

# Voodoo dolls in the classical world

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**Abstract:** Magic dolls play a major role in ancient literature when Greek or Roman authors describe the activity of sorcerers or witches. Another group of sources applying magic puppets includes inscriptions and magical papyri, which may contain recipes or prescriptions and obviously provide a more authentic image of magical procedures than poetry does. The credibility of written sources can be tested by a fortunately growing number of magic dolls found in excavations. Still, the picture emerging from dolls and their finding circumstances hardly matches the magical operations implied by literary sources.

**Key words:** voodoo dolls, magical puppets, ancient magic, curse tablets.

Ancient magic dolls are known from four distinct groups of sources: inscriptions, literary works, papyrus recipes, and the growing number of original figurines found in excavations<sup>1</sup>. It is also worth examining the well-documented finding circumstances of recently uncovered puppets.

## Literary sources and inscriptions

The earliest extant reference to magic dolls is made in the foundation oath of the settlers of Cyrene<sup>2</sup>. Although the text of the oath was formulated in the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, it is preserved to us in a 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC inscription. Another inscription from Cyrene (around 300 BC) describing an apotropaic procedure mentions two figurines of wood or clay. A third inscription from the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD suggests that a wax statue made by the evil sorcerer should be demolished to avert an epidemic.

As for literary sources referring to dolls, we have a Sophocles-fragment (5<sup>th</sup> c. BC) and a slightly more detailed description from Plato (4<sup>th</sup> c. BC). Theocritus' poem is Hellenistic, while the rest of our literary sources come from late republican Rome and from the Imperial Era<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup>The Egyptian origin of magic puppets is addressed in another paper, Németh 2017.

<sup>3</sup>I did not include the chameleon mentioned by Libanius 1.249 in my list, since it was a genuine animal the remains of which were applied to baleful sorcery. Ogden treated it as a voodoo doll, see Ogden 2009, 259. I also ignore the Christian legend narrating the conversion of St. Cyprian, see Ogden 2009, 329–331.

The Cyrenean foundation decree

"Oaths were sworn to this agreement both by those who remained in Thera and those who sailed to settle. And they called down curses on those who should foreswear themselves and fail to abide by their oath, be they among those settling in Libya or those remaining behind in Thera. They molded wax dolls [*kolossoi*] and burned them while calling down the curse, all having come together, men, women, boys, and girls. They prayed that the one who did not abide by these oaths but foreswore himself should melt and dissolve just like the dolls, he himself, his descendants, and his property, but that those that did abide by these oaths, whether among those sailing to Libya or those remaining behind in Thera, should have many good things, both they themselves and their descendants."<sup>4</sup>

The wax dolls were burnt.

Sophocles *Root-cutters*

"After he had melted a doll [*koros*] with fire."<sup>5</sup>

The doll (presumably made of wax) was burnt.

Plato *Laws* 933b

"It is not worthwhile for us to try to tell the souls of men who mistrust each other, if ever they see molded wax figures at doors or at crossroads or in some cases on the tombs of their ancestors, to ignore all such things, if we do not ourselves have a clear opinion about them..."<sup>6</sup>

The wax dolls were burnt.

Theocritus *Idyll* 2.28–31.

"As I melt this wax doll with the help of the goddess, so may Delphis of Myndos at once be melted by love. And as by the power of Aphrodite this bronze bull-roarer [*rhombos*] whirls round, so may he whirl round at my door."<sup>7</sup>

The wax doll was burnt.

Horatius *Sat.* 1, 8.

"I myself have seen Canidia coming with her black dress girt up, feet bare and hair unbound, howling together with the elder Sagana. One shuddered to look at either of them, because of their pallor. They began to dig up the earth with their fingernails and tear apart a dark lamb with their teeth. The blood was poured into a pit, so that they could call forth from it ghosts from the underworld to give them answers. There was a woollen doll, and another one made from wax. The woollen one was larger, so that it could restrain the smaller one with punishments. The wax doll held the pose of a suppliant, as if it were about to be executed in slave fashion. One of the women called on Hecate, the other on cruel Tisiphone. You could see snakes and underworld dogs wandering about and the moon blushing red and hiding behind the great tombs, lest she witness these things. If I tell a lie, may crows

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<sup>4</sup>Ogden 2009, 245.

