Allison Rosenblum, "Entry on: Roman Myths by Eric Freeberg, Diane Namm", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska and Lisa Maurice. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/272. Entry version as of November 10, 2026.

Eric Freeberg , Diane Namm

Roman Myths

United States (2014)

TAGS: Aeneas Aeolus Amulius Apollo Arachne Atlas Baucis Carthage Cerberus Ceres Charon Crete Cupid Diana Dido Dii Consentes Elysian Fields / Elysium Ephialtes Faustulus Garden of Hesperides Golden Bough Greeks Harpies Heracles Hercules Io Italia Janus Juno Jupiter Lares Lemures Manes Mars Mercury Minerva Neptune Numina Numitor (King) Nymphs Oedipus Otus (Giant) Ovid Penates Philemon Prometheus Psyche Remus Rhea Rome Romulus Saturn Sibyl Sphinx Styx Temple of Vesta (Forum Romanum) Thebes Titans Trojan Horse Troy Twelve Labours of Heracles Underworld Venus Vesta Vulcan



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General information	
Title of the work	Roman Myths
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	United States
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2014
First Edition Details	Diane Namm, *Roman Myths*. New York: Sterling Children's Books, 2014, 160 pp.
ISBN	9781454906117
Genre	Fiction, Illustrated works, Myths, Short stories
Target Audience	Children (Children ages 7–9)
Author of the Entry	Allison Rosenblum, Bar-Ilan University, allie.rose89@gmail.com
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com Lisa Maurice, Bar-Ilan University, mauril68@gmail.com

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Creators



Courtesy of Eric Freeberg.

Eric Freeberg (Illustrator)

Eric is a professional children's books illustrator. He has illustrated over twenty-five children's books including three classical retellings for Classic Starts (*The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, *Greek Myths*) as well as illustrating for various magazines and advertising campaigns. Freeberg has received multiple awards for his work including the 2010 London Book Fair's Children's Illustration Competition and the 2010 Holbein Prize for Fantasy Art. He currently resides in Florida.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: April 2, 2018).

Profile at the childrensillustrators.com (accessed: April 2, 2018).

Bio prepared by Allison Rosenblum, Bar Ilan University, allie.rose89@gmail.com and Constantine Christoforou, University of Roehampton, christoc1@roehampton.ac.uk

Diane Namm (Author)

Diane grew up in Brooklyn, NY. She started as a children’s book author, publishing to date over 65 books. She also wrote books for teens and adults. She transitioned to writing screen plays and films, as well as becoming a director and producer. She won numerous awards for her many activities. She currently resides in California.

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Source:

On-line interview (accessed: May 28, 2018).

Profile on iMDb (accessed: May 28, 2018).

Bio prepared by Allison Rosenblum, Bar Ilan University, allie.rose89@gmail.com

Questionnaire

1. What drew you to writing/working with Classical Antiquity and what challenges did you face in selecting, representing, or adapting particular myths or stories?

I've adapted many classics for children over the years, and so when my editor at Sterling Publishing asked me to adapt Roman myths for their Classics series, I was delighted. I had adapted Greek myths for them the year before, so it seemed like a natural sequel. For the Roman myths collection, I had several considerations: 1. I did not want do duplicate the myths I'd chosen for the Greek collection; 2. I wanted an origin myth (Romulus and Remus); 3. I wanted to include lesser known myths; 4. The stories had to be suitable for young readers and easy to understand. The greatest challenge was using a modern narrative voice with which to tell the stories.

2. Why do you think classical / ancient myths, history, and literature continue to resonate with young audiences?

I think that classical literature continues to resonate with young audiences because, like fairy tales, they use the basic storytelling tropes of good vs. evil, the powerless vs. the powerful; and like all religion-based stories, they prowide an understandind of the world and events in a way that seems approachable, relatable and yet magical.

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3. Do you have a background in classical education (Latin or Greek at school or classes at the University?) What sources are you using? Scholarly work? Wikipedia? Are there any books that made an impact on you in this respect?

