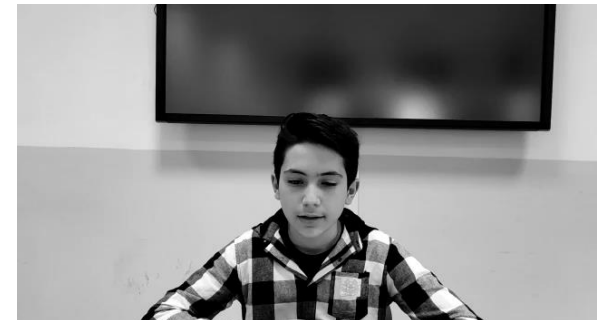


# A WALK AROUND THE CITY

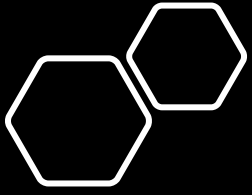
Looking around Reggio Calabria for the first time you might wonder what happened to the old city that was one of the first Greek colonies in southern Italy.

The answer is very simple: earthquakes, principally those of 1562, 1783 and 1908. Above all in 1908 the earthquake and a subsequent tsunami almost completely destroyed Reggio Calabria, Messina and dozens of nearby coastal towns.

Consequently, the new city of Reggio Calabria was constructed on the rubble of the old city using a modern layout. So today the most famous buildings mainly date back to last century.



Città di **Reggio Calabria**



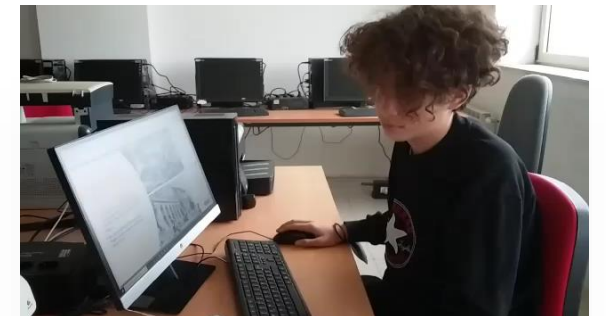
# The Library “Pietro De Nava”



The Municipal Library “Pietro De Nava” in Reggio Calabria, was established on the 31st March 1818 by a decree issued by Ferdinando I, King of the Two Sicilies,, under the name of Ferdinandian Library.

The original collection of books, made of a few hundred units coming largely from the 18th-century private libraries, was placed on the ground floor of the archiepiscopal palace in Piazza Duomo, in some rooms given by the Curia.

After the 1908 earthquake, the remaining part of the collection was brought to a makeshift firehouse, among the ruins of the Castle, until 1928 when the Library was based in the villa "Pietro De Nava", built in 1917 and donated to the city by Giuseppe De Nava.







In the second half of the 20th century a new building was created next to the existing one, which became the head office of the Library.

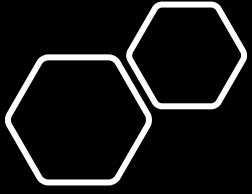


Today, almost two centuries after its establishment, the Library “Pietro De Nava” can be considered as an historical library of conservation, mostly and traditionally specialized in humanities, but it also a modern library, specialized in general knowledge.

The oldest documents are part of the so-called “fondo pergamenaceo”, an extremely valuable collection made of 147 parchments of the XIII-XIX centuries and including chapters, letters and privileges granted by various kings, diplomas and papal bulls.







# Lungomare “Italo Falcomatà”

Defined as the most beautiful kilometre in Italy (its actual distance is 1.7 kilometres), the seafront is a remarkable site of Reggio Calabria.

It shows to its passers-by all the signs of the process of development of the city, which approximately started in the VIII century B.C. with the settlement of the Greek colony of Rhegion along this part of the Calabrian coast, and which has definitely not stopped yet.

