

## Description of the monument



The north facade, from 1776, is made of stone in a regular medium course. It is made on two levels, cushioned by a triangular pediment bearing a cross at the top and two stone fire pots on the side. Two half-turrets frame the facade. They contain to the east the staircase leading to the stand, to the west a small room.

The front door is preceded by a flight of three steps. It is in an arc segment, stapled to the key (RF in the cartridge). Above the door, the entablature rests on two modillions placed on framing pilasters limited by a net of bossed devices. This

same device frames the first and second levels of the facade. Two small fins frame the second part of the second level.

The title is inscribed in Latin below the pediment: Virgin of the Assumption and Saint-Quenin.

You enter the building through a drum which supports the stand. On the left, in a basket-handle vaulted niche, is the baptismal font.

The facade, the drum, the baptismal font and the gallery date from the enlargement of the church in 1776.

The negative of the original facade is still visible on the vault of the first bay.

The vaulting of the nave is a ribbed vault which dates back to the work carried out in 1599 and the beginning of the 17th century. Each bay is separated by a slightly broken double arch, in matched chamfered stones. They fall on rectangular piers, via moulded transoms.



They seem to correspond, for the 2nd and 3rd bays, to the diaphragm arches supporting the primitive roof of the 15th century.

The double arch of the first bay has two cavities intended to receive a beam. Two other cavities are also visible at the level of the vault. It is very likely that this arrangement corresponds to a first stand.

The ribs of the nave vaults rest to the east and west on small corner bases but in the first bay, due to the decline of the

facade in the 18th century, the drop of the rib disappears in the floor of the gallery.

View from the north stand of the anchor hole on the double arch.



The west wall of the 2nd bay has, in its upper part, the remains of a window which initially lit the nave before the construction of the 2nd chapel.



View of the bricked-up window in the 2nd bay. High windows lighting the nave in the eastern wall.

On the east side, the church is currently lit by two windows which are pierced in the walls of the nave. The construction of the side chapels forced the builders to reduce their height.

## The choir



This choir dates from the enlargement of 1599. It is closed by an elegant wrought iron gate from the 18th century. It is covered with a vault of ribs radiating from the key.

The west wall includes a door and a gallery, dating from 1599. Finally, this masonry contains, in its southern part, the remains of a funeral niche.

The choir is lit by a window created in the 18th century.

## The side eastern chapels

The eastern side chapels open onto the nave through large semicircular arches. In the first and third bays, the intrados of the arch retains remains of "trompe l'oeil" paintings representing boxes punctuated with rosettes.

The first chapel was built in 1606 by Nicolas Granier, sacristan canon. It is covered with a dome on ribbed octagonal spears, with a lantern. The squinches are decorated with a large stucco shell carried by winged and



draped busts of women. The east wall retains a niche surrounded by fluted pilasters supporting a triangular stucco entablature.

The second chapel, lit by two pointed arch windows, is groin vaulted. The altar stone is an antique reuse.

The third chapel is covered with a vault with penetrations. It must have been entirely panelled, like the one facing it, and still has a fragment of an altarpiece with panel decoration. A niche contains a statue of Saint John the Baptist above a marble altar.



Exterior view of the 2nd and 3rd eastern side chapels (linked masonry).

An inscription from 1635 to Archdeacon Jean Rattaler is visible. He financed two chapels, one in honour of Saint John the Baptist and a second one (in the honour of Saint Joseph) to the right of the church as you enter. He also left all his property to the clergy, the chapter was designated to settle these donations.

Externally, the walls of the 2nd and 3rd chapels are linked and show simultaneous construction on the same model. In the third bay, two small bays visible from the outside have been replaced by an oculus.

The fourth chapel dates from the very beginning of the 16th century. Its floor is slightly raised and it is closed by a balustrade built on the model of the chapel facing it. It is covered with a groined vault on a barlong plan.



View of the 4th eastern side chapel.



Exterior view of the 4th eastern side chapel on the left with corner with chaining and of the 3rd chapel on the right.

The construction chronology is as follows: construction of the 4th east side chapel (matched exterior corner chaining); construction of the 1st side chapel; then simultaneous construction of the 2nd and 3rd chapels, which fit into the remaining central space.



Vue des chapelles latérales occidentales.

The west side chapels open onto the nave through large semi-circular arches (1st and 4th bay) or pointed arches (2nd and 3rd).

The first chapel is covered with a dome on squinches, octagonal and ribbed. The dome is painted blue, the ribs are pink ochre as the walls must have been. The squinches are decorated with large stucco shells.

The altar bears the statue of Saint Joseph as well as a wooden panel from a panelled assembly. It was built around 1635 (donation from Archdeacon Jean Rattaler).



