Roman ports, leading topic for the 5th Tarraco Biennal Conference

The Roman ports, protagonists of the 5th International Conference on Archaeology and Ancient World 'Tarraco Biennal'

'Roman ports. Archaeology of port systems' is the title of the 5th International Conference on Archaeology and Ancient World Tarraco Biennal, which will take place in Tarragona from **November 24 to 27**, in the Aula Magna of URV – Campus Catalunya (under the COVID security measures).

The conference was to be held in November 2020, but it was postponed due to the Covid health emergency. Now it is being recovered under the joint organization of the Rovira i Virgili University (URV) and the Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology (ICAC), and under the direction of Ada Lasheras, Joaquín Ruiz de Arbulo, and Patricia Terrado. The meeting is held at the end of November to coincide with the date of the declaration of Tarraco as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

A conference with around twenty experts from different European research centres

This fifth edition of the Tarraco Biennal conference will explore **the organization of the great ports**, as well as the great maritime routes, along with the essential role in the transport of all kinds of people, products, and ideas throughout the Mediterranean. Leading experts on the subject from Catalonia and Spain will take part in the conference, which will also include the participation of specialists from France, Italy, England, Cyprus, Austria, and Poland. **150 people have already registered** to attend the conference.

> The aim is to study the organisation of harbours, particularly focusing on their interconnected nature both at a local/regional level and on a Mediterranean-wide scale. The objective is to analyse ports not just as built infrastructures, but also as

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> nodes within a network of lesser regional harbours and anchorages – which configured "port-systems" – and crossroads of goods and people within the long-distance Mediterranean and Atlantic exchange routes.

In the press conference (last November 18), Joaquín Ruiz de Arbulo (URV-ICAC) and Patrícia Terrado stressed the will to 'publicize and share the latest research on ports, understood as systems and not just as simple structures'. Recent technological advances and studies on the port of Tarraco have led the organizers to choose this topic.

ICAC director, **Josep Maria Palet**, underlined the will of Tarraco Bienal to '**disseminate the research to the whole of society**' and to offer 'an image of unity of all institutions and entities that work in the field of archaeology in Tarragona, which cooperate to make these high-level scientific meeting possible'.

Communications will be held on November 25 and 26 (morning and afternoon sessions). On Saturday 27, the meeting will close with cultural visits to the Museum of the Port of Tarragona and the National Archaeological Museum of Tarragona (MNAT). Check out all the program here or in the **conference brochure**.



ICAC director, Josep Maria Palet (in the middle), during the press conference for the 5th Tarraco Biennal, on November 18, 2021, at the URV. On his left, Joaquín Ruiz de Arbulo (URV-ICAC) and, on the right, Patricia Terrado; directors of the conference along with Ada Lasheras (Casa de Velázquez – ICAC). Photo: ICAC.

The Tarraco Biennal conference is an initiative started in 2012 by the Fundació Privada Mútua Catalana with the aim of **stating Tarragona as the capital of research and scientific studies in archaeology**. Now, the direction of the conference falls to the URV and the ICAC, following the path of a scientific commission formed by all the local institutions related to archaeology and heritage: the Museum of History of Tarragona, the National Archaeological Museum of Tarragona (MNAT), the Royal Tarragona Archaeological

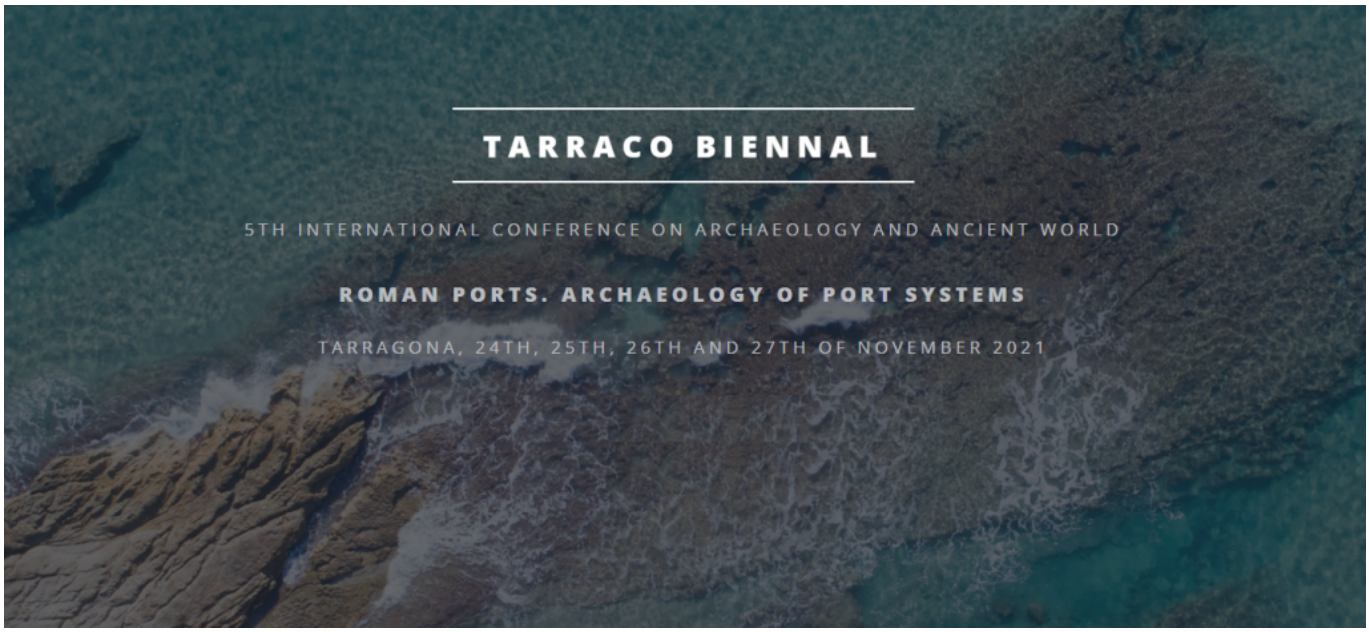
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Society, the Department of Culture of the Catalan Government, and the Archdiocese of Tarragona.

In this sense, URV and ICAC are satisfied with the 'very important echo' that the conclusions of each conference have got. The proceedings are published in paper and digital format and reach universities around the world.

Opening event, Wednesday 24 at 7 pm.

The 5th International Conference on Archaeology and Ancient World 'Tarraco Biennal' will open this **Wednesday, November 24 at 7:00 pm** in an inaugural event at the URV (Campus Catalunya, Tarragona), open to the public. Authorities **Maria José Figueras**, rector of the URV; **Pau Ricomà**, mayor of Tarragona; and **Josep Maria Cruset**, president of the Port of Tarragona, will attend the event. Professor of Archaeology at the URV and ICAC researcher **Joaquín Ruiz de Arbulo** will deliver the communication *Tarraco World Heritage and the Tarraco Biennal conference (2012-2021). In memoriam Joan Josep Marca*, which will point out the history of the conference in the city and its relationship with the declaration of **Tarraco as a World Heritage Site**.



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