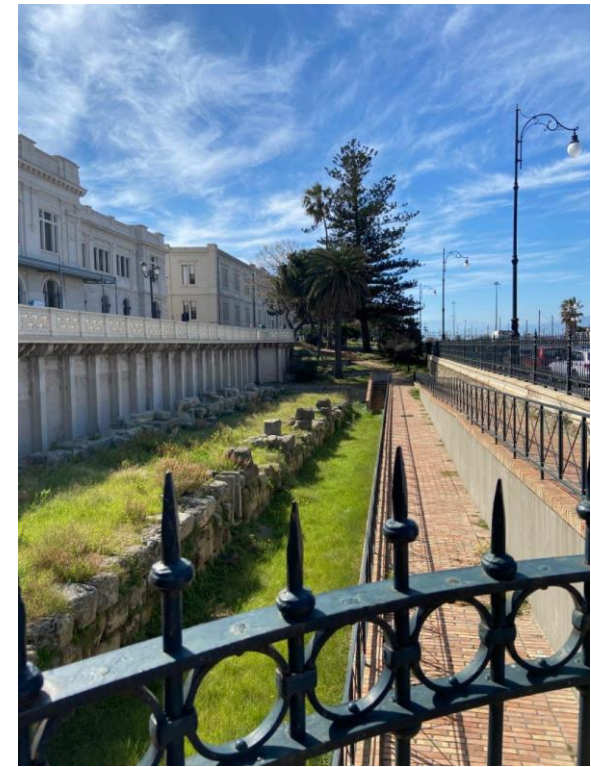




The oldest evidence of Reggio's evolution can thus be found at the beginning of the seafront: **archeological excavations** in this site have unearthed *the Greek Walls* that originally marked the official borders of the city. They can give us the idea of the early physical settlement made there by its first inhabitants.

Not so far from this site, you can find traces of another historical period, *the ruins of an important Roman hot spring*.

These two elements prove the great importance of the geographical position of the city. It has always been one of the focal points for strategic trade as well as for the control of the Mediterranean Sea.

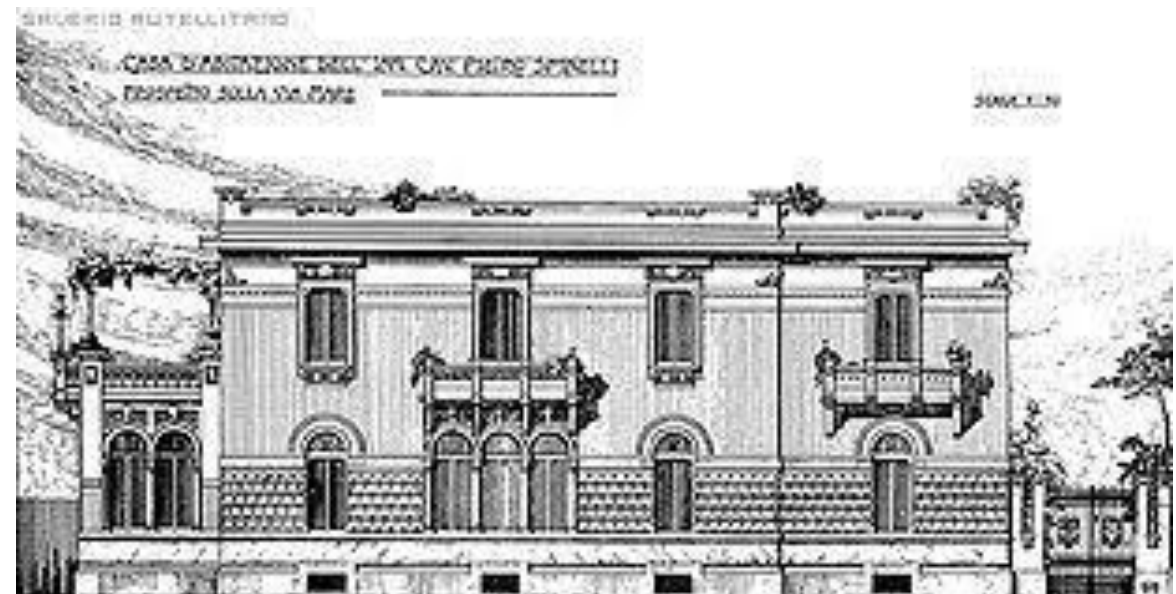
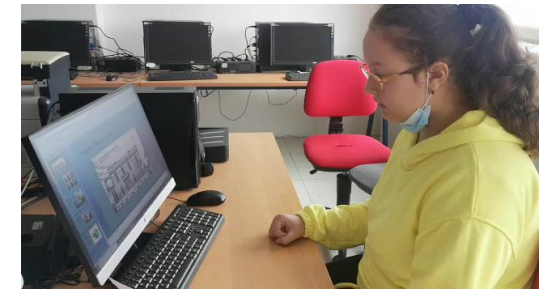




