THE CHARACTERIZATION OF APOLLO IN THE *ILIAD*

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the actions and behaviors of Apollo and his impact on the story of Homer’s *Iliad*. Apollo’s actions throughout the epic are complex and sometimes strange. I examine Apollo’s words and deeds to determine how he influences the story. Apollo’s character proves not only the catalyst of the poem, but he also plays a necessary role in the outcome of the story. While scholarly focus is predominately directed at the mortal characters, the gods’ individual characterization in the *Iliad* warrants equal examination.

While the bulk of my thesis will be an intense focus on Apollo’s actions, it is important to examine them against some of the actions of the other gods in the epic. My Introduction lays out my methodology and purpose, and analyzes explores the actions of the other major gods of the epic. I focus on gods whose actions either inform, emphasize, or allude to Apollo’s own actions. Chapter 1 explores Apollo in books 1-12 and specifically how he catalyzes the story and his interest in guarding the boundary between men and gods. Chapter 2 analyzes Apollo in books 13-24, especially in his role as agent of fate and Zeus’ will. My summary conclusion emphasizes just how vital and nuanced Apollo is as a character in the *Iliad*. 
Introduction

Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of this project is to explore the function of Apollo within the *Iliad* and the complex nature of the Apollo’s actions. Characterization of the gods is lacking in scholarship with a few notable exceptions, Kearns (2004) and Heath (2005), that inform my own work. I largely base this thesis on the argument of de Jong that characters in Homer are characterized through their words and deeds (2017: 45). The gods all have functions and individual characteristics and unique ways that they are portrayed, and individual characteristics and motivations.

First I must define a term that I will use throughout this project. The word I use for determining the series of events that take place in the epic is “story.” I am defining story as the series of events that occur and ultimately how the epic ends. More specifically, it is referring to the series of events that readers expect within the epic. There is an expectation for certain events to happen, and these expected events all make up the story of the *Iliad*. Thus, when I use the term “story” I am referring to the series of events that is expected by the reader.

In this project I complete an in-depth analysis of the god Apollo. Apollo plays an important and complex function throughout the *Iliad*. My first chapter explores Apollo’s function in the first twelve books of the epic. I focus specifically on his concern with the proper interaction between mortal and immortal, his wrath as the catalyst for the story of the epic, and his interactions with Athena. These functions illuminate the nuance and the complexity of Apollo’s character. Chapter Two explores the function of Apollo in the second half of the epic. I emphasize his function as an agent of fate and his continued concern for the proper interaction
between mortals and gods. In addition, I attempt to reconcile two passages that seem to challenge my observations. These observations not only illuminate the effect that Apollo has on the epic, but also emphasize the role of fate and the difference in motivations between Apollo and the other gods. Ultimately, I am focusing on Apollo because a deep exploration of his actions will display that he plays a unique role to the story of the epic and will shed light on the very character of the god.

This introduction will begin with a general survey of the other gods in the epic. I will explore their various roles and functions. This is an important task, as Apollo should not be examined in a vacuum. I will explore the functions of these gods that emphasize and reflect the qualities of Apollo. These aspects show how Apollo fits in with the other gods in terms of the story and the themes of the epic and how those gods illuminate Apollo’s own characterization. This is by no means an exhaustive list of the gods that are present in the epic, but those gods that reflect upon Apollo the most.

Zeus

The first god I will explore is Zeus. In this section I observe that Zeus is shown to have no tolerance for those gods who disobey or challenge his authority. He aggressively opposes such challenges and often resorts to threats against the gods. The threat of violence is necessary to put the other gods back under his rule. In addition, Zeus often demonstrates a desire to change the fated events of the epic, but ultimately chooses not to do so. When I discuss fated events, I refer to the expected outcome of the story by the reader. Wilson argues that fate is ultimately the will of the story, and thus the story of the epic is the will of Zeus (2007: 152). Due to the story being defined as the will of Zeus, I argue that fate, the expected events of the story, and the will of Zeus reinforce each other. Thus Zeus is ultimately beholden to these expected events, and so
these passages serve as a tease of potential alternative scenarios that would ultimately be unexpected by the reader. Since Apollo serves as an agent of Zeus’ will—and thus fate—and obeys him without question, these functions are necessary to explore. Apollo ultimately functions as the enforcer of the will of Zeus and not Zeus’ immediate desire. Zeus contemplates changing the events of fate, but Apollo does not act until or unless it leads toward the will of fate. Apollo then serves as the ultimate enforcer, when Zeus has cast his impulses aside and proceeds with fated events.

The Challenges of Hera

Zeus’ interaction with the gods, especially Hera, in Iliad 1 demonstrates his disdain for being challenged. By examining these challenges I aim to emphasize Apollo’s absolute obedience. The gods who challenge Zeus and his wrath at the challenge create a contrast with Apollo’s own obedience. When he brings the council of gods together, Hera immediately knows that he has met with Thetis (1.536-43), and mentions it to all the gods. This causes Zeus to become defensive, but his tone is not overtly aggressive in his first response. Hera’s knowledge that Thetis came to Zeus for aid, and her suspicion that he is going to turn against the Greeks, displays her intelligence (Synodinu 1987: 15). She challenges Zeus’ authority and immediately earns his wrath (1.560-7). Zeus’ actions appear to be those of a ruler or king, more than the actions of a husband against his wife. It would be easy to identify the interactions between Zeus and Hera as a model or a reflection of historical marriage in ancient Greece. Kerényi argues that the image of Zeus as a father is meant to describe his authority in the realm of a patriarchy and does not actually have anything to do with his role as an actual father (1976: 46). However, I argue that one cannot avoid analyzing the gods within their familial connections. Hera is Zeus’
wife, many of the gods are his children. Much of their identity is based around this fact as shown with epithets.

The second challenge by Hera also demonstrates his anger at being challenged and once again provides a contrast between the relationship between Hera and Zeus. Zeus has forbidden the gods from interfering with the war (8.1-40), and has threatened anyone of the gods who would dare defy him. Hera undermines Zeus on two different occasions, first by asking Poseidon to defy Zeus’ orders (8.201), and then by ordering Athena to fight against the Trojans (8.350). Finally, Hera and Athena prepare to take a chariot out to blatantly interfere with the battle. Zeus’ words toward the duo are fierce and aggressive:

“αὐτὰς δ᾽ ἐκ δίφρου βαλέω κατὰ θ᾽ ἅρματα ἄξω
οὐδὲ κεν ἐς δεκάτους περιτελλομένους ἐνιαυτοὺς
ἔλκε’ ἀπαλθήσεσθον, ἅ κεν μάρπτῃσι κεραυνός.” (8.403-5)

“And themselves (Athena and Hera) I will throw from the chariot and I will break the chariots. And not even in ten circling years will they heal their wounds, which the thunderbolt inflicts.”

Zeus threatens to wound the two goddesses with the thunderbolt he usually reserves for his enemies. This also serves as a warning to Athena, to whom normally he displays fondness. The threat of violence demonstrates that Zeus is not afraid to put the gods back under his command if he needs to. There are many gods that threaten to disobey Zeus, but he always forces them to back down. Hera not only backs down, but she completely rejects the idea of helping the Greeks and leaves their fate to Zeus (8.427). This demonstrates that Zeus’ forced persuasion is particularly effective against Hera (Synodinu 1987: 16). This reflects the dual nature of their relationship, both as a husband and wife and Zeus’ patriarchal superiority.

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1 All citations of Homer are to the Allen OCT.
2 All translations are my own.
Zeus Teases Changing Fate

In this section I will explore Zeus’ impulse to change the course of fate, ultimately an impulse that he always rejects. This emphasizes Apollo’s role as an agent of fate in two ways: the first is that Zeus’ decision to follow fated actions is often when Apollo takes action; the second creates a contrast between Zeus and Apollo. Apollo does not ever consider changing fated actions and only acts to enforce the story. Exploring Zeus’ relationship with fate ultimately highlights Apollo’s guardianship of fated events. Zeus, by word and deed, brings about fate. Apollo’s function is to be the enforcer of that will. In the first instance of Zeus’ actions, Zeus agrees to Thetis’ request that Achilles be granted his wish and the Greeks be defeated temporarily (1.517-27). He does not, however, promise that the Greeks will ultimately lose the war, which would go against fate. Zeus brings aid to the Trojans on several occasions, including empowering Hector to slay large numbers of the Greeks (11.196-208). He also hurls thunderbolts at the Greeks in order to bring aid to the Trojans (8.130-45). He knows that ultimately Troy will fall, and his sole motivation in aiding the Trojans is to fulfill his promise to Thetis (15.70-1). In addition, his promise suggests to the reader that Zeus has the power and autonomy to allow the Greeks to be defeated and thus change the story. Morrison argues for this notion that the gods are autonomous and are able in the end to make their own decisions (1997: 288). But while Zeus does allow Achilles’ wish to come true, the king of the gods knows that the Trojans will ultimately be defeated.

The second instance of Zeus toying with, but ultimately rejecting, the idea of changing the course of fate is when he considers saving his son Sarpedon (16.430-8). Zeus is fully aware that Patroclus is going to kill Sarpedon and seriously considers changing fate to save him. Hera’s counter that if he saves Sarpedon, the other gods would want to save their own children, shows a
rare lack of animosity between the two (16.440-57). For the first time after Hera gives a speech, Zeus does not chide or threaten her, and he heeds her advice. Hera suggests that if Zeus wants to save Sarpedon from his fate, he has the ability to do so. In the end Zeus decides that it is best that he allow Sarpedon to die. Thus, Zeus suggests the idea of saving his son, and by extension the idea that the other gods can save their own children. This event would lead to a potentially different ending of the epic. Zeus ultimately allows events to unfold as they are destined to.

Zeus also considers saving Hector’s life. Zeus remembers the piety that Hector has previously demonstrated to the gods (22.170-1), and then tells the other gods: ἀλλ᾽ ἄγετε φράξεσθε θεοὶ καὶ μητιάσθε | ἠέ μιν ἐκ θανάτου σαώσομεν (“But come gods to consider and to deliberate whether we should save him from death,” 22.174-5). Although Zeus has compassion and sympathy for the pious hero, he wishes to consult the other gods on whether or not they should change the hero’s fate. Athena answers with an appropriate response that Hector had been destined for a long time to die (22.174-81). Athena questions his consideration and adds that the other gods would not assent to such an act. Zeus does not argue, nor does he chide Athena for daring to question his thoughts and words. Instead he immediately relents and knows that it is time for the hero to die. In this passage, just as in the passage with Sarpedon, Zeus is advised by a goddess who has previously challenged his authority and provoked his ire. In this case though, his authority is not being challenged; Zeus is simply being reminded that he needs to act in the direction of fated events.

