

Domaine de
L' ABBAYE DE
MAIZIÈRES

Origin and history



666 YEARS OF HISTORY

Founded in 1125, Maizières Abbey had a decisive spiritual and economic part to play in the region of Beaune and Chalon for nearly seven centuries, from 1125 to 1791.



Maizières Abbey followed the footsteps of La Ferté Abbey (1113), heir of Cîteaux Abbey (1098), founding abbey of the Cistercian order. Based on the virtues of poverty, solitude and labor, the Cistercian movement experienced a significant expansion throughout the Middle Ages thanks to saint Bernard de Clairvaux's determining impulsion with the construction of hundreds of monasteries all across Europe.

Many lords were seduced by this spiritual renewal and these values. In the hope for salvation, they offered the monks part of their lands to found new monasteries. It is this certainty that led lord Flouques de Réon to beg Barthélémy, abbot of La Ferté Abbey, to establish a Cistercian abbey on his lands in honor of God, Saint Mary, and all the Saints.

Although originally reluctant to the idea, Barthélémy finally accepted the donation that made possible the foundation of this new abbey on the lands of "*Scotéria*" now called "*Gouttières*" in Saint-Loup-Géanges in 1125. The monks moved a bit from this first location a few years later and they built the final monastery on the ruins of an old Roman house "*Maceria*" that became Maizières.

The construction of the monastery spread over a century and ended with the blessing of the church in 1236. This was followed by a period commonly referred to as the Golden Age of the Cistercian order.

Many were the powerful lords, clerics and people who, following Foulques de Réon's example, made all sorts of contributions for the "*repose of their souls*", taking part in the monastery's expansion which quickly spearheaded a significant estate. Thanks to the monks' hard work and often titanic projects, the abbey shaped the rural landscapes (grapevine planting, pond and canal digging, forest clearing, farming, etc).

This prosperous period was put to a stop by the Hundred Years War (1338-1463) during which the Abbey was occupied twice by military troops. In 1438, King Charles VII commanded all monasteries should be administered by a lay person outside the community: the commendatory abbot was chosen by the king himself. Abbeys became family assets that were passed on and a large part of their revenues were allocated to the commendatory abbot. Original goals were replaced with an urge for profits and the slackening of the Benedictine rule. This led to a decrease in the number of monks as it was getting harder and harder for them to properly maintain the monastery and the properties.

This decline was accentuated by the religious wars that shook France in the end of the 16th century. Maizières Abbey repeatedly faced terrible damage in 1560, 1569, 1576, 1580, and 1590. The transcripts show that the abbey and its outhouses were devastated and ruined and that all its assets were stolen or burned. The disaster was so severe that the monks managed to rebuild only half of the abbey.

666 YEARS OF HISTORY

With such intense vicissitudes, some monks decided to strike back and instituted in 1622 the “*Strict Observance*” Maizières Abbey adhered to in 1660. Going back to its original values saved the abbey. Through perseverance and courage, the monks managed to rehabilitate and rebuild their properties and outhouses.

Despite the hurricane of the century that ravaged the forests in 1702 and the long cold episode that ruined all the crops from 1708 to 1711, the abbey continued on the path to recovery and in 1717, it was one of the most beautiful abbeys of the Cistercian movement.

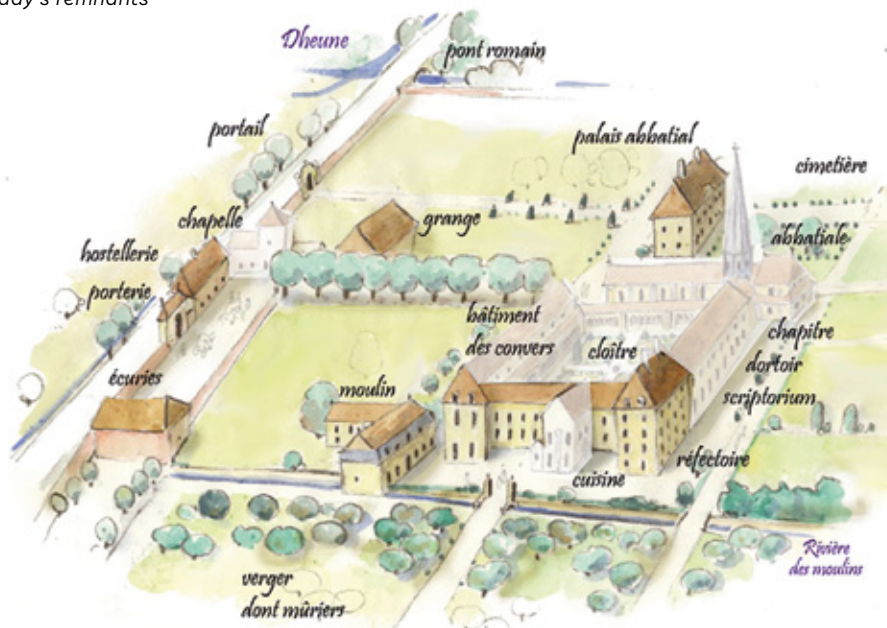
It owned a considerable number of assets, acquired and developed over centuries: tens of tenant farms, six mills, several buildings in Beaune, a forge, a tile factory, a glass factory, six ponds, many lands and meadows, woods and forests, vineyards in the famous villages of Volnay, Pommard, Meursault, Puligny-Montrachet, Blagny, etc.

