

* **Manécanterie**

The name comes from Latin "mansio cantorum" meaning house of song and refers to the choir school for young clerics which occupied the building from the 14th to 19th centuries.

* **Archivolt**

Moulding around an arch.

* **Spandrel**

Surface between the outer curve of an arch and a right angle.

The former parish choir school

The parish choir school, known as the manécanterie*, that backs onto the south of the Saint Jean Cathedral, is a building that is still not well known.

In the Middle Ages, the huge cathedral district spread over the banks of the Saône. As well as the cathedral itself, it comprised the episcopal palace, the cloister and the buildings needed for the communal life of the canons, especially the manécanterie which was originally a **refectory**.

The building, in its present proportions, was rebuilt in the 11th and 12th centuries on the remains of an older building, part of which, a **Carolingian arch** made of stone and brick, is still visible on the south façade. Work was performed on the cathedral chevet at the same time. The west façade of the manécanterie is patterned **with a blind arcade of twin arches** in freestone. A **polychrome effect**, produced by inlaying brick disks or tiles, decorated the archivolt*, the cross over the main door and the spandrels* between the blind arcades and the upper frieze. Today most of these inlays have gone and only the cavities of these typically Romanesque decorations remain, similar to others in Lyon at the abbey church of Saint Martin d'Ainay. The decoration is finished off by statues standing in niches, but they are difficult to identify today due to the damage suffered in the 16th century. This main façade has been altered notably by windows being put in and the roof being heightened, clearly legible above the Romanesque frieze.

The interior space is divided into a lower chapel and, upstairs, the great hall with its beamed ceiling. This is where the treasury's main collection is on display. The manécanterie is the oldest Romanesque building in Lyon, listed as an historic monument, along with the cathedral, in 1862, then restored in 1936.

two collections
of religious art

Centre des
monuments nationaux
Trésor de la cathédrale
Saint-Jean de Lyon
BP 5016
69245 Lyon cedex 05
tél. 04 78 92 82 29
fax 04 78 92 82 29

www.monuments-nationaux.fr

The collections of two archbishops
When **Cardinal Joseph Fesch**, appointed by his nephew the Emperor Napoleon, became Primate of the Gauls in 1802, Saint-Jean Cathedral had already been stripped of its ornaments. Converted into a Temple of Reason during the Revolution, the building had only just been restored to religious worship. This clergyman played an essential political role in re-establishing diplomatic relations between the French Empire and the Papacy, but he also devoted a great deal of energy to restoring the prestige of his archbishopric. He bought many paintings for the cathedral, and the treasury was reborn thanks to the pieces he commissioned for the ceremonies which began to recover their forgotten splendour. At the fall of the Empire in 1814, this high dignitary took refuge in Rome until his death in 1839, and the bishopric was administered by Cardinal de Pins.



Cardinal Louis-Jacques-Maurice de Bonald took over the archbishopric in 1840. A true art lover, he made the most of his travels to seek out religious objects from the Middle Ages and donated them to the Saint-Jean treasury. This prelate commissioned Lyonnais goldsmiths to make new pieces for the treasury, based on Medieval decorative records. He was also keen to promote the creative work of the city of Lyon which at the time had numerous studios of religious art exporting high-quality works all over the world.

treasury of the cathedral of Lyon

english

History of a treasury

The original group of **cathedral buildings** dates back to the 4th century. Formed by two churches and a baptistry, it was remodelled in the 12th century and the larger of the two churches was transformed into the Saint-Jean Cathedral. In a town ruled by many successive authorities from the late Roman Empire to the Middle Ages, the archdiocese represented the stable centre



of power. The archbishop became Primate of the Gauls in 1079. With a college of canons around him, his role can be seen clearly through a series of events that included ecumenical councils in 1245 and 1274 and the election of Pope John XXII in 1316. The cathedral treasury included both precious objects used in worship and to adorn the building. We can now only imagine the splendour of this treasury built up over the centuries. It was in fact gradually wiped out as a result of plundering by the Calvinists led by Baron des Adrets in 1562 and the melting down of precious metals ordered to cover the financial needs of the kingdom of France under Louis XIV and Louis XV. However, the cathedral built up a new treasury in the early 19th century through **Cardinal Fesch**, archbishop of Lyon from 1802 to 1839 and an uncle of Napoleon. The collection was then completed by the gifts of **Cardinal de Bonald**, archbishop between 1840 and 1870.



