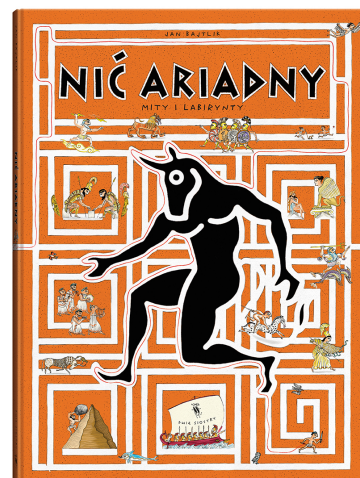


Jan Bajtlik

## Ariadne's Thread: Myths and Labyrinths [Nić Ariadny. Mity i Labirynty]

Poland (2018)

TAGS: [Gods](#) [Iliad](#) [Labyrinth](#) [Minotaur](#) [Monsters](#) [Odyssey](#)



Courtesy of the publisher.

General information	
<i>Title of the work</i>	Ariadne's Thread: Myths and Labyrinths [Nić Ariadny. Mity i Labirynty]
<i>Country of the First Edition</i>	Poland
<i>Country/countries of popularity</i>	Poland
<i>Original Language</i>	Polish
<i>First Edition Date</i>	2018
<i>First Edition Details</i>	Jan Bajtlik, <i>Nić Ariadny. Mity i Labirynty</i> [Ariadne's Thread: Myths and Labyrinths]. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Dwie Siostry, 2018, 72 pp.
<i>ISBN</i>	9788365341990
<i>Genre</i>	Nonfiction novels, Picture books, Wimmelbook*
<i>Target Audience</i>	Children (7+ (according to the publisher) )
<i>Author of the Entry</i>	Anna Mik, University of Warsaw, anna.m.mik@gmail.com
<i>Peer-reviewer of the Entry</i>	Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk

## Creators



### **Jan Bajtlik , b. 1989 (Author, Illustrator)**

Jan Bajtlik is one of the best known Polish illustrators. He graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. Besides illustrating children's books, he designed clothes patterns for Hermès, numerous posters, magazine covers and created graphics for advertisements. Bajtlik's non-fiction book *Alphadoodler* won Bologna Ragazzi Award in 2015.

Source:

[bajtlik.eu](http://bajtlik.eu) (accessed: July 19, 2019)

Bio prepared by Anna Mik, University of Warsaw,  
[anna.m.mik@gmail.com](mailto:anna.m.mik@gmail.com)

---

## Additional information

### Summary

Bajtlik's mythical catalogue consist of numerous depictions of the labyrinth in various configurations, each alluding to classical motifs and mythological stories. In the Introduction we read that ancient Greece was one of the most fascinating countries in the world whose culture and history influenced Europe and are admired to this day (Bajtlik, 2018: 5). Labyrinths drawn and described by Batjlik ought to lead the reader through this tradition, and teach them about ancient stories and customs. There is also an instruction how to use the book: find the only way out of each labyrinth, get to know Greek mythology in all details hidden on the pictures, and find explanatory glossary at the end of the book (assigned to each labyrinth).

On the next pages readers have the possibility to - literally - read the labyrinths: from the war between titans and gods, to various myths concerning, inter alia, Prometheus, Heracles, Minotaur, Trojan War and Odysseus's adventures - all the way through to ancient Greek history and customs. The last labyrinth represents ancient theatre, where viewers enjoy the spectacle, as supposedly readers are enjoying the book. On each page every single detail and phrase have a meaning - if not explained right away, this is, possibly, found at the end of the book.

At the end, as promised, the reader can find several pages with text alluding to each labyrinth, containing more detailed description of each story or phenomenon. As a whole, *Ariadne's Thread* is a collection of myths, designed for children as implied readers - but perfectly suitable also for an older audience.

### Analysis

The book is a postmodern variation of classical mythology and ancient tradition. Its labyrinths more accurately correspond to the concept of modern culture: complicated, varied, full of possibilities of interpretation. Jan Bajtlik, being both writer and illustrator, presents a coherent text, nevertheless full of entrances and misleading turns. At the same time, he gives the reader a tool to get through the labyrinth (which is the book itself): *Ariadne's Thread*, the glossary with clarifications, concerning each story/labyrinth. This strategy may allude to the ancient belief that in the center of a labyrinth awaits not a scary monster, but knowledge, that everyone should peruse. In this case, the



knowledge would be the glossary at the end of the book that the reader might find after going through the maze.

It is also interesting that exploration of Greek Myth – Minotaur's maze – is focused not on an evil monster waiting in its centre, but on woman's tool vital in survival – Ariadne's thread, a symbol of wisdom. In this non-fiction book the author points to the fact that in Greek mythology not a single story is simple, there is no one version of a myth, and a lot depends on readers' interpretation. Bajtlik, on one hand, gives such a possibility by letting a child into a maze of each story, on the other – he seems to attempt organizing gained knowledge by adding the glossary. It also seems vital that his illustrations correspond to the text flawlessly, as he is the author of both. As a non-fiction book is informative, at the same time, it poses to be a traditional *Wimmelbuch*, with multiple doodles and drawings, that imitates chaos that contains a cosmic order of Greek mythology.

---

Classical, Mythological,  
Traditional Motifs,  
Characters, and  
Concepts

[Gods](#) [Iliad](#) [Labyrinth](#) [Minotaur](#) [Monsters](#) [Odyssey](#)

---

Other Motifs, Figures,  
and Concepts Relevant  
for Children and Youth  
Culture

[Adventure](#) [Humanity](#) [Tradition](#) [Travel](#) [Treasure-hunting](#)

---

Further Reading

Cianciolo, Patricia J., *Informational Picture Books for Children*, Chicago: American Library Association, 2000.

Kurwinkel, Tobias, *Bilderbuchanalyse: Narrativik – Ästhetik – Didaktik*, Tübingen: UTB, 2017.

Sanders, Joe Sutliff, *A Literature of Questions: Non-fiction for the Critical Child*, Minneapolis, MN: University Minnesota Press, 2018.

---



Anna Mik, "Entry on: Ariadne's Thread: Myths and Labyrinths [Nić Ariadny. Mity i Labirynty] by Jan Bajtlik", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska and Susan Deacy. *Our Mythical Childhood Survey* (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: <http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/801>. Entry version as of December 03, 2024.

---

---



European Research Council  
Established by the European Commission

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood... The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.