

SECTION 8

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT NECROPOLISES IN HISPANIA

While the urban remains of Gades are heavily altered by the medieval, modern, and contemporary city, the great eastern necropolis of the city, located in the long island (Cotinusa), is in an exceptional state of preservation, as it was covered by dune layers.

Several thousands of tombs from all periods have been excavated in Cádiz, along an extension of 2.5 km (between Puerta de Tierra and Trille Street, approximately), and on both sides of the Via Augusta before reaching the entrance to the city.

The study of the funerary world is necessarily interdisciplinary: epigraphists for inscriptions, bioanthropologists or forensic specialists for anatomical and paleopathological study, ceramologists for grave goods, numismatists, and a long list of other specialists.

The Gadir-Roman necropolis presents some peculiarities, since there are no monumental tombs like in other Roman cities. For example, the lapidary epigraphy features specific supports (such as hexagonal plaques) or formulas typical of the region, like "*Karus/Kara suis*" ("beloved by their own").

This is the most important research topic for the present—studying everything that has already been excavated—and for the future, as there remain hundreds of plots still to be archaeologically investigated.



VRBS IVLIA GADITANA

Desempolvando su pasado

Did you know we have a lot of demographic data from two thousand years ago?

Unlike earlier periods, in which tombs do not explicitly provide the names of the deceased, the more than 1,000 preserved funerary inscriptions from Cádiz offer valuable information about the Roman population, following a very concise and easily understandable formula, much like in our cemeteries today.

Dedication to the Manes gods (*Diis Manibus sacrum*), the name of the deceased (*tria nomina*, *duo nomina*, or *cognomen*), age in years and sometimes months—for the youngest—and formulas such as “beloved by their own” (*carus/a suis*), “here lies” (*hic situs/a est*), and “may the earth rest lightly upon you” (*sit tibi terra levis*). Those belonging to the more noble classes were much more extensive.

In Roman times, life expectancy was around forty years, although there are examples of deceased individuals of all ages. The cases illustrated here range from Quieta (70 years), Faustilius (55), Epistus (33), Restitutus (27), Prepusa (26), Saturnina (19), and the young Martialis, just 1 year and 4 months old.