<sup>5</sup>Hesychius s.v. "melted" [*aistôsas*]), see Ogden 2009, 83.

<sup>6</sup>Ogden 2009, 22.

<sup>7</sup>Ogden 2009, 109.

drop their white crap on my head, may Julius come to piss and shit on me, and so too the feeble Pedatia and the thief Voranus. Why should I go through all the details? Why should I tell you how the ghosts held a conversation with Sagana, making mournful, shrill noises; how they secretly hid a wolf's beard together with a tooth from a variegated snake in the ground; how the fire flared up higher because of the wax image, and how I shuddered at the voices and actions of the two Furies, although this witness did not go unavenged?"<sup>8</sup>

The wax doll was burnt. The fate of the woollen doll is not revealed in the source.

Horatius *Epodes* 17.

"Or am I, who can animate wax effigies, as you yourself know from interfering, I, who can snatch the moon down from the sky by my incantations, I, who can raise up the cremated dead, I, who can blend love potions, am I to weep for my craft not encompassing your death?"<sup>9</sup>

The wax doll was 'animated'.

Vergilius *Eclogues* 8.80-81.

"As this clay grows hard and as this wax melts in one and the same fire, so may Daphnis melt in his love for me. Scatter the meal, and burn the crackling bay leaves with pitch. Wicked Daphnis burns me, so I burn these bay leaves against Daphnis. Bring Daphnis home, my spells, bring him from the city."<sup>10</sup>

The wax doll was burnt.

Ovidius *Heroides* 6.93–94.

"She places binding spells [*devovet*] on people from afar, molds voodoo dolls out of wax, and pushes fine needles into their pathetic livers."<sup>11</sup>

The wax dolls were tortured and presumably burnt as well.

Ovidius *Amores* 3.7.27–30; 77–80.

"Did my limbs grow heavy, bound [*devota*] by a Thessalian drug? Was I damaged by a spell and herbs? Or did a witch bind [*defixit*] my name with red wax and drive fine needles through the middle of my liver?"

"Who told you to lay yourself in my bed if you didn't want to perform, crazy man? Either some Circean witch [*venefica*] is binding you by piercing wool, or you come to me after wearing yourself out by having sex with someone else."

The wax doll and the woollen doll was tortured by needles.

Petronius *Satyricon* 63.

"You see, the witches had stolen the boy and left a straw doll in his place."

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<sup>8</sup>Ogden 2009, 115.

<sup>9</sup>Ogden 2009, 120.

<sup>10</sup>Ogden 2009, 113.

<sup>11</sup>Ogden 2009, 126.

It is questionable if the straw doll left in the place of the boy is really a voodoo doll or not. Although the doll was fabricated by witches, I presume this is rather a case of tricky stealing. Nevertheless, D. Ogden treats it as a voodoo doll<sup>12</sup>.

#### Laying of attacking ghosts from Cyrene

"Rules for attacking ghosts [*hikesioi*]. An attacking ghost sent upon one: if ever an attacking ghost is sent against one's house, if one knows from whom it comes to attack one, one is to give name to him, proclaiming the name over three days. If he is dead in the earth, or dead in some other condition, if one knows his name, one is to proclaim the name. But if one does not know the name, one is to proclaim "O person, whether you are man or woman." He should make dolls [*kolossoi*], a male one and a female one, from wood or from clay, entertain them, and set before them helpings of all food. When you have performed the rites, take the dolls to an unworked forest and fix them there with their helpings."<sup>13</sup>

The wooden or clay dolls are entertained to dinner, and then taken to an intact forest.

#### An oracle against pestilence from a Western Anatolian town

"Put her (Artemis) up in a temple, full of joy: she will provide deliverance from your affliction and will dissolve the poison (or: magic) of pestilence, which destroys men, and will melt down [8] with her flame-bearing torches in nightly fire the kneaded works of wax, the signs of the evil art of a sorcerer."<sup>14</sup>

A wax doll produced by an evil sorcerer induced an epidemic afflicting an Anatolian town (otherwise not known). Destroying the wax puppet brought the epidemic to an end.

