Elizabeth Hale, "Entry on: A-Maze-Ing Minotaur by Juliet Rix, Juliet Snape", peer-reviewed by Miriam Riverlea and Lisa Maurice. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/514. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Juliet Rix , Juliet Snape

A-Maze-Ing Minotaur

United Kingdom (2014)

TAGS: Ariadne Crete Knossos Labyrinth Minoans Minos Minotaur Theseus





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

General information	
Title of the work	A-Maze-Ing Minotaur
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	United Kingdom, United States
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2014
First Edition Details	Juliet Rix, Juliet Snape, *A-Maze-Ing Minotaur.* London: Frances Lincoln Books, 2014, 32 pp.
ISBN	9781847806543
Genre	Myths, Picture books, Toy and movable books
Target Audience	Children (ages 7–10)
Author of the Entry	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Miriam Riverlea, University of New England, mriverlea@gmail.com Lisa Maurice, Bar-Ilan University, lisa.maurice@biu.ac.il

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



Juliet Rix (Author)

Juliet Rix is a journalist, who has worked for the BBC and written for most of the major British broadsheets. She has a degree in the History of Arts, has travelled to over 50 countries, and writes travel guides. *A-Maze-Ing Minotaur* is her first children's book, inspired by a visit to Crete with her two sons.

Sources:

Bio at the murdochbooks.com.au (accessed: October 3, 2018)

Profile at the bradtguides.com (accessed: October 3, 2018)

Bio prepared by Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au



Juliet Snape (Illustrator)

Juliet Snape is an illustrator who, with her husband Charles Snape, specialises in writing and illustrating maze books (over twenty published, by Dover, Frances Lincoln, and Walker Books) Together, they are co-directors of a company, Juliet & Charles Snape, Ltd, and produce *Circa* and *Buzz*, two maths-based magazines for children (see here, accessed: October 3, 2018). She studied at the Cambridge School of Art and St Martin's School of Art, London, where she completed a postgraduate degree in art.

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.

Sources:

Bio at the murdochbooks.com.au (accessed: October 3, 2018)

Bio prepared by Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au

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.

Additional information

Summary

This picture book retells the story of Theseus and the Minotaur. Its retelling is unusual in that the text is framed on each left page, with a split-level illustration spreading across each pair of pages. In the top illustration (usually taking up two-thirds of the image) is the story of King Minos and his action; the lower illustration (one-third) reveals the Minotaur, lurking below. The style of the illustration is influenced by Minoan art, with bright colours, clothing, and wall-decorations, red columns, blue sky and blue sea. As the story unfolds, the Minotaur is gradually revealed, hiding among columns, asleep, peering up towards the action above. When Theseus enters the labyrinth (pp. 9–10), the page design changes, to reveal a full-page maze of underground stairs, platforms, and rooms (not unlike the underground apartments of Knossos). The front cover of the story promises "a real maze puzzle to solve!", and this page is that maze. Once Theseus is in the maze, trailing Ariadne's golden thread behind him, the layers shift to be the layers of the labyrinth. On page 13–14, the Minotaur confronts Theseus: "The Minotaur let out a mighty roar and Theseus screamed. Bull's hair met boy's skin, sword struck horn, arms and legs flailed everywhere . . . . Then all went quiet." (p. 14). Notably, the Minotaur is grey in colour, almost like a statue or sculpture, perhaps indicating its life underground away from the light. Theseus now has to find his way home, but he cannot see the thread. "He began to panic. Without the thread, how would he find his way out of the Labyrinth?'"(p. 16) A further double page spread shows the map again, this time with the golden thread highlighting the way out (and showing a clue to the reader). "At last his hand caught on the final twists of the golden thread, lying where he had dropped them. Slowly but surely, he wound the thread in, carefully retracing his steps through the maze. The Labyrinth was just as eerie as before, but Theseus was no longer afraid." (pp. 17–18). Theseus rescues his Athenian companions, and Ariadne lets them out of the great doors of the Labyrinth (pp. 19–20); they all escape onto his ship. "Never again would King Minos take the lives of young Athenians to feed his monstrous Minotaur" (pp. 20–21).

A final double page spread tells "The truth behind the story," explaining about the remains of Knossos, its excavation by Sir Arthur Evans, and giving brief context about the Minoan civilisation. "No Labyrinth has been found at Knossos, but excavations have revealed a vast complex of buildings with a large central courtyard reached by an angled corridor and surrounded by over 1000 interconnecting rooms.

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.

	Could the palace itself have been 'the Labyrinth'?" (p. 24) Acknowledgement of the pictures' inspiration by fragments of Minoan paintings is also made.
Analysis	This book offers a simple retelling of the Minotaur myth. It glosses over the Ariadne story, and treats the Minotaur as a simple monster. The Minotaur's depiction as stony-grey might indicate sympathy for its plight underground, or operate as a simple way of dehumanising the monster, and enabling a light handling of the violent aspects of the myth. Of interest is the archaeological research that artist and writer seem to have carried out, and the use of Minoan art as an inspiration for the illustration. The incorporation of the "maze" as a game for child readers to play, along with a clue, indicates an interesting use of picture book formats to encourage tactile responses.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Ariadne Crete Knossos Labyrinth Minoans Minos Minotaur Theseus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Family

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.