

Clash of the Titans

1981. MGM. Prod: Charles H. Schneer, Ray Harryhausen. D: Desmond Davis. Scr: Beverley Cross. Ph: Ted Moore. Mus: Laurence Rosenthal. Art: Frank White. Creator of Special Visual Effects: Ray Harryhausen. Assistants to Ray Harryhausen: Jim Danforth, Steven Archer. Model Makers: Janet Stevens, Colin Chilvers and (uncredited) Lyle Conway. Special Optical: Frank Van Der Veer, Ray Field.

Cast: Harry Hamlin, Judy Bowker, Burgess Meredith, Sian Phillips, Flora Robson, Freda Jackson, Laurence Olivier, Claire Bloom, Maggie Smith, Ursula Andress, Jack Gwillim, Neil McCarthy, Donald Huston.

Rating: ☆☆½ Stop-Motion: ☆☆☆

Harryhausen's last film was his most expensive, costing a hefty \$16 million—80 times the budget of his first solo venture, *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*. MGM marketed it aggressively and it made a substantial profit. But it is also one of his least interesting films, laboring under a stodgy script by Beverley Cross, who simply does not know how to engage an audience's interest.

A small fortune was spent on the actors who play the Gods of Olympus (including Laurence Olivier as Zeus) but they are always defeated by Cross' wordy, humorless dialogue. Director Desmond Davis holds everything together with polish but, like so many other directors of Harryhausen pictures, seems unable to inject the project with much energy. The 116-minute running time (longer than any previous Harryhausen film) frequently drags. Harryhausen fans were hoping for a film that would compare with his previous Ancient Greece tale,

Jason and the Argonauts, but many were sorely disappointed.

There is spectacle and action aplenty but for the most part it is mechanical and ponderous. Harry Hamlin and Judy Bowker, as the young lovers Perseus and Andromeda, try hard but are ultimately forgettable. Even Burgess Meredith, as the poet Ammon, is little better. The score by Laurence Rosenthal has some effective themes but is too imitative of the John Williams *Star Wars* style. Rosenthal has a distinctive theme for each of the film's major characters and replays it *ad nauseam* each time they appear. Much of the film's publicity was deceptively slanted to suggest the film was another *Star Wars* kind of film and one character, Bubo the mechanical owl, is clearly designed to cash in on the craze for cute robots inspired by R2D2 in the George Lucas space adventure. Harryhausen hotly refutes this on the grounds that Bubo is actually part of the Greek legends, which may be so—but the owl's personality (forever getting into trouble, falling over, bleeping and whirring) is a blatant steal.

Like *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad*, the film tries to create a unifying visual style. This is a commendable desire but works against *Clash of the Titans*. Most of the outdoor scenes are shot day-for-night and have clouds of machine-smoke wafting through them. This creates an eerie and naturalistic look but it also makes many scenes visually uninteresting. The bright sunshine and Technicolor look of *Jason* may not have looked true to life but are

preferable to the dull, overcast settings of *Clash*.

Production design by Frank White is likewise dreary. He makes the halls of Olympus look like cheap sets from an amateur theatrical production. The swamp-lair of the villain Calibos should have been something special but instead is forgettable.

Fortunately, Harryhausen works his magic and comes up with some magnificent episodes. The destruction by flood of the city of Argos, the capture of the winged stallion Pegasus, Perseus wrestling with Calibos in the swamps, and the climactic encounter with the snake-tailed Medusa — these are all examples of Harryhausen at the height of his powers, technically and dramatically.

But he, too, is guilty of some misjudgments. The increased budget tempted him to produce an overdose of stop-motion effects: There are a staggering 364 cuts. Some sequences are merely routine, making one wish that he had omitted these and instead spent more time developing a few key scenes. The pace suffers half way through when three extremely dramatic stop-motion episodes follow one another in rapid succession. A battle with Dioskilos (a two-headed dog) leads straight into the encounter with Medusa, which is followed by an appearance by three giant scorpions. The impact of each scene is weakened by the proximity of the other two, as the audience is bombarded with monstrous characters. As a self-contained episode, each is superb, but in terms of dramatic context, Harryhausen's time would have been better spent concentrating on either Dioskilos or the scorpions, but not both.

The Kraken, a giant sea beast that appears at the beginning of the film and again at the climax, is a major disappointment. It never convinces that it is more than a rubber puppet. On its face are stiff, whiskery growths, and its eyes are curiously lifeless. Instead of being jointed normally, its four arms move like tentacles, making the creature look even more unlikely. The script is never sure what to do with this behemoth, and during the climax, in which it comes to claim Andromeda as a sacrifice, it merely stands around looking evil until Perseus destroys it.

Other stop-motion characters, however, look marvelous. Pegasus is one of the most elegantly realistic puppets ever seen in a film, benefiting from an authentic white fur covering and wings with actual feathers. The giant vulture, which carries Andromeda off in a cage to Calibos' lair, also has an impressive covering of feathers, a gnarled beak, beady red eyes and a pink head and neck that are believably wrinkled.

Calibos is one of Harryhausen's most ambitious creations. Punished by Zeus, Calibos has been transformed into a nightmarish creature who is only part-human, with one goat-leg, two horns and a long reptilian tail. He is a stop-motion puppet in some shots and actor Neil McCarthy in others. Harryhausen invites difficulties by cutting from one to the other, but he brings it off perfectly.

Calibos demonstrates Harryhausen's ever-growing confidence in his animation. His earliest humanoid creations (the Ymir and the Cyclops) are characterized by their bizarre posture and gait — bestial legs and an "arms back" pose — which means that audi-

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ences do not expect them to have the natural pose and movements of a man. Later humanoid puppets — such as Talos and the skeletons in *Jason* — are anatomically more accurate but avoid having to create the illusion of fluid, natural movements because they are not flesh-and-blood creations. The troglodyte in *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger* was a leap forward since it was an entirely humanoid figure and also a living being — albeit characterized by a stiff, lumbering gait. Calibos (built over the Trog armature) takes the progression a step further. Some remarkable animation and careful attention to lighting and editing insure that few viewers are aware that the camera is cutting from live actor (primarily closeups of McCarthy's expressive, heavily made up face) to puppet. In some of the most perfect rear-screen composites of Harryhausen's career, he has the puppet Calibos wrestling with the live-action Perseus, the two actually seeming to make close physical contact.

Calibos, cracking a whip and sporting a vicious trident in place of one hand that Perseus has cut off, is a visually marvelous character. His unrequited love for Andromeda makes him a tragic figure. But Harryhausen seems to back away from elevating him to the status of a major character. He showed the same curious restraint with the Centaur in *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad*, where the creature's affection for Margiana could have lead to some King Kong–Ann Darrow pathos. The death of Calibos, slain by Perseus' sword, is not the climax of the film: It happens almost as a throw-away scene, as if Harryhausen were getting it out of the way so that he can move

on to the reappearance of the Kraken. This is a scripting flaw; the scenes should have happened in reverse order, the film ending with a climactic struggle between Perseus and Calibos, with Andromeda the prize, in the best Errol Flynn–Basil Rathbone fashion.

There is so much animation in the film that Harryhausen called in some assistants for the first and only time in his career. Jim Danforth, who had just left *Caveman*, and newcomer Steven Archer were recruited to handle many scenes. The breakdown of who did what is as follows. Harryhausen animated all the shots in the Medusa and scorpions sequences. He also animated all shots of Calibos except a few which were done by Archer. He animated all the shots of the vulture on the ground, leaving the flying shots to Archer. Archer also animated all shots of Bubo, except about four or five which were done by Harryhausen. For the Kraken, Harryhausen and Archer each did approximately half of the animation, with Danforth doing one shot. Archer did a few shots of Dioskilos but the bulk of this sequence was animated by Danforth. Danforth handled all the blue-screen shots of Pegasus in flight while Harryhausen animated shots of this puppet on the ground. Close shots of the horse's animated wings in front of a rear-projection were shared by Danforth and Archer.

