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Guided visit to recently discovered thirteenth century wall paintings under the Siena Cathedral

Wednesday 14th May

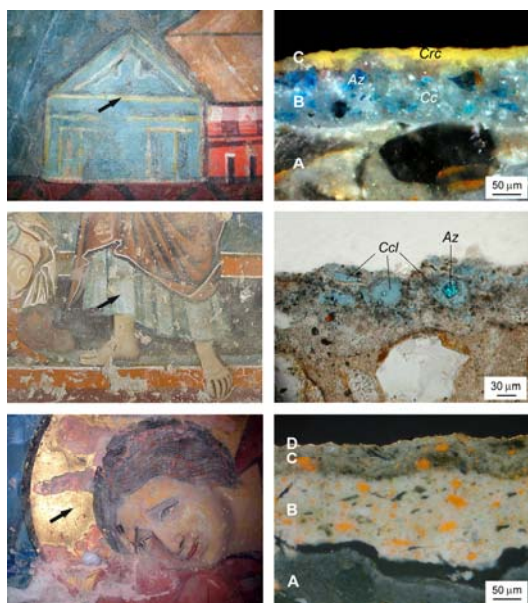
The wall paintings recently discovered under the Siena Cathedral constitute an unusually important pictorial cycle within the panorama of European medieval painting, going back to the earliest period of Sienese painting (the beginning is dated to about 1270).

The room hosting the paintings is under the floor of the Cathedral close to the baptistry, and was revealed during an excavation campaign in 2000, after remaining buried since the middle of the 14th century.

The paintings completely cover the perimeter walls of the room and two octagonal-based pillars, and consist of forty-five scenes mainly representing stories from the Old and New Testaments, culminating in the three grand scenes of the *Crucifixion*, *Deposition from the cross* and *Deposition in the sepulchre* which occupy the centre of the southern wall. The scenes are accompanied by faux marble dadoes and other decorations.



A scene of the paintings: *Deposition from the cross*. The faux marble dado with geometric motifs is seen in the lower part. The image shows the appearance of the paintings before the restoration.



Examples of microstratigraphies of some pictorial elements of the wall paintings.

During the visit historical information will be provided, together with the results of the recent scientific investigations on materials (plasters and paint films) and painting techniques, which assured adequate background knowledge for the restoration of the paintings. The main results will be highlighted in regard to their historical and artistic significance. Technical information about the recent restoration intervention will be furnished as well, starting from the state of conservation of the paintings soon after their discovery.

For further information and reservations:

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