Vue des 2<sup>ème</sup> et 3<sup>ème</sup> chapelles latérales occidentales.

The second chapel opens onto the nave through a large broken arcade in neo-Gothic style (certainly post-revolutionary). It is covered with a ribbed vault. Its arcs fall on overturned pine cones. The chapel is lit by a window.

The third west side chapel was built in 1615 under the bell tower. This part of the building appears to date from the 15th century. It communicates in the nave by a pointed arch off-centred in relation to the transoms. This arrangement is explained by the presence of the staircase leading to the bell tower.



View of the 3rd and 4th western side chapels.

Part of the nave wall located between these two transoms is panelled. The ribbed vaulted chapel is also panelled. In the thickness of the north wall, a door in the panelling opens onto a funeral niche set up under the staircase. This is the tomb of William III of Cheysolme, bishop of Vaison from 1585 to 1629.

The fourth chapel, shortly before the enlargement of 1599, opens onto the nave through a semi-circular arcade. Three steps give access to the chapel which, like the one facing it, is closed by a masonry balustrade. The north wall contains a stone pillar bearing lapidary signs very likely coming from the Saint-Laurent chapel and dating from the construction site in 1464. It also contains a niche.



The semi-circular vault presents the remains of a painted decoration (a coronation of the Virgin, surrounded by the 4 evangelists, and Saint Jerome). This decor dating from the 16th century was consolidated for the first time in 1994. The west wall has a large window. Externally, the west wall leans against the bell tower and is therefore posterior to it. A groove in the construction to the left of the window probably indicates the original roof of the chapel. The south wall includes three niches (statue of a virgin and child) and a masonry altar.

Decor of the vault of the 4th western side chapel (coronation of the virgin).



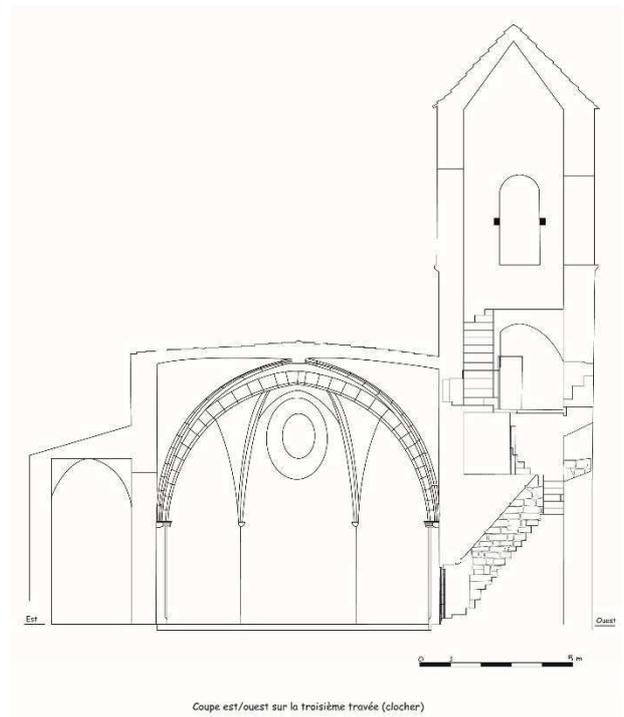
### The bell tower

The bell tower is built on the 3rd west bay. It is accessible through a staircase built into the thickness of its south wall.

This staircase was lit by a first window to the north which was walled up during the construction of the chapel of the 2nd bay. Two other windows to the west and east are also bricked up

The masonry of this staircase is carefully matched.

View of the bell tower from the west.



East/west section on the third bay.



### The sexton's house

The so-called sexton's house is quite ordinary and seems to correspond to the beadle's accommodation. It was built above the western chapel of the 4th bay, probably in the mid-17th century. It is accessible from the second floor of the bell tower.

View of the sexton's house on the right leaning against the bell tower.

