Katerina Volioti, "Entry on: Jason and the Argonauts [Ο Ιάσονας και η Αργοναυτική Εκστρατεία (O Iásonas kai ī Argonaftikī Ekstrateía)] 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/831. Entry version as of October 31, 2026.

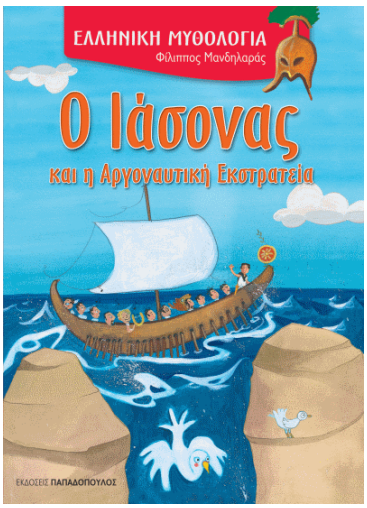
Natalia Kapatsoulia , Filippos Mandilaras

Jason and the Argonauts [Ο Ιάσονας και η Αργοναυτική Εκστρατεία (O Iásonas kai ī Argonaftikī Ekstrateía)]

Greece (2012)

TAGS: Achilles Aeëtes Aeson Amphiaraus Argonauts Argos (City) Boreas Calais Chiron / Cheiron Clashing Rocks / Symplegades / Cyanean Rocks Colchis Greece Harpies Hera Hercules Iolcus Jason Lemnos Medea Mysia Nymphs Orpheus Peleus Pelion Phineus Theseus Thrace Zetes





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

General information	
Title of the work	Jason and the Argonauts [Ο Ιάσονας και η Αργοναυτική Εκστρατεία (O Iásonas kai ī Argonaftikī Ekstrateía)]
Country of the First Edition	Greece
Country/countries of popularity	Greece
Original Language	Greek
First Edition Date	2012
First Edition Details	Filippos Mandilaras, *Ο Ιάσονας και η Αργοναυτική Εκστρατεία* [O Iásonas kai ī Argonaftikī Ekstrateía)], Greek Mythology [Ελληνική Μυθολογία (Ellīnikī Mythología)]. Athens: Papadopoulos Publishing, 2012, 16 pp.
ISBN	9789604843114
Official Website	www.epbooks.gr (accessed: September 04, 2019)
Genre	Illustrated works
Target Audience	Children (aged 3+)
Author of the Entry	Katerina Volioti, University of Roehampton, Katerina.Volioti@roehampton.ac.uk

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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).

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 Ιάσονας και η Αργοναυτική Εκστρατεία* [O Iásonas kai ī Argonaftikī Ekstrateía)], Athens: Papadopoulos Publishing, 2008, 36 pp.

Demo of 9 pages available at epbooks.gr (accessed: October 13, 2021).

Summary

Mandilaras' narrative starts with Jason's childhood on Mount Pelion and ends with the hero's adventures in Colchis.

Aeson, Jason's father, entrusted the child Jason to the centaur Chiron. When he turned twenty Jason headed for Iolcus to dethrone Pelias, his uncle. At a river crossing, Jason assisted an elderly woman, who was the goddess Hera in disguise. Jason lost one sandal in the river. King Pelias was terrified when he saw Jason. He remembered an oracle that he would lose his power to the one-sandaled. Pelias promised Jason the throne only if Jason brought back the golden fleece from Colchis.

Jason built a boat at Argos and searched for a crew of brave men. These included the heroes Hercules and Theseus. The Argonauts sailed to Lemnos, where women lived alone without husbands, and then to the land of Mysia. There, they lost Hylas, Hercules' helper. A nymph fell in love with Hylas and stole him away. When they reached Thrace, the sons of Boreas chased away the Harpyiae, the 'terrible birds' (απαίσια πουλιά in Greek) that ate Phineus' food. Following Phineus' advice, the Argonauts managed to sail past the Clashing Rocks. One morning they reached Colchis. To give the golden fleece, King Aeetes set Jason difficult tasks. Without Medea's help, her magic tricks, Jason would not have succeeded in his mission.

As we read on the last page, 'this magical story' (η μαγική αυτή ιστορία in Greek) continues.

