

# Reconstructing Laomedon's Reign in Homer: *Olympiomachia*, Poseidon's Wall, and the Earlier Trojan War

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THE LARGEST EVENT in the mythic history of the Troad is the Trojan War, immortalized in the *Iliad*. Yet, in the generation before this war the city had been sacked already by Herakles during the reign of King Laomedon. Herein I seek to piece back together the first Trojan War and other stories from Laomedon's reign in the Homeric tradition: a war among the Olympians themselves, which we might term an *Olympiomachia* (by analogy with the Hesiodic *Titanomachia*),<sup>1</sup> the building of an earlier wall at Troy by Poseidon (and Apollo) for the impious king, and Herakles' arrival and rude reception. I argue that the earlier wall of Troy mentioned in the *Iliad* was constructed as a result of an *Olympiomachia* and its aftermath contemporary with Laomedon's reign and preceding an earlier Trojan War. I further suggest that the *Olympiomachia* lurks in the background for poet and audience (much as the *Titanomachia* does for Hesiod's listeners) when they hear of insubordination in the second Trojan War. It, along with other early cosmic battles embedded within Homer's story-telling tradition, forebodes what could happen again if Zeus does not

<sup>1</sup> By this neologism I mean to stress the battle between the dwellers on Olympus (Ὀλύμπιοι), rather than the location (Ὀλυμπος) of the battle itself. In like manner Τιτανομαχία (first found as a title to an epic ascribed to the early epic poet Eumelus [or Arctinus] in a scholion on Apollonius of Rhodes [fr.3 Bernabé, *PEG*]) may refer to the Titans as an ethnic group, if the -ἄνες ending's analogues are any indication. See P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris 1969) 122.

forcefully maintain careful control.<sup>2</sup> These backstories also illustrate a point of methodology for the consideration of the history of any Homeric myth: we should first read Homer on his own terms, rather than through the lens of other poetic traditions, including the Hesiodic.

We turn first to consider Herakles' visit to Laomedon and Zeus's overall propensity for authoritarian reaction. Herakles is said by Homer to have come to Troy with six ships seeking the horses of King Laomedon, father of Priam (*Il.* 5.640–641). The horses were given by Zeus to Tros (father of Ilos, founder of Troy) as compensation for his son Ganymede's abduction by the gods.<sup>3</sup> Laomedon foolishly refused to hand over these special horses to the powerful Herakles, despite the probability that the hero had just rid Troy of “the well-known” (τό),<sup>4</sup> dangerous, and virtually amphibious “sea monster” (κῆτος).<sup>5</sup> Herakles' battle with the sea monster seems the most likely backstory for *Il.* 20.144–148, where he is shown running away from a sea monster whenever it chases him, escaping into a lofty fortification fabricated by the Trojans and Athena. One must assume that Herakles eventually subdued the creature in

<sup>2</sup> I employ ‘Homer’/‘Homeric’ throughout to stand for the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as texts, or for the oral poet or poets (*aoidos* or *aoidoi*) who sang each traditional song. Cf. a similar approach by M. Edwards, “Homer’s *Iliad*,” in J. Foley (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Epic* (Malden 2005) 302, and E. Minchin, *Homeric Voices* (Oxford 2007) 3. For a consideration of what is meant by ‘oral poet’ see J. Foley, *How to Read an Oral Poem* (Chicago 2002), and C. Beye, *Ancient Epic Poetry: Homer, Apollonius, Virgil* (Wauconda 2006) 1–42.

<sup>3</sup> *Il.* 5.260–272. By way of contrast, other early accounts (see *Hymn.Hom.Ven.* 202–203) make Zeus himself, rather than the gods more generally, the direct agent in the deed. The *Iliad* further records in a speech of Diomedes (5.268–269) that Anchises, before Herakles' arrival, stole Laomedon's stallions long enough to have bred six horses from his own mares.

<sup>4</sup> The definite article may mean the sea monster “we all know about,” as noted by M. Edwards, *The Iliad: A Commentary* V (Cambridge 1991) 307.

<sup>5</sup> On the meaning of κῆτος see Chantraine, *Dictionnaire* 527, who describes it in Homer as a “monstre marin”; cf. R. Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek* (Leiden 2010) 690–691.

this case. It was now time for payment. Laomedon mocked the hero, however, refusing to give Herakles the horses “despite” his having accomplished his task (εὖ ἔρξαντα, 5.650).<sup>6</sup> Herakles consequently proceeded to sack Troy as we learn from the speeches of Tlepolemos and Sarpedon (5.642–651). Herakles was not to be toyed with.

In a speech by Zeus to Hera, we further hear that this earlier sack of Troy was immediately followed by Hera’s trickery. She, through her “conniving” (δόλος, *Il.* 15.14), lulled her husband soundly to sleep (18–22). While he slept, she hounded Herakles all the way to Cos. Homer has Zeus provide the narrative:<sup>7</sup>

τὸν σὺ ξὺν Βορῆι ἀνέμῳ πεπιθοῦσα θυέλλας  
πέμψας ἐπ’ ἀτρύγετον πόντον κακὰ μητιόωσα,  
καί μιν ἔπειτα Κόων δ’ εὖ ναιομένην ἀπένεικας.

You drove him, after prevailing upon the North Wind,  
along the barren sea, devising wicked things,  
and then you carried him away to well-situated Cos.

