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KNOWLEDGE OF THINGS:
REASSESSING THE INDIGENOUS
AMERICAN HERITAGE IN ITALY

Grande Museo del Duomo di Milano

Piazza del Duomo 12, 20122 Milano

Form compiled by Davide Domenici

Introduction

The Grande Museo del Duomo di Milano preserves a single indigenous artefact, but one of exceptional importance: a feather mitre made in the sixteenth century by indigenous Mesoamerican artists of New Spain.

Cultural Areas (tags)

Mesoamerica

Collections

#01

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Mitre of Saint Charles
<i>Collector</i>	Pius V (Antonio Ghislieri) (1504–1572) Borromeo, Carlo (1538–1584)
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Mesoamerica

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<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	P'urhépecha or Nahua (Mexico)
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	The feather mitre – made between the second and third quarters of the sixteenth century by indigenous artists of New Spain using hummingbird feathers and feathers of other birds glued onto agave paper, together with linen, silk and gold thread – bears the monogram of the Holy Name of Jesus and Mary, accompanied by images of the Passion and of the Mass of Saint Gregory. The image is entirely analogous to that visible on a feather mitre preserved at The Hispanic Society of America (New York). The infulae of the mitre are decorated with grotesques. The visual source of both is an unknown print.
<i>History of the collection</i>	According to the Gesuato friar Paolo Morigi (1525–1624), the mitre was donated to Pope Pius V (1504–1572) by some Indigenous people who came to Rome on an unknown date; the pontiff then donated it to his nephew Carlo Borromeo (1538–1584), cardinal and later archbishop of Milan from 1565, from whom the mitre takes its name and who, according to Antonio Frigerio, used it in penitential functions. Carlo Borromeo subsequently donated it to the Duomo: it is mentioned in the inventory of the Sacristy of the Duomo drawn up in 1595. It was later transferred to the Treasury of Saint

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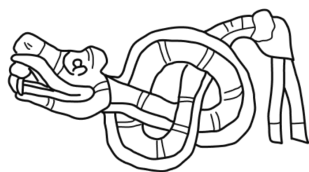
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	Charles, where it was recorded in 1739. In 1953 the work became part of the Museum's collection.
Online Database	
Web page	https://www.duomomilano.it/catalogo/mitra-di-san-carlo/
Bibliography	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frigerio, A. 1739. <i>Distinto ragguaglio dell'ottava meraviglia del mondo</i>. Milano: Antonio Frigerio.• Gallori, C.T. 2013. "Collecting Feathers: A Journey from Mexico into Italian Collections (16th–17th Century)." In <i>Collecting East and West</i>, eds. S. Bracken, A.M. Gáldy, A. Turpin, 61–82. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.• Gallori, C.T. 2015. "From Paper to Feathers: The Holy Names of Jesus and Mary from Europe to Mexico." In <i>Images Take Flight: Feather Art in Mexico and Europe, 1400–1700</i>, eds. A. Russo, G. Wolf, and D. Fane, 311–319. Munich: Hirmer.• Malvezzi, L. 1840. <i>Il Tesoro del Duomo di Milano</i>. Milano: Boniardi-Pogliani.• Morigi, P. 1597. <i>Il Duomo di Milano</i>. Milano: Francesco Paganello.• Mapelli Mozzi, C. 1978. "Scheda di Catalogo n. 193." In <i>Tesoro e Museo del Duomo di Milano</i>, eds. R. Bossaglia, M. Cinotti, vol. I, 91–92. Milano: Electa.

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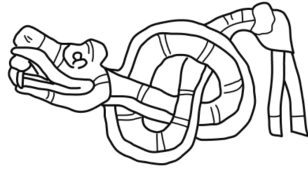
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