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PRAESENS

Kindgerechte „Arbeit am Mythos“ II

Noch mehr moderne Rezeptionsstrategien von der Adaptation bis zur Transformation

Child-friendly “Explorations of the Myth” II

A Continuation of Modern Reception Strategies from Adaptation to Transformation



Inhaltsverzeichnis

Editorial 2

Beiträge

Marta Pszczolińska
Learning through Fun. Classical Antiquity in *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek*, a Polish Comic Book Series 7

Maria José Campos
Metafiction and Genre Hybridity in Naoki Urasawa's Book *The Nameless Monster* by Emil Sebe 16

Angelina Gerus
Paideia of Diogenes: Live Like a Dog to Become a Human 25

Karolina Anna Kulpa
Playing with Cleopatra. About the Image of the Egyptian Queen in Products for Children and Young Adults (Introduction to Research) 36

Rezensionen

Editorial

Am Freitag, dem 13. November 2020, lud die *Österreichische Gesellschaft für Kinder- und Jugendliteraturforschung* COVID-19-bedingt zu ihrer ersten *online*-Konferenz. Einen ganzen Nachmittag lang trafen sich via *Blackboard Collaborate* auf der *Moodle*-Plattform der Universität Wien zahlreiche Forscher*innen und Studierende aus mehreren Ländern (und von verschiedenen Kontinenten), um einen bunten Strauß an Vorträgen von internationalen Referent*innen zu hören und mit ihnen angeregt zu diskutieren: Großer Dank für die Einrichtung des Webkonferenzraums gilt unserem EDV-Fakultätsbetreuer Christian Wagner, der einen technisch reibungslosen Ablauf sicherstellte.

Ein Tagungsbericht kann auf der Website der ÖGKJLF nachgelesen werden: https://oegkjlf.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/p_oegkjlf/Tagungsbericht_OEGKJLF2020.pdf.

Das virtuelle Format eröffnete die erfreulich breit genutzte Chance zu Internationalisierung und Vernetzung weit über den eigentlichen Adressat*innenkreis der ÖGKJLF hinaus: Zahlreiche Interessierte versammelten sich vor ihren Bildschirmen, um sich über die Spielarten von Mythologie, Mythisierung und Mythentransfer *(1)* in kind- und jugendgerechten Adaptationen, *(2)* in Werken, die (nur) vordergründig als Kinder- und Jugendliteratur erscheinen, oder auch *(3)* in klassischer *Crossover*-Literatur wissenschaftlich und didaktisch zu informieren.

Eröffnet wurde die Tagung von Susanne Blumesberger und Susanne Reichl in deutscher und englischer Sprache, um der internationalen Ausrichtung der Veranstaltung auch sprachlich Ausdruck zu verleihen.

Leider haben uns nicht alle Vortragenden ihre Manuskripte zur Verfügung gestellt. Nur zu gerne hätten wir alle Referate als verschriftlichte Beiträge in dieses *lili*-Heft aufgenommen. Doch zwei waren bereits für andere Publikationsorte vorgesehen. Sie sollen hier trotzdem gebührend Erwähnung finden, weil sie ein wesentliches Drittel der Tagung gebildet haben: Anna Maria Mik (Universität Warschau) stellte *Classical Mythology in a Polish Bestiary. The Example of Michał Rusinek's "The Book of Monsters"* (http://www.omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item-export/477) vor. Dabei handelt es sich um ein wunderschön illustriertes Werk, ein mit anspruchsvollen (auch poetischen) Texten ausgestattetes Buch, das von der Konzeption entfernt an Joanne K. Rowlings *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* erinnert und mit einer vergleichbaren, und doch ganz anderen Tiefendimension aufzuwarten hat: Die sogenannten ‚Bestien' sind zumeist liebenswerte, freundliche Wesen mit Freuden und Sorgen, die dazu anregen sollen, hinter die Fassade des jeweiligen Gegenübers zu blicken und mit typisch menschlichen (Ur)ängsten fertig zu werden. – Markus Janka, Professor für Klassische Philologie/Fachdidaktik der

Alten Sprachen, und seine Mitarbeiter Raimund Fichtel und Berkan Sariaydin von der LMU München präsentierten ihr facettenreiches Projekt *HistorMythos. Intermediale, interkulturelle und diachrone Perspektiven der Antikenrezeption* (http://www.cluster.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/). Beleuchtet wurden Perspektiven auf Phänomene der Antikenrezeption vom 18. bis ins 21. Jh. unter Anwendung eines mehrdimensionalen Zugangs (stofflich/inhaltlich – formal/ästhetisch – philosophisch/politisch-ideologisch/didaktisch – medial): Wirkungslinien allein sind nämlich zu wenig; vielmehr geht es um die Bedingungen, unter und die Strategien, mit denen rezipiert wird. Der Medienverbundkultur kommt dabei eine besondere Rolle zu.

Das vorliegende *lili*-Heft 58 (2022) ist mit seinen vier Beiträgen das erste, das ausschließlich englischsprachige Abhandlungen enthält (und drei deutschsprachige Rezensionen). Für das englische Lektorat zeichnen Valerie Gföhler und Georg Wendt verantwortlich; Ihnen gilt unser Dank für solide, schnelle, hilfreiche und professionelle Arbeit. Bewährte Unterstützung bekommen haben sie von Sonja Loidl.

Eröffnet wird das vorliegende Heft von Marta Pszczolińskas Beitrag *Learning through Fun – Classical Antiquity in „Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek", a Polish Comic Book Series*. Sie nimmt eine der langlebigsten und prägendsten Comicreihen Polens in den Blick, für die Henryk Jerzy Chmielewski (1924–2021) verantwortlich zeichnet: Der sprechende Schimpanse Tytus und seine menschlichen Freunde erleben Abenteuer in unterschiedlichsten Epochen, so auch in der Antike. Auf der stetig anwachsenden Plattform *Our Mythical Childhood Survey* (http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/about) sind weiterführende Einträge vorhanden, die die gelehrte Arbeitsweise (und das Quellenstudium) des liebevoll „Papcio Chmiel" genannten Künstlers anschaulich zeigen (http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1122 & http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/414).

Maria José Carmen Campos Runcie entführt uns mit *Metafiction and Genre Hybridity in Naoki Urasawa's Manga "The Nameless Monster" by Emil Sebe* in das weite Feld japanischer Mythenverarbeitung und -aneignung. An hochentwickelten Text- und Bildkonzepten, Sprachspielereien und Sprachwechseln lässt sie uns an einem vielfältigen Beispiel der Manga-Tradition teilhaben. Erzählt wird über die dunklen Seiten der menschlichen Natur mit Hilfe von Kinderbuchästhetik am Beispiel eines kunstvoll gestalteten Buches, das die Kraft hat, auf ‚Kinder' jeden Alters ideologisch einzuwirken.

Angelina Gerus stellt in *Paideia of Diogenes: Live Like a Dog to Become a Human* ein gerade durch seine Schlichtheit und klare Farbgebung kunstvoll illustriertes Bändchen aus der französischen Reihe *Les Petits Platons* (https://www.lespetitsplatons.com/) vor, in denen klassische Philosophie für kindliche Leser*innen unaufgeregt und demokratisch, mit Gefühl und vielen Originalzitaten (in Übersetzung) aufbereitet wird und so einen gleichzeitig niedrigschwelligen und klugen Einstieg in die Gedankenwelt großer und prägender Denker ermöglicht.

Abschließend demonstriert Karolina Anna Kulpa in *Playing with Cleopatra: About the Image of the Egyptian Queen in Products for Children and Young Adults (Introduction to Research)* das enorme Marketingpotential, das die Spielzeugindustrie in der vielleicht bekanntesten Ägypterin der Antike erkannt und dementsprechend verwertet hat: Ausgehend von ‚klassischen' Kleopatra-Darstellungen wie derjenigen Liz Taylors, spannt sie einen weiten Bogen über das kinderkulturelle Spektrum und zeigt das damit verbundene ethnische Kolorit auf. Zentral dabei ist die Einbettung dieser Elemente der Popkultur

in der (hoch)kulturellen Landschaft und das Wecken der Akzeptanz für diese beliebte Rezeptions- und Transformationsform.

Die Evasion in das Reich der Mythen mitten in der *aetas Covidiana* war ein wohltuender ‚Ausflug' in so etwas wie Normalität: in wissenschaftlichen, kollegialen und freundschaftlichen Austausch über ein Thema, an dem alle Beteiligten Freude haben und in dem sie Zukunftspotential für Rezipient*innen aller Altersstufen sehen.

Das vorliegende *lili*-Heft 58 (2022) = *Kindgerechte „Arbeit am Mythos" II: Noch mehr moderne Rezeptionsstrategien von der Adaptation bis zur Transformation / Child-friendly "Explorations of the Myth" II: A Continuation of Modern Reception Strategies from Adaptation to Transformation* versteht sich als Fortsetzung von *lili* 54-55 (2020) = *Kindgerechte „Arbeit am Mythos" Moderne Rezeptionsstrategien von der Adaptation bis zur Transformation / Child-friendly "Explorations of the Myth"*.

