



The **National Museum of Archaeology** can be found in the 17th century Palace della Crocetta where it has had its seat since 1880. Established by Vittorio Emanuele II, it houses a large collection of pieces from the Etruscan era as well as Greek and Roman antiquities.

Some of the original collections were enlarged during the Medicean period under the Lorraine and Medici dynasties and over the years new acquisitions, as well as donations, were added.

In 1898 the Etruria Museum of Topography was established and displays findings found in excavations in Tuscany, Umbria, and Lazio. In the early 20th century some of the monumental tombs of the Etruscans were transferred and redone in the garden of the museum. This museum also includes a section devoted to numismatics and glyptics.

The Egyptian museum contains a collection dedicated to Egyptian arts. The long history of the Egyptian people and culture is narrated by objects of diverse dating and origins: domestic utensils, beauty instruments along with other various instruments relative to the ritual of Mummification like the so-called Canopic Vessels: containers for the vital organs of the deceased and essential for the funeral trousseau.

Among the cult objects of this polytheist civilization, the Museum exhibits some fragments of papyrus, the chapters of the Book of the Dead: a story of the formula and ritual for the survival of the deceased in the afterlife, an exceptional facet of this great population.

The second section of the Museum is dedicated to Etruscan art: funerary sculpture and urns in terracotta. The Mater Matuta is the most important find; a funerary urn in the figure of a woman with a baby in her arms, symbolic of fertility and motherhood. This section also holds a bronze collection rich with devotional objects, domestic utensils, small bronzes of animals and human figures in the act of making offerings.

Finally, there is a series of ancient bronze arms for attack (daggers, helmets, knives and lances) and shields for defence, providing protection for the heart.

The third section is dedicated to the Attica Ceramics: funerary amphorae, geometric cups and vases from the VIII Century B.C. One can see the particular vases, painted with the black-figure technique asserted to be from the VI Century B.C. ,life scenes and those of abduction, mythological images, athletic competitions and races between carts and horses decorate the production of the famous Attic painter Lydòs (560 B.C.).

A fourth section holds numerous Roman bronzes: portraits, helmets, statues, and masks of noble and valorous heroes. A visit to the Archaeological Museum takes you back in time to discover cultures of now extinct populations which are displayed to keep their memory alive today.