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ANTIQUITY IN SOCIAL MEDIA: THE CASE OF THE 'FILMWEB' PORTAL AND ITS USERS

SUMMARY: The paper analyses the character of classical receptions and the proposed methodology of its analysys within the context of the new media. An example of a popular Polish website Filmweb, devoted to cinema, is used to present the case postulating new interdisciplinary methodology, necessary for the research on the receptions of antiquity in the new media.

KEYWORDS: media studies, classical tradition, classical receptions, New Media, Web 2.0., Filmweb

The research on the reception of antiquity in popular literature and culture is recently becoming more and more popular and – most importantly – more and more academically oriented. This is confirmed both by the number of monographs: *Reception studies* by Lorna Hardwick (2003), *Helen of Troy: from Homer to Hollywood* by Laurie Maguire (2009), *Ancient Greece in film and popular culture* by Gideon Nisbet (2008) – as well as several collections of articles printed by important editorial houses: *Classical myth and culture in the cinema*, edited by Martin Winkler (2001), *Classics and comics*, edited by George Kovacs and C. W. Marshall (2011), *Classics and the uses of reception*, edited by Charles Martindale (2006), and *Classics for all: reworking antiquity in mass culture*, edited by Dunstan Lowe

and Kim Shahabudin (2009).[1] A theme dominant in the academic literature seems to be the reception of antiquity in the cinema, and – to a lesser extent – in popular literature. Of particular importance is ancient mythology, which is discussed in an extremely important work *The reception of myth and mythology* (Moog-Grünewald 2010), which is the fourth supplement to the monumental *Brill's New Pauly: encyclopaedia of the ancient world* (Salazar, Gentry 2002-2011). In Poland, the issue of myth and popular culture was, among others, discussed by Katarzyna Marciniak in *Mitologia grecka i rzymska* [Greek and Roman mythology] (2010). Already in the introduction the author stresses the lack of such studies: *This book is an example of an academic approach in the sense that many of the phenomena, especially concerning the reception of myth in contemporary culture, are mentioned or widely discussed for the first time.*[2] It could be argued that the work of Marciniak is in fact an example of the reception of Greek and Roman literature in itself. From many versions of myth, the author chooses the most canonical ones and consequently shows their status in contemporary culture. The above-mentioned works, as well as many others, are therefore extremely important means for our understanding of antiquity, including its presence in popular and mass culture, pushed far to the margins of serious academic work.

For the majority of authors dealing with the reception of Greco-Roman culture the goal of their research is to show new areas – from the point of view of the reception – of presence of various antiquity elements in mass culture: literature, music, film, new media, etc. The adopted model is complemented by reaching for new interpretations, for example the feminist criticism. This is accompanied by immense popularity of the novels in which one can observe, from a feminist perspective, various kinds of mechanisms including two most important ones: choosing females as

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[1] See also the *Companion* series of such editiors as Brill: Smith, Pickup 2009; Boyd 2001; Wiley-Blackwell: Hardwick, Stray 2007; Kallendorf 2010; Farrell, Putnam 2010; Cambridge University Press: Steel 2013; Woodard 2007; Hardie 2002, in which one can find materials on classical tradition and reception in popular culture.

[2] Marciniak 2010: 10: *Niniejsza książka stanowi ujęcie naukowe w tym sensie, że wiele zjawisk, zwłaszcza dotyczących recepcji mitu w kulturze współczesnej, zostaje poruszonych bądź szerzej omówionych po raz pierwszy.*

main characters and reinterpreting ancient heroines well-known from mythology and literature: Helen (*Memoirs of Helen of Troy* by Amanda Elyot, 2005), Andromache (*Troy* trilogy by David and Stella Gemmell, 2005-2007), Rhea Silvia (*Die Söhne der Wölfin: Roman* by Tanja Kinkel, 2001), Lavinia (*Lavinia* by Ursula Le Guin, 2008)[3] and the like. It is worth considering, however, whether in these cases we are dealing with actual reception of ancient literature and myth, or just with presence of various motifs, themes, fragments, and citations in popular culture?

In my understanding the reception of ancient literature in contemporary culture and new media can be likened to an irreversible chemical process, which makes the motifs and elements of literature subject to specific cultural mechanisms. Due to these mechanisms the content starts to undergo numerous transformations, e.g. changing its original meaning (see Dominas 2014). However, the majority of studies on the subject provides us only with the ever-growing number of statements and enumerations, setting the contemporary example next to its ancient equivalent. In this way, the main scope of the studies becomes a record of successive ancient references in various novels, movies, video games and feature films, television series, and so on.

