

## ANCIENT GREEK MYTH AND DRAMA IN GREEK CINEMA (1930–2012): AN OVERALL APPROACH



### *I. Introduction*

The purpose of the present article is to outline the relationship between Greek cinema and themes from Ancient Greek mythology, in a period stretching from 1930 to 2012. This discourse is initiated by examining movies dated before WW II (*Prometheus Bound*, 1930, Dimitris Meravidis)<sup>1</sup> till recent important ones such as *Strella. A Woman's Way* (2009, Panos Ch. Koutras).<sup>2</sup> Moreover, movies involving ancient drama adaptations are co-examined with the ones referring to ancient mythology in general. This is due to a particularity of the perception of ancient drama by script writers and directors of Greek cinema: in ancient tragedy and comedy film adaptations,<sup>3</sup> ancient drama was typically employed as a source for myth.

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1. The ideologically interesting endeavours — expressed through filming the Delphic Celebrations *Prometheus Bound* by Eva Palmer-Sikelianos and Angelos Sikelianos (1930, Dimitris Meravidis) and the Longus romance in *Daphnis and Chloë* (1931, Orestis Laskos) — belong to the origins of Greek cinema. What the viewers behold, in the first fiction film of the Greek Cinema (*The Adventures of Villar*, 1924, Joseph Hepp), is a wedding reception at the hill of Acropolis. Then, during the interwar period, film production comprises of documentaries depicting the “Celebrations of the Third Greek Civilisation”, romances from late antiquity (where the beauty of the lovers refers to Ancient Greek statues), and, finally, the first filmings of a theatrical performance, *Delphic Celebrations. Prometheus Bound* and *Prometheus Bound* (1928 and 1930, Dimitris Meravidis). See MacKinnon (1986) 43-8; Lambrinos (1997) 135-44; Delveroudi (2001) 167-96; Mavromoustakos (2003) 303-7; Glytzouris (2008) 139-56.
2. See Dimitriou (1993); Valoukos (2007); Rouvas & Stathakopoulos (2005).
3. See MacKinnon (1986) 169-73; Van Steen (2000) 3-10, 204-8; Solomon (2001) 284-5.

While studying the accompanying bibliography on the relationship between Greek cinema and ancient mythology, the researcher does come across several articles and studies focusing on films by renowned directors such as Theo Angelopoulos and Michael Cacoyannis.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, one also realises the absence of an overall review of cinematic mythological references, not only on ancient myths but also on folk culture and pagan elements. The concise interpretation of the relevant films, attempted in the present article, is not exclusively focused on the pilot films (in Angelopoulos' case), but also revolves around films that have been overlooked or undervalued: what is sought after is an insight into how the myth unfolds within every available film and not a mere examination of outstanding films.

If a myth consists of the total of its variations, then, in order to compose the mosaic of its cinematic imprint onto the corpus of Greek cinema, we should not underrate a number of underlying factors: the historical continuum, the beginnings and the gaps in the use of the myths (as defined by terms of production conditions), the cinematic genre (slapstick comedy, rural adventures, melodrama) and the, cinematically uneducated, standard audience. In the concise review of the mythological theme, we should also not underrate the appropriation of the ideological and moral contents of the myth, as well as the occasional transposition of the terms with regard to its interpretational problems. If a myth is just a code of archetypes, then what the directors attempt to convert into everyday terms through the distortion-al mirrors of the screen (pace, composition of shots, shooting angles and editing), is the primordial and the timeless.

Thus, in trying to form a mythological cinematic pattern, we must take into account a number of quantitative criteria: the frequency of references, the originality of interpretations and transpositions, the emphasis on current events, as well as the timelessness of the films. Two methods may be adopted in approaching ancient mythical cinematic themes: one, "safe and less risky", involving a process of magnification and cross-reference, whereby each myth is being read and interpreted individually; and the other, "unsafe and risky", involving the creation of a cinematic typology of interpretative readings and misreadings. In the second case, we could group the relevant films into four sub-units, for methodological purposes: the theatrical, the political-psychoanalytical, the (neo)folkloric and the imaginary. Within the suggested groupings, we allow for an overlap between them and hence avoid strict definitions, since most of these films could be classified in more

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4. See MacDonald (1983); MacKinnon (1986) 74-94; Solomon (2001) 263-6; Rollet (2003) 33-41, 65-8, 305-11.

than one group. In addition, the tools are extracted from the disciplines employed, in order to better comprehend the films (such as dictionary references, psychoanalytic theory, anthropology, ethnology, and the Oriental ritualistic theatre). For the recommended categorization of the films into sub-units, the criteria applied are the following: the predominant cinematic interpretation, the stated intention of the director and how each film was received by the public and the critics; also, the activation of the intertextual network, the interpretative constants of the myth in question, the justification for the selection of the specific mythological variation, the conventional and exemplary interpretation of the mythical narrative, the convergence and divergence from the normative mythological model as effected through set design and dramaturgy, and the parallel offered by eminent counterparts of European filmography (i.e. cases of Pier Paolo Pasolini<sup>5</sup> and Jean Cocteau).

In tracing myths in the cinema, a sub-unit of the overall attempt to comprehend the Myth, we will examine, in fiction films and documentaries, the cinematic images of mythological characters who have been linked to tragedy (presented in the order of preference among filmmakers: Atreids, Labdacids, Pentheus – Dionysus, Medea, Prometheus, Phaedra, Alceste – Admetus – Hercules) and the myths connected to (demi)gods and heroes of the ancient world (Ulysses/Odysseus, Orpheus – Eurydice, Theseus – Ariadne – Minotaur, Persephone – Demeter, Hades, Selene – Hecate, Evagoras). Some mythical narratives (e.g. Orpheus and Eurydice), unlike the ancient mythical play-writing of post-war contemporary Greek theatre, are preferred by filmmakers, who also occasionally proceed to cinematic reconstructions: *Daphnis and Chloë* by Orestis Laskos (1931 and 1969 [*Daphnis and Chloë. The Young Lovers*]), Nikos Koundouros' *Young Aphrodites* (1963),<sup>6</sup> and Mika Zacharopoulou's *Daphnis and Chloë '66* (1966). What is worth noting at this level is that the popular myths of Odysseus and Medea have been handled cinematically in divergent ways. In the first case, the adaptation of Odysseus' adventures can be deemed overdue (1984: *Ulysses' Love*, 1995: *Ulysses' Gaze*, 2001: *Evagoras' Vow*), while in the second, Medea and Jason are viewed through a latent or aggressive feminist prism, already apparent in the 1960s and 1970s. Initially, it should be noted that some myths appear in film only once (Aurora in *A Daring Story*, 1993, by Dimitris Makris) and others — more popular — have seen new interpretations, from the 1960s onwards, with emphasis given on temporal and territorial displacement (myths of the Labdacids<sup>7</sup>).

5. See MacKinnon (1986) 126-56; Garlà (2008) 89-115.

6. See Delveroudi (2003) 171-7; Solomon (2001) 274.

7. See MacKinnon (1986) 51-5, 66-72; Michelakis (2008) 75-87.

Initially, a distinction between mythological references of a primary and secondary level shall be attempted.<sup>8</sup> In the first case, the mythological references may be directly apparent in the symbolic meaning of the film title (*Kierion* [1967–74, Dimos Theos], *Pandora* [2007, Giorgos Stambouloupoulos] and *Plato's Academy* [2009, Philippos Tsitos]), they may also involve historical periods and narrative levels (*Heniochos – The Charioteer*, 1995, Alexis Damianos) or influence the atmosphere of the film (the case of a plague in *Dream Factory* [Tassos Boulmetis, 1990], *The Years of the Big Heat* [Frida Liappa, 1991], *Desert Sky* [Nikos Cornilios, 1995]) and attitudes (*Sappho*, *The Lesbian* [Ilias Machairas, 1961], *Icarus' Dream* [Costas Natsis, 2005], and *Pandora and Plato* [Nikos Vergitsis & George Nikoulas, 2002]). Alexis Damianos' polysemous film title *Heniochos – The Charioteer* is expressing a dark symbol that permits readings in a narrative and visual context. Whether the title is referring to the black market dealer-collaborator who escapes the mob's wrath, to the Nietzschean portrait of the "left-wing" rebel, or the reaction of the brave and decent man to the death of a "right-wing" compatriot, the question still remains: it is not so much an illustration of the athletic ideals (traditional variation) as it is a reference to all those who hold the reigns of power in their hands, and a also dialogue with the fallen symbols of Ancient Greece, before the arrival of the New World. In *Pandora*, a femme fatale is causing fights and quarrels in the Greek countryside during the Greek Civil War, while in *Plato's Academy* Modern Greek mentality and issues of national identity are satirized within the environment of a cosmopolitan, multicultural Athens. Michael Cacoyannis in *The Day the Fish Came Out* (1966–67), satirically relates Pandora's myth to the dangers of nuclear energy.

Within the context of Greek cinema periodisation and during the period of "Old Greek Cinema", people who had excelled in the theatrical world, either directly linked to or originating from the theatre, dealt with the theatrical form of myth, as screenwriters, directors and independent producers. These were prominent figures such as Iakovos Kampnellis (*The Abduction of Persephone*, 1956), Giorgos Tzavellas (*Antigone*, 1961), Michael Cacoyannis (*Electra*, 1962), Manolis Skouloudis (*A Brash Young Man*, 1963), Alexis Parnis (*The Return of Medea*, 1968) and Michalis Papanikolaou (*Medea* '70, 1969). While the main corpus of film production was oriented towards the mass reproduction of the cinematic rules of genre cinema, the preoccupation with myths, initially as adaptations of tragedy, constituted the exception to the rule and a rare but interesting alternative. This is perceivable

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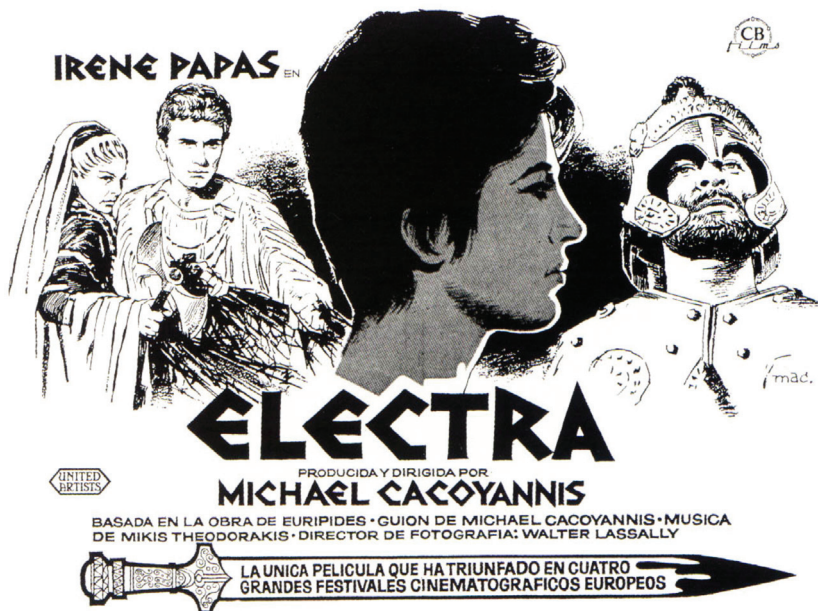
8. See also *The Suitors of Penelope* (1968, Christos Kyriakopoulos) and *The Road to Ithaca* (1999, Costas Dimitriou).

in the way tragedy was used by the representatives of New Greek Cinema in their quest for innovation. The world-wide appeal of the myths excites the Greek filmmakers of the 1960s, marking their appearance as representative of the Greek “cinéma d’auteur” (Cacoyannis, Koundouros, Tzavellas). Moreover, their participation and award-winning in international film festivals established them as “ambassadors” and representatives of Greek cinema, enhanced by the prestige of Ancient Greek culture.

A new perspective of the relationship between Greek cinema and myth was developed during the 1970s, when the representatives of New Cinema, knowing that “the myth has always been a thievery of language”, proceeded to an imaginative but ambiguous combination of mythological allegories, psychoanalytic terms and political references. The use of myths for the illustration of psychoanalytic terms and the recourse to allegories during periods when regimes imposed censorship, defined the progression to a different perception: from the earlier aim of reviving national awareness, the archetypal myth was eventually regarded within this specific time-frame as a powerful structure in which the subjective view and the ideological core coexisted. The contribution of myth as a vanguard of social change through the ideological and abstract confrontation of current messages can be traced in the films of Angelopoulos, Theos, Koundouros and Costas Ferris. In their films there is a coexistence of speculations regarding the popular-national spectacle and the dramatic processing of the myth, where known facts acquire a twofold dimension: the “social” and the “personal”. History, as an objective view of the social space, and psychology, as the subjective one, are defining the political and psychological terms. In the reading of the myths during this specific phase, new aesthetic norms are imposed through the polysemy of references, the distortion of conventions and the addressing of both the intellect and the senses. What defines those filmmakers’ endeavour is their effort to form a life attitude, to suggest a lifestyle, to pose existential questions, to access the modernist landscape, to convey messages through the transformations of the myths and to transpose the terms of interpretation. In their films, through incessant encoding, an aesthetic field is rendered, at times confined by literary figures of speech and, at other occasions, becoming a locus for cathartic psychological projections and directorial arrogance.

