



## Castello del Buonconsiglio monumenti e collezioni provinciali

### PRESS RELEASE

Trento, 29 November 2004

#### **Antique clocks on display in Castello del Buonconsiglio, Trento, from 25.06 to 06.11.05 THE MEASUREMENT OF TIME**

**Extraordinary creations of human ingenuity which measure the passage of time: the art of Italian clockmaking from the 15th to the 18th century**

(f.s.) – “Time is to the clock as intelligence is to the brain: a clock, whatever its size, whether a large pendulum clock or a fragile trinket, contains, in a certain sense, time. But time refuses to be bottled .... As it runs away like sand, or is measured by tiny wheels engaging other wheels, it flies away ineluctably under our very eyes, and continues flowing without interruption.....All that we can expect of a clock is that it registers the flow, nothing else. And since time has its rhythm, like the beating of a heart or the cycle of the tides, the instruments for measuring it cannot hold it back. The most they can hope to do is keep up with it.” These astute observations were made by Dava Sobel, while recounting the fascinating history of an Englishman, John Harrison, who, in the 18th century, invented sophisticated clocks with which it was possible to resolve the problem of measuring longitude, fundamental for orientation at sea.

The passage of time, which has always fascinated and tormented mankind, will be the subject of the next exhibition at Castello del Buonconsiglio, planned to run from 25 June to 6 November 2005. The sequence of exhibits proposed will enable visitors to admire some of the most interesting and elaborate mechanisms created between the 15th and 18th centuries for the measurement of time. There will also be “alarms” used in monasteries for the timing of prayers. For the first time in Italy, a notable variety of complex mechanisms designed to mark the passage of time which are outstanding, whether for the ingenious technical solutions adopted or for the elegance of their forms and quality of their decoration, will be brought together in one place. The valuable clocks, which will be put on display together with paintings and documents associated with the history of the clock, are coming from important private collections and public museums in Italy and abroad.

The exhibition will also offer the opportunity to appreciate the work of the Trentino clockmaker, Bartolomeo Antonio Bertolla (1702-1789), who became famous for the creation of splendid, richly decorated clocks – above all long case (pendulum) clocks (also known as grandfather clocks in English), and mantel clocks with dials presenting information about the phases of the moon and other astronomical data. Bartolomeo Antonio Bertolla’s pendulum clocks are considered veritable masterpieces: outstanding among them is a long case clock, the face of which is embellished with *rocaille* inserts in embossed silver, and the coat of arms of Prince Bishop Cristoforo Sizzo de Noris. Together with the priest and scientist, Francesco Borghesi di Mechel (Val di Non -Trento), Bertolla devised an astronomical-astrological timepiece, given to Maria Teresa of Austria, which is now kept in the Museum of History and Technology of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington.

Giuseppe Brusa, a leading clock expert, is coordinating the scientific committee for the exhibition, while the mounting of the exhibits is under the direction of Michelangelo Lupo.

#### **THE MEASUREMENT OF TIME**

**Trento - Castello del Buonconsiglio**

**25 June - 6 November 2005**

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