

Our Mythical Childhood...
Classics and Children's Literature Between East and West

ABSTRACTS
in alphabetical order

Jerzy Axer

Faculty of "Artes Liberales"

University of Warsaw

A Latin Lesson for Bad Boys, or Kipling's Tale of the Enchanted Bird

Latin lesson in Rudyard Kipling's *Regulus* from the series *Stalky & Co.* is discussed from the perspective of initiation of boys into society marked by ethos of the Empire. Mr. King, the Latin teacher uses Horace's *Ode* 3.5 to create for his students a mythology of growing up serving as a point of reference and a protective shield once they enter adulthood.

Elena Ermolaeva

Department of Classical Philology

Saint-Petersburg State University

Classical Antiquity in Children's Literature in the Soviet Union

Classical education in its traditional form dispensed at Classical grammar school existed in Russia until 1917. In the Soviet Union, a unified Soviet secondary school system abolished all

teaching of classical languages. The secondary school curriculum included a one-year course in Ancient History, both Eastern and Western.

Soviet children knew ancient Greek myths mostly from the book *Legends and Myths of Ancient Greece* by a Moscow Professor Nicholas Kuhn (1877–1940), first published in 1922, then reissued in 1955, albeit with some passages removed by Soviet censors and with quotations from Engels, Marx, and Lenin added in the preface. It was also translated into different national languages and reprinted many times in a great number of copies. Most popular were heroic myths about Prometheus, Heracles, and the Argonauts. *Odysseus' Adventures*, a prose rendering of the *Odyssey* for children, first appeared in 1952 from the presses of Children's Literature, a publishing house whose scholarly adviser was I.I. Tolstoy, member of the Academy. In 1964 followed *The Trojan War and its Heroes*, a tale based on the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*.

Heroic historical narratives and novels for children were quite popular. For example, numerous historical novels about Antiquity by Alexander Nemirovsky (1919–2007), a scholar, poet, and translator of Rilke and Hesse. The narratives by a children writer Lyudmila Voronkova (1906–1976) were devoted to the Messenian wars, to Alexander the Great and to Themistocles. They were initially published in a magazine, the “Pioneer.”

The outstanding classicist, Professor Solomon Luria (1891–1964) also wrote for children. *The Letter of a Greek Boy* (1930), based on a real letter found on a Oxyrhynchus papyrus dating from the 2nd–3rd c. AD, was written for a children magazine the “Hedgehog” [“Ezh”], commissioned by its editor Samuil Marshak. In 1960–1964 Luria wrote books for children about Archilochus, about decipherment of Mycenaean tablets. Together with his colleague historian Mark Botvinnik he wrote a book *The Travels of Democritus* (1964). Another classicist, scholar and translator, pupil of Tadeusz Zieliński and Michail Rostovzev, Maria Sergeenko (1891–1987) also wrote a story for children: *The Fall of Icarus* (1963).

Ancient Greece (1974) is the title of a collection of amusing stories by philologists and historians intended for the secondary school. There were also translations, such as *Spartacus* by Raffaello Jovanioli; *Gdy słońce było bogiem* by Zenon Kosidowski; *Perikles i Aspazja* by Aleksander Krawczuk; *The Ides of March* by Thornton Wilder; *I, Claudius* by Robert Graves; *Civilisation Grecque* by André Bonnard and others.

Valentina Garulli

Department of Classical Philology and Italian Studies

University of Bologna

Laura Orvieto and the Classical Heritage in Italy before WW2

Laura Orvieto (1876–1953), a Jewish-Italian author, wrote a series of books for children: *Storie della storia del mondo. Greche e barbare* (1911), *Principesse, bambini e bestie* (1914), *Storie della storia del mondo. Il natale di Roma* (1928), *Storie della storia del mondo. La forza di Roma* (1933), *Storie di bambini molto antichi* (1937). The paper will discuss Orvieto's classical inspirations, issues relative to Jewish identity within a historical Italian context, as well as her literary sources and development of classical themes.

Cristian-Nicolae Gașpar

Department of Medieval Studies

Central European University, Budapest

Politics, Euhemerism, and Adolescent Literature in Socialist Romania:

Horia Stancu's "Asklepios"

Asklepios, a novel written by Horia Stancu (1926–1983), was, judging by the standards of book publishing in the Socialist Republic of Romania in the second half of the twentieth century, a great success. The three Romanian editions of the book (a first edition published in 1965, reprinted in 1968, and in a revised version in 1972) stand as proof of this in addition to translations into several foreign languages such as German (1969), Polish (three editions published in 1969, 1975, and 1989), French (1970), Modern Greek (1971), and Portuguese (1974). Such success, which can hardly be explained entirely on the basis of the artistic value of the novel itself, is puzzling. What made this piece of children's literature produced in Socialist Romania a bestseller of sorts?

The present paper attempts to provide some answers to this question and, in the process, offer a glimpse into the subtle interplay between ideology, personal interests, and literature in publications addressed to young audiences in Socialist Romania in an age usually characterized as one of (timid) ideological thaw (1965–1970).

In doing so, I will look at the various factors which may explain the apparent success of Horia Stancu's book. These will include the biography of the author himself, his medical profession and the personal interests associated with it, as well as his privileged status as the son of Zaharia Stancu (1902–1974), one of the major fiction authors in post-WWII Romania, a showcase novelist and staunch supporter of the Communist regime, and an extremely influential figure in his capacity of president of the Writers' Union. I will also address the way in which the novel itself was made to serve a specific ideological purpose and, in the process, convey officially sponsored ideals to its young audience. I will argue that as a fictional account of the inventor of medicine, Asclepius, transformed by a modern euhemerist interpretation into a "historical" character, Horia Stancu's novel can be read in terms of a consistent attempt at debunking mythology and religious belief. In the novel, these are systematically opposed to the values of reason, modern science, and a view of the world informed by historical materialism. Last, but not least, I will also look into the book's literary merits as an entertaining work of fiction, potentially appealing to a certain taste for adventure set in a historical context, travel to exotic spaces, fascination with classical antiquity, and, possibly, an inclination to escapism as potential reasons for its apparent success as an item of adolescent literature.

