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TOYS AS CULTURAL ARTEFACTS
IN ANCIENT GREECE, ETRURIA, AND ROME

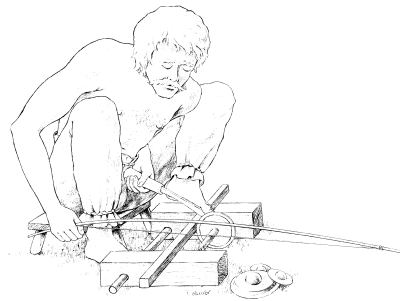
■ edited by Véronique Dasen & Marco Vespa

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Véronique Dasen & Marco Vespa (eds)

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Collection dirigée
par Michel Feugère

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Bronze statuette of a male youth with spinning top (H. 36 cm), from Coll. Loeb,
350-325 BCE, Staatliche Antikensammlungen Munich, inv. SL 25.

Photo Renate Kühling, Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek Munich.

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INTRODUCTION



Greek terracotta jointed "doll" (H. 12 cm), Corinthian type (5th century BCE). New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art inv. 44.11.8, Rogers Fund, 1944.

Public Domain < <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/254514> >



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Introduction

In his description of Arcadia's past at the heart of mainland Greece, Pausanias reconstructs the origin of a peculiar epithet, or *epiclesis*, of Artemis in her sanctuary near the city of Caphyae, and recalls local, epicchoric, traditions that were often only transmitted orally:

About a stade distant from Caphyae is a place called Condylea, where there are a grove and a temple of Artemis called of old Condyleatis. They say that the name of the goddess was changed for the following reason. Some children, the number of whom is not recorded, while playing about the sanctuary (*paidia peri hiron paizonta*) found by chance (*epituchein*) a rope (*kalōidion*), and tying it round the neck of a figurine (*agalma*) said that Artemis strangled herself. The Caphyans, detecting what the children had done, stoned them to death. When they had done this, a malady befell their women, whose babies were stillborn, until the Pythian priestess bade them bury the children, and sacrifice to them every year as sacrifice is made to heroes, because they had been wrongly put to death. The Caphyans still obey this oracle, and call the goddess at Condyleae, as they say the oracle also bade them, the Strangled Lady from that day to this.¹

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1. Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 8, 23, 6-7 (transl. W.H.S. Jones, Loeb, modified). This etiology is also repeated by Callimachus, *Aitia*, fr. 187; PRIoux 2011. On this Arcadian cult, see in particular PIRENNE-DELFORGE (2008), 192, 232.

This brief and dense tale, in which children are described as being able to spontaneously transform inanimate material into living beings, raises issues among the themes addressed in this volume. Beside earlier interpretations of the strangled Artemis as a fossil of Bronze Age tree cults,² this foundation, or rather re-foundation story provides significant information about ancient Greek views on children's play and playthings.

At first sight, no toy appears in the narrative to modern readers accustomed to a centuries-old toy industry³. However, the terms used by Pausanias indicate that this children's activity is related to play. They form a group, although no age, gender or number is specified, and they move freely in a sacred space around the temple,⁴ looking for material to use and manipulate in a ludic way (*paizonta*). They find a rope "by chance", *epituchein*, which was perhaps attached to a withered offering, and a figurine, not described as a toy, *athurma*⁵, nor as an articulated *paignion*,⁶ but as an *agalma*, that is a votive statuette, most likely made of clay, which could represent Artemis or a dedicant. The children behave on their own volition, free of adult control. They do not just imitate the dedicants, bringing and hanging terracotta dolls in the sanctuary, but invent a new story transforming the *agalma* into an active goddess. Pausanias stresses the children's authorship by using a middle-passive optative verbal form (*apanchoito*)

2. CHIRASSI (1968), 19-20, for the debate on tree cults.

3. On toy trade development in the early modernity (end of 16th cent.), see MANSON 2001, 83-96, and in this volume.

4. On literary and iconographic evidence about children's playful activities in Greek sanctuaries, see DASEN 2020.

5. On *athurma*, see E. Dieu, L. Floridi and C. Nobili in this volume.

6. On *paignia*, see I. Patera in this volume.

that adopts their point of view in the storytelling: “they announced that Artemis hung herself”.⁷

The change in Artemis’s name from *Condyleatis* to *Apanchomēne* preserves the narrative scenario constructed by the children’s activity described as play by Pausanias (*paizonta*). It corresponds to the common anthropological definition of play⁸ as an activity which is free, voluntary, and transformative,⁹ close to a ritual activity – here the offering of a hung terracotta figurine¹⁰ –, taking place in a circumscribed space – here the sanctuary –, where all limits can be exceeded, including enacting the death of a deity.

The event’s tragic conclusion is due to the unfortunate transgressive enunciation of the children who may have otherwise continued to play untroubled. The harsh reaction of the adults mirrors the power of symbolic play, seen as a serious threat to social and religious order. The game has an impact on real life: the “killers” of Artemis are stoned to death. The story showcases two categories of cultural attitudes to children play:¹¹ children play among themselves without adults and make toys by transforming daily life objects, as documented by several papers in this volume.¹² Several pieces of evidence, also presented in this book, show that play was valued for education and associated with a specific production of objects by adults for children, such as terracotta articulated dolls and rattles. In Condylea, adults were not expected to play with children or look after them, but they watched them, and judged them without considering the fictional value of play.

The story showcases some typical archaeological challenges. As Sally Crawford demonstrated,¹³ toys are usually missing in the archaeological record because most of them were made of organic material that have not survived or of transformed ordinary

objects that cannot easily be identified without a specific archaeological context. The *agalma* of the Condylea children may have been found among votive offerings. The term *agalma* designates not just a votive object pleasing to the gods but the potential divine and invisible empowerment of objects, as in offerings, which explains why the children could easily identify the figurine with a goddess.¹⁴ The children may have played with it as a substitute for a votive articulated “doll”, not a toy in the modern sense, but an object made to be manipulated in a specific, ritual, context, and with a transitional identity, between mortal or divine,¹⁵ embodying the girl, *numphē*, on the eve of marriage, as a new Core or Persephone.¹⁶ We understand too that the children were not upset by the absence of movable limbs. They created a new story based on Artemis, perhaps identifying the goddess with the girls under her protection who were believed to be threatened with suicide by hanging when menstruations were delayed and did not threaten to let the goddess die.¹⁷

The material variety and the polysemy of the objects used by children, youths, and adults in contexts associated with pleasure and leisure is reflected by the Greek and Latin vocabulary. Several papers offer nuanced philological answers in the search of specific words used for “toy” in ancient languages. No specific term emerges from written sources, but a wide range of words relate to a similar sphere. Eric Dieu delivers a very meticulous historical and linguistic study of the morphological structure and semantic values of Greek and Latin ludonyms, also based on Indo-European linguistic comparisons. Though it is very difficult to identify a linguistic category that defines semantically the materiality of a playful object used in a game, the Homeric term *athurma* (a sandcastle, but also a shell or a piece of jewellery) appears to be the only one that addresses the materiality of a “toy” as well as its emotional component.

The detailed diachronic analysis by Paola Moretti on the semantics of the ludonym *ludicrum* in ancient Roman culture makes a salient point about what we might call “a space of cultural anonymity” for the Western category of “toy” or “plaything”. The study of a large literary corpus ranging from Catullus to Augustine in the search of the semantic contours of the term *ludicrum*, that designates an object possibly manipulated by children for fun, reveals its ‘relational’ value according to contexts, and the absence of definition of its semantic properties. A prominent example is provided in the Augustan age by a few

7. Some modern translations, as in the Loeb collection (cf. above n. 1), choose to adopt the adults’ view by translating “Artemis was being strangled”. In doing so, the fictional dimension of the new ludic story told by children at play is completely omitted in favour of the adult (distorted) version of the episode.

8. On the historiography of play definitions, see DASEN, VESPA 2021.

9. See INGOLD (2013), 1-15 on the transformational dimension of ‘making’, as opposed to distinguishing thought and action as ontologically different phases, based on the model of Aristotelian view of form and matter.

10. Cf. the suspension holes in the tops of the head of articulated dolls that seem to be made to be hung. THOMPSON 1943, 114-115 is the first to comment on the vitality of these figurines with dangling arms and legs.

11. GASKINS, HAIGHT, LANCY (2007): 1. Play is discouraged, because it is credited with no special value 2. Play is tolerated until reaching the age for ‘serious’ work, children playing amongst themselves, with self-made items 3. Play is encouraged, and regarded as an educational tool, involving child-minders and parents, as well as the production by adults of specialized material for children.

12. See in particular C. Lambrugo, A. d’Onofrio, and J.-P. Rossie in this volume. On children’s material culture, see also LANGDON 2013.

13. CRAWFORD (2009).

14. See DUGAST, JAILLARD, MANFRINI (2021).

15. E.g. HUYSECOM-HAXHI, MÜLLER (2007).

16. On the transitional value of dolls, see DASEN, VERBANCK (2022).

17. See KING (1983) on the dangerous delay of menarche suffocating young girls, symbolised by hanging.

verses of an Horatian *Epistle* (1.6) where the meaning for the author of the expression *maris ludicra*, is ambiguous: it could refer to purple, coral, and shells as luxury objects that amaze and attract the beholder or as mere childish toys, objects of little value to abstain from. The Augustan poet knew how to play with these possible various interpretations due to the lack of a firm semantic anchorage. No statistically relevant correspondence can be traced between the term *ludicrum* and the category of “toy”. In other contexts, *ludicrum* can relate to entertainment in a wide sense and even mean a “spectacle”.

The linguistic enquiries by É. Dieu and P. Moretti are a stark reminder of previous fundamental questions raised over half a century ago by Émile Benveniste on the most important Western intellectual categories derived from the Graeco-Roman tradition and particularly inherited from Aristotle (‘being’, ‘substance’, ‘quality’, ‘quantity’ etc.) in contrast to other language systems such as the African language known as *ewe*.¹⁸ Indeed, what articulation is there between linguistic labels, nouns and other discourse particles on the one hand and categories of thought on the other? Does a culture recognize and think only what it expresses in distinct linguistic terms? In this case, is it possible to speak of a specific category for the notion of “toy” in the ancient Greek or Latin languages?

Claudia Zichi’s article analyses a famous and enigmatic passage from Plato’s *Laws* in which the human being is first described as a “divine marvel” or “puppet”, *thauma theion*, and then as a “plaything”, *paignion*, of the gods.¹⁹ Her reflections show that things are more complex than they might seem, calling again to mind connections between a toy and a divine assemblage. A *thauma* could also refer in ancient Greek polytheism to cult statues carried in procession, sometimes fallen from the sky, or even self-propelled.²⁰

Cecilia Nobili’s paper focuses on the relation of the notion of “toy” with that of an object of marvel, a magical instrument that can deeply fascinate. The observers or listeners may in turn be influenced by a cunning builder or manipulator of wonders. In particular, the author reconstructs a semantic development of the term *athurma*. On the one hand *athurma* means a marvellous object, a work of great ingenuity, but on the other hand, it can also be an instrument of suasive fascination and be associated to the world of song and dance, particularly in Greek

late archaism (6th cent. BCE). The best example of the cultural values associated to *athurma* is the story of the transformation of the tortoise carapace into the first lyre by the young Hermes in his Homeric hymn. The story combines extraordinary technical skill in the construction of a playful object and equally extraordinary technical knowledge in the use of the object.²¹

The philological study conducted by Lucia Floridi is strongly intertwined with the latter article. It pursues the exploration of the meanings of *athurma* in a literary corpus covering the Hellenistic and imperial periods. Looking at the enunciative contexts in which *athurma* is used, the author notes a progressive shift. *Athurma* first designated objects of remarkable manufacture, like precious artefacts, then increasingly referred to living beings, not only humans but also animals. *Athurma* can designate household animals as lifelong companions: the metaphorical representation of the interspecific bond between man and animal as an erotic relationship, recently studied by Cristiana Franco, reflects the cultural relevance of the use of *athurma* for pets²². In specific contexts, such as the symposium, *athurma* also denotes the imbalance of power between those who enjoy a spectacle and those who are objects of desire, *athurmata*, available for the pleasure of others. The similarities between playful and ritual action evidenced in Pausanias’ story about Artemis *Apanchomenē* also grounded in the use of *paignion*. Ioanna Patera explains how the term refers to light amusement as well as to religious festivals. However, once more, the materiality of the object eludes us.

Comparable contiguities appear between objects produced to perform a scientific demonstration and for entertainment purposes. Science and experiments are playful, as were mathematics and geometry. Based on the thorough study of ancient Greek texts on pneumatics and mechanics, especially by Hero of Alexandria (1st cent. CE), Tatiana Bur challenges and invalidates several preconceptions based on the artificial opposition between the serious and the playful. Through the thought-provoking parallel between the self-propelled objects animated by the flow of water or the intake of air and riddles, *problēmata paistika* (litt. “playful challenges”), that were normally enunciated during the festive context of the symposium, the author emphasises how the epistemological status of pneumatics knowledge constitutively envisages a ludic experience embodied in the symposiasts’ gestures, manipulations, and disillusioned expectations.