But alas, the upswing and renewal were annihilated by the terrible fire of 1733 which destroyed a large part of the monastery and led to a period of great difficulty that lingered until the French revolution in 1789. The constituent assembly cornered the abbey’s assets and sold them to multiple buyers on April 7th, 1791.

The abbey’s first buyer had the church and the two wings of the monastery dismantled to discourage from setting foot there ever again. The abbey became a stone pit and many houses built around 1820 were built with its stones.

Over the 19th and the 20th centuries, successive owners maintained the remaining parts of the original estate: the abbot’s residence, the wing of the monastery now called “*the Château*”, the mill, the outhouses, the park, etc.

Maizières Abbey
at the beginning of
the 18th century and
today's remnants



As of 2010, Lorraine entrepreneur François Pélissier, his wife Anne and their children Marine and Thomas, progressively acquired different parts of Maizières Abbey dispersed in Gergy and Saint-Loup-Géanges: the forest of Gergy, the pond of Maizières, the 40 Arpents Hamlet, Gouttières farm, and Maizières Abbey which included the Château, the Abbot's Residence, and the Outhouses.

The heart of Maizières Abbey is now finally replenished, giving this exceptional heritage and history a new life and a fresh impetus.

ABBEY LOCATION AND SURROUNDINGS

Maizières Abbey is located in the town of Saint-Loup Géanges, near Beaune, at the border between Saône-et-Loire county and Côte-d'Or county, at the heart of Burgundy.

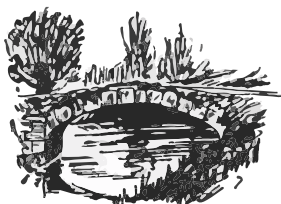


urrounded by a vast brick wall, it stretches over a rectangle of 30 acres formed by the county road of Chagny, the former railroad linking Allerey to Beaune, the Dheune river from East to West, and, from North to South, an old Roman road now called Chemin de Maizières.

The Roman road—currently a bicycle lane connecting Beaune to Chalon—was originally used by clerics for the various needs of their community. This road goes through the forest of Gergy, between the ponds of Vorthoy and Maizières, then crosses the Dheune along the abbey, to reach Beaune through Sainte-Marie-la-Blanche. It crosses the river on a Roman bridge dating from the 5th century. Its arch is remarkably laid out with its four particular terminals mangled by the wheels of the chariots and almost entirely covered with scrub. A local legend unfolds its evil origin:

“Very long ago, on Christmas night, the people of Cissey were on their way to the convent church with a bundle of wood in their hand to attend mass. A bridge made of wooden planks ordinarily got them across the Dheune. A dignitary riding his donkey was among the crowd. However, on that Christmas night, the wooden planks had disappeared. The farmers were devastated as they heard the bells of the abbey ringing out loud and clear. Satan was sneering in the shadows. Suddenly, a miracle worker of a monk emerged from the monastery. In the name of Notre Dame de Maizières, he ordered Satan to build a stone bridge. Satan had to obey but he asked for the first living being to cross the bridge in return. The pious monk encouraged a child to prick the dignitary’s donkey which, distraught, crossed the bridge and became the prey of a furious Lucifer.”

Small Roman
bridge of Maizières



FOUNDATION AND EARLY DAYS OF THE ABBEY

Notre Dame de Maizières Abbey (*Abbatia Nostrae Dominae Maceriarum*) was built on the antique ruins of an old house (*maceria*), hence the name Maizières.



The lands where the abbey was built were given to Barthélémy, abbot of La Ferté, heir of Citeaux, by Lord Foulques de Réon, his wife, and his children. These lands were first referred to as “*Scoteria*”, then “*L’escotière*” and over the centuries “*Les Gouttières*”. They welcomed the first monks who built Maizières Abbey a few miles away from there for almost a century. This place, located by the small Dheune river and along a secondary Roman road, perfectly met the criteria of seclusion and water abundance which were essential to the construction of a monastery remote from any house and people. Water was indispensable for the community to live healthily, work the mill and irrigate the meadows, the orchards and the gardens.

Flouques de Réon’s donation was accepted, not without effort. Indeed, abbot Barthélémy who was already in charge of the community of La Ferté didn’t want to engage in the construction of another monastery which would expose him to more construction works and frequent worries. Foulques de Réon kept soliciting and protesting, going on about how, on judgement day, the abbot would be accountable before God for having refused the faithful donation he was offering to honor God and redeem himself, his wife, his children and all his ancestors. He eventually convinced abbot Barthélémy to accept his donation. In the presence of Gauthier, bishop of Chalon, Joceran, bishop of Langres, and Pierre, archbishop of Tarentaise, Foulques de Réon gave an entire territory to abbot Barthélémy and granted the use of all the woods he owned in the neighborhood along with some meadows.

