Chapter I opened with a sketch of the deep cleft that yawned between the positions of Jean-Pierre Vernant and Walter Burkert. One of the major issues in which their controversy manifested itself concerned the question: is there one Zeus, one Apollo, one Athena or are there many different gods covered by each of these names? In this appendix I propose to discuss the tenets behind this controversy as it took form in a debate between two different protagonists. To my mind no dispute reveals more clearly the core of the aporia. One of the antagonists this time is Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood,\(^1\) who in an earlier publication had averred: “The gods who were worshipped in the different poleis were, of course, perceived to be the same gods.”\(^2\) The other is John D. Mikalson, who once wrote: “To Athenians Athena Polias, Athena Skiras, and Athena Hygieia were separate, for all purposes independent deities.”\(^3\) So far, to the best of my knowledge, the ‘debate’ has not advanced beyond a scathing critique by the first mentioned author on a few characteristic statements of the second.

In order to contest the perception in modern scholarship, and especially in Mikalson’s statement, “that the gods of tragedy are ‘artificial’ literary creations that had little relationship with the gods worshipped by the Athenian polis,”\(^4\) Sourvinou-Inwood singles out some passages of Mikalson’s *Honor thy God: Popular Religion in Greek Tragedy*. Together these passages amount to the thesis that the gods of everyday Greek life were hardly recognizable in the gods of the tragedy and that

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\(^*$\) This appendix aims to present an exemplary illustration of the dilemma as discussed in Ch. I, section “They may but need not” (pp. 77–84) and should preferably be read in that context.

\(^{1}\) Sourvinou-Inwood 1997.

\(^{2}\) See the full quote above Ch. I, n. 145, with my preliminary reaction.

\(^{3}\) Just so Mikalson 1983, 69 ff., on the epithets of Zeus, to be mentioned shortly.

\(^{4}\) The idea has been put forward many times. One for many: “we would be well advised to erect a firm partition between stage and temple/chapel” (Pleket 1981, 177).
the main reason for this distinction is that in everyday religion, the Zeus Ktesios in the little shrine of the private house was not Zeus the Thunderer and that “in tragedy this type of gods, Zeus Ktesios, Zeus Herkeios, Demeter, Athena Hygeia, Asklepios,” very essential for daily religious life, “were not among the major divine actors.” Here, too, one finds the phrase on the differences of the different Athenai, just quoted. Let us briefly review and assess Sourvinou-Inwood’s critical responses to these stray notes in Mikalson’s book and her objections to its general tenor.

A first, preliminary, counter-argument is that Zeus Herkeios, Zeus Ktesios, and Demeter do occur in tragedy. The observation is accurate but misses the point. Certainly these gods do appear in tragedy, as, more often, does (Apollo) Agieus, but not as “major divine actors.” On the contrary, whenever these gods occur this is particularly in those contexts in which their natural role as symbols of the actors’ places of belonging is required. Their task is to enhance the tragic flavour, for

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5 On these and other gods of the house see Parker 2005, 13–20, and above p. 122. On the various Zeuses such as Herkeios and Ktesios in their function of house gods see: H. Sjövall, *Zeus im altgriechischen Hauskult* (Lund 1931). More recently there is the important discussion in Brulé 2005a, who argues *inter alia* (p. 53) that in cases of emigration people used to take along these gods (and Hestia and probably also Apollo Patroios) to their new home. On Zeus Ktesios, who was represented and worshipped in the form of a jar (Athen. 473B–C), but also as a snake, see: D. Jaillard, “Images des dieux et pratiques rituelles dans les maisons grecques. L’exemple de Zeus Ktésios,” *MEFRA* 116 (2004) 871–983; Brulé 2005a, 33–40. M. Strocka, Ein klassischer Hausaltar, *Arch. Anz.* 2006, 1–7, discusses an altar in a private house (late 5th c. BC), dedicated to Aphrodite Ourania and Zeus Herkeios. He compares other known altars, most of them dedicated to Zeus Herkeios and Zeus Ktesios with other gods or goddesses. Most recently there are brief discussions in Faraone 2008, 216 f.; Boedeker 2008, 230–234.

