



NÁJERILLA MUSEUM



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**MUSEO
NAJERILLENSE**



**Gobierno
de La Rioja**

THE BUILDING

The Museum is housed in the Palace of the Abbot of Santa María La Real, constructed in the second half of the 18th century. It was communicated with the monastery via an overhead gangway across the calle de Las Viudas.

In 1785 the new pharmacy was installed on the ground floor, “good, beautiful glass and pottery jars and apparently a good selection of medicines; two small gardens with a few exotic plants and medicinal herbs” (Jovellanos, *Diaries (Intimate Memories)*: 1790-1801. 1915: 226). The pharmacy was complemented by the drying rooms for herbs and breeding tanks for lizards, leeches and vipers.

After the 1835 Dissolution, the pharmacy moved to premises in calle San Marcial where it would continue to serve the population of Nájera until 1921. At that time it was bought by Joaquín Cusí Fortunet who moved it to Catalonia. Nowadays it is conserved in its entirety in Masnou (Barcelona) and forms the basis of the Museo Cusí de Farmacia. The Museum preserves the pharmacy's original doorway with a medallion over it supported by a pair of angels and the motto **MEDICINAM CREAVIT ALTISSIMUS ET VIR PRUDENS NON ABHORREBIT EAM.** You



Hatch for serving the population of Nájera.



Main hall of the pharmacy conserved in Masnou.

can also see the west door with the hatch through which the medicines were dispensed to the local residents, the main doors and some painted medallions from the ceiling: basket and vase with flowers, coat of arms of the Abbey of Silos and the arms of the Abbey of Santa María la Real.

In 1838 the Palace was transferred to the City Council which used it as a Law Court and District Prison for the Nájera area. At this point the gangway linking it to the monastery was removed and the building was adapted for its new function: the first two floors were divided up into cells, saving a space for a chapel; the upper floor housed the administrative offices and the courtroom; and the garret was turned into living

quarters for the staff. Evidence of its penal and legal function, which continued right up until 1979, can be found in the numerous inscriptions left by the prisoners on the doors and walls of the building, sometimes combined with day-to-day scenes and figures with animals. In general, they have left the name and surname, place of birth, age and the reason and length of the prison sentence, and the date.

In 1981 the building was partly refurbished to house the burgeoning Nájera Museum.



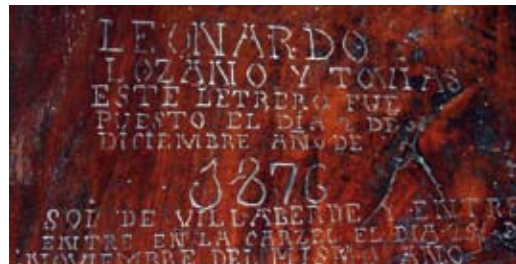
Doorway to the monastery pharmacy.



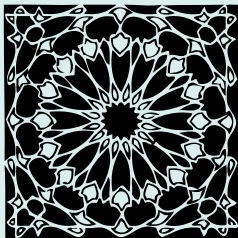
Inscriptions of prisoners on the main door.



Rosettes which adorn the ceiling of the pharmacy.



Inscriptions of prisoners on the door to the courtyard.

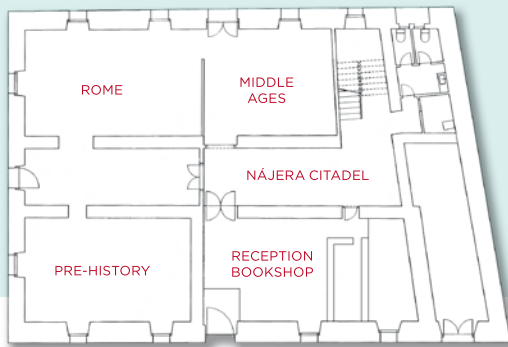


THE MUSEUM

The Najerilla Museum is **a project which was set up and funded by the Fundación Museo Histórico Arqueológico Najerillense**, created in 1999 by **Nájera Town Hall, the Association of Friends of the History of Nájera and the Institute of Riojan Studies**. Its goal is the conservation, investigation and promotion of La Rioja's Historical Heritage and in particular that of the Nájera district.

The Museum began to gather exhibits thanks to the initiative of the Association of Friends of the History of Nájera, since their foundation in 1973. These come from all the villages of the district and its surrounding area and were donated by a large group of local people who sought nothing in return. The stocks have continued to increase thanks to the constant flow of citizens' gifts, the material brought to light by ongoing archaeological digs

GROUND FLOOR



and the acquisition of outstanding pieces of historical interest to fill the gaps in the collections and which could not be obtained in any other way.

