

# “ TERRACOTTA WHISTLES AS A TYPE OF TOYS ”

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## ABSTRACT

*Clay, along with humanity's existence has been used as the most primitive material in making all kinds of goods to meet daily needs. One of these daily use objects is the toy that carries great importance as tool of entertainment, communications and development. The human instinct to explore and play has been shaped in various ways with the clay in different civilizations. Terracotta has become the basic material of the different toys as the main tool of act of playing. Ceramic whistles, widely seen from Prehistoric times to the present day from Europe to Asia, America, pre-Columbian cultures, also appeared in various civilizations as a type of whistling instrument as the ritual objects used in ceremonies. In this sense, ceramic whistles began to lose attention, especially in Turkey started to disappear with missing values due to diversity, changes and the development of toys within the industrial revolution. They are being produced as nostalgic toys, souvenir objects with limited edition. In this study, reference to the history of ceramic whistles, the arrival of the present day is being explained, as handicraft production, particularly by means of traditional aspect.*

**Keywords:** *whistle, toy, terracotta, ceramic, ritual*

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## INTRODUCTION

The subject of this research is the type of wind whistles referred to as a terracotta whistle, being the most primitive musical instrument and variety of toy, which was given shape with clay as a material and had special names in various countries and regions. Its emergence, its different types in history, how it is played, and especially because of its disappearance in Anatolia, the production of whistles at present times has been comparatively discussed.

### DEFINITION OF THE TOY AND EMERGENCE OF CERAMIC IN HISTORY

Playing, which has an important role in mental, physical and social development and is a type of amusement and communication act, is an important practice which carries the properties of preparing children for their future lives, developing their sense of possession and imagination (Akbulut, 2009, 182). Games and toys, which contribute to the development of culture due to requiring practice, information, ability, courage and strength, are also important as they give clues in the context of the information-culture levels of the times, societies and regions they belong to. When it is considered that mankind has used objects for games and produced toys since ancient times, it becomes apparent that games are as old as the history of man, emerging as an activity necessary to human nature.

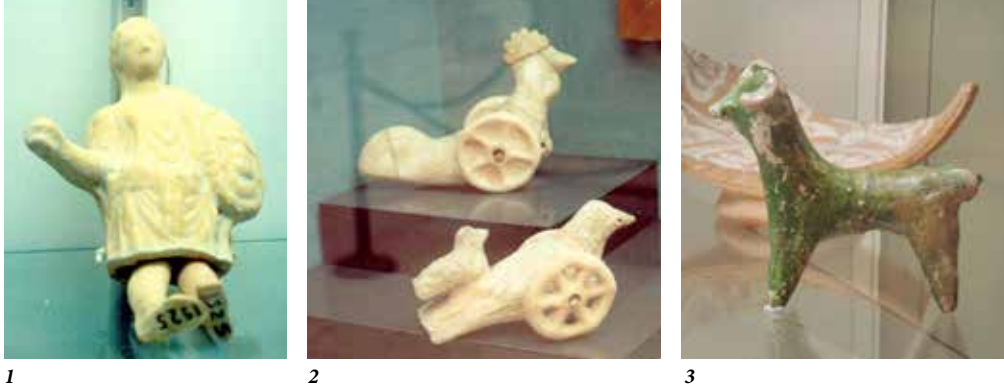
Clay, as the most primitive material used since the beginning of humankind, was used in the production of all kinds of goods supporting daily life. Toys constituted a group of such goods as well as pots and pans, weapons, accessories and similar kinds of wares. Terracotta objects which have survived to present days and are believed to have been used as toys in prehistoric ages, date back to 4000-5000 BC. According to archaeological researches the first toys discovered in history belong to the throne of Egypt in the 5th century BC. However, across the world, many more types of toy objects dating back to much older times in history have been encountered produced from materials such as bone, Stone, wood, clay, dry fruit and sea shells (Ak, 2006, 41).

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TOYS AND RELIGIOUS OBJECTS

In the context of toys and its relationship to religion, a tradition seen in ancient Egypt and many other cultures of the dead being buried with their toys links the concept of games with religion. The fact that ancient children's toys have similarities to icons designed to represent the strength of God and give him form leads to the belief that objects such as these were given to children so they could play with them after they had been used in religious ceremonies (Ak, 2006, 42).