From 1909 onwards, the authorities decided to rebuild the seafront on three main levels in order to respect the natural structure of the city, which is developed vertically from the sea level towards 15 m above.

The upper part of the seafront (via *Marina Alta*) is dominated by Liberty-style buildings, such as *Palazzo Spinelli*, *Palazzo Zani* and *Grand Hotel Miramare*.

***Villa Genoese Zerbi*** is particularly charming with its neo-Gothic Venetian style. It has got red brick facades, similar to those of the Venetian *cà*, which are adorned with Gothic arches, columns, decorative doorframes and balustrades. Until recently, the villa served as southern Italy's exhibition venue for the International Art Exhibition - LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA.





Three gigantic sculptures by the Italian artist *Rabaroma* were displayed at Villa Genoese Zerbi in 2007 and now they permanently adorn the seafront.

They are called *Trans-lettera*, *Labirintite* and *Co-stell-azione* and they are so picturesque that tourists usually take a souvenir photo with them. Despite their modern style, the three installations are perfectly integrated into the so-called “**botanic stripe**” (open gardens with rare tropical plants, palm trees and marvelous centuries-old Magnolia trees) which separates the upper and the lower part of the seafront.



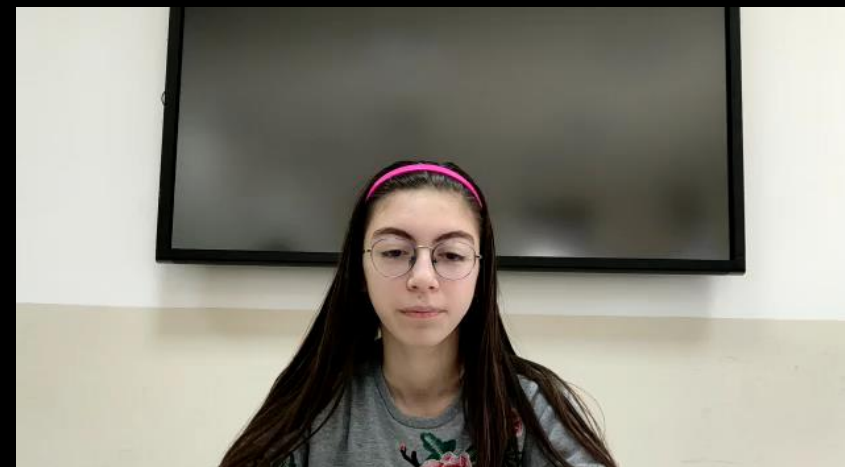




The lower part of the seafront (via *Marina Bassa*) is called **Lungomare Falcomatà** and is composed of a wide promenade hedged by elegant old-style street lamps, palm trees and exotic plants.

Walking on this promenade you can enjoy the wonderful panorama made up of the view of the Strait, of the Sicilian coast and of its volcano (Etna).

Several elegant marble stairs and a series of paths give access to the sea level with another walk and wonderful beaches on the Strait. In summer you can find here various bathhouses, excellent restaurants, lounge bars and clubs.





