TO CHEAT OR NOT TO CHEAT:
POSEIDON'S *ERIS* WITH ATHENA IN THE WEST PEDIMENT
OF THE PARTHENON

For more than 2000 years (from the 430s BC to 1801), visitors of the Acropolis who had passed the Propylaia were faced with an imposing image at the most prominent building of the sanctuary, the Parthenon. Its west pediment, almost 30m wide, presented a composition of more than two dozen marble figures, bigger than life-size. The sculptures were comparatively well preserved when the Marquis de Nointel visited Athens in 1674 (thirteen years before the disastrous explosion during the Venetian siege in 1687) and a Flemish artist in his entourage made a drawing (falsely attributed to Jacques Carrey; fig. 1-2). It documents only minor damage (the head of the female protagonist was missing, as were the horses in the southern half of the pediment).[1] Thanks to this drawing and to intensive research of numerous scholars it was possible to achieve a widely accepted reconstruction of the composition (fig. 3).[2] Since 2009, the New Acropolis Museum presents the sculptures preserved in Athens combined with casts of the pieces kept in the British Museum and elsewhere (fig. 4-5).[3]

1. The issue – Poseidon's *eris* with Athena – and the crucial question: Did the goddess win by cheating?

Pausanias, the only author who explicitly refers to the composition in the pediment, informs us about its theme: *ἡ Ποσειδῶνος πρὸς Ἀθηνᾶν ἐστιν ἔρις ὑπὲρ τῆς γῆς.*[4]

This *eris* is first mentioned by Herodotus:

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[1] Brommer (1963) 115-116 pl. 64; Meyer (2017a) 399-402 fig. 155-156. For the (false) attribution to Carrey, see Meyer (2017b) 119, n. 1.

[2] Berger (1976) 122-128 pl. 29; Berger (1977) 124-134 fig. 3-15 pl. 35-36 fold-out III; Meyer (2017a) 399-400 fig. 157.

[3] Valavanis (2013) 116-117, 148–49 fig. 170, 199-200; Pandermalis, Eleftheratou & Vlassopoulou (2014) 188-189, 210-214 fig. 257; Meyer (2017a) 400-401 fig. 159-164, 166-167.

[4] Paus. 1.24.5 (the front side of the temple showed *Ἀθηνᾶς γένησις*, Athena's birth).

ἔστι ἐν τῇ ἀκροπόλι ταύτῃ Ἐρεχθέος τοῦ γηγενέος λεγομένου εἶναι νηός, ἐν τῷ ἐλαίη τε καὶ θάλασσα ἔνι, τὰ λόγος παρὰ Ἀθηναίων Ποσειδέωνά τε καὶ Ἀθηναίην ἐρίσαντας περὶ τῆς χώρης μαρτύρια θέσθαι.

On that Acropolis there is a shrine[5] of Erechtheus the Earthborn (as he is called), wherein is an olive tree and a salt-pool, which (as the Athenians say) were set there by Poseidon and Athena as tokens for their contention for the land.[6]

From Herodotus we learn that the gods' *eris* is linked to the Acropolis, with visible marks in a section of the sanctuary that was sacred to Erechtheus, but we do not get a narrative.[7]

Later authors offer diverging accounts of a conflict between Poseidon and Athena. The most elaborate is the one given by Apollodorus' *Bibliotheke*:

Cecrops, a son of the soil, with a body compounded of man and serpent, was the first king of Attica, and the country which was formerly called Acte he named Cecropia after himself. In his time, they say, the gods resolved to take possession of cities in which each of them should receive his own peculiar worship. So Poseidon was the first that came to Attica, and with a blow of his trident on the middle of the acropolis, he produced a sea which they now call Erechtheis. After him came Athena, and, having called on Cecrops to witness her act of taking possession, she planted an olive tree, which is still shown in the Pandrosium. But when the two strove for possession of the country, Zeus parted them and appointed arbiters, not, as some have affirmed, Cecrops and Cranaus, nor yet Erysichthon, but the twelve gods. And in accordance with

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[5] For *νηός* in this context see Meyer (2017a) 70 n. 504 fig. 32, 89.

[6] Hdt. 8.55 (Translation: Godley).

[7] Meyer (2017a) 398. Interestingly, Herodotus mentions "the Athenians" as his source, implying that he would not have been able to connect the tree and the *thalassa* with the *eris* by his own knowledge. For the gods' conflict see Parker (1987) 198-204 and most recently: Marx (2011) 33-38; Jubier-Galinier (2012) 271-292; Junker & Strohwald (2012) 79-78; Pala (2012) 109-117; Vollmer (2014) 423-448; Meyer (2017a) 395-415.

their verdict the country was adjudged to Athena, because Cecrops bore witness that she had been the first to plant the olive. Athena, therefore, called the city Athens after herself, and Poseidon in hot anger flooded the Thriasian plain and laid Attica under the sea.[8]

This text implies that the main cult in Attica should actually be Poseidon's because he got there first, but that Athena (who came after him) managed to snatch it from him (sanctioned by the twelve gods). Based on this source (thought to be confirmed by others, see below), some scholars claimed that Athena actually stole the victory from Poseidon.[9] Consequently the pediment – one of the two largest images on the biggest temple for the goddess in her main sanctuary in Attica – would have shown Athena cheating. Athena would have received "the land" (Attica) and the cult of its inhabitants by a ruse. The Athenians would be confronted with an image conveying that they venerated the false divinity, or that they venerated Athena unjustly. Or was the pediment meant to encourage the Athenians to follow the goddess' example and achieve their goals by cheating?

This paper cannot discuss the pediment and its interpretation(s) at length. It concentrates on one specific question: Is the suggested reading (of Apollodorus' text and of the image in the pediment) justified? Is Athena represented as having received the land (and the Athenians' worship) by cheating? What do the (literary and visual) sources say about the gods' *eris*, and with which intention(s)?

2. The *eris* as a component of myth-making in Athens: anchoring a new cult constellation

The earliest source for a narrative context of the *eris* is Euripides' *Erechtheus*, performed during a short period of peace after the first decade of the Peloponnesian war (421-415 BC).[10] Unfortunately, the tragedy is preserved only in fragments. In this play,

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[8] Apollod. 3.14.1 (Translation: Frazer).

[9] Palagia (2005) 243; Primavesi (2016) 92. Others imply a case of injustice as they accept priority as a criterion: Simon (1980) 242-43; Parker (1987) 198; cf. n. 80.

[10] Editions: Kannicht (2004) 391-418 no. 24; Collard & Cropp (2008); Sonnino (2010); Primavesi (2016)

a conflict between mortals – the traditional Athenian myth of King Erechtheus’ successful defense of Athens against an attack from Eleusis (“invasion myth”)[11] – is (slightly modified)[12] reinforced by a conflict of interests among immortals (Poseidon and Athena). Eumolpus, Poseidon’s son, leads an army against Athens in order to replace Athena by Poseidon as the city’s tutelary deity. Athens is saved (and Athena’s guardianship maintained) at high costs: All three of the king’s daughters die,[13] and after Erechtheus kills Eumolpus, the furious divine father revenges his son by driving Erechtheus into the rock of the Acropolis.[14] At the end of the play, Athena orders the opponents to be reconciled by being worshiped together.[15]

The joint cult of Poseidon and Erechtheus is attested in Athens by a dedication made ca. 460-450 BC,[16] forty years before Euripides wrote his play. So neither the foundation of this cult nor its *aition* were invented by the poet. As there is no previous

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92-111 (with German translation). For the date, see Collard & Cropp (2008) p. XXXI and 366; most recently: Primavesi (2016) 93, 101-103, 108-109; Meyer (2017a) 377 n. 3023.

