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Press note

## Generali dedicates new archaeological museum in Rome's Piazza Venezia to schools

To introduce the younger generations to Italy's cultural heritage and history by valorising the country's historical and archaeological heritage: this is the intention of the Museum in Piazza Venezia, Rome, opened by Assicurazioni Generali, which houses the company's collection of archaeological items.

The exhibition is dedicated to Italian schools thanks to "Roots of the Present", an educational project that aims, in its first year, to involve approximately 3,000 schoolchildren from around Italy, on a completely free basis.

Generali Chairman Gabriele Galateri said: *"Understanding the past equips us to take on the challenges of the present. Italy has an inestimable cultural, artistic and archaeological heritage, and it gives us enormous satisfaction to make this collection available to the new generations."*

Speakers at the opening ceremony held on 30 November 2011 were Elena Ugolini, the Under-Secretary for Education, Daniela Candilio from the Special Superintendence for Rome's Archaeological Heritage, and Giorgio Rembado, the Chairman of the National Deans' Association.

Generali has been organising exhibitions and educational programmes aimed at Italian schoolchildren on its most representative premises since 2006.

### THE COLLECTION

The archaeological collection, hosted in an area of around 700 sqm., comprises 300 items from Imperial Rome dating between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, in addition to a Greek relief sculpture from the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.

The exhibition, for the first time, brings together under one roof the three elements of the Generali collection of antiquities: those unearthed during the excavations for the foundations of the Generali building, and those already on display in two historic buildings, Palazzo Poli in Piazza di Spagna and Palazzo Merolli in Via delle Tre Cannelle.

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The marbles preserved in Palazzo Poli became a part of the collection following the acquisition of the Palazzo, while those formerly belonging to the Merolli family were recently donated by FATA Assicurazioni, a member of the Generali Group and the owner of Palazzo Merolli since the 1950s. A colour-coded numbering system indicates the collection of origin of each items displayed in the exhibition.

### **THE PROJECT**

The project's teaching approach has the specific purpose of bringing young visitors into direct contact with the material displayed, thereby bridging the gap between the fascinating complexity of antiquity and the curiosity of the younger generations.

The "Roots of the Present" project offers fourth- and fifth-year primary school teachers and junior high school teachers an interactive multimedia programme that illustrates and valorises the local historical roots, through classroom activities, study aids, archaeological site visits and teaching activities specifically designed for the dedicated website.

A team of researchers and archaeologists from universities across Italy will support teachers in the various activities planned, while a series of online seminars will provide a nationwide opportunity to compare teaching methods. The project website will post further teaching materials, documentary videos and the results of the activities carried out by students.

### **THE EXHIBITION**

Information panels in every room tell visitors all about the exhibition, while the digital catalogue for IPAD contains photos and captions of all the items displayed. Finally, further themed insights are provided on educational leaflets in every room, which visitors can collect and carry home.

Through different display solutions, the various exhibition rooms allow visitors to learn about archaeological excavations (Room A), as well as the everyday life settings (Rooms B-C), the public venues (Rooms E-F) and the underworld (Rooms G-H-I-L-M) of ancient Rome, with its rituals and beliefs.

The presence of a series of "habitable stagings" also offers the opportunity to appreciate the historical stratification of the block on which the Palazzo stands, the evolutions undergone by Piazza Venezia, the worship of household deities, Trajan's Column and the relationship with the world of the dead.

Particular emphasis has been given to the archaeological remains found in this area of Rome during construction of the building that currently houses them,



providing visitors with a first-time opportunity to discover and reveal the development of this area of Rome, from ancient times to the present day.

### **THE BUILDING IN PIAZZA VENEZIA**

In 1903, at the request of the then general manager Marco Besso, Assicurazioni Generali purchased the site occupied by Palazzo Torlonia to build its Rome offices. The building was part of the project designed by architect Giuseppe Sacconi for Piazza Venezia, which was completely transformed to accommodate the monument to Vittorio Emanuele II. The pieces in the collection were found during the archaeological excavations directed by Giuseppe Gatti between 1902 and 1904. The foundations were built on a site that had once been the location of a building in ancient Rome. The items discovered during the excavation continued to be owned by Assicurazioni Generali, which has conserved them for more than 100 years; now, after a new restoration, they are on show to the public in a permanent exhibition.

### **THE GENERALI GROUP**

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