Hera

In this section I will argue that Hera’s function in the *Iliad* centers on her unrelenting and brutal hatred of the Trojans and further, that she is ultimately more anti-Trojan than she is pro-Greek. This is necessary to explore, as Apollo is often at odds with her, and her hatred contrasts
with Apollo’s concern for fate and appropriate behavior of gods and mortals. Hera’s actions emphasize Apollo’s by contrasting with him. Whereas Hera seeks to undermine Zeus to get her own way, Apollo is unquestioningly loyal. She uses trickery, brutality, and her intelligence to make sure that the Greeks prevail over the Trojans. The reason for this hatred is ultimately shown to be the Judgement of Paris (24.25-29). The first major display of this brutality is when Hera gives Zeus the names of three of her sacred cities in Greece tells him that he can destroy them whenever he wishes, if he would give in to her wishes:

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ήτοι ἐμοὶ τρεῖς μὲν πολὺ φιλταται εἴσι πόλεις
Ἄργός τε Σπάρτη τε καὶ εὐρυάγυια Μυκήνη,
τὰς διαπέρσαι ὅτ᾽ ἂν τοι ἀπέχθωνταί περί κῆρι,
τάοιν οὗ τοι ἐγὼ πρόσθ᾽ ἱσταμαι οὐδὲ μεγαίρω. (4.51-4)
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Truly there are three cities most dear to me, Argos, Sparta, and broad-streeted Mycenae: destroy them whenever they become hated in your heart: I won’t stand before them and I won’t begrudge you.

Hera is so desperate to get Zeus to allow her to rouse the Greeks that she offers to let him destroy her favorite Greek cities, cities that are present in the war. This demonstrates that she cares less about saving the Greeks in general than she does about defeating the Trojans. Hera was worshipped in Argos from ancient times. O’Brian argues that the poet takes advantage of her connection with Argos to highlight her obsession with the destruction of Troy. He argues further that she was considered a protector of Argos and Argive warriors, but that Homer does not portray her in her cultic role. Instead, her desire for Trojan blood is the emphasis of the poet (1990: 110-11). That is not to say that Hera does not have any care for the Argives, but it is clear in this passage that her priority is the destruction of Troy.
Her negotiation for the destruction of Troy seems to reflect bargaining trends within the *Iliad*. Donlan explores the relationship of reciprocity in Homer that reflect socio-economic situations in a historical context. He discusses “balanced reciprocity” in which the exchange of goods must be balanced in some fashion (1982: 140). This balance in the economical exchange is dependent on the relationship of the participant: the closer the relationship, the more personal the exchange (1982: 140). That is reflected in the exchange between Hera and Zeus. Hera’s need for the destruction of Troy is reflected by her offering her most sacred cities. Her statement that she will not hold those cities in high regard further emphasizes her hatred of Troy.

Another instance that demonstrates the lengths Hera will go to destroy the Trojans is when she attempts to convince Poseidon to fight Zeus. Zeus orders the gods not to aid the Greeks and Trojans further, threatening physical violence if anyone should disobey him (8.5-16). On account of this Hera devises a plan to counter Zeus by approaching Poseidon in order to call out Zeus’s actions and suggest that perhaps the gods hold Zeus back and aid the Greeks (8.205-6). Aiding the Greeks serves her goal to destroy the Trojans. Suggesting they fight Zeus seems like an extreme suggestion given how terrified the gods are of him, including Hera herself. In this case, her desire to aid the Greeks overpowers her reason. Poseidon’s words serve as a voice of reason: οὐκ ἂν ἔγωγ᾽ ἐθέλοιμι Διὶ Κρονίωνι μάχεσθαι | ἡμέας τοὺς ἄλλους, ἐπεὶ ἦ πολὺ φέρτερός ἐστιν (“For I would not want for us all to fight against Zeus the son of Kronus, since he is far mightier,” 210-11). This response makes Hera’s suggestion to fight Zeus seem ridiculous.

The final passage I wish to discuss concerning Hera’s obsession with defeating the Trojans is her famous seduction of Zeus. This passage causes devastating consequences for the Trojans. This action leads directly to Poseidon’s attack against the Trojans and the Trojan setback and to Hector’s becoming seriously injured on the battle field (Synodinu 1987: 16). The
representation of a woman as a source of trickery, deceit, and being a bane for men is not isolated to Homer. Hera parallels Pandora here in emphasizing the dangerous nature of women and feminine wiles. Pandora most memorably appears in Hesiod’s *Works and Days*. Zeus creates her as a punishment for mankind, having all the gods give her gifts to make her more attractive. But it is Hermes’ gift that is especially noteworthy. He gives her deceit, trickery, and crafty words (*Op.* 60-82). Pandora is used to entice and seduce Epimetheus, which ultimately leads to pain for all mankind. Pandora’s actions are similar to Hera’s seduction of Zeus, which ultimately leads to pain for the Trojan side. Hera demonstrates the devices a woman must turn to in asymmetric dynamics in marriage. She has become tired of Zeus’ rule for non-interference and adorns herself with beautiful clothing, perfume, and jewelry in order to entice Zeus and distract him from the events of the war (14.154-85). She even recruits other gods to help her in this endeavor. She promises Hypnos ample amounts of treasures, honors, and wonderful creations from Hephaestus (14.225-41). When Hypnos rejects her offer on account of his fear of Zeus, she offers one of the Graces as a wife in order to finally get him to agree to help (265-8). Hera is able to easily seduce Zeus, which allows Hypnos to place the god into a deep sleep (14.270-351). Hera knows that defying Zeus will get her into trouble, as twice before she has received threats of physical violence for her defiance. This seduction costs Hera her final humiliation when she faces Zeus’ wrath and threats, and she is forced into submission by Zeus (Synodinu 1987: 17). Hera is willing to face Zeus’ wrath in order to assure that the Trojans are routed.

Hera’s role contrasts with the actions and the words of Apollo. Hera and Apollo are in opposition to each other, and thus her actions illuminate his own by being contrary. Hera is shown as defiant against Zeus, and actively works against his will if it seems to get in the way of
her goals. This allows Apollo to stand out as one who is unquestioningly loyal to Zeus, and serves to bring about his will. Their different motivations emphasizes each other’s actions.

Poseidon

In this section I discuss Poseidon’s pro-Greek tendencies, which stem from a story whose events happen before those of the epic. This story says that he was cheated out of payment for building the Trojan wall. There is reference within the *Iliad* to events that predate it, specifically when Poseidon and Apollo helped build the walls of Troy and were supposed to be paid by Laomedon. Just like Hera, due to his anger at Laomedon, Poseidon is more anti-Trojan than he is pro-Greek in terms of motivation. I am not arguing an ethical issue with being more anti-Trojan; rather, the distinction I make is one of motivation. In addition, Poseidon is willing to defy Zeus whenever he is able. In this section, I will be looking at two passages in particular: Poseidon’s speech to Apollo during the Theomachy (21.434-50) and Poseidon’s interaction with Iris after he defies Zeus’ order not to interfere with the battle (15.165-7). These events highlight Apollo’s own function in the epic. In the Theomachy, Poseidon’s personal vendetta against the Trojans emphasizes Apollo’s concern for being an agent of fate. Poseidon’s rebellion against Zeus contrasts, once again, with Apollo’s loyalty toward his father.

The Theomachy

Poseidon’s pro-Greek leanings are clear throughout the epic, and we learn why in book 2:

\[
\text{τότε νῦν βιήσατο μισθὸν ἅπαντα, λαομέδων ἔκπαγλος, ἄπειλήσας δ᾽ ἀπέπεμπε. σὺν μὲν ό γ᾽ ἠπείλησε πόδας καὶ χεῖρας ὕπερθε δήσειν, καὶ περάαν νήσων ἐπὶ τῆλεδαπάων. (21.451-4)}
\]

Then terrible Laomedon constrained all our wages, and threateningly he sent us off.
He threatened to bind our feet and our hands above, and send us upon islands far away.
Poseidon is indignant that Apollo would side with the Trojans when Laomedon cheated them out of pay for their work in building the Trojan wall, but also because a mortal king dared to threaten the two gods. Much like the wrath of Hera and Athena, Poseidon’s motivation for fighting against the Trojans stems from a personal slight. Poseidon’s quarrel with the Trojans stems from a lack of respect for his τιμή, and his status as being higher than a mortals. Those of higher status are allotted greater τιμή, and their status must be recognized. Lloyd-Jones discusses τιμή in terms of the interaction between Achilles and Agamemnon. Agamemnon did not honor Achilles’ τιμή as would be his obligation as a leader (1971: 26). In addition, Achilles’ rage at the taking of Briseis is due to the lack of respect for his τιμή (1971: 12). Furthermore, Achilles’ rage is due to the fact that he is lower status than Agamemnon and does much of the work and still has less τιμή than Agamemnon. That idea of status and hierarchy explains Poseidon’s anger at the Trojans. Poseidon’s status as a god and thus higher than a mortal king, means that Laomedon’s refusal to pay him his rightful sum is a grave insult. Laomedon’s threats further demean Poseidon’s status and his τιμή is not respected. And so this event is a precursor to the conflict which begins the story of the *Iliad*.

While Poseidon is reluctant to directly fight against Zeus, he does still manage to undermine Zeus on occasion. This ultimately results in a tense confrontation by proxy wherein Poseidon nearly rises to fully defy Zeus. After Zeus has prohibited divine intervention, he becomes distracted for a time in book 13. Poseidon takes advantage and sneaks onto the Greek side of the war to provide some aid (13.11-57). Similarly, when Hera seduces Zeus into sleep, Poseidon rushes to bring aid and lead the Greeks to rout the Trojans (14.361-77). He uses the advantage that Hera granted him through her trickery to stop the advancement of the Greeks.
Both of these events lead to a tense confrontation between Zeus and Poseidon, which suggests a potential rivalry between the two brothers. Zeus’ statement emphasizes Poseidon’s attitude:

ἐπεί εὐ φημὶ βίῃ πολὺ φέρτερος εἶναι
καὶ γενεῇ πρότερος, τοῦ δ’ οὐκ ὄθεται φίλον ἦτορ
 ἵσον ἐμοὶ φάσθαι, τόν τε στυγέουσι καὶ ἄλλοι. (15.165-7)

Since I say that I am much better in power
and I am first in birth: but, his dear heart does not hesitate
to say that he is equal to me, whom even the others fear.

