

# Two rooms of different origin

Opened in 1997 and 2010 respectively, two rooms at the Cathedral contain displays of religious objects. Although there are no texts proving the existence of a treasure, it seems likely that the first room has long been home to the precious objects belonging to the Cathedral chapter, as is suggested by the recesses carved into the masonry. Not all these objects had a monetary value, the important documents, for example, recording the rights of the Cathedral chapter,

were deposited in the recesses in this room in modern times. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the liturgical vessels were kept in chests in the first room of what is now the sacristy. The first treasure room became a Mary Chapel in the 19th C. The second room was at one time the sexton's lodging. All the objects, most of which are protected as « Historic Monuments », are still consecrated for use in worship and can be used for the liturgy if members of the clergy ask for them.



Medieval room



Modern room

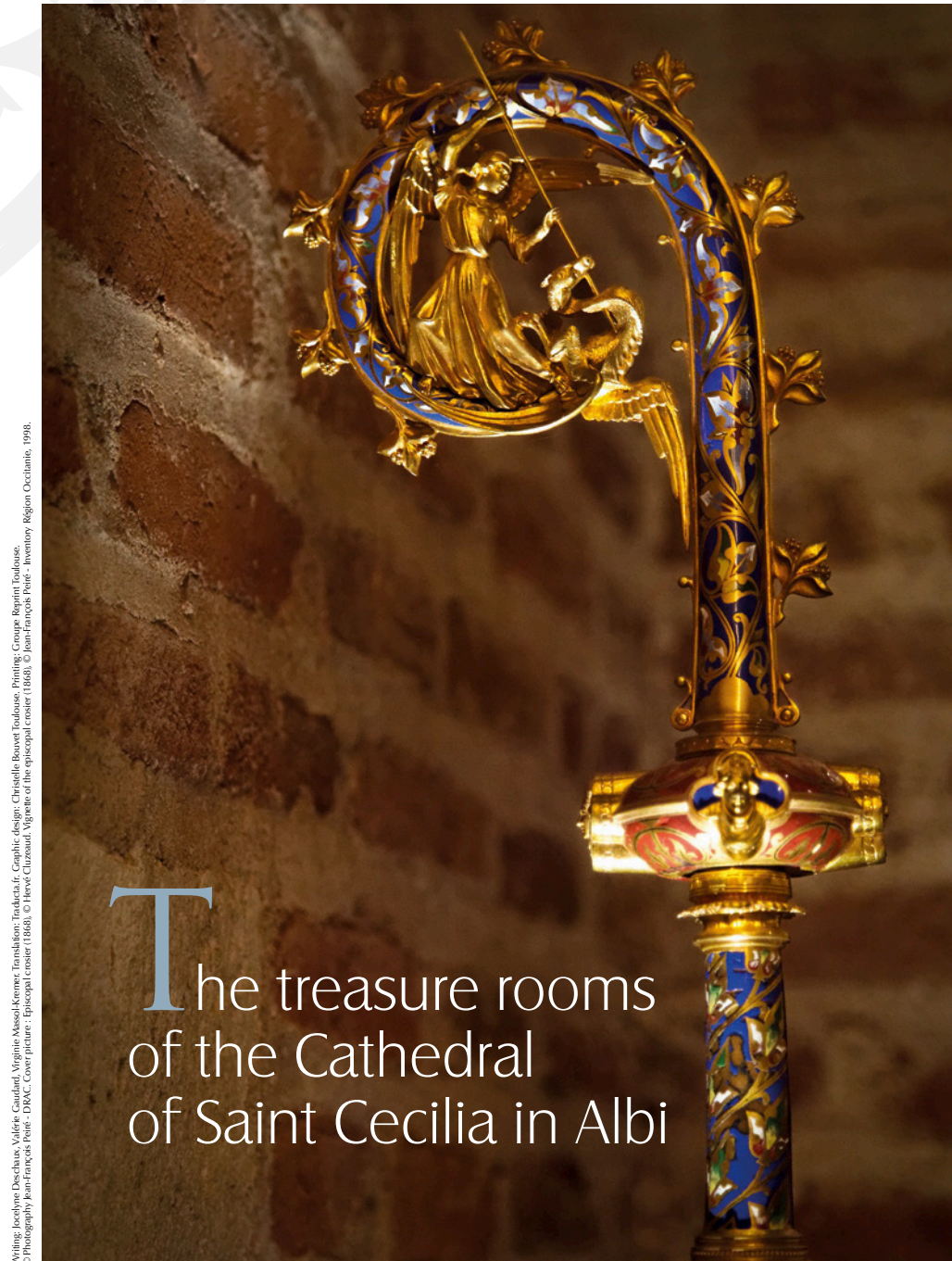
# The Cathedral chapter manuscripts



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Manuscript of the *Mappa mundi* of Albi (ms. 29): a collection of extracts from grammar, geography and history books, pastoral texts and biblical explanations that were used for teaching, this work contains **one of the oldest maps showing the world** as a whole and not in an abstract way. Dating from the 8th century, the map shows a vision of the world centred on the Mediterranean. An exceptional treasure, it was inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in October 2015, which lists the most precious items of documentary heritage.

From the year 600 onwards, Albi Cathedral had a *scriptorium*, where manuscripts were produced and copied to enrich the library. It is therefore one of the earliest documented in the Toulouse area. Working continuously until the mid-Middle Ages, this *scriptorium* was in its heyday in the 11th century, under the guidance of Archdeacon Sicard: the style developed at that time by the monastic scribes and illuminators was very specific and extremely refined. The Cathedral chapter library survived until the French Revolution. In 1789, the collections were confiscated by the State and formed the basis of a newly created « municipal library ». Today, thirty-five manuscripts from the Cathedral are kept in the Pierre-Amalric Media Library in Albi.



# The treasure rooms of the Cathedral of Saint Cecilia in Albi

SITUATED ABOVE THE SACRISTY,  
THE TREASURE ROOMS ARE OPEN  
FROM 9 AM TO 6 PM.



United Nations  
Educational,  
Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Episcopal city of Albi  
Included in the  
World Heritage List  
in 2010



TREASURE  
OF CATHEDRAL



PREFET  
DE LA REGION  
OCCITANIE

Drac Occitanie, 2017

