίλαπι πᾶσα κελαινὴ βέβριθε χθὼν
 ἥματ' ὀπωρινῷ, ὅτε λαβρότατον χέει ὕδωρ
 Ζεὺς, ὅτε δὲ ῥ' ἄνδρεςσι κοτεσσάμενος χαλεπήνῃ,
 οἳ βίῃ εἰν ἀγορῇ σκολεῖσθαι κρίνωσι θέμιστας,
 ἐκ δὲ δίκην ἐλάσσωσι, θεῶν ὅπιν οὐκ ἄλέγοντες.

And just as the whole black earth is oppressed beneath a tempest on a day in harvest-time, when Zeus pours forth rain in driving torrents, whenever in anger he becomes wrathful at men who by violence give crooked judgments in the assembly, and drive justice out, not considering the watchfulness of the gods over men's affairs.

In Il. XXII, 337-60, the dying Hector seems to imply that Achilles will be subject to divine vengeance if he fails to allow the burial rites to be performed for Hector. The only reference to punishment after death, however, is found in Il. III, 278 f., where Agamemnon refers to

...καὶ οἳ ὑπένερθε καμόντας
 ἀνθρώπους τίνυσθον, ὅτις κ' ἐπιόρκον ὁμόσῃ

...and you who in the world below punish men done with life, whoever of them has sworn a false oath...

It is interesting to note, that according to Il. IX, 497-512, it is possible for the transgressor to avert the anger of the gods through prayer, libations, and sacrifices:

...στρεπτοὶ δέ τε καὶ θεοὶ αὐτοί,
 τῶν περ καὶ μείζων ἀρετὴ τιμὴ τε βίη τε.
 καὶ μὲν τοὺς θυέεσσι καὶ εὐχολῆς ἄγανῃσι
 λαιβῇ τε κνίσῃ τε παρατρωνῶσ' ἄνθρωποι
 λισσόμενοι, ὅτε κέν τις ὑπερβῇ καὶ ἁμάρτῃ.
 καὶ γὰρ τε Ληταί εἰσι Διὶς κοῦραι μέγαλοιο,
 χολαί τε ῥυσαί τε παραβλῶπές τ' ὀφθαλμῷ,
 αἱ ῥά τε καὶ μετόπισθ' Ἄτης ἀλέγουσι κιούσαι.
 ἡ δ' Ἄτη σθεναρὴ τε καὶ ἀρτίπος, οὐνεκα πάσας
 πολλὸν ὑπεκπροθέει, φθάνει δέ τε πᾶσαν ἐπ' αἶαν
 βλάπτουσ' ἄνθρώπους· αἱ δ' ἐξαιέονται ὀπίσσω.

ὅς δέ κ' ἀνήνγηται καὶ τε στερεῶς ἀποείπη,
 λίσσονται δ' ἄρα καὶ γε Δία Κρονίωνα κιοῦσαι
 τῷ "Ατὴν ἅμ' ἐπεσθαι, ἵνα βλαφθεῖς ἀποτίσῃ.

For even the gods themselves are open to reason, although theirs is the greater excellence and honor and might. Men offer up supplications and win them over by sacrifices, and propitiating prayers, whenever anyone transgresses and sins. For Prayers are the daughters of great Zeus, lame, wrinkled, and looking about furtively. They are ever concerned with following behind, after the Tempter. But the Tempter is mighty and swift of foot and therefore far outstrips them all, going before them, making men fall. But Prayers then bring remedy. Now whoever regards the daughters of Zeus when they draw near, they give him aid and hear him when he prays. But whoever spurns them and sternly refuses them, they leave him and pray to Zeus Kronion that the Tempter may follow him and trip him up to make him pay the penalty.

To summarize the relation between Zeus and the moral order, we might say that the offenses which excite divine vengeance are the very ones for which a simple society can offer no adequate remedy: neglect of the dead, injuries to one's guest or host, and the perversion of justice. In other words, religion enters those areas of morality which custom cannot adequately enforce.

In the main, Homer's morality is based on social sanctions or men's feeling of right and decency: that is, on αἰδώς and νέμεσις. Αἰδώς is primarily a feeling of restraint. It enjoins respect and courtesy for elders and superiors, kindness to inferiors, humaneness toward a vanquished foe, and loyalty and courage in battle. Νέμεσις is a feeling of disapproval in the minds of others; reinforcing or engendering αἰδώς, it restrains one from any unworthy or extravagant action. Often, νέμεσις is expressed by the common man in such phrases as: θέμις -- οὐ θέμις;

καλόν -- οὐ καλόν; δίκαιον -- οὐ δίκαιον; ὡς ἐπιεικὲς -- οὐδὲ ἔοικε, οὐ κατὰ κόσμον.

