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### Article

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## **Greek Cinema as European Cinema:**

### **Co-productions, Eurimages, and the Europeanisation of Greek cinema**

Around the start of the 2010s, while Greece found itself in the midst of a deep financial, political and social crisis that troubled its relationship to Europe, Greek cinema was being noticed in prestigious film festivals. Soon the term ‘Weird Wave’ was adopted to suggest the unusual aesthetics and challenging ethics of the most distinctive films that emerged from this troubled nation at the time: Yorgos Lanthimos’ *Dogtooth* (2009) and Athina Rachel Tsangari’s *Attenberg* (2010). Despite being made before the consequences of the crisis had been fully felt in Greece, these films became emblematic of a turning point in Greek art cinema, a shift towards a different approach to theme, narrative, style, as well as – less obviously – towards new production practices. Such practices involved a new culture of professional solidarity that involved filmmakers supporting each other to overcome financial and institutional deficits; increasingly, however, they consisted of a more systematic approach towards building European co-productions - the main (if not only) means for securing a decent budget, and also a path towards more visibility in the film festival circuit and in international markets.<sup>1</sup>

The article explores this ‘extrovert’ culture in Greek filmmaking. By ‘extroversion’ I refer to the active search for funding and production partners beyond the traditional state and private options, and towards international co-productions, which in the Greek context, effectively, means European co-productions.<sup>2</sup> The article argues that the intensification of co-production

activity that has become more evident in the last few years has been the result of a number of factors, including the continuing impact of European institutional frameworks, the reduction of national funds towards cinema (partly as a result of the crisis), the emergence of a number of new producers trained in building co-productions, and the critical success of a number of Greek films in prestigious festivals. The analysis draws on film studies, media industry and film policy studies as it aims to reveal the ways in which both Europe-wide and localised social, financial and professional conditions have affected the production culture in Greece, especially with regard to art/quality cinema. It focuses in particular on European co-productions as a system of funding and making films that requires transnational collaboration and exchange. The article maps out the extent to which European co-productions have been adopted in Greece, and identifies some of the ways in which they have changed its production culture. It ends with an examination of the style, themes and reception of six recent Eurimages-funded co-productions in order to assess whether and how there is discernible change in the films made in the direction of a more recognisably 'European' cinema.

The study will combine quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitatively, the number of European co-productions involving Greece since the formation of Eurimages in 1989 will be examined and situated in the broader context of film production in Greece. The emphasis will be on films that received Eurimages funding, partly because data regarding all co-productions is not available<sup>3</sup>, but also because, as the Council of Europe's funding body for co-productions, Eurimages is the main European institution that supports cinema, offering a brand of quality and a commitment to European values. Qualitative methods draw on accounts of film practice offered in interviews with producers and directors, as well as the films and their critical reception. Ultimately the aim of this article is to map out the changing

landscape of Greek cinema with regard to the impact that the increasing interaction with European partners has had on the production culture in Greece and indirectly, on the character and reception of the recent Greek films produced.

The article is framed around the concepts of the ‘national’ and the ‘European’ – both rather slippery terms that escape precise definitions, and can only be approached in a contingent and situated manner. Benedict Anderson’s (1983/2006) influential concept of ‘imagined communities’ aims to explain the origin and formation of nationalism and underlines their constructed nature as well as the role of state institutions and media in galvanising them. Anderson’s concept can also be applied to the notion of Europe, since the formation of Europe-wide institutions that shape European policies also aim to reinforce European identity. It is my contention that national and European identities (and identifications) are complementary and, in a way, hierarchical. In other words, both legally, and in terms of belonging, being European tends to be a second-degree identification. One is first a national and then (also perhaps) a European citizen; and when people identify as or ‘feel’ European, they often do after a primary identification, which is often (but not always) national.

The two key institutions that represent Europe are the Council of Europe (est. 1949) and the European Union (est. 1957 as the European Economic Community). The former is a human rights organisation aiming to promote democracy and the rule of law across Europe and currently has 47 members. The latter was initially established with the aim of strengthening economic ties and creating a common market across its member states. Its renaming as the European Union (EU) in the Maastricht treaty of 1992, signalled the ambition for a closer integration among European nations and their citizens. It was then that, for the first time, the role of culture in helping foster a collective European identity was explicitly acknowledged

(Liz 2016, 23). It is therefore not a coincidence that around the same time both institutions launched programmes of support for culture and the audio-visual industry. The Council of Europe launched Eurimages in 1989, a programme aimed predominantly at cinematic co-productions; and the European Union established MEDIA (Mesures pour l'encouragement et le développement de l'industrie audiovisuelle) in 1992, a far more wide-ranging programme that focuses, among others, on film development and distribution. While both these programmes try to balance economic aims and a broader cultural agenda, they prioritise the former. Their primary purpose is to support European industry against the dominance of US products and, more broadly, globalisation; and by doing so they also aim to protect Europe's cultural heritage, promote its values and strengthen its population's sense of being European (Jackel 2003, 67-90; Liz 2016, 37-38).

Just as the national and the European are complementary notions, the same applies to the concepts of national and European *cinema*.<sup>4</sup> Particular films can be perceived as instances of both a national cinema *and* as representatives of European cinema. On one level, all films produced in a nation belonging in Europe are also European; however, some films contain more explicit elements that project a sense of European belonging – or, to put it otherwise, a cultural Europeanisation. In recent years, the rise of co-productions (within and beyond Europe) as well as the increased interaction and exchange across people and cultures, has rapidly pushed aside the concept of national cinema (and often the European) in favour of the transnational. Such, indeed, is the existential challenge to 'national cinema' that Vrasidas Karalis (2012, 280) concludes his study of Greek cinema by highlighting that 'in a globalized economy, a film may respond to the questions of many different societies. In this sense, today there are no "national cinemas" anymore; one could even claim that there are no European cinemas either, only world cinemas.' This is a line of argument already developed by

Thomas Elsaesser (2005, 31), who has taken it a step further by proposing that European cinema's strength is its ability to turn to its own advantage the position of 'strategic weakness' that Europe has found itself following the collapse of the Cold War; he calls for European cinema to 'rework a legacy' from 'a position of tactical weakness: freedom as the freedom to choose one's own limits and contradictions'.

