

# Ancient Percussion Instruments

## Organology - Perceptions - Multi-functionality

Toulouse, January 31, 2019



Percussion instruments have a renewal of interest for a few years, after being a long time poor relatives of academic research and very often relegated to the end of the catalogues of musical instruments. However, recent studies<sup>1</sup> show the complexity of uses of these items which, beyond their only sonorous mechanism, are mobilized in a wide range of contexts (ceremonies, theater, funerary field, votive offerings, etc.) for numerous reasons. Special attention will be paid to idiophones<sup>2</sup>, but also to membranophones when data allows it<sup>3</sup>.

Found in shrines, tombs, in domestic context or without any archaeological provenance, *realia* come from a great number of archaeological collections<sup>4</sup> but are dispersed in scientific publications. This workshop would like to propose a synthetic reflection on methodological issues, studies of contexts of discovery or even organological questions. Proposals relying on a strong archaeological corpus, which excavate a connection in series, would be appreciated.

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<sup>1</sup> Conferences such as : *Representations of Musicians in the Coroplastic Art of the Ancient World: Iconography, Ritual Contexts, and Functions* (New York, 2015), *La Fabrique du Sonore* (Paris, 2015), *Musical Instruments as Votive Gifts in the Ancient Greek World* (Boston, 2018), etc.

<sup>2</sup> Or autophones, according to the Hornbostel-Sachs system, the sound of these instruments comes from their vibration. Material used is often very stiff.

<sup>3</sup> The vibration of these instruments comes from the activation of a membrane. Very delicate, this last hardly hold out to the test of time.

<sup>4</sup> A lot of museum of archaeology own cymbals, bells, sistrum or crotales. Biggest collections produced catalogues of ancient musical instruments (Sachs 1921, Hickmann 1949, Anderson 1976, Ziegler 1979).

Other types of sources (literary, iconographic, epigraphic, numismatic) available can be questioned to give a better understanding of historical and anthropological implications and uses of percussion instruments. Moreover, Ancient authors' points of view often refer to the belonging of these various instruments to an identity, a culture or religion, more than to their musical or sonorous uses. Papers can focus on organology but also on the perception and depictions of some instruments by Ancients themselves. The goal is to catch the multiplicity of functions of percussion instruments and their potential connection with other sensorial ranges than the hearing.

Submissions can consider any civilization of the ancient Mediterranean area or East, with the purpose to reach a comparative reflection between cultural areas. The call is open to researchers in history, archaeology, history of art, classics and philology, musicology and anthropology. It should include a title and a 500 words abstract. The deadline for submitting abstracts for consideration is **18 June 2018** and proposals must be sent to [a.sauraziegelmeyer@gmail.com](mailto:a.sauraziegelmeyer@gmail.com). We'll come back to you in the beginning of September after the decision of the scientific committee. The results of the workshop will be published in a dedicated volume. If you have questions, please feel free to contact us.

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