

# Saguntum: The Remains of an Honorary Arch and Urban Planning Outside the City Walls

JUANJO FERRER-MAESTRO<sup>1</sup>, JOSEP BENEDITO-NUEZ<sup>1</sup> AND JOSÉ MANUEL MELCHOR-MONSERRAT<sup>2</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Department of History, Geography and Art, Jaume I University, Castellón, Spain

<sup>2</sup>Burriana Archaeological Museum, Spain

*At the end of the first century and especially throughout the second century AD, a public building programme was largely responsible for the transformation of Saguntum's urban planning, especially, outside the walls of this well-known Hispano-Roman city. The aim of this article is to present the features of the monumental landscape outside the city walls, including an outstanding honorary construction, which strongly influenced the design of public architecture at a time of political and socio-economic change.*

**Keywords:** Saguntum, Roman arch, Roman roads, urban planning

## INTRODUCTION

The city of Saguntum was a strategic Iberian trade centre located on the hill of the castle in present-day Sagunto, in the southern foothills of the Sierra Calderona, about 30 km north of the city of Valencia. The topography of Saguntum ensured that it became a privileged acropolis throughout its history. The city went through several building phases over the centuries, leaving behind the remains of numerous buildings and fortifications. It is therefore not surprising that the term castle has been used to describe the nature of this site and its current citizens are proud of the name of Sagunto, inherited from the Classical tradition.

Hannibal's attack and conquest of Saguntum at the outset of the Second Punic War (218–202 BC) led to the city's growing popularity, as recorded in Classical

texts. Saguntum suffered a long siege and, despite its request for help, Rome's protection was not offered to the city.

The city's strategic location and excellent terrestrial and maritime communications are especially relevant. The main coastal road, the Via Augusta in the imperial period, and the route from the coast to the Celtiberian interior of the Iberian Peninsula, make Saguntum a privileged enclave. Grau Vell, Saguntum's Mediterranean trading port, was located only 2 km away. The topography of the castle and the bed of the river Palancia influenced the city's development, determining its urban boundaries during the early Roman imperial period. Saguntum lies on several terraces along the margin of the river, which ascend to incorporate the theatre, the forum, and the western area at the top of the castle (Aranegui-Gascó, 1994; 2002) (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Map of Sagunto in Spain.

Main constructions mentioned in the text: (1) Circus; (2) Solar de Quevedo (Quevedo site); (3) the bridge; (4) plaza de la Morería (Morería Square).

After the war against Carthage, the city was reconstructed with the help of Rome. This favoured the expansion of urbanized areas and, during the era of Augustus, Saguntum was one of the main Roman cities in Hispania; even in the later Roman Empire it held great economic and political power on the Mediterranean coast. A period of important social, cultural, and urban change took place in Saguntum. Similarly, a change in the administrative status of other Hispanic cities took place after the implementation of the colonizing policy of Caesar and Augustus.

Saguntum's legal system as an allied city was modified, at least by 56 BC (Cicero, *Pro Balbo*, 9.23), when it became a Roman colony, as deduced from the legends figuring on coinage (Ripollès & Velaza, 2002). Under the reign of Augustus, the city was a Roman city, as can be observed on coins, particularly on an inscription dated in 4–3 BC (*CIL* II<sup>2</sup>/14, 305, Alföldy, 2012) (*CIL* II<sup>2</sup>/14, 305, Alföldy, 2012) and from a quote by Pliny ('Saguntum ... a town with Roman citizenship, famous for its loyalty';

*Natural History* 3,20). Furthermore, urban and stylistic changes, influenced by the presence of Augustus in Tarraco between 15 and 12 BC, are also visible in some cities in Hispania. Saguntum plays a significant role in the strengthening of monumentality at this time, as attested by a building programme undertaken both inside and outside the city walls.

### THE NEW URBANISM IN THE EARLY IMPERIAL PERIOD

The new city was organized along several roads, oriented from north to south, which crossed the town. One of them, located in front of the circus, connected the *porta triumphalis* with the public square that will be described below. Further archaeological investigations identified an original stretch of road to the east of the municipality, in Plaza de la Morería (Benedito-Nuez, 2015; Ferrer-Maestro et al., 2018). Another segment was found in Avenida País Valencià. These roads were parallel to the Via Augusta; they were connected to

the city wall so as to give access to the upper town, where the theatre and forum were located. These roads spread over an area of more than 60 hectares, their irregular layout due to their adjustment to the local topography.

In the present-day city of Sagunto, some new streets still overlap with Roman streets. So far, research has focused on the northern part of the city, especially on a N-S street (the *cardo*) that went through Carrer del Castell and Carrer Major. This is the area where the hermitage of San Miguel can be found. At this point, the N-S street would have cut the E-W axis (the *decumanus*), which probably gave access to the eastern part of the city. This E-W road ran through Carrer Major, crossed Plaza Mayor, and went down Carrer de Cavallers to the Teruel gate, that is, the western access to the city (Aranegui-Gascó, 2004; Hernández-Hervás, 2004). The remaining streets are parallel to the *cardo* and the *decumanus*, and the space was divided into different *insulae*. As previously seen in Plaza de la Morería, public buildings (temples) or private buildings (*domus* and *mausolea*) occupied each *insula*. From the early imperial period onwards, the embellishment of the area outside the city walls would become a clear political objective intended to include the periphery into the urban fabric (Benedito-Nuez, 2015).

### THE CIRCUS

The Roman circus was built in the *suburbium* of Saguntum's traditional heart, outside the walled perimeter of the city. It extended along the southern bank of the river Palancia and was oriented East-West. It was an area with good communications but was also dangerous because of the floods of the river. Astonishingly, the

remains of the circus were never declared a historical monument. Unprotected by the authorities, they disappeared in the 1960s when the plot was classified as land suitable for building (Melchor-Monserrat et al., 2017). The Roman circus has a considerable importance within the monumental urban plan of Sagunto. Its presence is attested in the writings of erudite travellers and chroniclers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and in 1888 the local historian A. Chabret identified the *porta triumphalis*, the *spina*, the *euripus*, and some hydraulic pipes (Chabret-Fraga, 1888). Another notable historian of Sagunto, Santiago Brú, described it in detail in the twentieth century (Brú i Vidal, 1963) (Figures 2a-b).

A broad chronology that takes account of the dimensions of this building can be established, starting in the middle of the second century AD (e.g. Hernández-Hervás et al., 1996; Pascual Buyé, 2002; Aranegui-Gascó, 2004). It coincides with a time of intense building activity in the city, with an extraordinary impact documented by archaeological investigations (Melchor-Monserrat & Benedito-Nuez, 2005a; Benedito-Nuez, 2015; Machancoses López & Jiménez Salvador, 2017; Ferrer-Maestro et al., 2018). Similarly, Corell's study of the inscriptions of Sagunto (Corell Vicent, 2002) established a link between the circus building and a fragment of a monumental inscription found on the castle hill. This inscription, which dates to the third century AD, commemorates a donation for the celebration of theatrical or circus performances: ]C/[ - - ]nses/[ - - ] MCCL/[ (CIL II<sup>2</sup>/14, 376, Alföldy, 2012).