The myth as a structural grid acquires a different content according to time, space, and the dominant ideology. During the years of the New and Contemporary Greek Cinema, films reflected and also responded to social changes and political ideologies of each period, whereas, at the same time, they also used the myth as an expressive tool. The cinematic version of the myths modernizes them, hence initiating a dialogue with the historical-polit-





ΑΠΟΣΠΑΣΜΑΤΑ ΚΡΙΤΙΚΩΝ ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΤΑΙΝΙΑ

# Η ΕΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΤΟΥ ΣΟΦΟΚΛΕΟΥΣ που χυρίσθηκε στο ΦΕΣΤΙΒΑΛ ΕΠΙΔΑΥΡΟΥ

**ANNA SYNOIDINOY** ★ **ΘΑΝΟ ΚΩΤΣΟΠΥΛΟ**

**Κριτικές Ίένου Τύπου**

...Αρθροί, διακριτική ή Συνέπιδος δαδίζει στην «ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ» ότι είναι η «Τραγωδία»...  
 ...Η ταινία, που έφερε πραγματικά δόξα στο Κασό, ...Η Άννα Συνοιδινό: πολύ Μεγάλη ηθοποιός...  
 ...Η καμπυλωμένη της σπονδυλική στήλη της Έλλης, και Βασίλειος Φίλιππος είναι κάτι που δεν πρέπει να το χάσει κανείς...  
 ...Η «Ηλέκτρα» του Σοφοκλέους προκάλεσε τόσους παρανοήματα...  
 ...Το θεατικό της Βενετίας θα κέρδιζε (εν μέσω γενικής κρίσης, αν δεν υπήρχε η «Ηλέκτρα» του Σοφοκλέους...  
 ...Η Άννα Συνοιδινό με «Ηλέκτρα» κέρδισε (επικρατώντας, μέγιστο και λιγότερο, Μία Έρρητη, που δεν λησμονεί και Κλάου)...  
 ...H. MELLANDER

**Η Κριτική του κ. ΔΗΜ. ΨΑΘΑ**

Ο παραγωγός προσφέρει μια όριστη έκπληξη στην ταινία του, που γεννήθηκε ή Τραγωδία. Γι' αυτό και μόνο, του χρονομέτρου πολλών...  
 ...Επί τέλους είδαμε στην όθνη ΗΘΕΟΠΟΥΣΕΙ...  
 ...Η Άννα Συνοιδινό φαντάζει στην «Ηλέκτρα» σαν μια ΘΕΟΤΗΤΑ της ΣΥΝΕΙΔΗΣ...  
 ...Ανταλλάει μια λεπτή προδοχή της νεωτερικής Ελλάδας στην Έλα κόρη...  
 ...Όσοι από τους Έλληνες βιάζονται την ταινία αυτή θα καταλάβουν ότι μόνο στην ταινία μπορεί να γίνουν τέτοια δραματικά πεπραγμένα και θεαματικά, που δεν προσφέρουν κανέναν άλλου τύπου...  
 ...Μερικοί ο' αὐτό το όφελος ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΙΚΟ, αλλά και ΡΕΑΛΙΣΤΙΚΟ που κέρδισαν, τρέφουν το κενό ότι κάτι άλλο κινεί αριστοτικά (ήντονα) — αν, όπως άλλα της όθνης — θα είναι δυνατόν ο' αντιπροσωπεύει...

ΑΠΟ ΛΥΡΙΟΝ

Μεγάλη Πρεμιέρα

**ΟΡΦΕΥΣ · ΠΙΓΚΑΛ · ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΑ · ΕΠΑΛΕΝΤΙΤ (Πειραιώς) · ΟΛΥΜΠΙΟΝ (Θεσ/νίκης)**

3 ΠΡΩΤΑ ΒΡΑΒΕΙΑ Φεστιβάλ Βενετίας Α' βραβείο ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΣ ΤΥΠΗΣ

ical events of modern times, with an emphasis on their intertextual dynamics. Therefore, the political and morphological codes are rendered through the contemporary political experience; they are revised, renewed and reconstructed in each new production. This period is characterized by cinematic soul-searching, revival and reactivation of mythological narratives whose core is corresponding to the spirit of the times. Antiquity and the revision of our relationship with it, as well as the re-establishment of Greek national identity through this bipolar relationship, both demand a lasting cultural identity within the mixed cultural climate of modernism, seated in the juxtaposition of conventional and unconventional elements. The handling of myths as a challenge for writers, directors and actors is the focal point for Western European Art. The creative adaptation of the myths is related to their aesthetic appeal, while the dynamic reconstructions and revivals transpose the terms of the interpretational issue. In this context, it is feasible to approach the Greek films that use ancient mythical themes by categorizing them. As regards the depiction of myth, both uninspired versions and stereotypical readings, are to be encountered, yet with exceptions that dare, through time shifts and heterotopias, highlight the contradiction, the peculiarity and the uncanny.

## *II. The Myth and the Theater: The Tragic Circles*

The preoccupation of Greek cinema with ancient Greek dramatic poetry<sup>9</sup> mainly dates back to the 1960s (Tzavellas, Cacoyannis), but thrives considerably later, during the period when the New Greek Cinema is established (Koundouros, Angelopoulos, Theos, Ferris). If, in the first period, the main objective is the cinematic transcription of the tragic myth, in the second, there is an attempt through adaptation to elicit political signifiers and to present issues regarding the similarities and dissimilarities in the expressive means of theater and cinema. Appropriating myths poses a series of questions: How can the theatrical form be overridden? How can the stylization and visuals be created accordingly? How can ancient myths, burdened with centuries of interpretations, be transcribed into images that illuminate obscure points or reveal their polysemy?

In the films that attempt to adapt the tragic myth, there is a recurrence of the technique of incorporating the theatrical stage in the events, thus pro-

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9. See Kyriakos (2002); Goudelis (1995) 83-87; Stassinopoulou (2002), 35-43.

viding a twofold representational method. Theatricality is detected in the actor's *kinesis* (rhythm, movement, posture, vocalization), in the auditory elements of the performance (sounds and silence, pause and idiolect), in the theatrical features (scenery, lighting, props) and in the appearance of the actors (costumes, use of masks, make-up). In addition, there is a "theatricality" in aesthetic proposals related to Brechtism, as an attempt to distance the audience from identifying with the events (retrospective narrative, analysis in images, ritual, use of masks, play within a play, stylized acting). The use of the aforementioned elements did not always reveal new semantics. The Brechtian experience was often demoted, while heterogeneity and peculiarity were severed from the production process. The codes of "theatricality" and the methods of de-dramatisation were used to render ancient Greek myths as political allegories, in which Greek history was also seen as myth and spectacle. The films of Angelopoulos, Theos, Koundouros, Dassin, Dionyssi Grigoratos, Andreas Pantzis and Giorgos Stambouloupoulos express this type of aesthetic choice.

The tragedies that were more often adapted into films were those whose main theme was passion or revenge (*Electra*, *Medea*, *Hippolytus*); those which castigated *hubris* against Nature (*Bacchae*); and those whose anti-establishment messages facilitated the drawing of parallels with the socio-political context (*Prometheus Bound*, *Antigone*). Of the films dealing with the myth of Antigone, the ones that stand out are: *Procedure* (1976)<sup>10</sup> by Theos, in which the system of values and arguments that the modernistic era poses are discerned by means of over-stylization and rituals; *The Photographers* (1998) by Koundouros, in which, what is attempted — within the postcolonial landscape of the Middle Eastern desert — is a political commentary on the aggression of Islam, the role of the media, global terrorism and capitalist cynicism;<sup>11</sup> and Tzavellas' *Antigone* (1961), a traditional theatrical-historical approach to the myth. Antigone was used as a symbol against Authority and as an interventionist incarnation of friendship, a model of morality and political stance, deprived, however, of the characteristics of an erotically unfulfilled femininity (with the exception of her presence in Aristopoulos' *Story Dome*, 1993).

Before Irene Papas rose to prominence as a cinematic tragedienne<sup>12</sup> in her rendition of Antigone and, later on as Electra (1962),<sup>13</sup> Helen (1971) and

10. See Gerassis (1980); MacKinnon (1986) 72-4.

11. Creon and Antigone, both symbols and victims of their different beliefs, die and are resurrected and the story recurs in cyclical formations, bridging time.

12. See Winkler (2001) 83-9; Kourelou (2008) 204-12.

13. Electra is an attempt to present ancient tragedy without pompousness, without the usu-



Clytemnestra (1977), the role of Oedipus' daughter had been performed on stage by significant Greek actresses such as Kyveli, Marika Kotopouli, Eleni Papadaki, and Anna Synodinou. Papas' tone in the films by Tzavellas and Cacoyannis, is in both cases a cry afar from traditional pomposity, allowing the viewers to diagnose the different aesthetics of both films. Papas the black-clad, shorthaired, mourning cinematic Electra, bears little comparison to the theatrical pedantry and the establishment of the "peplum" films. This film is closer to the reconstruction of the ethos and the behaviour of characters through the quest for visual and semantic parallels between ancient and contemporary Greece. In Tzavellas' attempt, on the other hand, his concern with cinematography (filming outside the studio, dramatization of narrative episodes) is obvious, as well as his commitment to the tradition of the Greek National Theatre Company. With the same rationale, theatrical versions of the myth of Antigone (*Agon*, Northern Greece Theatre Centre, 1995, Vassilis Papavassiliou) and production suggestions for staging it in a closed space ("Nea Skini", 1992, Lefteris Voyatzis) coexist with Antigone's new cinematic profile in the films of Koundouros and in Antouanetta Angelidi's *Thief for Reality* (2001), in which the part of Antigone, as a suicidal figure, is performed by a man.<sup>14</sup>

The formation of the female identity through the competitive mother – daughter model and the desire for the father (denying mother/idealized father), along with the restoration of wounded pride, are thematic constants of Electra's personality emphatically present, initially in Giannis Dalianidis melodramatic *No Tears for Electra* (1966) and, under a different context, in Angelopoulos' *The Travelling Players* (1975). Eva Kotamanidou, as a "heroine with no bed", assumes in *The Travelling Players* male characteristics both as a symbol of toughness and aggression, and as a symbol against oppression. In Dalianidis' film, actress Zoë Laskari, ill-tempered and nervous, experiences the despair of losing her father, her female attraction to Aegisthus and the paroxysmal denial of the sexually active Clytemnestra-mother. Angelopoulos' intertextual intentions tend to a coexistence of *Oresteia* and *Golfo the Shepherdess*: The Ancient Greek myth is linked to the popular spectacle, and both lead to contemporary historical allusions, at the moment when the ac-

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al theatrical hang-ups, in a different artistic medium which powerfully reveals the intricately wrought structure of Ancient Greek drama.

14. We watch three philosophical viewpoints of the world: Fate, Random, Free Will. In each version events vary, because our perception does change the world. Each one begins with a game (cards – dice – chess) and ends with a procession, which could remind us of the chorus of an ancient tragedy. The space is a game of in and out, on- and off-stage, theater and life.

tions of the members of the theatrical troupe seem dictated by the model of the classic myth. The transgression of time-space and the rendering of the myth of the Atreids through a historical prism and a Hegelian viewpoint, characterize Angelopoulos' ingenious correlation, who lays the foundations for the Greek cinematic mythological rule through this film: to represent and lend meaning to the myth by using the "play within a play" technique and the presentation of the divided Greek nation as a decimated family.

If Clytemnestra in *Reconstruction* (1970, Angelopoulos) is placed against the silence of the landscape of Epirus and in the din of the timeless myth of the emigrant's return, in *The Years of the Big Heat* (1991, Frida Liappa), Electra from Milos experiences elements of the myth in the dry landscape: the recognition and embrace of the two sisters in the ancient theatre of Milos, to the presence of the teacher and the use of cries of woe in Ancient Greek in combination with details of Odyssean recognition.<sup>15</sup> The mythical kings, as in Dalianidis' *No Tears for Electra* turn into money-wielders, and the conflicts in the palace are transformed into machinations within cosmopolitan circles. In Dassin's film, the private is interwoven with the public in the shipwreck episode, in which the black-clad relatives of the victims function as the ancient *choros* and also as a mirror in which the heroine cannot be reflected, absorbed by her desperate need for privacy. With her presence, Mercouri herself gives shape to a female portrait beyond conventions and compromises. In *Angry Family* (1979, Simon Varsamidis), an independent production inspired by a crime report of the police bulletin, the myth of the Atreids is transferred to a poor neighbourhood of Thessaloniki, whereas in *Minor Freedoms* (2008, Costas Zapas) and *Maria-Electra* (1996, Stella Bellessi), the plot is transferred to the Greek countryside where violence, pedophilia and prostitution prevail.