#### Apuleius *Apologia sive de magia*. 61.

"And after all this, they have also come up, on reading Pudentilla's letters, concerning the manufacture of a statuette. This statuette, they assert, I had fashioned of the rarest wood by some secret process for purposes of the black art. They add that, although it is loathly and horrible to look upon, being in the form of a skeleton, I yet give it especial honour and call it in the Greek tongue, basileus, my king."<sup>15</sup>

As Apuleius claims in his apology, the statuette is in fact not a voodoo doll but an image of Mercurius.

#### Lucian *Philopseudes* 14.

"Eventually, the Hyperborean fashioned an eros-doll from clay and said to it, 'Off you go, and bring Chrysis.' The clay flew aloft, and soon there she was knocking on the door. She came in and embraced Glaucias as absolutely insane with love, and she slept with him until we heard the cocks crowing."

<sup>12</sup>Ogden 2009, 141.

<sup>13</sup>Ogden 2009, 163.

<sup>14</sup>Graf 1992, 268–269.

<sup>15</sup>Translated by H. E. Butler. See Ogden 2009, 251–252, with a commentary.

The ‘animated’ clay doll shaping Eros fetches the sweetheart of Glaucias. This story corresponds to certain recipes in the magical papyri referring to ‘animated’ statuettes<sup>16</sup>.

Heliodorus *Aethiopica* 6, 14.

“She made a libation of honey into the pit, another of milk from a second bowl, and another again of wine from a third bowl. Then she crowned with laurel and fennel a dough cake molded to resemble a man and threw it into the pit. After all that she took up a sword, worked herself up a sword, worked herself up into an inspired frenzy and invoked the moon with names that sounded foreign and strange. She cut her arm open, wiped up some of the blood with a laurel branch, and threw it into the fire.”<sup>17</sup>

The text describing the most detailed magic scene refers to puppets from dough. The procedure of the witch’s sorcery is based on the Nekyia of the Odyssey (Book 11).

Pseudo-Callisthenes *Alexander romance* 1.

“For they say that Nectanebo, the very last of the pharaohs of Egypt, gained mastery over all peoples by magical power. By speech he could subject all the elements of the universe to himself. For if a cloud of war had suddenly come upon him, he did not bother with the army-camp, processions of arms, the sharpening of steel or engines of war, but he would retreat into his palace, take a bronze bowl, fill it with rain water, and mold some little boats and little human figures out of wax, put them in the bowl, and recite a spell while waving an ebony wand. He would call upon the angels and upon Ammon, the god of Libya. So it was that he would destroy and prevail over the enemies that attacked him, with lecanomancy of this sort and by <sinking> the boats.”<sup>18</sup>

The story provides a distant echo of an official Egyptian magical practice in the pharaonic age, during which enemy warriors (perhaps from Libya or Meroe) were moulded as wax puppets and cast into fire<sup>19</sup>.

Orphic *Argonautica* 950.

“When I arrived at the enclosure and the divine abode I dug a triangular pit in some flat ground. I quickly fetched some logs of juniper, dry cedar, prickly boxthorn and much-lamenting black poplars, and I made a pyre of them in the pit. Knowledgeable Medea brought many drugs [*pharmaka*], taking them from the coffers of an incense-laden crypt. At once I fashioned figures from barley meal. I threw them onto the pyre and slaughtered three all-black puppies as a sacrifice to the dead.”<sup>20</sup>

The dough puppets are cast into the pit, similarly to the scene in Heliodorus’ novel. The ultimate source of the scene might be the Nekyia of the Odyssey.

<sup>16</sup>PGM XII.14–95.

<sup>17</sup>Ogden 2009, 200.

<sup>18</sup>Ogden 2009, 55–56.

<sup>19</sup>Kákosy 1969; Pinch 2006; Zinn 2013, 4237.

<sup>20</sup>Ogden 2009, 92.

