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Katarzyna Kabacińska-Łuczak

Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan (Poland)

Horses, toy sabers, toy soldiers—a few words about boys' patriotic toys of the second half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century

ABSTRACT. Children's toys of the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were determined by several criteria: age, gender and social background of the child. They fulfilled several basic functions: ludic, socialization/preparatory, educational and educating. Boys' patriotic toys influenced the formation of patriotic feelings, both preparing the child for future military service, and developing a love for the history of the country.

KEYWORDS: children's toys, patriotic boys' toys, horses, soldiers and drill

Introduction

Toys were and still are an inseparable element of childhood, accompany the child every day; they are his friends and the most-anticipated gifts. The child being in the other reality (the reality of play) (Sułkowski, 1984), is capable of using everything to play with, and then every object becomes a toy. However, it is primarily an object deliberately made for play. Such was a dictionary definition of a toy in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Linde, 1814, p. 592).

A toy played a few basic functions: ludic, socialization, educational and educational as well as preparatory, and its selection was in that period of interest for us determined by three main criteria: age, sex and origin. Łukasz Gołębiowski in the source book "Games and Fun of Various States" published in 1831, clearly differentiated the fun of girls and boys, when he wrote: „Girls' games are less buzzing, they do not entail noise, they are more peaceful, of virginal grace, pleasant to be liked and willing to please" (Gołębiowski, 1831, p. 26). This fact was also emphasized by pedagogues and publicists of the nineteenth century. They pointed out that the differences between toys and games of boys as well

as girls, result first of all from the different social roles that society expects from them. For example, let us use the statement in “Dziennik Domowy” (“Daily Journal”) in 1835: “From the cradle to the grave the destiny of a woman entails love and sacrifice (...) The boys hack on a wooden pony, with a bullwhip in hand, play football or in experience and develop their strength while wrestling. When the girls sit calmly, engaged in conversation, a doll or a wreath for a father or mother, a playful boy runs in, interrupts their fun, spoils everything ...” (“Dziennik Domowy”, 1835, p. 350).

Hence the doll together with the world of the girl became the most important friend of a girl, and the horses and soldiers—the dearest objects of boys. Representatives of both genders, having fun, imitated the adult world, which they transferred to the time and space of play, on the one hand learning socially acceptable behavior in this way (frequently with a help from adults), and on the other hand—using the layers of imagination to create a new play reality.

The aim of these considerations is an attempt to show whether and how boys' toys influenced the formation of patriotic attitudes in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The issue will be dealt with in two aspects: the direct impact of toys on the development of certain elements of military drill/education during play and learning about the history of the country and its traditions, for example, while playing with toy soldiers. In the discussed period, both aspects were combined, becoming an important way to promote patriotism in the family. The horses, toy sabers and soldiers were to prepare the boy for the role of a soldier, a warrior, ready at any moment to take up the fight for his homeland (both during the First Polish Republic and during the Partitions), but also through the knowledge of tradition, language and native history to shape national consciousness, Polishness. However, this issue only seems to be obvious, because “The problem of researchers lies in the fact that in the absence of the state, and the existence of hostile institutions towards Polishness, such as schools or armies of partitioning countries, we still do not know enough about the mechanisms of making this bond, which we call the national feeling” (Nieuważny, 2007, p. 3). Let us add, it was a diverse bond, as it was created in families from various social spheres. In this discussion, detailed analysis of shaping patriotic attitudes at the turn of the 19th and 20th century will be omitted, and attention will be focused primarily on boys' toys affecting military skills and a sense of patriotism.

It seems that boys' patriotic toys in the Polish lands, were identified by Jan Bujak primarily with war toys (Bujak, 1988, p. 34)¹, which was influenced by several factors. Firstly, they resulted from geopolitical conditions—Poland, which was territorially located in the central part of Europe, was the area of many fights. “Because of the character of their country, Poles were an agricultural nation, and due to their geographical location they had to constantly fight against their neighbors who were pressing at us from all sides. (...) No wonder that the Poles highly valued the horse to which they owed their victories in peace and prosperity in peace. It carried them to fight, it faithfully accompanied in the hardships of war, it cultivated the land and brought it harvest (...) Living with a horse and saber began from the early childhood and lasted until old age (...)” (Dyakowski, 1911, p. 10). Boys, especially young noblemen, imitated the behavior of their fathers and uncles as they were wagging on ponies, waving sticks and battling.

