5.2 ANALISI COMPARATA DEI MUSEI DEL MONDO

BOLCA FOSSILS IN HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

Since the first news of discoveries, the Bolca fossils have been at the center of intense discussions and debates on naturalistic and philosophical themes, aimed at explaining the presence of animals and plants within the rocks. A very rich collection of publications, spanning almost five centuries of history, testifies to the scientific interest and human curiosity towards these fascinating legacies of a distant past, underlining, among other things, the importance and leading role that the Bolca fossils have played a role in the evolution of the process of understanding natural phenomena and in the development of paleontology.
The first known author to give notice of the Bolca fossils was Andrea Mattioli in 1555. In the work "Discorsi sopra Dioscorides" Mattioli cites "*Mr. Don Diego Ultado of Menodozza*" for having shown him some "*stone slabs*" brought by Veronese *" in which (splitting through the middle) various species of fish are found carved with each of their particles conversed in stone*". The collection of fish from Bolca of Don Diego Hurtado of Mendoza, ambassador for the Emperor Charles V, resident in Venice at the time of his acquaintance with Mattioli, can be considered the first known collection of fossils from this deposit. About fifteen years later, in 1571, there is evidence of the presence of Bolcian fossils in another very famous collection: that of the Veronese pharmacist Francesco Calzolari. The collection that Michele Mercati created in Rome for Pope Sixtus V dates back to 1574, in which fish from the Veronese area are mentioned, most likely attributable to Bolca, while ichthyoliths from this locality appeared in the Bolognese Musaeum metallicum of Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605). In 1600, Ludovico Moscardo continued the museological tradition of Calzolari, establishing his own Museum, which he described in a work published in 1656, where he also illustrated 6 fish from Bolca, classifying two of them, one as Orada and the other as Eel.
If in the 1500 the fossils from Bolca made their appearance in literature and in collections, of which however limited evidence remains, in the second half of the 1600 and in particular in the 1700 and 1800 the collections relating to fossils from Bolca multiplied. The collection of Scipione Maffei (1675-1755) in Verona must have been important, while other examples of collections, also created to examine the nature of fossils and find evidence to support one's theses on their origin, were those of Vallisneri (1661-1730) in Padua or of the archpriest of Grezzana Gian Giacomo Spada.
Distributed within collections present in Italy and abroad, the Bolca finds are starting to spread more and more: first reported in Europe, they will then cross the Atlantic to land in America, within museum collections of the most prestigious institutes and of the major universities.
However, still in 1700 an important group of collectors was found in Verona and, among these, the undoubtedly most important collection was that of the Gazola counts. Also enriched with specimens given by relatives and friends it will become the Gazola Museum, the contents of which will be entrusted for study to the abbot G. Serafino Volta who in 1796 will publish the work "Ittiolitologia Veronese", a fundamental publication on fossil fish. A well-known historical fact, with the arrival of Napoleon's troops in Verona for the Italian campaign, a commissioner in charge confiscated a good part of the finds from the Gazola collection, causing it to flow into the Natural History Museum of Paris in 1798. Gazola was then compensated for this operation and created a second collection of which he then donated some specimens to Napoleon himself. The remaining collection was acquired by the city of Verona in 1892 and placed in the Civic Museum of Natural History, together with another important collection, that of the paleobotanist Abramo Massalongo, an important scholar of fossil plants from Bolca.

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THE HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS OF BOLCA: METHOD AND RESULTS

By specifically analyzing the distribution of the Bolca fossils in the historical collections and trying to obtain information on the diffusion of the collections over the centuries, a preliminary bibliographic research was carried out which allowed us to produce the list below, together with a designed map with the open source software Qgis of which some extracts are included. This list was integrated through the information provided by current museums, subsequently contacted for the census. Despite being aware of the bias of the data, due to the enormous amount of publications present on Bolca and the loss of information over time, it was possible to draw a first infographic of the localization of finds from this location in historical collections and collections, based on the information currently known.

