

MUSEO DELTA ANTICO

Museum Guide

www.museodeltaantico.com

MUSEUM GUIDE

Edited by

Carla Buoite, Lorenzo Zamboni

Graphic design and editing

All'Insegna del Giglio

Text

The display texts were adapted by Carla Buoite and Lorenzo Zamboni, from museum panels by Aniello Zamboni and Claudio Negrelli (Roman period), Laura Ruffoni (ship's cargo), Valentino Nizzo and Lorenzo Zamboni (protohistory), Carla Buoite and Lorenzo Zamboni (Spina settlement), Annachiara Penzo (Spina cemetery), Sauro Gelichi (Late Antiquity and medieval period).

The historical reconstructions and graphic elaborations are based on the latest research by the Superintendency, and the universities of Zurich, Venice, Ferrara, Milan and Pavia.

Special thanks to Maurizio Cattani for unpublished information on the settlement of Valle del Mezzano.

Gabriele Arveda's text was revised by Aniello Zamboni.

Coordination

Roberto Cantagalli, Caterina Cornelio, Alessandra Felletti, Laura Ruffoni

Photos

Sergio Orselli, Paolo Rondini, Maurizio Cinti, Lorenzo Zamboni

By permission of the Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo - Polo Museale Emilia Romagna, Soprintendenza archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio per la città metropolitana di Bologna e le province di Modena, Reggio Emilia e Ferrara, of the Arcidiocesi di Ferrara-Comacchio, and of the Biblioteca Statale di Cremona.

Unauthorized reproduction is prohibited.

3D photogrammetry

Paolo Rondini

Maps

Teseo Editore - Rome

Drawings

Inklink - Florence

English translation

Jim Bishop, Lorenzo Zamboni

ISBN 978-88-7814-814-7

e-ISBN 978-88-7814-815-4

© 2017 All'Insegna del Giglio s.a.s.

Edizioni All'Insegna del Giglio s.a.s

via del Termine, 36; 50019 Sesto Fiorentino (FI)

tel. +39 055 8450 216; fax +39 055 8453 188

redazione@insegnadelgiglio.it

ordini@insegnadelgiglio.it

website www.insegnadelgiglio.it

Printed in Firenze, September 2017

Grafiche Martinelli

MUSEUM DESIGN

Coordination and organization: Dirigente Settore I, Roberto Cantagalli; Dirigente Settore V, Antonio Pini; Gian Giacomo Cavalieri, Alessandra Felletti, Antonio Ferroni, Leonardo Nascosi, Laura Ruffoni, Maria Rosa Sabattini

Scientific Board: Luigi Malnati, Sauro Gelichi, Carlo Peretto, Aniello Zamboni

Collaboration and specialist advice: Riccardo Belcari, Marco Bonino, Carla Buoite, Giovanna Bucci, Mario Cesarano, Caterina Cornelio, Paola Desantis, Simona Facioli, Glenda Giampaoli, Elena Grandi, Stefano Manfredini, Benedetta Martini, Stefano Medas, Claudio Negrelli, Valentino Nizzo, Annachiara Penzo, Laura Ruffoni, Benedetto Sala, Ursula Thun Hohenstein, Davide Tomasi, Carmela Vaccaro, Silvia Vertuani, Chiara Beatrice Vicentini, Lorenzo Zamboni

Lenders: Polo Museale Emilia Romagna – Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Ferrara; Soprintendenza archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio per la città metropolitana di Bologna e le Province di Modena, Ferrara e Reggio Emilia; Arcidiocesi di Ferrara-Comacchio; Biblioteca statale di Cremona

Conservation direction: Micol Siboni, Monica Zanardi

Conservation treatment: Valentina Guerzoni, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Ferrara, Opus Restauri, Parma: Angela Allini, Giorgio Arcari, Anna Ghillani, Società Strati s.n.c. di Marianna Cappellina, Ilaria Perticucci, Christian Tortato, con la collaborazione di Maria Baruffetti e Giulia Basilissi, Soprintendenza archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio per le province di Ravenna, Forlì-Cesena e Rimini

