With its rich and unique archaeological collections, this is one of the most ancient and important museums in the world. Its creation is closely tied to the figure of Charles III of the Bourbon dynasty, who ascended to the throne of Naples in 1734. He promoted the excavations of the Roman towns buried by the eruption of 79 AD, as well as the project of setting up a Museo Farnesiano, moving to Naples part of the rich collection he had inherited through his mother Elisabetta Farnese. It was his son Ferdinand IV who chose the current building to house both the Farnese collection and the relics from the Vesuvian towns, which are still today the core collections of the Museum. The palace, erected as royal cavalry barracks at the end of the 17th century, became the seat of the University of Naples from 1816 to 1877, when it was enlarged and refurnished by the two architects Fuga and Schiantarelli. The first galleries were set up during the French Decade (1806-1815) and with the Restoration of the Bourbons in 1816, it became the Real Museo Borbonico. Initially conceived as an encyclopedic museum, it included different Institutes and laboratories (Royal Library, Drawing Academy, Officina dei Papiri and an astronomical Observatory never to be completed), which were all moved to other locations at different times. After the unification of Italy in 1860, it became the National Museum. Its collections were gradually expanded through the acquisition of finds from excavations in Campania and Southern Italy, as well as from private collections. The transfer of all the paintings to the Museum of Capodimonte in 1957, determined its sole identity of Archaeological Museum.