Frei nach Yoda: „Möge der Mythos mit Euch sein!"

Sonja Schreiner (für die ÖGKJLF)

Beiträge

Playing with Cleopatra
About the Image of the Egyptian Queen in Products for Children and Young Adults (Introduction to Research)[1]

Karolina Anna Kulpa

In the more than two millennia that have passed since her death, Cleopatra has inspired generations of artists in immortalising their own visions of her image. In the process of reception, she was transformed into a hybrid of a historical figure and a pop-cultural image saturated with complex symbolism based on representations in literature, art, and film, and thereby reduced to an easily identifiable and stereotypical character. The paper focuses on some case studies including figurines, costumes, and games (board and video).

Keywords: Cleopatra, reception, hybrid, historical figure, pop-cultural-image

Spiel(en) mit Kleoptara. (Ab)bilder der ägyptischen Königin in Produkten für Kinder und Jugendliche: eine Einführung in die Forschung
In den mehr als 2000 Jahren, die seit Kleopatras Tod vergangen sind, hat die Ägypterin Generationen von Künstler*innen inspiriert, ihre jeweils eigene Vorstellung des Kleopatra-Bildes unsterblich zu machen. Während des Rezeptionsprozesses wurde sie in eine hybride Mischung aus historischer Figur und Proponentin der Popkultur transformiert, angereichert mit komplexem Symbolismus, der wiederum aus Literatur, Kunst und Film gewonnen wurde. Damit einher ging eine (gewisse) Reduktion auf einen leicht (wieder)erkennbaren, gleichsam stereotypen, wenn auch ikonischen Charakter. Der Beitrag präsentiert einige Fallstudien (z. B. Figuren, Kostüme, Brett- und Videospiele) als Anregung für weiterführende Forschung.

Schlagwörter: Kleopatra, Rezeption, Hybrid, historische Figur, Popkultur-Ikone

1 I would like to thank Dr. Sonja Schreiner for the invitation to the publication, her support and kindness at every step of the writing of this text. The part of research results presented in this paper have been achieved within the project *Our Mythical Childhood... The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges* led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak at the Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw, with funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme – ERC Consolidator Grant (Grant Agreement No 681202).

The Many Faces of Cleopatra

Cleopatra Philopator, queen of Egypt who lived in the first century BC, has fascinated me for many years, ever since I read Karen Essex's novels[2] as a teenager. This last representative of the Ptolemaic dynasty in the social consciousness may seem to be one of the best-known female rulers of antiquity. However, when we think of this Egyptian Queen,[3] do we have a historical figure in mind?

In the more than two millennia that have passed since her death, Cleopatra has inspired generations of artists immortalising their own visions of her image. In the process of reception, the Ruler was transformed from a historical figure to what I call the Egyptian Pop Queen – a hybrid of a historical figure and a pop-cultural image saturated with complex symbolism based on representations in literature, art, and film. Pop culture has reduced features of Cleopatra's image to an easily identifiable, stereotypical character, which was also transformed into children's and young adults' culture – literature, audiovisual and material works. Over time, this Egyptian Pop Queen became a product for sale, also for the youngest consumers.

In my paper, I focus only on a few case studies showing the use of various representations of Cleopatra in products for children and young adults[4] including figurines, dolls, costumes, board games, and video games. Of course, all these works (e.g. Playmobil sets, Lego Minifigures, Barbie, and Cleo de Nile dolls) require further analysis. Therefore, in the final part of this text, I indicate the methodological challenges faced by a researcher of the classical reception of antiquity dealing with research of contemporary products for children and young people.

The Birth of the Egyptian Pop Queen

This statement may come as a bit of a surprise, but we know very little about Cleopatra VII,[5] one of the seemingly most famous ancient figures. The Queen's childhood and early youth remain obscure, the name and background of her mother remains a mystery, as well as the nature of the education she received, referred to by Plutarch.[6] We have particularly little information on the appearance of this last representative of the Ptolemaic dynasty. The surviving coin editions with her image and the few identified representations in relief and sculpture, in my opinion constituting canonical rather than realistic depictions of Cleopatra, do not allow a clear determination of what the Queen looked like.[7] Our knowledge of the life of this historical daughter of Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos Philopator Philadelphos, called Auletes, is based on the few fragments devoted

2 See Essex (2001, 2002).
3 In the text, I use the terms "Queen" and "Ruler" in capital letters as referring to Cleopatra VII.
4 In this article, I define the term as people under the age of 18.
5 An ordinal number given by historians because there were at least five or six Ptolemaic queens named Cleopatra before the reign of the daughter of Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos Philopator Philadelphos called Auletes. See S.-A. Ashton, *Ostatnie królowe Egiptu*, op. cit., 69-77; A. Świderkówna, *Siedem Kleopatr*, op. cit., 9-10.
6 Plut. *Antonius* 27.
7 More about representations of Cleopatra in ancient material sources, see Kulpa (2021, 34-46).

to the figure of the Ruler in ancient literary sources.[8] Texts written in the Roman Empire, with which the Queen was, after all, at war, depict her, obviously in a negative light and only in the context of events related to the main figures of the Tiber River political scene at the time, especially Gaius Julius Caesar and his adopted son, Octavian, as well as Mark Antony. Cleopatra had an intimate relationship with two of the Romans, and the war with the third led to her death and consequently to the end of Ptolemaic rule in Egypt. Ancient sources, mainly literary (e.g. by Horace, Plutarch, Cassius Dio, Appian of Alexandria, Galen), however, already constitute the first layers in the development of the Ruler's reception.[9]

When reconstructing the biography of Cleopatra, historians have to actually construct it anew, trying to extract facts about her life and death from the majority of negatively charged verses about the Queen. This process is like putting together an incomplete puzzle, most of the pieces of which may never be found.

In the Renaissance, the ancient image of Cleopatra became a paraphrase,[10] which permeated from descriptions of the Queen in ancient literary sources to artistic works, and was then consolidated. The physiognomy of the Ruler remained unknown, so her image was created, she was dressed in robes from artists' eras and given attributes (snakes), and the scene presented was to be unambiguously associated with this and not another historical figure.

Ancient authors described the aspects of Cleopatra's life that connected her with the Romans who were in power in her time, while post-antique artists have further simplified the biography of the Ruler, highlighting even more selected moments from her bio. In this process there has undoubtedly been a narrowing of the Queen's biography to a few events and the removal of several of the roles she fulfilled, most notably that of mother to a son, Ptolemy XV Caesar (Caesarion), who – as Cleopatra's minor brothers – ruled along her side. Most post-antique depictions of the Ptolemaic Queen until the 19th century present her metaphorically playing with Eros and Tanatos, the Greek deities of love and death. Cleopatra has become a culturally important figure as the ancient queen who entertains at banquets[11] and charms men (also during the meeting in Tarsus),[12] and eventually commits suicide,[13] depicted in paintings and sculptures by

8 More about representations of Cleopatra in ancient literary sources, see Kulpa (2021, 46-57).

9 This view is in line with Lorna Hardwick's conception of the classical reception of antiquity. See: Hardwick (2003, 10).

10 Paraphrase means a modification or expansion of a text which retains the key elements of the original work. The historical figure of Cleopatra is treated as a prototype for the contemporary representations of the Ruler. Over the following centuries of reception process, it was modified and developed, but kept the key elements of the Queen's image conveyed by ancient material and literary sources.

11 E.g. *Cleopatra's Feast* (1653) by Jacob Jordaens from the collection of the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg, no. ГЭ-8536, and *Il banchetto di Marcantonio e Cleopatra* [Feast of Mark Antony and Cleopatra] (1654) by Francesco Trevisani from the collection of Galleria Spada in Rome.

12 E.g. *Le Débarquement de Cléopâtre à Tarse* [Cleopatra's Arrival in Tarsus] (1642/1643) by Claude'a Gellée from the Louvre collection, no. 4716, and *Arrivée de Cléopâtre à Tarse* [Cleopatra's Arrival in Tarsus] (1741-1757) by Charles-Joseph Natoire from the collection of Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nîmes.

13 E.g. *Cleopatra* (circa 1636) by Hubert Le Sueur from the collection of Hampton Court Palace, London, no. 39714., *Cléopâtre se donnant la Mort* [Cleopatra Inflicting Death on Herself] (1640–1650) by Claude Vignon from the collection of the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rennes, and *Selbstmord der Kleopatra* [Cleopatra's Suicide] (circa 1659-1662) by Guido Cagnacci from the collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, inv. no. Gemäldegalerie, 260.

applying a venomous snake to her exposed breast, while usually undressed or naked in the face of death.

