

Museums & Exhibitions

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Rodos Archaeological Museum

Rodos Archaeological Museum is housed in the monumental edifice that was the hospital of the Knights of St. John. Construction of it was begun in 1440 and brought to completion in the time of the Grand Master d'Aubusson (1476-1503). The items on display in the Museum come from various parts of Rodos and the neighbouring islands.

Visitors enter the building by way of the main entrance on the east side and find themselves in a large interior courtyard surrounded by vaulted porticoes, on the architectural model of the Byzantine inn. In front of the colonnade of the west portico stands a late Hellenistic tombstone in the form of a lion with the head of a bull between its front paws. Immediately in front of the pedestal on which the lion stands is a floor mosaic that has been transported from an Early Christian basilica at Arkasa on Karpathos. To the south of the main courtyard there is a smaller interior court, the floor of which incorporates another floor mosaic from an Early Christian basilica at Arkasa.

A monumental staircase at the east end of the south side of the main courtyard leads up to a timber-roofed balcony on the first floor. Exhibition rooms open on to the north, west and south sides of this balcony, containing objects - mainly pottery - most of to from the Italian excavations (the period 1912-1948. Room 1-3 in the south wing, and three of the rooms in the west wing (6-8) house finds from the region of ancient Ialysia (9th-4th c. BC). In the north wing (rooms 9-15) are exhibited vases found during the excavations of the acropolis of ancient Kamiros and the cemeteries in the surrounding area. The east wing of this floor is occupied by the large hall (1) that was the patient's ward of the Knights' hospital. This has a central colonnade on the long axis, and a small chapel with an apse projecting on the east facade of the building. This room contains a display of tombstones of Knights and coats-of arms from various buildings dating from the period of the Knights. Some fine examples of sculpture from Rodos and the neighbouring islands are exhibited in the rooms to the south of the balcony (11-VI) and in the Museum atrium. Room 11, which was the refectory of the Knights' hospital, contains many funerary sculpture from Late Antiquity. The most important exhibit in the small Room VI is a Roman portrait that has been identified as a copy of statue of Menander, the writer of New Comedy (4th c. BC); another interesting exhibit here is a panel of a funerary or votive relief on which is preserved a scene of a quadriga and Nike. Room III (the kitchen of the Knights' hospital) contains an exhibition of Archaic sculpture, and Classical and Hellenistic funerary reliefs; in the recess at the east (the hearth in which the food was prepared), we may note a *perirrhanterion*, and torsos and heads of kouroi from Kamiros. The grave stele of Kriton and Timarista (ca. 410 BC) has been set against the west wall of the main panel of the room; this was carved by a local artist influenced by the masterpieces of art on the Parthenon in Athens. The two Rooms IV and V contain Hellenistic and Roman sculptures. In room IV we may note the statue of the Marine Aphrodite in the type of the

Pudica; this probably dates from the late 4th c. BC, or is possibly a late Hellenistic reworking of an earlier model; also the archaistic Hekataeon and the porphyry head of Silenos, of the middle Hellenistic period. Room V houses a number of small-scale sculptures, many of them representative of the light style that flourished in the late Hellenistic period, which is conventionally called "Hellenistic rococo". A good example of this is the small statue of Crouching Aphrodite, a 1st c. BC work. The Museum atrium contains various statues and fragments of funerary monuments. A floor mosaic from Arkasa on Karpathos has been laid in the recess on the south side of the atrium, and at the back of the recess stands a reconstruction of a tombstone in the form of a small temple, housing a trophy.

Open daily except Mondays 08:30 – 15:00

Palace of the Grand Master

The palace of the Grand Master, or Castello, is built at the highest point of the medieval city, to the north-west, and its volumes dominate the city and its harbour. It was a strong structure, indissolubly linked with the fortifications, and played an active role in the defence of the city, forming the last refuge of the population in the event of the city boiling to the enemy.

