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The Chapel of St. Frodulphe

Barjon, France

Contents

Figures

Introduction

The small chapel of St. Frodulphe (approximately 12 metres by 5 metres) is found at the east end of a still used cemetery in the tiny village of Barjon in the department of Côte-d'Or in Burgundy, France. Barjon is some 33 kilometres NNW of Dijon. The chapel itself is located at

Figure 1: The location of Barjon, France is indicated by the bull's eye in the centre of the map. Approximate scale: 1:1,000,000 (Bursaux 2017).

47.6111 N, 4.9583 E. As shown in the cover illustration, its walls are made of irregularly shaped stones mortared together in rough courses. The roof is covered with rough stone tiles. The local

limestone is known for its strength as a vernacular building material and, although it changes colour with weathering, is thought to get harder when exposed to the atmosphere (BUCAILLE and LEVI-STRAUS 1980: 58). Traditionally this stone is used for both the walls and the roof tiles (called *laves* in Burgundy). The chapel is surrounded on two full sides and incompletely on

Figure 2: Aerial view of a portion of Barjon showing locations of the church, the cemetery, the chateau and the chapel (BURSAUX 2017).

a third by revetment walls that hold back the soil of the local cemetery. A fourth side faces a gully and a substantial drop in height.

The present location of the chapel is less than four metres from the closest part of the Barjon chateau and about 35 metres from the parish church (Figure 2). All three buildings have medieval origins. A church in Barjon is mentioned as early as 1169 (FLAMMARION 2004: 54-5). A fortress is mentioned as early as 1368 (BEAUSEJOUR and GODARD 1909: LXI-II, no. 408). As discussed in detail later, an inscription above the north door of the chapel testifies to a date of 1486. While the church and the chapel are listed national monuments, the chateau is not and is privately owned (Trouvtou 2014). The chapel is usually locked, but can be accessed by contacting the mayor. Once a year in September, the chapel is involved in a village festival celebrating St. Frodulphe (the Sunday after September 16).

Inside the chapel, and mortared into the current floor, is a stone sarcophagus. It is believed to that of St. Frodulphe (or Frou) from the eighth century as is announced by the sign at the entrance to the graveyard (Figure 3). Thought to be of either Roman or, more probably, Merovingian origin, this sarcophagus is reported to have only some light original, wave-patterned decoration (RATEL and RATEL 2009: 44). Some documentary evidence supports an early date for a religious presence in Barjon: a priest donated *'omnes res quas… sitas in fundo Baiodrinse*' - loosely, all things situated in the Barjon area - to the abbey of Flavigny in 751 or 752 (BOUCHARD 1991: 45-6). Of course, ascribing ancient names to modern places is subject to debate, but a noticeable amount of pre-medieval archaeology is also associated with Barjon (RATEL and RATEL 2009). Among these are two, partial, likely Roman inscriptions associated with the chapel itself - one partial *in situ* (discussed below and not previously reported) and one

Figure 3: Sign at the entrance to the cemetery indicating an eighth century date for the tomb of St. Frou.

removed in the early 1900s (RATEL and RATEL 2009: 43-4). The main goal of the present study is to assess the earliest, likely date for the chapel. If the structure were, in fact, one from the eighth century, it would be of international significance as a unique example of a standing, vernacular burial chamber of the late Merovingian period.

Little published archaeological work has been done on the chapel. Such a state is unsurprising for a rarely used religious building in the midst of a contemporary cemetery in a small and obscure village far from any major construction projects. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century produced some brief mentions of the chapel in various publications. In keeping

with scholarly interest at the time of those publications, the attention was almost exclusively focused on the Roman era or earlier. Recently documentary research on the adjacent chateau has been published online through the university of Burgundy, but only mentions an associated chapel in passing (MOUILLEBOUCHE and GORRIA). A more thorough discussion of documentary sources follows later in this report.

Research Aims

The principal aim of this project is to determine the nature, date and purpose of the original construction. A secondary aim developed upon arrival at the site. The investigator was informed of plans by the mayor to drill holes in the sides of the buildings to help control the interior moisture levels (BERGER 2018). Thus recording the state of the building became an objective as well, but it was hoped that this secondary aim would be reasonably accomplished in the process of accomplishing the first.

Evaluating the age of the building is entangled with the question of its original purpose. The direct interpretation of the evidence of an ancient sarcophagus and likely Roman era inscriptions as evidence of an early date needs to be tempered by the use of ancient material by medieval people in the construction of buildings, perhaps for economic reasons (EATON 2000: 11). The presence of the sarcophagus suggests an original role as a burial chamber, perhaps from as early as the late Roman period. Being the sight of a saint's burial with a surrounding cemetery suggests the possibility of a later date within the context of the cult of the saints. The close physical proximity of the chateau suggests a possible role as a private chapel of the local lord consistent with the suggested fourteenth century origin date of the chateau (MOUILLEBOUCHE and GORRIA). These different possibilities are not necessarily mutually exclusive, as the earlier options could have changed over time into a later option (BAILEY 2016: 68-9). Since multiple phases might indicate a change in function through time, determining the plausible early phasing from the visible fabric of the building is one of the principle objective of the survey.

The literature on each of the above possibilities is prodigious, and a thorough review is well beyond the scope of this project. However, a brief mention of plausibly similar buildings in

each of these time periods is relevant. While built to a much higher standard than the existing chapel, the hypogeum at Weiden bei Köln stands today with internal measurements of some 3.5 metres by 4.5 metres and lies more than five metres below ground (TOYNBEE 1971: 212). This structure is and was a much more refined building than the chapel under consideration. It is made of carefully carved stones and has elaborate fixtures. These types of structures were recognised as the burial places of saints as Christianity spread or were reused for religious purposes. An ancient tomb in Saint-Maximin (near Aix-en-Provence) was claimed in 1279 to house the sarcophagus of Mary Magdalen (JANSEN 2000: 18). This chamber of approximately four metres by four metres chamber now contains four Gallo-Roman sarcophagi (CROOK 2000: 53-4). Similar construction was built in imitation of or as a replacement for previous structures as the middle ages progressed (CROOK 2000: 61-3). The close proximity of the standing, Barjon chapel to the standing chateau suggests the function of the chapel as a private chapel or oratory, a common feature of both early and late medieval noble dwellings (MORRIS 1989: 258-62; WOOD 2006: 66-7). The chapel under study is similarly narrow to the examples mentioned above, but conformity to the basic size does not indicate a date. Determining the early phasing of the building is important, but being able to find evidence to support particular dates is similarly important. Without being able to resort to absolute dating, evidence has to come from other sources and can be, at best, suggestive.

