

A museum in the bay

The Archaeological and History Museum, currently owned by the municipality, is installed in the Castle of San Antón, a fortress built on an island in the bay of A Coruña - the Big Rock - that was previously used as a lazaretto for quarantine for those arriving by sea with the disease known as "the Fire of San Antón". The chapel built on the island was dedicated to this saint. The link with the land was already thought of in the 16th century and designed in the 18th, but not built until the middle of the 20th. Before this, there was a ferry service between the Castle pier and the door of San Miguel at the city walls.

The fortress of San Antón

In spite of the fact that Carlos I, while staying in A Coruña in 1522 before setting sail to Flanders for his coronation as Emperor, recommended erecting three fortresses in the bay (those of San Diego, Santa Cruz and San Antón), the first works did not begin until 1588, when his son, Felipe II, was already reigning. In the first stages of the construction, from the end of the 16th to the beginning of the 17th century, the main core of the fortress was fully defined: the first western body with an entrance through a tunnel protected by a tenaille, with two curtain walls coming from it - leaving a parade ground in the middle flanked on both sides by small domed rooms - adjoining the irregular star-shape eastern body. A tank was dug in the rock to collect rainwater and the former chapel was kept on the surface. At the beginning of the 18th century, the lower battery of 6 cannons was built plus the boathouse and the steps of the small pier. Half a century later, in 1776, the Governor's House was constructed; a neoclassic building that today houses the main collections of the museum. Originally, the barracks for the troops were located on the ground floor and the

house for the governor and chaplain, sacristy and chapel were on the upper floor.

The prison

From the end of the 17th century to the middle of the 20th century, the fortress complied with its function as a prison for common criminals and political prisoners. They included prominent figures such as Antonio de Villaruel (General in Chief for the defence of Barcelona against the Bourbon siege in 1714 that was brutally suppressed by Felipe V), Melchor de Macanaz (secretary to Felipe V, persecuted by the Inquisition), Alessandro Malaspina (eminent scientist who fell to misfortune with Godoy), Juan Díaz Porlier (the liberal general who rose against the absolutism of Fernando VII and was imprisoned and executed on the Gallows), Augusto Gonzalez de Linares (scientist imprisoned for defending the freedom of professorship) among many others, with or without well-known names, like the first prisoner we have news about - a Breton merchant detained in Redes at the beginning of the war with France in the 18th century, the absolutist prisoners thrown into the sea until they drowned in the 19th century, or the last ones who were victims of the Civil War and the pro-Franco dictatorship.

The Museum

In 1958, the Ministry for the Army swished the building to the City Council of A Coruña. It was used in 1964 for the Archaeological and History Museum, inaugurated in 1968. It holds prehistoric remains and the history relating to both the city and to Galicia. The exhibition consists of three sections: medieval and heraldic religious and funeral art (Parade Ground), archaeology and prehistory (ground floor of the House of the Governor), and history of the city (upper floor of the House of the Governor). The visit includes simultaneous tours of the castle architecture, explained in glass panels placed along the route.

Access. Parade Ground

The visit starts with the former Boat House that has today been turned into a specialized library and workroom, the pier and the Lower Battery.

The Main Entrance, with three 16th century shields and an inscription alluding to the castle building, opens onto the Parade Ground through a domed corridor. By transforming the castle into a museum in the 60s of the last century, the small rooms around the courtyard, which some time ago were the soldiers' dormitories and prisoners' cells, became open casemates for housing sculptures, a reflection of the beliefs and society of the late Middle Ages.

Sculptures from the churches sponsored by the powerful noble homes of the Andrade, as the former front entrance or the acroter with wild boar from the Montefaró monastery give way to outstanding artistic works, such as the tympanum of the Adoration of the Magi from the Convent of Santo Domingo or the image of St. James the Pilgrim from the Church of Santo Tomás, both in A Coruña.

The following spaces exhibit tombstones found in the churches of the mendicant Orders of the city, mostly representing the nobility - the men in their armour, the ladies dressed in gowns with their hair rolled - in the one from Santo Domingo, and of friars, confreres and craftsmen in the one from San Francisco.

