



PROCEEDINGS  
SECOND  
VATICAN  
COFFIN  
CONFERENCE  
6-9 JUNE 2017

VOLUME 1

EDIZIONI MUSEI VATICANI



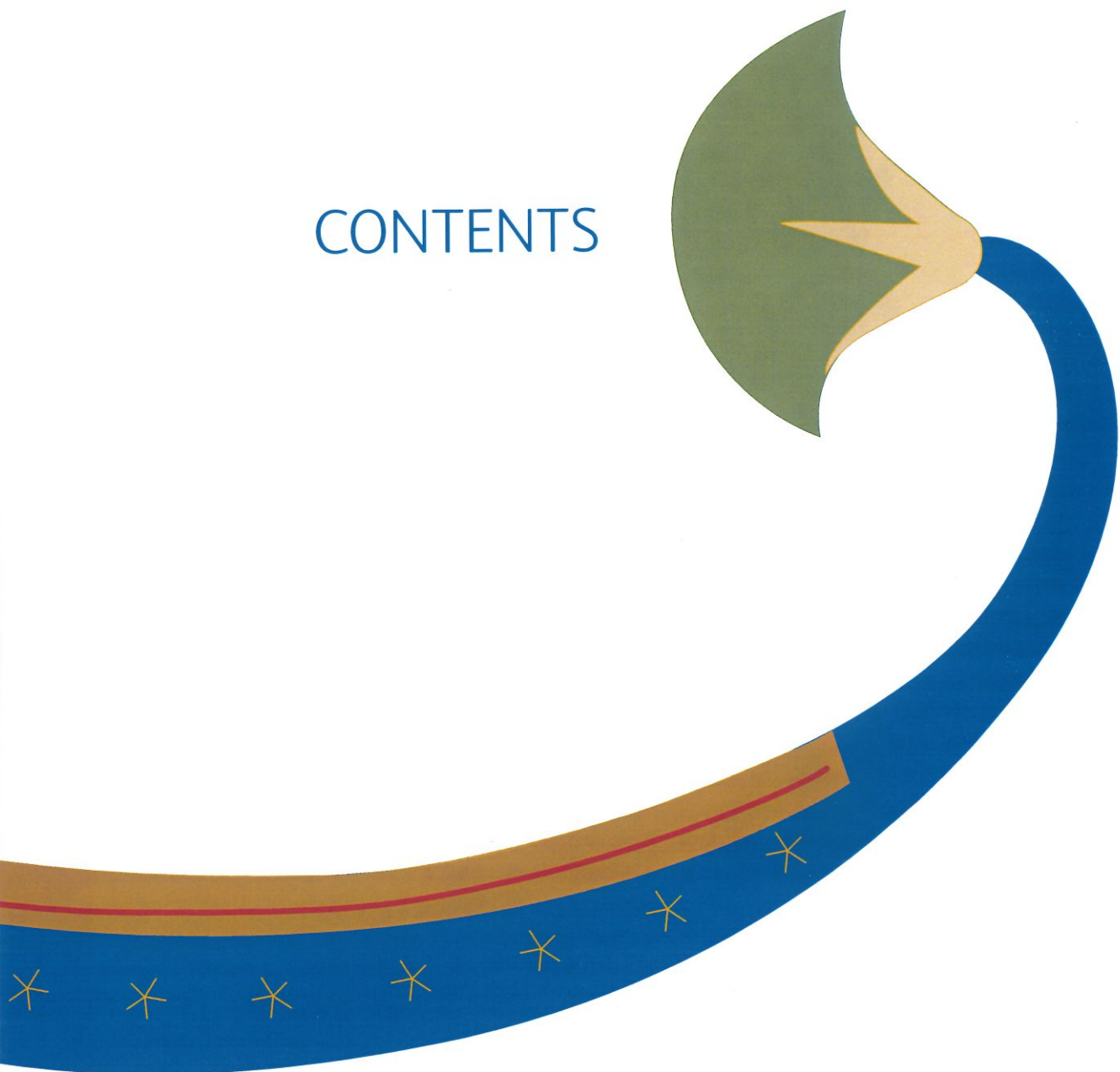
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edited by  
ALESSIA AMENTA and AGNESE IOB

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# PREFACE

The *Vatican Coffin Conference*, which was first held in 2013, was conceived as a setting and a time of dialogue for the numerous colleagues who study 'coffins' in all their complexity. A relatively recent multidisciplinary approach in Egyptology has displaced the perceived primary function of the coffin of being a 'container' of a mummy and a 'support' for texts and funeral iconographies that had to assure the transfiguration of the deceased in the afterlife: it has made the coffin in addition an expression of the material culture of ancient Egypt with all that this involves.

