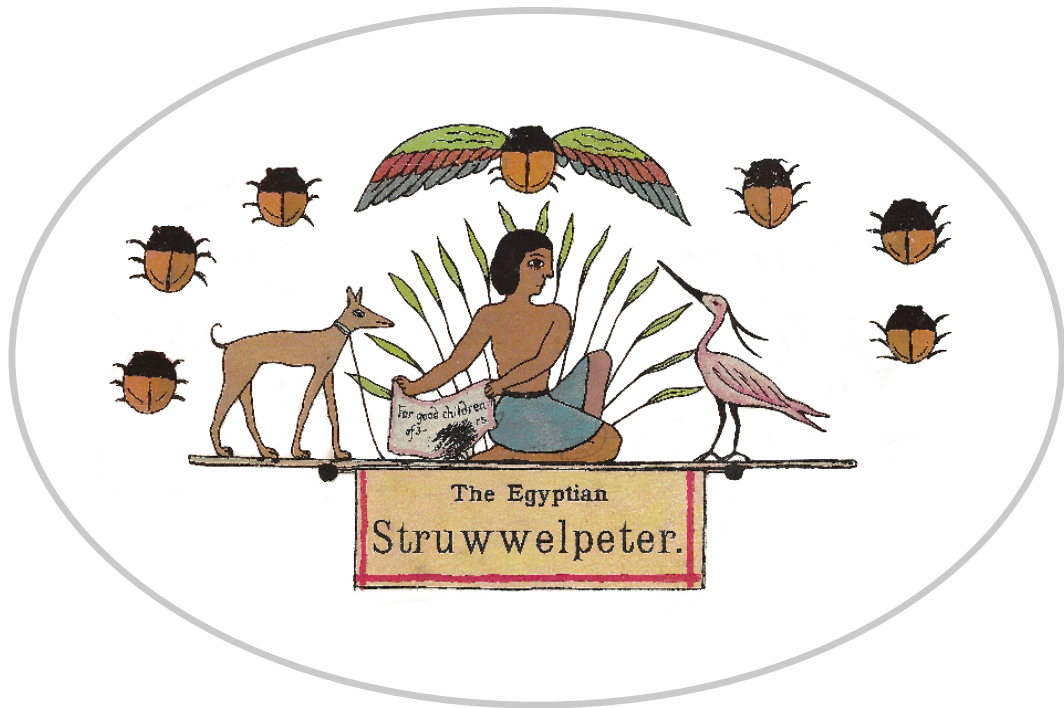


Accompanying booklet



History and Edition of the “Egyptian Struwwelpeter”

Hasso Böhme & Adelheid Hlawacek

Unterengstringen / Zurich and Baden near Vienna

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The Egyptian Struwwelpeter, Vienna, 1896

Visions of Egypt in Vienna around 1900

The Egyptian Struwwelpeter was created in Vienna at the end of the 19th century. A look at the historical context of the multi-ethnic state of Austria-Hungary around 1900 shows that Vienna was a crossroads of cultural-historical Europe when it came to the creation of perceptions of Egypt. Vienna in particular was characterised by a pronounced “Egyptomania”¹. A few examples can be used to illustrate this.

One of the reasons for this was the Vienna World Exhibition of 1873, at which ancient Egypt was shown in its Egyptian-Oriental collection. This included a replica of the magnificent tomb of Chnumhotep II (around 1870 BC). In 1891, the Kunsthistorisches Museum (Museum of Art History) Vienna² received one of 17 donations that Egypt distributed to as many international museums after an intact pharaonic tomb was discovered in Dêr el-Bahari. The Kunsthistorisches Museum was opened in the same year. It was an obvious choice to draw on the Egyptian-Oriental collection.

As a result, all of Vienna raved about Egypt and the treasures of the pharaohs. Reproductions were traded, and many people exhibited antiques or “old excavations” from Egypt in their parlours. 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 mouth³:

“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.”

A prominent Viennese example is Sigmund Freud, who had a number of ancient, particularly Egyptian, figures on his desk. In his last book, *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), he understood Moses as an Egyptian and derived central aspects of Mosaic monotheism from Akhenaten’s elevation of god Aton above all other gods.



Freud's desk in Vienna, photographed in 1938 by Edmund Engelman, shortly before Freud's emigration to London. © Thomas Engelman

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”. This witty idea was so successful that even the S. Fischer Verlag published an Egyptian Faust satire in 1889 under the title *Rajadar and Hellmischu. Ancient Egyptian song with LXXX images based on the life of an Egyptian Faust parody*. It is obvious that not only historical books but above all Seyppel's satirical Egyptian volumes were an expression of the “Egyptomania” present around 1900 and served as a direct model for the Viennese *Egyptian Struwwelpeter*.



1. “Sharp, Sharper, Sharpest” [1886]

I. A humorous tale of Old-Egypt.
Penned down and depicted in 1315 a.C. by C.M.Seyppel.
© dohaböhme collection



2. “He + She + It” (1884)

II. Egyptian Court Chronicle.
B. C. 1302. A veracious and truthful version, designed by C.M.Seyppel.
© dohaböhme collection



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
© E. Kerssens collection



4. “Rajadar und Hellmischu” (1889)
Scene from the Egyptian “Ur-Faust”.
6482 years before Goethe written by C.M. Seyppel.
© dohaböhme collection

“The Egyptian Struwwelpeter” - a private mystification

It was in this environment that the *Egyptian Struwwelpeter* was created in Vienna in 1893/1894. The book was a private, humorous present: around 1894 there was a middle-class circle of doctors from the Netolitzky, Gersuny, Billroth, Nothnagel and Tolds families who worked in leading medical positions and supported each other. August, the father of the Netolitzky family, worked as a civil servant in the Austrian Empire and was repeatedly transferred to new places.