6 I trust that, for my reaction to her views, I am allowed to adopt her own excuse “for such a strategy which may offend against some (culturally determined) preconceptions about what is perceived as (overt) polemic.” Space and time do not allow a discussion of her own interpretations as presented in her paper and especially in her book of 2003, with which I often agree. I also pass over her introductory calls for caution when approaching religion as represented in tragedy: descriptions of ritual may serve the underlying motifs of the tragedy for instance as a reversal of norms. Context must be taken in account. Indeed, these notes should be taken to heart: truisms may be true. On the consequences of context for gods in Euripidean tragedy see: Mastronarde 2002. More interesting is the notion of ‘unknowability’ which in S.’s view is a central category in Greek religion. I could not agree more. Several chapters of the present book are concerned precisely with that. For the further development of S.’s theoretical considerations I refer to Sourvinou-Inwood 2003, 1–66.

7 The only instance mentioned here is that a scene in Euripides’ *Suppliants* takes place in the forecourt of the sanctuary of Eleusis.
instance in scenes of a figure’s departure from, or return to the fatherland\textsuperscript{8} or of the imminent fall of a city, as we have seen in the case of (Apollo) Agieus.\textsuperscript{9} If anywhere in tragedy it is here that we have indisputable—and functional—references to everyday life.

Of the three rapid praeteritiones that then follow, which like all praeteritiones merit particularly careful reading, I single out one, since the other two will be implied in the discussion of the main arguments. “Let us leave aside entirely statements in texts that make clear that each divinity was perceived as one across his or her different cults.” The ‘\textit{ne dicam}’ element of the praeteritio is particularly regrettable since the most viable strategy to support (though not prove) one’s case would exactly consist of citing such statements. Most regrettable, however, because the two instances that S. nonetheless does mention (and which, I guess, may be taken as particularly exemplary), contradict or at least shed doubt on her own thesis.\textsuperscript{10} One is Xen. \textit{Symp.} 8.9, where the speaker, who is in doubt concerning the existence of two different Aproditai (but all the same continues distinguishing them on the grounds of their different altars, temples and sacrifices) is no less a person than Socrates. Our discussion of this passage shows that Socrates \textit{did} show concern about the question of unity and \textit{did not} come to a clear decision. The remaining question, however, was and still is: what did the Greek Tom, Dick and Harry think about it?

The other testimony is Xen. \textit{Anab.} 7.8.4–6, which we also encountered earlier, which raises the question of the relationship between Zeus Basileus and Zeus Meilichios. S. comments: “for the point there surely is not that Zeus Meilichios is a separate god, but that one should not neglect any aspect of the god’s persona.” Surely? Without further (con)textual argument, this is nothing but a modern scholar’s guess and a preconceived one at that. A glance into the text, as we saw, suggests that this interpretation is not the one of Xenophon himself. If he had intended to say this, his phrasing was at least inadequate. Incidentally, expressions such as “surely” and “of course,” far from being arguments, rather seem to be at odds with the methodology,

\textsuperscript{8} Pulleyn 1997, 159 f. collects a number of texts in which the hero returning from abroad greets his local gods. He observes that the term often used is \textit{προσειπεῖν}, and concludes that this is not a case of prayers but of “greetings to long-lost friends.”

\textsuperscript{9} See especially Chapter I nn. 276 and 281.

\textsuperscript{10} Both testimonia have been discussed above p. 71 and p. 63, respectively, where see my interpretations.
recommended by Sourvinou-Inwood herself, “which, as far as possible, prevents our own—culturally determined—assumptions from intruding into, and thus corrupting, the investigation.”

Then follow S.’s five major arguments against Mikalson’s separative distinctions between gods under one name in view of their various epithets, which is the basis of his differentiation between one (abstract and not realistic) Athena in tragedy and the many different Athenai in daily life.

1) The common iconographical type of each god, as for instance Artemis as a young girl with a bow and arrow, with or without deer, suggests unity in representation, hence unity in the god’s imagery. The fact that Zeus Ktesios does not seem to have had a very Zeus-like appearance and Zeus Meilichios as a snake not at all, is not a counter argument. On the contrary, their metamorphoses are a manner to express the otherness of the gods.¹¹

2) The core aspect of each divinity includes genealogy. How could a Paean, as inscribed in a sanctuary, refer to Apollo, the son of Leto and Zeus, if each Apollo was perceived as a different divinity?

