

introduction

The Carmona Archaeological Ensemble (CAC) is an open-air museum that exhibits part of the outer suburbs of the Roman city of Carmona. Here one can see several pre-Roman tumulus burial sites, the extensive and monumental area of one of the Roman necropoli of the city and an amphitheatre.

The CAC's location, high above the Via Augusta, offers an exceptional view that helps one to understand the site in relation to the city and its surrounding area.

The discovery and musealization of the necropolis was ground-breaking for Spain and a large part of Europe. The CAC, which at the time was called the Carmona Roman Necropolis, was the first site in Spain to be excavated systematically and open to the public. It was inaugurated in 1885.

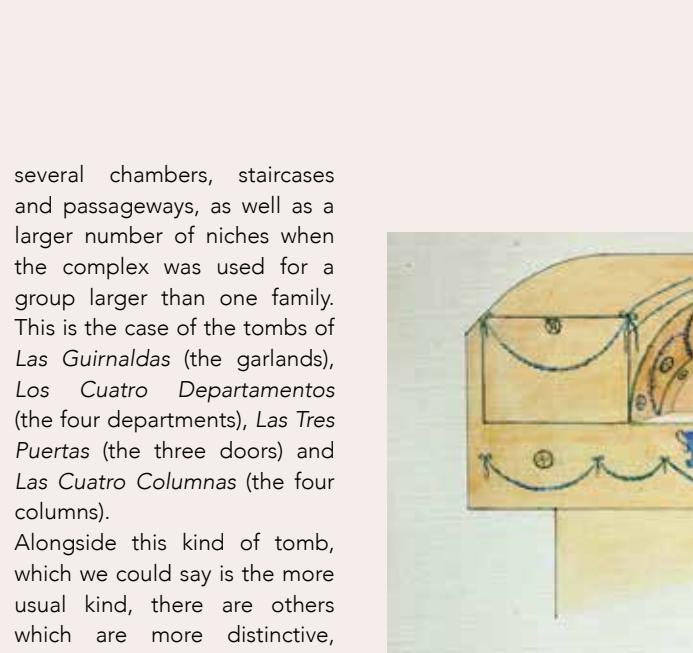
This initiative was in response to public demand in Carmona at the end of the 19th century, which rallied around the local pharmacist Juan Fernández López and the Anglo-French late romantic painter and scholar George E. Bonson, who contributed their findings (especially the latter) to academic circles of archaeological research both in Spain and abroad. In 1888, the museum was built on the site, which has since been reinforced, and which was also the first of its kind in Spain.

The first evidence of burials in the necropolis was a series of pre-Roman funerary monuments, made by excavating earth from a central trench covered by an earth mound or tumulus.

The first Roman burials are preserved to the south of the amphitheatre. These graves are believed to date back to the end of the 2nd century BC and all that remains of them are the trenches excavated in the rock.



) Sculpture of Servilia in its old location



) Recreation of the libation rite inside the circular mausoleum

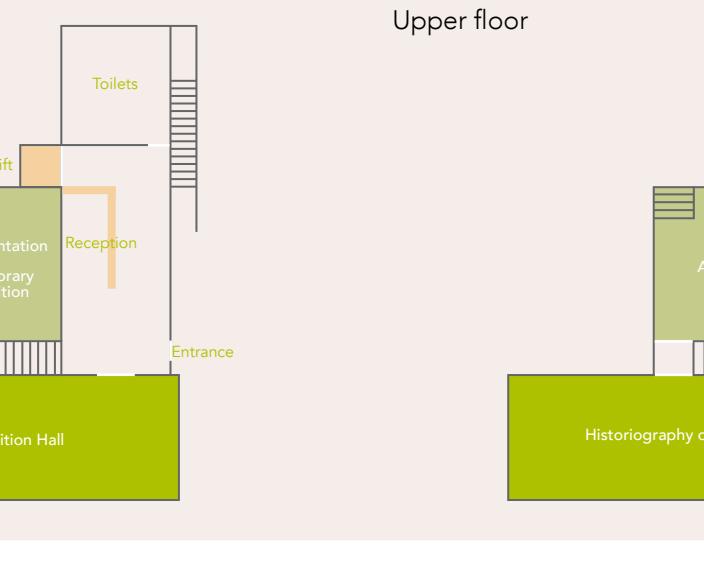
With the change of era it became the general practice to cremate bodies on funeral pyres and to build family tombs, characterised by having chamber cut from the rock accessed via a pit. On the surface, this might be topped off with monuments such as mausoleums in the form of a round tower (the most commonly found in this necropolis). In other cases, the lack of remains means we cannot determine what kind of monument complemented the underground chambers.