More expansive epic comment on this episode occurs at 14.242–261, where Cos may indicate a “perilous place” in and of itself.<sup>8</sup> The *Meropis* epic may have connected it with Giants whom Herakles had to fight.<sup>9</sup> In the *Iliad* narrative as we have it, however, the negative picture of Cos is related to the storm that blows Herakles off course (he is racked by winds), causing the loss of the five other ships that had accompanied him to battle against Troy. Zeus rescued him (*Il.* 15.29–30), in what appears, significantly, as an earlier pattern for the later *nostoi* of the *Odyssey*.<sup>10</sup> Hera paid for her contrivances by being hung in

<sup>6</sup> Translating the participle as concessive depends upon understanding 5.650 against the backstory of 20.144–148.

<sup>7</sup> *Il.* 15.26–28. Translations throughout are my own.

<sup>8</sup> See R. Janko, *The Iliad: A Commentary IV* (Cambridge 1992) 191.

<sup>9</sup> *Meropis* fr. 1–6 Bernabé, *PEG*.

<sup>10</sup> Notable from this backstory in the *Iliad* is the wrath of a female goddess, Hera. This adds another early Troad parallel for later events, one that perhaps acts as a template for the *Odyssey*’s *nostoi* after the Trojan War, when

mid-air with an anvil tied to her feet. The goddess Sleep, an accomplice in her covert activities, barely escaped punishment. She fled to the protection of Night, a concealing goddess revered even by Zeus, who called off the chase (14.258–261).

It is perhaps here in the chronology of Homeric myth that we are also to place another brutal action of Zeus, one of the two violent thrusts of Hephaistos from Olympos.<sup>11</sup> It is an event that Hephaistos himself recalls (*Il.* 1.590–594):

ἤδη γάρ με καὶ ἄλλοτ' ἀλεξέμεναι μεμαῶτα  
 ῥῖψε ποδὸς τεταγὼν ἀπὸ βηλοῦ θεσπεσίῳ,  
 πᾶν δ' ἡμᾶρ φερόμην, ἅμα δ' ἠελίῳ καταδύντι  
 κάππεσον ἐν Λήμνῳ, ὀλίγος δ' ἔτι θυμὸς ἐνήεν·  
 ἔνθά με Σίντιες ἄνδρες ἄφαρ κομίσαντο πεσόντα.

For already at another time, although I had wanted to defend you,  
 he threw me from the divine threshold, grabbing my foot.

I was borne along the whole day and at sunset

I landed on Lemnos, but little life remained within me.

There the Sintian men tended me after my fall.

The context for this recollection of an earlier authoritative and violent response to Hera's scheming is a present attempt by Hera to connive once again, now during the second Trojan War. Hephaistos reminds his mother of the cost of crossing Zeus the last time and how he had himself been eager but equally unable to defend her against her husband's violence. Presumably, after Zeus's hanging out of Hera, Hephaistos had immediately, if not impetuously, attempted to come to her aid, only to face Zeus's intractability. Zeus would brook no disobedience, even to stop the cruel punishment of one's own mother.

Another example of Zeus's authoritarian reflex to insubordination is found in the *Iliad*, in Book 8. Zeus threatens that he

<sup>11</sup> Athena also initially had it in for the departing Achaeans. See *Od.* 1.26–27, 3.143–147, 5.105–111. On the exchange of her anger for “benevolence” towards Odysseus see J. Clay, *The Wrath of Athena* (Lanham 1983) 50.

<sup>11</sup> The other one was by Hera herself, *Il.* 18.395–397.

will scourge or send to Tartaros any Olympian who attempts to balk at his orders against assisting the Trojans. What is more, he challenges any who may wish, to try to drag him down to earth. Zeus boasts (16–17):

γνώσεται ἔπειθ' ὅσον εἰμὶ θεῶν κάρτιστος ἀπάντων.  
εἰ δ' ἄγε πειρήσασθε θεοὶ ἵνα εἴδετε πάντες·

Know then by how much I am the strongest of all gods!  
Come, try, so that all of you gods may realize this!

He even proposes a tug of war. Yet to all of this Athena has but one reply (31–32):

ὦ πάτερ ἡμέτερε Κρονίδη ὕπατε κρειόντων  
εὖ νυ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν ὅ τοι σθένος οὐκ ἐπιεικτόν.

O our father, son of Kronos, lordliest of rulers,  
Now we well know that your strength is unyielding.

Hera will utter almost exactly the same formulaic line to Zeus later at 8.463, after he has threatened her and Athena with his thunderbolt. Hera will, however, substitute οὐκ ἀλαπαδνόν (“not easily mastered”) for οὐκ ἐπιεικτόν (“unyielding”) in the Adonean Clausula, as she exclaims: “Now we well know that your strength is not easily mastered” (εὖ νυ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν ὅ τοι σθένος οὐκ ἀλαπαδνόν).