An analysis of the presence of antiquity in mass culture should take into account broad cultural context: whether in fact the appearance of the story in the new novel is a manifestation of ongoing interest in antiquity, or the consequence of changes in the culture, which for some reason goes back to the antiquity? The novel *The song of Achilles* by Madeline Miller (2012) might prove that the myth has always been a part of European culture, both the high and the popular, and the character of Achilles was already of interest to the ancient authors. Perhaps this book, however, is a response to the ever increasing popularity of mythical figures in film and popular literature, and its sources do not necessarily need to be traced back to antiquity.[4]

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[3] Lindsay Davis, a British novelist, has written more than 20 novels on the character of a Roman detective, Marcus Didius Falco. The main character of her new series, however, is a woman – Flavia Albia, Falco's adopted daughter. The title of the first novel in the series, *The Ides of April. Falco: the new generation*, seems important in this context.

[4] It is worth to enumerate a number of examples from popular literature: Lion Oldi 2009; Philips 2007; Renault 1958; Werber 2006; Werber 2007.

In this article I propose a reversal of existing research perspectives and analyze comments of the users of the Filmweb site – Poland's largest social networking site dedicated to the cinema – about the most popular Hollywood productions referring to the antiquity: Wolfgang Petersen's *Troy* (USA 2004), Ridley Scott's *Gladiator* (USA, United Kingdom 2000), *Immortals. Gods and heroes* by Tarsem Singh (USA 2011), *Clash of the Titans* directed by Louis Leterrier (USA 2010), *Wrath of the Titans* by Jonathan Liebesman (USA 2012), Zack Snyder's *300* (USA 2007) and Noam Murro's *300: Rise of an Empire* (USA 2014), *The legend of Hercules* by Renny Harlin (USA 2014), Brett Ratner's *Hercules* (USA 2014).[5] This perspective may seem interesting for several reasons. What it proves above all is huge interest in ancient literature and culture, not only in the context of the spectacular shows, which no doubt are Hollywood productions, but also in the context of the antiquity.

It is well visible in the thread *Unfortunately, despite the many advantages of the movie, I must give it 2 stars, because…* (42 posts, beginning 31.10.2012) on the *Gladiator*, initiated by the user nicknamed lukaa.[6] He writes:

> unfortunately, the movie does not stay true to historical facts, which puts the title character gladiator (Crowe) in an unfavorable light. In ancient Rome, during the gladiatorial fights, when one of the combatants was knocked down or badly wounded, his fate could be decided by organizers of the Games… such a person would use the famous gestures called "pollice verso", or "turned thumb"… it is widely believed that the thumb pointed up meant grace and pointed down – death. This is shown in the movie where the Emperor (Phoenix) shows the thumb pointing down, but I think every child knows that actually and historically such a gesture meant an act of grace (the principle of an inverted thumb being at work here). The gladiator

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[5] The comments on Ratner's *Hercules* are based solely on trailers and fragments published in the Filmweb service: http://www.filmweb.pl/film/Herkules-2014-563042 (accessed May 5, 2014).

[6] http://www.filmweb.pl/film/Gladiator-2000-936/discussion/niestety%2C+mimo+ wielu+zalet+jakie+ma+film%2C+musxz%C4%99+go+oceni%C4%87+na+2+gdy%C 5%BC...,2045664 (accessed May 5, 2014).

(Crowe) rightly let his opponent live. I stress: he spared his life rightly and in accordance with the emperor's will!!! And yet it was understood as an act of disobedience!! Such historical inaccuracy begs for a director's cut, in which it would be corrected accordingly![7]

This is answered by user Asiaa_:

Your Avatar in 100% expresses my reaction to your comment. "Gladiator" is not a documentary film, it is a feature movie, created for the masses, and such detailed knowledge about which you are writing is is not available to the wide audience. Logically, however: thumbs down – must mean something bad – must mean: "you die"; thumb up – means something good – means "you live". It is as simple as that. And just to do justice to the makers of the movie: in historiography it is not absolutely certain in which direction emperor was pointing his finger. There is none :). And add to this that the emperor Maximus is a fictional character, which I think even the most ignoramus knows. Why don't you start nitpicking the death of Marcus Aurelius, hmm? :D I repeat: it is a feature film, not an academic presentation![8]

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[7] All quotations in Polish are in original spelling.