[11] Thuc. 2.15.1-2; Eur. Phoen. 852-855; Apollod. 3.15.4; Sch. Eur. Phoen. 854 (Schwartz 1887: 343). For the argument that this was an ancient myth see Meyer (2017a) 377-384, 394-395.

[12] Contrary to Thucydides’ account (see below n. 24), Eumolpus does not lead the Eleusinians, but Thracians. In Euripides’ time (and after the first years of the Peloponnesian war) allusions to inner-Attic warfare were better suppressed. In the *Erechtheus*, the connection to Eleusis seems to be maintained only by Eumolpus’ name. (For the figure of Eumolpus and the link to Eleusis, see Parker (1987) 203-204; Meyer (2017a) 384-388, 394-395).

[13] See Meyer (2017a) 378-384, 394-395 for a discussion of the idea that the salvation of a city depended on a virgin’s death. In an older version of the invasion myth, Aglauros sacrificed herself. In a younger version (of the late 6th century BC, see below n. 32) the king sacrificed his three daughters (Eur. *Ion* 277-278). In the *Erechtheus*, Euripides turned this motif into an appeal for patriotic action: in a moving monologue, queen Praxithea places the *polis* over her child and agrees to have her daughter sacrificed, for the salvation of Athens and of her sisters (Collard & Cropp 2008: F 360, 1-55; F 360a). In line with the logic of tragedy, by this decision she unwillingly triggers the death of all her three daughters (Collard & Cropp 2008: F 370, 65-70). Sonnino (2010) 113-119; Sourvinou-Inwood (2011) 77-87.

[14] Collard & Cropp (2008) F 370, 59-60; Eur. *Ion* 281-282. For a discussion whether Erechtheus was actually killed by Zeus on behalf of Poseidon, see Meyer (2017a) 378 n. 3026; 414.

[15] Collard & Cropp (2008) F 370, 90-95: Erechtheus was to be worshiped by the name of Semnos (“Sublime”) Poseidon. In the 4th century AD, Himerius sees the vicinity of Polias’ temple (the east cella of the Erechtheion) and the temenos “of Poseidon” (the west cella of the Erechtheion where Poseidon and Erechtheus were worshiped, Paus. 1.26.5) as evidence that Athena and Poseidon were “joined” after their quarrel (ἄμιλλα). Him. or. 5.30. Simon (1980) 254-255.

[16] IG I³ 873; inscription on the base of a marble basin, Athens, EM 6319 (now in the Acropolis Museum). Dedication to “Poseidon Erechtheus” by two members of the phyle Erechtheis, one of whom died in 447 (IG I³ 1162, 4-5). Kron (1976) 48-49, 53; Pandermalis, Eleftheratou & Vlassopoulou (2014) 256-257 fig. 315; Meyer (2017a) 244, 396 fig. 313.

testimony for the veneration of Poseidon on the Acropolis or for his inclusion in any of the myths joining the traditional cult recipients of this site (Athena, Erechtheus, Aglauros, Pandrosos, Cecrops)[17] and as the later evidence links his cult exclusively to that of Erechtheus,[18] there is no reason to assume that the god's association with Erechtheus in cult and its *aition*, the link of the invasion myth with the *eris* of the mortal opponents' tutelary deities, were very old.[19] The cult association of Erechtheus with Athena is, on the other hand, attested in the earliest sources.[20]

The combination as such (the gods' *eris* added to an existing myth)[21] is revealed by the observation that the invasion myth is about Athens (with invaders from Eleusis, although Euripides avoided the notion of inter-Attic warfare by making Eumolpus the leader of Thracians),[22] whereas the contest of the gods is "about the land" (Herodotus, Pausanias, see above), that is Attica! The invasion myth must have emerged at a time when a war between Eleusis and Athens was conceivable (regardless of the question whether such a war was ever fought).[23] Tellingly, Thucydides cites the war of "the Eleusinians with Eumolpus against Erechtheus" as the prime example of warfare within Attica at the times before the *synoikismos*.[24] The competition about the main cult in "the land" presupposes a community of worshipers in "the land" – not necessarily in Attica

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[17] For the cults of Poseidon in Athens and Attica see Shapiro (1989) 108-111; Parker (2005) 57-59, 409-410; Simon (2014) 40-44; Meyer (2017a) 303-304. For cults of Erechtheus, Aglauros, Pandrosos, Cecrops see Meyer (2017a) 244-292.

[18] For numerous later sources for the joint cult see Christopoulos (1994) 123-130; Luce (2005) 147-150; Meyer (2017a) 244-256.

[19] Cf. Binder (1984) 21-22 (introduced after 480 BC); Jeffery (1988) 124-126 (ca. 450 BC). *Contra*: Kron (1976) 48-52; Lacore (1983) 227-234; Kron (1988) 924; Luce (2005) 143-164; see also n. 21. Sceptical: Parker (1987) 199-200, 211 n. 55; Shapiro (1989) 102, 105; Pollitt (2000) 225; Tiverios (2005) 315 with n. 110.

[20] Hom. Il. 2.546–51; Hom. Od. 7.81. Meyer (2017a) 313-317.

[21] *Contra*: Sourvinou-Inwood (2011) 57-60, 66-87, 172-175. She distinguishes between an old cult of Poseidon Erechtheus and the (new) cult for Erechtheus called Poseidon (cf. n. 15) and is convinced that Poseidon was part of the invasion myth from the beginning because the priest of Poseidon Erechtheus participated in the Skira, together with the priestess of Athena. Furthermore, the *eris* about Attica would have been anachronistic after Athena had been established as city goddess. See Meyer (2017a) 246-250, 395 for a discussion about the Skira.

[22] See n. 12.

[23] Meyer (2017a) 378, 385-386, 394.

[24] Thuc. 2.15.1-2. Cf. Hdt. 1.30.4-5 (battle between the Athenians and the Eleusinians at a time before Solon).

within the boundaries of Classical times, but beyond the settlement around the Acropolis. The decisive argument for the combination of two distinct traditions is, however, not a (possible) chronological gap between a war fought before and a cult established after the *synoikismos*[25] but the fact that the defense of the city is juxtaposed to a myth said to be about "the land".

The *eris* of the gods, however, is not an established myth of Poseidon and Athena localized in Attica. It turns out to be a *Wandermotiv* (travelling motif) with varying figures and settings, except for one protagonist: Poseidon. The tradition is late, but consistent.[26] There are seven cases known in which Poseidon challenges the principal deity of a location. Most of them are located around the Corinthian and Saronic gulfs, but there is also a conflict about Naxos. Poseidon is always defeated (by Apollo in Delphi, by Helios in Corinth,[27] by Hera in Argos, by Zeus on Aegina, by Athena in Attica and by Dionysos on Naxos), with one exception: the strife (with Athena) for Troizen ends in a tie.[28]

Poseidon's challenge of his peers might not pass as a narrative *strictu sensu;* there is no progress or change in the course of the plot. This *Wandermotiv* characterizes Poseidon as a god of natural forces who threatens divinities that stand for social order and organization.[29] It is about the antagonism of nature and civilization.

