Newly established route for archaeological exploration or visits at the Cathedral of Tarragona

The Tarragona Cathedral features a new visitable museum space: a route that allows access to archaeological sites previously closed to the public.

This archaeological and musealization effort, driven by the Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology (ICAC-CERCA) and the Diocesan Museum of Tarragona, has received support from the Cathedral Chapter, the Department of Culture of the Generalitat de Catalunya, the City Council of Tarragona, the Rovira i Virgili University, Repsol, and the Private Foundation Mutua Catalana.

The new space, which uses the city wall as a reference and begins in Room 1 of the Museum, behind the old refectory, allows us to “explain how the very appearance of the medieval city of Tarragona can teach us about the Roman city of Tarraco,” expressed the researcher from ICAC-CERCA, **Josep Maria Macias** (MIRMED research group).

The archaeological itinerary is located behind the medieval chapels of the Cloister of the Cathedral of Tarragona, around the basement of the Canons’ House.

In this sense, this route “connects the entire Diocesan Museum, and the narrative of the Christian artistic material culture of the Museum is accompanied by an archaeological tour that helps us understand this same historical diachrony in the structure of the building,” explained the director of the Diocesan Museum of Tarragona and associate researcher at the ICAC-CERCA, **Andreu Muñoz Melgar**. Thus, the itinerary allows for a tour “through the Roman spaces of the closing wall of the imperial cult precinct and understanding how it served as a basis for generating the medieval project of the Cathedral, as well as the architectural elements that have been added since the Renaissance period.”

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On the other hand, researchers have agreed to qualify the Cathedral's surroundings "as t**he best place to explain the history of Tarragona**." The Cathedral preserves on its walls the traces of the city's evolution: from the construction of the imperial cult precinct, through the medieval Cathedral, considered one of the most spectacular in Hispania, as well as the different buildings added during the Renaissance period to the present day.

> The Cathedral of Tarragona is the largest engineering work ever undertaken in the city's history.



Josep Maria Macias (ICAC-CERCA) and Andreu Muñoz Melgar (MDT) are the leading researchers for the research project at the Cathedral of Tarragona. Photo: ICAC-CERCA (CC 4.0).

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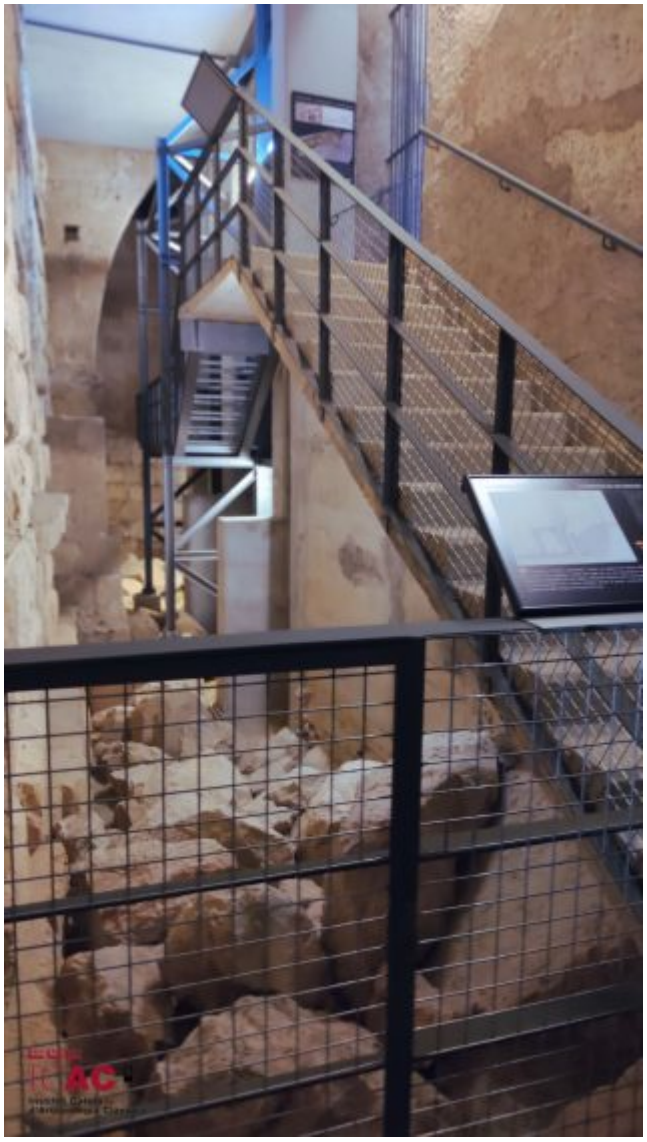
The itinerary allows visitors to explore the perimeter wall of the imperial cult precinct of Tarraco, located behind the medieval chapels of the cloister, around the basement of the Canons' House. It is designed as **an integrated learning space within the cathedral complex**.