While it is known that children in Ancient Greece and Rome dedicated their toys to the gods when they reached adulthood, the toys encountered in child graves points towards the notion of games being associated with children. Amongst these toys, rattles, whistles, dolls, carriages, horses, various animals, dreidels and yo-yo's stand out, mostly made from terracotta (Avci, 2005, 20). Though their exact historical dates are not known, these objects speculated to have survived to present times from prehistoric ages are known to have also functioned as objects of worship. Since the presence of games is also mentioned in the concept of rituals. The holy ceremonies

the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga explains, comprising of an air of collective festivities which temporarily suspended daily life, is said to have comprised of behaviours exactly the same way as games are played (And, 2003, 25). It is known that musical instruments, similar to types of toys in appearance, were played in activities such as blessings, religious sacrifices, funerals, weddings and dance competitions.



**1** *Figure 1: Terracotta Doll, Roman Period, İznik Arceology Museum*

**2** *Figure 2: Terracotta Birds With Wheel, Frig Period Kütahya Arceology Museum*

**3** *Figure 3: Glazed Terracotta Whistle in the Form of Aries Ottoman, Sadberk Hanım Museum, İstanbul (Photograph: Ezgi Martinez)*

These tools are objects named as whistles, emitting voices similar to a whistle when blown upon. In this sense, these objects transformed the act of breathing, which humans depend on for their existence, into a holy act and were associated with music. The notion of music was widely believed in the ceremonies of ancient cultures across the world to have had magical properties much like a godly act. In Ancient Mexico, terracotta whistles in the shape of skulls which emit sounds of animals and the sound of the wind are typical in Mayan Culture. Evidence has been encountered leading to the belief that this type of whistle, which was named the Death Whistle, was used in ceremonies where slaves were sacrificed, and some examples of it have been found in the hands of the buried (*The Death Whistle*).

Especially in societies where music was believed to have enabled communication with the gods, possessed medical specialties, and symbolised eternity, the whistle which is the ancestor of simple wind instruments has imitated nature in sound and form. Due to the noise the whistle makes, its size and shape, over time it has become varied and developed. It is known that in Japan, the whistle pipes, which when blown upon were believed to be a representation of god and were used to gather blessings, were given to children as toys once they had served their purpose. Whistle pipes which were believed to cure certain types of diseases, bringing fortune and happiness are also mentioned (*A not so simple instrument*).

### **THE DEFINITION OF CERAMIC WHISTLES AS TERRACOTTA TOYS**

Amongst musical instruments, whistles are technically in the Aero-phones class, in other words instruments which when blown upon emit loud voices at differing notes due to the vibration of the air trapped within them (Kura, 2005, 332). They are produced in shapes and sizes



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**Figure 4:** Aztec Florentin Codex (The Death Whistle)



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**Figure 5:** Burial Findings at Tlatelolco temple, (The Death Whistle)

which enable them to be comfortably held or grasped by hands. Their dimensions vary between 3 cm to 20 cm. The whistles, having a blowing mechanism inserted to the body and generally having an inner cavity, are divided into types according to the material they are made of, and according to their figurative characteristics (shape) and the sound they create. The whistles; often encountered among the antique toy types as they attract the attention of children because of the sound they make and their production survived until present days, material-wise draws the attention of commonly being made especially from ceramics. Gaining a universal dimension as they are encountered in all cultures worldwide, terracotta whistles are called with different names in different languages peculiar to every region because of being simple but popular.

**ITALY:** Fischietto, Fisaletto, Cuculo, Cucco, Ocarina, Supioto, cuchi, cucari

**PORTUGAL:** Boneco, Boniereco, Cantilharia, Assobito o Apito, Rouxinol, Cuco.

**SPAIN:** Pito-fischio- Silbato, Botijo-brocca ad acqua-, Rusinor,-usignolo- Canario, Pito tortolo, Siurel, Siulet, Xiulet. botijito

**FRANCE:** 'vase sifleur' 'rossignol', Subiet, Siblet, -uccello con il fischio- Sifflet a eau -ad acqua- Mariuneto cui cui

**LUXEMBURG:** Pickvillercher, -cuculo con fischio-.

**GERMANY:** Tompfeife, -fischio di argilla- Kuckuck, Nachtigall, -usignolo-.

**USA and UK:** Whistle bird whistle

**DANMARK:** Pipirovhest, -cavallo che fischia- Svallerhone.

**NORVEY:** Gauk

**FINLAND:** Savikukko, -gallo di argilla- Kukkopilli, -gallo col fischio.

**CHEK REPUBLIC:** Pistalka, Klinenà-Pistalka, -di argilla- Utacik Pistalka, dsbanok.

**HUNGARY:** cserépsíp

**YUGOSLAVYA:** Pissak, -ad acqua-

**GREECE:** Sfirichtra, Kanataki.

**RUSSIA:** Savi piilu, -in ceramica- Swilpe, Molinukas, Svistulka, Svistun, Schunschushpyk, bul bul, Kawalkal, Pepuk, Tam-scachlvtsha, -di argilla-.