#### *Cosmological conflicts in Homer*

What sort of background did the Homeric tradition carry that predisposed Zeus to such quick, self-protective, authoritarian reflexes? Put another way, what might poet and audience have had in mind for traditional points of reference or cosmological backstories?<sup>12</sup> There are various possibilities. A

<sup>12</sup> I use ‘backstories’ here with much the same meaning as ‘traditional referentiality’, a concept discussed in depth in J. Foley, *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic* (Bloomington 1991). The assumption of backstories in oral tradition known to poet and audience makes less necessary the insistence upon ‘interconnection’ through foreshadowing only within the *present Iliad* poem, as discussed in O. Taplin, *Homeric Soundings* (Oxford 1992) 9–11. On the contrary, the *Iliad* doubtless had been heard in a somewhat similar form before, and the Homeric *aoidoi* seemed to rely on a

threat to throw the Olympians into murky Tartaros referred to at *Il.* 8.13, by comparison with the Hesiodic tradition, may have brought up for Zeus's fellow Olympians memories of an earlier day when they had struggled as a group against the Titans. The Olympians could have remembered those earlier losers who, in Hesiod's pun, had "strained" (τιταίνοντες) so hard to win (*Theog.* 208–209), yet ended up imprisoned in Tartaros. The problem is that Homeric epic never directly emphasizes or details this cosmic event so central to Hesiod's epic. This is not to say that the Homeric epics display no knowledge of the *Titanomachia*, but rather to suggest that it is only one of their cosmic backstories.

The *Titanomachia* backstory, although much less apparent in Homer than in Hesiod, is present in small ways. The *Iliad* has a two-line reference to Zeus driving Kronos under the earth (14.203–204) and a few scattered references to the subterranean Titans.<sup>13</sup> The *Titanomachia* as a pattern for Homer may also lie behind the sort of binary we observe in the Trojan War itself.<sup>14</sup> In *Iliad* 20, for example, we find the gods split, part huddling together in the former lair where Herakles avoided the sea monster and part gathering elsewhere (20.149–152):

ἔνθα Ποσειδάων κατ' ἄρ' ἔζετο καὶ θεοὶ ἄλλοι,  
 ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' ἄρρηκτον νεφέλην ὤμοισιν ἔσαντο·  
 οἱ δ' ἑτέρωσε καθίζον ἐπ' ὄφρ' ὤσι Καλλικολώνης  
 ἀμφὶ σὲ ἦϊε Φοῖβε καὶ Ἄρηα πτολίπορθον.

There Poseidon and some of the gods sat down,  
 and they placed an impenetrable cloud around their shoulders;  
 but others on the other side were sitting down upon the bluff of  
 Fair Hills,

traditionally informed audience as they told their story. An assumption of the "audience's knowledge can allow the poet to curtail full explication of the underlying core material on which he draws" (N. Yasumura, *Challenges to the Power of Zeus in Early Greek Poetry* [London 2011] 7). In short, the current rendition must be heard within the larger performance tradition.

<sup>13</sup> *Il.* 8.874–881; 14.273, 279; 15.224–225.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. the comments of Yasumura, *Challenges* 71–75.

around you, Lord Apollo and Ares Sacker of Cities.

This divine division may be influenced by the sorts of Near Eastern patterns unquestionably behind Hesiod's *Titanomachia* and the *Theogony* more generally. In that case, the fear was of being ousted and replaced by one's own son.<sup>15</sup> Yet there are other reasons that could place the gods in opposite camps. For example, the *Iliad* makes allusion to the choice of Paris (24.25–30),<sup>16</sup> which might explain the opposition of Athena and Hera to Aphrodite. Apollo's own priest has been insulted (1.8–52), which could account in part for Apollo's opposition to the Achaeans,<sup>17</sup> despite an earlier subservience to Troy's King Laomedon that we will note shortly.<sup>18</sup> Of course, these other backstories do not at all rule out Homer knowing about a *Titanomachia*. After all, early Greek mythology is full of examples of multiple causes, not just multiple agents, as is demonstrated by myths like the curse of the House of Atreus—or should we say the curse of the House of Pelops, or perhaps, the *Oresteia*? Early sources make it clear that multiple curses infected Atreus's family line, both his predecessors and his progeny.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> On the Succession Myth or the Kingship in Heaven Cycle in Homer see Yasumura, *Challenges*; for its influence on Hesiod, P. Walcot, *Hesiod and the Near East* (Cardiff 1966); I. Rutherford, "Hesiod and the Literary Traditions of the Near East," in F. Montanari et al. (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Hesiod* (Leiden 2009) 22–24; E. von Dongen, "The 'Kingship in Heaven'-Theme of the Hesiodic *Theogony*: Origin, Function, and Composition," *GRBS* 51 (2011) 180–201. For relevant Near Eastern and early Classical sources see C. López-Ruiz, *Then the Gods Were Born: Greek Cosmologies and the Near East* (Cambridge 2010) 6–56.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. M. Davies, "The Judgement of Paris and *Iliad* Book XXIV," *JHS* 101 (1981) 56–62.

<sup>17</sup> Although once Agamemnon has sent an offering to Apollo (1.430–474), one might not expect the god's continued anger.

<sup>18</sup> Even Poseidon (21.458–460) upbraids Apollo during the second Trojan War for assisting the Trojans, bringing forward for his recollection the ignoble actions of Laomedon in the former generation.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Pind. *Ol.* 1.27; Aesch. *Ag.* (1378, 1590–1602); Ar. fr.478, *proagon* of a lost comedy; Thuc. 1.9 (and H. Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus* [Berkeley

The Greeks knew contradictory versions of a myth, even if one was preferred by a particular story-teller at a particular time and place, or one became more popular in the contexts of later panhellenic performance.<sup>20</sup>

Further, Hesiod's *Theogony* declares that it was Zeus who created the resulting world order known to him and his audience (*Theog.* 71–74):

ὁ δ' οὐρανῷ ἐμβασιλεύει,  
αὐτὸς ἔχων βροντὴν ἢ δ' αἰθαλόεντα κεραυνόν,  
κάρτει νικήσας πατέρα Κρόνον· εὐ δὲ ἕκαστα  
ἀθανάτοις διέταξε νόμους καὶ ἐπέφραδε τιμᾶς.