Elizabeth Hale

School of Arts

University of New England (New South Wales)

Katabasis Down Under in the Young Adult Fantasies of Margaret Mahy and Maurice Gee

Margaret Mahy and Maurice Gee, two of New Zealand's greatest writers for children and young adults are preoccupied with the underworld. Their characters plunge into dark places—through fractures of the mind, chasms in the earth, or portals to other worlds. This paper will examine the

repeated motif of the *katabasis*, the journey to and return from the underworld, a motif that has multiple classical and contemporary resonances. In so doing it will consider the role of the *katabasis* in forming adolescent identity and subjectivity in the context of New Zealand literature and culture.

Edith Hall

Department of Classics
King's College London

Aesop's Fables as Modern Children's Stories

Owen Hodkinson

Department of Classics
University of Leeds

'His Greek Materials': Philip Pullman's Use of Classical Mythology

This paper will examine the various kinds of use to which Classical and in particular Greek mythology is put in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy (*Northern Lights* [*The Golden Compass*], 1995; *The Subtle Knife*, 1997; *The Amber Spyglass*, 2000); this is a fertile field for investigation, since his fantasy world contains many overt references (from relatively commonly echoed topoi, e.g. the passage to the world of the dead requiring the services of a ferryman to cross a river, to more unique and *recherché* references, e.g. the use of the word 'daemon' to denote a kind of personal deity which all humans inhabitants of the world possess). It will investigate the depth and breadth of Pullman's familiarity with the myths and their interpretation, and for what purpose(s) he himself claims he uses this material, surveying published interviews with the author in popular magazines and literary reviews as well as academic work on his novels. It will compare this evidence with interpretative readings of key passages in the novels for their use of Greek myth references and consider the actual effects and functions of the

mythical figures, topographical and thematic features that inhabit his world and his texts (naturally bearing in mind the likely level of familiarity of the target audience, namely teens, with the Greek material referred to). Among other purposes, Pullman (famously an atheist and public critic of the established church and its role in society in his native Britain) wanted to give his alternative world an alternative, ‘pagan’ system of deities and powerful mythical beings, which engages with and to some extent creates the structure of human and other societies in his world in analogous ways to the church and other organised religions in the real world. This paper will thus consider Pullman’s use of Greek myths against the background of his stated secularist agenda and examine in detail the appropriateness and the success of some of his chosen alternatives to and analogues for Christian spiritual entities and social structures within his fantasy world; as part of this investigation, it will also touch upon the positioning of this fantasy series in contrast to C.S. Lewis’ similar *Narnia* series—also a fantasy for children/teens which evokes much of classical myth, which also, however, contains significant elements of Christian allegory.

Katarzyna Jerzak

Comparative Literature Department

University of Georgia, US

***The Aftermath of Myth: Hermes in J.M. Barrie’s “Peter Pan
in Kensington Gardens” and in Astrid Lindgren’s “Karlson on the Roof”***

“As long as there is still one beggar around, there will still be myth.”

Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*

“...it wasn’t anything supernatural at all, just Karlson on the Roof.”

Astrid Lindgren, *Karlson on the Roof*

“And in the end, you know, he flew away.”

J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*

I will analyze two lasting and yet controversial creations—J.M. Barrie’s Peter Pan from *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* and Astrid Lindgren’s Karlson from *Karlson on the Roof*—as distant

literary manifestations of the ancient god Hermes. First I will show the links between the two characters and Hermes, as well as a comparison between Peter and Karlson. Then I will discuss how the two stories correspond to a framework set up by Walter Benjamin in *The Storyteller*: “The fairy tale tells us of the earliest arrangements that mankind made to shake off the nightmare which myth had placed upon its chest.”

Neither character fits the mold of the mythical deity neatly, and yet they both possess enough attributes to be more than mere echoes of Hermes. The enduring power of the protagonists is, in part, due to the fact that they resonate on the deep level of collective memory and collective imagination. And yet the genre of fantasy does not apply to the two tales satisfactorily, either. Just as their protagonists are *Betwixt-and-Betweens*, so, too, these stories situate themselves between myth and fairy tale, with *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* close to tragedy and *Karlson on the Roof* at the comedy end of the spectrum. Connecting the two stories is yet another myth: that of Daedalus and Icarus, the myth of flying. Every child wants to fly. Peter does it almost despite himself and with no wings, simply because he is “dead-confident-sure” that he can, while Karlson, whose whirring motor sounds “heavenly,” can fly because he is “the world’s best stunt flyer.”

Hermes—god of wit and ambiguity—is a fitting predecessor for the characters of both Karlson—who is very funny—and Peter Pan, who is the very image of ambiguity. The genre of the two stories, itself ambiguous, is capacious enough to contain the absolutely outlandish and the absolutely necessary. The reader—both child and adult—is the recipient of the counsel that, argues Benjamin, when “woven into the fabric of real life is wisdom.”