Fate of magic dolls (according to literary sources and inscriptions):

Source	Fate of the doll
Cyrene 1.	Wax doll burnt
Sophocles	Wax doll burnt
Plato	Wax doll burnt
Theocritus	Wax doll burnt
Horatius <i>Satires</i>	Wax doll burnt
Horatius <i>Epodes</i>	Wax doll animated
Vergilius	Wax doll burnt
Ovidius <i>Heroides</i>	Wax doll pierced
Ovidius <i>Amores</i>	Wax doll pierced
Ovidius <i>Amores</i>	Woollen doll pierced
Petronius <i>Satyricon</i>	Dead boy exchanged with straw puppet
Oracle from Western Anatolia	Wax doll burnt
Pseudo-Callisthenes	Wax doll submerged into water
Cyrene 2.	Wooden or clay doll taken into an intact forest
Lucian <i>Philopseudes</i>	Clay doll ‘animated’
Apuleius	Sacrifice offered to wooden doll
Heliodorus	Dough puppet cast into a pit
Orphic <i>Argonautica</i>	Dough puppet burnt

In altogether 18 sources, 9 references are made to the burning of puppets, 3 to piercing them, one to cast it into a pit, and another one to cast it into water. Taking the puppet into uncultivated nature is part of a purification rite, while animating the doll is obviously the product of poetic fantasy, although the procedure is also referred to in magical papyri.

### Papyri<sup>21</sup>

A number of papyri provide a recipe for making a magic doll. The figurine is not always anthropomorphic: it can also shape a dog, a hippopotamus, or even a three-headed chimaera. According to recipes, the figurines are manipulated in various ways but they are never fully destroyed, not even if it was made from wax.

#### PGM IV. 296-335.

Take some wax or some clay from a potter’s wheel and mould two figures, male and female. Arm the male one like Ares, brandishing a sword in his left hand and striking the female’s neck on her right side. Put the female doll’s hands behind her back and make her kneel. You will fasten the stuff [*ousia*] on her head or on her neck. Inscribe the doll of the woman

<sup>21</sup>An excellent summary for magical papyri: Maltonini 2008.

being attracted: on her head, “ISEÊ IAÔ ITHI OUNE BRIDÔ LÔTHIÔN NEBOUTO-SOUALÊTH”; on her right ear, “OUER MÊCHAN”; on her left ear, “LIBABA ÔI-MATHOTHO”; on her face, “AMOUNABREÔ”; over her right eye, “ÔRORMOTHIO AÊTH”; over the other one, “CHOBBOUE”; on her right collarbone, “ADETA MEROU”; on her right arm, “ENE PSA ENESGAPH”; on the other one, “MELCHIOU MELCHIEDIA”; on her hands, “MELCHAMELCHOU AÊL”; on her breast, the name of the woman being attracted, with her metronymic; over her heart, “BALAMIN THÔOUTH”; under her stomach, “AOBÊS AÔBAR”; on her vulva, “BLICHIANEOI OUÔIA”; on her bottom, “PISSADARA”; on the soles of her feet, on the right one, “ELÔ”; on the other one, “ELÔAIOE.” Take thirteen bronze needles and insert one of them into the brain while saying, “I pierce your brain (insert her name)”; insert two into her ears, two more into her eyes, one into her mouth, two below her rib cage, one into her hands, two into her vulva and anus, and two into the soles of her feet, while on each occasion saying once, “I pierce the (insert name of part) of (insert her name), so that she may think of no one, except me alone, (insert your name).” Take a lead tablet, inscribe the same spell on it, and say it through. Bind the tablet to the figures with the warp from a loom, in which you have made 365 knots while saying, as you know how to, “Abrasax, constrain her.” Lay it as the sun sets beside the grave of one untimely dead or dead by violence, and lay flowers of the season there with it. The inscribed and recited spell is this...<sup>22</sup>

The recipe prescribes the following manipulations concerning the female magic doll:

1. The arms shall be bound behind her back.
2. Ousia shall be fastened on her head or neck.
3. Magic words shall be inscribed on the doll
4. The doll shall be pierced by 13 bronze needles on specified parts of her body
5. The spell (logos) shall be bound to the doll with a thread with 365 knots.

During this procedure, the magician had to recite continuously the spell and everything he wished to happen to the woman. For sure, not every doll was exposed to all these actions, but magicians definitely had to perform some manipulation during the course of the magic rite.

*PGM III. 424.*

“Take cow's milk and pour it. Put down a clean vessel and place the tablet under [it]; add barley meal, mix and form bread: twelve rolls in the shape of female figures. Say [the formula] three times, eat [the rolls] on an empty stomach, and you will know the power.”<sup>23</sup>

The female figurines shaped from milk and barley meal had to be eaten on an empty stomach.