The chapel of St. Frodulphe itself is the subject of almost no published studies, and those that are published contain very little detail. Archaeological links to the past, however, have been published. Human occupation in the region around Mont Mercure (its peak is less than 500 metres from the chapel) has been described as ‘dense’ since the Hallstatt era (MARTIN 1964:

310-1). Indeed, various Gallo-Roman artefacts have been found in the area (RATEL and RATEL 2009). Perhaps the most relevant is a inscription, with lettering of the Roman imperial period, found on an unspecified exterior side of a slab that formed the base of the altar before 1890 (REINACH 1895). This inscription is discussed in detail in the section on documentary research, but other inscriptions were also found in the process of this survey. They allow some dates to be fixed and shed light on otherwise unrecorded (or at least, unpublished) events that involved the building. By using the evidence of these inscriptions and the information from the survey, the goal is to assess what support there is for both the likely size, date and the early purpose of the original structure or structures.

Methodology

The chapel is not an easy building to survey despite its small size. Surrounding the building on two sides (north and west) and a substantial portion of a third (south) is a retaining wall, approximately one half metre from the sides of the building and approximately one metre high (Figure 4). The retaining wall allows the ground of the surrounding cemetery to be reasonably level, despite the slope of the ground on which the chapel was built. However, the higher ground level of the cemetery effectively screens substantial portions of the exterior walls from rectified photography. Furthermore, the narrow space allows an adult to stand between the

Figure 4: View towards the west of the ground around the north door with the narrow gap between the wall of the chapel (left) and the retaining wall (right). Note the plinth courses on the east side of the door and the absence of plinth courses on the west side.

wall and the building, but within such confined space, detailed observation of the lower courses of the walls is difficult.

Resources further restricted the choice in methodology. A lack of time prevented a stone-by-stone recording, which could provide a statistical assessment of the size of stones used and perhaps lead to helpful conclusions on the variation of stone size and shape. Such information would aid a careful phasing of the stone walls. However, the north, west and south sides of the building have large areas that appear to have been covered with additional layers of mortar. The ambiguity caused by these areas decreases the value of a stone-by-stone recording. Furthermore, the lower courses of the north wall would have required substantial cleaning to achieve accurate recording.

Three narrower problems with taking measurements are worth mentioning. First, a modern, private garage is physically connected to the chapel at its northeast corner. The area immediately to the east of this juncture is private property with plants that hindered both physical and visual access. Secondly, the north door was never opened. There is no handle or lock; it appears to be permanently closed, so no direct measurements were taken. Thirdly, the altar hindered measurements at the east end of the interior width, the window and the height. All these issues were addressed by very awkward measurements that were less reliable than most of the other measurements.

Given the restrictions mentioned above and the general lack of published work on the building, a simple survey was the chosen methodology. The choice was made to postpone detailed recording of the fixtures inside the chapel only because they were not originally viewed as important to the research aims. The roof was known to be a modern addition so little attention

was paid to it as well. Obviously more detailed study is merited but this project represents a beginning. The fieldwork for this project was executed by the author of this paper and Elizabeth Knight on two rather cold days: 19 November 2018 and the morning of the 20th. The available equipment included a tape measure, a folding ruler, some string and a line level. Both a digital camera, a 12 Megapixel Panasonic Lumix DMX-FP8, and a mobile phone, a Google Pixel XL, were used to take photographs. Unless otherwise noted, all photographs were taken by one of the two members of the survey team. The owner of the adjacent chateau, Olivier Berger, a professional marine archaeologist, was incredibly kind to us during this work. He fed us, allowed us to warm up and offered much information that was not otherwise obtainable, including information from the mayor of Barjon who had unfortunately been hospitalised before our visit. Yves DEGOIX, known to the author only via email, has been enormously helpful in general discussions and specifically with the interpretation of the inscription on the sarcophagus.