In this chapter, we have attempted to survey the idea of Zeus presented in the Iliad. We found an unclear idea of the genealogy of Zeus, since Homer sometimes traces Zeus' descent from Kronos and Rhea, and sometimes from Okeanos and Tethys. We showed the likelihood of Kronos having been the chief god of the pre-Hellenic inhabitants of Greece and of a compromise having occurred between his cult and that of Zeus; in this compromise, Kronos was overthrown as chief god by his son, but not entirely displaced from Greek worship. We then used several quotes to illustrate the Homeric notion of Zeus as all-powerful lord of the universe, and then noted that nevertheless, many passages practically deny the omnipotence of Zeus. We then noted that Homeric piety demanded a formal mode of addressing Zeus in prayer, as well as ritual purification before prayer. The cult of Zeus, however, often took the form of a rather crude exchange of offerings for supernatural aid or power. We contrasted this inconsistency to the reverence with which Homer always treats the great primal powers of nature, especially Νόξ. We next noted that Zeus, as god of the heavens, often indicated his will to men either by thunder and lightning or the flight of birds.

We then viewed the guardianship Zeus exercised over the moral order, especially over the Homeric code of ἀρετή. We also took note of Zeus as the guarantor of the sanctity of oaths, as the protector of the rights of the paterfamilias, as the

guardian of the rights of the guest and the host, as the defender against the perversion of justice in public hearings, and as guarantor of the right of the dead to proper burial. These offenses which excite divine vengeance were, as we noted on page 25, the very ones which a simple society could not adequately remedy.

The final chapter will be concerned with Zeus' power to control the course of events in the world.

CHAPTER III: ZEUS AND FATE

In this chapter, we shall discuss the relation between Zeus and Fate in the Iliad. There is little, if any, more consistency to be found in this aspect of Homer's theology than in those we discussed in Chapter II. Homer sometimes views Fate as the determiner of all earthly and heavenly happenings, sometimes identifies Fate with the will of the gods (especially with the will of Zeus), and at other times subordinates Fate to the will of the gods. These doctrines are found side by side; Homer never attempts to synthesize them.¹

In describing why events take a certain course, Homer frequently postulates a force variously named $\chi\rho\iota$, $\alpha\lambda\sigma\alpha$, $\mu\omicron\iota\rho\alpha$, or $\mu\omicron\phi\omicron\varsigma$. We shall begin by considering these words from an etymological and semantic point of view in order to throw some light on their significance.

$\alpha\lambda\sigma\alpha$ is derived from $\lambda\sigma\omicron\varsigma$ by J.A. Hild in his article "Fatum" in Daremberg-Saglio², but from $\omicron\lambda\tau\omicron\varsigma$ in the article "Moirai" in Pauly-Wissowa.³ The word $\omicron\lambda\tau\omicron\varsigma$ occurs six times in the Iliad (III, 417; VIII, 34, 354, 465; IX, 563; and XXIV, 465), and means "one's fate; fate that comes upon one".⁴ Both agree that $\mu\omicron\iota\rho\alpha$ is derived from $\mu\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma$ ⁵; hence $\mu\omicron\iota\rho\alpha$ would seem to designate one's allotment in life, while $\alpha\lambda\sigma\alpha$ at least probably signifies a lot common to all men. $\mu\omicron\phi\omicron\varsigma$, like $\mu\omicron\iota\rho\alpha$, is derived from $\mu\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma$.

I have not been able to find any etymology for *χῆρ*, but the list of meanings which follows shall show almost no difference in its meanings from those of *αἶσα*, *μοῖρα*, and *μόρος*.

Αἶσα and *μοῖρα* can both mean "measure" or "share":

...τίω δέ μιν ἐν καρδῇ αἶσῃ.

I consider them [his gifts] worth sawdust. (*Il.* IX, 378)

ἴσῃ μοῖρα μένοντι

He who stays at home gets an equal share. (*Il.* IX, 319)

The phrases *κατ' αἶσαν* and *κατὰ μοῖραν* are equivalent, as are *ὑπὲρ αἶσαν* and *ὑπὲρ μόρον* (or *ὑπέρμορον*).