*PGM XXIVb. 1-15.*

The highly fragmentary text instructed the magician what spells to inscribe on specified parts of the magic doll<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>22</sup>Ogden 2009, 247–248.

<sup>23</sup>Betz 1996, 29.

<sup>24</sup>Betz 1996, 264.

*PGM XCV. 1–6.*

The highly fragmentary text may have instructed the magician what spells to inscribe on specified parts of the magic doll<sup>25</sup>.

*PGM CXXIV. 1–43.*

"Take unsmoked beeswax and make a little manikin. Write the characters on a tiny piece of papyrus and place it inside the beeswax. Also write the three "ô's" and the letters that follow, on the head of the manikin, and the bones of the victim (?). Prick the left one' into the left eye of the manikin and the right one into the right. Hold the figure upside-down on its head and put it into a new pot. Leave the pot in the dark and fill it with water, up to the [shoulder] of the [manikin] only. Crush rhododendron plants with some vinegar and sprinkle the entrances to the tomb. Take a garland made from the plant, and while pronouncing the formula, attach it to the tomb: "Principal angel of those below the earth, BAROUCH, and you, angel of many forms, OLAMPTER; in this hour do not disobey me, but send to me . . . without fear, without harm, doing my every . . ."<sup>26</sup>

The letter omega shall be inscribed three times on the wax figurine, then both eyes shall be pierced by bone, and the doll has to be put upside down into a new pot left in the dark and filled up with water to the shoulder of the manikin.

*PGM IV. 1875–1910.*

"Take 4 ounces of wax, 8 ounces of fruit from the chaste-tree, 4 drams of manna. Pound each of these fine separately and mix with pitch and wax, and fashion a dog eight fingers long with its mouth open. And you are to place in the mouth of the dog a bone from the head of a man who has died violently, and inscribe on the sides of the dog these characters: (9 charaktères), and you are to place the dog on a tripod. And have the dog raising its right paw. And write on the strip of papyrus these names and what you wish: "IAÔ ASTÔ IOPHÎ," and you are to place the strip of papyrus on the tripod and on top of the strip you are to place the dog and say these names many times. And so, after you have spoken the spell, the dog hisses [or barks], and if it hisses, she is not coming. Therefore address the spell to it again, and if it barks, it is attracting her. Let a censer stand beside the dog, and let frankincense be placed upon it as you say the spell..."<sup>27</sup>

A bone of a murdered man shall be placed into the mouth of a dog moulded from fruits, wax, and manna. The ritual must be performed in the presence of the dog placed on a tripod. No reference is made on destroying the statuette.

*PGM IV. 2359–2372.*

"Take orange beeswax and the juice of the aeria plant and of ground ivy and mix them and fashion a figure of Hermes having a hollow bottom, grasping in his left hand a herald's wand and in his right a small bag. Write on hieratic papyrus these names, and you will

<sup>25</sup>Betz 1996, 105.

<sup>26</sup>Betz 1996, 321.

<sup>27</sup>Betz 1966, 71.

see continuous business: "CHAIOCHEN OUTIBILMEMNOUÔTH ATBAUICH. Give income and business to this place, because Psentebethm lives here." Put the papyrus inside the figure and fill in the hole with the same beeswax. Then deposit it in a wall, at an inconspicuous place, and crown him on the outside, and sacrifice to him a cock, and make a drink offering of Egyptian wine, and light for him a lamp that is not colored red."<sup>28</sup> A hollow statuette of Hermes shall be prepared from wax and herbal components. Papyrus sheets with writing were often found in extant wax dolls<sup>29</sup>.

*PGM IV. 2379–2399.*

"Take beeswax that has not been heated, which is known as bee glue, and fashion a man having his right hand in the position of begging and having in his left a bag and a staff. Let there be around the staff a coiled snake, and let him be dressed in a girdle and standing on a sphere that has a coiled snake, like Isis. Stand it up and erect it in a single block of hollowed-out juniper, and have an asp covering the top as a capital. Fashion him during the new moon and consecrate it in a celebrating mood, and read aloud the spell over his members, after you have divided him into three sections – repeating the spell four times for each member. For each member write on strips of papyrus made from a priestly scroll, with ink of cinnabar, juice of wormwood, and myrrh. When you have set it up high on the place you have chosen, sacrifice to it a wild [ass] with a white forehead and offer it whole and roast the inward parts over the wood of willow and thus eat it..."<sup>30</sup>

The wax beggar statuette is to be cut into three parts, and the magic spell must be recited over these members. No reference is made on burning or melting the wax<sup>31</sup>.