György Karsai

Department of Classical Philology, University of Pécs

Academy of Drama and Film in Budapest

Children’s Literature in Hungary after WW2: Ideological Struggle in the Kindergarten

In my presentation I will deal with selected Greek mythological figures present in the Hungarian after war children’s literature. There are different categories of these mythical heroes: the so-

called “stars” (e.g. Heracles, Odysseus, Zeus, Daedalus, Icarus, Helen), whose stories figure in all handbooks and Greek myths-collections; the good heroes and heroines (e.g. Antigone, Leda, Penelope, Prometheus, Telemachos, Perseus); and the evil ones (e.g. Hades, Cerberus, Minotaur, Midas, Scylla, Sphinx). These categories are sometimes mixed, sometimes clearly separated in the children’s literature in Hungary from the early 1950. Some of them served as examples to illustrate the humanity’s *eternal struggle* for freedom, helped or obstructed by the divine powers (e.g. Prometheus, Odysseus, Antigone; Creon, Ares, Midas). There are also explicitly different approaches in the *story-telling* in the books for children published in Hungary between 1945–1989: Imre Trencsényi-Waldapfel’s *Greek Mythology* is not only a correct summary of the most important Greek myths, but it is ‘ideologically perfect,’ too. Not so with Árpád Szabó’s books written on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (in prose), and on Herodotos’ *Persian Novels* which are absolutely free from any ideological background. I will illustrate these different approaches with some examples taken from the books of Imre Trencsényi-Waldapfel and Árpád Szabó.

Joanna Kłos

Faculty of “Artes Liberales”
University of Warsaw

Telemachus Wearing Jeans: Adam Bahdaj’s Reception of the Myth about Odysseus’ Son

Adam Bahdaj’s novel *Telemachus Wearing Jeans* [*Telemach w dzinsach*] was published in 1977. Its main character, fifteen-year-old Maciek, escapes from his boarding-school to look for his father, who had left the family years earlier. While traveling across Poland and encountering many obstacles along the way, he visits the places where his father supposedly have lived. Thus, what we get is a modern version of the first books of Homer’s *Odyssey*, where Telemachus travels in the footsteps of Odysseus. The mythical Greek kingdoms are replaced in the novel by the cities and towns of Polish People’s Republic, reflecting the realities typical of the period. The character’s subsequent adventures are presented to the young readers in volume 2, entitled *Where’s Your Home, Telemachus?* [*Gdzie twój dom, Telemachu?*] and published five years later.

In the 1970's and 1980's Bahdaj was one of the most important Polish writers of adventure novels for teenagers. The books about Telemachus, just like many other works by Bahdaj, gained significant popularity: reedited many times, they have been included on the IBBY Honour List; in 1990 they served as basis for a TV series.

The present paper will discuss the reception of the myth about Telemachus and Odysseus in Bahdaj's novel. First, the references to the myth present in the narration will be scrutinized. Such references fall in two categories: those aiming at popularizing the myth among the readers (e.g. the main character's favourite books are *Odyssey* and Jan Parandowski's *Wojna trojańska* [*Trojan War*]) and those designed to initiate a dialogue between the author and the readers already familiar with Telemachus' story (e.g. tips foreshadowing the plot's end that can be understood only by a person knowing the myth). Secondly, the paper will discuss those aspects of the story about Odysseus and his son that are emphasized by Bahdaj in his reinterpretation of the myth. A special consideration will be given to the son–father relation: Maciek is namely looking for his father, because he needs a figure of authority who would stand by him during his adolescence. Bahdaj seems thus to view the myth about Telemachus' travel as a story about growing up and the initiation into manhood. Finally, the paper will attempt to explain why the author chose an ancient Greek myth as a framework for his novel, i.e. why did he decide to provide young people living in Poland of the 1970's and 1980's with such a point of reference.

Przemysław Kordos

Faculty of “Artes Liberales”

University of Warsaw

Modern Greek Children Meet Their Ancient Legacy

The Author analyzes three selected Modern Greek stories for children. All three of them are well-known, popular, were awarded prizes and have a strong Ancient theme:

- Alki Zei, *Η Αλίκη στη χώρα των μαρμάρων* [*Alice in the Marbleland*], a story about a visit to the British Museum;

- Christos Boulotis, *To άγαλμα που κρύωνε* [*A Statue That Was Cold*], announced as “a true event that once occurred at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens”;
- Kira Sinou and Eleni Chouk-Apostolopoulou, *To χέρι στο βυθό* [*A Hand in the Depth*], a story about discovering the famous Antikythira wreck.

The goal of the Author is twofold:

1. to show or rather sketch the image of Antiquity that is being imposed on Greek children. I will look especially for any trace of expected ideological bias or even ‘pro-Ancient propaganda’;
2. to observe what strategies are used to interest children in their Ancient legacy. The question is to what extent contemporary Greek children might perceive the Antiquity differently than their peers in other countries. Some answers should be obvious but some might prove surprising.

Beata Kubiak Ho-Chi

Department of Japanese and Korean Studies

University of Warsaw

Isoppu monogatari, or Aesop’s Fables in Japanese Literature for Children

This paper is about *Aesop’s Fables*, popular in the modern Japanese children’s literature, and known in Japan already since the 16th century. It is astonishing given the fact that more detailed knowledge of western literature, including children’s literature, had been introduced to Japan only two and a half centuries later, in the second half of the 19th century. Initially, these fables were known in Japan under a name sounding quite foreign to the Japanese, i.e. *Esopo no fabulas*; later they became known as *Isoho monogatari* [*Aesop’s Tales*]; now they are called *Isoppu dōwa/guwa* [*Aesop’s Tales/Fables*] or *Isoppu monogatari* [*Aesop’s Tales*]. The paper presents the history of Aesop’s fables in Japan since their first Japanese translation from Latin by an unknown Jesuit missionary in 1593, through numerous translations and illustrated editions during a period of almost complete isolation from foreign influences lasting from the 1st half of the 17th century to the 2nd half of the 19th century, and until modern and contemporary times. A translation of Aesop’s fables at the end of the 19th century, in the period of Japanese enlightenment, by Watanabe On (a scholar from samurai circles who ran a famous military

