

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK

Monte Barro Archaeological Park, a unique and wonderful place, is located a few minutes away from Lecco and less than an hour from Milan. Visitors can go back 1500 years in time just by walking among the ancient woods and marvellous landscapes of Brianza's mountains and lakes.

Venturing into the Park, you will find many archaeological remains, dating back to the time of the Romans and of the Goths; the latter were a barbarian community, who founded the first Kingdom of Italy after the fall of the Roman Empire in 476 A.D.

Along the visit routes, you can dive into the historical places of the most important settlement of the Gothic Age discovered in Italy. Here it will be possible for you to walk among the ancient buildings and along the sections of the security walls which, with its towers, protected the settlement in the V and VI century A.D.

All the visit areas are collocated along well-signed paths which, through numerous panels and reconstructive drawings, will help the visitor learn about and understand one of the most important periods of Europe's history.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 286 A.D. the Roman emperor Diocletian divided the Empire and chose Milan as the capital of the Western Roman Empire, thanks to its economic, military and political value.

During the fourth and fifth centuries A.D., several castles and heavily fortified settlements were built to protect the villages south of the Aps from the barbarian raids.

The Lake Como area had a very important role in defending Milan and its neighbouring zones due to its position near transalpine passes and roads.

With the end of the Western Roman Empire in 476 A.D., the Italian peninsula became an independent reign. It was first ruled by the Herulian king Odoacer and then, from 493 to 553 A.D., by Theodoric the Great, leader of the Eastern Goths, also known as Ostrogoths.

The fortified settlement of *Monte Barro*, which had been founded by skilled Roman workers as a control point of the area, was later occupied by the Ostrogoths, until a fire caused its definitive abandonment around 540 A.D.

VISIT AREAS

The Park offers four different areas, which can be visited separately or as a single route making it possible for the visitor to discover more about the ancient history of the territory.

The ***Piani di Barra*** area is the main archaeological site, extending in an enchanting beech tree wood, where you can walk around the fortified Goth nucleus, which preserves the ruins of the ancient buildings excavated by archaeologists.

From the **Muraioo** area, you can proceed along an idyllic path overlooking *Brianza* lakes on one of the sections of the defensive wall, which protected the inhabited centre from the attacks of enemies with its watchtowers.

The **Monte Castelletto** area represents the latest archaeological discovery inside *Monte Barro* Park and preserves the ruins of a medieval tower with a fortified fenced area of XIII century A.D. The archaeologists are still working on this site, as there is still much to discover.

The **Archaeological Museum – M.A.B.** exhibits the various findings discovered in the archaeological areas of the Park. The main collection shows the original everyday objects of the V and VI century A.D. found in the Goths' buildings. This is the final stage of the itinerary.

PIANI DI BARRA

The nucleus of the settlement founded by the Romans in the V century AD and subsequently conquered by the Goths was discovered at *Piani di Barra* at an altitude of 600 metres, on the western slopes of *Monte Barro*.

The archaeological excavations that were carried out in this area between 1984 and 1997 led to the discovery of 11 buildings that were home to a garrison of soldiers and their families.

Other ruins have been found by archaeologists, but they are still untouched as excavations haven't started yet.

One of the most important buildings is the so-called *Grande Edificio*, the large building in the centre of the village where the military head of the garrison or the governor stayed. Inside the excavation site some of the most precious artefacts were found, such as the *Corona Pensile of Monte Barro*, the famous hanging crown, a unique masterpiece. The entire collection is displayed in the archaeological museum.

Following the undemanding circular route through fields and woods the visitors can still feel the ancient atmosphere of 1500 years ago. Panels with descriptions and drawings reconstructing the original aspect of the structures help visitors to better understand the customs and daily life of their ancient inhabitants.

HOW TO GET THERE

Visitors can reach all the buildings starting with the *Grande Edificio* by following a ring-shaped path. The trail starts at *Piazzale degli Alpini*, which is located on the road from Galbiate to the *Eremo del Monte Barro*, just a few bends before it. From the parking site just follow the directions and the illustrated panels on the road.