The success – at the level of the number of participants as well – of the *Second Vatican Coffin Conference* in 2017 attested to the intense activity of studies in this field. Over the years numerous international conferences have been held on the subject and today there are very many interesting projects that study coffins. This is a testament to how much these objects are a treasure chest of inexhaustible information and instruments for in-depth studies and the development of knowledge in this field. Coffins are increasingly kaleidoscopes that provide stimuli and varying interpretations according to the angle of observation and the point of view of the observer. In this, the *Vatican Coffin Project* has certainly been a pioneer.

The *Second Vatican Coffin Conference* which was held over four days had a very intense programme that offered space both to research in Egyptology and to Conservation and Diagnostics. This was in line with the approach of the *Vatican Coffin Project* which lives and breathes through an osmosis of these three areas.

Especial attention has been paid to numerous young scholars for whom a prize was created for the most innovative and interesting paper ('The Vatican Coffin Conference Bursary'). This is a stimulus to continue in their research with passion and dedication as well as a being fitting recognition of their work. Katarina Stövesand was proclaimed the winner of the prize with her paper on 'Late Period coffins in the Memphite necropoleis. A look at Egypt's Northern coffin production'.

These two volumes contain the Proceedings of the *Second Vatican Coffin Conference*. It is incumbent upon us and an obligation in the first place to thank all the authors because without their collaboration and infinite patience this publication would never have seen the light of day. The long wait was not easy and the same may be said of taking up the subject again after the pandemic and the post-pandemic period. Updating the text and the bibliography also posed a challenge.

It is even more incumbent upon us and necessary to thank everyone for their respect, their understanding, and above all their trust. This confirms that the intense activity that has characterised studies of coffins of recent years has not only opened up new frontiers of investigation but has also created a community of scholars that is close-knit and compact – the 'coffin people'.

The first section of the Proceedings contains the papers by the authors in alphabetical order. This is

followed by the section of posters which are presented as they were displayed during the conference. Many of these were later transformed into articles by the authors themselves and placed in these volumes. Especial attention has been paid to the final list of all the coffins mentioned, with their corresponding inventory numbers, listed according to the alphabetical order of the museums where they are kept. Our thanks go to Jaume Vilaró Fabregat who with enthusiasm allowed himself to be involved in the editing of this list.

An Appendix has been placed at the end of the publication on Terminology relating both to coffins in general and to their conservation. This is the joint work of the whole of the *Vatican Coffin Project* team which also compared the developments within individual institutions as regards conservation techniques and materials used. The numerous experimentations as regards methodologies and materials engaged in over the years also required a 'common language' that avoided misunderstandings. Sincere thanks from the whole of the group go to Nesrin El Hadidi and Nour Mohamed Badr who took part in this undertaking with enthusiasm and professionalism and translated the whole of the terminology into Arabic.

This preface is a fitting place to thank all those who contributed to the success of the conference. First and foremost, the *Direzione dei Musei Vaticani* for encouraging and supporting it so generously. The offices involved were many in number and all of them were equally fundamental in an extraordinary example of teamwork that the Events Office coordinated with impeccable care and organisational ability. To all of them go our sincerest thanks.

Special gratitude goes to the Editorial Office, to its coordinator Giuseppe Mazza, and particularly to Carla Cecilia who followed this long and demanding work at every step of its journey. We cannot fail to mention Giulia Angelini who with professionalism and patience was responsible for the graphics of these two volumes. Throughout the stages of the organisation and the presentation of the programme of the conference Mario Cappozzo, who also worked on the editing of the proceedings, acted as a fundamental support.

Last but not least, to add a personal note, our sincere thanks go to all our colleagues-friends of the *Vatican Coffin Project* with whom we interacted constantly and with whom for many years we have shared an exciting pathway of research and dialogue.

All of us together dedicate these volumes to Sandrine Pagès-Camagna, a dear friend who, before being a colleague, was a fundamental reference point in setting in motion and organising the exploration of diagnostics in the study of 'yellow coffins'. Sandrine will always remain in our hearts.

Alessia Amenta  
Agnese Iob

IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
SANDRINE PAGÈS-CAMAGNA

Together with the entire VCP team, we decided to dedicate the *Proceedings of the Second Vatican Coffin Conference* to the memory of our dear friend and colleague Sandrine Pagès-Camagna, who left us all too soon. Chemical engineer at the Research and Conservation Centre for the Museums of France (C2RMF, Paris), she had completed her chemistry thesis in Materials Science on Egyptian green and had developed exceptional skills and expertise in Egyptian polychromy, becoming an undisputed specialist in Egyptian blue particularly. We have collected her rich bibliography, which testifies to her professionalism and her pioneering approach to the study of Egyptian materials.

Her contribution to the VCP made it possible to study in depth all the material aspects of the polychrome wooden coffins. As part of this project, she carried out all the polychromy analyses on the 'yellow coffins' in the Louvre collection and was a very active member of our working group's discussions and undertakings. Sandrine was a fundamental support and a constant stimulus to us all.

She still had time to take part in the *Second Vatican Coffin Conference*, which she had wished to attend above all. We miss her very much.