In the story of *Desert Sky* (1997, Nikos Cornilios) and *Monkey Queen* (1999, Christophoros Christophis) we observe some — slightly altered — constants and variables of the mythical Labdacids. In the former, there are incestuous relationships (father and daughter, brother and sister), which are the cause for *hubris* in the abandoned and suffering city (water shortage, epidemics). In Cornilios' film, the loss of memory and physical sterility comprise a contemporary version of the Theban plague, while in Christophis' film a satirical deconstruction of *Oedipus at Colonus* is attempted: the myth is converted into "mythomania", while the drunkard Aesop and the Lolita-Antigone stand out, within the post-modern setting of an anchored ship and in the motley crew of lovers and mobsters. Even more interesting are Costas Aristopou-

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15. See Goudelis (2003) 75-87.

los' (*Starry Dome*, 1993) and Giannis Soldatos' (*The Enigma*, 1998) adaptations. The first film is transitioning the Oedipal conflict into the European landscapes of musical, theatrical, literary and artistic tradition, through the magnification of an intertextual network that boldly links traditional patterns, for the decoding of which an informed and activated audience is required. In the second film, which takes place in the "exotic" setting of a contemporary fringe group, surviving on the edges of an urban landscape, the ancient deceit of the oracle is aligned with the fraud of jingoism and the denial of the underprivileged (criminals and prostitutes). In the aforementioned adaptations of the myth in question, there is a lack of focus on issues such as individual guilt and individual action: no murderer feels any remorse, nor is blindness interpreted as a symbolic castration. On the contrary, the two poles of the pure and the miasmal are both activated. The same is true of the presentation of the mythical beast (Sphinx) though depicted as a freak of nature and behavior: it possesses a humanized charm and sex appeal.

Panos Ch. Koutras is approaching Ancient Greek myth from a queer postmodern viewpoint. In *Real Life* (2004), motifs of popular culture are combined with tragic archetypes (the Oedipus myth) and contemporary versions of Ancient Greek tragic myth are exploited: incest (mother and father as half-siblings), patricide in the Apollonian space of Sounio, a cocaine addict offspring of an aristocratic family, as Oedipus' shadow, looking for his father; the "Kalliga house" as a postmodern tragic home overlooking the Acropolis. Koutras, in *Strella* (2009), responding to the trend of undermining heterosexual structures, is adapting the Oedipus myth into a homosexual environment. A transsexual character wishes to transform a brothel near the Ancient Keramikos cemetery into a place where a queer family will reside, while the murderer-father seeks, after his release from prison, his son. At the same time, Giorgos — the father — and the transsexual Strella / Leonidas are having a sexual relationship. The Ancient Gods become "goddesses for the transsexuals", whereas the crossing of the river acquires a symbolism of gender limits, the hermaphrodite soothsayer Tiresias warns the characters through the mouth of a dying transsexual, and the grave ritual is embellished with the argot and the sexual codes of homosexuals. Going further into the story we recognize the Aristotelian *περιπέτεια*, the bipolar schema "*hubris*/retribution" in the actions of the characters. In the same framework, *Charlie's Son* is the story of a supposed son, coming from nowhere, with an acquired identity, avenging his father, and, as an Oedipus (not a self-destructive one; this one doesn't blind himself), falling in love with his mother. In a world made up of gangsters, whores and transvestites, *Monkey Queen*, a parody of Oedipus at Colonus, is a black situation comedy. The film's hero is a Black Sea

Ulysses, a trickster and a schemer who is gradually unravelling the mysteries surrounding the lives of his ex-wife Elena Fodor and the doubts about her sexual nature, whether she is a real woman or not, and of his adopted daughter Antigone, a postmodern Lolita.<sup>16</sup>

The films *The Girl and the Horse* (1973, Vangelis Serdaris), *Naked in the Snow* (1974, Giorgos Zervoulakos) and *House on the Rocks* (1974, Giorgos Zervoulakos) demote the myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus to “soft porn” aesthetics, especially in the way the erotic relationship between an older woman and a desirable young man is presented. In Dassin’s international production of *Phaedra*,<sup>17</sup> the crew, the emblematic presence of Melina Merkouri and the development of the myth in the context of urban ship-owners give the film a salient position. We encounter this version again in the *Mist under the Sun* (1980, Nikos Ligouris). Within a similar context, we can recognise a shift towards the myth of the classical period, both as a method of expressing an emotional and erotic complexity, and as a queer reference to the ancient world, while, at the same time, an effort to project male nude beauty modeled after classical Greek paradigms is attempted. In the film *Serenity* (1958, Gregori Markopoulos), the young workers looking for ancient statues, constitute a typical example of visual representation and modernisation of ancient erotic core themes. The same is true for the ideal friendship of Achilles and Patroclus in *Our Last Spring* (1960, Michael Cacoyannis) and Orestes and Pylades in *Orestes* (1969, Vassilis Fotopoulos), the figure of Hippolytus in the films *Phaedra* (1962, Jules Dassin) and *Mist under the Sun* (1980, Nikos Ligouris), the paradigms of male and physical beauty in the films *Electric Angel* (1981, Thanassis Rentzis)<sup>18</sup> and *Cavafy* (1996, Giannis Smaragdis), and in the queer short films *Opera* (1976, Andreas Velissaropoulos), *Trojans* (1989, Constantinos Giannaris), *Antinoos* (1991, Dionissos Andronis). To a similar chapter belong the men relationships in *Symposium* (1973, Dimitris Kollatos),<sup>19</sup> in *Vortex. The Face of Medusa*, (1971, Nikos Koundouros), the English captain “seeking the ideal” in *Bordello* (1985, Nikos Koundou-

16. In the short film *Oedipus* (2001, Ioakim Mylonas), a charming woman hires a young detective. He has to solve the mystery of the disappearance of a baby that took place approximately thirty years ago.

17. See MacKinnon (1986) 98-105; Solomon (2001) 268-9.

18. *Electric Angel* is an attempt to recapitulate the multiple forms of erotic experience, both ontologically and mythologically, at a given state of civilization.

19. Exactly as in Plato’s *Symposium*, this film deals with love, judged through modern perceptions. It is analyzed through the use of recitation of ancient writings (Plato, Sappho, Lysistrata), through newspapers, debates and memories of the leadings actors themselves. Later on we also encounter an approach of Plato’s *Symposium* in a humorous version in *Love Lessons for the Revolutionary* (2007, Nikos Alevras).

ros), who mentions Adonis and loves a Greece perceived through Byron's poetry,<sup>20</sup> as well as the expressions of desire and misogyny in the man-eating Medusa that petrifies men in *Vortex. The Face of Medusa* and *Medusa* (1998, Giorgos Lazopoulos).

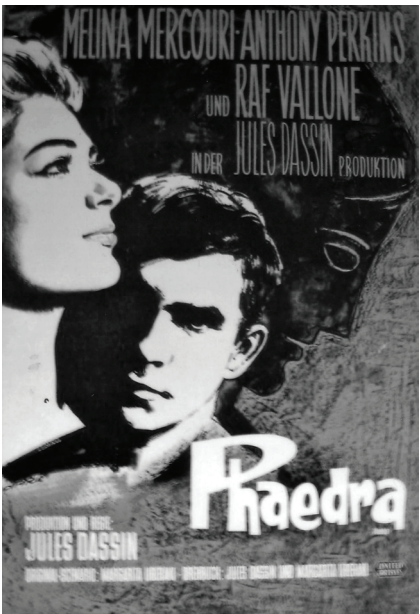
The myth of Medea,<sup>21</sup> the child-murdering sorceress, the enamoured and betrayed woman, allows for the emergence of certain early feminist images, resulting from the female emancipation in Greece, during the 1970s; this is a tendency that was later to be displaced from the focus of the adaptations, for the sake of the articulation of a discourse of alterity and within the context of a national, cultural and racial identity. In the cinematic version of the myth, the story of Medea and Jason was riveted to the romance genre, to the story of the fairy that falls in love with a mortal and assists him through magic in the vengeful mania of the expatriate, the uncharted psyche of the child-murderer. The emphasis on the atrocious crime overturns the classic conventions concerning beauty and political correctness, and presents a heroine out of the ordinary, differentiated from the models of standard female behaviour.<sup>22</sup> The theatrical setting in *A Dream of Passion* (1978, Dassin), *Summer of Medea* (1987, Babis Plaitakis), *Medea Louder than Any Thought* (2013, Nikos Grammatikos) and in the short film *Medea's Nurse* (2000, Giorgos Tzaineris) allows for the duplication of the signifiers through the "theatrical mirror"/point of view. On the other hand, the rural setting in the *Return of Medea* (1968, John Christian) and the slums of Piraeus in *Medea '70* (1969, Michalis Papanikolaou) are comprehended as repressive and nightmarish environments, allowing the outburst of an impetuous character and his descent into "undifferentiated, exceptionally strong emotional intensity". In Christian's film, apart from the contemptuous use of the heroine's name, the efficacious and self-serving Jason, who is, however, a stallion of plebeian beauty, three aspects of femininity are confronted: the power of wealth (Aleka Katseli), the passion of erotic possession (Marianna Kourakou), and youthful grace (Anna Fonsou). The second version, is closer to the stereotype of the humiliated woman who comes face to face with prejudice and jealousy, proceeding not to infanticide, but to castration of the man. In the film by Papanikolaou, the "futile erotic bravery" clashes with patriarchal structures, while the environ-

20. The film is made up of stories and hymns of praise to love, passion and the revolution of bodies and souls in a multinational world.

21. See Christie (2000) 144-65.

22. *Reflection on the Role* (2001, Freddy Vianellis) is a film about infidelity. The heroine appears in three parallel narrative courses. The third narrative course is the identification of the heroine with Medea because of the psychological pressures that have been brought about by the infidelity she experiences.





ment highlights, in its picturesque ugliness, the character's impasse. Moving on to the theatrical dimensions of the myth, we should point out the short film *Medea's Nurse*,<sup>23</sup> in which the myth is narrated by a secondary character in terms of classic dramaturgy (just before the end, the mute Medea hears the comments of an average person). In the *Summer of Medea*, we see the appearance of a foreigner in the character of the French actress, who has a hard time trying to realise her director-husband's theatrical vision, while performing the infanticide. In familiarizing herself with the particular role of *Medea*, the actress has to resort to personal experiences in order to interpret the character. This element relates this immature work to the more complete cinematic Medea of Dassin and Mercouri in *A Dream of Passion* (1978).<sup>24</sup> In this film, they balance the personal and professional problems of a theatre diva, who is about to perform Medea, with the heinous crime of infanticide committed by the cheated wife of an ambassador in Greece. The myth is interpreted through its theatrical enactment: namely, the combination of role and character, the staging of *Medea* at Delphi, and the male presence as an authoritarian director.

Twenty-five years later, a new cinematic image of the "poisoner" who wishes to defend her baby and her barbaric origin, is put forward; Callas in Pasolini's *Medea* (1970), without renouncing her identity, a woman who will be mother and lover, but also the vehicle of magic in the land of rationalism, as expressed by the seafarer and colonist Jason; a cinematic Medea, not once close to the classical theatrical idiom of the Greek National Theatre Company (1956, Katina Paxinou) and the feminist overtones of Minos Volanakis and Melina Mercouri (1975, Northern Greece National Theatre), but within the mythical language of Martha Graham's dance theatre (1946, *Cave of the Heart*) and of the "Omada Edafous (Ground Group)" (1993, Dimitris Papaioannou).

The romantic spirit saw the myth of Prometheus as a story of cosmogonic significance, a hymn to human heroism, an archetype of creation and a suggestion of the passage to a new era, beyond the writings of Hesiod and Aeschylus, the historiographic tradition and the literary development of the Alexandrians. Thus, Prometheus was perceived as the "Jesus of ancient times" and the ideal of absolute freedom and rebellious spirit. Between the first cinematic transfer of the Titan in Greek cinema (*Prometheus Bound*, 1930) by Meravidis, a recording of the performance at the Delphic Celebra-

23. Based on Euripides' *Medea*, the film comprises a new scene, which takes place a little before the end of the tragedy. The Nurse's soliloquy refers to all the murders that Medea committed from the moment Jason entered her life.

24. See MacKinnon (1986)156-61; Solomon (2001) 273-4.

tions and the second experimental attempt by Costas Ferris (*Prometheus in the Second Person*, 1975), we also possess a trilogy, written in verse by Nikos Kazantzakis (1943), the stage version by the National Theatre (Alexis Minotis, 1963 and Manos Katrakis, 1974) and the film renditions by Ivan Kavalieritze (1932), Gabor (1963), Vratoslav Mimica (1965), and Gregory Markopoulos (1967). However, the film of Ferris, as well as the later films of Costas Sfikas (*Prometheus Retrogressing*, 1998)<sup>25</sup> and Manoussos Manoussakis (*Lords*, 1978), handle the myth, at least in the case of the first two, by placing emphasis on cinematic expressive means. Ferris proceeded to an “alchemical cinema” of “pop sensitivity” and intertextual references, developing arguments about the relationship between the spectacle and the spectator, by associating the myth’s characters with various elements of cinematic technique. In Sfikas’ film, stillness, acting as a means of organizing thought, and the therapeutic self-action of Prometheus’ monologues are combined with the foundation of the artist’s myth. More traditional in its anti-authoritarian context is Manoussakis’ handling of the myth: a female theatre troupe is staging *Prometheus Bound*, commenting upon the relation of knowledge to liberty, and the mechanisms of future transposition of authority.

