



Who was Agrippina the Younger?

A white marble head sculpture representing 'Agrippina the Younger', daughter of Germanicus, sister of Caligula, wife of his uncle Claudius and mother of Nero. She was a woman who, according to the history of Rome, used her power and the elements this afforded her in order to establish herself on the throne and thereby establish her son as emperor of the Roman Empire. The different plots and conspiracies that she spearheaded gradually supplanted other contenders to the throne of Rome, which would even lead her to do away with her own husband. She was finally killed by her own son, Nero.

This bust from Merida has youthful features, with almond-shaped eyes and a small mouth and nose, although it is currently fragmented. An important feature is the hairstyle, a braided bow on the back of the neck, known as the '*talega*,' as can be seen on the back of the sculpture. This head would have formed a part of the iconography of the forum in the colony of Emeritus, which would have contained images of other emperors; all of them would have served to underline the importance of the Julian-Claudian dynasty (Castellano, Álvarez 2009: 26). It is 48 cm high and originally would have formed a part of a complete, almost life-sized statue. It has been dated to around the year 50 AD .



Sculpture of Agrippina the Younger (MAN 34433).

History of the sculpture of Agrippina

This piece appeared in the area of Mérida known as 'Diana's temple', although P. M. Plano mentions that was found on Berzocana Street next to another female head (Plano 1894: 28). Thanks to this author we know that it was part of the collection of the Archaeological Museum of Mérida (Plano 1894: sheet 1) but must have been sold at some unknown moment, as the next news we have about it is that it was part of the collection of the Marquis de Monsalud (Mariano Carlos Solano Gálvez). It was possibly acquired in 1901, at which time the marquis informed Father F. Fita of the offer he had received to acquire various pieces, including the statue of Agrippa kept in the Museum of Merida, fragments of architectural elements, and a marble head (García Iglesias 1997:186). Finally this sculpture was not sold, and is still in the National Museum of Roman Art, although the head to which he referred was possibly the one seen in this sculpture.

Faced with the possibility of the piece being sold outside of Spain, the Marquis of Monsalud acquired it for his important archaeological collection kept at his mansion in Almendralejo (Badajoz) .

After the death of the marquis, the collection was broken up, and was bought by the Catalan antique dealer, Rafael Casulleras, who divided it into several lots: one of them, containing around 150 pieces, was bought by the National Archaeological Museum in 1930 (Almagro Basch 1976: 135). Entry 149 of the file kept in the archive of the National Archaeological Museum corresponds to this sculpture, which is described as "large female Roman head, made of marble" (Exp. MAN 1930/95_14v). Since 1930, the sculpture has been exhibited in this museum in Madrid in the so-called "Roman courtyard," along with other portraits, figures in togas, and the large seated statues of Livia Drusa and the Emperor Augustus.



Toga sculpture (MAN 34431) and head of Agrippina the Younger (Mérida 1925: plate CXXV).

The Temple of Diana

The so-called 'Temple of Diana' is the main element of the Forum of the colony of Emerita Augusta. Despite being called this since the seventeenth century, it was not actually dedicated to the goddess, but instead to the imperial cult (Álvarez, Nogales 2003: 289), although other possible connections have been suggested in recent years (Ayerbe *et alii* 2009: 683). The temple was reused as a palace from the 15th century, until it was bought in 1972 by the Spanish State, to be restored and repaired. It is a *peripteros*, hexastyle temple, with six columns on the front and eleven on the side, made of granite that was then covered in stucco. It stands on a platform, which was accessed by a monumental staircase (Álvarez, Nogales 2003: 102). This latter interpretation considers that it must have been accessed by a central staircase, that began on a tribune, which was reached by two staircases on the side (Ayerbe *et alii* 2009: 672). The temple was surrounded by a sacred space or *temenos* that included a large rectangular area that was iden-

