HAPPILY EVER ANCIENT

Visions of Antiquity for children in visual media

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION:
A CONTEMPORARY ANTIQUITY
FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG AUDIENCES
IN FILMS AND CARTOONS

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It comes as no surprise that the cultural legacy of Antiquity is present in very different fields of our current world, from artistic expressions to politics, leisure or advertising. What has changed more recently, however, is the burgeoning scholarly interest in Antiquity's presence within contemporary popular culture. This research has been grouped together under the label of "Reception Studies", which has turned its attention to the processes by which the legacy of the ancient world has been "transmitted, translated, excerpted, interpreted, rewritten, re-imaged and represented" (Hardwick & Stray 2008: 1) in later societies whose own view of Antiquity has necessarily been influenced by their own political, economic, social, ideological and cultural context. Such re-readings of the past have been around since Antiquity itself, but from the end of the 20th century we have witnessed a marked proliferation of this phenomenon in films, TV, historical novel, comics, popular magazines, music, the Internet, videogames or advertisements. During this process of dialoguing with the past, Antiquity at times takes center stage through the direct engagement of historical characters and events or by setting something squarely in a historically and culturally marked ancient setting; but also can play more of a supporting role when ancient peoples or motifs are incorporated

(be it to a greater or lesser degree) through intertextual references. This flourishing and diverse engagement with Antiquity has been the subject of scholarly research in specialized collections of monographs dedicated to Reception Studies[2], journal publications[3] and websites[4]; this growing body of research has examined the general framework provided by contemporary popular culture[5], but also has focused on different civilizations[6] and a range of well-established genres, such as fantasy and science fiction[7], as well as other "less prestigious" cultural products, such as comics, videogames, theme parks and music[8].

This research is part of a broader one focused on the extent to which history has become an object of consumption in a society whose conception of the past is largely informed by the messages and images found in products that are circulated by the mass media and meant to satisfy the increasing demands of the entertainment industry (Morris-Suzuki 2005; Korte & Paletschek 2009 and 2017; De Groot 2016; Bareither & Tomkowiak 2020). The fact that a good portion of this cultural information is targeted at a children and young audience means that the media wields an enormous amount of influence in educational (and commercial) terms, since provides this consuming public with a wealth of historical information about the

2 *Classical Presences* (2005-present, Oxford University Press); *Imagines. Classical Reception in the Visual and Performing Arts* (2013-present, Bloomsbury Academic); *Screening Antiquity* (2015-present, Edinburgh University Press).

3 *Anabases* (2005-present: http://journals.openedition.org/anabases/); *New Voices In Classical Reception Studies* (2006-present: http://fass.open.ac.uk/research/newvoices); *Classical Receptions Journal* (2009-present: https://academic.oup.com/crj); *Thersites* (2015-present: https://thersites-journal.de/index.php/thr).

4 *Antiquipop* (2015-present: https://antiquipop.hypotheses.org/); *Fantastische Antike - Antikenrezeption in Science Fiction, Horror und Fantasy* (2017-present: https://fantastischeantike.de/).

5 Von Möllendorff, Simonis & Simonis (2013); Jenkins (2015); Dominas, Trocha & Wałowski (2016); Dominas, Wesołowska & Trocha (2016); Bièvre-Perrin & Pampanay (2018); Giovénal *et al.* (2019); Besnard & Scapin (2019); López Gregoris & Macías Villalobos (2020).

6 Egypt: MacDonald & Rice (2009); Dobson & Tonks (2020). Ancient Near East: Verderame & Garcia-Ventura (2020). Greece and Rome: Bessières (2016). Rome: Unceta Gómez & Sánchez Pérez (2019).