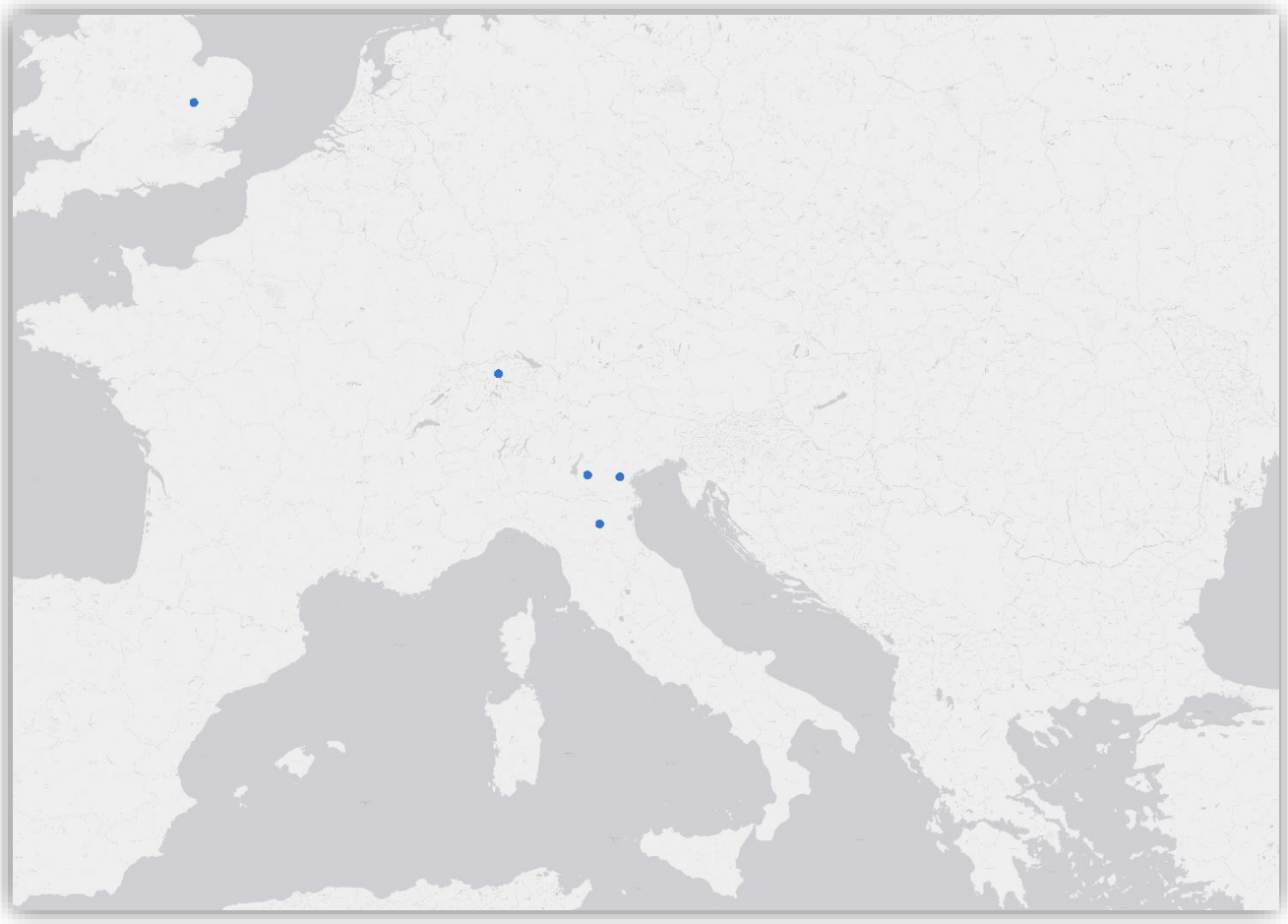
Collection from 1500

- Venezia: Don Diego Hurtado di Mendoza collection
- Verona: Calzolari collection
- Roma: Collezione Mercati – Papa Sisto V collection
- Bologna: Musaeum Metallicum of Ulisse Aldrovandi



