



**Opening hours:**

From 16th March to 1st November, daily from 10:30 a.m. until 05:30 p.m.  
From 2nd November to 15th March daily from 10:00 a.m. until 04:30 p.m.

**Closing times:**

Closed at 25th December and at 1st January of each year

**Reservations:**

Tel: +39 0588 86347

**Price valid until 31st December 2015**

**Volterra Card (valid 72 hours):**

**Museo Etrusco Guarnacci, Pinacoteca, Ecomuseo dell'Alabastro, Teatro Romano and Battistero**

14,00 € full

20,00 € Family (2 adults and 2 under 18)

12,00 € Students & over 60

10,00 € Adult groups (min 20 pax)

5,00 € Student groups (min 20 pax)

**Museo Etrusco Guarnacci**

The Guarnacci museum is one of oldest public museums of Europe: it began in 1761 when the noble abbot Mario Guarnacci (Volterra 1701-1785) gave its enormous archaeological heritage, collected over years of research and purchases, to the "public of the city of Volterra." The donation that also included a library of more than 50,000 volumes was an extremely forward-looking action in that, in addition to giving the city a very important cultural instrument, warded off any danger that the enormous heritage accumulated could disappear.

Guarnacci was an erudite historian and author whose work included a history of the oldest inhabitants of Italy ("Le Origini Italiane - Italian Origins," Lucca 1767). He certainly had the great merit of attracting to Volterra the attention of some of the greatest intellectuals of the era, such as Giovanni Lami, Scipione Maffei, and Anton Francesco Gori. They were dedicated to the scientific divulgation of materials of the collection through important publications and constant news in magazines such as "The New Literati," published in Florence by the same Lami.

The Museum's first site was the Maffei palace (in via Guidi, today via Matteotti) purchased by the Guarnacci to collect its heritage. On his death (in 1785), it was transferred, along with the library, to the Duecentesco Priori Palace. It remained there until 1877 when, with the addition of donations, purchases and the fruits of fortunate research conducted in first person by the scientific directors of the Institution, director Niccolò Maffei placed it at the Desideri Tangassi palace, where it is still located today.

The current disposition and location of materials demonstrate Maffei's positivistic impact, with items separated by classes and the urns distinguished according to the theme of the bas-relief on the case. While respecting the historic memory of this arrangement, an attempt was made, in recent times, to associate it with another, more didactic, chronological tour inside the exhibition itself, able to conduct the visitor through the long history of the Etruscan Velathri.

The chronological tour begins on the ground floor where significant pre- and proto-historic monuments are displayed (rooms I and I bis), along with orientalisised, archaic (room II) and classic (room III) memorials. It continues to the second floor and the illustration of the historic period of the city's great economic and artistic blossoming, from the end of the 4th to the 1st century B.C.

At the beginning of the tour is described the reconstruction of a tomb from the first Iron Age (9th – 8th Century B.C.): in room I are the materials from the 1892/1898 excavations of the Badia and Guerruccia necropolis; in I bis are the recent discoveries of the Ripaie necropolis (excavated in 1969).

The orientalisising period (VII century B.C.), barely documented in Volterra, is represented in room II with meaningful items: the Bucchero kyathos (dipper) by Monteriggioni with a dedicatory inscription, a series of bronze offerings, and from the exceptional gold jewellery coming from Gesseri di Berignone (Volterra) donated to the Museum by Bishop Incontri in 1839.

To the archaic period (VI century B.C.) instead belongs one of the best-known monuments of the Guarnaccia collection: the stela of Avile Tite, a funerary monument that depicts a warrior armed with a lance and sword that, stylistically, shows close affinity with Greek-Oriental works. In the center of room III is work from the 5th century B.C.: a carnelian scarab with a Greek inscription referring to its creator (Lysandros), an attic crater attributed to the late production of the Painter of Berlin, and classic age bronzes with various depictions.

The tour continues to the second floor; through a selective exhibition of monuments, it provides a panoramic image of the productions and tombs of the period conventionally called Hellenist (end 4th-1st century B.C.).

An element characterising the exhibition is the cinerary urn typical of Volterra and of its territory; in this reposed the remains of the deceased after the cremation rite, almost exclusive to Volterra. On the outside it appears as a small sarcophagus distinguished in two essential parts. One case functions as a true container for the ashes, and the cover; in the more ancient era (4th century B.C.) they were simply displuviatus (simple box urns) then, displaying the deceased semi-reclined on the bed on the occasion of a banquet, a social moment in which, in Etruria, the ladies of the house also participated, scandalizing the Greeks and Romans.