[N]iestety nie trzyma się historycznych faktów, co stawia tytułowego bohatera gladiatora Crowa w niekorzystnym świetle – mianowicie w starożytnym Rzymie podczas walk gladiatorów, gdy jeden z walczących został powalony lub mocno raniony, o jego losie mógł zadecydować organizator igrzysk… stosowano do tego słynne gesty zwane „pollice verso", czyli „obrócony kciuk"… Powszechnie uważa się, że kciuk skierowany w górę oznaczał łaskę, a w dół śmierć, i tak jest pokazane w filmie gdzie cesarz Phoenix opuszcza kciuk w dół, ale chyba każde dziecko wie że faktycznie i historycznie taki gest oznaczał akt łaski (tu działa zasada odwróconego kciuka) i gladiator Crowe słusznie daruje życie swojemu przeciwnikowi. Podkreślam, darował mu życie słusznie i zgodnie z wolą cesarza!!! a wtedy wszyscy odebrali to za akt jego zniewagi!! Taka historyczna niedokładność aż się prosi o wersję reżyserską w której to byłoby odpowiednio poprawione! czuwaj!

[8] *Twój Avatar w 100% wyraza moją reakcję na Twój komentarz. „Gladiator" to nie jest film naukowy, to jest film fabularny, tworzony dla mas, a taka szczegółowa wiedza, o jakiej Ty piszesz, nie jest dostępna publiczności. Na chłopski rozum – kciuk w dół – źle – umierasz; kciuk w górę – dobrze – żyjesz. proste? i żeby twórcom oddać sprawiedliwość – w historiografii nie ma pewności stuprocentowej, w ktora strone palec cesarza był skierowany. Nie ma :). a to, że cesarz Maksimus jest postacią fikcyjną, to chyba wie nawet największy laik. Czemu jeszcze nie przyczepisz się do śmierci Marka Aureliusza, hm? :D powtarzam: to film fabularny, ńie naukowy!*

The user comments also have great importance for the future of producers, writers, authors, directors, etc. Namely, they create continuously updated, dynamic cultural space of verification for concepts and mechanisms used in the film and their effect. When I talk about the effect, I mean not just American or European box office, but also assumptions of those involved in the film production. The mechanisms may be different – from a simple repetition of a myth, theme or story, to giving a greater role to women and episodic characters from ancient mythology, to far-reaching reinterpretation and processing, changes to the existing images and stereotypes. In modern marketing observation and analysis of what potential clients are doing and what they say about the subject is not only an addition to the previously used methodology, but a necessity. It is accurately described in academic literature and may result in the following statement: Web users themselves inform about their passions, interests and concerns, providing material which thirty years ago would have been difficult to imagine. In this way, hundreds of statements not only confirm or deny the mechanism, but provide guidance for the future, becoming an important part of modern marketing (Jaciow et al. 2013: 17-26; Dejnaka 2013: 187-205). User named Hantos, commenting on the *Clash of the Titans* movie, communicates his observations on the relationship between the production and several computer games (single thread of June 11, 2013):[9]

> The movie is neither a masterpiece, nor a total nonsense: it's just OK. But I definitely recommend, instead of watching it, to play the *God of War* game series […] The game is great and brutal but also 10 times more mythologically accurate and presents the mythologies much better (apart from the ending, of course) :)) The short films cut into the game present interestingly the origins of the gods, the wars of gods and Titans and a lot of other interesting stuff!![10]

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[9] http://www.filmweb.pl/film/Starcie+tytan%C3%B3w-2010-328812/discussion/film+taki+sobie+na+raz,2222057 (accessed May 5, 2014).

[10] *[F]ilm nie jest arcydziełem, ani też totalnym gniotem.Ot taki na raz.Ale zdecydowanie bardziej polecam po kolei zagrać w serie God of War (wstąpienie, chain of olympus,1, duch sparty,2,3!!) w tej kolejności.Gra świetna i brutalna ale też 10 razy dokładniej i lepiej przedstawia mitologie (poza zakończeniem oczywiście) :)) podczas*

Analysis of expression of social notwork users places the studies on classics in a wide cultural context in which the knowledge of the Graeco-Roman world should be complemented by the specific nature of social networking sites and mechanisms of new media.[11] Observations of Internet users are not grounded in their knowledge of antiquity, but also are connected to the wider communication between the user and the new social media. In addition, the Filmweb forum, as a typical example of the digital platform, can be observed for decades, which helps to analyse the changes in the perception of both the film and the wide range of topics related to it. The first entry on the *Gladiator* appeared on the site on July 9, 2000, last – on May 4, 2014. There are 1524 comments (as of May 5, 2014). Interesting are also statements concerning older production, such as Darryl Zanuck's, Rouben Mamoulian's and Joseph L. Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra* (USA 1963), Anthony Mann's and Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus* (USA 1960) or the same Anthony Mann's *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (USA 1964). Special cases are those of re-adaptations and changes taking place in the reception of the original film: such is the case of the *Clash of the Titans* by Dasmond Davis (USA 1981) and the already mentioned remake from 2010; the same also applies to adaptations of popular novels, computer games, etc.