school in Numazu), triggered their extreme popularity. Due to the didactic and moralistic character of the fables, already highly valued in pre-modern Japan, *The Popular Tales by Aesop* [*Tsūzoku Isoppu monogatari*] – as translated by Watanabe – belonged to the core of the so-called “upbringing” in Japanese schools, in the times of the formation of the modern Japanese state and until the World War 2. The wisdom inherent in Aesop’s fables combined with their brevity and clarity placed them among the stories of the world children’s literature most frequently published in contemporary Japan.

Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer

German Department

Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen

Orpheus and Eurydice

Reception of the Myth in Children’s Literature in German, French and English

There is a tendency in modern children’s literature to refer to ancient Greek and Roman history, literature and myths. This interest manifests itself in multiple re-tellings and adaptations of ancient myths targeted at children as well as in historical or fantasy novels for children focusing on classical myths and ancient history. Different functions and meanings of these inspirations will be analyzed in detail in relation to children’s books that refer to the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice.

Among the selected works from four countries (Germany, France, United Kingdom, USA) are comics, picture books, modern stories retelling myths and novels for children and young adults created by such authors as Francesca Lia Block, Paul de Bouchet, Ashton Brodi, Cornelia Funke, Werner Heiduczek, Katherine Marsh, Kai Meyer, Yvan Pommaux, and Nancy Springer.

I will explore on one hand why this specific myth was selected for children and on the other, what narrative and intertextual strategies were used by the authors. I expect to demonstrate that the knowledge of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is generally taken for granted, thus contributing to an increased complexity of children’s books referring to it. Due to the

combination with other ancient myths, the transfer of the myth into modern times, or the interconnection with Romantic ideas, the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice fulfils the function of a narrative pattern characterized by sub-textual levels. The interconnectedness of the ancient myth of Orpheus and Eurydice with contemporary themes and narrative strategies reveals an astonishing potential of multiple meanings and intertextual references. This evolution is additionally affected by a psychological interpretation of the protagonists, in particular in modern versions of the ancient myth.

Helen Lovatt

Department of Classics

University of Nottingham

East, West and Finding Yourself in Caroline Lawrence's "Roman Mysteries"

Various exotic and Eastern locations function within the "Roman Mysteries" as centres of identity, alternative to Ostia and Rome: Lupus searches for his mother in Greece; Nubia finds her family in Egypt; the whole group finally settle in Asia Minor. Rome as centre is set against various locations of 'otherness': the homeliness of Ostia, the sophistication of Magna Graecia, the learning of Alexandria. What is the effect of bringing the narrative to a close in a non-Roman environment? How important is Christianity in offering a different mode of forming an identity, separate from family, ethnicity, cultural homogeneity and education? How does this version of Roman history draw on traditions of writing Rome for children (and adults)? *Quo Vadis* is important here (Lawrence is a keen cinema fan), and other Romano-Christian books. Comparison with Lindsey Davis reveals the different dynamics at work: while Falco often ventures around the empire in search of local colour and new adventures, Lawrence's young detectives are always looking for more than the solution to their mysteries: they are also hoping to find themselves. Frequently they find that their identity does not lie straightforwardly with Rome, and negotiations with imperialism and the political power of the emperor are equally important here. The use of Roman Britain by, for instance, Rosemary Sutcliffe and Rudyard Kipling, offers a similarly sophisticated model of engagement with and yet independence from

Rome. I will range widely across the seventeen Roman Mysteries, with a particular focus on Judaism (Jonathan in *The Assassins of Rome*, *The Enemies of Jupiter*, *The Gladiators from Capua*), Africa (*The Beggar of Volubilis*, *The Scribes from Alexandria*) and Christianity/Asia Minor (*The Prophet from Ephesus*, *The Man from Pomegranate Street*).

Adam Łukaszewicz

Institute of Archaeology

University of Warsaw

***Vitalis the Fox. Remarks on an Early Reading Experience
of a Future Historian of Antiquity in Poland (1950s–1960s)***

The classical heritage can be transmitted directly or indirectly. In both ways it is present in many books for children. In this paper a few selected items of the speaker's early readings will be very concisely discussed in search of traces of the ancient world. These stories are as a random sample of the literary production for young readers of that time. They provide also an eloquent evidence of the variety, originality and high quality of the literature available to children in Poland. The comments will focus on the story of Vitalis the Fox by Jan Brzechwa.

Katarzyna Marciniak

Faculty of "Artes Liberales"

University of Warsaw

Create Your Own Mythology: Children for Children in Mythological Fan Fiction

The paper will focus on one of the most original aspects of the reception of Classical Antiquity among contemporary young people: mythological fan fiction.

Fan fiction consists in creating texts inspired by a pre-existing work of culture by its fans. It is a recent phenomenon that began in the milieu of science-fiction public, though its origins

may be traced many centuries back, to the tradition of writing parodies, continuations, or alternative endings to famous literary works. However, it was the Internet which allowed this phenomenon to fully blossom providing the main platform of publication for today's fan fiction pieces, while in the 1960s, the distribution was limited mainly to the genre-restricted sci-fi fanzines. Indeed, the World Wide Web has been gathering fans of all kinds and, in consequence, it has inspired the creation of fan labour of boundless scope. Nowadays, fan fiction is a global phenomenon and every fanfic author, whether a child or an adult – each having equal rights – may potentially count on millions of readers.