In previous research (Melchor-Monserrat et al., 2017), the proximity of the circus to one of the main communication arteries has been highlighted. It has been claimed that its location broke up the architectural project of Augustus' time, since the layout of the Via Augusta was cut at the exit of the



**Figure 2.** *a and b. Spina of the circus (Bru, 1963), wall of the opus quadratum of the circus (archive of the Saguntine Archaeological Centre).*

bridge giving access to the city (Olcina Doménech, 1987; Aranegui-Gascó, 2004). This odd spatial configuration would have been an obstacle in terms of closeness to the theatre and forum. Perhaps we should consider that building the bridge and detour of the Via Augusta was necessary to avoid creating problems of access to the circus. As is

known, viaducts and roads linked to entertainment buildings were built in other Hispano-Roman cities to give quick access to the city, making it possible to increase the number of visitors coming from other towns.

In Saguntum, a branch went from the Via Augusta, at the location of a suburban



villa known as Muntanyeta de l'Aigua Fresca, to reach the bridge that gave access to the circus. By means of a photogrammetric restitution process, using photographs taken during the Italian bombings of 1937 and 1938 in the Spanish Civil War, and orthophotography of the Valencian Cartographic Institute in 2012, it has been possible to work out a plan of the circus during its first quarter of a century of existence. The *spina*, the limits of the *cavea* (dashed lines), and even traces of the building that surrounded the *tribunal iudicum* can be clearly distinguished in the images (Figure 3).

The *cavea* would have been 11 m wide and 474 m long. Taking into account the end of the *spina* and the *cavea*, and comparing the space between the *meta* and the *carceres* in other Hispanic circuses, a working hypothesis can be suggested. It starts from the idea that the maximum length of the circus should be between 270 and 290 m. Moreover, the photograph taken in 1938 allows us to specify the length of the foundation as 237 m, while its total width would have been between 68 and 70 m (Melchor-Monserrat et al., 2017).

Bearing all these issues in mind, let us note that the surroundings of the circus were urbanized. The city was growing towards the lower areas, practically reaching the river Palancia, as suggested by the significant discoveries in the Morería and Quevedo sites (Melchor-Monserrat & Benedito-Nuez, 2005a, 2005b; Machancoses López & Jiménez Salvador, 2017; Ferrer-Maestro et al., 2018). These archaeological investigations revealing the remains of hydraulic infrastructure, public and domestic buildings, and place of worship with at least one excavated temple, have been crucial for our understanding of the ancient urbanism of Saguntum.

## THE BRIDGE

It has been suggested that several viaducts were built over the course of the river Palancia. These connected the entrance gate to Sagunto as an urban space surrounded by burial areas, where some of the most popular monuments were located. However, studies remain scarce; C. Aranegui-Gascó and M. Olcina Doménech (1983) described some remains and mentioned the problems related to the access to the city, in particular whether three bridges connected with the Via Augusta. One was in front of the circus, the second might be located under the railway bridge, and the third, to the west, would be linked to the Teruel road.

So far, preserved remains have been few and correspond to one of the viaducts, which links the circus with the Via Augusta. The most outstanding elements of this bridge are the abutments used to support the arches, whose ruins are scattered all over the riverbed. It is even more difficult to establish the chronology of the other bridges, set under the railway and near the road to Zaragoza, because detailed research is scarce (Benedito-Nuez, 2015; Ferrer-Maestro et al., 2018).

Information from the nineteenth century can shed some light on the bridge next to the circus: its ruins were then partially visible, as Enrique Palos reported: '... the half circle of the eastern part [of the circus] ... in the middle of which two piers are identified. They undoubtedly formed part of the bridge leading to Rome ... At the end of the circus, towards its upper part, two arches of another old bridge can be seen, while three piers with two arches can be observed in the riverbed' (Palos y Navarro, 1804; authors' own translation).

In addition, photographs of the 1960s kept in the archives of the Saguntine



**Figure 3.** Location of the circus overlaid on a present-day aerial photograph of the area (after Melchor et al., 2017).

Archaeological Centre show excellent masonry work, with the core of the bridge's piles were filled with *opus caementicium* (Figure 4).

### THE PUBLIC SQUARE

As part of the embellishment and monumental planning of the Saguntine *municipium* in the second century AD, new public and private buildings continued to be established in the city. This included a huge monumental building or enclosure built on the southern flank of the circus. It was erected on the Quevedo site, which is located between Carrer Horts, Carrer del

Remei and Carrer Ordóñez. The remains were discovered in the area of the old orchards of the Trinity Convent, which were cleared in the 1980s. These remains consist of a wall built in *opus quadratum* and a large entrance made of squared ashlar and flanked by pillars.

The oldest references to this site can be found in drawings made by Mariangelo Accursio in the sixteenth century. It is known that this outstanding Italian humanist, who was active in Spain between 1525 and 1529, drew the facades and ten inscriptions, seven of which are preserved in the Archaeological Museum of Sagunto (*CIL* II<sup>2</sup>/14, 337 to 346, Alföldy, 2012). The epigraphic evidence



**Figure 4.** Pier of the Roman bridge on the northern bank of the river Palancia (archive of the Saguntine Archaeological Centre).

indicates that the monument was dedicated to three members of the Sergii family, one of the most influential families in Saguntum, before the construction of the circus (Corell Vicent, 2002). The site housed the Roman temple of Diana, according to the seventeenth-century historian Escolano cited by the politician and writer Pascual Madoz in his well-known *Diccionario* (1848). The chronicler Chabret-Fraga (1888), an eyewitness, writes that the remains of a mosaic destroyed by excavation works were found in the garden of the former monastery of the Trinity. Only a fragment half a metre long could be identified. It had a white background with a black border resembling a meander design (SAV, 1873).

The latest archaeological excavations carried out on the site at the end of 2014 revealed a portico, an entrance with two monumental pillars, and a sewer. The beginning of the sewer, which may have been paved, would have been in the centre of an open space (Melchor-Monserrat & Benedito-Nuez, 2005b). The main entrance would probably coincide with a

street that would reach the area of the *porta triumphalis* of the circus from the walls. At the same time, the road axis that today corresponds to Carrer Horts would have separated the circus from the square (Ferrer-Maestro et al., 2018). Despite the relevance of the findings, the latest archaeological investigations on the site have not yet been published (Figure 5 a-b).

## THE TEMPLE

Classical texts refer to the existence of a temple dedicated to Venus (Polybius, *Histories* 3.97.6–8) and to a second temple dedicated to Diana (Pliny, *Natural History* 16.216). In recent studies, a building located on the forum has been identified as a temple to Heracles (Aranegui-Gascó, 1992, 2004) although no inscription linking this space with the worship of a god has been found. Other scholars state that other temples existed in the area (Beltrán-Villagrasa, 1956; Etienne, 1958) but so far no evidence has come to light.





