Sonya Nevin, "Entry on: Spot the Mummy in the Museum by Peter Bull Art Studio , Sarah Kahn", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elizabeth Hale. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/788. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Peter Bull Art Studio , Sarah Kahn

Spot the Mummy in the Museum

United Kingdom (2015)

TAGS: Architecture Artemis Asclepius Comedy (Ancient) Egypt Gladiator Games Gods Greek Art Greek History Greek Music Greek Philosophy Greek Theatre Laurel Wreath Mycenae Pegasus Roman History Tragedy (Ancient)





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

General information	
Title of the work	Spot the Mummy in the Museum
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	United Kingdom
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2015
First Edition Details	Sarah Kahn, *Spot the Mummy in the Museum*. London: QED Publishing, 2015, p. 23
ISBN	9781784930929
Genre	Instructional and educational works, Picture books
Target Audience	Children (c. 2–8)
Author of the Entry	Sonya Nevin, University of Roehampton, sonya.nevin@roehampton.ac.uk
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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



Peter Bull Art Studio (Company, Illustrator)

The Peter Bull Art Studio provides publishing houses and advertising agencies with design, illustration, and animation content. They were established in 1988 and are based in East Sussex in the UK. Historical illustrations are a specialism of the house and they have provided illustrations for a range of history titles for adults and children.

Source:

Official website (accessed: June 17, 2019)

Prepared by Sonya Nevin, University of Roehampton, sonya.nevin@roehampton.ac.uk



Sarah Kahn (Author)

Sarah Kahn is a children's author and editor based in Cambridge, UK. She took a degree in English Literature from the University of Cambridge before moving into publishing and writing. Many of her children's titles are non-fiction, such as *The Little Book of Horses and Ponies* (Usborne, 2010). She writes all the titles in the *Spot the…* series. She also writes children's puzzles for *The Daily Telegraph*.

Source:

Twitter's profile (accessed: June 17, 2019)

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Additional information

Summary

Each volume in the *Spot the…* series presents children with an environment to explore. Greco-Roman culture forms a prominent part of the environment in this edition, which is set in a museum. Each double-page spread in the books in this series depicts a scene from the specified environment which children search to find the themed object; in this case they search for the mummy in each room of the museum. Each double-page also picks out approximately five objects that are specific to that scene for the child to locate. Two sentences of information about each scene are included, and a figure from within each double-page asks the reader a direct question which is designed to prompt further examination of the scene. The format of the books makes them excellent for pre-readers and those at the early stages of reading. Children quickly learn to navigate the books themselves; adults can help them to draw out more, but children can examine the images and search for the specified items without adult assistance, meaning that children can enjoy them alone or can take the lead in shared adult-child "reading". This builds young people's confidence around the culture of books, reading, and reading images, which all has positive implications for developing literacy and love of learning. The range of environments is a further positive, stretching children's familiarity with environments they know and introducing those that they may not. The series' environments include building sites, jungles, transport, the world, oceans, gardens, farms, zoos, and space.

Spot the Mummy at the Museum is set in one large museum, with the double-page images leading children through the different galleries of the museum, each of which has a different theme. The different galleries are: Dinosaurs, Ancient Egyptians, Ancient Greeks, Buried Treasure, Ancient Romans, The Americas, Masks, Vikings, and the gift shop and café. The museum itself – depicted in the first double-page introduction – is a large neoclassical building with large rooms supported by tall columns.

The Ancient Greek gallery has a blue-white background comprised of walls, columns, and arches; some actors are performing on a small stage, there are several statues, some cabinets of small objects such as jewellery, and there is a wall of vases. White statues depict Pegasus atop a column, Athena Nike, Artemis with a deer, and Asclepius with snake and staff. Coloured statues depict a warrior with a torch and one with weaponry, both life-size (in context) and there is a miniature

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brown horse statue. Of the four actors, one is depicted as a man, one as a woman, and the other two wear a tragic and a comic mask. The text informs readers that: “The Ancient Greeks thought that art, writing and drama were very important. They filled their cities with statues and theatres.” Children are invited to find the eponymous mummy, artefacts: a “sad mask”, a horse statue, a shield, and a torch, and a teddy bear which is carried by a visitor.

