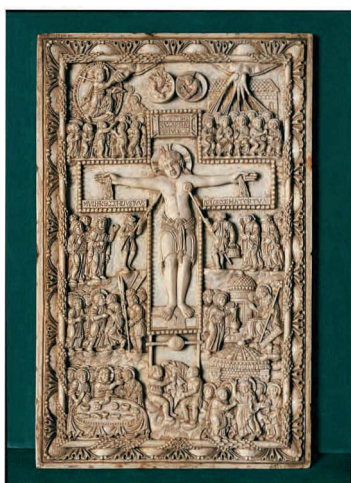


# The Treasure of Narbonne's Cathedral



Cathedral Saint Just and Saint Pasteur.  
Right view, cross-section of the cloister and the chapter room,  
above which lies the *capitulum novum* room, now the Treasure room.



The Crucifixion, *ivory* 9th century



Pyxis, *ivory* 11th century

The treasure of Narbonne's ancient Cathedral of St. Just and St. Pasteur is one of France's ten richest, among those of Conques, Troyes, Sens, Paris, Nancy, Metz, Chartres, Le Mans and Angers.

The Treasure is displayed in the new chapter room, referred to in 15th century texts as the *capitulum novum* or *capitulum rotodum* and more recently, as the echo or acoustic room.

The brick, ellipsoidal cupola of this square-shaped room gives it a remarkable particularity. A person sitting in one corner of the room and facing the wall can speak in a very low voice and be heard distinctly by the person sitting in the opposite corner, while anyone sitting elsewhere in the rooms hears nothing.

The current display of the Treasure dates back to the 1970s. Initially, the precious objects were no doubt kept in a near-by strong-room, located on the south side of the edifice, as evidenced by a 13th century vault therein.

Now, at this moment, a plan is under study for reorganizing the collection in order to provide more exhibition space, improved conditions for the display of certain objects and the possibility to display liturgical vestments.



Extract of the Pontifical de Pierre de la Jugie, archbishop of Narbonne between 1347 and 1375



The creation, tapestry of Flandres, late 15th early 16th century.



Marriage chest, crystal, vermeil, intaglio and garnets, 17th century. A gift to be used as a reliquary.

Most of the objects: manuscript, ivories, gold objects, furniture, tapestries, embroidered articles, sculptures, inscriptions in stone, murals, engravings and seals, liturgical vestments, etc., are evidence of the accumulation of works of art over the centuries. Some of these works were gifts on the part of the archbishops who lived between the 5th and the end of the 18th centuries; others were acquired by the chapter which managed the cathedral; still others were gifts to the church from generous benefactors, or more recently, were collected thanks to the efforts of the Archaeological and literary Commission of Narbonne.

These objects differ from a museum collection. Their primary vocation is sacred, assigned to the practice of worship. Their fortuitous assembly as a collection makes it possible to assess the alternating periods of enrichment and impoverishment of the place for which they were crafted and from which they are inseparable without the risk of losing their significance.

Visiting the treasure is the necessary complement to visiting the cathedral chancel, which is also ornamented with remarkable fittings: tapestries, archbishops' tombs, paintings, a great organ, gothic stalls and retables sculpted in polychrome stone, recently restored and reinstalled in the Notre-Dame chapel of Bethlehem after its discovery in 1981.

All of these objects, classified and protected by virtue of their status as historical monuments, are constantly monitored and periodically restored thanks to the national and city of Narbonne Funds. The loan of certain works is regularly requested for international exhibitions.