The series ends with Modern Age shields, the most outstanding of which is the one presiding the gates of the exterior city wall, which goes from the current Juana de Vega Street, with the Tower of Hercules surrounded by scallops shells and above the head of Gerión. The commemorative inscription of the works undertaken by the Duke of Uceda in the 17th century also relate to the Tower. It was preserved by the illustrated José Cornide, from A Coruña.

This was originally used as barracks for the troops at the fortress, including the kitchens. Today it contains the archaeological section, with a tour that guides us retrospectively from the Roman A Coruña to the most remote Palaeolithic times in Galicia.



House of the Governor. Ground Floor

ROME. GALLAECIA

The Roman settlement of A Coruña: Brigantium

The fragments of amphorae (containers used for transport) made in Tunis, Cadiz and around Naples, as well as domestic tableware of the same origin, speak about the possible existence of a very ancient inhabited nucleus in the city, already with commercial contacts in the Mediterranean between the 3rd century and 1st century BC.

In the second half of the 1st century AD, an important development took place. Different types of ceramics, the most outstanding of which is the *terra sigillata*, loom or frame weights, dice, game chips, broaches and pendants, as well as burial urns, gravestones and steles with funeral inscriptions and altars dedicated to gods, indicate the existence of a completely Romanised settlement.

The Tower of Hercules was also built in the second half of the 1st century AD. It is a lighthouse erected at a crucial point of the Atlantic route joining Rome with the British Isles. It was turned into a fortress in the Middle Ages and finally altered into its current configuration at the end of the 18th century. Archaeological excavations brought the foundations to light, as well as Roman and medieval materials and the confirmation of the existence of the exterior wall surrounding the access ramp, from Roman times. Beyond the urban nucleus, there is a *Villa*, in the current Cantón Grande, with some architectural structures and wall paintings that are very typical of such establishments.

The Villae

The most frequent settlements in the rural and coastal area of Roman Galicia are the mansions, belonging to the rich patricians, used for farming or seafaring or residential purposes, called *Villae*. The archaeological materials from those of Cantón Grande from A Coruña, Noville (Mugardos), Centroña (Pontedeume), Eirexa Vella (Bares) or Moraime (Muxía), are kept at this museum. The typical parts of these buildings are the paintings, mosaics, stuccoes, refractory bricks of hypocausts and the *tegulae* (flat tiles) and *imbrices* (curved tiles) from their roofs.

Worship of the Dead

There are incineration urns showing steles and plaques with epitaphs and Roman names from the necropolis of A Coruña, indicating the existence of funeral buildings, typical of the urban world. After the 3rd - 4th centuries AD, incineration gradually replaced burials in graves using *tegulae*, such as those found in Real Street, in an inverse process to the one we use at present.

Galician - Romans from the rural world incinerated and buried their dead and raised steles in their memory such as those at Mazarelas (Oza dos Ríos) or Tines (Vimianzo).

Worship of the gods

In A Coruña and other highly Romanised places, the bases of the statues of emperors and home or stone altars dedicated to Roman gods related to the sea and the army (*Neptune*, *Fortune*). The altars of the Cidadela camp were dedicated according to well-defined military ranks: a *signifer* (standard bearer) and an *optio* (equivalent to a lieutenant).

Trading and Atlantic navigation

The economic unit of the Roman Empire required a commercial network between its very distant territories. Objects recovered from the seabed such as anchor stocks or amphorae for transporting food (wine, salting and oil), confirm these relations between the Mediterranean and Atlantic sea routes.

Territorial conquest and military control

The military control of the A Coruña territory was undertaken from the Roman Camp of Ciudadela or Ciudadela, in Sobrado (A Coruña), the headquarters of the *Cohors I Celtiberorum* (a military unit dependent upon the *Legio Septima Gemina*, settled in León), which kept watch over the route connecting *Brigantium* with *Lucus Augusti*, the capital of the juridical department integrating the former A Coruña.

Whenever possible, Rome established peace agreements with the indigenous peoples. An example of such agreements is the *Tabula Lougeiorum*, which records an agreement on a bronze tablet between a representative of Rome and the *Ástur* community of *Lougei*.