In awareness of this, an innovative attempt will be made to analyze fan fiction inspired by classical mythology, and one of a very special type: where children are both authors and recipients of this kind of fan labour.

In the course of this analysis, the following research questions will be taken into consideration: Is there a “canon” of literary collections of myths referred to by fan fiction authors? How does mythological fan fiction fit into the genres typical for this phenomenon (alternative universe, continuation, point of view, crossover – specially of classical myths with “Harry Potter” world)? How does mythological fan fiction make use of the standard fan fiction tropes (adventure, angst, crime, drama, family, fantasy, friendship, general, horror, humour, hurt/comfort, mystery, parody, poetry, romance, sci-fi, song, spiritual, supernatural, suspense, tragedy)? Which themes, threads, and heroes are the “most wanted” among young authors? What is the role of the “living audience” in this phenomenon (feedback, collaborative fiction, educational gains)?

The material for this analysis will be drawn from FanFiction.Net, the largest such Internet platform gathering ca. 2 million users from all over the world. Thus, it will be possible to compare this aspect of the reception of classical mythology across different cultural regions.

Lisa Maurice

Faculty of Jewish Studies

Bar-Ilan University

The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Israeli Children's Fiction

Barbara Milewska-Ważbińska

Institute of Classical Studies

University of Warsaw

Childhood Rhetorical Exercises of the Victor of Vienna

To study some unusual aspects of humanistic education in the mid 17th century, the Author will look at two manuscripts preserved at the National Library of Poland in Warsaw containing Jan Sobieski's (the future Polish monarch's) notes taken during lectures as well as his Latin school essays. Between 1640 and 1643 the brothers, Marek and Jan Sobieski attended the celebrated school Kolegium Nowodworskie in Kraków where Jan produced his notes and essays.

The Author will discuss first the school curriculum, then Jan Sobieski's notes in his two extant schoolbooks. The topics of the future king's notes and essays covered not only to everyday life but also civil virtues and morals. Notes which contain references to ancient history, literature and culture will come up for a special scrutiny. The two following source texts will be analysed in detail:

1. Notes taken during a lecture on Cicero's speech *Pro lege Manilia*;
2. Sobieski's essay including the encomium of Athens *Laus Athenarum*.

Particularly valuable are passages discussing the relationship between an outstanding individual and his nation, the aspect of personal responsibility for national matters, love of the homeland, work for the public good, preservation and propagation of culture and tradition. The Author will also attempt to answer the question: to what the extent could Antiquity-related sources, as well as Sobieski's essays based on them, shape personality, moral attitude and intellectual abilities of the future king who lead his nation to the victory at Vienna.

Michał Mizera

Faculty of “Artes Liberales”

University of Warsaw

Tadeusz Zieliński’s “Irezyona. Attic Legends”: Between Academic and Literary Mythology

Tadeusz Zieliński’s (1859–1944) *Attic Legends* consist of a series of mythological stories about the fabled beginnings of Athens, from the reign of King Pandion I to the era of the hero Theseus. Written in Russian in St. Petersburg during the two revolutions, they were also published in Polish in the early twenties of the last century when the author was already in Warsaw. Nowadays forgotten, *Attic Legends* are not only a key to understanding Zieliński’s philosophy of religion, but they also reveal the great talent of this world-renowned literary scholar and academic lecturer, who was a member of the Polish Academy of Literature and a Polish candidate for the Nobel Prize.

Attic Legends are charming mythological tales for children and adolescents, but they also constitute a hidden message on Zieliński’s attitude to Antiquity. Focused on the study of Antiquity, he was inspired by the latest achievements of contemporary science. “Linked to ancient Antiquity and the Christian Middle Ages as the object of study, Zieliński was not a believer in the philosophy of Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Thomas, but Herder, Hegel, Humboldt, Wundt, Taine, Renan, Dilthey, Nietzsche”—as Andrzej Walicki justly said. Historicism, ethno-cultural pluralism, natural determinism, psychologism, technical inventions, discoveries in physics and chemistry—Zieliński was familiar with them all.

The turn of the century brought a number of revolutionary changes in the philosophy of art and man that caused among other things a return to Antiquity, its reinterpretation and the cult of the ancient Mediterranean as the beginning of the European civilization. It is the classical philology from the late 19th century, greatly influenced by Zieliński, that maintained contact with the tradition which should be understood not as a set of rigid rules, but as a creative and continuous dialogue with the past. You cannot ignore the importance of the debate on religion and religiosity, which begins on one hand in the work of Friedrich Nietzsche and his polemicists and on the other in the studies of anthropologists and psychologists. From this situation of redefining the relationship to the past and to the religion results the need of spiritual, moral,

scientific and artistic authority. This need was perfectly fulfilled by Zieliński, who became a champion and mentor to several generations of writers, theatre artists, politicians, classical philologists, and general readers.

The entire series was conceived as a set of truths that were already known to the Greeks of the archaic era, which Zielinski showed to the reader of his times. He considered these tales his olive branch, so called *eiresione*: branch of peace, harmony, consensus, the folk tradition as a carrier of the deepest truths, of the faith in the gods (in God) that gives hope for eternal life. Mythical childhood, which Zieliński brings to life, is a meeting with the Greeks, who enjoyed themselves and suffered as much as we do.

David Movrin

Department of Classical Philology

University of Ljubljana

Aemulating Aesopus: Slovenian Fables and Fableers Between Tradition and Innovation

The paper will analyse the changing perception of fable in Central Europe, as glimpsed from a set of key fable collections published in Slovenian during the last two centuries.

