

Modern & Popular Receptions of Late Antiquity (Society for Late Antiquity)

Society for Classical Studies 156th Annual Meeting

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PHILADELPHIA

Call for Papers for Panel Sponsored by the Society for Late Antiquity: Modern & Popular Receptions of Late Antiquity

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The late antique world hasn't captured the imaginations of modern audiences as much as Leonidas' Sparta, Cleopatra's Egypt, or Nero's Rome. Its presence in the popular literature and media of the 20th and 21st centuries, however, was never nonexistent. Novels such as Graves' *Count Belisarius* and Vidal's *Julian*, films such as *Teodora imperatrice di Bisanzio* and *Agora*, and video games such as *Age of Empires II* and *Total War: Attila* exposed much of their audiences to late antiquity for the first time. Scratch the surface and there is much more to be found in popular and non-traditional media, including fiction, graphic novels, documentaries, visual art, fashion design, video and tabletop games, and popular music. Nor are late antique themes alien to contemporary discourses in journalism and public-facing scholarship: anxieties over the perceived collapse of empires, competing definitions of theology and religion, pandemics, and persecutions have all offered tempting parallels to (mis)translate from late antiquity to today.

For this panel, we invite presentations that bring to scholarly attention some of the diverse forms of late antique reception from outside of traditional scholarship. How have this period's figures, events, ideas, and fashions been represented for a diversity of contemporary audiences in both the recent past and the present? Do forms of reception perpetuate or challenge common assumptions about late antiquity? In what ways have they been used and abused in response to current events and issues? Can an appreciation of reception inform and enrich our own research, teaching, and public scholarship about late antiquity?

Key to the work of reception studies is not the question of "historical accuracy" so much as identifying the *sources* that mediate between historical subject and the later audience, and how those audiences of authors, artists, directors, journalists, and even scholars *read* those sources and create *meaning* for themselves. Reception theory also asks how the products of reception have influenced readings of the past, influences to which not even academics are immune. Furthermore, an openness to reception is often an openness to the voices and perspectives of those traditionally underprivileged and underrepresented in academia.

Papers may last no longer than twenty minutes and will be followed by five minutes for discussion. The session will conclude with an extended period of discussion on the

topic between panelists and audience members. Please send questions and anonymous abstracts to Jeremy Swist (swistjj@miamioh.edu). Abstracts of **no more than 500 words**, and without names, should be sent as an email attachment no later than **March 1st, 2024**. All submissions will be judged anonymously by two referees. Prospective panelists must be members in good standing of the SCS at the time of submission and must include their membership number in the cover letter accompanying their abstract. Please follow the SCS instructions for the format of individual abstracts: <https://classicalstudies.org/annual-meeting/guidelines-authors-abstracts>. Submitting an abstract represents a commitment to attend the 2025 meeting if the paper is accepted. No papers will be read in absentia, and the Society for Late Antiquity is unable to provide funding for travel.