Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Helen of Troy by Ann Poeschel", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1202. Entry version as of November 11, 2026.

Ann Poeschel

Helen of Troy

United States of America (2019)

TAGS: Aphrodite Helen Paris (Trojan Prince) Sparta Trojan War





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Helen of Troy
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2019
First Edition Details	Ann Poeschel, *Helen of Troy*, "Women of Mythology: Goddesses, Warriors, and Hunters". Cavendish Square, New York, 2019, 32 pp.
ISBN	9781502651327 (paperback)
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Children (7–8 years)
Author of the Entry	Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@biu.ac.il
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Lisa Maurice, Bar-Ilan University, lisa.maurice@biu.ac.il Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk

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.

Creators



Ann Poeschel (Author)

From the book's *Helen of Troy* cover:

Ann Poeschel is an American author from Kansas. She holds a BA in English from the University of Kansas and a MA in publishing from Edinburgh Napier University. She is also a volunteer reading coach.

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Additional information

Summary

This book summarizes the life of Helen of Troy and her part in the Trojan War, adapted for young readers, by using clear language. The book briefly recounts Helen's parentage, the judgment of Paris, Helen's abduction and the Trojan Horse.

The book also includes a glossary, index and a short recommended reading section and websites. While the book focuses on Helen, it also provides information on the *Iliad*, Greek myths in general, life in Sparta, the role of women in ancient Greece (Sparta and the other city-states) and the reception of Helen in Sparta and today. There is also a brief account of a parallel story from Indian mythology, in which Rama's wife, the goddess Sita, was kidnapped by the evil god Ravana until she was saved and reunited with Rama.

The text is accompanied by photographs of locations and stock photos from various sites, such as Getty images, Shutterstock and more.

Analysis

Even though the book is aimed at young readers, it succeeds in providing a complete setting for Helen's story by providing relevant information on ancient Greek society. It is duly noted that the Trojan War "united Greece" (p. 10), an important historical observation that is often omitted from children's books. Thucydides made this statement in the 5th century BCE in his Peloponnesian War (in the book's opening section). The author also includes information on the Spartan way of life and even a note on the Spartan Cynisca who won the Olympic games twice.

As brief as the text may be, the author strives to show that Helen was not just beautiful, although her beauty was widely known and recognized. She emphasizes her bravery often and writes, "Spartans liked strong women. They thought Helen had been strong and beautiful. They thought she was brave too because she stayed strong even after Paris kidnapped her" (p. 19). Even though the author mentions that some stories tell that Aphrodite made Paris and Helen fall in love, she emphasizes the fact that Helen was kidnapped by Paris and did not leave her husband willingly. Hence, in a way, she tries to exonerate Helen’s reputation as a seductive femme fatale.

The author narrates how the image of Helen continues to be

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presented in and literature and even on TV (for example in DC's *Legends of Tomorrow* series from 2017 and the movie *Troy* from 2004).

The author claims that young people can look up to Helen today because she was a powerful woman and not just beautiful. We might sense here a more feminist agenda by the author.

The addition of the Indian story elucidates how a similar myth was narrated in different cultures. The examples from modern adaptions are significant in bridging the gap between the old myths and Greek society and the world of the modern readers. They make the myths as well as their mythological characters appear universal and relevant.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Aphrodite Helen Paris (Trojan Prince) Sparta Trojan War
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Appearances Femininity Heroism War

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