For this reason, his children in Vienna were occasionally looked after by his friends, the Gersuny family, during their studies. Among other things, Bertha Gersuny organised dance lessons for the children of the befriended doctors' families, including a graduation ball befitting their station.

The dance lessons were attended by the three eldest children of the Netolitzky family: Magdalena, Richard and Fritz, who were also looked after by “Aunt Bertha” during their student days away from the family.

When Magdalena was asked to procure a *Struwelpeter* for Mrs Gersuny, the idea probably arose to find a more suitable, appropriate and imaginative gift for “Aunt Bertha”. The result was a book made by the three children – the “author-company” – which the recipient received in 1894: the *Egyptian Struwelpeter*. The gift was based on mystification. A satirical foreword in the manuscript of the book mischievously claimed that the papyrus of an original Struwelpeter had been found, which was not only the model for this book, but also for Heinrich Hoffmann’s Struwelpeter.

The “author-company” of the “Egyptian Struwelpeter” Fritz, Magdalena and Richard Netolitzky



“Pyramid Thothmes” Fritz Netolitzky
All three photos: © Private archive



Magdalena [Magda] Netolitzky



Richard Netolitzky

The real-life reference was, of course, the other way around: the *Struwelpeter* by the Frankfurt doctor and psychiatrist Hoffmann, first published in 1845, served as this book’s template. *Struwelpeter* was the perfect model for this private idea. In the period around 1900, it was not only one of the most popular children’s books, but also served as a model for many a political and socially critical parody, as well as humorous and satirical, private or semi-private adaptations for weddings, family celebrations and anniversaries – as in the case of the Netolitzkys.



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

© Private archive

The making of the “Egyptian Struwwelpeter”

The idea for the *Egyptian Struwwelpeter* was triggered by gifts from Bertha Gersuny for Christmas 1893: she gave books to each of the Netolitzky children. They then decided to give her a present in return: a handmade book, which was very elaborately designed and could therefore only be completed and presented months later. On October 7, 1894, Bertha Gersuny received the *Egyptian Struwwelpeter* in the form of a manuscript. As the result of this work was so impressive, the idea subsequently arose to offer it to a publisher and print it as a book, which again took a year: it was published in November 1895.

Adelheid Hlawacek was able to reconstruct the creation of the *Egyptian Struwwelpeter* in the Netolitzky family based on preserved diaries and notes from relatives, friends and descendants of the Netolitzkys. The most important sources are Fritz Netolitzky's diaries, which he wrote in 1893/94 at the age of 19 during the period in which the book was written. The diaries and letters are in the possession of Fritz Netolitzky's granddaughter, Luitgard Knoll, and Richard Netolitzky's granddaughter, Helga Kudlich.⁴ It lends itself to our task to quote relevant passages from these sources below. This provides a direct insight into the making of the *Egyptian Struwwelpeter* within the family. Unless otherwise stated, the following quotations are taken from Fritz's diary. Other sources, such as letters from his mother, Hedwig Netolitzky to her mother living in Prague, are listed individually.

December 24, 1893 about the Christmas celebration in the family:

“The celebration itself was very nice and of all the gifts, however much each one pleased me, I was particularly touched by a gift from Gersuny, a book! You wouldn't believe it, you eat and drink like a horse, dance all over the place and then she gives you presents! In that case, one must do her a favour, as well! But what? Yes, Richard and Magda also got books from Gersuny, the ‘dancing aunt’.”

December 26, 1893

“We want to make an Egyptian Strubelpeter for the Gersuny. We already have the ‘cruel’ Friederich [*The story of Cruel Psamtek*]. That's my idea.”



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

December 27, 1893

“In the evening, we picked Emma up from gymnastics and while we were waiting and discussing Strubelpeter, I had the glorious idea of turning ‘Johnny Head-in-the-Air’ into a girl who turns round to look after students. The whole idea came from me in the first place, it could be great.”

December 29, 1893

“Robert’ is transformed for the Gersuny into someone who runs around in his mother’s farthingale in the Khamsin [*The story of flying Amenhotep*] – also my idea, Richard always implements it. If we have had money, we would have thought about the Strubelpeter over a glass of wine or beer, but instead, we had to go home and play a game of Halma.”

December 30, 1893

“While I was studying, I smoked the tip of Richard’s pipe, and the thought occurred to me that Paulinchen might be transformed into someone who smokes their father’s pipe, and Richard turned the Soup-Kaspar into *Sneferu, who waltzed not*.” Richard later wrote in his diary: “I did not dance much, mostly withdrew for some wine with Eduard.”

Richard and Fritz in the university library **on January 5, 1894:**

“...where Richard searched the Uhlemann for the Strubelpeter, while I [Fritz] leafed through a two-volume history of India. Then I also got stuck into Egypt and the book captivated me so much that I decided to continue reading it again soon.”

