central theme, she finds scant evidence that the directors saw modern Britain as an heir to classical tradition as represented in the Greek and Roman courts. Only at the Festival of Empire in 1911 was Roman Britain represented by a reconstruction of the Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath, and even this was a contribution by the City of Bath, erected outside the Palace proper.

If anything the book looks like a celebration of the benefits of free enterprise, but first and foremost it is a scholarly investigation, whose readability is prejudiced to a minor extent by an over-emphatic enunciation of the game plan, typical of the university thesis: 'this question is further examined in Chapter 2', 'in Chapter 5 I explore . . .', etc. Its scholarly apparatus is on the whole excellent, only let down by a pitifully inadequate index.

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CLASSICS AND CINEMA

CYRINO (M.S.), SAFRAN (M.E.) (edd.) *Classical Myth on Screen*. Pp. xii + 257, ills. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Cased, £60. ISBN: 978-1-137-49453-5.
doi:10.1017/S0009840X15002504

Few have done more than C. to foster the now thriving field of Classics and Cinema. This latest contribution, co-edited with S., extends a capacious umbrella to cover screen texts as diverse as *Metropolis, Monty Python's Life of Brian, Black Orpheus, Vertigo, Clash of the Titans, Rocky IV, Xena: Warrior Princess* and many more. Some items in this smorgasbord refer directly to Graeco-Roman antiquity; others are what the editors call 'subterranean' receptions (p. 5): screen texts whose connection with ancient or 'archetypal' myths must be inferred from thematic parallels. In what sense, exactly, do the latter count as 'receptions', and what is the pay-off for the reader? (See esp. J. Paul, 'Cinematic Receptions of Antiquity: the Current State of Play', *CRJ* 2 [2010], 136–55.) One's response will depend, in part, on one's answer to another large question: the meaning of the word 'myth'. Define this problematic term sufficiently loosely, and finding 'archetypal' themes in film is like shooting fish in a tuna can. Unless *some* methodological restrictions are imposed, the screen text for a book like this is the whole of cinema.

The editors tackle this issue in their introduction, explaining that in order to qualify as a 'subterranean' reception, a film must retain 'some core of character and causation' that make it 'recognizable' as an ancient myth (p. 2). But how does one determine such 'core' qualities? If a reception of the Orpheus story ends with Orpheus and Eurydice living happily ever after, is it still an Orpheus story? If the 'Dionysiac' forces of disorder are expelled from society (rather than incorporated into it), have we jettisoned the 'core' qualities of Dionysian myth? If an Oedipus-analogue fails to solve his riddle, is he still an Oedipus-analogue? Films making overt reference to antiquity have – at least superficially – an easier time of it methodologically. But if Heracles is no longer the son of Zeus, and Alcmene is a villainous high-priestess presiding over human sacrifice, it is worth trying to articulate in what sense, exactly, *this* counts as a 'reception' of the ancient Heracles.

All these examples come from the book under review, of whose seventeen chapters about ten (depending how one counts) fall into the 'subterranean' category. A case can be made for this latter approach, but it does need to be made. This is more easily done in some cases than others. It is not much of a stretch to read the various young female

archers in recent popular entertainment (*The Hunger Games, Game of Thrones, Brave*) as rewritings of an Amazonian 'archetype', updated for the modern girl (Graf). Other screen texts present more of a challenge. But Bullen, for example, works hard, and ingeniously, to support his claim that Euripides' *Bacchae* and *The Dark Knight* are 'productively interconnected' (p. 191). Some other contributors resort, less successfully, to an unfortunate vagueness. Thus Garcia treats *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* as a 'subtext' (p. 181) of Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae* because 'it relies upon the same fundamental myth and trope: that society determines our identity and agency, but that its influence can be subverted' (p. 174). Of how many movies (or books, for that matter) could one say the same?

A different problem bedevilling this sub-field is the need for scholarly skills extending far beyond the training of most classicists. Much early scholarship on classics and film (my own included – M.W. Blundell and K. Ormand, 'Western Values, or, The Peoples Homer: *Unforgiven* as a Reading of the *Iliad*', *Poetics Today* 18 [1997], 533–69) reads as if it were written by reasonably intelligent philologists who just happen to like movies. It tends to focus mostly on narrative, and has little to say about the distinctive aspects of film as a medium (notably its visuality), about film theory or history, cinematic techniques, film production, or audience response. Since the turn of the millennium, however, the methodological bar has been rising; the study of Classics and cinema is no longer in its infancy. Yet adolescence is a difficult time. Few classicists have the leisure to acquire real expertise in even one of the many fields bearing on the interpretation of screen texts (fields including not only cinema and television studies but the study of twentieth and twenty-first century social history and popular culture); but this does not free us from the obligation to approach such texts, as best we can, on their own terms, and not just as comparanda for ancient narratives.