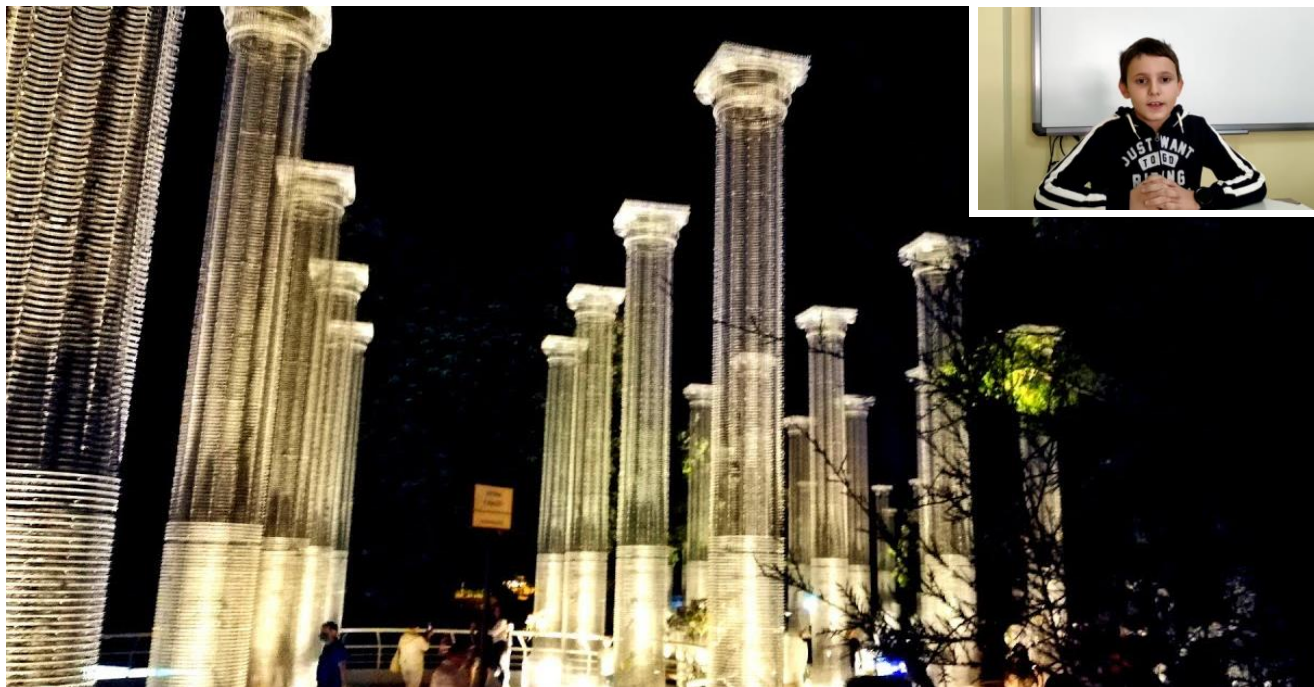


Between the sea and the promenade stands the **Arena of the Strait** (*Arena dello Stretto*), a modern amphitheatre that is strongly inspired by the arenas of the ancient tradition of Magna Graecia. In summer it is home to national and international events and shows.

At the top of the arena, almost in the water, stands a marble memorial dedicated to Vittorio Emanuele III, as the Porto Salvo pier was the first Italian place where he went immediately after he was proclaimed King in 1900.

The bronze statue in the centre of the marble stele (*Cippo Marmoreo*) depicts the goddess Athena Promachos in battle, defending the entire city of Reggio.

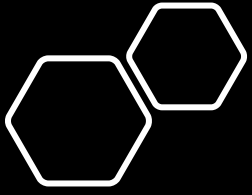




Along *Lungomare Falcomatà* there is **Opera**, a new public art permanent installation created by the Italian artist *Edoardo Tresoldi*. This open monument consists of a colonnade of 46 tall columns within a very large park and is fully crossable and accessible to visitors.

It represents a sort of *agora* and celebrates “the contemplative relationship between place and the human being through the language of classical architecture and the transparency of the *Absent Matter*”, a relationship expressed through *wire mesh*.





# The “Francesco Cilea” Theatre

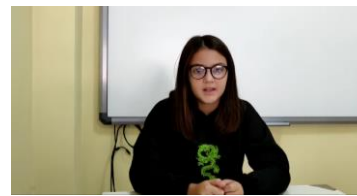
The **CILEA THEATRE**, with a capacity of 1,500 seats, is the largest theatre in Calabria. Its construction was started in 1908 and today is a reference point for the artistic and cultural tradition of the region.

