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L'ASSOCIATION "AUTOUR... DE L'ABBATIALE"

Its task consists in promoting the study of the history and the building archaeology as well as the implementation of any resources for the restoration, the development and protection of the abbey-church "Sainte-Croix" of Bouzonville and its background.

You are free to become a club member and contribute in this way to the promotion of our project. Don't hesitate to give us your point of view concerning our web site.

Thank you for the interest you shown by reading it!

Find the news concerning the association on the Website:

<http://cteparstbenoit.free.fr>

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View of the Apse before restoration works

ABBATIALE SAINTE CROIX BOUZONVILLE

GUIDE OF VISITE



Classified historic building on September 8, 1999

View of the Apse after restoration works

A PLAISANT SITE

The abbey-church is wonderfully located in the lower valley of the *Nied* on a small mound whose weak slopes go down to the river. Archaeological dues prove that the site was occupied as early as Celtic, Gallo-Roman and Ancient times.

A CHAPTER OF HISTORY

➤ Foundation:

About 1029-1030, the Count of Metz Adalbert II of Alsace and his wife Judith decided to build a monastery in Bouzonville. After his journey in the Holy Land, Adalbert returned with a fragment of the genuine cross. This relic was used as a dedication for the new monastery which became the Sainte-Croix abbey-church of Bouzonville. The Bishop of Metz consecrated it on January 31, 1033

➤ Burials:

According to the texts, the Count Adalbert and his son Gérard were buried in the choir of the abbey-church, his wife Judith in the middle of the monastery and Gerard's wife, Gisèle, in the choir of Saint Pierre chapel. One of them, Gérard II of Alsace (1048-1070) will be the first hereditary Duke, founder of the ducal house of Lorraine. Each time works were undertaken and graves unfortunately without identity were discovered in the basement of the church. That's why Bouzonville's church can be seen as the first necropolis of the ducal house of Lorraine.

➤ Destructions:

The founders' church was destroyed around 1340 during the struggles between the Duke of Lorraine and the Bishop of Metz. Quickly rebuilt on the same foundations, the choir was finished in 1345 and the whole building certainly before the end of the 14th century.

In May 1684, a fire devastated the cloister, destroyed the church roofs but also the roofing of the three church towers. The monastic buildings will be reconstructed twice as big and the north side aisle will be repaired (keystones of 1691). This church came close to a total ruin several times. During the 17th Century wars, a number of lootings made it dilapidated. Because of the Revolution's turmoil, the church became a temple of the Reason, then a hay barn and a forge. Finally the last World War hostilities destroyed its roof and stained-glass Windows. But even though the church will revive every time...

➤ The Relic (treasure):

Despite some vicissitudes, Adalbert's relic crossed the centuries until the Revolution's period when it was burned. In 1912 the parish received a new relic.

The bedside of the church:

Go in front of his lateral gate, walk along the southern frontage and have a look at:

- **The three freestone apses:** one of them is situated in the choir with three imposing Windows without filling up.
- **The two stairs turrets** that lead to the attic, which is very elegant and well fixed to the hole of the apses junctions. You will notice that they lean on the buttresses and the north turret is circular at the base.
- **The arched recess** between the two vertical buttresses (at the end of the bedside) may have given access to the basement of the primitive building, it is also admitted that this place could have been occupied by the church's ossuary.

Work that has been undertaken since 2006 as part of the restoration:



A large, pyramidal rocky spur found in the abbey's north courtyard had no counterpart on the other side; a new buttress that restores the south side apsidiole's original design was built in the same way as the existing buttresses.



The upper part of the south turret, which was on the verge of collapse, was disassembled and reconstructed, reusing stones that were in good condition and replacing the ones that were damaged.

The whole apse was given a face lift, and the deteriorating stones were replaced. The workmanship is excellent, and our abbey looks as good as new.

The turret roofs, dating from 1957, were removed and replaced. Slate roofing was done according to the "Old German" fitting method by the artisans of the company *Lebras Frères*. The turret's crown is crested by two sharp points.

The restoration work of the whole apse has been completed. New phases are being considered.



THE OUTSIDE

➤ The Gothic Tower:

What can be seen?

- The facing of the wall at the bottom of the porch.
- The gate with its tympanum in semi-circular vault, which represents a crucifixion (this tympanum was strongly messed up certainly due to the revolutionary sabotage).
These elements were brought out during the restoration of 1979.

❖ Some modifications at the beginning of the 18th Century

- **Construction of a fourth floor** equipped with four Windows of the Romanesque period. (Maybe for a re-use?)
- **Roofing of the tower** with a baroque double onion-shaped dome. Previously the tower had to be covered with a four-side pavilion roof, which was more respectful according to the monument style.
- **Edification of the cloister's portico** extended as far as the front of the Western façade of the church. Then pillars of that portico were inlaid into the walls of a new part of the building moved forward at the bottom of the tower. Today, pilasters and the beginning of the arches separating two vaults still can be seen despite the portico's destruction. The town's coats of arms (the Cross and the Fox appear on the key of the fore-porch arch).

➤ Porches of the annexes:

The porch between the two courtyards dates back to 1698. The one of the Abbey-church's entry that opens onto the town is from 1636.

➤ The primary courtyard:

The primary courtyard was given a face lift as part of the project to upgrade the abbey's secondary courtyard. The work was done during 2007, and was funded by the donations from the members of the association "Autour de l'abbatiale," by the profits from several events organized by the association, with the help of the General Council of Moselle, and with the participation of Bouzonville's town council.

