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KNOWLEDGE OF THINGS:
REASSESSING THE INDIGENOUS
AMERICAN HERITAGE IN ITALY

MA – Museo africano

Vicolo Pozzo, 1, 37129 Verona (VR)

Form compiled by: Micol Sboarina (museum operator), in collaboration with Davide Domenici.

Introduction

The Ma – Museo africano dei Missionari Comboniani di Verona was founded in 1938 with the aim of showcasing the activities of the Comboni missionaries in Africa. Over the following decades the museum was repeatedly renovated with the aim of rooting in the local area an institution intended for anyone interested in Africa. The most recent renovation, which introduced a strong multimedia component, took place in 2014. Although the museum's collections are largely devoted to Africa, the museum also holds collections of American artefacts, both archaeological and ethnographic in nature (not all of Indigenous manufacture, as in the case of souvenirs and reproductions), originating from Mexico, El Salvador, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Peru, Brazil and Argentina. For the purposes of this survey, the most relevant collection nuclei, described below, are those of archaeological materials from Ecuador and Mexico, as well as some ethnographic artefacts from Amazonian regions of Brazil.

Cultural Areas (tags)

Mesoamerica; Northern Andes; Amazon

Collection name	Mexico Collection
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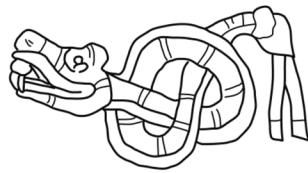
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Collector	Comboni Missionaries
Cultural areas	Mesoamerica
Ethnic group / community / cultural sphere	Teotihuacan (Mexico) Nahua (Mexico) P'urhépecha (Mexico)
Description of the collection	The materials relating to central Mexico, and in particular to the Basin of Mexico (some are described as coming from Xochimilco), comprise around twenty fragments of terracotta figurines and vessels, both Teotihuacan and Nahua/Aztec and P'urhépecha (Tarascan), together with a group of lithic artefacts that includes five flint bifaces, a flint arrowhead and a bifacial obsidian knife blade.
History of the collection	From the 1950s onwards the Comboni Missionaries who settled in Mexico collected these objects, which then reached the Casa Madre in Verona and are today preserved in the Museo africano.
Online database	
Web page	
Bibliography	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Venturi, F. 1993. "Per un recupero del patrimonio americanistico veronese: dal fondo Callegari alle terrecotte del Museo Comboniano". In <i>L'Americanistica italiana e le collezioni</i>

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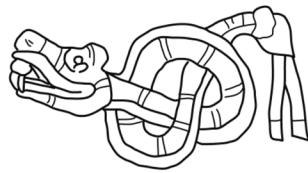
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	<i>precolombiane in Italia</i> , Mario Sartor, ed., 11-20. Padova: CLEUP.
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Collection name	Ecuador Collection
Collector	Ricchieri, Giuseppe (1929–2012)
Cultural areas	Northern Andes
Ethnic group / community / cultural sphere	Tumaco-La Tolita (Ecuador) Jama-Coaque (Ecuador) Nariño (Ecuador)
Description of the collection	Group of about two hundred terracotta artefacts, mostly fragments, consisting of anthropomorphic figurines, vessels, ocarinas, pintaderas and manioc graters.
History of the collection	According to Venturi (1993), who investigated the history of the collection in collaboration with Father Giuseppe Ricchieri, a missionary in Ecuador, at least a group of 80 objects was recovered by peasants in fields adjacent to Tolita Pampa de Oro, near Limoes on the River Esmeraldas. The rest of the material comes from the whole area of diffusion of the La Tolita culture. With the materials collected and donated by local inhabitants, Father Ricchieri founded a museum in Esmeraldas, and only a small part of the collection was sent to Verona.
Online database	

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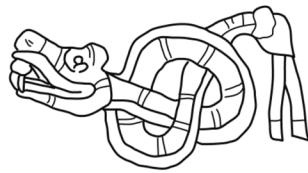
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Bibliography	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ricchieri, G. 2002. <i>La cultura tumaco-tolita. La costa ecuadoriana prima degli Incas</i>. Bologna: EMI.● Venturi, F. 1993. "Per un recupero del patrimonio americanistico veronese: dal fondo Callegari alle terrecotte del Museo Comboniano". In <i>L'Americanistica italiana e le collezioni precolombiane in Italia</i>, Mario Sartor, ed., 11-20. Padova: CLEUP.

Collection name	Brazil Collection
Collector	Comboni Missionaries
Cultural areas	Amazon
Ethnic group / community / cultural sphere	Unknown Amazonian groups
Description of the collection	Group of several dozen artefacts, mainly bows, arrows, axes, baskets, an ornament of seeds and a fish trap, some of which were evidently produced for the tourist market.
History of the collection	From the 1950s onwards the Comboni Missionaries who settled in Brazil collected these objects, which then reached the Casa Madre in Verona and are today

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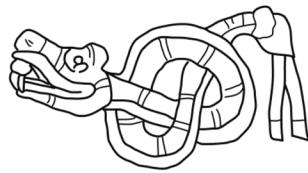
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