

In the *Homeric Hymn* to Demeter, Zeus twice attempts through mediators to convince Demeter to return to Olympus. It is only after Demeter is reunited with her daughter and realizes that she has to share her with Hades, that she is willing to accept a compromise. At this time a third representative of Zeus appears, Rheia, Demeter's mother, to convey the details of the final agreement with Zeus.

Scholars (H. Foley 1994, 91 ff.; C.A. Sowa 1984, 95-6; M.L.Lord 1967, 247-8) have noticed the similarities between this part of the Hymn and the embassy to Achilles in the *Iliad*. Particularly Foley makes the argument that Demeter experiences a mortal situation similar to that of Achilles, and she concludes that the Hymn brings the divine and the mortal worlds closer. Although such parallels offer a significant aid to understanding the poem, it also seems necessary to focus the discussion within the Hymn itself and examine how this particular scene -namely the visits by the mediators- shapes the presentation of the goddess. In particular I will explore how the poet employs the scheme "*da ut dem*" as a narrative tool that reveals Demeter's qualities and makes her praiseworthy. Seen in this light, the reconciliation attempts in the Hymn differ significantly from those in the *Iliad*.

During the negotiation process we witness an escalation, in respect to both the importance of Zeus' messengers, climaxing in the closest person to Demeter, Rheia, and the actual terms of the proposed agreement. At the beginning, Zeus, through Iris, employs his superiority in rank and demands the return of Demeter without making any offer that responds to the goddess' needs. At this stage he is engaged in what can be seen as negative reciprocity. Then through the mediation of all the gods a balanced exchange is attempted that involves the bestowal of benefits for both parties: honors and gifts for Demeter, restoration of the divine and world order for Zeus. This attempt however is again unsuccessful due to Zeus' failure to satisfy Demeter's terms, namely the return of Persephone. After the goddess states her request - unlike Achilles who is unwilling to be reconciled under any circumstances - Zeus is compliant and fulfills her wish. The two gods finally negotiate successfully after Demeter realizes that due to Persephone's consumption of a pomegranate seed, there is a need for a compromise. Thus the third and last mediator comes after Demeter's reunion with Persephone, that is, after Demeter accepts the fact that the situation is irreversible and she has no other choice but to submit.

It can be suggested then that Demeter is to be praised for the way she deals with this exchange process. She has proved that she values honor and gifts less than her daughter's return. Her perseverance in front of Zeus who like Agamemnon is superior in rank but in need of the other party's compliance, leads Demeter to at least partial possession of her daughter. Most importantly, through this reciprocity she reaches a high level of maturity just as Achilles does, though not during the negotiation attempts by the embassy but in a later scene, when he meets with Priam. Both Demeter and Achilles understand that they have to restrain their anger but also that they must compromise. However, unlike the embassy to Achilles that entails a failed exchange altogether, the Hymn offers the lesson of a positive model of reciprocity. In addition, the mediators highlight the transformation of Demeter, who abandons the raw emotion that led to withdrawal, and assumes a mature and civilized approach toward her conflict with Zeus.