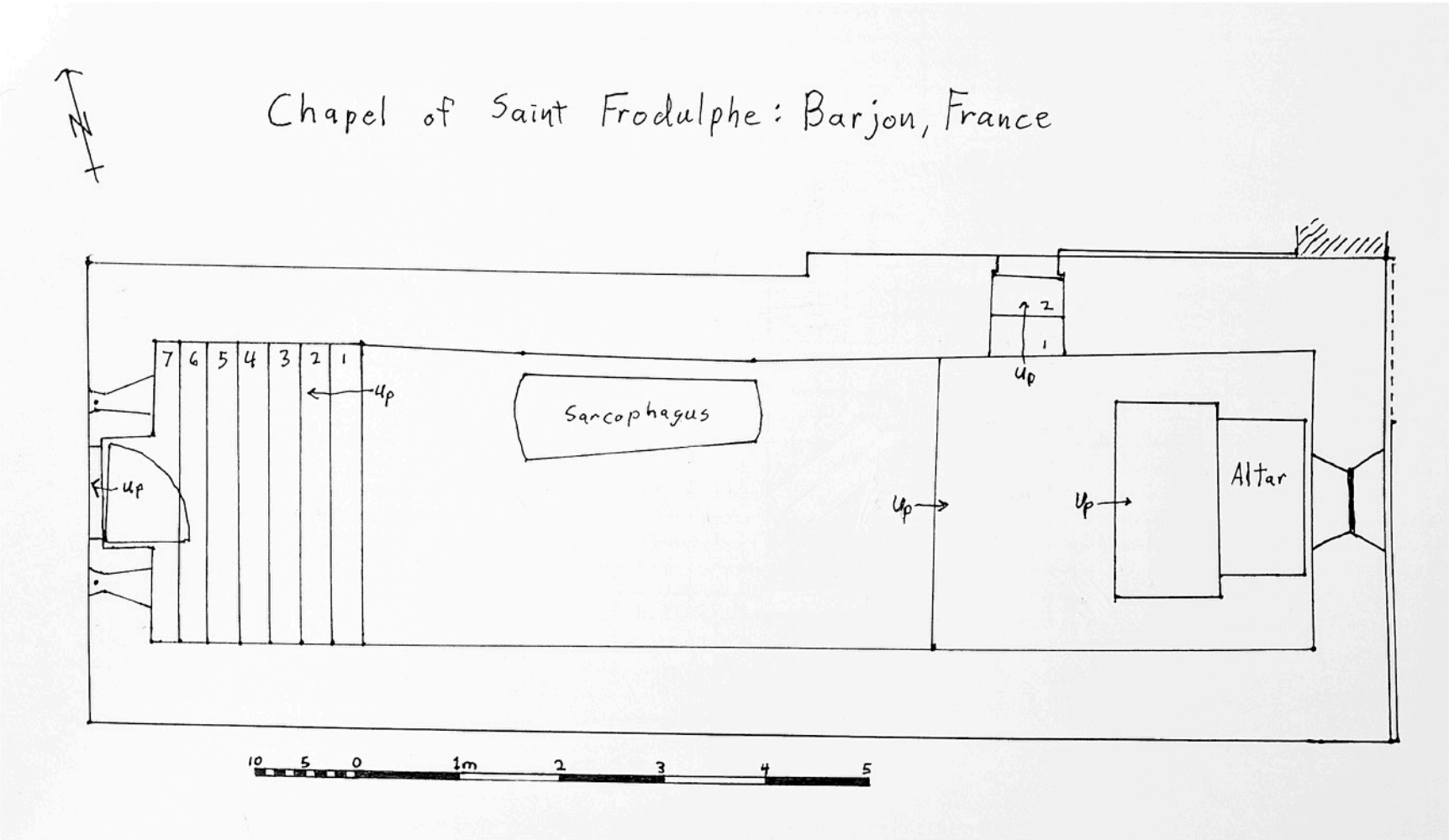

Figure 5: Measured plan of chapel of Saint Frodulphe.

Description of Building

Figure 5 presents a measured plan with a scale. The drawing was made from a likely flawed assumption that the southern interior wall was flat and that it runs parallel to the southern exterior wall. The thicknesses of the walls are largely deduced. Only the thickness of the west doorway passage is securely measured. Thus, the regularity of the west wall thickness was an independent starting point of the reconstruction represented in the measured plan.

The building has some obvious problems with deterioration and is in need of repointing. Except for the eastern exterior, each wall has significant areas of the mortar discoloured by apparent water absorption. Additionally, the north and west sides of the building have numerous cracks in the mortar with some areas appearing to have lost patches of mortar. The western end of the building appears to have a slight sag in it towards the southwest. The building appears nonetheless intact with no unintended holes in the walls.

All the exterior walls are composed of irregular stones mortared together. Colour differences suggest the use of different types of stone, but these differences are likely to be related to the varying amounts of weathering and cleaning. The stones are generally a mixture of a wide range of sizes with some undressed, some roughly dressed and others, such as the plinth stones of the west end, well dressed. Some modern concrete appears to have been used in the southwest corner to shore up a still visible sag.

The east side of the building (Figure 6) is pierced by a protected, stain glass window 0.62 metres wide and 1.48 metres tall in a recess composed of well dressed stone. A moulded plinth supports the base of the wall, but the plinth wall is 0.90 metres high at the exposed southeast end. The interior floor of the chancel is calculated to be 0.22 metres above this visible edge; the floor

Figure 6: East end of chapel.

Figure 7: Early view of east end of chapel (undated postcard with unknown provenance).

of the nave is only 0.08 metres above it. A stone cross with attached base sits atop the eastern wall of the chapel. The base sits 3.26 metres above the top of the plinth. Thus the total elevation from the ground at the southeast corner is 4.16 metres. Generally the stone of the east end of the building appears relatively consistent in colour. It is the only side of the building that can be compared to early photographs as found on an undated, purchased postcard (Figure 7, BERGER 2018). The use of such an unprovenanced source is questionable, but as the only available early photograph it seemed too important to neglect. Various walls and vegetation obscure the chapel in the postcard, but the presence of some sort of degenerating plaster covering is obvious. A stone wall appears to abut the chapel at the northeast corner and stretches off to the north. The standing chapel abuts a modern garage built next to a stone wall isolating the cemetery; this wall appears to follow the same line as the wall in the postcard. The adjoining property at the

Figure 8: Detail of east end at northeast corner.

northeast corner is currently privately owned, and private possessions and plants obscured the intersection with the modern garage (Figure 8). Nonetheless, some of the quoining can be identified as long-and-short work; these quoins touch the wall of the garage. On the same private property, exterior steps leading to a terraced piece of land obscure most of the lower courses of the plinth wall (Figure 9). The measured width to the edge of the quoins is 4.80 metres. This represents the edge of the chapel, and the measured lengths of the various sides of the building cannot be reconciled without using that length.

Figure 9: View towards north of east end along the plinth course.

The south wall of the building (Figure 10) has wide variations in shapes of the stones, and different types of mortar, and perhaps even remnants of the plaster shown in the antique postcard. The surface is reasonably clean despite some stains caused by moisture absorbed into

Figure 10: The south wall from the southwest.

the mortar. The close proximity of the chateau prevents taking a single photograph directly from the front. The south wall is 12.73 metres long. At the west end, the wall rises 1.51 metres from the ground to the eves, but at the east end, it rises 2.27 metres from the ground. This wall is easily seen to have three broad phases: a well ordered eastern end, a less well ordered western end, and a rather disordered central section. A noticeable bulge occurs in the wall toward the

Figure 11: Southwest corner from above retaining wall.

west end and is easily detected when looking along the wall towards the east (Figures 11 and 12). As the modern concrete and weak quoining in the southeast corner suggests, this section of wall seems to have been modified repeatedly over the years. This section ends approximately at the westernmost, large visible moisture stain shown in Figure 10; thus, it stretches from the western end to approximately the first 3.5 to 4.0 metres east along the wall. The central section of the

Figure 12: View along the south wall towards the east. Note the bulge distinguished by rough stone at the bottom and curve inward from there of all but the topmost courses.

Figure 13: Middle section of south wall stretching from about 3.5 m east of west end to 8 m east. Top is west; bottom is east. Note large grey stones at the bottom.

wall (Figure 13) stretches eastward from the moisture stain until just short of the full 8.0 metres mark as measured from the west. The topmost course is composed of large stones of relatively even size to support the roof. Next down are three or four courses which closely match the stones

of the east end. These courses extend further down on both the east and west ends of this middle section. Small irregular stones heavily covered in mortar are then underpinned by two long, grey stones that are the lowest identifiable stones. The far east end of the south wall is relatively well ordered and corresponds well with the east end of the building. The phasing observed in this wall is essential for the analysis to follow.

The west end of the chapel, with the only entrance still used at the time of this survey, has some well dressed stones used around the door and the two unglazed windows, but is otherwise characterised by irregular stones arranged in loose courses (Figure 14). A belfry composed of at least three large pieces of stone sits well above the door with a slight sag to the south. The base of the belfry was measured to lie 3.36 metres above the ground at the southern edge of the doorway. The staining of the mortar beneath the belfry is quite noticeable even when the weather is dry. Several different types of mortar and/or concrete are visible. This side of the building stretches unevenly from side to side for a measured width of some 4.58 metres at 1.20 metres above ground level at the southern edge of the doorway. The lintel is chamfered as are the stones around the door frame and windows, with only one exception. The bottom stone of the northern window is not chamfered. The windows are not at the same height. Each window contains a substantial, vertical iron bar that is perhaps to strengthen the weight-bearing potential of the windows. The threshold stone is split in an asymmetric manner with respect to the door and belfry. The split rests towards the north side of the building. The front of the building is a confused mixture of stones and styles. It is likely that this reflects numerous alterations and repairs over the years.