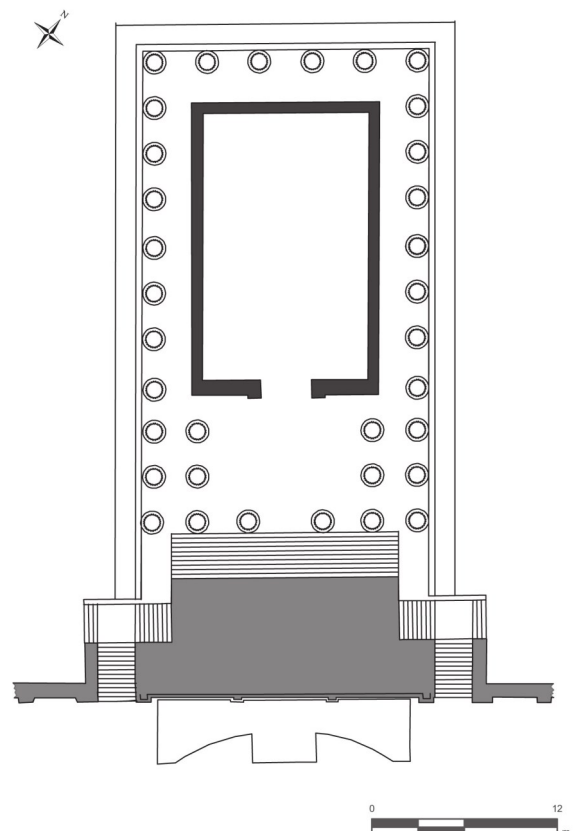
tified in the excavations carried out in the 1980s (Álvarez, Nogales 2003:72) and the new excavations carried out in this century (Ayerbe *et alii* 2009). In this space, on both sides of the temple, two virtually symmetrical ponds were built, covered with *opus signinum*. The entire sacred area was surrounded by a building in the form of π or an inverted U, which has been reproduced in the reconstruction of the modern-day square. As far as its iconographic elements are concerned, the temple would have contained statues of the imperial family, although little information is available about them. The *cella* may have contained a semi-colossal statue wearing a toga, effigies of empresses such as Agrippa, or pedestals of statues. It would have contained a group of sculptures of seated emperors, and female effigies (Álvarez, Nogales 2004: 314-318).

"A gentleman from Mérida wishes to sell me the statue of Agrippa in that Museum, with certain fragments of architecture, and a marble head. I do not consider it opportune that I should take anything from that Museum (...). The bad thing is that if it were sold, anyone could take it, and possibly from abroad (Letter from the Marquis of Monsalud to F. Fita, 01/04/1901, García Iglesias 1997:186).

*Estimated layout of the temple (Ayerbe *et alii* 2009: 671).*



Temple of Diana, Mérida, Spain (Photo A. Felicísimo).



The 3-D Model

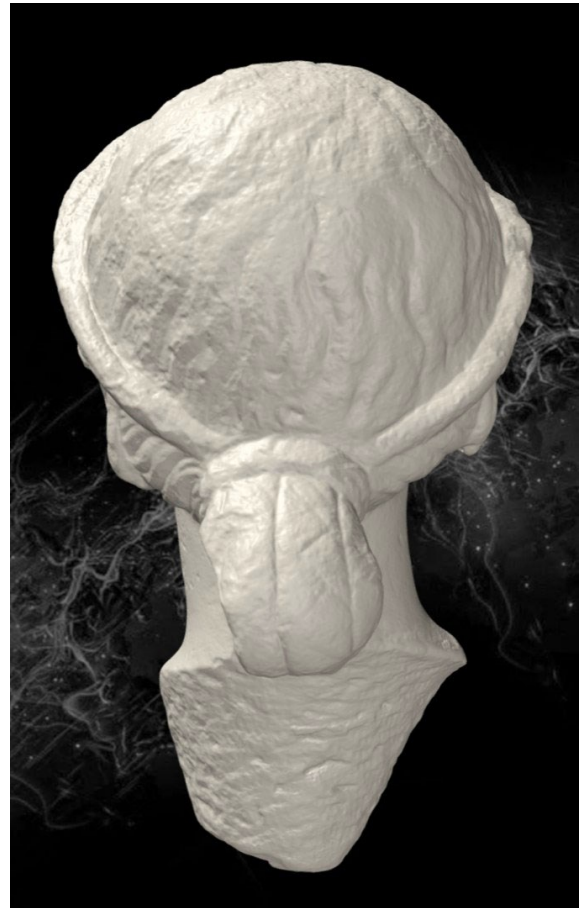
The 3-D model was made using a Go!Scan 50 scanner with a resolution of 1 mm and a metric precision of more than 0.2 mm. The sculpture was previously scanned in order to create a marble replica for permanent display in the exhibition of the Temple of Diana, where the original sculpture had been kept.

