

Hasso Böhme and Adelheid Hlawacek present
in collaboration with Prof. Dr Ernst Fischer,
Chairman of the Vienna Bibliophile Society

The bibliophile world novelty „The Egyptian Struwwelpeter“ on Papyrus



© KHM-Museumsverband

Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna
23 April 2025, 18:30 - 20:30

„The Egyptian Struwwelpeter“
History and Edition

As Adelheid Hlawacek reports, *The Egyptian Struwwelpeter* was created in Vienna at the end of the 19th century. One contributing factor was the Vienna World Exhibition of 1873, which featured an Egyptian-Oriental collection.

Gertrud Netolitzky, for example, who – as will be shown below – followed the creation of *Egyptian Struwwelpeter* together with her siblings from a middle-class Viennese family of doctors, testified to this by word of mouth:

“I am the last person to have witnessed its [*the Egyptian Struwwelpeter's*] creation. I was eight years old at the time, feverishly interested in every phase... At the time there was a fad for old ‘excavations’, which were much more primitive and not really old, we had such volumes at home.”

It was in this environment that the *The Egyptian Struwwelpeter* was created in Vienna in 1893/1894. The book was a personal, humorous gift for Bertha Gersuny, who organised dance classes for the Netolitzky children and their friends with a befitting graduation ball. The participants in the dance lessons were the three eldest children of the Netolitzky family: Magdalena, Richard and Fritz, whom ‘Aunt Bertha’ also looked after during their student days away from the family.

When Magdalena was asked to buy a Struwwelpeter for Mrs Gersuny, Magdalena and her siblings likely wanted to find a suitable, personal and imaginative gift for ‘Aunt Bertha’ as well. The result was a book made by the three children themselves, which the recipient received in 1894: *The Egyptian Struwwelpeter*. The gift was based on mystification. A satirical foreword in the manuscript of the book mischievously claimed that the papyrus of an original Struwwelpeter had been found which was not only the template for this book, but also for Heinrich Hoffmann’s *Struwwelpeter*. As the result of this work was so impressive, the idea was born to offer it to a publisher and print it as a book, which again took a year: it was published in November 1895.



The Netolitzky family

The parents, August and Hedwig Netolitzky with their seven children, Troppau 1897

standing: Richard, Julius,
Toni (domestic help), Ernst
seated: Fritz, Magdalena, Gertrud, Emma



Template for the illustration of the story of Cruel Psamtek
Photo: Vogeljagd © KHM-Museumsverband



From the story of Cruel Psamtek in the
Egyptian Struwwelpeter. © dohaböhme

On the history of the manuscript

After Bertha Gersuny's death on April 5, 1900, the manuscript of the *Egyptian Struwwelpeter* was returned to Magdalena Netolitzky's family. However, it fell victim to bombing in Vienna in April 1945 and was burnt down. A large part of the printed edition survived, which was recalled by the publisher due to the ongoing plagiarism case and was successfully sold later on.

The loss of the manuscript is all the more regrettable because – as mentioned – it contained another story about *Fidgety Philip* which was not included in the printed edition. This particular tale satirized military recruit training – an institution regarded as sacrosanct in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy of 1895. At the time, such criticism was considered too risky to publish, even in a humorous context. Only the story's final line has survived through family oral tradition: "Pereat military!" (Down with the military!).

The 1895 plagiarism trial

Publishing house Rütten & Loening in Frankfurt a. M. consequently also tried to prevent the publication of the *Egyptian Struwwelpeter* in 1895 by filing a plagiarism suit against the Viennese publisher Gerold's Sohn. The trial did not take place until the spring of 1896; the copies therefore, had to be recalled in December 1895. Christmas sale with this book had been lost for the publisher.

The reprinting process ended in favour of the publisher Gerold's Sohn: The copyright law in force from December 31, 1895 stipulated that the *Egyptian Struwwelpeter*:

- is clearly a work of literature
- does not reproduce any elements of the original *Struwwelpeter*, but is rather an adaptation with its own originality; such an adaptation could be published in the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy without the consent of the original [Frankfurt] author and publisher

Translations

The Egyptian Struwwelpeter.

The Egyptian Struwwelpeter: being the Struwwelpeter papyrus; with full text and 100 original vignettes from the Vienna papyri; dedicated to children of all ages.

Egyptiläinen Jörö-Jukka

Veikko Pihlajamäki (1921–2006) is the translator of the book into Finnish, which was published by the translator himself in Tampere in 1993.

Humoresque trilogy

The closest example, however, was a literary one: between the years of 1882 and 1884, the Düsseldorf genre painter, caricaturist and writer Carl Maria Seyppel created a successful satiric Egyptian trilogy which was based on Wilhelm Busch in terms of content, but for which he created his own, very striking Egyptian style in the design of the pictures and books. He used jute with lacquer seals and cover windows on the front covers and called them "mummy prints".