For F.R. Adrados, fable “is a genre [...] hard to separate from other genres, one with not very clearly defined limits.” Using this inclusive definition will perhaps unlock a genre that represents by far the most numerous remnant of Graeco-Roman literature within the corpus of Slovenian literature for children, offering enough material to allow comparisons and perhaps to decipher the trends that are visible over decades. Beyond the obvious problem of how much their various authors were actually indebted to “Aesopus”—some followed the tradition rather closely while others tended to be highly original—the paper will analyse their correlation with the historical circumstances in which they were working.

Some of the representative authors offer the material that seems to be both rich and diverse. These are Valentin Vodnik (1758–1819), the archegetes of Slovenian poetry; Anton Martin Slomšek (1800–1862), an important bishop and the first Slovenian to be canonised as saint; Josip Stritar (1836–1923), a highly prolific writer and critic, who was himself a classicist;

Dragotin Kette (1876–1899), a modernist poet; Matej Bor (1913–1993), a highly visible partisan poet and later president of Writers' Association of Yugoslavia; Žarko Petan (1929), a theatre director, a dissident author, and an internationally published author of aphorisms; Slavko Pregl (1945), a prominent children's author of the recent decades; and Tomaž Lavrič (1964), a comic-strip author, whose poignant *Bosnian Fables*, showered with international prizes, further developed the genre to address the tragedy into which the Balkans exploded during the early nineties.

Building on centuries of literary heritage, these heterogenous fables tend to reveal the most of their hermeneutical framework when describing the unequal power relations. As was pointed out by A. Patterson, since the times of "Aesopus" the slave, fable speaks to the need for those without power to encode their commentary, using wit as a means of subversion and emancipation. The vestigial structures of this Aesopic language, used to a different extent by different authors and quite impossible to crack without a careful contextual analysis, count among the most remarkable remnants of Graeco-Roman tradition in modern literature.

Sheila Murnaghan

Department of Classical Studies

University of Pennsylvania, US

in collaboration with Deborah H. Roberts

Department of Classics

Haverford College, US

Childhood, Mythology, and the Promise of Peace

This paper will consider works of fiction that bring together modern children and classical mythology in the service of pacifist and internationalist visions, especially in relation to major events of the twentieth century, including the two World Wars and the Cold War. Such works build on modern culture's widespread identification of antiquity as the childhood of humanity. Children, understood both as modern representatives of antiquity's more natural and spiritual qualities and as creators of the future, are depicted as heralds of a new order of international

understanding rooted in a shared classical heritage. Among the texts to be discussed is *The Hedgehog*, a children's book by the Anglo-American poet, novelist, and memoirist H.D. (1886–1961). First published in 1936, *The Hedgehog* concerns the adventures of a girl who lives alone with her mother in the Swiss Alps, her father having died in the First World War. Through her encounters with characters from classical myths, H.D.'s child heroine undergoes a journey of self-discovery in which her half-orphaned state is reinterpreted through the mythical archetype of the ancient hero with one mortal parent and one absent divine parent. This interpretation establishes her affinity to fatherless children in all the nations of war-torn Europe “who must feel differently about wars and about soldiers killing each other than other children.”

Elżbieta Olechowska

Faculty of “Artes Liberales”

University of Warsaw

J.K. Rowling Exposes Generations of Children Worldwide to Classical Antiquity

To all cultures *Harry Potter* brings an essentially similar message reflecting socio-political British reality of today within an international, global reality. References to classical antiquity mirror the importance of classical languages in traditional British education and add authority, credibility and lineage to the hidden magical side of our universe revealed in the novel. While wizardry is not restricted to Britain, different styles of practicing sorcery seem to have evolved within distinctive cultures; recognition and tolerance of diversity, international collaboration and understanding are offered as acknowledged tenets of the modern wizarding ethos, in parallel to similar values promoted in the non-magical global relations.

J.K. Rowling's novel, in its 68 or more language versions, displays one untouched original element: Latin spells, charms, and curses. All of half-a-billion copies sold since the publication of the first volume, each usually read by multiple readers, carry an indisputably powerful message across the diverse world cultures: Latin is a magic language. It would be rational to assume, following Rowling's logic, that magicians living well beyond the influence of ancient Rome must have been using their own ancient languages instead of Latin.

With the exception of Roman Catholics exposed in some measure to Latin in their Church, for a significant proportion of the estimated billion of *Harry Potter*'s young readers, wherever they live, this may be a first direct contact with the magic language. They want to know what the Latin words mean. In response, dozens of websites listing and explaining incantations and the significance of names sprouted online; numerous, largely unauthorized and less than scholarly companion books are devoting separate sections to Latin words and classical roots of themes and characters.

Translators into vernacular languages have been struggling to render the meaning not only of the fantastic plot but also of its cultural background including classical references, without losing the inventiveness and humour of the original. While there is no *Sacrosanctum Concilium* to regulate translations of J.K. Rowling's text, Warner Brothers' 1999 purchase of marketing rights to the Harry Potter franchise allowed the conglomerate to impose a prohibition on translating the "meaning" names, a practice followed with varying success by some translators of the first three volumes and judged unfortunate from the marketing perspective.

Tracking the reception of Rowling's classical references worldwide could provide a unique glimpse into the real cultural power of children's literature gone universal.

Hanna Paulouskaya

Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw

Museum of History and Archeology, Hrodna–Belarus

"An Attempt on Theseus" by Kir Bulychev

A New Generation of Russian Kids and Their New Antiquity

In 1993 Kir Bulychev wrote another novel in the series *Galactic Police*, entitled *An Attempt on Theseus*. The book tells the story of a virtual tour to Ancient Greece, where one of the participants takes the role of Theseus, and Kora, an agent of Galactic Police, is sent to accompany him and keep him safe.