The objects are essentially of an archaeological or ethnographical nature, complemented by works of ancient and contemporary art and an extensive collection of documents.

Parts of these stocks were put on public display intermittently between 1984 and 1992. In 2000 the Museum resumed its activity and in 2001 the permanent exhibition of the archaeological collection was inaugurated.



Burials in Majada Londeras. Bronze age.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTION

PRE-HISTORY

The room presents a selection of stone tools collected from the terraces of the river Cárdenas, representing the oldest evidence of the presence of hominids in La Rioja. Chronologically they cover different phases of the Palaeolithic era and correspond to the technology developed by Homo Intercessor, the Anteneanderthal and Neanderthal.

These are accompanied by a few examples of the industrial craft of the Superior Palaeolithic, Epipaleolithic, Neolithic and Metal Age in the Nájera district. La Sima de la Muela and Majada Londeras illustrate the funerary customs of the Bronze Age.

The Celtiberian culture, in which the Berones (valley) and Pelendones (mountains) were the key players, is characterised by the existence of stable, fortified settlements with an ordered layout of rectangular dwellings and the expansion of new technology: ironworking and the use of the wheel, both for transport and in the potter's wheel. The mastery of the wheel and the use of kilns with the baking chamber separate from the one for combustion, made it possible to achieve high temperatures and produce vessels with thin walls, great symmetry and resistance, with an even



Celtiberian earthenware vat



Block with excised decoration.



Plaque with excised decoration.



*Bronze axe head.
Chalcolithic age.*



*Head of chieftain's
stick*

orange colouration which can be decorated with paint.

Outstanding among the Cel-tiberian pieces on display are the ceramic blocks and plaques decorated with excised, incised and printed geometrical motifs possibly related to the architectural ornamentation. The bronze objects for personal use are part of the burial offering and the tombstones decorated with geometrical shapes, animals and horsemen would mark the most important graves. The loom weights, of different sizes, are proof of cloth making activity.



Arrow heads. Neolithic age



Sala Roma

ROME

Tritium Magallum was the Roman city which controlled the whole of the Najerilla valley, situated in Tricio, two kilometres from Nájera. It was one of the major ceramics production centres in Roman Hispania. **In Tricio the tableware known as Terra Sigillata, a type of ceramics made in a mould which bears the name of the workshop.** Over one thousand marks have been documented and more than four hundred potters' names have been re-constructed. **Production began in the middle of the 1st century with the arrival of potters from Gaul and continued until the 5th century.** The workshops were scattered all around Tricio and affected all the surrounding towns and villages, including Nájera. **Ceramics from Tricio were sold all over the Iberian Peninsula following the road network and making use of the Ebro river course (navigable as far as Varea, Logroño) it reached the Mediterranean and was exported to North Africa, Italy, France, etc.**

In the room there is a unique, diverse sample of Tricio table ware on display, including the moulds used by the potters and the pots obtained from them. As well as plain items there are also a range of more important decorative styles, beginning with initial copies of Gallic ceramics, continuing into the more personal metopa styles, including motifs with geometrical shapes and figures and reaching the style of series of circles, sometimes alternating with metopic. **The decoration combines geometrical and plant themes with all kinds of animals and human figures** (heroes, gods, allegories, priests), in isolation of forming scenes (processions, hunting, races, offerings)

The rest of the room is made up of a few fragments from tombstones or steles, a milestone, some pieces from monuments and other elements from everyday life.



Smooth TOSH. plate.



Detail of motifs in T.S.H.

T.S.H. moulds



MIDDLE AGES

The medieval room is presided over by the disc-shaped stele from Brieva de Cameros, decorated on both sides. Generally disc-shaped steles are located outside the context of the archaeological original, which determines its dating. **Its typological characters and the decorative motifs are maintained and repeat themselves from the pre-Roman Eras up until the Modern Age.** The Brieva stele belongs to this latter chronology, while the pieces around it appear in the context of grave objects from the late middle ages.

In the cabinet on the left **there are some Moorish ceramic items collected from the hilltops around Nájera and other Hebrew ones from the city's Jewish castle.**

At the back are various Romanesque capitals with plant motifs and figures and an anthropomorphic sarcophagus, an example of medieval burials in the district. To the right of this there is a selection of typical ceramic work from the period.

The display is completed **by several examples of glazed pottery dating from the 16th and 17th centuries and a selection of ceramic tiles from the Nájera Citadel,** decorated using different techniques, in isolation or combined in a single piece: cuerda seca ("dry cord"), cuenca y arista (a stamp used to produce a mould), painted or embossed.



