

## *The medieval village of Laudun Sancta-Fé on the hill of Sainte Foy*

*Ruins of the first castle  
Ruins Castellus*



*In the Middle Ages, the village was the only built-up area in the middle of the countryside.*

### *THE NAME OF SAINT FOY*

*The cult of Saint Foy was very popular in the Middle Ages. This young Christian woman, daughter of a high-ranking official, was martyred in the 3rd century in Agen for remaining faithful to her faith.*

*The church of Sainte Foy stood next to the old castle and the town walls, on the northeast side of the hill. It must have been oriented east-west, like all churches, and not north-south like the Chapel of the White Penitents.*

*This church, built at the dawn of the medieval town, gave its name to the entire hill.*

*The villagers also celebrated Saint Catherine there.*

*Religious services were shared between the church of Saint Génies (cemetery) and Sainte Foy (1357/1383).*



Château féodal, Maison de François de Laudun, Maison de Blaise Bigne sergent. L'église Sainte-Foy  
Emplacement probable de l'ancienne église de Sainte-Foy d'après les actes notariés.

*The original castle on the hill of Ste Foy consisted of a keep and at least one upper floor, accessed by a stone staircase. It certainly served as a dwelling and watchtower.*

*Two cisterns located in the lower courtyard collected rainwater; the castle was supplied with water by the*

*Rayol stream and the Crotte fountain.*

*The gate was located on the north side, at the top of the "Laudun wall," now Rue Jean Mermoz.*

*Later, a more sumptuous main building was constructed for the lords of Laudun.*

*A chapel had certainly been built before the construction of the Church of Sainte Foy in 1347.*

*The village of Laudun was protected by an initial enclosure, or vingtain (named for the tax levied on 1/20th of the income).*

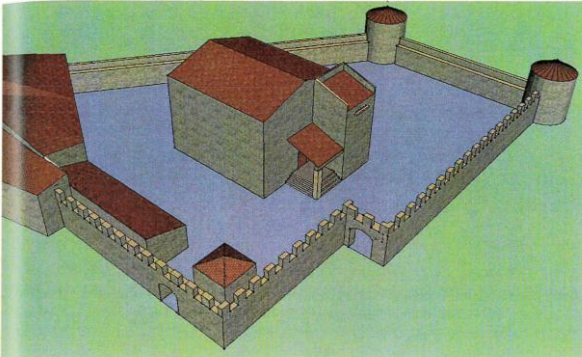
*This enclosure evolved between the 11th and 14th centuries, becoming a true defense for the village.*

*The castle was probably destroyed before 1453, at the end of the Hundred Years' War, at the same time as the Château de Lascours.*

## LE CASTELLAS

*In 1469, François de Laudun, lord of Laudun, had the original castle*

LE SECOND CHATEAU DE LAUDUN « LE CASTELLAS »



Vue du château de Laudun en 1558 (sans tenir compte de la pente de la colline).

*completely demolished to recover the stones that would be used to build the new castle, Le Castellas, as well as the walls and houses in the village of Ste Foy, which was located on the site of the Placnon garden.*

*In 1497, Guillaume de Laudun, son of François, obtained permission from King Charles VIII to build the new castle, but its construction had begun well before. He continued the work and lived in the castle.*

*The Castellas consisted of several rooms:*

- *the Upper Hall of the castle,*
- *the wardrobe of the said hall,*
- *the upper bedroom adjoining a dovecote,*
- *the wardrobe of the said bedroom,*
- *the passageway room to the attic,*
- *the grain loft,*
- *the loft adjoining the other above the Upper Hall,*
- *the kitchen (formerly the Lower Hall),*
- *the room adjoining the said kitchen and below the dovecote,*
- *the storage room behind the kitchen,*
- *the old kitchen,*
- *the cellar of the tynals,*
- *the cellar called the game store below the Upper Hall,*
- *a well in the lower courtyard*
- *a stable and horse barn of the castle*
- *a hayloft above the stable*



The walls, remains of cellars, staircases, doorways, arrow slits, and wells still visible within the Planchon Garden are the remnants of the 16th-century living quarters of the Lords of Laudun.

