Katerina Volioti, "Entry on: The Cyclades: Jewels in the Aegean [Κυκλάδες. Πετράδια στο Αιγαίο (Kykládes. Petrádia sto Aigaío)] by Natalia Kapatsoulia, Filippos Mandilaras ", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Dorota Mackenzie. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/265. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Natalia Kapatsoulia , Filippos Mandilaras

The Cyclades: Jewels in the Aegean [Κυκλάδες. Πετράδια στο Αιγαίο (Kykládes. Petrádia sto Aigaío)]

Greece (2017)

TAGS: Apollo Artemis Athenians Cycladic Figurines Delian League Greece in the Roman Era Leto Persians



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

General information	
Title of the work	The Cyclades: Jewels in the Aegean [Κυκλάδες. Πετράδια στο Αιγαίο (Kykládes. Petrádia sto Aigaío)]
Country of the First Edition	Greece
Country/countries of popularity	Greece
Original Language	Greek
First Edition Date	2017
First Edition Details	Filippos Mandilaras, *Κυκλάδες. Πετράδια στο Αιγαίο* [Kykládes. Petrádia sto Aigaío], My First History [Η Πρώτη μου Ιστορία (Ī prṓtī mou Istoría)] (Series). Athens: Papadopoulos Publishing, 2017, 36 pp.
ISBN	9789605696702
Available Onllne	Demo of 7 pages available at epbooks.gr (accessed: October 13, 2021).
Genre	Instructional and educational works, Picture books
Target Audience	Children (5+)
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.

Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk Dorota Mackenzie, University of Warsaw, dorota.mackenzie@gmail.com

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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).

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Additional information

Summary

This book offers an informative and concise overview of the history and culture of the Cycladic islands for young children. The narrative starts with a reference to the Aegaeis to a continental shelf with mountains and plains that covered the present-day Aegean Sea. The book recounts how the earth trembled and everything was covered with water. Only the tops of the mountains stayed above sea level. Leto found refuge to give birth to her children in one of the rocks sticking out of the sea. This island was called Delos. As the narrative continues, other islands formed a circle around Delos. The illustration here shows Leto as a young woman and Apollo and Artemis as children. In connection with the early Cycladic period (3200–2000 BC), we read that the gods – no names are given – lived on the islands, and that mortals were jealous of the gods and decided to inhabit the islands also. We see a craftsman making Cycladic figures, and we are perhaps encouraged to think about techniques and materials. For 1600 BC, we have an image of the famous fisherman fresco from Akrotiri, Thera. The hive in artistic activity, and civilization more generally, is said to have been interrupted by the eruption of Thera's volcano.

The book goes on to discuss how, in later times, the Persians, the Athenians, and the Romans all left their mark on the Cycladic islands. In the current era, we have a mention of the pirates, the Byzantines, the Venetians, and the Genoans. Syros was made the capital of liberated 19th-century Greece, and the illustrations here show European-looking aristocrats before a neoclassical building. We read how the sinking of Greek warship Elli on the island of Tenos marred August 1940. Not much later, Greece entered World War II. After the war, life on the islands changed. Some islands became places of exile. Some other islands welcomed wealthy ship owners. The book closes by referring to tourists today, and we see people enjoying a night out.

Analysis

In a book about the history of a popular tourist destination there is a reference to myth early on, to Leto giving birth on the island of Delos. Generally, however, mythical events follow paleontological ones, the shaking of the earth and the sinking of most of the Aegaeis. As presented in the book, science, rather than myth, can explain how the

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Cyclades originated. Ancient people, and not mythical characters, coined the name "Cyclades" to describe the islands surrounding sacred Delos.

The illustration featuring Leto, Apollo, and Artemis shows a beautiful sun-lit landscape by the sea that reminds the reader of modern holidaying on the Cycladic islands. Leto wears a red dress and grills fish in a barbeque, perhaps like a modern tourist. Child Artemis and child Apollo, who are both blond, play happily. Apollo is singing and Artemis chases a bird with her bow and arrow, as is appropriate, respectively, for the god of light and music and the goddess of hunting. The gods are playful about their roles and duties. The vegetation features cactus plants, which are suggestive of the drought episodes in many Cycladic islands. These arid conditions have been discussed extensively in the Archaeology of Bronze-Age Aegean*.

The activities of the gods and mortals are kept separate in the book's textual and visual language. Myth is associated with a very distant past. The gods are depicted as having lived on the islands before the early Cycladic period (3200–2000 BCE), when people came and produced high art. The Cycladic figurines are treated as artistic entities, and they are depicted in the process of production. There is no mention, not even implicitly, that the figurines could represent divinities. Humans' habitation of the Cycladic islands was not in any way determined by the gods. Instead, a logical explanation is provided, namely, that the islands were rich in mineral resources, the sea offered good-quality fish, and that the islands were on key trade routes. For the latter, the illustration features the route Attica to Alexandria, although the Egyptian city was unknown with this name in Cycladic times.

On the front cover, Kapatsoulia shows some children playing with Cycladic figurines and some with a cat, making the art of the Cyclades enticing to children. Mandilaras uses colloquial terms, such as "γλεντζές" [party-goer] for the Cycladic figurine of a seated man raising his cup (Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 286)**. Such colloquialisms make the third millennium BCE accessible to young learners.

In places, Mandilaras' language is poetic, and this could allude to well-known modern Greek poetry. In the opening page, the mention of rocks, of white houses, and of the sun could point to the work of

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Odysseas Elytis (1911–1996), winner of the 1979 Nobel Prize in literature***. In particular, Elytis may remind a primary-school teacher of the following verses from a poem in a school textbook about Greek language for 10–12 year-olds****.

Σπίτια μεγάλα κι άσπρα, σπίτια βουερά

πάνω στη μαύρη πέτρα πάνω στα νερά

[Big white houses, buzzing houses

on the black rocks on the waters] (transl. K. Volioti).

Our illustrated book, then, may be preparing children for their formal education, introducing them subtly into the culture of Modern Greece.

It would appear that the book is as much about history as it is about culture, ancient and modern. The salience of myth, of Leto and her children, falls into the background. The emphasis is on the achievements of mortals. The book conveys a sense that throughout the ages the people of the Cyclades managed well with adverse conditions, such as with a volcanic eruption, with the pirates, and with World War II. Present-day tourism, then, may emerge as yet another example of managing adverse conditions.

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* See, for example, Cyprian Broodbank, *An Island Archaeology of the Early Cyclades*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

** See gettyimages.co.uk (accessed: July 31, 2018).

*** See snhell.gr and poetryfoundation.org (accessed: July 31, 2018).

**** See ebooks.edu.gr (accessed: July 31, 2018).

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

Apollo Artemis Athenians Cycladic Figurines Delian League Greece in the Roman Era Leto Persians

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Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	History Parents (and children) Past Relationships
Further Reading	Broodbank, Cyprian, *An Island Archaeology of the Early Cyclades*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
Addenda	Hard bound. From a series entitled *My First History*.

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