Traditionally, European cinema has been defined in opposition to Hollywood, with notions of art and quality, as discussed above, contrasting the latter's commercialism.<sup>5</sup> Many studies, including Elsaesser's, have stressed the extent to which such a binary model is 'increasingly obsolete' (2015,17). They have noted the significance of popular national cinemas in Europe (Dyer and Vincendeau 1992, Bergfelder 2000), the hybrid nature of a number of European films aspiring for both quality and popularity (Eleftheriotis 2001, Liz 2016), or the dual (cultural and economic) aim that underpins European film policy (Moravetz et al. 2007; Mitric and Sarikakis 2016). Reflecting the increasing significance of a global perspective on cinema, a new set of concepts that offer new groupings and analytical tools for exploring the cinemas of the world are emerging that do away with the notion of nation and even of Europe. These include 'cinemas of citizens and cinemas of sentiment' (Stone 2018), 'transworld cinemas' (Martin-Jones 2018), or even 'regional cinema' (Marlow-Mann 2018).

While acknowledging the usefulness of these new conceptual configurations in the light of emerging socio-political and technological developments, this article maintains the concepts of national and of European cinema, not least because they are (still) represented in and by institutions that aim to support and serve their interests, and therefore offer concrete contexts for analysis. With regard to co-productions, and especially with reference to small countries like Greece which do not have autonomous regional authorities, the nation remains a

necessary category.<sup>6</sup> Individual countries' legislation provides specific cultural tests that legally define the national identity of a film, usually by offering a number of points for the presence of certain characteristics - including language, location, the nationality of its makers, etc. Such criteria are useful in the case of co-productions, as they legally determine the official nationality of a film.

Beyond legal definitions and critical canonisations, the perception of a film as belonging to a national cinema is often assigned intuitively by audiences, based on the presence of certain signs and referents that emanate from their experience of a national context, or from other representations attributed to it. Although some films do not foreground nationally specific characteristics, arguably most European films convey a sense of a film's dominant national identity based on the location of the story-world, and/or the national identity of the film's director (especially given the continuous symbolic importance of the director-as-auteur in European cinema), irrespective of the co-production mix that enabled it. If a co-produced film is seen as offering an artificial mix of national cultural elements to please funders and – presumably – audiences, but failing to do so in a convincing manner, it can be labelled as a 'Euro-pudding' a derogatory term that suggests the lack of organic grounding in a recognisable (national) context (Liz 2015, 74-75). It is partly the awareness of such a risk that has gradually led to a more sophisticated use of the mix of national elements in co-productions and to more flexible regulations by film funds regarding how their contributions should be spent. Thus, for example, the contribution of a national partner may be restricted to a technical domain (for example, cinematography or post-production) thus not affecting matters of representation.

In exploring, as this article does, instances of a national cinema as European cinema, its aim primarily is to illuminate contextual changes with reference, specifically, to the rise of co-productions; and secondarily to assess the extent to which these have affected the content, quality and overall character of recent films thus produced. In what follows, therefore, I explore the process and extent of Greek cinema's transformation in light of intensified interactions with European partners at the level of funding and production. My analysis will be chronologically organised, starting with a historical account of co-production practices and the institutional framework regarding cinema in Greece until 1990. I will then concentrate on the first 20 years of Eurimages – from 1989 to 2009 – and examine the extent and ways in which Greek cinema benefitted from the fund. Finally, I will focus on the 2010s, a period that coincides with a renewed international interest in Greek cinema which was triggered, on the one hand, by the success of Lanthimos, and, on the other, by the global financial crisis that affected Greece belatedly but intensely. By examining the profiles of Greek industry players active in co-productions, the production histories and the thematic and stylistic characteristics of their supported films, I will explore the extent to which in recent years there has been a significant change in the production culture in Greece towards embracing more European co-productions, and whether or how this has affected the films made.

### *(European) Co-productions and Greek Cinema: Setting the Scene*

Until the 1990s, co-productions were rare in Greek cinema, largely because there was no institutional and/or policy framework to facilitate them. Indeed, as Karalis (2012, xi) has put it, until the 1990s 'almost all Greek movies were made for domestic consumption, addressing local problems within the parameters of specific historical circumstances'. Two exceptions,

however, are worth highlighting as early instances of co-production in Greece - both of which occurred in the late 1950s/early 1960s, the period of the country's post-war financial recovery, and the peak of its commercial cinema's popularity.

The first concerns US runaway productions shot in Greece, such as *The Boy on the Dolphin* (1957, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, dir. Jean Negulesco), *Never on Sunday* (1960, Lopert Films, dir. Jules Dassin), *The Guns of Navarone* (1961, Columbia, dir. J. Lee Thompson) or *Zorba the Greek* (1964, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, dir. Michael Cacoyannis). These were all cases of inward investment encouraged by the Greek authorities at a time when the country was developing aspirations to become an international tourist destination. Some involved above-the-line personnel and creative contributors from Greece, but the films were part of the US studios' outsourcing practices that aimed to benefit from local tax benefits in Europe. In a revisionist account of the production history of *Never on Sunday* aiming to expand the category of national cinema to encompass co-productions, Yannis Tzioumakis (2017) has recently argued for its inclusion in the canon of Greek cinema.

Similar questions regarding the challenges to the category of national cinema brought about by co-productions can be explored in connection to a regional type of co-production that took place around the same time, involving collaborations with neighbouring countries. In contrast to the well capitalised US ventures, these were small scale one-off arrangements. They did not form part of any formalised state framework, but they emulated in an unofficial (and probably coincidental) way the European multiple language co-productions of the 1930s. Two examples include the Yugoslav/Greek co-production *Two Grains of Grapes* (*Dva Zrna Grozdja*, 1955, Nikos Skulidis/UFUS, dir. Mladimir Djordjevic) and the Greek/Turkish co-production *Love in the Classroom* (*Htypokardia sto Thranio*, 1963, Birsel Film/Finos

Film/Damaskinos-Mihailides, dir. Alekos Sakellarios). In both these cases different language versions of the films were shot for the two national markets that they were aimed at.<sup>7</sup>

Both these kinds of co-production were exceptions in what was a globally marginal industry, which by the 1970s was also on the verge of collapse following the (late) advent of television in Greece. This decline of the commercial sector was nonetheless countered by the rise of 'quality' cinema in Greece which began during the 1960s (Chalkou 2009), but emerged more dynamically in the 1970s as an oppositional discourse reinforced by the country's political woes. Emblematic of this 'New Greek cinema' was Theo Angelopoulos' Brechtian political epic *The Travelling Players (O Thiassos, 1974)* which premiered at Cannes (and won the FIPRESCI prize) on the year after the fall of the seven-year Greek dictatorship. Until the festivals' discovery of Lanthimos in the late 2000s, Angelopoulos had been Greece's main cinematic export, and it is not surprising that, until his death in 2012, he had been the Greek director most extensively involved in European co-productions.

