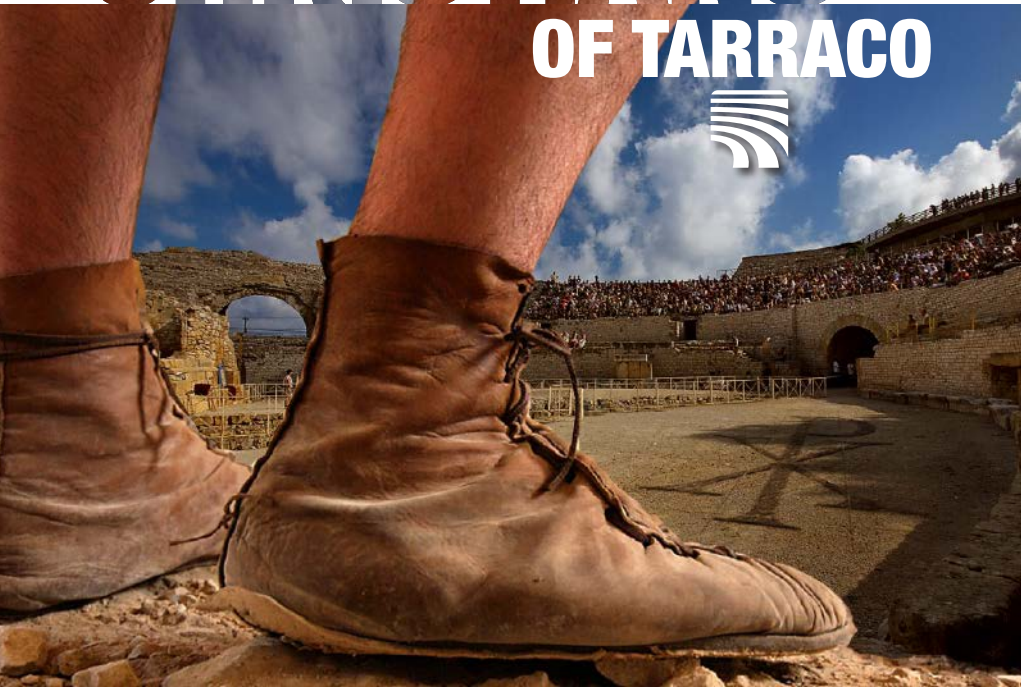


# The Route of the Earliest Christians OF TARRACO



A re-enactment that will bring you closer to the origins of Christianity

## THE PASSION OF SAINT FRUCTUOSUS

The re-enactment of the imprisonment, trial and subsequent martyrdom in the amphitheatre of Tarragona of the bishop Saint Fructuosus and of his deacons Augurius and Eulogius in an original drama by Andreu Muñoz, based on the oldest acts of martyrdom on the Iberian Peninsula. A re-enactment performed at the site of the martyrdom itself, sponsored by the Saint Fructuosus Cultural Association

with musical accompaniment provided by the Schola Cantorum and Orquestra of the Amics de la Catedral association.

**Saint Fructuosus Cultural Association**  
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⌚ € Please check prices and opening hours



The Route of the Earliest Christians of Tarraco®



## Articulated ivory doll

This peculiar doll with articulated arms and legs belonged to a girl who died at the age of five or six. It was discovered in 1927 inside a sarcophagus in the Paleochristian Necropolis of Tarragona. The piece measures 23 cm in height and dates to between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries.

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## ROUTE OF THE EARLIEST CHRISTIANS CARD

You are invited to purchase the Route of the Earliest Christians card (price: €1) and explore the route while enjoying great discounts.