Throughout the route, visitors will encounter various panels combining 3D reconstructions, floor plans, and informative texts that facilitate the interpretation of Roman remains, medieval structures, and those from the modern and contemporary periods.

The ICAC-CERCA and the Archdiocese of Tarragona have organized **a guided tour of the new archaeological itinerary on Saturday, February 3rd** (from 10 am to 1 pm), the day when the resource will formally become part of the tourist visit to the Cathedral of Tarragona and its Cloister.

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Inaugural Ceremony of the Archaeological Itinerary

The inaugural ceremony, which took place in the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament of the Cathedral on January 24th, was attended by a wide representation of all institutions involved in the project, as well as a hundred people who were able to make a first visit to the itinerary.

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Mr. Joan Miquel Bravo, Dean-President of the Cathedral Chapter, expressed his gratitude "to all the people and institutions that have made this project possible" and assured that "it helps us to know our past to understand who we are and what Tarragona we want to build." On the other hand, the Vice-Rector of the Rovira i Virgili University, **Marina Galià**, highlighted this event as "a good example of how research only makes sense when we transfer it to society as a whole."



The inaugural ceremony of the new archaeological itinerary took place at the Cathedral of Tarragona on January 24th, 2024, with the participation of representatives from the institutions and entities involved in the project. Photo: Archdiocese of Tarragona.

Francesc Roig, a member of the board of trustees of the Fundació Privada Mútua Catalana,

has expressed satisfaction at being able to continuously collaborate with the various projects promoted by the Cathedral. He also announced the upcoming presentation of two volumes about this temple, scheduled for April. Representing Repsol, **Francisco Montoya** also expressed gratitude for "having had the opportunity to support the archaeological itinerary and highlight that Repsol contributes to the region, of which it feels a part."

Representing the City Council of Tarragona, the Councilor of Heritage, **Nacho García**, asserted that "projects like this demonstrate that public-private collaboration works and greatly benefits the city of Tarragona." **Lurdes Malgrat**, the Director of the Territorial Services of the Department of Culture in Tarragona, emphasized the "spiritual and heritage aspects of the Cathedral" as elements that "enrich us and make us proud of our heritage."

Finally, **Josep Maria Palet**, the director of ICAC-CERCA, congratulated the project leaders "for creating this cultural resource, another milestone among others to come." He also commended Archbishop Joan Planellas, who expressed satisfaction with "the heritage and cultural plan being defined in the archdiocese" and the fact that research into the "beautiful and ancient heritage" is conducted from Tarragona, of which "we are once again proud."

A *Toquem Pedra* from the Cathedral

On the occasion of the inauguration of the archaeological itinerary, the ***Toquem Pedra*** podcast from Tarragona Ràdio, hosted by journalist Pep Sunyé, moved to the Cathedral. With the participation of researchers Josep Maria Macias, Andreu Muñoz Melgar and Andreu Muñoz Virgili, and the involvement of His Excellency and Reverend Mr. Joan Planellas i Barnosell, Archbishop of Tarragona.









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