As Greece joined the European Union in 1981, it became increasingly aligned with European cultural policies, including the adoption of a state-funding system for film production. 1981 also coincided with the election of a socialist government in Greece and the appointment of actress-turned-politician Melina Merkouri as Minister of Culture (1981-89) who was crucial in helping develop an institutional framework for Greek cinema - mainly through passing a law 'for the protection and development of cinematic art' and the 'support of Greek cinema' (Law 1957/1986). The major institutional change introduced by this law was that the nationalised Greek Film Centre became Greece's main film funding body.<sup>8</sup> This led to significant changes both in the mode of production and the kind of films made. The new system privileged the director-auteur (who was also usually producer and writer), giving

him/her full creative control. With few exceptions, it led to films with little appeal to the public – despite the creation of a distribution arm at the Greek Film Centre (Hellas Film) dedicated to their promotion in 1986. According to Karalis (2012, 218) the clientelistic policies of the socialist party in power affected which films were funded, shunning private investment or co-production opportunities. By the early 1990s, combined with the change of government, a crisis in public finances, and the realisation that this system was not bearing fruit, new funding schemes were introduced, most notably the programme *New Gaze (Nea Matia)* which aimed to support new directors (Karalis 2012, 229). New policies were also introduced which ‘favoured multiple sponsorship from many sources – private, state and international – and which were to become dominant in the new millennium’ (Karalis 2012, 240).

The above policy changes reflected, to a large extent, Europe-wide transformations. The box office troubles of Greek cinema were paralleled in most European film industries. Analysis of box office receipts in EU countries shows that in the mid to late 1980s the share of US films increased by 10% (from 60.2 percent in 1984 to 71.70 in 1991) pushing both national and other European productions to the margins (Held et al. 1999, 356). It was such economic woes that called for co-ordinated action from European institutions and led to the introduction of European audio-visual policies that gradually impacted on Greek cinema. Apart from Eurimages and MEDIA which offered financial support to different sectors of the industry, the Council of Europe’s European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production (adopted in 1992; came to force in 1994) was also crucial in creating the legal and institutional framework that facilitated co-productions within Europe. Reflecting the growing significance of co-productions on a global scale, the Convention was recently revised (in June 2016; open to signature from January 2017) in order to facilitate co-production

possibilities with non-European partners and ease the involvement of small (or low-production capacity) countries by lowering the threshold of participation (Council of Europe 2017a, Macnab 2017). In a parallel move towards international expansion, Eurimages has now (since March 2017) opened beyond Europe to include Canada as a co-production partner (Council of Europe 2017b).

In light of the above institutional and industrial developments in Greece and Europe, it is possible to explore more closely the co-production opportunities that Greek filmmakers embraced since the 1990s, and the extent to which they led to changes in the production culture in the Greek film industry. Data from Eurimages suggests that Greek filmmakers benefited more from the fund in the early years (Council of Europe 2017c). Between 1989 and 2017 Greece was the majority co-producer of 51 Eurimages-supported films (47 feature films and 4 documentaries) and participated as minority co-producer in another 55 Eurimages-supported films.<sup>9</sup> Within this period, there is fluctuation in the frequency of the allocation of the funds, with some years bringing healthy returns for Greek cinema (eg. in 1994, 1996 and 2017 five Greek projects were funded), and others not (eg. no Greek films funded by Eurimages in 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2014). Closer analysis shows that almost 55% of all the Greek Eurimages-supported projects, that is 28 films, were funded in the 1990s.<sup>10</sup> This figure reduces to 13 in the 2000s, and 10 between 2010 and 2017. A similar pattern emerges with the minority co-productions: 23 were supported in the 1990s, 17 in the 2000s and 14 between 2010 and 2017.<sup>11</sup>

This data alone does not illustrate the increase in Greek co-productions, as the 1990s are evidently the most active decade with regard to Eurimages-supported projects, while the 2010s are not complete. Examined more closely, however, it is evident that the last few years

have seen a surge in European co-productions: In the last five years (2012-17) 10 Greek films were funded by Eurimages (of which five were in 2017), while during the previous five years (2007-12) the number was just two.<sup>12</sup> Of the 10 Eurimages-supported films in the last five years, five were in 2017, matching the peak previously encountered in 1994 and 1996. While such a healthy return may be deemed coincidental, closer examination shows that it is the consequence of a broader shift in the production culture in Greece towards increased ‘extroversion’. In what follows, I will first examine the production culture in Greece between 1989 and 2009 with reference mainly to Eurimages-supported projects, while also exploring the extent to which other co-production activity also took place. I will then focus on the 2010s and illustrate the recent co-production landscape in Greece, as well as the characteristics and reception of the six most recent Eurimages-supported co-productions.

### ***1989-2009: Eurimages and Production Culture in Greece***

Of the 34 Greek directors, whose projects received funding from Eurimages between 1990 and 2009, Theo Angelopoulos was by far the most generously supported, having received over three million Euros from the fund for all his five feature films since 1990.<sup>13</sup> Four other Greek directors also had recurrent success, receiving Eurimages support twice each.<sup>14</sup> The remaining 29 successful directors were financed only once. Apart from highlighting Angelopoulos’ unique status in the European cinematic context, this also suggests that the fund aimed to be inclusive by supporting a range of different projects. Examination of the filmmaking activity of the 34 Eurimages-supported directors in this period shows that only five made further co-produced films. This suggests that Eurimages effectively provided the main (if not the only) incentive for European co-productions at the time.

Looking closer at the co-production activity of the five directors who worked with European (and international) partners aside from their Eurimages-supported films, it becomes evident that they depended on each director's individual situation rather than being representative of a broader national trend. Among these five directors, Michael Cacoyannis made the most co-productions. Having been born in Cyprus, educated in London, and worked in the US, Cacoyannis remains one of the country's most cosmopolitan directors.<sup>15</sup> Of the 15 feature films he directed, five – including *Zorba the Greek* (1964) – were either exclusively or jointly financed by US companies. Cacoyannis only made two films with European partners: the Italian/Cypriot Palme d'Or nominated *The Wastrel/Il Reliton* (1961); and the Eurimages-funded Greek-Cypriot-French *The Cherry Orchard* (1999). Like Cacoyannis, Nikos Koundouros also belonged to the generation who had started working in the 1950s, and who benefitted from Eurimages at the end of their careers. Koundouros only made three co-productions: the experimental *Vortex* (1967) which involved some US funds, his biopic *Byron* (1992) co-produced by Russian Mosfilm, and his penultimate film, the Eurimages-supported *The Photographers* (1999), with co-producers from Cyprus and Bulgaria. The other three directors belonged to the new generation that emerged at the time - that is filmmakers who made their first film in the late 1980s/early 1990s. These were Nikos Kornilios, Perikles Hoursoglou, and Constantinos Giannaris. Having had personal connections with France, Germany and the UK, they all made a film with each respective country as co-production. All their other films were financed exclusively from within Greece.