The palace of the Grand Master is a roughly square building (dim: 80x75 m) designed around a large courtyard (dim: ca. 50x40 m). Built at the end of the 7th c., to act as the citadel of the Early Byzantine "fortress", it continued to play this role throughout the Byzantine period and the period of the Knights of St. John (1309-1522). The building was modified before the Knights established themselves on the island; from the first quarter of the 14th c. the Knights began to repair the Byzantine citadel and convert it into the residence of the Grand Master and administrative centre of their state.

The main entrance is in the south facade, flanked by two imposing towers. The west facade is pierced by a gate, in front of which rises a tall, square tower, probably the work of the Grand Master Pierre d'Aubusson (1476-1503). On the north side there are underground rooms that served as storerooms; and it was probably in these that part of the civilian population took refuge in the event of an enemy attack. The ground floor was occupied by small and large vaulted rooms, set around a square courtyard, which were used as ancillary rooms.

In about the middle of the 19th c., the first floor collapsed completely, and very little of it survived until 1937, and the beginning of "restoration" work.

On the first floor were various official rooms, such as the "Great Council Chamber" and the dining room, as well as the private quarters of the Grand Master, which were commonly known as "Margaritae". During the period of Italian rule, a chapel was built to the right of the monumental marble staircase leading up to the first floor. In it was erected a bronze statue of Saint Nicholas, a copy of the work of that name by Donatello, in Bari.

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Floor mosaics of late Hellenistic, Roman and Early Christian times have been laid in many of the rooms on the first floor, most of them taken from buildings on Kos.

During the period of Turkish rule, the palace was used as a prison, and it continued to have this function under the Italians, until the decision was taken to "restore" the building.

Two major permanent exhibitions may be visited in the ground-floor rooms: on the north side, the exhibition entitled "The city of Rodos from its foundation (408/7 BC) to the Roman period" and on the south-west side, next to the chapel, the exhibition "Rodos from the 4th c. AD to its capture by the Turks (1522)".

Open Daily except Mondays 08:30 – 15:00

The Byzantine Museum

The church of the Panayia tou Kastrou (Virgin of the Castle), one of the most majestic buildings in the medieval town of Rodos, standing at the beginning of Ippoton street hosts the Rodos Byzantine Museum.

Built in the late 11th c., its architectural type is that of a domed, cross-in-square church, with the western leg of the cross longer than the others. Until 1309, when the island was captured by the order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, it was the Byzantine cathedral of Rodos.

After the capture of Rodos by the Knights of St. John, the Panayia tou Kastrou was converted into the Roman Catholic cathedral, an event mentioned in a papal bull of 1322.

Large-scale, radical work was undertaken on it during the period of the Grand Master Villeneuve (1319-1346), as confirmed by the coats-of-arms of Villeneuve himself and Pope John XXI 1 preserved in the upper part of the sanctuary. The work was concentrated on the roofing over the aisles and the sanctuary, in which use was made of poros blocks of various sizes as it is easily seen in the masonry of the monument. The dome was replaced by a barrel-vault and ribbed cross-vaults, which effectively transformed the building into a three-aisled church with a transept.

In 1826, the Belgian traveller Rottiers states that there were in the church a number of tombstones of Catholic residents in the city of Rodos and foreigners who died in there, and also that the sanctuary had stained-glass windows, which he drew before they were destroyed.

Some important fragments are preserved of the interior wall-paintings from the period of the Knights, amongst them a depiction of the Virgin, and those of four other saints, the best preserved of which is St. Lucia. This dates from the 14th c. and probably belongs to the school of Giotto, whereas the other wall-paintings combine Byzantine and Western elements.

After the capture of the island by the Turks in 1522, the church was converted into a mosque, called the Ederum or Kadouri Cami. Modifications to the building comprised the addition of a minaret to the outside of the south-west corner, of a mihrab (recess for prayer) to the inside of the south-east corner, and the white-washing of the masonry, which destroyed the wall-

paintings. These Turkish additions were removed during the Italian occupation (1912-1945), and the building was subsequently conserved by the Greek Archaeological Service, Since 1988, the church of the Panayia tou Kastrou has housed an exhibition of Byzantine and post-Byzantine painting, including icons from the collection of the 4th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities and wall-paintings detached from the churches of the Archangel Michael at Tharri and Ayios Zacharias at Chalki. Architectural sculptures and members (column capitals, closure slabs, impost blocks, etc) dating from the Early Christian period to the period of the Knights have been assembled in the courtyard on the north side of the church.