When did the motif of challenging Poseidon emerge? We do not know.[30] I would

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[25] As the *synoikismos* probably occurred in phases there might not even have been a chronological gap. Meyer (2017a) 308-311, 397.

[26] With one exception: Simonides of Keos (who died in 468/465 BC) mentions a contest of Hephaistos and Demeter for Sicily, with Aetna as judge (Page 1962: F 552, Simonid. 47; Sch. Theocr. 1.65-66). This is the earliest evidence for the *Wandermotiv*. It cannot be its original version (vastly outnumbered by the cases told for Poseidon – and hardly convincing: Aetna would have supported Hephaistos; Sicily, however, is the island of Demeter). Simonides' version will derive from Poseidon's *eris* with Athena. The poet will have heard about this motif during his stay in Athens (before he went to Sicily after the Persian wars). It provides the earliest clue for the tradition of this motif in Athens. Meyer (2017a) 396-397.

[27] However, Poseidon receives the Isthmos. Paus. 2.1.6. Meyer (2017a) 396-397.

[28] Plut. mor. 741A; Paus. 2.1.6 (Corinth). The defeat in Argos is attested also by Paus. 2.15.5 and Nonn. Dion. 36.127-129. For Troizen see Paus. 2.30.6. Bonnet & Pirenne-Delforge (2013) 206-208, 225. Kalauria passes to Poseidon in exchange for Delos by Apollo (Paus. 10.5.6). Meyer (2017a) 396.

[29] Meyer (2017a) 396-397 (with bibliography). For Poseidon's power and forces see most recently: Simon (2014) 37-44.

[30] In Roman Imperial times the *eris* motif was thought to have originated in Athens. Explicitly: Plut. mor. 489B (the Athenians "constructed" the myth ἀτόπως). The second day of the month Boedromion, the

suggest the period when the institution of the polis emerged, with the necessity to provide for the protection of agreed achievements of civilization against the raw forces of nature, an antagonism embodied by the opposition of civic deities and the god of the sea, the Earth-Shaker.[31]

In Athens, the link of the *eris* motif to the invasion myth and the foundation of the joint cult of Poseidon and Erechtheus occurred, according to my reconstruction, at the time of the Cleisthenic reforms when Erechtheus became one of the Eponymous heroes and his persona was focused on his role as primeval king and defender of Athens[32] (whereas the birth of Athena's foster child was henceforth told for a figure called Erichthonios, obviously derived from Erechtheus but with a different, very specific profile).[33] Towards the end of the 6th century, when Theseus was constructed as a "national hero",[34] his divine father Poseidon, worshiped in Attica for a long time, became associated with the traditional main cult recipients on the Acropolis, Athena and Erechtheus.

In Athens, physical marks in the sanctuary were associated with the gods' *eris*.[35] The olive tree will have been Athena's sacred tree at least since the times the *archaion agalma*, made of olive wood, was venerated in the first modest temple of the goddess.[36] The *thalassa* must have been an artificial installation, given the geology of the rock. I think that a site traditionally associated with Erechtheus was "given" to Poseidon (and

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anniversary of the *eris*, was thought to be a day of misfortune and skipped, Plut. mor. 489B, 741B (Parker 2005: 476-477). Cf. Paus. 2.1.6 (speaking about the *eris* in Corinth, he says: "I think the Athenians were the first .." to tell such a story, in order to praise Attica). These sources prove that the *eris* was established in Athenian cult and myth; they cannot be expected to date its establishment, and they certainly do not prove that the myth was an Athenian creation. Meyer (2017a) 397, 407, 411 n. 3168, 3229, 3274.

[31] Meyer (2017a) 396-397. For destructive actions of Poseidon, see below n. 92.

[32] Meyer (2017a) 379-380, 394, 397, 413–15.

[33] Erichthonios was a cult practitioner, not a cult recipient like Erechtheus. For Erichthonios (and his birth myth), see Meyer (2017a) 362-377, 413-419.

[34] For Theseus see von den Hoff (2010a) 300-315; von den Hoff (2010b) 161-188; Kyrieleis (2012/13) 97-108; Meyer (2017a) 430-431.

[35] Only the *eris* about Attica is associated with *martyria*. The olive tree (and probably also the site that would become the *thalassa*, see n. 37) existed earlier, and this existence will have inspired the connection with the *eris* motif. Kron (1988) 924; Meyer (2017a) 414.

[36] For the olive tree, see Meyer (2017a) 297-299, 406. For the *archaion agalma*, see Meyer (2017a) 147-155; Hölscher (2017) 388-398. For the first temple, see Korres (2008) 20-21; Meyer (2017a) 95-96.

arranged as a cavity with salt water) when his cult was joined to that of Erechtheus.[37]

Both *martyria* communicated characteristics of both deities and provided tangible "proof" that both gods had demonstrated their power on the Acropolis. Athena was the goddess of *techne*, and *techne* was required for the cultivation and exploitation of the olive tree, the backbone of agriculture in Attica.[38] Poseidon as the god of the sea and the Earth-Shaker was capable of producing water (salt water, his element) even on this rock. It has to be stressed that the *martyria* were linked to the respective divine figures in an attributive function. They conveyed the competence of Athena and Poseidon, without reference to their relationship or involvement into a specific narrative.

Let us keep in mind that there are three components that originally were independent and that became linked in Athenian cult and myth:

– the invasion myth (defense of Athens as a traditional tale, a conflict of mortals)

– the motif of Poseidon's challenge (in this case against Athena)

– the *martyria*: physical sites in the sanctuary as testimony of Athena's and Poseidon's powers and their presence.

3. The sculptures in the pediment: visualization of antagonism and reconciliation

The Parthenon pediment, carved twenty years before Euripides' play was performed,[39] presents an excerpt of this myth (which by the time of the construction of the Parthenon had been anchored in cult for two generations): it focuses on the *eris* and omits the

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[37] For the *thalassa* and its (hypothetical) predecessor, see Meyer (2017a) 261-264.

[38] Olive oil was the main agricultural product, used for food, perfume, lighting, prizes at the Panathenaic games. For Attic olive wood, see Hdt. 5.82-84: When the Epidaurians had to procure olive wood for the fabrication of cult statues, as ordered by the oracle, they turned to the Athenians because these had the monopoly at the time (7th century BC). Meyer (2017a) 298, 314-315.

