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KNOWLEDGE OF THINGS:
REASSESSING THE INDIGENOUS
AMERICAN HERITAGE IN ITALY

Musei Civici Gian Giacomo Galletti

Piazza Paola Angela Ruminelli 1, 28845 Domodossola (VB)

Form compiled by Federico Troletti (curator)

Introduction

The American ethnographic collection of the Civic Museums of Domodossola comes from the “Gian Giacomo Galletti” Foundation (1869–1984), to which it was donated between 1880 and 1915. On 18 June 2021 the Civic Museums inaugurated a new display, exhibiting part of the collections that had belonged to this Foundation. Among them, however, the American objects – previously displayed in Palazzo Silva – are today kept in storage. They were gathered by various individuals who, in the course of their travels, were fascinated by the material culture of the extra-European peoples with whom they came into contact. Among these were A. Piazza, G. Leoni, L. Muzzio, G. Trabucchi, Z. Calpini, the Dell’Orto brothers and G. Morandi. Thanks to the information contained in the inventories and archival documentation, it is possible, for almost all the objects, to determine the precise period when they were collected and acquired by the museum.

The collection comprises around 200 artefacts, dating from the nineteenth century to the first decades of the twentieth century and coming mainly from Mesoamerica and the Central and Southern Andes. This explains its heterogeneous nature. It includes objects linked to warfare and hunting, rings, pendants, a necklace, earrings, bottles, pottery, pouches, various plaques, bowls, statuettes, an idol, small figurines, a solar disc, pieces of textiles and garments, gourds and various decorated fragments.

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Cultural Areas (tags)

Mesoamerica; Central and Southern Andes

Collections

#01

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Fondazione Gian Giacomo Galletti (old designation). “Musei Civici “G.G. Galletti” di Domodossola (actual designation).
<i>Collector</i>	Various, including: A. Piazza; G. Leoni; Governo Peruviano; L. Muzzio; G. Trabucchi; Z. Calpini; Dell’Orto (brothers); G. Morandi.
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Mesoamerica; Central and Southern Andes
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Various, some not identified.
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	This is not a homogeneous collection, precisely because of its origins. The material includes: rings, pendants, a necklace, earrings, bottles, pottery, pouches, various plaques, bowls, statuettes, an idol, small figurines, a solar disc, pieces of textiles and garments, gourds and various decorated fragments.
<i>History of the collection</i>	The collection was assembled in the second half of the nineteenth century and reached the museum between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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Online Database	“Guarini” inventory (only some objects). Museum inventory (not accessible to the public).
Web page	
Bibliography	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Andreone, F., S. Mazzotti, G. Zanata. 2010. “Collezioni erpetologiche dimenticate? L’esempio del Museo G.G. Galletti di Domodossola e del Museo G. Scarpa di Treviso.”, <i>Museologia Scientifica. Memorie</i> 5: 137-147.• Ferro, N. 2008-2009. <i>Etnografia extraeuropea al Museo Civico di Torino. La collezione messicana di Zaverio Calpini</i>. Tesi di laurea in Museologia, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Torino.• Moro, G. I. 1875-1982. <i>musei della Fondazione Galletti di Domodossola</i>. Domodossola.

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