January 10, 1894

“...and Magda drew some pictures [finally all pictures] for the Strubelpeter, which are also very good, since Magda made copies of originals in the museum (Imperial Royal Court Museum).”

These originals are the aforementioned tomb paintings for a pharaoh by Ernst Weidenbach (see also sources no. 2), which have been preserved and can still be seen today in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. For months, the siblings eagerly collected information about Egypt from various books to ensure everything was correct. The work continued in their free time.

January 28, 1894

“While Richard was studying downstairs in the garden, I slept the sleep of the just on the sofa until I had finally slept enough at 4 o’clock and drew up some pages for the Strubelpeter.”

February 2, 1894

“Instead of going for a coffee, as we had initially planned, we worked on Strubelpeter, which of course, has to be finished by the end of February. Dad himself seems to like it.”

February 3, 1894

“Then we lazed around and made paper for Struwelpeter until we had to go to the office for corrections.”

When the news of Professor Billroth’s death (6 February, 1894 in Abbazia/Opatija) arrived in Vienna, the dance lessons at the Gersunys’ came to an end, which Fritz greatly regretted. Being able to dance was part of one’s education in bourgeois circles.

February 25, 1894

“In the afternoon, I prepared paper for the Strubelpeter and then lazed around in a terrible way, which certainly does you good when you’ve been working hard all week.”

Letter from Hedwig Netolitzky (mother of the three children, to her mother),

March 11, 1894

“Magda is painting her Struwwelpeter for Mrs Gersuny, which has been lying still for a long time, as she has lost her enthusiasm somewhat.”

Dr Gersuny was obviously already familiar with the draft of the *Egyptian Struwwelpeter* and had discussed it with the publisher Carl Gerold’s Sohn in advance.

Letter from Hedwig Netolitzky, August, 1894

“We were very pleased with the story of Struwwelpeter, but we must not attach too much importance to it. Gersuny wrote that he wanted to discuss with Magda on his return that the book could probably be published in autumn 95, but some changes would still have to be made to it, since individual things are not suitable for a larger circle, but on the whole these are only minor details and I would be so happy for the children; especially for Magda, who is always so modest.”

After October 7, 1894

“The whole family took an extraordinary interest in Struwwelpeter, which promised to be very pretty and which we all enjoyed. I make the paper, Richard writes the poems and Magda paints it in bright colours, giving her imagination full scope.”

“...it [*the Egyptian Struwwelpeter*] was brought to Mrs Gersuny by me [Fritz] and [sister] Emma, but she only looked at it when we had already left.”

The finally completed creative gift for the dance lessons was thus presented in form of a manuscript on October 7, 1894, which was commented on by the mother in a letter on **October 8**:

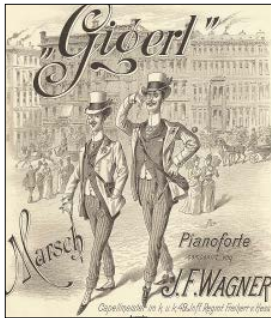
“Yesterday Magdalene had finished Struwwelpeter, which is now called ‘Gigerl Typhon’, and took it to Mrs Gersuny.”

It wasn’t planned from the outset that the manuscript would become a printed book. How did this come about? Bertha Gersuny laid out the inventive and witty gift in her living room for her guests to see. Among the guests was the well-known poet Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, who came from Moravia and had lived in Vienna since 1856. She also recommended the Viennese publisher she knew – Carl Gerold’s son – to publish the book. He already published a book by her husband Moritz *der Luftball* [aerial ball] in 1870. The printing of the manuscript, which again took months – the book was published in November 1895 – was therefore an initiative not only of the Netolitzkys, but also of Bertha Gersuny. The decisive negotiations between Gersuny and Carl Gerold’s Sohn took place between March and August of 1895, as can be seen from a letter from the mother Hedwig Netolitzky.

A business card from Bertha’s husband Robert Gersuny, dated **April 12, 1895**, is preserved, in which he told Magda Netolitzky the following:

“Dear Miss Magda! The publisher would like to take the Egyptian book to Leipzig at the end of April, but he demands that the title be changed to *Egypt. Struwwelpeter* and as the first page instead of the *Gigerl-Typhon* to one that corresponds to the title. Will the “author-company” be willing to do this? Warm regards! R. Gersuny.”

“Gigerl”⁵ is the Viennese derogatory term for a fashionable fop, like the English “dandy”; he was renamed *Thoth, the inky boy*. Thoth has various functions in Egyptian mythology: Among other things, he is the god of the art of writing. This is why the figure in the Viennese parody is equipped with ink stains and writing implements.



© “Gigerl-Marsch”, ca. 1900.
Wikipedia: Collection
Walter Anton



“Thoth, the inky boy”
© dohaböhme

Another letter from Hedwig Netolitzky dated June 11, 1895 again mentions the business card, which provides further information about the book’s genesis. According to this, the publication of the book was planned for October 1895, but only for a length of 16 pages due to the high printing costs. The witty preface in the manuscript, according to which the Frankfurt Struwelpeter was only an imitation of the Egyptian, was omitted in the printed version for cost reasons. In addition, a story about the military that was present in the manuscript was also omitted, but not only for financial reasons. The implied criticism of the Austro-Hungarian army fell victim to the publisher’s internal “censorship”.

