

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people assisted me throughout the last several years in bringing this long-standing effort to fruition. The most important were members of the *Our Mythical Childhood* network created and led by Katarzyna Marciniak, whose personal encouragement and generous support at all research and writing stages were the crucial factors.

Separate thanks must go to my friend and colleague from Kazimierz Kumaniecki's textual criticism seminar at the University of Warsaw, Jerzy Axer, who received me with open arms after forty years of absence at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw (in 2012 transformed into the Faculty of "Artes Liberales"), where he created a unique atmosphere of committed scholarship conducive to a flourishing, exemplary, and friendly collaboration. To Jerzy, I owe the opportunity to develop a third career that combines the previous two, Classics and media, that is, classical reception in audiovisuality. The present book is the latest result of this unusual *cursus*, the *honores* of which belong less to me than to the people who made it possible.

My children, Anna and Filip, certainly suffered from my unrelenting preoccupation with the audiovisual part of popular culture but showed exceptional patience when I could not wholly share their interests. Anna was directly and enormously helpful in reviewing my "English as a second language" vocabulary and style with her customary expertise and tact. Filip assisted me greatly in dealing with mundane affairs that otherwise would have threatened my comfortable existence required for this creative effort.

I must also express my special appreciation to the two reviewers of the book, Brane Senegačnik of the University of Ljubljana and Henry Stead of the University of St Andrews. Their many comments and suggestions, which I tried to follow as best as possible, clarified the book's structure and reasoning and hopefully improved it, with the usual proviso about all remaining imperfections being my own fault.

My thanks go again to Katarzyna Marciniak, who provided her usual support as the Series Editor in addition to what has already been said. I also express thanks to Ewa Balcerzyk-Atys, the copy editor and indexer of the volume, and Tomasz Chmielak, the "Artes Liberales" librarian, who was unfailingly helpful in locating publications I needed for my research.

I also met with other exceptional acts of kindness in procuring rare books and bibliographical data that cannot remain unacknowledged, in particular: my friend Małgorzata Borowska, a Hellenist and Byzantinist at the University of Warsaw, lent me her 1998 book on Digenes Akritas, and Andrzej Kompa, a Byzantinist at the University of Łódź, facilitated access to the 2017 edition of *Ethnika* by Stephanus of Byzantium unavailable in Warsaw. It may be a coincidence that they are both Byzantinists... My thanks to both of them.

In the spirit of fairness, I must not forget my friends and collaborators, who had to listen for several years to my frequent complaints and disaffected confidences about the slow and uncertain progression of the book; I would like to apologize to all of them for my self-indulgence and thank them for their tolerant patience – Zbigniew Kloch of my own "Artes Liberales" and David Movrin of the University of Ljubljana are high on that list.

Finally, the question of the title. "This is the song that never ends" is a phrase borrowed from the children's entertainer, ventriloquist, and puppeteer Shari Lewis (1933–1998). Her 1988 famous infinite-loop single-verse song provides a children's version of the concept of endlessness, which may be used to describe classical mythology's millennia-long and never-ending power of inspiration.

Warsaw, September 14, 2023