The colour of the sculpture is uniform, without any outstanding features, and so only its geometry was scanned. The process was carried out at the

National Archaeological Museum in two stages. The first part consisted of scanning the sculpture on its base (which is modern). For the second part, it was removed so that the bottom section could be scanned, which is where it was attached to the original statue that has now disappeared. Both scans were then cleaned up and fused together to create the complete model. The fusion process was carried out connecting similar points, with both scans including the same sections.

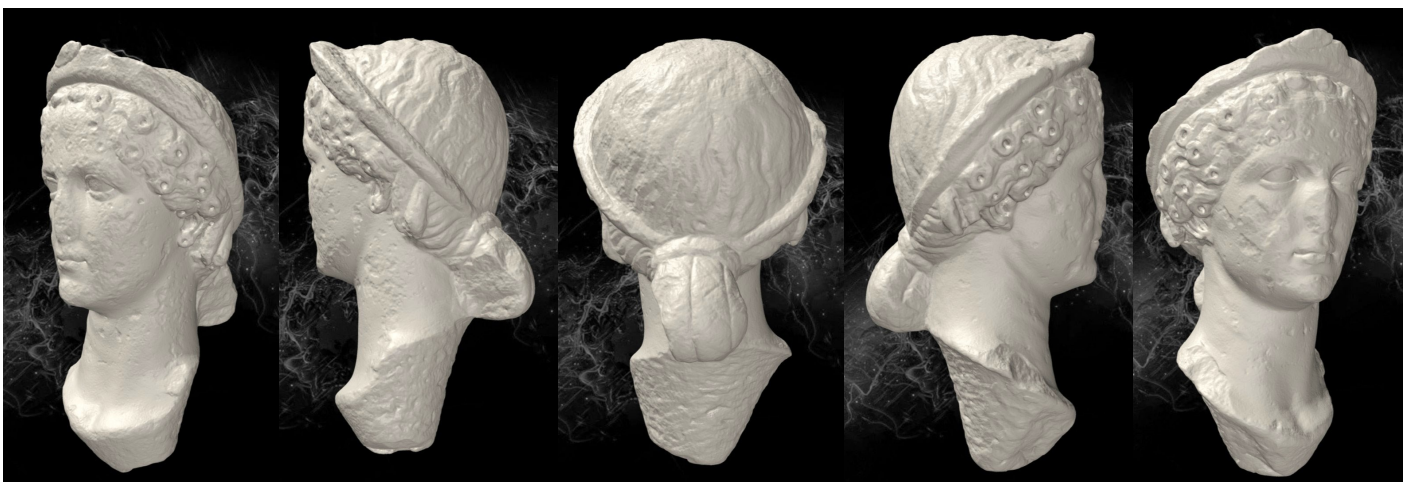


Left: Go!Scan 50 structured light scanner used for the 3-D scanning of this sculpture.



Link to the interactive 3-D model <https://skfb.ly/YVXI>

3-D models are basically computer files that contain information about the shape and color of the objects in question. The process of digitising collections of objects can be used to create virtual online catalogues.



Images of the sculpture seen from different angles. The interactive 3-D model is available at <https://skfb.ly/YVXI>

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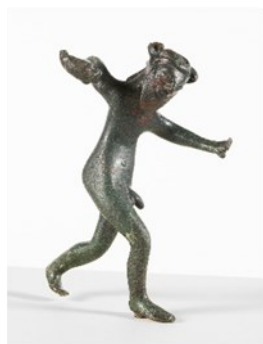
DIÁSPORA was presented to the Regional Research Plan of Extremadura in May 2016. The Decision of 24 May 2017, published in the Official Bulletin of Extremadura on 2 June 2017, includes it amongst the projects (file number IB16212) accepted to be carried out between 2017 and 2019. Research Project in Public R&D&I Centres in the Autonomous Region of Extremadura.

Our thanks to the National Archaeological Museum, and especially Paloma Cabrera, Ángeles Castellano, Margarita Moreno and Aurora Ladero for her valuable help in being able to make the images of the sculpture, and to consult the files in the respective archive.