The film also contains a wealth of non-animation effects. The flooding of a miniature of the city of Argos, Perseus wearing a helmet that turns him invisible, the face of the goddess Thetis (Maggie Smith) coming to life on a statue, a miniature of the walled city of Joppa, and a miniature of the ruins of a domed



Clash of the Titans (1981): Steve Archer (left) animates Dioskilos, the two-headed dog, under Ray Harryhausen's supervision.

temple high on a hill are only some of the film's impressive effects.

The quality of the animation is generally excellent. Process and optical work includes some superb static and traveling mattes but (as ever) one or two sub-standard ones sneak through. A long shot of the city of Joppa includes a huge carved elephant with a conspicuous blue shimmer around it where the two parts of a matte have not been correctly aligned. Close shots of Perseus riding Pegasus employ traveling matte that is not

up to the intricacies of the actor's hair and the horse's feathers, with the result that the sequences are significantly weakened.

The film begins with a good moody sequence (filmed in Cornwall) in which Danae and her baby Perseus are cast adrift in a casket at sea by Acrisius (Donald Houston). The credits are backed by stunning aerial footage over some Spanish mountains. This sequence is spoiled by the presence of a seagull soaring overhead, added to the footage by some

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inferior traveling matte work. The sea-gull arrives at Olympus, a detailed miniature which unfortunately *looks* like a miniature, thanks to the poorly detailed rocks and the scale of the "clouds" around it. Still, it's better than the interior, which always looks like a film set, with Olivier looking very fake on his throne, backed by an unlikely blue glow. Angered by Acrisius' action, Zeus wants revenge: "Destroy Argos! Let loose the last of the Titans! Let loose the Kraken!"

An intricate miniature of Argos is much better, matted into a live-action seascape and backed by a painting of mountains and sky. Beneath the sea, Poseidon (Jack Gwillim) releases the Kraken. Gwillim is seen as a tiny figure, blue-screened into a miniature set with a huge steel gate that bars the entrance to a cave. A prop of the Kraken's tail is effectively used in one low-angle live-action shot showing it swim out from the cave.

Three quick shots — including one animation cut — give us teasing glimpses of the Kraken, which will be seen more fully at the film's climax. In the first shot, the head and torso of the growling beast rise up out of the water. Frothing water has been superimposed onto the foreground. For this live-action shot, the largest of three Kraken puppets was used, this one a four-foot-high creation. The Kraken submerges, frothing water again in the foreground and a rear projection of Argos behind it. In a shot animated by Archer, the huge tail snakes across the screen, the animation giving it more movement than could have been achieved with a live-action prop.

Harryhausen intended that the Kraken rise "in an explosion of churn-

ing foam like a sea-to-land missile" but the reality is less dramatic. These three shots all look like effects composites; he is being too ambitious in trying to show such intimate contact with water.

Nevertheless, the ensuing tidal wave and destruction of Argos is marvelous. Shooting at 96 frames per second and using a five-foot high miniature set, Harryhausen demolishes columns, statues and buildings in a superb display of non-animation trickery. First-rate traveling mattes place tiny extras into the sets, deluged by the frothing water. The mattes are cleverly designed so that the extras seem to disappear as the water swamps them. Under Harryhausen's supervision, rotoscope mattes were drawn frame-by-frame by Roy Field's optical department over the footage of the actors so that they were progressively obscured as the water element surrounds them. This is probably the only occasion in a Harryhausen film where rotoscope matting has been used.

With the seemingly effortless precision born of years of experience, Harryhausen executes a series of non-animation effects before introducing his first full-blown stop-motion scene. Zeus takes a clay figurine of Calibos and its shadow transforms, by means of cel animation, into a horned, goat-legged creature. The giant hand of the goddess Thetis (Maggie Smith) deposits the sleeping Perseus in an amphitheatre in Joppa. Perseus discovers a helmet that turns him invisible and the poet Ammon is astonished to see footsteps appearing on the ground. And the city of Joppa is depicted in long shot by means of a striking static matte that combines huge statues and the walls of the city with a

bustling crowd below. The statues and walls are miniatures, not a painted area — there are no matte paintings at all in *Clash*.

In a restrained and haunting sequence featuring 13 stop-motion cuts, the spirit of the sleeping Andromeda is carried off in a cage by a giant vulture. The vulture is one example of the way Harryhausen has gone to great lengths in this film to avoid criticism that his creations tend to appear once, engage in a battle and are defeated. The vulture is used here as an instrument of another individual (Calibos) rather than as an adversary in its own right and (like the Kraken, Pegasus, Calibos and Bubo) is a recurring character, appearing significantly in two later scenes.

Long shots looking out from Andromeda's bedroom show the vulture landing on the balcony outside, which is a miniature area perfectly matted into the live-action surroundings. The creature perches on a balustrade, screeches and flaps its wings in a way that credibly suggests its great bulk. Low-angle medium shots of the squawking bird allow a good look at the wealth of detail in its wrinkled and fleshy head and neck. It is easy to believe that this is a living creature.

The vulture waits patiently as Andromeda's spirit walks towards the cage. But Harryhausen doesn't let his creation merely sit idly by. Cawing gently, it shuffles along the balustrade. Its beady eyes blink as they watch Andromeda. In another rear projection, this time from behind the puppet, the bird starts to get agitated as she enters the cage. Once Andromeda is in the cage, the vulture spreads its wings. Seen in long shot again

from inside the bedroom, the bird flaps its huge wings, flies onto the top of the cage, grabs it in its claws, squawks and takes to the air. The attractive final shot uses the same static matte set-up and a smaller nine-inch puppet (with rubber wings rather than feathers) which flies off into the distance with the cage hanging under it. The wings flap up and down gracefully with none of the strobing that has impaired other flying sequences. This shot, and all subsequent shots of the nine-inch puppet, were animated by Archer.

Perseus has witnessed Andromeda's abduction and determines that when the vulture carries her off the following night, he will follow it. At Ammon's suggestion, the two decide to enlist the help of the flying stallion, Pegasus. The scene in which Pegasus flies down to drink at a moonlit pool and is captured and broken in by Perseus is one of the film's highlights. The model is beautiful and the magnificent animation (primarily by Danforth) makes it one of the most convincingly "alive" stop-motion characters ever. There are some exceptional composites and the sequence has a hushed, almost breathless tone that imparts a magical, "fairy tale" quality. There are 39 stop-motion cuts.

The opening shot is a stunner. In long shot, the distant puppet flies down behind a tree (which is part of the live-action area and the branches of which have been carefully matted around), its wings flapping smoothly, its four legs galloping on air. Its tail is made up of white wires animated so as to swish convincingly. This is a great improvement on the Centaur's muscular tail in *Golden Voyage of Sinbad*, although in some cuts



Puppets of Perseus and Pegasus from *Clash of the Titans*, as they were displayed at London's Museum of the Moving Image.

the tail remains static when the animator hopes the audience's eyes will be elsewhere.