Two of the three<sup>26</sup> films appearing as adaptations of *Bacchae* (*Mania*, 1985, Giorgos Panoussopoulos and *Oh! Babylon*, 1989, Costas Ferris), tread the thin dividing line between the imaginary and reality, while the third (*Two Suns in the Sky*, 1991, Giorgos Stambouloupoulos), by transferring the action to the 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD, attempts a synaeresis of historiographic facts, pagan and Christian symbols and the “theatrical representational mirror”.<sup>27</sup> While in the film of Panoussopoulos, the contemporary Kithairon is the Greek National Garden where a group of children and scouts slip into Dionysian merry-making, in Ferris’ film the centre of Athens appears to be the futuristic decadent Babylon. In both films, emphasis is placed on the character of Prometheus: a neurotic and undersexed intellectual in Ferris film and a rationalistic career woman in Panoussopoulos. In Ferris post-modern visualization, while Dionysus is absent (substituted as a driving character by the projector), there is a coexistence of various types of music (ranging from jazz to African drumming), and references to painters of the imaginary and of “child

25. In this reading of Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound*, the chained rebel persists on the struggle for man’s liberation by simply speaking the words of the tragedy. See MacKinnon (1986) 111-7.

26. See *Before the Performance* (1981, Sakis Maniatis), a documentary on the performance rehearsals directed by Karolos Koun in “Art Theatre” (*Bacchae*, 1980).

27. See the presence of the actor Timotheos as a well-groomed Dionysus, who is sanctified and becomes an object of worship.

erotica" (Balthus, Dürer, Delvaux, Goya, Dali). In the more visually traditional *Mania*, symbols from folk traditions are activated, while connected to paganism, and erotic suggestions as an expression of maenadism are magnified.

### *III. Between History and Greek folklorism*

If the presence of the heroine in the park seems to fulfill the prophecy of the arrival of the fairy, in Panoussopoulos' film, in other films, the images of ancient deities-nymphs are inspired by the elements of folk tradition and their literary transcription in post-war greek poetry. The pantheistic glance transforms Artemis and Atalante into girls on remote Greek islands (*Nike of Samothrace* [1991–94] and *The Vernal Convocation of the Rural Guards* [1999] by Dimos Avdelioidis). Humans are elevated to gods and the gods acquire human form. Love is recorded in a landscape that "is in its finest hour" and becomes the mirror of natural desires (adaptations of *Daphnis and Chloë* by Longus and timeless characters of the Cretan mythological tradition in *A Brash Young Man* by Skouloudis). In *The Vernal Convocation of the Rural Guards*, elements of mythology and folk tradition are interwoven as in the cases of Alkmaion, devoured by bees because he saw the goddess naked, and of Artemis, identified with Elisso, revealing an issue of Ancient Greek moral order, under which beauty should remain unfettered. Similarly, we should look into the way the film is identified with ancient Greek thought, while the Rural Guard is identified with Cronus and time.

Beyond the threatening female figures in the short films *Nilo* (1979, Tassos Boulmetis) and *The Threat of Mormo* (1984, Costas Mazanis), we might as well mention the erotic aspects (desire and idealisation) throughout the visual transformation of the nymphs in *Testosterone* (2004, Giorgos Panoussopoulos) and *Beyond the Lake* (2007, Stavros Stassinis).<sup>28</sup> *Testosterone*, especially, is a study of the age-old battle of the sexes, against a backdrop of modern society where sexual roles are becoming increasingly difficult to play. This film may also be apprehended as a thriller, given that the protagonist is entrapped on a secluded island.

The mythology of the Underworld in Ancient Greek civilisation recalls three constant circles of worship and rituals, which may be observed in legit-

28. His goal is to understand the feminine nature and his quest to discover the "ideal woman". The grandmother Vavo is the bridge between the world of reality (the small village by the lake) and the woman of the opposite shore, the supernatural world, the natural spirit of the area.

imate cross-references: the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, the myth of Demeter and Persephone, and the myth of Hades. A concise approach to films referring to the above, leads to the general conclusion: the total of beliefs and customs confirms that the passage from mythical narrative — first to a literary and then to a cinematic reality — imposes the selective use of certain mythological motifs on the neo-mythological compositions. In the cinematic handling of the myth of Orpheus, what is predominant is the incident of his descent into the world of shadows, in order to find Eurydice, and not the post-romantic syndrome of the damned artist. Eurydice, in the film *Euridice BA 2037* (1975) by Nikos Nikolaidis, is confined to an almost sealed flat. Her story takes place behind closed doors: the expelled outside world is reminiscent of the threat of a totalitarian régime (secret files, radio stations, marches), while the murdered Orpheus assumes the form of an erotic fantasy.

From the “psychoanalytical locus” of confinement, Nikolaidis will transfer his heroine to the futuristic climate of *Morning Patrol* (1987). The obscurity of time and place remains constant throughout the film. Despite the fact that the landscape (urban, nocturnal and humid) is open, it still recalls a nightmarish claustrophobic set. The heroes are not psychologically analysed; they remain unknown, seeking their identity, receiving stimuli from the environment, while the voice-off narration substitutes the dialogue between the characters. The journey to the sea, the wandering in Hades with its shadows and human skeletons, the crossing of the river-border, the dead-end love affair with the Orpheus-sentinel, all prove the reproduction of the thematic context of the ancient myth.

On the other hand, what may be considered as an innovative element is the reversal of roles: “Eurydice” carries the dead body of poisoned “Orpheus” out of the city, while both are transformed into two shadows in the damp setting of the swamp. Finally, the emphasis on the use of the Hollywoodian film noir is characteristic, as a new mythology, encompassing the highlighted correspondence between the events on the city screens and the heroes’ lives. A similarly nightmarish setting is where the affair of ex-convict Eurydice, and Orpheus, the cashier at the super market, takes place, in Dimitris Athanitis’ *No Sympathy for the Devil* (1997). Between illusion and reality, with repetitive dialogues, the heroes’ descent and emergence from Hades takes the form of a catastrophic love developing in a world of drugs, seedy bars, cheap hotels and the city’s maze.<sup>29</sup>

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29. See also *Orpheus and Eurydice* (2000, Paul Pissanos) and the documentary *The Case of Eurydice* (2009, Freddy Vianelis).



Although the perceptions of the Underworld (Elysian Fields or Tartarus) were never unified and were subjected to great change, the cinematic portrayal of Hades usually bears resemblance to the urban landscape. The contrast between of the urban and the rural, or else between the natural and the industrial world as images of the “World and Underworld”, can be traced in (neo)folkloric aspects of the myth, as in the films *Orpheus in August* (1996, Giorgos Zervoulakos), *Earth and Water* (1999, Panos Karkanavatos) *Mourning Rock* (2000, Philippos Koutsaftis) and *Orpheus’ Path* (2013, Costas Kolimenos). In the first film, the rural area of the plains, the villages and the fêtes comprise the realm of light, while the domain of death is the city of Athens, surrounded by seedy hotels and popular music clubs. In Zervoulakos’ film, there are two deaths for Eurydice, a literal one and a metaphorical one, while the heroes’ journey between the nightmarish city-centre and an edenic countryside comprises the backbone of the film, providing the locus where the destinies of the characters unfold. The clarinet tunes of the “mute” Orpheus convey magical attributes, while, after the death of the pretty singer Eurydice, the hero stops playing and resorts to a world of silence: he seems to live conscious of the presence of death.

In the film of Karkanavatos, Orpheus is the Orthodox, rural lyre-playing Macedonian, who practices the custom of walking over hot coals. He follows his youthful love (Eurydice), experiences the violence of the Underworld (in the urban centre of prostitution, the mafia and night gangs), seeking the idealised object of his desire along parallel and non-intersecting routes. A differently planned and deserted summertime Athens is the location of the meeting between a dropout moonstruck music teacher, who attempts to put an end to his misery, and an isolated young woman who awaits for the handsome man in the full moon: Ferris, in *Double Moon in August* (1978), is circulating between fantasy and truth, the dreamlike and the schizophrenic, frustration and castration, in order to record the psychoanalytical aspect of the myth. In *Eleatis Xenos* (1996, Dimos Theos) the hero is identified with Empedocles as a physician-chemist and an enemy of violence, thus supplying — along with the musician, the guardian-angel of the myth — a stepping stone in the labyrinthine quest of the archaeologist heroine. In the final incident of the film *Lilly’s Story* (2002, Roviros Manthoulis) the “borderline aesthetic” is expressed through its poetic character and its satirical and non-tragic outlook. Among the consecutive “plots within a plot” the final incident on the island of Lesbos stands out, in which symbolic language and mythological parallels are prominent: the mysterious Sphinx at the village entrance and the blind musician as a guardian-angel against darkness and stormy weather. On the other hand, there are attempts of correlating the ashes of the ex-

patriates and the slick funeral business, while issues like the neutral borderline and the redefinition of identities are recorded under the perspective of the Mediterranean inhabitant. In Koutsaftis' documentary *Mourning Rock*, the "World and Underworld" scheme is inverted: Eleusis, as ancient sacred ground and as a violently industrialized contemporary landscape, appears, through the either verbally described or depicted events, to be a nightmarish microcosm of Greece. A sketchy version of the myth of Persephone and Demeter constitutes the starting point for screeplay writing (Kampanellis) in the folklore comedy *The Abduction of Persephone* (1956) of Grigoris Grigoriou, which aspects of rural Greece in the 1950s are satirized. This specific rendering is transposing the focus from the classic archaic grandeur to the simple folk, as it is evident in the representative microcosm of the Panochori and Katochori residents, including landlords, community archons, police sergeants, tenant farmers, sextons, teachers, town criers and schoolchildren. The Greek rural present is directly connected to the rough re-working of the myth: to the hard-working and authoritarian agricultural businesswoman Dimitra; to the intermediary police sergeant Zeus; to the amorous claims of the socially offended agriculturist landowner Pluton; and to the beauty and youthful naiveté of Persefoni. Koutsaftis proceeds to different treatment of the specific myth and the Eleusinian mysteries, by linking them to the history of an ancient town. The cultural layers of Greek timelessness can be traced in the diary entries the director made during a decade, as well as in the viewpoints of the underprivileged (refugees, workers, financial immigrants and scavengers). The director searches for "the rest of the movement, the remaining half of the movement that took place some thousand years ago", and accomplishes it by linking The Virgin Mary Mesosporitissa to Demeter; Iera Odos (the Holy Road) and the rites of the Eleusinian mysteries to images from the Orthodox Church; and the magnificence of humble things to capitalistic brutality.

The presence of Hercules in the short film of Dimitris Koutsabassakos *Hercules, Acheloos and My Granny* (1997) links the myth that portrays the demi-god fighting against Acheloos River for the claim of Deianira, with the Acheloos dam, which is under construction, and the director's centenarian grandmother, a resident of a village on Pindos sierra and exponent of folk wisdom. Hercules' second appearance concerns his descent to Hades in order to bring back Alceste, who was sacrificed for her husband, Admetus. The Balkan landscape of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century is figuratively rendered as Homer's Hades in the cinematic Nekyia and, at the same time, the jour-



ney of the Argonauts in Angelopoulos *Ulysses' Gaze* (1995).<sup>30</sup> This is equally true of *Hades* (1996)<sup>31</sup> by Stelios Charalambopoulos. In the latter, Albania is the Underworld, while Hercules' descent assumes existential dimensions. In the intertextual recreation, mythological and political elements coexist: the redefinition of the illegal immigrants' identities at the borderline as an aspect of the current political reality with the myth of the ferry-money paid for the transfer of the dead to the Underworld. Accordingly, in the first part (*Charonian Coin*)<sup>32</sup> of Pantelis Voulgaris triptych *It's a Long Road* (1997), after the discovery of the corpse of a young warrior of the Hellenistic era in Filippoi, the intellectual bourgeois archaeologist faces the repressed problem of his soldier son's suicide. Voulgaris seeks "the gods of small things": he interweaves the resurfacing personal trauma, the self-discovery pilgrimage to the Macedonian and Thracian military outposts, and the traces of the Ancient Greek myth regarding burial rituals.

If the images of the corpse and skeleton are foreign to the Ancient Greek world and the description of decay is absent, then, similarly, the terror the dead inflicting on the living by haunting them, is not present in the films that metaphorically describe the costly journey over the Styx River: *Honeymoon* (1979, Giorgos Panoussopoulos), *A Charmed Life* (1993, Patrice Vivancos), *The World Again* (2002, Nikos Cornilios). In the first two films, the actions of a group of old people in the ghettos of the elderly are recorded, while, in the third, the mystical wanderings of a group of orphan teenagers through the symbols of life's archetypal icons are documented. The bourgeois indolent world, the daring exotic journey as the great adventure right before the end, and the interpretation of the world and the escape into dreams, are rendered through comparisons with mythological symbols.

Finally, Hades and Acheron operate either as a borderline between life and death (*Etriza* 1981, Eleni Alexandraki; *Death on the Prowl* 2003; Alexandros Kollatos; *Nekya II* 1998, Alexandros Fassois), or as a border separating the world of two nations, within the context of a trip in the deserted Greek villages on the southwestern slopes of Pindos sierra (*Landscape in the Mist*, 1988, Theo Angelopoulos and *The Guardian's Son*, 2007, Dimitris Koutsibassakos). The hero of the film *Delivery* (2004, Nikos Panayotopou-

30. See Rollet (2003) 138-41.

31. The story of Evanthia, who, like another Alceste, is to descend into Hades, in the place of her husband, Admetus, underscores and "borrows" from Euripides' tragedy the "ethos" which becomes a life-stance.