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Other documents in the series



From left to right: torso from the Temple of Diana (Mérida -MASE REP00459-), Sileno (Capilla, Badajoz -MAN 1972/45/1-), Plaque Idol (Garrovillas, Cáceres -MAN 358-), Kylix (Medellín, Badajoz -MAN 1969/61/1-).



The kylix of Medellín (Badajoz)

This Attic wine cup or kylix belongs to the so-called "Little Masters" (Almagro *et alii* 2008: 582). It is a cup with black figures, and measures 11.6 x 19.0 x 24.7 cm. Its exterior is decorated with two contrasting images. On one side, there is a bearded figure in profile holding two lightning bolts in his hands, reminiscent of the symbolism associated with the god Zeus, who is dressed in a kind of tunic decorated with geometric elements. Below the divinity there is an inscription in Greek that reads: "I am a beautiful vessel". On the other side we can see the hindquarters of a galloping horse mounted by a teenage boy or *ephebus*, of which only some traces remain. The richness, detail and refinement of the representations is also confirmed by the attachment used for the handles, using two pairs of decorative palmette designs. The interior of the vessel is decorated with a medallion, in the centre of which two roosters appear facing each other, although the image is only partially complete. Researchers have identified it as a work by the potter Eucheiros (Almagro *et alii* 2008: 587) and date it to the 6th century BC.



Kylix of Medellín, Badajoz (MAN 1969/61/1).

History of the kylix

This cup is now in a poor state of repair and there are still quite a few fragments missing to be able to reconstruct it completely. The existence of the first fragment was crucial to the discovery of the necropolis of Medellín (Almagro Gorbea 1969).

The random discovery of several fragments means that the precise archaeological context is not known, although it seems that it must have belonged to a funeral deposit in the necropolis of Medellín.

How did this piece come to form a part of the collections of the National Archaeological Museum? According to the archival documentation kept in this institution, it was part of a group of

pieces sent to the museum as a permanent transfer from the Archaeological Museum of Badajoz (Exp. MAN 1982/41).



*Photograph of the area where the cup was found (Almagro *et alii* 2006: 22).*

The necropolis of Medellín

The site is located at the foot of the hill known as 'El Castillo', in Medellín (Badajoz), on a promontory at the point where the Hortigas and Guadiana rivers meet.

Its accidental discovery -some fragments were discovered while a well was being drilled- means that the precise archaeological context in which the piece was originally deposited is unknown, although we know that it must have belonged to a funerary deposit in the necropolis of Medellín.

In 1969, excavations began that led to the discovery of one of the most representative necropolises of the Orientalising period, as confirmed by the rich grave goods of its tombs.

Different types of burials have been documented: in pits, tumuli, or under layers of crushed stones. These latter types of structures are characteristic of the necropolis of Medellín, made with pebbles from

the Guadiana River in concentric alignments (Almagro *et alii* 2006).

Excavation of the necropolis of Medellín, Badajoz
(Almagro *et alii* 2006: 47).



καλὸν εἶμι ποτήρ(ι)ον

I am a beautiful vessel (Olmos, 1976: 253)

Basic bibliography

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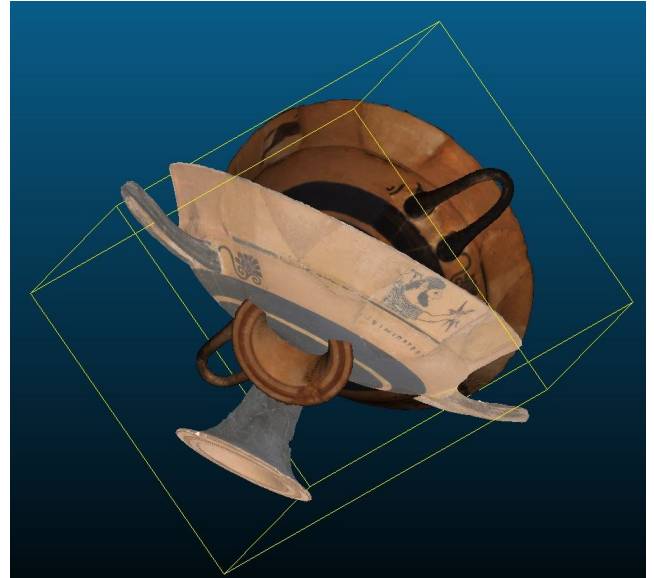
The archaeological area of Medellín (Badajoz) (Photo: M. R. de Soto).

