



This exhibition provides an exceptional opportunity to contemplate the collection of Iberian votive offerings of the Fundación Pública Andaluza Rodríguez-Acosta, never before seen in its entirety outside its permanent exhibition location in Granada. The set is made up of a number close to seventy pieces, mostly belonging to the Gómez-Moreno Collection, plus a few ones gathered by the painter José María Rodríguez-Acosta

among his rich founding legacy. It responds to very strict selection criteria, since it has a proportionally high number of extraordinary pieces, outside the most common standardized series. These are the best-preserved and highest quality specimens of those offered on the antique market after the discovery and massive extraction of these materials at the beginning of the 20th century before the official excavations carried out by Ignacio Calvo and Juan Cabré in 1916, 1917 and 1918. The archaeologist and art historian Manuel Gómez-Moreno Martínez collected them personally, selecting them among many others that were presented to him when he formed the collection of the Valencia de Don Juan Institute, in Madrid, of which he was the director in the decades of 1920 and 1930. Additionally, the painter José María Rodríguez-Acosta acquired around the same time some of the best specimens on sale for the decoration of his carmen-studio, today the headquarters of the Rodríguez-Acosta Foundation, to which the Gómez-Moreno Institute belongs.

The Iberians expressed some aspects of their religiosity through votive offerings in the form of small solid bronze figures made using the lost-wax technique, representative of the popular art of the time. Its chronology generally starts in the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. In exchange for protection, health, well-being and prosperity, or used in rites of passage, the votive offerings were deposited as part of rituals or cult offerings in the southern and southeastern sanctuaries of the Iberian peninsula, mainly located on elevations of the land and in caves, close to important roads and watercourses, outside population centers. Both the specimens acquired by José María Rodríguez-Acosta and those of Manuel Gómez-Moreno came mostly from the Collado de los

Jardines sanctuary, in Santa Elena, near Despeñaperros, whose wild landscape Juan Cabré captured in his photographs. Except for a sculptural group that escapes the usual concept of votive offerings, which seems to represent a fertility goddess in the form of a woman nursing a child, flanked by duck heads, the rest of the pieces are all ex-votos, presenting an offering attitude for the most part. Despite the stylization of the male and female offerers in an attitude of prayer, with some exaggerated features (hands, eyes, sexual organs) and carrying an offering (bread, fruit), the variety of attitudes and characters (warriors, horsemen, horses, bulls, etc.) from the Foundation's collections makes it possible to form an extremely rich and suggestive iconographic gallery of that civilization. In the words of Gómez-Moreno, a «great series, the product of a workshop initiated by a true artist and skillful founder, who devised types of exquisite individualism, variety and grace ... a whole world of natural evocations, worthy of appreciation among our most brilliant artistic outbursts».

An exhaustive study of this collection of ex-votos can be found at the following QR link.