The playful objects that are presented as offerings

18. BENVENISTE (1958).

19. Plato, *Laws*, 1.644d-645b

20. On self-propelled statues and other phenomena of experiencing the marvellous in the context of Graeco-Roman polytheism, see DUNAND (2018).

21. *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, 52-56; 418-423.

22. FRANCO (2017).

to the deity by young individuals in Greek literary epigrams and in Greek shrine inscriptions are of a very different nature. Sophie Laribi-Glaudel has reconstructed every type of votive offering, highlighting the terminological difficulties that thwart our attempts at identifying the objects with any certainty. She focuses on the social identity of the dedicator and the possible cultural implications of the association between the category of the object (domestic, musical, natural) and the cultural construction of the gender, age and status of the young boy or girl performing rituals in front of a community of fellow citizens.

The peculiarity of Greek and Roman terminology thus deprives us from a generic equivalent to the modern term ‘toy’. This should make us aware of a world of possibilities, the variety of potential playthings, the randomness of materials transformed into playthings through children’s agency. The identification of a ludic object without archaeological context is particularly challenging because any item could become playful in the hands of a child, as in Pausanias’ story.

Funerary contexts are especially precious as they provide information on the age, sex and status of the deceased as well as specific assemblages in the best documented examples. They provide evidence that modest daily life objects could entertain or have an educational purpose. Anna Maria D’Onofrio convincingly argues that the series of fourteen clay discs and five small cups from a Late Geometric child’s grave in Eretria formed a stacker toy whereas five cups of different sizes could have been teaching aides, training students to learn how to measure. Stone pebbles and flat stones similarly belong to long neglected find objects. In Greek Sicily, Claudia Lambrugo showcases how pebbles could be used as game tools, potentially with a pre monetary value, as are knucklebones.²³ Some special stones, engraved with signs, suggest that they may have been used in ritual contexts too.

A range of items, however, was potentially multifunctional, like limestone or metal spheres, also found by Daniela Costanzo in different sites of Magna Graecia. According to the context, they have been variously interpreted as marbles, tools for cleromancy rituals when inscribed with the name of a divinity, or for drawing lots in a *klerotērion*. Iconography can also contribute to understanding the metaphoric dimension of play and games, often associated with nuptial contexts. Depictions of balls’ offerings on the Locrian *pinakes* thus clearly refer to the seduction of the girl, carried in a chariot that are

23. On the symbolic link of knucklebones to weights, measures, and coins, see DOYEN (2021a) and (2021b).

found as bronze miniatures in tombs. The musical performances associated with ball games also took place in religious festivals, often anticipating marriage as Angela Bellia subtly explains.

The Greek custom of depositing miniatures and simulacra of daily life objects in tombs and sanctuaries can also blur modern interpretations. Comparative approaches can be useful and sometimes provide surprising results. Victoria Sabetai reveals the differences between the range of items from Boeotian tombs and the Theban Kabirion sanctuary, highlighting that specific selections were operated according to contexts, spinning tops being reserved for the sanctuary, miniature shields and dolls for the tombs, whereas rattling objects appear in both. This observation is corroborated by a votive Etrusco-Campanian bronze statuette of a young man analysed by Astrid Fendt who holds in his hands a spinning top and a whip, a symbol of his sub adult age as well as of his skill.

One of the most insightful texts concerning the study of the play culture in Graeco-Roman Antiquity is undoubtedly a short paragraph by Aelian in his *Varia Historia*: Aelian collects a series of anecdotes dealing with the special relationship between personalities of the past, divine or human, and the world of play, in particular children’s play, sometimes practised with the help of everyday objects or natural playthings.²⁴ A particularly striking story concerns the king of Sparta, Agesilaus II, who was said to play with his son when the latter was still a child, by taking a stick or a cane, *kalamos*, and riding it.²⁵ As modern readers and commentators, we would like to know how the horse that Agesilaus rode to play with his son actually looked like, or whether it had been defined as an actual horse. But neither Aelian’s text or earlier versions of the same anecdote,²⁶ provide any further explanations. The playful object is not described as a *paignion*, *athurma*, not even as a *mimēma*, or an *eikōn*, a ‘copy’ or a ‘representation’ of a horse.

The enigmatic nature of this playful object, for many generations *the* toy par excellence, has never ceased to intrigue and challenge scholars throughout history. Ernst Gombrich, semiologist and art historian, introduced two fundamental concepts, namely that of the ‘minimum image’ and of the ‘conceptual image’ in his *Meditations on a Hobby Horse*. At the origins of the artistic object, and we might say of the playful experience in choosing an object as a plaything, what are the relations between the two dimensions of

24. Aelian, *Historical Miscellany*, 12.15.

25. “Agesilaus mounted on a cane rode with his son who was still a child” (trans. N.G. Wilson, Loeb) (Ἀγησίλαος δὲ κάλαμον περιβάς ἵππευε μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ παιδὸς ὄντος).

26. Plutarch, *Life of Agesilaus*, 25.5.

functionality and shape? Must we confront these two notions or should we not distinguish different playful experiences according to the prevalence of one or the other in the manipulation and activation of the toy? One might see in Agesilaus' *kalamos*, something very similar to the ball of wool chased by a kitten, where what is central to the playful experience is not the resemblance or verisimilitude of the ludic-object, but the ability such a plaything has to respond to certain demands of action.²⁷

Michel Manson's research is carried out in this perspective. His cultural history of the hobby horse was achieved thanks to a careful reading of literary texts and images, from antiquity to the Medieval and Renaissance periods. The dissemination of specific models of chivalrous society, conveyed through stories and iconography, offers children a space to perform playful fiction that do not seem to have been activated in other historical and cultural circumstances.

The contributions collected in this volume investigate different periods and cultural areas of the Greek, Etruscan, and Roman world characterised as traditional, non-industrial societies in which most children's play experiences were conducted outdoors in rural and pastoral settings. Ethnographic comparisons are very precious, such as with the agricultural communities in Moroccan Anti-Atlas studied by Jean-Pierre Rossie, because they share habits and an ecology similar to those of ancient Mediterranean societies. The construction of the tools which Amazigh children use to stage mimetic-fictional play, such as the bride's game or the shepherd's game, is at the core of their play experience. The making of a plaything cannot be separated as a preliminary or different operation from the actual game. Toys there too have no special name. It is striking that the doll, as in the Graeco-Roman world, is a special case because of its close relation to life passages and rituals. It is simply called the 'bride', *taslit*, because girls mainly play at mimicking the ceremony of marriage, the major event that marks their lives.

Cleo Gougoulis responds to Jean-Pierre Rossie's investigation with an erudite social and anthropological study of the complex cultural and political usage of the term 'toy' in modern Greece, between the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, with the massive development of the toy industry. The public administration, the trade authorities, as well as the school and education system of the Greek state, a few decades after the

Greek Revolution and political independence, were aware of the need to use a hyperonym, a generic term for the playthings that until then would hardly or only in rare cases called toys. Four different terms appear to designate commercial toys, *athyrma*, *paignio[n]*, and *paignidi/paichinidi*, leading to the contemporary use of *paignidia* in Modern Greek.

These reflections on the emergence of a new terminology in the particular socio-cultural context of industrial societies once again emphasise how play and its tools are social phenomena of communication. In this perspective, Mattia Thibault offers an effective key to reading toys as signs ('texts'), and games as semiotic practices involving the game producers or the players in a continuous process of negotiation, re-semantisation, and innovation.²⁸ The semiotic perspective offers a rich harvest of heuristic tools that can incite the reader to read other essays through the lens of a discipline that emphasises the socio-relational dimension of play.

In the postface, Brigitte Röder highlights the bias imposed by Western modern views on ancient artefacts and their interpretation. The massive development of toy industry has biased the contemporary perceptions of the ecology of ancient playthings and their interpretation, especially for prehistory.

This volume thus intends to make scholars and a wider audience aware of the variety of artefacts that were part of the play experience of ancient childhood and youth, some very modest but culturally significant, such as the clay discs and little cups of the child's grave from Eretria. In depth philological and semantic approaches also open avenues for new ways of thinking about past categories and contribute to deconstructing a too narrow vision of toys and play.

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28. For a semiotic approach to play as a form of signifying, see also recently HELJIAKKA 2013 and THIBAUT 2020.

27. GOMBRICH (1963), 1-11.

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'Rite de passage' or Special Ability? The Bronze Statuette of a Boy Holding a Whipping Top in the Munich Collections of Antiquities

INTRODUCTION

The bronze statuette of a young man with a whipping top in the Munich Collections of Antiquities (figs. 1-4) is one of a few known three-dimensional representations of male children and youths in connection with this specific toy. The 36-centimetre-high figure depicts an athletic naked young man holding a conical top in his raised right hand. He presents the whipping top to the viewers like a special object – like a consecration gift. Based on this Late Classical bronze figure, perhaps originating from the region around the Gulf of Naples, the whipping top will be discussed as a toy for children and adolescents and as a far-reaching symbol for young adults in both the Greek and the Italic world of the 5th to 2nd centuries BCE. The potential statement of the Munich figure will be discussed: How does it fit into the known two- and three-dimensional representations of children and adolescents of both sexes playing with or presenting a whipping top? Does it represent an adolescent on the threshold of adulthood who consecrated his toy to a deity as part of the 'rite de passage'? Or was this statuette intended to consecrate to a deity, in a more abstract sense, the young man's ability as a whipping top player? Or did the figure serve as a grave offering to commemorate the young adult's special skill in handling the whipping top and to indicate his status of age?

1. THE PROVENANCE OF THE MUNICH BRONZE STATUETTE

A conclusive answer to these questions is only possible to a limited extent, as the ancient provenance of the Munich bronze statuette inv. SL 25 is unclear. The figure entered the holdings of the Staatliche Antikensammlungen München in 1933 through the bequest of the James Loeb Collection (1867-1933). Johannes Sieveking first published it in 1913 (fig. 5).¹ J. Loeb, for his part, had bought it in 1899 in the course of the auction of the collection of William Henry Forman (1794-1869) at Sotheby's in London. In the auction catalogue, Cecil H. Smith describes in the preface the acquisition and presentation history of the objects from the Forman collection, most of which had been purchased in the London art trade in the middle of the 19th century:

The Collection described in the following catalogue was formed by Mr. W. H. Forman in the middle years of the present century, mainly from purchases at London sales; [...] During Mr. Forman's lifetime, it was housed in the proprietor's home at Pippbrook House, near Dorking; and at his death passed first into the hands of his sister-in-law Mrs. Burt, and afterwards into those of his nephew Major A. H. Browne, of Callaly Castle, Northumberland, somewhere about the year 1889. The new proprietor removed it en bloc to his house in the

¹ SIEVEKING (1913), 66, pl. 27; last for this purpose: COLZANI (forthcoming 2022); GIUMAN (2020), 15.

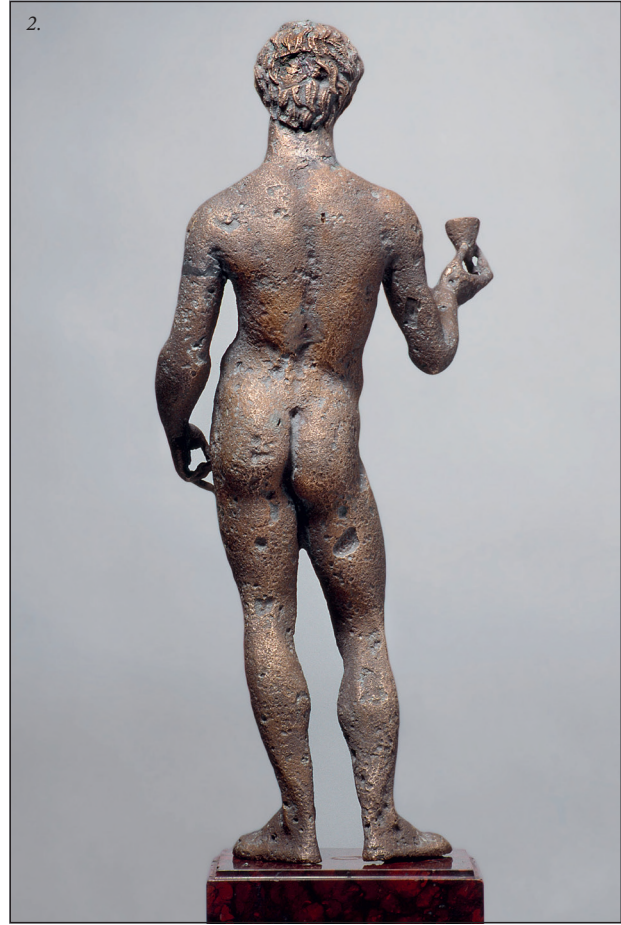


Fig. 1-4: Bronze statuette of a male youth with spinning top (H. 36 cm), from Coll. Loeb, 350-325 BCE, Staatliche Antikensammlungen Munich, inv. SL 25. Photo Renate Kühling, Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek Munich.