32. An archaeologist who has discovered an unluted tomb of the Hellenistic period decides to seek the friends of his 20 year-old soldier son who, a year ago, set himself on fire ("A Silver Coin on the Lips", script: Giorgos Skabardonis).

los) is a fallen angel who silently traverses the city, not only like some “silent narrator” or like a “garrulous listener”, but also as a separating line between social groups in the urban landscape.

The cinematic theme of the Labyrinth and the Minotaur appears to be linked to its reading as a moral symbol of modern dramaturgy, which is an indicator of the failure of humanistic values. In Thanassis Rakintzis’ *Ariadne Lives in Leros* (1993), the labyrinth is transformed into a psychiatric institution of tormented patients on the island of Leros, and the heroine, seeking her psychopathic father, crosses the dividing line between sanity-insanity and rationality-irrationality. In Koundouros’ *Bordello* (1985), the Cretan Labyrinth assumes the form of Madame Hortense’s bordello, in Crete of 1897. Violence, self-destruction, the magnification and perversion of the sexual instinct, monstrosity, even the Picasso-like labyrinth of artistic creation (Vollard’s series of engravings), are comprehended as pertaining to this polysemous cinematic rendering of the myth.

The imaginary points to the image-making power of the re-combination of everyday events, as formed through the myths. It is beyond Nikolaidis’ futuristic version of Eurydice and the rendering of *Bacchae* by Panoussopoulos and Ferris, that the imaginary finds its primary field in shaky environments where pagan and Christian elements, folk tales and mythical narratives coexist.<sup>33</sup> Within this context, we can mention the myths relevant to Selene, Hecate, Momo, Oblivion<sup>34</sup> and Medusa. The two predominant images are those of the “Night” and the “Woman”. The “Woman” is transformed from a terrifying figure to a protective priestess mother (*The Threat of Marmo*, 1984, Costas Mazanis); to an enamoured witch (*Crystal Nights*, 1992, Tonia Marketaki); to a dangerous “b-movie femme” (*Medusa*, 1998, Giorgos Lazopoulos); or even to a promiscuous woman (*The Night with Silena*, 1986, Dimitris Panayiotatos). The moon, linked to codes of ethics, lifestyles and workstyles, religious and magical rituals, as well as lycanthropy, lunacy and corny “romantic evenings”, is revealed as a visual atmosphere in film shots of a nocturnal sky. The films by Lazopoulos and Panayiotatos are also linked, due to the adoption of a filmic perspective and a woman protagonist, whose identity is ambiguous. In *The Night with Selena*, as the hero tries to re-enact

33. See the following films: *The Devil’s Men* (1976, Costas Karayiannis); *The Enchantress* (1985, Manoussos Manoussakis); *Karkalou* (1985, Stavros Tornos); *Seas of the Night* (1990, Panos Kokkinopoulos); *Moon Runaway* (1994, Theodoros Marangos); *Bewitched* (1996, Giorgos Karypidis); *The Cistern* (2001, Christos Dimas); *The Dance of the Horses* (2001, Christos Voupouras).

34. The short film *Lithi* deals with the loss of mother is corresponding to the loss of Mother-Earth within a dim desolate world.



the memory of his teenage erotic nights through illusionary and voyeuristic situations, he experiences erotic castration and the loss of love. In *Medusa*, the Freudian theme is obvious in the black-clad lady Mida/Medusa, whose son-avenger mourns and kills as a mother and woman/beast.

Finally, in the cinematic variation of Homer's Ulysses, there is less of a replication of the pre-Homeric and post-Homeric image of the hero's political double-dealing and utilitarian cynicism, and more, for ideological purposes, of the Odyssean model of the return to the homeland. The hero assumes the traits of an-once amoral resourcefulness and the succession of characters and masks. The following films are set in the landscapes of the Odyssey: *In Search of Penelope* (1980, Dimitris Kollatos), *Ulysses' Love* (1984, Vassilis Vafeas), *The Rape of Aphrodite* (1985, Andreas Pantzis), *Ulysses' Gaze* (1995, Theo Angelopoulos), *The Road to Ithaca* (1999, Costas Dimitriou), *Evagoras' Vow* (2001, Andreas Pantzis). If there is a reversal in the film of Kollatos (husband and son searching for the lost, wandering wife and mother), what is interesting about the rest is the multiplicity in the modern Odysseus personality, the places and the emphasis attached to his wandering. Vafeas' bourgeois character seeks the dream fairy; the film director in Angelopoulos' film, searches for the lost negatives of the first Balkan film; and finally in Pantzis' film, the villager looks for the reaffirmation of his faith. The Greek island landscape, the Balkan and Cypriot inland are the films' respective settings. Vafeas proceeds to the description of a bourgeois night dream through the straight asphalt lanes, the paradise of the island's youthful bodies and popular music clubs. The bourgeois character with his self-censored desires "finds the door open and enters" the landscapes of contemporary Greece: he stands silent and sad before an irrationally comical reality, stifling the ignition of "want and desire". Exactly as in the case of Angelopoulos' cinematic heroes, who usually bear the mythologically charged names "Alexander" and "Helen", in Pantzis' trilogy the dramatic characters are constantly given similar names, for instance, "Evagoras" (ancient king of Cyprus and contemporary champion) and "Aphrodite" (a metonym for Cyprus as Aphrodite was born there). If, in *The Rape of Aphrodite*, the journey back to his home, childhood and love bring the hero to face the reality of the war-violated Cyprus-Aphrodite after the Turkish invasion, in *Evagoras' Vow*, the naïve hero proceeds to a transcendental and allegoric journey from faith and innocence to doubt, through the symbols of Orthodoxy and Dionysian ritual. Pantzis' historical films are enriched with successive intertextual references: musical (Monteverdi's *The Return of Ulysses to his Homeland*), literary (Cavafy's and Seferis' poems), folkloric (the custom of slaying a rooster to celebrate the laying of the foundations of a house).

Another group consists of films where the Odysseus myth is connected with migration and identity: *Wandering* (1979, Christophoros Christophis), *The Photograph* (1986, Niko Papatakis), *Mirupafshim* (1997, Giorgos Korras & Christos Voupouras), *Hostage* (2005, Constantinos Giannaris), *Eduart* (2006, Angeliki Antoniou), *Supplicants* (2006, Stavros Ioannou), *Eden is West* (2008, Costa-Gavras) and the documentary *Qadir. An Afghan Odysseus* (2009, Annetta Papathanassiou). Historically elliptic and poetically consistent, the roving eye of *Wandering* successfully carries on a poetic dialogue with History, or, to put it otherwise — considering the poetic character of our national myths — offers us a historical rendering of the poetic mythology of Hellenism. If *The Photograph* is an allegory in the form of a modern-day tragedy of the “misunderstandings” and deceits of Modern Greek history, as seen through the eyes of a Greek of the Diaspora, *Hostage*, is based on actual events that took place in northern Greece in the spring of 1999. The central themes of the film are, among others: emigration and homesickness, manhood, as the salient feature of identity, and the role of the mass media. All these constitute efforts of intertwining those various elements, in order to shed light on a considerably violent and tragic moment in the recent history of Greece and Albania. In *Eden is West* (*Eden à l'Ouest*), Elias is an immigrant seeking for a new home. From East to West, he will be wandering through unknown places, meeting many different people, facing attitudes and facts he formerly ignored.

In fictional documentaries on ancient sights and popular religious rituals we encounter remnants and reasonings on the co-existence of Ancient and Byzantine civilisation, of the East and the West, of love and death, of male and female: *Mycenae Polytopon 1978 – Iannis Xenakis* (1978-80, Fotis Psychramis),<sup>35</sup> *The Revolution of Silence* (1997, Myrto Paraschi),<sup>36</sup> *Epirus, Primordial Greece* (1997, Maria Hadjimichali-Papaliou), *Mourning Rock* (2000, Philippos Koutsaftis),<sup>37</sup> *Et in Arcadia, Ego* (2003, Alexandros Papailiou),<sup>38</sup> *Guardians of Time* (2002, Margarita Manda),<sup>39</sup> *The Dance*

35. An experimental documentary on the massive multimedia performance *Mycenae Polytopon* by Iannis Xenakis, which was staged at Ancient Mycenae, in September 1978.

36. The documentary portrays a personal journey which follows the footsteps of the first anchorites at a time when the ancient world was slowly dying and Christianity was becoming established.

37. Eleusis is a sacred place, a landmark and a vantage-point from where one can gaze outwards at the world as well as inwards at one's self. On this film, see also above.

38. The film is a journey, a return to Arcadia: childhood memories, the nostalgia of the immigrants and the symbolism of the Romantics shedding light in the hidden meaning of “Et in Arcadia Ego”.

39. This is a travel of some “guardians of time” through archaeological sites. The direc-

of the Horses (2001, Christos Vourouras),<sup>40</sup> *Breath of Earth* (2003, Panos Karkanevatos).<sup>41</sup> A different negotiation of the representations and ideological burdens related to the Athenian Acropolis can be seen in the films: *The Sacred Rock* (2004, Myrto Paraschi) and *Acropolis* (2001, Eva Stefani). In the first one, in which we find ourselves inside the British Museum, a young man is going through a haunting experience and when he is back to Athens his involvement in the restoration works of the Acropolis acquires a totally new meaning. The young man's life merges into the nights spent on the hill of the Acropolis following the change of seasons. On the contrary, *Acropolis* is an experimental documentary that explores the significance that our national symbol par excellence, the Acropolis, acquires in the creation of our national identity and collective memory. Comparing the "sacred rock" with the female body, a comment on the timeless exploitation of the monument is attempted in the film. In *The Bleeding Statues* (1982, Tony Lykouressis) the scenes inside the museum form a magnificent synthesis of the ancient and of the modern world, in a tragic and deeply human synthesis inside the restored Archaeological Museum of a small provincial town. In *Equinox* (1990, Nikos Cornilios) five persons cross paths briefly at the site of an archaeological dig at the time of the autumn equinox. Beside the ancient stones they will present their own modern version of the game played by their forefathers. Architecture determines the relationship between the director and the location (the archaeological site that served some function for Ancient Greeks, for their descendants is merely a riddle to be solved). The theater as a sequence of ritualistic movements, gestures, words and rhythms, dictates the constant and perpetually ineffectual attempt of these five people to communicate. Finally, statues, papyri and rituals from the ancient world are used in a manner intending to make ironic and deconstructive commentary of the relation of Modern Greeks with Ancient Greek tradition: in *Marbles* (1987, Alexis Bisticas) a young man washes the dishes, breaks them in the manner of bouzouki fans when the music stirs the blood, and returns to Athens... with Melina and the famed Parthenon Marbles; in *Black Baa...* (2005, Theodoros Marangos) an Ancient Greek philosopher sends a letter addressed to Theodorakis, a modern-day Hellene; in *Evil in the Time of Heroes* (2009, Giorgos Noussias)

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tor uses their memories and testaments to go beyond the context of purely scientific documentation.

40. An ancient ritual drama where the sacrifice to the gods is seen in its contemporary form and survival through Christianity, all through the eyes of an eight-year old boy.

41. The agricultural activities and the folk rituals of mainland Greece are interwoven with the annual cycle of nature, the cycle of the sun.

an ancient power turns every human being into Zombies. If *Athenians* (1990, Vassilis Alexakis) is the story of an ancient tragedy performed beneath the Acropolis and “the story of a tired city”, in *Backdoor* (2000, Giorgos Tsemberopoulos), dealing with the kitsch representations of ancient rituals during the military dictatorship in Greece, the director is wavering between reform and self-destruction.

Through the above presentation of examples of the mythical method (reproduction of the thematic context of the ancient myth and neo-mythological compositions motivated by certain mythological patterns), it becomes obvious that Greek filmmakers have proceeded to legitimate interminglings, using constants and variables of the mythical narrative. The modernization of ancient mythology allowed the emergence of current political symbolism. However, the dramatization of the myth rarely led to it being doubted and, even more rarely, to its cinematic satirical deconstruction. The knowledge of the myth’s layers allowed for diffraction through the layers of reality, in the cases where the director’s aesthetic obsession did not absorb the myth’s dynamics, endowed it with a geometrical codification, while also leading to the composition of a dialectic and uniform aesthetics.