This Theatre is named after the famous Italian musician and composer *Francesco Cilea*, born in Palmi, a small town near Reggio Calabria.

The exterior of the building is inspired by Classical style. Inside there is an elegant foyer and large red curtains on the proscenium; the great hall, in nineteenth century style, is a horseshoe, with three tiers of boxes and a gallery, divided by a large royal box at the centre.







The history of the Cilea Theatre has its roots in the early 20th century and boasts a long and prestigious tradition: a lot of big names of theatre, dance, and above all opera, such as **Maria Callas** and **Luciano Pavarotti**, performed on its stage.

Every year this theatre offers a rich programme of events.

In addition, plays by local theatre companies are usually performed here.





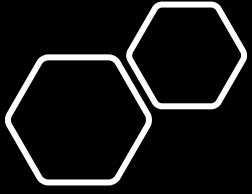
**Pinacoteca Civica  
di Reggio Calabria**



The north wing of the Theatre houses **the Municipal Art Gallery (Pinacoteca Civica)**. It contains some of the most prestigious works of Reggio Calabria's artistic heritage, dating back from the 15th to the 20th century. Inside you can find very important works by well-known artists including Mattia Preti, Luca Giordano, Pietro Bernini, Antonello da Messina, Alonso Rodriguez, Francesco Jerace and many others. The section dedicated to the 20th century displays a painting by Renato Guttuso depicting swordfish fishermen.



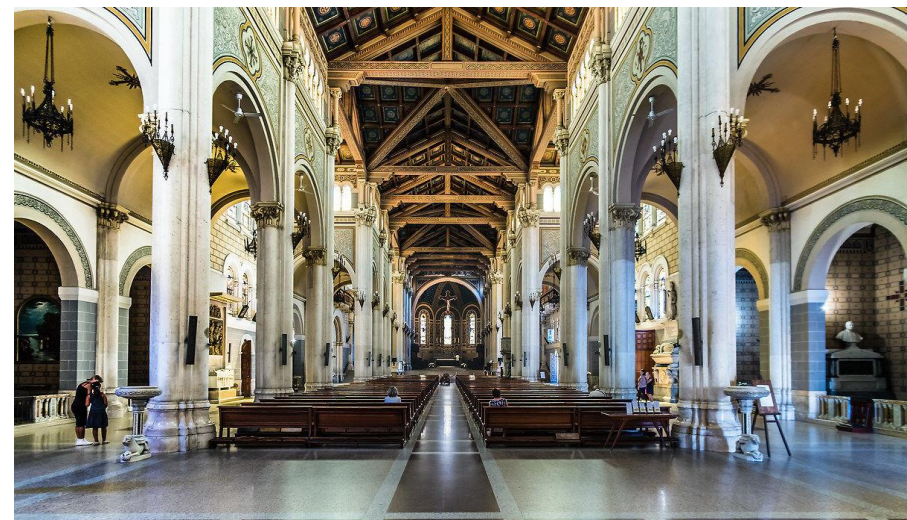




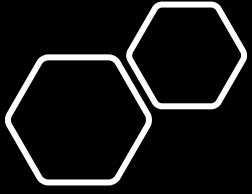
# The Cathedral

The Cathedral of Reggio Calabria is the mother church of the Archdiocese of Reggio Calabria - Bova and is the biggest religious building in Calabria.

Dedicated to *the Assumption of the Virgin Mary*, the Cathedral was severely damaged by the earthquake in 1908 and rebuilt in a modern eclectic style with Romanesque and Gothic elements. The initial design was by the engineer *P. Carmelo Umberto Angiolini* and then modified by the engineer *Mariano Francesconi*. The new church was consecrated in 1928.