Mansilla capital

Stele from Brieva



*Jug from a monastery refectory
16th-17th century.*



Fragments of Hebrew Hanukkyah



*Tiles from Nájera Citadel,
16th century*



NÁJERA CITADEL

The Citadel of Nájera formed part of the city's defensive complex dominated by the castle of La Mota situated on the summit and, in addition, made up of the castle of Malpica, the wall of the old town and the tower on the bridge. The manmade caves all along the clifftop could also be used, at least occasionally, for the defence and shelter of the inhabitants.

The Citadel combines the defensive character of a fort and the palatial splendour of the residence of the kings of Nájera/Pamplona in its origin and of the Dukes of Nájera from the 15th century onwards.

The excavations of the Citadel began in the year 2002 and still have not finished. **They show the intense occupation of the area which begins in the**

iron Age, continues through the Roman Era and is maintained during the domination by the Moors **and later Christian civilisation up until the 16th century.** At the end of that century the Dukes of Nájera left the city and the Citadel began a long process of destruction which culminated in the 19th century when the remains were razed to the ground to transform the space into threshing floors for bread.

The cabinets contain objects which represent the most important cultural phases in its historical development. **Among these the most interesting are the bovine shoulder blade with an Arabic inscription, the enamelled plaque from the late middle ages and the glazed pottery and other elements of daily use from the 15th and 16th centuries.**



Ornamental niche in the great hall of the Citadel



Entrance staircase to the Citadel during the excavation



General view of the Citadel after the restoration work



Moorish bovine shoulder blade.



Late middle ages enamelled plaque.



Stucco relief 15th-16th c.



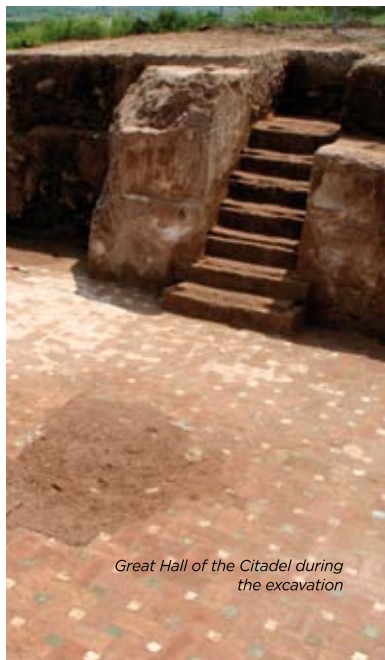
Painted tile 16th c.



Gold-plated buttons 16th c.



Gilt earthenware bowl. 16th c.



Great Hall of the Citadel during the excavation

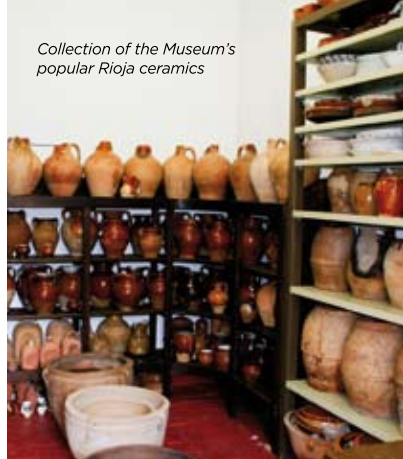
Temporary Exhibition.
"The Potter's Hands and Craft"
2008



Museum Restoration
room



Collection of the Museum's
popular Rioja ceramics



EXHIBITIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE MUSEUM



Temporary Exhibition.
"roof tiles which talk" 2012



Wine measurement.
Ollauri Town Hall, 1865



Temporary Exhibition.
"roof tiles which talk" 2012



Temporary Exhibition.
"roof tiles which talk" 2012

Temporary Exhibition.
"Things and Houses"
2015



INFORMATION OF INTEREST

NAJERILLA MUSEUM

Plaza de Navarra, 12
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museo@museonajerillense.com

Opening hours:

Tuesday to Saturday: 11:00 to 14:00 and 17:00 to 20:00.

Sundays and Public Holidays: 11:00 to 14:00.

July, August and September

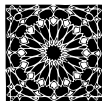
Monday to Saturday: 11:00 to 14:00 and 17:00 to 20:00.

Sundays and Public Holidays: 11:00 to 14:00.

National Public Holidays and days in between, open during working hours.

Type of visit:

- Free
- By appointment: Guided visits to the Citadel and Castle of Nájera for School groups and Cultural Associations.



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