



BENEDETTO XIV E BOLOGNA. ARTI E SCIENZE NELL'ETÀ DEI LUMI



On the 350th anniversary of the birth of Benedict XIV (elected Pope in 1740), born Prospero Lambertini, the University of Bologna is promoting an exhibition (Benedict XIV and Bologna. Arts and Sciences in the Age of Enlightenment) to tell the story of the pontiff's innovative work and cultural reform in the 18th century, which left a very strong mark on the city's history, its museum collections and its architectural landscape.

ROOM 1 – INTRODUCTORY SCREENING

ROOM 2 – ALDROVANDI MUSEUM

Transferred from Palazzo Pubblico to Palazzo Poggi between 1742 and 1743 at the behest of Pope Lambertini, with the aim of providing a unified location for naturalistic materials and making them available to scientists and young scholars, the Museum of Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605) joined the patrimony of the Institute of Sciences, in particular increasing the number of exhibits in the natural history rooms. In 1751, the specimen of the **Nile crocodile [B]** displayed in the hall, a gift from Benedict XIV, arrived there, as well as the lute turtle washed up on the beach of Neptune (see Zoological Collection). Also on display is the **mosaic portrait of Benedict XIV [A]**, made in 1744 from a design by Giacomo Zoboli using the cut enamel technique (which makes the tesserae less shiny and avoids reflections, giving greater fidelity to the original painting) and sent by sea from Rome. Finally, there is the bust of Clement XI, attributed to Lorenzo Ottoni and donated in 1741.

ROOM 3 – BOTANY AND ZOOLOGY

The pope's interest in the natural sciences is also reflected in the volumes of his library donated to the Institute of the Sciences: on display here **[E]** are *Locupletissimi rerum naturalium thesauri accurata descriptio* (1734) by the Dutch naturalist Albert Seba, which describes his collection of plants and animals in 4 volumes with 446 plates, and *Rariorum stirpium historia* (1742) by Giacomo Zanoni, Prefect of the Bologna Botanical Garden (1642-1682), illustrated with 185 plates of plants.

ROOM 4 – PHYSICS AND OPTICS

In 1745, Benedict XIV donated Giuseppe Campana's optical instruments to the Institute, enriching the physics laboratory dedicated to the study of light, a traditional subject of research in Bologna since Francesco Maria Grimaldi, the discoverer of diffraction. In the 1920s, Francesco Algarotti (author of the popular work *Il newtonianismo per le dame*, 1744), together with Zanotti and Manfredi, carried out experiments on refraction using Iceland spar, a transparent mineral, to demonstrate Newtonian theories. Other gifts from the Pope are on display in the room: an **armillary sphere [F]** in gilded brass with a wooden base on which are engraved the signs of the zodiac and the names of the winds, and a filar micrometer for measuring celestial positions, both by Domenico Lusverg (1744); finally, a Dutch **pressure cooker [G]**.

ROOM 5 – SURGERY AND OBSTETRICS

In 1742, the newly elected pope, Lambertini, by *motu proprio*, founded the first School of Practical Surgery within the University of Bologna and entrusted the first chair of surgery to Pier Paolo Molinelli, who was appointed sole ostensor of anatomy at the Institute of Sciences; he also donated to

