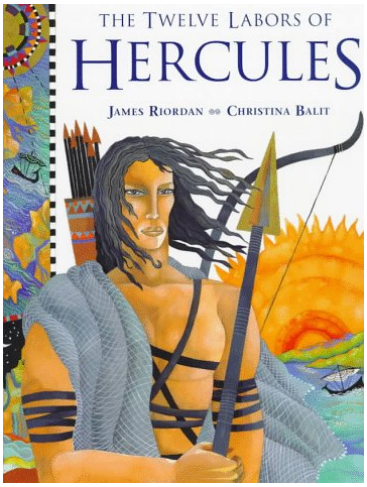
Allison Rosenblum, "Entry on: The Twelve Labours of Hercules by Christina Balit, James Riordan", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Elizabeth Hale. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/276. Entry version as of November 11, 2026.

Christina Balit , James Riordan

The Twelve Labours of Hercules

United Kingdom (1997)



Courtesy of Quarto Publishing Group UK.

TAGS: Admete Alcmene Alpheus Amazons Argonauts Artemis Athena Atlas Augean Stables Augeas Cacus Castor Centaur(s) Cerberus Ceryneian Hind Charon Chiron / Cheiron Colchis Deianeira Delphic Oracle Diomedes' Mares Dionysus / Dionysos Erymanthian Boar Eurystheus Eurytos Geryon Geryon's Cattle Golden Fleece Hades Hebe Hera Heracles Hercules Hippolyta's Belt Hydra Hyllus Iolaus Iole Iphitos of Oechalia Jason Ladon Linus Minos Minotaur Mycenae Nemean Lion Nereid(s) Nereus Nessus Nymphs Olympus Omphale Peneus Perseus Pollux Poseidon Stymphalian Birds Styx Titans Twelve Labours of Heracles Underworld White Bull Zeus



General information	
Title of the work	The Twelve Labours of Hercules
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	United Kingdom; United States
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	1997
First Edition Details	James Riordan, *The Twelve Labours of Hercules*. London: Frances Lincoln Limited, 1997, 64 pp.
ISBN	9780761303152
Genre	Illustrated works, Myths, Picture books
Target Audience	Crossover (Ages 8 and up)
Author of the Entry	Allison Rosenblum, Bar-Ilan University, allie.rose89@gmail.com
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Lisa Maurice, Bar-Ilan University, lisa.maurice@biu.ac.il Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au

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Creators



Christina Balit , b. 1961
(Author, Illustrator)

Christina Balit was born in the UK, but spent most of her childhood in the Middle East. She studied at the Chelsea School of Art and Royal College of Art. Her distinctive style of illustrations is founded on the use of watercolours. Balit's work covers a range of mythological traditions including Greek, Roman, Biblical, and Babylonian. Regarding classical myth specifically, Balit has written *The Scarab's Secret, Atlantis: The Legend of a Lost City*, introduction by Geoffrey Ashe, Henry Holt (New York, NY), 2000 and *Escape from Pompeii*, Henry Holt (New York, NY), 2003. As well as illustrating James Riordan, *The Twelve Labors of Hercules*, Millbrook Press (Brookfield, CT), 1997. She has also illustrated books of fairy tale, the solar system and tales from the Bible. Christina is the winner of The English Association's 4–11 Award for the Best Children's Illustrated Book of 2001, Key Stage 2 Non Fiction Illustration Award in 2002 for *The Kingdom of the Sun* and UK Reading Association Award for *Ishtad & Tammuz* among other awards.

She says of her work "My need to make something from nothing is the reason my blood runs, and I need to keep it thick. I read somewhere that Jacques-Yves Cousteau said "If we didn't die, we would not appreciate life as we do. I don't fear dying, but I can't imagine how people live if they don't 'make' things." (Source here, accessed: August 7, 2018).

Sources:

Official website (accessed: July 4, 2018).

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Bio prepared by Allison Rosenblum, Bar-Ilan University, allie.rose89@gmail.com and Robin Diver, University of Birmingham, RSD253@student.bham.ac.uk and Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com and Constantine Christoforou, University of Roehampton, christoc1@roehampton.ac.uk



James Riordan , 1936 - 2012
(Author)

Riordan was born in Portsmouth, England, graduated from the University of Birmingham, and taught at the London Institute of Education before becoming a lecturer at Bradford University, and then head of the Russian Department at the University of Surrey. He wrote an autobiography, children's novels, two non-fiction novels, children's anthologies, and worked as an editor and translator. He also regularly reviewed children's books for *The Times*. Among his books are: *Sweet Clarinet*, which won the NASEN award in 1999, and *Match of Death*, which won the South Lanarkshire Book Award in 2004.

Source:

Profile at amazon.com (accessed: January 17, 2018)

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

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Additional information

Summary	A picture book retelling of the story of Hercules' life and the twelve labors he performed, aimed at younger readers and readers interested in visual storytelling. Text is accompanied by opulent pictures.
Analysis	The book begins with an author's note stating Hercules was known by both the Greek and Roman names (Hercules/Herakles), and that because of his success with every single task, we have adopted the term "herculean" to refer to an exceptionally difficult task. Colorful illustrations with a Middle Eastern feel are on every page. Hercules' brute strength is emphasized in this book (both in the text and illustrations), not his own attitude about his strength. There are 14 chapters corresponding to different periods of Hercules' life and the twelve labors, and a map at the end of where each labor took place.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Admete Alcmene Alpheus Amazons Argonauts Artemis Athena Atlas Augean Stables Augeas Cacus Castor Centaur(s) Cerberus Ceryneian Hind Charon Chiron / Cheiron Colchis Deianeira Delphic Oracle Diomedes' Mares Dionysus / Dionysos Erymanthian Boar Eurystheus Eurytos Geryon Geryon's Cattle Golden Fleece Hades Hebe Hera Heracles Hercules Hippolyta's Belt Hydra Hyllus Iolaus Iole Iphitos of Oechalia Jason Ladon Linus Minos Minotaur Mycenae Nemean Lion Nereid(s) Nereus Nessus Nymphs Olympus Omphale Peneus Perseus Pollux Poseidon Stymphalian Birds Styx Titans Twelve Labours of Heracles Underworld White Bull Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Character traits Heroism Justice Punishment Revenge Values Violence

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