**(NOME DENOMINAZIONI DI "FISCHIETTO)**

## TERRACOTTA WHISTLE TYPES

Whistles in the classification of aerophone musical instruments are counted in the group of instruments which are blown through an air-duct. Aperture is the cavity between the blowhole and finishing edge. It can be square, round or oval. As it gets bigger, the tone gets higher. However wide and short it is, the sound becomes that much higher-pitched. If it is long and narrow, the sound becomes more winded and requires more blowing strength. This cavity transforms the sound into resonance (Hall, 2006, 59).

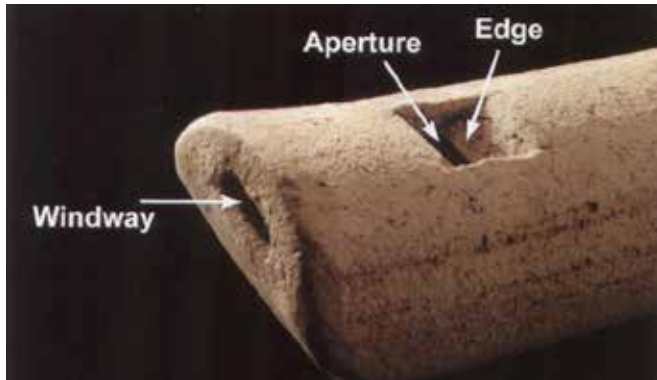


Figure 6: Whistling Mechanisms (Hall 2006, p57)

## CLASSIFICATION OF WHISTLES BY MEANS OF FORM

### Globular Whistles

It is enclosed as form and their bodies have a globular inner cavity. The sound is created by the mouthpiece located on the edge. Their sound intensity is weak. It can be said that they are common in Western and Central Europe. The types with 1 or 2 holes on them are widespread, and these holes create sound variation or prevent the air, compressed during firing, to create pressure. (A not so simple instrument).

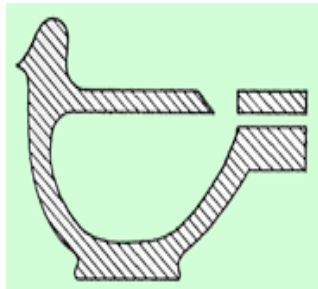
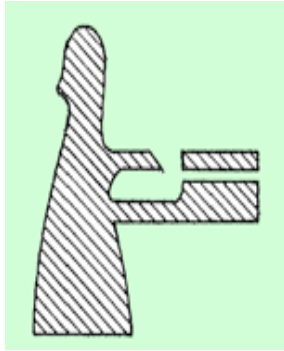


Figure 7: Globular Whistle Section

Figure 8: Globular Whistle Sample (Tüzüm Kızılcan Collection)

### Tubular Whistles

Its tonality depends on the length of the pipe in this whistle type, where blowing form is connected to the base or body from outside. While tubular whistles have high-pitched sound whereas the globular whistles have deeper and softer sound. If it has a pedestal and a base, it



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Figure 9: Tubular Whistle Section  
Figure 10: Tubular Whistle Sample



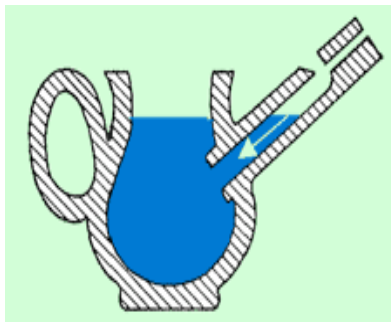
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may be tubular. In some whistles it is also seen that holes are bored to let the compressed air out and prevent cracking. Window is bored on the mouthpiece where the air flow breaks. If it is tubular, window is cut on the blowing pipe, and if it is globular it is opened on to the body. In water whistles, generally it is opened on the body, and only if it is globular it is opened underneath. This is done so, in aesthetical and practical terms rather than a technical reason.