πάντα κατ' αἶσαν ἔειπες ἀγακλεὲς ὦ Μενέλαε.

You have spoken all this rightly, oh worthy Menelaos. (*Il.* XVII, 716)

ναὶ δὴ ταῦτά γε πάντα, γέρον, κατὰ μοῖραν ἔειπες.

Yes, truly, old sir, you have spoken all this rightly. (*Il.* I, 286)

Ἕκτορ, ἐπεὶ με κατ' αἶσαν ἐνείκεσας, οὐδ' ὑπὲρ αἶσαν.

Hector, you reproach me rightly, and not beyond what is due. (*Il.* III, 59)

δεῖδω μὴ καὶ τεῖχος ὑπὲρ μόρον ἐξαλαπάξῃ.

I fear lest even beyond what is allotted he might destroy the city wall. (*Il.* XX, 30)

Both *μοῖρα* and *αἶσα* can mean "portion" or "allotment":

φῆν δέ οἱ εἰς Ὀνόεντα περικλυτὸν υἱὸν ἀπάξειν
Ἴλιον ἐκπέρσαντα, λαχόντα τε ληϊδος αἶσαν.

I said that after he had sacked Ilios, I would bring his famed son back to Opoeis, along with the portion of the booty assigned him. (*Il.* XVIII, 326 f.)

ἄστρα δὲ δὴ προβέβηκε, παροίχωνκεν δὲ πλέων νύξ
τῶν δύο μοιράων, τριτάτη δ' ἔτι μοῖρα λέλλειπται.

Look, the stars have moved onward, two of the watches have passed, the third yet remains. (Il. X, 252 f.)

Αἶσα, μοῖρα, and μόρος are all used in the sense of "portion or lot in life; fate; destiny."

...ἐπεὶ νό τοι αἶσα μίνυθά περ, οὐ τι μάλα δὴν.
νῦν δ' ἅμα τ' ὠκύμορος καὶ δῖζυρδος περὶ πάντων
ἔπλεο· τῷ σε κακῇ αἴσῃ τέκον ἐν μεγάροισι.

...since your lot in life is short, and of no long time. For now you are doomed to a speedy death and wretched beyond all men. Therefore, I bore you to an evil fate in our halls. (Il. I, 416-18)

εἴ περ μοι καὶ μοῖρα Διὸς πληγέντι κεραυνῷ
κεῖσθαι ὁμοῦ νεκύεσσι μεθ' αἵματι καὶ κονίησιν.

...even if it is my fate to be struck by the thunderbolt of Zeus and to lie among the corpses in blood and dust. (Il. XV, 117 f.)

εὖ νυ τὸ οἶδα καὶ αὐτὸς ὃ μοι μόρος ἐνθάδ' ὀλέσθαι

Well do I myself know that it is my fate to perish here. (Il. XIX, 421)

Αἶσα, μοῖρα, μόρος, and κῆρ are all used in the sense of "death". Since death is something allotted to every man, it is easy to see how these four words came to be transferred in meaning. Examples of these words bearing the connotation of death follow:

Ἕκτορ, ἐγὼ δούστηνος· ἰσὴ' ἄρα γιγνώμεθ' αἴσῃ

Hector, how wretched I am! We have been born for the same end. (Il. XXII, 477)

ᾧ δ' ἐτάρων εἰς ἔθνος ἐχάζετο κῆρ' ἀλεείων

He shrunk back into the throng of his comrades, avoiding doom. (Il. III, 32)

πρόσθεν γάρ μιν μοῖρα δυσώνυμος ἀμφεκάλυπεν
ἔγχεϊ Ἰδομενῆος, ἀγαυοῦ Δευκαλίδας.

For before that, accursed fate had enfolded him through the spear of Idomeneus, the son of noble Deukalion. (Il. XII, 116)

αἶ γάρ μιν θανάτοιο δυσσχέος ᾧδε δυνάμην
νόσφιν ἀποκρύψαι, ὅτε μιν μόρος αἰνὸς ἰκάνοι.

Would that I could hide him far away from woe-bringing death, when dread fate reaches him. (Il. XVIII, 464 f.)

Ἀῖσα, and μοῖρα can both signify a decree of fate, as these

passages show:

οὐ γάρ τις μ' ὑπὲρ αἶσαν ἄνηρ "Αἴδι προΐαπει.