My goal is not an analysis of individual expression, especially since many of them are quite original and unusual. User Wscieklyamok so comments on the movie *Immortals. Gods and heroes* (statement of December 5, 2011):[12]

After the movie I want to bite my wrists and sprinkle salt on the wound, then add some red chilli, and finally pour battery acid on it and watch it bubble.[13]

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gry przerywniki filmowe ciekawie opowiadają skąd się wzieli bogowie, o wojnie bogów z tytanami i całą masą innych smaczków!!

[11] New Media defined according to Manovich 2006: 90.

[12] http://www.filmweb.pl/film/Immortals.+Bogowie+i+herosi+3D-2011-485474/discussion/Po+filmie+mam+ochot%C4%99..,1789496 (accessed May 5, 2014).

[13] *Po filmie mam ochotę przegryźć sobie żyły i dosypać soli na ranę, następnie dodać trochę papryczki chilli, a na końcu zalać kwasem akumulatorowym patrząc jak bulgocze.*

Each posted reply, even the most controversial one, is a part of the wider discussion and in this context its meaning should be placed. Of course, such statements can be analyzed in relation to the understanding of users (educational context), but it is not the purpose of this article.[14] My paper does not analyze the contents of either the films or reviews, leaving such discussions to the researchers of film and Internet communities.

The choice of Filmweb is not accidental. Only in August 2013 this site was visited by 4.46 million users (ie. real users[15]) with 244.3 million hits (of which 9.76 million domestic mobile page views). An average Internet user spent on the site 27 minutes and 13 seconds on average.[16] In comparison with the year 2012 Filmweb recorded 22% increase in the number of users.[17] Unfortunately, in the case of the most popular websites one may observe a number of deficiencies which are due to the very nature of the network. It is clearly visible in the triad: Google search engine – Wikipedia – Filmweb. By entering any movie title to the Google search engine, we may be almost a hundred per cent sure that we will get either a result from on the Filmweb site or a Wikipedia page. The reason is that the more users the given service has, the more citations are leading to the site, thus increasing its popularity, which, in the case of new media, is a crucial point (Shuen 2009: 69-83). One must also remember about the process of personalizing our individual choices – the more of something we use in our computer, the more often will Google propose us just such a choice.[18] Of great importance

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[14] On the educational aspect see Klęczar 2001.

[15] Single users identified by the computer IP number.

[16] See http://www.wirtualnemedia.pl/artykul/filmweb-rekordowo-popularny-zyskuja-aleseriale-pl-i-film-interia-pl/page:2 (accessed May 5, 2014 for the statistical data).

[17] *Ibidem*.

[18] Cf. the official statement on the Google website: *We collect information to provide better services to all of our users – from figuring out basic stuff like which language you speak, to more complex things like which ads you'll find most useful or the people who matter most to you online*. […] *We use the information we collect from all of our services to provide, maintain, protect and improve them, to develop new ones, and to protect Google and our users. We also use this information to offer you tailored content – like giving you more relevant search results and ads*. Source: https://www.google.com/intl/en/policies/privacy/ (accessed November 23, 2014).

is also an increasingly common processs of combining a number of applications into a single, large media organism: websites connected to Facebook, Twitter, search engines etc. This leads to a situation where it is extremely difficult for the authors independent of the mainstream media to make a break. In addition, all Internet users are beginning to use the same, unverified knowledge, losing mechanisms of self-criticism and sometimes common sense. Simple statements by the users, devoid of any substantive sources, become the main source of knowledge, in accordance with the chief principle of the Internet – the more popular the more significant.[19]

Filmweb is a typical social networking site based on the members' knowledge. They are responsible both for thousands of reviews and an even greater number of posts on the forum. In accordance with the views of Paul Levinson we can include Filmweb in the list of the so--called New New Media. According to the american scholar, the most important determinants of this concept are users simultaneously being both consumers and producers, the authenticity of users due to the lack of professionalism, the ability to freely choose the medium, the lack of financial charge for the information.[20] The dominant role of users in the group situates Filmweb within the media trend referred to as Web 2.0. Typical for this trend, which dates back to 2004,[21] are primarily blogs, price per click, web services, participation, tools, wikis, tagging, syndication of content (Lister et al. 2009: 307). In this way, Filmweb, from the IT point of view, is a digital platform (suitable packaging) which, in accordance with the rules of the site, allows its clients (logged-in users) to fill in the content page. The last, no less important element of the project, are the other, non-logged users, who browse the site in search of knowledge.