### Water Whistles

These are called nightingale, botijito pitchers in various languages. It is a combination of globular whistles and tubular whistles. The difference is that the air blown through the pipe hits the water rather than the wall by filling water into the cavity, and the water level raises and creates sound. As the water moves the sound also swashes and its resonance becomes longer. Its specific characteristics are that the tonality of the sound is diverse and it creates a sound similar to that of a bird. If a whistle has a hole facilitating filling of the inner cavity from the top, this indicates it is working with water. However, there are also the types, which are filled through the blowing hole. The water hole may be on the top in open-mouthed pot shaped forms and water can also be filled through 1 or 2 holes bored in various places in enclosed forms like a bird. Generally the second hole is for facilitating the air to go out easily while filling the whistle with water, and to control the movement of the water when contacting with air while blowing.

(A not so simple instrument).



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Figure 11: Water Whistle Section



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Figure 12: Water Whistle Sample / Ezgi Martinez Collection

### Multi-chambered Water Whistles

The types of these special forms commonly encountered in a geography extending from Mexico to Peru since one, two thousand years ago until now, go up to 6 chambers. The types with double chamber are the most common ones. These are jointed from the bottom and connected with a handle from the top. The sound is created by the air coming out of upper chamber of



Figure 13: Multi-chambered Water Whistle  
(Abrashv, 2000,p. 41)

a small hole. While sculptural forms take place on one side, generally the second chamber is in the form of plain terracotta. These as well as being totemic symbols may also carry the characteristics of a sacred animal while the length of a normal whistle is 10-15 cm, it length may be as much as 20 cm. These are often included in straight blown aerophone group (Cosar, 2008, .34).

### Ocarina

It is known that ocarina, derived from the word oca meaning “Little Goose”, invented by Italian Guiseppe Luigi DONATI in 1860. It was encountered in ancient Egypt, Mexico civilizations but was not referred with this name until the said date. This type of instruments is also found among the porcelain product of German Meissen Company (Kura, 2004, 334). It is known that as well as being shaped as handmade or with moulds, they are also produced in different sizes. There are types ranging from 4cm to 20 cm in length. They are found in literature as a diatonic musical instrument having holes on the front and back surfaces, which can be easily opened and closed with fingers. While producing and playing artists and musicians are encountered especially in Far East and America, it is also found in countries outside these. Also, many researchers in music and ceramic fields write up thesis and carry out applied research on this subject (A not so simple instrument).



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Figure 14: Ocarinas by Alp Çam



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Figure 15: Ocarina by Sergio Garcia, Chili Collection of Prof. Sevim Çizer

### CERAMIC AS A MATERIAL IN PRODUCTION OF WHISTLE

It is known that the whistles produced from various materials in history are also produced by carving from materials especially like sea shells, stone, wood, bone, etc. Primitive people discovering that terracotta being more appropriate and durable material in terms of creating and transmitting sound, also began using ceramic in production of musical instruments used in various ceremonies where music play an important part, and in production of toys such as whistle played by children (Hall, 2006, 4). While offering infinite shaping means with its plasticity, Clay has a permanent superiority as a material remaining durable against environmental conditions

for centuries through its structural change after firing. Egyptian antique whistles, placed into the graves of the death by believing that they would play in their life beyond, still creates sound today, and gives us ideas by carrying the same sound made in those era to present days (Hall, 2006, 3-4) In this context, durability is very important.

Clay, easily taking shape, offers opportunity to obtain a great variety of forms. Human being initially adapting the crude forms of animals such as ox and roosters as they examined their surroundings and created shapes from clay, afterwards diversified and developed these forms.

Clay is also an easy material for creating the inner cavity, for joining the pieces and for opening holes. Clay is always preferred as the dimension of the holes could be changed and reversed during shaping. As distinct from other materials, instead of creating by carving from the existing material, it can be built from the beginning with inner cavity. Creation of beautiful sound and lending itself to be suitable for obtaining distinct tones is its important characteristics. While wet, it is very difficult, but possible to create the post-firing sound.

#### **EMERGENCE and HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT of TERRACOTTA WHISTLES**

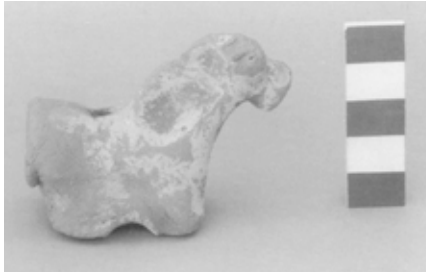
Various whistle types are sighted as toy type in a geography extending from Far East to Ocean countries, from Europe (*Rome, Greece*) to Asia (*Anatolia-Persia*), and including pre-Colomb cultures, from South America (*Mexico, Peru*) to Africa. While examples made up of bone and stone are sighted from Palaeolithic era, clay examples are begun to be sighted from Neolithic era. Although it can not be presumed whether the whistles are created with the objective of being a toy or a communication instrument with respect to their emergence, it is known that they transformed into ritual objects used in the ceremonies of different civilizations in the course of time. They are used not only for turning the sound into harmony, but also used to create blowing action lending itself to bring rain and good harvest, cure the patients or gain strength by commemorating the ancestors of various communities.