The necropolis was very likely laid out as private enclosures that were separated by low walls. Sometimes, within these enclosed spaces, trenches have been found that were used to contain the pyres for the cremation of bodies, known in Latin as *ustrina*.

The funerary complexes were thus composed of a chamber to house the urns of the deceased, which were normally cut from the rock, and an upper structure at ground level in the form of a plot, within which there might be some form of monument, as is the case of the Circular Mausoleum, or else some other kind of less durable construction that could house a triclinium (a place where meals were served) to hold the funerary banquets. There would also be small altars for the sacrifices in honour of the gods or the deceased, of which there are some examples on exhibition in the museum of the Archaeological Ensemble. This basic layout is often rendered more complex with

several chambers, staircases and passageways, as well as a larger number of niches when the complex was used for a group larger than one family. This is the case of the tombs of Las Guirnaldas (the garlands), Los Cuatro Departamentos (the four departments), Las Tres Puertas (the three doors) and Las Cuatro Columnas (the four columns).

Alongside this kind of tomb, which we could say is the more usual kind, there are others which are more distinctive, with layouts that are out of the ordinary. This is the case of what is popularly known as the Tumba del Elefante (tomb of the elephant), Tumba de Servilia (tomb of Servilia), Tumba de



) Reconstruction of the mural painting that decorated the front panel of the tomb of the rhyton

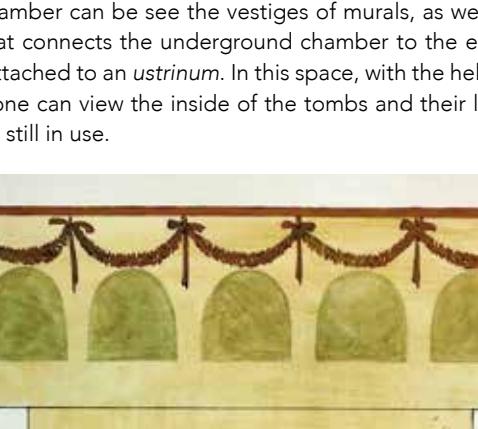
Postumio and Tumba de Prepusa (tombs of Postumio and Prepusa) or the two Columbarii-Triclinia, where we find open-air patios that are not found in tombs of the usual kind.

A common feature of many of the funerary complexes of this necropolis, although it has not survived intact to the present day, is the pictorial decoration that once adorned the funerary chambers. Even today we can see it in all its splendour and highlighting its great iconographic power, in the Tumba de Servilia, in the chambers of the Tumba de Postumio, Tumba de las Tres Puertas and the Tumba del Ritón de Vidrio (glass rhyton tomb).

distribution

The current headquarters of the CAC is the renovation of the first site museum built in Spain, in 1888. Inside, it houses a sample of Roman cremations, as well as different sculptures that decorated the funerary complexes.

Lower floor



Upper floor



itinerary

) Detail of the tomb of the elephant

One can set out on this route with the funerary constructions nearest the visitors' reception centre (1), such as the Circular Mausoleum (2), with its vaulted underground chamber and entrance pit. Next, we would highlight what is known as the Tumba de las Dos Familias (tomb of the two families), noteworthy for its two adjacent chambers (3). The loss of the vaulted ceiling allows us to envisage the inside of the funerary chambers and the layout of a bench at the same height as the niches to enable offerings to be placed. Together with them are several *ustrina* (4) which must have been communal. The rock's red colour is due to prolonged contact with fire. The Tumba del Elefante (5) has been the subject of heated debate with regard to how it should be interpreted. It has been thought that it was a shrine dedicated to the goddesses Attis and Cybele; later it was thought that it was a centre of a centre of worship of the god Mithras; however, its characteristics suggest that it very likely a family tomb with an unusual layout.

