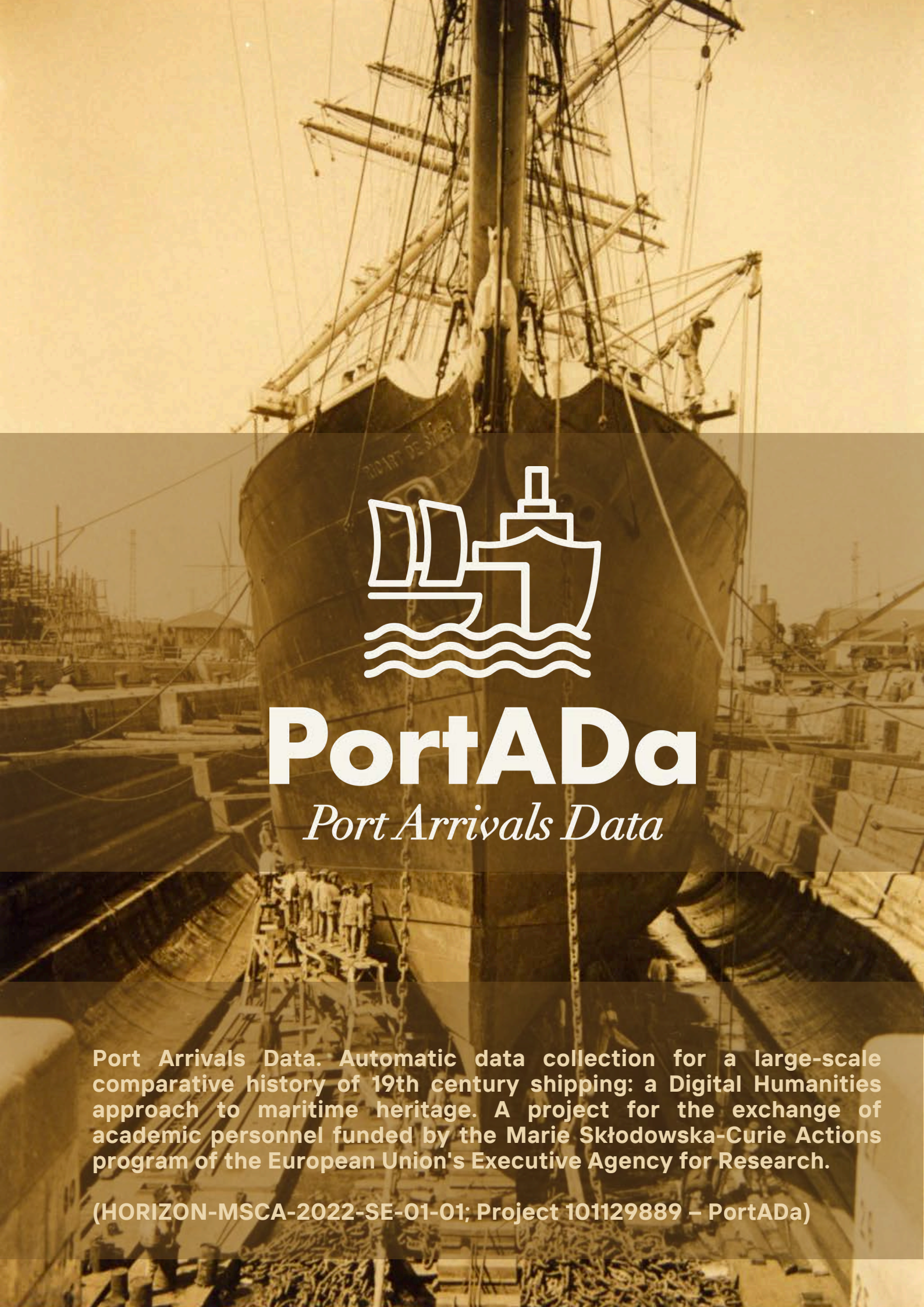

PortADa

Port Arrivals Data

Port Arrivals Data. Automatic data collection for a large-scale comparative history of 19th century shipping: a Digital Humanities approach to maritime heritage. A project for the exchange of academic personnel funded by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions program of the European Union's Executive Agency for Research.