The conquest of the territory in the 1st century BC and its integration in the Roman Empire accelerated the gradual assimilation process of the Galician world, which had already opened maritime contacts between Rome and the communities living in the *castros* along the coast and river routes.

- | GROUND FLOOR | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 0. Entrance-Library | 5. Archaeology Section |
| 1. Access Tunnel | a. Roman Coruña |
| 2. Gunpowder stores - warehouses | b. Romanization |
| 3. Parade Ground - Casemates: Medieval Section | c. Castro Culture |
| 4. History of the Castle - The Prisoners | d. Prehistory |
| | 6. Toilets |
| | 7. Well-Tank |
| | 8. Ramp-Access to upper floor |



ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORY MUSEUM CASTLE OF SAN ANTÓN

Opening hours:
Tuesdays to Saturdays, from 10 am to 7.30 pm
(July and August, from 10 am to 9 pm)
Sundays and Holidays, from 10 am to 2.30 pm
(July and August, from 10 am to 3 pm)

T. 981 189 850
museo.arqueoloxico@coruna.es

House of the Governor. Ground Floor

IRON AGE. THE CASTROS

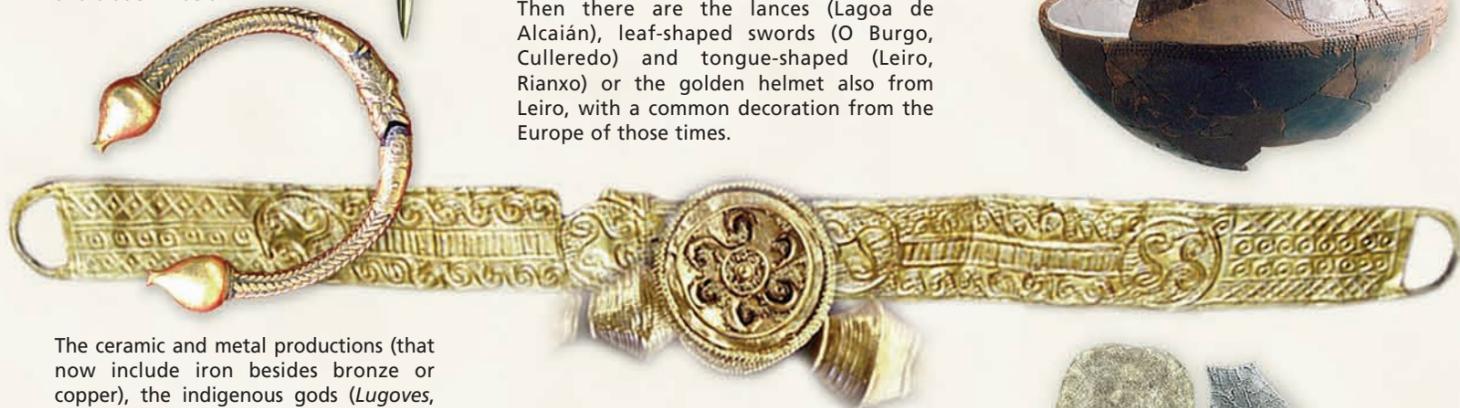
The *castros* are fortified villages, normally located on elevations or small peninsulas near the sea. Their domestic buildings were made of stone or mud and straw, in shapes ranging from circles to rectangles, acquiring greater complexity and spatial organization as the Galician society developed towards urbanization during the Iron Age, throughout the 1st millennium BC.

The Castro de Elviña is located in the city of A Coruña, inhabited by the *ártabros* or *arrotrebas*, from the Galician people. Materials recovered from different excavations (ceramics, metal remains, beads from necklaces, etc.) show the evolution of the fort from at least the 3rd century BC to the 4th century AD. One of the well-known sets of prehistoric goldwork come from there, the Treasure of Elviña, comprising an articulated necklace with 13 beads with a pendant, a choker and diadem - belt.



BRONZE AND CHALCOLITHIC AGE

The earlier period, the Bronze Age, includes the 2nd millennium BC. It ended, approximately 3,000 years ago, coinciding with an intense production of palstaves, ternary bronze axes (copper + tin + lead) that are normally accumulated in groups and are not usually suitable for work because they are too soft, so they are used for working ingots or coins. Then there are the lances (Lagoa de Alcaían), leaf-shaped swords (O Burgo, Culleredo) and tongue-shaped (Leiro, Rianxo) or the golden helmet also from Leiro, with a common decoration from the Europe of those times.