Since Classicism, the image of the Lagid has undergone several changes. We do not find representations of Cleopatra as a Ptolemaic princess or a young queen but see her exclusively as an adult and, above all, beautiful woman. Moreover, facts from her biography were extracted in order to construct a story about a woman who brought destruction to the men associated with her, for which she ultimately suffered punishment. Cleopatra thus becomes the heroine of romance, a temptress and debauchee luring married Romans in order to gain unlimited power on the Egyptian throne, but she fails and commits suicide. That image of the Queen was dominated above all by William Shakespeare, who, by transferring the life of the Ruler to the stage in one of his plays, created an ancient *femme fatale*. It was the tragedy *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607) that not only changed the way the life of the Egyptian Queen was presented but also dominated perceptions of her, overshadowing other works within the period in art from the 15th to the 18th century.[14] Placing invented character traits on the framework of a historical figure, built on the basis of ancient accounts considered reliable,[15] resulted in a blurred boundary between literary fiction and the perception of a real person. Thus, Shakespeare's vision, based on a reliable basis for the audience (ancient accounts), was merged with a historical figure. His Cleopatra is not a majestic, cool and balanced ruler, but a woman torn by passions. She is a whimsical coquette, emotionally blackmailing Mark Antony with her imaginary illnesses and fainting (Act I, Scene 3).[16] Their time together is filled with heated arguments, which, combined with the constant feasts, entertainment and fanciful games that the Queen organizes,[17] 'fuel' the affection in this relationship. Creating an ancient *femme fatale* out of Cleopatra makes the recipient – who reads the play or watches the stage performance – not feel sorry for the Queen. We probably could understand that her suicide is a just punishment for all her deeds, including the destruction of the men she supposedly loved. The death of the Ruler completes her image and gives sense to the story based on the plots of her life. The recipient has little sympathy for Cleopatra but is rather on Antony's side, dying a dignified death and in his last moments caring for the fate and safety of the Queen (Act IV, Scene XV). The ancient Ruler created by Shakespeare became the heroine of romances, operas, fiction, and plays.

At the turn of the 20th century, the wave of 19th century Egyptomania and the development of popular culture emphasised the perception of Cleopatra as a seductive

14 See also Dante Alighieri (1472) and Rabelais (1532, 1534). Mark Rose claims that Shakespeare has made the play one of the most famous in history. He has created a spectacle out of the past, and the viewer admires the characters' struggle against fate, even though he knows the finale. We know that Cleopatra and Antony will die and Octavian will triumph over them, but to this day we are fascinated by watching the "becoming" of history as we know it. After: Ross (1977, 6).

15 It should be highlighted again that ancient sources written many years after Cleopatra's death distorted her biography in significant ways.

16 After Shakespeare (1922).

17 Cleopatra mentions the pranks she played on Antony while he was fishing, including tying a pickled fish to his fishing rod (Act II, Scene V). According to Shakespeare, entertainments at the Queen's court included not only fishing and all-day feasts (Act I, Scene IV; Act II, Scene V), but also a game of billiards (Act II, Scene V), which is an anachronism.

femme fatale from the East, a beautiful black-haired temptress destroying men in the trap of toxic love. The Queen was assigned the role of a perverse, beautiful, and alluring oriental ruler with a cold heart, playing with men for her own amusement and pleasure. The image of Cleopatra as a mostly young, dark-haired beauty in Egyptian dress was thus shaped for decades to come in sculpture and painting (e.g. by H. Makart and A. Cabanel)[18] as well as in literature (e.g. in *Caesar and Cleopatra* by G. B. Shaw, play from 1898, published in 1901) and the performing arts (e.g. *Cléopâtre* [Cleopatre] from 1890 by V. Sardou).[19]

Over time, more and more daring costumes of actresses playing Cleopatra, novels, and plays containing descriptions of her amorous conquests and excesses, as well as paintings depicting her luxurious life and suicidal death as a result of snakebite, have completely obscured the image of the real character, who lived in the first century BC. The Egyptian Pop Queen was born, a hybrid of the last Ptolemaic Ruler and her subsequent receptive representations that became an integral part of popular culture in the 20th century. It is no longer just a character portrayed by Alexandre Cabanel and Hans Makart or a heroine created by William Shakespeare, George Bernard Shaw or Victorien Sardou. The dynamic development of mass audiovisual media – cinema and television, and later the Internet – led to the fact that the image of Cleopatra began to be dominated by visual components taken from images projected on cinema screens and computer monitors. In particular, Elizabeth Taylor's portrayal of the Queen in Joseph Mankiewicz's 1963 film[20] has become a sort of "benchmark" for what a modern Cleopatra should look like. Despite various film interpretations of the figure of the Ruler over the past half-century, she has most often been portrayed as a coquette and temptress, spending her time on her beauty, feasting, and seducing successive men. Associations with Julius Caesar and Mark Antony continue to be the core on which the popular transmedia narrative (according to Jenkins' conception)[21] about the Queen is centered. Especially the relationship with Antony and the culmination of a love story is often portrayed as toxic and devastating to both partners. Interestingly and noteworthy, the Cleopatra's suicide scene is very often filmed in such a way as not to cause discomfort to the viewer or almost completely disappears from the plot. As I mentioned, in most post-antique representations until the 19th century, Cleopatra was depicted as playing with Eros and Tanatos, with the vast majority of paintings and sculptures showing her in a moment of agony. In 20th and 21st century, the representations of the Queen with the first of these deities, undoubtedly marked by eroticism, begin to dominate.

The image of this Egyptian Pop Queen is often trivialized and reduced to an illustration of the figure of the black-haired beauty with the characteristic make-up (eyes emphasised with eyeliner, turquoise shadow on the eyelids), hairstyle of a long bob with

18 *Die Niljagd der Cleopatra* [Cleopatra's Nile Hunt] (1874/1875) by Hans Makart from the collection of the Belvedere in Vienna, no. 5837, and *Cléopâtre essayant des poisons sur des condamnés à mort* [Cleopatra Testing Poisons on Condemned Prisoners] (1887) by Alexandre Cabanel from the collection of Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp.

19 See Sardou (2010).

20 *Cleopatra,* dir. Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 20th Century Fox, 1963. Julius Caesar is played by Rex Harrison and Mark Antony by Richard Burton.

21 See Jenkins (2006, 20-21, 95-104, 119, 293).

a fringe and quasi-Egyptian clothes. Such graphic representations of the Ruler become products for sale.

Interestingly, this image of Cleopatra is beginning to gradually change in children's and youth culture, especially in literature,[22] as creators increasingly focus on portraying the Queen not as a *femme fatale*, but as a young and dignified princess, sometimes even a leader fighting for her country. Therefore, it is important to analyze how the successive representations of Cleopatra's image in children's and young adults' culture work, and how this article's examples of toys, games and costumes have become elements of the so-called transmedia narrative about the contemporary Egyptian Pop Queen.

The Queen of Egypt and Products for Children and Young Adults – Case Studies

Analyzing the image of Cleopatra VII in works dedicated to young audiences since 1965, we find different faces of the Ruler – from the capricious heroine ordering the construction of a palace in three months,[23] through the adventures of a mummified princess, Cleo de Nile,[24] to the mission of a young princess saving the universe from extinction.[25] It seems, therefore, that different faces of this Egyptian Ruler function in popular culture today, especially in children's and youth culture. Nevertheless, I will try to show with the indicated examples that they all create a coherent reception image of the Egyptian Pop Queen, whose biography can be divided into two periods and two roles. In the first, which covers her childhood and teenage years up to meeting Julius Caesar, Cleopatra is a young, dignified ruler. In the second, which concerns her relationship with Antony up to her suicidal death, she is depicted as a dangerous temptress. As we do not know much about the childhood of the historical Cleopatra, contemporary authors could let their imagination run wild when it came to portraying her life during this period. Particularly in 21st century publications for young recipients,[26] we find various descriptions of the adventures of a young princess, portrayed as a positive heroine. It is only after her encounter with Julius Caesar, as in G.B. Shaw's work, that we see Cleopatra's transformation into the *femme fatale* known from the play of Shakespeare, who, during her relationship with Antony, causes the destruction of her beloved and then commits suicide, as in the books by Karen Essex. The first role offers the recipient the opportunity to identify with the young princess and experience adventures together. The second face of the Queen, on the other hand, is often used by creators in their narratives as a negative character, an antihero or even an enemy to be defeated.

In this article, I would like to focus on selected examples of products by well-known manufacturers or available globally, aimed at children and young people, which can also be interpreted as showing the figure of Cleopatra in the two roles I mentioned above.

The analyzed figurines, dolls, and accessories, costumes, board games, and video games, as contemporary representations of the Queen's image, inspire new research

22 See Kulpa (2021, 234-245).
23 See Goscinny and Uderzo (1965); Goscinny and Uderzo (1968); Chabat (2002).
24 See for example *Monster High: Boo York, Boo York*, dir. William Lau, 2015.
25 See Maihack (2014-2020).
26 For example, see Gregory (1999), Holub (2007), Sheckter (2010), and Maihack (2014-2020).

questions, and their analysis requires new methodological tools, which I will mention at the end of this article.

