

## 6. Exterior - South side :

Leaving the church, turn to the left round the building, walk along the trench which was dug in the 1880's to protect the abbey from the damp and running water. A staircase allows access to the observation point (6). This is where the destroyed cloister was. The only traces left are where the roof of the cloister touched the wall of the transept (l) and where are these holes in the wall of the nave for embedding ceiling joists. The defense systems can clearly be seen. Large shooting platforms were erected on the gables of the choir and the transept. The roof is constructed of calcareous flagstones called "lauzes" typical of the south of Périgord. Go down the marked route. On the right is the site of ancient excavations. The journey offers a good view of the ramparts that are in the course of restoration and the so-called Salignac gate.

## 7. Exterior - South chapel :

The flying buttresses support the walls and counter the thrust of the dome. A number of modillions decorate the base of the roof (n).

## 8. Exterior - Choir :

Look at the line of linked stones (o), they form a belt to reinforce the wall. This type of reinforcement is different from the one observed at the same level in the south chapel. This advanced technique is older than the one of flying buttresses.

## 9. Exterior - North chapel :

Look at the line of linked stones (o), they form a belt to reinforce the wall. This type of reinforcement is different from the one observed at the same level in the south chapel. This advanced technique is older than the one of flying buttresses.



## 10. Exterior - North transept :

The multifoil window (p) is in the christian style developed during the 10th & 11th century in Moorish Spain. It is the only one of this type in the building. The stones in the fifth level above the window are another example of linked stones. The traces from the canon fire of 1575 are more visible from the outside than the interior. Go back to the point of departure. On your right is a guard post on the corner of the ramparts.



# Visitor Guide

## HISTORY

The village is named after Amand, a hermit originating from Limousin who lived in the 6th century. He came to evangelise the population of this part of the valley of Coly. He lived in a cave near to where the village later developed. It is likely that the first oratory was constructed during that period.

The presence of a monastery in Saint-Amand is mentioned in a document in the Vatican library dated 1047.

The construction of the abbey commenced at the beginning of the 12th century and was finished by the beginning of the 13th century. The north chapel and transept, the choir, south chapel and transept, nave and portal were built in succession. Abbot Guillaume was the first builder a little before 1124.

The 12th and 13th century was the peak period for the Augustinian abbey. The abbey which was linked to the Pope of Rome by the middle of the 13th century. It is probably during the 100 years war that the defensive system was constructed which makes the church here at Saint-Amand the most solidly fortified church in the Périgord.

Decline came with the plague, the wars and later the nomination of the abbots by the king. In the time of the revolution the abbey became a parish church. In 1877 the abbot Carrier with 423 parishioners cleared the grounds surrounding the abbey which was classified as an historical monument in 1886.

### 1. Bell Porch :

It is characterized by an imposing broken arch supported by two solid masses of masonry. Above towards the top the opening gave access to a wooden gallery supported by three large stones extending from the wall. There are ten defenses of this type in different places around the building. The entry is formed by three arched columns, which are decorated at the top with palms, flowers and leaves, typical of the gothic art 1200-1220. It is surmounted by an archivolt of diamond points above which are capitals representing bearers. A large curved stained window gives light to the interior.

### 2. The nave :

The nave and the bell porch are the most recent parts of the edifice. The sloping ascent of the ground continuing the climb from the threshold combined with the slight convergence of the walls before the choir produces an interesting effect of perspective. The nave's bare wall ascend to a broken arched ceiling.

