Playmobil Group

Playmobil Play + Give (Series): Greek Goddess Athena

Greece (2016)

TAGS: Athena





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Playmobil Play + Give (Series): Greek Goddess Athena
Country of the First Edition	Greece
Country/countries of popularity	worldwide
Original Language	Greek
First Edition Date	2016
Available Onllne	playmobil.co.uk (accessed:January 23, 2021)
Genre	Figurines*
Target Audience	Children (c. 4–10)
Author of the Entry	Oliver Brookes, The Royal College of Nursing, orbrookes@gmail.com
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Creators



Playmobil Group (Company)

The Playmobil Group was founded in 1974, in Zindorf, Germany by Hans Beck and Horst Brandstätter (accessed: July 6 2018). Over 3 billion Playmobil figures had been produced by 2017. The Playmobil Company state that, through their figures and sets, they offer "imaginative role play opportunities, integrated with a variety of historical and modern play themes." These sets are said to be both fascinating to children, and highly valued by parents and education practitioners. Playmobil sets and figures offer a large diversity of theme. These range from *Knights*, *Pirates*, *Wild Life*, *City Life*, and *History*.

Prepared by Oliver Brookes, The Royal College of Nursing, orbrookes@gmail.com

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Additional information

Summary

Many of the historical sets feature Roman military figures including: Roman soldiers, Roman troops, a Roman military ship, a chariot, and a tribune. Playmobil historical sets concern themselves primarily with Roman and Egyptian history. This differs from the stance of LEGO minifigures which include Greek and Roman historical and mythological figures

The Playmobil Play & Give initiative was introduced in November 2012, supporting the ELPIDA association (Association of Friends of Children with Cancer). To date this has produced two deities, Athena and Zeus, although there are plans to replicate all 12 Olympian deities, with proceeds going towards the ELPIDA association. These figures were produced primarily for the Greek market, and were not released through wider European Playmobil websites or stores.

Analysis

The *Athena* figure includes several of the typical warlike features of this deity. The spear and shield are reminiscent of the panoply of hoplites, the standard infantry unit of Classical Greece. The helmet, which bears similarities to the Chalcidean helmet of the Athena LEGO minifigure, exposes the face of the figure, and thus reveals the iconic Playmobil face. The face and body of the Playmobil figure does not appear to be distinctly gendered. This matches the notion of Athena as a goddess who oscillated between gendered roles. The geometric motif on the figure's chest is an allusion to the aegis, a popular iconographic identifier of the goddess which plays on the idea of "Greekness."

The accessories that accompany the figure place an emphasis on the differing elements of the nature and myth of the goddess. One of these is the snake, a common attribute of the goddess. The snake's winding body adds a sense of life to the scene.

The other animal featured in this set is the owl, the creature which, particularly in popular culture, is most closely linked to the goddess, including in her guise as a goddess of wisdom.

The plinth includes the inscription *ιερόν της αθηνας* [Temple of Athena]. It is coloured white to give the appearance of inscribed marble. There is a slit at the top of the plinth. It is unclear whether it

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

	is something functional to keep the owl in place (the owl is perching on the plinth on the figure box), or whether this is included to represent an ancient ballot box. If the latter, this would allude to Athena's patronage of Athens, and the emergence of the radical democracy in the 5th century BCE. The accompanying packaging presents the goddess in the context of her environment. A superimposed background of mountains and a Greek temple serve to present the goddess as though in action surveying the landscape. The packaging also displays how the attributes of the goddess could be used in relation to the goddess figure itself. For instance, the helmet is worn by the goddess, rather than held, and the figure is armed with both spear and shield. She is accompanied both by the snake, which is on the ground at her feet, and the owl, which is perched upon the plinth.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Athena
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Animals Intellect Names Pop culture references Religious beliefs War
Further Reading	Eptakili, Tassoula, *Playmobil looks to ancient Greek mythology for inspiration*, published October 3, 2016 at www.ekathimerini.com (accessed: August 3, 2018). List of LEGO minifigures (accessed: August 3, 2018). Playmobil, *Playmobil company history* (accessed: August 3, 2018). Playmobil, *The fathers of Playmobil* (accessed: August 3, 2018).

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Oliver Brookes, "Entry on: Playmobil Play + Give (Series): Greek Goddess Athena by Playmobil Group ", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/362. Entry version as of November 02, 2026.

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.