Figurines and Dolls

The image of Cleopatra has been used by such well-known toy manufacturers as LEGO, Playmobil and Mattel. The figure of the Ruler has also been portrayed by The Unemployed Philosophers Guild, a company that offers plush dolls of famous people. All these products share the image of the Egyptian Queen, based on a role played by Elizabeth Taylor. Both dolls and figurines are quite simply identifiable as representations of Cleopatra, created in the process of reception, thanks to the characteristic hairstyle of the bob with fringe, the applied kohl (ancient eyeliner), sometimes also turquoise shadows on the eyelid, as well as the quasi-Egyptian costume, usually a white, narrow dress decorated with turquoise appliqués, and jewelry – gold ornamental belt, bracelets, and necklace. The status of the Ruler is emphasised by the golden diadem, and sometimes identification with Cleopatra is indicated by the depiction of a snake's head in the diadem, referring to the Uraeus (Playmobil). The venomous reptile, snake or viper became, in the process of reception, one of the attributes ascribed to this Ruler, especially relating to her suicide.[27] Sometimes the creators emphasize this connection between the Queen and snake in the form of a toy accessory (LEGO).

The first Playmobil product referring to Cleopatra, is a figurine created in 1997 under the German name 'Ägypterin' [Egyptian] or the English name 'Nile Queen'.[28] The figure is dressed in a white quasi-Egyptian dress with blue and gold applications, a wide gold necklace and a golden crown, but the accessory of a cobra figurine with its head raised may suggest that it is Cleopatra who has been immortalized. The company released two more very similar figurines in 2006 (product no. 4651, Special Plus)[29] and 2014 (product no. 5459v10),[30] referring to the Ruler I discuss. It is worth noting that only the 2006 figure was sold under the name Cleopatra, while the other is labeled 'Ägypterin' [Egyptian]. In both cases, we see a dark-haired Egyptian queen in a characteristic bob hairstyle with fringe, with eyes emphasised with kohl, and in the 2014 version with olive skin. They are dressed in a white, narrow dress – with sleeves in the 2014 version –, which is decorated with red and blue applications, with the waist emphasised by a belt in the same colors. We also notice rich jewelry on the figurines – gold earrings and bracelets, as well as a necklace – in the 2006 version in blue and red colors, and the 2014 version in gold, multi-layered. The status of the figure as a queen is evidenced by the diadem topped with a snake's head and, above all, by the insignia of pharaonic power – the *nechacha*, a three-edged whip, and the *heka*, a short shepherd's staff. It should be noted that the historical Cleopatra was not called a pharaoh in her time, nor was she

27 Although we do not know how the Queen died, as Plutarch already wrote (*Antonius* 85), the reception of the figure of Cleopatra is dominated by the depiction of her death as suicide by a venomous snake. The reptile bites Cleopatra's breast in many representations.

28 Playmobil 4546, see: https://www.klickypedia.com/sets/4546-nile-queen/ (accessed May 09, 2022).

29 See https://www.klickypedia.com/sets/4651-cleopatra/ (accessed May 09, 2022).

30 See https://www.klickypedia.com/sets/5459v10-egyptian/ (accessed May 09, 2022).

portrayed as such. She was titled queen, and ruled alongside her minor brothers and later her son.[31] It seems that it was only in popular culture that the figure of the Queen began to function as the sole ruler of Egypt at the time, that is, the pharaoh. This is how Cleopatra was portrayed in Mankiewicz's 1963 film, as well as in subsequent literary, audiovisual and material works.

In my opinion, Playmobil products presented in 2016 are worthy of special attention.[32] In 2016, the company released nine sets in the series 'History: Romans and Egyptians'.[33] The series is linked to the animated film *Curse of the Pharaohs*,[34] which Playmobil released on YouTube in March 2017 in various languages. What draws attention is the plot showing a new interpretation of Caesar's arrival in Egypt, ruled by Cleopatra and her brother Ptolemy, in order to conclude an alliance between the two states, which the pharaoh wants to prevent by releasing the titular curse from the pyramid. Thanks to two brave Romans and the efforts of a young, wise Queen, a peaceful agreement is reached between the two nations, celebrated at a common feast. The producer also created an online booklet *Learn All about the Romans & Egyptians*[35] with additional information on the history and culture of the ancient Nile and Tiber states, in which the historical Cleopatra is presented as a positive figure on the political scene of the time.

All the sets in the series refer to scenes from the animated film, and one of them, 'Cleopatra and Caesar',[36] includes a figurine of the Egyptian ruler. The image of the Queen is almost identical to that depicted in the above-mentioned 2006 and 2014 products. The olive-skinned figure has the fringed hairstyle, characteristic of pop culture depictions of Cleopatra, a snake-head diadem, and her eyes are framed by kohl. The figurine has a long, simple dress with ornaments in blue, gold and turquoise, a gold bracelet and necklace. It is worth noting that neither the insignia of pharaonic power nor a separate snake figure can be found in the set, but the producers have included another reference to the images of Cleopatra as an oriental ruler. One servant, the third figure in the set, wears the skin of a wild cat, probably a leopard or a cheetah, and this animal since Orientalism has become one of the attributes visible in representations of Cleopatra, also been used in popcultural interpretations of her image, such as in the comics *Astérix et Cléopâtre* [Asterix and Cleopatra] by René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo from 1965.[37] We can also buy a plush version of Cleopatra, about 30 centimeters tall, dressed in the same way as the one from the set.[38]

A similar depiction of the last Ptolemaic Ruler can be found in LEGO products. In 2010, in the 'Minifigures' series, the Egyptian Queen figurine was released, also available

31 See Kulpa (2021, 34–36); Cauville (1990, 86); Reymond (1981, 139–143); Panov (2010).
32 See Kulpa (2022, forthcoming).
33 Based on the German Playmobil catalogue (2016/2017, 22–23).
34 See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kN3WSGA9DoM (accessed May 09, 2022).
35 See https://www.playmobil.co.uk/content/play_info_history_romans_2016_03/PLAY_INFO_HISTORY_ROMANS_2016_03.html (accessed May 09, 2022).
36 Nr 9169, see https://www.klickypedia.com/sets/9169-caesar-and-cleopatra/ (accessed May 09, 2022).
37 See Goscinny and Uderzo (1965).
38 See https://cambodia.desertcart.com/products/61765244-playmobil-plush-toy-cleopatra-serie-2-11-30-cm (accessed May 09, 2022).
https://www.fishpond.com.fj/Toys/PLAYMOBIL-Plush-toy-Cleopatra-Serie-2-30-Cm-Playmobil/9999046089350 (accessed May 09, 2022).

for sale as 'Cleopatra'.[39] Regardless of the name of the product, I believe we can interpret it as a representation of this particular Ruler. As in the case of Playmobil, the image of the figurine shows the characteristic pop culture representation of Cleopatra as a black-haired Queen with a bob hairstyle and diadem, as well as quasi-Egyptian make-up – an extended line over the eye and turquoise shadow on the eyelids, undoubtedly referring to Elizabeth Taylor's role in Mankiewicz's film. The white, long dress is decorated with an elongated belt and a wide necklace in black, gold and blue. The attention is drawn to a green, writhing snake with its tongue extended; the figurine can hold this reptile in its hand. As I mentioned, the snake is one of the reception attributes of Cleopatra's imagery, so in the case of this product, we can interpret its presence as help in identifying the toy as a representation of the last Ptolemaic Ruler.

Two products from The Unemployed Philosophers Guild are some of the more interesting examples of the portrayal of the Queen figure characteristic of popular culture. 'Plush Little Thinker Cleopatra Doll'[40] has a bob hairstyle with fringe, and her hair is decorated with a blue and gold cord braid at the ends. The figure wears a delicate diadem, and attention is drawn to her strong make-up and huge gold earrings in her ears. Cleopatra's eyes are emphasised with a black eyeliner, the line under her eyes reaches her eyebrows, her eyelids are highlighted with a turquoise shadow, and on her lips we see red lipstick. The quasi-Egyptian outfit of the figure, as in the previous products analyzed, consists of a long white dress, gold bracelets, a turquoise belt and shoes. Its greatest decoration is a huge necklace or collar consisting of several rows of beads in orange, blue, turquoise and gold.

The 'Cleopatra Finger Puppet & Fridge Magnet'[41] is a simplified version of the puppet. Both characters have a prominent nose and similar make-up and hairstyle, except that the puppet's hair is decorated with gold at the ends, she does not wear a fringe and her diadem is wider. Furthermore, there are differences in her costume, as her white dress is decorated with a much more modest necklace, or rather a lace collar in blue, and the belt emphasizing her waist is in gold.

In my opinion, the company perfectly reflects the concept of edutainment through its activity,[42] i.e. it teaches about the historical characters in a friendly way, while providing entertainment at the same time. In the case of Cleopatra dolls, these are another popcultural reception and reinterpretation, rather than the attempt to convey the 'real' appearance of this historical figure. Of course, the products can be used both as toys for children and as funny gadgets for adults.