Zeus was reigning in heaven  
possessing the lightning and thunderbolt that burns to ashes,  
after he had, by his might, overcome his father Kronos. And he  
put every matter in order for the gods and equally he pronounced  
their privileges.

Likewise in the *Iliad*, some cosmology is present. Poseidon voices the apportioned hegemony in his speech to Iris:

τρεις γάρ τ' ἐκ Κρόνου εἰμὲν ἀδελφοὶ οὓς τέκετο Ῥέα  
Ζεὺς καὶ ἐγώ, τρίτατος δ' Αἴδης ἐνέροισιν ἀνάσσω.  
τριχθὰ δὲ πάντα δέδασται, ἕκαστος δ' ἔμμορε τιμῆς·  
ἦτοι ἐγὼν ἔλαχον πολιὴν ἄλλα ναιέμεν αἰεὶ  
παλλομένων, Αἴδης δ' ἔλαχε ζόφον ἠερόεντα,  
Ζεὺς δ' ἔλαχ' οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἐν αἰθέρι καὶ νεφέλῃσι·  
γαῖα δ' ἔτι ξυνή πάντων καὶ μακρὸς Ὀλυμπος.

We are three brothers, sons of Kronos, born from Rhea  
—Zeus, myself, and Hades, third brother, ruler of the dead.  
The whole world was divided in three parts and each of us  
was allotted one share.

Once the lots were shaken, I won the blue-grey sea as mine to

[1971] 120–121). On multiple agency in ancient myth cf. the comments of Janko, *The Iliad* IV 3–7.

<sup>20</sup> On panhellenic influence see Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* 9; Clay, *Wrath of Athena* 8–9; D. Elmer, *The Poetics of Consent: Collective Decision Making in the Iliad* (Baltimore 2013) 205.

live in forever. Hades got the murky darkness,  
 Zeus wide heaven with the upper air and clouds,  
 but earth and high Olympus yet remained common for all.<sup>21</sup>

The Iliadic shaking of lots, however, speaks less strongly for the sort of Zeus-ordered cosmos that we find in Hesiod's *Theogony*, nor is it overtly connected with the aftermath of a *Titanomachia* as in Hesiod. The context of this speech, moreover, is Poseidon's complaint to Iris, Zeus's messenger, that his brother is acting unjustly in telling him what to do. Zeus had sent Iris with orders telling him to keep out of the Trojan War in which he and other divinities had been enmeshing themselves by siding with their favorite humans. Although Poseidon gives in and does what Zeus 'requests', one feels that real trouble could break out at any time, that the foundation of Zeus's hegemony is not as solid and sure as in the Hesiodic presentation.

Homer must, however, be read on his own terms, rather than forced into Hesiod's epic tradition. After all, as Janko has convincingly shown, the memorialization of ancient epic in written form began with the *Iliad*.<sup>22</sup> This is not to say that the

<sup>21</sup> *Il.* 15.187–193. Cf. *Hymn.Hom.Cer.* 85–86. The tripartite division of the cosmos is perhaps a creation story taken over from the Near Eastern Atrahasis myth, as suggested in W. Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1992) 89–91. On Near Eastern parallels to Homer see M. L. West, *The East Face of Helicon* (Oxford 1997) 334–437, and B. Loudon, *Homer's Odyssey and the Near East* (Cambridge 2011).

<sup>22</sup> Further, although it is likely that different areas produced their own stories or story versions as suggested by M. L. West, *Theogony* (Oxford 1966) 12, the idea that each region's oral poetics reflects an independent or isolated set of language developments remains tenuous to trace, as noted by R. Janko, "πρῶτόν τε καὶ ὕστατον αἰὲν αἰεῖν: Relative Chronology and Literary History of the Early Greek Epos," in Ø. Anderson and D. Haug (eds.), *Relative Chronology in Early Greek Poetry* (Cambridge 2012) 34–37. While we cannot know exactly what the original Homeric texts looked like, Janko (see also *Homer, Hesiod and the Hymns: Diachronic Development in Epic Diction* [Cambridge 1982]) has shown that the manuscript tradition we possess is *relatively* datable according to linguistic developments. The Homeric epics as memorializations of oral performances perhaps originated through some

Homeric tradition trumps other story traditions. The epic cycle tradition in some oral form predated the written artifacts with which we are left, and so certain of these stories doubtless predate Homer's memorialization in written form.<sup>23</sup> The same could be said of the *Homeric Hymns*.<sup>24</sup> My concern here, however, is about Hesiodic or other traditions taking priority over the Homeric, of assuming that we must read Homer through the lens of other story traditions. This caveat is especially important because Homeric epic does not, when it narrates moments of tension among the Olympians, foreground the sort of developed *Titanomachia* and its immediate aftermath found in Hesiod. Certainly we have seen that the imprint of such a model is far less pronounced. Homer's tradition instead had other moments of cosmic tension that are more overtly portrayed in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

One cosmic conflict known to Homer in more detail is a *Gigantomachia*.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, Hesiod narrates something of the

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sort of dictation process, on which see M. Parry's comments in A. Parry *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry* (Oxford 1971) 451; R. Janko, "The *Iliad* and its Editors: Dictation and Redaction," *ClAnt* 9 (1990) 326–334, and "The Homeric Poems as Oral Dictated Texts," *CQ* 48 (1998) 1–13; B. Powell, "Homer and Writing," in I. Morris and B. Powell (eds.), *A New Companion to Homer* (Leiden 1997) 3–32. The epic performance tradition lived on, however, as noted by C. Dué, "Achilles' Golden Amphora in Aeschines' 'Against Timarchus' and the Afterlife of Oral Tradition," *CP* 96 (2001) 33–47.

