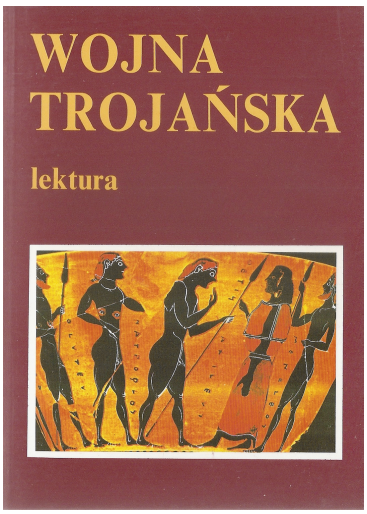
Summary: Sylwia Chmielewska, Analysis: Marta Pszczolińska, "Entry on: The Trojan War [Wojna Trojańska] by Stanisław Srokowski", peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1376. Entry version as of July 12, 2026.

Stanisław Srokowski

The Trojan War [Wojna Trojańska]

Poland (1994)

TAGS: Achilles Aeneas Agamemnon Ajax / Aias Andromache Aphrodite Apollo Athena Diomedes (Son of Tydeus) Hector Helen Hephaestus Hera Homer Iliad Nestor Odysseus / Ulysses Paris (Trojan Prince) Poseidon Thetis Trojan War Zeus



Courtesy of the publisher.

General information	
Title of the work	The Trojan War [Wojna Trojańska]
Country of the First Edition	Poland
Country/countries of popularity	Poland
Original Language	Polish
First Edition Date	1994
First Edition Details	Stanisław Srokowski, *Wojna trojańska*. Wrocław: Izba Wydawnicza „Światowit”, 1994, 152 pp.
ISBN	8390054760
Genre	Adaptation of classical texts*
Target Audience	Crossover (high school students)
Author of the Entry	Summary: Sylwia Chmielewska, University of Warsaw, syl.chm@gmail.com Analysis: Marta Pszczolińska, University of Warsaw, m.pszczolinska@al.uw.edu.pl
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Katarzyna Marciniak, University of Warsaw, kamar@al.uw.edu.pl Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com

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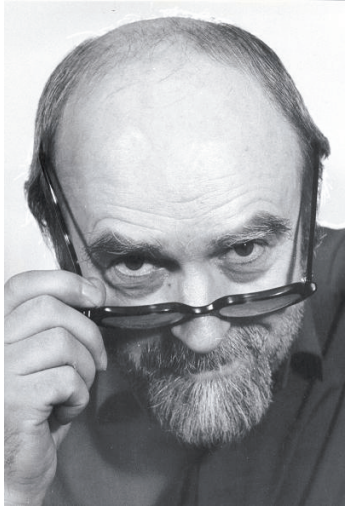
Creators



Courtesy of the Author

Stanisław Srokowski , b. 1936
(Author)

Stanisław Srokowski is a poet, novelist, playwright, literary critic, translator and essayist. Born near Tarnopol (in eastern Poland before WW2, now Ukraine). He started as a high school teacher, and then he branched out into journalism. He also joined “Solidarność” [Solidarity] – the first non-Communist trade union in Communist Poland.

Author of about 50 books, including several novels and short stories, and books for children. He won numerous literary prizes and awards, e.g., Australian International Prize POLCUL and among Polish awards, Stanisław Piętak Literary Award, Józef Mackiewicz Literary Award, and others. His prose and poetry were translated into many languages, including English, Japanese, and several European languages. His literary work is strongly connected with the culture of eastern pre-war Poland, as well as with ancient literature and culture.

Source:

The Author's Website (accessed: November 2, 2021);

"Srokowski Stanisław", in Jadwiga Czachowska and Alicja Szałagan, eds., *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury. Słownik biobibliograficzny, vol 7: R– Sta*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 2001, 407–410.

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Additional information

Summary

Based on: Katarzyna Marciniak, Elżbieta Olechowska, Joanna Kłos, Michał Kucharski (eds.), *Polish Literature for Children & Young Adults Inspired by Classical Antiquity: A Catalogue*, Faculty of "Artes Liberales", Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2013, 444 pp.