Two sections of Early Christian mosaic floors have also been laid on the floor of this courtyard, and also a section of marble-paved floor from the Great basilica at Cheimarra Street, in the city of Rodos.

Open daily except Mondays 08:30 – 15:00

Museum of Decorative Arts

A few metres from the Municipal Art Gallery in the direction of the Mediaeval Town is the charming Argyrokastrou Square. Here, in a building which dates from the period of the Knights and which was possibly an arsenal, you will find the Museum of Popular Art.

The museum is small, but its collection is particularly representative and includes ceramics (with beautiful Rodian wall plates), carved wooden partitions, needlework, rugs and carpets, as well as examples of traditional costumes, utensils, tools and furniture.

Open daily except Mondays 08:30 – 15:00

The Hospice of Saint Catherine

The Hospice of St. Catherine was built in 1391-92, under grand master Heredia, by the Italian Domenico d'Allemagna, admiral of the Order of the Knights of St. John (Knights Hospitaller). The founder was an important personage, disposing of considerable means. The foundation charter of the Hospice in 1391 states that it was “founded in the burgus of Rodos, near the walls at the gate leading to the mole” already known as the “Gate of St. Catherine” from 1465. The situation of the building draws the eye, as it projects into the axis of the high street; the salient part carries the coats of arms of 1516.

The Hospice, exclusively intended for eminent guests of the Order, was already in use from 1394-95; at this date traveller Niccole de Martoni described it as “beautiful and splendid, with many handsome rooms containing many and good beds”.

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The building was apparently destroyed in the siege of 1480 and the earthquake of 1481. Its rebuilding, as testified by the heraldry on the west facade, was completed by Costanzo Operti in 1516, when Fabrizio del Carretto was grand master.

In 1944 the east part of the Hospice was destroyed by Allied bombing, along with many building in the heart of the Jewish quarter. In the years following, the surviving part stood forlorn in a deserted neighbourhood. It was occupied by poor immigrants from the neighbouring islands until 1986, in slum conditions.

The Hospice of St. Catherine was one of the 20 state-owned properties under the jurisdiction of the Archaeological Receipts Fund entered in the restoration programme of the Office of the Medieval Town, founded in October 1985. Its restoration, in the following ten years, was a complex process involving:

- The social problem of rehousing 16 households hitherto accommodated within the Hospice (1986-1995).
- Archaeological investigation of the site (1987-1993).
- Urgent rescue measures, carried out alongside the restoration of the Hospitaller masonry and structural examination (1986-1991).
- Completion of consolidation measures and the architectural restoration of the standing part of the Hospice (1992-1995).
- Conservation of medieval and traditional features by specialists.
- Restoration of the collapsed east side of the building (1994-).
- The integration of the restored Hospice – “Heritage Educational Centre” into the surrounding archaeological sites, in order to facelift the area and attract the visitor of the historic centre.

The Rodian House

Organized by the Women of Rodos Cultural Association, this museum was inaugurated in May 1997. Visitors will find a trully traditional two-floor Rodian house: The living area, the bedroom, the kitchen. Traditional furnitures, hand made traditional linen, glasses, vases, kitchen utensils, as well as paintings, local art pieces and traditional costumes, all there to remind how Rodians were living during the last century.

Municipal Art Gallery

The Municipal Gallery of Rodos represents one of most significant collections of the Modern Greek Painting in Greece hosting a total of 690 exhibits. Featuring works by Maleas, Bouzianis, Kontoglou, Theofilos, Vassiliou, Hadzikyriakos-Gikas, Spyropoulos and other prominent Greek artists, is an invaluable experience for the scholar of Modern Greek painting. The visitor has the opportunity to see some of the most significant examples of their work. Many of the paintings have been part of official exhibitions, both in Greece and abroad. Alongside the masters there are in display other important artistic expressions that complemented the intellectual character of each decade and each major historical period. With a few exceptions - mostly regarding recent generations of artists who are still developing their own style and technique - the Municipal Gallery of Rodos is a highly representative museum of the Greek Art of this century. The paintings exhibited are changed in regular intervals.

