Imperial Projections: Ancient Rome in Modern Popular Culture


The phenomenal success of the recent film Gladiator ensures that ancient Rome will continue to inspire moviemakers and attract audiences as it has done since the dawn of cinema. Indeed, the creators of popular culture have so often appropriated elements of Roman history and society for films and television programs, novels and comic books, advertising and computer games that most people's knowledge of ancient Rome derives from these representations. In Imperial Projections, scholars from a variety of fields—classics, history, film studies, and gender theory—provide an interdisciplinary look at how ancient Rome has been depicted in the media and what these varied portrayals tell us about contemporary culture.

The essays in Imperial Projections examine such films as Spartacus, Ben-Hur, Cleopatra, and The Fall of the Roman Empire; the acclaimed BBC television series I, Claudius; the Broadway musical A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum; and the Roman-themed Las Vegas casino Caesars Palace, combining ancient history and cutting-edge cultural studies in a challenging, engaging, and informative volume.

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