The products aimed more at older recipients are two collectible dolls from Mattel. First, 'Barbie Doll: Elizabeth Taylor as *Cleopatra* from 2000,[43] featuring Elizabeth Taylor

39 No. 8805 from the Minifigures series five, see: https://www.lego.com/en-us/kids/sets/minifigures/lego-minifigures-series-5-e5fc2f9719bd40dca67911ead8b6946b (accessed May 09, 2022); https://www.tokopedia.com/demolego/lego-original-minifigure-egyptian-queen-cleopatra-series-5 (accessed May 09, 2022).

40 See https://www.etsy.com/pl/listing/857534958/plush-little-thinker-cleopatra-doll-the (accessed May 09, 2022).

41 See https://www.walmart.com/ip/cleopatra-finger-puppet-and-refrigerator-magnet/820852114 (accessed May 09, 2022).

42 The combination of education and entertainment see Iwanicka (2010, 307).

43 Elizabeth Taylor in Cleopatra, see: https://www.amazon.com/Barbie-Elizabeth-Taylor-Cleopatra-Doll/dp/B001PB6RL4 (accessed May 09, 2022).

as the Egyptian Ruler from Joseph Mankiewicz's film, is a collectible doll, obviously at a higher price than the standard model, but its arms do not bend and the outfit cannot be freely removed without risk of damage. Of course, this limits the potential ability of moving the doll like other versions of Barbie, but the buyer gets a unique product in a costume made of good quality materials. In fact, Barbie is given the features of an actress and presented in a golden costume known from the film scene of her arrival in Rome – when the Queen with her son enters in a luxurious parade on a golden sphinx in an outfit supposed to refer to Isis[44]. Many thousands of dollars were spent on the actress' costumes, and the aforementioned creation was said to cost as much as $6,500.[45] Not only has the doll been given the features of a beautiful actress, but both the gold costume and Taylor's make-up have been accurately reproduced. The eyes are lined with black eyeliner with an extended line running up to the eyebrows, and the eyelids, unusually, are highlighted with gold shadow, while the lips are covered with red lipstick. The costume itself has been rendered in every detail – it consists of a scooped-out dress and a coat cut to resemble wings, wrapping around Barbie's figure. The corset of the dress is embroidered in a feather-like pattern. The image of Cleopatra as a goddess is completed with a richly ornamented crown, consisting of a so-called vulture's crown with a Uraeus and a sun disk between two horns. In my opinion, this is one of the most interesting contemporary examples of the Queen's reception. Unveiling successive layers of the transformation of Cleopatra's image, we see a toy of a popular brand that has been given the appearance of the American Hollywood star featured in Joseph Mankiewicz's famous film, based on historical novels that use information taken from biased ancient literary sources about the Egyptian Ruler of the 1st century BC. There could be no better example illustrating the transformation of this historical figure into a pop culture myth: the Egyptian Pop Queen. As I mentioned, it may not be a typical toy, but it is certainly a great decoration and a collector's gadget for lovers of Barbie, Elizabeth Taylor's works, and such "Cleopatrophiles" as the author of this text.

In 2010 Mattel produced 'Barbie Doll as Cleopatra',[46] also aimed rather at an older audience. In this version, we see Cleopatra as an ancient *femme fatale*, in a distinctive pop culture make-up, perhaps inspired by Monica Bellucci's creation in the 2002 French film *Asterix & Obelix: Mission Cleopatra*, directed by Alain Chabat.[47] Barbie's eyes are emphasised with eyeliner with an extended line, her eyelids are highlighted with turquoise and yellow shadow and her cheeks are delicately pink. The doll is presented in a gold and turquoise headdress decorated with a scarab and a snake's head, two wing-like elements which cover her breasts, a green and black skirt with a slit to the hip, a huge, orange and white cape, and gold sandals with green and black accessories, large green and gold earrings and a long scepter resembling a staff, topped with a figurine similar to the representation of the goddess Isis. This is another of the collector's items, so as with the version depicting Elizabeth Taylor the possibilities to play with the doll are limited.

44 This beautiful outfit is also seen in the Cleopatra's death scene.

45 Jon Solomon reports that over $130,000 was spent on all the actress' outfits, including wigs and jewellery, see: Solomon (2001, 70).

46 Barbie Doll as Cleopatra, see: https://wertoys.com/barbie-doll-as-cleopatra-gold-label-2010-mattel/ (accessed May 09, 2022).

47 See Chabat (2002).

More Mattel products are for the typical entertainment of children, especially girls. In May 2010, the Monster High[48] franchise was launched, over time including web series, animated films and dolls with accessories. The titular 'Monster High' is a high school attended by teenage protagonists, children of monsters known from popular culture and especially from Hollywood films: the werewolf, the vampire Dracula, Frankenstein's Monster, the mummy and the sea monster, and, as the brand developed, further characters.

The most notable is Cleo de Nile, one of the main characters of the series, who is the most popular girl in Monster High. The protagonist can be regarded as another of the caricatured representations of the Queen: on the one hand, comical as, for example, in the production *Carry on Cleo* with Amanda Barrie (1964, dir. Gerald Thomas) or, as already mentioned, in the film with Bellucci, and on the other hand, shown as a school beauty, thus fitting in with the film representations of Cleopatra, always portrayed by pretty actresses. The transformation of her character, as portrayed in subsequent web series and feature animated films, particularly *Boo York, Boo York* (2015, dir. William Lau), and *Welcome to Monster High* (2016, dir. Stephen Donnelly, Olly Reid, and Jun Falkenstein), is worth exploring. From the character biography on the official website and the diaries included with some of the dolls' sets, we learn that Cleo is the daughter of Ramses de Nile, and therefore a mummy. She is an Egyptian princess who is about 5843 years old, so she was born around 3843 BC, and she stays alive by wearing a piece of magic bandage, otherwise she would 'turn to dust'.[49] The creators, therefore, gave the character a biography, which has nothing in common with Cleopatra VII, however, both Cleo's name and her image refer directly to the cinematic representations of this Egyptian Ruler and exemplify the transformation of Elizabeth Taylor's creation.[50] The blue-green eyes of Cleo de Nile are always highlighted with violet, turquoise-violet or golden shadow, additionally edged with a black line for the effect of the so-called cat's eye, and under the right eye there is a blue diamond. In the first season of the series, as well as in the case of the basic version of the doll, the status of the daughter of the pharaoh was emphasized by rich clothing. The costume is a kind of jumpsuit made of bandages, with an additional scrap of material on the right hand, gold jewelry in the form of a diadem in the hair, earrings, bracelets, sandals and a decorative belt. The set with this doll is accessorized with a turquoise transparent cape, as well as a matching gold and black handbag and a mobile phone. In the version from the film *Boo York, Boo York*, the right eye is painted to resemble the eye of Horus, to emphasise the origin of the character. The doll's black hair is either cut in a bob or left longer to the waist (in the first season it had golden streaks woven into it), always with a distinctive fringe, although in subsequent models both the fringe and some of the streaks are turquoise. Cleo de Nile also has the same attributes that can be ascribed to the image of Queen Cleopatra. Her favorite pet is an Egyptian cobra named Hissette, a turquoise female with violet eyes, wearing a gold diadem, rings and necklaces. In addition, accessories referring to ancient Egypt are of-

48 See https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monster_High (accessed May 09, 2022).
49 See https://monsterhigh.fandom.com/wiki/Cleo_de_Nile/Generation_1 (accessed May 09, 2022).
50 The analysis of the dolls after Kulpa (2021, 228-231).

ten attached to the dolls' sets. For example, the golden dressing table[51] decorated with snakes and lotuses includes cosmetics containers in the shape of a sphinx, a cat, and a Canopic jar with the image of Duamutef. In the Death Tired model is a pyramid-shaped lamp, and in the Gloom and Bloom version a pot with a green snake, and in the Ghouls Rule! set a mask formed in the shape of the eye of Horus as an accessory to a ball gown (one of Cleo's outfits in the *Ghouls Rule!* film from 2012).[52]

All the dolls and figurines I have described depict Cleopatra as young, beautiful, and just entering adulthood (Cleo de Nile) or beginning a relationship with Julius Caesar (Playmobil). Only both Mattel collectibles dolls and the LEGO figurine, in my opinion, portray the Queen's transformation into an ambitious Ruler ('Elizabeth Taylor in *Cleopatra*'), a compelling *femme fatale* ('Barbie Doll as Cleopatra') who faces a suicidal death, accentuated by the presence of a reptile (LEGO).