<sup>23</sup> W. Kullmann, "Oral Poetry Theory and Neoanalysis in Homeric Research," *GRBS* 25 (1984) 309–311; J. Burgess, *The Trojan War in Homer and the Epic Cycle* (Baltimore 2001) 7–12.

<sup>24</sup> J. Clay, *The Politics of Olympus* (Princeton 1989) 205; Janko, in *Relative Chronology* 38.

<sup>25</sup> Pindar (*Pyth.* 4.90) names another Giant, Tityos, and places veritable *Gigantomachiai* well before the voyage of the Argo. The reference, couched within Pindar's ode to Arcesilas (462 B.C.), is made by Medea herself, who qualifies her account by "they say" (80, φαντί), either an acknowledgement of the story having become legendary or a result of the constraints of narrative perspective. How else could she, living at the ends of the earth as Euripides has Jason describe it (*Med.* 540–541), have known this? While it is

birth of the Giants but says nothing directly in his *Theogony* about a *Gigantomachia*.<sup>26</sup> Yet, somewhat later Greek authors and very early Greek art make clear that an assault took place by the Giants upon the Olympians.<sup>27</sup> The *Iliad* makes reference to it, naming the Giants Otos and Ephialtes. This is in the speech of Zeus's divine consort, Dione, to Aphrodite, who has been wounded by the hubristic Diomedes. She has been scratched and is complaining to her mother, who advises that she accept the suffering of such males since she is not the first to have experienced thoughtless outrages. Dione then offers the example of Ares overcome by the Giants (5.385–391):

τλή μὲν Ἄρης ὅτε μιν Ἴωτος κρατερός τ' Ἐφιάλτης  
παῖδες Ἀλωῆος, δῆσαν κρατερῶ ἐνὶ δεσμῶ·  
χαλκῆω δ' ἐν κεράμω δέδετο τρισκαίδεκα μῆνας·  
καὶ νύ κεν ἔνθ' ἀπόλοιτο Ἄρης ἄτος πολέμοιο,  
εἰ μὴ μητρυιῆ περικαλλῆς Ἡερίβοια  
Ἑρμέα ἐξήγγειλεν· ὃ δ' ἐξέκλεψεν Ἄρηα  
ἤδη τειρόμενον, χαλεπὸς δέ ἐ δεσμὸς ἐδάμνα.

Ares endured when strong Otos and Ephialtes,  
children of Aloeus, bound him in strong bonds.  
He was bound in a bronze jar for thirteen months.

of course possible that Homer invented parts of his *Gigantomachia*, I agree with Yasumura, *Challenges* 56, that the presence in Homer of scattered references to the *Gigantomachia* suggests that a pre-Homeric story was known to poet and audience. Cf. the comments of Nagy, *Best of the Achaeans* 2, for instance, that “the *Iliad* is recording the fact that Odysseus already has an *Odyssey* tradition about him.”

<sup>26</sup> *Theog.* 50–52. The mention of Herakles as “blessed” (ἄλβιος) through his apotheosis (954–955) may imply Hesiod's comprehension of the reasons for Herakles' apotheosis first mentioned in Pindar (*Nem.* 1.61–73), including his assisting the gods in the *Gigantomachia*. There is no way of being certain, however.

<sup>27</sup> For artistic representations of the *Gigantomachia* see *LIMC* IV.1 191–192, IV.2 108–158. Early examples are too numerous to mention here but include the pediments of the Temple of Zeus at Acragas, the Treasury of the Megarians at Olympia, the Selinuntian metopes, the *peplos* and shield of Athena at Athens, and the scenes on a great many vases.

And then would Ares insatiate of battle have perished,  
 except that Eëriboia their very beautiful stepmother  
 sent word to Hermes. So he stole away Ares  
 already exhausted, for grievous bonds had broken him.

The poet has given his traditional audience, likely aware of the larger backstory, a short vignette from the larger *Gigantomachia* story. The bT scholiast (5.385a [II 60 Erbse]), less attuned to questions of oral tradition, is unsurprisingly skeptical, saying instead that the poet “confers” (περιτίθησιν) the story upon Dione “as though not creating a new story, but rather trusting in an ancient tradition” (ὥς [μύθους] οὐ καινίσας, ἀλλὰ παλαιαῖς παραδόσεσι πεισθεῖς). To the scholiast, it is all part of the machinations of the poet who “composed his story deceitfully” (ἐπίτηδες μύθους συλλέξας).