Figure 14: West end of chapel.

The north wall is heavily obscured by the nearby retaining wall (Figure 15). The visible portion of the wall is 12.15 metres. The section of the north wall at the very east end is blocked by an abutting, perpendicular stone wall with an overlap of some 0.90 metres. At the west end, the height from ground to eaves is 1.20 metres; adjacent to the abutting wall the height is 1.66 metres. A two corner juncture appears 7.13 metres from the west end of the building. The north wall projects out only 0.24 metres as a result of this junction. The associated projection stretches eastward 5.02 metres to the abutting wall. A doorway with gabling above pierces the wall. On the chamfered, ogee arched lintel lies the only external inscription. The chamfering continues down the doorframe. The retaining wall has prevented recent cleaning of the parts of the wall.

Figure 15: North side of building photographed in panoramic style from the northwest. An inscription is found above the door beneath the gable. The retaining wall obscures the lower courses of the building.

North Door Inscription

The inscription found above the north door of the chapel (Figure 16) has been reported as the following (Leszicaunais 2006):

"Mess(ir)e p(ierre) Gauthot p(rêtre) Curé/

L'an M cccc iiii xx vi fut f(aic)te."

The accuracy of this reading is debatable, but certain aspects of it appear to be accurate and, for the moment, no other plausible interpretation is available. In English, this reading might be rendered as "Seigneur Pierre Gauthot, priest, curate // the year 1486 (it) was erected." A nineteenth century reference confirms the date and suggests that this inscription has been published elsewhere, but the reference is vague as to whether the confirmation is from this inscription or from an independent documentary source (CADCO 1872: 97). The right side of the inscription is now very difficult to discern, perhaps because the inscription was sand-blasted (BERGER 2018). The current state of the inscription nevertheless suggests that at least the last two letters or symbols of the second line were not part of the above, reported reading. The other identified lettering is,

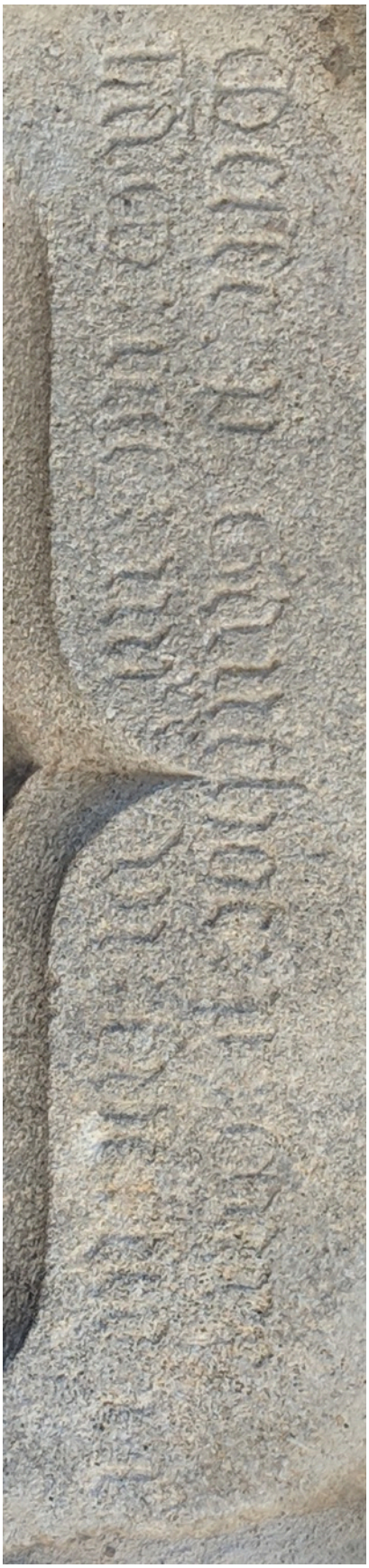

Figure 16: Inscription above the north door.

nonetheless, fairly credible as the following discussion indicates.

The script of this inscription appears to be a variant of the Gothic textura (textualis) that spread from northern France and Belgium as early as the eleventh century with very similar lettering found in later manuscripts (BISCHOFF 1990: 127). A reconstruction (Figure 17) of the reported inscription has been made with the lower-case lettering of TILLOTSON(2011) and the upper-case lettering of MARCOS(2017: 57). The latter is described as a 'Gothic Textura Prescissa', but both fonts are based on expensively produced manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth century. In this light, the script used for the inscription might be better described as a 'Gothic bastarda' or *lettres bourguignonnes* (BISCHOFF 1990: 143). The presence of apparent colons in the text is part of a trend that started at the end of the thirteenth century to add punctuation to increase readability (DEBIAIS *et al.* 2007: 132). This reconstruction seems to correspond quite well with the first line of the photographed inscription in Figure 16.

Figure 17: Reconstruction of 'Messe p Gauthot p Cure' using the lettering of TILLOTSON (2011) and MARCOS (2017: 57) for comparison to inscription in Figure 16.

The second line of the transcription is also supportable. It begins with what is likely to be an abbreviation as indicated by the bars over the letters - arguably an 'h' and an 'n'. However, afterwards, the year is given as "M CCCC IIII^{xx} VI" for 1486. CAPELLI (1982: 45) described this representation exactly for manuscripts in medieval French for dates with the 'IIII' used as a multiplier of the small superscript 'XX'. The right hand side of the reported transcription does

not agree with what appears to be rather obvious lettering beyond anything that could be ‘fut fte”. Nonetheless the date is a clear. The pertinent conclusion, thus, for the building is that part of the building can be dated to 1486 as stated explicitly in a nineteenth century publication with no reference or justification (CADCO 1872: 97). The style of the letters used in the inscription generally agrees with this date.