**Figure 5.** *a and b. Opus quadratum foundations and walls of the largest public square documented in Sagunto.*

The remains found in the excavations of Morería, on the east side of the N-S road, have been related to a temple, even though no epigraphic evidence has been discovered and the building has not yet been interpreted in all its complexity

(Melchor-Monserrat & Benedito-Nuez, 2005a; Ferrer-Maestro et al., 2018). Nonetheless, this building is of great archaeological value. It includes a massive masonry foundation 1.53 m wide; the walls have the same width and are made



with large cobbles from the river and limestone ashlar. The *opus quadratum* technique, bedded ashlar, and traces of a spout and gutter have only survived in the north-western corner of the building. The eastern facade measures 8.47 m and stands on a podium. Unfortunately, only the eastern half could be excavated (Figure 6).

Along with these architectural remains, fragments of ornamental elements that decorated the interior of the building were recovered during the excavation: smooth panels, moulded pilaster slabs, friezes with vegetal motifs, mouldings, and fragments of a *opus sectile* pavement. These elements were made with marble of Buixarró, Broccatello, Rosso antico, and Luni-Carrara types (Ferrer-Maestro et al., 2018).

### THE HONORARY ARCH

In the section above on 'The new urbanism in the Early Imperial Period', we pointed out that between the first and second centuries AD there was a profound transformation of the main public spaces in the town. They extended beyond the walled limits of the town, which undoubtedly demonstrates the importance of the monumental landscape erected outside the walls. This image of Saguntum was completed by the construction of an honorary arch, which was discovered in the excavations carried out in Plaza de la Morería. Due to its exclusive nature, this honorary arch is of great significance in the research conducted on the Roman municipality and its surrounding territory.

In the literature on Roman arches, research has tended to focus on analysing the documentation that is available from an archaeological perspective and from the epigraphic and literary evidence. These studies have generally addressed issues related to the historical context of arches,

their architectural definition, and their function.

Studies undertaken by Rossini (1836), Graef (1888), Frothingham (1915), Kaehler (1939), Mansuelli (1954), Pallottino (1958), Arce Martínez (1987), De Maria (1988), Wallace-Hadrill (1990), Gros (1996), Beard (2007), and Kontokosta (2013), are the most frequently cited works concerning Roman arches, including analyses of the epigraphic and literary records and the archaeological evidence for these monuments. In general, research has addressed issues related to their historical context, their architectural definition, and their function as urban embellishment and propaganda.

Such arches were built in the monumental centres of the cities, especially in the forums, and in areas where communication routes crossed a river or a territorial boundary. In the Iberian Peninsula, there are different types of arches with different ideological connotations. In some cases, they were the result of public initiatives, whereas in other cases, it was the will of the citizens themselves that led to their erection. The model followed was born in Rome in the Republican era, and was extended by Augustus throughout the provinces of the empire (Dupré Raventós, 1998: 159). Sadly, only a few of these arches have survived to the present day.

In Hispania, architectural remains are not common: the arch of Cabanes, in Castellón (Valencian Community), erected on the Via Augusta, seems to have been a private commission (Abad Casal, 1984; Abad Casal & Arasa i Gil, 1988). The extra-urban arch of Berà (Catalonia) was also built on the Via Augusta, some 20 km from Tarraco, at the end of the first century BC (Dupré Raventós, 1994a). Similarly, the Martorell arch is located on the north-eastern boundary of the territory of Tarraco, at one end of a bridge known as Pont del Diable that crosses the



**Figure 6.** Archaeological excavations of the medieval walls that covered the remains of the temple next to the Roman road entering Saguntum.

Rubricatus (now the river Llobregat) (Dupré Raventós, 1994b; Gurt & Rodà, 2005). In the central part of the emblematic Alcántara bridge in Cáceres that crosses the Tagus in Extremadura, an arch dedicated to Emperor Trajan was built (Blanco Freijeiro, 1978; Liz Guiral, 1988). The arch of Medinaceli, in Soria, Castile and Leon, is located at the top of the Jalón valley, near the road that linked Caesaraugusta (Zaragoza) with Augusta Emerita (Mérida) (Blanco Freijeiro, 1981; Abascal & Alföldy, 2002; Abad Casal, 2004). This monument was part of the wall that surrounded the city at the end of the first century AD. The tetrapylon of Capera, present-day Cáparra (province of Cáceres, northern Extremadura) was raised next to the forum, probably in the Flavian era (García y Bellido, 1972–74; Nünnerich-Asmus, 1996a and 1996b;

Cerrillo, 2006). The arch of Myrtilis Iulia in Mértola, Portuguese Alentejo, is located at the access gate to the forum, in the area of the citadel (Martins Lopes, 2014: 51).

The origin of some isolated architectural remains of other arches is not clear. For example, the monument of Ciempozuelos, near Titulcia the Community of Madrid, presumably located on a route that has not been identified archaeologically, is known from Classical itineraries (Nünnerich-Asmus, 1996–97). In the city of Edeta, now Llíria in the Valencian Community, the remains of an entrance arch to the city are dated to the end of the first century AD. They are located in the area called Pla de l'Arc, next to the road leading to Sagunto, and epigraphic fragments of an honorary nature have been found nearby. Tradition has considered that the pillar corresponds to a Roman arch but, as

recently suggested, it could belong to one of the sides of an arch-shaped door of a public building (Escrivà, 2014). The keystones of the arch at Corduba, Córdoba, probably formed part of a monumental entrance to the city's forum (Marcos Pous, 1987; Márquez, 1998; Monterroso Checa, 2011), although the arch may have flanked a religious building (Márquez, 1998: 175).

The remains found in Málaga (Community of Andalusia) and in Italica in the province of Seville are scarce. Only the winged victory figures of the keystones have survived at both sites (García y Bellido, 1949, 1972). Apart from these constructions, the arch adorning the access to the forum of the city of Lucentum, present-day Alicante, is of great archaeological value. Such an arch, which may have closed the W-NW inside of the public square (Olcina Doménech et al., 2014: 826; Olcina Doménech et al., 2015: 258–59) stands out due to its location. As for the Trajan arch in Mérida, it may correspond to the monumental access to the provincial forum (Arce Martínez, 1987). In Tarraco, there is an arch located in the forum that is related to Augustus' victories on the peninsula (Dupré Raventós, 1994b; Mar et al., 2015).

