



MUSEO DE
SANTA CRUZ

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTION



The main courtyard and staircase of the Santa Cruz hospital form one of the most beautiful compositions of Spanish Renaissance architecture. The architect was **Alonso de Covarrubias**, who made them around 1530.

The Jerusalem cross, emblem of Cardinal Mendoza, like his coat of arms, appears throughout the architecture of the building; it also constitutes here, along with elements typical of the Florentine *Quattrocento*, the basis of the decorative program. The lower gallery of the cloister has a set of stone pieces from various chronologies, some of large proportions, as well as mosaics, sarcophagi and Roman and Islamic inscriptions, funerary tombstones of knights of the Order of Calatrava from the old Synagogue of Tránsito, and various reliefs from the Modern Age.

ESSENTIAL PIECES

1

Menhir and Orthostat: made of granite and dated around 3500 BC, they come from the dolmen found in the Navalcán reservoir (Toledo) and its surrounding area. They have the particularity that they present geometric decoration on their front face, which makes them very unique.

A menhir is a stone driven vertically into the ground in isolation, while an orthostat is a block of stone that was part of a dolmen, a more complex construction. Both are remains of what is called megalithic culture, which in the Toledo area developed during the Chalcolithic, when humans began to manufacture metal objects.

The term megalithism comes from the Greek words *mega* (large) and *lithos* (stone). These are large constructions, landmarks in the landscape, whose function would be linked to the representation of the communities that built them with great effort.

The rural societies that have always lived near megaliths were unaware of their function and origin. That is why their imagination generated the most picturesque theories to justify them, legends that have survived to nowadays.



2

Warrior Steles: these are two pieces dated between the 9th and 8th centuries BC. C., belonging to the Late Bronze Age, found in the vicinity of the towns of Las Herencias and La Estrella, west of the province of Toledo.

They are stone slabs in which a character is schematically represented, surrounded by his weapons (shield, sword, spear, helmet, bow, breastplate...) and, sometimes, objects for personal use, such as the chariot with its wheel, which we see on *Las Herencias* stele (fig.1).

Its function is not known for sure. In any case, they are objects of representation of the power and strength of their possessor, markers of territory, of a region dominated by a powerful and warlike lord. The people who used them could be shepherds who received Indo-European and Mediterranean influences thanks to trade.

Their power, and the dominion of the natural routes and paths, near which the steles were found, would be reflected with the representation of their weapons and prestigious objects.



Fig.1

3

Verraco sculpture: It is a zoomorphic sculpture from La Puebla de Montalbán (Toledo). These types of representations of animals, usually pigs, wild boars or bulls, abound in the western interior of the peninsula. They are made of roughly worked granite.

They are of Celtic tradition, linked to the *Vettón* people, and could be dated between the 5th century BC and the Roman conquest of Hispania, during the II Iron Age.

Their purpose is not very clear, sometimes they have a funerary function, as indicated by their inscriptions, while in other cases they could be related to the economic activities of those pre-Roman societies, that would use them as landmarks in the landscape to show their dominance over a territory, passage areas, seasonal pastures, etc.



4

Two Roman altars: the museum's collection has a votive altar, dedicated to Hercules, and another funerary altar. The altars are small Roman stone altars, although they also appear in Greek culture.

Built in various materials, we can find them in temples or funerary complexes. In fact, the Latin word '*ara*' (*altar*) means stone on which a sacrifice is offered to divinity. The two typologies are practically the same, with identical structure. Only thing that changes is the inscription, because in the funerary type the letters DMS usually appear at the top, which means *Diis Manibus Sacrum*, or "consecrated to the gods Manes", Roman gods of the dead (something similar to *RIP* of later epitaphs) and the purpose, which would be to remember the deceased or glorify him. The altars have three elements: the cornice, which is the most decorated part, often with a triangular pediment, sometimes with *acrotera* at the ends; the epigraphic field, where the inscription appears with the name of the deity or the deceased, the person who dedicated the inscription, sometimes the date...; and the base, usually without decoration.



5

Roman milestone: made of granite and with a square section, this milestone can be dated between the 2nd and 4th centuries AD. It comes from the clearing of some houses in the Plaza de Zocodover (Toledo), demolished during the siege of the Alcázar in the Civil War. This piece had been reused for the construction of the Arab wall of the city. The milestones were the signaling posts that the Romans used to mark the distances in miles from one place to another along the roads and paths that structured the territory.

The road network was used by the Roman army in the conquest of territories, and thanks to it large forces could be mobilized with a speed never seen before. The Roman mile measured approximately 1.5 km and its name comes from the fact that it was equivalent to a thousand steps.