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## APPENDIX

## I. INDEX OF FILMS

1. *The Adventures of Villar*. Joseph Hepp. 1924 (Short film).
2. *Delphic Celebrations. Prometheus Bound*. Dimitris Gaziadis. 1927 (Documentary).
3. *Prometheus Bound*. Dimitris Meravidis. 1930.
4. *Daphnis and Chloë*. Orestis Laskos. 1931.
5. *Don't Be Afraid of Lightning*. Pavlos Valassakis. 1947 (Short film).
6. *The Vampire*. Nikos Koundouros. 1956.
7. *The Abduction of Persephone*. Grigoris Grigoriou. 1956.
8. *Serenity*. Gregori Markopoulos. 1958.
9. *Katina Paxinou and the Ancient Theatre*. Vassilis Maros. 1959 (Short film / Documentary).
10. *Our Last Spring*. Michael Cacoyannis. 1960.
11. *Never on Sunday*. Jules Dassin. 1960.
12. *Apollo and Daphne*. Thanassis Meritzis. 1960 (Short film / Documentary).
13. *Acropolis of Athens*. Robert Manthoulis, Fotis Mestheneos & Iraklis Papadakis. 1960 (Short film / Documentary).
14. *Antigone*. Giorgos Tzavellas. 1961.
15. *Sappho, The Lesbian*. Ilias Machairas. 1961.
16. *The Birds*. Nikos Koundouros. 1961 (Short film / Documentary).
17. *Aristophanes and the Attic Comedy*. Nikos Koundouros. 1961 (Short film / Documentary).
18. *Phaedra*. Jules Dassin. 1962.
19. *Electra*. Michael Cacoyannis. 1962.
20. *Electra*. Ted Zarpas. 1962.
21. *The Land of Centaurs*. Thanassis Meritzis. 1962 (Short film / Documentary).
22. *Performance is Finished*. Minas Christidis. 1962 (Short film / Documentary).
23. *Young Aphrodites*. Nikos Koundouros. 1963.
24. *A Brash Young Man*. Manolis Skouloudis & Costas Ferris. 1963.
25. *The Land of Minos*. Nikos Chatzithanassiou. 1963 (Short film / Documentary).
26. *The Girl and the Satyrs*. Dionissis Grigoratos. 1964 (Short film / Documentary).
27. *Cyprus, Where I was Destined to Reside*. Ninos-Fenek Mikelidis. 1964 (Short film / Documentary).
28. *Olympia*. Pavlos Philippou. 1964 (Short film / Documentary).
29. *Orpheus Sing*. Vassilis Maros. 1965 (Short film / Documentary).
30. *Humans and Gods*. Robert Manthoulis & Iraklis Papadakis. 1965 (Short film / Documentary).
31. *The Virgin*. Dimis Dadiras. 1966.
32. *The Death of Alexander*. Dimitris Kollatos. 1966.
33. *No Tears for Electra*. Giannis Dalianidis. 1966.
34. *Daphnis and Chloë '66*. Mika Zacharopoulou. 1966.
35. *Kierion*. Dimos Deos. 1967-74.

36. *The Day the Fish Came Out*. Michael Cacoyannis. 1967.
37. *If All the Women of World*. Nestoras Matsas. 1967.
38. *Love in Lesbos*. Giri Sikouens. 1967.
39. *Lysistrata '67*. Dimitris Spentzos. 1967 (Short film).
40. *Return of Medea*. John Christian. 1968.
41. *Operation Apollo*. Giorgos Skalenakis. 1968.
42. *The Suitors of Penelope*. Christos Kyriakopoulos. 1968.
43. *Orestes*. Vassilis Fotopoulos. 1969.
44. *Daphnis and Chloë. The Young Lovers*. Orestis Laskos. 1969.
45. *The Odyssey of an Uprooted*. Apostolos Tegopoulos. 1969.
46. *Medea '70*. Michalis Papanikolaou. 1969 (Short film).
47. *Alone*. Andreas Thomopoulos. 1969 (Short film).
48. *Gynaikokratia*. Takis Hatzopoulos. 1969 (Short film / Documentary).
49. *Reconstruction*. Theo Angelopoulos. 1970.
50. *See Lucian*. Giorgos Emirzas. 1970.
51. *Shadows in the Saddle*. Vassilis Mauromatis. 1970.
52. *Olympia*. Tony Lykouressis. 1970 (Short film / Documentary).
53. *The Trojan Women*. Michael Cacoyannis. 1971.
54. *Vortex*. Nikos Koundouros. 1971.
55. *Olympia*. Angelos Lamprou. 1971 (Short film / Documentary).
56. *In Memoriam*. Mimis Kougioumtzis. 1971 (Short film / Documentary).
57. *Lysistrata*. Giorgos Zervoulakos. 1972.
58. *Hippocrates and Democracy*. Dimis Dadiras. 1972.
59. *Boom... Tarata-tzoum!* Errikos Thalassinis. 1972.
60. *Pella. The Land of Alexander the Great*. Michalis Papanikolaou. 1972 (Short film / Documentary).
61. *Chronicles. Collections from the "Art Theatre"*. Mimis Kougioumtzis. 1972 (Short film / Documentary).
62. *The Beauty of Death*. Nestoras Matsas. 1972 (Short film / Documentary).
63. *Symposium*. Dimitris Kollatos. 1973.
64. *Gynaikokratia*. Errikos Thalassinis. 1973.
65. *The Girl and the Horse*. Vangelis Serdaris. 1973.
66. *The Great Love Song*. Pandelis Voulgaris. 1973 (Documentary).
67. *Dionysiac Rituals in Skyros*. Giorgos Zervoulakos 1973 (Short film / Documentary).
68. *Naked in the Snow*. Giorgos Zervoulakos. 1974.
69. *House on the Rocks*. Giorgos Zervoulakos. 1974.
70. *The Travelling Players*. Theo Angelopoulos. 1975.
71. *Euridice BA 2037*. Nikos Nikolaidis. 1975.
72. *Prometheus in the Second Person*. Costas Ferris. 1975.
73. *The Devil's Men / Minotaur*. Costas Karayiannis. 1975.
74. *The Trojan Women*. Dimitris Mavrikios. 1975 (Short film).
75. *The Bull and the Statue*. Costas Nastos. 1975 (Short film / Documentary).
76. *Proceedings*. Dimos Deos. 1976.
77. *Happy Day*. Pandelis Voulgaris. 1976.
78. *Olympia*. Aggelos Sideratos. 1976 (Short film / Documentary).
79. *A Study on the Cinematic Dialectical Absolute*. Fotis Psychramis. 1976 (Documentary).
80. *Oppression*. Dimitris Vardikos. 1976 (Short film).

81. *Iphigenia*. Michael Cacoyannis. 1977.
82. *Alexander the Great. Between History and Legend*. Nestoras Matsas. 1977 (Documentary).
83. *A Dream of Passion*. Jules Dassin. 1978.
84. *Double Moon in August*. Costas Ferris. 1978.
85. *Lords*. Manoussos Manoussakis. 1978.
86. *The Nostalgia of Oedipus*. Makis Moraitis. 1978 (Short film).
87. *Angry Family*. Simos Varsamidis. 1979.
88. *For an Empty Shirt. For Some Helen*. Nontas Sarlis. 1979.
89. *Honeymoon*. Giorgos Panoussopoulos. 1979.
90. *Wandering*. Christophoros Christophis. 1979.
91. *Neilo*. Tassos Boulmetis. 1979 (Short film).
92. *From the Rehearsal to Performance*. Mimis Kougioumtzis. 1979 (Short film / Documentary).
93. *Medicine during the Period of Hippocrates*. Ioannis Grivas. 1979 (Short film / Documentary).
94. *Stage Space*. Costas Katsaropoulos. 1979 (Short film / Documentary).
95. *Epi aspalathon (On a Thorny Bush)*. Ioannis Grivas. 1979 (Short film / Documentary).
96. *The Acharnians*. Dimitris Arvanitis. 1979 (Short film / Documentary).
97. *Aristotle*. Nestoras Matsas. 1979 (Short film / Documentary).
98. *Mist under the Sun*. Nikos Ligouris. 1980.
99. *In the Search of Penelope*. Dimitris Kollatos. 1980.
100. *Mycenae Polytopon 1978- Iannis Xenakis*. Fotis Psychramis. 1978-80 (Documentary).
101. *Acropolis-Acropolis*. Giannis Petropoulakis. 1980 (Short film).
102. *Democritos*. Nestoras Matsas. 1979 (Short film / Documentary).
103. *Aristarchos*. Nestoras Matsas. 1979 (Short film / Documentary).
104. *Before the Performance*. Sakis Maniatis. 1981 (Documentary).
105. *Electric Angel*. Thanassis Rentzis. 1981.
106. *Etriza*. Eleni Alexandraki. 1981 (Short film).
107. *When the Greeks*. Lakis Papastathis. 1981.
108. *The Bleeding Statues*. Tony Lykouressis. 1982.
109. *At Colonus*. Lefteris Xanthopoulos. 1983 (Short film / Documentary).
110. *Perseus*. Giannis Tsitsimpidas. 1983 (Short film / Documentary).
111. *Eroticism in Ancient Art*. Dinos Mavroidis. 1983 (Short film / Documentary).
112. *Voyage to Cythera*. Theo Angelopoulos. 1984.
113. *The Tragedy of Hippolytus*. Karolos Zonaras. 1984.
114. *The Love of Ulysses*. Vassilis Vafeas. 1984.
115. *This is the Balkans*. Vassilis Boudouris. 1984.
116. *The Threat of Mormo*. Costas Mazanis. 1984 (Short film).
117. *To Argos*. Thanassis Rakintzis. 1984 (Short film).
118. *Eleusina*. Takis Papagiannidis. 1984 (Short film / Documentary).
119. *Battle for the Acropolis*. Vassilis Maros. 1984 (Short film / Documentary).
120. *Bordello*. Nikos Koundouros. 1985.
121. *Mania*. Giorgos Panoussopoulos. 1985.
122. *The Rape of Aphrodite*. Andreas Pantzis. 1985.
123. *The Enchantress*. Manoussos Manoussakis. 1985.
124. *Karkalou*. Stavros Tornes. 1985.
125. *Mary and the Feathered Nights*. Eleni Alexandraki. 1985 (Short film).

126. *The Photograph*. Nico Papatakis. 1986.
127. *The Night with Silena*. Dimitris Panayotatos. 1986.
128. *Delos*. Thanassis Rakintzis. 1986 (Documentary).
129. *The Masks of Ancient Drama*. Mimis Kougioumtzis. 1986 (Short film / Documentary).
130. *Afaia*. Patroklos Stellakis. 1986 (Short film / Documentary).
131. *Morning Patrol*. Nikos Nikolaidis. 1987.
132. *Summer of Medea*. Babis Plaitakis. 1987.
133. *The Children of Helidona*. Costas Vrettakos. 1987.
134. *Prometheus*. Thomas Keramidiotis. 1987 (Short film / Documentary).
135. *Persephone*. Angeliki Antoniou. 1987 (Short film / Documentary).
136. *Modest Gods*. Philippos Koutsaftis. 1987 (Short film / Documentary).
137. *Ancient Greek Theatres*. Costas Nastos. 1987 (Short film / Documentary).
138. *Iphigeniae*. Dimitris Mavrikios. 1987 (Short film).
139. *Landscape in the Mist*. Theo Angelopoulos. 1988.
140. *Dion*. Tassos Psarras. 1988 (Short film / Documentary).
141. *Oh! Babylon*. Costas Ferris. 1989.
142. *Trojans*. Constantinos Giannaris. 1989 (Short film).
143. *The Marbles*. Alexis Bisticas. 1989 (Short film).
144. *Zeus Lykaion*. Vaggelis Kazan. 1989 (Short film / Documentary).
145. *The Parthenon Marbles*. Stavros Ioannou. 1989 (Short film / Documentary).
146. *Athenians*. Vassilis Alexakis. 1990.
147. *Dream Factory*. Tassos Boulmetis. 1990.
148. *The Eye of Dionysus*. Alekos Xirotiris. 1990 (Short film / Documentary).
149. *Nemesis*. Manolis Kouanis. 1990 (Short film / Documentary).
150. *Two Suns in the Sky*. Giorgos Stambouloupoulos. 1991.
151. *The Years of the Big Heat*. Frida Liappa. 1991.
152. *Der Fall Ö*. Rainer Simon. 1991.
153. *Nike of Samothrace*. Dimos Avdeliodis. 1991-94.
154. *Equinox*. Nikos Cornilios. 1991.
155. *Antinoos*. Dionisios Andronis. 1991 (Short film).
156. *Artemis of Brauron*. Charis Andreou. 1991 (Short film / Documentary).
157. *Chrystal Nights*. Tonia Marketaki. 1992.
158. *Oniromirografes*. Spyros Rasidakis. 1992 (Short film).
159. *The Return of Persephone*. Georgia Nikoltsiou. 1992 (Short film / Documentary).
160. *The Starry Dome*. Costas Aristopoulos. 1993.
161. *A Daring Story*. Dimitris Makris. 1993.
162. *Ariadne Lives in Leros*. Thanassis Rakintzis. 1993.
163. *A Charmed Life*. Patrice Vivancos. 1993.
164. *From Legends and Ballads*. Vassilis Xidis. 1993 (Documentary).
165. *Time Sleeps in the Orient*. Nikos Anagnostopoulos. 1993 (Documentary).
166. *The Right and the Wrong Arguments*. Lena Voudouri. 1993 (Documentary).
167. *Goodbye, Socrates*. Dimitris Babanikos. 1993 (Short film).
168. *Oreste a Tor Bella Monaca*. Karolos Zonaras. 1993 (Short film).
169. *Moon Runaway*. Theodoros Marangos. 1994.
170. *The Origins of Tragedy*. Stavros Ioannou. 1994 (Documentary).
171. *Ade e Core*. Karolos Zonaras. 1994 (Short film).
172. *Heniochos – The Charioteer*. Alexis Damianos. 1995.



