

MALAGA OR CUSTOMS HOUSE MUSEUM

THE BUILDING



The Customs House, the most impressive building in the capital, was built in 1826 on land reclaimed from the sea. In 2016 it was inaugurated as an archaeological and fine arts museum.



It is neoclassical in style with influences from Renaissance palaces, as it can be seen in its façade...



and interior courtyard.

ARCHAEOLOGY



THE CUSTOMS LADY: In 1789 Malaga began work on a new, larger building for its Customs House. As soon as the original foundations of the old building were excavated, a sculpture of a women from the end of the 1st or beginning of the 2nd century was uncovered. Today visitors are welcomed to the museum by this so called 'Customs Dame or Customs Lady' whose true identity is unknown.



THE WARRIOR'S TOMB: The tomb of the warrior is the star of this section. Discovered in 2012 and standing approximately 1.8 m tall, it represents a man of about 40 years of age, probably a Greek mercenary of the Phoenicians in Malaka in the 6th century BC.



The Corinthian helmet is worked with a large front palmette, snakes above the eye slits and four eagles. It was likely to have had feather plumes.



The spear, ritually unused, and the remains of a shield have also been discovered, all part of the typical ancient Greek soldier's (Hoplite) armour.



A carnelian and gold scarab, an Egyptian seal and an amulet with an engraving of Sekhmet, the goddess of war was also found.



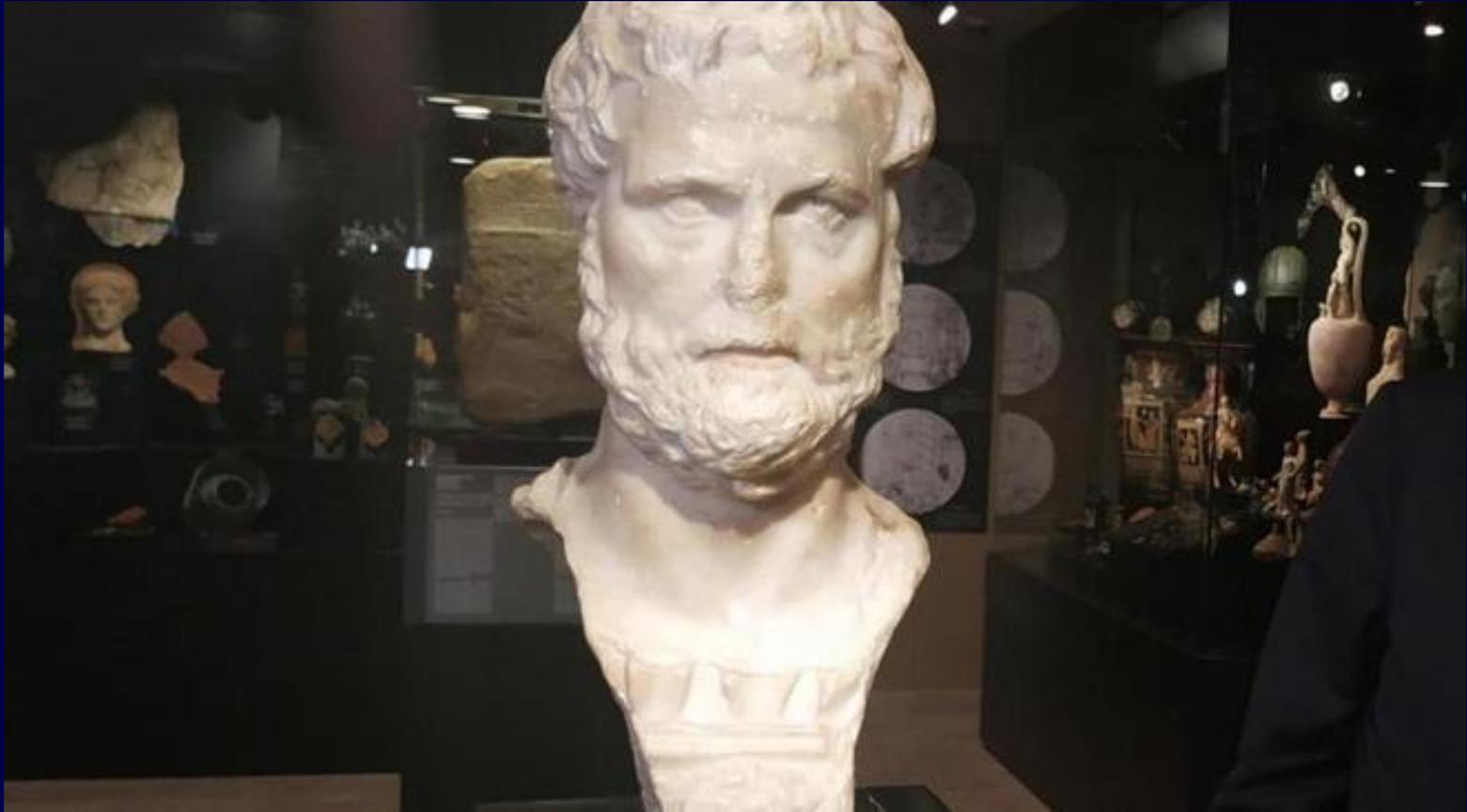
THE SEATED LADIES: These marble pieces were found in Cártama in the 18th century. As their heads and attributes have been lost, it is impossible to determine whether they are goddesses, deified empresses or representations of local ladies. Most probably the largest (1), which is more than 3 m high, is of Ceres, goddess of agriculture.