**Figure 16:** Whistling Pot, Chimu Culture, 1470 (Hall, 2006, 2)

**Figure 17:** Xun whistle from Korea / Collection of Ezgi Martinez





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**Figure 18:** Horse shape terracotta whistle, Amorium (Bener, 2008)



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**Figure 19:** Terracotta whistle, Antalya Museum (Bener, 2008)

While it is known that the history of whistles (*xun*) can be dated back 6000 years ago in China, ancient examples are sighted in the museums dating back to 1400 BC in Inca, Maya, Aztec cultures in South America and 800 BC in Mesopotamia Cultures like Persia (*in figure forms*). Rumour has it that the whistles known as *xun* in China are emerged as originating from a hunting tool called “meteor stone”. In ancient eras, while the people were hunting birds and other animals by throwing a stone or clay ball tight to a rope, they realized that some of the balls created sound as their inside were hollow, and they tried to blow the ball by taking interest in this sound. Thus, it is believed that this ball gradually became *xun* (*Toprak Oyuncaklar*).

Examples in the museums, excavation works and published sources indicate that these type of toys taking place in toy tradition of Anatolian civilizations. Existence of terracotta whistles made in ancient Greece, Rome and Byzantine periods is determined. In Amorium (*Afyon*) excavations, a terracotta whistle of Byzantine period, in the shape of a horse and 5 cm in height was found, and it is determined that it has an inner cavity and is blown through the hole on the back. It is believed that the other whistle example, having 1 hole on the mouthpiece and 2 holes on the front surface, belongs to Ancient Greek (*Hellenic*) era (Bener, 2008, 150).

Figures such as ram, sheep and horse often appear in many forms as animals of cornerstone of economy in Central Asian communities. 15-18th century ceramic whistles produced in Kütahya and Iznik, which may be thought as being produced to familiarize the children with animals, resembling these animals in form, refers to this social and cultural interaction (Sahin, 1992, 117). As it is found out that these are produced in the workshops producing kitchenware, it



**Figure 20:** Clay whistle in the Form of Aries from Ottoman Period 15th century. (Sadberk Hanım Museum) Photograph by Ezgi Martinez

can be said that these are products aimed towards the children of the customers at the marketplaces. Ram, believed to go to heaven in shamanistic approach in Akkoyunlu and Karakoyunlu tradition, being used in grave stones as well as being the form in toys given to children also draw attention. This is a general trend encountered in all civilizations. For example, ox form is also the first rough form encountered in many civilizations.



**Figure 21:** 16th century Almeria horse rider terracotta whistle. (Ortega, 2006, 218)



**Figure 22:** 16th century Paris Production, Sevr Museum / Photography by Ezgi Martinez

It is possible to encounter with terracotta whistles in Europe in almost every era. Whistles called “Siurell” in Spain are the most typical examples. Although original emerging date is unknown, it is believed that the Balearic Islands (*Mallorca, Ibiza, etc*) originate from Mediterranean culture. Their production has been continuing until today.

Findings emerged in excavations pertaining to ancient era, prove that the whistles in Cordoba, Almeria, Granada produced much earlier. In Arabic inscriptions pertaining to the periods of Muslim reign in Spanish territories, it is emphasized that using animal form in ceremonies in this way is a state of affairs far from the Muslim belief. Therefore, it is known that they are produced especially in Cordoba until their prohibition in 12-13th century (Ortega, 2006, 75). It can be said that bull (*Almeria*) and rooster (*Jaen*) in 12th century, rider on a horse until 15th century and reptilians, horse, rooster, woman figures pertaining to Nazari civilization in 14th century were the most common forms. It is seen that different bird species and human figures shown an increase towards 17th century. Male figure playing guitar or flute is standing and in traditional clothing. Female figures with hands on the hips or head, or bearing a baby or holding a baby in her hands with her traditional clothes are commonly seen in Granada. Majority of these are tubular whistles. Some whistles have a jug shape with mouth part open, and the human face is applied in a manner starting from the neck upwards as a mask. It is seen that the astonished human, dog or monster-like forms pertaining to 18th century are commonly found in Jaen region.