The current main gate of the Planchon Garden was the main gate of the Castellias.

We know, thanks to inventories, that the castle was still well-preserved in 1771, as evidenced by the presence of furniture and archives inside.

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## THE RAMPARTS



Les Remparts, les 8 tours, les 3 portes et le ravelin du bourg de Sainte-Foy.  
Au centre, le second château « le Castellias » avec ses deux tours

The ramparts around the town consisted of 8 towers

At the foot of the castle, on three slopes, lie different districts crisscrossed by a dozen narrow, winding streets of packed earth and wedged stones. At the corner of each street, a large stone serves to keep the hubs of carts at a distance.

*As soon as a street has a steep slope (which is often the case in Laudun), in order to avoid erosion of the road surface by rainwater runoff, it is necessary to pave with limestone chips and pebbles.*

### **COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION OF THE TOWN**

*Every year, on March 25th, before the general assembly of the inhabitants, a consulship is created.*

*Four consuls, known as the "ancient" consuls, present a list of twelve people. The first four are chosen to be modern consuls for the year, and twelve councilors are also appointed. This practice continued until the 18th century.*

*The first consul chosen from among the bourgeoisie  
the second from among the householders and large landowners  
the third from among the farmers and artisans  
the fourth from among the day laborers*

*The archives and land registers contain the list of consuls from 1532 to 1789.*

*The jurisdictional prosecutor: a doctor of law, he governed the seigneurie in the lord's absence.*

*The fiscal prosecutor or treasurer: an officer responsible for defending the community's interests. He represented the lord and private individuals.*

*The sergeant: an announcer by public proclamation, he also posted decrees issued by the lord or the community. He guarded and watched over the village.*

*The viguier: a man-at-arms and police officer, he commanded the village guard and ensured security.*

*Land and fruit guards: rural constables.*

*The pillars of justice:*

*The gallows pillars were located on the road from Bagnols to Avignon, at a place called Le Clavelet, but no longer existed in 1651 because the condemned were hanged in the public square of Laudun.*

## **HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY OF THE MEDIEVAL TOWN**

*In 1570, an act of pacification took place between the Catholic and Calvinist inhabitants.*

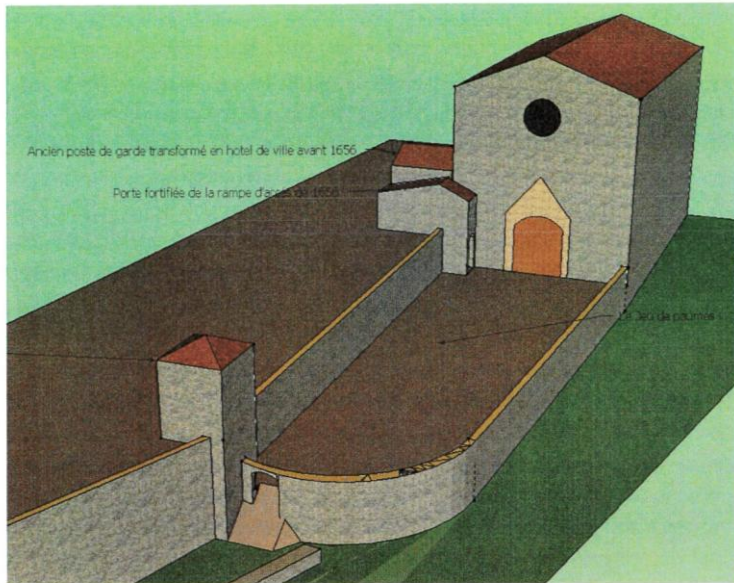
*In 1575, on the orders of King Henry III, 50 soldiers were garrisoned at Bord Castle.*

*In 1585, during the Wars of Religion, the town was attacked again. Soldiers arrived in 1586 to protect the town, and their numbers were reinforced in 1588.*

*In 1588, Laudun was besieged by Sieur Chambaud on the orders of the Duke of Montmorency, who ordered cannon fire from the top of Puech Velin. The inhabitants resisted.*