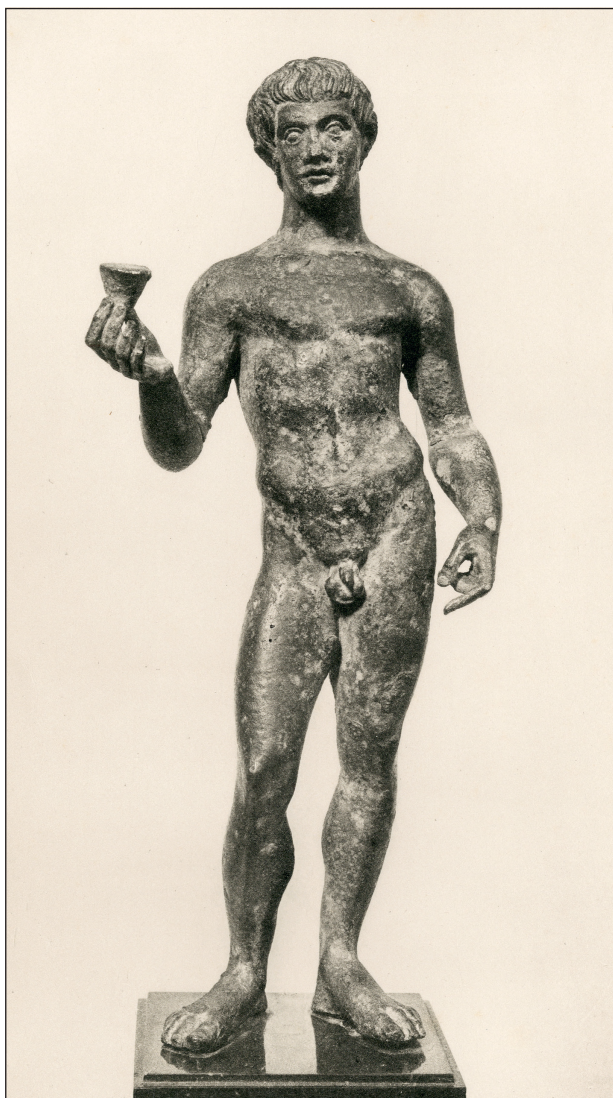


Fig. 5: Historical photograph before 1913 of the bronze statuette of the male youth with spinning top (see fig. 1-4). Photo after SIEVEKING (1913), pl. 27.

North, having built out for its reception a special wing as a private museum, with two handsome galleries, one above the other; in the upper were exhibited the collection of vases, and some of the more valuable of the smaller objects; in the lower the collection of bronzes, the rest of the antiquities, [...]²

C. H. Smith reports the following on the level of awareness of the collection in expert circles and on the provenance of the objects:

Formed too late for Waagen, and being outside the scope of Michaelis' work, the collection has thus remained practically unknown to archaeologists. [...], he [Alexander Conze] writes as follows: 'As a collector in London I can only name Mr. Forman of Queen Street, Cheapside, who was kind enough to show me several good bronze figures, probably found in tombs in Naples, [...]³

² SMITH (1899), III.

³ SMITH (1899), III.

In 1899, James Loeb, a banker and art historian who grew up in New York, bought the bronze statuette from the Forman Collection. J. Loeb was already building up a collection of small antique works of art after completing his studies in economics and art history at Harvard. In 1902 he withdrew into private life and moved to Munich. There, from 1909 to 1911, he had a city palace built with its own so-called museum room in a low side wing. In 1911-1913, he had a country house built in Murnau in South Bavaria, where antiquities were also presented. In Munich, J. Loeb established close contacts with archaeologists, including Johannes Sieveking (1869-1942), director of the Museum of Ancient Art (now the Staatliche Antikensammlungen). J. Loeb saw it as a self-obligation to make his collection generally known. J. Sieveking published it successively, even before a large part was bequeathed to the Munich Antikensammlungen in his will thanks to the friendship between J. Loeb and J. Sieveking. J. Sieveking's inventory catalogue of the bronze collection of Loeb was in 1913 the first of four publications on the Loeb collections.⁴ In the preface to Loeb's bronze volume, J. Sieveking refers to the then and previous location of the objects:

The bronzes united in this volume, the publication of which their owner James Loeb has kindly entrusted to me, have now found their place with the other antiquities of his rich and select collection, [...], in the museum room of his Munich home. The larger part, from the Forman collection, was formerly on loan to the Fogg Museum at Harvard University.⁵

2. Description, material condition and dating of the Munich bronze statuette

The bronze statuette from the Loeb Collection depicts a slender naked young man with his left standing leg and his right playing leg flared out to the front. His body is ponderated, the hip inclines to the right side of his body in accordance with the contrapposto leg position. The slender upper part of the body is only slightly modulated and refers to the sitter's youthful age. A relatively small, beardless head with a short hairstyle sits on the massive neck. From a hair spider at the back of the head, thick short strands wrap around the head and are arranged into a straight fringe on the forehead. Both arms are lowered. He has raised his right hand bent at the elbow and holds a top in his hand. J. Sieveking identified the whipping top in the first publication, but addressed the statuette as the embodiment of an adult: "That adults in the ancient world also indulged in whipping top play is already known to us from vase paintings."⁶ C. H. Smith recognised a youthful athlete

⁴ SALMEN (2018), 21-29; KNAUSS (2018), 204-207.

⁵ SIEVEKING (1913), III.

⁶ SIEVEKING (1913), 66.

in the auction catalogue of the Forman Collection: “Nude Youth, perhaps an athlete, standing on left leg with right slightly advanced, holding in his right a cone (?).”⁷ He referred to the top unspecifically as a cone; probably also because of the unusual way in which it is handled, to which Susanne Pfisterer-Haas also referred: “Young man with whipping top, which he holds in his right hand at the pointed end. He presents it like a flower or an offering. This is not the hand position in which he could place it on the ground to spin.”⁸

The left arm is almost completely lowered and only slightly raised at the elbow. The fingers of the forward stretched, lowered hand formerly enclosed an object, probably a whip (lat. *flagellum*) as the comparison with other figures suggests (see below). Due to the advanced corrosion, however, no traces of the attachment are visible. Friedrich Wilhelm Hamdorf suggests – erroneously – that a small bag with play knuckles should be added to the left hand.⁹ There are small cast bronze hooks on the soles of both feet, which appear modern due to their sharp edges. A small hole with thread marks was made in the right hook in the course of an earlier attachment. Today, the statuette is anchored in a natural stone base, which probably originates from the Loeb Collection.

The state of preservation of the figure is unstable, the surface heavily corroded and pitted with holes. How far advanced the corrosion has become in the meantime is shown by the photographic comparison with the condition from the early 20th century (cf. fig. 1 with fig. 5). At that time, the bronze surface still had a closed, smooth structure. The trace of an antique patching (a so-called plaster) can be seen on the rear right arm. The left arm was soldered back on with tin in an earlier measure.¹⁰ In November 1938, individual areas, especially on the left arm, were annealed because of eating patina. A new restoration took place in October 1968. In 2004, affected areas were blown out with an ultra-fine pressure blasting device.¹¹ According to Hagen Schaaff, the conservator for metal objects of the Munich Antikensammlungen: “the original surface is destroyed and slightly corroded. The colour of the surface indicates oxidation. The earlier use of chlorides had led to pitting corrosion. Salt pockets were probably also annealed on the reverse side in earlier measures”. As per H. Schaaff, electrolytic/electrochemical cleaning probably took place. In the meantime, new light blue-greenish, circular efflorescences have formed on the neck, shoulder

7 SMITH (1899), 16 no. 99, fig. 99.

8 PFISTERER-HAAS (2004), 414.

9 HAMDORF (1992), 164.

10 SIEVEKING (1913), 66 mentions already, that it was broken.

11 SCHAAFF (2004), State Collections of Antiquities Munich.

and back. The weight of the statuette (4.3 kilograms) indicates that it is a full casting.¹²

The ancient landscape attribution of the figure is unclear. C. H. Smith addressed it in 1899 as probably Etruscan: “Coarse style, probably Etruscan”.¹³ J. Sieveking was also guided by this judgement, which classified Etruscan art as inferior to Greek art:

Unfortunately, the quality of the execution does not correspond to the charming motif, which is unique in its kind. The lines of the bronze are somewhat angular and unbalanced, the upper and lower parts of the body do not seem to be well matched. The feet, hands and chest are excessively clumsy, the head was intended to appear individual, but seems clumsily placed. All in all, the statuette lacks proper artistic training. One senses certain borrowings from good models, without being able to define them more precisely, since they have been jumbled up and distorted. I think we can recognise in these weaknesses a criterion of Etruscan art, which re-stylised Greek works to suit its own taste. At the end of the 4th century BCE the bronze may have been made.¹⁴

This attribution and dating persist to this day.¹⁵ Christian Gliwitzky also emphasised the contrast between Etruscan and Greek styles:

At about the same time [around 300 BCE], another Etruscan artist created the figure of a youth who is presented to the viewer in ideal nudity. Here, too, the standing motif and body shape are undoubtedly indebted to classical Greek models. However, the design seems a little wooden and clumsy, which at least in our eyes gives it a striking charm compared to the often very smooth and all too perfect models.¹⁶

The Munich statuette has so far been regarded as the only evidence of the whipping top in Etruscan culture. Marco Fittà states thus: “Etruscan evidence of games and toys is extremely rare, but in the antique collections in Munich there is a bronze statuette from the end of the 4th century BCE showing a naked youth with a top in his hand”.¹⁷

The origin of the statuette from the Forman Collection suggests an ancient provenance from southern Italy with a focus on Campania maybe from a grave, but ultimately does not prove this. It is possible that the figure was created in the Etruscan-Campanian artistic environment, which is characterised by a fusion of

12 Kind information of H. Schaaff, conservator, State Collections of Antiquities Munich, 11.9.2020.

13 SMITH (1899), 16, no. 99.

14 SIEVEKING (1913), 66. Also GLIWITZKY (2015), 294, fig. 6.73, cat. 506 and PFISTERER-HAAS (2004), 414, fig. 44.1.

15 GIUMAN (2020), 15; PFISTERER-HAAS (2004), 414: “Etruscan bronze statuette around 300 BCE”.

16 GLIWITZKY (2015), 294, 377, cat. 506.

17 FITTÀ (1998), 78.

Greek and Etruscan cultural elements. The hairstyle follows classical models in a simplified form. The elongated, slender build, the restrained contrapposto with ponderation and pronounced hip swing suggest a dating around 350-325 BCE.¹⁸ The standing motif with both feet placed flat on the ground in a v-shape is comparable to a contemporaneous Northern Etruscan statuette of a young Heracles in the British Museum,¹⁹ which served as the handle of a situla.²⁰ In terms of body and arm posture as well as gestures and frontal gaze, the Munich figure resembles a smaller statuette of the same period in the Louvre in

18 GLIWITZKY (2015), 377, cat. 506: around 300 BCE; PFISTERER-HAAS (2004), 496, cat. 233: end of the 4th cent. BCE.

19 London, British Museum, H. 25.6. cm, 350-300 BCE, inv. 1824.4-46.12.

20 HAYNES (1985), 306, no. 65 with fig.



Fig. 6: Bronze statuette of a male youth perhaps formerly with whipping top in his hands (H. 16.3 cm), from Monte Falterona, 350-325 BCE, Paris, Louvre, inv. MN 351 (Br 291). Photo after CRISTOFANI (1985), 106, fig. 4.9.