The shift from the description of the service to the mechanisms that govern it is extremely important in the context of research on the

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[19] The process, in the context of Wikipedia, is described by Keen 2007: 51-60. See also Orliński 2013.

[20] Levinson 2010: 11-13. Levinson also points at the catalytic interrelations of such media, despite the rivalry, and on the greater importance of the new media when compared with previously offered services, such as Internet search engines and email.

[21] O'Reilly 2005.

reception of antiquity in new media. It should be taken into account that what is significant is not only the content but also factors responsible for its production. The user of new media, creating various reviews and comments and even entire websites, does not necessarily have to be fascinated with ancient culture. For him, the most important element, in accordance with the rules of online communities and Web 2.0 trend, is the fact that the creation itself will be based on the knowledge generally available on the Web; knowledge unverified and substantively deficient, which the author himself is not able to check or correct.

On the one hand we are dealing with a situation when the description of the new space in which antiquity is being presented defies previously used methodologies. The only element of this description may be (already mentioned) cataloging of hundreds of ancient examples, that is constant searching for them and registering them. In addition, this space may be unattractive because of poor level of knowledge contained in it, as well as – in many cases – the excess of form (mechanisms) over the content. On the other hand, services such as Filmweb attract researches by their complexity and diversity issues. They become a place where any user may, in an easy and informal manner, free of – disliked among average users – academic mindframe, present their own views on how they understand antiquity, and how it should be represented in film. This process I would like to call a bottom-up initiative in forming an opinion on the Greco-Roman heritage. This initiative is important, as it shows a vast sample of the functioning of antiquity in what is massive and popular, but for many reasons more and more significant.

Analysis of expression and comments on the Filmweb site reveals two perspectives, which in a sense are extreme opposites. The first is the perspective of an active user without expertise in the field of ancient history, archeology, literature and mythology. The only "weapon" of such Internet user is his/her activity, manifested in collating and comparing a number of products of mass culture. This perspective is based on the knowledge found on the Internet: Wikipedia, sites of historical or quasi-historical character, forums and blogs on the Internet etc. The basic mechanism in this case are the search engine algorithms, which allow for quick and easy access to any kind of knowledge, both of popular and academic in kind. The problem of such a user is typically

a failure to distinguish one type of knowledge from the other. At the opposite extreme we have the perspective of a knowledgeable user, also active, but getting his/her knowledge either from the outside reality (book knowledge, academic education), or from consciously using professional websites devoted to the ancient world.[22] Such a user would apply to his way of thinking the model of Zero – One nature, where zero means non-compliance with the ancient archetype, while one signifies the archetype's partial or total reflection of some ancient fact, motif, fragment of ancient chronicles, etc. In my comments about the two extremes I emphasize, on one hand, lack of reference in the literary and historical sources in the first group of users; on the other, I stress that the second disregards the space of popular literature and culture, which can be marginalized, but cannot be omitted, particularly if we are to discuss reception.

The two extreme attitudes described above are clearly present among users commenting on films about ancient cultures. The boundary is between those who love innovation at the level of content and form, and those who wish to remain faithful to the original, no matter how one defines that "original". In the case of mythology the "originals" are usually the most popular versions of a myth – the canonical versions, which as a result of the reception are permanently engraved in European literature and culture. This can be illustrated well by the discussion about the film *Immortals. Gods and heroes*. The user Kataro7 writes (statement of December 4, 2011):[23]

Okay, this movie is not supposed to be compatible with the mythology but I cannot understand what's going on with these gods. In the latter stages, when the gods (there are only five of them?) struggle with the Titans and all die apart from Zeus (at least as I understand it so, since he collapsed the entire contents of Tartarus with the gods and Titans). Then the Zeus guys escapes with Athene (who is dead) and Theseus to Olympus. And now this: the scene with the son of Theseus – does it represents the future? The kid has a vision in which countless gods are fighting with an equally large

[22] Dominas et al. 2008: 111-135; usually both ways described above are present.
[23] http://www.filmweb.pl/film/Immortals.+Bogowie+i+herosi+3D-2011-485474/ discussion/Czego%C5%9B+tu+nie+rozumiem,1788654 (accessed May 5, 2014).

amount of Titans. But hey,weren't there only five gods? If not, where were they during the fight in Tartarus? And did the Titans not die in the Tartarus? If these are the "new" gods, why are there, among them, the old gods, who died in Tartarus, for example Poseidon? This scene represents the future, because Theseus is a god. If the gods could arise from the dead, why Hephaestus did not do it and how does it make sense to kill gods in such case? Maybe this is a stupid question, but if I simply cannot comprehend something, somebody please just explain it to me.[24]

