Further reading

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In his pioneering article ‘The ahistoricism of medieval film’ in the online journal *Screening the Past*, 3, Arthur Lindley in 1998 noted ‘the absence of books by medievalists as well as of any kind devoted to medieval film’. Since then a field has begun to emerge. Although film studies and medievalism are still very much separate academic disciplines with their own traditions, some medievalists have started to take film seriously; and some film scholars have started to take seriously if not medieval film then at least historical film. The following survey is designed to complement our contributors’ references to suggest some twenty-first-century starting points for those interested in the overlaps between medievalism and film.

In 2007 *Exemplaria* published a special issue on Movie Medievalism (19:2), edited by Richard Burt and Nickolas Haydock. It contains six articles on a number of medieval films, predominantly from Hollywood, with reflections on anachronism, simulacra and trauma; and is particularly attentive to the paratexts of these films, like extra features on DVDs, publicity material and director’s comments. *Race, Gender and Class in ‘Medieval’ Cinema*, edited by Lynn Tarte Ramey and Tison Pugh in Palgrave’s New Middle Ages Series (2007), also collects interpretations of a number of individual films set in the Middle Ages or considered medieval, focusing on their depiction of race, gender or class. Particularly innovative are the reflections on race and colonialism, and the fact that this volume extends both the films and the plots covered beyond medieval Europe. A somewhat earlier essay collection, *The Medieval Hero on Screen: Representations from Beowulf to Buffy*, edited by Martha W. Driver and Sid Ray (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004), is loosely thematically linked through the topic of heroism, but also deals with wider issues of accuracy and the overlap between medievalism, science fiction and fantasy in films and

television. Driver and Ray are now co-editing *Medieval Shakespeare in Performance*, including work on film, forthcoming with the same publisher.

Mittelalter im Film, edited by Christian Kiening and Heinrich Adolf (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006), combines helpful surveys (on medieval film and epic films in general, Robin Hood, Joan of Arc, and, looking beyond Europe, Samurai films), with seven rather superficial case studies of classic films, and a select filmography. *Antike und Mittelalter im Film*, edited by Mischa Meier and Simona Slanicka (Cologne: Böhlau, 2007), is an unadventurous but useful collection of essays on individual films as well as including general reflections on the characteristics of medieval films as well as films about antiquity.

As regards monographs, Kevin Harty has been a ground-breaker in establishing an impressive corpus of films about the Middle Ages. His encyclopaedic *The Reel Middle Ages: American, Western and Eastern European, Middle Eastern, and Asian Films about Medieval Europe* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1999), listing and briefly describing over six hundred medieval films, was followed by two edited essay collection on Arthurian film with the same publisher, *King Arthur on Film* (1999) and *Cinema Arthuriana* (2002). John Aberth's *A Knight at the Movies: Medieval History on Film* (New York: Routledge, 2003) is an entertaining survey by a historian of films about King Arthur, Robin Hood, Joan of Arc, the Vikings, the crusades and the Black Death. While mostly concerned with accuracy, it contextualises this issue in the often equally fictionalised tales from the Middle Ages about these figures and subjects. Susan Aronstein's *Hollywood Knights* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) explores in detail the analogies between the medieval Europe of a wide range of Hollywood Arthurian films and America at the time of their production. Amy François de la Bretèque's most substantial contribution to the study of medieval film to date is *L'Imaginaire médiéval dans le cinéma occidental* (Paris: Champion, 2004). It provides a huge survey of American and European films about the European Middle Ages in a broad sense, listing 290 films. It deals with various forms of creative anachronism and fantasy; and discusses the films by content in terms of the medieval characters, events, areas and stories that they depict. The conference proceedings edited by Xavier Kawa-Topor under the title *Le Moyen Age vu par le cinéma européen* (Conques: Centre européen d'art et de civilisation médiévale, 2001) add further individual studies.

In the large field of the study of the modern reception of the

Middle Ages many general publications mention films, too. The annual *Studies in Medievalism*, for example, has included a number of essays on medieval film, particularly in the issue on *Film and Fiction*, edited by Tom Shippey and Martin Arnold (2002). The irregular series *Mittelalter-Rezeption*, edited predominantly by Ulrich Müller (Göppingen: Kümmerle), is the German-language equivalent. Those interested in adaptations of individual literary works from the Middle Ages, particularly of Arthurian material, can also draw on a substantial tradition of scholarship. Most introductions to medieval characters, stories and events now also include chapters on reception, which often discuss filmic representations. As many medievalists come into contact with film first as a tool for teaching, several publications address the use of film as a teaching tool, too, for example, Martha Driver's survey 'Teaching the Middle Ages on film: Visual narrative and historical record', *History Compass*, 5:1 (2007, 141–61).

There is also a broad range of academic studies about historical film as a genre (also known as heritage film or costume drama, and sometimes still as swashbuckler or adventure film). These works typically defend film against charges of inaccuracy and establish criteria for quality different from those of academic historiography. Pioneering works in this field were published by Pierre Sorlin, Leger Grindon, Vivian Sobchack and Robert Rosenstone, amongst others. Marnie Hughes-Warrington's *History Goes to the Movies* (London: Routledge, 2007) and William Guynn's *Writing History in Film* (New York: Routledge, 2006) are useful introductions to the accuracy debates in academia and beyond. Marcia Landy's star-studded edited collection *The Historical Film: History and Memory in the Media* (London: Athlone, 2001), like her own writing, is noteworthy for encompassing popular memory and fantasy as well as film. Postmodern or theoretical studies of historical films are still predominantly concerned with films about the recent past, especially about the Holocaust.

On the British heritage film Andrew Higson was instrumental in positing historical film as part of a wider heritage industry, which shapes national memory: see in particular his *English Heritage, English Cinema: Costume Drama since 1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Claire Monk's and Amy Sargeant's edited collection *British Historical Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2002) adds further useful facets. On Hollywood historical films Robert Burgoyne, George Custen and Robert Brent Toplin published groundbreaking work (see now also Toplin's *Reel History: In Defense of Hollywood*, Lawrence:

University of Kansas Press, 2002). David Elridge's *Hollywood's History Films* (London: Tauris, 2006) concentrates on the 1950s and offers useful insights into film production history.

Worth noting for comparisons are the recent studies of antiquity on film, again published mostly by classicists rather than by film scholars. Since Jon Solomon's foundational and Maria Wyke's insightful work, there have been a number of German-language collections (for example, by Ulrich Eigler; Martin Korenjak and Karlheinz Töchterle; Armin Loacher and Ines Steiner), as well as Gideon Nisbet's light-hearted *Ancient Greece in Film and Popular Culture* (Exeter: Bristol Phoenix Press, 2006). On the early modern period, another useful area of comparison, there is a wide range of secondary literature on Shakespeare on film. Michael Klossner's *The Europe of 1500–1815 on Film and Television: A Worldwide Filmography of Over 2550 Works, 1895 through 2000* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2002) delivers what its title promises and can therefore serve as a convenient starting point. (Note: While this manuscript was waiting to go to print, the following two books on medieval film appeared: Nickolas Haydock, *Movie Medievalism* (Jefferson, NC: MacFarland, 2008) and Richard Burt, *Medieval and Early Modern Film and Media* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.)