

# Press Release

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## Naval Powers, Pirates and Territorial Waters in Antiquity An International Conference of the Excellence Cluster Topoi on Naval Power and Naval Supremacy in Ancient Cultures

Forms of naval supremacy in ancient cultures are the focus of an international conference that will be held by the Excellence Cluster Topoi from December 12th to 14th at the Freie Universität Berlin. Participants will examine the strategies employed by naval powers such as Athens or Rome, the Mediterranean as a space, piracy as a defining moment in Naval Supremacy, and more. The goal is to develop a complex picture of ancient perception and organization of territorial waters. The conference is open to the public and admission is free. German and English will be spoken.

The sea as a space to be dominated played a decisive role in the strategies of ancient empires. Conceptions of naval supremacy and of the sea's strategic importance have yet to be systematically researched — in contrast to forms of land-based supremacy. The goal of the conference is for researchers to contribute towards a more detailed understanding of naval supremacy and to reexamine concepts such as «Thalassocracy» — literally «rule of the sea». The investigation will not be limited to the phenomenon of naval supremacy in Greek and Roman history, however. It will also include a comparative analysis of medieval and early modern forms of naval power. The conference is the brainchild of Ernst Baltrusch and Christian Wendt, both professors of ancient history at the Friedrich Meinecke Institute of the Freie Universität Berlin, and Hans Kopp, doctoral fellow at the Excellence Cluster Topoi.

The spatial organization of power in antiquity is part of the research program of the Excellence Cluster Topoi, a research association of the Freie-Universität Berlin and the Humboldt-Universität Berlin in cooperation with the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences, the German Archaeological Institute, the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science and the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation. Scholars from over thirty disciplines conduct inter-institutional research within the Cluster. Their work focuses on the connection between the development of spatial structures and knowledge in antiquity.

### When and Where

- Thursday Dec. 12 at 2:00 PM to Saturday Dec. 14
- Topoi Building, Freie Universität Berlin, Hittorfstraße 18, 14195 Berlin, U-Bahn Thielplatz (U3), Buses M11, 110.

### Online

[www.topoi.org](http://www.topoi.org)  
[www.topoi.org/event/21183/](http://www.topoi.org/event/21183/)

### More information

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