

Hesperia
Roman History and Myth as a Source for Heavy Metal
The Case Study of Stormlord

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Roman myths of foundation and Roman history provide a wide range of episodes that are apt subjects for metal songs: battles, bloodshed, intrigue, ‘excessive’ characters, ‘larger than life’ settings. It may be interesting to examine how Metal artists have given their interpretation of Ancient Rome; in particular, to define whether, and to what extent, the choice of themes drawn from Roman myth and history affects the common places of Metal imagery, giving them a special declination. It is also worth asking if the ‘Metal interpretation’ of Roman and classical subjects differs from the usual ‘barbaric’/medieval features of Metal music, or, conversely, how it might be influenced by Metal tropes, in a sort of ‘barbarization’ of Antiquity.

The presentation will discuss, as a case study, the Italian band Stormlord. Their songs and albums tend to focus progressively on subjects connected with classic mythology and Roman history (e.g. “The Curse of Medusa” and “Under the Samnites’ Spears”). The references to Classical Antiquity are explicit (cf. *Mare Nostrum*, 2008) and reach their culmination with *Hesperia* (2013), a concept album completely devoted to Virgil’s *Aeneid* (an experiment to be compared with Symphony X, *The Odyssey*).

We aim at giving a twofold survey of the treatment of Classical Antiquity by Stormlord: as a classicist, Antonino Pittà will discuss the original interpretation of Roman literary sources; as a musician, Francesco Ciancio will focus on the technical features required for the creation of a ‘Roman’ heavy metal.