Museum display: Riccardo Belcari; Carla Buoite; Claudio Negrelli; Annachiara Penzo; Alain Rosa; Laura Ruffoni; Aniello Zamboni; Lorenzo Zamboni

Conservation assistance: Opus Restauri, Angela Allini

Display assistance: Andrea Dal Bon ed Elena Maini; Polo Museale: Alain Rosa; Cooperativa Le Pagine: Anastasia Rizzoni

Transport and display: Crown Fine Art, Milan

Consulting and coordination of texts: Carla Buoite, Lorenzo Zamboni

Museum layout design, supervision and coordination: Michela Biancardi, Angela Cazzoli, Nike Maragucci, Alessandro Tricoli, Rita Zambonelli

Site management for the municipality: Leonardo Nascosi

Security coordination: Camilla Fabbri

Lighting: Carolina De Camillis, Riccardo Fibbi

Display: Tecton Soc. Coop. (mounting); Reset (electrical circuitry)

Systems: GPS Servizi

Scenography: Laboratorio Scenografico, Pesaro

Display case air conditioning: A&R Project – Molinetto Mazzano, Brescia

Cabling and wifi system: Delta Web Telecomunicazioni

Display materials: G. Bonomi srl – Parma; Aimi – Parma; Fab Lab – Spazio Marconi Comacchio (FE)

Video: Teseo Editore, Rome: design, direction and multimedia content; Concept: Enrico Orsingher; Creativity and post-production: Guglielmo Guarnera and Gian Claudio Pallotta (Krd/Cliché); Photography: Mario Setter, Andrea Agostini, Luca De Marinis; Narrator voice (Italian): Stefano Nazzaro; Narrator voice (English): Devin Watkins; Soundtrack: Jameson Nathan Jones, Ivan Krasnov, Phaelaeh, Purple Planet, Rainer Struck, Virerai; Costume: Ombretta Luciani; Specialist advice on Etruscan weaving: Glenda Giampaoli and Benedetta Martini; 3D graphics: Alfonso Annarumma, Emanuel Demetrescu, Cristina Ducci, Fernando Luceri, Roman Testoni; Archives: Rai Teche. Management system for multimedia devices: Maurizio Cerolini and Giorgio Tiranti.

Museum's name and logo: Stefano Buzzi; Alberto Zetti

Graphics, Website, App: Parallelo, Florence: Filippo Fineschi, Nicola Nottoli, Francesco Delacqua, Vincenzo Bologna, Francesco Marsoni

Promotional material design: Noemastudio, Ferrara

Promotional material printing: Del Gallo Editori, Spoleto

Graphics: Inklink, Florence: Simone Boni; Claudio Negrelli; Teseo Editore – Rome: Luciana Amapani

Translation: Studio Blitz, Pistoia; Ann Hilary Gashler; Devin Watkins

Museum services: Consorzio COGETOUR, Comacchio (FE)

Security: Protezione Civile – Beni culturali Gruppo Trepponti Comacchio; Auser; Pro Loco – Comacchio (FE); Top Secret – Ferrara

Communication Office: Laura Burgio, Katia Romagnoli

Communication: Dinamica Media - Ferrara

Insurance: Aon Spa, Bologna - Axa Art Versicherung

Fragrance project: Università di Ferrara, Master di II livello in Scienza e tecnologia cosmetiche: COSMAST; Fragranze Claudia Scattolini – Fragrance designer Italy; Laura Bosetti Tonatto

Photographic and video credits: Teche RAI, Polo Museale Emilia Romagna, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Ferrara, Museo Cristiano e Museo del Duomo di Cividale del Friuli, Soprintendenza archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio per la città metropolitana di Bologna e le province di Modena, Ferrara e Reggio Emilia, Soprintendenza archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio per le province di Ravenna, Forlì-Cesena e Rimini, Sergio Orselli, Maurizio Cinti