*PGM IV. 2943–2956.*

"Love-spell of attraction through wakefulness: Take the eyes of a bat and release it alive, and take a piece of unbaked dough or unmelted wax and mould a little dog; and put the right eye of the bat into the right eye of the little dog, implanting also in the same way the left one in the left. And take a needle, thread it with the magical material and stick it through the eyes of the little dog, so that the magical material is visible. And put the dog into a new drinking vessel, attach a papyrus strip to it and seal it with your own ring which has crocodiles with the backs of their heads attached, and deposit it at a crossroad after you have marked the spot so that, should you wish to recover it, you can find it."<sup>32</sup>

The dog figure has to be moulded from clay and wax, eyes of a bat must be placed into the eyes of the dog, then the eyes are to be pierced with a needle, and the doll has to be placed into a drinking vessel and deposited (probably buried) at a crossroad.

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<sup>28</sup>Betz 1996, 81.

<sup>29</sup>Pinch 2006, 91.

<sup>30</sup>Betz 1996, 81–82.

<sup>31</sup>Suarez de la Torre 2011.

<sup>32</sup>Betz 1996, 94.

*PGM IV. 3125.*

"This is how to make [the phylactery]: Taking Etruscan wax, mold a statue three hand-breadths high. Let it be three-headed. Let the middle head be that of a sea falcon; the right, of a baboon; the left, of an ibis. Let it have four extended wings and its two arms stretched on its breast; in them it should hold a scepter. And let it be wrapped [as a mummy] like Osiris. Let the falcon wear the crown of Horus; the baboon, the crown of Hermanubis; and let the ibis wear the crown of Isis. Put into the hollow inside it a heart [made] of magnetite, and write the following names on a piece of hieratic papyrus and put them into the hollow. Next, when you have made it an iron base, stand it on the base and put it into a little juniper wood temple at moonrise on the third day of the goddess. Then, having fixed it [firmly] in whatever place you choose, sacrifice to it a wild white-faced [falcon?], and burn [this offering] entire; also pour to it, as a libation, the milk of a black cow, the first-born [of its mother] and the first she suckled. [By these sacrifices you will have completed the deification of the statue.] And [now] feast with [the god]."<sup>33</sup>

The wax figurine must be consecrated and dined with<sup>34</sup>.

*PGM XIII. 310–319.*

"To send dream: Make a hippopotamus of red wax, hollow, and put into the belly of this hippopotamus both gold and silver and the so-called ballatha of the Jews and array him in white linen and put him in a pure window and, taking a sheet of hieratic papyrus write on it with myrrh ink and baboon's blood whatever you wish to send. Then, having rolled it into a wick and using it to light a new, pure lamp, put on the lamp the foot of the hippopotamus and say the Name, and he sends [the specified dream]."<sup>35</sup>

After hiding magic stuff into a wax hippopotamus, its foot has to be placed onto a new lamp, though it is not clear whether the foot needs to melt or not. The body of the hippopotamus surely did not burn or melt down.

### **Magic dolls**

The modern starting point of studying ancient magic dolls is an article by C. A. Faraone, or more precisely its Appendix, which includes 34 groups of finds from the Graeco-Roman world.<sup>36</sup> The decades that have passed since this publication have seen the emergence of a number of new finds that extended our knowledge on magic dolls considerably. The most significant find is undoubtedly the magical ensemble of the Anna Perenna sanctuary in Rome, which contained seven puppets<sup>37</sup>. One of them is a peculiar item: the doll is attacked by a snake that is biting its face<sup>38</sup>. Excavations at the Isis – Mater Magna sanctuary (Mainz)

<sup>33</sup>Betz 1996, 98–99.

<sup>34</sup>Cf. the prescription on the second Cyrenean inscription.

<sup>35</sup>Betz 1996, 181.

<sup>36</sup>Faraone 1991, 200–205.

<sup>37</sup>Piranomonte 2002; Piranomonte 2012; Piranomonte 2015.