Other arches are known from epigraphic fragments (Figure 7). Jérica is located 40 km from Sagunto, in the interior of the province of Castellón. In this locality, there was a Roman arch that could have been built during the Antonine period, its exact location remaining unknown (Abad Casal, 1984). Inscriptions alluding to the construction of arches and statues have been found in urban centres but, according to Beltrán Lloris Lloris (1980), the inscription from Jérica, which belongs to a tombstone, is different. Jérica is not a municipality given that no inscription referring to any magistrate has ever been found. Nonetheless, the area was home to a wealthy family since it spent a



**Figure 7.** Jérica inscription. The text reads: 'Quintia Proba built an arch for herself, Porcio Rufo and Porcio Rufino, and decorated it with statues for the sum of forty thousand sesterces' (CIL II<sup>2</sup>/14, 745, Alföldy, 2012). Municipal Museum of Jérica.

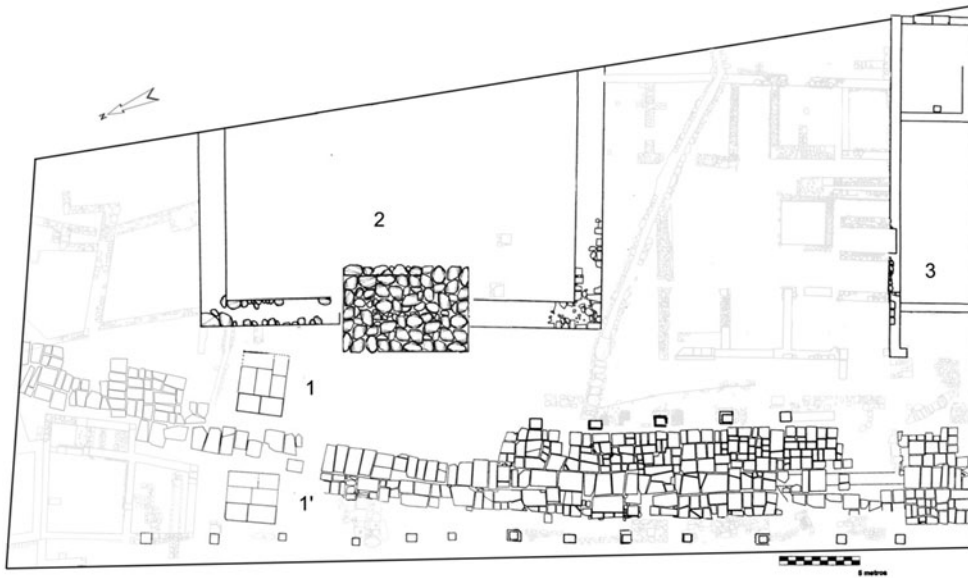
large sum of money on a private construction (Ferrer-Maestro, 1984–85).

In May 2018, the Institute of Iberian Archaeology of the University of Jaén announced that it had located the arch of *Ianus Augustus* in Mengíbar in the province of Jaén. It was erected at the end of the first century BC at the point where the *Via Augusta* crossed the *Baetis* (Guadalquivir), which is the territorial boundary between the provinces of *Baetica Ulterior* and *Citerior*. So far, it is only known from epigraphic sources (Sillières, 1981).

Outside the Iberian Peninsula, the *Sergii* arch in Pola (Pula, Croatia) deserves special mention among many other similar monuments. It was built by members of this family at the end of the first century BC in front of one of the entrance gates to the city (Traversari, 1971).

There are many examples of arches at milestones and crossroads in Italy. The arch of the *Gavi* in Verona was built around the middle of the first century AD on a section of the *Via Postumia*, outside the city walls, a few metres from the *Porta Borsari* (Tosi, 1982). An arch was built in Pisa in memory of *Gaius* and *Lucius*





**Figure 8.** Plan of the Morería site with foundations of the arch (1/1'), temple (2), and; building of the second century AD (3).

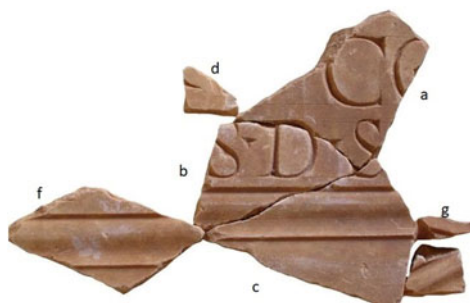
Caesar in AD 6 (Arce, 1987). In Pompeii, arches were erected on the roads, and fountains were built nearby, as in Sagunto (Giuntoli, 1989). In Rome, the variety and purpose of the arches are well known.

In the city of Sagunto, the excavations led by members of our research group in Plaza de la Morería have documented the existence of an arch located near the temple (Figure 8). It is an honorary construction that fits in with the monumentality of the lower part of the city during the High Empire. The remains of this arch have been found at the junction of the Morería and Grau Vell roads; the former is oriented north-south, leading towards the river Palancia, whereas it has been suggested that the latter started at a harbour in Grau Vell, entered the city, went past the circus, and then continued northwards towards the *municipium* of Bilbilis and the city of Caesaraugusta (Zaragoza), along the route that is today's Calle Huertos. The construction of the arch coincides with the building of a new

monumental complex set in a sacred area in the lower part of Saguntum. It is dominated by a temple, and the design of a porticoed pavement next to the road paved with grey dolomitic limestone slabs reinforces the character of the road as a main artery.

It is not known what the arch looked like since only a heavy foundation has survived. It was formed by two large, rough and unrefined architectural or sculptural pieces made of *opus caementicium* and ashlar, and limestone mouldings. Its span measured 3.5 m. The foundation would have gone across the road, coinciding with the end of the portico, forming a kink in the orientation of the road.

The excavation of the foundation of the arch began at the south-western corner of the eastern pillar because it was likely to provide more information about the monument. After removing between 30 and 40 cm of soil, several epigraphic fragments related to this monument were found in the fill next to its base (Figures 9



**Figure 9.** Eight fragments of a Buixcarró marble plaque. The epigraphic design is delimited by a straight cyma that measures 3.7 cm visible at the bottom. Both the front and the back faces are polished. Dimensions: a)  $(13) \times (17) \times 3.1\text{--}2.6$  cm; b)  $(9) \times (13) \times 2.5\text{--}2.2$  cm; c)  $(11.5) \times (17) \times 2.4\text{--}2.0$  cm; d)  $(3.7) \times (5) \times 2.9$  cm; f)  $(8.5) \times (15.5) \times 2.3$  cm; g)  $(1.9) \times (5) \times 2.4$  cm. Inscribed letters: line 1: 5.7 cm high; line 2: 4.3 cm high. Archaeological Museum of Sagunto.

and 10). They are the fragmentary remains of three monumental inscriptions of the end of the first and the beginning of the second century AD, dedicated to some prominent public figure. Corell and Seguí (2008: 77–80) believe these fragments relate to an imperial inscription, but other scholars point out that the inscription was by a consul or a senator (Ferrer-Maestro et al., 2018: 371). The inscription reads: [—] · *co*[(n)[*suli*)] · *p*[(atri)] *p*[(atriae)] ? [—] · *P*[(—)]*s* · *d*[(e)] · *s*[(ua)] [*p*[(ecunia)] · *f*[(ecit)]] ?

