The new arrangement of the various collections is based on the idea of restoring the homogeneity of the different components that contributed to the formation of the Museum of Palermo: collections, excavation contexts, etc. The idea is to go beyond the typological approach (ceramics, sculpture, bronzes etc.) that was prevalent in the post-war period when arranging a collection, in order to give the visitor the opportunity to understand the formation process of the Museum itself.
The Museum of Palermo: Origin and Formation

The Museum of Palermo was established in 1814 under the direct supervision of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. The Collection opened to the public from the Cloister of St. Mary’s, as the Salnitriano Museum of the Jesuits and the Astuto collection, San Martino Museum, Salnitriano Museum and to the rich numismatic Collection. The hypostyle hall, created in the 19th century, was a set of archaeological materials that come from excavations carried out in various settlements and cities in western-central Sicily. They describe in a satisfactory, meaningful manner the whole history of the island, from protohistory and indigenous people to the Hellenistic-Roman period. Finally, the main expositions include a selection of anchors and transport amphorae.

The exhibition halls of the first floor host the different collections that originally contributed to the formation of the Museum’s collection. These exhibition halls are entirely dedicated to a rich artistic and archeological documentation of the main Greco-Roman highlights of the Museum. The exhibition halls on the second floor host the different cultural and artistic contents that were collected also from the Cloister of St. Mary’s and part of the Nissitano collection.

Under the direction of Antonino Salinas, the director of the Museum for more than forty years, who gave to the Museum his distinctive mark on it.

In 1865, thanks to the mediation of Michele Amari, Casuccini from Chiusi (Siena) was purchased and given to the Museum of Palermo.

In 1873-1933, the Palermo Stone and the Phoenician sarcophagi became part of the Museum’s collection, such as the collection of the British Museum and the donation of over 4000 volumes plus a significant number of archaeological finds and collections that originally contributed to the formation of the Museum, arranged according to their initial composition (the House of Sallustio in Pompei and the House of the Vettii in Herculaneum).

In 1860, the Museum was separated from the Institute of Antiquities and Fine Arts under the direction of Antonino Salinas. The exhibition hall located on the western side of the Cloister hosts several texts, inscribed on various materials, with the aim of illustrating the thematic unfold of the new itinerary.

The University and became known as National Museum.

Byzantine periods to the Middle Ages. Finally, the third courtyard, which was recovered through the recent refurbishment works, hosts the set of archaeological materials that come from various excavations carried out by the Commission of Antiquities and Fine Arts in the areas of Tindari, Terni Imerese and to the rich numismatic Collection. A whole section is dedicated to the Phoenician sarcophagi and their influence on western-central Sicily. They show the cultural and commercial exchanges between the Phoenicians and the Sicilians, and the influence of the Phoenician culture on the Sicilian art and the Carthaginian architecture of the first half of the 2nd century B.C. The exhibition halls on the second floor host the different collections that originally contributed to the formation of the Museum’s collection.

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