Paris,²¹ which was probably once part of an Etruscan candelabra and comes from the well-known votive depository of Monte Falterona between northern Etruria and Romagna (fig. 6). Stylistically striking – as with the Munich statuette – is the supposed break between the organically elaborated upper body and the graphically applied facial structure. The objects held in the hand are lost. Research has so far referred unspecifically to sacrificial offerings.²² However, the piercing in the closed left hand and the forward-facing, only fragmentarily preserved right hand possibly also speak for a spinning top with whip as attributes of the young man. A 29-centimetre-high bronze statuette from the Museo Nazionale Romano

21 Paris, Louvre, H. 16.3 cm, 3rd quarter of the 4th cent. BCE, inv. MN 351 (Br 291).

22 PALLOTTINO (1992), cat. 516, with fig.; CRISTOFANI (1985), 106, no. 4.9 with fig.

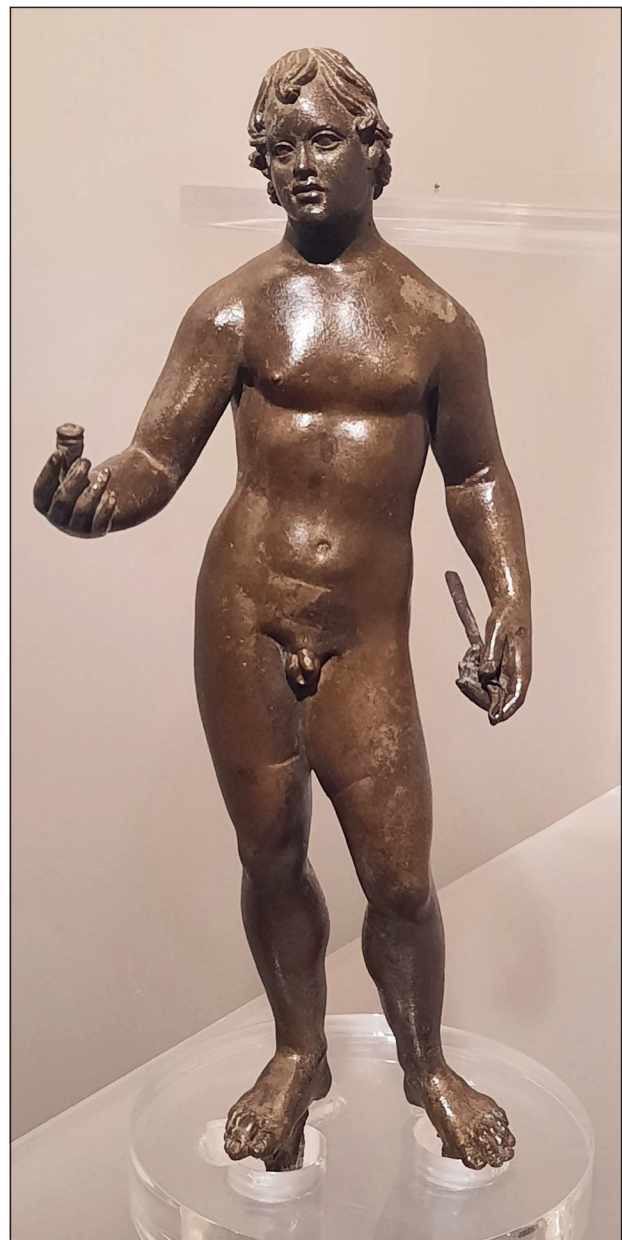


Fig. 7: Bronze statuette of a boy with whipping top (H. 25 cm), from Mentana, 2nd-1st century BCE, Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano, inv. 78277. Photo Giovanni Colzani, Milano.

in Rome, found in 1921 in Mentana near Rome, represents a boy of a much younger age (fig. 7),²³ which is probably to be located around the middle of the 2nd century BCE.²⁴ The boy has a soft, rounded body with childlike pads on his chest, stomach, arms, and legs. He wears his curly hair in the crested coiffure typical of young children. The three bronze statuettes mentioned suggest that in Central Italy, over a longer period from the late 4th to the 2nd century BCE, not only male adolescents but also male infants could be associated and represented in statuary art with a whipping top. These three statuettes go hand in hand with numerous finds of spinning tops as votive offerings in the early and middle Republican period in central Italian sanctuaries for Chthonic deities and those dedicated to Demeter or Menerva/Athena, which had a specific matrimonial character.²⁵ They fit into a familiar world of imagination from archaic to late classical Greece. There, in addition to written mentions, are many testimonies, especially in vase painting, that show not only boys but also girls on the threshold of adulthood and the 'rite de passage' in connection with the whip-round game.

3. SYMBOLIC POWER OF THE WHIPPING TOP IN GREEK AND ROMAN LITERATURE

The spinning top – and more specifically the whipping top – is an ancient children's toy mentioned in early Greek literature that was used by elder boys and girls. Homer calls it *strombos*, later authors name it *bembex*, *bembix*, *konos*, *rhombos*, *strobilos* and *trochos*. In Latin there are the terms *buxum*, *rhombus*, *turben*, *turbo* and *trochus*.²⁶ From the very beginning, the speed of rotation interested and fascinated people. Homer uses the toy as a means of comparison to describe dexterity and intensity in the use of a weapon. Thus, the Greek hero and fighter Aias hit his Trojan opponent Hector with a heavy stone and set him in motion like a spinning top:

[...]; of these [stones] he [Aias] lifted one on high, and smote Hector on the chest over the shield-rim, hard by the neck, and set him whirling like a top with the blow; and he spun round and round.²⁷

Vergil, some 700 years later, also refers to the high speed that had to be created with a skilful hand:

As at times a top, spinning under the twisted lash, which boys intent on the game drive in a great circle through an empty court – urged by the whip it speeds on round after round; the puzzled, childish throng hang over it in wonder, marvelling at the whirling boxwood; [...].²⁸

Persius, a Roman poet of Etruscan descent, emphasises in his satire around the middle of the 1st century CE the sporting ambition that went hand in hand with the game of the whipping top: It was his greatest wish "[...], and not to be outdone by anyone in whipping the boxwood top."²⁹ Early imperial poets ascribe oracle properties to the spinning top, as Ovid does:

She knows the ways of magic, and Aenean incantations, and by her art turns back the liquid waters upon their source; she knows well what the herb can do, what the thread set in motion by the whirling magic wheel, what the poison of the mare in heat.³⁰

The spinning top functions as an erotic symbol in Tibull's *Elegies*:

I was angry. I vowed I could bear our severance well. But now my proud vaunting has left me far and far away. For I am driven as a top that springs before the lash over the level ground, whirled by a quick boy's practised art.³¹

4. THE SPINNING TOP AS A VOTIVE OFFERING

Spinning tops of various shapes were found as votive offerings not only in Italian sanctuaries (see above), but also in Greek sanctuaries. Along with balls, rattles and knucklebones, they were representative of toys that young people gave as votive offerings in sanctuaries during the 'rite de passage' at the transition to adulthood.³² An anonymous epigram describes such a sacrifice by a boy named Philocles to Hermes, the patron of children:

To Hermes Philocles here hangs up these toys of his boyhood: his noiseless ball, this lively boxwood rattle, his knuckle-bones he had such a mania for, and his spinning-top.³³

At this point we can only refer to the Kabeiri sanctuary in Thebes, where numerous roundabouts were discovered,³⁴ and were also identified for the

23 Roma, Museo Nazionale Romano (Palazzo Massimo alle Terme), inv. 78277; TORO (2001), 338, no. 2262: finding place Mentana, Fosso delle Spallete. Up to now the statuette is dated in early Imperial times, see COLZANI (2022 forthcoming) and GIUMAN (2020), 15. He suggests its origins in an "officina pompeiana".

24 For the age determination see the statuette of a standing boy with goose in Leiden, Rijksmuseum, H. 32 cm, found in Montecchio near Cortona, around 150 BCE; fig. in CRISTOFANI (1985), 240, no. 128.

25 COLZANI (forthcoming 2022); GIUMAN (2020), 64-71.

26 GIUMAN (2020), 3; DASEN (2019b), 52; DASEN (2016), 82-85.

27 Homer, *Iliad*, 14. 412 (transl. A. T. Murray, Loeb); GIUMAN (2020), 2; PFISTERER-HAAS (2004), 469, n. 3.

28 Vergil, *Aeneid*, 7.378-384 (transl. H. R. Fairclough, Loeb); GIUMAN (2020), 9; FITTÀ (1998), 77.

29 Persius, 3.50/44-51 (transl. G. G. Ramsay, Loeb); GIUMAN (2020), 14; FITTÀ (1998), 89, n. 103.

30 Ovid, *Loves*, 1.8.5-10 (transl. G. Showerman, Loeb); FITTÀ (1998), 78.

31 Tibull, *Elegies*, 1.5.3-4 (transl. F. W. Cornish, J. P. Postgate, J. W. Mackail, Loeb); GIUMAN (2020), 12; FITTÀ (1998), 89, n. 104.

32 DASEN (2019a), 17.

33 *Greek Anthology*, 6.309 (transl. W. R. Paton, Loeb).

34 WOLTERS, BRUNS (1940), spinning top inv. 10473, 10450, 10447, 10433, 10445, 10446, 10448, 10449, 10451 pl. 18, 2. 4-11; inv. 10444, 10471, 10475 pl. 19, 4-6. See also V. SABETAI in this volume, pl. 2.

first time on the basis of an inscription naming the *strobilos*. The basic shape of the whipping tops found there consists of a cylindrical roller with a conical tip on one side and a flat end plate, usually with a central hole, on the other. The pin for turning was inserted into this hole. On some spinning tops, the side walls were grooved so that they could be used as whip spinning tops with a string for unwinding. They were with and without grooves and bore various decorations mostly consisting of painted ivy or leaf garlands, palmettes, rosettes or waterfowl. Fragments of figuratively decorated spinning tops were also found. They show, for example, the remains of a *tropaion* as well as the wings of a Nike, legs of a man and a cock. It is striking that the decoration was painted ‘upside down.’ This was easier for the painter. However, the motif would have been upside down in the top. This is understandable for votive offerings that were also placed upside down in the sanctuary, i.e. on the flat side; and which may not have been in real use at all. The finds from the Kabeiri sanctuary were usually made of clay.³⁵ Spinning tops presented as consecration offerings could also be made of bronze, lead, stone, glass or wood. The latter material was mainly used for the spinning tops that were in active use before the consecration.³⁶ In addition to the whipping top and the cylindrical top with a pin, there were simple tops consisting of a disc with a hole in the middle through which a pointed stick was pushed.³⁷ However, the spinning top could also consist of a clay disc with a modelled tip on both sides.³⁸

5. ‘RITE DE PASSAGE’: THE SYMBOLIC POWER OF THE WHIPPING TOP IN GREEK VASE PAINTINGS

5.1 Female youth with whipping top

Classical Greek vase paintings illustrate the symbolic value that the whipping top in particular had for both male and female adolescents on the threshold of adulthood. On the interior of an Attic drinking bowl in Brussels from around 450 BCE a female youth holds a whip in her right hand and drives the spinning top with it.³⁹ This consists of a cylindrical body with grooves and a pointed end. The actual driving process is not shown. The top is wound onto the whip string. A quick pull of the whip sets it in a circular motion. The rotary motion can be maintained by repeated strokes.⁴⁰ The young woman

wears a coat over her long sleeve chiton. Her left arm is bound in it. This is a motif that can also be found in other paintings of young women playing whipping tops.⁴¹ It served perhaps so that the unused arm did not interfere with fast play. The bowl comes from a richly furnished tomb in Athens. It was found in 1890 together with other vases coming from the workshop of the Sotades painter and seems to have been made especially for the tomb. A second white-ground button-handled bowl, also found in Brussels, forms a pair with the one described here. The interior of the bowl depicts a woman sitting on a stool. Opposite her sits a baby in a high chair. Most likely it is a mother and child. Presumably, the bowls were burial gifts in the grave of a girl who either died before her marriage, or a young mother who had just made the status transition from childhood to adulthood. While the whipping top still symbolizes the childhood phase of the girl, the baby stands for the new stage of life of the married woman.⁴²

Also referring to the realm of youthful eroticism, marriage, and associated rites of passage is the depiction on an Apulian pelike from the first half of the 4th century BCE in Matera.⁴³ Centrally, Eros is depicted playing the whipping top surrounded by two young women. The winged god of love stands prominently in the centre of the picture and strides out with his whip staff. His gaze is directed at the whirling whirling on the ground in front of him. The young woman sitting at the left edge of the picture, adorned with bridal garments, also looks spellbound at the ground, as if she expects a prophecy about a future love or marriage from the spinning top. In the window frame above the head of Eros sits a dove, the bird of Aphrodite. On the right, a young woman playing ball completes the scene. She too can be seen in the context of love and love affairs.⁴⁴ The function of the whipping top as a love oracle is also mentioned in the 3rd century BCE in an epigram by Kallimachos.⁴⁵ A young man goes to Pittakos of Mytilene, one of the seven sages, and asks him for advice in love matters. He, in turn, sends him to the children playing the whipping top in the square. These call out: “the closest one”. Then the young man understood that he must choose a woman from his social milieu.⁴⁶

5.2 Male youth with whipping top

Eros is also depicted on Greek vase paintings together with male youths driving the whipping top.

35 WOLTERS, BRUNS (1940), 123 f. On clay spinning tops from Corinth, see KLINGER (2022).

36 GIUMAN (2020), 4.

37 FITTÀ (1998), 77, fig. 142 (vase fragment from Athens).

38 FITTÀ (1998), 78, fig. 144 (object in Saintes, Musée Archéologique).

39 Musées Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire Brussels, inv. A891; fig. in GIUMAN (2020), 32, pl. VI; FITTÀ (1998), 77, fig. 143; BURN (1985), pl. 25.2.