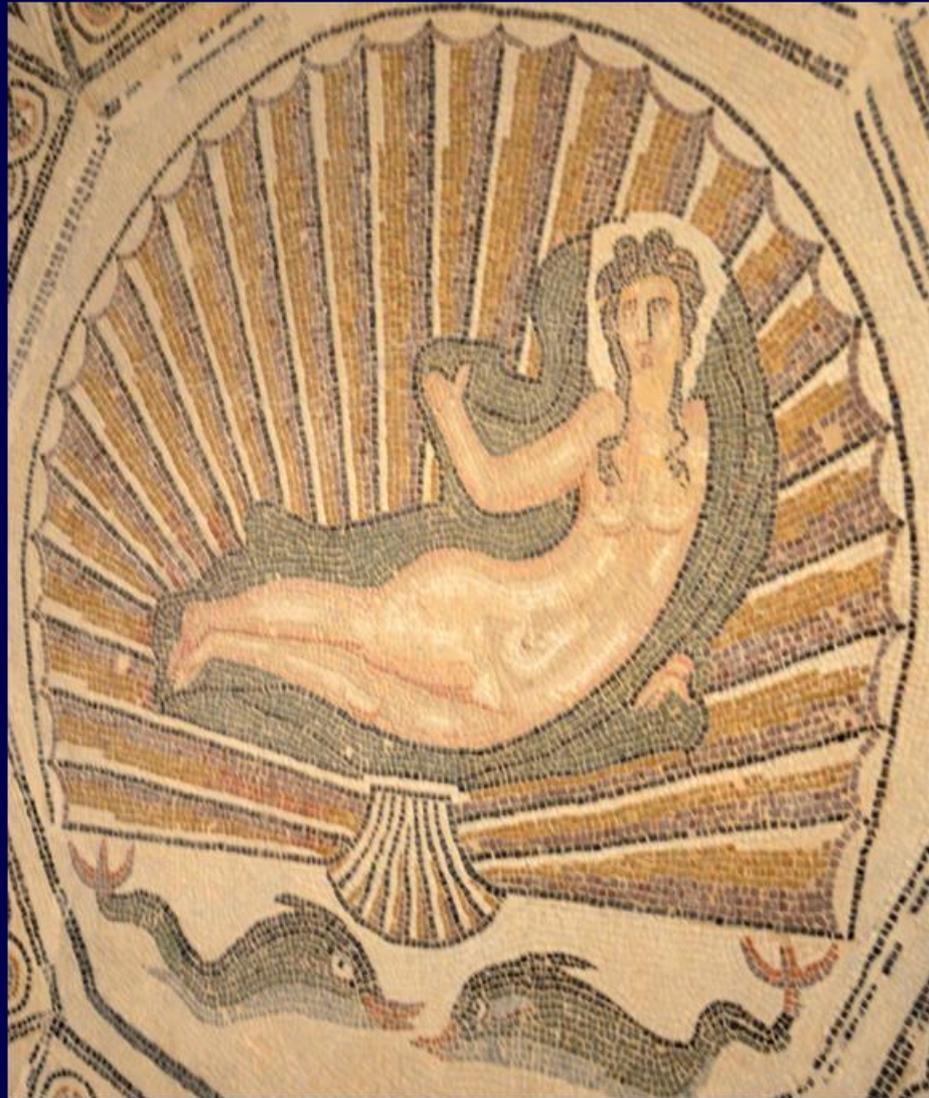
Here the play of folds, especially on the belly, is richer and more varied and the drapery is more transparent. Their heads and hands, now lost, were separate additions that must have fitted into the hollows prepared for this purpose.



The Museum's sculpture collection includes some fine portraits.



ANTONINO PIO BUST: This bust of Antoninus Pius was found by chance around 1912 in the Huelin neighbourhood. Lost for years, it was recovered thanks to some images from the Hotel Villa Padierna in Benahavís village, in which Michele Obama, then holidaying in Spain, was seen standing next to it. The bust was rescued for €80,000, restored and recently put back on display.



