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Editors:

Jaime Almansa Sánchez & Elena Papagiannopoulou



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Online Journal in Public Archaeology

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Using Facebook to build a community in the Conjunto Arqueológico de Carmona (Seville, Spain).

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Abstract

When the Conjunto Arqueológico de Carmona (Seville) was inaugurated as the first open-air archaeological museum in Spain in 1885, the institution enjoyed a local community of people interested in archaeology, but this community lost strength over time. One hundred years later, the institution has the goal of being a participative museum, and rekindling a special relationship with the local population, to form a new community of users which complements visitors. This article presents the preliminary results of a descriptive and exploratory study involving Facebook use to find out the demographic characteristics of people interested in the Conjunto Arqueológico de Carmona, as previous research to form a local community interested in archaeology and cultural heritage. Special attention is paid to the role played by education through archaeology as a means to improve social empowerment.

Keywords

Archaeological Site Management, Community Archaeology, Conjunto Arqueológico de Carmona, Facebook, Online Community, Online Education, Social Networking Sites.

Introduction

After several years of archaeological excavations carried out by Juan Fernández López, a pharmacist and local scholar, and George E. Bonsor, an Anglo-French painter who was to become one of the most influential amateur archaeologists in Spain at that time, on 24 May 1885, the Necrópolis Romana de Carmona (Roman Necropolis of Carmona) was inaugurated. The Necrópolis Romana de Carmona changed its official name in 1993 to Conjunto Arqueológico de Carmona (Carmona Archaeological Ensemble, hereinafter CAC).

The CAC turned part of the western necropolis of the ancient Roman *municipium* of *Carmo* into an open-air museum. This archaeological site is characterized by a type of burial consisting of cremation ashes kept in urns placed inside family-unit hypogea chambers accessed by a rectangular dwell-like opening (Rodríguez Temiño *et al.* 2012). These funerary complexes are dated from the end of the first century BC to the middle of the second century AD.

It was the first time that an archaeological site was opened to the public in Spain and one of the first cases within Europe. Fernández López and Bonsor had conceived a series of actions to support this museification of the Necropolis Romana de Carmona such as acquisition of the land where the ruins were located, the building of an on-site museum to show the archaeological objects found inside the Roman tombs, and the creation of a garden-like setting with paths to facilitate access to the tombs. The main pillar of the project was to be the establishment of the Sociedad Arqueológica de Carmona (Carmona Archaeological Society), a cultural platform that brought together the best of the local intellectuals and members of the Madrid and Seville Royal Academies, whose principal task was historical-archaeological research on Carmona (Maier Allende 1997). The Carmona Roman Necropolis continued as a private initiative until George E. Bonsor, shortly before his death, transferred ownership to the State on 28 July 1930.

As a museum, the CAC has the goal of being a participative institution, which means that visitors can create, share, and comment with each other about the content (Simon 2010, iii), but we are still far from being a fully participatory institution in

the way Nina Simon defines it, although we take this endeavour seriously enough to develop strategies with objectives, outcomes, and assessments to address those goals (Rodríguez Temiño *et al.* 2014).

One of these strategies is to break down the public into different categories according to their demographic characteristics, educational capital,¹ or motivation of the visit (Basset and Prince 1986), so that it is easier to adapt the message and communication to all kinds of audiences. In the broadest sense, the CAC public may be divided in two main groups for the aims of this paper: visitors and users. The difference between them is determined by how often they come to the CAC. Although the CAC receives an average of 35,000 visitors annually, the CAC lacks a stable community of users, aside from those who are family-activities consumers.

Certainly, at the time when the Necrópolis Romana de Carmona was inaugurated, there was an important local community surrounding it. Bonsor and Juan Fernández set up a guest book on the first day the Necrópolis Romana was opened to the public, where visitors could leave their signature and impressions of their visit to the ruins. The CAC's archives store five of these guest books. Upon studying these documents it is clear that during the first twenty years (1885–*circa* 1905) in the life of the Necrópolis Romana de Carmona, this site was visited by tourists from many Spanish cities and foreign countries as well as by a large part of Carmona's residents, but what is interesting to highlight now is the fact that some of them became *users* rather than merely *visitors* of the Necrópolis Romana de Carmona. They probably shared not only friendship with the owners of the Necrópolis but a common interest in archaeology and local historical studies too. There was a range of activities at the Necrópolis in which these users took part, such as those to commemorate the sixty years of the reign of Queen Victoria, organized by the only British national in Carmona at the time, George E. Bonsor, on 22 June 1897, during which readings of archaeological reports were followed by traditional dances.²

This community built around the Roman Necropolis of Carmona began losing strength over time. During the second decade of the twentieth century there is no trace of this community or new people to replace them. As more years passed, the people from Carmona

barely felt any linkage with the Necrópolis Romana de Carmona, considering it only as a resource for tourists.

One hundred years later, we think we should go back and rekindle a special relationship with the local population, to form a new community of users which complements visitors, and with whom we can develop a special relationship in the understanding of archaeology and archaeological heritage care.

We think that building a community of users around de CAC fits in with the idea of how community archaeology is intended in the United Kingdom and beyond (Moshenska and Dhanjal 2011), because of the desire of promoting active participation and the engagement of a local community with archaeology and the archaeological heritage to develop experiences that are more valuable and compelling for everyone. The main difference is about the role played by archaeological excavations. In the United Kingdom excavation forms an intrinsic and vital component of community archaeology, although it is not enough to involve local people in some community archaeology projects, as there is a lack of participation in subsequent non-excavation activities (Simpson and Williams 2008); while in Spain, legal restrictions make the involvement of members of the public in archaeological excavations difficult. According to cultural legislation, excavations must be carried out by professional archaeologists.

There are, however, strong similarities between community archaeology projects in those countries and what we do at the CAC: an emphasis in public empowerment through a two-way dialogue between archaeologists and the locals involved, enabling active participation and multiple interpretations.

But, before discussing the approach to the delimitation of the community any further, it is essential to explain the role we attribute to education in this process. This is a crucial starting point in understanding our view of public empowerment.

As a museum, the CAC's aims are educational in nature, but we try to replace, as far as possible, the traditional linear manner of presenting knowledge by other communication models in which information is devised, discussed and interpreted in a circular

process, allowing the audience to move from passive to active roles. Our educational purpose is not exclusively addressed to fill the gap between archaeologists and the lay-public in Roman funeral rites, Romanization process, and similar topics, as this kind of knowledge better fits in a formal educational setting. We think that it would be more appropriate to use those topics to develop activities aimed at enhancing positive attitudinal knowledge (Roberts 1992) of the past that helps citizens to form and keep a positive, and indeed the right, opinion about issues on archaeological heritage of public concern (Bartoy 2012).