Following the path, we find a group of funerary complexes covered with a structure. Alongside several funerary complexes, the Tumba de los Cuatro Departamentos (tomb of the four departments) stand out (6) as well as the Tumba de las Guirnaldas (tomb of the garlands) (7), in whose chamber can be seen the vestiges of murals, as well as a large oculus that connects the underground chamber to the exterior. This tomb is attached to an *ustrinum*. In this space, with the help of mobile devices, one can view the inside of the tombs and their layout when they were still in use.



) Reconstruction of the mural painting that decorated the front panel of the tomb of the garlands

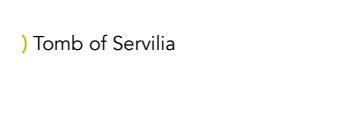


) Funeral Urns

The outstanding point of the route is the impressive Tumba de Servilia (tomb of Servilia) (8), which is set out around a central patio with a double line of columns. At its eastern edge with access from the outside, there used to be an underground passageway that led to the funerary chamber, also cut from the rock and supported by imposing arcades. Further on is the Tumba de las Cuatro Columnas (tomb of the four columns) (9), with a patio surrounded

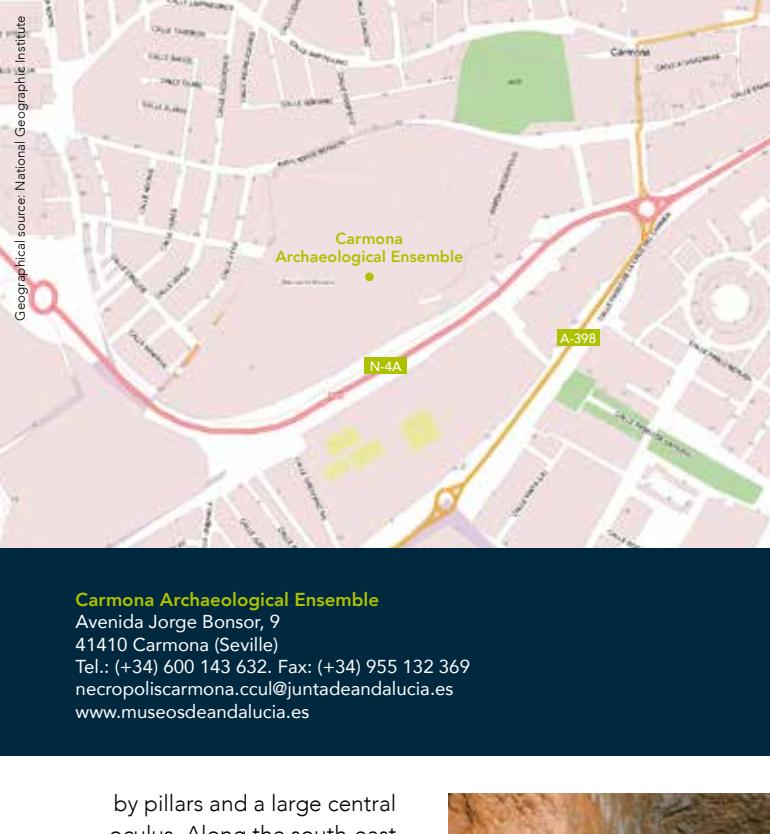


) Mural painting, corridor of the tomb of Servilia



) Inside the tomb of Servilia

) Tomb of Servilia



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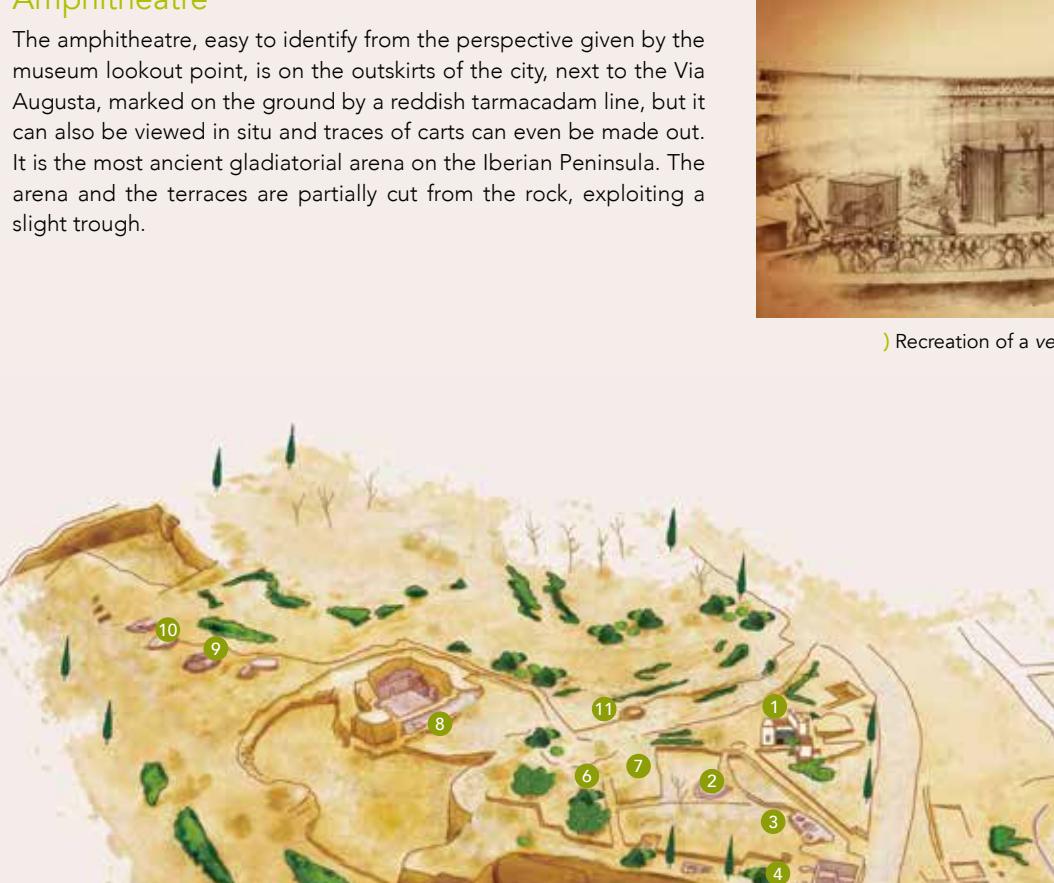


by pillars and a large central oculus. Along the south-east side, there is a group of aligned circular mausoleums (10).

From here we can retrace our steps by visiting the Tumba de Postumio (tomb of Postumio) (11), which combines niches for urns and grave for burial. In this tomb, one can see the effects of the elements that have degraded the rock in which the funerary chambers



) Tomb of the four columns



were cut. After this, we head towards the museographic facilities (1), which provides more information about the necropolis and from whose lookout point we can see how it is located in relation to the city, the Via Augusta, the funerary spaces and, finally, a mention of the public buildings of ancient Carmona, with the view of the amphitheatre (12).

