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KNOWLEDGE OF THINGS:
REASSESSING THE INDIGENOUS
AMERICAN HERITAGE IN ITALY

Palazzo Madama - Museo Civico d'Arte Antica

Piazza Castello, 10122 Turin

Form compiled by Maria Paola Ruffino (curator)

Introduction

The American ethnographic and archaeological collections entered the museum's holdings at a very early stage, shortly after it was founded by the City in 1863. As early as 1864, ceramics from El Salvador and Panama, donated by the engineer Bottero, entered the museum, followed in 1871 by Mesoamerican and Andean objects obtained in exchange with the Museo di Antichità.

The richest group of American works was offered to the museum in 1876 by Zaverio Calpini, an optician from the Val d'Ossola, on his return after spending more than thirty years in Mexico: over 1,500 pieces, among which objects of outstanding artistic value (together with numerous forgeries). In 1895 the collection was transferred to the Museo di Antichità di Torino and in 1929 to the Museo di Antropologia dell'Università di Torino. In 1933 it finally returned to the Museo Civico. The collection's most important pieces were shown in the exhibition "Arte Antica dell'America Latina" organised in Rome in 1933 by the Direzione Generale Antichità e Belle Arti.

In that same year, 1876, the museum also acquired the last substantial collection of objects from the Panama area and the Andes from Consul Giovanni Battista Donalisio. Alongside these main cores there are individual objects or small collections, acquired up to recent years: a tsantsa from the Jívaro (Shuar) culture, brought from Ecuador by Enrico della Croce di Dojola in 1873; Andean textile fragments from the antiquities

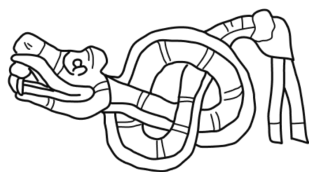
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market, donated by Ettore Mentore Pozzi in 1931 and by Roberto Pozzo in 2018; several terracottas (Chancay, Moche and Nazca cultures) and more recent wooden artefacts from Peru acquired in 1999.

Cultural Areas (tags)

Mesoamerica; Central America; Caribbean; Central and Southern Andes

Collections

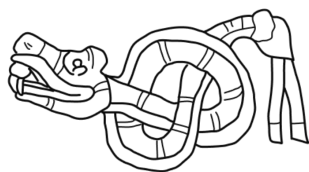
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<i>Name of the collection</i>	Calpini collection
<i>Collector</i>	Zaverio Calpini (1820–1905)
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Mesoamerica; Caribbean
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Mesoamerica: Mexico Caribbean: Puerto Rico
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	799 Mesoamerican works, including jade, stone and terracotta artefacts belonging to the Olmec, Teotihuacan, Zapotec, Maya, Toltec, Mixtec, Aztec and Taíno cultures (1 artefact).
<i>History of the collection</i>	The collection was assembled between 1848 and 1867 and acquired by the Museum in 1876.
<i>Online Database</i>	Some works in the museum's online collections.

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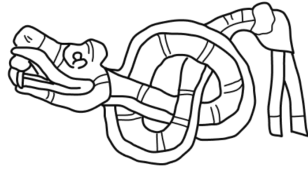
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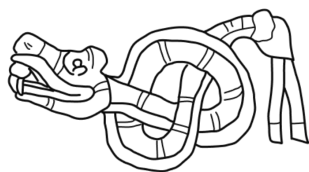
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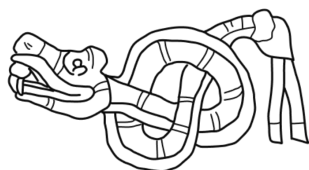
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#02

Name of the collection	Bottero collection
Collector	Engineer Bottero
Cultural areas	Mesoamerica; Central America
Ethnic group / community / cultural context	
Description of the Collection	51 ceramic artefacts – vessels and figurines – from the culture of El Salvador and the Chiriquí area (Panama).
History of the collection	Collection assembled and acquired before 1864.
Online Database	
Web page	
Bibliography	Careddu, G. 2002. “Antiche culture dell’America.” In <i>Terre lontane. Arti extraeuropee dal Museo Civico di Arte Antica, Città di Torino</i>, ed. E. Pagella,

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#03

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Donalisio collection
<i>Collector</i>	Consul Giovanni Battista Donalisio
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Central America; Central and Southern Andes
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Central America: Panama, Costa Rica Central and Southern Andes: Peru
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	Around 60 ceramic artefacts from the culture of the Chiriquí area (Panama) – vessels, bowls and ocarinas – ornaments in tumbaga from the Veraguas culture, and an oar from Darién. From the Central Andes: ceramic artefacts and silver artefacts of the Moche culture, ceramic vessels and figurines of the Chimú and Chancay cultures, and objects of the Inca culture.
<i>History of the collection</i>	The collection was assembled between 1855 and 1876 and entered the Museum in 1876.

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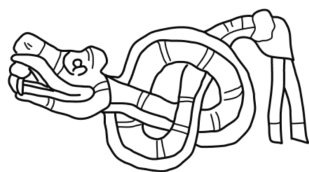
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