THE MURAIIOO

Between the V and VI century A.D., the period in which the rediscovered settlement near *Piani di Barra* was inhabited, the southern side of the mountain, naturally less steep, was

fortified with a long defensive wall as protection from enemy attack.

Atop the wall, made of stone blocks bound with mortar, there was a walkway approximately one meter wide. The wall was intercut with a series of square watchtowers.

The part of the wall found by the archaeologists, still maintained today, is about 1200 meters long and includes the remains of three towers.

The *Muraioo* was an integral part of the complex fortified system, which included *Monte Barro* and the nearby areas. The system was developed by the Romans in the last centuries of the empire to protect the Northern regions from the frequent barbaric incursions.

From the path along the *Muraioo* you can admire a panoramic view of the green hills and the *Brianza* lakes, which form a crown at the bottom of the *Prealpi Lombarde*.

HOW TO GET THERE

The route starts from the Eremo del *Monte Barro* and follows the whole visible part of the *Muraioo*. It continues on a well-marked and scenic path, *Il sentiero delle Torri* (n.307), only accessible on foot.

MONTE CASTELLETTO

The archaeological area of *Monte Castelletto* is a recent discovery made in 2007 as a result of extensive surface research. The site, which was excavated between 2011 and 2015, consists of the remains of a medieval tower attached to the town walls which contained a small cluster of buildings.

The site is located on a hill on the eastern side of *Monte Barro* where the natural topography of the area, overlooking the Adda River, the city of Lecco and all transport routes, made it an ideal place for the construction of a fortress.

The structures that are currently visible on the spot date back to the most recent period of the settlement when in the XIII century a small military garrison controlled the tower and the surrounding territory. The excavations have shown that people started to settle there much earlier, starting at least from the VIII century. Research is still in progress and older sections of the settlement haven't been excavated yet.

A well-marked path in the wood leads to the site after a short walk through the woods. Once there an illustrative panel describes the findings and how they were unearthed during the archaeological excavations.

HOW TO GET THERE

From Galbiate follow the directions to San Michele. Park your car in the parking site near the unfinished church of San Michele and walk along a dirt road as far as a clearing where you will see a road barrier. From there keep to the right and follow the path downhill

through the wood where you will find the signs leading to *Monte Castelletto*. It will take about 15 minutes to get there.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM – M.A.B.

Monte Barro Archaeological Museum is where more than 400 original artefacts are stored, all discovered during archaeological excavations at *Piani di Barra* and *Monte Castelletto*.

The most significant and valuable exhibits are displayed in the Museum and enhance the guided tour of the archaeological areas of the Park.

In the rooms of the museum, you can see how the Goths lived thanks to the original everyday objects, such as jewels, coins, items of clothing, crockery, glasses, furniture, oil lamps and much more.

The Museum has recently acquired the most valuable evidence found during the excavations, and one of the rarest examples in the world: the *Corona Pensile* of *Monte Barro*.

The Museums consists of two rooms organised on two levels where, with the help of the guides, the explicative panels and the many reconstructive drawings, visitors can learn more about the various artefacts and the daily life of the Goths 1500 years ago.

The Museum is located by the *Eremo del Monte Barro*, where you can also find the Park Centre, the Hermitage Restaurant, the Hostel and the panoramic terrace, which offers a breathtaking view of the hills of *Brianza*.

HOW TO GET THERE

You can easily reach the Museum in 10 minutes from Galbiate by car, on a road of hairpin bends, following the signs to the *Eremo del Monte Barro* Hermitage and leaving the car in the Museum parking site. Around the *Eremo*, there are restoration and accommodation facilities, such as the Park Centre, the Hermitage Restaurant and the *Monte Barro* Hostel.

HOW TO REACH THE PARK

The Archaeological Park is located inside *Monte Barro* Natural Park and is easily accessible on foot from Galbiate in the province of Lecco.

You can easily reach Galbiate from Milan or directly from Lecco.

By private means of transport:

From Milan, follow the SS36 towards Lecco, exit at Civate-Oggiono-Lecco lago and follow the road signs for Galbiate and the signage of the Park.

From Lecco, follow the SS36 towards Milan, exit at Pescate and follow the road signs for Galbiate and the signage of the Park.