North Wall Juncture

A close examination of the northern wall juncture with its two sharp corners could in principle indicate which section of the building came first (Figure 18). Because of the need for cleaning and the ambiguity caused by a lot of obscuring mortar, no obvious conclusion can be made. Nonetheless, this corner does have important implications for identifying the oldest stonework. The stonework at the top of the exterior corner seems to be part of relatively consistently sized course that appears on both the north and south walls. This course is distinctive for its relative uniformity. This evenness helps to provide a consistent base for the roof. The large quoin in the penultimate, topmost course seems to have a border at the interior corner. Very similar stones are found at the northwest corner, the southeast corner and northeast corner of the building. Beneath this large quoin are what appears to be three, relatively flat stones in a version of face-alternate quoining. The middle one could extend into the interior corner. Below this section, the stonework is much less clear with mortar and moss covering much of the stonework. What is visible is several smaller, heavily mortared stones of apparently the same type as the face-alternating above them. These stones are irregular in shape. These same irregularly sized, rough stones continue both to the east and to the west. At ground level is what appears to be a single, nicely squared flat stone of indeterminate size. Perhaps this stone is a

Figure 18: Detail of north wall juncture at 7.13 metres east of west end of building.

found Roman stone, but it could indicate a different context. Nowhere else is there supporting data for such a different context. The smaller irregular stones appear then to be the oldest stonework, but could be the same as those of the face-alternating quoins. The colour of these stones, but obviously not the size, is consistent with those of the large stones found at the base of the middle section of the south wall (see Figure 13).

Interior

The ceiling inside this building is a seemingly single pointed barrel vault covered in plaster. At the entrance at the west end of the building is a small platform of 0.28 metres lies 0.11 centimetres below the threshold of the door. Seven steps then descend approximately 0.98 metres

Figure 19: Interior view of western entrance from the base of the stairs.

Figure 20: Interior of chapel from top of western stairs.

to a patterned, tiled floor. The last step rises only 0.05 metres above the tiling of the floor and appears to descend below the level of the tiling (Figure 19). The tiling surrounds a sarcophagus on the north side of the nave with the tiles cut to match the edge without disrupting the pattern (Figure 20). The nave is 5.66 metres long. The chancel area is demarcated by a step up of 0.14 metres, a change in tiling and altar rails. A second doorway on the north side of the building enters just after the rails. Towards the east end is a wide platform on which two, clearly movable statues stand. This 1.88-metre wide platform is only approximately centred with respect to the walls but is centrally placed under the window at the east end of the chapel. A 1.5 metre wide altar rises up behind this platform and is also centred with respect to the window but not the

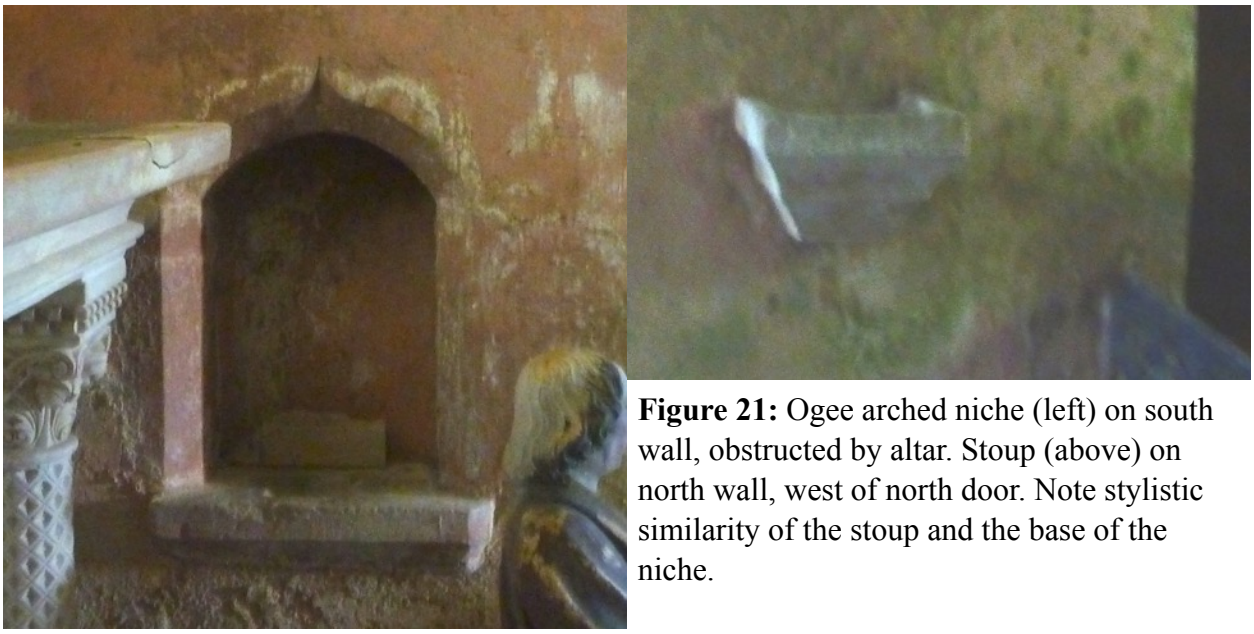

Figure 21: Ogee arched niche (left) on south wall, obstructed by altar. Stoup (above) on north wall, west of north door. Note stylistic similarity of the stoup and the base of the niche.

walls. Part of the altar obscures the window. The altar is situated a few centimetres from the east wall. One niche, empty, is found in the south wall at the edge between the platform and the altar (Figure 21). The top of that niche is barely above the height of the main platform of the altar. One of the five small shelves - apparently for statues - is found adjacent to the niche. Two other shelves are found symmetrically placed on either side of the east window; one of these was

Figure 22: Curvature of interior north wall paralleling north side of sarcophagus.

occupied with a statue. The only one of stone is found to the west of the north door and could have served as a a font for holy water - a stoup - in the past (Figure 21). One interesting feature of the interior is the distinct curvature in the northern wall that is not immediately obvious upon entering from the west. Near the north door, however, the curvature in the wall is obvious and parallels the northern edge of the sarcophagus (Figure 22)

Sarcophagus

Entombing Christian saints and kings in Gallo-Roman sarcophagi in Merovingian times was common (DODWELL 1982: 126). Although interesting, differentiating between a Roman or Merovingian sarcophagus thus offers no insight in assessing a date for the chapel.

COROT (1917) presented the first known depiction of the sarcophagus in a publication (Figure 23). COROT mentions the circular opening at the end, sometimes referred to as a fenestella, and the tradition of placing one's head inside the opening to cure migraines. Such openings generally permit the viewing of relics. Noting the pattern of lines represented in COROT's depiction, modern reference is made to bands of light relief (RATEL and RATEL 2009: 44). Such an impression is hard to confirm with modern photography, but the reported shape of the stone is. Much more noticeable is the presence of an inscription (Figure 24). A plausible transcription of the part still legible is (DEGOIX 2018):

