



## The Ancient World in Silent Cinema

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In the first four decades of cinema, hundreds of films were made that drew their inspiration from ancient Greece, Rome, Egypt and the Bible. Few of these films have been studied, and even fewer have received critical attention. The films in question, ranging from historical and mythological epics to adaptations of ancient drama, burlesques, animated cartoons and documentaries, suggest a preoccupation with the ancient world that competes in intensity and breadth with that of Hollywood's classical era. What contribution did the worlds of antiquity make to early cinema, and how did they themselves change as a result? Existing prints as well as ephemera scattered in film archives and libraries around the world constitute an enormous field of research, and this edited collection is a first systematic attempt to focus on the instrumental role of silent cinema in early twentieth-century conceptualizations of the ancient Mediterranean and Middle East.

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