



Il Cinema Ritrovato, Bologna 28 June – 5 July 2014

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO: 1914
The Irresistible Attraction of Antiquity II

Film screenings and workshop 4-5 July 2014

Last year's workshop dedicated to the intense relationship between silent cinema and antiquity was so inspiring and thought-provoking that we decided to revisit the experience. This time our two main topics were set by *Cabiria* (1914): 'Orientalism' and 'Film and the Other Arts'. The ancient world of silent cinema emerged out of the art forms of the nineteenth century. The new technology regularly drew on popular culture but it also attempted to position itself as an extension of high culture, as an art that could reach beyond working-class audiences. The ancient Orient, for example, had already been provided with violent narratives (as in Flaubert's novel *Salammbô*), exotic iconography (the paintings of Gérôme), sinuous movement (the dances of multiple Salomes), and emotional music (productions of Verdi's opera *Aida*). Early cinema sought legitimacy by drawing on such prestigious art forms and, in the process, it sought to outperform the other arts. Silent cinema learned to animate historical novels, to give movement to paintings, and to break open the frame of the proscenium theatre. In nineteenth-century representations of the ancient world, silent cinema found the materials on which to build its ambition to become a modern Muse consuming all the others. The workshop comprises curated viewings and open discussions and draws on the expertise of classicists, film historians, archivists, and (we hope) yours.

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The workshop will be held in english and italian

You can register in advance or ad hoc
<http://www.cinetecadibologna.it/cinemaritrovato2014en>
Hotel reservations with special prices at incoming@bolognawelcome.it

Friday 4th July

10.15-13.00

Screening of a variety of antiquity films associated with the other arts

Paintings were the main artistic source of imagery for silent films set in ancient Greece or Rome, or Palestine (*Christus* 1914-16). But once you become attentive, an astonishing array of arts concerned with antiquity surface, such as landscape architecture and interior decoration (*La perfetta ebbrezza* 1920), revue (*The Folly of Vanity* 1924), or opera (*L'Etoile du génie* 1914 – about Caligula). *La reine de Saba* (1912) plays out in spectacular style the biblical story of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10) - a favourite of painting and opera. The queen's African kingdom is unveiled as a seductive Orient of exotic music and dance, distant in culture as well as space from the kingdom of the Israelites.

14.30-15.45

Discussion (Sala Cervi)

20.30-23.30

Screening of *Cabiria* (1914)

One hundred years after its first release, *Cabiria* still displays its innovative character and its capacity for wonder. Rome is never shown, instead we observe a marvelously grand spectacle of Oriental cruelty and sophistication against which the Roman empire struggles and wins. Yet it is neither the heroine torn as a child from her home near Etna nor the hero who rescues her and takes her back to Rome that in the end we remember. But Maciste the compassionate and forceful Numidian slave and Sophonisba burning with frustrated desires.

Saturday 5th July

14.30-16.30

Screening of *Christus* (1914) and *Escursione nell'alto Egitto* (1914)

Christus is a life of Christ on an epic scale, shot on location in Italy and Egypt. Earthly civilisations are diminished by the new religion, as when we see the living Christ meditating on God's heavenly power before the monumental ruins of an Egyptian temple complex. Along the way, you can spot beautiful renditions in movement of celebrated religious paintings by Leonardo di Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo and many others.

16.45-18.00

Discussion (Sala Cervi)