Archaeological excavations revealed the foundation trench of the arch, which reached a depth of 1.55 m on the eastern side of the piece of *opus caementicium*. It was intended to provide the building with a firm foundation. The top of the foundation was flat; two bluish-grey dolomitic limestone slabs consisting of headers survived on the western side of the road and a similar slab survived on its eastern flank. The dimensions of the slabs vary. On the western side, there were originally 6 slabs on the road that would delimit a space 3.04 m long and 2.99 m wide. The two

slabs still *in situ* were  $1.80 \times 1.03$  m, and  $1.30 \times 1.01$  m respectively. On the eastern flank of the road, 6 slabs delimited a space 3.65 m long and 2.80 m wide. The remaining slab is 1.40 m long and 1.06 m wide, with a moulding preserved on its western side.

The imprints of five slabs of the eastern foundation and four of the western foundation have survived. These elements were arranged in alternating headers and stretchers. Thus, there is no doubt that this was the type of construction used for both pillars (Figures 11 and 12).

A reconstruction of the arch, based on the foundations found in the excavations and on information from several well-known arches (Pola, Berá, etc.) can be proposed. The structure of the entablature can also be compared with that of arches from the early imperial period, specifically the first half of the first century AD. The elements may include a *cymatium* moulding, an unadorned architrave, a corbel cornice, and a pediment.

## CONCLUSION

The honorary arch of Sagunto is a clear example of the public or private construction of local monuments in Roman cities. These projects followed, modestly, the pattern set by the great official monuments built in the provincial capitals. The city under scrutiny here, Saguntum, was arranged in terraces on a hillside, following the urban model that architects implemented in the capital of the province, Tarraco. This happened at a time in which the relationship between the provinces and Rome reached a new political dimension. The incorporation of Roman architectural and epigraphic elements dates the arch of Sagunto to the Flavian period and the reign of Trajan, which can be regarded as the last period of its construction.



**Figure 10.** Foundation of the eastern pillar of the arch, next to the slabs of the road in the Plaza de la Morería, Sagunto. Above the pillar, the wall of the eastern facade of the temple is visible.

The latest archaeological work carried out in the areas outside the walls of the municipality of Sagunto has enabled new monumental remains to be documented in detail, thus providing more precise information on the urban planning of Saguntum during the High Roman Empire. To the east, in Plaza de la Morería, archaeologists have discovered an excellent stretch of road and the foundations of a temple; the remains of the largest public square identified to date in the town were found on the Quevedo site, next to the Convento de la Trinidad. These remains were discovered in the 1980s, although the most recent excavations were carried out in 2014. The Roman circus extended in an East-West direction along the southern bank of the river Palancia. Its remains have been known since the eighteenth century thanks to several scholarly reviews. The first to conduct archaeological excavations was Chabret in 1888, and the last interventions

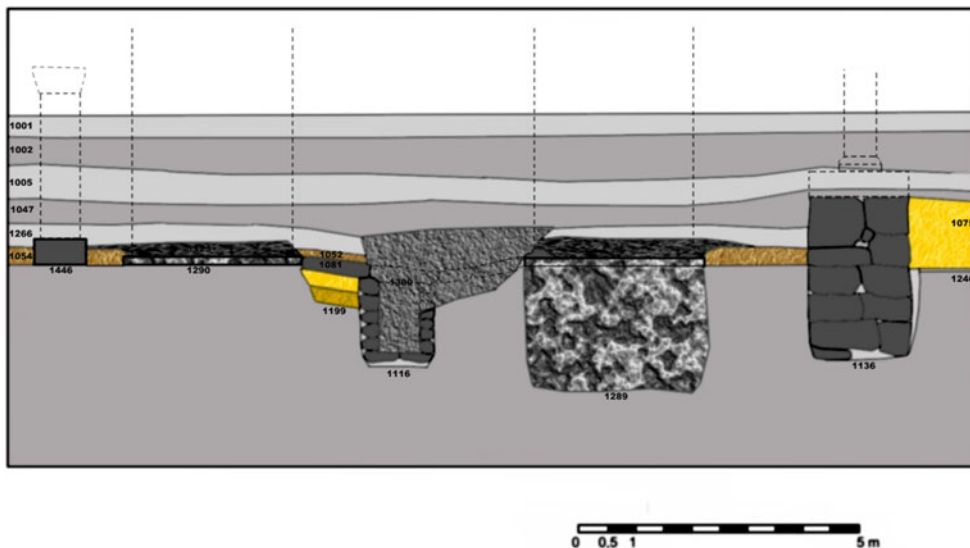
were carried out in 2009, which combined excavation work, consolidation, improvement and enhancement of the circus gateway to be included in a landscaped square.

In this new stage, the *civitas* of Sagunto included the lands lying adjacent to the river Palancia. This extension of the town perimeter has also been related to the implementation of new access roads. The process of monumentalization, as we have mentioned in previous articles, could coincide with that of other Hispanic cities, as a result of the peace process following the Sertorian and civil wars. Indeed, in the time of Augustus, Sagunto received the municipal statute; construction in the town was then extended from the ford onwards and the layout followed several roads that crossed the land at the foot of the castle. We know that one of them linked up with the bridge that stands in front of the circus. These findings,

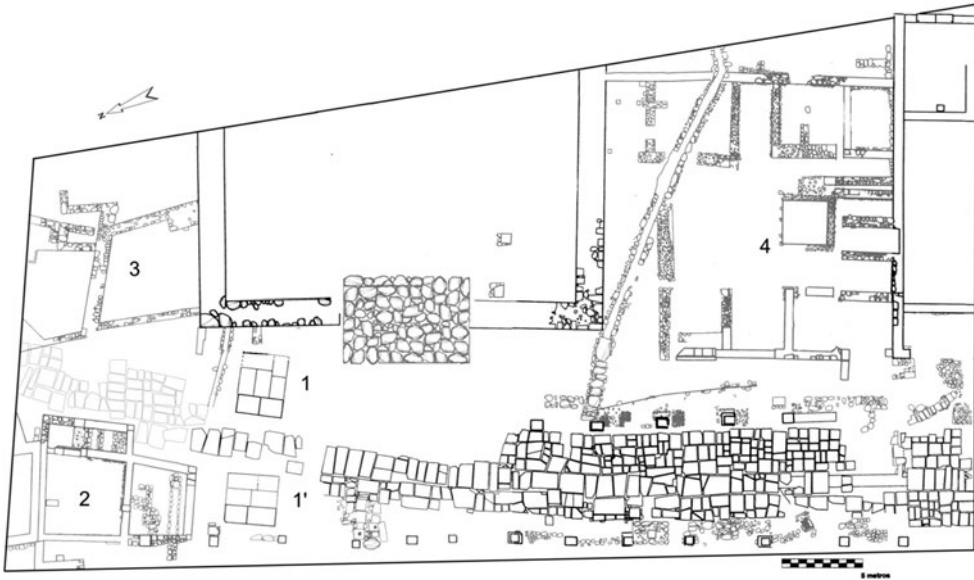




**Figure 11.** The caementicium blocks that make up the foundation of the arch located next to the road. They were found in the excavations that were carried out in Plaza de la Morería, Sagunto.



