



International conference

**Toys as Cultural Artefacts
in Ancient Greece, Etruria and Rome**

University of Fribourg/Remote

June 22-23, 2021



State Collections of Antiquities Munich
photo Renate Kühling

Organisation/contact: Véronique Dasen and Marco Vespa
Subscribe: locusludi@unifr.ch
Internet site: <https://locusludi.ch>

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Tuesday June 22

9:00 OPENING Véronique DASEN & Marco VESPA

HOW TO MAKE TOYS WITH WORDS: TEXTUAL AND LITERARY CONTEXTS

9:15 Éric DIEU, Toulouse, *Les désignations du jouet en grec ancien et en latin*

9:30 Paola MORETTI, Milano, *Ludicrum, a Word for "Toy": Origin, Meaning, Use*

9:45 Discussion Marco VESPA, Fribourg/ERC *Locus Ludi*

10:00 Andrea CAPRA, Durham & Claudia ZICHI, Uppsala, *Toying with Philosophy: Plato's Wondrous Puppet in the Laws*

10:15 Cecilia NOBILI, Bergamo, *Persephones' καλὸν ἄθρυμα. Toys, Ornaments, and the Marvel of Music & Lucia FLORIDI, Bologna, ἐράσμιον αἰὲν ἄθρυμα. Toys, Slaves, and Erotic Objects*

10:35 Discussion Claudia LAMBRUGO, Milano

10:45 Break

11:00 Ioanna PATERA, Cracow, Paigonia, *jeux et jouets*

11:15 Sophie LARIBI-GLAUDEL, Nancy, *Les jouets dans les épigrammes et les inscriptions votives*

11:30 Tatiana BUR, Cambridge, *Airing the Ludic*

11:45 Discussion Victoria SABETAI, Athens

12:00 Lunch break

FUNERARY APPROACHES

13:30 Claudia LAMBRUGO, Milano, *Stone Pebbles as Game pieces?*

13:45 Daniela COSTANZO, Reggio Calabria, *Games and Toys in context: Problems and Methods of Interpretation in Magna Graecia and Sicily*

14:00 Discussion Alessandro PACE, Fribourg/ERC *Locus Ludi*

14:15 Victoria SABETAI, Athens, *The Archaeology of Play in Boeotian Sanctuaries and Graves: a Contribution to the Ludic Culture of a Greek Polis*

14:30 Barbara CARÈ, Athens, *Functional and Fun? Reassessing the Value of Worked Astragali in Ancient Game Practices*

14:45 Discussion Ulrich SCHÄDLER, Fribourg/ERC *Locus Ludi*

15:00 Break

15:15 Edwige LOVERGNE, Paris/Roma, *Quelques réflexions sur les objets miniatures en contexte funéraire en Étrurie méridionale*

15:30 Bernard FARAGO-SZEKERES, Inrap, Isabelle BERTRAND, Chauvigny, Coralie GARCIA-BAY, Poitiers, *Encore une enfant, déjà une jeune femme ? Naintré (Fr)*

15:45 Thomas DANIAUX, Fribourg & Kyriaki KATSARELIA, Fribourg, *Chevaux à roulettes grecs et romains en contexte*

16:00 Discussion Marie-Lys ARNETTE, Fribourg/ERC Locus Ludi

16:15 Break

TOYS IN IMAGES: ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACHES

16:30 Hanna AMMAR, Fribourg/Paris, *Children's Ball Games on Attic Vases from the 5th and 4th Centuries BCE*

16:45 Véronique DASEN, Fribourg, *Representations of Toys in Funerary Contexts*

17:00 Discussion Alexandra ATTIA, Fribourg/ERC Locus Ludi

17:15 Break

17:30 Keynote speaker Michel MANSON, Paris, *Le cheval bâton de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance : mutations du regard sur l'enfance et ses jouets*

18:00 Discussion Oriol VAZ, Barcelona

18:15 Final discussion and closure of the day

Wednesday June 23

TOYS IN SACRED CONTEXTS

09:00 Francesca DIOSONO, München, Federica GROSSI, Milano & Loredana LANCINI, Le Mans, *Ritual Offerings or Divination Tools? Objects of Play from the Roman Republic Sanctuary of Diana in Nemi*

09:15 Sonia KLINGER, Haifa, *Toys or Models of Toys: Objects in Terracotta and Bronze from the Demeter and Kore Sanctuary at Ancient Corinth*

