

MI
75 MONOGRAPHS
INSTRUMENTUM



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

■ edited by Véronique Dasen & Marco Vespa

Toys as Cultural Artefacts in Ancient Greece, Etruria, and Rome

Véronique Dasen & Marco Vespa (eds)

Monographies Instrumentum

75

Collection dirigée
par Michel Feugère

Toys as Cultural Artefacts in Ancient Greece, Etruria, and Rome

Véronique Dasen & Marco Vespa (eds)

Published with the support of the European Research Council (ERC)
as part of the ERC Advanced Grant Locus Ludi.
The Cultural Fabric of Play and Games in Classical Antiquity
under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research
and innovation programme
(grant agreement # 741520)



LOCUS LUDI
The Cultural Fabric of Play and
Games in Classical Antiquity



eM éditions
Mergoil

Drémil-Lafage - 2022

Direction d'ouvrage

Véronique Dasen & Marco Vespa (eds)

Tous droits réservés

© 2022



Diffusion, vente par correspondance

Editions Mergoïl - 13 Rue des Peupliers - 31280 Drémil-Lafage

Tél : 0345440444 - e-mail : contact@editions-mergoil.com

ISBN : 9782355181290

ISSN : 1278 - 3846

Aucune partie de cet ouvrage ne peut être reproduite sous quelque forme que ce soit (photocopie, scanner ou autre) sans l'autorisation expresse des Editions Mergoïl.

Mise en page : Thomas Sauvage - www.thomasauvage.com

T H O M A **S** A U V A G E
Graphiste - Directeur Artistique

Couverture : Editions Mergoïl

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.

Impression : Aquiprint

Dépôt légal décembre 2022

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Toys and Play Experience in Ancient Greece, Etruria, and Rome. An Introduction VÉRONIQUE DASEN & MARCO VESPA.....	Page 9
---	--------

I. HOW TO MAKE TOYS WITH WORDS: TEXTUAL AND LITERARY CONTEXTS

Les désignations du « jouet » en grec ancien et en latin ÉRIC DIEU	Page 17
---	---------

<i>Ludicrum</i> , a Word for “Toy, Plaything”. Some Remarks on its Origin and Use PAOLA MORETTI.....	Page 31
--	---------

Toying with Philosophy: The Wonderous Puppet in Plato’s <i>Laws</i> CLAUDIA ZICHI.....	Page 43
---	---------

Persephones’ <i>kalon athyrma</i> . Toys, Ornaments and the Marvel of Music CECILIA NOBILI	Page 55
---	---------

Ἐράσμιον αἰὲν ἄθυρμα. Toys, Slaves, and Erotic Objects LUCIA FLORIDI.....	Page 63
--	---------

<i>Paignia</i> : jeux et jouets d’enfants, d’adultes et fêtes religieuses IOANNA PATERA	Page 75
--	---------

Airing the Ludic: on the Playful and Embodied Qualities of Ancient Pneumatics TATIANA BUR	Page 87
---	---------

Les consécrationes de jouets dans les sanctuaires du monde grec entre littérature et épigraphie aux époques classique et hellénistique SOPHIE LARIBI-GLAUDEL.....	Page 99
---	---------

II. TOYS IN CONTEXT

A Stacker Toy from Eretria (and a Collection of Little Cups). A New Look at Old Finds ANNA MARIA D’ONOFRIO	Page 117
--	----------

‘Playing’ with Stones. Stone Pebbles in the Greek World: Game Pieces, Tools, or Ritual Objects? CLAUDIA LAMBRUGO.....	Page 129
---	----------

Games and Toys in Context: Problems and Methods of Interpretation. Some Case Studies from Magna Graecia and Sicily	
DANIELA COSTANZO	<i>Page 141</i>

The Archaeology of Play in Boeotia. A Contribution to the Ludic Culture of a Greek Region	
VICTORIA SABETAI	<i>Page 153</i>

'Rite de Passage' or Special Ability? The Bronze Statuette of a Boy Holding a Whipping Top in the Munich Collections of Antiquities	
ASTRID FENDT	<i>Page 173</i>

Dancing with a Ball	
ANGELA BELLIA	<i>Page 185</i>

III. TOYS AS CULTURAL ARTEFACTS: ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND SEMIOTIC INSIGHTS

Le cheval bâton de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance. Mutations du regard sur l'enfance et ses jouets	
MICHEL MANSON	<i>Page 199</i>

Vegetal Material in Moroccan Children's Toy and Play Culture	
JEAN-PIERRE ROSSIE	<i>Page 213</i>

From άθυρμα and παίγνιον to παιχνίδι. Defining Toys in Modern Greece	
CLEO GOUGOULIS	<i>Page 227</i>

Toys, Tying, Toyish: The Semiotics of Objectual Play	
MATTIA THIBAUT	<i>Page 241</i>

POSTFACE

Do Finds Tell Stories? Yes: our Own! The Example of Prehistoric Toys	
BRIGITTE RÖDER	<i>Page 251</i>

AUTEUR.E.S / AUTHORS	<i>Page 255</i>
----------------------------	-----------------

RÉSUMÉS / ABSTRACTS	<i>Page 257</i>
---------------------------	-----------------

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> >*

Véronique Dasen

University of Fribourg/ERC Locus Ludi
veronique.dasen@unifr.ch

Marco Vespa

University of Fribourg/ERC Locus Ludi
marco.vespa@unifr.ch

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, epichoric, 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 hieron 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

* This research is part of the ERC Advanced project "Locus Ludi. The Cultural Fabric of Play and Games in Classical Antiquity" based at the University of Fribourg-CH. This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 741520). The authors of this volume presented their papers at the international conference *Toys as Cultural Artefacts in Ancient Greece, Etruria and Rome* which took place at the University of Fribourg (remote) in June 22-23, 2021, as well as at the webinar of Locus Ludi in 2021. Warm thanks are due to Robin Bertherin and Samuel Sottas for their help in the editorial work for this volume.

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 suasory 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-Glaudiel 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

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

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

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 ἔπνευε 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.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BENVENISTE, Émile, "Catégories de pensée et catégories de langue", *Les Études Philosophiques*, 13, 4 (1958), 419-429.

CHIRASSI, Ileana, *Miti e culti arcadici di Artemis nel Peloponneso e nella Grecia continentale*, Roma (1968).

CRAWFORD, Sally, "The Archaeology of Play Things: Theorising a Toy Stage in the 'Biography' of Objects", *Childhood in the Past*, 2 (2009), 55-70.

DASEN, Véronique, "La royauté de l'enfant : à propos d'Héraclite et de pratiques ludiques enfantines en Grèce ancienne", in David Bouvier, Véronique Dasen (eds), *Héraclite : le temps est un enfant qui joue* (Jeu/Play/Spiel 1), Liège (2020), 97-123.

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

27. GOMBRICH (1963), 1-11.

- DASEN, Véronique, VERBANCK PIÉRARD, Annie, “Poupées grecques en image : du jeu au rite”, in Véronique Dasen, Thomas Daniaux (eds), *Locus ludi. Quoi de neuf sur la culture ludique antique ?*, Pallas, 119 (2022), 349-378.
- DASEN, Véronique, VESPA, Marco, “Ancient Play and Games: in Search of a Definition”, in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (eds), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity. Definition, Transmission, Reception* (Jeu/Play/Spiel 2), Liège (2021), 5-16.
- DOYEN, Charles, “L’astragale comme symbole pondérale et monétaire”, in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (eds), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity. Definition, Transmission, Reception* (Jeu/Play/Spiel 2), Liège (2021a), 147-178.
- DOYEN, Charles, “Les astragales de Diogène”, *Les Études Classiques*, 89 (2021b), 65-85.
- DUGAST, Stéphan, JAILLARD, Dominique, MANFRINI, Ivonne (eds), *Agalma ou les figurations de l’invisible. Approches comparées*, Grenoble (2021).
- DUNAND, Françoise, *Corps vivants des dieux. Les statues animées dans le monde méditerranéen antique*, Paris (2018).
- FRANCO, Cristiana, “Greek and Latin Words for Human-Animal Bonds: Metaphors and Taboos”, in Thorsten Fögen, Edmund Thomas (eds), *Interactions between Animals and Humans in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, Berlin/New York (2017), 39-60.
- GASKINS, Suzanne, HAIGHT, Wendy, LANCY, David F., “The Cultural Construction of Play”, in Suzanne Gaskins, Artin Göncü (eds), *Play and Development: Evolutionary, Sociocultural, and Functional Perspectives*, New York (2007).
- GOMBRICH, Ernst, *Meditations on a Hobby Horse and Other Essays on the History of Art*, Oxford/New York (1963).
- HEIJAKKA, Katriina, *Principles of Adult Play(fulness) in Contemporary Play Cultures. From Wow to Flow to Glow*, Helsinki (2013).
- HUYSECOM-HAXHI, Stéphanie, MÜLLER, Arthur, “Déesses et /ou mortelles dans la plastique de terre cuite. Réponses actuelles à une question ancienne”, *Pallas*, 75 (2007), 231-247.
- KING, Helen, “Bound to Bleed: Artemis and Greek Women”, in Averil Cameron, Amélie Kuhrt (eds), *Images of Women in Antiquity*, Detroit (1983), 109-127.
- INGOLD, Tim, *Making. Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*, London/New York (2013).
- LANGDON, Susan, “Children as Learners and Producers in Early Greece”, in Judith Evans Grubbs, Tim Parkin (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Childhood and Education in the Classical World*, Oxford, (2013), 172-194.
- MANSON, Michel, *Jouets de toujours. De l’Antiquité à la Révolution*, Paris (2001).
- PIRENNE-DELFORGE, Vinciane, *Retour à la source. Pausanias et la religion grecque*, Liège (2008).
- PRIoux, Évelyne, “Images de la statuaire archaïque dans les Aitia de Callimaque”, *Aitia*, 1 (2011). URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/aitia/74>.
- THIBAUT, Mattia, *Ludosemiotica. Il gioco tra segni, testi, pratiche e discorsi*, Roma (2020).
- THOMPSON BURR, Dorothy, “The Figurines”, in Gladys R. Davidson, Dorothy Thompson Burr, *Small Objects from the Pnyx, I* (*Hesperia* Suppl. VII) Princeton (1943), 112-166.

PART I

HOW TO MAKE TOYS WITH WORDS:
TEXTUAL AND LITERARY CONTEXTS

Votive pinakes with a girl offering her sphairè to a priestess (H. 27.5 cm, L. 28 cm) and to Persephone (H. 18 cm, L. 17.4 cm) from Lokri, sanctuary of Mannella, 470-460 BCE. Reggio Calabria, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 28272; 58934. Su concessione del Ministero della Cultura n. 16 del 02 maggio 2022 – Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria.



Éric Dieu

Université Toulouse – Jean Jaurès, PLH-CRATA
Alexander-von-Humboldt Stiftung, Universität Würzburg
dieu@phare.normalesup.org

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

INTRODUCTION

Le vocabulaire du jeu est abondant en grec ancien comme en latin. Il peut s'agir de formes référant au jeu d'un point de vue général, abstrait, avec des familles de mots riches en faits de dérivation comme de composition, en particulier celle, en grec, de παίζω (*paizô*) « jouer », apparenté à παῖς (*païs*) « enfant »¹, et celles, en latin, de *lūdus* et de *iocus*, qui s'appliquent respectivement, dans les premiers textes, au jeu en actes et au jeu en paroles². Il peut s'agir aussi de termes spécifiques désignant tel ou tel type de jeu particulier ou d'objet servant à la pratique d'un jeu, pour lesquels, en dehors des témoignages littéraires où certains d'entre eux se rencontrent sporadiquement, on dispose de sources

lexicographiques parfois extrêmement fournies, comme l'*Onomasticon* de Pollux³ : dés, osselets, pions, jeux de ballon, cottabe, etc.

En revanche, les termes susceptibles de désigner d'une manière générale le « jouet » comme une réalité matérielle (objet avec lequel on peut jouer) sont particulièrement peu nombreux en grec et en latin. Bien loin d'être associé de manière exclusive à des mots spécifiques, le sens matériel de « jouet » y apparaît généralement comme une variante contextuelle, et particulièrement rare, de celui, plus répandu, de « jeu, divertissement, amusement » (ainsi pour παίγνιον [*paignion*] en grec, ou pour *lūdicrum* en latin), à tel point que la polysémie des mots concernés peut donner l'impression que les traductions modernes par « jouet » ne font guère qu'essayer maladroitement d'adapter au monde d'aujourd'hui des réalités qui n'existaient pas de la même manière dans l'Antiquité grecque et romaine.

La situation n'est pas la même que dans nos sociétés contemporaines. Pour prendre l'exemple du français, il apparaît aussi, certes, que le mot *jouet* ne désigne pas exclusivement un objet matériel servant à jouer : ce terme peut aussi s'appliquer à quelqu'un dont on se joue, dont on s'amuse ou on se moque, ou à quelque chose ou quelqu'un qui est abandonné à l'action des éléments de la nature (vent, flots, etc.) ou d'une réalité plus abstraite (fortune, etc.). Mais tous ces emplois du mot *jouet* sont perçus comme des emplois figurés, en regard du sens matériel qui

* Je tiens à remercier vivement Véronique Dasen et Marco Vespa de leur invitation au colloque « Toys as cultural artefacts in Ancient Greece, Etruria and Rome », ainsi que de leurs nombreuses et pertinentes suggestions en vue de la publication de cet article.

1. Voir en dernier lieu CASEVITZ (2018), dans un article qui traite bien davantage du vocabulaire du jeu que de celui du jouet en grec ancien, malgré son titre qui unit étroitement ces deux réalités.

2. En ce sens, parmi l'abondante bibliographie sur *lūdus* et *iocus* (mot qui est à l'origine du français *jeu*), outre les ouvrages de référence en matière de lexicographie (en particulier DELL, 322, 368-369), voir BENVENISTE (1947), 163 = BENVENISTE (2015), 179 : « Le *jocus* est le jeu-de-mots, le propos non sérieux, la plaisanterie ; le *ludus* est proprement l'« entraînement » sous toutes ses formes : entraînement à l'étude (d'où *ludus* « classe, école ») ou entraînement au combat, exercice militaire (d'où *ludus* « compétition ; jeu du cirque »). Le remplacement de *ludus* par *jocus* qui a seul survécu, consacre un changement d'attitude vis-à-vis de ces exercices et concours, tombés désormais au rang de simples « jeux ». Pour une étude plus précise des emplois de *lūdus* et *iocus* et de leur évolution dans la littérature latine, voir NUTI (1998).

3 Voir en dernier lieu COSTANZA (2020).

apparaît comme le sens propre⁴. Loindela avec παίγνιον (*paignion*) en grec ou *ludicrum* en latin, où le sens matériel de « jouet » est fort rare, et n'apparaît nullement comme le sens premier de ces mots.

Cet état de fait, à une époque ancienne, n'est en aucun cas caractéristique des seuls mondes grec et romain : dans bien d'autres langues, le sens matériel de « jouet » n'est dénoté de manière spécifique que par des termes attestés assez tardivement ; ou bien il n'a longtemps été qu'un sens secondaire par rapport à d'autres sens documentés plus anciennement. Le mot français *jouet*, anciennement diminutif de *jeu* (littéralement, « petit jeu »)⁵, est ainsi attesté depuis le XIII^e siècle seulement ; suivant une association sémantique que l'on retrouvera plus loin⁶, à côté de sa capacité à désigner un objet avec lequel les enfants jouent, il « s'est longtemps dit également de ce qui servait à amuser les adultes (bijoux, animaux de compagnie) »⁷. En ce qui concerne le substantif anglais *toy* « jouet », ce mot, à l'époque du moyen anglais (*toye*, *toy*), se trouve employé isolément pour désigner le badinage amoureux, avec une première attestation remontant au début du XIV^e siècle ; puis, essentiellement à partir du XVI^e siècle, il caractérise un discours ou un écrit trivial ou frivole, léger ou humoristique, une plaisanterie, un jeu de mots, une partie de plaisir, un amusement ou un divertissement, ou encore, parmi bien d'autres emplois attestés dès le XVI^e siècle, une chose de peu de valeur, une bagatelle, un petit ornement de peu de prix, un bibelot⁸, avant de pouvoir s'appliquer, à partir de la fin du XVI^e siècle seulement, à un objet avec lequel un enfant pouvait jouer (sens qui est devenu aujourd'hui le plus usuel)⁹. Quant au mot anglais moderne *plaything* (antérieurement *playing thing*, attesté en 1440), dont le sens premier est celui, matériel, de « jouet (d'enfant, etc.) », il s'agit d'un terme dont la première attestation apparaît dans les *Christian Ethicks* de Thomas Traherne (mort en 1674)¹⁰. Il relève clairement d'un type de formation récent par composition interne à l'anglais, alliant *play* « jeu » et *thing* « chose, objet ». Ce type de

formation se retrouve en allemand dans le composé *Spielzeug* « jouet », documenté depuis Johann Geiler von Kaysersberg (1445-1510)¹¹, qui est tiré de *Spiel* « jeu » et de *Zeug* « choses, outil, appareil, bazar, truc, machin », ou encore dans son équivalent néerlandais moderne *speeltuig* « jouet », qui remonte au moins au début du XVIII^e siècle, voire plus tôt¹².

1. LES NOMS DU « JOUET » EN GREC¹³

1.1. ἄθურμα (*athurma*)

Le mot grec qui désigne le plus nettement, dès les témoignages littéraires les plus anciens, une réalité susceptible d'être qualifiée comme un « jouet » au sens matériel du terme est certainement le substantif neutre ἄθურμα (*athurma*). Il s'agit d'un dérivé en -μα du verbe d'étymologie obscure¹⁴ ἀθύρω (*athūrō*) « jouer, se

11. Voir le dictionnaire de Jacob et Wilhelm GRIMM (1854-1971), s.v.

Spielzeug. Sur la formation de *Spielzeug*, avec un second membre de composé -zeug susceptible d'être par ailleurs en partie désémanisé et de fonctionner comme une sorte de suffixe, voir SEIDELMANN (1986).

12. Sur les premiers emplois de *plaything*, voir OED s.v.

13. Le dossier lexical de ἄθურμα (*athurma*) et de παίγνιον (*paignion*) a déjà été présenté de manière synthétique chez KIDD (2019), 99-104, et KIDD (2021), 24-28 : on se reportera à ces deux études pour plus de détails sur des points que nous n'avons pas jugé utile de répéter ici (mention d'autres occurrences de ἄθურμα et de παίγνιον, etc.). Sur ἄθურμα (*athurma*), voir aussi, dans le présent volume, les articles de Cecilia NOBILI et de Lucia FLORIDI, et sur παίγνιον, celui de Ioanna PATERA ; en outre, pour quelques compléments sur ces deux mots dans les épigrammes votives de l'*Anthologie Palatine*, voir aussi l'article de Sophie LARIBI GLAUDEL.

14. Sur l'étymologie de cette famille de mots, voir GEW I, 29, avec l'idée (remontant à PERSSON [1912], 577 n. 1) d'un rattachement à une racine *d^huer- « tourbillonner, se précipiter » (cf. lituanien *padūrai* « avec impétuosité », russe дурь [*dur*] « folie », etc.), et un préfixe ā- qui serait le degré zéro de *en- « dans » ; mais si l'on posait désormais, avec une reconstruction laryngaliste, ce premier membre comme *h₁en-, le degré zéro *h₁n- ne saurait aboutir à ā-, comme l'observe Robert S. P. Beekes (EDG, 30). Par ailleurs, l'idée d'un rapprochement avec le nom de la porte, θύρα, serait totalement indémontrable. Certes, du point de vue du sens, l'adjectif ἄθυρος (*athuros*) « sans porte » peut aussi signifier « sans retenue, sans frein, sans mesure » : l'évolution sémantique connue par ἄθυρος pourrait-elle alors suggérer qu'une étymologie qui chercherait à rapprocher ἀθύρω (< *ἀθύρ-γω) et ἄθურμα du nom de la porte (avec un ā- privatif) serait susceptible d'être tenue pour acceptable sur le plan sémantique, dans la mesure où elle fournirait un sens originel en partie comparable à celui que suppose la reconstruction étymologique précédente qui cherche à tirer ces mots d'une racine *d^huer- ? Il n'en est rien, car ce sens figuré de l'adjectif ἄθυρος (*athuros*) n'est guère documenté qu'en parlant de la langue, de la bouche, dans les textes les plus anciens (ainsi pour ἄθυρος chez Simonide, fr. 36.1.2 Page, etc. ; ἀθυρόγλωσσος [*athuroglōssos*] chez Euripide, *Oreste*, 903, etc. ; ἀθυρόστομος [*athurostomos*] chez Sophocle, *Philoctète*, 188, etc.). Sur cette métaphore du bavardage par l'image d'une absence de porte, voir TAILLARDAT (1965), 293-294. L'existence chez Hésychius d'un composé ἀθυρόνομος (glosé par ὡς ἐτυχε χρώμενος τοῖς νόμοις « qui use des lois n'importe comment », « qui se moque des lois », « qui se joue des lois »), susceptible d'être rattaché à la famille de ἀθύρω (*athūrō*) selon Pierre Chantraine (DELG, s.v. ἀθύρω), ne vient nullement étayer l'idée d'une parenté de ἀθύρω, ἄθურμα, avec ἄθυρος et donc θύρα : ἀθυρόνομος peut relever d'une rencontre tardive entre la famille de ἀθύρω et les composés à premier membre ἀθυρο- tiré de ἄθυρος ; ou bien, indépendamment de la famille de ἀθύρω, la forme ἀθυρόνομος (littéralement : « qui a la loi sans frein, sans retenue, sans mesure ») peut avoir été créée directement à partir

4. Voir ainsi la présentation de l'article *jouet* dans le dictionnaire d'Émile LITTRÉ (1873-1877).

5. Cf. LITTRÉ (1873-1877), s.v. *jouet*. Un suffixe de valeur diminutive dans un nom du « jouet » n'est pas quelque chose d'isolé : cf. le nom du « jouet » en russe, игрушка (*igrushka*), dont le suffixe -ушка (-*ushka*) est principalement représenté dans des diminutifs.

6. À propos de ἄθურμα, § 1.1, et de *ludicrum*, § 2.1.

7. DHLFI, 1075.

8. Sur la coexistence du sens d'« objet de peu de valeur, bagatelle, etc. » avec celui de « jouet d'enfant », cf. DHLFI, 214, à propos du substantif français *bimbelot* (attesté depuis 1549), variante de *bibelot* (« petit objet, souvent curieux, décoratif ») qui « s'est différenciée sémantiquement de *bibelot* en réalisant le sens de « petit jouet d'enfant », développant par extension celui d'« objet sans valeur, bagatelle » (1866) ».

9. Voir le détail des emplois anciens de *toy* dans OED s.v. *toy*, avec des remarques sur l'étymologie du mot, qui est incertaine : emprunt à l'anglo-normand et au français médiéval ? ou bien au moyen néerlandais ?

10. TRAHERNE (1675, 1^{re} éd. posthume).

divertir, s'amuser ; jouer d'un instrument de musique » (Homère, poètes ; rare en prose, où ce verbe est attesté notamment dans la Collection hippocratique, ainsi que, en parlant de la danse, chez Platon¹⁵). Certes, ἄθურμα (*athurma*) présente également les sens de « jeu, divertissement, amusement, récréation, délice, joie » ; il se trouve aussi appliqué, avec comme point de départ le sens d'« objet de divertissement, de plaisir, qui fait les délices de », à des animaux de compagnie¹⁶, à une petite fille¹⁷, ou encore, semble-t-il, à une statue¹⁸. Mais à plusieurs reprises, dans les textes les plus anciens (et ce, dès l'*Iliade*), ἄθურμα, au singulier comme au pluriel, dénote des réalités concrètes avec lesquelles des enfants jouent, ou bien, au pluriel uniquement, des ornements, des parures, toutes réalités susceptibles de divertir les enfants comme les adultes (voir à ce propos ce qui a été dit en introduction des emplois anciens du mot français *jouet*).

En ce qui concerne la coexistence des sens abstraits de « jeu, divertissement, etc. » avec ceux, concrets, de « jouet » ou « ornement, parure » (< « ce avec quoi on joue, on se divertit, on s'amuse, ce à quoi on se plaît »), on sait bien que le sens d'un nom d'action déverbatif peut se concrétiser en lien avec la vacance de places d'arguments (et donc avec la diathèse du verbe correspondant et ses constructions syntaxiques possibles¹⁹), et, plus précisément, en relation étroite

des deux composés ἄθυρόγλωσσος et ἄθυρόστομος (littéralement : « qui a la langue / la bouche sans porte », d'où « qui bavarde sans frein, sans retenue, sans mesure »).

15. Platon, *Lois*, 796b. Sur cet emploi relatif à la danse, cf. Eustathe, *Commentaires sur l'Odyssée d'Homère*, 1848, 56-57 (= vol. 2, 182, 18 Stallbaum, sur le vers 322 du chant 18 de l'*Odyssée*, cité § 1.1) : Ἀθύρματα δὲ κατὰ τοὺς παλαιούς παίγνια, σκιρτήματα [...] « et les ἄθύρματα, chez les Anciens, étaient des jouets (παίγνια), des danses (σκιρτήματα, pluriel de σκίρτημα "bond, danse") ». Un rapport sémantique entre l'idée de « jouer » et celle de « danser » (ou de « sauter ») est relativement banal : en vieux slave, *играти* *igrati* signifie aussi bien « jouer » que « sauter, danser » (le sens étymologique est peut-être « se mettre en mouvement », cf. sanskrit védique *éjati* « il se met en mouvement, tremble, secoue », mais cette étymologie reste néanmoins incertaine : voir *LIV* 2, 222, avec bibl. ; pour plus de détails sur les différentes étymologies possibles, voir *ESSJa* 8, 208-210). Voir d'autres exemples possibles d'un lien entre le sens de « jouer » et celui de « sauter, danser » chez BUCK (1949), 1108-1109.

16. Références plus bas, note 62.

17. *Anthologie Palatine*, 7, 643, 1, cf. *IG* 12(5), 677, 10 (Syros, II^e-III^e s. apr. J.-C.).

18. *Anthologie Palatine*, 7, 154, 1 (cf. 6, 37, 3). Le sens de « statue » a toutefois été contesté : sur cette question, avec une prise de position en faveur du sens de « statue », voir PAGE (1981), 382, 390. S'il en est bien ainsi, cet emploi de ἄθურμα (*athurma*) au sens de « statue » a-t-il été influencé, ne serait-ce qu'en partie, par ceux du mot ἄγαλμα (*agalma*) « ornement, parure ; offrande aux dieux ; image des dieux (statue ou peinture) ; statue ; image », qui offrent quelques points de rencontre avec certains des sens de ἄθურμα (ἄθურμα présente parfois le sens de « parure, ornement », cf. ci-dessous les occurrences de ce mot dans l'*Odyssée* et chez Sappho) ? À cet égard, il est notable que la *Suda* (α 767) indique, à propos de l'occurrence de ἄθურμα dans l'*Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 37, 3 : ἀντὶ τοῦ ἄγαλμα (« au lieu de ἄγαλμα »).

19. En l'occurrence, on notera que lorsqu'il n'est pas employé absolument, le verbe ἄθῦρω (*athūrō*) peut se construire aussi bien avec le

avec l'un des arguments potentiels, comme l'indique Hansjakob Seiler à partir des suffixés en *-ung* de l'allemand moderne²⁰ : avec l'objet dans *Darstellung* « (re)présentation » (= « ce qui est [re]présenté », cf. *darstellen* « [re]présenter »), avec l'instrument dans *Leitung* « conduite, canalisation, tuyau » (= « ce au moyen de quoi / avec quoi on conduit [de l'eau, du gaz, etc.] », cf. *leiten* « conduire, diriger »), ou encore avec le lieu dans *Wohnung* « habitation, logement » (= « ce dans quoi l'on habite », cf. *wohnen* « habiter »), etc.²¹

Ce phénomène de concrétisation s'observe parfaitement dans les dérivés neutres indo-européens en **-mṇ / *-men-*, auxquels remonte la classe des neutres grecs en *-μα* du type de ἄθურμα. Pour plus de détails, avec une prise en considération détaillée du cas des noms en **-mṇ / *-men-*, voir l'étude de Georges-Jean Pinault²², et, à sa suite, l'une de nos études antérieures²³, dont nous reproduisons ci-dessous, pour plus de clarté, le tableau des pages 17-19 sur les noms en **-mṇ / *-men-*, avec le parallèle des masculins en **-tu- / *-teu-*, et celui du suffixe de l'anglais moderne *-ing*²⁴ (voir *tableau 1 - p. 4*).

Bien que de tels développements sémantiques dans les noms en **-mṇ / *-men-* se fassent de l'abstrait vers le concret, il est remarquable que le neutre ἄθურμα s'applique, dans les premiers textes, à des réalités matérielles. Les sens plus généraux ou plus abstraits de « jeu, divertissement, amusement, etc. » sont attestés bien après les poèmes homériques. On les rencontre par exemple chez Héraclite : παίδων ἄθύρματα [...] τὰ ἀνθρώπινα δοξάσματα « Les opinions des hommes sont jeux d'enfants »²⁵ ; ou encore chez Euripide : τίς δ' οὐχὶ χαίρει νηπίοις ἄθύρμασιν ;

datif (de valeur instrumentale) de l'objet avec lequel on joue ou de la réalité à laquelle on prend plaisir (cf. Erinna, 1B, 20 Diehl : τῇν[α] δὲ τοῖσιν ἄθ]ύρομες « ce avec quoi nous jouions » : voir le commentaire de NERI [2003], 313-317 ; Apollonios de Rhodes, 4, 950, où il est question de jouer « à la balle », σφαίρῃ), qu'avec l'accusatif (par exemple dans l'*Hymne homérique à Hermès*, 152, où Hermès joue avec une étoffe [λαῖφος ἄθύρων, *laiphos athurōn*], sans parler ici des emplois de ἄθύρω au sens de « jouer d'un instrument de musique » ou de « chanter » avec le nom de l'instrument de musique ou du chant à l'accusatif, qui seront évoqués brièvement plus bas).

20. Voir SEILER (1986), 64-65. Cf. PANAGL (2002).

21. La réalité des faits est toutefois bien plus complexe, notamment parce que plusieurs développements sémantiques sont possibles pour un même mot : un terme aussi polysémique que *Leitung* peut aussi, selon ses contextes d'emploi, fonctionner comme un nom verbal (« action de diriger, direction, etc. »), ou encore dénoter l'agent de l'action (« ce qui dirige » : « instances dirigeantes, direction »).

22. PINAULT (1996), 207-208.

23. DIEU (2016), 16-19.

24. Ce tableau (faut-il le préciser ?) n'épuise nullement le champ des possibles en matière de concrétisation des noms abstraits.

25. Héraclite, B 70 Diels-Kranz.

	Neutres en *-mḥ / *-men-	Masculins en *-tu- / *-teu-	Anglais moderne -ing
Nom verbal	latin <i>nūmen</i> « signe de tête » < * <i>nēu-mḥ</i> (racine * <i>neu-</i> « faire un signe de tête »)	supin latin en - <i>tum</i> , infinitif sanskrit en - <i>tum</i> , védique - <i>tave</i> (< datif *- <i>teu-ei</i>), cf. védique <i>indrāya pātave</i> « pour qu'Indra boive », latin <i>pōtum</i> « pour boire » < * <i>pēh₃-tu-</i> (racine * <i>peh₃-</i> « boire »)	gérondif
Nom d'agent (normalement sur verbes intransitifs qui peuvent avoir un sujet non animé)	grec <i>ῥεῦμα</i> (<i>rheuma</i>) « flux, courant » < * <i>srēu-mḥ</i> « ce qui coule » d'où « coulée, écoulement » (racine * <i>sreu-</i> « couler »)	[féminin grec <i>κλίτης</i> (<i>klitēs</i>) « pente, versant » < « ce qui s'incline » (racine * <i>klei-</i> « pencher, incliner »)]	<i>rising</i> « insurrection, soulèvement » < « ce qui se lève » (<i>to rise</i> « se lever ») ; mais aussi nom verbal au sens de « lever [du soleil, de la lune] »
Nom résultatif (normalement sur verbes transitifs)	latin <i>sēmen</i> « semence » < * <i>sēh₁-mḥ</i> « ce qui est semé » (racine * <i>seh₁-</i> « planter, semer »)	védique <i>jantū-</i> « créature » < « ce qui est engendré » (racine * <i>gēnh₁-</i> « engendrer »)	<i>building</i> « bâtiment, construction » < « ce qui est construit » (<i>to build</i> « construire »)
Nom d'instrument (normalement sur verbes transitifs avec un complément à l'instrumental [ou son équivalent dans les langues qui n'ont plus d'instrumental])	védique <i>dāman-</i> « lien, corde » < * <i>dēh₁-men-</i> « ce au moyen de quoi on lie, liement » (racine * <i>deh₁-</i> « lier, attacher »)	védique <i>sētu-</i> « lien, attache » < « ce au moyen de quoi on lie » (racine * <i>seh₂-</i> « lier, attacher »)	<i>covering</i> « couverture, housse ; couvercle » (<i>to cover</i> « couvrir »)
Nom à valeur locale (normalement sur verbes de mouvement intransitifs à sujet animé)	védique <i>sthāman-</i> « place où se tenir [debout] » < * <i>sth₂-men-</i> (racine * <i>sth₂-</i> « se tenir [debout] ») ; mais sens de nom d'agent (« ce qui se tient debout ») dans tokharien B <i>stām</i> « arbre », vieux-haut-allemand <i>stam</i> « tronc d'arbre », latin <i>stāmen</i> « fil dressé, chaîne du métier vertical »	védique <i>gātū-</i> « chemin » < « lieu où l'on marche » (racine * <i>g^heh₂-</i> « aller, marcher ») ; mais sens de nom verbal dans l'infinitif védique <i>gātave</i> « pour aller »	<i>landing</i> « débarcadère, embarcadère » (<i>to land</i> « atterrir ; débarquer ») ; mais aussi nom verbal au sens d'« atterrissage ; débarquement »

Tableau 1

« Qui ne prend plaisir aux jeux²⁶ des tout petits ? »²⁷. Ils ne relèvent pas nécessairement de la conservation d'un sens plus abstrait qui aurait perduré de manière continue durant toute l'époque archaïque sans, du fait des hasards de la transmission des textes, être parvenu jusqu'à nous dès les premiers témoignages littéraires : il peut aussi s'agir d'une remotivation (au moins partielle) du « contenu potentiel²⁸ » abstrait d'un neutre en -μα de sens concrétisé dès les débuts de l'époque historique, suivant un procédé bien connu²⁹. On remarquera par ailleurs que ἄθურμα

(*athurma*) apparaît exclusivement au pluriel dans l'*Iliade* et dans l'*Odyssée* : ce n'est sans doute pas là un fait anodin, car on sait qu'au pluriel, les mots de sens abstrait prennent plus naturellement une valeur concrète³⁰.

La première occurrence de ἄθურμα (*athurma*) dans la littérature grecque se rencontre dans l'*Iliade*. Dans ce passage, où le rapprochement entre ἄθურματα (*athurmata*, v. 363) et le participe ἄθύρων (*athurôn*, v. 364) est notable, il faut remarquer que les ἄθურματα que se font les enfants avec le sable sur la plage ne sont pas des jouets préexistants, mais en quelque sorte des « amusements », des « jeux » concrétisés, des produits matériels de l'action de jouer³¹, qui se trouvent, dans le contexte du passage, prendre la forme de constructions de sable :

26. Le sens général de « jeux » semble plus satisfaisant, *a priori*, que celui de « jouets », même si l'absence de contexte ne permet pas de trancher de manière définitive entre les deux.

27. Euripide, fr. 272 Kannicht (trad. F. Jouan et H. Van Looy, CUF).

28. Sur cette notion, voir HAUDRY (1971), 114 : « Toute forme motivée possède par sa structure même (c'est-à-dire par la combinaison du contenu de sa base et de celui de sa formation) un contenu potentiel : ainsi franç. *facteur* "celui qui fait". Ce contenu potentiel peut être réalisé, fréquemment ou rarement (ou, en l'occurrence, exceptionnellement : un *facteur d'orgues*). »

29. En dehors des neutres en -μα, cf. par exemple, dans la classe des noms en -ᾱ / -η à degré radical o, de « contenu potentiel » abstrait (βολή « jet », ποθή « regret, désir », σποργή « amour, tendresse », etc.), le cas d'ionien δορή / attique δορά « peau écorchée, dépouille d'une bête » (< littéralement « ce qui est écorché », cf. δέρω « écorcher ») : à une époque tardive, dans la langue des médecins, ce nom présente le sens abstrait d'« écorchement, lacération » (dans les dissections) chez Galien, et l'on rencontre également chez Galien un préfixe ἐκδορά « action d'écorcher » (cf. ἐκδέρω « enlever la peau, écorcher »), avec réactualisation du « contenu potentiel » abstrait des noms du type morphologique *CoC-ᾱ. Pour plus de détails, voir DIEU (2016), 15-16.

30. Pour se limiter à quelques exemples, on peut évoquer les cas suivants : grec τὰ ἀγαθὰ « les biens, les productions » (Isaïe, 1, 19 : τὰ ἀγαθὰ τῆς γῆς φάγεσθε « vous mangerez les produits de la terre » ; etc.), latin *bona* « les biens » (au sens abstrait comme au sens matériel), anglais *the goods* « les biens, les marchandises », allemand *die Güter* « les biens matériels, les marchandises », russe блáга (*blága*) « les biens matériels » ; cf. encore latin *fortūnae* « biens, fortune (matérielle) » vs *fortūna* « fortune, sort, hasard », *cōpiae* « ressources, richesses, fortune ; forces militaires » vs *cōpia* « abondance » (et aussi « richesse, opulence »), *auxilia* « troupes auxiliaires » (avec spécialisation dans le domaine militaire) vs *auxilium* « aide, secours ».

31. Cela peut évoquer lointainement, *mutatis mutandis*, le terme de chasse qu'est le mot français *jouette*, qui désigne un « trou que le lapin fait en se jouant, et qui est moins profond que le terrier » (LITTRÉ [1873-1877], s.v. *jouet*) : en d'autres termes, une réalité matérielle produite par l'action de jouer.

[...] ἔρειπε δὲ τεῖχος Ἀχαιῶν
 ῥεῖα μάλ', ὥς ὅτε τις ψάμαθον παῖς ἄγχι θαλάσσης,
 ὅς τ' ἐπεὶ οὖν ποιήσῃ ἀθύρματα νηπιέησιν,
 ἄψ αὖτις συνέχευε ποσὶν καὶ χερσὶν ἀθύρων·
 ὥς ῥα σύ, ἦϊε Φοῖβε, πολὺν κάματον καὶ οἴζυν
 σύγχεας Ἀργείων, αὐτοῖσι δὲ φύζαν ἐνώρσας.

Il fait ensuite, et sans le moindre effort, crouler le mur des Achéens. Ainsi qu'un enfant, au bord de la mer, se fait avec le sable des jouets puérils, qu'il s'amuse ensuite à abattre d'un coup de pied ou d'un revers de main, ainsi tu abats, Phœbos, dieu des cris aigus, ce qui avait coûté aux Argiens tant de peine et de misère, et tu fais parmi eux se lever la panique³².

Le mot se retrouve à deux reprises, toujours au pluriel et en un sens matériel, dans l'*Odyssée*, avec, dans le premier des deux passages, l'idée d'objets qui mettent en joie le cœur de celui qui les reçoit (en l'occurrence une enfant, à la différence du second extrait) : « elle [Pénélope] l' [Mélanthô] avait élevée comme son enfant, et lui avait donc donné des ἀθύρματα pour son cœur » (παῖδα δὲ ὥς ἀτίταλλε, δίδου δ' ἄρ' ἀθύρματα θυμῷ)³³. Les ἀθύρματα (*athurmata*) pour le cœur de Mélanthô sont à interpréter non pas spécifiquement comme ce que nous considérons aujourd'hui comme des jouets, mais plus largement comme « tout ce qui pouvait mettre son cœur en joie »³⁴. Il s'agit sans doute plus précisément, bien que le contexte ne nous renseigne pas là-dessus, de réalités matérielles comme des bijoux, des ornements, des parures, etc. : cette possibilité est suggérée par l'emploi de ἀθύρματα (*athurmata*) chez Sappho (ποικίλ' ἀθύρματα « parures bigarrées »), dans un contexte où il est question de bracelets d'or, de robes de pourpre parfumées, etc.³⁵ Dans ce vers de l'*Odyssée*, Victor Bérard (CUF) et Philippe Jaccottet (La Découverte/Poche) traduisent prudemment ἀθύρματα (*athurmata*) par le terme générique de « cadeaux » plutôt que par « jouets ». Dans le deuxième passage, le mot est utilisé au sens de « camelote, bibelots »³⁶ (μυρί' ἄγοντες ἀθύρματα νηὶ μελαίνῃ). Il s'agit ici de marins phéniciens « apportant dans leur noir vaisseau d'innombrables bibelots »³⁷.

Dans tous les passages qui précèdent (*Iliade*, *Odyssée*, Sappho), il est notable que ἀθύρματα, qui ne désigne pas uniquement des jouets, mais également ces autres objets de plaisir que sont les parures, les bijoux, etc. (et ce, en un sens clairement premier, à la différence de nos sociétés modernes où le terme de « jouet » ne

pourrait être employé à propos de bijoux ou de bibelots qu'en un sens figuré³⁸), s'applique exclusivement à des enfants³⁹ ou à des femmes⁴⁰. Que seules des femmes soient concernées par les ἀθύρματα du vers 416 du chant 15 de l'*Odyssée* est rendu manifeste, un peu plus bas dans le même chant (v. 459-462), par le fait qu'un messager des marins phéniciens vient présenter un collier d'or (v. 460 : χρύσειον ὄρμον) à la mère d'Eumée et à ses servantes : sur ce point, voir le commentaire d'Eustathe, où ἀθύρματα (*athurmata*) est glosé par κόσμια (*kosmia*, « ornements, parures »), avec comme précision ταῖς [...] γυναιξὶ σπουδαῖα (« qui suscitent l'empressement, l'intérêt des femmes »)⁴¹.

Le sens de « jouet » d'enfant, ou en tout cas l'idée d'une réalité susceptible de divertir, d'amuser un enfant, sans qu'il s'agisse nécessairement d'un objet avec lequel l'enfant pourrait jouer à proprement parler, se retrouve à quatre reprises dans les *Hymnes homériques*. Dans l'*Hymne à Déméter*⁴², il ne s'agit pas véritablement, à la différence de l'*Iliade* et de l'*Odyssée*, d'un objet manufacturé (bibelots, bijoux, etc.) ni même fabriqué avec des éléments naturels (constructions de sable dans l'*Iliade*), mais d'une réalité plus ou moins naturelle, à savoir un narcisse brillant d'un éclat merveilleux, avec une tige à cent têtes (v. 8 sq.). Cela dit, on a encore affaire ici, malgré tout, à une création artificielle : c'est par ruse, pour plaire à Zeus, que Gaia avait fait croître cette fleur (v. 8-9), qui servit à piéger la jeune Perséphone et à favoriser son enlèvement (la terre s'entrouvrit pour en laisser sortir Hadès immédiatement après que Perséphone eut cherché à saisir cet ἄθυρμα). Le mot ἄθυρμα (*athurma*) est ainsi explicitement présenté comme dénotant une réalité trompeuse, dangereuse :

Ἦ δ' ἄρα θαμβήσας ὠρέξατο χερσὶν ἄμ' ἄμφω
 καλὸν ἄθυρμα λαβεῖν· χάνε δὲ χθὼν εὐρυάγνια

Étonnée, l'enfant étendit à la fois ses deux bras pour saisir le beau jouet : mais la terre aux vastes chemins s'ouvrit [...]⁴³.

32. Homère, *Iliade*, 15, 361-366 (éd. et trad. P. Mazon, CUF).

33. Homère, *Odyssée*, 18, 323.

34. Trad. M. Dufour, J. Raison, Classiques Garnier.

35. Sappho, fr. 44, 9 Lobel-Page. Cf. Sappho, fr. 63, 8 Lobel-Page.

36. Sur la coexistence, dans les poèmes homériques, du sens de « jouet (d'enfant) » avec celui de « camelote, bibelots », voir plus haut dans l'introduction à propos des mots français *bimbelot* (note 8) et anglais *toy*.

37. Homère, *Odyssée*, 15, 416.

38. Cf. KIDD (2019), 102 n. 20 ; KIDD (2021), 26 n. 33.

39. Homère, *Iliade*, 15, 363 ; Homère, *Odyssée*, 18, 323.

40. Homère, *Odyssée*, 15, 416 ; Sappho. Pour d'autres réflexions sur ce point, voir KIDD (2019), 101 ; KIDD (2021), 25.

41. Eustathe, *Commentaires sur l'Odyssée d'Homère*, 1786, 32 (= vol. 2, 105, 4-5 Stallbaum).

42. *Hymne homérique à Déméter*, 16.

43. *Hymne homérique à Déméter*, 15-16 (éd. et trad. P. Mazon, CUF). Cet emploi de ἄθυρμα a pu inspirer au moins un autre passage de la littérature grecque où un enfant est trompé par un ἄθυρμα (*Fragments orphiques*, 307F Bernabé = 34 Kern = Clément d'Alexandrie, *Protreptique*, 2, 17-18) : voir le commentaire de RICHARDSON (1974), 147, ainsi que KIDD (2019), 100, 102 ; KIDD (2021), 24, 26 (avec bibl.). Faut-il en outre songer à établir un rapprochement entre ce passage et celui du chant 15 de l'*Odyssée* où le collier d'or évoqué ci-dessus (v. 460), qui fait partie de la camelote (ἀθύρματα, v. 416) apportée par des marins phéniciens, va favoriser l'enlèvement du petit Eumée en distrayant sa mère et les servantes de celle-ci ? En ce sens, voir KIDD (2019), 102 ; KIDD (2021), 26.

Le mot ἄθურμα réapparaît trois fois dans l'*Hymne homérique à Hermès*, à propos d'une tortue⁴⁴ : celle-ci va divertir Hermès enfant, et surtout, Hermès va la mettre à mort et transformer sa carapace en un objet manufacturé, à savoir une lyre. Il est notable qu'ἄθურμα ne s'applique pas exclusivement à l'instrument ainsi conçu (avec les deux valeurs possibles de jouet d'enfant et d'instrument de musique dont on joue), comme au vers 52⁴⁵ où ἄθურμα annonce, en quelque sorte, l'emploi du verbe ἀθύρω au vers 485 en parlant également de la lyre⁴⁶ ; mais ce substantif s'applique aussi à l'animal encore vivant (v. 32 et 40). Cela implique-t-il qu'il faille penser qu'à l'époque de la composition de cet hymne, un ἄθურμα n'était pas nécessairement un objet résultant d'un procédé de fabrication (même par la voie de la nature, comme ci-dessus dans l'*Hymne homérique à Déméter*) ? Ce n'est pas strictement impossible, mais ce n'est pas certain pour autant, même si des occurrences plus récentes de ἄθურμα au sens d'« animal de compagnie, animal compagnon de jeu » sont bien attestées⁴⁷ : ces occurrences, toutes tardives, ont toute chance de relever d'un développement sémantique secondaire. Toujours est-il qu'il est manifeste que le jeune Hermès conçoit d'emblée la tortue rencontrée par hasard comme un objet, une carapace (v. 33 : αἰόλον ὄστρακόν ἐσσι, χέλυσ ὄρεσι ζώουσα « Tu es carapace aux reflets changeants⁴⁸, une tortue qui

vit dans la montagne »⁴⁹), dont il a immédiatement l'idée de tirer usage⁵⁰. On notera par ailleurs qu'au vers 32, Hermès évoque le plaisir que lui cause la tortue, et l'emploi de l'adjectif ἀσπάσιος (*aspasios*) « plaisant » permet également de mieux comprendre ensuite celui de ἄθურμα (chose qui amuse, qui divertit) : ἀσπασίη προφανεῖσα· πόθεν τόδε καλὸν ἄθურμα ; « Que j'ai de plaisir à te voir paraître ! D'où vient ce beau jouet ? »⁵¹.

C'est sans doute en partie sous l'influence du vers 52 de l'*Hymne homérique à Hermès*, et, pour l'emploi de ποίησε, sous celle de l'*Iliade* (ποίησις ἄθურματα, *poiêse athurmata*)⁵², que peut se comprendre l'unique occurrence de ἄθურμα chez Apollonios de Rhodes. Érôs vient de gagner les osselets d'or de Ganymède. Aphrodite arrive, et lui propose un cadeau en échange d'un service :

Καὶ κέν τοι ὀπάσαιμι Διὸς περικαλλές ἄθურμα
κεῖνο τό οἱ ποίησε φίλη τροφὸς Ἀδρήστεια
ἄντρω ἐν Ἰδαίῳ ἔτι νήπια κουρίζοντι,
σφαῖραν ἐντροχάλον, τῆς οὐ σύ γε μείλιον ἄλλο
χειρῶν Ἡφαίστοιο κατακτεατίσσει ἄρειον.

Et je te donnerai ce magnifique jouet de Zeus que lui avait fabriqué sa chère nourrice Adrasteia, quand il était encore un tout petit bambin dans l'antre de l'Ida : c'est une balle légère, telle que tu ne pourrais recevoir plus beau cadeau⁵³ des mains d'Héphaïstos⁵⁴.

Sans viser le moins du monde à l'exhaustivité sur les emplois de ἄθურμα (qui, en dehors de l'épopée ancienne⁵⁵, s'applique assez tôt, en poésie, à des réa-

44. *Hymne homérique à Hermès*, 32 : καλὸν ἄθურμα, en fin de vers ; 40 et 52 : ἐρατεινὸν ἄθურμα (*erateinon athurma*) « aimable jouet », en fin de vers.

45. *Hymne homérique à Hermès*, 52-53 : αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ τεῦξε φέρων ἐρατεινὸν ἄθურμα # πληκτρῷ ἐπειρήτιζε κατὰ μέλος, « après avoir si vite construit l'aimable jouet, il en éprouvait les cordes tour à tour, avec un plectre » (trad. P. Mazon, CUF).

46. *Hymne homérique à Hermès*, 485 : ρεῖα [...] ἄθουρομένη « dont on joue facilement... » (traduit par P. Mazon, CUF, par « jouet docile »). Sur le sens exact de ἀθουρομένη (*athuromenê*) dans ce vers, voir les commentaires de VERGADOS (2013), 540, et de RICHARDSON (2010), 212. Voir aussi VERGADOS (2013), 254 (à propos de ἄθურμα au vers 32) : « ἄθურμα points to the tortoise's future use as a musical instrument, as ἀθύρειν can be employed in the sense of playing an instrument » (comme c'est le cas au vers 485). Autre emploi du même verbe, dans cet hymne, au vers 152, où Hermès « joue » (ἀθύρων) de la main droite avec une étoffe, tandis qu'il tient de la main gauche la tortue transformée en lyre (laquelle apparaît ainsi, implicitement, comme un second jouet à côté de l'étoffe avec laquelle il s'amuse de l'autre côté). Le troisième et dernier emploi de ce verbe dans les *Hymnes homériques* se rencontre (et ce n'est sans doute pas là un hasard) à propos de ce fils d'Hermès qu'est Pan, en un sens musical comme au vers 485, et une fois encore au participe présent (*Hymne homérique à Pan*, 15-16, avec l'accusatif de l'air joué : μοῦσαν ἀθύρων # νήδυμον « jouant un air suave »). Ces trois occurrences, ainsi que celle du chant 15 de l'*Iliade* (également avec une forme de participe présent), sont les quatre seules occurrences de ce verbe dans l'épopée ancienne : ἀθύρω γ' apparaît donc uniquement en parlant d'un enfant qui s'amuse, ou bien à propos de l'utilisation d'un instrument de musique.

47. Références ci-dessous, note 62.

48. Sur cet emploi de l'adjectif αἰόλος « aux reflets changeants, bigarré », cf. ci-dessous (§ 2.1), à propos des « jouets » latins, Sénèque, *Lettres à Lucilius*, 115, 8 (*calculi leues et aliquid habentes uarietatis* « galets polis portant bigarrure ») ; et, *mutatis mutandis*, Sappho, fr. 44, 9 Lobel-Page : ποικίλ' ἄθურματα « parures bigarrées ».

49. Trad. P. Mazon, CUF.

50. *Hymne homérique à Hermès*, v. 34-35 : ὄφελός τί μοι ἔσση, # οὐδ' ἀποτιμήσω· σὺ δέ με πρῶτιστον ὀνήσεις « loin de te mépriser, je tirerai quelque chose de toi, et serai le premier à qui tu serviras » (trad. P. Mazon, CUF).

51. *Hymne homérique à Hermès*, 32 (trad. P. Mazon, CUF).

52. Homère, *Iliade*, 15, 363. Sur ces influences, voir CAMPBELL (1994), 119-120, avec mention d'échos possibles de l'épopée ancienne pour l'emploi de περικαλλές comme épithète de ἄθურμα.

53. Le terme μείλιον (*meilion*), mot surtout attesté au pluriel qui s'applique premièrement à des réalités destinées à amadouer, à charmer (cf. μείλιχος « doux, aimable, favorable », et le verbe dénomiatif μείλισσω « apaiser, chercher à se rendre favorable »), peut désigner des présents de mariage (des dons proposés à Achille s'il épouse une fille d'Agamemnon : *Iliade*, 9, 147 et 289), une offrande propitiatoire (Apollonios de Rhodes, 3, 1549), un châtement expiatoire (Apollonios de Rhodes, 3, 594), un charme, un talisman contre l'impossibilité de naviguer (Callimaque, *Hymne à Artémis*, 230), une offrande à une divinité (*Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 75, 8). Il présenterait ici le sens de « jouet » d'enfant selon le LSJ et les dictionnaires d'Anatole BAILLY (1894) et de Franco MONTANARI (2015), s.v. Mais le sens plus général de « cadeau » est peut-être meilleur, d'autant que la balle est qualifiée plus bas, au vers 152, de δῶρον « don, présent, cadeau » par Aphrodite. Toutefois, on notera qu'au vers 146, Érôs jette tous ses μείλια, c'est-à-dire tous les osselets d'or gagnés au jeu à Ganymède, qui ne sont donc pas à proprement parler des cadeaux. La traduction par « jouets » convient alors aisément, et c'est, outre les trois dictionnaires signalés ci-dessus, celle qui a été retenue par É. Delage (CUF) : μείλια δ' ἔκβαλε « il jeta tous ses jouets ».

54. Apollonios de Rhodes, 3, 132-136 (éd. F. Vian, trad. É. Delage, CUF).

55. Dans l'épopée tardive, au sens de « jouet (d'enfant) », voir encore

lités liées à la musique⁵⁶, évolution qui se conçoit aisément d'après l'emploi musical du verbe ἀθύρω au sens de « jouer [d'un instrument de musique] »⁵⁷), on signalera encore, au sens possible de « jouets » dans un contexte de manufacture, un passage d'Eschyle, extrait du drame satyrique *Les Pèlerins* ou *Les Athlètes isthmiques*. Un personnage offre aux satyres un « jouet » :

ἐγὼ [φέ]ρω σοι νεοχμὰ [...] ἀθύρματα
ἀπὸ [σκε]πάρνου κᾶκμ[ονος ν]εόκτ[ιτα].
τουτ[ὶ τὸ] πρῶτόν ἐστὶ σοι τ[ῶ]ν παιγ[νίων]ν.

Moi, je t'apporte des ἀθύρματα tout neufs, fabriqués tout récemment à la hache et à l'enclume. Voici le premier de tes jouets⁵⁸.

Ce « jouet » (παίγνιον), premier des ἀθύρματα annoncés, est censé être utile pour ξυνισθμιάζειν (*xunisthmiazein*, v. 58), « pour concourir à l'Isthme ». Comme le glose Raphaël Dreyfus dans sa traduction des fragments d'Eschyle, où ἀθύρματα est rendu par « jouet », et παιγνίων par « joujou », cet ἄθυρμα et παίγνιον à la fois (sans qu'il soit aisément possible de distinguer nettement le sens de ces deux mots, qui semblent fonctionner ici comme de simples variantes) est « vraisemblablement un objet qui leur servira pour les jeux : arme, char ? »⁵⁹. La réplique du coryphée au vers 55 (τί δὴ γανοῦσθαι τοῦτο ; « en quoi en aurai-je du plaisir ? ») permet d'être assuré que ἄθυρμα comme παίγνιον sont liés ici, dans la bouche de celui qui les a prononcés, au plaisir de celui qui recevra les objets ainsi désignés. On retrouve

l'idée, observée plus haut, de cadeaux, de présents destinés à produire de l'amusement ou du plaisir, même si le contexte est bien distinct des précédents.

Et ce passage nous introduit, du même coup, vers un autre mot grec susceptible de correspondre pour une part à l'idée moderne de « jouet », dans des conditions néanmoins souvent très différentes, comme ici où il s'agit d'objets manufacturés qui serviront lors des jeux isthmiques : παίγνιον. Mais avant d'en venir aux emplois de παίγνιον, on signalera encore l'existence d'un diminutif tardif ἄθυρμάτιον (*athurmatium*). À côté du sens de « jeu »⁶⁰, ἄθυρμάτιον présente assez nettement celui de « petit jouet, joujou » chez Lucien, ou plus précisément, ce nom s'y applique à un animal de compagnie constituant un objet de plaisir : ἔφερε δὲ [...] ἐν ταῖς ἀγκάλαις ἄθυρμάτιον ἄρκτου σκύλακα τὸ λάσιον αὐτῷ προσεικότα « [Le Cyclope, soupissant de Galatée] portait en outre dans ses bras un joujou, un petit d'ours, qui lui ressemblait par sa peau velue »⁶¹ ; il n'est nullement question ici d'un objet manufacturé, mais d'un authentique ourson⁶².

1.2. παίγνιον (*paignion*)

Le terme παίγνιον (*paignion*) est documenté depuis Eschyle. Il peut souvent être traduit par « jeu, divertissement, amusement », et renvoie fréquemment à quelque chose qui divertit, qui plaît : danse armée, comédie, mime, poésie légère, chant des cigales, personne aimée, etc.⁶³ Ce nom appartient à la famille de παῖς (*pais*), gén. παιδός (*paidos*) « enfant », παίζω (*paizō*) « jouer », etc. D'un point de vue morphologique (pour la formation, cf. ion. παιγνίη, att. παιγνία

Quintus de Smyrne, 7, 339.

56. Par exemple chez Pindare, *Pythiques*, 5, 23 : Ἀπολλώνιον ἄθυρμα « présent aimable d'Apollon » (trad. A. Puech, CUF), en parlant d'un chœur venu célébrer Arcésilas de Cyrène : le sens premier ici n'est en aucun cas celui de « jouet », mais celui, plus abstrait, de « divertissement, amusement, délices » (d'où, dans le contexte, « présent aimable »). Cf. Bacchylide, *Épigrammes*, 1, 3 (éd. J. Irigoin, CUF < *Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 313, 3, cf. Page [1981], 152) : ἐν ἀθύρμασι Μουσῶν « dans les jeux des Muses », expression citée juste après la mention du chœur des Athéniens (cf. *Épinicies*, 9, 87 ; voir encore chez Bacchylide, dans un tout autre contexte, *Dithyrambes*, 4, 57 : ἀρῆϊων [...] ἄθυρμάτων, expression renvoyant aux « divertissements d'Arès », c'est-à-dire à la guerre et aux combats). Voir plus de détails à ce sujet dans l'article de NOBILI, dans le présent volume (et sur les emplois érotiques de ἄθυρμα appliqué à des êtres humains, emplois principalement documentés à partir de l'époque hellénistique et romaine qu'il n'est pas possible d'aborder dans les limites de notre article, voir, dans ce même volume également, l'étude de FLORIDI).

57. Sur ce sens du verbe, voir ci-dessus le vers 485 de l'*Hymne homérique à Hermès*, ainsi que le passage de l'*Hymne homérique à Pan* cité note 46.

58. Eschyle, fr. 78c Radt, col. 2, 50-52.

59. DREYFUS (1967), 995. On notera en passant que l'utilisation de παίγνιον pour parler d'un objet servant pour les jeux athlétiques permet de nuancer un peu (bien que παίγνιον, désignant un objet matériel, ne se confonde pas pour autant avec ἀθλος « concours, jeu ») la distinction générale entre παίγνιον et ἀθλος telle qu'elle est exprimée par exemple par BENVENISTE (1947), 162 = BENVENISTE (2015), 178 : « où nous ne voyons que des variétés d'une même espèce, le jeu d'enfants et le jeu athlétique, les Grecs distinguaient deux réalités indépendantes (*paignion* et *athlos*) qu'ils n'auraient pas eu l'idée de confondre ». Le παίγνιον, dans ce fragment d'Eschyle, semble susceptible de s'introduire au milieu de l'univers des ἀθλοι.

60. Philoxène, fr. e 24 Page (= Athénée, 14, 50 [643c]) : κομπόν ἄθυρμάτιον « jeu ingénieux », en parlant de mots d'esprit.

61. Lucien, *Dialogues marins*, 1, 5 (trad. É. Chambry, CUF).

62. Notons que ἄθυρμα, entre autres auteurs tardifs (voir quelques autres références chez VERGADOS [2013], 254 ; cf. l'article de FLORIDI dans le présent volume), s'applique également à un animal de compagnie (chiot, en l'occurrence) chez Alciphron (*Lettres*, 2, 19, 3 Schepers : cf. § 2.1). Ce sens se retrouve dans des témoignages épigraphiques, ainsi dans IGUR 1230, 3 (épigramme à un petit chien, II^e-III^e s. apr. J.-C.) : κούρη δὲ ἄβρον | ἄθυρμα ποθοῦσα « et la fille, qui se languit de son doux compagnon de jeu » (cf. aussi, avec le verbe συναθύρω « jouer avec » [par ailleurs documenté seulement chez Moschos, 2, 30], GVI, 691, 1, II^e-III^e s. apr. J.-C. : Παρθενόπην κύνα θάψεν ἀναξέος, ἥ συνάθυρεν « La chienne Parthénopée a été enterrée par son maître, qui se divertissait avec elle » ; ces deux inscriptions ont été commodément rassemblées parmi d'autres dans une étude assez récente de Valentina GARULLI [2014]). Voir aussi ci-dessus à propos des emplois (néanmoins assez différents) de ἄθυρμα (*athurma*) relatifs à une tortue dans l'*Hymne homérique à Hermès*. Quant au fait que chez Lucien, l'ourson est qualifié comme un ἄθυρμάτιον, cf. Ovide, *Métamorphoses*, 13, 834 (Polyphème s'adresse à Galatée, en parlant de deux oursons) : *inueni geminos, qui tecum ludere possint* « j'ai trouvé des jumeaux qui pourront jouer avec toi » (puis au vers 836 : *uilloas catulos [...] ursae* « les petits d'une ourse velue », expression qui évoque à la fois ἄρκτου σκύλακα, *arktou skulaka*, « petit d'ours » et λάσιον, *lasion*, « velu » chez Lucien). Sur la question de savoir si Lucien s'est inspiré d'Ovide dans sa représentation du Cyclope, ou a puisé à une source alexandrine à laquelle Ovide aurait lui aussi emprunté, voir, en dernier lieu, FLORIDI (2017).

63. Sur la très grande diversité des emplois de παίγνιον, qu'il n'est pas possible de présenter de manière développée dans les limites de cet article, voir l'étude détaillée de PATERA dans le présent ouvrage.

[Hérodote, Aristophane] « jeu, amusement ; fête », il doit être issu de *παῖδ-ν-ιον, suivant un phénomène de dissimilation qui a pu être favorisé par l’ambiguïté du ζ de παίζω (ζ étant issu théoriquement soit de *γγ, soit de *δγ)⁶⁴.

Le sens de « jouet » est posé prioritairement dans les ouvrages de lexicographie, mais il est fort rare, et la plupart des références indiquées dans les dictionnaires avec ce sens sont contestables, comme peut l’illustrer la consultation des deux dictionnaires suivants :

• Dictionnaire d’Anatole BAILLY s.v. :

le premier sens indiqué est « ce qui sert à jouer, d’où jouet d’enfant, jouet », avec comme références Platon⁶⁵, et Plutarque⁶⁶. Mais dans le passage de Platon, le sens de ce mot est plutôt « jeu, divertissement », παίγνιον étant déjà défini un peu plus haut comme « ce qui se rapporte à l’ornementation, à la peinture, à tous les arts qui, en faisant usage de cette dernière ainsi que de la musique, réalisent des imitations, exécutées uniquement en vue de notre agrément »⁶⁷.

• LSJ s.v. :

« *plaything, toy* »⁶⁸, avec, entre autres références, des renvois à Platon, également contestables⁶⁹.

Parmi tous les passages référencés dans ces deux dictionnaires, seul celui, tardif, des *Œuvres morales* de Plutarque présente manifestement une occurrence de παίγνιον où ce mot s’applique à des objets

matériels avec lesquels les enfants jouent :

Ἄλλ’ ὥσπερ τὰ μικρὰ παιδάρια, ἀπὸ πολλῶν παιγνίων ἂν ἔν τις ἀφέληται τι, καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ πάντα προσρίψαντα κλαίει καὶ βοᾷ, [...]

Mais comme les petits enfants, si on leur enlève l’un de leurs nombreux jouets, pleurent et crient en jetant tous les autres [...] ⁷⁰.

Un tel emploi n’est pas isolé chez Plutarque :

Οὐ γὰρ μόνον βρέφουσιν ἄλλοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ σκεύουσιν, οἷς ἐτέρπετο, καὶ παιγνίοις τὴν τίττην διδόναι καὶ προσφέρειν τὸν μαστὸν προεκαλεῖτο.

Car ce n’était pas seulement aux autres nourrissons, mais aussi aux objets qui faisaient sa joie, à ses jouets, qu’elle demandait à sa nourrice de présenter et de donner le sein ⁷¹.

Comme ἄθυρμα (*athurma*) au sens de « parure, ornement » (cf. § 1.1), παίγνιον s’applique également à d’autres types d’objets⁷² que des jouets d’enfant : ainsi, chez Plutarque, dans *Que les bêtes ont l’usage de la raison*, 989e, ce mot est employé à propos d’une agrafe en or (ἡ πόρπη χρυσὸς οὖσα), qualifiée de « jouet parfaitement ciselé » (παίγνιον [...] τορφαίαις διηκριβωμένον), dans un contexte qui n’est pas sans rappeler les occurrences de ἄθυρμα (cf. § 1.1) à propos de bijoux de femmes, d’autant qu’il est question ici d’un homme qui est dépeint comme efféminé⁷³. Antérieurement, chez le poète Callimaque, on trouve déjà παίγνιον comme désignation d’un navire servant, une fois mort, de « bibelot digne d’être admiré » (τὸ περίσκεπτον παίγνιον) dans le temple d’Arsinoé⁷⁴.

64. Voir plus de détails chez LEJEUNE (1972), 78, § 67 n. 4.

65. Platon, *Le Politique*, 289b.

66. Plutarque, *Œuvres morales*, 469d.

67. Platon, *Le Politique*, 288c : τὸ περὶ τὸν κόσμον καὶ γραφικὴν θεῖναι καὶ ὅσα ταῦτη προσχρώμενα καὶ μουσικῇ μὴμῆματα τελεῖται, πρὸς τὰς ἡδονὰς μόνον ἡμῶν ἀπειργασμένα (trad. L. Robin, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade).

68. Le dictionnaire de Franco MONTANARI (2015), s.v., fait preuve de plus de prudence, car pour plusieurs des références qui suivent à Platon ou encore à Plutarque, le sens général indiqué est plus large : « *game, toy, plaything* ».

69. Platon, *Lois*, 803c (mais il s’agit d’un emploi au sens figuré de « jouet » [type d’emploi bien documenté par ailleurs, avec d’autres exemples dans le LSJ] : l’homme comme παίγνιον de la divinité, « jouet de la divinité », θεοῦ τι παίγνιον, ou, comme le traduit Léon Robin dans la Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, « objet d’amusement pour la Divinité ». Cela dit, dans un autre passage des *Lois* [644d] qu’il aurait été plus approprié de citer prioritairement pour illustrer le sens de « jouet », l’homme est représenté très concrètement comme un jouet, « une marionnette » [trad. É. Des Places, CUF, pour παίγνιον] fabriquée par les dieux : voir plus de détails chez Stephen KIDD [2019], 102, 110, et [2021], 26, qui hésite entre la représentation de l’homme comme une marionnette ou comme un jouet à remontoir, et voir surtout l’article d’Andrea CAPRA et Claudia ZICHI dans le présent volume ; Platon, *Le Politique*, 288c (mais le sens est en réalité celui de « jeu, divertissement, etc. », cf. ci-dessus) ; Platon, *Lois*, 797b (mais ici encore, le sens est celui de « jeu, divertissement, amusement » : [...] τοῦ τὰ αὐτὰ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως αἰεὶ τοὺς αὐτοὺς παίζειν τε καὶ εὐθυμεῖσθαι τοῖς αὐτοῖς παιγνίοις « de sorte que les mêmes âges jouent toujours les mêmes jeux suivant les mêmes principes et se plaisent aux mêmes amusements » [trad. A. Diès, CUF] ; il s’agit d’un passage sur la stabilité des jeux) ; etc.

70. Plutarque, *De la tranquillité de l’âme*, 469d (éd. J. Defradas, J. Dumortier, CUF).

71. Plutarque, *Consolation à sa femme*, 608d (éd. J. Hani, CUF ; trad. J. Hani modifiée). Il est question ici de la fille de Plutarque, âgée de deux ans. Cette description peut donner le sentiment que les jouets en question seraient comparables aux poupées modernes. Mais cela n’est pas sûr : selon toute vraisemblance, il ne s’agissait pas de simples jouets profanes à l’instar des poupées modernes. Ce que l’on a retrouvé archéologiquement dans des tombes de fillettes ou de jeunes filles, et que l’on appelle couramment « poupées », ce sont des figurines féminines articulées, principalement en terre cuite, mais aussi en os ou en ivoire, dont il n’est nullement évident qu’elles aient pu avoir un usage profane, mais qui, bien au contraire, devaient avoir une fonction religieuse. Parmi la bibliographie sur le sujet, voir en particulier un état récent de la question par DASEN (2021), 319-346 ; plus récemment, sur les représentations figurées de ces « poupées », voir aussi DASEN, VERBANCK-PIÉRARD (2022). Voir en outre DASEN (2011), 56-57, avec mention de ce passage de Plutarque.

72. Et d’ailleurs pas uniquement à des objets, mais plus généralement à des réalités qui suscitent du plaisir, ainsi chez le comique Éphippus, fr. 24 Kassel-Austin, à propos de mets délicieux.

73. En ce sens, voir KIDD (2019), 103 = KIDD (2021), 27.

74. Callimaque, *Épigrammes*, 5, 8 Pfeiffer. Autre emploi de παίγνιον chez Callimaque dans l’*Hymne à Délos*, 324, en parlant d’un jeu d’enfant, d’un amusement d’enfant (mais pas de jouets matériels) : παίγνια κουρίζοντι καὶ Ἀπόλλωνι γελαστὺν « amusement d’enfant pour faire rire Apollon » (trad. É. Cahen, CUF). Il s’agit de la course des marins qui font le tour de l’autel de Délos tout en se flagellant, et ne repartent pas avant d’avoir mordu le tronc de l’olivier sacré. Chez Callimaque, cf. aussi l’emploi de la variante παίγνιον dans les *Iambes*, 12 (= fr. 202

Chez Lucien, παίγνιον s'applique encore à une réalité matérielle présentée comme un jouet d'enfant : la baguette du jeune Hermès avec laquelle celui-ci conduit les âmes et fait descendre les morts. Héphestos dit à Apollon, peu après la mention du fait qu'Hermès tout jeune enfant a fabriqué un instrument de musique à partir d'une tortue morte (cf. § 1.1 sur ἄθυρμα) : Ἐγὼ ἐκείνην ἔδωκα αὐτῷ παίγνιον εἶναι « C'est moi qui la lui ai donnée pour qu'il joue avec (litt. : pour qu'elle soit son jouet) »⁷⁵.

Sinon, dans la majeure partie des passages où il est question de jouets matériels, παίγνιον se laisse comprendre au sens plus général de « jeu », ainsi chez Pausanias (à propos du sanctuaire des Grâces, dont l'une tient une rose, celle du milieu, un osselet, et la troisième, un petit rameau de myrte) : « Quant à l'osselet, pour les jeunes gens et les jeunes filles, qui n'ont encore aucun des désagréments que procure la vieillesse, pour tous ces gens-là l'osselet est un jeu »⁷⁶.

2. LATIN

2.1. *Lūdīcrum*

En latin, seul le substantif *lūdīcrum* est susceptible de désigner une réalité matérielle avec laquelle des enfants pouvaient jouer, ou, plus largement, par laquelle ils pouvaient être charmés. Mais il ne s'agit là que d'un sens parmi d'autres, d'ailleurs fort rare dans les témoignages écrits qui nous sont parvenus (ce qui ne saurait préjuger de son extension exacte dans la langue courante, parlée), comme pour παίγνιον en grec.

Le plus souvent, *lūdīcrum* réfère aux jeux publics (cirque, théâtre), comme on peut l'attendre d'un dérivé de *lūdus* (terme désignant anciennement le jeu *en actes*, par opposition à *iocus* : voir ce qui a été indiqué plus haut dans l'introduction), ou bien ce mot présente le sens abstrait de « jeu, plaisir, amusement »⁷⁷. Par concrétisation liée au contexte (amusement concrétisé, par exemple chez Horace⁷⁸), ce mot tend quelquefois (très rarement) à se rapprocher du sens matériel de « jouet ». Dans les *Lettres à Lucilius*, Sénèque emploie ainsi ce nom pour parler d'objets

sans véritable valeur. Il n'est pas inutile de citer ici un assez long extrait, qui montrera le détail de ce que Sénèque entend par *omne ludicrum* au début du passage :

8. *Tunc intellegere nobis licebit quam contemnenda miremur simillimi pueris quibus omne ludicrum in pretio est : parentibus quippe nec minus fratribus praeferunt paruo aere empta monilia. Quid ergo inter nos et illos interest, ut Ariston ait, nisi quod nos circa tabulas et statuas insanimus carius inepti ? Illos reperti in litore calculi leues et aliquid habentes uarietatis delectant, nos ingentium maculae columnarum, siue ex Aegyptiis harenis siue ex Africae solitudinibus aduectae porticum aliquam uel capacem populi cenationem ferunt. 9. Miramur parietes tenui marmore inductos cum sciamus quale sit quod absconditur. Oculis nostris inponimus et cum auro tecta perfudimus, quid aliud quam mendacio gaudemus ? scimus enim sub illo auro foeda ligna latitare.*

Alors nous pourrions comprendre combien est méprisable ce que nous admirons, pareils aux enfants pour qui le moindre hochet a tant de prix ; bien sûr, aux parents, comme aux frères et sœurs, ils préfèrent des colliers qui ont coûté quelques piécettes. Quelle différence, comme le dit Ariston, y a-t-il entre eux et nous ? C'est que nous appliquons notre folie à des tableaux, à des statues, sots à plus de frais. Eux, s'ils découvrent sur la grève galets polis portant bigarrure, ils s'en amusent. Notre amusette à nous, ce sont les tachetures d'énormes colonnes rapportées des sables de l'Égypte, des déserts africains pour soutenir soit un portique soit le plafond d'une salle à manger où tout un peuple de convives pourrait tenir. Nous admirons des murs recouverts de feuilles de marbre, sans ignorer cependant quelles sortes de matériaux ainsi l'on dissimule. Nous en imposons à nos yeux ; et quand nous avons badigeonné d'or nos lambris, faisons-nous autre chose que tirer plaisir d'un mensonge, puisque nous savons que d'affreuses solives se cachent sous cet or ?⁷⁹

Le terme de *lūdīcrum* s'applique ici à des objets qui font l'amusement, le divertissement des enfants, sans qu'il s'agisse systématiquement d'objets avec lesquels les enfants *jouent* à proprement parler, et qui auraient un usage bien spécifique dans le cadre de jeux particuliers (les enfants en sont plutôt charmés d'un point de vue général, comme le suggère l'emploi de *delectant*) : colliers (*monilia*), galets polis et bigarrés (*calculi leues et aliquid habentes uarietatis*)⁸⁰. Mais par analogie, il semble que *lūdīcrum* puisse également s'appliquer à tout objet (concret, matériel) de plaisir dans le monde des adultes, et de

Pfeiffer), où sont apportés à une enfant (Hébé, fille d'Héra), à l'occasion de son septième anniversaire, plusieurs παίγνια plus précieux que de l'or (v. 33, cadeaux de Poséidon) et aux sculptures variées (v. 27-28, cadeaux d'Athéna : ποικίλα γλυφῆ, à supposer que la lecture de ce dernier mot soit correcte, voir des réflexions à ce sujet, entre autres études, chez KERKHECKER [1999], 233 ; on notera l'emploi du même adjectif que dans ποικίλ' ἄθύρματα chez Sappho : cf. § 1.1).

75. Lucien, *Dialogues des dieux*, 11.

76. Pausanias, *Description de la Grèce*, 6, 24, 7 : Ἀστράγαλον δὲ μεираκίων τε καὶ παρθένων, οἷς ἀχαρὶ οὐδὲν πω πρόσεστιν ἐκ γήρωος, τοῦτων εἶναι τὸν ἀστράγαλον παίγνιον (éd. J. Pouilloux, trad. M. Casevitz, CUF).

77. Sur les sens les plus courants de *lūdīcrum*, outre la notice du *ThLL* signalée ci-dessous, voir par exemple NUTI (1998), 86-87, 89.

78. Horace, *Épîtres*, 1, 1, 10 : *uersus et cetera ludicra* « vers et autres amusements ».

79. Sénèque, *Lettres à Lucilius*, 115, 8-9 (éd. et trad. H. Noblot, CUF).

80. Cf. ce qui a été dit § 1.1 de ποικίλ' ἄθύρματα, *poikil' athurmata*, chez Sappho, fr. 44, 9 Lobel-Page.

plaisir vain, dans le contexte des *Lettres à Lucilius* : tableaux, statues, etc.⁸¹

L'idée générale de cet extrait peut être mieux cernée, bien que le substantif *lūdicrum* n'y soit pas employé de nouveau, à partir d'un autre passage de Sénèque où le même type de comparaison est fait entre le monde des enfants et celui des adultes. Ce second passage donne une idée plus précise des réalités matérielles auxquelles pensait Sénèque en utilisant le terme *lūdicrum* à propos des enfants dans l'extrait précédent (non seulement colliers, galets polis et bigarrés, mais encore osselets, noix, pièces de monnaie, constructions de sable, etc.)⁸² :

Non ideo quicquam inter illos puerosque interesse quis dixerit, quod illis talorum nucumue et aeris minuti avaritia est, his auri argenteique et urbium, quod illi inter ipsos magistratus gerunt et praetextam fascesque ac tribunal imitantur, hi eadem in Campo Foroque et in Curia serio ludunt, illi in litoribus harenae congestu simulacra domuum excitant, hi, ut magnum aliquid agentes in lapidibus ac parietibus et tectis moliendis occupati, tutelae corporum inuenta in periculum uerterunt. Ergo par pueris longiusque progressis, sed in alia maioraque error est.

Disons-nous que ce qui distingue l'homme de l'enfant, c'est que l'avidité des enfants a pour objet des osselets, des noix ou de menues pièces de monnaie, tandis qu'il faut aux hommes de l'or, de l'argent et des villes ; que les enfants ont leurs magistratures à eux et contrefont la prétexte, les faisceaux et le tribunal, tandis qu'au Champ-de-Mars, au Forum, à la Curie les hommes jouent pour de bon aux mêmes jeux ; que les enfants, en entassant du sable au bord de la mer, construisent des simulacres de maisons, tandis que les hommes, gonflés de l'importance de leur œuvre, amoncellent gravement pierre sur pierre, édifient des murs et des toits, et de ce qui devrait les abriter font une perpétuelle menace pour leur vie ? Enfants ou hommes faits, les illusions sont les mêmes ; il n'y a que leur objet et leur importance qui changent⁸³.

On ne trouve guère d'autre passage, en latin de l'époque classique, où *lūdicrum* puisse être interprété au sens de « jouet », d'« objet d'amusement », hormis le passage suivant de Catulle. *Lūdicrum* s'y applique aux rameaux fleuris d'un myrte, auxquels les nymphes des bois prennent plaisir :

*Floridis uelut enitens
Myrtus Asia ramulis,
Quos Amadryades deae
Ludicrum sibi rosido
Nutriunt humore.*

[...] semblable à un myrte de l'Asie, tout brillant des fleurs de ses rameaux, que les déesses Amadryades, en se jouant, nourrissent d'une rosée limpide⁸⁴.

Il faut remarquer que cet emploi de *lūdicrum* chez Catulle a toute chance d'avoir été au moins en partie inspiré par un modèle grec, et en particulier par ἄθურμα, chose qui n'est que rarement signalée chez les commentateurs modernes, et toujours de manière très allusive⁸⁵. Comme ici entre *ludicrum* et *nutriunt* (« nourrissent »), un rapport se rencontre en tout cas en grec entre ἄθურμα et l'idée de « nourrir » ou d'« élever » un être qualifié comme étant un ἄθურμα, mais dans des contextes différents, et surtout, à une époque postérieure à celle de Catulle (Catulle aurait-il néanmoins disposé d'un modèle grec plus ancien à cet égard, aujourd'hui perdu ?) : chez Alciphron⁸⁶, il est question de nourrir, d'élever (τρέφω) un chiot caractérisé comme un ἄθურμα, avec une syntaxe proche de celle du passage de Catulle⁸⁷. À propos de l'association entre ἄθურμα (*athurma*) et τρέφω (*trephō*) dans ce passage d'Alciphron, qui n'est pas usuelle, mais qui se retrouve dans quelques autres passages d'auteurs tardifs⁸⁸, S. Douglas Olson observe (mais sans évoquer Catulle) : « *It seems unlikely to be coincidence, and this is probably a prescribed combination based on a now-lost*

84. Catulle, *Poèmes*, 61, 21-25 (éd. et trad. G. Lafaye, CUF). G. Lafaye, qui traduit *ludicrum sibi* d'une manière non littérale par « en se jouant », indiquait p. 61, n. 6 : « Les nymphes prennent plaisir à faire croître ce myrte ; c'est pour elles un amusement, une distraction. » D'autres auteurs n'hésitent pas à traduire ici *lūdicrum* par « jouet ». Voir par exemple FORDYCE (1978), 241, qui rend ce mot par « *plaything* » (traduction des vers 23 à 25 : « *which the wood-nymphs feed with dew-drops to be their plaything* »). Voir aussi le commentaire d'ELLIS (1876), 172 : « *each spray is tended by a Hamadryad, and all of them together are their plaything* », ou encore la traduction de F. W. Cornish (Loeb Classical Library) : « *which the Hamadryad goddesses with dewy moisture nourish as a plaything for themselves* », etc.

85. En ce sens, voir le commentaire de FORDYCE (1978), 241, qui pense, mais sans fournir davantage de précisions, que les vers 23 à 25 ont pu être influencés par παίγνιον ou ἄθურμα : « *the phrase was perhaps suggested by παίγνιον or ἄθურμα* ». Voir aussi ELLIS (1876), 172, qui renvoyait à ἄθურμα en évoquant le vers 16 de l'*Hymne homérique à Déméter* (en parlant d'un narcisse : cf. § 1.1) ainsi qu'un passage d'Alciphron (le même, mais avec une autre numérotation, que celui dont nous parlons ci-dessous), mais très laconiquement, et sans préciser sa pensée : « *Ludicrum, ἄθურμα Hom. H. Cer. 16, where Persephone stretches her hands to take the narcissus as a καλὸν ἄθურμα*. Alciph. iii. 22. »

86. Alciphron, *Lettres*, 2, 19, 3 Schepers (cf. § 1.1, note 62) : κυνίδιον, ὃ <ἐ>τρέφομεν ἄθურμα τῇ δεσποίνῃ προσήγνός « le chiot que nous élevions comme un doux compagnon de jeu pour notre maîtresse ».

87. *Quos* : ὅ, pronoms relatifs compléments d'objet direct ; *nutriunt* : <ἐ>τρέφομεν, verbes conjugués signifiant « nourrir, etc. » ; *ludicrum* : ἄθურμα, attributs de l'objet ; *sibi* : τῇ δεσποίνῃ, datifs d'intérêt.

88. Voir en particulier Élien, *De la nature des animaux*, 6, 29.

81. À propos des statues, cf. l'emploi possible de ἄθურμα (*athurma*) pour désigner une statue dans l'*Anthologie Palatine*, 7, 154, 1 : voir § 1.1, note 18.

82. Sur ces deux passages de Sénèque, cf. JOURDAN-GUEYER (1994), 97-98.

83. Sénèque, *De la constance du sage*, 12, 2 (éd. et trad. R. Waltz, CUF).

exemplar. »⁸⁹ En ce qui concerne Catulle, on peut toutefois songer surtout à l'influence de l'*Hymne homérique à Déméter*, où il est également question de faire croître un végétal, d'autant que le narcisse qualifié d'ἄθυρμα au vers 16 de cet hymne est présenté comme suit aux vers 8-9 : νάρκισσόν θ', ὃν φῦσε δόλον καλυκώπιδι κούρη # Γαῖα [...] « le narcisse que, par ruse, Terre fit croître pour l'enfant fraîche comme une corolle »⁹⁰. Il est remarquable que la syntaxe de Catulle en est assez proche (*quos* : ὃν, pronoms relatifs compléments d'objet direct ; *nutriunt* « nourrissent » : φῦσε [*phuse*] « fit croître » ; attributs de l'objet *ludicrum*, en parlant des rameaux fleuris : δόλον [*dolon*, « piège »], en parlant du narcisse qui est aussi, au vers 16, un ἄθυρμα⁹¹ ; *sibi* : καλυκώπιδι κούρη, datifs d'intérêt).

Par la suite, le sens de « jouet » d'enfant se retrouve sporadiquement, par exemple chez Apulée⁹², à moins qu'il ne faille entendre ici *ludicrum* au sens, bien documenté par ailleurs⁹³, de « chose vaine, sans importance » ; ou encore, plus tard mais aussi plus nettement, chez Augustin (*quoniam pue-*

ro dantur quaedam puerilia ludicra « parce que l'on donne à un enfant des jouets enfantins »⁹⁴, avec l'idée qu'il faut les lui retirer ensuite des mains pour offrir à son esprit des nourritures plus utiles, et avec l'exemple de noix données à un enfant, puis d'un livre une fois qu'il a grandi) ; etc.⁹⁵

2.2. *Crepundia* ?

Le dictionnaire étymologique d'Alfred Ernout et Antoine Meillet⁹⁶ indique pour *crepundia* le sens premier de « jouets (hochets, poupées, petites haches, petites épées d'or ou d'argent, petits animaux, etc.) que les enfants portaient suspendus au cou et qui servaient de marque de reconnaissance » (depuis Plaute, principalement dans *Cistellaria* et *Rudens*), « en particulier la *bullā aurea* que portaient les enfants nobles, petite sphère creuse comportant une amulette » ; « par extension, dans la langue impériale⁹⁷, "maillots, langes" »⁹⁸. Selon toute vraisemblance, et bien que d'autres hypothèses aient pu être avancées⁹⁹, *crepundia* doit être rattaché à *crepō* « craquer, claquer, etc. »¹⁰⁰.

En dehors de l'emploi précis comme marque de reconnaissance, le sens général de « jouets » n'est nulle part attesté pour ce terme.

2.3. *Ioculus* ?

Ioculus, diminutif de *iocus* (jeu en paroles), désigne une petite plaisanterie, uniquement dans les comédies de Plaute¹⁰¹.

Suivant une conjecture qui remonte à Claude Saumaise (1629), ce mot serait également attesté chez Vitruve en un sens bien différent : celui de « jouet ». Cette conjecture a été acceptée par Johann G. Schneider¹⁰², et elle se trouve validée dans le dictionnaire de Félix Gaffiot¹⁰³.

89. OLSON (2019), 286. Notons à cet égard que la mention des ἄθυρματα donnés à Mélanthô par Pénélope dans l'*Odyssée*, 18, 323, suit immédiatement celle du fait que Mélanthô avait été élevée, nourrie (ἀτιτάλλε) par Pénélope (voir § 1.1). Le contexte est certes tout différent de celui d'Alciphron, car Mélanthô n'est nullement présentée comme un ἄθυρμα pour Pénélope, et le verbe employé n'est pas τρέφω, mais le verbe poétique ἀτιτάλλω « nourrir, élever ». Néanmoins, ce passage a-t-il pu en quelque façon jouer un rôle dans le développement d'une association entre ἄθυρμα et τρέφω chez certains auteurs tardifs ? Le substantif ἄθυρμα était un mot rare et surtout poétique : il ne serait nullement surprenant qu'une association phraséologique tardive comme celle-ci trouve son origine dans les poèmes homériques, avec conservation, en prose tardive, de la forme surtout poétique ἄθυρμα, mais remplacement du verbe poétique ἀτιτάλλω par son équivalent usuel τρέφω.

90. *Hymne homérique à Déméter*, 8-9 (trad. J. Humbert, CUF).

91. Cela n'est pas sans faire penser, *mutatis mutandis*, à la notion de « reprise décalée » étudiée par LE FEUVRE (2007) dans la poésie lyrique et épique grecque, et définie de la sorte par l'auteur (p. 123) : « à partir d'un syntagme usuel [A...B], le renouvellement consiste à remplacer l'un des termes (B) par un équivalent (C) et à reprendre ailleurs le terme effacé dans une autre fonction syntaxique » (exemple chez Pindare, *Olympiques*, 7, 49-50 : ξανθὸν ἀγαγὼν νεφέλαν # πολὺν ὕσε χρυσὸν « amenant une blonde nuée il fit pleuvoir abondance d'or » : le syntagme homérique récurrent associant l'adjectif χρύσειος « doré » [= B] au nom de la nuée, νεφέλη ou νέφος [= A], a été renouvelé ici par un syntagme reprenant A [νεφέλαν] et remplaçant B par un adjectif de sens voisin, à savoir ξανθός « blond » [= C], avec reprise décalée de B dans la proposition suivante au moyen du substantif χρυσός « or »). Chez Catulle, par rapport à l'*Hymne homérique à Déméter* (v. 8 et 16), il ne s'agirait pas d'une « reprise décalée » au sens où Claire Le Feuvre entend cette expression, mais d'un mécanisme plus ou moins inverse (non pas passage de [A...B] à [A...C... + B], mais évolution de [A...B... + C] vers [A...C]) : (*quos...*) *ludicrum... nutriunt* semble répondre à (ὃν) φῦσε (= A) δόλον (= B) du vers 8 de l'*Hymne à Déméter*, avec conservation de A (φῦσε → *nutriunt*), mais pour *ludicrum*, remplacement de B (δόλον) par C (ἄθυρμα au vers 16, qui, sans être synonyme de δόλος « piège ; ruse, tromperie, artifice », est néanmoins appliqué à la même réalité, à savoir le narcisse), sans reprise de B.

92. Apulée, *Apologie*, 45, 8 : *potius quam totum negotium quasi ludicrum pueris donares* (« au lieu d'abandonner toute l'affaire à des enfants, comme un jouet » ; trad. P. Valette, CUF).

93 Cf. *ThLL*, VII/2, col. 1765 B 1.

94. Augustin, *Commentaire sur les Psaumes*, 73, 2.

95. Pour d'autres références postclassiques, voir *ThLL*, VII/2, col. 1765. Voir aussi l'article de MORETTI dans le présent volume, avec de nombreuses références à des passages d'auteurs chrétiens ; plus largement, voir l'article de MORETTI pour d'autres réflexions sur les passages de l'époque classique présentés ci-dessus, ainsi que sur Horace, *Épîtres*, 1, 6, 7 (où l'emploi de *ludicra* est analysé dans le *ThLL*, VII/2, col. 1765, comme désignant des choses vaines, futiles, de peu d'importance).

96. DELL, 150.

97. Chez Plinius l'Ancien, *Histoire naturelle*, 11, 270.

98. Pour plus de détails sur les emplois de ce terme, voir *ThLL*, IV, col. 1174-1175 (avec mention d'autres sens : « amulette » chez Apulée, *Apologie*, 56 ; « claquoir » ou « sistre » chez Justin, 30, 1, 9 ; ou encore « enfance » en latin tardif).

99. Voir le dossier étymologique dans DELL, 150.

100. Voir aussi *ThLL*, IV, col. 1174, avec mention d'une scholie qui va dans ce sens.

101. Plaute, *Truculentus*, 104 ; *Mercator*, 993 ; *Mostellaria*, 923 ; *Rudens*, 729 ; *Stichus*, 23. Comme l'observe NUTI (1998), 48 n. 3, le sens de *ioculus* n'y semble guère éloigné de celui de *iocus*. Sur *ioculus* chez Plaute, voir aussi NUTI (1998), 58, 61.

102. Éd. J. G. Schneider (1807-1808).

103. GAFFIOT (1934), s.v. *ioculus*.

L'article du *Thesaurus* mentionne prudemment la chose, sans prendre parti¹⁰⁴. Les manuscrits, quant à eux, comportent le terme *pōculum* « coupe » (à l'ablatif pluriel *poculis*, ou *poclis* dans certains manuscrits). C'est le texte qui a été retenu dans la Collection des Universités de France¹⁰⁵ :

Virgo ciuis Corinthia, iam matura nuptiis, implicata morbo decessit. Post sepulturam eius, quibus ea uirgo uiua poculis delectabatur, nutrix collecta et composita in calatho pertulit ad monumentum et in summo conlocavit et, uti ea permanerent diutius sub diuo, tegula texit.

Une jeune fille, citoyenne de Corinthe, déjà nubile, mourut des suites d'une maladie. Quand elle fut ensevelie, sa nourrice rassembla et disposa dans une corbeille les menus objets qui faisaient sa joie de son vivant, les porta jusqu'à son tombeau sur lequel elle les déposa, et les recouvrit d'une tuile pour assurer plus longtemps leur conservation à l'air libre¹⁰⁶.

De nombreuses variantes ont été proposées par les modernes pour *poculis*, du fait du caractère *a priori* peu adapté de ce terme à la personnalité d'une jeune fille (« coupes, petits vases ? »). Outre *ioculis* « jouets », les autres conjectures sont les suivantes¹⁰⁷ : *prae aliis*¹⁰⁸ « en comparaison des autres, plus que tout »¹⁰⁹, *procliuius* « avec plus de penchant, d'inclination »¹¹⁰, *pauculis* « très peu nombreux »¹¹¹, *pupulis* « poupées »¹¹².

Néanmoins, il peut sembler difficile de retenir cette conjecture *ioculis*, à partir d'un mot attesté exclusivement dans la langue de Plaute, qui plus est en un sens tout différent. En outre, l'idée selon laquelle la lecture *poculis* ne fournirait pas un sens approprié au contexte est discutable. Comme l'indique Pierre Gros dans son commentaire de ce passage dans la *Collection des Universités de France*, *poculum* ne renvoie pas simplement à une coupe à boire, mais peut aussi « désigner à la rigueur de petits objets usuels ou ludiques »¹¹³. En ce sens, voir aussi Silvio Ferri dans ses éditions de Vitruve¹¹⁴ : « *Sta bene "poculis"; sono i piccoli vasetti, o bicchieri, o coppette per giuochi infantili* ».

104. *ThLL*, VII/2, col. 286.

105. Même chose dans l'édition de Frank Granger, Loeb Classical Library, et dans celle de Silvio Ferri signalée plus bas.

106. Vitruve, *De l'architecture*, 4, 1, 9 (éd. et trad. P. Gros, CUF).

107. Ces conjectures ont été recensées par GROS (1992), 76.

108. Et non pas *pro aliis*, comme l'indiquait fautivement Pierre Gros.

109. Éd. L. Marini (Aloysius Marinius), (1836).

110. Éd. V. Rose, H. Müller-Strübing, Teubner (1867).

111. Éd. V. Rose, Teubner (1899).

112. Éd. F. Krohn, Teubner (1912).

113. GROS (1992), 76.

114. Voir FERRI (1960), 20 = FERRI (2002), 72. Cf. la traduction de FERRI (1960), 145 pour *quibus ea uirgo uiua poculis delectabatur, nutrix collecta et composita in calatho pertulit* : « *la sua nutrice raccolse e ordinò in un cestello rotondo tutti quei vasetti e coppe onde la fanciulla si era diletta in vita* ».

P. Gros admettait cependant que « la conjecture de Schneider [...] est [...] la plus satisfaisante si l'on prend le parti de corriger la tradition »¹¹⁵. Mais est-il bien nécessaire de prendre ce parti ? Cela n'est nullement certain. La leçon *poculis* paraît tout à fait acceptable, d'autant que l'on sait aujourd'hui que les objets en miniature (tasses, coupes, etc.) semblent faire partie des objets qui étaient utilisés par les enfants dans le *lararium* domestique, dans leur lent parcours d'intégration dans la vie sociale des rôles qui les attendaient selon le modèle normatif prévu par les adultes : à ce sujet (mais sans mention du passage de Vitruve), voir en dernier lieu Ludovica Darani, qui, à propos des objets miniaturisés (meubles, vaisselle) découverts dans la tombe de *Iulia Graphis* (II^e siècle apr. J.-C.) à Brescello (Émilie-Romagne, Italie), considère que selon toute vraisemblance, ces petits objets servaient aux enfants à imiter les activités normalement réalisées par les adultes, et à se préparer ainsi de manière ludique à la vie d'adulte¹¹⁶.

CONCLUSION

Ainsi, parmi les formes grecques ou latines qui peuvent signifier « jouet » en un sens matériel, seul le mot grec ἄθურμα (*athurma*) réfère majoritairement à une réalité physique avec laquelle on peut sinon jouer à proprement parler (ce qui arrive, mais n'a rien de systématique), du moins s'amuser ou prendre du plaisir ; cela se produit dès les textes les plus anciens, où ἄθურμα s'applique d'abord exclusivement à des réalités qui font la joie d'enfants ou de femmes (jouets, parures, ornements, bibelots, etc., tous objets constituant des réalités futiles, frivoles, et parfois trompeuses, dangereuses, par opposition au monde plus sérieux et raisonnable des hommes¹¹⁷), avant de présenter d'autres types d'emplois à partir de la fin de l'époque archaïque. Si on laisse de côté les cas bien particuliers des mots latins *crepundia* et *ioculus* (le premier ne désigne des « jouets » qu'en tant que marques de reconnaissance, et le second relève, au sens de « jouet », d'une conjecture moderne qui n'a que bien peu de chance de devoir être retenue), les autres termes étudiés ici, à savoir *ludicrum*, παίγνιον (*paignion*), et plus brièvement μέλιον (*meilion*), présentent tous une très grande polysémie. Dans les témoignages écrits qui nous sont parvenus, ils ne sont utilisés que de manière très sporadique comme des termes génériques pour désigner ce que nous entendons aujourd'hui au sens propre par le mot *jouet* (objet matériel avec lequel on peut jouer), ou, plus largement, pour dénoter une réalité matérielle causant du plaisir, qu'il s'agisse d'un objet manufacturé (bijoux, bibelots, etc.), ou bien d'un élément de la

115. GROS (1992), 76.

116. DARANI (2021).

117. En ce sens, cf. KIDD (2019), 98, 101-102 = KIDD (2021), 25-26.

nature transformé en un jouet ou en un objet de plaisir par l'acte même du jeu (sable, etc.), voire par sa perception par l'être qui en est sous le charme (gallets, rameaux de myrte, etc.).

ABRÉVIATIONS BIBLIOGRAPHIQUES

DELG : CHANTRAINE, Pierre, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des mots*. I (A-Δ), 1968 ; II (E-K), 1970 ; III (Λ-Π), 1975 ; IV/1 (P-Y), 1977 ; IV/2 (Φ-Ω), par Jean Taillardat, Olivier Masson et Jean-Louis Perpillou, 1980, Paris (nouvelle édition en 2009).

DELL : ERNOUT, Alfred, MEILLET, Antoine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine. Histoire des mots*, Paris (2001), tirage de la 4^e éd. (1959, révisée en 1985) augmentée d'additions et de corrections par Jacques André (1^{re} éd., 1932).

DHLF : REY, Alain (dir.), *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*, Paris (1993).

EDG : BEEKES, Robert S. P., *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, Leiden/Boston (2010).

ESSJa : ТРУБАЧЕВ, Oleg Nikolaevič (Трубачев, Олег Николаевич), *Этимологический словарь славянских языков. Праславянский лексический фонд*, Moskva (1974-).

GEW : FRISK, Hjalmar, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, I-III, Heidelberg (1960-1972).

GVI : PEEK, Werner, *Griechische Vers-Inschriften*, I, *Grab-Epigramme*, Berlin (1955).

IG : *Inscriptiones Graecae*, Berlin (1873-).

IGUR : MORETTI, Luigi, *Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae*, I-IV, Roma (1968-1990).

LIV² : RIX, Helmut (dir.), *Lexikon der indogermanischen Verben*, Wiesbaden (2001, 2^e éd. ; 1^{re} éd., 1998).

LSJ : LIDDELL, Henry George, SCOTT, Robert, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford (1940), 9^e éd. révisée par Henry Stuart JONES, Roderick MCKENZIE, avec un supplément (P.G.W. GLARE, éd., 1996).

OED : SIMPSON, John A., WEINER, Edmund S.C. (éd.), *The Oxford English Dictionary*, I-XX, Oxford (1989, 2^e éd.).

ThLL : *Thesaurus linguae Latinae*, Leipzig (1900-).

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

N.B. : Le plus souvent, les éditions et traductions d'œuvres anciennes, lorsqu'elles appartiennent à une collection spécifique d'éditions de textes anciens (Collection des Universités de France, abrégée CUF ; Loeb Classical Library ; etc.), ou lorsqu'elles sont citées de manière très ponctuelle, sont simplement signalées dans le corps de l'article avec mention de la collection ou du lieu et de la date d'édition, sans être reprises ici de manière plus détaillée.

BAILLY, Anatole, *Dictionnaire grec-français*, Paris, 16^e éd. revue par Louis Séchan et Pierre Chantraine (1950, 1^{re} éd. 1894).

BENVENISTE, Émile, « Le jeu comme structure », *Deucalion. Cahiers de philosophie*, 2 (1947), 161-167 = BENVENISTE, Émile, *Langues, cultures, religions (choix d'articles réunis par Chloé Laplantine et Georges-Jean Pinault)*, Limoges (2015), 177-183.

BUCK, Carl D., *A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages*, Chicago/London (1949).

CAMPBELL, Malcolm, *A Commentary on Apollonius Rhodius Argonautica III, 1-471*, Leiden/New York/Köln, Brill (1994).

CASEVITZ, Michel, « Les noms du jeu et du jouet en grec », *Kentron*, 34 (2018), 51-60.

COSTANZA, Salvatore, « Les jeux dans l'*Onomasticon* I 30 ; VI 107, 109 ; VII 203-205 ; IX 94-129 de Pollux », *Revue des études grecques*, 133, 2 (2020), 361-409.

DARANI, Ludovica, « Iulia Graphis : miniature e mors immatura », in Véronique Dasen, Typhaine Haziza (éd.), *Dossier thématique : jeu, normes et transgressions*, *Kentron*, 36 (2021), 121-156.

DASEN, Véronique, « De la Grèce à Rome : des jouets pour grandir ? », in Dorothee Charles, Bruno Girveau (éd.), *Des jouets et des hommes*, Paris (2011), 53-59.

DASEN, Véronique, *Le Sourire d'Omphale. Maternité et petite enfance dans l'Antiquité*, Rennes (2021).

DASEN, Véronique, VERBANCK-PIÉRARD, Annie, « Poupees grecques en images : du jeu au rite », in Véronique Dasen, Thomas Daniaux (éd.), *Locus Ludi. Quoi de neuf sur la culture ludique antique ?*, *Pallas*, 119 (2022), 349-378.

DIEU, Éric, *L'Accentuation des noms en *-ā (*-eh₂) en grec ancien et dans les langues indo-européennes. Étude morphologique et sémantique*, Innsbruck (2016).

DREYFUS, Raphaël (tr.), *Tragiques grecs. Eschyle. Sophocle*, Paris (1967).

ELLIS, Robinson, *A Commentary on Catullus*, Oxford (1876).

FERRI, Silvio (éd., tr. et comment.), *Vitruvio, Architettura (dai libri I-VII)*, Roma (1960) ; rééd., Milano (2002).

FLORIDI, Lucia, « Polifemo tra letteratura e iconografia : Luc. Dmar. 1 e 2 », *Aevum antiquum*, 17 (2017), 245-274.

FORDYCE, Christian J., *Catullus. A Commentary*, Oxford (1978).

GAFFIOT, Félix, *Dictionnaire latin-français*, Paris (1934).

GARULLI, Valentina, « Gli epitafi greci per animali. Fra tradizione epigrafica e letteraria », in Antonio Pistellato (éd.), *Memoria poetica e poesia della memoria*.

- La versificazione epigrafica dall'antichità all'umanesimo*, Venezia (2014), 27-64.
- GRIMM, Jacob et Wilhelm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, Leipzig (1854-1971).
- GROS, Pierre (éd. et tr.), *Vitruve. De l'architecture. Livre IV*, Paris (1992).
- HAUDRY, Jean, « Le suffixe i.-e. *-men- », *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris*, 66, 1 (1971), 109-137.
- JOURDAN-GUEYER, Marie-Ange, « Sénèque et les jeux de l'enfance », *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé* (1994), 94-102.
- KERCKHECKER, Arnd, *Callimachus' Book of Iambi*, Oxford (1999).
- KIDD, Stephen, *Play and Aesthetics in Ancient Greece*, Cambridge (2019).
- KIDD, Stephen, « Le jeu est-il une émotion ? Enquête sur la *paidia* grecque », in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (éd.), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity : Definition, Transmission, Reception / Jouer dans l'Antiquité classique : Définition, Transmission, Réception*, Liège (2021), 19-28.
- LE FEUVRE, Claire, « La reprise décalée, un procédé de renouvellement formulaire dans la poésie lyrique et épique grecque. Sur les composés gr. πολυδῆνης / skr. *púrudam-sas-*, gr. *μελιφεπής / skr. *mádhuvacas-* », in Alain Blanc, Emmanuel Dupraz (éd.), *Procédés synchroniques de la langue poétique en grec et en latin*, Bruxelles (2007), 123-137.
- LEJEUNE, Michel, *Phonétique historique du mycénien et du grec ancien*, Paris (1972).
- LITTRÉ, Émile, *Dictionnaire de la langue française*, Paris (1873-1877).
- MONTANARI, Franco, *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, Leiden/Boston (2015).
- NERI, Camillo, *Erinna. Testimonianze e frammenti*, Bologna (2003).
- NUTI, Andrea, *Ludus e iocus. Percorsi di ludicità nella lingua latina*, Treviso/Roma (1998).
- OLSON, S. Douglas, « From 'Canonical' Literature to Alciphro », in Andreas Willi (éd.), *Formes et fonctions des langues littéraires en Grèce ancienne*, Vandœuvres (2019), 279-317.
- PAGE, Denys L., *Further Greek Epigrams. Epigrams Before A.D. 50 from the Greek Anthology and Other Sources, not Included in Hellenistic Epigrams or The Garland of Philip*, Cambridge (1981).
- PANAGL, Oswald, « Verbalabstrakta. Onomasiologische Vielfalt und semantischer Wandel », in Mechthild Habermann, Peter O. Müller, Horst Haider Munske (éd.), *Historische Wortbildung des Deutschen*, Tübingen (2002), 59-74.
- PERSSON, Per, *Beiträge zur indogermanischen Wortforschung*, Uppsala/Leipzig (1912).
- PINAULT, Georges-Jean, « Aspects de la reconstruction de l'abstrait en indo-européen », in Nelly Flaux, Michel Glattigny et Didier Samain (éd.), *Les Noms abstraits, histoire et théories. Actes du colloque de Dunkerque (15-18 septembre 1992)*, Presses universitaires du Septentrion, Villeneuve d'Ascq (1996), 199-211.
- RICHARDSON, Nicholas J., *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Oxford (1974).
- RICHARDSON, Nicholas J., *Three Homeric Hymns: to Apollo, Hermes, and Aphrodite. Hymns 3, 4, and 5*, Cambridge (2010).
- SEIDELMANN, Erich, *Vom Wort zum Suffix. Das Morphem /zeug/ als Wortbildungsglied in den bairisch-österreichischen Mundarten*, Hamburg (1986).
- SEILER, Hansjakob, « Zum Zusammenhang von Nomina actionis, Nomina agentis und Eigennamen », in Annemarie Etter (éd.), *O-o-pe-ro-si. Festschrift für Ernst Risch zum 75. Geburtstag*, Berlin/New York (1986), 60-71.
- TAILLARDAT, Jean, *Les Images d'Aristophane. Études de langue et de style*, Paris (1965).
- TRAHERNE, Thomas, *Christian Ethicks, or Divine Morality Opening the Way to Blessedness, by the Rules of Vertue and Reason*, London (1675).
- VERGADOS, Athanassios, *The Homeric Hymn to Hermes. Introduction, Text and Commentary*, Berlin/Boston (2013).



Paola Francesca Moretti

University of Milan
paola.moretti@unimi.it

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

INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the substantive *ludicrum* as a “*ludonimo generale*”, i.e. a hyperonym denoting ‘an object to play with’.¹ After some remarks on its origin and relationship to the adjective *ludicer/ludicrus*, the history of *ludicrum*, ‘toy’, is illustrated, within the general framework of the development of Latin ludonyms referring to ‘play’ and ‘games’ since the archaic times to late Antiquity: *ludo*, *-ere/ludus/ lusus*, and *iocor*, *-ari/iocus*.²

Ludicrum, ‘toy’, features most of the times in comparisons and similes, that is, literary devices by means of which daily life and its activities find their way into linguistically ‘artificial’ and culturally adult-oriented literary texts: this would suggest that the word itself pertains to informal, everyday language. Moreover, *ludicrum* never specializes as a word in the sense of meaning ‘plaything’; hence, some contextual element is always needed to single

out passages where *ludicrum* unambiguously means ‘toy’, e.g., mentioning the ‘plaything(s)’ to which *ludicrum* refers. Remarkably, the Romans do not adopt a specialized hyperonym for ‘toy’, whereas two words for ‘toy’ exist in Greek:³ ἄθυρμα (more poetic: cf. ἀθύρω, perhaps from an Indo-European root meaning ‘to deceive’)⁴ and παίγνιον (more prosaic: cf. παίζω, related to παῖς, ‘child’).⁵ In this respect, it is worth noting that, in two passages where *ludicrum*, ‘toy’, features, a Greek parallel can be either strongly suggested (Catullus) or positively singled out (Arnobius).

1. *LUDICRUM*: ITS ORIGIN AND A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF ITS OCCURRENCES

The substantive *ludicrum* should derive from *ludo*, *-ere*, plus the instrumental suffix *-crum* (= *-crom*, a dissimilated form of *-clom*, from IE **-tlo*): *-crum* belongs to a group of noun suffixes usually featuring in deverbal neutral nouns, that denote either an instrument for doing something or a place where something is done.⁶ The suffix *-crum* is not very

* This article is the revised version of the paper I presented at the ERC conference “Toys as Cultural Artefacts in Ancient Greece, Etruria, and Rome” (Fribourg, June 2021). I thank the attendees that took part in the discussion on that occasion. Furthermore, my heartfelt thanks to Véronique Dasen and Marco Vespa for inviting me to take part in the conference, and for reading the final version of the paper, providing me with illuminating suggestions and very useful bibliographical additions.

1 On the distinction between “*ludonimi generali*” and “*ludonimi particolari*”, see SCALA (2013), 163-7, esp. 164.

2 A topic dealt with in detail by NUTI (1998). See also É. DIEU in this volume.

3 On Greek verbs ‘to play’, see at least CASEVITZ (2018). On subst. ἄθυρμα, see C. NOBILI in this volume.

4 NUTI (2013), 61-2.

5 This is the only example of a ‘ludonym’ evoking childhood in IE languages; NUTI (2013), 60.

6 *-tro/-culo* and *-cro/-bulo/-bro*, stemming from IE **-tro/-tlo/-dhlo/-dhro* respectively: these suffixes are typical of “*meist von Verben abgeleitete Werkzeug- und Ortsbezeichnungen (Neutra, wenige Fem. und Mask.)*”;

productive in Latin. Besides some problematic items,⁷ there are a few ‘-crum-suffixed’ substantives, most of them presumably pertaining *also* to an informal linguistic register: *simulacrum* (from *simulare*);⁸ *sepulcrum* (from *sepelire*);⁹ *involutrum* (from *involvere*);¹⁰ *lavacrum* (from *lavare*).¹¹ *Ludicrum* should be added, from which a first declension adjective possibly resulted, based on the reanalysis of the substantive within ambiguous expressions:¹² a peculiar adjective, yet, whose masculine nominative (supposedly, *ludicer* or *ludicrus*)¹³ and comparative/superlative forms never occur. Except for a doubtful ‘adverbial’ *ludice* in the *Annals* of Ennius (fr. 69 Sk.),¹⁴ the adjective features from Plautus on,¹⁵ whereas the substantive is found from the age of Cicero and Catullus.¹⁶ Obviously, the fact that the adjective is found earlier than the substantive might depend on accidental evidence, and *per se* does not rule out the pre-existence of the substantive.

Ludicrum, at least from the time of Livy, takes on the meaning of ‘public show’ and tends to be used – as a (not specialized) singular – corresponding to the (highly specialized) plural *ludi*, ‘public shows’. However, *ludicrum* occurs *also* in contexts different from those of ‘public games’, and apparently preserves its polysemy until late Antiquity.¹⁷ The Latin corpus of

Brepols ‘Library of Latin Texts’ shows that occurrences amount to 114 (out of which 53 substantives) and 245 (out of which 74 substantives), in the sections ‘Antiquitas’ and ‘Aetas patrum’ respectively.¹⁸ *Ludicrum* seems to be increasingly common, and its meaning does not seem to undergo dramatic changes: most often it refers to a *ludus publicus* (38 out of 53 occurrences in ‘Antiquitas’; 31 out of 74 occurrences in ‘Aetas Patrum’), and only a few times to ‘toys’ or ‘games’ (in ‘Antiquitas’, 4 occurrences as ‘toy’, 1 as ‘game’; in ‘Aetas Patrum’, 9 occurrences as ‘toy’, 3 as ‘game’).

2. The Context: *ludere* as the Most Common Verb for Children ‘at Play’

Ludicrum seems to be almost the only substantive denoting ‘material toys’ in texts dating from republican to late Latin. This stability should be accounted for in light of the fact that, as shown by Latin (literary) texts,¹⁹ *ludere* from Plautus on regularly expresses the generic ‘play’ of children;²⁰ moreover, even if other substantives are used to refer to play and games (*ludus/lusus*, and later *iocus*),²¹ the verb *ludere* does not seem to be threatened by its potential competitor *iocor*, -ari, ‘to play’,²² a verb that surfaces in literary texts only by Ausonius’ time.²³

LEUMANN (1977), 312-4.

7 Such as the hapax *eluacrus*, an adjective deriving from *elavare*, as far as we can judge from its only occurrence: cf. Cato, *On agriculture*, 10.4, who mentions an *eluacrum labrum* (‘a washtub’, i.e. a *lavacrum*).

8 Occurring only once in archaic Latin (Plautus, *Mostellaria*, 84-6), it has been common since the 1st cent. CE.

9 “*Neben sepul-tus*”; see LEUMANN (1977), 314.

10 Occurring three times in the letters by Terentianus (early 2nd cent. CE, from Roman Egypt), in the phonetically ‘vulgar’ form *imboluclum* (*PMich* VIII, 467 and 468).

11 A popular word in Christian texts, where Baptism is defined as *lavacrum* (i.e., *lavacrum regenerationis*). An investigation of the texts of the Brepols data-base ‘Library of Latin texts’ (Brepols: <http://clt.brepols.net/pros2.lib.unimi.it/cds/pages/Search.aspx>) shows that 20 occurrences are found in the section ‘Antiquitas’ (until the 2nd cent. CE: 19 in Apuleius and 1 in Gellius), whereas in the section ‘Aetas patrum’ (since late 2nd cent. to about 735 CE) 1291 occurrences are found, in a corpus including mostly – although not exclusively – Christian authors: a true explosion!

12 Cf. SELDESCHACHTS (1993), 211-4: as a matter of fact, in expressions like *hoc ludicrum est* the distinction between substantive and adjective is not clear cut, and reanalysis would be possible (‘this is a plaything’ > ‘this is entertaining’). However, the issue is not uncontroversial: *ludicrum* is usually assumed to be the substantivized form of the adjective *ludicer/ludicrus* (LEW, I, 829, s.v.; DELL, 369, s.v.; LEUMANN (1977), 314; NUTI (1998), 86-7).

13 Cf. *ThLL* 7/2, 1761.38-1765.62, s.v.; on *ludicer/ludicrus*, see 1761.45-8.

14 This is not to be read as an adverb ending in -ē, which would not fit into the hexameter; rather, it is to be viewed as a neutral accusative (and hence adverbial) form of *ludicer* (*ludicrē*) inflected as a third declension adjective, a form admitted by the grammarian Priscianus (SKUTSCH (1985), *ad loc.*).

15 NUTI (1998), 60.

16 NUTI (1998), 86, 89.

17 Cf. *ThLL* 7/2.1763.26-1765.51, section II (about substantive *ludicrum*). It includes: A (“*vi originaria de delectamento*”), encompassing: A1, “*actio ludendi vel generaliter quaecumque homines se delectandi, re-*

creandi sim. causa invenerunt”, that is: A1a, “*in rebus privatis*” (A1aa, “*generatim*”; A1aβ, “*poesis vel ipsa carmina ludendo condita*”; A1ay, “*ludi puerorum*”); A1b, “*publice, sc. sive de ludis sive de singulis ad eos pertinentibus spectaculis scaenicis vel circensibus*”; A2, “*metonymice respiciuntur ipsae res quibuscum luditur*”; B (“*vi deflexa*”), encompassing: B1, “*per similitudinem transfertur ad res vel actiones vanas, minoris momenti sim*”; B2, “*fere abusive de rebus turpibus*”. The most relevant parts are A2 and perhaps A1ay, as the difference between *ludicrum* ‘toy’ and ‘act of playing’ is not always clear cut.

18 See above, n. 11.

19 The only ones we can rely on. As a matter of fact, in the surviving corpus of Latin non-literary texts, including inscriptions, no verbal reference to children’s play, games, or playthings is found, although children at play and/or toys are sometimes portrayed on tombs.

20 NUTI (1998), 39-41. Cf. Plautus, *The little Carthaginian*, 1074: “the mark which a monkey made by biting you when you were playing as a child (*ludenti puero*)”; Cicero, *On Duties*, 1.103: “as we do not grant our children unlimited licence to play (*ut enim pueris non omnem ludendi licentiam damus*), but only such freedom as is not incompatible with good conduct...”. Translations, unless otherwise stated, are taken from the Loeb Classical Library (with slight changes).

21 The substantive *ludus* usually means ‘children’s play/game’ and is sometimes replaced by *lusus* since the Augustan age; NUTI (1998), 134-8 (see *ThLL* 7/2.1790.36-66 on *ludus*, 1889.74-1890.16 on *lusus*). E.g., we know from Servius (*Aeneid*, 5.602) that Suetonius wrote a (now lost) book *De puerorum lusibus*. On the other hand, *iocus*, that had entered the semantic area of adults’ ‘playing’ since the Augustan age (first example in Ovid discussed by NUTI [1998, 149-52]), seems never to have been adopted to refer to children’s playing, possibly because it basically denotes a verbal jest, pertaining to adults only (*ibid.*, 70: cf. also *ThLL* 7/2.286.54-290.20).

22 NUTI (1998), 152.

23 Cf. Ausonius, *Epistles*, 10.92-3, who wishes that the young son of Probus, his addressee, “may become versed in fables, growing used to play and learn at the same time (*suescat [...] simul et iocari et discere*)”; cf. NUTI (1998), 166. Yet, I wonder whether the metrical structure of the two verbs (*iocari* vs. *ludere*) might have influenced the poet’s choice. See, on the other hand, the late ancient *Dicta Catonis* (ll. 36-38), where *ludere* denotes playing as opposed to learning: “Play (*lude*)

Its copious occurrences suggest that *ludere*, ‘to play’, pertains also to everyday language. As a matter of fact, throughout antiquity the verb is associated with the act of children’s playing with a specific toy (such as a *speculum*,²⁴ a *turbo*,²⁵ *crepundia*,²⁶ etc.). Sometimes it features in somewhat derogatory comparisons describing play as a typically ‘childish’ activity, unsuitable for adults. This is the case for a well-known passage by Horace, in the *Satire* illustrating the Stoic paradox that only the wise man is sane.²⁷ In this context, the folly of lovers is compared to that of adults enjoying children’s games, that are listed in detail: “Building toy-houses, harnessing mice to a wee cart, playing odds and evens (*ludere par impar*), riding a long stick [...]”, playing “at building with sand (*in pulvere... ludas opus*)”.²⁸ Interestingly, the same verb is used later by pseudo-Acro when commenting on this text and describing the game of *par impar* in a passage which no doubt resonates with the allure of informal language, that I quote in full:

Ludere par impar] De illo dicit, cum quo pueri soliti sunt ludere inter se, quando premunt copiam nucum vel castanearum manibus, tunc, quando simul veniunt ad ludendum, laxo sinu veniunt et girum inter se faciunt et proponunt sibi problema. Tunc cooperta manu quisque ostendit suo compari et infit: ‘Quot insunt?’. Si alius augurari potuerit, aufert illi. Sic tam diu hoc certant, ut uter deoneret alium.

To play odds and evens] The poet speaks of the game of ‘odds and evens’, that the children use to play: they hold some nuts or chestnuts in their fists, then, when they gather to play, they come in a loose robe and take turns asking each other a riddle. With closed fists held out toward each of their playmates, they then ask: ‘How many are there?’. If a playmate is able to guess, he takes his competitor’s nuts. And they continue playing until one of them has gained all his playmate’s nuts.²⁹

with the hoop. Eschew dice. Study (*disce*) literature”.

24 Phaedrus, *Fables*, 3.8.4-5: “These two, while at their childish play, happened to look into a mirror (*speculum* [...]) / pueriliter ludentes forte inspexerunt) which had been placed on their mother’s boudoir chair”.

25 Charisius, *The Art of Grammar*, 81: “both the whirlwind and the game that child play (*quo ludunt pueri*) is called *turbo* (= spinning top), not – as some wrongly call it – ‘children’s *turben*’ (*turben* [...] *puerorum*)” (transl. mine). There follows a quotation of Virgil’s simile of the spinning top (*Aeneid*, 7.378-383), to which I shall return. *Turben* as ‘spinning-top’ occurs in Tibullus (*Elegies*, 1.5.3-4), in a simile referring to the poet’s love folly.

26 Prudentius, *Crown of Martyrdom*, 3.19-20, about the child Eulalia’s reject of playing: “as a little girl (*pusiolo*) she had put toys (*crepundia*) from her and was a stranger to play (*ludere nescia*)”.

27 Horace, *Satires*, 2.3.

28 Horace, *Satires*, 2.3.247-273. A similar comparison is found in Jerome’s preface to the translation of Origen’s homilies on the Gospel of Luke (*Origen’s Homilies on the Gospel of Luke*, praef.): Jerome says that “Origen in these homilies is like a child playing knucklebones (*quasi puerum talis ludere*)” and contrasts these homilies with Origen’s more mature works.

29 Pseudo-Acro, commenting on Horace, *Satires*, 2.3.248 (transl. mine).

Furthermore, there are many other ludonyms deriving from *ludere* that occur – scantily, and yet consistently – up until late Antiquity. For instance, a ‘player’ or ‘playmate’ is always referred to as *lusor*/*conlusor* (and never – say – as *iocator*!).³⁰ Besides the famous passages by Seneca, where Chrysippus’ simile *de pilae lusu* (in this case, ball-game as practiced by adults) is taken advantage of to illustrate teachings on giving and returning *beneficia*,³¹ there are three interesting occurrences of *conlusor* as denoting a child playmate. Two of them are found in the *Historia Augusta*: Septimius Severus (*Septimius Severus*, 1.6) reproaches his eldest son for being too generous when sharing some fruits with young playmates (*conlusoribus puerulis*), and seven-year-old Caracalla (*Caracalla*, 1.1) flares up in seeing a playmate of his (*conlusorem suum*) being beaten because he is a Jew.³² Another relevant example is met with in the first book of Augustine’s *Confessions*:

We loved to play (*delectabat ludere*) and punishments were imposed on us by those who were engaged in adult games. For ‘the amusement of adults (*nugae*) is called business (*negotia*)’.³³ [...] As a boy I played ball-games, and that play slowed down the speed at which I learnt letters with which, as an adult, I might play a less creditable game (*quia ludebam pila puer et eo ludo impendebam, quominus celeriter discerem litteras, quibus maior deformius luderem*).³⁴ The schoolmaster who caned me was behaving no better than I when, after being refuted by a fellow-teacher in some pedantic question, he was more tormented by jealousy and envy than I when my opponent overcame me in ball-game (*cum in certamine pilae a conlusore meo superabar*).³⁵

In what follows, Augustine blames himself for his fondness of playing (*amore ludendi*), and for his curiosity, that “mountingly increased ... appetite for public shows; public shows are the games of adults (*in spectacula, ludos maiorum*)”.³⁶

In sum, within the framework of *ludere* being a most common hyperonym for ‘playing’,³⁷ the word

30 See also *ThLL* 7/2, 1867.33-1868.1, s.v. *lusor* (since Plautus); *ibid.* 3, 1664.44-73, s.v. *collusor*; *ibid.* 7/2, 282.45-6, s.v. *iocator*.

31 Seneca, *On Benefits*, 2.17.2-5, 32.

32 On children and adults at play in the *Historia Augusta*, see GAILLARD-SEUX 2020.

33 Cf. Seneca as quoted by Lactantius, *Divine Institutions*, 2.4.14.

34 Once again, we find the children’s dilemma – learning vs. playing – described in terms of *discere* vs. *ludere*.

35 Augustine, *Confessions*, 1.9.15 (transl. H. Chadwick, OUP).

36 Augustine, *Confessions*, 1.10.16. Here we are met with a skillful word-play, as *ludi* means not only ‘public shows’, but also ‘the playing activities of adults’, as corresponding to ‘the play of children’. On this passage, see also HERRERO DE JÁUREGUI (2021), 290. On the topos of adults being blamed for living their lives ‘playing like children’, see DASEN (2020), 104-5 (and n. 36).

37 To this also the presence of *ludere* in the inscriptions found on (adults!) *tabulae lusoriae* might bear witness (see FERRUA, BUSIA (2001)): even if these texts are formulaic and stereotyped (three rows, each one built up with two six-letters words), the presence of *ludere* as

ludicrum, coined after a straightforward way of word formation (*ludi-crum*, ‘thing to play with’, just like *involu-crum*, ‘thing to wrap with’), is easily understandable as denoting ‘toy’ (mostly children’s toys, not different from It. ‘giocattolo’, Fr. ‘jouet’, Sp. ‘juguete’, Germ. ‘Spielzeug’...).

3. LUDICRUM, ‘TOY’: 1ST CENTURY BCE TO 3RD CENTURY CE

Here follow some examples of *ludicrum* referring to a ‘toy’, ‘plaything’, especially – if not exclusively – intended for children.

3.1. The Nymphs’ Playthings

The earliest (surviving) occurrence of *ludicrum* as plaything is found as early as Catullus, in the *epithalamium* for the wedding of Manlius Torquatus and Vinia Aurunculeia (*Poems*, 61). In the lines 16-25, two similes are referred to the bride, who is compared first to Venus appearing in front of Paris, the Phrygian judge, and then with myrtle, sacred to Venus:³⁸

For now shall Junia wed with Manlius, Junia as fair as Venus who dwells in Idalium, when she came to the Phrygian judge; a good maiden with a good omen, like the Asian myrtle shining with flowering sprays, which the Hamadryad goddesses with dewy moisture nourish as a plaything for themselves (*floridis velut enitens / myrtus Asia ramulis / quos Hamadryades deae / ludicrum sibi roscido / nutriunt umore*).³⁹

Commentators point out correspondence between Lat. *ludicrum* and Gr. ἄθρυμα and παίγνιον,⁴⁰ and suggest possible parallels in the Greek poetic tradition, where both words feature as denoting a plaything for (children) gods: for Hermes, who comes across the turtle shell and handles it as a “fine plaything”, καλὸν ἄθρυμα;⁴¹ for Persephone, reaching out with her hands to take the narcissus flower, a “pretty plaything” (καλὸν ἄθρυμα), which is also deceitful, as, right after she picks it, she is abducted by Hades;⁴² for Apollo, as Callimachus, speaking of the rites performed by sailors around Apollo’s altar in Delos, says: “these things did the nymph of Delos devise for play (παίγνια) and laughter to young Apollo”.⁴³ To these, a further text should be added:

well as the absence of *iocari* are remarkable.

38 On the form and function of mythological and natural similes in this *carmen* and in the tradition of *epithalamia*, see FEENEY (2013).

39 Catullus, *Poems*, 61.16-25.

40 FORDYCE (1978), 241.

41 *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, 32. On this occurrence, see NOBILI (2013), 157-9.

42 *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 15-6. As remarked by C. NOBILI in this volume, the narcissus is as deceitful as the toys offered to the child Dionysos by the Titans; see also below § 3.4.

43 Callimachus, *Hymn to Delos*, 323-4. Reference to Callimachus is found in KROLL (1989), 109.

Athenaeus⁴⁴ quotes an epigram by the poetess Hedyle where the sea-god Glaucus, in love with the nymph Scylla, is said to bring her “as gifts either shells from the Erythraean rock or halcyon chicks, yet unfledged, as little playthings for the girl (τῇ νύμφῃ [...] ἄθύρματα)”.⁴⁵

The image of the Hamadryades playing with myrtle sprays undoubtedly evokes some Greek model, perhaps Alexandrian. However, this fact does not rule out that the word *ludicrum*, used as ‘plaything’ for children, however divine, belongs to an informal linguistic register, just as children’s playing belongs to daily life. Moreover, Catullus’ poetic language admittedly contains elements pertaining both to the literary and to the informal registers: and this is true also for our *epithalamium*, which, even if it should be ranked among Catullus’ most ‘literary’ poems, is rich in forms that sound “colloquial” (e.g., diminutives like *ramulis*).⁴⁶

3.2. The Sea’s ‘Playthings’

In the opening of epistle 1.6, Horace illustrates a philosophical motto that would lead his addressee Numicius to happiness: “marvel at nothing”. This should be applied both to natural phenomena (ll. 3-5) and to objects of desire (ll. 2. 6-8) and fear (ll. 2. 9-11). The term *ludicra* appears where the ‘objects of desire’ are described:

*Nil admirari prope res est una, Numici,
solaque quae possit facere et servare beatum.
Hunc solem et stellas et decedentia certis
tempora momentis sunt qui formidine nulla 5
imbuti spectent: quid censes munera terrae,
quid maris extremos Arabas ditantis et Indos
ludicra, quid plausus et amici dona Quiritis,
quo spectanda modo, quo sensu credis et ore?
qui timet his adversa, fere miratur eodem
quo cupiens pacto; pavor est utrobique molestus, 10
improvisa simul species exsternat utrumque.*

‘Marvel at nothing’ – that is perhaps the one and only thing, Numicius, that can make a man happy and keep him so. Yon sun, the stars and seasons that pass in fixed courses [5] – some can gaze upon these with no strain of fear: what think you of the gifts of earth [*munera terrae*], or what of the sea’s playthings [*maris... ludicra*], which make rich far distant Arabs and Indians – what of the plaudits and the favours of the friendly Roman – in what wise, with what feelings and eyes think you they should be viewed? And he who fears their opposites ‘marvels’ [10] in much the same way as the man who desires: in either case ’tis the

44 Athenaeus, *The Learned Banqueters*, 7.297bc.

45 Hedyle, *SH*, 456. See FLORIDI 2018-2019, esp. 161-2 (on Glaucus’ ἄθύρματα).

46 CHAHOUD (2021), esp. 131-3 (quotation at 141).

excitement that annoys, the moment some unexpected appearance startles either.⁴⁷

Maris might be thought of as governed by *munera* (l. 5), a choice resulting in an ‘independent’ *ludicra*, which is variously explained.⁴⁸ However, I’d prefer to link *maris* to *ludicra*. The *sapiens* should not marvel at those gifts given by the sea, i.e. pearls and purple fish dye (perhaps, also sea turtles),⁴⁹ that make the Arabs and the Indians rich, *maris ludicra* being the sea’s playthings, the playthings offered by the sea. As a matter of fact, those who are enchanted by these objects shall be compared with naïve children, who are mistakenly lead to believe that trifling little objects that are found and used as playthings, such as small pebbles picked up on the seashore, are valuable.⁵⁰

A passage by Seneca sheds light on Horace’s epistle (Seneca might be even dependent on him).⁵¹ The most beautiful vision is that of *virtus*: only the *sapiens* ‘sees’ virtue, whereas unwise people are attracted by the deceiving appearance of things, just like children are attracted and misled by trifling playthings:

Then it will be in our power to understand how contemptible are the things we admire – like children who regard every toy as a thing of value (*simillimi pueris, quibus omne ludicrum in pretio est*), who cherish necklaces bought at the price of a mere penny as more dear than their parents or than their brothers. And what, then, as Aristo (SVF 1.372) says, is the difference between ourselves and these children, except that we elders go crazy over paintings and sculpture, and that our folly costs us dearer? Children are pleased by the smooth and variegated pebbles which they pick up on the beach (*Illos reperti in litore calculi leves et aliquid habentes varietatis delectant*), while we take delight in tall columns of veined marble brought either from Egyptian sands or from African deserts to hold up a colonnade or a dining-hall large enough to contain a city crowd [...].⁵²

In Seneca, we find some elements that are often associated in almost all occurrences of *ludicra*, ‘toys’. Toys are linked to children and childhood, and they

are often deceitful for children: even when they are not deadly traps (like Persephone’s narcissus), toys deceive children owing to their gleaming appearance, or, less dangerously, merely distract them. In any case, toys are considered absolutely unsuitable for (male) adults.

3.3. “Don’t Entrust a Serious Thing (Negotium) to a Child, as if it were a Plaything!”

A further example of *ludicrum* is found in Apuleius’ *Apologia*. Among other charges, Apuleius is accused of setting up a magic rite, during which he would have caused an epileptic *puer*, named Thallus, to ‘fall’, i.e. to undergo an ‘epileptic seizure’. Apuleius rebukes the accuser, Sicinius Aemilianus, for summoning two *pueri* as witnesses to support his charge: Thallus, who does not remember what happened, and Sicinius Pudens, Pudentilla’s younger son, who is himself a *puerulus*.⁵³ It would have been better if Aemilianus himself had taken on the task of supporting the charges, rather than entrusting them to children, as if they were an inexpensive toy:

You name none at all except that boy Sicinius Pudens, in whose name you are accusing me, since he claims to have been there. Even if his youth did not diminish the sanctity of his oath, still his being an accuser weakens his credit. It would have been easier, Aemilianus, and much more damning if you claimed to have been there yourself and had begun to lose your mind after that ceremony, rather than entrusting the whole business to young boys like a toy (*potius quam totum negotium quasi ludicrum pueris donares*).⁵⁴ A boy collapsed, a boy looked on: was it some boy who cast the spell too?⁵⁵

Playing with toys, again, is emphasised as a child’s activity, as opposed to the seriousness of the trial, which is referred to as a *negotium*, a loaded word, suggesting an activity that barely befits adults.

3.4. The Deceitful Toys of Dionysos

In the following century, the African Arnobius, in a passage where he polemicizes against the Bacchic mysteries, dwells on the episode of the child Dionysos (Lat. *Liber*) being first circumvented and then killed by the Titans. The instrument of circumvention are some toys,⁵⁶ that allegedly distracted the divine child and that – as we can argue clearly from Arnobius’ source, Clement of Alexandria – must be interpreted as symbols of mysteric rites:

And we also refrain from speaking of other Bacchanalia in which a sacred secret which must not even be uttered is revealed and communicated to the initiated:

47 Horace, *Epistles*, 1.6, 1–11.

48 A thorough survey on earlier interpretations is found in CITRONI MARCHETTI (1997), 204–7; see also FEDELI (1997), 1086–7. For instance, the Loeb translation, that I have slightly modified, reads: “what think you of the gifts of earth [*terrae munera*], or what of the sea’s [*maris*, scil. *maris munera*], which makes rich far distant Arabs and Indians – what of the shows [*ludicra*], the plaudits and the favours of the friendly Roman etc.”

49 As Marco Vespa suggested me, turtle shells were an emblem of luxury since the early imperial age (cf. TRINQUIER [2018]), besides being interestingly linked to Hermes’ most characteristic plaything, the lyre. On pearls and turtle shells as luxury objects, see at least SCHNEIDER 2018.

50 Cf. CITRONI MARCHETTI (1997), 211; before her, HEINZE (1914), 57–8, translates *maris ludicra* as “das Spielzeug des Meeres”.

51 As remarked by HEINZE (1914), 57–8.

52 Seneca, *Epistles*, 115.8.

53 A denigrating term, within this context: cf. HUNINK (1997), 135–6.

54 MARCHESI (1914), 121 *ad loc.* renders “come fosse un giocattolo”.

55 Apuleius, *Apologia*, 45.7–8.

56 Cf. TORTORELLI GHIDINI (2000); LEVANIUK (2007), esp. 167–8; HERRERO DE JÁUREGUI (2021), 283–7; NOBILI, in this volume.

how Liber when busy with boyish toys (*occupatus puerilibus ludicris*) was torn asunder by the Titans [...] As evidence and proof of this [*scil.* Dionysos' fate], the Thracian [*scil.* Orpheus] in his poems handed down the knucklebones, mirror, spinning tops, wheels, and smooth golden apples taken from the virgin Hesperides (*talos speculum turbines, volubiles rotulas et teretis pilas et virginibus aurea sumpta ab Hesperidibus mala*).⁵⁷

Arnobius most possibly draws on Clement,⁵⁸ who tells of the Titans deceiving the child “with childish toys” (παιδαριώδεσιν ἄθύρμασιν), and quotes two lines by Orpheus, that list the toys: “Top, wheel and jointed dolls, with beauteous fruit of gold from the clear-voiced Hesperides (κῶνος καὶ ῥόμβος καὶ παίγνια καμπεσίγνια,⁵⁹ / μῆλά τε χρύσεα καλὰ παρ’ Ἑσπερίδων λιγυφώνων = *OF* 34 K.)”; he concludes by again mentioning the toys, that allegedly are the blameworthy symbols of Dionysos’ cult: “the knucklebone, the ball, the spinning-top, apples, wheel, mirror, fleece (ἄστράγαλος, σφαῖρα, στρόβιλος, μῆλα, ῥόμβος, ἔσοπτρον, πόκος)”. Spinning toys, like κῶνος, ῥόμβος and στρόβιλος, are admittedly connected to the mysteries of Dionysos, as is shown also by Virgil’s famous simile, comparing a spinning top urged to whirl by children to queen Amata, excited by the Fury Allecto and frantically rushing around like a *Baccha*.⁶⁰ Most importantly, Lat. *ludicra* in Arnobius undoubtedly refers to the childish toys that are explicitly listed and corresponds to Greek ἄθურμα, that is endowed with a negative overtone of deceitfulness.⁶¹ Again, the *ludicra* are meant as an instrument for distracting naïve children.

4. 4TH-5TH CENTURY CE: AUGUSTINE AND JEROME

The Christians’ view of children’s playing is marked by a conspicuous “ambivalence”.⁶² I will dwell only on a few passages by Augustine and Jerome. The image of children’s *ludicra* appears in Augustine’s dialogues and in his homilies; moreover, Jerome bears witness to its presence in the Latin Scriptures. An informal linguistic register is likely to surface in both.⁶³

57 Arnobius, *The Case against the Pagans*, 5.19 (transl. G. McCracken, Newman Press, with slight changes).

58 Clement, *Protrepticus*, 2.17-18: on this passage, see also HERRERO DE JÁUREGUI (2010), 147-53; MASSA (2020), 41-4. On the relationship between Clement and Arnobius, see HERRERO DE JÁUREGUI (2010), 153-5.

59 For παίγνια καμπεσίγνια interpreted as referring to knucklebones, see CARÈ, in press, and C. NOBILI in this volume.

60 Virgil, *Aeneid*, 7.378-383. Cf. BOCCIOLINI PALAGI (2007), 73-82.

61 On the etymology of ἄθურμα, see above n. 4.

62 On this topic, see at least HERRERO DE JÁUREGUI (2021).

63 Among the sources of ‘everyday language’, the Fathers of the Church are to be recorded, see at least ADAMS (2013), 12-22.

4.1. Augustine

The image of children playing with toys finds its way into Augustine’s earliest dialogues (384-387 CE): while being closely connected with “la visée pédagogique et éthique” of the dialogues,⁶⁴ it seemingly works as a stock simile.

Ludicra (pl.) appears twice in the *Against the Academicians*. The dialogue focuses on the refutation of a substantial point of the Academicians’ teachings: if only *verisimile/probabile* can be attained, both truth and happiness are beyond human reach. The metaphor of preparatory exercise, undoubtedly reminiscent of stock imagery referring to dialectical and rhetorical training, is hinted at in the beginning of the discussion: “we have engaged in this discussion of ours to train you (*exercendi tui causa*) and to incite you to cultivate your mind”.⁶⁵ Later, when it is time to shift to the core question, Augustine highlights the change by means of a ludic metaphor, where *iocari* (= ‘to play’) seems to replace the most common *ludere*:

Let’s end the preliminary exercises we engaged in (*prolusimus*) with these young men, where philosophy itself freely played along with us, so to speak (*ubi libenter nobiscum philosophia quasi iocata est*). Accordingly, let childish tales (*fabellae pueriles*) be put beyond our reach!⁶⁶

The choice of *iocari* might be due to the involvement of *philosophia*, who is not a child and whose ‘playing’ obviously entails words;⁶⁷ however, the use of *iocari* seems all the more remarkable, as in the same context also ‘childish tales’ are referred to.

