



## METADATA

**Title:** Ancient Greek myths and tragedies in 20th century opera

**Other Titles:** -

**Language:** Greek

**Authors:** Kordellou, A., Special Teaching Staff, UPATRAS

**ISBN:** 978-618-228-071-3

**Subject:** LAW AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, HUMANITIES AND ARTS

**Keywords:** Contemporary music / Music theatre / 20th century opera / Ancient Greek tragedy / Ancient Greek myths

**Bibliographic Reference:** Kordellou, A. (2023). Ancient Greek myths and tragedies in 20th century opera [Undergraduate textbook]. Kallipos, Open Academic Editions. <http://dx.doi.org/10.57713/kallipos-303>

## Abstract

Considering not only the interest of composers and librettists of the 20th century for the ancient Greek tragedies, but also the intertemporal presence of ancient Greek myths in the operatic creation, the present essay aims at presenting and studying librettos inspired by ancient Greek themes and myths. The first chapter examines the librettos in which the central figure is god Dionysus and the persons related to him (mainly the Bacchae). Librettos of operas concerning the House of Labdacids –as these myths are mentioned in the ancient dramas of the Theban cycle with Oedipus and Antigone as their main characters– are studied in the second chapter. The following chapter examines operas based on persons and events from the House of the Atreids. Emphasis is given to librettos based on relevant ancient tragedies (e.g. the trilogy Oresteia). The fourth chapter presents operas that refer to tragedies

related to the outcome of the Trojan War (Euripides' Andromache, Hecuba, Helen, and Trojan women) and to mythic events narrated by Homer in the Iliad. The fifth chapter discusses operas (and some sui generis musico-theatrical works) based on two plays by Aeschylus: Prometheus Bound and Persians. Operas whose plots are based on characters and events from the Homeric Odyssey are presented in the sixth chapter. In the seventh chapter we study librettos that have as source of inspiration the events and persons connected, on one hand, with the Argonautic Expedition and, on the other, with Euripides' Medea. The eighth chapter focuses on the use and revision of the myth of Orpheus in the opera librettos of the 20th century, while the last chapter of the book concerns those inspired by the Euripidean tragedies Hippolytus and Alcestis and mythic figures such as Theseus, Ariadne, Phaedra and Hercules.