Analysis of the production companies that received Eurimages support between 1989 and 2009, shows that the majority were owned by the directors themselves. More specifically, of the 40 Eurimages funded films, 29 were made with production companies owned by their directors. This shows that the production culture of the 1980s, which privileged director-

producer-writer schemes, lingered through the 1990s and most of the 2000s. Of the director-owned companies that appear on the list, only Fantasia Audiovisual (Stella Theodoraki and Thanos Anastopoulos), maintained Eurimages activity after 2010.

The remaining 11 films were produced by dedicated production companies, most of which emerged as a response to the new opportunities presented by co-productions. The two most active producers with Eurimages at the time were Panagiotis Papahatzis (with the production company Hyperion [1987-2007] and, since 2003, Argonauts); and Fenia Kossovitsa (with the production company Ideefixe [1997-2004] and, since 2004, Blonde). Papahatzis founded Hyperion with the aim to ‘introduce and promote new Greek directors in the Greek and European market’.<sup>16</sup> Hyperion was the most ‘extrovert’ production company of the 1990s and 2000s, having received Eurimages funding six times (twice for Greek films), and leading three more co-productions (with France and/or Turkey). Despite also producing mainstream films aimed predominantly at the domestic market, Papahatzis’ successor company, Argonauts (2003-17) has been equally ‘extrovert’: seven of its 17 films so far are co-productions (five within Europe, one with Eurimages).<sup>17</sup>

Fenia Kossovitsa has also been involved with co-productions since the late 1990s. With Ideefixe (1997-2004) she obtained Eurimages funding four times (once as major co-producer). In 2004 Kossovitsa co-founded Blonde, a diversified production company also active in events production and location services. Between 2010 and 2017, Blonde has been awarded Eurimages funding four times (two of which as majority co-producer) while the company has also been involved in five more co-productions.

Other companies engaged with Eurimages in the 1990s were Stefi (a large, highly diversified and still active company founded by Vassilis Katsoufis) and Mythos (active 1997-2003 owned by Dionysis Samiotis who continued to work as producer in commercial productions till the early 2010s). In the 2000s, Takis Veremis's Strada Film (est. 1995), and Despoina Mouzaki's Cinegram (founded 1989) appeared. Strada later moved mainly into distribution and Cinegram was mostly active in television in the 2000s.

What should be noted here, is the importance of Greek companies' participation as minority co-producers in other European projects. Aside from the financial benefits, these collaborations brought Greek professionals in contact with their European counterparts, and fostered a culture of reciprocity, mutual learning, and openness that challenged the Greek film industry's relative insularity. Aiming to capitalise on opportunities, but also on the opening of Greece's economy partly as a result of the adoption of the Euro in January 2002, by the mid 2000s a number of companies had emerged that offered specific production services, such as location shooting or post-production. Among these, two have had a recurrent presence in Eurimages: Inkas (Lilette Botassi) which is also active in feature film production; and Graal (Konstantina Stavrianou), a post-production house with over 50 co-productions to-date.

What emerges from the above is that despite the specific opportunities offered by Eurimages that benefitted those who were awarded its support, the fund had little effect in transforming the production culture in Greece more broadly. In other words, it took two decades before producers and directors became more systematically geared towards co-productions irrespective of Eurimages. This was the result of, on one hand, a broader change of culture facilitated by the gradual proliferation of networking opportunities for filmmakers in film

festivals; and, on the other, of the financial crisis which further limited the funds available for film production nationally. One such opportunity is the SEE Cinema Network which since 2000 represents participating countries from South Eastern Europe that support the development of international co-productions. Even more wide-ranging in its effect has been the Agora, the industry section of the Thessaloniki International Film Festival which was established in 2005, and specifically its co-production forum 'Crossroads' that has helped initiate a number of co-productions across the Mediterranean, Balkan and Central Europe (Papadimitriou 2016, 106-107). Despite their regional character, both these networking opportunities have helped foster a more 'extrovert', Europe-orientated, production culture in Greece.

To understand the impact of the financial crisis on the production culture in Greece in the 2010s it is important to situate it in the context of the preceding period. The deregulation of Greek television in the 1990s, led to investment in film production from private television channels. As the Greek economy grew during the 1990s and 2000s, so did the commercial audio-visual sector too. Production companies specialising in advertisement and television series were established, while film distribution and exhibition companies began to invest in production. In this context, and despite endemic dysfunctions in the state funding system, art films could also get financed - usually through a combination of state and private funds. In other words, while European co-productions were one possible option for funding, at the time there were also alternatives. Emerging directors could find work in their industry, as well as the means to finance their first films.

The early career of Yorgos Lanthimos offers a good illustration of the funding opportunities available in Greece for filmmakers in the 2000s, and of their subsequent loss. It is to this I

will now turn before exploring in some more detail the post-2010 (co)production landscape in Greece. Despite the fact that Lanthimos' departure from Greece in 2011 problematises his relationship to Greek national cinema, it is important to stress the impact that his international success had in enhancing an 'extrovert' production culture in Greece. On one hand, it gave filmmakers – especially those of Lanthimos' generation – the confidence of the realisation that global recognition is possible for a director from a small European country such as Greece; and on the other, it made festivals, critics, and – not least – producers beyond Greece, notice Greek cinema and engage in co-productions with Greek companies.

### ***2010s: Crisis, Resilience and the Europeanisation of Greek (art) cinema***

A graduate of the Stavrakos Film School in Athens, throughout the 1990s Lanthimos worked on commercial projects (advertisements and music videos) while also directing experimental theatre plays and short films. His first foray into feature film directing was as director-for-hire for the mainstream comedy *My Best Friend (O Kalyteros mou Filos)* which he co-directed with its comedian-star Lakis Lazopoulos. Four years later, Lanthimos gained the financial support of three advertising production companies (Modiano, Top Cut, Stefi) to direct his first feature film *Kinetta* (2005). This narratively opaque, visually arresting, and conceptually challenging film that was co-produced by fellow filmmaker Athena Tsangari's Haos Film, was noticed by international film festivals: it premiered in Toronto and was later shown in Berlin. For his next film, *Dogtooth*, Lanthimos obtained state funds, but was also financially supported by the advertising company Boo, and new production company Horsefly.<sup>18</sup> The film opened at the 'Un Certain Regard' section of the Cannes Film Festival, where it won the top award, and was later nominated for a Best Foreign Film Oscar - a

recognition that a Greek film had not received for over 30 years. Both of his films, in other words, were sponsored by advertising companies, introducing a new kind of synergy between art and commerce in Greece.