7 Bost-Fiévet & Provini (2014); Rogers & Stevens (2015) and (2018); Rogers (2017).

8 Comics: Kovacs & Marshall (2011) and (2015); Carlà (2014); Gallego (2015). Videogames: Rollinger (2020). Theme parks: Carlà-Uhink (2020). Heavy metal music: Fletcher & Umurhan (2020). For a reasoned defense of the importance of these forms of Classical Receptions, see Lowe & Shahabudin (2009: XI-XIII).

past through toys, collectables, non-fiction books, literary adaptations, comics, videogames, theme parks, exhibition, movies and television series (Kühberger 2019). When it comes to Antiquity in particular, just think of the proliferation of toys that evoke the ancient world: Playmobil sets with Egyptian, Greek or Roman figures[9], Lego products drawing upon Greek mythology (Brack, Sweeney & Thomas 2014), and certain models of Barbie dolls that depict her as "Egyptian Queen", "Grecian Goddess", Cleopatra, Medusa or Athena (Milnor 2005; Raucci 2009). All of these examples go to show how popular toys can exercise enormous influence over young children's developing conceptions of Antiquity through the transmission of cultural and historical references; this is especially the case when we remember that many children learn about these civilizations for the first time through play, long before they ever study them formally in school (Kübler, Bietenhader & Pappa 2013).

However, it is primarily in print publications and audiovisual productions targeted towards a youth audience that we find the greatest number of cultural products interacting with Antiquity. Historical novel, literary adaptations and non-fiction books have been the object of many studies in recent years (Maurice 2015; Marciniak 2016; Hodkinson & Lovatt 2018; Nelson & Morey 2019), but movies, shorts, television series and, more recently, content made to be distributed online have received much less attention from academic research. This certainly cannot be explained by the lack of audiovisual content dealing with Antiquity that is intended to these consumers. Indeed, from Émile Cohl's *Les douze travaux d'Hercule* (1910, the first-known animated representation of Antiquity)[10] to *Gods & Heroes* (an upcoming television series produced by the subscription platform Netflix), there has been more than a century of

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9 As part of the *History* production line, since 2006 and 2008 have been available figures dedicated to Roman and Egyptian Antiquity, respectively; beginning in 2016 the company has also sold figures of the Greek gods; and in 2020 they announced new toys dealing with Hercules, Jason and the Argonauts, Dedalus and Icarus as well as Achilles and Odysseus, initially marketed only in Greece (see the *Playmobil 2020* catalogue, pp. 42-43: http://playmobil.a.bigcontent.io/v1/static/KATALOG_GR_2020_01).

10 The nearly seven minutes of this gem of early animation can be seen at https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/11/Les_douze_travaux_d'Hercule_(1910).webm.

live-action films and a rich array of animated features, not only traditional cartoons, but also silhouette, cutout, puppet, stop-motion and digital animations. Examples have been originally produced for both the silver screen[11] and also television[12], but some creations appear in both formats[13]. Others works are part of broader phenomena, either the audiovisual adaptation of literary works of a historical or mythological nature — ranging from classics (even also the Bible)[14] to modern works[15] as well as comics[16]—, or a transmedia marketing strategy according to which an

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11 Among the many animated films, we can point to movies from Japan, such as *Hoshi No Orefeusu* [*Metamorphoses*] (1978) and *Arion* (1986); from North America: *Hercules* (1997) and *Hercules and Xena – The Animated Movie: The Battle for Mount Olympus* (1998); and from Europe: *La Reine Soleil* (2007) and *Gladiatori di Roma* (2012). Among the live-action movies, we can mention the recent *Clash of the Titans* (2010), *Immortals* (2011) and *Wrath of the Titans* (2012).

12 There are many examples of animated TV series from *The Mighty Hercules* (1963) and *The Roman Holidays* (1972) to *Gods' School* (2018). For live-action TV series, think of *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys* (1995), *Xena: Warrior Princess* (1995), *Young Hercules* (1998) and *Atlantis* (2013).

13 This is what happened with Disney's *Hercules* (1997) and the TV spin off *Disney's Hercules: The Animated Series* (1998). The opposite took place with the Tunisian cartoon *Viva Carthago* (2004) which led to the film *Les Naufragés de Carthage* (2006), as well as the South Korean *Ollimposeu gadieon* [*Olympus Guardian*] (TV series: 2002; full-length feature: 2005) and the Japanese *Thermæ Romæ* (TV series: 2012; live-action movies: 2012 and 2014).

14 For animated versions of Biblical stories, we can name full-length features, such as *The Prince of Egypt* (1998) and *El Arca* (2007), and TV series, such as *Tezuka Osamu no Kyūyaku Seisho Monogatari* [*In the Beginning: The Bible Stories*] (1993) and *Friends and Heroes* (2007-2009); see Heard (2016) and Ogura & Hioki (2016).

