“Release the Kraken!” – The Recontextualization of the Kraken in Popular Culture, from *Clash of the Titans* to *Magic: The Gathering*

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ABSTRACT

This article explores an example of recontextualization in popular culture. As a case study, the article takes a closer look at how the Kraken, known from Scandinavian folklore, has been recontextualized into Greek mythology. After a survey of the lore of the Kraken, attention is turned to the 1981 movie *Clash of the Titans*, where the Kraken plays a prominent role and where the Kraken is first put in the context of Greek mythology. In order to see this movie’s impact on popular culture’s discourse on the Kraken, the paper examines the discourse of the Kraken in popular culture, both before and after *Clash of the Titans*. The analysis ends with a closer look at an expansion of the popular card game *Magic: The Gathering*: the *Theros* set from 2013, where the game is set in a world based on Greek mythology. By following the design process of this game, we see an example of what may be termed “open recontextualization”. The designers’ main motivation for including the Kraken in the *Theros* set is to meet the expectations of the players, which in turn is based on the appearance of the Kraken in *Clash of the Titans*. By studying this process, this article aims to contribute to our understanding of the reception of Antiquity in popular culture.