In contrast to what happened one hundred years ago, a local community around the CAC nowadays should not exclusively be composed of people living in Carmona who come to take part in CAC onsite activities. It is possible, and desirable taking into account the possibilities offered by the internet, and especially by social networking sites, to expand our search of interested people and to combine the 'real world' and cyberspace to form a community. In fact, when we started working on this project, not only did we assume a certain degree of delocalisation of this community but also that the internet was going to be a fundamental tool because, as Kozinets (2010: 15) has stated, the use of the Internet may empower and enable the formation of communities (though see Richardson 2013; Walker 2014)

Nevertheless, it is probably inadequate to name all fans of a website or social networking site as an online community when they are merely virtual social aggregations. The term community appears appropriate only to refer to a group of people who share some sustained social interaction and a sense of familiarity between them (Kozinets 2010: 10; Varik and Oostendorp 2013: 454). Many people who visit a website or click the *like* button in a networking site do not later maintain any kind of engagement with those pages.

Building an online community between the CAC and its followers means sharing information with one another, repeated contact and promoting a feeling of familiarity and membership. It has not happened yet in our case, but we are trying to use Facebook, the most popular networking site, as a tool to approach an identification of demographics of that community. It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss psychological issues on why, or who, uses

Facebook (Ryan and Xenos 2011, Nadkarni and Hofmann 2012), however attention has been paid to the quality of the posting as we were aware that Facebook favours quick clicks on the *like* button and emotive responses to postings, rather than cognitive ones.

Museums and Facebook

Fifteen years ago, although digital interactivity was maturing, only a few museums showed interest in exploring that way as a channel with which to communicate with the public; but now the recent proliferation in the use of social networking sites has resulted in a new avenue through which museums can communicate with their audiences. Social networking sites are defined as internet-based services that give individuals three major capabilities: a) the ability to construct a public profile; b) the ability to identify a list of other users with whom a connection is shared, and c) the ability to view and track individual connections as well as those made by others (Nadkarni and Hofmann 2012).

Facebook, mainly used by people to build an online presence, is the most popular social networking site. According to Facebook Inc., the number of monthly active users was 1.11 billion at the end of March 2013, which means that 665 million people are connected to Facebook daily. In light of figures such as these, it is not surprising that an overwhelming majority of museums maintain presence on Facebook (Bonacini 2011: 141–143). This social network is no longer a mere conduit for friends to stay connected; it now also plays a pivotal role in showing museums' popularity.

Museums usually have their own web pages as the main way to communicate to their public, because websites permit hosting and provide many useful resources, so that Facebook is only an added extra for their online strategy. The main reason for the massive presence of museums on this social network is that Facebook offers the possibility of being in contact with millions of people and to increase their virtual audience (Pett 2012: 91–92; Schick and Damkjær 2010: 37).

Not being present would mean museums that wanted to have some social influence would be missing out.³ Especially for small

museums, Facebook can indeed play the role of web 2.0 platform due to its easy-to-use interface.⁴

As previously mentioned, the reason for Facebook usage by museums is, above all, to be viewed online. The strategies followed to reach this goal go through posting news and useful information about events that take place in the museum or spectacular photos of the collections with links to the museum's website, but without much interactivity. Possibly this is the main reason why many museums, despite a large number of Facebook fans, have in fact low levels of engagement. By this it is meant proportionally few active users (Schick and Damkjær 2010: 37–38).

CAC's Facebook page

After joining Facebook on 18 May 2010, the CAC's page has more than 2,932 *likes* at the time of writing. This amount of fans is very far from that of the major international museums, such as the Louvre with more than one million fans, the British Museum, with numbers exceeding four hundred and twenty thousand or the Prado National Museum, boasting an excess of two hundred and ninety thousand, and monuments such as La Alhambra with more than one hundred thousand or the Tower of London with more than sixty-four thousand. But the number of CAC's online fans is consistent with real visitors of the museum and the socio-demographic characteristics of the province of Seville. However, while, generally speaking, the statement that no museum can be popular online without having some level of popularity offline is true, the number of followers on Facebook, and any other social networking site, is also proportional and dependent on the degree of interaction with users.

The CAC created a Facebook page to improve its online presence and to keep in touch with its physical visitors and potential visitors. To achieve those goals, the CAC staff has been feeding this page with posts (status updates, photos and videos) whose contents were mainly related to news, events (guided tours, children's activities and so on), pictures of the Roman tombs in the CAC, and a small amount of information about ancient Roman funerary rites.

Of course, this model of communication, even in a social networking environment, does not enhance participation, because the message source is always the CAC and the content of the post does not encourage responses. That is why, although the CAC's page has gained fans, followers' contributions were few and trivial, as in many of the other museums' Facebook pages (Schick and Damkjær 2010: 36). Even though it seems to be normal that only a small portion of the people that visit an online community become active, around one per cent according to some authors (Nielsen 2006; Varik and Oostendorp 2013: 456), after several months, we decided to focus our activity on Facebook more on engaging with online audiences rather than on promoting events.

This lack of interaction means that users do not see what the CAC uploads on Facebook, because the news feed is a blend of top stories, your friends' recent stories and pages you *like*. By default Facebook uses an algorithm, called EdgeRank, to discriminate which posts you see on your wall. They come more from the friends and pages you interact with the most and less from those you do not. These findings can be consistent with the differences between the two most important types of information processing on internet: searching and surfing (Kim *et al.* 2014).

