



## **THE MASCOT OF THE UNIVERSIADE NAPOLI 2019: SYMBOLS AND ECHOES OF CAMPANIA**

Siren Parthenope, symbol of Naples and its mythical foundation, is the mascot of the Universiade.

Designed by Melania Acanfora, young Neapolitan student of the "Accademia delle Belle Arti" (Academy of Fine Arts), the Mascot Parthenope is a gymnast with her fish tail transformed into scaly legs which allow her to run, jump, dance, just as a real athlete.

In our collective memory, the Mascot has always represented a lucky charm on the field of play, as well as the identity and the joyful image of the Country hosting the Universiade, a representation of a community sharing sports and cultural values deeply rooted in its territory.

The myth of Naples' foundation is related to Parthenope, the Siren who died on the shores of the Tyrrhenian Sea after her vain attempt to stop Ulysses. Parthenope's divine origin explains her potential to embody two almost opposite aspects: the threat of a perfidious and bewitching song, and the foundation of a city in an amazing location with its celebrations and rites.

In Naples, the presence of Parthenope can be found not only in the amulets, but also in the streets, in the alleys and squares characterized by ancient and modern iconographic traces: from the Siren on the base of the Spire of San Domenico, to the Parthenope portrayed on the floor in one of the rooms of San Martino Museum, as well as the statue in Sannazaro square.

Sirens, mythological creatures bonded to the Tyrrhenian Sea, and in particular to the shores of "Campania Felix", have always been a controversial and fascinating figure at the same time. Moreover, Parthenope allows us to overcome traditional narration: just as for the sailors, even the current edition of the University Games will be under her spell.

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