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# Medieval room | The setting for the Cathedral's objects

## Origin of the objects

Of diverse origin, the objects displayed in the first room all come from the Cathedral and therefore belong to the State. The sculptures, which would probably have been placed on the altars, illustrate past layouts of the Cathedral that have now disappeared. Other objects, such as the silverware, have been replaced over the centuries and are now used for worship only very occasionally or not at all. Most of the pictures were donated to the Cathedral. Finally, this room also contains pieces found in old excavations.

## Chronological presentation

The Cathedral possesses few medieval objects, many of them having been destroyed during the Revolution. Documented as early as the 12th century, the relic of the true cross was kept in a reliquary in the form of a gilded silver cross decorated with crystal and gemstones and trimmed with pendants. All that remain are descriptions and representations (in the Cathedral in the Chapel of the Holy Cross).



**Shrine, glove plaques:** found in a bishop's tomb underneath the slabs in the choir in 1893. The silverware presented is evidence of the scale of production in the Limousin in the Middle Ages. Crosier and reliquary (13th C.): champlevé enamelling on gilded copper. Glove plaques (14th C.): silver, traces of enamel, depicting the Annunciation.



**Virgin and child** (12th C.): polychrome wood, the oldest statue kept in the Cathedral, known as the Black Virgin, shows traces of fire, which is thought to have melted away the metal plates that would have covered the piece.



**Reliquary of St. Ursula** (14th C.): polychrome wood, it is in the common shape of a canopy and shows the young martyr princess who refused to abjure her Christian faith by marrying a pagan prince, protecting, like a Virgin of Misericord, four of her eleven thousand martyred virgin followers under her long cape.



**Polyptych of the Virgin** (14th C.): unlike the other medieval works on display, most of these large panels of polychrome and gilded wood were donated to the Cathedral at the end of the 19th century by the family of a collector from Albi and a last one was purchased by the State in 2000. Dated by an inscription to 1345, this work in the Sienese style, once housed in a church in Lavagnola, Liguria, depicts scenes from the Life of the Virgin and the Passion of Christ on a gold background that gives them an immaterial character.

**The modern age.** The Council of Trent, which ended in 1563, reinforced the veneration of relics. On the episcopal visit by Mgr Le Goux de la Berchère in 1698, instructions were given by the bishop to place relics in individual reliquaries. The melting down of silverware during the Revolution was followed in the 19th century by many new orders for silverware, which explains the large number of sacred vessels dating from that time.