Secondly, the political situation after 1795 undoubtedly influenced educational ideals, carried out primarily in the family, which in the period of national captivity became the basic place of patriotic education, which was influenced by both the political atmosphere and philosophical assumptions and social changes (the turn of the 19th and the twentieth century) (Bocheński, 1971). However, it should be remembered that the understanding of these changing educational ideals was mainly recognized by „the enlightened”². And patriotism, identified above all with national uprisings, has changed in favor of everyday patriotism (Sochoń, 2007, p. 263), implemented in social activities, organic work, etc. This view corresponds to the words of Andrzej Zwoliński, according to which “War, partitions, and slavery are extreme situations for the nation, which most often force emotional and instinctive behaviors to survive. For the time of peace, however, a more rational patriotism is needed, in which love for the homeland can be expressed in the ability to sacrifice political ambitions, give up planned profits that are too burdensome for the poorest social group, and also bring social rules into Christian life, with patience and persistence, despite adversity. Because patriotism mani-

¹ Dozens of research on toys divides patriotic toys into three groups. The first one included small-size figurines of knights and soldiers, along with all military hinterland and weaponry, the second one contained dolls usually depicting boys—dressed in uniforms, which are a copy of military uniforms. The third group consists of uniforms or their fragments, in which children can dress themselves (Bujak, 1988, p. 35–36).

² Nieuważny, 2007.

festis itself not only in love as a certain intention and inclination, or even a gesture, but also in the whole practice of life, in work for the common good and in a solid concern for the nation” (Zwoliński, 2015, p. 362).

Thirdly, patriotic toys were influenced by family ideals of individual social spheres, the more so that "Polish society therefore expected from the family that it would raise the young generation in the national spirit, prepare the youth for the fight for a free homeland, and then work for its good. Women played a special role in shaping the patriotic attitudes of the young generation..." (Kalinowska-Witek, 2014, p. 178–179). According to Stefania Walasek, "On the basis of the accounts of the authors of the memoirs, it can be concluded that both parents, grandparents, siblings, as well as distant relatives had influence on patriotic education of children and adolescents." (Walasek, 1994, p. 132), and the choice of methods used by family members depended largely on the political situation in the partition. Common ways of influencing the young generation were: historical reading, magazines, stories about the history of the family and family history, geographic and historical tours, and in Galicia—participation in the celebration of national holidays (Walasek, 1994, p. 132). It seems that boys' toys that shape patriotic attitudes can be added to this list.

Finally, it seems that the willingness to use military toys was influenced by centuries-old traditions of a man—a warrior who must fight and win.

The whole issues of the so-called patriotic toys in Polish historiography has not been fully elaborated, although the themes of toys have permanently inscribed in contemporary historical and pedagogical research³, while becoming part of the "social history of education" (Jakubiak, 2016, p. 13). The characterization of patriotic toys was presented in the study "Toys in Europe" Jan Bujak, according to whom "patriotic functions were primarily designated for war toys" (Bujak, 1988, p. 34). In addition, there are several texts that selectively analyze this issue⁴, and some references to the problem in the book by D. Żołądź-Strzelczyk, I. Gomułka, K. Kabacińska-Łuczak, M. Nawrot-Borowska, "The history of children's toys in the Polish territories up to the beginning of the 20th century". These reflections do not exhaust the subject, as they merely

³ Comp. work D. Żołądź-Strzelczyk, K. Kabacińskiej-Łuczak, M. Nawrot-Borowskiej, detailed bibliography in: Żołądź-Strzelczyk et al., 2016, p. 437–457.

⁴ Ryś, 2010; Pilichowska, 1997; Lauda, 2016; Kania, 2017; Kabacińska-Łuczak, 2018.

outline the most important of his problems, how the fun of horses has aroused feelings of patriotism? How did the toy soldiers teach the history of the country, which along with language and traditions influenced the formation of national consciousness?

The following analysis uses written sources (diaries, pedagogical press, family, socio-literary, beautiful literature addressed to adults, as well as intentionally directed to children, ABC's), iconographic (drawings, press graphics, photographs), as well as material sources (museum objects). From the catalog of written sources, texts placed in the press and addressed to children deserve attention. The first group includes articles published in the pedagogical press ("School"), family press ("Domestic Journal"), socio-literary („Kłosa”—„Ears of Wheat”), in which the horse was described as a typically boy's toy, but criticism was also raised over that popular toy. The issues of boy's toys discussed on the one hand describe play reality, on the other hand—especially addressed to mothers, parents—as seen as postulative. Texts addressed to children at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries (published both in the press and in primers, or separately in the form of books), due to their purpose and method of transmission, are quite specific sources. They are characterized by didacticism, moralizing, simple plot, which is why the way toys are written in them is adapted to the age and development possibilities of the addressee. For example, in primers, the illustrations of boys on horses were used to describe the immediate reality of the child. In literary texts, there are descriptions of playing with horses, toy soldiers, etc., with an appropriate didactic commentary. An important place in the group of written sources is occupied by diaries⁵ (men's diaries), in which the authors mentioning their own childhood, gave an example of play with horses, soldiers, etc. Unfortunately, boys' toys, like toys in general, were not often mentioned attributes of childhood. A valuable source also includes written novels and stories of the so-called literature of the mirror, which was used to describe the literature of the second half of the nineteenth century. In these short texts you can find descriptions of various boys' games.