40 RUDOLF, WARWITZ (1982), 117.

41 GIUMAN (2020), 32, pl. VIIa, b with further depictions showing young women with whipping top; PFISTERER-HAAS (2004), 415.

42 BURN (1985), 101.

43 Matera, Arch. Naz., inv. 14924; DASEN (2019b), 53, fig. 4-5; DASEN (2016), 84, fig. 8 A-B; SCHAUBURG (1976), 52, fig. 24.

44 GIUMAN (2020), 36, pl. IX; DASEN (2019b), 53; PFISTERER-HAAS (2004), 417.

45 *Greek Anthology*, 7.89.

46 Cited from DASEN (2019b), 53.

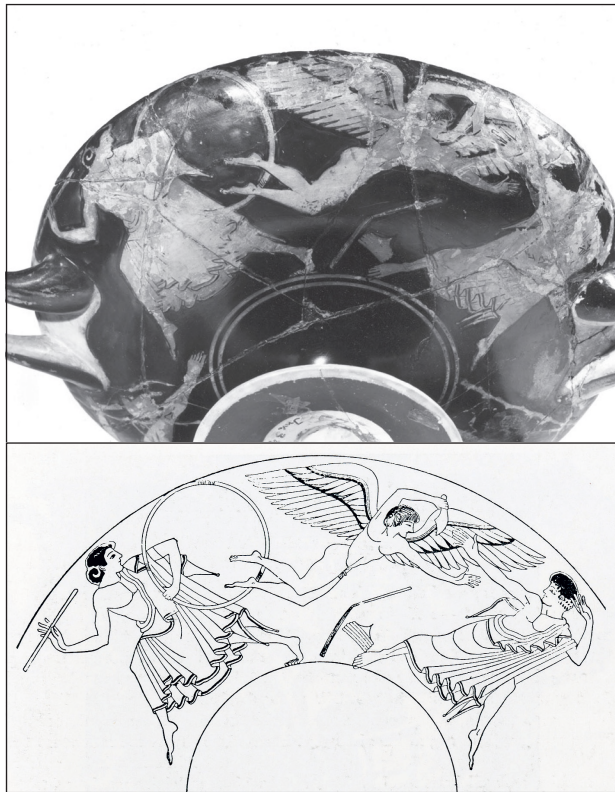


Fig. 8-9: Attic kylix of Duris depicting Eros who startles two young men playing with whipping top and hoop, 480 BCE, Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. 3166. Photo Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz; redrawing after Olshausen (1979), 18, fig. 3.

He represents the transitional period from adolescence to adulthood. On an Attic drinking bowl of Duris in Berlin, made around 480 BCE (figs. 8-9) the youthful god of love plunges with a knife⁴⁷ between two youngsters playing.⁴⁸ The one running away to the right drops the top and whip in fright. The one escaping to the left, who just drove the hoop, runs away with his toy under his arm. Eros has cut off the right young man the *krobylos*, the untied long hair. The scene can be interpreted in the sense that the young men are suddenly and violently seized by love. This process is also occasionally associated with concrete physical pain in other contemporaneous vase paintings. The cut hair, however, can also be interpreted as an allusion to a hair sacrifice of the *ephepera*.⁴⁹

The well-known hair sacrifice of the Attic *ephebes* took place at the *apaturia*, a *phratría* festival celebrated in month *pyanepsion* (October/November). Here the young men who had reached the age of 18 were enrolled in the *phratría* lists. They became full-fledged citizens. On the third day, the *koureotis*, the young adults in question offered a hair sacrifice, the

47 Elisabeth Rohde – on my opinion wrongly – suggests that the object in the right hand of Eros is a sandal: CVA Berlin 1 (DDR 3), Antikensammlung (1990), 29, pl. 14,1.

48 Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. F3168; GIUMAN (2020), 21-23; OLSHAUSEN (1979), 18, fig. 1.3 (redrawing).

49 PFISTERER-HAAS (2004), 416 fig. 44.5.

koureion.⁵⁰ However, in the case of the boys playing with the top and hoop, the action of Eros is more likely to refer to an earlier hair sacrifice. As with manhood rites of many peoples, hair sacrifices were also common among the Greeks, which the boys offered when they reached sexual maturity. It can be assumed that the 15-16 year old *mellephebes* also gained access to the *palaestra* after the hair sacrifice festival. The Eros on the Berlin bowl assigns the boys, as it were, to their new stage of life, in which they will move predominantly in male company until about the age of 18. This is also suggested by the *palaestra* scene on the opposite side of the Berlin bowl. Young naked men stand at a water basin and clean themselves with *strigileis*. In pederasty, adolescent boys between the ages of 15 and 18 were considered particularly attractive. They were popular with adult men, and it is they who are praised on the vases as *pais kalos* (beautiful youth).⁵¹ In a decidedly homoerotic context, the whip top and hoop are depicted on an Attic pelike of Hermonax in Basel, made around 460 BCE.⁵² Depicted is Zeus, who kidnaps Ganymede. The latter is just together with other beardless youths (*ageneioi*) in the *palaestra*. He holds a cock (the typical love gift) in one hand, in the other he leads a

50 LAMBERT 1993, 152-189.

51 OLSHAUSEN (1979), 22.

52 Basel, Antikenmuseum, inv. BS 483, fig. in GIUMAN (2020), pl. V.



Fig. 10: Attic lekythos depicting Hermes wooing a youth while playing with a whipping top, c. 450 BCE, Tübingen, Collection of Classical Antiquities, inv. 814. Photo R. Balluff, University of Tübingen, Collection of Antiquities.

hoop. One of his two youthful companions escapes holding a top and a whip in his hands.⁵³

Hermes, the god of transition, can appear in the vase painting itself as a whipping top player.⁵⁴ On an Attic lekythos ca. 450 B.C. in the Collection of Classical Antiquities in Tübingen (fig. 10) the god woos a young man by playing the spinning top.⁵⁵ Striding far out, he hurries from the left and lashes out with his whipstick to drive the spinning top to run even faster. In the left Hermes holds his *kerykeion*. Calmly and shamefacedly wrapped up to the neck in his cloak, the youth standing on the right follows the action of the god. The left arm is hidden under the cloak and from the right one sees only the hand with stretched out index finger. Both with young men and with young women, to whom the erotic interest applies or will soon apply, this attitude is to express their shamefulness (*aidos*). Between Hermes and the youth hangs in the centre of the picture, directly above the spinning top, a small bag of knucklebones, a toy which, like the spinning top, could be consecrated to Hermes at the end of youth. But here it is rather to be understood as a love gift of the god to the youth.⁵⁶ Especially on vases in the second half of the 5th century BCE, the Athenian youths are depicted dealing with Hermes. Now the aspect of the youth patron emerges. Hermes is the helper in all difficulties. Hermes helps young people in love matters and enjoys special veneration on the day of marriage. The favorite toy of Hermes is the whipping top, which he sometimes beats in the presence of children and young people.⁵⁷

CONCLUSION

The Munich statuette of a young naked man presenting a whipping top in his raised right hand and probably holding a whip in his lowered left is one of three male statuettes of different childish-youthful ages with this subject currently known from the Italic-Etruscan area. In marked contrast to the classical Greek depictions of this subject, the young athletic man stands calmly and presents his toy. The Greek pictorial sources, on the other hand, show youths/young adults of both sexes in action with the spinning top: either they are playing with it themselves or they are disturbed in the game by a deity or they are watching a deity like Eros or Hermes playing with the whipping top. On the one hand, the Greek vase paintings pay tribute to the written sources from the Greek Archaic to

the Roman Imperial periods, which speak of the physical dexterity associated with the spinning top; on the other hand, they clearly characterize the transitional period from youth to adulthood, which is also connoted with eroticism and the upcoming wedding. The whipping top and playing with the same is thematized in scenes in which both – male and female youths – come into contact with deities of transition such as Hermes or Eros, or are involved in mythical incidents of pederasty.

The spinning top itself is also attested in various forms and materials as a votive offering in the Greek as well as in the Italic cultural area. The Munich bronze statuette has also been read so far in such a context, namely as a “votive offering to a deity, such as Hermes, to whom toys were consecrated as a farewell to youth.”⁵⁸ But it might have been also a grave good.

All three bronze statuettes from the Italic-Etruscan cultural area listed above depict male children and adolescents showing off a whipping top. Besides the meaning of the whipping top in terms of ‘rite de passage’ they should also be read in the context of the literary sources from the early Roman imperial period, which ascribe a high symbolic value to the whipping top with regard to one’s own athletic-manual abilities. Whether the Munich statuette of the young man can be further interpreted to mean not the consecration of the object, but symbolically that of a special skill, namely that of playing the spinning top, cannot be conclusively clarified due to the lack of find context. Athenaeus, who lived in Egypt around 200 CE, mentions in his *Deipnosophistae* a statue that honors an acrobat or magician with special abilities:

Aristonicus of Carystus, Alexander’s ball-player, was made a citizen by the Athenians because of his skill, and a statue was erected to him. For in later times the Greeks came to esteem vulgar skill of hand very highly, more than the ideas of the cultivated intellect. The people of Hestiaeae, at any rate, and of Oreus, raised a bronze statue in the theater of the juggler Theodorus, holding a pebble (*psephos*, term used for the tool of magicians⁵⁹) in his hand.⁶⁰

Especially since the Hellenistic period, groups of acrobats, musicians, dancers and jugglers have been present as itinerant body artists - with and without animals - in the cities of the Greek and Italian, and later Roman, world. They excelled in a wide variety of arts, which included physical dexterity. Their social status was low. They were on the fringes of society. This often went hand in hand with an origin from a foreign region or with physical deformity.

53 GIUMAN (2020), 16; DASEN (2018), 11.

54 BEAZLEY (1938), 267: “After a lost story it was Hermes who invented the spinning top.”

55 Tübingen, Antikensammlung, foundation Sieglin 1910, inv. 814: CVA Tübingen (5) pl. 41, 6-8.

56 PFISTERER-HAAS (2004), 416.

57 ZANKER (1965), 99.

58 PFISTERER-HAAS (2004), 414.

59 Oral reference from Véronique Dasen concerning the interpretation of the quote.

60 Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 1.19a (transl. C. B. Gulick, Loeb).

Their arts were considered entertaining but ultimately not socially acceptable. A conscious alterity to ‘normal’ professional and social groups was constructed.⁶¹ Dexterity and speed – as was important when playing with the whip top – were also required, for example, in the art of juggling with balls. This is described by Manilius in his *Astronomica* in the 1st century CE:

[...]; another can with a deft kick keep in the air a flying ball, exchanging hands for feet and employing in play the body’s support, and execute with nimble arms a volley of rapid strokes; yet another can shower his limbs with a host of balls and create hands to spring up all over his body with the result that, without dropping any of the number, he plays against himself and causes the balls to fly about his person as though in answer to his command.⁶²

In fact, however, the game with the whipping top is not listed among the activities of the acrobats that have come down to us via the Greek and Latin vocabulary.⁶³

It is therefore rather unlikely that the statuette of the Munich spinning top player can be interpreted in such an acrobatic-magical context. With the whipping top, it represents a piece of play equipment that is typical for the age of advanced youth at the transition to adulthood. If the figure was once a grave offering, then perhaps the aspect of the young deceased’s dexterity should be emphasised. If it was a votive offering, then it most likely embodied the aspect of the ‘rite de passage’.

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61 DASEN (2019c), 130-131.

62 Manilius, *Astronomica*, 5.166-172 (transl. G. P. Goold, Loeb); DASEN (2019c), 132.

63 See list in DASEN (2019c), 133-135.

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TOYS AS CULTURAL ARTEFACTS IN ANCIENT GREECE, ETRURIA, AND ROME

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RÉSUMÉS / ABSTRACTS

VÉRONIQUE DASEN & MARCO VESPA

Toys and Play Experience in Ancient Greece, Etruria, and Rome. An Introduction

This paper examines the cultural variety and polysemy of the artefacts involved in the play experience in Classical Antiquity. No generic equivalent to the modern term 'toy' emerges from Greek and Latin written sources, but a wide range of words (*athurma*, *paignion*, *ludicrum*...) relate to a similar sphere of pleasure and entertainment. Philological and semantic analyses open avenues for new ways of thinking about past categories and contribute to deconstructing a too narrow vision of toys and play. The identification of a ludic object without archaeological context is particularly challenging because any item could become playful in the hands of a child. Some were very modest but culturally significant, such as clay discs or pebbles. This nuanced approach of past life experiences, based on emic definitions, should make us aware of a world of possibilities through children's (and adults') agency.

