

Museo Nazionale Romano - Palazzo Altemps

Piazza Sant_Apollinare, 46, 00186

near the Piazza Navona,

9 AM – 8 PM (Closed Monday)



The palace is located in **Campo Marzio**, a few steps behind Piazza Navona.

In the archaeological excavations preliminary to the restoration work there have been discovered the structures of a **late imperial Roman domus** and the remains of numerous medieval tower-houses incorporated within the Renaissance palace.

The core of the current building is due to Girolamo Riario, in the **15th century**: relevant to this stage are the **wooden ceilings** of the first floor and the mural paintings of the Sala della Piattaia. The cardinal of German origin Markus Sitticus III von Hohenems Altemps acquired it in 1568 and therein established his **collection of ancient sculptures**.

Representative interventions of the Altempsian period are the courtyard and the **altana** (rooftop loggia), the monumental chimneypiece and the Church of St. Anicetus, the decorations of the painted loggia and the frescoes of the **Room of the Painted Perspectives**.

During the **18th century**, the Palace returned to being a **diplomatic residence** and accommodated lavish feasts in both the courtyard and the theatre. In the 19th century the French lieutenant Jules Hardouin inherited the entire property of his deceased wife, Lucrezia Altemps. In 1883, he saw himself compelled to cede the building to the Holy See which, between 1894 and 1969, bestowed its usage to the Spanish Pontifical College. The Ministry of Heritage and Cultural Activities acquired the Palace in 1982 and the Archaeological Superintendence of Rome has led a rigorous restoration culminating in the inauguration of the museum in 1997.

The seat of the National Roman Museum at **Palazzo Altemps** houses important collections of **antiquities consisting of Greek and Roman sculptures** that in the 16th and 17th centuries belonged to various families of the Roman nobility. The placement of the statues inside the rooms reproduces the **antiquarian taste for the ostentatious display typical of that time**. A feature common to the sculptures is the recourse to additional restoration, desired by collectors not only for aesthetic sense but also to confer dignity to the figures represented.

The Altemps Collection - The important collection of antiquities of Cardinal Markus Sitticus abounded in some one hundred artworks, then passed to several different properties. In Palazzo Altemps there are still four large statues located in the northern portico and other sculptures decorating the staircase.

The Boncompagni Ludovisi Collection - In the rooms on the ground floor and the first floor are exhibited 104 sculptures that the Italian State purchased from the Ludovisi-Boncompagni family in 1900. Among the most representative examples: the Ludovisi Acrolith and the Ludovisi Throne, the **Gaul Killing Himself and His Wife**, the Athena restored by Algardi, the Ares restored by Bernini and the Grande **Ludovisi Sarcophagus**.

The Mattei Collection - In the galleries on the sides of the courtyard and in a room of the first floor are exhibited some ancient sculptures that originally adorned the villa and gardens of Ciriaco Mattei on the Caelian Hill: the Dacian in antique yellow marble is particularly renowned.

The Drago Collection - In the southern loggia are exhibited four reliefs of the collection once belonging to the Del Drago family; they were known and drawn since the 15th century, studied and admired by Winckelmann as well.

The Egyptian Collection - The sculptures on display in the so-called Apartments of D'Annunzio were found in Rome in the area of the Campus Martius where once the great Sanctuary dedicated to Isis stood; they partly come from Egypt and **partly are the result of a Roman production after the Egyptian fashion** that developed abreast with the spread of the Egyptian cults in the West. In the room of the Mother Goddesses is exhibited the head of the Ephesian Artemis unearthed in 2009 during the urban excavation campaign in Via Marmorata