CARTAMA MOSAIC: The symbolism of the 6 m x 4m Cártama mosaic represents the birth of Venus, who appears reclining on a shell.



In the 2nd century, mosaic art focused more on the magnificence of the whole piece rather than individual details.



VISITABLE STOREROOM: One of the attractions of the Museum is its large visitable storeroom, located on the ground floor, with archaeological remains, paintings and objects not on main display.

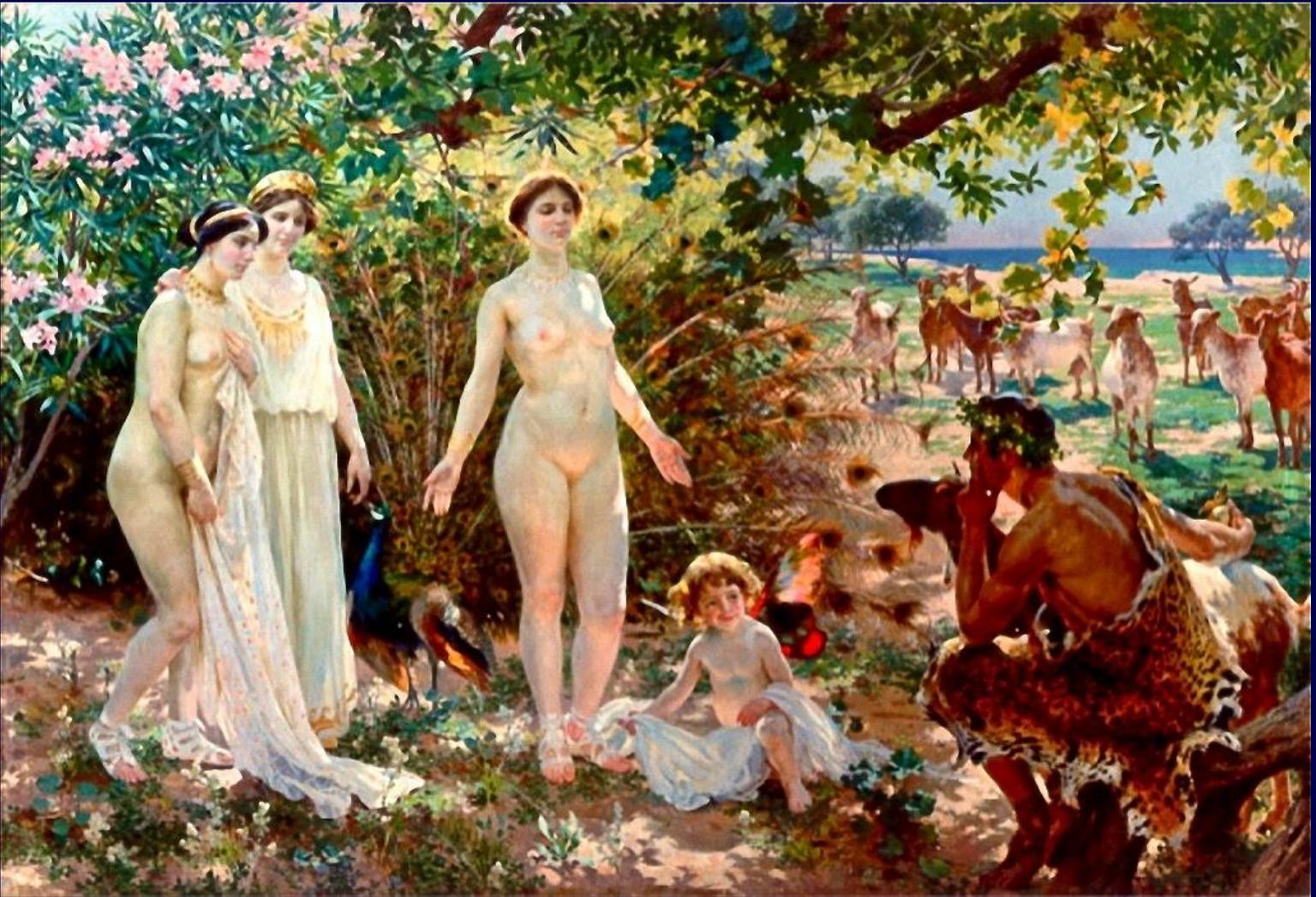


People are advised to start their visit with it, or save it until the end, but once there, not to leave without opening the drawers of the display cabinets.