In addition, in the present considerations, iconographic materials were used, especially press graphics from magazines addressed to chil-

⁵ This term covers a very large area of a specific writing, based mainly on memory and containing the author's own experiences, after: Deresiewicz, 1976, p. 245; Żołędź-Strzelczyk et al., 2016, p. 39.

dren, which were most often an illustration of the described history, as well as graphics by Michał Stachowicz and photographs depicting a child on a rocking horse.

These considerations are conducted from the historical and pedagogical perspective, which is why the preparatory function of boys' military toys and their influence on patriotic education were emphasized above all. Attention was paid to two aspects of the preparatory function of military boy toys. First of all—to prepare for the role of a warrior, or to train skills during military games, and secondly—to promote patriotic feelings by learning about the history of the country.

Preparation for the role of a warrior— insurrectionist patriotism⁶

It seems that ponies, sabers and other accessories of playing with drills, as well as soldiers, reflecting military attributes adequate to the era, influenced the formation of patriotism, which “In almost every age (...) meant something different” (Tazbir, 2004, p. 48) —from the medieval loyalty of the dynasty (ruler), through loyalty to the Polish Republic (the times of elective kings), through sacrificing property and living for the homeland (Enlightenment), to participation in underground groupings and uprisings (in the era of national misery) (Tazbir, 2004, p. 48) and painstaking work to improve the economic and educational needs of Poles at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

The most important functions of boy's toys consisted in social, educational and upbringing impact. „A military toy, as Jan Ryś claims, is definitely intended for boys as potential soldiers” (Ryś, 2010, p. 138), whom it prepared for practical military service. Playing with drills, riding a horse, fencing (swords and sabers) influenced specific (e.g. skillful, agile) skills of boys (e.g. riding skills), who were learning to issue commands as well as to perform them, e.g. during marches. They were especially important in shaping the so-called insurrectionist patriotism, or maintaining the tradition of regaining independence during the armed struggle. From this point of view, it was necessary to prepare the boy from the earliest years that his soldierly / military skills could be used in armed operations.

⁶ The term taken from the article Winnicki, 2012.

Toy horses

What a doll for a girl meant, a toy horse was for a boy⁷. Being aware of the impact of the child's gender on the toys he received (*de facto* the differentiation introduced by adults), Henryk Wernic, a well-known 19th-century educator, believed that "If children acquire some practice in walking, they should be provided with toys that would keep them moving and in a way forced them to do so—thus a ball, a wooden horse, a cart are completely in their right place here. (...) These toys are equal to all boys and girls, the only difference being that girls give preference to dolls over ponies; as for the sister, the doll also completely replaces the a fridging pony. A pony horse, sometimes disobedient, needs encouragement in the form of a threat or a request; the doll is not always slow to the sister's orders, it must be admonished, rebuked, cared for, etc., and both must be provided with food, food and rest" (Wernic, 1881). It sanctions the division of toys into a girl's doll and a boy's horse, while showing the common features of playing with these objects—both a doll and a horse, "animated" in playful reality, must be fed, given rest. So the boys were not only supposed to be on horseback, but also to learn to look after them and care for them.

There is no doubt that—as Łukasz Gołębiowski claimed—the first fun of the boys was a toy horse and a toy whip (Gołębiowski, 1831, p. 26). Toy ponies, like other toys, on the one hand reflected the reality of adults, on the other they created it. Horses on a stick, rocking horses, etc. imitated (in appearance, poses) their animal prototypes. The horse has been an inseparable companion of man for many centuries. "It was an invaluable help in human work, accompanied man on holidays and every day, it wore whole armies on his comb, and his strength and beauty ignited the imagination of artists" (Lisiewicz, Łysiak-Łątkowska, 2017, p. 7; comp. Sawicka, 2002). That is why it also became an important boy's toy.

The ponies were very diverse toys: sometimes they were ordinary sticks ridden by small boys, and also sticks completed more or less accurately and decoratively made head of the horse (adornment reflected the financial possibilities of the family), there were rocking horses, skids, and figures of horses dressed mostly from wood by grandfather or fa-

⁷ Compare: Toy horses "for riding"—on a stick, poles and wheels, in: Żołędź-Strzelczyk et al., 2016, p. 233–246.

ther. What the boys were interested in depended on their age: little boys galloped on horse skates and rocked on stable horses on platforms or two skids, while the older ones usually rode real horses, which was also dependent on the financial wealth of the family. In peasant families, the most common was a stick, while soldiers were stones. The heroes of the novel A. Dygasiński, entitled *In the Wilderness*, rode on such horses. "Now all three boys sat on wooden sticks and began to parade; Maciej rode ahead, loudly bumping his bare feet and pretending that his wooden horse was bending" (Dygasiński, 1898, p. 117), Janek, the main character of *The Orphan's Fate*, received an ordinary paper horse on wheels from his mother (Prus, 1974, p. 116).