Blowing pipe in most of them are located at the back and are tubular whistles. Their lengths vary from 3 to 14 cm depending on their form. Technically being often produced as handmade, the figures with clothes and in the shape of a mask are shaped in moulds. While it is determined that they are coloured with primers and oxides, being unglazed and having few colours also draw the attentions. Terracotta whistles, production of which has been continuing and diversified until today in various countries as extension of these traditions, those produced especially in Spain Mallorca are very typical. Most commonly encountered one is the rider on a horse and their height goes up to 20 cm. Characteristic colours are shades of blue on white background or red, yellow and green decors. When examining the 15-16th century products in Renaissance period, examples produced in the form of human head, and again in various animal forms in Europe are another group of whistles drawing the attention.

Earliest ceramic terracotta whistles sighted in 17th century Europe have owl figures and are of the type blown with water. These are shaped by hand in Holland. Dog shaped whistles blown from the back are encountered also in Delft in the same period.

First examples were also found in England in 18th century; these whistles are simple in shape and are shaped in mould. 19th century examples have the shape of swan and bird. While these whistles, which were shaped in moulds, were produced in multi-colour initially, it draws the attention that they begun to become less coloured towards 20th century. Glazing on them reflects the typical characteristics of the region, where they were made. Human figure and historical figures shaped with mould are seen in 20th century examples. It is seen that these are transformed into metal and plastic later on in search for less costly and more convenient production

Sevres museum refers to abundance of production of terracotta whistles in 19-20th century France, in the prospectus distributed to wholesalers with regards to fired terracotta whistle toy production (*Artistes et Potiers*).



**Figure 23:** 16th Russian Clay Whistle from Russia (*Dymkovo Toys*)

It is known that it is also the most ancient handicraft also in Russia. Coloured Dymkovo figures are the known examples. It is believed that they are produced for the ceremonies to celebrate the Spring and the sun. Forms made up of animal totems began to transform into wide variety of human figures in 19th century. While the zigzag speckles and lines have varied up to 10 different colours, it is known that these are made from red mud and decorated on white glaze. While reproductions are made today, they are widely produced as souvenirs.

## TERRACOTTA WHISTLES IN ANATOLIA AND THEIR STATUS TODAY

It is known that ceramic whistles are produced as toys in various pottery villages as an extension of terracotta whistle tradition encountered in Anatolia in ancient era. Terracotta whistle production, with their local names Aydın bülbül testisi, bülbül ibriği, Avanos Düdüklü bardak



**Figure 24:** Slip decorated Terracotta whistle with glaze, produced in pottery village Kınık

İstanbul Eyüp Düdüklü testi, Ordu Ünye düdüklü ibrik, İzmir (*Bornova*) ışkırık, Kınık düdük, Denizli toprak düdük is facing extinction today. They are produced and sold in small quantities as souvenirs as they do not attract the interest of the children as in the old days.

After being built technically and generally by form lathe or by hand, they are bored at 30 degrees with a pre-prepared special cane and angled lath from the mouth aperture and with an acute angle from the aperture window. Care is taken during boring for the clay pieces remaining on the lath not to block the hole again, to pre-

vent the deterioration of the sound. These disappearing examples are reached with great difficulty as the master making them pass away one by one in the course of time, their production is sustained by their children. Today there are rare workshops and masters still trying to maintain this tradition. While the production was between 150-300 thousand in Bilecik Kınık in the past, the productions made between 8-10 thousand today are almost ending. Fevzi Kubat and Emrullah Şen are the last known masters. Jug shaped, glazed and flux decorated these whistles are peculiar to the region and are also sighted in Eyup toy shops today which used to be the first center of Ottoman in 17th century to make and sell toys for children and is famous with the terracotta whistles which the boys were mostly interested in.



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**Figure 25:** Denizli Sarayköy red chick whistle, unglazed wheel thrown

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**Figure 26:** Mould shaped hen whistle Karacasu / Photograph Ezgi Martinez

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Chick shaped whistles produced by Ali Cintemir and his family in Denizli Saraykoy are in the colour of red clay or are artificially decorated. There is a big market for these in Pamukkale, Serinhisar and Denizli and surroundings. Rooster and chick shaped whistles produced in Aydın Karacasu region are similar to those produced in Saraykoy, and are distinguished with their clay colour. Karacasu clay is redder in colour. Although its known last master Hamdi Kiriş does not produce any longer, his son maintains the production in lesser quantities.

