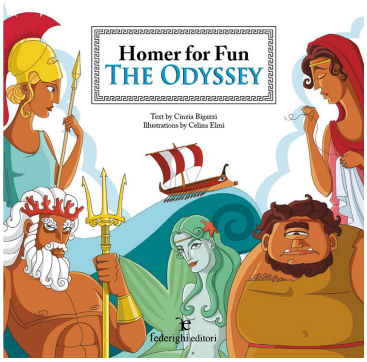
Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Homer for Fun: The Odyssey [Omero per gioco – L'Odissea] by Cinzia Bigazzi, Celina Elmi", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/822. Entry version as of September 14, 2026.

Cinzia Bigazzi , Celina Elmi

Homer for Fun: The Odyssey [Omero per gioco – L'Odissea]

Italy (2010)

TAGS: Aeolus Athena Calypso Charybdis Circe Odysseus / Ulysses Penelope Polyphemus Poseidon Scylla Telemachus Tiresias Zeus



Cover courtesy of Federighi Editori.

General information	
Title of the work	Homer for Fun: The Odyssey [Omero per gioco – L'Odissea]
Country of the First Edition	Italy
Country/countries of popularity	Italy, UK
Original Language	English and Italian
First Edition Date	2010
First Edition Details	Cinzia Bigazzi, *Omero per gioco – L'Odissea*, (*Le Novelle della Cipolla* series). Certaldo: Federighi Editori, 2010, 60 pp.
ISBN	9788889159262
Genre	Adaptations, Illustrated works, Myths
Target Audience	Children
Author of the Entry	Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com
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Creators

Cinzia Bigazzi (Author)

Cinzia Bigazzi is an Italian author of children's books, for example *Dante for Fun*, *The Decameron / Calandrino* and the *Stolen Pork: Costanza and Martuccio*. Some of Cinzia's books are adapted versions of classic books.

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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).

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Additional information

Translation

English: *The Odyssey. Homer for Fun*, Certaldo: Federighi, 2012, 60 pp.

Summary

This book is part of the *Le Novelle della Cipolla* series, which provides abridged myths accompanied by lavish illustrations. This book relates the voyage of Odysseus (called in the book by his Roman name, Ulysses), from the end of the Trojan War till his safe return to Ithaca. After opening with the council of the gods, the story follows Telemachus and Penelope and we first meet Odysseus on Calypso's island. Thus the narrative follows the plot of the Homeric epic quite closely. Odysseus is cast off at the shore of the Phaeacians where he tells them of his adventures. In the end, Odysseus safely returns to his home and reunites with his family. The killing of the suitors is narrated, yet not the subsequent hostilities between their relatives and Odysseus. The story ends on a happy note, with Odysseus and Penelope joined together and fall into deep, peaceful sleep (thanks to Athena's aid).

The accompanying rich and colorful illustrations vividly bring the story to life. The illustrations are an integral part of the book and they help visualize the written text.

Analysis

This book is part of a series offering abridged and adapted stories for children. Therefore the violence or sexual content are moderated. These books are intended to offer an "accessible and attractive" narrative of classic literature, as is stated on the cover. The author appears to be trying to follow the original myth as closely as possible, while cautiously adapting the story for a younger readership.

The book opens, like the Homeric epics, *in medias res*, with the council of the gods regarding Odysseus' fate. In their discussion, the gods mention Ulysses who is held on Calypso's island, his wife and son who wait for him in Ithaca and also Poseidon's revenge on Ulysses because he harmed his son, Polyphemus. This is a lot of information with which the readers come across for the first time, unless they have previously read or heard about the Odyssey. This technique can

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either deter the readers and confuse them or alternatively, trigger their curiosity and make them want to discover more about the plot and learn who Polyphemus is and why and how did Ulysses put out his eye.

Furthermore, opening the story with the council of the gods immediately signals to the readers that the story takes place in a fantastic and mysterious setting, abundant with supernatural beings, with tales of revenge and adventures.

