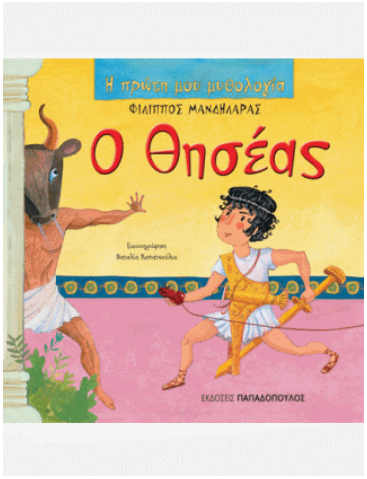
Natalia Kapatsoulia , Filippos Mandilaras

Theseus [Ο Θησέας (O Thīséas)]

Greece (2008)

TAGS: Aegeus Aethra Ariadne Athens Crete Marathon Midas Periphetes Procrustes Sciron Sinis Sounion Troezen



Courtesy of the Publisher. Retrieved from epbooks.gr (accessed: July 5, 2022).

General information	
Title of the work	Theseus [Ο Θησέας (O Thīséas)]
Country of the First Edition	Greece
Country/countries of popularity	Greece, UK, USA, Australia
Original Language	Greek
First Edition Date	2008
First Edition Details	Filippos Mandilaras, *Ο Θησέας* [O Thīséas]. My First Mythology [Η Πρώτη μου Μυθολογία (Ī prṓtī mou Mythología)] (Series), Athens: Papadopoulos Publishing, 2008, 16 pp.
ISBN	9789604128846
Available Onllne	Demo of 10 pages available at epbooks.gr (accessed: October 11, 2021).
Genre	Instructional and educational works, Myths
Target Audience	Children (4+)
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Creators



Natalia Kapatsoulia (Illustrator)

Natalia Kapatsoulia studied French Literature in Athens, and she worked as a language tutor before embarking on a career as a full-time illustrator of children's books. Kapatsoulia has authored one picture book *Η Μαμά πετάει* [Mom Wants to Fly], which has been translated into Spanish *Mamá quiere volar*. Kapatsoulia, who now lives on the island of Kefalonia, Greece, has collaborated with Filippos Mandilaras on multiple book projects.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: July 2, 2018).

Profile at the epbooks.gr (accessed: July 2, 2018).

Bio prepared by Katerina Volioti, University of Roehampton, Katerina.Volioti@roehampton.ac.uk



Filippos Mandilaras , b. 1965 (Author)

Filippos Mandilaras is a prolific and well-known writer of children's illustrated books and of young adults' novels. Mandilaras studied French Literature in Sorbonne, Paris. His latest novel, which was published in May 2016, is entitled *Υπέροχος Κόσμος* [Wonderful World], and it recounts the story of teenage life in a deprived Athenian district. With his illustrated books, Mandilaras aims to encourage parents and teachers to improvise by adding words when reading stories to children. Mandilaras is interested in the anthropology of

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extraordinary creatures and his forthcoming work is about Modern Greek Mythologies.

Sources:

In Greek:

Profile on EP Books' website (accessed: June 27, 2018).

i-read.i-teen.gr (accessed: June 27, 2018).

Public Blog, published 15 September 2015 (accessed: June 27, 2018).

Press Publica, published 28 January 2017 (accessed: June 27, 2018).

Linkedin.com, published published 6 May 2016 (accessed: February 6, 2019).

In English:

Amazon.com (accessed: June 27, 2018).

On Mandoulides' website, published 7 March 2017 (accessed: June 27, 2018).

In German:

literaturfestival.com (accessed: June 27, 2018).

Bio prepared by Katerina Volioti, University of Roehampton, Katerina.Volioti@roehampton.ac.uk

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Additional information

Translation

English: *Theseus and the Minotaur*, trans. Vasiliki Misiou, Faros Books, 2019, 36 pp.

Summary

This book aims to educate young learners about Theseus, presenting episodes from Theseus' life in a compact and entertaining manner. The textual and visual narrative starts with Theseus' parents, Aegeus and Aethra, and ends with the hero's long rule as a wise king of Athens. The plot unfolds like a fairy tale, appropriate for a story about the four kings mentioned: Aegeus, Theseus, Pittheus, and Minos.