Keywords: Artemis Apanchomene, childhood, doll, Gombrich, fictional play, hobby horse, potential objects, toy

Jouets et expérience du jeu en Grèce, Étrurie et Rome dans l'Antiquité. Une introduction

Cet article examine la variété culturelle et la polysémie des artefacts impliqués dans l'expérience du jeu dans l'Antiquité classique. Aucun équivalent générique du terme moderne 'jouet' n'émerge des sources écrites grecques et latines, mais un large éventail de mots (*athurma*, *paignion*, *ludicrum*...) se rapporte à une sphère similaire du plaisir et du divertissement. Les analyses philologiques et sémantiques ouvrent de nouvelles façons de penser les catégories du passé et contribuent à déconstruire une vision trop étroite des jouets et du jeu. L'identification d'un objet ludique sans contexte archéologique est particulièrement difficile car n'importe quel objet pouvait devenir ludique entre les mains d'un enfant. Certains objets étaient très modestes mais culturellement importants, comme les rondelles d'argile ou les cailloux.

Cette approche nuancée de l'antiquité, basée sur des définitions émiques, nous faire prendre conscience d'un monde de possibilités à travers l'agencement des enfants (et des adultes).

Mots-clés : Artemis Apanchomene, cheval bâton, enfance, Gombrich, jeu fictif, jouet, objet potentiel, poupée

DIEU, ÉRIC

Les désignations du « jouet » en grec ancien et en latin

Cet article s'interroge sur la terminologie servant à désigner d'une manière générale le « jouet » dans l'Antiquité grecque et romaine. Si le vocabulaire du jeu est abondant en grec ancien comme en latin, avec des familles de mots riches en faits de dérivation comme de composition (comme celles, en latin, de *lūdus* et de *iocus*, qui s'appliquent respectivement au jeu en actes et au jeu en paroles), les termes susceptibles de désigner le « jouet » sont, en revanche, particulièrement peu nombreux, et leur polysémie peut donner l'impression que les traductions modernes par « jouet » ne font guère qu'essayer maladroitement d'adapter au monde moderne des réalités qui n'existaient pas de la même manière dans ces deux sociétés anciennes. Ainsi, *lūdicrum* en latin et παίγνιον en grec sont surtout des noms de l'« amusement », ou, le cas échéant, du « jeu », qui, employés à propos de réalités concrètes (constructions de sable, cailloux, colliers, poupées, etc.), peuvent se laisser traduire par « jouet » (« amusement » ou « jeu » concrétisé, matérialisé en un objet, etc.).

Mots-clefs : grec, jouet, latin, lexicologie, philologie, vocabulaire

The Terminology of 'Toy' in Ancient Greek and Latin

This paper investigates the terminology used to refer to the general notion of 'toy' in Greek and Roman antiquity. While the vocabulary for 'play' is abundant in ancient Greek as well as in Latin, with word families rich in derivation as well as in composition (such as, in Latin, *lūdus* and *iocus* which apply respectively

to the play in acts and to the play in words), the terms referring to 'toys' are, by contrast, particularly few, and their polysemy gives the impression that modern translations as 'toy' are merely clumsy attempts to adapt to the modern world realities that did not exist in the same way in these two ancient societies. Thus, *ludicrum* in Latin and *παίγνιον* in Greek are mostly terms for 'amusement' or 'play', which, when used for concrete realities (sand constructions, pebbles, necklaces, dolls, etc.), may be translated as 'toy' ("amusement" or 'play' concretised, materialised in an object, etc.).

Keywords: Greek, toy, Latin, lexicology, philology, vocabulary

MORETTI, PAOLA

Ludicrum, a Word for 'Toy, Plaything'. Some Remarks on its Origin and Use

This paper focuses on *ludicrum* as a hyperonym denoting 'an object to play with'. After some remarks on its origin, the history of the word is analysed within the general frame of the development of Latin ludonyms referring to 'play' and 'games'. *Ludicrum* never specializes as 'toy', and only co-textual elements shed light on the meaning of its occurrences. However, there seems to be no other Latin word that specializes in the sense meaning 'toy'. *Ludicrum* appears for the first time in Catullus, yet in all probability it was common even before him, as *ludere* is the most common verb for children's playing since Plautus and continued as such until late Antiquity. *Ludicrum* is usually associated with both human and divine children (or youth); when adults are said to be like children playing with *ludicra*, a negative overtone is always implied. The paucity of the occurrences of this ludonym is easily explained when we think that our sources are mainly literary texts produced in a culture which is prominently adult-oriented.

Keywords: games, Latin language, Latin ludonyms, *ludicrum*, play, Rome, toy

Ludicrum, un mot pour dire le « jouet ». Quelques remarques sur son origine et ses usages

Cet article concerne le mot *ludicrum*, un hyperonyme dénotant « un objet avec lequel jouer ». L'histoire du *ludicrum* est analysée dans le contexte du développement des ludonymes latins faisant référence au « jeu » et aux « jeux ». *Ludicrum* ne désigne jamais le « jouet » de manière spécifique et seul le contexte littéraire éclaire le sens de ses occurrences. Cependant, aucun autre mot latin ne semble se spécialiser avec le sens de « jouet ». *Ludicrum* apparaît pour la première fois chez Catulle, mais il était probablement commun avant lui, car *ludere* est le verbe désignant le jeu des enfants depuis Plaute et jusqu'à la fin de l'Antiquité. *Ludicrum* est généralement associé à des

enfants et des jeunes, humains et divins ; quand les adultes sont comparés à des enfants jouant avec des *ludicra*, une connotation négative est toujours implicite. La rareté des occurrences de ce ludonyme s'explique quand on pense que nos sources sont principalement des textes littéraires produits au sein d'une culture fortement orientée vers les adultes.

Mots-clefs : jeux, jouer, jouet, langue latine, ludonyme latin, *ludicrum*, Rome

ZICHI, CLAUDIA

Toying with Philosophy: The Wonderous Puppet in Plato's Laws

The paper looks at the metaphorical meaning of the puppet in the first book of Plato's *Laws*. It aims to investigate the operating force behind the marionette as well as the role played by musical education in the prevailing of the string of calculation. It does so firstly by retracing the technical qualities of the puppet in literary works – from Herodotus to Plato –, and secondly by pinpointing the psychological and philosophical consequences of the image of the marionette in relation to a 'morally correct' education in music and dance.

Keywords: education, marionette, musical education, puppet, Plato's *Laws*

Jouer avec la philosophie : la marionnette merveilleuse dans les Lois de Platon

L'article examine la signification métaphorique de la marionnette dans le premier livre des *Lois* de Platon. Il cherche à saisir la force opératoire de la marionnette ainsi que le rôle joué par l'éducation musicale pour faire prévaloir le « cordon du calcul ». Il s'agit d'abord de retracer les qualités techniques de la marionnette dans les œuvres littéraires – d'Hérodote à Platon – puis de mettre en évidence les conséquences psychologiques et philosophiques de l'image de la marionnette par rapport à une éducation « moralement correcte » de la musique et de la danse.

Mots-clefs : éducation, éducation musicale, *Lois* de Platon, marionnette, poupée

NOBILI, CECILIA

Persephones' kalon athyrma. Toys, Ornaments, and the Marvel of Music

This paper investigates the evolution of the terms *athyrma/athyro* in archaic epic and lyric poetry, where the original meanings of 'toy'/'playing' gradually evolves into their musical counterparts. The semantic shift is implied and possibly encouraged by the connection with the realm of marvel and fascination that the terms assume since their earliest occurrences.

Keywords: Hermes, marvel, music, play, toy

Le kalon athurma de Perséphone. Jouets, ornements et l'émerveillement de la musique

Cet article examine l'évolution des termes *athurma/athuro* dans la poésie archaïque épique et lyrique où les significations originales jouet/jeu ont graduellement évolué vers leurs équivalents musicaux. Le glissement sémantique est sous-entendu et peut-être encouragé par le rapport avec le domaine du merveilleux et la fascination que les termes impliquent depuis leurs plus anciennes occurrences.

Mots-clefs : Hermès, merveille, musique, jeu, jouet

FLORIDI LUCIA

Ἐράσμιον αἰὲν ἄθυρμα. Toys, Slaves, and Erotic Objects

This paper aims to investigate the use of the term ἄθυρμα in erotic contexts. Particular attention is paid to its application to human beings, and especially to young slaves, to better understand the relationship between the meaning of 'toy' and that of 'erotic object'.

Keywords : ἄθυρμα, erotic object, toys, young slave

Ἐράσμιον αἰὲν ἄθυρμα. Jouets, esclaves et objets érotiques

Cet article analyse l'utilisation du terme ἄθυρμα dans des contextes érotiques. Une attention particulière est portée à son application aux êtres humains, et notamment aux jeunes esclaves, pour mieux comprendre la relation entre le sens de « jouet » et celui d'« objet érotique ».

Mots-clefs : ἄθυρμα, jeune esclave, objet érotique, jouets

PATERA, IOANNA

Paignia : jeux et jouets d'enfants, d'adultes et fêtes religieuses

Le terme *paignion* signifie au sens propre « jouet ». Il s'agit souvent de l'objet préféré d'un enfant ou d'une divinité, comme dans le sens métaphorique de l'être humain en tant que jouet des dieux ou du destin. Les nombreuses occurrences du terme ainsi que celles de ses dérivés montrent des utilisations plus variées. *Paignion* peut en effet, de façon attendue, désigner un jeu, quelque chose de peu sérieux, qui amuse, et s'applique notamment aux représentations comiques et aux poèmes légers. D'autres contextes dans lesquels *paignion* apparaît montrent cependant des sens plus surprenants, comme sa signification de « fête religieuse ». L'examen du lien sémantique entre ses différentes acceptions dans les sources grecques peut nous donner une idée plus claire de ce que constituent le jouet et le jeu proprement dits.

Mots-clefs : fête religieuse, jeu, jouet, *paidia*, *paignion*

Paignia: Games and Toys of Children and Adults, and Religious Festivals

The term *paignion* properly means 'toy'. It is often the favorite object of a child or of a deity, as in the metaphorical sense of the human being as a toy of the gods or of fate. The various occurrences of the term as well as those of its derivatives show more varied uses. It can indeed, as expected, designate a 'playful action', something unimportant, amusing, and applies in particular to comic representations and light poems. Other contexts in which *paignion* appears, however, has more unexpected meanings, such as 'religious festival'. The semantic links between these different meanings in Greek sources provide a clearer picture of what properly constitutes toys and play.

Keywords: game, *paidia*, *paignion*, play, religious festival, toy

BUR, TATIANA

Airing the Ludic: on the Playful and Embodied Qualities of Ancient Pneumatics

This chapter explores how elements of play and the playful intersected with the ancient science of pneumatics, focusing explicitly on how this manifested materially. Ancient pneumatic epistemology is best understood as 'embodied' and this embodied quality contributed both to the ludic value of many pneumatic objects, as well as to the 'serious' work that consisted of demonstrating and distributing pneumatic knowledge. Refiguring the modern scholarly discourse on ancient pneumatics from *either* frivolous gadgetry or abstract theorems, I pair ancient pneumatic texts with objects from material culture to illuminate how two categories of objects functioned as cultural objects of play: trick vessels and pneumatically animated scenes. The exploration of the dynamic interactions between the culture of the playful and the culture of the scientific in Graeco-Roman antiquity offers new reflections on categories of objects – scientific instruments and/as toys – as well as on categories of epistemology – the scientific informing, and being informed by, the make-believe.

Keywords : animation, Hero of Alexandria, klepsidra, make-believe, mechanics, Philo of Byzantium, play, pneumatics, trick vessels

Jeu de souffles : sur les qualités ludiques et matérielles de la pneumatique antique

Ce chapitre explore la façon dont les éléments du jeu et du ludique s'entrecroisent avec la pneumatique antique en se concentrant sur ses aspects matériels. L'épistémologie de la pneumatique antique est mieux comprise lorsqu'elle est « incarnée », une nature

incarnée qui contribuait à la fois à la valeur ludique de beaucoup d'objets pneumatiques et à l'objectif plus « sérieux » qui consistait à démontrer et diffuser un savoir. Afin de remettre en cause la dualité du discours académique actuel qui n'étudie la pneumatique antique qu'en tant que gadget frivole ou théorèmes abstraits, j'associe textes antiques et objets pour mettre en lumière la façon dont deux catégories d'objets fonctionnaient de manière ludique : les vases à astuce et les scènes animées pneumatiquement. L'exploration des interactions dynamiques entre culture ludique et culture scientifique dans le monde gréco-romain apporte de nouvelles réflexions sur la catégorisation d'objets qualifiés tantôt d'instruments scientifiques ou de jouets, ainsi que sur une catégorisation épistémologique – la connaissance scientifique et l'apprentissage du savoir par des simulacres.