Zeus declares that Poseidon is overstepping his bounds by thinking that he was equal to the elder. As the elder brother, Zeus would enjoy certain benefits over the younger. Poseidon claims this message from Zeus indicates that the two brothers are equals. Poseidon chides the king of the gods by declaring: χερσὶ δὲ μὴ τί με πάγχυ κακὸν ὣς δειδισσέσθω (“Let him not frighten me with force as if I were some complete coward,” 15.196). This response contrasts with Hera’s usual response to threats, in which she backs down. Poseidon nearly refuses to back down; instead he completely rebels against Zeus. Poseidon is shown to potentially be a threat against Zeus, even if it is unknown if he would be successful. His actions show that the politics of Olympus can at times be volatile, and Zeus has to constantly defend his position. This emphasizes once again that Apollo is taking a stance directly next to his father. Apollo would not consider rebelling against his father, and certainly would not consider attacking the god. Poseidon’s anti-Trojan stance and irrational rant to attack Zeus is contrary to Apollo’s unyielding loyalty toward the will of Zeus.

Athena

In this section I will argue that Athena is especially deceitful to devastating effect. While all the gods can be deceptive, whether through changing form or manipulating others, Athena is
particularly cruel and brutal with her deceit. Athena stands in contrast to Apollo, as her motivations are personally motivated. In addition, she acts with far more cruelty than Apollo. She serves as a foil for Apollo’s sense of propriety and concern for appropriate interactions between the mortal and immortal. Two passages in particular demonstrate the extent of her cruelty and deception: her role in the death of Hector (22.226-99) and her manipulation of Achilles’ emotions to stir him to fight Hector (22.220-1).

In the death of Hector, Athena displays a particularly cruel level of deceit and manipulation. All the gods know at this point that Hector is going to die. The scales have fallen, Apollo has abandoned him. Athena appears to Hector in the form of his own brother: κιχήσατο δ’ Ἕκτορα δῖον Δηϊφόβῳ ἐϊκυῖα δέμας καὶ ἀτειρέα φωνήν (“And she came to god-like Hector having made her form and her untiring voice like Deiphobus,” 22.226–7). Appearing as Hector’s brother and then convincing him to stop and fight Achilles is a dreadful action (cf. Kullmann 1984: 4). What is even crueler is that the moment Hector turns around and decides to fight Achilles with the help of his brother, Athena immediately abandons him. Hector immediately understands the situation (22.296-9). Hector comes to know that not only has his death come due to his desire to kill Achilles, it is also because of the deceit of Athena. The death of Hector does not end Athena’s cruelty towards the Trojan hero. In book 24, when Achilles is mutilating the body of Hector, many of the gods show him pity. Three of the gods do not show any pity: οὐδὲ Ποσειδάων᾽ οὐδὲ γλαυκώπιδι κούρῃ (“But, not ever (show pity) did Hera, nor Poseidon, nor the flashing eyed daughter,” 24.22). If this trio of gods had their way, Hector would remain in Achilles’ grasp and never would his body be seen again by his family. Ultimately, Athena’s deceit leads to particularly cruel and brutal consequences for Hector. All
these actions stand in contrast to Apollo’s concern for propriety, as it is clear that Apollo is concerned with some system of ethics that the gods are expected to follow.

Athena’s Manipulation of Achilles

Athena purposefully stokes Achilles’ rage and personal vendetta to encourage him to go after Hector. This passage emphasizes the manner in which Athena manipulates others. She manipulates the hero by mentioning Apollo: οὐδ’ εἰ κεν μάλα πολλὰ πάθοι ἑκάεργος Ἀπόλλων | προπροκυλινδόμενος πατρὸς Διὸς αἰγιόχοι (…”Not even if Apollo the far-worker should suffer many things, groveling in front of father Zeus the aegis bearer,” 22.220-1). It has been previously shown that Achilles has a particular hatred of Apollo (22.8-20). Achilles expresses a desire to take vengeance upon the god (21.15-20). Her mention of Apollo, who was Hector’s protector, manipulates Achilles into a greater rage to accomplish the task that she wants. Athena’s assertion that Apollo might go begging to Zeus is completely unsubstantiated. Apollo has never shown any desire to go against Zeus’ will and always obeys his father. In addition, Apollo, at the moment of Zeus’ determination of Hector’s fate, will without question abandon Hector. It is clear that Athena simply is assuring Achilles that Apollo will not interfere with him again. Ultimately, this passage demonstrates Athena’s manipulation of Achilles’ emotions and zeal to obtain her own desire.

Ares

In this section, I will argue that Ares is easily manipulated and defeated, and thus ultimately functions as a relatively weak presence among the gods, and even a hated one to his father. Furthermore, I argue that Ares’ function in the Iliad is to reflect his quasi-mortal vulnerability in contrast to the other gods. This vulnerability contrasts with Apollo’s guardianship of the boundary between mortal and immortal and it serves as an indication of why
his concern is necessary. Ares’ actions serve as a caution of the dangers of breeching this boundary, particularly when a god becomes too close to being mortal. Ares nearly crosses this boundary multiple times, thus displaying his lesser status among the gods. I will examine two passages in particular. The first is when he is injured by a mortal man with the help of Athena, and then is berated by his father. The second is Ares’ fight during book 21, which shows him being defeated quite easily. I am not arguing that Ares is insufficient in respect to battle prowess, as he very clearly is causing slaughter and mayhem among the mortals. Rather, I am arguing that among the gods he is shown to be ineffective and lesser in status and strength than many of the other gods. This is important when discussing Apollo’s guardianship of the proper interaction between the mortal and immortal, as Ares’ vulnerability informs the need for that guardianship.

Ares Is Injured

In this section I will show how Ares is represented as being lesser in strength to the other gods. Being lesser in strength is a reflection of his status within the hierarchy of the gods. Ares is easily defeated and hated among the gods. This is an important aspect to explore alongside Apollo as Ares demonstrates a level of vulnerability that is reminiscent of the mortal heroes, which violates Apollo’s guardianship of the boundary between mortals and the divine. Apollo often warns mortals that attempting to cross that boundary comes with consequences. Ares comes close to experiencing consequences similar to those heroes. Ares’ actions and consequences demonstrate that Apollo’s concerns have validity. The hero Diomedes is imbued with exceptional might by Athena and is given the ability to perceive the gods (5.21-32). Athena allows him to attack Ares (5.825-35). When Ares is struck the effect is immediate: ὃ δ’ ἔβραχε χάλκεος Ἄρης | ὅσσόν τ’ ἐννεάχιλοι ἐπίαχον ἢ δεκάχιλοι (“And bronze Ares roared, as great as nine or ten thousand men in unison,” 5.859-60). This injury almost blurs the line between the
mortal and immortal, as Ares’ injury seems serious and demonstrates his vulnerability. Ares immediately runs away and flees quickly to Olympus (5.864-70). Purves discusses falling as normally a uniquely human behavior (2006: 195); as he further argues Ares here narrowly avoids simulating mortal time and experience due to his quick retreat (2006: 202). This defeat by a mortal causes Ares to run to his father to complain about Athena’s actions. Ares complains that Athena is acting beyond Zeus’ orders and without law, and that Zeus never chastises for doing so (5.872-86). Zeus’ response emphasizes his negative feelings for Ares and how he is hated among the gods (5.889-91). The fact that Ares needs to be healed is reminiscent of the mortals who are injured during the battle and need aid from the gods to keep fighting. Ares’ injury by Diomedes and his subsequent interaction with Zeus portray the god as being lesser in power and status than many of the other gods. In addition, Ares’ proximity to mortal vulnerability emphasizes the danger of violating Apollo’s boundary. Though he does not warn gods in the Iliad about this boundary, I nevertheless argue that Ares serves as the dangers of crossing too far in the realm of the mortal.

Ares vs Athena

The Theomachy further shows Ares as a god who is lesser in comparison to the other gods in regards to strength and so is easily defeated. This passage further emphasizes that Ares’ injury reflects a vulnerability that is closer to mortality than any of the other passages of the Theomachy. This vulnerability further reinforces the importance for Apollo’s concern for the proper interaction and behavior of the mortal and immortal. Ares’ injury and defeat by Athena allows him to simulate the result of fallen mortals. Ultimately, Ares functions as a caution for why that proper interaction is important. The conflict between Ares and Athena is the first of the conflicts that happen during the Theomachy (21.390-400). Ares takes this moment to berate
Athena for her previous actions. This speech ends in a threat to Athena: τῶ σ᾽ αὖ νῦν ὅ᾽ω ἀποτισέμεν ὅσσα ἔοργας (“I think that you will repay as much as you have made,” 21.399).

Ares’ boast is ultimately a hollow threat. Athena not only dodges Ares’ attack, but simply picks up a rock and throws it at the god, who falls to the ground defeated (21.400-7). The poet emphasizes how much space Ares covers as he falls, and it takes several lines for him to fall to the ground. In order to finish the comedic moment of this fight, Athena stands over Ares: νηπύτι’ οὐδέ νῦ πῶ περ ἐπεφράσω ὅσσον ἀρείων | εὐχομ’ ἐγὼν ἔμεναι, ὅτι μοι μένος ἰσοφαρίζεις (“Fool, you do not consider how much greater I declare myself to be, seeing that you deem your might equal with mine,” 21.410-11). This insult emphasizes how easy it was for Athena to defeat Ares and how weak he is compared to the other gods. This displays the importance for the appropriate interactions between gods and mortals, particularly the importance of the god’s behavior.