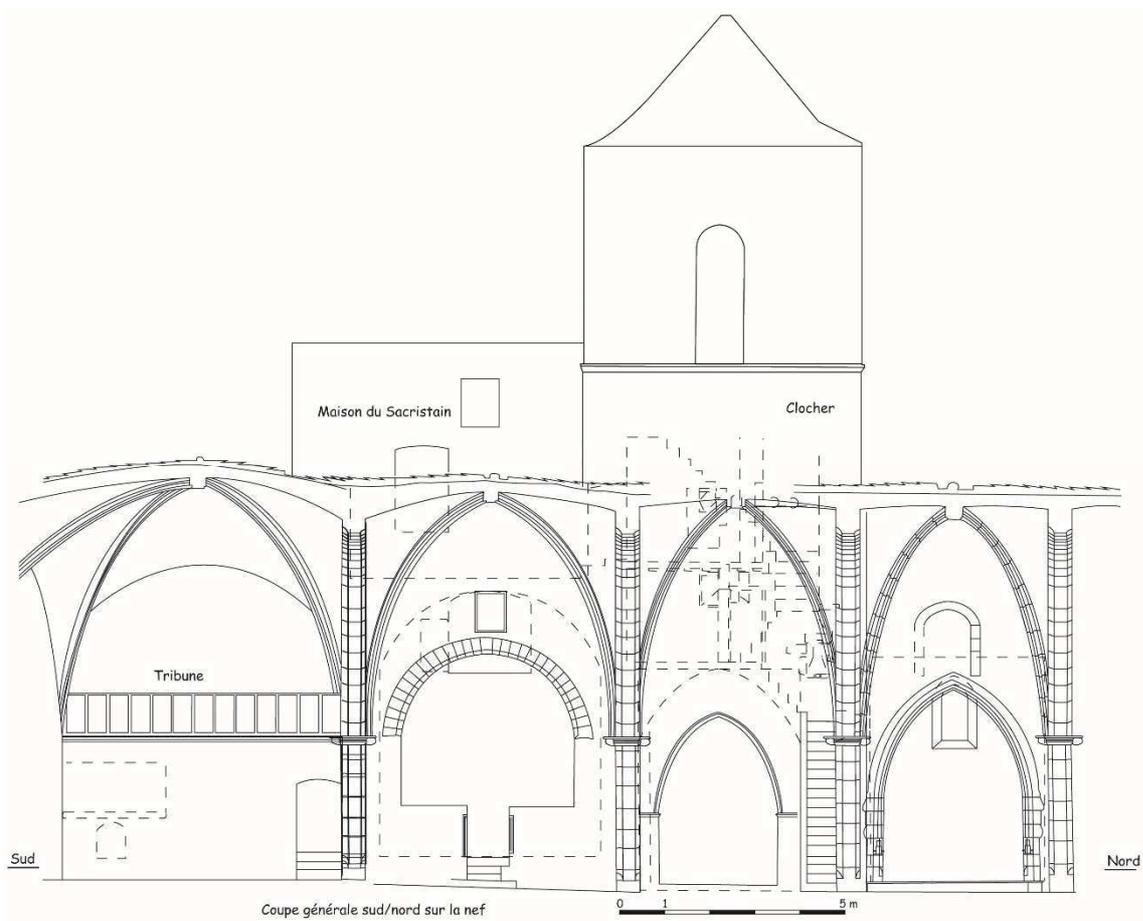


Fig. 19: General south/north section of the nave.

