

ROSA TIZIANA BRUNO

Illustrated by Natascha Stolz

KAIRÓS

A DAY IN MAGNA GRAECIA

In collaboration with the
Archaeological Park of Paestum and Velia

**PAEST
UM & 
VELIA**

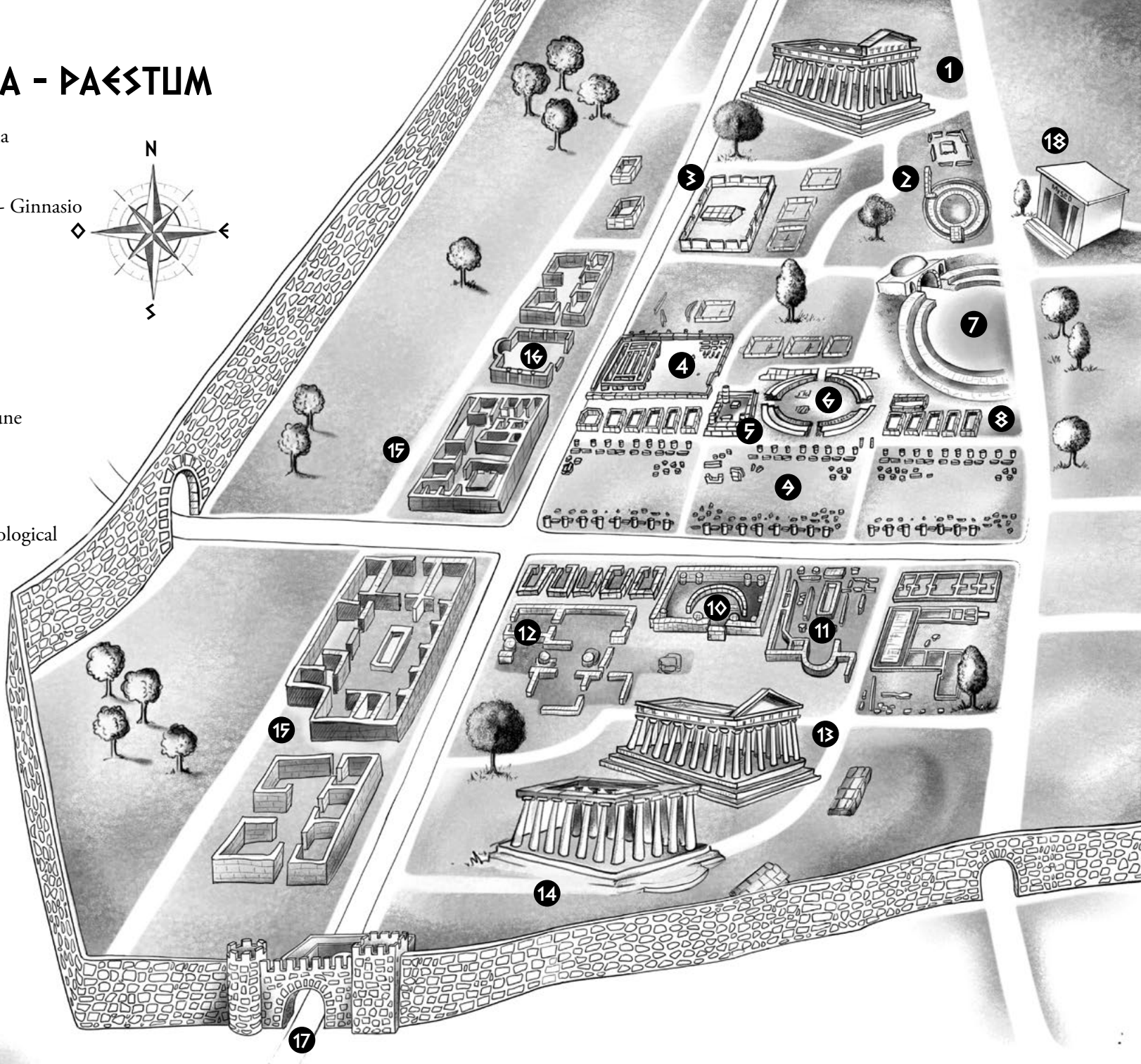
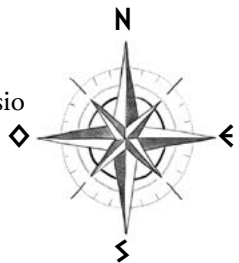
MIMebù 

