**PHD THESISABSTRACT**

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**SUBJECT: THE WORLDS OF GREEKS AND BARBARIANSTHROUGHTHE PLAYS OF EURIPIDES: TWO WORLDS IN COMPARISON**

Greeks have always had a clear awareness of their Hellenic identity, which they defined mainly in relation to the *autonomy* and *self-sufficiency* provided by their living within the city-states. Although the supremacy of the institution of the Greek city over the eastern despotismwas given, this event was never a cause of arrogance and a claim of cultural superiority by the Greeks. On the contrary, the people of the East have always fascinated them with its "diversity" and its long history, as we can see from the books of Hecataeus of Miletusand Herodotus.

The numerous names of people found in the Homeric epics, the linguistic borrowings of the archaic language and the cosmological conceptions of the eastern origin of Hesiod testify to the fruitful cultural interaction between Greeks and barbarians, which continued unabatedlythroughout the period of Greek colonization, mainly due to the innate thirst for learning of the Greeks. The first reference to the term "barbarian" in the sense of the non-Greek, whose language is spoken incomprehensibly, is found in the B rhapsody of Homer's *Iliad*: «*ΝάστηςαὖΚαρῶνἡγήσατοβαρβαροφώνων*» (*IliadII*, v. 867),but without the slightest devaluation.

This mood of the Greeks changed drastically after the establishment of the Persian Empire and the fall of the kingdom of Lydia, as the danger of enslavement was now visible. However, the historical circumstances that changed the self-consciousness of the Greeks and intensified the polarization of Greek-barbaric relations were the Persian wars of the 5th century B.C. century, mainly from the battle of Marathon (490 B.C.) and beyond.

In the formation of the Greek-barbarian dipole, the contribution of the ancient Greek Drama was decisive, given the social role it was played. Aeschylus’ play*Τhe Persians*, which is the earliest evidence of the intensityof the Greek-barbarian polarization, now delimits the Greek-barbaric dimension not on the basis of linguistic or ethnic difference, but on the basis of the political organization and moral worldview of the two people.

The first indication of a widespread rejection of barbarians is found in the plays of Euripides that were written during the period when Greece was plagued by the sufferings of the Peloponnesian War. The change in the self-consciousness of the Greeks took place in the decades that followed and gradually expanded against all barbarians, even against the Macedonianraces, while during the 4th century B.C. the perspectivethat those who did not participate in Greek education were considered uncivilized and therefore barbaric was consolidated.

This PhD thesis focuses on the investigation of the relations between the two worlds of Greeks and barbarians as they are detected through the tragedies of Euripides, *Medea* and *Iphigenia in Tauris*, hisplays of the so-called Trojan Circle, *Andromache*,*Hecuba*, *The Trojan Women*, and also his plays *The Bacchae*and *The PhoenicianWomen*. The subject will be explored from a variety of perspectives, and any possible convergencesor discrepancies between the Greek-barbarian worlds will be sought. In this direction, we will focus on the elements of the dramatic plot and the characters that reveal the relationships between them.

The choice of the playwright is a consequence of the fact that Euripides' plays are by far the most detailed testimony of the barbaric world, since they present a multitude of barbaric characters as well as various geographical and ethnographic descriptions, which allow us to form a perfect view about the way of life and worship and the barbaric worldview in general.

In addition, the perspective of this modernist playwright is of great research interest. We will notice that the two worlds of Greeks - barbarians in Euripides' plays are intertwined.The playwright, wanting to show how surprisingly sometimes the two worlds of barbarians-Greeks converge,poses questions, dispelsdoubts, shows the other side of things. He knows that "in everything there is in sperm the opposite." In this context, it sometimes makes the boundaries of confrontation between the two worlds indistinguishable through the use of a variety of dramatic means and techniques.

The present PhD thesis is elaboratedwith the expectation of contributing to the promotion of the issue of "otherness", of the "other", of the "foreign" in antiquity. Nowadaysthe issue is more relevantthanever, due to globalization. However, it is imposedto keep the necessary distances and not to interpret the ancient text in modern terms, but to try to highlight, as far as possible, Euripides’ views, who had realized that the depiction of the barbaric world reflected to some extent the pathogeniesof the Greek world.That is why he does not criticize his heroes for their passions, he does not seek their punishment and he does not try to substantiate their cultural superiority or inferiority. It simply contrasts elements of action, persons, institutions, situations and effortlessly leaves viewers to draw their own conclusions, seeking to highlight the view that "a barbarian is first and foremost a man who believes in barbarism."