In a closer rear-projection shot, Pegasus comes in for a landing, his rear legs hitting the ground first. Perseus and Ammon are hiding in the lower foreground behind a tree. The same set-up is used to show Pegasus walking in a circle, snorting, his wings still raised. The animation shots are intercut with shots of the head and legs of a live-action horse. The invisible Perseus throws a rope, which seems to extend from nowhere and wrap around the horse's neck. Ammon looks on as Pegasus flaps his wings anxiously, his front legs rear-

ing up. These are all flawless rear-screen composites, the puppet looking like it really is part of the live-action surroundings.

In the same set-up, Perseus' helmet is knocked off and he becomes visible, struggling at the end of the rope. This composite required another pass of the camera but its lighting and contrast are still perfectly balanced. There is a matte down the middle of the shot where the miniature rope is lined up with the live-action rope. In a series of shots using the same long-shot design, Perseus continues to restrain the whinnying Pegasus, eventually approaching him and mounting him. The moment when Perseus

actually leaps onto the horse is done in a close live-action cut.

Two more long shots using the same design have a puppet of Perseus astride Pegasus, who rears up in anticipation of taking to the air. The animation is convincing because the puppets are far off and because Perseus is partly obscured by the horse's wings. The opening long-shot design is used again to show Pegasus leaving the ground and flying behind a foreground tree.

The long sequence of cuts in which Pegasus tries to throw Perseus, eventually being subdued by the rider, contains some shots that are excellent and others that are disappointing. There are three basic designs. Extreme long shots have the two puppets blue-screened in front of a sky background. Medium shots are done one of two ways. In one, Perseus is blue-screened in front of film of animated wings, which in turn have been animated in front of a rear projection of the sky. In the other, the animated wings are shot in front of rear-projected footage of Perseus on a partly seen mock-up of the horse. The long shots are the most successful. The medium shots always look like effects shots because the traveling matte is unable to handle the intricacies of Perseus' hair blowing in the wind.

For the long shots, the Pegasus puppet was attached on its far side to a blue rod that allowed it to move in several directions, including up and down. Danforth's animation of the beast bucking and bending is very fluid. This is a complex bit of animation: as well as the kicking legs and the head, he also has to animate the wings, the swishing tail and the Perseus-puppet.

In one dynamic long-shot, horse and rider turn in the distance, backed by some very photogenic clouds. Eventually Pegasus is calmed and (in an attractive design) Perseus brings him in to land. The static matte designs seen earlier are used again, with Ammon looking on as Pegasus trots around in a circle, Perseus (live action again) having dismounted. Harryhausen cuts away to avoid showing Perseus actually dismounting—wisely so, since this might have betrayed the puppet Perseus. Pegasus folds his wings down by his side as the two men stand beside him. The closing shot in this fine scene is a romantic silhouette of all three characters, with Perseus petting Pegasus on the nose. This is a rear-projection composite, with the puppet aligned with footage in which Hamlin mimes the action.

The following night, Perseus is ready to follow the vulture and hides in Andromeda's bedroom. This long sequence, involving a stunning aerial chase and an encounter between Perseus and Calibos, contains 35 stop-motion cuts.

The first three cuts, in which the squawking vulture picks up the cage carrying Andromeda and flies off, use three rear-screen designs seen earlier. In a very striking long shot, the far off vulture (the nine-inch puppet) flies left to right above a nighttime composite of the walls of Joppa. In the same shot, Perseus enters from the left riding on Pegasus, all three puppets seeming tiny.

Animated against rear-projected footage shot from a helicopter, the vulture flies away from the camera, the wings flapping gracefully as though it is riding the air currents. The pursuit over

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some very dramatic craggy peaks combines long shots of the Perseus puppet and Pegasus blue-screened against the sky, long shots of the vulture and medium shots of Perseus with animated wings in the foreground. When the vulture flies low over the swamps near Calibos' lair, one can't help wishing that Harryhausen had had the time and budget that would have allowed him to introduce some O'Brien-style glass shots. In long shot, Perseus and Pegasus fly down through some clouds. This effect was probably achieved with some soft-focus rotoscope matting.

In a skillful rear-screen composite, the vulture deposits the cage on a muddy mound surrounded by an alligator-infested swamp. There is a puppet Andromeda inside the cage but because it is so far off and barely seen, Harryhausen doesn't need to give it any movement. The next two cuts use the same set-up, with the vulture alighting on a foreground log and looking on as Andromeda steps out of the cage.

The build-up to our first sight of Calibos effectively dispenses with a musical score, using instead the ominous sounds of frogs croaking. In two medium shots, the wizened vulture caws gently. Andromeda walks through the foggy swamp when suddenly a swarthy goat-leg steps into the foreground. The camera tilts up, revealing Calibos with his back to us, his dinosaur-like tail swishing to and fro. The miniature floor on which the puppet stands blends in perfectly with the dark background, withstanding even the tilt-up which might have given it away.

The camera dollies as it looks over Calibos' shoulder, following him as he

walks behind Andromeda. The character limps because although one leg is goat-like, the other has been left in its human form. Why Harryhausen chose to animate this particular shot is a mystery: The puppet's tail and goat-leg are below the frame, so he could have used McCarthy. Perhaps he deliberately chooses to use McCarthy only for closeups, since long shots of the actor might have contrasted too noticeably with the puppet.

In a seamlessly matched static matte composite, Calibos sits on his throne, the live-action Andromeda standing to one side. The throne is an ornately carved miniature. The foreground steps leading down from the throne are part of the live-action plate. Calibos stands up, swishes his tail and cracks his whip (which momentarily disappears below the matte line — although this is only noticeable when watching in slow-motion on video). In a very fluidly animated cut, Calibos — now seated again — beckons Andromeda to him, and she kneels beside his throne.

The invisible Perseus looks on as Calibos bemoans his fate and recounts his twisted plans for revenge. If he cannot have Andromeda, then he will insure that no one else can. As Perseus leaves, he is unaware that Calibos has spotted his footsteps in the mud.

Perseus wades knee-deep through the swamp looking for Pegasus. Suddenly, Calibos appears and locks an arm around Perseus' neck. This audacious composite is brilliantly successful for a number of reasons. The alignment of puppet arm and the image of Perseus in the rear projection is done with rock-steady precision. Both characters are kept partly in shadow so as to disguise

contrasts. The point at which Calibos makes contact with the water is obscured by a convenient rock in the rear projection. Harryhausen could not use McCarthy for this shot because he wanted to show Calibos' tail snaking high in the air.

Three more shots use this set-up as the two struggle. In another superb example of alignment, Calibos' other hand appears to have grabbed Perseus' arm. The two characters really do seem to be making physical contact. Enormous care has gone into this sequence: Medium-shots of McCarthy and Hamlin are intercut with the composite shots, but they never conflict, always seeming like part of the same scene.

In a different perspective of the struggle, Harryhausen takes his magic one step further — the Calibos puppet is clearly seen standing in the water as he batters at Perseus with his fist. The horizontal matte line goes through the water and, cleverly, the ripples caused by the actor seem to be caused by the puppet. It is one of the finest composites in Harryhausen's career. The scene ends abruptly as Perseus raises his sword and slashes down.

Back in Joppa, Andromeda stands in the temple of Thetis before a crowd and recites the riddle that Calibos has given to her. Any man who can solve the riddle can have her hand in marriage, but those who fail to solve it are burned at the stake. Long shots of the interior of the temple are skillful mattes, with the upper parts of the huge pillars and the statue of Thetis a miniature matched to the live action below.