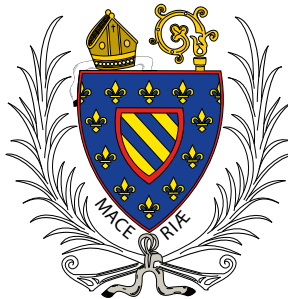
FOUNDATION AND EARLY DAYS OF THE ABBEY



The abbot's residence

The abbey was blessed in 1236 by Guillaume de la Tour, bishop of Chalon. Its armories represented a crosier and a miter on top of a deep blue escutcheon covered with golden lily flowers and at its center, the six stripes of gold and blue of the coat of arms of Burgundy. Below the tip of the escutcheon, Maceriae was written between two golden branches.

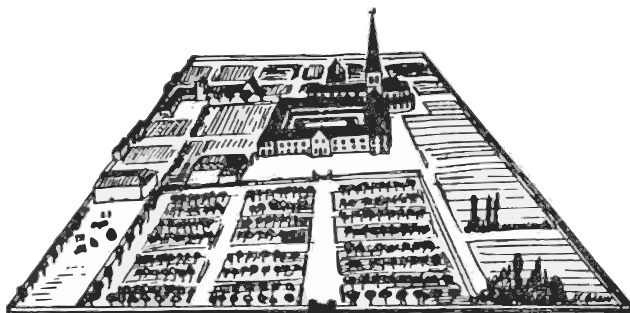
The seal represented a bare-headed abbot wearing a chasuble and holding a book in his left hand. The inscription said: Sigillum abbat-
tis de Maceriis.



Following its foundation, the prestige of the abbey was acknowledged by the Vatican and all the prelates and lords in the vicinity. Popes Eugène III (former monk of Clairvaux), Luce, Urbain and Innocent III granted consequent privileges to Maizières like tithe exemption. Cardinal Nicolas, representative of the Holy See in France even granted indulgences to all who visited the church of Maizières.

As the abbey progressively acquired many advantages (fishing rights, grape harvesting privileges, serfdoms, cemetery plots, indulgences), the monks started showing signs of megalomania. They sought the protection of dignitaries like Agnès, duchess of Burgundy and daughter of Saint Louis, and regularly welcomed the dukes of Burgundy like Eudes IV and Philippe le Hardi.

The abbey was subsequently protected by other popes who treated it with generosity. It was made rich by several dukes of Burgundy, by the provost of Montaigu who donated in 1209, by Elisabeth de Montréal lady of Meursault who also donated in 1221, by Nicolas II bishop of Tusculum in 1227, the house of Vergy, the lords of Montaigu, Faucon de Corpeau and many other renowned families in the region.



Map of the abbey in the 17th century

PRESENTATION OF THE ABBEY

Surrounded by a long wall of bricks coming from its tile factory, the abbey extended over 12 hectares (30 acres).



The abbey was composed of a huge monastery for the monastic community, an abbot's residence, a big farm made up of several halls and structures, and an out-house connected to the monastery dedicated to flour and wine-making.

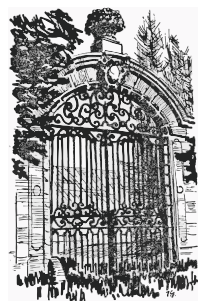
There were four entry doors. A high fence dating from the 19th century, flanked by two small pavilions, gave access to the former conventual building now referred to as the castle, comprising the dormitory, the refectory, the *"chauffoir"* (the only room with a fireplace) and the big study room. The other three entries were located on the west side of the wall, along the *"path of the monks"*, now called *"Chemin de Maizières"*. Three porches from different times were spared by the ravages of time.

Two porches rebuilt in the 17th and 18th centuries led to the former farm. One of them is monumental. Its door hinges are still apparent.



Door to the commons

Closer to the Dheune, the last porch still has its two original fences and above them, the abbey escutcheon. It granted the abbots and special guests access to the abbot's residence using an honor pathway that still exists today. Adorned with a Louis XV pediment, the abbot's residence was surrounded by a vineyard and a vegetable garden. Its purpose was to house the abbot and his guests whenever he was staying with the community.



Abbey fence

The big park comprised a set of gardens: Hortulus (a vegetable garden), Pommarius (an orchard), Herbularius (a medicinal garden), a vine plot and blackberry bushes to feed the silkworms. Inside the monastery, the Hortulus concretized the deep aspirations of a monastic life: contemplation and meditation. Hortus conclusus (the small garden of Mary located by the church of the abbey) illustrated the mystical garden of Eden.

Above the canal crossing the park, you could see the mill built in 1698 which provided flour for the bread oven. On the front, a stone stands with the abbot's miter and crosier above a striped escutcheon, almost erased. Adjoining the mill, a large outhouse dating from the same period comprised stables, vaulted cellars, a press room and a wine cellar.

The monks' dormitory was built in the same style as the abbot's residence. You could access it through a big stone portal adorned with the striped escutcheon of Burgundy between two branches and now deprived from its original walls.



Lateral gate of the conventual building

Inside, a grand hall with a unique stone stairway with wrought iron railings, part of which were replaced with the old communion fence.

On the right, a kitchen and a dining room where the tombstone of Eudes de Beaune, 23rd abbot (1373-1397) can be found. On the left, a dining room paved with its original clay bricks, two of which are illustrated; stunning Louis XIV woodworks, delicately sculpted, and the slightly disproportionate plans of the abbey surrounded by blackberry bushes.

