



# ETHICS AND PRACTICE OF CONSERVATION

Manual for the conservation of ethnographic and multi-material assets

EDIZIONI MUSEI VATICANI

## PRESENTATION

The Vatican Museums have an extraordinary team of restorers and specialists in the sector of conservation and research, perhaps like no other museum institution in the world. It consists of almost one hundred professionals, divided among the seven Laboratories for the restoration of different materials, the technicians of the Conservator's Office and the scientists of the Cabinet of Scientific Research.

The group of the Ethnological Materials Research Laboratory, which serves almost exclusively the Missionary Ethnological Museum – *Anima Mundi*, constitutes a *unicum* in many respects. Throughout all these years, the entire team, coordinated by Stefania Pandozy, has faced with enthusiasm the challenges presented on a daily basis in relation to the conservation and restoration of a patrimony of tens of thousands of ethnological works, produced using countless types of materials and with “native” techniques at times still unknown.

The patrimony in question ranges from prehistoric flints from over two million years ago, to Japanese imperial armour; from Tibetan *Tang-ka*, to Wayang shadow puppets, from the ritual masks of the Yaghan population of Tierra del Fuego, to African lyres, from Wampum belts to ceramics from the South West of the United States, without neglecting to mention the precious Chinese painted scrolls, works in feathers from Amazonia, ceremonial poles from the Tiwi Islands and thousands of other works representing all cultures from Asia to Africa, Oceania to America.

The Ethnological Materials Restoration Laboratory of the Vatican Museums has thus been able to develop experiences and skills in various sectors, as shown by this volume that may be considered as a fully-fledged “manual”. *Ethics and practice of Conservation. Manual for the conservation of ethnographic and multi-material assets* is a publication that well represents the great attention of the Pope's Museums to the heritage of indigenous cultures and which, I am sure, will contribute to international debate on themes crucial to the conservation of diversity.

Thanks to the valuable participation of internationally renowned scholars and experts, the volume offers a reflection on multi-material assets and on the social responsibilities of the restorer, promoting exchange between the professions engaged in the protection and transmission of heritage.

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