The ludic metaphor is interestingly recalled below, when Augustine, by quoting Cicero, warns that things and not words are at issue in the discussion:

The Academician says: ‘All the things I think ought to be called “plausible” or “truthlike” seem to me to be like this. I make no objection if you want to call them by another name. It’s enough for me that you grasp what I mean, that is to say, the realities to which I’m giving these names. The wise man should not be a craftsman of words but an investigator of realities’⁶⁸. Now do you understand full well how those playthings I was stirring you up with have been dashed from my hands (*ludicra illa, quibus vos agitabam, de manibus excussa sint*)?⁶⁹

Ludicra obviously refers to the speakers’ *pro-ludere*, debating the difference between *probabile* and *verisimile*. Again, just before defining the issue of the debate that will follow, Augustine admonishes:

64 As demonstrated by BOUTON-TOUBOULIC (2020).

65 Augustine, *Against the Academicians*, 2.7.17 (transl. P. King, OUP).

66 Augustine, *Against the Academicians*, 2.9.22 (transl. P. King, OUP).

67 On *iocus/iocari*, basically ‘playing with words’, see above, n. 21.

68 This text corresponds to Cicero, *Academics*, fr. 19.

69 Augustine, *Against the Academicians*, 2.11.26 (transl. P. King, OUP).

Now the sun reminds me to put away in their boxes the playthings I was showing to you as if you were children – especially since I was showing them as display ornaments rather as items for sale (*quae ludicra pueris proposui redigam in cistas, praesertim cum ea ornandi iam potius quam vendendi gratia proponam*).⁷⁰

The discussion was a preliminary exercise, like a game for children: in this context, translating *ludicra* as “playthings” would preserve the lively image of ‘putting away’ childish playthings, i.e., giving up playing.⁷¹

Moreover, the metaphor of playing is applied to (seemingly!) useless discussion of *signa* in the first part of the *De magistro*. In fact, dwelling on *signa* is not children’s play but exercises for the mind:

Maybe you think we’re playing around and are diverting the mind from serious matters by some little puzzles that seem childish (*Tu enim fortasse aut ludere nos et a seriis rebus avocare animum quasi quibusdam puerilibus quaestiunculis arbitraris*), or that we’re pursuing some result that is only small or modest – or, if you suspect that this discussion might issue in some important result, you want to know straightaway what it is (or at least to hear me say what it is!). Well, I’d like you to believe that I haven’t set to work on worthless playthings (*vilis ludicra*) in this conversation. Though we do perhaps play around, this should itself not be regarded as childish (*quamvis fortasse ludamus, idque ipsum tamen non puerili sensu aestimandum sit*). Nor are we thinking about small or modest goods. Yet if I were to say that there is a happy and everlasting life, and I want us to be led there under the guidance of God (namely Truth himself) by stages that are suitable for having set out on such a long journey by considering signs rather than the things themselves that are signified. So then, you’ll pardon me if I play around with you at first – not for the sake of playing (*Dabis igitur veniam, si praeludo tecum non ludendi gratia*) to exercise the mind’s strength and sharpness, with which we’re able not only to withstand but also to love the heat and light of that region where happy life is.⁷²

The rendering of *ludicra* as ‘playthings’, which is not without controversy,⁷³ is suggested by the reference to childhood: discussion is likened to a ‘preparatory exercise’ (“playing around”, transl. King), as opposed to playing with playthings *puerili sensu*, which is unworthy of adults.

70 Augustine, *Against the Academicians*, 2.13.29 (transl. P. King, OUP).

71 BOUTON-TOUBOLIC (2020), 72 translates “amusements” (French), i.e. ‘entertainments’, and views this sentence as being a hint at Augustine giving up his teaching career as a rhetor. However, on children selling and buying playthings, see also Augustine, *Confessions*, 1.18.30 (below, § 5).

72 Augustine, *De magistro*, 8.21 (transl. P. King, OUP).

73 King translates “trivialities”; for a less detailed translation of *ludicra*, cf. above n. 71.

Augustine profits from the ‘play’ comparison/metaphor also in his preachings, where toys are usually referred to as basically childish means of entertainment. On the one hand, toys are given to children by indulgent parents; on the other hand, their toys are to be relinquished, once they have grown up. God features in these similes as behaving like a good – sometimes even indulgent – father.⁷⁴

In some cases, the antinomy Old vs. New Testament is concerned. In Augustine’s *Commentary on Psalm 73*, God is compared to a father, who gives his child playthings (“childish toys are given to a child to entertain his childish mind [*puero dantur quaedam puerilia ludicra quibus puerilis animus avocetur*]”): later, when he is grown up, they are to be relinquished, “so that he might handle more useful things, fit for adults”; this example is easily understood by Augustine’s public, as any father does the same with his own children: “You too gave to your child nuts when he was young, a book when he grew up”. Likewise, God grants his children the Old Testament (“those – so to say – childish toys [*illa quasi ludicra puerorum*]”), when they are young, and the New Testament, when they grow up.⁷⁵

Elsewhere, *ludicra* are the symbol of faith’s ‘childhood’, i.e., immaturity, that must be superseded, to turn to the spiritual vision of God:

If you please, not to delay it longer, let us run over the passage, and see how carnal hearts are troubled by the words of the Lord; to this end troubled, that they may not continue in that which they hold. Let this be wrested from them, as some toy is wrested from children, with which they amuse themselves to their hurt (*Extorqueatur tamquam pueris ludicrum nescio quid, quo se male avocant*), that, as persons of larger growth, they may have more profitable things planted in them, and may be able to make progress, instead of crawling on the earth.⁷⁶

Now (*scil.* when we see God *facie ad faciem*) let trifles be far removed from the soul’s sight. The little child should throw away his toys, and learn to deal with greater things (*abiciat puer parvulus ludicra, discat tractare maiora*).⁷⁷

Moreover, God gives his children earthly and unimportant gifts, to invite them to ask Him for greater ones. Like a good father, he sometimes gives ‘toys’ to whimsical children, to prevent them from crying: “The father gives some little and playful things [= playthings] to little children, because they cry,

74 Further texts bearing witness to both the good (i.e., pedagogic) and evil role of children’s play in early Christian literature are found in HERRERO DE JAUREGUI (2021), 287–95.

75 Augustine, *Commentary on Psalm 73*, 2 (transl. mine).

76 Augustine, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, 18.7 (transl. J. Gibb, J. Innes, NPNF)

77 Augustine, *Sermon*, 53.15.16 (transl. mine).

if they do not get them (*Quaedam enim plerumque parva et ludicra* [here, an adj.] *concedit pater parvulis filiis, quae maxime, nisi acceperint, plorant*"); the father's *pietas* ("affection") yields "to children who play and take delight in playthings (*ludentibus et de quibusdam ludicris se oblectantibus*)": but this behavior – Augustine remarks – pertains to indulgence, rather than to education.⁷⁸

4.2. Jerome and the Scriptures

Besides some examples drawn from daily life,⁷⁹ a passage from Jerome's *Commentary on Habakkuk* deserves closer scrutiny. Jerome comments upon a verse of prophet Habakkuk (1.10), bearing in mind and quoting also the Greek text of the LXX. In the Greek text a ludic metaphor is explicitly referred to, as describing the fierce Chaldaeans: "And at kings will he scoff, and tyrants will be his toys (παίγνια). He will jest at every fortress (εἰς πᾶν ὀχύρωμα ἐμπαίζεται) and heap up earth and take it." Jerome first presents his reader with a literal-historical interpretation of the Hebrew text (that is, of his Latin *Vulgata*)⁸⁰, according to which the Chaldaeans are the Babylonian conquerors; then, he displays an allegorical interpretation, based on the text of the Latin translation of the LXX: the Chaldaeans are *daemonia*, who may take possession of human souls, but God, when souls are delivered from them, "will take delight in kings, and tyrants will be his playthings (*tyranni ludicra eius erunt*), as he sees the devil... and his reign being destroyed" (transl. mine). Possibly the words *ludicra* = παίγνια ('toys') remind him of a passage of the book of Job,⁸¹ which is evoked in the following description of God who treats the devil as his toy, as his laughing stock:

Neque enim solus draco formatus est ut lusui haberetur a domino, qui est 'principium plasmationis eius, factus angelis ludicrum',⁸² neque illum solum dabit deus 'quasi passerem parvulo';⁸³ sed si quis etiam alius crudelis,

⁷⁸ Augustine, *Sermon*, 302 (transl. mine).

⁷⁹ Jerome criticizes his adversary, John bishop of Jerusalem, for distracting him from the target of his polemic, like a nursemaid deceiving a child with toys: "You say none of these things; you bring forward Manichaeus, and keep Origen out of sight, and, just as when children ask for something to eat their nursemaids put them off with some little plaything (*parvulis cibum poscentibus ludicra quaedam offerunt...*, *ut avocent mentes eorum*), so you direct the thoughts of us poor rustics to other matters, so that we may be taken up with the fresh character on the stage, and may not ask for what we want" (Jerome, *Against John of Jerusalem*, 21, transl. W.H. Fremantle, NPNF).

⁸⁰ In the *Vulgata* the ludic metaphor is somewhat weakened, and rendered as mockery: "And he will triumph over kings and tyrants and they will be his laughing stock (*ridiculi eius*): and he will laugh at every fortress (*super omnem munitionem ridebit*) and will heap up earth and take it" (transl. mine).

⁸¹ *Job*, 40.19 and 29.

⁸² Cf. *Job*, 40.19 LXX: "This is the chief of what the Lord created, made to be mocked at by his angels (τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἀρχὴ πλάσματος Κυρίου, πεποιημένον ἐγκαταπαίζεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ)."

⁸³ *Job*, 40.29 LXX: "Will you play with it as with a bird, or tie it up like a sparrow for a child (παίζει δὲ ἐν αὐτῷ ὥσπερ ὀρνέω ἢ δήσεις αὐτὸν

et mentis tyrannicae fuerit, tradetur sermoni Dei in derisum. Et ipse ait: 'in omnem munitionem inludet'.

The drake (*scil.* the devil) is not the only one to be created to be a plaything for the Lord, the devils who is 'the chief of what the Lord created', 'made a plaything for angels', and he is not the only one that God will give 'as a sparrow to a child'; but, if anybody else is cruel and of tyrannic temperament, he will be given to God's word as a laughing stock. And he [*scil.* prophet Habakkuk] says: 'with all the fortresses he will play'.⁸⁴

The image of playing with little birds or sparrows features also in the apocryphal *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, 2, where Jesus as a child is said to play with sparrows;⁸⁵ moreover, in Arnobius⁸⁶ pagan gods are compared to whimsical "children" (*parvuli pusiones*), willing to be reconciled to those who offend them if they "get little sparrows, dolls, ponies, puppets, with which they may be able to divert themselves (*passerculos pupulos eculeos Panes*⁸⁷ *accipiunt, quibus avocare se possint*)".

A few further occurrences of *ludicra*, 'toys' that are found also in Christian poets, reinforce the impression that we are dealing with a widespread lexical item. E.g., in Prudentius the virtue of *Spes* gives a speech, after she has helped *Humilitas* kill *Superbia*: *Spes* recalls the victory of David over Goliath, who is said to have experienced "how powerful might be a little child's toy (*pueri quid possent ludicra parvi*)", that is David's sling.⁸⁸

5. OTHER LATIN WORDS FOR 'PLAYTHING'?

A search for other words that might be used to refer to 'toys' is quite a difficult task, in that it would require a thorough and in-depth examination of a huge number of texts, pertaining to different registers and dates. Therefore, I limit myself here to offer a few texts where other words *might be assumed* as referring to 'toys'. The scant results show that perhaps also *ludus* and *lusus* (not *iocus*!) might be used, but usually they were not.

Lusus is found in Livy, when he describes the "inconsistent generosity" of Antiochus Epiphanes, who enjoys "to make himself and others laughing stocks (*munificentia inaequali sese aliosque ludificari*)":

to some, men of distinction who held themselves in high esteem, he would give childish presents, as of food

ὥσπερ στρουθίων παιδίω)? The *Vulgata* (*Job*, 40.24) reads: 'Will you be able to play with him as with a sparrow, or to tie him like a sparrow to a child (*numquid inludet ei quasi avi aut ligabis illum ancillis tuis*)?.'

⁸⁴ Jerome, *Commentary on Habakkuk*, 1.6-11.

⁸⁵ See HERRERO DE JÁUREGUI (2021), 297-9.

⁸⁶ Arnobius, *The Case against the Pagans*, 7.8 (transl. G. McCracken, Newman Press).

⁸⁷ The plural of *Pan*, i.e. 'small images of Pan, puppets', meant as toys for boys and girls.

⁸⁸ Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, 295.

or toys (*puerilia, ut escae aut lusus, munera*), others, who expected nothing, he would make rich. And so he seemed to some not to know what he wanted; some said that he was playing childish tricks (*ludere*), some that he was unquestionably insane.⁸⁹

The gifts he gives to important people are described as *puerilia munera*, consisting of *escae* (“food”) or *lusus* (“toys”), both to be interpreted as genitive.

Ludus features in Ausonius and Augustine. In a passage of the *Mosella*, the sailors enjoying gazing at their own image as reflected by the crystal-clear surface of the waters are compared to a young girl who handles a mirror for the first time, and who is deceived by her own image that she sees reflected in the new toy:

But when Hyperion pours down the sun’s full heat, the crystal flood reflects sailor-shapes and throws back crooked pictures of their downward forms. [225] And as they ply their nimble strokes with the right hand and the left, and throwing their weight in turn now upon this oar, now upon that, the wave reflects a watery semblance of sailors to match them (*unda refert alios simulacra umentia nautas*). The boys themselves delight in their own counterfeits, wondering at the illusive forms which the river gives back (*ipsa suo gaudet simulamine nautica pubes, fallaces fluvio mirata redire figuras*). [230] Thus, when hoping soon to display her braided tresses – ‘tis’ when the nurse has first placed near her dear charge the wide-gleaming glory of the searching mirror (*candentem late speculi explorantis honorem*) –, delighted, the little maid enjoys the uncomprehended game, deeming she gazes on the shape of a real girl (*laeta ignorato fruitur virguncula ludo / germanaeque putat formam spectare puellae*): [235] she showers on the shining metal kisses not to be returned, or essays those firm-fixed hairpins, or puts her fingers to that brow, trying to draw out those curled locks; even so, at sight of the reflections which mock them, the lads afloat amuse themselves with shapes which waver between false and true (*talis ad umbrarum ludibria nautica pubes / ambiguus fruitur veri falsique figuris*).⁹⁰

Ignorato... ludo (l. 233) is usually rendered as ‘game’,⁹¹ whereas, most significantly, Roger Green, in his seminal commentary to Ausonius’ works, translates: “the girl delightedly plays with this unfamiliar toy”.⁹² Ancient sources bear witness to mirrors being used as toys,⁹³ and mirrors as playthings feature in Clement’s, Arnobius’ and Firmicus Maternus’ retelling of the story of Dionysos being deceived by the Titans.⁹⁴

In particular, Firmicus presents a “euhemeristic” version of the story,⁹⁵ and emphasises the role of the Titans’ playthings in enticing the young god: Juno, the evil stepmother of young *Liber*, “with a rattle and a mirror of ingenious workmanship... so beguiled the fancy of the boy (*crepundiis ac speculo adfabre facto animos... pueriles adlexit*), that he left his royal seat and let his childish desires lead him to the place of ambush”.⁹⁶ All in all, *ludus* in the *Mosella*-simile labels a mirror as being used as a toy; besides metrical aspects, Ausonius might have chosen this term owing to its ambiguity, as *ludus* is also closely connected to the semantic field of ‘deceitfulness’, which fits well with the overall theme of the passage: the deceitfulness of the images reflected by the waters of the Mosella and by the little girl’s mirror (cf. *simulacra*, l. 227; *simulamine*, l. 228; *talis ad umbrarum ludibria nautica pubes / ambiguus fruitur veri falsique figuris*, ll. 238-239).

Another possible occurrence of *ludus*, ‘toy’, is met with in Augustine, when he dwells on some blameworthy effects of his “love for games” (*amore ludendi*):

I also used to steal from my parents’ cellar and to pocket food from their table either to satisfy the demands of gluttony or to have something to give to boys who, of course loved playing a game as much as I, and he would sell me their playthings in return (*ut haberem quod darem pueris, ludum suum mihi, quo pariter utique delectabantur, tamen vendentibus*).⁹⁷

The rendering of *ludum suum* as “their playthings”⁹⁸ can be supported by the fact that Augustine mentions further below some of the toys the children have to abandon, in order to replace them with adults’ activities, that are censurable too: they move away from “nuts and balls and sparrows (*a nucibus et pilulis et passeribus*)” in order to pursue “kings, gold, estates, and slaves”.

Last, a periphrasis for ‘toy’ is found in the grammatical tradition, in two passages where the inflection of *turbo* (‘spinning top’) is concerned. Martianus Capella suggests that it be inflected like *cupido*, “if it means either ‘whirlwind’ or ‘children’s toy’ (*puerilis ludi instrumentum*)”,⁹⁹ whereas Probus remarks that *turbo*, “when it means ‘children’s toy’ (*puerilis lusus instrumentum*)”,¹⁰⁰ is inflected as a masculine noun, and then quotes the Virgilian simile of the spinning top.

89 Livy, 41.20.1.

90 Ausonius, *Mosella*, 222-239.

91 Besides the just quoted Loeb translation (by H.G. Evelyn-White), cf. e.g. PASTORINO (1971), 133: “un gioco ancora sconosciuto”; GRUBER (2013), 71: “das bisher unbekannte Spiel”. See also ThLL 7/2, 1790.51.

92 GREEN (2015).

93 See the fable by Phaedrus hinted at above, n. 24.

94 On Clement and Arnobius, see above § 3.4.

95 On Firmicus, see at least HERRERO DE JÁUREGUI (2010), 156-9.

96 Firmicus Maternus, *The Errors of Pagan Religions*, 6.2 (transl. C. Forbes).

97 Augustine, *Confessions*, 1.18.30 (transl. H. Chadwick, OUP).

98 A question arises here: is the plural *ludi* being avoided by Augustine owing to its connection with ‘public games’? why does he not use *ludicra* in this context instead?

99 Martianus Capella, *On the Marriage of Philology and Mercury*, 3.292 (transl. mine).

100 Probus, *Excerpta de nomine*, 210 (transl. mine).

CONCLUSION

After this bird's-eye view, some general point can be made. The semantic field covered by *ludo*, *-ere* (and its derivatives) in Latin is quite wide, both in synchrony and in diachrony: accordingly, *ludicrum* never specializes as meaning '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 as meaning 'toy'. *Ludicrum*, 'toy', appears for the first time in Catullus, but in all probability, it was common even before him, as *ludere* has been the verb of choice for children's play since Plautus and continues until late Antiquity. *Ludicrum* is usually associated with both human and divine children; when adults are said to be children playing with *ludicra*, a negative overtone is always implied, as they are allegedly engaging in an activity which does not become them. We can definitely say that the paucity of occurrences of this general ludonym is easily accounted for when we think that our sources are mainly literary texts, produced within a culture which shows little or no interest in daily life (household, women, children), as it is prominently adult-oriented.

In sum, when ancient play is concerned, ludonyms, just like material toys,¹⁰¹ are often hard to interpret, and most of the time contextual evidence proves to be crucial.

ABBREVIATIONS

DELL = ERNOUT, Alfred, MEILLET, Antoine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine*, Paris (2001).

LEW = WALDE, Alois, HOFMANN, Johann B., *Lateinisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg (1938).

OF = KERN, Otto, *Orphicorum Fragmenta*, Berolini (1922).

SH = LLOYD-JONES, Hugh, PARSONS, Peter, *Supplementum Hellenisticum*, Berolini/Novi Eboraci (1983).

SVF = VON ARNIM, Hans, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, Berlin/New York (2010 = 1903-1905).

ThL = *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, Lipsiae, Berlin/Boston (1900-).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ADAMS, James N., *Social Variation and the Latin Language*, Cambridge (2013).

BOCCIOLINI PALAGI, Laura, *La trottola di Dioniso. Motivi dionisiaci nel VII libro dell'Eneide*, Bologna (2007).

BOUTON-TOUBOULIC, Isabelle, "Jeux littéraires et performances poétiques dans les *Dialogues de Cassiciacum* d'Augustin", in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (dir.), *Dossier Bons ou mauvais jeux ? Pratiques ludiques et sociabilités*, *Pallas*, 114 (2020), 69-84.

¹⁰¹ On toys, see HARLOW (2013).

CARÈ, Barbara, "L'astragale réexaminé. Jeu, rites et violence dans l'Antiquité classique", in Véronique Dasen, Typhaine Haziza (eds), *Violence et jeu, de l'Antiquité à nos jours*, Caen, in press.

CASEVITZ, Michel, "Les noms du jeu et du jouet en grec", *Kentron*, 34 (2018), 51-60.

CHADWICK, Henry (tr.), Augustine, *Confessions*, Oxford (2008).

CHAHOU, Anna, "Language and Style", in Ian Du Quesnay, Tony Woodman (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Catullus*, Cambridge (2021), 116-142.

CITRONI MARCHETTI, Sandra, "I giochi della natura e gli oggetti del lusso in Orazio, *Epistole* 1, 6, 5-8", *Materiali e discussioni*, 38 (1997), 203-213.

DASEN, Véronique, "La royauté de l'enfant. À propos d'Héraclite et de pratiques ludiques enfantines en Grèce ancienne", in Véronique Dasen, David Bouvier (eds), *Héraclite : le temps est un enfant qui joue*, *Jeu/Play/Spiel* 1, Liège (2020), 97-123.

FEDELI, Paolo, Q. Orazio Flacco, *Le opere*, II.4: *Le epistole. L'arte poetica. Commento*, Roma (1997).

FEENEY, Denis, "Catullus 61: epithalamium and Comparison", *The Cambridge Classical Journal*, 59 (2013), 70-97.

FERRUA, Antonio, BUSIA, Maria, *Tavole lusorie epigrafiche*, Città del Vaticano/Tivoli (2001).

FLORIDI, Lucia, "Edile, *Scilla* (SH 456)", *Incontri triestini di filologia classica*, 18 (2018-2019), 151-172.

FORBES, Clarence E. (tr.), Firmicus Maternus, *The Errors of the Pagan Religions*, New York (1970).

FREMANTLE, William H. (tr.), Saint Jerome, *To Pammachius Against John of Jerusalem*, Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, New York (1893).

FORDYCE, Christian J., *Catullus. A Commentary*, Oxford (1978 = 1961).

GAILLARD-SEUX, Patricia, "Jeux d'adultes et jeux d'enfants dans l'*Histoire Auguste*", *Pallas*, 114 (2020), 207-230.

GIBB, John, INNES, James (tr.), Saint Augustine, *Homilies on the Gospel of John; Homilies on the First Epistle of John; Soliloquies*, Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, New York (1888).

GREEN, Roger P.H. (ed.), *The Works of Ausonius*, Oxford (2015); DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780198144632.book.1 (the original work was published in 1991).

- GRUBER, Joachim, *D. Magnus Ausonius, 'Mosella': Kritische Ausgabe, Übersetzung, Kommentar*, Berlin/Boston (2013).
- HARLOW, Mary, "Toys, Dolls, and Material Culture of Children", in Judith Evans Grubbs, Tim Parkin (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Childhood and Education in the Classical World*, Oxford (2013), 322-340.
- HEINZE, Richard, Q. Horatius Flaccus, *Briefe*. Erklärt von Adolf KIESSLING, Berlin (1914).
- HERRERO DE JÁUREGUI, Miguel, *Orphism and Christianity in Late Antiquity*, Sozomena 7, Berlin/New York (2010).
- HERRERO DE JÁUREGUI, Miguel, "Early Christian Attitudes to Child Playing", in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (eds), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity. Definition, Transmission, Reception – Jouer dans l'Antiquité Classique. Définition, Transmission, Réception*, Jeu/Play/Spiel 2, Liège (2021), 283-299.
- HOWARD, George E., "The Twelve Prophets", in Albert Pietersma, Benjamin G. Wright (eds), *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, Oxford (2007), 777-819.
- HUNINK, Vincent, Apuleius of Madauros, *Pro se de magia*, 2: *Commentary*, Amsterdam (1997).
- KING, Peter (tr.), Augustine, *Against the Academicians and the Teacher*, Indianapolis - Cambridge (1995).
- KROLL, Wilhelm, *C. Valerius Catullus*, Stuttgart (1989).
- LEUMANN, Manu, *Lateinische Laut- und Formenlehre*, München (1977 = 1928).
- LEVANIOUK, Olga, "The Toys of Dionysos", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 103 (2007), 165-202.
- MCCRACKEN, George E. (tr.), Arnobius of Sicca, *The Case against the Pagans*, Westminister, MA (1947).
- MARCHESI, Concetto, *Apulei Platonici Madaurensis De magia liber*, Città di Castello (1914).
- MASSA, Francesco, "Des dieux qui jouent : polémiques religieuses autour du fr. 52 D.-K. d'Héraclite dans l'Empire romain", in Véronique Dasen, David Bouvier (eds), *Héraclite : le temps est un enfant qui joue*, Jeu/Play/Spiel 1, Liège (2020), 27-46.
- NOBILI, Cecilia, "Il gioco nell'Inno omerico a Hermes", in Chiara Torre, Claudia Lambrugo (eds), *Il gioco e i giochi nel mondo antico. Tra cultura materiale e immateriale*, Bari (2013), 155-160.
- NUTI, Andrea, *Ludus e iocus. Percorsi di ludicità nella lingua latina*, Roma (1998).
- NUTI, Andrea, "Sui termini indicanti 'gioco' e 'giocare' nelle lingue indoeuropee. Una panoramica", in Chiara Torre, Claudia Lambrugo (eds), *Il gioco e i giochi nel mondo antico. Tra cultura materiale e immateriale*, Bari (2013), 53-70.
- PASTORINO, Agostino, *Opere di Decimo Magno Ausonio*, Torino (1971).
- SCALA, Andrea, "Considerazioni su attività ludica e linguaggio: giochi con le parole e parole per i giochi (ludonimi)", in Chiara Torre, Claudia Lambrugo (eds), *Il gioco e i giochi nel mondo antico. Tra cultura materiale e immateriale*, Bari (2013), 161-167.
- SCHNEIDER, Pierre (ed), Dossier *Perles et écaille*, *Topoi*, 22, 1 (2018), 11-179.
- SELDESCHLACHTS, Herman, "Notes d'étymologie latine", in Lambert Isebaert, *Miscellanea linguistica Graeco-Latina*, Namur (1993), 209-217.
- SKUTSCH, Otto, *The Annals of Quintus Ennius*, Oxford (1985).
- TORTORELLI GHIDINI, Marisa, *I giocattoli di Dioniso tra mito e rituale*, in Marisa Tortorelli Ghidini, Alfredina Storch Marino, Amedeo Visconti (eds), *Tra Orfeo e Pitagora. Origini e incontri di culture nell'antichità*, Napoli (2000), 255-63.
- TRINQUIER, Jean, "De la tortue marine à l'écaille : un matériau 'indien' ", in Dossier *Perles et écaille*, *Topoi*, 22, 1 (2018), 15-124.



Claudia Zichi

Uppsala University
claudia.zichi@lingfil.uu.se

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

Ravi dans une sorte de rêve, il souriait, puis il revint vers la dame en se hâtant et, comme il marchait plus vite qu'il n'en avait l'habitude, ses deux épaules oscillaient de droite et de gauche ridiculement, et il avait l'air tant il s'y abandonnait entièrement en n'ayant plus souci du reste, d'être le jouet inerte et mécanique du bonheur.
(M. Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, tome 1, Paris, 1919).

INTRODUCTION

In Proust's masterpiece, Monsieur Legrandin smiles of joy, his shoulder oscillates, and he is said to be "the lifeless wire-pulled puppet of his own happiness." He is, that is, moved by an inner emotion. This paper aims to look at the metaphorical meaning of the puppet in *Laws* book 1¹ in order to shed light on the operating force behind the marionette and the role played by the so-called 'helpers' in the prevailing of the string of λογισμός.

The first reference to marionette in Greek Literature appears to be in the second book of Herodotus' *Histories*:²

Τὴν δὲ ἄλλην ἀνάγουσι ὀρθὴν τῷ Διονύσῳ οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι πλὴν χορῶν κατὰ ταῦτα σχεδὸν πάντα Ἑλλήσι. Ἀντὶ δὲ φαλλῶν ἄλλα σφί ἐστι ἐξευρημένα, ὅσον **τε πηχυαῖα ἀγάλματα νευρόσπαστα**, τὰ περιφορέουσι κατὰ κόμας γυναῖκες, νεῦον τὸ αἰδοῖον, οὐ πολλῶ τεῶ ἔλασσον ἐὼν τοῦ ἄλλου σώματος· προηγέεται δὲ αὐλός, αἱ δὲ ἔπονται ἀείδουσαι τὸν Διόνυσον.

The rest of the festival of Dionysus is observed by the Egyptians much as it is by the Greeks, except for the dances; but in place of the phallus, they have invented the use of **images two feet high pulled by strings**, the male member nodding and nearly as big as the rest of the body, which are carried about the villages by

women; a reed-pipe leads the way, and the women follow behind singing of Dionysus.

Here the standard expression for marionette is τὰ ἀγάλματα νευρόσπαστα, "images pulled by strings".³ Herodotus is talking about Egyptian religious rituals in honour of Dionysus: male figures were carried and their *phalloi* were operated with a cord. Still, referring to the same object, i.e. operated by cords, both in *Republic* and *Laws* Plato talks of θαύματα, 'marvels', or 'prodigies'. Given the occurrence of the word in metaphorical contexts⁴ it is not easy to determine its technical characteristics. Aristoteles speaks of τὰ αὐτόματα as a subcategory of such θαύματα.⁵ Here it is a question of quite complicated mechanical systems, whose coordinated operation suggests an automaton and could evoke wonder in those 'who do not know the cause'.⁶ From a passage in Apuleius' *De Mundo*,⁷ we understand that these puppets drawn by threads, *neuróspasta*, could move their necks, eyes and hands when pulled by a string. Apuleius also mentions the possibility of nodding the head:

³ On marionettes as νευρόσπαστα, see HERZOG-HANSER (1936), SCHRÖDER (1983).

⁴ *Republic*, 514b; *Laws*, 2.644d 7-e 4.

⁵ Cf. "Automatic marvels": Aristoteles, *Metaphysics*. A.3 983 a14, *On the Generation of Animals*, 2.1, 734 b10, 2.5, 741b7-8; cf. *On the Motion of Animals* 7.701b2-10.

⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1.3, 983a 14; GALLUZZO (forthcoming).

⁷ Apuleius, *On the Cosmos*, 27.

¹ Plato, *Laws*, 2.644d6-645b1.

² Herodotus, *Histories*, 2.48.2 (transl. A. D. Godley, Loeb).

etiam illi, qui in ligneolis hominum figuris gestus movent, quando filum membri, quod agitari volent, traxerint, torquebitur cervix, nutabit caput, oculi vibrabunt, manus<que> ad[que]⁸ ministerium praesto erunt nec invenuste totus videbitur vivere.

Even people who work with wooden puppets, when they pull the string of the limb which they want to move, the neck turns, the head nods, the eyes swivel, the hands will be ready to help, and the whole has the appearance of graceful life.⁹

Such puppets, however, are standardly referred to as wooden. Even though there is significant evidence of the existence of terracotta marionettes, the subject is still little studied.¹⁰ Maya Muratov has pointed out how these articulated figurines not only reflect local artistic phenomena, but also “seem to provide a unique source of information on popular religious beliefs and rituals over a wide chronological and geographical range.”¹¹ Moreover, M. Muratov shows how these terracotta figurines with articulated limbs should not only be interpreted as childish playthings but also as important aspects of religious rituals and processions, as is confirmed by the passage from Herodotus mentioned above.¹² The same conclusion, that string-operated figures are not always to be regarded as childish playthings, is reached by Nicholas Reeve on his study on a small wooden Egyptian statuette representing a woman wearing nothing but a heavy, shoulder-length wig preserved in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.¹³

1. THE PUPPET AS METAPHOR OF THE SOUL

Now, the idea of human helplessness that is evoked by the marionette brings us back to ‘the lifeless wire-pulled puppet’ in Proust’s work, and, most importantly for the questions raised in this paper, to the use of the metaphor in Plato’s work.¹⁴

In the allegory of the cave, in *Republic* book 7, Socrates is talking about prisoners chained in a cave who can only see shadows of the real objects. To illustrate this image, Socrates refers to puppeteers (θαυματοποιοί) holding their puppets above a screen: the puppets are the real objects, but the the prisoners can only see their shadows projected on the wall in front of them:

ἐν ταύτῃ ἐκ παίδων ὄντας ἐν δεσμοῖς καὶ τὰ σκέλη καὶ τοὺς αὐχένας, ὥστε μένειν τε αὐτοὺς εἷς τε τὸ

πρόσθεν μόνον ὁρᾶν, κύκλῳ δὲ τὰς κεφαλὰς ὑπὸ τοῦ δεσμοῦ ἀδυνάτους περιάγειν, φῶς δὲ αὐτοῖς πυρὸς ἄνωθεν καὶ πόρρωθεν καόμενον ὀπισθεν αὐτῶν, μεταξύ δὲ τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ τῶν δεσμοτῶν ἐπάνω ὁδόν, παρ’ ἣν ἰδὲ τειχίον παρῳκοδομημένον, ὥσπερ τοῖς θαυματοποιοῖς πρὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων πρόκειται τὰ παραφράγματα, ὑπὲρ ὧν τὰ θαύματα δεικνύουσιν.

They have been there since childhood, with their necks and legs fettered, so that they are fixed in the same place, able to see only in front of them, because their fetter prevents them from turning their heads around. Light is provided by a fire burning far above and behind them. Between the prisoners and the fire, there is an elevated road stretching. **Imagine that along this road a low wall has been built— like the screen in front of people that is provided by puppeteers, and above which they show their puppets.**¹⁵

In this case, the puppeteers are the operating force behind the movements of the puppet. There is an external agency, and, remarkably, the puppet is here used in its concrete sense to explain Socrates’ philosophical image. In *Laws*, the question on the agency of the puppet (θαῦμα) becomes more complicated.

In *Laws* book 1 (644d-645b) the Athenian presents the adult soul as a puppet that is dragged in opposite directions. The educated man should always follow the “guidance (ἀγωγή) that comes from the golden and sacred guidance of calculation (λογισμός).” The golden string of calculation “calls in aid the public law of the city” (τῆς πόλεως κοινὸν νόμον ἐπικαλουμένην) and is pliant, while the others are made of iron and are rigid.¹⁶ Furthermore, this “golden” string is “gentle and non-violent”, and therefore it needs “helpers” in order to prevail over the other strings.¹⁷

Περὶ δὴ τούτων διανοηθῶμεν οὕτως. **θαῦμα** μὲν ἕκαστον ἡμῶν ἡγησώμεθα τῶν ζώων θεῖον, εἴτε ὡς **παίγνιον** ἐκείνων εἴτε ὡς σπουδῇ τινι συνεστηκός· οὐ γὰρ δὴ τοῦτό γε γινώσκουμεν, τόδε δὲ ἴσμεν, ὅτι ταῦτα τὰ πάθη ἐν ἡμῖν οἷον νεῦρα ἢ σμήρινθοι τινες ἐνοῦσαι σπῶσιν τε ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀλλήλαις ἀνθέλκουσιν ἐναντία οὔσαι ἐπ’ ἐναντίας πράξεις, οὐ δὴ διωρισμένη ἀρετὴ καὶ κακία κεῖται. μῖα γάρ φησιν ὁ λόγος δεῖν τῶν ἔλξεων συνεπόμενον αἰεὶ καὶ μηδαμῇ ἀπολειπόμενον ἐκείνης, ἀνθέλκειν τοῖς ἄλλοις νεύροις ἕκαστον,

8 I follow the conjecture by MAGNALDI (2020); the MSS (BNPLU) have *manus atque*.

9 Apuleius, *On the Cosmos*, 27 (transl. G. Boys-Stones, <http://individual.utoronto.ca/gbs/demundo/texts.html>).

10 Cf. LAMBRUGO (2019), 48-49.

11 MURATOV (2019), 401.

12 MURATOV (2019), 401-432.

13 REEVE (2020), 48-49.

14 The metaphor evokes the same idea in Horace, *Satires*, 2.7.82, and Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, 14.1.23.

15 Plato, *Republic*, 7.514b5-11 (transl. C. D. C. Reeve, Hackett Publishing Company).

16 Plato, *Laws*, 1.644e-645a. The opposition between gold and iron strings recalls Hesiod, *Works and Days*. 109 (also cited at *Republic* 3.415a with reference to the myth of metallic races). Cf. FERRARI (2005), 145, and BRISSON-PRADEAU (2006), n. 56, 244. Moreover, as pointed out to me by Andrea Capra there might be here a meta-ludic pun on the term λογισμός (*calculation*) which is a quintessentially rationalistic term and λυγισμός (*bending, twisting*) which refers to the playful image of the bending puppet.

17 Plato, *Laws*, 1.644d-645b1 (transl. T. Griffith, Cambridge texts in the history of political thought).

ταύτην δ' εἶναι τὴν τοῦ λογισμοῦ ἀγωγὴν χρυσὴν καὶ ἱερὰν, τῆς πόλεως κοινὸν νόμον ἐπικαλουμένην, ἄλλας δὲ σκληρὰς καὶ σιδηρὰς, τὴν δὲ μαλακὴν ἄτε χρυσὴν οὖσαν, τὰς δὲ ἄλλας παντοδαποῖς εἶδεσιν ὁμοίας. δεῖν δὴ τῇ καλλίστῃ ἀγωγῇ τῇ τοῦ νόμου ἀεὶ συλλαμβάνειν· ἄτε γὰρ τοῦ λογισμοῦ καλοῦ μὲν ὄντος, πράξου δὲ καὶ οὐ βιαίου, δεῖσθαι ὑπηρετῶν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀγωγὴν, ὅπως ἂν ἐν ἡμῖν τὸ χρυσοῦν γένος νικᾷ τὰ ἄλλα γένη.

Let's think about it like this. Let's figure each of us living creatures as a **puppet** put together by the gods as a **toy** or for some serious reason – that being something we don't know. What we do know is that these feelings we have are like tendons or strings inside us, drawing us but pulling in opposite actions, and in fact the demarcation line between human goodness and badness lies here. According to this account, there is one of the pulls which each of us must always follow, never letting go of that string, and resisting the other tendons; this is the golden and sacred **guidance of calculation (τοῦ λογισμοῦ ἀγωγή)**, which calls in aid the **public law of the city**; the other strings are hard, as if made of iron – where this one is pliant, being made of gold – and resembling various kind of things;¹⁸ and we must always cooperate with the finest pull, which is from the law, since calculation, fine as it is, is also gentle and non-violent, and therefore **its leading needs helpers**, to make sure the golden type of string within us prevails over the other types.¹⁹

This is one of the most well-known passages in Plato's *corpus*, and one that lies at the bottom of Plato's psychology of the soul in the *Laws* and, as I argue, his view of education.²⁰ I do not intend to advance

any interpretation on the possible reference to the tripartite theory of soul expressed in the *Republic*.²¹ Rather, the focus of the present paper is on the link between the psychological outline of the soul and the Athenian's account of education in Books 2 and 7 of the *Laws*. First, it is necessary to look at some key terms of the passage:

θαῦμα. I follow Klaus Schöpsdau and Dorothea Frede in not taking θαῦμα as a puppet controlled from the outside, but rather as an image that emphasizes the complexity of the soul's inner forces. The term θαῦμα “wonder, puppet”,²² according to the description of the Athenian, appears to designate a marionette toy that is moved by wires and cords.²³ Scholarly readings of the passage have often emphasised Plato's pessimistic view on the human soul, which – at face value – appears to be described as a toy created by the gods, with no capacity of free will.²⁴ However, this reading is challenged when one considers the pulling cords as internal to the human soul (τὰ πάθη ἐν ἡμῖν οἷον νεῦρα ἢ σμήρινθοί τινες) and not as external forces manoeuvring the soul from above. Christopher Bobonich, who is concerned with the idea of psychological agency in the *Laws*, claims that the strings that pull the puppet in different directions do not represent parts of the soul (as in the *Republic*), but different mental states – opinions, desires, and emotions – and that it is the soul, functioning as a single, indivisible agent, that has to decide what prevails.²⁵ While he claims that “the person seems to be nothing more than the passive container of affections that pull against one another, or the passive spectator of these pulling forces”, at the same time he also admits that in those cases when reason actually controls the other impulses (by being the strongest) we must accept that “we can pull

18 I follow ENGLAND'S (1921), 256-257 and SAUVÉ MEYER'S (2012), 182 interpretation that the text implies that the string of virtue is one (cf. μίᾱ in emphatic position), and also characterized by immutability and harmony, while the opposite strings are characterized by dissimilarity in forms. Cf. also SCHÖPSDAU (1994), 238, according to which τὰς δὲ ἄλλας παντοδαποῖς εἶδεσιν ὁμοίας symbolises the many forms and shapes of pleasure (*Philebus* 12c-d) in contrast to the uniformity and unchangeability of reason (*Philebus* 59c-d). Still, the softness of the golden string seems to suggest that reason can find ways to manipulate – and control – pleasures and pains; cf. ANNAS (1999), 143.

19 For the idea that Plato here has in mind Homer's picture of Zeus, at one end of the golden rope, successfully resisting the other gods and goddesses at the other, see ENGLAND (1921), 256. For the symbology of gold as a sign of excellence strictly linked to the poetic tradition, see JOUËT-PASTRÉ (2006), 40-41.

20 The puppet image has long been studied in isolation, that is, with no connection to the broader cultural framework of the *Laws*: RANKIN (1962); SPRAGUE (1984). A different approach is, however, found in BELFIORE (1986) 425; LAKS (1990), (2000), (2005); SCHÖPSDAU (1994-2003), *ad loc.* I.231-6; BOBONICH (2002), 260-7; JOUËT-PASTRÉ (2006), 38-54; SASSI (2008); FREDE (2010), who examines the broader philosophical implications of the puppet image. SAUVÉ-MEYER (2015) and (2018) offers a broad interpretation of the passage and argues that there are two distinct and irreconcilable competing models of virtue in books 1 and 2 of the *Laws*. One, which she calls the conflict-model, is introduced by Clinias and exemplified by the victory of the golden cord in the puppet image. The other, the harmony model, which receives its fullest articulation at the beginning of book 2 where the Athenian describes virtue as the 'agreement' (*sumphōnia*) between one's reason and one's pleasures and pains (2.653a5-c4). Contrary to

this reading, the present paper argues that the 'agreement' between the strings, thanks to the prevailing of a rational deliberation, is already suggested and evoked in the puppet-image.

21 BOBONICH (2002), 261-4 sees in the passage not a discussion of parts of the soul but rather impulses from a unitary agent. For a discussion of and responses to Bobonich's claim, see SAUVÉ MEYER (2015), 172-173. For Plato's conception of the tripartite structure of the soul and the notion of the soul's immortality and divinity as strictly linked with Plato's treatment of the self and his treatment of the city, see SASSI (2008), 10-24, and for the description of negative emotions as parallels to the earlier tripartition of the soul of the *Republic*, cf. PFEFFERKORN (2020), 252-269.

22 Cf. 2.658c1.

23 FREDE (2010), 116 is the only one among translators, editors, and commentators, to suggest that θαῦματα should not be read as puppets plainly manipulated by the gods, but rather as wind-up automata. For a different opinion on the rendering of the term, see SCHOFIELD (2016), 136, according to whom the focus of the problem here is on the strings that draw us not on what initially activates them. Still, I advocate that whether the force is internal or external to the artifact lies at the heart of the Athenian's view on education.

24 According to SASSI (2008), 130, the controversial image of the man-puppet represents the internal tension, constitutive of human nature, between the superior impulse of reason and the confused multiplicity of emotional drives.

25 BOBONICH (1994), 3-36.

our own wires”.²⁶ If this claim is correct, it follows that the image of the puppet, rather than a plaything subject to external forces, sketches inner impulses that need to be stirred so that the cord of reason will prevail. From this perspective, K. Schöpsdau sees the “plaything of the gods” as referring to the divine part (“the immortal part”) that is innate in us, and which, if correctly trained and developed in the social and personal life,²⁷ will bring us closer to the divine realm.²⁸ There is, that is, a human way for granting the golden string of reason success over the other forces, thus bringing the individual closer to the gods.²⁹

λογισμός. Λογισμός is generally translated by commentators as ‘calculation,’ with reference to its first mention at 644d2, where the term indicates the process of rationally deliberating over what is better and worse among the feelings of ‘fear’ (φόβος) and ‘confidence’ (θάρος) in relation to one’s expectations (ἐλπίς) of the future.³⁰ C. Bobonich interprets λογισμός as “practical deliberation” that delivers ‘all things considered’ judgements about what is ‘good or bad for the person in the long run.’³¹ Now, if λογισμός is first intended here as an abstract power of judgement, it might be logical that a few lines later, in the marionette-image, the primary quality of the *guidance of calculation* is that of leading the soul towards the most correct deliberation and should therefore not be taken as a concrete force opposed to pleasures and pains.³² Such guidance (ἀγωγή)³³ is

gentle and non-violent, and it needs ‘helpers’ to prevail over the other pulls. The expression ‘prevailing over the other pulls’ (ὅπως ἂν ἐν ἡμῖν τὸ χρυσοῦν γένος νικᾷ τὰ ἄλλα γένη) is read by Susan Sauvé Meyer as indicating an internal psychological conflict, where λογισμός is the weakest party. Still, other qualities of λογισμός might in fact lead to a different interpretation, and to consider ‘calculation’ as something other than a concrete pulling force.³⁴ Recent commentators propose (a) that ‘victory’ of the golden string is to be read as the golden string giving direction and content to the other strings, thus shaping them,³⁵ (b) that the implication of becoming ‘master over oneself’ implies the ability to harmonise the differences between pleasure and pain and reason,³⁶ and finally (c) that λογισμός encourage the following of certain rational principles but does not concretely pull the agent towards any specific direction.³⁷

Following this line of reading, I propose that what the Athenian has in mind is the pursuing of an agreement between feelings and reason, which will make the subjection or the victory of one over the other unnecessary. Through the puppet image the Athenian aims to clarify to Cleinias and Megillus the implications of the claim he makes at 644b that “good people are those who are able to rule themselves, while the bad ones those unable to do so” (ἀγαθῶν μὲν ὄντων τῶν δυναμένων ἄρχειν αὐτῶν, κακῶν δὲ τῶν μὴ, 1.644b6-7). A few lines later he states that each of us has within ourselves two opposite advisors: pleasure and pain (δύο δὲ κεκτημένον ἐν αὐτῷ συμβούλω ἐναντίω τε καὶ ἄφρονε, ὧ προσαγορεύομεν ἡδονὴν καὶ λύπην (1.644c6-7). Thus, the first and real opposition appears to be between these two, and ‘calculation’ (λογισμός) is the ‘adjudicator’ called to deliberate regarding which of them is better and worse (1.644c9-d2). This first definition of self-mastery then does not necessarily imply that rational deliberation stands in opposition to the other passions, such as pleasure and pain. Rather, the most important point here, I would argue, is that pleasure and pain need to be evaluated by a correct reasoning. In the puppet image (1.644d6-645b1) the golden and

26 BOBONICH (2002), 266.

27 Cf. 4.713e8-714a2.

28 SCHÖPSDAU (1994), 234-235.

29 For the differences between marionette and automated machines cf. DUNAND (2018) and MAYOR (2018), 179-213, as well as T. BURR’s contribution in the present volume.

30 Cf. 644d2: ἐπὶ δὲ πᾶσι τοῦτοις λογισμός ὅτι ποτ’ αὐτῶν ἄμεινον ἢ χεῖρον, “presiding over all this – deciding which of them is better or worse – is calculation”. The rendering of ἐπὶ δὲ πᾶσι is not entirely agreed among scholars: T. Griffith has “presiding over all these” (cf. Budé: “par-dessus tout”, Pangle: “over all these”), while S. SAUVÉ MEYER (2015) has “against all these” perhaps anticipating her interpretation of the role of ‘calculation’, in the coming marionette-passage, as pulling against other forces. Still, as observed by SCHOFIELD (2016), 9 ‘deciding which of them [pain, pleasure, etc.] is better or worse’ does not suggest that its role is primarily one of opposition. Schöpsdau has ‘zu diesen allen kommt noch die vernünftige Überlegung’, however, not in the sense of ‘über diesen’ (scil. ‘steht als Herrscher’) but rather in the sense of ‘neben diesen’, i.e. as a mere addition to the passions. Still, the objection of SCHÖPSDAU (1993), 236 that λογισμός needs help to achieve authority over the passions does not deny the fact that also in the present passage the function of λογισμός is to rationally ‘calculate’ and make the best judgement.

31 BOBONICH (2002), 263-7.

32 Contra SAUVÉ MEYER (2012), according to whom *logismos* is “a force pulling at us like pleasure and pain”, which constitutes one of her main arguments in arguing for a ‘conflict model’ in the puppet image. Contra Sauvé Meyer, see also SCHOFIELD (2016), according to which victory over oneself is a matter of a person ‘translat[ing] into action the deliberations he has himself engaged in’ (2016), 146-148.

33 The term ἀγωγή (1.645a1-7) is used in reference to the non-rational pull of appetites and emotions in *Republic*, 604b1; *Phaedrus*, 238c3, cf. SAUVÉ MEYER (2015), 105.

34 However, I do not agree with England’s proposal of interpreting the ‘golden agōgē of calculation’ in the present passage as education (*paideia*) invoked at 2.659d2, in that, as correctly observed by Sauvé Meyer, education is a matter of shaping a person’s ‘pleasures and pains’ to agree with a correct *logos* (cf. 2.653a-c, 2.659d). In this sense, I argue that λογισμός is not to be intended as education, but rather that education is the helper that ‘feeds’ calculation.

35 FREDE (2010), 217-20; ANNAS (1999), 142-4.

36 JOUËT-PASTRÉ (2006), 42: “L’homme doit donc sans cesse essayer de devenir maître de lui-même en harmonisant les mouvements de la marionnette qu’il est. La victoire sur soi est l’établissement d’une harmonie et d’un accord entre ses affects et le *logismos*”. Still, Emmanuelle Jouët-Pastré also notes that the strings are not broken (scil. by the just law) but rather tamed and subordinated to the golden string (42), thus implying a conflict between the two. The present reading attempts to show that the aim is in reality the harmony between them.

37 WILBURN (2012), 32-3.

gentle pull of calculation will use not force and threat but persuasion when deliberating what is best for the soul. The power of effective persuasion given by the gentleness of the pull – which stands in contrast to the hardness and inflexibility of the iron pulls, and which can thus also manage and manipulate them – is what situates calculation above the struggle.³⁸ In this sense, the flexibility of calculation also explains why λογισμός ‘calls in aid the public law of the city’ (ταύτην δ’ εἶναι τὴν τοῦ λογισμοῦ ἀγωγὴν χρυσὴν καὶ ἱερὰν, τῆς πόλεως κοινὸν νόμον ἐπικαλουμένην, 1.645a2). Most translators prior to Tom Griffith take τῆς πόλεως κοινὸν νόμον ἐπικαλουμένην to mean “which is called the law of the city” because of the passage at 1.644d1–3, where the Athenian states that when the reasonable consideration (λογισμός) is accepted as a δόγμα κοινόν (*a common belief*) of the city it is called ‘law’ (νόμος ἐπωνόμασται).³⁹ However, in the puppet image, the golden string of calculation hints at a process of reasonable deliberation within the human soul, and therefore it cannot be something fixed “which is called common law of the city”. As Andrea Nightingale proposes, the participle ἐπικαλουμένην might be intended here in its more common middle voice usage: ‘calling in aid’.⁴⁰ The idea thus suggested is that the reasonable consideration that takes place in the human soul will benefit from the help of the law, that same law, which, few lines earlier, had been defined as *common belief of the city* (1.644d3).⁴¹ The law of the city – which is going to be based on a renovated programme of choral education – will function as an ‘ally’ to the pull of calculation/reasoning, since it will help inform and plant the seed for the most correct rational upbringing. In this perspective, the ‘gentle’ golden string of calculation – which should be trained to be able to judge, in all men, what is best – does not only

require the aid of the law, but – being as it is gentle and non-violent – it also needs helper(s) (ὑπερέτης, 1.645a6) to succeed and prevail.⁴²

2. THE ‘HELPER’ MANOEUVRING THE PUPPET

The nature of the “helpers” or the quality of the assistance of the λογισμός is not further elaborated.⁴³ I will argue that what the Athenian defines as ‘helpers’ of calculation is the necessity for the young to develop the correct perception of what is right and wrong, in other words, a correct education. Through the upbringing of the soul of the child in the correct perception of pleasure and pain, “education” is what leads the young to the λόγον ἀληθῆ (645b4) that has to be proclaimed by law.⁴⁴

Education in Book 2 is considered to be the training that encourages citizens from the beginning to the very end “to hate what they should hate and love what they should love”:⁴⁵

Λέγω τοίνυν τῶν παίδων παιδικὴν εἶναι πρώτην αἰσθησιν ἡδονὴν καὶ λύπην, καὶ ἐν οἷς ἀρετὴ ψυχῇ καὶ κακία παραγίγνεται πρότον, ταῦτ’ εἶναι, φρόνησιν δὲ καὶ ἀληθείας δόξας βεβαίους εὐτυχὲς ὅτω καὶ πρὸς τὸ γῆρας παρεγένετο· τέλος δ’ οὖν ἔστ’ ἄνθρωπος ταῦτα καὶ τὰ ἐν τούτοις πάντα κεκτημένος ἀγαθὰ. **παιδεῖαν δὴ λέγω τὴν παραγιγνομένην πρότον παισὶν ἀρετὴν**· ἡδονὴ δὴ καὶ φιλία καὶ λύπη καὶ μῖσος ἂν ὀρθῶς ἐν ψυχαῖς ἐγγίγνωνται μήπω δυναμένων λόγῳ λαμβάνειν, λαβόντων δὲ τὸν λόγον, **συμφωνήσωσι** τῷ λόγῳ ὀρθῶς εἰθισθαι ὑπὸ τῶν προσηκόντων ἐθῶν, αὕτη ὅθ’ ἢ **συμφωνία** σύμπασα μὲν ἀρετὴ, τὸ δὲ περὶ τὰς ἡδονὰς καὶ λύπας τεθραμμένον αὐτῆς ὀρθῶς ὥστε μισεῖν μὲν ἃ χρὴ μισεῖν εὐθὺς ἐξ ἀρχῆς μέχρι τέλους, στέργειν δὲ ἃ χρὴ στέργειν, τοῦτ’ αὐτὸ ἀποτεμὼν τῷ λόγῳ καὶ παιδεῖαν προσαγορεύων, κατὰ γε τὴν ἐμὴν ὀρθῶς ἂν προσαγορεύοις.

38 This interpretation follows that offered by ANNAS (1999), 143–44 that reason, by leading and molding other parts, allows the individual to rise above human susceptibility to pleasure and pain, “which would not of itself ever produce anything other than the winner of a battle for the strongest desire.”

39 As SCHOFIELD (2016), 141 rightly points out, the name ‘common law’ (κοινὸν νόμος 1.645a2) is an expression that never recurs in this enormous work on the subject.

40 NIGHTINGALE (1999): the verb ἐπικαλεῖν means ‘take as a surname or nickname’ when it is used in the passive while in the middle it means ‘call in as a helper or ally’; cf. also Morgan’s remark (in NIGHTINGALE (1999), 104, n. 12) that assimilation of λογισμός to νόμος is problematic, “in that the former is an intellectual activity whereas the latter is a fixed entity; the lawcode cannot really be said to do the thinking for the city.”

41 For the idea that reasoning λόγος and νόμος are strictly related, but not assimilated to each other, see SCHOFIELD (2016), 142–143, and in particular his reference to *Republic*, 10.603e–604d: “Now is it not reason and law [λόγος καὶ νόμος] that exhorts him to resist [ἀντιτείνειν], while that which urges [έλκον] him to give way to his grief [λύπας] is the bare feeling itself [αὐτὸ τὸ πάθος]?” On the same passage and on the capacity of λογισμός to evaluate better and worse irrational feelings as defined in *Republic*, 5.441b7–c2 (ἐνταῦθα γὰρ δὴ σαφῶς ὡς ἔτερον ἑτέρῳ ἐπιπλήττον πεποιήκεν Ὀμηρος τὸ ἀναλογισάμενον περὶ τοῦ βελτιονός τε καὶ χείρονος τῷ ἀλογίστως θυμουμένῳ), cf. SCHÖPSDAU (1994), 230.

42 Cf. SCHOFIELD (2016), 145 who argues that the reasonable pull of calculation is validated by ‘the communal voice of the entire city’ and implemented *by us as its helpers or servants* (my italics).

43 André Laks observes that one striking feature of the *Laws* as a text is its repeated deferral of actual legislation: LAKS (2000), 263–6 (‘postponement’); LAKS (2005) 26–30 (‘report’). As noted by SAUVÉ MEYER (2012), 183–184, the notion of ‘helping’ or ‘assisting’ calculation might recall the doctrine of the *Republic*, that the spirited part of the soul (θυμός) functions as an ally (σύμμαχος) of the λογιστικόν against the appetites (*Republic*, 5.441e–442b). Thus, S. Sauvé Meyer suggests that the audacity (θάρος) and sense of shame (αἰδώς) that enables the just citizen to resist the temptations of illicit pleasures are candidates for the ‘assistants’ mentioned here (see SAUVÉ MEYER 2012, 313–315 and note on 1.644c9–d1). NIGHTINGALE (1999), 104, KLOSKO (2006), 221, and RENAULT (2014), 304 propose that the law is the helper.

44 Education is later characterised as a pulling and guidance, thus SCHÖPSDAU, BRISSON, PRADEAU (2006), 32–3 propose that it provides the requisite assistance. SCHÖPSDAU (1994), 232 also regards the legislator as “helper” in that he defines himself as educator of citizens at 9.857e (cf. also 4.718d, 4.719e7). For the idea of every citizen being ‘helper of the law’, cf. also 5.729d7, 7.822e6–7 and especially 4.715c7, where individuals that are mostly loyal to the laws are defined as ὑπηρέτας τοῖς νόμοις, *servants of the laws*, and the very success (the well-being, σωτηρία) or failure of the state depend on them.

45 Plato, *Laws*, 2.653a5–c4.

Well, I maintain that with children, their first childish perception is pleasure and pain, and that it is in these that goodness and badness first make their appearance in the soul. As for wisdom and opinion which can be relied on, well, you're lucky if they make their appearance even in old age – certainly the person who has acquired them, and all the good things that go with them, is a complete human being. **Now education, I maintain, is this goodness as it is making its first appearance in children;** if pleasure, friendship, pain and hatred arise in the proper way in the souls of those who cannot as yet grasp the reason for them, and if, when they do grasp the reason, their feeling are consonant with that reason because they have been correctly trained by the appropriate habits, then this consonance is in general called human virtue, while the part of which has had a proper upbringing where pleasure and pain are concerned, so that, from the very beginning to the very end, they hate what they should hate and love what they should love – well, separate off this part in your account and give it the name “education” and in my opinion at least you will be giving it the right name.⁴⁶

It appears that when there is concordance (συμφωνία, 2.653b6) between reason and the senses of pleasure and pains, due to proper training, it is possible to find virtue (1.644-45 and 2.653b-c). For an action to be virtuous, that is, it must be approved by both reason and the emotions. In other words, the Athenian defines as “education” the training of the passionate, more individual⁴⁷ parts of the soul to take pleasure in those poetic compositions and artistic performances that are judged as beautiful and good in accordance with the criteria of correctness and utility that we have mentioned above. This implies that during festive and theatrical contexts, the audience should be trained (or re-trained) to delight in “the pleasurable rhythmic and harmonic perception (τὴν ἑνρυθμόν τε καὶ ἐναρμόνιον αἰσθησιν μεθ’ ἡδονῆς) of song and dance” (2.654a2-3, 2.653c-54a), and to experience the “joy” (χαρᾶς, 2.654a5) of dancing in or observing choruses (χορούς, 2.654a4), only as far as these representations imitate the inclinations and actions of virtuous people. In fact, by appreciating the performance of choral representations of virtuous action, one (re)learns to enjoy the qualities of virtue itself (2.654b-d, 2.655b).⁴⁸

46 The principle at the base of the education here laid down recalls *Republic*, 2.366c, 3.401c-402a. According to this principle, every child should feel a natural instinct that attracts him/her to the Beautiful (i.e. to the Good in a moral sense) while at the same time being filled with distaste for the Ugly (i.e. the morally Bad). This idea, which is very present in book 2 (cf. 653b-c, 654c-d, 656b, 660a) and is repeated later (3.689, 6.751d, 6.752c), is emphasized by the constant opposition in the passage between verbs indicating “love” (στέργειν, χαίρειν, ἀσπάζεσθαι) and “hate” (μισεῖν, δυσχεραίνειν).

47 SASSI (2008), 125-148.

48 For choral performances as a dimension of the human that is central

Recent studies on choral performances in the *Laws* have explored the link between the individual and the collective through the dancing rhythm. Barbara Kowalzig defines as ‘bodily social’ the physical property that allows the individuals’ rhythmic impulse to converge with that of the chorus, as if there were a transcendent force merging individual body with collective rhythmicity. In this sense, choral dance fulfils a fundamental social role in creating ties between citizens (this being, at least, the aim of the gods when offering dance as a gift to humans).⁴⁹ Leslie Kurke discusses Plato’s modelling of choral *paideia* as closely linked to the imagery of puppets on three levels: the political, the individual, and the cosmic. While great emphasis is put on the political and cosmic levels, less attention is given to the individual level.⁵⁰ At an individual level, L. Kurke interprets both συμφωνήσωσι and συμφωνία (2.653b6) as describing a choral image where the alignment and cooperation of the various parts of the soul with each other function as an interior chorus with *logos* now installed, perhaps, as ‘chorus leader’. The image of the ‘divine puppet’ whose golden string of *logismos* and the strings of the passions move together – drawn in coordination by a divine hand – is thus replaced by the image of an interior chorus: “that is to say, the puppet image and the image of an interior chorus here appear to be allomorphs of each other.”⁵¹ Although I concur with L. Kurke’s analysis that *logos* serves to move in unison, it still remains to be explained how the golden string comes to prevail and ‘tame’ the other strings, that is, how the string of *logismos* becomes the ‘chorus leader’.⁵² A definition of the helpers as fundamentally “a correct habituation and training” does not examine further the quality of the training, that is, which dances and bodily movements are to be implemented in Magnesia in order to achieve this result. I argue that at an

to the political project of the *Laws* see FOLCH (2015), 71-80.

49 KOWALZIG (2013), 171-211. Also, by linking the concept of rhythm to the collective dimension, B. Kowalzig regards the integration of individual and collective rhythmic feeling in the ‘bodily social’ as the specific element which ultimately allows the political and moral stability of society, in that it controls the communal life. See also PFEFFERKORN (2021), 335-365.

50 At a political level, KURKE (2013) emphasizes how the expression ἀλλήλοις συνείποντας (“linking us one with another”, *Laws*, 654a4) represents all the citizens responding in unison and through dance to “the golden cord of *logismos*”, which is “the common law of the city”. At a cosmic level, orderly dance movements bind citizens intimately to the structure of the universe in that they recall the structured circular movements of the heavenly bodies in the *Timaeus* (*Timaeus* 40d2-3 and 42a5-b5), see further KURKE (2013), 141.

51 KURKE (2013), 139. Kurke brilliantly points out also the linguistic elements that indicate the close relation between the puppet image and the passage on education at 653a5-c4:

52 Cf. *Laws*, 2.659d-660a, a passage that clearly refers back to 653a-c and suggests the intimate connection between the guidance of *logos* in the individual soul and that of the ‘old men’ (of the Nocturnal Council?) endorsing *nomos* within the city. Cf. LAKS (2000), 283-4, suggesting that the Nocturnal Council comes to play the role of the ‘golden cord of *logismos*’ for the city as a whole.

individual–psychological level, the imitation of “correct” dance movements has a direct influence on the golden impulse of reason.

According to 2.653a5–c4, for the golden string of calculation to prevail, the child needs to start from a young age to acquire, as a form of habit, a pre-disposition (a kind of pre-rational feeling) to certain “correct” pleasures, so that bodies and souls can become the most beautiful and best.⁵³ The advancement, by the Athenian, of a correct upbringing through gymnastics, music and dances is not only initiated by a moral necessity, but is also based on important psychological reasons. In Book 2 (653d–654a) the Athenian first argues that the body of the young is not able to remain calm, since it is in its nature to always move and cry:

φησὶν δὲ τὸ νέον ἅπαν ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν τοῖς τε σώμασι καὶ ταῖς φωναῖς ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν οὐ δύνασθαι, κινεῖσθαι δὲ αἰεὶ ζητεῖν καὶ φθέγγεσθαι, τὰ μὲν ἀλλόμενα καὶ σκιρτῶντα, οἷον ὀρχούμενα μεθ’ ἡδονῆς καὶ προσπαίζοντα, τὰ δὲ φθεγγόμενα πάσας φωνάς.

What the story says is that pretty well any young creature is incapable of keeping quiet, either physically or vocally; it has to be trying to move and make sounds all the time, now jumping and skipping (dancing for pleasure, for example, or playing games), now uttering all kinds of sound.⁵⁴

This natural incapability to stay quiet is the physical root of music and gymnastics. The gods, moved to compassion towards a species condemned to sufferance, assigned to men the Muses, Apollo and Dionysus as companions and regulators of festivals (καὶ Μούσας Ἀπόλλωνα τε μουσηγέτην καὶ Διόνυσον συνεορταστάς ἔδοσαν, ἵν’ ἐπανορθῶνται, 653d3–4).⁵⁵

3. THE ROLE OF MUSICAL EDUCATION FOR A MORALLY CORRECT UPBRINGING

In *Laws* the Athenian does not investigate in depth the causes of the restless behaviour of children. At 672b8–c6 it is made clear that humans do not possess, at birth, the amount and the degree of intelligence that they should have at an adult age; rationality (φρόνησις), although οἰκεία, “proper”, i.e. belonging by nature to the individual, needs to be developed: it needs to be fostered through correct music and

gymnastic, which are, in turn, a consequence of, and a response to, these coarse movements and cries of the child.⁵⁶

τὸ δὲ τοσόνδε οἶδα, ὅτι πᾶν ζῶον, ὅσον αὐτῷ προσήκει νοῦν ἔχειν τελεωθέντι, **τοῦτον καὶ τοσοῦτον** οὐδὲν ἔχον ποτὲ φύεται· ἐν τούτῳ δὴ τῷ χρόνῳ ἐν ᾧ μήπω κέκτηται τὴν **οἰκείαν φρόνησιν**, πᾶν μαίνεται τε καὶ βοᾷ ἀτάκτως, καὶ ὅταν **ἄκταινώσῃ**⁵⁷ ἑαυτὸ τάχιστα, ἀτάκτως αὖ πηδᾷ. ἀναμνησθῶμεν δὲ ὅτι **μουσικῆς τε καὶ γυμναστικῆς ἔφαμεν ἀρχάς** ταύτας εἶναι.

One thing I do know, however, which is that, for any living creature, fully developed, **that intelligence – that degree of intelligence** – is never something it is born with. And during the time when it has not yet attained its **own level of understanding**, any creature will rush around like a mad thing, uttering wild cries and – **the minute it can get itself up** – giving wild leaps. Let us not forget that it is these cries and leaps which we described as **the origin of music and gymnastic**.⁵⁸

The creation of music and gymnastics is a natural consequence of the cries and leaps of the child.⁵⁹ What is more, music as well as gymnastics are meant, as the child grows, to shape the still undeveloped rational part, νοῦς, and bring it to full development. Now, this intellectual growth occurs thanks to the gods, who, taking pity on us, have given to humans the perception of rhythm and dance: the ability to perceive rhythm and harmony allows for a transformation from disorder (ἀτάκτως, 2.664e6, 672c4) to a reasoned order (τάξις, 2.664e–665a).⁶⁰

Εἴπομεν, εἰ μεμνήμεθα, κατ’ ἀρχὰς τῶν λόγων, ὡς ἡ φύσις ἀπάντων τῶν νέων διάπυρος οὖσα ἡσυχίαν οὐχ οἶα τε ἄγειν οὔτε κατὰ τὸ σῶμα οὔτε κατὰ τὴν φωνὴν εἴη, φθέγγοιτο δ’ αἰεὶ **ἀτάκτως** καὶ πηδῶ, **τάξεως** δ’ αἰσθησιν τούτων ἀμφοτέρων, τῶν ἄλλων μὲν ζῶων οὐδὲν ἐφάπτοιτο, ἡ δὲ ἀνθρώπου φύσις ἔχοι μόνη τοῦτο· **τῇ δὴ τῆς κινήσεως τάξει ῥυθμὸς ὄνομα εἴη, τῇ δὲ αὖ τῆς φωνῆς, τοῦ τε ὀξέος ἅμα καὶ βαρέος συγκεραννυμένων, ἀρμονία ὄνομα προσαγορεύοιτο**, χορεία δὲ τὸ συναμφοτέρον κληθεῖη. θεοὺς δὲ ἔφαμεν ἐλεοῦντας ἡμᾶς συγχορευτάς τε καὶ χορηγούς ἡμῖν δεδωκέναι τὸν τε Ἀπόλλωνα καὶ Μούσας, καὶ δὴ καὶ τρίτον ἔφαμεν, εἰ μεμνήμεθα, Διόνυσον.

What we said at the beginning of our discussion, if our memory serves us right, was that there is fire in the

53 Cf. *Laws*, 7.788c6–8: Οὐκοῦν ὅτι μὲν σώματα καὶ ψυχὰς τὴν γε ὀρθὴν πάντως δεῖ τροφὴν φαίνεσθαι δυναμένην ὡς κάλλιστα καὶ ἄριστα ἐξεργάζεσθαι, τοῦτο μὲν ὀρθῶς εἰρηται πού, “now, it is an absolute requirement of correct upbringing that it should be clearly capable of producing the finest and best possible bodies and souls”.

54 Plato, *Laws*, 2.653d7–e3.

55 I take the Muses, Apollo and Dionysus to be subjects of ἐπανορθῶνται (cf. *Laws*, 2.653e4, 2.672e9, *Timaeus*, 80a–b). For a different interpretation, see SCHÖPSDAU (1994), 260. Cf. also Plato, *Timaeus*, 42e–44c where the incapacity to stay quiet is explained as a disturbance that affects the soul as a consequence of the external movement to which the soul is subjected after embodiment.

56 Plato, *Laws*, 2.672b8–c6.

57 Poetic verb ἀκταίνω (Anacreon PMG 466; Aeschylus *Eumenides* 36, *Anonymous Tragic Fragments*, 147). The use of a poetic verb in a non-poetic context might be regarded as an attempt to create a paronomasia with ἀτάκτως; cf. SCHÖPSDAU (1994), 342.

58 Plato, *Laws*, 2.653d.

59 For the use of rattle as a means for children to acquire reason through rhythm see DASEN (2017), 89–107.

60 Plato, *Laws*, 2.664e4–665a6. For a definition of rhythm and harmony see SCHÖPSDAU (1994), 262–263.

natural composition of all young things: they cannot be at rest – neither their bodies nor their voices; they spend their whole time uttering wild cries and frisking about. Of the other animals none has any idea of order in either respect; it is something unique to human nature. **We said the name given to control of movement was rhythm**, whereas for the **control of the voice – the blending of high and low pitch – the name we use is harmony**. The combination of the two is called choral dance. We said the gods had pity on us, and given us Apollo and the Muses to be our companions and leaders in the dance; we also mentioned a third name, if we remember rightly – Dionysus.

The point is that a training in music and gymnastics will guide the young from a state of physical disorder and disarray to a state of stable physical behaviour. A training in musical education, in other words, has the task to calm and guide the disordered movements of the soul towards a regular course, that is, a rhythmic and ordered structure.⁶¹ From this perspective music and dance can be regarded as “helpers” (to refer back to the “puppet image” at 644d) that instill order (τάξις) and stability in the souls of the young, who are deprived of a sense of order and moderation in the first years of their life. The same idea, i.e. that the Muses have given harmony to men so that it could bring order in the movement of their souls, is also present in the *Timaeus*:⁶²

ἡ δὲ ἀρμονία, συγγενεῖς ἔχουσα φορὰς ταῖς ἐν ἡμῖν τῆς ψυχῆς περιόδοις, **τῷ μετὰ νοῦ προσχρωμένῳ Μούσαις οὐκ ἐφ’ ἡδονὴν ἄλογον** καθάπερ νῦν εἶναι δοκεῖ χρήσιμος, ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ τὴν γεγονυῖαν ἐν ἡμῖν ἀνάρμοστον ψυχῆς περίοδον εἰς κατακόσμησιν καὶ συμφωνίαν ἑαυτῇ σύμμαχος ὑπὸ Μουσῶν δέδοται· καὶ ῥυθμὸς αὖ διὰ τὴν ἄμετρον ἐν ἡμῖν καὶ χαρίτων ἐπιδεᾶ γιγνομένην ἐν τοῖς πλείστοις ἔξιν ἐπικούρος ἐπὶ ταῦτα ὑπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐδόθη.

And harmony, whose movements are naturally akin to the circular motions of our souls, is useful **to the man who makes intelligent use of the Muses not for mindless pleasure** (which is nowadays taken to be the point of melody), but for the disharmony of the soul’s revolutions that has arisen in us: harmony is an ally, provided by the Muses for the soul in its fight to restore itself to order and harmony. Rhythm also was given for the same purpose by the same benefactors, to support us because for the most part our internal state is inconsistent and graceless.

In other words, music and rhythm are not intended to provide some kind of irrational pleasure. On the contrary, in *Laws* as well as in *Timaeus* musical harmony is intended to reproduce in the soul a particular psychological order. In *Laws*, it serves to elevate the human soul to the divine sphere through the sacred festivals which are given to humans as gift,

61 Cf. also *Laws*, 2.653e3-654a7, 2.664e-665e; 2.672c-d, 2.673c-d.

62 Plato, *Timaeus*, 47d2-e2.

and as pause from the labours 653d. In *Timaeus*, it serves to reflect the rational structure of the movement of the soul of the world.⁶³

Thus, for a correct moral upbringing of the soul, it is necessary to implement regular and correct movements that bring peace and calmness to the soul. Also the continuous movement, the singing of lullabies, and the performance of music and dance on the psychic fury of the Korybants are considered as examples of activities that calm the soul (790d-e4). The cause of the calming effect of this external movement – explained later in the passage – lies in its regularity, which serves to quieten feelings of fear and rage so that a condition of peace can prevail.⁶⁴

ὅταν οὖν ἔξωθὲν τις προσφέρῃ τοῖς τοιούτοις πάθεσι σεισμόν, ἢ τῶν ἔξωθεν κρατεῖ κίνησις προσφερομένη τὴν **ἐντὸς φοβερὰν οὔσαν καὶ μανικὴν κίνησιν**, κρατήσασα δέ, γαλήνην ἡσυχίαν τε ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ φαίνεσθαι ἀπεργασαμένη τῆς περὶ τὰ τῆς καρδίας χαλεπῆς γενομένης ἐκάστων πηδήσεως, παντάπασιν ἀγαπητόν τι, τοὺς μὲν ὕπνου λαγχάνειν ποιεῖ, τοὺς δ’ **ἐργηγορότας ὀρχουμένους τε καὶ αὐλουμένους**⁶⁵ μετὰ θεῶν, οἷς ἂν καλλιεροῦντες ἕκαστοι θύωσι, κατηργάσατο ἀντὶ μανικῶν ἡμῖν διαθέσεων ἕξεις ἔμφονας ἔχειν. καὶ ταῦτα, ὡς διὰ βραχέων γε οὕτως εἰπεῖν, πιθανὸν λόγον ἔχει τίνα.⁶⁶

So when you apply an external, physical agitation in such cases, the external motion which is thus applied overcomes the internal motion which was causing the fear and madness. And when it has overcome it, the unmistakable effect is to produce a calm and stillness in the soul in place of the violent pounding of the heart which was invariably experienced before. This has a wholly good effect: in the one case, it gets children off to sleep; in the other case where people are wide awake, they dance and listen to the music assisted by the gods, whom they worship and to whom they sacrifice,⁶⁷ thus replacing a state of folly with a conscious state of mind. These matters, to say it briefly, have a persuasive explanation.

The reason behind the agitation of small children is taken to be a type of fear (δεῖμα, 7.790e9) produced by a weak condition of the soul, καὶ ἔστι δειμάτα δι’ ἔξιν φαύλην τῆς ψυχῆς τινα (7.790e8-9). The result of the swaying and singing is regarded as the mastering by the regular external movement of the

63 Cf. *Timaeus*, 35b-36a. For a detailed explanation of the passage, see TAYLOR (1928) and BRISSON (1992).

64 Plato, *Laws*, 7.791a1-b2.

65 Cf. *Ion*, 536b, when the rhapsode Ion hears something by Homer, he is soon awake (ἐργήγορας) and his soul dances (ὀρχεῖται); cf. SCHÖPSDAU (1994), 513.

66 The persuasive feature of this speech suggests that it could also be regarded as a preamble to a hypothetical law on the matters.

67 T. Griffith translates otherwise: “it uses dances and the pipe (with the assistance of the gods to whom their worship and sacrifice are directed in any particular instance) to replace our attack of madness with a state of sanity. Well, anyway, for a brief explanation, that has some degree of plausibility to it.”

inner movement of fear.⁶⁸ In mastering their fear, the Athenian continues, the young start the training in courage which consists in “winning over the fears and terrors that take hold of us” (7.791b10-c1).⁶⁹ The word γαλήνη, which literally means the stillness of the wind at the sea, indicates here (for the first time in Greek literature) the calmness of the soul.⁷⁰ In Plato it occurs only twice.⁷¹ In the *Phaedo* it indicates the calmness in the soul produced by philosophy, while in the *Timaeus* it refers to the calmness re-acquired by the soul after the continuous affections caused by its incarnation in a mortal body.⁷² The metaphoric use of the word, common in both *Laws* and *Phaedo*, gains additional force through the presence in both dialogues of another rare word: αιώρα, “swing”, “oscillatory movement”.⁷³ In *Laws* Book 7 it occurs at 789c-d, where the Athenian argues for the necessity of moving the babies when they are still in their mothers’ wombs:⁷⁴

ὅτι τὰ σώματα πάντα ὑπὸ τῶν σεισμῶν τε καὶ κινήσεων κινούμενα ἄκοπα ὀνίναται πάντων, ὅσα τε ὑπὸ ἑαυτῶν, ἢ καὶ ἐν αἰώραις ἢ καὶ κατὰ θάλατταν, ἢ καὶ ἐφ’ ἵππων ὀχουμένων καὶ ὑπ’ ἄλλων ὅπως οὖν δὴ φερομένων τῶν σωμάτων, κινεῖται, καὶ διὰ ταῦτα τὰς τῶν σίτων τροφὰς καὶ μάτων, κινεῖται, καὶ διὰ ταῦτα τὰς τῶν σίτων τροφὰς καὶ ποτῶν κατακρατοῦντα, ὑγίειαν καὶ κάλλος καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ῥώμην ἡμῖν δυνατὰ ἐστὶ παραδιδόναι.

for the body any physical motion, any kind of shaking or movement, is invigorating and beneficial – whether the motion be its own, or a swinging,⁷⁵ or at sea or on horseback, or that of any other moving body. It helps it deal with the food and drink which form its sustenance and enables it to give us our health and good looks – and strength into the bargain.

It appears that even though the movement is not produced by the body itself, but rather by an external agency (like the mother), such an oscillating movement confers health, beauty, and strength to the body. That a continuous movement (during day and night) is beneficial is repeated at 7.790c5-9, where

68 In the *Laws* there is no explanation of why a continuous movement is beneficial. However, such an explanation is developed in *Timaeus*, 88d-e.

69 For courage as one of the virtues of the soul, cf. 3.696b; for the parts of virtue, cf. Plato, *Protagoras*, 328d-330a, 349b-361a.

70 Cf. CASSEL (1959), 37. In Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 740 the word does not describe a condition of the soul but rather the state of a woman, Helen.

71 Plato, *Phaedo*, 84a7 and *Timaeus*, 44b3.

72 See SCHÖPSDAU (1994), 512.

73 Before Plato the word is found only in Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 1264. In Plato it occurs only twice in the *Phaedo*, at 111e, and in the above-mentioned passage of the *Laws*. It also occurs in Demosthenes, *On the Crown*, 260.5, but here in relation to the physical fluctuation of the head.

74 Plato, *Laws*, 7.789d1-7.

75 T. Griffith translates ἐν αἰώραις as “some sort of wheeled vehicle”.

the very young children are exhorted to live as if they were always “on a ship at sea”, καὶ οἰκεῖν, εἰ δυνατόν ἦν, οἶον ἀεὶ πλέοντας (7.790c8).

4. THE BODY AS MORAL AGENT

In Book 7 the Athenian develops a detailed legislation regarding public dances. Again, he discusses the necessity for the city to reproduce in song and dance the actions that are proper of virtuous men: “rhythms and the entire music is imitation of the good and bad manners of men”, τὰ περὶ τοὺς ῥυθμοὺς καὶ πᾶσαν μουσικὴν ἐστὶν τρόπων μιμήματα βελτιόνων καὶ χειρόνων ἀνθρώπων (7.798d7-e1). Thus, at 815a-b, he encourages a type of dance that imitates the correct movements of a body in war, that is “weaving, leaping into the air, or crouching down – and then the counterparts to these, those that move into aggressive postures and try to represent those involved in shooting bows or throwing javelins, or delivering blows of any kind” (7.815a2-7). These dance movements will be welcomed into the city of Magnesia:⁷⁶

Το τε ὀρθὸν ἐν τούτοις καὶ τὸ εὐτονον, τῶν ἀγαθῶν σωμάτων καὶ ψυχῶν ὁπότεν γίγνηται μίμημα, εὐθυφερὲς ὡς τὸ πολὺ τῶν τοῦ σώματος μελῶν γιγνόμενον, ὀρθὸν μὲν τὸ τοιοῦτον, τὸ δὲ τούτοις τούναντίον οὐκ ὀρθὸν ἀποδεχόμενον.

What is correct and vigorous in these (scil. the movements), if there is imitation of beautiful bodies and souls, a straightening, for the most part, of the limbs of the body, that kind of dance is correct, whereas its opposite is generally accepted to be incorrect.

The correct war dance is the dance that performs the correct movements of a body in war. To this dance the Athenian gives the name “pyrrhic” (7.815a2).⁷⁷ As regards the pacific dance, the Athenian distinguishes between the “Bacchic dance”, the performance of certain rites of purification and initiation, which imitate drunken people under the name of “Nymphs, Pans, Sylenus, Satyrs” (7.815c), and the non-belligerent dance (τῆς ἀπολέμου Μούσης, 7.815d5), which is proper of those who honour the gods and the children of the gods. The Athenian further divides this dance in two types: a more joyful type for those people who have found prosperity after hardship and danger and another type which is more appropriate to the preservation and increase of an existing property (7.815d-e). Now, depending on the level of joy, the movements will be either disciplined or extreme:⁷⁸

76 Plato, *Laws*, 7.815a7-b3.

77 Such a dance, at the time of Plato, had already lost its war-like character, except in Sparta where it was still used in military training. For additional bibliography on pyrrhic dance, see SCHÖPSDAU (2003), 591.

78 Plato, *Laws*, 7.815e4-816a6.

ἐν δὲ δὴ τοῖς τοιούτοις που πᾶς ἄνθρωπος τὰς κινήσεις τοῦ σώματος μειζόνων μὲν τῶν ἡδονῶν οὐσῶν μειζους, ἐλαττόνων δὲ ἐλάττους κινεῖται, καὶ **κοσμιώτερος μὲν ὢν πρὸς τε ἀνδρείαν μᾶλλον γεγυμνασμένος** ἐλάττους αὖ, δειλὸς δὲ καὶ ἀγύμναστος γεγυνῶς πρὸς τὸ σωφρονεῖν μειζους καὶ σφοδροτέρας παρέχεται μεταβολὰς τῆς κινήσεως· ὅλως δὲ φθεγγόμενος, εἴτ' ἐν ᾧδαῖς εἴτ' ἐν λόγοις, ἡσυχίαν οὐ πάνυ δυνατὸς τῷ σώματι παρέχεσθαι πᾶς. διὸ μίμησις τῶν λεγομένων σχήμασι γενομένη τὴν ὀρχηστικὴν ἐξηργάσατο τέχνην σύμπασαν.

In dances of this kind, I take it, the more extreme anyone's joy, the more extreme will be the movements of his body; the less extreme his joy, the less extreme his movements. **Again, the more disciplined the dancer, the more practiced in courage, the less extreme his movements.** Whereas a coward, one who is unpracticed in self-control, displays more extreme and more exaggerated contrasts of movement. In general, anyone using his voice, whether in song or speech is quite incapable of keeping his body still. That is how the imitation, through gestures of the things spoken, has created the entire art of dancing.

The imitation of good, i.e. practiced in courage or self-control, and bad characters has given rise to different types of non-belligerent dances. The concept here expressed is that dance is conceived as a means to instil a sort of pre-rational virtue, through a selection of ordered and balanced movements.⁷⁹ Dances that are typical of orgiastic rituals such as Bacchic dances thus do not have any place in Magnesia. The dances encouraged by the Athenian, on the other hand, imitate movements of self-controlled men, because in performing them, the individual himself becomes moderate. In other words, there is a transition between imitating moderate gestures and becoming a moderate individual. To this type of dance, as we have seen, the Athenian opposes the “pyrrhic” dance, which is instead frenetic and more agitated.

The usefulness of a certain type of movement, as well as the appropriateness of the imitation involved in it, is certainly the most important criterium for the acceptance in Magnesia of certain dances. It is this that the Athenian – when talking about the armed dances of Curetes and those of Dioscuri in Sparta – defines as “artistic representations worthy of imitation”, μιμήματα προσήκοντα μιμεῖσθαι (796b3-5). This expression concludes the Athenian's discussion of the moral usefulness of dance performances: only the action of a character that is worthy of imitation (because morally good) will be represented in choral dances. The idea of *χρήσιμος*, ‘useful’ (792d3), is always present in the Athenian's program of education for Magnesia. Mousiké has an

effect on the collectivity. This notion of collectivity is at the core of the Athenian's political design, in which every citizen contributes to the higher good of society.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, the metaphor of the puppet in Plato's *Laws* has significant psychological implications. This is the only place in the entire dialogue where there is such a precise description of the functioning of the human soul. The question remains though: why a puppet? What types of images and connections did the puppet suggest in the mind of Athenian citizens? First, it is safe to say that marionettes were not exclusively conceived of as childish playthings, but they were widely used in processions and sacred ceremonies. On the one hand, the performative and often religious context in which such articulated objects appear was particularly important for the philosopher in that it links the idea of the human soul to something sacred. On the other hand, the fact that puppets and marionettes were also everyday objects used by children implies that their functioning by strings to imitate human movements was generally well-known by ordinary citizens, which allowed for an immediate and corporeal understanding of the opposite psychological forces dragging the soul.

As for the strings manoeuvring the soul in *Laws*, the question to be posed is not really who is controlling us – the puppets – but how we control the πάθη inside us. Starting when still in the womb, the soul appears to be led toward the morally ‘correct’ emotions. The oscillatory movement performed for quietening the irrational fears of the child serves as training for courage at a pre-rational phase, while the dances and gymnastic movements that are to be learned from a very young age have as principal aim the shaping – through the imitation of good characters – of individuals that are courageous, moderate, and self-controlled. In this sense, and in relation to the puppet image, by ‘educating’ one's reactions to pleasurable and painful events it is possible to stir the ‘marionette’ in the most correct direction. In other words, by encouraging the young to take pleasure in the ‘correct’ dances and music it is possible to ‘operate’ on the soul's inner, pre-rational cords (πάθη), that is, to educate it towards what is right and wrong. Finally, it might be this ‘sub-rational’ inclination to desire what is moderate, useful, and overall ‘good’ for society that constitute the main helper for the golden string to prevail over the other impulses.

79 Cf. Plato, *Cratylus*, 423a-b.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ANNAS, Julia, *Platonic Ethics, Old and New*, Ithaca/London (1999).
- BELFIORE, Elizabeth, "Wine and *catharsis* of Emotions in Plato's *Laws*", *Classical Quarterly*, 36 (1986), 421-437.
- BOBONICH, Christopher, "Akasia and Agency in Plato's *Laws* and *Republic*", *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 76, 1 (1994), 3-36.
- BOBONICH, Christopher, *Plato's Utopia Recast: His Later Ethics and Politics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, (2002).
- BRISSE, LUC AND PRADEAU, Jean-François, *Platon. Les Lois.*, Garnier Flammarion, Paris (2006).
- BRISSE, LUC (tr.), *Platon. Timée, Critias. Traduction inédite, introduction et notes*, Paris (1992).
- DASEN, Véronique, "Le hochet d'Archytas : un jouet pour grandir", in Véronique Dasen, Patricia Gaillard-Seux (eds), *Accueil et soin de l'enfant (Antiquité, Moyen Âge)*, Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest 124, Rennes (2017), 89-107.
- ENGLAND, Edwin Bourdieu (tr.), *The Laws of Plato*, Manchester (1921).
- FERRARI, Franco and POLI, Silvia, *Le Leggi. Testo Greco a fronte*, Milano (2005).
- FOLCH, Marcus, *The City and the Stage: Performance, Genre, and Gender in Plato's Laws*, Oxford, (2015).
- FREDE, Dorothea, "Puppets on String", in Christopher Bobonich (ed.), *Plato's Laws: a Critical Guide*, Cambridge (2010), 108-126.
- FRONTEROTTA, Franco, *Platone. Timeo, Introduzione, traduzione e note*, Milano (2003).
- GALLUZZO, Gabriele, "Automatic puppets, Toy Carts, and Robots. Aristotle's Metaphysics of Artefacts and the Question of Automata", in Tatiana Bur, Isabel Ruffel (eds), *Technological Animation in Classical Antiquity*, Oxford (forthcoming).
- GRIFFITH, Tom (tr.) and SCHOFIELD, Malcolm (ed.), *Plato: Laws (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought)*, New York/Cambridge (2016).
- HERZOG-HANSER, Gertrud, "Νευρόσπαστα, *neurospasta*, Marionetten" in Georg Wissowa, Wilhelm Kroll (eds.), *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Stuttgart, XVII, 33 (1936) 161-163.
- IRWIN, Terence, "Morality as Law and Morality in the *Laws*", in Christopher Bobonich (ed.), *Plato's Laws: a Critical Guide*, Cambridge (2010), 92-107.
- JOUËT-PASTRÉ, Emmanuelle, *Le jeu et le sérieux dans les Lois de Platon*, Sankt Augustin (2006).
- KLOSKO, George, *The Development of Plato's Political Theory*, Oxford (2006).
- KOWALZIG, Barbara, "Broken Rhythms in Plato's *Laws*. Materialising Social Time in the Chorus", in Anastasia-Erasmia Peponi (ed.), *Performance and Culture in Plato's Laws*, Cambridge (2013), 171-211.
- KURKE, Leslie, "Imagining Choralities: Wonder, Plato's Puppets, and Moving Statues", in Anastasia-Erasmia Peponi (ed.), *Performance and Culture in Plato's Laws*, Cambridge (2013), 123-170.
- LAKS, André, *Loi et Persuasion. Recherche sur la structure de la pensée politique platonicienne*, Atelier national de reproduction des thèses, Université de Lille III (1990).
- LAKS, André, "The Laws", in Christopher Rowe, Malcolm Schofield (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, Cambridge (2000), 258-292.
- LAKS, André, *Méditation et coercition: pour une lecture des Lois de Platon*, Villeneuve d'Ascq (2005).
- LAMBRUGO, Claudia, "Marionnettes", in Véronique Dasen (ed.), *Ludique. Jouer dans l'Antiquité, catalogue de l'exposition, Lugdunum, musée et théâtres romains, 20 juin-1^{er} décembre 2019*, Gent (2019), 48-49.
- LAURENT, Jérôme, "Fil d'or et fils de fer. Sur l'homme 'marionnette' dans le livre I des *Lois* de Platon (644c-645a)", *Archives de philosophie*, 69 (2006), 461-473.
- MAGNALDI, Giuseppina (ed.), *Oxford Classical Texts: Apulei: Opera Philosophica*, Oxford (2020).
- MURATOV, Maya, "Paratheatrical Performances in the Bosphoran Kingdom. The Evidence of Terracotta Figurines", in David Braund, Edith Hall, Rosie Wyles (eds), *Ancient Theatre and Performance Culture around the Black Sea*, Cambridge (2019), 400-432.
- NIGHTINGALE, Andrea W., "Plato's Lawcode in Context: Rule by Written Law in Athens and Magnesia", *Classical Quarterly* 49 (1999), 100-122.
- PFEFFERKORN, Julia, "Shame and Virtue in Plato's *Laws*. Two Kinds of Fear and the Drunken Puppet", in Laura Candiotti, Olivier Renaut (eds), *Emotions in Plato*, Leiden (2020), 252-269.
- PFEFFERKORN, Julia, "The Three Choruses of Plato's *Laws* and their Function in the Dialogue", *Phronesis*, 66, 4 (2021), 335-365.
- REEVES, Nicholas, "A Rare Mechanical Figure from Ancient Egypt", *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 50 (2015), 1-20.
- SASSI, Maria-Michela, "The Self, the Soul and the Individual in the City of the Laws", *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 35 (2008), 125-148.
- SAUVÉ MEYER, Susan, "Pleasure, Pain, and 'Anticipation' in Plato's *Laws*, Book I", in Richard Patterson, Vassilis Karasmanis, Arnold Hermann (eds.), *Presocratics & Plato. Festschrift at Delphi in Honor of Charles Kahn*, Las Vegas (2012), 311-328.

SAUVÉ MEYER, Susan, *Plato: Laws 1 & 2. Translated with an Introduction and Commentary*, Oxford (2015).

SCHOFIELD, Malcolm, "Plato's Marionette", *Rhizomata*, 4 (2016), 128-153.

SCHÖPSDAU, Klaus, *Platon Werke: Übersetzung und Kommentar. Nomoi (Gesetze): Buch I-III; Buch IV-VII*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen (1993-2011).

SCHRÖDER, Heinrich O., "Marionetten", *Rheinisches Museum*, 126 (1983), 1-24.

TAYLOR, Alfred E., *A Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, Oxford (1928).

RANKIN, David H., "Plato and man the puppet", *Eranos*, 60 (1962), 127-131.

RENAUT, Olivier, *Platon: la médiation des émotions: l'éducation de thymos dans les dialogues*, Paris (2014).

SPRAGUE, Rosamunde K., "Plato and Children's Games", in Douglas E. Gerber (ed.), *Greek Poetry and Philosophy: Studies in Honour of Leonard Woodbury*, Chico Calif. (1984), 275-284.

WATERFIELD, Andrew, *Timaeus and Critias*, Oxford (2009)

WILBURN, Joshua, "Akrasia and Self-rule in Plato's *Laws*", *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 43 (2012), 25-53.



Cecilia Nobili

Università degli Studi di Bergamo
cecilia.nobili@unibg.it

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

The importance that Plato's *Laws* assigns to play and games in the education of children is well known.¹ At 796 b-d Plato prescribes playful dancing (τῆς χορείας παιδιά) as a useful exercise for kids and children, following the example of Athena, who invented the armed dance (ἐνόπλιος ὄρχησις) to celebrate the gods' victory over the Giants.²

ἡ δὲ αὖ που παρ' ἡμῖν κόρη καὶ δέσποινα, εὐφρανθεῖσα
τῇ τῆς χορείας παιδιᾷ, κεναῖς χερσὶν οὐκ ᾤηθη δεῖν
ἀθύρειν, πανοπλία δὲ παντελεῖ κοσμηθεῖσα, οὕτω τὴν
ὄρχησιν διαπεραίνειν· ἃ δὴ πάντως μιμεῖσθαι πρέπον
ἂν εἴη κόρους τε ἅμα καὶ κόρας, τὴν τῆς θεοῦ χάριν
τιμώντας, πολέμου τ' ἐν χρεῖα καὶ ἐορτῶν ἕνεκα.

And at Athens our Virgin Lady, I believe, **charmed by the pleasure of performing in a chorus**, and disapproving of empty hands in **recreation**, thought she should perform the dance only when arrayed in full armour. Our boys and girls should imitate her example whole heartedly and prize the gift which the goddess has made them, because it increases their fighting skill and embellishes their festivals.³

The verb used by Plato in order to explain the goddess' act of dancing is ἀθύρειν (*athyrein*), which is related to the noun ἄθυρμα (*athyrma*) and expresses the idea

of dance as a game (emphasizing the concept already expressed by τῆς χορείας παιδιά), which generates pleasure and fun in those who practice it.

Ἄθυρμα and ἀθύρειν have a long and fascinating history that relates the two terms both to the sphere of game and play, and to that of music and dance. As I will now set out to investigate, the two words originally meant “toys” and “plaything”, but their meaning gradually shifted to the pleasure they give, to the beauty they generate as ornaments and, hence, to the most amusing and pleasant activity of all, namely music and dance;⁴ in this context, the two terms may also be connected with the erotic sphere as objects of desire.⁵ The overlap between play and music is also implied by the verb παίζω (*paizô*) which bears the double meaning of the English “play” and the French “jouer” and may be referred to games, music and dance.⁶ The case of ἄθυρμα, nonetheless, is more subtle, because the careful analysis of its earliest attestations in archaic Greek poetry shows that the above-mentioned shift of meaning also includes the ideas of marvel, θαῦμα (*thauma*), and wonder.⁷

4 The pleasure generated by ἀθύρματα is central in KIDD (2019), 98-107, and connected to the idea of play as pleasure, as also implied by Plato. See also É. DIEU, in this volume.

5 See L. FLORIDI, in this volume.

6 See HUIZINGA (1943), 42; CASEVITZ (2018); KIDD (2019), 7-9. On the linguistic and semantic overlap between music and dance see Plato, *Laws*, 673c, 796b, 803e; LONSDALE (1993).

7 On the importance of θαῦμα (with the meaning of “marionette”) in the

1 See JOUËT-PASTRÉ (2006); D'ANGOUR (2013); CALAME (2103); KIDD (2019), 29-96

2 See also Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 7.72.7.

3 Plato, *Laws*, 796 b-d (transl. SAUNDERS 1970).

Ἄθυρμα appears for the first time in the *Iliad*, in a passage where Apollo leads the Trojan army against the Greek camp and destroys the great wall the Achaeans had erected to protect their ships with the same ease as a child might destroy the sandcastle he has just built on the beach:

ἔρειπε δὲ τεῖχος Ἀχαιῶν
 ρεῖα μάλ', ὥς ὅτε τις ψάμαθον πάϊς ἄγχι θαλάσσης,
 ὅς τ' ἐπεὶ οὖν ποιήσῃ **ἄθύρματα** νηπιήσιν
 ἄψ αὐτίς συνέχευε ποσὶν καὶ χερσὶν **ἄθύρων**.

He had torn down the wall
 of the Achaeans with ease,
 as when some child near the sea
 scatters sand after he has made a **plaything** in his
 childishness,
 and then **in a frolic tears** it all down with his feet and
 hands.⁸

Building sandcastles is described here as a typical children's activity, which brings fun both through the act of building and, possibly even more, through the act of easily destroying the castles. The passage is interesting because it gives us a glimpse of the world of children in Greek epic, which is a theme rarely explored by Homer, and attests to a kind of game obviously not evidenced by any archaeological sources.⁹

Nevertheless, it may also bear some further resonance, if we consider that the term ἄθυρμα is here used in the context of a simile, as the sandcastle is compared to the great wall erected by the Greeks as the main form of protection for their camp and, most importantly, for the ships which would make their return home possible.¹⁰ In *Iliad* 7.430-463 the wall is described by the gods as a great enterprise, a marvelous work that will bring fame to those who erected it.¹¹ However, it was built without the gods' permission, without performing any sacrifice for them, and Poseidon is afraid that it will overshadow the fame of the walls of Troy that he has erected with Apollo. For this reason, Zeus allows Poseidon and Apollo to destroy it when the war is over; the gods rage against the wall by directing the streams of all rivers against it for many days, so that by the end the Trojan plain will bear no trace of the

building for all future generations.¹² In conclusion, the Achaeans' wall is a great and marvelous work, but its construction is perceived by the gods as an act of trickery worthy of punishment.

This subtle nuance in the meaning of ἄθυρμα is even more evident in the passages of the *Odyssey* where the noun appears. In the *Odyssey*, the term is employed by Eumelos, Odysseus' swineherd: when talking about his infancy, he recounts that, as the child of a rich aristocrat, he was kidnapped by some Phoenician merchants who sold him to Laertes as a slave. In his story ἄθύρματα are the jewels and the other luxury objects that the Phoenician traders brought to Eumelos' palace, in order to sell them to the women there: "Phoenician men came / there, famous for their ship – the rats! They had countless / **trinkets** in their black ship" (ἐνθα δὲ Φοίνικες ναυσικλυτοὶ ἤλυθον ἄνδρες, / τρώκται, μυρί' ἄγοντες **ἄθύρματα** νηϊ μελαίνῃ).¹³

As Eumelos later explains (ll. 457-475), one of these ἄθύρματα (*athyrmata*), a gold and amber necklace, especially attracted the attention of his mother and of the other women in the house, and distracted them, so that the Phoenician servant managed to abduct him without notice. In this context, ἄθυρμα defines some pieces of jewelry, some female trinkets that are worthy of admiration for their beauty. As Stephen Kidd writes:

athurmata can thus be seen extending beyond the 'toy' to include objects of 'delight', like jewelry, 'trinkets', or 'baubles'. [...] Typically, only children and women are associated with such objects. The reason is clear: *athurmata* are not objects of the 'serious' male world, but objects of immediate pleasure, frivolous both in their positive and negative aspects.¹⁴

Nonetheless, the term also implies a kind of deceiving and negative beauty, which makes the child's abduction possible. Such connotation is even more evident in the following passage concerning Melantho, one of Penelope's unfaithful handmaidens; Melantho is rude to the beggar Odysseus and disrespectful toward Penelope, although the queen had raised her as a daughter, giving her "playthings" or "delights" when she was a child:

τὴν **Δολίος** μὲν ἔτικτε, κόμισσε δὲ Πηνελόπεια, / παῖδα
 δὲ ὥς ἀτίταλλε, δίδου δ' ἄρ' **ἄθύρματα** θυμῷ.

Dolios fathered her, but Penelope had raised and
 cherished / her as her own child, giving her **playthings**
 that delighted her heart.¹⁵

sphere of play and games see also C. ZICHI in this volume.

⁸ Homer, *Iliad*, 15.361-364 (transl. POWELL 2014, slightly modified).

⁹ On playthings made of natural materials like sand, stones and knucklebones, see KIDD (2019), 103-107, C. LAMBRUGO and A. D'ONOFRIO in this volume.

¹⁰ Apollo's destruction of the wall paves the way for the Trojan attack on the ships, which amounts to the almost complete defeat of the Greeks, stimulating Patroklos' new entry into the battle and all the events that will derive from it.

¹¹ See also Homer, *Iliad*, 9.348-350. The Trojans are afraid of the wall (*Iliad*, 12.61-79), and only Apollo's help gives them the courage to launch the attack.

¹² Homer, *Iliad*, 12.4-33.

¹³ Homer, *Odyssey*, 15.415-416 (transl. POWELL 2015).

¹⁴ KIDD (2019), 101.

¹⁵ Homer, *Odyssey*, 18.323 (transl. POWELL 2015).

ἄθურμα here apparently has the usual and plain meaning of “toy”, but the context is once again one of deceit: significantly, the unfaithful Melanthe is said to be Dolios’ daughter, a name meaning “treacherous”, to signify her deceitful character.

To sum up, the three occurrences of the noun ἄθურμα in the Homeric poems underline a common situation: ἄθურμα is a plaything, related to the realm of children or, alternatively, women; it is an object that gives pleasure to those who use it and may generate marvel, owing to its beauty. At the same time, however, it has an ambiguous meaning and carries an overtone of deception.

This characterization overtly appears in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*: the opening lines describe the young girl Persephone in the act of playing and dancing with a group of girls (Ocean’s daughters); the scene is located in a beautiful meadow, and the girl enjoys picking flowers.¹⁶ The most beautiful flower is a narcissus, a καλὸν ἄθურμα (*kalon athyrma*), marvelous to behold, yet deceitful; it has been generated by the soil upon Hades’ request, as a trap for the girl: when Persephone, fascinated by the flower, picks it, Hades rises from the underworld and abducts her.

Δήμητρ’ ἡΰκομον σεμνήν θεὰν ἄρχομ’ αἰεΐειν,
αὐτὴν ἡδὲ θύγατρα τανύσφυρον ἦν Ἀΐδωνεύς
ἦρπαξεν, δῶκεν δὲ βαρύκτυπος εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς,
νόσφιν Δήμητρος χρυσαόρου ἀγλαοκάρπου
παίζουσαν κούρησι σὺν Ὠκεανοῦ βαθυκόλποις,
ἄνθεά τ’ αἰνυμένην ρόδα καὶ κρόκον ἡδ’ ἴα καλὰ
λειμών’ ἄμ μαλακὸν καὶ ἀγαλλίδας ἡδ’ ὑάκινθον
νάρκισσόν θ’, **ὃν φύσε δόλον** καλυκώπιδι κούρη
Γαῖα Διὸς βουλῇσι χαρίζομένη πολυδέκτη
θαυμαστὸν γανώοντα, **σέβας** τότε πᾶσιν ιδέσθαι
ἀθανάτοις τε θεοῖς ἡδὲ θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποις·
τοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ ρίζης ἑκατὸν κάρα ἐξεπεφύκει,
κῶζ’ ἦδιστ’ ὁδμή, πᾶς δ’ οὐρανὸς εὐρύς ὑπερθε
γαῖα τε πᾶς ἐγέλασσε καὶ ἄλμυρόν οἶδμα θαλάσσης.
ἡ δ’ ἄρα **θαμβήσας** ὥρεξάτο χερσὶν ἄμ’ ἄμφω
καλὸν ἄθურμα λαβεῖν· χάνε δὲ χθὼν εὐρυάγνια
Νύσιον ἄμ πεδίον τῇ ὄρουσεν ἀναξ πολυδέγμων
ἵπποις ἀθανάτοισι Κρόνου πολυώνυμος υἱός.

Demeter I begin to sing, the fair-tressed awesome goddess, herself and her slim-ankled daughter whom Aidoneus seized; Zeus, heavy-thundering and mighty-voiced, gave her, without the consent of Demeter of the bright fruit and golden sword, as she **played** with the deep-breasted daughters of Ocean, plucking flowers in the lush meadow-roses, crocuses, and lovely violets, irises and hyacinth and the narcissus, which Earth grew **as a snare** for the flower-faced maiden in order

to gratify by Zeus’s design the Host-to-Many, a flower **wondrous** and bright, **awesome** for all to see, for the immortals above and for mortals below. From its root a hundredfold bloom sprang up and smelled so sweet that the whole vast heaven above and the whole earth laughed, and the salty swell of the sea. The girl **marveled** and stretched out both hands at once to take the **lovely toy**. The earth with its wide ways yawned over the Nysian plain; the lord Host-to-Many rose up on her with his immortal horses, the celebrated son of Kronos.¹⁷

The narcissus is defined here as a καλὸν ἄθურμα, a beautiful “toy”, and the whole atmosphere is childish: the girl enjoys picking flowers, as young girls normally do, since they love using them to adorn their hair and dresses. However, this narcissus is no ordinary flower: it is θαυμαστὸν (*thaumaston*, marvelous), a kind of σέβας (*sebas*, prodigy) for everyone and generates fascination in the girl (θαμβήσασα, *thambêsasa*). At the same time, it has been generated as a δόλος (*dolos*), a trap to attract the girl and lead her into the underground world of Hades.

In these verses we can thus see the same characterizations of ἄθურμα that the Homeric passages somehow disclosed; the most evident aspect is the marvel (θαῦμα) and wonder it engenders in those who look at it (just like the wall erected by the Achaeans or the jewels traded by the Phoenicians). However, the θαῦμα may be ambiguous and bear some subtle overtones that make it deceitful, δόλιος (*dolios*): it may carry one into some unexpected different world or new realm. The same happens with the ἀθύρματα, “toys”, used by the Titans to distract young Dionysus and kill him in a myth connected with the Mysteries and originally attributed to Orpheus, as is explained in a very critical passage by the Christian theologian Clement of Alexandria:¹⁸

Τὰ γὰρ Διονύσου μυστήρια τέλεον ἀπάνθρωπα· ὃν εἰσέτι παῖδα ὄντα ἐνόπλῳ κινήσει περιχορευόντων Κουρήτων, δόλῳ δὲ ὑποδύντων Τιτάνων, ἀπατήσαντες παιδαριώδεσιν ἀθύρμασιν, οὗτοι δὴ οἱ Τιτᾶνες διέσπασαν, ἔτι νηπίαχον ὄντα, ὡς ὁ τῆς Τελετῆς ποιητῆς Ὀρφεὺς φησιν ὁ Θράκιος·

κῶνος καὶ ρόμβος καὶ παίγνια καμπεσίγνια,
μῆλ’ αὖτε χρύσεα καλὰ παρ’ Ἑσπερίδων λιγυφώνων.
Καὶ τῆσδε ὑμῖν τῆς τελετῆς τὰ ἀχρεῖα **σύμβολα** οὐκ ἀχρεῖον εἰς κατάγνωσιν παραθέσθαι· ἀστράγαλος, σφαῖρα, στρόβιλος, μῆλα, ρόμβος, ἔσοπτρον, πόκος.

For the mysteries of Dionysos are completely inhumane: when he was still a child and the Kouretes were dancing around him in an armed dance, the Titans **sneaked in by trickery and deceived him with childish toys**, and these very Titans tore him to pieces, even though he was still a baby, as says Orpheus the

¹⁶ The context is typical for the abduction of girls (as the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* also shows), and thus bears an erotic overtone, as noted by L. FLORIDI, in this volume. See SOURVINOU-INWOOD (1987) 131-153, 141-147; LONSDALE (1993), 183-186; CALAME (2001), 145-162.

¹⁷ *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 1-18 (transl. FOLEY 1994).

¹⁸ See TORTORELLI GHIDINI (2000); LEVANIUK (2007).

Thracian, the poet of the initiation:

kanos and *rhombos* and dolls with bending limbs
and beautiful golden apples from the clear-voiced
Hesperides.

And so it is not useless to put forth for censure the use-
less **symbols** of your rite: knuckle-bone, ball, *strobilos*,
apples, *rhombos*, mirror, wool.¹⁹

Dionysus is fascinated by the toys (like Persephone),
because they are marvelous objects (the *konos* and
rhombos are spinning toys of some kind;²⁰ the doll
has moving limbs). Olga Levaniouk notes that they
must be closely related to the Dionysiac Mysteries (as
Clement explains, they are symbols of the rite), since
they initially have a negative function, namely to
generate illusion and deceit, but later lead to a state
of well-being and peace, as the Mysteries guarantee.²¹

This idea of ἄθυρμα as something related to the realm
of illusion may possibly be detected in a fragment by
Sappho (63 V.), an apostrophe addressed to Dream:

Ὅνοιρε μελαιν[α
φ[ο]ίταις ὅτα τ' ὕπνος [
γλύκυσ θ[έ]ρος, ἥ δειν' ὀνίας μ[ανύματ'
ζᾷ χάρις ἔχην τὰν δύναμ[ιν
ἔλπις δέ μ' ἔχει μὴ πεδέχη[ιν
μηδὲν μακάρων ἐλ[πομ' ἔχην δὲς πολύκα]ρπον ἄβαν-
οῦ γάρ κ' ἔον οὔτω[ὥστε
ἄθυρματα καὶ []εσθαι·
γένοιτο δέ μοι[
τοῖς πάντα [.

O Dream, [through] the dark [night ...]
you wander while Sleep you [...]
sweet god, [you show us] terrible [presentiments] of
anguish.
[It is truly impossible] to keep [your] power apart,
but the hope of not having part [of the pain you bring]
comforts me.
No, I do not hope [to enjoy twice] the fecund youth of
the blessed,
for I could not be so [foolish ... as to]
[still long for the] **toys** and [...],
but may mine be [an old age free of ills ...]
those that everything [...] ²²

The text is fragmentary, but according to the
reconstruction provided by Franco Ferrari (who
joins fr. 63 V. with fr. 87 V., from the same papyrus),²³

19 Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus*, 2.17 (= OF 307F Bernabé)
(transl. LEVANIUK 2007).

20 See for details LEVANIUK (2007), 175-180.

21 LEVANIUK (2007). See also CARÈ (forthcoming), for the fascination
the toys generate in order to vehiculate the access to the Mysteries.
However, the negative aspect of the toys in this passage, considered
as a mean of deception and as a way to diminish Dionysus' power, is
suggested by MASSA (2020), 42-43.

22 Sappho, fr. 63 V. (transl. FERRARI 2010).

23 Both fragments are preserved by P.Oxy. 1787, and the combining of
the two fragments was first proposed by PUGLIA (2007) and then de-
veloped by FERRARI (2007), 188-189. Such a reconstruction, however,

Sappho is here addressing Dream, who wanders in the
Night, accompanying Sleep and generating anxieties
and illusion. More specifically, the poetess, in her old
age, would here be rejecting the illusion of reverting
to the age of youth, with its ἄθυρματα ("toys") and
delights.

In another Sappho passage, ἄθυρμα bears the slightly
different meaning of "ornament", as in *Odyssey* 15. Fr.
44 V., possibly an epithalamium, focuses on Hector
and Andromache's wedding, and describes the
luxury objects that are displayed by the heroic couple
and which elicit admiration from ordinary people:

πόλλα δ' [ἐλ]ίγματα χρύσια κάμματα
πορφύρ[α] καταύτ[με]να, ποίκιλ' **ἄθυρματα**,
ἀργύρεα τ' ἀνάρ[ι]θμα [ποτή]ρ[ια] καλέφαις.

And behold many bracelets of gold and gowns
of purple go with the wind's breezes; **playthings** of
many kinds
and countless goblets of silver and ivory.²⁴

As in *Odyssey* 15, the term ἄθυρματα is associated
here with the feminine sphere and alludes to the
rich ornaments that the young bride wears on her
wedding day; I do not wish to push too far the idea
of the illusory character that this noun implies, as
revealed by Sappho's fr. 63, by underlining the fact
that the audience of this ode knew how vain the
Trojan princess' wealth would prove. What we have
may simply be a description of a joyful moment
and of the beautiful ornaments that everyone
admires. However, starting from the lyric poets of
the Archaic Age, we notice a shift of meaning in the
noun ἄθυρμα, which gradually loses the original
epic meaning of toy, to cover other semantic fields,
primary associated with "ornaments", but also with
"joy" and the pleasure derived from music.

In Pindar's *Pythian* 5, ἄθυρμα indicates the song itself
and the joyful chorus that sings it, giving pleasure to
Apollo.

μάκαρ δὲ καὶ νῦν, κλεεννάς ὅτι
εὖχος ἤδη παρὰ Πυθιάδος ἵπποις ἐλών
δέδεξαι τόνδε κῶμον ἀνέρων,
Ἀπολλώνιον ἄθυρμα.

And you are blessed now too, because in the glorious
Pythian festival you have lately gained a triumph with
your horses
and have welcomed this victory revel of men,
in which Apollo delights.²⁵

Similarly, in Bacchylides' *Epinician ode* 9, the term
refers to song, which gives pleasure to the Muses.²⁶

is far from certain, as NERI, CINTI (2017), 335, underlines.

24 Sappho, fr. 44.8-10 V. (transl. FERRARI 2010).

25 Pindar, *Pythian*, 5.20-24 (transl. RACE 1997a).

26 But in Bacchylides, *Dithyrambs*, 18.57 ἀρηῶν δ' ἄθυρμάτων means the
"delightful activities of Ares" and the term entails a sensual allure that
anticipates the erotic overtones of the Imperial Age. See L. FLORIDI,
in this volume.

σὺν δ' ἀλαθείᾳ βροτῶν
 κάλλιστον, εἴπερ καὶ θάνη τις,
 λε[ί]πεται Μουσ[ᾶν] ἄθ[υρ]μα.

When men speak truly there remains,
 even if [a man should die,
 the loveliest **plaything of the [deep-girdled] Muses.**²⁷

In both passages we can note an important step toward the new meaning that ἄθυρμα and the corresponding verb ἀθύρω (*athyro*) will acquire in texts from the sixth century onward, where the musical connotations become overwhelming, as the Platonic passage quoted at the beginning of this paper demonstrates. In Alceus' fr. 70 V., the verb ἀθύρω is used in a sympotic context, and indicates the sound of the lyre;²⁸ in Pindar's *Isthmian* 4.37 it is referred to Homeric songs.²⁹

As Stephen Kidd correctly notes, the semantic shift from "toy" to "music" is certainly due to the idea of pleasure that an ἄθυρμα generates: just as toys delight and entertain children, so the performance of music represents a joyful moment for men. Nonetheless, the connection with θαῦμα and wonder that we have seen at work right from the very first attestations of the term may have played an important role in the passage. As is well known, music and poetry are often represented as a marvelous force that fascinates and enchants the human soul,³⁰ transporting it into a different world, as happens to Persephone or to the young Dionysus. While music is not intrinsically deceitful, it is imbued with some subtle powers that make it comparable to the deceiving powers of the objects we have examined so far.

A fundamental text, which clearly exemplifies the transition of ἄθυρμα and ἀθύρω from the sphere of play to that of music, is represented by the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, one of the most recent among the major *Hymns*, possibly dating from around the 6th century BCE.³¹ In this ode, the newborn Hermes finds a tortoise in a meadow and kills it in order to craft the first lyre in the history of humanity.³² He is thus not only the inventor of this important musical instrument, but also the inventor of the music that can be played with its accompaniment. At the end

of the ode, Hermes gives the lyre to Apollo (as an exchange for the cattle he has stolen from him), and the instrument will become Apollo's most typical attribute.

In this ode, ἄθυρμα and ἀθύρω appear first with the "playful" meaning (ll. 32, 40, 52, 152) and then with the "musical" one (l. 485); furthermore, even in this case the marvelous and deceitful character of the lyre is manifest.

At the beginning of the ode, Hermes is represented as a prodigious newborn: on the very day of his birth, as he is exiting the cave where he lives with his mother, he sees a tortoise in a meadow and immediately understands that he can make a lyre out of it.

Ἑρμῆς τοι πρῶτιστα χέλυν τεκτῆναι· αἰδὼν,
 ἢ ῥά οἱ ἀντεβόλησεν ἐπ' αὐλείῃσι θύρῃσι
 βοσκομένη προπάροιθε δόμων ἐριθηλέα ποιήν,
 σαῦλα ποσὶν βαίνουσα· Διὸς δ' ἐριούνιος υἱὸς
 ἀθρήσας ἐγέλασσε καὶ αὐτίκα μῦθον ἔειπε·
σύμβολον ἤδη μοι μέγ' ὀνήσιμον, οὐκ ὀνοτάζω.
 χαῖρε φυὴν ἐρόεσσα χοροῖτύπε δαιτὸς ἑταίρη,
 ἀσπασίη προφανεῖσα· πόθεν τόδε **καλὸν ἄθυρμα**
 αἰόλον ὄστρακον ἔσσο χέλυσ ὄρεσι ζώουσα;

Hermes first engineered a tortoise to be a singer – the one who crossed his path at the courtyard gates, browsing on the flourishing vegetation in front of the house, stepping with a swagger. The beneficent son of Zeus spotted her, laughed, and straightaway spoke: «A **symbol** already – and a very beneficial one for me! I don't disparage it. Joy to you, gorgeous-bodied girl who stamps in the chorus, companion of the feast, a welcome appearance. Where's this **pretty plaything** from? You have a shifty shell-colour, mountain-dwelling tortoise!».³³

The tortoise's shell is addressed by Hermes as καλὸν ἄθυρμα (as also at ll. 40 and 52, ἐρατεινὸν ἄθυρμα); in fact, the lyre becomes Hermes' favourite toy, that the baby always holds under his arm or in the crib (ll. 63-64, 153, 242).³⁴ However, the young Hermes is already so clever that he understands that the turtle is a σύμβολον (*symbolon*), a sign of something else;³⁵ as in the case of Dionysus' toys, which are symbols of his rite in the Mystery rite, the turtle here is a symbol of the lyre that Hermes will craft from this animal. Furthermore, the lyre will be become the gift Hermes will give Apollo as a symbol of reconciliation after the quarrel about Apollo's cattle. So its symbolic nature is constant throughout the poem and prefigured since its earliest mention.

Once the instrument has been crafted, Hermes tests

27 Bacchylides, *Ep.* 9.84-87 (transl. McDEVITT 2009).

28 Alcaeus, fr. 70.3 V.: ἀθύρει πεδέχων συμποσίω, "(the lyre) sharing in the banquet, makes merry".

29 Pindar, *Isthmian*, 4.37-39: ἀλλ' Ὅμηρός τοι τετίμακεν δι' ἀνθρώπων, ὅς αὐτοῦ | πᾶσαν ὀρθώσας ἀρετὰν κατὰ ῥάβδον ἔφρασεν | θεσπεσίων ἐπέων λοιποῖς ἀθύρειν, "But Homer, to be sure, has made him honored | among mankind, who set straight his entire achievement and declared it with his staff | of divine verses for future men to enjoy" (transl. RACE 1997b).

30 See Plato, *Ion*, 533d-536d and LIGHTFOOT (2021), 80-106.

31 Cf. JANKO (1982), 133-150; RICHARDSON (2010), 24-25; NOBILI (2011); VERGADOS (2013), 130-147; THOMAS (2020), 1-23.

32 On this episode see SHELMEKDINE (1984); KAHN (1995); BRILLANTE (1999); NOBILI (2011), 160-165; VERGADOS (2013), 245-278; THOMAS (2020), 154-180.

33 *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, 25-33 (transl. THOMAS 2020, slightly modified).

34 See NOBILI (2013).

35 THOMAS (2020), 157-158.

its sound for the first time, and the effect is marvelous and astonishing:

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ τεῦξε φέρων ἔρατεινόν ἄθυρμα
πλήκτρῳ ἐπειρήτιζε κατὰ μέλος, ἢ δ' ὑπὸ χειρὸς
σμερδαλέον κονάβησε· θεὸς δ' ὑπὸ καλὸν αἶδεν
ἔξ αὐτοσχεδῆς πειρώμενος, ἥ ῥτε κοῦροι
ἤβηται θαλίῃσι παραιβόλα κερτομέουσιν.³⁶

When he had made it, he took his lovely **plaything** and with a plectrum tested it in a scale, and at his touch it reverberated **fearsomely**. The god sang to it well, making an extempore trial as youths in their prime make bantering retorts at festivities.³⁷

The use of ἄθυρμα at l. 52 is extremely meaningful because it no longer refers to the toy-turtle that had amused the little Hermes, but already describes the lyre itself. So the word conveys both the meaning of toy and that of musical instrument at the same time. The sound of the instrument is σμερδαλέον, terrifying, because it is new.³⁸ It generates terror, wonder and admiration in those who listen to it because this is the first time that a lyre produces any sound and no one has ever heard it before; the apparently innocent turtle has now become a new and powerful instrument, whose great power attracts Apollo's interest.³⁹

At the end of the *Hymn*, Hermes pleases Apollo, who was angry at him because of the theft of his cattle, with the sound of the lyre:

λαβὼν δ' ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ χειρὸς
πλήκτρῳ ἐπειρήτιζε κατὰ μέλος· ἢ δ' ὑπὸ χειρὸς
σμερδαλέον κονάβησε, γέλασσε δὲ Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων
γηθήσας, ἑρατὴ δὲ διὰ φρένας ἦλυθ' ἰωὴ
θεσπεσίης ἑνοπῆς, καὶ μιν γλυκὺς ἕμερος ἦρει
θυμῷ ἀκούζοντα.

He took it on his left-hand side and with the plectrum tested it in a scale, and at his touch it reverberated **fear-somely**. But Phoebus Apollo laughed with joy; lovely was the god-given clamour's sound as it shot through his senses, and sweet desire pervaded his spirit as he listened.⁴⁰

The sound of the lyre is σμερδαλέον (*smerdaleon*) for Apollo, too, because it is the first time he hears it. The god is astonished and fascinated and declares that the new music is marvelous (l. 443: **θαυμασίην** γὰρ τήνδε νεήφατον ὅσσαν ἀκούω). The lyre has the incredible power of changing Apollo's mood: initially he is

extremely angry at Hermes for his theft, but then the music fills his soul with sweet pleasure, making him peaceful and friendly toward his younger brother.

Again, we can notice the ἄθυρμα's power to raise wonder and give pleasure, but in this context it is even more meaningful because it is identified with the lyre, thus confirming that overlap between "toy" and "music" that was to become an established idea from the sixth century onward. As the examples so far adduced show, the change in the use of *athyrma* more as a "piece of art", a "piece of music", a kind of "marvelous spectacle" than a "plaything" can be due to the category of "artifice", "art" and "technical prowess" which seems to characterize the *athyrmata* even in the realm of play, in contrast to other toys. The *athyrmata* involve a special technical ability displayed by those who play with them (the sandcastles built by the children in the *Iliad*, the lyre manufactured by Hermes), and such a skill (*techne*) generates wonder and admiration, that lead to realm of music and fascination.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BRILLANTE, Carlo, "L'invenzione della lira nell'*Inno omerico a Hermes*", *Studi Classici e Orientali*, 47 (1999), 95-128.

CALAME, Claude, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece. Their Morphology, Religious Role, and Social Function*, Lanham (2001).

CALAME, Claude, "Choral Practices in Plato's *Laws*: Itineraries of Initiation?", in Anastasia Erasmia Peponi (ed.), *Performance and Culture in Plato's Laws*, Cambridge (2013), 87-108.

CANTILENA, Mario, "Il primo suono della lira", in Roberto Pretagostini (ed.), *Tradizione e innovazione nella cultura greca da Omero all'età ellenistica. Scritti in onore di Bruno Gentili*, Roma (1993), 115-127.

CAPRA, Andrea, NOBILI, Cecilia, "Hermes Iambicus", in John F. Miller, Jenny Strauss Clay (eds), *Tracking Hermes, Pursuing Mercury*, Oxford (2019), 79-92.

CARÈ, Barbara, "L'astragale réexaminé. Jeu, rites et violence dans l'Antiquité classique", in Véronique Dasen, Typhaine Haziza (eds), *Violence et jeu, de l'Antiquité à nos jours*, Caen in press.

CASEVITZ, Michel, "Les noms du jeu et du jouet en grec", in Veronique Dasen, Typhaine Haziza (eds), *Dossier thématique "Jeux et jouets"*, *Kentron. Revue pluridisciplinaire du monde antique*, 34 (2018), 51-60.

D'ANGOUR, Armand, "Plato and Play. Taking Education Seriously in Ancient Greece", *American Journal of Play*, 5, 3 (2013), 293-307.

FERRARI, Franco, *Una mitra per Kleis: Saffo e il suo pubblico*, Pisa (2007).

36 On the playful nature of the *Hymn*, both in its material and non-material aspects (i.e. the sympotic allure), see NOBILI (2013) and CAPRA, NOBILI (2019).

37 *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, 52-56 (transl. THOMAS 2020).

38 See CANTILENA (1993); THOMAS (2020), 174.

39 See LIGHFOOT (2021), 88-97.

40 *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, 418-423 (transl. THOMAS 2020).

- FERRARI, Franco, *Sappho's Gift: the Poet and her Community*, Ann Arbor (2010).
- FOLEY, Helene Peet, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter: Translation, Commentary and Interpretative Essays*, Princeton (1994).
- JANKO, Richard, *Homer, Hesiod and the «Hymns». Diachronic Development in Epic Diction*, Cambridge (1982).
- JOUËT-PASTRÉ, Emmanuelle, *Le jeu et le sérieux dans les Lois de Platon*, Sankt Augustin (2006).
- KAHN, Laurence, "La lyra di Hermes", in Donatella Restani (ed.), *Musica e mito nella Grecia antica*, Bologna (1995), 185-188.
- KIDD, Stephen E., *Play and Aesthetics in Ancient Greece*, Cambridge (2019).
- LEVANIOUK, Olga, "The Toys of Dionysos", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 103 (2007), 165-202.
- LIGHTFOOT, Jennifer, *Wonder and the Marvellous from Homer to the Hellenistic World*, Cambridge (2021).
- LONSDALE, Steven H., *Dance and Ritual Play in Greek Religion*, Baltimore (1993).
- MASSA, Francesco, "Des dieux qui jouent: polémiques religieuses autour du fr. 52 D.-K. d'Héraclite dans l'Empire romain", in Véronique Dasen, David Bouvier (eds), *Héraclite: le temps est un enfant qui joue, Jeu/Play/Spiel 1*, Liège (2020), 27-46.
- MCDEVITT, Arthur, *Bacchylides: the Victory Poems*, London (2009).
- NERI, Camillo, CINTI, Federico, *Saffo. Poesie, frammenti, testimonianze*, Ariccia (2017).
- NOBILI, Cecilia, *L'«Inno omerico a Erme» e le tradizioni locali*, Milano (2011).
- NOBILI, Cecilia, *Il gioco nell'Inno omerico a Erme*, in Chiara Torre, Claudia Lambrugo (eds), *Il gioco e i giochi nel mondo antico. Tra cultura materiale e immateriale*, Bari (2013), 155-160.
- POWELL, Barry, *The Iliad*, Oxford/New York (2014).
- POWELL, Barry, *The Odyssey*, Oxford/New York (2015).
- PUGLIA, Enzo, "Per la ricomposizione del quarto libro dei canti di Saffo (P. Oxy. 1787)", *Seminari Romani di Cultura Greca*, 10 (2007), 17-39.
- RACE, William, *Olympian Odes; Pythian Odes*, Cambridge (Mass.) (1997a).
- RACE, William, *Nemean Odes; Isthmian Odes; Fragments*, Cambridge (Mass.) (1997b).
- RICHARDSON, Nicholas J., *Three Homeric Hymns. To Apollo, Hermes, and Aphrodite. Hymns 3, 4, and 5*, Cambridge (2010).
- SAUNDERS, Trevor J., *Plato, The Laws*, Harmondsworth (1970).
- SHELMERDINE, Susan, "Hermes and the Tortoise. A Prelude to the Cult", *Greek Roman Byzantine Studies* 25 (1984), 201-208.
- SOURVINOU-INWOOD, Christiane, "A Series of Erotic Pursuits: Images and Meanings", *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 107 (1987), 131-153.
- THOMAS, Oliver, *The Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, Cambridge (2020).
- TORTORELLI GHIDINI, Marisa, "I giocattoli di Dioniso tra mito e rituale", in Marisa Tortorelli Ghidini, Alfredina Storchi, Amedeo Visconti (eds), *Tra Orfeo e Pitagora: origini e incontri di culture nell'antichità. Atti dei seminari napoletani 1996-1998*, Napoli (2000), 255-263.
- VERGADOS, Athanassios, *The Homeric Hymn to Hermes. Introduction, Text and Commentary*, Berlin/Boston (2013).



Lucia Floridi

Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna
lucia.floridi2@unibo.it

Ἐράσμιον αἰὲν ἄθυρμα. Toys, Slaves, and Erotic Objects

INTRODUCTION

Of the three sets of terms designating “game” and “play” in Greek – παίζω, ἀθύρω, ἐψιάομαι and their respective cognates –¹ the one centred on the verb ἀθύρω and its derivatives, such as ἄθυρμα, is already found in Homer, and appears quite frequently in poetry from the Archaic Age onwards, although most of its occurrences in prose – where the regular words are παίζω, παίγνιον and cognates – are provided by authors of the 1st centuries CE. The etymology of the word is not completely clear,² and ἀθύρω/ἄθυρμα is sometimes overlooked in modern discussions on the topic.³

Like other words related to this semantic area, the ἀθύρω set covers a variety of connected meanings: in addition to the basic sense of “playing (a game),”⁴ it can mean “to play a musical instrument”⁵ or “to dance.”⁶

* Thanks are due to Véronique Dasen and Marco Vespa for inviting me to take part in this project, and to Cecilia Nobili and Giuseppe Ucciardello for commenting on a first draft of this paper.

1 See, most recently, CASEVITZ (2018), and É. DIEU in this volume.

2 A connection with θύρα is to be ruled out: see FRISK (1960), s.v.; CHANTRAINE (2009), s.v.; according to BEEKES, VAN BEEK (2009), s.v., it is to be connected to PIE *dhuer(H)-, “to whirl, rush.”

3 E.g. SCHMIDT (1878) and (1886).

4 E.g. Homer, *Iliad*, 15.364, in the simile of the child who builds sandcastles on the seashore.

5 E.g. *Anacreontic Odes*, 41.11.

6 Plato, *Laws*, 796d. For ἀθύρω/ἄθυρμα in relation to music and dance, see C. NOBILI in this volume.

The derivative noun ἄθυρμα means “plaything”, “toy,”⁷ but also “delight”, “joy”, often with reference to music.⁸ The noun can also take on concrete meanings, such as “beautiful object”, “adornments,”⁹ and, when applied to living creatures, “pet”. Finally, it can indicate people – especially slaves – endowed with the specific function of providing amusement and pleasure. In short – to put it in Stephen E. Kidd’s words – “‘pleasure-object’ often seems to be the idea.”¹⁰ In this paper, I will focus on the erotic meaning of ἄθυρμα. I will try to examine uses and contexts that imply an erotic nuance, and that may have favoured the application of the word to human beings, in the specific sense of “erotic objects”.

7 E.g. Homer, *Iliad*, 15.363; Heraclitus, B70; Euripides, *TrGF* 272; Oppian, *Halieutica*, 3.169.

8 A choral ode: Pindar, *Pythian Odes*, 5.23 Ἀπολλώνιον ἄθυρμα; songs: Bacchylides, *Epinicians*, 9.87 I. = M. Μουσ[ᾶν] - - - ἄθ[υρ]μα; see also Bacchylides, *Greek Anthology* 6.313.3 = FGE 548 ἐν ἄθ[υρ]μασι Μουσᾶν, where it is used for the Muses’ musical contests (as explained by PAGE (1981), 152, “musical contests are their *pastime*”); in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, 40 and 52, Hermes’ lyre is defined as ἐρατεινὸν ἄθυρμα – and at v. 32 the tortoise, not yet transformed into a musical instrument, is called a καλὸν ἄθυρμα: see VERGADOS (2013), *ad loc.*

9 In the plural: e.g. *Odyssey*, 18.323; Sappho, fr. 44.9 and 63.8 Voigt; Socrates Rhodius, *FGrHist* 192F2 ἀθ[υρ]ματα Διονυσιακά; *DGE*, s.v. I.2; *LSJ*, s.v. As aptly remarked by STEPHANUS, *ThGL*, I, col. 870, however, in these cases too the primary meaning is *oblectamentum*: “ἀθ[υρ]ματα non signif. Ornamenta, sed appellari ita tamquam Res ludicras”.

10 KIDD (2019), 98, who offers one of the best recent discussions of this word, as well as of παίγνιον *ibid.*, 98–104.

1. TOYS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

A first passage to consider is the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*:

Δήμητρ' ἡῦκομον σεμνήν θεὰν ἄρχομ' αἰδεῖν,
αὐτὴν ἡδὲ θυγάτρα τανύσφυρον ἦν Ἀΐδωνεύς
ἥρπαξεν, δῶκεν δὲ βαρύκτυπος εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς,
νόσφιν Δήμητρος χρυσαόρου ἀγλαοκάρπου
παίζουσιν κούρησι σὺν Ὠκεανοῦ βαθυκόλποις, 5
ἀνθεὰ τ' αἰνυμένην ρόδα καὶ κρόκον ἡδ' ἴα καλὰ
λειμών' ἅμ' μαλακὸν καὶ ἀγαλλίδας ἡδ' ὑάκινθον
νάρκισσόν θ', ὃν φῦσε δόλον καλυκώπιδι κούρη
Γαῖα Διὸς βουλῇσι χαριζομένη πολυδέκτη
θαυμαστὸν γανόωντα, σέβας τότε πᾶσιν ιδέσθαι 10
ἀθανάτοις τε θεοῖς ἡδὲ θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποις·
τοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ ρίζης ἑκατὸν κάρα ἐξεπεφύκει,
κῶζ' ἥδιστ' ὁδμή, πᾶς δ' οὐρανὸς εὐρύς ὑπερθε
γαῖα τε πᾶς' ἐγέλασσε καὶ ἀλμυρὸν οἶδμα θαλάσσης.
ἡ δ' ἄρα θαμβήσας ὠρέξατο χερσὶν ἅμ' ἄμφω 15
καλὸν ἄθυρμα λαβεῖν· χάνε δὲ χθὼν εὐρυάγνια
Νύσιον ἅμ' πεδίον τῇ ὄρουσεν ἄναξ πολυδέγμων
ἵπποις ἀθανάτοισι Κρόνου πολυώνυμος υἱός.

Demeter I begin to sing, the fair-tressed awesome goddess,
herself and her slim-ankled daughter whom Aidoneus seized;
Zeus, heavy-thundering and mighty-voiced, gave her,
without the consent of Demeter of the bright fruit and golden sword,
as she played with the deep-breasted daughters of Ocean,
plucking flowers in the lush meadow-roses, crocuses,
and lovely violets, irises and hyacinth and the narcissus,
which Earth grew as a snare for the flower-faced maiden
in order to gratify by Zeus's design the Host-to-Many,
a flower wondrous and bright, awesome for all to see,
for the immortals above and for mortals below.
From its root a hundredfold bloom sprang up and smelled
so sweet that the whole vast heaven above
and the whole earth laughed, and the salty swell of the sea.
The girl marveled and stretched out both hands at once
to take the lovely toy. The earth with its wide ways yawned
over the Nysian plain; the lord Host-to-Many rose up on her
with his immortal horses, the celebrated son of Kronos.¹¹

These verses describe Kore's abduction by Hades, which occurs while the maiden is picking flowers, according to a common mythical pattern.¹² The

myth illustrates – among other things –¹³ the girl's “initial resistance to marriage and then her eventual acceptance of her fate.”¹⁴ Although Kore is mature enough to become a bride, she still plays like a child (παίζουσιν, v. 5),¹⁵ reaching out for the beautiful narcissus flower as though it were a toy (καλὸν ἄθυρμα, v. 16). She does not know that it has been planted there as a snare, and that Hades is going to appear from the underworld to take her down there with him. The term ἄθυρμα, although used here in its primary sense of “toy”, appears in a context full of allusions to sexuality, and calls attention to the transitional period that leads the girl from childhood to adulthood. The “pretty plaything” which Persephone tries to pick hides an insidious danger – being seized by Hades means the loss of virginity, the passage from the status of daughter to that of bride and wife.¹⁶

A second text by Bacchylides is worth considering:

ὁμμάτων
δὲ στίλβειν ἄπο Λαμνίαν 55
φοίνισαν φλόγα· παῖδα δ' ἔμ-
μεν πρόθηβον, ἀρηϊῶν δ' ἄθυρμάτων
μεμνᾶσθαι πολέμου τε καὶ
χαλκεοκτύπου μάχας·
δίξησθαι δὲ φιλαγλάους Ἀθήνας. 60

Bright red Lemnian fire flashes from his eyes. He is a boy in the prime of youth, intent on the playthings of Ares: war and battles of clashing bronze. He is on his way to splendour-loving Athens.¹⁷

These verses conclude *Dithyramb*, 4 S.-M. (= 18 M.), a dramatic dithyramb in four strophes where king Aegeus and a chorus of young Athenian men discover the deeds of Theseus, who is approaching Athens, but whose identity is still unknown to them. Theseus is described as a παῖς in the prime of youth (παῖδα [...] / [...] πρόθηβον, vv. 36-37); and as a

¹³ For the use of Persephone's story in funerary contexts, see *infra*.

¹⁴ WALKER (2020).

¹⁵ She is, in Nicholas James Richardson's words, “something of a child”: RICHARDSON (1974), *ad loc.* Both BIERL (2021) and CALAME (2021) argue that in these passages, where it is applied to young girls on the threshold of their adulthood, παίζειν implies a choral dance, whose movements are unintentional and playful, as it is to be expected in children; the verb might thus be intended as “to dance”.

¹⁶ The loss of virginity, which dramatically alters the girl's status (so that her very name changes from Kore, “virgin”, to Persephone), is particularly stressed by Claudian, *The Rape of Proserpine*, 2.260-264. Some observations on this point in e.g. LINCOLN (1979), 228-229. For ἄθυρματα with reference to the “delights” of a young girl, prematurely deprived of life's joys, see Posidippus, *epigram*, 55.1-3 A.-B. πάντα τὰ Νικομάχης καὶ ἀθύρματα καὶ πρὸς ἐώϊαν / κερκίδα Σαπφώϊους ἐξ ὁάρων ὁάρους / ὥχετο Μοῖρα φέρουσα προῶρια, “All Nicomache's delights, all her conversation *à la* Sappho, / one after the other, at the sound of the morning shuttle, / Fate has taken away prematurely” (transl. C. Austin, LED), where “il termine fa riferimento ai giochi e ai passatempo adolescenziali”, as remarked by PRETAGOSTINI (2002), 122.

¹⁷ Bacchylides, *Dithyramb*, 4.54-60 S.-M. (=18.54-60 M.) (transl. D. A. Campbell, Loeb).

¹¹ *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 1-15 (transl. H. P. Foley, Princeton UP).

¹² See, among the many examples, Creusa in Euripides, *Ion*, 887, Helen in Euripides, *Helen*, 242-248 or Europa in Moschus, *Europa*, 63.

παῖς he still plays, although his playthings are those of Ares (ἀρητῶν δ' ἄθυρμάτων, v. 37), i.e. battles and martial actions.

On the one hand, the word ἄθυρμα reduces the bloody deeds of war to “Ares’ pastimes”, implying the irrelevance of human things from a divine perspective, and conveying the idea of the pleasure the god takes in war; on the other hand, a term so strongly connected to the world of children serves the purpose of emphasising Theseus’ youth.¹⁸ As first suggested by Reinhold Merkelbach,¹⁹ the ode was most probably composed for a dithyrambic performance by ephebes at an Attic festival.²⁰ The hero is thus presented as the perfect Athenian ephebe, a mythical prototype of the young Athenian boys whose training was celebrated that day. In addition, it is to be noted that, despite the martial atmosphere, upon closer inspection the final strophe reveals a dissolution of the tension caused by Theseus’ arrival.²¹ When describing the physical appearance of the young hero, who is approaching in arms, as if ready to fight, Aegeus also remarks that the boy is heading towards “splendour-loving Athens”, an expression which reminds one of the beginning of the ode, where a sharp contrast is drawn between the joys of the symposium and the tragedy of war. In vv. 1-4 an apprehensive chorus asks Aegeus why the trumpet, which usually signals war, has been sounded:

Βασιλεῦ τᾶν ἱερᾶν Ἀθανᾶν
τῶν ἀβροβίων ἄναξ Ἴωνων
τί νέον ἔκλαγε χαλκοκῶδων
σάλπιγξ πολεμῆϊαν αἰοιδάν.