To the early interest of ponies in small boys, attention was drawn in "Kłósy", where we read: "The boy cannot speak well yet, and already sits on a stick, as if on a horse, wriggles with a stick in his hand, which has a saber" (E.J., 1885, p. 395). This statement corresponds to the statement of Bogdan Dyjakowski: "The first games of the boy were associated with the horse first with fictional, then real. The boy barely learned to walk on all fours when he crawled over to his father's or other man's knees, climbed on to them and sat straddling them, he played it more slowly, as if on a real steed. These children like this fun the same way, and just like in the past, the song is sung to them:

A man is riding
on a horse all by himself.

And when the boy could walk and run about his own strength, then the father's knees were replaced with a stick, which presented this superiority, that one could move from place to place and play on it, pretending to be a horse's thumping with loud stomping. Also, the boy harnessed four, three or a pair of peers, stitching them with a thread or twine and rushing with them like wind, through meadows and fields. When the boy grew up, he was put on a real horse and henceforth he never parted with it again (...) It is also not surprising that starting to practice horse riding from the earliest childhood, every youngster had all the secrets of equestrian art (...) A young man, trained in a horse-riding ride, enlisted under a banner and on horseback served the homeland, winning the fame and title of a bachelor" (Dyakowski, 1911, p. 10). This fragment shows how important it was to teach attachment to a horse, and how valuable riding skills are gained during play.

Older boys rode horses on their own, for example Edward Raczyński liked riding a lot: “He also rode horses on small Cossack ponies, mostly without a saddle, but only on a rug” (Raczyński, 2009, p. 124).

The importance of a horse as a toy may also be demonstrated by the prayer of the little Henia—the hero of the novel by Adolf Dygasinski entitled *The New Mysteries of Warsaw*. The boy, living with his grandmother in a poor apartment, prayed to God with these words: “My God, how good are you, do me a favor, give me a horse the same as Kazio from this high tenement! Give me a toy whip that this little Adam from the Kolski family has! You know, God, this little whip with stars at one end!” (Dygasiński, 1887, p. 152; comp. Kabacińska-Łuczak, 2016).

Toy horses on a stick

„The boy himself, if he has a whip and a stick, transforms into a rider; his horse is unbridled, he is restless, the boy tames him and makes him slow, happier when it sniffs down the sisters before him, when tied on a rope, mounted on a rope, he moves his horse (...) or when sitting on a rocking horse he slaps it with a whip” (Gołębiowski, 1831, p. 12). Józef Rulikowski recalls this kind of fun in his diary, writing: “I once used to play with my peers on a berth replacing horses” (Rulikowski, 1862, p. 102).



Figure 1. M. Stachowicz. *Boys on toy horses* (early 19th century).
Muzeum Okręgowe w Rzeszowie

This description fully corresponds with iconographic shows of riding on a stick. Let the scene sketched in 1804 by Michał Stachowicz serve as an example (Kabacińska, 2010). On this card from the album you can see two playing little boys. One of them lets go of the kite and holds a fan in his hand. The other one is riding a horse, which is a stick ending with a contoured head of a horse (with a bit, nipple and chiefs) with equestrian gear. The boy holds a whip in his hand, which he probably hurries his steed with.

Picture No. 2 presents a similar play, on which an afternoon, idyllic scene was captured. "Mom is sitting at the table and sewing something. Julia and Zosia sat beside her, wrapping wreaths of pretty flowers. Józio, with his hand in his hand, on his wooden horse, hassle, jumps around the garden" (Anczyc, 1887, p. 42). Not a richly carved toy is a bust of a horse with simple features, probably made by a grandfather or some craftsman.



Figure 2. W.L. Anczyc. *ABC: pierwsza nauka dla dzieci* (1887)

Also, S. Róžański in his primer intended for learning to read and write at home and at school put in the "First Reading" part a short text about horse-riding, with a sketch of a boy running on a stick on a stick. „The boy came out in front of the house (...) He got on a wooden horse and ride! Hens and geese fled before him; even Burek the dog escaped him. The boy played like this for an hour. (...) The boy dismounted from the horse, took it to the hall and put there, and he went to study” (Róžański, 1906, p. 37). Ignacy Jan Paderewski dashed with his sister on

a horse made at home. “I was a knight riding a horse-charger, on which I left for victories. Behind my steed I had a long stick, at the end of which Antonina placed a bag filled with various old rags, which was supposed to represent a horse’s head—even ears were there (...) On this wonderful steed I slogged around the house, fought imaginary fights” (Paderewski, 1982, p. 33–34)—in this way, Paderewski recalled the children's riding on the horse after many years.

