



KNOT

KNOWLEDGE OF THINGS:
REASSESSING THE INDIGENOUS
AMERICAN HERITAGE IN ITALY

Musei Civici di Como – Museo Archeologico “Paolo Giovio”

Palazzo Giovio, Piazza Medaglie d’Oro 1, 22100 Como

Form compiled by: Davide Domenici

Introduction

The Museo Archeologico “Paolo Giovio”, part of the Musei Civici di Como, was formally opened in 1897 in its current premises, the former residence of the Giovio family. The museum’s collections are mainly archaeological in nature but also include a number of interesting ethnographic groups, gathered mostly during the nineteenth century and originating from the Eastern Woodlands (USA), Mesoamerica (Mexico), Central America (Costa Rica and Nicaragua), Perú (northern coast), Paraguay (Chaco), Argentina (Chaco, Tierra del Fuego) and Brazil (Amazon and Mato Grosso).

Cultural Areas (tags)

Eastern Woodlands; Mesoamerica; Central America; Central and Southern Andes; Amazon; Gran Chaco; Austral America

Collections

#01

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Regazzoni collection
<i>Collector</i>	Regazzoni, Innocenzo (1823?–1899)

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<i>Cultural areas</i>	Amazon; Austral America
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Yagua or Peba? Eastern Bororo (Brazil) Chaco (Argentina) Ona or Selk'nam (Tierra del Fuego) Kawésqar or Alacaluf (Tierra del Fuego) Yámana or Yaghan (Tierra del Fuego)
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	<p>The Regazzoni collection includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 assorted artefacts from the Argentine Chaco (two hunting horns, a metal bow and a part of a harpoon); • 5 awls in rhea bone, of uncertain provenance but in any case from southern Argentina; • 9 artefacts attributable to Ona or Selk'nam groups from Tierra del Fuego (a bow, a quiver in seal hide and seven arrows with glass points); • 2 artefacts attributable to Kawésqar (or Alacaluf) groups from Tierra del Fuego (a basket and a necklace made of bone rings); • 3 artefacts attributable to Yámana (or Yaghan) groups from Tierra del Fuego (two wooden-and-bone harpoons and a model bark canoe with paddles); • 4 assorted artefacts from Amazonia (a bag in plant fibre of unknown attribution, an ornament in plant fibre attributable to Yagua or Peba groups, a necklace of jaguar teeth and a necklace of jaguar claws attributed to Eastern Bororo groups).

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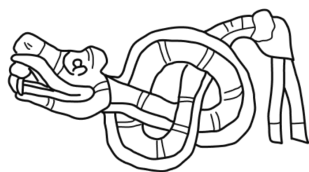
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<i>History of the collection</i>	It is unclear how Regazzoni – who never travelled to the Americas – obtained the South American materials, probably between 1870 and 1885. According to Antonio Aimi (1995), it is possible that the objects from the Chaco and from Tierra del Fuego were received in exchange from Pellegrino Strobel or Alfredo Tatti. The Museo di Como acquired the Regazzoni collection between 1891 and 1893.
<i>Online Database</i>	
<i>Web page</i>	
<i>Bibliography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Campione, F.P., I. Nobile De Agostini (eds.). 1995. <i>America ritrovata. Collezioni americane dell'Ottocento nei Musei Civici di Como</i>. Como: Accademia di Belle Arti "A. Galli". ● Campione, F.P. 2006. "La Terra del Fuoco nelle collezioni dei Musei Civici di Como", in Antonio Salerno, Antonio Tagliacozzo (ed.), <i>Finis Terrae. Viaggiatori, esploratori e missionari italiani nella Terra del Fuoco</i>, pp. 333-344. Roma: Soprintendenza al Museo Nazionale Preistorico Etnografico "Luigi Pigorini". ● Pastore, C. 2001-2002. <i>Il rapporto tra ambiente e cultura nei popoli storici della Terra del Fuoco, attraverso la presentazione delle opere conservate nei</i>

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	<i>Musei Civici di Como. Tesi di laurea, Università degli Studi dell'Insubria.</i>
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#02

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Garovaglio collection
<i>Collector</i>	Garovaglio, Alfonso (1820–1905)
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Eastern Woodlands; Central and Southern Andes
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Mississippian? (USA) Quito (Ecuador) Moche (Peru) Chimú (Peru) Chancay (Peru)
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	The Garovaglio collection includes 12 ceramic artefacts from the northern and central coasts of Peru (mainly Chimú), a ceramic fragment of uncertain date from Quito (Ecuador), as well as four arrowheads and a polished stone axe from the Eastern Woodlands of the USA (perhaps of Mississippian affiliation).
<i>History of the collection</i>	In his villa at Lovenio Alfonso Garovaglio assembled an archaeological collection that also included the Peruvian artefacts, probably purchased on the antiquarian market.

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	Garovaglio bequeathed the collection to the Museo di Como, which inherited it upon his death in 1905.
Online Database	
Web page	
Bibliography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campione, F.P., I. Nobile De Agostini (eds.). 1995. <i>America ritrovata. Collezioni americane dell'Ottocento nei Musei Civici di Como</i>. Como: Accademia di Belle Arti "A. Galli".