King of sacred Athens, lord of the luxuriously-living Ionians, why has the bronze-belled trumpet just now sounded a war song?²²

The sound of the trumpet is completely unexpected for the Athenians – the Ionians of v. 2, significantly qualified by the epithet ἀβροβίων, in strong opposition to πολεμῆϊαν αἰοιδάν. The final strophe presents a similar opposition. The young boy, on his way to Athens, has accomplished all the wondrous military deeds that mark his initiation into adult life (vv. 16-30). He is now ready to enter Athens as the

King’s legitimate heir,²³ and, as a consequence, to conform to the city’s mores, “*tra cui la raffinatezza ionica di cui Atene era ormai nel V secolo principale esponente*”.²⁴

In such a context, one should note that the physical description of Theseus is characterised by an intrinsic sensuality. A flame beams from his eyes, and although it is a “Lemnian flame” (ὀμμάτων / δὲ στίλβειν ἄπο Λαμνίαν / φοίνισσαν φλόγα, vv. 54-56), an expression that alludes to the proverb Λέμνιον βλέπειν, “with fierce look”,²⁵ apt for the military context,²⁶ the image of a young boy’s eyes shooting forth fire also had erotic overtones in Greek poetry, at least from Pindar onwards.²⁷ The emphasis, here, is on Theseus’ formidable deeds and military glory, but the hero is also described as a boy endowed with all the graces of his young age. He is a brave warrior, but he is also a youth in the splendour of his prime. A word such as ἄθυρμα, with its idea of juvenile playfulness, although used in connection with Ares, helps convey the notion of a return to the peaceful atmosphere evoked, at the beginning of the ode, by the expression τῶν ἀβροβίων ἄναξ Ἴωνων, and abruptly interrupted by the sound of the trumpet.

In the third book of Apollonius Rhodius’ *Argonautika*, Aphrodite addresses these words to her son, Eros:

εἰ δ’ ἄγε μοι πρόφρων τέλεσον χρέος ὅττι κεν εἶπω,
καὶ κέν τοι ὀπάσαιμι Διὸς περικαλλὲς ἄθυρμα
κεῖνο τό οἱ ποίησε φίλη τροφὸς Ἀδρήστεια
ἄντρῳ ἐν Ἰδαίῳ ἔτι νήπια κουρίζοντι,
σφαῖραν ἐντρόχαλον, τῆς οὐ σύγε μείλιον ἄλλο 135
χειρῶν Ἥφαιστοιο κατακτεατίσσει ἄρειον.

Come, be ready to perform for me the task I will tell you of, and I will give you Zeus’ all-beauteous plaything – the one which his dear nurse Adrasteia made for him, while he still was a child, with childish ways, in the Idaean cave – a well rounded ball; no better toy will you get from the hands of Hephaestus.²⁸

23 CALAME (1990), 73-77.

24 NOBILI (2021), 62.

25 Hesychius, λ 873 Latte; CPG II, 122 and 505; see MAEHLER (2004), 204; GIUSEPPETTI (2015), 98, n. 92.

26 The warrior’s fiery look is a common theme, starting from Homer: see Homer, *Iliad*, 13.474, 15.621; Pseudo-Hesiod, *Shield of Heracles*, 72; GRAZ (1965), 240-247.

27 Pindar, fr. 123.3-5 M. E.g. Dioscorides, *Greek Anthology*, 5.56.3 = HE 1465; Rhianos, *Greek Anthology*, 12.93.9 = HE 3216; Asclepiades, *Greek Anthology*, 12.161.3 = HE 904; Meleager, *Greek Anthology*, 12.63.1-2 = HE 4484-4485; *Greek Anthology*, 12.72.3-4 = HE 4492-4493; *Greek Anthology*, 12.109 = HE 4308-4311; *Greek Anthology*, 12.110 = HE 4550-4553; *Greek Anthology*, 12.113 = HE 4312-4313; *Greek Anthology*, 12.127.3-4 = HE 4422-4423; *Greek Anthology*, 12.144.3 = HE 4556; Anonymous, *Greek Anthology* 12.99.4 = HE 3687; Strato of Sardis, *Greek Anthology* 12.196 = 37 Floridi; Irenaeus Referendarius, *Greek Anthology*, 5.251.1; Musaeus, *Hero and Leander*, 90; Maximus of Tyre, 18.8; PEARSON (1909); OGLE (1913), 133-136; SZARMACH (1982), 67; TOOHEY (1992), 267-268.

28 Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautika*, 3.131 (transl. R. C. Seaton, Loeb, slightly modified).

18 Cf. Pindar, *Nemean Odes*, 3.43, where Achilles παῖς ἐὼν ἄθυρε μέγала ἔργα with his spear.

19 MERKELBACH (1973), followed by IERANÒ (1987); on Theseus as an ephebe, see also BARRON (1980), who suspects that the hero’s attributes (κυνέαν Λάκαι-/ναν, vv. 50-51 and οὔλιον Θεσσαλὴν χλαμύδ’, v. 53) may refer to the names of the three sons of Cimon, Lakadamonios, Oulios and Thessalos; for a discussion of John Barron’s hypothesis, see MAEHLER (2004), 190-191.

20 Other Attic festivals have been suggested, such as the Dionysia, the Thargelia, the Hephaestia, the Theseia, and the Great Panathenaia: see MAEHLER (2004), 189.

21 As recently remarked by NOBILI (2021).

22 Bacchylides, *Dithyramb*, 4.1-4 S.-M. (= 18.1-4 M.) (transl. D. A. Campbell, Loeb).

The expression περικαλλές ἄθურμα refers to the golden ball of Zeus – σφαῖραν ἐντρόχαλον, v. 135 – which Aphrodite promises to give her divine son as a gift, to induce him to make Medea fall in love with Jason.²⁹ The ball symbolises here Eros' universal power,³⁰ but Eros had already been represented as a ballplayer by Anacreon³¹ to convey the idea that the god of love ruthlessly plays with the lives of men. The same image is also featured in Meleager,³² which is clearly reminiscent of Anacreon, and in art too Eros is often represented as playing with a ball.³³

More generally, the game of the ball is associated with the erotic sphere: see, most famously, the passage of the *Odyssey*, where Nausicaa is described as playing with a ball when she first meets Odysseus, in a context full of nuptial symbols.³⁴ The mythical scheme underlying the episode recalls the one encountered in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*: a maiden is playing with her friends in a solitary place, when a male figure bursts unto the scene.³⁵ Once again, ἄθურμα is used with reference to a child's toy, but the game it alludes to carries erotic resonances.

Some centuries later,³⁶ Longus, in *Daphnis and Chloe*, thus describes the daily activities of Daphnis and Chloe, the two protagonists of his pastoral novel:

Ἐπραττον δὲ κοινῇ πάντα, πλησίον ἀλλήλων νέμοντες. Καὶ πολλάκις μὲν ὁ Δάφνις τῶν προβάτων τὰ ἀποπλανώμενα συνέστελλε, πολλάκις δὲ ἡ Χλόη τὰς θρασυτέρας τῶν αἰγῶν ἀπὸ τῶν κρημνῶν κατήλαυνεν, ἤδη δὲ τις καὶ τὰς ἀγέλας ἀμφοτέρας ἐφρούρησε θατέρου προσλιπαρήσαντος ἀθύρματι. Ἀθύρματα δὲ ἦν αὐτοῖς ποιμενικὰ καὶ παιδικά.

They were grazing their flocks near one another and did everything together. Sometimes Daphnis rounded up stray sheep from her flocks, and sometimes Chloe

drove the friskier goats down from the hanging cliffs. By this time, one watched over both flocks while the other was playing some game. Their games were the kind shepherds and children play.³⁷

As Ewen Bowie aptly remarks, the author “keeps reminding us that D. and C. are two removes from cultivated adults”³⁸ (i.e. they are shepherds, as opposed to urban cultivated people, and children, as opposed to adults).³⁹ In such a context, “the innocence of their modes of entertainment is heightened for readers who know that ἀθύρματα can also refer to partners in sexual play”.⁴⁰ Ἀθύρματα, as the ἀθύρματι that immediately precedes clearly shows, does not have any sexual overtones here, and is to be taken in his “neutral” sense of “pastimes”; the two shepherds are naïve young people, they are children who play children's games. But their story is that of a gradual discovery of sex and love: Bowie's suggestion that the word might sound somewhat ironic (if not “proleptic”) to the readers is certainly right. We are confronted, once again, with the blurring line between childhood and adulthood, innocence and maturity, children's games and the pursuit of love and sex.

2. PETS

Ἄθურμα does not refer exclusively to inanimate things, but also to living entities. We have already mentioned the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*,⁴¹ where καλὸν ἄθურμα is used for the tortoise. The word actually often applies to “pets”, and in this sense it appears quite frequently in erotic contexts, where it usually (but not exclusively) designates a gift for one's beloved. An interesting example is provided by the woman poet Hedyle (4th/3rd cent. BCE):

ἢ κόγχους δωρήματ' Ἐρυθραίης ἀπὸ πέτρης,
ἢ τοὺς ἀλκύνων παῖδας ἔτ' ἀπτερύγους,
τῇ νύμφῃ [...] ἀθύρματα.

gifts, cockleshells from Erythraean rock,
or the children of kingfishers still wingless,
baubles [...] for the nymph.⁴²

The fragment opens with (what remains of) a catalogue of erotic gifts offered by Glaucus to the nymph Scylla: the word, here, seems to refer collectively to both the shells (κόγχους, v. 1) and the kingfisher chicks (ἀλκύνων παῖδας, v. 2).⁴³ As

29 An allusion to this passage is provided by Philostratus the Younger, *Imagines*, 8 = pp. 402-403 Kayser, where the very word ἄθურμα is used: μισθὸν δὲ οἱ (i.e. to Eros) τῆς ὑπουργίας ἡ μήτηρ σφαῖραν προδεῖκνυσι Διὸς αὐτὴν ἄθურμα γεγονέναι λέγουσα, “as pay for this service his mother shows him a ball which she says was once a plaything of Zeus” (transl. A. Fairbanks, Loeb). The expression περικαλλές ἄθურμα is found, in a different context (an isopsephic epigram offered as a gift to Marcus for the Saturnalia), in Leonidas of Alexandria, *Greek Anthology* 6.322.3 = FGE 1870, who is dependent on Apollonius, according to CAMPBELL (1994), 120.

30 On this point, see especially HUNTER (1989), 113; PENDERGRAFT (1991); on Apollonius' passage, see also at least GILLIES (1924); KLEIN (1980-1981).

31 Anacreon, fr. 302 Page = 13 Gentili.

32 Meleager, *Greek Anthology*, 5.214 = HE 4268, the poet's heart is Heliodora's plaything.

33 LIMC III 1.914, 987. For a discussion of the visual erotic discourse of ball-play in Attic and Italiote vase painting, see DASEN (2016) with earlier bibliography. For a survey of the literary passages where this motif occurs, see PRETAGOSTINI (2007), 172-179.

34 Homer, *Odyssey*, 6.100.

35 For the erotic significance of such a narrative situation in relation to Nausicaa's episode, see e.g. MASTROMARCO (2003), 117; NOBILI (2006); BOUVIER (2021).

36 For a discussion of Longus' date see BOWIE (2019), 19-20, who argues that the author wrote his novel around 220 CE.

37 Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe*, 1.10.1.

38 BOWIE (2019), 115.

39 The idea that “pastoral” and “childish” are somewhat equivalent terms is also to be found at the end of the novel, where Daphnis and Chloe realise that what they had engaged in until then were only ποιμένων παίγνια, “shepherds' games” (4.40.3): see PATTONI (2005), 242, n. 33.

40 BOWIE (2019), 115.

41 *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, 32.

42 Hedyle, SH 456.1-3 (transl. I. M. Plant, University of Oklahoma Press, slightly modified).

43 On Hedyle's fragment, see PLANT (2004), 53-55; FLORIDI (2018-

regards this last point, it is to be noted that, in the sense of “pet”, the noun often applies to birds:⁴⁴ see especially two passages of Claudius Aelianus,⁴⁵ the first one about doves that are the companions of Aphrodite, the goddess of love, and the second one about an eagle, raised by his owner as a beloved or a younger brother.⁴⁶ Other instances are included e.g. in Lucian where the diminutive ἄθυρμάτιον is used for a bear cub, raised by Polyphemus, in love with Galatea;⁴⁷ in Galen with reference to a πίθων, a “little ape”, mentioned as a funny “plaything” for children in their play;⁴⁸ in Alciphron, where it is used for a puppy dog;⁴⁹ *IGUR* also for a puppy dog, Theia, mourned by her young master.⁵⁰

In most of these passages, ἄθυρμα = “pet” is justified at a double level: (1) a pet is a “joy” and a “pastime”, as any “toy” can be; (2) the animals so defined are usually “puppies”, i.e. they are somewhat related to the world of infancy.⁵¹

The custom of presenting pets as erotic gifts might be related to the young age of the beloved (especially, though not exclusively, in homosexual contexts, where the *eromenos* was usually a young, prepubescent boy,⁵² and thus one still interested in toys).⁵³ Be that as it may, ἄθυρμα as “pet” combines most of the ideas conveyed by the word – infancy, joy, and love.

2019), with further bibliography.

44 On birds (and other animals) as household pets in Greece and Rome, see LAZENBY (1949) (who also remarks that bird-names are often used as terms of endearment).

45 Claudius Aelianus, *On the Nature of Animals*, 4.2 ἄθῦρματα γὰρ Ἀφροδίτης περιστέραις εἶναι ἔδουσί τε ἐκεῖνοι; *On the Nature of Animals*, 6.29 (= Phylarchus, *FGH* 61a) οὐ γὰρ τί που ὡς ἄθυρμα ἐς παιδίαν ἔτρεφε τὸν ὄρνιν, ἀλλὰ ἐρωμένου δίκην ἢ ἀδελφοῦ νεωτέρου.

46 Other instances of the word with reference to birds include Claudius Aelianus, *On the Nature of the Animals*, 3.42 (the coot), 10.23 (gazelles, sacred to Isis), 10.35 (the partridge, sacred to Artemis), 11.33 (the Indian peacock), 12.4 (the sparrowhawk, dear to Hermes), 16.5 (the hoopoe, loved by Indian kings). Παίγνιον can be used in a similar sense: according to Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 2.17.4, when Zeus was wooing Hera, he turned himself into a bird to be her “plaything” (παίγνιον). On this passage (and, more generally, on the use of παίγνιον and ἄθυρμα to refer to “animate toys”), see KIDD (2019), 113–114.

47 Lucian, *Dialogues of the Gods*, 1.4.

48 Galen, 3.80 K. ἄθυρμα γελοῖον παιζόντων παίδων τοῦτο τὸ ζῷον.

49 Alciphron, *Letters*, 2.19.3 τὸ Μελιταῖον κυνίδιον, ὃ ἐτρέφομεν ἄθυρμα τῇ δεσποίνῃ προσήνές.

50 *IGUR* 1230.3–4 (2nd/3rd cent. CE) κούρη δὲ ἄβρὸν ἄθυρμα ποθοῦσα ἔλεινὰ δακρύει / τὴν τροφίμην; on this epitaph, see GARULLI (2014), 33 and 39–40.

51 As suggested by FRANCO (2017), 40–41, pets were possibly “involved in ludic activities meant to entertain and produce ‘pleasure’ and ‘enjoyment’”. In her investigation into the vocabulary of human-animal bonds, Franco highlights the preference, in Graeco-Roman antiquity, for metaphors of erotic attraction as a way to conceptualise the relationship between human beings and pets.

52 According to Strato of Sardis, *Greek Anthology*, 12.4 = 4 Floridi, for instance, the *eromenos* should be neither under 12 nor over 17 years old (see my commentary *ad loc.*).

53 On pets as erotic gifts, see especially DOVER (1978), 92–93; KITCHELL (2004), 180–181 (with a specific focus on dogs).

3. HUMAN BEINGS

In the preceding paragraphs we have analysed some occurrences of ἄθυρμα in its proper sense of “toy”, “plaything”, in contexts that show, to different degrees, a connection with the sphere of affection, love, and sexuality. In this paragraph, we will concentrate on the use of the word with specific erotic connotations.

The first occurrence of ἄθυρμα with an erotic meaning is provided by an Old Comedy playwright, Crates (fr. 23 K.-A.), quoted by Photius:⁵⁴

ἀφροδίσιον ἄθυρμα· Κράτης Λαμίας· “καὶ μάλιστα ἀφροδίσιος ἀθύρμασιν”. *** ἡδὺ γὰρ κάκεῖνο δρᾶν ἐστι, λέγεσθαι δὲ οὐ καλόν.⁵⁵

aphrodision athyrma: Crates in *Lamia*: “and especially to *aphrodisia athyrmata*”. For this too is pleasant to do, but to talk about it is not appropriate.⁵⁶

The lack of a context makes it difficult to understand what the exact sense of the expression ἀφροδίσιον ἄθυρμα was: possibly “erotic pastimes”, with reference to sexual activities, as it is usually understood by scholars of comedy,⁵⁷ or possibly, more concretely, “partners in sexual play”, as suggested by DGE,⁵⁸ on the basis of (the much later) Cassius Dion, where τὰ ἀφροδίσια [...] ἀθύρματα are the young slaves who are the object of Augustus’ attentions:

πυθομένων τέ τινος αὐτῆς πῶς καὶ τί δρῶσα οὕτω τοῦ Αὐγούστου κατεκράτησεν, ἀπεκρίνατο ὅτι αὐτὴ τε ἀκριβῶς σωφρονούσα, καὶ πάντα τὰ δοκοῦντα αὐτῇ ἡδέως ποιούσα, καὶ μήτε ἄλλο τι τῶν ἐκείνου πολυπραγμονούσα, καὶ τὰ ἀφροδίσια αὐτοῦ ἀθύρματα μήτε ἀκούειν μήτε αἰσθάνεσθαι προσποιουμένη.

When someone asked her [i.e. Livia] how and by what course of action she had obtained such a commanding influence over Augustus, she answered that it was by being scrupulously chaste herself, doing gladly whatever pleased him, not meddling with any of his affairs, and, in particular, by pretending neither to hear of nor to notice the favourites that were the object of his passion.⁵⁹

54 On the word in comedy, see also Cratinus, fr. 152 K.-A., where the meaning, however, is different: BIANCHI (2017), 28.

55 It is unclear whether the comic passage is limited to the words καὶ [...] ἀθύρμασιν, or also involves what follows – in which case, the text should be corrected, for the sake of meter: for possible reconstructions, see BONANNO (1972), 114–116; PERRONE (2019), 135–136 (with earlier bibliography).

56 Photius, a 3396 Theod.

57 For instance, the term is translated as “erotic pastimes” by HENDERSON (1991), 154, as “passatempo amorosi” by PERRONE (2019), 134 (according to whom “I ‘trastulli di Afrodite’ sono chiaramente da intendersi nel senso di giochi erotici, sessuali, forse in relazione alle abitudini oscene del demone Lamia e alle sue pericolose arti seduttive”, p. 136), and as “jeux d’amour” by KOMORNICKA (1981), 68 (who comments: “A part Eupolis [...] – et les lignes de Cratès que l’on vient évoquer – ce terme n’apparaît que dans la littérature tardive, au sens érotique – Dio Cass. 58,2; *anacréontique* 53,8 b”).

58 DGE, s.v., I.1; “De pers. amadas ἀφροδίσια ἀθύρματα *objetos de amor*”.

59 Cassius Dion, 58.2.5 (transl. E. Carey, Loeb).

A further instance of the expression is provided by *Anacreontic Odes*,⁶⁰ ἀφροδίσιον [...] ἄθυρμα, “object of Aphodites’ love”, where it is not used, however, for a human being, but for Aphrodites’ flower, the rose (whose erotic overtones are well-known).⁶¹ We have thus evidence that the periphrasis could be applied to both animate and inanimate objects.

In the 5th century BCE, the word reappears in Eupolis’ comedy Ἀστράτευοι (also known by the alternative title Ἀνδρόγυννοι), of which very little survives.⁶² According to Photius, the playwright used the expression ἀνδρόγυννον ἄθυρμα (fr. 46 K.-A.). This is Photius’ lemma:

ἀνδρόγυννον ἄθυρμα. Εὐπολις ἐν Ἀστρατεύτοις. ἀνδρογύνους δὲ ἔλεγον τοὺς ἄνδρας μὲν τὸ σώμα φύντας, εἰς γυναικάς δὲ σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἀφέντας καὶ τὰς τούτων ἐπιτηδεύσεις ἐπιτηδεύοντας.

androgynon athyrma: Eupolis in *Astrateutoi*. They used the term *androgynoi* for men who were physically male, but who made themselves into women and adopted their practices.⁶³

Once again, the absence of a context makes it difficult to understand whether the term was used here in the sense of “(sexual) plaything”, “androgynous bauble”, as translated by S. Douglas Olson,⁶⁴ or of “partner in (homo)sexual play”, with specific reference to a person. The citation context, however, might suggest that the latter is meant. Photius explicitly says that the expression was used “for *men* who were physically male”, and what is presumably Photius’ source, namely Phrynichus,⁶⁵ whose (epitomised) note survives,⁶⁶ reads ἀνδρόγυννον ἄθυρμα· εἰ θέλοις γύννιν τινὰ σκῶσαι, χρήσαιο ἄν, “an androgynous bauble: if you would like to mock someone as a pansy, you could use [this term]”.⁶⁷ Phrynichus thus draws an equivalence between ἀνδρόγυννον ἄθυρμα and γύννιν, “womanish man”,⁶⁸ which suggests an interpretation of the expression as “homosexual erotic object” (apparently, with an abusive connotation⁶⁹).

60 *Anacreontic Odes*, 55.8.

61 It is also a slang term for the *pudendum muliebre*: see e.g. Pherecrates, fr. 113.28–29 K.-A.; Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, 944; further examples in HENDERSON (1991), 135; SANDIN (2000), 345.

62 Fr. 35–47 K.-A.; see DOVER (1978), 144, and especially OLSON (2017), 154.

63 Photius, α 1764 Theod (transl. S. D. Olson, KomFrag, slightly modified).

64 OLSON (2017), 178, comments: “ἄθυρμα (‘plaything, bauble, trinket’ [...]) is something trivial in which a person nonetheless takes delight”. Olson does not mention the later use of the word as “erotic object”. See also HENDERSON (1991²), 154: “transvestites’ play”.

65 Phrynichus, PS, 17.13–14.

66 OLSON (2017), 177.

67 Transl. OLSON (2017), 177.

68 LSJ, s.v.

69 As pointed out by OLSON (2017), 178, the word ἀνδρόγυννον is explicitly treated as abusive at Plato, *Symposium*, 189e νῦν δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀλλ’ ἢ ἐν ὀνείδει ὄνομα κείμενον, “now only the name survives, but is

Be that as it may, ἄθυρμα, in later (prose) writers, is certainly applied to human beings, in the sense of “erotic object”. Before Cassius Dio, who writes in the 2nd–3rd centuries CE, the first certain instance is provided by Philo of Alexandria in his *On the Contemplative Life* (1st cent. BCE–1st cent. CE). The author is polemically describing sumptuous banquets, characterised by a lavish display of opulence. Handsome male slaves, richly dressed up, serve food and wine, while a younger group of boys is there just to offer pleasure to the banqueters’ eyes. Those younger boys are ἀθύρματα ... παιδεραστῶν:

ἐφεδρεύουσι δ’ ἄλλοι, μεράκια <ἢ> πρωτογένεια, τοὺς ἰούλους ἄρτι ἀνθοῦντες, ἀθύρματα πρὸ μικροῦ παιδεραστῶν γεγονότες, ἡσκημένοι σφόδρα περιέργως πρὸς τὰς βαρυτέρας ὑπηρεσίας, ἐπίδειξις ἐστιατόρων εὐπορίας, ὡς ἴσασιν οἱ χρώμενοι, ὡς δὲ ἔχει τὸ ἀληθές, ἀπειροκαλίας.

On the sideline there are other boys, youths whose beard has just started to embellish their cheeks, who have recently become the playthings of the pederasts, dressed in a too elaborate way for rather heavy services, a display of the opulence of the guests – so those who use them presume – but, in reality, of their bad taste.⁷⁰

In all the passages considered in this section so far, ἄθυρμα carries an erotic meaning through its association with a specific qualifier – ἀνδρόγυννον, ἀφροδίσιον, or παιδεραστῶν. The term can be applied to both objects (the rose) and people (young male slaves in the role of παιδικά in Philo of Alexandria and Cassius Dio; Crates’ and Eupolis’ fragments are of uncertain interpretation, but whereas the word is applied there to human beings, in Eupolis’ case we are probably dealing with adult passive homosexuals, given the subject of the play).

But was the word, when applied to human beings, perceived as erotic *per se*? A second passage by Philo of Alexandria⁷¹ suggests a negative answer to this question. Philo mentions a mentally disabled man who was the ἄθυρμα of children and boys (ἄθυρμα νηπίων καὶ μεираκίων σχολαζόντων): they would dress him up as a king and pretend to be his devoted guards and citizens. The idea of erotic play is not involved here: the man is just a “plaything”, a pleasurable “pastime” for the idle boys.⁷²

Other passages, however, show a more complex and nuanced situation. There is, for instance, an epigram of Antipater of Sidon⁷³ on a pantomime, Antiodemis:

nothing other than an insult”.

70 Philo of Alexandria, *On the Contemplative Life*, 52.

71 Philo of Alexandria, *Flaccus*, 36–39.

72 Although deformity might have its own erotic appeal: see GARLAND (2010), 52–54.

73 For the attribution of this epigram to the Sidonian, see especially ARGENTIERI (2003), 136–137.

Ἡ καὶ ἔτ' ἐκ βρέφους κοιμωμένη Ἀντιοδημὶς
 πορφυρέων, Παφίης νοσσίς, ἐπὶ κροκύδων,
 ἢ τακεραῖς λεύσσουσα κόραις μαλακώτερον ὕπνου,
 Λύσιδος ἀλκυονίς, τερπνὸν ἄθυρμα Μέθης,
 ὕδατινους φορέουσα βραχίονας, ἢ μόνη ὁστοῦν 5
 οὐ λάχεν – ἦν γὰρ ὅλη τοῦν ταλάροισι γάλα –,
 Ἰταλίην ἤμειπεν, ἵνα πολέμοιο καὶ αἰχμῆς
 ἀμπαύσῃ Ῥώμην μαλθακίνῃ χάριτι.

Antiodemis, the nursling of Aphrodite, who from her babyhood slept on purple cloth, the glance of whose melting eyes is softer than sleep, the halcyon of Lysis, the delightful toy of Methe, whose arms flow like water, who alone among women has no bones at all (for she was all cream-cheese), has crossed to Italy, that by her softening charm she may make Rome cease from war and lay down the sword.⁷⁴

The description of the girl, who was certainly “a singer of licentious songs”,⁷⁵ has clear erotic overtones: she is defined, for instance, as Παφίης νοσσίς, “the nursling of Aphrodite” (v. 2), she has a melting gaze (v. 3)⁷⁶ and she is endowed with a “softening charm” (μαλθακίνῃ χάριτι, v. 8). At v. 4, she is called τερπνὸν ἄθυρμα Μέθης, “the delightful toy of Drunkenness”, an expression where ἄθυρμα, combined with the mention of drunkenness – a typical ally of Love –⁷⁷ is certainly to be taken in an erotic sense. The whole context, which combines dance, music, and performance at symposia, strongly suggests that ἄθυρμα is used here for the wide range of meanings that it covers: playfulness, music and dance, and erotic enjoyment.

Crinagoras wrote an epitaph for a very young slave, Hymnis:

Ὑμνίδα τὴν Εὐάνδρου ἐράσμιον αἰὲν ἄθυρμα
 οἰκογενὲς κούρην αἰμύλον εἰναέτιν,
 ἥρπασας, ὧ ἄλλιστ' Αἰδῇ, τί πρόωρον ἐφίεις
 μοῖραν τῇ πάντως σείῳ ποτ' ἐσσομένη;

Hymnis of Evander, an ever-lovely toy born in the house, a nine-year-old maiden of wheedling ways you have seized, ruthless Hades: why did you send an early doom to her who would be anyway yours someday?⁷⁸

As Maria Ypsilanti aptly remarks, Hymnis is presented, at v. 1, as a “lovable toy” in the house, which implies a “neutralization, as it were, of the girl who is described in terms of an object”, a “grammatical” ambiguity [...] in accordance with her wavering identity and role, oscillating between that of a child

and that of a woman”.⁷⁹ In addition, the expression, given its associations with music and song, might hint at the girl’s musical skilfulness, suggested by the very name Hymnis, and by the adjective ἐράσμιον (the Muses and their art are often accompanied by ἐρατός, ἐρατεινός, *et sim.*),⁸⁰ and, at the same time, at the girl’s role in the house as a young slave – more specifically, as an entertainer for her master, a provider of amusement and relaxation.⁸¹ Such amusement might also have had erotic connotations. When analysing Martial’s poems on the dead slave-child Erotion (5.34, 5.37 and 10.61), along with other evidence,⁸² Patricia Watson argues that all slaves who found themselves in the position of being their masters’ favourite pet slaves “were sexual playthings, whether potential or actual”.⁸³ Young *delicia* might not have participated in full sexual intercourse before adolescence, but they were nevertheless conceived as erotic playthings – the most common terms to define them being *delicatus*, *deliciae*, and *pupus*, but also *lusus*, *ludus*, and, in Greek, ψίθυρος, literally “talkative”,⁸⁴ or παίγνιον.⁸⁵

Once again, however, it is the context that provides ἄθυρμα with an erotic overtone (combined, here, with other nuances). Indeed, no erotic overtones are detectable in the only other funerary instance of the word known to me, an epitaph for a 6-year-old child: [τοῦν]κεν ἀρπάξας Ἐριούνιος Εὐβουλῆι / [τέκνον] ἄθυρμα φέρεν Φερσεφόνη τ' ἀλόχῳ.⁸⁶ The child, who comes from a prominent family (see rr. 1-8 and 11-12), is taken away from his parents by a chthonian deity (here, Hermes Eriounios)⁸⁷ to become an ἄθυρμα, a “joy”, a pleasant “pastime”

79 YPSILANTI (2018), 207-208.

80 The whole expression is thus probably to be seen as a variation of the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, 52, ἐρατεινὸν ἄθυρμα (said of Hermes’ lyre): see YPSILANTI (2018), 209 and 210.

81 On slaves playing this role, and for the terminology used to define them, see SLATER (1974).

82 In particular, one of Ausonius’ poems on his young slave *Bissula*, called *ludus*, *amor*, and *voluptas* in 17.4.1 Green, and *CIL* 6.5163, an epitaph for a master buried together with his 7-year-old slave *Gutta*, described as *delicium eius* (the very notion of a man and a woman buried in the same tomb has strong erotic overtones, as the Ovidian episode of Pyramus and Thisbe, *Metamorphoses*, 4.157, for instance, shows).

83 WATSON (1992), 261.

84 Cassius Dion, 48.44.3 παιδίον τι τῶν ψιθύρων, οἷα αἱ γυναῖκες γυμνὰ ὥς πλήθει ἀθύρουσαι τρέφουσιν and 67.15 παιδίον τι τῶν γυμνῶν τῶν ψιθύρων; Lucian, *On Salaried Posts in Great Houses*, 28 τις ψιθύρος οἰκέτης.

85 Plutarch, *Life of Antony*, 59.8 ὁ δὲ Σάρμεντος ἦν τῶν Καίσαρος παιγνίων παιδάριον, ἃ δηλῆκία Ῥωμαῖοι καλοῦσιν. On the erotic overtones of παίγνιον and παίειν in general, see *LSJ*, s.v., I.5; HENDERSON (1991), 157; GUICHARD (2004), 214-215; ROSENMEYER (2004), with a particular focus on παίειν/συμπαιζειν in connection with young girls and/or Eros; CALAME (2021). Some examples of παίγνιον/παίγνια as “boy toy” are also found in KIDD (2019), 114.

86 GVI 2030.9-10 = IG 12(5).677.9-10 (Syros 2nd/3rd cent. CE).

87 On the chthonian meaning of Ἐριούνιος, see LANGELLA (2017), in part. 398 and 407 for this inscription.

74 Antipater of Sidon, *Greek Anthology*, 9.567 = HE 584-591 (transl. W. R. Paton, Loeb).

75 GOW, PAGE (1965), II, p. 83.

76 Cf. Ibycus, *PMG* 6.2: τακέρ' ὄμμασι δερκόμενος.

77 For the common association between “love and wine”, see e.g. Anacreon, fr. 14 Gentili; Strato of Sardis, *Greek Anthology*, 12.2.5-6 = 2.5-6 Floridi; *Anacreontic Odes*, 4.

78 Crinagoras, *Greek Anthology*, 7.643 = GPh 1873-1876 = 19 Ypsilanti (transl. M. Ypsilanti, OUP).

for the gods of the Underworld,⁸⁸ according to the common metaphor of death as an act of kidnapping performed by divine entities (especially when ἄωροι are involved).⁸⁹ The epitaph is relevant for two reasons: (1) it confirms that ἄθυρμα does not necessarily have a specific erotic connotation, and (2) it is applied to a free child, and not to a slave, as in most of the other instances analysed so far.

In the *Life of the Sophists*, Philostratus narrates of an Indian slave, Autolekythos, who at symposia used to mix Attic and Indian words, thus offering his masters (Favorinus and Herodes Atticus) food for laugh:⁹⁰

ἦν δὲ οὗτος Ἰνδὸς μὲν καὶ ἱκανῶς μέλας, ἄθυρμα δὲ Ἡρώδου τε καὶ Φαβωρίνου, ξυμπίνοντας γὰρ αὐτοὺς διήγεν ἐγκαταμινύς Ἰνδικοῖς Ἀττικά καὶ πεπλανημένη τῇ γλώττῃ βαρβαρίζων.

He was an Indian, pretty well black, and a plaything of Herodes and Favorinus. When they were drinking together, he would amuse them by mixing Attic words with his Indian, and by speaking his barbarian language with a tongue that was all over the place.⁹¹

The word is also applied to a slave by Flavius Josephus who defines a certain Tryphon τοῦ βασιλέως (i.e. Ptolemy Epiphanes) ἄθυρμα:

Τρύφων [...] ἦν τοῦ βασιλέως ἄθυρμα καὶ πρὸς τὰ σκώμματα καὶ τοὺς ἐν τοῖς πότοις γέλωτας ἀπεδέδεικτο.

Tryphon was the king's jester and was appointed to regale the guests with jokes during the drinking.⁹²

In both passages, the word indicates an entertaining man, a “jester”⁹³ (which is obviously consistent with the semantic sphere covered by ἀθύρῳ),⁹⁴ but the possibility that there is also an erotic connotation cannot be ruled out. As Leofranc Holford-Strevens has persuasively argued, the name Autolekythos, in Philostratus' passage, might mean “Well-hung” –⁹⁵ thus suggesting that the kind of amusement provided by the slave to his masters was also sexual.

In a similar vein, one may wonder whether Tryphon, a name related to τρυφή, “delicacy, daintiness”, but also “luxuriousness”,⁹⁶ might suggest the idea of wantonness, thus hinting at the erotic nature of the relationship between him and the king.

Be that as it may, from this survey some conclusions can tentatively be drawn. (1) The term ἄθυρμα is applied to human beings at least from the 1st century CE onwards – but the possibility that it may have been used in this way already in 5th century comedy cannot be ruled out. (2) An ἄθυρμα, when applied to human beings, is, generically, a “provider of pleasure and joy”. Such pleasure and joy are not to be regarded as being specifically sexual, although in most cases they seem to include an erotic dimension. (3) As far as we can judge (the comic fragments do not allow any definite conclusion), the term is mostly applied either to children or to (young) slaves.⁹⁷

We should now consider the following gloss by Hesychius:

ἀθυρεύεσθαι· παίζειν. μινύειν. σκιρτάν.

athyreuesthai: to play, to have sexual intercourse, to leap.⁹⁸

The second *interpretamentum* for ἀθυρεύομαι – a verb only attested here –⁹⁹ is μινύειν, “to have intercourse with”, which suggests that the erotic meaning was (among those) perceived as “regular”. Hesychius has other three entries that might be relevant for our purposes: ἀθύρματα· παίγνια,¹⁰⁰ ἀθύρει· παίζει, ῥαθυμεῖ,¹⁰¹ and ἀθύρουσι· παίζουνσι.¹⁰² In all of them, the erotic meaning is not specified as it is in the case of ἀθυρεύεσθαι, and a more generic equivalence with the semantically wider παίγνιον/

88 Given the presence of Persephone, one may wonder whether there is a reminiscence here of the καλὸν ἄθυρμα of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, whose importance as a model in the epitaphic tradition is well-known (see, also on Persephone's role as a figure symbolising prematurely dead girls, e.g. TSAGALIS (2008), 100-110; WYPUSTEK (2013), 99-121): see HUNTER (2019), 147-148 (who also proposes to restore καλὸν or τερπνόν at v. 10, rather than Kaibel's τέκνον).

89 VÉRILHAC (1982), 173-185.

90 According to Philostratus, when Favorinus died, he bequeathed his personal library and his Indian servant to his friend Herodes.

91 Philostratus, *Life of the Sophists*, 490.10.

92 Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 12.212.1.

93 SOPHOCLES (1914), s.v.; see also DGE, s.v., II.2; LSJ, s.v.

94 On ἀθύρματα in the sense of “jestlings”, cf. e.g. Philo of Alexandria, *De specialibus legibus* 2.193 κῶμοι σὺν ἀθύρμασι καὶ τωθασμοῖς, *Legatio ad Gaium* 168 ἀθύρματα καὶ παιδιὰς ληρώδεις καὶ παρασεσρμέννας οἶδας.

95 HOLFORD-STREVEN (2003), 438. See Demosthenes, 54.14-17 and Lucian, *Lexiphanes*, 10.

96 Tryphon was also the nickname of Ptolemy VIII, so called for his life-style (ἐκ τοῦ βίου), according to Claudius Aelianus, *Various Histories*, 14.31 (who reports a dialogue between him and a quite uninhibited beautiful woman). For similar puns, cf. Meleager, *Greek Anthology*, 5.154.2 = HE 4315 ἄ Τρυφέρα τρυφερά; Asclepiades, *Greek Anthology*, 5.185.6 = HE 937 = 26.6 Sens, a series of shopping instructions for a certain Demetrius that include an invitation for a woman called Tryphera to join the group: as remarked by SENS (2011), 179, “the luxury (τρυφή) suggested by the ‘speaking name’ is appropriate for a woman who is to be the life of the party”. See also the character of Tryphaena in Petronius, to be connected to Greek τρυφή, and thus to the idea of wantonness – the name was significantly paraphrased by WALSH (1970), 99, as “Luxuria”: see BARCHIESI (1984), 169.

97 This is hardly surprising: both children and slave can be described, in grammatical terms, as “neuter”. The age of the two slaves mentioned, respectively, by Philostratus and Flavius Josephus is not specified, so no definite conclusion can be reached on this point, but it is a reasonable guess that they were both young, especially if the erotic reading proposed here is correct.

98 Hesychius, α 1639 Latte-Cunningham.

99 It should be noted that the verb is quoted by Hesychius in the middle form: verbs in -εύω often have a deponent nature (see DEBRÜNNER (1917), 107-108); this diathesis is consistent with an erotic meaning: cf. e.g. ἡδομαι, τέρπομαι.

100 Hesychius, α 1636 Latte-Cunningham.

101 Hesychius, α 1638 Latte-Cunningham.

102 Hesychius, α 1640 Latte-Cunningham.

παίζειν is suggested. Unlike ἄθυρμα, there are no surviving instances of ἀθύρῳ in an erotic sense – its main meanings being “play”, “sing”, and later “mock at”,¹⁰³ so Hesychius’ silence, at least in the case of the two entries related to the verb, is most probably justified. According to him, however, ἀθυρεύομαι has not only incorporated the meanings of ἀθύρῳ, but has also acquired a meaning of its own, possibly as a result of the semantic specialisation of ἄθυρμα. What this gloss suggests is that, in Imperial Greek (possibly already by the 2nd century CE, when the main source of Hesychius, the Lexicon of Diogenianus, was compiled), the erotic overtone of this linguistic family had become prominent.

CONCLUSION

As this survey should have made clear, an erotic overtone is recognisable in ἄθυρμα from the Archaic *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* onwards, and becomes especially prominent in late Hellenistic and Imperial literature, where the term is used not only in poetry, as in the previous centuries,¹⁰⁴ but also in prose.

The use of ἄθυρμα to mean (1) (children’s) “toy”, in contexts which imply a transition to adulthood, sex and love, together with its use in the sense of (2) “toy, delight” with reference to pets – often employed as erotic gifts – are consistent with the establishment of its meaning as (3) “erotic pastime”, “erotic object”, which was often applied to human beings, and particularly to slaves.

Ἀθυρεύομαι does not seem to have an erotic meaning *per se*, but can acquire it if accompanied by specific qualifiers or if used in contexts with strong erotic resonances. Nevertheless, as the gloss by Hesychius shows, from a certain point onwards the erotic meaning must have been perceived as particularly prominent. Ἀθυρεύομαι is quite an evanescent word for us, but it provides valuable evidence of the semantic specialisation undergone by ἀθύρῳ/ἄθυρμα and cognate terms.

ABBREVIATIONS

DGE = ADRADOS, Francisco Rodríguez, *Diccionario Griego-Español*, Madrid (1980).

FGE = PAGE, Denys L., *Further Greek Epigrams*, Cambridge (1981).

GPh = GOW, Andrew S. F., PAGE, Denys L., *The Garland of Philip and Some Contemporary Epigrams*, I-II, Cambridge (1968).

GVI = PEEK, Werner, *Griechische Vers-Inschriften*, Band I, *Grab-Epigramme*, Berlin (1955).

¹⁰³ Nonnus of Panopolis, *Dionysiaca*, 45.244. LSJ, s.v.; DGE, s.v.

¹⁰⁴ OLSON (2017), 178 defines the word as “exclusively poetic vocabulary”.

HE = GOW, Andrew Sydenham Farrar, PAGE, Denys L., *The Greek Anthology. Hellenistic Epigrams*, I-II, Cambridge (1965).

IG = *Inscriptiones Graecae*, I-XIV, Berlin (1873-).

IGUR = MORETTI, Luigi, *Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae*, I-IV, Rome (1968-1990).

LSJ = LIDDELL, Henry George, SCOTT, Robert, *Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford (1996).

PMG = PAGE, Denys L., *Poetae Melici Graeci*, Oxford (1962).

SH = LLOYD JONES, P. Hugh J., PARSONS, Peter J., *Supplementum Hellenisticum*, Berlin/New York (1983).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARGENTIERI, Lorenzo, *Gli epigrammi degli Antipatri*, Le rane 35, Lecce (2003).

BARCHIESI, Alessandro, “Il nome di Lica e la poetica dei nomi in Petronio”, *Materiali e discussioni per l’analisi dei testi classici*, 12 (1984), 169-175.

BARRON, John P., “Bakchylides, Theseus and a Woolly Cloak”, *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 27 (1980), 1-8.

BEEKES, Robert, VAN BEEK, Lucian, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, Leiden (2009).

BIANCHI, Francesco Paolo, *Kratinos, Einleitung und Testimonia*, *Fragmenta Comica* 3.1, Heidelberg (2017).

BIERL, Anton, “Choral Dance as Play: *Paizein* in Greek Drama, or Body Movement as Sexual Attraction between Gender and Genre”, in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (eds), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity: Definition, Transmission, Reception*, *Jeu/Spiel/Play* 2, Liège (2021), 29-47.

BONANNO, Maria Grazia, *Studi su Cratete comico*, *Proagones*. Studi 11, Padova (1972).

BOUVIER, David, “Athéna, Éros, Ulysse, Nausicaa, des lavoirs, un lion et une balle dans l’*Odyssée*”, in Véronique Dasen (ed.), *Dossier Éros en jeu, Métis. Anthropologie des mondes grecs et romains*, 19 (2021), 13-35.

BOWIE, Ewin, *Longus. Daphnis and Chloe*, Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics, Cambridge (2019).

CALAME, Claude, *Thésée et l’imaginaire athénien : légende et culte en Grèce*, Lausanne (1990).

CALAME, Claude, “Les jeux poétiques d’Éros : le désir amoureux en performances musicales”, in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (eds), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity: Definition, Transmission, Reception*, *Jeu/Play/Spiel* 2, Liège (2021), 79-91.

CAMPBELL, Malcolm, *A Commentary on Apollonius Rhodius Argonautica III 1-471*, Mnemosyne. Supplementum 141, Leiden/New York/Köln (1994).

- CASEVITZ, Michel, “Les noms du jeu et du jouet en grec”, *Kentron. Revue pluridisciplinaire du monde antique*, 34 (2018), 51-60.
- CHANTRAINE, Pierre, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des mots*, Paris (2009).
- DASEN, VÉRONIQUE, “Jeux de l’amour et du hasard en Grèce ancienne”, *Kernos, Revue internationale et pluridisciplinaire de religion grecque antique*, 29 (2016), 73-100.
- DEBRÜNNER, Albert, *Griechische Wortbildungslehre*, Indogermanische Bibliothek, Zweite Abteilung, Sprachwissenschaftliche 8, Heidelberg (1917).
- DOVER, Kenneth James, *Greek Homosexuality*, London (1978).
- FLORIDI, Lucia, *Stratone di Sardi. Epigrammi*, Hellenica 24, Alessandria (2007).
- FLORIDI, Lucia, “Edile. Scilla (SH 456)”, *Incontri di Filologia Classica*, 18 (2018-2019), 151-172.
- FRANCO, Cristiana, “Greek and Latin Words for Human-Animal Bonds: Metaphors and Taboos”, in Thorsten Fögen, Edmund Tomas (eds), *Interactions between Animals and Humans in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, Berlin/Boston (2017), 39-60.
- FRISK, Hjalmar, *Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, I, Heidelberg (1960).
- GARLAND, Robert, *The Eye of the Beholder. Deformity and Disability in the Graeco-Roman World*, London (2010).
- GARULLI, Valentina, “Gli epitafi greci per animali. Fra tradizione epigrafica e letteraria”, in *Memoria poetica e poesia della memoria. La versificazione epigrafica dall’antichità all’umanesimo*, Studi di Archivistica, Bibliografia, Paleografia, Venezia (2014), 27-64.
- GILLIES, Marshall M., “The Ball of Eros”, *The Classical Review*, 38 (1924), 50-51.
- GIUSEPPETTI, Massimo, *Bacchilide. Odi e frammenti*, BUR. Classici greci e latini, Milano (2015).
- GRAZ, Louis, *Le feu dans l’Iliade et l’Odyssée*, Études et commentaires 60, Paris (1965).
- GUICHARD, Luis Arturo, *Asclepiades de Samos. Epigramas y fragmentos*, Sapheneia. Beiträge zur Klassischen Philologie 10, Bern/Berlin/Bruxelles/Frankfurt am Main/New York/Oxford/Wien (2004).
- HENDERSON, Jeffrey, *The Maculate Muse. Obscene Language in Attic Comedy*, New York/Oxford (1991).
- HOLFORD-STREVENS, Leofranc, *Aulus Gellius. An Antonine Scholar and His Achievement*, Oxford (2003).
- HUNTER, Richard L., *Apollonius of Rhodes. Argonautica Book III*, Cambridge Greek and Latin classics, Cambridge (1989).
- HUNTER, Richard L., “Death of a Child: Grief Beyond the Literary?”, in Maria Kanellou, Ivana Petrovic, Chris Carey (eds), *Greek Epigram from the Hellenistic to the Early Byzantine Era*, Oxford (2019), 137-153.
- IERANÒ, Giorgio, “Osservazioni sul Teseo di Bacchilide (Dyth. 18)”, *Acme*, 40 (1987), 87-103.
- KIDD, Stephen E., *Play and Aesthetics in Ancient Greece*, Cambridge/New York (2019).
- KITCHELL, Kenneth F. Jr., “Man’s best friend? The changing role of the dog in Greek society”, in Barbro Santillo Frizell (ed.), *PECUS. Man and Animal in Antiquity. Proceedings of the Conference at the Swedish Institute in Rome, September 9-12, 2002*, Rome (2004). www.svenska-institutet-rom.org/pecus
- KLEIN, Theodore M., “Apollonius Rhodius, *vates ludens*: Eros’ Golden Ball (Arg. 3, 115-50)”, *Classical World*, 32 (1980-81), 223-225.
- KOMORNICKA, Anna M., “Sur le langage érotique de l’ancienne comédie attique”, *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica*, 9 (1981), 55-83.
- LANGELLA, Elena, “Osservazioni sul valore ctonio di Ἐπιοῦνιος”, in Ivo Hajnal, Daniel Kölligan, Katharina Zipser (eds), *Miscellanea Indogermanica, Festschrift für José Luis García Ramón zum 65. Geburtstag*, Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft, Innsbruck (2017), 397-409.
- LAZENBY, Francis D., “Greek and Roman Household Pets”, *The Classical Journal*, 44, 5 (1949), 299-307.
- LINCOLN, Bruce, “The Rape of Persephone: A Greek Scenario of Women’s Initiation”, *The Harvard Theological Review*, 72 (1979), 223-235.
- MAEHLER, Herwig, *Bacchylides. A Selection*, Cambridge Greek and Latin classics, Cambridge (2004).
- MASTROMARCO, Giuseppe, “L’incontro di Odisseo e Nausicaa tra epos ed eros”, in Salvatore Nicosia (ed.), *Ulisse nel tempo. La metafora infinita*, Saggi, Marsilio, Venezia (2003), 107-126.
- MERKELBACH, Reinhold, “Der Theseus des Bakchylides (Gedicht fuer ein attisches Ephebenfest)”, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 12 (1973), 56-62.
- NOBILI, Cecilia, “Motivi della poesia nuziale in Odissea VI 149-185”, *Rendiconti dell’Istituto Lombardo – Accademia di Scienze e Lettere. Classe di Lettere e Scienze morali e storiche*, 140 (2006), 59-74.
- NOBILI, Cecilia, “Bacchilide e la poetica del simposio (Bacch. Pae. 4.21-25 e 61-78)”, *Quaderni Urbinati di*

Cultura Classica, 129, 3 (2021), 53-65.

OGLE, Marbury B., "The Classical Origin and Tradition of Literary Conceits", *The American Journal of Philology*, 34 (1913), 125-153.

OLSON, S. Douglas, *Eupolis. Einleitung, Testimonia und Aiges-Demoi (Frr. 1-146)*, Fragmenta Comica 8.1, Heidelberg (2017).

PATTONI, Maria Pia, *Longo Sofista. Dafni e Cloe*, BUR. Classici greci e latini, Milano (2005).

PEARSON, Alfred Chirton, "Phrixus and Demodice. A Note on Pindar, Pyth. 4.162 f", *The Classical Review*, 23 (1909), 255-257.

PENDERGRAFT, Mary Louise B., "Eros ludens: Apollonius' Argonautica 3, 132-41", *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici*, 26 (1991), 95-102.

PERRONE, Serena, *Krates*, Fragmenta Comica 2, Heidelberg (2019).

PLANT, Ian M., *Women Writers of Ancient Greece and Rome. An Anthology*, Norman OK (2004).

PRETAGOSTINI, Roberto, "Le metafore di Eros che gioca: da Anacreonte ad Apollonio Rodio e ai poeti dell'Antologia Palatina", *AION(phil)*, 12 (1990), 225-38 = *Ricerche sulla poesia alessandrina II. Forme allusive e contenuti nuovi*, Roma (2007), 169-179.

PRETAGOSTINI, Roberto, "L'epigramma per Nicomache (Posidippo, P. Mil. Vogl. VIII 309, IX 1-6)", in Guido Bastinani, Angelo Casanova (eds), *Il papiro di Posidippo un anno dopo*. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Firenze 13-14 giugno 2002, Studi e testi di papirologia. Nuova serie 4, Firenze (2002), 121-128.

RICHARDSON, Nicholas James, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Oxford (1974).

ROSENMEYER, Patricia A., "Girls at Play in Early Greek Poetry", *The American Journal of Philology*, 125 (2004), 163-178.

SANDIN, Pär, "An Erotic Image in Asclepiades 5", *Mnemosyne*, 53 (2000), 345-6.

SCHMIDT, J.H. Heinrich, *Synonymik der griechischen Sprache*, II, Leipzig (1878).

SCHMIDT, J.H. Heinrich, *Synonymik der griechischen Sprache*, IV, Leipzig (1886).

SENS, Alexander, *Asclepiades of Samos. Epigrams and Fragments*, Oxford (2011).

SLATER, Niall W., "Pueri, Turba Minuta", *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 21 (1974), 133-140.

SOPHOCLES, Evangelinos Apostolides, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods (from B.C. 146 to A.D. 1100)*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (1914).

SZARMACH, Marian, "ΕΡΩΤΙΚΟΙ ΛΟΓΟΙ von Maximos Tyrios", *Eos*, 70 (1982), 61-69.

TOOHEY, Peter, *Melancholy, Love, and Time. Boundaries of the Self in Ancient Literature*, Ann Arbor (1992).

TSAGALIS, Christos C., *Inscribing Sorrow. Fourth-Century Attic Funerary Epigrams*, Trends in Classics, Supplementary volumes 1, Berlin/New York (2008).

YPSILANTI, Maria, *The Epigrams of Crinagoras of Mytilene*, Oxford (2018).

VERGADOS, Athanassios, *The Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, Texte und Kommentare 41, Berlin/Boston (2013).

VÉRILHAC, Anne-Marie, *Παῖδες ἄωποι. Poésie funéraire*, vol. II, Grafeion demosiegmaton tes Akademias Athenon, Athènes (1982).

WALKER, Abbe Lind, *Bride of Hades to Bride of Christ: The Virgin and the Otherworldly Bridegroom in Ancient Greece and Early Christian Rome*, London/New York (2020).

WALSH, Patrick Gerard, *The Roman Novel: the "Satyricon" of Petronius and the "Metamorphoses" of Apuleius*, Cambridge (1970).

WATSON, Patricia, "Erotion: Puella Delicata?", *The Classical Quarterly*, 42 (1992), 253-68.

WYPUSTEK, Andrzej, *Images of Eternal Beauty in Funerary Verse Inscriptions of the Hellenistic and Greco-Roman Periods*, Mnemosyne. Supplementum 352, Leiden/Boston (2013).



Ioanna Patera

Université Jagellonne
ioanna.patera@gmail.com

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

INTRODUCTION

Jeux et jouets font partie du monde de l'enfance. Ils sont généralement considérés comme des activités joyeuses et frivoles, mais ils sont régis par des règles précises. Le terme *paignion* (παίγνιον), intimement lié à l'enfance par la racine même du mot *pais* (παῖς), « l'enfant », signifie à la fois le jeu comme action et le jouet comme objet¹. L'analyse des divers contextes dans lesquels il apparaît fournit des indications sur ce qu'il pouvait recouvrir. Il s'agit pour nous de savoir avec qui le jouet ou le jeu était associé, l'âge et le genre des personnes qui s'y adonnent, la nature qui leur est prêtée par les auteurs anciens, leurs premiers inventeurs. Le point qui retiendra notre attention, c'est le rapport entre le jeu et les fêtes honorant les dieux. Il ne s'agira pas ici d'analyser les trouvailles des sanctuaires ou les objets que nous considérons comme des offrandes, mais plutôt ceux qui ont un rapport intrinsèque avec le rite.

Les jouets d'enfants connus par les tombes sont des jouets à roulettes, des instruments bruyants comme des hochets, des animaux en terre cuite².

Ils sont également connus par les épigrammes qui mentionnent leur dédicace aux dieux une fois les enfants grandis. Ainsi, dans une épigramme anonyme, Timaréta consacre à Artémis, au moment de son mariage, ses tambourins, son ballon, la résille qui retenait ses cheveux, ainsi que ses mèches – ou bien, selon la traduction la plus répandue, ses poupées, et les vêtements de ses poupées³. Quant aux jeunes garçons, ils ont leurs propres jouets comme le montre une épigramme de Léonidas : Philoclès dédie à Hermès les jouets de son enfance, son ballon, ses castagnettes, ses osselets qu'il aimait, sa toupie⁴. Tous ces objets sont à proprement parler

comportant une poupée. Trouvés depuis l'époque géométrique, entre le IX^e et le milieu du VIII^e s. av. J.-C., ils présentent des systèmes symboliques comportant des diadèmes ou résilles, des modèles en terre cuite de chaussures, des « poupées » aux jambes mobiles (évoquant la mobilité de la fiancée ou celle d'un guide pour l'au-delà ?), un *kalathos* ou panier à laine (symbole de l'activité de la future épouse), une boîte ou un coffret (évocation de la dot). Cet ensemble se transforme à la fin du VIII^e s. av. J.-C. avec l'apparition d'autres accessoires comme la grenade, le fruit qui lie Perséphone à Hadès, symbole du mariage avec la mort. Une poupée articulée s'y ajoute dès le début du V^e s. av. J.-C. Sur les figurines articulées grecques et italiotes, voir DASEN, VERBANCK-PIÉRARD (2022) et V. SABETAI dans ce volume. Sur les hochets, SABETAI (2022).

1 CHANTRAINE (1968), s.v. παῖς. Sur la polysémie du terme *paignion*, voir É. DIEU dans ce volume, selon qui le sens matériel de jouet est rare.

2 LANGDON (2007), 173 avec la note 1 pour les références. Ces catégories sont cependant aussi discutées. Les animaux dans les tombes pourraient être une allusion à un vrai jouet, un animal vivant. Pour les poupées, voir DASEN (2010a), 26, à propos du « *maiden kit* » selon l'expression de LANGDON (2007), 46, des ensembles archéologiques

3 *Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 280. DAUX (1973), 392, corrige *komas* au lieu de *koras*, non retenu par BRULÉ (1996). NERI (1998), 173-174, considère, de façon convaincante, que la correction de Georges Daux n'est pas nécessaire. Voir aussi S. LARIBI-GLAUDEL dans ce volume.

4 *Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 309. Sur les jouets qui apparaissent dans ces épigrammes votives, voir S. LARIBI-GLAUDEL dans ce volume. Elle identifie le rhombe à un instrument musical ou un objet lié à la sphère amoureuse plutôt qu'à une toupie. Voir aussi LARIBI-GLAUDEL (2022).

des *paignia* (παίγνια), des jouets, auxquels l'on peut ajouter multitude d'autres comme les petites voitures connues par les lexicographes⁵.

Outre un objet proprement dit, *paignion* peut désigner un être vivant, humain ou animal de compagnie. Parmi les humains l'on trouve ainsi qualifiés les jeunes gens, qui sont considérés comme des objets érotiques que se disputent les vieilles femmes d'Aristophane⁶. Les *paignia* se retrouvent aussi dans les mains des dieux enfants. Ainsi, Apollon enfant riait avec une invention de la nymphe délienne : avant de remonter sur leur bateau, les marins devaient faire le tour du grand autel en recevant des coups, en se flagellant et mordant le tronc de l'olivier sacré les mains derrière le dos⁷. Ce jeu qualifié d'enfantin, qui fait rire le petit dieu, est un rite accompli par les humains. Un certain nombre de dieux sont d'ailleurs honorés en tant qu'enfants, comme cet Asclépios *Pais* honoré à Tilphoussa dans un sanctuaire où se trouve aussi la tombe de sa nourrice Trygon⁸, ou encore Héra de l'ancienne Stymphale élevée et honorée par Téménos fils de Pélasge en tant que *Pais*, *Teleia* et *Chêra*⁹. Comme les petits mortels, les dieux enfants sont charmés par les jouets. Pour amadouer Héra dans sa jeunesse, Zeus s'était métamorphosé en coucou qu'elle a attrapé comme un *paignion* ; le coucou se retrouve ensuite sur le sceptre que tient la statue de la déesse faite par Polyclète¹⁰. Les dieux possèdent ainsi les mêmes *paignia* pour jouer dans leur enfance que les jeunes mortels.

Ces mêmes objets peuvent être utilisés à des fins diverses, rapprochant les catégories du ludique et du religieux, du jouet et de l'objet rituel. Dionysos enfant s'amusait à danser avec les Courètes quand les Titans ont rusé pour l'attirer avec des jouets, des *athurmata* qualifiés de puérils ou d'enfantins (*paidariôdesin*) : un cône, un rhombe, des poupées articulées¹¹, des

pommes d'or du jardin des Hespérides. Clément reprend ces objets qu'il connaît par le poète Orphée et il ajoute à cette liste les symboles inutiles de l'initiation aux mystères du dieu, un osselet, une balle, une toupie, des pommes, un rhombe, un miroir et un flocon de laine¹². Si l'on peut trouver un symbolisme derrière chacun de ces objets aimés du petit dieu, les objets énumérés par Clément ne relèvent pas nécessairement du jouet ; ils renvoient au motif de la tromperie (*dolos*) que le jeune dieu ne peut contrer¹³. Il est clair que le statut de jouet n'est, concernant des objets ayant eu une autre destination initiale, qu'un moment dans la vie d'un objet ; les enfants peuvent jouer avec les objets de leur environnement qui ne sont pas, initialement, destinés au jeu¹⁴. Ce qui nous intéresse ici davantage c'est que, inversement, les jeux peuvent servir à l'initiation des adultes aux rites de Dionysos.

Le terme *paignion* connaît par ailleurs nombre d'usages métaphoriques qui ne font plus référence à l'enfance. L'être humain lui-même est le jouet des dieux (*theou ti paignion*), comme l'Athénien le dit à Klinias dans les *Lois* de Platon. Dès lors tout homme, et femme, doivent s'accorder à cette nature et jouer aux meilleurs des jeux (*paizonta hoti kallistas paidias*)¹⁵. Les termes qui qualifient les jouets sont très souvent associés à quelque chose de plaisant et de peu sérieux ; ce sont des objets qui donnent du plaisir¹⁶. Platon toujours, l'applique en tant que catégorie générale aux œuvres d'art, les imitations et la musique faites uniquement pour le plaisir (*hêdonas*) ; comme le précise l'Étranger pour le jeune Socrate, tout ce qui se fait dans cette catégorie de *paignion* n'a aucun but sérieux (*spoudê*), uniquement le jeu (*paidias heneka*)¹⁷. Le terme *paignion* sert en effet à signifier ce qui est peu sérieux, à l'instar de *paizô* qui signifie aussi bien jouer qu'agir en enfant¹⁸. Il désigne ainsi la poésie légère voire la poésie en général, les

5 Pausanias, *Collection de noms attiques*, a 81 Erbse.

6 Aristophane, *L'Assemblée des femmes*, 922. Sur cet aspect érotique, voir KIDD (2019), 114 ; voir aussi L. FLORIDI dans ce volume.

7 Callimaque, *Hymne à Délos*, 4, 321-324 : πρὶν μέγαν ἢ σο βωμὸν ὑπὸ πληγῆσιν ἐλίσσαι ῥησσόμενον, καὶ πρέμνον ὀδακτάσαι ἀγνὸν ἐλαίης χεῖρας ἀποστρέψαντας· ἃ Δηλιάς εὗρετο νύμφη παίγνια κουρίζοντι καὶ Ἀπόλλωνι γελαστὺν (« Il ne remonte en sa nef qu'il n'ait fait, sous les coups, le tour de son grand autel, en se flagellant, et qu'il n'ait, les mains derrière le dos, mordu de ses dents le tronc de l'olivier sacré ; » trad. É. Cahen, CUF). Sur les rites de flagellation ainsi que le rite en l'honneur d'Orthia auquel il fait immanquablement penser, voir CARÈ (sous presse).

8 Pausanias, *Description de la Grèce*, 8, 25, 11. Dans la suite, Pausanias raconte l'exposition d'Asclépios enfant, sauvé par Autolaos, fils illégitime d'Arcas. Il donne d'autres versions des parents d'Asclépios en 2, 26, 4-7.

9 Pausanias, *Description de la Grèce*, 8, 22, 2.

10 Pausanias, *Description de la Grèce*, 2, 17, 4.

11 CARÈ (sous presse), montre la complexité de l'expression παίγνια καμπεσίγνια. En analysant l'adjectif, elle y décèle une « valeur transitive-objective plutôt que réflexive », ce qui pourrait constituer « une allusion aux os de la cheville, c'est-à-dire l'osselet, un 'jouet qui permet aux membres de plier' et de mettre en mouvement des membres ».

12 Clément d'Alexandrie, *Protréptique*, 2, 17, 2-18, 1. Voir LEVANIQUK (2007) pour le rhombe et le cône en particulier avec la bibliographie antérieure. D'autres symboliques sont prêtées à ces objets selon les contextes, par exemple la toupie : DASEN (2016), 78-79. Sur la présence possible d'un osselet dans la liste de Clément d'Alexandrie, voir CARÈ (sous presse).

13 MASSA (2021), 41-43. Comme le remarque HERRERO DE JÁUREGUI (2021), 284-285, le fait de jouer et les jouets sont des signes de la banalité, de l'erreur et de la perversion que Clément dénonce comme inhérents aux mystères païens.

14 CRAWFORD (2009), 56, arrive à cette conclusion sur la base de l'étude du cimetière anglo-saxon de Mucking dans l'Essex, utilisé entre le V^e et le VIII^e s. apr. J.-C. Les enfants avaient des jouets que les archéologues ne sont pas capables de reconnaître car ils ne sont pas destinés à cet usage. Dès lors, la catégorie des jouets est définie de manière très restrictive par des adultes.

15 Platon, *Lois*, 7, 803c.

16 KIDD (2019), 98-99, fait par exemple référence aux catégories des bijoux qui font plaisir aux femmes mais aussi des animaux.

17 Platon, *Politique*, 288c.

18 CASEVITZ (2018), 52.

paignia comprenant les poèmes homériques¹⁹. Le *paignion* est dans ce cas l'élément qui suscite le plaisir qui accompagne ce qui est donné aux dieux ou adressé aux humains. Le terme peut avoir par ailleurs des connotations clairement péjoratives. Apollonius rapporte par exemple une définition de Callimaque qui associe le terme *paignion* à une ordure ou un rebut (*katharma*) ou à une tête de bois²⁰.

Jeux et jouets, les *paignia* sont formés sur le terme *pais* qui désigne les enfants en général, garçons et filles, mais aussi les esclaves de tous les âges²¹. Le point de vue commun à ces différentes catégories de personnes serait leur incapacité de réflexion et leur manque de morale²². Selon Mark Golden pourtant, la petitesse impliquée dans le terme *pais* ne fait pas nécessairement référence à la morale ou à la capacité intellectuelle ; il l'associe plus volontiers à ce qui est insignifiant, sans importance, en remarquant que le terme est trop vague pour faire référence à un ensemble de qualités physiques ou intellectuelles précis²³. En revanche, selon cet auteur, le terme recouvre deux catégories de personnes ayant un statut social et un rôle économique similaires, accentuant la ressemblance de groupes sociaux inférieurs en opposition aux seuls citoyens²⁴.

D'autres termes formés sur *pais* comportent des connotations variées et peuvent nous donner encore quelques indications sur le caractère des jeux et des jouets. L'adjectif *παίγνιος* (*paignios*) dénote ainsi l'enjoué et nous amène à regarder la manière dont les anciens considéraient les enfants. Leur caractère est défini par Aristote comme étant direct, avec un grand appétit pour les plaisirs. C'est durant l'enfance que cet appétit est le plus grand, reconnu dans l'envie de plaisirs culinaires et la recherche de la musique²⁵. Les enfants ont aussi tendance à être changeants, en raison du manque de discipline ; changer leurs jeux est jugé comme dangereux par Platon. Dans les *Lois*, l'Athénien considère que les jeux sont décisifs pour la stabilité et la fidélité à la législation. Si les enfants

jouent toujours aux mêmes jeux et qu'ils prennent plaisir (*euthumeisthai*) aux mêmes jouets (*paigniois*), alors les lois demeurent inchangées. Si, en revanche, les jeux varient et les enfants portent leur intérêt d'un jeu à l'autre, ils montrent du respect à l'homme qui introduit des nouveautés – la pire sorte d'homme pour un état puisqu'il altère le caractère des jeunes²⁶.

1. JEUX D'ADULTES

Bien que les jeux et les jouets sont de la première importance pour les enfants, les *paignia* ne leur appartiennent pas exclusivement. Certains jeux sont réservés aux adultes, comme celui d'origine sicilienne du *kottabos*, désigné comme *paignion* (*παίγνιον*) ou *paidia* (*παίδιά*) joué lors des banquets et lors duquel on utilise un vase²⁷. D'autres sont inventés par des adultes, suivant le motif du premier inventeur. Selon Hérodote, les Lydiens revendiquent l'invention de tous les jeux (*tas paignias*), à la fois des Lydiens et des Grecs, la faisant remonter au temps du règne d'Atys fils de Manès, alors qu'une famine s'était abattue sur tout le pays. Ils auraient inventé les dés (*kuboi*) et les osselets (*astragaloï*), la balle (*sphaira*) et tous les autres à l'exception des *pessoi*, les jeux de pions, afin de faire oublier la souffrance de la faim²⁸.

Quant aux *pessoi*, ils auraient été inventés par Palamède, bienfaiteur de l'humanité et grand inventeur de tactiques militaires selon Gorgias qui le défend d'une accusation de trahison. Il a inventé les dispositifs de guerre, l'écriture des lois, les lettres, les poids et les mesures pour réguler les échanges, les chiffres et les *pessoi*, les pions qui constituent un passe-temps agréable et « qui organisent le temps d'inactivité sans risque »²⁹. Selon Sophocle, il aurait également inventé les dés, les *kuboi*, en même temps que les *pessoi* lors d'une famine³⁰. Pausanias précise qu'il a dédié les dés inventés dans un temple de Tuchê³¹.

Outre le symbolisme de chaque invention prise individuellement ou les associations qu'induit chacune d'entre elles, elles ont été analysées dans leur ensemble dans le sens d'un système symbolique signifiant qui s'impose comme un principe organisateur – les tactiques militaires, les lois et les usages de la cité –, et d'une valeur morale positive au

19 Vitae Homeri, Sudae vita 47 et 104 Allen ; Eustathe, *Commentaire sur l'Iliade d'Homère*, 4, 255, l. 10, concernant les œuvres de Mnaseas de Locres ou de Colophon ; Diogène Laërce, *Vies des Philosophes*, 6, 83, 13 ; Athénée, *Deipnosophistes*, 7, 118, 20 ; 7, 118, 23 ; 7, 118, 26 ; 9, 24, 44 ; 14, 43, 2 ; 15, 63, 33.

20 Apollonius le Grammairien, *Anthologie Palatine*, 11, 275 : Καλλιμαχος τὸ κάθαρμα, τὸ παίγνιον, ὁ ξύλινος νοῦς· αἴτιος ὁ γράψας Αἴτια Καλλιμαχος (« Callimaque, l'être abject, le plaisantin, le cabochard. À l'origine de ce jugement ? Celui qui écrivit les 'Origines' de Callimaque. » Trad. R. Aubreton, CUF).

21 GOLDEN (1985), 91.

22 Pour les références aux sources anciennes, voir GOLDEN (1985), 92, n. 7-8.

23 GOLDEN (1985), 92-93.

24 GOLDEN (1985), 97-99. Les enfants comme les esclaves sont par exemple sujets, par la loi et par la coutume, à la violence physique.

25 Voir Aristote, *Politique*, 7, 1334b 22-24 ; *Éthique à Nicomaque*, 3, 1119b ; plaisirs culinaires : Platon, *Lettres*, 13, 361 A (vin doux et miel) ; Aristophane, *Thesmophories*, 505-506, et scholie *ad. loc.* (miel) ; musique : Aristote, *Politique*, 8, 1341a 16-21.

26 Platon, *Lois*, 7, 797b-c. Voir GOLDEN (1990), 9, qui attribue cette appréciation à ceux qui sont le moins concernés par le contrôle de tous les aspects de la vie communautaire.

27 *Paignion* : Théophraste, fr. 118, 1 Wimmer ; Athénée, *Deipnosophistes*, 10, 30 ; scholie à Aristophane, *Nuées*, 1073a. *Paidia* : Athénée, *Deipnosophistes*, 15, 2, en fait une invention sicilienne ; 15, 3 ; 15, 7. Sur l'iconographie du *kottabos*, voir ATTIA, DELAHAYE (2021), avec la bibliographie antérieure.

28 Hérodote, *Histoires*, 1, 94, 2-3. VESPA (2021b), 126-128.

29 Gorgias, fr. 11a, 30 Diels - Kranz : πεσσοῦς τε σχολῆς ἄλυπον διατρίβειν. Trad. VESPA (2021a), 86.

30 Sophocle, fr. 479 Radt.

31 Pausanias, *Description de la Grèce*, 2, 20, 4.

service de la cité. Les jeux apparaissent donc comme des systèmes symboliques signifiants au même titre que les autres inventions de Palamède. Quel que soit le contexte socio-politique de l'apparition des jeux³², leur énumération vient clore la liste des inventions attribuées à Palamède. Selon la formule de David Bouvier, elle pourrait être la somme de toutes les autres, transformant en jeu la réflexion stratégique³³. Inventé lors d'une famine, le jeu constitue ainsi une forme d'entraînement, par la reconstitution d'une guerre en miniature³⁴.

Un autre contexte que nous pouvons évoquer concernant ces inventions est celui du religieux. L'invention des jeux se situe dans un passé mythique. Palamède apparaît d'abord dans les *Chants Cypriens*³⁵. Pausanias le décrit tel qu'il l'a vu dans la peinture de Polygnote, proche d'Actéon et d'Ajace de Salamine, jouant aux dés (*kubois*) avec Thersite³⁶. Bien plus tard, Philostrate en fera le véritable héros de la guerre³⁷. Autrement, l'invention des jeux est située dans la lointaine Égypte et attribuée au dieu Thoth. Avec une liste d'inventions similaire à celle de Palamède, Socrate lui attribue aussi l'invention de la *petteia* et des dés, ainsi que des chiffres et de l'arithmétique, de la géométrie et de l'astronomie, et puis des lettres³⁸. Comme nombre d'inventeurs liés à des cultes héroïques, Palamède, le fils de Poséidon, fait l'objet d'un culte en Troade³⁹.

Le vocabulaire du jeu et du jouet indique lui aussi un contexte religieux ; les polémistes chrétiens l'utiliseront plus tard pour déprécier les sacrifices et les rites des anciens qu'ils qualifient de *paignia*⁴⁰. Parmi eux, certains associent les *paignia* plus

spécifiquement aux oracles⁴¹. Les pratiques des anciens ne sont dès lors que des jeux d'enfants, elles sont risibles et ne peuvent susciter le respect de la croyance sérieuse pratiquée par les seuls adultes.

2. JEUX ET FÊTES

Alors que les termes *paidia* (παιδιά) et *paignion* (παίγνιον) peuvent apparaître comme des synonymes⁴², de façon inattendue, ils signifient également fête⁴³. En tant que composant, *paidia* (παιδιά) précise la fête laconienne des Gymnopédies durant laquelle les éphèbes dansent pour Apollon⁴⁴. En tant que substantif, lexicographes et scholiastes glosent *paignia* (παίγνια) par *heortê* (ἑορτή : fête)⁴⁵. Aristophane qualifie quant à lui la fête qui honore Hécate dans la *Lysistrata* de *paignia* (παίγνια)⁴⁶.

Nous pouvons tenter d'expliquer ce lien par le biais des enfants et des cérémonies qui leur sont spécifiquement destinées. Les *amphidromia* ponctuent leur introduction dans l'*oikos*, le cinquième ou le septième jour après la naissance ; la *dekate*, au dixième jour, où on leur attribue un nom ; les Apatouries, véritable fête tenue en automne, marque leur introduction à la phratry⁴⁷. Les enfants sont encore impliqués dans diverses fêtes, comme au deuxième jour des Anthestéries, les *Choés*, qui comprenaient le couronnement des enfants de trois ans avec des fleurs⁴⁸. Les enfants sont impliqués dans

32 Leur contexte de développement serait, selon KURKE (1999a), 251-252 ; (1999b), 296, celui des traditions égalitaires et élitistes de la période archaïque. Contrairement aux jeux de hasard comme les dés et les astragales ou les osselets qui relèvent de la fortune ou du divin, les *pesoi* relèveraient de l'ordre ; les Lydiens ne connaissant pas l'ordre de la cité, ils n'auraient pas pu les inventer.

33 BOUVIER (2021), 179.

34 VESPA (2021a), 90.

35 Pausanias, *Description de la Grèce*, 10, 31, 2 (fr. 27).

36 Pausanias, *Description de la Grèce*, 10, 31, 1.

37 Philostrate, *Sur les héros*, 10. Sur cet aspect héroïque de Palamède, voir en particulier VESPA (2021a), 78.

38 Platon, *Phèdre*, 274 c-d.

39 Filiation : Euripide, *Iphigénie à Aulis*, 198 ; culte : Philostrate, *Vie d'Apollonius*, 4, 13, 26-29.

40 Cyrille, *Commentaire sur le prophète Isaïe*, PG 70, 568, l. 32 : Βωμοὶ δὲ οὐκέτι καὶ θυσίαι, καὶ γοητεῖαι, καὶ οἱ τὰ τῆς ἀπάτης ἐπιτηδεύοντες παῖγνια (« Ni les autels, ni les sacrifices, ni les charmes, ni ceux qui pratiquent les jeux de la tromperie [ne sont restés] ») ; Psellus, *Opusculs psychologiques, théologique et démonologique*, 130 : θυσίων σπλάγχνων τε τομαὶ τὰ δὲ ἀθύρματα πάντα· τοῦτ' ἔστιν· ἡ θυτική καλουμένη ἐπιστήμη, ἡ διὰ τῶν θυσίων τῶν μελλόντων ζητοῦσα τὴν πρόγνωσιν καὶ ἡ διὰ τῆς τομῆς τῶν σπλάγχνων τῶν σφαζομένων ἱερείων, παῖγνια εἰσὶν ἀντικρυς (« Des sacrifices et des découpes de viscères ; tout cela ce sont des jeux ; la science dite sacrificielle, celle qui cherche la prédiction des choses à venir au moyen de sacrifices et de découpes des viscères des victimes sacrificielles, [toutes ces pratiques] ce sont ouvertement des jeux »). Sur cet aspect dépréciatif, voir BORGEAUD (2021), 82.

41 Grégoire de Nazianze, *Oration*, 39, 5 : ποῦ δὲ Ἑκάτης τὰ φοβερά καὶ σκοτεινὰ φάσματα, καὶ Τροφονίου κατὰ γῆς παῖγνια καὶ μαντεύματα, ἢ Δωδωναίας δρυὸς ληρήματα, ἢ τρίποδος Δελφικοῦ σοφίσματα, ἢ Κασταλίας μαντικὸν πόμα; (« Où, les fantômes effrayants envoyés par Hécate pendant la nuit, les bouffonneries et les oracles souterrains de Trophonios, les sornettes du chêne de Dodone, les charlataneries du trépied de Delphes et le breuvage prophétique de Castalie ? » trad. P. Gallay, Sources chrétiennes, 358).

42 Hérodien, *Sur l'orthographe*, 3, 2, 563, l. 2 Lentz : παιδία, τὸ σημαῖνον τὸ παίγνιον.

43 Sur jeu et rite, voir aussi BORGEAUD (2022).

44 Voir les descriptions chez Pausanias, *Description de la Grèce*, 3, 11, 9 ; Plutarque, *Lycurgue*, 15, 1, 7 ; Plutarque, *Apophthegmata Laconica* (Mor. 208d), 9, ainsi que les définitions chez Phrynichus, *Praeparatio sophistica*, 57, 19. Voir aussi Thucydide, *Histoire de la guerre du Péloponnèse*, 5, 82, 2 ; 5, 82, 3 ; 5, 82, 4 ; Platon, *Lois*, 1, 633c 4 ; Xénophon, *Mémoires*, 1, 2, 61.

45 Scholie à Aristophane, *Lysistrata*, 700 : παῖγνια: Ἑορτήν. Les deux définitions se retrouvent par exemple chez Eudème, *Sur le langage rhétorique*, 169b 17 Niese (*Philologus*, Suppl. 15) : παῖγνια: ἡ ἑορτή, et 169b 23 : παιδία: παίγνιον.

46 Aristophane, *Lysistrata*, 700-701 : Ὅστε καὶ ἄλλοις θῆκατῃ ποιοῦσα παῖγνια ἐγὼ ταῖσι παισὶ τὴν ἑταῖραν ἐκάλεσ' ἐκ τῶν γειτόνων (« C'est au point qu'hier encore, comme je donnais une fête en l'honneur d'Hécate, j'avais invité dans le voisinage la camarade de mes enfants. » Trad. H. Van Daele, CUF), et schol. *ad. loc.* : παῖγνια: Ἑορτήν. Chez Hérodote, *Histoires*, 9, 11, les Hyacinthies sont célébrées dans les plaisirs (Υακίνθια τε ἄγετε καὶ παίζετε).

47 Voir GOLDEN (1990), 26, n. 12 pour les différents âges évoqués pour cette introduction ; DASEN (2010b), 303. Les rôles que jouaient les enfants dans les fêtes sont plus généralement examinés par NEILS (2003), 139-161, depuis les enfants divins recevant un culte, les rituels accomplis pour les enfants et les enfants servant d'assistants aux rites.

48 Philostrate, *Heroicus*, 35, 9. Voir aussi Aristophane, *Thesmophories*, 746. Les vases identifiés comme des *choés* montrent souvent des en-

divers rites aussi, comme l'*aiôra* ou balançoire et l'*eiresiônê* où des enfants portent un rameau plein de fruits de saison, allant d'une maison à l'autre en chantant et en demandant des gâteaux⁴⁹.

De façon plus éloquente encore, les enfants, rarement il est vrai, peuvent remplir la fonction de prêtres bien qu'ils ne puissent théoriquement assumer de fonctions officielles⁵⁰. Pausanias rapporte qu'au sanctuaire d'Athéna *Kranaia* près d'Élatées, des habitations sont réservées à ceux qui servent la déesse avec à leur tête le prêtre. Ce dernier est choisi pour cinq ans parmi les garçons n'ayant pas encore atteint l'âge de la puberté où se termine cette charge de prêtrise. Pendant ce temps, le garçon vit avec la déesse et se baigne dans des baignoires comme dans l'ancien temps⁵¹. Toujours dans les temps anciens selon Pausanias, à Aigion, le prêtre de Zeus – lui-même représenté par une statue d'enfant (*pais*), est choisi annuellement. Le choix portait sur celui qui remportait un concours de beauté. Mais quand sa barbe poussait, son titre de beauté et vraisemblablement aussi sa prêtrise passaient à un autre garçon⁵². Le même critère de la puberté vaut pour le jeune prêtre d'Athéna *Alea* à Tégée⁵³. À Thèbes, la coutume veut que le prêtre d'Apollon *Ismênios* choisi pour un an soit un garçon, un *pais* de bonne famille, beau et fort. Il porte le titre de *daphnaphoros*, car les garçons portent des couronnes de laurier⁵⁴. Outre ces histoires rapportées, un document de Cos daté du I^{er} siècle av. J.-C. précise « que l'acheteur de la prêtrise [de Zeus *Alseios*] soit en bonne santé, d'une totale intégrité physique et qu'il ne soit pas plus jeune que huit ans »⁵⁵.

3. LES JEUX ÉDUCATIFS ET L'IMPORTANCE DU PLAISIR

Outre les fêtes autour de l'enfance et le rôle des enfants dans les rites, la confusion de ce que les catégories modernes peuvent classer à la fois du côté du jeu et du côté du rite, comme l'*aiôra* ou balançoire, la *krupteia* spartiate – que l'on pourrait traduire par cache-cache, les jeux associés aux fêtes comme l'*askôliasmos* en l'honneur de Dionysos au moyen d'outres qui porte d'ailleurs le même nom

fants qui tirent un chariot ou qui jouent avec des ballons. Sur ce motif iconographique, voir AMMAR (2020) et sur ces activités dans les sanctuaires, DASEN (2020).

49 Sur le rite de l'*aiôra*, voir SABETAI (2021). Aristophane, *Lysistrata*, 641-647, met quant à lui en scène les rôles des jeunes filles lors des fêtes : arréphores à sept ans, *aletrides* à dix ans, petites ourses d'Artémis *Brauronia* et, puis, canéphores.

50 GOLDEN (1994), 373-374.

51 Pausanias, *Description de la Grèce*, 10, 34, 7-8.

52 Pausanias, *Description de la Grèce*, 7, 24, 4.

53 Pausanias, *Description de la Grèce*, 8, 47, 3.

54 Pausanias, *Description de la Grèce*, 9, 10, 4.

55 IG XII 4, 328 : [ὁ πριά]μενος τὰν ἱερωσύναν ἔστω ὑγιής καὶ ὁλόκληρος καὶ μὴ νεώτερος ἐτέων | [ὁκτώ. Traduction CGRN 167.

que la fête Askôlia, et la *skaperda* jouée lors des Dionysies d'où les jeux de mots insultants ne sont pas absents⁵⁶, l'éducation se révèle un facteur qui associe, notamment pour Platon, les jeux aux fêtes. Les enfants se réjouissent des représentations théâtrales et des spectacles de marionnettes⁵⁷. D'après l'Athénien, ils apprennent par le chant de la nourrice et de la mère, qu'il soit rieur (*meta paidias*) ou sérieux (*meta spoudês*). Ce sont les mêmes histoires entendues lors des prières (*en euchais*) qui accompagnent les sacrifices et lors des spectacles, ces mêmes spectacles que les jeunes aiment (*has hêdista*) regarder lors des sacrifices⁵⁸. Le spectacle des rites, adressé aussi bien aux petits qu'aux grands, comporte des fastes, des couronnes d'or, des habits féminins ou masculins réservés aux fêtes⁵⁹. De même, les processions, les compétitions musicales et athlétiques sont à la fois partie intégrante des fêtes et spectacles réjouissants, à la fois rites et jeux⁶⁰. L'éducation des futurs citoyens est ainsi accomplie au moyen de jeux d'où le rire et la bonne humeur sont loin d'être exclus.

Bien que la *paidia*, le passetemps enfantin, contraste souvent avec la *spoudê*, le sérieux⁶¹, l'intérêt des jeux, toujours selon Platon, est dans leurs vertus : ils contribuent à former le caractère des enfants entre trois et six ans qui les inventent naturellement quand ils se rassemblent aux temples de quartier. Après six ans, en effet, les jeunes garçons et les jeunes filles sont séparés⁶². Il va de soi que leur comportement doit être ordonné, ce à quoi veillent les nourrices et l'une des femmes élue pour surveiller ces dernières. La vertu des jeux consiste en ce qu'ils incitent à se conformer à la loi, aux règles, sinon les enfants risquent de ne pas mûrir ; l'amour de la nouveauté met en danger l'ordre établi. Selon l'Athénien des *Lois*, les États devraient connaître l'importance des jeux d'enfants dans le maintien de la loi⁶³. Les laisser innover reviendrait à les laisser devenir des hommes différents de leurs pères⁶⁴. Il ne s'agit donc pas uniquement de réguler les jeux mais de former les futurs citoyens. Les jeux contribuent encore à identifier des aptitudes

56 Scholie à Aristophane, *Ploutos*, 1129 Chantry ; Hésychius, *Lexicon*, s 854 Schmidt, s.v. ; s.v. σκαπερδεῦσαι· λοιδορῆσαι.

57 Platon, *Lois*, 2, 658c.

58 Platon, *Lois*, 10, 887d. À propos de l'*hêdonê*, du plaisir comme caractéristique du jeu dans le discours de l'Athénien des *Lois*, voir KIDD (2019), 16-17, avec des références à la note 54.

59 Platon, *Ion*, 535d ; Xénophon, *Économique*, 9, 6.

60 MIKALSON (1982), 217-218, considère ces éléments communs aux fêtes qui contribuent à les rendre plaisantes et ludiques, à la fois pour les participants et pour les spectateurs.

61 Platon, *Lois*, 1, 647d ; 5, 732d ; 7, 796d ; *Politique*, 288c ; *République*, 10, 602b. Pour les références, voir GOLDEN (1990), 53, n. 6. Selon KIDD (2019), 163 et 167-168, le contraste des deux termes s'articule autour du but poursuivi par la *spoudê*, tandis que la *paidia* implique un plaisir immédiat, sans but à atteindre dans le futur.

62 Platon, *Lois*, 7, 793e-794c.

63 Platon, *Lois*, 7, 797a-b.

64 Platon, *Lois*, 7, 798b-d.

et les jouets à préparer les enfants au rôle qu'ils rempliront dans la vie ; l'homme qui veut être bon en une activité doit la pratiquer depuis son enfance au moyen du jeu. Les jouets doivent dès lors être faits sur la base de modèles réels d'outils⁶⁵. L'étude elle-même doit être présentée sous forme de jeu, *paizontas* (παίζοντας), de sorte que l'homme libre étudie de son plein gré et garde à l'esprit tout ce qu'il a appris⁶⁶. C'est en jouant aux astragales ou quelque autre jeu, *paidian* (παιδιάν), qu'un enfant comme Alcibiade peut acquérir une vision claire de la justice et de l'injustice⁶⁷. Le caractère amusant et agréable du jeu nécessaire à l'éducation, permet de faire le lien entre jeux, plaisanteries et fêtes religieuses. Nombre d'auteurs associent la *paidia* (παιδιά) aux fêtes, *heortai*⁶⁸. D'autres synonymes de *paidia* (παιδιά) ou de *paignia* (παίγνια) montrent la même association festive. Ainsi par exemple l'*epsia* (ἐψία) signifie le rire et le jeu. Par une étymologie populaire, le terme est associé au jeu de mots, à l'*epos* ou bien aux fruits utilisés comme des jouets⁶⁹. Eustathe l'associe aux fêtes et l'utilise comme un adjectif pour les fêtes joyeuses⁷⁰. L'édition du lexicographe Denys en fait en revanche un synonyme des fêtes⁷¹. Si les jeux étymologiques sont généralement peu convaincants, ils établissent un lien qui était admis entre les jeux et les fêtes. De manière analogue, le terme *athurma*, qui apparaît lui aussi comme un synonyme de *paignion*⁷², est également associé aux sacrifices au

moyen d'une étymologie populaire fondée, cette fois, sur l'assonance⁷³.

La bonne humeur et l'amusement sont partie intégrante de certaines fêtes. Plutarque décrit la *paidia* bachique et ses excès, son *hubris* (ὑβρις), comme si le dieu avait été présent et conduisait le *kômos* désordonné⁷⁴. Il décrit de même la fête romaine en l'honneur de Bona, célébrée de nuit par les femmes dans l'amusement (*paidia*) et la musique⁷⁵. Aristophane évoque les jeux et les danses, les rires et les railleries dignes de la fête de Déméter⁷⁶ ; selon Cornutus, celle de Déméter *Chloë* est célébrée dans la joie et l'amusement (*meta paidias kai charas*) en espérant l'abondance⁷⁷. C'est pour soulager les humains faisant pitié, selon Platon, que les dieux ont institué les *heortai*, les fêtes comme des récompenses pour qu'ils se détendent du labeur. Ils leur ont donné comme compagnons dans les *heortai* les Muses, Apollon *Musêgetês* et Dionysos⁷⁸. Le sujet principal de Platon est, ici encore, l'éducation, voire l'éducation idéale évoquée par un jeu de mots éloquent entre éducation et plaisir⁷⁹. L'Athénien parle des lieux où les lois seront bonnes dans le futur en ce qui concerne l'éducation et les plaisirs des Muses, mettant côte à côte les deux termes *paideia* et *paidia* (παιδείαν τε καὶ παιδιάν). Les poètes éduquent les enfants et les jeunes gens qui forment les chœurs ayant pour but

65 Platon, *Lois*, I, 643b-c. Sur ces jouets en tant que *mimēmata*, voir KIDD (2019), 14-16.

66 Platon, *République*, 7, 537a.

67 Platon, *Alcibiade*, 1, 110b.

68 Platon, *Phèdre*, 276b : παιδιὰς τε καὶ ἑορτῆς χάριν (« par jeu, et à l'occasion de la fête ; » trad. P. Vicaire, CUF) ; *République*, 2, 365a : à propos des purifications διὰ θυσίων καὶ παιδιᾶς ἡδονῶν (« par des sacrifices et des jeux divertissants ; » trad. É. Chambry, CUF) ; Ménandre, *Samienne*, 75-76 : à propos des plaisirs des fêtes, τῆς δ' ἑορτῆς παιδιὰν πολλὴν ἐχούσης (« La festivité donnait grande matière à divertissement ; » trad. J.-M. Jacques, CUF).

69 Scholie à Apollonius de Rhodes, *Argonautiques*, 459a : ἐψιόνωνται· παρὰ τὴν ἐψίαν, ἥ ἐστι διὰ λόγων παιδιὰ, οἷον ἐπεσία τις οὔσα παρὰ τὸ ἔπος (« ils s'amusent : [provient de] l'amusement, qui est un jeu de mots, tel [le terme] *epesia* formé d'après l'épopée [*epos*] ») ; Scholie à Nicandre, *Alexipharmaca*, 233b : ἐνεψιήματα δὲ τὰ παίγνια· παίζουσι γὰρ αἱ κόραι καὶ τέρπονται τοῖς μῆλοις ; ἐνεψιήματα] τραγῆματα πρόσφορα (« [on appelle] *enepsiēmata* les jeux ; car les jeunes filles jouent et prennent plaisir aux pommes ; friandises de nourriture »). Traductions personnelles.

70 Eustathe, *Commentaire sur l'Odyssée d'Homère*, 2, 159, l. 25 : οἱ δὲ παλαιοὶ ἐρμηνεύοντες τὴν λέξιν φασὶν οὕτως· ἐψιάται ἀντὶ τοῦ, γελᾷ, παίζει, διαλέγεται· καὶ ἐψία παιδιὰ, γέλως, χλεύη· καὶ ἐψία ἑορταί (« on dit que les anciens interprétaient le mot ainsi ; s'amuser au lieu de rire, jouer, s'entretenir ; et *epsia* l'enfance, le rire, la moquerie ; et *epsiai* les fêtes »). Voir aussi Hésychius, *Lexicon*, e 7698, 1-2 : ἐψία· παίγνια, ἐψιή· γέλως, et e 7708, 1 : ἐψία· γέλως, παιδιὰ, χλεύη ; *Etymologicum Gudianum*, e 576, l. 15 : Ἐψία· τὰ ἀπὸ λόγων ἔχοντα παίγνια· οἷον ἔπια, παρὰ τὸ ἔπη (« *Hepsia* : les jeux qui proviennent des mots [les jeux de mots], comme [le terme] *epia* [mots] qui provient des épopées [du terme *epê*] ») ; traductions personnelles.

71 Aelius Dionysius, *Attika onomata*, e 83, l. 1 : ἐψία· παιδιὰ, γέλως, χλεύη, καὶ ἐψία· ἑορταί (*Hepsia* « [amusement] : le jeu enfantin, le rire, la moquerie, et *Hepsia* : les fêtes ») ; traduction personnelle.

72 Hésychius, *Lexicon*, a 1636 : ἀθύρματα· παίγνια ; scholie à Oppien,

Halieutica, 5, 455 : Σὺν δ' ἡθυρε· συνέπαιζεν· ἀθύρματα γὰρ τὰ παίγνια (« « jouer ensemble ; car les *athurmata* sont des jouets ») ; Apion, *Fragments sur le glossaire homérique*, fr. 10, l. 1 Neitzel : ἀθῦρει· παίζει, καὶ ἀθύρματα παίγνια ; Apollonius, *Lexicon Homericum*, 12, l. 32 Bekker : ἀθῦρει παίζει, καὶ ἀθύρματα παίγνια, ἐν τῇ Ὁ ῥαψωδίᾳ τῆς Ἰλιάδος “ὅς τ' ἐπεὶ οὖν ποιήσῃ ἀθύρματα νηπιέησι [*Iliade*, 15, 363]. Le terme connaît, tout comme *paignion*, des usages métaphoriques : Himerius, *Oration*, 69, 23. Traduction personnelle.

73 Pseudo-Zonaras, *Lexicon*, a 61, 3 : Ἀθύρματα· παίγνια παρὰ τὸ θύω, τὸ ὀρμῶ· θύω, θύρω καὶ ἀθύρω καὶ ἀθῦρμα· ἡ ἀθῦρμα τα τινὰ ὄντα, παρὰ τὸ ἀθρεῖν τινὰ θεάματα (« *athurmata* : jeux/ jouets, [terme qui provient] de *thuō* [sacrifier], de *hormō* [s'élancer] ; *thuō* [sacrifier], *thurō* [pourvoir/ garnir de portes], *athurō* [jouer], et *athurma* [jeu/ jouet] ; ou bien ce genre de termes [signifieraient] *athurma*, [terme qui provient] d'*athrein* [regarder] ces spectacles ») ; traduction personnelle. L'allusion aux spectacles suggère des jeux.

74 Plutarque, *Alexandre*, 67, 6.

75 Plutarque, *César*, 9, 8.

76 Aristophane, *Grenouilles*, 387-393 : καὶ μ' ἀσφαλῶς πανήμερον παῖσαι τε καὶ χορεῦσαι. Καὶ πολλὰ μὲν γέλοιά μ' εἰπεῖν, πολλὰ δὲ σπουδαῖα, καὶ τῆς σῆς ἑορτῆς ἀξίως παῖσαντα καὶ σκώψαντα νικήσαντα ταινιοῦσθαι (« Fais qu'en sécurité toute la journée je puisse me livrer aux jeux et aux danses. Que je tienne bien des propos plaisants, bien des propos sérieux ; qu'après avoir badiné et raillé d'une manière digne de ta fête, vainqueur, je porte les bandelettes » ; trad. H. Van Daele, CUF) ; *Paix*, 816 : Μοῦσα θεὰ μετ' ἐμοῦ ξυμπαίζει τὴν ἑορτήν (« Muse divine, [...] viens célébrer la fête avec moi ; » trad. H. Van Daele, CUF).

77 Cornutus, *De la nature des dieux*, 55, 14.

78 Platon, *Lois*, 2, 653d. Voir aussi Thucydide, *Histoire de la guerre du Péloponnèse*, 2, 38, 1-2.

79 CALAME (1999), 300 ; pour l'association des termes *paidia* et *paideia* dans les *Lois*, voir JOUËT-PASTRÉ (2000), 71-72, selon qui « la *paidia* recouvre la *paideia* au point que l'éducation ne peut se concevoir sans le jeu. »

d'accroître leur vertu, *pros aretên* (πρὸς ἀρετήν)⁸⁰. Les premières sensations des plaisirs et des peines qui rendent l'éducation des enfants problématique, se corrigent à l'âge adulte au moyen de la musique. Platon met l'accent sur des aspects précis des fêtes : musical, athlétique, social et alimentaire mais aussi, ce qui nous intéresse davantage, ludique⁸¹. Ailleurs dans les *Lois*, il met côte à côte la *paidia* et les fêtes, *heortasei* (ἐορτάσει), celles des jeunes qui font plaisir à voir aux plus âgés⁸². Ayant atteint l'âge responsable de quarante ans, les hommes peuvent enfin se joindre à la fête, la *teletê* (τελετή) de Dionysos qui est également un amusement, *paidia* (παιδιάν), et boire du vin⁸³. Quant à Aristote, il met sur le même plan la *paidia* (παιδιάν), les rires, les fêtes ou *heortai* et tout ce qui procure du plaisir et de l'espoir⁸⁴. Il est certain que pour les Athéniens les fêtes sont une occasion de s'amuser, chanter, danser, participer à des sacrifices et des banquets⁸⁵. Platon emploie le verbe *heortazô* (ἐορτάζω) comme un synonyme de *hestiô* (ἐστιῶ)⁸⁶. Quant à Xénophon, il évoque les festins lors des fêtes, l'*euôchia* signifiant à la fois se régaler et faire la fête⁸⁷. Les fêtes organisées par l'État profitent de fait au peuple et davantage encore aux plus pauvres ; les sacrifices aux frais de l'État leur permettent de se rendre aux banquets et de recevoir une part des animaux sacrifiés⁸⁸. Et Strépsiade se rend malade à force de profiter de la fête des Panathénées⁸⁹.

Les fêtes honorant les dieux vont ainsi de pair avec tout ce qui peut faire plaisir aux mortels, qu'il s'agisse de laisser s'exprimer la jeunesse ou de compenser l'âge avancé pour tout ce qu'il a perdu. Strabon note bien que les rites ont lieu dans une atmosphère de récréation festive (*heortastikê*) car la récréation (*anesis*) permet à l'esprit de s'abstraire des occupations humaines et de se tourner vers le divin⁹⁰. Les jouets et les jeux, leur association aux jeunes et le rôle de ces derniers voire des enfants lors des fêtes ne suffisent pas, me semble-t-il, à expliquer le lien intrinsèque entre jeu et rite. Nous pouvons évoquer en ce sens divers facteurs qui contribuent à ce rapprochement sans y suffire individuellement.

80 Platon, *Lois*, 2, 656c.

81 Cf. Platon, *Lois*, 10, 887d : μετὰ τε παιδιᾶς.

82 Platon, *Lois*, 2, 657d. Selon KIDD (2019), 80, ce passage qui montre les plus âgés prêts à se réjouir parce qu'ils se rendent à une fête, les montre prêts à s'éveiller, malgré la diminution de leurs capacités physiques, à la mémoire de leurs jeux de jeunesse et à devenir des participants actifs à la fête.

83 Platon, *Lois*, 2, 666b.

84 Aristote, *Rhétorique*, 1380b.

85 MIKALSON (1982), 216.

86 Platon, *République*, 5, 458a.

87 Xénophon, *Cyropédie*, 1, 5, 1. Voir CHANTRAINE (1968), s.v. εὐωχέω.

88 Xénophon, *Constitution des Athéniens*, 2, 9.

89 Aristophane, *Nuées*, 386-387.

90 Strabon, *Géographie*, 10, 3, 9. Pour un commentaire de ce passage, voir BERGEAUD (2021), 200.

La continuité entre l'enfance et l'âge adulte est l'un d'entre eux. Bien que, selon Aristote, le caractère changeant des enfants affecte leurs amitiés, puisqu'ils recherchent un plaisir qui est lui aussi changeant⁹¹, comme le constate Cyrus, certaines amitiés durent et peuvent servir⁹². Ainsi Cléocrète, le héraut des initiés, pour enrayer la guerre civile, a pu se servir de l'argument que lui et ses alliés avaient participé ensemble aux rites, aux sacrifices, aux fêtes, aux chœurs, ainsi qu'à l'école⁹³.

4. JEUX ET JOUETS AU SANCTUAIRE

Les enfants s'adonnent à toutes sortes de jeux à l'intérieur des sanctuaires⁹⁴. Nous avons vu comment les jeux préparent les enfants aux rôles qu'ils rempliront à l'âge adulte. Les jeux de force par exemple, de lutte, préparent les garçons à leurs devoirs guerriers. Mais pour ce qui est des jeux véritablement enfantins impliquant des jouets, le lien est plus subtil. Le jeu différencie les enfants des adultes⁹⁵. Les astragales sont notamment associés aux enfants, dès Homère qui montre l'ombre de Patrocle évoquant son enfance et la malencontreuse tuerie du fils d'Amphidamas lors d'un jeu d'astragales qui a mal tourné⁹⁶. Ce lien à la jeunesse est l'argument qu'utilise Pausanias pour rendre compte de la présence d'un astragale dans les mains de l'une des Charites, représentées par des *xoana* dorés aux extrémités de pierre blanche, dans leur sanctuaire à Petra. L'une tient une rose, l'autre une petite branche de myrte, deux éléments que Pausanias associe à Aphrodite ; l'astragale que tient la troisième est un *paignion* (παίγνιον) qui convient aux jeunes gens et aux jeunes filles⁹⁷. De façon semblable, Antipater de Sidon montre la *parthenos* Hippé qui, bien qu'arrivée à l'âge de se marier et d'offrir sa chevelure à Artémis, aime encore les osselets (λιπαστραγάλη)⁹⁸. Une nette opposition de ce qui convient à chaque âge est aussi marquée par Plutarque qui, en évoquant les moyens de tromper, attribue les astragales aux enfants et les serments aux hommes⁹⁹.

Nombre de jeux et de jouets considérés comme

91 Aristote, *Éthique à Eudème*, 7, 1236a 38-39 ; *Éthique à Nicomaque*, 8, 1156a 31-35. Voir aussi 1157a 28-29 ; 1158a 5.

92 Xénophon, *Cyropédie*, 4, 2, 10. Sur ces liens amicaux de l'enfance, voir GOLDEN (1990), 51-52.

93 Xénophon, *Helléniques*, 2, 4, 20 : μετεσχίκαμεν δὲ ὑμῖν καὶ ἱερῶν τῶν σεμνοτάτων καὶ θυσιῶν καὶ ἐορτῶν τῶν καλλίστων, καὶ συγχορευταὶ καὶ συμφοιτοῦνται γεγενήμεθα καὶ συστρατιῶνται.

94 Voir notamment DASEN (2020), 106-113, qui détaille ces jeux ainsi que leurs conséquences, parfois fatales.

95 GOLDEN (1990), 54.

96 *Iliade*, 23, 88.

97 Pausanias, *Description de la Grèce*, 6, 24, 6-7.

98 *Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 276. Sur cet « encore » qui marquerait le passage de la jeune fille, voir BRULÉ (1996), 2.

99 Plutarque, *Lysandre*, 8, 4 ; *Apophthegmata Laconica*, 229b ; *De Alexandri magni fortuna aut virtute*, 330f.

spécifiquement enfantins sont pourtant utilisés par les adultes à des fins diverses – nous pouvons évoquer en ce sens les premiers jeux mentionnés, les tambourins des petites filles, frappés par les participantes aux chœurs d'Artémis¹⁰⁰. Comme le précise Socrate, « on ne peut devenir bon joueur à la *petteia* ou aux dés, si on ne s'y applique pas dès l'enfance et si on ne joue qu'à ses moments perdus »¹⁰¹. Ces jeux ont des connotations différentes dans les mains des adultes, notamment parce qu'ils impliquent des jeux d'argent¹⁰². Les prétendants de Pénélope qui mènent une vie oisive jouent aux *pessoi*¹⁰³, et l'on joue aux dés, à la *kubeia*, lors des banquets¹⁰⁴. Les mêmes jeux sont joués par les jeunes et les moins jeunes. Le roi Rhampsinite descendu dans l'Hadès alors qu'il était encore vivant, y jouait aux dés (*sunkubeuein*) avec Déméter ; il en revint avec un cadeau de la déesse¹⁰⁵.

Les dieux pouvaient aussi jouer aux mêmes jeux que les humains. Éros avec Ganymède jouaient aux astragales, tout comme Dionysos¹⁰⁶. Ce jeu populaire montre des variantes significatives. Pollux en donne un aperçu étendu. On joue avec les pions au jeu des lignes nommé *diagrammismos* (παιδιᾶ καὶ ὁ διὰ γραμμισμός). En jouant avec les astragales cachés dans la main on pouvait jouer à pair ou impair et se rapprocher d'une technique mantique (μαντεία). Le même résultat pouvait être obtenu avec des fèves, des noix ou des amendes, voire des monnaies comme dans le *Ploutos* d'Aristophane (816)¹⁰⁷. Selon Pollux et d'autres auteurs encore les astragales sont également populaires parmi les adolescents qui jouent à la palestre¹⁰⁸. Dans les rêves, selon Artémidore, les astragales signifient des choses différentes selon l'âge des joueurs. Pour les enfants, jouer aux dés, aux astragales ou aux cailloux n'est pas mauvais, car les enfants ont pour habitude de jouer tout le temps. En revanche, pour les adultes, jouer aux dés (*kubeuein*) est mauvais et signifie se disputer pour de l'argent. Rêver de jouer aux astragales est aussi mauvais pour les adultes à moins qu'ils n'espèrent hériter ; car les astragales, provenant de cadavres, présagent de dangers¹⁰⁹. Les combinaisons du jeu des astragales

portent par ailleurs des noms évocateurs. Au nombre de trente-cinq lorsqu'on jette quatre astragales, elles portent des noms de dieux, de héros, de rois, d'hommes éminents voire d'hétaïres¹¹⁰.

Les noms de jeux sont parfois également évocateurs. Pour un jeu de *pessoi*, cailloux ou pions, chaque joueur dispose de cinq pièces sur cinq lignes, dont la médiane porte le nom suggestif de ligne sacrée, *hiera* (ἱερά). Ce jeu des cinq lignes, selon Sophocle, se joue en lançant un dé¹¹¹. Si le nom est connu dès l'époque archaïque, il était probablement obscur du temps de Pollux¹¹². En revanche, l'expression devenue proverbiale « *kinei ton aph' hieras* » (κίνει τὸν ἀφ' ἱερᾶς) qui désigne la dernière chance du joueur, a été reprise bien plus longtemps¹¹³.

D'autres jeux portent des noms qui s'associent plus ou moins directement aux sanctuaires. À Athènes, selon des sources tardives, l'on jouait aux jeux d'argent au temple d'Athéna *Skiras* qui donne son nom aux maisons de jeu, les *kubeutêria* (κυβευτήρια) appelées aussi *skirapheia*¹¹⁴. Il se peut que cette association soit une construction savante, tout comme le sanctuaire d'Athéna *Skiras* au lieu-dit Skiron apparaît comme une construction autour d'une racine commune¹¹⁵. La déesse, à un certain moment de son histoire du moins, accueille des jeux et des devins¹¹⁶. La présence du devin Skiros indique aussi un oracle par les dés au lieu-dit Skiron, sur la voie sacrée vers Éleusis. Ce devin dont le nom fait partie du dossier bien connu de *skiron*, le parasol sous lequel la prêtresse d'Athéna, le prêtre de Poséidon et celui d'Hélios marchent vers le lieu-dit Skiron¹¹⁷, est un éleusinien ou bien venu de

de dés. La qualité des jeux est jugée différemment par les auteurs modernes ; le jeu des astragales est bon alors que celui de dés a des connotations péjoratives ; voir KIDD (2017b), 119-120 et VESPA (2020) au sujet de la *kubeia* utilisée comme un argument rhétorique ayant pour but de valoriser ou au contraire dénigrer le statut social d'un citoyen.

110 Suétone, *Des termes injurieux. Des jeux grecs*, 84-87 Taillardat.

111 Sophocle, fr. 396 ; Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 9, 97-98 ; Photius, *Lexicon*, s. 3354 (Épicharme, fr. 225 Kaibel). Voir aussi CAPRA (2016), 42-43. Notons que la *petteia*, en tant que nom générique, fait référence à divers jeux ; ainsi par exemple AUSTIN (1940), 260. Pour le jeu, voir KURKE (1999a), 256-257 et plus spécialement SCHÄDLER (2009) ; SCHÄDLER (2021), 148-151.

112 KIDD (2017a), 85.

113 Eustathe, *Commentaire sur l'Odyssée d'Homère*, 1, 28, 40-45. Sur cette formule et ses emplois dérivés, voir ZUCKER (2021), 247-256.

114 Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 9, 96 ; Photius, *Lexicon*, s. 521, 8 ; Harpocraton, *Lexicon*, s.v. Σκιράφια ; Eustathe, *Commentaire sur l'Odyssée d'Homère*, 1, 28, 35-37. Pour les sens de *kubeuô*, jouer aux dés et s'adonner aux jeux d'argent, voir KIDD (2017b), 120 et 123 pour le passage de Pollux. Aristophane, *Ploutos*, 242-244, évoque les jeux de dés en relation avec la prostitution et les maisons closes (πύρναισι καὶ κύβοισι). Pour les *skirapheia*, voir VESPA (2023).

115 Ainsi PARKER (2005), 174-175, et VESPA (2023).

116 Photius, *Lexicon*, s. 521. Selon PICARD (1929), 129, la déesse elle-même présidait à une technique mantique.

117 Philochore, *FGrHist* 328 F 14 (Harpocraton, *Lexicon*, s.v. σκίρον ; Souda, s. 623) ; Photius, *Lexicon*, s. 521, 8.

100 BRULÉ (1996), 3.

101 Platon, *République*, 2, 374c : πεττευτικὸς δὲ ἢ κυβευτικὸς ἱκανῶς οὐδ' ἂν εἰς γένοιτο μὴ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἐκ παιδὸς ἐπιτηδεύων, ἀλλὰ παρέρῳ χρόμμενος. Trad. É. Chambry, CUF, légèrement modifiée.

102 Sur l'aspect négatif des jeux d'argent et notamment de la *kubeia*, voir VESPA (2020), 175-176.

103 *Odyssée*, 1, 106-107. Les *pessoi* sont ici liés à la transgression de l'hospitalité ; voir KURKE (1999b), 255.

104 Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 9, 94. Voir CARÉ (2009-2010), 33.

105 Hérodote, *Histoires*, 2, 122, 1. Sur cet épisode, voir HAZIZA (2023).

106 Apollonius de Rhodes, *Argonautiques*, 3, 117 (Éros et Ganymède) ; *Anthologie Palatine*, 12, 46, 47 (Éros) ; Clément d'Alexandrie, *Protréptique*, 2, 18, 1 (Dionysos).

107 Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 9, 101.

108 Aristophane, *Les guêpes*, 295-296 ; Platon, *Lysis*, 206e.

109 Artémidore, *Oniroticon*, 3, 1. Sur la valeur des jeux en rêves, voir DU BOUCHET (2021), 275 pour ce passage d'Artémidore sur les jeux

Dodone pour combattre aux côtés des Éleusiens¹¹⁸. D'autres divinités sont associées à la mantique au moyen d'astragales. Héraclès à Boura en Achaïe est consulté dans une grotte. Le consultant prie devant la statue, jette quatre astragales sur la table qui se trouve devant le dieu et reçoit sa réponse en lisant le schéma ainsi formé sur une tablette explicative¹¹⁹. Ces astragales ayant servi à la mantique pouvaient ensuite être dédiés aux sanctuaires¹²⁰. Jeux et jouets dans les sanctuaires s'expliquent donc par leur utilisation par des jeunes et des moins jeunes, le rite et la mantique. Les simples jeux n'en sont pas exclus, comme le montre la réponse d'Héraclite qui, lorsqu'il se voit demander d'instituer des lois, il refuse de prendre part à la vie politique avec ses concitoyens Éphésiens et préfère jouer aux astragales avec les enfants au temple d'Artémis¹²¹. Il valorise le jeu avec les enfants aux dépens de celui de la *polis*, au sens de jeu comme au sens propre¹²².

Les oracles par les osselets sont une pratique bien connue pour la plaine pamphylienne au II^e siècle apr. J.-C. Le système oraculaire est certes différent du jeu d'enfants, ne fût-ce qu'en ce qui concerne l'usage systématique de noms divins et aussi l'évaluation des points¹²³. Mais les moyens mis en œuvre sont similaires. Des inscriptions rapportent la technique : on jette cinq astragales, ou bien on jette cinq fois un astragale, afin de combiner les chiffres sortants et d'y reconnaître une divinité¹²⁴. La divinité intervient dans l'espace du hasard, elle guide la main du lanceur et le mène à la réponse oraculaire¹²⁵. L'interprétation est basée sur un texte qui donne les réponses, inscrit sur la pierre et placé en un lieu central. Certaines parmi ces inscriptions ont été exposées dans ou à proximité de l'agora, d'autres près d'un sanctuaire – dont une avait été dédiée par un agoranome de Termessos, une autre près de la porte de la ville et, enfin, on en trouve une en relation avec le théâtre¹²⁶. Leur rapprochement avec Hermès a souvent été attribué à l'association du dieu au hasard et à la chance. Pourtant dans l'*Hymne homérique*, Apollon lui concède d'être écouté par les humains, sorte de divination bien que considérée comme inférieure¹²⁷. Selon Apollodore, Apollon lui cède la divination

par les cailloux (*psêphoi*) en échange de la syrinx¹²⁸, alors que dans l'*Hymne* Apollon lui donne seulement des instructions pour rejoindre les Thriai qui lui révéleront, elles, la manière de se faire entendre des humains, à quoi Zeus consent et fait d'Hermès le maître des oiseaux qui apportent des présages et d'animaux de toutes sortes, ainsi que le messenger d'Hadès¹²⁹. Le terme *thriai* désigne par ailleurs les cailloux mantiques, inventés par les Thriai filles de Zeus ou bien par Athéna qui les a lancés au lieu-dit Thriasion¹³⁰. Hermès restera de toutes façons associé à la distribution des lots, à leur maniement par la coïncidence et le hasard¹³¹.

CONCLUSION

Bien que la proximité du vocabulaire puisse suggérer que les jeux et les jouets sont spécialement destinés aux enfants, cette relation n'est pas nécessaire, même lorsque les auteurs anciens les dévalorisent en raison de leur caractère infantin. Certains jeux et jouets apparaissent comme relatifs à l'âge et au genre des joueurs mais cette relation ne résiste pas non plus à l'examen des sources. Quelle que soit leur réputation, jeux et jouets s'associent au rite de diverses manières, offrandes, symboles voire moyens pour accomplir le rite et se retrouvent dès lors dans les sanctuaires d'où le jeu en tant que tel n'est pas absent. Les dieux jouent aux mêmes jeux et avec les mêmes jouets que les petits humains. Ils jouent avec les humains, et le petit Apollon rit même des rites qu'ils accomplissent dans la souffrance.

Qu'il s'agisse d'enfants ou d'adultes, le plaisir que les jeux procurent a des effets sur l'éducation des uns et sur la disposition des autres. Toujours selon Platon qui évoque à travers l'Athénien des *Lois* la juste manière de vivre en temps de paix, il ne s'agit pas de faire comme les gens qui croient que le travail sérieux devrait s'accomplir afin de jouer – en ses termes, il ne s'agit pas, comme le pense la majorité, de mener les travaux de la guerre en vue de la paix. Il n'y a pas, selon l'Athénien, de jeu ou d'éducation digne de ce nom dans les travaux de la guerre. C'est en temps de paix qu'il faut vivre le mieux possible, c'est-à-dire s'adonner aux passetemps ou aux jeux des sacrifices, chants et danses afin de gagner les faveurs des dieux, tout en faisant appel sur ce point à l'autorité d'Homère¹³².

118 Éleusinien : Philochore, *FGrHist* 328 F 14 ; de Dodone : Pausanias, *Description de la Grèce*, 1, 36, 4.

119 Pausanias, *Description de la Grèce*, 7, 25, 10.

120 Scholie à Pindare, *Pythique*, 4, 338. C'est aussi par la proximité de la mantique qu'est expliquée la présence d'astragales sur les monnaies d'Asie Mineure par ASHTON (2019).

121 Diogène Laërce, *Vies des Philosophes*, 9, 1, 2-3.

122 DASEN (2021), 118 ; SCHÄDLER (2021), 154.

123 GRAF (2005), 63. Notons qu'Artémidore, *Onirocriticon*, 2, 69 qualifie les ἀστραγαλομάντιες de menteurs.

124 GRAF (2005), 50-60.

125 GRAF (2005), 66.

126 GRAF (2005), 71-72.

127 *Hymne homérique à Hermès*, 564-566. Ainsi GRAF (2005), 74.

128 Apollodore, *Bibliothèque*, 3, 10, 2. Cet échange est absent de l'*Hymne homérique à Hermès*.

129 *Hymne homérique à Hermès*, 552-568.

130 Photius, *Lexicon*, s.v. Θρίαί ; *Etymologicum Gudianum*, s.v. Θράσιον. ἐκεῖ γὰρ ἔρριπτεν ἡ Ἀθηνᾶ τοὺς μαντικούς ψήφους (« Thrasion ; car c'est là qu'Athéna jeta les cailloux mantiques » ; traduction personnelle) ; *Etym. Magnum*, s.v. Θρίαί.

131 Voir en particulier JAILLARD (2012), 93-95.

132 Platon, *Lois*, 7, 803e-804b ; Homère, *Odyssée*, 3, 26 ; selon la formule de JOUËT-PASTRÉ (2000), 77, l'éducation des citoyens de tous les âges ne peut être mise en œuvre « que si la cité est une cité en paix et une cité de jeux ».

La vie passée à jouer est la meilleure, celle qui rapproche l'humain du divin. Il ne s'agit pas là d'une analogie entre jeu et religion. La réalité du jeu n'emprunte pas au sacré quelques-uns de ses caractères les plus apparents comme le pensait Émile Benveniste¹³³. Nos catégories de jeu et de jouet ne recouvrent pas nécessairement les mêmes domaines que leurs équivalents anciens. Les termes *paidia* (παῖδιά) et *paignion* (παίγνιον), *paignia* (παίγνια) et *heortê* (ἑορτή), se trouvent en une relation intrinsèque qui s'établit par le biais de la fête. Les fêtes et les jeux permettent d'alléger les incertitudes humaines, comme le montre Platon pour les unes et l'invention de Palamède pour les autres. Ce lien qui apparaît également dans l'équation qu'établissent scholiastes et lexicographes entre *paidia* et *heortê*, apparaît en réalité bien avant avec leur mise en œuvre dans l'emploi du vocabulaire festif. Platon ira dans un sens quelque peu différent, en mettant jeux et fêtes côte à côte, qui permettent aux humains de se rapprocher des dieux au moyen du plaisir.

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

- AMMAR, Hanna, « Greek Children and their Wheel Carts on Attic Vases », in Katharina Rebay-Salisbury, Doris Pany-Kucera (éd.), *Ages and Abilities. The Stages of Childhood and their Social Recognition in Prehistoric Europe and Beyond*, Oxford (2020), 209-220.
- ASHTON H. J., Richard, « Astragaloï on Greek Coins of Asia Minor », in Véronique Dasen, Ulrich Schädler (éd.), *Dossier Jouer dans l'Antiquité. Identité et multiculturalité*, Archimède. Archéologie et histoire ancienne, 6 (2019), 113-126.
- ATTIA, Alexandra, DELAHAYE, Adrien, « Vertiges du banquet : jeux d'habileté et d'équilibre au *symposion* », in Véronique Dasen, Typhaine Haziza (éd.), *Dossier thématique Jeux, normes et transgressions*, Kentron. Revue pluridisciplinaire du monde antique, 36 (2021), 29-66.
- AUSTIN, Roland G., « Greek Board Games », *Antiquity*, 14 (1940), 257-271.
- BENVENISTE, Émile, « Le jeu comme structure », *Deucalion. Cahiers de philosophie*, 2 (1947), 161-167.
- BORGEAUD, Philippe, *La pensée européenne des religions*, Paris (2021).
- BORGEAUD, Philippe, « Quelques réflexions sur le rapport entre jeu et pratique rituelle », in Véronique Dasen, Vinciane Pirenne Delforge (éd.), *Dossier Des dieux des jeux, du hasard ?*, *Kernos*, 35 (2022), sous presse.
- DU BOUCHET, Julien, « Jouer en rêve chez Artémidore », in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (éd.), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity : Definition, Transmission, Reception*, Collection Jeu/Play/Spiel 2, Liège (2021), 267-282.
- BRULÉ, Pierre, « Des osselets et des tambourins pour Artémis », *Clio*, 4 (1996), 1-14.
- BOUVIER, David, « Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira l'Illiade », in David Bouvier, Véronique Dasen (dir.), *Héraclite : le temps est un enfant qui joue*, Jeu/Play/Spiel 1, Liège (2021), 173-194.
- CALAME, Claude, « Indigenous and Modern Perspectives on Tribal Initiation Rites; Education According to Plato », in Mark W. Padilla (dir.), *Rites of Passage in Ancient Greece : Literature, Religion, Society*, London/Toronto (1999), 278-312.
- CAPRA, Andrea, « 'Giocare alla città'. Discorsi e pedine nella 'Repubblica' », *Acme*, 1 (2016), 41-45.
- CARÈ, Barbara, « Il gioco degli astragali : un passatempo tra antico e moderno », *Ludica. Annali di storia e civiltà del gioco*, 15-16 (2009-2010), 32-42.
- CARÈ, Barbara, « L'astragale réexaminé : jeu, rites et violence dans l'Antiquité classique », in Véronique Dasen, Typhaine Haziza (éd.), *Violence et jeu. De l'Antiquité à nos jours*, Caen, Presses universitaires de Caen, sous presse.
- CASEVITZ, Michel, « Les noms du jeu et du jouet en grec », *Kentron*, 34 (2018), 51-60.
- CHANTRAINE, Pierre, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des mots*, Paris (1968).
- CRAWFORD, Sally, « The Archaeology of Play Things : Theorising a Toy Stage in the 'Biography' of Objects », *Childhood in the Past*, 2 (2009), 55-70.
- DASEN, Véronique, « Archéologie funéraire et histoire de l'enfance dans l'Antiquité : nouveaux enjeux, nouvelles perspectives », in Anne-Marie Guimier-Sorbets, Yvette Morizot (éd.), *L'Enfant et la mort dans l'Antiquité I. Nouvelles recherches dans les nécropoles grecques. Le signalement des tombes d'enfants*, Paris (2010a), 19-44.
- DASEN, Véronique, « Childbirth and Infancy in Greek and Roman Antiquity », in Beryl Rawson (dir.), *A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, Chichester, Malden MA (2010b), 291-314.
- DASEN, Véronique, « Jeux de l'amour et du hasard en Grèce ancienne », *Kernos*, 29 (2016), 73-100.
- DASEN, Véronique, « La royauté de l'enfant. À propos d'Héraclite et de pratiques ludiques enfantines en Grèce ancienne », in David Bouvier, Véronique Dasen (éd.), *Héraclite : le temps est un enfant qui joue*, Jeu/Play/Spiel 1, Liège (2020), 97-123.
- DASEN, Véronique, VERBANCK-PIÉRARD Annie, « Poupées articulées en image : du jeu au rite », in Véronique Dasen, Thomas Daniaux (éd.), *Locus Ludi. Quoi de neuf dans la culture ludique antique ?*, *Pallas*, 119 (2022), 349-378.

133 BENVENISTE (1947), 164.

- DAUX, Georges, « Les ambiguïtés de grec κόρη », *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, 117, 3 (1973), 382-393.
- GRAF, Fritz, « Rolling the Dice for an Answer », in Sarah Iles Johnston, Peter T. Struck (dir.), *Mantikê. Studies in Ancient Divination*, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 155, Leiden/ Boston (2005), 51-97.
- GOLDEN, Mark, « Pais, 'child' and 'slave' », *L'Antiquité Classique*, 54 (1985), 91-104.
- GOLDEN, Mark, *Children and Childhood in Classical Athens*, Baltimore/ London (1990).
- GOLDEN, Mark, « Children's Rights, Children's Speech and Agamemnon », in Robin Osborne, Simon Hornblower (dir.), *Ritual, Finance, Politics. Athenian Democratic Accounts Presented to David Lewis*, Oxford (1994), 371-383.
- HAZIZA, Typhaine, « Jouer aux Enfers : la rencontre ludique entre Rhampsinite et Déméter (Hérodote, II, 122) », in Véronique Dasen, Vinciane Pirenne Delforge (dir.), *Dossier Des dieux, des jeux- et du hasard ?*, Kernos (2023), sous presse.
- HERRERO DE JÁUREGUI, Miguel, « Early Christian Attitudes towards Child Playing », in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (éd.), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity: Definition, Transmission, Reception*, Jeu/Play/Spiel 2, Liège (2021), 283-299.
- JAILLARD, Dominique, « Hermès et la mantique grecque », in Stella Georgoudi, Renée Koch Piettre, Francis Schmidt (éd.), *La raison des signes. Présages, rites, destin dans les sociétés de la Méditerranée ancienne*, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 174, Leiden/ Boston (2012), 91-107.
- JOUËT-PASTRÉ, Emmanuelle, « Jeu et éducation dans les Lois », *Cahiers du Centre Gustave-Glotz*, 11 (2000), 71-84.
- KIDD, Stephen, « *Pente Grammai* and the 'Holy Line' », *Board Game Studies Journal*, 11 (2017a), 83-99.
- KIDD, Stephen, « How to Gamble in Greek: The Meaning of *Kubeia* », *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 137 (2017b), 119-134.
- KIDD, Stephen, *Play and Aesthetics in Ancient Greece*, Cambridge (2019).
- KURKE, Leslie, « Ancient Greek Board Games and how to Play them », *Classical Philology*, 94, 3 (1999a), 247-267.
- KURKE, Leslie, *Coins, Bodies, Games and Gold. The Politics of Meaning in Archaic Greece*, Princeton (1999b).
- LANGDON, Susan, « The Awkward Age: Art and Maturation in Early Greece », in Ada Cohen, Jeremy B. Rutter (dir.), *Constructions of Childhood in Ancient Greece and Italy*, Hesperia Suppl. 41 (2007), 173-191.
- LARIBI-GLAUDEL, Sophie, « Jeux de garçons, jeux de filles. Les épigrammes funéraires grecques », in Marie-Lys Arnette, Véronique Dasen (éd.), *Joueuses! Clio. Femmes, genre, société*, 56 (2022), sous presse.
- LEVANIOUK, Olga, « The Toys of Dionysos », *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 103 (2007), 165-202.
- MASSA, Francesco, « Des dieux qui jouent : polémiques religieuses autour du fr. 52 D.-K. d'Héraclite dans l'Empire romain », in David Bouvier, Véronique Dasen (éd.), *Héraclite : le temps est un enfant qui joue*, Jeu/Play/Spiel 1, Liège (2021), 27-45.
- MIKALSON, Jon D., « The Heorte of Heortology », *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 23 (1982), 213-221.
- NEILS, Jenifer, « Children and Greek Religion », in Jenifer Neils, John H. Oakley (éd.), *Coming of Age in Ancient Greece. Images of Childhood from the Classical Past*, New Haven/ London (2003), 139-161.
- NERI, Camillo, « Baucide e le bambole (Erinna : SH 401, 1-4, 19-22) », *Athenaeum*, 86, 1 (1998), 165-178.
- PARKER, Robert, *Polytheism and society at Athens*, Oxford (2005).
- PICARD, Charles, « Les antécédents des 'astragalizontes' polycléteens, et la consultation par les dés », *Revue des Études Grecques*, 42 (1929), 121-136.
- SABETAI, Victoria, « Playing at the Festival: *Aiora*, a Swing Ritual », in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (éd.), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity: Definition, Transmission, Reception*, Jeu/Play/Spiel 2, Liège (2021), 61-77.
- SABETAI, Victoria, « Bronze Rattles and Clay Shields for the Boeotian Child of the Elite : New Finds in Context », in Véronique Dasen, Thomas Daniaux (éd.), *Locus Ludi. Quoi de neuf dans la culture ludique antique ?*, Pallas, 119 (2022), 43-74.
- SCHÄDLER, Ulrich, « *Pente grammai* – The Ancient Greek Board Game *Five Lines* », in J.-N. Silva (éd.), *Proceedings of the Board Game Studies Colloquium XI, April 23-26 2008*, Lisboa (2009), 1000-1023.
- SCHÄDLER, Ulrich, « 'Le temps un enfant qui joue' – mais à quoi ? La perspective ludographique », in David Bouvier, Véronique Dasen (dir.), *Héraclite : le temps est un enfant qui joue*, Jeu/Play/Spiel 1, Liège (2021), 147-157.
- VESPA, Marco, « Les effets néfastes de la *kubeia*. Mise en jeu du prestige et de l'image sociale en Grèce classique », in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (éd.), *Dossier : Bons ou mauvais jeux? Pratiques ludiques et sociabilité*, Pallas, 114 (2020), 173-192.
- VESPA, Marco, « La sagesse de Palamède : les dés, les pions et l'établissement d'un ordre (à propos de Philostrate, *Sur les héros*, 10 Follet) », in David Bouvier, Véronique Dasen

(éd.), *Héraclite : le temps est un enfant qui joue*, Jeu/Play/Spiel 1, Liège (2021a), 75-94.

VESPA, Marco, « Au commencement était la faim. Récits sur l'origine des jeux dans l'Antiquité grecque et romaine », in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (éd.), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity : Definition, Transmission, Reception*, Jeu/Play/Spiel 2, Liège (2021b), 125-145.

VESPA, Marco, « Les *skirapheia* entre Athéna et les jeux d'argent. Enquête sur une reconstruction mémorielle savante », in Véronique Dasen, Vinciane Pirenne Delforge (dir.), *Dossier des dieux, des jeux et du hasard ?*, Kernos (2023), sous presse.

ZUCKER, Arnaud, « Gloser n'est pas jouer. Les formules de jeux dans les recueils parémiographiques », in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (éd.), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity: Definition, Transmission, Reception*, Jeu/Play/Spiel 2, Liège (2021), 239-266.



Tatiana Bur

University of Cambridge
tadb2@cam.ac.uk

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

INTRODUCTION

ἐὰν οὖν ἀγγεῖον λαβὼν τις κουφότατον καὶ σύστομον, προσθεὶς τῷ στόματι ἐκμυζήσῃ τὸν ἀέρα καὶ ἀφῇ, ἐκκρεμασθήσεται ἐκ τῶν χειλέων τὸ ἀγγεῖον, ἐπισπωμένου τοῦ κενοῦ τὴν σάρκα πρὸς τὸ ἀναπληρωθῆναι τὸν κενωθέντα τόπον· ὥστε ἐκ τούτου φανερόν γενέσθαι, ὅτι ἄθρους κενὸς ὑπῆρξεν ἐν τῷ ἀγγεῖῳ τόπος.

So, if ever someone takes an extremely lightweight vessel with a narrow mouth and applies it to their own mouth, then sucks out the air and blows it away, the vessel will be suspended from their lips, since the vacuum sucks the flesh in so that the emptied space is filled up; with the result that it is clear from this that there was a “continuous” vacuum in the vessel.¹

*Thanks are due to Véronique Dasen and Marco Vespa for organising the conference where the bare bones of this paper were first presented, and for their subsequent editorial efforts and efficiency. I am indebted to Albert Bates, Colin Webster and Maialen Maugars, as well as to Vicky Sabetai for help with the archaeological evidence, and to Mattia Thibault for introducing me to the work of Lotman. I am grateful to Darwin College, Cambridge for making possible the sketches which are the work of the talented Yannis Nakas whom I thank warmly for his professionalism and enthusiasm.

¹ Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, pr. 86–91 (translations are my own). Though the edition of SCHMIDT (1899) with German translation is still undoubtedly the best for Hero’s *Pneumatics*, the line numbering for the proem is not continuous. Line numbers in the proem referred to here thus follow the digital version available on the TLG website. Subsequent chapters are referred to by their Roman numerals as in Schmidt [S], with the numbering of WOODCROFT (1851) [W] offered, too, as this remains the only available English translation of the text.

This demonstration appears at the beginning of Hero of Alexandria’s 1st century CE technical text on pneumatics, a text which is dedicated to the systematic study of the effects of running liquid, air, and steam. In proving that the continuous vacuum can be artificially created, Hero describes sucking all the air out of a light vessel so that it attaches to the lips. Hero’s scientific explanation here actively creates an assemblage of vessel and body, as the mouth of the jug meets the mouth of the human. This is a highly embodied approach to understanding suction and vacuums, one that transforms an abstract philosophical claim about the nature of the universe into a sensation experienced in the body. To what end is pneumatic knowledge then applied? In the author’s own words, pneumatic principles can be combined in various ways some of which supply the most pressing needs (*anagkaiotatai chreiai*) of human life, others of which produce alarm and amazement (*ekplēxis* and *thauma*).² It goes without saying that there are potential hazards of anachronism in attempting to attribute objects described in the ancient text into one or the other of these categories, emically speaking.³ The syringe or the cupping glass have obvious medical utility to the modern reader but no

² Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, pr. 15–17.

³ Not least the anachronistic scholarly obsession with treating Hero as the ‘inventor of the steam engine’ for his description of a spherical device containing water which whirls around when placed over a source of heat. For an eminently sensible discussion see KEYSER (1992).

less ‘useful’ are objects intended for use in temples to delight the gods, or those meant to entertain guests at symposia. Without risking mistaken attribution along the useful/marvellous dichotomy (if, in fact, it is a strict dichotomy), there are still observations to be made about the objects presented in Hero’s text. The first is very simply that the demonstrations of pneumatic principles are embedded in objects *at all*. This already shows a materialist tendency to scientific proofs. Further, there are, broadly speaking, two kinds of objects described in ancient pneumatic texts which stand out for the way that they revel in their ludic qualities: trick vessels, and pneumatically animated scenes and figurines. One of the aims of this paper, then, is to show that ancient pneumatic engineers invested genuine scientific energy into creating objects of ludic value. I will argue that recognising the distinctive combination of embodied and ludic qualities present in pneumatic texts, and the objects described therein, allows for a culturally productive understanding of ancient pneumatics as a discipline. Accordingly, the distribution of pneumatic knowledge in antiquity is shown to rely on the assemblage of human body and scientific ‘toy’. At the same time, I hope the paper will also offer a new view into ludic objects, mimicry and the culture of play in antiquity by highlighting the significant overlap, and interaction, with the discipline of ancient mechanics.⁴

1. ANCIENT PNEUMATIC TEXTS

Since the ancient pneumatic corpus is by no means well known, and the record from antiquity is in any case patchy at best, it is useful to start with a brief description of these texts and their authors to help situate the discussion chronologically and contextually. The text with which I opened the chapter was the *Pneumatica* of Hero of Alexandria. Hero was likely active towards the end of the first century CE and though Hero’s text is the least problematically preserved, he was writing in a tradition that predated him by several hundred years.⁵ This is obvious from his *Pneumatica* itself which refers to the works of former writers of the genre,⁶ as well as from at least one predecessor’s treatise extant in Arabic translation with a partial Latin translation. This leads us to Philo of Byzantium, who flourished around 200 BCE and wrote on a variety of mechanical subjects in a nine-book compendium entitled *Mēchanikē Syntaxis*. Like Hero, Philo refers in anonymous terms to previous pneumatic authors.⁷ We have evidence of

another pneumatic engineer, Ctesibius, living and working in the court of Ptolemy II in Alexandria about a generation earlier who is said by Vitruvius to have ‘invented’ pneumatics.⁸ Regrettably, all of Ctesibius’ works are now lost but we know that he wrote on water clocks, water organs and other pneumatic inventions. From what we can tell, there is considerable consistency across roughly three centuries in the presentation of ancient pneumatic texts, in the object types described, and, crucially, in the ludic spirit of the treatment of the material.⁹

1.2 Modern Approaches

There have been, broadly speaking, two opposite scholarly approaches to ancient mechanical texts and to *Pneumatica* in particular: what we might call the ‘frivolous gadgets’ approach on the one hand, and the ‘hyper-serious’ approach on the other. The former stresses the trivial nature of objects described, often lamenting the fact that the evident mechanical ingenuity of the ancients was not ‘better placed’.¹⁰ The hyper-serious approach instead opts to emphasise the deep intellectual value of these objects to the point where they became viewed as armchair inventions demonstrating scientific principles and anticipating modern technological advancements rather than objects that had a real cultural existence in the Graeco-Roman world.¹¹ On the surface, it seems that jumping on the frivolous band wagon might be expedient for a paper on the playful but what I aim to show instead is that it is through careful amalgamation of these two views that we come to a revised understanding of what is truly ludic about these objects and, in turn, about ancient mechanical epistemology. This is, by and large, because scholars downplayed the cultural and historical value of frivolous. These were fun ‘gadgets’ but they failed to do any serious cultural work for the ancient historian. The hyper-serious approach

CARRA DE VAUX (1902) who offers French translation. For an English translation (not without its problems): PRAGER (1974).

8 Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, 9.8.2 *qui etiam spiritus naturalis pneumaticasque res invenit*. Cf. Pliny, *Natural Histories*, 7.125. On a pneumatic drinking horn supposedly devised by Ctesibius and dedicated at the temple of the deified queen Arsinoe Philadelphus Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists*, 11.497d–e with BUR (forthcoming).

9 On a slightly conservative estimate, around 20% of Hero’s devices come from Philo. GRILLO (2019), cvii estimates 15 out of 80 devices; RIHLL (2018), 352 says 25%. On the scientific debts between Hero, Philo and Ctesibius see DRACHMANN (1948).

10 This issue is intimately linked with the problem of the technological ‘blocage’ in antiquity. This theory, which has now been confidently discredited on a number of fronts by a new generation of scholars of ancient technology, rested on the mistaken premise that technological progress leads to economic progress. I discuss the issue in further depth in relation to ancient automata in BUR (2016), 10–22. The best places to go for discussions on the historiography of ancient technology are GREENE (1990), (2008); CUOMO (2007), esp. 4–5 on the blocage; DEVECKA (2013).

11 A typical example is the work of Derek de Solla PRICE who saw in ancient automata, for example, ‘progenitors of the industrial revolution’ (1964), 10. Cf. BEDINI (1964), 24.

4 It is perhaps worth noting here that in antiquity, pneumatics was considered a branch of mechanics.

5 For the dating of Hero see NEUGEBAUER (1938), 21–24; RAÏOS (2000); SOUFFRIN (2000); GIARDINA (2003), 8–25; SIDOLI (2005), (2011); MASÌA (2015); GRILLO (2019), xxiii–xxviii and Appendix 5.

6 Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, pr. 1–16.

7 Philo of Byzantium, *Pneumatics*, 1. The best edition of Philo’s text is

tried to combat this view by highlighting the role that ancient mechanical texts had to play in the history of technology to such an extent that ‘gadgets’ became interpreted ‘as object lessons in mechanical and pneumatic principles, rather than as tricks intended to inspire wonder.’¹² This corrective served only to deny any nuanced position on the value of the marvellous and of the ludic in ancient culture. While these frivolous/serious debates have oriented themselves around the extant textual tradition, which is comprised of only a few remaining texts, engaging with objects and material interactions with human bodies and practices reveals much more about the role that pneumatics had in ludic culture, and the role that the playful had in the distribution of pneumatic knowledge.

More recently, there has been an interest in rethinking ancient mechanical texts, their traditions, and their contexts.¹³ There has been both a push to reevaluate the texts in their philosophical contexts where wonder (*thauma*) and craft (*mētis*) played a role,¹⁴ as well as a move to appreciate the literary value of technical prose.¹⁵ Although not concerned with mechanical texts and objects, but of particular relevance to the present argument, Reviel Netz’ *Ludic Proof* demonstrated just how playful Hellenistic mathematics was.¹⁶ What I propose here is to consider mechanical texts not just in their literary and intellectual contexts, but in their *material* contexts. This is not to ignore the fact that not every object in the texts were constructed by every reader. In this case, the pneumatic descriptions are read as an intellectual puzzle, and it becomes a game in its own right to conceptualise how the parts of the object come together in the mind’s eye.¹⁷ There are various ways, especially in their defiant and mocking qualities, that pneumatic objects can be seen as analogous to the riddle which is described as ‘a facetious problem’ (*problēma paistikōn*) in Athenaeus, for example.¹⁸ Yet a materialist reading of these texts reaches further. It has the potential to unearth novel ways of thinking about categories of objects (scientific instruments and/as toys), and about categories of epistemology (the scientific, or at the very least mechanical, informing the make-believe). This not only allows for a new lens through

which to approach pneumatic texts and the objects they encode, but also pushes New Materialist methodologies onto objects not traditionally treated as part of ancient material culture.¹⁹

2. SETTING THE PNEUMATIC AGENDA

Both Philo and Hero’s texts begin with an introduction giving an agenda for the work, describing basic pneumatic properties as the authors conceive them, and, crucially, explaining the use to which pneumatic epistemology can be put. We learn from the very opening sentence of Hero’s *Pneumatica* that the discipline is treated by two types of specialists: philosophers (*philosophoi*) and mechanics (*mēchanikoi*). While philosophers treat pneumatics theoretically (*logikōn*), mechanics deduce pneumatic properties based on the action of perceptible bodies ([...] δι’ αὐτῆς τῆς τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἐνεργείας).²⁰ In general, the discipline of mechanics in antiquity occupied a precarious position between theory and practice which was constantly, and self-consciously, being negotiated by authors of technical texts.²¹ Yet the appeal to sensible phenomena as the way to prove pneumatic principles is particularly strong in *Pneumatica*. It is, Hero stresses four times in the introduction, the only way to prove the existence of the vacuum.²² Indeed, it is precisely this assertion which leads him to the kinds of embodied demonstrations which opened the chapter.