Here is the answer of the user szarit (statement of December 8, 2014):[25]

If you had read Greek mythology, you probably realize that the Titans and the Olympians are related (Zeus, Poseidon, Hades, Hera, Demeter, and Vesta are the children of the Titan Cronus and Titaness Rhea). Anyway, in the movie it is said that the war in heaven was a war among brothers. Helios, Eos and Selene are gods recognized by Zeus and other Olympians, but they are also children of the Titans (ironically, Hyperion himself and Thea), just like many other personages known from Greek mythology; these do not necessarily need to be giants. Unless you mean the Giants and write „Titans" instead. Anyway, the myths do not, in my opinion, describe the Titans as much taller from the Olympians; the tall ones were the Giants. The Giants are also children of Gaia and they also fought the Olympian

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[24] *Dobra, ten film niby nie ma być zgodny z mitologią ale nie mogę zrozumieć o co chodzi z tymi bogami. W tych ostatnich scenach, kiedy bogowie (których jest tylko pięciu?) walczą z tytanami i giną wszycy oprócz Zeusa (przynajmniej tak to rozumiem skoro on zawalił ten cały tartar wraz z zawartością czyli bogami i tytanami) wtedy Zeus zwiewa z Ateną (która nie żyje) i Tezeuszem na Olimp. I teraz tak: scena, w której jest syn Tezeusza – przedstawia przyszłość. Dzieciak ma wizję, w której niezliczona ilość bogów walczy z równie wielką ilością tytanów. Ale zaraz, czy bogów nie było tylko pięciu? Jeżeli było więcej to gdzie byli w czasie walki w tartarze? I czy tytani nie zginęli w tym tartarze? Jeżeli to są „nowi" bogowie to co wśród nich robili bogowie, którzy zginęli w tartarze, np. Posejdon? Ta scena przedstawia przyszłość, bo Tezeusz jest już bogiem. Jeżeli bogowie mogli powstać z martwych, to czemu Hefajstos tego nie zrobił i jaki ma sens ich zabicie? Może to głupie pytania, może czegoś nie ogarniam, jeżeli tak to niech ktoś mnie poprostu uświadomi.*

[25] http://www.filmweb.pl/film/Immortals.+Bogowie+i+herosi+3D-2011-485474/ discussion/Czego%C5%9B+tu+nie+rozumiem,1788648 (accessed May 5, 2014).

gods. Well, there is even a well known epic called Gigantomachy, but in it the major human hero was Heracles, not Theseus. The movie version was shortened, it showed the Minotaur and the fact that he was killed by Theseus; there was also the labirynth and Phaedra (the priestess); they made Akamas the son of Theseus and Phaedra. Pity that the special effects and costumes were tragically bad and artificial.[26]

Research on the reception of antiquity in the statements and comments of the Filmweb users shows clearly that we are dealing here with three spaces: literature and ancient culture, literature and popular culture, and new media. While the relationship between the first and second of these are becoming better known, it is difficult to point out any work in which that previous relationship would be described more broadly in the context of media studies. Here the crucial thing would be to make the new media a new area for studying classical reception; it is not enough to complement the traditional description of the reception with examples of the hundreds of websites, blogs, social media accounts etc. I am of the opinion that the combination of these three spaces may reveal, to those interested in antiquity, a completely new understanding of its presence in contemporary culture – the mass, media-oriented culture (Czeremski et al. 2013: 48-59).

An in-depth analysis of the expressions should combine the experience of researchers from different disciplines. Interdisciplinarity, which in this case should mean building a common position by the use of

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[26] *Jeżeli czytałeś mitologię grecką to pewnie wpadło ci w oko że tytani i bogowie olimpijscy są spokrewnieni (Zeus Posejdon Hades Hera Westa i Demeter są dziećmi tytana Kronosa i tytanki Reii. Zresztą w filmie też jest powiedziane że walka w niebie była bratobójcza.Helios Eos i Selene są bogami uznanymi przez Zeusa i innych olimpijczyków ale też są dziećmi tytanów o ironio właśnie Hyperiona i Theii podobnie jak wiele innych postaci znanych w mitologi greckiej i wcale nie muszą być olbrzymami.Chyba że myślisz o Gigantach a piszesz tytani.Zresztą w mitach jakoś nie zauważyłam że Tytani wyróżniali się bardzo wzrostem na tle olimpijczyków a ci wielcy byli właśnie giganci. Giganci to też dzieci Gai i walczyli z bogami olimpijskimi ba jest nawet nawet znany eposie „Gigantomachia" a tam głównym ludzkim herosem był Herakles nie Tezeusz. A w filmie w wersji skróconej pokazali Minotaura i fakt że zginął z ręki Tezeusza,był też labirynt i Fedra (kapłanka) i Akamasa zrobili wg mitów syna Tezeusza i Fedry. Szkoda tylko że efekty specjalne i kostiumy były tragiczne i sztuczne.*

