Film Review: Spartacus Essay, Research Paper

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What is clearly justified by the historical sources

In Stanley Kubrick s film of Spartacus, many events that are documented in the historical sources are accurately portrayed. In the film, we see Spartacus and other slaves seize kitchen implements from the cookhouse in which they are eating and attack the guards. This is clearly justified by Plutarch in Fall of the Roman Empire; “seventy-eight, who realised this, managed to act in time and get away, armed with choppers and spits which they seized from some cookhouse”.

The film shows that in the summer of 73 BC, “about seventy slaves escaped from Batiatus s training school at Capua and established a defensible position on Mount Vesuvius some thirty kilometres away. ” This is clearly justified by the historical sources and is accurately portrayed in the film.

The film also correclty portrays the Cilicians pulling out of an agreement with Spartacus, in which they were going to transport slaves to Sicily. The Cilicians are bribed by the Romans to pull out of the agreement, so that they can quell the slave revolt. This left the slaves trapped near Rhegium in the Peninsula of Brittium, and with armies marching towards them from north and east, Spartacus was left with no choice but to turn and face Crassus

What is contradicted by the historical sources

In the film, Spartacus says that he was a slave from birth and that his father before him was also a slave. However, this is contradicted by accounts of Spartacus life. It is said that he had once served with the military service with the Romans and was then later sold as a slave.

The next contradiction is when, in the film, Spartacus leads the slaves to cross the Alps where they would disperse and go to their homes. However, Plutarch claims that the slaves had not agreed with Spartacus plan: “His men however, would not listen to him. They were strong in numbers and full of confidence, and they went about Italy ravaging everything in their way.1″

One of the most incorrectly portrayed events in the film is when spartacus dies. In the film, Spartacus is crucified after being forced to have a gladiatorial fight with his close friend. However, it is documented that Spartacus actually died in battle, when he ran at Crassus: “Though he did not reach Crassus, he cut down two centurions who fell on him together.”

What has been added in

In the film, Spartacus falls in love with a kitchen slave who he takes with him and who eventually has his child. However, none of this is documented in the historical sources and was probably added in to have the seemingly mandatory love interest that is in Hollywood movies.

Along with Spartacus wife comes Spartacus baby son who was born shortly before he died. This has been added in by the film makers, probably to give the story an element of happiness in the end because after the birth of Spartacus son, his blood line is continued even though he is now dead.

It is clear that the film Spartacus is not a completely historically accurate depiction of the actual events that happened around 73BC. Instead, it has taken certain events and dramatised them in order to keep entertainment value high and keep the viewers interested. However, in doing this, the film has become less historically accurate to the extent that it could even be called a fiction film.

Bibliography

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