

The Museo della Specola

Lenoir repeating circle, the collection encompasses one of the most beautiful and better kept series of topographical instruments, built by Matthew Berges, Ramsden's successor.

Dating back from the same period, are some meteorological instruments and Cacciatore's mercury seismoscope, as well as some small physical instruments that were given to Piazzini.

A rich and composite legacy

Around 1850, the equipment of the Observatory underwent a renewal. In the meantime Germany had replaced England as leading country in optical equipment manufacturing and thus the telescopes bought in that period were German: a passage instrument built in Berlin by Pistor & Martins and an excellent 10" Merz refractor, one of the best instruments of the time, especially used to observe the

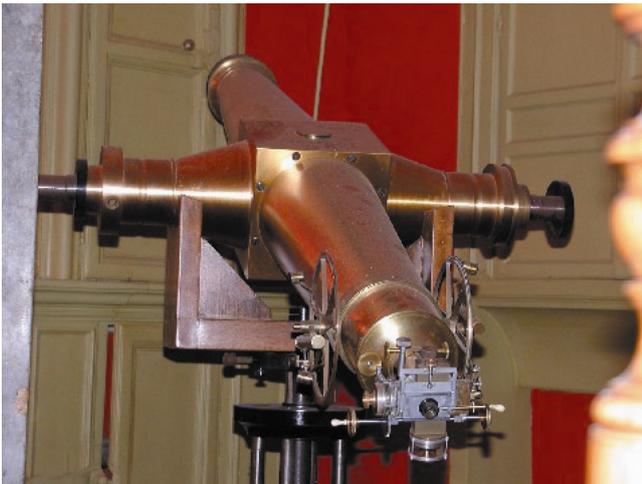


The Merz equatorial telescope

the Observatory at the end of 19th century for scientific purposes.

The Museo della Specola holds also instruments for earthquake detection, acquired in the same period to check the stability of the tower. Between 1890 and 1910, a new series of instruments to determine the Earth's magnetism was bought to boost the research on Earth-Sun interactions.

A gallery of oil portrait paintings completes the collection. They were mainly realized by Sicilian neoclassic master Giuseppe Velasco (1750-1827), and depict Piazzini and the most important scientific and political men he was close to; later paintings make the almost complete series of portraits of the Observatory directors.



The Pistor & Martins meridian circle

sun and planets.

Both instruments have been recently restored and replaced in their original position, respectively in the meridian room and in the refractor hall.

This second group of instruments comprised also some clocks and several instruments of meteorology, a discipline that in those years was growing to become a science. The collection also includes a few spectroscopes, utilized by Tacchini for his solar physics research started in 1871.

An interesting addition to the collection is a set of three telescopes coming from the private observatory of Prince Giulio Fabrizio Tomasi di Lampedusa, sited in his villa at San Lorenzo Colli, and bought by



The portable instruments gallery

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