

A LITTLE HISTORY

Mentioned as a chapel in 901, it grouped the monks from Augisey, chased by the invasions and then became a parish for the villages of Essia, Gêruge, Arthenas, Augisey and a few scattered houses.

In the tenth century, it became a priory dependent on Gigny, of clunisien obedience. The list of the principal known priors spans several hundred years. The abbesses of Château-Chalon kept the patronage of the place until 1602.

THE CHURCH



Listed as a historical monument in 1991, the church stands in the middle of a cemetery, which is still in use, surrounded by a stone wall. The single nave is composed of several buildings of different heights to which four chapels are attached. As part of the parish of St-Georges-du-Revermont, religious services are held here regularly.

In the centre, the solid look of the tower is accentuated by the very few openings. Beneath, a semicircular arched side door, decorated with mouldings on prismatic bases, is generally used as the main entrance.

A curious porch over the semicircular arched west door, is similar to the one at Château-Chalon church. The inscription "P. Gentet, chaplain at Gigny" in 14th century gothic script on one of the stones protruding from the columns, tells us that these short columns belonged to an older building.

The well-spaced semicircular arched bays date from 15th and 16th centuries. At their base are found decorative carvings of rare coats of arms (shields) or sculptures.

As a whole, the building can be considered to be mainly late 15th century, apart from the chancel, the ante-chancel, which is most certainly of a previous period, and the later lengthening of the nave.

Several modifications to the roof of the tower have been carried out in more recent times.

The sober look of the whole building gives it a certain unity.

ST LAURENT, PATRON SAINT OF THE VILLAGE AND THE CHURCH

A Roman leader supposedly dedicated to St Laurent the land that had been conceded to him. This was a tradition continued by the monks of Augisey. Pope Sixte II gave the deacon Laurent the responsibility of looking after the poor. Laurent was suspected of holding the riches coveted by Emperor Valerien. Summoned to trial, he was sentenced to be burnt alive on a gridiron in 258. He is considered to be the greatest martyr in the beginnings of Christianity. Several representations of the saint can be seen inside the church. In times gone by, a banner showing his likeness was carried by men during the processions up to the statue of the Virgin Mary. The patron saint's feast day is 10th August.

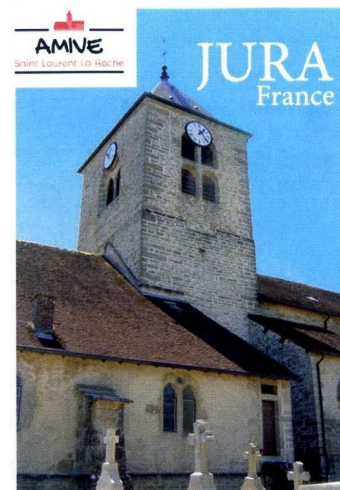
St Laurent (detail)
"Our Lady of the seven sorrows"



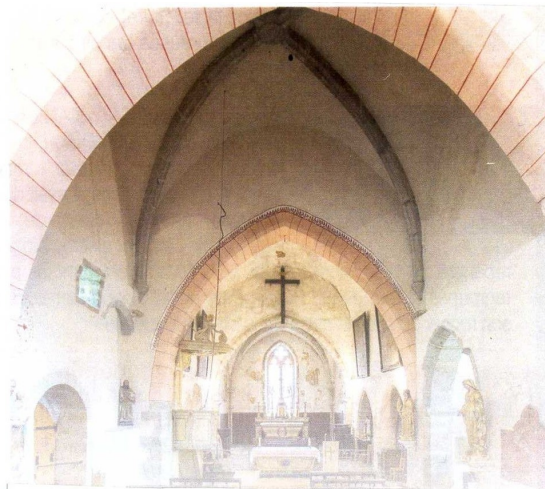
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Sources : A. Rousset, Dictionnaire géographique, historique et statistique... du Jura , t. III, 1855
; P. Lacroix, Eglises jurassiennes romanes et gothiques, C'ère, Besançon, 1981 ; P. Barnoud, ACMH, Eglise Saint-Laurent.
Etude préalable à la restauration intérieure, 2007 ; M. Marchand, « Epigraphie et héraldique de l'église de St-Laurent-la-Roche » pp. 426-433, 2013 dans : Travaux, 2012, Société d'Emulation du Jura, Lons-le-Saunier ; * S. Antès, « L'inscription commémorative de la chapelle seigneuriale de Saint-Laurent-la-Roche (1621) » dans : Travaux 2016, idem, 2017, pp. 47-54,
Etude préalable à la restauration intérieure - Paul BARNOUD ACMH - Septembre 2007



ST LAURENT-LA-ROCHE CHURCH (ST LAWRENCE)



It has been said that, from a distance, the church tower of St Laurent-la-Roche, which is situated in the middle of a long building, looks like the mast of a ship. A crois-sant-shaped indentation in the first foothills of the Jura explains the originality of the site.