[39] Expenses for these sculptures are listed in the Parthenon accounts of 438/437 to 434/433 BC (the accounts for the year 433/432 BC are lost), see Palagia (1993) 7; Davison (2009) 1121-1144; Marginesu (2010) 32. For the reconstruction and discussion of the sculptures, see above n. 2 and: Simon (1980) 239-255 fig. 1-2, 4; Palagia (1993) 7-17, 40-59, 61 fig. 3-5, 7a, 22, 71-86, 90-96, 98-120; Pollitt (2000) 221-226 fig. 1-2; Palagia (2005) 225-234, 242-253 fig. 77, 80, 89-90; Ellinghaus (2011) 133-140, 278, 284-286, 308-311; Shear (2016) 107-108, 114-117 fig. 27-28; Meyer (2017a) 399-400 n. 3189 (bibliography); Meyer (2017b) 122-125; Meyer (2017c) 181-192; Walter-Karydi, forthcoming (in the Festschrift for Giorgos Despinis, to be published in 2018, erroneously cited in Meyer (2017a) as publication of 2017).

invasion myth.[40]

In the center, the protagonists – Athena wearing the aegis and a helmet, Poseidon naked – are shown in a chiastic pose, close to each other (in fact, slightly overlapping). They lean heavily in opposite directions and turn their heads to look at each other.[41] The gods' conflict is presented as Poseidon's trouble with Athena (in accordance with both Herodotus and Pausanias):[42] Poseidon is clearly marked as the aggressor by stepping into Athena's side of the pediment.[43]

The gods are flanked by chariots whose horses (a team of two for each chariot) rear as they are abruptly stopped by the two female charioteers (Nike and Amphitrite).[44] The seated and crouching figures in the corners, most of them females with children, are the heroes and heroines of Attica, the ancestors of the Athenians.[45] Divine messengers – Hermes in the left and Iris in the right side – bridge the gap between the mortals and the gods.

The *martyria* were included, too. The olive tree (originally of bronze, replaced by a marble sculpture in the Roman Imperial period) stood in the background in the center of the composition,[46] next to Athena's left foot, partly overlapped by Poseidon.[47] Salt

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[40] Later sources for the invasion myth: Meyer (2017a) 381 with n. 3051.

[41] The head of Athena is partly preserved: Brommer (1963) 39-40, 162-163 pl. 97-101, 152; Palagia (1993) 45-46 fig. 92-94. For the turned head of Poseidon, see the drawing of 1674 (above, n. 1, fig.1).

[42] In the text cited above (n. 6), Herodotus mentions the olive tree and then the *thalassa* (as if the *martyria* had caught his attention in this order), but when he refers to the *eris* he names Poseidon first. Pausanias (1.24.5) speaks of Poseidon's *eris* against Athena. Their phrasing suggests that they thought of the *eris* as an affair in Poseidon's interest or of his initiative, not as a contest of equal competitors with open end.

[43] Berger (1976) 124-126 pl. 29; Berger (1977) 127 (the god passes his section by 0.45 m); Simon (1980) 242-244.

[44] For the discussion about the identity of Athena's charioteer, see Meyer (2017a) 401–2.

[45] Figures B and C can be identified as King Cecrops (snake-tailed) with one of his daughters. Pandermalis, Eleftheratou & Vlassopoulou (2014) 214-215 fig. 259. The identities of figures D – F and P – V are disputed (see the overview in Palagia (1993) 61; Pollitt (2000) 221–26). Following a suggestion by Furtwängler, some scholars attribute the groups to Athena and Poseidon, respectively, or to Athens and Eleusis. Simon (1980) 244-245; most recently: Brinkmann (2016) 53, 195 n. 3. Instead of dividing them into parties of winners and losers I prefer to see them as witnesses of Athena's victory (attesting the long tradition and, ultimately, the eternity of her realm in Attica). Meyer (2017a) 401 with n. 3199–3202 (discussion).

[46] Fragments of the trunk (with snake): Brommer (1963) 41, 96-97, 164 no. 4 pl. 102, 152; Palagia (2005) 246; Meyer (2017a) 400 n. 3196.   Reconstruction: Berger (1977) 128-128 fold-out III: in the center (fig. 3). – Beyer (1977) 115-116 Beil 3,2 placed the tree on block 14 of the base (between Poseidon and his horses), Simon (1980) 249-255 fig. 1 and 4 placed it on block 11 (underneath Athena's horses). I do not understand why Athena's shield, fixed to the tympanon above the left side of block 13 and above

water (*thalassa*) was visualized as Poseidon's element by two marine figures, a *ketos* (now lost) between the feet of his charioteer and a sea snake that supported one of his horses.[48] Here again, the *martyria* function as attributes of the gods. There was no physical contact between the marine figures and Poseidon or between the olive tree and Athena.[49] The pediment did not show that or how the gods "set" these *martyria* (Herodotus).

There is no allusion to the invasion myth. Of its protagonists, Erechtheus will have been represented by one of the figures in the corners, but not as a fighter.[50] The composition focuses on the divinity venerated in the temple. Athena is celebrated as the goddess of the *polis* (the Acropolis and the city) where she has "set" the olive tree, and as the goddess of Attica whose heroines and heroes have assembled. The *eris* theme reminded the beholders that the god who had challenged Athena was associated to the cult, and the *martyria* of both divinities, shown in the pediment, reminded them of the two marks that were actually to be seen in the sanctuary, in a precinct where Erechtheus was the main cult recipient.[51]

Poseidon's right foot (left of the center of the pediment), should exclude a position of the olive tree in the center of block 13, behind Poseidon (right of the center of the pediment), as Beyer (2016) 33-35 n. 6 fig. 1b claims. There is a quadrangular cavity in the rear part of block 13 (see Beyer (1977) 114 fig. 7; Simon (1980) 251 fig. 4) that might be a trace of the tree.

[47] Two later Attic vases with the representations of the *eris* (see n. 58, 61) modify the composition in the pediment: the opponents flank the tree. As this is not the case in the pediment (and the tree therefore necessarily pushed into the background) the gods' movements cannot be interpreted as reactions (of surprise and awe) to the creation of their own *martyria*, as suggested by Brommer (1963) 160, followed most recently by Ellinghaus (2011) 137.

[48] *Ketos*: shown in two drawings of 1674: the one attributed to Carrey (see n. 1 fig. 2) and: Brommer (1963) 49-50, 115-116 pl. 65,1. – Sea snake: Brommer (1963) 49-50 pl. 118,2; Palagia (1993) 40, 42, 47-49 fig. 103; Meyer (2017a) 400-401 n. 3197.

[49] Both arms of both figures are broken. Enough is left to be sure that Athena's right arm was extended towards the corner, away from the tree. Poseidon's arms were at some distance to the marine figures. Meyer (2017a) 400, 406.

[50] For the figures in the corners, see above n. 45. For hypothetical identifications of Erechtheus and Eumolpus, see Meyer (2017a) 401 n. 3199–3202.

[51] The olive tree stood in the open air temenos of Pandrosos, adjoining the west wall of the Erechtheion, as attested by Philochoros, FGrHist 328 F 67. The salt water was seen by Pausanias 1.26.5 nearby, inside the west cella of the Erechtheion (hypothetical localization: Meyer (2017a) 57-59 fig. 54-56). For the situation before the Erechtheion was built see the reconstruction of the site by A. Papanikolaou: Meyer (2017a) 60-61 fig. 89. For Erechtheus as the main cult recipient in the area where the western part of the Erechtheion was to be built, see Meyer (2017a) 65-70 fig. 31-32.

