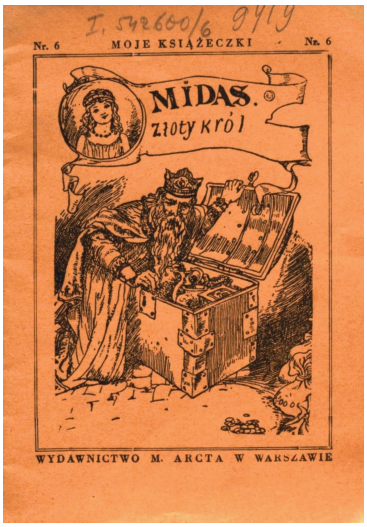
Summary, Analysis: Hanna Paulouskaya, "Entry on: Midas. A Golden King [Midas. Złoty król] by Maria Buyno-Arctowa [Jagmin, Ciocia Mania, J. Brzostek] ", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska and Katarzyna Marciniak. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2022). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1483. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Maria Buyno-Arctowa [Jagmin, Ciocia Mania, J. Brzostek]

Midas. A Golden King [Midas. Złoty król]

Poland (1931)

TAGS: Dionysus / Dionysos Midas



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General information	
Title of the work	Midas. A Golden King [Midas. Złoty król]
Country of the First Edition	Poland
Country/countries of popularity	Poland
Original Language	Polish
First Edition Date	1931
First Edition Details	Jagmin, *Midas. Złoty król* [Midas. A Golden King], "Moje Książeczki" 6. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo M. Arcta, 1931, 17 pp.
ISBN	Not applicable
Genre	Adaptations, Myths

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Target Audience	Children (5–15)
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Creators



Maria Buyno-Arctowa, circa 1929, in Michał Arct, *Jak powstaje książka*, Warszawa: M. Arct, 1929, 66. Public domain. Source: Polona (accessed: August 1, 2022).

Maria Buyno-Arctowa [Jagmin, Ciocia Mania, J. Brzostek] , 1877 - 1952
(Author)

Author of more than 80 books for children and young readers, e.g. *Kocia mama i jej przygody* [Cat Lover and Her Adventures], 1905; *Słoneczko* [The Little Sun], 1920; *Dziecko morza* [Child of the Sea], 1937; especially popular in the period between WW1 and WW2. She married into a family of publishers specializing in children's literature; she worked at her husband's publishing house as director of the children's section. From 1902 to 1936, she contributed to the children's magazine "Moje pisemko" as editor-in-chief and author using various pseudonyms, e.g., Jagmin, Ciocia Mania, J. Brzostek.

Sources:

"Arctowie", in Julian Krzyżanowski and Czesław Hernas, eds., *Literatura polska. Przewodnik encyklopedyczny, vol. 1: A–M*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1984, 29.

"Buyno-Arctowa Maria," in Julian Krzyżanowski and Czesław Hernas, eds., *Literatura polska. Przewodnik encyklopedyczny, vol. 1: A–M*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1984, 124.

Szałagan, Alicja, "Buyno-Arctowa Maria," in Jadwiga Czachowska and Alicja Szałagan, eds., *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury. Słownik biobibliograficzny, vol. 1: A–B*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1994, 361–364.

Bio prepared by Adam Ciołek, University of Warsaw, adamciolek@student.uw.edu.pl

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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.

King Midas loves only two things: gold and his daughter, Złotuszka [Goldie]. He collects as much gold as he can for his daughter. One day while counting the money in the treasury, Midas meets a young man who offers to fulfil one of his wishes. Midas wishes that everything he touches transforms into gold. The following day, the king wakes up and realizes that his wish was granted. He changes many objects into gold but also experiences some problems: his glasses turn into gold, as does a handkerchief made for him by his daughter; despite these unexpected difficulties, he remains happy. However, his happiness ends when Midas realizes that he cannot eat or drink because food also turns into gold. In despair, the king, forgetting about his "gift," kisses his beloved daughter, and she becomes a golden statue. Then, the young man reappears and, after a short dialogue during which Midas is brought to realize the consequences of his greed, the man tells Midas to bathe in the river – its waters will remove the "gift."

Analysis

The author uses the name of a mythical character and the theme of a mythical story, but there is no direct reference to Antiquity (the story happens in a rather vague fairy-tale setting; lifestyle and conditions seem closer to modern times, e.g., Midas wears glasses). Myth is used to demonstrate the consequences of greed. There is no mention of Dionysus; the miraculous power is granted by a "young man" who appears out of nowhere and first fulfils Midas' wish and then tells him how to get rid of it by washing in a nearby (sic!) river and splashing all the changed objects with water from that river (pp. 14–16; cf. Ovid, *Met.* 11.136–141).

Like in Nathaniel Hawthorne's version of the myth in *A Wonder Book for Boys and Girls* (1851)*, king Midas has a daughter whom he loves the most, and she is the main reason for his changing his mind. Even her name, Złotuszka [Goldie], while it is made up and is not a real name, it is a similar play on words to Marygold, the name the

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American writer gave to Midas' daughter. Another important motif is the inability to eat or drink, and Midas openly admits that a piece of black bread and a cup of clean water are worth more to him than all the gold in the world (pp. 10–14).

The story contains a straightforward moral lesson and is addressed to a young audience as a parable emphasizing values and the need to be careful what we wish for. There are also some humorous elements, for example, the scene when "the princess sees herself all splashed with water by her father who is also dripping with rivulets of water!" [Jakże zabawną minkę miała królewna, kiedy, ożywszy, zobaczyła się zlaną wodą przez ojca, również ociekającego strugami wody!] (p. 16). The story also contains references to the modern world, such as "today's aircraft or electric tram" ([dzisiejszy samolot lub tramwaj elektryczny], p. 3) compared to miracles in the times of Midas.

* For more on the reception of Midas' myth in children's literature see Elizabeth Hale and Miriam Riverlea, *Classical Mythology and Children's Literature: An Alphabetical Odyssey*, Warsaw: University of Warsaw Press, 2022, 58–60.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Dionysus / Dionysos Midas
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Desires Magic Morality Values
Further Reading	Elizabeth Hale and Miriam Riverlea, *Classical Mythology and Children's Literature: An Alphabetical Odyssey*, Warsaw: University of Warsaw Press, 2022.

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Roberts, Deborah H. and Sheila Murnaghan, "'A Kind of Minotaur': Literal and Spiritual Monstrosity in the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne" in Katarzyna Marciniak, ed., *Chasing Mythical Beasts. The Reception of Ancient Monsters in Children's and Young Adults' Culture*, Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2020, 55–74.

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