9:30 Discussion Thomas DANIAUX, Fribourg/ERC Locus Ludi

9:45 Emilie THIBAUT, Amiens, *Des offrandes miniatures pour les dieux des Étrusques : des jouets pour grandir ?*

10:00 Astrid FENDT, München, *Rite de Passage or Special Ability? The Bronze Statuette of a Boy Holding a Spinning Top in the Munich Collection of Antiquities*

10:15 Discussion Edwige LOVERGNE, Rome

10:30 Break

10:45 Angela BELLIA, Roma, *Dancing with a Ball: Written Sources and Material Evidence*

11:00 Discussion Hanna AMMAR, Fribourg/ERC Locus Ludi

TOYS IN DIACHRONY

11:15 Cleo GOUGOULIS, Patras, *From ἄθλημα and παίγιον to παιχνίδι. Defining Toys in Modern Greece*

11:30 Jean-Pierre ROSSIE, Braga, *Vegetal Material in Moroccan Children's Toy and Play Culture*

11:45 Mattia THIBAUT, Tampere, *Toys, Toying, Toyish: The Semiotics of Toys from Objectual Play to Toyification*

12:00 Final discussion and closure of the conference

TOYS AS CULTURAL ARTEFACTS IN ANCIENT GREECE, ETRURIA, AND ROME

The international conference *Toys as Cultural Artefacts*, organised by the ERC *Locus ludi* research team, invites experts from different disciplines - anthropologists, archaeologists, philologists, art historians – to share reflections on the cultural notion of toy and playful experience in ancient Greece and Rome in a pluridisciplinary and diachronic perspective. It will take place remotely.

Linguistic and archaeological researches have elaborated on the continuities as well as on the differences between Antiquity and modern times. The aim is to develop these first observations in order to attempt to define the specificities of ancient playthings. The conference will debate the following questions in a comparative, diachronic and cross disciplinary approach:

What is a “toy”? What do we mean by toy in a post-industrial contemporary society? and how was it defined in the past? Since when and how were playthings associated with a specific age group or gender? Adults have games, but what about toys? Archaeologically, can we define the distinctive features of such object in Classical antiquity (size, material, ergonomics, cheap or costly...)? Semiologically, when did specific terms appear to qualify them, and why? In the Greek lexicon, different words, from *paignion* to *athurma*, refer to playful experiences which could include what we call toys, but the contexts of use are different, such as artistic performances, verbal jokes, as well as erotic discourses. In the Latin vocabulary, only the adjective *ludicrum* may be associated with actions that we could translate, albeit inaccurately, with 'toy'. Archaeologically, how can it be identified?

The toy stage in the biography of objects. As Sally Crawford (2009) demonstrated, any object can become a toy in the hands of a child, and it is thus impossible or very difficult to identify it without an archaeological context (cultic, funerary, domestic). Problematic too are terracotta replicas of objects found in tombs or sanctuaries. Why were such replicas of toys made, and can we distinguish the real artefact from its symbolical substitute? Similar reflections apply to miniature objects often associated with children, but with different functions according to time and space, some clearly distinct from play, as with defunctionalised miniature offerings. Terracotta figurines of animals also belong to that debated category.

Cheap or costly toys? self-made by children or caretakers, or products of specialists? More work should be undertaken to identify the making of playthings by children, their caretakers or specialised craftsmen. Did one play with self-made or manufactured artefacts? Written sources describe remarkable playthings that were made by specialists, such as the flying dove of Archytas or luxurious puppets. Some of these costly productions are literary fictions, but few surviving exceptional objects in bronze, amber or other precious material, such as an articulated bronze warrior, testify precious objects imitating what we would call toys. But are these toys?

Playful rites or ritual play? How can we account for the complex relationship between playful activities on the one hand and religious and devotional experiences on the other in the ancient world? Apart from the so-called “dolls” are a key feature of sanctuary offerings, other playthings such as knucklebones, balls and spinning-tops were dedicated in sanctuaries, each with varying associations and manipulations to explore. Game and divinatory practices are contiguous, as displayed by dice and knucklebones which belong to objects able to activate divine action.

The agency of toys: for the ancients, did toys generate a fictional universe, and did they possess a subjectivity? Toys participate to the construction of social identity. Did they differ according to age groups and gender? Did they promote interaction between children, siblings, or friends, between individuals of different sex or status? Did adults (child-minders or parents, mothers or fathers) play with children, and how? And where, in domestic, public or sacred spaces? On a more general level: did toys transmit cultural values shared by a Mediterranean *koinê*? and can we trace transmissions and transformations in later historical periods?