



# The National Archeological Museum of Naples

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# What is it?

The **National Archeological Museum of Naples**, also known as **MANN**, is an important Italian archeological museum, particularly for ancient Roman remains. Its collection includes works from Greek, Roman and Renaissance times, especially Roman artifacts near Pompei and Ercolano.

The museum was built as a chivalry barrack, then it became the seat of the **University of Naples**.

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# The History

The museum's construction began in 1586 by the Viceroy of Naples, Don Pedro Giron, with the intention of creating a stable. But later, in 1612 Don Pedro Fernando de Castro, his successor from 1610 to 1616, commissioned the architect Giulio Cesare Fontana to design the "Palazzo dei Regi Studi", which was to become the new seat of the University of Naples. But in 1777 the University was transferred to the Royal Boarding School of the Saviour and King Ferdinand IV of Bourbon made this building the seat of the Bourbon Museum and the Royal Library. The architects Ferdinando Fuga, first, and Pompeo Schiantarelli, later, were commissioned to enlarge the old Palazzo degli Studi and convert it into a universal museum. And finally, after the Unification of Italy, in 1861, the Bourbon Museum became the property of the nascent Italian State and was renamed the National Museum.



*Pedro II Tellez Giron*

# Collections



The Farnese Collection



The Pompeia Collection



The Egyptian Collection



The Meridian Hall



The Secret Museum

# The Farnese Collection

Today, the collection, which is located on the ground floor of the museum, is one of its most important cores, among which the sculpture of the Farnese Bull stands out. It depicts **the torture of Dirce, Queen of Thebes**, who was tortured by a bull as a punishment for the jealousy to which he had subjected the beautiful Antiope, and the famous Farnese Hercules, found in the Baths of Caracalla.



# The Pompeian Collection

The Pompeian collection originated with the archaeological excavations in Pompeii, which began in the first half of the 18th century.

The collection constitutes the main cores of the Bourbon collection and includes all the artefacts found in the Vesuvian excavations: sculptures, mosaics, armoury, frescoes and various other pieces, including papyri found in Ercolano and now in the national library of the royal palace.



## The Egyptian Collection

In particular, of great importance are the works belonging to the Borgia collection, including ancient objects found around Rome and Velletri.

When Cesare Borgia died in 1804, part of the collection was donated to the papal congregation, while most of it passed to his nephew Camillo Borgia, who tried to sell it first to the King of Denmark, then to Joachim Murat, King of Naples, who bought it in 1814.



# The Meridian Hall



It was closed to the public for a long time. This hall, originally intended to house an astronomical observatory, has the extraordinary sundial on the floor in the south-west corner, over 27 metres long.

The sundial is a brass strip that runs between marble panels in which elliptical shapes are set with paintings of the twelve signs of the zodiac



# The Secret Museum

The Secret Cabinet or Secret Museum is the name given to the private rooms containing erotic or sexual items, mostly deriving from excavations of Pompeii and Ercolano. Access was limited to aged people. After the revolution in 1848, the monarchy proposed the destruction of objects, fearful of being accused of lasciviousness.

The director of the museum closed the entrance providing the door with three different locks and covered with wallpaper. This part of the museum has been reopened in 2000.