However, the concentration on Athena is not the only explanation for the omission of the invasion myth. Erechtheus' defense of Athens continued to be a vital element in the explanation and presentation of the cult associations on the Acropolis,[52] and it could serve as a mythical paradigm for historical generals,[53] but it never became a popular subject of visual representations. Instead, another, younger invasion myth was constructed and prominently (and frequently) shown in Athenian images of public and private use: the Attic amazonomachy. This new version of a fight against amazons emerged after the Persian wars, as an obvious mythical paradigm for the defense against the Persians. In this version of the myth, the amazons invade Attica and besiege the Acropolis. The Athenians, led by Theseus, manage to beat them.[54] The new images of the fight against amazons, accordingly, show this event as a battle of armies, with countless combatants on either side.[55] It is this new invasion myth, the Attic amazonomachy, that is represented right underneath the pediment, in the 14 west metopes of the Parthenon.[56]

The combination of all three components of the myth – the invasion myth, the *eris* and the *martyria* – is only attested by Herodotus (who mentions the location of the *martyria* in Erechtheus' precinct), by Euripides' *Erechtheus,*[57] and by an Athenian hydria of ca. 400 BC found in Pella (it shows a composition of the *eris* that varies the one in the Parthenon and, in an upper zone, a scene of two attacking warriors).[58] There

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[52] Erechtheus' grave (the spot where he was driven into the rock by Poseidon) was integrated into the Erechtheion, see Kron (1976) 43-48; Meyer (2017a) 56-59 fig. 46-49, 54-56, 61-78.

[53] The monument erected on the Acropolis in honor of the strategos Tolmides (died in 447/446 BC) comprised bronze statues of Erechtheus and Eumolpus διεστῶτες ἐς μάχην, (having taken position for fighting). Paus. 1.27.4. Meyer (2017a) 398-399 with n. 3180. Korres (1994) 86–87, 124 MB 10, 10´ fig. 41 identified the base, followed by Tiverios (2005) 305, 317-318; Tiverios (2016) 143-151 fig. 1. *Contra*: Brinkmann (2016) 112-125, 163 cat. 35 fig. 75-96 (hypothetical identification with the bronze statues found in Riace). The sculptor Myron made a statue of Erechtheus, too: Paus. 9.30.1.

[54] Earliest literary evidence: Aischyl. *Eum.* 685-690 (458 BC); Meyer (2017a) 198 n. 1578. Earliest images: Theseion (Paus. 1.17.2) and Stoa Poikile (Paus. 1.15.2): Di Cesare (2015) 99-101, 184.

[55] Images of the Attic amazonomachy: Muth (2008) 375-393 fig. 267-74.

[56] Berger (1986) 99-107 pl. 1, 113-139; Meyer (2017a) 107 fig. 157, 165.

[57] The *martyria* are alluded to in Praxithea's speech (Collard & Cropp (2008) F 360, 43-49): It must be prevented that Eumolpus replaces the olive tree (and the golden Gorgo) by the trident.

[58] Pella, Arch. Mus. 80/514. Drougou (2000) 147-216 pl. 30-39, color pl. I–IV; Drougou (2004) 6-31 fig. 1-18; Tiverios (2005) 299-319 fig. 1-10; most recently: Neils (2013) 595-613 fig. 1-9; Simon (2014) 47 fig. 17; Tiverios (2016) 143-152 fig. 2-6; Meyer (2017a) 399, 402-403, 406 (bibliography) fig. 384-392. – Eumolpus in scenes of the *eris*, but not in confrontation with Erechtheus: 1. Attic lekanis lid, Athens,

are only two later authors, Isocrates and Hyginus (dependent on Euripides) and two scholiasts who connect the invasion myth with the *eris*.[59]

4. Poseidon's *eris* with Athena after ca. 400 BC: in search of a narrative

The Pella hydria is the latest visual representation of the encounter of Erechtheus and Eumolpus. Images of Poseidon's *eris* with Athena are rare[60] despite the prominent realization of this theme at the Parthenon. In addition to the Pella hydria there is only one image that repeats the composition of the pediment, a mid-4th century Attic hydria in St. Petersburg.[61] Some images present the *eris* as a quiet vis-à-vis of both deities.[62]

There are, however, numerous literary sources for Poseidon's *eris* with Athena, ranging from the 4th century BC to Byzantine times.[63] The diversity of their versions leave the reader puzzled. A reason for the *eris* is rarely given. In Euripides' *Erechtheus*, Poseidon's son Eumolpus intends to establish his father as main divinity of Athens, instead of Athena. Apollodorus confirms that the *eris* was about *timai* (honors, that is: cult).[64] According to some authors the quarrel was about the right to be the *eponymos* of

NM Acr. 594 (ca. 400 BC; Eumolpus behind Poseidon): Tiverios (2009) 163-170 fig. 3-4 drawing 1; Marx (2011) 35 pl. 7,2-3; Meyer (2017a) 405 fig. 396-399. – 2. Lucanian pelike, Policoro 35304 (420/410 BC; Poseidon and Eumolpus, both on horseback, face Athena in a chariot): Simon (1980) 246-249, 252-253 pl. 51,2; Tiverios (2005) 304-305; Simon (2014) 47-48 fig. 18a-b; Meyer (2017a) 399 fig. 379-380.

[59] See below, with n. 90 for the scholia.

[60] Most recently: Tiverios (2005) 299-319 (images outside Attica: 315 n. 110); Marx 2011: 33-38; Pala (2012) 109-112; Meyer (2017a) 399-406.

[61] St. Petersburg, Hermitage P 1972.130. Tiverios (2005) 301-302, 307, 312, 316, 319 fig. 11; Marx (2011) 33-36 pl. 6,1-2; Jubier-Galinier (2012) 275-281 fig. 2; Brinkmann (2013) 243, 246, 334 no. 47 fig. 268; Meyer (2017a) 404-406 (bibliography) fig. 381-383.

[62] Lekanis lid Athens, NM Acr. 594 (see n. 58) and Meyer (2017a) 405 fig. 394-395.

[63] Xen. mem. 3.5.10; Plat. Menex. 237c-d; Isocr. or. 12.193 (panathen.); Call. iamb. 4.66–-1; Call. Hec. F 260, 24-26; Dion. Hal. *ant.* 14.2.1; Hyg. *fab.* 46, 164; Ov. *met.* 6.70-82; Plin. *nat.* 16.89.240; Apollod. 3.14.1; Plut. *Them.* 19.3; Plut. *mor.* 489B, 741B; Paus. 1.24,3; 1.26.5; 1.27.2; Aristeid. 1.40–45 (panathen. ed. Lenz & Behr); Sch. Aristeid. 1.40 (Dindorf 1829: 58, 24-27 ad 106.11); Him. or. 5.30, 6.7; 21.2; Lact. Comm. Stat. *Theb.* 12.632–34; Varro de gente p. R. fr 17 (fr. 222 ed. Salvadore 1999) *apud* Aug. civ. 18.9; Sch. Eur. *Phoen.* 854 (ed. Schwartz 1887). – Simon (1980) 239-245; Palagia (1993) 40 n. 1-9; Pollitt (2000) 222-226; Tiverios (2005) 300-303, 315 n. 8, 30, 110; Meyer (2017a) 407-415 n. 3229-3283. For the various terms for the *eris* see Meyer (2017a) 407 n. 3230.

[64] Apollod. 3.14.1.

the city.[65] Others assert that it was about priority – to be the first to take possession of Attica,[66] the first to found a city there,[67] the first to show something.[68]

The accounts are so divergent, vague and contradictory that I arrived at the conclusion that there never was a consistent, coherent narrative but just the elements that Herodotus mentions and that the representation in the Parthenon pediment concentrates on: Poseidon's challenge and the *martyria* that illustrated the – opposite – character and competence of both divinities.[69] Later authors, apparently, had a hard time to understand the *martyria*'s attributive function. Although the composition in the Parthenon pediment clearly showed the tree and the marine figures in the vicinity of the gods, but not in physical contact with them (thus marking their respective powers and their habitat, but not their actions), various authors tried to integrate the *martyria* into their narrative – and ended up with unconvincing or contradictory versions.

