

The Idea of the “Other” as Expressed through Ancient Greek Literary Forms

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Definitions:

Autochthony: nativeness by virtue of originating or occurring naturally (as in a particular place) endemism, indigenoussness. nativeness - the quality of belonging to or being connected with a certain place or region by virtue of birth or origin.

Examples: Aeschylus, *The Persians* 790-94; Plato, *Menexenus* 237 B-C

Metoiikesis: μεταικέω, to change one’s abode, remove to a place; to be a μέτοικος or settler, reside in a foreign city.

Quotes:

“Hearing that, ‘O King,’ said Demaratus, ‘Seeing that you bid me by all means speak the whole truth, and say that which you shall not afterwards prove to be false, —in Hellas poverty is ever native to the soil, *but courage comes of their own seeking, the fruit of wisdom and strong law; by use of courage Hellas defends herself from poverty and tyranny...*”

(Herodotus 7.102, Emphasis mine)

“...But now they met their enemies outside the narrows, and many of the barbarians were there slain; for their captains came behind the companies with scourges and drove all the men forward with lashes. Many of them were thrust into the sea and there drowned, and more by far were trodden down bodily by each other, *none regarding who it was that perished...*”

(Herodotus 7.223, Emphasis mine)

“Had numbers counted, the *barbarian* warships surely would have won; the Greeks but numbered thirty tens, and ten apart from these a chosen squadron formed; but Xerxes, and this I know full well, a thousand led; and seven and two hundred ranked as queens in swiftness. The count stood so. Seemed *we* unequal? Some deity destroyed our host, who weighing down the balance swung the beam of fortune. *The gods saved the city of the goddess.*”

(Aeschylus, *The Persians*, 337-347. Emphasis mine)

Darius: If you lead no expedition to the land of Greece, not even if the Median host be more; for Grecian soil is their own ally.

Chorus: What dost thou intend by that, “their own ally”?

Darius: It starves to death excessive numbers.

(Aeschylus, *The Persians*, 790-94)

“Now as regards nobility of birth, their first claim thereto is this—that the forefathers of these men were not of immigrant stock, nor were these their sons declared by their origin to be strangers in the land sprung from immigrants, but natives sprung from the soil living and dwelling in their own true fatherland; and nurtured also by no stepmother, like other folk, but by that mother-country wherein they dwelt, which bare them and reared them and now at their death receives them again to rest in their own abodes. Most meet it is that first we should celebrate that

mother herself; for by so doing we shall also celebrate therewith the noble birth of these heroes.” (Plato, *Menexenus*, 237 B-C)

“So firmly-rooted and so sound is the noble and liberal character of our city, and endowed with such a hatred of the barbarian, because we are pure-blooded Greeks, unadulterated by barbarian stock. For there cohabit with us none of the type of Pelops [Peloponnesian], or Cadmus [Theban], or Aegyptus or Danaus [Argolid], and numerous others of the kind who are naturally barbarians though nominally Greeks; but our people are pure Greeks and not a barbarian blend; whence it comes that our city is imbued with a whole-hearted hatred of alien races. *None the less, we were isolated once again because of our refusal to perform the dishonorable and unholy act of surrendering Greeks to barbarians.*” (Plato, *Menexenus* 245 C-E, Emphasis mine)

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