Costumes

There are many costumes on the market that allow you to impersonate Cleopatra on Halloween or at a fancy dress ball.[53] For the purposes of this text, I have analyzed those available online: 'Girls Shimmer Cleopatra Costume',[54] 'Classic Cleopatra Girls Halloween Costume',[55] 'Girls Cleopatra Costume (white)',[56] 'Kids Cleopatra Costume',[57] 'Girls Pink Cleopatra Costume Kids Egyptian Princess Dress Queen of The Nile Outfit',[58] 'Dazzling Cleo – Child Costume',[59] 'Girls Cleopatra Costume (black)',[60] 'All Powerful Girls Cleopatra Costume',[61] 'Cleopatra Girl Costume',[62] and 'Girls Dark Cleopatra Costume'.[63] Girls can choose from quasi-Egyptian costumes, usually slim white or black dresses, to which airy capes have been added. The outfits are decorated with golden stripes with black, turquoise, red or pink applications, and a wide necklace, or rather a collar matching the colors. An indispensable element is a diadem or a kind of crown topped with a shiny ornament or a shape referring to the head of a snake. The set is completed with bracelets, sandals and sometimes a wig cut in the shape of a hairstyle typical for pop culture representations of Cleopatra, which was popularized by Elizabeth Taylor's role. A unique

51 See https://www.amazon.co.uk/Monster-High-Vanity-Dressing-Table/dp/B0063NPLTS (accessed May 09, 2022).
52 See: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2446108/ (accessed May 09, 2022).
53 The examples are easy to find on Amazon, eBay, etc.
54 See https://www.partycity.com/girls-shimmer-cleopatra-costume-P447143.html (accessed May 2, 2021).
55 See https://www.wondercostumes.com/cleopatra-kids-costume-ptckcle.html (accessed May 09, 2022).
56 See https://www.wondercostumes.com/girls-cleopatra-costume.html (accessed May 09, 2022).
57 See https://www.halloweencostumes.com/kids-cleopatra-costume.html (accessed May 09, 2022).
58 See https://www.amazon.com/Cleopatra-Costume-Egyptian-Princess-Outfit/dp/B08PZ7DW8B (accessed May 09, 2022).
59 See https://www.partydelights.co.uk/egyptian-costumes/dazzling-cleo-child-costume-16207.aspx (accessed May 09, 2022).
60 See https://www.costumepartyworld.com/girls-cleopatra-costume (accessed May 09, 2022).
61 See https://www.halloweencostumes.com/girls-all-powerful-cleopatra.html (accessed May 09, 2022).
62 See https://www.thecostumeshop.ie/kids-costumes/cleopatra-kids-costume-en.html (accessed May 09, 2022).
63 See https://www.partycity.com/girls-dark-cleopatra-costume-P789628.html (accessed: May 2, 2021).

proposal is the costume called 'Cleopatra Girl Costume',[64] which refers to the Hellenistic, specifically Macedonian roots of the Ptolemaic dynasty from which the Queen originated. You can buy a white dress resembling a *chitoniskos* (a shorter version of a *chiton*), fastened at the shoulders with hoops, possibly inspired by a *fibula* (an ancient type of broch or pin used to fasten clothes), to which a decorated short cape made of the same material is attached. Both the bottom of the dress, the belt and the neckline are decorated with gold lace ribbons, and the set also includes a diadem, the shape of which resembles a wreath of leaves. All the costumes discussed are made of polyester, with the decorations usually being sewn sequins in various colors, while the cloaks in the Egyptian costumes are most probably sewn from synthetic chiffon. Accessories, especially diadems and bracelets are made of gold ribbons of shiny, golden polyester or plastic.

The attention is drawn to some of the descriptions of the costumes with which the vendors advertise their products. One of them, in a text about the 'All Powerful Girls Cleopatra Costume', writes that the historical Cleopatra was a leader on whom girls can model themselves:

> Is your daughter a strong leader? When it comes to recess is she the one who organizes the races or decides what that group is going to pretend that day? Maybe she's always volunteering to read in class or bringing that science project to the next level. However she uses her leadership skills, you know that she could do anything, even lead a nation. [...] When your little girl dresses up as this mighty queen she's sure to feel as powerful as that immortal heroine that ruled in 51BC. Maybe she's dressing up for a school project or maybe she wants an imperial Halloween costume this year, either way, this Cleopatra Halloween costume is sure to support her leadership aspirations. She knows better than anyone that a queen doesn't follow the crowd, the crowd follows you.[65]

This is a remarkable portrayal of the Egyptian Queen as a positive heroine and role model. It should be noted, however, that information about Cleopatra's relationship with the Romans and her suicide have been removed from the description, presumably as being unsuitable for children. It may be obvious, but all the costumes I have mentioned should not be controversial for showing cleavage or exposing the belly of a child. Considering the reception image of Cleopatra in pop culture, I think this is an important change in showing the figure of the Queen to children, especially to girls, this ancient Ruler as a role model.

Board and Video Games

Board games and video games are another category of products with the reception image of Cleopatra aimed at children and young people. Below, I will present seven examples that, in my opinion, will show the most important representations of this Queen, and I will point to different types of using her character in the games' plots.

64 See https://www.thecostumeshop.ie/kids-costumes/cleopatra-kids-costume-en.html (accessed May 09, 2022).

65 See https://www.halloweencostumes.com/girls-all-powerful-cleopatra.html (accessed May 09, 2022).

The two analysed board games are *Cleopatra and the Society of Architects* designed by Bruno Cathala and Ludovic Maublanc in 2006, which was released in a new edition in 2020 with the additional description *Deluxe Edition*, and *Similo History*, created in 2019 by Martino Chiacchiera, Hjalmar Hach and Pierluca Zizzi. *Cleopatra and the Society of Architects*' plot follows Numerobis' task in Chabat's film, *Asterix & Obelix: Mission Cleopatra*, of building a palace for the Queen. Players take on the role of the eponymous architects, who compete with each other to obtain the best resources, sometimes resorting to bribery to fulfil Cleopatra's wishes. During the game, players build a three-dimensional palace and can take part in mysterious rituals to speed up the process, gain fame, and the position of chief architect. An interesting plot twist upon completion is the discovery of which player has been the most corrupt. Regardless of winning, this player is thrown to the crocodiles kept by Cleopatra (another reference to Chabat's film), and the architect with the second-most points is the winner. In its original version, the Queen figure is very small, about 3.5 cm, made of sand-colored plastic. It shows a standing figure of the Ruler holding a kind of scepter, wearing a long dress, a necklace characteristic for quasi-Egyptian representations, with half-long hair or a wig, on which we can see the so-called vulture crown. Unfortunately, due to the small size of the figurine and the uniform color, it is difficult to distinguish all the details. In the later version of the game, this element has been changed. The figure of Cleopatra is captured in motion, walking to the palace. The image fits in with pop cultural representations of her as a seductive beauty – her white dress[66] is slit up to her thigh, revealing her leg, her bust is emphasised through the tight top of the dress. The exemplification of the Egyptian Ruler is completed with make-up – an extended line highlighting the eye – and an elaborate crown, referring to the vulture crown, which is characteristic for Egyptian queens – made of two feathers, ostrich or falcon, and associated with Hathor's solar disk.[67] In both versions, the Cleopatra figurine is important, though rarely used. Moving it across the board means completing more elements of the palace, and placing it on the throne brings the game to a close. *Cleopatra and the Society of Architects* is aimed at audiences aged 10 and over, probably because of the multi-threaded gameplay.

Similo, on the other hand, is a deductive card game, and its *History* version features famous people from the pages of history, including Cleopatra. One of the participants takes the role of the narrator, while the others have to guess which of the famous people on the twelve cards in front of them is the mysterious figure.

The Egyptian Queen is depicted to her waist in front of a wall with hieroglyphs. She is an olive-skinned, black-haired beauty with a fringe – characteristic of her pop-cultural exemplifications – on top of which we can see a kind of diadem topped with a bird's head, with wings decorated with green stones surrounding Cleopatra's face – this is probably an interpretation of the vulture crown. She looks into the distance, while her almond-shaped eyes have been emphasised with kohl, her eyelids delicately highlighted with a pink shadow, and her lips in cherry lipstick depicted in a half-smile revealing her teeth. The Queen's dress consists of two strips of white fabric crossed over the bust, the

66 In the premium version, all figures are painted.
67 See Wilkinson (2003, 149-143).

neckline is accentuated with a wide gold necklace with green and turquoise stones, and a wide gold bracelet can be seen on her left arm.

Such a drawing of the Ruler together with a representation of Leonardo da Vinci can be also found on the first card in the box with the title of the game– interestingly enough, a wall with hieroglyphs was chosen as the background. On the card with the Ruler, as with other characters, there is short information about Cleopatra, that she is an Egyptian queen and the last ruler of the Ptolemaic kingdom (69-30 BC).[68]

Undoubtedly, the game has an educational value, is intended for an audience from 7 years of age and over, and provides entertainment, corresponding to the already mentioned concept of edutainment. It is also worth noting that the description of the Queen's life omits the threads of her relationships with the Romans and her suicidal death, focusing instead on the presentation of a young and dignified ruler.