3) Cult regulations sometimes use the deity’s name alone, without epithet, or refer to some deities by name alone and to others by name and epithet. Piece de resistance here is IG II² 334 with sacrifices at the Lesser Panathenaia for Athena, Athena Hygieia, Athena Polias and Athena Nike, formulations that “make clear that in the assumptions that shaped these choices Athena was one goddess who had different cults as she had different altars.”¹²

4) Important cultic elements were shared between different sanctuaries of the same divinity with different epithets. Example: the Ark-êteia for Artemis Brauronia and Artemis Mounichia, and vases of a particular type and shape that are used for several Artemides in Attica.

5) Mythological representations, too, may be shared by temples of gods with different epithets. Example: according to Mikalson’s thesis, Athena in the gigantomachy scenes of the Parthenon metopes should represent Athena Polias while Athena in the same mytho-

¹¹ One recognizes the Vernantian position to which S. duly refers in her n. 16.

¹² One of the prescriptions says that all but one of the cows are to be sacrificed at the great altar of Athena and one at that of Nike.
logical context on the east pediment of the Athena Nike temple should be Athena Nike. Sourvinou-Inwood concludes:

This extremely implausible scenario, which makes nonsense of the way in which meaning is created out of images, is further invalidated, I suggest, by the fact that, as we have seen, it was possible to refer to dedications to Athena on the Acropolis as just ‘Athena’ or as ‘child of Zeus’, or ‘daughter of Zeus’, which referred to a divine personality—Athena, the goddess Athena in all her facets.

I have chosen to give a rather extensive rendition of these arguments since they lay bare the kernel of the discordance between the two positions. It is impossible to go extensively into all the arguments presented here. Fortunately all of them can be tackled on one and the same common underlying layer of argumentation.

As to the first, let us, just for the sake of argument, accept for a moment the universality of one iconographical scheme for every god with one name and many epithets, including local ones. What then is its relevance for Sourvinou-Inwood’s thesis? The same is true of Maria, Our Lady, the Holy Virgin, the Panagia. She is pictured as a woman, mostly seated, with a baby in her arms—either on her right or left arm (which, incidentally, can make all the difference between various local Holy Virgins). Yet these Holy Virgins worldwide are differentiated as distinct personae by the local believers. Not by the Pope and not by the young priest from Naples (Ch. I p. 66) but by a majority of Juanitas, Marias and Panagiotes. In her case then, despite the very uniform iconography, it is exactly the epithet, the place, or the specialization that turns out to make the differences in identities. So it appears that iconography as an argument for identity is precarious to say the least and lacking probative value to tell the truth.

I here must remind the reader that I am not arguing for whatever kind of continuity between (cults of) ancient Greek gods or heroes and modern Mediterranean saints (even if it is undeniable that many of them, including Holy Virgins, “in form, stature, and figure” are

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13 And just pass over (praeterire) the confusing iconographies of Zeus Melichios and Apollo Agueus, and the chronological differences between the bearded older Apollo of the archaic period and the younger one of classical times, and also be silent about the black Artemis of Sicily and the black Demeter of Arcadia, for all of whom Sourvinou-Inwood’s global interpretation is insufficient.

14 See above p. 66.

heavily indebted to many a Mediterranean god(dess). Nor do I wish to smooth over the differences between Christian Saints and pagan deities. What I do wish to argue for is nothing more than the *conceivability* of the idea that one superhuman figure (god, saint, hero) due to her/his local and functional varieties may multiply her/himself into a multitude of figures that are conceived as mutually different persons. This turns out to be a common phenomenon in current living religion.

What is true for universal iconography is equally true for the other universalities listed by Sourvinou-Inwood: genealogy (2), common cultic elements (4), and mythology (5). In principle, all Holy Virgins are mother of Christ (2) and share the mythology of birth, oppression, flight to Egypt, and final grief (5), as it is all pounded home during the Scripture readings at the religious services. They also share the ritual elements of, for instance, the rosary with the concomitant mumbling of Hail Marys (4). During these services of Scripture reading, sermon and hymns and prayer, the Holy Virgin is consistently referred to as Maria or Holy Virgin, not as Maria del Carmin or Maria Addolorata. With which we have reached the question of the name as presented in

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17 Which, for that matter, is far from being as uniform as S. claims. The Arcadian Demeter, apart from the colour of her skin, is married to Poseidon, not Zeus, and as we have seen this has its consequences for her progeniture.

