



CRYPT PROJECT

The sensational recent discovery of a part of the cathedral crypt which had been covered up for centuries brought to light an exceptional cycle of paintings of stories from the Old and New Testaments covering the walls and pillars of this space under the cathedral. This completely unexpected discovery has restored to us stunningly beautiful wall paintings which are absolutely unique, since they have been preserved intact from repainting or restoration. The range of colors is dazzlingly brilliant, from deep blues to intense reds to shiny gold.

However, immediate examination by restorers has evidenced the fact that, while the paintings have maintained their original colors unaltered, the painted plaster surface tends to break away and crumble. Thus the appropriate chemical and microclimatic analyses were carried out to determine the best way to preserve the paintings.

The work of restoration was done by Giuseppe Gavazzi, Massimo Gavazzi, and Amedeo Lepri. Consultants for the controlled environment aspects were the Opificio delle Pietre Dure in Florence, while the chemical analyses were made by experts in environmental geo-chemistry and stone conservation from the Department of Environmental Sciences of the University of Siena, under the direction of Dr. Alessandro Bagnoli from the Office of the Superintendent of Cultural Properties of Siena.

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