Jug shaped whistles with neck, which had been produced in Avanos but extinct today are peculiar to the region. The types produced by the masters İbrikci (*pitcher granit maker*) Hasan Usta and Ahmet Kılıç are only sighted in the collections.

Masters Tamer Canber producing whistles in Iznik similar to ancient whistles, Hasan Ur-savas producing jug shaped whistles with long neck in Menemen, Serafettin Benek producing



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**Figure 28:** Tamer Caner, Whistle in the Form of Aries, slip decorated, İznik, Collection of Prof. Ayşegül Türedi Özen

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**Figure 29:** Unglazed terracotta whistle made by Şerafettin Benek, Çanakkale, Collection of Reyhan Güleç

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**Figure 30:** Denizli Sarayköy red chick whistle made by Ali Cintemir, wheel throw, painted / Photograph Ezgi Martinez

whistles in the shape of Ottoman period jugs in Canakkale, Ayhan Donmez again producing chick shaped whistles in Antalya and selling to touristic regions were reached, and it is determined that they carry on with their production.

Information obtained about Ali Usta from Çanakkale who had travelled to many pottery villages in Anatolia and taught whistle making and hence helped its spreading starting from 1930s



and eventually passed away in Kutahya. While it is known that Tahir usta produces similar whistle forms in Kutahya, no workshop maintaining this tradition could be found today. Also, İlker Egi, whose whistle design called “pay the piper and play the whistle” exhibited in the State souvenir competition, produced this design afterwards for Akşehir festival presented a distinct approach to this traditional topic. Thus, draw the attention to the fact that interpretations can be brought to ceramic whistles in a traditional form, and to the necessity of exerting efforts for them to be brought back to life once again.

**Figure 31:** *Nasrettin Hoca Whistle by İlker Egi, Ironoxide, transparent glaze*

### TERRACOTTA WHISTLES IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

Ceramic whistles of today are commonly sighted in a wide geographical area extending from Far East to Africa, and from Europe to America. Terracotta toys, being common in Junxian town of Henan province in China, are tradition of the local community, and are called “*Clay Cuckoos*”, “*Beautiful Cuckoo*” and “*Cuckooing Chicks*”. It is known that great many terracotta whistles and cuckooing chicks are sold in the traditional fair in Junxian town during Yuanxiao Holiday and Spirit Holiday in traditional Chinese calendar. It is rumoured that the buyers of these are generally married country women not having any children or wish to have children.



Hand built clay is generally painted with ash black, dark brown and red paint, and pattern is drawn on these in rose red, yellow, green and white colours. The theme of these toys covers a wide spectrum (*Toprak Oyuncaklar*).

Initially sighted in Neolithic age, xun is generally made up of stone and bone, and later on from clay. There are many shapes of xun. Some of these are oval, round, egg, fish and pear shapes. The most common one is the pear shape. Initially having only one sound hole, xun transformed into a whistle with few holes, and it is known that xun with six sound hole began to be produced in eras before Christ, and turned into a common musical instrument and also played in the imperial palace. It is the egg shaped enclosed form, which is as well

**Figure 32:** *A decorated whistle from Huangping, China's Guizhou Province (Huangping clay whistle in China's Guizhou)*



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Figure 33: Sgraffito decorated Terracotta whistle Mexico, collection of Tuzum Kızılcan

Figure 34: Terracotta whistle from Mexico, collection of Kamuran Ak,

Figure 35: Bolivia whistle with 4 chambers, collection of Tuzum Kızılcan



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Figure 36: Glazed anonym chick whistle, Bulgaria

Figure 37: Chick whistle from Menemen, unglazed

Figure 38: Bulgaria Anonym Whistle, glazed

Figure 39: Glazed pitcher whistle, Grit Island Master Manolis from Margarides village collection of Prof. Sevim Çizer



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Figure 40: Portuguese painted whistle contribution of Elif Toprak

Figure 41: Whistle from Poland, glazed, contribution of Duygu Kahraman

Figure 42: Pitcher shaped whistle from Spain Manises contribution of Kemal Uludağ



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Figure 43: Tubular Whistle from Africa, collection of Tuzum Kızılcan

Figure 44: Whistle from Turkmenistan, painted, contribution of Zehra Çobanlı

Figure 45: Whistle made in Iran, unglazed, contribution of Sadettin Aygün

as being used for Confucius rituals it is also seen as a daily life object in China, and the likes are encountered in Korea, Japan and Vietnam. Blowing hole is located on the upper wall. Various professors from Chinese State Conservatory worked on design of xun, and while increasing the number of holes to 10, they began to align the holes in a more orderly manner. Thus it is ensured that it is played easier and with louder noise.

