

## First Floor

### Cavriglia and its territory in the nineteenth century



The exhibition space is characterized by a central rotating machine, divided into several sections, each containing objects that refer to some aspects of traditional life in Cavriglia in the nineteenth century (the countryside, the forest, religion, tree crops, the home and livestock). The machine is surrounded by ferrous laminate interrupted by a series of small multicoloured windows located at different heights. Of these, only a few have a clear glass that allows a clear view of the objects of the past. Near the entrance, a speaking figure representing Priamo Bigiandi. The latter was a miner, mayor and member of the Italian Parliament. Due to the depth of his social, political and human standing the museum chose him as a spokesman. Bigiandi explains the main processes of territorial transformation from a traditional agricultural vocation, to the excavation of wood coal. A first graphic panel describes Cavriglia in the first half of the nineteenth century with a quote from Emanuele Repetti.

Opposite to the entrance, a series of graphic panels and windows on the theme of wood coal in Cavriglia, (see panel behind the speaking figure) divided into several sub-themes: “The subsoil and wood coal,” describes the various stages of the discovery of wood



coal in the Valdarno territory since the sixteenth century: “Fuel rocks” presents the different types of fuel rocks according to a nineteenth century classification, “A. Stoppani, the geological culture in the nineteenth century” and finally “The ownership of the subsoil in Tuscany”. The next panel, “The topsoil and the traditional human activities in the nineteenth century”, is composed of a series of photographic images accompanied by quotes highlighting the activities, mainly agricultural, of the territory of Cavriglia.



On the other side, the exhibition illustrates some aspects of the town of Caviglia in the nineteenth century. A first interactive electronic panel shows the parishes of the area and their concurrence with the development of suburbs. Next to it, a big showcase hosts the historic flag and a voluminous book with the first administrative acts of the town founded in 1809. After the Unification of Italy, the centrality of the municipality was confirmed by the acquisition of those public functions, such as the registry, previously exercised by the parishes. The outfitting of this Hall is completed by a large graphic panel: "The Birth of an industrial district in Tuscany: assets, mine, railway, power plant and social implications".

In fact, starting from the seventies of the nineteenth century, the information on the presence of wood coal in Valdarno became more detailed. This and the presence, in the nearby Florence, of capitals and investors willing to invest in new ventures, such as the exploitation of wood coal mines, ironworks and, subsequently, a power plant fuelled by locally extracted combustibles, a nearby rail network for transport and finally cheap labour drawn from the countryside. To the side of the panel a quick chronology of the development of the mines.



#### To learn more

- Archivio storico del Comune di Caviglia.
- I. Biagianti, Sviluppo industriale e lotte sociali nel Valdarno superiore (1860 – 1922), ed. Olschki, Firenze 1984.
- Comune di Caviglia (a cura di), Storia di una terra di minatori. Gli archivi raccontano, Grafica 10, Città di Castello, 2009.
- Comune di San Giovanni Valdarno (a cura di), Vilfredo Pareto e il Valdarno, s.l., 2005.
- E. Repetti, Dizionario Geografico Fisico Storico della Toscana, Bertelli e Piccardi, Firenze, 1833.
- G. Sacchetti, Ligniti per la patria. Collaborazione, conflittualità, compromesso. Le relazioni sindacali nelle miniere del Valdarno superiore (1915-1958), Ediesse, Roma 2002.