

Document Citation

Title	Alexander the Great
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Source	<i>Hong Kong Film Festival</i>
Date	1981
Type	program note
Language	Chinese English
Pagination	131-132
No. of Pages	2
Subjects	Angelopoulos, Theodoros (1935), Athens, Greece
Film Subjects	O megalexandros (Alexander the Great), Angelopoulos, Theodoros, 1980

Alexander The Great

(O Megalexandros)

Greece/W. Germany/ 1980

Director:
Theodoros Angelopoulos

Screenplay:
Theodoros Angelopoulos

Photography (colour):
Giorgios Arvanitis

Art Director:
Miké Karapiperis

Costumes:
Ghiorgos Ziakas

Music:
Christodulos Halaris

Production Manager:
Stephanos Vlakos

Cast:
Alexander
Omero Antonutti

The Stepdaughter
Eva Kotamanidou

The Schoolteacher
Grigoris Evanghelatos

The Guide
Michalis Yannatos

Italian Anarchists
Laura de Marchi
Francesco Cernelutti
Brizio Montinaro
Norman Mozzato
Claude Betan

Woman of the Village
Tula Stathopoulou

Man of the Village
Thanos Grammenos

Mr Zelepis
Christoforos Nezer

Alexander as a boy
Ilia Zafiropulos

Co-produced by
Angelopoulos Produc-
tions (Athens)/ZDF
(Munich)/RAI (Rome).
Producer for RAI:
Lorenzo Ostuni. Execu-
tive Producer: Phoebe
Stavropoulou.

Approx. 195 minutes.

Greek and Italian
dialogue/English
titles.

Source: Angelopoulos
Productions, 23-25
Daphnomili Street,
Athens 706, Greece.

The Film

On the first New Year’s Eve of the 20th century, the Greek bandit Alexander seizes a party of English aristocrats and holds them hostage in a remote mountain village. The village is run as a commune, under the guidance of a group of Italian anarchists. Alexander is a mysterious figure: his birth is unknown, and so he adopts a village woman as his mother, and her daughter becomes his sister; later he marries his adopted mother, so that his step-sister becomes his step-daughter. On the wedding day, assassins hired by the ousted land-owners try to kill Alexander, but murder his bride instead. Gradually, Alexander comes to represent more than just a bandit...

From an Interview with Angelopoulos

The first thing to be said is that it’s the most simple film I’ve made so far. Its progress is linear, and it hasn’t deve-
loped its stylistic form in the course of editing like the other films. There are no chronological jumps – the film begins on New Year’s Eve in 1900 and proceeds from there, except for the final sequence when the little Alexan-
der becomes Megalexandros and goes towards the city. Which is a modern city – present-day Athens, in fact – in contrast to the rural, turn-of-the-
century world of the rest of the film. When the little Alexander enters the city, he brings all the experience of the century with him. He has gained a total experience of life, sex and death, and over it there is a great question mark. How long will the night last, and when will a new day break?

It’s a more surrealistic film than *The Travelling Players*. It doesn’t describe real events, but their sense and meaning, and concentrates on political and sexual consequences. It’s a more ‘poetic’ film, whereas *Travelling Players* was more concrete.

Greek people have grown up caressing dead stones. I’ve tried to bring mythol-
ogy down from the heights and directly to the people, in both *Travel-
ling Players* and *O Megalexandros*. The title should not be Alexander the Great but Megalexandros, who exists in popular, anonymous legends and fables and has nothing to do with the historical Alexander – he evokes a totally different personage. For this

reason, we have had difficulty in finding a translation for the title. The legend of Megalexandros originated in 1453 under Turkish domination, and it has come down through oral tradi-
tion over the centuries. It embodies one of the deepest of Greek senti-
ments, that of waiting for a liberator, even a Messiah – he’s a kind of Christ figure, and in the film is also identified with St. George.

The film is based on two sources. One is *The Book of Megalexandros*, which is an account of the legend, and pro-
vides the general climate of the film rather than the storyline. The second, more concrete source is an actual event of 1870, when a group of aristo-
cratic English tourists were kidnapped by Greek bandits at Marathon. The bandits held them to ransom and demanded an amnesty from the government in exchange for the host-
ages. The government botched the whole business, and the exchange never came about; so the tourists were killed, and a scandal erupted. The British fleet blockaded the port.
– from an interview by Tony Mitchell, published in *Sight & Sound* (Winter 1980/81)

Theodoros ANGELOPOULOS

For details of Angelopoulos’ career and his filmography, please see the note on his earlier film *Days of ’36*.

片子的開始是二十世紀初第一個除夕晚，一個以亞歷山大爲首的土匪集團，闖入了一羣英國貴族開的派對中搗亂，並將他們脅爲人質，藏在一條偏僻的村落，那一條偏僻村落是由一羣義大利無政府主義者控制，可以容納各種政派的自由公社。

亞歷山大是一個神秘人物，他自己也不知他何時出生，爲了掩人耳目，因此他認了村中婦人爲他繼母，而那個婦人的女兒便是他胞妹。

稍後，亞歷山大娶了他的繼母爲妻，他的胞妹便是他的女兒。在婚禮那一天，一個被地主派來的殺手想暗殺亞歷山大，却誤殺了他的妻子，逐漸，亞歷山大所代表的意義超越了一般流寇盜賊的層面，他的政治意識越來越高……

安哲羅普洛斯談及本片時，說道：「先要說的是：《亞歷山大大帝》是我所拍的影片中最顯淺的一部，片子是直線發展，沒有任何時空的跳躍，除了最後一場之外，片子一開始就是一九〇〇年的除夕晚上，從這日開始，劇情一直推展。最後一場寫幼小的亞歷山大長大成人，成爲米基亞歷山杜斯，向城市發展，

那一個是十分現代化的雅典，跟影片大部份世紀初農村景色成一個對比。當年輕的亞歷山大進入城市，他携同了自己那份生活經驗，這份經驗就是生命，性與死亡的經驗。

跟《流浪藝人》比較，這一套比較超現實的影片，它不是描述實在的事件，片子的意義和層面是集中於政治的，性慾的結果。這是一部較「詩意」的電影，而《流浪藝人》卻是實在具體。

片子是根據兩個資料來源拍成。第一個是依照一本叫『米基亞歷山杜斯』的民間傳奇小說，它提供片子一般背景氣氛多於提供故事骨幹。第二個，則根據一件發生在一八七〇年眞事，一羣英國遊客在馬拉松地區被一班希臘土匪綁架，要求政府大赦來交換人質，但希臘政府拒絕，結果這班英國遊客被殺，這件醜聞震動一時，英國政府馬上有反應，派出海軍封鎖希臘海港。」

（有關安哲羅普洛斯的生平簡介，請參閱《三六年的歲月》內文。）

導演：

菲多奴斯·安哲羅普洛斯

編劇：

菲多奴斯·安哲羅普洛斯

攝影（彩色）：

佐治·亞雲尼堤斯

藝術指導：

米基斯·卡拉彼柏里斯

服裝：

加拉高斯·佳素勒基斯

音樂：

基士杜洛斯·哈拉勒

主演：

亞米奧·安東尼狄，
伊娃·康泰明尼杜，
佐治里斯·伊雲哲拉杜斯

片長： 195分

1980 倫敦／威尼斯電影節

