Zoia Barzakh, "Entry on: The Grandson of Perseus. Book 2: The Son of the Lame Alcaeus [Внук Персея. Книга II: Сын хромого Алкея (Vnuk Perseia. Kniga II: Syn khromogo Alkeia)] by Henry Lion Oldie [Dmitry Gromov and Oleg Ladyzhensky] ", 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/462. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Henry Lion Oldie [Dmitry Gromov and Oleg Ladyzhensky]

The Grandson of Perseus. Book 2: The Son of the Lame Alcaeus [Внук Персея. Книга II: Сын хромого Алкея (Vnuk Perseia. Kniga II: Syn khromogo Alkeia)]

Russia (2012)

TAGS: Acrisius / Akrisios Alcaeus Alcmene Amphitryon Argos (City) Atreus Cephalus Comaetho Creon Dionysus / Dionysos Electryon Mycenae Pelops Perseus Poseidon Teleboans Teumessian Fox Thyestes Tiryns Zeus



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General information	
Title of the work	The Grandson of Perseus. Book 2: The Son of the Lame Alcaeus [Внук Персея. Книга II: Сын хромого Алкея (Vnuk Perseia. Kniga II: Syn khromogo Alkeia)]
Country of the First Edition	Russia
Country/countries of popularity	Russia; Ukraine; Belarus; Moldova
Original Language	Russian
First Edition Date	2012
First Edition Details	Henry Lion Oldie, *Внук Персея. Книга II: Сын хромого Алкея* [*Vnuk Perseia. Kniga II: Syn khromogo Alkeia*]. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Eksmo-Press, 2012, 416 pp.
ISBN	9785699554379
Genre	Fantasy fiction, Mythological fiction, Myths, Novels
Target Audience	Young adults (15–25)
Author of the Entry	Zoia Barzakh, Bar-Ilan University, zoia_barzakh@mail.ru
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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



Henry Lion Oldie [Dmitry Gromov and Oleg Ladyzhensky] , b. 1990
(Author)

Henry Lion Oldie is the pen name of Ukrainian fantasy fiction writers Dmitry Gromov and Oleg Ladyzhensky. Both authors reside in Kharkiv, Ukraine, and write in Russian.

Dmitry Evgenievich Gromov was born on March 30, 1963 in Simferopol (Crimea, Ukrainian Republic, Soviet Union). In 1969 he moved to Sevastopol (Crimea), and in 1974 – to Kharkiv, where he lives until now. In 1980, after graduating from high school, he enrolled at the Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute. After the Institute he worked as a chemical engineer. He started writing fantasy in 1976, in the age of 13. By the beginning of the 1990th he almost completely left engineering for the sake of literary activity.

His hobbies are hard rock music (he is an author of the first and, to my knowledge, only Russian monograph on the history of “Deep Purple") and karate (II kyu, brown belt).

Gromov is married, has a son (born 1989).

Oleg Semenovich Ladyzhensky was born on March 23, 1963 in Kharkiv. In 1980, after graduating from high school, he enrolled at Kharkiv State Institute of Culture, where he acquired a profession of theater director. Since 1984 he has been working as a director of the Pelican Theater Studio, one of the actors of which is Dmitry Gromov.

Ladyzhensky has a black belt, II dan in karate, and a title of internationally certified referee in martial arts. He is a member of the International Association of National Contact Karate-Do Societies and the senior instructor of Gōjū-ryū school.

Ladyzhensky is married, has a daughter (born 1985).

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"The birthday of sir Henry Lion Oldie" is November 13, 1990, when Gromov and Ladyzhensky subscribed the first story they wrote together, "Cinema unto death and..." ("Кино до гроба и..."), by this name. For the last name they took first two letters from each of their names ("Ol" from "Oleg" and "Di" from "Dima", Russian pet name from "Dmitry"), and the name of Henry the Lion, medieval German prince, served as the first names.

At Eurocon 2006 in Kiev, the European Science Fiction Society named Gromov and Ladyzhansky Europe's best writers of 2006 (see here, accessed: April 23, 2018). Among other awards of Oldie are the Award of Dniestrian Moldovan Republic Writers Guild (1997, for the novel *A Hero Must Be Alone*), two «Golden caduceus» (award of Kharkiv International Festival of Fantasy "Star Bridge") for 2000 and 2005 and "Golden Roskon" (award of International Conference on Fantasy and science fiction "Roscon", held in Moscow) for 2006.

Sources:

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Azbuka,"Философы от фэнтези: жизнь и миры Генри Лайона Олди", dtf.ru (accessed 02.01.2022)

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Additional information

Summary

This is a heroic fantasy fiction based on the rare versions of myth Amphitryon, aimed at young adults, in novel format. Prequel to the novel *A Hero Must Be Alone*, published 17 years before by the same authors. This is the second book of Oldie's dilogy *The Grandson of Perseus*, devoted to the exploits of Amphitryon, the grandson of Perseus.

