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KNOWLEDGE OF THINGS:
REASSESSING THE INDIGENOUS
AMERICAN HERITAGE IN ITALY

Museo di Storia Naturale Don Bosco

Istituto Valsalice

Viale Enrico Thovez 37, 10131 Turin

Form compiled by Guido Salza (curator), in collaboration with Anna Bottesi

Introduction

The Museo di Storia Naturale Don Bosco, located in the Valsalice Salesian Institute, collects zoological, mineralogical, palaeontological and ethnographic materials gathered from the late nineteenth century onwards through the activity of Salesian missionaries and teachers.

The ethnographic section preserves a very substantial and varied collection of objects and material culture items, almost all of which come from American areas and were collected or donated by missionaries and travellers.

Particularly significant is the Yanomami collection, linked to the figure of the Salesian missionary Don Luigi Cocco (1923–2014) and his work as a missionary in the Orinoco region.

The museum's present layout is the result of a remodelling project carried out between 1967 and 1969, the year in which it was inaugurated in its current form.

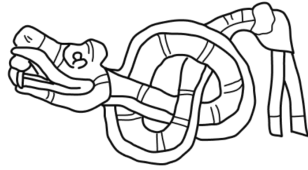
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Cultural Areas (tags)

California; Mesoamerica; Central America; Northern Andes; Central and Southern Andes; Amazon; Central-Eastern and Coastal Brazil; Gran Chaco; Austral America

Collections

#01

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Yanomami collection
<i>Collector</i>	Don Luigi Cocco
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Amazon
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Yanomami (Venezuela)
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	The Yanomami collection of the Museo di Storia Naturale Don Bosco consists of around one hundred artefacts for everyday and ritual use, gathered by the Salesian missionary Don Luigi Cocco between the 1950s and 1970s. The materials document the traditional material culture of the Yanomami groups in the Orinoco region: baskets, adornments, ornaments made with seeds and feathers, body ornaments, weapons, and ritual items such as masks and funerary urns for the preservation of the ashes of the deceased.

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<i>History of the collection</i>	The collection was assembled between the 1950s and 1970 and entered the Institute between 1960 and 1970.
<i>Online Database</i>	
<i>Web page</i>	
<i>Bibliography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brocardo, G. 1994. <i>Guida al Museo di Storia Naturale "Don Bosco"</i>. Torino: Istituto Salesiano Valsalice.

#02

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Ethnographic / various collection
<i>Collector</i>	Don Bresciani, Don Balzola, other unidentified Salesian fathers
<i>Cultural areas</i>	California; Amazon; Central-Eastern and Coastal Brazil; Gran Chaco
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Native Americans from California; Bororo, Toba, Shuar (Jivaro), Yanomami, Tukano (Brazil); Gran Chaco, Argentina.
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	The collection consists of around one hundred everyday objects and ritual artefacts: baskets, ornaments, body adornments, musical instruments, masks and weapons. The items document the material culture of different Native American groups and South American indigenous

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	peoples, especially from Brazil and the Gran Chaco region.
<i>History of the collection</i>	The collection was assembled between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries and entered the museum between the early 1900s and the 1970s.
<i>Online Database</i>	
<i>Web page</i>	
<i>Bibliography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Brocardo, G. 1994. <i>Guida al Museo di Storia Naturale "Don Bosco"</i>. Torino: Istituto Salesiano Valsalice.

#03

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Patagonia, Chubut, Tierra del Fuego collection
<i>Collector</i>	Don M. Borgatello, Don Lino Carbayal, other unidentified Salesian fathers
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Austral America
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Tehuelche (province of Chubut), Kaweshkar (named "Alacalufes" in the inventory), Selk'nam (named "Onas" in the inventory)
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	Collection consisting of around 800 objects, of which nearly 700 are arrowheads and spearheads in various

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	materials. There are also knives, scrapers, bows, arrows, quivers, necklaces, bolas perdidas, a bola drag, slings and bolas, in addition to everyday and ritual objects linked to the traditional material culture of the indigenous populations of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego.
<i>History of the collection</i>	The collection was assembled between the late nineteenth century and 1950 and entered the museum from 1898 onwards.
<i>Online Database</i>	
<i>Web page</i>	
<i>Bibliography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Brocardo, G. 1994. <i>Guida al Museo di Storia Naturale "Don Bosco"</i>. Torino: Istituto Salesiano Valsalice.

#04

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Mesoamerican archaeological collection
<i>Collector</i>	Unidentified Salesian fathers
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Mesoamerica; Central America
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Maya (Mexico and Guatemala); excavations at Tamanique (El Salvador, province of Las Charcas).

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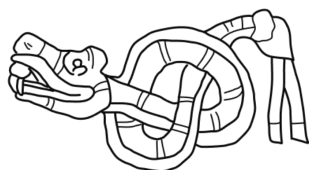
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	The collection comprises between 40 and 50 archaeological finds from various provenances. Among the pieces from Mexico are terracotta vessels and figurines, spindle whorls for spinning and some lithic tools. The materials from El Salvador come from the excavations at Tamanique (Las Charcas province) and consist mainly of ceramic vessels, bowls and small terracotta figurines.
<i>History of the collection</i>	The collection was assembled between the late nineteenth century and 1950 and entered the museum from 1898 onwards.
<i>Online Database</i>	
<i>Web page</i>	
<i>Bibliography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Brocardo, G. 1994. <i>Guida al Museo di Storia Naturale "Don Bosco"</i>. Torino: Istituto Salesiano Valsalice.

#05

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Andean archaeological collection
<i>Collector</i>	Unidentified Salesian fathers
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Northern Andes; Central and Southern Andes

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<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Northern Andes (Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia). In Ecuador, sites of: Sadahuaycu, Cuchikiabo valley; Loya; Esmeraldas. The Shuar (Jívaro) material comes from the region of Gualaquiza. Central and Southern Andes (Peru, Bolivia and Chile). In Chile: Calle de Valdivia (Santiago). Calima, Inca, Mapuche (named “Araucani” in the inventory).
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	The Andean archaeological collection includes ceramic, stone and metal artefacts from different cultural areas of the Andes. From the Northern Andes, vessels, bowls, figurines, lithic artefacts and ornaments; from the Central and Southern Andes, statues, vessels, mortars, spindle whorls and a mould for discs.
<i>History of the collection</i>	The collection was assembled between the late nineteenth century and 1950 and entered the museum from 1898 onwards.
<i>Online Database</i>	
<i>Web page</i>	
<i>Bibliography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Brocardo, G. 1994. <i>Guida al Museo di Storia Naturale “Don Bosco”</i>. Torino: Istituto Salesiano Valsalice.

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