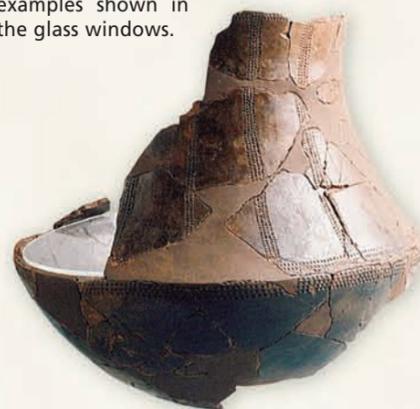
The ceramic and metal productions (that now include iron besides bronze or copper), the indigenous gods (*Lugoves*, *Cosou*), liturgical items (Axe of Cariño) and the sophisticated goldwork (earring of Baroña or torques of San Lorenzo Pastor, Orbellido or Xanceda), define the singularity of the culture of the northwest *castros*.

The curved-edge axes made of bronze (copper + tin), of the Barcelos type, are much older and especially the original trapezoidal ones made from pure copper. The oldest weapons are made of the same metal, such as those in the set from Leiro, with halberd and wheat sheaf daggers, or others that appear with Palmela-type arrow tips, archer's braces and vase-type flower holders, on the small individual tombs which we call cists, some decorated like the one from A Insua (Borneiro, Cabana de Bergantiños). Contemporary to this first phase of the initial Bronze /Chalcolithic Age, around 2500-2000 BC, are the cave engravings known as petroglyphs and the beautiful necklace and diadem set found in Cicere (Santa Comba). Battle maces and large polished lithic objects (chisels, hoe blades) mark the transition to this warlike period after the decomposition of the earlier megalith building society.



NEOLITHIC - MEGALITHISM

The sedentarization, the practice of agriculture, domesticating animals, ceramics, the use of polished stone and textiles are innovations of this period before working with metals. In the Galicia of that era, the construction of *mámoas* or small tombs generally containing a building inside made of large stones (megalith or dolmen) also progressed, built and used for a long time, from the 4th to the 2nd millennium BC. These collective funeral monuments, which were also used as ceremonial places, territorial markers and group identifiers, could be decorated with engravings and paintings and housed idols and offerings with ceramics, symbolic objects and adornments, or stone items such as arrow tips or polished axes, omnipresent tools typical of this Neolithic period. The Dombate Dolmen (Cabana de Bergantiños) or *A Mina da Parxubeira* (Mazaricos) are examples shown in the glass windows.



MESOLITHIC AND PALAEOOLITHIC PERIODS

Small Mesolithic tools carved in quartz were found in O Reiro (Arteixo) from the most remote times, before agriculture. The oldest ones are the stone axes and chopping tools from the later Palaeolithic period, such as those found at the mouth of the river Miño.

Access ramp and western platform

Exhibited on the ramp that joins both floors of the Castle is the *Borna*, an experimental craft made in 1974 with leather and wicker, as stipulated in a study on Atlantic relations between Galicia and the British Isles in Prehistoric times. There is also a door and some steps on the ramp leading to the tank dug out in the rock and covered with stone vaults, which supplied the castle with rainwater, by means of a channel from the rear façade of the House of the Governor.

We can see a lighthouse from the upper courtyard, a well that interconnects with the tank or guard posts.

In the garden of the bastion, two types of burials are reconstructed: a child's tomb

made of flagstones from the Roman necropolis in A Coruña and the Cista de Taraio, from the Early Bronze Age. You can also see the petroglyph, probably medieval like the one in Punta Herminia, saved from destruction by transferring it from the Monte Alto gunpowder store near the Tower of Hercules.

On the terrace of the House of the Governor, accessed by a spiral staircase, a ceramic mural is exhibited with episodes and legends related to the history of the Herculean city.



House of the Governor. Upper floor

There are some signs of different periods in the history of the city and of Galicia in the House of the Governor.