...ANI MILLOT CURE DE BARJON DECLARE AVOIR OB(SERVÉ?) /

... (P)AR L'INTERCESSION DE SAINT FRODULPHE…/

(S)AINT ANTOINE DE PADIE UN GRAND SOULAGEMENT/

DANS MA MALADIE/

1773

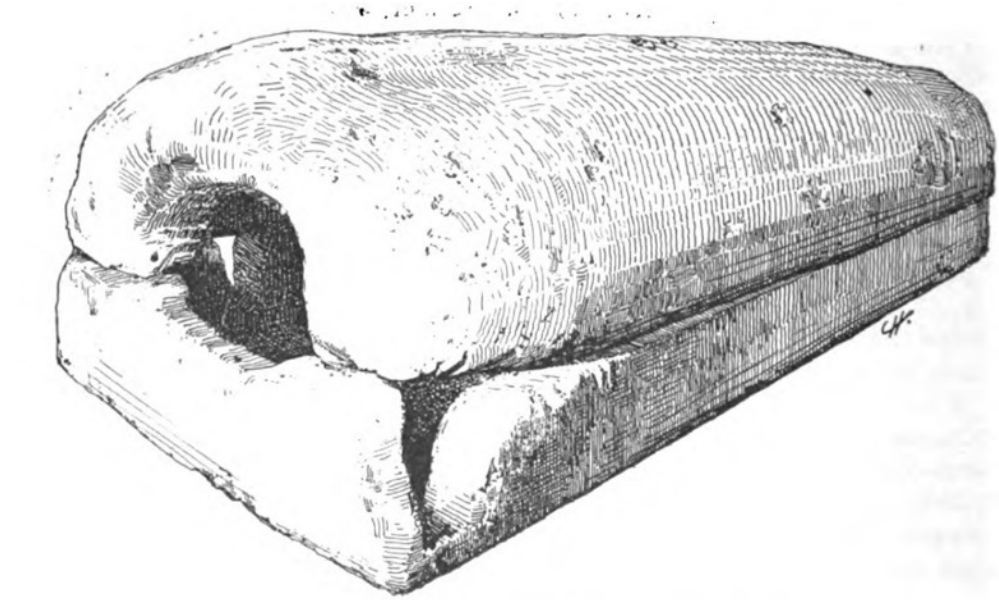

Figure 23: Sarcophagus inside chapel of St. Frodulphe. Drawing from COROT (1917) and photograph.

The parish register for Barjon provides the information that Nicolas Antoine Millot, the curate of Barjon, died 15 January 1774 at Barjon at the age of 36 (DEGOIX 2018 citing AD21: 104). Thus the likely translation of the original inscription might be rendered as: ‘Antione Millot, curate of Barjon, declares that he has observed by the intercession of Saint Frodulphe (and) Saint Antoine of Padua a great relief in my illness, 1773’.

Above the first legible part of the first line of the above inscription is a presumably later inscription:

J(?) G 183(?)6

Perhaps this is the initials JG and the date 1836.

A large indentation at the end of the first and second lines as well as numerous smaller dints in the inscription suggest significant damage occurred after 1773, perhaps during the French revolution. If destruction were the aim, the vandals gave up. That the building may have

Figure 24: Inscription on cover of sarcophagus with date of 1773 inscribed lightly in last towards the middle of image. Note the damage done to the right hand side of the inscription.

suffered similar treatment is certainly plausible. The damage to the sarcophagus could have resulted from a collapse of the building. At any point the sarcophagus could have been moved but only if the motivation and resources were there. The formidable bulk of the cover suggests a lot of weight. The possible immobility of the sarcophagus is also suggested by the view of the interior of the sarcophagus (Figure 25). The observable cracks in the side could be the result of the force used to create the fenestella or from stress from water or weight while the sarcophagus was, presumably, buried. More interesting is the lack of a visible bottom to the sarcophagus. The rocky soil beneath the sarcophagus' cover could represent the ground on which the body was

Figure 25: Photograph through the fenestella of the sarcophagus. Numerous fractures in the side and a bottom of rocky soil are apparent.

lain, the floor of the original building or the later floor if the sarcophagus had been moved. If the sarcophagus was buried, water flow may have led to the accumulation of soil and rock on top of

a now invisible bottom. Although far from irrefutable, overall, the evidence lends itself most easily to the idea that the sarcophagus was not moved.

Inscription Near the Altar

A part of an inscription, previously covered entirely with plaster, is now visible on the southeast corner of the platform or step immediately in front of the altar (Figure 26). The

Figure 26: Partial inscription on southeast corner of platform in front of altar, the edge of which is a the bottom right of the photo.

inscription appears to be the upper left hand of a larger inscription. The lettering appears to be in three lines, but the presence of a border may indicate that the top line is part of a border

inscription around a central text. Notably, the inscription does not appear to be in an original position. It was apparently reused.

Documentary Research

A detailed documentary record of the chapel of St. Frodulphe would require a thorough search of manuscript records. However, published works provide some significant, if limited,

Figure 27: Early nineteenth century map to compare to modern aerial view of Figure 2 (Cadastre Napoléonien 1836).

perspective on several different aspects of the building and its history. Figure 27 shows that the basic arrangement and form of the chateau, chapel and church have not changed substantially since the early part of the nineteenth century. The map was rotated to allow an easier comparison.

Saint Frodulphe (or Frou or Frodulfus or *Frodulfus*) is an obscure saint, and the related documentary sources offer little help in dating the chapel. The story of this saint being in Barjon is thought to originate with a *breviarium* written in the sixteenth century around Langres and is described as '*fabriquée'* (fabricated) (MARILIER 1991: 50-1). This story links Frodulphe to Saint Merry (or Médéric or Merri or *Medericu*s) who baptised and trained him. Frodulphe's name is mentioned only once in the twelfth century document thought to be a reflection of an original version written at the end of the ninth century (AA SS Aug. VI, C0522A; BRUAND 2002: 127, note 32). No alternative explanation for why the sarcophagus in Barjon is associated with Frodulphe has been found. The tradition associated with Saint Merry places Frodulphe's death in Paris where his remains were kept with his master's reliquary after the construction of the new church of Saint Merry in the 1500s (HUYSMANS 1908: 90-1). An author of the 1700s resolved the discrepancy by suggesting that Saint Frodulphe of Barjon is a different Frodulphe (LEBEUF 1864: 200). Although this suggestion resolves the conflict, it does not aid in providing a plausible date for the chapel before the sixteenth century *breviarium*. The documentary evidence surrounding saint Frodulphe thus indirectly supports the notion of this sarcophagus being discovered at some later time than when the saint lived, but offers no likely date for the discovery before the sixteenth century.