### 3. North chapel :

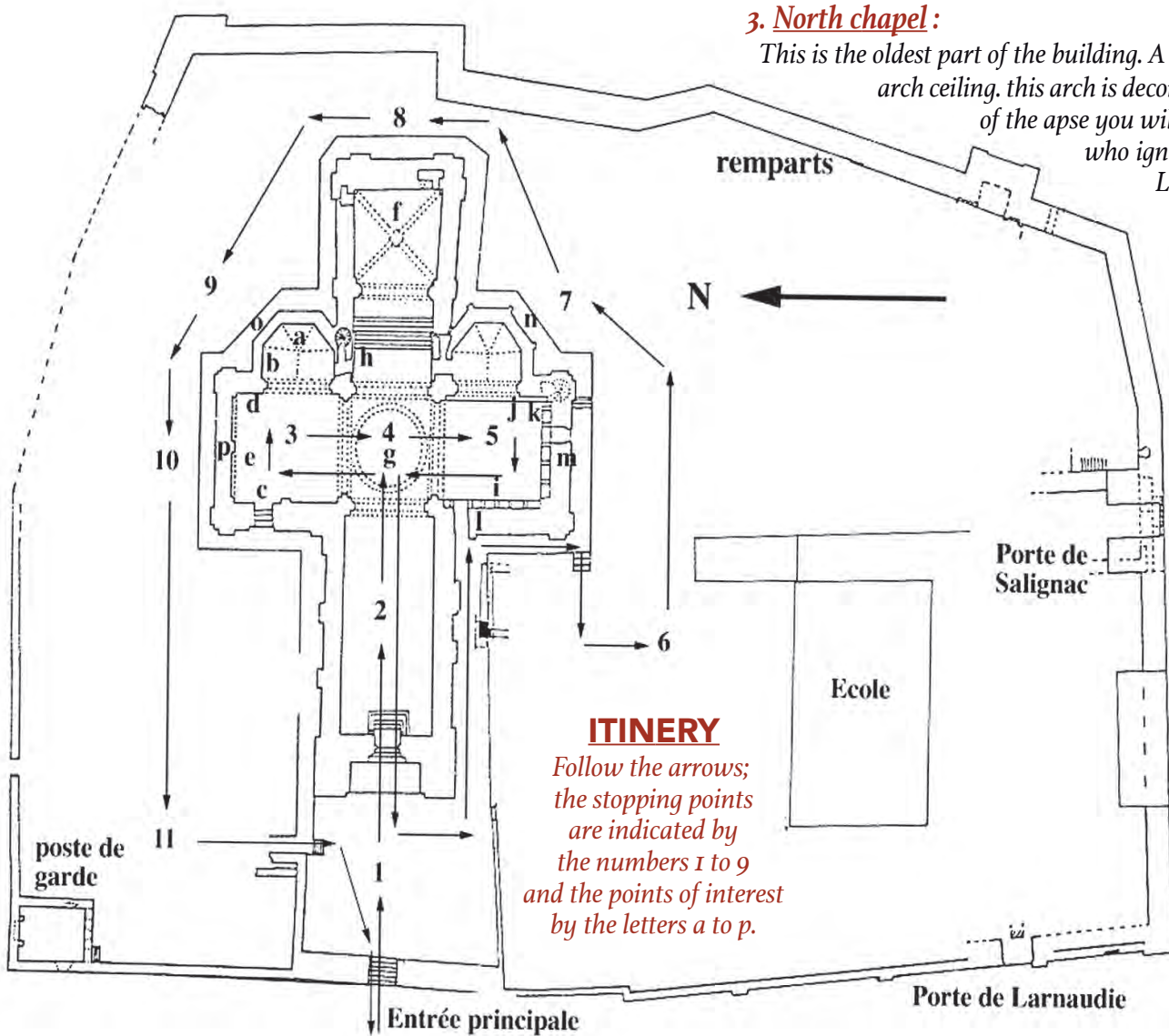
This is the oldest part of the building. A pentagonal apse open into the arm of the north transept covered by a broken arch ceiling. this arch is decorated with the coat of arms of the abbots of Ferrieres (a) Engraved in the angle of the apse you will find the epitaph of abbot Guillaume, (b) translated as following "Learn you who ignores it that here rests a famous man whose life resembled that of Rachel and Lia, of Martha and Maria. Brothers, sing psalms and ask Christ that he will save abbot Guillaume for his devotion". The north chapel served a long time as a parish church. It had an access by a door (c) which is now walled up, its whole surface was probably ornamented. There are still traces of a crucifixion fresco dated the beginning of the 13th century (d), you can still see on either side of the cross the chariots depicting the moon and the sun, and above the symbolic representation of Jerusalem.. On the north wall, a badly closed hole (e) was caused by canon shots of six days duration necessary to evict a Huguenot captain who had taken over and sacked the abbey in 1575.

### 4. Choir and crossing :

Above the choir are two crossing arches (f) that can be dated around 1150. The cupola above the crossing rests on pendentives and on great pointed arches supported by embedded columns (g), a style frequently found in Périgord. At this point, one can note upon the walls of the transept the presence of a walkway which is supported by large arcades. At the foot of the north pillar (h) starts the staircase that gives access to the upper part and defense systems. This part is not accessible to visitors.

### 5. South chapel :

Along the south and west walls, there still runs a narrow gallery supported by semicircular arches resting on twin columns (i). It allowed access to the dormitory and upper cloister. On the south side of the apse entrance arch is a very fine capital representing two men being eaten simultaneously by lions and dragon-like monsters (a symbol of hell). On the south wall is a bearded acrobat (k).



**ITINERY**  
Follow the arrows;  
the stopping points  
are indicated by  
the numbers 1 to 9  
and the points of interest  
by the letters a to p.