15 Especially children's and youth literature, turned into episodes of animated TV series, such as *The Littles* ("Ben Dinky", 1985), *Where's Wally* ("The Living Exhibits", 1991), *Arthur* ("Team Trouble", 1996), *The Busy World of Richard Scarry* ("Hold Your Breath!", 1996), *Lilly the Witch* ("Lilly and Hercules", 2004) and *Vampirina* ("Mummy Mayhem", 2017), and live-action productions, both TV series, such as *Roman Mysteries* (2006), and movies, such as *Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* (2010), and *Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters* (2013).

16 We can think of audiovisual adaptations and works inspired in the classic characters from the *bande dessinée* connected to Antiquity, such as *Astérix* (in animated movies from *Astérix le Gaulois*, 1967, to *Astérix: Le Secret de la potion magique*, 2018, as well as the live-action versions *Astérix et Obélix contre César*, 1999, to *Astérix et Obélix: Au service de Sa Majesté*, 2012), *Papyrus* (TV series from 1998) and *Alix* (TV series from 1999); also think of mangas, such as *Olympus no Pollon* [*Little Pollon*] (TV series *Ochamegami Monogatari Korokoro Poron*, 1982) and the above mentioned *Thermæ Romæ* (*id.*, 2008). Furthermore, we find elements from the ancient world occasionally incorporated both in movies and television series starring characters from the *bande dessiné* (the episode "Gnoman Holiday" from the TV series *The Smurfs*, 1989; Tintin in *Les cigares du Pharaon*, 1992; Blake and Mortimer in *Le mystère de la grande pyramide*, 1997); from manga (*Mazinger Z*, 1972); from the comic strips (the episodes "The Great Inventor" from the show *Garfield and Friends*, 1992, and "Rupert and the Nile" from *Rupert*, 1994); or even from the DC universe (starting with the short *The Mummy*

audiovisual creation is part of the merchandising of a product created to be consumed by the same audience[17].

Among the many types of animations dealing with the ancient world, there is no shortage of projects that were conceived of as primarily having a pedagogical purpose and were meant to increase children's knowledge of and interest in Antiquity: here, we can think of individual episodes of long-running TV shows[18], works produced by public TV networks[19] or private companies[20], and even online audiovisual contents created as a fruit of academic research projects[21] or as result of educational materials design[22]. Nevertheless, such products form only a small portion of existing content when compared to the large number of initiatives that use Antiquity as a tool or backdrop for creating fiction meant primarily to entertainment. Created for a purely playful purpose, the products belonging to this second category draw on historical motifs (ranging from the relatively accurate to

Strikes, 1943, starring Superman) as well as the Marvel universe (the episode "Let the Stranger Die...!" from the TV show *The Marvel Super Heroes*, 1966, starring Prince Namor the Sub-Mariner).

17 On the one hand, Playmobil's Ancient Egypt and Rome series have given way to digital animations, like the short *Der Fluch der Pharaonen* (2016, first distributed as a promotional DVD and then found later on the company's website and YouTube) and more generally the film *Playmobil: The Movie* (2019), while, on the other, the books on ancient world published in the *Horrible Histories* collection (1993-present) have given rise television series (animated from 2001, live-action from 2009) and the film *Horrible Histories: The Movie - Rotten Romans* (2019).

18 These can take various forms: contrast *The Wonderful Stories of Professor Kitzel* (1972), *Cantinflas Show* (1972) and *Amigo and Friends* (1982) with the series directed by Albert Barillé *Il était une fois... l'homme* (1979), *Il était une fois... les Découvreurs* (1994) and *Il était une fois... les Explorateurs* (1996), or with the ironical approaches in *Histeria!* (1998), *Horrible Histories* (2001) and *Adam Ruins Everything* (2015).

19 The movie *La Odisea de los Lunnis* (2006, TVE) and episodes from television series like *The Story of Britain* ("The Roman Invasion" and "Roman Britain", 2014, BBC) and *Lunnis de leyenda* ("Hércules", "El Caballo de Troya", "Habis, el rey tarteso", "Aníbal" and "Egeria" among others, 2016-present, TVE).