1. "Sharp, Sharper, Sharpest" [1886], I. A humorous tale of Old-Egypt. *Penned down and depicted in 1315 a.C. by C.M.Seyppel.*

2. "He + She + It" (1884), II. Egyptian Court, Chronicle. *B. C. 1302. A veracious and truthful version, designed by C.M.Seyppel.*

3. "Die Plagen" (1884), III. Egyptian Humoresque. *Text written down and artwork copied by C.M. Seyppel at the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt. Mummy print D.R.P. 23615*

More about Adelheid Hlawacek and the Netolitzky family: <https://struwwelpeter.org>

The immortal Struwwelpeter and his descendants

As Hasso Böhme reports, the “original” *Struwwelpeter* was created under circumstances comparable to those of the *Egyptian Struwwelpeter*: It was originally a private book. The Frankfurt doctor, psychiatrist and writer Dr Heinrich Hoffmann had created the *Struwwelpeter* for Christmas 1844 as a booklet for his son Carl to read aloud. Little did he know that he would create a children’s book that would be printed in countless editions and translated into many languages, influencing generations and continuing to spark debate to this day.

Part of the book’s extraordinary impact is that it has been used and rewritten as a model for numerous political and socially critical public parodies to this day. It has also been used privately, mostly for humorous adaptations at company and family celebrations or as a thank-you gift.

As is well known, Struwwelpeter is still criticised today as the epitome of so-called “black pedagogy”. However, this hardly does Hoffmann justice. He was convinced that it was appropriate to confront children with such realities, albeit under the protection of parental guidance. Although the reality in his *Funny stories and whimsical pictures* was also deliberately exaggerated, according to Hoffmann the stories were not “plucked out of thin air”, but rather “grown up from practical soil, especially the main character.” His name can be interpreted in different ways. The immediate origin is a little stick figure drawn on a page called “Das Haar- und Nagelkind” (The Hair and Nails Child), which Hoffmann called *Struwwelpeter* on the last page of his booklet.

The success and reception of Struwwelpeter

After Christmas 1844, Heinrich Hoffmann presented the booklet he had illustrated and written for his three-year-old son to the friends of the Society of Artists, Scholars and Writers “Tutti Frutti and their Baths in the Ganges”, with great success. His future publisher, the Mannheim Jewish publisher Zacharias Löwenthal, was also present. He recognised the value of this new children’s book concept, took it over from Hoffmann for 80 guilders and had the first edition published under the pseudonym “Der lustige Reimerich Kinderlieb”, the 2nd to the 4th edition under the pseudonym “Heinrich Kinderlieb”.

In the autumn of 1845, the first 3,000 copies were published under the title *Lustige Geschichten und drollige Bilder mit 15 schön colorirten Tafeln für Kinder von 3-6 Jahren* (*Funny stories and whimsical pictures with 15 beautifully coloured plates for children aged 3-6*) with six stories; they sold out quickly. The 2nd edition contained two more stories, the 3rd and 4th editions were published under the title *Der Struwwelpeter*. The last two stories followed in the 5th edition in 1847 and Heinrich Hoffmann was named as the author on the title page. The scope of the book was now finalised, but the title character was still in flux. In 1859, Hoffmann created a new *Struwwelpeter* in the 27th edition with long hair, new pictures and minimal changes to the text. In the 31st edition, the hairstyle was changed back to the familiar “crown of rays”, also known as the “Afro-look”.

Struwwelpeter translations

The *Struwwelpeter* was translated into European languages early on:

- 1847 Danish *Vaer Lydig*
- 1848 English *The English Struwwelpeter*
- 1860 French *Pierre l'Ébouriffé*
- 1871 Spanish *Juan el Desgreñado*
- 1882 Italian *Pierino Porcospino*

Over 60 further translations followed, with a large number of vernacular and dialect translations. In addition, numerous imitations, parodies and adaptations for music and theatre were created, some with socially critical or political intentions, as well as private family-related Struwwelpetriades.

Girl Struwwelpetriades

- 1849 *The Struwwelsuse* Erfurt
- 1864 *The screaming Liesel* Munich
- 1867 *Mlle Mary Sans-Soin* Paris
- 1888 *Women's Struwwelpeter* Stuttgart
- 1896 *The Struwwel-Liese* Hamburg

Political Struwwelpeter parodies

- 1848 *Little handbook for rummagers* Leipzig
- 1849 *The political Struwwelpeter* Düsseldorf
- 1878 *A Faint Echo of Old Memories* Copenhagen
- 1899 *The political Struwwelpeter* London
- 1943 *Schicklgrüber* Kalkutta

Socio-critical Struwwelpeter parodies

- 1852 *The great Struwwelpeter* Berlin
- 1877 *The military Struwwelpeter* Berlin
- 1880 *The pedagogically improved Struwwelpeter* Munich
- 1883 *Short gynaecological Struwwelpeter* Heidelberg
- 1896 *Technical Struwwelpeter* Berlin / Vienna

Musical theatre pieces

1875, Andreas Hussla, *Melodies from Dr Heinrich Hoffmann's Struwwelpeter*. Literarische Anstalt Rütten & Loening, Frankfurt (piece of music).

1951, Kurt Hessenberg, *Der Struwwelpeter Petrus hirtus*, Edition Schott, 1956, piano reduction ED 6082 (piece of music).