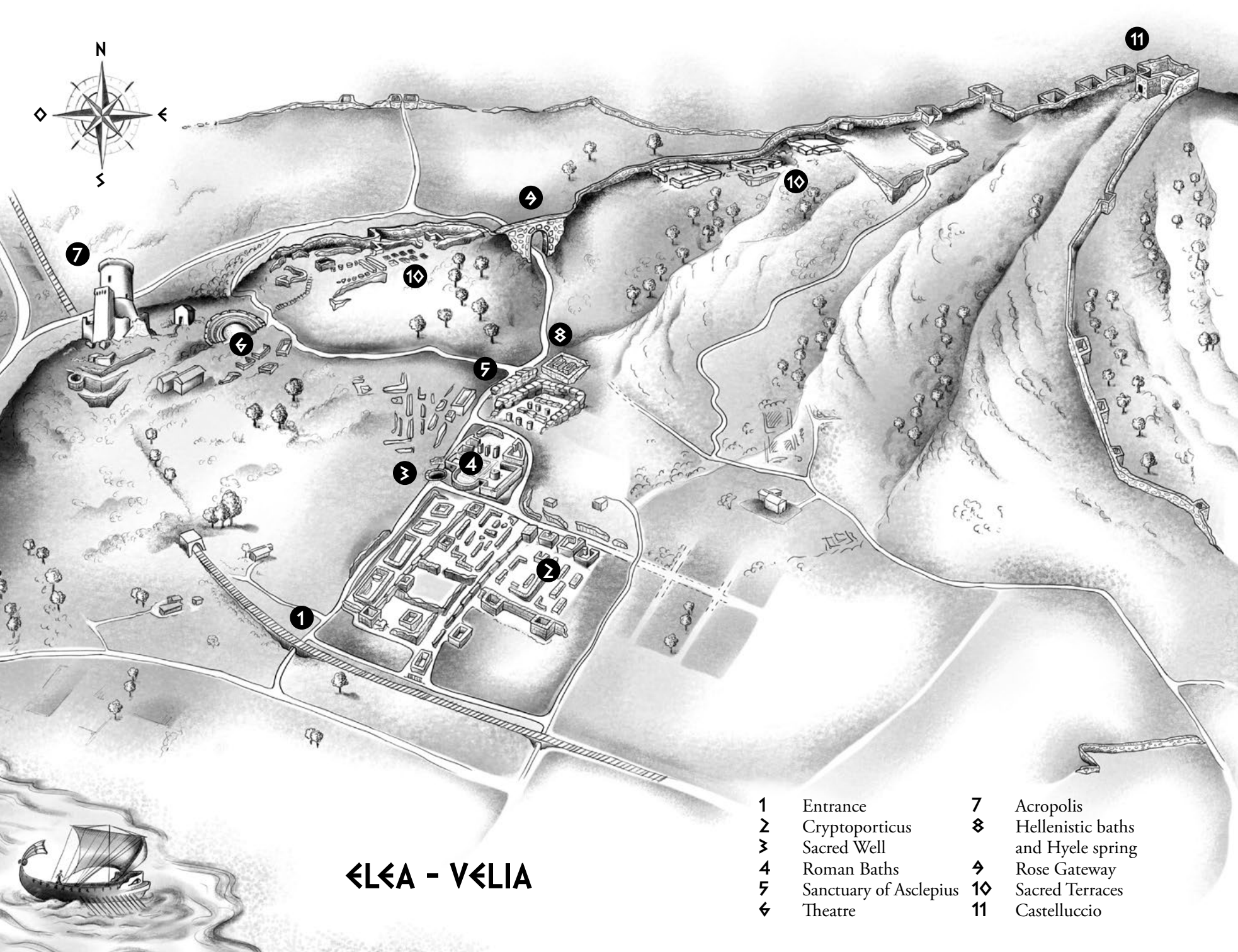
INDEX

Preface	11	Thoughts to unroll	123
Bathing	15	A grandmother like any other	129
A gift from the sea	23	The woman who ends the battle	137
Phil's secret	29	Elea: herbs and wind for body and soul	147
Welcome to Poseidonia!	45	Touching the Roman Empire	155
Mr Parmenides	57	The man who read dreams	179
A walk in the past	71	<i>Kairós</i>	195
Having breakfast with <i>kairós</i>	87	Afterword: the Archaeological Park	205
Mr Pythagoras	107	Behind the scenes: author and illustrator	214

POSEIDONIA - PAESTUM

- 1 Temple of Athena
- 2 Ekklesiasterion
- 3 Heroon
- 4 Swimming Pool - Ginnasio
- 5 Temple of Peace
- 6 Comitium
- 7 Amphitheatre
- 8 Aerarium
- 9 Forum
- 10 Curia
- 11 Macellum
- 12 Thermae
- 13 Temple of Neptune
- 14 Temple of Hera
- 15 Living quarters
- 16 Caesareum
- 17 Justice Gateway
- 18 National Archaeological Museum





ΕΛΕΑ - VELIA

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Entrance | 7 | Acropolis |
| 2 | Cryptoporticus | 8 | Hellenistic baths and Hyle spring |
| 3 | Sacred Well | 9 | Rose Gateway |
| 4 | Roman Baths | 10 | Sacred Terraces |
| 5 | Sanctuary of Asclepius | 11 | Castelluccio |
| 6 | Theatre | | |

6

A WALK IN THE PAST



They walked eastwards and after a few minutes caught sight of huge buildings: gigantic, imposing and majestic buildings supported by wide columns. There were three of them, one more solemn than the other.

Phil explained that they were temples built to honour the gods. The first paid homage to the goddess Hera, and at the rear of the building was a closed cell where only priests were allowed to enter because it held the sacred statue of the goddess.

Elena noticed that at the back of the cell, two



small spiral staircases climbed up to the roof. And she imagined that up there was someone intent on guarding the temple; the stairs were for going up to check.

The architecture, perfect and mighty, seemed to have been studied in great detail.

«And the other temple?» she asked, pointing to a similar building that stood a little further on.