The book is an abridged and simplified version of Homer's *Iliad*; it retells the whole Trojan War in twenty-four chapters imitating the composition of the original epic. It is written in prose; a map of Ancient Greece shows cities and kingdoms with which the most important characters are connected. The author presents the basic plot precisely and accurately, adapting it to the age of potential readers (teenagers, adolescents). The action develops very dynamically, with dialogues and picturesque descriptions of the circumstances accompanying the main plot. Motifs slowing down the action are omitted, e.g. the catalogue of Achaean and Trojan forces in the second book of the *Iliad*. The following strands of the story are the most enhanced and developed:

- the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles over Briseis;
- the dualism of action (heroes on Earth and gods on Olympus); gods' interventions on both sides;
- duels (Menelaus vs. Paris, Diomedes vs. Aeneas, Hector vs. Ajax, Hector vs. Achilles, etc.), fighting, aristeiai, or the finest moments in the life of a hero (e.g. Diomedes' *aristeia*) and funeral speeches given by warriors;
- Helen's situation in Troy (her guilt, Priam's sympathy for her, etc.);
- Hector's farewell to Andromache and Astyanax;
- the embassy of Odysseus, Ajax and Phoenix to Achilles;
- Odysseus' and Diomedes' foray to Trojan lines and killing of Dolon;
- Hera's seduction of Zeus causing him to fall asleep;
- the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus and the former's rage after the death of his friend;
- the description of Achilles' new shield and armor, given to him by Hephaestus;
- the death of Hector and Priam's grief.

In the preface and afterword, we also find a short, explanatory presentation of the historical and mythological background of the war.

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Analysis

The title of the book is not chosen by chance. In this book and *Przygody Odyseusza*, the author reuses titles of short adaptations of Homer's works aimed at young audiences, published by Jan Parandowski in c. 1927 and c. 1935, both well known to many generations of Polish children. Parandowski's *Wojna trojańska* was written as a quick review of the Trojan myth (78 pp.) and abridged the *Iliad* to present it to children in an accessible manner. Srokowski goes a step further and retells the myth adding more details and subplots, although some of them are still omitted out of necessity (in the VI book, the duel between Glaukos and Diomedes is reduced to only one sentence; book VII merely presents the duel between Hector and Aias, and the Trojans do not discuss giving Helen back and the Achaeans do not build their wall during a truce). He uses the same pattern of division (24 books) as the Alexandrian philologists. He focuses on the plot of the *Iliad* to "show Homer's works, his genius and beauty to the young readers, students of secondary and primary schools, who would like to get familiar with a greatness but do not have the courage to reach for the original or a translation" (p. 5). The author hopes that it would be an incentive to read the whole *Iliad* in future and, for this purpose, creates an epitome as faithful to Homer as it is possible to achieve on 131 pages.

The adaptation is aimed at school children, so the author silently adjusts certain issues while preserving others. There are scenes of adversaries being humiliated, duels, assassinations and deaths on the battlefield in drastic, anatomical detail, similar to Homer, who depicted these fights in his epic. At the same time, the status of women-captives is euphemized, as if they were just supposed to perform some house chores and/or to be admired for their beauty. Agamemnon says to the pleading Chryses: "Go away, you pushy old man (…). And your daughter will stay with me and then she will live in Argos to make my bed" (p. 12), indicating that the captives' fate is slavery and nothing worse, suggesting that they will not be mistreated. Hector, talking with Andromache, fears defeat and death, which would allow his enemies to capture his wife, humiliate and dishonour her (p. 44). The ambiguity in the language is highlighted after Hector's death when Achilles mutilates his corpse and drags it behind his horses. In the description, the same word for dishonour is used, as in the case of Andromache's possible fate (p. 133). The description in the XIV chapter presents the seduction of Zeus by his

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shrewd wife, Hera, who wants to distract him from what is happening on the battlefield, which indicates that the book must have been aimed at older primary school children or even high school students. Some details of the description may be misunderstood or incomprehensible to younger children.

The language used resembles a heroic epic – it is somewhat archaic or dated and not immediately understood by young readers today. Some words in the author's rich vocabulary are no longer in use, and many school children could benefit from footnotes explaining these expressions, but at the same time, there are many modern dialogues and phrases.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Achilles Aeneas Agamemnon Ajax / Aias Andromache Aphrodite Apollo Athena Diomedes (Son of Tydeus) Hector Helen Hephaestus Hera Homer Iliad Nestor Odysseus / Ulysses Paris (Trojan Prince) Poseidon Thetis Trojan War Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Authority Conflict Death Emotions Family Heroism Prediction/prophecy Religious beliefs Sacrifice Values Violence War
Further Reading	Parandowski, Jan, *Wojna trojańska. Według Iljady Homera opowiedział dla młodzieży Jan Parandowski*, Lwów: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Książek Szkolnych, c. 1927.

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