173. *Ulysses' Gaze*. Theo Angelopoulos. 1995.
174. *Orpheus Descending*. Giorgos Zervoulakos. 1995.
175. *Bewitched*. Giorgos Karipidis. 1995.
176. *Artemis*. Panos Zenelis. 1995 (Documentary).
177. *Meri-Amen*. Thomas Moschopoulos. 1995 (Documentary).
178. *Modern Greek Tragedy*. Elli Ventoura. 1995 (Short film).
179. *Elatia*. Dimitris Traggalos. 1995 (Short film).
180. *Stranger from Elea*. Dimos Theos. 1996
181. *Hades*. Stelios Charalambopoulos. 1996
182. *The Slaughter of The Cock*. Andreas Pantzis. 1996.
183. *Medusa*. Giorgos Lazopoulos. 1996.
184. *Maria-Electra*. Stella Belessi. 1996.
185. *Cavafy*. Giannis Smaragdis. 1996.
186. *Lysippos Created*. Nikos Fragias. 1996 (Documentary).
187. *Idaeon Myths*. Lefteris Haronitis. 1996-99 (Documentary).
188. *A Hellenic Parody (We Greeks)*. Iordanis Ananiadis. 1996 (Short film).
189. *Desert Sky*. Nikos Cornilios. 1997.
190. *It's a Long Road*. Pandelis Voulgaris. 1997
191. *The Golden Apples of the Hesperides*. Sofia Papachristou. 1997.
192. *No Sympathy for the Devil*. Dimitris Athanitis. 1997.
193. *Mirupafshim (So Long)*. Giorgos Korras & Christos Voupouras. 1997.
194. *The Revolution of Silence*. Myrto Paraschi. 1997 (Documentary).
195. *Epirus. Primordial Greece*. Maria Hadjimichali-Papaliou. 1997 (Documentary).
196. *Heracles, Acheloos and My Granny*. Dimitris Koutsiabassakos. 1997 (Short film).
197. *The Photographers*. Nikos Koundouros. 1998.
198. *Black Out*. Menelaos Karamagiolis. 1998.
199. *Prometheus Retrogressing*. Costas Sfikas. 1998.
200. *The Enigma*. Giannis Soldatos. 1998.
201. *Nekyia II*. Alexandros Fasois. 1998 (Documentary).
202. *The Vernal Convocation of the Rural Guards*. Dimos Avdeliodis. 1999.
203. *The Monkey Queen*. Christophoros Christophis. 1999.
204. *Earth and Water*. Panos Karkanevatos. 1999.
205. *The Road to Ithaca*. Costas Dimitriou. 1999.
206. *Mourning Rock*. Philippos Koutsaftis. 2000 (Documentary).
207. *Backdoor*. Giorgos Tsemberopoulos. 2000.
208. *Orpheus and Eurydice*. Paul Pissanos. 2000
209. *Mediterranean Stories*. Stelios Charalambopoulos. 2000 (Documentary).
210. *Medea's Nurse*. Giorgos Tzaneris. 2000 (Short film).
211. *Thief or Reality. Three Versions*. Antouanetta Angelidi. 2001.
212. *Evagoras' Vow*. Andreas Pantzis. 2001.
213. *Reflection on the Role*. Freddy Vianelis. 2001.
214. *The Cistern*. Christos Dimas. 2001.
215. *Acropolis*. Eva Stefani. 2001 (Documentary).
216. *The Dance of the Horses*. Christos Voupouras. 2001 (Documentary).
217. *Lilly's Story*. Robert Manthoulis. 2002
218. *The World Again*. Nikos Cornilios. 2002.
219. *Ariadne*. Giorgos Kordelas. 2002.

220. *Guardians of Time*. Margarita Manda. 2002 (Documentary).
221. *Ancient Greek's Symposium (Part 2)*. Dimitris Vorris. 2002 (Short film).
222. *Pandora and Plato*. Nikos Vergitsis & George Nikoulas. 2002 (Short film).
223. *Death on the Prowl*. Alexandros Kollatos. 2003.
224. *Breath of Earth*. Panos Karkanevatos. 2003.
225. *All the Weight of the World*. Thanos Anastopoulos. 2003.
226. *Et in Arcadia Ego*. Alexandros Papailiou. 2003 (Documentary).
227. *The Aegean in the Words of the Poets*. Loukia Rikaki. 2003 (Documentary).
228. *Real Life*. Panos Ch. Koutras. 2004.
229. *Trilogy. The Weeping Meadow*. Theo Angelopoulos. 2004.
230. *Delivery*. Nikos Panayotopoulos. 2004.
231. *Testosterone*. Giorgos Panoussopoulos. 2004.
232. *The Sacred Rock*. Myrto Paraschi. 2004 (Documentary).
233. *Olympic Champions of Crete*. Lefteris Haronitis. 2004 (Documentary).
234. *Hostage*. Constantinos Giannaris. 2005.
235. *Icarus' Dream*. Costas Natsis. 2005.
236. *Black Baaa...* Theodoros Marangos. 2005 (Documentary).
237. *The Ring*. Andreas Apostolidis. 2005 (Documentary).
238. *Eduart*. Angeliki Antoniou. 2006.
239. *The Abduction of Europe*. Angelos Spartalis. 2006.
240. *Supplicants*. Stavros Ioannou. 2006 (Documentary).
241. *Pharmakon*. Ioakim Mylonas. 2006 (Short film).
242. *The Guardian's Son*. Dimitris Koutsabassakos. 2007.
243. *Pandora*. Giorgos Stambouloupoulos. 2007.
244. *Beyond the Lake*. Stavros Stassinis. 2007.
245. *Love Lessons for the Revolutionary Action*. Nikos Alevras. 2007 (Documentary).
246. *Styx*. Alexia Roiter. 2007 (Short film).
247. *Pyrgos-Parthenon*. Panos Karkanevatos. 2007 (Documentary).
248. *Eden is West*. Costa-Gavras. 2008.
249. *Charlie's Son*. Karolos Zonaras. 2008.
250. *Minor Freedoms*. Costas Zapas. 2008.
251. *Evil in the Time of Heroes*. Giorgos Nousias. 2009.
252. *Strella*. Panos Ch. Koutras. 2009.
253. *Plato's Academy*. Philippos Tsitos. 2009.
254. *Qadir. An Afghan Udyseus*. Annetta Papathanassiou. 2009 (Documentary).
255. *The Case of Eurydice*. Freddy Vianelis. 2009 (Documentary).
256. *Lithi*. Gavril Tzafkas. 2009 (Short film).
257. *Gadfly. The Riders of Pylos*. Nikos Kalogeropoulos. 2010.
258. *Arcadia Lost*. Phedon Papamichael Jr. 2010.
259. *Oedipus*. Ioakim Mylonas. 2011 (Short film).
260. *About Love Reason. Plato's Symposium*. Dimitris Makris. 2011 (Documentary).
261. *Venus in the Garden*. Telemachos Alexiou. 2011.
262. *Dos*. Stathis Athanassiou. 2011.
263. *My Blood*. Diamantis Karanastassis. 2012.
264. *On the Other Side*. Theodoris Vournas. 2012 (Short film).
265. *The Telemachy*. Alexander Nally. 2012.
266. *Recycling Medea*. Asteris Koutoulas. 2013 (Documentary).

267. *Medea Louder than Any Thought*. Nikos Grammatikos. 2013 (Documentary).
268. *Orpheus' Path*. Costas Kolimenos. 2013.
269. *Standing Aside, Watching*. Giorgos Servetas. 2013.

## II. CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO MYTHICAL NARRATIVES

PROMETHEUS: *Prometheus Bound* (1930, Dimitris Meravidis). *Prometheus in the Second Person* (1975, Costas Ferris). *Lords* (1978, Manoussos Manoussakis). *Prometheus* (1987, Thomas Keramidiotis). *Prometheus Retrogressing* (1998, Costas Sfikas).

DIONYSUS – BACCHAE – PENTHEUS – AGAVE: *Before the Performance* (1981, Sakis Maniatis). *Mania* (1985, Giorgos Panoussopoulos). *Oh! Babylon* (1989, Costas Ferris). *The Eye of Dionysus* (1990, Alekos Xirotiris). *Two Suns in the Sky* (1991, Giorgos Stambouloupoulos).

PERSEPHONE – DEMETER – HADES: *The Abduction of Persephone* (1956, Grigoris Gregoriou). *Persephone* (1987, Angeliki Antoniou). *The Return of Persephone* (1992, Georgia Nikoltsiou). *Mourning Rock* (2000, Philippos Koutsafitis).

HERCULES – ALCESTE – ADMETUS: *Hades* (1996, Stelios Charalambopoulos). *Heracles, Acheloos and My Granny* (1997, Dimitris Koutsiabassakos).

HECATE: *Crystal Nights* (1992, Tonia Marketaki).

CHARON – STYX RIVER – ACHERON: *Honeymoon* (1979, Giorgos Panoussopoulos). *Etriza* (1981, Eleni Alexandraki). *Landscape in the Mist* (1988, Theo Angelopoulos). *A Charmed Life* (1993, Patrice Vivancos). *It's a Long Road* (1997, Pandelis Voulgaris). *Nekya II* (1998, Alexandros Fassois). *The World Again* (2002, Nikos Cornilios). *Death on the Prowl* (2003, Alexandros Kollatos). *Delivery* (2004, Nikos Panayotopoulos). *The Guardian's Son* (2007, Dimitris Koutsiabassakos). *Styx* (2007, Alexia Roiter).

NEMESIS: *Nemesis* (1990, Manolis Kouanis).

LITHI: *Lithi* (2009, Gavril Tzafkas).

ULYSSES AND THE ODYSSEY: *The Suitors of Penelope* (1978, Christos Kyriakopoulos). *The Odyssey of an Uprooted* (1969, Apostolos Tegopoulos). *Wandering* (1979, Christopher Christophis). *In Search of Penelope* (1980, Dimitris Kollatos). *Ulysses' Love* (1984, Vassilis Vafeas). *Voyage to Cythera* (1984, Theo Angelopoulos). *The Rope of Aphrodite* (1985, Andreas Pantzis). *The Photograph* (1986, Nico Papatakis). *Oniromirografes* (1992, Spyros Rasidakis). *Ulysses' Gaze* (1995, Theo Angelopoulos). *Slaying of the Cock* (1996 Andreas Pantzis). *Mirupafshim. So Long* (1997, Giorgos Korras & Christos Voupouras). *The Road to Ithaca* (1999, Costas Dimitriou). *Evagoras' Vow* (2001, Andreas Pantzis). *Hostage* (2005, Constantinos Giannaris). *Eduart* (2006, Angeliki Antoniou). *Supplicants* (2006, Stavros Ioannou). *Eden is West* (2008, Costa-Gavras). *Qadir. An Afghan Udyssesus* (2009, Anneta Papathanassiou). *The Telemachy* (2012, Alexander Nally).

AGAMEMNON – CLYTEMNESTRA – ORESTES – ELECTRA: *Electra* (1962, Michael Cacoyannis). *No Tears for Electra* (1967, Giannis Dalianidis). *Orestes* (1969, Va-

silis Fotopoulos). *Reconstruction* (1970, Theo Angelopoulos). *The Trojan Women* (1971, Michael Cacoyannis). *The Travelling Players* (1975, Theo Angelopoulos). *The Trojan Women* (1975, Dimitris Mavrikios). *Iphigenia* (1977, Michael Cacoyannis). *For an Empty Shirt. For Some Helen.* (1979, Nontas Sarlis). *Angry Family* (1979, Simos Varsamidis). *Atreids* (1987, Dimitris Mavrikios). *The Years of the Big Heat* (1991, Frida Liappa). *Maria-Electra* (1996, Stella Belessi). *Real Life* (2004, Panos Ch. Koutras). *Minor Freedoms* (2008, Costas Zapas).

ACHILLES AND THE TROJAN WAR: *Our Last Spring* (1960, Michael Cacoyannis). AJAX: *Hostage* (2005, Constantinos Giannaris). EVAGORAS: *Evagoras' Vow* (2001, Andreas Pantzis).

LABDACIDS [OEDIPUS – ANTIGONE – TIRESIAS – CADMUS – JOCASTA]: *Antigone* (1961, Giorgos Tzavellas). *Proceedings* (1976, Dimos Deos). *Nostalgia of Oedipus* (1978, Makis Moraitis). *Dream Factory* (1990, Tassos Boulmetis). *Der Fall Ö* (1991, Rainer Simon). *Desert Sky* (1997, Nikos Cornilios). *The Enigma* (1998, Giannis Soldatos). *The Photographers* (1998, Nikos Koundouros). *Monkey Queen* (1999, Christophoros Christofis). *Thief or Reality. Three Versions* (2001, Antouanetta Angelidi). *Trilogy. The Weeping Meadow* (2004, Theo Angelopoulos). *Charlie's Son* (2008, Karolos Zonaras). *Strella* (2009, Panos Ch. Koutras). *Oedipus* (2011, Ioakim Mylonas). *Blood* (2012, Diamantis Karanastasis). *Standing Aside, Watching* (2013, Giorgos Servetas).

JASON, MEDEA AND THE ARGONAUTS: *Return of Medea* (1968, John Christian). *Medea '70* (1969, Michalis Papanikolaou). *A Dream of Passion* (1978, Jules Dassin). *Summer of Medea* (1987, Babis Plaitakis). *Medea's Nurse* (2000, Giorgos Tzaneris). *Reflection on the Role* (2001, Freddy Vianellis). *Recycling Medea* (2013, Asteris Koutoulas). *Medea Louder than Any Thought* (2013, Nikos Grammatikos).