By the large fireplace in the living room upstairs, a superb plate from 1728 carved with the coat of arms of Dom Pernot (the second to last abbot of Maizières), his miter, his crosier and two eagles above a silver escutcheon made of three sand stripes, a blue line on the top part, a wide-open winged eagle and a marquis' crown.



The conventual building

The church and most of the conventual buildings were destroyed during the French revolution but fortunately, archeological search and the presence of the pedestal of three pillars aligned at the foot of a stone wall made it possible to trace the monastery's exact original layout.

This stone wall was originally the left wall remaining of the very church over which another wall was built to separate the abbot's residence from the old monastery. Fragments of the church and a mutilated Christ made of stone were embedded in the wall without respect for their religious symbolism. The location of the old cemetery was determined thanks to the discovery of the many bones that had been buried for over 650 years close to this wall.

The church of the abbey was high and vast with 15 chapels and 58 choir stalls to celebrate mass every morning. The nave was narrow, and the apse was very large. A large U-shaped ambulatory certainly delimited the choir from one crossing to the other, in the continuity of the collaterals.

The slated bell tower was 100-foot high from the roof lantern to the cross. It dominated the green horizon with majesty.



It was a true regional pantheon. Inside were the mausoleums of two bishops of Chalon: Alexandre de Montaigu, 45th bishop, whose stone statue is in the city museum of Chalon; Olivier de Martreuil, 64th bishop of the city. Many benefactors were also buried there: Hugues III duke of Burgundy, Guy de Vergy, Hugues de Palteau, Guy de Verdun, Richard de Montbéliard, Hugues de Neublan, Robert comte de Tonnerre, Alexandre of Burgundy, Béatrice countess of Chalon, Geoffroy of Chagny, Vauthier sans terre (landless), Jehane de Navilly, Jean de Poupet, Pierre de Corcelles, Héliodore de Thyard de Bissy, etc.

*Tombstone of Pierre Monthantheaume, 1327, buried in the abbey.
VAIVRE (J.-B. de), original drawings of Burgundian medieval tombs issued
from the Gaignière collection*

ITS PROPERTIES AND OUTHOUSES

The abbey owned major agricultural properties: a series of mills and many ponds, vineyards and outhouses in Beaune, a tile factory, big farms and tenant farms, an iron workshop, a forge, a glass factory, many woods and forests, etc.

Agricultural properties

The abbey operated many farms: in Beaune county, the farm of Blagny donated by the bishop of Langres in 1184; the farm of Pernand, visible until 1666; a barn in Chenôve and another one in Merceuil near Maizières; a fine estate at the foot of the mountain in Aubigny near Aluze; a rich farm in Bel-Air north of Larocheport; the farm of the Répand near Demigny, bequeathed by Geoffroy le Blanc in the 12th century and home to a few monks; the big farm of Le Buet north of the woods of the monks between Dracy-le-Fort and Mellecey; and other agricultural properties in Allerey and Demigny.

Despite the fees and expenses, the revenues of these different estates were more than sufficient to support the community.

Mills

If a few monks lived a life of contemplation and reverence, the others were to work in the fields, repair the ponds, the houses and a series of mills, like the ones in Tronchat, Breuil, La Forge and Maizières. The first three were established on the Dheune canal which had been dug by the monks on 8 kilometers, from the castle of Mimande to the castle of Cissey where it merges with the Dheune river.

The mills of La Forge and Maizières were installed last, on a breach called “*industrial river*”, also designed by these experienced diggers. This stream is the second artificial derivation which converges with the waters behind the abbey, passing under the abbey to the mill of Saint Loup. It was some tremendous earthwork.

Ponds

Other works, just as important, were continued in 1250 to create several ponds. The new ponds of l'Egoutière and Petit-Beauregard were dug in 1251. The floor of the latter was repaired in 1376. Gérard de Margueron, the abbot of Maizières, purchased the pond of Grand-Beauregard in 1448. The pond of Vorthoy also belonged to the abbey. Same for the pond of Maizières. This 62-acre pond flows into the nearest pond of Baignant. It borders the forest of Gergy and adjoins a hill above which meadows, vines, orchards and fields surround the hamlet of the "*Quarante Arpents*" (Forty Acres). This hydropower system around the monastery became the object of contention between the monks and the inhabitants who were worried by the abbey's growing ownership.

The monks of Maizières came into conflict with the bishops of Chalon, the Templars of the Chapel of Demigny, the lord of Mimande... who regularly opposed irrigation works, flooding, fishing rights and tithes. The number of trials and disputes shows the very procedural spirit of the Cistercian monks and their ability to defend their community's interests when they were at stake. The judgements of the Parliament of Paris almost systematically gave them back their right to dispose irrevocably of their ponds and mills.

Vineyards

Maizières Abbey planted most of the vines around Beaune, a city now famous in the entire world for its vineyard. It owned several wine estates in Pommard, Blagny, Meursault, Puligny-Montrachet and Morgeot.

The monks were quite involved in wine trade with some of the region's most glorious appellations, judging from the difficulties they faced to obtain entry rights to the city of Beaune, plus the number of presses, tanks and other wine-making equipment they owned, and their inventories according to which over 500 barrels were stored inside the monastery's vaulted cellars.

Tile factory and workshops

Maizières's tile factory was located on the road to Allerey, just out from the woods. Bricks and tiles of all local dimensions were baked in outdoor ovens. Their tint varied depending on the type of clay that was used and how hot the oven was. In La Forge, near the old mill, an eponymous group of agricultural structures can still be found. There also used to be an ironwork and a forge along the road.