Kir Bulychev who wrote mainly in the 1970s and 1980s, was one of the greatest Soviet science-fiction writers for kids and adolescents. Several generations of Soviet kids grew up reading his novels and almost believing in the worlds created by the author.

An Attempt on Theseus differs significantly from Bulychev's earlier works. Written late—in 1990s—it describes modern reality and is full of contemporary ideas. The world presented in the novel abounds in elements reflecting the dramatically transformed Russian reality of that period. The characters as well as the readers grew up and changed as well. Sometimes it seems that the author feels that he does not belong to this new world.

The Researcher examines the new Russian reality of the 1990s through the filter of antiquity described by Kir Bulychev and proposes to find out how the author saw modern Russian readers, what he thought about their knowledge of antiquity, about their interests and even ideology. What the old writer thought about his adolescent readers now grown up?

The novel is compared to other works of the author written at the same time or earlier; the comparison is broadened to include other prominent science-fiction novels written by European or American authors.

Deborah H. Roberts

Department of Classics

Haverford College, US

in collaboration with Sheila Murnaghan

Department of Classical Studies

University of Pennsylvania, US

War, Empire, and the Frontier in American Fictions of Ancient Rome

This paper will explore the treatment of the experience and purposes of war and military life in American historical fiction written in the first half of the twentieth century and set in ancient Rome and its empire. Writers of historical fiction for young readers engage in a double construction of the past by the present: of childhood from the point of view of adulthood and of antiquity from the point of view of the writer's own day. In so doing, they regularly try both to

teach something about the past and to tell stories, especially coming-of-age stories that resonate with their child readers' present-day lives. The pervasive theme of war in fictions of ancient Rome is often presented through the eyes of the young soldier, and thus obviously serves the purposes of the coming-of-age story. But the way in which writers represent warfare is also evocative of the larger social and historical context of writer and reader and of a contemporary military life which is at once a reality and (for many though not all children) another imagined realm. Critical attention has in recent years focused primarily on British writers of historical fiction (such as Henty, Kipling, and Rosemary Sutcliff), and in particular on their representation of Roman Britain and the Roman Empire as a response to and commentary on imperial and post-imperial Britain. In this paper, with a look at the works of two American writers of the 1920s–1940s, Paul Anderson and Jay Williams, we consider the specifically American points of reference of their fiction and its evocation both of American history and of the military of the writers' own days.

Ewa Rudnicka

Faculty of “Artes Liberales”

University of Warsaw

Reception of Classical Antiquity in Lexicography for Children and Adolescents

The Author's focus will be on the presence of classical antiquity in the Polish dictionaries addressed to children and teenagers and on ways it is included and used; this issue appears not only interesting, but also important from the point of view of educational principles. The lexicographical description of lexis connected with classical antiquity and intended for small children, teenagers or young people is not a simple task. The first difficulty lies in determining the range of the described lexis, the next is caused by the scope of essential information and its relationship to strictly linguistic data. Using relevant examples and selected dictionary entries, the study will review how particular authors cope with this topic and what general tendencies or regularities it reveals.

Jörg Schulte

Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies, University College London

&

Agata Grzybowska

College of Interdepartmental Individual Studies in the Humanities, University of Warsaw

Saul Tchernichowsky's Mythical Childhood

Saul Tchernichowsky (1875–1943) was known as the “Greek” among the Hebrew poets since his first collections of poems published under the title *Hezyonot u-Manginot* in 1898 and 1900. Later, he was the first to translate the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, idyls of Theocritus and Horace’s *Carmina* into Hebrew (preserving the meter of the originals). In his own poetry, he introduced genre of classical and European literature into Hebrew, most prominently the idyl (in Hebrew hexameters) and the sonnet. His idyls are based on memoirs of his childhood in the villages of Tauria, in the northern part of the Crimea. He has developed the myths of his childhood first in an extended biography (edited by Boaz Arpaly in 1990) which later served as a source for his idyls. Here, the myths of his childhood are presented with many stylistic devices which are directly derived from the classical bucolic and epic poetry, i.e. the Homeric extended simile. The paper will investigate how Tschernichowsky’s myth of his own childhood is reflected in his autobiographical poems and idyls some of which were included into anthologies for children.

Peter Simatei

Department of Literature, Theatre & Film Studies

Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya

African and Oriental Oral Traditions in East African Children’s Literature

This work discusses the presence of African, Oriental, and Greek oral traditions in children’s fiction from East Africa. While acknowledging that such presence reflects the usual interaction

between written and oral traditions in African literature in general, I seek to show how the incorporation of oral traditions in children's literature constitutes a long tradition of intercultural reception and cross-cultural fusions in East Africa. I examine how a variety of oral and written sources from the antiquity have been recreated and adapted not only to suit the didactic and entertainment functions of this literature but also to reflect on the complexities of the modern world. I am interested, for example, with how this literature connects the great animal stories of East Africa with the fables of the legendary Greek fabulist, Aesop and how the famous Swahili *Abunuwasi* tales finds a meeting ground with the other popular African trickster narratives even as it mirrors the story telling traditions of the *Arabian Nights*.