The young Amphitryon in the rank of lawaget leads the Tiryns troops with his father Alcaeus. They defend the Peloponnesian coast from the raids of Teleboans, a pirate tribe led by Pterelaus, the son of Poseidon. Atreus and Thyestes, sons of Pelops and brothers of Amphitryon's mother, take refuge to Mycenae after the murder of Chrysippus, their small brother. They begin to make backroom deals, preparing for the future seizure of power. They see the main hindrance in eight sons of Electryon, the king (*wanakt*) and their uncle, and provoke ambitious teenagers to lonely suicidal attack for Teleboans. All the boys are killed. Electryon, in rage and despair, takes from Amphitryon an oath to take revenge on the king of the Teleboans.

Electryon in his fury attempts to sacrifice Comaetho, a daughter of Pterelaus, in a kind of ritual validation of Amphitryon's *sponde*. Amphitryon desides to prevent the slaughter and to save the girl, which leads to the violent quarrel between two men, and Triton, a mentally disabled, but extremely powerful attendant of Amphitryon, kills Electryon with his club, believing that Amphitryon is in danger.

In order to save the poor young man, Amphitryon takes the blame for the accidental murder of his uncle. Amphitryon has to go to exile and wanders around Hellas in search of a ritual purification from the defilement. All the rulers of Peloponnese refuse him, fearing political complications. Having found shelter with King Creon of Thebes, Amphitryon, with his friend Cephalus, helps the Boeotians to get rid of the terrible Dionysian legacy – the Teumessian fox.

Having been purified from his defilement, Amphitryon gathers a coalition to fight the Teleboans, since, in accordance with the oath he gave to Electryon just before the latter's unfortunate death, his wife Alcmene, Electryon's daughter, cannot give birth to the heir unless Amphitryon performs the promised revenge and kills Pterelaus. Having done so, he can become the father of Iphicles and Heracles.

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Analysis

The main source for the plot of the second book is Pseudo-Apollodorus (*Mythological Library*, II, 4, 6–7). Where Apollodorus tells of accidental killing of Elelctryon by Amphitryon, explaining that "he allegedly threw his club at a runaway cow, it had ricocheted from its corns and killed Electryon." Oldie, in the manner of Greek poets and dramatists, changes the traditional myth in order to introduce ethical motive interested to himself. This motive of human sacrifice is the central one to *A Hero Must Be Alone*.

In connecting the Teumessian fox with Dionysus, the authors again use rather rare local myth told by Pausanias (*Description of Greece*, IX, 19, 1) in order to establish connection between the exploits of the grandson and the lifetime project of the grandfather Perseus – struggle with chaotic Dionysian forces.

In the story of the Pterelaus' death the authors follow closely the version of Pseudo-Apollodorus: Pterelaus, the son of Poseidon, is invulnerable, but only till he has his magical golden hair. Comaetho, in the hope of marriage with Amphitryon, steals it and, when Amphitryon kills her father, gives it to her beloved. The love of Comaetho to Amphitryon is depicted as something akin to Dionysian frenzy, and her gift is the last temptation of Amphitryon: it can make his master something more than human at the cost of his humanity. Nevertheless, Amphitryon, the grandson of Perseus, who, unlike his half-brother Dionysus, prefers human vulnerability over divine frenzy, doesn't need this gift. He throws the hair away.

Now that he has overcome this last temptation he can become a father of Alcides and Iphicles, who, according to *A Hero Must Be Alone*, saved the humankind from the doom of being either victims to goods of pawns in their hands.

The book, forming a connection between *The Grandson of Perseus* and *A Hero Must Be Alone*, encompasses topics central for both books, namely that of character formation, gender and identity. Amphitryon, the central character, a youth bearing the burden of Dionysus' enmity and course of Pelopids, undergoes several tests that gradually reveal his character as responsible, sensible and honest adult man. His rational behaviour and awareness of the possible political grounds of events is opposed to childish endeavor of young Electryonidae, who

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are easy targets of manipulations. Nevertheless, he is neither cynical nor over-rational: he takes upon himself the blame for killing Electryon in order to save Triton and refuses to disengage himself from the oath given to Electryon. At the end refusal of divine lock of Pterelaus and Dionysian frantic love of his daughter symbolize his ultimate self-awareness as responsible and self-sufficient adult male.

The topic of gender is also explored in the image of Comaetho. She was raised by her father, a famous pirate, as a boy, and often disguise herself as a boy. The awareness of her feminine nature comes to her too late, together with her love to Amphitryon, and therefore takes the unnatural form of Dionysiac frenzy. Hereby this frenzy – the phenomenon Perseus devoted his life to fight with – is presented as overcompensation for one's unawareness or belated awareness of the important part of one's nature.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Acrisius / Akrisios Alcaeus Alcmene Amphitryon Argos (City) Atreus Cephalus Comaetho Creon Dionysus / Dionysos Electryon Mycenae Pelops Perseus Poseidon Teleboans Teumessian Fox Thyestes Tiryns Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adolescence Child, children Coming of age Conflict Death Family Friendship Gaining understanding Heroism Identity Justice Love Memory Morality Parents (and children) Past Psychology Relationships Sexuality Tricksters Violence

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