Coming from Autun through Bellecroix, Cretaine, and the "*path of the iron leaders*", the ores were carried to these workshops on the back of donkeys. This road coming from Autun crossed the one connecting Chalon to Beaune by the pond of Porcherot. It then led to Poligny, skipping the Saône between Verjux and Verdun using the ford established in front of Montchanu.

Outhouses

Maizières abbey owned an outhouse on Maizières street in Beaune called le Petit Maizières. It was composed of a tower and a wing located on the coal market plaza. The monks traded their wine inside this building.

To put an end to business rivalries opposing the merchants and the monks over entry rights, this building was first rented on May 17, 1395, to the city of Beaune by order of Philippe le Hardi, duke of Burgundy. It was purchased on April 3, 1415, by the mayor assisted by several aldermen and the abbot of Maizières, represented by the cellar monk Dom Pré de la Rivière, in exchange for 200 gold francs.

The 112-foot-tall tower was destined to receive a clock and several bells claimed by the inhabitants later on. The belfry and the bells still exist today.

ITS COMMUNITY AND ITS ABBOTS

Forty abbots successively administered Maizières Abbey from its foundation to the French Revolution.



At the beginning of the 17th century, they were twenty-five to thirty and there are reasons to believe that between 1650 and 1667, about fifty monks could easily live at the abbey which was in full bloom. This is confirmed by the number of stalls dating from that same time now located in Saint-Pierre church of Chalon. In

1516, king François I and pope Léon X signed a concordat stipulating that from now on, abbots would be directly nominated by the king (commendatory abbots). Some unscrupulous abbots took advantage of the situation to commit theft, spoliation and abandon their communities.

But the reform of cardinal François de la Rochefoucault (1558-1645) imposed a return to the founding rule of strict observance. After a series of conflicts between the different Cistercian abbeys, Maizières eventually adopted the reform in 1658.

Some abbots had a decisive impact on the evolution of the abbey.

12th century – Angelerius 1st Abbot (1133-1146)

In the 10th year of his administration, abbot Angelerius allowed Duke of Lorraine Siméon II and his wife Anne of Namur to provide housing for about twelve monks in Stulzebrune, Lorraine, near Alsace.

13th century – Boniface 8th Abbot (1228-1238)

In 1237, abbot Boniface's right to all the tithes acquired during his episcopate or originally given by bishop Guillaume over the ponds, mills, vineyards, woods, grazing, tenant farms, barns, and other out-buildings located on the property was confirmed.

14th century – Eudes de Beaune 23rd Abbot (1373-1397)

In 1362, the abbey purchased la maison du bœuf, the tower and several houses in Beaune. The wines produced by the abbey were sold in the city of Beaune exempt of entrance fees. On April 20, 1395, Philippe le Hardi, Duke of Burgundy, gave in to the county magistrates' complaints and asked the abbey for the tower (which would later become the city's belfry) and the adjoining houses in exchange for tax exemption on the wines. This tower later became Beaune's belfry. His tombstone is exhibited in the abbot's dining room in the *Château*.

15th century – Gérard Margueron de Poiley 27th Abbot (1445-1469)

The monks struggled to keep their right to fish in order not to starve in this time of great need. They purchased several ponds (Beauregard) and engaged in the construction of a new pond on the Vendaine, south of Gouttières farm in 1451. A conflict broke out when bishop Jean Germain of Chalon claimed ownership over la Vendaine. In 1455, the Parliament of Paris ruled in favor of the monks. To show their official ownership, the monks decided to name it after the abbey. In 1462, Gérard Margueron de Poiley handed down the abbey to this nephew with the approval of pope Paul II. He died in 1470 and was buried inside the church.

16th century – François Scipion de l'Eglise 33th Abbot (1569-1578)

Piémontais de Cherasco, son of a royal senator and monk of Citeaux became the abbot of Maizières on April 3, 1569, shortly before being appointed general vicar of the entire order in Italy. He devoted much of his life writing about Saint Bernard's life in latin. He died in Saluces on March 23rd, 1578 and was buried in the cloister of Marie de Stafarde church under the following epitaph: "*François Scipion de l'Église, doctor in theology and law, of remarkable science, aged 28. To his beloved son, his mother in bitter pain, Anna.*"

17th century – François Gendron 37th Abbot (1665-1688)

François Gendron was a far better abbot than most of his predecessors. He did everything in his power to save the monastery from its critical situation. The abbey bounced back thanks to the abbot's wise and prudent management and his ability to work in close collaboration with the monks and the prior. Together, they demarcated the properties, conducted property inventories, signed farm-out agreements, and undertook renovations. His remains lie in the cemetery of Orléans under the following epitaph: *"Of all people, Sir François Gendron is the worthiest of immortality. As a priest, he was introduced to the art of healing at the hospital of Orléans and was called by queen Anne of Austria to bring to court the medicine he prepared for the poor. After the King offered him Maizières Abbey, he dedicated his life to tending to the poor there. Twenty years after leaving the court, on his 70th year and on the eleventh day of year 1688, after showing unfailing goodwill and unlimited charity, he said farewell to this miserable existence and embraced a better one."*