«That one is my favourite! In your time it is called the Temple of Neptune.»

«Gosh, how tall it is, almost touching the sky! But tell me about Hera.»

Phil explained that the goddess Hera played a very important role in Greek life. The daughter of Rhea and Cronus, she was regarded as the protector of marriage and family, the wife of Zeus, king of the gods, and therefore queen of gods and men. Her noble behaviour and solemn appearance combined with an unpleasant character. She lost no opportunity to harm anyone who annoyed her, sitting there placidly on her golden throne. But, in her defence, it has to be

said that, although she was queen, her life was by no means easy. Zeus neglected her, often devoting his attentions to other women, and this hurt her deeply, causing her much anger.

«And that one over there in the distance, the largest temple, to whom is it dedicated?»

«It was built in honour of the goddess of wisdom and war, Athena.»

«But it's huge!» exclaimed Elena, her heart bouncing in her chest with excitement. It was all tremendously fascinating.

Phil went on to tell her the story of Poseidonia, reminding her that the city's name came from the sea god Poseidon, armed with an iron trident and able to shake land and water.

«Wow! Could we be looking at him now?»

«No. Gods don't walk among people. They stand on Mount Olympus and rule our lives from there.»

«But how many would that be?»

«Twelve.»

«Ah, all things considered, they are few.»

«Twelve the most important ones, then there are more.»

Elena and Phil walked a little further, enveloped in a wonderful glow. The light of Poseidonia was particularly vivid and bright. Perhaps it was because the sun reflected off the white stones and bounced off the light-coloured pebbles of the road, or because it simply shone intensely, proud of all that beauty beneath it.

«What was it like for your people to get here?» asked Elena out of the blue, bubbling with curiosity.

«Difficult and wonderful at the same time.»

«Why?»

«But it's too long to explain!»

«And we're in no hurry, right? Tell me, come on!»