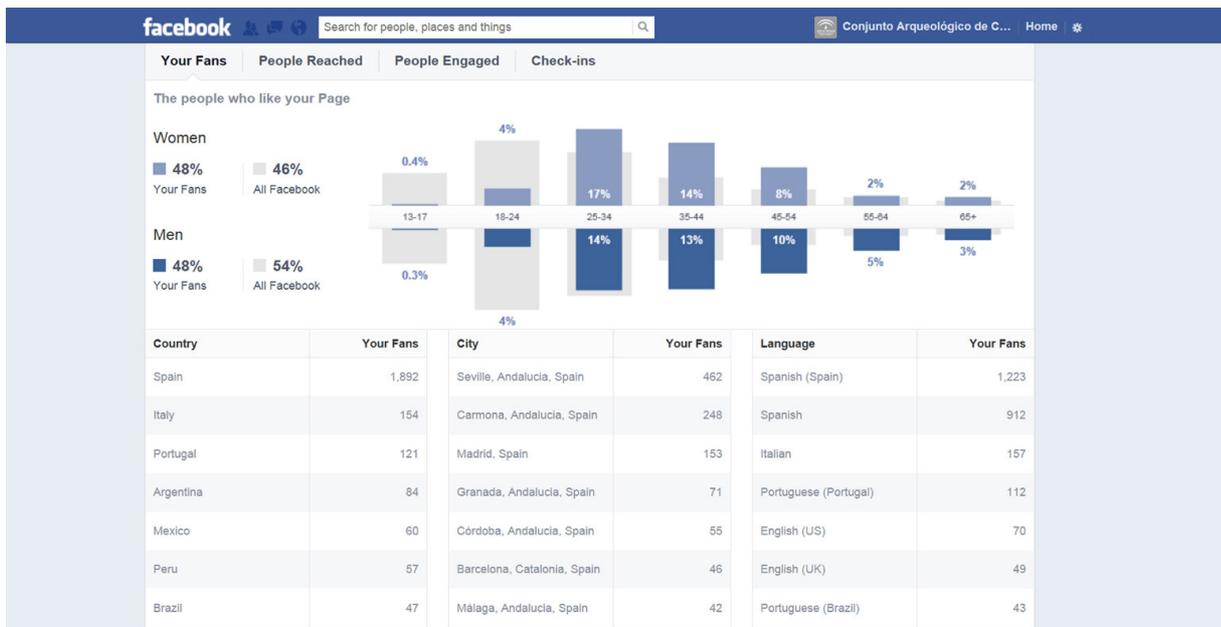


Fig. 1: People who like CAC's Facebook page, according to Facebook's statistics

Demographic characteristics of CAC's page followers

Before the beginning of the *Hidden Treasures* activity, which we refer to below, the Facebook demographic statistics show some characteristics of the followers of CAC's page (Fig. 1). First, the 18–24 years old demographic (of both men and women) represented barely 8% of the total of people who *liked* the page, however this demographic accounts for 32.3% of all Facebook users. Second, the CAC's page mainly drew its fans from the 25–34 year old group (48% women and 48% men), with women of 25–34 years being the group with the highest rate of users at 17%, five points above the average ratio for that group in all of Facebook. Third, women of 25–34 years were the group of people who rated the highest among those who saw the page (21%), although this group represents only 17% of all the group's followers. The next group, composed of 35–44 year old women reached up to 16%, scoring higher than its proportional representation of CAC's fans (13.8%). Groups of men of the same age range comprised only 13% of people who saw the page, equal in proportion of their ratio between CAC's followers. Fourth, it was possible, through Facebook, to be able to outline the geographical realm of the CAC's followers. So we knew that the province of Seville (which includes Carmona) with almost seven hundred followers was the place where most of the people who *talk* (i.e. to generate a story from a post) about the page were from.

Hidden Treasures of the Necropolis of Carmona

In order to encourage the interactions between the CAC and its Facebook fans, we decided to carry out a typical museum activity with educational goals, but online. We wished to give this activity a double purpose. On the one hand, to disclose unpublished objects, providing information about them with interpretative language, with the same educational role predicable of mass communication displayed by museums through exhibitions; that is, with an informal educational purpose (Alt and Griggs 1984; Asensio Brouard and Pol Méndez 2002; Hooper-Greenhill 1999). This means that, when this activity was designed, our purpose was not to provide data and assume that the Facebook users would learn new facts about the Roman funeral rituals, but rather to motivate them to make

meanings that would lead to the interpretation of these objects, from a constructivist perspective. Of course, if we lower our expectations in the light of a full understanding of what is possible to achieve in the real museum setting, on the internet our expectations were even lower.



**HIDDEN TREASURES
OF THE NECROPOLIS OF CARMONA**

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Fig. 2: "Hidden Treasures" starting post in English.

On the other hand, we tried to assess the *reach* (in Facebook terminology, the number of people who see a post) and the type of responses we might get from posting something requiring more thought from our fans. In this way we directly addressed the delimitation of the interested community in archaeology and archaeological heritage around the CAC (i.e. the main goal of the activity).

On 3 October 2012, the online activity *Hidden Treasures of the Necropolis of Carmona* began (Fig. 2). As we said in the presented post, we wanted to share on Facebook some pieces of great interest not on display, but guarded in CAC stores to ensure their conservation: "Objects that permit us to reconstruct the history of the graves of this Roman necropolis and bring us to the most intimate details of their dwellers".

The activity consisted of the monthly presentation of a piece in two steps: first, showing a picture of the object with a question to encourage responses, and second, publishing an album with some photos and an informative text of two or three paragraphs about the object explaining the question, a few days later.

To boost virtual interactivity, at the beginning, two versions of each post, in Spanish and English were uploaded. But these bilingual posts only lasted for the first four publications. In total, twenty-one posts have been published: the presentation and seven pieces, plus their responses (seven of them in both Spanish and English). The pieces (most of them about grave goods), questions, and topics we wished to explain were the following:

- A bronze mirror with the question, "Why would the dead need a mirror?" to explain the sense of grave goods (Fig. 3).
- An urn with an inscription dedicated to a slave, and the question, "What made it so special to this slave?" The main idea was talking about the ancient social classes.
- A phallic amulet and the question, "What are you looking at?" to explain the popular tradition of the *evil eye* (Fig. 4).
- An ivory nit comb and the question, "*¿Qué le picaba a esta mujer?*" to highlight the successful design of this object that remains substantially the same even today.⁵

- A golden *bullā* with the question, “*¿Cumplió el oro su cometido?*” to talk about the protection against childhood diseases.⁶
- A wall painting depicting an erotic scene with the question, “*¿Te parece apropiado para una tumba?*” to explain funeral wall painting of necropolis Carmona tombs.⁷
- A modern inscription and the question, “*¿Dónde estaba colocada esta piedra?*” to explain the beginnings of the site museum of the Necrópolis Romana de Carmona.⁸

Why would the dead need a mirror?



Discover a new piece
every month on our facebook

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Fig. 3: The “Why would the dead need a mirror?” post.

What are you looking at?



**Discover a new piece every month
on our facebook**

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Fig. 4: The 'What are you looking at?' post.