6

Roman male sculpture with a *toga*: early imperial sculpture (from the 1st century AD) in a round shape, made of marble, found in a building on C/de la Plata (Toledo).

The *toga* was a characteristic and distinctive garment of Ancient Rome, consisting of a long semicircular cloth between 3.5 and 6 m long, which was placed on the shoulders and around the body.

It was usually woven from white wool and worn over a tunic. According to Roman tradition it was the favorite clothing of Romulus, the founder of Rome.

The truth is that the toga became a common garment for male Roman citizens. The women wore the *stola*.

As the toga was very voluminous and impractical, it gradually fell into disuse, and was only worn by patricians and high magistrates, as a symbol of power and tradition. The head and arms are missing from the sculpture. On the one hand, the robed sculptures were made in series and without heads, which could then be added depending on the portrayed that suited them. On the other hand, the arms, being elements that stand out in the sculptures, are the ones that most easily break and lose over time.



Mosaic of the four seasons: mosaic from the late imperial period, from the second half of the 3rd century AD.

During the works to expand the Toledo weapons factory, in the 1920s, this mosaic was found at the Vega Baja site. It was part of a Roman *villa*, one of many that must have existed in the area, far from the bustling urban center of Toletum, for the enjoyment of large patrician families.

The decorative composition of this mosaic is based on a geometric layout on the perimeter, and a central circle. Its *tesserae* are made of marble, colored stones and vitreous paste. In the corners there are representations of the seasons of the year and fruits, but the central scene stands out above all, very colorful, which includes fish and marine animals made with great detail and realism.

Next to this mosaic we find another, octagonal in format, with a scene of the port of Alexandria, where we can see, along with boats and workers, the famous lighthouse of the city.



8

The dancing satyr: is the name by which the remain of a Roman marble sculpture, dated around 2nd century AD, is known. It was found in the basements of a private home, in the vicinity of the Roman baths, in the Amador de los Ríos square in Toledo. The sculpture represents a life-size figure, and would probably be part of the decoration of the hot springs. The marble from which it is made comes from the Greek island of Paros, and the workmanship is excellent. The thermal baths were public bathing areas and always had considerable dimensions. The citizens of Roman civilization went there weekly, not only to take a bath, but also to relax and meet friends and family. This tradition was maintained during the Middle Ages through the Andalusian culture, of whose *hammam* or public baths there are numerous vestiges in the city of Toledo.

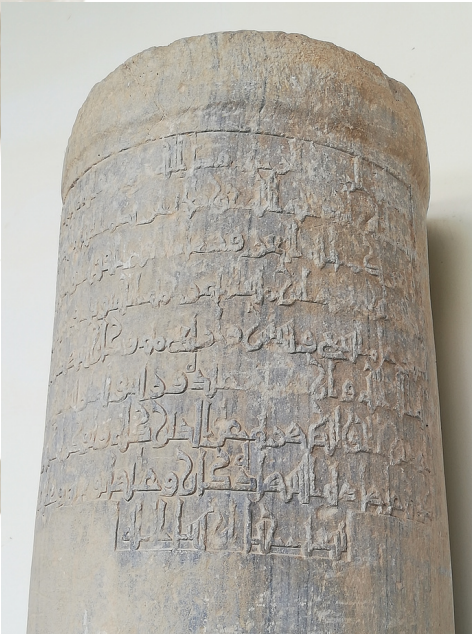




Among the Andalusian pieces in the collection (fig. 1), this Islamic well curb from the 11th century stands out, which comes from the *Aljama* (main mosque) of the city, which was located in the same place as the Cathedral in the present. Made of marble, it stands out for its epigraphic decoration, organized in stripes with kufic characters, and ataurique (stylized vegetation). As a curiosity, we must highlight the wear on the edge of the curb, caused by the ropes used to remove water from the well over time.

10

Funerary cippus: made of marble and dated 467 of the Hegira (1074 AD). The funerary cippus are stone cylinders with inscriptions, which were used to identify the tombs of people with a higher social and economic level in the Andalusian era. This one in particular includes a funerary inscription in Kufic characters that refers to the jurist Abu l-Walid Isma'il ibn Muhammad ibn Maslama.



Muslims used to mark the position of graves in cemeteries, located on the outskirts of cities, with different types of commemorative monuments. The more modest graves were marked with one or several rough unhewn stones. If the deceased was in a better position, the grave was marked with a cippus, a tombstone or a stele.