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Lost painting found

DURHAM (North Carolina) Nov. 4: An unfinished Leonardo da Vinci Fresco lost for more than 400 years has been discovered beneath another painting in Florence, two US professors said, reports Reuter.

'The Battle of Anghiarri' discovered beneath a mural by Vasari in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence 'may' be one of Leonardo's most important if not his most important work', Duke University Professor John Spencer told a Press conference Thursday.

Art scholars have known of the painting for centuries through manuscripts and copies by Rubeans and Raphael, but it was only discovered this summer after Prof. Spencer and Harvard Prof H. Trevor Newton took core samples.

Dr Spencer said the samples showed that the Fresco beneath the Vasari painting consisted of pigments similar to those in Da Vinci's 'Last Supper'. The pigments were extremely unusual at the time the Italian master lived.

The Fresco, believed to be about 59 feet long and 16 feet high commemorates a battle important to the establishment of the Florentine Republic. It was painted between 1515 and 1506.

Dr Spencer said Italian restorers began working on Fresco on October 20. The Vasari mural was being removed by a special process that would preserve both it and the Da Vinci.

Two layers of glue and canvas would be applied to the Vasari and when the canvas was stripped off the top material would come off with it he said.

Dr Newton 30, had been searching for the Fresco for more than five years and Dr Spencer, 56, joined the project in 1975. It was only 18 months ago that they realised a misinterpretation of manuscripts had led them to look on the wrong wall of the Palazzo Vecchio.

'It was like finding something that you've known about all your life. You've never been able to see', Dr Spencer said.