At night the temple is deserted — except for Calibos, who comes to pray

to the goddess. In two outstanding extreme long shots (animated by Archer), the puppet (a second, smaller version) kneels at the foot of the huge statue, his tail swishing behind him. Part of the floor is miniature (the puppet throws a shadow onto it) but where it meets the live-action set is undetectable. These two high-angle shots, looking down at the tiny, bizarre creature groveling before the statue, are haunting fantasy images and among the most memorable in the film. Calibos reveals the stump where his left hand has been cut off by Perseus and pleads for Thetis to help him get revenge.

The next day, the statue of Thetis cracks apart (filmed in miniature at 96 frames per second). The enormous head comes to rest in front of Perseus and the face of Maggie Smith is superimposed over it as she speaks. This is a good bit of basic camera trickery, infinitely preferable to the unlikely figurehead that came to life in *Jason and the Argonauts*.

That night, Calibos and his swamp cronies capture Pegasus. This brief and subdued sequence, containing 12 stop-motion cuts, is a satisfying example of how Harryhausen is taking pains to make his special effects further the plot, rather than allowing the plot to serve the effects, as is more often the case. It is full of flawless composites, but one can't help wishing that Harryhausen had staged it in broad daylight. The shadowy lighting hides all the matte lines, but it also makes the scene less visually appealing.

The camera pans across from the live-action Pegasus (head and neck only) to a dark tree from behind which emerges Calibos, holding his whip. In this shot, animated by Archer, the invisible matte

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line follows the outline of the tree. In medium shot, Calibos lashes out with his whip, one of the few shots in the film in which the animation looks hurried. In long shot, both puppets are seen in full in a clearing, Calibos' whip wrapped around the stallion's neck. Pegasus rears up on his hind legs and (in a beautifully lit medium shot) extends his wings, which catch the moonlight.

Harryhausen moves his animation camera nearer to the same rear-screen set-up in the next shot, which has Calibos still restraining Pegasus with his whip, while the swamp men run up in the background. The matte line runs along the ground. In medium shot, a realistically animated net lands on top of Pegasus, who struggles under its weight. In long shot again, Calibos looks on as Pegasus is brought down, his wings tangled in the netting. A closer shot of Pegasus on the ground, surrounded by the men and struggling under the net, is a superb composite. Calibos' tail swishes excitedly. In two final medium shots (animated by Archer), Calibos raises a large shell to his mouth and blows on it like a horn, declaring his triumph.

The next morning, Perseus, Andromeda, Ammon and several soldiers set off in search of a means to defeat the Kraken. As they ride off across a desert, Calibos is revealed hiding behind a tree, watching them go. The puppet's feet are below the frame, so no matte is required. The rear screen looks particularly grainy because it contrasts with the bright daylight shots immediately preceding it. This shot was animated by Archer.

Zeus, wishing to aid his son Perseus, orders that the wise owl Bubo be sent to guide him. But Athene instead

instructs Hephaestus to fashion a bronze mechanical owl. The character of Bubo, always bleeping, spluttering and falling over, is designed to add some comic relief; although he may amuse young children, he adds little to the film. It's another example of how the script adds more and more fantastic elements without developing each properly.

Three armatured Bubo puppets were built, one full size (that is, about 15 inches tall), another four inches tall, and a third only one inch tall, used for extreme long shots. Most of the shots of Bubo were animated — very smoothly — by Archer, who successfully imbues the character with lots of touches of personality. One wonders if Harryhausen left these sequences for Archer to do because he himself was not particularly inspired by the creature and preferred to work with the more original flesh-and-blood creations. In this first encounter with the owl, there are 16 stop-motion cuts.

Far off in the distant sky, Perseus and his group see the tiny Bubo flapping towards them. As the owl gets nearer, the mechanical clunk of its wings can be heard. It heads for a gnarled tree stump that appears to be a prop placed in the desert location. In closer shots, Bubo flaps noisily straight at the camera, then hovers above one of the tree's branches. Bubo lands on the branch but fails to grasp it properly, spinning downwards and hanging upside down. The branch snaps and breaks off; part of the branch is miniature and matched to the live-action tree, then animated frame-by-frame as it falls.

Bubo hits the ground head first, topples over onto his back, then rocks from side to side very credibly before

coming to rest. In the same static matte set-up, the owl bleeps desperately and kicks his legs. Perseus picks up a mechanical prop version of the owl, finds he can communicate with it, then places him back on the branch. Hamlin mimes the action, and the puppet owl is carefully aligned in front of the rear screen so that it seems he is being held up.

Bubo's head spins around excitedly and he bleeps and clicks before taking to the air again. In long shot again, he flies upwards, animated against a rear projection of the sky, intending to lead Perseus to the Stygian witches who can help him in his quest. In the final long shot, the one-inch puppet flies above the galloping horses, traveling from the foreground into the background, probably moving about four feet into the rear-screen set-up.

Bubo is seen again shortly afterwards as Perseus and his group pass through some rocky terrain at the foot of the cliff where the witches' temple is perched. This short sequence has eight stop-motion cuts. The first cut, in which Bubo flies away from the camera into a rocky pass, looks too much like a process shot because of the way the rear image is locked off. A static matte of Bubo flying out from behind a rocky pillar is much better, with the character pausing and dipping in flight. Bubo flies between some rocky outcrops (another good static matte), circles, then settles on a rock in a closer shot that uses a matte where the puppet's feet meet the ground.

Archer pulls off some deft animation in two shots that play up the owl's less-than-perfect mechanics. Bubo blinks but his eyes are out of synch, then he extends one wing tentatively, then the

other, before taking to the air again. In long shot, he hovers above Perseus and the soldiers who are climbing up the cliff face.

The domed ruins of the witches' temple are another of the film's fine fantasy images. The miniature ruins are matted into the top of the shot, with the soldiers approaching from below. One wishes that Harryhausen had included more shots like this.

The three cackling witches (Flora Robson, Anna Manahan and Freda Jackson) have no eyes and see with the aid of a crystal ball that they share. The amusing black humor of the sequence is the closest the script comes to genuine light relief, but it is clear that Cross is not comfortable with the style. Perseus commands Bubo to steal the witches' "eye," only promising to return it if they will reveal the secret of how the Kraken may be defeated. There are ten stop-motion cuts.

In a shot with rock-solid registration, Bubo takes off from the arm of one of the soldiers in the rear projection. In three more rear-projection shots, the wire-supported puppet flies around the inside of the temple, eventually snatching the eye from the hand of one of the witches and dropping it in Perseus' hand. The eye appears to be part of the live action and supported on an invisible wire. Bubo lands on a miniature rock and is seen in some cutaway shots as the witches reveal the secret of how to defeat the Kraken. "A titan against a titan!" they crow, telling Perseus to go in search of Medusa. Bubo blinks and rocks from side to side, full of activity, finally flying back up through a hole in the roof (a static matte).

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Perseus and his men arrive at the banks of the River Styx. The far off Island of the Dead is a miniature matted into the shot. Superimposed fog once again makes the setting unnecessarily gloomy. Charon, the ferryman, turns out to be a living skeleton, but he's a poor relation to the skeletons of *7th Voyage* and *Jason*. This one is a live-action character whose only moving part is a hand that clutches at the coin which Perseus offers.

The ruins of the Temple of Aphrodite are a good location, but again the scene is weakened by the machine-fog that drifts through it, making a potentially striking setting merely dreary. Walking warily through the ruins, Perseus and two soldiers are set upon by Dioskilos, the two-headed dog that guards the ruins. This savage battle is excitingly staged and one of the few occasions in the film where Harryhausen indulges in a good old gratuitous set-piece, where the monster comes on, fights and is destroyed. It has no plot function—it merely delays the confrontation with Medusa. The excellent model has two very vicious heads and a convincing fur covering. There are 30 stop-motion cuts in the sequence, most of them animated by Danforth. The scene as filmed is shorter than originally planned, which may explain why Dioskilos is a disappointingly characterless adversary.