Hero closes the introduction by saying that through the pneumatic principles explained, ‘many varied and wonderful motions may be discovered’ (ἔστι γὰρ δι’ αὐτῶν εὐρίσκειν πᾶν ποικίλας καὶ θαυμασίας κινήσεις).²³ This both repeats and elaborates his earlier claim regarding pneumatics’ ability to supply amazement and alarm, and, interestingly, overlooks the second part of the original statement concerning the ‘most pressing needs of human life’. The very fact that mechanical principles can (and should!) provoke wonder (*thauma*) is critical to a proper recontextualization of these texts and their objects, placing both quite directly in conversation not just

12 WIKANDER (2008), 785 and 790.

13 Following the commendably early example of DRACHMANN (1948).

14 SCHÜRMANN (1991), esp. chapter 4 (sympotic technologies) and 5 (religious technologies); TYBJERG (2000), (2003); BERRYMAN (2003), (2009), esp. chapter 5 on pneumatics, as well as a forthcoming chapter; SCHIEFSKY (2007).

15 E.g. TAUB, DOODY (2009); DOODY *et al.* (2012); ASPER (2013); ROBY (2016); FORMISANO, VAN DER EIJK (2017).

16 NETZ (2009).

17 Arguably, even reading is informed by prior embodied experience of what is being described.

18 Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists*, 10.448d. I owe this reference to Marco Vespa.

19 For a recent general review of the material turn in Classics, see CANEVARO (2019). On New Materialism, its applications, its insights and its limitations see GAIFMAN, PLATT (2018). NETZ (2002) offers interesting thoughts on the intersection between the cognitive and material properties of ancient tokens used in counting. ROBY (2019) explores embodied cognition in the work of Ptolemy and the instruments described therein.

20 Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, pr. 1-4. Cf. Philo of Byzantium, *Pneumatics*, 1.

21 This is the case from our earliest extant mechanical text, the 3rd cent. BCE Peripatetic *Mechanical Problems* through to Pappus of Alexandria writing in the 4th cent. CE.

22 Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, pr. 1-4, pr. 23-5, pr. 194-5, pr. 329-32.

23 Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, pr. 346-7.

with philosophy,²⁴ but also with toys and other elements of ludic culture discussed in this volume. Yet the choice of the adjective *poikilos* is equally as suggestive. It is vital to understand *poikilia* vocabulary in Hero's texts as making strong allusion to physical appearance.²⁵ *Poikilia* is an aesthetic phenomenon, referring often to visual variegation especially of colour. If the use of *thauma* and related concepts draws Hero into a philosophical discourse, the use of *poikilos* is a way to bring mechanics into a visual discourse, possibly even an art historical discourse.²⁶ Hero here is both staking a claim for pneumatics in the intellectual realm, and overtly tying together theoretical pneumatic ingenuity with visual variety and manifold perceptible effects. In fact, we will see in the examples to follow that the artfulness, the variation in effect—in other words, the *poikilia*—of these objects extends even beyond the visual to other sensory realms such as taste, touch, and sound.

3. EMBODIED AND LUDIC PNEUMATIC PRACTICE

The rest of the paper will be dedicated to presenting case studies, first of trick vessels (3.1) and then of pneumatically animated scenes (3.2). The focus of the first section will be to demonstrate in practice the importance of sensible perception in pneumatic epistemology which we saw Hero claim in the abstract in the introduction. To do so, I will lean on the theoretical framework of the embodied object and enrichen the contextual picture by adducing archaeological material which testifies to the construction of pneumatic trick vessels just like those described in the texts. The second section on pneumatically animated scenes will then demonstrate how the real/make-believe dichotomy of play usefully informs the category of ancient pneumatic objects and helps us to reflect upon thorny issues of viewership.

3.1 Trick Vessels

Thinking about these objects as *embodied* – that is to say, in the words of Milette Gaifman and Verity Platt, as ‘carefully wrought things which assume, interact with, substitute for, and/or become parts or extensions of human bodies’²⁷ – is a way to break down the subject-object duality and anthropocentric vision through which art and objects have so often been analysed. While the human subject was the

one to pick up the lightweight, narrow-mouthed cup in Hero's demonstration above, and while they are the one to actively place it to their lips, unexpected, amusing results on the human body ensue. Together, object and body work as a symbiotic, socio-material assemblage which, in this case, relies on pneumatic properties to activate a ludic quality. This simple shift in perception already transforms our vision of these objects from theoretical designs trapped in the pages of dusty books, to actual participants in ancient symposia or ancient rituals, for example. This is twice as powerful once we take into consideration the surviving material culture.

Vessels described in pneumatic texts are generally presented from most simple to most complex. Thus, the first five vessels in Hero's *Pneumatica* serve to demonstrate some basic types of siphons and simple alterations which will then be widely used in the subsequent, more technically involved, arrangements. The first vessel in Hero's text that holds ludic potential is a basic vessel for retaining or discharging wine at pleasure.²⁸ Hero describes the construction of a small bronze sphere (*sphairion*) with a series of holes at the bottom, and a small pipe at the top. When the vessel is submerged into wine, the liquid will enter through the holes in the base. Then, if the ‘user’²⁹ covers the top orifice with a finger and lifts the vessel out of the wine nothing will flow out until, as desired, they release their finger to discharge the required amount, popping their finger back to stop the flow again. The small size specified in the description of this object, allowing it to be easily manipulated by the human hand, was certainly an important consideration. Indeed, vents are surreptitiously covered and uncovered by fingertips in very many of these trick vessels, both in the texts and in the archaeological record, making it clear just how intertwined body and object are when it comes to the functioning of trick vessels. Hero takes care in the instructions to explain how this can most practically be achieved showing a preoccupation for the smooth performance of these ludic vases.

This simple vessel is in effect an ancient *klepsydra* though it is not labelled as such in the text.³⁰ In order to explain breathing through the pores of the skin, Empedocles' fragment B100 incidentally offers a rare and rather complete description of a glinting

24 As per TYBJERG (2003) with the subsequent views of BERRYMAN (2009), 52–3. For a recent (and much needed) general study on wonder from Homer to the Hellenistic World see LIGHTFOOT (2021).

25 I argue this more fully in relation to Hero's text on automata in BUR (2020), 153–56.

26 On *poikilia* in Hero, TYBJERG (2003), 458–9; in general, DETIENNE, VERNANT (1974), esp. 25–31 on *poikilia* and *mētis*; FRONTISI-DUCROUX (2000), esp. 52–55 on *daidaleon* vs. *poikilon*; GRAND-CLÉMENT (2015).

27 GAIFMAN, PLATT (2018), 404.

28 Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatica*, I.VII S = 6 W. Cf. Philo of Byzantium, *Pneumatica*, 11.

29 The scare quotes are intended to query issues of usership and enslaved agents taken up more fully below.

30 The actual term *klepsydra* is only used in one of Hero's descriptions (II. XXVII S = 63 W) where it is part of a larger construction used to regulate the amount of liquid discharged from a larger vessel. It should not be translated there as ‘water-clock’ as done by Woodcroft though the word can have this meaning in other contexts at least from the late 5th or early 4th cent. BCE, as in Aristophanes, *Acharnians*, 693, for example.

bronze *klepsydra* and how to use it in the simile of a girl ‘playing (*paizousai*) the bronze *klepsydra*’.³¹ In this fragment, the child first covers the top hole and submerges the vessel in water observing that no water enters through the bottom perforations. She then releases her finger and watches the vessel fill up with water. Finally, the text describes her withholding the flow of a full *klepsydra* by covering the top pipe until a desired moment when it is drained. The sense of *paizō* in the fragment captures the girl’s ability to manipulate, with intrigue, the various pneumatic effects that this vessel can perform. This small clue of contextualisation is particularly useful to link a common ‘scientific’ object of antiquity to the realm of play, and to indicate that similar versions to Hero’s description were used (presumably replacing wine with water) as children’s toys in domestic contexts. We have direct material evidence for ancient *klepsydrai*, mostly surviving of clay instead of bronze.³² Ancient clay *klepsydrai* varied in shape from *askoi*, *oinochoes*, *rhyta* and *kantharoi* and seemed, eventually, to settle somewhat into the dome-shape as described in Hero from about the sixth century BCE.³³ Syrian, Mycenaean and Minoan *klepsydrai* appear in the archaeological



Fig. 1: 6th cent. BCE Boeotian terracotta *klepsydra*. H. 15.2 cm; diam. 11.1 cm. The handle perforation is just visible and the base has a series of perforations not visible in the photo. New York Metropolitan Museum 57.11.1. Rogers Fund, 1957.

31 On the textual issues here between ‘playing the clepsydra’ (*klepsudēr paizousa*) (Bollack) which appears in most manuscripts and the emendation ‘playing with the clepsydra’ (*klepsudēri paizousa*) (Diehl) see KEFALIDOU (2006), 178–9.

32 For a bronze example from ca. 1–2 CE, the so-called ‘Ambleuse vase’, see BAILEY (2003).

33 For a catalogue and discussion see KEFALIDOU (2003); (2006).

record as early as the second millennium BCE and continue to be produced across the Eastern Mediterranean until at least the sixth century CE. A unique subset of dome-shaped *klepsydrai* peaked in popularity in Boeotia and Attica in the mid-sixth and fifth centuries BC (fig. 1). What unites all *klepsydrai* is the single perforation at the top of the vessel for finger control, and the series of holes at the bottom for liquid discharge. What is engaging—somatically and cognitively—about these vessels is the act of releasing the liquid which requires the object to become an extension of the human body. Once it has been submerged, filled thanks to the pneumatic suctioning, and then held aloft, the *klepsydra* and its user are conjoined, a single agent in the discharging of liquid which confounds expectations from its filling to its pouring. The fact that the *klepsydra* was so often made using recognisable vase shapes played into this perceptual trick rendering them indistinguishable from a regular *askos* or *chous* until, with the subtle move of a finger, the base of the vessel revealed itself to be porous.

The precise uses of these objects are notoriously hard to pin down. From a purely functional perspective the *klepsydra* could be suited to filling a *kylix* after drawing wine from a *krater* (straining the wine along the way) or sprinkling liquid onto a surface as in a libation. According to the Empedocles fragment it was also suitable for play yet no *klepsydra* has been identified in a domestic context to date and archaeological findspots are confined to graves and sanctuaries. This supports Eurydice Kefalidou’s favouring of a libational use for the vessels but what is less clear to me is that this was restricted to ‘funerary or chthonic ceremonies’.³⁴ Libations, after all, happened in many more contexts—including, it must be said, symposia—with the possibility that the vessels, special as they were, might have been later dedicated or included in burials. As a comparable example, it seems clear enough that a pneumatically enhanced *rhyton* in the form of the Egyptian god Bes described in an epigram by Hedylus was both used in sympotic revelry and consecrated as a dedication to Arisonoe Philadelphus.³⁵ Further, Empedocles’ little girl playing the *klepsydra* serves to remind us that material fragments found in domestic contexts could once have been this paradigmatic pneumatic object which has much to do also with the culture of play, of entertainment and of ancient religion.

The *klepsydra* forms part of a category of vessels in pneumatic texts whereby it is the ‘user’ who is to showcase the object before an unsuspecting audience. Similarly in the case of another vessel described by Hero, water, wine or a mix of both can be poured alternatively from a single spout in a single

34 KEFALIDOU (2006), 181.

35 Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists*, 11.497d–e with BUR, (forthcoming).

jug, toying with the preconception that a vessel can hold only one type of liquid at a time.³⁶ In a rare moment of vocabulary giving a hint as to audience reaction, guests are unmistakable objects of jest as Hero describes ways to change the arrangement so that just water pours out 'for those whom we wish to prank (*empaizein*)'.³⁷ If the context of use of the *klepsydra* remains ambiguous, this object is clearly intended for light-hearted interaction between a 'user' and an audience. The pneumatic object allows the former to 'play' with the latter and truly acts as a toy or object of riddle in this sense.³⁸

The material record again furnishes plenty of comparable examples not just for this vessel but also for others describing ingenious ways to pour and to contain liquid.³⁹ Potters mastered techniques which created hidden, inner compartments within vessels to confound expectations in a number of ways: vessels that seemed to hold infinite amounts of liquid, vessels that managed to produce liquid while appearing empty, vessels that allowed for water to cool wine without diluting it, vessels that were subdivided internally to hold different kinds of liquids, and more.⁴⁰ This heterogeneous group of trick vessels point quite clearly, in both iconography and form, to use in contexts of drinking, revelry and festivity.⁴¹ A stand-out example is the Louvre 'drinking komast' vase (fig. 2).⁴² This Corinthian plastic vessel dated between 600 and 575 BCE sees a bearded man squatting with arms outstretched holding the handles of a decorated *skyphos* placed in front of him. The man is pierced in two spots (the top of the head and the back) and the *skyphos* also has a small hole in the bottom (fig. 3). Both plastic elements connect to a circular base below so that the trick of the vessel can be deployed in two possible ways. The vase can be filled at an angle so that the wine passes



Fig. 2: Early 6th cent. BCE terracotta 'drinking komast' vase. H. 20.5 cm; diam. 14.5 cm; length 21 cm. Paris, Louvre CA 454. <https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010261519>



Fig. 3: The 'drinking komast' vase with perforation in the head visible. There are also perforations in the bottom of the skyphos and in the drinker's back. Paris, Louvre CA 454. <https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010261519>

from the *skyphos* into the belly of the fat man. If the two holes on the man are then covered, the *skyphos* will remain empty of wine until the designated moment when the finger holes are uncovered, and

36 Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, I.IX S = 8 W.

37 For other fun ways to pour wine and water: cf. Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, I.IX S = 8 W, I.XVIII S = 18 W, I.XXII–XXVI S = 22–6 W, I.XXXII S = 32 W, I.XL S = 39 W, II.I S = 41 W, II.XII–XIII S = 51–2, II.XIX–XX S = 58–9 W, II.XXVII–XXX S = 64–66 W, II.XXXI S = 67 W cf. Philo of Byzantium, *Pneumatics*, 16, 21–6, 28–30.

38 On the ancient symposium as a ludic occasion LISSARRAGUE (1987) is still seminal with chapter 3, in particular, dealing with trick vessels.

39 See the examples in DEONNA (1909); NOBLE (1968); KILINSKI (1986); KEFALIDOU (2006).

40 In the textual tradition compare also vessels from which either a stream flows or liquid is withdrawn yet which continue to have liquid at a uniform height ('vase a niveau constant'): Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, I.XIX–XX S = 19–20 W, Philo of Byzantium, *Pneumatics*, 17–19. There are also cases where by pouring liquid into one vessel, a release will be effected from another: Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, I.XIV S = 13 W, I.XXIII S = 23 W, I.XXXV S = 34 W. This seems particularly attractive to 'turn' water to wine: I.XXII S = 22 W, I.XXVI S = 26 W. A vessel that seems to hold infinite liquid Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, I.XXXVII S = 36 W.

41 Iconography of Boeotian trick vases studied by KILINSKI (1986) is very Dionysian including satyrs and komasts in scenes with drinking vessels, for example. See also the discussion of LISSARRAGUE (1987).

42 Paris, Louvre CA454. POTTIER (1895); LISSARRAGUE (1987), 50–51.

wine spontaneously fills the *skyphos* of the thirsty *komast*. Alternatively, if the two holes are covered first, and then wine is poured into the *skyphos*, the liquid will remain before the *komast* until he greedily glugs the wine when the holes are released. Philo describes the construction of several comparable ‘wine-stealing’ arrangements clearly meant to liven up the drinking culture of the symposium.⁴³

The parallels between the written objects and their archaeological counterparts are important to demonstrate that these technical manuals were clearly contributing to ludic culture played out in contexts such as the ancient symposium. Where the archaeological record and pneumatic texts diverge, however, is in the much greater level of sophistication present in certain arrangements in the *Pneumatica*. Indeed, some of the most complex arrangements would have required quite a skilled ‘user’ to set up, and smoothly perform, the intended trick.

Where I would now like to take the discussion is to the scare quotes I have employed up to this point around the ‘user’ of the vessels. This has served to earmark the term for further probing as it conceals the important issue of who precisely was the knowledgeable or skilled individual in these embodied demonstrations and the implications of some hypothetical answers. Most often it is assumed that in sympotic contexts it was the host, or perhaps the technician, who authoritatively performed the tricks of these vessels to the delight of ‘naïve’, unsuspecting guests. It is well worth considering, however, the possibility of an enslaved agent performing this role, especially since they were otherwise responsible for serving wine.⁴⁴

Enslaved people in Graeco-Roman antiquity were made to fulfill a variety of functions including ones which required a high level of skilled knowledge. On the one hand, enslaved entities were themselves considered ‘playthings’ of their masters.⁴⁵ Given that we have seen how pneumatic trick vessels become amalgamated with the human body which activates their properties for the benefit of those watching, this leads us towards a picture where enslaved agent and object combine for the purpose of entertainment. The autonomy of the former is crucial to the proper

functioning of the trick yet becomes overshadowed in the moment of performance by the very mechanical properties their bodies enable. If it is the case that symposia had enslaved workers whose role was to successfully deploy these trick vessels to the delight of all, the enslaved body becomes an extension of the ludic object, or a ‘living prop’. If it is permissible for an enslaved entity to activate the playful *komast* vase, however, would it be too socially transgressive for an enslaved agent to operate a vessel which intends to mock or prank (*empaizen*) guests?

As well as being considered playthings, enslaved people had an important role in distributing knowledge in Graeco-Roman antiquity. Certain enslaved persons were highly educated and used as teachers to educate the children of the elite, others were assigned to remind their master of the names of acquaintances and clients, for example. In this case, as noted by David Konstan, enslaved entities acted as ‘external hard drives’ for their masters.⁴⁶ Even if the actual pneumatic ‘performance’ was enacted by an enslaved agent, then, it is likely to have been the owner of the ‘living prop’ who would get the *kudos* for the *thauma* and *ekplēxis* that the object was able to engender. This would be an example of an enslaved worker having mechanical skill, but the master keeping strict jurisdiction over the *paideia* which would go into devising and understanding the objects, a distinction that is present in other despotic dynamics in antiquity. Importantly, this unfolding of delicate social relations was camouflaged within a context of playful entertainment. Acknowledging the potential place of an enslaved agent in the deployment of pneumatic trick vessels points to the role that enslaved people might have had in distributing at least mechanical *skill*, if not also mechanical *knowledge*.⁴⁷ These reflections divulge a much bigger research agenda combining the history of enslaved agents in ancient literature with the history of enslaved agents in ancient scientific practice.⁴⁸ I restrict myself here to noting that the embodied, sensible properties of ancient pneumatic

43 Philo of Byzantium, *Pneumatics*, 43-48. Compare the well-known game of *kottabos*.

44 Two papers delivered as part of the 2021 Cambridge Laurence Seminar Series greatly stimulated my thinking in the next section. Serafina Cuomo’s paper “Collaboration in mathematical texts and practices – a distributed cognition approach” and Joseph Howley’s “The Roman secretary as *uilius* and the despotic denial of collaboration”. The proceedings of the conference will be published in due course. In the meantime, HOWLEY (2020) gestures towards some of the ideas which will form part of his much-anticipated forthcoming monograph tracing the history of the Roman book in terms of human labour. Specifically on invisible technicians in 17th cent. scientific laboratories see SHAPIN (1989).

45 On slaves as *athrymata* in Graeco-Roman culture, see the contribution by L. FLORIDI in this volume.

46 KONSTAN (2019), 210-12 generally on relationships with enslaved people as ‘unequal friendships’ which displayed elements of Distributed Cognition (DC).

47 I am leaning here on work on Distributed Cognition in the classics for which see ANDERSON *et al.* (2019) whose papers explore ‘the ways in which cognition is explicitly or implicitly conceived of as distributed across brain, body and world in Greek and Roman technology, culture, science, medicine, philosophy, art, literature and drama.’ (18).

48 A fuller study of the topic would surely look at Philo’s ‘servant girl’ (Philo of Byzantium, *Pneumatics*, 30), the only pneumatic vessel shaped in human form. She combines in a most culturally intriguing way the ludic element of these objects with questions of enslaved agents. Is she speaking to Aristotle’s well-known passages on the utopic autonomy of objects replacing slave labour (Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252b35)? I omit her here, however, because of a massive initial hurdle which is that there is good reason to believe that she was a later interpolation into the single manuscript where she is mentioned. See BERRYMAN (2009), 163.

epistemology formed an integral component of this knowledge distribution.⁴⁹ Ultimately, mechanical texts were neither convincing people that vacuums existed, nor were the description of these objects what made the symposia fun. It was the object-human assemblage reliant on the fundamentally embodied quality of pneumatic epistemology, that was doing the cultural work here both to ‘frivolously’ disseminate play and to ‘seriously’ distribute knowledge.

In other cases, guests would engage directly with the pneumatic object/toy. This is clear, for example, in a vessel where there is a surprise dispensing of water, wine or a mixture of both as we saw in a vessel above, but this time from a *rhyton* or drinking horn.⁵⁰ As the guest picks up the curious *rhyton* and places it to their lips to take a sip, it would be anyone’s guess as to what liquid would touch their tongue. The ludic value of this vessel relies on the sensory capacities of the human body as the pneumatic game of chance is this time revealed through taste, rather than sight.⁵¹ The pneumatic properties are activated, and the playful nature of the vessel comes into being only as a result of becoming an extension of the guest. In that moment what becomes amusing to *others* in the room is the combination of pneumatic vessel and human user, the former having once again played a trick on the latter.

3.2 Animated Scenes

We move now to look at pneumatically animated scenes. These often have an explicit narrative or zoomorphic decoration to them using characters like satyrs, Pan and dancers; animals like birds, snakes, lions and other mammals.⁵² If the trick vessels offered the chance—using the theoretical framework of the embodied object—to show the importance of the ludic and of sensible perception in pneumatic epistemology, what we get with these animated scenes instead is the opportunity to reevaluate the real/make-

believe dichotomy, placing the mechanically ludic in the matrix.⁵³

Like the trick vessels, some of these objects rely on the input of a human agent to be activated such as figurines which appear to drink thirstily when a cup is presented to them.⁵⁴ Others are autonomously activated by a continuous source of running water. Some are rather simple and involve a single element of animation, such as the insertion of a siphon in an animal body to make it appear to drink, whistle or hiss,⁵⁵ for example, while others are complex arrangements which combine various properties put together to create longer lasting fictions. A delightful example of this latter category is a model scene of singing birds who suspend their song when an owl perched nearby turns to face them, only to resume when the owl looks away again (fig. 4).⁵⁶ The display requires a continual source of running water so that the performance can repeat on loop. The capacity for this scene to animate without apparent human input heightened the impact of its effect on the viewer who is inclined to question the source of its spirit or *pneuma*. At the same time, the constant reiteration of the same movement patterns is an indication of its artificiality, pointing to *pneumatica*, ‘the science of pneumatics’, as an answer to the question. Pneumatics simultaneously constructed and deconstructed the make-believe. In another example, a serpent coils around a tree at one end of scene, a figurine of Heracles holding up a bow appears at the other end, and an apple is placed between them (fig. 5).⁵⁷ When the apple is raised, Heracles shoots his arrow at the serpent who lets out a reactive hiss. Unlike the owl and bird arrangement which might be erected to then stand relatively unattended, this arrangement has a fixed moment of animation after which it must be reassembled before its next show. Yet the human input required did not void the entertainment afforded. Indeed, the role of the apple here is to transpose the human intervention into an area of the animation separate to the narrative that unfolds. Finally, a great number of animated scenes reproduce religious themes on a small-scale: worshippers automatically pour libations on an altar or whirl around in ecstatic dance, temple doors open of their own accord, water for purification is dispensed automatically.⁵⁸ In various cases Philo

49 See ROBY (2019) on DC in/and the work of Ptolemy.

50 Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, I.XVIII S = 18 W. Cf. II.XXVIII S = 64 W; Philo of Byzantium, *Pneumatics*, 16.

51 Pneumatic spectacle is meant to be pansensorially experienced. In certain cases there are tricks played with hot and cold liquids (Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, I.8 S = 7 W), in other cases air forced through pipes makes an unexpected noise (Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, I.XV–XVII S = 14–17 W, II.9–10 S = 48–9 W, II.XXVI S = 62 W, II.XXXV S = 75W; Philo of Byzantium, *Pneumatics*, 58–61).

52 Some of the trick vessels in Hero’s *Pneumatica* are probably meant to be thought of as sympotic in context even though they are more of a pneumatic display using liquids without any obvious drinking element. Examples include Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics* I.X S = 9 W, II.II S = 42 W (water jets); II.VI S = 45 W (ball held aloft by steam); II.VIII S = 47 W (fountain which trickles by the sun’s rays); II.XIV S = 53 W (perpetually ascending water). I am inclined to see some ludic value in scientific demonstration here, though I admit the hunch needs further examination.

53 BERRYMAN (forthcoming) argues for the amusing nature of pneumatic objects coming from the viewer’s recognition that they are manufactured.

54 Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, I.XXIX–XXXI S = 28–30 W.

55 Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, I.XV–XVI S = 14–16 W, II.IV S = 43 W, II.V S = 44 W (birds made to whistle by flowing water) cf. Philo of Byzantium, *Pneumatics*, 58, 60; Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, II.XXI S = 60 (serpent hisses).

56 Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, I.XVI S = 15 W. Cf. Philo of Byzantium, *Pneumatics*, 60.

57 Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, I.XLI S = 40 W.

58 Libations at an altar: Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, I.XII S = 11

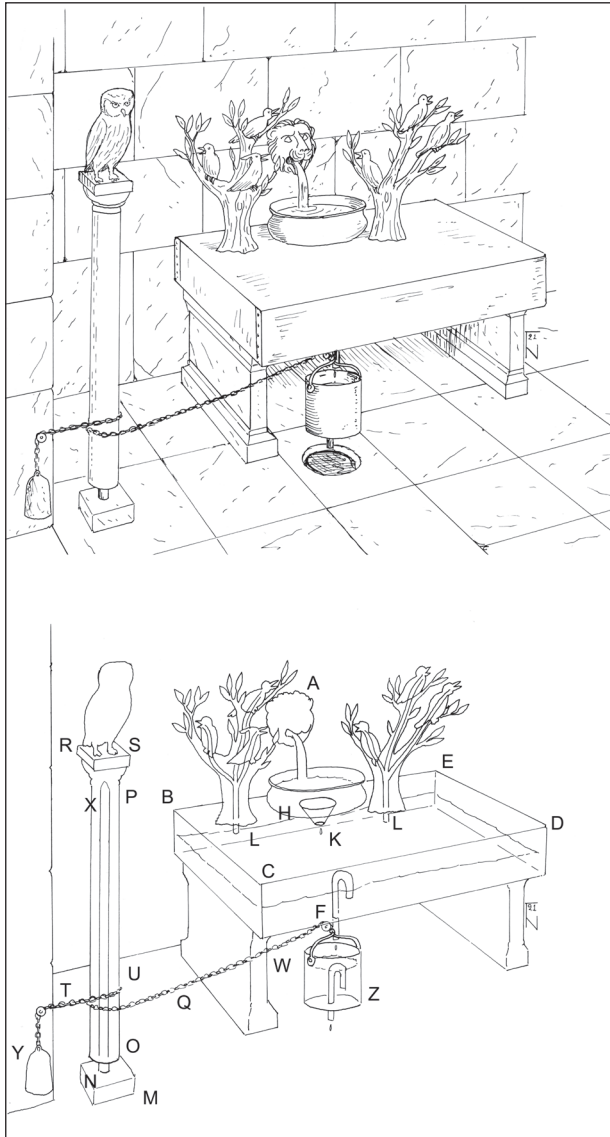


Fig. 4: Owl and bird display described in Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, LXVI S = 15 W. Copyright, author.

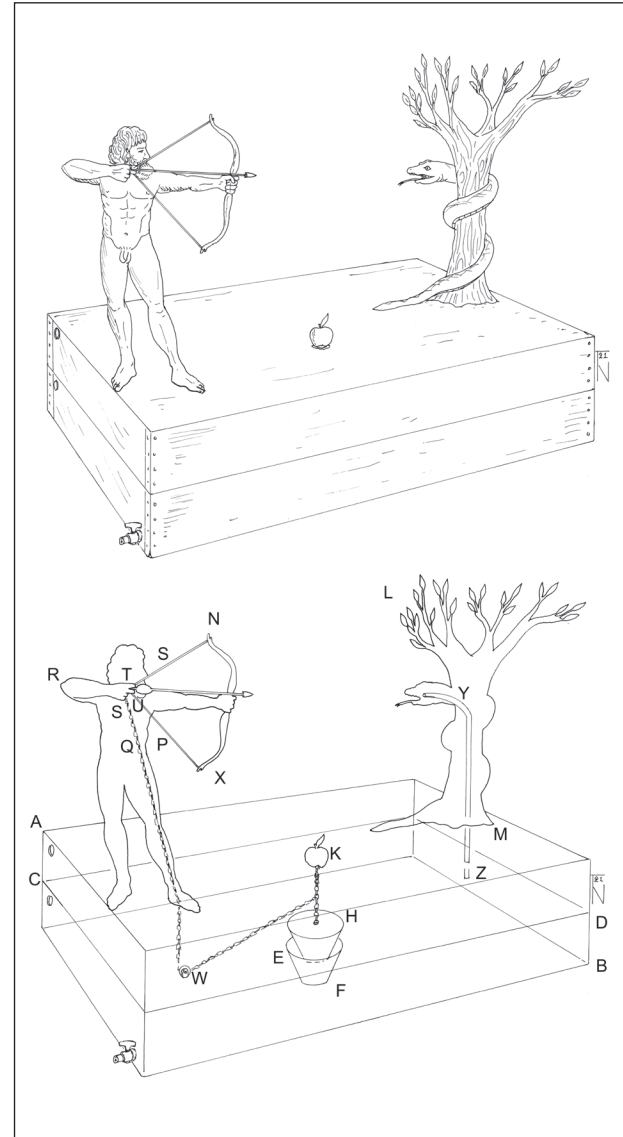


Fig. 5: Heracles shoots a serpent described in Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, LXXI S = 40 W. Copyright, author.

specifies that the source of running water can be found in a temple helping us to localise the use of such pieces.⁵⁹ I do not intend here to go into the complex issues of religious viewing of these objects.⁶⁰ Instead, I would like to suggest that the concept of play is useful to understand the general viewership of these objects.

Just as games are *both* real and make-believe, so, too, are pneumatic toys, especially as they enable these animated scenes. Consistent already with Roger Cailliois' view of mimicry, both 'play make-believe' and the rules of the game – which happen to be

pneumatic principles in our case – are essential, not accessory to the success of the simulation.⁶¹ More recently, Juri Lotman has explored the way that play-type models engage participants in two types of behaviour at any given moment: a 'practical' one rooted in reality, and a 'conventional' one based in play.⁶² J. Lotman explains brilliantly that 'Play is the *simultaneous* realization (not their *alternation in time!*) of practical and conventional behaviour. The player must simultaneously remember that he is participating in a conventional (not real) situation... and not remember it.'⁶³ Ancient pneumatically animated scenes are never making a claim to *be* a live animal, there is no intention to *deceive* their viewer, but they use mechanics' ability both to imitate life and to contradict its expected workings to create a

W, II.XXI S = 60 W. Water for ablution: Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, I.XXI S = 21 W, I.XXXII S = 31 W. Cf. Philo of Byzantium, *Pneumatics*, 36, 63. Self-opening temple doors: Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, XXXVIII–XXXIX S = 37–8 W. Figurines dance on an altar: Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatics*, II.III S = 70 W. For further discussion: BUR (2016).

59 Philo of Byzantium, *Pneumatics*, 59, 60, 61.

60 BOSAK-SCHROEDER (2016); BUR (2020) and (forthcoming) explore this issue.

61 CAILLOIS (1958); HAMAYON (2016), 233.

62 LOTMAN (2011).

63 LOTMAN (2011), 254. Italics in original.

fiction, a playful scene of make-believe.⁶⁴ In this important way, mechanical automation (and this goes for ancient automata as much as for pneumatically animated scenes) distinguishes itself from sculpture or painting in antiquity, which authors frequently describe as ‘deceiving’ or ‘tricking’ viewers.

We should not see pneumatically animated objects strictly as demonstrations of scientific principles, though they do perform that function, nor are they ‘just’ frivolous toys, though they are demonstrably ludic in spirit. It matters less for our purposes *what* scene is displayed, or *which* animal is chosen, but it matters greatly that there is *something* that anchors the scientific demonstrations to play-like modelling systems. This is crucial: pneumatic principles are embedded into a fiction that provokes a reaction (of amusement, perhaps also bemusement). We must not then separate the functional potential (to entertain/amuse/impress) from the representational components (how it is dressed up on the outside) from the pneumatic properties of these objects.⁶⁵ Too long one or the other have been highlighted leading in partial analyses. The scientific and the ludic should not be seen as opposing forces here, but rather the one enables the other, and quite openly: there is nothing clandestine about their relationship. This is, I suggest, more than ‘just a bit of fun’ but indicates that the ludic is at the very core of ancient mechanical epistemology. If we take the two halves of this paper together – the first on trick vessels and the second on animated scenes – I hope to have shown that pneumatic epistemology is at once embodied and ludic; to be proven and to be practiced ancient pneumatic epistemology relies both on the body and on the playful.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANDERSON, Miranda, CAIRNS, Douglas, SPREVAK, Mark (eds), *Distributed Cognition in Classical Antiquity*, Edinburgh (2019).

ASPER, Markus, *Writing Science: Medical and Mathematical Authorship in Ancient Greece*, Berlin (2013).

BEDINI, Silvio, “The Role of Automata in the History of Technology”, *Technology and Culture*, 5 (1964), 24-42.

BERRYMAN, Sylvia, “Ancient Automata and Mechanical Explanation”, *Phronesis*, 48 (2003), 344-369.

BERRYMAN, Sylvia, *The Mechanical Hypothesis in Ancient Greek Natural Philosophy*, Cambridge (2009).

BERRYMAN, Sylvia, “Devising Nature”, in Tatiana Bur, Maria Gerolemou, Isabel Ruffell (eds), *Technological Animation in Classical Antiquity*, Oxford (forthcoming).

64 On pneumatics imitating life, Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, 10.7.4.

65 Cf. GAIFMAN, PLATT (2018), 403.

BOSAK-SCHROEDER, Clara, “The Religious Life of Greek Automata”, *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*, 17 (2016), 123-136.

BUR, Tatiana, *Mechanical Miracles: Automata in Ancient Greek Religion*, MPhil dissertation, Sydney (2016).

BUR, Tatiana, *Manufacturing the Marvellous: Technology and Divine Presence in Ancient Greek Religion*, PhD dissertation, Cambridge (2020).

BUR, Tatiana, “The Importance of the Construct: Technological Animation in Ancient Religious Contexts”, in Tatiana Bur, Maria Gerolemou, Isabel Ruffell (eds), *Technological Animation in Classical Antiquity*, Oxford (forthcoming).

CAILLOIS, Roger, *Les jeux et les hommes*, Paris (1958).

CANEVARO, Lilah, “Materiality and Classics: (re)turning to the Material”, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 139 (2019), 222-232.

CARRA DE VAUX, Bernard, *Le livre des appareils pneumatiques et des machines hydrauliques par Philon de Byzance*, Paris (1902).

CUOMO, Serafina, *Technology and Culture In Greek and Roman Antiquity*, Cambridge (2007).

DEONNA, Waldemar, “Vases à surprise et vases à puiser le vin”, *Bulletin de l’institut national genevois*, 38 (1909), 207-33.

DETIENNE, Marcel, VERNANT, Jean-Pierre, *Les ruses de l’intelligence: La métis chez les Grecs*, Paris (1974).

DEVECKA, Martin, “Did the Greeks Believe in their Robots?”, *The Cambridge Classical Journal*, 59 (2013), 52-69.

DOODY, Audre, FÖLLINGER, Sabine, TAUB, Liba, “Structures and Strategies in Ancient Greek and Roman Technical Writing: an Introduction”, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 43 (2012), 233-236.

DRACHMANN, Aage, *Ktesibios, Philon and Heron: a Study in Ancient Pneumatics*, Copenhagen (1948).

FORMISANO, Marco VAN DER, EIJK, Philip (eds), *Knowledge, Text and Practice in Ancient Technical Writing*, Cambridge (2017).

FRONTISI-DUCROUX, Francoise, *Dédale: Mythologie de l’artisan en Grèce ancienne*, Paris, (2000).

GAIFMAN, Milette, PLATT, Verity, “Introduction: from Grecian Urn to Embodied Object”, in Milette Gaifman, Verity Platt, Michael Squire (eds), *The Embodied Object in Greek and Roman Art*, *Art History*, 41, 3 (2018), 403-19.

GIARDINA, Giovanna, *Erone di Alessandria: le radici filosofico-matematiche della tecnologia applicata. Definitiones: testo, traduzione e commento*, Catania (2003).

- GRAND-CLÉMENT, Adeline, "Poikilia", in Pierre Destrée, Penelope Murray (eds), *A Companion to Ancient Aesthetics*, Lanham, MA (2015), 406-421.
- GREENE, Kevin, "Perspectives on Roman Technology", *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 9 (1990), 209-19.
- GREENE, Kevin, "Historiographical and Theoretical Approaches", in John Oleson (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Engineering and Technology in the Classical World*, Oxford (2008), 62-90.
- GRILLO, Francesco, *Hero of Alexandria's Automata: A Critical Edition and Translation, Including a Commentary on Book One*, PhD dissertation, Glasgow (2019).
- HAMAYON, Roberte, *Why We Play: An Anthropological Study*, transl. Damien Simon, Chicago (2016).
- HOWLEY, Joseph, "In Ancient Rome", in Matthew Rubery, Leah Price (eds), *Further Reading*, Oxford (2020), 14-27.
- KEFALIDOU, Eurydice, "What is this then? Not a Clepsydra?" (Aristophanes, *Vespai*, 858): A Group of Peculiar Archaic Vases", *Egnatia*, 7 (2003), 61-107.
- KEFALIDOU, Eurydice, "Suction Dippers", in Athena Tsingarida (ed.), *Shapes and uses of Greek vases (7th - 4th centuries B.C.)*, Études d'Archéologie 3, Bruxelles (2006) (2006), 173-184.
- KEYSER, Paul, "A New Look at Heron's 'Steam Engine'", *Archive for History of Exact Sciences*, 44 (2) (1992), 107-124.
- KILINSKI, Karl, "Boeotian Trick Vases", *American Journal of Archaeology*, 90 (1986), 153-58.
- KONSTAN, David, "One Soul in Two Bodies: Distributed Cognition and Ancient Greek Friendship", in Miranda Anderson, Douglas Cairns (eds), *Distributed Cognition in Classical Antiquity*, Edinburgh (2019), 209-224.
- LIGHTFOOT, Jessica, *Wonder and the Marvellous from Homer to the Hellenistic World*, Cambridge (2021).
- LISSARRAGUE, François, *Un flot d'images, une esthétique du banquet grec*, Paris (1987).
- LOTMAN, Juri, "The Place of Art among Other Modelling Systems", *Sign Systems Studies*, 39, 2 (2011), 249-270.
- MASIÀ, Ramon "On Dating Hero of Alexandria", *Archive for History of Exact Sciences*, 69 (2015), 231-255.
- NETZ, Reviel, "Counter Culture: Towards a History of Greek Numeracy", *History of Science*, 40, 3 (2002), 321-352.
- NETZ, Reviel, *Ludic Proof: Greek Mathematics and The Alexandrian Aesthetic*, Cambridge (2009).
- NEUGEBAUER, Otto, "Über eine Methode zur Distanzbestimmung Alexandria-Rom bei Heron", *Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser*, 26 (1938), 3-26.
- NOBLE, Joseph, "Some Trick Greek Vases", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 112, 6 (1968), 371-378.
- POTTIER, Edmond, "Le satyre buveur, vase à surprise du Musée du Louvre", *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, 19 (1895), 225-235.
- PRAGER, Frank, *Philo of Byzantium Pneumatica: The First Treatise in Experimental Physics, Western Version and Eastern Version*, Wiesbaden (1974).
- PRICE, Derek, "Automata and the Origins of Mechanism and Mechanistic Philosophy", *Technology and Culture*, 5 (1964), 9-23.
- RAÏOS, Dimitris, "La date d'Héron d'Alexandrie: témoignages internes et cadre historico-culturel", in Gilbert Argoud, Jean-Yves Guillaumin (eds), *Autour de la Dioptré d'Héron d'Alexandrie*, Saint-Étienne (2000), 19-36.
- RIHLL, Tracey, "Mechanics and Pneumatics in the Classical World", in Paul Keyser, John Scarborough (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Science and Medicine in the Classical World*, Oxford (2018), 337-358.
- ROBY, Courtney, *Technical Ekphrasis in Greek and Roman Science and Literature: the Written Machine between Alexandria and Rome*, Cambridge (2016).
- ROBY, Courtney, "Physical Sciences: Ptolemy's Extended Mind", in Miranda Anderson, Douglas Cairns (eds), *Distributed Cognition in Classical Antiquity*, Edinburgh (2019), 37-56.
- SIDOLI, Nathan, "Heron's *Dioptra* 35 and Analemma Methods: an Astronomical Determination of the Distance between Two Cities", *Centaurus*, 47 (2005), 236-258.
- SIDOLI, Nathan, 'Heron of Alexandria's Date', *Centaurus*, 53 (2011), 55-61.
- SHAPIN, Steven, "The Invisible Technician", *American Scientist*, 77, 6 (1989), 554-563.
- SOUFFRIN, Pierre, "Remarques sur la datation de la Dioptré d'Héron par l'éclipse de lune de 62", in Gilbert Argouda, Jean-Yves Guillaumin (eds), *Autour de la Dioptré d'Héron d'Alexandrie*, Saint-Étienne (2000), 13-17.
- SCHIEFSKY, Mark, "Art and Nature in Ancient Mechanics", in Bernadette Bensaude-Vincent, William Newman (eds), *The Artificial and the Natural: An Evolving Polarity*, Cambridge, MA (2007), 67-108.
- SCHMIDT, Wilhelm, *Heronis Alexandrini Opera quae Supersunt Omnia*, 1, *Pneumatica et Automata*, Leipzig (1899).
- SCHÜRMANN, Astrid, *Griechische Mechanik und Antike Gesellschaft: Studien zur staatlichen Förderung einer Technischen Wissenschaft*, Stuttgart (1991).
- TAUB, Liba, DOODY, Aude (eds), *Authorial Voices in Greco-Roman Technical Writing*, Trier, (2009).

TYBJERG, Karin, *Doing Philosophy with Machines: Hero of Alexandria's Rhetoric of Mechanics in Relation to the Contemporary Philosophy*, PhD dissertation, Cambridge, (2000).

TYBJERG, Karin, "Wonder-making and Philosophical Wonder in Hero of Alexandria", *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 34 (2003), 443-466.

WIKANDER, Örjan, "Gadgets and Scientific Instruments", in John Oleson (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Engineering and Technology in the Classical World*, Oxford (2008), 785-799.

WOODCROFT, Bennet, *The Pneumatics of Hero of Alexandria*, London (1851).



Sophie Laribi-Glaudel

Membre associée à l'HisCant-MA
Université de Lorraine
sophie.laribi-glaudel@univ-lorraine.fr

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

INTRODUCTION

Du point de vue de l'épigraphiste, les jouets, au sens d'objets destinés à divertir et amuser les petits, fabriqués par des adultes ou bien détournés de leur usage initial pour en faire un jeu par l'enfant lui-même, semblent n'avoir suscité que peu d'intérêt dans l'Antiquité, tant ils paraissent absents, à première vue, de nos inscriptions quelle qu'en soit la nature¹. Pourtant, plusieurs épigrammes votives littéraires font mention d'offrandes de jouets à Hermès ou Artémis par des jeunes gens au seuil de l'âge adulte, passage qui marque la fin de l'enfance dans les sociétés anciennes. Si l'on peut

se demander si ces épigrammes compilées dans l'*Anthologie Palatine* étaient réellement destinées à être gravées sur la pierre ou bien si elles étaient purement littéraires, les consécration de jouets sont en revanche bien attestées par les trouvailles archéologiques, ainsi que par les inscriptions, certes peu nombreuses². Nous proposons donc de rouvrir le dossier des jouets dans les sanctuaires du monde grec d'après la documentation épigraphique en nous appuyant sur les sources littéraires et archéologiques. À partir de nos observations, nous proposerons des clefs de lecture pour mieux comprendre la place – ou l'absence – des jouets dans nos corpus épigraphiques, tout en interrogeant les réalités culturelles derrière les motifs relatifs à l'enfance. Dans une première partie, nous analyserons le vocabulaire employé dans les épigrammes votives littéraires pour désigner les jouets ; nous examinerons alors les choix de traductions, qui témoignent de nos biais modernes. Dans une seconde partie, nous poursuivrons l'enquête dans le corpus épigraphique afin d'examiner la réalité rituelle de ces épigrammes littéraires abondamment commentées, tout en les confrontant aux données matérielles.

* J'adresse mes plus vifs remerciements à Véronique Dasen et Marco Vespa qui m'ont invitée au colloque *Toys as Cultural Artefacts in Ancient Greece, Etruria and Rome* qui s'est tenu à distance les 22 et 23 juin 2021, et qui m'ont fait part de leurs remarques précieuses sur cet article. Je remercie également les intervenantes et intervenants du colloque pour leurs conseils et leurs remarques précieuses, en particulier Victoria Sabetai. Je remercie également Christophe Feyel qui a accepté de relire ces pages et dont les remarques m'ont grandement aidée à améliorer mes réflexions. Cet article a été rédigé en partie pendant la crise sanitaire, alors que nombre de bibliothèques étaient fermées ou difficiles d'accès ; j'en profite donc pour adresser mes remerciements et ma reconnaissance aux chercheuses et chercheurs qui ont eu la gentillesse de me faire parvenir leurs publications en version numérique. Les erreurs et approximations qui demeurent dans cet article sont évidemment totalement de mon fait.

¹ Voir la définition posée en introduction par Véronique DASEN et Marco VESPA ainsi que É. DIEU dans ce volume. Sur les objets récupérés et transformés par les enfants et sur la difficulté de les identifier archéologiquement, voir CRAWFORD (2009) et l'article de C. LAMBRUGO dans ce volume.

² Les épigrammes étaient originellement destinées à être gravées ; cette forme a toutefois pu inspirer des poètes qui se sont alors prêtés à des exercices littéraires, mais toujours inspirés des inscriptions. Sur la forme de l'épigramme, voir LAURENS (2012), 43-62 ; SANTIN, FOSCHIA (2016), notamment l'introduction. Sur la question d'une éventuelle distinction entre épigrammes purement littéraires et épigrammes inscrites, voir SENS (2020), 3-5.

1. LES OFFRANDES DE JOUETS DANS LES ÉPIGRAMMES VOTIVES

Définir la catégorie des jouets dont il est question dans les épigrammes votives de l'*Anthologie Palatine* n'est en réalité pas aisé. Dans ces textes, le terme παίγνιον (*paignion*) est employé pour désigner ces objets associés à l'enfance, mais pas exclusivement : ce mot est en effet éminemment polysémique. Il en est de même pour ἄθურμα (*athurma*), qui désigne le jouet, et plus largement l'objet attirant ou joli. Certes, ces caractéristiques le rendent attractif pour l'enfant, qui a envie de le toucher, de jouer avec, mais ce terme dépasse évidemment cette acception³. Il nous a donc semblé indispensable de réévaluer la catégorie même des jouets, et de nous garder d'en définir les contours à partir de notre expérience contemporaine. Nous avons également choisi d'intégrer à notre réflexion une série d'objets que nous n'aurions pas, de prime abord, associés à notre catégorie moderne – et adulte – des jouets, mais qui en constituaient bien pour les enfants contemporains des textes étudiés dans cet article qui remontent pour l'essentiel aux IV^e et III^e siècle av. J.-C. Il s'agit par exemple des coquillages qui font l'objet de consécration par des jeunes filles⁴. Nous avons en outre intégré les instruments de musique à cette liste non exhaustive de jouets mentionnés dans les épigrammes votives de l'*Anthologie Palatine*.

Le terme παίγνιον est bien attesté au sens de « jouet » dans au moins une épigramme votive de l'*Anthologie Palatine* du III^e siècle av. J.-C. Un jeune homme, nommé Philoclès, y consacre à Hermès ses κουροσύνης παίγνια (*kourosunēs paignia*), ses « jouets d'enfant »⁵. Cependant, l'acception du terme est en réalité bien plus large. En effet, dans une autre épigramme du livre VI, des courtisanes consacrent des παίγνια à Aphrodite. Les « jouets » en question sont évidemment destinés à des adultes... Il s'agit ici d'un jeu littéraire, reposant sur l'ambiguïté de ce terme, auquel le poète s'est plié⁶. Ἀθურμα est également attesté à plusieurs reprises dans les épigrammes votives de l'*Anthologie Palatine*, mais, tout comme παίγνιον (*paignion*), il ne désigne pas nécessairement un jouet tel que nous, modernes, l'entendons de prime abord⁷. Dans une épigramme

attribuée à Bacchylide, ἐν ἄθურμασι Μουσᾶν (*en athurmasi Mousan*) fait référence à l'art déployé par le poète, qui ravit et divertit les Muses, et non à un jeu d'enfant⁸. Le terme est attesté dans une autre épigramme votive de l'*Anthologie Palatine* au sens d'objet agréable au dieu, en l'occurrence Pan auquel des bergers consacrent un morceau de bois de chêne poli, et peut-être sculpté⁹. Ἀθურμα (*athurma*) désigne donc plus largement, dans le vocabulaire des épigrammes littéraires, l'ornement ou l'objet synonyme de divertissement. Cependant, comme pour τὸ παίγνιον, cette définition peut aussi correspondre à celle du jouet, au sens d'objet plaisant à voir, à manipuler et à posséder, et dont les enfants peuvent s'emparer¹⁰.

1.1. Les astragales et la balle

Outre les termes génériques de παίγνιον et d'ἄθურμα, des catégories plus spécifiques de jouets sont attestées dans les épigrammes de l'*Anthologie Palatine*. C'est tout d'abord le cas des astragales, ou osselets. Ainsi, la jeune Hippè, qui consacre ses cheveux à Artémis à la veille de ses noces, donc au seuil de l'âge adulte, est désignée par l'adjectif φιλαστραγάλη (*philastragalè*)¹¹. Nous suivons la démonstration de Louis Robert qui conserve la leçon du manuscrit et cet *hapax* ; selon lui, l'adjectif renvoie à la spécificité du temps de l'enfance, au cours de laquelle les jeunes filles, comme les jeunes garçons, s'adonnent à ces jeux¹². Comme Hippè la φιλαστραγάλη, l'amour

sens de « jouet » ou « amusement d'enfant », puisque le mot est associé au terme νηπιέσθιν qui peut être traduit dans ce contexte par enfantillage : Homère, *Iliade*, 15, 361-364. Voir LE MEUR (2009), 60.

8 *Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 313 : prière adressée à la déesse de la Victoire. PAGE (1981), 151-152 pour le commentaire. D'autres occurrences d'ἄθურμα au sens de « plaisir, amusement de telle divinité » peuvent être citées : Bacchylide, *Odes*, 9, 87 : Μοῦσαν ἄθურμα (*Mousan athurma*) ; 18, 57 : Ἀρηϊῶν ἄθურμάτων (*Arèiōn athurmatōn*). Pindare, *Pythiques*, 5, 23 : Ἀπολλώνων ἄθურμα (*Apollōnōn athurma*). Dans une épigramme funéraire, il est question d'un enfant défunt devenu jouet de Perséphone dans l'au-delà « παῖς ἐν δώμασι Φερσεφονείοις παίγνιον (*pais en dōmasi Pherséphonéiois paignion*) » : voir *Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 483.

9 *Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 37. Dans son commentaire, Pierre Waltz (CUF) réfute un sens proche d'ἄγαλμα mais suggère que le bout de bois a été sculpté en forme de phallus, ce qui rapprocherait alors le sens d'ἄθურμα ici de celui donné aux παίγνια de l'épigramme 6, 17. Hermann Beckby (Sammlung Tusculum) quant à lui traduit dans ces deux épigrammes παίγνια par « Figürchen » et ἄθურμα par « Ergötzung ». Ἀθურμα au sens de statue est attesté dans une épigramme funéraire : *Anthologie Palatine*, 7, 154, 1. PAGE (1981) 382 et 388-391. P. Waltz traduit ἄθურμα par « monument » mais H. Beckby conserve le sens original en optant pour « Zierde ».

10 Sur le jeu et le plaisir dans la *paidia* grecque, voir KIDD (2021), 22-28 en particulier.

11 *Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 276. Le motif de la joueuse d'osselets était courant dans la coroplatie antique, comme en témoignent les figurines mises au jour à travers le monde grec, à l'instar de la joueuse tenant un *phormiskos*, conservée au Musée du Louvre et provenant de l'Acropole d'Athènes (Fin du IV^e s. av. J.-C., Cp 5278).

12 ROBERT (1971), 89, n. 3. C'est également la leçon privilégiée par P. Waltz (CUF). H. Beckby (Sammlung Tusculum) traduit « *die gerne Würfel noch spielt* ». Nous ne suivons pas son choix de traduction qui nous semble éloigné de la réalité ludique que revêt le terme grec φιλαστραγάλη.

3 C'est une observation commune que de constater que les enfants, notamment en bas-âge, jouent avec des objets détournés de leur usage premier ; les clefs de voiture par exemple, qui brillent et cliquettent, intéressent fréquemment les petits humains d'aujourd'hui.

4 Sur les jeux, les jouets et leur dimension culturelle, voir DASEN, VESPA (2021).

5 *Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 309 (trad. P. Waltz, CUF) ; DASEN (2017), 102-103. La formule peut être rapprochée des jouets d'enfance d'Apollon évoqués par Callimaque, παίγνια κουρίζοντι : voir Callimaque, *Hymne à Délos*, 354.

6 *Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 17. Voir aussi le sens donné à παίγνιον chez Plutarque, *Vie d'Antoine*, 59 (trad. É. Chambry et R. Flacelière, CUF) : τῶν Καίσαρος παιγνίων, les « mignons d'Auguste ».

7 L'une des premières attestations d'ἄθურμα dans l'*Iliade* revêt bien le

des osselets qualifie également Philoclès que nous avons rencontré un peu plus haut et qui consacra ses « jouets d'enfant » à Hermès, parmi lesquels ἀστραγάλας θ' αἷς πόλλ' ἐπεμήνατο (*astragalas th' ais poll' épéménato*), « les osselets qu'il aimait tant ». Les astragales sont également mentionnées dans une épigramme votive relative à un écolier qui consacre un masque comique aux Muses après avoir remporté un concours scolaire. Pour avoir « bien formé ses lettres » (ἐπεὶ καλὰ γράμματ' ἔγραφεν, *épei kala, grammat' égraphen*), Connaros remporta ὀγδῶκοντ' ἀτραγάλους (*ogdōkont' astragalous*), « quatre-vingts osselets »¹³. Les astragales apparaissent donc dans ces épigrammes votives comme les jouets emblématiques de l'enfance, consacrés par des enfants à des divinités dites courotrophes, c'est-à-dire protectrices des étapes de l'enfance.

La balle y apparaît aussi comme un objet de l'enfance masculine et féminine¹⁴. Elle est mentionnée à trois reprises dans des épigrammes relatives à des offrandes de jouets au seuil de l'âge adulte. Philoclès consacre à Hermès sa balle cousue, ῥαπτὴ σφαῖρα (*rhaptè sphaira*), qui devait être faite de tissu ou de cuir¹⁵. Timaréta offre la sienne à Artémis¹⁶. Callitélès consacre à Hermès l'intégralité de sa panoplie d'éphèbe en plus de sa balle. Dans son cas, il ne s'agit pas tout à fait d'un emblème de son enfance, mais plutôt d'un accessoire utilisé lors des σφαιρίσεις (*sphairiseis*), des jeux de balle réservés aux jeunes hommes et aux adultes¹⁷. Ces activités faisaient en effet partie intégrante de l'entraînement des jeunes gens dans le cadre du gymnase, mais aussi des jeunes filles¹⁸. Les arrhéphores à Athènes auraient en effet

disposé d'une cour destinée à accueillir leurs jeux de balle pendant leur période de service cultuel sur l'Acropole¹⁹. Ces jeux de fillettes ou de jeunes filles ne sont pas sans évoquer les échanges de balle entre Nausicaa et ses compagnes, dans une mise en scène poétique qui met aussi en lumière le potentiel séducteur de ces très jeunes femmes²⁰. Il s'agit donc d'un objet emblématique de l'enfance, bien que son usage ne soit pas exclusif à cette période de la vie humaine²¹. Nous voyons donc se dessiner ici, au sein même de la catégorie des jouets, des objets et des usages spécifiques à certaines classes d'âge, nous y reviendrons au sujet du terme πλαταγή (*platagè*).

1.2. ῥόμβος et instruments de musique

Parmi les κουροσύνης παίγνια (*kourosunè paìgnia*) de Philoclès figure l'ἑλικτὸς ῥόμβος (*heliktos rhombos*)²². P. Waltz rend ce terme par « toupie »²³ ; il en est de même dans l'édition allemande de H. Beckby qui emploie le terme *Kreisel*²⁴. Cette traduction, séduisante de prime abord, ne nous paraît toutefois pas vraiment satisfaisante. Le choix de traduire ῥόμβος par toupie dans l'épigramme relative à Philoclès s'explique peut-être par le sens donné à ce terme dans un passage de Clément d'Alexandrie qui mentionne les jouets agités par les Titans afin d'attirer Dionysos et de le mettre à mort²⁵. En menant une enquête lexicale dans l'*Anthologie grecque*, il apparaît qu'en dehors de ce contexte spécifiquement enfantin, ῥόμβος désigne l'un des instruments de musique consacrés par une Bacchante à Dionysos (στρεπτόν ῥόμβον, *strepton rhombon*)²⁶. Le ῥόμβος, en tant qu'instrument de musique utilisé en lien avec le culte de Cybèle, et sans lien avec l'enfance, est aussi bien attesté dans l'*Hélène* d'Euripide ; le terme est parfois rendu par « tambourin » en français²⁷. Il est évident qu'il ne s'agit pas ici d'une toupie ni

13 *Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 308 (trad. P. Waltz, CUF). SENS (2020), 23, 69-70

14 De très petits enfants se voient offrir ce type de jouets. C'est le cas de Zeus, encore bébé, pour qui sa nourrice Adrastée fabriqua une balle, promise par Aphrodite à Éros dans ces vers : voir Apollonios de Rhodes, *Argonautiques*, 3, 132-141. La balle est désignée par les termes ἄστρομα (v. 132) et σφαῖρα (v. 135). La balle est décrite aux vers 134-140 : elle semble être faites d'anneaux d'or et ses coutures (ῥαφαί) ne sont pas visibles. Elle revêt une dimension cosmique qui évoque la structure d'un astrolabe. Sur la balle et son usage dans des rites de passage de l'enfance féminine, voir la contribution de A. BELLIA dans ce volume. Sur la question du genre et des jeux d'enfants, voir LARIBI-GLAUDEL (2022).

15 La ῥαπτὴ σφαῖρα est également mentionnée, dans une liste de jouets d'enfants, dans *Anthologie Palatine*, 12, 44. La balle de Philoclès est également qualifiée, en fonction de la leçon adoptée, d'εὐφυλλον (GOW, PAGE (1965a) Leonidas de Tarente, 45, et GOW, PAGE (1965b), 355) ou d'εὐφημον comme chez P. Waltz (CUF).

16 *Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 280 (Timaréta) ; 282 (Callitélès) ; 309 (Philoclès).

17 Xénophon, *Constitution des Lacédémoniens*, 9, 5, au sujet des Lacédémoniens écartés au moment de la constitution des équipes pour ces jeux de balles, car jugés peu courageux : il s'agit ici d'hommes adultes et non d'enfants ou de jeunes gens. Voir aussi les passages d'Athénée consacrés au jeu de balle et à la danse : Athénée, *Deipnosophistes*, 1, 14d-15c. Sur les jeux de balle dans le monde grec, voir notamment O'SULLIVAN (2012) ; PIETROBELLI (2020) ; DASEN, VESPA (2022).

18 Plutarque dépeint également Antoine et Cléopâtre, des adultes donc, s'adonnant aux jeux de balle : Plutarque, *Moralia. Fortune des Romains*, 319F. Sur les jeux de balle à l'époque romaine : MATHIEU (2021).

19 Ps.-Plutarque, *Moralia. Vie des dix orateurs*, 4, 839c : une statue équestre d'Isocrate enfant se trouvait sur l'Acropole, non loin de l'aire de jeu de balle des arrhéphores : « ἐν τῇ σφαιρίστρᾳ τῶν ἀρρηφόρων ».

20 Homère, *Odyssée*, 6, 99-118. Voir GOLDEN (2021), 54-55 : il s'agit selon lui d'un jeu proche de la balle au prisonnier, qui consiste à lancer la balle sur l'un des autres joueurs.

21 GOLDEN (2021), 53. Les balles sont également souvent représentées parmi les jouets avec lesquels les enfants s'amuse sur des céramiques attiques de la fin du V^e s. av. J.-C., et notamment dans le répertoire iconographique des *choes*. Voir par exemple l'œnochoé figurant un petit enfant nu qui porte les *probaskania* en travers de sa poitrine et lance une balle devant lui, provenant d'Athènes et datée de la fin du V^e s. av. J.-C., conservée au Musée du Louvre (CA 2916) : VAN HOORN (1951) fig. 438.

22 *Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 309, v. 3-4.

23 Trad. P. Waltz, CUF

24 Trad. H. Beckby, Sammlung Tusculum.

25 Clément d'Alexandrie, *Protreptique*, 2, 17 et notamment κῶνος καὶ ῥόμβος καὶ παίγνια καμπεσίγνια, μῆλ' αὖτε χρύσεια καλὰ παρ' Ἑσπερίδων λιγυφώνων.

26 *Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 165. P. Waltz (CUF) traduit par « tambour rond » et H. Beckby (Sammlung Tusculum) par « drehbare Trommel ».

27 Euripide, *Hélène*, 1362 (trad. H. Grégoire et L. Méridier, CUF).

d'un jouet d'enfant²⁸. Dans la II^e *Idylle* de Théocrite, ῥόμβος désigne un objet magique associé au culte d'Aphrodite, vraisemblablement une roue en bronze, que Simaithia et son esclave Thestylis font résonner au cours de leur incantation²⁹. Cet objet de magie amoureuse est également attesté dans la IV^e *Pythique* de Pindare. Aphrodite y attache un oiseau, un iynx, dont le nom revient en anaphore chez Théocrite, afin que Médée tombe amoureuse de Jason et lui permette d'emporter la Toison d'or³⁰. Nous sommes bien loin ici des jeux innocents d'enfants. Le ῥόμβος de Philoclès n'est donc pas une toupie, mais plutôt un instrument de musique, voire un objet en lien avec la sphère amoureuse dans laquelle le jeune homme entrera une fois adulte³¹.

Parmi ses jouets d'enfants, Philoclès consacre également une πλαταγή (*platagè*) à Hermès³². Le terme désigne de manière générale un idiophone, hochet ou crécelle, instrument renfermant un ou plusieurs grelots³³. Le hochet se situe en effet à la frontière entre nos catégories modernes des instruments de musique et du jouet. Sa fonction dépend de l'âge de l'enfant qui en dessine en réalité la fonction : hochet pour amuser ou calmer les bébés, maracas ou crécelle accompagnant la formation de l'enfant et ses propres performances musicales³⁴. La musique occupait en effet une place importante dans l'éducation des enfants, en particulier ceux des classes supérieures de la société, mais aussi de façon générale dans les pratiques religieuses du monde grec³⁵. Cela explique donc l'association des instruments de musique à l'enfance, masculine comme féminine, et ce dès la prime enfance à travers le hochet dont la fonction évolue en même temps que l'enfant se développe. La traduction de πλαταγή dans l'épigramme de Philoclès

est complexe ; le terme renvoie peut-être ici à la fois au hochet du tout petit et à l'instrument de l'enfant – voire de l'adolescent si l'on calque nos catégories modernes. Le poète évoquerait alors un objet qui, sous le même nom, accompagnait le jeune garçon tout au long de l'enfance, changeant de fonction en même temps que son propriétaire grandissait. À la veille de ses noces qui marqueront son entrée dans le monde des adultes, Timaréta consacre à Artémis ses τύμπανα (*tumpana*), des tambourins qui évoquent aussi les chœurs de jeunes filles³⁶. L'épiclèse Limnatis Artémis renvoie en outre au contexte péloponnésien où elle est bien attestée³⁷. Des spécificités régionales se dessinent donc ici autour des instruments de musique emblématiques de l'enfance.

1.3. La poupée

La poupée est un autre objet de l'enfance, plus spécifiquement féminine, qui pose quelques problèmes au philologue, à l'historien ainsi qu'à l'archéologue³⁸. P. Waltz voulut voir dans la νύμφη au vers 1 de l'épigramme 274 du livre VI de l'*Anthologie Palatine* une poupée³⁹. Mais lui-même, en note, admet que la leçon adoptée est douteuse. En effet, il ne faut pas lire ἐπιποντίδα νύμφαν (*epipontida numphan*), qu'il traduit par « poupée de corail », mais bien ἐπιπορπίδα νυμφᾶν (*epiporpidā numphan*) « broche de jeune mariée » comme le propose H. Beckby⁴⁰. En outre, l'offrande d'une poupée après une naissance, fût-elle la première pour une jeune mariée, est peu convaincante. Il est plus vraisemblable d'imaginer la jeune accouchée offrir l'un de ses bijoux de jeune mariée à Ilithyie⁴¹. Le terme κόρη est en revanche attesté dans l'épigramme de Timaréta⁴². Le poète se livre ici à un jeu de mots autour de la double acception du mot qui signifie en effet également « jeune fille » : Timaréta consacre une série d'objets à Limnatis, dont sa « κόρας (...) καὶ τὰ κορᾶν ἐνδύματα » (*koras*

28 Le terme βέμβιξ (*bembix*) apparaît en revanche pour désigner une toupie avec laquelle des enfants jouent dans une épigramme de Callimaque – il ne s'agit toutefois pas d'une épigramme votive : *Anthologie Palatine*, 7, 89 = Callimaque, *Épigrammes*, 1. Le sens de toupie pour βέμβιξ est également attesté dès l'époque classique chez Aristophane, *Les Oiseaux*, v. 1461.

29 Théocrite, *Idylles*, 2, 30 et 36 : ῥόμβος et τὸ χαλκῆον ὡς τάχος ἄχει (*to khalkēon ōs takhos akhei*) Le bronze en question renvoie très certainement au ῥόμβος ὁ χάλκεος (*rhombos ho khalkēos*) du vers 30. Le ῥόμβος est aussi associé à Éros. Voir à ce sujet Gow (1934), 4-5.

30 Pindare, *Pythiques*, 4, v. 214-215. Sur les jeux et la sphère amoureuse, voir DASEN (2016).

31 Le musée de Paros expose plusieurs *rhomboi* en marbre mis au jour dans la tombe d'un enfant découverte au sein de la nécropole Paroikia. Voir ZAPHEIROPOULOU (1998), 69. Je remercie Kyriaki Katsarelia qui m'a transmis cette information et qui m'a également fait parvenir une photographie des objets en question.

32 P. Waltz (CUF) traduit πλαταγή par « castagnettes » et H. Beckby (*Sammlung Tusculum*) par « Klapper ».

33 DASEN (2017).

34 Πλαταγή aussi employé pour désigner l'arme avec laquelle Héraclès combattit les oiseaux de Stymphale : Apollonios de Rhodes, *Argonautiques*, 2 1052-1257. Voir DASEN (2017), 97. Sur la formation musicale tout au long de l'enfance, voir KOLOTOUROU (2011).

35 Sur le hochet en général, et particulièrement sur le lien entre cet objet et l'*anthropopoiesis* de l'enfant, voir DASEN (2017).

36 CALAME (2019) ; BIERL (2021).

37 Le culte d'Artémis Limnatis est bien attesté par la littérature : Strabon, *Géographie*, 8, 4-9 : sanctuaire d'Artémis de Limnai entre Sparte et Messène. Pausanias, *Description de la Grèce*, 4, 4, 2-3 : sanctuaire d'Artémis Limnatis aux confins de la Messénie – il s'agit selon toute vraisemblance du même sanctuaire ; 4, 31, 3 : sanctuaire d'Artémis Limnatis sur le Mont Ithomé. Pausanias, *Description de la Grèce*, 8, 53, 11 : Artémis Limnatis à Tégée. Pausanias, *Description de la Grèce*, 7, 20, 7-8 : Artémis Limnatis à Patras. Artémis reçoit l'épiclèse Limnaia à Sicyone (2, 7, 6) et Liménia à Hermionè (2, 34, 11). L'épigraphie confirme l'importance de l'épiclèse Limnatis et de ses dérivés, voir par exemple KOURSOMIS (2014) sur Artémis Limnatis à Messène et CHATELAIN (2011) pour une synthèse des occurrences de l'épiclèse Limnatis à travers le monde grec, et les rapports entretenus par cette déesse avec les milieux humides.

38 Sur les poupées, voir ELDERKIN (1930) ; DASEN (2015), 319-334, GUTSCHKE (2019), DASEN VERBANCK-PIÉRARD (2022).

39 *Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 274 (trad. P. Waltz, CUF).

40 Trad. H. Beckby, *Sammlung Tusculum*.

41 Plusieurs épigrammes votives du livre 6 font mention des objets consacrés par les femmes après leurs couches : 146, 200, 279 et 274 (Ilithyie) et 201, 202, 271 et 272 (Artémis).

42 *Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 280 (trad. P. Waltz, CUF).

kai ta koran endumata), que l'on peut rendre par sa « poupée et les accessoires de poupée ». Il est tentant d'imaginer la jeune fille qui consacre un jouet de son enfance, qui ne convient plus à la femme adulte qu'elle est sur le point de devenir. Cependant, il pourrait aussi s'agir de l'offrande d'une figurine qui n'avait pas une fonction de jouet à proprement parler dans le monde grec, et que nous interprétons de manière peut-être trop rapide comme la poupée avec laquelle la fillette jouait et qu'elle consacre au seuil de l'âge adulte. En outre, la lecture du mot κόρα dans le manuscrit dont provient cette épigramme n'est pas assurée, et il faudrait peut-être lui préférer au début du vers 3 κόμας (*komas*). Timaréta consacrerait alors non pas une poupée, mais sa chevelure⁴³. La jeune fille offrirait alors à la déesse « des mèches de cheveux et les accessoires de la *korè* ». Le terme κόρα/κόρη (*kora/korè*) est en fait problématique parce qu'il désigne tout à la fois, nous l'avons vu, la jeune fille et la figurine, et parce que les traducteurs le rendent parfois par poupée⁴⁴. Si la leçon adoptée dans la plupart des éditions est correcte, rien ne permet d'affirmer que Timaréta consacre une poupée avec laquelle elle joua, ou bien tout simplement une figurine à son image ou à celle de la déesse pour marquer son entrée prochaine dans le monde des adultes. Les accessoires qu'elle offre à Artémis Limnatis pourraient éventuellement être ceux d'une poupée, ou bien tout simplement ceux de la jeune fille, la *korè* qu'elle demeure au seuil du mariage⁴⁵.

1.4. Coquillages et animaux

Nous avons vu que le terme παίγνιον (*paignion*) ne désignait pas exclusivement le jouet de l'enfant, mais plus largement l'objet de divertissement, plaisant, qu'il soit utilisé par des petits humains ou par des adultes. Cette polysémie nous invite à interroger les catégories parfois trop modernes, voire trop étroites, que nous calquons sur les mondes anciens. Dans cette perspective, nous proposons d'intégrer à la catégorie des jouets consacrés aux divinités les animaux et en particulier les coquillages. Ces derniers ne conviennent certes pas de prime abord à nos catégories modernes du jouet⁴⁶. Pourtant, ils sont étroitement associés à l'enfance dans plusieurs épigrammes de l'*Anthologie Palatine*, ainsi que dans d'autres pièces littéraires. Dans l'Épigramme V de Callimaque, la jeune Sélénéia consacre à Aphrodite Arsinoé un coquillage, κόγχος (*kongkhos*), plus

précisément un nautile⁴⁷. Selon l'usage archaïque, c'est l'objet qui parle à la première personne : il raconte son périple d'animal marin devenu offrande consacrée à une déesse qui préside à la fois au mariage et à la navigation. La jeune fille, comme le nautile, a voyagé de Smyrne jusqu'au cap Zéphyrium dans les alentours d'Alexandrie. Ce coquillage a peut-être été ramassé par l'enfant au cours d'une chasse sur la plage, ou bien il lui a été offert par un adulte, puis conservé comme un petit trésor. Sélénéia pourrait avoir consacré ce coquillage, objet précieux qu'elle a possédé dans son enfance, alors qu'elle est sur le point de devenir adulte⁴⁸. Le périple en mer constitue ici un parallèle à celui qui l'attend désormais : Aphrodite Arsinoé, protectrice des marins, est aussi invoquée pour la protéger des dangers inhérents à ce passage, par exemple des périls de l'accouchement qui devrait suivre ses noces⁴⁹. Callimaque emploie explicitement le terme de παίγνιον (*paignion*) pour désigner cette offrande dans le sens d'objet plaisant qui s'intègre bien à l'idée de collection. Il est destiné à être aussi plaisant pour Aphrodite Arsinoé qu'il le fut pour la jeune fille. Le coquillage, au carrefour de la catégorie du jouet et de l'ornement voire de la babiole, est également attesté dans des vers attribués par Athénée à Hédylè, poétesse athénienne de la fin du IV^e siècle av. J.-C.⁵⁰. Il y est question de la tentative d'approche de Glaucos qui, tombé amoureux de la nymphe Scylla, dépose pour la séduire des coquillages, κόγχους (*kongkhous*) devant sa grotte, ainsi que des poussins d'Alcyon⁵¹. Ces présents sont désignés par le terme ἀθύρματα (*athurmata*), que l'on peut rendre, nous l'avons vu, par jouet mais aussi par ornement. L'on retrouve donc ici le coquillage, également associé à la jeune fille chez Callimaque, et l'oiseau. Cet animal est fréquemment associé à l'enfance dans la statuaire grecque comme dans la poésie⁵². Ainsi, une

47 Callimaque, *Épigrammes*, 5 ; le texte en a été transmis par Athénée, *Deipnosophistes*, 7, 318b.

48 Pour un exemple gallo-romain de « trésor de fillette » constitué, entre autres objets, de coquillages, voir la contribution de Bernard FARAGO-SZEKERES, Isabelle BERTRAND et Coralie GARCIA-BAY sur une tombe de Naintré (III^e-IV^e s. apr. J.-C.) au colloque des 22-23 juin 2021. Ce type d'exemple nous amène à reconsidérer la place des petits amas d'objets qui peuvent avoir été rassemblés par des enfants et constitueraient la trace de leur passage. Cf. les observations de C. LAMBRUGO et de J.-P. ROSSIE dans ce volume.

49 Sur la fondation du sanctuaire d'Aphrodite Arsinoé par Callicratès : SENS (2020), 38 (texte) et 177-178 (commentaire). Dans cette épigramme, la déesse est désignée comme la protectrice des jeunes filles, ἄγναι θυγατέρες (*hagnai thugatérés*) l. 392, et notamment de celles sur le point de se marier, mais aussi des marins désignés par la formule ἅλως ἀνδρες (*halos andrés*) (l. 393).

50 Athénée, *Deipnosophistes*, 7, 297b.

51 L'alcyon est un oiseau marin fabuleux ; il y a un jeu entre l'amour contrarié de Glaucos et le chant plaintif que cet animal était réputé produire. Voir THOMPSON (1895), s.v. Ἀλκυών ; GUTZWILLER (1992), 204-208 ; ARNOTT (2007), 20-21 ; MYNOTT (2018), 280.

52 Dans une fable d'Ésope, un père offre à son fils un choucas après lui avoir lié les pattes. L'oiseau s'enfuit et meurt, entravé par le fil qui s'accrocha à des branches : Ésope, *Fables*, 164. Sur les oiseaux et les enfants, voir ROBERT (1971) et BEAUMONT (2012), 36, 78 et 191.

43 DAUX (1973), 225, 228. *Contra* : NERI (1998), 172-174.

44 Sur κόρη au sens de figurine, voir Platon, *Phèdre*, 230b.

45 DAUX (1973), 228-229.

46 La multiplication en France des campagnes de prévention, dont le but est de rappeler que les animaux ne sont pas des jouets, tend à montrer que la séparation entre ces deux catégories ne va toujours pas de soi de nos jours.

épigramme attribuée au poète Glaucos et intégrée à la *Couronne de Méléagre* mentionne la caille aux côtés d'autres παίγνια, la balle et les osselets : ὄρνυξ, ῥαπτὴ σφαῖρα καὶ ἀστράγαλοι (*ortux, raptè sphaira kai astragaloi*)⁵³. Petits animaux de compagnie appréciés des enfants, elles pouvaient être utilisées comme oiseaux de combats⁵⁴. Les insectes servaient aussi aux jeux d'enfants dans le monde grec, comme l'atteste un passage de Pollux⁵⁵. Une épigramme tirée du livre VI de l'*Anthologie Palatine* fait mention de l'offrande d'une cigale d'or par Charisthénès, un jeune garçon qui consacre également sa chevelure aux κούραις Ἀμαρυνθιάσι (*kourais Amaranthias*)⁵⁶. Cependant, le terme τέττιξ (*tettix*) désigne aussi dans le contexte attique une attache de cheveux. La nature de la consécration laisse penser qu'il s'agit en réalité du bijou qui retenait la mèche offerte par le jeune garçon, et non d'une évocation d'un jouet du petit Charisthénès⁵⁷. Les divinités auxquelles l'offrande est adressée sont associées à Amarynthos, une bourgade sise non loin d'Érétrie. Ce sanctuaire a été identifié avec certitude par Denis Knoepfler ; il abritait des rites de l'enfance sous l'égide d'Artémis Amarysia⁵⁸.

Les offrandes de jouets mentionnées dans les épigrammes votives de l'*Anthologie Palatine* s'inscrivent donc dans le cadre de rites marquant des étapes cruciales de l'enfance qu'elles contribuent à documenter. Ces pratiques variaient selon les cités et les époques, et étaient placées sous l'égide de différentes divinités, souvent associées à des épicleses spécifiques, à l'instar d'Artémis Limnatis mentionnée dans l'épigramme de Timaréta. Il est cependant possible d'en synthétiser les grands traits. Des rites accompagnaient la naissance, les principales étapes de l'enfance, ainsi que le passage à la puberté puis à l'âge adulte à proprement parler qui correspondait au mariage pour les filles et à l'entrée dans le corps

civique pour les garçons⁵⁹. Les épigrammes votives de l'*Anthologie Palatine* illustrent certaines de ces étapes rituelles ; des garçonnetts de quatre ans y consacrent leur chevelure à Apollon dans un rituel qui semble marquer la fin de la prime enfance masculine⁶⁰. Les garçons au seuil de la puberté se placent sous l'égide d'Hermès, qui est également un protecteur de l'enfance. Frère du précédent, il entretient un lien particulier avec cet âge de la vie sous le calame des poètes grecs, de l'époque archaïque où il est dépeint sous les traits d'un bébé bien précoce dans les *Hymnes homériques*, à l'époque hellénistique où Callimaque en fait un « père fouettard » prompt à effrayer les petits dieux désobéissants⁶¹. Artémis reçoit les offrandes de Timaréta sur le point de se marier, donc de quitter le monde des jeunes filles ou *parthénoi* pour entrer dans celui des *gunaikes*, des femmes accomplies à travers le mariage et la maternité d'après les catégories propres au monde grec antique, laissant ainsi l'*oikos* paternel pour rejoindre celui de son futur époux. Afin de s'assurer la protection de ces dieux, les petits fidèles et leurs parents leur consacraient diverses offrandes, de la figurine en terre cuite à la statue en marbre en passant par les jouets dont des exemplaires ont en effet été mis au jour dans les sanctuaires. Le geste de la consécration est désigné, dans les épigrammes de Philoclès et de Callitèles, par les formes verbales à l'aoriste ἀνεκρέμασεν (*anekremasen*) et ἐκρέμασεν (*ekremasen*) ; ἀνακρεμάννυμι (*anakremannumi*) et κρεμάννυμι (*kremannumi*) évoquent le geste d'accrocher. Ces termes reflètent donc une réalité cultuelle très concrète : les offrandes pouvaient en effet être accrochées, dans l'enceinte du sanctuaire, aux murs, au plafond ou encore aux branches des arbres qui s'y trouvaient. Nous proposons donc de confronter, dans la deuxième partie de cet article, les motifs que nous avons relevés dans les épigrammes de l'*Anthologie Palatine* aux données épigraphiques et matérielles relatives aux consécrationes de jouets.

2. ENQUÊTE ÉPIGRAPHIQUE ET ARCHÉOLOGIQUE

Les inscriptions constituent des sources incontournables pour comprendre le fonctionnement des sanctuaires du monde grec, en particulier les inventaires qui y furent mis au jour. Ces documents complètent en effet l'aperçu offert par les fouilles archéologiques, notamment lorsqu'ils mentionnent des offrandes périssables, comme les vêtements et

53 *Anthologie Palatine*, 12, 44.

54 Sur les combats de cailles : ROBERT (1971), 88-89. Ces combats d'animaux semblent davantage réservés aux adultes ; Plutarque mentionne les combats de cailles et de coqs au cours desquels Cléopâtre et Antoine aimaient à parier, voir Plutarque *Moralia. Fortune des Romains*, 319F.

55 Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 4, 124.

56 *Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 156. SENS (2020), 48 et 239-240. Sur le motif de la cigale et sur les « *kourai* d'Amarynthos » voir SEMENZATO *et al.* (2020). Sur la cigale et les rites de passage féminins dans le *Per-séphonéion* de Locres Épiphényrienne en Grande Grèce, voir dans ce volume l'article de A. BELLIA.

57 Sur les offrandes de cheveux : LEITAO (2003) ; CAIRNS (2016), 294-306 (sur l'épigramme de Charisthénès) ; GRUNDMANN (2019), 242-252.

58 Sur l'identification du sanctuaire d'Amarynthos : KNOEPFLER *et alii* (2017) ; REBER, KRAFF (2018) (présentation des trente dernières années de fouilles sur l'ensemble du site et étape du développement du sanctuaire depuis l'époque archaïque) ; KNOEPFLER (2018) (les inscriptions du sanctuaire et les étapes de l'identification de ce dernier). Sur Archô, la nymphe qui pourrait être rapprochée des κούραις Ἀμαρυνθιάσι, voir le rapport annuel 2020 de l'*École Suisse d'Archéologie en Grèce* (ESAG) : THEURILLAT, KRAFT (2020), 18 ; BE (2020), 349 ; REBER *et alii* (2020), 114.

59 Ces pratiques rituelles sont documentées essentiellement pour les enfants libres des cités grecques. La documentation relative aux esclaves est, dans l'état actuel de nos connaissances, peu déserte.

60 *Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 155 : le petit Crobilos âgé de quatre ans consacre sa chevelure, un coq et gâteau au fromage ; 278 : un jeune garçon dont l'âge n'est pas indiqué consacre sa chevelure ; 279 : un garçonnet consacre ses cheveux après leur première coupe.

61 *Hymne homérique à Hermès* daté du VI^e s. av. J.-C. ; Callimaque, *Hymne à Artémis*, 64-71.

les tissus en général, qui ne nous sont pas parvenues. Les inventaires ne sont toutefois pas exhaustifs : il n'y a par exemple aucune trace des offrandes de figurines en terre cuite pourtant découvertes en très grand nombre en contexte cultuel. Cela s'explique par la nature même des documents épigraphiques qui avaient un coût non négligeable puisqu'il fallait payer la pierre et le lapicide. Les inscriptions mises au jour dans un sanctuaire ne sauraient en constituer l'intégralité des archives ; la copie sur pierre n'était pas systématique et les inventaires des offrandes étaient établis au préalable sur papyrus ou sur tablettes de cire, aujourd'hui disparus. Ce sont donc principalement les offrandes précieuses, ou jugées comme telles, qui étaient listées dans les inventaires gravés sur pierre. Les inscriptions votives constituent également des sources précieuses pour comprendre les pratiques rituelles au sein d'un sanctuaire. En effet, certains fidèles accompagnaient leurs offrandes d'une dédicace, constituée généralement de leur nom, le cas échéant de celui d'un ou de plusieurs proches, d'une invocation de la divinité et du contexte de la consécration, après un vœu par exemple. Ces textes sont toutefois rarement très développés, ce qui s'explique là encore par le coût de la gravure. Ce sont les offrandes de prix qui étaient accompagnées d'une dédicace gravée sur pierre, essentiellement des statues ou des reliefs votifs dont les bases pouvaient être inscrites. Toutes ces raisons expliquent donc en partie l'apparente absence des jouets dans nos textes épigraphiques. Pourtant, nous avons vu que les offrandes de jouets sont bien attestées dans les épigrammes votives de l'*Anthologie Palatine*. S'agit-il uniquement de reconstitutions littéraires qui ne témoigneraient d'aucune réalité rituelle ? Les jouets mentionnés par les poètes seraient, sous leurs calames, autant de *topoi* de l'enfance, dont l'évocation tendait à dramatiser le passage vers l'âge adulte mis en scène dans ces épigrammes. Pourtant, il ne s'agit pas de pures inventions poétiques, et les jouets mis au jour dans plusieurs sanctuaires du monde grec montrent que ces offrandes étaient courantes, comme dans le Kabirion de Thèbes en Béotie ou encore dans le sanctuaire de Déméter et Korè à Corinthe⁶². Enfin, des mentions de jouets apparaissent dans quelques inscriptions : il s'agit d'inventaires de l'Asclépiéion

d'Athènes, datés de la fin du IV^e siècle av. J.-C. et du Kabirion de Thèbes, daté du III^e siècle av. J.-C., du récit d'une guérison miraculeuse d'enfant dans l'Asclépiéion d'Épidaure et d'une balle inscrite datée du début du V^e siècle av. J.-C.

Nous avons établi, à partir des épigrammes votives de l'*Anthologie Palatine*, une liste de jouets au sens d'objets associés aux enfants et à leur divertissement. Il s'agit d'astragales, de balles, de poupées pour les fillettes, de coquillages ainsi que de petits animaux, et d'instruments de musique. Le terme ἄθურμα (*athurma*) est bien attesté dans le contexte des sanctuaires qui nous intéressent ici, par exemple dans les inventaires de Délos où il apparaît au pluriel. Des jouets ont été mis au jour lors des fouilles menées sur cette île, réputée avoir abrité les couches de Lété⁶³. Callimaque évoque en outre dans son *Hymne à Délos* les jouets du petit Apollon⁶⁴. Pourtant, le terme ne revêt pas ce sens dans ces inventaires déliens : il convient de le traduire dans ce contexte par « pendants », « ornements »⁶⁵.

2.1. Les consécration d'astragales

Les astragales sont en bien attestées dans les inscriptions. Les inventaires de l'Asclépiéion d'Athènes, datés du troisième quart du IV^e siècle av. J.-C., font mention de consécration d'astragales ouvragés : ἀστράγαλοι δορκάδαιοι ἀργυρίωι δεδεμένοι (*astragaloi dorkadēoi arguriōi dedémēnoi*) et ἀστραγάλιον ἐπίχρυσον (*astragalion epikhruson*)⁶⁶. La nature du texte ne nous permet toutefois pas d'établir le contexte rituel de ces offrandes, ou l'identité précise et l'âge du fidèle qui les consacra. Les *iamata* du sanctuaire d'Épidaure, datés de la fin du IV^e siècle av. J.-C., livrent davantage de détails sur une consécration d'astragales par un jeune garçon⁶⁷. Ces récits de guérisons miraculeuses étaient inscrits sur les murs de l'Asclépiéion pour servir d'exemples édifiants aux fidèles venus honorer Asclépios. Dans l'exemple qui nous intéresse, un garçon (παῖς) répondant au nom d'Euphanès, se rend dans le sanctuaire afin de soigner une maladie dont la nature exacte nous échappe⁶⁸. Le jeune patient est suffisamment âgé pour entreprendre seul la démarche de se rendre auprès d'Asclépios. Le récit le met en scène dialoguant avec le dieu : à ce dernier qui lui demande ce qu'il compte lui offrir en cas de guérison, Euphanès répond « dix osselets », ce qui amuse Asclépios qui le soulage alors de ses

62 Kabirion de Thèbes : voir *infra*. Sanctuaire de Déméter et Korè à Corinthe : MERKER (2000), 48-60 (sur la question particulière des poupées articulées), 125-126 et 194 (figurines de jeunes gens tenant une balle ou un sac d'astragales) ; KLINGER (2022a) (offrandes d'astragales dans le sanctuaire de Déméter et Korè à Corinthe lors de rites de passage à l'âge adulte). Voir aussi KLINGER (2022b) sur les modèles d'astragales en bronze et en terre cuite mises au jour dans le sanctuaire de l'Acrocorinthe. Les nombreux astragales mis au jour dans l'Antre Corycien, à Delphes, peuvent avoir été utilisés à des fins ludiques par des enfants venus vénérer les Nymphes ou bien à des fins oraculaires par des fidèles de tous âges : AMANDRY (1984). Sur les balles et les astragales associés aux enfants en contexte votif, voir IGNATIADOU, PAPAICONOMOU (2021) (autour de la statue petit garçon à l'Poie de Lilaia) et CASTIGLIONE (2020) (autour du corpus de figurines d'enfants de Kharayeb dont certaines tiennent des balles).

63 DEONNA (1938), 337-338.

64 Callimaque, *Hymne à Délos*, v. 354.

65 FEYEL, FEYEL (à paraître), s.v. ἄθურμα.

66 ALESHIRE (1989), 130 (inventaire III) = IG II² 1533, respectivement l. 23-24 et l. 32.

67 IG IV² 1. 121 l. 68-71. Sur les récits de guérison, voir LIDONNICI (1995) et PRÊTRE, CHARLIER (2009), 26-27.

68 Le texte indique Οὗτος λιθίων ἐνε[κά]θευδε (*outos lithiōn enékatheu-dē*) ; le nom de cette maladie évoque des calculs rénaux.

maux⁶⁹. La mention des astragales renvoie à la jeunesse de ce petit patient dont les jouets sont les seuls biens de valeur, ou du moins les seuls auxquels il en accorde suffisamment pour se figurer qu'ils puissent servir d'offrandes. Cette scène quotidienne contribue également à donner d'Asclépios l'image d'un dieu proche des mortels, et particulièrement des petits fidèles dont de nombreuses statues ont été découvertes dans les différents *Asclépieia* du monde grec⁷⁰. Des astragales sont également mentionnés dans un inventaire d'offrandes daté de la fin du III^e siècle av. J.-C. et provenant du Kabirion de Thèbes, nous y reviendrons⁷¹. De très nombreux astragales ont été mis au jour lors des fouilles menées dans des sanctuaires du monde grec et certains ont livré des exemplaires de figurines d'enfants tenant des astragales⁷². Cependant, ces objets ont revêtu de nombreuses fonctions ; leur interprétation est donc extrêmement complexe et requiert une observation approfondie du contexte de leur découverte. En effet, si les astragales constituent un objet emblématique de l'enfance, des adultes pouvaient également s'adonner à ce jeu. En outre, les osselets pouvaient être utilisés en dehors du contexte ludique pour des consultations oraculaires, comme dans l'Antre corycien⁷³. Enfin, ces petits ossements ont tout simplement pu être laissés sur place après le sacrifice d'un animal dans l'enceinte du sanctuaire, sans qu'ils aient fait l'objet d'un geste rituel spécifique⁷⁴. La consécration ou le dépôt d'un ou plusieurs astragales n'est donc pas nécessairement le fait d'un enfant.

2.2. Les consécration de coquillages

Des offrandes de coquillages, désignés par le terme *κόγχος* (*kongkhos*), sont attestées dans les inventaires déliens, mais il n'est pas possible de reconstituer le contexte rituel de ces dépôts⁷⁵. Ces objets ont pu être consacrés par des marins afin de remercier une divinité à l'issue d'une traversée heureuse, ou bien pour en invoquer la protection à la veille d'un départ. Le coquillage renvoie aussi à la sphère féminine ; nous avons vu qu'il était offert à la nymphe Scylla

par Glaucos dans les vers d'Hédylè, ou consacré à Aphrodite par Sélénéia chez Callimaque. Des dépôts de coquilles sont aussi attestés dans l'Antre corycien près de Delphes, peut-être en lien avec le culte de Nymphes. Les autres offrandes qui y furent découvertes laissent en effet entrevoir des pratiques rituelles typiquement féminines à cet endroit⁷⁶. Des coquillages ont également été mis au jour en nombre dans un sanctuaire de l'île de Kythnos, dans les Cyclades, qui pourrait être identifié comme celui d'Artémis et Apollon⁷⁷. La nature de ces dépôts nous échappe en partie ; ces coquilles ont en effet pu décorer des bijoux, ou bien constituer des ornements de vêtements ou de cheveux. Il est aussi possible qu'elles aient constitué des offrandes de peu de prix, consacrées aux divinités par des fidèles qui les auraient ramassées sur l'une des plages de l'île. Kythnos était plutôt pauvre en ressources, ce qui peut expliquer l'aspect modeste de ces offrandes⁷⁸. Le sanctuaire abritait vraisemblablement des rites de l'enfance : il est alors tentant d'imaginer que de jeunes, voire de très jeunes fidèles aient offert à Artémis et Apollon le fruit d'une chasse aux coquillages. Ces données archéologiques confrontées aux mentions littéraires nous invitent à réévaluer, certes avec prudence, la place de ces objets dans les sanctuaires ainsi que leur fonction. À travers les pratiques et à travers le regard des enfants, les coquillages ont pu constituer de jolis objets que les petits d'homme ont pris plaisir à ramasser et à collectionner. Il est possible que certains de ces objets aient été déposés comme offrandes par leurs soins. Se dessine alors la manifestation de la capacité d'agir, ou *agency*, des plus jeunes dans la sphère religieuse, indépendamment de la volonté parentale. L'enfant aurait offert à la divinité un objet qu'il aurait lui-même ramassé et qui ne nécessitait donc pas l'intermédiaire de ses parents pour son achat ou sa fabrication⁷⁹. Quant aux petits animaux familiers des enfants, ils ne semblent pas avoir fait l'objet de consécration à proprement parler. En revanche, ils sont bien présents dans l'iconographie des enfants au sanctuaire. C'est par exemple le cas de plusieurs statues de fillettes mises au jour dans le sanctuaire athénien d'Ilithyie à Agrai ou dans le sanctuaire d'Artémis à Brauron ; plusieurs d'entre elles sont représentées tenant un lapin ou un oiseau⁸⁰. Des figurines de garçons tenant des animaux, et notamment des coqs, sont attestées dans d'autres sanctuaires du monde grec ; dans ce cas,

69 IG IV² 1 121 l. 68-71.

70 Sur les statues d'enfants dans les sanctuaires d'Asclépios à travers le monde grec, voir notamment BOBOU (2015).

71 IG VII 2420 l. 21-22. Voir *infra*.

72 Des figurines d'enfants tenant des astragales ou des sacs d'astragales ont ainsi été mises au jour dans le sanctuaire de Déméter et Korè à Corinthe : MERKER (2000), 188, 194, H32 et C201 qui tient également une balle.

73 Des dés pouvaient également être utilisés pour ces consultations. Ainsi, le sanctuaire d'Orthia à Sparte a livré des dés d'époque archaïque inscrits du nom de cette déesse et d'Ilithyie, la protectrice de la naissance. Voir KILIAN (1978).

74 AMANDRY (1984), 347. Sur les astragales en général, voir CARÈ, DASEN (2022) et CARÈ (à paraître).

75 Par exemple : *Inscriptions de Délos* 1403 face B fragment b col. II l. 16-18 (ὄστρεϊα ἐπὶ κιονίων ξυλίων *ostréia epi kioniôn xulionôn*) ; *Inscriptions de Délos* 442 face B l. 179 (κόγχον ἀργυροῦν *kongkhos argyroun*).

76 AMANDRY (1984), 378-380. Le coquillage est parfois associé à la sexualité féminine, voir GUTZWILLER (1992), 203.

77 THEODOROPOULOU (2013), 199 (coquillages peut-être placés sur des étagères dans l'*adyton* du temple) et 203 (coquillages accrochés au plafond du temple) ; MAZARAKIS AINIAN (2019), 63-133.

78 ROBERT (1977), 13-15. Je remercie Ch. Feyel de m'avoir signalé ce point.

79 Sur les coquillages dans les sanctuaires du monde grec : TASSIGNON (2005) et THEODOROPOULOU (2013), 212-215.

80 Sur ces statues d'enfants : BOBOU (2015).

il ne s'agit pas d'une représentation du jeune fidèle avec son compagnon de jeu, mais d'une convention iconographique rappelant sa jeunesse et le passage qu'il s'apprête à subir pour intégrer le monde des hommes adultes⁸¹.

2.3. Les consécrationes de balles

Nous n'avons rencontré aucune mention de consécration par des enfants ou des jeunes gens dans la documentation épigraphique. En revanche, des balles inscrites sont bien attestées dans le monde grec, à l'instar de la dite balle de Myrrhinè⁸². Ce modèle de balle en terre cuite d'environ 4,4 cm de diamètre et de fabrication attique a été daté du tout début du V^e siècle av. J.-C. Il renferme au moins un grelot, intégré lors de la cuisson, et présente deux trous⁸³. La frise qui y est peinte représente un homme âgé offrant une fleur à un jeune garçon accompagné d'un chien, non loin de ce qui semble être une biche. Des scènes de palestre les encadrent, l'une représentant le lancer de javelot, l'autre le lancer de disque. La balle de Myrrhinè est ornée de trois formules peintes, ou *dipinti*. L'une peut être traduite par « J'appartiens à Myrrhinè, en effet ». Le nom de Myrrhinè est répété en bas de la scène et de l'autre côté de la sphère « ὁ παῖς καλός » (*ho pais kalos*) est inscrit. Ces inscriptions ont été réalisées au moment de la fabrication de l'objet. Une autre, à connotation funéraire, a été ajoutée tardivement⁸⁴. Malheureusement, l'objet ayant été acquis sur le marché de l'art, on ignore sa provenance exacte, et par conséquent sa fonction⁸⁵. L'inscription la plus ancienne l'associe à une figure féminine, Myrrhinè, mais la mention du παῖς καλός et la scène peinte renvoient au monde très masculin de la palestre. L'identité de Myrrhinè a donc été débattue ; selon Henry Immerwahr, il s'agit d'une fillette à qui la balle-hochet a été offerte⁸⁶. Margherita Guarducci identifie quant à elle Myrrhinè à une courtisane en raison de la dimension érotique de la scène peinte⁸⁷. Les trous présents sur l'objet laissent penser qu'il a pu être suspendu, peut-être lors de sa consécration dans un sanctuaire, ou bien lors de son dépôt comme offrande funéraire⁸⁸. À moins qu'il ne s'agisse de

trous réalisés lors de la cuisson afin d'éviter que la balle de terre cuite n'éclate⁸⁹. La première hypothèse est séduisante si on la rapproche du verbe κρεμάννυμι (*kremannumi*), accrocher, utilisé dans deux des épigrammes votives mentionnées plus haut pour désigner le geste même de l'offrande⁹⁰. L'authenticité de cette balle en terre cuite a été remise en question, mais des objets similaires sont bien attestés à travers le monde grec de l'époque archaïque à l'époque hellénistique. Une boule en terre cuite, plus ancienne puisque datée du VII^e siècle av. J.-C., mise au jour à Érétie porte également une inscription, Εὐφάθλος (*Euwathlos*), qui pourrait être un nom propre ou un adjectif⁹¹. Là encore, ni le contexte de la découverte ni l'inscription ne permettent d'identifier cet objet comme une offrande ; en outre, le diamètre réduit le rapproche davantage de la boule, ou de la bille, que de la balle⁹². D'autres balles mises au jour en contexte funéraire, mais anépigraphes, viennent compléter ce dossier. Il s'agit notamment d'un modèle de balle cousue en terre cuite, qui n'est pas sans évoquer la ραπτὴ σφαῖρα (*raptè sphaira*), consacrée par Philoclès à Hermès. Cet objet provient toutefois non d'un sanctuaire, mais d'une tombe de la nécropole de Samothrace dans laquelle un individu jeune a été identifié⁹³. Enfin, des *askoi*, également en forme de balles cousues, ont été mis au jour à Corinthe⁹⁴. Les statues et statuettes d'enfants et de jeunes gens à la balle peuvent être ajoutées à ce dossier. Le sanctuaire de Déméter et Korè à Corinthe a ainsi livré plusieurs exemplaires de figurines féminines tenant un objet rond identifié à une balle dans un geste d'offrande, peut-être à Aphrodite elle aussi vénérée à cet endroit⁹⁵. Des objets similaires sont attestés dans d'autres régions du monde grec, en Italie du Sud⁹⁶, en Béotie, sans que le contexte ne nous soit toutefois toujours bien connu⁹⁷. Il en est de même pour le dossier des statues en bronze et en marbre d'enfants à la balle, en majorité des garçons⁹⁸. Dans le contexte des sanctuaires, ce type de représentation peut

81 Sur la symbolique du coq dans la coroplastie du monde grec : HUYSECOM HAXHI (2015).

82 HOFFMANN (1963) ; IMMERWAHR (1967) ; GUARDUCCI (1980), 10-16 ; SALMINEN, KAJAWA (2013) ; SALMINEN, KAJAWA (2018), 303-304.

83 HOFFMANN (1963), 21.

84 IMMERWAHR (1967), 261 ; GUARDUCCI (1980), 13.

85 La balle est entrée en 1963 dans les collections du *Museum of Fine Arts* de Boston, cf. HOFFMANN (1963).

86 IMMERWAHR (1967), 259. Aristote mentionne la balle comme un cadeau adéquat pour un enfant : Aristote, *Éthique à Nicomaque*, 4, 1123a14.

87 IMMERWAHR (1967) ; GUARDUCCI (1980), 14.

88 H. Immerwahr suggère que ces trous permettaient de suspendre la balle qu'il identifie à un hochet : en l'agitant ainsi, elle produisait un son qui pouvait calmer le tout-petit enfant auquel elle avait été offerte, qu'il s'agisse d'un garçonnet ou, plus probablement, d'une fillette, sans risque que ce dernier ne la brise. IMMERWAHR (1967), 255.

89 Je remercie Victoria Sabetai d'avoir attiré mon attention sur ce point.

90 *Anthologie Palatine*, 6, 282 et Voir supra. 309.

91 ANDRIOMENOU (1981), 234, fig. 101 ; SEG 32 858 et 39 940.

92 Je remercie à nouveau K. Katsarelia pour les échanges stimulants que nous avons eus au sujet de cet objet sur lequel elle mène actuellement des recherches.

93 DUSENBERY (1959), 168-169, fig. 8.

94 EDWARDS (1975), pl. 19 et 58.

95 MERKER (2020).

96 Voir par exemple la figurine datée du III^e s. av. J.-C. et conservée au *Metropolitan Museum* de New York (no. inv. 07.286.18). Perséphone Korè recevait des balles en offrande dans son sanctuaire de Locres.

97 Le Louvre expose une figurine de jeune fille d'époque archaïque et provenant de Béotie (Louvre MNE 1332, vitrine 21 salle 648 ; voir DASEN (2019), 56-57, fig. 1).

98 Sur ces statues, voir DASEN (2020), 108-109, fig. 4 (statuette en bronze de Dodone représentant un garçonnet tenant une balle, IV^e-III^e s. av. J.-C.) ; BOBOU (2015), 129, fig. 14 (fillette tenant une balle, Érétie), 139, fig. 46 (garçon debout tenant une balle, Pirée), 153, fig. 57 (garçon tenant un oiseau et une balle, Delphes).

évoquer une consécration de jouet, mais aussi le petit d'homme en train de jouer dans une mise en scène qui évoquerait le quotidien. Enfin, la consécration d'une statue de ce type peut célébrer l'habileté de l'enfant dans cette activité sportive et ludique ; c'est d'ailleurs en ce sens que l'on peut comprendre l'adjectif εὐφημον (*euphèmon*) qui qualifie la balle de Philoclès dans l'*Anthologie Palatine* : le jeune homme ne consacrerait pas une simple balle avec laquelle il jouait garçonnet, mais bien un accessoire avec lequel il a pu briller dans sa pratique⁹⁹. Dans plusieurs exemples présentés ici, les consécration de jouets intervenaient lors de rites de l'enfance. Selon le modèle des rites de passage fixé par Arnold van Gennep, il s'agit de marquer le passage d'un état à l'autre de la vie humaine, sans possibilité de retour¹⁰⁰. Jusqu'au seuil de l'âge adulte, les différentes étapes de l'enfance étaient placées sous la protection de diverses divinités ; des rites spécifiques impliquaient les enfants et leurs parents. À cette occasion, les enfants ont pu déposer leurs jouets dans les sanctuaires afin de marquer par cet abandon un moment clef de leur maturation. Ces rites de l'enfance marquaient donc autant d'étapes dans le processus d'éducation et de formation des enfants auquel le jeu comme la musique participaient, en particulier aux époques classique et hellénistique.

2.4. Des poupées et des toupies

Les inscriptions n'ont, à notre connaissance, livré aucune attestation relative aux poupées évoquées dans l'épigramme de Timaréta. Des figurines féminines articulées, dont de très nombreux exemplaires ont été mis au jour à travers les sanctuaires du monde grec, sont généralement désignées sous cette terminologie. Cependant, rien n'indique que ces objets en terre cuite aient fait office, avant leur consécration, de jouets pour les enfants¹⁰¹.

Nous avons discuté, au sujet d'une épigramme de l'*Anthologie Palatine*, du sens qu'il convient de donner au terme ῥόμβος. Ce mot est bien attesté, sous la forme ῥόμβος, dans des inventaires attiques datés de la fin du IV^e siècle av. J.-C. Il s'agit d'offrandes faites par des femmes à Artémis Brauronia¹⁰². L'identité des fidèles n'est pas clairement établie ; il n'est alors

pas possible de déterminer s'il s'agissait de jeunes filles ou de femmes mariées bien que cette dernière hypothèse semble la plus plausible. La nature exacte de cet objet n'est pas claire ; il pourrait s'agir d'instruments de musique, *rhombos* ou tambourin, réalisés dans différents matériaux, en l'occurrence en bois et en ivoire¹⁰³. Ces occurrences épigraphiques et attiques montrent que le ῥόμβος de Philoclès ne doit effectivement pas être traduit par toupie, et qu'il désigne bien un instrument de musique.

Le terme στρόβιλος (*strobilos*), qui désigne la toupie, n'apparaît pas dans les épigrammes votives de l'*Anthologie Palatine*, mais il est attesté dans la documentation épigraphique. Il s'agit de l'une des rares mentions de jouets dans des inventaires de sanctuaires, en l'occurrence le Kabirion de Thèbes qui abritait des rites de l'enfance qui marquaient notamment le passage des jeunes gens de l'enfance vers l'âge adulte¹⁰⁴. Des figurines en terre cuite représentant des garçons y ont été mises au jour ; elles renvoient à des pratiques rituelles de l'enfance, liées à l'espoir d'une descendance, ou bien à l'entrée dans la puberté ou au passage à l'âge adulte¹⁰⁵. Nombre de jouets y furent également découverts ; ces objets ont pu être interprétés comme des offrandes déposées par les jeunes fidèles au seuil de l'âge adulte, mais aussi comme des offrandes faites au *Pais* par des fidèles de tous âges¹⁰⁶. Plusieurs toupies en terre cuite, très vraisemblablement des modèles de véritables toupies fabriquées en bois, y ont été découvertes ainsi que des yoyos et des astragales¹⁰⁷. Ces jouets, ou ces modèles de jouets, semblent destinés à de grands enfants car il faut posséder un certain savoir technique et un certain degré de motricité fine pour pouvoir s'en servir. Ces modèles correspondent en effet à des toupies sabots activées grâce à un fouet et qui nécessitaient une grande dextérité. Il ne s'agit donc pas de jouets confiés aux tout-petits, mais bien

99 DASEN (2020), 108.

100 VAN GENNEP (2011). Sur la catégorie des rites de passage appliquée au monde antique en général et grec en particulier, voir LALANNE (2006), 99-128 (à travers l'étude de ce motif dans le roman grec) ; DERKS (2012) (la réflexion est centrée sur le monde romain mais l'auteur évoque le monde grec en parallèle) ; LEFÈVRE-NOVARO, RUTHERFORD (2014) (dans une perspective comparatiste).

101 Sur les exemplaires de « poupées » articulées, voir par exemple celles mises au jour dans le sanctuaire de Déméter et Korè à Corinthe dans MERKER (2000), 48-60, 172 et 339. Selon l'autrice, il s'agit pour certaines de consécration à Aphrodite faites par des jeunes filles sur le point de se marier. Sur la typologie, les représentations et les fonctions de ces figurines, notamment en lien avec le contexte nuptial, voir DASEN, VERBANCK-PIÉRARD (2022).

102 Sur les inventaires du Braurion, voir LINDERS (1972).

103 ῥόμβος (*rhombos*) : IG II² 1517 l. 207 (ῥόμβος) ; IG II² 1456 (ῥόμβος ξύλινος ἐπίχρυσος *rhombos xulinos epikhrusos*) ; Musée d'Oropos n° 591 II l. 62 : (ῥόμβον ἐλεφάντιν *rhombon elephantin*) et peut-être aussi II l. 70. Pour l'*editio princeps* de cet inventaire, voir KALLIONTZIS (2021), 128-129. Sur ῥόμβος/ῥόμβος voir Scholies à Théocrite, *Idylles*, 2, 30 : τὸν δὲ ῥόμβον οἱ Ἀττικοὶ ῥόμβον καλοῦσι. Plusieurs instruments ont été découverts lors des fouilles du sanctuaire de Brauron : PÓLOGIÓRGI (2015), cat. 69-71.

104 Inventaire du Kabirion de Thèbes : IG VII 2420 et notamment l. 21-23. Sur les scènes rituelles peintes sur les vases du Kabirion, voir SABETAI (2018) et (2019), 7-10.

105 SCHMALTZ (1974), 33-76, n° 60-231, n° 251-283. Des figurines féminines sont également attestées : SCHMALTZ (1974), 107-114, n° 286 et 287. On note également deux « poupées » : SCHMALTZ (1974), n° 277 et 376.

106 KERN (1890), 5-6 : selon lui, les jouets mis au jour dans le sanctuaire avaient été consacrés au *Pais*. Il associe ces objets aux παιδαριώδεα ἀθλήματα dont les Titans se servirent pour attirer le petit Dionysos afin de le mettre à mort.

107 Astragales : BOESSNECK (1973), 9-10. Toupies : BRAUN, HAEVERNICK (1981), no. 280, pl. 19,3, no. 281, pl. 19,6 et no. 282, pl. 19,4.

à des enfants suffisamment habiles pour les faire fonctionner et qui appartenaient donc à la même classe d'âge que le *Pais* divin vénéré dans le Kabirion. Les offrandes de jouets sont également attestées dans l'inventaire cité plus haut, provenant de ce sanctuaire et daté de la fin III^e siècle av. J.-C. Il y est question de la consécration, par une dénommée Ôkuthoa, de quatre astragales (ἀστραγάλως πέτταρας, *astragalôs pettaras*), d'une toupie (στροβίλον, *strobilon*), du fouet permettant de la lancer (μάστιγα, *mastiga*) et d'une torche (δαΐδα, *daïda*)¹⁰⁸. Ces objets renvoient au monde de l'enfance : les jouets mentionnés en sont les emblèmes par excellence, et la torche évoque l'initiation ainsi que le mariage qui marque la fin du temps des jeunes filles¹⁰⁹. Rien ne nous permet toutefois de déterminer si ces objets renvoient à l'enfance de la fidèle, à celle de l'un de ses fils ou de l'une de ses filles, ou bien à celle du *Pais*, un dieu enfant honoré dans le Kabirion¹¹⁰. Il est possible d'imaginer une jeune Ôkuthoa qui consacre les objets de son enfance à la veille de son mariage car ils ne seront plus convenables une fois devenue une *gynê*¹¹¹. Enfin, Ôkuthoa peut aussi être une mère qui consacre des jouets au nom de l'un de ses enfants. La confrontation des données archéologiques et épigraphiques ne nous permet pas de trancher : les jouets mis au jour lors des fouilles du sanctuaire comme ceux mentionnés dans l'inventaire pouvaient avoir été consacrés par, ou pour, des enfants, ou bien offerts au *Pais* par des fidèles de tous âges. La distinction que nous tentons d'opérer ici est-elle pertinente ? Il est en effet possible que les pratiques se soient entrecroisées ; des jeunes gens ont pu consacrer leurs jouets d'enfant, notamment à *Pais*, tandis que des adultes ont pu honorer la jeune divinité en lui offrant, par exemple, une toupie et des astragales. Dans le cas d'Ôkuthoa, l'assemblage des jouets laisse toutefois penser qu'elle était une jeune fille, qui, au seuil du mariage que la torche évoque, consacra les marqueurs de l'enfance qu'elle s'appropriait à laisser

derrière elle. Ce passage de l'inventaire permet en outre de reconsidérer la dimension masculine du culte des Cabires, et des rites de l'enfance qui s'y déroulaient. Certes, nombre de figurines mises au jour représentent des garçonnets ou des jeunes gens, mais les femmes et les jeunes filles n'étaient pas écartées des pratiques rituelles qui se tenaient dans le Kabirion de Thèbes, et en particulier celles relatives aux rites liés à la fin de l'enfance¹¹².

CONCLUSION

Cette enquête menée à travers les textes littéraires et les inscriptions montre toute la complexité des catégories que nous établissons à l'aune de nos sources. La question du genre de ces objets ne va pas de soi. La balle est ainsi consacrée aussi bien par une jeune fille que par de jeunes hommes dans les épigrammes de l'*Anthologie Palatine*. Le *rhombos* consacré à Hermès par Philoclès, un jeune garçon, dans l'*Anthologie Palatine*, est offert à Artémis par des Athéniennes d'après les données épigraphiques attiques. Ôkuthoa, une fidèle thébaine, consacre une toupie à une divinité masculine dans le Kabirion. Certains objets peuvent en outre ne pas entrer dans nos catégories modernes du jouet : ainsi, la balle de Myrrhinè, un objet en terre cuite qui semble imiter les balles en cuir ou en tissu avec lesquels les enfants s'amusaient, aurait aussi pu servir de hochet puisqu'elle contient un grelot. Le terme même de πλαταγή pose des difficultés de traduction, car il peut désigner plusieurs sortes d'idiophones, du hochet destiné au bébé à l'instrument de musique¹¹³. Il en est de même pour le coquillage que nous interprétons plus volontiers comme un objet décoratif ou de parure que comme un objet qui change de catégorie lorsqu'il est manipulé par les enfants. L'élargissement de nos catégories et la confrontation des sources nous invitent aussi à revoir des choix de traduction. Il apparaît ainsi que le *rhombos* de Philoclès est plus certainement un instrument de musique qu'une toupie, d'après l'étude des occurrences du terme dans la documentation littéraire et épigraphique. L'instrument de musique s'éloigne certes de notre catégorie moderne du jouet, mais il participe dans le monde grec de la formation et de la socialisation des enfants, notamment dans le champ religieux. Il est en effet possible que les enfants aient eu la charge au sanctuaire de faire retentir leur *rhombos* ou leur *platagè* lors de cérémonies religieuses. Ces instruments constituent donc à la fois des jouets que l'on pourrait qualifier d'éducatifs selon nos

108 IG VII 2420 l. 21-23 ; WINNEFELD (1888), 427.

109 Sur le mariage et les torches : VERILHAC, VIAL (1998), 320-322. Sur les femmes et les torches dans les pratiques rituelles : PARISINOU (2000). Sur l'initiation et les torches à Brauron : SOURVINOU-INWOOD (1991), 107-108.

110 Michèle Dumas interprète ainsi la scène figurée sur la partie supérieure de la stèle de Rhynchôn datée de la fin du V^e s. av. J.-C., soit près de deux siècles avant l'inventaire en question. On y distingue un homme assis, accompagné d'un enfant. Un personnage féminin, également assis, lui tend un objet que l'autrice identifie à une toupie. Il pourrait s'agir d'une scène familiale, représentant les proches du défunt, ou bien une scène cultuelle figurant Kabiros, Pais et une divinité féminine. Voir DAUMAS (1998) et DAUMAS (2001), 130-132, fig. 1.

111 Sur les osselets qui ne conviennent pas à l'ἀνὴρ τέλειος (*anēr télaios*) ou à la γυνή (*gunè*), voir Artémidore, *Clef des songes*, 3, 1, et le commentaire qu'en fait Louis Robert : ROBERT (1968), 227-233 (au sujet du « boxeur estropié » de l'épigramme 258 de Lucilius), 290-291 (sur les osselets en général.).

112 Sur les offrandes de toupies dans le Kabirion de Thèbes et le rôle de Déméter Kabiria, voir aussi GIUMAN (2020), 59-76 et V. SABETAI dans volume. Sur les offrandes de toupies dans le sanctuaire de Corinthe, KLINGER (2022a), 100-105, nos. 126-134, pl. 20.

113 Dans un article posthume consacré aux jeux dans le monde grec que nous avons déjà cité plus haut, Mark Golden écrivait très justement « *Categories are always messy* ». GOLDEN (2021), 49.

catégories modernes, et des objets fonctionnels utilisés par des enfants au cours de cérémonies au sein des sanctuaires du monde grec, où ils agissaient comme des fidèles certes particuliers, mais à part entière.

Au terme de notre étude, il apparaît également nécessaire de remettre en question une éventuelle dichotomie entre les épigrammes littéraires et les données épigraphiques. Il faut en effet garder à l'esprit que nombre des textes compilés dans les manuscrits qui formèrent l'*Anthologie Palatine* furent en réalité initialement gravés sur la pierre. Les attestations épigraphiques d'offrandes de jouets sont rares, mais elles existent. Si les gestes rituels décrits dans les épigrammes dites littéraires relatives aux consécration de jouets sont pour certains fictifs, ils reflètent des réalités culturelles, certes en décalage avec les données épigraphiques ou archéologiques, ce qui peut s'expliquer par des spécificités régionales. Philoclès consacre ses astragales à Hermès ; d'autres sont consacrés par des enfants à Asclépios à Épidauré, ou encore par des jeunes femmes aux Cabires dans leur sanctuaire de Thèbes d'après les sources épigraphiques. Ces offrandes intervenaient dans des contextes culturels variés, elles accompagnaient les rites qui marquent des étapes clefs de l'enfance, ou bien des rites plus ponctuels qui ne sont pas nécessairement circonscrits à cet âge de la vie, après une guérison par exemple.

L'étude des consécration de jouets met en outre en exergue une certaine vision de l'enfance, loin d'être monolithique, dans le monde grec. Les jouets, leurs appellations et leurs usages témoignent en effet du regard porté sur les différentes étapes qui marquaient le développement des petits humains telles que les Anciens les concevaient. Le corpus des figurines d'enfants mises au jour dans les sanctuaires illustre également cette vision : le Kabirion de Thèbes a ainsi livré des figurines de garçonnets et de jeunes garçons plus âgés. C'est aussi en ce sens que les adjectifs associés à ces objets dans les épigrammes peuvent être interprétés ; ils semblent en effet faire référence aux aptitudes motrices, sociales ou encore intellectuelles acquises par les enfants et les jeunes gens qui les consacrent¹¹⁴. Enfin, les offrandes de jouets attestées dans certains sanctuaires, à l'instar du Kabirion de Thèbes où le dieu *Pais* était vénéré, nous invitent aussi à envisager l'enfance des dieux, ses représentations et ses manifestations dans les pratiques culturelles du monde grec ancien.

ABRÉVIATIONS

BE = « Bulletin Épigraphique », *Revue des Études Grecques* (2020).

¹¹⁴ Platon, *Lois*, I 643 b-c ; Aristote, *Politiques*, 7, 1336a 29-34.

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

ALESHIRE, Sara, *The Athenian Asklepieion. The People, their Dedications, and the Inventories*, Amsterdam (1989).

AMANDRY, Pierre, « Os et coquilles », *L'Antre corycien* II, *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique, Supplément*, 9 (1984), 347-380.

ANDRIOMENOU, Angeliki, « Ἀψιδωτά οἰκοδομήματα καὶ κεραμεικὴ τοῦ 8ου καὶ 7ου αἰ. π.Χ. ἐν Ἐρετρία », *Anuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni Italiane in Oriente*, 59 (1981), 187-236.

ARNOTT, William, *Birds in the Ancient World from A to Z*, London/New York (2007).

BEAUMONT, Lesley, *Childhood in Ancient Athens: Iconography and Social History*, London (2012).

BIERL, Anton, « Choral Dance as Play: Paizein in Greek Drama, or Body Movement as Sexual Attraction between Gender and Genre », in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (éd.), *Play and games in Classical Antiquity: Definition, Transmission, Reception / Jouer dans l'Antiquité classique : Définition, Transmission, Réception, Jeu/Play/Spiel* 2, Liège (2021), 29-47.

BOBOU, Olympia, *Children in the Hellenistic World: Statues and Representation*, Monograph of Classical Archaeology, Oxford (2015).

BOESSNECK, Joachim, *Die Tierknochenfunde aus dem Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben*, München (1973).

BRAUN, Karin, HAEVERNICK, Thea, *Bemalte Keramik und Glas aus dem Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben*, Das Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben 4, Berlin (1981).

CAIRNS, Francis, *Hellenistic Epigram: Contexts of Exploration*, Cambridge (2016).

CALAME, Claude, *Les Chœurs de jeunes filles en Grèce ancienne. Morphologie, fonction religieuse et sociale (Les parthénées d'Alcman)*, Paris (2019).

CARÈ, Barbara (éd.), *Astragalomania. New Perspectives in the Study of Knucklebones in the Ancient World* (à paraître).

CARÈ, Barbara, DASEN, Véronique, « Gaming », in Jan N. Bremmer, Jörg Rüpke, Georgia Petridou (éd.), *Religion in Context: Graeco-Roman Religious Practices in their Socio-Cultural Milieu*, Stuttgart, (2023, sous presse).

CASTIGLIONE, Marianna, « Pleasure before Duty: Playing and Studying in the Cultic Context of Kharayeb », in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (éd.), *Dossier Bons ou mauvais jeux? Pratiques ludiques et sociabilité, Pallas*, 114 (2020), 96-127.

CHATELAIN, Thierry, « Artémis Limnatis ou la recherche du juste milieu », in Nathan Badoud (éd.), *Philologos Dionysios. Mélanges offerts au professeur Denis Knoepfler*, Recueil de travaux publiés par la Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines 56, Genève (2011), 391-405.

CRAWFORD, Sally, « The Archaeology of Play Things:

- Theorising a Toy Stage in the 'Biography' of Objects », *Childhood in the Past*, 2 (2009), 55-70.
- DASEN, Véronique, *Le sourire d'Omphale. Maternité et petite enfance dans l'Antiquité*, Cahiers d'histoire du corps antique 4, Rennes (2015).
- DASEN, Véronique, « Jeux de l'amour et du hasard en Grèce ancienne », *Kernos*, 29 (2016), 73-100.
- DASEN, Véronique, « Le hochet d'Archytas. Un jouet pour grandir », in Véronique Dasen, Patricia Gaillard-Seux (éd.), *Accueil et soin de l'enfant (Antiquité, Moyen Âge)*, Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest 124, Rennes (2017), 89-107.
- DASEN, Véronique (éd.), *Ludique ! Jouer dans l'Antiquité. Catalogue de l'exposition, Lugdunum, musée et théâtres romains, 20 juin-1^{er} décembre 2019*, Gent/Lyon, (2019).
- DASEN, Véronique, « La royauté de l'enfant. À propos d'Héraclite et de pratiques ludiques enfantines en Grèce ancienne », in David Bouvier, Véronique Dasen (éd.), *Héraclite : le temps est un enfant qui joue*, Jeu/Play/Spiel 1, Liège (2020), 97-123.
- DASEN, Véronique, et VERBANCK-PIÉRARD, Annie, « Poupées grecques en images : du jeu au rite », in Véronique Dasen, Thomas Daniaux (éd.), *Locus Ludi. Quoi de neuf sur la culture ludique antique ?*, *Pallas*, 119 (2022), 349-378.
- DASEN, Véronique, VESPA, Marco, « Ancient Play and Games: in Search of a Definition », in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (éd.), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity: Definition, Transmission, Reception / Jouer dans l'Antiquité classique : Définition, Transmission, Réception*, Jeu/Play/Spiel 2, Liège (2021), 5-16.
- DASEN, Véronique, VESPA, Marco, « Play, Games, and Leisure. Greek and Roman Views », in Christopher Laes, Ville Vuolanto (éd.), *A Cultural History of Youth in Antiquity*, London (2022), sous presse.
- DASEN, Véronique, VERBANCK-PIÉRARD Annie, « Poupées grecques en images : du jeu au rite », in Véronique Dasen, Thomas Daniaux (éd.), *Quoi de neuf sur la culture ludique antique ?*, *Pallas*, 119 (2022), 349-378.
- DAUMAS, Michèle, *Cabiriaca. Recherches sur l'iconographie du culte des Cabires*, Paris (1998).
- DAUMAS, Michèle, « Stèles béotiennes d'initiés des dieux Cabires », in Geneviève Hoffmann (éd.), *Les pierres de l'offrande. Autour de l'œuvre de Christoph W. Clairmont*, Zürich (2001), 125-135.
- DAUX, Georges, « Anthologie Palatine VI 280 (Poupée et chevelure, Artémis Limnatis) », in *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 12, (1973), 225-234.
- DEONNA, Waldemar, *Le mobilier délien*, Paris (1938).
- DERKS Ton, « Les rites de passage dans l'Empire romain : esquisse d'une approche anthropologique », in Pascal Payen, Évelyne Scheid-Tissinier (éd.), *Anthropologie de l'Antiquité. Anciens objets, nouvelles approches*, Turnhout, (2012), 43-80.
- DUSENBERY, Elsbeth, « A Samothracian Necropolis », *Archaeology*, 12 (1959), 168-169.
- EDWARDS, Roger, *Corinthian Hellenistic Pottery*, Corinth, 3, Princeton (1975).
- ELDERKIN, Kate, « Jointed Dolls in Antiquity », *American Journal of Archaeology*, 34, 2 (1930), 455-479.
- FEYEL, Marie, FEYEL, Christophe, *Index des Inscriptions de Délos, section des verba potiora* (à paraître).
- GIUMAN, Marco, *La trottola nel mondo classico. Archeologia, fonti letterarie e iconografiche*, Roma (2020).
- GOLDEN, Mark, « Play, Sport, Dance, Ball Games: Categories in Motion », in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (éd.), *Play and games in Classical Antiquity: Definition, Transmission, Reception / Jouer dans l'Antiquité classique : Définition, Transmission, Réception*, Jeu/Play/Spiel 2, Liège (2021), 49-59.
- Gow, Andrew, « IYΓE' POMBOΣ : Rhombus, Turbo », *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 54, 1 (1934), 1-13.
- Gow, Andrew, PAGE Denys, *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams, I, Introduction, Text and Indexes of Sources and Epigrammatists*, Cambridge (1965a).
- Gow, Andrew, PAGE Denys, *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams, II, Commentary and Indexes*, Cambridge (1965b).
- GRUNDMANN, Steffi, *Haut und Haar: politische und soziale Bedeutungen des Körpers im klassischen Griechenland*, Philippika 133, Wiesbaden (2019).
- GUARDUCCI, Margherita, « Tre singolari epigrafi di antichi ceramografi ateniesi », *Miscellanea. Tituli*, 2 (1980), 7-20.
- GUTSCHKE, Frauke, « Greek Terracotta Dolls: between the Domestic and the Religious Sphere », in Giorgos Papantoniou, Demetrios Michaelides, Maria Dikomitou-Eliadou (éd.), *Hellenistic and Roman Terracottas*, Leiden/ Boston (2019), 215-222.
- GUTZWILLER, Kathryn, « The Nautilus, the Halcyon, and Selenia: Callimachus's Epigram 5 Pf. = 14 G. - P. », *Classical Antiquity*, 11, 2 (1992), 194-209.
- HOFFMANN, Herbert « A clay ball of Myrrhine », *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts*, 61, 323 (1963), 20-22.
- HUYSECOM HAXHI, Stéphanie, « Du coq au canthare. Images de l'initiation masculine dans la coroplathie béotienne à l'époque classique », in Stéphanie Huysecom-Haxhi, Arthur Muller (éd.), *Figurines grecques en contexte : présence muette dans le sanctuaire, la tombe et la maison*, Villeneuve d'Ascq (2015), 71-89.
- IGNATIADOU Despina, PAPAICONOMOU Irini-Despina, « The Knucklebone and the Goose Playing and Jeopardy for the Boy of Lilaia' » in Barbara Carè, Véronique Dasen, Ulrich Schädler (éd.), *Back to the Game: Reframing Play*

and Games in Context, *XXI Board Game Studies Annual Colloquium* (Board Games Studies Supplement), Lisbon, (2021), 309-337.

IMMERWAHR, Henry, « An inscribed Terracotta Ball in Boston », *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 8, 4 (1967), 255-266.

KALLIONTZIS, Yannis, « An Inventory List and a Votive Relief from the Sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia Found in Oropos », in Emily Mackil, Nikolaos Papazarkadas (éd.) *Greek Epigraphy and Religion: Papers in Memory of Sara B. Aleshire from the Second North American Congress of Greek and Latin Epigraphy*, Leiden/Boston (2021), 108-143

KERN, Otto, « Die Boiotischen Kabiren », *Hermes*, 25 (1890), 1-16.

KILIAN, Imma, « Weihungen an Eileithyia und Artemis Orthia », *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 31 (1978), 219-222.

KIDD, Stephen, « Le jeu est-il une émotion ? Enquête sur la *paidia* grecque ». in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (éd.), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity: Definition, Transmission, Reception / Jouer dans l'Antiquité classique : Définition, Transmission, Réception*, Jeu/Play/Spiel 2, Liège (2021), 19-28.

KLINGER, Sonia, *The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore: Miscellaneous Finds of Terracotta*, Corinth XVIII.8, Princeton (2022a).

KLINGER, Sonia, « Models of Astragaloi from the Demeter and Kore Sanctuary on Acrocorinth », in Véronique Dasen, Thomas Daniaux (éd.), *Quoi de neuf sur la culture ludique antique ?*, *Pallas*, 119 (2022b), 75-100.

KNOEPFLER, Denis, « Amarynthos trente ans après : l'épigraphie a tranché, mais Strabon n'aura pas à plaider coupable », *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, 2 (2018), 883-953.

KNOEPFLER, Denis, KARAPASCHALIDOU, Amalia, REBER, Karl, KRAPE, Tobias, THEURILLAT, Thierry, « Amarynthos 2016 », *Antike Kunst*, 60 (2017), 135-145.

KOLOTOUROU, Katerina, « Musical Rhythms from the Cradle to the Grave », in Matthew Haysom, Jenny Wallensten (éd.), *Current Approaches to Religion in Ancient Greece: Papers Presented at A Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 17-19 April 2008*, Stockholm (2011), 169-187.

KOURSOMIS, Socrates, « Revisiting Mount Taygetos: the Sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis », *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, 109 (2014), 191-222.

LARIBI-GLAUDEL, Sophie, « Jeux de garçons, jeux de filles. Les épigrammes funéraires grecques », in Marie-Lys Arnette, Véronique Dasen (éd.), *Dossier Joueuses !*, *Clio. Femmes, genre, société*, 56 (2022), sous presse.

LALANNE Sophie, *Une éducation grecque. Rites de passage et construction des genres dans le roman grec ancien*, Paris (2006).

LAURENS, Pierre, *L'Abeille dans l'ambre. Célébration de l'épigramme de l'époque alexandrine à la fin de la Renaissance*, Paris (2012).

LE MEUR, Nadine, « Les enfants dans l'Iliade », in Michel Fartzoff, Murielle Faudot, Evelyne. Geny (éd.), *Reconstruire Troie. Permanence et renaissances d'une cité emblématique*, Besançon (2009), 41-72.

LEFÈVRE-NOVARO, Daniela, RUTHERFORD, Ian, « Rites of Passage and Purification in Greece and the Aegean: The Second and First Millennia BC », in Alice Mouton, Julie Patrier (éd.), *Life, Death, and Coming of Age in Antiquity*, Leiden (2014), 453-462.

LEITAO, David, « Adolescent Hair-Growing and Hair-Cutting Rituals in Ancient Greece. A Sociological Approach », in David Dodd, Christopher Faraone (éd.), *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives: New Critical Perspectives*, London (2003), 109-129.

LiDONNICI, Lynn, *The Epidaurian Miracle Inscriptions. Text, Translation, and Commentary*. Graeco-Roman Religion Series 11, Atlanta (1995).

LINDERS, Tullia, *Studies in the Treasure Records of Artemis Brauronia found in Athens*, Skrifter utgivna av Svenska institutet i Athen, Series prima 19, Stockholm (1972).

MATHIEU, Nicolas, « Sphaeristerium ? Mystères et jeux de balle », in Véronique Dasen, Typhaine Haziza, (éd.), *Dossier Jeu, normes et transgressions*, *Kentron*, 36 (2021), 67-92.

MAZARAKIS AINIAN, Alexander, *The Sanctuaries of Ancient Kythnos*, Rennes (2019).

MERKER, Gloria, *The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore. Terracotta Figurines of the Classical, Hellenistic and Roman period*, Corinth, 18, 4, Princeton (2000).

MYNOTT, Jemery, *Birds in the Ancient World: Winged Words*, Oxford (2018).

NERI, Camillo, « Baucide e le bambole. Erinna: SH 401, 1-4, 19-22 », *Athenaeum* 86, 1 (1998), 165-178.

O'SULLIVAN, Lara, « Playing Ball in Greek Antiquity », *Greece & Rome* 59, 1 (2012), 17-33.

PAGE, Denys, *Further Greek Epigrams. Epigrams before A.D. 50 from the Greek Anthology and Other Sources, not Included in "Hellenistic Epigrams" or "The Garland of Philip"*, Cambridge (1981).

PARISINO, Eva, « 'Lighting' the World of Women: Lamps and Torches in the Hands of Women in the Late Archaic and Classical Periods », *Greece & Rome*, 47, 1 (2000), 19-43.

PIETROBELLI, Antoine, « Cerceau et petite balle : les bienfaits des jeux pour la santé », in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (dir.), *Dossier Bons ou mauvais jeux ? Pratiques ludiques et sociabilité*, *Pallas*, 114 (2020), 149-169.

- PÔLOGIÔRGI, Melpo « Ἱερὸ Ἀρτέμιδος Βραυρωνίας : Τὰ ξύλινα εὐρήματα των ἀνασκαφῶν », *Archaiologike Ephemeris* (2015), 123-216.
- PRÊTRE, Clarisse, CHARLIER, Philippe, *Maladies humaines, thérapies divines : analyse épigraphique et paléopathologique de textes de guérison grecs*, Archaiologia, Villeneuve d'Ascq (2009).
- REBER, Karl, KRAPE, Tobias, « À la recherche du sanctuaire d'Artémis Amarysia : dix ans de fouilles à Amarynthos (Eubée) », *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, 2 (2018), 849-881.
- REBER, Karl, KNOEPFLER, Denis, KARAPASCHALIDOU, Amalia, KRAPE, Tobias, GREGER, Daniela, ACKERMANN, Guy, ANDRÉ, Jérôme, « Les activités de l'École suisse d'archéologie en Grèce en 2019. L'Artémision d'Amarynthos et les pistes de course du Gymnase d'Érétrie », *Antike Kunst*, 63 (2020), 105-119.
- ROBERT, Louis, « Les épigrammes satiriques de Lucilius sur les athlètes : parodie et réalités », in Antony Raubitschek (éd.), *L'Épigramme grecque : sept exposés suivis de discussions*, Entretiens de la Fondation Hardt sur l'Antiquité classique 14, Vandoeuvres (1968), 181-295.
- ROBERT, Louis, « Les colombes d'Anastase et autres volatiles », *Journal des Savants*, 2 (1971), 81-105.
- ROBERT, Louis, « Monnaies hellénistiques », *Revue de Numismatique*, 19 (1977), 7-47.
- SABETAI, Victoria, « The Six's Technique in Boiotia. Regional Experiments in Technique and Iconography », *Hesperia*, 87 (2018), 311-385.
- SABETAI, Victoria, « Pan, God of Wilderness, in Beotian Landscapes: Fear, Laughter and Coming of Age », *Mythos*, 13 (2019). <http://journals.openedition.org/mythos/1379> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/mythos.1379>
- SALMINEN, Elina, KAJAWA, Mika, « Myrrhines' ball revisited », *Arctos*, 47 (2013), 243-255.
- SALMINEN, Elina, KAJAWA, Mika, « Greek Inscribed Discs: Athletes, Dedications and Tombstones », in Athena Kavoulaki (éd.), Πλειών. *Papers in Memory of Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood*, Ariadne Supplement 1, Rethymnon (2018), 289-331.
- SANTIN, Eleonora, FOSCHIA, Laurence (éd.), *L'épigramme dans tous ses états : épigraphiques, littéraires, historiques*, Lyon (2016).
- SCHMALTZ, Bernhard, *Terrakotten aus dem Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben*, Das Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben 5, Berlin (1974).
- SEMNZATO, Camille, VERDAN, Samuel, THEURILLAT, Thierry, « La cigale et le poulain », in Αποβάτης. *Mélanges eubéens offerts à K. Reber par ses étudiant·e·s à l'occasion de son 65^e anniversaire*, Lausanne (2020), 140-145.
- SENS, Alexander, *Hellenistic Epigrams. A Selection*, Cambridge (2020).
- SOURVINOU-INWOOD, Christiane, « Reading » *Greek Culture. Texts and Images, Rituals and Myth*, Oxford (1991).
- TASSIGNON, Isabelle, « Naturalia et curiosa dans les sanctuaires grecs », in Véronique Dasen, Marcel Piérart (éd.), Ἱδιὰ καὶ δημοσίᾳ : les cadres «privés» et «publics» de la religion grecque antique actes du IX^e colloque du Centre International d'Étude de la Religion Grecque Antique (CIERGA), tenu à Fribourg du 8 au 10 septembre 2003, Kernos Supplément 15, Liège (2005), 289-300.
- THEODOROPOULOU, Tatiana, « The Sea in the Temple ? Seashells from the Sanctuary of the Ancient Town of Kythnos and Other Marine Stories of Cult », in Gunel Ekroth, Jenny Wallensten (eds), *Bones, Behaviour and Belief. The Osteological Evidence as a Source for Greek Ritual Practice*, Stockholm/Athen (2013), 193-218.
- THEURILLAT, Thierry, KRAPE, Tobias (ed.), *ESAG - Rapport annuel - Jahresbericht 2020*, Lausanne (2020).
- THOMPSON, D'Arcy Wentworth, *A Glossary of Greek Birds*, Oxford (1895).
- VAN GENNER, Arnold, *Les rites de passage : étude systématique des rites : de la porte et du seuil, de l'hospitalité de l'adoption, de la grossesse et de l'accouchement, de la naissance, de l'enfance, de la puberté, de l'initiation, de l'ordination, du couronnement, des fiançailles et du mariage, des funérailles, des saisons, etc.*, Paris (2011).
- VAN HOORN, *Choes and Anthesteria*, Leiden (1951).
- VERILHAC, Anne Marie, VIAL, Claude, *Le mariage grec du VI^e siècle av. J.-C. à l'époque d'Auguste*, Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique, supplément 32, Athènes/Paris (1998).
- WINNEFELD, Hermann, « Das Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben, 3, Die Vasenfunde Athen: Verlag von Karl Wilberg », *Athenische Mitteilungen*, 13 (1888), 412-428.
- ZAPHEIROPOULOU, Photeini, *Paros*, Athènes (1998).

PART II

TOYS IN CONTEXT



Eretria, Heroon Grave 11 of a child (ca. 750-700 BCE). The series of cut discs. Eretria, Archaeological Museum. Photo A.M. D'Onofrio.

■
Anna Maria D’Onofrio

University of Naples “L’Orientale”
adonofrio@unior.it

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

“When we at present blame or praise the upbringing of different persons, we say that one is ‘educated’ and another is ‘uneducated,’ sometimes applying the latter characterization to human beings who are very well educated in trade or merchant shipping or some other such things. So it is appropriate that in our present discussion we do not consider these sorts of training to be education: we mean rather the education from childhood in virtue, that makes one desire and love to become a perfect citizen who knows how to rule and be ruled with justice”.

Plato, Laws, 1, 643e (transl. PANGLE 1980)

INTRODUCTION

I joined the team of Irene Lemos at Lefkandi in 2007, to examine some small finds from the necropolis of Toumba for publication, and I am very grateful to her for this exciting Euboic stage.¹ Grave 11 of the family cemetery just inside the later West Gate at Eretria had attracted me for the presence of the cut discs, to which I dedicated the booklet *Tallies, Tokens, Counters From Mediterranean to India*, where I had gathered this type of evidence usually neglected.² At the time, the grave had been published by Claude Bérard in *Eretria III* (1970), while Béatrice Blandin’s volume *Eretria XVII* was about to appear. Finally, in 2007 my son Lorenzo was five years old and I had accumulated a decent experience of childish games and the way to manipulate objects typical of children.