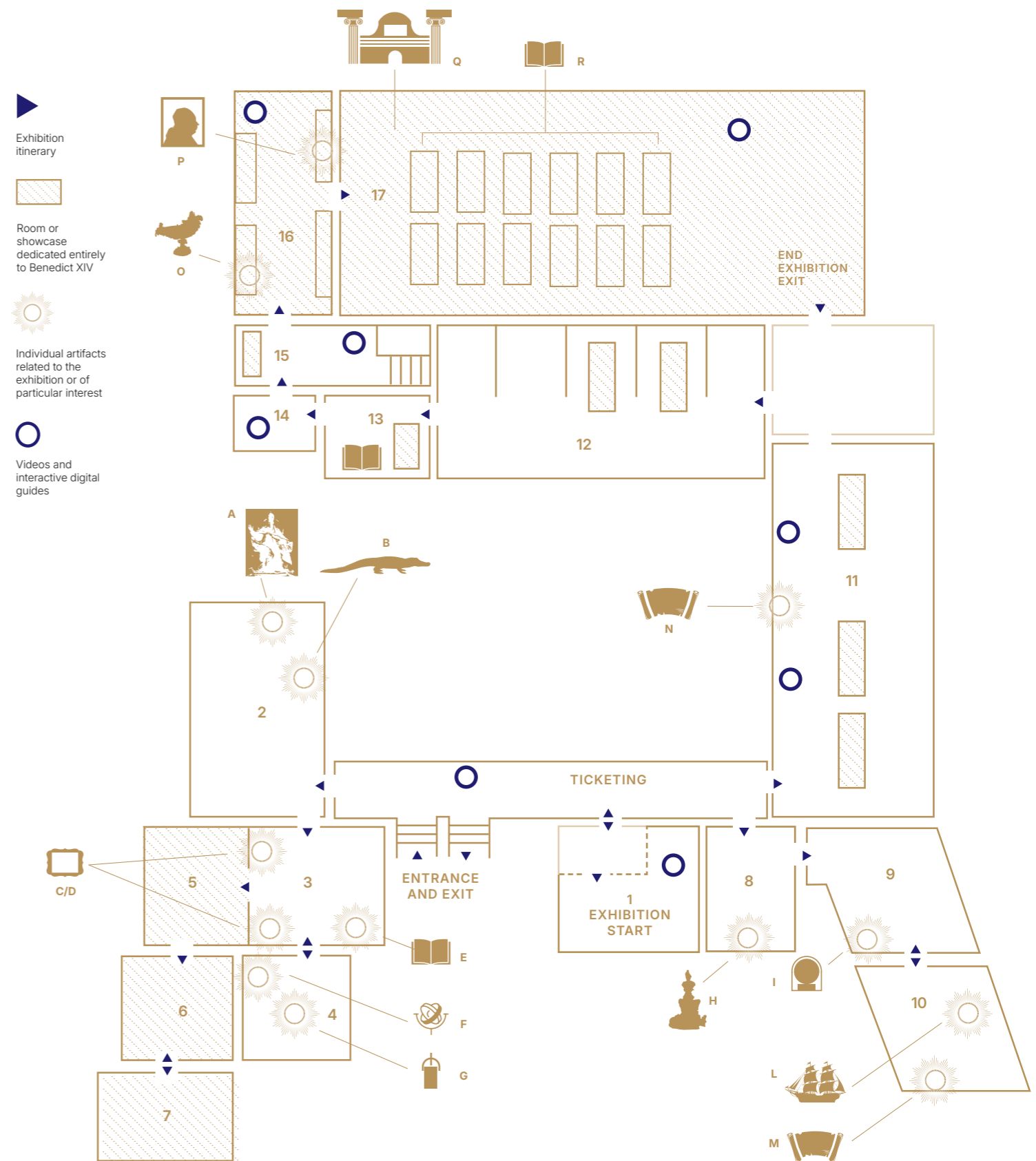
him **surgical instruments** specially made in France. In general, Benedict XIV was always careful to provide the Institute with the most suitable and modern equipment for the practice of experimental sciences. In 1758, he acquired from the obstetrician Giovanni Antonio Galli the **wax models** of the female and male genital apparatus, made by Giovanni Manzolini and Anna Morandi, and the clay models of the uterus, made by Giovan Battista Sandri, which were designed for tactile exploration and therefore even more effective for teaching purposes.

ROOM 6 – ANATOMY

Begun in 1742 at the behest of Benedict XIV and completed around 1751, the creation of the Anatomy Room was entrusted to the Clementine sculptor and academic **Ercole Lelli**. The project, promoted with the aim of providing useful models for the study of the myology and osteology of the human body, includes the life-size wax models of two **'ignudi'** and six **'skinned'** figures showing the subcutaneous layers of the musculoskeletal system. The display in the showcases not only preserves the integrity of the figures, but also emphasises their aesthetic value and moral content, in addition to their didactic-scientific function: if the two nudes are the paradigmatic example of human beauty of the first parents, **Adam and Eve**, the two human skeletons armed with scythes, which conclude the series, represent an allegory of death.

