

# *Jeu de crosse or rather hockey ?*

This is an engraving from « Les Yeux et plaisirs de l'enfance » (Games and pleasures of childhood) by Claudine Bouzonnet Stella. She succeeded her late uncle, Jacques Stella, as the head of her family's print workshop at the Louvre, Palace Royal at that time, in 1657. That year, she engraved and published Stella's designs for fifty scenes of putti playing games, including the one seen here. The text on the engraving is a little rhyme:

## *La Crosse*

*Malgré le temps de la saison  
Ceux-ci sortent de la maison,  
& s'en vont crosser par caprice ;  
& la chacun pour le degot  
s'échauffe, et dans cette exercice  
la crosse leur vaut un fagot.*

Which translates into :

*Despite the weather and the season,  
those children leave the house,  
& the whim struck them to play crosse;  
& each one pushes the ball  
this crosse exercise replaces  
lighting up a bundle of wood.*

I stayed as close as possible to the French text, and with that, I did not respect the rhyme.

All the stick and ball-playing children in this engraving have a stick in their hands, and there is only one ball. They are represented as players who don't wait for their turn but play the ball as soon as they can, as confirmed the text.

This depiction represents the game of early hockey.





### *Claudine Bouzonnet-Stella*

She was born at Lyon in 1636, the daughter of Étienne Bouzonnet, a goldsmith, and his wife, Madeleine Stella. She studied art in Paris under her uncle, Jacques Stella. Having collaborated with various engravers for many years before achieving considerable success as a painter, Stella had decided to set up a workshop to produce prints after his designs. To staff it, he brought in his sister's children, Claudine, Antoinette, Françoise and Antoine, all of whom moved from Lyon to live in his apartments in the Louvre. It is, however, likely that Claudine Bouzonnet-Stella also had some training in engraving from another practitioner, as her uncle's printmaking activities had been restricted to etching.

Following Jacques Stella's death in 1657, she became head of the workshop and was granted exclusive rights by the king to publish prints after Stella's designs. In the same year, she issued *Les Jeux et Plaisirs de l'Enfance*, a set of 50 plates which she had engraved herself after a series of drawings by Jacques Stella. She died in Paris in 1697.

*From Tribune de Lyon – Claudine Bouzonnet-Stella, autoportrait à la croix rouge*

*Extrait of [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claudine\\_Bouzonnet-Stella](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claudine_Bouzonnet-Stella)*