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KNOWLEDGE OF THINGS:
REASSESSING THE INDIGENOUS
AMERICAN HERITAGE IN ITALY

Galleria Estense

Largo Porta Sant'Agostino, 337, 41121 Modena (MO)

Form compiled by: Anna Maria Piccinini (art historian), in collaboration with Davide Domenici.

Introduction

The collection of the Galleria Estense in Modena preserves a single but very rare Indigenous American artefact. It is an incised gourd of Peruvian origin, dating to the seventeenth century.

Cultural Areas (tags)

Central and Southern Andes

Collection name	Peruvian Collection
Collector	Unknown
Cultural areas	Central and Southern Andes
Ethnic group / community / cultural sphere	Quechua (Peru)
Description of the	Bottle made from a gourd (<i>Lagenaria siceraria</i>), with

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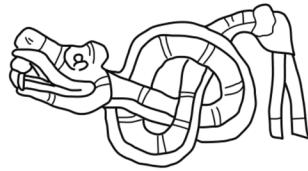
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collection	spheroidal body and tall vertical neck (form known as chucula), dried and incised (Inv. 2449). Height 43 cm; diameter 19 cm. The neck is decorated with geometric motifs with a twisting pattern, while on the body one sees the view of a port city, with complex architecture and vegetation. The city faces the sea, where boats and sailors are depicted, one of whom appears to be saving from a sea monster a man who has fallen into the water. The decorative technique corresponds to the typical Andean practice of mate burilado ("gourd incised with a burin"), with the addition of polychrome painting.
History of the collection	The gourd-bottle was first documented in the Galleria Estense in 1662 by Giovanni Donzi as "Una zucca di legno lavorata col bolino alla todesca"; it also appears in the inventory drawn up in 1751, where it is described as "fiasco di terra o sia zucca d'orto". The dating before 1662 makes the Estense example particularly ancient and therefore of great rarity and importance.
Online database	
Web page	
Bibliography	Sirocchi, S. 2021. "Manifattura peruviana. Bottiglia". In "Stravaganze e bizzarrie". <i>La collezione di arti decorative della Galleria Estense</i> . Modena: Gallerie Estensi-SAGEP.

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