

Abstracts of the presentations at the conference Child-friendly “Explorations of the Myth”. Modern Reception Strategies from Adaptation to Transformation, Faculty of Philological and Cultural Studies, University of Vienna, November 13, 2020

The following members of the Our Mythical Childhood team from the Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, University of Warsaw, held their presentations:

Angelina Gerus

Paideia of Diogenes – Live Like a Dog to Become a Human

Diogenes the Dog-Man (Diogène l'Homme Chien, 2011) by Yan Marchand stands as an entertaining doxographical primer, which introduces Diogenes of Sinope to young readers of the 21st century. However, this time famous anecdotes from his life are subject to different modifications being gathered in a short story about young Hellenes called Androsthène. With a view to sketch the main mechanisms of classical reception within the stereographic space of the text, Roland Barthes’s five narrative codes were chosen as the method. Mapping these semiotic changes makes it noticeable how propitious the figure of the Cynic is for tracing ideological shifts from Antiquity up to the present day and that Diogenes still delivers us relevant and effective survival instructions.

Karolina Anna Kulpa

Playing with Cleopatra: About the Image of Egyptian Queen in the Products for Children and Young Adults

In my presentation, on the example of the image of Cleopatra VIII, would like to show why it is worthwhile in classical reception studies to undertake scientific reflection on apparently “ordinary objects” of everyday life. I will point out how the Queen was transferred from a historical figure to a pop culture icon, including being part of contemporary children and youth culture. Pop culture has reduced features of Cleopatra’s image to easily identifiable, the stereotypical character which then became a product for sale, also for the youngest consumers. I will present a few case studies of the use of various views of Queens's representations in products for children and young adults including figurines, dolls, costumes, board and video games, school supplies, etc. Of course, all the works mentioned in my presentation, e.g. Playmobil sets, Lego Minifigures, Barbie and Cleo de Nile dolls) require further analysis. Therefore, in the final part of my presentation, I will indicate the methodological challenges faced by a researcher of the reception of antiquity dealing with recent products for children and young people.



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Anna Mik

Classical Mythology in a Polish Bestiary: The Example of Michał Rusinek's *The Book of Monsters*

In the presentation, I invite you to look at a contemporary Polish bestiary for children: *Księga potworów* [The Book of Monsters], written by Michał Rusinek and illustrated by Daniel de Latour. The book was published in 2016 in Warsaw. It contains short poems about various monsters from different traditions. On the one hand, we can find Nibelung from Richard's Wagner opera. On the other hand, there is an entry on Utopiec, a Slavic water monster, a very nice guy who can drown you. Nonetheless, the monsters that interest me most are those coming from classical mythology. In the presentation, I take a closer look at them to show how they transformed since antiquity and what function they have today.

Marta Pszczolińska

Learning through Fun - Classical Antiquity in *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek* Comic Book Series

The series *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek* is largely enjoyed by children and has been popular with generations of Polish readers since it was first printed in 1957 in a magazine "Świat Młodych". Since 1966, the author, Henryk Jerzy Chmielewski, published the series in the form of independent booklets. The comics are about two boys and a chimpanzee, Tytus, whose intellect they are turning into that of a human being. Their adventures feature many educational elements as the characters learn about the world and yet they are still incredibly witty and entertaining. Classical antiquity presented in the series is contained in booklet VI, where the reader learns about the Olympic games, booklet XV, where a motif of the city of Atlantis appears, and booklet XIX, where the development of theatre and performances is described, including Greek and Roman spectacles. The presentation shows how information about important phenomena of ancient culture can be successfully incorporated into a children's comic book in order to teach effortlessly while providing fun.



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