For no man shall send me to Hades against fate's decree. (Il. VI, 487)

ἀλλ' ἀναχωρῆσαι, ὅτε κεν συμβλήσεται αὐτῷ,
μὴ καὶ ὑπὲρ μοῖραν δόμον "Αἴδος εἰσαφίκηται.

But go back, whenever you are pitted against him, lest you reach the house of Hades against the decree of fate. (Il. XX, 335 f.)

Most importantly, αἶσα, κῆρ, and μοῖρα are all personified and treated as goddesses who determine the course of events:

...ὕστερον αὖτε τὰ πείσεται ἅσα οἱ Αἶσα
γιγνομένη ἐπένησε λίγῃ, ὅτε μιν τέκε μήτηρ.

But afterward, he shall suffer whatever Fate allotted him at birth with her thread, when his mother bore him. (Il. XX, 127 f.)

οὓς μὴ κῆρες ἔβαν θανάτοιο φέρουσαι.

...whom the fates of death have not borne away. (Il. II, 302)

...τῷ δ' ὥς ποθι Μοῖρα κραταίῃ
 γιγνομένων ἐπένησε λίγῃ, ὅτε μιν τέκον αὐτή.

And thus, no doubt, did powerful Fate spin for him with her flax at his birth, when I myself bore him. (Il. XXIV, 209 f.)

What we have done here is to trace the development of the meanings of αἶσα, κῆρ, μοῖρα, and μόρος. Beginning with the original meanings indicated by the etymologies of αἶσα, μοῖρα, and μόρος, we showed that these words later came to be limited in meaning to "one's allotment, one's fortune in the course of his life. These words are often further restricted in meaning to signify that allotment common to all men, which is death. The meaning is also occasionally particularized to mean the allotment to a certain person at a certain time. Lastly, and most importantly, αἶσα, μοῖρα, and κῆρ are personified and treated as goddesses who control the course of events.⁶

Homer never clarifies the relationship between Zeus and Fate. Sometimes, Zeus seems to be in control of fate, as in Il. XVII, 321, which says that if Apollo had not aroused Aeneas, then the Achaeans would have been victorious ὑπὲρ Αἰδὸς αἶσαν (beyond the allotment of Zeus).

On the greatest number of occasions, however, Homer simply attributes control of the course of events to Zeus, another god, a daimon, or an indefinite θεός, and makes no reference to fate. The course of events is most commonly treated as the result of the will or of the direct intervention of Zeus. Numerous

examples are to be found in every book of the Iliad. Since this view of Zeus as controller of the course of events is to be found both in the purely narrative sections of the Iliad as well as in its epic speeches, it would seem that the poet both held this view himself, and wished to picture it as being the common opinion of his contemporaries. We shall cite but two of the literally hundreds of examples that occur: one from a narrative section, the other a section put in the mouth of one of Homer's characters:

...εἴλει δὲ θεὸς ἀτάλαντος "Αρηΐ
Ἕκτορ Πριαμίδης, ὅτε οἱ Ζεὺς κῦδος ἔδωκε.

Hector son of Priam, peer of swift Ares, drove them together, now that Zeus had given him glory. (Il. VIII, 215 f.)

δοιοὶ γάρ τε πίθοι κατακείσθαι ἐν Διδῷ οὐδὲι
δώρων οἷα δίδωσι, κακῶν, ἕτερος δὲ ἔσθων.
ὃ μὲν κίχρα μείξας δῶν Ζεὺς τερπικέραυνός,
ἄλλοτε μὲν τε κακῷ ὃ γε κύρεται, ἄλλοτε δ' ἐσθλῷ.
ὃ δὲ κε τῶν λυγρῶν δῶν, λαβητὸν ἔθηκε,
καὶ ἐ κακῇ βούβρωστις ἐπὶ χθονὶ δῖαν ἐλαύνει,
φοιτᾷ δ' οὔτε θεοῖσι τετιμένος οὔτε βροτοῖσιν.

For two urns of gifts that he gives lie on Zeus' threshold: one of evils, the other of good things. To whomever Zeus, hurler of the thunderbolt, gives a mixed lot, this man meets now evil, now good; but to whomever he gives ill-fortune, he makes that man the butt of insult. And evil ravenous hunger drives him about the face of the sacred earth, and he roams about, honored by neither gods nor men. (Il. XXIV, 527-33)

The other gods occasionally affect the course of events in this way, sometimes in conjunction with Zeus, sometimes independently of him. In Il. XX, 193, Achilles claims Aeneas was saved from death at his hands by "Zeus and the other gods."