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CONTENT

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FRAMEWORK

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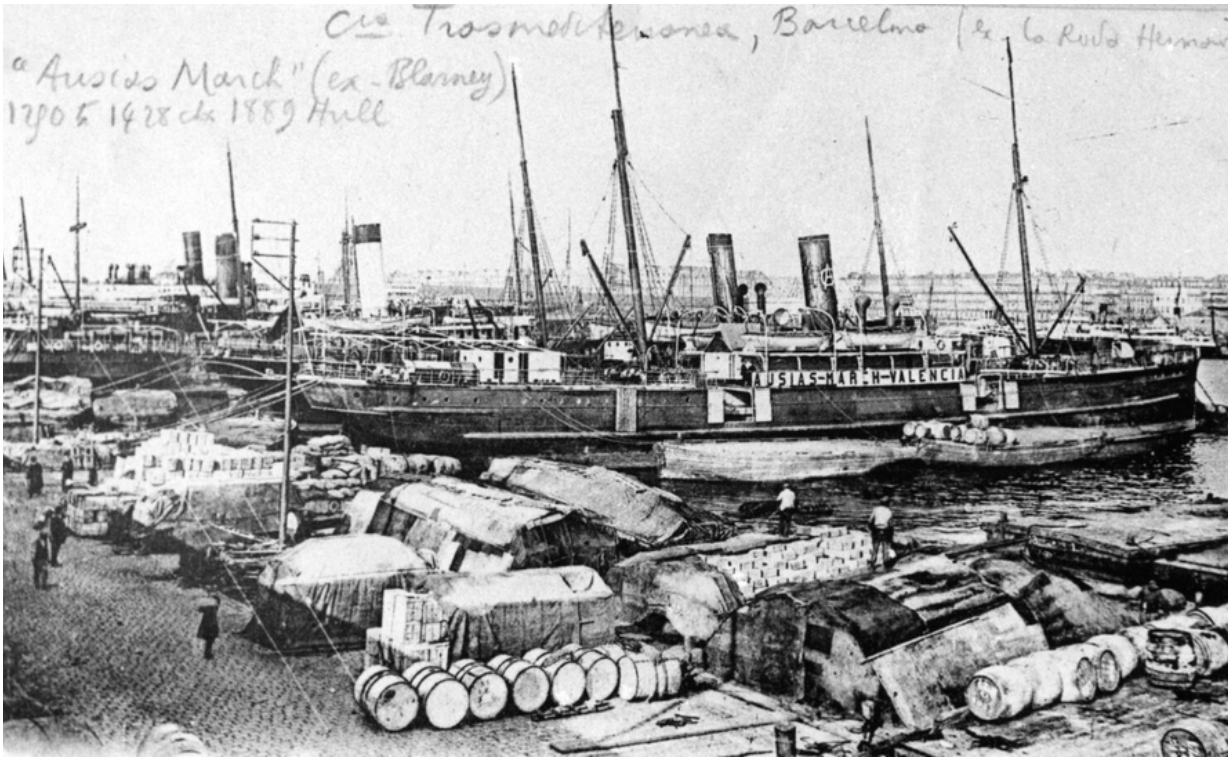

In the 19th century, during the transition from sail to steam, port cities were at the heart of imperial colonialism and capitalist configurations, linked by maritime trade and traffic to the processes of globalization and the international division of labor. In these ports, the arrival of ships represented an economic, cultural, and political event. Simultaneously, the supply and distribution of cargo from these ships created internal networks based on local, regional, and river trade and traffic. Thus, news of the arrival of ships from other ports received a privileged place in the local press of these port cities.

From a historical perspective, the project focuses on the period in which the main transformations took place in the transition from sail to steam (1850-1910) and on the ports of Barcelona, Marseille, Havana, and Buenos Aires, which have different profiles and played a crucial and specific role in the international division of labor.

GOALS

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PortADA has set itself the following goals:

A. The generation of an open database with thousands of records related to maritime trade in the 19th century, with information on ship arrivals at the ports participating in this project, on which we will be able to base new studies on economic, social, geopolitical, and cultural issues. This database will cover approximately 1.6 million ship arrivals over the six decades studied here, with information published in the local press. The database will be made available under a free and open license so that other researchers, as well as an interested non-academic public, can explore its contents.

B. The development and sustainability of lasting research collaborations through the creation of a team of approximately thirty digital humanists specializing in the application of computational methods to explore maritime and economic history. In the medium term, this group will be able to serve as an information resource for other academic institutions interested in the digital transition and the creation, maintenance, and exploitation of their respective research resources.