More information about the Giants’ ambitions comes during Odysseus’s underworld experience, where he hears the story of Iphimedeia, spouse of Aloeus and mother of Otos and Ephialtes (*Od.* 11.305–320). Here we learn unsurprisingly that the Giants are the result of Poseidon’s *affaire d’amour*, rather than being Aloeus’s progeny (a point also picked up in a scholion on *Iliad* 5).<sup>28</sup> We hear too that the Giants threaten to ascend to heaven by piling Ossa on Olympos at the mere age of nine. Apollo kills them before they grow any stronger. The Giants further provide a comparison for the frightening Laistrygones (*Od.* 10.120–122).<sup>29</sup> By the time of Euripides, moreover, the Giants and Titans were often grouped together as powers

<sup>28</sup> Schol. bT 5.385b contrasts the relationship of Otos and Ephialtes with Aloeus and then Poseidon, by calling the first a relationship of “adoption” (θέσις) and the second of “birth” (φύσις). One might imagine Aloeus’ position as similar to Amphitryon’s, whose story is first recorded in Pind. *Nem.* 10.11–18, but was included earlier still on the sixth-century chest of Kypselos, according to Paus. 5.18.3.

<sup>29</sup> The other occurrences of the Giants in the *Odyssey* (7.56–60, 204–206) add nothing to our understanding of a *Gigantomachia*.

hostile to Zeus and the Olympians.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, stories clearly could be changed to fit the moment.<sup>31</sup> Later mythographers would name other Giants said by them to be buried under various volcanoes.<sup>32</sup> The context for the story of the Giants in *Iliad* 5 proves interesting, too, since the myth is told to a whining Aphrodite by her mother Dione,<sup>33</sup> a parentage that may represent an alternative birth narrative to Hesiod's story of the castration of Ouranos (*Theog.* 181–210).

There remains the question of Monsters who have threatened Zeus in the past. In Hesiod's tradition, the Monster Typhoeus, offspring of Gaia and Tartaros (*Theog.* 821–822), is associated with the struggle against the Olympians. Typhoeus is called a πέλωρος (“Monster”) in *Theog.* 845 and 856.<sup>34</sup> Homer is aware of something of this history, since he mentions that Typhoeus was buried in the region of the Arimnoi (*Il.* 2.782–783), perhaps after his unsuccessful bid for supremacy vividly described by Hesiod (820–852).<sup>35</sup> Yet, ultimately Homer does not say much about Monsters, and his use of πέλωρος has nothing directly to do with Hesiod's. In Homer, πέλωρος is used of a wide range of creatures: *Il.* 5.741, of a Gorgon; 2.321, 12.202, 220, of a snake; 18.83, of armor; *Od.* 9.257, 428, of Kyklops; 10.168, of a stag; 10.219, of Circe's animals; 12.87, of Skylla; and 15.161, of a goose. In Homer's single mention of Typhoeus, significantly, the description πέλωρος is not used.

<sup>30</sup> On the history of the Giants see F. Vian, *La Guerre des Géants: Le mythe avant l'époque hellénistique* (Paris 1952).

<sup>31</sup> See e.g. Eur. *Hec.* 472 and *IT* 224.

<sup>32</sup> Pindar has these Giants dying on Naxos (*Pyth.* 4.88–89). The category of ‘Giant’ in later myth overlapped with ‘Monster’, and the two are often blended. For a later account see Apollod. 6.1.6.

<sup>33</sup> Perhaps the same river nymph that Hesiod includes in his list in *Theog.* 353.

<sup>34</sup> The only other πέλωρος in Hesiod is the Echidna of *Theog.* 295.

<sup>35</sup> The location is disputed. For possible sites see West, *Theogony* 250–251.



by quickly calling the Hundred-Hander to lofty Olympus,  
 whom the gods call Briareos, but all men  
 Aigaion, for he is in fact far greater in strength than his father.  
 He then sat down by the son of Kronos, rejoicing in his renown;  
 and the blessed gods cowered in fear and did not continue to  
 bind him.

The Hundred-Hander Briareos came to Zeus's rescue from his fellow Olympians, so it seems, just as he had done in Zeus's battle against the Titans during the primordial events of the ordering of the cosmos, an event known first in any detail in Hesiod's *Theogony*. Of course, there is no indication that all or even the greater part of the events of Hesiod's *Titanomachia* were known to Homer in detail, as we saw earlier. Nor is there reason to assume that the Homeric tradition was as heavily influenced by the same Near Eastern cosmological exemplars as the Hesiodic. The *Iliad's* comment that Briareos' strength was greater than his father's (1.404), moreover, does not, as in the Hesiodic tradition (*Theog.* 147–153), appear to refer to Ouranos, but instead to Poseidon.<sup>38</sup>

There is no persuasive reason why Homer's story of the binding of Zeus, often considered strange and lying on the periphery, could not have been for him and his early audience, very much at the center. We need not define Homeric myth through the story that became the most popular in later sources, as some scholars have done.<sup>39</sup> Further, one event in

<sup>38</sup> The Homeric story also involves more consideration of onomastics (*Il.* 1.403–404) than does the Hesiodic. On the onomastics of this passage see G. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary I* (Cambridge 1985) 94–95; D. Gera, *Ancient Greek Ideas on Speech, Language, and Civilization* (Oxford 2003) 52–54; and J. Heath, *The Talking Greeks: Speech, Animals, and the Other in Homer, Aeschylus, and Plato* (Cambridge 2005) 56 n.61, for bibliography. Just what the implications from onomastics are is difficult to determine definitively.