**Figure 12.** Stratigraphy of the Morería site. The numbers refer to the stratigraphic units. 1001–1005: contemporary and modern period; 1047: medieval period; 1075 interior of the temple; 1116: sewer; 1136: temple; 1246: ustrinum; 1266: fourth to eighth century deposit; 1289–1290: arch foundations; 1300: early Islamic period; 1446: street portico.



**Figure 13.** General plan of the Morería, excavations: (1/1') arch; (2, 3 and 4) domus of the third century AD.

together with the presence of several public infrastructures, such as sewers and fountains, define a better urban planning of the lower part of the town during the first and second centuries AD.

The construction of these buildings was financed by the municipal authorities and by significant amounts of money contributed by individuals. There is a great deal of literary evidence describing the participation of rich citizens in imperial times. A magnificent example of an immense fortune in the town in the second half of the first century is the 4 million sesterces that Voconius Romanus, a citizen of Sagunto, received from his mother (Pliny, Epist. 10.4.2). Moreover, we know that arches were erected in the monumental centres of the towns and there is documentary evidence of an arch in the Morería over the roadway near the temple.

The Roman arch in Sagunto represents the interest of the local elite classes to build monuments in Roman towns and cities. These projects undoubtedly followed, in a modest way, the pattern set by

the great official monuments built in the provincial capitals. Accordingly, the city was arranged in terraces on a hillside, following the urban model that architects implemented in the capital of the province, Tarraco. This happened at a time in which the relationship between the provinces and Rome reached a new political dimension. With the adoption of Roman architectural and epigraphic elements, the Sagunto arch points to the Flavian period and the reign of Trajan as the latest possible date of construction.

To sum up, the Sagunto arch is a simple arch, erected in a pre-eminent position at the entrance of the Morería road. This road, oriented North-South towards the hill of the castle, would have been visible from the N-S *cardo*. Its construction includes a slight kink in the road near the temple.

The destruction and dismantling of the monument must have taken place in the middle of the fourth century or in the fifth century AD. A deposit of silt over the foundations of the arch, made of bluish-

grey limestone fragments, has been dated to that period. These fragments may have been deposited there when the ashlar that made up the monument were extracted and reshaped.

At that point, the public buildings that contributed to the popularity of the city during the High Empire were abandoned. The previous urban configuration was no longer followed, and was replaced by new models of urban architecture that transformed a large *domus* located in the lower part of the city. At the same time, the new constructions transformed the city's suburbs. All these changes resulted in Saguntum presenting a different aspect. The infrastructural elements of this part of the city soon became cluttered and clogged. Clear examples include a fourth-century road and sewer filled with sedimentary deposits. However, the temple's floor plan remained intact until the twenty-first century, when its southern corner was dismantled. Within this framework of urban transformation, a progressive occupation of the public thoroughfare, changes in the road surface, and a rise in the street's level took place. Clay and rubble pavements became widespread. The extension zone occupied by housing led to the closure of the road portico and the subsequent use of the pavement in the area of the arch.

## REFERENCES

- Abad Casal, L. 1984. Arcos romanos en el País Valenciano: los testimonios epigráficos. *Lucentum*, 3: 193–200.
- Abad Casal, L. 2004. *El arco de Medinaceli, un monumento singular en la Hispania romana*. Alicante: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes.
- Abad Casal, L. & Arasa i Gil, F. 1988. El arco romano de Cabanes (Castellón). *Archivo Español de Arqueología*, 61: 81–117.
- Abascal, J.M. & Alföldy, G., eds. 2002. *El arco romano de Medinaceli (Soria, Hispania Citerior)* (Biblioteca Archaeologica, 18). Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia.
- Alföldy, G. ed. 2012. *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Volume 2: Inscriptiones Hispaniae Latinae. Pars 14, Conventus Tarraconensis. Fasc. 3, Colonia Iulia Vrbs Triumphalis Tarraco* (CIL II 2 /14, 3). Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Aranegui-Gascó, C. 1992. Un templo republicano en el centro cívico saguntino. *Templos romanos de Hispania, Cuadernos de Arquitectura romana*, 1: 67–82.
- Aranegui-Gascó, C. 1994. De la ciudad ibérica a la ciudad romana: Sagunto. In: X. Dupré Raventós, ed. *La ciudad en el mundo romano, Actas del XIV Congreso Internacional de Arqueología Clásica*. Tarragona: CSIC, pp. 69–78.
- Aranegui-Gascó, C. 2002. Ob restitutam Saguntum bello punico secundo. In: A. Ribera i Lacomba & J.L. Jiménez Salvador, eds. *Valencia y las primeras ciudades romanas de Hispania*. Valencia: Ayuntamiento de Valencia, pp. 245–54.
- Aranegui-Gascó, C. 2004. *Saguntum: oppidum, emporio y municipio romano*. Barcelona: Bellaterra.
- Aranegui-Gascó, C. & Olcina Doménech, M. H. 1983. Arqueología en Sagunto ciudad. In: *Primeras Jornadas de Arqueología en las Ciudades Actuales*. Zaragoza: Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza, pp. 113–18.
- Arce Martínez, J. 1987. Arcos romanos en Hispania: una revisión. *Archivo Español de Arqueología*, 60: 73–88.
- Beard, M. 2007. *The Roman Triumph*. Cambridge (MA): Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Beltrán Lloris, F. 1980. *Epigrafía latina de Saguntum y su territorium (Cronología. Territorium. Notas prosopográficas. Cuestiones municipales)* (Servicio de Investigación Prehistorica, Serie de Trabajos Varios, 67). Valencia: Diputación Provincial de Valencia.
- Beltrán-Villagrana, P. 1956. Excavaciones en Sagunto (Valencia). *Noticiario Arqueológico Hispánico*, 3–4: 131–68.
- Benedito-Nuez, J. 2015. Las infraestructuras viarias de Saguntum en época imperial. *Potestas*, 8: 9–38.
- Blanco Freijeiro, A. 1978. *El puente de Alcántara en su contexto histórico*, Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia.
- Blanco Freijeiro, A. 1981. *Historia del Arte Hispánico I. La Antigüedad*, 2, Madrid: Alhambra.