Five selected examples of the portrayal of Cleopatra in video games are: *Cleopatra: Queen of the Nile*[69] by Break Away production from 2000, *Invincible Cleopatra – Caesar's Dreams*[70] by JetDogs Studio from 2021, *Cleopatra Gives Birth Into Water*[71] by Dress Up Mix from 2015, *Assassin's Creed Origins*[72] produced by Ubisoft from 2017, and *Dante's Inferno*[73], an action video game created by Electronic Arts in 2010. We can find in them the exemplifications of Cleopatra as a young and dignified ruler of Egypt, but also a dangerous temptress, even the eponymous monster, *fatale monstrum*,[74] from one of Horace's odes. The games are also very different in terms of the possibilities for interaction with the Ruler's character.

Cleopatra: Queen of the Nile is an example of using the representation of the Queen only on the packaging or in the menus as she does not appear in the gameplay itself. In this add-on to the city-building game *Pharaoh* (1999), the player must complete a series of missions to build and maintain a city in Egypt during the reign of the last Ptolemaic Ruler. On the image on the cover Cleopatra is depicted in a quasi-Egyptian outfit, an ornate skirt with bands of colored, blue, gold, turquoise and brown applications, and a high waist, emphasised by a wide gold belt. On the skirt, we can also see a blue and gold belt. The Queen's bust is covered by a wide necklace made of several layers of beads in colors similar to those on the skirt. The black-haired beauty has eyes emphasised with eyeliner with an extended line under her lower eyelid, as well as red lips. A snake-head diadem is seen on her fringed hair or wig. In her hands, decorated with wide golden bracelets, the Ruler holds the insignia of pharaonic power. Additional decorations include golden beads woven into Cleopatra's hair or wig, and a golden necklace with a large turquoise scarab.

Very similar depictions of the Queen can be found in *Invincible Cleopatra – Caesar's Dreams* and *Cleopatra Gives Birth Into Water*. The first title is a time management game,

68 Based on the Polish version of the game.
69 See https://impressionsgames.fandom.com/wiki/Cleopatra:_Queen_of_the_Nile (accessed May 09, 2022).
70 See https://store.steampowered.com/app/1475670/Invincible_Cleopatra_Caesars_Dreams/?l=polish (accessed May 09, 2022).
71 See https://www.girlgames.com/cleopatra-gives-birth-into-water.html (accessed May 09, 2022).
72 See https://www.ubisoft.com/en-us/game/assassins-creed/origins (accessed May 09, 2022).
73 See https://dantesinferno.fandom.com/wiki/Dante%27s_Inferno (accessed May 09, 2022).
74 Hor. *Carmina* I 37.21.

in which players have to help the Ruler of Egypt get a magic amulet in order not to let the Roman army conquer her country. To do this in the successive levels we control the characters of the mummy and the young Cleopatra by gaining a certain number of resources, constructing buildings and defeating enemies, including the god Anubis. An important element is to finish the game boards in a certain time to gain additional gold stars, which we can exchange for elements of the outfit or additional attributes (cat, scarab) to increase the skills of the titular figure. Unfortunately, the character still has the same outfit during gameplay, namely a white, tight dress with a decorative belt in gold, red and turquoise. Cleopatra's image in the game is inspired by Elizabeth Taylor's creation in Mankiewicz's film, with her hairstyle in the shape of a characteristic bob with a fringe, her eyes are emphasised with eyeliner and purple shadow and her lips with red lipstick. The Ruler's hair is adorned with multicolored beads and she wears a snake-head diadem on her head. Additional decorations are a wide gold necklace, gold sandals and bracelets. They highlight the image of the Queen as a young leader, the eponymous invincible Cleopatra, who fights for her country.

Cleopatra Gives Birth Into Water, in turn, is an unusual exemplification of the Egyptian Ruler as a young mother. The player's task is to help the two servants who accompany Cleopatra to give birth to a blond-haired son. In the beautiful palace, the player performs certain tasks, from lighting candles, playing the lute and massaging, to preparing a fragrant bath and giving the child to the mother. The toddler is then presented by the Queen and a Roman, probably Caesar, to the Egyptian subjects. Cleopatra's image in this game is also reminiscent of Elizabeth Taylor's creation, as she has her characteristic bob hairstyle with a fringe, her eyes are emphasised with purple shadow and eyeliner, and her lips are colored with red lipstick. The royal status of the Ruler is highlighted by a golden crown, referring to the vulture crown, which she wears all the time. Only Cleopatra's clothing changes during the gameplay. At the beginning we see her in a gold dress, colorful necklace and snake-shaped bracelet (she does not take it off during the game, either). During birth, she is wearing a casual white robe with a delicate blue and gold decoration at the neckline. When presenting her son, on the other hand, she wears a white strapless dress decorated with a gold ribbon.[75]

It is worth noting that there are plenty of similar online games such as *Cleopatra Gives Birth Into Water* (especially available on websites dedicated to children and young people, mostly girls), in which the player has the task of helping in the birth of the child of a specific figure. Nevertheless, they do not feature any other women known from history, but fairy tales' female protagonists or princesses from Disney animated films: Belle from *Beauty and the Beast* (*Princess Belle Gives Birth*)[76] Cinderella (*Cinderella Gives Birth to Twins*),[77] Arielle from *The Little Mermaid* (*Pregnant Arielle Gives Birth*),[78] Anna and Elsa from *Frozen* (*Frozen Anna Gives Birth*[79] and *Frozen Elsa Gives Birth*[80]), and so on. The inclusion of Cleopatra in a series of fairytale heroines shows the extent to which her

75 Analysis after: Kulpa (2021, 228).
76 See https://www.dressupwho.com/games/princess-belle-gives-birth/ (accessed May 09, 2022).
77 See https://www.girlgames.com/cinderella-gives-birth-to-twins.html (accessed May 09, 2022).
78 See https://mycutegames.com/Games/Princess/Pregnant-Ariel-Gives-Birth.html (accessed May 09, 2022).
79 See https://www.girlgames.com/frozen-anna-give-birth-to-a-baby.html (accessed May 09, 2022).
80 See https://www.dressupwho.com/games/frozen-elsa-gives-birth/ (accessed May 09, 2022).

image has been transformed: from the real-life daughter of Ptolemy XII through being inspiration for paintings, literature, theatre, music, and later film and other areas of 20th century popular culture, to a character from the children's world.

In all of the aforementioned games, the Queen's image depicts a majestic young Ruler at the pinnacle of power – certainly not a *femme fatale* – and directly relates to pop culture reminiscences of Elizabeth Taylor's creations, including the birth of her son, Caesarion.

However, Cleopatra as the dangerous temptress is portrayed in the next two works. *Assassin's Creed: Origin* from the *Assassin's Creed* series is an action-adventure game intended for adults (+18), although younger people are also likely to participate in the gameplay.[81] The plot of this series is about the genesis of the conflict between the titular Assassins and their enemies – the Templars. The player takes on the role of warriors named Bayek and Aya (Bayek's wife), whose son was assassinated, and they decide to take revenge on his murderers. Players perform successive missions to defeat a secret society called the Order of Ancients, which, as it turns out over time, includes both prominent Romans and Egyptians. Players try to prevent this organization from taking power over Egypt, and the background of the game is an alternative version of events connected with Cleopatra's history, from the moment she regained the crown after being banished by her brother to the death of Julius Caesar. It is worth noting that an interesting plot point is a moment when the Queen, hidden in a rolled-up carpet, gets to the palace where Julius Caesar resides, as it is the player who helps the Ruler to get to the Roman leader safely.

Players do not get to control Cleopatra's character, but there is a lot of interaction between her, Bayek and Aya during the game. The Queen is presented as a black-haired, beautiful and sensual woman with a charming voice, wearing a characteristic hairstyle (probably a wig) of a long bob, dressed in rather skimpy Egyptian clothes, with her eyes emphasised with kohl. An interesting element of Cleopatra's appearance is her jewelry, especially her headdress with colorful beads and gold rings, above her temples connected by chains and a huge green stone above her forehead – forming a kind of mask surrounding her eyes.

In the first scene with the Ruler, we see her at a feast, asking for opium and challenging the men who are present to spend the night with anyone willing, on the condition that this volunteer is later executed. This is an obvious reference to scenes from films such as *Cleopatra* from 1912 (dir. Charles L. Gaskill), based on V. Sardou's play, and *Due notti con Cleopatra* [Two Nights with Cleopatra] from 1954 (dir. Mario Mattoli). The exemplification of Cleopatra in *Assassin's Creed: Origin* is a ruthless and vindictive manipulator who is not afraid to torture her subjects to get the information she needs (she is stopped by Aya) and unhesitatingly decides on a death sentence on her brother and co-ruler. She is a *femme fatale* who tempts the protagonists with the prospect of a safe and peaceful state, only to use their skills for her own ends, such as eliminating rivals to the throne, and then betraying them and going over to the enemy's side. She is not a 'monster' to be defeated, but her actions and choices become the *spiritus movens* of the centuries-old conflict between the Assassins and the Templars.

