The Mythic Background

The following myths are primarily relevant to the story of the play:

- The story of Io (Admetus, Io, Erycynius, Apollo, Atena, Zeus, Semele)
- The story of Xouthos, the son of Apollo and Kreousa (Delphi, Atena, Zeus, Aphrodite, Apollo, Xouthos, Kreousa)
- The story of Persephone (Hades, Persephone, Demeter)

The Epic Background

“The hero, with his gift for poetic expression, is the mouthpiece of his time. He speaks on their behalf, expressing the aspirations and frustrations of his people.” - A. T. Fehling

“The hero is a man of his time, a true and selfless representative of his people, a man who fulfills a divine mission.” - W. H. D. Rouse

The Historical Background

“During the Peloponnesian War, Athens was at war with Persia. The conflict between Athens and Persia was a direct result of the Persian invasion of Greece in 490 BC.” - J. J. Pollitt

The Dramatic and Symbolic Background

“The [play] is not merely a romantic tragedy, but also a realistic drama.” - W. H. D. Rouse

Themes, Issues, and Dramatic Strategies

“Euripides is one of the greatest playwrights of the ancient world, and his plays continue to be performed and studied today.” - J. J. Pollitt

Key Characters

- Xouthos: the son of Apollo and Kreousa
- Kreousa: the wife of Xouthos and the mother of Ion
- Ion: the son of Xouthos and Kreousa

Plot Summary

“Xouthos enters upon the tragic stage, and makes the world of tragedy less remote as each time new versions of what had gone before, these operations are centrally related to the dominant themes of birth, rebirth, and happy ending.” - George Walsh

Overarching Interpretations

“Euripides is known for his innovative and controversial themes in his plays. His plays challenge the traditional notions of justice and morality, and often explore the complexities of human nature.” - J. J. Pollitt

Overall Overinterpretations

“Euripides’ plays are often interpreted as an exploration of the human condition, with themes of love, betrayal, and redemption.” - J. J. Pollitt