Methodology

As Facebook is a new phenomenon, there is relatively little empirical research on it and its members. Most of the existing research is devoted to exploring the role of personality in Facebook usage or its limits as an educational tool for college students since it has become nearly ubiquitous at universities (Tess 2013). But contextually rooted discussions of the real value of this social network as an educational tool for museums are rare. We could not access any studies, so far, devoted to investigating similar issues.

It has been preferred to base our considerations on a mix of quantitative and qualitative data, although quantitative data only plays a secondary role in this research because the main interest of this research is to gain a deep understanding of the meaning of educational action online in the case of a local museum.

To deal with qualitative data, an adapted version of netnography has been used. Netnography, or ethnography on the internet, adapts ethnographic research techniques to study the communities that are emerging through computer-mediated communications (Kozinets 2010). Netnographic data collection and analysis is mainly a market-oriented methodology, but we think that this way of understanding the discourse, and interactions of people engaging in computer-mediated communication, can be successfully applied to other social topics providing trustworthy interpretations.

As far as the privacy settings of each Facebook profile have allowed, a database of users (people who interact at least once with any post belonging to the activity *Hidden Treasures*) has been made to gather some of their personal characteristics. Special attention has been paid to their educational level,⁹ whether or not they are archaeologists or work at any museum, whether they are archaeological hobbyists or have cultural interests, and finally the place where they live. All of these features have been drawn from the personal information disclosed in the *About* tab, the analysis of their photos, timeline cover photo or by reading some comments, visible groups of which they are members, and events to which they have been invited. Although, as any online entity, Facebook itself permits its users to display their idealized, rather than accurate, personalities through their profiles, what has been referred to

as the 'idealized virtual identity hypothesis'. Some research has suggested that users usually express and communicate their real personality rather than promoting idealized versions of themselves (Leng 2013: 687; Nadkarni and Hofmann 2012: 246–248). To preserve the privacy of the users, this database was coded, no names were included and the data has since been deleted after this research.

Quantitative data from the Facebook page's administration panel has been gathered in order to complement this netnographic data.

After completion of the activity, a questionnaire was designed to investigate users' perceptions on the activity. This was sent by email to some of the CAC Facebook page's active and inactive followers to prompt a wide participation.

Data analysis from *Hidden Treasures*

When the *Hidden Treasures* activity started, the CAC Facebook page's number of fans was 1,813. According to the data supplied by Facebook, the first post (the presentation of the activity in Spanish) aroused an unprecedented interest among fans and non-fans of the page. This post had a relatively wide scope of *like*, *share*, *comment*, and stories generated from it, but we also noted that on the same day it was published the number of *likes* rose by forty-one; the highest amount of *likes* we have had in any one day so far.

Sorted by their organic reach, the twenty-one items that comprise this activity, the range is distributed among the 2,361 people who saw the wall painting with the erotic scene photo and the three hundred and thirty people who saw the post presenting the activity in English. In general terms, for the diverse range of posts, we found that the responses to albums have been more widespread than the posts with questions, although it was in these that the largest number of comments were produced. The activity has been gaining broad reach as time has progressed, which is consistent with the increase of fans during the nine months that the activity lasted. However, despite the interest in reaching an international audience, there has been a very small increase in non-Spanish

speaking fans, and in general the CAC Facebook page has a very low number of followers with non-Spanish names.

If we compare the number of users who have created a story from each post with the number of people who theoretically have been reached,¹⁰ it is clear that there has been a very low interaction. For example, the first post was seen by 4,896 people, but only six hundred and eighty generated a story from it.¹¹

Six hundred and thirty-five users have taken part in the *Hidden Treasures* activity. From them only about four hundred and thirty were CAC page followers; the rest took part via shared posts by followers, mainly showing they *liked* the photo with a question or the album with a response, but after that they did not visit the CAC page or if they did, they did not like it.

While it would still be considered inappropriate to name this whole group of people an online community, there is a continuum of participation for some of them so they may resemble a 'geeking' community. That is an online community where the sharing of information, news and stories about a particular topic is the community's *raison d'être*. The mode of interaction of these communities is mainly informational (Kozinets 2010: 36), although in this case, the proprietor generated content that has an overwhelming weight on the threads of messages.¹²

According to the data gathered, out of those six hundred and thirty-five users, four hundred and sixteen (65.5%) have a university degree, one hundred (15.7%) have high school education, seventy-four (11.6%) have elementary school education, and in forty-five cases (7%) it has been impossible to deduce their educational level (Table 1). It must be noted that not many users are self-reported as university students, although Facebook is virtually ubiquitous among college students, and the *Hidden Treasures* posts have been shared with undergraduate students in Archaeology Facebook groups. This could support the conclusion reached in many papers that students do not see social networking as a learning tool, but as a means of increasing their social capital (Junco 2012; Tess 2013).¹³

Users	Educational Capital
416	University
100	High School
74	Elementary School
45	No Information