<sup>39</sup> So Kirk, *The Iliad* 93–94; a similar tone in comments on lines 403 and 404 by M. Willcock, *The Iliad of Homer I* (London 1978) 194. T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth* (Baltimore 1993) 59, while skeptical, allows that what I call here an *Olympiomachia*, “could [italics his] refer to a time earlier in the [second]

Troy's history, datable to the reign of Laomedon, may in fact be a direct consequence of the *Olympiomachia*—the building of walls around Troy by Poseidon and Apollo. The walls predate Herakles' visit to Troy. In the *Iliad*, the god Poseidon mentions, in a moment of complaint towards humans, that he had endured building a wall in Troy for Laomedon:

ἦτοι ἐγὼ Τρώεσσι πόλιν πέρι τεῖχος ἔδειμα  
 εὐρύ τε καὶ μάλα καλόν, ἴν' ἄρρηκτος πόλις εἴη·  
 Φοῖβε σὺ δ' εἰλίποδας ἔλικας βοῦς βουκολέεσκες  
 Ἰδης ἐν κνημοῖσι πολυπτύχου ὑληέσσης.  
 ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ μισθοῖο τέλος πολυγηθέες ὦραι  
 ἐξέφερον, τότε νῶϊ βιήσατο μισθὸν ἅπαντα  
 Λαομέδων ἔκπαγλος, ἀπειλήσας δ' ἀπέπεμπε.

Indeed, I built for the Trojans a wall about their city,  
 wide and very splendid, so that their city might be impregnable.  
 But you, Phoibos, grazed his cattle with the rolling gait  
 on the slopes of the hills and dales of wooded Ida.  
 But when the seasons brought the greatly welcomed moment for  
 payment, then terrible Laomedon forcefully defrauded us  
 of our entire wage, and he sent us away with a threat.<sup>40</sup>

Apollo, for his part, was also made to tend Laomedon's cattle. Yet, the impious remuneration is a threat of violence: to bind both gods hand and foot, cut off their ears, and sell them as slaves in far-off islands. Despite their honest toil, neither divinity received proper reward or treatment at their human host's hands. The fact that those in Laomedon's employ were divinities made the offence all the worse, especially since he was aware of whom he was insulting. After all, theoxenies met by mortal arrogance could lead to severe penalties.<sup>41</sup> La-

Trojan War." The chronology I propose, however, places the *Olympiomachia* before the first Trojan War known to Homer.

<sup>40</sup> *Il.* 21.446–452; cf. 7.451–453. See M. Ebbott, "Laomedon," in Margalit Finkelberg (ed.), *The Homer Encyclopedia* (Malden 2011) 467.

<sup>41</sup> Consider Athena coming disguised in the *Odyssey* and the typical words of one unnamed suitor to Antinoös in *Od.* 17.483–87. On the theoxeny theme see S. Reece, *The Stranger's Welcome* (Ann Arbor 1993) 10, 45–47,

omedon's threats are such as to point definitively to his base character, an arrogant attitude that will be repeated, as we saw, when the hero Herakles next arrives. Somewhat later accounts recall that Laomedon died in Herakles' assault on Troy (by his bow, according to the tradition behind Eur. *Tro.* 813–814). Laomedon's demise at Herakles' hands would work well with Homer's picture of Laomedon's arrogance since it seems unlikely that his impious treatment of Poseidon and Apollo, but also of Herakles, would be left unpunished.

Why Poseidon and Apollo must build these walls, coupled as their labor is with their doubtless divinely ordered powerlessness as servile and abused employees, is not known directly, but I suggest one possibility, taken not from Hesiod but from Homer. The predicament of these leading Olympians does suggest that they have done something serious against Zeus himself. Who else would have had the power to condemn Poseidon and Apollo to such labor and to impose restrictions on their divine prerogatives? The whole unsavory experience is, I suggest, connected with an unsuccessful attempt by Zeus's fellow Olympians to overthrow him during the reign of impious King Laomedon.

As a possible control for my contention that the *Olympiomachia* is connected with the building of the Trojan wall through the downfall and punishment of Poseidon and Apollo, I return to *Iliad* 1. There we have listed in order three gods who are said to have worked to bind Zeus: Ἥρη τ' ἠδὲ Ποσειδάων καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη (“Hera, Poseidon, and Pallas Athena,” 1.400). Homer's habit of not including all the important players in every event should keep us from mandating that Apollo be listed, yet having his name on that list would strengthen my argument for his involvement in and for consequences from an *Olympiomachia*. The scholia do in fact have an alternative reading, attributed to Zenodotus (1.400a [I 114]): Ἥρη τ' ἠδὲ Πο-

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181–187; cf. its presence in international folktales, ATU 751A\* and C\* in H.-J. Uther, *The Types of International Folktales* (Helsinki 2004).

σειδάων καὶ Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων (“Hera, Poseidon, and Phoibos Apollo”), with Apollo’s name in place of Athena’s. Nor was Zenodotus alone in his awareness of this variant in the manuscript tradition.<sup>42</sup>

Aristonicus thought that such a name substitution strained what was “plausible” (τὸ πιθανόν), since it meant, in context, having Apollo among “the gods deceitfully assisting the Achaeans” against the Trojans.<sup>43</sup> This was clearly a more natural role for Athena in the *Iliad*. The bT scholiast (1.400b), moreover, adds a note to suggest that the jealous motives of Hera, Poseidon, and Athena were more obvious motivational factors. Writers, he says, include

οἱ δὲ Ἥραν μὲν διὰ τὸ πολλαῖς μίγνυσθαι, Ποσειδῶνα δὲ διὰ τὸ πλεονεκτεῖσθαι εἰς τὴν διανομήν, Ἀθηνᾶν δὲ διὰ τὸ ἀναγκασθῆναι ζευχθῆναι Ἡφαίστῳ.