I have BA and MA degrees in English literature. I worked as a children's book editor for many years before I started writing. I've been in love with mythology since I was 7 years old, so it was a happy coincidence and a great opportunity for me to adapt the Greek and Roman myths books for Sterling. As source material I used Edith Hamilton and Thomas Bullfinch. I had read these two books several times in the course of my studies, and so I naturally turned to them when selecting myths to adapt.

4. Did you think about how Classical Antiquity would translate for young readers, esp. in (insert relevant country)?

Yes, I definitely thought about how Classical Antiquity would translate for young readers. That's always the challenge in doing adaptations for young readers, to make them relevant to their modern sensibility while maintaining the fabric of magic and the original spirit of the story.

5. How concerned were you with "accuracy" or "fidelity" to the original? (another way of saying that might be – that I think writers are often more "faithful" to originals in adapting its spirit rather than being tied down at the level of detail – is this something you thought about?)

I think every author who does adaptations is concerned with accuracy and fidelity to the original. However, you're correct in assuming that fidelity to the spirit of the story is the greater concern, especially when considering that the narrative voice has to be modernized, and the vocabulary and story content have to be appropriate for the audience (3rd to 6th grade). It's my understanding that several of my classic adaptations have been adapted into many languages (although I can't confirm that about Roman and Greek myths), and so I always take into account that the audience may not always be in the western hemisphere – although, of course, my own experiences are, without

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question, westernized, and I'm sure that on some level that informs my storytelling choices.

6. Are you planning any further forays into classical material?

I've actually written several plays that were modern adaptations of other English literature classics and where well received. They were produced by my nonprofit theater company, West of Broadway – for the purposes of introducing a new generation of children to both the theater and to some of the classics that I loved when I was a child. I've adapted *Ransom of Red Chief* by O. Henry, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, *Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter and *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. I can refer you to the following website (accessed: May 28, 2018).

Prepared by Allison Rosenblum, Bar-Ilan University, allie.rose89@gmail.com

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Additional information

Summary

Retelling of classic Roman myths meant for ages 7–9 with one illustration per story. Following the stories, the author includes questions for discussion about each story.

The stories in the book:

- *The Oak and the Linden Tree*
- *Prometheus and Io*
- *Atlas and the Eleventh Labor of Hercules*
- *Romulus and Remus*
- *Escape from Troy*
- *The Golden Bough*
- *Cupid and Psyche*
- *Minerva and Arachne*
- *Oedipus and the Sphinx*
- *Otus and Ephialtes*

Analysis

The book begins with a 26 page introduction to Roman mythology, explaining who the "Numina" are, and that the Romans eventually call them "Titans". The Romans did not originally tell stories about the gods, wanting to tell useful stories – were more practical in their approach. The introduction talks of Lares and Penates, household protectors, as well as public ones like Saturn and Janus who watched over the city. It explains about different spirits like Lemures and Manes, and the Dei Consentes, the 12 major gods: Jupiter, Mars, Neptune, Vulcan, Apollo, and Mercury; and goddesses: Juno, Minerva, Vesta, Ceres, Diana, and Venus. There is also a short explanation of the Roman origins of the names of the months and weekdays. Then we have quite erratic choice of stories, some about the gods and some derived from Roman origin tale. There is no specific chronology to the tales and their sequence is not understood. The author mixes mythological stories involving the gods and more historical narrative (like the foundation of Rome).

Although the book is titled "Roman myth" most of the myths narrated in it belong to Greek mythology. Only stories focusing around the foundation of Rome could be referred to as *Roman myths*.

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Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Aeneas Aeolus Amulius Apollo Arachne Atlas Baucis Carthage Cerberus Ceres Charon Crete Cupid Diana Dido Dii Consentes Elysian Fields / Elysium Ephialtes Faustulus Garden of Hesperides Golden Bough Greeks Harpies Heracles Hercules Io Italia Janus Juno Jupiter Lares Lemures Manes Mars Mercury Minerva Neptune Numina Numitor (King) Nymphs Oedipus Otus (Giant) Ovid Penates Philemon Prometheus Psyche Remus Rhea Rome Romulus Saturn Sibyl Sphinx Styx Temple of Vesta (Forum Romanum) Thebes Titans Trojan Horse Troy Twelve Labours of Heracles Underworld Venus Vesta Vulcan
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adversity Character traits Disobedience Heroism

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