- Brú i Vidal, S. 1963. Datos para el estudio del circo romano de Sagunto. *Archivo de Prehistoria Levantina*, 10: 207–21.
- Cerrillo Martín de Cáceres, E. 2006. El tetrapylon de Cáparra. *Visión histórica y gráfica*. *Zephyrus*, 59: 305–16.
- Chabret-Fraga, A. 1888. *Sagunto. Su historia y sus monumentos*. Barcelona.: Ramírez.
- Corell Vicent, J. 2002. *Inscripcions romanes del País Valencià II (Saguntum y el seu territori)*. Valencia: Universitat de Valencia.
- Corell, J. & Seguí, J.J. 2008. Fragmentos de inscripciones monumentales romanas de Sagunto. *Sylloge Epigraphica Barcinonensis*, 6: 73–80.
- De Maria, S. 1988. *Gli archi onorari di Roma e dell'Italia romana*. Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider.
- Dupré Raventós, X. 1994a. *L'arc romà de Berà (Hispania Citerior)* (Bibliotheca Italica, Monografías de la Escuela Española de Historia y Arqueología en Roma, 20). Roma: CSIC.
- Dupré Raventós, X. 1994b. Los arcos honoríficos de Tarraco. In: X. Dupré Raventós, ed. *La ciudad en el mundo romano, Actas del XIV Congreso Internacional de Arqueología Clásica*. Tarragona: CSIC, pp. 177–88.
- Dupré Raventós, X. 1998. Los arcos honoríficos. In: *Hispania, el legado de Roma: en el año de Trajano, septiembre-noviembre de 1998, La Lonja-Zaragoza*, Zaragoza: Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza, pp. 159–62.
- Escrivà, 2014. Escrivà Torres, V. 2014. La ciudad romana de Edeta (Llíria, Valencia). In: M. H. Olcina-Doménech, ed. *Actas de las Jornadas sobre Ciudades Romanas Valencianas. Actualidad de la investigación historicoarqueológica*, Alicante, pp. 123–142.
- Etienne, R. 1958. *Le culte impérial dans la Péninsule Ibérique d'Auguste à Dioclétien*, Paris: De Boccard.
- Ferrer-Maestro, J.J. 1984–85: Los Porcios, una familia hispanorromana de Jérica. *Estudis Castellonens*, 2: 352–57.
- Ferrer-Maestro, J.J., Benedito-Nuez, J. & Melchor-Monserrat, J.M. 2018. A New Impression of the Roman City of Saguntum (Spain) Based on Recent Findings. *Archeologia Classica*, 69: 357–72.
- Frothingham, A.L. 1915. The Roman Territorial Arch. *American Journal of Archaeology*, 19: 155–74.
- García y Bellido, A. 1949. *Esculturas romanas de España y Portugal*, Madrid: CSIC.
- García y Bellido, A. 1972. Arcos honoríficos romanos en Hispania. *Hispania romana (Colloquio italo-spagnolo, Roma, 15–16 maggio 1972)* (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Cuaderno 200). Roma: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, pp. 7–24.
- García y Bellido, A. 1972–74. El tetrapylon de Capera (Cáparra, Cáceres). *Archivo Español de Arqueología*, 45–47: 45–90.
- Giuntoli, E. 1989. *Arte e historia de Pompeya*. Firenze: Bonechi.
- Graef, B. 1888. Triumph- und Ehrenbogen. In: A. Baumeister, ed. *Denkmäler des klassischen Altertums zur Erläuterung des Lebens der Griechen und Römer in Religion, Kunst und Sitte, Bd. 3 (Perseus-Zwölfgötter)*. München & Leipzig: Oldenbourg, pp. 1865–99.
- Gros, P. 1996. *L'architecture romaine du début du IIIe siècle av. J.-C. à la fin du Haut-Empire, 1. Les monuments publics*. Paris: Picard.
- Gurt, J. M. & Rodà, I. 2005. El Pont del Diable. El monumento romano dentro de la política territorial augustea. *Archivo Español de Arqueología*, 78: 147–65.
- Hernández-Hervás, E. 2004. Evolución del urbanismo antiguo en la ciudad de Sagunto. In: P.P. Ripollès, ed. *Opulentissima Saguntum*. Sagunto: Fundación Bancaja, pp. 113–22.
- Hernández-Hervás, E., López Piñol, M. & Pascual Buyé, I. 1996: La implantación del circo en el área suburbana de Saguntum. *Saguntum*, 29: 221–30.
- Kaelher, H. 1939. Triumphbogen (Ehrenbogen). In: *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft, zweite Reihe* 7, A1. Stuttgart: Metzler, pp. 373–426.
- Kontokosta, A. H. 2013. Reconsidering the Arches (*foRNices*) of the Roman Republic. *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 26: 7–35. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1047759413000044>
- Liz Guiral, J. 1988. *El puente de Alcántara. Arqueología e historia*, Madrid: Centro de Estudios Históricos de Obras Públicas y Urbanismo.
- Machancoses López, M. & Jiménez Salvador, J. L. 2017. Vidas paralelas: los circos de Saguntum y Valentia. Nuevos datos sobre su disposición en la trama urbana. In: J. López Vilar, ed. *Actes 3er Congrés Internacional d'Arqueologia i Món Antic. La glòria del circ: curses de carros i competicions circenses*. Tarragona: Fundació Privada Mútua Catalana, pp. 161–66.