The book was to be produced under the title *Der Aegyptische Struwelpeter* by the Viennese publisher Gerold’s Sohn at the Nister printing works in Nuremberg. However, the printing costs of fl. 5,000,— (Gulden) demanded by this company were considered too high, and the planned selling price was to be less than one guilder. The author’s fee was therefore only fl. 150,— plus thirty free copies. The Gersunys regretted the low sum, but reserved the right to renegotiate for further editions.

Diary of Hedwig Netolitzky, August 10, 1895

“Dr Gersuny brought the first specimen”



Original edition German,
publisher Gerold’s Sohn,
Vienna, © 1895
© dohaböhme



Original edition English,
H. Grevel & Co, London.
1896

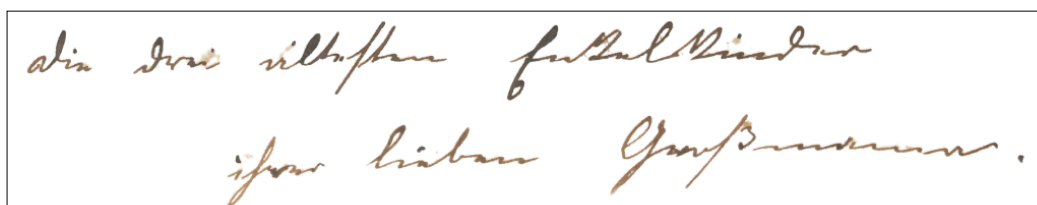
USA: Stokes, New York,
[1897]
© dohaböhme

Diary of Hedwig Netolitzky October 27, 1895

“Dr Gersuny delivers fl. 150 guilders as a fee for the “author-company”. The siblings were overjoyed, even though they had not yet received their copies, as they were promised for the next few days. Lithography and printing were carried out by Nister in Nuremberg, and the book was published by Gerold’s Sohn in Vienna.”

Although the Egyptian Struwwelpeter was a private publication of the Netolitzky family, the book was also publicly advertised. An advertisement can be found in the Wiener Zeitung No. 268 of 19 November, 1895, p. 5 in the “Kleine Chronik” section:

“(The *Egyptian Struwwelpeter*) A funny picture book is published by C. Gerold’s Sohn in Vienna with the Egyptian Struwwelpeter for the Christmas sales. Children and perhaps also adults looking for entertainment will be amused and delighted by the old stories with their lively colourful pictures in the “Egyptian style”.”



Dedication by the authors Magdalena, Richard and Fritz in a first edition of the *Egyptian Struwwelpeter*: “From the three eldest grandchildren for their dear Grandmama”. © Archive: Udo Frank Kürschner

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 process and later successfully sold.⁷

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. In this story, recruit training was made fun of. In 1895, it was not advisable in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to satirise the institution of the military, which was considered sacrosanct, at least not semi-publicly as in a printed book. In the family, only the last line has been passed down orally: “Pereat military!” (Down with the military!).

The pseudo-scientific-satirical preface was also lost, in which it was cheekily claimed in a witty reversal that the Frankfurt Struwwelpeter was an imitation of the much older *Egyptian Struwwelpeter*. Although this preface has been lost, the present edition of the *Egyptian Struwwelpeter* in the form of a papyrus scroll may be able to implement the idea of an “Ur-Struwwelpeter” of the Netolitzky siblings, at least in a formal way.

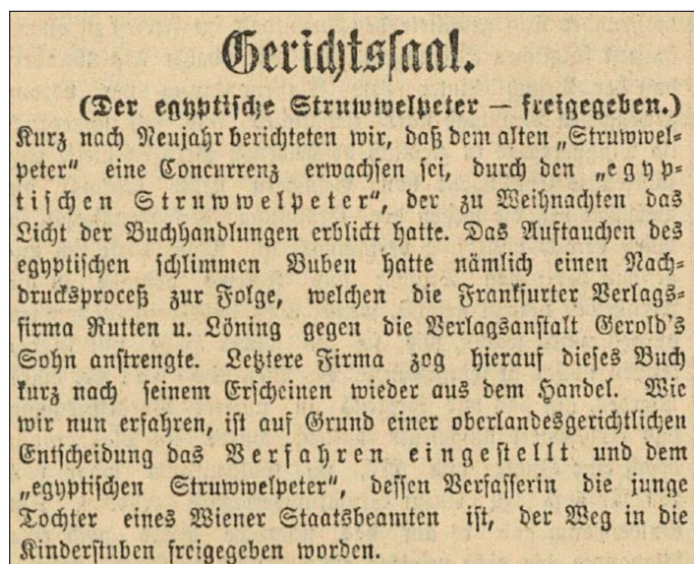
The 1895 plagiarism trial

In the 1850s, the publishing house Literarische Anstalt Rütten & Loening, the Frankfurt publisher of Heinrich Hoffmann's *Struwwelpeter*⁸, won an important trial. The publisher Scholz had taken over the original pictures and added Dutch texts. The result of the trial was that the image and text of a children's book were deemed worthy of protection. This was the first time that plagiarism rights (copyright) for children's books were legally confirmed.⁹ This gave Rütten & Loening the opportunity to conduct and largely win a considerable number of lawsuits against competing editions of the *Struwwelpeter* up to 1924.