The organization of specific exhibitions and other artistic events in various buildings of the Medieval town is also among the activities of the Municipal Art Gallery.

With the sole exception of the painting by Yiallinas, the works in the Municipal Art Gallery of Rodos belong to artists born after 1863. They cover the four distinct periods of 1863 to 1881, 1882 to 1897, 1898 to 1909, 1923 to 1940 and lastly the forties.

The first group contains fifteen artists, the most prominent of which are undoubtedly Maleas, Parthenis, Hadzimihail. The second of the aforementioned groups includes Galanis, Goumaropoulos, Kontoglou, Lytras, Bouzianis, Papaloukas; the third group is consisted of forty artists (Vassiliou, Kontopoulos, Nikolaou, Hatzikyriakos-Ghikas and others); the fourth group features about thirty works, including the painters Diamantopoulos, Engonopoulos, Moralis, Mytaras, Sikeliotis, Spyropoulos, Tsarouhis and others. The fifth group includes artists born between the wars, with approximately forty works by artists such as Gaitis, Ioannou, Kessanlis, Tetzis, Fassianos, and others. The last group contains relatively fewer works, about ten in number, by artists such as Botsoglou, Patraskidis, Psychopedis, Zouni and others. The sum total of exhibits, as an organic entity, makes it possible for the art lover or the art student to see the questions and problems which have occupied Greek artists this century, the solutions they offered to these problems and, in the final analysis, how Greek reality during this period was portrayed.

Ancient Rodos – 2400 Years Exhibition

The exhibition was inaugurated in 1993, as part of the celebrations of the 2400th anniversary of the foundation of the city of Rodos in 408/7 BC. In it are displayed finds that have come to light during rescue excavations by the KB' Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities from 1948 to the present. There are 12 exhibition rooms:

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Room I: The island of Rodos from the Neolithic period to the merger (synoecism) of the three ancient cities.

Case 4. General picture of the Late Minoan 1 city (1650-1450 BC) at Trianta.

Cases 7-11. Geometric and Archaic pottery. Tomb groups from various parts of the island.

Room II: The merger of the three ancient cities (408/7 BC).

Foundation and organisation of the new city.

Case 4. Objects on which the official symbols of the Rodian state are depicted,

Case 5. Weapons and sling-shot.

Room III: Public buildings and sanctuaries.

Cases 1-2. Dedications from the sanctuary of Demeter.

Case 6. Clay head of Helios (the "Sun") (150-100 BC), and a fragment of a Rodian amphora, offered as a prize in the Halieia, the festival in honour of Helios (4th c, BC)

Case 11. Dedications from the storage pit in the sanctuary of Zeus Atabyrios.

Room IV: The Rodian house.

In the centre of the room is a floor mosaic with a representation of a New Comedy mask, Cases 7 and 9. Objects that reflect the convivial atmosphere of the symposium.

Room V: Cosmetics - daily life.

Case 1a. Glass vases and alabastra for oils and perfumes.

Case 3. Gold jewellery,

Case 5. Exhibits connected with children and games.

Room VI: Artistic and cultural life.

This room is dominated by a plaster cast of a statue depicting a child in an attitude of prayer, the original of which is attributed to the school of Lysippos (300 BC).

Room VIII: Rodian pottery workshops

Case 2. Vases and moulds for making relief skyphoi (bowls)

Room IX: Figurines - bronzes – glassware.

Case 1. Clay figurines and moulds.

Case 2. Finds from bronze workshops, in which statues were cast by the "lost wax" (*cire perdue*) technique. Restorations of the Kolossos of Rodos that have been suggested at various times.

Room X: Commerce - economy - coins.

Case 1. Imported piriform amphoras.