<sup>38</sup>Inventory number of the wax doll attacked by snake: 475550. Cf. Sánchez 2015, 194–202.

yielded three magic dolls<sup>39</sup>. The study of Hans-Jörg Nüsse is an excellent summary of the finds from Germania. Recent finds from Great Britain and France are presented by Magali Bailliot, whose publication also provides us with a detailed description of the finding circumstances of items uncovered in Germany and Austria<sup>40</sup>. A surprising number of Romanian and Moldavian finds are known from the comprehensive work of Valeriu Sîrbu<sup>41</sup>. However, the latter volume (written in Romanian) provides little information on finding circumstances, therefore international scholarship would find a new, more detailed and linguistically more accessible survey very useful.

The following table presents the provenance of known items and indicates the material of magic dolls. The data concerning dolls found before 1991 comes from C. A. Faraone's mentioned article, whereas the data concerning more recent items is given after the table.

Provenance	Lead	Bronze	Clay	Wax/flour
Attika	9		1	
Arkadia		6		
Kephallonia		1		
Delus	4	4		
Crete		2		
Euboia	1			
Sicily	1	1		
Italy	3	1	9	7
N.-Africa	3			
Egypt			3	6
Palaestina	16			
Asia Minor		1		
Britannia	1			
Germany			8	
Carnuntum			1	
Poiana/Romania			32	
Hanska/Moldavia			1	
Total	38	16	55	13

The dolls preserved various marks created during the ritual, providing us with an insight into the magicians' workshop. An important type of manipulation is writing various names or magic words onto the puppet<sup>42</sup>. The Mnesimachos doll in a coffin from the

<sup>39</sup>Witteyer 2004.

<sup>40</sup>Bailliot 2015.

<sup>41</sup>Sîrbu 1993, 58–62.

<sup>42</sup>This is prescribed by several magical papyri, e.g. PGM IV. 296–335; PGM XXIVb. 1–15; PGM XCV. 1–6; PGM CXXIV. 1–43.

Athenian Ceramicus cemetery is a good example. The name Mnesimachos is inscribed into the right leg of the lead puppet<sup>43</sup>. The magician placed the doll into a small lead coffin and buried it into a grave<sup>44</sup>.

Another inscribed wax doll was found in the Anna Perenna sanctuary in Rome. The puppet is peculiar in two respects: it was made from pure beeswax, and it has an inscription that not only includes magic words and letter combinations but also names the target of the ritual:

- PETRONIUS CORNIGUS
- FB EΘ Ω ΘΙΘΩ ΘΑΟΙ
- ΩΣΧΙΘ GΩ
- X
- Θ (((
- A
- I
- AP
- Cornigus<sup>45</sup>

The clay puppet found in Carnuntum has traces of piercing, and the doll was broken, therefore only the upper part was preserved<sup>46</sup>.

Several dolls from Germany have been published in recent years.

1. Two clay dolls have been found in Straubing that are hollow and make a clinking noise, thus they were assumed to be actually rattlers for children<sup>47</sup>. The detailed finding circumstances are unknown, but one of the puppets has traces of piercing, which leads us to the conclusion that the items are not rattlers but magic dolls.

2. Two clay figurines have been found in Eining (Bavaria), but unfortunately their archaeological context is unknown. Both items had been broken and show traces of piercing<sup>48</sup>.

3. The clay doll uncovered in the area of Frienstedt (Erfurt) is hollow inside, and shaking it makes a rattling noise. It excels other magic dolls in size (15.7 cm)<sup>49</sup>. Several injuries can be observed on the item, but the most explicit ones are around the genitalia<sup>50</sup>.

4. The clay doll found in Beutow (Lüchow-Dannenberg) was first published in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and it was erroneously interpreted as of Slavic origin<sup>51</sup>. The doll is hollow inside and rattles similarly to those found in Straubing<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>43</sup>Ogden 2009, 246.

<sup>44</sup>For detailed discussion see Németh 2013, 69–74.

<sup>45</sup>Frigeri 2012, 621.

<sup>46</sup>Gassner 2008, 225–226; Bailliot 2015: 102–103.

<sup>47</sup>Spindler 1983; Nüsse 2011, 135; Bailliot 2015: 101–102.

<sup>48</sup>Spindler 1983. The photos of magic dolls from Germany are published by Nüsse on pages 134–135; by Bailliot on page 99.