➤ The apse:

The apse of the church has undergone major restoration. The work – initiated by the chief architect of the Historical Monuments – started June 15, 2006 and was completed in late June 2009. The company *PIANTANIDA* of Saint Dié, Vosges, performed the work on the structure, and the company *LEBRAS*, did the roofing and zinc roofing work.

FASCINATING VISIT

Walk along the main alley and contemplate:

- **The central nave** (17meters high/10meters high for each side)
- **The gothic architecture** of the 14th Century characterized by:
 - The shape of the vaults' ribs
 - The small columns
 - The abacuses of the capitals of the large cylindrical pillars, which support small columns.

Go to the choir:

You will notice there is no transept. Have also a look at

- **The capitals of the small columns**, on which are built the ribs of the triumphal arch Characters and animals under leaves can be seen on it.
- **Keystones**: (which are indicated on the map and the pictures)
- 2. In the Choir: At the centre, Christ on the cross is situated between the Abbot of Bouzonville and a monk. An inscription reminding the rebuilding of 1845 is written around it. Behind the key appears a shield bearing the arms of *Gutzon* from Wyskirch.
- 4. The Paschal Lamb that raises the standard of the Resurrection
- 5. The escutcheon with the three Moors' heads which is coat of arms of Armand Wisse of GERBEVILLER who was the abbot from 1457 to 1481.
- 15. The Paschal Lamb with a halo (without any caption)
- 16. Another shield bearing the arms of Gerard from Esch, who was the abbot of Bouzonville from 1385 to 1413.

➤ The old furniture:

A beautiful wooden crucifixion from the 15th Century (southern apse)
The statue of Saint Benoit situated in the choir (17th Century)
(1, 28 meters high) →

The stalls, the two lions made of wood and six panels made of carved wood. (End of the 18th Century)

➤ The modern furniture:

This furniture that takes us back to the biblical event of the Covenant was sculpted by Claude Michel and put in December 1985.

The altar: Evocation of the panels of the barrel

- The burning bush - The Sinai Act
- Passover - The bronze snake

Evocation of the altar stone:

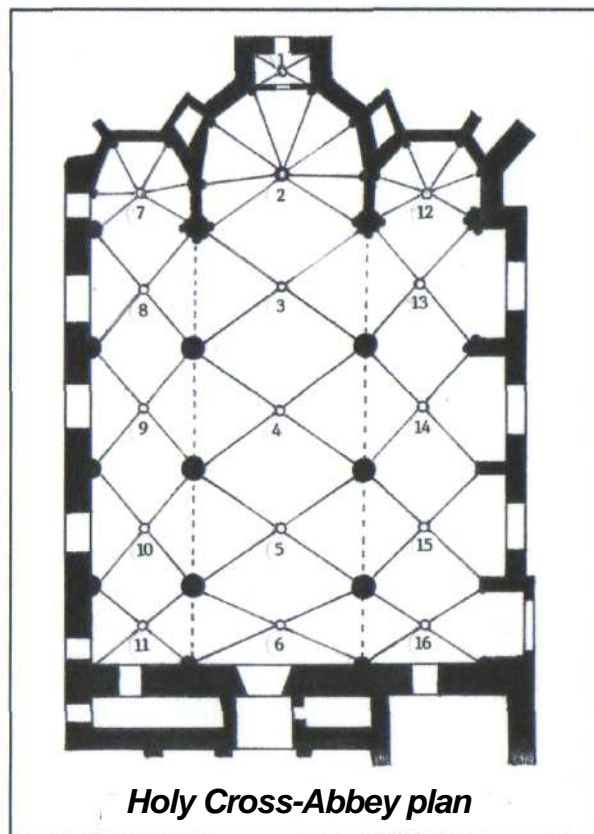
- Manna and quails

The lectern: - The rock water

The tabernacle: - The Ark of the Covenant

The Wav of the Cross is in the same design as the previous items.





Holy Cross-Abbey plan

- **The choir organ** is inspired by the North-European styles of the 17th and the 18th Centuries was built by the *Marc GARNIER* factory in 1979 and was embellished in 1995.
- **Stained-glass Windows** set up by the workshops THOMAS of Valence from 1952.

Within works of renovation of the abbey-church, some stained glasses were deposited and rested after cleaning and repair by the company VITRAILFRANCE of LE MANS.

In the choir, you can admire from left to right

- The death pangs in Gethsemane
- The Death on the Calvary
- The Deposition

In the southern side chapel, dedicated to John Dory in the past, you also will see:

The church Windows that remind us of the abbey's foundation representing:

- Saint Helena who is discovering the Holy Cross in Jerusalem
- Adalbert's wife, Judith, who is founding the monastery
- THEODORIC, the Bishop of Metz, who's blessing the places.

The northern side chapel, dedicated to the Virgin, represents the famous events of

- The Annunciation
 - The Assumption
 - Pius XII who is proclaiming the dogma of the Assumption
- Have a glance at the beautiful blind arches.

Return towards the exit and stop at the first bay:

- **The three gates** date from the consecutive rebuilding due to the fire of 1684.
- **Another Christ** made of wood is on top of the main door.

On the left:

The gate that looks onto the first courtyard of the abbey-church.

On the right:

- **A Pieta**
 - Brought back in 1898 by the French pilgrims, **the Cross of Jerusalem** was offered to the Church of Bouzonville on Easter Monday 1899 by Your Grace FLECK, the Bishop of Metz.
- A cross, made of olive wood is inlaid in that relic and more precisely at the level of the Virgin's head.