In 2018, television station ZDF showed a modern interpretation of some of the stories by Jan Böhrmann and the *Neo Magazin Royale* team, set in the present day *Der Struwwelpeter*.

2024, programme booklet *Shock-headed Peter*, junk opera, interpreted by the Tiger Lillies, Julian Crouch and Phelim McDermott, music by Martyn Jacques.

Family Struwwelpeter parodies

Some examples:

- 1883 *Struwwelpeter Song* for the author of *Struwwelpeter* on his 50th anniversary as Doctor Frankfurt a. M.
- 1894 *The Egyptian Struwwelpeter* Vienna
- 1896 *Der Schwerenöther*, wedding edition (Mumm family) Frankfurt a. M..
- 1916 *Family indictment* for Karl and Lieschen Vilseck am See
- 1998 *Anniversary and birthday Struwwelpeter F. Baumgartner* Freiburg i. B.

A visit to the Struwwelpeter Museum in Frankfurt provides a deep insight into the work of Henrich Hoffmann and the abundance of ever new forms of Struwwelpeter themes in the expression of their time since 180 years.

Contributors

Adelheid Hlawacek

Born in 1947 as the fifth of six children in Ahrenberg, Lower Austria, graduated from a humanistic grammar school, educational training and training for the higher library service at the Austrian National Library in Vienna, founding member of the Austrian Society for Children's and Youth Literature Research. From 1994 on, research on the *Egyptian Struwwelpeter* as well as numerous exhibitions and projects on the subject of *Struwwelpeter*.

Hasso Böhme

Born in Dresden in 1944, lives near Zurich. From 1975 to 2012, he was the owner of a trading company that represented the products of well-known international companies in Switzerland. Today he is a book researcher, author, concept designer and publisher.

„dohaböhme bibliothek & archiv“, Hasso and Dominique Böhme, Unterengstringen, Switzerland

The „dohaböhme bibliothek & archiv“ was founded in 2017 by Dominique and Hasso Böhme and aims not only to collect, but also to conduct research in the given subject areas. Focal points: ABC picture books, children's and youth literature, Greek mythologies, Faust, Reynard the Fox and fables and especially Struwwelpeter. The objects discussed and shown here are all owned by the collection. Approx. 1,000 objects have been digitised.

Prof. Dr. Ernst Fischer

Chairman of the Vienna Bibliophile Society.

Danksagung

Dr. Regina Hölzl, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien
and all other contributors to the creation of the papyrus scroll.

The „Aegyptian Struwwelpeter on Papyrus“ is available as a numbered edition of 18 copies each in German and English:

ISBN Nr. 978-3-033-10547-8 German: *Der Aegyptische Struwwelpeter* Papyrus
ISBN Nr. 978-3-033-10548-5 English: *The Egyptian Struwwelpeter* Papyrus

Subscription offer

„The Egyptian Struwwelpeter” on Papyrus

Preferential price for the subscription,

valid until 30 June 2025

EUR 990.00

Orders from **1 July 2025**

Retail price

EUR 1'600.00

Price excl. shipping costs

Available in:

Two numbered special editions of 18 copies each in German and English.

The bibliophile package of the Egyptian Struwwelpeter consists of

A clamshell box with an embedded papyrus label on the outside lid and a papyrus certificate of authenticity with seal on the inside.



A 28-page accompanying booklet with the following topics:

Origin of the stories of Hoffmann's original Struwwelpeter and the misuse of the Struwwelpeter stories by parents who threaten their unruly children: If they are not good, they will suffer a similar fate to the one depicted in the stories. In the spirit of black pedagogy.



Hoffmann based Struwwelpeter on stories from his private and professional life.

Origin stories and the depiction of the Egyptian Struwwelpeters of the Netolitzky family from Vienna, researched on the basis of the diaries and notes of the family and their descendants as a cheerful gift for the “dancing aunt” Bertha Gersuny.

The traditional way of storing papyrus scrolls in antiquity, a linen cloth for wrapping.





The 4.5 metre long papyrus scroll, printed with 17 illustrations on the subject of “The Egyptian Struwwelpeter” as well as a text panel with information on the origin of the Egyptian Struwwelpeter in the guise of historical hieroglyphic splendour, inspired by the wallpaper paintings from 1894 that already existed at the time in today's AEOS Hall I of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

Your order:

First name: _____

Last name: _____

Institution: _____

Street: _____

ZIP, City: _____

Country: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Der Aegyptische Struwwelpeter on Papyurs (GER)

ISBN: 978-3-033-10547-8, dohaböhme Vertrieb und Verlag AG

pcs. _____

Price incl. VAT, plus shipping costs

The Egyptian Struwwelpeter on Papyurs (EN)

ISBN: 978-3-033-10548-5, dohaböhme Vertrieb und Verlag AG

pcs. _____

Price incl. VAT, plus shipping costs

Mail to: info@doha-bvv.com



dohaböhme

bibliothek & archiv

dohaböhme bibliothek & archiv

Zürcherstraße 71, Postfach 43

CH-8103 Unterengstringen

info@doha-bba.com

www.doha-bba.com