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KNOWLEDGE OF THINGS:
REASSESSING THE INDIGENOUS
AMERICAN HERITAGE IN ITALY

Museo Civico Etnografico "Giovanni Podenzana"

Via del Prione 156, 19121 La Spezia

Form compiled by Giacomo Paolicchi (curator)

Introduction

The Museo Etnografico "Giovanni Podenzana" is one of the oldest sections of the Museo Civico della Spezia, established in 1873: it preserves, studies, displays and promotes local and non-European ethnographic material collected from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.

The Museum acts as a centre for research and dissemination on themes of anthropology and ethnography, with particular attention to the geographical area known as Lunigiana Storica, thanks to collaborations with institutions of national and international importance.

The non-European section includes artefacts from Africa, the Americas, Asia and Oceania that reached La Spezia thanks to explorers, sailors, scholars and travellers. Collected as ethnographic data, spoils of war or simple curiosities, these artefacts were meant to bear witness to encounters with distant cultures with which people had come into contact in various ways. In a period of just under one hundred years, from 1845 to 1936, weapons, ornaments, everyday utensils, furnishings and photographic images were purchased, stolen or received as gifts and subsequently became part of the rich museum collections of La Spezia.

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Cultural Areas (tags)

Great Plains; Amazon; Austral America

Collections

#01

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Capellini donation
<i>Collector</i>	Capellini, Giovanni (1833–1922)
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Great Plains
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Omaha; Ponca
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	Thirteen artefacts of various types (clothing accessories and different tools) collected by Giovanni Capellini during the scientific expedition to North America in which he participated in 1863.
<i>History of the collection</i>	Collected in 1863 and acquired in the twentieth century.
<i>Online Database</i>	Database of the Cultural Services of the Municipality of La Spezia
<i>Web page</i>	https://bibliospezia.erasmo.it/Opac/OggettiDArte.aspx
<i>Bibliography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Piccioli, R., A. Rozzi Mazza, 1990. <i>Exotica. Raccolte di viaggio nel Museo Civico della Spezia</i> (La Spezia,

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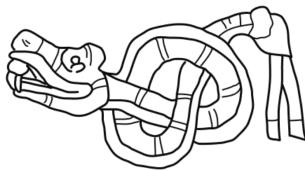
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	<p>Centro Allende, 24 aprile – 21 maggio 1990), La Spezia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Piccioli, R., ed. 2007. <i>I Figli del vento. Gli indiani delle praterie nelle collezioni ottocentesche</i> (La Spezia, Palazzina delle Arti “Lucio Roberto Rosaia” 29 giugno – 30 settembre 2007). Milano: Silvana Editoriale.• Landini, W., M. Durante, G. Paolicchi, D. Alessi, eds. 2022. <i>Fossilia. Mostra paleontologica dedicata al grande scienziato spezzino Giovanni Capellini nel centenario della sua scomparsa</i> (La Spezia, Museo Civico Etnografico "Giovanni Podenzana" 15 aprile - 27 novembre 2022), La Spezia: Comune della Spezia.
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#02

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Castrucci donation
<i>Collector</i>	Father Emanuele Castrucci (1813–1888)
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Amazon
<i>Ethnic group/ community / cultural context</i>	Shuar; Záparos (Peru)

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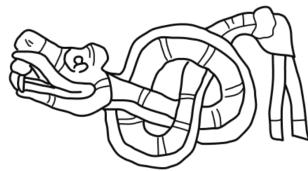
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<i>Description of the Collection</i>	About thirty artefacts (weapons and clothing accessories) collected by Father Emanuele Castrucci from Vernazza during his activity as a missionary in Peru.
<i>History of the collection</i>	Collected in the 1840s and acquired in the twentieth century.
<i>Online Database</i>	Database of the Cultural Services of the Municipality of La Spezia
<i>Web page</i>	https://bibliospezia.erasmo.it/Opac/OggettiDArte.aspx
<i>Bibliography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Piccioli, R., A. Rozzi Mazza, 1990. <i>Exotica. Raccolte di viaggio nel Museo Civico della Spezia</i> (La Spezia, Centro Allende, 24 aprile – 21 maggio 1990), La Spezia.

#03

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Viale collection
<i>Collector</i>	Viale, Luigi (1838–1912)
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Amazon?
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Brazil

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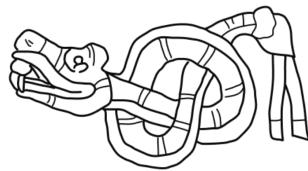
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<i>Description of the Collection</i>	Seven arrows and two bows.
<i>History of the collection</i>	Unknown.
<i>Online Database</i>	
<i>Web page</i>	
<i>Bibliography</i>	

#04

<i>Name of the collection</i>	De Orestis donation
<i>Collector</i>	De Orestis, Alberto
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Amazon?
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Brazil
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	A bow, three arrows, a fur quiver and a feathered headdress.
<i>History of the collection</i>	The collection was acquired in 1906, but no information is available regarding how it was assembled.
<i>Online Database</i>	

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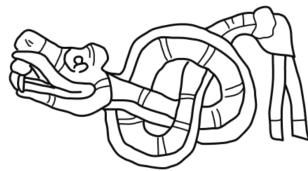
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#05

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Rossi donation
<i>Collector</i>	Rossi, Luigi
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Unknown
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Two wooden arrows with iron points.
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	
<i>History of the collection</i>	The collection was acquired in 1908, but no information is available regarding how it was assembled.
<i>Online Database</i>	
<i>Web page</i>	
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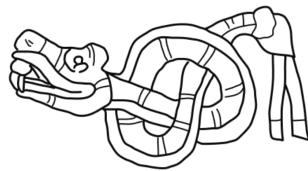
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#06

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Simonelli donation
<i>Collector</i>	Simonelli
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Austral America
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Puelche (Patagonia)
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	Five flint arrowheads.
<i>History of the collection</i>	The collection was acquired in 1902, but no information is available regarding how it was assembled.
<i>Online Database</i>	
<i>Web page</i>	
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