20 For example, Disney with the movie *Donald in Mathmagic Land* (1959) and the television series *Little Einsteins* ("The Legend of the Golden Pyramid", 2005), and Nickelodeon with the television series *Bubble Guppies* ("Only the Sphinx Nose", 2013).

21 *Hoplites! Greeks at War* as part of *Panoply Vase Animation Project* (http://www.panoply.org.uk/) (Nevin 2019).

22 The educational platform TED-Ed hosts creations made by Ray Laurence such as *Four sisters in Ancient Rome* (2013: https://www.ted.com/talks/ray_laurence_four_sisters_in_ancient_rome) (Laurence 2019), while YouTube host *Minecraft* videos made by Jessie Craft on the channel *Divus Magister Craft* (2014-present: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTtKmPD0_Qo9Uy932ZGKFhA) (Craft 2019).

the completely fantastical)[23] or mythological ones (again, ranging from close to rather loose adaptations)[24], but they often do it to show an exotic past incorporated in (or evoked from) an imaginary present[25], to play with the time-travel motif[26], or even to display surreal plots full of anachronisms and commonplaces (e.g. Roman emperors and gladiators, gods and monsters from Greek mythology, Egyptian pyramids and mummies[27]) starring by famous cartoon characters[28]. However, some creations very far removed

23 Television series such as *Princesse du Nil* (1999), *Les Fils de Rome* (2000), *Academia de gladiadores* (2002), *Spartacus* (2005) or *Gladiators* (2009).

24 Television series such as *Mythic Warriors* (1998), *Wondrous Myths & Legends* (1999), *Jason et les héros de l'Olympe* (2001), *L'Odyssée* (2002) or *Mission Odyssey* (2002).

25 Works starring characters ranging from Felix the Cat (*Felix Gets Broadcasted*, 1923), Porky (*Porky's Hero Agency*, 1937) and Donald Duck (*Trombone trouble*, 1944) to Scooby Dooby-Doo (both in "It's All Greek to Scooby-Doo" from the television series *What's New Scooby-Doo*, 2004, as well as in the movie *Scoob!*, 2020); individual episodes from animated series like *Tetsuwan Atomu* [*Astro Boy*] ("Neo Shiza" ["Neo Caesar"], 1963), *The Care Bears Family* ("The Most Ancient Gift", 1988), *Gargoyles* ("The New Olympians", 1996), *Futurama* ("A Pharaoh to Remember", 2002), *Martin Matin* ("Martin l'Égyptien", 2003), *SpongeBob SquarePants* ("Spongicus", 2008), *Pokémon* ("Kuroki eiyū no iseki! Shinborā to Desukān!!" ["Explorers of the Hero's Ruin!"], 2012), *Miraculous. Les aventures de Ladybug et Chat Noir* ("Le Pharaon", 2015), *44 gatti* ("Il tesoro di Tutankatmon", 2019) or *Peppa Pig* ("Roman Day", 2019); and full series like *Tutenstein* (2003), *Class of the Titans* (2005) or *Egyxos* (2015).

