



Civico Museo Parisi Valle
Maccagno con Pino e Veddasca – Lago Maggiore (Varese)

The Treasure of Imperial Maccagno

An exceptional restoration to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Mint

2022 | 12 | 10 – 2023 | 04 | 10

The exhibition illustrates the fascinating history of the Imperial Feud of Maccagno Inferiore ('royal court and land of its own' at least since the first decades of the 13th century) with a double homage: On the one hand paying tribute to its outstanding heritage, and on the other hand celebrating the 400th anniversary of the famous Imperial Mint founded in 1622.

The exhibition of coins minted in Maccagno has been realised in cooperation with *Numismatica Varesina* with a scientific contribution by Luca Gianazza and is accompanied by documents from public, private and ecclesiastic collections - some of them never published - on the town's noble history. These include an elaborate imperial diploma of 1637 from the Diocesan Historical Archive in Como. The document confirms the imperial vicariate and the right to mint coins, which was granted by Ferdinand III to Giacomo Mandelli whose family ruled the destiny of the feud for centuries. Also presented is a handwritten copy of the municipal statutes of 1569, a recent, fortunate addition to the municipal collection of Maccagno con Pino e Veddasca. The following section shows a series of images, including ancient photographs and paintings that have never been presented to the public (of particular interest is Carlo Bossoli, *Il Lago Maggiore da Maccagno Inferiore*, 1867, courtesy Galleria Aversa, Turin) for a depiction of the urban features of the town, which has preserved its original medieval character.

The introducing section, dedicated to the heritage of art and faith in Maccagno Inferiore, is focused on the restoration of a precious altarpiece from the parish church of S. Stefano, of which trace had been lost.

The canvas, a large *Immaculate Conception* dated 1729, can be attributed to the hand of an important painter from Varese: Pietro Antonio Magatti (1691-1767). Equally important is the chain of events that led to the restoration of the painting. Providentially recovered during the *Census of ecclesiastical cultural Heritage in the parishes of Maccagno* (CEI national census), it was mentioned

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by the Diocese of Milan and then restored by Valentina Fontana and dott.ssa Maria Rita Sampietro thanks to funds from the *Ministry of Culture, Superintendence of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape for the provinces of Como, Lecco, Monza-Brianza, Pavia, Sondrio and Varese*. In addition to the painting, a meticulous selection of works from the parish heritage well documents both the wealth of Imperial Maccagno in the years of monetary production (until the last two decades of the 17th century) and the impact that the arrival of the *Immaculate Conception* had on art and society of the town during the 18th and 19th centuries.

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