PHAEDRA – HIPPOLYTUS: *Phaedra* (1962, Jules Dassin). *The Girl and the Horse* (1973, Vangelis Serdaris). *Naked in the Snow* (1974, Giorgos Zervoulakos). *House on the Rocks* (1974, Giorgos Zervoulakos). *Mist under the Sun* (1980, Nikos Ligouris). *Dos* (2011, Stathis Athanassiou).

THESEUS – ARIADNE – MINOTAUR: *The Land of Minos* (1963, Nikos Chatzithanassiou). *The Devil's Men. Minotaur* (1975, Costas Karayiannis). *Bordello* (1985, Nikos Koundouros). *Ariadne Lives in Leros* (1993, Thanassis Rakintzis). *Olympic Champions of Crete Ariadne* (2004, Lefteris Haronitis, 2002, Giorgos Kordelas). *Ariadne* (2002, Giorgos Kordelas).

ORPHEUS – EURYDICE: *Eurydice BA 2037* (1975, Nikos Nikolaidis). *Double Moon in August* (1978, Costas Ferris). *Morning Patrol* (1987, Nikos Nikolaidis). *The Stranger of Elea* (1996, Dimos Theos). *Orpheus Descending* (1996, Giorgos Zervoulakos). *No Sympathy for the Devil* (1997, Dimitris Athanitis). *Earth and Water* (1999, Panos Karkanevatos). *Orpheus and Eurydice* (2000, Paul Pissanos). *Lilly's Story* (2002, Robert Manthoulis). *The Case of Eurydice* (2009, Freddy Vianellis). *Orpheus' Path* (2013, Costas Kolimenos). SELENE: *The Night with Silena* (1986, Dimitris Panayiotatos).

PERSEUS – MEDUSA: *Vortex* (1971, Nikos Koundouros). *Medusa* (1998, Giorgos Lazopoulos). EUROPE: *The Abduction of Europe* (2006, Angelos Spartalis). ATLAS: *All the Weight of the World* (2003, Thanos Anastopoulos).

ALKMAION: *The Vernal Convocation of the Rural Guards* (1999, Dimos Avdeliodis).

DAPHNIS AND CHLOË: *Daphnis and Chloë* (1931, Orestis Laskos). *Young Aphrodites* (1963, Nikos Koundouros). *Daphnis and Chloë '66* (1966, Mika Zacharopoulou). *Daphnis and Chloë. The Young Lovers* (1969, Orestis Laskos).

PHAETHON: *Black Out* (1998, Menelaos Karamagiolis).

ARTEMIS, ATALANTE: *Artemis of Brauron* (1991, Charis Andreou). *Nike of Samothrace* (1991-94, Dimos Avdeliodis). PAN: *A Brash Young Man* (1963, Manolis Skouloudis & Costas Ferris).

NYMPHES: *Apollo and Daphne* (1960, Thanassis Meritzis). *A Brash Young Man* (1963, Manolis Skouloudis & Costas Ferris). *The Girl and the Satyrs* (1964, Dionyssi Grigoratos). *Neilo* (1979, Tassos Boulmetis). *Testosterone* (2004, Giorgos Panoussopoulos). *Beyond the Lake* (2007, Stavros Stassinis).

MARMO: *The Threat of Marmo* (1984, Costas Mazanis).

AURORA: *A Daring Story* (1993, Dimitris Makris).

PANDORA: *The Day the Fish Came Out* (1966-67, Michael Cacoyannis). *Pandora* (2007, Giorgos Stambouloupoulos).

### III. CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO THEMATIC FOCUS

(Matters concerning reception, categorization and classification. Reception in modern Greece and its relation to Greek Political History)

1. ANCIENT GREEK DRAMA (ADAPTATIONS): *Delphic Celebrations. Prometheus Bound* (1927, Dimitris Gaziadis). *Prometheus Bound* (1930, Dimitris Meravidis). *Antigone* (1961, Giorgos Tzavellas). *Phaedra* (1962, Jules Dassin). *Electra* (1962, Michael Cacoyannis). *Electra* (1962, Ted Zarpas). *The Virgin*. (1966, Dimis Dadiras). *No Tears for Electra* (1966, Giannis Dalianidis). *If All the Women of World* (1967, Nestoras Matsas). *Lysistrata '67* (1967, Dimitris Spentzos). *Return of Medea* (1968, John Christian). *Orestes* (1969, Vassilis Fotopoulos). *Medea '70* (1969, Michalis Papanikolaou). *Reconstruction*. (1970, Theo Angelopoulos). *The Trojan Women* (1971, Michael Cacoyannis). *Lysistrata*. (1972, Giorgos Zervoulakos). *Gynaikokratia* (1973, Errikos Thalassinis). *The Girl and the Horse* (1973, Vangelis Serdaris). *Naked in the Snow* (1974, Giorgos Zervoulakos). *House on the Rocks* (1974, Giorgos Zervoulakos). *The Travelling Players* (1975, Theo Angelopoulos). *Prometheus in the Second Person* (1975, Costas Ferris). *The Trojan Women* (1975, Dimitris Mavrikiou). *Proceedings* (1976, Dimos Deos). *Iphigenia* (1977, Michael Cacoyannis). *A Dream of Passion* (1978, Jules Dassin). *Lords* (1978, Manoussos Manoussakis). *The Nostalgia of Oedipus* (1978, Makis Moraitis). *Angry Family* (1979, Simos Varsamidis). *For an Empty Shirt. For Some Helen* (1979, Nontas Sarlis). *Mist under the Sun* (1980, Nikos Li-gouris). *Mania* (1985, Giorgos Panoussopoulos). *Summer of Medea* (1987, Babis Plaitakis). *The Children of Helidona* (1987, Costas Vrettakos). *Iphigeniae* (1987, Dimitris Mavrikiou). *Oh! Babylon* (1989, Costas Ferris). *Athenians* (1990, Vassilis Alexakis). *Two Suns in the Sky* (1991, Giorgos Stambouloupoulos). *The Years of the Big Heat* (1991, Frida Liappa).



*The Starry Dome* (1993, Costas Aristopoulos). *The Right and the Wrong Arguments* (1993, Lena Voudouri). *The Origins of Tragedy* (1994, Stavros Ioannou). *Hades* (1996, Stelios Charalambopoulos). *Maria-Electra* (1996, Stella Belessi). *Desert Sky* (1997, Nikos Cornilios). *The Protographers* (1998, Nikos Koundouros). *Prometheus Retrogressing* (1998, Costas Sfikas). *The Enigma* (1998, Giannis Soldatos). *The Monkey Queen* (1999, Christophoros Christophis). *Medea's Nurse* (2000, Giorgos Tzaneris). *Thief or Reality. Three Versions* (2001, Antouanetta Angelidi). *Reflection on the Role* (2001, Freddy Vianelis). *Real Life* (2004, Panos Ch. Koutras). *Trilogy. The Weeping Meadow* (2004, Theo Angelopoulos). *Hostage* (2005, Constantinos Giannaris). *Charlie's Son* (2008, Karolos Zonaras). *Minor Freedoms* (2008, Costas Zapas). *Strella* (2009, Panos Ch. Koutras). *Oedipus* (2011, Ioakim Mylonas). *My Blood* (2012, Diamantis Karanastassis). *Recycling Medea* (2013, Asteris Koutoulas). *Medea Louder than Any Thought* (2013, Nikos Grammatikos).

2. SYMBOLIC MEANING OF THE FILM TITLE: *Sappho, The Lesbian* (1961, Ilias Machairas). *Kierion* (1967/1974, Demos Theos). *Heniochos - The Charioteer* (1995, Alexis Damianos). *The Golden Apples of the Hesperides*. (1997, Sofia Papachristou). *Ancient Greek's Symposium (Part 2)* (2002, Dimitris Vorris). *Pandora and Plato* (2002, Nikos Vergitsis & George Nikoulis). *Icarus' Dream* (2005, Costas Natsis). *Pharmakon* (2006, Ioakim Mylonas). *Pandora* (2007, George Stambouloupoulos). *Plato's Academy* (2009, Philippos Tsitos).

3. HELLINISM AND DIASPORA: *The Odyssey of an Uprooted* (1969, Apostolos Teopopoulos). *Wandering* (1979, Christophoros Christophis). *Voyage to Cythera* (1984, Theo Angelopoulos). *The Rope of Aphrodite* (1985, Andreas Pantzis). *The Photograph* (1986, Nico Papatakis). *Ulysses' Gaze* (1995, Theo Angelopoulos).

4. TOURIST PROMOTION OF THE COUNTRY. THE NATIONALISTIC. VERSION OF ANCIENT GLORY COMIC VARIATIONS: *Never on Sunday* (1960, Jules Dassin). *Loves in Lesbo* (1967, Giri Sikouens). *Operation Apollo* (1968, Giorgos Skalenakis). *Shadows in the Saddle* (1970, Vassilis Mauromatis). *Boom... Tarata-tzoum!* (1972, Errikos Thalassinos). *Hippocrates and Democracy* (1972, Dimis Dadiras). *Gynaikokratia* (1973, Errikos Thalassinos). *Alexander the Great. Between History and Myth* (1977, Nestoras Matsas).

5. A SARCASTIC JUXTAPOSITION AND DECONSTRUCTION: *The Adventures of Villar* (1924, Joseph Hepp). *The Vampire* (1956, Nikos Koundouros). *Never on Sunday* (1960, Jules Dassin). *The Day the Fish Came Out* (1966-67, Michael Cacoyannis). *When the Greeks* (1981, Lakis Papastathis). *Athenians* (1990, Vassilis Alexakis). *A Hellenic Parody (We Greeks)* (1996, Iordanis Ananiadis). *Backdoor* (2000, Giorgos Tsemberopoulos). *Acropolis* (2001, Eva Stefani). *The Sacred Rock* (2004, Myrto Paraschi). *Black Baaa...* (2005, Theodoros Marangos). *Evil in the Time of Heroes* (2009, Giorgos Nousias). *Gadfly. The Riders of Pylos* (2010, Nikos Kalogeropoulos). *Standing Aside, Watching* (2013, Giorgos Servetas).

6. POLITICAL HISTORY. MODERN GREEK POETS, RITUALS: *Cyprus, Where I was Destined to Reside* (1964, Ninos-Fenek Mikelidis). *The Travelling Players* (1975, Theo Angelopoulos). *Happy Day* (1976, Pandelis Voulgaris). *Epi aspalathon (On a Thorny Bush)* (1979, Ioannis Grivas). *The Children of Helidona* (1987, Costas Vrettakos). *The Right and the Wrong Arguments* (1993, Lena Voudouri). *The Aegean in the Words of the Poets* (2003, Loukia Rikaki). *Giorgios Seferis, the Poet, in the Land of Eclipse* (2003-07, Andreas Pantzis).

7. FILMING THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES AND RITUALS: *Delphic Celebrations*. *Prometheus Bound* (1927). *Prometheus Bound* (1928/1930, Dimitris Meravidis). *Katina Paxinou and the Ancient Theatre* (1959, Vasillis Maros). *The Birds* (1961, Nikos Koundouros). *Electra* (1962, Ted Zarpas). *Performance is Finished* (1962, Minas Christidis). *Alone* (1969, Andreas Thomopoulos). *In Memoriam* (1971, Mimis Kougioumtzis), *Chronicles. Collections from the "Art Theatre"*. (1972, Mimis Kougioumtzis). *From the Rehearsal to Performance* (1979, Mimis Kougioumtzis). *The Acharnians* (1979, Dimitris Arvanitis). *Myce-nae Polytopon 1978-Iannis Xenakis* (1978-80, Fotis Psychramis). *The Origins of Tragedy* (1994, Stavros Ioannou). *Lysippos Created* (1996, Nikos Fragias).

8. STATUES AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES: *The Adventures of Villar* (1924, Joseph Hepp). *Serenity* (1958, Gregori Markopoulos). *The Death of Alexander* (1966, Dimitris Kollatos). *The Great Love Song* (1973, Pandelis Voulgaris). *The Bull and the Statue* (1975, Costas Nastos). *A Study on the Cinematic Dialectical Absolute* (1976, Fotis Psychramis). *The Bleeding Statues* (1982, Tony Lykouressis). *Modest Gods* (1987, Philippos Koutsaftis). *Ancient Greek Theatres* (1987, Costas Nastos). *Artemis of Brauron* (1991, Charis Andreou). *Equinox* (1991, Nikos Cornilios). *Cavafy* (1996, Giannis Smaragdis). *Guardians of Time* (2002, Margarita Manda). *The Ring* (2005, Andreas Apostolidis).

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UNIVERSITY OF PATRAS  
kyriakos0302@hotmail.com



### Abstract

The present article outlines the relationship between Greek cinema and themes from ancient Greek mythology and drama during the period from 1930 to 2012. It undertakes to examine for the first time more than 260 Greek films of various lengths whose subject is based on

ancient Greek tragedy and comedy, ancient archetypes, mythical heroes, and archeological landscapes. The study includes a classification of the films and commentary. Films are first classified according to their narrative, and are then placed into sub-categories according to their theatrical, political, psychoanalytical and ethnological material. The films of major Greek directors (Cacoyannis, Koundouros, Tzavellas, Angelopoulos) are examined along with works of lesser known filmmakers.