

Sightseeing Tour for Accompanying People (17/10/08) Orihuela and the “Alcudia”

For those accompanying people who are interested and have previously filled out the corresponding registration, a guided sightseeing tour will be offered on 17/10/08.

In the morning, the tour will start in the city of Orihuela, which is situated in the Southern province of Alicante. During the last four centuries it has been the "Episcopal City" of the province of Alicante. Orihuela has an important artistic patrimony, resulting from its long and involved history, as well as the notable religious impression on its civic traditions.



In Orihuela’s old quarters, declared Historic-Artistic and Monumental assemblage in 1969, noble buildings succeed each other; five of them are declared national monuments:

- Saint Domingo's Convent.
- Saint Salvador's Cathedral.
- Church of the Saints Jusa and Rufina.
- Episcopal Palace.
- Church of Santiago.

This sightseeing tour will be mainly focused on architecture, sculpture and painting.

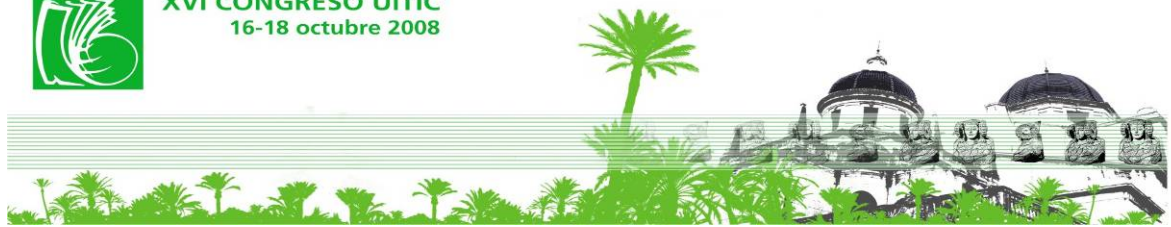
After having lunch in Orihuela, the group will return to Elche to visit the “Alcudia-Archeological Site”, which stratigraphical sequence extends from the Bronze Age to the beginning of Islamization, although some Neolithic materials have also been found. During the Iberian Age (prior to the Roman rule period), Ilici was probably one of the most important cities of the Iberian Peninsula. From this



period, it is worth pointing out a remarkable sculpture assembly including masterpieces like the Lady of Elche (*Dama de Elche*) and the Warrior Bust (*torso del guerrero*), and the decorative ceramics with the so-called Elche style. In the Roman period, Elche became *Colonia Iulia Ilici Augusta*, one of the most outstanding cities on the Spanish Mediterranean coast.



The Lady of Elche (currently at the Spanish National Archeological Museum – Madrid)



Sightseeing Tour for Accompanying People (18/10/08) Elche city center

For those accompanying people that are interested and have previously filled out the corresponding registration, a guided sightseeing tour to Elche city centre will be offered on 18/10/08.



Elche is the third largest city in the *Comunidad Valenciana* region in terms of population size and resources. A stroll through the city's streets will reveal an interesting historical centre, a silent witness to its glorious past. Between the 8th and 9th centuries it was the walled city of *Al-Andalus*, falling to the Christians in 1265. The Palm Grove, legacy of the *Andalusí* farming culture, has been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

The city's historical centre boasts several buildings of great cultural value that are silent witnesses to the different periods of Elche's history: The Moorish city walls, the *Alcázar de la Señoría* fortified palace and garden, the majestic Calahorra fortress, the *Basílica de Santa María* with its outstanding Valencian Baroque portico, the Renaissance *Convent de la Mercè* and the Gothic Town Hall.

Elche also boasts a second cultural asset that has been declared World Heritage by UNESCO: the Elche Mystery Play. This Masterpiece of World Oral and Intangible Heritage, a religious lyrical drama, is the last surviving example of medieval religious drama in Europe and is performed every year during the month of August.