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KNOWLEDGE OF THINGS:
REASSESSING THE INDIGENOUS
AMERICAN HERITAGE IN ITALY

Museo del Tessuto

Via Puccetti, 3, 59100, Prato

Form compiled by Dr Daniela Degl'Innocenti (curator)

Introduction

The existence of the Museo del Tessuto in Prato is closely bound up with the city's textile tradition, which dates back to the twelfth century and developed in particular around the art of wool-working.

The museum was created in 1975 within the "Tullio Buzzi" Technical Institute for the Textile Industry, following a donation of around six hundred ancient textile fragments. This donation enriched the material already present, deriving from collections gradually assembled over time by the school's teachers for use as teaching resources for students.

Other associations – such as the Associazione Ex Allievi dell'Istituto Buzzi – and local institutions – including the Municipality of Prato, Cariprato and the Unione Industriale Pratese – have over the years contributed to the expansion of the collections. After a brief period in the Palazzo Comunale, in 2003 the Museo del Tessuto was transferred to its permanent home in the restored premises of the former Campolmi factory. The American collection consists of three textile fragments from the Andean regions and of pre-Columbian origin. They were acquired at different times between 1976 and 2006 as donations from private individuals and former pupils of the school.

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Funding 2021-2027 | PNRR M4C2: PRIN 2022

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Cultural Areas

Central and Southern Andes

Collections

#01

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Collection of the Fondazione Museo del Tessuto (inv. 06.08.01)
<i>Collector</i>	
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Central and Southern Andes
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Proto-Nazca culture (Peru)
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	Fragment of a textile in knitted camelid wool. The fringe, knitted in polychrome wools, is made up of three elements: a head with a saw-tooth pattern, a continuous band and a skirt. The latter is rendered by fifty-seven figures in which torso, arms, face and hair are depicted; the hair, hanging downwards, forms the pennants. The piece was originally sewn to the edge of a mantle. The object belongs to the Proto-Nazca culture, which developed in the coastal area south of Peru between 200 BC and 100 BC. The Proto-Nazca culture marks the transition between the earlier Paracas civilisation and the later Nazca settlement. This phase paved the way for

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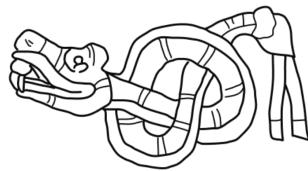
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	<p>the emergence of a style characterised by vivid polychromy, evident both in textiles and in ceramics. The pre-Columbian cultures of the coast and highlands developed an intense textile production using camelid wools (guanaco, vicuña, llama and alpaca) and/or plant fibres, chiefly cotton.</p>
<i>History of the collection</i>	The circumstances in which the piece was collected are unknown; it was acquired by the museum in 2006.
<i>Online Database</i>	
<i>Web page</i>	
<i>Bibliography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boccherini, T., P.B. de Liguori, D. Degl'Innocenti, eds. 1999. <i>Museo del Tessuto di Prato</i>, 29-31. Milano: Editore Skira.• Degl'Innocenti, D., ed. 2007. <i>Museo del Tessuto di Prato. Trenta anni di donazioni</i>, 145. Prato: Museo del Tessuto Edizioni.

#02

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Collection of the Fondazione Museo del Tessuto (inv. 76.03.641) (Monetti Collection – Switzerland)
<i>Collector</i>	
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Central and Southern Andes

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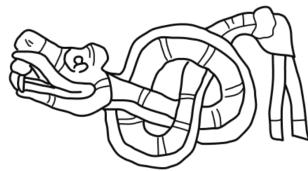
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<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Chancay (Peru)
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	<p>Fragment of a wool textile (tapestry with eccentric wefts), from the Late Intermediate Period (1200–1476 AD). Textile structure: brown warp; wefts in dark brown, reddish brown, white and yellow, interlocked. Tapestry weave.</p> <p>The design is laid out in parallel bands alternating in a vertical checkerboard arrangement. The motif consists of felines with anthropomorphic limbs holding ritual implements. At the bottom there are two horizontal bands enclosing a running-dog motif. A border sewn to the textile is decorated with a lozenge pattern.</p>
<i>History of the collection</i>	The circumstances of collection are unknown. It was acquired in 1976 following a donation by the former pupils of the Istituto Buzzi.
<i>Online Database</i>	
<i>Web page</i>	
<i>Bibliography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boccherini, T., P.B. de Liguori, D. Degl'Innocenti, eds. 1999. <i>Museo del Tessuto di Prato</i>, 29-31. Milano: Editore Skira.• Degl'Innocenti, D., ed. 2007. <i>Museo del Tessuto di Prato. Trenta anni di donazioni</i>, 145. Prato: Museo del Tessuto Edizioni.

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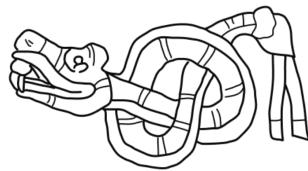
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#03

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Collection of the Fondazione Museo del Tessuto (inv. 85.04.01) (Desii Collection)
<i>Collector</i>	
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Central and Southern Andes
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Peru
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	Fragment of a wool textile (plain weave, tapestry with eccentric wefts), from the Late Intermediate Period (1200–1476 AD). Textile structure: a plain-weave wool cloth in burnt-brown (fragment sewn to the main textile). The main textile has a warp of fine brown spun wool and wefts of wool in wine-red, pink, ochre, black, green and olive. Tapestry weave. The design is laid out in diagonal bands with serrated edges. At the centre of the bands are stylised zoomorphic figures (serpents or birds) in a flipped pose, whose silhouettes are created by the chromatic contrast of the weft colours. Along one long side there is a border with a running-dog motif.
<i>History of the collection</i>	The circumstances of collection are unknown. It was acquired in 1985 following a donation by Renzo Desii.

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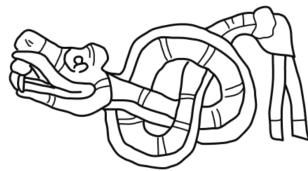
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