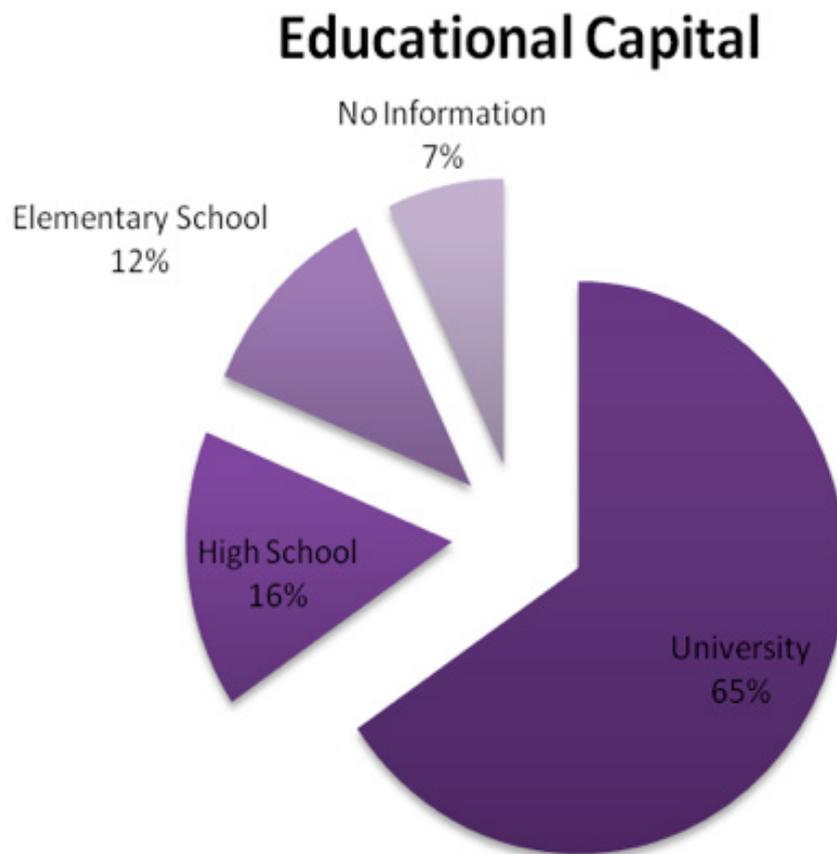


Table 1: Users + Educational Capital

Of greater interest is the data showing the degree of engagement between users and the activity *Hidden Treasures*. This interaction is shown, above all, by three actions: *like*, *share*, and *comment*. Taking into account only users who have done more than one of these (excluding CAC staff personal profiles), we have one hundred and eighty-six users who have *liked*, *shared* or written a comment more than once, although this figure is reduced to one hundred and forty-seven unique users. However, this participation rate and the total number of comments are considerably higher than those achieved by other similar projects, but using platforms other than Facebook and in more socially compact communities, a few years

ago (Affleck and Kvan 2008: 273). In Kozinets' terminology they can be labelled as 'devotees', because of their focal interest in and enthusiasm for the consumption activity but having relatively shallow social ties between them and with the CAC (Kozinets 2010: 33–34). They form the target audience of educational activities.

The first finding is that for the actions demanding a greater degree of involvement (*like*, *share*, and *comment*), the greater proportion of people come from Carmona. Crossing information on educational level and provenance, in order to draw a closer picture of the educational goals of the activity, we discovered that the people from Carmona—but with an elementary and/or a high school level of education—participated more in terms of clicking *like*, than their counterparts from other areas. Statistically speaking, those coming from other areas such as Seville, the rest of Andalusia, the rest of Spain or from abroad were users with a higher level of education (university level). Correlations can be established between the total *likes* and the social-demographic variables broken down by educational levels. The average between them is more than double in Carmona, and tends to be closer to one as the distance from that town increases (Table 2). Significantly, the highest proportion between the number of unique users and total *likes* is observed in the segment of people with elementary education living in Carmona.

Posts of the *Hidden Treasures* have been shared one hundred and sixty-three times by seventy-nine unique users (excluding CAC staff). The act of sharing a post has a similar pattern to the *like* one, but it has significant differences too.

On the one hand, statistics show that people from Carmona still constitute the core of followers who share posts of the activity, with the highest repetition rate, however a minor number of unique users who share posts compared to Seville. In this group from Carmona, the strong presence of people who lack university degrees still continues. That feature is lost as the place of residence of the followers turns away from Carmona.

Likes Provenance

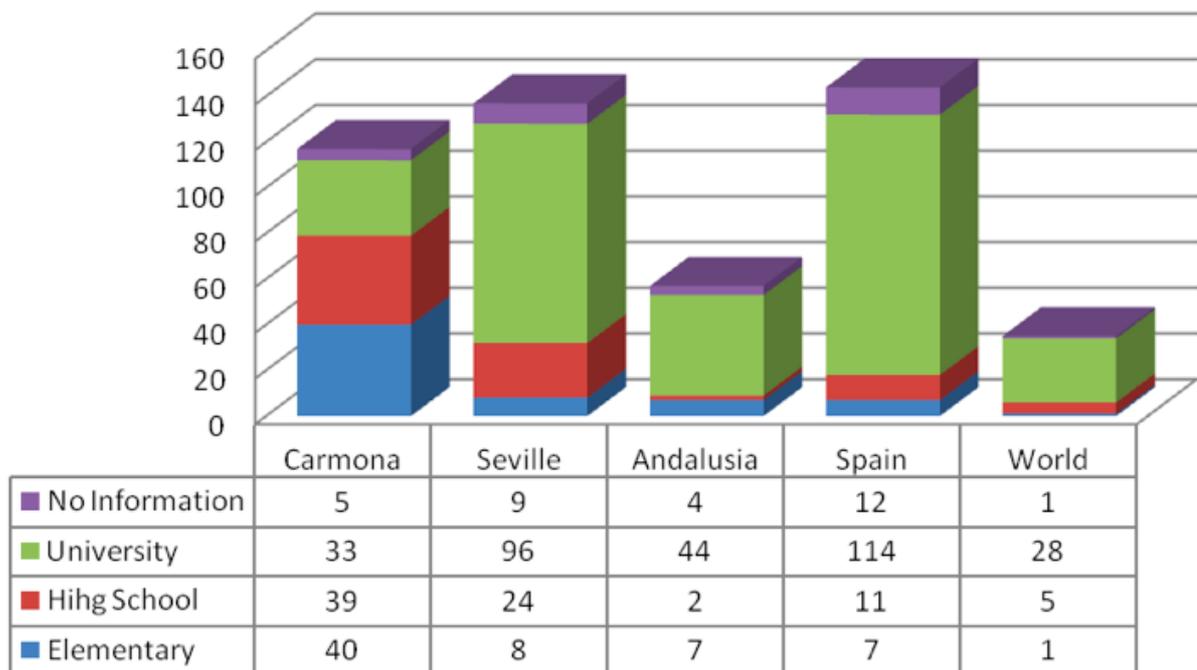


Table 2: Likes provenance

These findings mean that members of the main stakeholder group live close to the CAC and engagement with the CAC is weaker as the place where followers live is further away from Carmona.

To achieve an interpretation of the reasons why there is a high percentage of *shares* between followers from Carmona, an analysis has been conducted adding to the educational level of the users another variable not taken into account so far: profession. The results have been compared with the responses to the questionnaires sent via email.

The largest group of followers from Carmona that shared posts more than once is comprised of people with an elementary or high school educational level, and they are not necessarily related to museums or historical heritage. In response to the questionnaire sent by email, in which we ask for the reasons why he/she usually shared posts of *Hidden Treasures* activity, the most common explanation showed a certain satisfaction from being able to show everyone the importance of objects with archaeological interest existing in Carmona, because probably many people do not know it.¹⁴ The second largest group consists of both Carmona's institutions

specializing in the promotion of tourism and other museums. The replies to the emailed questionnaire emphasize their obligation, as part of their jobs, to promote the CAC and its activities online as a way to promote Carmona.