different methodologies, is one of the key concepts in contemporary research on the presence of antiquity in the new media. In this context, the cooperation between media experts, social scientists, computer scientists (the construction of appropriate tools), linguists (language analysis and its impact on the content) would be crucial. About those presenting their opinions on the Filmweb site little can be said. After logging in one will get information about what kind of film genres they are interested in and about their activity in recent months, years, etc. We may also find out since when they have been a part of the community service and when was the lat time they were logged onto the website. Thus we are dealing with apparent anonymity here and it is difficult to say to what extent the individual entries are authentic and to what – provocatively constructed to encourage others to read and partake in a particular thread, subject, etc.

Most entries are one or few sentence long expressions, resembling information published in a variety of instant messaging communicators (Skype, GaduGadu) or other social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter). Terms of Service[27] prohibit the use of foul language, but such words appear in condensed or changed form. This is possible due to the fact that it is a computer program that is resposbile for monitoring the language, and not the editor of the site, as is the case in some online forums. Seldom do we deal with longer, more elaborate expressions commenting on the movie, topic, or subject. The majority of threads have just one comment. The analysis of the material allows us to divide it into two complementary spaces and the division within them. It should be noted, however, that each division is generally simplified. A single user of the service can once be part of one group, and then of the other one. Another problem is the continuous updating of the site, its dynamics and continuous growth of information, which can lead to generating a new area of research. Last post dedicated to film *300* comes from the April 10, 2014 (as of May 5, 2014).

The first space is created by the site users. They can be divided into two groups: the supporters of the free, unfettered approach to antiquity, and the so-called traditionalists who outdo one another in pointing at factual

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[27] To be found at http://www.filmweb.pl/regulations (accessed May 5, 2014).

errors and caring for accuracy in reworking ancient literature or culture. This division corresponds to the already described perspectives of users and the examples presented. It is worth quoting here an anonymous user service (account deleted) of July 13, 2003:[28] *No comment. Yet another Hollywood super-flop… Homer's probably trembling with terror…*[29]

The second space is organized according to the subject of the entries. The most important division here is that between the comments relating to trailers and the statements presented after the release of a movie – both in Poland and abroad. Especially valuable is the first group of entries, where users provide information about their expectations. There one can find countless comments concerning the ways in which the users view antiquity. User greggreg86 (statement of March 28, 2014) participating in discussions on the trailer for the film *Hercules*, writes:[30]

> For me as an archaeologist (Mediterranean), a fact particularly annoying, but also incomprehensible, is the chronology of the film: 14 thousand years ago?! Couldn't they simply and normally set the events at 2.5 thousand years ago? 14 thousand years ago in Eurasia last mammoths were still alive, in Western Europe famous Magdalenian culture (Lascaux cave) prevailed; meanwhile in Greece and the surrounding area Upper paleolithic hunter-gatherer cultures thrived. These were living mainly off the so-called littoral zones: coastal fishing, shellfishing, hunting for waterfowl, etc. For the first use of bronze (not to mention iron) we would have to wait for almost 10 thousand years still…[31]

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[28] http://www.filmweb.pl/film/Troja-2004-37311/discussion/No+comment,151520 (accessed May 5, 2014).

[29] *No comment. Czyli kolejna hollywoodzka superporażka... Homer już pewnie drży z przerażenia...*

[30] http://www.filmweb.pl/film/Herkules-2014-563042/discussion/Znowu...,2417333 (accessed May 5, 2014).

[31] *Mnie jako archeologa (śródziemnomorskiego), denerwuje to szczególnie, ale najbardziej mnie zastanawia przedział czasowy – chronologia filmu: 14 tys lat temu?! A nie mogli umieścić akcji jak bozia przykazała np. 2,5 tys lat temu. 14 tys lat temu w Eurazji żyły jeszcze ostatnie mamuty, W Europie zachodniej panowała słynna kultura Magdalenska (jaskinia Lascaux) a W Grecji i okolicach przeżywały się ostatnie górnopaleolityczne kultury łowców- zbieraczy (kultura epigrawecka). żyjący głównie z wykorzystywania tzw. strefy litoralnej: przybrzeżne łowienie ryb, zbieranie skorupiaków,*

The users' knowledge often derives primarily from the trailers, as well as from their own reactions, from both official and unofficial websites of the production, from various rumors and "leaks" published on hundreds of websites dealing with the subject of the film. Already at this level, one can observe the process described in detail by H. Jenkins – the media undergo a process of convergence, in which individual, non-film elements (websites, music CDs, computer games, comics), become a part of a greater whole (Jenkins 2007: 25).