By the time of his next film *Alps* (2011), and despite his international success, Lanthimos struggled to find finance from Greece. His difficulties were aggravated by the financial crisis that intensified pre-existent dysfunctions in the Greek state funding system, and severely hit the commercial sector – including advertising companies that were no longer in a position to invest in film production. *Alps* was eventually financed from a combination of Greek state and private sources, with some MEDIA development funding, and support by French, US and Canadian companies. Altogether, however, the film did not reach the budget that Lanthimos had hoped for. Realising that staying in Greece would mean facing continuous financial struggles, especially as the country was getting deeper into crisis, Lanthimos left Greece for the UK. From there, he was able to tap in to significantly better funding opportunities, international casts, as well as global distribution and visibility.

The first film he made after his departure from Greece was *The Lobster* (2015), an Irish/Dutch/UK/French/Greek co-production supported by Eurimages with a twenty times larger budget than that of his previous film. The film had a very successful critical and (for a film of its kind) commercial trajectory too. It won the Jury Prize the Cannes Film Festival, and even managed to secure distribution in the USA – a market notoriously difficult for European films. Within two years, Lanthimos premiered his next film *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* (2017) also at Cannes, where it won the Best Screenplay award. A UK/Irish/US co-production, filmed in the US with A-list international stars (Nicole Kidman), the film has no financial or production links to Greece, save for the national origin of its director and his co-writer Efthymis Filippou (who has written scripts for other internationally acclaimed Greek

films, such as Tsangari's *Chevalier* (2015) or Babis Makridis' *Pity (Oiktos)* (2018)). The film's connection to Greece is thematic as the story offers a radical reinterpretation of the myth of Ifigeneia and alludes to the tropes of ancient Greek tragedy.

Increasingly Lanthimos cinema may best be understood in the context of 'global art cinema' (Galt and Schoonover 2010) rather than with reference to national or European contexts. However, the films and their success have impacted Greek cinema both stylistically and symbolically: on the one hand, they established the 'Weird Wave' as an internationally recognisable style that contemporary Greek directors cannot ignore (even if they choose to differentiate themselves from it); on the other, their international recognition has conveyed a renewed sense of possibility and confidence among art film/festival-oriented directors and producers. In practice, however, the financial conditions for film production worsened since the crisis. While it was the box-office dependent commercial sector of the industry that was hit most immediately, state-funding dependent cinema was also affected as budgets tightened and delays worsened. The cash-starved filmmaking community responded in three ways: by supporting each other (solidarity), appealing to future audiences (crowdfunding), and, seeking further co-production opportunities (extroversion) (Papadimitriou 2017a). The rest of this article explores in more detail the latter of these options. Focusing on the six Eurimages-supported films from the 2010s that have been completed at the time of writing, it explores aspects of their production histories, their main stylistic and thematic characteristics, their critical and audience reception, as well as the broader co-production activity of their directors and production companies.

As indicated above, between 2010 and 2017, 10 majority and 14 minority Greek co-productions received Eurimages funding. Of these, 14 are by directors based in Greece (or

Greek-Cyprus) or of Greek origin.<sup>19</sup> Of the 18 Greek production companies that have received Eurimages funding since 2010, only five appeared before 2010 (Argonauts, Fantasia, Blonde, Graal and Inkas).<sup>20</sup> The remaining 12 are mostly new companies established in the 2010s or shortly before. Of these, only three are director-owned, suggesting the gradual decline of this company model. These two were Fantasia, a company that since the late 1990s has produced over 20 films including by directors other than its owners; Vergi, established in 1993 by Panos Karkanevatos, that – in contrast to Fantasia - has only produced the director's own films; and Haos, co-owned by director Athina Rachel Tsangari, producer Maria Hatzakou and editor Matt Johnson.<sup>21</sup>

In 2014, two films that had received Eurimages funding in 2012 were released in Greek theatres - Panos H. Koutras' *Xenia* and Yannis Economides' *Stratos (To Mikro Psari)*. Both films premiered in prestigious film festivals – *Xenia* at the Un Certain Regard section at the Cannes Film Festival and *Stratos* in competition at the Berlinale. The films dominated the Hellenic Academy Awards, with 15 and 14 nominations, and six and four wins respectively. Their box office returns, however, in Greece were rather disappointing, with 15,000 and 16,000 admissions respectively, underlining the commercial unsustainability of challenging auteur films in the Greek market.<sup>22</sup> The two films reflect the distinctive authorial styles of their filmmakers, neither of which follows a 'Weird Wave' aesthetic.

Koutras' *Xenia* is a fantasy-infused queer road-movie that focuses on two half-Greek, half-Albanian brothers in search of their long-lost father and of legitimation in a country that rejects them as aliens. Economides' *Stratos* is a noir-inspired violent story of a contract killer in crisis-ridden Greece whose moral consciousness awakens in the face of the potential abuse of a child. In its denouncement of homophobia, xenophobia and racism, Koutras' 'queer gaze' (Karalis 2015) blends social commentary with upbeat, playful and humorous escapes in

fantasy. Economides' film, on the other hand, is a verbally explosive stylised allegory for debt and the crisis-ridden Greece. The films loosely draw on different genres and construct complementary visions of 21<sup>st</sup> century Greece: the road movie, melodrama and musical for Koutras; and the social drama and film noir for Economides.

Koutras' films are characterised by a queer aesthetic that utilises popular forms to deal with topics of relevance that relate to, but also exceed the national. While his films are situated in recognisably Greek contexts (and with the Acropolis often in view) the references and modes of address are often transnational, if not specifically European. His campy parodic sci-fi *The Attack of the Giant Moussaka (I Epithesi tou Gigandiaiou Moussaka, 1999)* offers a playful critique of the excesses of the society of spectacle, while the transgender melodrama *Strella: A Woman's Way (Strella, 2009)* challenges taboos about gender and sexuality. *True Life (Alithini Zoi, 2004)* is a family melodrama that playfully exposes its characters' (and society's) secrets and lies. Economides' films, on the other hand, are more claustrophobically grounded in a Greek reality. In his first films, *Matchbox (Spirtokouto, 2003)* and *Soul Kicking (I Psyhi sto Stoma, 2006)*, his distinctive use of language - in other words, the use of extreme, and near-constant, shouting and swearing - creates a raw, but also heightened, sense of realism. In *Knifer (Mahairovgaltis, 2010)* Economides introduced elements of genre and detached stylisation, while *Stratos* makes a more self-conscious – almost parodic – use of *film noir* references and of the director's own style.