Xanthos

In this final passage for analysis I explore the actions of a god that reflect the dangers of violating the boundary of mortal and immortal, a direct reflection of Apollo’s concerns. Xanthos’ interaction with Achilles represents the danger of a mortal who oversteps and violates the boundary that concerns Apollo. Xanthos attempts to reason with Achilles, simply asking the hero to stop flooding his waters with the dead Trojans (21.214-21). Achilles absolutely refuses to stop and decides to attack the river god. Immediately, the hero realizes his mistake as Xanthos begins to drown him (21.233-51). The willingness to attack a god on Achilles’ part represents his rejection of mortality, as he attempts to cross the boundary dividing mortal and immortal. Even though Achilles’ rampage is savage and powerful, the consequences of overstepping are dire. Achilles ultimately fails, as the river god nearly kills him. If Hera had not ordered Hephaestus to burn the river, Achilles would have been defeated (21.330-61). Ultimately, this passage
demonstrates that Achilles is willing to violate the appropriate boundary between the mortal and immortal, while it also demonstrates that even a minor god is far more powerful than the mightiest humans.

Conclusions

This survey of the ways that the gods are portrayed throughout the *Iliad* is intended to shed light upon the powerful impacts that the gods have upon the story. I have shown that the actions of the gods display individual desires, traits, and expectations. Zeus is in a particularly unique position among the gods in the epic. He ultimately must follow the expected story, which is beholden to this tradition. The events of the *Iliad* are fated to happen because the story has events that the audience would expect. While he is able to express a desire to take actions that are not fated, in the end Zeus never strays from the story and is always an active force in driving it forward. His role directly influences Apollo’s motivations as the agent of fate.

Hera is most often depicted as aiding the Greek side of the war. However, her motivations are more complicated than favoritism; she also bears an intense hatred of the Trojans, stemming from the judgement of Paris. Hera’s hatred of the Trojans is so powerful that she is willing to do anything, even sacrifice her favorite Greek cities, to make sure that they suffer. She is also willing to face the wrath of her husband each time that she stands up to him. Zeus threatens her with physical violence each time, and yet she continues to defy him. Hera’s goals are clear: she simply wishes to see the destruction of Troy. Hera stands as an opposite of Apollo, who contrasts with her actions. Apollo’s actions are not personally motivated, and he never stands against Zeus. Hera’s actions emphasize and illuminate Apollo’s function in the epic.

Poseidon ultimately is depicted as having a personal issue with the Trojans and rivalry with Zeus. Poseidon has a vendetta that originates from before the story of the epic, when the
Trojan king Laomedon refused to pay Poseidon for building the walls. Apollo and Poseidon together worked for Laomedon on the orders of Zeus. Not only did Laomedon not pay Apollo and Poseidon, he also threatened them with violence. This provokes the Earthshaker’s wrath against the Trojans, and he makes his indignation perfectly clear. Poseidon does not want conflict with Zeus, as he makes clear when Hera asks him to rebel. This does not mean that Poseidon does not take opportunity to go against Zeus’ orders. When Zeus orders the gods to not interfere with the war, Poseidon still attempts to defy the god. When Hera puts Zeus to sleep, Poseidon creates havoc and death among the Trojans. When Zeus becomes aware of Poseidon’s actions, his threats push Poseidon into rage. Poseidon threatens to defy Zeus and it seems for a time that Poseidon and Zeus may come into conflict. Once again Poseidon serves as a contrasting figure for Apollo that emphasizes the latter’s function in the epic. Apollo does not attempt to disobey Zeus, and does not threaten to rebel. Like with Hera, Apollo’s motivations are not personal, he has a role to enforce fate and the will of Zeus.

Athena has so many roles in the epic that it is difficult to encapsulate the ways she is depicted. I have focused on the passages in which Athena uses her cleverness and trickery to accomplish her goal. All the gods use trickery within the story, but Athena is brutal. Athena’s trickery against Hector is the clearest example. She does not merely manipulate him, but takes the form of his brother and convinces him he would not be alone in the fight against Achilles. When Hector realizes he was alone, he knows that Athena has tricked and betrayed him. Athena serves as a foil for Apollo’s sense of propriety, and her actions emphasize his role as an agent of fate and loyal son of Zeus in the epic.

Ares on the other hand is depicted in a lesser position than many of the other gods and is easily overcome by his enemies. In addition, he is shown to be hated even by his father. Ares is
the second god to be injured by Diomedes during the epic. His actions in the epic serve to emphasize Apollo’s guardianship of the boundary between the mortal and immortal. Ares represents the dangers of what happens when a god becomes closer to the mortal realm. Ares is a god of war and a warrior himself. Ares’ injury at the hands of a mortal is insulting and he is forced to run to Olympus and tell his father. Zeus’ words are harsh and reveal Ares as a hated son and god among the immortals. Ares’ easy defeat at the hands of Athena demonstrates how weak and largely irrelevant Ares is among the gods in the epic. Whether intentional or not, Ares’ vulnerability emphasizes Apollo’s guardianship of divine boundary. Ares’ injury and general lack of ability among the gods display the consequences of gods who become vulnerable as a hero might.

Finally, the episode of Xanthos features a conflict between a god and a mortal. Achilles is full of rage and a demonic fury to kill all of the Trojans. He dumps their bodies in the river, which upsets the river god. Achilles’ unhinged response is to attack the river itself. This attack demonstrates how far Achilles is rising into the realm of the divine in that he would dare to attack a being greater than himself. These actions display the ultimate consequence of violating Apollo’s concern for the mortal and immortal. Achilles oversteps his bounds and immediately is overwhelmed and is nearly killed, despite his own divine blood.

Ultimately, my purpose is to explore the functions of the gods and their motivations in the epic. I also focus on aspects of the gods that directly reflect or inform the motivations and actions of Apollo. While all these gods manifest their own character with their own motivations, their actions also illuminate the function of Apollo in the *Iliad*. Each of these gods plays a role that either informs Apollo’s actions, create conflict with him, or further emphasize his role as the guardian of the boundary between the mortal and immortal.
Chapter 1: Books 1-12

Introduction

In this chapter I will explore the role of Apollo in the first half of the *Iliad*, especially in terms of his words and deeds. My studies show that Apollo’s role is surprising in a number of ways. The first is that he provides the initial instance of wrath; at first it seems as though his wrath toward Agamemnon is meant to foreshadow his pro-Trojan stance, but this is contradicted as his wrath toward the Greeks is fleeting and easily appeased. Instead Apollo anticipates and instigates the wrath of Achilles, and becomes a reflection of the *Iliad*’s theme of wrath. Apollo’s actions with Athena seem to demonstrate that they interact with the battle similarly, but with opposite results for one side or the other. Apollo’s actions ultimately prove that he has concerns beyond being on the side of the Trojans in the war; he is especially concerned for the proper interaction and boundary between mortal and immortal.

Chryses and Apollo (1.33-52)

Apollo’s wrath on behalf of his priest Chryses quickly and harshly punishes the Greeks, but quickly is appeased and abated. Chryses pleads with Agamemnon to get his daughter back, as Agamemnon has taken her as a prize in war. Agamemnon tells Chryses to go away or face his wrath (1.26-32). Chryses then makes his plea to Apollo to punish the Greeks. Apollo responds immediately by coming down from Olympus and bringing plague upon the Greeks. Apollo’s motivations are made immediately clear: βῆ δὲ κατ᾿ Οὐλύμποιο καρήνων χωόμενος κῆρ (“He came down from the peaks of Olympus being angry in his heart,” 1.44). The poet’s use of the phrase χωόμενος κῆρ emphasizes the fact that Apollo is taking this event personally, as he is angry on behalf of his own priest. Apollo has a concern for those who worship and authorize his
worship in the world. The fact that his priest has been slighted constitutes a slight on Apollo as well. This insult by a mortal toward Apollo explains his anger in his actions towards the Greeks. His anger parallels the beginning of the story of the *Iliad*, namely Achilles’ wrath. Apollo’s wrath toward the Greeks ultimately causes Achilles’ own wrath against Agamemnon (Rabel 1990: 429). Both Apollo’s and Achilles’ wrath come from the same source (Agamemnon) and for the same reason, namely the theft of a woman (Rabel 1990: 431). After the Greeks sacrifice and pray to the god for an entire day (1.428-75), the poet says: ὃ δὲ φρένα τέρπετ᾽ ἀκούων (“And hearing them he (Apollo) became gladdened in his heart,” 1.475). Apollo’s wrath then is only conditioned on the fact that Chryses prayed for his wrath to fall onto the Greeks.

Apollo’s wrath is surprising in this passage, as it is very fleeting and relatively easy to appease, in seeming contradiction to his pro-Trojan sympathies later in the *Iliad*. In fact he does not begin to aid the Trojans until book 4. The vague and sometimes paradoxical actions of Apollo lend a surprising element. However, a plausible explanation is that his anger for the insult toward his priest and thus the attack on his own status by that of a mortal supersede that of his later pro-Trojan leanings. In fact, this would be consistent with later appearances of Apollo and his concern for the appropriate interaction of gods and mortals. Also, within this passage his motivations are quite easy to surmise. He brings plague upon the Greeks because his priest asks him to do so, and he is providing aid to one of his worshippers. Once the priest is appeased, and Apollo has received much praise and a sacrifice, Apollo is also appeased.

In sum, his role in book 1 is that his actions set off the entire story and theme of the *Iliad*. The first line refers to Achilles’ wrath, which ultimately is a consequence of Apollo’s actions. Achilles’ wrath can be understood as having Apollo as its originator, but also its final end in the escalation of Achilles’ wrath. We see this in the confrontation between Apollo and Achilles in
book 22 (Rabel 1990: 430). Apollo’s plague causes Achilles to demand that Agamemnon return Chryses’ father. In return for this insult Agamemnon takes Briseis away from Achilles. This immediately leads to Achilles’ wrath and retreat from the war. While this is not likely Apollo’s motivation for his actions, he does end up creating Achilles’ wrath.