The 3-D model

The 3-D model of this piece was obtained by merging a three-dimensional mesh obtained by means of a high-precision metric scan, with a photogrammetric model that provides realistic and high resolution photographic information. The scan was made with a Go!Scan 50 scanner with a metric accuracy of 0.5 mm. In this step it was not necessary to capture the texture of the object, as this is obtained from the photogrammetric process. In this step, 41 photographs of the kylix were taken with a Pentax 645Z 51 Mpx camera, to then generate a high-resolution, true-colour 3-D model. In both cases the piece was placed on a rotating platform to turn it while scanning and taking pictures. During the photo session, the piece was illuminated by LED panels

with diffusers, a calibrated colour chart was photographed, and the images were corrected according to the specific colour profile.

Once the 3-D models had been created using both techniques, they were imported into a computer application (Cloud Compare) to unify the axes, orientation, and scale. Finally, using the mesh created by the scanner, once correctly oriented and scaled, the image or texture constructed with the photogrammetric method was projected. The result is a model that combines all of the strengths of both methods: a high-resolution texture, and highly accurate dimensions.



The illustration shows one stage of the workflow involved in merging the mesh from the scan with the photogrammetric model. The aim is to ensure that the final result has the metric accuracy and true scale provided by the scanner, and the texture information with the colour calibration from the high-resolution digital camera.



Link to the interactive combined 3-D model <https://skfb.ly/6KrqS>

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Our thanks to the National Archaeological Museum, and especially Alicia Rodero and Aurora Ladero for her valuable help in being able to make the images of the sculpture, and to consult the files in the respective archive.

Other documents in the series



From left to right: head of Agrippina the Younger (Mérida – MAN 34433), stele of Hernán Pérez (Cáceres- MAN 1991 / 105 / 6), Plaque Idol (Garrovillas, Cáceres – MAN 358).

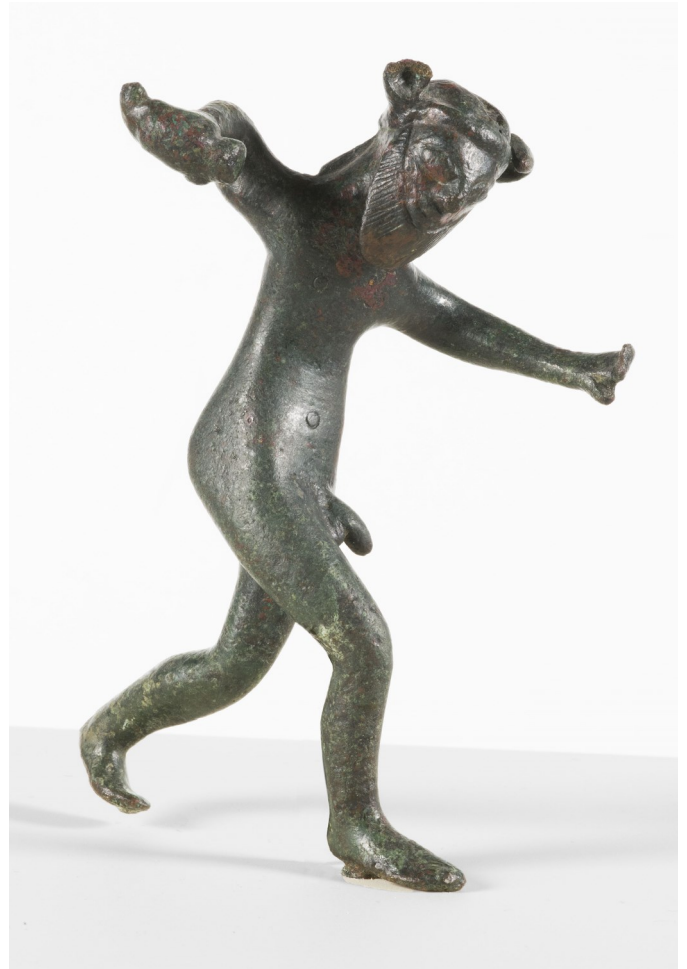


The Silenus of Capilla (Badajoz)

This solid bronze figure represents a naked Silenus in a dancing posture, as shown by his extended arms and legs, carrying a bowl or *kyton* for drinking wine in his right hand, in a clear allusion to a 'symposiast' (an intoxicated individual) associated with the ritual of the banquet.