The historical cartography has an exceptional sample: the Geometric Map of Galicia [*Carta Geométrica de Galicia*] by Dr. Domingo Fontán, finished and presented to the Governing Queen Maria Cristina in 1834, although it was not published until 1845 in Paris. This map signified a great advance in the cartography not only of Galicia but also of the Peninsula. Queen Isabel II came to A Coruña in 1858 to inaugurate the rail works. The silver trowel from this visit is kept here, exhibited in a showcase together with other items such as recollections of prominent figures from A Coruña from the 19th century.

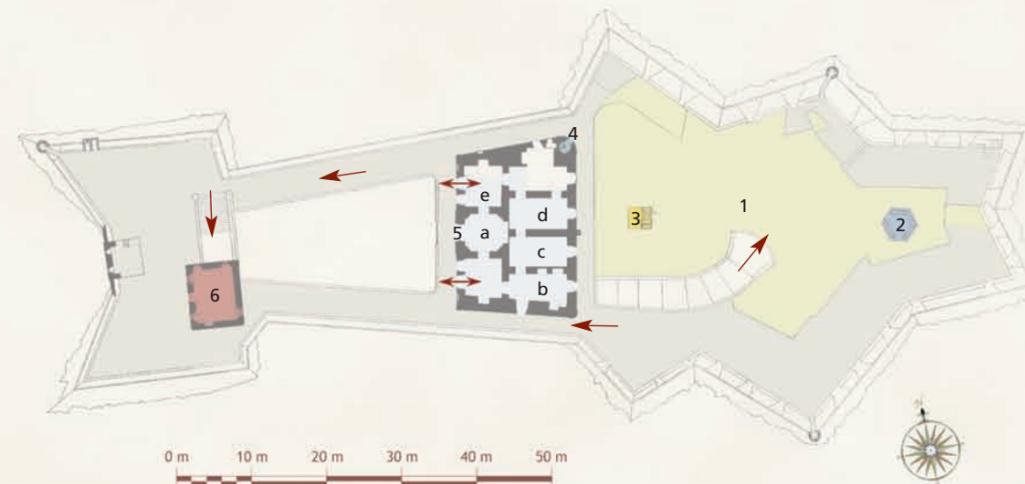
At the beginning of the 19th century, the War of Independence took place, in which the city of A Coruña lived through the episode of the Battle of Corunna in Elviña (1809). There are remains of two Flags of the Alert Battalion at that time, made of linen and with the painted shield of Galicia and some items recovered from the battlefield (sabre, bayonet, ammunition). The shield of A Coruña and the one of Spain is embroidered on the two Flags of Isabel II,

exhibited in the same room together with the 18th century Standard of the city. The presence of the Tower of Hercules is outstanding on these flags, before and after Giannini's restoration at the end of the 18th century; in later ones, attention is drawn to how the earthing chain of the lightning rod is emphasized. In all probability, it is one of the first in Spain as it corresponds to the spirit of enlightenment of A Coruña during the Century of Light.

The following room is devoted to the sea, a foundation of the city and engine of its history. In 1589, the city endured a siege from the English fleet commanded by Francis Drake, a year after the ships of the *Gran Armada* landed in the port of A Coruña. The role that the women of the city played in this period was emphasized, especially that of the heroine called Maria Pita. The remains recovered from the Cape Cee shipwreck are from this same period, mainly coins, grapeshot and a ring. Several cannon balls and a money chest from a boat complete this room.



The visit ends in the sacristy and in the small neoclassic chapel, which replaces the earlier one of San Antón. A varied collection of liturgical and religious objects are on show there, including the Image of the Virgin of the Rosary, patron saint of the city, or the neoclassic cupboard from the chapel at the cemetery of San Amaro, finished off with a painting attributed to the studio of Murillo: *La Virgen de la servilleta*.



UPPER FLOOR

1. Courtyard-Garden
2. Lighthouse
3. Well
4. Access to the terrace
5. House of the Governor: History Section
 - a. Vestry-Chapel
 - b. Navigation Room
 - c. War of Independence
 - d. Baroque Room
 - e. History of A Coruña
6. Guard-Room: workshops