



THE BLACK BOX TREASURES (#13)

(A SUMMER SMILE 😊)

There is an interesting term called the “black box theory”. It speaks about an object which can be analyzed in terms of its input and output, but there is no knowledge of its internal workings. This theory can be explained in a very easy way: “The child who tries to open a door has to manipulate the handle (the input) so as to produce the desired movement at the latch (the output); and he has to learn how to control the one by the other without being able to see the internal mechanism that links them. In our daily lives we are confronted at every turn with systems whose internal mechanisms are not fully open to inspection, and which must be treated by the methods appropriate to the Black Box.” (Ashby, W. Ross, *An Introduction to Cybernetics*, 86).

Many of us probably don't know that in our Archives here in Rome we have more than 200 black boxes. Some of those treasures have seen the light of day in many publications, but there are still others waiting to be seen...

WARNING: The following newsletter contains images and descriptions that may be disturbing to some readers. Reader discretion is advised.

(A healthy smile - #13)

A treasure is pretty relative. For us something is a “treasure” but for others not necessarily so. For example, we consider our white teeth our personal treasure but others could see it differently.

I have recently found in the archives a very unique black box (#57). It contains the belongings of the archbishop of Capua, Salvatore Baccarini C.R. (1881-1962). Namely, some relics of various saints, the bishop's seal and his pocket watches. Among these, I found a special small box... with two full sets of Baccarini's false teeth with some golden elements.

In order to show you these “pearls” among other treasures, I had to wear not just the regular material gloves but disposable ones. After a close analysis, it seems that when he started to wear these, he just had three of his own teeth. As you can notice the “old” set had also some nice golden elements (picture 1). Looking at the plastic denture (picture 2) we can see that when he started to wear it, unfortunately he didn't have any teeth of his own at that time.

It is curious that somebody decided to place Baccarini's false teeth as an archive entry. Who knows?



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