<sup>49</sup>Nüsse 2011, 133.

<sup>50</sup>Not included in Bailliot 2015.

<sup>51</sup>Nüsse 2011, 133.

<sup>52</sup>Not included in Bailliot 2015.

5-7. Excavations at the Isis and Mater Magna sanctuary of Mogontiacum (Mainz) yielded three clay puppets<sup>53</sup>. The intensive magical activity performed in the sanctuary is also proved by 34 local curse tablets found<sup>54</sup>. The clay dolls had been broken, and one of them shows traces of piercing. The upper part of one broken item was buried face down, while the bottom part was buried with feet upwards.

The following description of the most recent finds from Britannia and Gaul is based on the study of Magali Bailliot.

8. Britannia: Fishbourne, Sussex<sup>55</sup>. Though the lead puppet was found in a villa, evidence of frequent ritual activities (probably connected with Cybele and Attis) is detected in the surrounding area. The figurine was probably twisted during the ritual<sup>56</sup>.

9. Gallia: The excavation of a cellar under a Roman building at Durocortorum (Reims) yielded two clay puppets of obviously magical context, however, the group of finds has not been published<sup>57</sup>. One of the puppets was better preserved, while the other one is merely a pile of fragments. The legs are broken off the larger puppet, and traces of piercing by needle or nail are visible. The puppet was closed into a clay bowl.

10. Piriac-sur-Mer (Pays de la Loire): A lead puppet (13 cm high) was found in a Roman villa with a wine-press in 2004. The masculinity of the doll is clearly indicated<sup>58</sup>. Both arms and one leg were twisted during the ritual. The right arm is bent as if bound behind its back. The puppet was broken due to twisting.

The provenance of magic dolls is summarized in the following table:

Provenance	Grave	Sanctuary	Water	Pit	House	Box/vessel
Athens	6		1 Ilissus			5
Delus		4			4	
Etruscan	2					
Rome	2					
Italy	8	7	7 pool			7
Morocco			2 canal			
Egypt						6
Palaestine		16				
Britannia		1				
Gallia					3	1
Germania		3			1	

<sup>53</sup>Witteyer 2004, 42–47; Bailliot 2015: 100.

<sup>54</sup>Blänsdorf 2012, 50–180.

<sup>55</sup>Bailliot 2015, 103.

<sup>56</sup>Bailliot 2015, 103: "The damage to the upper limbs may be due to twisting."

<sup>57</sup>Bailliot 2015, 103–104.

<sup>58</sup>Bailliot 2015, 104–105. The find has not been published satisfactorily.

Carnuntum		1				
Poiana						32
Hanska						1
Total	18	32	10	1	7	52

Considering the above, the following types of manipulation can be observed in magic dolls:

- Twisting the head back (bronze, lead)
- Piercing (clay, wax, lead)
- Burning (wax – written sources)
- Breaking the body (clay, wax, lead)
- Placing it into coffins / capsules
- Burial or submerging into water
- Writing names onto it (Rome, Athens, Etruria, Puteoli, Sicily)<sup>59</sup>.

The material of the doll affected the available means of manipulation: it was obviously impossible to pierce a bronze puppet, and there was little chance to melt it by casting it into fire. On the basis of the above, a manikin statuette can be considered a magic doll only if we can observe typical ways of representation (e.g. bending an arm back, binding) or one of the mentioned manipulations<sup>60</sup>.

The surviving dolls prove that most manipulations formulated in literary sources did exist, but magicians applied numerous other methods in practice, and not all wax statuettes were destined to perish in fire.<sup>61</sup> If the procedure required, the doll was pierced, closed into a capsule, buried, or thrown into water, but destroying it was not necessary, because the spell worked until the doll rested in a grave or in water<sup>62</sup>. The destruction of the doll could surely not have secured the same result.

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<sup>59</sup> Faraone 1991, 200.

<sup>60</sup>This condition rules out the identification of most Romanian manikin statuettes in magical context (Sîrbu 1993).

<sup>61</sup>Naturally, the probability of finding archaeological traces of actually burnt wax dolls is rather low.

<sup>62</sup>Cf. the inscription of a curse tablet from Savaria, *SEG* (40, 1990, 919).

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