Rütten & Loening 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. The publisher Gerold's Sohn missed out on Christmas sales of the book:



"Börsenblatt for the German book trade", 24 December 1895, Gerold's Sohn, recall of the *Egyptian Struwwelpeter*.
Source: Udo Frank Kürschner



"Neues Wiener Tagblatt", 7 April 1896, "Courtroom" section
Source: Austrian National Library ANNO, Historical Newspapers and Periodicals

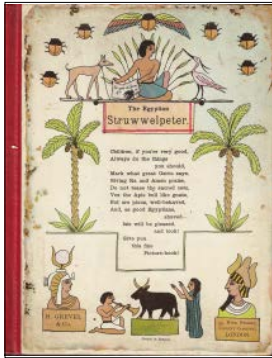
The case ended in favour of the publisher Gerold's Sohn: The copyright law in force from December 31, 1895 stipulated that the *Egyptian Struwwelpeter*:

- 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.

Fritz Netolitzky's diary also contains an entry on the outcome of the trial. On April 12, 1896, he noted on the occasion of a visit to his relatives in Rokitz: "I was received very kindly, as always, had to tell a lot, and in return I learnt many things, e.g. that the *Struwwelpeter* had been released." After this date, there are no further entries in the Netolitzky family diaries about the *Egyptian Struwwelpeter*.

Translations

The Egyptian Struwwelpeter.

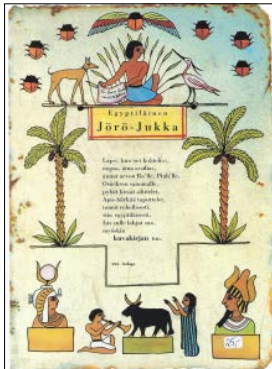


The Egyptian Struwwelpeter: being the Struwwelpeter papyrus; with full text and 100 original vignettes from the Vienna papyrus; dedicated to children of all ages.

© dohaböhme collection

The English translation under this title was published by Grevel in London in 1896, printed by Nister in Nuremberg, who already produced the Austrian edition. A separate American edition was published by Stokes in New York, [1897].

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. The entire edition of 1,000 copies was sold during an exhibition on Egyptian art at the museum in Tampere from August 30, 1993 to January 2, 1994. A 2nd edition was published in 1999, also by the translator.

© dohaböhme collection

Adelheid Hlawacek and the Netolitzky family

The family ties between Adelheid Hlawacek and the Netolitzky family made it possible to research the diaries and family papers that have survived. Her detailed report *Der Aegyptische Struwwelpeter ein Kuriosum der österreichischen Kinderliteratur* can be found at:

<https://struwwelpeter.org>

Explanations of names in the Egyptian Struwwelpeter

Amenhotep (Serapis)	Egyptian-Hellenistic god of fertility <i>Name of the boy from The story of flying Amenhotep</i>
Anubis	God with a jackal's head, responsible for embalming the dead <i>The story of Pyramid Thothmes</i>
Apis	Sacred bull of Memphis. (Capital of Lower Egypt, Old Kingdom ca. 3000 BC) Foreword, <i>The story of Cruel Psamtek</i>
Aton (Ra)	Sun god, the origin Foreword
Necho Sety Ramses	Names of the three red boys <i>The story of the red boys</i>
Isis	Wife of Osiris, goddess of birth, rebirth, magic. Foreword, <i>The story of Cruel Psamtek</i>
Khamsin	Hot desert wind in North Africa <i>The story of flying Amenhotep</i>
Khufu (Cheops)	Ancient Egyptian pharaoh (ca. 2555 BC) tomb: highest pyramid in Egypt, Giza. <i>Khufu</i> is the name of the boy in <i>The tragic tale of Khufu and Tobacco</i>
Osiris	Stands for rebirth and fertility, connected with the world of the dead <i>The story of the red boys</i>
Psamtek I.	Pharaoh and founder of the Saïten dynasty (ca.664–610 BC) <i>The story of Cruel Psamtek</i>
Ra	Ancient Egyptian sun god. Ra = sun. Foreword
Sneferu (Ramses)	Pharaoh 19th Dynasty, New Kingdom. (ca. 1300 BC). Richard Netolitzky is “waltzing Sneferu” in <i>Of Sneferu, who waltzed not</i>
Sphinx	Lion with a human head, symbolizes the power of the sun and the reigning pharaoh. Guards tombs, palaces and sacred paths. <i>The story of flying Amenhotep</i>
Thoth	God of the moon, the art of writing, wisdom and magic <i>Thoth, the inky boy</i> depicted as an ink boy.
Thothmes	Egyptian: Traveller and tourist Fritz Netolitzky, an enthusiastic mountaineer, became the “Pyramid Thothmes” in <i>The story of Pyramid Thothmes</i>
Unnefer	High Priest of Osiris at Abydos in the reign of Ramses II with Children's drawing and text by Emma Netolitzky in <i>The story of Cruel Psamtek</i> .



New fine edition, 31st–40th thousand, ca. 1905, Frankfurt am Main

The immortal Struwwelpeter and his descendants

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. *The Egyptian Struwwelpeter* from 1894 is an example of this, but by no means the only one.

In the following, these two aspects of Hoffmann’s Struwwelpeter shall be examined in more detail: the context in which it was written on the one hand, and its reception and adaptation on the other.