The church clings to the side of the Châtelet on one side while a statue of the Virgin Mary dominates the sheer rock opposite.

In the past, a powerful stronghold stood here. It was demolished in 1668 on the order of Louis XIV.

On one side, the far-reaching view overlooks the valley and then the plain, on the other, the village houses, lined up along the streets, the lay-out of which sometimes reveals clues to the past.



PLAN OF THE VISIT

The present-day entrance is situated in the bay beneath the tower. Go up the aisle to the main altar. The view down the church helps distinguish the various periods.



1 — The Chancel

Chancel with flat chevet and ribbed vault onto little columns bearing informative arms on the left : 3 little stone shelves and inscriptions : P.Michelot fit fe (made) ceste (stone) ; on the right, Catron, dated 1457. Numerous traces of a painted decoration, now disappeared, on the chevet wall.



2 — 19th Century stained glass window

Judgement of Laurent, the deacon. Before appearing in front of the Roman tribunal during the persecutions, Laurent had hurriedly given away all

the material goods belonging to the church he managed as a deacon. He could therefore say "My riches, here they are !" showing the poor gathered around him. The landscape in the grisaille part of the window evokes the village and its rock ; a cross in the place of the present statue of the Virgin Mary.



3 — Wall painting on the north wall of the chancel (listed)

Adoration of the Magi (beginning of 17th century)

Brought to light in 1992, this painting is a rare example in this region. Lovely fresh colours, naturalistic decoration ; the coat of arms hanging from the tree tells us that the donor on the left is Louis, illegitimate son of Jean de Châlon Arlay.



4 — Ante—chancel

Slightly broken semicircular vault, still in the Norman style.

Wide, late 15th century arcades on the level of the two chapels, which were walled up in the last century.

5 — Four large 18th century paintings (listed)

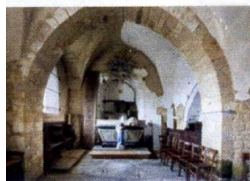
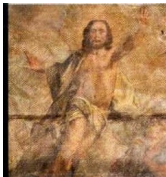
Scenes from the life of Christ (c.1750)

North : Pentecost and Ascension

South : Nativity and Resurrection

Pictures awaiting restoration owing to their artistic value.

The Resurrection is perhaps an interesting copy of the picture by Carle Van Loo in Besançon cathedral. It is considered to be remarkable.



6 — Barrau chapel

Built in 1494.