The Gods’ Party (1.601-611)

The party of the gods emphasizes the differences between mortal and immortal characters: the immortal gods are able to experience conflict with one another without any long-term consequences, but the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon will have consequences for the entire epic (Schein 1984: 54). Apollo’s actions in this passage do not further the story of the epic. Nevertheless, they do serve to emphasize the lack of consequence the gods experience in contrast to the warring mortals. Thus, Apollo’s performing for the gods serves to emphasize the differences between what it means to be mortal and immortal. This is a theme that will be explored several times throughout the *Iliad*. The theme is further emphasized when taken in the context that the mortals are in their war camps in the midst of war. This passage happens directly after the first conflict of the gods as Hera speaks out against Zeus for favoring Thetis (1.531-65). Apollo utters no words during this conflict, but he entertains his fellow gods: οὐ μὲν φόρμιγγος περικαλλέος, ἣν Ἀπόλλων, ἔχ᾿ Ἀπόλλων θ᾿, αἳ ἄειδον ἀμειβόμεναι ὀπὶ καλῇ (“Nor of the beautiful lyre, which Apollo held and of the Muses, who sang exchanging (with each other) with a beautiful voice,” 603-4). Apollo is portrayed in his musical aspect, performing to entertain his fellow gods. This happens while the mortals prepare for war. Ultimately, this demonstrates the difference in how the immortals and mortals experience war. The immortal experiences no consequences and avoids the horrors of death and conflict, while the mortal does not have the opportunity to experience the leisure the gods do when the day is over. Apollo’s use of song and
verse within the meter of epic can be a reference to Apollo’s role as the god of poetry in cult. That would mean interpreting Apollo’s actions could have deeper implications, as the god of poetry is taking actions within the poem. This would be implying some divine authority to the author of the poem.3

Apollo Urges the Trojans (4.507-16)

Apollo’s first interaction with the Trojans ultimately serves to demonstrate how he foreshadows future events in the epic, namely that the tide of the war is going to change in favor of the Trojans. I also argue that Apollo and Athena mirroring each other’s actions at first seems to demonstrate their favoritism, but Apollo is ultimately shown to perform actions that are not motivated by being pro-Trojan. As the Trojans are being routed, Apollo sees them running from his sanctuary on Pergamus and speaks directly to the warriors (4.509-13). The purpose of Apollo’s speech seems to be to assure them that the Greeks are not invincible, but are men just like them. He also informs them that Achilles is not currently in the battle, which he feels should invigorate them. Apollo’s shouting from his own sanctuary in Troy serves to emphasize his pro-Trojan leanings. The method of communication of Apollo with the Trojans differs from that with Chryses. Chryses does not directly interact with Apollo, but only through prayer does he obtain his wish. In this passage, Apollo directly yells at the Trojan warriors. Apollo, and in fact the other gods, interacts with mortals in various ways and there is not always consistency in those methods (Kearns 2004: 65). His actions with Chryses are that of a god who is answering a prayer of his priest. However, his speech to rouse the Trojans to rise up against the Greeks seems to foreshadow the coming change towards the Trojans.

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3 I choose not to analyze this any further, as Apollo’s role as the god of poetry is not explicit within the text. However, it is worth further research.
In this passage Apollo actually performs no actions and relies on his speech to rouse the Trojans. It can be argued that as the battle will turn in favor of the Trojans, this could be foreshadowing the turn in the war. The gods are often used to provide information and foreshadow (de Jong 1997: 315). If this approach is considered, it would support Nagy’s assertion that the nature of Apollo is words waiting to become action (2004: 7). Apollo’s motivation for this speech is once again clear: he favors the Trojans and wishes them to rise against the Greeks. Apollo’s reason for choosing the Trojans is never made clear, in contrast to the motivations of Hera or Athena. One potential reason is that in myth he is often associated with this region and so it is unsurprising that he takes their side (Kearns 2004: 61). Ultimately, Apollo’s speech rouses the Trojans, which prevents them from running away, and anticipates the eventual change in the tide of war.

Apollo and Athena

Book 5 introduces another running theme of the *Iliad*, namely that Athena often mirrors Apollo’s actions toward the Greeks. By mirroring, I mean that Apollo and Athena are often portrayed performing similar acts but, to opposite effect, for example, when Athena persuades Ares to leave battle (5.30-7), but Apollo’s persuasive words prompt him to return (5.454-9). As a result of taking these actions, the two gods catalyze subsequent actions. Removing Ares from the battle allows Aphrodite to run to him for aid (363-75). When Apollo persuades him to return, it not only provides aid for the Trojan side, but allows for the passage in which Diomedes is able to attack and injure Ares (826-63).

Another example of these two gods mirroring each other is during the night time raid of Diomedes and Odysseus. There is an obvious difficulty when dealing with Book 10, as scholars debate its authenticity. There are issues with the book regarding language, structure,
archaeology, and story (Stanley 1993: 119). However, I include it in my discussion as it does feature an unusual portrayal of Apollo’s demeanor. Athena directly speaks to Diomedes as he makes his raid in order to warn him back toward the Greek camp (10.503-13). Immediately after, Apollo spots his sister interfering with the hero and takes it upon himself to warn the Trojans of the Greek presence (515-25). The language of Apollo is surprising (τῇ κοτέων, “Being angry at her,” 10.517), as it is a rare reference to Apollo’s immediate emotion toward someone. Although Apollo does show anger in book 1, this anger does not seem to be as strong or for the same reasons. It perhaps reflects resentment at his sister’s actions in the war, or anger by proxy, as Zeus had forbidden interference with the mortals (8.1-27). Nevertheless, language does not often show Apollo’s emotions toward his fellow gods in war, in contrast to his wrath toward specific mortals. Athena catalyzes events by allowing the Greeks to steal the horses of the Trojans, but Apollo alerts the Trojans to the theft and allows for the reader to see the anguish and confusion of the passage. In summary, Apollo’s and Athena’s mirrored and opposite actions catalyze events, but also demonstrate that Apollo detests the actions of his sister.

Apollo and Diomedes (5.431-44)

The interaction between Apollo and Diomedes demonstrates that Apollo’s persuasive words influence the actions of others, and specifically heroes. Apollo is shown directly intervening against Diomedes as he protects Aeneas, who is destined to survive the war. Further, the passage emphasizes Apollo’s concern for the appropriate differences between mortals and immortals. Diomedes had been given the ability to perceive the gods by Athena, but was warned not to attack any of the gods except Aphrodite (5.121-32). Apollo articulates the division between mortal and immortal:

ϕράζεο· Τυδείδη, καὶ χάζεο, μηδὲ θεοίσιν
Think, son of Tydeus, and back off. Do not wish to think yourself equal to the gods, since never are the race of immortal gods and men who walk the earth equal.

This is the first of several speeches in which Apollo asserts the appropriate interaction between gods and mortals. Apollo is angered that Diomedes dared attack him and think that he is equal to the gods. Diomedes’ reaction to Apollo’s speech, Τυδεΐδης δ᾿ ἀνεχάζετο τυτθὸν ὀπίσσω, | μηνὶν ἀλευάμενος ἑκατηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος (“And the son of Tydeus retreated back a little, avoiding the wrath of farshooting Apollo,” 5.433-4), could be interpreted not as fearful, but simply avoidant (Jones 1996: 110). But, because Diomedes retreats and does not injure Apollo as he did Aphrodite, the hero recognizes that he does not have the power or capability to harm the god.

Apollo’s persuasive speech concerning the division of mortal and immortal succeeds in changing the course of Diomedes’ actions. This demonstrates Apollo’s ability to change the actions of others by words. The hero gives up on his attempts to slay Aeneas.

Apollo’s actions thus influence even events that happen outside the bounds of the epic, as the audience knows that Aeneas is destined to survive the war. Apollo even goes as far as to take the hero away from the battle so that Aeneas can be healed before he reenters it (5.445-6). He creates a phantom to take the place of the hero while he heals in safety (5.449). Apollo’s actions allow for fate to be preserved and anticipate a story outside the events of the epic that continues the story of Aeneas and the epic cycle.

Apollo and Ares (5.454-9)
In order to explore Apollo’s concern for the boundary between mortal and immortal I turn to his interaction in Book 5 with Ares, who had previously been removed from the battle by Athena’s trickery. Aphrodite has been injured, and Apollo then goes to Ares and says,

 Aristotle βροτολογέ, μαυρόφονε, τείχεοπλήτα, οὐκ ἂν δὴ τόνδ᾿ ἄνδρα μάχης ἐρύσαιο μετελθώ, Τυδεῖδην, ὃς νῦν γε καὶ ἂν Διὶ πατρὶ μάχοιτο; Κύπριδα μὲν πρῶτα σχεδὸν οὔτασε χεῖρ᾿ ἐπὶ καρπῷ, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ᾿ αὐτῷ μοι ἐπέσσυτο δαίμονι ἰσος. (5.455-9)

Ares, Ares bane of men, bloodthirsty overcomer of walls, you could not go and drag this man from the battle, the son of Tydeus, who would now fight against even father Zeus; first he wounded the Cyprian one near the hand on the wrist, but then he, like a god, rushed upon me myself.

Apollo’s assertion that Diomedes would now fight against Zeus himself emphasizes his concern for the appropriate interaction of mortal and immortal. So too does Apollo’s indignation that the hero attempted to attack even himself (αὐτῷ μοι, 459). However, given that Diomedes backed away from Apollo when he reprimanded the hero, and did not manage to injure him, it seems unlikely that Diomedes would actually engage Zeus in battle. Apollo would know this and so this speech seems primarily to attempt to manipulate Ares into fighting on the side of the Trojans. First, he stresses the audacity of Diomedes in attacking the king of the gods himself. Next, he mentions that Diomedes already injured Aphrodite. This act emphasizes the audacity of the mortal to actually injure a god. Finally, Apollo drives home this immoral and audacious act by citing the attack upon himself. Apollo manipulates Ares into joining the battle on his side by using the actions of Diomedes. Ultimately, Apollo uses his persuasive voice for Ares to rejoin the battle on the side of the Trojans. He also catalyzes events to put Ares back in the battle so that the latter is in position to be injured in battle (5.855-60). Apollo’s oratory abilities are not
unique among the gods, Athena for one also uses a persuasive voice to convince others. I use Apollo’s voice here to emphasize how he catalyzes events.

Apollo and Athena (7.17-36)

By ending the battle and preventing further bloodshed, Apollo manages to prevent Athena’s secret machinations. This happens in the only direct confrontation between Apollo and Athena, which also emphasizes the differences between mortal and immortal. Athena heads toward the battlefield as she sees the Greeks (7.17-18). Apollo comes out to meet her and makes a speech:

τίπτε σὺ δὴ αὖ μεμαυῖα, Διὸς θύγατερ μεγάλοιο,
HELLIONIO, μέγας δὲ σε θυμός ἀνῆκεν;
η ἴνα δὴ Δαναοῖς μάχης ἐπεραλκέα νίκην
δός; ἐπεὶ οὐ τι Τρώιας ἀπολλυμένους ἐλεαίρεις.

