Summary: Joanna Kozioł, Analysis: Marta Pszczolińska, "Entry on: Odysseus' Adventures [Przygody Odyseusza] by Jan Parandowski ", peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1171. Entry version as of October 30, 2026.

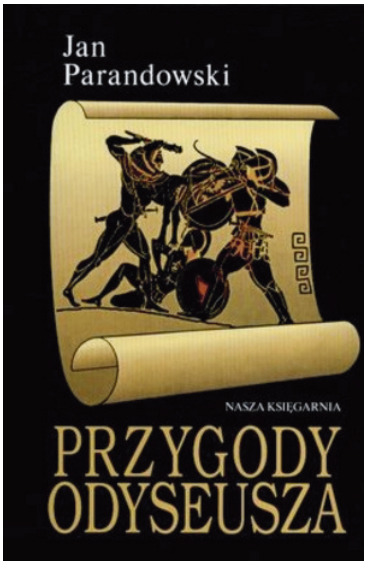
Jan Parandowski

Odysseus' Adventures [Przygody Odyseusza]

Poland (1935)

TAGS: Aeolus Athena Charybdis Circe Cyclops / Cyclopes Helen Hermes Homer Ithaca Menelaus Odysseus / Ulysses Odyssey Poseidon Sirens Telemachus Tiresias Trojan War





Cover from the edition Warsaw: Nasza Księgarnia, 2011, 120 pp. Scan of the cover kindly provided by Nasza Księgarnia.

General information	
Title of the work	Odysseus' Adventures [Przygody Odyseusza]
Country of the First Edition	Poland
Country/countries of popularity	Poland
Original Language	Polish
First Edition Date	1935
First Edition Details	Jan Parandowski, *Przygody Odyseusza: według Odysei Homera opowiedział dla młodzieży Jan Parandowski*. Lwów: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Książek Szkolnych, [s.a., c. 1935], 102 pp.
ISBN	Not applicable for the ed. pr.
Genre	Adaptation of classical texts*
Target Audience	Crossover (Children, teenagers)
Author of the Entry	Summary: Joanna Kozioł, University of Warsaw, joasia7777@interia.pl Analysis: Marta Pszczolińska, University of Warsaw, m.pszczolinska@al.uw.edu.pl

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Creators



Photograph by Edward Hartwig, retrieved from the National Digital Archives.

Jan Parandowski , 1895 - 1978
(Author)

Classical philologist and archaeologist. An outstanding and prolific author of books related to Antiquity; translator of classical masterpieces. Contributed to many Polish newspapers and magazines. Chairman of the Polish PEN Club from 1933 to 1978. Recipient of prizes for outstanding literary achievements, such as a bronze medal received at the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympics for his book *Dysk olimpijski* [Olympic Discus]. Member of the European Society of Culture. In 1962 he was elected Vice-President of the International PEN. An exceptionally successful supporter and advocate of Classical Antiquity in Poland. His *Mitologia. Wierzenia i podania Greków i Rzymian* [Mythology. Beliefs and Legends of the Greeks and Romans], still often read even in primary school, remains for many generations of Polish readers a fundamental source of the knowledge of ancient myths.

Major works: *Eros na Olimpie* [Eros on the Olympus], 1924, *Mitologia. Wierzenia i podania Greków i Rzymian* [Mythology. Beliefs and Legends of the Greeks and Romans], 1924; *Wojna trojańska* [Trojan War], 1927; Oscar Wilde's biography *Król życia* [A King of Life], 1930; *Dysk olimpijski* [Olympic Discus], 1933; *Niebo w płomieniach* [Heaven in Flames], 1936; *Trzy znaki zodiaku* [Three Signs of the Zodiac], 1938; *Godzina śródziemnomorska* [The Mediterranean Hour], 1949; a study on creative writing *Alchemia słowa* [Alchemy of the Word], 1951. He also translated into Polish Caesar's *Civil War*, 1951, and Homer's *Odyssey*, 1953.

Sources:

Krełowska, Danuta, *Jan Parandowski: życie i twórczość*, Toruń: Wojewódzka Biblioteka Publiczna i Książnica Miejska im. M. Kopernika, 1989.

Paciorkowska, Monika, *Jan Parandowski*, slideshare.net (accessed: December 30, 2020).

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"Parandowski Jan", in Jadwiga Czachowska and Alicja Szałagan, eds., *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury. Słownik biobibliograficzny, vol. 6: N–P*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1999, 254–260.

"Parandowski, Jan", in *Encyklopedia PWN*, encyklopedia.pwn.pl (accessed: December 30, 2020).

