

Filippo Pacini and nineteenth century anatomical and microscopic preparations. Comparing techniques and museum collections

Francesca Monza

Medical Humanities, University of Insubria, Department of Biotechnology and Human Sciences, Varese , Italy

As director of Physiological Museum in Florence, Filippo Pacini devoted himself to enrich the collection of anatomical preparations, which later on he expanded with a "Micrographic Museum".

In the mid-nineteenth century the histological studies had been recently developed, the microscope was the main innovation of the century. It is exactly in those years, indeed, that first microscopic collections were brought to light - alongside the traditional anatomical collections - to accomplish educational and research purposes. In Italy Pacini's florentine collection was state-of-the-art.

At that time, the collection of the Anatomical Museum of Pavia was developed and it enriched Antonio Scarpa's microscopic preparations with those created by Bartolomeo Panizza and those donated by Josef Hyrtl in 1858. In the Anatomical Museum of Perugia, founded in 1844, the first microscopic preparations were made by Filippo Pacini and the collection was further enriched thanks to the work of Pacini's disciple Elia Mortara (between 1862-64).

In Europe one of the collection thought to be the reference point as far as the anatomical museum were concerned, was Orfila Museum in Paris, that the scientist of Pistoia knew well, as evidenced by the notes in his manuscript.

Mathieu Orfila was a chemist and a passionate researcher who was particularly interested in poisons and preservatives solutions, issue on which extensively worked also Pacini, leaving many writings and notes on the best solutions for conservative anatomical specimens (Pacini 1861; Pacini 1880).

References

- Bianchi A. [a cura di] (1889) Relazione e catalogo dei manoscritti di Filippo Pacini, esistenti nella R. Biblioteca Nazionale centrale di Firenze.
- Monza F. (2006) Anatomia in Posa. Il museo anatomico di Pavia dal XVIII al XX secolo.
- Pacini F. (1861) Dei liquidi per le preparazioni anatomiche: del prof. Pacini in *Annali di chimica applicata alla medicina cioè alla farmacia, alla tossicologia, all'igiene, alla fisiologia, alla patologia e alla terapeutica* (series 3, volume 33, issue 4).
- Pacini F. (1880) Di alcuni metodi di preparazione e conservazione degli elementi microscopici dei tessuti animale e vegetali.

Keywords: Anatomy museums, physiology museums, anatomical preparations, histological preparations, Physiological Museum of Florence, Anatomical Museum in Pavia, Orfila Museum in Paris.