The text in Apollodorus' *Bibliotheke* (3.14.1) is a case in point. The account, quoted above in translation, does not make sense as it aligns two different concepts of being πρῶτος. The word πρῶτος can be used in an absolute and in a relative sense.

In the absolute sense it can refer to the virtue and honor of being the first one to invent or achieve something. This is the common notion of the πρῶτος εὑρετής. The πρῶτος εὑρετής never competes with another person for finding. (S)he is honored for her/his achievements, not for winning.[70] Athena was not the first one to plant an olive tree as opposed to other gods who might have done that later, she was the only divinity ever to do so because inventing items that contributed to civilization (and later teaching the mortals to make use of them) was her special profile.

In the relative sense, πρῶτος is the first among others. Apollodorus uses πρῶτος in this sense when he says that Poseidon arrived πρῶτος in Attica. And he insists on this meaning of πρῶτος, saying about Athena that she came after him. The text thus implies

[65] The most elaborate source is Varro (see n. 63). Meyer (2017a) 407, 409-412 n. 3232, 3255, 3264, 3267. — Others: Ov. *met.* 6.71; Aristeid. 1.43 (panathen., ed. Lenz & Behr); Him. or. 6.7.

[66] Isocr. or. 12.193 (panathen.); Apollod. 3.14.1.

[67] Hygin. *fab*. 164.

[68] Sch. Aristeid. 1.40.

[69] Meyer (2017a) 406-413; Meyer (2017b) 126-127; Meyer (2017c) 186-192.

[70] For the notion of the πρῶτος εὑρετής see most recently: Junker & Strohwald (2012) *passim*.

that the criterion for the right of establishing one's own cult was priority of arrival, that the competition was about time and speed.

Apollodorus' text, if read without consideration of additional sources, could be taken as a report about a competition of being the fastest to get to Attica in order to claim possession of it. With priority of arrival as criterion, the winner would be Poseidon (and he manifested his arrival by producing the salt spring, still in existent "now" according to Apollodorus). However, this is contradicted by the following statement that the land was given to Athena because she was the first to plant the olive tree (not the first to arrive). In this case, Athena's invention is the criterion, and the fact that the goddess had procured a witness can hardly be taken as an attempt of deception. Or did the author intend to blame the "twelve gods" (another inconsistency of the text)[71] for having taken the wrong decision, based on Cecrops' (truthful and indisputable) statement about the goddess' gift? Were they wrong in their appreciation of Athena's "invention", should they instead have voted for Poseidon because he had arrived first?

The text neither insinuates that Athena bribed a witness or stole the victory nor that anybody took an unjustified decision. It juxtaposes two uses of πρῶτος that are incompatible. A πρῶτος εὑρετής cannot beat (or be beaten by) a person who is πρῶτος in arrival. Poseidon's achievement might be questioned (Athena – or anybody – could have arrived before Poseidon did), Athena's achievement goes undisputed (she is the only one to plant an olive tree; Poseidon is certainly never expected to do so). The *Bibliotheke* complies traditions that defy their combination.

Athena as πρῶτος εὑρετής of the olive tree is well attested. Callimachus explicitly states that the goddess "found" the tree "when she contended for Attica with the See-weed Dweller".[72] Ten more authors assert that Athena planted, produced, showed, made appear or gave the olive tree when she was challenged by Poseidon.[73] The

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[71] The twelve Olympian gods would include the opponents and Zeus. The involvement of the twelve gods is, however, found in Callim. Hec. F 260, 24-26 (Hollis 2009: F 70, 9-11) and repeated by Ov. *met*. 6.72-82.

[72] Callim. *iamb*. 4.66-68, 71 (Translation: Goold).

[73] Dion. Hal. *ant*. 14.2.1; Apollod. 3.14.1; Hyg. *fab*. 164; Paus. 1.24.3; Ov. *met*. 6.81–82; Plut. *Them*. 19.3; Aristeid. 1.41 (panathen., ed. Lenz & Behr); Sch. Aristeid. 1.41 (Dindorf 1829, 60, 5-6 *ad* 106,15); Plin. *nat*. 16.89.240; Lact. Comm. Stat. *Theb*. 12.632-634. Syncellus, Ecl. *chron*. 179 (ed. Mosshammer)

goddess is also credited with the olive in texts that make no allusion to this god (and the *eris*).[74] However, the common connection of her "creation" or "donation" with the conflict is telling. It reflects, I would claim, the strong link of the tree to the *eris* that had been established in Athens, both in myth (the living olive tree in the sanctuary was said to have been set by the goddess at that occasion, attested by Herodotus) and in image (the olive tree was prominently shown next to the goddess in the prime visual reference to the *eris*, in the Parthenon pediment).

As the olive tree serves both as a praise of Athena's competence and as a tangible link of the goddess to the Athenians (who profit from this gift), it might serve as a reason for Athena's victory over Poseidon. Six authors (and a scholiast) actually say that Athena won because of the tree.[75]

The *thalassa* worked well as Poseidon's attribute, but it did not work as part of the narrative. Unlike the olive tree it was not a gift (in fact, it was of no advantage for anybody) and could therefore not compete with the olive (and not be blamed for the god's defeat). Consequently, it is mentioned only rarely.[76] When late authors attempted to integrate the *thalassa* into the narrative and presented the olive tree and "the wave" as means of competition,[77] scholiasts tried to add a touch of plausibility by suggesting that the gods competed about being the first to show something.[78] Roman authors

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says that in the reign of Cecrops the olive "grew" for the first time on the Acropolis, but he does not connect it to the *krisis* of Poseidon and Athena (that he also mentions).

[74] Without any context to the *eris*: Eur. *Tro.* 801-803; Eur. *Ion* 1433-1436; cf. Diod. 5.73.7. Junker & Strohwald (2012) 6-7.

[75] Apollod. 3.14.1; Hyg. *fab.* 164; Ov. *met.* 6.78–82; Plut. *Them.* 19.3; Aristeid. 1.41-43 (panathen., ed. Lenz & Behr); Sch. Aristeid. 1.41 (Dindorf 1829: 60, 5-6 *ad* 106,15); Him. or. 6.7; 21.2.

[76] Apollod. 3.14.1; Paus. 1.24.3, 1.26.5; Aristeid. 1.41 (panathen., ed. Lenz & Behr). Meyer (2017a) 409.

[77] Aristeid. 1.41-42 (panathen., ed. Lenz & Behr; tellingly, in this case Poseidon's "wave", described as his *symbolon*, symbolizes something useful: victory in sea battles); Him. or. 6.7; 21.1-2. – Ov. *met.* 6.72-82 parallels both "production" processes, Poseidon's *fretum* and Athena's olive. – In Varro *de gente p. R.* fr. 17 (fr. 222 ed. Salvadore 1999) *apud* Aug. civ. 18.9, there is no competition at all: the *prodigia* appear (without the gods' involvement or presence), and, after having consulted the oracle in Delphi, Cecrops summons the male and female Athenians in order to vote about the name of the city (Athena wins because of the women's vote).

