
Enhancement of the invisible heritage: the case of the Ethnological Archaeological Civic Museum of Modena

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Résumé

The Ethnological Archaeological Civic Museum of Modena preserves a collection of about 180 flint artefacts, mostly dating back to the Lower and Middle Paleolithic, from the French sites of Montières les Amiens, Abbeville, Saint Acheul and Renancourt les Amiens. The collection was sold in 1891 to the Institute by Charles Le Beuf, an antiquarian and police chief of the town of Meaux, from which Carlo Boni, director of the Civic Museum, had purchased numerous finds to enrich the collections.

The project of study and enhancement of the collection is part of the rediscovery of collections "invisible" to the public.

The first "rediscovered" collection was the Egyptian one, formed in the years immediately following the foundation, in 1871, of the Civic Museum. The enhancement of this small collection has become a great opportunity for research. Thanks to the network of collaborations activated by the Museum, the best experts in the sector have been involved by combining scientific and humanistic disciplines.

The enhancement of the project took place through multiple initiatives aimed at all types of audiences: the live restoration of a child mummy was proposed, the 3D facial reconstruction of the child's face, the guided tours to tell the many "Stories of Egypt" - title of the exhibition - that emerged from the research, the educational courses and workshops for children as well as the in-depth meetings.

The second appointment will be dedicated to the French Paleolithic collection, rediscovered thanks to the collaboration with the Department of Humanities of the University of Ferrara. Also, in this occasion, the archaeological study of the material was accompanied by research on how to create a collection with a strongly evocative value. In fact, it was Boucher de Perthes, the pioneer of the prehistoric studies, who first collected many artifacts from the Paleolithic in Abbeville, in the first half of the 19th century, and associated them with paleontological remains. This and other discoveries started the studies of Prehistory in Europe and had great importance in the debate between creationists and evolutionists that contributed to the birth of Prehistory as a scientific discipline and to the foundation of museums such as Modena, which in 2021 will celebrate 150 Anniversary.

On the enhancement front, on the one hand we intend to give space to those issues that allow

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us to communicate the topicality of prehistory, such as migration and mobility, environmental sustainability, climate change, nutrition; on the other, initiatives have been designed to stigmatize the stereotypes that accompany the imagery of prehistory with paradigms of true / false, projection of films, animations and documentaries and an original exhibition of the famous advertising stickers of the Panini collection, a unique collection preserved in Modena, which represents a mirror of society between the 19th and 20th centuries.

An interactive thematic itinerary dedicated to understanding the "technological gesture" will be dedicated to the primary school public; for high school students, in particular for the art institute, experiential sessions will be proposed starting from the "design" of an iconic prehistoric artefact.

Mots-Clés: Museums, collections enhancement, Italy