



NATIONAL ARCHEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF EGNAZIA

ANCIENT EGNAZIA

The archaeological site of Egnazia, being inserted in a favourable natural and environmental context, among secular olive trees and the sea, is one of the most interesting sites in Apulia. Cited by some famous authors such as Plinio, Strabone and Orazio, this town was very important in the past, thanks to its geographic position, to its port and thanks to the Via Traiana. In fact Egnazia was an important commercial centre. This was the last stop on the trip to Brindisi along the ancient road as the Latin poet Orazio documented. In the third Satira of his second book he tells of Egnazia, where he was arrived with Virgilio and Mecenate.

The history of ancient *Gnathia* develops during several centuries. The first settlement, a village of huts, dates back to the XVI cent. B.C. (bronze age). During the XI cent. B.C. (iron age) this area was invaded by people coming from the Balcans, the Iapigi. In the VIII cent. B.C. the Messapian phase started for Gnathia and all of the Salento. This ended when the Romans conquered Gnathia in the III cent. B.C. Then Gnathia became a republic and a part of the Roman Empire and it ceased to exist with the end of the Roman Empire.

Egnazia still maintains the Messapian defensive massive wall (7 mt high and 2 km long, which encloses an urban area of about 40 hectares) and the **necropolis**, where the pit chambers and semi-chamber tombs are, some of which are enriched by pictorial decorations.

There are lots of traces dating back to the Roman Age: the **Via Traiana**, the **civil basilica** with the **hall of the three graces**, the **temple of oriental cults**, the **amphitheatre** and the **porticoed square**. Among the best preserved buildings is the **cryptoporticus**. There are also two **early Christian basilicas** situated near the **private Roman houses** originally paved with mosaic floors.

Black pottery, finely decorated with white, yellow and red pictures is named "*Gnathia* pottery" (IV-III cent. B.C.).

THE MUSEUM

The **Archaeological Museum** is set outside the boundary walls of ancient *Gnathia* in the area of the Messapian necropolis. It consists of eleven bright pavilions around two patios and at the present time it includes three different exhibitions. The first one, "Documents of the Bronze Age", is about the ancient settlements along the Adriatic coast of Apulia, dating back to the Bronze Age, which had frequent commercial exchanges with Greece. The second exhibition is about Egnazia and its history. It includes the beautiful marble head of *Attis* and a mosaic representing the **three Graces**. The third one, "Global Archaeology at Gnathia", is realized in collaboration with the University of Bari and it emphasizes the relationship between archaeology and other scientific disciplines. The museum is both the exhibition seat and the office of the Archaeological Superintendence of Apulia. It controls a territory full of buried treasures. It also protects and makes the archaeological property known to others.

In the museum you can find a restoration laboratory, a technical office, a catalogue office, a library and didactic services.

INFORMATION

The museum is open every day from 8:30 AM to 7:30 PM (ticket office closes at 7:00 PM).

The archaeological park is open from 8:30 AM to 17:00 PM (ticket office closes at 16:00 PM). Both are accessible to the disabled.

Ticket: museum and park €3,00

Just museum/park €2,00

Free entrance to 18 and over 65 years old

50% reduction from 18 to 25 years old

The museum is closed on 1st January and 25th December

It is possible to **reserve guided visits** (also in foreign languages) - **080/4827895**.

Inside the museum using flash is forbidden. To take photos or videos is necessary to fill in the authorization form (ask to the vigilance staff).