ROOM 7 – THE 'MORANDI-MANZOLINI' WAXES

The room contains wax models of anatomical and sensory organs, the work



of Giovanni Manzolini, Ercole Lelli’s former collaborator, and Anna Morandi, a wax artist and anatomist. The showcases display **their portraits**, which are portentously mimetic thanks to the technique they used, combining the use of wax with the kit of glass eyes, real cloth and real hair. Caught in the act, the first dissecting the heart, the second the brain, they were modelled by Anna Morandi, celebrated by contemporary sources for the unusual courage she showed in handling “corpses and even decaying limbs”, reproducing them “with admirable art”, taking care to arrange them “in the most elegant manner” (Francesco Maria Zanotti, 1755).

ROOM 8 – BASEMENT OF THE PORTRAIT OF MARSILI The **carved wooden base [H]** used to support the *portrait of Luigi Ferdinando Marsili* (1766), depicting an eagle, an orb, armour, shields and various instruments, belonged to the collection of Christina of Sweden before coming into the possession of Pope Lambertini and was made to support the bust of her father, King Gustavus of Sweden. It may have served as a base to support the bust of Clement XI, now in **room 2**.

ROOMS 9/10 – GEOGRAPHY AND BOATING

Benedict XIV also contributed to the enrichment of the Institute’s geographical and nautical room, created in 1724: in 1752, the Pope gave the Institute **two globes, one celestial and one terrestrial [I]**, made of wood and papier-mâché, covered with printed paper, made by John Senex in 1740. The first globe shows more than 2,000 stars with names in Latin, Greek and Arabic, while the terrestrial globe shows the equator, tropics and ecliptic, meridians, parallels and other lines useful for navigation. Dating from 1751 is the gift of the **III-rank ship St Anthony of Padua [L]**, 2 decks, 58 guns, 3 masts, a model of a didactic nature, built so as to show the keel frame. It belonged to the Comte de Maurepas, Superintendent of the French Navy. Next to it is the **map of Europe [M]** by Frederick de Wit: printed in Amsterdam in 1719 by Reiner and Joushua Ottens, the map is part of a collection of maps of the 4 continents donated to the Institute in 1726, characterised by frames with printed friezes by Domenico Bonaveri and Odoardo Fialetti, on which the papal stamp is visible. The **nautical chart by Banet Panadès [N]** (16th cent.), depicting the Mediterranean and part of the Atlantic Ocean, is located in **room 11**, but is part of this section; the chart originally belonged to the Marquis Cospi, whose collection was given to the Institute at the behest of Pope Lambertini.

ROOM 11 - PRINTS, GRAPHIC AND DESIGNS Benedict XIV’s tireless promotion of studies included the donation of an impressive

collection of prints of works by the Old Masters, bound in albums and destined for educational use within the Accademia Clementina. A volume from the Pinacoteca Nazionale, opened on an engraving of a drawing by Claudio Maratta (1625- 1713), dedicated to the ***School of Drawing***, together with some large loose prints belonging to the BUB, attests to this in the exhibition. A copy of Lorenzo Capponi’s ***Pianta, facciata e spaccati della chiesa di San Pietro*** (Plan, façade and cut-outs of the church of San Pietro) testifies to the rebuilding of Bologna’s cathedral, entrusted to the architect Alfonso Torreggiani. Finally, the altar-piece of the *Annunciation* (now in the church of Sant’Isaia), made in 1726 for the chapel of Palazzo Poggi thanks to the financing of Lambertini, then Bishop of Theodosia, is the work of Marcantonio Franceschini.

