

Chalons-en-Champagne, Notre-Dame-en-Vaux

The nave was shifted to the south of the space between the towers to widen the span, and therefore the existing towers sit on earlier foundations as part of a narrower church. The earliest remaining work is in parts of the crossing and the walls of the nave, with the suggestion that it was for a much lower building.

In the 40s, just before the crusade, the nave piers were installed, the western portal and the south porch. Without good evidence this has been dated to the 60s, but the presence of half a dozen of the carvers from the 30s and 40s makes that extremely unlikely. This may have been the last portal built until after the troops returned.

I discuss the dating of the great northern portals elsewhere.

Work was done on the towers and the crossing in the 50s, and in the next decade some work was done on the nave gallery and the foundations were laid for the new choir. Construction of the choir continued through the 70s into the 80s, with all the high vaults being completed in the 90s. Altogether the capitals show that the plan for the Notre-Dame choir was conceived at the time that the Saint-Remi walls had advanced to the window sills.

Notice that it is being laid out before its "mentor" at St-Remi had reached the level of the gallery, which means that if St-Remi were the inspiration it was hidden under scaffolding, and thus more likely to have been transmitted by the original designer.