Sharing a post means not only agreeing with its content, which may be manifested by clicking the *like* button, but also local pride and satisfaction from seeing something relevant from Carmona online. In this regard, we think that it is not important whether people share posts from their personal profile or from a public one, nor that the educational level is key.

In order to understand why some individuals outside of Carmona shared posts from the Hidden Treasures activity, an additional factor should be considered on top of the aforementioned factors: the positive image of the educational aims, pursued by the CAC with this activity, held by colleagues in other institutions. In fact, a large group of people and institutions outside of Carmona that shared posts have professions—or goals when they are public or private institutions—related to archaeology, museums or heritage care. Sometimes, the shared posts were customized by adding messages that encouraged participation. For example, one person who works at the largest museum in Seville, when sharing the posts with a picture of a phallic amulet and the question, “What are you looking at?” added the message, “*Otro enigma... se admiten hipótesis... y para saber la solución, mirad en la página del Conjunto dentro de unos días*”.¹⁵

Amongst the most frequent reasons explained in the answers to the emailed questionnaire is, “*Estoy encantado de apoyar una actividad educativa con un solo click de ratón*”.¹⁶

Without any doubt, text has been the best way to incite an active participation in the *Hidden Treasures* activity. In order to lay out a foundation for discussing the interactivity between CAC’s staff and Facebook followers through posting messages, some points about posting text on Facebook must be highlighted before analyzing the statistics.

Messages posted in that activity have been classified into two main types, according to the authorial source: proprietor content

(generated by CAC's staff) and user-generated content (contributed by CAC's followers) (Walther and Jang 2012: 3–4). But it should be noted that proprietors and users have different attributions regarding messages, not only because of the position that CAC's staff maintains on the page (clearly shown by the hierarchical situation on the timeline), but also because of the authoritative image we have as experts on Roman funerary rituals, especially when using the CAC logo to post.

It is not surprising that this different role deeply affects the nature of the interactivity, as interaction does not happen between peers. That is why we used our own personal profiles to post short messages enhancing participation, as well as the CAC's, and people knew we belonged to the CAC.

As a proprietor or administrator of the page, CAC's staff has editorial privileges over the content of followers' contributions, even the ability to remove unwanted messages, although we never used that privilege.

From the variety of communication tools provided by Facebook to broadcast messages (i.e. status updates or wall text posts) we decided to upload manipulated photos as starting posts due to their powerful and attractive qualities. Photos tend to minimize cognitive effort and the time to process information.¹⁷ By uploading photos, our intention was to promote discussions but avoiding quiz games. The topics were carefully chosen to fulfil some prerequisites: they needed to take into account previous thoughts that people have about antiquity, and be able to connect the past and the present. In fact, the Roman necropolis of Carmona was considered a side-topic.

According to Facebook statistics, the total number of comments in the *Hidden Treasure* activity amounted to three hundred and seventeen, but because of the users' privacy settings only two hundred and eleven can be seen on the CAC's page. One hundred and seventy-one of them have been posted by sixty-eight unique CAC's followers, excluding the CAC itself, i.e. Ignacio Rodríguez Temiño, and Daniel González Acuña.

Sorted by topic, although comments on the same topic are distributed in several threads, as some of them have been written

in a shared post, they range from ninety-nine comments on the amulet photo with the question, 'What are you looking at?' (only sixty-five visible) to zero. One topic has no comments: the English version of the photo of an urn with an inscription dedicated to a slave and the question, "What made it so special to this slave?" The album's responses on the phallic amulet question in English had only one message posted by the CAC's staff on the album itself, but no comments by the users. Here again it is clear that the English versions of photos and albums are the least commented on. There is not one comment written by an English native speaker, and only one by a foreign person using English on a thread started from a shared post, although this is not his native language.

Looking at these numbers, we have probably been unsuccessful in acquiring and retaining consecutive posts, and the thread content does not have many messages; but, as far as we know about similar activities carried out by other museums on Facebook, the number of messages is similar to ours.

Upon analyzing the thread's comments and messages several observations can be made. As it has been suggested, on social networking sites, users detect and differentiate responses to subcategories of peers online, such as laypersons, self-proclaimed experts, and experts who are credentialed by third parties (Walther and Jang 2012: 7). As all of the CAC's activity threads were started by the page's administrator posting a photograph with a caption and question, the original poster was considered an expert credentialed by his belonging to a museum, thus creating a perceived hierarchy among readers and posters. All comments and posts were directly related to answering the question and to the original photograph. There was no interactivity between the posters, with all of them reacting solely to the thread's original post.¹⁸ The only case in which there was any interactivity between the users was when shared posts started a new thread on a user's personal Facebook profile. Obviously, in that situation, the hierarchical relationship is replaced by others between equals.

Users' posts were moderated by the page's administrator but in a way which avoided any perceived hierarchy. In order to promote a level of equality, the moderators used their own profile pages, rather than that of the CAC, bearing the CAC's logo. The rationale

behind moderating in this way was the constructivism theory as well as netnographical methodology.

As mentioned above, throughout the *Hidden Treasures* activity, two hundred and eleven messages in total were posted by both the CAC' staff and the public. Such posts fall under three categories, the first being commonplace, trivial content messages (e.g. "*Buena pregunta*",¹⁹ a comment posted by one user on the post with the question: "Why did the dead want a mirror?"). During the *Hidden Treasures* activity there were twenty-six messages of this type posted, most of them in threads started from the shared posts with photos of objects or paintings with sexual connotations.

The second category of posts could be classified as motivational messages aiming to encourage users' participation and involvement. Twenty-seven of these were made in total during the course of the activity, most of them composed by the moderators. The final type, considered the most important in this activity, was the enlightening messages. These include all the suggestions and responses made by users. In total, there were one hundred and seventy-eight messages of this type.