Special thanks: All the employees of the Municipality of Comacchio involved in this project: Polizia Municipale, Segreteria e Organi di Governo, Settore I Turismo Cultura e Pubblica Istruzione, Settore II Affari Generali Personale, Settore III Finanze e Partecipate, Settore IV Territorio Sviluppo Economico Demanio, Settore V Lavori Pubblici e Patrimonio, Settore VI Politiche Sociali

MUSEO DELTA ANTICO



COMUNE DI COMACCHIO



Ministero
dei beni e delle
attività culturali
e del turismo

POLO MUSEALE EMILIA ROMAGNA

SOPRINTENDENZA ARCHEOLOGIA, BELLE ARTI E
PAESAGGIO PER LA CITTÀ METROPOLITANA DI
BOLOGNA E LE PROVINCE DI MODENA, REGGIO
EMILIA E FERRARA



EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional Development Fund



ERDF ROP 2007-2013
COMPETITIVENESS AND
EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVE
Regione Emilia-Romagna

BUILDING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER



ibc istituto per i beni artistici
culturali e naturali

M museo
archeologico
nazionale
di napoli



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



World
Heritage
Centre



Man and the
Biosphere
Programme



Biosfera Delta Po
uomo e natura insieme

The realization
of this guide has been made possible
thanks to the contribution of:

Bartoli&Arveda

Associazione Professionale
www.bartoliarveda.it

INDEX

- 8 *Institutional greetings*
- 10 *Presentations*
- 13 *Ospedale degli Infermi. The building before the museum,*
by Gabriele Arveda
- 16 *The museum design,* by Michela Biancardi, Angela Cazzoli,
Nike Maragucci, Alessandro Tricoli, Rita Zambonelli
- MUSEUM DISPLAY, by Carla Buoite and Lorenzo Zamboni
- 21 *The ancient Delta. Environment and landscape*
- 22 *Before Spina. The protohistoric population*
- 24 *Spina. Crossroads of the ancient world*
- 41 *Roman period. A land without towns*
- 48 *The roman ship. Its cargo*
- 54 *Late Antiquity and medieval period. A new town*
- 63 *Further reading*

Institutional greetings

The opening of the new Ancient Delta Museum is a historic moment for Comacchio, and also a great achievement on the part of the council. For many years our citizens have wanted to develop the local cultural heritage, for touristic and educational purposes, and also to enhance our local cultural identity. Now it is time for Comacchio – which for centuries was isolated and subject to foreign dominion and long-lasting poverty – to make its thousands of years of history live again. This goal could be indeed seen as social redemption and the recovery of a sense of belonging to our land.

Moreover, archaeological evidence recalls an ancient past when the territory of Comacchio, at the mouth of the River Po, was an international crossroads for people, goods, ideas and civilizations. Archaeology tells us of the challenging relationship between men and a harsh – but at the same time fertile – environment. A relationship based on hard work and a vision of the future. It is important to make better known and to communicate this historical culture, which remains a source of inspiration even today. Our community therefore wanted to welcome these monuments to our past into the town centre, and house them inside a historical building – the 18th century Ospedale degli Infermi, for too many years left abandoned. Giving a new life to this building is another important achievement, since it remained for a long time a huge silent presence in the historic town centre. Only a few cultural events were held there, such as the exhibitions “Genti nel Delta da Spina a Comacchio” (2007), “L’Isola del Vescovo” (2009), and “Omaggio a Giglio Zarattini” (2014).

Today this great building, the museum’s natural home, is once more fully functional, after long restoration work. We can now admire not only the treasures inside the museum, but also the architectural splendour of its premises, an original and impressive witness to the scientific and social vision of the Enlightenment applied to public health.

This new museum has thus deep roots in Comacchio’s history, but it also has an innovative exhibition design, with a fresh, modern appearance thanks to the intelligent use of multimedia and narrative presentations. Our wish is that this reality may be nurtured and constantly improved through scientific research and dissemination.

