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KNOWLEDGE OF THINGS:  
REASSESSING THE INDIGENOUS  
AMERICAN HERITAGE IN ITALY

## Castello di Agliè

Piazza Castello, 2, 10011, Agliè (TO)

*Form compiled by Elisabetta Silvello (curator), in collaboration with Anna Bottesi*

## Introduction

The Castello di Agliè has an architectural history that goes back to the twelfth century, when it was built by the Marquises of San Martino. In the eighteenth century the residence underwent a first change of ownership: it was purchased by the royal House of Savoy, who enlarged it and transformed it into an imposing royal residence. The project was by Ignazio Birago di Borgaro and was inspired by the architecture of Filippo Juvarra. The works, which remained unfinished, also concerned the urban layout in front of the Castle, modelled on the French Place Royale. The interventions also affected the park and garden, which were laid out anew with a formal Italian-style design.

Two important figures in the history of the castle and its collections were King Carlo Felice and his wife Maria Cristina of Bourbon, who devoted great interest above all to enriching the archaeological and antiquities collections. On the death of the two sovereigns, the Castle passed by inheritance to Ferdinando of Savoy, Duke of Genoa. It was to his grandson, Ferdinando Umberto of Savoy, Prince of Udine, that the gathering of objects from the Americas is due. This took place between the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, during the various expeditions that, as a member of the navy, led him to different parts of the world.

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## Cultural Areas (tags)

Great Plains; Mesoamerica; Austral America

## Collections

#01

<i>Name of the collection</i>	<b>American collection</b>
<i>Collector</i>	Ferdinando of Savoy-Genoa, Prince of Udine
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Great Plains; Mesoamerica; Austral America
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Great Plains: Tsitsistas (Cheyenne)?  Mesoamerica: Guatemala  Austral America: Tierra del Fuego, Selk'nam?
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	From the Great Plains of North America come a deerskin pipe bag decorated with geometric motifs made with glass beads in red, blue, green, white and black, and two pairs of children's deerskin moccasins with glass bead decorations in red, blue, green, white and light blue, applied to cover the entire surface of the front part and the lower edge.  From Guatemala comes a half dried gourd, decorated by

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	<p>incision with a portrait of Umberto I of Savoy. On one side the inscription “M.A. Chaves, Guatemala, 1903” is recorded.</p> <p>The objects from Tierra del Fuego consist of a rush basket, probably of Selk’nam manufacture, and a quiver with twelve arrows.</p>
<i>History of the collection</i>	<p>North America: 1870–1906. According to the SIGEC record: “According to the 1927 inventory, the moccasins were a gift from Buffalo Bill (William Frederick Cody). The Buffalo Bill Wild West Show came to Italy on two occasions: in 1890 and in 1906. The show was staged in numerous cities and was greeted with great enthusiasm by the Italian public.”</p> <p>Guatemala: 1903.</p> <p>Tierra del Fuego: 1905–1907. According to the SIGEC record: “Between 4 February 1905 and 3 February 1907 Ferdinando of Savoy-Genoa, Prince of Udine, undertook a journey around the world on board the cruiser Calabria and reached, among other places, South America. The label accompanying the object refers to the Italian Salesian Mission in Chile and is signed ‘Fr. Maggiorino Borgatello, Salesian missionary’. It is highly likely that the Prince was a guest of the Mission during his stay. His</p>

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	<p>presence at the religious institution is also attested by the handwritten note accompanying another object in the ethnographic collection from the same place (inv. 2435/1964), which bears the dedication ‘To H.R.H. Prince Ferdinando of Udine’. The missionary who donated the two artefacts to the Duke of Genoa lived between 1857 and 1929 and from 1893 onwards was the first director of the Salesian museum in Punta Arenas, Chile, which today bears his name.”</p> <p>All the artefacts were acquired by the Museum in the twentieth century.</p>
<i>Online Database</i>	Catalogo Generale dei Beni Culturali
<i>Web page</i>	<p>North America:</p> <p>Pipe bag: <a href="https://www.catalogo.beniculturali.it/detail/DemoEthnoAnthropologicalHeritage/0100455047">https://www.catalogo.beniculturali.it/detail/DemoEthnoAnthropologicalHeritage/0100455047</a></p> <p>Moccasins 1: <a href="https://www.catalogo.beniculturali.it/detail/DemoEthnoAnthropologicalHeritage/0100455048">https://www.catalogo.beniculturali.it/detail/DemoEthnoAnthropologicalHeritage/0100455048</a></p> <p>Moccasins 2: <a href="https://www.catalogo.beniculturali.it/detail/DemoEthnoAnthropologicalHeritage/0100455049">https://www.catalogo.beniculturali.it/detail/DemoEthnoAnthropologicalHeritage/0100455049</a></p> <p>Guatemala:</p>

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	<p>Gourd: <a href="https://www.catalogo.beniculturali.it/detail/DemoEthnoAnthropologicalHeritage/0100455046">https://www.catalogo.beniculturali.it/detail/DemoEthnoAnthropologicalHeritage/0100455046</a></p> <p>Tierra del Fuego: Basket: <a href="https://www.catalogo.beniculturali.it/detail/DemoEthnoAnthropologicalHeritage/0100455043">https://www.catalogo.beniculturali.it/detail/DemoEthnoAnthropologicalHeritage/0100455043</a></p> <p>Quiver: <a href="https://www.catalogo.beniculturali.it/detail/DemoEthnoAnthropologicalHeritage/0100455044">https://www.catalogo.beniculturali.it/detail/DemoEthnoAnthropologicalHeritage/0100455044</a></p>
<i>Bibliography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minola, M. 2012. <i>Residenze minori di Casa Savoia</i>. Sant'Ambrogio di Torino: Susalibri.</li></ul>

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