SCIENTIFIC IMPACT IN MARITIME HISTORY

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EThis project will allow for a better understanding of the evolution of maritime traffic in each port and the position of each port in the international division of labor. In this way, it will be possible to reconstruct international trade between these ports at a level of detail rarely used until now. Simultaneously, the previously under-considered coastal traffic will be understood, along with the connection of local and international trade networks and their role in the configuration of circuits, connections, and cargo flows. The reconstruction of historical series for maritime traffic in these ports is a necessary step toward the construction of the currently non-existent port traffic statistics required to understand maritime transport networks, in their global dimension, during the 19th century.

The information included in the notices of port arrivals in the newspapers provides abundant and useful data to detail the technological changes in navigation. We can observe the evolution in the typology of ships, to understand the periods of use for different sailing ships and the circumstances under which traditional sailing methods persisted.

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The analysis of the names of captains and skippers in command of the ships arriving at the ports allows us to delve deeper into social and labor history by reconstructing career trajectories at scale, improving our understanding of the social mobility of this group, the changes that occurred with the introduction of steam technologies, and the differences between regions and countries.

INNOVATIVE TECHNIQUES

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PortADA aims to deploy a practical framework based on the Digital Humanities, enabling the analysis of large volumes of information on 19th-century shipping. For this purpose, a text corpus suitable for analysis is needed, consisting of information on ship arrivals available in the contemporary press. This corpus will be obtained by applying strategies, methodologies, and procedures recently introduced in the field of the humanities, and by developing proprietary applications to achieve this.

The massive use of historical sources and the processing method proposed by PortADA are the main innovations of this project. The lists of ships arriving daily at ports contain a complete register of vessels, cover a wide period (in some cases, since the late 18th century), with diverse and abundant information—including coastal trade—and, in general, enable the detailed description and analysis of maritime and port traffic. Their consideration and treatment on a large scale are unprecedented in maritime history.

There are tens of thousands of records, as each year saw thousands of ship entries in each port. This is, therefore, a source that is difficult to exploit using traditional methods due to the time-consuming nature of the process. PortADA proposes the use of available IT tools and the development of innovative technologies to automate the process and analyze the large volume of data required for the proposed robust analysis.

In technological terms, the project provides for the automatic transcription and mass processing of existing digital resources. The procedures and software used will be easily replicable for other ports and for broader chronologies, in order to contribute to the overall scientific goal of reconstructing global maritime traffic across the longest possible timeframe. In some cases, digitization will not only serve the exploitation considered in this project but may also serve as a means of preservation and accessibility for the digitized material.

NUM. 421 MARTES 1 DE MAYO DE 1866. 4225

DIARIO DE BARCELONA,

DE AVISOS Y NOTICIAS.

EDICION DE LA MAÑANA.

En esta ciudad, al mes, 12 rs.—Fuera, trimestre, 48 rs.—Francia, id., 60 rs.—Ns. sueltos, 8 cs.

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INTERNATIONAL CROSS-SECTORAL INTERDISCIPLINARY

PortADA has created mixed local working groups—one for each port to be studied: Barcelona, Marseille, Buenos Aires, Havana—comprising a combination of maritime and port history specialists and academic staff with expertise in digital humanities. Each local team will address and solve the specific problems of their respective documentary sources. Computer developments aimed at solving specific problems will be shared among the different local teams. Workflows are established using agile methods, planning the different phases of the project step by step with continuous feedback systems.

Secondly, to create meaningful and useful collaboration opportunities, the project runs a two-month summer school during each of the four years. The summer schools will combine training, workshops, research collaborations, and group work to solve technological problems. PortADA is based on the need to better integrate historical research with technological development in creating software tools for the advancement of the digital humanities.