[78] Sch. Aristeid. 1.40 (panath., ed. Lenz & Behr; Dindorf (1829) 58, 24-27 *ad* 106,11); cf. Sch. Aristeid. 1.41 (Dindorf 1829: 60, 5-6 *ad* 106,15): Athena was the first to show the olive tree. Meyer (2017a) 409, 411.

replace the *thalassa* by a horse, providing the god with a useful item that could correspond to the olive tree.[79]

5. The Parthenon pediment as inspiration?

It remains to be asked: How could the idea arise that the gods competed for priority?

It was suggested that this idea was already visualized in the west pediment (fig. 1-5) where the *eris* would be presented as a race.[80] As Poseidon arrived first, in this reading Athena would be the cheater.

The composition of the pediment, however, does not agree with this reading. Should the beholder assume that both protagonists had jumped from their chariots when these had been running at full speed (shown in the process of being stopped), in order to – do what? Attack each other? Pass each other running (Poseidon's right leg overlaps Athena's left leg)?[81] Would Poseidon be shown as the winner because he was "ahead" of Athena, having entered into the left part of the pediment? As argued above (and elsewhere), the composition of the pediment does not illustrate a situation that a witness of the encounter might have observed. Instead, it visualizes the antagonism of the opponents (movement towards each other, gazing at each other) and the end of it (leaning in opposite directions). The gods' strife is solved, they shy away from each other, either because Zeus sends his thunderbolt or because they become aware of his invisible presence.[82] The chariots are appropriate means of transport for the gods (not

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[79] Lact. Comm. Stat. *Theb*. 12.632-34: Poseidon gave a horse as *indicium belli*, Athena the olive as *pacis insigne*. Cf. Verg. georg. 1.12-14 (without the *eris* as context; Poseidon produces the horse by hitting the rock, an obvious derivation of the tale about the origin of the *thalassa*). Meyer (2017a) 409.

[80] Binder (1984) 15-22; Stewart (1990) 153-154; Palagia (1993) 40; Shear (2001) 735-738; Palagia (2005) 243-253; Schultz (2007) 66-69 fig. 9; Shear (2016) 115-117. – Pollitt (2000) 221-226 and Barringer (2008) 66 mention it as one version of the myth.

[81] Cf. Brommer (1963) 160; Pollitt (2000) 223. Ellinghaus (2011) 134-137 fig. 48, 66, 202-204 lists slightly older compositions of two fighters in similar chiastic positions. However, the conflict of Poseidon with Athena was not of the kind that would be solved by violence. Both gods were opponents, but not in the military sense. The composition does not follow the iconography of quarrel (of two persons), either, see Meyer (2017b) 122 (examples of the 6th and 5th centuries BC). – Tiverios (2005) 300-301 thinks that on the Pella hydria (n. 58) Athena directs her spear against Poseidon's trident that is about to destroy the olive tree. *Contra*: Meyer (2017a) 402-403.

[82] Meyer (2017a) 400, 402 fig. 158; Meyer (2017b) 122-127; Meyer (2017c) 182-192. Simon (1980) 245-255 fig. 1 reconstructed a thunderbolt between the gods' heads. The Pella hydria (n. 58) provides a

only for those who are Hippia and Hippios), implying their epiphany.[83] Racing towards the center and halted, the chariots turn out to be a visual strategy in order to underline both the gods' movement towards each other and their sudden separation.[84] The position of the rearing horses that are suddenly stopped repeats and reinforces the gods' movements (towards each other, away from each other).

I suggest not to use Apollodorus in order to interpret the pediment, but the pediment in order to interpret later authors.

Of the many authors who wrote about the *eris* of Poseidon and Athena, there are only two more who stated that priority mattered: Isocrates and Hyginus.[85]

Isocrates is the earliest source to mention this criterion. In his Panathenaic oration (342 BC), Eumolpus justified his attack on Athens and his alleged right to rule the city by pretending that his father Poseidon had taken possession of Athens before Athena had.[86] Isocrates' version of the myth is derived from Euripides' play *Erechtheus* (as in this play, Eumolpus leads an army of Thracians, not Eleusinians).[87] I suggest that the

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parallel but does not prove that the pediment actually showed the thunderbolt (the image on the vase adopts certain elements of the pediment and diverges in others; the olive tree is the center of the composition). Walter-Karydi (see n. 39) argues that Zeus would never threaten an Olympian god in this way. – Zeus' role as judge in the *eris* is an innovation, first attested by Euripides' *Erechtheus* (Collard & Cropp 2008: F 370, 99-100: at the end of the play Athena announces what "Zeus Father in Heaven" decided as *dikastes*). The motif might have been inspired by the Parthenon. Simonides' version (Aetna as judge in the quarrel about Sicily, see n. 26) suggests the tradition of a local figure as judge. For Poseidon's *eris* with Athena, Cecrops is attested in this role by sources of the 4th century BC and later: Xen. mem. 3.5.10; Callim. iamb. 4.67-69; cf. Nonn. Dion. 36.126. He will have been the original judge (and the prototype for Aetna in this role). Some (literary and visual) sources give him a role as witness, see Meyer (2017a) 410. Judges mentioned in later sources: Zeus (Hyg. *fab*. 164); Zeus and the twelve gods (Callim. Hec. F 260, 24-26; Hollis (2009) F 70, 9-11); the twelve gods appointed by Zeus (Apollod. 3.14.1); the twelve gods (Ov. *met*. 6.70-82); anonymous judges (Plut. *Them*. 19.3); the Athenians (Xen. *mem*. 3.5.10 [with Cecrops]; Aristeid. 1.41-43 [panathen., ed. Lenz & Behr]; Him. or. 6.7; Varro, see n. 77). – Pollitt (2000) 224-226; Meyer (2017a) 397, 410-411 with n. 3174.

[83] For example, Apollo in the pediment of his late Archaic temple in Delphi: Osborne (2009) 6-9, 12 fig. 1, 11; Kyrieleis (2012/13) 106; Meyer (2017a) 89-90, 401-402. Cf. Walter-Karydi (2015) 167-168. For Poseidon Hippios see Bakchyl. 17.99-100. Tiverios (2005) 302, 312-313; Simon (2014) 39, 44; Meyer (2017a) 404, 409 (bibliography). He was worshiped (with Athena Hippia) on the Kolonos Hippios near the Academy, see Greco (2014) 1516-1519 (Marchiandi); Meyer (2017a) 303 with n. 2443.

[84] Schneider & Höcker (2001) 143; Meyer (2017a) 402.

[85] And the scholiast to Aristeid. 1.40 (panathen., ed. Lenz & Behr; Dindorf (1829) 58, 24-27 *ad* 106,11) who tried to make sense of Aristeides' notion of a competition of the wave and the oil twig and suggested that the victory depended on being the first one to show something, see n. 78.

[86] Isocr. *or*. 12. 193 (panathen.). Primavesi (2016) 93; Meyer (2017a) 408.

[87] For Euripides as source for Isocrates see Roth (2003) 212. Primavesi (2016) 93 points out that Isocrates

idea of first arrival was also taken from this play.

Due to the fragmentary state of the tragedy it remains open whose initiative the attack (and its justification) was: was it Eumolpus' (who was introduced by his father Poseidon in the prologue, but might have acted in his own interests)? Was it Poseidon's, as in the cases when there was a conflict only among immortals?[88] I suggest it was Euripides' idea to have Eumolpus claim his father's first arrival as a justification for his attempt to install Poseidon as main god. It would thus be the pretentious statement of a mortal, not of the god himself, and it would thus ingeniously convey that this boastful claim was a case of *hybris* and therefore bound to fail.[89] How could it have convinced in Athens, Athena's city?

