

15 - The enigmatic crocodile

Hanging on the wall of the south transept, this is an «animal of unknown origin, probably from tropical countries».

Various legends circulate about the unusual presence of the animal in the church.

16 - The organ case

Dating from the 17th century, it was commissioned by Louis Gouffier for the collegiate church.

Since the 19th century, false zinc pipes have replaced the original ones.



To find out more...

The Association «Les Amis d'Oiron» invites you to download a document presenting various aspects of the collegiate church...

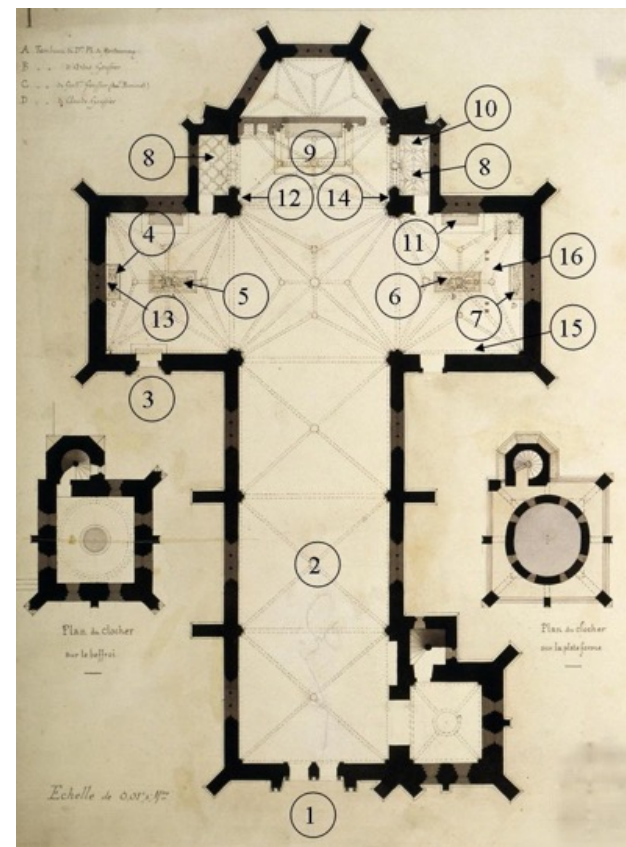
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Collégiale Saint Maurice

Welcome !

A jewel of the Renaissance, the building has been listed as a historic monument since 1840.



In a deed dated March 10, 1519, Artus Gouffier transformed the church of Saint-Maurice d'Oiron into a collegiate church, with the intention of rebuilding it entirely. He died a few months later ; his widow, Hélène de Hangest, remained committed to fulfilling this wish until her death. The church was consecrated in 1532, but only the choir and transept were completed by then.

1 - The western facade

This features a double entrance surmounted by a rose, framed by two protruding buttresses. The griffins on the pediment bear the Gouffier coat of arms. The motto *Hic terminus haeret*, borrowed from Virgil's *Aeneid*, takes on its full religious and philosophical meaning here.

2 - The nave

The nave comprises three bays with simple cross-arches. The keys bear the Gouffier coat of arms.

3 - North seigniorial gate

Opening onto the château grounds, this was the lords' entrance to the church.

• THE TOMBS •

The four tombs, in Dauphiné marble and alabaster, were damaged by Protestants in 1568, dismantled during the Revolution, then reassembled in 1839 by architect Pierre-Théophile Segretain. They are no longer in their original position.

4 - Tomb of Guillaume de Bonnivet

Appointed admiral by François I in 1516, he died at the battle of Pavia in 1525.

5 - Tomb of Philippe de Montmorency

Second wife of Guillaume Gouffier, her recumbent tomb depicts her in widow's attire.

6 - Tomb of d'Artus Gouffier

Appointed governor to François I, he oversaw the future sovereign's education, and in 1515 was appointed Grand Master of France.

7 - Tomb of Claude Gouffier

Son of Artus, he was appointed Grand Écuyer du Roi in 1546.

8 - Choir chapels and arcades

On either side of the choir are the north chapel, reserved for the Lord, and the south chapel, reserved for the women of the family.

9 - The altar and altarpiece

The high altar is framed by pilasters with elaborate pinnacles. The tabernacle, in painted and gilded wood, dates from the 17th century. It is framed by statues of the twelve apostles.

• THE PICTURES •

10 - Saint Jérôme (1580 – 1600 ?)

This oil painting of this doctor of the church, translator of the Bible into Latin, is attributed to Andrea del Sarto or Girolamo Muziano.

11 - Saint Jean-Baptiste (17th century)

This painting depicts the saint in the desert, pointing to the Passion Cross, after Raphael. It is a copy, François d'Aubusson, Duc de la Feuillade and owner of the château in the second half of the 17th century, having offered the original work to Louis XIV !

12 - Saint Claude and Claude Gouffier (1546-1558)

This painting on wood depicts Saint Claude as a bishop and Claude Gouffier wearing his Grand Écuyer sword, with a resurrection scene in the background.

13 - The Institution of the Rosary (1631)

This is a copy of a lost original by Rubens, commissioned by Louis Gouffier to Charles Beaubrun.

14 - La Resurrection

An Antwerp work dating from the early 16th century.