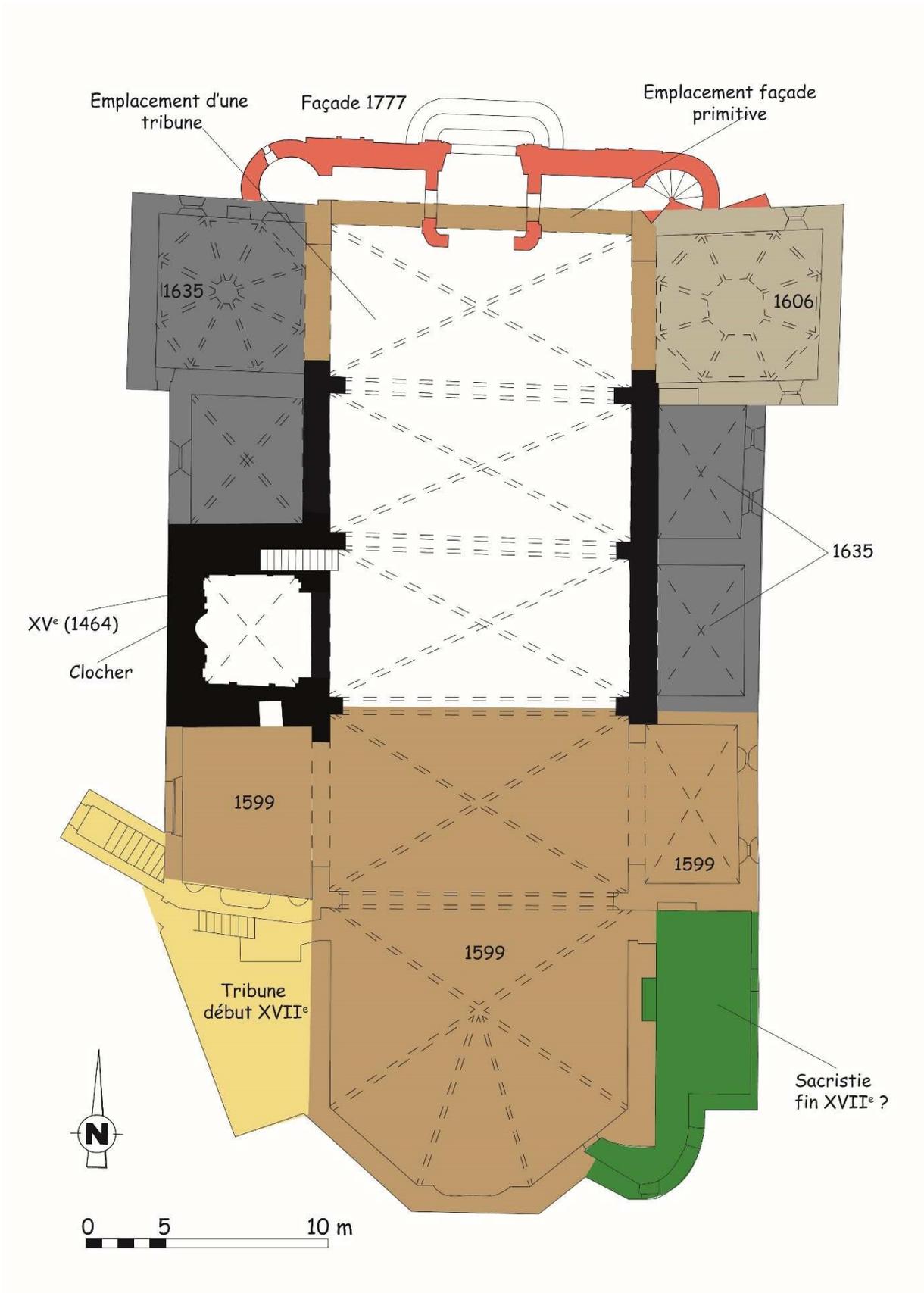


Fig. 20: General plan of the church and chronological phasing.

## **Assessment of the archaeological study**

At the end of this first archaeological study of the church in the upper town of Vaison-la Romaine, it appears that part of the current building dates from the end of the Middle Ages and the works were started by Bishop Pons de Sade. From the fixed price contract of 1464, the masonry of the second and third bays as well as the bell tower currently remains, except for the upper parts which correspond to a later elevation.

The bell tower is built with courses of small rubble stones. It offers cut stone corner chains with lapidary signs. The stones in the chaining are arranged in an awkward way: the joints are irregular and bricks or tiles are used, from time to time, to wedge certain stones.

At the very end of the 16th century, works were undertaken to enlarge the church. The work, started in 1599, shows that the choir of the 1464 church was destroyed and replaced by an additional nave bay. A new choir is built further south, based on the model of the previous one but of the same width as the nave. This work forced the builders to cut directly into the rock to support the new choir. Also, at the same time, it was decided to install a vault over the nave, which was covered, until then, by a simple frame. The diaphragm arches of the 2nd and 3rd bays, initially supporting the framework, are recycled into a double arch supporting the new vault.

The walls of the nave are slightly raised to support the new vault: this is visible outside, on the eastern side. A window in the bell tower, opening on the east side, found it unusable because it was then included in the new roof of the nave.

Later on, the church will be the subject of more or less successful additions which increase the heritage interest of the monument but which, at the same time, weaken the building because it seems that these additions were made without a real overall project...

First, the side chapels of the 4th bay were built (western chapel shortly before 1599 then eastern chapel in 1599).

The first eastern side chapel was built in 1606. The 2nd and 3rd side chapels on this side were built simultaneously (linked exterior masonry) in the remaining space, in the years 1635.

On the west side, the first side chapel was also built in 1635. The construction of the side chapel of the 2nd bay obstructed a window originally lighting the bell tower staircase on the south side.

The side chapel of the 3rd bay was built in 1615. However, this space was existing before this date because it corresponds to the base of the bell tower which dates from the end of the 15th century.

It is probably at this time that the staircase in the bell tower was modified: first opening onto the side chapel, its access was moved to open directly into the nave.

The sacristan's house, built on the fourth western side chapel, appears to be an addition from the mid-17th century.

A gallery was added to the west of the choir: the original wall was opened to create a new space, which is very dilapidated today. These works seem to be concomitant with the construction of the sacristan's room.

Finally, shortly before the Revolution, a new facade, of the Jesuit type, was built in 1776: the negative of the original facade can still be discerned at the level of the vault of the nave.