Having said that, I was happy to share my reflections about this grave of child in the appropriate place (*Locus Ludi*) to deal with this subject, so light but so engaging because it leads me back to my direct experience with children. Some discs from Grave 11 are on display in room 1 of the Archaeological museum of Eretria, others are kept in storage, and I was able to examine and handle them all. The photos reproduced here are of Kyriaki Katsarelia, who very kindly made them available to me,³ while the one showing the tokens assembled as a stacker toy was made by me in the Museum’s storage rooms. Last but not least I thank the director of ESAG, Sylvian Fachard, for the publication permission and hope that in the future all “*jetons*” can be reunited in the exhibition.

With this contribution I would like to show how – starting from a marginal element of the grave equipment – we can consider from a different perspective a broader and complex issue, or the social role of children in the final phase of the Geometric period in an important site for the Greek world such as the city of Eretria.

* I presented this contribution in the Online Seminar Series Autumn 2021, University of Fribourg, of the ERC AdG project *Locus Ludi: The Cultural Fabric of Play and Games in Antiquity*, kindly invited by Véronique Dasen. I welcomed the invitation that allowed me to share and verify an idea that I had had fourteen years ago and had remained in a computer folder. I am also grateful to Marco Vespa who read the manuscript and addressed me to the Platonic text, so important for a long-term vision.

1 The volume Lefkandi III is in progress and I am grateful to Irene Lemos for having invited me to publish there the small finds from tombs 74 and 46.

2 See D’ONOFRIO (2007a).

3 My own photos of 2007 are of poor quality. Kyriaki Katsarelia kindly shared her own documentation and discussed with me before the seminar. She is completing her PhD thesis on ludic culture in Central Greece, working under the direction of Véronique Dasen, University of Fribourg, in the frame of a Swiss National Foundation project on Greek and Roman dolls. I am grateful to S. Huber for the exchange on the material from Eretria.

1. THE HEROON NECROPOLIS AND CHILD BURIALS IN CONTEXT

1.1 The Burials of the So-Called Heroon Plot of the West Gate

Grave 11 is part of a group of burials of members of the Eretrian elite, adults and children, active between ca. 750 and 680 BCE at the city's western gate, in an area subject to flooding by the nearby stream⁴ (fig. 1). At the cessation of burials, the triangular monument transformed the site into a Heroon, later obliterated by a residential neighborhood⁵ (fig. 2). A recent study projects the network of archaeological finds

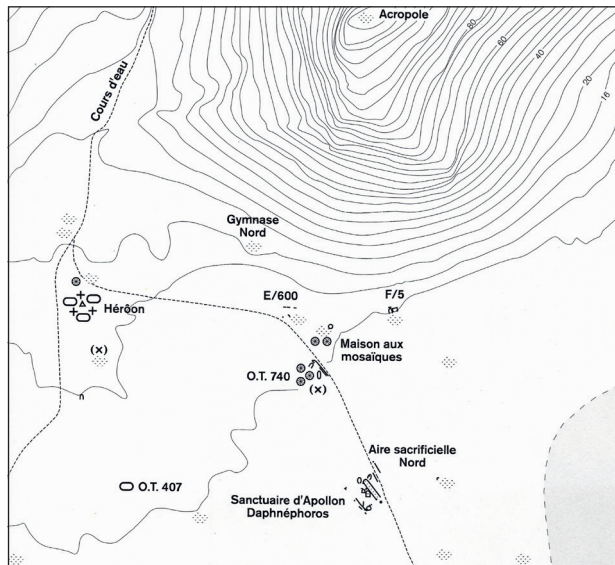


Fig. 1: The site of Eretria, ca. 750-700 BCE. Map after Blandin (2007b), pl. 16, part.

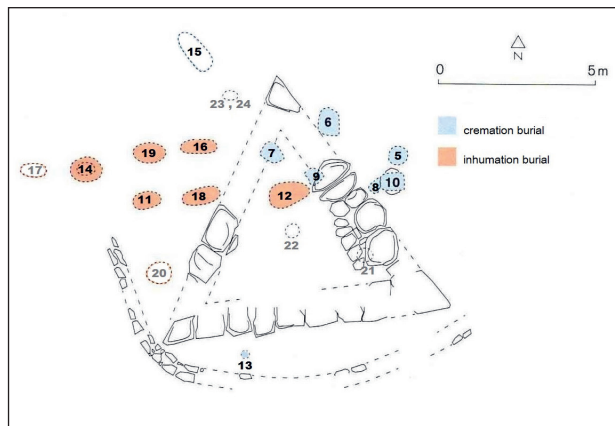


Fig. 2: The Heroon cemetery. The stone triangle signals the Heroon, below the foundations of a house of Classical and Hellenistic age. Drawing after Blandin (2010), author's re-elaboration.

onto the environmental and hydrogeological context on which the city is founded and organized, with the legible transformations over time.⁶

4 BÉRARD (1970). BLANDIN (2007b), 40-43, 144, pl. 11 (map of finds from Eretria in the Geometric Age). Cf. most recently REBER (2021).

5 BÉRARD (1970) and (1978); COLDSTREAM (1979), 196; BLANDIN (1998); BLANDIN (2007a). Cf. BLANDIN (2010), 263.

6 VERDAN *et al.* (2020).

The delimitation of the Heroon's geometric burial group and the isolation of the plot from the cemetery area have been questioned by some scholars, and yet the data provided by C. Bérard first and B. Blandin later in the context re-editing document a structured and relevant burying group.⁷

Remnants of disturbed burials and pits of uncertain function were found on the northern, western, and southern edges of the plot, but their spatial arrangement appears marginal compared to the main core of graves, which extends compactly in an east-west direction and expresses a specific funerary custom of great interest for the redefinition of the social roles of men, women, and children gathered even after death.⁸ As for the floor of the necropolis, a series of "petites fosses ou poches" connected with funerary activity but difficult to identify as graves due to the total absence of bones and other material as well as their small size were observed.⁹

The best-known of the group of cremations assembled in the eastern part of the necropolis is Grave 6, with the remains of one deceased wrapped in linen and laid in a large bronze cauldron covered by a second specimen, and with furnishings consisting only of metal objects, personal ornaments and numerous weapons.¹⁰ Five other adult individuals – men and women of various ages, including mature ones – were also cremated and deposited in similar but smaller urns. The extension of the use of the cinerary lebes – a rare and elite rite – to women has been

7 BLANDIN (1998), BLANDIN (2007b), 42. I refer to BÉRARD (1978) esp. 90 for a refutation of the criticism received from R. Martin and C. Rolley, who denied the family dimension of the plot and its well-defined spatial dimension, suggesting that the unexcavated area around it would have contained the rest of the necropolis. On the social patterns related to the different readings of the evidence, cf. BLANDIN (2007a), 140-144. Cf. also CRIELAARD (2007) and (2016).

8 These are Graves 15, 23, 24 (north), Grave 17 (west), and Graves 20, 22 and 13 (south) for which cf. BLANDIN (2007b), 35-58. When both bones and grave goods are missing, the function of the pits is unclear. "Fosse 21" (BLANDIN (2007b), 57), lacking human remains and grave goods, is interpreted as a votive deposit or the remnant of a sacrifice. "Fosse 22", containing weapons and residual subgeometric materials, is explained as a product of the upheaval of the site after the necropolis phase (BÉRARD (1970), 46). Cf. BLANDIN (2007b), 58, who hypothesizes instead a "Tombe perturbée?" Here I refer only to the stratigraphically uncontroversial material to define in broad strokes the burying group. About the increasing visibility of infants and children in the deathscape of Early Iron Age Greece, see GALLOU (2021), 445 (with bibliography).

9 BÉRARD (1970), 46. These would be the traces of use of the necropolis itself, of its ancient floor, testifying to its frequentation and occasional ritual behavior. For some scholars, at the end of the Geometric Age a sanctuary of Dionysos would have arisen on the site of the necropolis, of which, however, no traces exist, cf. BLANDIN (2007a), 41 and (2007b), 37.

10 BÉRARD (1970), 13-17. Cf. BLANDIN (2007b), 196 (section and photo), 40; BLANDIN (2010), 263. The presence in the same tomb of four swords and several spearheads does not reflect the ritual customary in Early Iron Age, according to which the deceased received only his own weapon, cf. D'ONOFRIO (2021). In the Heroon necropolis also in tomb 9 a second curved sword was laid on the cover slab, in addition to the fragment specimen found in the ash lens. On the fabric, cf. REBER (2021), 44.

interpreted as a way of affirming the cohesion of the family group and its role in Eretrian society.¹¹ It also appears noteworthy that the deposition of cremated remains in a fine linen cloth, observed in Grave 6, is repeated in Graves 7 and 10, which are female.¹²

In the western sector of the necropolis, eleven other graves are arranged, all of them inhumation graves; when human remains are legible, they refer to children of various ages. These include Grave 11, of a child about three years old, to which I return later since it contained the discs that interest us here. Some similar discs were recovered in Grave 23, disturbed and referable to a young person twelve to eighteen years old, where, however, the material, although contemporary with the necropolis, was not in situ; therefore, even the tokens recovered there cannot be referred with certainty to the original context.¹³

1.2 The Child Inhumations of The Western Sector of the Plot (except Grave 11)

The child inhumations of the western plot of the Heroon necropolis have rather variable grave goods, in contrast to the adult cremation graves, which, although uneven in terms of the richness and numerosity of the objects, have in common the weapons and the bronze container for the ashes. Grave 12¹⁴ is the closest to the cremated burials, can be dated to late 8th to early 7th century BCE, and belongs to a child about three years old, buried with an unidentified small animal, since the remains were not later found in the museum.¹⁵ Two pots with pouring spouts, a cup and a kantharos, of miniature size were recognized by B. Blandin as actual feeding bottles alluding to the infant condition.¹⁶ A small iron knife completes the grave gifts, which appears simple but not trivial; finally, among the pottery I note the

small handmade lekythos with conical belly traceable to the “*atelier de la roue dentée*”, of Attic import and probably intended to contain opium or other medicinal substances.¹⁷ The most extraordinary of the children’s plot is Grave 14, of a child about nine months old, the oldest (ca. 760-750 BCE).¹⁸ Around the forehead a gold diadem pressed upon a matrix, fabricated for the funeral; around the neck a necklace of fifty glass beads, of Phoenician or oriental import; at the forearms two bronze bracelets covered with gold foil (probably also worn) and a gold brooch on the chest complete the extraordinary parure, which, given the size of the jewelry, suitable for an adult, for C. Bérard is entirely derived from her (?) mother.¹⁹ The offering is reminiscent of the necklace of 29 amber beads laid around the neck of an infant about nine months old in Grave 1 of Maison IV of the Classical and Hellenistic habitation, isolated and not far from the West Gate, which is slightly older.²⁰ The pottery that completes the grave goods in Grave 14 is reduced to the essentials: a small skyphos, a dish and a jug.²¹ Grave 16 is of a five/six-year-old child, buried with only one vessel next to his/her head, a small aryballos dated around 680 BCE.²² In Grave 18 the human remains were poorly preserved and accompanied by a skyphos and amphoriskos service, both rather small in size, dated to the last quarter of the 7th century BCE.²³ Grave 19, datable to around 700 BCE, is also attributed to a child for its grave goods, although the remains were not preserved; the eight vessels (some small in size) include a skyphos,

11 BLANDIN (2007a), 147. BLANDIN (2007b), 40-58. Graves 5 to 10 are cremations in bronze urns.

12 Extremely fine linen textile in which the burnt bones were wrapped have survived in female Graves 7 and 10 and in the well-known male Grave 6 (“*du prince*”): cf. REBER (2021), 44. Grave 10 contained two gold pins, comparable with the exemplar from child inhumation Grave 14 (BLANDIN (2007a), 106).

13 At the time of the excavation, Graves 23 and 24, both disturbed, were not distinguished; cf. BLANDIN (2007b), 41, 58. In Grave 23 the vase was laid down near the skull, while the “*jetons*” were found among the residual material.

14 BLANDIN (2007b), 51-53, 129. Age: three years $\pm$ twelve month. Nine ceramic vessels lay at the bottom of the pit (two skyphoi, three cups, a kantharos, an oinochoe, a lekythos, a crude jug, with a hole in its belly) and two metal objects (a small iron knife and a bronze viróla, probably from its handle). BÉRARD (1970), 33, points out that this tomb predates cremation Grave 9, which is one of the last burials in the necropolis.

15 The scattered bones seemed to form a whole skeleton: BÉRARD (1970), 33; 54; cf. BLANDIN (2007a), 125. Pig and goat remains were also found (BLANDIN (2007b), 132).

16 BLANDIN (1998), 142, fig. 4-b. The Boeotian statuette of a female figure feeding an infant with a beak cup is evoked on 144, fig. 5. This is an important reflection because small beak vases are found in a large number of infant burials in the Greek world (cf. infra n. 37 for a specimen from the Kerameikos, Grave G56).

17 Of Corinthian manufacture for BLANDIN (2007a), 82, the specimen is counted among the decorated vases of the “Argive Monochrome” ware of Attic production traceable to the “*atelier de la roue dentée*” (KOUROU (1987), 32-41, cat. no. 25). These are containers of pharmaceutical substances – sedatives and drugs, the commonest was opium, Homeric *νηπενθές* – used in illness or as offerings to the underworld deity (KOUROU (1988), 320-322).

18 BLANDIN (2007b), 53-55. A child nine months $\pm$ three months old, the age for which the standard rite would be enchytrismos (BLANDIN (2007a), 148). BÉRARD (1970), 34-45, and color plates in the text. We note the presence of “1 *fragment d’os long d’animal de grande taille*” (ox), which together with goat bones and shells (BLANDIN (2007b), 133) could be remains of the funeral meal. For other bone finds, cf. BLANDIN (2007b) Graves 12, 16, 17, 21, 23 and 24.

19 BÉRARD (1970), 53; cf. BLANDIN (2007a), 100 and note 1030. A gold diadem decorated with battle scenes (ME 18146) and two skyphoi come from the late 8th cent. BCE burial on the Lerta property (cf. BLANDIN (2007b), 107, 313). The scholar considers this burial to be a child inhumation and mentions “*un diadème et plusieurs vases*” (BLANDIN (2007a), 148) but the grave size and anthropological data are unknown, as she indicates in the catalogue.

20 BLANDIN (2007b), 75-77, pl. 126.7. The necklace was composed of 29 almond-shaped beads, poorly preserved BLANDIN (2007a), 98): this is an extraordinary, imported object, dated to the first half 8th cent. BCE, compared to which the Lefkandi evidence appears modest. Rich jewelry, including necklaces, characterizes child burials from central Crete, to which POMADÈRE (2010), 102, has drawn attention.

21 BLANDIN (2007b), 53-54.

22 BLANDIN (2007b), 55.

23 Cf. BLANDIN (2007b), 55. While remaining in the broader Late Geometric period, B. Blandin points to a comparison within LGIIa for one of the skyphoi.

three cups, an oinochoe, an aryballos of Corinthian import, a jug, and a second coarse ceramic jug. Finally, devoid of grave goods are Graves 17 and 20. In the former case the human remains are poorly preserved, and in the case of Grave 20 the skeleton is completely absent.²⁴

2. CHILD’S GRAVE 11

2.1 The Grave Goods

Grave 11 is a small oval pit, less than a meter long and aligned with inhumations Graves 12 and 18.²⁵ Osteological analysis determined that “*Il s’agit d’un enfant âgé de 2 ans ± 8 mois*,”²⁶ thus a young child, at the age when he learned to move on his own and began to imitate others, being able to communicate verbally and listen to stories (fig. 3).²⁷ The grave goods, whose arrangement in the pit is unknown,²⁸ place the burial in the second half of the 8th century BCE (fig. 4). They consist of eleven

Birth to 8 months	8 months to 1.5 years	1.5 to 3 years	5 years
Lifts and holds up head	Begins to crawl and may stand aided by furniture	Stands on one foot or on tip-toe	
Turns over unaided (7 months)	Can throw without losing balance	Can run, skip, climb and ride a bike	Dresses and undresses
Reaches towards objects	Handles finger-foods	Imitates others	
	Uses spoons and cups	Understands people and objects still exist when they cannot be seen	
Smiling and gazing	Becomes anxious when separated from loved ones	Expresses pride, pleasure, embarrassment and shame	
	Shows affection by kissing and hugging	Responds to name	Tells stories
	Responds to name	Explores environment	Understands the future and the past
	Interacts with other children		Social interaction and role-playing
Gurgles and babbles to communicate	Forms simple sentences	Uses sentences to communicate feelings and needs	Asks questions about the meaning of words
	Has no understanding of 'male' and 'female'	Understands 'male' and 'female' through dress and over time, but not changing situations	Understands 'male' and 'female' through time and situations: "gender consistency"

Fig. 3: Child development milestones from ages 1 to 5 years. In red the age class of the child buried in Grave 11. After Lewis (2011).

vessels: a monochrome skyphos with a small lozenge motif painted in white on both faces; two aryballoi decorated on the shoulder one with four large crabs and the other with a motif of large triangles in rays, standard in size;²⁹ a series of five small one-handled cups of decreasing size, decorated allover with multiple-brush patterns.³⁰ Two miniature vases – a monochrome jug and a kalathos – and a single-handled cup, all handmade, complete the ceramic set.³¹ Finally, there are the fourteen “*jetons*” cut from the body of fine or rough ceramic vessels, which the

24 BLANDIN (2007b), 55 (Grave 17), 57 (Grave 20).
25 BÉRARD (1970), 33. BLANDIN (2007b), 49-51. BLANDIN (2010), 264 (in the photo the amber bead is missing).
26 BLANDIN (2007b), 129.
27 LEWIS (2007). At three years children are talking, playing and actively mobile. See on p. 6 and Table 1. Of course, “Although biological age categories provide data from which interpretations are made, adult perceptions of the ability, maturity and responsibilities of children at each age are culturally determined, and must be considered when trying to ask questions about past child activity and health” (LEWIS (2007), 7). LEWIS (2011). I would like to thank my anthropologist colleague Alessandra Sperduti for directing me to this author’s studies and to a scientific approach of assessing children’s abilities across age groups, which is essential to adequately address the study of the material.
28 BLANDIN (2007b), 49.

29 BLANDIN (2010), 296, cat. 284 (H. 8 cm; rim diam. 13.6 cm). BLANDIN (2007b), 49, cat. 1, pl. 92.1.
30 “*Cinq tasses ornées de lignes verticales exécutées au peigne à brins en vernis brun foncé, orange ou noir*”: BLANDIN (2010), 296, cat. 285 (H. 3-5.3 cm; diam. 4.6-7.7 cm). BLANDIN (2007b), 49, pl. 92.2-6.
31 BLANDIN (2010), 296-299: *cruche miniature* (H. max. 4.4 cm), cat. 286; *tasse, céramique grossière*, cat. 289 (H. max. 4.4 cm); *kalathos, céramique grossière*, cat. 290 (H. 3.5 cm). BLANDIN (2007b), 49, pl. 93.1, 10, 11.



Fig. 4: Heroon Grave 11. The grave gifts, with a selection of the cut discs. The spherical amber bead is not shown. Late Geometric, ca. 750-700 BCE. Photo after Blandin (2010), 265.

scholar calls “*palets*” for a game.³² Like the “*jetons*”, for C. Bérard the shells and miniature pots as well as the collection of small cups also refer back to the world of childhood and the horizon of play.³³

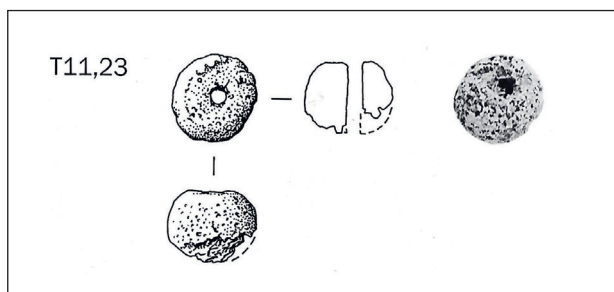


Fig. 5: Heroon Grave 11. Amber pearl. Photo after Blandin (2007b), pl. 94.

There is no lack of personal ornaments: an amber bead (fig. 5) and a bronze ring with ends adorned with spirals.³⁴ According to C. Bérard, their presence would prove that this was a little girl. But it must be said that the ring (a model adaptable to the size of the finger) appears referable to an adult hand³⁵ and therefore could have belonged to the mother, as the scholar hypothesized in the case of the Grave 14 jewelry. As for the amber bead, C. Bérard points to two interesting comparisons, both from Athens and chronologically close: the first, from an Agora inhumation grave of a six-year-old child, concerns not the material itself but the ornamental function of the vague;³⁶ the second from the Geometric necropolis of Kerameikos on the south bank of the Eridanos, where pit Grave 56, containing the skeleton of a child whose length (58 cm) alone is known, returned an amber bird. It is not clear whether it was a pendant, but it seems remarkable to me that the ceramic gifts included, among other things, a cup with a beak – that is, a baby bottle – and a set of five small cups, the height of which, not given in detail, varies from 4 to 5.2 cm, recalling the set from the Eretria grave.³⁷

32 BÉRARD (1970), 33, no. 11.4, referring to all fourteen exemplars found in the excavation, with diameters between 3.5 and 6 cm. Cf. BLANDIN (2007b), 50, cat. 12-22, pl. 93.6 (photo with all 11 objects preserved). Cf. BLANDIN (2010), 298, cat. 291 (only eight specimens in the photo on p. 299, inv. 16588-16595, diam. 2.5-5.9 cm). COLDSTREAM (1979), 196, calls the discs “clay counters for play”.

33 BÉRARD (1970), 53.

34 BLANDIN (2007b), 50, cat. 23, pl. 94.1 (amber); BLANDIN (2007b), 50, cat. 24, pl. 94.2 (ring). Cf. BLANDIN (2010), 264, 298. Two small fragments of bronze (lost): BÉRARD (1970), no. 11.3, pl. 12.51 (on the right), cf. BLANDIN (2007b), 50.

35 BÉRARD (1970), 33: diam. 1.9 cm; width 5.5 mm; the ring is open and adaptable, cf. BLANDIN (2007b), 24, pl. 94.2. For the typology and attribution of the object ‘à un proche,’ cf. BLANDIN (2007a), 103.

36 C. Bérard (mentioned above) considers the tomb, dated to the third quarter of the 8th cent., to be female and speculates that the vague was the ornamental element of a fibula or brooch while BRANN (1960), 409, believes it was a pendant (“Near the backbone lay a glass bead which had probably hung around the child’s neck. On each forearm was a bronze bracelet”).

37 KÜBLER (1954), 249 (Grab 56); KÜBLER (1954), 24 (amber). Only two cups are illustrated, at pl. 107 (inv. 318 and 1319). These are materials

2.2 The “jetons”, their Multiple Uses, and a Child’s Stacker Toy?

Of the fourteen roughly circular “jetons” cut from the body of fine or coarse pottery vessels found in the grave, three were lost and therefore we do not know their dimensions (figs 6, 7 a-b). C. Bérard, however, pointed out that the dimensions of the discs, cut from vases both of fine ware and coarse ware, and from close as well as open shapes, were in the range of 3.5 to 6 cm; therefore, the lost discs were

LGIIb, ca. 720-700 (cf. COLDSTREAM (2008), 87: “Phaleron” cup, with a straight shallow profile, pl. 15p). Cf. FRAGKOPOULOU, †ZOSI (2017), 138, table 1, where the number of cups is 4, dated late 8th - early 7th cent. BCE.



Fig. 6: Heroon Grave 11. The series of cut discs: 8 are on display in the Museum window, 3 ones are kept in the storeroom. Three other discs have been lost. Photo courtesy by K. Katsarelia.

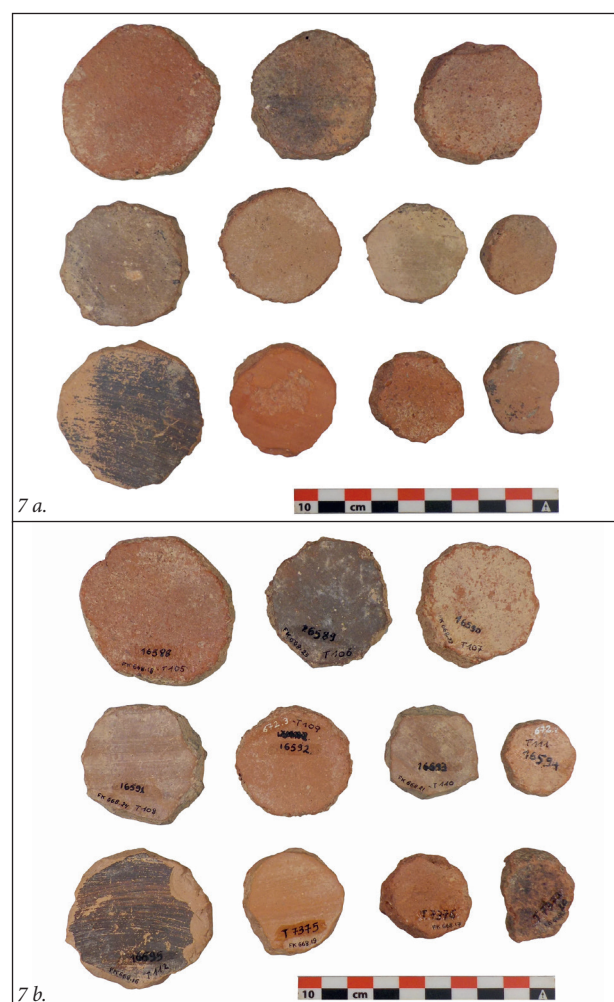


Fig. 7 a-b: The cut discs, both sides. Photo courtesy by K. Katsarelia, author’s re-elaboration.

also arranged within these size limits (Table 1).³⁸ Comparison with the potsherds carved round recovered in the excavation of Grave 23 of the same plot, which was disturbed and therefore cannot be referred to the original grave goods with certainty, is not helpful. Some terracotta “tokens” come from the Sacrificial Area north of the Sanctuary of Apollo, but details on the stratigraphic context of their discovery are lacking,³⁹ and in this case perforated and unperforated/plain specimens alternate, as perforated and unperforated are the terracotta spheres recovered in the same excavation.⁴⁰ Finally, cut discs from the excavation of Eratonymou Street, near a large apsidal building, are well known.⁴¹ This is thus a short list of Eretrian finds, devoid of contextual elements useful for clarifying the manner in which these objects were used. Only in the case of the grave examined here does it seem to me possible to make a hypothesis, which I illustrate further below.

Cut discs occur at several Mediterranean archaeological sites and were manufactured starting from prehistoric periods. Their counterparts in Mesopotamia are the “reworked sherds” and the “reworked painted sherds”, both subtypes of the type “discs”, classified among the tokens by Denise Schmandt-Besserat.⁴² The Author and other scholars investigated the semiotic system of tokens, mnemonic devices to store data preceding the invention of Sumerian pictographic writing (ca. 4000 BCE).⁴³ A first approach to multiculturalism and duration of a variety of similar small finds is offered in the volume *Tokens, tallies, counters*, to which I refer for a comprehensive survey of contexts in the Greek world and the substantial bibliography of finds.⁴⁴ The recent

discovery in an Athenian tomb, probably of a child, from the Submycenaean necropolis in the Koukaki district, of a group of 35 ceramic discs with a hole through them, has been interpreted as a game, albeit with doubts.⁴⁵ The cut discs were largely produced during the Geometric and the Archaic period, as mostly attested at Athens. The Greek literature also provides many examples of game activities which could be related to these artifacts (*pesoi* according to ancient Greek writers) and, in some cases, the game rules are known. Nevertheless, the rough shape of the pottery discs suggests that they could have served many functions. A recent study is offered by Colelli, who could add new finds to the short list of the available evidence: from two excavation pits in the lower part of the Agora of Aiolian Cyme an undisturbed late 8th - half of 7th century BCE stratigraphy was recovered, connected both with a domestic site and with productive activities.⁴⁶ During the excavation, a small group of discs (a few centimeters diameters large) were found, but even in this case it is not possible to obtain further information on their use.⁴⁷ The Cyme find confirms, however, that these objects, as in Lefkandi, Athens, and Eretria itself, were indeed used in daily life with various functions, not exclusively as game pawns, and certainly were not just grave gifts.

Let us now return to the “*jetons*” of Grave 11 and their possible function. C. Bérard, followed by B. Blandin, believed that they were the pawns of a game (“*palets d’un jeu*”); however, the traditional “*jeux de palette*” still in vogue are played with discs of similar size: “*Pour marquer, les joueurs doivent lancer leurs palets sur la planche afin de se rapprocher le plus près du maître, le petit palet qui fait office de cochonnet.*”⁴⁸ In this case, however, the discs to be thrown have similar dimensions.

Rather, a different, very basic and age-appropriate play option for the little deceased is a stacker toy. It involves using clay discs to form a tower that has the

38 B. Blandin corrects as 3.3 cm the minimum diameter. Cf. BLANDIN (2007b), 50, cat. 12-22 (where also the thickness is reported): cat. 12: cm 5.2-5.5; cat. 13: cm 3-3.3; cat. 14: cm 5.6-5.9; cat. 15: cm 3.7-3.8; cat. 16: cm 2.8-3.4; cat. 17: cm 3.7; cat. 18: cm 4.5-4.8; cat. 19: cm 4.7-4.8; cat. 20: cm 4.6-4.7; cat. 21: cm 4.3-4.6; cat. 22: cm 2.5-3. On the basis of a survey of disc sizes in the Greek world, COLELLI (2021), 19, 21 observes that “*Meno frequenti sono gli esemplari con diametro superiore a mm 55/60, che, in genere, tendono a essere ricavati da ceramica più grossolana e con le pareti più spesse e per i quali si potrebbe forse ipotizzare una diversa destinazione primaria.*”

39 HUBER (2003), vol. I, 69, pl. 135, cat. O 271 O 282; vol. II, 104; specimens O271-273 are drilled in the center. Finally cf. VERDAN (2013), 164, pl. 111, figs. a-c., where a number of “*jetons*” (a: *céramique fine*; b: *céramique grossière*; c: *jetons percés*) not catalogued and not indexed are illustrated; cf. COLELLI (2021), 31, n. 31-32.

40 HUBER (2003), 2, 68. Kyriaki Katsarelia presented a paper on “*Boules en contextes funéraires et de sanctuaire à Erétrie*” in the ERC Locus Ludi Workshop “*Boules et billes en contextes du Proche-Orient au monde grec*”, Fribourg, remote on 10.7.2021. Cf. also supra note 3.

41 ANDREIOMENOU (1981), 233-234, pl. 99: cut out from the belly of painted vessels. Similar tokens, pierced and unpierced, come from the Lefkandi settlement; POPHAM *et al.* (1987), nos 54-65a-m. Cf. COLELLI (2021), 12.

42 D’ONOFRIO (2007a), 4: the Mesopotamian horizon is much older and more complex but nevertheless provides a starting point for investigating even in Aegean prehistory and the Greek world the use of objects specifically designed to manipulate, store, and preserve data.

43 SCHMANDT-BESSERAT (1992).

44 D’ONOFRIO (2007a, b). Cf. COLELLI (2021), with a discussion of the

playful aspect of the discs and the presentation of findings from the Kyme Aeolian settlement (Izmir, Turkey).

45 TSALKOU (2020), 576-577, fig. 3, from Tomb 10. The discs appear to have been held together by rope or other organic material, judging by their grouped position.

46 COLELLI (2021), 11: the western trench, which returned eight specimens, is probably to be considered part of a huge dump connected to some productive activity located nearby, datable to the late 8th and early 7th cent. BCE; the eastern trench, which returned five specimens, is to be connected with a domestic setting (Structure a), made between Middle and Late Geometric and abandoned by the mid-7th cent. BCE.

47 Made of pottery and (one) of stone. I would not consider the stone object as a counterpart of the pottery discs.

48 The reference is to the game typical of the Breton region and western France (<https://www.philibertnet.com/fr/8314-jeux-de-palets>). There are different versions in various European countries (cf. “*Jeux de palets*” https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeux_de_palets). I have not specifically researched these games as I believe they are not relevant to our context.

largest discs at the base and as you go along you place the others, with decreasing sizes. The game recalls current but time-honored play activities. It is an educational game, training the child to distinguish the size of the different sherd discs and to place them correctly so that a stable “tower” is achieved. Although some discs are missing, as mentioned above, the effect produced by vertically assembling potsherds following a decreasing pattern is really effective (fig. 8). Naturally the discs could also be used by the children in many ways, freely playing with their different sizes, but the stacker toy appears the most obvious destination.



Fig. 8: Looking at the discs as a stacker toy. Photo A.M. D’Onofrio.



Fig. 9: The five one-handed cups decorated with multiple brush patterns and painted on the inside. Photo courtesy by K. Katsarelia.



Fig. 10: The five one-handed cups decorated with multiple brush patterns and painted on the inside. Photo after Blandin (2010), 297.

2.3 The One-Handed Cups Decorated with Multiple Brush Patterns or “la collection de petites tasses”

In the first edition of the context, C. Bérard suggested that “la collection de petites tasses” represented a play set (toy tableware). The miniature jars, the coarse handmade cup⁴⁹ and the collection of the five cups decorated with multiple brush patterns are put on the same level and “représentent peut-être même des ébauches enfantines et servaient à faire la dînette.”⁵⁰ A conclusion to which B. Blandin also later came. But is it correct to look at the serving of cups (figs 9, 10) from a playful imitative perspective related to the simulation of food and drink handling, and in what terms?⁵¹

In reviewing the child grave gifts from Eretria, B. Blandin rightly focused on the size of the vessels as an important element in defining their use. The feeding cups in Grave 12 of the Heroon necropolis are small in size, suitable for feeding a child; the large skyphos in Grave 11, on the other hand, appears suitable for normal food use, and the scholar empirically measured its capacity, which corresponds

49 The handmade cup is not glazed on the inside and for that very reason could not have been intended for use but only a toy; BLANDIN (1998), 143; BLANDIN (2007a), 50, cat. 10, pl. 93.4. The object could also have symbolic rather than playful value; in any case comparisons should be extended.

50 BÉRARD (1970), 53.

51 From eighteen months to three years old, when in common parlance children are “toddlers”, play evolves and becomes imitative (proto-symbolic play); objects from everyday life are then used in actions of “pretend play” (e.g.: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/itf09cogdevfdsym.asp>).

to half a liter.⁵² The capacity of the cups in the same grave is similarly measured: “*les tasses 2, 4, 5 et 6 ont respectivement une capacité de 76, 44, 42 et 21 ml*” (Table 2).⁵³ and judged too small for real use. The cups would therefore not be functional, not only because of inaccurate workmanship but because “*la capacité de ces récipients est en outre trop réduite pour qu’ils aient servi de vases à boire.*”⁵⁴

Of the 33 cups from the grave goods of Eretria, most are referable to infant graves.⁵⁵ A notable exception is the controversial Grave 1 of “Parcelle O.T. 740”, an oval pit topped by a Hellenistic wall that has made excavation difficult and whose funerary nature remains possible but not certain.⁵⁶ The only grave goods, if it is a grave at all, are twelve cups, and of these a group of six appear to have been stacked.⁵⁷ Ten cups have a black body and an average height of around 6 cm:⁵⁸ assimilated to the class of one-handled monochrome flat-based cups widely diffused in the Greek world since the Protogeometric and throughout the Geometric period;⁵⁹ in contrast, the two cups decorated all over with multiple-brush patterns, distinctively Euboean, recall the specimens from Grave 11 of the Heroon also in size, smaller than the monochrome specimens.⁶⁰ This is a class already identified at Lefkandi, where it is considered “fairly late” on stratigraphic grounds.⁶¹

52 BLANDIN (1998), 142: the scholar measured the volume of this and other vessels empirically, since morphological particularities make an abstract calculation impossible.

53 BLANDIN (2007a), 88-89 and footnote 854, where the volume of cup 3 is not given. The capacity given for cup 4 (44 ml), which is the largest, does not seem to be able to correspond to the actual one.

54 BLANDIN (2007a), 88. The scholar refers to the capacity of a modern “*verre à liqueur*”, with an approximate volume of 40 ml. However, it can be observed that the internal glazing makes the actual use possible.

55 The same link between small cups and child burials recurs in the Rhodian necropolis of Ialysos, where it has been the subject of a very thorough analysis: D’ACUNTO (2020), 222-225 and *infra* note 63.

56 MAZARAKIS AINIAN (1987), 10, believes that a mound marked the grave and the context was intended for cultic practices. This interpretation is rejected by BLANDIN (2007b), esp. 115-117.

57 BLANDIN (2007b), 117-119, figs. 323-325 (detail of the excavation on pl. 165). On heaping up of vessels as the normal way for arranging and storing table ware on shelves, see SIMANTONI-BOURNIA (2011), esp. 975.

58 BLANDIN (2007b), 118, cat. 1-10: cat. 3 and 5 specimens have a height of 5.5 cm; other specimens reach or exceed 6 cm; sometimes heights are fluctuating at various points, testifying to careless workmanship.

59 PAPADOPOULOS, SMITHSON (2017), 814-817, with fig. 6.33. This type also dominates at Lefkandi (cf. *infra* note 61).

60 BLANDIN (2007b), 118, cat. 11 (H. 4.2-4.5 cm) and cat. 12 (H. 4-4.5 cm). It is not possible to elaborate here on the possible readings of the context, which is controversial.

61 BOARDMAN, PRICE (1980), 67, pl. 51, where they define the differences between the two classes of cups, including the dimensional gap: “the commoner has a black body with a strap handle decorated with various simple linear patterns in added white or with a vertical wavy line between bands [...] the second class s of smaller cups, more heavily walled, and decorated all over with multiple-brush patterns which run vertically or obliquely over the walls, crossing towards the base and often running on to the base itself [...]”.

On the basis of preliminary reconnaissance it seems to me that these Eretrian cups decorated with multiple brush patterns and found in funerary contexts do not exceed 5 cm in height and mostly stand at 3-4 cm; the specimens from Grave 11 are also between 3 and 5 cm in height (Table 2). Without pretending to deal here with such a vast and complex topic as the dimensional characterization of single-handled cups, which in every production and context knows a margin of variability,⁶² it can be said that a specificity of this class of Eretrian cups is its smaller size and destination in child burials. It thus follows the pattern highlighted by Matteo D’Acunto for the necropolis of Rhodes and the eastern Aegean area, where – with different morphological characteristics – the single-handled cup recurs exclusively in infant burials.⁶³ Athenian “Phaleron” cups also characterize child graves, and the Kerameikos child grave mentioned above returned a collection of five small cups that should be examined in more detail.⁶⁴

The playful reading of the decorated cups from Grave 11, while representing a first step toward contextual interpretation of the finds, does not, however, explain the accuracy of constructing a true size scale that is grasped from an arrangement of the cups that takes them into account, measurements in hand. In fact, for “*faire la dinette*” a group of vessels of different shapes (closed and open forms), echoes of adult burial gifts, would be more appropriate: indeed, the kalatiskos and oinochoe from the same grave suggest this kind of explanation.⁶⁵ If the cups decorated with multiple

62 A. Kotsonas has returned to the theme several times, particularly for Cretan contexts, see KOTSONAS (2014). Very thorough is the presentation of Athenian Early Iron Age flat-based cups in PAPADOPOULOS, SMITHSON (2017), 814-819, with reference to standards and variability. D’ACUNTO (2020), 135 (and see the following note), about the evidence from Ialysos.

63 D’ACUNTO (2020), 627: “*L’ipotesi più probabile è che le tazze monoansate costituiscono un attributo specifico dell’individuo non-adulto, in relazione all’attività del bere. Più in particolare, resta aperta l’ipotesi che si trattasse di oggetti visti come di appannaggio/pertinenza/proprietà del piccolo defunto. La variazione delle dimensioni, da esemplari piccoli ad esemplari medio/grandi, si potrebbe spiegare, eventualmente in relazione all’età dell’individuo in questione e/o al differente contenuto di liquidi.*” In addition, the author on 635 makes reference to the Choes ceremony in the Athenian Anthesteria festival, where children during their third year of age “[...] ricevevano delle versioni su scala ridotta del chous (boccale) da cui facevano il loro primo assaggio di vino. [...] nelle tombe di Ialysos (ma anche di altri centri del Dodecaneso, come Kos) l’attributo della tazza monoansata, assieme alla coppa emisferica e al piattino, si riferisce normalmente a tombe di non-adulti di età superiore a quella perinatale. Nel caso della tazza, si tratta, quindi, di un attributo specifico di una ben determinata fascia di età dei bambini, il cui ingresso poteva essere stato formalizzato attraverso un rito iniziatico.”

64 This is a class that still awaits proper classification and takes its name from the evidence of the child necropolis found in the Phaleron area; its wide distribution in Attic necropolises and sanctuaries is illustrated by FRAGKOPOULOU, †ZOSI (2017) with bibliography. It could also be noted that counting on a base of five is the norm for the Greeks and therefore a set of five measures is very didactic, see PIETTRE (1993).

65 The handmade cup, on the other hand, has dimensions (H. 4.4 cm; diam. lip 6.4 cm) comparable to those of the larger cups made on a potter’s wheel. However, we need to be cautious and consider other possible uses of the miniature pots, which are recurrent in sanctuaries

brush patterns were an ordinary drinking set, the same objection would apply: they would have the same size, as is the case in present-day toy tableware, whereas small vessels of different and standardized sizes are used for serving predetermined quantities of food. The Grave 11 set thus represents a collection of measurements that evokes the use of the kyathos underlying the measurement of liquids and solids in the classical Greek metric system⁶⁶ (fig. 11). More generally, as Antonis Kotsonas suggests, vessels with standardized capacity probably also conformed to units of volume used by the same communities that produced them; on the other hand, standardized capacity could also be controlled through the use of vessels that served as measurements but in any case were unlikely to be characterized by absolute standardization in capacity.⁶⁷



Fig. 11: Classical or Hellenistic table of measurement from Eretria. Photo after Hitzl (2010), 151

In conclusion, rather than for “*faire la dinette*” the set of cups could have been an instrument of a game of the “selling food” (cereals, legumes) or “selling beverage” type, instructive for learning the measures that regulated daily activities and exchanges. One also does not rule out the possibility that the different capacities of the small vessels may also have

and, in particular contexts, traceable to domestic pharmacopoeia, cf. REBER (2010), and MARTIN PRUVOT (2010), 176, cat. 131-135, also considering the presence in tomb 12 of the small lekythos from the “*atelier de la roue dentée*”, of the Argive Monochrome ware, for which I refer above to note 17.

⁶⁶ On units and tables of measurements at Eretria cf. HITZL (2010): at fig. 188 an Eretrian specimen from the Classical-Hellenistic period; cf. 184, cat. 182 in the same volume. From B. Blandin’s measurement cited above in footnote 52, for example, cup 6 (the smallest) appears to have a capacity that corresponds exactly to half of the next measurement, cup 5, which at 42 ml is very close to the Greek unit kyathos (0.04). A verification of the capacity of cup 4 (44 ml seems small) and acquisition of the capacity of specimen 3 (not indicated) would be useful.

⁶⁷ KOTSONAS (2014). The author notes that although Greek sources tell us that amphorae of a certain provenance had standardized capacities, these actually show considerable variation in capacity.

a relation to the stages of the child’s growth and thus of his or her nutrition: in any case, the collection of cups implies learning about capacity measures and their direct manipulation.⁶⁸

3. SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

3.1 Playing with Size, Playing with Space: Small Things and Children’s Games.

In general, the identification of the discs and the collection of small cups in this grave as things that children played with – objects within the child’s environment, which acquired a transient “toy” stage – can be proposed “within a child-centered theoretical framework”, following Sally Crawford’s perspective, which allows to grasp the reason why it is so difficult for archaeologists to recognize things that children played with.⁶⁹

In both cases, the two sets of objects, the discs and cups, are arranged within a harmonious size scale, stimulating the child’s ability to empirically assess their sizes. Using the size differences of similar objects (the discs, the cups), different sequences can be composed in the game. The cups, identified at the time of discovery as a set for “*faire la dinette*”, do not immediately reveal their educational potential when not observed in sequence. Indeed, the progressive dimensions suggest a technical implication that has gone unnoticed: toys and at once measuring instruments (however approximate), they introduced the child to the world of measurement and, in perspective, exchange and trade. How can one be surprised that this unprecedented evidence of educational toys comes from Eretria, a center of relations and exchanges between diverse social and ethnic components, including Phoenician ones? Alphabetic writing manifests itself at this site as a new and extraordinary resource; now it turns out that through targeted assemblies of everyday objects children of rank were taught to measure empirically and open their minds to interaction and exchange.

After all, Plato, who in Book Seven of the *Laws* devotes ample space to the education of children from three to six years old, which includes the rudiments of the science of calculus and numbers, cites Egypt as an example, where an elementary method of associating notions of calculation with fun games – which include the use of cups (flat bowls) of different metals⁷⁰ – is practiced, and insists on the need to teach children to measure from play:

⁶⁸ I thank M. D’Acunto for the exchange on the collection of cups, which was very helpful in focusing on the possibility of use related to the child’s growth stages.

⁶⁹ CRAWFORD (2009). On play with pebbles see also D. COSTANZO and C. LAMBRUGO in this volume.

⁷⁰ Plato, *Laws*, 819b-c: “Also, in play, they mix together flat bowls of gold, bronze, silver, and other such materials, and then divide them into wholes in various ways” (transl. PANGLE, 1980). Cf. JOUËT-PASTRÉ (2006), 65.

“Then after these things they go on to measurements in length and surface and volume, dispelling a certain ridiculous and shameful ignorance which exists by nature in all human beings, as regards all these subjects. In play, even little children learn the principles of distribution, harmonization, sequencing.”⁷¹

3.2 Meaningless, Meaningful Things: Social Negotiation, once More

Looking at the material from a purely classificatory and typological point of view may miss other features of the assemblage that are not meaningless. Just as a dinner service will have a different profile depending on whether it is an individual set or a set for several people, and may be more or less important and complex, so a group of cut discs or a set of small pots of the same type may turn out, based on specific characteristics such as in this case size scale, to be a game assembled according to precise learning outcomes. Along with shapes, in fact, numbers and sizes can also be representative of a real-world approach constructed under adult guidance. The series of small, single-handled cups of varying capacities proposes an activity comparable to the endowment of cut discs of varying and progressive diameters: both games invite exploration of the variation of magnitudes and a harmonious use of the endowed elements.

If the child in Grave 14 of the Heroon burials displays precious jewelry that in a more traditional way underlines the rank of the little deceased, her (?) peer in Grave 11 is distinguished by educational games lovingly laid beside him (?), probably a favorite pastime. We would like to know whether these different ways of expressing love to one's children through grave goods correspond to a gender diversity, but on this chronological horizon – and for such premature deceased – we risk projecting our modern sensibilities onto the past. With this in mind, however, we can speculate that the rich parure of jewelry in Grave 14 was intended for a little girl while the educational toys in Grave 11 for a future warrior trader, belonging to the lineage of the Euboic seafarers,⁷² among the most celebrated representatives of those “human beings who are well educated in commerce or mercantile expeditions”, as Plato observes, who nevertheless advocates a higher

kind of education, one that puts the model of the perfect citizen, lover of justice and virtue, before any other goal.⁷³

TABLES

Table 1. The dimensions of clay discs (*jetons*) after BLANDIN (2007b), 50, cat. 12-22, where also the thickness is reported. The largest size interval between specimens is between discs 15 and 21 (about half a cm) and between 12 and 14 (slightly less: 0.4 mm).

Cat.	Diam. cm
22	2,5-3
16	2,8-3,4
13	3-3,3
17	3,7
15	3,7-3,8
21	4,3-4,6
18	4,5-4,8
20	4,6-4,7
19	4,7-4,8
12	5,2-5,5
14	5,6-5,9

Table 2. Height, diameter and capacity measurements of the five one-handed cups decorated with multiple brush patterns, after Blandin (2007b), 49, cat. 92.2-6. About capacity of 92.4 see note 53.

Cat.	Height	Diam. (lip)	Capacity (ml)
92.4	5,1-5,3	7,3-7,7	44 (?)
92.2	5	6,5	76
92.3	3,8-4,2	5,9-6,3	?
92.5	3,2-3,6	6-6,3	42
92.6	3-3,4	4,6-4,8	21

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANDREIOMENOU, Angeliki K., “Ἀψιδωτά οἰκοδομήματα καὶ κεραμεικὴ τοῦ 8ου καὶ 7ου αἰ. π.Χ. ἐν Ἐρετρίᾳ”, *Grecia, Italia e Sicilia nell’VIII e VII secolo a.C. Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Atene, 15-20 ottobre 1979), Annuario della Scuola archeologica di Atene e delle missioni italiane in Oriente. Roma: Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene*, 59 (1981), 187-236.

71 Plato, *Laws*, 819d (transl. PANGLE, 1980).

72 Two terracotta weights appear in the grave goods of the prestigious MGII tomb 3 Bouratza, a primary incineration of an adult (sex undetermined), with an iron sword and a gold diadem, suggesting further exploration of this research perspective, cf. BLANDIN (2007a), 90; BLANDIN (2007b), 17-19; 19, nos. 15-16, pl. 26.1-2 (the weights). Also in Euboea, the tomb of the “Warrior Trader”, a 9th-cent. BCE tomb in the Toumba cemetery at Lefkandi, contained sixteen stone balance weights and fragments which are for the most part virtual duplicates of common LBA balance weights from Cyprus and the Levant, as John Kroll demonstrated, KROLL (2008).

73 Plato, *Laws*, 643e: “When we at present blame or praise the upbringing of different persons, we say that one is ‘educated’ and another is ‘uneducated,’ sometimes applying the latter characterization to human beings who are very well educated in trade or merchant shipping or some other such things. So it’s appropriate that in our present discussion we do not consider these sorts of training to be education: we mean rather the education from childhood in virtue, that makes one desire and love to become a perfect citizen who knows how to rule and be ruled with justice.” (transl. PANGLE 1980). On similar contiguities between play and learning, abaci and board-games, for reckoning methods, see DASEN, GAVIN (2021).

- BÉRARD, Claude, *L'Hérôon à la porte de l'ouest. Eretria : fouilles et recherches III*, Berne (1970).
- BÉRARD, Claude, "Topographie et urbanisme de l'Érétrie archaïque: l'Héroôn", in Jean-Paul Descoeudres, Christiane Dunant, Ingrid Rotraud Metzger, Claude Bérard (eds.), *Eretria: fouilles et recherches VI*, Berne (1978), 89-95.
- BLANDIN, Béatrice, "Recherches sur les tombes à inhumation de l'Héroôn d'Érétrie", in *Euboica: L'Eubea e la presenza euboica in Calcidica e in Occidente*, Naples (1998), 135-146.
- BLANDIN, Béatrice. *Les pratiques funéraires d'époque géométrique à Érétrie*, Eretria: fouilles et recherches XVII, I, *Texte*, Lausanne/Gollion (2007a).
- BLANDIN, Béatrice. *Les pratiques funéraires d'époque géométrique à Érétrie*, Eretria: fouilles et recherches XVII, II, *Catalogue, tableaux et planches*, Lausanne/Gollion (2007b).
- BLANDIN, Béatrice, "Les sépultures de l'Héroôn", in Chantal Martin Pruvot, Karl Reber, Thierry Theurillat (eds), *Cité sous terre : Des archéologues suisses explorent la cité grecque d'Érétrie*, Gollion (2010), 263-265.
- BOARDMAN, John, PRICE, Martin, "The Late Geometric Pottery", in Mervin R. Popham, Leyland H. Sackett, Petros G. Themelis, *Lefkandi I: The Iron Age. The Settlements, the Cemeteries*, The British School of Archaeology at Athens Suppl. 11 (1980), 58-79.
- COLDSTREAM, John Nicolas, *Geometric Greece*, London (1979).
- COLDSTREAM John Nicolas, *Greek Geometric Pottery. A Survey of Ten Local Styles and their Chronology*, Bristol (2008).
- COLELLI, Carmelo, "Piccoli dischi in ceramica o pietra da Kyme Eolica. Sprazzi di vita quotidiana nel mondo greco in età geometrica e arcaica", *Thiasos*, 10, 1 (2021), 1-25.
- CRAWFORD, Sally, "The Archaeology of Play Things: Theorising a Toy Stage in the 'Biography' of Objects", *Childhood in the Past*, 2, 1 (2009), 55-70.
- CRIELAARD, Jan Paul, "Eretria's West Cemetery revisited: Burial Plots, Social Structure and Settlement Organization during the 8th and 7th Centuries BC", in Alexandros Mazarakis Ainian (ed.), *Oropos and Euboea in the early Iron Age: Acts of an international round table*, University of Thessaly, June 18-20, 2004, Volos (2007).
- CRIELAARD, Jan Paul, "Living Heroes: Metal Urn Cremations in Early Iron Age Greece, Cyprus and Italy", in Federico Gallo (ed.), *Omero: quaestiones disputata*, Ambrosiana Graecolatina 5, Milano/Roma (2016), 43-78.
- D'ACUNTO, Matteo, *Ialiso 1: La necropoli: gli scavi italiani (1916-1934): I periodi protogeometrico e geometrico (950-690 a.C.)*, Atene (2020).
- D'ONOFRIO, Anna Maria, "A Preliminary Survey of Evidence for Counters and Tokens in the Aegean and Hellenic World", in Anna Maria D'Onofrio (ed.), *Tallies, Tokens & Counters. From the Mediterranean to India: A Cross-Cultural Approach*, Napoli (2007a), 85-103 and 128-130 (plates).
- D'ONOFRIO, Anna Maria, "An Introduction", in Anna Maria D'Onofrio (ed.), *Tallies, Tokens & Counters. From the Mediterranean to India: A Cross-Cultural Approach*, Napoli (2007b), 1-7.
- D'ONOFRIO, Anna Maria, "Diversities and Inequality: The Male Burials in Early Iron Age Athens", in Orlando Cerasuolo (ed.), *The Archaeology of Inequality: Tracing the Archaeological Record*, SUNY Series, The Institute for European and Mediterranean Archaeology Distinguished Monograph Series, New York (2021), 125-153.
- DASEN, Véronique, GAVIN, Jérôme, "Game Board or Abacus? Greek Counter Culture Revisited", in Barbara Carè, Véronique Dasen, Ulrich Schädler (eds), *Back to the Game: Reframing Play and Games in Context. XXI Board Game Studies Annual Colloquium, International Society for Board Game Studies, April, 24-26, 2018, Benaki Museum – Italian School of Archaeology at Athens*, Lisbon (2021), 227-271 (= *Board Games Studies Journal*, 16, 1 (2022), 251-307).
- FRAGKOPOULOU, Florentia, †Eleni Zosi, "Material Koine and the Case of Phaleron Cups: Conventions and Reality", in Søren Handberg, Anastasia Gadolou (eds), *Material Koinai in the Greek Early Iron Age and Archaic Period: Acts of an International Conference at the Danish Institute at Athens, 30 January - 1 February 2015*, Aarhus/Athens (2017), 133-165.
- GALLOU, Chrysanthi, "Children and Death in Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Greece", in Lesley A. Beaumont, Matthew Dillon, Nicola Harrington, *Children in Antiquity: Perspectives and Experiences of Childhood in the Ancient Mediterranean*, London/New York (2021).
- HITZL, Konrad, "Poids et mesure", in Chantal Martin Pruvot, Karl Reber, Thierry Theurillat (eds), *Cité sous terre : Des archéologues suisses explorent la cité grecque d'Érétrie*, Gollion (2010), 150-151.
- HUBER, Sandrine, *L'aire sacrificielle au nord du sanctuaire d'Apollon Daphnéphoros*, Eretria: fouilles et recherches XIV, Gollion (2003).
- JOUËT-PASTRÉ, Emmanuelle, *Le jeu et le sérieux dans les Lois de Platon*, Sankt Augustin (2006).
- KOTSONAS, Antonis, *Standardization, Variation, and the Study of Ceramics in the Mediterranean and Beyond*, Leuven/Paris/Walpole MA (2014).
- KOUROU, Nota, "À propos de quelques ateliers de céramique fine, non-tournée du type 'argien monochrome' ", *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, 111 (1987), 31-53.
- KOUROU, Nota, "Handmade Pottery and Trade: the Case of the 'Argive Monochrome' Ware", in Jette Christiansen, Torben Melander (eds), *Proceedings of the 3rd Symposium*

on Ancient Greek and Related Pottery, Copenhagen (1988), 314-324.

KÜBLER, Karl, *Kerameikos, Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen* 5.1. *Die Nekropole des 10. bis 8. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin (1954).

LEWIS, Mary E., *The Bioarchaeology of Children. Perspectives from Biological and Forensic Anthropology*, Cambridge (2007).

LEWIS, Mary E., "The Osteology of Infancy and Childhood: Misconceptions and Potential", in Mike Lally, Alison Moore (eds), *(Re)Thinking the Little Ancestor: New Perspectives on the Archaeology of Infancy and Childhood*, Oxford (2011), 1-13.

MARTIN PRUVOT, Chantal, REBER, Karl, THEURILLAT, Thierry (eds), *Cité sous terre : Des archéologues suisses explorent la cité grecque d'Érétrie*, Gollion (2010).

PANGLE, Thomas L., *The Laws of Plato [Translated, with Notes and an Interpretive Essay]*, Chicago/London (1980).

PAPADOPOULOS, John K., SMITHSON, Evelyn Lord (eds), *The Early Iron Age. The Cemeteries, The Athenian Agora* 36, Princeton (2017).

PIETTRE, Renée, "Les comptes de Protée", *Mètis. Anthropologie des mondes grecs anciens*, 8 (1993), 129-146.

POMADÈRE, Maia, "La différenciation funéraire des enfants en Crète centrale au premier Âge du Fer : L'indice d'une nouvelle structuration sociale", in Anne-Marie Guimier-Sorbet, Yvette Morizot (eds), *L'Enfant et la mort dans l'Antiquité, I. Nouvelles recherches dans les nécropoles grecques – le signalement des tombes d'enfants*, Paris (2010), 97-108.

POPHAM, Mervin R., SACKETT, Leyland H., THEMELIS, Petros G., "Lefkandi I: The Iron Age. The Settlements, the Cemeteries", *The British School of Archaeology at Athens Suppl.* 11 (1980).

REBER, Karl, "Une pharmacie domestique", in Chantal Martin Pruvot, Karl Reber, Thierry Theurillat (eds), *Cité sous terre: Des archéologues suisses explorent la cité grecque d'Érétrie*, Gollion (2010), 133.

REBER, Karl, "Production Activities and Consumption of Textiles in Early Iron Age Eretria", in Margarita Gleba, Beatriz Marín-Aguilera, Bela Dimova (eds), *Making Cities: Economies of Production and Urbanization in Mediterranean Europe, 1000-500 BC*, Cambridge (2021), 39-45.

SCHMANDT-BESSERAT, Denise, *Before Writing*, Austin (1992).

SIMANTONI-BOURNIA, Eva, "Multi-storeyed Vases of the Geometric Period", in Alexandros Mazarakis Ainian (ed.), *The « Dark Ages Revisited ». An International Conference in Memory of William D. E. Coulson*, Volos (2011), 971-981.

TSALKOU, Eugenia, "Τμήμα υπομνηναϊκού νεκροταφείου στα νότια της Ακρόπολης (Κουκάκι). Μια προκαταρκτική

παρουσίαση", in Nikolas Papadēmētriu et al. (eds), *Athens and Attica in Prehistory: Proceedings of the International Conference, Athens, 27-31 May 2015*, Archaeopress Archaeology, Oxford (2020), 575-587.

VERDAN, Samuel, *Le sanctuaire d'Apollon Daphnéphoros à l'époque géométrique*, Eretria : fouilles et recherches XXII, Gollion (2013).

VERDAN, Samuel, THEURILLAT Thierry, FACHARD Sylvian, GHILARDI Matthieu, "Of Dykes and Men: Eretria in the Making", in Elisabetta Bianchi, Matteo D'Acunto (eds), *Opere di regimentazione delle acque in età arcaica. Roma, Grecia e Magna Grecia, Etruria e mondo italico*, Roma (2020), 19-36.



Claudia LAMBRUGO

Università degli Studi di Milano

claudia.lambrugo@unimi.it

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

INTRODUCTION

The present contribution draws its inspiration from an intriguing study that I have recently completed concerning stone pendants in elite sub-adult tombs in Greek Sicily.¹ I suggested that these artefacts, sometimes belonging to the Early Bronze Age (Castelluccio culture), were worn as apotropaic amulets by newborns, babies, and children between the 7th and 6th century BCE. These Castelluccian stone beads and pendants are unlikely to have been handed down from the Early Bronze Age. Consequently, we can argue that, after being accidentally discovered in ancient tombs during the Archaic Period, they may have been recognized as ancient, and therefore deemed particularly valuable, also due to the intrinsic properties of the stones, often shiny and translucent.

Since then, I have noticed the occurrence of stone pebbles and flat stones in funerary assemblages both in Greece and Western Greece. Therefore, I started collecting data to understand whether these artefacts shared the same purpose as the amulets but were carried and displayed in other ways (presumably inside pouches or net bags), or whether they had a completely different function.²

¹ LAMBRUGO (2020).

² My deepest gratitude to Véronique Dasen, Henri Duday, Clemente Marconi, Reine-Marie Bérard, Kyriaky Katsarelia and Vicky Sabetai, for sharing data and ideas about this intriguing topic. This paper was

This paper presents some preliminary notes about this category of material which has long suffered from a lack of attention. Despite being humble and easily available, stone pebbles might have played specific cultural roles in the Greek world.

1. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA

The preliminary data I have gathered so far enables us to distinguish at least two different groups of stone pebbles and flat stones. They come from either burials or religious spaces.

1.1. Plain Stone Pebbles

The first group consists of plain stone pebbles and stones with flattened surfaces and different in size, weight, and colour, deposited either alone or in groups. Pebbles like these, neither carved nor smoothed, have been discovered in sacred areas as well as in tombs of Greece, Magna Graecia, and Sicily dating from the Protogeometric Period and later.

A Late Protogeometric cist tomb, uncovered in 1955 nearby the so-called Mycenaean House of the Sphinxes in Mycenae, contained the skeleton of a child, laid in a crouched position, with a rich funerary assemblage. An amphora contained a set of 24 pebbles, one (diam. ca. 4.5 cm) considerably

elaborated thanks to a scientific exchange stay at Fribourg University supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and part of the ERC AdG Locus Ludi Research Programme.

larger than the rest (diam. ca. 1.5 cm) (fig. 1). The smaller stones are roughly circular, whereas the large one is flatter.³ Grave 6 in the Rundbau burial ground in the Kerameikos cemetery of Athens is a large but partially preserved shaft, dating from the last quarter of the 8th century BCE. The dating of this grave is based on a footed cup, which was the only vessel recovered from the burial, along with 20 (?) stone pebbles whose variety in colours, shape, and size is worth pointing out (fig. 2). An amphora with a painted decoration representing a man and a horse is now recognized as the *sema* of the tomb. According to the excavators, the scant skeletal remains may have belonged to a child or a sub-adult individual.⁴

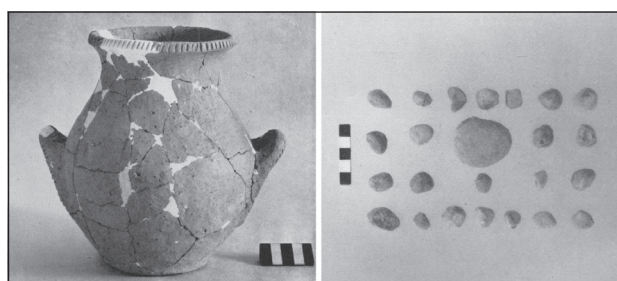


Fig. 1: Late Protogeometric cist tomb, from the so-called House of Sphinxes at Mycenae. Photo after Desborough (1956).



Fig. 2: Kerameikos Grave Rb 6, Athens, last quarter 8th cent. BCE. Photo after D'Onofrio (2017), 265, figs. 24.7-9.

Single and multiple stone pebbles are also recorded in tombs in Greek Sicily. Tomb Z 24 in the Megara Hyblaea South necropolis⁵ is a multiple inhumation of at least six sub-adult individuals in a lithic sarcophagus which was reopened and reused several times between 640 and 580 BCE. The abundant and exquisite grave goods include a single white

pebble.⁶ Nine stone pebbles, some made of limestone and some of quartz, were also discovered by Paolo Orsi in the right hand of an adult from a multiple inhumation in an enormous lithic sarcophagus in the Fusco Necropolis in Syracuse (tomb 450), dating from between the end of the 7th and the beginning of the 6th century BCE.⁷ Moreover, two tombs from the Contrada Pezzino Necropolis in Agragas are worth mentioning. Both of them are inhumations, but we do not know whether they belong to adults or sub-adults. Tomb 1116, dating from the second half of the 6th century BCE, contains a large set of Corinthian *pyxides* and *kotyliskoi*, a female clay figurine, and 25 stone pebbles of various colours (fig. 3).⁸ Tomb 1181, which is slightly more recent (first half of the 5th cent. BCE), contained two large pebbles of different dimensions and colour among the grave goods (fig. 3).⁹

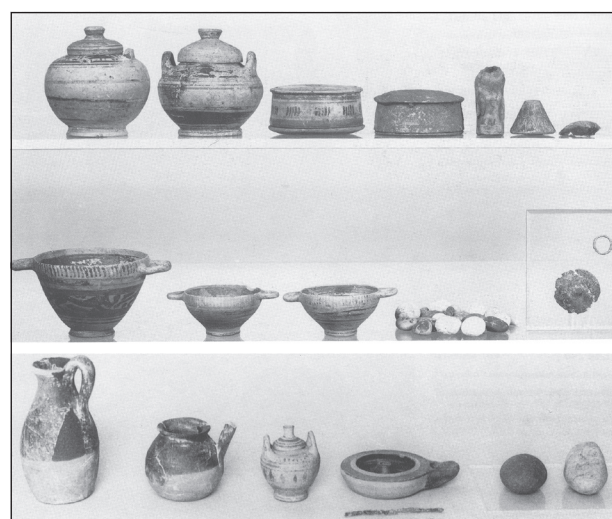


Fig. 3: Tomb 1116, from Contrada Pezzino cemetery, Agrakas, second half 6th cent. BCE (above); Tomb 1181, from Contrada Pezzino cemetery, Agrakas, first half 5th cent. BCE (below). Photo after De Miro (1989), pl. XII, XLIV.

Pebbles, deposited either alone or in groups, were also found in burials in Magna Graecia. Five stone pebbles are recorded in a late-4th to mid-3rd century BCE burial (tomb 29) at Muro Tenente (Messapia) containing the skeleton of a young female adult buried with black-glaze pottery, the aforementioned pebbles, and some knucklebones. It is worth pointing out that the deceased was holding three of the pebbles in her right hand, while the other two were discovered near the left hand.¹⁰ A single sandstone pebble comes from tomb 2 at Sant'Angelo Vecchio in the *chora* of Metaponto. This burial belongs to a

3 DESBOROUGH (1956), 129-130.

4 D'ONOFRIO (2017), 263-265. See also KNIGGE (1980), 77.

5 It is worth reminding that several funerary spaces have been discovered at Megara Hyblaea: the West necropolis was explored by Paolo Orsi between 1889 and 1892, for a total of over 800 tombs, mostly remained unpublished, except for the first 300 ca. edited in CAVALLARI, ORSI (1890). The South necropolis, which has been investigated since 1947, is now published in DUDAY, GRAS (2018). Finally, the North necropolis (c/o RIASOM), with a smaller number of tombs, excavated between 1954 and 1957, was preliminary described in GENTILI (1954).

6 Ca. 3 x 2.7 x 2.3 cm. DUDAY, GRAS (2018), 34-42.

7 ORSI (1895), 176-177; unfortunately, the stone pebbles are not preserved.

8 *Veder greco ad Agrigento* (1988), 293; DE MIRO (1989), 32, pl. XII.

9 *Veder greco ad Agrigento* (1988), 371; DE MIRO (1989), 54, pl. XLIV.

10 TETTEROO, WAAGEN (2010), 138-140.

young adult male (ca. 25 years old), and dates to the middle of the 5th century BCE based on the analysis of a black glaze amphora uncovered inside the *Carparo* sarcophagus.¹¹ The data from sanctuaries and sacred areas, equally rich and promising, will be discussed further on.¹²

1.2. Stone Spheres

The second group consists of roughly spherical stones, often (but not always) of similar dimensions (diam max. 2 cm) and weight, usually deposited in tombs in multiple sets. The lithic material of which they are made is sometimes a more precious stone, such as translucent calcite or Cycladic marble, which required a greater effort to be obtained and more sophisticated skills to be shaped and polished.

Striking examples come from many Greek necropoleis in Sicily, such as the ones in Megara Hyblaea, Syracuse, and Himera. Tomb Z 67A, from the Setto Cementeria (6th cent. BCE), in the South necropolis of Megara Hyblaea, is an infant *enchytrismos* in a Corinthian amphora. The funerary assemblage consists of a Corinthian *kotyliskos* and three stone spheres (fig. 4a).¹³ Reine-Marie Bérard, while studying the funerary rituals of this necropolis,

also noticed these specific artefacts¹⁴ and provided a chart (fig. 4b) presenting the weight and dimensions of each object, which proved to be consistent for the whole set.

Tomb Z 124,¹⁵ in the same Setto Cementeria, dating to the second half of the 7th century BCE, yielded the inhumed remains of at least five sub-adults. The anthropological analysis has revealed that two of them were newborns, the third was one to three years old, the fourth was nine to twelve, and the last was a twelve to fifteen-year-old adolescent. The grave goods are very rich and include bronze ornaments, wide sets of ceramic vessels among which are Corinthian unguent vases and drinking cups, and an Etruscan bucchero *kantharos* (fig. 5). Particularly outstanding is a series of twelve ovoid and spherical stone pieces of similar colour but slightly different dimensions and weight (fig. 4b). Lab analyses show that the stone pieces are all made of the same “*calcite pure d’origine géologique*”,¹⁶ a very hard, translucent, and birefringent material, which had to be carved and smoothed to obtain the planned shape. These analyses, carried out at the same time by the *Centre de recherche interdisciplinaire d’archéologie analytique de Bordeaux* and the *Institut Géologique Albert de Lapparent de Paris*, have outlined that this kind of lithic material is only available in two areas of Sicily, far apart from each other and even farther from Megara Hyblaea, the Licodia Eubea district, and the area of Capo Passero.

11 SILVESTRELLI, EDLUND-BERRY (2016), 113-114.

12 See *infra* § 2.3.

13 DUDAY, GRAS (2018), 99.

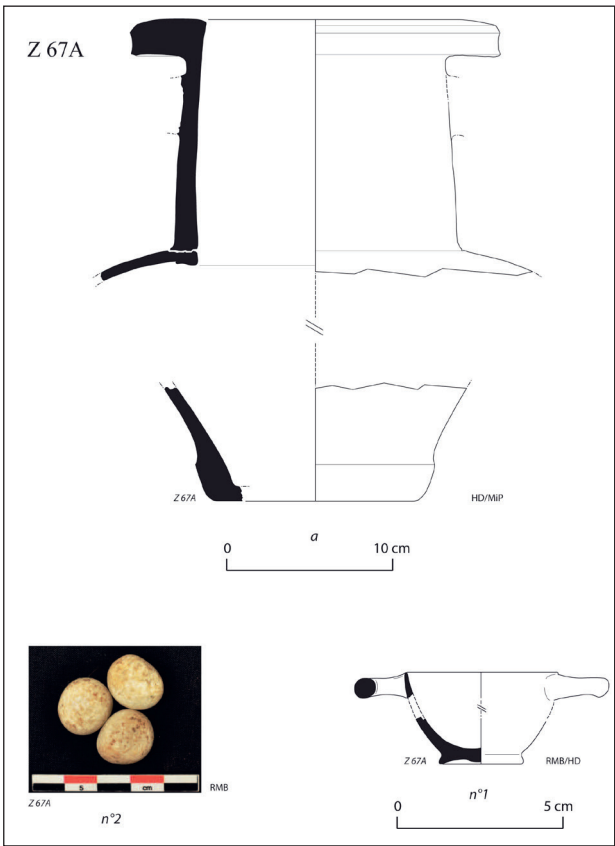


Fig. 4a: Tomb Z 67A, from Megara Hyblaea, South cemetery, Setto Cementeria, 6th cent. BCE. Syracuse, Museo Archeologico Regionale “Paolo Orsi”. Photo after Duday, Gras (2018).

14 BÉRARD (2017), 240-243.

15 DUDAY, GRAS (2018), 123-130.

16 BÉRARD (2017), 243.

Tombe	Poids (g)	Longueur max (mm)	Largeur max (mm)
Z 67	5	17,1	12,8
Z 67	5,3	17,4	14,2
Z 67	5,6	18	14,8
Z 124	3,4	15,7	14,8
Z 124	3,9	17,5	13,1
Z 124	4,4	17,6	15,7
Z 124	4,5	17,2	15,5
Z 124	5,7	20,3	14,3
Z 124	6,4	18,7	17
Z 124	6,7	19,8	17,2
Z 124	7,8	18,6	17,7
Z 124	8,7	22,7	17,6
Z 124	10,1	22,8	21,9
Z 124	10,8	25,1	18,5

Fig. 4b: Chart presenting the weight and the dimensions of globules in tombs from Megara Hyblaea, South cemetery. Chart after Bérard (2017), 242, pl. 82.

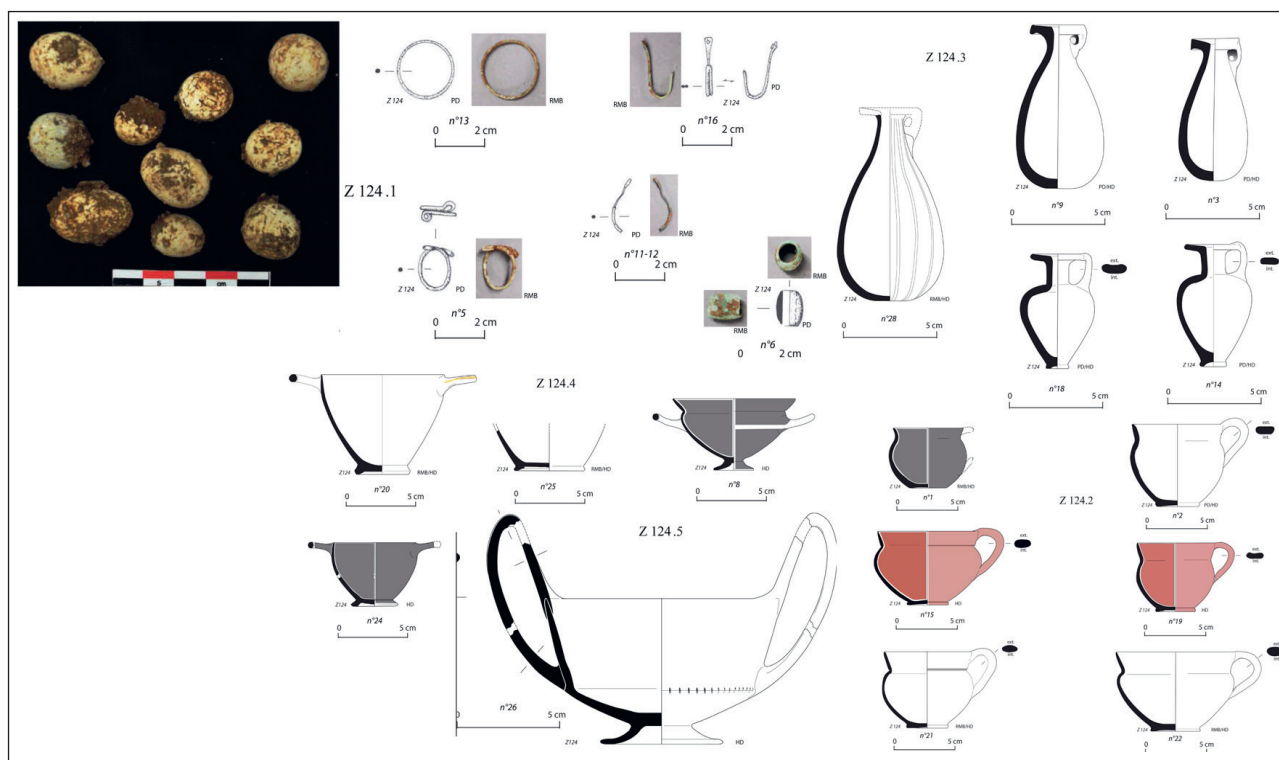


Fig. 5: Tomb Z 124, from Megara Hyblaea, South cemetery, Settole Cementeria, second half of the 7th cent. BCE. Syracuse, Museo Archeologico Regionale “Paolo Orsi”. Photo after Duday, Gras (2018).

Tomb 768 from the West necropolis of Megara Hyblaea, for which only a preliminary report is available,¹⁷ is also noteworthy. This burial, discovered in 1892, is described as a multiple inhumation in a sarcophagus, but we do not have any osteological analysis providing us with high-quality data concerning the number and age of the deceased. We can only rely on the excavator’s notes reporting the presence of four individuals, three of whom may have been sub-adults. The funerary assemblage consists of several vessels and metal (bronze, lead) and bone ornaments. There were also four small Parian marble spheres found under the elder sub-adult’s skull, as well as fifteen pebbles laid in a corner of the sarcophagus.¹⁸

Also worth mentioning is an *enchytrismos*, tomb 179, from the Fusco necropolis in Syracuse, containing the skeleton of a young child (“*scheletro di fanciullo di pochi anni*”).¹⁹ The funerary assemblage includes an Ionian cup, seven shells, two bone ax-shaped amulets, a bronze ring, and five smooth spherical pebbles (fig. 6). The tomb dates to the 6th century BCE.

17 CARUSO (1892), 278.

18 I am particularly grateful to Dr. Giuseppina Monterosso (Syracuse, Museo Archeologico Regionale “Paolo Orsi”) and to Dr. Reine-Marie Bérard (CNRS, Centre Camille Jullian, Aix-en-Provence) for helping me search the grave goods from this tomb. Unfortunately, at a careful check in the storerooms of the Syracuse Museum, it has turned out that only the ceramic items were collected and inventoried by P. Orsi (inv. no. 11867-11878). Therefore, there are no traces left of both the Parian marble balls and the stone pebbles.

19 ORSI (1895), 127.

A last significant example is tomb RO 1628 from the Pestavecchia necropolis in Himera,²⁰ an *enchytrismos* of a fetus or neonate buried in a locally produced stamnoid *pyxis*. The vessel also contained a black cup and seven white limestone spheres (diam. 1.5/2 cm) (fig. 7). The tomb dates from the end of the 6th to the beginning of the 5th century BCE.

2. TOWARDS AN INTERPRETATION

The function and the cultural meaning of stone pebbles and spheres are not easily ascertainable, as the topic is especially problematic and any number of explanations may be proposed.

2.1. Game Pieces?

Due to the frequent association with sub-adult tombs, highlighted in the archaeological data discussed above, it seems likely that stone pebbles and spheres (found together in tomb 768 of Megara, West necropolis, for instance) were children’s game tools, as claimed by Orsi himself in the publication of the aforementioned Syracusan burials.²¹ The precious spheres similar in size and weight belonging to our second group may be regarded as marbles.²² Even though we lack clear evidence for Greek children playing with marbles,²³ this interpretation is usually proposed for similar full bronze spheres,

20 VOPES (2002), 49; VASSALLO (2014), 284.

21 ORSI (1895), 127, 177.

22 See *supra* § 1.2.

23 Conversely, for marble games and marble tracks in the Roman world see SCHÄDLER (2019a).



Fig. 6: Tomb 179, from Syracuse, Fusco necropolis, 6th cent. BCE. Syracuse, Museo Archeologico Regionale "Paolo Orsi". © Assessorato ai Beni Culturali e dell'Identità Siciliana della Regione Siciliana – Palermo – Prot. 3331.

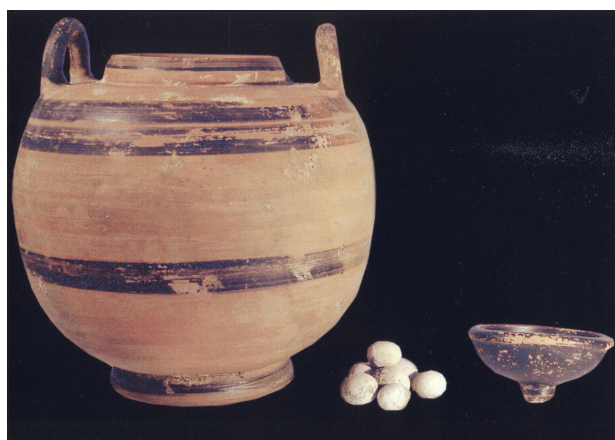


Fig. 7: Tomb RO 1628 from Himera, Pestavecchia necropolis, end 6th/beginning 5th cent. BCE. Photo after Volpes (2002), 49.

equally documented in specific association with infant burials.²⁴

Plain pebbles were likely used for a wide range of games, also as substitutes for other natural items such as nuts, acorns or even knucklebones; particularly relevant is the well-known πεντέλιθα (*pentelitha*), for which five stones are needed according to Pollux,²⁵

²⁴ BÉRARD (2017), 240-243 for a comparison between stone and full bronze marbles in the cemeteries of Megara Hyblaea; see also D. COSTANZO in this volume (*Lokroi Epizephyrioi*, Lucifero necropolis, tombs 677 and 1614 at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria).

²⁵ Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 9.126; COSTANZA (2019), 167-168 with references.

or the ἐποστρακισμός (*epostrakismos*),²⁶ still very popular all over the world, which consists of throwing flattened pebbles on the water surface and making them skip several times. The scene of some children playing this game on the Ostia seaside described by Minucius Felix²⁷ is particularly touching. We might also envision something like the modern game called 'Jacks', in which a large stone is thrown into the air, and players have to pick up as many smaller stones as they can before catching the large stone again. This might be the case, for instance, of the set made of a larger cobble and several smaller pebbles found in the aforementioned tomb at Mycenae (fig. 1).

Moreover, it is worth pointing out that, as far as the occurrence of any specific numbering sequence or logical system of pebbles is concerned, nothing relevant has emerged yet. Stone pebbles are easily conceivable as basic tools for any free and spontaneous ludic activity, and they can undergo sudden changes in function by being incorporated into the creative process of toy-making by children. For instance, playing at making toy-houses with round pebbles or rough stones is not only still a recurrent game among children living in preindustrial societies,²⁸ but it is also quoted by Plato, Horace, and Seneca for Greek and Roman

²⁶ COSTANZA (2019), 153-154 with references.

²⁷ Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 3.5-6.

²⁸ See ROSSIE (2019); LAMBRUGO, in preparation.

children.²⁹ Otherwise, pebbles may simply have been collected for their beauty as personal keepsakes while wandering along rivers and lakes or on the seaside. Valerius Maximus writes that an illustrious pair of true friends, Scipio and Laelius, “used to pick up shells and pebbles wandering on the beaches of Caieta and Laurentum.”³⁰

But let us leave aside the world of children and their games to recall that pebbles are also documented in adult burials, as the gathered archaeological data has shown. In this framework, a quote from Alciphron’s *Letters* describing an astonishing magic show set up in the theatre with small pebbles seems to be particularly relevant:

[...] and then a fellow took me and carried me off to the theatre, where he gave me a good seat and entertained me by various shows. Most of the shows I don’t recall, for I’m a poor hand at remembering and telling such things; but I can tell you that one thing I saw made me almost speechless with astonishment. A man came forward, and, setting down a three-legged table, placed three little cups on it. Then under these cups he hid **some little round white pebbles**, such as we find on the banks of rapid streams. At one moment he would hide them one under each cup; and at another moment (I don’t know how) he would show them all under a single cup; and then again he would make them entirely disappear from under the cups and exhibit them between his lips. Then he would swallow them, and, drawing forward the spectators who stood near him, he would take one pebble from a man’s nose, another from a man’s ear, and the third from a man’s head, and after picking them up he would make them disappear from sight again. A very light-fingered gentleman!³¹

There is little need for further comment: pebbles might be linked to conjuring and juggling performances in the kaleidoscopic world of the *thaumatopoioi*, and specifically to the so-called *ψηφοπαῖκται* and *ψηφοκλέπται* (*praestigiatores*),³² whose surprising ability in handling pebbles is highlighted in the literary sources.³³ In addition, Athenaeus reminds us of a bronze statue representing *Theodoros*, a famous *ψηφοπαίκτης*, holding a pebble in his hand, as documented in Tomb 450 from the Fusco necropolis in Syracuse.³⁴

Pebbles could also be used as tokens or counters in ancient Greek board games (such as the famous *pente grammai* and *polis*),³⁵ especially when they appear to be grouped by colour, polished, and intentionally worked to give them a uniform shape. Luxury gaming sets with glass tokens and pebbles from excavations in northern Greece have recently been published,³⁶ and are known to us from several Etruscan, Celtic, and Italic burials (fig. 8).³⁷ However, as Ulrich Schädler rightly points out, “it is not clear whether or not they were used as gaming devices (counters for example), since they are found without dice much more often than glass counters are.”³⁸



Fig. 8: Pebbles from burial Certosa 392 (left) and burial Arnoaldi 110 (right). Bologna, Civico Museo Archeologico. Photo after Schädler (2019b), 163, fig. 3-4.

Finally, as Véronique Dasen and Jérôme Gavin have recently demonstrated,³⁹ we may not exclude that manipulation of pebbles has played a crucial role in a reckoning system operated on an abacus within the development of Greek numeracy. As a matter of fact, games, mathematics, and divination – to which we will come further on –, were contiguous activities.

2.2. Tools for Hunting, Fighting or other Activities?

Pebbles might have also been used as tools. Apart from weights (but we expect pebbles as weights to be attested more frequently in domestic contexts rather than in funerary assemblages or religious contexts), they might have been tools for finishing vase surfaces,⁴⁰ or projectiles for hunting slingshots,⁴¹ especially for hare and bird chasing (fig. 9) or for fighting as slingers (*ψιλοί*).⁴²

votive or honorary statues, see also A. FENDT in this volume.

35 The same wide range of functions is generally supposed for clay cut discs, left apart in this paper; for the topic see D’ONOFRIO (2007); COLELLI (2021).

36 IGNATIADOU (2019), with previous references.

37 SCHÄDLER (2019b); see also MANNIEZ (2019) for interesting archaeological contexts in Roman Gaul and GRAELLS I FABREGAT (2022) for interesting comparisons in preroman Spain.

38 SCHÄDLER (2019b), 163.

39 DASEN, GAVIN (2021).

40 ADORNO (2018), 225 (*kerameikos* of Selinunte), with other references.

41 SILVESTRELLI, EDLUND-BERRY (2016), 553; MACNAMARA (1983), 228, fig. 28.

42 See, for instance, the iconography of Heracles and the Stymphalian birds in WOODFORD (1990), 55, nos. 2243-2244.

29 Plato, *Laws*, 1.643c; Horace, *Satires*, 2.3.247-249; Seneca, *On firmness*, 12.2.

30 Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, 8.8 (trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, Loeb).

31 Alciphron, *Letters of Farmer, Napeus or Creniades*, 2.17.1-4 (trans. Francis H. Fobes, A. Rogers Benner, Loeb).

32 For *praestigiatores* in the Classical World see TODISCO (2013), 26; TEDESCHI (2017); COSTANZA (2019), 61-63, 179-180; DASEN (2019), 131, 134.

33 Seneca, *Moral Letters to Lucilius*, 45.8; Artemidorus, *The Interpretations of Dreams*, 3.55.

34 Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists*, 1.19b. On skill games honoured by



Fig. 9: Attic black figure amphora with Heracles slaying the Stymphalian birds (swans) with sling; attributed to Group E; 540 BCE. © London, British Museum (Museum Number 1843,1103.40).

There can be no question on the crucial role that hunting played in the *paideia* of the aristocratic offspring as proper preparation for adult warfare,⁴³ and we know that hunting scenes painted on Greek vases are intended to display the skills and courage of young elite males.⁴⁴ Hunting implements in tombs might have alluded to the *areté* of the deceased (especially in the case of a sub-adult individual), to reassert his role and excellence within society.

It can be then hypothesized, for instance, that the pebbles in Tomb 1181 from Contrada Pezzino at Akragas are tools, since there are only two of them, and they are rather large. Nevertheless, we know that the presence of weapons and working tools in Greek tombs of Magna Graecia and Sicily is extremely modest, due to a lack of interest in the funerary ‘representation’ of feminine and masculine genders and social (roles).⁴⁵

2.3. Votive Offerings and Ritual Objects?

There is at least another interesting way of interpreting the presence of pebbles not only in funerary assemblages but also in sanctuaries and sacred deposits: small stones may have also been votive offerings or ritual objects.

A peculiar practice of divination by manipulating pebbles (μαντική διὰ τῶν ψήφων) is recorded by Apollodorus as having been taught to Hermes by his elder brother Apollo.⁴⁶ Zenobios cites a passage written by Philochoros⁴⁷ concerning θρίαυ as divination pebbles (μαντικαὶ ψῆφοι) which, according to some ancient authors, would have been invented by Athena herself. In addition, Pausanias⁴⁸

mentions a spring sanctuary dedicated to Hermes at *Pharai* in Thessaly, where the same divination practice is performed utilizing about thirty *tetragonoi lithoi*, each of them linked to the worship of a different god and called by its name.

Literary sources inform us of the existence of a minor oracular practice called cleromancy, performed by interpreting designated tokens called *sortes*. These could be made from any sort of materials: dice, knucklebones, wooden sticks, clay or bronze spheres, and, of course, pebbles.⁴⁹ The *sortes* could be picked up from a container, tossed (*lithobolia*), or rolled. Cleromancy served a myriad of purposes, from drawing lots for civil and military occasions (voting, allotting public offices, reporting for assembly or military duty) to divination for private matters.⁵⁰ However, if the *sortes* inscribed with anthroponyms can be plausibly assigned to secular activities,⁵¹ it is just as likely⁵² that spheres and pebbles inscribed with divine names might have been linked to cleromantic rituals, or at the very least used as dedications to thank the god(s) for a favourable response.⁵³

In this framework, it is intriguing that plain water-worn pebbles of different dimensions have sometimes been uncovered in ancient Greek sanctuaries, although they are seldom published properly. For instance, in Gela (Sicily),⁵⁴ isolated pebbles are recorded among the votive offerings in the Predio Sola sanctuary,⁵⁵ the sacred area in Via Tucidide,⁵⁶ and the foundation deposit of the Via Fiume sanctuary.⁵⁷ Definitively more abundant is the presence of pebbles, either alone or gathered in small groups on the bottom of a cup (fig. 10a), in the *Thesmophorion* of Bitalemi along the *Ghelas* river.⁵⁸ Here pebbles, clay and stone spheres, and knucklebones might be interpreted either as *sortes* used in cleromancy rituals for private purposes or as game pieces.⁵⁹ Also worth mentioning are the pebbles found in votive

49 For dice as *sortes* see PACE, in preparation.

50 CORDANO, GROTANELLI (2001); GRAF (2005).

51 CORDANO (2001); CORDANO (2011), 102-104; LAZZARINI (2019), 97, fig. 1, all with previous references.

52 MAGGIANI (1994); SCLAFANI (2007); ROCCA (2009), 267-271; BRUGNONE (2011); PAPAICONOMOU (2013), 126-127.

53 Inscribed pebbles as votive dedications or ritual objects for divination from Sicily and Magna Graecia are mentioned in SCLAFANI (2007), 262-263 (from *Kamarina* and *Thermai Himeraiai*); ROCCA (2009), 267-271 (from *Selinunte*); BRUGNONE (2011), 87.

54 Preliminary notes in KRON (1992b), 68-69.

55 ISMAELLI (2011), 205, n. 749, pl. 38; cm 2.6 x 3.2; layer I, from middle 7th to middle 6th cent. BCE.

56 FIORENTINI (1985), 29.

57 ADAMESTEANU, ORLANDINI (1956), 261: “grosso ciottolo fluviale foggiano in forma di parallelepipedo, lunghezza cm 11”.

58 ORLANDINI (1966), 28, pl. XXIII, fig. 2: “mucchetto di ciottoli di fiume che erano stati offerti dentro a una coppa di fabbrica locale nella seconda metà del VII sec. a.C.”.

59 KRON (1992a), 631-633; VERGER (2013), 254.

43 VIDAL-NAQUET (1988), 99-122; SCHNAPP (1997), 123-171.

44 D’ACUNTO (2013), 48-52, 59-64 for the Chigi Vase.

45 LAMBRUGO (2019), 155.

46 Apollodorus, *Library*, 3.115; *Etymologicum Magnum* s.v. αἱ μικραὶ λιθάδες καὶ λεπταί. For a more detailed discussion about the nature of the divination taught to Hermes by Apollo, which is described differently in the *Hymn to Hermes* (by means of bees, vv. 552-563), cfr. GROTANELLI (2001). Numerous are the literary sources on the role of *gemmae* in divination, see MACRÌ (2018), 116-124; and FARAONE (2018).

47 GIUMAN (2020), 39-40.

48 Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 7.22.4.



Fig. 10a: Stone pebbles in a local cup from the *Thesmophorion* of Bitalemi (Gela), second half 7th c. BCE. Gela, Museo Archeologico Regionale (© Emanuele Turco).

deposits from the sacred area of Porta V in Akragas,⁶⁰ and from the Sanctuary of *Malophoros* in Selinunte (pebbles in a locally produced cup),⁶¹ which has also yielded an astonishing number of knucklebones (ca. 2620 according to Gabrici's report), plausibly linked to *astragalomanteia*.⁶² One may also mention the numerous pebbles found in Temple R on the acropolis of Selinunte, whose study is currently being undertaken by the author on behalf of the joint mission of the Institute of Fine Arts–NYU and University of Milan 'La Statale'.⁶³

Although our knowledge of cleromancy performed through pebbles is scarce, it is plausible that these tokens, when not inscribed, could still be interpreted by following specific instructions, especially if they were different in type of stone, colour, size, or decorated with painted symbols that have now vanished. A pebble discovered in the *Thesmophorion* of Bitalemi in Gela seems to be particularly relevant for this perspective. This object is covered in brown dots that seem to have been a natural feature of the stone rather than painted (fig. 10b).⁶⁴ A man-made



Fig. 10b: Stone pebble with naturally made (?) dots from the *Thesmophorion* of Bitalemi (Gela), deposit 409. Gela, Museo Archeologico Regionale (© Marina Albertocchi).

60 DE MIRO (2000), 49–50.

61 PARISI PRESICCE (2003), 279–280.

62 GABRICI (1927), 160.

63 I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Clemente Marconi, Director of the Archaeological Mission, for stimulating me at this research, and to the Director of the Parco Archeologico di Selinunte e Cave di Cusa, arch. Bernardo Agrò. Recent papers on Temple R and its main phases in MARCONI (2018); MARCONI (2019); WARD, MARCONI (2020) with previous references.

64 I warmly thank Marina Albertocchi for sharing data and image.

hole suggests that it was probably worn also as an apotropaic amulet.

Interestingly, dots are sometimes painted on clay spheres such as those from the well-known 'Isis Tomb' in Eleusis (first half of the 8th cent. BCE), which is believed to have belonged to a high-status priestess⁶⁵. As there are no running holes, these objects cannot be interpreted as mere necklace beads. I wonder whether they could have instead played a role in some divination or sacred rituals, rather than being merely game pieces as suggested in past studies.⁶⁶ Kyriaki Katsarelia⁶⁷ is now in charge of cataloguing numerous clay spheres (ca. 300) from Eretria, Lefkandi, and other sites in Euboea. In her provisional report, she points out how these artefacts (perforated or not) are either non-decorated or painted in red or black, with geometric motifs such as circles, lines, and 'eyes', likely referring to different meanings (?).

Moving now from Greek Sicily to mainland Greece, archaeological evidence from the temple of Poseidon at Isthmia and the sanctuary of Kommos in Crete may provide additional insights. Numerous pebbles of approximately the size of hens' eggs lay scattered and mixed with the bones and ashes from sacrifices at the level of the Archaic *temenos* at Isthmia. There can be no doubt that they played a role in religious rituals, as Oscar Broneer argues: "they may have been brought by temple officials and perhaps by the general public to permit them to participate in the ritual slaughter by casting stones at the victims".⁶⁸ This act reminds us of the rite performed on the *tumulus* tomb of *Tereus* in Megara, where the sacrifice consisted of scattering pebbles instead of barley according to Pausanias.⁶⁹ This has been interpreted as a symbolic representation of an actual bloody sacrifice, recalling a time when sacrificial animals were slain with stones rather than with blades. This interesting interpretation might turn out to be useful also for the pebbles found in the sacred areas of Selinunte, due to the well-known habit of the Selinuntines to replicate in their own city cults and rituals of the motherland Megara Nisaea.⁷⁰

The dedication of pebbles in religious contexts also appears to be linked to ancient forms of aniconism,

The dotted pebble is to be published in the forthcoming volume by ALBERTOCCHI, PIZZO, in press.

65 PAPAGGELI (2012), 105–114, with previous bibliography.

66 But five similar clay balls (ø cm 2.5/3) with painted dots are documented in a child grave (tomb 3, end 10th–beginning 9th cent. BCE), from Kerameikos, Athens (KÜBLER (1954), 212–213, pl. 15): game pieces in this case?

67 I warmly thank her for sharing the data and discussion. Her PhD on the ludic culture of central Greece is part of the SNSF project *Greek and Roman Articulated Doll Project* at Fribourg University.

68 BRONEER (1971), 55–56.

69 Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 1.41.8–9; see also *ibid.* 2.32.2.

70 ZOPPI (2015), 36; MARCONI (2018), 187–188.

specifically the cult of stones perceived as inherently related to the divine for their unique location, appearance, or material.⁷¹ This type of cult is believed to have been deeply rooted in Crete, where evidence for baetylic cults can be found extensively in Minoan religion and in later times.⁷² In the Greek sanctuary of Kommos, for instance, pebbles are a proper dedication since the deity, namely an Apollo *Lithesios*, is here openly associated with the cult of stones.⁷³ At Kommos, in the Archaic Period water-worn pebbles were placed next to one another to form a circular bedding, or in scattered groups. But the tradition of dedicating stones to the god of Kommos was still alive in the Hellenistic Period, as demonstrated by the deposition of cups containing cobbles (fig. 10c).⁷⁴ Fabio Caruso has recently pointed out a fascinating connection. The long-term ritual habit of manipulating and dedicating stones to the god of Kommos could be linked to the practice of incubation (*enkoimesis*), possibly attested on the site by the iconography of one of the much-discussed cups with incised decoration from Kommos dating to the end of the 7th century BCE.⁷⁵ Ambiguous links between stones and dreams are also stressed by literary sources. Alkman (7th cent. BCE) claims that dreams are *hypopetridioi*, meaning that dreams live under the stones and are protected by stones (at least

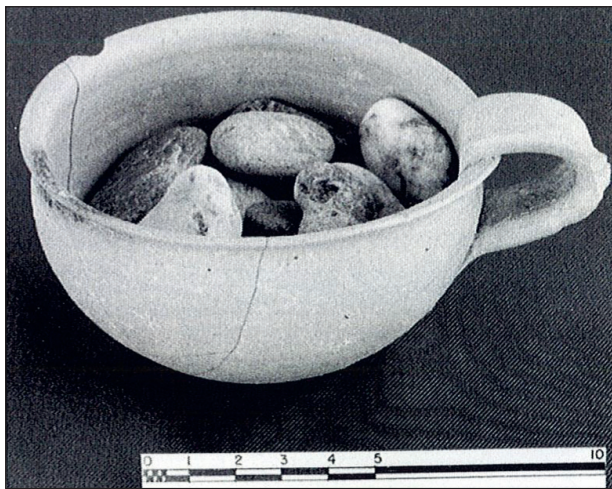


Fig. 10c: Hellenistic cup with pebbles as votive dedication from the sanctuary of Kommos (Crete). Photo after Shaw, Shaw (2000), 266, cat. 560.

71 GAFMAN (2012). An interesting link between an aniconic cult stone and the deposition of pebbles has recently been pointed out by DENTI (2020), 198–200, with previous bibliography for the site of Incoronata di Metaponto, 9th–8th cent. BCE.

72 GALLO (2005); ANZALONE (2015), 112–117. A new trilithic *simulacrum* quite similar to the famous one found in the Temple B at Kommos has recently been unearthed at Priniàs (PALERMO *et al.* (2017), 458–459).

73 MELFI (2013), 359–360.

74 SHAW, SHAW (2000), 28, 266, cat. 560.

75 CARUSO (2011); see also SHAW (1983) for the cups with incised decoration.

according to the scholiast).⁷⁶ Pliny the Elder also states that “*Hammonis cornu* or ‘Horn of Ammon’, which is among the most sacred stones of Ethiopia, has a golden yellow colour and is shaped like a ram’s horn. The stone is guaranteed to ensure without fail dreams that will come true” (*Hammonis cornu [...] promittitur praedivina somnia repraesentare*), alluding to the fact that this specific type of stone had the power to provide prophetic dreams.⁷⁷

CONCLUDING REMARKS

A wide range of personal, recreational, functional, and even ritual interpretations based on archaeological data and literary sources may be proposed for pebbles discovered in funerary and religious contexts alike.

After suffering from a total lack of attention, stone pebbles are now regarded as significant and multifunctional items. The hypothesis of these artefacts being playthings, although very likely when they are found in infant burials – all the more convincing when found together with other game tools, such as shells (Syracuse, Fusco, Tomb 179) and marbles (Mégara Hyblaea, West necropolis, Tomb 768) – does not fully answer the question about their use. Pebbles might be also tools, deposited in tombs to mark the cultural identity and social role of the dead (a potter? a young hunter?). But even if we cannot exclude that stone pebbles had instrumental purposes, they could have still been used as *sortes* in cleromancy, or as proper votive objects related to aniconic cults, or even played a powerful role in helping people to have prophetic dreams.

In this context, it is worth pointing out again the previously mentioned Tomb 29 from Muro Tenente. The deceased, a young woman, was holding five pebbles in her hands. She was also buried with a set of miniature vessels (a trozzella, a krater, and a *phiale*), a black-glaze oil lamp, three knucklebones, and a whetstone. It is then fairly plausible that she may have been a local soothsayer, called *sortiloca* in literary sources.⁷⁸

Additional research in the coming years may shed further light and provide more food for thought on this intriguing issue. With the evidence currently available, it seems safe to assume that the archaeological context frequently has the final say in interpreting the data. The debate remains open, but a lot is on the plate: a stimulating starting point for future inquiries.

76 Alcman, fr. 1 Page, 49, schol. A 9; see CARUSO (2011), 219.

77 Pliny, *Natural History*, 37.167.

78 See MAGGIANI (1994), note 38.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ADAMESTEANU, Dinu, ORLANDINI, Piero, "Gela. Ritrovamenti vari", *Notizie degli scavi di antichità* (1956), 203-401.
- ADORNO, Linda, "Gli strumenti per la produzione ceramica del quartiere artigianale di Selinunte", in Valentina Caminneci, Maria Concetta Parello, Maria Serena Rizzo (eds), *La città che produce. Archeologia della produzione negli spazi urbani. Atti delle Giornate Gregoriane, X, 10-11 Dicembre 2016*, Bari (2018), 223-226.
- ALBERTOCCHI, Marina, PIZZO, Maddalena (eds), *Gela. Il Thesmophorion di Bitalemi. La fase arcaica. Scavi Orlandini 1963-1967, Monumenti Antichi 81*, in press.
- ANZALONE, Rosario Maria, *Gortina VII. Città e territorio dal protogeometrico all'età classica*, Athene (2015).
- BÉRARD, Reine-Marie, *Mégara Hyblaea 6. La nécropole méridionale de la cité archaïque. 2. Archéologie et histoire sociale des rituels funéraires*, Rome (2017).
- BRONEER, Oscar, *Temple of Poseidon, Isthmia. Excavations by the University of Chicago*, Princeton/ New Jersey (1971).
- BRUGNONE, Antonietta, "Le sferette bronzee iscritte da Himera", *Kernos* 24 (2011), 77-94.
- CARUSO, Eduardo, "Megara Hyblaea. Scavi nell'antica necropoli", *Notizie degli scavi di antichità* (1892), 278-288.
- CARUSO, Fabio, "Perchance to dream. Una lettura della coppa a figure incise C 2396 da Kommòs", in Giovanni Rizza (ed.), *Identità culturale, etnicità processi di trasformazione a Creta fra Dark Age e Arcaismo*, Studi e materiali di archeologia greca 10, Palermo (2011), 209-221.
- CAVALLARI, Francesco Saverio, ORSI, Paolo, "Megara Hyblaea. Storia, topografia, necropoli e anathemata", *Monumenti antichi* 1/Parte I (1890), 689-950.
- COLELLI, Carmelo, "Piccoli dischi in ceramica o in pietra da Kyme eolica. Sprazzi di vita quotidiana nel mondo greco in età geometrica e arcaica", *Thiasos. Rivista di archeologia e architettura antica*, 10, 1 (2021), 1-25.
- CORDANO, Federica, "Strumenti di sorteggio e schedatura dei cittadini nella Sicilia greca", in CORDANO, GROTTANELLI (2001), 83-93.
- CORDANO, Federica, "Note sui gruppi civici sicelioti", in Federica Cordano, *Camarina. Politica e istituzioni di una città greca*, Themata 8, Tivoli/Roma (2011), 99-108.
- CORDANO, Federica, GROTTANELLI, Cristiano (eds), *Sorteggio pubblico e cleromanzia dall'antichità all'età moderna. Atti della Tavola Rotonda, Università degli Studi di Milano, 26-27 gennaio 2000*, Milano (2001).
- COSTANZA, Salvatore, *Giulio Polluce, Onomasticon: excerpta de ludis. Materiali per la storia del gioco nel mondo greco-romano*, Alessandria (2019).
- D'ACUNTO, Matteo, *Il mondo del vaso Chigi. Pittura, guerra e società a Corinto alla metà del VII secolo a.C.*, Berlin/Boston (2013).
- DASEN, Véronique, "Saltimbanques et circulation de jeux", in Véronique Dasen, Ulrich Schädler (eds), *Jouer dans l'Antiquité. Identité et multiculturalité*, Archimède, 6 (2019), 127-143.
- DASEN, Véronique, GAVIN Jérôme, "Game Board or Abacus? Greek Counter Culture Revisited", in Barbara Caré, Véronique Dasen, Ulrich Schädler (eds), *Back to the Game: Reframing Play and Games in Context. XXI Board Game Studies Annual Colloquium, International Society for Board Game Studies, April, 24-26, 2018, Benaki Museum – Italian School of Archaeology at Athens*, Lisbon (2021), 227-271 (= *Board Games Studies Journal*, 16, 1 (2022), 251-307).
- DE MIRO, Ernesto, *Agrigento. La necropoli greca di Pezzino*, Messina (1989).
- DE MIRO, Ernesto, *Agrigento. I. I santuari urbani. L'area sacra tra il tempio di Zeus e Porta V*, Roma (2000).
- DENTI, Mario, "Di terra e di pietre, di legno e di ciottoli. Tecniche edilizie e funzioni architettoniche sulla costa ionica dell'Italia meridionale nell'Età del Ferro", in Fabrizio Pesando, Gabriel Zuchtriegel (eds), *Abitare in Magna Grecia: l'età arcaica. Atti del Convegno Napoli-Paestum, 15-16 Marzo 2018*, Pisa (2020), 193-214.
- DESBOROUGH, Vincent Robin d'Arba, "Mycenae 1939-1955. Part III. Two Tombs", *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, 51 (1956), 128-130.
- D'ONOFRIO, Anna Maria, "A Preliminary Survey of Evidence for Counters and Tokens in the Aegean and Hellenic World", in Anna Maria D'Onofrio (ed.), *Tallies, Tokens & Counters from the Mediterranean to India*, Proceedings of the Meeting (Naples 2004), Napoli (2007), 85-103.
- D'ONOFRIO, Anna Maria, "Athenian Burial Practices and Cultural Change: the Rundbau Early Plot in the Kerameikos Revisited", in Xenia Charalambidou, Catherine Morgan (eds), *Interpreting the Seventh Century BC. Tradition and Innovation*, Oxford (2017), 260-280.
- DUDAY, Henri, GRAS, Michel (eds), *Mégara Hyblaea 6. La nécropole méridionale de la cité archaïque, 1. Les données funéraires*, Rome (2018).
- FARAONE, Christopher A., *The Transformation of Greek Amulets in Roman Imperial Times*, Philadelphia (2018).
- FIORENTINI, Graziella, *Gela. La città antica e il suo territorio*, Palermo (1985).
- GABRICI, Ettore, *Il santuario della Malophoros a Selinunte (Monumenti Antichi 32)*, Milano (1927).
- GAIFMAN, Milette, *Aniconism in Greek Antiquity*, Oxford (2012).
- GALLO, Miriam, "Per una riconsiderazione del betilo in ambito minoico", *Creta Antica*, 6 (2005), 47-57.

- GENTILI, Gino Vinicio, “Megara Hyblaea (Siracusa) – Tombe arcaiche e reperti sporadici nella proprietà della «Rasiom», e tomba arcaica in Predio Vinci”, *Notizie degli scavi di antichità* (1954), 80-113.
- GIUMAN, Marco, *La trottola nel mondo classico. Archeologia, fonti letterarie e iconografiche*, Roma (2020).
- GRAELLS I FABREGAT, Raimon, “Guerreros que aprendieron a jugar lejos de su casa: el caso de los mercenarios hispanos des s. IV a.C.”, in Raimon Graells i Fabregat, Alessandro Pace, Miguel F. Pérez Blasco (eds), *Warriors @ play, Proceedings of the International Congress held at the Museum of History and Archaeology of Elche (28th May 2021)*, Alacant (2022), 59-89.
- GRAF, Fritz, “Rolling the Dice for an Answer”, in Sarah Iles Johnston, Peter T. Struck (eds), *Mantikê. Studies in Ancient Divination*, Leiden/London (2005).
- GROTTANELLI, Cristiano, “La cléromancie ancienne et le dieu Hermès”, in CORDANO, GROTTANELLI (2001), 155-196.
- IGNATIADOU, Despina, “Luxury Board Games for the Northern Greek Elite”, in Véronique Dasen, Ulrich Schädler (eds), *Jouer dans l'Antiquité. Identité et multiculturalité, Archimède*, 6 (2019), 144-159.
- ISMAELLI, Tommaso, *Archeologia del culto a Gela. Il santuario di Predio Sola*, Bari (2011).
- KNIGGE, Ursula, “Der Rundbau am Eridanos”, in Wolf Königs, Ursula Knigge, Alfred Mallwitz (eds), *Rundbauten im Kerameikos*, Kerameikos, Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen XII, Berlin (1980), 57-98.
- KRON, Uta, “Frauenfeste in Demeterheiligtümern: das Thesmophorion von Bitalemi”, *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1992a), 611-650.
- KRON, Uta, “Heilige Steine”, in Heide Froning, Tonio Hölscher, Harald Mielsch (eds), *Kotinos. Festschrift für Erika Simon*, Mainz/Rhein (1992b), 56-69.
- KÜBLER, Karl, *Die Nekropole des 10. bis 8. Jahrhunderts, Kerameikos, Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen V*, Berlin (1954).
- LAMBRUGO, Claudia, “Gela: la necropoli arcaica. Paesaggio funerario, rituali, società e ‘piccoli principi’”, *Annali di archeologia e storia antica*, 26 (2019), 141-172.
- LAMBRUGO, Claudia, “The Power of Ancient Stones: Protecting Children in Greek Sicily”, *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 60 (2020), 3-4, 429-443.
- LAMBRUGO, Claudia, “The Materiality of Toys and Children’s Spontaneous Play: Towards a Biography of Ludic Objects”, in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (eds), *A Handbook to Ancient Play and Games in Classical Antiquity*, in preparation.
- LAZZARINI, Maria Letizia, “Paolo Orsi e l’epigrafia della Calabria e della Sicilia”, in Carmelo Malacrino, Maria Musumeci (eds), *Paolo Orsi alle origini dell’archeologia tra Calabria e Sicilia. Catalogo della mostra*, Reggio Calabria (2019), 95-104.
- MACNAMARA, Ellen, “Site A (and Site C) Native Settlement. Archaic Greek Occupation and Early Hellenistic Circuit Wall”, in Ellen MacNamara et al., *The Excavations at Cozzo Presepe (1969-1972)*, Roma (1983), 207-243.
- MACRÌ, Sonia, *Le pietre dei Greci. Letteratura, mito, saperi naturali*, Milano (2018).
- MAGGIANI, Adriano, “Mantica oracolare in Etruria: litobolia e sortilegio”, *Rivista di Archeologia*, 18 (1994), 68-78.
- MANNIEZ, Yves, “Jouer dans l’au-delà? Le mobilier ludique des sépultures de Gaule méridionale et de Corse (Ve s. av. J.-C. - Ve s. apr. J.-C.)”, in Véronique Dasen, Ulrich Schädler (eds), *Jouer dans l'Antiquité. Identité et multiculturalité, Archimède*, 6 (2019), 186-198.
- MARCONI, Clemente, “La dea del tempio R”, in Claudia Antonetti (ed.), *Gli esametri Getty e Selinunte. Testo e contesto*, Alessandria (2018), 179-200.
- MARCONI, Clemente, “New Evidence for Early Greek Settlement on the Acropolis of Selinunte”, in Elena C. Partida, Barbara Schmidt-Dounas (eds), *Listening to the Stones. Essays on Architecture and Function in Ancient Greek Sanctuaries in Honour of Richard Alan Thomlinson*, Oxford (2019), 252-261.
- MELFI, Milena, “The lithos and the Sea. Some Considerations on the Cult of the Greek Sanctuary at Kommos”, in Wolf-Dieter Niemeier, Oliver Pilz, Ivonne Kaiser (eds), *Kreta in der geometrischen und archaischen Zeit. Aktes des Internationalen Kolloquiums am Deutschen Archäologischen Institut, Athen 2006*, Athenaia Band 2, München (2013), 355-363.
- ORLANDINI, Piero, “Lo scavo del thesmophorion di Bitalemi e il culto delle divinità ctonie a Gela”, *Kokalos*, 12 (1966), 8-35.
- ORSI, Paolo, “Siracusa – Gli scavi nella necropoli del Fusco a Siracusa nel giugno, novembre e dicembre del 1893”, *Notizie degli scavi di antichità* (1895), 109-192.
- PACE, Alessandro, “Pratiche cleromantiche a Pompei? A proposito di un set di dadi dal santuario di Esculapio (VIII 7, 25)”.
- PALERMO, Dario, PAUTASSO, Antonella, RIZZA, Salvatore, BIONDI, Giacomo, PAPPALARDO, Eleonora, PERNA, Katia, GIGLI PATANÈ, Rossella, “Priniàs. Scavi e ricerche degli anni 2006-2010”, *Annuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni italiane in Oriente*, 95 (2017), 427-496.
- PAPAGGELI, Kalliopi, “La Sacerdotessa (?) della Tomba di Iside”, in Nikolaos Christos Stampolidis, Mimika Yannopoulou (eds), *‘Princesse’ del Mediterraneo all’alba della Storia. Catalogo della mostra*, Atene (2012), 105-115.

- PAPAIKONOMOU, Irini-Despina, “La jeune fille et la morte en couches. Un cas de maternité précoce, souhaitée ou avortée, d’après les témoignages des sépultures”, in Florence Gherchanoc, Jean-Baptiste Bonnard (eds), *Dossier mères et maternités en Grèce ancienne*, Métis, 11 (2013), 109-144.
- PARISI PRESICCE, Claudio, “Selinunte dalla scelta del sito alle prime fasi di vita”, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung*, 110 (2003), 263-284.
- ROCCA, Giovanna, “Due inediti da Selinunte”, in Claudia Antonetti, Stefania De Vido (eds), *Temì selinuntini*, Pisa (2009), 267-273.
- ROSSIE, Jean-Pierre, “Les jeux des enfants de l’Afrique du Nord et du Sahara”, in Véronique Dasen (ed.), *Ludique! Jouer dans l’Antiquité. Catalogue de l’exposition, Lugdunum, musée et théâtres romains, 20 juin - 1^{er} décembre 2019*, Gent/Lyon (2019), 115-117.
- SCHÄDLER, Ulrich, “Les pistes de billes”, in Véronique Dasen (ed.), *Ludique! Jouer dans l’Antiquité. Catalogue de l’exposition, Lugdunum, musée et théâtres romains, 20 juin - 1^{er} décembre 2019*, Gent/Lyon (2019a), 66-67.
- SCHÄDLER, Ulrich, “Greeks, Etruscans, and Celts at Play”, in Véronique Dasen, Ulrich Schädler (eds), *Jouer dans l’Antiquité. Identité et multiculturalité*, Archimède, 6 (2019b), 160-174.
- SCHNAPP, Alain, *Le chasseur et la cité. Chasse et érotisme en Grèce ancienne*, Paris (1997).
- SCLAFANI, Marina, “Zeus Soter, Eracle, Leukatheia e tre «sortes» dall’antica Himera”, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung*, 113 (2007), 247-265.
- SHAW, Maria C., “Two Cups with Incised Decoration from Kommos, Crete”, *American Journal of Archaeology*, 87, 4 (1983), 443-452.
- SHAW, Joseph W., SHAW, Maria C. (eds), *Kommos IV. The Greek Sanctuary*, Princeton/Oxford (2000).
- SILVESTRELLI, Francesca, EDLUND-BERRY, Ingrid E.M. (eds), *The Chora of Metaponto 6. A Greek Settlement at Sant’Angelo Vecchio*, Austin (2016).
- TEDESCHI, Gennaro, *Spettacoli e trattenimenti dal IV secolo a.C. all’età tardoantica secondo i documenti epigrafici e papiracei*, Trieste (2017).
- TETTEROO, Corine, WAAGEN, Jitte, “Le sepolture di Muro Tenente 1993-2002”, in Gert-Jan Burgers, Christian Napolitano (eds), *L’insediamento messapico di Muro Tenente. Scavi e ricerche 1998-2009*, Mesagne (2010), 85-140.
- TODISCO, Luigi, *Prodezze e prodigi nel mondo antico*, Roma (2013).
- VASSALLO, Stefano, “Le sepolture di bambini nelle necropoli di Himera”, in Chiara Terranova (ed.), *La presenza dei bambini nelle religioni del Mediterraneo antico. La vita e la morte, i rituali e i culti, tra archeologia, antropologia e storia delle religioni*, Roma (2014), 257-290.
- Veder greco ad Agrigento. *Veder greco. Le necropoli di Agrigento. Catalogo della mostra, Agrigento 1988*, Roma (1988).
- VERGER, Stéphane, “Aspects des activités des femmes dans le thesmophorion de Bitalemi”, in Stéphane Verger, Lionel Pernet (eds), *Une Odyssée gauloise. Parures de femmes à l’origine des premiers échanges entre la Grèce et la Gaule*, Arles (2013), 251-255.
- VIDAL-NAQUET, Pierre, *Il cacciatore nero. Forme di pensiero e forme di articolazione sociale nel mondo greco antico*, Roma (1988).
- VOLPES, Maria Elena (ed.), *Per gioco. Collezioni dell’Associazione Museo del Giocattolo Pietro Piraino. Catalogo della mostra, Palermo 2002-2003*, Palermo (2002).
- WARD, Andrew, MARCONI, Clemente, “War and the Life of a Sacred Structure. Weapons from the NYU-UniMI Excavations in the Main Urban Sanctuary of Selinunte”, in Melanie Jonasch (ed.), *The Fight for Greek Sicily. Society, Politics, and Landscape*, Oxford/Philadelphia (2020), 18-46.
- WOODFORD, Susan, s.v. “Herakles and the Stymphalian Birds”, in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (LIMC)*, V. Zürich / München (1990), 54-57.
- ZOPPI, Carlo, “Il culto di Demetra a Selinunte”, *Sicilia Antiqua*, 12 (2015), 25-43.

■
Daniela Costanzo

Ministero della Cultura - Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria.
daniela.costanzo@cultura.gov.it

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

INTRODUCTION

The objects of the ancient ludic sphere have long been considered a kind of *curiositas*, an entertainment for bored scholars in search of anecdotes on the daily life of ancient populations.¹ From an archaeological point of view, many studies have focused on a purely typological perspective, with the main aim of tracing in the archaeological documentation the cross-references to literary and iconographic sources. Among them we have to notice at least the pioneering volume by Ignazio Paternò Castello, Prince of Biscari, *Il ragionamento a Madama N.N. Sopra gli antichi ornamenti e trastulli de' bambini* published in Florence in 1781.² The same perspective was adopted by Louis Becq de Fouquières in his monumental work *Les jeux des Anciens* published in 1869 (fig. 1).³

The interest in the contextual analysis of these artifacts is more recent and aims to place them in a more complex interpretative framework. This need arises not only from the evolution of the archaeological discipline itself, but also from the awareness of the

1 See SCILABRA (2004), ELIA (2013), DASEN (2018).

2 CASTELLO, Ignazio Paternò, *Il ragionamento a Madama N.N. Sopra gli antichi ornamenti e trastulli de' bambini*, Florence (1781).

3 BECQ DE FOUQUIERES, Louis, *Les jeux des Anciens, leur origine, leur description, leurs rapports avec la religion, l'histoire, les arts et les mœurs*, Paris (1869). A commented reedition is in preparation by V. Dasen.

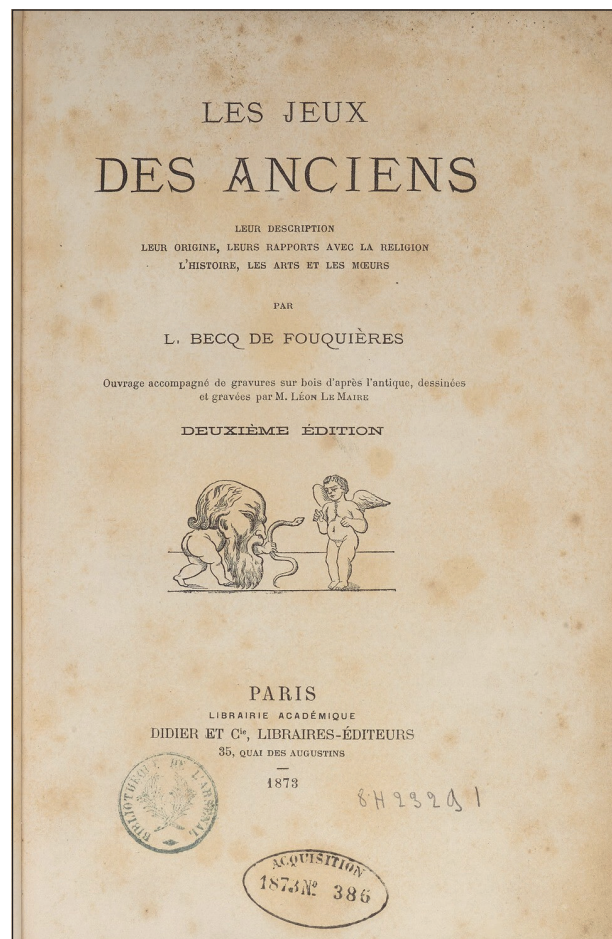


Fig. 1: Louis Becq de Fouquières, *Les Jeux des Anciens*, 2nd edition, 1873.
Source gallica.bnf.fr/BnF, public domain.

cultural, socio-pedagogical and symbolic value of toys in human life.⁴

If the testimonies of the games and toys of ancient Greek world are abundant in the literary texts, less data availability concerns the iconographic supports and the material remains, posing different problems of interpretation. Any approach to the interpretation of toys and games in iconography must take into account the filter of artistic conventions, the context of production, fruition, use and reuse of the images and their symbolical significance: these variables determine significant implications for the interpretation and often suggest numerous possibilities among which it is hard to identify the most probable one. Considering the contexts of discovery, these objects have been found mainly in sanctuaries and necropolises rather than in habitats. The differential survival of materials mostly derives from a wider use of metal and terracotta in votive and funerary contexts, a choice precisely made to render “imperishable” the offering to the deity or the dedication to the deceased. This negatively affects our knowledge of the real distribution of such kind of artifacts in ancient times, painting a most incomplete picture. Many other uncertainties remain: the size and shape do not sufficiently define the function of some objects as toys, especially when the place of the discovery is unknown.⁵

Even if in the last decades several references have already been made to toys in Western Greek colonies,⁶ a discussion on their meaning in context will not be out of place here. This paper will focus on three categories of playthings well represented in the collections of the National Archaeological Museum of Reggio Calabria with insights into other contexts of Magna Graecia and Sicily. As part of this dissertation, we will also mention objects whose function cannot be defined unequivocally as playthings in the absence of context: as we have already anticipated, this is a considerable aspect of the discipline and passing it in silence would be inappropriate from a methodological point of view.

1. BALL GAMES. FROM LITERARY SOURCES TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS: THE CASE OF LOKRI

Ball games seem to be very popular in ancient Greek world among children, young girls and boys as well as adults: they were played individually or in groups. Different games are known thanks to literary and iconographic sources, such as *apòrrhaxis* or *ourania*. The first one consisted of throwing the ball on the ground to make it bounce, then catching it

and throwing it again and counting the number of bounces.⁷ The second game, called *ourania* by the ancient authors, was particularly appreciated by young girls and consisted in harmonious movements made with a ball thrown upwards, very close to a kind of dance.⁸

The point to focus on is the symbology of the ball game that is often used to represent seduction and romantic relationships. As ball games are very popular among young people, Eros often uses them to strike his victims: it is the case of fr. 358 by Anacreon, where the poet is literally hit by a purple ball thrown (maybe inadvertently) by a girl he falls in love with: “Once again golden-haired Eros hits me with a purple ball and challenges me to play with the girl with fancy shoes”.⁹

Still in the Hellenistic times the link between the ball game and Eros is evoked by poets:

This Love that dwells with me is fond of playing at ball, and to thee, Heliodora, he throws the heart that quivers in me. But come, consent to play with him, for if thou throwest me away from thee he will not brook this wanton transgression of the courtesies of sport.¹⁰

This contiguity of meaning between play, love and youth is the reason why girls are often represented playing with a ball together with other maids or with Eros himself; in a solid group of Attic and Italiote vases Aphrodite and/or Eros are represented together with girls or young couples with a ball symbolizing youth, the age of love (fig. 2).¹¹



Fig. 2: Red-figured pelike (H. 37.4 cm), Karlsruhe B9 Painter, 380-360 BCE. Matera, Museo Nazionale “D. Ridola”, Collezione Rizzon, inv. no. 164517. <https://magnagrecia.huma-num.fr/s/matera-rizzon/page/benvenuto>, public domain.

4 BEAUMONT (1994), BAXTER (2005), SOMMER, SOMMER (2017), DASEN (2019), DASEN, VESPA (2021).

5 DASEN (2012), esp. 11-12.

6 SCILABRA (2004), SCILABRA (2012), ELIA (2013).

7 COSTANZA (2019), 127-131.

8 COSTANZA (2019), 125-126.

9 Anacreon, fr. 358 (transl. D.A. Campbell, Loeb); see PFEIJFFER (2000). In fr. 298 Anacreon compares follies of love to Eros’ knucklebones. For Eros as “playful child, careless and carefree, with attendant notions of wanton destruction and whimsicality” see also PRATT (2017), 229-230.

10 *Palatine Anthology*, 5.214 (transl. W.R. Paton, Loeb).

11 DASEN (2016).



Fig. 3: Red-figured barrel (H. 12 cm, L. 16 cm) from Lokri, tomb 884, necropolis of contrada Lucifero, Lokri Group, 380-360 BCE. Reggio Calabria, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 4794. Su concessione del Ministero della Cultura n. 16 del 02 maggio 2022 – Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria.

In the child tomb 884 excavated in the Lokri necropolis a red-figured barrel of the funerary set (fig. 3)¹² clarifies in an exemplary way this concept, associating two extremely significant images: it shows on one side a young girl and a young man playing with a ball, in a game in which they have to put it in a sort of decorated *cista*, and on the other side Eros embracing a seated woman adorned with jewelry which could represent either Aphrodite or the human bride.¹³ Given the young age of the girl child buried here, the compensatory purpose of these images seems quite evident and the iconography could represent the two stages of feminine life, never reached because of her premature death: adolescence, represented by the girl intent on playing a seduction game with a boy, and adulthood, embodied by the woman, ready to receive the favours of Eros.

The importance of this collective imagination is confirmed by other iconographic sources known from the same site. The *lekane* lid found in tomb 1491 shows a kneeling Eros in front of a seated girl which turns back the head towards another figure, who reaches out his right hand to caress her face. The two figures are very close, giving the impression of being ready to kiss, the god throws a ball to the *retrospective* girl in front of him (fig. 4).¹⁴

The interpretation of this scene probably embarrassed Paolo Orsi both for cultural and archaeological reasons: he admitted that both figures wore female clothes but attributed a male face to one of them thinking to an androgynous being. From our point of view, whether it is a representation of Sapphic love

or a simple scene of friendship and affection between two girls, the most interesting detail is the presence of Eros who invites, through the ball game, to the pleasures of youth. Moreover, the iconographic setting is completed by a seated woman offering some fruits or eggs in a *phiale* to a young man standing before her with a foot raised. We would therefore be faced with an association of ball games and love scenes already evoked by Véronique Dasen for more ancient iconographic sources.¹⁵

Eros is depicted in a similar scene, throwing a ball towards a lying woman in another incomplete *lekane* lid found in the residential area of Lokri.¹⁶ Even if it is a standardized production of a local workshop, one can reasonably assume that such kind of scenes were particularly appreciated in the *polis*, revealing a complete identification between ball games, youth and erotic representations in a constant connection with the infantile and feminine elements of the society.

Other archaeological items conserved at the Archaeological National Museum of Reggio Calabria explain almost well this privileged link between ball games, childhood and adolescence. In the shrine of Mannella in Lokri, Persephone patronized the rites of passage into adulthood, especially for young girls at the moment of their marriage. The offering of the ball is one of the scenes represented on the *pinakes*,



Fig. 4: Red-figured lekane (H. 12.8 cm, Diam. 20.5 cm) from Lokri, tomb 1491, necropolis of contrada Lucifero, Kneeling Eros Group, 375-350 BCE. Reggio Calabria, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 5250. Su concessione del Ministero della Cultura n. 16 del 02 maggio 2022 – Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria.

12 H. 12 cm; L. 16 cm.

13 ORSI (1913), 41-42, fig. 53; TRENDALL (1967), 75. Two other fragments can be attributed to objects identical in shape and decoration: one also found in the necropolis, inv. no. MAC466, and another one from the residential area of contrada Centocamere, inv. no. C98/VN2010; see ELIA (2018a), fig. 13.

14 ORSI (1917), 130-132, figs. 36-38; TRENDALL (1967), 219-220, pl. 87; on the interior of the lid: Papposilen. For an overview on interpretation of iconographic treatment of female homosexuality in Greek art see BOEHRINGER (2021), 126-139. Another *lekane* (inv. no. 5251), representing two female figures and a kneeling Eros, was near the left foot of the dead. The size of the tomb and the human remains indicated that the deceased was an adult, a woman as suggested by the composition of the funerary set.

15 See DASEN (2016).

16 Inv. no. 1972/95, 1973/120; see ELIA (2018a), fig. 11.

polychrome votive tablets locally produced during the first half of the 5th century BCE and offered in the Mannella sanctuary. The *pinakes* provide a large series of images related to the myth of the abduction of Kore and her enthronement in the Underworld as Persephone, wife of Hades and queen of the afterlife; they also represent the cult practiced in Lokri and an assimilation between the goddess and the individual experience of her worshippers can reasonably be argued. Young girls and sometimes boys are represented while offering their *sphairē* to a priestess (Z. 5/19-21) or to the divinity represented alone or beside Hades (Z. 8/29); the young dedicants are sometimes accompanied by Hermes (Z. 8/8-9, Z. 8/14), Dionysus (Z. 8/34-37) or Ares (Z. 8/29) (fig. 5);¹⁷ sometimes the divine couple Hades-Persephone itself is represented holding a ball in the hands, as symbol of the offerings received by the worshippers.

17 MARRONI, TORELLI (2016), 46: "L'esclusività delle divinità maschili tra quelle presenti sulle raffigurazioni [...] allude in maniera simbolica all'elemento maschile partecipante del rito matrimoniale"; see also TORELLI (1977), 171.



Fig. 5: Votive pinakes with a girl offering her *sphairē* to a priestess (H. 27.5 cm, L. 28 cm) and to Persephone (H. 18 cm, L. 17.4 cm) from Lokri, sanctuary of Mannella, 470-460 BCE. Reggio Calabria, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 28272; 58934. Su concessione del Ministero della Cultura n. 16 del 02 maggio 2022 – Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria.

The offering of the ball represented on the Lokrian *pinakes* is a clear reference to ritualized renunciation of childhood locally performed and, together with scenes of sacrifices in preparation for marriage offered in the sanctuary (*proteleia*), testify specific local rituals involving preferentially the youngest members of the population.¹⁸

If in ancient times the major part of the offerings actually consecrated to the gods were of perishable materials such as wool, leather, vegetable fibers, some material evidences of the offerings made to Persephone are preserved, such as clay reproductions of balls: one of them imitates through incisions leather strips around it,¹⁹ while another spherical object interpreted as a ball preserved at the moment of the discovery some traces of depicted flowers (fig. 6).²⁰



Fig. 6: Clay sphere (D. 15 cm) from Lokri, sanctuary of Mannella, 5th century BCE. Reggio Calabria, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 6288. Su concessione del Ministero della Cultura n. 16 del 02 maggio 2022 – Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria.

Among the votive offerings found in thousands in the sanctuary of Mannella in Lokri, a bronze figurine, the figured base of a mirror locally produced, represents a girl who holds a ball in the left hand lifting a lock of hair with the other hand (fig. 7).²¹

Several literary sources inform us that locks of hair, curls and braids were often offered by young men and young girls to the gods during the rites preceding the marriage and this practice seems attested in the Lokrian context by a series of *pinakes* representing the cutting of the hair by a girl (fig. 8).²²

On the Lokrian bronze handle the abandonment of childhood is doubly represented through the offering of a toy and the dedication of a lock of hair recalling

18 On dance with a ball and ball offering, see also A. BELLIA in this volume.

19 SCILABRA (2012), 396, fig. 7.

20 Inv. no. 6288.

21 Inv. no. 6736.

22 Type Z6/9.

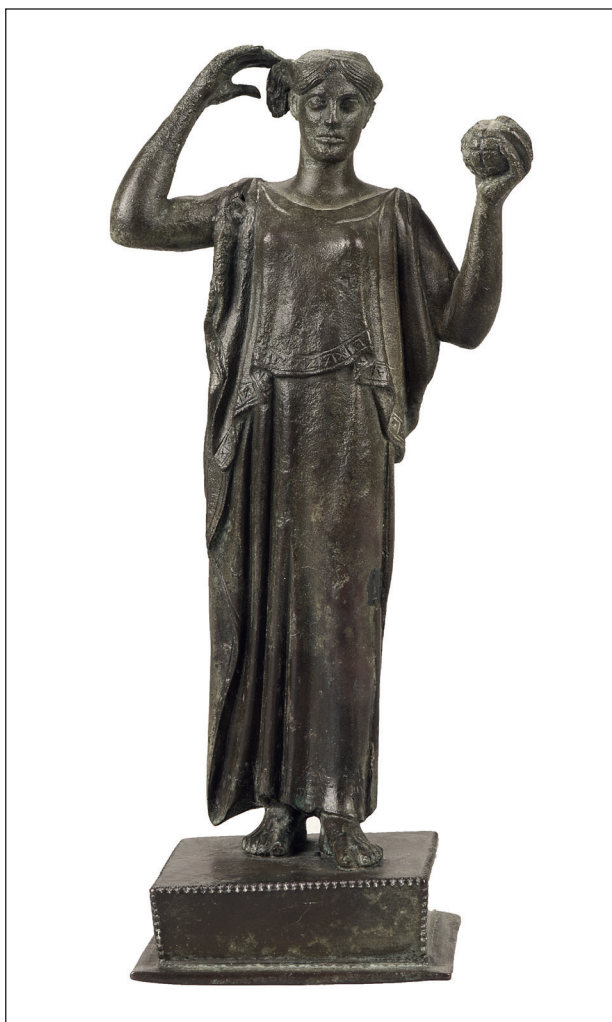


Fig. 7: Bronze figured base handle of a mirror (H. 17.1 cm) from Lokri, sanctuary of Mannella, 470-460 BCE. Reggio Calabria, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 6736. Su concessione del Ministero della Cultura n. 16 del 02 maggio 2022 – Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria.



Fig. 8: Votive pinax with a girl cutting her hair from Lokri, sanctuary of Mannella, 470-460 BCE. Drawing by Rosario Carta, Orsi (1909).

the status of the worshipper as *nymphē*.²³ All these archaeological data, dated between the 5th and 4th centuries BCE and locally produced to meet local demand, establish a coherent cultural framework, in which the importance given to the ball games as symbol of youth is evident both in funerary practices and in religious rituals.²⁴

2. PEBBLES, SPHERES AND MARBLES: SOME CASE STUDIES FROM TOMBS AND INTERPRETATION CHALLENGES

In the Greek world pebbles (likewise nuts and marbles) were used for many games played both by children and adult people. Ancient authors refer to their use in *artiasmos* (par/impar), consisting in guessing how many of them were hidden in the opponent's hand, and in the *psephopaignion*, a conjuring trick literally called "the game with pebbles".²⁵ Different ancient sources seem to suggest that pebbles were also used in a similar way as dices, knucklebones and pawns both in the Greek and Roman world.²⁶

Turning to the archaeological evidence, in the Fusco necropolis of Syracuse some pebbles are attested.²⁷ In tomb CDL-CDLII, a sarcophagus containing two *enchytrismoι* of infants and the inhumation of a third child buried near an adult, P. Orsi discovered a group of nine limestone and quartz pebbles in correspondence of the right hand of the adult. As the archaeologist noted, it was "*un mucchietto di ciottoletti di calcare ed in quarzo [...] servito per un gioco*".²⁸ In the same area of the Fusco necropolis, the child buried in the *enchytrismos* CLXXIX was accompanied by seven marine shells, two double-axe amulets and five pebbles: P. Orsi connected them to the game of the *pentalitha* cited by Pollux²⁹ still played by children at Orsi's times³⁰ and almost all around Southern Italy until the Sixties. In modern Sicily, in fact, the game was known as "*cinque petri*", in Salento as "*thuddri*", in Calabria as "*cuti*" and in Sardinia as "*biccus*": all these names recall the object used to play and sometimes the number required.

23 See DILLON (2002), 215: "Toys would be dedicated to Artemis by adolescent girls prior to marriage, as a prelude to finding a husband and having children. More significant as a rite of passage before marriage was the ritual of the cutting and dedication of a lock of hair". For this Lokrian bronze figurine the chthonian value of offering a lock of hair is also recalled by ARIAS (1977), 548-549.

24 In passing, it should be noted that as a symbol of childhood the ball also appears on the *pinakes* of Hipponion, a colony founded by Lokri on the Thyrrenian Sea, which produces its own *pinakes* and shares with its motherland an amount of cult practices and a common religious framework. For an exemple see SCHENAL PILEGGI (2014), 112-113, fig. 6.

25 Pollux IX, 200; commented in COSTANZA (2019), 61-63.

26 COSTANZA (2019), 76-103; see also KLEIN (1932), 18, pl. 19.

27 On the interpretation of pebbles, see also C. LAMBRUGO in this volume.

28 ORSI (1895), 70-71.

29 Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 9.126.

30 ORSI (1895), 21.

Twelve limestone spheres were discovered in the “point funéraire” Z124 in Megara Hyblaea, Cementeria sector, a multiple cremation of five subadults individuals (two perinatals, one 1,5-3 years old individual, one 9-12 years old individual, one 12-15 years old individual).³¹ The spheres were put inside an Etruscan bucchero *kantharos*. In the Western necropolis of the city the sarcophagus T768, containing the bodies of an adult, of two children and the remains of third cremated, also contained five pebbles of Parian marble and fifteen flat pebbles (“*pedine da gioco*”).³² Five stone spheres were among the grave goods of T660³³, in which an adult woman was buried.

Small bronze spheres which can be interpreted as marbles are known from several contexts in Magna Graecia and Sicily. Coming back to Lokri, in tomb 677

dating from 530 to 500 BCE (fig. 9) five small spheres of bronze were put on the right hand of the dead, a woman as suggested by the grave goods, including ornaments (glass beads and a bronze fibula – almost rare in this necropolis) and objects of the *kosmēsis* (*lekythoi*, a mirror). In tomb 1614 dating from 500 BCE (fig. 10), containing the remains of an adult person, the objects placed in the grave consisted of a white-ground alabaster representing an Amazon, a small bronze bell (maybe an apotropaic object) put on the chest and seven bronze spheres: because some of them are perforated, the designation of them as playthings may not be as secure. In tomb 334, the cremation of a young girl, two clay spheres can be maybe interpreted as marbles.

The Western necropolis of Megara Hyblaea provide significant evidence of bronze marbles in tombs, with a recurring number of three and five items. The sarcophagus T021 discovered in the Podere Vinci contained the remains of an adult and a child girl with five bronze marbles.³⁴ Five bronze marbles were

31 BÉRARD (2018), 123-130; see especially 125-126 for the geological analysis of the composition and the interpretation of these objects as playthings; see also 126-127 for the archaeological evidence in the Western necropolis discussed below.

32 Under the skull of a child placed in the center of the sarcophagus the excavators found “*Quattro palline di marmo pario, per gioco*”; CARUSO (1892), 278.

33 CARUSO (1892), 173: “*Cinque palline di pietra*”.

34 ORSI (1890), 809: “*alquanto irregolari con un diametro di cm 1/5, ed un peso medio di grammi 24 ½ - 25*”.



Fig. 9: Bronze spheres (D. 1.5 cm) from Lokri, tomb 677, necropolis of contrada Lucifero, 530-500 BCE. Reggio Calabria, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 4525. Su concessione del Ministero della Cultura n. 16 del 02 maggio 2022 – Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria.

among the funerary goods of child tomb T831³⁵ and T 940.

In the same sector of the necropolis, tomb T123, in which two children were buried together with some cremated bones, contained three spheres of solid bronze.³⁶ Three bronze marbles were also in the inhumation of a child T153 (two of which perforated);³⁷ in T645 the bronze spheres were put inside a black glazed cup.³⁸

The number of five spheres recurs also in some graves excavated in Akrai by Gabriele Judica: data about these excavations, carried out in 1820, are not accurate, as usual for those times, but we are acknowledged by the author he had found five limestone spheres in a tomb, five lead spheres in another one and other bronze spheres in different tombs of the necropolis.³⁹

35 CARUSO (1892), 288.

36 ORSI (1890), 853: “Tre palline irregolarmente sferiche (diam. cm 18-20) piene”.

37 ORSI (1890), 859: “Tre palline piene, irregolarmente sferiche, due delle quali (diam. mm. 10) traforate, la terza (diam. mm. 20) no, destinate senza dubbio a qualche gioco”.