The children themselves were also horses that were harnessed to ride. You can find many such descriptions and illustrations. For example, use the following. Picture 3 shows the fun of two boys. One of them, walking on all fours, pretends to be a horse. The other boy is sitting on it, holding a saber in one hand, in the other he's holding the reins, which he steers a horse with. Various toys are scattered around the playing children, including a cannon, a horse figure with a rider, and a drum. This presentation is an illustration of the published story, whose main characters were two boys: Jaś and Waldek, who “Wished a different gift for Christmas than a book. The father, at their request, bought them a book, and at the same time various military supplies: a cannon, a trumpet, a drum, a bridle for a horse, a hat and a hussar sword” (“Dodatek do «Przyjaciela Dzieci»”, 1873, p. 441).



Figure 3. *Zabawa chłopców*. “Dodatek do «Przyjaciela Dzieci»” 1873. 37

The play corresponds to the description of a similar play, which is a fragment of B. Prus' text from *The Cyclist's Memoirs*, in which we read: "I am walking, and from this side street runs out a group of four children and teenagers from five to fifteen years of age. Of course, they play in the army at ten in the morning!... At the head of this army rushes some girl in a ragged skirt with tangled hair on her head, carrying a child, (...). At the head of this army rushes some girl in a ragged skirt with tangled hair on her head, on the hand with a child, (...). Behind the girl I see a teenage boy, with a thick and hoarse voice, pretending to be a carter who chases two or eight-year-olds in front of him, and behind them—a legion of small and large children, in jackets, frock coat, colorful dresses, cloth hats, hats or bare head—they go fours" (Prus, 1974, p. 290–291) The inclusion of children to the harness was a familiar game, which Dyakowski also mentions: "If there were girls in such a harness, their braids were often used as reins, making all cords unnecessary" (Dyakowski, 1911, p. 13).

Rocking horses

Among the various toy horses, rocking horses—already known from earlier periods deserve attention (comp. Żołędź-Strzelczyk, Kabacińska-Łuczak, 2011; Kabacińska, 2007; Kabacińska, 2010). For example, let me use a graphic of Michał Stachowicz from the beginning of the 19th century (Figure 4), where we can see two little boys riding on horses. This is probably a moment of break in learning because the teacher is watching the game closely. The boy on the left is riding a horse made of a stick, finished with a very well contoured head of the horse together with the front hooves and short reins, which the boy holds in his left hand. He holds a whip in his right hand. The other boy is sitting on a wooden rocking horse, whose head was made with great care. The toy is very comfortable and safe, because, what needs to be emphasized, it has a support under the back.

A leather horse with a real tail hung in the door of the Mincel's store (Prus, 1969, p. 32). Similar, perhaps, was placed in Figure 5, where the moment of playing with Christmas presents was captured. The visible division of toys by gender is very important, as this graphic is in the primer, and the contents included therein strongly influenced the children learning to read. The boys received military toys as gifts. One of

them, hitting the drum, probably strikes the song of the marching song, the other prepares to ride on a beautifully made rocking horse. The size of the toy is adapted to the child, being a faithful copy of the real horse. The boy holds a whip in his hand, with the help of which he drives his horse.



Figure 4. M. Stachowicz. *Chłopcy na konikach* (early 19th century).
Muzeum Okręgowe w Rzeszowie



Figure 5. W.L. Anczyc. *ABC: pierwsza nauka dla dzieci* (1887)

A similar representation of a child riding a rocking horse has been placed in a booklet addressed to children, entitled „Coloring books: ten colorful plates described by rhyming for a small child by Jan Chęciński” (Figure 6).

The little boy in a soldier’s outfit proudly rides a rocking horse, made with every care for details of both the appearance of the animal and riding accessories (saddle, stirrups)—the horse looks “alive”. It stands on two skids, so the toy is safe and stable.



Figure 6. J. Chęciński. *The boy riding a rocking horse*



Figure 7. Autor unknown. *A child on a toy horse*.
Muzeum Narodowe Rolnictwa i Przemysłu Rolno-Spożywczego w Szreniawie

Equally beautifully made horse was immortalized in a photograph from 1908, in the collection of the National Museum of Agriculture and Agricultural and Food Industry in Szreniawa (Picture 7). What is important, it is adapted to the child's age. In this performance, we see a small child swinging on a black horse. It is probably a Christmas gift, as shown by the date recorded in the photograph: 26.12.08.

A similar rocking horse can be found in the Średzka Land Museum (see Picture 8). The size is also adapted to the age and height of the child. The animal has a nicely profiled head, on the back there is a saddle with stirrups, a tail made of real hair, only a mane, unfortunately, it has been painted. The horse stands on wooden poles, provided, importantly, with special props for the child's hands instead of the reins.



Figure 8. *A rocking horse* (early 20th century). Muzeum Ziemi Średzkiej

Perhaps this is what Marcin Zaleski recounted: “Between many other toys that our grandfather gave us, we had quite a large wooden horse on the poles, in the whole mount of the mount. Cleaning and decorating this horse was the most favorite activity of mine” (Zaleski, 1893, p. 25; cf. Pachocka, 2009, p. 196–197).