They settled down comfortably, at the foot of a wall, near a lentisk bush sprouting from the side of the road, and Phil tried to remember everything they had told him about his ancestor, from the journey by ship to the landing in Sibari,

to the transfer to the Tyrrhenian coast. He wanted to make sure he didn't forget any details; his new friend deserved a rich and honest account.

Grandfather Papas – that was his name – had come from a town in Achaia, north of the Peloponnese. He belonged to the Achaean race and had embarked under the leadership of Is, a very brave man, who had offered to lead the sea crossing. On the same ship travelled many other companions of adventure, all in search of a new land to live in, as resources in the motherland were becoming increasingly scarce. But, combined with necessity, there was a great desire for adventure pulsing through each of them. And it was this desire that helped them overcome their fear, especially when the sea swelled and the gigantic, threatening waves looked like monsters ready to devour everything.

When they arrived in southern Italy, they soon realised that their courage had been rewarded. The coastline before them looked beautiful, with its gulfs and promontories, wide

beaches overlooking a crystal-clear sea, and behind them mountains with curious and bizarre shapes resembling hawks' beaks, round domes or pyramids. Large rivers flowed down from these mountains towards the sea, flowing through white rocky areas adorned with oleanders. And that first impression proved to be right, for they soon discovered that the land offered great opportunities: silver and bronze mines, huge forests, flocks of game, a generous sun.

Elena listened spellbound, imagining the strong emotions that Grandpa Papas must have felt, together with his friends.

But that was only the beginning. Phil went on to describe the encounter between his people and the people living in the Sibari area. At that time, in fact, southern Italy was inhabited by a mosaic of peoples called Ausoni, Enotri, Itali, Siculi, Japigi. The Greeks immediately made friends with some of them, but with others they fought for a long time, almost always winning.

As soon as they founded the city of Sibari,

Grandfather Papas and the others worked hard to make it more prosperous and welcoming. They built an exclusive quarter for the rich, called Megara, and other large villas outside the city. A law was passed forbidding the keeping of cockerels or craftsmen's workshops within the walls, so that they would not disturb the sleep of the inhabitants with their singing or noise.

The citizens liked to wear very colourful clothes and the dyers who brightened the fabrics were allowed not to pay taxes. There was a custom of wearing many rings on the fingers, elegant boots imported from the East were worn and children sported sophisticated hair with braids and ribbons. Women adorned their dresses with precious beads, wore high heels and had a variety of earrings and bracelets for every occasion. A rich man named Alcisthenes had a tunic made with gold embroidery that was kept for two centuries and then sold to the Carthaginians for over a hundred talents, a huge sum!

The Sybarites loved to relax in warm water and

be enveloped in steam, but they also loved to eat fine food in company. They were the first in Magna Graecia to allow women to take part in banquets, while the other Greeks only allowed men and a few slaves to serve.

«And for what reason?» asked Elena, abruptly interrupting Phil's story.