26 In addition to the already mentioned *Viva Carthago / Les Naufragés de Carthage* (with transitions from one time to another, but always in Antiquity), *Thermæ Romæ* and movies, such as *Il signor Rossi cerca la felicità* (1976), *Ôgon no hô: Eru Kantâre no rekishikan* [*The Golden Laws*] (2003) and *Mr. Peabody and Sherman* (2014), we must add the *Αρχαιούλης* shorts (2000-2004), the Biblical-themed series *Anime Oyako Gekijō* [*Superbook*] (1981-1982 and 2009-2013), *Tondera Hausu no Daibōken* [*The Flying House*] (1982-1983) and *The Greatest Adventure: Stories from the Bible* (1985-1992); and numerous episodes from television series, such as *Mr. Peabody and Sherman* (from "Nero", 1959, to "Ancient Greek Games", 2015), *Tooter Turtle* ("Olimping Champion (Weak-Greek)", 1960), *Looney Tunes* (with Daffy Duck and Speedy Gonzales in "See Ya Later, Gladiator", 1968), *The Brady Kids* ("It's All Greek to Me", 1972), *Ghostbusters* ("GhostBunglers", 1986), *Inspector Gadget* ("Gadget's Roma", 1986), *G.I. Joe* ("G.I. Joe and the Golden Fleece", 1986), *DuckTales* ("Home Sweet Homer", 1987), *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* ("A Most Excellent Roman Holiday", 1990), *Back to the Future: The Complete Animated Series* ("Roman Holiday", 1991), *The Angry Beavers* ("Friends, Romans, Beavers!", 1998), *Sabrina: The Animated Series* ("When in Rome", 1999), *Johnny Bravo* ("Quo Doofus", 2000), *Time Squad* ("Repeat Offender", 2002), *Time Warp Trio* ("See You Later, Gladiator", 2005), *Kodai Ōja Kyōryū King* [*King Dinosaur*] (the cycle made up of "Ancient Roman Holiday", "Desperately Seeking Spartacus", "Coliseum Clash" and "There's No Place Like Rome", 2008), *Tempo Express* ("Olympie", 2010), *Justin Time* ("Roman Racers", 2011), *Chronokids* ("L'homme qui murmurait à l'oreille des éléphants", 2014) and *Doraemon* ("Nazo no piramiddosu!? Ejiputo dai bōken" ["The Mystery of the Pyramids!? The Great Egyptian Adventure"], 2017).

27 As an example, we can adduce the abundance of mummies in contemporary popular culture (Glynn 2020: 2) and specifically in animated features (*ibid.*: 20, n. 60).

28 Among them, Mighty Mouse (*The Trojan Horse*, 1946), Popeye (*Popeye Meets Hercules*, 1948), Bugs

from the history and culture of Antiquity show a very intelligent use of those motifs through intertextual references that become them a product of great artistic quality as well as commercial success[29].

The great volume and diversity of audiovisual productions on the ancient world that are produced for a young audience stands in marked contrast to the very little scholarly attention dedicated to the topic. To begin, there is still no an overall study that compiles the ever increasing corpus of relevant audiovisual works. As a result, any research on the subject must, as a starting pointing, identify objects to study that combine film, animation, the ancient world and youth audiences by searching through generalist databases focused on film (e.g. the *Internet Movie Database*: https://www.imdb.com/) or cartoons (*The Big Cartoon Database*: http://www.bcdb.com/). Furthermore, one must consult the relevant entries in generalist works of an encyclopedic nature dealing with animation broadly (e.g. Lenburg 2009; Webb 2011) or with audiovisual treatments of Antiquity specifically, as the catalogue made by Hervé Dumont (2013) or the list compiled by Herbert Verreth (2014). Besides isolated mentions of relevant topics in generalist monographs on film and Antiquity (Solomon 2001) or more specialized studies dealing with subgenres (Lindner 2015 on the undead; Gloyn 2020 on monsters), there have also been some very interesting studies, though limited in scope to Greek myth and Homer epic from a range of different perspectives, both in the general framework of contemporary popular culture (Stierstorfer 2014), and in a more focused discussion on audiovisual productions (Lindner 2008 and 2017),

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Bunny and Yosemite Sam (*Roman Legion-Hare*, 1955), Tom and Jerry (*It's Greek to Me-ow!*, 1961), Woody Woodpecker (*Roamin' Roman*, 1964) and The Pink Panther (the episode "Pinkus Pantherus" from the show *The Pink Panther*, 1993), as well as the protagonists of the show *Animaniacs* ("Hercules Unwound", 1995), *I are Weasel* ("I are Gladiator", 1999), *Pucca* ("Gold Medal Garu", 2007) and *The Backyardigans* ("Match on Mt. Olympus", 2008).

