CALL FOR PAPERS

CFP: By Jove! Invoking Ancient Deities on Modern Screens

An area of multiple panels for the 2016 Film & History Conference:
Gods and Heretics: Figures of Power and Subversion in Film and Television
October 26-October 30, 2016
The Milwaukee Hilton
Milwaukee, WI (USA)

DEADLINE for abstracts: June 1, 2016

AREA: By Jove! Invoking Ancient Deities on Modern Screens

Long after their worship ceased, the gods and goddesses of the ancient Mediterranean world have remained potent forces in the modern imaginary. While their traditional names remain the same, modernity’s shifting ideological matrices change the signification of these deities. The meaning of worshippers paying homage to them; of priests and prophets claiming to speak on their behalf; and of heroes and rulers challenging their authority or receiving their favor, all change when the moral authority and even existence of these gods and goddesses is no longer a self-evident truth. Technologies for visualizing the divine in e.g. film, television, and video games further complicate the way audiences comprehend deities associated with living cultural traditions but defunct belief systems. Furthermore, viewers may relate very differently to the re-imagining of these ancient Mediterranean gods and goddesses on the modern screen, depending on their various social, cultural, religious, ethnic and/or national identities.

This area invites 20-minute papers (inclusive of visual presentations) considering the motivations, execution, conditions, ramifications, and reaction to representing deities of the ancient Mediterranean world on screen. Topics include, but are not limited to:

* Embodying the gods: how divine identity, gender, and power are visually depicted; why certain god/desses are more (or less) frequently depicted; whether visual representation reinforces the viewer’s sense of realism, or makes the god/dess seem too quotidian

* Gods and stars: the interaction of divine identity and star texts, the resultant effect on viewer interpretation of character and/or actor

* Contextualizing the gods: do god/desses function differently in ancient vs. modern mise-en-scene; the shifting ideological function of ancient god/desses in relation to modern narratives, history, religious systems/theologies; whether genre as context changes the signification of a deity
* Sizing up (or down) the deities: depicting the stature of god/desses relative to humans; how the scale of a medium (e.g. film versus television) or the viewing platform (e.g. movie screen versus smartphone) affects perception of divinity

* Presence without substance: how excluding god/desses as active participants in the onscreen drama affects perception of their power and even existence (e.g. Troy)

* Interacting with the gods: how god/desses relate to humans (e.g. heroes, priest/esses, kings/queens, worshippers); the interactive experience of video game players (e.g. God of War) and app users versus the comparatively passive experiences of film/TV viewers

Proposals for complete panels (three related presentations) are also welcome, but they must include an abstract and contact information, including an e-mail address, for each presenter. For updates and registration information about the upcoming meeting, see the Film & History website (www.filmandhistory.org).

Please e-mail your 200-word proposal by 1 June 2016 to the area chair:

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