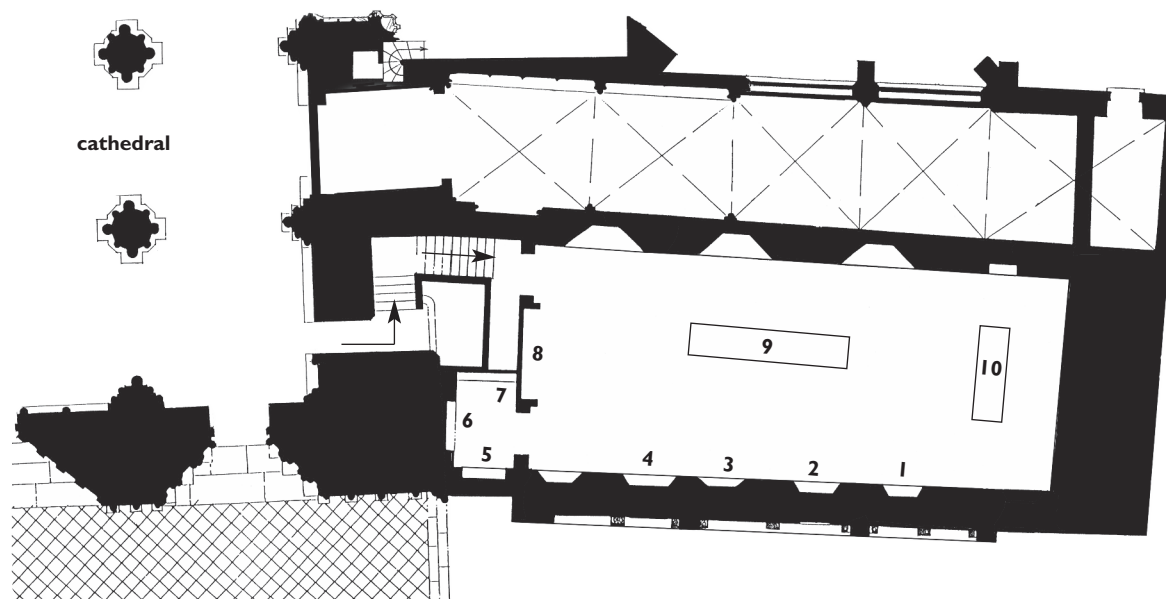
* **Chased enamel**
Enamel laid on an engraved surface.

* **Primatiale**
Cathedral where the Primate of the Gauls has his see.

* **Primate**
Honorary title attached to an episcopal see by virtue of a tradition based on the historical importance of this see. The archbishop of Lyon carries the title of Primate of the Gauls.

The upper hall of the manécanterie is today the casket that holds the treasury. It has on display archaeological exhibits such as capitals carved from the block, Byzantine in origin, standing against the left-hand wall as you go in. The treasury itself is mainly composed of liturgical objects, often made of valuable materials: liturgical objects and vestments, objects of reverence or processional objects and insignia distributed in the various display cabinets. **Display cabinet ·1·** contains the oldest pieces of the treasury, notably a 10th century ivory chest and a 13th century Byzantine portable altar. The incense holder and the psalter tablets, **display cabinet ·2·**, have a chased enamel* decoration. This enamel work, produced in the Limoges region around the 13th century, was highly renowned for its quality and the beauty of its colours. The 15th century censer, **display cabinet ·3·**, with its form of a miniature Gothic temple, illustrates another type of decoration from the late Middle Ages. **Display cabinet ·4·** contains items from the modern period, by which time the various religious objects had established forms. The majority of these pieces, especially those from the Middle Ages, were acquired by Cardinal de Bonald.

Cardinal Fesch bought or commissioned the pieces on display in the cabinets in the small adjoining room. Tradition has it that he gave the Saint-Jean Primatiale* ornaments cut from the red hangings used for the anointing of Napoleon I at Notre-Dame de Paris, i.e. the chasuble and stoles in **display cabinet ·5·**. **Display cabinet ·6·** contains works produced by Parisian goldsmiths, in particular a monstrance made by the Lyonnais goldsmith Favier and donated by Joséphine de Beauharnais. **Display cabinet ·7·** houses the liturgical ornaments and vestments worn by Cardinal Fesch at the wedding of Napoleon and Joséphine de Beauharnais in 1804.



cathedral

* **Morse**
A metal clasp for fastening the cope, the vestment worn by the priest to celebrate the Eucharist.

* **Pall**
Cloth used to cover the chalice and paten.

* **Maniple**
Ornamental band worn on the left arm by the celebrant during Mass.

Similarly, the **display cabinet ·8·** shows off ornaments made in Lyon and also by Parisian goldsmiths. The large neogothic monstrance, as well as the three morses*, whose shape is such that they can hold little figurative scenes depicting Christ and the Virgin, are the work of André Favier, a Lyonnais goldsmith.

Cardinal de Pins' gilded silver ornaments and plate were made in Lyon by the Parisian goldsmith Poussielgue-Rusand. These are all the liturgical objects needed to celebrate mass: the ciborium, the tray and cruet, the chalice and the paten. **Display cabinet ·9·** shows the texts and engravings relating to pontifical mass ceremonies in Lyon. In **display cabinet ·10·** one can see the chasuble, stole, pall* and maniple*, made from Lyonnais silk to designs by the architect Bossan, who was responsible for the Notre-Dame de Fourvière basilica, as well as a cope, known as pluvial for the rain, of Cardinal de Bonald on which Saint Pothin and Saint Irénée appear in relief.



The tapestries on display date mostly from the 17th century. They were probably given to Saint-Jean Cathedral by Cardinal Fesch. Against the wall opposite the display cabinets, above the Byzantine capitals, four tapestries illustrate episodes from the **Story of Jacob**. They come from a Brussels studio. Jacob's dream shows Jacob asleep dreaming of a ladder that leads to God, climbed by angels. This was a particularly cherished subject in the iconography of church hangings.

At either end of the hall hang tapestries representing plant motifs, known as 'verdures'. One depicts a unicorn and the other ducks. These 18th century hangings come from the studios of Aubusson. The bust of Cardinal Fesch, made by the Lyonnais sculptor Joseph Chinard, stands on the landing. In the entrance hall, sculpted elements from different periods provide a link with the cathedral, which is itself richly decorated with carvings.