By public means of transport:

From Lecco's railway station, take the D55 or LGV buses, which will directly take you to Galbiate.

To arrive at MUSEO ARCHEOLOGICO, AREA DEI PIANI DI BARRA, AREA DEL MURAIUO, and at CENTRO PARCO:

By car or shuttle bus service from Galbiate:

Follow the signs for *Eremo Del Monte Barro*. During the weekend, generally from Easter to September the road is closed to traffic, except for authorised means of transport for service reasons, and shuttle bus service is guaranteed (only in case of good weather). Ample parking is available nearby. The path is CLOSED TO BUSES, unless you have a specific authorisation, which can be requested at the Municipal Police of Galbiate.

Walking from Galbiate:

Leave the car at Villa Bertarelli's parking lot, headquarters of *Monte Barro* Natural Park. Follow the path number 303 towards Camporeso, historical borough and base of the Alta Brianza Ethnographic Museum. After Camporeso, follow path number 301 and after about 45 minutes of walking, you will arrive directly at the *Piani di Barra* archaeological area. To proceed to *Eremo del Monte Barro*, follow the paved road for 15 minutes.

EXHIBITIONS (MUSEUM)

The Archaeological Museum of *Monte Barro* displays exhibits over 400 original artefacts, found during the archaeological excavations conducted at *Piani di Barra* and *Monte Castelletto*.

The most significant and important artefacts are exhibited in the showcases of the Museum and enrich the tour of the Archaeological Park. For example, everyday objects like jewels, coins, tableware, glasses, pieces of furniture, lanterns and so on show us something about how the Goths lived.

The famous *corona pensile* of Monte Barro, one of the rarest specimens in the world, was found during the archaeological excavations and has been recently included in the museum collection.

The Museum consists of two rooms on two levels. Thanks to the guides, the information boards and the numerous three-dimensional drawings visitors can learn more about the meaning of the findings and get a clearer idea of the daily life of the Goths.

The Museum is located near the *Eremo del Monte Barro* where visitors can find the Park Centre *Ristorante dell'Eremo*, the Hostel and a panoramic terrace that offers an astonishing view of Brianza's hills.

HOW TO GET THERE:

The Museum is easily accessible: it takes only ten minutes by car from Galbiate, following the hairpin bends and the road signs to *Eremo del Monte Barro*. There is a parking site for visitors.

VISITING THE MUSEUM

Monte Barro Archaeological Park and Museum can be visited in different ways.

It is possible to walk along the paths of the archaeological areas or to visit the Museum rooms independently or with a guide.

At the reception of the Museum there are booklets, audio guides, maps, flyers and other informative material to further enhance the visit of the archaeological areas and exhibition rooms.

GUIDED VISITS

Being accompanied along the archaeological area's paths and through the museum by an expert guide allows the visitor to dive deeper into the history and the events of the locations brought to light by the archaeologists.

The multiple tour options are organized by the COOPERATIVA ELIANTE (+39 3662380659) and can be consulted on the web page:

Personalised visiting packages can be requested by directly contacting COOPERATIVA ELIANTE.

SCHOOLS

Schoolchildren and teachers can explore the archaeological areas of the Park accompanied by qualified staff, who will guide them through the paths and the Museum rooms.

Several activities and educational workshops for students of all ages are regularly organised by guides and specialised educators.

The Park and Museum are specially equipped with spaces for children workshops.

All the educational activities are handled by the COOPERATIVA ELIANTE (+39 3339127227) and can be viewed in detail on the following page:

AUDIO GUIDES

At the entrance of the museum audio guides are available for further information on general themes and on the objects in the display cabinets.

Languages: Italian, English, French and German.

At the moment of delivery an ID will be required to take an audio guide (passport, identity card, driving licence, etc...).

AREA FACILITIES

The Archaeological Museum is located near the *Eremo del Monte Barro*, which hosts not only the Park Centre, but also a restaurant, a hostel, educational workshops, conference halls, showrooms and more.

Below you can find links to the facilities connected to the Archaeological Museum. On the *Monte Barro* Park website, you can read all the information about the numerous resources and activities carried out throughout the year.