A little later on, in verses 293- 298 of Book XX, on the other hand, Poseidon alone is pictured as saving Achilles from harm.

The gods are often considered to affect the course of events by rousing the psyche of an individual to act. Most frequently, this is done by Zeus, as in Il. VI, 234-36, where he takes away Glaucus' wits to make him trade armor worth one hundred oxen for armor worth nine; or Il. XII, 293 f., where Zeus rouses Sarpedon to fight. This office is also executed by the other gods, notably Poseidon (Il. XIII, 83 f.), Apollo (Il. XVI, 728), Athene (Il. XVIII, 310 f.), Hera (Il. VIII, 217-19), and Thetis (Il. XXIII, 14).

Again, in many other instances, Homer ascribes control over the course of events to an indefinite θεός, as in Il. IX, 48 f.

νῶϊ δ', ἐγὼ Σθέnelός τε, μαχησόμεθ' εἰς ὃ κε τέκμων
'Ιλίου εὐρώμεν· σὺν γὰρ θεῷ εἰλήλουθμεν.

But we two, I and Sthenelos, will fight on, until we reach Ilios, for with the aid of a god have we come.

Sometimes it is made very clear that this θεός is Zeus, as is the case in Il. XIII, 730-33:

ἄλλῳ μὲν γὰρ δῶκε θεὸς πολέμῃ' ἔργα,
ἄλλῳ δ' ὄρχηστὺν, ἑτέρῳ κίθαριν καὶ αἰολὴν,
ἄλλῳ δ' ἐν στήθεσσι τιθεῖ νόον εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς
ἑσθλόν...

To one a god gives the works of war, to another the dance, to another the lyre and the song, and in the breast of another, Zeus puts an understanding mind...

At still other times, control over the course of human events is ascribed to a δαίμων. There is no word in Greek

philosophical or religious language which is so nearly impossible to interpret except when it is placed in the context of a certain epoch or school of thought. In Homer, δαίμων designates divinity, insofar as it causes a beneficial or harmful effect on men. Δαίμων is the divine power, conceived in anthropomorphic terms; δαίμων suggests a hidden, indefinable wisdom in which all the gods participate, and through which they are made to realize their superiority to men. Δαίμων is analogous to the Roman idea of numen; but while the Romans saw numen as a vague, impersonal force, the Homeric δαίμων had a personal, ordered form.⁷

Most frequently, the δαίμων is represented as a power of evil, as in Il. XV, 467:

ὦ πόποι, ἦ δὴ πάγυ μάχης ἐπὶ μῆδεα κείρει
δαίμων ἡμετέρης, ὃ τέ μοι βιδὸν ἔκβαλε χεῖρός

Oh woe, a god has utterly brought to ruin our counsels of battle, in that he has cast the bow from my hand..."

The δαίμων is represented as a beneficent power only rarely in the Iliad. One of the few examples is Il. XV, 403 f.:

τίς δ' οἶδ' εἴ κέν οἱ σὺν δαίμονι θυμὸν ὀρίω
παρειπών; ἀγαθὴ δὲ παραΐφασίς ἐστιν ἑταίρου.

Who knows but that with a god's help I might rouse his spirit by my persuading? The persuasion of a comrade is a good thing.

At times, δαίμων is simply a substitute for θεός, as in Il. III, 420, where Homer says of Aphrodite: ἦρχε δὲ δαίμων.
(The goddess led the way).

When Zeus cannot decide the fate of two warriors, he

determines whose lot it is to live and whose to die in a very human fashion: he weighs the κῆρ of each in a balance. This occurs in Il. XXII, 209-14:

καὶ τότε δὴ χρύσεια πατὴρ ἐτίθεινε τάλαντα,
 ἐν δ' ἐτίθει δύο κῆρε τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο,
 τὴν μὲν Ἀχιλλῆος, τὴν δ' Ἕκτορος ἵπποδάμοιο,
 ἔλκε δὲ μέσσα λαβῶν· ῥέπε δ' Ἕκτορος αἴσιμον ἦμαρ
 ᾤχετο δ' εἰς Αἴδαν, λίπεν δέ εἰς Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων.
 Πηλεΐωνα δ' ἔκανε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη

And then the father held up his golden scale and placed [in them] two fates of death which brings long woe. One was the fate of Achilles, and the other that of horse-taming Hector. He took the balance by the middle and raised it. Down sank Hector's day of doom and departed for Hades, and Phoebus Apollo left him. But flashing-eyed Athene came to the son of Peleus...