38 CARUSO (1892), 131.

39 JUDICA (1821), 33-34, recalled by ORSI (1890), 859, n. 1.

All these examples seem to suggest that the game of marbles, likewise elsewhere in the Greek world, was diffused among people of different ages, not only children, and that providing the dead with marbles was perhaps a way of making the afterlife more enjoyable. Other functions, such as divinatory ones, have been proposed for some particular graves, such as T660, provided with a rich bronze *parure* composed by several ornaments and amulets recalling the extreme limits of Eastern and Western world in the Greek perspective.⁴⁰

This type of object is not known only in tombs: several attestations of small bronze spheres come from sanctuaries and sacred places: it is the case of the Persephoneion at Mannella in Lokri, of the Heraion of Croton and of the sanctuary of Timpone della Motta in Francavilla Marittima near Sybaris; in the last site the cult of a feminine deity protecting the rites of passage is superimposed on an indigenous place of cult. In Sicily some inscribed items with the divinity's name have been interpreted as objects used for cleromancy rituals at Himera;⁴¹ in Greece similar

40 VERGER (2010), 304.

41 Some of them were discovered in the *temenos* on the Piano di Imera,



Fig. 10: Bronze spheres (D. 2 cm) from Lokri, tomb 1614, necropolis of contrada Lucifero, 500 BCE. Reggio Calabria, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 5340-5346. Su concessione del Ministero della Cultura n. 16 del 02 maggio 2022 – Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria.

spheres are known in the Heraion of Argos or in the heroos of Aptaera (2nd-1st cent. BCE).⁴² In this type of context, marbles are therefore to be interpreted as votive offerings, but some kind of games were actually played in the sacred places themselves, as the game board incised into the pediment of the Lato's temple in Delos seems to suggest.⁴³ It is also true that absolutely identical for size and material spheres are known from the agorà of Athens in association with the *klērōtēria*, the machines used to choose jurors of the democratic assemblies among the citizens.⁴⁴ A good example of the multiple functions of certain objects and of the profound importance of context in determining function and significance.

3. JUST FOR FUN? WHEELED MINIATURE CARTS BETWEEN SIGNIFIED AND SIGNIFIERS

In the list of playthings which can be assumed as the most frequently represented in the Greek world the two-wheeled cart (*hamaxis*) was almost exclusive to younger children. On vases, funerary reliefs and terracottas children are represented dragging it behind them, harnessing it to domestic animals, such as Maltese dogs, or using it to transport smaller children or dolls.⁴⁵

Because of the perishable material used for this very popular toy, archaeological evidence is rare and mainly metal reproductions of bronze, iron and lead are preserved. In the child tomb 400 of Lokri (late 5th-early 4th cent. BCE) a two-wheeled bronze miniature chariot was found (fig. 11).⁴⁶ P. Orsi suggested that the chariot was actually a toy used to passionate the young dead (that he called “ragazzo” precisely because of this object in the funerary set) to chariot racings and athletic competitions,⁴⁷ so one can infer, also a means to designate the economic ease and the status of the *oikos* of the dead, considering that in the Greek world equestrianism was a symbol of aristocracy and a practice reserved to the highest social classes. Although some sub-



Fig. 11: Bronze miniature chariot (H. 17 cm, L. 9.8 cm) from Lokri, tomb 400, necropolis of contrada Lucifero, late 5th-early 4th century BC. Reggio Calabria, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 4364. Su concessione del Ministero della Cultura n. 16 del 02 maggio 2022 – Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria.

adults graves display the high status of their family,⁴⁸ a very low number of funerary sets from the Lokrian necropolis evoke the figure of the aristocratic horse owner.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the composition of the funerary set of tomb 400, including a mirror and a fibula, is typically feminine in the necropolis recurrent and rigid system of gender indicators and invite us to reflect about the choice of including this object in the grave goods of a girl child. Evoking the representations of girls playing with wheeled carts on Attic *choes*, Diego Elia proposed that the Lokrian miniature chariot cannot be interpreted as a gender indicator: the author suggests that the intrinsic value of the object seem to be rather a tool to report the high status of the deceased, regardless of her age and sex.⁵⁰ This reading is absolutely logic, but perhaps it will be appropriate to take a further interpretative step, asking ourselves if this toy was simply a toy, a mere object of play and fun. That is the question!

the other ones belong to materials from a seizure but probably come from the same context; see BRUGNONE (2011).

42 VIVIERS (2004), 269.

43 SCHÄDLER (2009), especially 182-184; the author underlines that not all the boards with parallel lines can be interpreted as game boards and that some of them are more likely supposed to be *abaci*.

44 For the literary and archaeological evidence about *klērōtēria* see KOSMETATOU (2013).

45 See DASEN (2012), 12-14; ELIA (2013), 44-46.

46 H. 17 cm; L. 9,8 cm; ORSI (1912), 14-15, fig. 15. The wheel axes and the draught pole were made of iron. The rest of the funerary set consisted of four *lekylthoi* and a bronze button.

47 ORSI (1934), 343: “Una simpatica novità ci è fornita dal carrello in bronzo del sepolcro 400, il quale nella sua arcaica semplicità, denota, come anche a Locri, non ostante il terreno poco favorevole, venisse instillata già nei bambini la passione per quelle corse ai carri, che fu quasi una specialità delle città italiote, che la vollero consacrata nelle loro monete”.

48 See ELIA (2018b) and COSTANZO (2021).

49 Along the utilization of the necropolis objects of the equestrian activity are present only in few tombs, evoking an access limited only to small groups of citizens, such as a spur and two horse bits found in tombs 748 and 754. An elitist ideal can be recognized in tomb 624 which included in its grave goods also the tip and the *sauroter* of a javelin, a real *unicum* in the necropolis. In tomb 1496 a bronze diadem, probably applied to a leather headdress, must have constituted a sort of parade helmet; see CERCHIAI (1990).

50 ELIA (2013), 47. On children and wheel carts on attic vases, see AMMAR 2020.

Pedagogical value of toys is well known: in the last decades most anthropological and archaeological literature demonstrated the importance of toys in the socialization process of children, with the transmission and negotiation of cultural knowledge, community rules and categories of gender.⁵¹ Actually this is not so far from Plato's recommendation on controlling and correcting children games: in his opinion toys would help children mimic and practice their role in future adult life.⁵² Starting from this assumption, let's turn to the local context in order to infer if this item could have a particular meaning and take importance in relation to the age and the sex of the young dead of tomb 400.

Actually, in Lokri a great number of chariot images are known: in fact, the horse-drawn chariot is represented on hundreds of *pinakes* found in the Mannella sanctuary in the scene of the mythical abduction of Kore by Hades or by a young "emissary".⁵³ This well-known episode is central in the Lokrian religion and symbolizes the passage from adolescence to adulthood, since it transforms the young girl Kore into Persephone, wife of Hades and queen of the Underworld. The myth of Persephone was perhaps transmitted in the form of a local epic poem⁵⁴ and, even if the enactment of the scene during the marriage celebration is an unprovable reading, it can reasonably be argued that it had a particular significance in both rite and Lokrian everyday life, influencing at the same time the local artistic production. The presence of a young man committing the abduction of Kore, alone or together with Hades or Dionysos, has been also interpreted as the symbolic representation of the husband enacting a simulated kidnapping during the wedding celebration modeled on the myth.⁵⁵ It is notable that on the *pinakes* the abduction of Kore by the young man is represented both violent and consensual: this detail could perhaps authorize us to hypothesize a specific desire, on the part of young Lokrian women, to represent their own marriage experience by choosing iconographic variants perceived as closer to their viewpoint of the event.⁵⁶

The chariot also appears on a series of *pinakes*

referring to Aphrodite (Z. 10/2) (fig. 12): at the presence of Hermes, the goddess of love gets on a chariot guided by a pair of love-genii, a male one bringing a dove in the right hand and a female one holding an *alabastron*, "emblems and means of her power".⁵⁷



Fig. 11: Votive pinax (H. 23.2 cm, L. 23.5 cm) with Aphrodite and Hermes from Lokri, sanctuary of Mannella, 470-460 BCE. Reggio Calabria, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 28265. Su concessione del Ministero della Cultura n. 16 del 02 maggio 2022 – Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria.

On the Lokrian *pinakes* the representation of marriage as a *nymphagōgia* is only limited to the type Z. 7/3 (3 *pinakes* dating back around 490 BCE),⁵⁸ while it is numerically preeminent its mythical transposition represented by the abduction of Kore or by the departure of Aphrodite described above. Even if a little more recent than the *pinakes*, this toy could therefore take on a precise function in the process of socialization of the girl child buried in tomb 400: we suppose it could actually be used to vehicle the founding myth of the Lokrian religion and, consequently, the most important part of the *gamos*, the transfer of the bride from her father's *oikos* to that of the new husband, transposed on the mythical level like on the *pinakes* representations⁵⁹. After all, games imitating wedding and intended to vehicle "feminine" ideals are known in several civilizations⁶⁰ and this reading does not seem astonishing in a funerary context in which, since the second half of the 6th century BCE, the articulation of the grave

51 BAXTER (2005).

52 Plato, *Laws*, 643b-c; 794a and 795a. See DASEN (2012), 10-11 for other literary sources claiming the importance of play and toys in revealing children's dispositions.

53 Abduction of Kore by Hades (types Z. 2/1, Z. 2/18, Z. 2/19, Z. 2/22, Z. 2/24): 35,1% of the *pinakes*; abduction of Kore by a young "emissary" (types Z. 2/2-17, Z. 2/20-21, Z. 2/25-30): 29,4% of the *pinakes*; see MARRONI, TORELLI (2016), 67, tab. 6.

54 GIGANTE (1977), 644-646, with references.

55 TORELLI (1977), 172-173, with references. According with other interpretations, this young man could be a god or a hero: Thanatos, Hermes, Eubuleus or one of the Dioscuri.

56 Just five *pinakes* in the group of abduction by Hades (type Z. 2/24) do not represent violence and are classified as "*viaggio degli sposi*".

57 ZUNZT (1971), 166. The author also recalls an *askos* found in the Lokrian necropolis in the grave of a youth (sep. 83): ZUNZT (1971), 170-171; ORSI (1911), 18-19, fig. 17.

58 The best well preserved item is exposed in the National Archaeological Museum of Reggio Calabria (inv. no. 58173). The wedding chariot represented on this type of *pinax* is the *klinis* pulled by a pair of mules.

59 See also COSTANZO (2022), 188-189.

60 ANDREU-CABRERA (2009), 205.

goods displays a clear distinction between the social roles of men and women. In addition, it will be useful to remember what Luca Cerchiai has already pointed out, namely that Lokrian girl children seem subjected to an early characterization as adults, through a composition of the funerary set evoking their future role of wives. Alongside this trend, toys sometimes present in their funerary sets recall the infantile condition and, at the same time, a precarious status defined by opposing elements, oscillating between their age at the moment of the death and a never reached future.⁶¹ We could also infer a symbolic offering made to the girl at the moment of the death: an object evoking her social destiny of wife offered for a compensatory purpose, according to a practice widely known for the *aōroi* in the funerary realm.

A comparable object, even if it dates to the 6th century BCE, was found in the Kroton necropolis of Carrara III and it is exposed at the National Archaeological Museum of Croton. It is unfortunately impossible to give an interpretation of its significance in context because this miniature chariot was unearthed before the beginning of the systematic excavations in the funerary site and no association with a specific tomb is known. A third example of a miniature bronze and iron chariot, datable to the second half of the 6th century BCE, was discovered in the child tomb 9C Petrelli excavated in 1973 in Metauros, on the Tyrrhenian coast of Calabria. The funerary set included an Ionian bucchero *alabastron*, an Attic Kassel-type *kylix* an Attic black-figured amphora, a group of knucklebones, a bronze bull's head, three bronze plates and a terracotta coffin.⁶² In this case, the reference to the symbolic realm of aristocratic society seems almost clear and the miniature chariot may have been a toy introducing the young dead to the status of warrior. This different interpretation in comparison with what just proposed for Lokri is, in our opinion, justifiable both by the different chronological and cultural framework and by another interesting detail: the correspondence between this object and the iconography set of the amphora buried in the tomb. What did it represent? A warrior on a horse-drawn chariot...⁶³

Also single wheels are known for the Lokrian necropolis: the first one is a lead metal wheel, found in the child tomb 342 and associated with knucklebones and two seated feminine figurines, which are usually offered in young girls tombs.⁶⁴ In the adult tomb 1671, a woman for the set composition, two wheels

were found out of the grave, with some traces of fire.⁶⁵ Once again, the interpretation of the archaeological data is not always simple and univocal: for the item found in tomb 342, P. Orsi proposed an alternative interpretation to toy as symbol of Nemesis' wheel. From a typological point of view, a good comparison for the Lokrian items is the bronze wheel found in Croton: unfortunately, it was discovered out of context during an urban excavation.⁶⁶

CONCLUSION

The case studies analyzed in this article have highlighted how critical knowledge and in-depth study of toys can decisively contribute to the understanding of complex social identities and cultural dynamics in act in ancient societies. As with other type of objects, toys are associated with multiple meanings depending on their social and historical context. They are a useful category to study the history of childhood according to context and to infer the transmission of cultural knowledge, roles, expectations, and behaviors conveyed by them.

Furthermore, the continuous advancement of archaeological knowledge also contributes to interpret the data of old excavations and to propose valid and consistent interpretations also for findings out of context: both these categories specifically concern many archaeological sites of Magna Graecia and Sicily. Similarly, we hope to have shown how the analysis of the context (both specifically archaeological and cultural in a broad sense) is decisive in the interpretation of this category of objects and of their images. Toys are in fact particularly suitable for opening a glimpse into the daily life, the funerary practices and the ritual gestures of the ancient Western colonies, as well as a privileged vehicle for defining age, gender and social status.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AMMAR, Hanna, "Greek Children and their Wheel Carts on Attic Vases", in Katharina Rebay-Salisbury (dir.), *Ages and Abilities, Stages and Social Recognition: Childhood in Prehistoric Europe and Beyond*, Oxford (2020), 209-220.

ANDREU-CABRERA, Eliseo, "Traditional Children's Games in the Mediterranean: Analogies", *Journal of Human Sport and Exercise*, 4, 3 (2009), 201-210.

ARIAS, Paolo Enrico, "L'arte locrese nelle sue principali manifestazioni artigianali. Terrecotte, bronzi, vasi, arti minori", in *Locri Epizefirii*, I, Napoli (1977), 479-579.

BAXTER, Jane Eva, *The Archaeology of Childhood. Children, Gender and Material Culture*, Oxford (2005).

BEAUMONT, Leslie A., "Child's Play in Classical Athens", *History Today* 44, 8 (1994), 30-35.

65 ORSI (1917), 140, 142, fig. 49.

66 I thank Gregorio Aversa (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Crotona) for sharing this information.

61 CERCHIAI (1990).

62 FOTI (1974), 380; SABBIONE (1981), 20.

63 For a recent summary of images in funerary context as a tool for self-representation of the deceased's identity and ideology (by him or by the family group he belonged to in the case of sub-adults, we add) see PIZZIRANI (2021).

64 ORSI (1912), 11.

- BÉRARD, Reine-Marie, *Megara Hyblaea 6. La nécropole méridionale de la cité archaïque 1. Les données funéraires*, Collection de l'Ecole Française de Rome, Rome (2018).
- BOEHRINGER, Sandra, *Female Homosexuality in Ancient Greece and Rome*, London/New York (2021).
- BRUGNONE, Antonietta, "Le sferette bronzee iscritte da Himera", *Kernos*, 24 (2011), 77-94.
- CARUSO, Edoardo, "Megara Hyblaea (Comune di Melilli). Nuove esplorazioni nella necropoli megarese", *Notizie degli Scavi* s. (1892), 126-132, 172-183, 210-214, 243-252, 278-288.
- CERCHIAI, Luca, "Sesso e classi di età nelle necropoli greche di Locri Epizefiri", in Gherardo Gnoli, Jean-Pierre Vernant (eds), *La mort, les morts dans les sociétés anciennes*, Cambridge (1990), 289-298.
- COSTANZA, Salvatore, *Giulio Polluce*, Onomasticon: excerpta de ludis. *Materiali per la storia del gioco nel mondo greco-romano*, *Hellenica* 81, Alessandria (2019).
- COSTANZO, Daniela, "Immaturo e pratiche funerarie nelle necropoli della Calabria greca", in Elisabetta Govi (ed.), *Birth. Archeologia dell'infanzia nell'Italia preromana* II, *Archeologia* 31, Bologna (2021), 823-843.
- COSTANZO, Daniela, "L'éternel enfant. Rites et pratiques funéraires pour les immatures dans les nécropoles de la Calabre grecque", in Alexandra Attia, Daniela Costanzo, Christian Mazet, Valeria Petta (eds), "Infinito sarà il tempo dell'Ade". *L'archéologie funéraire en Italie du Sud (fin VI^e - début III^e siècle av. J.-C.)*, *Archeologia Nuova Serie* 7, Venosa (2022), 179-195.
- DASEN, Véronique, "Cherchez l'enfant! La question de l'identité à partir du matériel funéraire", in Antoine Hermay, Céline Dubois (eds), *L'enfant et la mort dans l'Antiquité*, III, *Le matériel associé aux tombes d'enfants*, Bibliothèque d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne et Africaine, 12, Paris/Aix-en-Provence (2012), 9-22.
- DASEN, Véronique, "Jeux de l'amour et du hasard en Grèce ancienne", *Kernos*, 29 (2016), 73-100.
- DASEN, Véronique, "Histoire et archéologie de la culture ludique dans le monde gréco-romain. Questions méthodologiques", *Kentron*, 34 (2018), 23-50.
- DASEN, Véronique (ed.), *Ludique ! Jouer dans l'Antiquité, Catalogue de l'exposition, Lugdunum, musée et théâtres romains, 20 juin-1^{er} décembre 2019*, Gent/Lyon (2019).
- DASEN, Véronique, VESPA, Marco (eds), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity: Definition, Transmission, Reception/ Jouer dans l'Antiquité classique. Définition, transmission, réception*, Collection Jeu/ Play/Spiel 2, Liège (2021).
- DILLON, Matthiew, *Women and Girls in Classical Greek Religion*, New York (2002).
- ELIA, Diego, "Giochi infantili nel mondo greco: la documentazione archeologica", in Claudia Lambrugo, Chiara Torre (eds), *Il gioco e i giochi nel mondo antico. Tra cultura materiale e immateriale*, Documenti e Studi 55, Bari (2013), 41-51.
- ELIA, Diego, "Il Gruppo di Locri in Calabria meridionale: sviluppo di una tradizione siceliota", in Martine Denoyelle, Claude Pouzadoux, Francesca Silvestrelli (eds), *Mobilità dei pittori e identità delle produzioni*, Cahiers du Centre Jean Bérard 25, Napoli (2018a), 77-95.
- ELIA, Diego, "Elementi di stratificazione verticale e orizzontale della società a Locri Epizefiri: la necropoli in contrada Lucifero (seconda metà del VI-V secolo a.C.)", in Carmelo Malacrino, Simonetta Bonomi (eds), *Ollus leto datus est. Architettura, topografia e rituali funerari nelle necropoli dell'Italia meridionale e della Sicilia tra Antichità e Medioevo, I. Dalla Preistoria all'Ellenismo*, MARC Convegni 1, Reggio Calabria (2018b), 315-322.
- FOTI, Giuseppe, "L'attività archeologica in Calabria", in *Metaponto*, Napoli (1974), 375-386.
- GIGANTE, Marcello, "La cultura a Locri", in *Locri Epizefirii*, I, Napoli (1977), 619-697.
- JUDICA, Gabriele, *Le antichità di Acre*, Messina (1821).
- KLEIN, Anita, *Child Life in Greek Art*, New York/Oxford (1932).
- KOSMETATOU, Elizabeth, "Tyche's Force: Lottery and Chance in Greek Government", in Hans Beck (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Greek Government*, Oxford (2013), 235-251.
- MARRONI, Elisa, TORELLI, Mario, *L'obolo di Persefone. Immaginario e ritualità dei «pinakes» di Locri*, Pisa (2016).
- ORSI, Paolo, "La necropoli", in *Megara Hyblaea. Storia, topografia, necropoli e anathemata, Monumenti antichi* 1 (1890), 689-942.
- ORSI, Paolo, "Gli scavi nella necropoli del Fusco a Siracusa nell'anno 1893", *Notizie degli Scavi*, (1895), 3-86.
- ORSI, Paolo, "Rapporto preliminare sulla quinta di scavi nelle Calabrie durante l'anno 1910. I. – Locri Epizephyrii. La necropoli Lucifero", *Notizie degli Scavi* suppl. (1911).
- ORSI, Paolo, "Scavi di Calabria nel 1911 (relazione provvisoria). I. – Locri Epizephyrii. Necropoli greca in contrada Lucifero", *Notizie degli Scavi* suppl. (1912), 5-18.
- ORSI, Paolo, "Scavi di Calabria nel 1913 (relazione preliminare). Locri Epizephyrii", *Notizie degli Scavi* suppl. (1913), 3-54.
- ORSI, Paolo, "Locri Epiz. – Campagne di scavo nella necropoli Lucifero negli anni 1914 e 1915", *Notizie degli Scavi* s. 5, 14 (1917), 101-167.
- ORSI, Paolo, "Scavi di Calabria negli anni 1910-11. Locri Epizephyrii I. La necropoli greca in contrada Lucifero", *Archivio Storico per la Calabria e la Lucania* (1934), 329-347.
- PFEIFFER, Ilja Leonard, "Playing Ball with Homer. An Interpretation of Anacreon 358 PMG", *Mnemosyne. A Journal of Classical Studies*, 53, 2 (2000), 164-184.

PIZZIRANI, Chiara (ed.), *Iconografia e rituale funerario, Atti del I Incontro di studi sul significato delle immagini nei contesti funerari*, Archeologia 29, Bologna (2021)

PRATT, Louise, "Play, Pathos, and Precocity. The Three P's of Greek Literary Childhood", in Judith Evans Grubbs, Tim Parkin with Roslynne Bell (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Childhood and Education in the Classical World*, Oxford (2017), 227-245

SABBIONE, Claudio, "L'area locrese", in *Il commercio greco nel Tirreno in età arcaica*, Salerno (1981), 15-34.

SCHÄDLER, Ulrich, "Pente grammai – The Ancient Greek Board Game Five Lines", in Jorge Nuno Silva (eds), *Board Game Studies Colloquium IX*, Lisboa (2009), 173-196.

SCHENAL PILEGGI, Roberta, "I *Pinakes*", in Maria Teresa Iannelli (eds), *Hipponion Vibo Valentia Monsleonis. I volti della città*, Reggio Calabria (2014), 109-116.

SCILABRA, Carla, "Per uno studio dei giocattoli nel mondo greco tra VI e III secolo a.C.: fonti e dati archeologici", *Orizzonti* 5, (2004), 139-149.

SCILABRA, Carla, "Veneri pupa negata. Giocattoli in tomba: casi di studio dall'Occidente greco", in Antoine Hermay, Céline Dubois (eds), *L'enfant et la mort dans l'Antiquité*, III, *Le matériel associé aux tombes d'enfants*, Bibliothèque d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne et Africaine 12, Paris/Aix-en-Provence (2012), 387-402.

SOMMER, Maria, SOMMER, Dion, "Archaeology and Developmental Psychology. A Brief Survey of Ancient Athenian Toy", *American Journal of Play*, 9, 3 (2017), 341-355.

TORELLI, Mario, "I culti di Locri", in *Locri Epizefirii*, I, Napoli (1977), 147-184.

TRENDALL, Arthur Dale, *The Red-Figured Vases of Lucania, Campania and Sicily*, I-II, Oxford (1967).

VERGER, Stéphane, "Archéologie du couchant d'été", in Jean-Paul Le Bihan, Jean-Paul Guillaumet (eds), *Routes du monde et passages obligés : de la protohistoire au haut Moyen-Age*, actes du colloque international d'Ouessant (27 et 28 septembre 2007), Quimper (2010), 293-337.

VIVIERS, Didier, "Crète", *Kernos*, 17 (2004), 268-277.

ZUNZT, Günther, *Persephone. Three Essays on Religion and Thought in Magna Graecia*, Oxford (1971).



Victoria Sabetai

Academy of Athens, Research Centre for Antiquity
vsabetai@academyofathens.gr

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

INTRODUCTION

This paper surveys toys and playthings from Boeotia considering their findspot, material and function.¹ The region's ludic material spans several centuries but shows a peak in the late Archaic era and in the latter part of the 5th century BCE. It is comprised of a die,² pebbles, spintops, a "yo-yo", astragals, and rattles. Further, objects such as bells and dolls, as well as miniatures, such as shields and baskets, should also be scrutinized for they may comprise a ludic facet, although their precise function is debated. Medium is worth considering as some playthings may classify as simulacra when manufactured in non-functional materials and sizes. Ludic objects are usually charged with symbolic meanings which vary according to time period and social context.

Despite the numerous cult places in Boeotia, ludic material is concentrated only in a selected few. The richest corpus comes from the Theban Kabirion,

dates from the 5th century BCE onwards and presents variety of medium and forms. Some of its toys, such as the decorated spintops and "yo-yo", are unique to it and rare in the Greek world, in general. The funerary record, on the other hand, provides a slightly different repertoire. Some objects that are unattested in the sanctuaries may occur in graves, as, e.g., the bronze rattles, while the spintops are rare. Bells and knucklebones seem to occur only in selected sanctuaries and in specific graves. The pattern of toy dedication in the Boeotian sanctuaries and cemeteries sheds light into the ludic culture of a Greek region and highlights the significance of playthings in ritual and votive practice.

1. PLAYTHINGS IN THE KABIRION SANCTUARY

Spintops, a "yo-yo", astragals, bells and peculiar pear-shaped pouches called *phormiskoi* were offered to the Kabiroi, patrons of a mystery cult according to the testimonia.³ The archaeological evidence from the site spans the Archaic to the Roman era, while the visual sources date from the 5th to the 4th century BCE, and are thus much earlier than the written ones.⁴ The patron deities appear named on a custom-made skyphos for this sanctuary which depicts the

¹ I use "plaything" in a general sense and as encompassing the meaning of "toy". For example, bells may be termed playthings, for they were not aimed primarily for play although they could be put also to such use. A spintop is called "toy", for it was made primarily for a game of skill. On philological definitions that reveal the the difficulty to apply modern categories to ancient artefacts, see KIDD (2019) and É. DIEU in this volume.

² For the uncanonical die from an Archaic burial of status see SABETAI (2021). It belongs to an assemblage comprising pebbles (one engraved), shells and other objects, while the associated female deceased was interred bejewelled and accompanied with vases and spindle whorls.

³ Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 9.25, 5-10 mentions the foundation myth of the Theban Kabirion sanctuary with no details on the cult.

⁴ For the evolution of the cult and the organization of the sanctuary's space, see SCHACHTER (2003).

Kabiros as a mature symposiast and Pais as his young acolyte (pl. 1).⁵ The “senior-junior” relationship appears also on another Kabiric skyphos with Hermes offering his son Pan festive bands and twigs.⁶ The Kabiric skyphoi bear comic scenes which parody well-known myths, or human institutions such as weddings, sacrifices and symposia. Emphasis is placed on the expression of fear at critical moments, with heroes appearing as cowards with deformed bodies at a moment of danger or with big monsters chasing little men.⁷ The interest in the “senior-junior” relationship together with a derisive imagery which parodies heroic myths and favours figures of fear points to a context of initiation in this cult place.⁸ The Kabirion’s coroplastic repertory, namely little boys, youths holding roosters and lyres, and symposiasts, thus males featured in types denoting their age-class and its respective social roles, suggests that initiation should be understood in a context of maturation rituals, when cultural ideals tend to be highlighted in ritual and votive practice.⁹



PLATE 1: Kabiric skyphos. Athens, National Archaeological Museum inv. 10426. © Εθνικό Αρχαιολογικό Μουσείο/ National Archaeological Museum, Athens, photographer Kostas Xenikakis.

1.1 Spinning Tops

Widely played in many cultures, the spintop is a toy requiring skill. It is designed to spin rapidly on the ground and when set in motion it remains balanced on its tip due to its rotational inertia. The toy is mentioned in the *Iliad* and is associated with the god Hermes.¹⁰ It is fashioned as a cylinder tapering to a tip from the 8th century BCE to the Classical

era and was spun with the use of a whip, *mastix* (μάστιξ), which is why it bears grooves. Although rare in Greece,¹¹ spintops are relatively numerous in the Kabirion¹² while only two examples are known from the necropolis of Akraiphia.¹³ More than a dozen wheel-made, clay examples are recorded from this sanctuary, half of which bear figures of humans and animals, such as children playing, a man and a rooster, two female heads, water birds and a crab. One example depicts a *tropaion*, a visual reference to the military realm.¹⁴ Most bear floral decoration of ivy and palmettes or are plain and date from the late 5th to the 4th century BCE.¹⁵ There exist also spintop-shaped items in marble and steatite, some of which are compact, ungrooved, and heavy, and thus non-functional (pl. 2 a-c). They may be identified as tops by comparison to the clay ones, but their material suggests that they are simulacra rather than the real thing.¹⁶ Their transcription in stone ascribes to them a monumental character, despite their small size. In the Kabirion eighteen bronze spintop-like objects were further unearthed which have been tentatively interpreted as weights or gaming counters.¹⁷

The dedication of spintops to the Kabiroi is mentioned in a 3rd century BCE stele found in the temple which states that a woman, Okythoa, offered such a toy together with the whip for spinning it.¹⁸ The source attests to the spintop’s continued link

11 For whipping tops and twirlers from the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Corinth see KLINGER (2022). For unidentified objects from a sanctuary in the Megarid which must be twirlers see KYRIAKOU-ZAPHEIROPOULOU (2014-2015), 383-384, nos. Δ45-Δ53 and SABETAI (2022 in preparation). On the bronze statuette of a young man holding a spinning top, of unknown provenance, kept in Munich Antikensammlungen, see A. FENDT in this volume.

12 WOLTERS, BRUNS (1940), 89 and 123-124; pl. 18, nos. 2; 4-11; pl. 19, nos. 4-7; pl. 41, no. 7; pl. 42, no. 13; pl. 48, no. 19 (large example); pl. 49, nos. 11-14 and pl. 61, no. 4. BRAUN, HAEVERNICK (1981), 36-37; 48-49; 61; 114; pl. 3, nos. 1-4; pl. 4, no. 14; pl. 6, nos. 6-7; pl. 7, nos. 4; 7; pl. 8, no. 1; and 13; pl. 19, nos. 3-4 and 6; CRUCCAS (2014). For tops from the Kabirion in the antiquities market see AVRONIDAKI (forthcoming).

13 ANDREIOMENOU (1994a), 239, fig. 103 (grave 84; third quarter of the 5th cent. BCE; co-found with figurines of a youth and ca. 20 vases). The second spintop is under publication by the author: SABETAI (2022 in preparation).

14 WOLTERS, BRUNS (1940), 123, pl. 19, no. 7.

15 A re-examination is needed in order to verify the identification of all these fragments as tops. I had autopsy only of the examples in the Thebes Museum. The clay one bears ivy decoration, as well as grooves and a hole on its top side (inv. 48411; BRAUN, HAEVERNICK (1981), 61, no. 282, pl. 19, no. 4; height 9.2 cm; diam., 6.9; weight, 175.1 gr). The break at its tip must be modern and not due to actual use because it lacks the white minerals which normally coat antiquities after centuries in the soil and which are visible elsewhere.

16 Cf., e.g., marble top, Thebes 48412 (V 1957): height 5 cm; diam. 3.3 cm; weight, 83.1 gr (cf. BRAUN, HAEVERNICK (1981), 114, no. 172, pl. 34, no. 37). Steatite top (black), Thebes 48413 (V 2301): height 2.2 cm; diam. 1.5 cm; weight, 6.6 gr (BRAUN, HAEVERNICK (1981), 114, no. 170, pl. 34, no. 35). More examples exist.

17 BRAUN, HAEVERNICK (1981), 36, *non vidi*.

18 WOLTERS, BRUNS (1940), 21-22, no. 2, lines 21-23. Okythoa offered also astragals.

5 Athens inv. A 10426: WOLTERS, BRUNS (1940), 96, no. K1, pl. 5; 44, no. 1.

6 Kabiric skyphos once Berlin inv. VI. 3286: *ThesCRA* II.3.c. (2004), s.v. Initiation, 103, no. 105 (W. Burkert). For the accuracy of the published drawing see SCHÖNE-DENKINGER (2012), 145-146.

7 For Odysseus, Kadmos and monsters in Kabiric imagery see MITCHELL (2009), 272-276; WALSH (2009), 183-185; 192-204.

8 LEBESSI (1992), esp. 5 first pointed to issues related to maturation in conjunction with the mystery cult of the Kabiroi; cf. also *ThesCRA* II.3.c. (2004), s.v. Initiation, 103 with earlier bibliography; SABETAI (2019).

9 For male types in the Kabirion see SCHMALTZ (1974), 33-107.

10 For the top see LAMBRUGO (2013); GIUMAN (2020). For the terms *ve-mvix*, *strobilos* or *konos*, see DASEN (2016), 82-85. For tops dedicated to Hermes upon maturation see *Anthologia Palatina*, 6, 309, yet the term *rhombos* in this source may refer to the “yo-yo”: DASEN (2018b), 30.



PLATE 2: Spintops from the Kabirion. Thebes, Archaeological Museum. Photo A. Santrouzanos.
a. inv. 48411 (K1506; clay);
b. inv. 48412 (V1957; marble);
c. inv. 48413 (V2301; steatite).
© Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports – Ephorate of Antiquities of Boeotia - Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development (H.O.C.R.E.D.).

to the Kabirion also in the Hellenistic era, as well as to its ritual import, which made the offer worth inscribing in stone.

The excavators and others after them interpreted the tops as appropriate offerings to the junior Kabiros, Pais. Based on resemblances between the senior Kabiros and Dionysos who appear as kantharos-holding symposiasts, some scholars recalled the top's symbolism in the Bacchic mysteries, which presumably dramatized a story of deceit, namely the killing of the infant Dionysos by the Titans who distracted him with toys including a *konos*.¹⁹ Despite the affinities between Dionysiac and Kabiric iconography, the association of the Kabiric cult with Bacchic mysteries is far from documented.²⁰ Inscribed kantharoi mention Kabiros, not Dionysos, whereas this ritual vase-type is not associated primarily with the god of wine in Boeotia, but functioned mainly as a heroic, ethnic, and aristocratic emblem.²¹ Further, the use of late testimonia treating Dionysiac mystery cult for the interpretation of the religious identity of the Kabiroi in the Classical period seems methodologically unwarranted. A more promising path in the study of the spintops from the sanctuary is to research not only their relationship with the Kabiroi but also with their dedicators. To do this we will turn to the visual evidence of Attic vase-painting which is the main source of information about players of spintops. We will then compare this evidence with the already mentioned terracotta corpus from the Kabirion which is mainly comprised of figure types picturing the Boeotian male dedicator in roles characteristic of his age class and social status. Understanding the identity of the dedicator helps us perceive how this is reflected in, and in fact also shapes, the cultic personae of the Kabiros and Pais, a pair of deities in subsequent age-classes and sympotic roles, to whom are offered playthings and imagery of mythical parodies, grotesque bodies and slapstic humour.

Attic vase imagery points to specific associations between spintops and male adolescence. Although female players occur in some mid 5th century BCE decontextualized scenes,²² earlier ones depict

youths with tops in a more precise setting, namely interacting with older males. The context is of institutionalized pederasty which characterized Greek male adolescence and functioned as an aspect of the education and socialization of youths in the *polis* system.²³ A cup by Douris (480-470 BCE) depicts a youth praised as *kalos* admiring the skill of a mature man who has just spun the top with his whip. The context of pederasty is implied by the youth's himation which is drawn above his nape to picture his modesty, *aidōs* (αἰδώς). The floral ornaments play a role in intensifying the content of the scene, for the thick leaf above the mature man is fully developed, while the bud or leaf above the youth is thin and at an earlier stage of growth.²⁴ A pelike by Hermonax (470-460 BCE) (pl. 3 a-b) depicts the spintop with other toys in a developed scene with Zeus and Ganymede, the equivalent of the mortal *erastēs* (ἐραστής)-*erōmenos* (ἐρώμενος) pair on the mythological level.²⁵ Zeus catches the hoop-rolling Ganymede in the presence of boys holding a cock and a spintop together with a whip. The iconographic combination of the spintop with a hoop and a cock is meaningful.²⁶ The rooster is a typical erotic gift in homoerotic scenes, where the *erastēs* offers it to the *erōmenos* as a living symbol of agonistic spirit and masculinity.²⁷ Interestingly, Ganymede appears again with a hoop and a rooster in either hand, but no spintop, on a more succinct scene by the Berlin Painter.²⁸ As one can hardly roll the hoop while holding a cockerel, the image obviously uses elements from reality as iconic signs in an artistic construct in order to signify that the boy is at the crossroads of childhood and initiatory pederasty which marks the onset of adolescence on the social level. Thus, the appearance of the spintop in the same context with the hoop and the rooster on Hermonax's detailed scene attests to its being part of the iconic visual vocabulary pertaining to this age class.²⁹ Similar associations exist in Boeotia as documented by a spintop from the Kabirion on which is depicted a youth holding a stick to roll his hoop (pl. 3 c).³⁰ This piece postdates by some decades

19 For toys in Dionysiac mystery cult see e.g. LEVANIUK (2007); CRUCCAS (2014). For tops in the Kabirion as part of a mystery cult see GIUMAN (2020), 53; 59-64; 71-72. Cf. BRAUN, HAEVERNICK (1981), 37. For a Dionysiac "spinning top dance" connected to female initiation and marriage in the megalography of the Roman "Villa dei Misteri" see SCAPINI (2016).

20 For the Dionysiac elements in the Kabirion see SCHACHTER (2003), 123-125; SCHÖNE-DENKINGER (2012), esp. 142-146. LEBESSI (1992) refuted the relationship between Kabiros and Dionysos and argued that the Kabiroi visualize the same deity in two subsequent age classes. Her article did not attract the attention it deserves, presumably because it is written in Greek.

21 For the kantharos in Boeotia see SABETAI (2012b), 129. Note further that Dionysos appears infrequently in Boeotian art.

22 See, e.g., cup Brussels A891 (BAPD 209537) and lekythos Athens,

Vlasto (BAPD 212311). Cf. PFISTERER HAAS (2004), 416 on the association of spintops with youths in their social milieu and in the presence of male gods, versus women who usually play alone.

23 SCANLON (2002), 64-97; 199-273.

24 Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University G3730 (BAPD 205298). KEI (2015), 275.

25 Basel, Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig BS483 (BAPD 205409). DASEN (2019b), fig. 1.

26 For the hoop-toy see DASEN (2018a); (2019a).

27 DASEN, VESPA (2022).

28 Paris, Louvre G175 (BAPD 201933; 500-490 BCE).

29 The *phormiskos* or astragal sack, common attribute of minors, also occurs in scenes of play with a top as on the lekythos Tübingen S10814 (BAPD 4088) with Hermes. Unlike the agitated god, the youth appears in the passive stance of immature persons in need of guidance on the brink of maturation.

30 BRAUN, HAEVERNICK (1981), 36; 49, no. 153; pl. 6, no. 7.



PLATE 3: a-b. Pelike by Hermonax Basel BS483, side A, detail. After CVA Basel 2, pl. 52, 3-4.
 c. Sherd from Kabirion. Boy with hoop. After Braun, Haevernick (1981), pl. 6, 7.
 d. Terracotta figurine from the Kabirion. Athens, National Archaeological Museum inv. A 10278. © Εθνικό Αρχαιολογικό Μουσείο/ National Archaeological Museum, Athens, photographer Demetrios Gialouris.

the Attic images with tops, hoops and cocks in the context of institutionalized initiatory pederasty. Yet, although in Attica this practice is more consonant with the Archaic and early Classical aristocratic ethos, in the predominantly oligarchic Boeotia it prevailed until the 4th century BCE, as may be inferred from the “Sacred Battalion”, the Theban elite corps which was formed with homosexual pairs.³¹ The interpretation of the Kabirion as a sacred space for male maturation rites in the 5th and 4th century BCE may be confirmed by the site’s restricted coroplastic repertoire, especially the series of rooster-holding youths which is contemporaneous with the decorated spintops (pl. 3 d).³² These figurines should be seen as idealized pictures of their dedicators, who are featured with the typical animal-symbol of male adolescence. In the sanctuary they clearly functioned as ex-votos of boys who commemorated their transition to adulthood. Besides the Kabirion, the imagery of the rooster-holding youth is widespread in Boeotia, in general, as can be documented from imported Attic vases, such as skyphoi painted by the CHC Group depicting male courtship, and the inscribed grave stele of the boy Mnasiatheios, which was commissioned by his *erastes* Pyrrhichos in the late Archaic era.³³

Although the rooster-holding figurines from the Kabirion do not hold also spintops, we may surmise that their dedicators offered such toys or simulacra as freestanding votive gifts. Thus, the painted roosters and tops on the Attic vases appear in the form of cock-holding terracotta figurines and toys in various media in the sacred space of the Kabirion, where they functioned as mementa of institutionalized pederasty and coming of age. The spintops may have been meant for both Kabirot as protectors of youths and as gods that represent the generational relationship on the divine level and in the prestigious sympotic context.³⁴ In this line of thought, the basic aspect of the ritual at the Kabirion in the Classical era was not so much, or not only, or not at all, that of a mystery cult, but mainly the celebration of a civic-religious ideal, coming of age.³⁵ Maturation is associated with acquiring skills, fighting fear with

laughter, and feasting, as suggested respectively by the spintops, the grotesque imagery and the depiction of the Kabirot in the symposion, the quintessential institution of male bonding in Greek culture. The recent discovery of spintops in other, non-Dionysiac, Greek sanctuaries disassociates them further from the supposed context of Bacchic mystery cult posited for the Kabirion.³⁶

Female participation at the Kabirion cannot be excluded, especially in view of the two late 5th century BCE spintops depicting a woman’s head, as well as the Hellenistic inscription mentioning Okythoa. Yet, females are much less visible in the sanctuary’s coroplastic, mostly male, repertoire and it is possible that they gained importance only in later times.³⁷ If so, the rare tops featuring female heads may have alluded to the youth’s prospected bride, to the love magic inherent in some rotating toys, and, perhaps humorously, to the special skill needed to set a top and a marriage in motion.³⁸

1.2 “Yo-Yo”

Related to the spintop in that both toys rotate and require skill when played, is the “yo-yo”, a bobbin-like object. The toy involves rhythmic vertical motion and a specific hissing sound as the cord wraps and unwraps on the central spool which bridges the “yo-yo”’s discs.³⁹ Its ancient name may have been *rhombos*, but it is uncertain whether this referred to a form of spintop or *iyinx*, the latter a toy that could acquire also a metaphorical value related to love magic and divine protection. “Yo-yos” are mostly shown in the hands of boys and occur mainly in Attic child graves of the second quarter of the 5th century BCE, while some bear figured decoration.⁴⁰

In Boeotia a “yo-yo” was found in the Kabirion⁴¹ while rare ones from graves remain unpublished (pl. 4).⁴²

31 See LEBESSI (1992), 9; SCHACHTER (2007), 125-126; MA (2008), 83.

32 For terracotta youths with cocks in the Kabirion see SCHMALTZ (1974), 45-71; HUYSECOM-HAXHI (2015). For cocks in Boeotia see SABETAI, AVRONIDAKI (2018), 349-351; 359. For the Kabirion and male transitions see recently SABETAI (2019).

33 For CHC skyphoi see AVRONIDAKI, SABETAI (2016), 36-37 and for Mnasiatheios’ stele ANDREIOMENOU (2012). Cf. also the vases with *kalos* graffiti from the Kabirion: WOLTERS, BRUNS (1940), 43-44, nos. 56; 58-59.

34 We should not associate the tops only with Pais. An inscribed bell mentioning both Kabirot shows that in the mind of the votaries was the father-son or elder-younger relationship; see below.

35 Maturation rites decline after the 4th cent. BCE, LEBESSI (1992), 17. It is possible that what starts as a celebration of initiatic maturation develops into a mystery cult after the decline of the polis system from the Hellenistic era onwards.

36 For the modern fascination with “mysterious” mystery cults see SCHACHTER (2003), 140, n. 16; MITCHELL (2009), 250-251; SABETAI (2012a), 87, n. 25.

37 LEBESSI (1992), 15 notes the rarity of female names also on inscribed pots. The 1500 beads found at the Kabirion, of various dates, suggest both infant and female presence; see BRAUN, HAEVERNICK (1981), 99-100; LEBESSI (1992), 2, n. 3; SCHACHTER (2003), 139, n. 13.

38 For the tops depicting female heads see WOLTERS, BRUNS (1940), 89, pl. 41, no. 7; AVRONIDAKI (forthcoming). For a *testimonium* (*Anthologia Palatina* 7, 89) mentioning a youth who is advised to ask the spintop players for an oracle about the choice of the proper bride, see DASEN (2016), 84-85.

39 For the “yo-yo” see WEHGARTNER (1983), 154-160; SHAPIRO (1985); WEISS, BUHL (1990); PFISTERER HAAS (2004), 417-418; CIOBOTARU (2017); DASEN (2018b), 30.

40 For “yo-yos” depicting youths inscribed “*ho pais kalos*” see Athens 28006 (BAPD 276023); New York 28.167 (BAPD 211738). For another with Hermes and a cock-holding youth see Athens, Agora P29670 (BAPD 848).

41 Athens A 10459; Diam. 12.8 cm; see WOLTERS, BRUNS (1940), 68, no. 278; 84-85, pl. 24, nos. 1-3.

42 See ANDREIOMENOU (1994b), 113. A flattened, hollow, clay sphere, grooved on its perimeter and with two holes along its vertical axis may perhaps be an atypical “yo-yo”; see ANDREIOMENOU (2015), 326,



PLATE 4: Yo-yo from the Kabirion. Athens, National Archaeological Museum inv. A 10459. © Εθνικό Αρχαιολογικό Μουσείο/ National Archaeological Museum, Athens, photographer Eirini Miari.

The piece from the Kabirion has been dated from the second third of the 5th century BCE and attributed to the Boeotian workshop.⁴³ It is decorated with white around a red-figure tondo and bears a dedicatory graffito to the Kabiros. Perseus lurking with his *harpē* (ἄρπη) appears on one disc and Medusa, a female monster able to petrify every man gazing at her, on the other. The type chosen for Medusa is that of a sleeping woman shown in profile rather than in the fearful frontal position. The powerful female rests defenseless in a rocky landscape, with her potent eyes closed in sleep. Her condition may refer metaphorically to a marginal or transient state of being with all its connotations of vulnerability.⁴⁴

pl. 220, no. 38.

43 AVRONIDAKI (forthcoming).

44 For the sleeping Medusa see FRONTISI-DUCROUX (1996), 87; TOPPER (2007), 90-94. For Attic examples depicting Medusa sleeping cf. BAPD 209561, 207171, 207172, 275462. For rocks in “marginal” settings see DIETRICH (2010). For a gorgon’s mask (ca. 700 BCE) and

The image of the disempowered Medusa may have encompassed cultural meanings of importance to males crossing to manhood. The visual message on the “yo-yo” may concern femininity, a force that the ancients deemed dangerously seductive and in need of taming by the man. By seeing Medusa as a sleeping maiden on a toy requiring skillful manipulation, the presumably male beholder would be encouraged to perceive female power as conquerable.⁴⁵ This scene seems at home in the Kabiric imagery where the discourse on the nature of femaleness takes various forms and where even heroes like Odysseus may be comically rendered as stupefied cowards when confronted with potent and dangerously seductive women like Circe.⁴⁶ Choosing the theme of the vulnerable Medusa as a hero’s easy prey for the decoration of an object associated with play may have further imbued the scene on the “yo-yo” with humorous nuances. Its dedication to the Kabiros, presumably upon coming of age, may hint at cultural stereotypes regarding the sexes, and in particular ontological concepts related to femininity which could be also invested with playful overtones in Classical Boeotia.

1.3 Astragals

Astragals, bones from the ankle of sheep or goat, were widely used throughout antiquity as dice for gaming, devices for divination, erotic gifts and talismans for protection when worn on the body.⁴⁷ Besides their natural form, they were also used as workpieces that could be processed and altered for various purposes. They were also copied in a plethora of mediums and sizes as befits their cultural importance and polysemy. Besides divination and play, the literary, archaeological and visual sources associate them with age identities and ritual behaviours in votive and funerary practices that vary across time and place. Knucklebones need to be examined in their epichoric context. In Boeotia they occur in specific cult places or accompany special categories of female burials.

Natural and worked astragals were retrieved in great numbers in two Boeotian sanctuaries, namely the Kabirion (793 pieces) and the cave of the Leibethrian Nymphs and Pan on mount Helicon (more than 4.000 pieces).⁴⁸ Three knucklebones from the Kabirion

its role in boys’ initiation rites see LANGDON (2007), 174-175.

45 For other “yo-yos” depicting the taming of females via erotic abductions see Athens 2350 (BAPD 209560; Leucippids, Europa); Athens 2192 (BAPD 211360; Peleus and Thetis).

46 MITCHELL (2009), 272-274; WALSH (2009), 195-201; SABETAI, AVRONIDAKI (2018), 356-359.

47 For the astragal see CARÈ (2010); (2012), in tombs; (2017), polysemic character. For its ludic functions among which love oracles see CARÈ (2009-2010). For an inscribed clay astragal used as a homoerotic gift see HERMARY (2012) and (2019).

48 See BOESSNECK (1973); BRAUN, HAEVERNICK (1981), 113-114, pl. 34, nos. 27-31 (Kabirion). TRANTALIDOU, KAVOURA (2006-2007), 462;



PLATE 5: a-c. Bronze astragal from the Kabirion, Thebes, Archaeological Museum inv. 48414.
d. Burnt, pierced astragal from Akraiphian tomb. Thebes, Archaeological Museum inv. 52819.
© Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports – Ephorate of Antiquities of Boeotia - Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development.

were filled in with lead.⁴⁹ Votive simulacra in the form of astragals in glass, stone and metal were also offered to the Kabiroti (pl. 5 a-c).⁵⁰ Four were made of green or cobalt blue glass, 23 small and large ones were of steatite or soapstone, two of marble and one of amber.⁵¹

Natural and worked astragals are also found in Boeotian tombs but remain unpublished, except for those from the Thespian Polyandron.⁵² Recent digs at Akraiphia unearthed a few 4th century BCE interments of young females with such objects. In one case more than 20 pierced astragals, presumably strung in a cord, were found in a tomb furnished with jewellery, a mirror and figured vases.⁵³ Another 4th

century BCE grave in Akraiphia contained a single pierced astragal, which, although the young woman was inhumed, was found burnt in the layers above her skeleton (pl. 5 d). The dead was here adorned with a beaded wreath and accompanied with a red-figure pelike with a Dionysiac-erotic theme and two glazed pots.⁵⁴ The fact that the knucklebone was a singleton in her grave may suggest that she once wore it on her body as a pendant with amuletic function.⁵⁵ The astragal may have been burnt as part of a ritual at the closing of the funeral, presumably in order to characterize the woman as a prematurely deceased individual, an *aōros* (ἄωρος). Charred astragals, a very rare find, are also known from interments at Lokroi Epizephyrioi.⁵⁶

Because of a lack of published evidence we do not know whether placing astragals in tombs was a

465; 467-471 (Heliconean cave). For an overview of the Heliconean cave see VASSILOPOULOU (2013).

49 BRAUN, HAEVERNICK (1981), 113. They were interpreted as offerings with a magical function or as objects whose weight falsification was meant to guarantee the best throws at a game.

50 A bronze astragal exhibited in the Thebes Museum bears a ring on its top side: Thebes 48414 (M648); height 2.5 cm; length 4 cm; width 2.5 cm; weight, 98.5 gr. For other examples from the Kabirion see BRAUN, HAEVERNICK (1981), 114, no. 160. For metal astragals see CARÈ (2019).

51 For Hellenistic and Roman astragals in various materials cf. ERLICH (2017), 44-46.

52 CARÈ (2022 forthcoming); ANDREIOMENOU (1994b), 113.

53 The grave is under publication by the author.

54 The grave is under publication by the author. The astragal is preserved in two fragments (Thebes Museum, inv. 52819).

55 For knucklebones as amulets related to the afterlife see DE GROSSI MAZZORIN, MINNITI (2013), esp. 379. They may be best seen as associated with the identity of the deceased. For a pierced metal example from Lokrian Halai see CARÈ (2019), 161, n. 30. For a rare gold necklace with beads in the shape of pierced astragals and pendants in the form of crescents, roundels etc from Hellenistic Kephallenia see VIKATOU, ANDREATOU (2020), 21 (bottom).

56 See ELIA, CARÈ (2004), 80, n. 33 (graves 1222 and 1308). I owe the reference to Barbara Carè.

widespread custom in Boeotia. Yet, a recent report on the northeastern necropolis of Thebes mentions a “structure” comprised of series of knucklebones, kotyliskai and terracottas, the most prominent among which is a figurine of a youth holding a cock. The “structure” was unearthed inbetween two cremation burials and was interpreted as a relic of a funerary ritual.⁵⁷

Further research is needed in order to specify the use of astragals in Boeotian sanctuaries and tombs. The pieces in the Kabirion are clearly votive; in the funerary realm their use may have been amuletic when burnt above the corpse or arranged in a cord next to it.

1.4 Rattles, Phormiskoi and Bells

Some sound-making objects were associated with children and could therefore pertain to the realm of play, but had also a wider utilitarian, educative and ritual function. These are the rattles, the phormiskoi and the bells, all associated with percussion.

⁵⁷ KOUNTOURI (1999), 322.

Although superficially seen as noisy playthings, they instilled the sensory experience of rhythm in infants, thus having an edifying function in the upbringing and socialization of babies in various cultural landscapes of sound.⁵⁸ In the funerary *mise en scène* they functioned as iconic objects of a childhood cut short, while finds from some cult sites suggest that they were offerings associated with the successful transition from one age class to the next.⁵⁹

In Boeotia, a particular type of metal rattle is known from late 6th - early 5th century BCE child burials at Akraiphia, while phormiskoi and bells occur in both sanctuaries and tombs for a much longer period. The bronze rattle resembles a hand mirror and, although light, is more suitable for an adult's rather

⁵⁸ For percussive music as agent in religious ritual and acculturation see KOLOTOUROU (2011), esp. 179-183 for the key concept of *eurythmia* in Greek thought and aesthetics. For the rattle in the theory of music of Archytas of Tarentum (4th cent. BCE) see DASEN (2017). The *testimonia* associate the *platagè* or *platagonion* with the soothing of children: Aristotle, *Politics*, 8.6.2, 1340b; Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 9.127.

⁵⁹ For sound-making objects in child tombs see BELLIA (2014).



PLATE 6: a. Bronze rattle from Akraiphian child tomb. Thebes, Archaeological Museum.
b. Munich Antikensammlungen inv. NI 5509. After Hamdorf (2014), 182, D84.
c, d. Phormiskos. Thebes, Archaeological Museum, inv. 4918, and kanastron from Akraiphian child tomb (T.208). Thebes Archaeological Museum inv. 49188.
e. Clay bell from the Kabirion. Thebes Museum inv. 46239 (A299). Photo A. Santrouzanos. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports – Ephorate of Antiquities of Boeotia - Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development.

than a baby's hand (pl. 6 a). It is manufactured with two convex hammered discs joined together with rivets and attached to a usually cast handle. About a dozen pellets inside the hollow cavity created by the discs produce the sound of a percussion instrument. The type from the Akraiphian tombs should be recognized as the one featured in the hands of the Boeotian figurine kept in Munich (third quarter 5th century BCE) which depicts a woman holding a baby-girl in one hand and a rattle of the type documented in our graves in the other (pl. 6 b).⁶⁰ Such metal rattles are the most precious offerings in a few, lavishly furnished, child graves. The richest one (first quarter of the 5th century BCE) contained at least 60 vases, namely an Attic black-figure lekythos, 27 Corinthian vases (kotyliskai, exaleiptra and an aryballos), 31 black-glazed pots (28 kantharoi or kanthariskoi, two plemochoi and a mug), as well as eight Boeotian overpainted kantharoi. Among the figurines are a reclining ithyphallic symposiast, and animals (horses, birds, sirens and pigs).⁶¹ Metal objects, such as knives, jewellery and mirrors occur infrequently in the Akraiphian necropolis and accompany mainly elite adult burials. Instead of the knife or mirror, the Boeotian child of the elite is buried with its bronze rattle, which highlights the toy's iconic role in the Boeotian belief system that conditioned funerary display in the late Archaic-early Classical era.⁶²

Bronze rattles are occasionally co-found with one or more phormiskoi in Boeotian child graves, where this object was popular from the late Geometric to the late 4th century BCE.⁶³ The phormiskos is a clay ovoid or piriform object with a long "handle" and a pierced finial. It is thought to imitate the gourd or the astragal sack, the latter made in perishable materials such as leather and cloth.⁶⁴ It is occasionally found with pellets inside, which suggests a use as rattle presumably imitating the sound of an astragal pouch. In Boeotia this rattling toy was produced in

figured and plain examples⁶⁵ and may occur in richly furnished tombs as, e.g., the Rhitsona grave 31.⁶⁶ In an Akraiphian child tomb of the early 5th century BCE two phormiskoi⁶⁷ were deposited together with 37 vases (25 kantharoi, three kotyliskai, two Attic black-figure lekythoi, five unguent vases (four exaleiptra, and a plemochoe) a bronze aryballos, a glass amphoriskos, ten figurines (a rider, a horse, a pig, a cock, a dove, a ram, and a human figure), and a small clay kanastron.⁶⁸ One of the phormiskoi bears patterned decoration in white, red and blue color (pl. 6 c-d).

Bells are not solely linked with the ludic sphere for they were put to various uses across space and time, from sound devices to implements in rituals and accessories with amuletic function.⁶⁹ They occur throughout the Greek world in cultic, domestic and funerary settings and in a time span from the Late Geometric to the Middle Ages. They are not usually found in bulk except for Athena's sanctuary in Sparta, the Samian Heraion and the Kabirion (pl. 6 e).⁷⁰ A few examples from Sparta and the Kabirion bear inscriptions which specify that they are votive dedications. A rare 4th century BCE metal example from the Kabirion is inscribed Πυρίας Καβίρωι και Παιδι ("Pyrias to Kabiros and Child").⁷¹ Yet, most bells are clay effigies often equipped with clappers which allow only a light tinkle and thus a mild and playful sensory experience. We may consider them votives, if not also ephemeral toys tinkling temporarily in imitation of metal bells. In her study of Greek bells Alexandra Villing noted that these objects were part of a complex social and religious framework with many potential uses depending on the setting and the time period. The sound of the bell was generally understood as a signal which could occasionally ward off evil. In its possible ludic function the bell could have been comparable to the rattle, as suggested by its extensive occurrence in child burials, on occasion together with phormiskoi and metal rattles.⁷² The symbolic dimension of bells as

60 Munich, Antikensammlung inv. NI 5509. The object has been interpreted as a mirror but must be a rattle: see HAMDORF (2014), 182, no. D84. Rattles of different types appear also rarely on Attic choes-jugs, see, e.g., London 1910.0615.4 (BAPD 11041); Munich 2462 (BAPD 11383); Athens, Agora P16917 (BAPD 16260).

61 For graves with bronze rattles see SABETAI (2022a). The rattle from this tomb (T.380) is 28 cm long (shaft 20 cm; diam. 8.5 cm; width of handle 2.3 cm; thickness 1 mm).

62 For other rattles from tombs see ANDREIOMENOU (1994a), 218-22, fig. 85 (length, 24.3 cm.)

63 For phormiskoi see KEFALIDOU (2001); HATZIVASSILIOU (2001); KEFALIDOU (2003), esp. 185-186; (Boeotian and Locrian examples); KEFALIDOU (2004). They occur in Boeotian tombs (Rhitsona, Halai, Tanagra and Thespiiai) and in the Kabirion: KOLOTOUROU (2011), 174, n. 24; WOLTERS, BRUNS (1940), 121, pl. 20, no. 7. BRAUN, HAEVERNICK (1981), 34. For such objects from Akraiphian child tombs see ANDREIOMENOU (1994a), 215; 217, figs 80 and 81b.

64 For a Boeotian phormiskos from Thebes depicting in relief the astragals inside it see Mannheim CG177 (BAPD 9033398). See also the Boeotian terracotta phormiskos with astragals inside in Paris, Louvre CA 943; WILLIAMS (2022), 296-297, fig. 3, with discussion of depictions of phormiskoi in vase-painting.

65 For a Boeotian phormiskos depicting a warrior's departure see Erlangen I277 (BAPD 9033192; 530 BCE). For patterned examples see CVA Tübingen 1, pl. 47, 7.

66 BURROWS, URE (1907-1908), 280, pl. XII, c (early 5th cent. BCE; for the date cf. CVA Thebes 1, 99 [V. Sabetai]).

67 Thebes inv. 52822 and 49189 (length ca. 9.5-12.5 cm; diam. 4-5 cm). The tomb (T.208) is under publication by the author.

68 Effigies such as miniature kanastra and shields (see below) occur in child graves and may have also been token toys; their study should be contextualized within the phenomenon of miniaturization.

69 See VILLING (2002), esp. 289-292 (amulets in late and non-Greek contexts). For bells in amuletic chains (crepundia) see DASEN (2015), 189; SCHMIDT-DOUNA (2017), 120, 121, 123. For the Roman tintinnabula see PARKER (2018).

70 For clay bells (at least 8) from the Kabirion see WOLTERS, BRUNS (1940), 93, pl. 19, no. 8 and pl. 43, nos. 12-13 (height 7-18 cm); BRAUN, HAEVERNICK (1981), 34-36; 61, nos. 283-284; pl. 19, nos. 5; 9; 10.

71 VILLING 2002, (249), fig. 14. The dedicator is a man, while on the Spartan bells also female names occur.

72 For bells as toys see VILLING (2002), 290.

implements of rhythmic sound that could please and appease children as well as avert the evil on the brink of maturation may have been one of the reasons why they reached sanctuaries such as the Kabirion, where they could be dedicated as characteristic objects of a bygone infancy.

As to clay Boeotian examples, these date from the 6th century BCE to the first half of the 4th century BCE and occur in both sanctuaries and graves. Villing mentions as earliest the 5th century BCE elongated conical examples from the Thespian Polyandron burial (424 BCE), the Kabirion and a sanctuary (Thesmophorion) at Eutresis.⁷³ To the Boeotian cult places can be added examples from a Theban sanctuary which should be identified with that of Demeter Kadmeia, the poliadic deity of the city.⁷⁴ Examples of earlier date have been found in Akraiphian tombs. An infant grave dated to 520/510–500 BCE on the basis of a black-figure lekythos depicting a warrior contained a plain bell with a dome-like shape and arched handle.⁷⁵ Its tomb-group was comprised of 21 vases, at least 11 horse figurines and another of a woman, as well as a miniature clay shield, which points to a boy. In the Classical era bells become more conical and bear painted bands, while in the 4th century BCE they are slender, with a flaring rim and polychrome decoration.⁷⁶

1.5 “Dolls” and Miniature Shields

“Dolls” were found in Boeotian sanctuaries and graves, while miniature shields only in the latter; these artefacts characterized burials of girls and boys respectively.

Clay figurines with articulated arms and/or legs, seated or standing, dressed or nude and occasionally limbless have been called “dolls” but the ancient term for the female ones was probably *nymphē* (νύμφη), which also means bride. Current scholarship notes that they were toy-figurines with an educative function in a ludic frame which aimed at the socialization of girls. In Attica they were also made in marble and dedicated to goddesses protecting the passage of women to maturity; their transcription in stone highlights their iconic character.⁷⁷ On occasion

Attic bride-“dolls” are found with miniature *lebetes gamikoi* in an assorted set that imitates the nuptial setting of the bridal preparations.⁷⁸ In Boeotia “dolls” are found in sanctuaries and tombs. A miniature nuptial set from a rich mid 4th century BCE Theban grave contained an enthroned and a seated bride “doll” together with figurines of dancers, acrobats, a hydriaphoros, Leda and the swan, mini *phormiskoi* and bridal shoes. Instead of the *lebetes gamikoi* which were used only in Attica, a pair of small kraters evokes the nuptial banquet and pictures bliss in the form of Dionysos’ *hierogamia* with Ariadne.⁷⁹ Astragals and jewellery complement the nuptial “mise en scène” of this tomb (pl. 7 a).

An even richer and roughly contemporary Akraiphian tomb offers a rare example of an array of bridal imagery with the use of various artefacts, namely vases, figurines, a mirror, glass beads, a needle, a bell, a *kanastron* and shells (pl. 7 b).⁸⁰ The tomb’s objects are in fact an assortment associated with female life-phases and aspects of female identity. In larger scale are a bronze caryatid mirror which was a 5th century BCE heirloom, a plastic lekythos in the form of Eros flying above the waves, a free-standing female head and the figurine of a bride wearing a polos-crown covered on top by a veil, which she pulls to perform the *anakalypsis* (ἀνακάλυψις) gesture while holding a knotted fillet. In small scale is a group of vases (*hydrikske*, *amphoriskos*, *lekaniske*, metal *pyxis* and squat lekythos) while even smaller is a group of figurines (pl. 7 c), comprising an enthroned “doll” minus the throne. The “doll” preserves only her lower, draped, body, while her legs are not articulated in contrast to her – now lost – arms. This type of *plangōn* (πλᾶγγων) with limited mobility may represent a terracotta type that stands between the standard “doll” with articulated arms and legs and the more statue-like figurine. It is unknown whether such “dolls” functioned as toys made to be played; yet their small size may have induced intimacy with the girl who handled them.⁸¹ The “doll’s” coroplastic “family”, namely the tomb’s small figurines, may have been part of a small-scale “doll household”: two nursing women, possibly a reference to the deceased

73 For Boeotian sites with bells see VILLING (2002), 252–254. For other Boeotian bells see, e.g., Erlangen I399A and I399B (BAPD 1006699 and 9034134).

74 See SABETAI, KARAKITSOU (2010–2011), 273–274, fig. 9 (4th cent. BCE). Bells from burials of subadults suggest that these objects were not confined solely to small children.

75 Thebes 42583. Height 7.5; diam. 6 cm. Its pale clay may suggest Corinthian origin. See SABETAI (2022a), 51–52 (tomb T.232). For a *comparandum* to this tomb’s lekythos cf. CVA Reading 1, pl. 11, 11. Note that of early date are also bell-shaped dolls, for which see below.

76 Cf. ANDREIOMENOU (1990), 141, pl. 97, ε–ζ (woman’s tomb 62).

77 DASEN (2010), 25–29; HUYSECOM-HAXHI *et al.* (2012); GRIESBACH (2014); SCHWARZMAIER (2015). For the term *nymphē* for the “doll” see PILZ (2009), 108. For marble dolls at Brauron see DESPINIS (2010), 115–122. Their features are idealized but there exist also rare carica-

tured ones which are notably associated with dead adolescents, see SKARLATIDOU (2017), 76, fig. 3.

78 HIGGINS (1954), 172, no. A2, 186–87, nn. 702–706, pl. 91. On nuptial as well as funerary context in Italiote vase painting, see DASEN, VERBANCK-PIÉRARD (2022).

79 BONANNO-ARAVANTINOS (2015). For the tomb’s kraters as symbols of the wedding feast, see SABETAI (2011), 156–157. For an assortment of dolls, dancers and astragals on the same pair of earrings see SCHWARZMAIER (2020), 77–82; such combinations reveal a widespread community of ideas regarding the role of “dolls” in the prenuptial realm. For other assemblages from Boeotia see HAMDORF (1996), 53, 55, fig. 55 (limbless doll, nurse, dancer).

80 On this grave see SABETAI (2022b), 353–360.

81 On the power of miniatures to invite intimacy, touch and enchantment leading to real or imagined handling and for miniaturization theory see MARTIN, LANGIN-HOOPER (2018); HUGHES (2018), 58–67.



woman's childhood, a crouching boy alluding to her prospective motherhood, a mini *ephedrismos* (ἐφεδρισμός) group recalling childhood pastimes, two female heads and a small male one. This last may have represented her bridegroom in the form of a "doll" too, in a rare appearance in such a context.⁸² The grave group's other small items, namely the miniature vases and the *kanastron* (κάναστρον) add nuances of aromatics, water-fetching and flower or fruit-collecting, all key *topoi* associated with

maidens in Greek cultural imagination. Thus, the funerary celebrations are "staged" with token objects giving concrete form to notions of nubility, erotic charm, adornment, and female roles spanning from childhood to motherhood. Such a setting at the grave visualizes further the concept of the "marriage to Hades" while intensifying feelings generated by the deceased's premature death.

"Dolls" from earlier time periods are rare in the necropoleis but a series is reported from the Heliconeian cave of the Leibethrian Nymphs and Pan which is the only cult place currently known to have attracted such votives in the 5th century BCE

⁸² The *ephedrismos* group is broken and preserves the headless runner's body and the mounted girl's torso with part of her arms (Plate 7c: fourth head on the top row and third body on the bottom). It is not easy to explain why the small heads were found without their body. No skeleton was found in this large cist tomb which suggests a totally decomposed child/subadult, as it is often the case at Akraiphia.



PLATE 7: a. Doll Group from Theban tomb (Bonanno-Aravantinos 2015) as displayed in the Thebes Museum. Photo by Author. Photos Andreas Santrouzanos. b, c. Akraiphian tomb group and small terracottas presumably from doll group. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports – Ephorate of Antiquities of Boeotia - Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development. Photos Andreas Santrouzanos.

(pl. 8 a).⁸³ The “dolls” have articulated arms and legs and wear a *polos* indicating ritual maidenal status. Very few are complete but several of their articulated limbs have survived. Several other female terracotta types were found in the cave, presumably brought to the deities upon coming of age. The prevailing Corinthian type for the dolls matches the abundance of Corinthian pottery unearthed in the site.

Moving further back in time, we note that articulated “dolls” from the ripe Archaic era are currently unknown. Yet, an early group of 13 clay examples dated to 710/700 -680 (?) BCE and derived from a few, mostly looted, Theban tombs is noteworthy for its type and decoration.⁸⁴ The “dolls” are bell-shaped females with movable legs, fixed arms and plastically rendered breasts. They are richly dressed, bejeweled and shod with boots, which are occasionally particularly large and elaborate.⁸⁵ They bear decorative motifs on their dress as well as on their arms, the latter perhaps suggesting tattoos. Branches and birds are depicted along the arms and on the skirt of the “doll” Louvre CA 573, while her sister CA 623 features a round dance of women and girls among stylized flowery plants (pl. 8 b). Although associated with the funerary realm, these “dolls” may be interpreted as effigies of the nubile female as is the case with their counterparts of later periods. The fact that only their legs are movable in combination with the dance decorating their dress may be seen as a visual reference to a key theme, namely the chorus of

branch-holding maidens at the flower of their youth who danced in honour of deities.⁸⁶ This theme was also recurrent on Geometric pottery, on early Boeotian clay *poloi* with birds and on the quintessential Attic nuptial shape, the loutrophoros.⁸⁷ Their conspicuous shod feet must further signify the special bridal shoes (*nymphides*) which are variously rendered as boots or sandals. The emphasis on shoes recalls the fact that the ancient wedding involved the bride’s ritual transfer to her husband’s abode in a procession. Thus, both the actual ritual and the imagery of shod dolls enhance the notion of the maiden’s transition to marriage as a journey in the late 7th-early 6th c. BCE, whereas later the doll appears as the enthroned mistress of her household.⁸⁸ Such bridal figures make these early Boeotian “bride-dolls” appropriate funerary offerings for the elite Theban girls who died prematurely and were buried as *aōrai* (ἄωραι). We should not fail to note the resemblance of early dolls to bells, their elongated neck serving as handle and their movable legs as clappers.

Although the elaborate 4th century BCE Akraiphian “doll” set may have included a man as groom, male identity in earlier periods prioritized military aspects, as seen in child tombs with miniature clay shields

⁸³ The dolls are unpublished; one is exhibited in the Thebes Museum (inv. 49348). For the figurines from the cave see VASSILOPOULOU *et al.* (2015); SABETAI (2019), para. 4-5.

⁸⁴ See JEAMMET (2003).

⁸⁵ Copenhagen 3887; JEAMMET (2003), 28, fig. 20.

⁸⁶ For maidenal choruses see CALAME (1977).

⁸⁷ SIMON (1972); SABETAI (2021), 166-168, Boeotian *poloi*; KYRKOU (1997), early loutrophoroi. For sprig-holding girls as a theme picturing the concept of nubility in early Greek art see LANGDON (2007), 188-191. The birds on one example, JEAMMET (2003), 17, fig. 17, display diverging features, one being taller than the other, which may suggest a male-female or elder-younger pair.

⁸⁸ For shoes see in general PICKUP, WAITE (2018); KLINGER (2018). The shift of emphasis from the dance and the procession in the public (7th-6th cent. BCE) to the enthroned bride in her *oikos* (5th-4th cent. BCE) is also attested in Attic vase iconography.

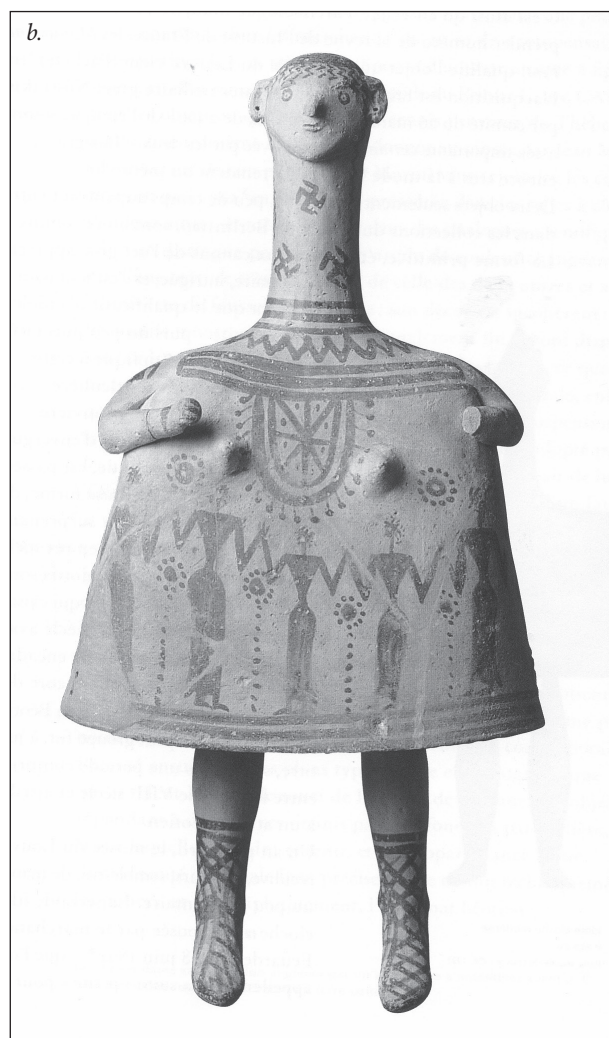


PLATE 8: a. Doll from the Heliconeian cave of the Leibethrian Nymphs and Pan. Thebes, Archaeological Museum inv. 49348. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports – Ephorate of Antiquities of Boeotia - Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development.

b. Doll, Paris, Louvre inv. CA 623. Photo after Jeammet (2003).

c. Mini shields from Akraiphian tombs © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports – Ephorate of Antiquities of Boeotia - Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development.

(pl. 8 c). Were they toys or merely miniaturized objects with token value? The question should be asked in the frame of the phenomenon of miniaturization of life-size objects and their transcription in various non-functional materials. The small shield occurs in a few Boeotian tombs and is known also from sanctuaries elsewhere.⁸⁹ An Akraiphian late Archaic child grave contained two miniature shields, one of which was found at the area of the dead's chest.

⁸⁹ See SCHMIDT (1994), 47, pl. 11, nos. 44-45 (late 6th cent. BCE). For other Akraiphian examples see ANDREIOMENOU (2015), 202, pl. 95, no. 18.23 (ca. 550 BCE); *eadem* 260, pl. 151, nos. 28.17 and 28.18 (ca. 500 BCE). For other Boeotian examples see WOLTERS (1899), 119; URE, URE (1933), 6-7 (last third 6th cent. BCE). HIGGINS (1954), 213, no. 797, pl. 107. For miniature arms in general cf. GRAELLS I FABREGAT (2017).

They co-existed with a lekythos near the Dolphin Group depicting a runner, thus, besides military, also athletic ideals were exalted in this tomb.⁹⁰

CONCLUSION

A plethora of playthings is attested in Boeotia from the late 7th century BCE onwards, with a particular concentration in the Kabirion sanctuary and in the region's burials of children and subadults (ἄωροι). In the tombs, "dolls" appear in the 7th century BCE, are unknown in the Archaic era and reappear in the 5th and 4th century BCE, while sound-making objects (rattles, bells and *phormiskoi*) occur in child burials from the Archaic era onwards. A series of

⁹⁰ For the publication of the tomb see SABETAI (2022a). Shields: Thebes, inv. 47525 (height 3.5; diam. 15) and 47526 (height 3.8; diam. 11.7). Co-finds: 18 vases (1 fayence) and 7 figurines (horses; deer).

spintops and a “yo-yo” occur in the Kabirion of the Classical period. Playthings disappear in Hellenistic necropoleis presumably because of changes in the burial customs.

The materials used for toys and their simulacra vary across time but clay is the commonest. The use of stone and metal for tops, bells, astragals and rattles highlights their cultural import. The rare bronze rattles are the most precious object in infant graves and characterize children of the elite.

Some of the toys, such as the rattles and *phormiskoi*, are associated particularly with babies. Others, such as the spintops, the “yo-yo” and the knucklebones are more closely linked to older children or adolescents, as can be documented from Boeotian findspots as well as their depiction in Attic iconography. The Kabirion sanctuary and the pronounced presence of playthings in its material and epigraphical record is noteworthy. The series of decorated spintops, one of which depicts a boy with his hoop, as well as the “yo-yo”, toys used in games of skill or functioning as iconic simulacra, are particular to it. Although contextualized in the frame of Bacchic mysteries due to some Dionysiac elements in the Kabiric ware, the occurrence of the spintop also in other cult sites refutes this interpretation. In fact, the top and the hoop belong to the Attic visual vocabulary of initiatory pederasty together with the rooster, which appears in the hands of terracotta youths from the Kabirion. A combined reading of the evidence points to the links of the dedicated spintops, “yo-yo” and figurines with maturing males in the Classical period. The contemporaneous derisive imagery on Kabiric ware provides a further context for associating toys of skill and love magic with coming of age. Upside-down scenes parodying terrified heroes and frightful or grotesquely deformed figures had a significant role in the Greek pedagogy of expressing and overcoming fear. Anxiety permeates transient states, but when culturally channeled may teach minors how to control it as part of an *agoge* that aimed at transforming them into courageous adults. The Kabirion’s playthings may be contextualized in the light of this edifying strategy.⁹¹ Tops, “yo-yos”, knucklebones, and possibly also bells and *phormiskoi* document an aspect of the *mise en scène* of maturation celebrations in Classical Boeotia and attest to Theban interest in the coming of age of its citizens. In this “big picture” toys such as the spintops were not deceitful devices as in Bacchic mysteries but, on

the contrary, an antidote to fear via joyous play. The spintop recalled the pederastic *agōgē* (ἀγωγή) of the elite and epitomized the skills to be mastered, while the sleeping female monster as easy prey to a hero on the “yo-yo” communicated humorously ideas about femininity. Thus, playfulness and gendered humour could ease the tensions associated with growing up and transforming from boy to brave man in the frame of the classical Greek *polis*.⁹²

ABBREVIATIONS

KH I; KH IV; KH V (= *Kabirenheiligtum*)

I = P. Wolters and G. Bruns, *Das Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben*, I, Berlin (1940).

IV = K. Braun and T. E. Haevernick, *Bemalte Keramik und Glas aus dem Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben*, *Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben* II, Berlin (1981).

V = B. Schmaltz, *Terrakotten aus dem Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben: menschenähnliche Figuren, menschliche Figuren und Gerät*, *Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben*, Berlin (1974).

BAPD = Beazley Archive Pottery Database.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANDREIOMENOU, Angeliki, “Το νεκροταφείο της Ακραιφίας”, *Praktika Archaeologikis Etaireias* (1990), 113-141.

ANDREIOMENOU, Angeliki, “Το νεκροταφείον της Ακραιφίας: Αγρός Ιω. Κόλλια. Μέρος Ι,” *Archaeologike Ephemeris*, 133 (1994a), 155-254.

ANDREIOMENOU, Angeliki, “La nécropole d’Akraiphia”, in Juliette de la Genière (ed.), *Nécropoles et sociétés antiques : Grèce, Italie, Languedoc. Actes du colloque international du Centre de recherches archéologiques de l’Université de Lille III, Lille, 2-3 décembre 1991*, *Cahiers du Centre Jean Bérard* 18, Naples (1994b), 99-126.

ANDREIOMENOU, Angeliki, “Η εξ Ακραιφίας στήλη Μνασιθείου, έργον Φιλούργου”, in Georgia Kokkorou-Alevras, Wolf D. Niemeier (eds), *Neue Funde archaischer Plastik aus griechischen Heiligtümern und Nekropolen. Internationales Symposion Athen, 2.-3. November 2007*, *Athenaia* 3, München (2012), 229-243.

ANDREIOMENOU, Angeliki, *Το κεραμεικό εργαστήριο της Ακραιφίας, Δημοσιεύματα του Αρχαιολογικού Δελτίου* 106, Αθήνα (2015).

AVRONIDAKI, Christina, *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum, Athens National Archaeological Museum* 8, Greece 16 (forthcoming).

AVRONIDAKI, Christina, SABETAI, Victoria, “Λευκά πουλιά της Βοιωτίας”, in Mimika Giannopoulou, Chrysanthi

⁹¹ Note that the Kabirion is an extra-urban sanctuary, as it lies at 8 km from Thebes. Coming of age is known to have been associated with sanctuaries of this kind, as, e.g., the one at Brauron. The Heliconeian cave-sanctuary is remoter and wilder and must have been perceived as an *eschatia* (ἐσχάτια).

⁹² For the study of toys in the context of artefacts which attest to the process of social gendering in early Greece see LANGDON (2007), esp. 173.

Kallini (eds), *Ηγάδιν*, Τμητικός τόμος για τη Στέλλα Δρούγου, I, Αθήνα (2016), 6-50.

BELLIA, Angela, “La musica e l’infanzia nel mondo antico. Fonti scritte e documentazione archeologica”, in Chiara Terranova (ed.), *La presenza dei bambini nelle religioni del Mediterraneo antico. La vita e la morte, i rituali e i culti tra archeologia, antropologia e storia delle religioni*, Roma (2014), 53-69.

BOESSNECK, Joachim, *Die Tierknochenfunde aus dem Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben (Böotien)*, München (1973).

BONANNO-ARAVANTINOS, Marguerita, “La tomba 404 della necropoli nord-orientale di Tebe (Beozia)”, in Arthur Muller, Ergün Lafli (eds), *Figurines de terre cuite en Méditerranée grecque et romaine*, II, *Iconographie et contextes*, Villeneuve d’Ascq (2015), 333-348.

BRAUN, Karin, HAEVERNICK, Thea Elisabeth, *Bemalte Keramik und Glas aus dem Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben*, Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben IV, Berlin (1981).

BURROWS, Ronald M., URE, Percy N., “Excavations at Rhitsona in Boeotia”, *Annual of the British School at Athens*, 14 (1907-1908), 226-318.

CALAME, Claude, *Les chœurs de jeunes filles en Grèce archaïque*, Rome (1977).

CARÈ, Barbara, “Il gioco degli astragali: un passatempo tra antico e moderno”, *Ludica*, 15-16 (2009-2010), 32-42.

CARÈ, Barbara, “L’astragalo nel sepolcro μετὰκίων τε καὶ παρθένων παίγνιον? Riflessioni per la rilettura di un costume funerario: i casi di Locri e Caulonia”, in Lucia Lepore, Paola Turi (eds), *Caulonia tra Crotona e Locri. Tomo 2. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi* (Firenze, 30 maggio – 1 giugno 2007), Firenze (2010), 459-469.

CARÈ, Barbara, “L’astragalo in tomba nel mondo greco: un indicatore infantile? Vecchi problemi e nuove osservazioni a proposito di un aspetto del costume funerario”, in Antoine Hermay, Céline Dubois (eds), *L’enfant et la mort dans l’Antiquité*, III, *Le matériel associé aux tombes d’enfants, Actes de la table ronde internationale organisée à la Maison Méditerranéenne des Sciences de l’Homme (MMSH) d’Aix-en-Provence, 20-22 janvier 2011*, Bibliothèque d’archéologie méditerranéenne et africaine 12, Aix-en-Provence (2012), 403-416.

CARÈ, Barbara, “Where the Children Are: an Insight into ‘Age Markers’ in Western Greece. Astragali from the Burial Area of Locri Epizefiri”, *Journal of Greek Archaeology*, 2 (2017), 175-198.

CARÈ, Barbara, “Bones of Bronze: New Observations on the Astragalus Bone Metal Replicas”, *Annuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni italiane in Oriente*, 97 (2019), 157-170.

CARÈ, Barbara, “Beyond the Grave: Burial Rituals and Knucklebones at the State War Memorial of Thespieae”, in Raimon Graells i Fabregat, Miguel Pérez Blasco,

Alessandro Pace (eds), *Warriors at Play*, Alicante (2022 forthcoming).

CIOBOTARU, Alina, “New Reflections Regarding an Old Topic: Classical Greek Pottery ‘Bobbins’. Yo-yos, Toys or Bobbins for Thread?”, *Revista Philohistoriss*, 3, 5 (2017), 43-54.

CRUCCAS, Emiliano, “Doni votivi al Pais”, in Chiara Terranova (ed.), *La presenza dei bambini nelle religioni del Mediterraneo antico. La vita e la morte, i rituali e i culti tra archeologia, antropologia e storia delle religioni*, Roma (2014), 467-494.

DASEN, Véronique, “Archéologie funéraire et histoire de l’enfance dans l’Antiquité : nouveaux enjeux, nouvelles perspectives”, in Anne-Marie Guimier-Sorbets, Yvette Morizot (eds), *L’enfant et la mort dans l’Antiquité*, I, *Nouvelles recherches dans les nécropoles grecques. Le signalement des tombes d’enfants*, Travaux de la Maison René-Ginouvès 12, Paris (2010), 19-44.

DASEN, Véronique, “Probaskania: Amulets and Magic in Antiquity”, in Dietrich Boschung, Jan N. Bremmer (eds), *The Materiality of Magic*, Morphomata 20, Paderborn (2015), 177-203.

DASEN, Véronique, “Jeux de l’amour et du hasard en Grèce ancienne”, *Kernos*, 29 (2016), 73-100.

DASEN, Véronique, “Le hochet d’Archytas : un jouet pour grandir”, in Véronique Dasen, Patricia Gaillard Seux (eds), *Accueil et soin de l’enfant (Antiquité, Moyen Âge)*, Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l’Ouest 124, Rennes (2017), 89-107.

DASEN, Véronique, “Ganymède ou l’immortalité en jeu”, *Kernos*, 31 (2018a), 119-140.

DASEN, Véronique, “Histoire et archéologie de la culture ludique dans le monde gréco-romain. Questions méthodologiques”, in Véronique Dasen, Typhaine Haziza (eds), “Dossier : Jeux et jouets”, *Kentron. Revue pluridisciplinaire du monde antique*, 34 (2018b), 23-50.

DASEN, Véronique, “Hoops and Coming of Age in Greek and Roman Antiquity”, in Gilles Brougère, Mark Allen (eds), *Proceedings of the 8th International Toy Research Association World Conference; Toys and Material Culture: Hybridisation, Design and Consumption*, Paris, (2019a), 1-21. hal-02170802f

DASEN, Véronique, “Jeux de cerceau”, in Véronique Dasen (ed.), *Ludique! Jouer dans l’Antiquité, catalogue de l’exposition, Lugdunum, musée et théâtres romains, 20 juin-1^{er} décembre 2019*, Gent/Lyon (2019b) 54-55.

DASEN, Véronique, VERBANCK-PIÉRARD Annie, “Poupées articulées en image : du jeu au rite”, in Véronique Dasen, Thomas Daniaux (eds), *Locus Ludi. Quoi de neuf sur la culture antique*, Pallas, 119 (2022), 349-378.

DASEN, Véronique, VESPA, Marco, “Play, Games, and Leisure. Greek and Roman Views”, in Christian Laes, Ville

- Vuolanto (eds), *A Cultural History of Youth in Antiquity*, London/Bloomsbury (2022), 77-94.
- DE GROSSI MAZZORIN, Jacopo, MINNITI, Claudia, "Ancient Use of the Knucklebone for Rituals and Gaming Piece", *Anthropozoologica*, 48 (2013), 371-380.
- DESPINIS, Giorgos, Ἀρτεμὶς Βραυρωνία. Λατρευτικά ἀγάλματα καὶ ἀναθήματα ἀπὸ τὰ ἱερά τῆς θεᾶς στὴ Βραυρώνα καὶ τὴν Ἀκρόπολη τῆς Ἀθήνας, *Η Βιβλιοθήκη της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικῆς Εταιρείας* 268, Αθήνα (2010).
- DIETRICH, Nikolaus, *Figur ohne Raum? Bäume und Felsen in der attischen Vasenmalerei des 6. und 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.*, Image and Context 7, Berlin (2010).
- ELIA, Diego, CARÈ, Barbara, "Ancora sull' 'astragalomania' a Locri Epizefiri. La documentazione dalla necropoli in contrada Lucifero", *Orizzonti*, 5 (2004), 77-90.
- ERLICH, Adi, "Happily Ever After? A Hellenistic Hoard from Tel Kedesh in Israel", *American Journal of Archaeology*, 121 (2017), 39-59.
- FRONTISI-DUCROUX, Françoise, "Eros, Desire, and the Gaze" trans. N. Kline, in Nathalie B. Kampen (ed.), *Sexuality in Ancient Art: Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Italy*, Cambridge Studies in New Art History and Criticism, Cambridge (1996), 81-100.
- GIUMAN, Marco, *La trottola nel mondo classico. Archeologia, fonti letterarie e iconografiche*, Quaderni di Otivm. Collana di studi di archeologia e antichità classiche 4, Roma (2020).
- GRAELLS I FABREGAT, Raimon, "Armi miniaturistiche: un riesame", in Raimon Graells I Fabregat, Fausto Longo, Gabriel Zuchtriegel (eds), *Le armi di Athena; il santuario settentrionale di Paestum*, Paestum (2017), 179-195.
- GRIESBACH, Jochen, "Pupa: spielend vom Mädchen zur Frau" in Susanne Moraw, Anna Kieburg (eds), *Mädchen im Altertum*, Frauen, Forschung, Archäologie 11, Münster (2014), 253-274.
- HAMDORF, Friedrich W. (ed.), *Hauch des Prometheus. Meisterwerke in Ton*, München (1996).
- HAMDORF, Friedrich W. *Die figürlichen Terrakotten der Staatlichen Antikensammlungen München*, Staatliche Antikensammlungen München Katalog der Terrakotten, I-II, München (2014).
- HATZIVASSILIOU, Eleni, "The Attic Phormiskos: Problems of Origin and Function", *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 45 (2001), 113-148.
- HERMARY, Antoine, "L'amour des jeunes garçons dans la Grèce classique : à propos d'un astragale inscrit d'Apollonia du Pont", in Antoine Hermary, Céline Dubois (eds), *L'enfant et la mort dans l'Antiquité*, III, *Actes de la table ronde internationale organisée à la Maison Méditerranéenne des Sciences de l'Homme (MMSH) d'Aix-en-Provence, 20-22 janvier 2011*, Aix-en-Provence (2012), 417-425.
- HERMARY, Antoine, "Askos en forme d'osselet", in Véronique Dasen (ed.), *Ludique. Catalogue de l'exposition "Ludique ! Jouer dans l'Antiquité"*, Lugdunum-musée et théâtres romains, 20 juin – 1er décembre 2019, Gent (2019), 96-97.
- HIGGINS, Reynolds, *Catalogue of the Terracottas in the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, British Museum, I, Greek: 730-330 B.C.*, London (1954).
- HUGHES, Jessica, "Tiny and Fragmented Votive Offerings from Classical Antiquity", in S. Rebecca Martin, Stephanie M. Langin-Hooper (eds), *The Tiny and the Fragmented. Miniature, Broken, or Otherwise Incomplete Objects in the Ancient World*, New York (2018), 48-71.
- HUYSECOM-HAXHI, Stéphanie, "Du coq au canthare. Images de l'initiation masculine dans la coroplastie béotienne à l'époque classique", in Stéphanie Huysecom-Haxhi, Arthur Muller (eds), *Figurines grecques en contexte. Présence muette dans le sanctuaire, la tombe et la maison*, Archaiologia, Villeneuve d'Ascq (2015), 71-89.
- HUYSECOM-HAXHI, Stéphanie, PAPAICONOMOU, Irini-Despina, PAPADOPOULOS Stratis, "Les figurines en terre cuite dans les sépultures d'enfants en Grèce ancienne : le cas des jeunes filles nues assises", in Antoine Hermary, Céline Dubois (eds), *L'enfant et la mort dans l'Antiquité*, III, *Actes de la table ronde internationale organisée à la Maison Méditerranéenne des Sciences de l'Homme (MMSH) d'Aix-en-Provence, 20-22 janvier 2011*, Aix-en-Provence (2012), 343-366.
- JEAMMET, Violaine, *Idoles-cloches de Béotie*, Collection Solo 25, Paris (2003).
- KEFALIDOU, Eurydice, "Late Archaic Polychrome Pottery from Aiani", *Hesperia*, 70 (2001), 183-219.
- KEFALIDOU, Eurydice, "Vases for the Dead: Local Workshops of White-Ground Polychrome 'Phormiskoi' ", in Bernhard Schmaltz, Madeleine Söldner (eds), *Griechische Keramik im kulturellen Kontext: Akten des internationalen Vasen-Symposions in Kiel vom 24. bis 28.9.2001*, Münster (2003), 185-187.
- KEFALIDOU, Eurydice, "On Phormiskoi Again", *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 47 (2004), 23-44.
- KEI, Nikolina, "The Floral Aesthetics of Attic Red-figure Pottery: Visual Adornment and Interplay between Ornament and Figure", in Claudia Lang-Auinger, Elisabeth Trinkl (eds), *Phytai kai Zoia. Pflanzen und Tiere auf griechischen Vasen. Akten des Internationalen Symposiums an der Universität Graz, 26.-28 September 2013*, Beihefte zum Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum Österreich 2, Wien (2015), 271-280.
- KIDD, Stephen, *Play and Aesthetics in Ancient Greece*, Cambridge (2019).

- KLINGER Sonia, "Terracotta Models of Sandaled Feet: Votives from the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore on Acrocorinth", *Hesperia*, 87 (2018), 429-449.
- KLINGER Sonia, *The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore: Miscellaneous Finds of Terracotta*, Corinth XVIII.8, Princeton (2022).
- KOLOTOUROU, Katerina, "Musical Rhythms from the Cradle to the Grave", in Matthew Haysom, Jenny Wallensten (eds), *Current Approaches to Religion in Ancient Greece: Papers Presented at a Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 17-19 April 2008*, Stockholm (2011), 169-187.
- KOUNTOURI, Elena, "Οικόπεδο Τσάλλα", *Archaiologikon Deltion*, 54 (1999) 318-323.
- ΚΥΡΙΑΚΟΥ-ΖΑΡΗΕΙΟΡΟΥΛΟΥ, Dora, "Αρχαϊκό ιερό στο Αλεποχώρι Μεγαρίδος (II): Ο «οίκος» και τα ευρήματά του. Ειδώλια και μικροαντικείμενα του αποθέτη", in *Archaiologikon Deltion*, 69-70, A, Meletes (2014-2015), 281-410.
- ΚΥΡΚΟΥ, Maro, "Η πρωτοαττική πρόκληση. Νέες κεραμικές μαρτυρίες", in John H. Oakley, William D.E. Coulson, Olga Palagia (eds), *Athenian Potters and Painters: The Conference Proceedings*, Oxbow monograph 67, Oxford (1997), 423-434.
- LAMBRUGO, Claudia, "La toupie", *Archéothéma*, 31 (novembre-décembre 2013), 30-31.
- LANGDON, Susan, "The Awkward Age: Art and Maturation in Early Greece", in Ada Cohen, Jeremy B. Rutter (eds), *Constructions of Childhood in Ancient Greece and Italy*, Princeton (2007), 173-191.
- LEBESSI, Angeliki, "Τα μετάλλινα ζώδια του θηβαϊκού Καβίριου. Μια ερμηνευτική πρόταση", *Archaiologike Ephemeris* (1992), 1-19.
- LEVANIOUK, Olga, "The Toys of Dionysos", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 103 (2007), 165-202.
- MA, John, "Chaironeia 338: Topographies of Commemoration", *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 128 (2008), 72-91.
- MARTIN, S. Rebecca, LANGIN-HOOPER, Stephanie M., "In/complete. An introduction to the Theories of Miniaturization and Fragmentation", in S. Rebecca Martin, Stephanie M. Langin-Hooper (eds), *The Tiny and the Fragmented. Miniature, Broken, or Otherwise Incomplete Objects in the Ancient World*, New York (2018), 1-23.
- MITCHELL, Alexandre G., *Greek Vase-Painting and the Origins of Visual Humour*, Cambridge, (2009).
- PARKER, Adam, " 'The Bells! The Bells!' Approaching Tintinnabula in Roman Britain and Beyond", in Adam Parker, Stuart Mckie (eds), *Material Approaches to Roman Magic. Occult Objects and Supernatural Substances*, Oxford (2018), 57-68.
- PFISTERER HAAS, Susanne, "Kreisel und Jojo" in Raimund Wünsche, Martin Bentz (eds), *Lockender Lorbeer: Sport und Spiel in der Antike*, München (2004), 414-418.
- PICKUP, Sadie, WAITE, Sally, *Shoes, Slippers, and Sandals: Feet and Footwear in Classical Antiquity*, London (2018).
- PILZ, Oliver, "Some Remarks on Meaning and Function of Moldmade Terracotta Relief Plaques Depicting Naked and Dressed Female Figures", in Clarisse Prêtre, Stéphanie Huysecom-Haxhi (eds), *Le donateur, l'offrande et la déesse : systèmes votifs dans les sanctuaires de déesses du monde grec*, Kernos Supplément 23, Liège (2009), 97-110.
- SABETAI, Victoria, "Eros Reigns Supreme: Dionysos' Wedding on a New Krater by the Dinos Painter", in Renate Schlesier (ed.), *A Different God? Dionysos and Ancient Polytheism*, Berlin (2011), 137-60.
- SABETAI, Victoria, "Boeotian Red-Figured Vases: Observations on Their Contexts and Settings", in Stine Schierup, Bodil Bundgaard Rasmussen (eds), *Red-Figure Pottery in its Ancient Setting. Acts of the International Colloquium Held at the National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen, November 5-6, 2009*, Gösta Enbom Monographs 2, Aarhus (2012a), 81-98.
- SABETAI, Victoria, "Looking at Athenian Vases through the Eyes of the Boeotians: Copies, Adaptations, and Local Creations in the Social and Aesthetic Culture of an Attic Neighbour", in Stefan Schmidt, Adrian Stähli (eds), *Vasenbilder im Kulturtransfer: Zirkulation und Rezeption griechischer Keramik im Mittelmeerraum*, CVA Deutschland 5, München (2012b), 121-137.
- SABETAI, Victoria, "Pan in Boeotian Landscapes: Fear, Laughter and Coming of Age", *Mythos*, 13 (2019) URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/mythos/1379>.
- SABETAI, Victoria, "A Boeotian Die in Context: Gaming Pieces, Jewellery, Seals, Spindle Whorls and Bird Bowls in a Female Burial of Status", in Barbara Carè, Véronique Dasen, Ulrich Schädler (eds), *Back to the Game: Reframing Play and Games in Context. XXI Board Game Studies Annual Colloquium, April, 24-26, 2018, Benaki Museum – Italian School of Archaeology at Athens*, Lisbon (2021) 147-178 (= *Board Game Studies Journal*, 16, 1 (2022), 159-195).
- SABETAI, Victoria, "Bronze Rattles and Clay Shields for the Boeotian Child of the Elite: New Finds in Context", in Véronique Dasen, Thomas Daniaux (eds), *Locus Ludi: Quoi de neuf sur la culture ludique ? Pallas*, 119 (2022a), 43-74.
- SABETAI, Victoria, "Images in Dialogue: Picturing Identities in Boiotian Stone, Clay, and Metal", in Judith M. Barringer, François Lissarrague (eds), *Images at the Crossroads: Media and Meaning in Greek Art*, Edinburgh Leventis Studies 10, Edinburgh (2022b), 346-375.
- SABETAI, Victoria, "For Whom Did the Top Spin? A Boeotian Spinning Top in Context", in Claudia Lambrugo

- (ed.), *A Turning World: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Spinning Top and 'mosca cieca'*, Milano (2022 in preparation).
- SABETAI, Victoria, AVRONIDAKI, Christina, "The Six's Technique in Boiotia. Regional Experiments in Technique and Iconography", *Hesperia*, 87 (2018), 311-385.
- SABETAI, Victoria, KARAKITSOU, Elena, "Κεραμική και τμήμα κεράμωσης των κλασικών χρόνων από τη Θηβαϊκή Καδμεία: Διάσπαρτα τεκμήρια ενός ιερού", *Archaiologikon Deltion*, 65-66 (2010-2011), Μελέτες [2016], 263-280.
- SCANLON, Thomas F., *Eros and Greek Athletics*, Oxford (2002).
- SCAPINI, Marianna, "The Winged Figure in the 'Villa dei Misteri' Fresco and the Spinning Top in Ancient Rituals", *Mythos*, 10 (2016), 193-213. <https://doi.org/10.4000/mythos.509>
- SCHACHTER, Albert, "Evolutions of a Mystery Cult: The Theban Kabiroi", in Michael B. Cosmopoulos (ed.), *Greek Mysteries: The Archaeology and Ritual of Ancient Greek Secret Cults*, London (2003), 112-142.
- SCHACHTER, Albert, "Boiotian Military Elites", in Klaus Fittschen (ed.), *Historische Landeskunde und Epigraphik in Griechenland: Akten des Symposiums veranstaltet aus Anlass des 100. Todestages von H.G. Lolling (1848-1894) in Athen vom 28. bis 30.9.1994*, Münster (2007), 123-134.
- SCHMALTZ, Bernhard, *Terrakotten aus dem Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben. Menschenähnliche Figuren, menschliche Figuren und Gerät*, Das Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben V, Berlin (1974).
- SCHMIDT, Evamaria, *Katalog der antiken Terrakotten. Martin von Wagner Museum, Würzburg, Mainz* (1994).
- SCHMIDT-DOUNA, Barbara, "Αγαλμάτιο κοριτσιού με φυλακτήριο", in Emmanuel Voutiras, Eleni Papagianni, Natalia Kazakidi (eds), *Bonae Gratiae. Essays on Roman Sculpture in Honour of Professor Theodosia Stefanidou-Tiveriou*, Thessaloniki (2017), 117-128.
- SCHÖNE-DENKINGER, Angelika, "Import und Imitation attischer Bilder in Böotien," in Stefan Schmidt, Adrian Stähli (eds), *Vasenbilder im Kulturtransfer: Zirkulation und Rezeption griechischer Keramik im Mittelmeerraum*, CVA Deutschland 5, München 2012, 139-149.
- SCHWARZMAIER, Agnes, "Gaben für eine nicht erlebte Hochzeit. Zu Funktion und Bedeutung einiger Terrakottentypen in klassischen Mädchengräbern in Athen", in Arthur Muller, Ergun Lafli (eds), *Figurines de terre cuite en Méditerranée grecque et romaine, II, Iconographie et contextes*, Villeneuve d'Ascq (2015), 305-315.
- SCHWARZMAIER, Agnes, " 'Der Frauen schönste Zier' – griechischer Goldschmuck mit figürlicher Dekoration und seine Bedeutung", in Véronique Dasen, Fabio Spadini (eds), *Bijoux antiques : de l'ornement au talisman. Identités et pratiques sociales*, *Gemmae*, 2 (2020), 75-97.
- SHAPIRO, H. Alan, "Greek 'Bobbins': a New Interpretation", *Ancient World*, 11 (1985), 115-120.
- SIMON Erika, "Hera und die Nymphen. Ein böotischer Polos in Stockholm", *Études de céramique et de peinture antiques offertes à Pierre Devambez, Revue Archéologique*, N.S. 2 (1972), 205-220.
- SKARLATIDOU, Eudokia, "Terracotta Figurines from the Cemetery of Thermi", in Polyxeni Adam-Veleni et al. (eds), *Figurines. A Microcosmos of Clay*, Thessaloniki (2017), 74-76.
- TOPPER, Kathryn, "Perseus, the Maiden Medusa, and the Imagery of Abduction", *Hesperia*, 76 (2007), 73-105.
- TRANTALIDOU, Katerina, KAVOURA, Ismini, "Astragali in Caves: The Contribution of the Archaeozoology in the Understanding of Some Ancient Greek Cult Practices", *Anodos. Studies of the Ancient World*, 6-7 (2006-2007), 459-473.
- URE, Annie D., URE, Percy N., "Boeotian Vases in the Akademisches Kunstmuseum in Bonn", *Archaeologischer Anzeiger*, 17, 1 (1933), 1-42.
- VASSILOPOULOU, Vivi, "Prehistoric Use and Ancient Ritual Worship at the Cave of Hagia Triada on Helikon", in Fanis Mavridis, Jesper Tae Jensen (eds), *Stable Places and Changing Perceptions: Cave Archaeology in Greece*, BAR International Series 2558, Oxford (2013), 319-328.
- VASSILOPOULOU, Vivi, SKOUMI, Nelly, NASSIOTI, Eleni, "Aphrodite figurines from the sanctuary of 'Nymph Koronia' at mount Helicon", in Arthur Muller, Ergün Lafli, (eds), *Figurines de terre cuite en Méditerranée grecque et romaine, II, Iconographie et contextes*, Villeneuve d'Ascq (2015), 473-480.
- VIKATOU, Olympia, ANDREATOU, Melpomeni, Η αρχαιολογική συλλογή Σάμης, Exhibition Catalogue, Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού και Αθλητισμού, Εφορεία Αρχαιοτήτων Κεφαλληνίας και Ιθάκης, Αθήνα (2020).
- VILLING, Alexandra, "For Whom Did the Bell Toll in Ancient Greece? Archaic and Classical Greek Bells at Sparta and Beyond", *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, 97 (2002), 223-295.
- WALSH, David, *Distorted Ideals in Greek Vase-Painting. The World of Mythological Burlesque*, Cambridge, (2009).
- WEHGARTNER, Irma, *Attisch weissgrundige Keramik: Maltechniken, Werkstätten, Formen, Verwendung*, Mainz am Rhein (1983).
- WEISS, Carina, BUHL, Anton, "Votivgaben aus Ton. Jojo oder Fadenspule?", *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1990), 494-505.
- WILLIAMS, Dyfri, "Bone and Ball Bags: Greek *Phormiskoi* and *Diktydia* (?)", in Véronique Dasen, Thomas Daniaux (eds), *Locus Ludi: Quoi de neuf sur la culture ludique ? Pal-las*, 119 (2022), 295-319.

WOLTERS, Paul, “Vasen aus Menidi. II”, *Jahrbuch des deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, 14 (1899), 103-135.

WOLTERS, Paul, BRUNS, Gerda, *Das Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben*, I, Berlin (1940).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank the staffs of the Ephorate of Boeotia (A. Harami, K. Kalliga); Athens, National Museum (G. Kavvadias, M. Chidioglou, C. Avronidaki) and N. Skoumi for photographs and permits.



Astrid Fendt

Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek
fendt@antike-am-koenigsplatz.mwn.de

'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.

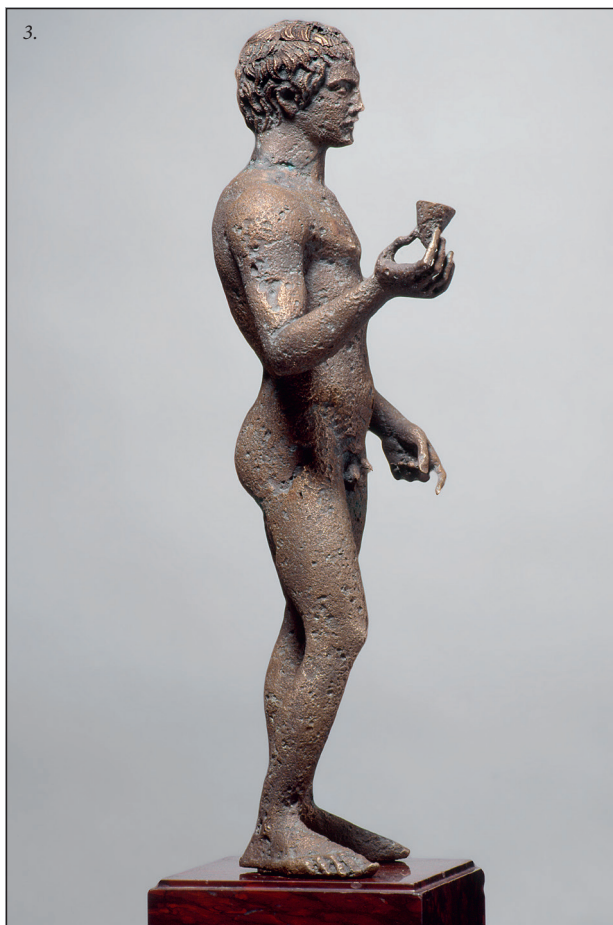
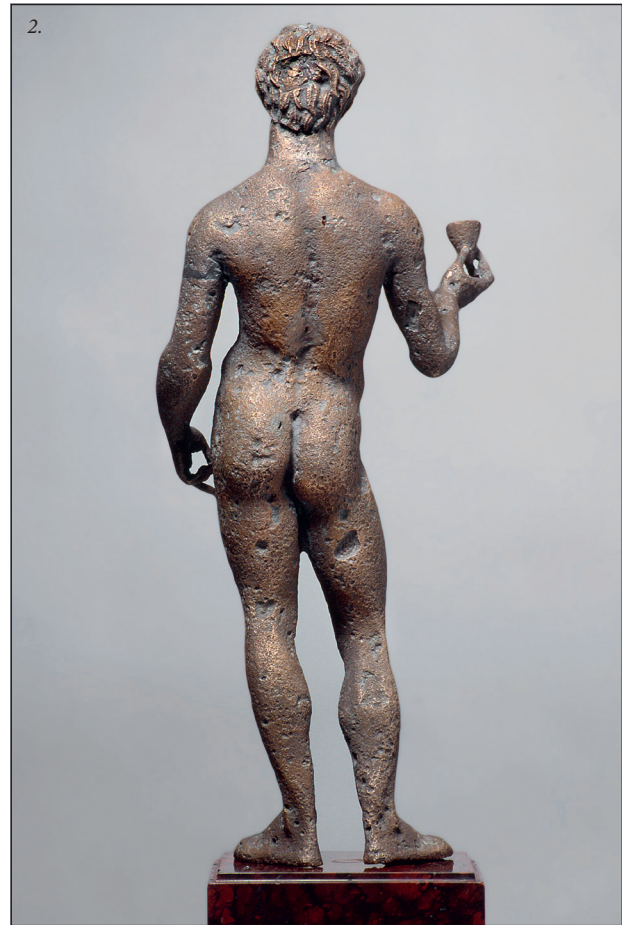


Fig. 1-4: Bronze statuette of a male youth with spinning top (H. 36 cm), from Coll. Loeb, 350-325 BCE, Staatliche Antikensammlungen Munich, inv. SL 25. Photo Renate Kühling, Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek Munich.

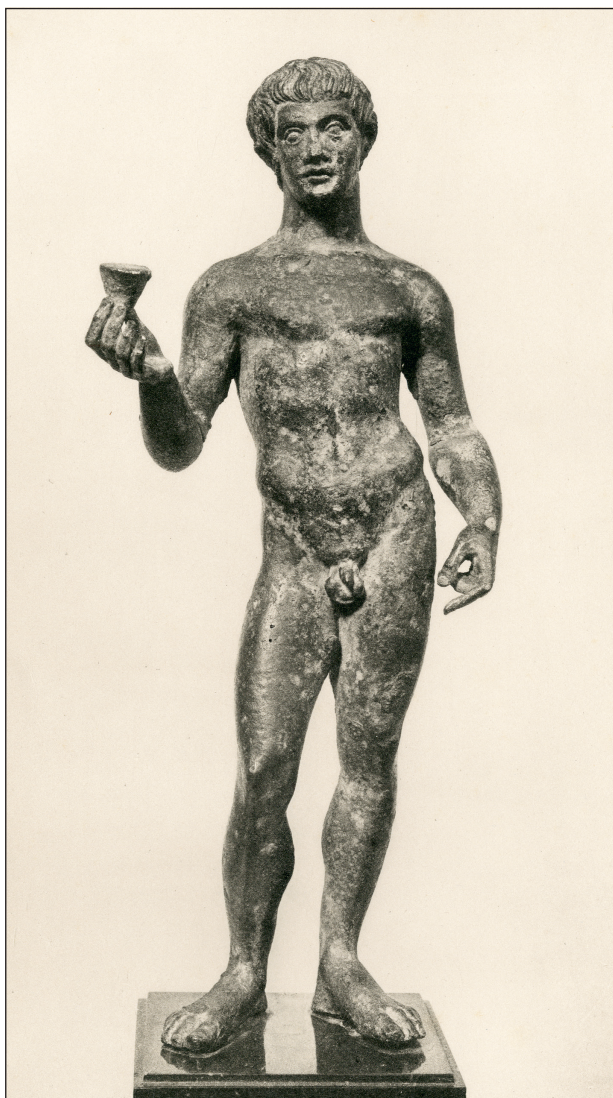


Fig. 5: Historical photograph before 1913 of the bronze statuette of the male youth with spinning top (see fig. 1-4). Photo after SIEVEKING (1913), pl. 27.

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

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

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.

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.

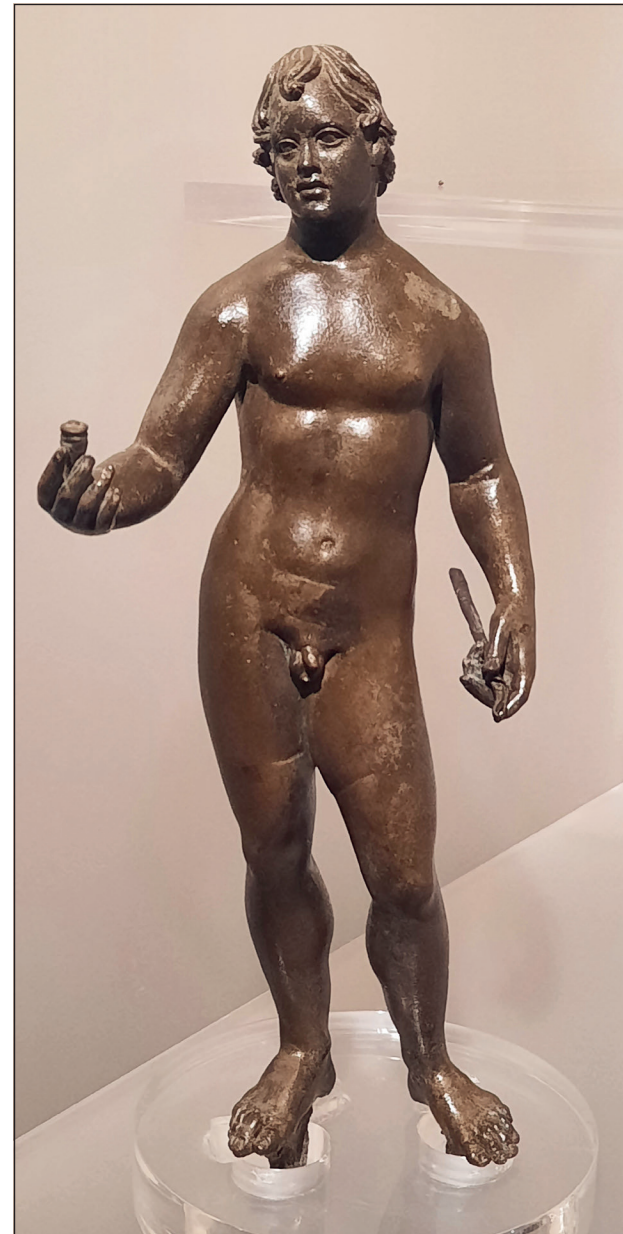


Fig. 7: Bronze statuette of a boy with whipping top (H. 25 cm), from Mentana, 2nd-1st century BCE, Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano, inv. 78277. Photo Giovanni Colzani, Milano.

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; SCHAUENBURG (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.

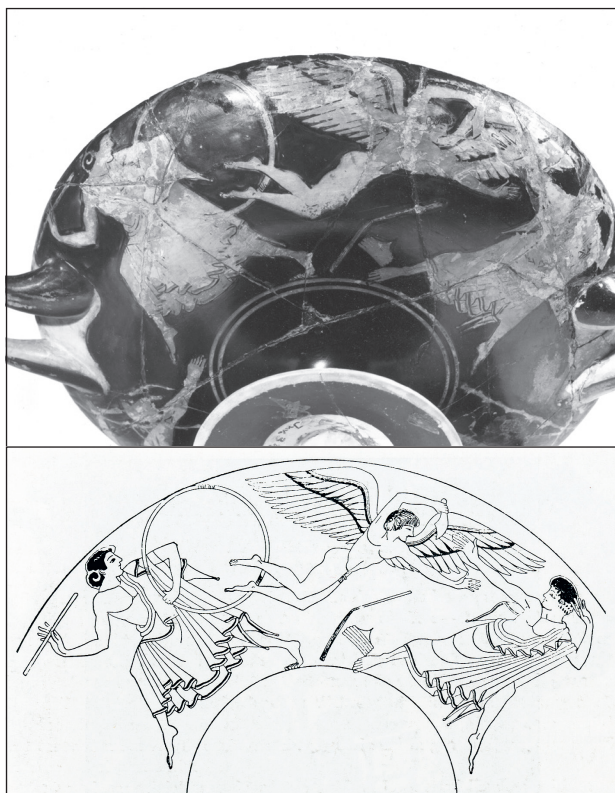


Fig. 8-9: Attic kylix of Duris depicting Eros who startles two young men playing with whipping top and hoop, 480 BCE, Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. 3166. Photo Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz; redrawing after Olshausen (1979), 18, fig. 3.

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 *ephemera*.⁴⁹

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

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.

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.

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 shamefulfulness (*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'.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BEAZLEY, John D., "Notices of Books, CVA USA 6, Baltimore", *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 58 (1938), 267.
- BURN, Lucilla, "Honey Pots: Three White-ground Cups by the Sotades Painter", *Antike Kunst*, 28 (1985), 93-105.
- COLZANI, Giovanni, "Un giovane giocatore di trottola: osservazioni su una rara iconografia della piccola plastica antica", in Claudia Lambrugo (ed.), *A Turning World: a Multidisciplinary Approach to the Spinning Top and others Toys and Games*, Milano (2022 forthcoming).
- CRISTOFANI, Mauro, *I Bronzi degli Etruschi*, Novara (1985).
- DASEN, Véronique, "Jeux de l'amour et du hasard en Grèce ancienne", *Kernos*, 29 (2016), 73-100.
- DASEN, Véronique, "Hoops and Coming of Age in Greek and Roman Antiquity", 8th *International Toy Research Association World Conference, Jul 2018, Paris, France*, Paris (2018). hal-02170802

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.

DASEN, Véronique (ed.), *Ludique ! Jouer dans l'Antiquité, Exhibition Catalogue Lyon, Gent* (2019a).

DASEN, Véronique, "Sabots, Toupies et Totons", in Véronique Dasen (ed.), *Ludique! Jouer dans l'Antiquité, Exhibition Catalogue Lyon, Gent* (2019b), 52-53.

DASEN, Véronique, "Saltimbanques et circulation de jeux", in Véronique Dasen, Ulrich Schädler (eds), *Dossier Jouer dans l'Antiquité. Identité et multiculturalité, Archimède, Archéologie et Histoire Ancienne*, 6 (2019c), 127-143.

FITTÀ, Marco, *Spiele und Spielzeug in der Antike. Unterhaltung und Vergnügen im Altertum*, Darmstadt (1998).

GLIWITZKY, Christian, "Aus Etruskern werden Römer", in Florian Knauß, Jörg Gebauer (eds), *Die Etrusker. Von Villanova bis Rom, Exhibition Catalogue Munich, München* (2015), 254-315.

GIUMAN, Marco, *La trottola nel mondo classico: archeologia, fonti letterarie e iconografiche*, Roma (2020).

HAMDORF, Friedrich Wilhelm, "Jeune homme à la toupie", in Doris Vanhove (ed.), *Le sport de la Grèce antique. Du jeu à la compétition, Exhibition Catalogue Brussels, Brussels* (1992), 164, 18.

HAYNES, Sybille, *Etruscan Bronzes*, London (1985).

KLINGER, Sonia, *The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore: Miscellaneous Finds of Terracotta, Corinth XVIII.8*, Princeton (2022).

KNAUSS, Florian S., "Raising the Spirit and Feasts for the Eyes – James Loeb's Antiquities Collection", in Hermann Mayer, Brigitte Salmen (eds), *James Loeb. Collector and Patron in Munich, Murnau and Beyond*, München (2018), 204-217.

LAMBERT, Stephen D., *The Phratries of Attica*, Ann Arbor (1993).

OLSHAUSEN, Elke, "Eros mit dem Barbiermesser", *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1979), 17-24.

PALLOTTINO, Massimo (ed.), *Die Etrusker und Europa, Paris 1992 – Berlin 1993, Exhibition Catalogue Berlin, Paris* (1992).

PFISTERER-HAAS, Susanne, "Kreisel und Jojo", in Raimund Wünsche, Florian Knauß (eds), *Lockender Lorbeer. Sport und Spiel in der Antike, Exhibition Catalogue Munich, München* (2004), 414-420.

SCHAAFF, Hagen, *Restaurierungsdokumentation Nackter Mann mit Kreisel*, Archiv Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München, unpubliziert, München (2004).

RUDOLF, Anita, WARWITZ, Siegbert A., "Spiele anderer Zeiten und anderer Völker", in Rudolf, Anita Rudolf, Siegbert A. Warwitz (ed.), *Spielen – neu entdeckt. Grundlagen – Anregungen – Hilfen*, Freiburg (1982), 117.

SALMEN, Brigitte, "James Loeb – Introduction to his Life and Work", in Hermann Mayer, Brigitte Salmen (eds),

James Loeb. *Collector and Patron in Munich, Murnau and Beyond*, München (2018), 12-71.

SCHAUENBURG, Konrad, "Erotenspiele, 1. Teil", *Antike Welt*, 3 (1976), 39-52.

SIEVEKING, Johannes, *Die Bronzen der Sammlung Loeb*, München (1913).

TORO Angela (ed.), *Ritrovamenti e contesti: i reperti archeologici della provincial di Roma nelle raccolte del Museo Nazionale Romano*, Roma (2001).

SMITH, Cecil H., *The Forman Collection. Catalogue of the Egyptian, Greek & Roman Antiquities (The Bronzes and Vases Described by Cecil H. Smith, Assistant Keeper in the British Museum) and Objects of Art of the Renaissance, &C., which Will Be Sold by the Auction, by Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, Monday 19th June 1899*, London (1899).

WOLTERS, Paul, BRUNS, Gerda, *Das Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben I*, Berlin (1940).

ZANKER, Paul, *Wandel der Hermesgestalt in der attischen Vasenmalerei*, Bonn (1965).



Angela Bellia

Institute of Heritage Science, National Research Council of Italy
angbellia@gmail.com

Dancing with a Ball

INTRODUCTION: BALL GAMES AND BALL DANCE

Written sources as well as images and objects reveal how ball games played an important role in the daily life of the Greek world.¹ Since the age of Homer, a close connection between the concepts of playing with a ball and dancing with a ball seems to be evident. The verb *paizein* (παίζειν) is related to the game, given its derivation from the word *paiz*, which has parallels not only with *molpē* (μολπή), but also with playing music and dancing.² As Steven Lonsdale has argued,³ the game of Nausicaa and her companions contains musical and choreographic elements allowed for by the use of this verb. According to Claude Calame,⁴ due to the particular use of the verb *παίζω* in a dancing context, it is possible to interpret this passage in Book 6 of the *Odyssey* as a choral scene and as the first description of a ball dance ritual in Greek literature.

Nymphs are described as playing and dancing with Artemis in honour of Leto, thus linking the playful ball throw of the Phaeacian maidens to the divine dance:⁵ once the young girls have washed the laundry and hung it out to dry, they bathe and enjoy a feast

in the open air. Then, Nausicaa and her attendants throw off their veils. After eating their meal on the river bank, the girls, led by the princess, engage in a ball-throwing game (σφαίρη τὰ δ' ἄρ' ἔπαιζον) and a dance while they wait for their garments to dry.⁶ One of them misses, and the stray ball awakens Odysseus. A simile compares their activity to the sport of Artemis and her Nymphs.

A similar scene is mentioned in the *Homeric Hymn to Artemis*⁷ where the goddess visits the house of Apollo in Delphi and leads the choral dance of the Muses and Graces. It is interesting to note that in both cases, the poet prefers to use the verb *paizein* to refer to not only Nausicaa's ball-throwing game with her companions on the beach, but also the dance of the Nymphs (ἄγρονόμοι παίζουσι).⁸ Moreover, in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*⁹ Hermes kidnapped Aphrodite while she was dancing (παίζομεν) with a group of Nymphs and maids.

Through the simile there is an overlap of the choral dance under the supervision of Nausicaa and the group play of the Nymphs under Artemis, whose delight in hunting is also expressed by the verb *paizō* (παίζω). The princess is compared to the goddess not

1 O'SULLIVAN (2012), 17-33.

2 Homer, *Odyssey*, 6.100; *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, 206.

3 LONSDALE (1993), 206-208.

4 CALAME (2001), 87. See also CALAME (2021), 90-91.

5 BOUVIER (2021), 16-19; OLSEN (2021), 33-35.

6 CALAME (2001), 43-49.

7 *Homeric Hymn to Artemis*, 13-20.

8 HENRICHS (1996), 35.

9 *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, 119-120.

only because of her activity but also for her physical resemblance. At the conclusion of the simile, it is established that Nausicaa is preeminent among her companions. The same criteria for physical beauty and superiority is found in the description of Artemis as the leader of the choral dance on Olympus in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*.¹⁰ she is taller by a head, better to look at, and more enticingly graceful. Moreover, the playful ball game of the handmaids is accompanied by a chant led by Nausicaa (ἤρχετο μολπῆς), who is recognised as the leader, or *choregos*, of the dance, given that she provides her companions with the signal for the song and dance. As princess and the next to wed, Nausicaa has the right to lead off the song and dance within their play.

According to Anton Bierl,¹¹ from Nausicaa onwards, the verb *paizein* refers mostly to young girls in their rite de passage: as such they are close to or on the brink of marriage and as *numphai* in a state of in-between, belonging already partly to Aphrodite, but still maidens in the realm of Artemis, the goddess of maidenhood.

It is worth noting that the scene of the ball game played by Nausicaa and her companions recalls the ball game in the palace of the Phaeacians' king. Moreover, in Book 8 of the *Odyssey*¹² the throwing of the ball is also connected with dance, when Alcinous, the king of the Phaeacians, urges the attendees of the party in his palace to begin the banquet with a dance (ἀλλ' ἄγε, Φαιήκων βητάρμονες ὅσσοι ἄριστοι, / παίσατε).¹³ given that no one else could compete with his sons (because they are the best of the best), Alcinous orders Halius and Laodamas to perform a solo dance (μουνὰξ ὀρχήσασθαι).¹⁴ After catching a purple ball (σφαῖραν καλὴν... πορφυρέην), one of them leans back and throws it up (ρίπτασκε), while the other jumps and catches it (μεθέλεσκε) before his feet hit the ground. During their ball throwing performance, the other young people stand around the centre of the dance floor (ἑσταότες κατ' ἁγῶνα), clapping their hands (κοῦροι δ' ἐπελήκεον) and beating the time. The Phaeacian youths are not engaged in a competition: they are displaying their excellence in dancing and ball play.¹⁵

1. DANCING WHILST THROWING A BALL

As Salvatore Costanza has argued,¹⁶ in the passages of Books 6 and 8 of the *Odyssey*, it is also possible to recognise a connection between certain dances and

games with balls of different sizes, some of which were named with the word σφαιρισμός (*sphairismos*) and are related to the symbolic value of the ball. In the *Onomasticon*,¹⁷ Pollux states that participants in ball games were called σφαιρίζοντας (*sphairizontas*), and lists the verbs used to describe the handling process of a ball (σφαῖρη παίζειν, σφαῖραν ῥίπτειν, βάλλειν, ἀφιέναι, πέμπειν, προπέμπειν, ἐκπέμπειν, ἀντιπέμπειν, ἀνταφιέναι, ἀνταποφέρειν). He also mentions several ball games, providing a brief description of them. An example is offered by the ball game of *harpastōn* as well as of *pheninda*,¹⁸ involving a ball pass and a run (escape),¹⁹ and the *thermaustrizein*, a dance described as an imitation of a pincer movement.²⁰ Another reference to the relationship between ball games and ball dance can be found in a comment by Eustathius on Homer's *Odyssey* (dated to the 12th cent. CE), where the σφαίρας παιδιά is explained as a type of dance and the person who plays with a sphere is a type of dancer.²¹

In Pollux's lists the term *ourania* appears,²² recalling the movements of the Phaeacian dancers, given that it is referred to as a dance and a game in which a ball was thrown upwards: participants had to lean backwards and throw the ball into the air, while companions tried to catch it before it fell back down. In the *Onomasticon*, adjectives suitable to describe a ball game (εὐρρυθμον, εὐσχήμονα, εὐσκοπον, ἐπίσκοπον, εὐτονον) are also mentioned: it is noteworthy that all of them are connected to sound, harmony and rhythm, and could also apply to dance performances.²³

Other written references on dance and play are related to marriage,²⁴ as in the description of Pseudo-Hesiod's *Shield of Heracles*,²⁵ where dancing and singing, as well as the act of play during a wedding ceremony, are described (χοροὶ παίζοντες [...] παίζοντες ὑπ' ὀρχηθμῶ καὶ αἰοιδῇ).

17 Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 9.103-107.

18 Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 9.105. Cf. KARANIKI (2021), 221-238.

19 Cf. MENDNER (1959), 517-524.

20 Athenaeus, 14.629e; Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 4.102; Eustathius, *Odyssey*, 1601.304.

21 Eustathius, *Odyssey*, 1601.304.

22 Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 9.106.

23 Athenaeus, 1.14f-15a; Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 9.104-105.

24 CALAME (2001), 86-87.

25 Pseudo-Hesiod, *Shield of Heracles*, 270-284: "Next, there was a city of men with goodly towers; and seven gates of gold, fitted to the lintels, guarded it. The men were making merry with festivities and dances; some were bringing home a bride to her husband on a well-wheeled car, while the bridal-song swelled high, and the glow of blazing torches held by handmaidens rolled in waves afar. And these maidens went before, delighting in the festival; and after them came frolic some choirs, the youths singing soft-mouthed to the sound of shrill pipes, while the echo was shivered around them, and the girls led on the lovely dance to the sound of lyres. Then again on the other side was a rout of young men revelling, with *auloi* playing; some frolicking with dance and song, and others were going forward in time with an *aulos* player and laughing. The whole town was filled with mirth and dance and festivity" (trans. H. G. Evelyn-White, Loeb).

10 *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, 195-199.

11 BIERL (2021), 32-33.

12 Homer, *Odyssey*, 8.370-380.

13 Homer, *Odyssey*, 8.251.

14 Homer, *Odyssey*, 8.370-380.

15 GOLDEN (2021), 52-55. For the acrobatic dances in the ancient world, see TODISCO (2013), 13-29.

16 COSTANZA (2019), 219-222.

2. BALL DANCE AS RITUAL ACT

Alongside the written sources that establish the close relationship between dance and ball games, we can add a reference to the space devoted to these activities. An example is the House of Arrephoroi (*Arrephorion*). According to Plutarch, this space – located on the Acropolis, east and north of the Erechtheion and dated to ca. 500-400 BCE – was called the “ball court of *Arrephoroi*” (σφαίριστρά των Ἀρρηφόρων).²⁶ Archaeological survey evidence shows that this space²⁷ could have been flat and large enough to serve as a dance floor suitable for hosting dance rituals – perhaps related to the myth of Cecropids – performed by a small female group. This marks the first time that we have heard of a special setting reserved for ball games in a ritual context.²⁸

It is not surprising that ball games were not only playful activities, but also graceful and rhythmic performances which were offered to the gods in order to please them, given that they seem to be linked to festivals and rituals as well as play: ball games related to female dance activities in particular were performed as a sort of ritual act in honour of the divinities and in anticipation and celebration of marriage. 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. Although a wedding was a rite of passage for the nuptial pair, marriage and its ritual events involved the entire community. Moreover, the informal play of Nausicaa and her companions provides us with information which helps us to understand certain social assumptions underlying courtship and marriage in antiquity. As Véronique Dasen has noted,²⁹ although it is not made explicit in the text, musical and choral performances rhythmically marked by the throws of the ball could have assumed a divinatory value, given that the rebounds and the deviations of the ball, as well as the sound of the ball falling to the floor (and, most likely, the sound from within the ball itself, if it was also a rattle)³⁰ were unpredictable.

Taking into account the ball not merely as a playful object, but also its cultural and religious meanings,³¹ it cannot be excluded that the movement of a ball launched into the air could be considered – especially in relationship with Eros –, as a metaphor for a very mobile loving gaze and as an oracle of the conquest of the beloved, if Eros strikes him or her. Thus, it is possible to recognise in the Nausicaa episode of

the *Odyssey* the erotic allusion evoked by dance and ball games.³² Moreover, in highlighting the harmony of gestures, eurythmy, and perfect coordination of the limbs, ball games and passages performed with mastery and a strong sense of rhythm became proof of wisdom and ethical disposition. Playing well and making a good shot with the ball denoted a sign of election: it is not just a physical record, but it responds to the requirements demanded of members of an elite society.³³

In this regard, the performances of young men in Book 8 of the *Odyssey* are focused on building a sense of community cohesion, creating a link between the members of the performing group. As Sarah Olsen has argued,³⁴ these dancers exemplify the social force of *choreia* as conceptualised in real Archaic and Classical practice.

3. EXAMPLES OF BALL DANCE ON VASES AND TERRACOTTAS

As V. Dasen has highlighted³⁵ vases dating from 470 BCE onwards depict games with spherical objects that girls and women throw into the air, and then catch without dropping: they perform games alone or in the gynaeceum, sometimes in the presence of female or male figures. Images representing the throwing of balls and apples are related to the *parthenoi* and the *numphai* (given that the pre-nuptial state and the period of transition to the marital condition is symbolised in relation above all to Eros and Aphrodite), while in the ball games performed by *gumnai* it is possible to recognise a remembrance of the loving dexterity in the domestic activities of married women.³⁶ Whilst images representing the throwing of spherical objects exist in many iconographic versions (such as balls and apples as an alluring and loving gift, and wool balls as an expression of spinning in the *oikos*), it is possible to recognise in all of these images a symbolic value related to women of different ages and status as girls ready for marriage or as married women engaged in the care of the home and family as well as *hetaerae*.³⁷ Given that ball dance was a suitable form through which to express the grace and rhythm necessary for a performance to be appreciated by the audience, women and girls playing with the balls are represented in dance scenes on vases of different shapes and sizes.

An intriguing ball dance is depicted in a Beotian red-figure *pyxis* in the Moutoussi collection, a

26 Plutarch, *Moralia*, 839c. Burkert (2003), 425-427.

27 HURWIT (1999), 200; GRECO (2010), 25.

28 BURKERT (1989), 23-49.

29 DASEN (2016), 75-81.

30 BELLIA (2021a), 72-76.

31 SOURVINOU-INWOOD (2008), 206-209.

32 BOUVIER (2021), 16-17.

33 COSTANZA (2019), 219-222.

34 OLSEN (2021), 28-29.

35 DASEN (2016), 76.

36 SABETAI (2020), 109-112.

37 TODISCO (2013), 95.

small round box decorated with female scenes: being special vases for the female toilette, red-figure *pyxides* in the first half of the 5th century BCE represent female activities and daily life. On this *pyxis* are depicted four groups of women, most likely engaged in a ball game in an open-air environment recalling a nuptial meaning (fig. 1 a-d).³⁸ Outside the groups are two women seated on a rock, their backs turned to one another. The one on the right holds out a round object, most likely a ball, towards three dancing maidens, who stretch both arms towards her, in an attempt to catch the ball that she is about to throw. The three lively dancers are dressed in *peploi* and are depicted moving backwards to the right. Only the lead dancer wears her hair unveiled and loose under a high *polos*, denoting that she is still an unmarried girl. This could be in line with the custom related to the period of the *pyxis*, when a particular arrangement and order of the *choregos* is requested in order to distinguish her from the other members of the dancing group not only according to physical appearance, but also dancing skills. The identification of the lead dancer on the *pyxis* as a bride allows us to grasp how this dance and its accompanying ball game was an important moment of the wedding ritual preparation.³⁹ A *trigonon* player sits on a rock, plucking her instrument with both hands. This string instrument is especially related to wedding ceremonies and female activities, contributing to the creation of a nuptial (or prenuptial)⁴⁰ context along with other symbolic objects also represented in the scene, such as the mirror, a *louterion*, and the swan, all of which are connected with rituals related to passage phases from childhood to adulthood. In this figurative context, the swan – which is paired with a maiden looking at her image in the mirror – seems to assume a metaphorical meaning as an embodiment of manliness as well as a reminder to brides-to-be of the man's involvement in their transition to adulthood: the strong bonds between the female and male swans and the love for their young, well-known since antiquity, give that this bird it is not only a symbol of virility (possibly with hidden hints of sexual aggression), but also of ideal conjugal and parental behaviour.⁴¹ Moreover, the representation of the swan recalls not only the rhythmical sounds of their beating of the wings useful to accompany their singing, but also evoke the sonic aspects related to the wedding rituals along with the string instrument in the same scene.

Moreover, the presence of the musician leaves no

38 Athens, Moutoussi Private Collection (late 5th cent. BCE); AVRONIDAKI (2014), 82-95.

39 OAKLEY (2004), 313. Cf. OAKLEY, SINOS (1993), 14.

40 WEST (1992), 72-73; PAPADOPOULOU (2011), 414-418.

41 AVRONIDAKI (2014), 90. The swan with this metaphorical meaning is represented on the Lokrian *pinakes* (fig. 6a-b).



Fig. 1 a-d: Beotian red-figure pyxis. Athens, Moutoussi Private Collection. Late 5th century BCE. Maidens engaging in a ball-game; maiden self-mirroring and a hovering swan, maiden dipping her hands in a louterion; trigonon player plucking her instrument. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports/Ephorate of Antique Shops and Private Archaeological Collections.



Fig. 2 a-b: Attic red-figure pyxis. London, British Museum, inv. 1907.5-19.1. 500-450 BCE. A running or a very lively female dancer holding her dress; a seated woman is playing by throwing balls. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

doubt that the *pyxis* represents a dancing scene, given that dance – as well as ball play – requires the coordination of movements and gestures which is possible thanks only to sound, rhythm, and music. As Christina Avronidaki has argued,⁴² this scene seems to recall the passage describing Nausicaa's ball game accompanied by dance and song, and also to highlight how “the rhythmic movement of the maidens, combined with the seated posture and different dress of the woman solemnly holding out the ball towards them, adds a ceremonial dimension to the scene.”⁴³

Another interesting example of a ball dance is offered by an Attic red-figure *pyxis* with a lid, which represents a woman holding a “sprang” frame, used for making hairnets. On the *pyxis*, which is preserved at the British Museum, a running or a very lively female dancer is also represented holding her dress, while a seated woman is throwing some balls into

the air (fig. 2 a-b).⁴⁴ Aside from the depiction of the ball player, the presence of symbolic objects such as a sash, loom, stork, bird in a cage, basket and chest all seem to recall the nuptial sphere. The ball dance, along with iconographical elements such as the sash and chest represented on the vase, could also echo a wedding ritual in the scene depicted on the Apulian red-figure Panathenaic type amphora preserved at the Bassano del Grappa Museum. On this vase, a young female dancer throws a spherical object – most likely a ball made of leather strips – into the air in a very lively manner, while another seated female figure is playing with two balls holding the hem of her chiton with her left hand (fig. 3).⁴⁵

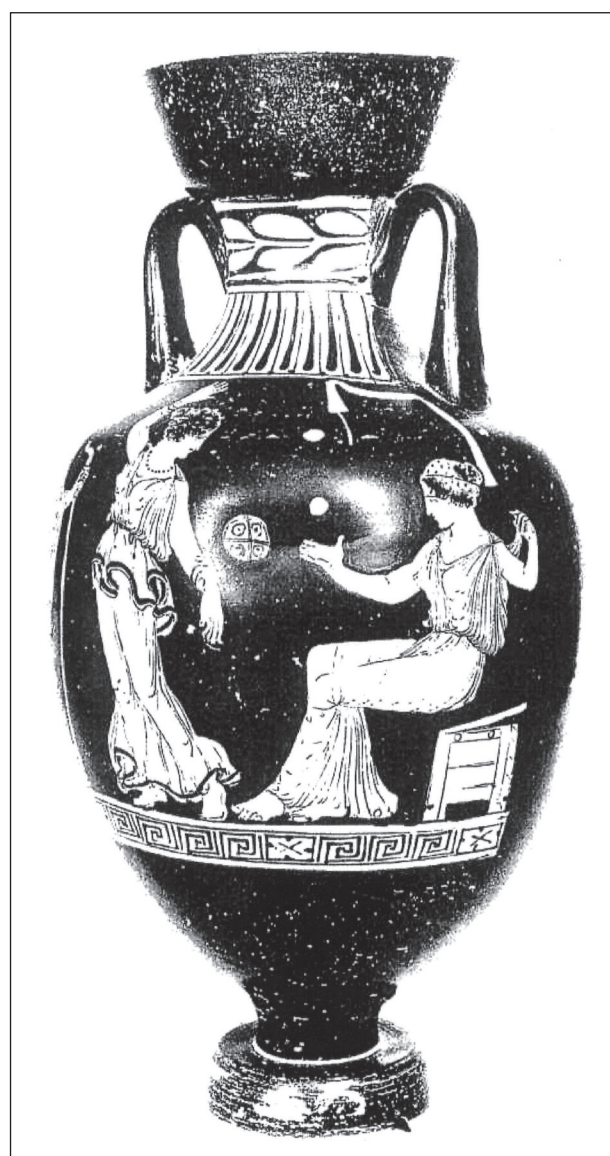


Fig. 3: Apulian red-figure amphora. Bassano del Grappa Museum, Chini Collection, inv. 67. Side A. A female dancer throws a spherical object, probably a ball; a sitting female figure is playing with two balls. 425-400 BCE. After Todisco (2013), pl. XVII, MGS5.