18 Which is not homogeneous either. Gods are involved in a multitude of local myths, often radically diverging from—and even contradicting—the Homeric and Hesiodic ones, as no modern textbook of Greek myth fails to notice. See e.g. Buxton 1994. This, then, has immediate consequences for figurative art. A. Snodgrass, *Homer and the Artists, Text and Picture in Early Greek Art* (1998), shows how early Greek artists derived their motifs only rarely from the Homeric poems but far more frequently from their local mythologies. For a revolutionary new vision of geometric pictorial art as a representation of social ritual rather than of mythical narrative see however: S.H. Langdon, *Art and Identity in Dark Age Greece, 1100–700 B.C.E.* (Cambridge – New York 2008).
argument 3 and both anticipated and repeated in the wider context. It is the central argument.

If, during official cultic performances, the Holy Virgin is everywhere addressed with her sole name Maria (or variants such as Holy Mother), this apparently does nothing to affect the locals’ conviction that the Maria of this particular church or parish, with her particular surname, is a special local Maria with very special qualities, and as such different from other Marias. The tenets of Sourvinou-Inwood—now in fact exposed as a dogmatic, very modern, academic and rationalistic creed—just collapse when confronted with the incredible, yet undeniable, potentials of living religion. The facts on which her position is based may be true if viewed from one perspective, but do not bear out her conclusions as absolute, monolithic and exclusive laws. It is well possible that the Athenian authorities who commissioned the lex sacra using the bare name Athena, while also detailing sacrifices to different Athenai under the names Athena Hygieia, Athena Polias and (Athena) Nike, may have conceived these deities as different aspects of one goddess. But this has no compelling implication for the attitude of the majority of worshippers. That there are some dedications addressed to ‘Athena’, ‘Daughter of Zeus’, and others to ‘Athena Hygieia’, does as little to prove unity as do ‘letters to heaven’ in one church of a local Maria, some of which are addressed to Our Lady of Carmel, others to Mother Maria, Mother of God, or Holy Virgin. That the local Maria is nevertheless perceived as different from other Marias, including the Maria, however much this makes havoc of doctrinaire theology, and hence is incomprehensible and unacceptable to the modern intellectual, is apparently not an uncommon phenomenon, as we have amply demonstrated.

So my conclusion—based on the evidence of living religion, not on theoretical premises (‘Praxis’ versus ‘Lehre’, in the words of J. Rüpke)—is that “this extremely implausible scenario, which makes nonsense of the way in which meaning is created out of images” for better or for worse appears to prevail worldwide among religious people, including


20 See precisely on the different Athenas: Jost 1992, 30.

21 The tendency to collectivize the different Athenas under one name is here of course fostered by the fact that they all share one ‘sanctuary’, as S. herself refers to the Acropolis.
Christian believers who might have been expected to be more curtailed by one central religious authority than were the undogmatic ancient Greeks. And this leaves us with the question of who is the one that applies ‘modern constructs’ or using "strategies conducive to the creation of meanings which make perfect sense to modern scholars".  

As we have seen in Chapter VI, the anthropologist M. Bloch wrote that the study of ritual should avoid two things: 1) jumping from the inside of religious discourse to everyday speech when producing an explanation, and 2) either directly or indirectly using logical forms. Rigorous—and, worse, premature—application of logical reasoning may make the modern observer blind to types of evidence that do not fit our paradigm. Long ago A.D. Nock wrote:

We must not look for consistency in men’s religious actions, any more than in their secular conduct: norms of belief and facts of practice, words and deeds do not fit: nor do men mean all that they say, in reverence or irreverence, least of all men as nimble of wit and tongue as were many of the Greeks. Religion is not all or nothing, certainly not among them.

Does all this mean that after all Mikalson is right with his statement criticized by S. that the gods of tragedy are ‘artificial’ literary creations that had little relationship with the gods worshipped by the Athenian polis”? No it does not, at least not without some reservation.  