18th century – Michel-André Rennequin d'Egville 40th and penultimate Abbot (1711-1755)

Michel-André Rennequin d'Egville was appointed as deacon of the diocese of Paris by King Louis XIV on Christmas day, 1711. The abbot turned out to be particularly authoritarian and stingy throughout his mandate, although he didn't hesitate to spend a lot of money for his own sake. Indeed, the abbot's residence he had built for himself was especially expensive. He also granted himself a third of all revenues, ignoring the former agreement on income distribution between the abbot and the monks. Meanwhile, he never ensured a local presence, nor did he have any of the necessary work done in the farms and at the monastery. This situation progressively led to the abbey's decline. The point of no return was reached with the tragic end of the French Revolution which resulted in the sale of all the abbey's assets in 1791 and in the destruction of a large part of the monastery.

THE ABBEY'S HARDSHIPS

The abbey went through multiple hardships: climate catastrophes, epidemics, wars, conflicts... and managed to make it through.



In the 14th century, Maizières Abbey suffered from the great insecurity brought by the repeated assaults of the Hundred Years' War. The country was deserted and periods of scarcity incited people to rebel against taxes.


Despite being under the protection of Philippe le Bon, duke of Burgundy, the monks were repeatedly forced to find refuge in their outhouses in Beaune.

In the 16th century, the misfortunes of Burgundy had painful repercussions on Maizières Abbey: the religious wars trashed the abbey in 1560, 1569, 1576, 1580 and 1590, not to mention the deaths caused by the black plague in 1586.


Many transcripts written at the end of these destructions attest of the damages:

"The repeated attacks against this land in the duchy of Burgundy caused great losses and damages. The clerics and their help were forced to retreat four to five times from the abbey to the city of Beaune or elsewhere. Every time the forces entered the abbey, they would steal pieces of furniture, lead from the steeple, relics and sanctuaries."

“The soldiers stole our cattle, making it impossible for us to till the fields. They also demolished many buildings. Tithes do not yield much because most farm workers have been killed. The ones who’ve survived do not have the means nor the cattle to work the fields. The foray was so severe that the poor farmers couldn’t go to work in the fields and the vineyards without fearing for their lives.”



“While the castle of Dijon was being besieged, the carabineers climbed Maizières Abbey’s walls, took control of the gate, and massively got inside. They broke the church and bedroom doors, took all the furniture and ornaments in the church, four to five hundred bichets of grain, seven to eight hundred barrels of wine, put them on chariots and horses and caused other damages.”



In the 18th century, a succession of tragedies led to heavy vicissitudes. The “*storm of the century*” of 1702 ravaged the forests. It was followed by the long cold wave of 1708-1711 which wiped out the crops. The terrible fire of 1733 entirely destroyed the monks’ dormitory, the abbot’s residence, his furniture and the cloister.

Completely broke, the abbey obtained from the king the special authorization to sell its woods to the navy. It contracted many loans and its only profits came from its vineyards.

On the eve of the French revolution of 1789, only 9 monks still lived in the abbey: prior J. B. Virot, sub-prior Georges Villiers, cellar monk Denis Gardet, brother Benoît Remondet, brother François Compin, brother Claude Cohardet, brother Gaspard Gaudier, brother Desjardin and brother Thorin. In November 1789, the constituent assembly decided to confiscate the clergy and the monastic orders’ properties and by mid-May 1790, the abbey’s assets were starting to be cataloged.

The declaration of inventory of July 9th, 1790 made by the prior and the cellar monk featured the assets that were to be auctioned:

- *The monastery consisting in several buildings (cellars, mill, barns...), a courtyard, a garden and an orchard enclosed within walls. About 6 acres of buildings and 15 acres of land.*
- *The abbot's house, the farm and an enclosed plot (7,5 acres)*
- *The tenant farm of L'Egoutière: 2 farm accommodations, 2 barns, a press, a cellar, 4 stables, a courtyard, a garden, outhouses (about 90 acres)*
- *The tenant farm of L'Epervière in Saint Loup, its buildings, its lands and vines (35 acres)*
- *The tenant farm of La Forge in Saint Loup, its 2 houses and outhouses (74 acres)*
- *Eight tenant farms: Courcelotte and Répans in Merceuil, Bel-Air in Cisse, Le Buet in Dracy, Beauregard in Demigny, Aubigny in Aluze, Chenove in Savigny and Bully*
- *Many lands: the Outrage, the Terre des Murs, the pièce au Blanc, En Millore, Enpige Vilain, etc. (495 acres)*
- *28 meadows le Grand Breuil in Saint Loup and Le Verglat (178 acres)*
- *Woods and forests (3705 acres)*
- *Four mills: the Breuil and the Tronchat (in Demigny), Cisse, Saint-Loup and its farm, outhouses and meadows (50 acres)*
- *A glass workshop (Prodhun in Autun district)*
- *A tile factory in Saint-Loup*
- *Six ponds: Grand and Petit Beauregard, Batard in Demigny, Maizières (25 acres), Roch (5 acres), Neuf (3,5 acres) in Saint Loup*
- *Ten houses in Beaune (mostly on Maizières street)*
- *Vineyards in Beaune, Savigny, Pommard, Volnay, Blagny, Puligny, Chassagne, and Meursault.*

Awaiting the transactions, the monks were the guardians of the abbey's assets. However, five of them decided to leave the abbey. On January 11th, 1791, the mayor and the prosecutor brought the last four monks before the judge, forced them to leave the abbey and indicate their new address.