Both Koutras and Economides have their own production companies, and made their first films independently. Since their second films, however, they started collaborating with other producers. Papahatzis' Argonauts produced Koutras' second film, *True Life* (a co-production with French company Program33). Since *Strella*, Koutras has worked with producer Eleni Kossyfidou who joined him as partner in his company 100% Synthetic. Economides also

started working with Papahadzis from his second film *Soul Kicking*, and has continued to do so ever since, while Chistos V. Konstantakopoulos (Faliro House) has also joined all of Economides' films since *Knifer*. All these three producers are actively involved in co-productions beyond the ones discussed here. Indicatively, by summer 2017, Argonauts had four co-productions in development and Kossyfidou (with her personal company Blackbird) was shooting one co-production, while developing two others. Faliro House's profile also includes a number of co-productions, including some with the US.<sup>23</sup>

Of the two films, *Xenia* had a better career outside Greece. Its theatrical release in France brought a respectable 70,000 admissions<sup>24</sup>, it has shown at about 30 film festivals, and it has also secured digital distribution through Amazon. Despite reservations expressed by some critics (van Hoeij, 2014; Lodge, 2014) the film's critical reception was overall positive (Lemercier, 2014). In his extensive review of the film, Karalis (2015) claims that '*Xenia* is one of the most significant European films of the last decade, a filmic space in which local experience and transnational aesthetics converge in an extremely imaginative and challenging manner'. *Stratos*, on the other hand, had less international exposure, and a more mixed critical reception, with its perceived verbal excesses, stylisation and slow pace counting against it (Foundas, 2014; Dalton, 2014; Proimakis, 2014).

2015 saw the release of another two Eurimages-funded Greek films, Alexis Alexiou's *Wednesday 4:45* and Panos Karkanevatos' *River Banks (Ohthes)*. Alexiou's film premiered internationally at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York to mixed reviews (DeFore, 2015), while Karkanevatos' was effectively bypassed by the festival circuit, having shown only in Hamburg, home of one of its co-production partners. The films' domestic box office was lower than that of the previous year's releases: *Wednesday 4:45* had 10,000 admissions, while *Riverbanks* less than 2000. Alexiou's film, however, was very positively received by

the Greek filmmaking community, as evidence by the nine awards (and 13 nominations) it won from the Hellenic Film Academy.

Alexiou's *Wednesday 4:45* is a hyper-stylised neo-noir with multiple cinephile references to Asian cinema, Michael Mann and Quentin Tarantino. Like *Stratos*, but with a very different visual and overall stylistic approach, the film is a thinly disguised allegory of Greece's crisis as it tells the story of a man crushed under the weight of debt. As its main producer Thanassis Karathanos (Twenty-Twenty Vision) is based in Germany, and the majority of the funds were from Germany, the film is technically a minority Greek production. *Wednesday 4:45* received Eurimages funding in 2011, but it took four years for it to reach the screen. The delay is explained by its production history which offers a good illustration of how the Greek crisis both hindered and propelled the film's making. German television channel ZDF/ARTE was the first partner to join the co-production - and it can be argued that the film's crisis-related topic combined with its genre-based approach offered a good sell. However, as the crisis in Greece was unfolding, state funding for films was frozen for about two years, halting the progress of the production. Due to these circumstances, Eurimages exceptionally approved the project before national funding was secured from Greece, accepting just letters of interest.<sup>25</sup> More partners from Germany (German General Film Board) and Greece (Faliro House, Marni Film, the Greek Film Centre) entered the co-production, but the abrupt closure in June 2013 of the Greek State Broadcaster/ERT blocked this part of the national funding. To cover for the missing budget, the producers managed to secure last-minute support from the Israel Film Fund (where the post-production took place), and the film was finally completed. *Wednesday 4:45* was Alexiou's second film and his first co-production.

Set in the north-eastern border of Greece with Turkey, Karkanevatos' *River Banks*, is a co-production between Greece, Germany and Turkey, that focuses on the relationship between a

psychologically troubled stationed soldier who does mine clearing and a young woman who helps traffic migrants across the river. The profile of its director/producer (who belongs to the generation of filmmakers who first made films in the early 1990s), is interesting because it is untypical. Karkanevatos is the only Eurimages-recipient in the 2010s who represents the old director-centered production culture (whereby the director produces their film through their own company – in this case Vergi); and on the other, he has been remarkably ‘extrovert’ throughout his filmmaking career, as all his four films are co-productions. Karkanevatos has collaborated with a range of national partners both within and beyond Europe: the UK, Germany, and Belgium for *Borderline (Metaihmio)*, 1994); Bulgaria and Luxembourg for *Earth and Water (Homa kai nero)*, 1999); and the US, Belgium and Canada for *Well Kept Secrets, Athanasia (Kala Krymmena Mystika, Athanasia)*, 2008). Despite a strong visual approach, a topical migration-related theme, and a suggestive use of the concept of borders, Karkanevatos approach, especially its mix of realist and poetic elements, did not help *River Banks* achieve the desired reception with audiences and critics.

The final two completed Eurimages-supported Greek films from the 2010s are *Son of Sofia (O Gios tis Sofias)*, 2017) and Babis Makridis’ *Pity (Oiktos)*, both of which have links with the ‘Weird Wave’. Psykou’s Greek, Bulgarian and French co-production is set during the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens and tells the story of an 11-year old boy from Russia who joins his mother Sofia in Greece to find that she is married to an old man whom she also looks after. Told from the perspective of the boy, the film gives us access both to his actions and his imagination, as we experience the well-meaning but oppressive attempts of his new stepfather to teach him Greek and ‘proper’ behaviour. A distinctive semi-absurd and mildly surreal humour underpins the film’s storytelling and its *mise-en-scene*: huge soft toys underscore awkward expressions of love, enable empowering (also ridiculous) masquerades, and assist imaginary escapes. *Son of Sofia* is film about how psychological violence breeds

physical violence in a family. It has thematic and stylistic affinities with the so-called Greek Weird Wave, and yet enough distinctiveness to warrant differentiation, as most reviewers have noted. The film opened at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York in April 2017, to overall positive critical reception (Schager, 2017; Economou, 2017), labelling it as ‘magic realist’ (Economou, 2017) or highlighting its ‘idiosyncratic’ features (Schager, 2017).

Psykou’s previous film, Greek-Czech co-production *The Eternal Return of Antonis Paraskevas* (*The Eternal Return of Antonis Paraskevas*, 2013) was also hailed as a ‘weird wave entry of sorts’ (Van Hoeij, 2013).

