

UNIVERSITY OF  
Southampton

Exploring Rome's  
ancient port.  
Portus  
Field School  
2014







View of the excavation area

## Background

The Field School is hosted by the Portus Project ([www.portusproject.org](http://www.portusproject.org)), established six years ago with an aim to study the maritime port of Imperial Rome, Portus, located at the mouth of the Tiber (Italy). Directed by Prof. Simon Keay and led by the University of Southampton, the project is run as an international collaboration with a number of partners, including the Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma, the British School at Rome and the University of Cambridge. Due to its academic excellence and cutting-edge innovation in fieldwork techniques, including computer modelling work developed by the project co-director Dr Graeme Earl, Portus is currently a leading Roman archaeology excavation recognized as such by the highest academic funding bodies, whose support it continues to enjoy, as well as wide media coverage, including recent BBC1 programme Rome's Lost Empire ("The Roman Empire: what lies beneath" is the US version of the programme).

## About Portus

Portus (Fiumicino) was the maritime port of ancient Rome and, together with the neighbouring river port at Ostia, was the focus of a network of ports serving Imperial Rome between the mid-1st century AD and the 6th century AD. It was established by Claudius, enlarged by Trajan, and subsequently modified during the 3rd and 4th centuries AD. The port began to enter a period of slow decline from the late 5th century AD onwards, although it was the scene of a major struggle between Byzantine and Ostrogothic troops during the Gothic wars (AD 535-553).

Portus was critically important for supplying the city of Imperial Rome with foodstuffs and materials from across the Mediterranean from the 1st century AD onwards. It also acted as both a point of export for supplies and products from the Tiber Valley to the north of Rome, and a major hub for the redistribution of goods from ports across the Mediterranean. It must also have acted as a major conduit for people visiting Rome from around the Mediterranean.

## Project Aims and Objectives

Directed by Simon Keay, the Portus Project is guided by two main objectives. Firstly, it seeks to build a better understanding of Portus itself, as well as its relationship to Ostia, Rome, and the rest of the Mediterranean. Secondly, it aims to develop techniques that will enhance the ways in which highly complex classical sites can be investigated and recorded, and evaluate the impact of those techniques. Used in combination, non-destructive survey, open area excavation, and the computer graphic representation of excavated and graphically-simulated Roman buildings are key components to achieving these objectives.



Team photo, July 2013



Laser scanning of a subterranean corridor



# Field School Syllabus

The Field School, organized by the University of Southampton, offers a combination of hands-on practical training and academic content. The academic content of the programme is primarily concerned with Roman imperial history and material culture, with a particular reference to archaeology of the Tiber delta and Rome. Fieldwork training will focus upon theories, techniques and strategies of survey and excavation, archaeological stratigraphy, sampling procedures, field data collection and recording methods, documentation and report preparation. Students will also learn to map, recover, catalogue, and process archaeological artefacts.

The project also uses cutting-edge digital technologies and we can provide training in a variety of techniques that we use in our work. Those with a specific interest in this area of our work or archaeological computing in general should get in touch to discuss the options as the programme can be tailored to suit their needs.

The students will receive practical training in the following areas:

- Archaeological survey – transects, laser scanning, photogrammetry, mapping, and data processing
- Archaeological excavation – layout, mapping, profiles, sediments, artefact recognition
- Archaeological recording procedures – photography, imaging, context sheets, section, plan and feature drawing, site maps
- Global positioning systems (GPS) and total data station (TDS)
- Geophysical survey

- Recovery, identification and interpretation of cultural materials, archaeological features, contexts and stratigraphy
- Basic report preparation – documentation of inventory and excavation results

The Portus Field School will run for three weeks. The Field School begins on Sunday June 22nd, with a welcome dinner for all participants, and the last working day is Friday July 11th. The normal working day is from 8:00AM to 6:00PM, with a coffee break and a lunch break. We will work five days a week, with Saturday and Sunday being days off. On most Saturdays field trips will be organized to sites and museums in the area, while Sundays will always be free time to use as you like: explore the area, go to Rome or the beach.

On your first working day you will be given a half-day introduction to the site and the field techniques you will be using. This will include a Health and Safety briefing, followed by a site tour. You will be assigned to a particular trench and site supervisor on the excavation, who will be on hand to give you constant guidance. During the following weeks you will be given field tuition as you are rotated through different tasks, allowing you the chance to try your hand at all aspects of excavation. At the end of every week all participants will be kept up-to-date with overall site progress by means of a weekly site tour. This training will be supplemented with lectures given by field school staff and visitors. These will provide participants of all levels with an understanding of the wider context in which the work at the site is situated. Study visits will be organized to sites and museums in the wider area, including Rome and Ostia.

Visualisation of the Navalía



Excavating a skeleton

## Tuition and Credits

Academic Credit: 30CATS, Sponsoring Institution: University of Southampton, UK. 30 UK credits roughly equate to 15ECTS or 10 US Credits, but it is up to student's home institution to decide how many credits it will actually award. Those interested in obtaining accreditation should therefore check with their home institutions first. The full syllabus that can be used for that purpose can be obtained by emailing the Field School Director.

Those wishing to obtain credits will be required to submit a Fieldwork Report that will be formally assessed, as well as to produce a short piece of written work on a set topic, which is to be submitted by September. A University of Southampton Lifelong Learning Certificate is available for all Field School participants.

## Programme Fee

£3,500. Programme fee includes tuition, accommodation, workday meals and Sunday dinner, program activities and excursions. Airfare and health insurance are not included.

## Dates

22 June–13 July 2014

## How to Apply

Application is now open and further details can be found on the Field School website: [www.portusproject.org/education/portus-summer-field-school/](http://www.portusproject.org/education/portus-summer-field-school/). Applications are dealt on a first come first served basis and early application is encouraged as places on the Field School fill up very quickly. If you would like to register an interest in the excavation, please email the Field School Director, Dr Dragana Mladenović (D.Mladenovic@southampton.ac.uk).



Excavating the Imperial Palace

[www.portusproject.org/education/  
portus-summer-field-school/](http://www.portusproject.org/education/portus-summer-field-school/)