Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Mythology Code Writing Kit (Ology Stationary Kit) by Nick Harris, Nicki Palin, David Wyatt", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/846. Entry version as of April 24, 2024.

Nick Harris , Nicki Palin , David Wyatt

Mythology Code Writing Kit (Ology Stationary Kit)

United Kingdom (2008)

TAGS: Argonauts Constellations Harpies Heracles Hercules Medusa Minotaur Olympians Theseus Trojan Horse

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

General information	
Title of the work	Mythology Code Writing Kit (Ology Stationary Kit)
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	United Kingdom
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2008
First Edition Details	*Mythology Code Writing Kit (Ology Stationary Kit).* London: Templar publishing, 2008.
ISBN	9781840118995
Genre	Illustrated works, Instructional and educational works, Puzzles and games
Target Audience	Crossover (Children and all ages)
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

Nick Harris (Illustrator)

Nicki Palin (Illustrator)

David Wyatt (Illustrator)

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Additional information

Summary

This is an attractive set. The purpose is for the players to create their own secret messages using the different codes. On the inside cover there is a note from John, who hopes that whoever finds this kit writes down their own adventures, and not succumb to greed as he did. The players are encouraged to use various forms of expressions for their secret messages. For example, the use of vase painting to convey ideas (there are stickers of such vases), or writing their names in the Greek alphabet. There are various opportunities for inquisitive players to create their own hidden messages in different ways.

This kit contains envelopes, notelets, postcards and stickers all in the theme of ancient Greek. There are various stickers in the kit which include: the 12 Olympians, Medusa's head, Hercules fighting a lion, Jason facing the dragon which guards the golden fleece, the Trojan horse, Theseus and the Minotaur, constellations, decorated Greek vases, Agamemnon's golden mask, mystical creatures (harpy, some kind of monster), the fate sisters, a woman sitting (or chained?) to a rock – maybe she is Ariadne since there is a sail-boat in the distance.

There are various styles to the stickers, some are colorful, some are black and white.

There are envelopes with a drawing of the acropolis (probably of Athens). Some sheets of papers withdrawing of Doric columns. There are also five postcards: one depicts Hercules fighting the Hydra on one side and on the back a small picture of Theseus facing the Minotaur. Two similar postcards depict a large picture of a couple riding a chariot on the sea (the man is similar to Poseidon, holding a trident). In the back there is a small picture of a ship engulfed by scary looking tentacles. There are freezes drown above and under the large picture which appear to show scenes from the Argonauts' story: a boat with a crew, flying monsters, sowing of afield, spreading seeds, a dragon guarding the fleece and a man and woman walk hand in hand to the ship.

The other two postcards depict a large picture of Perseus turning his gaze from an ugly Medusa to his shield, while holding his sword. The small picture at the back depicts two warriors fighting with spears, perhaps Achilles and Hector?

There are also Greek alphabet code and oak-leaf code. There are

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groups of three leafs, black and white and each grouping signifies something else. For example, one dark leaf and two bright leafs mean Thunder = unlikely. According to the back cover, the kit was supposedly compiled by a treasure hunter, John Oro and it is the key to unlocking ancient secrets. The player must solve the Greek script and Oak-leaf oracle.

On the back it is noted that this kit is based on the book *Mythology: Greek Gods, Heroes & Monsters* by Dugald A. Steer.

Analysis

While in our digitized world it might appear archaic to use notelets and envelopes for sending messages, the spirit of treasure hunting might get encourage children (and adults!) to make up their own codes, using a foreign alphabet or the constellations. Children can use the suggested techniques or create their own codes. It is a thought-stimulating kit which makes the ancient world appear magical and mysterious and could certainly appeal to children who may be looking for something a bit different.

There is also a warning inside, in English, but transliterated into Greek letters, which reads “Be careful what you ask the gods for, some gifts may become curses”. It is very nice to read it in Greek letters and it might encourage the children to write such messages on their own.

This is a cryptic message which perhaps is meant to stimulate the players’ imagination while they question and wonder about these mysterious cursed gifts. The sticker of the Trojan horse could allude to such fatal gifts (since the horse was believed to be a gift to Athena). The most known cursed gift form the gods was Midas golden touch, yet there is no reference to it in the stickers. Perhaps the players are encouraged to find myths which correspond to the cryptic message.

The obscure message the various stickers and the postcards present glimpses at Greek mythology. They depict specific scenes, part of stories. It is up to the inquisitive players to find out the source of these images and learn the myths behind them. These visual references to mythology function as a more interactive way for children or adults to learn more about Greek mythology. The players are the ones who need to actively search for the myths and learn the context behind the different elements of the kit. This makes Greek mythology the reward of those who discover the stories behind the drawings and also present

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	it as a mysterious and exciting world of monsters, heroes and fabulous stories.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Argonauts Constellations Harpies Heracles Hercules Medusa Minotaur Olympians Theseus Trojan Horse
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Interactivity Magic

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