Several older works mention a chapel in Barjon, but the earliest of them are ambiguous in detail. Documents of 1609 and 1677 mention a chapel associated with the lordship of Barjon but do not specifically identify it with either a cemetery or Saint Frodulphe (MOUILLEBOUCHE and GORRIA). COURTEPEE (1781: 508) mentions the 'antique et basse' (old and lowly) chapel in the cemetery of Barjon with the empty tomb of Saint Frodulphe. He goes on to say that

his body had been transferred to a reliquary in the church, but that the head had been transferred to Grancey. ‘Ruinous’ is the only adjective clearly describing the state of the building, but he comments that it deserves to be better maintained as it was often frequented by strangers. The tense used is imperfect and thus implies a continuing action. With pilgrims visiting it, the ruinous state may simply have meant it needed some paint. A late nineteenth century author - thus after the French revolution - states that the building was restored in the early part of that century and has only three openings - two doors and a window at the chancel end of the church (MOREAU 2007). This last reference is the first to describe anything specific about the chapel. Since the current chapel has two windows on either side of the front door in addition to the other named openings, one can only wonder if these windows were added after the nineteenth century or were simply not worth mentioning. A brief description of the chapel from 1872 mentions a side door (presumably the north door) and a date of 1486 for the construction of that part of the building. It adds that there are two bays, which are the only old parts, are from the fifteenth century (CADCO 1872: 97). Thus, the building clearly has a long history, but the details of the use and origins are unclear.

A partial inscription found on an unspecified exterior side of a slab that formed the base of the altar before 1890 has been mentioned in multiple publications. REINACH (1895) states that the slab stuck out some 15 to 20 centimetres and blocked the installation of a new altar, presumably the current one. Although the slab was broken up, the work of several people allowed the inscription to be recovered. It read: MATVRI SIIDATIANI / BANDVLIA MARCIILLI. The use of ‘II’ for an ‘E’ is, according to Reinach, associated with the Roman imperial period in Gaul. The interpretation of this inscription, presumed to be partial, is: ‘Of

Maturius Sedatianus, Bandulia, daughter of Marcellus' (RATEL and RATEL 2009: 44). MORILLOT (1885: 119), furthermore, indicated that he was able to observe the inscription before the 1890 renovation of the altar. He also noted that slab in question supported a stone altar that was covered by an altar in wood. He goes on to suggest that saint Frodulphe had then performed Christian services on '*cet autel païen*' (this pagan altar). This altar then could be one that was used for Roman funerary rites and was perhaps surrounded by a walled enclosure of some sort as known from elsewhere (TOYNBEE 1971: 51, 80). If not destroyed like the slab with the inscription, this original altar could still lie under the new altar, just as it was under the previous wooden altar.

Both the off-hand discussion of renovation and the plausible visibility of the inscription bring up important issues. Obviously the chapel underwent renovation around 1890. Local sources say that both the flooring and the stairs at the western door were a result of this renovation (BERGER 2018, citing the mayor). As mentioned above, a nineteenth century mentions only three openings. The current building has five, of which the two open windows of the west wall were not mentioned. Given that moisture is still a problem inside the chapel and that the suggested solution is opening more holes in the building, the windows of the west wall may have been added at any time. Furthermore, as discussed above, the sarcophagus has a round hole into which the faithful can place their head for healing. Morillot's article suggests that the inscription could have been seen without too much effort at some point. The importance of the appearance of antiquity and therefore authority in the medieval mind is, of course, relevant to a possible late medieval origin when the need for antiquity was all the more important for a claim to an ancient saint's tomb (EATON 2000: 134). However, for a more literate faithful, a partial

Roman inscription would have been a distraction. The current position of the sarcophagus would not have allowed seeing the inscription when near the business end of the sarcophagus, but would have been seen by people entering from the north door.

A brief report in the Dijon newspaper from 2013 mentions two different attempts at renovation of the chapel in recent times (Bien Public 2013). The first had used defective materials, and thus a second renovation was done. The specifics mentioned are the replacement of the roof with the cleaning of the cross and belfry - presumably those on top of the roof. The refuse for some of this work is found to the southeast of the building in the gulley (BERGER 2018).

Although the documentary evidence given above is not helpfully specific, it does allow a number of reasonable conclusions. The constancy of the basic outline of the building need not be questioned over the last 200 years. However, the documentary record does indicate a number of renovations. The one at the end of the nineteenth century changed the altar, the flooring and the steps at one end. The renovation at the beginning of the nineteenth century came after the French revolution which in general led to a large amount of destruction of church property throughout France. However, even before that event, the state of the chapel was described as ruinous, although the specific meaning of that is rather unclear. Careful reading of the documentary sources also hint at the possibility of the sarcophagus being in a different spot within the chapel and the possibility that the windows of the west end could possibly post-date the mid-nineteenth century. These hints would require substantiation from features of the building to be given any credence.

Discussion and Analysis

The chapel of Saint Frodulphe appears as a single-celled building on the inside but as a two-celled building on the outside. In the interior the chancel is differentiated from the nave by altar railings and a small step up (Figure 20). Such an arrangement is found in 'small parish churches, manorial chapels, castle chapels and those attached to colleges and other institutions' (RODWELL 2012: 66). The exterior reflects a two-celled plan as seen in the 0.24 metre projection on the north side of the building toward the east end (Figure 15). For a medieval parish church, the maintenance of a church's two parts, the chancel and the nave, fell to different groups respectively: the rector and the people (RODWELL 2012: 67). The interpretation of the inscription over the north door ascribes a curate as being responsible for construction in 1486 (Figure 16). If this construction was for a manorial or castle chapel, the entire extent of the 1486 building may have been restricted to the chancel area. The double corner juncture, however, appears to have similar stonework going both to the east and to the west away from the juncture in the lowest stone courses (Figure 18). These courses likely represent the original stonework for this date and suggest that the chancel and nave were constructed at the same time.

The southern wall, however, tells a different story (Figure 10). Three gross phases are seen in the exterior of the southern wall, each of approximately equal length. The stonework of the central section of the wall is comparatively disordered compared to either end. The workmanship and even some of the stones themselves are unlike any other part of the exterior wall (Figure 13). This odd stonework might have been associated with a low-lying entrance into the chapel, perhaps from the chateau which is less than five metres to the south and originally on a downward slope. The different phases of the southern wall combined with the consistent

phasing of the northern wall around the north side projection suggests that this middle section of the southern wall is earlier than 1486. The position of the sarcophagus inside the chapel is directly opposite this middle southern-wall phase. The odd bulge in the northern interior wall that follows the northern edge of the sarcophagus (on the right in Figure 22) suggests the builders of 1486 may have tried to accommodate an older wall near the sarcophagus, perhaps in order to preserve the sanctity of the site. The plausibility of such an idea is easily seen on the measured plan (Figure 5). The original floor may well have been dirt as suggested by the dirt and stone found in the bottom of the sarcophagus (Figure 25), although this material may have been accumulated from wash into the sarcophagus while buried. Thus the nave should be viewed as the original part of the building and should be dated sometime before 1486.

