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.

The Cathedral chapter manuscripts

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.
Cathedrals may, temporarily or perma-
nently in some cases, house objects from
places where the conditions of their
conservation are either unsatisfactory
or impractical. 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.

Processional cross 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 Labouzes-Candieu,
one of the first abbeys in the Albi region
founded in the middle of the 12th century
and demolished during the Revolution. The
Catalan cross is contemporary with the Labo-
zuès-Candieu cross.

Censer (18th C.) of 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
elaborated shape of the Cahuzac-sur-
Vire 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
cathedral at Saint Salvi Church.
One was wearing a wimple and
pannelled veil in the style typical of the
second half of the 15th C.

Virgin of Pity: polychrome marble,
found in Saint Salvi Church, this is a
fine example of the sculptural
ensemble inspired by the polyptych
of the 15th and 16th centuries and
ubiquitously 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
choir screen. On loan from the
Toulouse-Lautrec Museum.