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22 Sourvinou-Inwood 1997, 161. Her position under discussion here also runs counter to her own directives in her ‘Assumptions and the Creation of Meaning: Reading Sophocles’ Antigone,’ JHS 109 (1989) 134–148, espec. 134: “we must reconstruct in detail their (= the Greeks’) cultural assumptions, by means of which meaning was created, and try to read through perceptual filters created by those assumptions; otherwise we will inevitably read through our own assumptions by default (…) and they will inevitably produce very different meanings from theirs.”

23 ‘Religious Attitudes of the Ancient Greeks’ in: Nock 1972 II, 549 f. Cf. also S.R. Barrett, quoted above (Ch.1 n. 233). Moreover, not everything that men do, say or write bears meaning. See on ‘economy of significance’ in ritual J.Z. Smith l.c. above Ch. VI n. 148. On (lack of) meaning in visual art: P. Veyne, L’interprétation et l’interprète, Enquête (anthropologie, histoire, sociologie) 3 (1996) devoted to "Interpréter, Sur-interpréter", 241–272: The reliefs of the late Roman funerary sarcophages are systematically overinterpreted by those who cannot understand or accept that the decorations do not necessarily carry a symbolic meaning. On overinterpretation in literary texts see above Ch. II n. 41 and n. 105 and below p. 534 n. 15. Cf. the salient summary by Isabel in the motto of this book.

24 Although at this point I do not shrink from expressing my agreement with e.g. S. Scullion, Olympian and Chthonian, ClAnt 13 (1994) 75–119, espec. 117 f.: “Endless ramification is a reflex of the προσήκουσα ἀρετή of polytheism (…) The vision of the Greek pantheon offered in Homer, the Hymns, and the handbooks is not privileged and does not set a standard, or more accurately, does so only in literary terms; it
what still stands in Sourvinou-Inwood’s demonstration is that side by side with the locally and functionally differentiated many Athenai (and Apollones and Artemides) there is always also the one and only Athena, as marked by her name, and by a common aggregate of myth and iconography. And who would not agree with the conclusion of Sourvinou-Inwood 2003, 513: “In the eyes of the ancient audience there was permeability between the world of the tragedy and their world”? It should moreover be added that in other works Mikalson does betray a hesitant acknowledgment of the co-existence of the two positions, as e.g. in 1983, 69: “Zeus has numerous different epithets and to greater or lesser degrees each of these epithets indicates a different god with distinct functions and cult centers.” The “more or less” reservation may betray a slight touch of embarrassment with the situation. Scholars, on the other hand, who introduce the term “of course” by way of argument block their access to embarrassment or surprise. Of course? Of whose course? Their course, our course? In a scholarly discourse on the essentials of a foreign religion this term, being an undisguised reference to our own paradigm, is better avoided.

should not be allowed to distort our perception of the actual world of cult and cultic legend, which, in religious terms, is a larger and a more complex and serious world.” Or in the words of Rowe 1976, 47: “The system, or ‘symmetry’ which the poetic tradition attempted to impose on the Greek gods evidently had little effect on actual religious practice, which seems to continue to celebrate a simple and ever-expanding plurality of divinities.”

25 The question remains, however, in the words of Buxton 1994, 162 f.: “How were such lowest-common-denominator attitudes integrated with those implicit in the artistic-performance contexts? Or were they integrated?” And his answer is: “I suggest that we have no idea how, or whether, most people reconciled the perspectives implied by the various ways in which they might confront mythology. (…) They will simply have accepted as normal the fact that different ways of imagining the gods were appropriate to different contexts. To ask which constituted their real belief is to miss the point.” Cf. also Mastronarde 2002.

26 In his conclusion (ibid.) “In practical terms, in the fourth century these various Zeuses were treated, particularly in cult, as different, independent deities,” the expression “more or less” has disappeared.

27 This attitude is all the more surprising since at other places or in other works Sourvinou-Inwood has an open eye for the complexity of religious relations. So for instance when she writes (Sourvinou 1978, 101 f.) that religion in the Greek world is “a network of religious systems interacting with each other and with the Panhellenic religious dimension,” and even more surprising, ibid. “the degree and nature of Panhellenic influence on local religion and cults remains something to be examined rather than assumed!” In this inconsistency we may detect a perfect illustration of what F. Schmidt has coined ‘L’impensable polytheisme’ (Paris 1988), translated as The Inconceivable Polytheism: Studies in Religious Historiography (Chur [etc.] 1987). Cf. also above n. 22.