, "Entry on: History of the Greeks by ", peer-reviewed by , . Our Mythical Childhood Education (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2026). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/education-survey/item/81.

History of the Greeks

(1959)

TAGS:

General information	
Title of the work	Storia dei Greci
Title of the work in english	History of the Greeks
Year of publication	1959
Publisher	Rizzoli
Original language	Italian
Target and Age Group	General Public

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.

Additional information

Contents & Purpose

SUMMARY
The book is a historical essay about Ancient Greeks. In contrast to the *History of Rome* by the same author, the narrative does not follow a strict chronological order. In fact, despite the overall chronological setting, the author follows a rather idiosyncratic approach in his presentation of the history of the Greeks. In the book, the reader finds legendary figures, such as Minos and Homer, as well as historical figures of ancient poets, like Aristophanes, philosophers, such as Heraclitus, but also rather later figures, like Heinrich Schliemann.

The book contains fifty-three chapters overall, divided into five parts:
PART ONE: BETWEEN HISTORY AND LEGEND
PART TWO: THE ORIGINS
PART THREE. THE AGE OF PERICLES
PART FOUR. THE END OF AN ERA
PART FIVE. HELLENISM
(my translation from Italian).

Each chapter opens with a foreword addressed "*To the readers*" including the author's "*poetic statement*." In the end, there is a final chronology.

Each chapter is based on one character or event, either mythological or historical, treated in an informative and popular manner, accessible to readers of any age, including children.

Further comments

History of the Greeks differs from *History of Rome* of the same author, as Montanelli himself states in the foreword.:
"*L'ho chiamata Storia dei Greci perché, a differenza di quella di Roma, è una storia di uomini, più che una storia di popolo, di nazione, o di stato*."
My translation: "*I called it History of the Greeks because, unlike the one of Rome, it is a history of men rather than history of a people, nation, or state*."

In fact, the narrative strand of the book runs alongside the history of the making of a people: the Greeks. This is the reason why, for example, in Part One a chapter is dedicated to a legendary Cretan king Minos, another to the poet Homer, and another to a historical

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figure, the archeologist, Schliemann. The reason for such a mixed bag is to be found in the contribution each figure made to the development not only of Greek culture, but also to the meaning and role of this culture in the popular modern imagination.

Another statement of the author indicates the strength of the book, as well as its limitation:
"*In questo libro i poeti e i filosofi contano più dei legislatori e dei condottieri: il solco lasciato da Socrate e da Sofocle mi sembra più profondo di quello che lasciarono Temistocle ed Epaminonda*."
My translation:
"*In this book poets and philosophers count for more than legislators and commanders: it seems to me that Socrates and Sophocles left a deeper impression than Themistocles and Epaminondas*."

Following this reasoning, on one hand the author devotes space to figures who do not usually appear in a historic essay, depicting the Greeks as an attractive and vital people composed of characters, thoughts and personalities rather than facts and figures. But at the same time, this statement shows that the book does not primarily aim for historical accuracy; it neglects pivotal historical figures, as well as crucial wars and political events.

Nevertheless, *History of the Greeks* faithfully drafts the footprint of a people and the impression that it left in our imagination, which was, after all, exactly the main goal announced by the author in the foreword to the book:
"*La mia ambizione è stata quella di fornire ai lettori un mezzo per riavvicinarsi senza fatica e soprattutto senza noia agli antichi greci*."
My translation:
"*My ambition has been to provide readers with a means to draw closer to the ancient Greeks, without effort and above all without boredom*."

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