Emphasizing the role of Telemachus, as the boy who needs to search of his missing father, can also relate to the young readers. Telemachus is a young character with whom they can identify. He is no less a hero than his father, since he and his mother are facing impossible straits and their home is threatened.

Thus the actual story after the gods' meeting, begins with Telemachus, Penelope and the situation in Ithaca. While, again, the author aims to follow the Homeric chronology, focusing on the young hero at first makes the story relevant to the young readers. Furthermore, while Ulysses was facing mortal dangers, they were of a fantastic kind, monsters of all sorts. Telemachus and Penelope, on the other side, must face real-life difficulties with evil men who try to take control of their home and their lives. The danger they are facing appear to be more menacing than the more eccentric obstacles, which Ulysses must overcome. Ulysses' struggles, however, could be seen as exciting adventures, despite their obvious perils. Furthermore, Athena is shown as asking Zeus to send Hermes to Calypso and make her release Ulysses. Hence it appears as if the gods already reaffirm that they will help Ulysses return home. Therefore the readers are less concern about his safety than about Telemachus' and Penelope's. When Telemachus announces that he is leaving his home and traveling to Sparta to find news about his father, then the narrative shifts to Ulysses and his adventures.

The author chooses to begin Ulysses' account at the Phaeacians with the happenings at Ismaros against the Kikones. This part of the story is not as widely known as Ulysses' other adventures, therefore it appears as if the author wished to present a well-balanced and complete story as much as possible, even within the limitations of an abridged book. By mentioning this episode and the resulting wrath of Zeus on Ulysses and his crew, the author in fact shows that the gods did not arbitrarily lashed at Ulysses and prevented his return home.

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Her portrayal depicts the gods as punishing Ulysses due to his own actions. Their punishment was severe, yet it was not unjustified.

Making Ulysses tell the story in the first person (similarly to the original myth) also makes the story more exciting, especially if it is narrated as a bed-time story for example. The first person makes the events more relatable and close. We run with Ulysses, laugh with him and worry with him. The reader becomes more engaged with the plot. The emotional climax of this association with the hero is reached in Ulysses' katabasis: his meeting with mother and his futile attempt to embrace her. The inclusion of this emotional episode in this abridged version of the story signifies its importance to the author, who chose to include it as well. The author may be interested in showing the readers the humanity of Ulysses. He has flaws and he suffers and grieves as well. He is not a one-dimensional hero who triumphs in everything he does, but rather he struggles and overcomes difficulties. As we previously mentioned, Telemachus and Ulysses both share life-threatening dangers, yet Telemachus is facing them at home, at the time of the story, while Ulysses is saved and can narrate his story in retrospect. Therefore the readers are "listening" to his story and share his emotions, yet they are not worried about his survival, while they still do not know what will become of Telemachus.

Only after Ulysses finally returns home, the readers meet Telemachus again, as he reunites with his father after his return from Sparta. Both father and son return form their respective voyages in which they both grew and had to endure difficulties. This return home of father and son symbolizes the following return of order to Ulysses' home and family-life.

Regarding the female characters in the story, Penelope is less emphasized than Telemachus. She remains home, unraveling her tapestry and in the end she recognizes Ulysses by testing him regarding their nuptial bed. Other strong female characters include Athena who basically orders Zeus to save Ulysses, Calypso who captured him, Circe, the Sirens and even Ulysses' mother whom he sees in the underworld. Thus Ulysses is constantly aided, hampered yet loved by various female characters throughout his journey.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs,

Aeolus Athena Calypso Charybdis Circe Odysseus / Ulysses Penelope Polyphemus Poseidon Scylla Telemachus Tiresias Zeus

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Characters, and Concepts	
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Death Journeys Love Punishment Revenge Survival Tricksters
Addenda	The entry refers to the 2016 reprinted English edition

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