81 Analysis after: Kulpa (2021, 224-226).

The titular monster from Horace's ode could be, in my opinion, an inspiration for Cleopatra's image in the action-adventure game *Dante's Inferno*, also intended for an adult audience and based on Dante Alighieri's *Divina Commedia* [Divine Comedy] (early 15th century, published in 1472)[82]. As a reminder, in the Italian author's work, the protagonist meets the Egyptian Ruler in the second circle of hell in the fifth song, in which people reside who have succumbed to the sin of lust. The creators based the game on this narrative poem and decided to make Cleopatra a size-shifting demon who must be defeated in order to complete the game and bring the murdered Beatrice back.[83] Interestingly, in *Dante's Inferno*, the Queen rules this part of hell along with Antony because she swore loyalty to Lucifer. Already in front of Cleopatra's residence, we meet stone snakes, probably a reference to her suicidal death by reptile venom, which has been perpetuated in pop culture. The Queen definitely cannot be called a beauty, as she has a grey body and her face brings to mind zombies or Kuchisake-onna,[84] her lips have been cut from the corners to the cheeks, and there are bloody streaks around her eyes.

Cleopatra's outfit includes a torn hip band and a gold necklace with the image of an eye covering her naked breasts. It is worth noting the creature's headpiece, which resembles a moody *nemes* with a golden diadem and scarabs, and the monster's long, golden fingernails. The Ruler in the game has many powers, she controls all the demons in the circle, can summon unbaptized babies from her nipples, and can release the murderous Antony from her maw, whom she can heal. Additionally, the Queen has the ability to cause electrical storms and seduce any being with a kiss. After Mark Antony is defeated by Dante, she tries to tempt the hero by taking on the size of an average woman, but fails and is killed by a blow to the chest. It would seem that this is a completely different image of Cleopatra from that found in the other titles discussed, but it is simply another version of one of the roles assigned to the Ruler, that of a dangerous temptress.

I believe that the diverse ways in which the Queen is portrayed to older and younger audiences is very interesting. I am very curious if the fact of presenting Cleopatra to children as a young and majestic Ruler, and not as a *femme fatale*, will significantly change the reception exemplifications of the Queen in the future.

Instead of a Conclusion – The Methodological Challenges...

These examples of the functioning of the image of Cleopatra in products for children and young people obviously do not exhaust the issue, but only outline it. Therefore, I would like to share methodological challenges that, I believe, many researchers interested in studying contemporary representations of the Queen face, and more broadly in classical reception studies with material and audiovisual works aimed at young audiences. Of course, I am aware that every scholar will adopt a different research perspective

82 See Lansing (2010, 198, 201–202).

83 Analysis after Kulpa (2021,226-227).

84 A demon from a Japanese urban legend, appearing in the form of a woman with her lips slit, who asks passerbys a question and kills or mutilates them depending on their answer, see Kamińska (2016, 198).

and choose different research methods, but I hope that outlining my methodological challenges will inspire scholarly discussion of the issue I am interested in, and, perhaps, make it possible to develop new research concepts in the future to enable the fullest possible analysis of these aspects of children's and young adults' culture.

The first and most important challenge I face during my research is to define the term 'toys' in the context of the technological revolution. The very definition of 'toys' may differ in dependence on a specific research perspective adopted or accordingly to the legislative law of a particular country that allows certain products for sale.[85] As an example may serve the definition proposed by Jan Bujak, which identifies a toy as

> a material object deliberately made for entertainment purposes, which covers the cultural content of the epoch or past epochs relevant to him in the field of material, spiritual or social culture, and communicates them in a way that evokes specific attitudes, ludic, and through them it shapes physical, mental or emotional development.[86]

Étienne Benson claims that

> toys have become high-stakes playthings. They provide children with fun and fantasy while teaching hard-edged social norms; they promise parents peace of mind while bringing the chaos of popular consumer culture into the home; they produce massive profits for multinational conglomerates whose public relations offices promise to put the child's interests first.[87]

It is worth noting that researchers more and more often associate the issue of the functioning of toys with popular culture and do include the analysis of those items' impact on the user.[88] From my perspective the most important studies on toys in the context of cultural studies concern recognizing them not only as an important element of popular culture, but also a cultural-media universe in which, bearing in mind the concept of a transmedia storytelling by Henry Jenkins, there is a convergence between various media. That term covers literature, audiovisual arts and material objects that these products might represent.[89] In my text, however, I use the term 'products' because I find it problematic to define board games and video games specifically as toys. The question is whether to include other products in the category of toys or to draw clear boundaries between toys such as dolls, figurines and costumes and games.

Another important methodological challenge is the definition of the concept of young adults. In my paper, I assumed that by using this term, I meant recipients under the age of 18, but the terminology in different disciplines can refer to people between 13 and 35 years of age. This large discrepancy definitely changes the perspective on this age group, as the potential difference between the youngest and the oldest audience is

85 See Żołądź-Strzelczyk et al. (2016, 13-14).
86 Quotation translated by the author, see: Bujak (1988, 24).
87 See Benson (2006).
88 For example, see: Kline (1992); Fleming (1996); Lyon Clark and Randolph Higonnet (1999); Wesseling (2018).
89 Examples of such works are: Bergesen (2006); Forman-Brunell and Whitne (2015); Steinberg (2012); Drotner and Livingstone (2008); Flanagan (2008).

more than twenty years – a whole generation. Connected to this issue is another question about the categorization of products for children and young people. In the case of the reception of the figure of Cleopatra, it can refer to the video games and collectible dolls mentioned in the paper, but also to cosmetics – young girls also do make-up. Where is the borderline between being a child and a young adult? How can you tell if a product is aimed at this age group if, for example, Playmobil figurines are collected by people of all ages, while games aimed at 18 and older are played by younger people too? I must admit that I am still looking for answers to these questions.

The most important research question is what research methods should be used in studying the reception of Cleopatra in products for children and young people. In my research as culture studies scholar and historian, I use the academic ideas of reception studies, principally proposed by Lorna Hardwick and Christopher Stray,[90] the authorities on classical reception studies, and Konrad Dominas,[91] a Polish philologist and IT specialist. One of Hardwick's assumptions is worth special attention:

> (IV) The concept of cultural horizon (with its ancient analogue *paideia*) provides a useful, but not constraining framework for reception studies. How cultural horizons, with their assumptions, expectations, aspirations and transformations, can be related to classical material is a crucial area in modern reception studies which also have to take into consideration the impact of new technologies and art forms (such as film).[92]

That allows to classify pop cultural items, toys and other youths' products such as plushies, dolls, costumes, and video games just as important for contemporary reception studies as established art forms, such as paintings, books, and films. Secondly, it seemingly broadens our understanding of the ancient world's perception beyond contemporary western borders by inclusion of Hellenistic Egypt and, of course, the figure of Cleopatra VII. The next concept of transmedia storytelling accordingly to H. Jenkins[93] is a kind of narrative developed by various media platforms, each of which contributes to creation of a fictional world. The virtual world is a particularly important research area as an interaction platform that flows between literature, audiovisual culture and toys, costumes, and games. Helpful in the analysis of Cleopatra's convergence between audiovisual and material works (toys, board games, and costumes), as well as the analysis of video games, is furthermore the adoption of the concepts from visual culture studies,[94] especially the use of critical analysis of visual materials in terms of approach proposed by Ross Gillian,[95] and using, *inter alia*, the concept of intertextuality (a term introduced by Julia Kristeva), [96] recognized by John Fiske and Irit Rogoff as the basic competence in reading popular culture,[97] as well as visual sociology in the approach proposed by Piotr

90 See Hardwick (2003); Hardwick and Stray (2007).
91 See Dominas (2017).
92 See Hardwick (2003, 10).
93 See Jenkins (2006, 20-21, 95, 194, 119, 293).
94 See Jenks (1995); Mirzoeff (1998, 1-13); Mitchell (2002, 231-250); Bal (2003, 5-31); Smith (2008).
95 See Gillian (2000).
96 See Kristeva (1969); Kristeva and Roudiez (1980).
97 See Fiske (1989, 100); Rogoff (1998).

Sztompka,[98] allowing to focus on the issue of reading by a particular society using and transforming representations created both in conscious and accidental ways. Also worth noting are the academic ideas of material culture studies,[99] especially the Lash and Lury's concept of the medialisation of objects and the objectification of the media[100] that also focuses on how the global culture industry works through brands.

Of course, thanks to scrutinizing ancient literary and material sources in terms of credibility and authenticity applying methods of auxiliary sciences of history (source studies, genealogy, numismatics, epigraphy), it is possible to present the frequency of the multidimensional and heterogeneous image of Cleopatra's appearance in the reception process which in popular culture has been reduced to an often trivialized, superficial image that is easy to identify even by the youngest audience.

These are just a few of the possible research concepts to help analyze the issue that has been presented. I hope that this article, an introduction to research about Cleopatra's image in products for children and young people, will encourage further scholarly research and discussion.

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98 See Sztompka (2005); Sztompka and Bogunia-Borowska (2012).

99 See Appadurai (1986); Miller (1987); Glassie (1999); Woodward (2007); Trentmann (2016); Hannan and Longair (2017); Hicks and Beaudry (2018).

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