Case 2. The evolution of the Rodian amphora (middle of the 4th c.-200 BC).

Cases 4.5. Rodian and foreign coins, and three Rodian "hoards".

Room XI: The Cemetery.

To the right of the entrance is a tombstone in the form of a small temple with late Hellenistic painted decoration. Cinerary urns and ossuaries.

Room XII: Burial customs.

Cases 1-4 Characteristic groups of grave offerings from tombs in the cemetery.

Case 5 Katadesmoi, sheets of lead with incised inscriptions, usually of curses. These were mostly placed in graves of people who met with violent deaths.

“Rodos from the 4th BC to 1522 AC” Exhibition

This exhibition was organised by the 4th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities as part of the celebrations of the 2,400th anniversary of the foundation of the city of Rodos.

It is to be found on the south-west side of the ground floor of the palace of the Grand Master, where the walls of this building coincide with the 7th c AD fortifications of the city.

Chronologically, it covers the period from Christian times to the capture of Rodos by the Ottoman Turks in 1522, and geographically it includes not only the city, but also the rest of the island. The aim of the exhibition is to project some aspects of daily life on Rodos through archaeological finds and visual aids.

The subject units into which the exhibition is divided have been allocated to different rooms, where they are accompanied by sounds, music and speech. They are presented in the following order:

Room I: Early Christian period - pagan religions and Christianity.

Evolution of the urban design of Rodos, density and extent of medieval monuments on the island.

Room II: Economy.

Farming, handicraft industry, commerce, imports, coin circulation.

Room III: Daily life.

Diet, clothing, leisure and entertainment, social welfare. Burial customs and cemeteries.

Room IV: Defence and administration.

Weapons and defensive organisation, state and church administrative organisation.

Room V: Cultural life.

Room VI & VII: Worship

The Aquarium - Museum

The Hydrobiological Station of Rodos is located in the northern part of the island and was constructed during 1934-1936, initiating its activities in 1937 as the real Instituto di Recerche Biologiche de Rodi. In 1945 it was incorporated as peripheral station of the Greek Hydrobiological Institute under the Supervision of the Athens Academy.

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Since 1963 it has been operating as an Aquarium - Museum and research unit. It belongs to the National Centre for Marine Research (NCMR) which is currently developing its research activities in oceanography, fisheries and island waters through corresponding institutes.

The NCMR falls under the supervision of the General Secretariat of Research and Technology belonging to the Ministry of Development.

The main objective of the HSR is to exhibit within its museum a comprehensive collection of live marine organisms, taxidermal specimens, large fishes and sea monsters in addition to a large collection of scientific instruments.

Drawing on its rich research background and on the laboratory and scientific support of the NCMR in Athens, the Station promotes its presence in the region by confronting the major problems within the sensitive area of the Dodecanese.

The scientific personnel of the HSR work in close collaboration with other scientists exchanging experience and know-how concerning the function and the constant improvement of the Station.

There is continuous contact, communication and cooperation with similar stations and environmental organizations overseas involved in the preservation of endangered species, such as turtles, dolphins and seals.

The Aquarium is located in the basement of the Hydrobiological Station and is the only public aquarium in Greece. It offers the visitors the chance to have a close up view of the marine life of the Eastern Mediterranean, providing the impression of being underwater.

With its impressive open water circulation system, supplying 40 tanks with a total capacity of 80,000 litres, the Aquarium provides natural living conditions for a wide range of interesting specimens of Mediterranean organisms such as reefs, sea flowers, octopuses, clams, decapods, turtles and numerous fishes.

Since 1994 the expansion and renovation of the HSR has begun by developing new laboratories for the study of fish, mammals and turtles that are facing major problems of survival in the open sea.

Within the new conference center, initiatives are being taken towards awareness education through applied seminars for domestic and overseas students and producers such as fishermen and aquaculture farmers.

Seminar classes include practical exercises, fieldwork and sampling techniques, utilizing NCMR's 62m long, fully equipped research vessel "AEGAEON", in addition to laboratory analysis in the HSR.

Open Daily 09:00 – 16:30