Katerina Volioti, "Entry on: Paris and Beautiful Helen [Ο Πάρις και η ωραία Ελένη (O Páris kai i ōraía Elénī)] by Natalia Kapatsoulia, Filippos Mandilaras ", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Lisa Maurice. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/773. Entry version as of November 01, 2026.

Natalia Kapatsoulia , Filippos Mandilaras

Paris and Beautiful Helen [Ο Πάρις και η ωραία Ελένη (O Páris kai i ōraía Elénī)]

Greece (2012)

TAGS: Achaeans Aphrodite Ares Athena Hecuba Helen Hera Iris Menelaus Olympus Paris (Trojan Prince) Peleus Priam Sparta Thetis Troy Zeus





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

General information	
Title of the work	Paris and Beautiful Helen [Ο Πάρις και η ωραία Ελένη (O Páris kai i ōraía Elénī)]
Country of the First Edition	Greece
Country/countries of popularity	Greece
Original Language	Greek
First Edition Date	2012
First Edition Details	Filippos Mandilaras, *Ο Πάρις και η ωραία Ελένη* [O Páris kai i ōraía Elénī], Greek Mythology [Ελληνική Μυθολογία (Ellīnikī Mythología)]. Athens: Papadopoulos Publishing, 2012, 16 pp.
ISBN	9789604843138
Genre	Illustrated works
Target Audience	Children (4+)
Author of the Entry	Katerina Volioti, University of Roehampton, Katerina.Volioti@roehampton.ac.uk
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk 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



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 stories to children. Mandilaras is interested in the anthropology of

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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

Adaptations

The book is an adaptation of the book published in 2008 within the series *My First Mythology:*

Filippos Mandilaras, *Ο Πάρις και η ωραία Ελένη* [O Páris kai i ōraía Elénī], Athens: Papadopoulos Publishing, 2008, 36 pp.

Demo of 13 pages available at epbooks.gr (accessed: October 13, 2021).

Summary

The story starts with pregnant Hecuba, Queen of Troy, having a bad dream. The seer Aesacus advises Hecuba to kill her child. If she does not Troy will be destroyed. Priam asks a herdsman to abandon the newborn child in the mountains. The herdsman leaves the baby under an olive tree. When he returns in a week's time he sees the infant playing with a bear and decides to raise the child as his own. He names the child Paris. The years go by and Paris becomes handsome and good with words. When the Olympians celebrate the wedding of Thetis and Peleus, a beauty contest takes place between Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite. Zeus asks Paris to decide which goddess is the most beautiful. Paris chooses Aphrodite, who promises him the most beautiful woman in the world as his wife. Having told Priam that he (Paris) is his son, Paris sails to Sparta to meet the beautiful Helen.

In the meantime, Helen has married Menelaus, not least because he has presented her with pearls. King Menelaus had asked his people, the Achaeans, to swear to fight against anyone who might dare set eyes on Helen. Paris, with Aphrodite's help, manages to seduce Helen. Before dawn, Paris and Helen set off for Troy. So, the Achaeans went to war. This war lasted for ten years, and many young men died.

Analysis

The book offers an account of who Paris and Helen are. Readers learn more about Paris than Helen, namely, how he survived abandonment, judged a beauty contest, and abducted the most beautiful woman. Helen is portrayed as a femme fatale character.

Paris' upbringing in the mountains may resonate with that of Zeus on Mount Ida, as recounted in another book by the same author and

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illustrator: *The Twelve Gods of Olympus*. The presence of mythical characters in the wilderness seems to follow a wider motif. The beauty contest between the three goddesses takes place in the meadows, while Paris "gazed at mountain tops" (my translation, «αγνάντευε τις βουνοκορφές» in Greek). Kapatsoulia depicts Paris in a relaxed posture. As the goddesses appear before him, Paris reclines on the grass, surrounded by a piglet, two turtles, and a small fluffy sheep. Paris' posture is perhaps reminiscent of that of a famous Classical sculpture from the east pediment of the Parthenon that shows a young man, possibly Dionysos, reclining on a rock.* The animals encircling Paris, however, water down any visual references to Greek antiquity. All animals are small and cute. Their resemblance to soft toys makes the narrative pleasant for young children. These animals, moreover, are too tame to belong to the wilderness of the mountains. Instead, with their playfulness they contribute to an ambience of romantic love in the backdrop of nature, a *topos* in ancient literature, as exemplified by the Greek bucolic poets,** and its rediscovery in Renaissance art (e.g., *The Judgement of Paris*, ca. 1528, by Lucas Cranach the Elder).*** Parents, teachers, and other guardians who read the books to children may recognize the allusion to Classical texts and their reception in early modern times.