42 AVRONIDAKI (2014), 84-85.

43 AVRONIDAKI (2014), 90.

44 London, British Museum 1907.519.1 (500-450 BCE); Siron (2015), 232, fig. 10.

45 Bassano del Grappa Museum, Chini Collection 67 (425-400 BCE); TODISCO (2013), pl. XVII, MGS5.

It is interesting to note that a female dancer holding a ball is also represented in terracotta groups of female figures dating to the 4th to 3rd century BCE (fig. 4).⁴⁶ These special *choroi*, formed by three maidens dancing and playing wind and percussion instruments while wearing jewellery and transparent clothes, have been found in many sacred and domestic contexts in Sicily and Magna Graecia.⁴⁷ As in the case of the female groups found in the sanctuaries of Demeter and Kore-Persephone in Morgantina and in Solunto (fig. 5),⁴⁸ there is an *aulos* player and a dancing *tympanon* player on the right and left sides, while in the middle a figure holding a round object, most likely a ball, is represented. These female groups depicting this dancing and musical retinue offer the opportunity to understand the different roles of the female musicians and dancers in these terracotta *choroi*. The *auletris* is lower than the other figures playing the *tympanon*; her role is secondary in the representations. The female figure without musical instruments but holding a ball is probably the *choregos*, and seems to have the most important role, given that she is placed at the centre of the *choros*. She is taller than the other figures; furthermore, she wears the *polos*, generally used by women or girls in ceremonial events like wedding rituals. It cannot be discounted that she is the bride. In this case, the ball is a symbol recalling her beauty and *charis*; she is able to arouse erotic desire by performing the dance. In these representations, the dancing figurines not only have in common the holding gesture of the hem of the chiton in the pose of a synchronised, rhythmical dance movement,⁴⁹ but also the particular nuptial gesture of *anakalypsis*,⁵⁰ with this gesture, performed during the nuptial rites, maidens showed their readiness for sexual maturity and welcomed their new status as brides.⁵¹

The contexts within which these terracotta groups representing dance and musical activities were found is a key focus of investigation for both the study of dance and its performative contexts. These terracottas present the strongest visual testimony of dance performances in sacred female spheres and also of the places where dance activities took place.⁵² Figurines representing dancers and musicians are emblematic of the close link between dance practice and the ceremonies, particularly when the figurines' iconography depicts activities identifiable as ritual acts; their production must have been

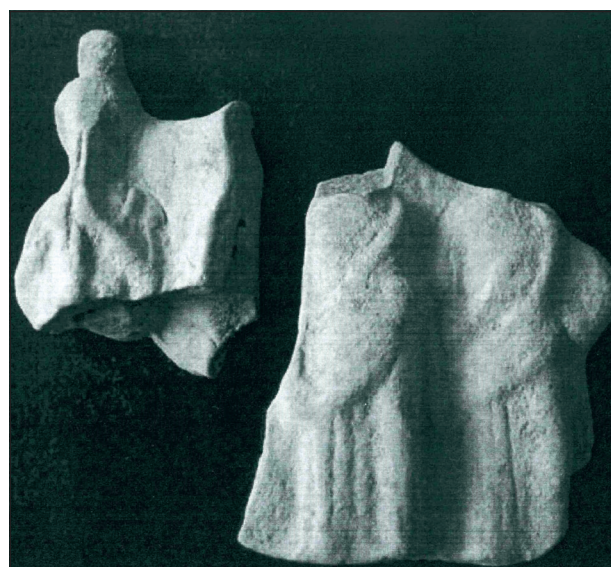


Fig. 4: Terracotta figurines representing aulos and tympanon players and a dancer holding a ball. Aidone, Regional Archaeological Museum, S.n.i. 4th-3rd century BCE. From the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore-Persephone in Morgantina. After BELLIA (2009), 103, cat. no. 228.



Fig. 5: Terracotta figurines representing aulos and tympanon players and a dancer holding a ball. Palermo, Regional Archaeological Museum "Antonino Salinas", N.I. 1193. 4th-3rd century BCE. From Solunto. After BELLIA (2009), 138, cat. no. 334.

intimately intertwined with the ritual ceremonies in sacred places. Terracottas representing female dancers holding a ball are not simply dedications and material objects, but dynamic and expressive products of performative behaviour in worship. These depictions may have been conceived as souvenirs of particular moments in a given ritual that involved singers, dancers, musicians, and the performance of dances related to peculiar ceremonies. As with the other votives found in shrines in Sicily and Magna Graecia – especially those related to Artemis and Kore-Persephone –, these figurines seem to evoke

46 Aidone, Regional Archaeological Museum (s.n.i) (4th-3rd cent. BCE); BELLIA (2009), 103, n. 228.

47 BELLIA (2016), 195-198.

48 Palermo, Regional Archaeological Museum "Antonino Salinas" N.I. 1193 (4th-3rd cent. BCE). From Solunto; BELLIA (2009), 138, cat. no. 334.

49 BELLIA (2009), 26, cat. no. 16; 85, cat. no. 165.

50 BELLIA (2009), 32-33, n. 28.

51 PAUTASSO (2008), 285-291.

52 BELLIA (2016), 191-207.

ritual acts in sacred places, where maidens took part in offerings in honour of the divinities. In this case, the representation of a sphere could recall the offering of a ball as *aparché* to the divinities, as it is referred to by the well-known epigram from the *Greek Anthology* in which Timarete offers her ball to Artemis before marriage, at the moment when she abandons puberty.⁵³

4. THE DANCE, BALL, AND CICADA ON THE LOKRIAN PINAKES

As Mario Torelli has argued,⁵⁴ the offering of the ball (sometimes a rattle toy in form of a ball, as in the case of evidence found in Pontecagnano and Spina),⁵⁵ is

⁵³ *Greek Anthology*, 6.280. CALAME (2001), 131.

⁵⁴ TORELLI (1977), 164-166.

⁵⁵ DESANTIS (1987), 29-30, cat. no. 27, fig. 19b; GASTALDI (1998), 51,

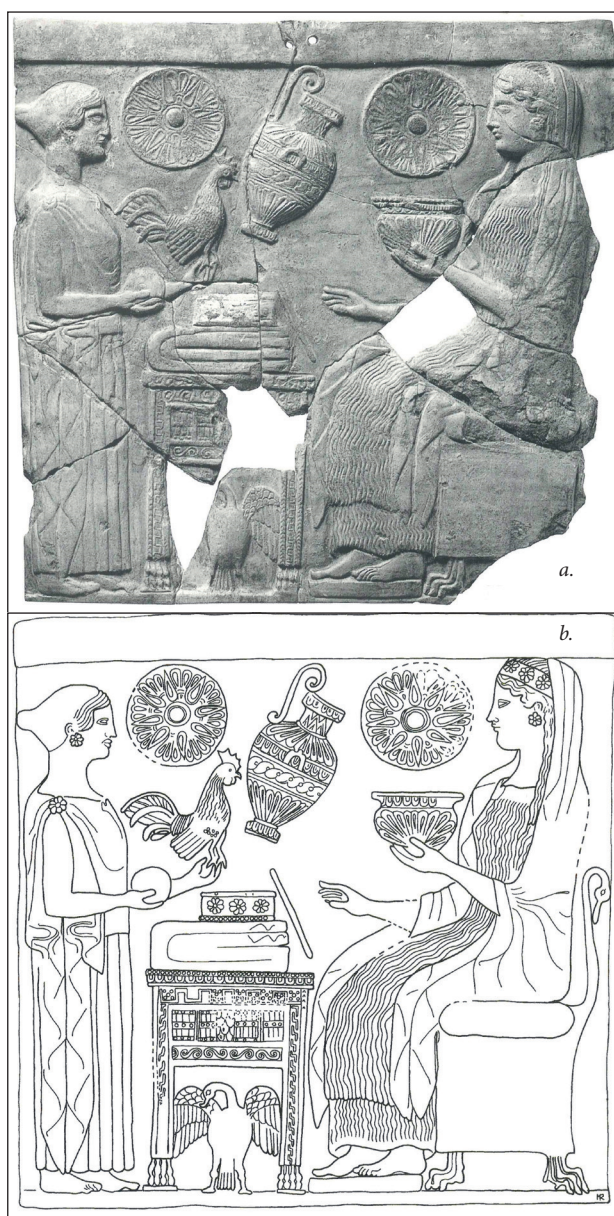


Fig. 6 a-b: Pinax with the offering of a ball. Reggio Calabria, National Archaeological Museum, 5th century BCE. From the *Persephoneion in Lokri Epizephyrii*. After *I Pinakes di Locri* (2000-2003), II.5, pl. LXXXIX.32, fig. 36.

also related to dance as a ritual act. On the Lokrian *pinakes*, the polychrome terracotta reliefs dating from the first half of the 5th century BCE and found at Lokri Epizephyrii in the sanctuary of Persephone (the most illustrious *Persephoneion* of Magna Graecia, according to ancient sources),⁵⁶ this ritual seems to be evoked in many examples (fig. 6 a-b).⁵⁷ Amongst this outstanding group of objects are scenes of the myth and the cult of Kore-Persephone (the goddess of the underworld who, in Lokri, supervised rituals connected with the marriage of the Lokrian maidens and the entry of young people into adult life) involving ritual acts related to all passage phases from childhood to marriage. In particular, M. Torelli has given his attention to a dance and ball game, establishing a parallel between the Lokrian rituals with those – as in the *sphairisterion* (ball court) – which took place in the Acropolis of Athens, where, as we have seen, the maidens *arrhephoroi* played with the ball, performing dances before marriage away from their community.⁵⁸

The scenes on the *pinakes* representing the offerings of a ball – one of which has been found in Lokri (fig. 7)⁵⁹ – belong to the same sphere of meaning as the *pinakes* that depict childhood games recalling



Fig. 7: Clay ball from Lokri Epizephyrii. Reggio Calabria, National Archaeological Museum, Collezione Scaglione, inv. 221. 5th-4th century BCE. Graphic reworking of image from Lissi (1961), 96, cat. no. 111, pl. XLI. Archaeo Design and Drawing: Orazio Pulvirenti.

100, fig. 59, 2; BELLIA (2021a), 71-76. Cf. DURAND (1991), 92-99.

⁵⁶ MARRONI, TORELLI (2016), 9-22.

⁵⁷ Reggio Calabria, National Archaeological Museum (5th cent. BCE); *I Pinakes di Locri* 2000-2003, s. IV, II.2, 252-253, pl. LXXXIX.32, fig. 36.

⁵⁸ BELLIA (2012), 36. On Lokrian *pinakes* and related archaeological material, see also D. COSTANZO in this volume.

⁵⁹ Reggio Calabria, National Archaeological Museum, Collezione Scaglione 221 (5th-4th cent. BCE); LISSI (1961), 96, cat. no. 111, pl. XLI. Cf. HOFFMANN (1963), 20-22.

a musical context.⁶⁰ An example is the scene representing the *choros* of three young girls holding a *kalathos* and an *alabastron* in front of a seated woman holding a crown (fig. 8 a-b).⁶¹ This latter figure could be the *numpheutria*, the bride's maid of honour and important attendant who, as Victoria Sabetai highlighted,⁶² played the role of surrogate mother in the ritual of a Greek wedding. The trio of dancing girls move towards her, holding their hands.⁶³ This dancing group on the Lokrian *pinakes* seems also to recall the mythical episode of the abduction of Kore when, according to the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*,⁶⁴ Hades kidnaps the maiden while she gathers flowers and dances with her companions, carrying her off

60 TORELLI (1977), 164; MARRONI, TORELLI (2016), 32. Cf. TODISCO (2005), 717-718.

61 Reggio Calabria, National Archaeological Museum (5th cent. BCE); from the *Persephoneion* in Lokri Epizephyrii; *I Pinakes di Locri* 2004-2007, 615-666 and 786-808, pls. CCLb-CCVIII, fig. 65.

62 SABETAI (2020), 108.

63 Vases with the representation of dancing scenes have been found in the *Persephoneion*; BELLIA (2021b), 39-40, pl. VII, fig. 9.

64 *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 3-8. CALAME (2001), 35.

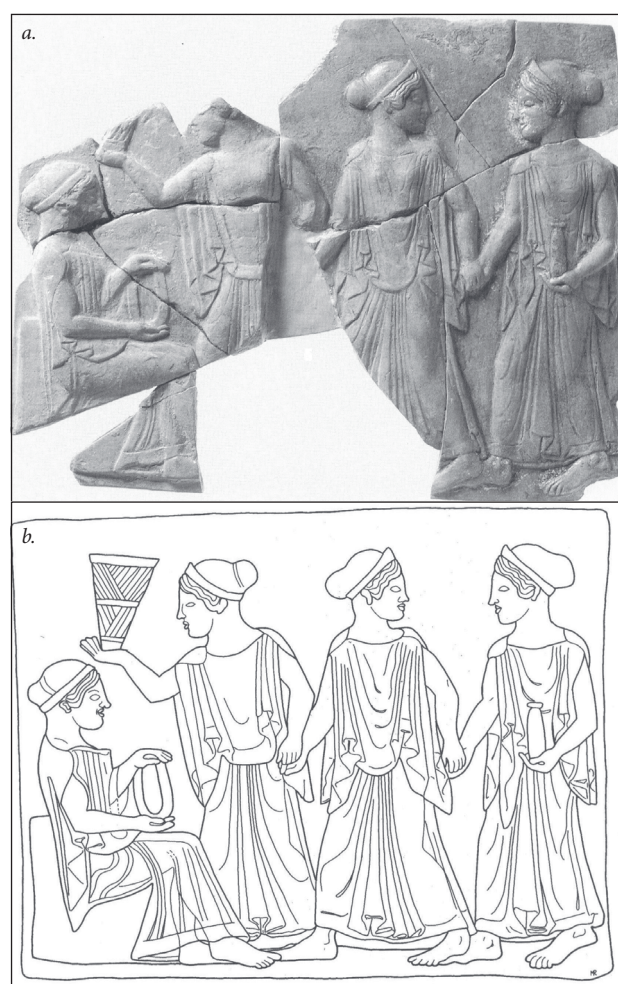


Fig. 8 a-b: Pinax with three dancers holding a *kalathos* and an *alabastron* in front of a sitting woman holding a crown. Reggio Calabria, National Archaeological Museum. 5th century BCE. From the *Persephoneion* in Lokri Epizephyrii. After *I Pinakes di Locri* (2004-2007), III.5, pl. CCII.b, fig. 65.

in his chariot (παίζομεν ἢ δ' ἄνθεα δρέπομεν).⁶⁵ It is worth noting that on the *pinakes* that depict Hades's chariot, the scared maiden holds a ball in her hand, as if at the moment of her abduction she was engaged in a ball game while dancing with the other maidens (fig. 9 a-b).⁶⁶

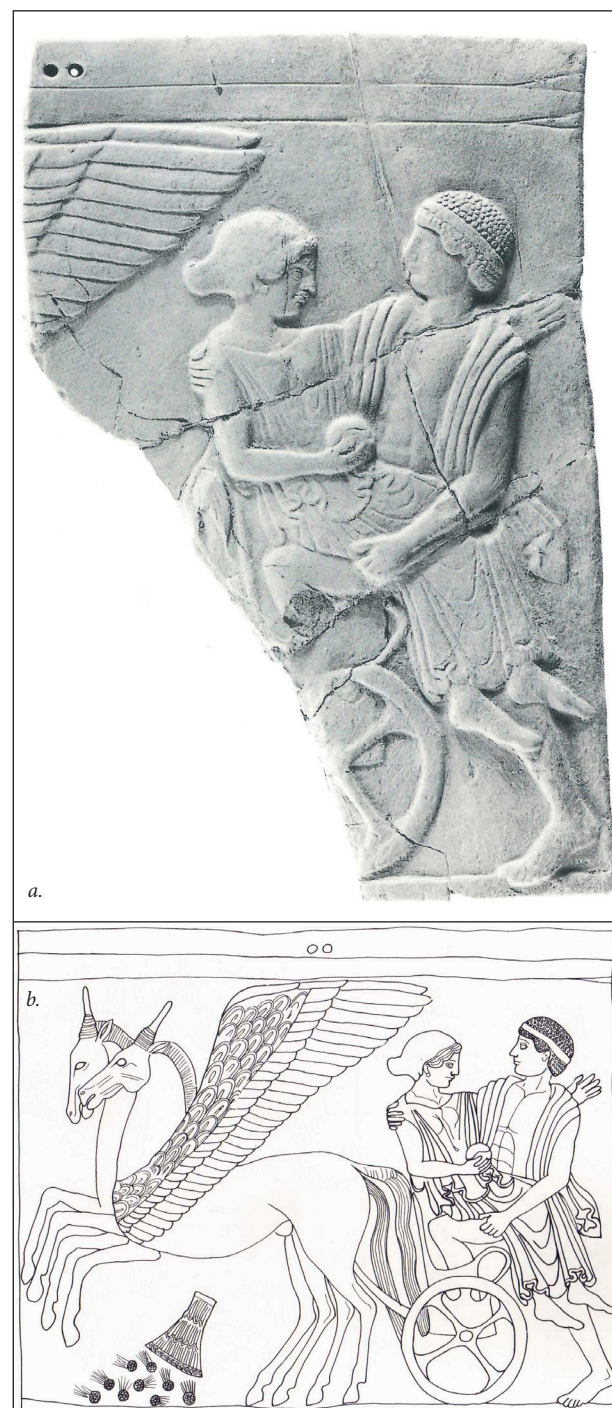


Fig. 9 a-b: Pinax with abduction of a maiden holding a ball. Reggio Calabria, National Archaeological Museum. 5th century BCE. From the *Persephoneion* in Lokri Epizephyrii. After *I Pinakes di Locri* (1996-1999), I.4, pl. CCXXXV.a, fig. 31.

65 *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 417-428. Cf. BELLIA (2012), 30-34; MARRONI, TORELLI (2016), 32-33.

66 Reggio Calabria, National Archaeological Museum (5th cent. BCE); *I Pinakes di Locri* 1996-1999, 228, pl. CCXXXV.a, fig. 31.

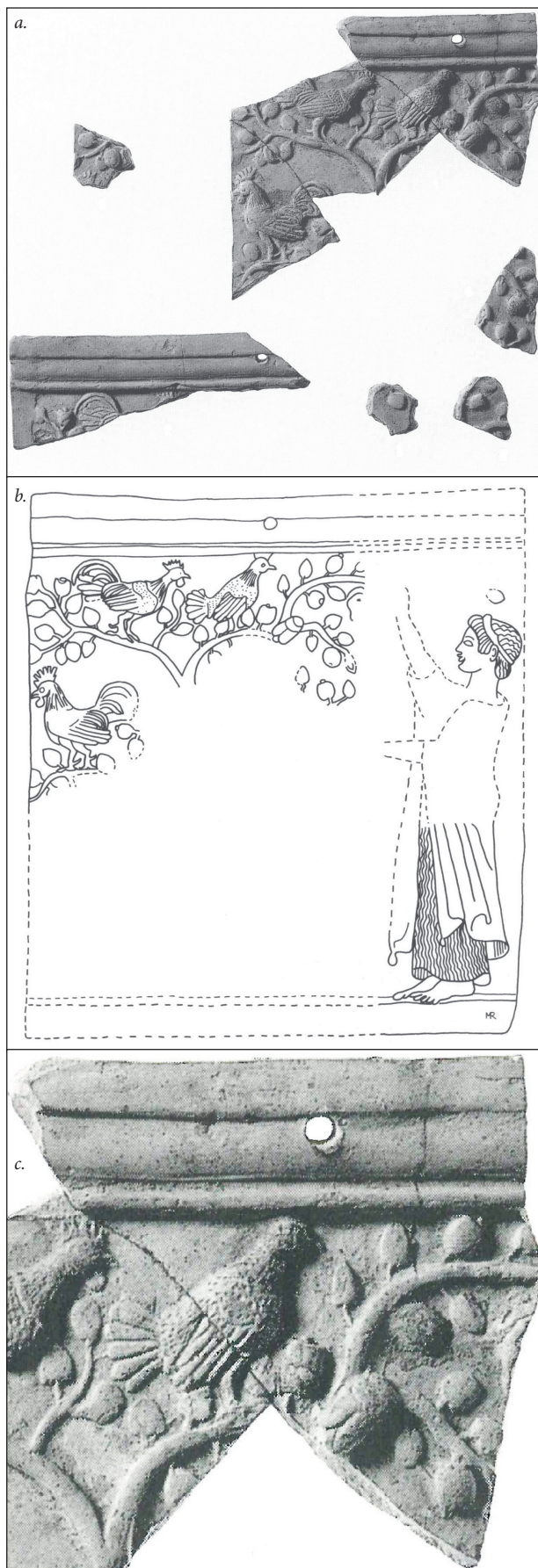


Fig. 10 a-c: Representation of a little female figure while trying to reach a cicada. Reggio Calabria, National Archaeological Museum. 5th century BCE. From the Persephoneion in Lokri Epizephyrii. After *I Pinakes di Locri* (2000-2003), II.5, pls. XXXVIIa-b, fig. 16.

On the Lokrian clay tablets, another reference to a childhood game can be recalled from the scene depicting the catching of cicada.⁶⁷ In this representation, a little female figure seems to sing, given that her lips are open, whilst trying to reach a cicada⁶⁸ on the tree, possibly an apple tree (fig. 10 a-c).⁶⁹ The playful features of the cicada and the related game of its catch performed during childhood⁷⁰ is also evidenced by the discovery that clay and ivory cicadas were laid in sanctuaries where rites of passage from puberty to adulthood were performed, as well as by the cicadas found in the burial sites of girls who died prematurely:⁷¹ this includes an example in Locri, where an ivory cicada was placed in a tomb belonging to a newborn or infant girl (fig. 11),⁷² according to the custom also mentioned in an epigram attributed to Teodorida which appears in the *Greek Anthology*.⁷³ The insect depicted in the Lokrian *pinakes* could allude to the choir of cicadas as a metaphor for female choral songs⁷⁴ related to the erotic sphere and the power to seduce.⁷⁵ Therefore, whether considered on the level of ideological meaning or not, the scenes of offering

67 BELLIA (2010-2011), 129-138; BELLIA (2012), 35-37; MARRONI, TORELLI (2016), 32.

68 *I Pinakes di Locri* 2000-2003, series IV, II.1, 207-215, cat. nos. 1-10, fig. 16, pls. XXXVII.

69 Reggio Calabria, National Archaeological Museum (5th cen. BCE); from the *Persephoneion* in Lokri Epizephyrii; *I Pinakes di Locri* 2000-2003, series IV, II.1, 207-215, fig. 16, pls. XXXVIIa-b.

70 Cf. SALZA PRINA RICOTTI (1995), 39-50; FITTÀ (1997), 24.

71 ORSI (1913), 7, fig. 6. Cf. GIUMAN (2008), 223-226.

72 Reggio Calabria, National Archaeological Museum (6th-5th cent. BCE); BELLIA (2012), 38, fig. 8. On its use as jewellery for the girl to be married, alluding to the transformation of the *numphê*, see also DASEN (2015), 303-304, figs. 10.10 and 10.12.

73 *Greek Anthology*, 6.156. See BRILLANTE (1987), 59-62.

74 TORELLI (1977), 163; ARIAS (1984), 100-102; BELLIA (2012), 39.

75 CALAME (2001), 35.

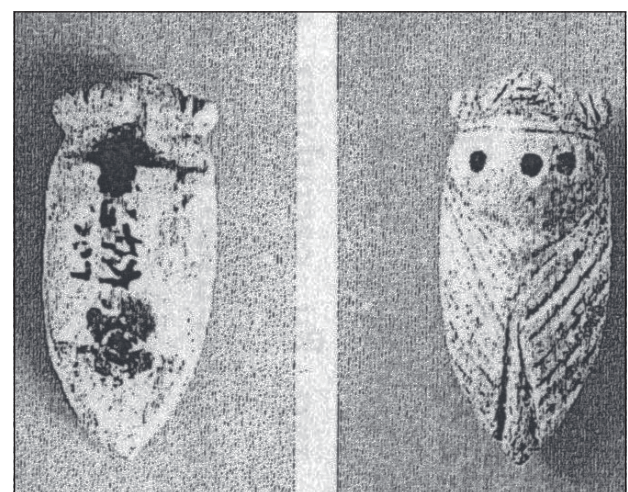


Fig. 11: Ivory cicada. Reggio Calabria, National Archaeological Museum. 6th-5th century BCE. From the tomb 594/8 of the necropolis of "Contrada Lucifero" in Lokri Epizephyrii. After BELLIA (2012), 38, fig. 8.



Fig. 12: Bronze statuette of a girl holding a ball. Reggio Calabria, National Archaeological Museum, inv. 6736. 460-450 BCE. From the *Persophoneion* in Lokri Epizefirii. After GRILLO (2005), 194, cat. no. 39.

the ball, as well as the action of wearing the hair down as represented in the bronze statuette from the *Persophoneion* in Lokri (fig. 12),⁷⁶ could be related to the same symbolic meaning of dance and games of cicada capture performed before leaving childhood. Since they refer to the pre-nuptial condition, which was bound to change with marriage, it should be remembered that dance and ball games contributed to the acquisition of grace and beauty as well as endurance in difficult conditions, qualities required in adult women.

⁷⁶ Reggio Calabria, National Archaeological Museum 6736 (460-450 BCE); GRILLO (2005), 194, cat. no. 39.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

From what has emerged on this survey of ball games and ball dances, it is clear these special activities required that certain skills be performed, and that audiences were expecting the dancers and performers to possess these skills. This reasoning could explain why written sources mention the skills and performances of ball players and ball dancers, both those from the mythical realm as well as from real life. These skills were an advantage for girls, allowing them to expose their prowess to the admiration of potential suitors. Indeed, ball playing or ball dancing are represented within scenes that likely display a number of activities that maidens ready for marriage would have to carry out. These activities, which related to beauty, youth, and femininity, as well as musicality and grace in movement, were requested and expected of girls in order to be desirable and suitable for marriage.

Regarding the depictions of ball dances, whilst we have not distinguished between human and non-human dancers, it is possible to consider them as reflective of human dance in honour of divinities and their retinue, as well as of special ceremonies. Therefore, the images present us with at least an idea of which dance was appropriate for which ritual context. Despite ritual events being a favourite subject for sculptors and painters and the fact that we possess countless images of sacred events, there are only a few that explicitly show a worshipper in the act of dancing. This is not surprising given both the difficulties of depicting movements and, by contrast, the appeal of more visually interesting ceremonial scenes.

As Frederick Naerebout has highlighted,⁷⁷ images were intended to portray “dance” but not any particular event. For this reason, neither the depictions nor the written sources allow us to reconstruct the actual performances, since we lack the music and their song texts. Moreover, not only must we be aware that these performances cannot be seen or heard, we must also consider that a dance and a particular movement are never fixed but are constantly evolving, and even if a dance can be localised and pinned down in time, every performance is unique and can never be repeated in exactly the same way. For this reason, images can be questioned on the basis of the function and social role of dance as marker of an occasion other than ordinary, mobilising an audience, and communicating messages about the community and about social relations.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ NAEREBOUT (2019), 35-49.

⁷⁸ NAEREBOUT (2017), 39-66.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ARIAS, Paolo Enrico, "Su di un pinax locrese", in Maria Grazia Marzi Costagli, Luisa Tamagno Perna (eds), *Studi di antichità in onore di Guglielmo Maetzke*, Roma (1984), 97-102.
- AVRONIDAKI, Christina, "An Assortment of Bridal Images on a Boeotian Red-figure Pyxis from the Workshop of the Painter of the Great Athenian Kantharos", in Stine Schierup, Victoria Sabetai (eds), *The Regional Production of Red-figure Pottery: Greece, Magna Graecia and Etruria*, Aarhus (2014), 82-101.
- BELLIA, Angela, *Coroplastica con raffigurazioni musicali nella Sicilia greca (VI-III sec. a.C.)*, Biblioteca di Sicilia Antiqua 3, Pisa/Roma (2009).
- BELLIA, Angela, "Competizioni musicali di Greci d'Occidente: il caso della cicala di Locri", *Rudiae*, 22-23 (2010-2011), 129-138.
- BELLIA, Angela, *Il canto delle vergini locresi. La musica a Locri Epizefirii nelle fonti scritte e nella documentazione archeologica (secoli VI-III a.C.)*, Nuovi saggi 116, Pisa/Roma (2012).
- BELLIA, Angela, "An Archaeomusicological Approach to Representations of Musicians in Ancient Coroplastic Art", in Angela Bellia, Clemente Marconi (eds), *Musicians in Ancient Coroplastic Art: Iconography, Ritual Contexts, and Functions*, *Telestes*, Studi e Ricerche di Archeologia musicale nel Mediterraneo 2, Pisa/Roma (2016), 191-207.
- BELLIA, Angela, "Sounds of Childhood in the Ancient World", *Telestes. An International Journal of Archaeomusicology and Archaeology of Sound*, 1 (2021a), 71-85.
- BELLIA, Angela, "Danza nell'Occidente greco: un approccio all'archeologia della performance nel contesto sacro", in Elvia Giudice, Giada Giudice (eds), *Studi miscellanei di ceramografia greca*, Monografie dell'archivio ceramografico dell'Università di Catania 7, Catania (2021b), 31-54.
- BIERL, Anton, "Choral Dance as Play: Paizein in Greek Drama, or Body Movement as Sexual Attraction between Gender and Genre", in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (eds), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity: Definition, Transmission, Reception*, *Jeu/Play/Spiel* 2, Liège (2021), 29-48.
- BOUVIER, David, "Athéna, Éros, Ulysse, Nausicaa, des lavois, un lion et une balle dans l'Odyssée", in Véronique Dasen (ed.), *Dossier Éros en jeu, Métis. Anthropologie des mondes grecs anciens*, 19 (2021), 13-35.
- BRILLANTE, Carlo, "Il vecchio e la cicaia: un modello rappresentativo del mito greco", in Renato Raffaelli (ed.), *Rappresentazioni della morte*, Urbino (1987), 47-89.
- BURKERT, Walter, "La Saga delle Cecropidi e le Arreforie: dal rito di iniziazione alla festa delle Panatenee", in Marcel Detienne (ed.), *Il Mito*, Roma/Bari (1989), 23-49.
- BURKERT, Walter, *La religione Greca*, Milan (2003).
- CALAME, Claude, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece*, New York/Oxford (2001).
- CALAME, Claude, "Les jeux poétiques d'Éros: le désir amoureux en performances musicales", in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (eds), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity: Definition, Transmission, Reception*, *Jeu/Play/Spiel* 2, Liège (2021), 59-91.
- COSTANZA, Salvatore, *Giulio Polluce, Onomasticon: Excerpta de ludis. Materiali per la storia del gioco nel mondo greco-romano*, Alessandria (2019).
- DASEN, Véronique, *Le sourire d'Omphale. Maternité et petite enfance dans l'Antiquité*, Rennes (2015).
- DASEN, Véronique, "Jeux de l'amour et du hasard en Grèce ancienne", *Kernos* 29 (2016), 73-100.
- DESANTIS, Paola, "Statuette votive", in Fede Berti, Caterina Cornelio Cassai, Paola Desantis, Silvana Sani (eds), *La coroplastica di Spina. Immagini di culto*, Catalogo della mostra (Ferrara, 12-24 settembre 1987), Ferrara (1987), 13-36.
- DURAND, Agnès, "Les jeux de balle", in Roland May (ed.), *Jouer dans l'Antiquité, Musée d'archéologie méditerranéenne-Centre de la Vieille Charité, 22 novembre 1991 - 16 février 1992*, Marseille (1991), 92-99.
- FITTÀ, Marco, *Giochi e giocattoli nell'antichità*, Milano (1997).
- GASTALDI, Patrizia, *Pontecagnano II.4. La necropoli del Pagliarone*, Napoli (1998).
- GIUMAN, Marco, *Melissa. Archeologia delle api e del miele nella Grecia antica*, Roma (2008).
- GOLDEN, Mark, "Play, Sport, Dance, Ball Games: Categories in Motion", in Véronique Dasen, Marco Vespa (eds), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity: Definition, Transmission, Reception*, *Jeu/Play/Spiel* 2, Liège (2021), 49-59.
- GRECO, Emanuele, *Acropoli - Areopago - tra Acropoli e Pnice. Tomo 1*, Paestum (2010).
- GRILLO, Eleonora, "Figura femminile con peplo", in Angelo Bottini (ed.), *Il rito segreto. Misteri in Grecia e a Roma*, Catalogo della mostra (Roma, Colosseo, 22 luglio 2005 - 8 gennaio 2006), Milano (2005), 194-195, cat. n. 39.
- HENRICHs, Albert, "Warum soll ich denn tanzen?": *Dionysisches im Chor der Griechischen Tragödie*, *Lectio Teubneriana* 4, Stuttgart/Leipzig (1996).
- HOFFMANN Herbert, "A Clay Ball of Myrrhine", *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, 61 (1963), 20-22.
- HURWIT, Jeffrey Mark, *The Athenian Acropolis. History, Mythology and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present*, Cambridge (1999).
- I Pinakes di Locri* 1996-1999, Massimo Cardosa, Eleonora

- Grillo, Marina Rubinich, Roberta Schenal Pileggi, and Elisa Lissi Caronna, Claudio Sabbione, Licia Vlad Borrelli (eds), *I Pinakes di Locri Epizefiri*, Roma (1996-1999).
- I Pinakes di Locri* 2000-2003, Eleonora Grillo, Marina Rubinich, Roberta Schenal Pileggi and Elisa Lissi Caronna, Claudio Sabbione, Licia Vlad Borrelli (eds), *I Pinakes di Locri Epizefiri*, Roma (2000-2003).
- I Pinakes di Locri* 2004-2007, Federico Barello, Massimo Cardosa, Eleonora Grillo, Marina Rubinich, Roberta Schenal Pileggi, and Elisa Lissi Caronna, Claudio Sabbione, Licia Vlad Borrelli (eds), *I Pinakes di Locri Epizefiri*, Roma (2004-2007).
- KARANIK, Andromache, "The Midas Game: Performance, Intertextuality and the Poetics of Childhood", in Véronique Dasen and Marco Vespa (eds), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity: Definition, Transmission, Reception, Jeu/Play/Spiel* 2, Liège (2021), 221-238.
- LONSDALE, Steven, *Dance and Ritual in Greek Religion*, Baltimore/London (1993).
- MARRONI, Elisa and TORELLI, Mario, *L'Obolo di Persefone, Immaginario e ritualità dei Pinakes di Locri*, Pisa (2016).
- MENDNER Siegfried, "Das Spiel Phaininda-Harpastum", *Gymnasium* 66 (1959), 517-524.
- NAEREBOUT, Frederick G., "Achoreutos apaideutos: Dance in Ancient Greece", in Clare Fitzgerald (ed.), *Hymn to Apollo: The Ancient World and the Ballets Russes*, New York (2019), 29-51.
- NAEREBOUT, Frederick G., "Moving in Unison. The Greek Chorus in Performance", in Laura Gianvittorio (ed.), *Choreutika: Performing and Theorising Dance in Ancient Greece*, Biblioteca di Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica 13, Pisa/Roma (2017), 39-66.
- O'SULLIVAN Lara, "Playing Ball in Greek Antiquity", *Greece & Rome*, 59 (2012), 17-33.
- OAKLEY, John H., "Wedding Dances", in *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum*, Los Angeles, 2.4.b (2004), 312-314.
- OAKLEY, John H. and SINOS, Rebecca H., *The Wedding in Ancient Athens*, Wisconsin (1993).
- OLSEN, Sarah, *Solo Dance in Archaic and Classical Greek Literature: Representing the Unruly Body*, Cambridge (2021).
- ORSI, Paolo, "Scavi in Calabria nel 1913 (relazione preliminare), Locri Epyzephyrii", *Notizie e Scavi Suppl.* (1913), 3-54.
- PAPADOPOULOU, Zozie D., "Wedding Music", in *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum*, Los Angeles, 6 Add 2.4.c (2011), 414-418.
- PAUTASSO, Antonella, "Anakalypsis e Anakalypteria. Iconografie votive e culto nella Sicilia Dionigiana", in Carmela A. Di Stefano (ed.), *Demetra. La divinità, i santuari, il culto, la leggenda*, Roma (2008), 283-291.
- SABETAI, Victoria, "Conventionalizing Wedding Imagery: A New Hydria in the Benaki Museum", in Elvia Giudice, Giada Giudice (eds), *Studi miscellanei di ceramografia greca*, Monografie dell'archivio ceramografico dell'Università di Catania 6, Catania (2020), 107-130.
- SALZA PRINA RICOTTI, Eugenia, *Giochi e giocattoli. Vita e costumi dei romani antichi*, Roma (1995).
- SIRON, Nicolas, "La jeune fille au héron. Genre et érotique dans l'iconographie grecque (VI^e-IV^e siècle avant J.-C.)", *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire*, 42 (2015), 217-242.
- SOURVINOU-INWOOD, Christiane, "Due protettrici della donna a Locri Epizefiri: Persefone e Afrodite", in Giampiera Arrigoni (ed.), *Le donne in Grecia*, Roma/Bari (2008), 203-221.
- TODISCO, Luigi, "Bambini, fanciulli e dediche votive in Italia meridionale", in Annamaria Comella, Sebastiana Mele (eds), *Depositi votivi, Depositi votivi e culti dell'Italia antica dall'età arcaica a quella tardo-repubblicana*, Atti del Convegno di Studi (Perugia, 1-4 giugno 2000), Bari (2005), 713-721.
- TODISCO, Luigi, *Prodezze e prodigi nel mondo antico: Oriente e Occidente*, Roma (2013).
- TORELLI, Mario, "I culti in Locri", in Domenico Musti (ed.), *Locri Epizefiri, Locri Epizefiri*, Atti del XVI Convegno di Studi sulla Magna Grecia (Taranto, 3-8 ottobre 1976), Napoli (1977), 147-184 and 590-592.
- WEST, Martin L., *Ancient Greek Music*, Oxford (1992).

PART III

TOYS AS CULTURAL ARTEFACTS: ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND SEMIOTIC INSIGHTS



Toy car made by an eight-year-old boy, Anti-Atlas 2006. Photo Khalija Jariaa



Michel Manson

Université Paris 13

michelj.manson@wanadoo.fr

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

INTRODUCTION : LE CHEVAL BÂTON, UN JOUET DE GARÇON PÉRENNE ?

Le cheval bâton, jouet attesté dans l'Antiquité, puis au Moyen Âge, dans l'Ancien Régime, et qui est toujours présent aujourd'hui, nous pose le problème de la pérennité de certains jouets, comme les poupées, les osselets, les balles, etc. Même lorsque l'on croit que les jouets sont les mêmes depuis toujours, on admet volontiers qu'ils peuvent changer de forme, bénéficier des progrès de l'artisanat et de l'industrie, et sont donc sensibles aux modes¹. Est-ce parce qu'il met en jeu des ressorts ludiques qui appartiendraient à la nature humaine, à des fonctions que la croissance des enfants met en œuvre quelles que soient les époques de l'histoire ? Aux filles la poupée, aux garçons le cheval bâton : deux jouets qui nécessitent une imagination enfantine capable d'animisme, pour prêter à la poupée la vie d'une personne et au cheval bâton les performances d'un coursier, le temps du jeu.

Mais le jouet ne fait pas le jeu. C'est le joueur qui donne sens à l'objet à l'intérieur de la fiction ludique

qu'il imagine. Son imagination dépend de sa culture, de la société dans laquelle il a été élevé. Comme l'écrivait Jacques Henriot, « en dépit de ce que le jouet peut avoir de concret, de matériel, il reste étroitement dépendant de l'imaginaire et du symbolique : il reflète de manière indirecte la double idée que la société se fait de l'Enfance et du Jeu². » Le cheval bâton imite le cheval, mais la place du cheval dans la vie des hommes et dans l'imaginaire est-elle la même dans l'Antiquité, au Moyen Âge et aux Temps modernes et contemporains ? Pourquoi, et comment, le petit garçon peut-il s'identifier à un cavalier durant des siècles ?

Introduisons d'abord une distinction fondamentale. Certains jouets sont fabriqués, bricolés, par l'enfant et son milieu, et on les appellera des « jouets écologiques », d'autres sont des produits élaborés par des professionnels, artisans ou industriels, et ils sont ensuite vendus. Ce sont les « jouets du commerce ». Le poids de l'imaginaire social ne pèse pas de la même façon sur ces deux catégories de jouets. Comme l'explique Gilles Brougère, les jouets du commerce participent « au formatage social et culturel des individus dans notre société [...] [et] le jouet participe à la domestication de l'enfant, mais où trouverait-on une société qui ne domestiquerait pas ses enfants³ ? »

¹ BECQ DE FOUQUIÈRES (1869), 1-2 : « Et si les enfants furent de tout temps les mêmes, leurs joujoux aussi, hochets, crécelles, jouets de toutes sortes, poupées de bois, d'argile ou de cire, se ressemblent à toutes les époques, sauf l'art qui imprime sa marque sur les plus humbles choses. » Depuis, Philippe Ariès a montré qu'il y avait une histoire de l'enfant (ARIÈS, 1960 et nombreuses rééditions) et nous avons jeté les bases d'une histoire du jouet dans MANSON (2001).

² HENRIOT (1989), 101.

³ BROUGÈRE (2003), 298.

Cependant, il faut nuancer tout de suite cette vision réductrice du jouet en rappelant ce que la sociologie de l'enfance récente a bien mis en valeur que « l'enfant est un acteur de la construction de son être social et culturel, de sa socialisation ou acculturation. [...] l'enfant [...] ne se contente pas d'intérioriser la culture, mais [qu'] il participe à sa production⁴. »

Ainsi, faire l'histoire d'un jouet pérenne comme le cheval bâton demanderait à situer le jeu et l'objet du jeu dans le réseau des valeurs et de l'imaginaire de la société à chaque étape de cette histoire, en cherchant à comprendre ce que les enfants en ont intériorisé et ce qu'ils ont pu créer. L'entreprise est énorme et, pour l'amorcer, nous ne traiterons ici que les débuts de cette histoire, de l'Antiquité au XVI^e siècle, en essayant de mieux percevoir les mutations dans le regard sur l'enfance et ses jouets. Nous comptons sur le cheval bâton pour nous aider à comprendre ces transformations.

1. LE CHEVAL BÂTON ANTIQUE : DE LA FOLIE À LA SAGESSE

On a beaucoup répété que le cheval bâton était connu des Grecs et des Romains, en citant comme source pour la Grèce antique deux vases, et quatre textes. Examinons d'abord les sources iconographiques. La plus ancienne attestation du jeu se trouverait sur un vase *chous* du Louvre, daté de 425 av. J.-C.⁵ Agnès Durand décrit la scène comme représentant « un enfant à cheval sur son "dada" devant un autel et le terme d'un dieu, jeune comme son adorateur ». En fait, en regardant de plus près, on s'aperçoit que l'enfant tient son jouet à roues au bout d'un long manche, par la main gauche, à côté de sa jambe, et non entre les jambes. Le jouet n'est pas chevauché, ce n'est pas un cheval bâton. Une autre image semble plus explicite. Il s'agit d'un vase italote, un cratère, signalé en 1855 dans les *Monumenti, Annali e Bullettini*, dont le dessin est repris dans le Daremberg et Saglio, puis par Salomon Reinach, par Ludwig Deubner et enfin par Marco Fittà (fig. 1)⁶. Le vase n'a pas été retrouvé et le dessin est une interprétation qu'on peut mettre en doute⁷. Il ne resterait alors comme témoignage de l'existence de ce jeu dans la Grèce ancienne qu'un petit nombre de textes, que nous allons examiner, en prenant d'abord ceux qui concernent Agésilas. Plutarque écrit dans la *Vie d'Agésilas* :

ἦν δὲ καὶ φιλότεκνος ὁ Ἀγησίλαος διαφερόντως· καὶ

4 BROUGÈRE (2003), 299.

5 DURAND (1991), 194, n° 97 et 74, fig. 62.

6 *Monumenti* (1855), pl. VI ; LAFAYE (1900), 1358, fig. 4637 ; DEUBNER (1930), 169, fig. 16 ; FITTÀ (1997), 48, situe ce vase à Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, tout en signalant p. 49 un autre vase : « Su un cratere a campana dell'Italia meridionale, ora perduto, era rappresentato un bastone con la testa equina. »

7 Voir KEI, sous presse.

περὶ ἐκείνου τὸ τῆς παιδείας λέγουσιν, ὅτι μικροῖς τοῖς παιδίοις οὐσι κάλαμον περιβεβηκὼς ὥσπερ ἵππον οἴκοι συνέπαιζεν.

Agésilas avait cela entre autres choses, qu'il aimait fort tendrement ses enfants ; et conte-t-on de lui qu'il se jouait avec eux emmi la maison, quand ils étaient petits, montant dessus un bâton ou dessus une canne comme sur un cheval, auquel état l'un de ses amis l'ayant un jour trouvé en son privé, il le pria de n'en vouloir rien dire, jusqu'à ce que lui-même eût de petits enfants⁸.

Robert Flacelière le traduit ainsi :

Agésilas avait effectivement pour ses enfants une extrême tendresse : on raconte que lorsqu'ils étaient tout petits, il partageait leurs jeux dans la maison, montant comme eux à cheval sur un bâton⁹.

Le texte que Plutarque donne dans les *Apophthegmes des Lacédémoniens* (ou *Laconiens*) est très proche¹⁰ de celui de la *Vie d'Agésilas* :

Φιλοτεκνότατος δ' ὦν διαφερόντως λέγεται ὅτι μικροῖς τοῖς παιδίοις κάλαμον περιβεβηκὼς ὥσπερ ἵππον οἴκοι συνέπαιζεν· ὁφθεῖς δὲ ὑπὸ τινος τῶν φίλων παρεκάλει μηδενὶ φράζειν, πρὶν καὶ αὐτὸς πατήρ παιδῶν γένηται.

Comme il avait une extraordinaire tendresse pour ses enfants, on rapporte que, quand ils étaient tout petits, il partageait leurs jeux dans sa maison, enfourchant un

8 Plutarque, *Agésilas*, 25, 5 (trad. J. Amyot, Gallimard).

9 Plutarque, *Agésilas*, 25, 5 (trad. R. Flacelière, CUF).

10 DELATTRE (2012), pour l'auteur, les *Apophthegmes des Lacédémoniens* « peuvent être considérés comme un document de travail de Plutarque » et la *Vie d'Agésilas* aurait alors développé et mis en perspective l'anecdote du cheval bâton. Dans son édition de ce texte, François Fuhrmann attribue bien cette œuvre à Plutarque, ce seraient des notes prises au cours de ses travaux et utilisées par la suite (Plutarque, *Œuvres morales. Apophthegmes laconiens* (trad. F. Fuhrmann, CUF)).



Fig. 1: cratère italote. D'après FITTÀ (1997), 35, fig. 48.

bâton en guise de cheval ; et qu'ayant été vu par un de ses amis dans cette posture, il l'avait prié de n'en parler à personne avant d'être devenu père lui-même¹¹.

Ces textes datent du début du II^e siècle après J.-C., celui d'Élien d'un siècle plus tard. Compilation d'auteurs divers, son *Histoire variée* doit certainement ce passage à Plutarque :

Ἀγησίλαος δὲ κάλαμον περιβάς ἵππευε μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ παιδὸς ὄντος, καὶ πρὸς τὸν γελάσαντα εἶπε ὅτι νῦν μὲν σιώπα, ὅταν δὲ γένη πατὴρ αὐτός, τότε ἐξαγορεύσεις.

Agésilas, à califourchon sur un roseau, jouait à chevaucher avec son fils, qui était encore enfant. Il dit à quelqu'un qui riait : « Tais-toi maintenant. Lorsque tu seras père toi-même, alors tu diras ce que tu penses aux autres pères ».¹²

Doit-on croire cette histoire et son attribution à Agésilas, roi de Sparte de 398 à 360 av. J.-C. ? Dans le texte de la *Vie d'Agésilas*, Plutarque insère l'anecdote dans un passage concernant Sphodrias. Ce général et magistrat spartiate, dans un conflit avec Thèbes, est chargé de garder Thespies dans l'hiver 379-378 et prend l'initiative au printemps 378 d'attaquer Athènes, mais il échoue. Il est désavoué par Sparte, rapatrié, et, alors qu'il va être condamné, Agésilas intervient et le fait innocenter. Plutarque raconte qu'il a voulu faire plaisir à son fils Archidamos, amoureux du fils de Sphodrias, Cléonymos. L'anecdote du cheval bâton vient donc illustrer l'amour qu'Agésilas porte à ses enfants. Or, la source de Plutarque est Xénophon, qui raconte cette même histoire¹³, mais sans le passage sur le cheval bâton. De fait, les historiens grecs du IV^e siècle av. J.-C. ne se penchent pas particulièrement sur la tendresse d'Agésilas envers ses enfants petits : dans cette histoire de Sphodrias, il ne s'agit que de son fils déjà grand¹⁴. Il nous semble donc légitime d'émettre l'hypothèse que ce passage a été inventé par Plutarque, d'autant qu'il reflète bien ses propres valeurs sur la tendresse des parents à l'égard de leurs enfants. Dans son traité *Sur l'éducation des enfants*, Plutarque affirme que « c'est grâce à elle [la philosophie] et avec elle que l'on peut être [...] affectueux envers ses enfants »¹⁵. Il prône une éducation par la douceur et la persuasion, et il y consacre même un petit traité, *De l'amour des pères et des mères pour leurs enfants*, dans lequel il montre que les animaux déploient des trésors de tendresse et d'amour pour nourrir et élever leurs petits, gratuitement, sans rien en attendre. L'homme ne peut pas faire moins que les bêtes sauvages, et en premier lieu la mère qui

allaite son bébé et l'aime dès sa naissance, malgré les souffrances endurées dans l'accouchement. Ainsi, les pères n'aiment pas leurs enfants pour les secours qu'ils en recevront dans leur vieillesse, mais par une force qui leur vient de la nature. Le regard tendre de Plutarque envers ses propres enfants se voit dans un épisode douloureux de sa vie. Arrivant à Tanagra, il apprend la mort de sa fille, Timoxéna, âgée de deux ans. Il écrit à sa femme une lettre de consolation¹⁶. Il lui rappelle comment leur fille répondait à leur tendresse et que sa bonté allait jusqu'à demander à sa nourrice de donner le sein aussi à ses jouets (*kai paigniois*). Il utilise aussi le mot *paignion* pour désigner des jouets dans un autre traité¹⁷. Son attention à l'enfance et aux jouets se retrouve dans de nombreux passages de son œuvre. C'est lui qui raconte qu'Archytas inventa la crécelle et le cerceau pour les enfants qui ne pouvaient se tenir tranquilles¹⁸, lui qui évoque Alcibiade enfant jouant aux osselets¹⁹. Cela suffit pour montrer que la sensibilité de Plutarque à l'enfance, son regard qui capte les relations des enfants avec leurs jouets, tout cela rend plausible l'hypothèse de son invention du jeu d'Agésilas au cheval bâton. Il est amusant de constater que Xénophon, qui n'en dit rien, est l'auteur du premier traité sur l'art équestre que nous ayons conservé²⁰. Plutarque n'invente peut-être pas cette anecdote complètement, parce qu'il l'a trouvée, appliquée à Socrate, chez Valère Maxime.

De otio laudato in externis.

Idque vidit, cui nulla pars sapientiae obscura fuit, Socrates ; ideoque non erubuit tunc, quum interposita arundine cruribus suis, cum parvulis filiis ludens ab Alcibiade risus est.

Du repos honorable, chez les étrangers.

Cette nécessité fut bien comprise de Socrate, à qui n'échappait aucun élément de la sagesse. Aussi ne rougit-il pas, lorsque, à cheval sur un roseau et jouant avec ses fils tout enfants, il excita les rires moqueurs d'Alcibiade²¹.

11 Plutarque, Œuvres morales. *Apophtegmes des Lacédémoniens*, 2, 70 (trad. F. Fuhrmann, CUF).

12 Élien, *Histoires diverses*, 12, 15 (trad. A. Lukinovich et A.-Fr. Morand, CUF).

13 Xénophon, *Histoire grecque*, 5, 4, 24-33.

14 SCHEPENS (2005).

15 Plutarque, Œuvres morales. *Sur l'éducation des enfants*, 10 (trad. J. Sirenelli, CUF).

16 Plutarque, Œuvres morales. *Consolation à sa femme*, 608-611F. Marié vers 70 apr. J.-C., ayant déjà eu quatre garçons et peut-être d'autres filles avant celle-là, à laquelle il avait donné le prénom de sa femme, on peut en conclure que la lettre date d'une période allant de 85 à 95 après J.-C., donc avant l'écriture de la *Vie d'Agésilas*.

17 Plutarque, Œuvres morales. *De la tranquillité de l'âme*, 8 (trad. J. Dumortier, CUF) (= *Moralia*, 469 D) : « Mais comme les petits marmots, quelqu'un leur enlève-t-il un seul de leurs nombreux jouets, jettent à terre tous les autres en pleurant et en criant, de la même manière, sommes-nous tourmentés sur un point par le sort, nous perdons sottement l'avantage de tout le reste par nos lamentations et notre impatience. » ἀλλ' ὥσπερ τὰ μικρὰ παιδάρια, ἀπὸ πολλῶν παιγνίων ἂν ἓν τις ἀφέλῃται τι, καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ πάντα προσρίψαντα κλαίει καὶ βοᾷ, τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ἡμᾶς περὶ ἓν ὀχληθέντας ὑπὸ τῆς τύχης, καὶ τὰλλα πάντα ποιεῖν ἀνόνητα ἑαυτοῖς ὀδυρομένους καὶ δυσφοροῦντας. Sur les différents sens de *paignion*, voir aussi É. DIEU dans ce volume.

18 Plutarque, *Propos de Table*, 714E. Après Aristote, *Politique*, 1340b 25.

19 Plutarque, *Alcibiade*, 2, 2-3.

20 Xénophon, *De l'Art équestre*. Voir SCHENK (2001).

21 Valère Maxime, *Des faits et des paroles mémorables*, 8, 8 (trad. P. Constant, Garnier).

Valère Maxime écrit sous Tibère, son ouvrage ayant été composé entre 24 et 31 après J.-C. Valère Maxime fait partie des sources de Plutarque, et l'on peut penser que c'est chez cet auteur qu'il a trouvé l'idée de cette anecdote en la transposant à Agésilas. L'auteur latin voit dans cette attitude de Socrate un exemple de sagesse, et l'on a vu que pour Plutarque, la tendresse d'un père envers ses enfants vient de la nature mais est enseignée aussi par la philosophie. D'où vient cette anecdote chez Valère Maxime ? La source de ce passage ne semble pas être connue, il est le seul à la raconter²². Peut-on penser qu'il l'a inventée, en pensant à la Satire d'Horace. Car le seul texte mentionnant ce jeu, avant celui de Valère Maxime, est celui, bien connu, et toujours cité, du poète augustéen Horace.

*Aedificare casas, plostello adiungere mures
ludere par, impar ; equitare in harundine longa
Siquem delectet barbatum, amentia verset*

Construire de petites maisons, atteler des souris à un petit chariot, jouer à pair ou impair, monter à cheval sur un long roseau, si un homme ayant de la barbe trouvait du charme à ces jeux, c'est que la démente le travaillerait²³.

Dans cette satire, Damasippe vient voir Horace chez lui et essaye de lui démontrer que tout le monde est fou, en prenant des exemples de démences différentes. Dans le passage qui nous intéresse, c'est de la folie, pour un homme mûr, barbu, de jouer comme un enfant, et, parmi ces jeux, il y a celui de chevaucher un cheval bâton : *equitare in harundine longa*. Ce discours est clairement à l'opposé de ceux de Valère Maxime et de Plutarque pour qui un philosophe et un roi peuvent jouer à ce jeu avec leurs enfants et rester des exemples de sagesse. Il apparaît aussi que tous ces textes ne s'intéressent qu'à l'adulte qui chevauche un cheval bâton : rien n'est dit sur les enfants. Nous sommes dans un discours philosophique qui prend prétexte des jeux d'enfant pour réfléchir sur la sagesse et la puérilité des hommes, puisqu'être puéril c'est se conduire en enfant. Ce discours était déjà celui de Varron, dans un fragment des *Satires Ménippées* (entre 80 et 67 av. J.-C.). Ce passage peut se traduire ainsi : « [...] c'est pourquoi on voyait bientôt une grande partie d'entre eux se mettre à désirer poupées (*puparum*) et figurines (*sigillorum*)²⁴. »

Situé dans un chapitre sur les Aborigènes, ce fragment évoque donc les habitants préhistoriques du Latium, en un passé mythique qui est celui de l'âge d'or²⁵. Ces hommes étaient des Sages, mais à la fin de l'âge d'or ils sont devenus comme des enfants, pué-

rils, désirant comme eux poupées et figurines. Nos textes font donc du cheval bâton un symbole de la folie ou de la sagesse des hommes, créant ainsi deux *topoi* que nous retrouverons pendant des siècles.

Mais qu'apprend-t-on sur ce jeu d'enfant et sur le jouet qu'il utilise ? Presque rien, à part le fait qu'il s'agit d'un jouet écologique et que tous les auteurs s'entendent pour dire qu'il est fait à partir d'un roseau : *arundo* en latin, chez Horace et Valère Maxime, *kalamos* (κάλαμος) en grec chez Plutarque. Cette plante, relativement facile à couper, est assez légère pour que des mains de petit enfant puisse porter aisément la badine devenue cheval.

Nous n'avons donc aucune certitude que ce jeu ait bien existé dans le monde grec, et nous serions assez enclin de penser qu'il a surgi au I^{er} siècle av. J.-C., lié à une image fortement positive d'enfant à cheval et qu'on veut imiter. Je pense au *lusus Troiae*, cette parade équestre dont les acteurs sont des enfants, avant la prise de la toge virile, dont l'âge avait été abaissé à quatorze ans²⁶. Si les origines du jeu troyen peuvent être très anciennes, ce qui m'importe c'est qu'il resurgit à partir de Sylla²⁷, et, surtout, qu'il correspond à l'époque augustéenne à un désir de réorganiser la jeunesse. Les enfants de Rome assistent à cette parade, et voient aussi des enfants à cheval en tête de la *Pompa circensis*, prélude aux *Ludi romani*, ce que nous raconte Denys d'Halicarnasse, qui vit sous Auguste et se fait le chantre de sa propagande²⁸. En chevauchant leur cheval bâton, les petits Romains se voyaient glorieusement défiler sur leur cheval au *lusus troiae* ou à la *Pompa circensis*. Les enfants du Moyen Âge, eux, se prendront pour des chevaliers joutant dans un tournoi.

2. LE CHEVAL BÂTON MÉDIÉVAL : UN SYMBOLE DE LA PETITE ENFANCE ET UN DESTRIER DE TOURNOIS

2.1. Un jouet écologique attesté aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles en Italie et en France

C'est au XIII^e siècle que le cheval bâton fait sa réapparition dans les sources, en l'occurrence dans un sermon du dominicain Ambrogio Sansedoni, ou Ambroise de Sienne (1220-1286). Il a été condisciple de Saint Thomas d'Aquin à Paris, a joué un rôle de négociateur international et s'est avéré un prédicateur talentueux. Dans l'un de ses *Sermoni dominicales*, il fait la remarque suivante, tirée de son observation de l'enfance : *Sicut pueri non possunt equitare in equis vivis faciunt sibi de canna et galeas de luto* (« Comme les enfants ne peuvent pas chevaucher de vrais che-

22 D'après BOSCH (1929).

23 Horace, *Satires*, 2, 3, 247-249 (trad. F. Villeneuve, CUF).

24 Varron, *Satires Ménippées*, 1, frg. 1 (trad. J.-P. Cèbe, École française de Rome).

25 Nous avons montré les liens étroits qui unissent l'enfant et l'âge d'or : MANSON (1978).

26 NÉRAUDAU (1979), 227-237.

27 Plutarque, *Caton d'Utique*, 3, 1, car il y participe comme chef de l'une des deux *turmae*.

28 NÉRAUDAU (1979), 234. Denys d'Halicarnasse emprunte cependant à Fabius Pictor.

vaux, ils le font sur un roseau et ils se fabriquent des casques avec de l'argile »²⁹. Nous sommes là encore très proche du roseau cité par les Romains, mais le personnage auquel s'identifient les enfants vus par Ambroise de Sienne est le chevalier du Moyen Âge.

Dans une source littéraire française du siècle suivant, le bâton devient un personnage doté d'un nom. C'est Jean Froissart, le célèbre auteur des *Chroniques*, qui a raconté les jeux de son enfance dans un poème, *L'Espinette amoureuse*, que l'on peut dater vers 1370³⁰. Comme il est né vers 1337 et qu'il dit raconter les jeux « dessous douze ans », il faudrait donc les situer au milieu du siècle. Né à Valenciennes, en pays flamand, il a eu une enfance urbaine, de petite bourgeoisie. La liste des jeux qu'il cite est longue, au moins une cinquantaine, mais il faudrait se garder de la généraliser à toute l'enfance médiévale³¹. Parmi ces jeux, ceux avec des jouets constituent la catégorie la moins développée. Notre jouet apparaît clairement, sans aucun problème d'interprétation : « Et j'ai souvent d'un bastonciel / Fait un cheval nommé Grisiel³². »

Il s'agit d'un simple bâton, donc du jouet « écolo-gique », et l'imaginaire mis en œuvre par l'enfant apparaît dans la transformation de ce bâton en un cheval qui devient un personnage porteur d'un nom, comme les poupées que les petites filles baptisent. Il faut souligner que dans la liste des jouets de Froissart deux seulement semblent provenir du commerce, de l'artisanat : la balle (*esteuf*)³³ et la toupie (*tourpoie*). Cette dernière, faite au tour, est vendue par les merciers à la foire du Lendit au XIV^e siècle³⁴.

2.2. Un jouet symbole de l'enfance dans l'iconographie médiévale

Contemporaine de ce cheval bâton nommé Grisiel, mais géographiquement et culturellement à l'opposé, une première représentation du cheval bâton surgit dans un contexte religieux et symbolique, en Italie, à Padoue, dans une église, celle des *Eremitani* (Érémittiques)³⁵. Il s'agit d'une fresque de Guariento di Arpo, datée vers 1361-1365³⁶. Cette église liée au départ au couvent de l'ordre des Ermites de Saint Augustin a

reçu une décoration du chœur par Guariento, dont il ne reste que le côté gauche, avec un cycle racontant les vies de Saint Philippe et de saint Augustin. En dessous, sept vignettes monochromes, en grisaille imitant le marbre, représentant dans chaque espace trilobé une planète personnifiée, flanquée d'une figure masculine et d'une figure féminine. La Lune, couronnée, debout devant son char, tenant un croissant de la main droite, le pied gauche sur un globe, est ainsi encadrée par un garçon à gauche, et une fille à droite. Le garçon chevauche un cheval bâton dont il stimule l'ardeur à l'aide d'un fouet qu'il brandit de la main droite. La fille berce une poupée nichée dans un repli de sa robe, relevé par sa main gauche, et, de la main droite, elle tire un jouet à roulettes, simple axe avec deux roues au bout d'une longue ficelle. La Lune est la planète de l'Enfance et celle-ci est constituée d'un garçon et d'une fille, chaque enfant avec le jouet qui symbolise le mieux l'enfance des garçons et l'enfance des filles³⁷. Cette fresque a inspiré des miniaturistes du siècle suivant, vers 1435-1440, dont l'un innove en plaçant une poupée dans un petit chariot que tire la fillette³⁸.

L'iconographie des âges de la vie n'est pas nouvelle, mais c'est seulement à partir du XIV^e siècle que l'enfance est représentée avec des jouets³⁹. Pour les garçons nous trouvons le sabot, le cheval bâton, le moulinet et la balle, pour la fille, la poupée. L'intérêt pour ce thème de l'enfance est sans doute à relier avec le succès européen d'un ouvrage dû au franciscain Bartholomaeus Anglicanus (Barthélémy l'Anglais), actif à Paris et en Saxe, qui composa vers 1230 l'encyclopédie médiévale la plus influente, *De proprietatibus rerum* connue par d'innombrables manuscrits et éditions imprimées, sans compter les résumés, les adaptations et les citations⁴⁰. L'auteur s'intéresse aux propriétés des âges (Livre VI) avec de nombreuses notations sur l'enfant et son éducation⁴¹. C'est pourquoi les manuscrits des XIV^e et XV^e siècles comportent pour ces passages des miniatures sur l'enfant où souvent apparaissent des jouets. Particulièrement exemplaire, la miniature illustrant un passage de ce livre VI, dans la traduction du latin par Jean Corbechon du *Livre des propriétés des choses* (vers 1475-1482). On y voit le bébé dans son berceau, le petit enfant qui apprend à marcher avec un déambulateur et un enfant plus âgé

29 CACIORGNA, GUERINI (2004), 129.

30 FROISSART (1972), vers 148-248. Cf. PLANCHE (1980).

31 Selon une remarque de VAN GENNEP (1936), chap. VI « Les jeux populaires », 724-736. Il cite Froissart et insiste sur le fait que l'identification des jeux apparaissant dans une simple énumération sans description reste problématique : pour y parvenir il faut utiliser les dictionnaires de patois. Un même nom de jeu peut, dans une autre région, désigner une autre réalité ludique, et inversement, un même jeu peut avoir des appellations diverses.

32 FROISSART (1972), vers 213-214.

33 Fabriqués par les « paulmiers » présents au nombre de 13 à Paris dans la taille de 1292. Cf. FRANKLIN (1906), s.v. Paulmiers.

34 *Tourpoie*, manuscrit A, *tourpie*, manuscrit B (FROISSART (1972), vers 241). Pour la toupie à la foire du Lendit, cf. *Le Dit d'un mercier*, poème du XIV^e siècle cité par FRANKLIN (1906), 753-755.

35 SPIAZZI (1993).

36 D'ARCAIS (1975), fig. 109.

37 SEARS (1986), 109-110, ill. n 45

38 Prosdocius de Beldemando, *De motibus corporum supercaelestium canones*, Padua, 1435, Oxford, Bodleian Library, ms. Can. Misc. 554, fol. 171 r^o, et Michel Scott, *Liber physiognomiae*, Italie du nord, vers 1440, Modène, Biblioteca Estense, ms. Lat. 697, fol. 4 v^o (poupée dans le chariot).

39 Les recherches d'Elizabeth Sears offrent à ce sujet une base sûre, avec plus de 150 manuscrits constituant un corpus représentatif de l'évolution iconographique de la représentation des âges de l'homme au Moyen Âge.

40 VOIGT (1910) liste ces manuscrits et éditions, qu'il faudrait aujourd'hui compléter.

41 Chapitres 4-7, 9, 10, 14, traduits par GOODICH (1975-1976).

chevauchant un cheval bâton doté d'une superbe tête bien modelée et brandissant un moulinet à vent à deux palettes, comme s'il s'agissait d'une lance dans un tournoi⁴². Le cheval bâton semble bien avoir une place privilégiée pour signifier l'enfance : c'est celui qu'on représente le plus souvent. Dans la roue des âges de l'homme, il est le symbole de la *pueritia*⁴³, et lorsque l'on distingue la *pueritia* et l'*infantia*⁴⁴, il marque la petite enfance, alors que le sabot est souvent l'attribut de garçons d'une dizaine d'années, âge qui offre la coordination motrice nécessaire pour entretenir le mouvement du sabot en le fouettant. C'est ce que montre une miniature de la fin du XV^e siècle représentant le petit enfant coiffé d'un bonnet avec le moulinet à vent comme une lance et sur un cheval bâton, faisant face à un garçon plus âgé qui fouette un sabot⁴⁵. L'image de l'*infantia* que nous avons citée, celle du pavement de la cathédrale de Sienne, dans le transept droit, réalisée en 1475 par Federighi, a été précédée par deux textes dont on ne sait si l'artiste en avait eu connaissance, mais qui provenaient de la région siennoise. Le premier est dû au poète orviétan Simone de' Prodenzani (c.1351-c.1440), qui, dans son *Liber Saporecti*, consacre huit sonnets aux âges de la vie (*Etates hominum* ou *De etate hominum*). Le troisième sonnet, évoquant l'enfance, parle de notre jouet :

*Doppo tre anni comencia a cavalcare
Sopra la canna e questo è 'l suo ronzino,
Non avendo pensier de nullo afare.*

Après trois ans il commence à chevaucher sur un roseau et celui-ci est son cheval, ne pensant rien faire de particulier en cela⁴⁶.

Il est très intéressant d'avoir ici, pour la première fois, une indication d'âge à partir duquel le petit enfant commence à s'imaginer cavalier, et cet âge est très crédible au regard de l'évolution psychologique et motrice de l'enfant.

Le cheval bâton apparaît aussi dans une iconographie qui représente l'enfance, mais sans que la dé-

signation de la tranche d'âge apparaisse. Prenons l'exemple de l'iconographie religieuse, et d'abord de l'Enfant Jésus, symbole de tous les enfants. L'image la plus connue est celle de l'enfant Jésus à cheval bâton, accompagnant Sainte Dorothée, sur une xylographie coloriée, vers 1480 (fig. 2)⁴⁷. Jésus tient un panier de la main droite et les rênes de son cheval, à la tête bien formée, dans la main gauche. Sur un manuscrit allemand un peu antérieur, dans les scènes de l'enfance du Christ, une vignette le montre, nu, chevauchant un cheval bâton⁴⁸. Un codex théologique du début du XVI^e siècle montre le Christ enfant, nu sur un cheval bâton et affrontant un serpent⁴⁹.

L'iconographie religieuse présente le cheval bâton avec d'autres personnages et dans d'autres situations. Ainsi Saint Jean enfant sur un plat de naissance, de l'école florentine, daté de 1428⁵⁰. L'enfant est nu, assis, tenant un moulinet à vent dans la main droite avec un bâton passant sous sa jambe gauche, muni d'une poignée (?) faisant office de tête de cheval. Sur

47 Bnf. Estampes, LEMOISNE (1930), n° 54 ; BOUCHOT (1903), pl. 74, n° 138.

48 Eberhard Windeck, *Vita imperatoris Sigismundi germanica*, vers 1456. Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. 2913, fol. 1 r°.

49 Codex théologique, détrempe et encre sur parchemin, vers 1510. Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, cod. Theol. 4° 136, fol. 19.

50 Plat conservé par The New Historical Society.



Fig. 2: Sainte Dorothée avec l'Enfant Jésus, xylographie vers 1480. Bnf. Estampes. D'après Lesmoine (1930), no 54.

42 Bnf. Ms. Fr. 218, fol. 95 f°. et ms. Fr. 22532. Image publiée dans ALEXANDRE-BIDON, CLOSSON (1985), pl. coul. et une planche de dessins de jouets montre un cheval bâton sur les manuscrits suivants de la Bnf : Ms. Lat. 757 f° 198 ; Ms. Lat. 774 f° 1 ; Ms. Fr. 995 f° 7.

43 Ainsi, sur un manuscrit italien vers 1435, *Virtutum ac vitiorum delineatio*, Roma, Biblioteca Casanatense, ms. 1404, fol. 4 v°. et sur un manuscrit allemand du scribe Konrad Bollstatter, *Losbücher*, BSB Cgm 312, vers 1450-1473, image 201, München Staatsbibliothek.

44 Par exemple sur le pavement de la cathédrale de Sienne, dû à Antonio Federighi, en 1475, qui représente les sept âges de l'homme, l'*Infantia* est, dans la copie du XIX^e s., un petit garçon nu chevauchant un moulinet à deux palettes qui lui sert de cheval bâton, mais l'original du Musée montre bien un cheval bâton. Siena, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. Cf. MANSON (2008). Pour une étude approfondie des âges de l'homme de Federighi, cf. CACIORGNA, GUERINI (2004), 123-131, fig. 83-84.

45 *Offices et prières pour l'usage privé d'une dame*, illustration d'un texte interpolé sur les Sept âges de l'homme, Oxford, Bodleian Library, ms. Douce 12, fol. 16 r°. Autre copie, ms. Douce 8, fol. 6 r°.

46 PRODENZANI (1998), XVI-XVII (trad. M. Manson).

un Bréviaire, c'est peut-être l'Enfant Jésus, nu, avec une auréole, accompagné par deux enfants ailés, qui se trouve dans un char que tirent d'autres petits anges. Dans le cortège qui précède et qui suit ce char, quatre petits enfants nus et ailés sont à cheval bâton, deux en tête, l'un d'eux portant un étendard. En fin de cortège, les deux autres tiennent chacun un moulinet à ailettes⁵¹.

Ce jouet peut surgir entre les jambes d'un petit garçon qui passe ou qui assiste à une scène religieuse, comme sur le tableau anonyme de la présentation de Jésus au temple (vers 1475-1495), avec, au premier plan, un gamin, un fouet dans la main gauche, fièrement juché sur son cheval doté d'un cou et d'une tête très bien formée⁵². Une gravure d'Albrecht Dürer, *Ecce Homo* (vers 1498-1499) montre, elle aussi au premier plan, un petit garçon sur les marches en haut desquelles le Christ apparaît à la foule. L'enfant regarde le Christ, tenant négligemment un bâton dont une excroissance forme une vague représentation de la tête du cheval⁵³.

Sur un tableau célèbre de Lucas Cranach, *Le Christ bénissant les enfants* (vers 1545-1550), une mère, située à gauche du Christ, avec un bébé sur un bras, tient le bras d'un petit garçon qui ne songe qu'à s'échapper sur sa monture dotée d'une belle tête harnachée. Sa sœur, devant lui, tient sa poupée. Tous deux au premier plan montrent comme Guariento deux siècles plus tôt les deux jouets symboliques de l'enfance des garçons et des filles, deux jouets marqueurs du genre.

2.3. Un jouet symbole de la chevalerie et des tournois

Les manuscrits enluminés peuvent aussi montrer des enfants avec ce jouet dans un but purement décoratif, dans les marges des pages, parfois avec le désir de représenter un jeu qu'autorise le cheval bâton, le jeu du tournoi. Dans le premier cas nous trouvons des ouvrages liturgiques, comme les Heures à l'usage d'Évreux, vers 1450-1475, où l'enfant nu chevauchant un cheval bâton fait face à un oiseau ailes déployées⁵⁴, et un ouvrage de Saint Augustin où, dans la marge du bas, un enfant sur ce jouet, debout sur un tertre herbeux, semble plongé dans une profonde réflexion⁵⁵. Le motif du putto ailé avec cheval bâton peut être purement décoratif, comme dans une fresque de Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, dit le Sodoma, exécutée à Monteoliveto Maggiore vers 1508. Dans un panneau décoratif avec des grotesques, sous une fontaine centrale, se trouvent deux amours ailés. Celui de gauche

chevauche un bâton qu'il tient de la main gauche, et dont le sommet dessine un 4. Celui de droite utilise ses deux mains pour maintenir une jarre sous un jet d'eau de la fontaine, et il a laissé derrière lui, debout, son cheval bâton de même forme que l'autre.

Les livres d'heures du XVI^e siècle utilisent aussi dans leurs marges des enfants, nus ou habillés, qui semblent faire la course à cheval bâton. Un bois gravé souvent repris et copié depuis 1502, se retrouve dans des Heures imprimées par Thielman Kerver pour Gillet Remacle⁵⁶ et dans des Heures pour Simon Vostre⁵⁷. Deux enfants semblent se poursuivre à cheval bâton, et, entre les deux, un autre indique au suiveur la direction du premier. C'est sans doute aussi un jeu de poursuite qu'illustre la belle miniature d'un livre d'heures vers 1510⁵⁸, où une femme assise semble surveiller trois enfants habillés dont deux se suivent à cheval bâton, le troisième tournant bride dans l'autre sens, comme s'il abandonnait la course.

La volonté décorative peut aussi se conjuguer avec l'évocation du jeu de tournoi. Sur un missel espagnol (vers 1468), la marge du bas de la page comprend quatre enfants nus, avec une cape ou un bonnet, sur un cheval bâton et brandissant un autre bâton, dans un cas à l'horizontale comme la lance lors du tournoi⁵⁹. Bien qu'il soit seul dans la marge, c'est le même jeu qu'évoque l'enfant qui chevauche un roseau avec une tête très sommaire, qu'il tient par les rênes dans sa main gauche, alors qu'il tient solidement dans la droite un autre roseau, aussi grand que lui, qui pourrait bien être sa lance au repos⁶⁰.

Ce jeu est si répandu et observé qu'un texte du milieu du XV^e siècle l'évoque clairement :

Quant on voit ces petits enfans courir parmi les rues à chevaux de bois, à tout lances, et desguisez par manière de gens de guerre, c'est tout vray signe de tout prochenement avoir grant tribulacion ou pays⁶¹.

51 *Breviarium abbatis pars hiemalis*, Salem, vers 1493-1494, Heidelberg, Université, Cod. Sal. LXC fol. 151 r°.

52 Paris, Cluny, Musée national du Moyen Âge, n inv. Cl. 23414.

53 New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 19.70.4.

54 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Mas. Canon. Liturg. 283, fol. 21 v°.

55 Saint Augustin, *De civitate Dei*, vers 1469-1473, Bnf. Mas. Fr. 19, fol. 190.

56 *Hore intemperate Virginis Marie secundum usum Romanum cum pluribus orationibus tam in gallico quam in latino*, Paris, achevé d'imprimer par Thielman Kerver, imprimeur libraire, pour Gillet Remacle, le 5ème jour de janvier l'an 1503. Ce bois est répété 10 fois sur les 194 p. illustrées (Bnf. Rés. Vélins 1507, NUMM-1090403).

57 *Ces presentes heures a lusaige de Troyes*, pour Simon Vostre, 1507, reprise d'un bois de 1502. (Bnf. Vélins 1671, NUMM 1511466, vue 26). Cette gravure se retrouve plusieurs fois dans le livre et dans d'autres Heures, à l'usage de Bourges par exemple, vers 1511.

58 Livre d'heures à l'usage de Rome, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms Douce 276 fol. 124 r°.

59 *Missel*, Valence, vers 1468, New York, The Morgan Library, Ms M 450 fol. 126 r°.

60 *Graduel*, Castille, vers 1500-1510, New York, The Morgan Library, Ms M 887 fol. 1, r°.

61 CAMBRAY et al. (1855), *Les Évangiles des Quenouilles*, première journée, chap. XX, 25 ; dans la même édition, une autre version tirée du manuscrit d'Armand Cigongne est donnée à la page 111. Une traduction en français moderne est disponible dans RICHÉ, ALEXANDRE-BIDON (1994), 161.

Lorsqu'on voit l'enfant nu, la tête couverte du heaume intégral, tenant un étendard d'une main et les rênes d'un beau cheval bâton avec une tête bien sculptée⁶², on croit voir l'illustration du texte des commères. Le même manuscrit montre un tournoi burlesque entre un lapin et un escargot, chacun monté sur les épaules d'un singe, le lapin tenant comme lance un moulinet à deux palettes. Sur une autre enluminure, un vrai tournoi se déroule devant des spectateurs⁶³. Le tournoi à cheval bâton figure ainsi sur plusieurs documents du XVI^e siècle dont l'un juxtapose sur la même page un vrai tournoi et, dans la marge du bas, cinq enfants habillés joutant avec des moulinets à vent et des coursiers de bois, deux avec des têtes sculptées, un autre fruste (fig. 3)⁶⁴. Le duel de deux enfants nus, avec de simples bâtons comme lances et de splendides chevaux bâton, forme un décor charmant sous l'image sinistre de la Mort venant chercher le Bailli⁶⁵. Il est intéressant de découvrir que ce thème

du tournoi à cheval bâton gagne le chœur d'abbayes et de cathédrales, par exemple comme miséricorde de l'abbaye de Saint Julien de Beauvais, avec deux enfants nus⁶⁶, ou dans le chœur de la Sint Catharinakerk, à Hoogstraten, près d'Anvers, où ce sont deux moines qui combattent⁶⁷. Il y a donc eu une véritable vogue de cette représentation, comme l'a bien montré Lucas Wüthrich⁶⁸, et ce n'est pas sans rapport avec la vogue réelle des tournois, au moment où la guerre médiévale se transforme par la professionnalisation et où les chevaliers brillent plus dans les tournois que sur les champs de bataille. Spectacles princiers, les joutes et tournois participent à la promotion des valeurs chevaleresques dont la noblesse médiévale était porteuse, mais qui connaît une crise identitaire⁶⁹. Le simulacre de combat est devenu un sport-spectacle, et il joue auprès des enfants le même rôle de modèle idéal que les jeux troyens auprès des petits romains.

2.4. Le cheval bâton, la mort et la folie

Le tournoi sous l'image de la mort venant chercher le bailli montre un lien entre le cheval bâton, symbole de l'enfance, et la mort de l'enfant. Ce lien est à nouveau exprimé dans un tableau d'Hans Baldung Grien, *Les Trois âges de la femme et la Mort*, vers 1510⁷⁰. Fait rarissime, c'est donc la fillette toute petite, agenouillée par terre qui serait l'utilisatrice du cheval bâton posé sur le sol, sous sa jambe, et non un garçon. Au-dessus, la même en jeune femme admirant sa beauté dans un miroir, et à côté, sa version en vieille femme au-dessus de laquelle la Mort brandit le sablier. Une gravure postérieure (1535) montre la Mort arrivant à cheval bâton, par la fenêtre, pour prendre un enfant qu'un homme cherche à retenir en le tirant par le bras⁷¹.

De ce rapport de l'enfance à la mort on passe à celui de l'enfance à la folie, car, comme le dit Michel Foucault, « La folie, c'est le déjà-là de la mort⁷² ». Ainsi, l'enfance – âge privé de raison – ressemble à la folie, et il faut être fou pour chevaucher un cheval bâton – comme le disait déjà Horace – ou courir avec un moulinet à vent, ce que montre l'iconographie des XV^e-XVI^e siècles⁷³. Il en est ainsi dans les gravures illustrant le célèbre ouvrage de Sébastien Brant, *La Nef des fous*, écrit en allemand en 1492, traduit en



Fig. 3: The Golf Book, atelier de Simon Benig, Bruges, vers 1520-1530, scène du mois de juin, enfants joutant à cheval bâton avec moulinets à vent. Londres, The British Library, Add. 24098 fol. 23 v^o. https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=add_ms_24098

62 Fin XV^e-début XVI^e siècle, conservée à Paris, Musée de Cluny. Reproduction dans DAMAMME (2001), 13.

67 Sculpture sur bois attribuée à Albrecht Gelmers, vers 1532-1548.

68 WÜTHRICH (1981), 23 ill. et un catalogue de 56 représentations.

69 Voir NADOT (2010 et 2012). Le goût de François I^{er} pour les tournois n'est sans doute pas pour rien dans la mode des tournois en cheval bâton.

70 Vienne, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

71 Johann Pauli, *Schumpff und Ernst würrh das Buch genant ...*, Strasbourg, Bartholomeum Grieninger, 1535, in fol. (Bnf. Rés. G. Y2. 42 fol. 49 r^o).

72 FOUCAULT (2005), 31. Le premier chapitre s'intitule *Stultifera navis*, « La Nef des fous ».

73 MANSON (1999), 124, 216, 303-304, 385, 417, etc.

latin en 1497 et en vers français par Pierre Rivière la même année⁷⁴. Le chapitre LXXVIII, « De ceulx qui nentendent jeux » est illustré par une gravure montrant un fou avec le bonnet à grelots, tenant un cheval bâton de la main gauche, et un enfant devant lui avec un moulinet à vent. Érasme, dans sa dédicace à Thomas More de *L'Éloge de la folie*, datée du 9 juin 1508, écrit ceci : « [...] les circonstances ne se prêtant guère à du travail sérieux, j'eus l'idée de composer par jeu un éloge de la Folie. » Et il ajoute : « Si mes censeurs y consentent, qu'ils se figurent que j'ai voulu me distraire à jouer aux échecs ou, comme un enfant, à chevaucher un manche à balai⁷⁵. » Voilà le cheval bâton, jeu d'enfant comparé à un jeu d'adulte qui confine à la folie, puisqu'il en fait l'éloge. En fait, il s'agit bien d'une reprise du vers d'Horace⁷⁶ en le saisissant dans le même contexte de la folie des hommes.

3. LE CHEVAL BÂTON À LA RENAISSANCE : UNE PLURALITÉ DE REGARDS SUR L'ENFANCE ET SES JOUETS

3.1. Rabelais et le cheval bâton

Racontant l'enfance de Gargantua, Rabelais n'oublie pas les jouets, et en particulier le moulinet à vent et le cheval bâton.

Il se fit lui-même, avec un gros fardier, un cheval pour la chasse, un autre pour tous les jours avec un levier de pressoir, et, avec un grand chêne, une mule avec sa housse pour le manège. Il avait encore dix ou douze chevaux de relais et sept chevaux de poste. Il les faisait coucher près de lui. [des invités de son père arrivent et cherchent une écurie pour leurs chevaux. L'enfant se propose de les emmener et les conduit à sa chambre] «Voici les écuries que vous cherchez : voilà mon genet, mon guilledin, mon gascon, mon hongre.» Et, les chargeant d'un gros levier : «Je vous donne ce frison, dit-il. Je l'ai eu à Francfort, mais il est à vous. C'est un bon petit cheval, d'une grande robustesse. Avec un tiercelet, une demi-douzaine d'épagneuls et deux lévriers, vous voilà roi des perdrix et des lièvres pour tout l'hiver⁷⁷».

74 Sébastien Brant, *Stultifera Navis*, Bâle, Johann Bergmann von Olpe, 1497, traduction en vers latins par Jacobus Locher Philomusus. - *La Nef des folz*, Paris, Moreau, 1497, trad. en vers français par Pierre Rivière de la version latine de J. Locher.

75 Trad. Pierre de Nolhac, Garnier-Flammarion.

76 Érasme écrit : « *Proinde, si uidebitur, fingant isti me latrunculis interrim animi causa luisse, aut si malint, equitasse in arundine longa.* » Il n'est pas sans intérêt de noter que les traductions du XVIII^e s. de Gueudeville et de M. de La Veaux rendent ce passage par « quelque jeu d'enfant », alors qu'au XIX^e siècle le jeu est précisé. Pour Victor Develay en 1876 : « je suis allé à califourchon sur un bâton », pour Emmanuel des Essarts (1877) : « J'ai chevauché sur un long bâton » et il donne en note le vers d'Horace, et pour G. Lejeal (1899) : « je chevauche un bâton ». Une édition latine, datée de Bâle, 1540, donne en note latine la référence à Horace, référence qui est donc bien perçue à l'époque. On ne comprend pas pourquoi P. de Nolhac introduit l'idée du balai en 1927.

77 RABELAIS (1973), *Gargantua*, livre I, chap. XII, 74-75. L'édition est bilingue mais nous ne donnons que la translation. Ce texte date de

Le texte montre un enfant récupérant des tiges d'usages différents pour en faire des chevaux bâtons, et construisant dans son imaginaire les races et les fonctions des occupants de l'écurie installée dans un coin de sa chambre, car il dort avec ses jouets. Ces notations montrent que Rabelais a bien observé les enfants et leurs jeux avec le cheval bâton, et là, nous ne sommes plus dans les symboles et les métaphores, mais dans une réalité ludique riche. Cette réalité est de mieux en mieux observée par les artistes de la fin du XV^e siècle au début du XVII^e siècle.

3.2. L'iconographie des jeux d'enfants et la présence du cheval bâton (1475-1560)

À la fin du XV^e siècle et au début du XVI^e siècle, les jeux d'enfants deviennent un thème iconographique à part entière, où s'entrecroisent des significations multiples et un réel désir de voir vivre les enfants. Nous sommes à la Renaissance, et le regard des artistes sur l'enfance est plus attentif, plus curieux de découvrir les diverses activités ludiques enfantines⁷⁸. Parmi celles-ci figure le cheval bâton, apparemment un jouet comme les autres. Lorsqu'Israel van Meckenem représente vers 1475 un groupe d'enfants qui s'amuse, seul le cheval bâton est un jouet véritable, les autres objets sont des objets usuels détournés de leurs fonctions pour devenir objets de jeu⁷⁹. De même, lorsque Hans Baldung Grien nous montre deux mères nues avec dix enfants nus, les seuls vrais jouets sont un cheval bâton chevauché par l'enfant qui tient le cartouche avec le monogramme du peintre, et un autre cheval bâton, par terre, que se disputent deux enfants⁸⁰. Par contre, d'autres images⁸¹ cherchent à faire un « catalogue » des jeux des enfants, soit avec une série d'images, soit en regroupant sur la même image les jeux différents. La première stratégie correspond à l'intention du miniaturiste ayant illustré le *Livre d'heures de la famille Ango* (Rouen, début du XVI^e siècle) qui propose une quinzaine de jeux d'enfants dont le cheval bâton, avec trois enfants nus, l'un qui chevauche le sien, un autre en train de tomber, son jouet par terre et son camarade qui essaye de le retenir, portant son propre jouet sur l'épaule⁸². Un autre livre d'heures, imprimé, illustre le mois de janvier, traditionnellement le mois des jeux d'enfants, par une gravure où un groupe d'enfants s'amuse sur une place, avec une

1534 ou 1535.

78 MANSON (2001), chap. IV « Le regard curieux des artistes de la Renaissance », 59-82.

79 Gravure, Bnf Estampes, Ea 48b rés., 48c rés. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, B. 188.

80 Gravure, vers 1512. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 32.64.5.

81 Nous utilisons ce mot dans son sens contemporain, générique, pour embrasser tout type de représentation figurée, quel que soit son support : estampes, gravures, tableau, fresque, sculpture, etc., bien que chaque type de document iconographique doive être analysé et étudié avec des méthodes spécifiques.

82 Bnf. Ms. Nlles acq. Lat. 392, fol. 137.

crosse et une boule, un moulinet à noix, un oiseau au bout d'une ficelle, et un garçon sur un cheval bâton avec une grosse tête sculptée, et un moulinet à vent tenu comme une lance⁸³. L'iconographie des jeux d'enfants, le *ludus puerorum*, a servi aussi de façon symbolique dans la tradition alchimique⁸⁴. La plus belle représentation est celle du splendide manuscrit *Splendor Solis*, de 1582⁸⁵, dont les enluminures reproduisent celles de Jörg Breu l'Ancien (vers 1531-1532)⁸⁶. Au premier plan, devant une immense salle ouverte, un groupe de cinq enfants, trois nus et deux habillés. Deux enfants tirent un coussin sur lequel se trouve un bambin qui semble vouloir se lever mais deux autres l'en empêchent, dont un est en train de chevaucher un cheval bâton à la tête bien formée. Dans la pièce, deux enfants jouent au tournois avec des moulinets à vent comme lances, l'un étant sur un cheval bâton l'autre non. Les deux montures ont un manche long, une tête pourvue de rênes et de tout l'harnachement (muserolle, frontale, têtère, sous-gorge). Un autre exemplaire du *Splendor Solis*, vers 1550, montre des enfants nus dans la campagne, l'un avec un fouet, un autre à cheval bâton⁸⁷.

83 *Ces presentes heures a lusaige de Paris toutes au long sans requérir, avec plusieurs belles hystoires ; nouvellement imprimées*, à Paris, par la veuve de feu Thielman Kerver, en la grande rue Saint Jacques, à l'enseigne de la Licorne, 1522. Paris, Bnf. Rés. B. 3163. Gravure reproduite dans des Heures à la Vierge de 1542 et encore en 1569.

84 CHONÉ, ALIZON (2011), 126-127 sur le *ludus puerorum* en particulier.

85 Londres, British Library, Ms Harley 3469 fol. 31 r°.

86 Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett, 78 D 3 fol. 26 r°.

87 *Splendor Solis*, Hambourg, 1708, emblème n° 20.



Fig. 4: Pieter Bruegel l'Ancien, *Jeux d'enfants*, huile sur bois, 118 x 121 cm, vers 1560, Vienne, Kunsthistorisches Museum.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pieter_Bruegel_d._%C3%84_041b.jpg

Mais c'est avec le tableau *Jeux d'enfants* (vers 1560)⁸⁸ de Pieter Bruegel l'Ancien (fig. 4) que la représentation des jeux d'enfants prend un nouvel essor, dans la stratégie qui consiste à établir un catalogue pictural des activités ludiques enfantines. Même si un symbolisme de l'enfance et de la folie se trouve à l'arrière-plan de ce tableau, ce qui compte c'est la volonté de montrer plusieurs dizaines de jeux d'enfants, dont celui d'un petit garçon, au premier plan, qui chevauche un cheval bâton, jouet du commerce à la tête bien formée. Sur ce tableau, les trois-quarts des jeux sont sans jouets, et parmi ceux avec jouets, les plus nombreux utilisent des jouets écologiques. Notre cheval bâton se distingue donc, comme les poupées des fillettes qui jouent dans la maison, dans l'angle gauche du tableau. Représenter les jeux d'enfants dans un cadre urbain, dans une ville où l'enfance est reine, telle est la nouveauté qu'apporte ce tableau. Dès lors, et surtout dans l'art flamand, les jouets s'exhibent sur les places, dans les rues, dans les auberges⁸⁹.

3.3. Le cheval bâton dans les rues, les places et chez les marchands de jouets (1560-1625)

Parfois, pour les besoins du propos de l'artiste, les enfants sont nus, comme des putti antiques⁹⁰. Ainsi, pour exprimer l'innocence, vers 1581, Maarten de Vos nous montre, sous *Innocentia* assise sur un nuage, un terrain vague bordé de bâtiments, terrain sur lequel une foule d'enfants nus jouent (fig. 5). Dans l'angle en bas à gauche, trois fillettes habillées, avec des poupées. Derrière elles, au troisième plan, deux petits garçons nus, à cheval bâton et armés d'une badine pour stimuler l'ardeur de leur coursier⁹¹. Ce schéma est repris, avec des enfants habillés, dans le frontispice du texte de Jacob Cats sur les jeux d'enfants, daté de 1625, dessiné par Adriaen Pietersz van de Venne, gravé par Hendriksz Verstralen⁹². Les fillettes avec poupées sont bien dans l'angle en bas à gauche, les autres enfants, habillés, certains forment un cortège, d'autres jouent de façon isolée, dont un petit garçon à cheval bâton. Cette composition utilisant une place et des architectures avait été utilisée aussi en 1577 dans une suite de sept planches illustrant les âges de

88 Vienne, Kunsthistorisches Museum. PORTMANN, HEINEN-TARDENT (1962), reproductions couleur. VANDEN BRANDEN (1982), pl. XV à XX ; MANSON (1999), 471-474.

89 MANSON (2007a).

90 MANSON (2007b). Nous y avons développé la différence de culture et de regard entre les artistes italiens et les artistes flamands, les premiers restant attachés à l'iconographie antique de l'enfance, avec l'image du putto, les seconds cherchant à rendre l'enfance de façon plus réaliste. Cela n'empêche pas certains artistes, comme Maarten de Vos, d'emprunter à l'esthétique italienne.

91 Maarten de Vos, *Innocentia*, gravé par Adriaen Collaert, Anvers, Gerhard de Jode, vers 1581. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 49.95.1991.

92 Jacob Cats, *Kinder-spel*, Middelburg, 1625.



Fig. 5: Maarten de Vos, *Innocentia*, gravé par Adriaen Collaert, Anvers, Gerhard de Jode, vers 1581. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 49.95.1991. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/383752>

la vie⁹³. La planche évoquant l'enfance montre une architecture idéalisée, de type Renaissance, avec des enfants jouant sur une grande place. Au milieu, au troisième plan, à côté l'un de l'autre, une fillette avec sa poupée et un petit garçon avec une longue robe et un bonnet, sur un cheval bâton.

Ainsi se décline jusqu'au XVII^e siècle l'idée de Brueghel d'une ville envahie par des enfants qui jouent. Mais une autre façon de montrer le jeu des enfants consiste à les insérer dans la foule, dans un pèlerinage ou les jours de foire et de kermesse, au milieu des adultes. Cela permet de montrer les petits marchands de jouets dans les villages et dans les villes, mais aussi les colporteurs. Lorsque Pieter Aerten représente vers 1550 le *Retour d'un pèlerinage à Saint Antoine*, il montre des enfants qui reviennent avec un jouet, un moulinet à vent, et il nous fait voir les marchands d'objets de piété qui vendent aussi des jouets, dont le cheval bâton, qui émerge d'un panier posé au sol⁹⁴. Pieter Brueghel l'Ancien a représenté des enfants qui jouent avant et après son tableau de 1560. Ainsi, dans *La kermesse de la Saint Georges*, gravée et publiée en 1559, il montre une marchande de moulins à vent assise au pied d'un arbre au milieu de la place du village, dans la liesse de la kermesse, mais surtout, il nous offre la seule image connue de deux enfants chevauchant le même che-

val bâton, un garçon et une fillette semble-t-il⁹⁵. Le même éditeur publie en 1562 une gravure de Pieter van der Heyden d'après Pieter Brueghel : *Le Mercier pillé par les singes*⁹⁶. Le colporteur dort sous les arbres et de nombreux singes pillent sa hotte, accrochent les objets aux arbres et jouent avec les jouets : deux singes semblent faire la course à cheval bâton. Ce thème est repris jusqu'au XVII^e siècle, donnant lieu à des variantes. Pieter van der Borch représente un singe qui tient dans les mains les jouets qu'il vient de sortir de la hotte, deux moulins à vent et deux chevaux bâton avec de belles crinières et des rênes⁹⁷. Les mêmes artistes, dans la représentation d'une kermesse paysanne (*Boerkermis*), montrent une mère achetant un moulin à vent pour son petit garçon chevauchant son cheval bâton, jouet dont le marchand a tout un lot émergeant d'un panier⁹⁸. Cette vente de jouets dans les kermesses flamandes est attestée de façon encore plus manifeste par un tableau de Pieter Baltens (fig. 6), vers 1570, qui place tout au fond de la scène une rangée de boutiques de jouets, quatre toiles de tente au-dessus d'un long comptoir, accueillant six clients adultes et un enfant. On y voit des tambours et arbalètes, et là encore, des chevaux bâton émergeant d'un panier. Deux enfants s'en rapprochent, déjà munis de leur monture⁹⁹. Loin de cette floraison de jouets du commerce, nous avons un petit enfant à cheval sur un jouet écologique, vers 1560¹⁰⁰. On pourrait peut-être voir une progression du jouet du commerce, dans la mesure où il est plus souvent représenté à la fin du XVI^e siècle et au début du XVII^e siècle, ainsi par Karel van Mander en 1592¹⁰¹ et par Jan I Brueghel en 1600¹⁰².

3.4. Le cheval bâton dans l'iconographie de l'enfance et les séries de jeux d'enfants (1560-1620)

Parmi les représentations de l'enfance liées à un parcours de la vie humaine se trouvent les images illustrant la *Tabula Cebetis* (le Tableau de Cébès)¹⁰³. Les enfants arrivent à la porte gardée par un Genius, et, après avoir pénétré dans l'enceinte, ils deviennent des adultes qui montent vers le sommet que n'atteignent que ceux qui ont acquis la sagesse. Dans la

93 Hans Vredeman de Vries, *Theatrum Vitae Humanae*, gravé par Jan Wiericx, Anvers, Petrus Balt, 1577.

94 Bruxelles, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, inv. 7524. MANSON (2001), 71 et pl. couleur.

95 Pieter Brueghel l'Ancien, gravé par Lucas van Doetecum, publié par Hieronymus Cock, 1559. Bnf. Rés. CC-5(2)-fol.

96 Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. RP-P-08-75-239.

97 Pieter van der Borch, gravé par Claes van Visscher II, Amsterdam, vers 1600. Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-26.785.

98 Pieter van der Borch, gravé par Claes van Visscher II, Amsterdam, vers 1600. Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-80.484.

99 Pieter Baltens, *Kermesse flamande*, vers 1570. Amsterdam, vers 1600. Rijksmuseum, SK-A-2554.

100 Hans Bol, *Boerenfest*, vers 1560. Rijksmuseum, RP-P-1951-338.

101 Karel van Mandel, *Boerenkermis*, 1592, papier, encre et lavis. Rijksmuseum, RP-T-2008-101.

102 Jan I Brueghel, *La fête villageoise*, 1600, huile sur cuivre. Londres, Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 4055131.

103 SCHLEIER (1973) ; MANSON (1999), 393-399.



Fig. 6: Peeter Baltens, *Kermesse flamande*, huile sur panneau, 112 x 157 cm, vers 1570, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, SK-A-2554. <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/zoeken/objecten?q=baltens&p=1&ps=12&st=Objects&ii=3#/SK-A-2554,3>

reprise de ce tableau antique, il y a donc une image de l'enfance. Les enfants sont nus et sans objets dans les éditions de 1507 à 1515 et le premier jouet qui apparaît, en 1519, est le cheval bâton, jouet écologique car simple bâton¹⁰⁴. On retrouve ce jouet écologique en 1531¹⁰⁵, vers 1560-1563¹⁰⁶, mais à partir de 1561, le cheval a une tête bien formée issue du travail d'un artisan¹⁰⁷. Il est même superbe, sur le dessin d'Hendrik Goltzius gravé en 1592¹⁰⁸ et c'est encore un jouet de commerce sur la gravure anonyme de 1600¹⁰⁹.

Toujours dans le même milieu artistique, une gravure publiée par Hieronymus Cock en 1570 nous offre une vision des âges de la vie, en commençant par l'enfance : un enfant est né, les Parques filent son existence et l'enfance est représentée par des enfants qui jouent, dont un avec un cheval bâton à la tête bien sculptée¹¹⁰.

104 Hieronymus Wietor, *Tabula Cebetis*, Cracovie, 1519. Londres, British Museum, E. 8.4.

105 Erhard Schön, *Tabula Cebetis Thebani*, vers 1531. Londres, British Museum, 1895, 0122.145.

106 David Kandel, *Tabula Cebetis*, illustration d'un livre perdu, vers 1560-1563. Londres, British Museum, 1895, 012.130.

107 Frans Floris, gravé par Philippe Galle, *Tabula Cebetis*, 1561. Londres, British Museum, 1880, 0710.886 et Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, NG-2011-50-10.

108 Hendrik Goltzius, gravé par Jacob Matham, 1592. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-27.329.

109 *Bivium vitae humanae (Tabula Cebetis)*, anonyme, 1600. Londres, British Museum, 1880, 0710.886.

110 Jan Stradanus, *La naissance*, gravé par Pieter Furnius, publiée par Hieronymus Cock, 1570. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 17.3.3424.

Les séries de jeu d'enfants reprennent ce jouet, à commencer par celle de Guillaume le Bé, en 1587, où les enfants sont habillés et jouent à deux ou trois jeux par planche¹¹¹. Sur celle où figure le cheval bâton, là aussi jouet du commerce et montrant l'animal entier, un vers du sixtain désigne ce jeu : « Courent, dispost, sur un cheval de bois ». Autrement dit, cette chevauchée ne leur coûte guère d'efforts. Une deuxième série de jeux d'enfants a été réalisée par un flamand, Ambrosius Bosschaert, mais en France, où il est devenu Ambroise Dubois et a travaillé au château de Fontainebleau, dans le salon Louis XIII, où il a peint au plafond, vers 1610, des enfants nus se livrant à toutes sortes de jeux. L'un d'eux chevauche un cheval bâton avec une très belle tête¹¹². Ce décor, voulu par Henri IV, était destiné à Louis XIII enfant. Or le journal du médecin de l'enfant royal, Jean Héroard, évoque les rapports de cet enfant avec le cheval bâton. Quatre fois entre janvier et mai 1605, le médecin signale que l'enfant joue au cheval bâton avec une baguette de houx (une houssine). Le 10 janvier, « Met une houssine entre les jambes, en fait ung cheval et ung petit baston devant en fait un pistolet. Tient une houssine en sa main dont il tient la bride de son cheval. » Le 15 janvier, « Se promene sur une longue houssine dont il fait ung cheval ». Le 6 mars, « Court sur une houssine dont il fait cheval. Pissé et baissant ce

111 Guillaume Le Bé, *Les trente-six figures contenant tous les jeux*, Paris, 1587, pl. III : « Jeux de Crecerelle, Moulinet & autres ». MANSON (1999), 475-479.

112 Dans la peinture finale, il n'y a qu'un enfant à cheval bâton. Dans un dessin préparatoire, vers 1609, deux enfants à cheval bâton semblent se faire la course. Paris, Louvre, Cabinet des dessins, RF 43264.

cheval contre son eue : “Beuvé (beuvés), dict-il, petit cheval” ! » Enfin, le 26 mai « Mené a l’ormoie, faict cheval d’une houssine. Sautelle a courbetes : “Maman ga je vien de travaillé mon cheval¹¹³.” » Nous avons là, pour la première fois, l’observation directe d’un enfant de trois ans trois mois à trois ans huit mois, se faisant lui-même son propre cheval bâton avec une baguette de houx, imaginant qu’il le fait boire et qu’il le travaille comme un cheval de manège. Cet imaginaire de l’enfant que l’iconographie ne nous donne pas, complète l’imaginaire culturel investit dans ce jouet par les artistes. Lorsque Jacques Stella dessinera sa propre série d’enfants nus livrés à toutes sorte de jeux, gravés par sa nièce en 1657, son poème redira plus amplement ce que Guillaume Le Bé évoquait avec un regard d’adulte, légèrement ironique quant à l’animisme enfantin : « & cet autre qu’on voit trotter / Porte, en cette belle équipée / Le cheval qui le doit porter. » Mais seul Héroard nous a fait percevoir ce qu’un petit garçon pouvait projeter sur ce bâton devenu cheval.

CONCLUSION : LE CHEVAL EST UNE VALEUR SÛRE, MAIS CHANGEANTE

Que la cavalcade sur un cheval bâton transforme le petit garçon en aristocrate romain durant les jeux troyens, ou en chevalier joutant en tournoi, ou en cavalier faisant la course avec d’autres cavaliers, le modèle du cheval change, et les enfants changent leur scénario ludique, mais le jouet reste le même. Ou plutôt, le jouet se diversifie et gagne toutes les classes de la société, du petit paysan au fils du roi, les deux utilisant un jouet écologique, mais ils peuvent aussi se fournir en jouets du commerce bon marché, comme ceux vendus par les colporteurs et les boutiques en plein air, dans les pèlerinages et les fêtes de villages en pays flamands. Certains fils de rois ou d’aristocrates, en Espagne, posent devant le peintre avec leur cheval bâton venant sûrement d’un commerce de jouets de luxe¹¹⁴. Ce jouet européen, est parmi les plus représentés dans l’iconographie des XV^e-XVI^e siècles, et sa vogue continue aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles, en s’affaiblissant cependant. Il semble que l’irruption dans le commerce des jouets, d’un cheval en carton, sur socle puis sur roulettes, ait fait perdre beaucoup de son attrait au cheval bâton. Avec la révolution industrielle et l’abaissement du coût des chevaux sur lesquels l’enfant peut vraiment monter, on aurait pu penser que le cheval bâton n’aurait pas survécu à cette concurrence. Or il n’en est rien, et il est toujours là aujourd’hui. Expliquer pourquoi est une autre histoire.

113 HÉROARD (1989), t. I, 574, 578, 608, 666.

114 Alonso Sanchez Coello, *Portrait de Don Diego*, fils de Philippe II d’Espagne, vers 1577. Vienne, Liechtenstein Museum. Santiago Moran, *Portrait d’un jeune garçon*, vers 1586. Musée de Gliwice, Silésie.

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

ALEXANDRE-BIDON, Danièle, CLOSSON, Monique, *L’Enfant à l’ombre des cathédrales*, Lyon/Paris (1985).

ARIÈS, Philippe, *L’Enfant et la vie familiale sous l’Ancien Régime*, Paris (1960).

BECQ DE FOUQUIÈRES, Louis, *Les jeux des anciens : leur description, leur origine, leurs rapports avec la religion, l’histoire, les arts et les mœurs*, Paris (1869).

BOSCH, Clemens, *Die Quellen des Valerius Maximus: ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der Litteratur der historischen Exempla*, Stuttgart (1929).

BOUCHOT, Henri, *Les deux cents incunables xylographiques du département des esptampes*, II, Paris (1903).

BROUGÈRE, Gilles, *Jouets et compagnie*, Paris (2003).

CACIORGNA, Marilena, GUERRINI, Roberto, *Il pavimento del Duomo di Siena. L’arte della tarsia marmorea dal XIV XIX secolo, fonti e simbologia*, Milano (2004).

CAMBREY, Fouquart de, DUVAL, Antoine, d’ARRAS, Jean, *Les Évangiles des Quenouilles*, éd. Pierre Jannet, Paris, (1855, 1^{ère} éd. 1480).

CHONÉ, Aurélie, ALIZON, Jean-François, « Le jeu à la lumière de l’alchimie, enjeux symboliques et anthropologiques », *Revue des Sciences sociales*, 45 (2011), 124-131.

D’ARCAIS, Francesca Flores, *Guariento, tutta la pittura*, Venezia (1975).

DAMAMME, Jeanne, *Mémoires de jouets*, Paris (2001).

DELATTRE, Charles, « Voix de Lacédémoniennes. Injonction et identité de genre dans les paroles de femmes spartiates », *Cahiers « Mondes Anciens » [En ligne]*, 3, 2012.

DEUBNER, Ludwig, « Spiele und Spielzeug der Griechen », *Antike*, 6, 1930, 162-177.

DURAND, Agnès, « Jouets imitant les moyens de transport », in Roland May et al., *Jouer dans l’Antiquité, Musée d’Archéologie Méditerranéenne-Centre de la Vieille Charité, 22 novembre 1991-16 février 1992*, catalogue d’Exposition, Marseille, Paris (1991), 74.

ÉRASME, *Éloge de la Folie*, traduction par Pierre de Nolhac, Garnier-Flammarion, Paris (1964, 1^{ère} éd. 1511).

FITTÀ, Marco, *Giochi e giocattoli nell’Antichità*, Milano (1997).

FOUCAULT, Michel, *Histoire de la folie à l’âge classique*, Paris (2005, 1^{re} éd. 1972).

FRANKLIN, Alfred, *Dictionnaire historique des arts, métiers et professions exercées à Paris depuis le XIII^e siècle*, Paris (1906).

FROISSART, Jean, *L’Espinette amoureuse*, éd. Anthime Fourier, Paris, Klincksieck (2^e éd. 1972, 1^{ère} éd. vers 1370).

GOODICH, Michael, « Bartholomaeus Anglicus on Child-Rearing », *History of Childhood Quarterly*, 3 (1975-1976), 75-84.

HENRIOT, Joseph, *Sous couleur de jouer. La métaphore ludique*, Paris (1989).

- HÉROARD, Jean, *Journal de Jean Héroard, médecin de Louis XIII*, éd. Madeleine Foisil, Fayard, Paris (1989, 1^{ère} éd. 1601-1610).
- KEL, Nicolina, « Le vase antique en dessin : jeux et enjeux de lectures plurielles », in Véronique Dasen, Alexandra Attia, Marie-Lys Arnette (éd.), *Louis Becq de Fouquières, Les jeux des Anciens*, II, *La réception des jeux antiques à l'époque moderne*, Jeu/Play/Spiel, Liège (sous presse).
- LAFAYE, Georges Louis, « Ludi - Jeux privés », in Charles Victor Daremberg, Edmond Saglio (éd.), *Dictionnaire des Antiquités grecques et romaines*, t. III, II^e partie (L-M) (1900), 1356-1362.
- LEMOISNE, Paul-André, *Les xylographies du XIV^e et du XV^e siècle au cabinet des estampes de la Bibliothèque nationale*, II, Paris/Bruxelles (1930).
- MANSON, Michel, « L'Enfant et l'âge d'or. La IV^e églogue de Virgile », in Raymond Chevallier (éd.), *Présence de Virgile (Caesarodunum XIII bis)*, Paris (1978), 49-62.
- MANSON, Michel, *Le Jouet dans la France d'Ancien Régime*, Paris, Université Paris I, thèse d'État sous la direction de Daniel Roche (1999).
- MANSON, Michel, *Jouets de toujours : de l'Antiquité à la Révolution*, Paris (2001).
- MANSON, Michel, « Les jouets et les jeux des enfants sont sur la place (1560-1660) », in Laurence Baudoux-Rousseau, Youri Carbonnier, Philippe Bragard (éd.), *La place publique urbaine, du Moyen Âge à nos jours*, Arras (2007a), 69-77, ill. 19-22.
- MANSON, Michel, « Histoire du jouet dans l'art, approche anthropologique, 1450-1650 », *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Siena*, 26, Fiesole (2007b), 129-164, 8 figs.
- MANSON, Michel, « Les jouets du Pavement de la cathédrale de Sienne (1475-1545), et l'originalité de Domenico Beccafumi », in Mario Lorenzoni (éd.), *Sacro e profano nel duomo di Siena. Leggere l'arte della Chiesa, Quaderni dell'Opera*, 10-12, Siena, (2008), 227-252.
- Monumenti, annali e bullettini pubblicati dall'Istituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica*, Gotha, Leipzig (1855).
- NADOT, Sébastien, *Rompez les lances ! Chevaliers et tournois au Moyen Âge*, Paris (2010).
- NADOT, Sébastien, *Le spectacle des joutes. Sport et courtoisie à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Rennes (2012).
- NÉRAUDAU, Jean-Pierre, *La jeunesse dans la littérature et les institutions de la Rome républicaine*, Paris (1979).
- PLANCHE, Alice, « Culture et contre-culture dans l'Épînette amoureuse de Jean Froissart : les écoles et les jeux », *L'Enfant au Moyen Âge (Littérature et civilisation)*, Aix-en-Provence, (1980), 389-403.
- PORTMANN, Paul, HEINEN-TARDENT, Anne, *Jeux d'enfants de Pieter Brueghel Le Vieux*, Orbis Pictus 35, Lausanne (1962).
- PRODENZANI, Simone de', *Sollazzo e Saporetto*, éd. Luigi Maria Reale, Effe Fabrizio Fabbri, Perugia (1998, 1^{ère} éd. c.1351-c.1440).
- RABELAIS, Francois, *Gargantua*, in *Œuvres complètes*, éd. Guy Demerson, Paris (1973, 1^{ère} éd. 1534).
- RICHÉ, Pierre, ALEXANDRE-BIDON, Danièle, *L'Enfance au Moyen-Âge*, Paris (1994).
- SCHENK, Aurélie, « Cheval et équitation dans l'Antiquité, à la rencontre de la "plus noble conquête de l'homme" », *Chronozones, Revue de l'Institut d'Archéologie de l'Université de Lausanne*, 7 (2001), 44-49.
- SCHEPENS, Guido, « À la recherche d'Agésilas. Le roi de Sparte dans le jugement des historiens du IV^e siècle av. J.-C. », *Revue des Études grecques*, 118 (2005), 31-78.
- SCHLEIER, Reinhart, *Tabula Cebetis oder "Spiegel des Menschlichen Lebens darin Tugend und untugend abgemalet ist". Studien zur Rezeption einer antiken Bildbeschreibung im 16 und 17 Jahrhundert*, Berlin (1973).
- SEARS, Elizabeth, *The Ages of Man, Medieval Interpretations of the Life Cycle*, Princeton (1986).
- SPIAZZI, Anna Maria, *La Chiesa degli Eremitani a Padova*, Milano (1993).
- VAN GENNER, Arnold, *Le folklore de la Flandre et du Hainaut français, département du Nord (...)*, t. 2. *Sources, arbres, et saints patrons. Magie et médecine populaires. Littérature et jeux populaires*, Paris (1936).
- VANDEN BRANDEN, Jean-Pierre, « Les jeux d'enfants de Pierre Bruegel », in Philippe Ariès et Jean-Claude Margolin (éd.), *Les jeux à la Renaissance*, Paris (1982), 499-524, pl. XV-XX.
- VOIGT, Edmund, « Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De Proprietatibus rerum* : Literarhistorisches und bibliographisches », *Englische Studien*, 41 (1910), 347-359.
- WÜTHRICH, Lucas, « Windrädchenlanze und Steckenpferd, Kinderturnier und Kampfspielzeug um 1500 », *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte*, 38 (1981), 279-289.



Jean-Pierre Rossie

University of Braga
sanatoyplay@gmail.com

Vegetal Material in Moroccan Children's Toy and Play Culture

INTRODUCTION

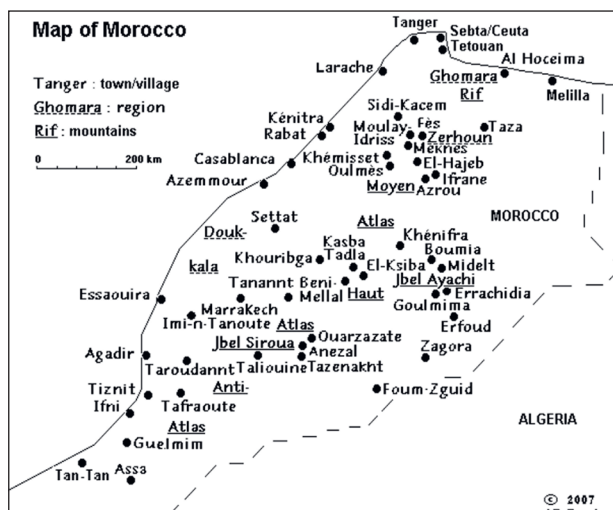
As a sociocultural anthropologist my research took place in central Morocco between 1992 and 2001 among Arabic and Amazigh-speaking children from rural and urban regions, and since 2002 among Amazigh (Berber) children living near or in the Anti-Atlas Mountains of southwestern Morocco (Map 1). Khalija Jariaa and Boubaker Daoumani, my two Anti-Atlas collaborators, helped gather the evidence on vegetal material used by Anti-Atlas children. Khalija Jariaa was born in 1974 in a village 29 km from Tiznit, where she lived during her youth. Since 2005 she lives in a village on the outskirts of Tiznit, now a quarter of this town. Boubaker Daoumani was born

in 1973 in a village 30 km from Sidi Ifni but lived in that town from a young age. Amazigh populations inhabit mainly the Rif, Middle, High and Anti-Atlas Mountains. In many coastal and some inland cities, Moroccan Arabic is spoken.

My previous publications describe and analyse children's play and toys linking these to their physical, cultural, and social context.¹ The goals of the research are:

- Recording, analysing, and distributing written and visual information on Saharan and North African children's toy and play heritages and documenting their evolution.
- To promote in these regions and worldwide the interest in children's culture, especially their play, games, and toys.
- Recognizing the critical role of children as active participants in creating and adapting the society and culture in which they grow up.
- To stimulate the integration of North African and Saharan children's cultures into humanity's tangible and intangible heritage.

Recently, the ethics of the research on and with children became a crucial topic. Wanting to observe



¹ The books and powerpoints are available on <https://ucp.academia.edu/JeanPierreRossie> and <https://www.scribd.com/user/63524386/Jean-Pierre-Rossie>.

and photograph children during play, an ethnographer will get a quick reply, relate, or withdraw. Their consent is often indicated indirectly by accepting a discrete presence. Without being trusted by the children, their families, and neighbours, participant observation is impossible. However, the research is more accessible as the concerned children like the author's and his collaborators' interest in their toys and games. They feel respected and appreciated when seen as valuable informants and producers of objects and knowledge. When asking children what they prefer, they want to be correctly named, and the consulted adults found this no problem. When mothers, fathers, or other adult caretakers accepted research on their children, they almost always offered this permission verbally. Indeed, it is impossible to do such research without the adults' approval, as it happens in families and public spaces. The interested reader can find more details on this research's ethical and methodological aspects in two publications.²

The ethnographic data are based on observations, unstructured interviews, making photographs, and a few videos, combining different methodologies and sources of information. In the research, modernity is also looked after because it is inadequate to study children's cultural practices as unchanging events. The contemporary situation of this play culture shows the influence of local social and cultural changes, television and other media, emigration, and tourism, putting forward the growing impact of globalization, consumption, and digitalization.

This chapter will not offer a complete description of play and toys.³ It focuses on vegetal material used for make-believe play such as doll play, play referring to the animal world, domestic life, sound and music, feasts and rituals, and technical activities, but some also to games of skill. Reed and cotton rags are essential parts of creating toys. Children use palm, reed, and other leaves to make different toys, such as little windmills, animals, and vehicles. Sound-making toys, such as whistles, flutes, or drums, are made with vegetal material. Vegetables like summer squash, potatoes, and carrots are also used.

As this ethnographic chapter features in a volume about archaeological research, I mention the comparison between North African or Saharan children's play and toy cultures and those from Antiquity. Some classical archaeologists have expressed that this comparison offers new and stimulating ways of analysing and interpreting archaeological objects and images.⁴

2 ROSSIE (2008), 24-26, 45; ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 454-465.

3 This information is available in several books of the collection *Saharan and North African Toy and Play Cultures*; ROSSIE (2005-2021). ROSSIE (2022). See also ROSSIE (2019).

4 ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 467-471. As Véronique Dasen expressed: "The comparisons with the games you are dealing with are so useful for understanding the past, not to conclude that it is the same thing. However,

1. USING VEGETAL MATERIAL FOR DOLL PLAY

The favourite doll play of Moroccan girls has always been wedding feasts ceremonies. Instead of the word doll, *tislit* or *taslit* is used in Amazigh and *arusa* in Arabic, meaning bride. Most dolls represent women and sometimes children. Girls make male dolls, yet they regularly are poorly dressed. With few exceptions, all these dolls represent real people, and doll play refers to existing situations. Traditionally doll frames are made with two pieces of reed bound together in the form of a cross. The frame of most Moroccan dolls consists of wooden material like a reed, branches, sticks, and carpenter wood, so that vegetal material lies at the basis of most Moroccan dolls. The top of the vertical reed or piece of wood can be left untouched, but, in several cases, facial features are incised, drawn, or etched with a hot iron, and natural tar, charcoal, or ballpoint colour them. One rarely finds dolls with legs. Only a few times, the lower part of the vertical reed is cut out into two strips, and once a schoolgirl puts two small pencils at the bottom of her doll to represent legs.⁵

An ear of maize (Indian corn) may become a doll frame, the beard of the corncob being the hair. A piece of a reed-like plant with a stalk growing to 2 to 3 meters height and having a yellow feather on top, called *tasnayt* or *taguyt* in the Anti-Atlas and *driyat* in the rural area near Safi, serves as a doll frame. Girls use part of this stalk to make a doll frame instead of a reed because the surface of the reed stalk must be cleaned with a knife or a piece of faience to remove some protrusions that can hurt their hands. On the contrary, the stalk of *tasnayt* has a smoother surface. Boys also use such a rod to push a car or truck.

Some Anti-Atlas girls fix heads of damaged plastic dolls on top of a reed frame. Exceptionally a fig has served that purpose. A girl just thirty-months-old from the same region made a doll with a piece of cactus through which she put a small branch as arms. In the Anti-Atlas, where argan trees are an economic asset, girls and boys use argan nuts to make dolls and other figurines. Argan nuts are oval fruits of 3 cm in length and resemble olives. Children use two argan nuts, one as head and the other as the body, when making human figures. To create its arms and legs, they introduce under the green skin some thorns or thin twigs. When the skin dries, it shrinks, and the thorns or twigs become rigidly attached to the argan nuts. Other vegetal material girls choose for specific meanings are green leaves on top of a piece of reed split with the fingernails to become women's prized long hair. Reed leaves have been plaited or done like buns, and hemp or cotton threads became hair.⁶

er, the anthropological parallels are good to think about."

5 ROSSIE (2005a); ROSSIE *et al.* (2001).

6 ROSSIE (2005a) 113, 132-133, 137-138; ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 131-132, 157-159, 177-178, 195-196.

Girls, eventually boys, use cotton fabrics, as vegetal material, to give underwear and upper wear to dolls with a wooden frame or modelled in clay, dresses older girls sew by hand. Rags collected from a seasonal river or old clothes are used to give volume to girls' female dolls because skinny women are traditionally not favoured. To create pregnant dolls, they put some rags or small cushions under the dresses. It happens that female dolls receive breasts by putting in place two little cotton balls or small stones. In another case, snail shells have been wrapped in a piece of white gauze to figure the bride and bridegroom.

The picture below shows a reconstruction of the wedding feast as imagined in 2007 by a playgroup of some girls between six and eleven years in a village being incorporated in the city of Tiznit a few years later.⁷ For their play, they crafted several dolls. To the left of the candle stands the bride wearing a white dress, and on the right, one sees the bridegroom wearing a simple white dress and turban. At the feet of the married couple, the girls put in small pots several herbs used during wedding rituals. Her mother stands to the bride's left with a rich village woman bringing traditional gifts on the far left. A little behind the rich woman, there is the specialist in the application of henna. To the right of the groom stands the woman who organizes marriage ceremonies. These six dolls were made traditionally with an armature of two reeds bound cross-shapely or, in the case of the rich woman doll, with a piece of wood. They do not have facial features. Behind a stove stands the cook made of polystyrene and wearing black clothing. On the far right, a female tourist, a plastic doll dressed as a modern fashion girl, brought a basket with gifts representing products of a consumer society (fig. 1).

⁷ ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 49-50.

At the beginning of Spring, Moroccan children use turnips, squash, pumpkins, potatoes, carrots, and onions to construct dolls. If there are leaves attached to these vegetables, they eventually become the dolls' hair. Now and then, boys look for vegetables to create male dolls. With summer squash, an eleven-year-old High Atlas boy living in a small village at 2600 meters, made in 1992 a mule driver and mule described in the next section. In the same village, a ten-year-old boy produced an exceptional one-meter-tall male doll. The frame, a vertical branch with a reed fixed in the shape of a cross, is topped with squash, having incisions for the eyebrows and small holes for the eyes, nose, and mouth. The incisions for the eyebrows and the hole for the mouth were blackened with kohl, a natural beauty product.

In the nose holes, he inserted a yellow piece of fruit. This doll is remarkable because of its height and squash head and the play in which it performs. With such a doll, boys imitate the young men who assist in front of young women at the Amazigh *ahwash* dance. In 2011 in an Anti-Atlas village, a boy of eleven took a beet and put two slices of a carrot in the fake head as eyes.⁸

Internal and external causes have always influenced Moroccan children's doll play, but information gathered in the Anti-Atlas Mountains since 2003 shows that this development accelerates. Girls putting plastic doll heads on top of the vertical reed, whereas the rest of the doll construction remains traditional happens more often. Nevertheless, one can also argue that it is an excellent example of how the traditional technique for making dolls offers new life to a toy industry doll of which only the head remains. The male

⁸ ROSSIE (2005a), 62-63, 73-74.



Fig. 1: Reconstruction of the wedding play of a girls' playgroup, Anti-Atlas, 2007. Photo Jean-Pierre Rossie.



Fig. 2: Bridegroom and bride doll created for wedding play, Anti-Atlas, 2006. Photo Jean- Pierre Rossie.

doll (fig. 2) shows the growing role of themes related to migration. This male doll represents a well-known Amazigh singer living in France who came back to his village of origin to marry a local girl in 2006.

Once the wedding feast is finished, the laughing and singing girls stage the couple's wedding night by putting them on a bed made with cushions. After a short time needed to manufacture a pregnant doll like the bride in the photo but with a protruding belly, a play-group of girls aged between six and nine exclaims that she is pregnant. This play activity happens in a big playhouse delineated with stones. From the beginning of the 21st century, using heads from wasted plastic dolls has become usual in this mountainous region, just as using Barbie-like dolls. Among young Anti-Atlas girls, the tradition of making dolls reflecting the traditionally preferred model of local rounder women seems to turn into an interest in slimmer media promoted Western Barbie-like types. This model is also promoted by importing cheap Chinese slim plastic dolls, and similar dolls brought to Morocco by returning migrants and tourists. During the final decades of the 20th century, two situations increasingly influenced the children: the regular return of Moroccan emigrants living in Europe and European tourists visiting Morocco.

Regarding the return of family members living in Europe, its impact on girls and boys becomes more prominent year by year through gifts of toys (dolls, teddies, weapons) and means of transport (bicycles, toy vehicles). Local girls began to dress and decorate dolls inspired by fashions moving away from the local dress code. The theme of European women going

to the beach becomes a recent game whereby girls dress a slender plastic doll in a miniskirt and put her on a beach lounger getting a sunbath. Slim dolls appear in a bikini in two different situations related to belly dancing and fashion cloth sewn by hand.⁹

Moroccan female dolls represent a wide variety of adult women and sometimes men: brides, family members, professionals related to marriage, but rarely bridegrooms. Other topics highlighted in these games are the pregnant woman, the mother with her baby or young child, childless and older women, maids, peasants, female and male craftspeople, wealthy and low-income families, migrants, and tourists. Play themes inspired by television programs become important. Girls enact situations in the hospital, the female doctor, and other medical situations. Khaliya Jariaa's observations of Anti-Atlas girls attest to the integration in play and toy-making activities of dolls showing children with a handicap concerning private homes for children and adults in distress. Missing legs and arms of second-hand plastic dolls were replaced with pieces of reed and sticks or left without limbs. One handicapped doll figures an older adolescent girl named the 'beautiful one' and offers a striking example of integrating certain negative aspects of the adult world in girls' doll games. The girl holding the doll representing the female head of the private home, a charity working with alms given to the mosque, says to the beautiful girl who wants to walk in the evening to the centre of Tiznit that this is not possible because men might abuse her.¹⁰ We rarely observed rural girls playing with dolls as babies, and only one example has been photographed in the southwestern town Sidi Ifni. However, girls possibly play with reed or clay dolls staging a mother wearing a baby on her back.

2. USING VEGETAL MATERIAL FOR ANIMAL WORLD PLAY

Like all over the world, Moroccan children as young as four years ride on a horse or mule using a long reed or branch. A black plastic bag or strings wound around its top becomes the head. To spur their mount, they shout *rra, rra* while hitting themselves with a stick or piece of rubber, and when stopping, they shout *sha, sha* just as is done with the actual animal. Before the Second World war, Moroccan boys skillfully wove two-dimensional dromedaries, mules, gazelles, and scorpions with strips of palm leaves and played with them in miniature oasis gardens or wore them around their necks. When seeing such animal figures in 1993 and the following years near the picturesque Todra Gorge, boys sold these only to tourists during school holidays. Lahcen Oubahammou writes that young Middle Atlas boys

⁹ ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 50-67, 105-130.

¹⁰ ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 63-67.

run in all directions, mounting a stalk of the giant fennel or a reed while imitating the neighing of a horse and when playing to be a horse-rider learn to communicate with horses.¹¹

In 1992, an eleven-year-old High Atlas boy built a mule and a mule-driver with summer squash, reed, and sticks.¹² He used a big squash as body and five sticks, four as legs and one as neck covered with a small head for the mule. He built the mule-driver by putting on top of the vertical reed a squash with cut-out face as head, and below the reed, another squash as the trunk, sticking in it half pieces of a reed as legs with pieces of potato as feet. Pieces of potatoes also represent the eyes and mouth (fig. 3).



Fig. 3: Mule and mule-driver created with squash, High-Atlas, 1992.
Photo Jean-Pierre Rossie.

The Anti-Atlas examples of toy animals made with vegetal material confirm that boys like to make animal figurines more than girls seem to do. A seven-year-old boy from a coastal mountain village made a well-modelled clay horse giving it big manes fixing in its neck about 25 round sticks cut from a green reed. His peer friend saddled his clay dromedary of burden with pieces of branches. These boys and village boys living in other Anti-Atlas regions use argan nuts to make horses and possibly other animals. A young adolescent from the pre-Sahara showed how he made a hybrid horse with a green lemon as body and five pieces of reed for the legs and neck and added a few plastic items as head, saddle, and tail.¹³

Girls also ride wooden horses, but girls creating toy animals have less often been observed. Still, according to female informants living in 1996 at the foot of the Middle Atlas, girls create horses with a fibrous plant called *berwal* having long small leaves. To be a horse, the plant must be cut to have three ends, two for the legs and one for the neck and head. With a

piece of this plant, a saddle is made. In 2006 a six-year-old Anti-Atlas girl played with a mule and cart. The mule is built with carpenter wood and four long nails as legs and carries the traditional double bag made with a cotton rag.¹⁴

While visiting a potter's workshop in the coastal city Safi in 2007, I saw his five-year-old son playing with a small forest of fourteen trees, twigs fixed in a piece of clay. He built the forest containing a horse, cat, dog, and hen modelled with clay his father gave him and then fired. After a discussion with the potter, it became evident that this game served as fun for his son and initiation to making pottery.

3. USING VEGETAL MATERIAL FOR DOMESTIC LIFE PLAY

Moroccan children's toy-making and play activities about domestic life relate to dwellings, dinner play and utensils, household, and subsistence activities. The child's sex plays a prominent role in choosing what to do, thus following the division of the domestic world into female and male spheres. For play and toy-making related to domestic life, much vegetal material gets used: trees and bushes, twigs, reed, palms, cactus, straw, herbs, plants, flowers, leaves, figs, wild strawberries, acorn cups, and for sure other vegetal material not yet noted.

A thirty-month-old girl observed in an open space near her home at the outskirts of Tiznit at the beginning of 2021 plays alone with her tiny house, probably one of the smallest, filled with pieces of reed and many leaves (fig. 4).

¹⁴ ROSSIE (2005b), 91; ROSSIE (2013), 101.

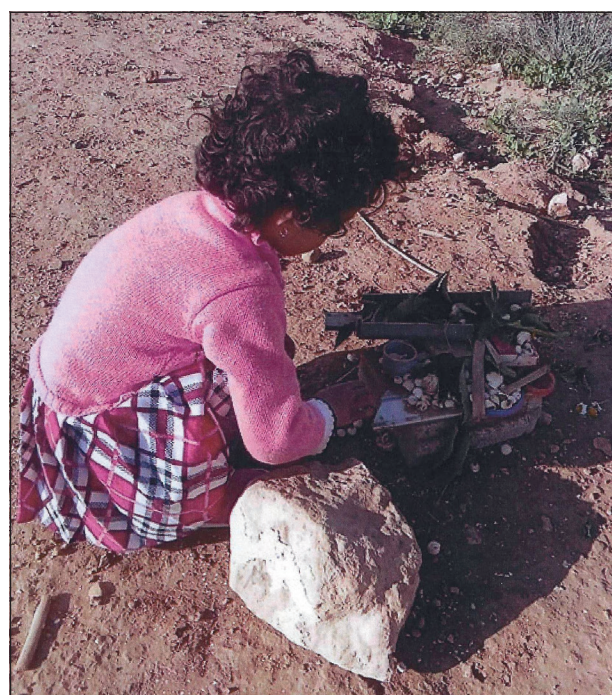


Fig. 4: Thirty-month-old girl playing with her small house, Anti-Atlas, 2021. Photo Khaliya Jariaa.

¹¹ OUBAHAMMOU (1987), 51, 61.

¹² ROSSIE (2005b), 99-100.

¹³ ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 177-178, 207-208, 212-213, 219.

Older Moroccan girls make large open-air houses they can sit in with walls often delimited by stones, sometimes built near trees or bushes to offer shade, and possibly be integrated into play activities at some distance from their homes. In 2017 a group of about ten Anti-Atlas girls between five and thirteen years used a row of four small trees for an open fireplace and constructed their house of two square meters nearby. Some other vegetal material like reed and branches to build houses seems seldom used as a concrete example cannot be given. However, in decorating their pretend houses, girls use flowers, herbs, reed, and palms. A typical way to make little carpets seen in central and southern Morocco is using two pieces of reed attached in the shape of a cross and wrapping them in yarn. Near a series of three houses, an older Anti-Atlas girl built a hammam or hot bath with three sticks of brushes tied on the top as a tripod. This structure, about one meter high, is covered with a large piece of plastic.¹⁵

Moroccan boys also built the same kind of houses but not as often as girls. In the region of the Todra Gorges in Central Morocco, boys skillfully weaved among other dromedaries, mules, gazelles, and scorpions with strips of palm leaves and played with them in miniature oasis gardens or wore them around their necks. However, weaving such toys for play ended already before 1992, and boys made these only to sell them to tourists. In the Anti-Atlas, girls and boys create toys representing flowers, house decorations, bags, slingshots, and cradles with this technique. A boy built a car and another a television in this way.¹⁶

Children's villages having many rooms delimited with stones and used for longer times, especially during the summer school holiday, are special events in children's culture. K. Jariaa observed these in a few Anti-Atlas villages. In these children's villages, girls or boys often conduct parallel activities representing the world of women or men, respectively. A play-group of fifteen girls and another of ten boys built one of the best examples around a solitary tree at some distance of the village, a tree having a function within their games. To the left of the tree, one sees the girls' section and the boys' section to its right. The less developed boys' section contains a small shop where girls pretend to buy all they need for dinner and household play.¹⁷

In another Anti-Atlas village, now a quarter of Tiznit, girls use much vegetal material for dinner and household play. Pieces of orange peel become carrots, and shrub leaves serve as herbs when preparing a would-be couscous. Shrub leaves also replace the vegetables when cooked on an open fire fueled with

twigs and cardboard. When the girls do not use this open fire anymore, a young boy cooks some pumpkin.¹⁸ Anti-Atlas boys rarely prepare dinner, but two examples show how herbs and leaves become vegetables.¹⁹

When girls model toy utensils with clay, they often use pieces of reed or branches as the middle pole and handle for miniature mills. Anti-Atlas girls mix mud with straw to create the hand mill and plates needed for the game of preparing argan oil. Before pretending to extract argan oil from the seeds, they must break the hard shells by hitting the argan nuts with a stone in a unique way, just as women do. These girls also create toy cradles with reeds or a piece of date-branch and regularly attach to the baby or cradle a little red bag containing five different herbs as protection against the evil eye. The same red balls can be seen on some dolls, particularly when they represent a bride or bridegroom.²⁰ The names written in italics are a transcription of the Tashelhit words. The red bag containing five herbs is called *takummiz*. These herbs are *izri* mugwort (*Artemisia*), *lèzir* rosemary (*Salvia Rosmarinus*), *lehbaq* basil (*Ocimum basilicum*), *lèhenna* henna (*Lawsonia inermis*), and *lèkan* mint (*Mentha*). Except for mugwort, girls can use these herbs because their mothers often cultivate them near their homes. However, if needed, they symbolize the herbs with other plants. An Anti-Atlas girl took a flowering stem of the basil plant and put it in the headband of her bride doll. This plant creates a pleasant smell, but more importantly, it protects the bride from misfortune and promotes happiness in her marriage.²¹ Women use the same kinds of protection in customs related to wedding and baby care.

A small house in an Anti-Atlas village shows a large stone as a table supporting a clay vase holding a wildflower surrounded by some pretend dishes and a cake covered with yellow powder (fig. 5). For this purpose, girls take many petals of yellow field flowers and dry these in the sun. They take a large handful of dry petals, rub these on a sardine can with abrasive holes and let the yellow powder fall on the cake.²²

In 2013 and 2016, the archaeologist Argyris Fassoulas analysed the elaborated techniques of Anti-Atlas girls using flowers and plants to produce white, yellow, green, red, and grey colours and paint some of the clay toys, often utensils, they have modelled. The function of these colours is not only decorative, but they also communicate a social meaning. Clay utensils painted green, red, and yellow belong to affluent

15 ROSSIE (2008), 58-59, 95-96; ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 232-244, 254-255.

16 ROSSIE (2005b), 63, 100, 122; ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 373.

17 ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 296-300.

18 ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 231, 250-253.

19 ROSSIE (2008), 140, 196.

20 ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 142-144, 187.

21 ROSSIE (2008), 101-102.

22 ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 237-238



Fig. 5: Using field flowers to give a yellow colour to a girl's cake, Anti-Atlas, 2009. Photo Khalija Jariaa.

families and those painted white to low-income families. Grey is used for modest utensils, be it of a poor or a rich woman. One of the techniques to prepare the powder made with flower petals or plant leaves is using an improvised two-piece grater with two sardine cans or a sardine can and a tuna can. The colour preparation, application, and preservation have been described in detail.²³ According to Argyris Fassoulas:

These operations bear witness to a significant technical investment, a significant investment in time, and, of course, a deep knowledge of the materials used. The children show themselves, once again, capable of creatively exploiting a large territory around their villages and of implementing quite sophisticated technical strategies. Most of the time, it is the girls who do the manufacturing. This situation is a notable phenomenon but quite understandable given that the production of toy utensils, the most decorated type of toy, is a girl's business.²⁴

This archaeologist also researched the use of spurge milk, milky sap of the *euphorbia virosa* plant, that older Anti-Atlas girls use to coat the surface of clay toys to ameliorate their resistance and the persistence of the colours and to offer protection to climate and insects.²⁵

Henna plays an essential role in Moroccan women's and girls' lives for aesthetic and protective reasons. With the leaves, a woman prepares the henna paste applied on hands and feet. As young as five years, small girls observe how their mother prepares the paste, and they train to do this, replacing the henna leaves with wet sand. In a wedding game, the girl playing the role of the bride gives presents to the other players representing family members and guests visiting her to pay their respects. One of the presents is henna now being olive flower petals. Girls some-

times dye dolls' long braids of woolen threads with henna.²⁶

Anti-Atlas girls use some flowers to produce beauty products. For example, they apply the juice obtained by treating red poppy flowers on their hands and nails to decorate them as women do with henna. This juice is made by emptying the inside of the first stage of forming an argan nut and filling the hole with poppies' petals. After some time, a dark juice appears.²⁷ The Aït Ouirra girls of the Middle Atlas Mountains learn to "tattoo" with the juice of wild strawberries.²⁸

In 1993, when visiting the El Hoceima area of the Rif in north Morocco, I found bracelets children made with acorn cups. A few years later in the Middle Atlas, female informants said girls made bracelets, necklaces, dolls, and toy horses with parts of the *berwal* plant, a fibrous plant with long small leaves growing during the rainy season.²⁹ Nowadays, Anti-Atlas girls continue to make bracelets, necklaces, and hairbands with dry figs.

In games referring to gardens and gardening, Moroccan boys and girls use flowers, leaves, herbs, and plants. However, girls often arrange gardens for the small houses they build. Gardening in the sense of horticulture and working in the fields is a boys' game, being primarily men's work. When central Moroccan and Anti-Atlas boys play gardening, they like to combine this with make-believe irrigation.³⁰

4. USING VEGETAL MATERIAL FOR PLAY WITH SOUND AND MUSIC

For Moroccan children singing, dancing, and playing musical instruments often belong to the same play activity. They use several sound-producing and musical instruments such as rattles, clappers, whistles, percussion instruments, wind instruments, and string instruments. Boys made the sound and music toys found during the research except for the rattles and flower whistles. Some instruments consist only of vegetal material, but often this material is used for one or more parts. Undoubtedly, the mentioned information only offers a partial view because systematic observation and questioning are lacking.