Some of the contributors to this volume (all but three who of whom are classicists) remain primarily concerned with narrative patterns and thematic parallels. But about half of them also employ one or more of the interpretative frameworks offered by film studies. McAuley, for example, argues persuasively that *Metropolis* (1927) 'is too Promethean to be purely coincidental' (p. 110), in part by interpreting the film within its intellectual, political and cultural context. Augustakis looks at *Le Gladiatrici* (1963) through the twin lenses of its film genre (Sword and Sandal) and mid-twentieth century Italian politics. Curley makes a compelling case for cinematic self-reference in the divine interventions of *Clash of the Titans* (1981). S. argues that the NBC TV movie *Hercules* (2005) was 'Christianized' to meet the demands of evangelical Christians, a newly influential audience sector. Easton makes effective use of 'the Orphic cinematic tradition' (p. 50) and of Marcuse's Orphism to ground his interpretation of *The Adjustment Bureau* (2011) as a reception of the Orpheus myth inflected by the 'mythology' of mid-century America. Raucci's study of representations of the Greek hero from 2010–2014 looks at ways in which new technologies have changed the face of film promotion. Thompson (a film student) makes use of such quintessentially cinematic matters as camera angles and point of view. And C. provides a valuable introduction to the influential concept of the black sidekick or 'magical negro' (a derisive phrase coined by Spike Lee).

To be fair to the less film-savvy contributors, they were clearly operating under a stringent word limit. All the papers are the same skimpy length (around ten pages, including notes and illustrations but not bibliography). All the authors, then, must have made difficult choices about what to exclude. The need for plot summary eats further into the space available for analysis. As a result, all the chapters – even the most successful – seem underdeveloped. Curley's final paragraph on theology, for example, cries out for expansion. C.'s introduction to the 'magical Negro' leaves her just three pages for Orpheus. S. needs more room to locate her 2005 *Heracles* within the long prior tradition – from Xenophon to Disney – of sanitising that hero. Thompson's topic (the 'Pygmalion complex'

and masculine desire in three major films) is far too ambitious for ten pages. A more stringent selection process, resulting in fewer chapters, would have given the more successful entries room to breathe.

As it is, were I a contributor, I would resent the number of blank pages in the book design, which could have been used to expand each offering by another page and a half (a significant fraction, under the circumstances). The reader is further frustrated by other production shortcomings. Nearly every chapter includes one or more endnotes of the form 'for the text of x, see y', referring indiscriminately – and inconsistently – to OCTs, Loebs and popular translations of Greek and Latin texts. This is singularly unhelpful, especially for a target readership that needs to have the word 'classical' explained (p. 4). The illustrations are an added handicap. The single photograph that accompanies each chapter is often irrelevant to the argument; conversely, a number of papers could have made effective use of multiple movie stills. To add insult to injury, the jacket design shows *not* a movie scene but a monumental sculpture (the Westmacott Achilles).

If the volume as a whole is not quite ready for prime time, however, this is certainly no fault of the contributors, many of whom have produced stimulating articles holding out the promise of fruitful development. And despite the book's limitations, it is heartening to see a posse of mostly younger scholars lighting out so enthusiastically for what is still – relatively speaking – a new frontier.

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EPICS IN FILM

PAUL (J.) *Film and the Classical Epic Tradition*. Pp. xii + 334, ills. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Cased, £70, US$150. ISBN: 978-0-19-954292-5.
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The author tells us that this project began as her dissertation in 2000. We are the beneficiaries of the decade-plus that has given this project ample time to expand and flourish. The resulting book contains eight chapters, beginning with an introductory survey of the relationship between the ancient literary epic tradition and the cinematic Ancients of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The introduction outlines the study that unfolds in the subsequent five chapters investigating applications and particular examples relating to Homer, the *Argonautica, The Fall of the Roman Empire* and *Gladiator, Spartacus* and *Ben-Hur*. The seventh and eighth chapters address spectatorship and cinematic parodies. Within there are a number of well researched and thoroughly, if overly, nuanced discussions of individual films that fall in one way or the other under the category of epic, whether they are filmisations of ancient epics (e.g. *Ulysses, Helen of Troy, Jason and the Argonauts, Troy*), films dependent upon ancient historical figures (e.g. *Spartacus*) or modern novels set in antiquity (e.g. *Ben-Hur*), or cinematic parodies set in antiquity (e.g. *Carry On Cleo, Monty Python's The Life of Brian*.) On a smaller scale P. addresses a number of other films ranging from Godard's *Le Mépris* (*Contempt*) and Pasolini's *Medea* to *300* and *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: the Lightning Thief*. Most of these lesser studies are quite succinct but appropriately tantalising.

Similarly, P. offers very brief allusions to or summaries of such relevant ancient (mostly literary) topics as Aristotle's discussion of the epic genre, the Cyclic Epics, *kleos*, the