

Abstract: The kitharodic performances of Hermes in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* (ll. 30-51 and 418-33) reflect the evolution of the proemial genre: the god passes from a self-contained song of erotic content to a theogonic proem on the birth of the gods, similar to the *Homeric Hymns*. The poet of the *Hymn* thus seems to delineate the history of the proemial genre and reveals that the rhapsodic long hymn was born as an independent genre in imitation of kitharodic erotic *nomoi* on the gods' deed. In the sixth century the *Homeric Hymns* were regarded as a new poetical genre, invented by the rhapsodes in order to imitate the success of the kitharodes; they were modeled on the kitharodic *nomoi* but occasionally served as proems for long epic recitations.

Keywords: Homeric Hymn to Hermes, Kitharody, Homeric Hymns, Rhapsodes, Proems.