*Son of Sofia* is produced by Giorgos Karnavas, the joint co-owner of Heretic films (est. 2013) together with Konstantinos Kontovrakis. Heretic’s ‘extrovert’ orientation makes it a very good example of the new production culture in Greece. Within the four years since its founding Heretic has systematically focused on co-productions, both as major and as minor co-producer. The company has also launched a sales agent branch (Heretic Outreach), the first ever in Greece that specialises in sales of films from the Balkans. Aside from obtaining three Eurimages awards (two as the major co-producer and one as a minor) since its founding, the company has also benefitted from the bilateral French-Greek co-production agreement which has been set up in 2014 (initially for three years; renewed for another three in 2017). The agreement has been set up in order to support Greek quality cinema in the light of continuing financial challenges, and offers very advantageous terms for the Greek side.<sup>26</sup> Between 2014 and 2017, 26 projects (20 fiction and 6 documentaries) were supported by the fund for a total of 3.2 million.<sup>27</sup> Heretic and Blonde are the two companies that have benefitted most from the French-Greek fund so far having been awarded support five times each.

Finally, Babis Makridis’ *Pity* premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2018. A

black comedy focusing on a man who thrives when people feel sorry for him, *Pity* is co-scripted by Efthimis Filippou, the regular collaborator of Lanthimos. Filippou's script makes *Pity*'s 'Weird Wave' credentials undeniable, while the question for the critics (whose reviews were overall positive) was whether this is a renewing (Linden, 2018; Ide, 2018) or a familiar (Lodge, 2018) example of the, by now recognisable, Greek art-cinema genre. *Pity* is a Greek-Polish co-production, whose main producer is Amanda Livanou's Neda Film (est. 2014). Having worked as a producer since the 1990s, Livanou has extensive previous experience in co-productions and her new company's slate includes the 2016 (also) Greek-Polish co-production *Park* (dir. Sofia Exarchou) - a visually driven and narratively loose film that focuses on a group of young people living in the ruins of the Athens Olympic Park.

The above discussion has illustrated the increased co-production activity since 2010, as well as the more 'extrovert' profiles of the production companies, which are all extensively and systematically involved in co-productions, marking a significant shift from the production practices in the 1990s and 2000s. A brief look at the production profiles of the five Greek films that were awarded Eurimages support in 2017 (and which are not completed yet) further reinforces this point. Of the five companies, three (Blonde, Heretic and Fantasia) have had prior Eurimages success, while for the other two (Haos and Homemade) this was their first Eurimages award. Both these companies, however, have already been active in co-productions and/or international collaborations: Haos mainly with the US, while Maria Drandaki's Homemade Films (est. 2009) with European partners (having already completed two, and currently producing and/or developing another five co-productions).

The brief exploration of the six Eurimages-supported films of the 2010s (that have already been completed) highlighted their thematic and stylistic diversity, but now begs the question

of their cultural Europeanisation. In other words, do the films project a marked sense of European belonging, and/or engaging with Greek issues in the context of European concerns? And, most importantly, can we establish a link between their co-production status and their form and content?

The fact is that by looking at the finished films it is very difficult to detect any direct effect on their content and form that can be attributed to their status as co-productions. This is because cultural elements that express a dual sense of belonging – national and European – can be present in a film irrespectively of its mode of production and financing. Furthermore, in none of the six films examined is there a tokenistic presence of cultural elements from all co-producing countries that would risk calling them ‘Euro-puddings’ that would have imposed a forced sense of cultural Europeanisation. Rather, they are all recognisably Greek in so far as they include obvious signs of the ‘national’ (location of the story, language, location, actors, main creative collaborators, among others) and handle thematic concerns that emanate from Greek experience. At the same time, the films reflect the broader cultural and social transformations of an increasingly Europeanised and globalised Greece: Greek characters interact with people from different cultural and national backgrounds (*Wednesday 4:45*, *Xenia*, *Riverbanks*, *Son of Sofia*), while the issues that the films explore also have European (and global) resonances. *Stratos* and *Wednesday 4:45* highlight the extent to which debt and the financial crisis dehumanise people; *Xenia* denounces the lack of multicultural acceptance, racial tolerance and sexual diversity; *River Banks* points to Europe’s boundaries and to what it might mean to be in or out of Europe; *Son of Sofia* foregrounds questions of identity and national belonging. That the films deal with such issues cannot be directly attributed to the films’ status as co-productions. While we can only speculate about whether the presence of such concerns may have helped the projects secure the funds, and/or whether these films would have managed to find alternative financing sources to be completed, the

fact is that one would not necessarily be able to identify these six films as co-productions without reading the credits.

In order to try to locate more concretely the extent to which the process of securing funds from different European partners, and then realising a European co-production, affects the content and the creative result of the films, I asked the views of the directors and producers I interviewed. Their response was unanimous in stressing that the process did not affect the major creative decisions (stories, themes or styles) or the overall aims of a film, as these are driven by the screenwriter/director's vision - an answer that confirms the continuing commitment of Eurimages (and European cinema more broadly) to auteur cinema. However, they also agreed that the co-production process affects the creative result of a film in more subtle and specific ways. For example, in needing to pitch a project to European partners and funding bodies, it is important to highlight the points of connection of a local experience to a broader European one, as well as its potential resonance to wider audiences, thus affecting some of its emphases. The same applies to the presentation of a script – if not its core structure or style. Furthermore, collaboration with creative and technical teams from other European countries brings the Greek crews in contact with different working methods and approaches, thus both enhancing technical expertise and often leading to different creative choices. In this sense, the Europeanisation of Greek cinema, is not a matter of a radical change of brand or identity, but rather a subtle, indirect and complex process that involves cross-fertilisation, interaction and exchange at the levels of a film's development and production.

## ***Conclusion***

This article has offered a detailed examination of European co-productions in Greece, focusing mainly on Greek Eurimages-supported films, in order to explore whether and how transformations akin to a Europeanisation of Greek cinema have become more pronounced since 2010. By Europeanisation it referred to the increased interactions with European partners at the level of funding and production (in other words, ‘extroversion’ towards European partners), while also pointing to the consequent process of creative and cultural cross-fertilisations. The emphasis was on highlighting the changes in the production culture in Greece as a result, on the one hand, of the increased economic necessity to engage in European co-productions for Greek (art) cinema’s survival, and, on the other, of intensified aspirations following the international recognition of a number of Greek films in this period. Aside from offering a comprehensive profiling of the co-production activity in the country (especially in regards to majority Greek co-productions), the article also examined the six European-supported Greek films completed between 2010 and 2017 in order to highlight their stylistic and thematic diversity and argue that their cultural Europeanisation (the extent to which, in other words, they demonstrate issues and approaches that position Greece more explicitly in the context of Europe) can only indirectly attributed to their co-production status.

