

Assisi: The Frescoes in the Basilica of St. Francis

Angiola Maria Romanini

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During the eight hundred years since its founding, the Basilica of St. Francis has survived twenty-three recorded earthquakes. None, however, was as devastating as the most recent in September 1997. This important volume offers an incomparable opportunity to see the entire Basilica of St. Francis, including the frescoes of St. Jerome and St. Matthew, which were lost forever when they fell from the nave of the church.

The basilica is shown in all its glory. Precious close-up photographs of the frescoes are accompanied by general views of both the upper and lower church, showing the soaring Romanesque architecture, the intricately patterned painted ribs of the arches, the altar and wooden stalls, and the incredible stained glass windows. The frescoes of the Basilica of St. Francis are masterpieces of the very early Renaissance, still influenced by the distinctive perspective and flatness of the Gothic. The text relates the story of the painting of the church--the events depicted by the frescoes themselves, and the progress of work by painters under the tutelage of Cimabue and Giotto, some of whose hands are discernable in individual masterpieces, such as the fresco of Isaac.

The Basilica of St. Francis will be restored, but it will never again be as complete as before the tragedy of nature that claimed an important part of art history and Italian culture. *Assisi* is an important document of our cultural heritage.



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