ROOMS 12/13 – THE LIBRARY Benedict XIV enriched the Institute’s library by acquiring collections from noble Bolognese families and then (in 1742) the Aldrovandi and Cospi funds; he then added more than 10,000 volumes that had belonged to Cardinal Filippo Maria Monti (1675-1754). He also donated his own library with a ***motu proprio of September 6, 1754***, and with a similar act of **July 20, 1755**, he introduced the obligation to give to the library a copy of every work printed in Bologna: the original document with autograph signature is shown. He also promoted the purchase of buildings adjoining the Institute for the construction of a new library - now known as the Aula Magna of the BUB (**Room 17 [Q]**) - which was built according to a design by Carlo Francesco Dotti, preferred to that (shown) by Giuseppe Civoli. The two-storey walnut library, built by the carpenter Carlo Dal Pozzo from a design by Ercole Lelli, is surmounted by twenty-eight painted terracotta busts of theologians, jurists, and Greco-Latin authors.

The library was opened to the public on 12 November 1756 with a **speech by Ludovico Montefani Caprara**, published in 1757. In addition to the **manuscript catalogue** compiled in 1750 at the behest of the Pope (ms. BUB 425), the display cases contain a selection of book and manuscript bindings from the Lambertini collection, from all over Italy and Europe. Decorations include gilded frames, woven bands and floral friezes in styles such as ‘regular lace’ (imitating lace clothing with continuous designs) and ‘irregular lace’ (with birds, flowers and shells in stylised scrolls). The predominant material is red leather, a symbol of the triumphant Church after the Counter-Reformation.

ROOM 14 – MUSIC The portrait of the composer **Giambattista Martini** (1706-1784) - together with Giacomo Antonio Perti (1661-1756) one of the Pope’s musical advisers, author of a

Mass in G major known as Lambertina) - is intended to recall the Pope’s concern for the relationship between music and the liturgy (the subject of the 1749 encyclical *Annus qui hunc*) and for the Accademia dei Filarmonici of Bologna, which was equal in prestige to the Capitoline Congregation of Musicians of Santa Cecilia.

ROOM 15 – THE LAMBERTINI FAMILY The showcase displays a series of documents relating to the Lambertini family, one of the oldest noble families of Bologna, which can be traced back to a Lamberto, son of Count Mondo of Saxony: next to the **family tree** traced by the librarian L. Montefani Caprara (ms. 4207, 18th cent.), there is a place for the volume ***I riti nuziali degli antichi Romani: per le nozze di Sua Eccellenza don Giovanni Lambertini con Sua Eccellenza donna Lucrezia Savorgnan*** (*The wedding rites of the ancient Romans: for the wedding of ...*, Bologna, Lelio della Volpe, 1762), in whose antiporta there is a portrait of Benedetto XIV’s great-nephew with his bride. The elegant 16th-century palace at 43 Via Santo Stefano, characterized by a portico with Doric columns, once belonged to the Vizzani family and became the home of the Lambertini family in 1732, when it was bought by Prospero, then archbishop of Bologna: an **engraving of it by Antonio Landi** (1713-1791) can be seen.

ROOM 16 – BENEDICT XIV PROMOTER OF THE ARTS

The richness of Lambertini’s gifts to the Cathedral of his city is documented by the Treasure of San Pietro: on display are the ligature for a Roman ritual and the service for burning liturgical incense during religious services, made up of a **thurible and a gilded silver nacelle [O]**, the work of the famous goldsmith Antonio Gigli. The preciousness of the **Golden Rose**, unfortunately dispersed, sent to Bologna in 1751 by Benedict XIV according to an ancient ritual, is attested by two engravings from the BUB and the plate by Antonio Scarselli, in the ***Insignia degli Anziani del Comune di Bologna*** (kept in the State Archives). Benedict XIV’s affection for his city was expressed in his support for both the Institute of Sciences and the Accademia Clementina, which he endowed with a collection of plaster casts of ancient sculptures. He also gave numerous commissions to Clementine professors for the Bologna Cathedral. Excluded from this, however, was Giuseppe Maria Crespi, who painted a portrait of Lambertini, who was only a cardinal at the time, when he was summoned to Rome for the conclave in which he was to be elected Pope. In addition to **Crespi’s painting [P]**, there is another illuminated portrait by his son Antonio and a **model of a monument** dedicated to the pontiff by Filippo Della Valle in gratitude for his membership of the Accademia Clementina. Another portrait of the Pope on the wall, executed by Gaetano

Savorelli after a model by Pierre Subleyras, shows the Pope in his dual temporal and spiritual role, summarised in the act of audience and blessing. On the wall at the entrance to the room is a remarkable work by **Ludovico Carracci**: a portrait in an official pose of Francesco Pannolini, a wealthy merchant and founder of the university college of the same name, whose property (including this painting) was given to the Institute of Sciences in 1745 at the Pope’s request.