Horses on a float

The boys used to ride not only on a stick on sticks or poles, but also played with horses standing on floats. These platforms could also have wheels, as in Figure 9, where the boy is sitting on such a pony. The figure



Figure 9. K. Kędzierski, *Christmas gift giving* (1922)

of the horse has not exactly been reproduced—it is rather the outline of an animal figure. Equestrian accessories are also lacking in here.

The horse on the float often appeared in tales addressed to children, most often serving didactic purposes. Maria Weryho in her collection described the story of a horse belonging to Poluś. The boy, playing with a horse on a platform with wheels, beat him and pulled his tail. As a result, he broke it. His sister, Krysia, made the tail an animal made of her own long hair which she cut off. Poluś was happy, but their mother was much less (Weryho, 1911, p. 22).



Figure 10. Toy horses in the offer of the store of K. Ignatowicz. “Wielkopolanin” 1804. 281

It was just such ponies on floats that could be bought in the shop of Kajetan Ignatowicz in Poznań. In the period preceding Christmas, there were often advertisements of toys and statements by journalists raising the role and importance of toys in the process of upbringing and development. Figure 10 presents ponies on two types of flats and a rocking horse. It should be noted that the novelty on the offer was “very durable paper horses” (“Wielkopolanin”, 1804, p. 3; comp. Kabacińska-Łuczak, Nawrot-Borowska, 2018).

It may seem that playing with toy ponies gives not only joy of fun and prepares you for the role of a soldier and a warrior, but it is also safe. At the turn of the 19th and 20th century, you can find voices that critically evaluate toy horses. As examples, let me use the statements of the doctor Professor E. Madeyski and the pedagogue Barbara Żulińska. The first wrote: “The harmful children's toys include rocking horses and riding sticks, as the children say: on horseback. Both irritate the sexual organs by tickling or rubbing during the movement of the ride, which causes the sexual system to develop too early, which has a significant effect on the future” (*Dyjetetyka*, 1869, p. 141; cf. Nawrot-Borowska, 2016). Barbara Żulińska, who does not believe that giving boys the shotguns, whips, toy soldiers and sabers trains courage, but leads to barbarism, wrote: “Today, courage means something other than bloodshed; today, we are primarily concerned with courage in life, courage in expressing beliefs, and courage in overcoming the adversities we encounter at every turn. Will we get this courage by shooting animals, playing soldiers?” (Żulińska, 1910, p. 23).

Drills

In addition to the horses, the important military and preparatory function was also played by military toys: fusions, rifles, broadsheets. Therefore, from an early age, boys have turned to military skills.

„We all had a small weapon, the children's toy was a drill, they were proud of their mother when the skillful children turned out to be good. When we went with Bulikowski for a walk, everyone carried a broadsword, a carabiner, and war songs were so widespread that we, little ones, sang in a chorus aloud when going for a walk” (Pilichowska, 1997, p. 65–66). Such memories often accompany diary writers. Julian Borzym

greatly appreciated the broadsword he received from his grandfather (Borzym, 2009, p. 46), Józef Kostrzewski recalled creating pop guns (Kostrzewski, 1970, p. 15) and Arkady Fiedler fired an old key filled with gunpowder and lead (Fiedler, 1976, p. 160).

Playing in soldiers was probably a favorite activity for boys. It has also become a frequent motif in texts addressed to children. In the booklet “Let’s play soldiers! Pictures with rhymes for small children” you can find a verbal description of the entire child battle (Figure 11), and in “The Children’s Friend”—drill (Figure 12): „My uncle bought Adam and Staś, toy horses on mounted poles, and for little Ignas he bought a tiny trumpet. The children, happy with the gift, immediately started to play, and Adam began to play around the room pretending to be a rider with a whip. Staś put a hat on his head, a paper hat, and took the Father's staff like a broadsword, and Ignas, following the example of his older brothers, climbed on the reed of the Father as though on a horse, and began to trumpet like a musician. (...) Adam and Staś snorted like horses, stamped their feet, Ignas trumpeted with all his might.” (*Koniki i książeczka*, 1873, p. 395).



Figure 11. *Let's play soldiers! Pictures with rhymes for little children*. Warsaw 1869

The fact that the drills belonged to important boys' games is evidenced by the memory of Ignacy Rzecki: “He taught me [father—K.K.Ł.] to read, write, glue envelopes, and above all, work (Prus, 1969, p. 27). Kazio Wirski, the protagonist of Bolesław Prus' children, was brought up

with similar memories, uncovered by his uncle: He bathed him in cold water, fed and simply dressed, woke up early, taught him how to ride a horse, shoot, as well as fencing. He created a unit for him from rural boys, who were armed with childish carabiners, dressed in fantastic uniforms and who drilled not too badly” (Prus, [https://pl.wikisource.org/wiki/Dzieci_\(Prus\)/I](https://pl.wikisource.org/wiki/Dzieci_(Prus)/I)).



