

His plain, effective rendering of Pindar is enviable—and reminds this reviewer most of Diane Arnson Svarlien's under-appreciated translation for Perseus Project 1.0 (Yale University Press, 1991).

The result is memorable lines of English poetry. For instance, the famous opening lines of *Nemean* 5 sing (219): 'I am no statue-maker, fashioning images / that stand in idleness and do not budge / beyond their bases. No! On every / cargo boat and every skiff, sweet song, / set forth now from Aegina, spreading wide the news'. And this from *Nemean* 3: 'Various actions thirst for various rewards; / what triumph at the games most loves is song, / deffest escorts of crowns and deeds of prowess' (204). *Olympian* 1, which, to the average reader, determines whether one turns the page or not, reads: 'Best is water, and gold, like blazing fire by night, / shines forth preeminent amid the lordliness of wealth' (25).

As impressive as Miller's achievement is, I list now a few criticisms of this volume.

The introduction, while notable for its broad learnedness and laudable in its clarity of prose, will occasionally lose a non-academic audience (namely, the audience we teach). It impresses the classicist; but liberal use of transliterated Greek and phrases like the 'dative case with modal force' (23) will hinder the general reader.

The introduction missed an opportunity, I think, to put into plain English *why* Pindar is considered to be the greatest of the Greek lyric poets. Rather, we get a lot of the *how* he did it. But a general-purpose introduction, I think, should fill out the picture of the enduring beauty of Pindar's poetry, and give modern voice to Quintilian's appraisal that his verse was an *eloquentiae flumine* ('flood of eloquence') (10.1.61).

Desired by this reviewer, too, was a broader take on the influence and afterlife of Pindar's poetry—e.g., on the influence of the Pindaric ode in European letters in the centuries following Pierre de Ronsard's *Odes* (1550). Admittedly, some brief mention is made in the preface, where Miller notes Voltaire's famous quip on the *divin Pindare*: i.e., that he is a poet whom all praise but no one understands. But this is too subtle for the average student to really take note.

In English, for instance, the influence of the Pindaric form is great: Dryden, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Shelley ('Ode on a Grecian Urn') all imitated Pindar to great effect, producing some of the more memorable odes in the English language.

Lastly, the present volume lacks a helpful bibliography for students wishing to dip their toes into the exciting waters of contemporary Pindaric studies (alluded to in the preface and introduction to this edition). In this respect it is deficient with regard to the impressive ode-by-ode secondary scholarship apparatus presented by the *Oxford World's Classics* 2008 edition.

But these are desires for amplification of the present volume and do not affect my strong recommendation. The work as it stands is the best one-volume edition of Pindar's *Odes* to high school and college students currently available. Its scholarship will satisfy the expert; its dependable, enjoyable, often beautiful rendering of Pindar's poetry will satisfy the student and teacher alike.

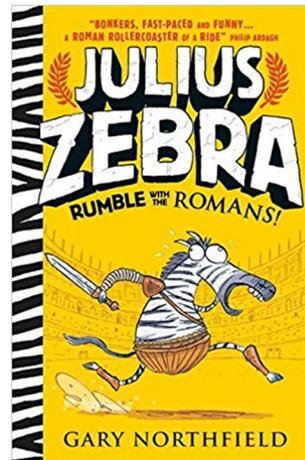
In closing, I would like to thank Lucinda Alwa, *magistra carissima mea*, for her notes and suggestions on this review—an educator well-versed not only in Pindar, but in lighting a love of Greek and of Latin that does not fade.

doi:10.1017/S2058631020000240

Julius Zebra: Grapple with the Greeks!

Northfield, G. Pp. 296, ill. London: Walker Books, 2018. Paper, £6.99. ISBN: 978-1-4063-8096-5.

James Watson



This book is the fourth in a series that has already seen Julius Zebra, the hero of the tale, 'rumble with the Romans', 'bundle with the Britons' and become 'entangled with the Egyptians'. Readers may therefore have encountered Julius and his friends before seeing them 'grapple with the Greeks', but for your reviewer this book was his first encounter with this version of the ancient world.

As his name suggests, Julius is a zebra, and his friends include a crocodile, a giraffe, an antelope, a warthog and a lion.

A brief introduction reveals that they are at home as this story begins after adventures that have seen Julius become a gladiator in Rome and Pharaoh in Egypt. They are visited by Heracles, who asks for their help in re-completing one of his labours which has apparently been 'undone': this is soon revealed to be the need to obtain a golden apple. After surviving an attack by Talos, the friends – now without Heracles who goes to look for the apple elsewhere – first look inside the Labyrinth on Crete, where they encounter the Minotaur. Having failed to find an apple they leave the Labyrinth, meeting Theseus on their way out, who suggests that they try the Garden of the Hesperides. They gain access to the garden by building a Trojan Zebra, only to discover that apples are out of season. They travel to Phrygia to ask King Midas to turn a normal apple to gold, and although they succeed, they do so at a cost – Julius' brother, Brutus, is also turned to gold. Julius decides to go to the underworld to rescue Brutus but, despite finding him, fails to save his brother because he looked back at him on their way out, causing him to disappear. The friends are, finally, captured by Hades, who on hearing their story summons Heracles and punishes him for involving the animals in the quest; Hades rewards them with their heart's desire, which means that Julius is reunited with Brutus back home.