Wilfried Stroh

Institute for Classical Philology

Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich

De fabellis puerilibus Latinis

The paper (in Latin) will analyze all sorts of books written for children in Latin, beginning with the famous and still amazing *Robinson secundus* by Philippus Julius Lieberkühn, 1785 (4 editions). This and most of other Latin stories for children are translations of originals written in modern languages, like the rather well known *Winnie ille Pu* by Alexander Lenard, 1960; or, the excellent *Pinoculus Latinus* by Ugo Enrico Paoli, 1962, or (the most recent) *Regulus* [*Le petit prince*] translated by Alexander Winkler, 2011. Modern poems have been rendered either in the rhythms of the original, as did Erwin Steindl, *Max et Moritz*,⁴ 1981 (from Wilhelm Busch), or, what proved to be even more witty, in a strictly metrical version we owe to U.E.Paoli, *Maximi et Mauriti malefacta*, 1960. Among Latin comic strips the best come perhaps from the German schoolmaster Carolus Rubricastellanus, *Asterix*, 1973 sqq. Too few are original compositions, but most are more suitable for young adults than for children. An excellent example is Michael von Albrecht's *L. Simii Liberatoris Commentarii*, 1991; or, the next in line, Mercedes González Haba's *Tacitus Cattus*, 1997, and Anonymi *Liber Tibifas*, 2012. Literary as well as pedagogical qualities will be considered in a field that should not be left only to dilettantes.

Robert Sucharski

Faculty of “Artes Liberales”

University of Warsaw

Jadwiga Żylińska’s Fabulous Antiquity

Jadwiga Żylińska, a Polish writer and essayist, wrote a collection of short stories *Priestesses, Amazons and Witches. A Tale from the End of the Neolithic and Bronze Age* [*Kapłanki, amazonki i czarownice. Opowieść z końca neolitu i epoki brązu*], and five other short stories that have Greek mythology as their subject and were published together under the title: *Behold the Minoan Story of Crete* [*Oto minojska baśń Krety*]. The individual titles are: *Master Daedalus* [*Mistrz Dedal*], *A Tale of Hercules* [*Opowieść o Heraklesie*], *Theseus and Ariadne* [*Tezeusz i Ariadna*], *The Youth of Achilles* [*Młodość Achillesa*] and *Seeking the Golden Fleece* [*Wyprawa po złote runo*].

The book *Priestesses, Amazons and Witches...* is an invitation to travel through the archaeological and mythical past, mainly in the Eastern Mediterranean; the principal theme appears to be “women as a dynamic force in history.” Żylińska presents her own vision—the roots of history reach down to the worship of the Great Mother Goddess and Matriarchy perceived in a still 19th century fashion (Żylińska’s books remind us here of works by Robert Graves); “when authority passed into the hands of men, manners significantly deteriorated.”

Behold the Minoan Story of Crete presents a collection of reformulated threads and motifs—in spite of the title, the theme of Crete does not dominate, and ‘Minoan-ness’ is probably just a metonymy for mythical history of Greece. Again, exactly as it was in the previous book, Żylińska offers traditional, well known stories strongly emphasizing the role of women. In the Polish *belles-lettres* she pioneered an original type of historical and quasi-historical narration, later called ‘herstory.’

Christine Walde

Institute for Classical Philology

Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz

Uses of Antiquity in Harry Potter or the Birth of a Modern Classic

It has been generally observed that J.K. Rowling's enchanted world draws heavily on the mythology of several cultures (for example, Greek, Germanic and Anglo-Saxon). Furthermore, Latin is a very highly cathected language, even if strangely enough the pupils at Hogwarts never seem to learn Latin—they are all naturals. A re-lecture of the 7 volumes shows that these “classical” traditions are more than a superficial and easily gratifying ingredient: the Harry Potter saga is in its entirety, in details, in narrative structures and literary strategies, modeled on epic and dramatic traditions of Classical Antiquity. It is a congenial ‘combination’ of several very powerful and therefore valid literary/mythological narratives. Rowling's notion of magic—a blending of pagan magic and its reception in Renaissance—eclipses Christian concepts of devil-related “black” magic, which contributed to the global success of Harry Potter as in its various translations the saga could be harmonized also with non-Christian traditions. Even if these strategies are rather apparent to the Classics expert (who will always be an avid reader), their detection on behalf of the average reader is not necessary to understanding and relishing this marvelous children's book. This observation leads to more general reflections on the uses of Antiquity in children's literature and in globalized popular culture.

Szymon Wróbel

Faculty of “Artes Liberales”

University of Warsaw

Oedipal Conflicts and Their Fabulous Solutions

It is a truism to say that Freud's work, in particular the discovery of the Oedipus complex, was the result of the shocking experience Freud suffered during the Sophocles' play *Oedipus Rex*

staged at a Viennese theatre. At the risk of simplification, one could say that, thanks to Sophocles, Freud discovered the ancient roots ruling family romance scenarios of the modern man. Following this train of thought, Bruno Bettelheim encourages us to treat fairy tales as narratives, which provides the Oedipal subject (a young, growing up child) with fantasies that he or she would never have imagined alone, and which allow him or her to deal with the conflicts inherent in the period of adolescence. Fairy tales often show us stories in which the hero successfully goes through a series of ordeals, such as, for example, killing a dragon, solving puzzles and eventually rescuing a beautiful princess, marrying her, and then living happily ever after. The Author would like to test this hypothesis and to consider the structure of certain fairy tales in which the Oedipal myth (scenario) is still alive in order to see what kind of conflict resolutions these tales have to offer. In fairy tales, messages are conveyed indirectly and symbolically: the story reveals in an encrypted form successive developmental tasks, ways of coping with emotional ambivalence, techniques for controlling emotional turmoil. A tale also offers the promise of a happy end. The Author poses a question, at the initial stage a largely rhetorical one, whether these solutions are nothing more but fairy-tale promises intended to provide a fleeting, therapeutic delusion which later clashes with the tragedy of life (Oedipal scenario).