Processes of change can be traced from different perspectives and are usually best illustrated from a degree of temporal distance. While situating the analysis in the context of the co-production activity in Greece during the past thirty years, the main focus of this article has been on very recent developments. The extent to which this ‘extroversion’ and European orientation in the production culture in Greece, and by extension – albeit more indirectly – in the content and form of the films thus made, will be sustained is difficult to predict. However, in so far as neither the market conditions, nor the policy framework and available funding

sources for film production in Greece significantly alter, it is likely that European co-productions will continue to play a key role in offering economic support for Greek cinema, leading to further subtle and complex processes of cultural Europeanisation.

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<sup>1</sup> For an exploration of the 'culture of solidarity', see Papadimitriou 2015 and Tsagari 2016. For an analysis of the funding options available to Greek filmmakers since the crisis, see Papadimitriou 2017a. For a study showing the positive effects of co-productions on the European circulation of films see European Audiovisual Observatory, cited in De Vinck 2014, 341-42.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'extroversion' is used in Greek industry circles in this sense. See, for example, the event 'Extroversion through Greek cinema', organised by the Wharton Club of Greece and

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the Hellenic Film Academy (Onassis Cultural Center, March 29, 2016) as part of a discussion between industry members and financiers exploring new funding options for Greek cinema. For further use of the term in an academic context, see also Papadimitriou 2017a and Tzioumakis 2017.

<sup>3</sup> The Greek Film Centre does not provide historical data about Greek co-productions, and has no archives accessible to researchers. The Lumiere database which lists some additional Greek co-productions, is incomplete, and only cites films that have had theatrical distribution in other European countries.

<sup>4</sup> On national cinema, see Hjort and MacKenzie 2000; on European cinema, see Elsaesser 2005, Galt 2006, Halle 2014.

<sup>5</sup> For a foundational article on the topic, see Neale 1981.

<sup>6</sup> For a broader take on the usefulness of the nation, see Jusdanis 2001.

<sup>7</sup> Both films were discussed in papers presented at the conference ‘Unknown Greek Cinema: New Cartographies, New Protagonists, New Discoveries of the Past [1945–1967]’, Thessaloniki, Greece, May 28–30, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> The origins of the Greek Film Centre go back to 1970 (the period of the dictatorship), when the Greek Bank for Industrial Development (ETBA), which was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Industry, formed a subsidiary called General Film Enterprises, to offer support to the already crumbling film industry. In 1975 (after the transition to democracy), the subsidiary was renamed as Greek Film Centre, and in 1980 it was transferred to the Ministry of Culture, while ETBA (nominally) maintained financial oversight. In 1986, under the socialist government, the Greek Film Centre became nationalised (article 16 of law 1957/1986). In 2010, its legal status changed to a public benefit non-profit legal entity, supervised and at least 50% funded by the Ministry of Culture and Sport. Sources: Stassinopoulou 2017, Greek Film Centre, Law 1957/1986 and Law 3905/2010.

<sup>9</sup> Unless otherwise specified, ‘Greek films’ from now on, will refer to majority Greek co-productions.

<sup>10</sup> Possible reasons for such positive returns in the 1990s may include the steady representation of Greece at Eurimages by Costas Vrettakos (1991-2006), the (compared to the 2010s) much higher budgets allocated by the Greek Film Centre for production, as well as policy changes at Eurimages.

<sup>11</sup> The overall funding allocated to films with Greek involvement in each decade roughly matches this diminishing pattern: €9 million in the 1990s (of which €5.3 million went to Greek-led films); €8 million in the 2000s (of which €3.5 million to Greek-led films); and €3,5 million in the 2010s (of which €1.2 million to Greek led films).

<sup>12</sup> However, the average amount earned by each film has been lower in the last five years: Between 2007 and 2012 the two Greek films received € 950 thousand from Eurimages (an average of €474 thousand each), while between 2012-2017 10 films received almost €1.7 million (an average of €170 thousand). This discrepancy can be explained (a) because of the reduced financial capacities of the crisis-ridden national film bodies in Greece, on which the overall budgets depend; and (b) because of the fact that in 2007 one of the supported films was Theo Angelopoulos’ *Trilogy II: The Dust of Time*, which received a whopping €650,000, well above the maximum amount allowed with the most recent regulations (€ 500,000).

<sup>13</sup> Angelopoulos’ films that received Eurimages support are *The Suspended Step of the Stork*, 1991; *Ulysses Gaze*, 1995; *Eternity and a Day*, 1998; *Trilogy: The Weeping Meadow*, 2004; and *Trilogy II: The Dust of Time*, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> These were Pandelis Voulgaris (in 1994 and 2003), Nikos Kornilios (in 1989 and 2001), Vangelis Serdaris (in 1996 and 2000), and Menelaos Karamanghiolis (in 1995 and 2007).

<sup>15</sup> For an exploration of cosmopolitan authorship, see Eleftheriotis 2012.

<sup>16</sup> Quote from Papahatzis’ CV.

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<sup>17</sup> Information from personal interview with Panayotis Papahatzis.

<sup>18</sup> For more on the production history of *Dogtooth*, see Papadimitriou 2015.

<sup>19</sup> In four of the films directed by Greek directors (including Lanthimos' *The Lobster*) Greece is a minority co-producer. Of these, Alexis Alexiou's *Wednesday 4:45* (2015) and Christos Georgiou's *Happy Birthday* (not yet released) are German majority co-productions, but they are culturally Greek because they tell stories referring to, and grounded in, Greek experience and language. They are both produced by Thanassis Karathanos (Twenty-Twenty Vision).

<sup>20</sup> While *Argonauts* and *Blonde* do not appear at Eurimages before 2010, their previous production companies Hyperion and Ideefixe respectively do. By listing them here I emphasise the continuity based on the producers, rather than their company.

<sup>21</sup> The difference between the two models of production company is reflected in their respective professional bodies, as represented by the two Trade Unions: SAPOE (Audiovisual Producers' Association of Greece) that represents producers; and ESPEK (Union of Director-Producers of Greek Cinema) that represents director-producers. Directors who are not producers, are represented by EES (Greek Directors' Guild).

<sup>22</sup> For comparison, it is worth highlighting the potential that a mainstream Greek film can have in the Greek box office: in the 2015-16 season, Christopher Papakaliatis' private television-funded *Worlds Apart* (*Enas Allos Kosmos*) reached almost 700,000 tickets. Source: Greek Film Centre.

<sup>23</sup> On Faliro House, see Papadimitriou 2015.

<sup>24</sup> Source: Eleni Kossyfidou.

<sup>25</sup> Normally, a minimum 30% (now 50%) from all the funding parties should have been secured first.

<sup>26</sup> National participation consists of 20% contribution from the Greek Film Centre, and 80% from the French CNC. Source: Altcine.

<sup>27</sup> Source: Greek Film Centre.