The making of the Struwwelpeter

The making of the Struwwelpeter has to do with both Hoffmann’s family and his profession.¹⁰ Hoffmann was born in Frankfurt am Main on June 13, 1809. He studied medicine at the universities of Heidelberg and Halle from 1828 to 1833. In 1833, he added a year to his studies in Paris. Shortly before the death of his seriously ill father, he returned to Frankfurt in 1834, where he began working in a clinic for the poor in 1835. In 1840 he married Therese Donner; his son Carl Philipp was born in 1841, his daughter Antonie Caroline in 1844 and his son Eduard in 1848.

In 1851, Hoffmann began work at the “Frankfurt Asylum for the Mentally Insane and Epileptic”, where he set up a new, exemplary “institution” on the Affenstein in 1864 and worked for almost four decades in the spirit of Enlightenment medicine¹¹. During this time, he was one of the most important pioneers of independent adolescent psychiatry. In 1888, at the age of 79, he retired.

Among other things, Hoffmann was involved in important public events and campaigned for the democratisation of art education. In 1848, he represented the city of Frankfurt as one of ten members of the pre-parliament in Frankfurt's Paulskirche. Hoffmann died on September 20, 1894. The City of Frankfurt honoured his services to the city's history with a grave of honour in Frankfurt's main cemetery.



The 32-year-old Dr Heinrich Hoffmann,
anonymous artist, around 1840,
© Hessenberg, collection
Struwwelpeter Museum, Frankfurt am Main

Struwwelpeter was created in a private, family context: Hoffmann wrote it in a few weeks as a Christmas present for his three-year-old son Carl. At the time, the booklet was entitled *Funny stories and whimsical pictures with 15 beautifully coloured plates for children aged 3-6*. Hoffmann drew inspiration from the direct experiences of his private and professional life. In the magazine *Die Gartenlaube*, the most widely distributed German family magazine of the 19th century, a fellow student (F. S.) of Hoffmann's described retrospectively in 1871¹² how these stories came about. He also made it clear thereby that Hoffmann combined them with pedagogical considerations. For example, it was also about how to get the attention of frightened child patients, despite the practice of parents threatening disobedient children with the frightening figures of the "doctor" and "chimney sweeper":

"A sheet of paper and a pencil usually helped me quickly; one of the stories in the book is quickly invented, drawn with three strokes, and told as vividly as possible. The fierce opponent calms down, the tears dry, and the doctor can easily do his duty. This is how most of the great scenes were created and I drew them from existing material; some things were invented later, the pictures were drawn with the same pen and ink with which I had first written the rhymes, all directly and without authorial intention."

Moreover, the colleague not only addressed the fact that Hoffmann was also heavily criticised for the *Struwwelpeter*, but also what he said in response. The general outlines of his pedagogy also become clear in this apologia:

"And yet, dear friend," I remarked, "your picture books have been heartily attacked." "Yes," Hoffmann replied, "Struwwelpeter has been accused of great sins. They say: 'The book spoils the child's aesthetic sensibilities with its grimaces'. Well then, let infants be brought up in picture galleries or in cabinets with antique plaster casts! The book should after all evoke fabulous, gruesome, exaggerated ideas! But absolute truth, algebraic or geometric theorems will not stir a child's soul, but will let it wither away miserably." "The mind [of the child] will do itself justice, and that person is fortunate who has been able to rescue a part of the child's sense from its first years of inertia into life."

In *Gartenlaube* No.1, 1893, Hoffmann continued his reflections on a pedagogy based not on abstract moral principles but on observation:

"The child simply learns through the eye, and it only understands what it sees. In particular, it doesn't know what to do with moralistic rules. The admonition: Be clean! Be careful with the lighter and leave it be! Be obedient! – These are all empty words for the

child. But the image of the messy child, of the burning dress, of the accident of a careless child – the visual image alone explains itself and teaches. It is not for nothing that the proverb says: „A burnt finger shuns the fire’.”

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 name can also be documented in folklore, as Günther Mahal has shown in *Doctor Faust and Struwwelpeter*.¹³ According to this source, this name for shaggy hair was widely used in Saxony, Hessen and southern Germany. According to Mahal, the young Goethe, for example, was reprimanded as early as 1765 as “Frankfurter Strubbelpeter” and forced to “have his hair combed out, which was so full of feathers as if sparrows had nested in it.”

Moreover, the Zurich psychologist and philosopher Donald Brinkmann presented a “psychological analysis” in 1945 in the *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Psychologie*¹⁴:

“With ‘Struwwelpeter’ – ‘Satyros’ – ‘Schiwa’, a very specific archetype appears, the archetype of destruction, whereby the ambivalent meaning of this figure and its affinity with procreation and growth must be taken into account. Destruction does not simply mean annihilation, chaos or nothingness. It is just as much about the destruction of all illusionary appearances, so that the essence of being may attain truth.

Heinrich Hoffmann was evidently guided by the same intuitive destruction [...] when he placed so much emphasis on the fact that the printed edition of his “Struwwelpeter” was not only intended to be looked at and read, but also to be torn apart. [...]

But suffice it to say that our psychological analysis has introduced some new aspects into the discussion, which may serve to shed new light on the unique nature and unrivalled success of this classic children’s book.”

