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AMANDA POTTER & HUNTER GARDNER

Classics and the Supernatural in Modern Media

In 2020 we planned to hold a conference in July on the topic of Classics and the Supernatural in modern media. The aim was to bring scholars together to celebrate a milestone birthday for one of the organisers, and to hold the conference on the Isle of Wight on the site of the Roman Villa at Brading. Everything was booked, and then the world changed. The COVID 19 pandemic swept across the world like a plague that, if not supernatural, seemed like something from science fiction. The conference was replanned for 2021, then for 2022. When it was finally held in the summer of 2022, most participants were only just resuming international travel. After two years of Zoom meetings and virtual conferences, it was great to engage with colleagues and friends face-to-face again: the museum's staff and facilities, the sunshine, and the setting of an ancient villa on an island off England's coast were perfect. After the conference some participants got infected with the virus, reminding us of the risks now inherent when meeting up and spending time in a room with others. But we are happy to report that all recovered, and many have chosen to develop their papers in the present volume.

This collection of papers from the conference covers a wide variety of methodologies across a wide range of media (television, film, comics, novels), showcasing the different directions scholars take in classical reception studies. At the same time, the contributions find common ground in demonstrating how modern media consistently use tropes of magic, divine power, and ritual practices from Greco-Roman antiquity to articulate supernatural events to (often sceptical) audiences of the twenty-first century. We are pleased to share them with you in this special issue of *Thersites*.