The inauguration of the museum is therefore the result of a great effort shared by many institutions and professional teams. We would like to express our gratitude to the ‘Ministero dei Beni e Attività culturali e del Turismo’ and especially to the ‘Soprintendenza archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio per la città metropolitana di Bologna e le Province di Modena, Reggio Emilia e Ferrara’, along with the ‘Polo Museale Emilia Romagna’, the Emilia Romagna Regional Authority, and the universities of Ferrara, Bologna and Venezia. Thanks also to all the researchers, designers, and restoration and museum design companies, and also to the employees of Comacchio Council, who have worked together during a period of intense commitment that we will always remember gladly.

The new Ancient Delta Museum thus represents a goal achieved by an entire community, a desire fulfilled over generations. The final result is to give back Comacchio its historical roots, its memory of belonging. The monumental museum seat, built inside the intricate maze of canals in the town centre, was conceived as an asylum for sick bodies and poor souls. After centuries, the former hospital has become the perfect home for the spirit of the Po Delta.

Just as water crosses borders, the desires and aspirations of an entire community cannot be dammed into small creeks. Ongoing research and continuing new discoveries foreshadow amazing, brand new vistas.

Comacchio’s new museum lies in the delta’s embrace.

Alice Carli, Marco Fabbri

The scientific project for the new museum of Comacchio – a necessary step before work began on the museum's design – was developed over the course of ten years.

This inauguration is therefore an important goal achieved by Comacchio Council in first place, and also thanks to dedicated work by the former 'Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici dell'Emilia Romagna', and indeed of the researchers of the universities involved in archaeological excavations and studies, including Ferrara, Venice, Bologna, Zurich and Pavia. Thus today we can see the results of all their hard work, which gives the citizens of Comacchio – as well as national and international visitors – a comprehensive picture of the history of this territory and the life of its ancient inhabitants.

The museum makes wide use of new technological tools, but at the same time keeps closely in touch with the traditional display of excavation finds. It is thus possible to fully explain what archaeology really is, going beyond the superficial sensationalism of the media and some improvised popularization. For it is hard work to communicate history using all the results of an archaeological excavation, which involve increasingly complex methods and more advanced technology. We must therefore consider the whole context, beyond the single – more or less revealing and evocative – discoveries. We have to comprehend the entire picture over an extensive territory, putting in parallel data from other excavations and using (when these exist) traditional written sources, including historical texts, local chronicles and archives. I believe that the authors of this short guide have rendered this complexity with passion and intelligence, placing Comacchio within a broad historical discourse and letting the objects on display "speak" for themselves.

Like most municipal archaeological museums in Italy, the Ancient Delta Museum houses only material owned by the State, because the finds all come from excavations carried out during the last century. Collaboration between Comacchio Council, now responsible for the museum's upkeep, and the national – recently renamed – Archaeology, Fine Art and Landscape Superintendency has been essential for what has been achieved, but will be even more so for future issues. I refer in particular to the longstanding problem of the unfinished conservation treatment of the Roman shipwreck. After many interruptions, we are now completing the treatment, having identified the best methodology – the wreck, to everyone's satisfaction, is actually in very good condition inside its artificial shell. Future goals could be new excavations, carried out by the universities involved in the project and by the Superintendency. The results of this work will stimulate the renewal and growth of the Ancient Delta Museum.

As should be clear to everyone (even to those who know little about archaeology), an archaeological museum must always have close ties with the surrounding territory, where archaeological excavations continue. Otherwise it will be left behind by new developments and may indeed itself become 'mummified'. Contrary to what is sometimes said, the only sound basis for the conservation of our archaeological heritage is adequate scientific knowledge, and without correct conservation there is no future for development.

Luigi Malnati

Director of the 'Soprintendenza archeologia belle arti e paesaggio per la città metropolitana di Bologna e per le province di Modena, Reggio Emilia e Ferrara' – former head of the 'Soprintendenza ai beni archeologici dell'Emilia Romagna' and of the 'Direzione Generale Archeologia'

Presentations

Comacchio's archaeological adventure officially began on 3rd April 1922, with the discovery of Etruscan graves during reclamation work in Valle Trebba. This was a sector, with over 1200 graves, of the cemetery of Spina, the Etruscan port town between the River Po and the Adriatic Sea, until then only known from references by ancient writers. Since their time, the archaeological importance of the Comacchio area has been occasionally pre-announced by reports of surface finds discovered over the centuries during dry periods by chroniclers and local history enthusiasts.