From the seventy unique users (including the authors of this paper, the only CAC staff members who took part in the activity, either using our personal profiles or behind the CAC logo) it has been possible to gather personal information from up to sixty-eight people. The results of the information crossing about educational level and residence first show a predominance of people with university degrees commenting on the activity over those without a degree (Table 3). Logically, Seville has scored high in people with university degrees as it is the closest capital and hosts two universities offering studies in archaeology. However, despite this relative advantage, compared to the percentage of professional archaeologists out of the total number of people with university degrees who have posted comments, it appears that Seville represents 30%, somewhat lower than the median of these two variables in the rest of the places of residence (37%), except for Carmona where this percentage is even lower (25%). This shows that the further away the residence is from Carmona, the greater the participation of archaeologists is in the activity. Emails asking for the reasons why they had not taken part in the activity were sent to

five archaeologists from Seville, friends of the CAC's Facebook, who had *liked* the activity but did not post any comment. The responses emphasized that, although they thought that the activity was very interesting, they felt they were not part of the target audience, so they chose not to interfere with posting comments. Furthermore, they emphasized that their use of Facebook was private and not professional, so they did not pay much attention to activities related to archaeology. During a phone interview, this explanation was corroborated by a professor of Archaeology at the University of Seville, who had participated with two trivial comments in a thread that started from a shared post.

	Carmona	Seville	Andalusia	Spain	World
Elementary	6	3	3	0	0
High School	2	0	0	4	0
University	8	16	6	13	7

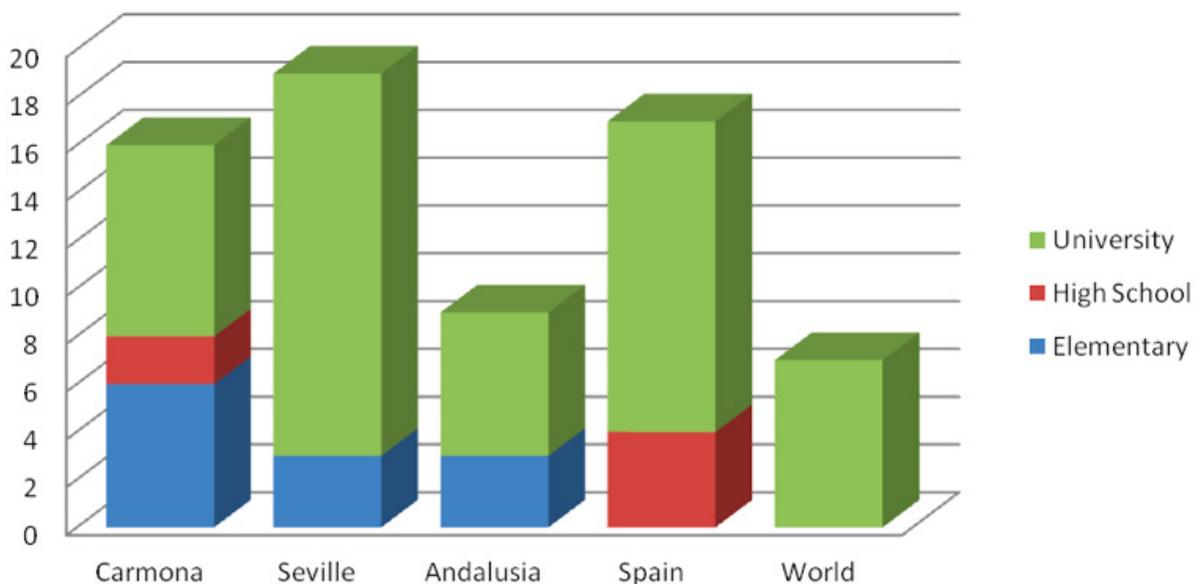


Table 3: Comments: educational capital + provenance

The other notable feature of the crossing of information is that users without university degrees who wrote messages not only live near Carmona, but also many of them are archaeology hobbyists, mainly metal detector users. In response to the questionnaire emailed, they said that they enjoyed the opportunity offered by *Hidden Treasure* activity to learn more about antiquity.

Cultural interests not especially related to archaeology were reported from nearly 90% of the rest of the posters.

Thirty-two emails have been sent in total, and twenty-five have been replied to. In all of these responses the activity has been evaluated positively. Nineteen of them asked for new activities like *Hidden Treasures*, despite that request not being included in the questionnaire.

Of the people who have written more than one post in a single or multiple threads, the number of people residing in Carmona is nearly 50%, excluding the CAC's staff.

As expected, most comments are made in the posts that ask questions rather than the response albums. The ratio of comments with trivial content is higher between people with university degrees than between non-university degree colleagues. An overwhelming majority of 'enlightening messages' focused upon replying to the questions displayed on the start posts. Those messages are characterised by a combination of imagination and prior knowledge of archaeology. It is important to note, for the purposes of the activity, that they do not contain short answers, but rather texts of three or four lines long to justify their suggestions. In the case of comments on response albums, they stressed the interest of the information offered, or gave new insights on the topic, or just expressed a sense of local pride in Carmona. Overall, it may be noted that in most of the enlightening messages an interest in the chosen topics and a desire to know more about them is expressed.

In contrast to the role of the expert played by identified staff members of the CAC, it has been observed that comments made by other archaeologists have gone unnoticed by the rest of the public (they have not got any *likes* and their content was not extended to other posts). Perhaps this behaviour is due to the lack of interaction between the users, as we have already mentioned.

In relation to the comments made by other experts, it should be noted that there has been little discussion or debate, and only a small number of comments of a debating nature have occurred in the CAC's threads. It should also be noted that all messages have been textual, with no images uploaded, whereas in other posts

outside the activity, there have been debates where it is normal that images were uploaded to support the textual contents, an option allowed by Facebook from the comment box.

Research on the psychological factors that influence posting messages in social networks has raised awareness of impulsive responses (i.e. quick comments with not much thought) (Leng 2013). We have seen a good example of this behaviour in the *Hidden Treasures* activity. In the post with a phallic amulet photo and the question, "What are you looking at?" our purpose was to talk about the 'evil eye',²⁰ without giving any importance to what the object is. At a point of discussion on what would be the utility of the amulet, one user posted a short question comment, "*Pero vibra???*".²¹ The following flurry of comments seemed never ending (according to Facebook they reached up to ninety-nine). Facebook deleted most of them because their contents were considered undesirable.

Final comments

From this analysis of the *Hidden Treasures* activity, what can be concluded? Clearly two points, at least. First, that the demographic characteristics of engaged online visitors are quite different to those of physical visitors. Many of the CAC's engaged online audience is composed of those who live relatively near the CAC, have an elementary education level, and some of them maintain an offline relationship with the CAC, mainly as consumers of family activities. The demographic characteristics of the online followers of the CAC became more similar to those of regular museums visitors in Spain, as we moved away from Carmona. So the comfortable evolutionary extension of CAC's activities into the digital realm has geographical and sociological limits so far, despite the globalization of the internet. Although the number of fans on CAC's Facebook page continues to grow, the community that could be formed around the CAC remains rooted in the neighbourhood and in physical contact with the institution. They form the raw material for a future CAC community, a micro-public sphere that works like a laboratory in which new experiences are invented and popularized (Keane 1995: 9–11).

