Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: The Iliad: Homer for Fun [L'Iliade – Omero per gioco] by Celina Elmi, Valentina Orlando", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/812. Entry version as of October 31, 2026.

Celina Elmi , Valentina Orlando

The Iliad: Homer for Fun [L'Iliade – Omero per gioco]

Italy (2014)

TAGS: Achilles Agamemnon Aphrodite Apollo Athena Hector Hecuba Helen Hera Menelaus Paris (Trojan Prince) Patroclus Poseidon Priam Thetis Zeus





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

General information	
Title of the work	The Iliad: Homer for Fun [L'Iliade – Omero per gioco]
Country of the First Edition	Italy
Country/countries of popularity	Italy
Original Language	Italian
First Edition Date	2014
First Edition Details	Valentina Orlando, *L'Iliade – Omero per gioco* (*Le Novelle della Cipolla* series). Certaldo: Federighi Editori, 2014, 48 pp.
ISBN	9788898897032
Genre	Adaptations, Illustrated works, Myths
Target Audience	Children
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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



Celina Elmi (Illustrator)

Celina Elmi is an Italian illustrator and graphic designer; she has a degree in Culture and Fashion styling (Università di Lettere e Filosofia). In 2014, along with three more female artists, she formed a collective, “Le Vanvere”, which organizes events and exhibitions. She also organizes various workshops.

Sources:

Personal website (accessed: March 7, 2019).

Bio prepared by Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com



Valentina Orlando (Author)

Valentina Orlando is an Italian author of children books, for example *Dante for Fun*, *The Decameron / Calandrino and the Stolen Pork: Costanza and Martuccio*. These are renditions of classical literature for young readership.

Bio prepared by Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com

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Additional information

Translation

English: *The Iliad – Homer for Fun*, trans. Lesley Burgon, Federighi, 2014, 47 pp.

Summary

As is it noted on the book's cover, "this series of abridged books certainly doesn't intend to replace the originals of the classics they represent, but rather aims to render them accessible and attractive for young people (and… also not-so-young)". This is a perfect summary of the series, which incorporates the mythical stories with the help of visually attractive and highly colorful illustrations on each page; the text is written on top of these paintings which cover the entire page.

This story emphasizes highlights of the Trojan War and narrates the story from the beginning to the end of Troy in a short span of 48 pages. Regardless of the brevity, the book provides a full description of the War and the main points of it, including the intervention of the gods.

The retelling of the Iliad contains the narratives of the golden apple, participation of the gods, the wrath of Achilles, the death of Patroclus and Hector and the wooden horse. Some of these stories did not appear in the Homeric poem, yet since they were part of the Trojan cycle the author decided to include them in order to present a more complete portrayal of the story to young readers.

The author chooses to highlight specific scenes from the narrative, such as Achilles' appeal to his mother (although his choice of short life is not mentioned); Aphrodite's rescue of Paris; and Poseidon's assistance to the Achaeans. It is even mentioned how Apollo struck Patroclus himself and how Patroclus' spirit revealed itself to Achilles. Unlike many retelling of the Trojan War, the involvement of the gods is highly accentuated in this narrative and add elements of fantasy to the story that the young readers may appreciate and be interested in.
The main characters appears at the beginning (a small picture and a short description of each), Greeks, Trojans and Gods. On the back cover there is a note from the editors, stating that they have paid special attention to the visual images, after having carried out research into costumes and settings. The result is an attractive looking book.

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Analysis

The book is named “Homer for Fun” and while it is hard to refer to the Trojan War as “fun” the book does offer an enjoyable reading, mainly because of the attractive and colorful illustrations which spread on full pages and form an integral part of the narrative.

The book refers to Homer as the main point of reference, yet also relates events that are not in the *Iliad*, yet can be found in the *Odyssey* or *Aeneid*, such as the feud between the goddesses, the wooden horse, Achilles’ death and Helen’s return to Greece. For some reason, only Odysseus is referred to by his Roman name, Ulysses. The reason may be that his Roman name is more familiar to the Italian children. The author also uses the words ‘Achaeans’ to refer to the Greeks, followed by the word Greeks in parentheses, thus maintaining the archaic feeling of the war.

There is almost no characterization of Helen, the actual cause of the war. Paris decides to kidnap her because Aphrodite offered her to him (and Menelaus waged war take her back. There is a large picture of Helen and Paris holding hands and looking lovingly at each other, and at the end she is shown from behind, looking at the blazing Troy. Helen’s thoughts or action are not referred to in the book, as if she was indeed a prize to be won. It seems that the author wished to present only a general description of the story, without delving deeper into a more detailed characteristic of different characters. The other characters are also not deeply developed. Achilles is mainly presented as angry and, surprisingly, Hector is presented as rather cruel. There is no tender scene between him and his family. Thus the story depicts only a stereotypical imagery of them.

Colour is also utilized effectively in the illustrations, both to convey the feelings of the characters and to reflect the mood of the narrative. For example, fighting scenes are presented on a yellowish background perhaps to elude to the setting of the battles on the sand; when Achilles hears about Patroclus’ death, the pages are red, symbolizing his anger; Thetis appears on blue background, symbolizing her status as sea nymph. Thus the visual language is just as important as the actual words and plays an equal part in conveying the story. This helps young readers to understand the story even if they are not fluent in reading the text.

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Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Achilles Agamemnon Aphrodite Apollo Athena Hector Hecuba Helen Hera Menelaus Paris (Trojan Prince) Patroclus Poseidon Priam Thetis Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Death Friendship Love Parents (and children) Revenge Violence War
Addenda	The entry is based on the 2017 reprinted edition in English.

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