Figure 12. *The Children's Friend* 1873, *Drill*



Figure 13. J. Chęciński, *Drill*

There is no doubt that playing drums, military maneuvers influenced patriotic education, especially in the era of partitions. Róża Raczyńska wrote about playing such games in regaining independence: We all want to fight for our homeland (...). If you want to fight for your homeland you

have to be strong, brave and be able to shoot. Arthur is already very good at popping beans and flying volunteers, he only had a popper with a cork. Then he had a springy fusion, from which he could aim and kill (with peas) flying shuttlecocks for a bet.” (Raczyński, 1969, p. 63).

Preparations for a real armed struggle began during military games, during the drill and fighting on sticks. The five boys playing the drums (Figure 13) probably did not realize it until the end. One of them with a highly raised banner (most probably a French one) happily leads their march. Behind him, with a whip in his hand, a boy drives his steed. In the middle a saber walks proudly, behind him a boy playing the trumpet, and finally a boy driving a horse on a platform with a wagon, perhaps a wagon with war supplies.



Figure 14. Boleś-Knight, In: Wrotnowski F. (1851) *Elementarz polskich dzieci*

F. Wrotnowski in “The Primer of Polish Children”, in short stories, didactic pictures, showed the importance of boys’ plays and toys shaping courage and patriotism. Boleś, a several-year-old hero of the book, “put on a suitable paper hat, put a wooden saber to his side, and strutted like a knight” (Wrotnowski, 1857, p. 27). The uncle watching the scene doubted the boldness and courage of the boy, which is why “taking the gun, he escorted the cock, as if wanting to shoot at the wind. Boleś was in fear, he started shouting and crying. What a piece of knight from Boleś!” (Wrotnowski, 1857, p. 27). Uncle told the boy the story of another boy,

“who was afraid to enter a dark room and stammered, and was afraid of a gander like a snake. No one had taught him courage before, and when he grew up he became a soldier to dress up in uniform and buzz the broadsword on the cobblestone” (Wrotnowski, 1857, p. 27). As you can guess, during the fights, the master fled from the battlefield and suffered humiliation. The point of the text fully refers to the meaning of toys and games shaping patriotic attitudes: “But Boleś will be brave when he grows up” (Wrotnowski, 1857, p. 28).

Promoting Polish history and traditions— everyday patriotism

A true patriot must first of all consider the land on which he was born and has grown up to be the first and the main basis for the love of his homeland. In man, the love of the fatherland will only be perpetuated, «when this land is known in all directions (...). Getting to know the native country is therefore an emotional, poetic, religious side of the love of the homeland (...).» (Libelt, 1907, p. 23–24) wrote Karol Libelt in the song “On the love of the homeland” (Kowalczyk, <http://www.e-pw.pl/page.php/1/0/show/96/>). The ways of propagating patriotism were determined by the socio-political situation in the partitions. For example, in the Prussian partition the organic work was also an expression of patriotism, which was written in 1882 by its advocate, Wawrzyniec Engeström (1829–1910): “This supreme and most understandable patriotism of everyday life, honest, legal and open daily work, quiet virtue and sacrifice—this is the strongest foundation of the organization in which the strength and spiritual development of our society is contained.” (Engeström, 1882, p. 22; comp. Kowalczyk)

The spread of patriotic feelings carried out in the family took place also through stories from the history of the family, the country, caring for maintaining the holiday traditions or national. The group of these elements also includes the use of toys, especially boys' toys. According to Jan Bujak, at the turn of the 19th and 20th century, “the content of most of them [patriotic toys] were historical topics” (Bujak, 1988, p. 34). Knowledge of history was being developed through reading books on the history of the nation, arranging theater scenes, building blocks. Among such richness, soldiers are on the forefront.

Toy soldiers

„Liked, especially by boys of all ages, not only children, toy soldiers, are toys depicting miniature figures of warriors from different eras and various armies” (Żołędź-Strzelczyk, Gomułka, Kabacińska-Łuczak, Nawrot-Borowska M., 2016, p. 404). They were made of many materials available in a given era, such as wood, clay, ivory, metals (from silver to tin) (Bujak, 1988, p. 35).

An example of such items shows a collection of figurines in the Museum of the Middle Earth—painted on both sides (see Figure 15). You can recognize soldiers of many armies among them, including Napoleon’s army.