The key words in this type of statements are "source" and "version". These words give more authority to those users who are using them in a conscious or unconscious way. In this context, Internet users speak about their expectations of Wolfgang Petersen"s *Troy*:[32]

> Slayer (January 28, 2004):
> Most difficult to detemine at present , but the trailer is probably overdone as far as the number of ships is concerned; I don't think there were so many people back then; I know the talk of overcrowding of the land, etc., I do not know how many people can get on an average ship, but I think this is overdone; although these things certainly will not stop anyone watching the film with pleasure.[33]

> ARM11 (March 22, 2004):
> You're right, there are too many ships, but the film is going to be good. I hope that Helen will be played by a pretty chick (that is, actress).[34]

> Michal (March 23, 2004):
> Just so happens that the number of ships may be right. At those times, the galley could carry a dozen or so warriors, and at Troy, according to

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polowanie na ptactwo wodne etc. Na pierwsze wykorzystywanie brązu (nie mówiąc o żelazie) trzeba było czekać tutaj jeszcze prawie 10 tys lat…

[32] http://www.filmweb.pl/film/Troja-2004-37311/discussion/Trailer,223698 (accessed May 5, 2014).

[33] *Trudno sie wypowiedziec na dzien dzisiejszy, ale co do trailera to chyba nieco przegieli z iloscia statków, chyba az tyle ludu tam nie bylo, ja wiem, ze niby przeludnienie ziemi itp, nie wiem po ile osob wchodzi srednio na taki statek, ale chyba jednak to przegiecie :) choc takie rzeczy na pewno nie przeszkodza w odbiorze filmu.*

[34] *Racja tych statków za dużo ale film zapowiada się nieźle. Mam nadzieję, że Helenka to będzie ładna babka (hm aktorka).*

various sources, could have been even 100 thousand Greeks. It is easy to count :).[35]

At this level the already described division into supporters and opponents of changes and transformations to the ancient material arises.

A major issue for researching Greco-Roman heritage in the context of new media is the problem of the so-called double reception. According to the definition of Lorna Hardwick and Christopher Stray, reception is understood as the most important ways in which *Greek and Roman materials are transmitted, translated, selected, interpreted, transcribed, presented and represented* (Hardwick, Stray 2008: 1). But the film is in itself a part of sometimes a very complex reception (selecting, interpreting, etc.), in which different research perspectives cross. A comment on a film, according to the above definition, becomes therefore a reception of the reception – thus a double reception.

To present this phenomenon in its proper perspective, introducing new and valuable things to the literature on the subject, individual entries should be captured at the moment in which the Internet discussion becomes a prelude to a topic concerning antiquity. From a researcher's point of view, such a discussion may show what is and what may be the understanding of antiquity in mass culture. We get a view of what is required of ancient literature and culture, the extent to which it is subject to various modifications, what is left of the tradition and what is the role of the mass culture products within the receptions of antiquity.

To sum up, it is worth to illustrate the above observations by the following example. In 2014 year two movies about Hercules (both previously mentioned here) were made. The first, *The Legend of Hercules*, tells the story of a man (to a lesser extent a hero), the base for whose adventures would be hard to find in ancient sources. Screenwriters – Sean Hood, Hanna Weg, Daniel Giat and Giulio Steve – thus copied the mechanism already used in Singh's *Immortals. Gods and Heroes*, in which Theseus has little in common with the mythical archetype. The makers thus breaking a mythological pattern are responding

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[35] *Akurat tak się składa, że liczba okrętów może się zgadzać. Na tamte czasy, galery mogły przewieźć kilkudziesięciu wojowników, a pod Troją, według różnych źródeł mogło być nawet 100 tysięcy Greków. Łatwo pomnożyć więc :)*

to the audience needs which, within the constraints of a service such a Filmweb, favors free reworkings of mythology and ancient history. Meanwhile, the *Hercules* production, directed by Ratner, is most likely (2014) a fairly faithful reproduction of Greek and Roman mythology, as one can see in the movie trailer featuring some of the twelve labors of Hercules. Significantly, however, the writers, Ryan Condal and Evan Spiliotopoulos, used the Latin version of the title heroe's name, in which one can clearly detect the influence of the modern marketing. These two productions fully coincide with the views of the two main groups of Filmweb users: those supporting and those opposing interfering in classical literature and culture.

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