In the subsequent lines, Athene lures Hector into the fatal battle with Achilles by deluding him into thinking that his brother Deiphobus is close at hand to aid him.

Several important facts are shown us by these verses. Zeus uses a balance to weigh men's fates only twice in the Iliad. These incidents occur only at the most critical moments, when it is difficult even for Zeus to know what is fated. This passage indicates that Zeus did not determine men's fates; his role, rather, was to learn what was fated and then to see that it was brought to fulfillment. Immediately upon the discovery of what has been fated, Apollo abandons Hector and Athene begins to aid Achilles.

On the other hand, what Zeus says in Il. XV, 164-71 seems to indicate that he does know what is fated:

...ὃ δ' ἀνοστήσει ὃν ἐταῖρον
 Πάτροκλον· τὸν δὲ κτενεῖ ἔγχεϊ φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ
 Ἰλίου προπάρσιθε, πολέας ὀλέσαντ' αἰχμηδὺς
 τοὺς ἄλλους, μετὰ δ' αὖτις ἐμὸν Σαρπηδόνα δῖον.
 τοῦ δὲ χολωσάμενος κτενεῖ Ἕκτορα δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς.
 ἐκ τοῦ δ' ἂν τοι ἔπειτα παλίωξιν παρὰ νῆων
 αἰὲν ἐγὼ τεύχοιμι διαμπερές, εἰς ὃ κ' Ἀχαιοὶ
 Ἰλίον αἰὲν ἔλκοιεν Ἀθηναίης διὰ βουλᾶς.

...and he [Achilles] shall send forth his comrade Patroclus, but renowned Hector shall slay him with the spear before Ilios, after he kills many other youths himself, among them my son, noble Sarpedon. Then, wrathful over Patroclus shall Achilles slay Hector. Then will I cause a driving back of the Trojans continually and without pause, until the Achaeans shall take steep Ilios by the counsels of Athene.

Although Zeus does set the course of the battle, it seems that, in Homer's mind, death is decreed for the individual by a power other than Zeus. What Zeus says in Il. XXII, 174-76, however, indicates that the gods themselves execute the decree of fate for an individual, but have a certain undefined freedom in determining whether or not to execute the decree:

ἀλλ' ἄγετε φράζεσθε, θεοί, καὶ μητιᾶσθε
 ἧέ μιν ἐκ θανάτοιο σῶσομεν. ἧέ μιν ἤδη
 Πηλεΐδῃ Ἀχιλῆϊ δαμάσομεν ἐσθλὸν ἔοντα.

But come and take thought, gods, and give counsel, whether we shall save him from death, or slay him through Achilles, Peleus' son, good man though he is.

Il. XIX, 86 f. tends to corroborate this idea. Agamemnon is here speaking of his guilt (or lack thereof) in acting rashly against Achilles:

...ἐγὼ δ' οὐκ αἴτιός εἰμι,
 ἀλλὰ Ζεὺς καὶ Μοῖρα καὶ ἡεροφοῖτις Ἐρινός

I am not guilty, but rather Zeus and Fate and Erinyes, who walks in darkness.

Zeus' powerlessness to alter something that has already been fated is best shown in Il. XVI, 431-57:

τοὺς δὲ ἰδὼν ἐλέησε Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω,
 "Ἥρην δὲ προσέειπε κασιγνήτην ἄλοχόν τε·
 "ὦ μοι ἐγὼν, ὃ τέ μοι Σαρπηδόνα, φίλτατον ἀνδρῶν,
 μοῖρ' ὑπὸ Πατρόκλοιο Μενoitιᾶδασ δαμῆναι.
 διχθὰ δὲ μοι κραδίη μέμονε φρεσὶν ὀρμαίνοντι,
 ἢ μιν ζῶν ἐδόντα μάχης ἥπο δακρυόεσσης
 θείῳ ἀναρπάξας Λυκίης ἐν πτόνι δῆμῳ,
 ἢ ἤδη ὑπὸ χερσὶ Μενoitιᾶδασ δαμάσσω."
 Τὸν δ' ἡμείβετ' ἔπειτα βοῶπις πότνια "Ἥρῃ·
 "αἰνότατε Κρονίδη, ποῖον τὸν μῦθον ἔειπες.
 ἄνδρα θνητὸν ἐδόντα, πᾶλαι πεπρωμένον αἶψῃ,
 ἅψ' ἐθέλεις θανάτοιο δυσσχέος ἐξανάλυσαι;
 ἔρδ'· ἅτῃρ οὐ τοι πάντες ἐπαινέομεν θεοὶ ἄλλοι.
 ἄλλο δὲ τοι ἔρέω, σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῆσιν·
 αἶ' κε ζῶν πέμψῃς Σαρπηδόνα ὅνδε δόμονδε,
 φράξεο μὴ τις ἔπειτα θεῶν ἐθέλῃσι καὶ ἄλλος
 πέμπειν ὃν φίλον υἷδν ἀπὸ κρατερῆς ὑμίνης·
 πολλοὶ γὰρ περὶ ἄστυ μέγα Πριάμοιο μάχονται
 υἷες ἀθανάτων, τοῖσιν κότον αἰνὸν ἐνήσεις;
 ἄλλ' εἴ τοι φίλος ἐστί, τεδὼν δ' ὀλοφύρεται ἦτορ,
 ἢ τοι μὲν μιν ἔασον ἐνὶ κρατερῇ ὑμίνῃ
 χέρσ' ὑπο Πατρόκλοιο Μενoitιᾶδασ δαμῆναι·
 αὐτὰρ ἐπὴν δὴ τὸν γε λίπη τε καὶ αἰὼν,
 πέμπειν μιν Θανάτῳ τε φέρειν καὶ νήδυμον ὕπνον,
 εἰς ὃ κε δὴ Λυκίης εὐρείης δῆμον ἵκωνται·
 ἔνθα ἔταρχουσιν κασιγνητοὶ τε ἔσται τε
 τύμβῳ τε στήλῃ τε· τὸ γὰρ γέρας ἐστί θανόντων."

When he [Zeus] saw them Patroclus and Sarpedon, the son of of wily Kronos took pity, and spoke to Hera, his sister and his wife: "Oh woe is me! It is fated that Sarpedon, the dearest of men to me, is to be slain by Patroclus, son of Menoetius! My heart is inclined in two directions as I ponder in my mind whether I should snatch him up while he yet lives and speed him away from the doleful battle to the rich land of Lycia, or slay him at the hands of Menoetius' son." Then ox-eyed queenly Hera answered him: "Most dread son of Kronos, what a saying you have spoken! A man that is mortal, long since given over to fate, you wish to set free again from the power of woe-bringing death? Do it, but we other gods shall not approve of your action. Another thing will I tell you, and you take it to heart: if you send Sarpēdon alive to his house, remember that some other god may later wish to send his own dear son away from fierce battle."

fierce battle. For many sons of the immortals are fighting about the great city of Priam, and you will send your dread wrath upon them. But even if he is dear to you and your heart is grieved, still let him be slain at the hands of Patroclus, Menoetius' son, in the fierce battle. But when his soul and his life have left him, send Death and refreshing Sleep to bear him away until they come to the land of broad Lycia. There will his brethren and fellow-townsmen pay him the funeral rites with mound and pillar, for this is what is due the dead.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this passage. First, it is evident that Zeus could, if he so desired, overrule what Fate has decreed. But, as Hera reminds Zeus, for him to do so would be to upset the order of the universe. If he no longer lets that which must be come to pass, then he can no longer expect the other gods not to interfere in the rightful order of events. Line 449 in the above passage states that Zeus will punish any other god who saves a mortal whom fate has marked out for death. This implies that Zeus sees to it that the course of events marked out by Fate is actually followed. Zeus is bound by Fate's decrees; for him to violate them would be to invite chaos into the universe.

Is Fate subordinate to or identical with the will of Zeus, thus making Zeus bound to the decrees of Fate only in the sense that a man is bound by his given word of honor? Or is Fate a power entirely apart from Zeus' sway and superior to it? The Iliad never makes clear which is true.

Abbreviations Used

I In the Notes

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D.S.: Daremberg, C., and Saglio, E. (eds.). Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines. Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck und Verlagsanstalt, 1962-63.

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Notes

Introduction

¹In referring to "Homer", I do not intend to imply that I have taken any position as to the precise nature of the authorship of the Iliad and the Odyssey. I refer to "Homer" only because custom sanctions doing so. The "Homeric Question", of course, is entirely beyond the scope of this thesis.

Chapter I

¹Theodor Gomperz, Greek Thinkers: A History of Ancient Philosophy, trans. Laurie Magnus (London: John Murray, [1949]), I, 28.