The first four cuts were animated by Archer, shadowy shots of a dark shape with two glowing eyes, hiding in a doorway. Then, in a dynamic action, the wire-supported dog leaps out from behind a pillar (a matted area) and knocks the two soldiers over, the contact suggested by alignment of puppet and ac-

tors. The puppet, well-matched with its rear-projected surroundings, lands on the ground and turns, ready to attack. The area of miniature floor on which the snarling dog stands is undetectably matted into the live-action area.

In closeup, the two animated heads of the dog snap at Perseus, who hides behind his shield. In an excellent static matte composite, Dioskilos rears up and pushes down on Perseus' shield, forcing him back. The same set-up is used in another excellent shot in which the two soldiers run in to help Perseus, and one of their swords (probably painted on glass) momentarily passes in front of the puppet. In the same shot, Dioskilos rears up on his hind legs and chases the soldiers out of the frame.

The soldiers run into a new static matte set-up, an area surrounded by pillars. In another dynamic moment, Dioskilos immediately leaps into the frame after them, crossing the equivalent of about four meters, then turns to face the men. This set-up, used in several shots, has the actors in shadow and the puppet in direct sunlight, which has the unfortunate effect of emphasizing the fact that they are pieces of film that have been shot separately. Several closeups show the two heads snapping viciously at the camera, and in some of them an animated miniature sword passes across the shot, adding subliminally registered impact.

The dog's heads lunge very quickly in and out of a closeup of a soldier protecting himself with his shield. There is a lot of dramatic camera-shake in this shot and it may be that the animation camera was tilted in small increments, one frame at a time. A long shot plays

up the presence of the two heads, with one head barking at one soldier and the other head snapping in the other direction at the second soldier. In the same shot, Dioskilos bounds after one soldier, running into the shadowed area and behind a matted pillar.

In another forceful static matte design, the dog leaps after the soldier who has run between the pillars. The soldier falls backwards onto a stone platform and Diskilos goes for his throat. The matte line follows the edge of the platform, below which steps run down the near side, and very successfully makes puppet and actor appear to be part of one image. The live-action image of the soldier recoiling appears to have been slowed down so as to allow time for the animation choreography to match up with it.

In an extreme closeup with camera shake, Dioskilos' heads snap at the shield of the fallen soldier. Perseus runs into the static matte set-up and, as Dioskilos continues goring the soldier, he slashes at one of the dog's hind legs. A glass-painted sword passes in front of the puppet for a few frames.

In a slightly different perspective of the same set-up, Perseus stabs one of the heads, which squeals, drops and hangs limply while the other continues snapping and barking. This grimly humorous moment was conceived by Danforth. Dioskilos lunges at Perseus, who stabs at its other head. Again, a painted sword appears in front of the puppet for a few frames. Perseus continues slashing at the animal, eventually forcing it back.

Dioskilos is forced up onto his hind legs then topples backwards over the edge of the steps and falls out of the

frame. Danforth animates this shot very ably — it could have looked awkward. The two final stop-motion cuts use yet another static matte set-up, with the dying dog on the ground at the foot of the steps. Perseus comes up behind it and delivers the death blow with his sword — recalling the design of the final shots in the *Allosaurus* sequence in *One Million Years B.C.* Dioskilos tries to rear up again, squeals and expires.

The audience is allowed only a few seconds to get its breath before Perseus and the two soldiers enter Medusa's temple. The temple is unlike anything we have seen before in a Harryhausen picture. This shadowy, low-ceilinged chamber has no windows and its only light comes from burning braziers that throw a flickering orange glow onto the walls and the many columns. It's the perfect location for the loathsome, crawling horror of Medusa.

Although this scene is a self-contained set-piece, it doesn't appear at all gratuitous since this is the goal of Perseus' quest: he must decapitate the Gorgon and use her head to turn the Kraken to stone. The scene is a good example of Harryhausen being in full directorial control. He milks the eeriness of the scene for all it's worth, carefully building tension and controlling pace so that it can hold its own dramatically. This is the antithesis of the conventional Harryhausen battle scene: here he is more interested in mood and suspense.

The six-minute sequence contains fifty-three stop-motion cuts, all executed by Harryhausen except for one that was done by Archer. Medusa is another of the film's excellent models, with a rattle-snake's tail and a woman's upper half,

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albeit green and covered in reptilian scales. In her hair are twelve small snakes that were also painstakingly animated by Harryhausen, as well as one more coiled around her wrist. Over her shoulder she carries a bow and a quiver full of arrows. Adding to the nightmarish look of the scene, Harryhausen keeps his creation partly hidden by shadows in many shots, and when she is seen more clearly, she is bathed in the flickering light from the braziers. The animation table must have been surrounded by lamps that would be turned on and off for a few frames to simulate the effect.

One of the sequence's greatest achievements is that this doesn't look like composite photography. There are no matte lines to be spotted here. Yet in almost every shot, the puppet has been matted into a full-size set of the chamber. Only a portion of the steps and one pillar were constructed in miniature.

Rosenthal's score is effectively creepy in this sequence, especially during the early shots when our sense of anticipation is highest. In the first three animation cuts, Medusa is seen only in part and as shadows: her raised tail on a wall, her snake-head on a column. In these shots, the wall and columns must be part of the miniature set, placed in front of the rear-projected chamber with its flaming braziers.

In a stunning long shot, backed by an unsettling musical theme, Medusa drags herself along with her arms at the top of a flight of steps, lit up by a brazier on the left in the rear projection. The idea that she should drag herself along, rather than shuffling on her snake's tail, is a chilling one, and was suggested to

Harryhausen by Archer. It is impossible to detect what part, if any, is a miniature set in this fine composite.

Since Perseus cannot look at Medusa directly, for fear of being turned to stone, he uses his shield as a mirror. In two shots, a composite of Medusa shuffling past the brazier, looking around and snarling, has been matted into the center of the shield. It looks like the footage of Perseus holding the shield has been freeze-framed, allowing a steady matte to follow the outline of his arm.

Many medium shots and long shots do not use mattes, with the bottom of the puppet below the foot of the frame. Others are long-shot static mattes, such as a shot of Medusa rearing up at the top of the steps, her raised tail swishing behind her as she reaches over her back for her bow.

Another rear-screen set-up looks over Medusa's shoulder into the chamber as she loads an arrow and fires it at one of the soldiers. The miniature sword is removed at the last moment (just before the arrow leaves the bow), replaced by a live-action sword with which the puppet has been carefully aligned. The camera zooms in from a medium shot to a closeup of Medusa's face. Her eyes light up and the snakes in her hair continue to writhe. An extreme closeup gives us a good look at her scaly green skin and jagged teeth. The fallen soldier looks up and is turned to stone. The glow in the Gorgon's eyes goes out.

In long shot again, Medusa loads another arrow and shoots it at Perseus, whose shield is struck. This very quick action is consummately animated by Harryhausen. In closeup, the Gorgon

looks around hungrily, then drags herself down the steps. Presumably, part of the steps are miniature but this is obscured by shadows. In two medium shots, she loads another arrow and fires it at a torch that Perseus has thrown as a distraction.

In a new long-shot static matte design, Medusa, now standing upright and shuffling along on her tail, passes behind a statue, which is probably a foreground miniature. In a shadowy and very creepy closeup, her eyes look this way and that as she seeks out her prey. In two panning medium shots, she reaches for another arrow and slithers behind one of the pillars. The pillar is probably another miniature.