Some ethical issues arise when communicating through social networking sites, especially Facebook. Although they are confirmed as a key to maintaining interaction between museums and their audiences, '[e]thical practice must be determined according to a museum's particular mission and circumstances' (Wong 2013: 25). In our case, we are aware of the artificial division among the public due to the use of the internet as a fundamental communication channel, and because of the so-called 'digital divide', especially in dealing with local people. That is the reason why we are promoting other communication channels to contact local people through activities where physical presence is essential, although we have to overcome other sociological barriers that divide museum visitors and those who are not visitors (Rodríguez Temiño *et al.* 2014: 124–127).

Secondly, trying to assess the educational outcomes of an open activity such as *Hidden Treasures of the Necropolis of Carmona*, is absolutely out of place, as several hundred of the CAC's page friends, all with different educational and demographic characteristics, have participated in it. Especially if by educational outcomes we mean the acquisition of meaningful and lasting conceptual knowledge. Such an assessment was not the goal of the activity either. In this way, the effectiveness of *Hidden Treasures*, as a means to empower users through education, must be directly related to the ability of this activity to increase user engagement with the CAC's Facebook page. Modifying the original definition of student engagement cited by Junco (2012: 188), engagement would be defined here as the amount of time and psychological energy that a user has devoted to the activity.

Using explanations borrowed from psychology, it can be argued that when involved users found a new *Hidden Treasures* post on their Facebook profiles' *walls*, they probably assimilated information more effectively than if they were less motivated. This motivation is crucial in determining cognitive or emotional responses.

Taking into account all these observations together, it could be said that this activity has been positive for some motivated CAC's followers, even if they were *lurkers* (i.e. users who did not contribute to the activity by posting texts, but clicked the *like* button, shared a post, or did not do such actions, at least read the posted messages), as well as for the building of the CAC's online profile.

Facebook is not a tool to drive new physical visitors to the CAC, but to communicate with anyone who wishes to keep in touch, and is able to do so. This communication has different effects depending on the motivations that tie them to the CAC. While for most it will be a mere source of information, at best, for a micro-public we wish that every act of communication is goal-oriented and will help to build a future local community of people interested in archaeology and archaeological heritage care. Future efforts will have to concentrate on broadening the sociological bases of this community.

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(Endnotes)

1 Cultural capital is a sociological concept defined as a "theoretical hypothesis which made it possible to explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from the different social classes by relating academic success, i.e., the specific profits which children from the different classes and class fractions can obtain in the academic market, to the distribution of cultural capital between the classes and class fractions" (Bourdieu 1986: 243).

2 '1885–1906. Carmona. Libro álbum de firmas'. CAC Archive III.1.3. leg. 1, lib. 4, 90 ff., [12 ff.].

3 Metrics to measure museums' success offline (i.e. the yearly number of visitors) have played the same role in Facebook's museum pages. Effectively, generated by Facebook, the number of likes that the museum has appears under the cover photo. Because this feature is immune to manipulation, visitors can draw an inference about the success of the page.

4 Web 2.0 refers to online platforms whereby content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion.

92 - Ignacio RODRIGUEZ & Daniel GONZÁLEZ - Using Facebook...

5 "What stung this woman?".

6 "Did gold fulfil its purpose?".

7 "Does it seem appropriate for a grave?".

8 "Where was this stone placed?"

9 Probably the sociological concept of academic capital is better suited for our purposes, rather than educational level, or similar, but finding out that kind of personal information was beyond the scope of, and the means available for, this research.

10 Facebook defines this variable as the number of unique users who like a page, poste to a page's timeline, like, comment on or share one of a page's posts, answer a question posted, respond to events, mention a page, tagg a page in a photo or check in at a location.

11 This is the only one where calculating the number of people who saw the post is possible, as the following posts were published in both languages on the same date, so we can not dissociate the reach of one from the other.

12 Proprietor is used with the meaning given by Walther and Jang (2012: 3).

13 According to Pierre Bourdieu, social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu 1986: 245).

14 In some replies it seems that people have forgotten that shared posts are only shown on the friend's timeline, not *urbi et orbe* to the millions of Facebook users.

15 "Another enigma... hypotheses are welcome... and to find out the answer, look at the CAC's page in a few days".

16 "I was delighted to support an educational activity through a simple click of the mouse".

17 Researchers have found that when a 'topic starts' (the first post in a thread) with a clear question the chances of a response are increased by between 6%-16.4% (Varik and Oostendorp 2013: 457).

18 Interactivity occurs when a message relates to one generated by a different user, the like button is clicked on a message written by another user, or one user is tagged in another comment.

19 "Good question".

20 This name refers to the pernicious influence that a person could have on everything around him/her without carrying out any ceremony or ritual magic, sometimes even without being aware of it. Eye contact was seen as the main means of transmission of this evil influence. According to popular tradition, the evil eye could destroy not only the individual but also their property and, in general, everything that was dear to them. Above all, its influence on children was most feared, and was worse than on adults, according to popular belief, probably due to

the incidence of disease in early life. To protect yourself from this terrible threat, if evil was inoculated through the eyes, it was necessary to surround oneself with amulets that served to detract the gaze away from the transmitter. Objects, which by nature are indecent, ridiculous or aggressive can neutralize these evil feelings. Without a doubt, the most represented in these amulets was the phallus, regarded as a symbol of fertility and the best defense against the evil eye.

21 "But, does it vibrate???"

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The process for the acceptance of papers will be easy and fast. Once the article has reached the editor, the decision will be taken in less than 48 hours. Papers rejected from the editor will not be considered again unless they undertake major changes. Correspondence will not be continued for those papers. If the paper is pre-accepted by the editor, it will be peer-reviewed by two different experts in the common blind process. After that, the author will be given feedback and advice in order to go over the article, which will be corrected again to check if it meets the requirements of the reviewers. Once this process has finished, the article will be edited as it will appear on the journal and returned to the author for a final check (only spelling mistakes or other details, not changes on the text). The commitment of the journal is to be able to complete the whole process in less than two months.

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We will be publishing one volume per year (first trimester) and although we are willing to receive papers the whole year, full articles for next-year's volume should be sent before October in order to complete the process with time.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the editor at: jasarqueologia@gmail.com

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