Paris is presented here as a smooth-talking amorous young man. He is not only handsome but also well-versed, potentially like a typical (Athenian) citizen who received elite education in an urban environment. We tend to forget that Paris grew up in the mountains. Yet, Paris' ability to talk convincingly ("με τρανή λαλιά" in Greek) plays no role in his seduction of Helen. Aphrodite helped him, we are told, to lure Helen with words ("ξελογιάζει" in Greek). Helen follows him in his ship the same evening, and they sail for Troy together. Paris' attire seems to convey that he is an outsider to mainland Greece. He had to travel to and from Sparta swiftly. Paris wears a blue cap with a pointed top, which might recall those worn by Persians in two other books by the same author and illustrator: *Leonidas and the Battle at Thermopylae* and *The Battle of Marathon*. Amusingly, his cap is decorated with a red heart. Thus, when he judges the three goddesses, and before he falls in love with Helen, Paris impersonates love. If Paris is amorous by nature, then the beauty contest was decided in advance. The contest was a mere excuse for Paris to exhibit his personality traits.

Helen is aware of how her beauty affects others. We read that she had a wonderful stature, her face approximated that of a goddess, and her

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hair fell to her shoulder like waves. Helen is shown by Kapatsoulia standing on the sea's surface, as if she defies the laws of gravity. Her hair blends with the sea's waves, while men swim happily around her. The image seems to emphasise Helen's natural beauty. Helen had multiple suitors, the best young men amongst the Achaeans. The reason for marrying Menelaus was his gift of pearls, that is, of expensive possessions. Here, Helen may be criticized for being materialistic. Readers may become even more critical of Helen at the end of the book, since Helen was indifferent to the loss of life during the Trojan War. The depiction of the Trojan Horse on the book's last page might point to the fall of Troy as a consequence of Helen's actions, as well as to another book in the same series, *Ο Δούρειος Ίππος*.

Mandilaras' language on this last page is especially poetic and presumbaly targets adult readers, who can explain words and meanings to young children. Mandilaras recounts that "the Achaeans took Ares' footpath" (my translation, "οι Αχαιοί πήραν του Άρη το μονοπάτι" in Greek). 'Ares' may sound like 'Hades' ('Άδης' in Greek). Unlike Hades, however, Ares is not a place. The meaning is that the Achaeans went to war. We read, furthermore, that Helen was 'draped in witchcraft' (my translation, 'τυλιγμένη μες στα μάγια' in Greek), as if Helen was fully immersed and lost in her own world.

Throughout the book there is a plethora of unfamiliar objects from the deep past, e.g., a 'burning torch' and a 'sacred wreath' (my translation, 'φλεγόμενος πυρσός' and 'ιερό στεφάνι' in Greek). Many of Mandilaras' words, nonetheless, seem to refer to recent history. Mandilaras calls warriors 'παληκάρια', which translates 'brave young men' and could recall folksongs (δημοτικά τραγούδια) from Greece's nineteenth-century Liberation Struggle (1821).

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* British Museum, 1816,0610.93. See (accessed: March 1, 2019).

** See, for example (accessed: March 1, 2019).

*** Metropolitan Museum of Art, 28.221. See (accessed: March 1, 2019).

Achaeans Aphrodite Ares Athena Hecuba Helen Hera Iris Menelaus

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Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Olympus Paris (Trojan Prince) Peleus Priam Sparta Thetis Troy Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Childhood Gender, female Loss Love Prediction/prophecy Romance Travel War
Addenda	Information about the book. Soft bound.

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