Archaeological knowledge of Spina and the delta area has been closely linked to the progress of land reclamation. With the drainage of Valle Pega between 1953 and 1965, another rich sector of the cemetery was brought to light, with another 2650 graves, along with the harbour zone of Motta della Girata, and the Early Christian church of Santa Maria in Padovetere with its own cemetery.

In 1960 the reclamation of Valle Lepri - Mezzano led to the identification of the settlement of Spina. Excavation began there in 1965 and are still in progress. Other discoveries were made in the Roman villa of Bocca delle Menate. These exciting results were accompanied by other positive outcomes during the monitoring of work in the territory, along with the initiatives promoted by Comacchio Council aimed at discovering more about the old town in the lagoon.

Inside the Museo Delta Antico we find the substantial fruits of all the activities just described, starting from the Julio-Claudian monument found in 2015 in Baro Zavelea, which welcomes the visitor and introduces the first section dedicated to the Roman period (1st cent. BC-4th AD). Here we can admire objects from excavations of settlements in populated areas (including Argine d'Agosta and Dosso dei Sassi), or found in neighbouring territories. Among them there are also some valuable funerary monuments from Ostellato. The Roman section closes with the abundant and renowned Valli Ponti shipwreck.

On the first floor the visitor will find artefacts belonging to the pre-Spina inhabitants, who lived here during the late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (11th to 7th cent. BC). Then comes the large section on the wealthy and highly Hellenized Adriatic port of Spina (late 6th to middle 3rd cent. BC), first the town, then the cemetery.

The rich collection of grave goods from sector D of Valle Pega, mostly unpublished, gives an account of the chronological development of the burials, while the reconstruction of the stratigraphic sequence immerses the visitor in the reality of an excavation.

The last section is dedicated to late antiquity and the medieval period. Thanks to recent excavations we know about Comacchio at the time of its birth (mid 6th cent. AD), during its prosperity, up to the last archaeological evidence dating to the 15th and 17th centuries. Its strategic location ensured its wealth and reliance upon trade. It is cited for the first time with this name in *Liutprand's Capitulary* (AD 715-730), a document that established commercial relations between the Lombards of Pavia and the inhabitants of a new centre, Comacchio, at this time already established from an administrative, military and ecclesiastical point of view.

On this long journey through the centuries, the visitor is assisted by traditional information sources, abetted by multimedia for interaction and in-depth themes.

These instruments of instruction are further emphasized by sensory experiences. One may hear the sound of the backwash running over the Valle Ponti shipwreck, or perceive delicate flavours inside the "olfactory path".

This short Museum Guide, published soon after the inauguration, is another item offered by Comacchio Council to visitors.

The Ancient Delta Museum is an archaeological treasure of undoubted value which will become an important milestone in the museum network of the province of Ferrara.

Caterina Cornelio Cassai

Our society entrusts museums with the task of preserving material cultural heritage and conveying knowledge to the present and future public. However, a museum cannot play its educational, preservative and inspirational role without communicating its content effectively and comprehensively, especially to those who are not experts in the fields it covers.

That is why the theme of museum communication is now at the centre of international debate, in European cultural programmes as well as in the specialist and technical documents of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Tourism and Institute for the Artistic, Cultural and Natural Heritage of the Emilia Romagna Region.

This short guide to the Ancient Delta Museum is a flexible and informative tool, which offers a different presentation of the contents of a visit to the museum. Its publication is an opportunity to take stock of how the general communication of the newly opened museum has been designed and set up. The creation of a new museum has of course involved the design the various instruction devices, including panels, labels, films, guides, apps, sites, didactic workshops, as parts of a single general and coherent view.