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Analysis

Jason's childhood in the woods echoes that of other mythological characters, including that of the god Hermes in another book by Mandilaras and Kapatsoulia: *Ερμής, ο θεός για όλες τις δουλειές* (*Hermes. The god for all chores*, my translation). What is of significance here is that Jason will receive a good education from Chiron. The centaur is described as a polymath (a doctor, seer, and astrologer), as well as a great pedagogue. Jason's father expects Chiron to make his young son a good person. The wording in Greek (να τον κάνει άνθρωπο) is a catchphrase that recalls a traditional understanding of teachers' duties. According to this understanding, a teacher's priority, especially at elementary school, is to teach children how to be considerate of others in society.

Chiron's education appears to have borne fruit. When Jason meets an elderly lady at the river, he offers to carry her. At this instance, Mandilaras inserts yet another traditional motif in the text. Jason asks for the woman's blessing (την ευχή in Greek). Such a request is rather outdated, and rarely followed by youths in contemporary Greece. Before we read about his great feats, young Jason emerges as a model of humane behaviour. He respects, and even venerates, the elderly. These noble behaviours nuance a myth from the deep past. Jason's story is indeed very old, although this is not acknowledged in the book. In fact, the myth of the Argonauts is mentioned in Homer (*Od*. 12. 69–72).

Jason's kindness, however, does not seem to be sufficient for the hero to overcome adversity. Unlike superheroes in modern popular culture, Jason needs to be assisted by others to complete the extremely demanding missions set by Kings Pelias and Aeetes. Pelias assumes that Jason will not return from Colchis. The expedition is challenging. Jason takes action and builds a ship of fine quality wood. More remarkably, Jason puts together a team of committed crew members who have a range of skills and qualities. Some are celebrated heroes, notably Hercules and Theseus. Readers may think that these characters' supernatural powers will be invaluable in the expedition. It may seem questionable how other members of the crew, like Orpheus, 'the great musician and poet' (ο άφταστος μουσικός και ποιητής in Greek), will contribute to the operation. Adult readers might think beyond books for children and draw parallels to modern agendas about the importance of diversity in high-performance teams. In the business world, for example, a book about team dynamics, *The Wisdom of Teams* by Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith

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(Harvard Business School, 1993), has had a tremendous impact, with multiple re-editions and translations over the years.*

It makes sense, then, that Jason's team includes both renowned and lesser-known mythic actors. Readers could be familiar with Hercules and Theseus, but not with Zetes and Calais, sons of Boreas (the north wind). The two brothers, who have wings and impersonate a strong wind like their father, become instrumental in the story. They defeat the Harpyiae and deliver Phineus from his ordeal. The Harpyiae are nasty creatures. They are described as anthropomorphic birds with steel claws (ανθρωπόμορφα πουλιά με νύχια ατσάλινα in Greek) that snatched away Phineus' food. We read that Phineus was a blind seer, and there is no mention that he was also a King of the Thracians. The omission could make readers feel even more compassionate for Phineus. Zetes and Calais appear to show kindness and help the suffering seer. A moral message may surface here. Kindness overcomes monstrosity and nastiness. Medea, at the very end of the book, is also presented as a helper, committed to assisting Jason. Thus, the book closes with an emphasis on collaboration. Readers may form the impression that this is a story about multiple heroes, not just about Jason.

The name 'Argo' is not mentioned in the text, but it is shown in upper case (ΑΡΓΩ in Greek) in Kapatsoulia's illustration of the ship. Children are likely to be familiar with the name, since 'Argo' is popular in Greece for all kinds of establishments, from hotels to rowing teams. Argo is also the name of a highly-visited wooden replica of a 13th-century BCE ship at the port of Volos,** which children may know about and wish to go and see.

* See hbr.org (accessed: 5 July, 2019).

** For a recent post, see www.volosday.gr (accessed: 5 July, 2019).

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

Achilles Aeëtes Aeson Amphiaraus Argonauts Argos (City) Boreas Calais Chiron / Cheiron Clashing Rocks / Symplegades / Cyanean Rocks Colchis Greece Harpies Hera Hercules Iolcus Jason Lemnos Medea Mysia Nymphs Orpheus Peleus Pelion Phineus Theseus Thrace Zetes

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Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Adversity Childhood Good deeds Good vs evil Heroism Humanism Journeys Justice Love Magic Prediction/prophecy Transformation Travel Values
Addenda	Published in Greek. Soft bound.

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