In a series of shots, she turns at the sound of Perseus' shield being thrown to the ground, hisses and shoots another arrow. A shot of just her tail shows it flicking and unfurling. One medium-shot of her crossing the frame is so deliberately shadowy that practically no detail on the puppet can be made out.

Another closeup looks like it may be a repeat of a cut used earlier. Another arrow is drawn and (in a new static matte set-up) Medusa stands in the background as Perseus hides behind a pillar in the foreground. It's a textbook example of how the "reality sandwich" fools the eye into thinking that a foreground puppet is actually far off and behind live-action figures. Medusa shuffles slowly into the foreground in a series of medium shots and closeups in which the camera dollies backwards. Heightening the tension, there is a shot of the rattlesnake tail flicking in the air, suggesting the Gorgon is ready to strike.

Another shot of the bulky tail shows how it moves along in sidewinder fashion.

Continuing to build the tension, there are two more closeups and a long shot of Medusa now level with the concealed Perseus. Suddenly, Perseus steps forward and cuts off the Gorgon's head with his sword. This carefully aligned animation requires that the head is supported on wires for most of the shot. A scream rings out.

In another ingenious touch, one of Medusa's hands scrapes its fingernails noisily down the side of one of the pillars (a miniature). In long shot, the headless body slumps down, the tail snaking about behind it. She continues to struggle pathetically, her arms reaching out, her tail writhing desperately. It's a fitting image that this abhorrent creature doesn't die straight away.

Red goo oozes out of the open neck of the prostrate Gorgon, a gruesome effect achieved with a matte line down the edge of the now-stationary puppet. In a new and final long-shot static matte set-up, Perseus stands on the right holding Medusa's head while on the left the tail of the Gorgon, lying in a pool of red ooze, makes a last shudder.

There is little chance to unwind after this climactic encounter. The plot lunges straight into a nighttime battle with three giant scorpions and a final confrontation with Calibos. Out of context, these are fine scenes but — without any down-to-earth build-up preceding them — their impact is reduced: The jaded audience feels as though it has suffered a surfeit of fantasy.

The three models, each 18 inches long, are crafted with all the attention to detail and accuracy that one has come to

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expect of Harryhausen's designs. All the animation in this scene was done by Harryhausen. He had hoped that the scene could take place in bright daylight but the weather was against him on the day of live-action shooting, with the result that this is another of several scenes that are characterized by a flat visual tone. A few shots are marred by the lighting contrast between the studio-lit puppet and the live-action rear image.

The five-minute sequence contains 44 animation cuts, a total that includes three cutaways to reaction shots of Bubo, 19 shots of Calibos and 22 of the battling scorpions. There are several superb flourishes but on the whole this gratuitous set-piece, which could have rivaled the skeleton battle in *Jason*, lacks the dynamic pacing and choreography of that earlier sequence. For most of the scene there is no score and one can't help thinking how much Bernard Herrmann (who died in 1975) would have improved the level of excitement.

Perseus and his men sleep out at night, the head of Medusa hanging in a basket from a tree. Calibos appears and walks up to the bag. In this shot, the puppet's shirt is animated so that it appears to blow in the wind, a clever touch subliminally registered by viewers. Harryhausen could have saved himself some work by making this a medium shot and using McCarthy, but he wanted to show the character's tail snaking behind him.

Archer animated the next shot, in which Calibos stabs the Gorgon's head with the trident that now replaces his missing hand. In a long cut, three scorpions grow out of the blood which drips on the stony ground and grow in size. Presumably, in this static matte set-up,

Harryhausen gradually brought each puppet nearer to the camera as he animated them, giving the impression that they were getting larger (as he had done with the wasp in *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger*). Each one now the size of a horse, the scorpions wave their claws in the air threateningly. Looking on, Bubo's eyes pop open. He flaps his wings excitedly and his head spins round.

In long shot, Calibos steps across a miniature stony floor that is meticulously matched to the ground in the live-action plate. He cracks his whip and the prop Bubo falls off his perch into the river, waking Perseus and his men.

The three scorpions face the camera, their claws clacking and their stingers held aloft. They stand on a miniature floor, again carefully blended with the ground in the rear image. In a static matte design, one scorpion runs at Perseus and its claw knocks his sword flying, the contact effectively mimed by Hamlin. In the same cut, the other two scorpions run in from the left as the other soldiers run in from the right. In another long-shot static matte design, Perseus retreats as one of the scorpions advances on him.

Meanwhile, Calibos causes more confusion, cracking his whip and making the horses panic and flee. Harryhausen executes this tricky action convincingly, and as ever has the character's tail snaking from side to side, to remind us that this is no man in a costume.

One scorpion lunges and snaps at the camera, allowing a close look at the wealth of detail on it, especially the tiny bumps all over it. In a new long-shot static matte, Perseus faces off against the retreating scorpion, while in another

shot the two soldiers battle the other two creatures. There is lots of implied physical contact as sword meets pincer and a shadow appears to have been rear-projected under one scorpion.

Perseus continues fending off his scorpion, narrowly avoiding getting injured by the stinger. The puppet stands on a well-matched floor inlay that allows it to throw a shadow. In a dynamic close shot, the scorpion snaps its claws at the camera. The soldiers, in medium shots, hack and duck as the other two scorpions attack them.

In a live-action cut, Calibos' whip pulls one of the soldiers to the ground. In a chilling shot, one scorpion scuttles noisily over to the fallen man. Standing on a miniature floor, the creature drives its stinger into the soldier's chest. The miniature floor on this occasion is not so carefully matched to the live action, but the suggestion of physical contact of man and stinger is very convincing.

In a medium shot with no matte, the other soldier slashes at a scorpion and chops off one of its claws, which is wire-supported briefly as it falls. This is a macabre little touch that recalls the beheading of a skeleton in *Jason*. The soldier then plunges his sword down through the creature's head, forcing it into the ground. This is an enjoyably gruesome moment, with the scorpion letting out a scream and kicking its spindly legs desperately. Harryhausen's animation makes you believe you are watching a living creature in its death throes.

While Perseus battles on against his scorpion in two long-shot static matte shots, Calibos intervenes again. In a live-action cut, he cracks his whip, then is

seen in a long-shot static matte pulling on the whip which is now around the neck of the second soldier. In a superb moment of intimate physical contact, Calibos wraps one arm around the soldier's neck, then sticks his three-pronged blade into his back. Puppet and actor really seem to be in the same shot. In long shot, Calibos steps back, his tail swishing, and watches the soldier fall to the ground. Pleased with his work, he turns to face Perseus.

In two long shots, Perseus reaches up, grabs the scorpion's sting and cuts it off with his sword. In a new rear-screen set-up, he cuts off part of one claw (wire-supported for a few frames), then drives his sword down into the scorpion's head, just as the soldier had done earlier. At this point in the sequence, it is clear that either some animation was planned but never filmed, or else that the sequence wasn't properly thought through in pre-production, because we never find out what happened to the third scorpion. This may have been omitted to improve the pace but it makes the sequence seem confused and unfinished.

With the scorpions dispatched, the scene is set for a duel between Calibos and Perseus. In two medium shots, Calibos cracks his whip and sends Perseus' sword flying. Perseus dives to the ground to retrieve it and in two long-shot static matte set-ups, Calibos cracks his whip at the prostrate hero.

With careful precision, Calibos' whip is lined up with the rear image of Perseus so that it seems to be wrapped around his neck. Standing on a miniature rocky floor, Calibos pulls on the whip as Perseus resists, trying to reach his sword. Perseus manages to reach his

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sword and, to Calibos' surprise, hurls it straight at him. In a fine medium shot, the wire-supported miniature sword flies through the air and embeds itself in Calibos' stomach. There is a look of shock on the villain's face as he slumps forward, growling in pain.