- Mansuelli, G. 1954. El arco honorífico en el desarrollo de la arquitectura romana. *Archivo Español de Arqueología*, 27: 93–178.
- Madoz, P. 1848. *Diccionario Geográfico-Estadístico-Histórico de España y sus posesiones de ultramar. Tomo XI*, p. 777.
- Mar, R.; Ruiz de Arbulo, J.; Vivó, D.; Beltrán, J. A. & Gris, F. 2015. *Tarraco. Arquitectura y urbanismo de una capital provincial romana* (Documents d'Arqueologia Clàssica, 5–6). Tarragona: Universitat Rovira i Virgili.
- Marcos Pous, A. 1987. Ménsula de posible arco romano en Córdoba. *Corduba archaeologica*, 13: 54–66.
- Márquez, C. 1998. *La decoración arquitectónica de Colonia Patricia. Una aproximación a la arquitectura y al urbanismo de la Córdoba romana*. Córdoba: Universidad de Córdoba.
- Martins Lopes, V.A. 2014. Mértola e o seu território na antiguidade tardia (séculos IV–VIII). Unpublished PhD dissertation, Universidad de Huelva.
- Melchor-Monserrat, J.M. & Benedito-Nuez, J. ed. 2005a. *Monográfico Arse*, 39. Sagunto: Centro Arqueológico de Sagunto.
- Melchor-Monserrat, J.M. & Benedito-Nuez, J. 2005b. El edificio monumental romano del solar de Quevedo (Sagunto). *Braçal*, 31–32: 147–56.
- Melchor-Monserrat, J.M., Benedito-Nuez, J., Ferrer-Maestro, J.J., García, F. & Buchón, F. 2017. Nuevas aportaciones al conocimiento del circo romano de Sagunto y su entorno monumental. In: J. López Vilar, ed. *Actes 3er Congrés Internacional d'Arqueologia i Món Antic. La glòria del circ: curses de carros i competicions circenses*. Tarragona: Fundació Privada Mútua Catalana, pp. 155–60.
- Monterroso Checa, A. 2011. Córdoba romana. Historiografía abierta sobre arquitectura y urbanismo. *Antiquitas*, 23: 149–75.
- Nünnerich-Asmus, A. 1996a. Das Monument von Ciempozuelos (Madrid) aus dem Río Jarama. Ein privater römischer Ehrenbogen im Zentrum der Tarraconensis, *Madridener Mitteilungen*, 37: 121–69.
- Nünnerich-Asmus, A. 1996b. *El arco cuadrifonte de Caparra (Cáceres)* (Anejo de Archivo Español de Arqueología, 16). Madrid: CSIC.
- Nünnerich-Asmus, A. 1996–1997. El monumento de Ciempozuelos (Madrid). Un arco romano privado en el centro de la provincia tarraconense. In: *Hispania i Roma. D'August a Carlemany. Congrés d'homenatge al Dr. Pere de Palol, Girona 23, 24 i 25 de novembre de 1995* (Annals de l'Institut d'Estudis Gironins, 36). Girona: Institut d'Estudis Gironins, pp. 503–17.
- Olcina Doménech, M. 1987. La necròpolis romana. In: *Guía de monumentos romanos y del Castillo de Sagunto*. Valencia: Generalitat Valenciana, pp. 109–12.
- Olcina Doménech, M., Guilbert, A. & Tendero, E. 2014. El foro de Lucentum (Tossal de Manises, Alicante). *Conventus Carthaginensis – Hispania Tarraconensis*. In: J.M. Álvarez, T. Nogales & I. Rodà, eds. *Actas XVIII Congreso Internacional de Arqueología Clásica. Centro y periferia en el mundo clásico, I. Mérida*: Museo Nacional de Arte Romano, pp. 825–30.
- Olcina Doménech, M., Guilbert, A. & Tendero, E. 2015. Lucentum: el paisaje urbano augusteo. In: J. López Vilar, ed. *Tarraco Biennial, Actes 2on Congrés Internacional d'Arqueologia i Món Antic: August i les províncies occidentals, 2000 aniversari de la mort d'August, Tarragona 26–29 de novembre de 2014*. Tarragona: Fundació Privada Mútua Catalana, 255–61.
- Pallottino, M. 1958. Arco onorario e trionfale. In: R. Bianchi Bandinelli, ed. *Enciclopedia dell'arte antica classica e orientale I*. Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, pp. 588–99.
- Palos y Navarro, E. 1804. *Informe descriptivo de las ruinas romanas de la antigua ciudad de Sagunto*. Archivo Histórico de la Academia Valenciana (original manuscript), Madrid.
- Pascual Buyé, I. 2002. El circo romano de Sagunto. In: T. Nogales & F.J. Sánchez Palencia, eds. *El circo en la Hispania Romana*. Mérida: Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, pp. 155–74.
- Ripollès, P.P. & Velaza, J. 2002. Saguntum, colonia latina. *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 141: 285–94.
- Rossini, L. 1836. *Gli archi trionfali e funebri degli antichi romani*. Roma: presso l'autore e da G. Scudellari.
- SAV, 1873. Archivo de la Real Academia de la Historia (original manuscript), Madrid.
- Sillières, P. 1981. A propos d'un nouveau milliaire de la Via Augusta. *Revue des Etudes Anciennes*, 83: 255–71.

Tosi, G. 1982. *L'arco dei Gavi a Verona*. Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider.

Traversari, G. 1971. *L'arco dei Sergi*. Padova: Casa Editrice Dottore Antonio Milani (CEDAM).

Wallace-Hadrill, A. 1990. Roman Arches and Greek Honours: The Language of Power at Rome. *The Cambridge Classical Journal*, 36: 143–81. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068673500005265>

Josep Benedito-Nuez is assistant professor at the Universitat Jaume I in Castellón. His main lines of research are related to the study of the history of urbanism and the funerary world in the Mediterranean during the Early and Late Roman Empire. Other interests include the production and trade of sumptuary art of the Roman era, and the cataloguing of architectural heritage and material culture.

### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Juanjo Ferrer-Maestro is Professor of Ancient History at the Universitat Jaume I in Castellón and director of the research group *Antiqua*. His interests include the economic and financial aspects of the Roman expansion, the use of state ideology for the benefit of the ruling groups, and the landscape of power in the urban heritage. He also coordinates the study of the Roman establishment in the northern territory of Saguntum.

*Address:* Avenida Sos Baynat s/n, 12071 Castellón, Universitat Jaume I de Castellón, Spain. [email: [jferrer@uji.es](mailto:jferrer@uji.es)]

*Address:* Avenida Sos Baynat s/n, 12071 Castellón, Universitat Jaume I de Castellón, Spain. [email: [josep.benedito@uji.es](mailto:josep.benedito@uji.es)]

José Manuel Melchor-Monserrat is director of the Archaeological Museum of Burriana. His research areas focus on the study of Roman settlements in the Valencian Community in Spain, the cataloguing of archaeological materials, and the analysis of criteria for the musealization of materials and archaeological sites.

*Address:* Plaça de la Mercè s/n, 12530 Burriana, Museo Arqueológico de Burriana, Spain. [email: [melchor@uji.es](mailto:melchor@uji.es)]

### Les vestiges d'un arc d'honneur et urbanisation hors les murs de la ville de Saguntum

*A la fin du premier siècle apr. J.-C. et surtout au cours du second siècle apr. J.-C., un programme de construction d'édifices publics a largement transformé le tissu urbain de Saguntum, en particulier au-delà des murs de cette ville bien connue dans le monde hispano-romain. Dans cet article, nous présentons les éléments du paysage monumental en dehors des murs de la ville, y compris un arc d'honneur remarquable, qui ont fortement influencé l'architecture publique à une époque marquée par de profonds changements politiques et socio-économiques.* Translation by Madeleine Hummler

*Mots-clés:* Saguntum, arc romain, voies romaines

### Die Überreste eines Ehrenbogens und Stadtplanung außerhalb der Mauern von Saguntum

*Am Ende des ersten Jahrhunderts n. Chr. und besonders im Verlauf des zweiten Jahrhunderts n. Chr. war ein öffentliches Bauprogramm maßgeblich für die Veränderung des Stadtbilds von Saguntum*

*verantwortlich. Dies ist besonders außerhalb der Mauern von dieser bekannten hispano-römischen Stadt sichtbar. Dieser Artikel betrifft die verschiedenen Elemente der monumentalen Einrichtungen außerhalb der Mauern der Stadt, einschließlich eines bemerkenswerten Ehrenbogens, welche die öffentliche Architektur in einer Epoche von größeren politischen und sozial-wirtschaftlichen Veränderungen stark beeinflusst haben.* Translation by Madeleine Hummler

*Stichworte:* Saguntum, römische Bogen, römische Straßen