Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

DOLLS FROM AROUND THE WORLD G149/A

Most of the dolls in this box were brought back from a holiday as a souvenir. They represent the traditional dress of the areas they originally came from.

Doll from Egypt

The model Egyptian man is wearing a *galabeya* - a long, loose robe with sleeves. *Galabeya* is the Egyptian name, but other countries call this garment by different names, for example in Iran it is called a *chador* and in Morocco it is a *djellaba*. In hot countries it is best to wear loose clothing that covers most of the body. This way, the skin is protected from the sun and doesn't absorb too much heat.

The hat is called a fez. It is brimless, cone-shaped and made from felt. The Egyptian fez is red, but in other Muslim countries all over the world it can be made from different coloured material. The fez was part of the official army uniform and considered part of Egyptian national dress until 1952 when the new republican government removed it from official use. It is very rarely seen in Egypt today, except in tourist shops. There is a picture of a fez on the right.



In his hand he holds a set of prayer beads, which in Arabic are called *misbaha*. They are used by Muslims to concentrate on their prayers and keep count when they are reciting the names of Allah. They can be made from many different types of materials including wood, plastic and glass.

He carries a traditional hand-woven Egyptian rug over one shoulder.



Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

DOLLS FROM AROUND THE WORLD G149/A

Doll from Malta





The long black cloak is called a *ghonnella* or *faldetta* and is only seen on the islands of Malta and Gozo in the Mediterranean (see map). It is not known how it came to the islands but was worn by nearly all women right up until the Second World War. After this, it became less popular and by the 1970s it had almost completely disappeared.



The *ghonnella* was made to cover the head but not the face. The front of the hood was made into a frame by starching or adding a cane or piece of board. In the summer this large hood caught sea breezes and helped to cool the wearer and in the winter the shape could be changed to fit more closely.

This old postcard dates from about 1900. It shows a Maltese lady wearing the *ghonnella* and holding the material in place with her right hand, in the same way as the doll.

Doll from Italy







We know from the words written on the dress of this doll that she comes from the island of Ischia, off the coast of Italy near Naples (see map). Being an island, fishing is naturally a very important part of life, which is why the doll carries a tray of fresh fish. There are many fish restaurants on the island serving locally caught seafood and offering magnificent sea views.

Tourism is also very important to Ischia. Its beautiful beaches and thermal spas attract over six million visitors a year. This doll is wearing traditional island costume, which is worn at festivals and parties, but not in everyday life.

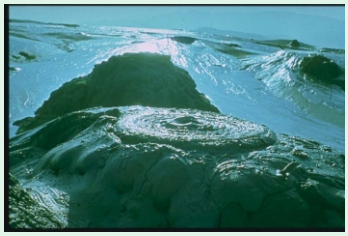
Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

DOLLS FROM AROUND THE WORLD G149/A

Female Doll from Buzau, Romania



The Buzau region is located in the east of Romania (see map). It is mountainous to the north and flatter in the south. The region is famous for its strange, natural phenomena - the mud volcanoes and living fires, both formed by gases rising from beneath the surface of the earth.



Mud volcanoes



Fires



Mountain scenery

Traditional folk costume is similar across Romania with regional differences in colour and style. As with most national dresses, it is rarely worn today, except for festive occasions.



The doll's skirt is called a *fotă*, which is a straight piece of woollen material wrapped around and held in place with a waistband. The scarf on the head indicates that the woman is married. Unmarried women would have their hair uncovered and braided until their wedding day and after that they would always have to wear a scarf. This tradition is not followed today, as it would be impractical for everyday modern life.

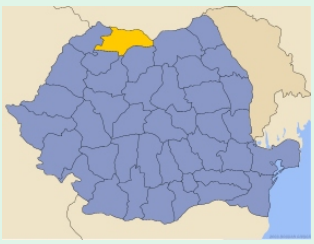


The shoes are called *opinci* and are worn with woollen socks or foot wraps. There is evidence for this type of footwear dating back to 2500 BC, as a statue was found with a very similar shoe at the archaeological site of Turdas, north Romania. *Opinci* worn in the mountainous areas have raised toes, whereas those on the plains are flatter. The picture on the right shows the *opinci* being worn with woollen socks.

Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

DOLLS FROM AROUND THE WORLD G149/A

Male doll from Maramures, Romania



The Maramures region is in the far north of Romania, as you can see on the map. The area is mountainous and well known for its beautiful scenery and traditional craft and woodwork.





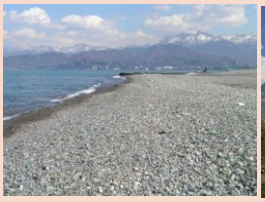
The doll is wearing a waistcoat called a *pieptar*. It is made from sheepskin and decorated according to the local style with embroidery and tassels.

The checked bag is typical of the Maramures region. It is used to carry belongings on festive occasions, but of course normal bags and plastic carrier bags are commonly seen in everyday life. The hat is made from felt and is sometimes seen with decoration, like the one in the picture on the right.

Two male dolls from Georgia



Geographically, Georgia lies at the point where Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East meet. As a result of this location, the history and culture of Georgia has many influences and the landscape is extremely varied. The map on the right shows the location and the photographs show the Caucasus mountains to the north of the country, the beaches on the coast of the Black Sea and the capital city, Tbilisi.







These Georgian figures represent the traditional way of life in some villages, where dancing and folk music take place during festivals and on special occasions. Traditional dress is worn whilst songs and dances are performed. The cities of Georgia, however are very modern and it would be rare to see traditional dress being worn there.



Both men wear *papakhi* - a hat made from thick sheep's wool. These are mostly worn in the colder, mountainous areas of Georgia.

Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

DOLLS FROM AROUND THE WORLD G149/A

India bride doll



An Indian bride normally wears red and gold on her wedding day. The red cloth is embroidered with zari - a thin wire made from gold or silver, which is used in traditional Indian and Pakistani clothes for special occasions. The dress worn by the doll was once red, but unfortunately the colour has faded with time.

This doll wears a *lehenga choli*. The *lehenga* is the long skirt and the *choli* is the matching top. The *choli* is sometimes shorter and shows the wearer's stomach. A red *lehenga choli* is the most popular choice for the bride to wear at her wedding. In some areas of India it is known by a different name such as a *ghagra choli, chaniya choli* or *sharara*.

The scarf that covers her head is called a *dupatta*. For a wedding it is worn over the head but in everyday life it can be worn around the waist or neck with traditional clothes or even jeans.



Notice the orange markings on the doll's hands. These represent paintings on the bride's hands made with henna. Henna is a plant that can be turned into a paste to make a natural dye. The picture on the right shows henna decoration on the hands.

The wedding clothes are similar, whether the woman is Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. The clothing is cultural rather than religious, although the ceremonies themselves are very different.