Calibos, now on his knees on an expertly matched floor inlay, clutches his stomach, reels backwards, roars in pain, then slumps forward onto the ground, his tail snaking behind him. In his final shot, he lies on the ground, one arm and a leg making slight movements before he expires. Harryhausen animates his death scene with entertaining melodramatic finesse, but one wishes that the confrontation were not over so soon.

Those wishing that we had seen the last of Bubo now have their hopes dashed. He emerges from the river into which he had fallen and is seen in six animation cuts. The remote-controlled model is used for the shot in which he is actually in contact with water. The subsequent static matte shots were all animated by Archer, who conceived the humorous gestures of the character. The bleeping owl walks up to the prostrate Perseus and shakes his wings dry. Gurgling and flapping his wings, he receives instructions from Perseus to rescue Pegasus. Finally, he flexes each wing tentatively, checking that they still function.

The freeing of Pegasus is another scene that is only dramatically half-realized. Not enough has been made of the fact that Pegasus has been captured and so his release is less than thrilling. The idea that the tiny Bubo should be able to terrify the vulture into such a panic that it accidentally sets light to the swamp-men's lair is somewhat far-fetched. And

the sequence concludes without explaining what becomes of the vulture — are we meant to assume that it perished in the flames? There is a lot going on in these 23 animation cuts, but the audience's involvement is not engaged: it's another example of how more is less.

In a long shot of the swamp lair, the vulture is perched on a branch, shifting this way and that and cawing gently. The branch is part of the live-action and the puppet is carefully lined up with it. The small model of Bubo flies in from behind a tree, down the side of which runs a matte line. Archer animates the noisily clanking wings with convincing briskness.

The vulture model looks especially good in a shadowy medium shot in which its wrinkled face is lit up by the burning braziers. In a series of six rear-screen shots, Bubo flies around the lair, harassing the swamp-men. Avoiding the locked-off look of many such shots, Harryhausen had the camera pan across several of the live-action cuts. Bubo swoops this way and that, flying straight at the camera in one cut. In a reaction shot, the vulture actually seems to look startled, jerking its neck up.

In the same long-shot set-up that opened the sequence, Bubo flies over the head of the vulture, which ducks, screeches and flaps its wings agitatedly. Bubo continues harassing the vulture in several more cuts until the giant bird steps down off the branch onto a miniature floor (avoiding the need for a matte in this shot). Its wings spread, the vulture turns to avoid Bubo and knocks over one of the braziers — which is pulled over by unseen wires on the live-action set. Strutting around in a panic,

the vulture only manages to spread the fire further.

In an extreme long shot, the tiny Bubo model flies around the lair, heading for the cage that contains the live-action Pegasus. In a shot deftly animated by Archer, the owl flies down to the catch on the cage and releases it—the animation is timed to coincide with the catch being pulled by a wire on the live-action set.

In a beautiful long shot—one of the best in the film—the Pegasus puppet trots out of the cage, spreads its wings and neighs, relishing its freedom. The wings are picturesquely lit by the orange-green glow from the flames. In the final animation cut in the sequence, Bubo flaps through the smoke and flames, wheezing as he escapes.

At last, the pace settles down for a while as we return to Joppa to witness Andromeda being prepared for the sacrifice to the Kraken. An excellent matte shot depicts a train of soldiers leading her below the walls and towers of the city.

The finale, involving no fewer than four of the stop-motion characters, brings the plot full circle, as Poseidon once more releases the Kraken. Unfortunately, this long sequence (there are 69 animation cuts) simply isn't exciting. There is plenty going on but this is "action by numbers." The Kraken menaces Andromeda; Perseus, riding Pegasus, defends her; both Pegasus and Bubo are injured by the Kraken; and finally Perseus uses the Gorgon's head to destroy the sea beast. It could have been gripping stuff but is poorly directed and poorly paced. Cassiopeia, Ammon and a crowd of extras look on disinterestedly,

unable to contribute anything to the sequence.

A major reason for the scene's failure is the fact that the Kraken never looks like anything more than a rubber puppet. The sharpness of the studio lighting on the model contrasts with the more natural graininess of the live-action elements. The skyline behind the puppet is an unlikely orange color and conflicts with the blue sky that backs shots of Perseus riding Pegasus, further highlighting the fakery of the episode.

Seen in extreme long-shot, the Perseus puppet rides Pegasus through the air, blue-screened against a deep blue sky. A closer shot of Perseus in front of the animated wings again suffers from traces of blue spill, spoiling the effect.

Andromeda is manacled to a huge rock on the shore. Parts of this rock and another rocky pillar to the right are miniatures in a studio tank, meticulously matted in. One enormous reptilian hand reaches up from the far side of the rocks and grips them. This is followed by a second hand and then, with grim humor, a third and fourth. (Video viewers will not see the last hand.) The animation of the hands is less smooth than one has come to expect of Harryhausen. A huge splash of water is thrown up, a superimposed element that has been carefully matted so that it matches up with the outline of the rocks. The head and shoulders of the growling Kraken rise up behind the rocks.

There is another close shot of Perseus riding the prop horse, again spoiled by blue spill. In closeup, the Kraken opens its mouth and roars—but this angry gesture fails to divert attention away from the fact that this is an

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unconvincing puppet, with lifeless eyes. In several long shots using the matte design with the miniature rocks, the growling Kraken surveys the scene.

In extreme long shot, Bubo flaps across a cliff face. This is probably a blue-screen shot and is not marred by spill. In a shot animated by Danforth, the owl flies past a closeup of the Kraken, who roars at the creature. The force of the roar sends Bubo hurtling out of control and crashing into one of the cliffs. These shots use the large four-foot-high model of the Kraken (built only from the waist up) and Bubo is a separate blue-screen element. The shot of Bubo landing on the cliff face is probably a static matte design, rather than making use of a miniature rock face. In closeup, the Kraken looks down at the off-screen Bubo.

In the long-shot set-up again, the Kraken turns towards Andromeda and heads in her direction, causing another fountain of superimposed spray to be thrown up. The creature's animated tail rises up and follows behind it. The Kraken rises up near the rock to which Andromeda is manacled. Its arms grab the rocky pillars on either side of her. Intended to suggest an octopus' tentacles, these elbow-less limbs only serve to make the creature look even less believable. A forceful closeup of the four-foot model tilts up from the Kraken's stomach, glistening with gel, to its face.