29 In this sense, we can take the series *Phineas and Ferb* (2007-2015) as paradigmatic: the show's relationship with Antiquity can be found in the sophisticated intertextual connections and allusions to the Homeric poems (see the episodes "I Scream, You Scream", 2008, and "Troy Story", 2013, as well as the full-length feature *Phineas and Ferb the Movie: Across the 2nd Dimension*, 2011), Atlantis ("Atlantis", 2009), Sparta ("Lotsa Latkes", 2011), chariot races ("Greece Lightning", 2008), the Venus de Milo ("Candace Loses Her Head", 2008) and Myron's Discobolus ("Phineas and Ferb Get Busted!" / "At Last", 2009 and "Primal Perry", 2013), Alexander the Great and the Gordian Knot ("Knot My Problem", 2013), gladiators ("Leave the Busting to Us!, 2008) or the toga and laurels ("Phineas and Ferb Get Busted!" / "At Last", 2009), among others.

but also on particular figures[30], specific works[31], individual creators[32], and issues that until quite recently had not attracted the attention of Western scholarship, such as the Japanese anime (Castello & Scilabra 2015 and Wieber 2017) or the Soviet cartoons (Paulouskaya 2017). At the same time, the Internet has also provided a fruitful forum for both offering up-to-date information about academic research on Classical Receptions and childhood[33] as well as providing a platform for directly accessing the very audiovisual content in question[34].

The scholarly research is so scarce and recent because of a prejudice which still prevails in 2013, when in the prologue of *L'Antiquité au cinéma* Dumont admits that in this work "les films d'animation (qui s'adressent en majorité à un public infantin) ne sont signalés qu'occasionnellement, pour information" (Dumont 2013: xxv); in this way, he places animation in a secondary position that in turn justifies its sporadic treatment, since it is merely the stuff of kids and not worthy of an academic's attention. Nevertheless, Martin Lindner has correctly noted that "'children's films' means films produced *for* but only supposedly consumed *by* an under-age audience" (Lindner 2008: 40); for that reason, any study into the issue ought to begin with a recognition of the fact that "'for children' is not the same as 'childish'" (*id.* 2017: 531) and hence recognize that these productions can "offer an excellent opportunity for studying the principles of our modern reception of classical antiquity" (*id.* 2008: 55).

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30 Solomon (2018) on Hercules; Zwick (2017) and Maurice (2019) on the Greek pantheon.

31 Blanshard & Shahabudin (2011: 194-215) on the Disney's film *Hercules* (1997); Miles (2018) on the television series *Ulysses 31* (1981) and *Odysseus: The Greatest Hero of Them All* (1986); Tomasso (2019) on *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys* (1995-1999); Cresswell (2015) and Hobbs (2015) on *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic* (2010-2019).

32 Green & Goodman (2013) on Ray Harryhausen.

33 See the blogs and web pages associated with the project *Our Mythical Childhood... The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges* (2016-2021); specifically, the database of audiovisual material in the section *Our Mythical Childhood Survey* (http://www.omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/category/audiovisual).

34 The website *Animated Antiquity. Cartoon Representations of Greece, Rome and Beyond* (https://animatedantiquity.wordpress.com/), which has been run by Chiara Sulprizio since 2017 (as well a related Facebook page and Twitter account), has become a space for its creator to share and comment on a broad corpus of productions, ranging from rather recondite early receptions of Antiquity in silent film to better-known movies and television series.

At this point lies precisely the interest of *Happily Ever Ancient. Visions of Antiquity for Children in Visual Media*. The present volume has its origins in the conference *Érase una vez... la Antigüedad* that was held in the Facultad de Geografía e Historia at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid from 12-13 January of 2017 and which was the first scholarly conference dedicated specifically to the presence of Antiquity in audiovisual productions for a young audience. The contributions that are part of this book analyze animated and some live-action productions from America, Europe and Asia made for TV and the silver screen alike. Their authors address different aspects of myth and history, not only from the Near East and the Mediterranean, by examining the ancient elements that accompany contemporary motifs or the contemporary treatment of ancient motifs. The first section deals with Disney, beginning with the movie *Hercules* (1997). In "Family love and happily marriages: Reinventing mythical society in Disney's *Hercules* (1997)", Elena Duce Pastor examines how Disney reinterprets Greek mythology to present youngest viewers with the social and familial values that characterize "the American way of life" according to the liking of the target audience (and their parents) and of the existing gender stereotypes, turning it into a form of entertainment and, through a powerful merchandising campaign, a consumer object. On the other hand, in "Over 5,000,000.001: Analyzing Hades and his people in Disney's *Hercules*", Chiara Cappanera reveals the extent to which the depiction of the Underworld in *Hercules* (e.g. its geography, inhabitants and architecture) is the visual aspect of the film that most closely conforms to the descriptions of this same space found in the poetic tradition as well as the corpus of vase painting; this is achieved through the use of color and darkness in a representation of the Underworld that combines elements culled not only from Greek tradition, but also from Rome and the Medieval world. An analysis of a second Disney production, *Atlantis: The Lost Empire* (2001), alongside the anime *Nadia: The Secret of the Blue Water* (1991), the videogame *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis* (1992) and the first season of the TV series *Stargate Atlantis* (2004-2009) is the focus of Irene Cisneros Abellán's chapter entitled "From Plato's Atlantis to Interestellar Gates: The distorted myth." In this contribution, Cisneros Abellán examines how and why the Platonic description of Atlantis has evolved in so different directions in the context of pop culture, culminating