There is constant action, and we move on swiftly from one event to another. Aegeus leaves the pregnant Aethra to return to Athens. Theseus is a strong young boy who recovers his father's sword and sandals from underneath a rock, kisses his mother goodbye, and sets off to meet his father. On his way, he uses his club and sword to overpower the robbers Periphetes, Sinis, Procrustes, and Sciron. When Theseus reaches Athens, a woman tells him about the calamities that have fallen upon the Athenians. King Minos has arrived from Crete to take away seven young girls and boys. In addition, a wild boar is ravaging at Marathon. Theseus thinks for a moment and decides to act. He captures the wild boar and sacrifices the animal to his father, who recognises Theseus. Next, the hero sails for Crete to "cut down the Minotaur's appetite." At the labyrinth, which Mandilaras first describes accurately, as a prison, Theseus meets Ariadne. To help him get out alive, she gives him a thread.

Here we have suspense in the narrative. Inside the labyrinth, Theseus can not hear a thing for quite some time. Then, suddenly, the Minotaur, whom we see when we turn the page, appears before Theseus. No violence is shown in the illustration, although the text refers to a close fight between Theseus and the Minotaur "μέχρι που βρήκε στόχο το σπαθί" [until the sword finds its target] and the Minotaur "τον κόσμο χαιρετάει" [says goodbye to the world].

Theseus sails back but forgets to change the sail from black to white. At Sounion, King Aegeus sees the black sail and, in despair, falls into the deep sea. The illustration shows Aegeus looking at the sea rather than falling into it. Again, given the target audience's young age,

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death is not shown. On the last page, we read that Theseus mourned for his father and gave his father's name to the sea. There is no explicit mention of the Aegean Sea. The story ends with King Theseus ruling Athens and making the city renowned to the world.

Analysis

The textual and visual narrative blends past and present entities to offer an entertaining account that is also of interest to adults.

In Mandilaras' language, colloquial and straightforward expressions abound, such as "πέρα ως πέρα" ("completely") for how much king Aegeus loved the king's daughter at Troezen. Much of the narrative appears in verses that rhyme and these facilitate memorisation. Some text is indirect speech, inside bubbles that recall comic books. Such bubbles would be familiar to children from contemporary popular culture, including text messages on smartphones and iPads. The author gives many names for mythical characters: Aegeus, Aethra, Pittheus, Periphetes, Sinis, Procrustes, Sciron, Minos, and Ariadne. The list of geographical locations is also long: Troezen, Athens, Crete, Marathon, and Sounion. Learning all these names could be a challenge for four-year-olds. However, what helps here is the presence of red arrows linking the names, especially for the robbers, with the illustrated figures. The content and style of writing are modern and accessible, and there are no references to Greek culture and identity (ancient or modern). Nevertheless, some traditional elements are evident. We read, for example, that Aegeus married Aethra and then her tummy expanded. Children may think of a husband and wife rather than a boyfriend-girlfriend relationship.

There is something playful in Kapatsoulia's illustrations. All figures, including the villains, have red cheeks that make them look like dolls. Most characters, including Theseus, have black hair, resembling modern south Mediterranean people. Some youths in Theseus' boat to Crete have brown, red, and blond hair, suggestive of individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds and/or tourists to Greece.

Although the pages are not numbered, the contrasting backgrounds of consecutive pages or sets of pages give the impression that the story progresses in time and space. The book's three interiors of grand buildings denote palaces. Wall frescoes showing plants and dolphins allude to a Mycenaean and Minoan past, also known from frescoes on houses excavated at Akrotiri, Thera. White columns point to Classical

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antiquity. Neither the frescoes nor the columns, however, are accurate depictions of archaeological evidence. Theseus, who remains young and boyish throughout, except for the last page, wears a lion's skin as if he were Hercules.

The action happens mostly outdoors, in landscapes and seascapes. Drawings of the countryside are denoted by pale colours and feature depictions of animals, such as a turtle, snake, dog, cat, and a multitude of birds. In all likelihood, these animals are familiar to children from other stories unrelated to Greek mythology. Domestic animals are also present, reflecting what young children love. We see a puppet by a young girl that Theseus meets when he arrives in Athens. On the last page, a smiley cat appears under Theseus' throne. The cat plays with red thread originating from Theseus' garment. These visual details tell another story, in addition to that of the text.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Aegeus Aethra Ariadne Athens Crete Marathon Midas Periphetes Procrustes Sciron Sinis Sounion Troezen
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Heroism Parents (and children)

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