In a long series of shots — a combination of medium shots, long shots and extreme long shots — the Kraken looks down at Andromeda, lowering itself into the water to get a closer view. It's almost as if Harryhausen isn't sure what to do with the character. At last, an animated

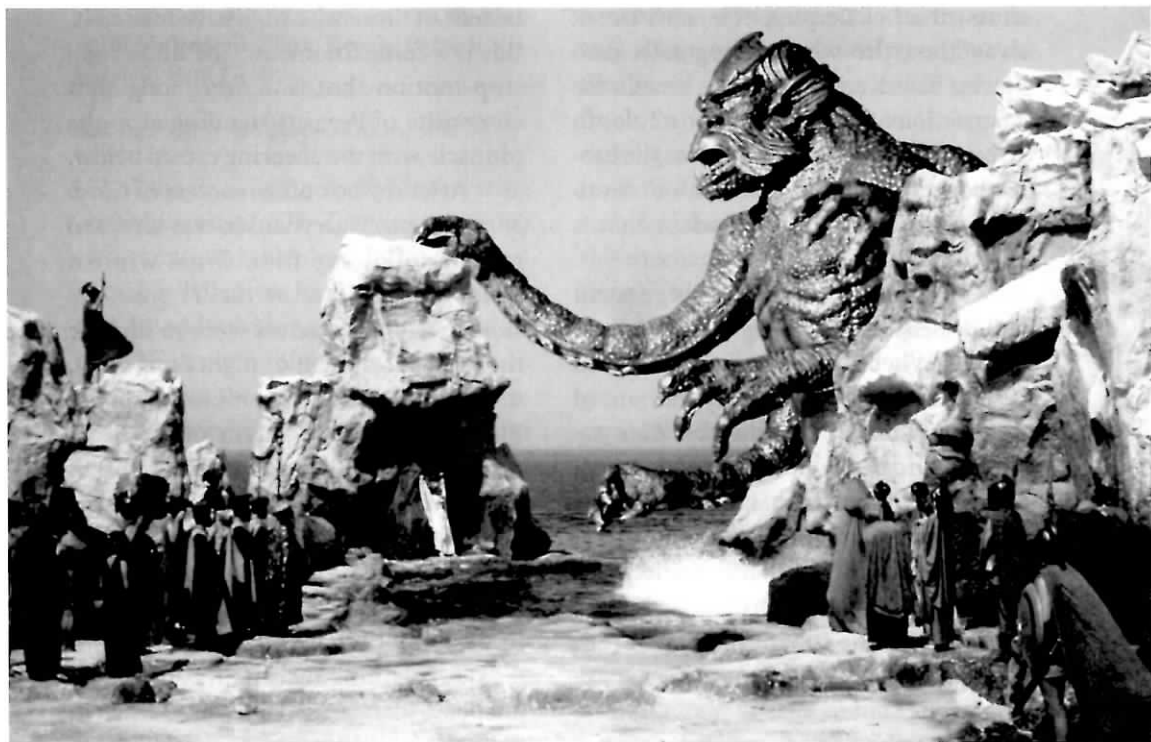
hand reaches out, passing in front of a rear projection of the terrified Andromeda.

Perseus gets ever nearer, sometimes seen in extreme long shots as a puppet on Pegasus and sometimes (in closer shots) blue-screened in front of the animated wings. In one of these, he starts untying the sack containing Medusa's head. In one impressive extreme long shot, the two puppets fly over the heads of a group of soldiers standing on top of a cliff. The animation of horse and rider is first class, as usual. The camera pans left to right, following them.

Perseus and Pegasus, presumably a separate blue-screen element, fly into the set-up in which the Kraken is looking down at Andromeda. The sea creature looks up at the intruders. In one medium shot of Perseus, he flies past the huge head of the Kraken, a shot that effectively gives an impression of the creature's size. One of the Kraken's claws reaches out and swipes at Pegasus, causing horse and rider to tumble into the sea. This convincingly animated cut required careful timing since Pegasus is a blue-screen element, and therefore it was not possible for Danforth to align the puppet and the Kraken's claw simply by looking through the camera (as would be done in a rear-screen shot).

Stop-motion artists usually try to avoid showing puppets in contact with water but Harryhausen carries it off beautifully in a shot where Pegasus hits the surface of the sea. A horizontal matte line runs across the water and a fountain of spray is superimposed to hide the actual impact.

In several closeups, the Kraken growls some more (why doesn't he get



The Kraken comes to claim Andromeda in *Clash of the Titans*.

on with it?) while Bubo revives on the cliff face, his head spinning around and doing a kind of double-take when he sees what's going on. Bubo takes to the air and there is a dramatic shot of the tiny owl flying past the Kraken's stomach, superimposed spray churning below. The shot appears to be made up of four elements: the rear-projected backdrop, the spray and the two puppets, animated separately.

In two consummate moments of interaction, the owl picks up the sack from the water (actually suspended on wires), then drops it into Perseus' hands. The Kraken looks on and in one cut his lip curls into a sneer. Hamlin mimes the action of holding the Gorgon's head out in front of him, with the puppet head

added in a rear-screen set-up. Its snake-hairs writhe and its eyes light up with an eerie energy.

In a low-angle medium shot, the growling Kraken draws back. Perseus continues to hold the Gorgon's head out in front of him. The Kraken starts to stiffen, backed by the sound of bones crunching. In long shot, the now-immobile Kraken changes to a stony gray color, an effect achieved by slowly dissolving to a gray plaster-of-Paris model.

Cracks start to appear on the Kraken's body. Archer achieved this by slowly revealing cracks in the plaster model that had been made earlier and obscured by painting over them. In a closer shot, cracks snake across the creature's head. In successful live-action

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shots, the brittle puppet's arms break away then the whole thing falls into pieces. The Kraken's demise recalls the destruction of the bronze statue Talos in *Jason*, but that sequence is by far the better conceived of the two. Talos' death had a quality of tragic grandeur that is absent here.

The glow in Medusa's eyes goes out and Perseus throws the head far out into the sea. Where it lands, the sea starts to churn and Pegasus suddenly flies out of the water and up into the sky. This exciting static matte uses the same design seen earlier when the stallion fell into the sea. In extreme long shot, the neighing beast flies around in a large circle.

Perseus frees Andromeda, looked on by Bubo, who coos as the pair start to get romantic. In three magnificent extreme long shots, Pegasus comes in for a landing at the top of one of the pinnacles of rock, his wings held up and back to maintain balance. In the lower part of these impressive composites, the crowd cheers him. He trots around in a circle, neighs and rears up, looking splendid. Bubo, in his final shot, gets over-excited by all this and falls off his perch on the cliff face (this is an all-miniature set-up). The camera tilts down with the puppet as it bounces off the rocks and falls onto its side. For the

benefit of those who may have missed it, this is a comic moment. The film's final stop-motion shot is another long-shot composite of Pegasus standing atop the pinnacle with the cheering crowd below.

After the box office success of *Clash of the Titans*, Harryhausen was all set to make a follow-up film. Cross wrote a script called *Force of the Trojans*. Its stop-motion characters were to include the Furies (a swarm of night creatures), the Sphinx ("a triple mutation from Phrygia"), Scylla ("Terror of the Sea") and the Four Horsemen of the Inferno. But Cross' writing here has the same lifelessness that marred *Clash*, so perhaps it is no great loss that the film was never made. Harryhausen, 61 at the time of the release of *Clash*, decided to call it a day, explaining that life was too short to spend years locked away in darkened animation studios. There was also a suspicion among fans that he felt that his style of filmmaking had had its day, superseded by the computer-aided wizardry of ILM and other effects companies that had sprung up since *Star Wars* in 1977.

Clash of the Titans has many magical moments but it is a disappointing farewell film from the man who has put some of the most exhilarating fantasy images of all time on the screen.

Class of 1999

1989. Original Pictures. Prod-D: Mark L. Lester. Scr: C. Courtney Joyner. Story: Mark L. Lester. Ph: Mark Irwin. Art: Steven

Legler. Mus: Michael Hoenig. Visual Effects Supervisor: Eric Allard. Special Effects Makeup: Rick Stratton.

The Stop-Motion Filmography

*A Critical Guide to 297 Features
Using Puppet Animation*

NEIL PETTIGREW

WITH A FOREWORD BY
Ray Harryhausen



McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers
Jefferson, North Carolina, and London

Frontispiece: *King Kong* (1933), conceived by Merian C. Cooper and brought to life by Willis O'Brien, is still the yardstick against which all stop-motion characters must be measured.

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