Mots-clefs : animation, clepsydre, faire-semblant, Héron d'Alexandrie, jeu mécanique, Philon de Byzance, pneumatiques, trucage

LARIBI-GLAUDEL, SOPHIE

Les consécration de jouets dans les sanctuaires du monde grec entre littérature et épigraphie aux époques classique et hellénistique

Les enfants grecs fréquentaient, aux côtés des adultes, les sanctuaires du monde grec. Ils pouvaient y consacrer des jouets, une pratique attestée par plusieurs épigrammes votives tirées de l'*Anthologie Palatine*. La confrontation des sources littéraires, épigraphiques et archéologiques met en lumière la matérialité de ces pratiques rituelles de l'enfance, mais invite également à interroger la catégorie même des jouets. Les jeunes fidèles consacraient ainsi divers instruments de musique, des balles ou des astragales, ou encore des objets qu'ils se plaisaient à collectionner, comme des coquillages. Les consécration de jouets dans les sanctuaires témoignent donc des rites qui marquaient les différentes étapes de la vie des petits Grecs et des petites Grecques, de la prime enfance au seuil de la puberté puis à l'entrée dans l'âge adulte.

Mots-clefs : consécration, épigrammes votives, jouets, rites de l'enfance, rites de passage

The Consecrations of Toys in Greek Sanctuaries between Literature and Epigraphy in the Classical and Hellenistic periods

Greek children used to frequent, alongside adults, the sanctuaries of the Greek world. There, they could dedicate toys, a practice attested by several votive epigrams from the *Greek Anthology*. The comparison of literary, epigraphical, and archaeological sources highlights the materiality of the childhood ritual practices. It also invites us to question the very category of 'toys'. The young worshippers consecrated indeed various musical instruments, balls, or

astragals, as well as objects that they enjoyed collecting, such as shells. The consecrations of toys in the sanctuaries were part of the coming of age rituals that marked the different life stages of the Greek boys and girls, from early childhood to the threshold of puberty and of adulthood.

Key Words: childhood rituals, offerings, rites of passage, toys, votive epigrams

D'ONOFRIO, ANNA MARIA

A Stacker Toy from Eretria (and a Collection of Little Cups). A New Look at Old Finds

The article concerns the Late Geometric child's grave of the Heroon burial plot near the Western Gate of Eretria, with a series of fourteen discs cut from vases, and a collection of five small cups. The re-examination of the discs, regarded as pawns of a game, has made it possible to verify that their vertical assembly, according to the decreasing size of the discs themselves, makes what we now call a stacker toy. As for the cups, also characterised by the variety of sizes, they make up a set of five that includes a specimen corresponding to the Greek measure of the kyathos. Rather than playing at preparing dinner one can think of them as a game of dosing grains and other substances. The Platonic text of the *Laws*, dedicated to the education of children, evidences the custom of providing children with the skills necessary to perform various trades as adults, including that of the merchant. Through the educational use of simple everyday objects, Greek children were introduced to the knowledge of numbers and measurements. Among the funerary gifts, a small Attic lekythos related to the preservation of pharmaceutical substances – sedatives and drugs, alludes to the care, in vain, of a little deceased of rank.

Keywords: Eretria, West Gate cemetery by the "Heroon", pottery discs, small cups, educational toys, "Argive Monochrome" ware

Un jouet à empiler à Érétrie (et une collection de coupelles). Un regard neuf sur d'anciennes trouvailles

Cet article analyse le mobilier funéraire d'une tombe d'enfant de l'époque géométrique tardive dans la nécropole de l'Hérôon à la porte ouest d'Érétrie, avec une série de quatorze disques découpés dans des vases et une collection de cinq coupelles. Le réexamen des disques, jusqu'ici interprétés comme les palets d'un jeu, a permis de vérifier que leur assemblage vertical, selon leur taille décroissante, constitue ce que nous appelons aujourd'hui un jouet à empiler. Quant aux coupelles, également caractérisées par la variété des tailles, elles constituent un ensemble qui comprend un spécimen correspondant à la mesure grecque du kyathos. Plutôt que jouer à la dinette, elles ont pu servir à mesurer les céréales et d'autres

substances. Le texte platonicien des *Lois*, consacré à l'éducation des enfants, témoigne de la coutume de donner aux enfants les moyens d'exercer les compétences nécessaires à différents métiers, dont celui de marchand. Grâce à l'utilisation pédagogique d'objets simples du quotidien, les enfants grecs ont été initiés à la connaissance des nombres et des mesures. Parmi les offrandes funéraires, un petit lécythe attique associé au stockage de substances médicinales – sédatifs et drogues – fait allusion aux vains soins portés à un petit défunt de haut rang.

Mots-clés : cimetièrre, coupelles, disque en terre cuite, Éréttrie, Herôon, jouets éducatifs, Porte de l'Ouest, vaisselle argienne monochrome

LAMBRUGO, CLAUDIA

'Playing' with Stones. Stone Pebbles in the Greek World: Game Pieces, Tools, or Ritual Objects?

As Sally Crawford convincingly argued ("The Archaeology of Play Things: Theorising a Toy Stage in the 'Biography' of Objects", *Childhood in the Past*, 2, 2009, 55-70), any object may become a toy in the hands of a child, so it is challenging to identify it without archaeological context. This is particularly true for stone pebbles and flat stones, which have been long regarded as meaningless objects. However, they occur either as a single object or in sets in tombs and sanctuary deposits in the Greek world. The frequent association with sub-adult burials seems to suggest that at least some of these pebbles and spheres were game tools (marbles perhaps?), but they might have also been considered valuable (also due to the intrinsic properties and colours of the stones?), and therefore used as ritual objects. This paper aims to draw attention to an issue that has been neglected for a long time, to present some intriguing archaeological contexts containing pebbles, and to focus on different interpretations.

Keywords: cleromancy, game pieces, *lithobolia*, marbles, pebbles, *pentelitha*

« Jouer » avec des cailloux. Galets en pierre dans le monde grec : instruments de jeu, outils ou objets rituels ?

Comme Sally Crawford l'a démontré de manière convaincante ("The Archaeology of Play Things: Theorising a Toy Stage in the 'Biography' of Objects", *Childhood in the Past*, 2, 2009, 55-70), n'importe quel objet peut devenir un jouet dans les mains d'un enfant. Il est donc difficile de les identifier sans contexte archéologique. C'est particulièrement vrai pour les galets en pierre et les pierres plates, qui ont longtemps été considérés comme des objets insignifiants. Cependant, ils se rencontrent soit de manière isolée, soit dans des ensembles dans des tombes et dépôts de sanctuaire dans le monde grec. La fréquente association avec les tombes de pré-adultes semble suggérer qu'au moins certains galets et

certaines sphères étaient des instruments de jeu (des billes ?), mais ils ont aussi pu être jugés précieux (pour leurs propriétés intrinsèques ou les couleurs des pierres ?), et donc utilisés comme des objets rituels. Cet article vise à attirer l'attention sur une problématique longtemps négligée et présente des contextes archéologiques intrigants avec des cailloux en proposant différentes interprétations.

Mots clés : billes, cailloux, cléromancie, *lithobolia*, galets, *pentelitha*, pièces de jeu

COSTANZO, DANIELA

Games and Toys in Context: Problems and Methods of Interpretation. Some Case Studies from Magna Graecia and Sicily

What is the symbolic significance of playthings and images of toys and games in relation to the archaeological and cultural context they belong to? Are there typologies specific to certain age or status groups recognizable from associations of objects and images in context? What is the most reliable method for a correct interpretation of this kind of archaeological data? Based on a series of case studies from the Greek colonies of Magna Graecia (Lokri, Croton, Metauros) and Sicily (Syracuse, Megara Hyblaea), this paper offers an analysis of ancient games and toys (ball games; pebbles, spheres and marbles; wheeled miniature carts), trying a contextual reading of the material and a critical discussion of the theories and methods to interpret these objects.

Key words: ball games, Lokri, Kroton, marbles, Megara Hyblaea, Metauros, pebbles, spheres, Syracuse, wheeled miniature carts

Jeux et jouets en contexte : problèmes et méthodes d'interprétation. Quelques études de cas de Grande Grèce et de Sicile

Quelle est la portée symbolique des objets et des images ludiques selon le contexte de découverte et le milieu culturel auquel ils appartiennent ? Existe-t-il des typologies propres à certains groupes d'âge ou de statut à identifier à partir des assemblages en contexte ? Quelle est la méthode la plus fiable d'interprétation de ces données archéologiques ? À partir d'une série d'études de cas issus des colonies de Grande Grèce (Locres, Croton, Metauros) et Sicile (Syracuse, Megara Hyblaea), cet article propose une analyse de jeux et de jouets anciens (jeux de balle ; pions, billes, sphères ; chariots à roulettes), en tentant une lecture contextuelle du matériel et une discussion critique des théories et des méthodes d'interprétation de ces objets.

Mots-clés : balle, billes, chariots miniatures, Croton, galets, Locres, Mégara Hyblaea, Metauros, sphères, Syracuse

SABETAI, VICTORIA

The Archaeology of Play in Boeotia. A Contribution to the Ludic Culture of a Greek Region

The article presents toys from Boeotia by examining finds from the region's sanctuaries and graves. An important corpus of material associated with play was unearthed in the Theban Kabirion sanctuary, such as spinning tops, a yoyo, knucklebones, and rattling objects which date from the late 5th century BCE onwards. These playthings present notable variety of medium and form as they were manufactured in stone, metal, and clay, which suggests votive function. The top's links with adolescence and its appearance with a specific coroplastic repertoire in the Kabirion points to links with male maturation. The grotesque imagery of deformed bodies, comic versions of heroic myths and figures of fear on the Kabiric pottery provides the wider context for associating the sanctuary's toys or their effigies with coming of age. The funerary record, on the other hand, provides a slightly different repertoire of playthings, for example rare metal rattles, miniature shields, small flat baskets (*kanastra*) and doll sets from tombs of children and subadults.

Keywords: Boeotia, coroplast, dolls, knucklebones, miniature shields, rattling objects, spintops, "yo-yo"

L'archéologie du jeu en Béotie. Une contribution à la culture ludique d'une région grecque

Cet article présente les jouets de Béotie en analysant les trouvailles des sanctuaires et tombes de la région. Un important ensemble de matériel lié au jeu provient du sanctuaire thébain du Kabirion, notamment des toupies, yoyo, osselets et hochets qui datent de la fin du V^e siècle av. J.-C. Ces jouets présentent une variété de matériau et de forme, pierre, métal, argile qui suggère une fonction votive. Le lien entre la toupie et l'adolescence, tout comme son apparition dans un répertoire coroplastique spécifique au Kabirion, indiquent des rapports étroits avec le processus de maturation sexuelle masculine. L'imagerie grotesque de corps déformés, les réélaborations comiques de mythes héroïques et les figures d'épouvante sur les vases du Kabirion fournissent un contexte plus large dans lequel les jouets ou leurs substituts sont associés au passage à l'âge adulte. Le registre funéraire, en revanche, propose un répertoire légèrement différent de jouets, avec par exemple de rares hochets en métal, des boucliers miniatures, des paniers (*kanastra*) et des poupées provenant de tombes d'enfants et d'individus subadultes.

Mots-clefs : Béotie, bouclier miniature, coroplastie, poupées, osselets, hochets, toupies, "yo-yo"

FENDT, ASTRID

'Rite de passage' or Special Ability? The Bronze Statuette of a Boy Holding a Whipping Top in the Munich Collections of Antiquities

A 36-centimeter-high bronze statuette in the Munich Antikensammlungen represents a naked young man holding a conical spinning top in his raised right hand, and formerly probably holding a whip in his left hand. The statuette was made around 350-325 BCE, probably in the Etrusco-Campanian environment. It formerly came from the James Loeb collection. Its place of discovery is unknown. It is assumed that it served as a votive offering or a grave good. It probably depicts a youth on the threshold of adulthood presenting his toy as part of the 'rite de passage' and consecrating it to a deity such as Hermes. With the dedicated presentation of the spinning top, the young man certainly also refers to his special ability and skill in playing whipping tops. It cannot be conclusively clarified whether the statuette can be further interpreted to the effect that the young man is not consecrating the object per se, but – in a more abstract sense – his ability, and can thus perhaps be interpreted in a professional context with acrobats and magicians.