All’. εἰ μοὶ τι πίθοιο, τὸ κεν πολὺ κέρδιον εἴη·

νῦν μὲν παύσωμεν πόλεμον καὶ δηιοτήτα

σήμερον οὐστερον αὖτε μαχήσοντ’, εἰς ὁ κε τέκμωρ

Τλιον εὐροσιν, ἐπεὶ ὃς φίλον ἐπίλετο θυμῷ

ὑμῖν ἀθανάτῃσι, διαπραθέειν τόδε ἄστυ. (7.24-32)

Desiring what, daughter
of great Zeus, have you come from Olympus, did a great anger incite you? Is it so that you giving the strength to the other side could give victory of the battle to the Danaans? Since you do not take any pity on the Trojans being killed but, if you could obey me in anything, it would be much better if now we could stop the war and the battle today. Later they will fight again, until they find the prize of Ilium, since it is so dear to the hearts of you immortal goddess to destroy this city.

Apollo’s reference to Athena’s lack of pity for the Trojans will be echoed in book 24, where Apollo speaks out against those lacking such pity (Allan 2006: 13). However, Apollo’s accusations of pitilessness ring hollow in light of his own pitiless attacks on the Greeks. His motivation here is to stop the battle for the day, which is why he confronts Athena directly.
Apollo in the end gets Athena to agree to his terms: ὧδ᾿ ἔστω, ἑκάεργε (“So let it be, farshooter,” 7.33). Ultimately, Apollo prevents Athena from further catalyzing events in her own favor, as well as ending the battle on his own terms. Apollo in the same passage protects his Trojans, while preventing Athena’s own actions.

Conclusions

Examining Apollo’s role in the first half of the *Iliad* shows that the god is complex and acts in surprising ways at times. Apollo first becomes the catalyst for the entire story as his wrath inadvertently leads to the wrath of Achilles, and in the process he embodies the major theme of the epic. Apollo’s swift wrath and even swifter forgiveness come as a shock, given his later pro-Trojan stance. Apollo is able to serve as a catalyst for Achilles’ wrath, while at the same time is shown to be a complex character. This complexity continues to be displayed through his actions in the war, which are often countered by Athena. The siblings frequently perform similar but opposite actions in the war. Their actions serve to instigate events as well as to favor their respective favored sides. These actions allow events to unfold as they should in the story. Examples of these instances are their individual interactions with Ares (5.455ff) and the night raid (10.515ff). Finally, Apollo expresses the difference between mortal and immortal. He accomplishes this with his persuasive words to both Ares and Diomedes. While his interaction with Ares mostly serves to return him to the battle on the side of the Trojans, his indignation at the audacious behavior of Diomedes is clear. His speeches also show his ability to change the actions of others. He is able to get Ares to act against Athena’s wishes and previous interactions, as well as stop Diomedes from attacking Aeneas.

It would be an oversimplification to state that Apollo’s actions are to aid his favored side of the war. Athena’s motivations, as well as Hera’s, are made clear by their hatred toward the
Trojans. Apollo’s motivations are not made obvious, and his actions are sometimes contrary to what one might expect, as shown by his fleeting wrath toward the Greeks in Book 1. In addition, expressing the difference between mortal and immortal demonstrates that aiding the Trojans is not his only concern. This will be emphasized in the second half of the *Iliad*, where Apollo takes actions against the Trojans. Ultimately, Apollo’s words and deeds demonstrate the complex and powerful impact of the god in the *Iliad*.

Chapter 2: Books 13-24
Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the role of Apollo in Books 13-24 of the *Iliad*. I argue that Apollo in the second half of the epic functions as an agent of Zeus’ will, and thus an agent and preserver of fate. In addition, I argue that the will of Zeus ultimately conforms to fate as well as the expected events of the epic. Apollo’s actions as the epic comes to a close are largely concerned with preserving the story of the epic and allowing events to progress as the reader expects it to. On several occasions Zeus hints at the idea of taking the story in alternative directions, and Apollo is often a tool to redirect events so they happen as they are supposed to. I will also argue that Apollo continues his previous concern for the proper boundary between mortal and immortal, and in particular the proper behavior of gods when interacting with mortals. In addition, I explore two instances of problematic or complex actions that seem to undermine what Apollo was previously trying to accomplish. I attempt to provide some potential explanations for these inconsistencies.

Before I examine passages concerning Apollo, I first have to define what I mean by the story and its relationship to fate and Zeus’ will. Fate refers to events that are destined to happen, which is an element that the *Iliad* relies on heavily. Edwards argues that fate is defined by the will of the poet, but is ultimately limited by the traditional stories surrounding the epic (1987: 136). However, I follow Wilson’s more precise formulation that fate is the will of the expected events that readers would expect, to which the poet must ultimately conform (2007: 151). The story gives direction and defines the events that are fated to occur. Thus, fate and the expected events inform one another. Homer is our earliest example of the epic, and so the question arises if the poet is actually beholden to earlier incarnations of the poem. However, given the panhellenic nature of the epic story, it makes sense that the poet had to maintain the story with
events that those listening would expect. The opening lines reveal the catalyst for the epic: Διὸς δ᾽ ἐτελείετο βουλή (“And the will of Zeus was fulfilled,” 1.5). Thus the will of Zeus also informs fated events, as Zeus himself is beholden to the same limitations of the story. Zeus can consider changing events, but in the end he will always follow the path of the story. Zeus acts as an agent for fate on many occasions, using scales to determine the path he should take. Because the will of Zeus is subject to fated events or events the audience is expecting, all three of these effectively inform each other. This is demonstrated through the fact that expected events in the story inform what events are fated and thus Zeus’ actions. Morrison disagrees with the assertion that Zeus’ will and fate are synonymous, arguing that Zeus’ will and desires seem to go against the greater story (1997: 299). However, I argue that the gods can and do display autonomous behavior, but this does not contradict fate as I have described it. While Zeus does demonstrate behavior that does not necessarily affect the story as a whole, when it comes to fated events he always takes actions that conform to the expected events. Therefore, Zeus is an autonomous and anthropomorphic entity, but his will always conforms to fate.

Apollo Defends the Walls of Troy and the Death of Patroclus

In this section, I argue that Apollo ultimately acts as a preserver of fate and one who foreshadows events that will happen in a story that occurs chronologically after the Iliad. As Patroclus pushes his way toward the walls of Troy, Apollo meets him to prevent the city from falling. The poet even informs his audience that there was a real danger that Troy could have fallen at that moment: ἔνθα κεν υψίπυλον Τροίην ἕλον υἱες Ἀχαιῶν (“Then would the sons of Achaeans have taken high walled Troy,” 16.698). If Apollo had not taken a stand against the hero, Troy would have fallen before its allotted time. It is Apollo’s speech following the repulsion of Patroclus that dictates what is fated to be: χάζεο διογενὲς Πατρόκλεες, οὐ νῦ τοι
οἶσα | σῷ ὑπὸ δουρὶ πόλιν πέρθαι Τρώων ἀγερόχων, | οὐδ᾽ ὑπ᾽ Ἀχιλλῆος, ὅς περ σέο πολλὸν ὀμείνων (“Step back Zeus-born Patroclus: for the city of the lordly Trojans is indeed not destined to be destroyed by your spear, nor by Achilles’, who indeed is far better than you,” 16.708-10).

Apollo speaks about future events beyond the *Iliad*, which the reader would be aware of. The *Iliad’s* story ends before the war does, and both Patroclus and Achilles will be dead before Troy falls.

Apollo prevents the fall of Troy before its destined time. This demonstrates Bergold’s claim that Apollo acts not simply to benefit the Trojans, but functions in the *Iliad* as an agent of Zeus’ will and a preserver of fate (1977: 185). Apollo’s complete obedience to Zeus shows him to be an extension of that will. This is shown earlier in Book 16 when Zeus commands Apollo to take Sarpedon away from the battle and to anoint and clean the body (16.666-75). Apollo’s response is to not disobey: οὐδ᾽ ἄρα πατρὸς ἀνηκούστησεν Ἀπόλλων (“Apollo did not disobey his father,” 16.676). The word ἀνηκούστησεν is used only twice in the *Iliad*, and both times it is used in relation to Apollo not disobeying Zeus (15.236, 16.676). This obedience to Zeus’ will demonstrates that Apollo is concerned with more than aiding the Trojans—he is carrying out fated events. His reproach to Patroclus demonstrates that he is not acting out of personal anger toward the Greeks or Patroclus; rather, his goal is to prevent the fall of Troy before it is meant to fall. Apollo ultimately is acting to preserve fate and protect the story that the audience expects.

In this passage Apollo preserves fate, but as he does so he foreshadows events that occur outside the story of the *Iliad*. Apollo makes it clear to the attacking hero that neither he nor Achilles will be the one to overcome the Trojans. The poet hints at the idea of Patroclus actually succeeding in overcoming the walls of Troy, but Apollo drives him off before he can do so.
Despite the tease, expected events of the story demand that Patroclus not succeed. This passage ultimately demonstrates Apollo’s role as one who preserves future events.

When it comes time for Patroclus to die, Apollo once again functions as a preserver of fate. He becomes an active participant in the death by striking Patroclus dumb and making him an easy target for Hector (16.789-805). This action allows the armor of Achilles to fall into the hands of Hector, which marks his inevitable death (Allan 2005: 7). The connection of the armor and Hector’s death is shown by the poet’s words as the armor becomes Hector’s: σχεδόθεν δὲ οἱ ἑν ὄλεθρος (“For his destruction was close,” 16.800). In addition, the poet claims that Zeus allowed the armor to fall into Hector’s possession (16.799-800). Once again Apollo has become an agent of Zeus’ will and thus an agent of fate. In this passage he is not simply seen as an invisible force, as Patroclus vocalizes who actually killed him: ἤδη νῦν Ἕκτορ μεγάλ᾽ εὔχεο σοὶ γὰρ νίκη Ζεὺς Κρονίδης καὶ Ἀπόλλων, οἳ με δάμασσαν ρηιδίως (“Hector now you brag much; for Zeus the son of Kronus and Apollo gave you victory, who easily overpowered (me),” 16.844-5). Ultimately, both when Patroclus attempts to overpower the walls of Troy and when he dies, Apollo acts to interfere with events so fated events can occur.

