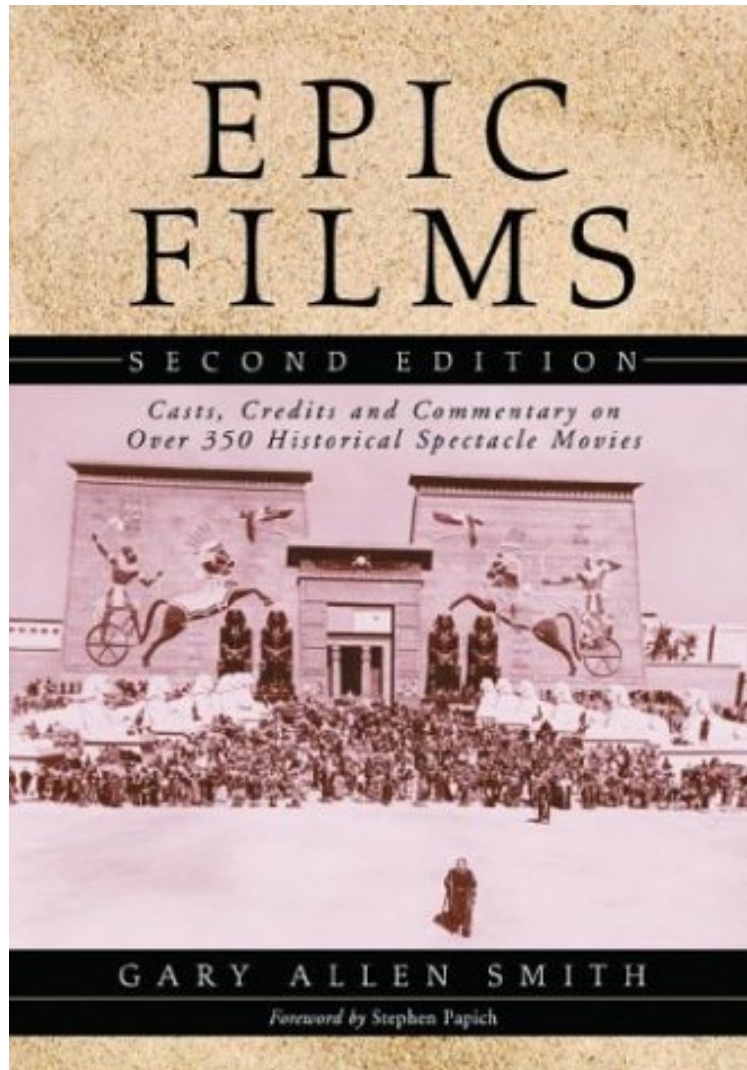


[Download free pdf] Epic Films: Casts, Credits and Commentary on Over 350 Historical Spectacle Movies, Second Edition

Epic Films: Casts, Credits and Commentary on Over 350 Historical Spectacle Movies, Second Edition

Gary A. Smith

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Gary A. Smith : Epic Films: Casts, Credits and Commentary on Over 350 Historical Spectacle Movies, Second Edition before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Epic Films: Casts, Credits and Commentary on Over 350 Historical Spectacle Movies, Second Edition:

"Epic" films, those concerned with monumental events and larger-than-life characters, cover the period from the

Creation to the A.D. 1200's and have been churned out by Hollywood and overseas studios since the dawn of filmmaking. Arguably the master of the genre, Cecil B. DeMille hit upon the perfect mixture of sex, splendor, and the sacred to lure audiences to his epic productions. Each of the 225 alphabetically arranged entries in this book includes casts and credits, plot synopsis, and narratives on the making of the films. Many photographs enliven the text.

From Booklist Epic films continue to delight and impress audiences. As early as 1907, the year of the first version of *Ben-Hur*, large-scale historical movies were being produced. Smith, a frequent film reviewer, describes 355 epics in this volume, starting with *Judith of Bethulia* (1914) and ending with the 2000 Oscar-winning *Gladiator*. This second edition has about 50 percent more entries, and all commentary is based on viewing rather than occasional recollection, as in the first edition. Most of the films are from the U.S and Italy. Smith limits his scope to "the period of time from the creation to the thirteenth century--from cavemen to the Crusades." Thus, the reader will not find *Gone with the Wind* in these pages. The work is not exhaustive; television productions are few and not as extensively treated. Although a few comic epics are included, such as *The Three Stooges Meet Hercules*, the Monty Python classics *Life of Brian* and *The Holy Grail* as well as Mel Brooks' *History of the World, Part 1* are omitted. Smith's introduction provides an objective and encompassing history of epics, noting the interplay between film and TV. Each alphabetically arranged entry ranges from a quarter-page to two pages in length. The first paragraph lists the production credits (producer, director, crew, cast), followed by a plot summary. About a fifth of the entries give production history, editorial commentary, and snippets from movie reviews. Black-and-white photos complement the text on almost every page. Twenty other films are credited in the first appendix (with no explanation for why they are given this treatment), and 21 more epics that were not completed are listed in the second appendix. A bibliography and index complete the volume. It should be noted that the index of titles and names is incomplete and not always accurate. A chronological list of films, a list by country, and a list by topic (e.g., *King Arthur*, prehistoric, etc.) would have been useful. Although the coverage is not complete, this volume provides a good introduction to the mainstream genre. Public, academic, and high-school libraries may consider this reference as a pleasant addition to their film collections. RBBCopyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "one of the few reference works on this subject" -- ARBA About the Author Gary Allen Smith, a contributing writer for *Little Shoppe of Horrors* since 1980, has also written for *Films in*, *Filmfax*, *Superstar Cine*, and *Cult Movies*. He is also the author of *Uneasy Dreams: The Golden Age of British Horror Films, 1956-1976* (2000) and lives in Los Angeles.