Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Myths in Sicily: Thunderbolts I [I miti in Sicilia: I fulmini, 1] by Riccardo Francaviglia ", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/806. Entry version as of November 19, 2026.

Riccardo Francaviglia

Myths in Sicily: Thunderbolts I [I miti in Sicilia: I fulmini, 1]

Italy (2015)

TAGS: Acis Athena Cronus / Kronos Daphnis Gaia / Gaea Galatea Heracles Hercules Nomia Odysseus / Ulysses Ouranos / Uranus Polyphemus Rhea Zeus

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

General information	
Title of the work	Myths in Sicily: Thunderbolts I [I miti in Sicilia: I fulmini, 1]
Country of the First Edition	Italy
Original Language	Italian
First Edition Date	2015
First Edition Details	Riccardo Francaviglia, *I miti in Sicilia: I fulmini,* vol. 1. Splēn edizioni, 2015, 96 pp.
ISBN	9788899268084
Genre	Adaptations, Myths
Target Audience	Children (Older children, 9–13)
Author of the Entry	Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com
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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

Riccardo Francaviglia (Author, Illustrator)

According to the back cover, Riccardo Francaviglia is a Sicilian author and illustrator. He is also an actor, narrator and puppet master. He teaches illustration techniques at the Academia delle Belle Arti in Catania.

Source:

Official website (accessed: July 19, 2019)

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Additional information

Translation

English: *Myths in Sicily: Thunderbolts*, trans. Letizia Martin.

Summary

This book (the first of a 2-books series) explores the Greek myths that are found in Sicily. The myths narrated in this volume are: the creation of the world and the struggle between Titans, Gods and Giants; Odysseus in Sicily (Polyphemus, Aeolus, Scylla and Charybdis); Daphnis and Nomia; Artemis and Orion; Acis and Galatea.

The focus is on the Sicilian connections to the myths (places, natural phenomena). Each story is accompanied by an illustration and also includes extra information boxes at the bottom of the page which explain certain elements or names from the text. For example, the name Cronus is highlighted in blue in the text and there is a short explanation of it in the information box.

Analysis

This volume stands out in the field of myths' collections due to its specific focus on Sicilian connections. These connections can relate specific locations (for example, the mouth of the fallen giant Enceladus which is believed to be under the volcano Etna; the straits of Zancle where Scylla and Charybdis dwelled), or more general, for example, Daphnis, a Sicilian shepherd. References to works of art that represent the mythological characters are also included to set the story within a Sicilian connection. For example, the author notes that in the Villa Belvedere of Acireale there are sculptures by Rosario Anastasi of Galatea and Acis' story; thus the book of myths is also used as a guide book for Sicilian attractions. The myths are not told from a moralistic didactic point of view, as their main interest is linking Sicily to the ancient Greek lore. This may be a result of patriotic enthusiasm by the writer, since it appears that he wished to accentuate the importance and significance of the island in the Greek tradition. The books could also be mainly aimed at tourists who frequent the island and may wish to know about its ancient mythological roots (especially since the books are translated to English as well).

Books such as these expand the geography of the ancient myths,

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which are mistakenly perceived at times to be limited to Greece alone. By broadening the scope of ancient Greek culture, we get a better understanding of the great influence of this culture, its spread throughout the Mediterranean and its significance even today. A book that places Sicily within Greek mythology attests to the importance of what Greek mythology means to other cultures (even with its less pleasant myths), and reflects the fact that Sicily was once inhabited by Greeks. The author writes in the chapter about Polyphemus, that "some of the misadventures that Odysseus had to face, took place in an island the Greeks were especially fond of, to the point of locating the most part of their mythological stories in it: Sicily." (p. 24). Attributing most of the mythological tales to Sicily is an exaggeration yet this note illuminates the patriotic pride the author shares with the reader about the connection between Sicily and ancient Greek myths.

The edition seems to appear very conscious of the readers as well as the environment. A note at the back states that "no ancient forests have been destroyed to publish this book." Since most of the myths discuss Nymphs and metamorphosis to natural elements, this note seems to carry more power and relates well to the content of the book. The back cover also has a note on the type of font used in the book (and its legibility for readers with dyslexia). This suggests that the publisher wishes for the book to be read by as wide audience as possible.

The language is very clear and easily understood, and the information boxes make the connection to Sicily a lot clearer for the less knowledgeable readers.

While the myths are presented in a clear language, and at times employ a comical tone (for example, Gaia and Uranus are visiting Rhea and Cronus after she gives birth), the book is not aimed at young children. This is especially clear from the mention of genitalia (the word "penis" is repeated within the story of Cronus and Uranus and the tale of how Zeus, Hermes and Poseidon urinated into a bag and gave it to Ireo in order to create a baby) and less pleasant hints at sexual activities or violence. Rape is not specifically mentioned though and other forms of violence are narrated, albeit without overly graphic descriptions (for example, how Polyphemus killed Odysseus' men). The stories are also accompanied by illustrations, which may not appeal to all, being darkly colored and relatively scary or grotesque at times.

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	As noted this collections allows the author to expand on less known myths, like the transformation of Scylla and Charybdis into monsters or the story of Daphnis and Nomina. This decision to emphasize the less retold myths, distinguish this collection from other myths anthologies.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Acis Athena Cronus / Kronos Daphnis Gaia / Gaea Galatea Heracles Hercules Nomia Odysseus / Ulysses Ouranos / Uranus Polyphemus Rhea Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Death Friendship Love Revenge Violence War
Addenda	The review refers to the 2018 reprint edition.

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