They are seen in majority of Central and South American countries such as Mexico, Peru, Cuba, Bolivia, Honduras, Guatemala, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Panama. Multi-chamber types are common, and its ritual association is strong.

The types sighted in transoceanic countries are those made up of fruit shells, and the ceramic ones appear as imitations of those (*Abrashev,2000, 60*).

While it is known that their production is widespread in countries such as Poland, Spain Portugal, Romania, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Slovenia in Europe, it is possible to catch similarity in the examples in terms of techniques and form in Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. This refers to interactions in the course of history.

Most of these productions in Europe are seen in the shape of birds and pitchers. They differ in details like decorations and colors and the body. The whistling parts of these whistles are also quite different just as in the following examples of Poland and Portugal.

Other unexpected forms can be seen in different countries. Globular flutes are commonly sighted in South Africa since there is tubular whistle production as well. It is known that they are still an important musical communication and sign instrument among tribal societies. And the tubular types appear in various animal forms.

In Iran making clay whistles comes from the traditions of primitive times date back to BC. Traditional production, although rarely, is also encountered in UK, Germany and France. It can be said that among these largely the animal forms and the bird forms of globular whistles are common. Besides studio productions it is also possible to find that traditional products are fi-



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**Figure 46:** Whistles at Toy Museum in Kechkemet Hungary



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**Figure 47:** Whistle from Hungary, unglazed, contribution of Sercan Filiz

nancially supported the local development agents or local managements. Toy Museum in Kechkemmet Hungary is a good example for such encouragements where there is a big collection of terracotta whistles over 200 from the country with the contributions of International Ceramic Studios in Kechkemmet which organizes Sound and Clay Symposium.

### CONCLUSION: PRODUCTION TODAY, EVALUATION AND SUGGESTIONS

In this research, history of the ceramic whistles are mentioned, and their evolution and types today are explained with examples from various parts of the world and their production as handicraft today and especially its traditional aspect are examined.

Whistles are toys of the types which can be touched and grasped. In this group, sound making hand and mouth together with ear can be qualified as a type of coordinated toy. Whistles, having different types between each other, may be gathered under 4 groups as toys, ceremonial article, souvenir and musical instrument ocarinas.

There are examples from 3 cm to 20 cm in size rarely over 20 cm. If they had to be classify as form, they can be grouped as animal, utensils, pitcher, glass, jug, human and others. The fact that the inherent discovery and playing instinct in human nature turned into various toys in different periods and civilizations, with the usage of clay which is the closest material to the human nature brought the play and ceramic concepts of the clay together. Terracotta whistles being an object on the brink of extinction as toys today, became unfavourable after the industrial revolution by being affected also by all technological developments.

Naturally the industrial revolution has affected the extinction of these kinds of tradition-based handicrafts but today some artists and craftsmen handling the subject once again and work on it. It is seen that many contemporary ceramic artists in the world are affected from this traditional form, and inspired to bring forward an interactive art piece to express them. While on the one hand forms in the context of ceramic sculptures are produced, on the other hand these forms also addressing a second sense strengthening expression desired to be put forward by creating sound is a different approach appropriate to contemporary art comprehension of today.

Necessity of keeping these types of traditions alive by showing sensitivity to our cultural values comes into forefront. Our children's familiarization with primitive toy types may lend assistance in preventing them being brought up as insensitive individuals in this technological age. This also can be an opportunity to develop their creativity while providing fun with interactive facilities.



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*Figure 48: Selin Toprak peacock whistle design , Figure 49. Selin Toprak peacock whistle made of clay, Figure 50. Tiff Cobb Children Studio, Luisiana*



While, in France, Italy or Korea for instance, associations and chambers keeping this cultural value alive through various activities and solidarities, it is possible to make initiatives to protect and keep these whistles alive in Anatolia, which are an ancient tradition. Bringing the collectors, active ceramic artists, masters and even children together by organizing fairs and festivals can be an important initiative. In this day and age, still being used in tribal societies, disappearance of the ethnic types known to be still used in various countries as a type classified as wind musical instrument may be prevented in this way. By means of this the artists can lead the potters giving ideas and new information about forms glazes and colours, and more people can learn to make whistling objects which is not easy and requires patience. Such organizations held in the content of projects of economically supported would ignore the economic concern and concentrate more on aesthetics and conceptual ideas.

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