**Reliquary bust of a female saint, arm reliquary of St. Martianne** (end of the 17th C.): these serial reliquaries in polychrome wood, gilded or silvered, used to be presented for veneration in the Cathedral. St. Martianne is a saint

local to Albi who is represented in the choir of the Cathedral.



**Worshipping angel** (17th C.): these expressive statuettes in gilded and painted wood used to be placed on either side of an altar.



**Christ giving the keys to St. Peter** (1628): this oil on canvas signed by Jacques Blanchard, Painter to the King, known as the « French Titian », shows as an intimate scene the giving of power to the First Vicar of Christ.



**Episcopal crosier** (1868): gilded and enamelled bronze, designed by architect Viollet-le-Duc and made by Parisian goldsmith Pous-sièlgue-Rusand, Mgr Lyonnet's crosier was originally made for Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris.



**Reliquary of St. Cecilia** (1887): enamelled bronze, made by the Popes' goldsmith Pous-sièlgue-Rusand. Prelates who

have worked for the cult of the saint wear the relic. These included Cardinal Jouffroy who, in 1468, brought a radius back from Rome. Still in use, the work is regularly taken out, in particular for the saint's feast.

# Modern room | Precious objects from elsewhere

Cathedrals may, temporarily or permanently in some cases, house objects from places where the conditions of their conservation are either unsatisfactory or insecure. In other cases, it is to better display them.

The objects on display in this second room come from different churches in the diocese, mainly Saint Salvi Church in Albi.



**Liturgical vestments:** to preserve the fragile fabrics, the liturgical vestments from the Cathedral's vestment chest that are no longer used are presented on a rotating basis in the large display cabinet.



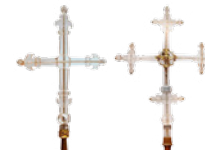
**Portrait of Gregory XV:** this portrait is part of a series of eight oils on wood (17th C.) depicting a number of Popes and Mgr d'El-bène, Bishop of Albi from 1588 to 1608, which were formerly kept in the sacristy of Saint Salvi Church.



**Tabernacle** (17th C.): polychrome and gilded wood, made in 1612 by Georges Hugonnet, master carpenter of the town of Albi, and Jean Hourde, a painter of Belgian origin working in Albi, for the Chapel of Saint Mary in Castelnaud-de-Lévis. On loan from the Toulouse-Lautrec Museum.



**Virgin with Child** (14th C.): this polychrome stone statue with its posture characteristic of the 14th C., on loan from the Toulouse-Lautrec Museum, to which it was donated, is a fine work whose initial provenance remains unknown.



Cross of Labessière-Candeil Cross of Cadalen

**Processional cross** made of rock crystal and silver (16th C.): with a reliquary (13th C.) in champlevé enamel in the Limousin style, it bears witness to the wealth

of the Cistercian Abbey of Labessière-Candeil, one of the first abbeys in the Albi region, founded in the middle of the 12th century and demolished during the Revolution. The Cadalen cross is contemporary with the Labessière-Candeil cross.



**Censer** (18th C.): made of silver-plated bronze, 16th century censers have a Gothic window decoration sometimes topped by a fleur-de-lis (such as the Castelnaud-de-Montmiral censer). The elongated shape of the Cahuzac-sur-Vère censer, made of gilded copper, indicates that it was made in the middle of the 18th century and is of Italian inspiration. The group of items displayed shows the changes in style from the 16th to the 18th century.



**Woman's head:** polychrome white stone, the three heads were kept in the sacristy at Saint Salvi Church. One was wearing a wimple and panelled veil in the style typical of the second half of the 15th C.



**Virgin of Pity:** polychrome limestone, from Saint Salvi Church, this is a fine example of the sculpted ensembles inspired by dolorist piety in the 15th and 16th centuries and abundantly illustrated in the sculpture of Toulouse.



**Crowned saint** (end of the 15th C.): polychrome stone, in the Burgundian style, it may come from the Cathedral's choir screen. On loan from the Toulouse-Lautrec Museum.



Painted by Flemish painter Van Limbos, this picture showing *the Holy Family with St. Anne and the infant St. John*, was acquired by the State in 2012. It is a painted wood panel commissioned by Anne Regin, nephew of Cardinal Antoine Duprat. Appointed bishop in 1528, Duprat never resided in Albi and Anne Regin exercised his uncle's duties locally. Beautifully painted, this work borrows from the style of Raphael.