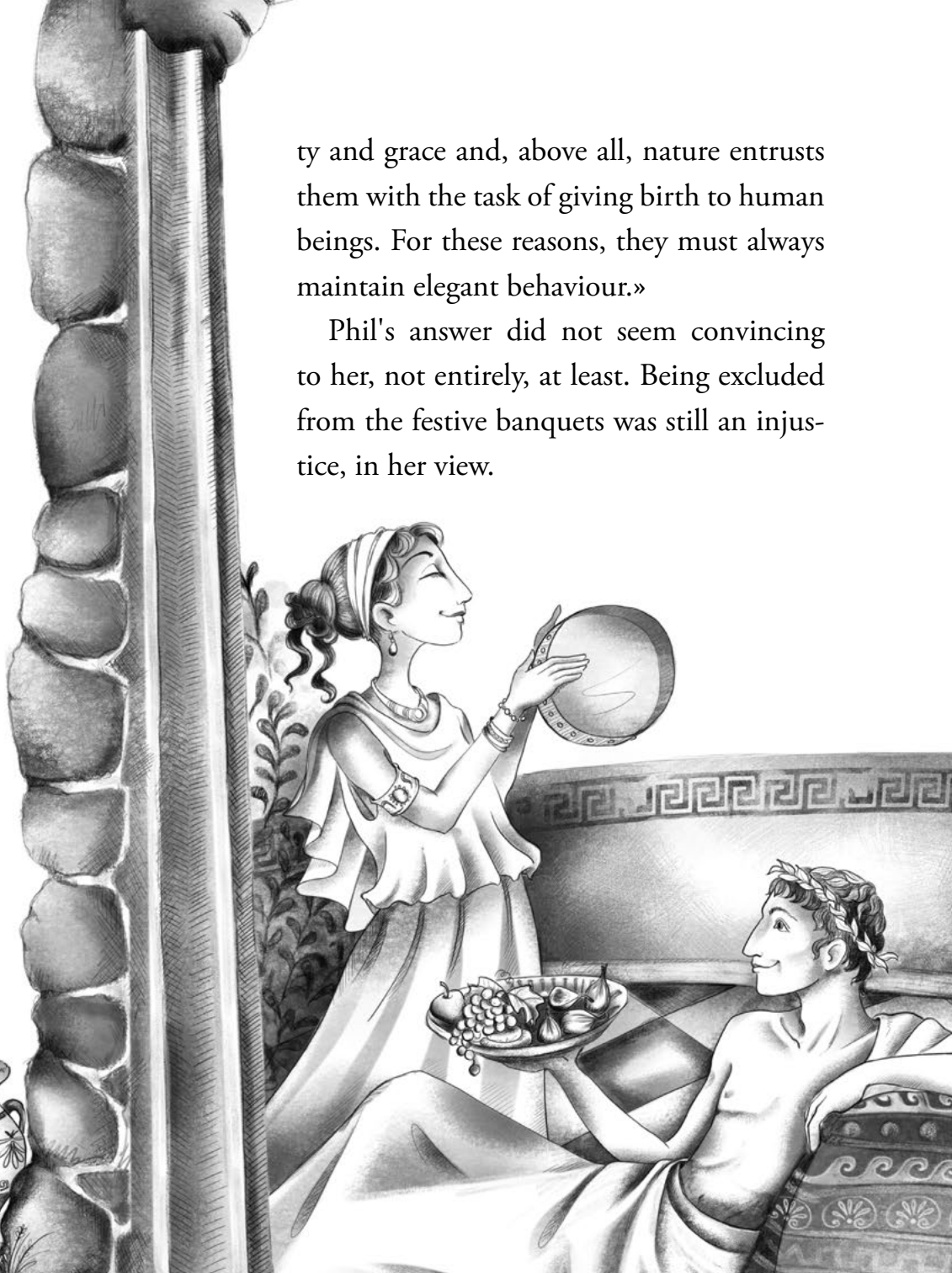
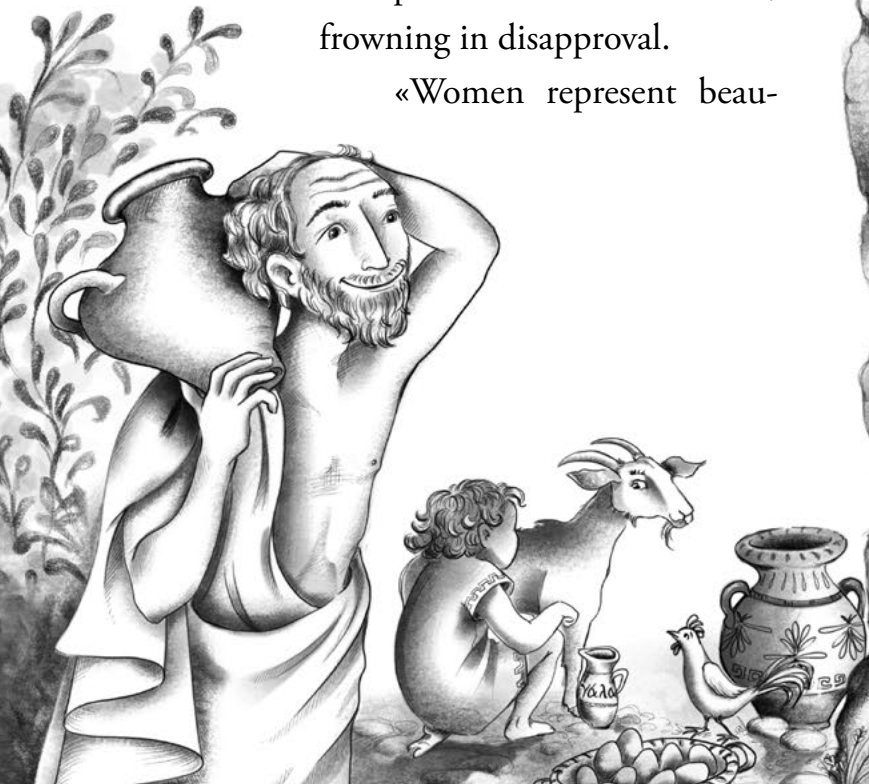
«Because a lot of wine was drunk at banquets and drunkenness caused disturbances.»