Hera, because of Zeus’s many affairs, then Poseidon, on account of his avaricious disposition in regard to the distribution, and Athena, since she was forced to wed Hephaistos.

The affairs of Zeus and the distribution of power between himself and Poseidon are myths told in Homer.<sup>44</sup> Athena’s ‘marriage’ to Hephaistos may be alluded to as well, albeit less overtly.<sup>45</sup>

A further argument is made by the bT scholiast against accepting the variant *Phoibos Apollo*, but in the reasoning one

<sup>42</sup> Schol. bT 1.400b: τινὲς δὲ γράφουσιν “καὶ Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων.”

<sup>43</sup> Schol. 1.400a: ἀφαιρεῖται δὲ τὸ πιθανόν· ἐπίτηδες γὰρ τοὺς τοῖς Ἑλλησι βοηθοῦντας.

<sup>44</sup> On the affairs of Zeus, *Il.* 14.13–28; on Poseidon and the distribution of spheres of power see the discussion above on 15.187–193.

<sup>45</sup> If in *Il.* 2.547–549 Erechtheus is simply synonymous in the earliest epic tradition with Erichthonios. Erechtheus, in this reading of the Homeric text, would be the earth-born son of Hephaistos from his attempt to rape Athena (his ‘marriage’ to Athena). This solution to the identity of Erechtheus in Homer would explain why, in the *Iliad* passage, Athena herself “reared” (θρέψε) Erechtheus after his birth. For a fuller consideration of this myth see *LIMC* IV.1 923–951.

discerns the influence of philosophy. The Iliadic line is read as a metaphor based upon “primal physical elements” (στοιχεῖα). The exposition is not particularly Homeric in its probability argument, which links the mention of Poseidon to water, Hera to air, and Athena to earth.<sup>46</sup> Ultimately, of course, the aspersions or speculations of Zenodotus’ successors in Alexandria or later exegetes do not determine the matter. Zenodotus’ reading, instead, could be a tradition-based variant affirming Apollo’s central participation in an *Olympiomachia*. For this, I have argued, both he and Poseidon suffered humiliating consequences.

### Conclusion

Poseidon and Apollo, then, as part of the punishment for their involvement in the attempted Olympian coup known to Homer from his tradition, were made to serve Laomedon, an arrogant human taskmaster. The events of Laomedon’s reign including an *Olympiomachia*, then, join with other earlier cosmological events in Homer, including, as I have outlined, something of the *Titanomachia*, a *Gigantomachia*, and perhaps a battle with the Monster Typhoeus, to provide traditional backstories and possible templates for Zeus’s authoritarian reflex to his fellow Olympians during the second Trojan War. These cosmological events acted for Homer and his audience in much the same way as the fear of being ousted by one’s son formed a central thematic element for Hesiod. Hesiod’s traditional myths should not, then, be taken as more significant for an understanding of Homeric myth than the stories that we find embedded and expanded in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* themselves, including an *Olympiomachia* during Laomedon’s reign.

While an Olympian family battle did not appeal as greatly as

<sup>46</sup> Schol. bT 1.400c: τὴν τῶν στοιχείων παλαιὰν σύγχυσιν δηλοῖ, Δία τὸ πῦρ, Ποσειδῶνα τὸ ὕδωρ, Ἥραν τὸν ἀέρα, Ἀθηνᾶν τὴν γῆν (ὀργανικὴ γὰρ ἐστὶ καὶ ἐπινοητικὴ τῶν ἀπάντων)· μόνον γὰρ τὸ πῦρ ἐν αὐτοῖς καθαρὰν καὶ ἀμιγῆ τὴν φύσιν ἔχει. Such an argument, however, would be at home among Empedoclean philosophers and their inheritors.

other cosmological stories to later audiences—and Olympian harmony is much more pronounced in the *Odyssey*<sup>47</sup>—for at least the audience of the *Iliad*, Olympian disharmony and a past Olympian family struggle make up part of the story hoard accessed by poet and audience. We need not mitigate the importance of any of the events of Laomedon's reign for an understanding of early mythic tradition or, through contrast with other story renditions including the Hesiodic, argue that Homer made them up. As noted by Aristarchus, we need first “to make Homer intelligible from Homer” (“Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὀμήρου σαφηνίζειν”),<sup>48</sup> an old sentiment that still has validity for contemporary research into ancient epic and the traditions each represents.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> The *Odyssey* opens with the absence of one god (1.20), Poseidon, against whom all the Olympians are united (1.77–79).

<sup>48</sup> Porph. *Quaest. Hom.* 1.56 Sodano, ἀξιῶν δὲ ἐγὼ Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὀμήρου σαφηνίζειν αὐτὸν ἐξηγούμενον ἑαυτὸν ὑπεδείκνυον, ποτὲ μὲν παρακειμένως, ἄλλοτε δ' ἐν ἄλλοις; cf. 1.12–14, 15.18–21. That the wording is likely that of Aristarchus, see J. Porter, “Hermeneutic Lines and Circles,” in R. Lamberton and J. Keaney (eds.), *Homer's Ancient Readers* (Princeton 1992) 70–77. That this was Porphyry's exegetical assumption is in any case constantly demonstrated throughout his discussion of Homeric questions.

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