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Walls (Archaeological Promenade)

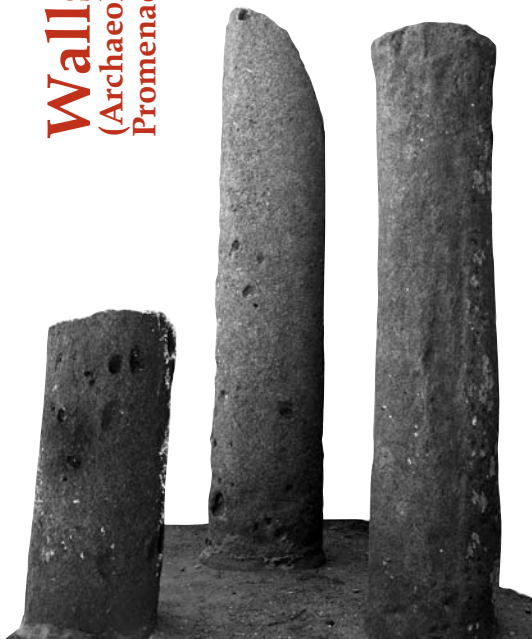


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Walls (Archaeological Promenade)



Tarraco's Roman wall is the most ancient and preserved monument. Of its original length which were more than 4,500 metres, it is only preserved the part that embraces the Old Town of the city, of 1,100 metres approximately. The rest has disappeared due to the urban growth of the last two centuries.

The Archaeological walking route follows the 18th century fortifications, which were built to protect the city against the War of the Spanish Succession of the Spanish monarchy. In 1932 it became the current promenade and it was opened to the public as a romantic garden area.

Of the wall's oldest period (dating of the beginning of the 2nd century BC) there are only little sections and three towers left: the Archbishop, Capiscol and Minerva towers.

This first phase facings, are placed before the Archbishop tower and between the Seminary and Minerva towers. The main feature are their construction based on rough stones (*opus siliceum*), also known as polygonal or Cyclopean apparel, with an original size of six metres and four metres width.

The majority of the preserved wall sections belong to a second period and they are formed by big stones (cyclopean or polygonal) which hold an ashlar's facing (*opus quadratum*). Some of these ashlars present old stone-cutter marks. Despite their differences in construction, both skirting boards belong to the same period, which is between years 150 and 130 BC approximately. This second period represents an important

expansion of the first one in terms of length – big part of the preserved wall belongs to this period- and dimensions, with a twelve metres height and six metres width.

The first tower, known as the Archbishop tower, preserves a Roman period ground floor (beginning of the 2nd century BC), but the major part of its height was caused due to a growth during the 14th century. Near the tower, we can observe a cyclopean main old door. In front of the tower, there is a reproduction of *August de Prima Porta*, gift given by the Italian State in 1934 due to the close connection of the emperor with Tarraco.

The second tower, known as Seminary or Capiscol, presents as well a cyclopean old door next to it. In front of the tower there is a reproduction of the mythical capitol wolf with the twins Romulus and Remus.

Minerva Tower or Saint Magí Tower is the one which presents more features. On two of its sides and on one corner, there are sculpted human heads, and on top of one of its surfaces there is a half part of a relief which represents the goddess Minerva, giving the tower its name.

The last element of interest is the Socors door. It is an ancient round arch which gave access to the city, and it is the only Roman door of big dimensions that has been preserved.

Apart from the Roman Wall, some other expansions of the defensive system can be seen, such as the Black Small Fort, and the guard force, where there can be visited a small exposition about the evolution of the city defense throughout the centuries.



01 A section of the 2nd phase walls and patrol path (150-125 BC). **02** Black Fort (16th century). **03** Facing of the first phase of the wall (217-197 BC). **04** Statue of Augustus. **05** Archbishop's Tower. **06** Cabiscol (Cantor's) Tower (217-197 BC). **07** Minerva Tower (217-197 BC). **08** Roman Gate (150-125 BC). **09** Low rampart fortifications (1709).