Name of the collection	Fusoni collection
Collector	Fusoni, Cesare
Cultural areas	Central and Southern Andes; Amazon; Gran Chaco
Ethnic group / community / cultural context	Bororo (Brazil) Guató (Paraguay) Indigenous groups of the Chaco (Paraguay)
Description of the Collection	<p>The Fusoni collection consists of:</p> <p>A bow and four arrows attributable to Eastern Bororo groups (Brazil);</p> <p>18 artefacts from Guató groups in Paraguay. Seven of these relate to a non-Indigenous military context (spurs, kepi, stirrups, cinch, riding whip), while the remaining</p>

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	eleven can be attributed to Indigenous groups of the Chaco (mainly arrows).
<i>History of the collection</i>	The objects donated by Fusoni, whose collecting history is unknown, reached the Museo di Como in 1876 through Innocenzo Regazzoni.
<i>Online Database</i>	
<i>Web page</i>	
<i>Bibliography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campione, F.P., I. Nobile De Agostini (eds.). 1995. <i>America ritrovata. Collezioni americane dell'Ottocento nei Musei Civici di Como</i>. Como: Accademia di Belle Arti "A. Galli".

#03

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Pedraglio collection
<i>Collector</i>	Pedraglio, Andrea (1843–1921)
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Unknown
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Unknown
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	This is an incised gourd with foot, handles and spout with stopper, used as a container for gunpowder.

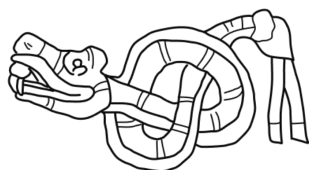
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	Although it was published in 1995 among the materials of American provenance, such an origin is highly doubtful.
<i>History of the collection</i>	The gourd entered the museum collection in 1889, when it was donated by Andrea Pedraglio. The ways in which Pedraglio obtained it are unknown; however, the gourd bears the annotation “1849”, a year that also appears in the accession register as an indication of provenance (“Como 1849”).
<i>Online Database</i>	
<i>Web page</i>	
<i>Bibliography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Campione, F.P., I. Nobile De Agostini (eds.). 1995. <i>America ritrovata. Collezioni americane dell'Ottocento nei Musei Civici di Como</i>. Como: Accademia di Belle Arti “A. Galli”.

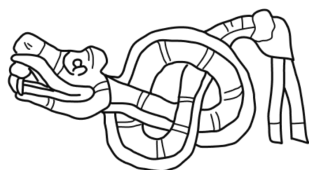
#04

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Quaglia collection
<i>Collector</i>	Quaglia, Giuseppe (1819–1893)
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Mesoamerica

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<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Nahua (Mexico)
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	An anthropomorphic figurine with a large headdress, of Mexican provenance, clearly a forgery.
<i>History of the collection</i>	The artefacts collected by Giuseppe Quaglia – including the forged object of American origin – were purchased by the Municipality of Como in 1893, the year of the collector's death; he had previously donated most of his collection to what is now the Museo delle Civiltà in Rome. Curiously, the figurine donated by Quaglia, although clearly of Mexican origin, was long exhibited and described as a “Peruvian idol”.
<i>Online Database</i>	
<i>Web page</i>	
<i>Bibliography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Campione, F.P., I. Nobile De Agostini (eds.). 1995. <i>America ritrovata. Collezioni americane dell'Ottocento nei Musei Civici di Como</i>. Como: Accademia di Belle Arti “A. Galli”.

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<i>Name of the collection</i>	North American collection
<i>Collector</i>	Unknown
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Eastern Woodlands
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Mississippian (USA)
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	21 ceramic fragments mounted on cardboard supports, deriving from a nineteenth-century display of the museum.
<i>History of the collection</i>	The collecting history of the ceramic fragments is unknown, since they were rediscovered in the museum stores in 1995.
<i>Online Database</i>	
<i>Web page</i>	
<i>Bibliography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Campione, F.P., I. Nobile De Agostini (eds.). 1995. <i>America ritrovata. Collezioni americane dell'Ottocento nei Musei Civici di Como</i>. Como: Accademia di Belle Arti "A. Galli".

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<i>Name of the collection</i>	Ghidinelli collection
<i>Collector</i>	Ghidinelli, Azzo
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Central America
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Costa Rica Nicaragua
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	
<i>History of the collection</i>	The artefacts, which are still unpublished, come from excavations carried out by Azzo Ghidinelli in Costa Rica and Nicaragua. Ghidinelli donated them to the Museo di Como between 1964 and 1966.
<i>Online Database</i>	
<i>Web page</i>	
<i>Bibliography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Campione, F.P., I. Nobile De Agostini (eds.). 1995. <i>America ritrovata. Collezioni americane dell'Ottocento nei Musei Civici di Como</i>. Como: Accademia di Belle Arti "A. Galli".

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