Keywords : ability, bronze statuette, Etrusco-Campanian art, grave good, rite de passage, spinning top, votive offering

« Rite de passage » ou compétence particulière ? La statuette en bronze d'un jeune homme tenant une toupie dans la collection d'antiquités de Munich

Une statuette en bronze de 36 centimètres de haut, conservée à l'Antikensammlungen de Munich, représente un jeune homme nu tenant une toupie dans sa main droite levée et probablement un fouet non conservé dans sa main gauche. La statuette a été réalisée vers 350-325 av. J.-C., probablement en milieu étrusco-campanien. Elle provient de la collection James Loeb. Le lieu de sa découverte est inconnu. On suppose qu'elle fut dédiée dans un sanctuaire ou déposée en offrande dans une tombe. Elle représente probablement un jeune homme au seuil de l'âge adulte, présentant son jouet dans le cadre d'un rite de passage pour le consacrer ensuite à une divinité comme Hermès. En présentant une toupie, le jeune homme fait certainement aussi référence à son habileté particulière pour manipuler une toupie-sabot. Il n'est pas possible de déterminer de manière définitive si la statuette peut être interprétée comme la consécration non de l'objet en soi, mais – dans un sens plus abstrait – de sa compétence, peut-être dans un contexte professionnel associé aux acrobates et magiciens.

Mots-clefs : art étrusco-campanien, compétence, offrande funéraire, offrande votive, statuette en bronze, rite de passage, toupie

BELLIA, ANGELA

Dancing with a Ball

As the activities of Nausicaa and her brothers suggest, dance, music, and ball play had a salient function in bringing together groups within the community, given that ball-playing dance seemed to be linked not only to play, but also to festivals and rituals. Ball games were not just playful activities, but also graceful and rhythmic performances which were offered to the gods in order to please them. Ball games related to female dance activities in particular were performed as a type of ritual act in honour of the divinities and in anticipation and celebration of marriage. Through exploring written sources on ball-playing and material evidence related to female ball-dancing, various aspects of ball dance performances and their related ritual contexts will be considered.

Keywords : ball, ball dance, ball game, ball offering, cicada, Lokri, Lokrian *pinakes*

Danser avec une balle

Comme les activités de Nausicaa et de ses frères le suggèrent, danse, musique et jeu de balle ont l'importante fonction de fédérer des groupes au sein de la communauté, car danser au jeu de balle semble avoir été lié non seulement au jeu mais aussi à des festivals et des rituels. Loin d'être de simples activités ludiques, les jeux de balles étaient aussi des performances gracieuses et rythmées qui étaient offertes aux dieux afin de leur plaire. Les jeux de balle liés aux activités de danse féminine en particulier étaient réalisés comme un type d'acte rituel en l'honneur des divinités dans le cadre de la préparation et célébration du mariage. L'étude des sources écrites sur les jeux de balle et des traces matérielles liées à la danse de balle féminine permettra d'examiner divers aspects des performances de danse de balle et leurs contextes rituels associés.

Mots-clefs : balle cigale, danse avec une balle, jeu de balle, Locres, offrande de balle, *pinakes* locriens

MANSON, MICHEL

Le cheval bâton de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance. Mutations du regard sur l'enfance et ses jouets

Deux jouets sont souvent considérés comme « pérennes », la poupée et le cheval bâton, attestés depuis l'Antiquité, tous deux au cœur de l'animisme ludique enfantin. Pour interroger cette « évidence », on retrace l'histoire d'un jouet « genré » masculin, le cheval bâton. Signe de la sagesse ou de la folie des hommes dans l'Antiquité, ce jouet semble apparaître à l'époque romaine lorsque surgit le modèle des enfants à cheval pour la *Pompa circensis* ou le

lusus troiae. Au Moyen Âge, on ne s'étonnera pas de voir dans les miniatures des manuscrits des enfants imitant les chevaliers dans un tournoi à cheval bâton. Mais ces images utilisent aussi ce jouet comme un symbole de la petite enfance. Au XVI^e siècle, c'est la folie et la mort qu'il évoque parfois, tout en devenant par ailleurs un jouet bien présent dans la vie des enfants, vendu par les merciers, dans les pèlerinages et dans les foires flamandes. Jouet de pauvres et jouet de riches, très présent dans l'iconographie, le cheval bâton ne cesse d'enrichir ses significations et ses transformations.

Mots-clefs : cheval bâton, histoire du jouet, histoire de l'enfant, Horace, poupée, Rabelais

The Hobby Horse from Antiquity to the Renaissance. Changing Views of Childhood and Toys

Two toys are often regarded as 'perennial', the doll and the hobby horse, both in the heart of children's playful animism since Antiquity. To question this 'evidence', we trace the history of a 'male-gendered' toy, the hobby horse. A sign of the wisdom or folly in Antiquity, this toy seems to have emerged in Roman times when the model of children on horseback for the *Pompa circensis* or the *lusus troiae* appeared. In the Middle Ages, it is not surprising to see in the miniatures of manuscripts children imitating knights in a tournament on horseback. But these images also use this toy as a symbol of early childhood. In the 16th century, it sometimes evokes madness and death, while becoming a very present toy in the lives of children, sold by haberdashers, in pilgrimages and at Flemish fairs. A toy for the poor and for the rich, very present in iconography, the hobby horse never ceases to enrich its meanings and transformations.

Keywords: doll, history of toy, history of children, hobby horse, Horace, Rabelais

ROSSIE, JEAN-PIERRE

Vegetal Material in Moroccan Children's Toy and Play Culture

This study is part of an extensive research on North African and Saharan children's play, games, and toys published on Academia.edu, Zenodo.org, and Scribd under the author's name and whereby he strives to promote the recognition of these children's cultures in their countries and as part of the heritage of humanity. This paper analyses the use of vegetal material for doll play, animal world play and domestic life play, play related to sound and music, feasts and rituals, technical activities, and games of skill. The information is based on fieldwork between 1992 and 2021 and comes from Moroccan Amazigh (Berber) and Arabic-speaking children. These children aged between two and fifteen years mostly live in multi-cultural and media-influenced rural environments.

Keywords : animal, child, doll, ethnography, Morocco, play, toys, vegetal material

Le matériel végétal des jeux et jouets des enfants du Maroc

Cette étude fait partie d'une analyse approfondie des jeux et jouets d'enfants nord-africains et sahariens publiée sur Academia.edu, Zenodo.org et Scribd sous le nom de l'auteur dans l'intention de promouvoir la reconnaissance des cultures enfantines dans ces pays et comme patrimoine de l'humanité. L'article analyse l'usage de matériel végétal pour des jeux de poupées, lié au monde animal ou à la vie domestique, des jeux en relation avec les fêtes et rituels, le son et la musique, les activités techniques, et les jeux d'adresse. Les informations sont basées sur des recherches sur le terrain entre 1992 et 2021 et proviennent d'enfants amazighs (berbères) et arabophones marocains. Ces enfants âgés de deux à quinze ans vivent souvent dans des environnements ruraux multiculturels et influencés par les médias.

Mots-clés : animal, enfant, ethnographie, jeux, jouets, Maroc, poupée, matériel végétal

GOUGOULIS, CLEO

From άθuρμα and παίγνιον to παίχνιδι. Defining Toys in Modern Greece

The paper discusses the ideological, political, and socio-economic processes involved in the selection and use of four terms (*athurma*, *paignio[n]*, *paignidi/paichinidi*), employed in modern Greek for toys by the state bureaucracy, scholars and members of the Greek literate elite. Drawing on examples from different contexts (statistical tables, directories and guides dealing with the Greek toy market, articles in the daily and specialized press, children's literature, and modern Greek lexicography), the study analyses the use of ancient and modern Greek terms and the emergence of new terms linked to toy production and distribution from the foundation of the Greek state to the dawn of the 21st century. The variety of terms employed in different contexts is examined in relation to ideas of nationhood involved in the debate over the selection of national language (the "language question"), conceptions of childhood and play, and the rise of the Greek toy market, in the context of the emergence of Greek capitalism in the 19th century.

Keywords: *Athurma*, Greek demoticism, history of childhood, language question, modern Greek toy terminology, *paignion*, *paignidi*, *paichnidi*, play, toys, toy definition, toy market.

De άθuρμα et παίγνιον à παίχνιδι. Définir les jouets en Grèce moderne

Cet article concerne les processus idéologiques, politiques et socio-économique impliqués dans la sélection et l'usage de quatre termes (*athurma*,

paignio[n], *paignidi/paichinidi*) employés pour désigner des jouets en grec moderne par la bureaucratie, les chercheurs et l'élite cultivée grecque. Tirant ses exemples de différents contextes (tableaux statistiques, répertoires et guides du marché grec du jouet, articles de la presse quotidienne et spécialisée, littérature pour enfants et lexicographie grecque moderne), cette étude analyse l'usage de termes issus du grec ancien et moderne et l'émergence de nouveaux termes liés à la production et la distribution de jouet depuis la fondation de l'État grec jusqu'à l'aube du XXI^e siècle. La variété des termes employés dans différents contextes est examinée en relation avec les concepts de nation contenues dans le débat sur le choix de la langue nationale (« la question linguistique »), avec les conceptions de l'enfance et du jeu et l'essor du marché du jouet en Grèce, dans le contexte de l'émergence du capitalisme grec au XIX^e siècle.

Mots-clés : *Athurma*, définition du jouet, grec demotique, jouet, linguistique, marché du jouet, histoire de l'enfance, jeu, jouet, terminologie grecque moderne, *paignion*, *paignidi*, *paichnidi*

THIBAUT, MATTIA

Toys, Tying, Toyish: the Semiotics of Objectual Play

This paper offers a theoretical and methodological overview on the semiotic features of toys and toy-related practices. Eugen Fink describes toys as "magical" objects, whose meaning depends on the context from which we look at them. Toys are indeed unique objects from a semiotic standpoint. We propose some reflections on the differences between toys and other playthings, and on the interpretative nature of toying. We focus on the objects that are *made* to be toys – and hence on the different forms of authorship that take place and collide in toy-play. From the idea of designed toys, we briefly investigate what kind of material characteristics and aesthetic qualities facilitate toy-play outlining a quality of *toyishness*. Finally, we engage with the idea of *toyification*, and of the possible uses of the semiotic realm of toys outside their proper context.

Keywords: gamification, ludification, magic, plaything, semiosphere

Jouets, jouer, jouable: la sémiotique du jeu

Cet article propose un aperçu théorique et méthodologique des caractéristiques sémiotiques des jouets et des pratiques liées aux jouets. Eugen Fink décrit les jouets comme des objets « magiques », dont le sens dépend du contexte à partir duquel on les observe. Les jouets sont en effet des objets uniques d'un point de vue sémiotique. Nous proposons quelques réflexions sur les différences entre jouets et autres objets ludiques, ainsi que sur la nature interprétative

du « jouer ». Nous nous concentrons sur les objets qui sont *faits* pour être des jouets – et donc sur les différents desseins d’auteur qui prennent place dans le jeu. Le concept de « *designed toys* » nous amène à examiner quel genre de caractéristiques matérielles et esthétiques facilite le jeu et la qualité de jouet. Enfin, nous abordons l’idée de *jouetification* et des potentiels de l’usage du domaine de la sémiotique des jouets en dehors de leur contexte propre.

Mots-clefs : *gamification*, ludification, magie, objet ludique, sémiosphère

RÖDER, BRIGITTE

Do Finds Tell Stories? Yes: our Own! The Example of Prehistoric Toys

For 99.9% of its history humankind got by without writing. The sources available to prehistoric archaeology are material in nature and must be filled with meaning and interpreted from today’s perspective. But the artefacts are silent and ambiguous. It is therefore all the more baffling that the archaeological practice paints a completely different picture. And it is striking that the interpretation of objects is generally limited to one particular interpretation that appears to arise directly from the finds – indeed, the finds themselves seem to be telling the story they were part and parcel of. The history of mankind apparently discloses itself automatically from the stories they tell. But these stories are ours, as the example of the prehistoric toys shows. The childhood stories told are intertwined with those of gender and family. On closer inspection, it turns out that these stories reflect modern perceptions of an ideal of human co-existence which we deem to be “primordial”.

Keywords: emotions, material culture, modern concepts, Prehistory, primordial state, stories, toys

Les trouvailles ont-elles une histoire? Oui : la nôtre ! L'exemple des jouets préhistoriques

Pendant 99,9% de son histoire, l’humanité s’est passée de l’écriture. Les sources dont dispose l’archéologie préhistorique sont toutes de nature matérielle et il faut leur attribuer un sens et les interpréter de notre point de vue actuel. Mais les artefacts demeurent muets et ambigus. Il est donc d’autant plus étonnant que dans la pratique archéologique, l’interprétation des objets se limite généralement à une interprétation spécifique qui semble découler directement des trouvailles – qui semblent raconter d’elles-mêmes l’histoire dans laquelle elles s’insèrent. À partir de ces histoires, l’histoire de l’humanité se révélerait comme par elle-même. Mais ces histoires sont les nôtres, comme le montre l’exemple des jouets préhistoriques. Les histoires d’enfance racontées s’entremêlent avec celles des genres et des familles. Un examen critique montre

que les histoires racontées reflètent une perception moderne d’un idéal de cohabitation sociale que nous jugeons « originelle ».

Mots-clés : concepts modernes, culture matérielle, émotions, état originel, jouets, narrations, préhistoire