## FOR SALE AT MUNICIPAL TOURIST OFFICES:

ANTIC AJUNTAMENT OFFICE  
Carrer Major, 37

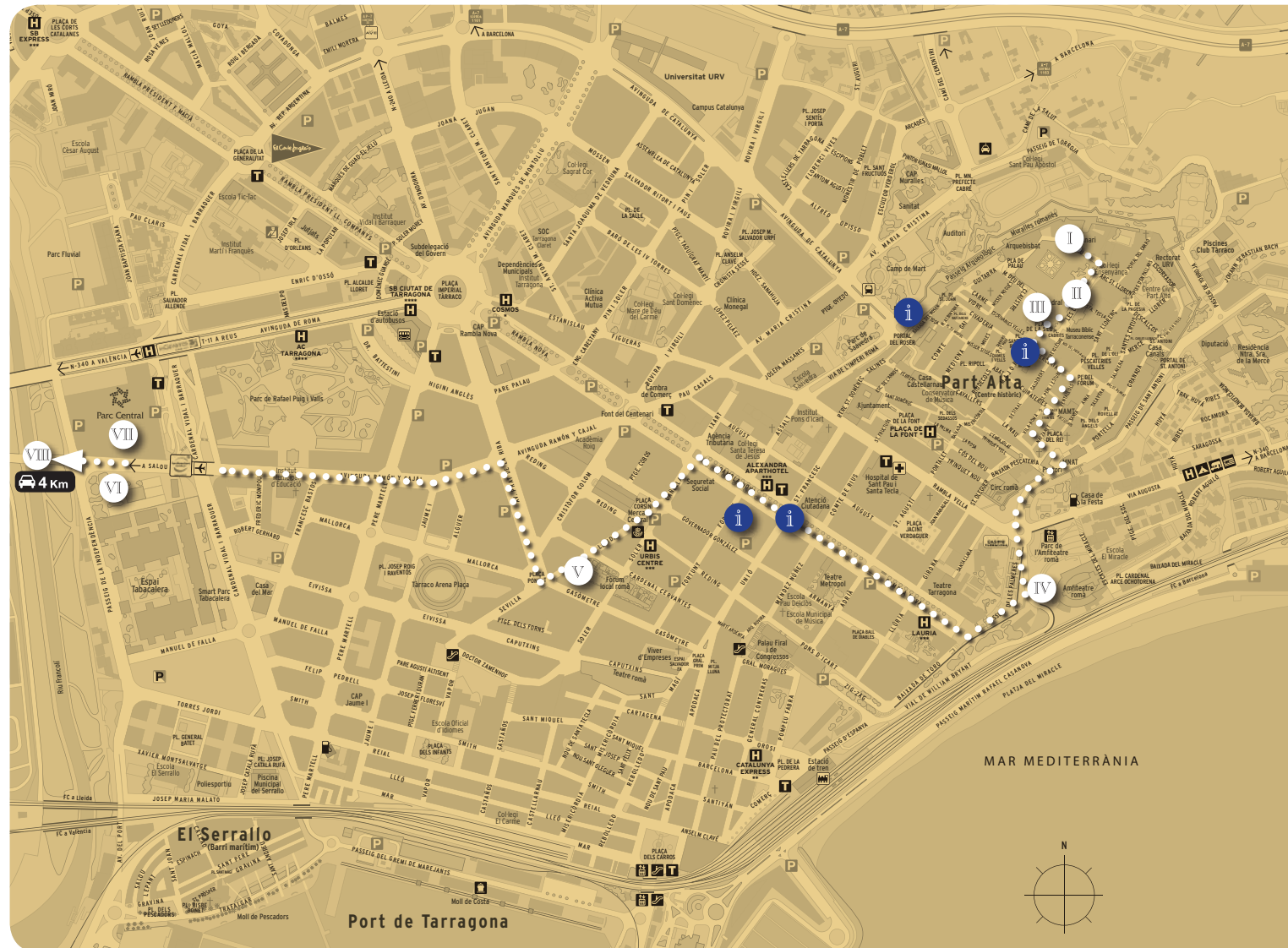
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## TARRACO, CENTRE OF EARLY HISPANIC CHRISTIANITY

Tarragona is one of the richest Hispanic cities in terms of paleochristian material culture. Tradition links the arrival of Christianity to the missionary actions of the Apostle Paul, but the first historical mention of Christianity in the city dates to the year 259, in which the bishop of Tarraco, Fructuosus, and his deacons Augurius and Eulogius were burned alive in the amphitheatre during the persecution of Christians waged by the Emperors Valerian and Gallienus. In the late Roman era, the Church in Tarragona became the metropolitan see of the province of Tarraco and played an active role in many provincial councils, with some of its bishops holding powers of primacy on behalf of the Pope (Bishop of Rome) for the Hispanic provinces. The documental, artistic and archaeological paleochristian heritage that has survived in the city is, as a whole, the most notable on the entire Iberian Peninsula.



## THE ROUTE OF THE EARLIEST CHRISTIANS OF TARRACO

- I Chapel of Saint Paul
- II Tarragona Biblical Museum
- III Diocesan Museum and Tarragona Cathedral
- IV Roman amphitheatre
- V Colonial Forum
- VI Paleochristian Museum and Necropolis
- VII Paleochristian basilica in Parc Central
- VIII Late Roman complex of Centelles







A LITTLE GEM HIDDEN IN A CLOISTER

CHAPEL OF SAINT PAUL

The Seminary building (19<sup>th</sup> century) is located at the highest point of the city's acropolis. One of its cloisters houses a chapel built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which formed part of the hospital of the canons of the see. According to pious tradition, Saint Paul preached from the rock on which the chapel was built. An exhibition inside the centre offers a summary of the history and archaeology of early Christianity in Tarraco.

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I



A JOURNEY TO THE ORIGINS OF JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN CULTURE

TARRAGONA BIBLICAL MUSEUM

The Tarragona Biblical Museum was founded in 1930 and helps the public to put the Bible within a historical and cultural context and understand its transcendent values. Visitors can enjoy a rich collection of archaeological, literary, artistic and didactic materials that will bring them closer to the fascinating world of Judaeo-Christian culture. The museum is an excellent instrument for understanding the theological, symbolic, ritual and iconographic foundations of the world of the earliest Christians.