in an image of an envied high-tech utopia that warns contemporary society about the abuse of scientific advances. Emma Perazzone Rivero's "*Moana and Malinowski: An anthropological approach to modern animation*" shifts our attention to another Disney production. The author's analysis elucidates the intimate relationship that, according to anthropological research, existed between myth and ways of living in ancient societies from the South Seas, on the one hand, and the natural environment in which those societies flourished, on the other. In this context, the movie *Moana* (2016) focuses on a young heroine whose steadfast and independent character makes her into a role model for children and endows the film with the educational potential of teaching students about the relationship between humankind and nature.

And yet Disney is not the be-all and end-all of animation. In "Animating Antiquity on children's television: The visual worlds of *Ulysses 31* and *Samurai Jack*", Sarah Miles examines a complete French-Japanese series from 1981, and an individual American episode from 2002 because both one and the other employ the resources of contemporary cinema and anime to visually create (though in quite different ways) Odysseus' homecoming and the Battle of Thermopylae, respectively, through the use of cultural codes that are both popular as well as attractive to young viewers. Japanese anime is also analyzed by Noelia Gómez San Juan in "Salpicaduras de motivos clásicos en la serie *One Piece*": in the same fantastical setting as the celebrated original manga, this animated version incorporates various historical, mythological and cultural elements from classical Antiquity so as to humorously link the protagonist's adventure to that of Odysseus or the Argonauts.

Alongside these fictitious characters and settings, we also find some actual historical figures, whether through rough biographical sketches, guest appearances alongside fictional characters or through other references in far-off settings. In "'What a nose!' Visions of Cleopatra at the cinema & TV for children and teenagers", Nerea Tarancón Huarte examines the image of the last queen of Ptolemaic Egypt in audiovisual productions for youth audiences in order to demonstrate how commonplace ideas about the queen's beauty, exoticism, seductiveness and capriciousness

have remained dominant in portrayals of Cleopatra instead of stressing her well-attested intelligence or political skill. In "Once Upon a Time in Macedon. Alexander the Great in media fiction for children and young audiences", Borja Antela-Bernárdez examines the treatment of the Macedonian conqueror in both Western and Eastern productions to conclude that thanks to his successes the image of Alexander endures as a potent model and symbol in contemporary media productions, though he can also be depicted as the victim of his own ambition.

Finally, the two chapters that close the volume focus on echoes of ancient world found in two well-known productions of popular culture that are as far from Antiquity as they are different from one another. In "*The Odyssey* as told on *The Simpsons*", Gaius Stern turns to the famous satirical cartoon's telling of the fall of Troy and Odysseus' voyage home, in which characters from the TV show are assimilated to deities, heroes and creatures of the Greek mythology. To close the volume, María del Mar Rodríguez Alcocer's contribution "Magic landscapes and their inhabitants in Harry Potter's universe" identifies how elements from J. K. Rowling that find their origin in Greek culture (even if filtered through other re-readings of Antiquity) are used to signal the otherness of certain spaces and imaginary beings: in the first case, allusions to Greek motifs highlight a space's liminal quality, marking the line between life and death, whereas in the second case, they play with the line between civilization and savagery.

On the whole, the range of discussions and perspectives found in the chapters that comprise this book reflects the amount, the variety and the rich array of ways that Antiquity is present in the audiovisual products consumed by children and young audiences today. And without further ado, we can begin with *Happily Ever Ancient* by saying *Once upon a time in Antiquity...*

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