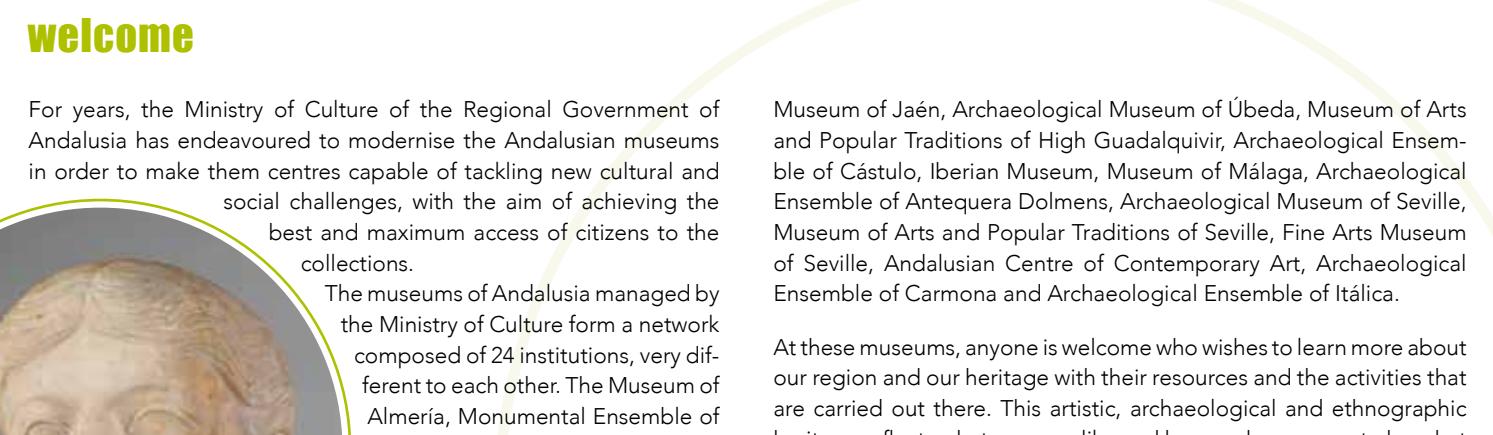
) Funeral goods

Amphitheatre

The amphitheatre, easy to identify from the perspective given by the museum lookout point, is on the outskirts of the city, next to the Via Augusta, marked on the ground by a reddish tarmacadam line, but it can also be viewed in situ and traces of carts can even be made out. It is the most ancient gladiatorial arena on the Iberian Peninsula. The arena and the terraces are partially cut from the rock, exploiting a slight trough.



) Recreation of a venatio or a fight against animals



- 1. Visitors reception
- 2. Circular mausoleum
- 3. Tomb of the two families
- 4. Ustrina
- 5. Tomb of the elephant
- 6. Tomb of the four departments
- 7. Tomb of the garlands
- 8. Tomb of Servilia
- 9. Tomb of the four columns
- 10. Four circular mausoleums
- 11. Tomb of Postumio
- 12. Amphitheatre

welcome

For years, the Ministry of Culture of the Regional Government of Andalusia has endeavoured to modernise the Andalusian museums in order to make them centres capable of tackling new cultural and social challenges, with the aim of achieving the best and maximum access of citizens to the collections.

The museums of Andalusia managed by the Ministry of Culture form a network composed of 24 institutions, very different to each other. The Museum of Almería, Monumental Ensemble of the Alcazaba of Almería, Museum of Cádiz, Archaeological Ensemble of Baelo Claudia, Archaeological Museum of Córdoba, Fine Arts Museum of Córdoba, Madinat al-Zahra Archaeological Ensemble, Archaeological and Ethnological Museum of Granada, Casa de los Tiros Museum, Fine Arts Museum of Granada, Museum of Huelva,

Museum of Jaén, Archaeological Museum of Úbeda, Museum of Arts and Popular Traditions of High Guadalquivir, Archaeological Ensemble of Cástulo, Iberian Museum, Museum of Málaga, Archaeological Ensemble of Antequera Dolmens, Archaeological Museum of Seville, Museum of Arts and Popular Traditions of Seville, Fine Arts Museum of Seville, Andalusian Centre of Contemporary Art, Archaeological Ensemble of Carmona and Archaeological Ensemble of Itálica.

At these museums, anyone is welcome who wishes to learn more about our region and our heritage with their resources and the activities that are carried out there. This artistic, archaeological and ethnographic heritage reflects what we were like and how we have come to be what we are now. The institutions, through their exhibitions and activities, show what we long to be in the future.

We want to welcome you to this museum, hoping that you enjoy your visit. We encourage you to visit all the museums in Andalusia and we thank you for the tie that you have created, from now on permanently, with Andalusian heritage.

Ministry of Culture

visit us

How to get there?

Public transport

Bus (Casal company): Sevilla-Carmona M-124.

Private transport

From Seville and Cordoba via the A4.

Nearest public car park: Paseo del Estatuto.

For information about opening hours, group tours and prices, visit www.museosdeandalucia.es

Remember

For the proper use of these facilities and for the enjoyment of all, it is necessary to comply with the rules established by the centre and to adhere to the instructions of the security staff.

Legal Deposit: SE 1215-2018