The abbey's assets were sold within a few months starting April 7th, 1791. The abbey itself and the big clos de Maizières were purchased by Sir Deplace, an entrepreneur from Savoie. To prevent the monks from coming back, he had the cloister, the church and all things related to religion destroyed. The conventual house became a "Château" and he kept the outhouses. All the stones he clawed back were sold in the area.

The 10-foot-tall Christ in the basilica was carried to the parish church of Saint Loup on August 17th, 1791 by the priest along with reliquaries which are now at the foot of the altar. The library was grouped with Chalon's as well as the stalls which were transferred to the choir of Saint-Pierre church in Chalon. They were dominated by four statues which had adorned Maizières' choir for hundreds of years: Saint Augustine, Saint Ambrose, Saint Jerome and Saint Gregory.

One of the bells of Maizières Abbey was taken by the revolutionaries of Chalon. Three other bells were broken by Mr. Dumont, judge and mayor of Saint Loup. He even dressed up his donkey with venerable religious clothing before walking it around the village.

The other eight bells of the steeple were brought to Chalon during incredible scenes of destruction. Only one bell remained at the abbey but almost all the holy vases and ornaments were stolen or scattered. The organ that had vibrated the vaulted ceiling so many times was moved to the church of Seurre with great difficulty by its parish priest. They are the only pieces of art of the monastery that made it through the Revolution.



Emblazoned landmark

AND NOWADAYS

As of the beginning of the 21st century,
the abbey engaged in a path to revival.



Starting in 2010, Lorraine entrepreneur François Pélissier, his wife Anne and their children Marine and Thomas progressively acquired different components of Maizières Abbey: the forest of Gergy, the pond of Maizières, the 40 Arpents hamlet, the farm of the Gouttières. They were then able to reunite the conventual house, the abbot's residence and the farm owned by three different people, recreating most of Maizière Abbey's original estate. As of 2019, they undertook a vast rehabilitation program to rekindle this exceptional history.

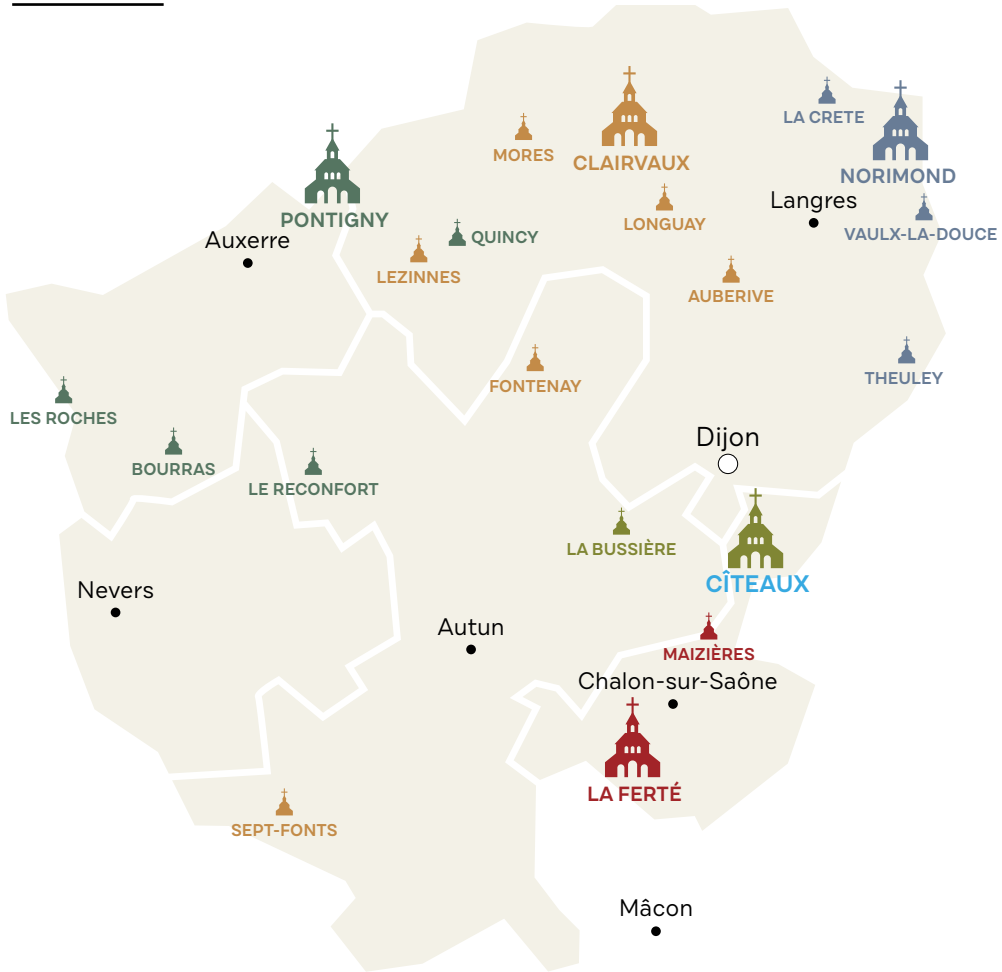
The high walls covered with flaking moss are still standing as if to protect what remains and regain their original unity. They still enclose centuries-old conventual houses, buildings and objects spared by human vandalism.