Apollo Urges Aeneas to Fight Achilles

I have shown that Apollo primarily functions as an agent of fate; here I will discuss a problematic passage of Apollo in which he seems to act against fate and his capacity as a servant of Zeus’ will. In Book 20 Apollo disguises himself as a Trojan and convinces Aeneas to attack the rampaging Achilles (20.75-85). This is problematic because as we have seen, Apollo knows the outcome of the war. Thus, the god should know that Aeneas cannot defeat Achilles in combat. This passage stands in stark contrast to that in Book 5 where he saves Aeneas from the wrath of Diomedes and seemingly preserves events that happen after the events of the epic. In
Book 20 Apollo performs an action that not only would almost certainly result in Aeneas’ death but also bring events that the audience would expect to happen outside the epic to an end. Even Aeneas is dubious about going after Achilles. Aeneas initially responds that he had faced Achilles earlier in the epic and would have been killed if not for Zeus’ intervention: ἦ κ’ ἐδάμην ὑπὸ χερσίν Αχιλλῆος καὶ Αθήνης (“Then I would be slain by the hands of Achilles and Athena,” 20.94). Even Aeneas knows that he cannot defeat Achilles in battle. Aeneas and Apollo both know the outcome is the death of the former. Apollo takes this one step further with his most curious counter response to the hero: καὶ δὲ σέ φασι Διὸς κούρης Ἀφροδίτης ἀποκατήμεν, κεῖνος δὲ χερείος ἔστι, ἣ μὲν Διὸς ἐσθ᾽, ἣ δ᾽ ἐξ ἁλίοιο γέροντος (“But they also say that you were born from Aphrodite the daughter of Zeus, while that guy is from a lesser god: for the one is from Zeus, but the other (i.e., Thetis) is from the old man of the sea,” 105-7). Apollo attempts to manipulate Aeneas into attacking Achilles by appealing to his greater heritage. This would seem to imply that there is some sort of hierarchy of strength for heroes depending on who their parent is. However, this is likely to be a fallacy, as the power of Achilles is greater than that of Aeneas. This oddity seems to be contrary to Apollo’s previous actions, and it is difficult to understand why Apollo would urge Aeneas to attack Achilles. As an attempt to explain this oddity I argue that Apollo’s indignation at the actions of Achilles forces the god to take action. He attempts to slow the hero down and prevent further inappropriate actions. Apollo places Aeneas in danger only as a desperate attempt to prevent the worst that Achilles could do.

This book has another strange aspect to it in that Aeneas is shown pity by a surprising god. Poseidon, who stands against the Trojans with Athena and Hera, pities the Trojans while Apollo shows no care:

… εἰ μὴ ὄρῃ ὅξῳ νόησε Ποσειδῶν ἐνοσίχθων
αὐτίκα δ´ ἀθανάτοις θεοῖς μετὰ μῦθον ἔειπεν
“ἳ πόποι ἦ μοι ἄχος μεγαλήτορος Αἰνείαο,
ὁς τάχα Πηλείωνι δαμεὶς Ἄϊδος δὲ κάτεισι
πειθόμενος μύθοισιν Ἀπόλλωνος ἑκάτοι
νήπιος, οὐδέ τί οἱ χραισμήσει λυγρὸν ὄλεθρον” (20.291-6)

… If Poseidon the Earthshaker did not notice sharply:
at once he said a speech to the immortal gods:
“Oh shame! Truly I grieve for greathearted Aeneas,
who quickly will go down to the house of Hades, having been killed by the son of Peleus
believing the speeches of far-shooting Apollo,
the idiot, for he will not ward off baneful destruction from him.

Poseidon claims that Apollo will not protect Aeneas, and depicts Apollo as pitiless toward him.
Poseidon goes further to claim that Apollo intends to lead Aeneas to destruction. This is
completely in contrast to Apollo’s previous actions in the Iliad. Poseidon even makes a direct
reference to Aeneas’ destiny to survive these events (307-8). When Poseidon suggests they save
Aeneas, Hera refuses to do so on the grounds that she and Athena have an oath to never prevent a
Trojan death (313-14). It seems as though in this passage Poseidon and Apollo have swapped
positions, counter to their attitudes in the rest of the Iliad. However, since Apollo places Aeneas
in danger only due to the extreme and horrific actions of Achilles, Apollo is not acting with
cruelty.4

Poseidon vs. Apollo: Theomachy

Apollo in the Theomachy models the proper behavior for a god vis-à-vis mortals,
particularly that it is not proper for gods to fight each other over mortal lives. The Theomachy
begins in Book 21, in which many of the gods square up against each other. Many scholars, both
ancient and modern, perceive this passage as largely comedic (Seeskin 1977: 295-6). However,

4 In addition, as I have shown that Apollo is an agent of fate, it is possible that Apollo knew that Poseidon would
save the hero. However, the text [“Homer”] does not provide any evidence that this is the case. The text does
support Apollo’s anger and indignation at the inappropriate actions of Achilles.
this is darker once it is examined as a reality. The Theomachy occurs while mortals are fighting and dying in a real battle and there is no consequence for the gods, illuminating the tragic notion that mortals are destined to die and suffer. While the conflict between the other gods can be seen as ridiculous, the exchange between Apollo and Poseidon has a tonal shift toward the more serious (Richardson 1993: 86). Poseidon in his speech to Apollo appeals to a past before events of the epic when the founder of Troy wronged them (21.436-460). But Apollo’s response shows deference for his uncle and unwillingness to fight over mortals: ἐννοσίγαι’ οὐκ ἄν με σαώφρονα μυθήσαιο | ἔμμεναι, εἰ δὴ σοί γε βροτῶν ἕνεκα πτολεμίξω | δειλῶν (“Earthshaker, you would not think that I am wise, if I were to fight you on behalf of wretched mortals,” 21.462-3). Apollo’s concern is for the appropriate behavior of gods towards each other and toward mortals; he does not believe it proper to fight his uncle over mortal men. Apollo’s refusal to fight Poseidon also shows deference to him, and thus a difference in stature between the two gods (Richardson 1993: 94). Apollo does not fight Poseidon because he has a view of the proper interaction between gods, and at the same time understands the difference in their station.

Apollo vs. Achilles

The proper behavior between gods and mortal is a major concern for Apollo, particularly when a mortal oversteps his bounds. In the conflict between Apollo and Achilles in Book 22, Apollo is marked by his concern for the proper boundary between mortal and immortal. Furthermore, he is defined by his wrath and disdain for Achilles. After Apollo leads Achilles away from the Trojans, he finally confronts Achilles: τίπτέ με Πηλέος υἱὲ ποσὶν ταχέεσσι διώκει | αὕτος θνητός ἐὼν θεὸν ἄμβροτον; (“Why do you chase me son of Peleus with swift feet, you being a mortal and I an immortal god?” 22.8-9). Apollo recalls earlier rebukes of heroes who do not know their place. He is indignant at Achilles’ daring and excessive actions. Later in
the speech Apollo further emphasizes his immortality by stating that Achilles could do him no harm, as Apollo is not destined for death (22.13). Achilles is the strongest of the Greeks and ultimately Apollo reminds Achilles of his mortality (Rabel 1990: 430). The difference between Apollo and Achilles is further emphasized by the latter’s response: ἦ σ’ ἂν τισαίμην, εἴ μοι δύναμις γε παρείη (“If the ability should be present in me, I would take vengeance on you,” 22.20). Achilles laments not being able to do anything to his opponent, thus acknowledging his lesser status.

Ultimately, this passage displays Apollo’s wrath and disdain for Achilles. This is made clear by Apollo’s words concerning Achilles’ treatment of the Trojans: ἦ νῦ τοι οὔ τι μέλει Τρώων πόνος, οὔς ἐφόβησας (“Truly is the toil of the Trojans not a care at all for you, those whom you routed,” 22.11). Apollo’s anger and disdain for Achilles arises the latter’s lack of propriety and pitilessness (Allan 2006: 13). However, the wrath of Achilles and the wrath of Apollo are ultimately reflections of each other. As I discussed in chapter one, Apollo is the origin and the magnification of Achilles’ wrath (Rabel 1990: 430). The two mirrored wraths come face to face, and in this instant Achilles’ wrath is directed at Apollo (Allan 2006: 430). Apollo in this passage is simultaneously depicted as concerned with Achilles’ inappropriate behavior, while representing a mirror image of Achilles’ wrath. Apollo frames the epic by instigating Achilles’ wrath and by being there at the culmination of that wrath. In addition, Apollo serves as a reminder to the reader that Achilles’ wrath has limits, and his vengeance cannot extend to Apollo.

Apollo Abandons Hector
I choose to examine this short, but powerful, passage because it ultimately solidifies Apollo’s role as an agent of Zeus’ will. Zeus lifts the scales to determine the fate of Hector and Achilles. The emotional power behind the passage comes when the scales settle: 

And the fatal day of Hector sank, and it went down into the house of Hades, and Phoebus Apollo abandoned him,"

22.212-13). It is a simple statement, but one that emphasizes Apollo’s role as an obedient son. He leaves Hector and as long as the hero remains alive, Apollo brings him no more aid. Furthermore, He does not complain as Hera might, does not beg his father for reprieve, and there is not even a moment of regret as Apollo abandons the hero that he has aided on multiple occasions.

This passage demonstrates that Apollo is not acting strictly out of a pro-Trojan stance. Furthermore, it shows that his pro-Trojan stance is not his main motivation. Apollo seems far more motivated by his role as an agent of Zeus’ will and a preserver of fate. Just as in earlier passages where Apollo knows that outcome, he knows that Hector’s time has come. Surprising is the lack of reaction or emotion from Apollo. However, one should not mistake Apollo’s lack of emotion or complacency as a lack of pity. As we will see, Apollo will protect and stand up for Hector even after his death. But when it comes down to Hector’s life, Apollo does not hesitate to abandon the hero when Zeus’ will demands this.