The hypothesis that it was Euripides' idea to introduce first arrival as a criterion for the gods' competition (albeit as the claim of a mortal intruder) is confirmed by the observation that the only author to repeat it (besides Isocrates and Apollodorus), Hyginus, is also the only one (with Isocrates and scholia that obviously used Euripides' text)[90] who connects the invasion myth with the *eris*.[91] Hyginus' account depends either on Isocrates or on their common source.

However, even if the claim is voiced by a mortal, not by the god himself, in a city where Athena was well established as the city goddess and where it was widely known

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might have witnessed the performance of the *Erechtheus* in ca. 420/415 BC.

[88] According to Primavesi, the format of the tragedy requires the god's explicit claim, as the driving motive for the actions taken (and their consequences suffered) by the mortals. He thinks that Eumolpus' pretense would not suffice (oral communication in May 2016). Poseidon opens the play with his prologue and speaks about his son, but whether he claimed to have been cheated and dispossessed by Athena (as Primavesi 2016: 94-96 thinks) is open to speculation. For my assessment of the play, see Meyer (2017a) 380-381, 415.

[89] Meyer (2017a) 408.

[90] Sch. Eur. Phoen. 854 (Schwartz 1887: 343): Poseidon sent his son Eumolpus (king of Thracians) against the Athenians when he had the *eris* with Athena about Attica because of the olive tree. – Sch. Aristeid. 1.87 (panathen., ed. Lenz & Behr; Dindorf (1829) 109, 31-34; 110, 1-11 *ad* 118,10): Eumolpus is a king of Thrace, the child of Poseidon and Chione (a genealogy that can be concluded for the prologue of Euripides' *Erechtheus*, see Primavesi 2016: 94). His war is paralleled with Poseidon's *krisis* with Athena about the *polis*. Cf. Dindorf (1829) 110, 22-31 *ad* 118,10: This Eumolpus attacked Attica, his *patroos ktema*.

[91] Hygin. *fab*. 46 (Eumolpus attacks *quod patris sui terram Atticam fuisse diceret*). In Hygin. *fab*. 164 the gods compete about the right to be the first to found a city in Attica. Athena wins because she is the first to plant an olive tree. In *fab*. 164, Hyginus is the only author to follow Euripides in naming Zeus as judge of the *eris*, see above n. 82. Meyer (2017a) 408-409, 413.

that she had given the olive tree, how could the idea emerge that Poseidon might have come to Athens first, ahead of Athena, and might have taken possession of the city?

To be the first one, to arrive somewhere first, means to be faster than others. It is the basic idea of athletic or hippic *agones*. *Agones*, however, imply the idea of open competitions, with winners who might lose the next *agones* and losers who might be future winners. The *eris* was not an *agon*. It was not to be repeated, with a new chance for victory. The *eris* was about a decision, with a one-time winner and loser (and the loser's furious reactions are mentioned in some sources).[92] When Euripides (as I suggest) introduced the criterion of priority into the *eris* of the gods (the first one to have taken possession), he transferred an element of athletic and hippic competition among mortals (the idea of victory because of first arrival) into the sphere of gods. This might have been the poet's strategy to mark Eumolpus' reasoning as rooted in the world of mortals: Just as a runner who is the first to reach the goal is entitled to victory, Poseidon has the right to be worshiped in Athens because he was the first to have taken possession of it.

In introducing priority – an idea of athletic and hippic competition – as a claim for the possession of the city, Euripides was (I suggest) inspired by the Parthenon pediment, although this image did not show the gods racing. As argued above, the chariots have a function as elements of a strategy to visualize the gods' antagonism. However, the existence – and visual prominence – of the chariots in full speed might have led to the idea of a competition of speed, of a race.[93] It has already been suggested by various scholars that Euripides was occasionally inspired by visual sources;[94] he even mentioned them as a reference.[95]

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[92] Eur. *Erechtheus* (Collard & Cropp 2008: F 370, 45-62; Poseidon provokes an earthquake and threatens to distroy the Royal palace). In Varro (see n. 77) and Apollod. 3.14.1 he floods the Thriasian plain and Attica; in Hyg. *fab.* 164 he is refrained from doing so by Zeus. After his defeat in Argos he creates a draught and a flood: Paus. 2.15.5. – Parker (1987) 199; Meyer (2017a) 396, 411-412 n. 3165.

[93] Meyer (2017a) 411-413.

[94] Simon (1980) 252-253; Spaeth (1991) 342 n. 67; Harrison (2000) 284-285 n. 61; Stieber (2011) 138-139, 281. – Zeus as the *dikastes* of the *eris* in the *Erechtheus* (see above n. 82) is, I think, likewise inspired by the composition of the pediment, where Athena and Poseidon suddenly shy away from each other (see above n. 41).

[95] Eur. *Ion* 266-272: The tale of the birth of Erichthonios is known to Ion by visual representations, ὥσπερ ἐν γραφῇ νομίζεται (l. 271).

The idea of being "the first" triggered (as the sources discussed above reveal), and it might have promoted the frequent inclusion of Athena's "first finding" (the olive tree) in the tales of the *eris*. Both concepts (arriving first and being πρῶτος εὑρετής) are juxtaposed in Apollodorus' *Bibliotheke,*[96] making the incompatibility of both concepts apparent.

From the 4th century BC on, the literary sources, with the exception of Isocrates, Hyginus (and two scholiasts)[97] speak only about the *eris*, without allusion to the invasion myth. In that, they are in accordance with the pediment. I wonder whether this is a coincidence – or a clue for the identification of their source. Given the great divergence of narratives, with only the antagonism of Poseidon and Athena plus the *martyria* as core motifs, it seems that the pediment motivated later authors to come up with their own narratives. They might – directly or indirectly – depend on the Parthenon (as two of the few later images of the myth surely did).[98] Remember Herodotus: He needed the Athenians to tell him about the connection of the *martyria* with the *eris*. Later writers would have had the image in the pediment to "tell" them about the *eris.*[99]

6. Conclusion

No, Athena was not presented as cheater – neither in any of the literary sources nor in the pediment of the Parthenon. The *eris* of Poseidon and Athena was about cult and veneration: was nature or civilization to prevail in Attica? It was not about whether he or she had arrived there first. The motif of the *eris* was a characterization of Poseidon, a feature of his behavior, a description of what was to be expected from a god like that, a challenge of natural forces that civilization might experience. Athena's victory did not humble Poseidon. It explained the lasting existence of Athens as a civilized community that enjoyed the many gifts of the goddess. The pediment did not remind of a stolen

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[96] See above, and cf. Hygin. *fab*. 164 (see n. 91). Meyer (2017a) 409.

[97] See above with n. 90-91.

[98] See above n. 58 and 61 for the Pella and St. Petersburg hydriai.

[99] Meyer (2017a) 411-413. Varro's idea that the male and female Athenians were summoned to decide about the name of the city (see n. 77) might have been inspired by the mixed groups of males and females in the corners of the pediment. For Ov. *met*. 6.70-82, see Meyer (2017a) 409, 413.

victory. It praised Athena as the goddess who had made it possible that Athens had been and continued to be what and how it was. And with this praise the Athenians, of course, praised themselves, too ...

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