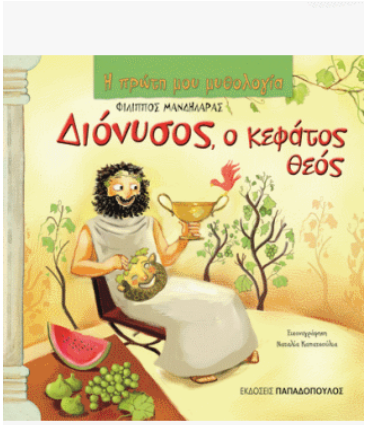
Katerina Volioti, "Entry on: Dionysos, the Merry God [Διόνυσος, ο κεφάτος θεός (Diónysos, o kefátos theós)] by Natalia Kapatsoulia, Filippos Mandilaras ", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/154. Entry version as of November 09, 2026.

Natalia Kapatsoulia , Filippos Mandilaras

Dionysos, the Merry God [Διόνυσος, ο κεφάτος θεός (Diónysos, o kefátos theós)]

Greece (2013)

TAGS: Dionysus / Dionysos Maenads Satyr(s) Silens



Courtesy of the Publisher. Retrieved from epbooks.gr (accessed: July 5, 2022).

General information	
Title of the work	Dionysos, the Merry God [Διόνυσος, ο κεφάτος θεός (Diónysos, o kefátos theós)]
Country of the First Edition	Greece
Country/countries of popularity	Greece
Original Language	Greek
First Edition Date	2013
First Edition Details	Filippos Mandilaras, *Διόνυσος, ο κεφάτος θεός* [Diónysos, o kefátos theós], My First Mythology [Η Πρώτη μου Μυθολογία (Ī prṓtī mou Mythología)](Series). Athens: Papadopoulos Publishing, 2013, 36 pp.
ISBN	9789604844487
Available Onllne	Demo of 7 pages available at epbooks.gr (accessed: October 13, 2021)
Genre	Instructional and educational works, Myths
Target Audience	Children (age 4+)
Author of the Entry	Katerina Volioti, University of Roehampton, Katerina.Volioti@roehampton.ac.uk

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.

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Creators



Natalia Kapatsoulia (Illustrator)

Natalia Kapatsoulia studied French Literature in Athens, and she worked as a language tutor before embarking on a career as a full-time illustrator of children's books. Kapatsoulia has authored one picture book *Η Μαμά πετάει* [Mom Wants to Fly], which has been translated into Spanish *Mamá quiere volar*. Kapatsoulia, who now lives on the island of Kefalonia, Greece, has collaborated with Filippos Mandilaras on multiple book projects.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: July 2, 2018).

Profile at the epbooks.gr (accessed: July 2, 2018).

Bio prepared by Katerina Volioti, University of Roehampton, Katerina.Volioti@roehampton.ac.uk



Filippos Mandilaras , b. 1965 (Author)

Filippos Mandilaras is a prolific and well-known writer of children's illustrated books and of young adults' novels. Mandilaras studied French Literature in Sorbonne, Paris. His latest novel, which was published in May 2016, is entitled *Υπέροχος Κόσμος* [Wonderful World], and it recounts the story of teenage life in a deprived Athenian district. With his illustrated books, Mandilaras aims to encourage parents and teachers to improvise by adding words when reading

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stories to children. Mandilaras is interested in the anthropology of extraordinary creatures and his forthcoming work is about Modern Greek Mythologies.

Sources:

In Greek:

Profile on EP Books' website (accessed: June 27, 2018).

i-read.i-teen.gr (accessed: June 27, 2018).

Public Blog, published 15 September 2015 (accessed: June 27, 2018).

Press Publica, published 28 January 2017 (accessed: June 27, 2018).

Linkedin.com, published published 6 May 2016 (accessed: February 6, 2019).

In English:

Amazon.com (accessed: June 27, 2018).

On Mandoulides' website, published 7 March 2017 (accessed: June 27, 2018).

In German:

literaturfestival.com (accessed: June 27, 2018).

Bio prepared by Katerina Volioti, University of Roehampton, Katerina.Volioti@roehampton.ac.uk

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Additional information

Summary

Philippos Mandilaras recounts Dionysos' life and the god's contribution to ancient and modern wine and performance culture. Mandilaras' text is predominantly in rhyming verses, facilitating memorisation by children of pre-school age. Children can repeat after a teacher reads the text. Some text, e.g., Semele's conversations with Hera and Zeus, appears in speech bubbles. The interactive experience of reading and performing fits Dionysos' festive ambience that is apparent throughout the book.

Mandilaras starts with Dionysos' extraordinary birth from his father's thigh, and, humorously, Natalia Kapatsoulia, the illustrator, shows Zeus sewing Dionysos into his thigh seven pages later. On the opening page, we are also told about Dionysos' wanderings in towns and mountains and that the god gave people the vine. Both themes, about travelling and viticulture, are repeated in the book.

At the very end, children are asked to make face masks, "like the ones the ancient Greeks used" in theatrical performances honouring Dionysos. The masks show different emotions, including joy, surprise, and anger.

Analysis

The illustrator shows Dionysos dancing below a vine with hanging grapes, interestingly with his back to the reader. The fox at the vine's root may allude to Aesop's fable *The Fox and the Grapes*, as well as to a well-known proverb in modern Greek derived from that fable: "Όσα δε φτάνει η αλεπού, τα κάνει κρεμαστάρια." The fox has been popular in Greek folklore and fairy tales in recent times. The apparent conflation of mythological and modern narratives may make Dionysos' story more familiar to children.

Subsequent pages, too, feature traditional and modern visual motifs, which facilitate the learning of Greek mythology. Semele is shown embroidering on a porticoed veranda of her father's palace. Zeus kneels before beautiful Semele in the same way that princes greet their princesses in fairy tales. The floating hearts, indicative of Zeus' love, point to modern (and perhaps even digital) communication stereotypes. We see a pram with hanging toy stars and flowers adorning a building's interior walls. Children would be acquainted

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with such imagery from family and kindergarten in their real lives. The stork carrying baby Dionysos points to imaginary life and, once again, to folklore tales and popular beliefs.

Typically for Greek mythology, there are plenty of surprises and reversals of fortune. These take children and other readers beyond the familiar. Zeus got angry, and “the galaxy darkened”. Vines grew around the boat’s mast, and the pirates turned into dolphins. These transformations are characteristic of Dionysos, who is always on the go. Children read about different lands, ranging from Phrygia to Aetolia, and envisage various landscape settings for Dionysos’ actions. In the open air on a green and flowered plateau, Dionysos dances in the company of a maenad, a satyr, a silenus, and another woman. These mythical creatures “from foreign places” are described as “daimons”, thus alluding to the extraordinary.

More importantly, perhaps, children discover the world of wine. Mandilaras explains the origin of the word for grape, "staphyli," which is named after king Oineas’ son, Staphylos, and cautions children about the effects of excessive wine drinking. Again, the educational use of Greek mythology becomes apparent here. Indeed, the book closes by teaching us about Dionysos’ modern relevance. Wine pertains to celebrations today, and we see young men and women seated around taverna tables raising their wine glasses. Wine, moreover, influenced theatrical production. An excellent appendix at the end of the book tells us more about ancient theatre and Dionysos and Dionysos’ followers (the satyrs, the silenus, and the maenads).

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Dionysus / Dionysos Maenads Satyr(s) Silens
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Coming of age Emotions Theatre

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Further Reading

Information about the book at epbooks.gr, published 11 September 2013 (accessed: August 1, 2018).

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