²Arthur Bernard Cook, Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion (New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1964), I, 9.

³Ibid., I, 1.

⁴Ibid., I, 4-5.

⁵Richard John Cunliffe, A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, [1963]), p. 96.

⁶Cook, op. cit., I, 3.

⁷The great goddess, the Mother of Heaven and Earth. She was known as Mylitta in Assyria, and Astarte in Phoenicia. The Greeks called her Heavenly Aphrodite, or simply the Heavenly One. Herodotus, trans. A.T. Godley ("Loeb Classical Library"; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1946), translator's note, vol. I, p. 137.

⁸Herodotus i. 131. The translation is my own, as are all the translations in this thesis.

⁹Cook, op. cit., I, 9-10

¹⁰Martin P. Nilsson, A History of Greek Religion, trans. F.J. Fielden (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1949), p. 142.

¹¹Gomperz, op. cit., I, 17

¹²Ibid., I, 22

- ¹³J. Toutain, "Religio", D.S. IV, pt. 2, pp. 831-32.
- ¹⁴Gomperz, op. cit., I, 25-26.
- ¹⁵Nilsson, op. cit., p. 143.
- ¹⁶Gomperz, op. cit., I, 26.
- ¹⁷Homeric Hymn 5. 256-72. As found in Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns and Homerica, trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White ("The Loeb Classical Library"; London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1936), pp. 406-27.
- ¹⁸Gomperz, op. cit., I, 26-27.

Chapter II

- ¹Herbert J. Rose, "Kronos," O.C.D., p. 476.
- ²"Uranus," P.W., 2nd series, IX, pt. 1, 966-70.
- ³Rose, loc. cit.
- ⁴"Kronos," P.W., XI, pt. 2, 1982.
- ⁵Herbert J. Rose, A Handbook of Greek Mythology (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., [1953]), p. 43.
- ⁶"Kronos," P.W., XI, pt. 2, 1988. That Kronos was a supreme deity is made clear by the fact that he was given the appellation βασιλεὺς.
- ⁷Ibid., 1986-87.
- ⁸Ibid., 1990.
- ⁹Ibid., 1982.
- ¹⁰Ibid., 1990.
- ¹¹Cunliffe, op. cit., p. 157.
- ¹²Ibid., p. 218.
- ¹³Cook, op. cit., II, pt. 1, 582-85.
- ¹⁴Homer Iliad, trans. A.T. Murray ("Loeb Classical Library"; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963), vol. II, p. 180, translator's footnote.

- 15 Cunliffe, op. cit., p. 195.
- 16 "Nyx," P.W., XVII, pt. 2, 1663-64.
- 17 Edouard Cuq, "Jusjurandum," D.S., III, pt. 1, 748.
- 18 Georg Autenrieth, A Homeric Dictionary for Schools and Colleges, trans. Robert P. Keep, rev. Isaac Flagg (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, [1966]), pp. 45-46.
- 19 Correspondingly, according to Autenrieth's Homeric Dictionary, ἀρετός and ἐσθλός almost invariably refer to physical excellence in Homer; κακός, moreover, rarely refers to moral badness.
- 20 Werner Jaeger, Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture, trans. Gilbert Highet (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), I, 3-4.
- 21 Ibid., I, 8.
- 22 Ibid., I, 7-9.
- 23 Cuq, op. cit., p. 748.
- 24 George M. Calhoun and T.B.L. Webster, "Polity and Society," A Companion to Homer, ed. Alan J.B. Wace and Frank H. Stubbings (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1962), pp. 449-50.

Chapter III

- 1 "Moirai," P.W., XV, pt. 2, 2449.
- 2 J.A. Hild, "Fatum," D.S., II, pt. 2, 1016.
- 3 "Moirai," P.W., XV, pt. 2, 2449.
- 4 Cunliffe, op. cit., p. 289.
- 5 Hild, "Fatum," D.S., loc. cit.; "Moirai," P.W., loc. cit.
- 6 The plural form Μοῖραι only occurs once in the Iliad, in II. XXIV, 49: τλητὸν γὰρ Μοῖραι θυμὸν θέσαν ἀνθρώποισιν. (The Fates have given men an enduring soul.) The only reference to several Fates spinning out men's dooms in Homer comes in Od. VII, 197 f. The naming of the three Fates and the distinction between their tasks is not found in Homer.
- 7 J.A. Hild, "Daemon," D.S., II, pt. 1, p. 9.

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