

Archaeological and Monumental Sites of Andalusia



↑ Monumental staircase from the Augustan period (1st century A.D.).

HISTORY

In the 7th century B.C. the Phoenicians, in the process of their trading and civilizing activities, settled in Cerro del Prado, about 2 km northwest of Carteia. In the 4th century B.C., their descendants, the Carthaginians or Punics, founded what we know today as Carteia. For the new city they chose a promontory near the mouth of the river Guadarranque, a magnificent location offering control over the Strait of Gibraltar and shelter within the bay of Algeciras.

When Rome defeated Carthage in the Punic Wars, in the 3rd century B.C., the Romans established themselves, enlarging the city considerably and building numerous monuments. The population born there, the children of Hispanic women and Roman soldiers, were not recognised by Rome as citizens. Carteia sent a delegation to Rome requesting a solution to this problem and obtaining from the Senate the title of *Colonia Libertinorum* in 171 B.C., thus becoming the first Roman colony outside Italy. The city was involved in internal conflicts such as the one that pitted Caesar against Pompey at the end of the 1st century B.C. The inhabitants of Carteia supported the latter, the loser of the war, for which they suffered the consequences.

From the 6th century A.D. it was the Visigoths who settled in the city and once again changed its structure. Today we know it was used as a necropolis. Arab troops appeared in the area at the beginning of the 8th century and from here the conquest of Al-Andalus began. Thanks to Muslim texts we know that they adapted one of the existing religious buildings in Carteia and turned it into a mosque. Later, with the arrival of the Marinid armies from North Africa (13th century), building called *Hishn Quartayana*, today known as the Cartagena Tower, was erected near the city of Carteia.

At the end of the 16th century, in the area closest to the sea, stands the **Rocadillo Tower**, which was part of the coastal defence systems built by Felipe II and his successors. It rises above the remains of the Roman wall, from which the mouth of the river Guadarranque was controlled.



← The Rocardillo *Domus* and part of the road network. ↓ Virtual reconstruction of the Roman theatre. ↓ Salted fish factory.



A BUNKER EN CARTEIA, 26 CENTURIES LATER

During the Second World War, more than 500 military fortifications were built in the area under the Campo de Gibraltar Defence Plan, to guarantee the integrity of Spanish territory in the event of a hypothetical allied attack from Gibraltar. Three bunkers were built in Carteia, which were never used in military action, although they were fully equipped.

One of them has been made into a museum and opened to the public. It consists of three rooms, equipped with machine guns and an anti-tank gun.

One of the firing rooms has been faithfully recreated. In the central room, the largest, the landscape that would have been seen from it in the 1940s is reproduced behind the embrasure and several war instruments, plans and photographs are exhibited.

The third room has been stripped of its military character and displays socio-cultural aspects of post-war Spain, with graphic resources and sound effects from a vintage radio.



↑ Interior of the bunker.

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FREE ADMISSION



Agencia Andaluza de Instituciones Culturales
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA Y PATRIMONIO HISTÓRICO

SEE AND UNDERSTAND CARTEIA

1 Punic wall

A gateway to the city, carved in sandstone and made up of embossed ashlar, has survived. The wall is of the casemate type, following the prevailing Greek model of the time.

2 Republican Temple

Over the remains of ancient religious constructions from the Punic period, a large temple was erected, the oldest known republican monument in this place (2nd century B.C.), with a surface area of 24 x 18 m. The temple stood on a 1.90 m high podium and was entered via a front staircase framed by two side blocks that protruded from the facade. It was possibly a hexastyle temple—with six columns at the front—, of the peripteral type, that is to say, surrounded by columns except at the rear. It had a *cella* that housed the statue of the god, whose identity is currently unknown.



↑ Ideal reconstruction of the temple.

3 Buildings

Next to the temple stood a large porticoed building used as a dwelling. The main part would have been a *domus* type Roman house belonging to the wealthy class. It is a typical house with an atrium or central courtyard that can be entered through a corridor or tunnel with rooms on both sides. Next to the *domus*, sharing the façade, there is an *insula* or block of dwellings for less wealthy people. In this area there is also a large Augustan building with a monumental staircase. The thickness and quality of its walls seem to suggest the existence of a second floor, which would have extended to the upper terrace. To the right of the staircase, halfway up which was a large double door, there are several rooms in the manner of the typical shops or *tabernae*, which overlook a street that led to the lower part of the city.

4 Visigoth necropolis

The Roman temple is surrounded by tombs from the Visigoth period, retaining the use of the area as sacred ground.



5 Thermal building

This is a very large construction and must have been in use from the 1st to the 4th century AD. It had all the rooms typical of thermal baths: *caldarium* or hot bath room; *tepidarium* or tepid room; *frigidarium* or cold room, and *apodyterium* or dressing room area. There was also a gymnasium with a *natatio* (outdoor swimming pool) and a latrine. It was therefore a complex building, not just for bathing. In the 6th and 7th centuries A.D. the area was used as a necropolis. In the same place, the remains of another building with an apsidal floor plan suggest the existence of a late Roman basilica.

6 Roman dwelling

Here you can see the one known as the *Rocadillo Domus*, with similar construction techniques and structural characteristics to the dwelling next to the temple. Located at



↑ Aerial view of the archaeological remains of the Carteia thermal building.

the crossroads of two paved streets, access was by means of two steps leading up from the street. It is a *domus*-type dwelling, with numerous rooms, an atrium with a cistern and a peristyle paved with mosaic. Sections of the Roman road can still be seen next to it.



↑ Rocadillo Tower.

7 Rocadillo Tower

With a quadrangular floor plan and attached to the Roman wall, the engineer Livadote was commissioned to build this watchtower at the end of the 16th century. It is about 12 m high, the lower half of which is a solid body. Above this is the guardhouse, which would have been reached by means of a rope ladder. It is a vaulted room in which there is a chimney with a vertical shaft and a narrow window from which you can see the mouth of the river Guadarranque.

8 Salted fish factory

The fishing industry was very important in Roman times. The coasts near the Strait of Gibraltar were a prosperous economic area, reflected in the numerous salted fish factories built from the 1st century BC

onwards. The salting pools were the elements common to all the factories. Once cleaned and gutted, the fish were placed in the pools between alternate layers of salt. *Garum* sauce was also made in the factories, a highly sought after and very expensive delicacy. *Garum* was used as a condiment and was produced from macerated fish viscera mixed with aromatic herbs. Salted fish were packaged in amphorae for transport and marketing.

9 Bunker

In this area you can also visit one of the bunkers built during World War II, which has been turned into a museum, being the first one of its kind in Andalusia.



↑ Interior of a bunker room.

10 Theatre

Partially excavated, the Roman theatre preserves part of the stage building and the stands, which are built on the natural terrain, except the *summa cavea*. Structurally it is very similar to the one in Merida, with a *cavea* diameter of 78 m and 2,500 m² of stands. It had an estimated capacity of 5,200 people and is the largest in Andalusia visible in its entirety.