

Preface

Beyond any doubt, *Bacchae* is one of the most exciting and complex plays of Euripides. It symbolically merges aspects of radical changes in stage and state in late fifth century Athens foreboding developments in culture and thought.

This play on Dionysus and his cult provokes a reinvention of plot-patterns and fundamental concepts of earlier drama and it calls for exploring the transformation of its varying aspects in later cultural contexts.

Human fight against the absolute power of the god, the notion of *theomachia*, and the ensuing divine retribution, on the one hand, and the establishment of a new religious experience of decisive impact, on the other, emerge as the pivotal concepts of this last Euripidean play. This key idea originates in Aeschylean drama and is refigured in later literary engagements with *Bacchae* in culturally different environments.

Such thoughts provided the stimulus for an exploration focusing on *Bacchae* both as a receiving text that draws on Aeschylus' Dionysiac plays and as an *ex-emplum* for plot-patterns and concepts adapted with substantial alterations in the Byzantine drama *Christus Patiens*, which expresses considerably different views from pagan thought.

The idea of this book to shed light on the dialogic process of narrative, style, and thought in varying ideological and cultural contexts was shaped within the framework of presentations of mine on Aeschylus' *Lycurgeia* and on the reception of Euripidean drama in *Christus Patiens*. The former theme was treated from different viewpoints in the XIth Spanish Congress of Classical Studies in Santiago de Compostela and the 3rd Trends in Classics Conference in Thessaloniki; the latter was presented in the International Conference of the Research Institute of Byzantine Culture on the Reception of Antiquity in Byzantium in Sparta and the 15th FIEC Congress in London.

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G. X.-K.

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