

Call for Papers — XXVIII Board Game Studies Colloquium | Alicante 2026

Dear Colleagues,

We would like to invite you to present at the 28th edition of the *Board Game Studies Colloquium* in Alicante, Spain, April 27 - 30, 2026. Hosted by the University of Alicante with the support of the *Departamento de Prehistoria, Arqueología, Historia Antigua, Filología Griega y Filología Latina* we encourage participants to engage with the main research theme: *Board Games and War* (see below), or with some of the topics listed below.

Topics of Interest

- After the collapse, Archaeological approach to Board Games revisited
- Games in Spain from Antiquity to early modern times.
- Board Games in times of crisis. Do people keep on playing?
- Are we learning? Education through games, GBL, Gamification, Serious Games, ...

Submission Guidelines

Submissions should use the [dedicated form here](#) and arrive no later than December 21, 2025. Each submission should include a Title and an Abstract (no more than 250 words).

Presentations will be 20 minutes only and we ask you to keep this in mind when developing your submission. Presenters will have the opportunity to write up their presentation shortly after the meeting to be included in a proceedings volume. Papers should be no longer than 12 pages (around 3000 words).

As usual, all submissions related to the research field of Board Game Studies are welcome and are not limited to the main theme. All written materials should be in English. While English is the *lingua franca* at BGSC, language differences should not keep you from attending or presenting. Please contact us if the English language presents a problem to you. Given the ever-rising interest in our field the scientific committee will review submissions based on relevance, innovation and overall quality of the work. We aim to send out notifications of acceptance early in 2026.

With out best regards the organizers of the

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Main theme

Board Games and War

Play and war are deeply intertwined, linked by more than mere coincidence in time and space. They represent two dimensions of human competition and identity that counterbalance one another.

History also shows that war and military activity have often acted as catalysts for the development of games. Ancient sources attribute the invention of certain games to Palamedes during the siege of Troy. Likewise, the image of Ajax and Achilles seated and playing a game board became an enduring icon of Greek ethos, embodying strength and restraint, intelligence and ferocity. According to classical sources, board games were used both to train and entertain officers and soldiers during long periods between battles. They served to stir or soothe emotions, providing both provocation and relief. Beyond the battlefield, these games could also act as instruments of political elements and cultural practices, resulting in a unified language that transcends cultural and linguistic boundaries, thereby fostering inclusivity and diversity.

Some years ago (2021), the Archaeological Museum from Elche and the Department of Prehistory, Archaeology, Ancient History and Greek and Latin Philology (University of Alicante) organized the exhibition *Iberian Warriors and Games*, alongside the international conference *Warriors at Play*. Both initiatives emerged from the same line of research, aimed at exploring the figure of the pre-Roman Iberian mercenary and his connection to Mediterranean board games, linked to graves of high-status Iberian warriors. The findings were striking, revealing that this association recurs across multiple contexts and ancient cultures, and even extends into medieval and modern times.

The interplay between play and war is complex, and one that we are committed to investigating further. During the 28th edition of the Board Game Studies Colloquium our goal will be to identify new case studies in which individuals identified as warriors not only engage in warfare but also practise, collect, or represent themselves through the act of board gaming. Other related themes like how these aspects find themselves to be thematics of and mechanics within games modernly, or how play practice in war times persists are of relevance.