

# KNOT

KNOWLEDGE OF THINGS:  
REASSESSING THE INDIGENOUS  
AMERICAN HERITAGE IN ITALY

## Museo Civico di Castello Ursino

Piazza Federico di Svevia, 21, 95121, Catania

*Form compiled by Dr Floriana Cappadonna (at the request of Dr Valentina Noto, Director of the Museum)*

### Introduction

The Museo Civico di Castello Ursino is housed, as its name suggests, within the fortress of the same name, built at the behest of Frederick II of Swabia between the end of 1239 and the beginning of 1240. It originally stood on the top of a promontory in a strategic position in relation to the sea and the city of Catania; however, the eruption of Etna in 1669 radically altered the configuration of the surrounding landscape and the castle, no longer standing above its surroundings, lost its military function.

Over the centuries it never ceased to be used, passing from Norman fortress to Aragonese royal residence and later to residence of the Spanish viceroys. It was restored in 1934, and from that same year it has housed archaeological collections dating from the medieval, Renaissance and modern periods. A further restoration was carried out in 1988.

The Museo Civico di Castello Ursino in Catania preserves a collection of Mexican artefacts originating from the two most important and emblematic eighteenth-century collections: that of Prince Biscari and that of the Benedictine monks. It was an interest in the exotic that led monks and other travellers, in the course of their journeys and in the antiquarian markets of Naples, Rome, Florence and Venice, to seek out and purchase objects such as those now in the collections.

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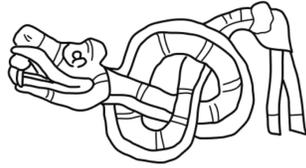
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Funding 2021-2027 | PNRR M4C2: PRIN 2022

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## Cultural Areas

Mesoamerica

## Collections

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|--|---|
| <i>Name of the collection</i>                      | <b>Biscari and Benedictine collections</b>  |
| <i>Collector</i>                                   | Prince Ignazio Paternò Castello of Biscari<br>Abbot Vito Maria Amico  |
| <i>Cultural areas</i>                              | Mesoamerica (New Spain (Mexico), more specifically Tonalá (Guadalajara), probably via Spain)  |
| <i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i> |   |
| <i>Description of the Collection</i>               | “Buccheri” and bowls, small items of tableware, inv. nos. 7721–7774.  |
| <i>History of the collection</i>                   | Artefacts collected in the eighteenth century and acquired by the museum between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.                    |
| <i>Online Database</i>                             |   |
| <i>Web page</i>                                    |   |
| <i>Bibliography</i>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Croazzo, G.R. 2006. “Ceramica Coloniale Messicana nel Museo Civico di Catania: una nota.”</li></ul> |

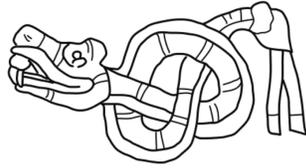
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|  | <p>Faenza - Bollettino del Museo internazionale delle ceramiche di Faenza anno XCII: 135-151.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Croazzo, G.R. 2020/1. "I bucheri messicani nelle collezioni siciliane: la lettura degli inventari." Archivio storico per la Sicilia orientale: 187-191.</li></ul> |
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## Knowledge of Things (KNOT)

### Reassessing the Indigenous American Heritage in Italy

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