At a basic level, we chose to use many videos, along with more traditional panels and labels, with the aim of locating the archaeological objects firmly within their territorial, temporal and cultural contexts, and to summarize the main historical backgrounds. In addition to easy communication, this familiar medium also has the purpose of reducing distances and making the visitor more comfortable, helping to overcome

the slight awe that may often afflict our relations with a cultural institute.

We are all by now used to living in a virtual world, to employing technology naturally and learning without reading. The communication style of the videos is quite classic, brief and matter-of-fact.

The scenographies too have the same goal of transmitting content, with understanding facilitated by the medium of imagery. These basic means of communication may be used either alone or in groups; interactivity is minimal, mainly concerning the choice of language (Italian or English) at the simple press of a button.

More advanced levels of approach are also envisaged, and are currently under development. The aim is to explore some topics in greater detail and highlight the particular features of certain objects.

Through the variety of communication systems, we also want to keep visitors' attention high and increase their involvement. There is, for example, a sensory and olfactory path, inspired by the main themes of the museum. Other tools are touch-screen content, tablet and smartphone applications, and teaching workshops for children and adults. And not least this short guide, to be followed by a forthcoming more specialized catalogue, allowing visitors to take news and scientific information away with them.

In conclusion, we started out from a general framework of images and suggestions, but returned in the end, via diversified paths, to the reading of written texts and to the concreteness of the material archaeological data.

Laura Ruffoni

Before the museum

The Ospedale degli Infermi

Gabriele Arveda

The seat of the new Ancient Delta Museum is the former hospital of Comacchio, a building with a long and troubled history which has played a major role in the town's life.

The history of the old hospital is closely linked to the precarious economic and social situation of Comacchio under the domination of the Papal State during the second half of the 18th century AD, when the Holy See applied a reformist policy to its provincial territories.

The population's chronic poverty and the resulting bad public health in Comacchio required the presence of a hospital, the lack of which had been denounced for decades. A document of Pope Clement XIV in 1771 started the formation process, partly because the Holy See wanted to quell Comacchio's tax protest regarding the rents of its valleys. The solution was thus to allocate a large sum for construction work and services, including a hospital.

After a few years of indecision, mainly due to the large amount of expenditure planned, in 1777 Pope Pius VI finally ordered the start of work. The burden of expenses was fully incurred by the local community and the project was entrusted to the architect Antonio Foschini from Ferrara (1741-1813).

The first step was the selection of the houses and sites to examine and compare, so as to choose the most suitable ones.

The decision made, however, was to design a new building rather than modify pre-existing properties. The reasons were to contain costs and also to be able to choose an isolated position more suitable for a hospital.

A construction site was therefore selected by a committee from those proposed by Foschini, on the basis of its strategic

position, isolated but centrally placed at a crossing point between three canals and two roads.

The year 1778 saw the beginning of the work, which continued until 1784 with many difficulties, including the limited resources available and the population's protests at the increased costs.

A key figure in the building of the hospital was Cardinal Francesco Carafa, appointed head of the Ferrara legation. Carafa was a good administrator and reformer opposed to the waste of public resources and the overwhelming power of the Papal clergy and nobility. To reduce costs, for example, he used prisoners for the excavation of water channels.

In 1780, the direction of the work was entrusted to Gaetano Genta (1750-1837), another architect from Ferrara – less renowned but also less expensive than Foschini.

After many difficulties and economic sacrifices, including loan reductions, in 1784 the work was finally finished.

However, the hospital was not yet ready for use, for economic reasons and also due to formal issues. On one hand there was a lack of funding to run it, on the other the above-mentioned 1771 document by Pope Clement XIV stipulated that the hospital's construction should be accompanied by the establishment of a home for spinsters, and also a school for poor children. Failure to comply with these conditions meant that the hospital could not open.

The official opening finally took place on May 15 1811, as decreed by Eugène de Beauharnais, Viceroy of Napoleonic Italy. In fact it was not until the completion of further massive and expensive restoration works, made necessary by various civilian and military occupations in the difficult