# The Aragonese Castle

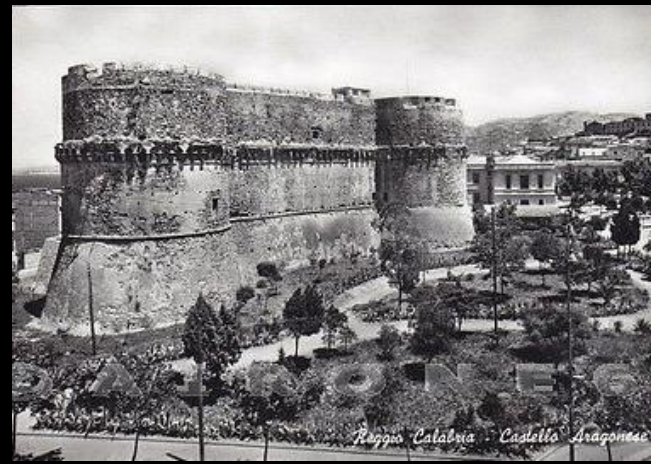
In Reggio Calabria, in the homonymous piazza, the **Aragonese Castle** contains centuries of history and is considered, together with the **Riace Bronzes**, one of the city's symbols.

Even though it is referred to as Aragonese, its origins are indeed much older, probably built in the 6<sup>th</sup> century by the **Byzantines**. Throughout the centuries it has been restored and enlarged by its conquerors: from the **Normans** to the **Angevins** and the **Aragonese**.

It was Ferdinando I of Aragon who, in 1458, commissioned the most substantial of the Castle's modifications, expanding it to its maximum size and grandeur.





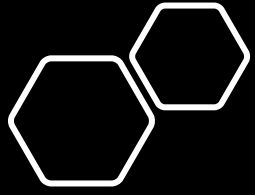


During the Risorgimento the Aragonese castle was transformed into a political prison and a place of execution for the rebels.

After the earthquake of 1908, the castle was badly damaged and so, the decision was made to demolish nine tenths of the fortress, saving the bastions.

The recent and radical **restoration** brought it back to its original splendor. It was home to the observatory of *the National Institute of Geophysics* until 1986 and today it is the seat of expositions and art exhibitions.





# The Villa Comunale “Umberto I”

The **Villa Comunale** of Reggio Calabria is an important green space in the city, rich not only in plants, but also in monuments.

It extends for about one hectare in the historic centre between the *Cathedral* and *Corso Garibaldi*.



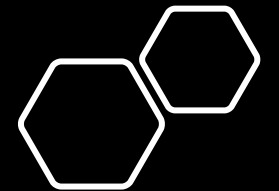




### Rediscovering the city's past

The Villa was born during the Bourbon era, in 1854, with the intention of creating a botanical garden. It was inaugurated in 1907 by **King Vittorio Emanuele III**, who on that occasion also unveiled the bust dedicated to his father, Umberto I.

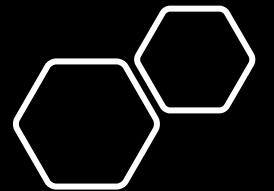
Inside, there are some monuments such as the busts of some national and local patriots, and buildings of historical value, such as the neoclassical *portal of Palazzo Vitrioli* from the 14th century: made of soft limestone and **Lazzaro stone**, it belonged to the building destroyed by the earthquake in 1908.







In addition to these historical testimonies, there are also authentic Roman columns in the Villa, in the site named “**Viale delle Colonne**”, located next to the favourite destination of children: the duck and swan pool and the goldfish tank.







### Plants from all over the world

The most important attraction at Villa Comunale is its **botanical garden**, which hosts **unique and exotic plants**. Along the avenues, you can find numerous specimens of luxuriant palm trees, fig trees, magnolias, banana trees, pepper, rubber, camphor trees, and the bottle tree. Among the rarest plants, one can admire the Ficus Elastica (Rubber tree), the Nolina Recurvata (Elephant foot or Pony tail palm), the Dracaena draco (Dragon's blood tree), Judas trees, and numerous other flower species.







### **A space dedicated to leisure time**

The Villa is a place where the inhabitants of Reggio spend their free time: inside there is a small refreshment space and children's rides. Moreover, throughout the year, and particularly in the summer, many recreational and cultural events are hosted. here.