They shelter the remains of glorious soldiers and venerable clerics whose songs and prayers made their way up to the sky for centuries.

Years and uprisings have passed but nothing has erased the true memory of what can't be destroyed in the men's mind or heart. May the day come when this estate is given the opportunity to rekindle with a life of contemplation, to revive its historical, cultural and religious heritage, to shine worldwide and to develop a set of economic and touristic activities.

May the future generations remember these grand convictions and the brave actions of the men of the past, so they can re-enchant the world and its creation.

Cistercian abbeys
and their genealogy in
Burgundian dioceses
(15th century)

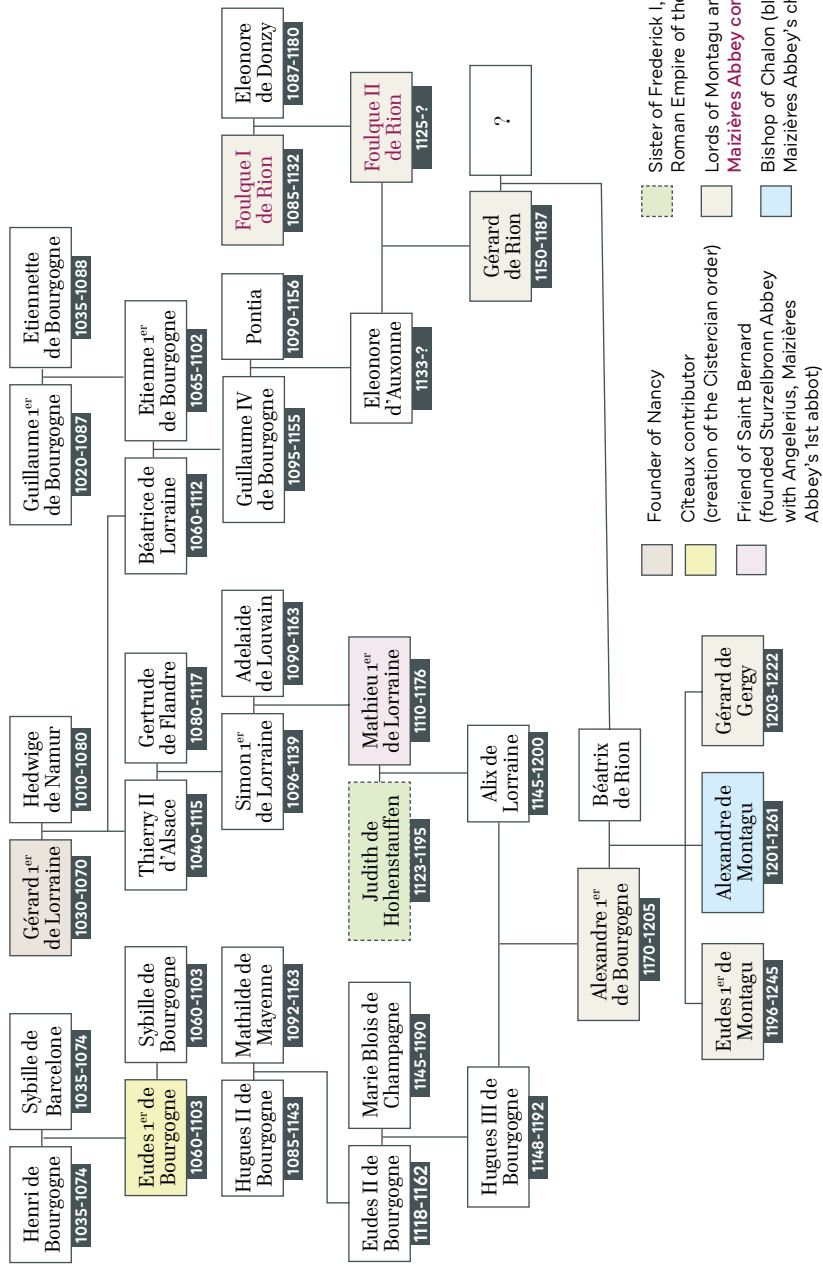


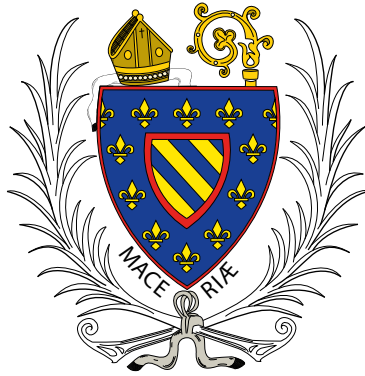
- Bishopsrics
- Capital of the dukes of Burgundy
-  "Daughters" of Cîteaux Abbey
-  "Granddaughters" of Cîteaux Abbey

GENEALOGICAL LINKS

DUCHEES OF LORRAINE AND BURGUNDY

Foundation of Maizières Abbey in the 12th century





*May the future
generations remember
these grand convictions
and brave actions,
so they can re-enchant
the world and
its creation.*