The Swiss literary scholar Peter von Matt¹⁵ analysed the effect of the main character from a socio-psychological perspective:

“He [Struwwelpeter] is immortal. Everyone knows that. And nobody knows why. The mystery of his irresistible effect travels through the ages with Struwwelpeter. An undeniably amateurish product becomes a classic.” “...through the will of the children. They said yes to the book in a way that set the market in motion right from the start. The horrified parents, the shocked educators and all the other appointed and unappointed protectors of children’s souls remained helpless in the face of the children’s jubilation and the market’s desire.”

The doctor and psychoanalyst Georg Groddeck likewise offered a “psychological analysis” in 1927:¹⁶

“He [Heinrich Hoffmann] was very probably far ahead of his time – too far to be able to describe a clear diagnosis on the one hand and more than paedagogical advice, let alone therapeutic approaches, on the other.”

Groddeck also claims that there are actually only four decisive textbooks of psychoanalysis: Richard Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelungs*, Henrik Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, Goethe's *Faust* and Hoffmann's *Struwwelpeter*. He later added Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*.

The *Struwwelpeter* is also positively received in clinical psychology and adolescent psychiatry.¹⁷ In its stories, for example, clinical pictures from the areas of ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) and APD (Antisocial Personality Disorder) can be recognised. A brief look at the individual stories of the *Struwwelpeter* can also reveal the possibility of a psychopathological reading, following the research. This is also an opportunity to show how the stories of the *Egyptian Struwwelpeter*, which also grew out of the everyday life of the Netolitzky family, relate to Hoffmann's stories.



The Story of the Wicked Frederick

Compulsion to dominate through destructive behaviour. Increased potential for aggression. Antisocial personality disorder (APD). In the end, he is bitten "deep into the blood" by a dog.

Egyptian Struwwelpeter

The story of Cruel Psamtek, (tortures the sacred crocodile, he is punished by the Isis priest).



The Story of Soup-Kaspar

Refusal to eat, stubbornness.

Egyptian Struwwelpeter

The story of Sneferu, who waltzed not. He doesn't want to dance.



The Story of Fidgety Philip

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), compulsive movement, "fidget spinner syndrome".

Egyptian Struwwelpeter

Parody of the Austrian military. The original existed in the manuscript, but was not printed in the book for political reasons. Only the last line has survived orally: "Pereat military!" (Down with the military!)



The Story of Johnny Head-in-the-Air

Dreamer. Attention deficit disorder (ADD).

Egyptian Struwwelpeter

No story.



The Story of Flying Robert

Adventurousness and heedlessness.

Egyptian Struwwelpeter

The story of flying Amenhotep; is whirled through the air by the desert storm Khamsin in his father's tunic wide and falls to his death in the sand. In the English version, the mother's farthingale is exchanged for the tunic wide, the effect is the same: death.



The Very Sad Tale with the Matches

Dangerous curiosity, playing with fire; Paulinchen burns to death.

Egyptian Struwwelpeter

The tragic tale of Khufu and Tobacco; nausea from overindulgence with father's pipe followed by a beating.



The Story of the Inky Boys

Racism, intolerance; punishment by dipping in ink.

(Hoffmann had resigned from the Masonic lodge "Zur Einigkeit" after Jewish members were ostracised).

Egyptian Struwwelpeter

The story of the red boys who mock the Osiris priest with the red cloak; Osiris punishes the boys by plunging them into the Red Sea.



The Story of the Thumb-Sucker

Thumb-sucking and its prohibition; consequence: thumbs off

Egyptian Struwwelpeter

No story.



The Story of the Wild Huntsman

Reversal story: hare as hunter, hunter as hunted

Egyptian Struwwelpeter

The Story of Pyramid Thothmes; Thothmes pops a bottle cork on the top of the pyramid, angers the pharaoh's spirit and terrified plunges into the abyss and dies.



The Struwwelpeter

Protest behaviour against compulsory standards.

Egyptian Struwwelpeter

Thoth (god of the art of writing) as *Thoth, the inky boy*, with ink stains on his body and clothes.

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 und ihre Bäder im Ganges” (Tutti Frutti and their Baths in the Ganges), with great success.¹⁸ His future publisher, the Mannheim Jewish publisher Zacharias Löwenthal, was also present. Gutzkow, Börne, Engels, Marx and Heine valued him as “our young German bookseller”, according to Heine. Löwenthal converted in 1857 and from then on called himself Carl Friedrich Loening. 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 edition¹⁹ 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”.