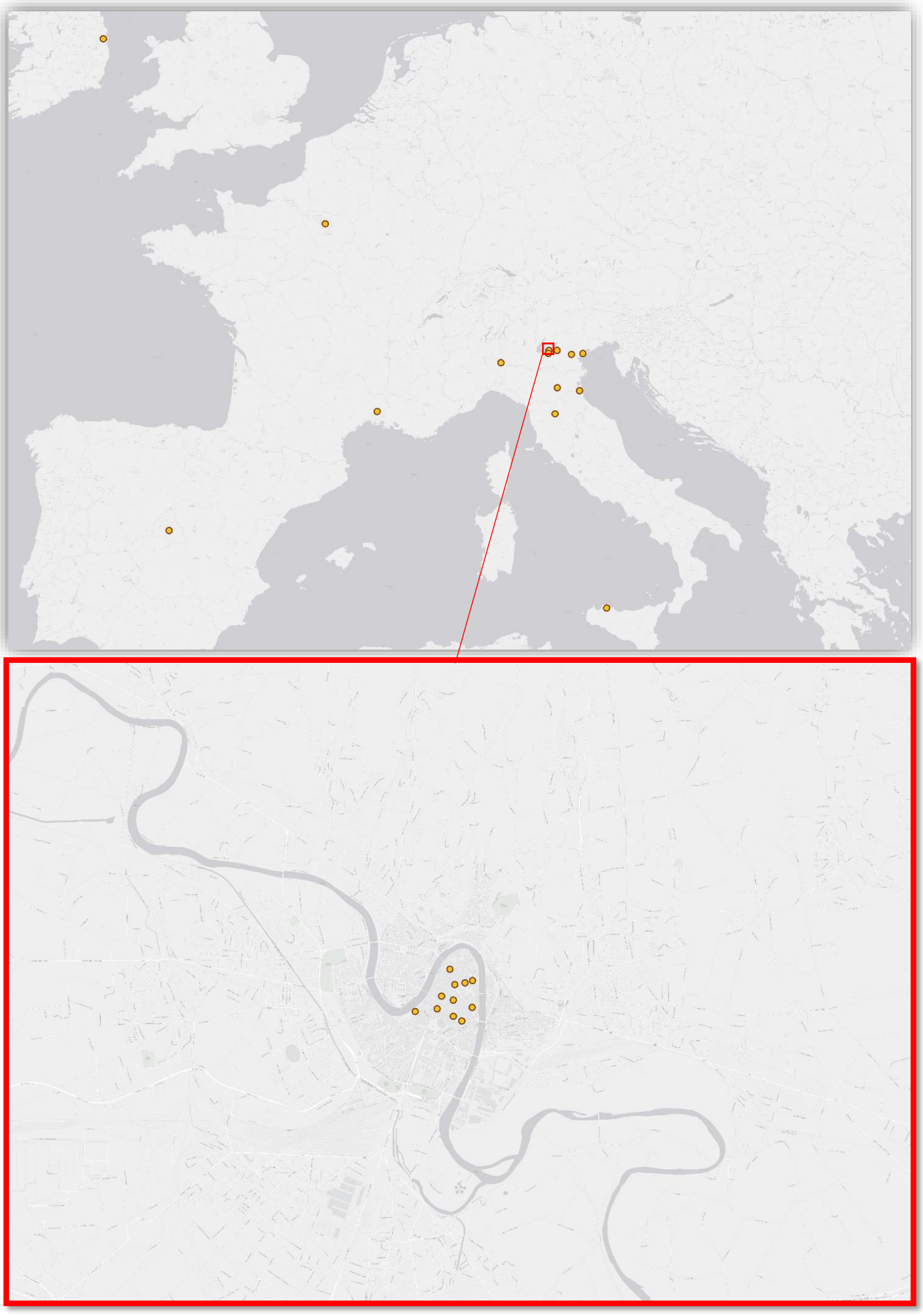
Collection from 1600

- Verona: Museo Moscardo
- Padova: Museo Vallisneriano
- Bologna: Marsili collection
- Zurich: Scheuchzer collection
- Cambridge: Woodward collection



Collection from 1700

- Bologna: Institute of Bologna, founded by Marsili in 1711. Collects the Aldrovandi collection
- Grezzana: Giacomo Spada collection
- Verona: Maffe collection, Cavalier Antonio Bianchi collection, Giulio Cesare Moreni collection , Gasparo Bordoni collection, Vincenzo Bozza collection , Rotari collection, Canossa collection , Buri collection , Dionisi collection, Rota collection, Gazola collection
- Arzignano: Don Giuliano Serpe collection, Matteo Stacco collection
- Padova: Vallisneri collection
- Venezia: Zannichelli collection
- Pavia: Museo Bellisomiano, Collezione Spallanzani
- Firenze: Baillou collection
- Ravenna: Museo Ginanni
- S. Martino delle Scale, Palermo: Collection of the Monastery di S.Martino delle Scale
- Paris: Davila collection
- Nimes: Jean-Francois Seguier collection
- Madrid: Real Gabinete de Historia Natural
- France: M.Galois collection
- Dublin: George Graydon collection



Collections from 1800

- Pavia: Gabinetto di Pavia
- Cremona: Museo Civico di Cremona
- Milano: Milano University collection
- Bergamo: Paolo Conte Vimercati Sozzi collection
- Cinisello: Villa Silva collection
- Verona: Gazola and Massalongo collections, Museo Civico di Verona
- Vicenza: Biblioteca Bertoliana, Museo Civico di Vicenza
- Castelgomberto: Castellini collection
- Bassano del Grappa: Parolini, Brocchi collection
- Padova: De Zigno collection, Gabinetto di Storia naturale dell'Università di Padova
- Trieste: Museo di Storia Naturale di Trieste
- Udine: Gabinetto di Storia Naturale Antonio Zanon
- Parma: Regia Università di Parma
- Bologna: Cappellini collection
- Imola: Scarabelli collection
- Accademia Valdarnese
- Napoli: Museo di Geologia
- Dublin: Royal Irish academy
- Cheshire: Philip Grey Egerton collection, Lord Cole
- Bristol: James Johnson collection
- Cambridge: J. Chaning Pearce collection
- London: British Museum, Royal College of Surgeons of England
- Paris: Muséum national d'Historie naturelle
- Troyes: Musée d'art moderne de Troyes
- Montpellier: Jules de Christol collection
- Gand: Gand University collection
- Vienna: Francis I collection, Naturhistorisches Museum
- Berlin: Museum für Naturkunde
- Yale: Gabinetto del College
- Cambridge: Museum of Comparative Zoology
- Pittsburgh: Carnegie