Apollo Fights for Hector

Apollo’s attitude in the argument over the treatment of Hector’s body is troubling because his own concern for the proper boundary between immortal and mortal seemingly gets turned back upon him. However, this is not actually the case as Apollo’s reasoning for advocating for Hector emphasizes his concern for appropriate actions of mortals. After twelve
days of abusing Hector’s body, some of the gods want Hermes to steal the body away (24.22-4). Apollo who finally speaks up on behalf the Trojan prince: σχέτλιοι ἐστε θεοί, δηλήμονες: οὐ νό ποθ’ ύμην | Ἐκτωρ μηρί’ ἐκη θήδην αἰγῶν τε τελείων; (“You are cruel gods, baneful ones: did Hector not ever kindle the thighbones of oxen and perfect goats for you?” 24.34-5). Apollo calls out the gods for not pitying such a pious individual. Hera retorts by calling out Apollo for his support of the Trojans and reminding the gods present that Hector was purely human, while Achilles is part god and thus greater (24.55-63). Allan points out that Apollo’s speech does not speak to his favoritism toward the Trojans, but his anger at the impropriety and cruelty of Achilles (2006: 13). Hera’s ultimate argument is what causes complications for previous representations of Apollo:

τὸν δὲ χολωσαμένη προσέφη λευκώλενος Ἰρη, ἐεί ἐκαν καὶ τοῦτο τεὸν ἔπος ἄργυρότοξε, εἰ δὴ ὑμὴν Ἀχιλῆι καὶ Ἐκτωρι θήσετε τιμήν. Ἐκτωρ μὲν θνητός τε γυναῖκα τε θήσατο μαζόν αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεῶς ἐστι θεᾶς γόνος, ἢς ἐγὼ αὐτή ῥέψα τε καί ἀτίτηλα καὶ ἀνδρὶ πόρον παράκοιτιν Πηλέι, ὃς περὶ κῆρι φίλοι γένετ’ ἀθανάτοισι. πάντες δ᾽ ἀντιάσθε θεοὶ γάμου ἐν δὲ σὺ τοῖσι δαίνυ᾽ ἔχων φόρμιγγα κακῶν ἕταρ’, αἰεν ἄπιστε. (24.55-63)

Then white armed Hera being angry said:

“This statement of yours would be so, lord of the silver bow, if you had given the same honor to Achilles and Hector. Hector was mortal and suckled a woman’s breast: but Achilles is born of a goddess, whom I myself reared and nourished and gave as a wife to the man Peleus, who became dear in the heart of the immortals. All you gods took part of the wedding: and you among them dined holding the lyre, you always untrustworthy, companion of evil.”

Hera’s point that Achilles deserves more honor than Hector because he has the blood of gods is similar to previous sentiments of Apollo. He has repeatedly shown a concern for the proper interaction of mortal and immortal, and to show favor toward one who was entirely mortal seems
counter to this. She points out the inconsistency and injustice of Apollo giving a man of divine blood the same status as a completely mortal man—this is a point that Apollo cannot deny (Burgess 2004: 23). While it may seem that Hera usurps Apollo’s usual role of policing the proper boundary between immortal and mortal, this is actually not the case. Apollo calls out the actions of Achilles as inappropriate, and he clearly has disdain for them. Thus, Apollo is actually acting well within his role and is rightfully indignant. What is not clear is why Hera calls Apollo untrustworthy, as he has not proven to be so previously. Burgess claims that Hera is probably referring to a general characteristic in Apollo that she observes (2004: 23), particularly that he is working against her actions. Hera sees Apollo as an adversary in her goals of destroying the Trojans. It is possible that in her perspective she sees him as untrustworthy because he opposes her plans.

Conclusions

Apollo’s actions in the second half of the *Iliad* are complex and at times difficult to interpret. At the extreme his actions run counter to his usual concerns. The strongest and largely the most consistent role that Apollo plays is as an agent of Zeus. As I have shown, the will of Zeus is a representation of fate in the story. The function of Apollo as an agent of Zeus’ will is shown through his defending the walls of Troy, an action that serves two purposes. First, it allows Apollo to preserve fate by preventing Patroclus from conquering the walls of Troy before its allotted time. Second, his speech foreshadows events that happen outside the story of the *Iliad* where Patroclus and Achilles die before Troy falls. His words and actions at the wall preserve and foreshadow fated events. Apollo further preserves fate by finally ending the life of Patroclus. Apollo displays no anger, wrath, or personal wish to kill the hero. Patroclus is destined to die, and Apollo facilitates the death of the hero. He also allows the armor of Achilles to fall into the
hands of Hector, which ultimately marks Hector’s destiny to die as well. It seems as though Apollo is taking action to make sure events happen as they are supposed to. Finally, Apollo displays his role as the agent of fate by abandoning Hector to die the moment that Zeus declares it is the hero’s time. Apollo gives no speech, no complaint, but simply obeys the will of his father and the scales of fate.

However, Apollo takes a single action which seemingly undermines all his actions to steer the events of the epic. Apollo convinces Aeneas to attack Achilles, a fight that even Aeneas knows he cannot win. Apollo knows the path of the story and knows that Aeneas cannot defeat Achilles in combat. Also, as shown in Chapter 1, Aeneas is destined to survive the battle. This suggests that Apollo actively sought to interfere with fated events, which seems to undermine my previous argument. It is only by the intervention of Poseidon that Aeneas is able to be saved. This means that while Apollo sought to subvert fated events, his enemy sought to preserve it. Apollo’s sense of propriety and disdain for Achilles’ actions ultimately explains his seemingly counter-intuitive attitude. Achilles is out of control, and his inappropriate actions require Apollo to intervene.

Apollo is also shown to have a concern for the proper interaction between mortal and immortal. I have analyzed in the previous chapter the passages in which he acts upon mortals who cross this boundary. In this chapter the major event that displays this concern is his battle with Poseidon, a seemingly serious fight that is surrounded by more comedic conflicts. Apollo’s concern here is that it is inappropriate to fight his fellow god over the lives and conflicts of mortal beings. Thus, Apollo is showing concern for the appropriate behavior of gods when it comes to mortals. Apollo shows respect for the god who is higher in station. It is even possible
that this is a familial interaction, since Apollo is the younger of the two gods and Poseidon the elder of the family. Apollo does not wish to attack his uncle over mortal beings.

At odds with his concern for proper interaction with respect in interacting with mortals is the passage in which the gods debate over the body of Hector. Achilles’ abuse of the body causes Apollo to appeal to the gods to save the Trojan. However, Hera reprimands Apollo for showing a mortal equal status to one with divine blood. This seems to counter Apollo’s previous claims for mortals being lesser and that the gods should not conflict with each other over mortal lives. I reconcile this contradiction by emphasizing Apollo’s disdain for Achilles on account of the latter’s lack of pity toward his slain foes. So while it seems that Hera usurps Apollo’s concern for the appropriate interaction between mortal and immortal, in actuality Apollo’s disdain for Achilles’ actions demonstrate that he still has this concern. Apollo is acting in the appropriate manner, because Achilles’ behavior is so drastic. Apollo shows pity for the dead Hector, and has a disdain for Achilles despite his divine heritage.

Ultimately, while Apollo’s behavior in a couple of passages may be complex, surprising, and difficult to understand, his role as a whole is very clear. Apollo, as the *Iliad* comes to an end, is interfering in events in order to make sure that events the audience would expect come to pass. One might even argue that Apollo is an instrument for the poet to divinely assure that events happen as they should, while at the same time hinting that those events could play out differently than the reader expects. Apollo also shows genuine pity and emotion as he laments over the treatment of Hector’s body, and thus demonstrates he has autonomy outside his functioning as an agent of Zeus’ will.
Conclusion

Throughout this project I have aimed to explore the various ways that Apollo is characterized and how he affects the story of the Iliad. I did this first by exploring the other major gods of the epic, and tried to demonstrate how their actions highlight many of Apollo’s characteristics. Zeus’ connection with fate and his disdain for being challenged informs Apollo’s actions in the epic. Apollo is portrayed as an obedient son of Zeus who carries out his will. Hera’s absolute hatred for the Trojans contrasts with Apollo’s concern for fated events and compassion toward the Trojans. Poseidon’s personal history in building the Trojan walls directly involves Apollo and influences how they interact. Athena’s motivations are entirely selfish, whereas Apollo’s motivation is to ensure that fated events happen as they should. Finally, Ares and Xanthus demonstrate the dangers of violating the boundary between mortal and immortal. The consequences are shown when Ares appears to be weak and ineffective, and when Xanthus nearly kills the rampaging Achilles. All of these gods have their own autonomy and personalities, and they do not serve only to contrast or emphasize Apollo. But it is necessary to analyze those functions that do emphasize Apollo’s actions, so as not to analyze Apollo in isolation.

I then explored the first half of the Iliad, showing that Apollo demonstrates a consistent concern for appropriate interaction between mortal and immortal. He appoints himself to be a guardian of this interaction, and violations of it make him angry. His wrath is also shown to be a driving force of the story of the epic, as it is effectively what catalyzes Achilles’ own wrath. Apollo’s and Achilles’ wrath are reflections of each other, but Apollo’s ultimate concern for compassion and propriety set him at odds with the hero.
In the second half of the epic, Apollo is shown to be an agent of fate and Zeus’ will. Apollo’s ultimate concern is to follow fated events of the story, and prevent changes in the story. He demonstrates this by preventing the walls of Troy from falling, as well as taking an active role in the death of Patroclus. The ultimate expression of his being an agent of fate is the when Apollo does not hesitate to abandon Hector when Zeus determines it is time for him to die. Despite his fondness for the Trojans, Apollo will preserve fate and does not disobey his father. In addition, the second half of the epic continues to demonstrate Apollo’s concern for the appropriate interaction between mortals and immortals. When characters act inappropriately, Apollo takes drastic actions against them. Achilles’ rampage forces Apollo to attempt to slow him down by sending Aeneas after him, which places fated events at risk. In addition, his speech to the gods concerning the treatment of Hector’s body demonstrates his disdain for Achilles’ actions.

Apollo’s actions are complex, and he proves to be a powerful presence throughout the epic. His words and deeds show him to be one of the major driving forces of the story. I believe I have shown that the gods can be analyzed as characters. It is a source of curiosity to me whether there is some relation to Apollo’s character in the epic and his cultic representations. Perhaps this will be a topic of research in the future. But in the text of the *Iliad*, I have illuminated his role in maintaining the expected outcome of the story.

Works Cited