1st edition,
2nd Print, 1845

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27nd edition, 1859



31st edition, 1860

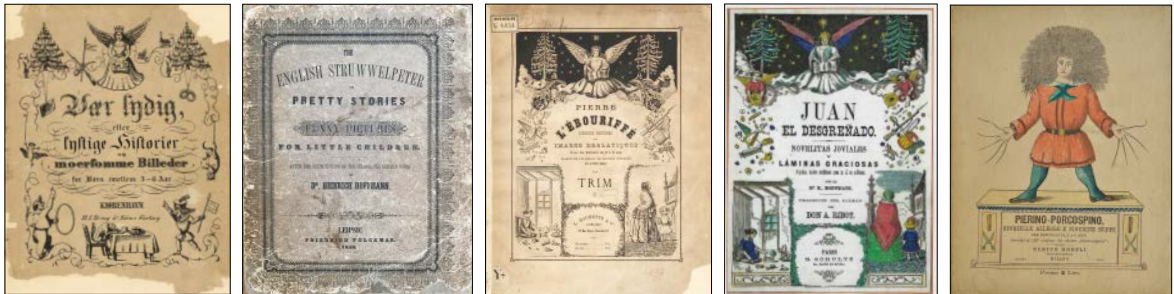


Splendour edition, 1881
New Fine Edition, 1889²⁰

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*



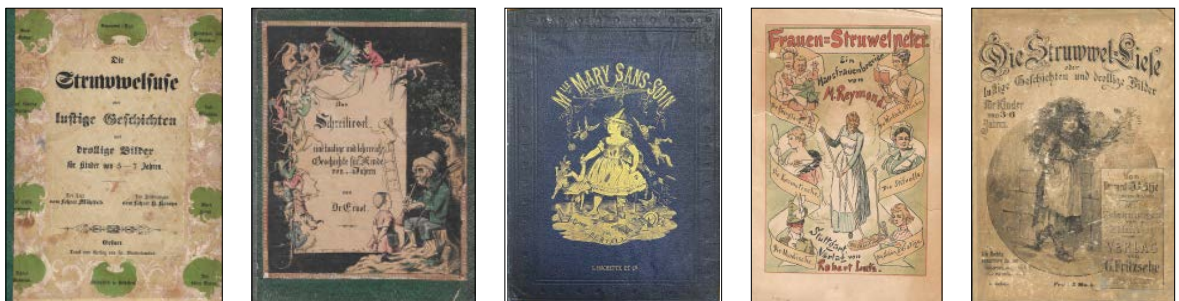
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Over 60 further translations followed, with a large number of vernacular and dialect translations. In addition, numerous imitations, parodies and adaptations for music and theatre were created, some with socially critical or political intentions, as well as private family-related Struwwelpetriades.²¹ A few contemporary examples from this broad field are listed below. It hereby becomes clear that the Egyptian Struwwelpeter was by no means an isolated phenomenon, but rather one example among many, albeit a particularly successful one.

Girl Struwwelpetriades

Some examples:

- 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



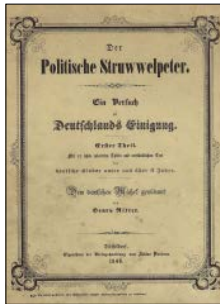
© dohaböhme collection

Political Struwwelpeter parodies

Some examples:

- 1848 *Little handbook for rummagers*
- 1849 *The political Struwwelpeter*
- 1878 *A Faint Echo of Old Memories*
- 1899 *The political Struwwelpeter*
- 1943 *Schicklgrüher*

Leipzig
Düsseldorf
Kopenhagen
London
Kalkutta



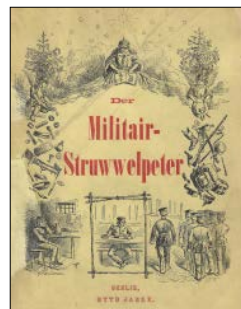
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Socio-critical Struwwelpeter parodies

Some examples:

- 1852 *The great Struwwelpeter*
- 1877 *The military Struwwelpeter*
- 1880 *The pedagogically improved Struwwelpeter*
- 1883 *Short gynaecological Struwwelpeter*
- 1896 *Technical Struwwelpeter*

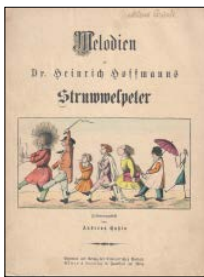
Berlin
Berlin
Munich
Heidelberg
Berlin / Vienna



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Musical theatre pieces

Some examples:



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



1951, Kurt Hesseberg
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 Böhmernann and the *Neo Magazin Royale* team, set in the present day *Der Struwwelpeter*.

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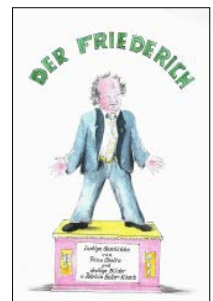
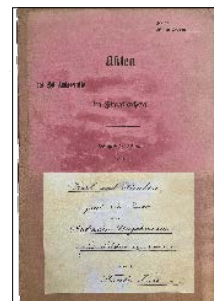
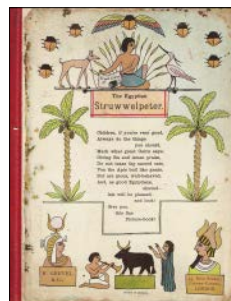
2024, programme booklet
Shock-headed Peter, junk opera, interpreted by the Tiger Lillies, Julian Crouch and Phelim McDermott, music by Martyn Jacques.

Performed at the Scala Theatre in Vienna from April 5 to April 25, 2024

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
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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.²²

Contributors

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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.

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Hasso and Dominique Böhme, dohaböhme bibliothek & archiv, CH-Unterengstringen (Zurich)
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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.

Nathalie Gacond



Born in Menziken AG in 1973, she is a multi-talented administrator and graphic designer. She worked in the marketing sector of the event technology/entertainment electronics industry for many years and now designs graphic products for the dohaböhme research library, among many other things.

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By the Tiger Lillies: Julian Crouch and Phelim McDermot, music by Jacques Martyn
 Interpreted and performed at the Scala theatre in Vienna from April 5 to April 25, 2024:
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