Figure 15. Toy soldiers (early 20th century.). Muzeum Ziemi Średzkiej

Playing with such an army was perhaps a memory described in “Dziennik Łódzki” in 1889: “how many memories must be pressed into your mind, memories of your childhood, with such words «lead soldier»! With what enthusiasm you accepted the box that contained the entire army, set it on the table, formed it into ranks, columns, and your young imagination breathed life into this soulless world, dreaming of battles, victories, processions (...) Faded bright colors of their costumes, weapons faded in your maturing mind, the vivid colors of the youthful fantasy, whose sources are increasingly sought in the real world; So you threw

away the empty toy, or suspecting how much work and human knowledge there is in this tiny object” („Dziennik Łódzki”, 1886)



Figure 16. *Playing with toy soldiers*. “The Children’s Friend” 1862

Soldiers were also heroes of stories addressed to children. In one of them, Maria Weryho made the main character a figure of an old soldier who tells the story of his life: “I have the honor to present myself, dear reader. I am an old lead soldier. But I must first explain to you how I got here. It was a very long time when once a worker took a spoon of lead, heated it on hot coals and poured it into a mold. After a while the lead froze and hardened, and then the worker opened the form and a young, luminous soldier jumped out. It was me. Then my clothes, shoes, helmet were painted and I became an elegant hussar. I was not alone, there were twelve of us, all of us full of strength and enthusiasm. We wanted to go immediately to the war, but some large hand took us and arranged it in a wooden box. Then we were taken to the store, but we were lying there soon. The next day an old woman came and took us to her grandson in a Christmas gift. Grandson was a seven-year-old boy and his name was Janek. It was a good boy, cheerful, funny, I can not complain, he put us in ranks, he taught us to march, he drove us ... Everything would be best if ... ah, if Jurek was a bit more decent. How many accidents were there for this reason (...)” (Weryho, 1907, p. 22–23). Figure 17 refers to this fragment as it captures the moment of the soldiers’ drill.



Figure 17. S. Masłowski, *Playing with toy soldiers*, in: Weryho M. (1907) *A soldier's story*

Two armies of Framuaks and Szkatulaks participated in the battles led by the heroes of the novel Maria Konopnicka "Dolls of my children". The first lived in a frame in a table room, the second in a box standing under the window. "The boys were usually into manufacturing the dolls" (Konopnicka, 1962, p. 3). The Framuaks were elegantly dressed, "Chief of them, Duke Józef Poniatowski, wore a uniformed coat, girded with a sash with a magnificent knot (...). The boast of the Framuvaks were stiff corsets, made of cards turned to pink or blue side, and their weapons consisted of rifles, made of pitch bows—for militants, or of swords, prepared from pens and pencils—for elders" (Konopnicka, 1962, p. 4–5). Their leader was Prince Józef Poniatowski. The Framuaks had their heroes: Czarnecki, Kosciuszko, and Chodkiewicz. Both armies played peacefully during the peace, they made trips to Brazil, but during the war the soldiers fought bravely. "Finally, both armies collided with great impetus. Bohdarenko, with his head hitting like a buffalo, in the columns of the enemy, he beat furiously (...). Czarnecki and Kosciuszko struck swith mall, previously prepared troops in an efficient manner, saving their brave people...." (Konopnicka, 1962, p. 13–14). This literary description of soldiers' fights is probably a representation of authentic boyish games. This example shows how many messages from Polish history children got to know during play and how they could use this knowledge and how many military skills they gained (fighting strategies, command, etc.).

The fun, whose source was the patriotic stories of parents and grandparents, was remembered by Teodor Kaczyński. The memoirist and his colleagues, coming from families where national consciousness and knowledge of the history of Poland were passed down generations, they often played in the Polish army. “The worst thing was that nobody wanted to be in a hostile army,” wrote Kaczyński. We were better off when we were making Polish and foreign soldiers from pebbles, sticks and rags. So in our children's minds a national, Polish feeling was being created” (Kaczyński, 1987; comp. Nawrot-Borowska, 2016).

Summary

Bronisław Trentowski wrote in the mid-nineteenth century: “Do you know who the real patriot is? He, who in his youth did, to his own natural disposition, a certain unchanging plan of serving the homeland, who learned something properly, became a detailed man, and then throughout his life he works on his creation persistently and constantly strives for one goal. His path is pointed out. He follows it with a bold, skillful step, and no stranger will stop him” (Trentowski, 1845, p. 34; comp. Kowalczyk). That patriotism which was developed in the family and the church, shaped the generations of Poles thanks to which Poland regained its independence. It seems that a certain influence on shaping the patriotic attitudes of boys could have toys that accompanied them in childhood—horses (on a stick, poles, platforms), soldiers and items used for drill etc. First of all, they shaped equestrian skills and agility, but also instilled a passion for what was Polish, affecting the history of Poland and native traditions. And for these reasons, they influenced the formation of national unity.

And although there were criticisms—Barbara Żulińska decided that playing in a soldier is conditioned “instinctively” and culturally, but “One should, however, turn back and snatch children—and society in the future—from the habits of mutual killing inherited by the original generations. If a boy has to command someone, let him play Falcons. This game will give him the opportunity to do different exercises, he can put columns on them and, most importantly, he spreads the healthy idea of a falcon” (Żulińska, 1910, p. 24), but it was fun in the army, and the hogs on the horse that were important activities for boys.

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