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II



A UNIVERSE OF SPIRITUALITY AND ARTISTIC FASCINATION

DIOCESAN MUSEUM AND CATHEDRAL

The See of Tarragona is located where, during Roman times, a temple was erected in dedication to the Imperial Cult. The imposing remains of that great space are still visible in the cathedral's refectory. This sacred pagan area was partially dismantled after the 5<sup>th</sup> century and transformed into a Christian space. It is believed that a Visigoth cathedral may have once been located in this spot. One of the Renaissance chapels of the medieval cathedral is dedicated to Saint Fructuosus and his deacons and it is here where relics of these Hispanic protomartyrs are venerated. The Diocesan Museum

also holds archaeological elements dating from the first centuries of Christianity, notably including a small bronze liturgical pitcher dating to the 7<sup>th</sup> century, which was found in a tomb in the area of the cathedral. Additionally, the magnificent paleochristian Bethesda sarcophagus dating to the 5<sup>th</sup> century is built into the façade of the cathedral.

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III



A BASILICA IN THE ARENA OF THE AMPHITHEATRE

ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE

The amphitheatre is an oval-shaped building originally used for gladiator performances. Built at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, it could accommodate up to 12,000 spectators. During the reign of Heliogabalus at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the amphitheatre underwent various changes. On 21 January 259, Bishop Fructuosus and his deacons Augurius and Eulogius were burned alive by order of the governor of Tarraco, Emilian. It was yet another consequence of the application of the edicts decreed against Christians by the Emperors Valerian and Gallienus. Between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Church built a basilica in memory of the martyrs on the

exact spot where the saints were immolated. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, a new temple dedicated to Santa Maria del Miracle (St Mary of the Miracle) was erected over that structure. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Trinitarian monks built a convent next to the temple. The community used the space until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

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http://museu.tarragona.cat

⌚ € Please check prices and opening hours

IV



THE CENTRE OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE IN TARRACO

COLONIAL FORUM

The Colonial Forum was the centre of social and political life in Tarraco. An early square has been documented in the city that dates to the era of the Roman Republic and that was presided over by a temple dedicated to the Capitoline Triad (Jupiter, Juno and Minerva). If the Apostle Paul visited the city of Tarraco, as legend tells us, this would be where he would have conducted his public missionary activities. A church dedicated to Saint Fructuosus was documented

near this site in the medieval era and survived until the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Pious tradition holds that the house of Saint Fructuosus was located on that spot.

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http://museu.tarragona.cat

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V



TESTIMONIES TO PALEOCHRISTIAN CULTURE

PALEOCHRISTIAN MUSEUM AND NECROPOLIS

Bishop Fructuosus and his deacons were buried by the Christian community of Tarraco in this cemetery area. The spot took on sacred significance for the local Church and the faithful showed great interest in being buried near the remains of the deceased, funerary trousseaux and an extraordinary collection of Christian epigraphs.

The Paleochristian Museum and Necropolis allows visitors to understand Roman funerary practices, learn about the different types of graves employed in antiquity and explore this place used for the adulation of the martyrs and as a

centre of pilgrimage until the beginning of the Visigoth era. The Museum houses the richest collection of paleochristian archaeology and art on the Iberian Peninsula. Its collection is made up of sarcophagi, mosaic works in honour of the deceased, funerary trousseaux and an extraordinary collection of Christian epigraphs.

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VI



LITURGICAL CUSTOMS OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

BASILICA IN PARC CENTRAL

This funerary basilica, which dates to the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, consists of three naves and a transept with an apse and a counter-apse orientated towards the east and an atrium in front of it. The building is enclosed on the eastern side by a square apse with two small rooms annexed to it, used as a sacristy and a room for storing items of worship. At the foot of the basilica, an atrium with a central patio holds a gallery giving onto a set of rooms. Nearly 200 graves have been documented in the area surrounding the basilica and the ambulatorium of the atrium. One epigraph found here is dedicated to the beatified

Thecla, a consecrated virgin of Egyptian origin who died at the age of 77. The basilica in Parc Central is the only example of paleochristian basilica architecture found in Tarragona and provides an excellent means for visitors to better understand the liturgical customs and buildings of worship of early Christianity.

Car park of the Parc Central shopping centre  
Av. de Vidal i Barraquer, 15-17  
43005 Tarragona. Tel.: + 34 977 22 87 97  
atencionalcliente@ccparccentral.com

⌚ Please check opening hours

VII



CHRISTIAN ART EXPRESSED IN MOSAIC

LATE ROMAN COMPLEX OF CENTCELLES

The part of the complex open to visitors corresponds to a majestic building built between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, four kilometres from Tarragona on the banks of the River Francolí and on the road called the Via de Italia in Hispanias. The central room is topped with a dome decorated in a magnificent mosaic arranged in concentric bands depicting hunting images, scenes from the Old and New Testaments and enthroned figures, among others. In terms of Christian motifs, the representations of Bible stories are particularly outstanding and include images of Adam and Eve, Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, the prophet Jonas, the three young men of Babylon, the prophet Daniel, Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd and

the resurrection of Lazarus. Although the chronology and the function of the building remains a matter of debate, the magnificence of the project, the technique employed and the iconography used suggest that whoever commissioned the work must have been a high-ranking figure with firm Christian beliefs. This complex is undeniably one of the most outstanding testimonies to the art of the first centuries of Christianity.

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VIII