

CELTIBERIC AND ROMAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE IN SPAIN

The archaeological site of Tiermes (Tiermes / Termes / called Termancia years ago), at Montejo de Tiermes (Soria, Castilla y León, Spain), is one of the most interesting site on the Iberian Peninsula. The long period over which the area was habited, extending from Neolithic times up to the early modern age, encompassing the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, the Celtiberian period (oppidum and necropolis at Carratiermes), the Roman period (Roman municipium at Termes), the Visigoth period and the medieval times, covers more than thirty-five centuries.

Since 1975 to 1998, the team of archaeologists led by the Director-Curator of the Numantino Museum, Jose Luis Argente Oliver, died in 1998, has been carrying out annual digging campaigns in the spring and summer months. Now, a new international team of archaeologists led by Santiago Martínez Caballero (Curator of the Segovia Museum) and Alberto Bescós Corral (Curator of the Zamora Museum) carry out annual digging campaigns with the support of the Asociación de Amigos del Museo de Tiermes, the Perugia University, the Valladolid University and other Spanish scientific institutions.

A SORT REVIEW OF THE TIERMES HISTORY:

Some cities inscribe their name in the History because of the great deeds of its inhabitants defending their freedom and their independence. During the long and terrible Celtiberic war, Rome sent its powerful army against a poor and faraway people who lived in the rich lands of Hispania: the AREVACOS (ARAVACI), the boldest and most war-like Celtiberic people, whose cities, Numancia and Tiermes mainly, were impregnable to the Roman army. Numancia became the terror of the Republic. Tiermes was an ally of Numancia and a natural fortress. It was not conquered until 98 b. C., when Tito Didio (Titus Didius), after his victory, forced the people to go down from the city to the low lands. They had to leave their city in the mountain and also Tito Didio stopped them walling the new place. The aggressiveness of the Termestine people was clearly shown during the wars against Rome, they defeated Consul Quintus Pompey's army in 139-138 b.C. and they resisted the Roman sieges. The oldest archaeological remains found in Tiermes are from the first half of the 2nd millennium b.C. The written references about Tiermes are limited and very brief in their comments. The first comment about Tiermes is from Apianus. He says that Tiermes was one of the most important arevacii cities. These comments are dated from 143 b.C. when Apianus spoke of the Celtiberic wars (Apianus resume Polibius history about the Roman Republic). We have some other news about Tiermes in the Celtiberic times, but only the necropolis excavation is giving us important information about their funeral rituals and about their social structure. The absence of important documents and the ignorance of the last 2500 years about Tiermes are beginning to disappear because of the archaeological works, which began in 1975 and still continue in this place.

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www.tiermes.net

THE CITY NAME

The first name of the city was Termes, as appears in classical and medieval texts according to epigraphic studies. Only Apianus and Diodorus used another name, Termentia, maybe because it sounds similar to Numancia, the most important celtiberic city at this time. The name "Tiermes" was used until the XIII century, since then there has been a linguistic evolution changing the name "Termes" into "Tiermes" today's name.

MONOGRAPHIC TIERMES MUSEUM

On 9th June in 1986 the Monographic Tiermes Museum was inaugurated, being its aim to give visitors complementary information of the place and to show some of the materials that have been found. On the other hand, this building has some complementary installations to help the archaeologist's studies, photographic laboratories, restoration, drawing, etc. The exhibition of Tiermes Museum picks out the archaeological materials that refer to the three main periods of the place: Celtiberian, Roman and Middle Ages. In this way, we try to complement the visit to the architectural remains of the town and get precise and complete information.

NECROPOLIS (CEMETERY) OF CARRATIERMES

There is not much information about this stage but the excavations in the celtiberic necropolis of Tiermes, called Carratiermes, is giving us numerous and important archaeological information. Until now the fieldwork affects only a part of the necropolis, but we just have enough global features to relate this necropolis with other ones of this geographic area. However Carratiermes has given us new remains and because of them we can know something about the unknown aspects of the Celtiberic world.

The excavated tombs in Carratiermes were cremated, the osseous remains and the dowry are placed in different positions: inside a grave in the natural conglomerate, just on the ground, inside an urn, etc. In general, the tomb were protected and covered with small stone heaping, and in other cases we find stones surrounding a stone stele with the dowry under it. In this necropolis, to the west, a funeral collection was excavated; its structure was made of limestone and sandstone building a small mountain not too high and tombs around it. The tombs dowries date back from a modern era of this necropolis of Carratiermes.

ROMAN AGE

The nature of geological area (sandstone, called arenisca) made possible, even in the celtiberic stage, architecture carved from rock. This was an ideal solution to build houses bearing in mind the weather of this area. Because of this special stonework we can still see the basic structures of the houses. Roman buildings have also survived with its rubbed masonry wall. This fact and the good maintenance of the public and private houses and streets make this place the Spanish Pompeii, as Taracena called Tiermes.

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The most brilliant stage in the long life of Tiermes was, certainly, the roman age, which has the majority of the today archaeological remains. The archaeological investigations about the present works are based in different parts of the city those belonging to the roman and medieval times. The most important roman building are:

- Aqueduct, Castellum Aquae, Forum, Macellum, Termas, Wall, the "Aqueduct House" (1.800 m²).

MEDIEVAL AGE

The information about medieval Tiermes disappeared during the Low Roman Empire and Visigothic times. The Islamic age is unknown to us. When the Christians conquered Tiermes, one church was built in that time, the today hermitage known as Our Lady of Tiermes. But nobody lived in the old city permanently. A necropolis carved from rock is near the Manzanares river. In this necropolis more than 40 burials have been found in the native stone. There are not funeral dowries or osseous remains; just in one of them there was a small glass and a metallic object. Their chronology dates back from the IX to the XI centuries.

The medieval necropolis is placed around the hermitage of Our Lady of Tiermes and more than 200 tombs have been studied there. The necropolis has several kinds of burials: with sandstone, in sarcophagus, two tombs over the roman road, etc. Chronologically this necropolis dates from the end of the XI century and the beginning of the XII century to the XV century. These two mentioned burials over the roman road date back from the VI-VII centuries.

Tiermes was an inhabited city until the XV century, later the people of Tiermes went to live in the neighbouring cities. Since then the news that we have about it are just bibliographical references (Loperráez, Rabal, Romanones, Calvo, etc...). In this sense the investigations of Taracena were the most important ones in order to understand the archaeological study of this place. The present studies and fieldwork in Tiermes were initiated in Tiermes were initiated in 1975.