*In 1590, the same Marshal of Montmorency, having reconciled with King Henry III, was tasked with the reconstruction of the Laudun citadel. In 1599, Abbot Jean Fraisse, former chaplain to King Henry IV, was appointed perpetual vicar and prior of the Church of Notre Dame la Neuve, assisted by three priests. Laudun was one of the largest parishes in the diocese of Uzès. He died in 1632 and was buried in a vault beneath the church's high altar.*

## **NOTRE DAME LA NEUVE CHURCH - FORTRESS CHURCH**



*Between 1345 and 1352, Guillaume de Laudun, former Archbishop of Toulouse, had the Church of Notre Dame la Neuve built (replacing the destroyed Church of Sainte Foy).*

*With its substantial size and its north façade*

*built against the ramparts of the medieval town, the church served a defensive purpose. The slate roof and the parapet walk at the level of the current bell tower were still in existence in 1495. A watchtower on the bell tower served as a lookout.*

*A door to the northeast (present-day Rue de la République) provided access to the church via a staircase.*

*From 1412 onwards, through a donation by Guillaume de Laudun to the community, the revenues from the moats were used for repairs to the ramparts, the city gates, and the Notre Dame la Neuve church.*

*A few years later, the church of Saint Génies (cemetery) was definitively abandoned, partly ruined by successive attacks between 1357 and 1383.*

*Numerous works were carried out on Notre Dame la Neuve throughout the decades.*

## **AFTER THE MIDDLE AGES...**

### **SITE OF THE PRESENT CHURCH**

*1658-1662: Demolition of the large western portal; a double walnut door was installed at the entrance with a smaller door on either side.*

*The moat beyond the tennis court was filled in, and a wall was built from the southwest corner of the church to the base of the rampart tower. This is the current site of the church square.*

### **1628 LA PESTE A LAUDUN**

*From November 1629 to July 1629, a plague epidemic struck the town. Following severe headaches and stomach pains, the victims died within 24 hours.*

*900 inhabitants perished, half the population.*

*There was no more room in the cemetery surrounding the Church of Saint Génès to bury the infected bodies.*

*Three new burial sites were opened:*

*1 beneath the church,*

*1 near the Church of Sainte Foy, and*

*1 in the Roques district.*

*December 30, 1628: Four volunteer residents, hired by the consuls of Avignon, serve the sick.*

*January 7, 1629: An apothecary is appointed to supply medicines and drugs. Bread is also distributed to the residents.*

*There are guards at the gates of Laudun and barriers to prevent people from entering the city.*

*Payments will be made (contracts and receipts ratified) to:*

- the volunteer inhabitants serving as ravens to bury the bodies of plague victims,*
- the perfumers to disinfect houses,*
- the monks to care for the sick,*
- the inhabitants serving as consuls since the appointment scheduled for March 1629 could not take place.*

*August 16, 1629, the feast day of Saint Roch, is the official date marking the end of the pandemic.*

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### ***THE CURRENT CITY HALL***

*Between 1646 and 1650, Master François Issoire, doctor of law and ordinary judge, had his house built, with a spiral staircase, a house which is currently the Town Hall.*

### ***THE BROTHERHOODS OF LAUDUN***

- 1535 - Visitation of Our Lady*
- 1538 - Holy Spirit*
- 1550 - Corpus Christi*
- 1601 - Saint Elizabeth*
- 1648 - Our Lady of the Rosary*
- 1648 - Holy Savior*
- 1661 - Saint Joseph*
- 1668 - Saint Vincent the Vintner; 1647 -*

*the White Penitents (the chapel of the White Penitents was built after 1659, as evidenced by the deed recording the purchase of the houses in 1659).*

*Today, virtually nothing remains visible of the old town center, the medieval village of Sancta Fé on the hill of Sainte Foy.*

*In the 1960s, for safety and hygiene reasons, the Municipality decided to demolish the ruins to prevent any risk of accidents.*

*Subsequent Municipalities undertook restoration work on the chapel of the White Penitents and its terrace, the Madonna statue, the revitalization of the Jardin Planchon, the creation of a promenade, the covered market halls, etc.*

*It should be noted that in the 19th century, the buildings in the town center were abandoned. To avoid paying taxes, the owners destroyed the roofs, which led to the ruin of these remains in a very short time.*