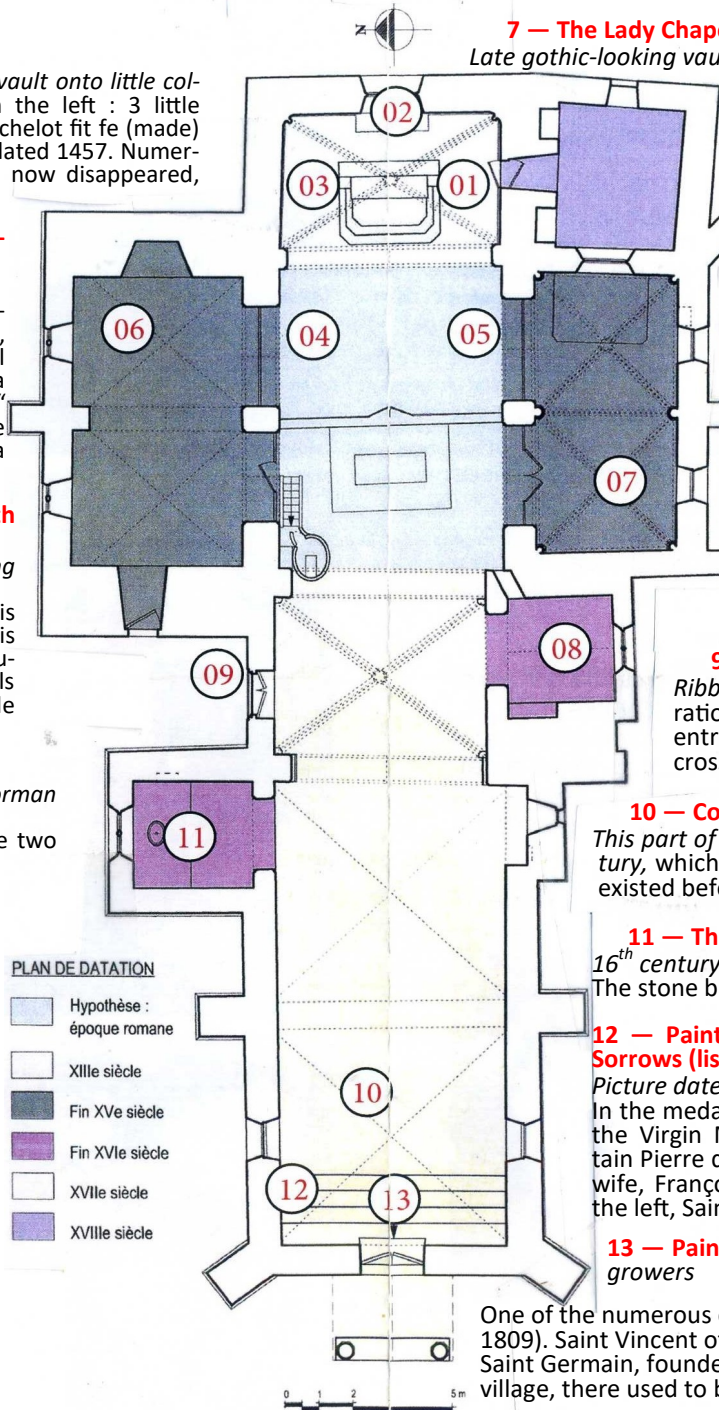
Groined vaults. Was in a critical state in 1689.

Partially collapsed in 1821.

Roughly rebuilt.

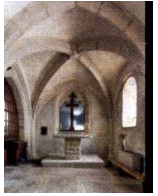
PLAN DE DATATION

	Hypothèse : époque romane
	XIII ^e siècle
	Fin XV ^e siècle
	Fin XVI ^e siècle
	XVII ^e siècle
	XVIII ^e siècle



7 — The Lady Chapel

Late gothic-looking vault Incomplete window unblocked in our times.



Tomb stone of Catron, the parish priest, whose name is carved on the little right hand column in the main chancel. Arms chiselled in the roof bosses. Also in this chapel is part of an old altarpiece, probably 18th century, which is a true example of popular artwork.

8 — The seigniorial chapel

A fragment of a wall painting is visible. (Descent from the cross, 17th century)

A squint, or hagioscope, in the axe of the altar, enabled the nobility to follow the services. A commemorative inscription (1621). The real meaning of the text in Latin was revealed in a recent study : a moving homage from a tearful husband, Renobert de Mont-Saint-Ligier, lord of St-Laurent-La-Roche, to his young wife, Charlotte de la Favée, who died in childbirth at the same time as her child. Partial remains of a funeral niche (14th century) where Béraud de Saint-Nizier, young lord of the place lay. He was the son of Etienne and Hugnette de Saint-Croix. She murdered her husband and had an extraordinary destiny.

9 — Bay under the tower

Ribbed vault on 17th century profile bases. Ochre decoration on the semicircular arches. On the right of the entrance to the church is a coloured consecration cross.



10 — Continuous barrel vault

This part of the nave was lengthened in the 17th century, which was a period of prosperity. An older one existed before.



11 — The Baptistry

16th century semicircular vault.

The stone baptismal font dates from 1691.

12 — Painting : Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows (listed)

Picture dated 1613 on the frame.

In the medallions : scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary, kneeling donors : Captain Pierre de Courlon, governor of Saint-Laurent-La-Roche castle, and his wife, Françoise Bancenel. Behind them stand their protector saints. On the left, Saint Laurent is depicted with a gridiron, his traditional attribute.



13 — Painting : Saint Germain and Saint Vincent, patron saint of wine-growers

One of the numerous copies made in the 19th century of a picture by J-M. Vien (1716-1809). Saint Vincent of Saragossa, a Spanish deacon and martyr, is shown glorified by Saint Germain, founder of the illustrious abbey in Paris. On the sunny slopes of the village, there used to be a famous vineyard, which was destroyed by Phylloxera.