«That doesn't sound like a reason to me!» protested the little tourist, frowning in disapproval.

«Women represent beau-

ty and grace and, above all, nature entrusts them with the task of giving birth to human beings. For these reasons, they must always maintain elegant behaviour.»

Phil's answer did not seem convincing to her, not entirely, at least. Being excluded from the festive banquets was still an injustice, in her view.



7

HAVING BREAKFAST WITH KAIRÓS



Elena didn't know exactly what time it was, but it was certainly time to munch on something good. The leap in time hadn't affected her stomach, which was still crying out for sweets.

«Come with me, it's time for *akratisma*», Phil told her, pointing to a road that proceeded south.

«*Akra*... what?»

«I mean, breakfast.»

«Great! Where are we going?»

«To my place, see if we can find some leftover treats.»

«What a great idea!» exclaimed Elena beaming. «It's finally getting serious!»

«And we also need to find a decent dress for you.»

«I think I see what you have in mind. We'll get the dress at your place, right?»

«Yes. Be sure to be discreet. They don't know you and they might ask me a thousand questions.»

«What have you got against questions?»

«I'd rather my father didn't know anything about the people I meet travelling through time.»

«Ah! You're doing all this in secret from your parents.»

«Never mind, let's change the subject.»

«Come on, explain. What's going on?»

In that instant Phil's face darkened, the boy bowed his head like someone who feels guilty and, with his eyes on the ground, admitted: «I promised my father that I would never reveal the existence of the time cave to anyone».

Elena fell silent and a silent thought made its way into her mind: even in that far-off era, over two millennia ago, it was considered disgraceful not to keep promises, especially those made to parents.

She tried to be as sincere as possible: «Being sorry does you credit, but it has happened and there is no point in feeling guilty. You will make it up to me, I'm sure. In the meantime, you have my word that I will not reveal your secret to anyone else».

Phil was relieved, Elena's generous and intelligent words gave him courage. That was it, he would find a way to make up for his mistake.

«Now try to keep a low profile, will you?» he intimated with a look of gratitude on his face.

«I swear I'll be quiet in the corner.»

«Good. The servants will not notice you if you are discreet.»

«And tell me, what sweets will we find in your house? My mouth is already watering.»

«Surely we'll find *tagenites* along with *staitites*, and then plenty of honey.»

Walking briskly, they were at their destination in a few minutes. They slipped quickly through the atrium into the *gynaeceum*, the part of the house where the women and children were.

«Shh! Don't say anything, they might hear us.»

At that instant they heard footsteps.

«Here comes the servant girl to tidy up», Phil said agitatedly. «We must leave!»

But Elena reminded him that they had not yet retrieved the dress for her.

«Right!» commented the boy in a low voice. «The maidservant has just collected the laundry, we'll get a tunic from her basket.»

The curious little girl couldn't wait to get in on the action. «I'll go now!»

Phil tried to hold her back, but it was no use, she had already reached the bench where the basket was resting, while the servant was arranging some dishes.

From behind the sideboard, where he had been hiding, the boy signalled for her to come back. If the servant had noticed her, she would surely have signalled the presence of a stranger. And her father, he was sure, would not have appreciated the bizarre surprise.