In a village of the Tiznit region, the two types of rattles made by mothers, other women, or older girls taking care of babies and tots have reed handles. The traditional rattle, a cylindrical box containing beads or solid objects, is firmly wrapped in rabbit, sheep, or goatskin, although rabbit skin is preferable because it gives a better sound. They made a recent version with

23 ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 576-586.

24 ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 572.

25 ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 587-589.

26 ROSSIE (2008), 93, 229; ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 172-173.

27 ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 310-311.

28 OUBAHAMMOU (1987), 51.

29 ROSSIE, (2005a), 120; ROSSIE (2005b), 97; ROSSIE (2008), 229.

30 ROSSIE (2008), 239-240; ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 72- 73, 275-278.

the empty transparent plastic container once filled with water from the Zamzam spring of the Great Mosque of Mecca brought back home by pilgrims. These rattles amuse small children and offer them some protection due to the connection with the holy water in the container or the big beads cut out of a large tree branch, kept by the in 2006 eighty-five-year oldest woman of the village. Such beads are also attached to the hair of a baby as protection. A piece of reed forms the handle of the rattles.³¹

Amazigh boys and girls from the Moroccan pre-Sahara constructed a clapper that indicates rhythm with three slats cut out in a palm branch bearing a date cluster. A detailed description of this kind of clappers is mentioned for Ghrib boys from the Tunisian Sahara.³²

In a village near Midelt, a girl showed in 1999 how a flower becomes a whistle. The girl took the chalice-shaped petals and extracted the stamens. Then she put the petals in her mouth with the bit of opening at the base first. Pressing her lips slightly on this opening and blowing correctly, she produced a whistling sound.³³ In the Anti-Atlas, girls and boys use flowers, grass, reed, palm, and other leaves, to whistle.

Boys having a drumming session can be seen here and there in Morocco, and they enjoy themselves a lot like some Sidi Ifni boys who sat in the shadow of a tree on the sidewalk of the road to the harbour. With sticks, they beat small and large tin cans together with plastic bottles. On top of reeds, they imagined microphones put in front of their drums.³⁴

In the collection of Moroccan toys of the Musée de l'Homme, now in the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris, I found a reed flute registered in 1931, played by young herds boys and other children. According to the information on the index card, the reed was pierced by eight holes, seven holes on the upper side and one on the lower side, the mouthpiece being painted red. In the 1990s, one could buy this type of flute in Marrakech and the Middle Atlas.³⁵ Pierre Flamand mentions that children in the southern Moroccan countryside make such flutes themselves.³⁶

In 1999, I met Khalef, a thirteen-year-old herds boy sitting on the side of a road in the Middle Atlas, playing his self-made violin while looking at the sheep (fig. 6). He created this violin with a branch of an olive tree and an old tin can. He barked the branch except for two squares of bark. One square of

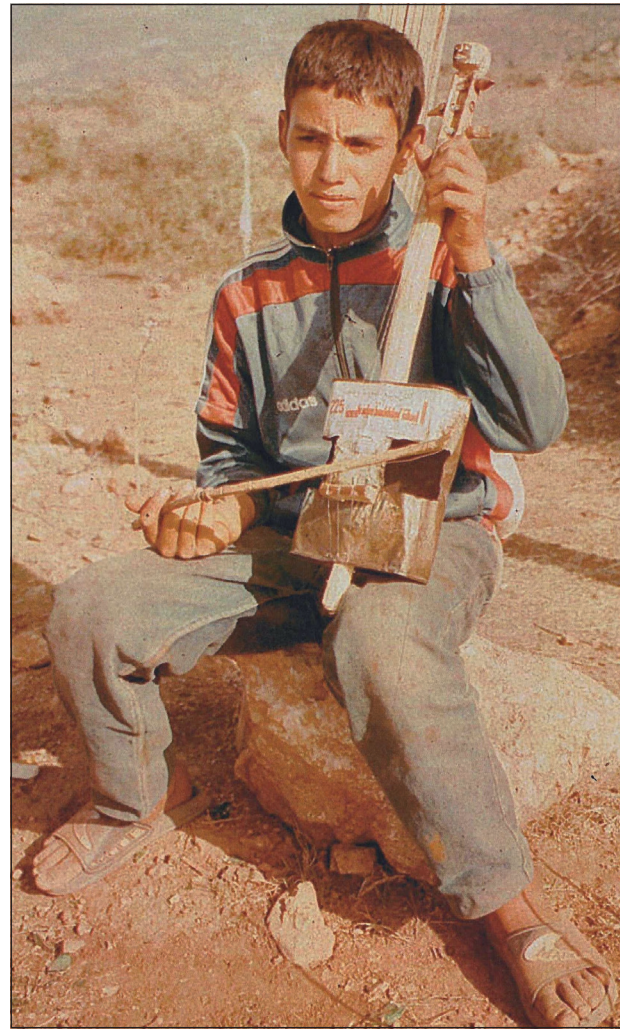


Fig. 6: Thirteen-year-old herds boy playing his self-made violin, Middle Atlas, 1999. Photo Jean-Pierre Rossie.

bark lies on top of the violin and shows a face with nose, mouth, eyes, and ears.

He burned three holes at both sides of a hollowing and drove in them pegs made with the same wood. Two rectangular openings cut out on the upper side of the can replace the violin's sound holes. The bridge, placed in the middle just below the sound holes, is cut from a piece of light softwood, probably taken from a cacao tree. Three straightened metal spirals from exercise books serve as strings. The bow is a barked olive tree branch kept bent by five nylon threads bought in a shop. The making of such violins seems to be rare. Nevertheless, two informants from the Midelt region said they built similar violins as boys. Moreover, a seven-year-old schoolboy from a mountain village near Sidi Ifni played a simplified violin in 2005.³⁷

5. USING VEGETAL MATERIAL FOR PLAY ABOUT FEASTS AND RITUALS

Concerning the link between play, toys, and feasts, the *Ashura* period and the *Imashar* masquerade

31 ROSSIE (2008), 350-351.

32 ROSSIE (2008), 270-271.

33 ROSSIE (2008), 290.

34 ROSSIE (2008), 286.

35 ROSSIE (2008), 291-292.

36 FLAMAND (1948-1958), 158.

37 ROSSIE (2008), 294-298.

come to the foreground. However, the *Mulud*, the commemoration of the birth of the Prophet, and nowadays children's anniversary can be significant. During *Ashura* and *Imashar*, ancient customs and rituals survive in children's play and toy-making activities. Moroccan children also playfully enact customs and rituals related to burial, fire, water, and wedding. Sometimes the distinction between play and ritual becomes unclear, or children partake in ritual events.

Ashura day falls on the tenth of the month, *Muharram*, the first month of the Muslim lunar calendar, and the festivities last for ten days starting at the beginning of the month. For children, this feast is the most crucial period of the year. Adults give them toys, sweets, dresses, and other presents. Traditionally a tiny pottery drum is given to boys and a tambourine to girls, but nowadays, one sees girls playing a pottery drum. Playing these percussion instruments, they sing typical *Ashura* songs. However, these old songs are recently mixed with popular Moroccan songs, as heard in Sidi Ifni and Tiznit. Authors from 1915 onwards discuss these festivities, often mentioning that girls create unique dolls to enact events related to agricultural rites. In 1921, Émile Laoust offered a detailed description of the ritual with a reed frame doll called *isli n Ashur*, bridegroom of *Ashur*, among Amazigh girls in the High Atlas and Anti-Atlas Mountains.³⁸

In the Anti-Atlas and a few other Moroccan regions, girls often used sheep bones as doll frames. In some Anti-Atlas villages and Tiznit, this custom is continued until today but rather as a game. However, a male and a female doll called *Baba Ashur* and *Mama Ashur* play a leading role. In 2007, K. Jariaa observed a playgroup of about twelve-year-old girls creating their *Ashur* dolls in an Anti-Atlas Mountain village. Part of a basil plant was put in a female doll's head-cover to promote happiness in marriage (fig. 7).

³⁸ LAOUST (1921), 30- 31; for a translation see ROSSIE (2005a), 189.



Fig. 7: Ashur dolls of twelve-year-old girls, Anti-Atlas, 2007.
Photo Khalija Jariaa.

In several Moroccan regions, this girl's game did and still does incorporate the burial of the dolls but without boys' knowledge. When the girls bury their *Ashur* dolls, the boys must search the graves, unearth, and undress them, then throw the frames away. During *Ashura*, boys and girls also play games related to ancient rituals of fire and water. Boys construct the local water sprayer with two pieces of reed, a hollow reed, open at one side and with a small hole in the closed side, and another reed serving as the piston. Anti-Atlas boys have been doing this since long ago, but girls only for at least two decades.

In Tiznit, a town close to the Anti-Atlas Mountains, starts after the *Ashura* period the *Imashar* festivities whose origin could go back to ancient times. For a week an evening parade walks around in the center of the town. Adolescents, young adults, and possibly older boys who often wear masks perform as musicians, singers, dancers, and other participants. Two or three young men parade large animals such as camels, cows, elephants, and giraffes. Girls and women participate by chanting and acclaiming the parade and stimulating the youngsters from their quarter to perform well. Young men use vegetal material such as reed, branches, sticks, palm bark, and cotton textile to make masks, animals, flutes, and accessories. Boys between six and thirteen years make masks and would-be animal figures trying to organize their own *Imashar* in Tiznit quarters or villages in the area (fig. 8).³⁹

The *Mulud* is the yearly commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad's birth. Especially for this feast, Central Moroccan Amazigh boys continued to build small windmills in the 1990s. The simple windmill has one sail, but other windmills have two sails. An iron wire serving as an axle pierces the top of a longer piece of reed. To make the windmill's sail, one cuts a piece of reed in two and attaches a rectangular piece

³⁹ On *Ashura* and *Imashar* see ROSSIE (2005a), 187-190; ROSSIE (2008), 311-322; ROSSIE et al. (2021), 290-292, 318-319, 423-424, 720-722, 731-732.



Fig. 8: Boys training for the Imashar parade, Anti-Atlas, 2009.
Photo Khalija Jariaa.

of paper fixed with glue prepared with fig tree sap, dates, or flour, quite often replaced by shop-bought tape or glue. To make the sail turn, the boys holding up their windmill run fast. Seeing girls running with a windmill was not exceptional then, but in the region of Midelt, informants told girls did not make windmills.⁴⁰ In the Anti-Atlas, boys and girls built the same windmills. They still did this in some villages during the *Mulud* in October 2021. In the 1970s, K. Jariaa and other village children said that this windmill symbolizes the sun and, when running around with it, it represents the sun's movements in the sky. Although this statement is still valid in villages, it seems to be forgotten by children nowadays in Tiznit.

Until today, girls playfully imitate an ancient Amazigh custom to implore rain, practised by women in Tiznit and some Anti-Atlas villages. In 2007, girls created dolls using a wooden spoon in the village where K. Jariaa was born. This doll is named *belghenja*, just like the tall ladle doll used by women. Date palm leaves or herbs were often added to the doll's head, symbolizing fertility for nature and women. In the 1980s, Amazigh girls from villages near Midelt made a *telghenja* doll with a wooden spoon and used it in the playful context of imploring rain during periods of drought.⁴¹ Vegetal material is also used for games featuring wedding ceremonies and protection from the evil eye or misfortune.

Although doll play offers multiple benefits for children's socialization, an ambivalent attitude towards dolls could exist among adults, at least in former times. This suspicion probably relates to the existence of figures related to magical or ritual events. People possibly also feared that *jnun*, the spirits, could take possession of a doll. An older Anti-Atlas village woman stated that when she was a child in the 1950s, it was commonly believed that a girl's hair would not grow when a doll remained with her at night. She stressed that if this belief weakens with each generation, it was still very much alive in her mother's generation.⁴²

Playful divination is not a topic here. Nevertheless, a game observed during fieldwork in the Tunisian Sahara in 1975 should be noted. A Ghrib boy or girl playing the role of a male or female soothsayer rolls up a piece of woolen yarn between both hand palms as when making a little ball of clay. If a child asks when someone will return, the soothsayer says: "oh little yarn, when will that person come home?" The soothsayer puts the rolled-up yarn on the ground to unroll. If the yarn's extremity points eastward, this indicates that he or she will come home the same

day. If the extremity points to another direction, this means that this person will stay away for a longer time.⁴³

6. USING VEGETAL MATERIAL FOR PLAY ABOUT TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES

In Morocco, village and town boys used self-made weapons for hunting games and fighting, such as fronds, slingshots, bullet and arrow shooters, bows, knives, swords, and guns. To do so, they use much vegetal material. Fronds were braided with palm leaves or dwarf palm fibres. To get a slingshot, one needed to find an appropriate piece of forked branch, for example, a well peeled olive branch. A hollow reed served as an arrow thrower, and with an elastic, a boy propelled a thin pointed reed. Bows were made with oleander wood or a shrub branch. To bend the branch, this must remain in a bent shape for a week or so. A strip cut out of a bicycle tube is used for the string. Boys did not use fronds, slingshots, arrow throwers, and bows only for play or exercise but also for a utilitarian function. For example, when chasing birds from the fields or those pecking ripe olive and argan nuts, looking after goats and sheep to protect them from wild dogs and wolves, or hunting birds roasted as food. Girls seldom make this kind of toy weapons in the Anti-Atlas, but sometimes they get it from a boy by offering him some candy. In 1995, a nine-year-old boy living in a village near Midelt showed how boys make a folding knife with two reed halves, the blade of which he bends to the handle held in place by a rubber band. The blade jumps forward when the elastic is put back on the handle. Boys also use a reed to make swords or guns and excel in creating vehicles with natural and vegetal material (fig. 9 and on 197).⁴⁴

Since starting fieldwork in Morocco in 1992, I saw boys pushing similar self-made cars or trucks in many regions, and in Anti-Atlas villages, they make these until today. Mostly reed, and sometimes branches are used for the axle and for pushing the vehicle. With exceptions aside, girls do not make toy vehicles, but they might get one by giving a boy candy or another present.

In 2006, a series of toys made by boys and girls based on the continual movement of one or two wings were collected, which children recently call *élikopter*. The primary type consists of a hollow reed in which the player slides a wooden rod. A thread is wound around the rod and then passed through a hole down the reed. A continual movement is transmitted to the rod and one or two wings by pulling and releasing the thread. Five years later, but in another Anti-Atlas village, a ten-year-old boy imagined an amphibious

40 ROSSIE (2008), 325-329.

41 On *belghenja* and *telghenja* see ROSSIE (2005a), 190-192; ROSSIE (2008), 306-310; ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 313-317.

42 ROSSIE (2005a), 215-216.

43 ROSSIE (2008), 304-305.

44 ROSSIE (2013), 57-60, 64-66, 68-70, 74, 78-79, 87; ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 347-349.



Fig. 9: A car made by an eight-year-old boy, Anti-Atlas, 2005.
Photo Jean-Pierre Rossie

boat built with lightwood from the asphodel plant and two big reed leaves as superstructure.

In a village, about 30 km from Sidi Ifni, K. Jariaa observed a six-year-old boy who claims to create roller skates with pieces of cactus and yogurt pots as wheels. In a High Atlas village, a twelve-year-old boy built his tractor in 1996 using one large and some small cactus pieces to form the frame and seat and waste material for the wheels and exhaust pipe. Ten years

later, in a village near Agadir, three boys and two girls were playing together with a copy of the Agadir tourist train. The boys built three tourist trains, one with a long piece of cactus as chassis. The girls created the drivers and tourists with cross-shaped reed pieces as done for traditional dolls.⁴⁵

In 2006, a seven-year-old boy from Khaliya Jariaa's village invented a new toy, an umbrella. The central pole is a reed, and palm strips serve as ribs. These palm strips must be softened by putting the package on the ground and hitting it with a stone.⁴⁶

7. USING VEGETAL MATERIAL FOR PLAY ABOUT GAMES OF SKILL

At about the age of seven years, Moroccan boys are play more games of physical skill than girls, and according to observations, most games of strength, fighting, speed, climbing, and football are played by boys. However, some Moroccan female informants stressed that they liked to play football or climb trees together with brothers and neighborhood boys as a child. Climbing as high as possible in date palm or other trees is popular among older boys, and the danger associated with it increases its attraction.

To count out someone to play a desired or undesired role in a game of skill, boys and girls can use leaves of a date palm held between two fingers (fig. 10). The players take a leaf on a turn until one catches the shortened leaf and becomes the It.

An apricot nut serves to make an Anti-Atlas toy showing continuous movement when pulling and releasing a thread. To create three holes in a nut, one topping the other to put a nail through and a third hole on the side to pass the thread, village boys rub the nut on a stone until the holes appear. A similar model consists of a piece of reed with three holes cut

45 On these vehicles made with vegetal material see ROSSIE (2013), 111-112, 126-139, 142-147, 161-162, 165, 170, 176-179, 183-188, 199-200, 217-218, 232-235; ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 357.

46 ROSSIE *et al.* (2021), 358-361.



Fig. 10: Counting out using date palm leaves, Anti-Atlas, 2012.
Photo Boubaker Daoumani.

out, a long nail pushed through the reed, and a large bottle cap. Then, this reed should stick in a corn cob. Usually, girls do not make these toys but play with them when a boy gives them. Pieces of cross-shaped reed covered with a plastic sail become kites. Boys regularly make kites but sometimes girls do as well.

Anti-Atlas girls and boys play a game, described for the first time, with fruits of *aknari*, the prickly pear cactus. The description refers to the game played in the village 29 km from Tiznit. However, a similar game is played in other villages as well. During the ripe fruit season, several girls and boys aged eight and over gather on a vacant lot some distance from the houses and sit on the ground in two circles, one with girls and the other with boys. Before starting, three girls agree to wear either a red, yellow, or white scarf, and each brings a prickly pear. The oldest player chooses one of the three girls wearing a scarf and peels the fruit she holds to see what the interior colour of the fruit is: red, white, or yellow. The girl who wears the scarf with the colour indicated by the fruit becomes the first game leader. This girl cuts the skin of the prickly fruit in three thirds, then places it in the middle of the circle of players and sits near it. Now the other boys and girls circle her and the fruit, looking for a good moment to grab it. The seated fruit protector should try to hit the back of the one bending down to take it. If she succeeds, she picks up the fruit and runs away at full speed, eating the peeled portion very quickly. If she manages to eat all before being caught, she wins this round and starts again. If she is caught before the fruit has been completely eaten, she receives seven not too hard blows from each player on her back, and hands tied, she must look at the continuation of the game. The one who catches her becomes the new leader and protector of the second *aknari* fruit.

Children may also use vegetal material for games of intellectual skill. However, the only example found until now shows two men playing *dama* checkers on a large oval piece of the prickly pear cactus.

Reviewing the available information on Moroccan children's games of skill from rural and urban areas and disregarding the replacement of several traditional ball games by football, most skill games belong to the traditional play heritage. Moreover, the material and design for skill games such as hopscotch, tops, knucklebones, windmills, stilts, swings, and board games resemble those of earlier generations.⁴⁷

CONCLUSION

Moroccan children used and still use flowers, herbs, plants, fruits, shrubs, and trees to create toys and play pretend games about dolls, animals, household life,

sound, music, feasts, rituals, weapons, and vehicles. Information on the use of vegetal material for physical and intellectual skill games remains too limited to shed light on this subject. As might be expected, there remains a clear differentiation in the toy making and play activities of girls and boys from the age of around six, but at the same time crossing the gender divide is not exceptional, sometimes accepted or prohibited.

Although the thirty-month-old girl mentioned in this chapter continues to use reed and leaves in her small house in 2021 and older girls did the same in 2020, the intrusion of plastic toys and other industrial objects in Moroccan regions makes using vegetal material in play activities more seldom. The factors of change are largely linked to school, television, smartphone, urbanization, migration, tourism, industrialization, and consumption. Nevertheless, changes in Moroccan children's play and toy culture are not a new phenomenon. F. Castells speaking of the *Ashura* feast in Rabat writes in 1915:

Some shops besieged by children sell toys of European import: guns, balls, dolls, drums, bugles, etc. [...] Next to these shops crouched in front of his merchandise, an old representative of the tradition offers, without much success, humble little toys of indigenous manufacture: turnstiles intended to make noise, miniature cradles, automatic hammers striking in turn on a wooden anvil by the play of a string, and monster-shaped hens tinkling on a small plank when it is swung.⁴⁸

It is true that this was in the capital Rabat and not in the countryside, but change became more and more rapid there also since the last quarter of the 20th century. Nowadays, one can observe three-year-old children manipulating a smartphone in mountain villages.

This chapter demonstrates the important use of vegetal material in Moroccan children's play and toy-making activities, stressing that this is embedded in physical, linguistic, and socio-cultural environments. My goal is also to promote comparison between Moroccan children's games and toys and those of children who lived in Antiquity hoping that this may offer archaeologists clues for renewed explanations and hypotheses.⁴⁹ Véronique Dasen highlighted how children in ancient Greece playfully used vegetal material when inventing a replacement for the sacrifice of an animal by adults: the lexicographer

48 CASTELLS (1915), 240: "Quelques boutiques assiégées par les enfants vendent des jouets d'importation européenne : fusils, pelotes, poupées, tambours, clairons, etc. [...] À côté de ces boutiques se tient accroupi devant sa marchandise, un vieux représentant de la tradition qui offre, sans beaucoup de succès, d'humbles petits jouets de fabrication indigène : tourniquets destinés à faire du bruit, berceaux en miniature, marteaux automatiques frappant à tour de rôle et par le jeu d'une ficelle sur une enclume en bois, poule à forme monstrueuse picotant sa planchette lorsqu'on la balance".

49 ROSSIE (2020).

47 All photos of the mentioned games of skill are available in ROSSIE (2022).

Pollux (2nd cent. CE) tells how they crafted together in a Boeotian sanctuary a mock animal (a ram) in the shape of an apple with twigs suggesting horns and paws.⁵⁰ Ancient literary sources mention similar creations.⁵¹ More examples of children's use of vegetal material in Antiquity are still to be identified archaeologically.⁵²

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CASTELLS, F., "Note sur la fête de Achoura à Rabat", *Les Archives Berbères*, 1, 4 (1915-1916), 230-244.

DASEN, Véronique, "Cherchez l'enfant ! La question de l'identité à partir du matériel funéraire », in Antoine Hermay, Céline Dubois (dir.), *L'enfant et la mort dans l'Antiquité*, III, *Le matériel associé aux tombes d'enfants*, Paris/Aix-en-Provence (2012), 9-22.

DASEN, Véronique, "La royauté de l'enfant. À propos d'Héraclite et de pratiques ludiques enfantines en Grèce ancienne", in David Bouvier, Véronique Dasen (eds), *Héraclite : le temps est un enfant qui joue*, Jeu/Play/Spiel 1, Liège (2020), 97-123.

FLAMAND, Pierre, *Quelques manifestations de l'esprit populaire dans les juiveries du sud-marocain*, Casablanca (recherche de 1948 à 1958).

LAOUST, Émile, "Noms et cérémonies des feux de joie chez les Berbères du Haut et de l'Anti-Atlas", *Hespéris*, 1 (1921), 3-66.

OUBAHAMMOU, Lahcen, *Ethnographie des jeux traditionnels chez les Aït Ouirra du Maroc : description et classification*, thèse, Laval (1987).

ROSSIE, Jean-Pierre, *Saharan and North African Toy and Play Cultures. Children's Dolls and Doll Play*, Stockholm (2005a).

ROSSIE, Jean-Pierre, *Saharan and North African Toy and Play Cultures. The Animal World in Play, Games and Toys*, Stockholm (2005b).

ROSSIE, Jean-Pierre, *Saharan and North African Toy and Play Cultures. Domestic Life in Play, Games and Toys*, Stockholm (2008).

ROSSIE, Jean-Pierre, *Saharan and North African Toy and Play Cultures. Technical Activities in Play, Games and Toys*, Braga (2013).

ROSSIE, Jean-Pierre, "Les jeux des enfants de l'Afrique du Nord et du Sahara", in Véronique Dasen (dir.), *Ludique ! Jouer dans l'Antiquité, Catalogue de l'exposition, Lugdunum-musée et théâtres romains, 20 juin -1^{er} décembre 2019*, Gent (2019), 115-117.

ROSSIE, Jean-Pierre, JARIAA, Khalija, DAOUMANI, Boubaker, FASSOULAS, Argyris, *Saharan and North African Toy and Play Cultures. Make-believe Play among Children of the Moroccan Anti-Atlas*, Braga (2021).

ROSSIE, Jean-Pierre, *Comparing Play and Toys from Greco-Roman Antiquity with Traditional Play and Toys from Rural North Africa*, Braga (2020). PowerPoint on <https://locusludi.ch/the-project/>; <https://zenodo.org/record/3865382#.YtFogexBxFl> (DOI 10.5281/zenodo.3865382)

ROSSIE, Jean-Pierre, *Vegetal Material in Moroccan Children's Toy and Play Culture*, Braga (2022). Powerpoint on <https://locusludi.ch/the-project/>; <https://zenodo.org/record/6849578#.YtURVOxBxFk> (DOI 10.5281/zenodo.6849578)

50 DASEN (2020), 111-112 (transl. M. Casevitz): "Pollux décrit comment ils s'unissent pour bricoler un simulacre d'animal sous la forme d'une pomme avec des brindilles suggérant les cornes et les pattes"; Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 1.30-31 : "Voici le fait qu'on sacrifie des pommes à Héraclès près de la Béotie – je ne parle pas ici des bêtes à cornes avec une langue poétique, mais des fruits des arbres – pour la raison suivante. Une fête du dieu était établie et le moment de sacrifier pressait, la victime était donc un bélier. Et ceux qui avaient cette charge avaient tardé, involontairement, car on ne pouvait pas traverser le fleuve Asopos, dont le courant était devenu soudain fort. Cependant les enfants autour du sanctuaire accomplirent le rite de la cérémonie tout en jouant : ils prirent une pomme mûre et placèrent au-dessous de ce fruit quatre brindilles, et ils en ajoutèrent deux au-dessus – c'étaient les cornes – et selon les poètes, ils dirent qu'ils offraient le sacrifice de la pomme comme s'il s'agissait d'un animal à cornes. On dit qu'Héraclès se réjouit du sacrifice et jusqu'à présent ce rite de la cérémonie subsiste, et chez les Béotiens Héraclès est appelé Μήλων (« Pommard ») et il a reçu ce nom à cause de cette façon de sacrifier".

51 E.g. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 878-884: "Why, when he was still a tyke this high, he could make clay houses at home, and carve boats, and fashion figwood carts, and he'd make frogs out of pomegranates as pretty as you please" (transl. J. Henderson, Loeb). For further references, see DASEN (2012).

52 See C. LAMBRUGO and A. D'ONOFRIO in this volume.



Cleo Gougoulis

Department of History and Archaeology
University of Patras, Greece

From άθυρμα and παίγνιον to παιχνίδι. Defining Toys in Modern Greece

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary modern Greek has one single term denoting at once play, game and toy, i.e., all semantic fields of ludic activity and the means for its performance are covered by the word παιχνίδι. This has not always been the case in the history of modern Greek. Other terms borrowed from ancient Greek (παιδιά, παίγνιον, άθυρμα) have also been employed in various written sources dealing with play and playthings representing the different sections of the literate Greek elite during the long struggle towards the establishment of colloquial Greek (Demotikē) as the official language of the Greek state in 1976. In this essay I will attempt to deal with the (re)-emergence of the term άθυρμα/αθύρματα, its co-existence with the word παίγνιον and the gradual replacement of both by the words παιγνιδι[ον]/παιγνίδια and παιχνίδι/παιχνίδια as terms denoting toy/toys in the context of particular processes of nation building involving language selection, the rise of the Greek toy market and the emergence of child centered discourses among Greek scholars in the late 19th and early 20th

*I am grateful to the editors of this volume for their invitation to the workshop ‘Toys as Cultural Artefacts’ where the material for this article was first presented and for the invitation to contribute to this book. I am especially grateful to Véronique Dasen for her encouragement, patience, and continuous support during the writing process of this essay. Many thanks go to Marco Vespa to whom I owe the inspiration for developing an initial idea-first formulated in GOUGOULI, KARAKATSANI (2008), 11, into systematic research in the uses of Ancient Greek terms for toys in modern Greek. I also wish to thank Krystallia Markaki for her help in locating newspaper articles.

centuries. I will do so by examining in a rather eclectic and chronologically inconsistent fashion, a variety of sources: official documents referring to the Toy sector of the Greek economy (National Statistical Service tables and census reports on the production, exports and imports of toys), commercial guides of Greece, directories of Greek toy manufacturers, indicative examples of daily or weekly Press (columns, market reports and toy ads in daily Athenian newspapers, children’s and women’s periodicals),¹ with a sporadic reference to children’s literature (poetry, primers), and a selection of lexicographers of medieval and modern Greek. The study covers broadly the period from the foundation of the Greek Nation State in 1830 to the last two decades of the 20th century with occasional glimpses into earlier periods, wherever deemed necessary.

1. TOYS AND THE NEED FOR A NEOLOGISM IN AN EMERGENT GREEK TOY MARKET

In 1900 a few months after the death of the classicist, lexicographer and professor of Latin at the University

¹ The study of the press is not exhaustive. It covers so far seven titles which are nevertheless quite informative. I have examined the following newspapers and periodicals: *ACROPOLIS* (1887-1929), *ASTY* (1897), *EMPROS* (1896-1911), *SKRIP* (1922), *DIAPLASIS TON PAIDON* (1879-1941), *TO PAIDI* (1930-1933), *EFIMERIS TON KYRION* (1887-1917). I have not included autobiographical literature and folklore studies in this article due to space restrictions but see PATSIOU (2008) on play in autobiographies and GOUGOULI (2000), 47-48, for a first discussion of play terminology in folk studies.

of Athens, Stefanos Koumanoudis, his son Petros published his opus magnum *Synagoge neōn lexeōn ypo ton logion plasthēton apo tis aloseos mechri ton kath' imas chronon* (*A Compendium of New Words Created by Scholars from the Fall [of Constantinople] to the Present*),² a compilation of neologisms that had been added by Greek scholars to modern Greek language from 1453 to the last decade of the 19th century with an emphasis on words that were introduced from the mid-18th century onwards.

S. Koumanoudis drafted this unusual compilation of more than 60.000 words coined by Greek scholars out of Ancient Greek roots in the context of a long and heated debate on language and nationhood initiated by Greek Enlightenment scholars in the 18th century and continuing well after the formation of the Greek Nation-State in the 19th and the 20th centuries, as a controversy over the choice of the official language of the Greek nation. S. Koumanoudis espoused the Enlightenment ideal of enriching the written and spoken forms of the Greek language with neologisms attesting to the progressive spirit of the era i.e., words borrowed from ancient Greek and high register Greek translations of terms constructed in Western Europe to express the scientific, economic, philosophical and social developments since the 18th century.³ Although neologisms were part of what Peter MacKridge terms as the westernization of Greek language,⁴ they were used by many scholars adopting a neo-classicist ideology, as proofs for the unmediated continuity between modern and ancient Greece, while also highlighting the influence of Western Europe from Ancient Greece. The big number of contemporary scientific terms borrowed from ancient Greek thus illustrated for S. Koumanoudis the capacity of modern Greek to retain the vivid spirit of the Ancient Greek language.⁵

Interestingly enough seven entries mentioned in this compilation refer to toys: two adjectives (αθυρματοειδής, αθυρματικός) and four compound words all referring to contexts related to the production and retailing of commercial toys (αθυρματοποιία, αθυρματοποιοί, αθυρματοπώλαι, αθυρματοπωλεία).

The compound words had been traced by S. Koumanoudis in newspaper and periodical columns with market reports describing the festive transformation of Piraeus and Athens commercial centres during New Year's eve or commenting on the Christmas celebration in other European capitals, a festive period traditionally linked to gift exchange

and increasingly associated with childhood and consumption during the rise of the Greek bourgeoisie in the late 19th century.⁶

A columnist of the daily newspaper *Acropolis*, for instance, – a newspaper particularly prone to neologisms⁷ – commented on the 2nd of January 1895: “Ζωηρά η όψις του Πειραιώς χθες... Τα αθυρματοπωλεία εξεπούλησαν τας πραγματείας των όλας σχεδόν” (“Piraeus had a vivid outlook yesterday. Toy shops sold out nearly all of their stock”).

If four out of the seven toy related neologisms in the Koumanoudis compendium referred to the commercial aspect of toys, is it possible that Greek scholars turned to the ancient Greek term *athurma*⁸ in order to define a new sector in the economy, i.e. to describe the development of a toy market addressing children? Looking through the compilation yet another set of neologisms – this time related to compounds of the term παίγνιον (παιγνιοβιομηχανία, παιγνιοποιία, παιγνιόχαρτα, παιγνιοχαρτοποιία) – seemed to confirm this hypothesis, as the first two of these latter terms denoted toy production while the latter two referred to playing cards and the playing cards industry.⁹ I shall next turn to a discussion of terms used for toys by market commentators in the press, by toy producers in toy advertisements and by the Ministry of Economy in annual statistics on production and commerce. The analysis will focus on written sources referring to the production, distribution and – to a smaller extent – consumption of toys from the last two decades of the 19th century to the early 1970s with a brief reference to the history and characteristics of the Greek toy market.

2. THE EVIDENCE FROM THE TOY MARKET

Commercial toys entered the Greek toy market in the late 19th century first as imported goods, mainly addressing a bourgeois clientele, until the development of an indigenous small-scale “industry” in the first decades of the 20th century. During this period three categories of retailers provided

6 See ARGYRIADI (2008), 153, GOUGOULI (2008), 230-239, on toy consumption and retail practices during the Christmas-New Year festive period. See AGRIANTONI (1999), 173-226 and HADZIOSIF (1999), 309-343 on the rise of Capitalism in 19th century Greece.

7 S. Koumanoudis referred to this tendency as “neologomania”, see DIMARAS (1998), I.

8 On άθυρμα in the Antiquity see KIDD (2021), 22-28, and contributions by C. NOBILI and I. PATERA in this volume. On άθυρμα in Byzantine texts see KOUKOULES (1948), 161-162, LAMPROPOULOU (2008), 69-70, 74 and (2020), 47. CASEAU, MESSIS (2020), 37-38, report an inconsistent distinction among Byzantine authors between *paignion* and *athurma* denoting game and toy respectively.

9 The word *paigniochartopoiia* was traced by S. Koumanoudis in a National Government Gazette referring to the special tariffs arranged for the Greek graphic design industry ELKA ASPIOTI founded in the last decades of the 19th century on the island of Corfu. The Elka Aspioti industry produced playing cards, stationary goods, and cigarette paper. See VOUSOLINOU-ANYFANTI (2014) and <https://greekarchivesinventory.gak.gr/index.php/rr87-bmdz-39fa>

2 KOUMANOUDIS (1900).

3 Famous scholars of the Greek Enlightenment such as Evgenios Voulgaris, Dimitrakis Katartzis and Adamantios Korais strongly promoted the construction of neologisms. See DIMARAS (1998), xliii.

4 MACKRIDGE (2014), 137.

5 DIMARAS (1998), xlv, LIAKOS (2007), MACKRIDGE (2014), 136-137.

bourgeois children, initially, with imported toys primarily from Germany, France, and Italy and to a lesser extent from the US: Haberdashers and variety stores, department stores and specialized toy shops.¹⁰ Throughout the 20th century the Greek toy trade has been characterized by its fragmentation in small scale enterprises, lack of clear boundaries between production and retailing and seasonality of sales. All three characteristics are linked to the fundamental quality of toys as seasonal gifts offered by parents and other adult relatives to children during the traditional gift-exchange rituals associated with the Winter festivities of New Year and – after the World War II – of Christmas.¹¹

My first move in order to confirm my hypotheses on the link between the neologisms associated with the ancient words *athurma* and *paignio*[n]¹² with the Toy Market was to try and locate the terms for toys and their contexts of use in written sources since the formation of the Greek State. While newspapers mentioned by S. Koumanoudis were an obvious starting point, I also turned to documents related to the Greek Industry and Economy: Annual publications of the Ministry of National Economy and later of the National Statistical Service, census reports and panhellenic or local commercial guides. The official term for toy manufacturing employed by the Greek State appears in the second industrial census run by the Ministry of National Economy in 1920 and published in 1926.¹³ Four factories listed in this census are described as producing αθύρματα. We know that it is toys that the term refers to because the census reports were bilingual and included French translations of all terms.¹⁴ The word “*jouets*” featuring in a parenthesis next to αθύρματα leaves no doubt regarding the meaning of the latter as playthings. Toy production is referred to as αθυρματοποιία in the commercial guide of Greece published by Nikolaos Inglesis in 1905-1906, where two toy manufacturing enterprises are mentioned in the district of Attica.¹⁵

10 MINISTRY OF NATIONAL ECONOMY (1919); see ARGYRIADI (2008), 153-154, GOUGOULI (2008), 230-231.

11 See GOUGOULI (2008) *passim*. The lack of clear boundaries between production and retailing is a characteristic of many other countries during the early years of the establishment of the toy market. See for instance MANSON (2001), 293-310, on 18th cent. Parisian haberdasheries as production and retailing units.

12 Παιγνιο/α in current modern Greek covers the semantic domain of rule-bound play, i.e., games and the objects of play in particular contexts e.g., in situations associated with manipulation and maneuvering (as in game theory or political games) or with loss of control and becoming an object of derision. See section on the definition of toys in lexicographers of modern Greek.

13 MINISTRY OF NATIONAL ECONOMY (1926). The first census of Greek industries 1917 did not comprise toys, because it concerned major industrial production and excluded small scale enterprises. See RIGINOS (1987), 85.

14 Industrial and Commerce reports include French translations before WW2, after which English gradually replaces French.

15 See INGLESIS (1905-1906), 628. Tsokas and Livanas, two of the oldest toy retailers in the Greek Toy Market, were mentioned in the guide as

This however is not the whole story. Life is messier than our neat taxonomies and tables would have it. Αθύρματα was not the only official term referring to commercial toys during the period represented by the above two examples. In the 1917 Statistics of the Special Trade of Greece with Foreign Countries, featuring imported and exported goods during that year, toys are mentioned as παιγνίδια παιδών (once again with the French translation “*jouets d'enfants*”).¹⁶ To complicate things yet further in the 1960s and 1970s the choice of terms denoting toys in production and commerce is reversed. Toys appear in production tables as *paignidia*, while the commerce tables list under one and the same category αμάξια παιδών, αθύρματα, and παίγνια together with the English translation: children's perambulators, toys, and games (figs 1, 2).

As toy sales tended to concentrate in the Christmas-New Year period so did the essays, chronicles and market reports on toys and toy retailers' ads in newspapers and journals. The terms used for toys in daily Athenian newspapers and in periodicals addressing women and children in the 19th century until the Interwar period followed the same pattern of inconsistency as the official production records. What seemed to be most relevant for the choice of terms for toys was the context of reference.

Newspaper reports on the Christmas or New Year Market, during this period, tended to use the terms άθυρμα/αθύρματα/αθυρματοπωλεία to denote “toy/toys/toy shops”. Feminist authors such as the proponent of women's emancipation and founder of the Greek women's journal *Εφημερίς των κυριών*, Kalliroi Parren¹⁷ and her associates, tended in similar festive editorials and columns to refer to the παίγνια (“toys”) featuring on New Year's Eve shop windows during the entire publication period of the journal.¹⁸ In all articles whatever the terminology preferred by authors, toys are associated with childhood. The toymakers and retailers themselves, on the other hand, tend to use more colloquial language in their advertising space in newspapers and periodicals. From the last two decades of the 19th century onwards, the overriding majority of toy ads in New Year's issues of newspapers and journals and in annual commercial guides, containing brief texts created by shopkeepers and manufacturers to draw attention of the readership on their merchandise,

αθυρματοποιεία (“toy manufacturing units”). See above on the lack of boundaries between production and retailing in the Greek toy trade.

16 See MINISTRY OF NATIONAL ECONOMY (1919), 107, 168, 179, 195, 220, where toys are broken down in several categories according to material.

17 On the role of K. Parren in introducing early feminist ideas and promoting women's collective consciousness in Greece see, among many others, VARIKA (1987) and AVDELLA, PSARRA (2005).

18 Η *Εφημερίς των Κυριών* (*The Ladies' Journal*) was published from 1887 to 1917.

BIOMHXANIA - BIOTEXNIA
XI: 8. Ποσότητες βιομηχανικῶν προϊόντων παραχθείσαι κατὰ τὰ ἔτη 1962 καὶ 1963 (συνέχεια)
Quantity of certain industrial items produced in 1962 and 1963 (continued)

Κωδικὸς γίδου	Εἶδος προϊόντος	Μονὰς μετρήσεως Unit of measure- ment	1962	1963	Products
	Ἀεροθάλαμοι ὀχημάτων ἐν γένει	Χιλ. τεμ. Th. of pieces	...	35	Inner tubes for vehicles in general
	Τακούνια καὶ σόλες ἐξ ἐλαστικοῦ	Τόνοι - Tons	594	693	Rubber soles and heels
	Πλαστικά εἶδη οἰκιακῆς χρήσεως	»	...	3.388	Plastic articles of household use
	Πλαστικά εἶδη οἰκοδομικῆς χρήσεως	»	...	251	Plastic articles for building purposes
	Πλαστικά εἶδη συσκευασίας	»	...	2.923	Plastic articles for packing
	Πλαστικά παιγνίδια καὶ ἀνθὲς	»	...	624	Plastic toys and flowers
	Πλαστικά εἶδη λοιπὰ	»	...	6.492	Other plastic articles
31	Χημικὰ βιομηχανία				Chemical industries
	Αἰθέρια ἔλαια ἐσπεριδοειδῶν	Τόνοι - Tons	20	33	Citrus fruit essential oils
	Ἀπορρυπαντικὰ διάφορα	»	23.206	19.191	Detergents, various
	Λευκαντικὰ οὐσία ἐν γένει	»		8.846	Bleachers
	Ἀσετυλίνη διαλελυμένη	Χιλ. μ ³ Th. cu. m.	534	560	Acetylene
	Βόραξ	Τόνοι - Tons	217	308	Borax
	Γλυκερίνη	»	192	206	Glycerine

Fig. 1: Plastic toys are mentioned as plastika paignidia in the production tables listing the quantity (in tons) of industrial and manufactured goods 1962 and 1963. After ESYE (1965), 250.

ΕΜΠΟΡΙΟΝ
XIII: 14. Εισαγωγὰι ἐμπορευμάτων συμφώνως πρὸς τὴν Ἀναθεωρημένην Τυποποιημένην Ταξινόμησιν τοῦ Διεθνoῦς Ἐμπορίου (ΤΤΔΕ): 1964, 1965 (συνέχεια)
Imports according to the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC revised): 1964, 1965 (continued)

 Ποσότης εἰς τόννους
 Ἀξία εἰς χιλιάδας δραχμῶν

 Quantity in tons
 Value in thousand drachmae

Ἀριθμοὶ Κώδικος ΤΤΔΕ SITC Code Number	Ἐμπορεύματα	Εἰδικαὶ εἰσαγωγὰι c.i.f. Special imports c.i.f.				Commodities
		1964		1965		
		Ποσότης Quantity	Ἀξία Value	Ποσότης Quantity	Ἀξία Value	
861	Συσκευαὶ καὶ ὄργανα ἐπιστημονικά, λατρικά, ὀπτικῆς, μετρήσεως καὶ ἐλέγχου	1.017	206.956	1.197	262.936	Medical, optical, measuring and controlling scientific instruments and apparatus
862	Φωτογραφικὰ καὶ κινηματογραφικὰ ἐ- φόδια	801	82.690	959	96.146	Photographic and cinematographic supplies
863	Ταινίαι κινηματογραφικαί, ἐκτεθεῖσαι εἰς τὸ φῶς καὶ ὑποστᾶσαι ἐμφάνισιν	50	34.887	48	42.272	Developed cinematographic film
864	Ὁρολογοποιία	155	60.114	177	68.401	Clocks and watches
891	Μουσικὰ ὄργανα, συσκευαὶ ἐγγραφῆς καὶ ἀναπαραγωγῆς τοῦ ἡχοῦ κλπ.	616	72.175	770	80.203	Musical instruments, sound record- ers and reproducers etc.
892	Ἐντυπα	909	53.775	964	51.096	Printed matter
893	Εἶδη ἐκ τεχνητῶν πλαστικῶν ὕλων	1.334	45.381	1.452	55.729	Articles of artificial plastic mate- rials
894	Ἀμάξια παιδῶν, ἀθύρματα, παίγνια καὶ εἶδη διασκέδασης	321	50.603	377	52.546	Perambulators, toys, games and sporting goods
895	Εἶδη χαρτοπωλείου καὶ εἶδη γραφείου	450	40.075	528	49.194	Office and stationery supplies
896	Ἀντικείμενα τέχνης, συλλογῶν καὶ ἀρ- χαιοτήτων	12	3.340	9	1.646	Works of art, collectors' pieces and antiques
897	Κοσμήματα καὶ εἶδη χρυσοχοίας . .	34	9.724	27	14.094	Jewellery and goldsmiths' and sil- versmiths' wares
899	Βιομηχανικὰ εἶδη μὴ κατονομαζόμενα	1.060	70.796	771	77.995	Manufactured articles not specified

Fig. 2: Toys are classified in the category nr 894 in 1964 and 1965 Commerce tables listing quantities of Imported Goods. This category illustrates the variety of goods associated with the toy sector: amaxia paidon, athurmata, paignia kai eidi diaskedaseos, are included with their official English translations (perambulators, toys, games and sporting goods). After ESYE (1966), 260.



Fig. 3: Advertisement of the Magiropoulos-Roussopoulos haberdashery in 1896. Among several haberdashery goods the shop offers little toys (paignidakia) for kids. The ad is written in Demotiké. After DROSINIS, KASDONIS (1896), 483.



Fig. 4: Toy ad of Meneidis and Kastρινakis shop in Athens published in the newspaper Kathimerini on 7.12.1948. After Kathimerini 7 December 1997.

tend to refer to toys as παιγνίδια (or the diminutive term παιγνιδάκια)¹⁹ (figs 3, 4). Occasional references were also made to παίγνια and παιχνίδια, the term used today in both spoken and written Standard Modern Greek. The term παιχνίδια gains significant popularity in commercial guides, retailers'

¹⁹ See for example the advertisement of the Tsokas retailing and manufacturing unit in the newspaper *Empros* 15.12.1897: Από το εμπορικόν και εργοστάσιον παιγνιδίων Γ.Τσοκά προμηθευθήτε χονδρικός και λιανικώς κούκλαις και διάφορα εγχώρια παιγνίδια, ευθηγά. Προσέτι και άπαντα τα είδη ανδρών, γυναικών και παιδων ("Wholesale or retail, buy your dolls and domestically made toys cheap from the shop and toy factory of G. Tsokas. Also all men's, women's and children's items").

catalogues²⁰ and toy ads²¹ in the interwar period and becomes prevalent in the late 1960s (fig. 5). Again this process is not linear, as the 1969 invoice vignette with the logo of the wholesale, retail and manufacturing unit of Sot. Stavropoulos suggests. The enterprise is mentioned as "Εργοστάσιον παιγνιδίων, κουκλών μοδιστών και ειδών Απόκρεω" ("Toy, mannequin and carnival goods factory") (fig. 6).

Similarly, the Vocational School for Toys and Decorative Arts (Επαγγελματική Σχολή Αθυρμάτων και Διακοσμητικής Τέχνης), founded in 1929 by the Union for Greek Women's Rights, the "Educational Association" and members of the "Art Group", and

²⁰ Toys feature at least since 1926 as παιχνίδια (toys) or μικροπαίχνιδα (penny toys) in the catalogues of the Variety Store Kaloutas and Tsirobinas on the island of Syros, under the category of stationary goods or the autonomous category of the "toys section".

²¹ See toy ad of the variety store Kourliafitis and Theodosopoulos in Athens, in the newspaper *Skip* 20.12.1922 and 31.12.1922: Μεγάλη συλλογή παιχνιδίων και ειδών πολυτελείας ("A big collection of toys and luxury goods"). Another variety store Montesantos, on Ermou street advertised παιγνίδια in 1913 and 1914 ads (Acropolis 27.12.1913 and 21.12.1914). In an advertisement published in *Acropolis* on 24.2.1924, the same shop uses the term παιχνίδια: Έφθασαν τα αναμενόμενα παιχνίδια, κομψοτεχνήματα, ποδήλατα παιδων στου Μοντεσάντου, Ερμού 109 ("The most awaited toys, bibelots and children's bicycles have arrived at Montesantos shop, 109 Ermou st.").



Fig. 5: Advertisement of the tin- toy manufacturing unit, K. Ananiadis and Sons in Nikaia, Attica in 1966. After Genikos Odigos tis Nikaias, (1966), n. p.



ΕΡΓΟΣΤΑΣΙΟΝ

ΠΑΙΔΙΚΩΝ ΠΑΙΓΝΙΔΙΩΝ ΚΟΥΚΛΩΝ ΜΟΔΙΣΤΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΙΔΩΝ ΑΠΟΚΡΕΩ

ΑΠΟΘΗΚΗ

ΕΓΧΩΡΙΩΝ & ΕΥΡΩΠΑΙ-
ΚΩΝ ΚΟΥΡΔΙΣΤΩΝ
ΠΑΙΓΝΙΔΙΩΝ

ΣΩΤ. Α. ΣΤΑΥΡΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ

ΑΔΡΙΑΝΟΥ - ΜΗΝΣΙΚΛΕΟΥΣ 14

ΑΘΗΝΑΙ

ΤΗΛ. 24-625

- ΣΩΣΙΒΙΑ
- ΠΥΡΟΤΕΧΝΗΜΑΤΑ
- ΚΟΤΙΓΙΟΝ
- ΜΑΣΚΕΣ

• ΠΩΛΗΣΙΣ ΧΟΝΔΡΙΚΗ ΚΑΙ ΛΙΑΝΙΚΗ ΤΙΜΑΙ ΕΡΓΟΣΤΑΣΙΟΥ •

ΤΙΜΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ

№ 2073

Αθήναι τῇ 22 - 4. 1964

Κύριος Μ. Στεφανίδου

Διεύθυνσις Αδριανού 65 Αθήναι

ΔΩΔ.	ΤΕΜ.	ΕΙΔΟΣ ΕΜΠΟΡΕΥΜΑΤΟΣ	ΜΕΡ.	ΟΛΙΚΟΝ
	1	Τραϊνὸ Γερμ. Πόρκο	4	127
	1	Λιθομυμνιδόδρ. 3 Βαλνιέτα	127	127
	1	Πόρκο Π.	4	63
	1	Μυμνιδό Π.	4	60
	1	Ενδομυμνιδόδρ. Γερμ.	4	85
	1	Πόρκο Π.	4	12
	9	Πόρκο Π.	4	51
	1	Πόρκο Π.	4	25
	1	Πόρκο Π.	4	45
	1	Πόρκο Π.	4	42
	2	Πόρκο Π.	4	70

Fig. 6: Invoice vignette of the wholesaler, retail outlet and manufacturing unit, Sotiris Stavropoulos, listing the variety of the shop's merchandise: toys, mannequins for seamstresses and carnival goods and issued on 22.4.1966. Private Collection. Courtesy of the toy collector Spyros Kypriotis. Published with permission.

thereafter known as "Papastrateios School",²² is mentioned by the feminist team of its founding members interchangeably as "Σχολή Αθυρμάτων...", "Σχολή Παιγνιδίων", "Σχολή Παιγνιδιών".²³

²² See ROUPA (2016), MARKAKI (2020), 73, 152-153, 218-219, 236-248. The Educational Association was an association of educationalists devoted to the promotion of educational reforms and the introduction of colloquial Greek in school and state. The Art group was a group of artists founded during the Interwar period and fostering a model of Greek Modernism influenced by movements such as the Arts and Crafts, Bauhaus and the German movement for aesthetic education. The name "Papastrateios School" is due to a large donation received by the Papastratos brothers, famous tobacco merchants and industrialists.

²³ On "...σχολή αθυρμάτων..." see ROUSOPOULOU (1936) 30, on "...σχολή παιγνιδίων..." VASILEIOU (1931), 32; on "σχολή παιγνιδιών..." see STAMATELATOU (1934), 25. In the latter text, a review of the Papastrateios school's annual activities, Stamatelatou refers to the school as "Σχολή παιγνιδιών" in the title of the published review, while in the body of her text Papastrateios is referred to as "Σχολή παιγνιδιών". See

What lies at heart of the polysemy in denoting the domain of commercial playthings is the debate between two opposed factions of intellectuals and educated members of the Greek socioeconomic elite, the purists and demoticists, during the long years of the so-called language question, i.e., the controversy over the appropriate form of the official Greek language. The purists supported the adoption of Katharevousa, an artificial, form of Greek used in written language and the State bureaucracy. Demoticists, on other hand, promoted the adoption of Demotikē, i.e., colloquial Greek, as a paramount tool for educational reform. At this point a brief mention of the history of the language question should be made to which I will turn in the following section.

MARKAKI (2020), 153-205, for more details on the school's activities.

3. TOYS AND THE LANGUAGE QUESTION

The terms *ἄθυμα* and *παίγνιον* were part of the vocabulary adopted in contexts calling for the use of the classicist form of Modern Greek, the Katharevousa, inspired before the foundation of the Greek Nation State by the influential Enlightenment scholar Adamantios Korais in his quest for a representative language of the Greek nation, as a middle way between ancient Greek and modern colloquial Greek, during the years preceding the 1821-1827 Greek War of Independence from the Ottoman Empire. Katharevousa was adopted as the official written language used by the State Bureaucracy, the press, and scholarly texts after the formation of the Greek Nation State in 1830. The adoption of Katharevousa served political functions, as it reflected the classicist ideal of reviving ancient Greece, its culture and its language, a duty calling for the linguistic purification particularly from Ottoman influences. This purist form of Greek was part of the Hellenic model of national consciousness according to the anthropologist Michael Herzfeld, constituting a cultural response to the European image of classical Greece and an ideology claiming authority from the conviction of cultural continuity with ancient Greece.²⁴ It was also chosen by the members of the Greek bourgeoisie as a form of “cultural capital”²⁵ contributing to the clear distinction of the educated, “civilized” upper middle class from the “vulgar populace”, which spoke Demotikē, the colloquial language.²⁶ Katharevousa dominated written forms of linguistic expression²⁷ in state institutions, the press and education during the first 50 years following the formation of the Greek State (1830-1880) and was endorsed by the 1911 constitution as the official language of the Greek State.²⁸

Adamant opponents of *Καθαρεύουσα* were demoticists, intellectuals and educationalists supporting a broad perspective of political ideas²⁹ and embracing, to a varying degree, the views of the main 19th century European educational reformers. Demoticists pursued educational reforms aiming at improving literacy rates, through the introduction of Demotic Greek in the school system. Demotikē was promoted

as the popular or common language understood by everybody, the mother tongue, the language of the plain people and children.³⁰

Whereas Katharevousa prevailed in official circumstances and documents, Demoticists fought back by securing their position in less formal contexts such as literature and by gradually creating an organized movement for the adoption of Demotikē in education and all aspects of public life. Demotic dominated literary production in the last two decades of the 19th century, starting from poetry. By 1890, according to P. MacKridge, nearly all Greek poetry was written in Demotic Greek, while by 1910 Katharevousa lost its last important literary proponent with the death of Alexandros Papadiamantis, who was the only fiction writer still writing in the purist form of Greek.³¹ 1910 also saw the founding of the Educational Association, where a younger cohort of militant educationalists pursued a goal conceptualized by a number of Diaspora Greek intellectuals during the years of the Greek Enlightenment: the realization of ideals of national progress through the education of the popular classes. Demotic Greek represented a vehicle for the achievement of a cluster of diverse ideas of nationhood, national unity, modernity, and progress.³² Although Demoticists temporarily lost the battle with the constitutional enforcement of Katharevousa in 1911, the struggle for the promotion of Demotikē continued for many decades. By the time of the Interwar in the 1920s and 1930s Demotic had conquered literary and essay production, and Demoticism acquired official academic support.³³ In 1941 the first Grammar of demotic was published by Alexandros Triantafyllidis but Katharevousa was enforced again for a long period after the defeat and the ensuing ruthless persecution of the Greek communist party and its supporters following the 1946-1949 civil war. Demotic eventually became the official language of the Greek state after the fall of the military dictatorship (1967-1974) in 1976.³⁴

24 See HERZFELD, (1982), 20.

25 See BOURDIEU (1986), 241-258, on the various forms of capital, including the notion of “cultural capital”.

26 See LIAKOS (2007), 3, on the need for a linguistic (and social) distinction drawn by Purists between Katharevousa as language of the nobility and the “Koinē” the common language of the vulgar populace and women.

27 SKOPETEA (1988), 110-111 reports that some members of the Greek parliament occasionally spoke in Katharevousa in particular contexts.

28 See LIAKOS (2007), 6.

29 This spectrum included socialists, liberals and antiparliamentary nationalists all pursuing the introduction of Demotic Greek as a national language for different reasons. See LIAKOS (2007), 8. For recent reviews of the language question and its historiography see MALAFANTIS (2019), 283-308 and PATRIKIOU (2017), 101-119.

30 See SKOPETEA (1988), 101. An example of the polemic climate of the era can be discerned in the famous article by the later recognized as national poet, Kostis Palamas, in the demoticist journal *Noumas*, on the need for the adoption of Demotikē as the official language of the State, because it as a language that children can understand. The article was published a few days before the Parliament discussion which ended in the endorsement of “Simple Katharevousa” by the 1911 constitution. See (PALAMAS (1911), 113-114), LIAKOS (2007), 10 and the portal https://www.Greek-language.gr/digitalResources/literature/tools/concordance/biography.html?cnd_id=7 (last access 14 .8. 2022).

31 See MACKRIDGE (2014), 136.

32 See PATRIKIOU (2017), 103-105.

33 See LIAKOS (2007), 7-8; on diverse ideas on nationhood during this period and especially during the Interwar period see TZIOVAS (1989).

34 MACKRIDGE (2014), 136, associates the institutionalization of Demotic with the language unification requirements set by the European Community. LIAKOS (2007), 9, adds more factors such as the spread of new communication systems, and local intense political developments during the early 1970s leading to the eventual delegitimization of Katharevousa as the language of the Junta among a broad political spectrum of intellectuals and politicians supporting the

It is in the background of the concessions and small victories of the Demoticists within a predominant institutional framework promoting Katharevousa on the one hand, and the gradual development of prevalent linguistic conventions in different contexts, on the other, that the aforementioned variety in the use of terms for toys should be understood. A brief look into the different terms used for playthings in children's literature from the formation of the Greek state through the period of the Interwar is revealing.

4. TOYS IN LITERARY CONTEXTS: CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND CONCEPTIONS OF LANGUAGE, CHILDHOOD, AND PLAY

The word *paignidia* appears as a generic term denoting play and games in early 19th century primers published by the Ministry of Education shortly after of the establishment of the Greek state and the enforcement of compulsory education at the level of primary school. During this period educationalists tend to support Locke's ideas of children as empty slates calling for strict regimes of indoctrination and control of their daily activities. Toys are of no interest during this period and play or games are barely tolerated in texts picturing dutiful and obedient children pursuing the motto "pleasure after work".³⁵ In an 1836 primer written by Ioannis Chomatianos³⁶ brief texts advise prudent children to spend their recreation time in serious pursuits, a task involving choice of useful and orderly *paignidia* ("games"), promoting physical well-being. The language of the primers is simple Katharevousa, with occasional usage of morphologically and phonologically elaborated colloquial Greek terms. *Paignidia* is the term closest to the word that actual children would have probably used in rural and urban streets and wastelands during this period to denote play, games and toys, as the semantic unification of the distinct realms of play in vernacular Greek in the terms *paignidi(n)/paignidion* had most likely taken place much earlier than the 19th century.³⁷

reconstitution of parliamentary democracy.

35 See MAKRYNIOTI (1986), introduction and passim; PATSIΟΥ 2000, 268-271 reports the same attitudes towards play in terms of its distinction to serious pursuits in early 19th century children's periodicals such as *Paidiki Apothiki*.

36 CHOMATIANOS (1836), 65. "Το φρόνιμον παιδίον, ενασχολούμενον πάντοτε εις χρηστά και ωφέλιμα πράγματα, παίζει πολλά ολίγον, και μόνον προς γύμνασιν και άσκησιν του σώματος. Εκλέγει παιγνίδια σεμνά και εύτακτα... και ποτέ δεν παίζει εις τους δρόμους και δημοσίας πλατείας...". PATSIΟΥ (2000), 265, in her citation of the same paragraph of the 1839 reprint of the book, copies the word *παίγνιδια* instead of *παιγνίδια* mentioned in the original copy. It is most likely a typographical error.

37 ΚΟΥΚΟΥΛΕΣ (1948), 181, 197 in his opus magnum on the life and culture of Byzantines traces in his chapter on play examples of medieval literature produced in various regions from the 14th century onwards where the term *παίγνιδιον* in the sense of game is already present in the Chronicle of Moreas (verse 5395 refers metaphorically to the jeu de barres, *ωσαν παιγνιδιον παίζομεν το λέγουσιν αμπάrais*) and in authors such as Στέφανος Σαχλίκης (verses 160, 203, 263, 283 on dice

In the last two decades of the 19th century new publications appear, echoing the influence of Rousseau, and European educationalists such as Froebel and – later – Montessori and Swedish and German physical education theorists linking childhood, nationhood, physical well-being and play.³⁸ *I Diaplasia ton Paidon* (*Children's Education*), a widely read journal, mainly addressing bourgeois children and adolescents, and published from 1879 to 1970, is a case in point, as it constitutes the first periodical that abandons overt didacticism especially after the novelist, play writer and supporter of a moderate form of Demotikē, Grigorios Xenopoulos, takes the position of editor in chief in 1895.³⁹

As the journal wishes to combine education with recreation and pleasure, it encompasses play and playthings as a regular subject of its columns, and a frequent theme of poetry and prose often written or translated by demoticists.⁴⁰ The language employed is as close to the language of children as the linguistic conventions of the era permit. Play and toys appears in poetry right from the first issues of the journal in 1879 in the poem *Pseftopolemos* (mock war) by Emmanouel Stratoudakis, who refers to young boys' boisterous games as *paichnidia*, or the poem *O paichnidiaris* ("The Playful One") by George Souris published in 1883, where toys (*paichnidia*) represent the spirit of childhood, which the author wishes to keep alive.⁴¹ Toys are often portrayed as coming alive in poems and stories describing children playing out gender specific fantasies with their toys. The most frequent term used to denote play, games, and toys during the period 1879-1919 is *paignidia* (and *paichnidia* in poetry). After the adoption of Demotic in 1919 by the editor in chief, Grigorios Xenopoulos, in the aftermath of the educational reform of 1917, the demoticist term *paichnidia* is employed in a growing frequency in prose and regular columns such as the *Athinai kai Epistolai* (Athenian Letters) depending on the linguistic convictions of the author. The term *athurma/athurmata*, used in

games) in the 15th century. On the relationship between the vernacular language of this literature and the actually spoken literature during the 15th and 16th centuries see VINCENT (2014), 100. More details will follow further in the section on lexicographers.

38 See ΚΟΥΛΟΥΡΙ (1997) and ΓΟΥΓΟΥΛΙΣ (2021) on the role of Greek gymnasts in forging these links manifest in the introduction of physical education (which included traditional games) in the primary school curriculum in 1899. On the influence of intellectuals and educationalists from European reformers regarding conceptions of play and toys see PATSIΟΥ (2000), 266-67, 272-73, and KARAKATSANI (2008), 91-119.

39 See PATSIΟΥ (1987), 26-27.

40 *Diaplasia* not only gave space to demoticist literature. According to the pioneer educationalist and essay writer Katina Pappa, the journal contributed to the dissemination of the Athenian version of Demotic all over Greece. See PAPPΑ (1951), 158, as cited in PATSIΟΥ (1987), 182.

41 See *Diaplasia ton Paidon*, vol. 1 (1879), 114 and vol. 5 (1883), 20, as cited in PATSIΟΥ (2000), 271-272.

political newspapers and in toy statistics is rare in *Diaplasia*, and appears in the early years probably for stylistic reasons interchangeably with *paignidia* in consecutive sentences of the same article or essay.⁴² *Paignia* is used interchangeably with *paignidia* – but in a lower frequency than the latter – to denote games. In fact, the journal offers a regular column of “good games” (*kala paignidia*), i.e., games of physical or mental skill, such as exploration games, puzzles, guessing games or particular games with cards since 1879.

Although children’s literature strives to approximate spoken language it necessarily adjusts to several conventions. Which terms were actually used in colloquial Greek for toys and which concepts are inscribed in this terminology? If *paichnidi* was already the prevalent term used for toy in the 19th century poetry when did the term *paichnidi* prevail over its medieval/early modern variant *paignidi*? I will try to partly address these questions by turning to the official definition of toys by the Greek toy trade and by lexicographers of Modern Greek.

5. DEFINING TOYS IN THE TOY TRADE AND IN LEXICOGRAPHY

All terms encountered in this brief review of modern Greek terminology for toy(s) *athurma/paignion/paignidi(on)/paichnidi*, so far, in statistical tables, political, literary and feminist press and – obviously – in children’s literature, are associated with toys as objects pertaining to childhood as a distinct social category with special needs, a notion that gradually permeates Greek intellectuals after the Enlightenment. In the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution,⁴³ the introduction of compulsory education in the 1830s and the development of an increasing interest the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the regulation and later in the abolishment of child labor, Greek middle-class children first – if not all children – are gradually associated with play and education. The definition of toys by the Greek Ministry of Commerce and by the Greek Union of Toy Manufacturers is hardly surprising in this respect. Toys (*παιχνίδια*), according to the Greek Ministry of Commerce, are defined as: “Any product which has been designed or is evidently destined to be used during play activities by children younger than fourteen years of age”.⁴⁴

42 See for example the essay “The city of children’s toys” dealing with the history of Nurnberg toy production through the eyes of a young manufacturer, published in *Diaplasia ton Paidon* in series. In vol. 16, issue 13 (1899), 110, the term *ἀθύρμα* appears once, while the term *παιγνίδιον* is mentioned eighteen times.

43 See MAKRYNIOTI (1986), 237-242, GOUGOULI (2000), 12-14. SCHWARTZMAN (1978), 4-6, the work-play distinction is related to the Protestant Ethic and is specific to western culture. On the philosophical roots and the historical development of the association of toys with the notion of triviality and frivolity see SUTTON-SMITH (1986), 218-222.

44 See EVLIATOU-BARONOU (1996) ii. The domain covered by this defi-

Being an object belonging to the world of children, modern Greek terms for toys carry with them the same ambivalence that other European languages preserve for the concept of play altogether, as an activity opposed to work and seriousness. The juxtaposition of toys to seriousness features in press reports in the 19th century where playthings are often referred to as “*ανωφελή αθύρματα*” (useless toys).⁴⁵ This notion of superfluous objects forces Gregorios Xenopoulos, to defend toys as – emotionally – necessary but practically useless New Year’s gifts suited for children in a 1918 text published in one of his regular columns in *Diaplasia*: the *Athenian Letters*, where he advises parents and godparents to indulge in the pleasure of offering “*παιγνίδια και στολίδια*” (“toys and knick-knacks”).⁴⁶

The polarity between toys and seriousness is present in the major works of Modern Greek lexicography and in Greek Encyclopedias under various entries.⁴⁷ Other semantic fields covered by the term *paignidi* and *paichnidi*, besides the activity and the object of play, and the notion of games and sports, are gambling, and the dark sides of play such as mockery, ridicule, deception, all actions aiming at laughing at someone’s expense for fun, humiliation, or vengeance. The conceptual link of play to festival is also present in the list of meanings provided by the aforementioned dictionaries and encyclopedias under the entry *paignidi* and more often than not *paignion*, as theatrical performance and show while the term *paignidia* in plural is encountered in the sense of folk musical instruments at least since the late medieval period.⁴⁸ The choice of the main entry

inition does not exhaust the entire range of the Greek toy sector whose activities include, according the Association of Greek Manufacturers of Children’s Toys and Carriages (SEVPA), the following four categories: children’s toys. Children’s carriages and baby accessories, children’s furniture and Christmas and carnival goods (SEVPA (2004)). All four categories have been representative of the toys sector since the beginning of toy production in Greece in the first decades of the 20th century and appear in all catalogues and directories published by the Association from 1985-2001. See GOUGOULI (2008) *passim*, for a discussion of the link of toys to seasonality and gift exchange rituals.

45 See for instance the market report published in the journal *Estia*, vol. 1, issue 1, 31.1.1876: “... Τα εργαστήρια της Ερμαϊκής και Αιολικής οδού, των κυριωτέρων τούτων αρτηριών της πόλεως, επιδεικνύουν θορυβωδώς και εν γραφικοίς συμπλέγμασι τα μάταια και ανωφελή αθύρματα όσα οι εργατικοί Παρίσιοι αποστέλλουσιν ημίν” (“Workshops on the main (commercial) streets of Athens, Ermou and Aioulou, noisily display their vain and useless toys that industrious Paris sends us in picturesque combinations”). Cited in KAIROFYLLAS (1999), 150-151.

46 See *Diaplasia ton Paidon*, 26 (1918), 36.

47 An indicative search among modern Greek encyclopedias and dictionaries is revealing. The Encyclopedia of Eleftheroudakis and the “Helios” Encyclopedia associate the term *paignidi* with recreation and play (the ancient *paidia*) in contrast to the performance of a serious task. See ENKYKLOPAIDIKON LEXICON ELEFTHEROUDAKI (1930) and NEOTERON ENKYKLOPAIDIKON LEXICON “Helios” (1945). The Encyclopedia of Drandakis describes the concept as a “free activity performed for the sake of recreation in contrast to serious work”. See MEGALI ELLINIKI ENKYKLOPAIDIA (1930), s.v. *paignion*.

48 On the notion of performance see KRIARAS (1997), s.v. *παιγνίδιον*

chosen by each dictionary and encyclopedia to denote play and toys does not necessarily reflect colloquial language. It most likely seems to follow the status quo of the language question (and the linguistic predilections of the publisher or author) at the time of publication.⁴⁹ Historical dictionaries such the dictionary of Sophocles (1888) covering the period from 146 BCE to 1100 CE and Emmanouel Kriaras (1997) who deals with the late medieval period (1100-1699) offer interesting hints towards the history of the terms *ἀθურμα*, *παίγνιο(ν)*/*παιγνίδι*/*παιχνίδι* as they refer to the authors or anonymous literary texts using the respective terms.⁵⁰ The Kriaras dictionary is especially interesting as it draws its material from the medieval vernacular literature, which according to the linguist Alfred Vincent probably approximates the actually spoken language of the common people during the late middle ages.⁵¹ *Ἀθურμα* does not appear in the Kriaras dictionary, an indication of its possible extinction in colloquial Greek at least since the late medieval period, where the term *παιγνίδι*[v] prevails in texts ranging from the 11th through the 16th century with a couple of references to *παιχνίδι* as well. *Παιγνίδι* as a term denoting toys is found by E. Kriaras in the verse romance of *Eratokritos* published in the late 16th century in Venetian ruled Crete by Vincent Kornaros.⁵² *Paignion* refer to sports, games, shows and musical instruments in Sophocles, while E. Kriaras finds the same term in contexts referring to board games and in texts referring to acts of deception, mockery and comical performance.

and s.v. *παίγνιον*. On the meanings of *paignio* in Modern Greek see note 12 above. It is the dark side, the irrational aspect of play represented in games of chance that drives the play theorist J. Huizinga to exclude them from his definition of play, as they do not conform to his conceptualization of (competitive) play as contributing to the development of civilization. See HUIZINGA (1955), 47-48 and SUTTON-SMITH (1997), 80-81 and 202-203, for a powerful critique of the male rhetoric underlying Huizinga's exaltation of competition in play.

49 The encyclopedia of Drandakis (Megali Elliniki Enkyklopaideia) published in 1930 and the ΝΕΟΤΕΡΟΝ ΕΝΚΥΚΛΟΠΑΙΔΙΚΟΝ ΛΕΞΙΚΟΝ "Helios" (1945) list the term *παίγνιον* as their main entry, accompanied by the comment "colloquially *παιγνίδι(ον)*, *παιχνίδι*". The Eleftheroudakis encyclopedia published between 1927 and 1932, on the other hand, lists *παιγνίδι(ον)* και *παιχνίδι* as the main entries for play and toy while the entry *παίγνιον* is restricted to the domain of gambling games and cards, with an encyclopedic coverage of the history of gambling. See ΕΝΚΥΚΛΟΠΑΙΔΙΚΟΝ ΛΕΞΙΚΟΝ ΕΛΕΦΘΕΡΟΥΔΑΚΙ (1930). Concerning dictionaries: BABINIOTIS (1998) published after the establishment of Demotic as the official language of the Greek State, uses the colloquial term *παιχνίδι* as his main entry. STAMATAKOS (1971) mentions the term *παιγνίδι* as his main entry (adding immediately the colloquial term *παιχνίδι* next to the entry) while both authors refer to the historical provenance of the term *παιγνίδιον* from the medieval term *παιγνίδι* a diminutive of the ancient term *παίγνιον*.

50 See SOPHOCLES (1888), s.v. *ἀθურμα*, *παίγνιον*, *παιγνίδιον*, KRIARAS (1997), s.v. *παίγνιον*/*παιγνίδι*[ov]. Sophocles is a nickname used by philologist Sophocles Evangelinos Apostolidis in his publications.

51 See VINCENT (2014), 100.

52 See KRIARAS (1997), vol. 14, 195, s.v. *παιγνίδιον* where he mentions the verse A 976: "οτεν ανεθρέφουμου και κοπελιά ελογούμου/παιγνίδια και κουτσουνικά πάντα έβανα στο νού μου" ("As I grew up to be considered as a young lady/I always had toys and dolls in my mind").

This discussion obviously covers indicative examples and does not claim to be exhaustive or to document the historical trajectory of the polysemy of the terms *athurma/paignion/paignidi/paichnidi* in any detail. My aim has been rather to open an interdisciplinary discussion on the topic by presenting some of the evidence. Covering the history of terminology for play and toys is indeed a challenging task calling for systematic research by language historians and theorists of various disciplines.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Almost four decades ago, Michalis Meraklis, in a chapter on play in the second volume of his introductory work to contemporary Folklore Studies, *Ελληνική λαογραφία. Ήθη και έθιμα*, formulated the hypothesis that the signficatory unification of all forms of play and the means for their performance, the playthings, under the single term *παιχνίδι* in contemporary Modern Greek, was related to the commercialization of toys under contemporary capitalism leading to an object dominated play of solitary and passive, young consumers.⁵³ As play according to this line of argument denoted more and more playing with commercial toys, there was no need to use different terms for play, games and toys. M. Meraklis was right in calling for a socioeconomic analysis of linguistic phenomena and wrong in his conclusion of the semantic unification of all terms under capitalism,⁵⁴ as a result of his overstressing of the role of economic changes at the expense of ideological and political developments, manifest in the history of the Greek language and particularly the language question. *Ἀθურμα* in modern Greek is a scholarly term revived by intellectuals from ancient Greek and used together with *παίγνιο*[v] – an ancient term for toy and game exhibiting a relative longevity both in medieval vernacular common Greek and in modern Greek – by the Greek bureaucracy and the press in particular contexts referring to commercial toys and games during the period when the purist

53 See MERAKLIS (1986), 34. M. Meraklis, writing in the 1980s from the position of Professor of Folklore at the University of Ioannina, Greece was the first academic folklorist to use the demoticist (and colloquial) term *παιχνίδι* in his work. Konstantina Bada has also called for the need to discuss linguistic changes in the context of socioeconomic developments and has pointed out that while the term *παιχνίδι* connoted a variety of traditional games and play contexts prevalent in rural Greece before WW2, the same term during the 1980s was increasingly associated with children's toys. See BADA (1993), 203. For a first discussion of these ideas and the role of the language question in the development of written forms denoting play, games and toys see GOUGOULIS (1993) and GOUGOULI (2000), 40-41.

54 As we have seen in the previous sections our evidence so far suggests that the development of the all encompassing term *paignidi* had most likely taken place much earlier than the rise of capitalism in Greece. In fact, quite the opposite process was at work in the dawn of the 20th century, as the set of neologisms associated with *athurma* and *paignion* in the Koumanoudis compilation suggest. The commercialization of toys called for the development of new terms to denote toy production and distribution.

form of Katharevousa prevails in official documents, the press and scientific treatises. Both terms and especially their compounds pertain to contexts of reference linked to seasonal commentaries on the Greek and international toy trade and are used interchangeably with the all-encompassing generic term παιγνίδι, and after 1965 παιχνίδι, the latter being the term used in contemporary standard modern Greek.⁵⁵

Παιγνίδι[-ον] (and later παιχνίδι) is a colloquial term found in poetry, children's literature, autobiographical texts of 19th and 20th century Demoticists and early 19th century folk play studies. The term παιγνίδιον is also acceptable by scholars writing as columnists in newspapers and periodicals at least since the last two decades of the 19th century probably because it was a term endorsed and used by the Enlightenment scholar and initiator of Katharevousa, A. Korais at least since the first quarter of the 19th century.⁵⁶ Hence perhaps its use in early 20th century statistical tables of international trade.

In contemporary lexicography and more often than not in 19th century press toys are juxtaposed to seriousness, while a rhetoric of progress⁵⁷ is further added by the 20th century Educational Demoticism.

Toys within educational contexts are associated with playful learning while literary texts (short stories or novels for children and autobiographical texts) seem to stress the exuberant and chaotic aspect of play and a offer vision of childhood as a period of innocence and proximity to nature.⁵⁸

Which term did children and their families use to denote play and playthings? The latter question is difficult to answer in the light of an absence of recorded spoken language before the 20th century⁵⁹ and the still embryonic scholarly interest in a history of modern Greek *children* (rather than of *childhood* as an institution) recording the experience of being a child in the past two centuries beyond

the scope of oral history⁶⁰ i.e., through innovative uses of all possible sources that can contribute to a reconstruction of children's voices in the Modern Greek past. Autobiographical texts, Folk play studies recording regional play and toys terminology and the unpublished archives of the Historical dictionary of Greek Language of the Academy of Athens, to name but a few, are invaluable sources calling for further research that will give more voice to Iona and Peter Opies' "people of the playground", their language, their views and their emotions regarding toys and play.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AGRIANTONI, Christina, "Viomichania" ("Industry"), in Christos Hadziiosif (ed.) *Istoria tis Ellados tou 20ou aiona*. (*A History of 20th Century Greece*), A1, Athina (1999).

ANDROULAKI, Maria, "To Kentro Laografias kai I Ethniki Mousiki Syllogi. Palaioi kai syghronoi prosanatolismoi tis mousikis erevnas" ("The Hellenic Folklore Research Centre and the National Music Collection: Older and Contemporary Orientations in Musical Research"), in Aikaterini Polimerou-Kamilaki, Potiropoulos Paraskevas and Panagiotis Kamilakis (eds), *O Nikolaos Poltis kai to Kentron Erevnis tis Ellinikis Laografias. Praktika Diethnous Epistimonikou Synedriou*, 1, Athina (2012), 105-129.

ARGYRIADI, Maria, "Ta ellinika emporika paichnidia kata ton 20o aiona" ("Greek Commercial Toys in the 20th Century"), in Cleo Gougouli and Despoina Karakatsani (eds), *To Elliniko Paichnidi. Diadromes stin istoria tou* (*Greek Toys: Historical Trajectories*), Athina (2008), 120-223.

AVDELLA Efi, PSARRA, Angelika, "Engendering 'Greekness': Women's Emancipation and Irredentist Politics in Nineteenth Century Greece", *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 20, 1 (2005), 67-79.

BABINIOTIS, Georgios, *Lexiko tis Neas Ellinikis Glossas* (*A Dictionary of Modern Greek*), Lentro Lexikologias, Athina (1998).

BADA, Konstantina, "Play in Traditional Society", in Cleo Gougoulis (ed.) *Special Volume on Children's Play, Ethnographica*, 9 (1993), 203-210.

BOURDIEU, Pierre, "The Forms of Capital", in John Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research in Sociology*, Westport (1986, 1st ed. 1983), 241-258.

CASEAU, Béatrice, MESSIS, Charis, "Exerevnontas ta atakta proefivika paichnidia" ("Investigating Unruly

55 See above n. 13 and 30 on metaphoric use of *paigion* – in the sense of "game" – as political maneuvering, and in the sense of "toy" as becoming a plaything in the hands of someone and hence an object of ridicule. These concepts are also retained by the current terms *paighnidi/paichnidi*.

56 See KORAI (1828-1829), vol. 1 (1828), 286, *paighnidion* is mentioned in the context of commentaries on entries on games in the *Suidae Lexicon* (e.g. s.v. *πεσσοί*) and on an unknown game mentioned in the medieval poem Ptochoprodormos. In vol 2 (1829), s.v. *ζάρι*, 141, and *πάλα*, 280-281. A. Korais uses the term *paigion* for toy and *paighnidion* for games.

57 See SUTTON-SMITH (1986), 113-144.

58 I am relying here on Vicky Patsiou's analysis of play in autobiographical texts of 19th and 20th century novelists, as I have not included a review of autobiographies in this essay. See PATSIOU (2008), 252-261.

59 See ANDROULAKI (2012) on the history of the National Music Collection and the first recordings of Chios songs in 1899 on wax cylinders collected by the director of the Institute of Phonology in Paris, Hubert Pernot.

60 There is however a lively interest since the 1990s in recording children's voices from the past among social historians, anthropologists, folklorists and Cultural Studies scholars employing oral history methods such as K. Bada or Maria Papathanasiou, on the experience of work and play by rural children in Mid-War Greece, Ricki Van Boeschoten, Odette Varon-Vasar, and more recently Gonda Van Steen, on children's active participation in Anti-Nazi-resistance and on children's experience of the post-Civil War extensive adoptions from Greece to the US, respectively, to name but a few.

Preadolescent Games”), in Cleo Gougoulis (ed.), *Play during the Byzantine Era, Special Section, Archaeologia kai Technes*, 133 (2020), 34-41.

CHOMATIANOS, Ioannis, *Syntomon Alfavitarion dia tin eis ta dimotika scholeia tiw Ellados spoudazousan neolaian* (A Short Primer for the Greek Youth Studying in Primary Schools), Patras (1836).

DIMARAS, Constantinos Th., “Lexicografia kai ideologia” (“Lexicography and Ideology”), in Stefanos Koumanoudis, *Synagogi neon lexeon ypo ton logion plathenton apo tis aloseos mechri ton kath’ imas chronon*, Athina, Ermis (1998), vii-lxiii.

DROSINIS, Georgios, KASDONIS, Georgios (eds), *Nea Ellas, Eikonografimenon Ethnikon Imerologion*, Typografeio tis Estias, Athina (1896).

ENKYKLOPAIDIKON LEXICON ELEFTHEROUDAKI, Athina (1930).

ESYE [Ethniki Statistiki Ypiresia tis Ellados (National Statistical Service of Greece)], *Statistiki Epetiris*, Athina (1965).

ESYE [Ethniki Statistiki Ypiresia tis Ellados (National Statistical Service of Greece)], *Statistiki Epetiris* Athina (1966).

EVLIA TOU-BARONOU, Stavroula, *O Klados ton Paidikon Paihnidion* (The Sector of Children’s Toys), Institute for Financial and Industrial Research, Sector of Branch Studies, 135, Athina (1996).

GENIKOS ODIGOS TIS NIKAIAS, Nikaia (1966).

GOUGOULIS, Cleo, “Introduction”, in Cleo Gougoulis (ed.), Special Volume on Children’s Play, *Ethnographica*, 9 (1993) p. 155-160.

GOUGOULI, Cleo, “Eisagogi” (“Introduction”), in *Paidi kai paichnidi sti Neoelliniki Koinonia. 19os 20os aionas* (Children and Play in Modern Greece. 19th and 20th centuries), Kastaniotis and Foundation for Childhood Research, Athina (2000), 11-84.

GOUGOULI, Cleo, “To Emporiko paichnidi os doro” (“Commercial Toys as Gifts”), in Cleo Gougouli and Despoina Karakatsani (eds), *To elliniko paichnidi. Diadromes stin Istoría tou* (Greek Toys Historical Trajectories), ELIA/MIET, Athina (2008), 224-251.

GOUGOULIS, Cleo, “The Search for Cultural Continuities in Studies of Modern Greek Children’s Play and Games: Some Theoretical and Methodological Questions”, in Veronique Dasen and Marco Vespa (eds), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity: Definition, Transmission, Reception*, Liège (2021), 315-327.

GOUGOULI, Cleo, KARAKATSANI, Despoina, “Eisagogi: To elliniko paichnidi. Diadromes stin istoria enos politismikou. antikeimenou” (“Introduction: Greek Toys. Trajectories in the History of a Cultural object”), in Cleo Gougouli and Despoina Karakatsani (eds), *To elliniko*

paichnidi. Diadromes stin Istoría tou (Greek Toys Historical Trajectories), Athina (2008), 11-29.

HADZIOSIF, Christos, “I belle époque tou kefalaiou” (“The Belle Époque of capital”), in Christos Hadziosif (ed.) *Istoria tis Ellados tou 20ou aiona* (A History of 20th Century Greece), A1, Athina (1999).

HERZFELD, Michael, *Ours Once More. Folklore, Ideology and the Making of Modern Greece*, Austin (1982).

HUIZINGA, Johan, *Homo Ludens. A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, Boston (1955, 1st ed. in Dutch 1938).

INGLESIS, Nikolaos, *Odigos tis Ellados, apasis tis Makedonias, tis Mikras Asias, meta ton nison tou Archipelagous kai ton nison Kriti-Kyprou-Samou* (A Guide of Greece, the Entire Macedonia, Asia Minor. the Archipelagos Islands and the Islands of Crete, Cyprus, Samos), Athina, Anatoli (1905-1906).

KAIROFYLLAS, Giannis, *Oi proti emporoi ton Athinon* (The First Merchants of Athens), Athina, Filippotis (1999).

KARAKATSANI, Despoina, “I ekpaideftikes kai paidagogikes diastaseis tou pachnidíou. O rolos kai oi chriseis tou athurmatos stin elliniki ekpaidefsi” (“Educational and Paedagogical Dimensions of Toys. The Role and Use of Toys on Greek Education”), in Cleo Gougouli and Despoina Karakatsani (eds), *To elliniko paichnidi. Diadromes stin Istoría tou* (Greek Toys Historical Trajectories), ELIA/MIET, Athina (2008), 91-119.

KIDD, Stephen F., “Le jeu, est-il une émotion?”, in Veronique Dasen and Marco Vespa (eds), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity: Definition, Transmission, Reception*, Liège (2021), 19-28.

KORAIS, Adamantios, *Atakta. Igoun Pantodapon eis tin Archaian kai tin Nean Ellinikin Glossan Aftoschedion simeioseon* (Atakta, i.e. Makeshift Notes on the Ancient and Modern Greek Language), En Parisiois, I (1828), II (1829).

KOUKOULES, Faedon, “Ta paidika paignia” (“Children’s Games”), in Faedon Koukoules (ed.), *Vyzantinon vios kai poltismos* (The Life and Culture of Byzantines), I, Athina (1948).

KOULOURI, Christina, *Athlitismos kai opseis tis astikis koinonikotitas. Gymnastiki kai athlitika somateia* (1870-1922) (Sports and Aspects of Bourgeois Sociality. Gymnastics and Sports Associations [1870-1922]), Istoriko Archeio Ellinikis Neolaias/KNE/EIE, Athina (1997).

KOUMANOUDIS, Stefanos, *Synagogi neon lexeon ypo ton logion plathenton apo tis aloseos mechri ton kath’ imas chronon* (A Compendium of New Words Created by Scholars from the Fall [of Constantinople] to the Present), Athina, Ermis (1998, 1st ed. 1900).

KRIARAS, Emmanouel, *Lexiko tis Mesaionikis Ellinikis kai Dimodous Grammateias 1100-1669* (A Dictionary of Medieval Greek and Colloquial Greek Literature), 14 vols, Thessaloniki (1997).

- LAMPROPOULOU, Anna, "To athurma sto Vyzantio" ("Toys during the Byzantine Era"), in Cleo Gougouli and Despoina Karakatsani (eds), *To elliniko paichnidi. Diadromes stin istoria tou* (Greek Toys. Historical Trajectories), ELIA/MIET, Athens (2008), 69-89.
- LAMPROPOULOU, Anna, "Otan oi piges siopoun, ta evrimata milane" ("When Sources are Silent, Findings Speak"), in Cleo Gougoulis (ed.), *Play during the Byzantine Era, Archaeologia kai Technes*, 133 (2020), 43-63.
- LIAKOS, Antonis, "Glossa kai ethnos stin Neoteri Ellada" ("Language and Nation in Modern Greece"), *Themata Istorias tis Ellinikis Glossas* (2007), 1-10. Available at http://www.greek-language.gr/greekLang/studies/history/thema_18/index.html
- MACKRIDGE, Peter, "The Greek Language since 1750", in Caterina Carpinato and Olga Tribulato (eds), *La Storia della lingua greca*, Venice, (2014), 133-164.
- MAKRYNIOTI Dimitra, *I Paidiki Ilikia sta Anagnostika Vivlia 1834-1919* (Childhood in [Greek] primers 1834-1917), Athina/Giannena (1986).
- MALAFANTIS, Kostas, "Neoellinikos Diafotismos kai Ekpaideftikos Dimotikismos. Ideologikes synecheies kai adixodes epivioseis kata ton Dimitri Glino" ("Modern Greek Enlightenment and Educational Demoticism. Ideological Continuities and Revival Impasses According to Dimitris Glinos"), in Georgios Mpoupous (ed.), *Gia to paron kai to mellon tou Ellinismou* (On the Present and Future of Hellenism), Athina (2019), 283-308.
- MANSON, Michel, *Jouets de toujours. De l'Antiquité à la Révolution*, Paris (2001).
- MARKAKI, Krystallia, *Paizontas me ta Athurmata tou Mesopoloemou. Mia Diethnis Ellinikotita* (Playing with Interwar Toys. An International Greekness), unpublished Ph. D Thesis, Panteion University, Athina (2020).
- MEGALI ELLINIKI ENKYKLOPAIDEIA (GREAT HELLENIC ENCYCLOPEDIA), Athina, Pyrsos (1932).
- MERAKLIS, Michalis, *Elliniki Lagrafia. Ithi kai ethima* (Greek Folklore: Rites and Morals), Athina, Odysseas (1986).
- NEOTERON ENKYKLOPAIDIKON LEXICON TOU HELIOU, Athina (1945).
- PALAMAS, Kostis, "Gia na to diavasoun kai ta paidia" ("So that Children can read it too"), *O Noumas*, 424 (1911), 113-114.
- PAPPA, Katina, "O paidagogos", *Nea Estia*, 50, 587 (1951), 156-160.
- PATRIKIOU, Alexandra, "On the Historiography of the Greek Language Question in Post 1974 Greece", *Historein*, 16, 1 (2017), 101-119.
- PATSIΟΥ, Vicly, *I Diaplasia ton Paidon*, (1879-1922): *To Prototypos kai I Sygkrotisi tou* ("The Periodical Diaplasia ton Paidon. Models and Constitution Process"), IAEN (National Historical Archives on Greek Youth), Athina (1987).
- PATSIΟΥ, Vicly, *I terpsis ton paidon. Anaparastaseis tou paichnidion stin elliniki logotechnia tou 19ou aiona* (Children's Delight. Representations of Play in 19th c. Greek Literature), Athina (2000), 253-303.
- PATSIΟΥ, Vicky, "I Mnimi tis aftoviografias kai I empeiria tou paichnidion" ("The Memory of Autobiography and the Experience of Play"), in Cleo Gougouli and Despoina Karakatsani (eds), *To elliniko paichnidi. Diadromes stin Istorias tou* (Greek Toys Historical Trajectories), ELIA/MIET, Athina (2008), 252-261.
- RIGINOS, Michalis, *Paragogikes Domes kai Imeromisthia stin Ellada 1909-1936* (Production Structures and Wages in Greece 1909-1936), Athina (1987).
- ROUPA, Evangelia, "Papastrateios Scholi Diakosmitikis kai Paidikon Athurmton: I Periodos 1929-1940", in *Praktika tou 35ou Panelliniou Istorikou Synedriou* (Proceedings of the 35th Panhellenic Conference), Thessaloniki (2016), 221-263.
- ROUSOPOULOU, Agni, "I drasis tis idiotikis protovoulas gia tin prostasia tou ergazomenou paidiou" ("Private Initiatives in the Protection of the Working Child"), *To Paidi*, 35 (1936), 25-33.
- SCHWARTZMAN, Helen B., *Transformations: The Anthropology of Children's Play*, New York/London (1978).
- SEVPA (Syndesmos Ellinon Viotechnon Paidikon Paichnidion kai Amaxon [Association of Greek Manufacturers of Children's Toys and Carriages]), "To Paidi kai to Paichnidi", 31i Ekthesi, EKEP 24-27 Septemvriou, 2004 ([Guide to the exhibit] Children and Play, 31st Exhibition, EKEP 24-27 September Athina (2004).
- SKOPETEA, Helle, *To "Prototypos Vasileio" kai I Megali Idea* (The "Model Kingdom" and the Great Idea), Athina (1988).
- SOPHOCLES Evangelinus Apostolides, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods from B.C. 146 to AD 1100*, New York/London (1888).
- STAMATAKOS, Ioannis, *Lexikon tis Neas Ellinikis Glossas*, 1-3, Athina (1971).
- STAMATELATOU, Maria "Etisia logodosia peri tis draseos tis Papastrateiou Scholis Paignidion kai Diakosmitikis" ("Annual Review of the Activities of the Papastrateios School of Toys and Graphic Arts"), *To paidi*, 26 (1934), 25-32.
- SUTTON-SMITH, Brian, *Toys as Culture*, New York (1986).
- SUTTON-SMITH, Brian, *The Ambiguity of Play*, Cambridge Mass. (1997).
- TZIOVAS, Dimitris, *Oi metamorfoseis tou ethnismou kai to ideologima tis ellinikotitas sto mesopolemo* (Transformations of Nationalism and the Ideology of Greekness in the Interwar Period), Athina, Odysseas (1989).
- VARIKA, Eleni, *I Exegersi ton kyrion. I genesi tis feministikis*

syneidisis stin Ellada 1833-1907 (The Ladies' Rebellion. The Genesis of Feminist Consciousness in Greece, 1833-1907), Athina (1987).

VASILEIOU, Spyros, "Paidika schediasmata" ("Children's Drawings"), *To παιδί*, 8 (1931), 32-37.

VINCENT, Alfred, "Finding the 'Common Tongue'. The Language of the Printed Vernacular Greek Verse from 1509 to the Early Eighteenth Century", in Caterina Carpinato and Olga Tribulato (eds), *La Storia della lingua greca*, Venice (2014), 99-131.

VOUSOLINOU-ANYFANTI, Eleni, *I Vomichania stin Kerkyra. I Viomichania grafikon technon Aspioti-ELKA, (teli 19ou ai.) (Industry on Kerkyra. The Graphic Arts Industry Aspioti ELKA, end of 19th C)*, unpublished Ph. D. thesis Kerkyra, Ionian University (2014).

YPOURGEION ETHNIKIS OIKONOMIAS (MINISTRY OF NATIONAL ECONOMY), *Statistiki tou Eidikou Emporiou tis Ellados meta ton Xenon Epikrateion kata to Etos 1917 (Statistics of the Special Trade between Greece and Foreign Countries 1917)*, Athina (1919)

YPOURGEION ETHNIKIS OIKONOMIAS (Ministry of National Economy), *Apografi ton Viotechnikon kai Viomichanikon Epicheiriseon kata tin 18 Dekemvriou 1920 (Manufacturing and Industrial Enterprises Census 18.12.1920)*, Athina (1926).



Mattia Thibault

Tampere University
mattia.thibault@tuni.fi

Toys, Toying, Toyish: the Semiotics of Objectual Play

INTRODUCTION – THE *MAGIC* OF TOYS

This paper aims to present some possible approaches to a semiotics of toys, with a specific attention to the interpretative attitudes necessary for toy-play and the different forms of meaning production related to toys. This exploration builds on the several earlier works dedicated to establishing some semiotic features of toys and can be seen as a subset of a larger “ludosemiotics”.¹

From a semiotic perspective playing involves the institution of a set of new sign functions that connect real objects to fictional meanings. Every form of play seems to involve this kind of resemantisation: objects become *playthings*, places become *playgrounds* and people become *players* – as long as *playtime* is ongoing. The intense activities of *semiosis* (generation of meaning) typical of play, has been described as “endogenous” to underline how play create meaning from itself.²

This characteristic is particularly important when we deal with objectual play – be it with toys or with objects that were created for other purposes (or emerged naturally) and are used *as* toys. Brooms or cardboard tubes often become horses and spyglasses, sticks and pinecones can be swords and grenades, as so on. Eugen Fink mentions explicitly “sticks and

stones” as possible toys - objects that can be found in nature and have been typically used in objectual play.³ The meaning associated to these objects can be seen as more arbitrary than the one assigned to toys during play, but the semiotic process underneath is the same.

It must be noted that this *resemantisation* – the action of assigning a new layer of meaning to an object – happens also to the objects that are appositely crafted to be played with. E. Fink claims that toys are unique, among human artefacts, because they hold completely different values according to the perspectives adopted.⁴ From a non-playful point of view, toys are perceived as commodities: they are objects covering the function of entertaining children (or older players, we might add). However, when a toy is seen from inside a playful context, it acquires an additional value that transforms it into something different. In other words, if for a father the teddy bear that he gave to his children is simply an object to keep them occupied and entertained, for the playing children the toy will “come to life”, at least in the fictional worlds of play. Toys acquire new values and meanings that are true only as long as the toys are considered as part of the play. E. Fink defines this feature as “magic”, as it is the kind of ontological and semiotic confusion at the base of ancient magic practices.

1 THIBAUT (2016a); THIBAUT (2020).

2 COSTIKYAN (2002).

3 FINK (1969).

4 FINK (1969).

This magic attribute of toys, this ability to invite players to offer them new layers of meaning and to interact with them accordingly is rooted in a specific interpretative disposition: what Iurij Lotman describes as based on a “playful behaviour”.⁵ I. Lotman describes it as the simultaneous realization of practical and conventional behaviour: “The player must simultaneously remember that he is participating in a conventional (not real) situation (a child knows that the tiger in front of him is a toy and is not afraid of it), and not remember it (when playing, the child considers the toy tiger to be a real one)”.⁶

According to I. Lotman, hence, the new layer of meaning does not erase the old one: the players don’t lose completely the contact with reality but are well aware of the “pretend” nature of their actions. The new connotations of toys, then, are an addition, not a substitute, to the original, non-play meaning. I. Lotman is adamant in stating that these two sets of meaning are coexistent simultaneously. At every single moment of play, the players are interpreting objects and actions both under the *semiotic domain* of play and that of ordinary life. In other words, they are always aware of the playful character of their actions. Loosing this awareness would be comparable to the kind of madness that haunts Don Quixote, who playfully identifies windmills as giants, but then forget that they are windmills nonetheless. The new meaning, then, overlaps the “real” one, but does not erase it, the players never completely lose their connection to reality: rather they continuously shift between the two different domains.

2. TOYS AND PLAYTHINGS

If we adopt I. Lotman’s understanding of play seen as a systematic re-interpretation of the objects, subjects, and spaces of the world, which are translated into play, any attempt to define what is a toy becomes a challenge. After all, if all objects can be used to play, then all objects seem to be susceptible to become toys. Being a toy, then, would be a state of an object, related to its current use, and not a property.

A possible point in favour of this argument emerges from archaeology, and from what has been described as an apparent lack of toys in many excavations.⁷ Aside from concerns related to the materials used to make toys (generally soft and, hence, easily degraded), one possible explanation is based on the *interpretative* nature of the archaeological work. Archaeology, after all, is an activity with very strong semiotic characteristics, combining the scientific techniques

of excavation with deduction and abduction in an attempt to correctly interpret the signs left behind by past cultures. How archaeologists interpret those signs shapes the image we have of the past. Sally Crawford suggests that many archaeologists simply do not see the remains of childhood material cultures.⁸ The artifacts that are part of them are routinely interpreted in other keys, with “adult” interpretations, because archaeologists are not trained to recognize these different perspectives.⁹ Toys, according to this argument, are not recognized as such, because it is not always possible to say with certainty what is a toy or not from an objective standpoint.

It would seem, then, that rather than talking about toys, we should talk about *toying*, that is, we should focus on an activity that is, at the same time, of interpretation and interaction. If we identify this activity with “play”, however, we encounter another problem: there are many objects that are used to play that we would not necessarily define as “toys”, from baseball bats to lottery tickets.

To distinguish between different *playthings*, let’s fall back and try to rely on a dictionary definition. The *Oxford Dictionary*, for example, define a toy as: “an object for a child to play with, typically a model or a miniature replica of something”. The dictionary seems to indicate that toys are exclusively infantile objects, to be relegated to child-play. This claim is rather difficult to support: adults who play with toys do exist, and in increasing numbers. Although still surrounded by a certain stigma, adult toy play is rather popular and it is often articulated in activities related to posing, collecting, or photographing toys.¹⁰ The idea that toys are “replicas”, on the other hand, while being obviously restraining, seems more interesting to explore. Being a “replica” entails having a specific relation with *another object*, that the replica is imitating, in some capacity. Imitation is indeed one important part of many playful activities, and more precisely of those that Roger Caillois defines as *mimicry* – forms of play based on masking and pretending.¹¹

In our quest to define toys (or maybe toying) we can then try to rearticulate playthings (understood as the objects that we use to play) according to the four forms of play described by R. Caillois: *agon*, *alea*, *ilinx* and *mimicry*.

Agon is the form of play related to competition – with others, with ourselves, or with constructed opponents (like a computer AI or a mechanical puzzle). First, we then have playthings used in competition and puzzle

⁵ LOTMAN (2011).

⁶ LOTMAN (2011), 254.

⁷ CRAWFORD (2009).

⁸ CRAWFORD (2009), 57.

⁹ BONNICHSEN (1973).

¹⁰ HEJIAKKA (2013).

¹¹ CAILLOIS (1967).

solving. R. Caillouis in the description of this form of play gives as examples sports and competitive table games.¹² These play activities often require numerous objects to play. Many sports involve the use of balls, clubs, sticks, and rackets, gloves, swords and rifles, special shoes, armour and protection, cars, bicycles, skis and so on. The very spaces that house these games and what they contain – tracks, fields, pools, lines, gates, flags are, technically, objects used to play. Board games also make use of many objects, such as tables, boards, chessboards, pawns, miniatures, playing cards and tokens. None of these objects we would generally define as “toys”, so we could exclude, as a rule of thumb, the playthings used in *agon*.

The second form of play is also related to the semiotic mood of surprise, which encompasses all play based on randomness and chance. According to R. Caillouis, examples of this type are dice games, roulette, card games, lotteries, etc. The playful objects connected to risk taking and chance will then be dice, playing cards, roulette, slot machines, bags and bingo cards and electronic random number generators. These objects are all devices that produce entropy, mechanisms that give rise to unpredictable results. Again, none of these objects would be generally defined as toys, so we can exclude playthings used in *alea* as well.

Ilinx is the form of play linked to vertigo and includes playful activities that cause a state of dizziness and loss of self in the players. Therefore, all those devices that induce a rapid and/or rotating movement in the players belong to *ilinx*. Trampolines, sleds, rides, roller coasters, ice skates, jumpers, stilts, motorcycles, rollerblades and skateboards are all devices used for this purpose. Some (such as skis) are also used in competitions, and therefore belong to *agon* too. Nevertheless, also these objects seem not to be closely related to what we understand as toys.

The latest form of play is *mimicry*, the form of play that involves imitation and disguise – an emptying of oneself that allows players to pretend to be someone (or something) else. Examples by R. Caillouis are activities that rely primarily on disguise and involve objects such as masks, make-up, costumes, and replicas of various objects (such as plastic swords or dolls). *Mimicry*, however, can be extended to all forms of play based on imitation. The playthings related to this type of *mimicry* are many and include dolls, construction sets, puppets, and figurines. These are indeed the objects that we generally define as toys. Toy-play, therefore, seems to be closely related to *mimicry*, but not to any other form of play.

Play activities, of course, are not always that clear cut. The four forms of play can be present, in different measures, in various playful activities – and

therefore many playthings feature several different characteristics. Carousels, for example, are vertigo generating devices dedicated to *ilinx*, they are often also strongly themed (featuring baroque horses, giant teacups and all sorts of vehicles) therefore including an element of *mimicry*. On the other hand, the first performance in many team sports is a coin toss, mixing *alea* with *agon*. The list could easily continue.

The many playthings that we have listed give us some indication of why the dictionary chooses to relegate toys to replicas: if the definition of toy were extended to all objects used in playful activities, we would be forced to consider decks of cards or a carousel as toys. To be more precise, however, we should not necessarily refer to them as replicas, but as objects used in play activities oriented to *mimicry*.

In our attempt to define toys, then, we have outlined two main characteristics: the first one is that any object can be a toy, if it is used in a specific kind of playful activity. Being a toy is not a feature, it is a way of being interpreted and used. The second is that not every play activity transforms objects into toys: it is the form of play of *mimicry* that realises that specific interpretation, or *resemantisation* needed for something to be a toy.

3. MAKING TOYS

If all objects can virtually become toys, there is however a class of objects that is culturally recognised and produced to *be* toys – that is, objects made with the purpose to be *toyed* with. These objects, independently if they are the result of artisanal work or industrial production, are the result of an act of *authorship*.

Designing toys is a way to facilitate the resemantization process by creating objects for the purpose of using them in a play activity oriented towards *mimicry*. Designing and creating a toy is, semiotically speaking, the creation of a text conceived to be used as a playful sign: an object that stands for something else in a play activity (a doll that stands for a baby, a toy car that stands for a real one). The creation of toys, therefore, is a form of *sign production* and, in particular, it can involve two different modes of production among those described by Umberto Eco in his treatise on semiotics: “stylization” and “invention”.¹³

Stylizations are modes of sign production based on conventionality. It is a convention “which stipulates their recognizability by virtue of their agreement to an expressive type which is not strictly prescriptive which allows many free variants” (my translation).¹⁴ Many of the stylizations listed by U. Eco are in fact represented in many types of toys, such as codified

¹² CAILLOIS (1967).

¹³ Eco (1979).

¹⁴ Eco (1979), 301.

macro-environmental traits (houses, castles, villas ...), the standardized image of complex objects (such as cars, weapons, kitchen objects, planes and so on) and heraldic emblems (a sheriff's star or the symbol of the Transformers). The stylizations used by the toys can also refer to characters in a narrative, such as superheroes (Batman, Spiderman), folk heroes (Robin Hood) and characters from films (Darth Vader, Ghostbusters) as well as more generic *thematic roles* (firefighters, policemen, cowboys, fairies, singers ...) or even more generic beings (animals, dinosaurs, humans).

If we visit a toy store, we will see that most of the products sold there are the result of stylizations. The only exceptions will be toys that represent nothing culturally well-known or with an established plastic configuration. These toys are related to the mode of production of signs of the *invention*.

In particular, these toys imply a *moderate* invention, in which a perceptual representation is projected on an expressive continuum and is interpretable because it makes use of stylizations, coded combinatorial units (such as natural languages) and fictitious samples. The invented toys, therefore, are three-dimensional projections, with a correspondence between the selected points of the toy and a toposensitive semantic model. In other words, invented toys have the same "shape" as a cultural unit created at the same time as the toy. An example might make this clearer. When Leandro Consumi and Gianfranco Enrietto invented and produced the line of toys called *Gormiti* for GIG, they invented toys which, on the basis of different stylizations (anthropomorphism and zoomorphism, bright colours linked to natural elements such as plants, lava and water), represent fictional characters that did not exist before. It is a case of projection from nothing: the cultural unity that is the meaning of the toy is created by the toy itself.¹⁵

Inventions, however, are always susceptible to undergo what U. Eco call a process of *catacresis* and become stylizations. If an invented toy is successful enough, like the *Barbie doll* or *Lego* figurines, it becomes an instantly recognizable new class, a part of popular culture. The new products in these series (new *Barbies*, new *Lego* sets), therefore, will no longer be inventions, but stylizations, recognized for their resemblance to a well-established type of expression.

Industrial and craft toys facilitate the play process. One of the objectives of those who design toys is precisely to facilitate the resemantization process for the players: toys provide them with stylizations, supports for fictitious samples (articulated dolls or articulated puppets capable of performing certain gestures) and, in general, try to build both texts and

cultural units that can be easily used in the game. This does not necessarily mean that these are closed texts (i.e. texts susceptible to only one interpretation), on the contrary: toys are left with "empty spaces" that allow players to resemantize them freely and at their leisure.

However, the ease with which toys can be resemantized, coupled with the play's tendency to resemantize entire systems of objects and link them together, makes toys a perfect trigger for play. Manipulating or observing an object that we recognize as a toy is in itself an invitation to play, a continuous temptation that pushes us to acquire a playful attitude and start playing.

We can therefore imagine that toys are also made with the aim of facilitating the transition between the semiotic domain of everyday life and the playful one. Many forms of play begin with the interpretation of a toy. Since the interpretation of toys is rarely isolated, all objects in the repertoire will then be "infected" by the resemantization of the toys and will become likely to be treated as toys too (whether they were created for this or not) whose new meaning will be the result of the mediation between their plastic configuration and the player's imagination. Toys, therefore, can be a gateway to play and, although play can exist without toys, any practice involving toys is particularly vulnerable to playful resemantizations.

4. *INTENTIO AUCTORIS, LECTORIS AND OPERIS*

To understand the semiotic dynamics of play, however, we have to dwell on the fact that the authorship of the toymakers has only a limited impact on the overall meaning-making characteristics of the activity. In order to map the different elements involved we can rely, once more, on U. Eco, and in particular in his description of the three *intentio* involved in sense-making.¹⁶

U. Eco describes three instances, or components, that enter into action in any interpretative effort. First, we have the *intentio auctoris*: related to authorship and to the act of engraving meaning in a certain text by its author(s). A novelist, a filmmaker or a toy designer purposely fill their products with narratives, ideas, values, aesthetic choices and so on. They are responsible for a part of the meaning that is to be found in the object.

Second, there is the *intentio lectoris*, that is related to readership. The reader, the viewer or the player are not passive receptacles of the meaning conveyed by the authors but apply to it their own interpretative filters and relate it to their own personal experience. The readers are co-creators of the meaning conveyed by the texts in several ways, especially as texts are

¹⁵ Eco (1979).

¹⁶ Eco (1979).

“lazy machines” that delegate much sensemaking work to their readers. A novel, for example, will not describe in detail every room or every character: it will be the readers role to imagine them, to fill the gaps, when they are reading. This is even more relevant when it comes to toy-play, which is a highly creative endeavour. Players hold a rather important degree of authorship: toys are resemantized and used according to their will, generally by negotiating their functions with the objects themselves and with their creators. Some toys are more “willing” than others to accommodate the meaning desired by the players, in particular toys that represent more generic actors and objects, rather than specific characters. Even the latter, however, can be easily resemantised by the players, and used to represent something else entirely. From a communicative point of view, this versatility of toys is necessary to remedy the paradigmatic limitations of the system: with a limited number of versatile toy-signs, players will be able to create many narratives. The pleasure of this challenge is also one of the devices that rewards players for their efforts.

Finally, there is the *intentio operis*, that underlines the role of the text itself, beyond the will of authors and readers, in the sensemaking. Nagmeh Nouri Esfahani and Victoria Carrington, in their research on the use of toys by Iranian girls in Australia, present a very interesting case that exemplifies this phenomenon.¹⁷ Accounting for the rather subversive use that these girls made of *Bratz* dolls, they make several examples. One girl, for example, would cut the hair and feet of a *Bratz* doll and then strip it completely: what remained of the doll, once all the features that seemed marked as feminine by the player were removed, was a toy suitable to represent the “uncle”, a generic male character. Another little girl drew forehead marks of some of her dolls to indicate their Indian ethnicity. For many, it was very important that the dolls could sit, so that they could arrange them in meetings similar to those they witnessed at home. While it is the will of the readers that guide these actions, it is the affordances and materiality of the toys that make them possible. The fact that clothes can be removed, that hair can be cut, or that the dolls have joints become fundamental attributes of their semiotic content. More in general, then, the *intentio operis* in toys highlights the unexpected possibilities that emerge from the objectual nature of toys, for the ways in which they can be modified, combined, bent, or even broken.

All three *intentiones* are equally important if we are to try to assess the meaning emerging from toy-play – meaning that emerges both from their synergies, but also from the tensions that emerge from them.

¹⁷ CARRINGTON, NOURI ESEAHANI (2015).

5. TOYISHNESS

All objects can become toys, but not all toys are equally effective in facilitating and encouraging play. An important part of toy design consists in exploiting the material potential of objects to make them as *toyish* as possible, that is, to make them better at being toys. To examine this toyishness, we will focus both on the materials that they are made of – in semiotics terminology on their “substance of expression”.¹⁸

If we look at toys’ substance of expression, there would appear to be no specific restrictions or requirements on what kind of materials can be used to create a toy. Historically, many different materials have been used for this purpose, including wood, bone, metal (lead, tin, iron, steel), stone, glass, leather, cloth, porcelain, clay, snow, sand, plastics (ABS) and foam. Virtually any material is likely to be used for the creation of toys.

However, some materials or some of their characteristics appear to be preferred to others, by both players and toy designers. In a study by Elvin Karana and Paul Hekkert a survey reports that designers describe suitable materials to be used to make toys as light, smooth and brightly coloured.¹⁹

Gregory Bateson suggests a possible clue to the reasons for these preferences when he mentions how different animal species immediately recognize that balls are objects made to play with.²⁰ He suggests this happens in virtue of their almost negligible weight in relation to their mass. In other words: a ball seems too light to be “real”. This almost instinctive inference seems related to the “magic” mentioned by E. Fink and, more in general, with the opposition between playful interpretations and those related to ordinary life.

Obviously, lightness is not a necessary feature, nor a sufficient one: toys can be heavy (like tin soldiers) and non-playful objects can be light despite having only boring ordinary functions (like a sponge). It is therefore a material characteristic that works as an invitation to play rather than a formal requirement.

The brightly coloured materials used for toy making, as highlighted by Katriina Heljakka,²¹ could also have a similar function: to signal that these objects are meant for extra-ordinary purposes: a purple and pink phone or an orange gun would be quite unusual as objects with “serious” functions. The colourful hides of the *My Little Pony* toy line, and the red points on gun replicas, hence, share a similar function.

¹⁸ HJELMSELV (1961). From a more complete analysis of these characteristics, please see THIBAUT (2020) where I first outlined these features.

¹⁹ KARANA, HEKKERT (2008).

²⁰ BATESON (1956).

²¹ HELJAKKA (2013).

Another attribute common to many toys is that of softness, indicated by E. Karana and P. Hekkert as typically toyish, which can be combined with that of smoothness. This is a feature that metonymically connects the toy with the softness of the mother, clothes, bed.²² These characteristics make the object comfortable and welcoming.

This first set of ideal characteristics for the substance of the expression of toys is not, again, in any way mandatory. There can be objects that have all the opposite characteristics and are still recognized and used as toys. This list most likely points to a number of features that, for various reasons, can be particularly effective in communicating the playful nature of an item to a potential player.

Besides aesthetics, there are practical concerns that also guide the choices in substance of expression for toys. The most important one is probably related to the safety of interaction. Brittle, sharp and hard materials are often avoided, especially in toys designed for children. In the latter case, the toys must be harmless and safe: the fact that they are intended for inexperienced use makes them potentially very dangerous. Although these characteristics also affect the form of expression of the toys (discouraging shapes such as spikes, sharp edges, or small parts that can be ingested), they affect many aspects of its substance too, including the use of chemicals or paints that can be toxic or irritating. The extensive use of plastics and polymers in the manufacture of contemporary toys can also be linked to this need to make harmless objects: these materials are hardly broken and, when they do, they do not have sharp edges.

Finally, there are other material characteristics that are able to directly influence the play activity: elasticity, viscosity or stickiness. These features can be used to create toys that “react” to player actions, for example by bouncing, that stick to walls or that are pleasantly disgusting to the touch (slime).

We now have a short list of potential features that seem to encourage playful interactions with objects: lightness, colourfulness, softness, safety, and reactivity. These characteristics point towards a specific kind of aesthetics, linked with unreality and being outside of the ordinary, that can be easily related to toys: toyishness.

6. TOYIFICATION

To summarise some of the considerations that we have made so far, while analysing toys from a semiotic perspective we must distinguish between the following:

- To toy: to reinterpret objects in a fictional and playful way and using them in a play activity.
- Designed toys: objects that are designed, created, and marketed with the purpose of being toyed with.
- Toyishness: the aesthetics quality of looking or feeling like a toy.

These three characteristics, while generally collaborating, can appear separately. It is possible, and common, to toy with objects that are not designed to be toys and have not particularly toyish appearance (like rocks or pebbles). Designed toys do not necessarily have to be toyish in appearance, and have indeed, uses outside play – primarily their commerce. Finally, objects can have a toyish appearance, without being designed to be toys or being used to play – as it is the case for many candies, designed to appeal to children in virtue of their aesthetics as well.

These three elements, or dimensions, become particularly important if we want to engage with *toyification*, the last concept that we will approach in this paper. Toyification, however, needs to be understood in the context of the ludification of culture,²³ and as a strategy related to gamification.²⁴

The expression “ludification of culture” is used to indicate a cultural trend that sees the prestige of play and games reach unprecedented levels. This shift probably started during the enlightenment and can be detected in the works of Rousseau and Schiller. Since then, more and more forms of play have become hegemonic, with a rapid acceleration in the 1980s, probably due to the success of digital games. Ludification of culture does not imply that we play *more* than in the past, nor that play is more *important* than it used to be. The change is in the *perception* of play, which is less seen as something childish or futile, and increasingly understood as an important phenomenon, both culturally and economically.

In semiotic terms, we can describe the ludification of culture as a semiospheric trajectory, that brings play and games closer to the “centre” of our culture and increases their *modelling ability*.²⁵ As the word suggests, modelling ability implies the two possible meanings contained in the word “model”. On the one side, a model is a heuristic tool, a simplification or systematisation of reality that helps us understand it. From this perspective, the increased modelling ability of play means that play works increasingly well as a metaphor used to describe all sort of things, from the economy (where we have “players”) to life

²² See the transitional object described by WINNICOTT (1971).

²³ RAESSENS (2006).

²⁴ HAMARI (2019).

²⁵ THIBAUT (2016b).

itself (imagined as a sport in expressions like “life coach” or “looser at life”).²⁶

On the other hand, models have also a prescriptive nature. A model can be a prototype, something to be physically or culturally reproduced. From this perspective, then, games and play become something to be imitated, a source of strategies or a tool to be used in different kinds of processes. This is what we generally refer as gamification,²⁷ that is, the attempt to design something that affords similar experiences as those of games, in the belief that this will motivate or engage people, pick their curiosity, and favour their immersion in the activity.

While toys do not enjoy a success as broad and across different demographics as digital games, they have also benefitted of the ludification of culture. Adult toy-play is becoming increasingly accepted and toys such as *Lego* are now at the centre of complex transmedia intertextual nets.²⁸ From this increased prestige of toys originates the idea of *toyification*.

“Toyification” has been defined by Mattia Thibault and Katriina Heljakka as the express attempt to make objects, activities or practices more toy-like, or to use the communicational power of these objects in other contexts than play.²⁹

In this paper, however, we have seen how “toys” are complex objects. If we connect the idea of toyification with the three main distinctions made above, we can individuate three different strategies of toyification focusing each on one of them. In each of these cases toying, designed toys, or toyishness will go beyond their traditional limits and will invade other contexts.

- Toying with objects that are not meant to be toyed with is, in fact, very common: we have described it as a basic form of toy play. Strictly speaking, this is the most common form of toyification – and a very long standing one, existing far before the first designed toys were crafted. There are, nonetheless, some cases where this action is somewhat connected with the ludification of culture: when toying happens in a public non-play context. A famous example can be people taking pictures in which they appear to hold the Tower of Pisa. This is a form of toying – a playful action based on a pretend-play situations – that indeed is happening outside of the traditional boundaries of toy-play.
- A second strategy is based on using or positioning designed toys in non-traditional setting. Nowadays it is not uncommon to find toys in schools, universities, hospitals, and offices used both as

decorations or as aids for teaching or research. It is increasingly common to see toys in window shops, where their role is of attracting attention, and not being products sold there. Toys are, occasionally, appearing on fashion accessories, such as jewellery or purses. In other words, they are steadily invading all sort of contexts. This form of toyification makes use of the ability of designed toys to work as triggers for playfulness in non-play contexts, or simply to signal a relationship with a border play-oriented pop culture.

- The last strategy is based on applying a toyish aesthetics to objects that are not toys and are not meant to be toyed with. Darth Vader toasters, puppy-eared smartphone covers, *Lego* inspired furniture, and Mickey Mouse cupcakes: these are but a few of the possible examples of toy aesthetics applied in new, non-toy contexts. The use of bright colours in candies and snacks, as mentioned above, can also be considered a form of toyification. This strategy makes use, at the same time, of the material characteristics of a toyish aesthetics, but also of the typical representations operated by designed toys, which are increasingly intertextual and represent characters from successful franchises. In this case, such objects do not necessarily invite a playful interaction, but, again, they are pointers to an overall playful and game-oriented pop culture – perceived, hence, as a desirable characteristic by the objects’ owners.

We have described toyification as a relatively recent phenomenon, but this should not mislead us. Despite the current ludification of culture, the possibility of toyifying objects and situation should by no means be considered a prerogative of the present time – on the contrary, research of forms of toyification in history would be most fascinating.

7. CONCLUSION

In this paper we have collected a few key points about the semiotic features of toys and toy-play. We have started by underlining the “magic” properties of toys and their ability to be interpreted in different ways. Then, we proceeded in differentiating toys from playthings and describing them as objects used in a specific form of play. While every object can be used as a toy, we have proposed some reflections about 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 have briefly investigated what kind of material characteristics and aesthetic qualities facilitate toy-play. Finally, we have engaged with the idea of toyification, and of the possible uses of the semiotic domain of toys outside their proper context.

²⁶ IDONE CASSONE (2017).

²⁷ HAMARI (2019).

²⁸ HELJAKKA (2013).

²⁹ THIBAUT, HELJAKKA (2019).

With this brief excursion, we have far from exhausted all the semiotic features and dimensions entailed in toy-play. Much could still be said, for example, on the importance of gestures in toy-play, on the different forms of communications (with others and with ourselves) that emerge in these practices and so on and so forth.³⁰

Nevertheless, we hope to have shown a glimpse of the semiotic richness and complexity of objectual play, and to have made a strong argument for the exceptionality of toys among human artifacts when it comes to their semiotic potential.

A final note: the present article might appear a bit out of place in this special issue: after all, the antiquity has never really been mentioned or engaged in the above pages. Nonetheless, it is my belief that there is much to be learned from initiating a multidisciplinary conversation between semiotics, history, and archaeology on this topic. On the one hand, semiotics can offer useful tools to look deeper in the possible uses and interpretations of ancient toys and cultural practices. On the other hand, a more nuanced diachronic account of how toys have been understood, crafted and used would greatly benefit the reflections about the semiotic properties of objectual play.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BATESON, Gregory, "The Message 'This is Play'", in Bertram Schaffner (ed.), *Group Processes: Transactions of the Second Conference*, New York (1956), 145-242.

BONNICHSEN, Robson, "Millie's Camp: an Experiment in Archaeology", *World Archaeology*, 4, (3) (1973), 277-291.

CAILLOIS, Roger, *Les jeux et les hommes*, Paris (1967).

CARRINGTON, Victoria, NOURI ESFAHANI, Naghmeh, "Rescripting, Modifying, and Mediating Artifacts: Bratz Dolls and Diasporic Iranian Girls in Australia", in Miriam Forman-Brunell, Jennifer Dawn Whitney (eds), *Dolls Studies, the Many Meanings of Girl's Toys and Play*, New York (2015), 121-132.

COSTIKYAN, Greg, "I Have no Words & I Must Design: toward a Critical Vocabulary for Games", *Proceedings of the Computer Games and Digital Cultures Conference*, Tampere (2002), 9-33.

CRAWFORD, Sally, "The Archaeology of Play Things: Theorising a Toy Stage in the 'Biography' of Objects", *Childhood in the Past*, 2, 1 (2009), 55-70.

ECO, Umberto, *Lector in fabula*, Milano (1979).

FINK, Eugen, *Oasi della gioia*, translation by Eugenio Cutolo, Salerno (1969).

HAMARI, Juho, "Gamification", *The Blackwell encyclopedia of sociology*, (2019), 1-3.

HELJAKKA, Katriina, *Principles of Adult Play(fulness) in Contemporary Toy Cultures: From Wow to Flow to Glow*, Helsinki (2013).

HJELMSLEV, Louis, *I fondamenti della teoria del linguaggio*, Torino (1961).

IDONE CASSONE, Vincenzo, "Through the Ludic Glass: a Cultural Genealogy of Gamification", in *Proceedings of the 21st International Academic Mindtrek Conference*, New York (2017), 54-62.

KARANA, Elvin, HEKKERT, Paul, "Attributing Meanings to Materials", in *Proceedings of the 6th International Design & Emotion Conference*, Hong Kong (2008).

LOTMAN, Jurij Mihajlovic, "The Place of Art Among other Modelling Systems", *Sign Systems Studies*, 39, 2/4 (2011), 251-270.

RAESSENS, Joost, "Playful Identities, or the Ludification of Culture", *Games and Culture*, 1, 1 (2006), 52-57.

THIBAUT, Mattia, "Toward a Semiotic Analysis of Toys", in Kristian Bankov (ed.), *New Semiotics. Between Tradition and Innovation, Proceedings of the 12. World Congress of Semiotics*, Sofia (2016a), 989-998.

THIBAUT, Mattia, "Lotman and Play: For a Theory of Playfulness Based on Semiotics of Culture", *Σημειωτική-Sign Systems Studies*, 44, 3 (2016b), 295-325.

THIBAUT, Mattia, *Ludosemiotica: il gioco tra segni, testi, pratiche e discorsi*, Roma (2020).

THIBAUT, Mattia, HELJAKKA, Katriina, "Toyification: a Conceptual Statement", in Gilles Brougère, Mark Allen (eds), *Proceedings of the 8th International Toy Research Association World Conference*, Paris (2019) < hal-02083004>.

WINNICOTT, Donald, *Playing and Reality*, London (1971).

³⁰ As mentioned above, some tentative description of toy-play as a semiotic system can be found in THIBAUT (2016a), while a more extensive engagement with toys' levels of expression and content in THIBAUT (2020).

POSTFACE



*Clay Spintop from the Theban Kabirion (late 5th-4th century BCE). Thebes, Archaeological Museum.
Photo A. Santrouzanos © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports – Ephorate of Antiquities of Boeotia -
Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development (H.O.C.R.E.D.).*



Brigitte Röder

University of Basel
brigitte.roeder@unibas.ch

Do Finds Tell Stories?

Yes: our Own!

The Example of Prehistoric Toys

INTRODUCTION: USING ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS TO PASS ON HISTORY

Toys in the perspective of prehistory are at least methodologically as problematic to identify and interpret than for the different historical periods examined in this volume. This paper will offer some comparative reflections based on finds without associated texts nor images. For 2.5 million years – or 99.9% of its history – humankind got by without any form of writing. From today's perspective this is highly regrettable because it means that we will never know how prehistoric people saw themselves and the world. Equally, we will never know if they were indeed people like you and me, as is constantly insinuated. The millions of people who have lived during this unimaginably long timespan have left behind very little evidence. The traces we do find only allow us to see tiny glimpses of these past life-worlds and modes of existence emerging dimly from the depths of time as if during a lightning storm at night.

Objects manufactured by or for children belong to extant evidence which largely consists of everyday items such as stone tools, potsherds or remnants of food that have survived the ravages of time, of building structure relics and, finally, the remains of prehistoric people. They are the main sources available to prehistoric archaeologists to reconstruct

history. All the evidence is material in nature and must be filled with meaning and interpreted from today's perspective. The crux of the matter is that we can only interpret what we can compare to something we know. It is therefore not without reason that archaeologists are said to “find what they know”.

These conclusions by analogy – in other words comparisons of the unknown with the known – are often unproblematic; after all, it is highly likely that a stone object that was shaped like a modern axe blade was also actually an axe blade in prehistory, particularly since such objects are in fact quite useful and efficient tools for felling trees. Their functionality, therefore, is the same. The historical insight that people used stone axes to chop down trees, on the other hand, is rather banal. And, of course, stone axes raise many more questions whose answers do not immediately follow from the objects themselves: were such objects also used as weapons? Can we assume that axes with particularly well-fashioned blades made from types of rock sourced from far-flung places were objects of prestige and perhaps even indications of rank or insignia of power? Were such special types of rock believed to possess magical powers too? Who would have used such axes in combat? Who would have used them to underline their social position? Who would have used them in the context of magic practices?

While the use of stone axes as weapons is attested to

by discoveries of human skulls with corresponding injuries, there are no such diagnostic features when it comes to answering the other questions. The more our questions move away from the primary function of the objects and are aimed at the actions in which they were involved, the wider the scope for interpretation and the range of possible answers become. When the questions begin to revolve around the identity of the persons who made or used a particular object, we move into the realm of pure speculation. However, it is precisely the questions about the people that make up the core of why we are interested in history or prehistory. In other words, the closer our questions come to the actual core of our historical interest, the more varied and uncertain the potential answers become.

While it is painful to be pushed to the limits of archaeological insight, it should not come as a surprise, since from an epistemological perspective it is to be expected that the scope for interpretation should range rather widely from well-founded conclusions to pure speculation. Not least thanks to collaborations with specialists from various natural sciences, prehistoric archaeology has in recent decades developed complete mastery of finding more and more evidence with which to confirm certain conclusions, of giving consideration to alternative interpretations and even of extending the limitations of the potential insight in relation to certain topics. The latter has been possible thanks, in particular, to DNA and isotope analyses on human remains, which allow us to draw valid conclusions with regard to mobility patterns and dietary habits, that would not have been thought possible, even twenty years ago.

This rather rapid development, however, mainly pertains to human remains, which only make up a small proportion of the archaeological sources. The bulk of sources, i.e. the artefacts, are still associated with the phenomenon that their cultural and historical interpretations grow more varied and uncertain the closer the questions we ask of them come to the core of our interest in history. It is therefore all the more baffling that the archaeological practice paints a completely different picture. And it is striking that the interpretation of archaeological sources from the point of view of cultural history does not even come close to exploring the full range of possible interpretations but, rather, is generally limited to one particular interpretation. Where ambiguity prevails, unambiguity is created, and the one and only interpretation appears to arise directly and quite naturally from the finds – indeed, the finds themselves seem to be telling the story they were part and parcel of. All we as archaeologists and also as museum visitors have to do, is listen to them; the history of mankind apparently discloses itself automatically from the stories they tell.

1. THE FINDS REPEATEDLY TELL THE SAME STORIES, FOR INSTANCE, ABOUT CHILDHOOD

On closer inspection, the stories the finds allegedly tell mainly relate to everyday life. The stories fill in all the colourful details of what we cannot actually see when we look at the objects. Let us look at some things associated with children found in Neolithic and Late Bronze Age lakeside settlements: a child-sized bow at Zurich-Mozartstrasse (Fig. 1) and a wooden sword in Lake Inkwil (Fig. 2), a rattle in Möringen, a feeding bottle and an animal figurine from Grandson-Corcelettes (Fig. 3, Fig. 5), a small wooden boat in Yverdon-les-Bains-Clendy (Fig. 4), as well as miniature ceramic vessels from Lake Nussbaum (left) and from Niederwil (right) (Fig. 6).

While the rattle and the feeding bottle are perfectly finished, the small ceramic vessels are misshapen or lopsided and have lumpy surfaces. It is tempting to hypothesize that they were produced by children themselves.¹

The longer we look at the objects, the more they touch us because they conjure up memories and feelings of nostalgia. We know all these things from our own childhoods, though they might have been made of different materials or looked slightly different. We recognise certain toys and we are reminded, perhaps, of our own clumsy attempts at pottery making in kindergarten or primary school. These memories are accompanied by stories; stories where such objects played a part, and stories from our own childhood and from childhood in general. By virtue of our own stories and of similar stories told to us by others, the objects quite naturally begin to take on meaning. The stories build a bridge across the millennia and create an emotional link to the children who lived several thousand years ago.

And what could be more obvious than to imagine that the way these children grew up was very similar to the way we did? They obviously played and, when playing, imitated the adults around them, thus preparing themselves for their future tasks and roles. The girls played at cooking meals in their toy pots and used rattles to entertain their younger siblings. The boys playfully honed their hunting skills using bows and played at fighting enemies using wooden swords. This is where childhood stories become interwoven with gender and family stories about the gender-specific roles and the division of labour between women and men within the family and in society at large. In the end, we are presented with a very vivid and coherent idea of how prehistoric people lived together – and of the elements that generally make up the fundamental forms of human co-existence, anytime and anywhere.

¹ Cf. the activities of Moroccan children described by J.-P. Rossie in this volume.



Fig. 1: Child-sized bow from the Neolithic lakeside settlement of Zurich-Mozartstrasse (Switzerland), length: 106,5cm. © Martin Bachmann, Kantonsarchäologie Zürich.



Fig. 2: Small wooden sword. Surprising discovery made during an underwater excavation at a Late Bronze Age settlement in Lake Inkwil (Cantons of Bern and Solothurn, Switzerland), length: 47,7cm. © Archäologischer Dienst des Kantons Bern, Albert Hafner/Kantonsarchäologie Solothurn.



Fig. 3: Fired clay bird-shaped rattle, height 5.7 cm, and a “feeding bottle”, height 5 cm, from the Late Bronze Age lakeside settlements of Möriegen (Canton of Bern, Switzerland) and Grandson-Corcelles (Canton of Vaud, Switzerland). © Bernisches Historisches Museum, Bern. Photograph by Stefan Rebsamen.



Fig. 4: Small wooden boat from the Neolithic lakeside settlement of Yverdon-les-Bains-Clendy (Canton of Vaud, Switzerland), length: 33cm. © Musée d'Yverdon et région. Photograph by Yves André, Musée cantonal d'archéologie et d'histoire, Lausanne.



Fig. 5: Animal figurine made of fired clay from the Late Bronze Age lakeside settlement of Grandson-Corcelles (Canton of Vaud, Switzerland), length: 9,1cm, width: 4cm.. © Bernisches Historisches Museum, Bern. Photograph by Christine Moor.



Fig. 6: Neolithic miniature ceramic vessels from Lake Nussbaum (left) and from Niederwil (Canton of Thurgau, Switzerland). © Photograph: Amt für Archäologie Thurgau, Daniel Steiner, www.archaeologie.tg.ch.

This familiarity and the supposed certainties, however, are deceptive. If we take a more in-depth look it becomes clear that the stories all resemble each other quite closely and that they represent modern perceptions of an ideal of human co-existence which we deem to be “primordial”.² Only the elements that make sense from today’s perspective are added to the stories. Anything that is alien, unintelligible or even irritating, anything that could cause the narrative to falter, change the direction of the familiar story or make prehistoric people seem unfamiliar, is systematically overlooked or instinctively factored out. This is the only way to ensure that we mirror ourselves in prehistory and it is the only way that the beginnings of the history of humankind can be used for orientation and reassurance about the existential questions of human co-existence, which are currently being controversially discussed and renegotiated in emotionally charged debates within society. Only this way is it possible for us to mirror ourselves in prehistory.

2. USING FINDS TO TELL DIFFERENT STORIES

The same finds could be used to tell quite different stories.³ However, in order to do so, we would have to abandon the idea that our prehistoric antecedents were people like you and me and that they structured their social co-existence in exactly the same way as we do today. We must let go of the deceptive familiarity and the common bond with “our ancestors” and instead open our minds and curiosity to their potential otherness and accept the irritation that could result from this. What would help and inspire us in this adventure, not just on an intellectual but also on an emotional level, would be to familiarise ourselves with the living conditions and values of other societies, both past and present. In this way we could gather a lot of substance for new and potentially surprising stories. Against the background of this rather more colourful collection of stories, the archaeological sources would appear in a completely different light. New research questions would be raised and this, in turn, could potentially move into focus a different set of facets of the prehistoric modes of existence.

² RÖDER (2015); (2016).

³ RÖDER (2014).

3. USING DIFFERENT STORIES TO COME CLOSER TO HISTORIC REALITY?

Would these new stories come closer to historic reality? Instead of attempting to answer this question, I would like to close by quoting the physical anthropologist Anna Kjellström and the archaeologist Stig Welinder:

“Prehistory is the silent time before history, prior to the invention of writing. There are no documents. All words used in analyses and in discussion have to derive from ourselves. They are words of our time. Thus, not only all questions [...], but all answers, that is, all concepts and ideas, are concepts and ideas of ourselves. They are reflections of ourselves. [...] Prehistoric archaeology forces you to rethink your questions, concepts and ideas.”⁴

Not to trace our own questions, concepts and ideas back to supposed primordial or natural states but instead to question and reflect on them, is one of the key competencies at a time when fundamental aspects of human co-existence are being renegotiated.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

KJELLSTRÖM, Anna, WELINDER, Stig, “Old Age in Prehistory”, in Brigitte Röder, Willemijn de Jong, Kurt Alt (eds), *Alter(n) anders denken. Kulturelle und biologische Perspektiven*, Kulturgeschichte der Medizin, 2, Köln/Weimar/Wien (2012), 71-91.

RÖDER, Brigitte, “Spurlos verschwunden? Kinder und Heranwachsende in archäologischen Quellen”, *Archäologie in Deutschland*, 6 (2014), 20-23.

RÖDER, Brigitte, “Jäger sind anders – Sammlerinnen auch. Zur Deutungsmacht des bürgerlichen Geschlechter- und Familienmodells in der Prähistorischen Archäologie”, in Tobias Kienlin (ed.), *Fremdheit – Perspektiven auf das Andere*, Kölner Beiträge zu Archäologie und Kulturwissenschaften, 1, Bonn (2015), 237-253.

RÖDER, Brigitte, “Alles so schön vertraut hier. Wer wohnte im Pfahlbau?”, in *4.000 Jahre Pfahlbauten*, Ostfildern (2016), 137-142.

⁴ KJELLSTRÖM, WELINDER (2012), 71-72.



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

AUTEUR.E.S / AUTHORS

1. **ANGELA BELLIA,**
Researcher, Institute of Heritage Science,
National Research Council (Italy)
angbellia@gmail.com
2. **TATIANA BUR,**
Ancient Greek Cultural Historian, currently the
Mary and Moses Finley Research Fellow,
Darwin College, Cambridge (United Kingdom)
tcdb2@cam.ac.uk
3. **DANIELA COSTANZO,**
Archaeologist, Italian Ministry of Culture,
Curator, National Archaeological Museum of
Reggio Calabria (Italy)
daniela.costanzo@cultura.gov.it
4. **VÉRONIQUE DASEN,**
Professor in Classical Archaeology, University of
Fribourg (Switzerland) and PI of the European
Research Council (ERC) project *Locus Ludi*.
*The Cultural Fabric of Play and Games in Classical
Antiquity*
veronique.dasen@unifr.ch
5. **ANNA MARIA D'ONOFRIO,**
Associate Professor in Classical Archaeology,
L'Orientale University, Naples (Italy)
adonofrio@unior.it
6. **ÉRIC DIEU,**
Professor in Ancient Greek Language and Litera-
ture, Toulouse - Jean Jaurès University (France)
eric.dieu@univ-tlse2.fr
7. **ASTRID FENDT,**
Senior Curator, Staatliche Antikensammlungen
und Glyptothek, München (Germany)
fendt@antike-am-koenigsplatz.mwn.de
8. **LUCIA FLORIDI,**
Associate Professor in Classical Philology,
Alma Mater Studiorum, Bologna (Italy)
lucia.floridi2@unibo.it
9. **CLEO GOUGOULIS,**
Associate Professor in Cultural Anthropology,
Patras University (Greece)
cleogougoulis@yahoo.gr
10. **CLAUDIA LAMBRUGO,**
Associate Professor in Classical Archaeology,
Università degli Studi di Milano (Italy)
Claudia.Lambrugo@unimi.it
11. **SOPHIE LARIBI-GLAUDEL,**
Post-doctoral researcher, HisCant-Ma research
center, Lorraine University (France)
sophie.laribi-glaudel@univ-lorraine.fr
12. **MICHEL MANSON,**
Emeritus Professor, Historian of Childhood Cul-
ture, University Paris-Sorbonne (France)
michelj.manson@wanadoo.fr
13. **PAOLA FRANCESCA MORETTI,**
Associate Professor in Latin Literature,
Università degli Studi di Milano (Italy)
paola.moretti@unimi.it
14. **CECILIA NOBILI,**
Senior Lecturer in Ancient Greek Language
and Literature, Università degli Studi di
Bergamo (Italy)
cecilia.nobili@unibg.it
15. **IOANNA PATERA,**
Associate Professor in History of Religion,
Jagellonian University, Krakow (Poland)
ioanna.patera@uj.edu.pl

16. **BRIGITTE RÖDER,**
Professor of Prehistoric Archaeology,
University of Basel (Switzerland)
brigitte.roeder@unibas.ch

17. **JEAN-PIERRE ROSSIE,**
Sociocultural Anthropologist, Research
Associate, Universidade Católica Portuguesa
Braga (Portugal) and ERC Locus Ludi, Fribourg
(Switzerland)
sanatoyplay@gmail.com

18. **VICTORIA SABETAI,**
Classical Archaeologist, Director of Research,
Academy of Athens (Greece)
vsabetai@Academyofathens.gr

19. **MATTIA THIBAUT,**
Assistant Professor, Information Technology and
Communication Science, Tampere University
(Finland)
mattia.thibault@tuni.fi

20. **MARCO VESPA,**
Research Fellow in Classics, ERC *Locus Ludi*.
The Cultural Fabric of Play and Games in
Classical Antiquity, Fribourg (Switzerland)
marco.vespa@unifr.ch

21. **CLAUDIA ZICHI,**
Research Fellow in Classics, Uppsala
University (Sweden)
claudia.zichi@lingfil.uu.se

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, *lūdus* 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, klepsydra, 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 : cimetière, 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, *penthelita*, 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, Metapontum) 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, Metapontum, 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, Métaponte) et Sicile (Syracuse, Mégara 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, Métaponte, 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 (*kanas-tra*) 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 ἄθურμα and παίγνιον to παιχνίδι. 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 ἄθურμα et παίγνιον à παιχνίδι. 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 démotique, jouet, linguistique, marché du jouet, histoire de l'enfance, jeu, jouet, terminologie grecque moderne, *paignion*, *paignidi*, *paichnidi*

THIBAULT, 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