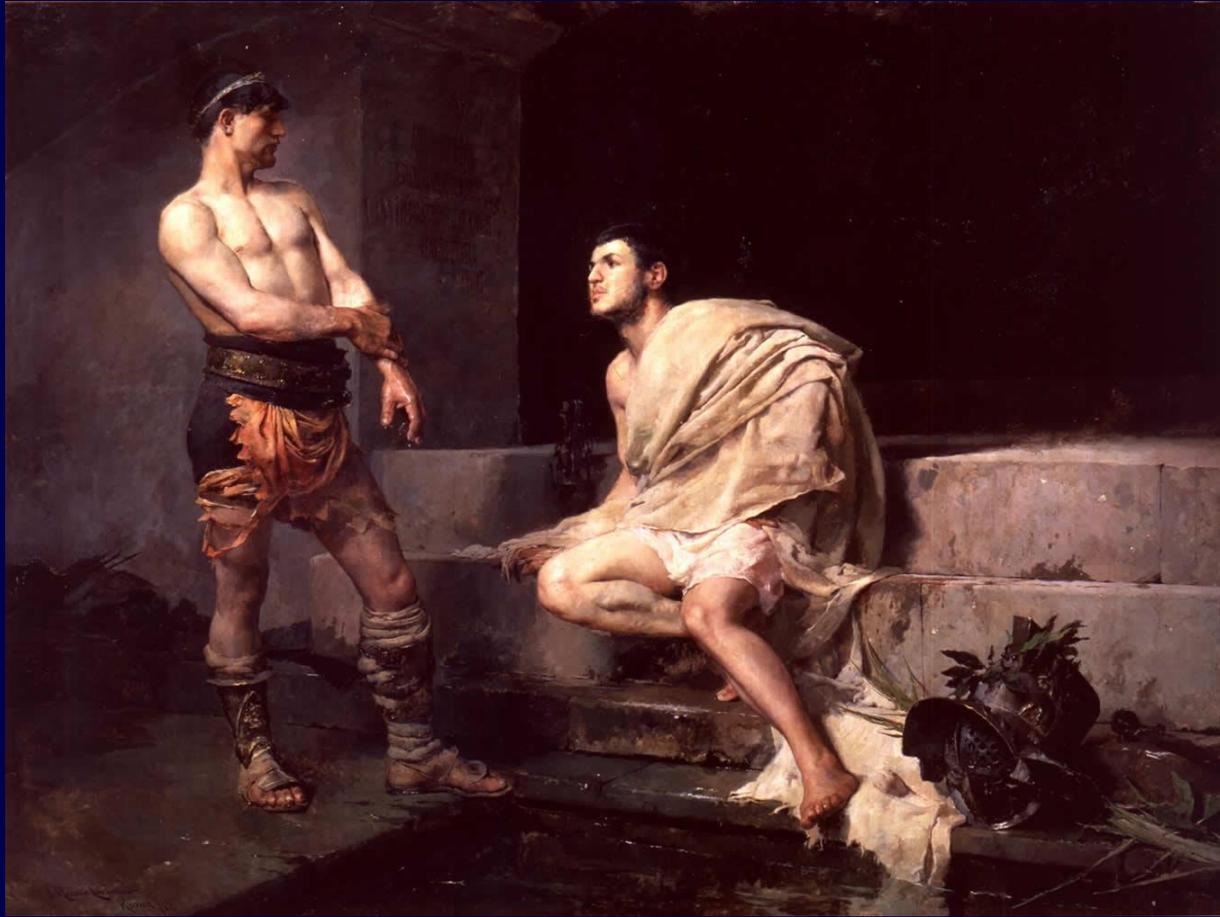
PAINTING



And She Had a Heart! by Enrique Simonet (1890) stands out for the realism of its details, the anatomical rigour and the depth of the painting suggested by the foreshortening technique used to depict the young woman's corpse.



Much more cheerful is the Judgement of Paris (1904), by the same author, who used his wife as the model for the three goddesses and his children for Eros and Paris.



The Sweating Finish Line (Latin "Meta Sudans") or Gladiators after the Combat (1880), painted by the 20 year-old José Moreno Carbonero, depicts two gladiators washing their hands by a pond after a fight and corresponds to the model of academic painting, with a classicist theme and style, and very carefully balanced drawing of light, colour and composition.



The Slave Girl for Sale by José Jiménez Aranda (1892-1902), with its Orientalist theme, is one of the most interesting nudes in 19th-century Spanish painting. The sign above the girl's belly reads in Greek: Rosa, 18 years old, for sale for 800 coins.



This Basque Drinker (1910) is in keeping with Joaquín Sorolla's loose, rapidly executed style of painting, which magnificently emphasises the hard, realistic face of the peasant.



Fernando Labrada was awarded the First National Medal for his Head Study in 1922. It is particularly noteworthy for its representation of the state of mind, with a certain halo of mystery and the landscape in the background, giving the work great depth.



Exiting the museum, visitors bid farewell to the Customs Lady, hoping to return...



...when the rooftop restaurant reopens, with its magnificent views of the Alcazaba.