ROOM 16 – THE TREASURES OF THE LIBRARY

In the large display case to the right of the entrance to the Aula Magna, there are a number of illuminated or decorated manuscripts from the BUB, mainly of a liturgical nature (breviaries, missals, books of hours): among the most notable are the ***Psalter*** (ms. 346, sec. XIII), illuminated by **Nicolò di Giacomo** and characterised by a refined iconographic apparatus, in courtly and Byzantine taste, and the ***Little Office of the Virgin Mary*** (ms. 1140, ca. 1490), of the Flemish school, with elaborate initials, decorations of zodiacal symbols, scenes of the various months and miniatures, 9 large and 39 small. Also very richly decorated are Enea Silvio Piccolomini’s (1405-1464) ***Cardinal’s Letters*** (ms. 1200, 15th cent.), which he collected after being elected Pope (1458) with the name of Pius II, and Pierre Bersuire’s ***Moral Repertory*** (ms. 286, from 1431), with a large illustrated initial (the Most Holy Trinity) on a polychrome and gilded ground and a floral frieze framed in gold and color.

ROOM 17 – THE TREASURES OF THE LIBRARY

In the large room designed by Carlo Francesco Dotti, opened to the public in 1756 and furnished with a walnut bookcase **[Q]** made by Carlo Dal Pozzo to a design by Ercole Lelli, the exhibition of **manuscripts [R]** continues, introduced by 3 Armenian books, small in size and decorated with sumptuous images: a ***Gospel*** (ms. 3290, 17th cent.) with a silver filigree binding; a ***Commentary on the Twelve Minor Prophets*** (ms. 3291, 16th cent.) portrayed with polychrome and gold decoration; and finally, a ***Commentary on the Apocalypse*** (ms. 3292, 17th cent.). The ***New Testament and Psalter*** in ecclesiastical Slavonic (ms. 3575B, dated 1404), richly decorated, is the work of two artists: the first follows Gothic and Romanesque models from the Venetian and Bolognese traditions, while the second remains more faithful to local models. The ***Carthusian Breviary*** (ms. 343, 14th cent.), illuminated by Nicolò di Giacomo in the Bolognese Carthusian monastery of San Girolamo, and the ***Lectioarium*** (ms. 892, 16th cent.), made for the Basilica of San Petronio in Bologna, are also worthy of mention, with historiated initials decorated with plant motifs, friezes with rods or garlands with floral motifs

and medallions with pearls and precious stones. The ***Missal*** (ms. 1084), on the other hand, dates from the 11th century and is written in tiny Carolingian letters, with large ornaments and elaborate initials in elegant purple frames bordered with geometric motifs. Among the literary manuscripts, there is the ‘**Dante lambertino**’ (ms. 589, 14th cent.), from the Bologna area, with the text of the Comedy, valuable both for its antiquity and for its decorations, and the ***Satires of Juvenal*** (ms. 877, 15th cent.), decorated with floral volutes in blue, white, pink and gold, and with the coat of arms of the Attavanti family of Florence.