MONTE BARRO PARK: <http://www.parcobarro.lombardia.it>

ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM OF ALTA BRIANZA - MEAB:
<http://meabparcobarro.weebly.com>

HERMITAGE RESTAURANT OF MONTE BARRO: <http://montebarro.it>

HOSTEL OF MONTE BARRO PARK: <http://www.ostelloparcobarro.it>

Other accommodation and educational structures in the park

VILLA BERTARELLI (Head office of the Park)

PESCATE LODGE (Restaurant Service)

ALPINE LODGE (Restaurant Service)

COSTA PERLA BIRD CAPTURE (Educational Centre) – For information: 3662380659

NATIVE FLORA CENTRE (Educational Centre)

INCOMPLETE CHURCH OF SAN MICHELE (Visit Centre)

PIAN SCIRESA LODGE (Restaurant Service)

VISITING THE SITE

VISITING THE MUSEUM

Monte Barro Archaeological Park and Museum can be visited in different ways.

It is possible to walk along the paths of the archaeological areas or to visit the Museum rooms independently or with a guide.

At the reception of the Museum there are booklets, audio guides, maps, flyers and other informative material to further enhance the visit of the archaeological areas and exhibition rooms.

GUIDED VISITS

Being accompanied along the archaeological area's paths and through the museum by an expert guide allows the visitor to dive deeper into the history and the events of the locations brought to light by the archaeologists.

The multiple tour options are organized by the COOPERATIVA ELIANTE (+39 3662380659) and can be consulted on the web page:

Personalised visiting packages can be requested by directly contacting COOPERATIVA ELIANTE.

SCHOOLS

Students and teachers can explore the archaeological sites of the park with our guides, who will also show them around the museum rooms.

Events and workshops for students of all ages are regularly organised by our guides and specialized educators. At the museum and at the Park Centre there are various rooms specially equipped for children workshops.

All of the educational activities are handled by COOPERATIVA ELIANTE (333 9127227) and can be found on their website.

AUDIO GUIDES

At the entrance of the museum audio guides are available for further information on general themes and on the objects in the display cabinets.

Languages: Italian, English, French and German.

At the moment of delivery an ID will be required to take an audio guide (passport, identity card, driving licence, etc...).

RESEARCH

RESEARCH AT *PIANI DI BARRA*

Stories about the legendary town of *Barra*, on *Monte Barro*, were handed down through the centuries: for some it was the capital of Orobi, also mentioned by Pliny the Elder, while others believed it to be a late Roman walled village.

In the XII century, for example, the *Chronica* by Dominican friar Galvano Fiamma recalls a fortified place, named *Civitas de Barri*, where Gerberga, the daughter of the last Lombard king Desiderius, supposedly found a safe shelter while she was on the run from Charlemagne. In the 1960s, thanks to some sporadic research the remains of buried walls and some isolated artefacts were discovered.

Systematic research was carried out only from 1985, when the Consortium Monte Barro Park was founded and the first excavation campaigns started.

The excavations were carried out between 1986 and 1997. During these campaigns the remains of several buildings as well as a fortified settlement built by the Goths during the V and the VI centuries .A.D. were discovered, proving the old tales to be true.

After these discoveries, the Archaeological Park and the Museum were opened, allowing the remains of the ancient constructions to be preserved and the artefacts to be displayed.

ONGOING RESEARCH AT MONTE CASTELLETTO

The site of *Monte Castelletto* was discovered in 2007 during an archaeological campaign. The structures currently visible were completely buried and no one knew about the existence of the archaeological site.

The name of the mount, *Castelletto* (meaning “small castle”), the morphology and topology of the territory, as well as the presence of stone blocks, led archaeologists to postulate the existence of a fortified structure.

In 2011, 2013 and 2015 three different excavation campaigns were carried out in order to gather information about the nature of this site.

It is assumed that different populations lived here between 700 and 1400 a. D. There is still a lot to discover about the older civilizations because research has yet to be concluded.

WHERE WE ARE

The archaeological Museum of *Monte Barro* can be found at:

Località Eremo- Via Balassi,1
23851 Galbiate - Lecco