This object may be an ornamental element from some kind of container, or could have been part of a perfume burner (Olmos 1977: 373). The figure combines human and animal traits, such as pointed ears (Olmos 1977: 377). Its anatomical details are simple, without stressing the musculature, although the front is more detailed thanks to the punching and dotting of the surface. Small incisions indicate the beard, while a number of ribbons, which hold the figure's hair in place, fall onto its shoulders. All of these details can be seen in the photographs or in the 3D model that was made thanks to this research project.

This is a small statue (11.5 x 7.8 cm) made using the 'lost wax' casting technique, which was found in the town of Capilla in Badajoz. It has been interpreted as a piece made by indigenous populations, with Greek influences (Almagro Gorbea 1977: 384). It has been dated from what is known as the Orientalising Period, between the end of the sixth century or start of the fifth century BC.



The Silenus of Capilla (MAN 1972/45/1).

In Greek mythology, Silenus was a satyr who was the adoptive father and companion of Dionysius, the god of wine. He was often represented in a state of drunkenness.

History of the Silenus of Capilla

This bronze was found around 1969 in an area known as Tabla de las Cañas, near Capilla (Badajoz). Unfortunately, no further details are known about the figure. It is currently kept in the National Archaeological Museum, with reference number 1972/45/1.

From the archival documentation, also kept in the MAN, we know that in August 1972 the Spanish state decided to acquire it, at which point it entered the Museum (MAN 1972/45-6). At present it can be seen in Room 11, dedicated to Peninsular Prehistory.

The site of Tablas de las Cañas

Tabla de las Cañas is a site located in the municipality of Capilla (Badajoz), on the banks of the river Zújar. It is located at an altitude of about 350 m, a fundamental aspect of the site, as it controls obligatory transit points. Near the highest point of Capilla (Peñón del Pez, 734 m) and about 3 km from the site, there is a large defensive settlement (Domínguez y García 1991: 237). At present, the site of Tabla de las Cañas is considerably altered, due to the construction of trenches and a munitions store during the Spanish Civil War (Domínguez and García 1991: 236).

This is a settlement in which it is difficult to detect the wall structures. On the eastern and northern slopes it is possible to see what has been interpreted as a wall that would have protected a small settlement of one hectare. As regards the structures that have been revealed by excavation work, it has been confirmed that they are rectangular dwellings made up of an indeterminate number of rooms with walls made of rammed earth and adobe over stone masonry. The floors, made of rammed earth or pebbles, are in a highly deteriorated condition (Domínguez and García, 1991:240).



*View of Capilla (Badajoz) where the dancing satyr figure was found
(Foto: wikipedia CC BY-SA 4.0).*

Photographs



Access the images on <https://tinyurl.com/y4lyl2s3>

The 3-D Model

The 3-D model was made with a Go!Scan 20 scanner with 0.2 mm resolution and slightly better metric accuracy. The figure has a very dark colour, as can be seen in the photographs, so a non-textured model was made so that the morphology can be seen more easily. The colour of the model is therefore not real (it is actually the colour seen in the photographs). The scan was made at the National Archaeological Museum by placing the sculpture in various positions and then merging the partial models to generate a complete one. The

fusion is done by marking equivalent points, which means that both scans must include several common areas. The structured light scanner projects a light pattern onto the object to generate the 3D model, without damaging the piece.



Go!Scan 20 scanner .



Link to the interactive 3-D model: <https://skfb.ly/6Kt9I>

Basic bibliography

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Silenus often appears in Bacchic representations, such as the one carved on this first century marble altar where, among other figures, we can identify Chiron, Bacchus, Hercules and the drunken Silenus, crowned with vine leaves. The piece is in the National Archaeological Museum (No. 2708) and is originally from Rome.



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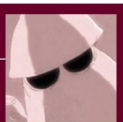
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Other documents in the series



From left to the right: Stele from Hernán Pérez (Cáceres-MAN 1991/105/6), Plaque Idol from the dolmen of Garrovillas (Cáceres-MAN 358), Torso from the Temple of Diana (Mérida-Badajoz MASE REP00459).