Among the **illuminated incunabula**, the ***Bible*** printed in Mainz in 1462 by Johann Fust and Peter Schoeffer, former collaborators of Gutenberg, who developed a two-colour red-and-blue printing technique, and the first edition of **Lactantius** (Subiaco 1465) printed by Conrad Sweynheim and Arnold Pannartz, who emigrated to Italy after the sack of Mainz, deserve special mention. Also noteworthy are the editions printed by the Venetian printmaker **Aldo Manuzio**, including the first printed editions of the Greek classics Aristotle (1495-98), Sophocles (1502), and finally Pindar (1513), on whose title page the typographic mark with anchor and dolphin stands out. The Pope then collected splendid printed editions from later centuries: for example, the fourth edition of **Seneca’s works** (1652), edited by Justus Lipsius, with engravings by Cornelis Galle after a design by Rubens, and the facsimile (***Antiquissimi Virgiliani codicis fragmenta***, Rome 1741) reproducing the capital script and miniatures of the manuscript Vaticanus Latinus 3225 (4/5th cent.), which documents the interest of the culture of the time in palaeography, as well as in more traditional disciplines such as archaeology and epigraphy (on which see the volumes by **Furietti** and **Maffei**). At the end of this section are the first Italian translation of Lucretius’ *The Nature of Things* (by Marchetti, London 1717) and **Voltaire’s** tragedy *Le fanatisme, ou Mahomet* (Amsterdam 1743), with a letter of dedication from the author: these books show the pope’s curiosity about the culture of the time, even though both were later banned. Finally, the extraordinary algological herbarium, with specimens of dried marine plants preserved in transparent plaster sheets, collected by the antiquarian **Antonio Baldani** (entitled ***Fuci corallinae et keratophita***), testifies to the richness of the library also in the field of natural sciences.

A special section is then devoted to Pope Lambertini’s **theological and liturgical reflections**, which can be reconstructed through his works, of which the BUB holds both printed copies and numerous manuscripts. In particular, there are the treatises *De servorum Dei beatificatione* (1734-38 and reissued in 1743), *De*

sacrificio Missae (1747), a revision of the *Annotazioni sopra le Feste* (1740), ***De synodo dioecesana*** (1748 and 1755) and the ***Notae de miraculis***, a work that remained unpublished until 2024, preserved in ms. 1070. Pope Benedict XIV, in 1742, put an end to the centuries-old dispute about the compatibility of Confucian rites with Christianity; the interest in China is attested (as well as by some artefacts donated to the Institute of Sciences and now in the Medieval Museum) by the ***Atlas of the Imperial Territories*** by Matteo Ripa, missionary in Peking between 1711 and 1723, which was given to the Pope in 1719; the Pope’s activity is also documented by some collections of **letters** (especially ms. 4330, with 248 autograph letters). A final section looks at the contemporary fortune of the figure of the Pope, thanks to Alfredo Testoni’s play *Il cardinale Lambertini* (1905) and the interpretations by **Ermete Zacconi** (theatre, film) and **Gino Cervi** (theatre, film, television): the dialect version of the play has been performed in Bologna until recently.

COLLEZIONE DI ZOOLOGIA

On display here, recently restored, is the **lute turtle**, a gift from Benedict XIV, found on the beach of Neptune, where it had probably washed up. This is the oldest documented specimen of a leatherback sea turtle in Italy.

MUSEO CIVICO ARCHEOLOGICO

Donations from the Pope enriched the Antiquities Room and the Natural History Section of the Institute of Sciences with important numismatic material and some Egyptian mummies, which were transferred to the Civic Museum in 1878. The **cartonnage of a mummy** from the first century B.C. and an **anthropoid sarcophagus** (ca. 735-746 B.C.) of an Egyptian dignitary called Mes-Iset are now on display.

MUSEO CIVICO MEDIEVALE

Valuable gifts from Benedict XIV, such as the **monstrance clock** with oil lamp by the Flemish Hans de Valx, “relojero” of Philip II, come from the collections of the Institute of Sciences. Also noteworthy are the **two parade basins** (1672) with jugs covered with deer horn and carved ivory, probably the work of Balthasar Griessmann, which were displayed in the President’s Room of the Institute with gilded frames. Pope Lambertini also donated objects of Oriental and Indian culture: the white porcelain **Zambeccari Cup** (China, 16th cent.), a **cup made of rhinoceros** horn with snake handles (Ming Dynasty) and the **trunk** decorated with mopa-mopa resin, an **Amazonian axe** and a **feathered headdress**, given to the Pope by the Jesuit Carlos Brentano.