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| ***Zigomar*** |
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| *Zigomar* was the criminal mastermind of French writer Léon Sazie’s eponymous serial novel, or *feuilleton*, which appeared in the newspaper *Le Matin* between 1909 and 1910. It was in 1911, however, when *Zigomar* and his Z-gang shot to worldwide fame through a cinematic adaptation in six episodes by the Éclair Film Company and its leading director, Victorin-Hippolyte Jasset. Serial detective fiction was certainly not new at the time, Éclair and Jasset led the way in 1908 with the famous *Nick Carter* series and multiple adaptations and imitations of Sherlock Holmes that had flooded the screens for years, but the elevation of a criminal figure was still a very recent phenomenon – with Danish precursors such as *Dr. Nikola* (Viggo Larsen, 1909), *Zigomar* helped pave the way for classics such as Louis Feuillade’s *Fantômas* series (1913-1914). Abel argues that Jasset’s *Zigomar*, played by Alexandre Arquillière, strengthened Sazie’s by transforming him into an immoral bourgeois gentleman, ‘a capitalist entrepreneur pushed to the point of excess’ (Abel: 1998, 358). As such, *Zigomar* was one of the first modernist anti-heroes to grace the silver screen, an illustrious criminal who undermined bourgeois society by upsetting the social order and preying on its members – not coincidentally the cinema’s target audience. |
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| Further reading:  (Abel)  (Les Films en Sérié)  (Turconi) |