Buried Treasure presents labelled items from a variety of cultures, with Greco-Roman items continuing to have a strong presence: “Roman artefacts” (coins and a cup), “Roman pottery”, and “Greek vase”. Other items are prehistoric, Anglo-Saxon, and natural history. The Ancient Romans gallery then presents a large-scale model exhibition of a dining room and a section of amphitheatre, with gallery visitors viewing the model scenes from behind a rope. The background wall colours are reds and yellows. In the dining area, two figures recline to drink, two stand and talk, two play music, and two offer trays of drinks and snacks. Roman children stand nearby, a boy holding a sword, a girl a doll, and a third child gesturing towards the dining area. The dining area is decorated with an ancient Greek vase, white statues apparently of Roman politicians, and a colour statue of a legionary. The amphitheatre arena contains racing chariots and fighting gladiators, with stands of cheering onlookers beside an imperial box. The information text reads: “The Ancient Romans loved entertainment. They held parties and feasts at home and went out to see chariot races and gladiator fights.” Despite the prevalence of classical antiquities in the museum, the only Greco-Roman artefact in the shop is a replica pot. Similar pottery, ancient coins, and a white stone bust alongside items from other cultures combine to give classical antiquity a strong presence on the front cover. The book concludes with an invitation to go back to the start and locate nine more objects (including the Greek pot in the Roman room), an extra information page featuring the Romans' love of “exotic” food and the fact that “The word dinosaur comes from the Greek language”, and some suggested follow-up activities including visiting a museum.

Analysis

Perhaps the most pleasing thing about this delightful book is that its very inclusion in the series normalises the idea that museums are an integral part of the human environment, somewhere that children may be interested in and or visit. This develops an idea that may already be

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present for children who do visit museums and introduces those who do not to the possibility that they could. Children are also introduced to the idea that modern people know about antiquity through the survival of items from that period, a fact that is not immediately obvious to a young child. The inclusion of further displays of models and so on both mimics the type of displays one may find in a museum and helps to establish an ancient surrounding. Not all museums have classical collections, but this volume gives Greco-Roman culture a prominent place in this representative museum, which in turn expresses antiquity's prominent in culture and to establishes an expectation that one might see antiquities if one should visit a museum. There are many visitors in the museum, of all ages, sex, and ethnicity; there are people in wheelchairs, people with prams and buggies, people drawing pictures, taking notes or photographs, people apparently wandering or purposefully following floor-plans. In one or two cases there are museum staff talking about particular artefacts with visitors; there are no school groups or education sessions going on, but then, given the number of adult-child combinations, one may be safe in assuming this is a museum at the weekend. The great variety of people using the museum and the enthusiasm with which they are shown enjoying it in their various ways expresses a hugely positive sense of the museum as an interesting and engaging place that anyone can go to, with classical culture featuring as a topic that anyone might enjoy exploring.

There is virtually no follow-up information about what things in the galleries are. So, for example, the image of a statue of Artemis is based on a real antiquity, but there is no information about the identity of Artemis let alone the statue on which the image is based. Adults may or may not be able to provide children with further information, however the main purpose of the book is a very basic, accessible introduction rather than detail.

Generally the gallery titles emphasise peoples over places: e.g. “Greeks” not “Greece”, “Romans” not “Rome”. This differs in the “Americas”, which unnamed “ancient civilisations” plural are said to inhabit (presumably because there would be too many cultures to name individually). The emphasis on peoples humanises the collections and the importance of people in generating culture. In terms of the contrast between Greeks and Romans, the Greeks are represented as a more sophisticated, cultured people; they “thought that art, writing and drama were important." The Roman scenes focus much more heavily on entertainment and the pleasures of the senses.

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	Warrior culture is depicted in both via statues of soldiers, but this is not emphasises in either. The different cultures presented in the museum appear in roughly chronological order by room, meaning that children may sub-consciously pick-up the idea of dinosaurs coming before people, Egyptians before Romans, Romans before Vikings, and so on.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Architecture Artemis Asclepius Comedy (Ancient) Egypt Gladiator Games Gods Greek Art Greek History Greek Music Greek Philosophy Greek Theatre Laurel Wreath Mycenae Pegasus Roman History Tragedy (Ancient)
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Child's view Disability Diversity Environment Gaining understanding Heritage History Interactivity Knowledge Learning Parents (and children) Socialisation Theatre
Further Reading	Shaffer, Sharon E., *Engaging Young Children in Museums*, London: Routledge, 2015. Sobel, David M. and Lipson, Jennifer L., eds., *Cognitive Development in Museum Settings. Relating Research and Practice*, London: Routledge, 2015.

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