As will already be clear from this synopsis, the ancient world that Julius Zebra inhabits combines elements drawn from both myth and history. The story is set during the reign of Hadrian (largely an unseen presence, though stated to be seeking revenge on Julius for events that occurred in earlier books), and yet heroes of the mythological Greek past seem very much to be present, despite the remark that 'the real Greek legends were years ago' (p. 63). The description of the Cretan port is also somewhat anachronistic, as we learn that 'on the promenade pretty tavernas and restaurants were dotted among the

fishermen's huts' (p. 87) and that it is the venue for 'aqua aerobics' (p. 90) led by Julius' old friend, Pliny the mouse. It is, of course, not fair to criticise this book for creating its own ancient world, but it does mean that it is not the place to turn for an accurate overview of Greek history or mythology. The book is clearly, however, based on a careful understanding of the ancient world, and one might learn about classical realities from some of the incidents narrated – for example the charming description of how to use an oil lamp (pp. 114–115). Additionally, after the story's conclusion, there is a section on Roman numerals, a glossary, and an explanation of the links between planetary names and Greek gods, as well as some details about Greek hoplites and vase-painting in pages encouraging art and craft work, which, while being presented in a similarly light-hearted way to the story, are certainly educational.

It is as a work of entertaining fiction that this book is most successful. It is intended (according to the publisher's website) for ages seven and above, and children will surely enjoy the animal characters and their escapades. They and older readers may also enjoy seeing how the author has skilfully adapted well-known Greek myths to create his story. There are also moments that seem designed to appeal to adult readers, for example Julius' comment 'We're going to need a bigger army' – presumably adapted from the well-known line from *Jaws* – on first seeing the Minotaur. The story is engagingly told by a mixture of printed text and cartoons containing dialogue in speech bubbles; every page of the story includes at least one cartoon, and occasionally one occupies a whole double-page spread. The language in which the story is told is lively and child-oriented, with frequent use of capitalisation for emphasis – as shown, for example, by this description of the Labyrinth (p. 109): "PEEYOOO!" he cried, desperately trying to catch his breath. "This place flippin' STINKS!" Parents might not be thrilled if their children learn terms such as 'FLIPPIN' 'ECK!' (p. 71) or 'cocky' (p. 307) from this book, but generally the tone seems right for children, even if the decision constantly to refer to skeletons as 'skellybobs' (p. 264 and elsewhere) might bemuse older readers.

There appear to be very few mistakes in the book; unfortunately, those which exist come from the factual pages that follow the story. There the name of Zeus' father is given once as 'Chronos' (p. 306) and once, as one would expect, as 'Cronus' (p. 311), Homer is misleadingly stated to be a 'writer' (p. 308), 'Hephaistos' seems oddly transliterated (p. 308), and the comments 'You will never find more than three Roman numerals in a row' and '4 is not IIII' (p. 305) are potentially confusing, with the second overlooking the fact that four can sometimes be written in this way.

An epilogue to the story suggests that there may be more adventures in store for Julius Zebra – which would be no bad thing on the evidence of this book. Whilst the antiquity it presents feels like a compilation of elements from across the Greco-Roman world, this book deserves praise for bringing the ancient past so entertainingly to life for young readers, whom one hopes it will excite to find out more about ancient Greece.

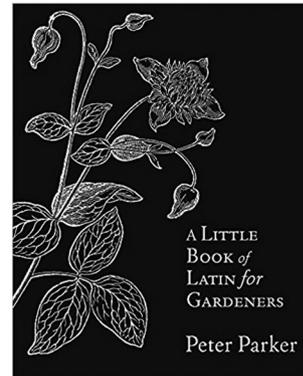
doi:10.1017/S2058631020000252

A Little Latin Book for Gardeners

Parker, P. Pp.322. Little, Brown. Hardback, £12.99. ISBN: 978-1-4087-0616-9

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A brief look at the first few pages of this guide to the nomenclature of horticulture will be enough to convince the reader of the author's zeal and his appetite for research. For classicists perhaps, the most interesting feature is his account of the major players in the history of plant classification.

Most readers of this journal, for example, will know of the Athenian writer Theophrastus from his 'Characters', first popularised in English when included by Penguin with Vellacott's translations of Menander. But Theophrastus also counts as the first classifier of plants, and it is through/from him that we get the names pelargonium, geranium, anemone, peony and antirrhinum, among others.

Then much later we learn of John Ray, apparently self-taught as a botanist, whose *Historia Plantarum* (1686–1704) runs to over 2000 pages in three large volumes. He it was who placed some 6000 plants into 125 families and laid the foundations of modern nomenclature.

It was entirely natural, within Europe at least, for Latin to reign supreme as the language of plant classification. It simply remained for the astoundingly industrious Swede, Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778) to make his indelible mark on the history of botany via his *Systema Natura* – already in its 10th edition when the author was 51. His binomial system, as Parker is quick to point out, has proved both invaluable and enduring, neatly reducing the name of the Hoary Plantain (for instance) from *Plantago foliis ovato-lanceolatis pubescentibus, spica cylindricali, scapo tereti* – 'plantain with downy narrow oval leaves tapering to a point at each end, a cylindrical head and a smooth stem' – to the succinct *Plantago media* – 'intermediate plantain'.

With its relentless torrent of information and anecdote, allied with many comprehensive word lists, this book is really for the enthusiast, nay fanatic. It is no doubt instructive to learn, for example, that the adjective *alpinus* indicates 'above the tree-line' whereas *alpestris* indicates below it. But which general reader, even one with a penchant for making their back garden into a mini-Paradise, really needs the exhaustive story of the naming of the flowering quince that fills page 91?

doi:10.1017/S2058631020000264