CALENDAR

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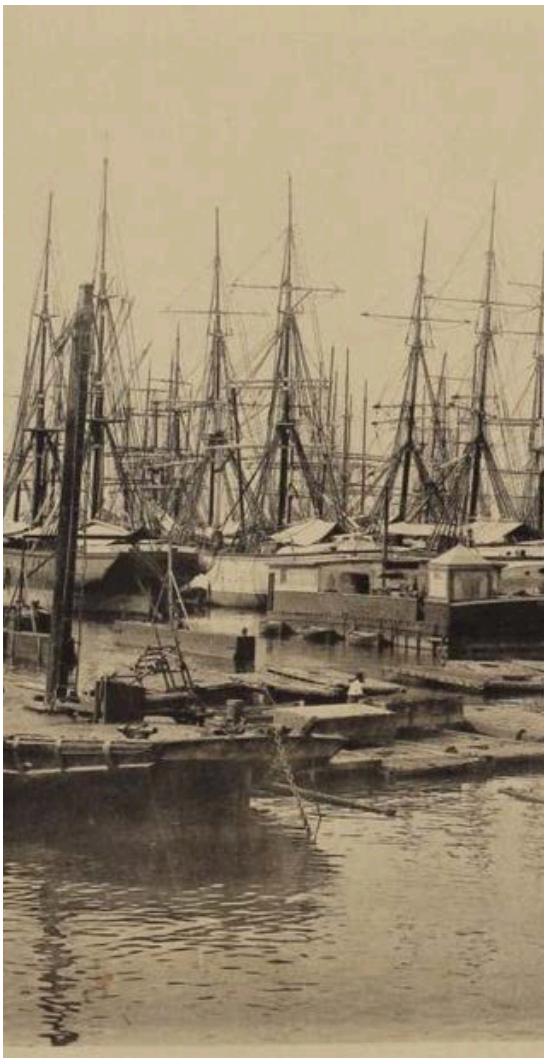
The project is organized into four stages, corresponding to its four-year duration.



Phase 1

Information collection, which involves reprocessing digital images, applying new OCR techniques, and extracting text from news reports of ship arrivals in port.

Phase 2

Data debugging, resolving issues such as synonymy and the identification of identical entities represented in varying formats.

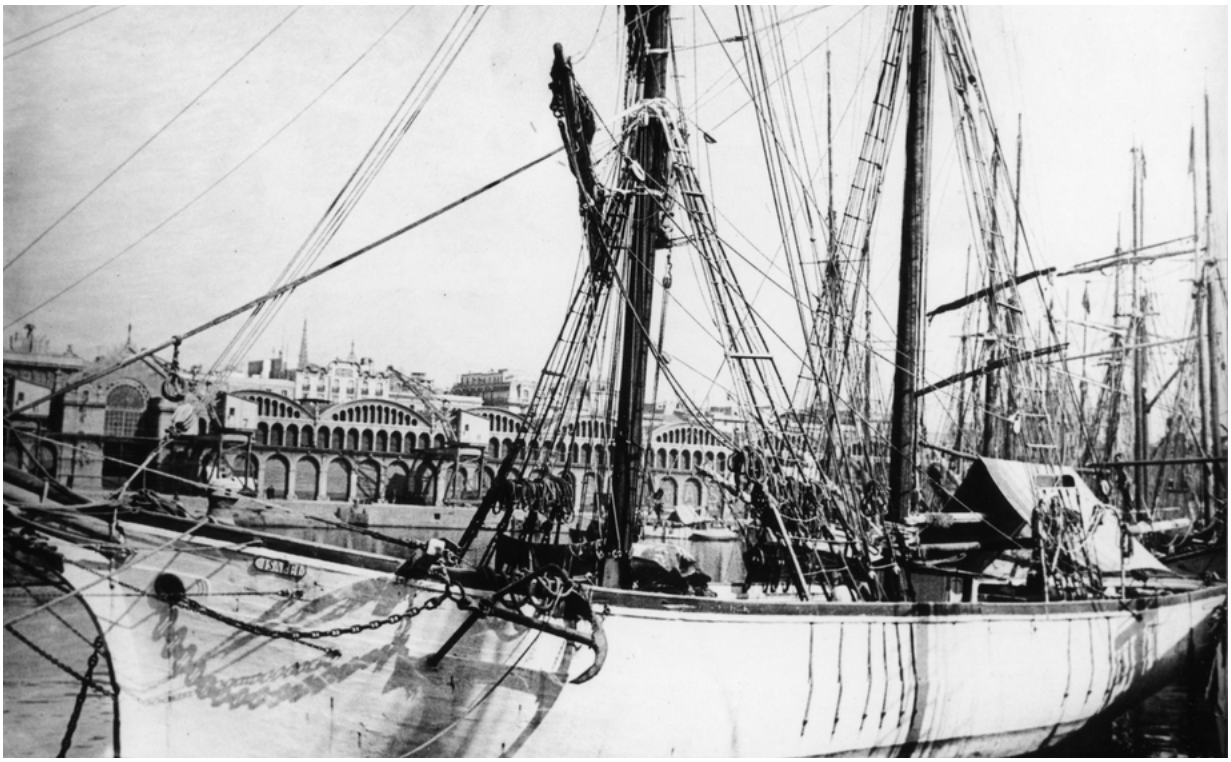
Phase 3

Database exploitation, including database analysis, appropriate data visualization, and the drafting of initial scientific papers and articles on the project's objectives.