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Życiorys Jana Parandowskiego, kul.pl (accessed: December 30, 2020).

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Additional information

Summary

Based on: Katarzyna Marciniak, Elżbieta Olechowska, Joanna Kłos, Michał Kucharski (eds.), *Polish Literature for Children & Young Adults Inspired by Classical Antiquity: A Catalogue*, Faculty of "Artes Liberales", Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2013, 444 pp.

The adaptation covers the events in the Odyssey. The sequence of chapters corresponds to the Odyssey as follows:

Odysseus' Adventures — *Odyssey*

Chapter one — book IX
Chapter two — book X
Chapter three — books XI–XXII
Chapter four — book XXII
Chapter five — books I–IV
Chapter six — books V–VIII
Chapter seven — books VI-VIII
Chapter eight — books XIII–XVII
Chapter nine — books XIX–XXII
Chapter ten — books XXIII–XXIV

The book contains many extensive quotations from the *Odyssey* in Lucjan Siemieński's translation.

Analysis

Parandowski's adaptation is a quick review of the myth of Odysseus's return from Troy, according to Homer, and was prepared for young readers to acquaint them with the story without having to read the entirety of *Odyssey*. As the title is: *Odysseus' Adventures*, the book does not start with Telemachus' Peloponnesian journey, though this story is briefly presented in chapter five: *A House without a Master*. Parandowski then manipulates the sequence of particular adventures and foregoes Homeric delays to obtain a more cohesive, linear narration adjusted to young readers. The Homeric diegetic world's complexity is not preserved because this adaptation is a compact version of the myth, in which drastic or "immoral" details are softened or removed. For example, Circe kneels before Odysseus, having been threatened by his sword, takes her spell off, and everybody feasts for the whole year – there is no mention about her inviting the hero to her alcove to confirm their union and new bond. Similarly, Parandowski

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"spares" the serving girls' lives on Ithaca, who were consorting with the suitors. When the suitors are dead, Odysseus orders the maidens to take out the dead bodies and clean up the place, exactly as Homer described, but then he tells them that he will deal with them later without explaining what the "dealing with" would entail.

Another adjustment is of a linguistic and stylistic nature, as the author includes lively dialogues to make the impression of dynamic action. However, the language retains some archaic vocabulary or syntactic elements imitating old-fashioned literature, although long and complex Homeric comparisons are absent. It is worth mentioning that out of respect for Homer and to show samples of the original text, Parandowski quotes the *Odyssey*, first, in a historical 19th century poetical translation by Siemieński. In later editions, he uses his own, prosaic one, better suited to the contemporary reader and considered the best Polish translation. This strategy familiarizes the child with Homer's narrative style and can influence readers to reach for the original in the future.

In later editions the illustrations based on John Flaxman's drawings (see here, accessed: January 21, 2021) were replaced with the illustrations prepared by Parandowski's son Zbigniew, resembling ancient Greek pottery style.

For many years, *Odysseus' Adventures* was compulsory reading in school curricula for the 5th grade of elementary school, i.e., for 11-year-old children. Even though it is currently optional, it remains a valuable *Odyssey*'s epitome for young readers, still reprinted and widely read.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Aeolus Athena Charybdis Circe Cyclops / Cyclopes Helen Hermes Homer Ithaca Menelaus Odysseus / Ulysses Odyssey Poseidon Sirens Telemachus Tiresias Trojan War
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Adversity Conflict Death Emotions Family Heritage Heroism Homesickness Journeys Loss Love Magic Magic powers Prediction/prophecy Punishment Survival Travel Violence War Witch

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Further Reading

Homer, *Iliada*, trans. by Kazimiera Jeżewska, introd. by Jerzy Łanowski, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1986.

Homer, *Iliada (wybór)*, trans. by Franciszek Ksawery Dmochowski, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1985.

Homer, *Odyseja*, trans. by Jan Parandowski, Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1953.

Homer, *The Odyssey with an English Translation by A.T. Murray, PH.D. in two volumes*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1919. Avaliable online:

1. Greek: perseus.tufts.edu (accessed: January 21, 2021).
2. English: perseus.tufts.edu (accessed: January 21, 2021).

"Jan Parandowski", in: *Nowa Encyklopedia Powszechna, vol. 4: M–P*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1996, 775.

Selected bibliography concerning Jan Parandowski's work and life see here.

Addenda

Editio princeps: illustrator unknown, illustrations based on drawings by John Flaxman (see here, accessed: January 21, 2021);

Later editions: ill. Zbigniew Parandowski.

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