This section of the Museum essentially privileges the display of recently acquired tomb complexes to allow seeing the urn in its original context. The family tomb also housed the items that the relatives placed next to the funerary monument and, which, symbolically, allowed the deceased to survive in the beyond. These were, in general, banquet supplies (vessels for mixing water with wine, for pouring and for drinking), but also ornaments and special toiletry items for women.

In rooms XXVII and XXVIII are tombs supplied with urns from the Badia necropolis of the 3rd and 2nd century B.C.; room XXIX is dedicated to the reconstruction, for educational purposes, of an ancient workshop with the instruments that Volterranean alabaster artisans continue to use, perpetuating a very ancient tradition. Room XXX exemplifies the qualitatively higher production of the urns, obviously in alabaster, a local stone similar to marble, that Volterra's Etruscans employed exclusively for funerary use.

Room XXXI is dedicated to the subjects represented in the bas-relief of the cases: Greek myths or scenes of the journey of the deceased into the beyond that are illuminated to the taste of the client. Rooms XXXII and XXXIII, dedicated to the topic of the "portrait" on the covers, closes the section regarding the urns, and the panorama expands to the other artisanal productions of Hellenistic Volterra: bronze working (rooms XXXIII and XXXIV) with mirrors, votive statuettes, crockery, beaten coins from the local mint, and ceramics (room XXXVI and XXXVII) with black paint or red figures. In room XXXV are displayed some sculptural monuments for funerary use, among which stands out the statue of the Lady with child (the so-called *kourotrophos* Maffei) with dedicatory inscription (3rd Century B.C.). In the corridor leaving the second floor are fragments of the terracotta decoration from a temple excavated on the acropolis of Castello.

#### The Guarnaccia collection

Rooms III-IX of the ground floor and the entire first floor (rooms XIII-XXVI) are dedicated to the exhibition of the original collection of the Museum until 1861 enriched by donations purchases, and research. The order that dates back to 1877 includes, as already indicated, more than 600 urns based on the subject of the bas-relief on the case: ornamental motifs (demons, masks, rose windows) room IV; fantastic and ferocious animals, room V; a farewell to the deceased by the parents, room VI; journey to hell on horseback, room VII; in a covered carriage (*carpentum*), room VIII; with the chariot, room IX.

On the first floor are displayed urns with bas-reliefs of the following Greek mythological themes. The Trojan cycle: Cadmus killing the dragon, Acteon torn to pieces by a dog, the torture of Dirce, Oedipus and the Sphinge, the seven against Tebe, room XVI; the recognition of Paris as the son of Priam, the kidnapping of Helen, Telephus in the Greek camps, Philoctetes abandoned in the island of Lemnos, the arrival of the Amazons to help Priam, the sacrifice of Trojan prisoners in honour of Patroclus, room XVII; Athenian sagas: Theseus and the Minotaur, room XIII; the abduction of the Leucippides, room XIV; Argive myths: Perseus frees Andromeda, room XIV; the stories of Penelope, Oenomaus and Hippodamia. Some episodes are directly from the *Odyssey*: Ulysses and the Sirens, the blinding of Polyphemus, the transformation of Ulysses' sailors into animals, and the murder of Penelope's suitors, the Proci, room XVIII.

In room XX, with a particular emphasis on the entire collection's most meaningful monuments, are the covers of the spouses, an elderly couple reclining on the connubial bed, with strongly characterized features, modelled in terracotta. (1st century B.C.).

In the center of room XX is another monument-symbol of the Museum and of Etruria in general, the elongated *ex-voto* by Giovinetto known as *Shadow of the Evening*. Its great fame, enriched by legends as curious as they are false, is due essentially to the singular form of this votive bronze that evokes the shadow projected on the ground from the human figure in the light of the sunset, in singular assonance with works of contemporary sculpture. Its "modernity," united to the extraordinary modelling of the forms, abnormal for the unnatural elongation of the figure, but, at the same time, perfectly proportioned, makes this bronze one of the masterpieces of Etruscan sculpture of the 3rd Century B.C.

The first floor of the Museum has mosaic floors in all the rooms brought from buildings of the imperial Roman age of Volterra or of Segalari (at Castagneto Carducci). There are other important sections of the Guarnaccia collection: the coin cabinet with rare Etruscan objects in gold, silver, bronze and more than three thousand Greek, Roman republican and imperial coins, bronzes (room XXIV), along with gold jewellery and gems (room XXV).

At the end of the tour is the first floor room XXVI dedicated to Roman Volterra, in which are displayed materials coming from the urban area and Vallebuona, site of the ancient, splendidly preserved Theatre. We recommend a visit.

In this room was placed the dedicatory inscription of the Theatre ordered built by two characters of the gens Caecina at the temples of Augustus and of Tiberius.

Along the wall of the Museum access stairway landings are placed, according to the customs of the past century, many Latin funerary epigraphs from Rome or Volterra and its territory.