As Elena rummaged through the basket trying to find something to wear, the woman suddenly turned and saw her.

«*Poia eisai?*» she asked the little girl, her eyes widening.

The little intruder remained motionless, not out of fear, but because the servant girl's extraordinary beauty enchanted her. She had biscuit-coloured skin and an intense light in her eyes that stood out like black pearls under a cascade of curls.

Phil quickly emerged from behind the cupboard, he could no longer remain hidden, the situation had to be saved somehow. He turned to the servant with incomprehensible words, but from his tone he could tell he was trying to find a

plausible excuse, and he seemed to have succeeded because the servant was listening quietly.

«What did she say when she addressed me?» the little stranger intervened, assailed by curiosity.

«She asked you who you were», Phil explained with a reproachful look. «But fortunately I have remedied your mess!»

A moment later the servant girl approached, handing Elena a white linen tunic, a silver brooch and a pair of leather sandals.

The girl thanked with a smile, then the servant gave the tunic, brooch and sandals to Phil as well, and then silently walked away with her somewhat lightened basket.

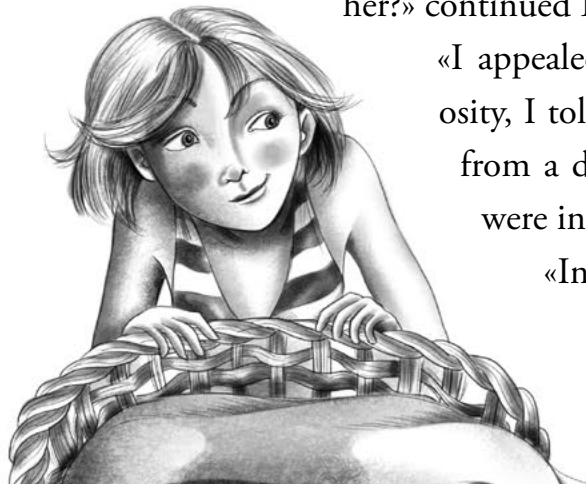
«And what did you say to convince her?» continued Elena.

«I appealed to her generosity, I told her you came from a distant land and were in need of help.»

«Indeed there is

some truth to that!» agreed Elena bursting out laughing.

«Shh! Keep your voice down or the others will find out about us too.»



«What's her name?»

«Who?»

«Her, the woman who gave me the tunic.»

«Her name is Akida and she is from Libya.

Have you finished with the questions? We must leave!»

«But Libya is in Africa. How did she get here?»

«Like most slaves: she was captured by our soldiers after a victory in battle.»

«Captured? Where do you get off doing such things?» asked Elena indignant at that horrible answer.

«Well, that's how the world works. The winner dominates over the loser. I think that rule applies in your time as well.»

«Not at all! In our era, it is forbidden to capture people and make them slaves. What nonsense!»

«Are you sure? There are many ways to enslave people...» Phil interrupted suddenly, this was not the time for long conversations, he had

to get out of the house as soon as possible. He put his index finger over his mouth to signal Elena to be quiet, and then pointed to the tunic his friend was holding in her hands.

Elena thought that the question of slavery deserved to be studied in depth, noted down what she had seen in her mind and proposed to discuss the subject with her parents when she returned to the future. Now, in fact, it was time to get dressed and get something to eat!

She unrolled the linen cloth and noticed that it had no sleeves or fastenings of any kind, it was simply a large rectangle of white cloth.

«How am I supposed to wear this?» he asked in a whisper.

«Look, just do as I do, it's easy.»

Phil rolled the rectangle of cloth around his body, fastening it on his right shoulder with the silver pin. It wasn't actually complicated. Elena imitated him and the linen obeyed meekly under her inexperienced hands. She slipped on her sandals, knotted the laces around her ankle and

in an instant found herself dressed according to the customs of Magna Graecia. The feeling was not bad at all, she felt elegant and refined, even though she was wearing nothing but a simple cloth.



«We look beautiful!» she exclaimed.

But Phil listened absent-mindedly; he was already busy preparing breakfast. Elena watched with amusement as he quickly took the food from the cupboard.