Phase 4

Knowledge transfer, encompassing the public dissemination of results to a broader audience beyond academia.

OPEN SCIENCE PRACTICES



UA fundamental component of this project's methodology is the sharing of procedures, working methodologies, and software under development. This is facilitated through the aforementioned summer schools, during working sessions and through the creation of final school reports, best practice documents, and guidelines and recommendations for similar projects.

In addition to adhering to standard open science practices, the project's methodology is based on the design of a modular software system to facilitate subsequent exploitation for other sources. The project's resulting database will be made available under an open license, enabling researchers and an interested public outside academia to explore its contents.

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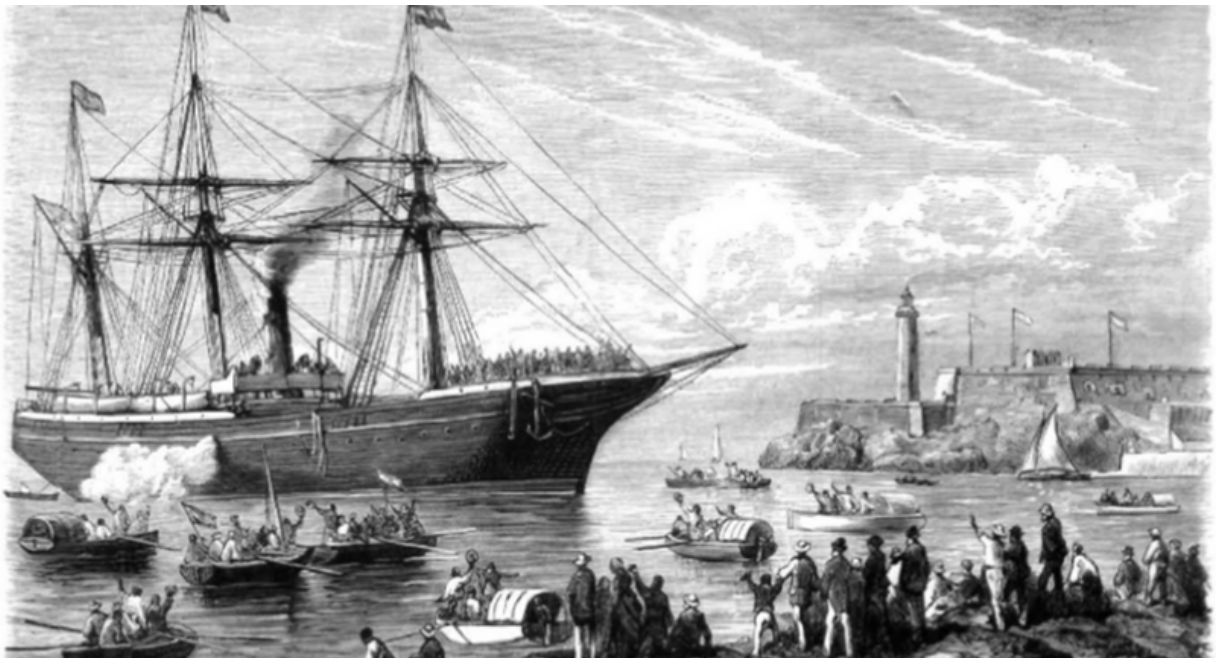
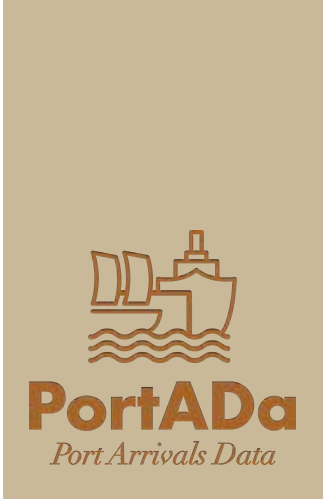
Research results, particularly published articles, will appear in high-quality, open-access, peer-reviewed journals. Dissemination entities are involved from the project's outset to help define final product requirements. These organizations are also crucial in the co-creation of research agendas and distribution content.

PortADA also aims to dedicate significant attention to knowledge transfer. Therefore, public dissemination and popularization entities are integral project partners.





For further information

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