The western end of the chapel appears to be a later addition. On the southern wall towards the western end a noticeable bulge in the stonework occurs at the base of the exterior wall (Figures 11 and 12). The western face of the chapel is a rather odd mixture of stone and styles (Figure 14). The windows are at different heights and are reinforced with iron bars. Perhaps these were added to help with the moisture levels inside the chapel. What appears to be modern concrete is used in the southwest corner of the building as opposed to quoins. The western door does not align with the threshold stone nor with the peak in the ceiling (Figure 19). All of these observations align with the idea of numerous modifications, some apparently within the last century.

Other information supports the idea of the western end being a later addition. Medieval churches did not have western doors for the people, but instead had doors on the north or south walls; the western entrances were ceremonial (RODWELL 2012: 68). The presence of the stoup

near the north door suggests the north door was at some point the main access for the people (right in Figure 21). The niche (left in Figure 20) is currently obstructed by the altar. This niche with its ogee arch is stylistically consistent with the ogee arch of the inscribed lintel above the north door (Figure 16) and is presumably of a similar date. Thus the present location and size of the altar is unlikely to date from 1486. The lower portion of the niche matches the style of the lower portion of the stoup, and thus this stoup is likely to be from the era of 1486. This evidence, then, supports the north door as the main entrance in 1486. The apparent phasing seen in the south wall (Figure 10) with a sharp contrast between the western end, the middle and the eastern end suggests a different date for the western end. Perhaps then, the western end was built at the time of the infilling of the cemetery area that raised the level of the ground and necessitated the building of the retaining walls.

The proposed, gross phasing of the building can now be outlined. The original phase of the building surrounded the present location of the sarcophagus. In the standing chapel, this phase would correspond roughly to the nave, the area from the bottom of the steps to the chancel (approximately 5.6 metres in length beginning about 2.8 metres from exterior of the west wall). The entrance to this building would have been from the south. In 1486 a new phase was constructed at the east end of the standing building. This phase corresponds to the chancel area. Sometime after 1486, a western entrance with descending stairs was installed. Plausibly this entrance was introduced at the same time as the original southern entrance was removed. The timing could correspond to a formal dissociation of the chapel from the chateau. More securely the current western entrance was installed to compensate for a significant rise in the land around the chapel and concomitant construction of retaining walls.

The presence of plausibly Roman inscriptions and stonework should not bear on the dating of the original building. As shown in Figure 26, an *in situ* inscription does not appear to be anything other than a reused stone. Indeed, it was covered with plaster. The relationship between the niche and the standing altar suggests that the altar associated with the inscription reported by REINACH (1895) was not there in 1486. Thus any underlying stonework or inscriptions were likely placed there afterwards or used in the construction in 1486.

More generally, there is no convincing evidence from the building survey to indicate a date much before the date of the inscription - 1486, despite the presence of likely Roman inscriptions and Merovingian sarcophagus mortared into the present floor. Indeed, such evidence alone is not useful for dating because of the frequent appearance of Roman stonework in medieval buildings (EATON 2000: 58-66, Table 26). In Barjon within recent years, additional sarcophagi were recognised after their destruction by construction equipment only some 50 metres to the east of the chapel (BERGER 2018). The presence of a number of older burials in the area nearby had been previously acknowledged (RATEL and RATEL 2009: 44). It would then be unsurprising then that a sarcophagus was discovered near the current location of the chapel. The adjacent chateau is first testified in the fourteenth and fifteenth century (MOUILLEBOUCHE and GORRIA). Perhaps in the construction or daily operations of the chateau, such a discovery could have been made. The appearance of the first *vita* of St. Frodulphe in the sixteenth century likely has more to do with the counter-reformation's stricter requirements for recognising a saint's relics than with the timing of the discovery, but the late date supports a late discovery of the sarcophagus (OLDS 2012: 137). The inherent difficulty of non-destructive archaeological assessment, however, calls into question the possibility on a late

medieval date. Indeed some interesting parallels with this chapel and certain late antique buildings is notable as mentioned above. Furthermore, both documentary and archaeological sources support occupation in Barjon from a much earlier date. However, if the sarcophagus had been identified earlier as that of Saint Frodulphe, the church would most likely be located there and not fifty metres away (for example, ZADORA-RIO 2003: 9-11). Although arguing from the basis of absence is shaky, the charters acknowledging a church in Barjon from both 1169 and 1170 specify the dedication to saints for churches both before and after it in the respective charters, and the church in Barjon is among a considerable number that have no named saint associated with it (FLAMMARION 2004: 40-1, 54-5). The suggestion, then, is that no association with Saint Frodulphe was present in the twelfth century. If an identified saint's tomb had been present, the church would have certainly born his name and likely be placed on or near his tomb. In the case of Barjon, the chateau is more obviously associated with the tomb.

Conclusion

The earliest phase of the building is likely associated with the current location of the sarcophagus. There is no ambiguity about the close parallel of the interior north wall and the northern edge of the sarcophagus. The visible, interior bulge of the north wall of the nave suggests this wall was conserved when the 'new' east end of the building was added, presumably in 1486. The original entrance to the building was likely on the south side of the building opposite to the sarcophagus. This assumption is based on the visible, exterior context changes for the lowest courses of the wall 3.5 and 8 metres eastward from the west end of the building (Figure 13). This distance contains the location of the sarcophagus on the north side of the building. A later phase is likely to be the introduction of the western stairs and western entrance. Generally western entrances were the ceremonial entrance, and the people's entrance was to the south and rarely only from the north (RODWELL 2012: 68). Arguably such a new, western entrance was necessitated by the rising ground levels of the cemetery to the north and west of the chapel, and the separation of the chateau's influence on the chapel. Presumably when the retaining walls were built and the land filled in, a new entrance was needed. How and when such an event occurred is unknown, but it happened before 1836 when the first available detailed map of Barjon was drawn.

This complicated building demands more study. Certain features cry out for more detailed analysis which the inexperienced investigator did not foresee while present at the site. The most basic is the need to characterise the different types of stone observable in the exterior of the wall. Careful measurement and detailed recording for the north wall between the north door and the west end of the building may further help to support or to refute the notion of a

phase wherein the western stairs were added later. As mentioned earlier, a stone-by-stone analysis might well help characterise more detailed phases, of which there seems to be many. The exterior walls have clearly undergone major renovations over the years. Photography records the walls as having looked rather different within the last hundred years or so. While the interior seems mainly to reflect renovations of the late eighteenth century, a detailed recording of all the fixtures might help in dating the building. The floors of the chapel were simply assumed to be flat; a careful measurement assessment might show otherwise. Such measurements would helpfully be combined with scaled cross-section drawings. Excavation, if the opportunity presented itself, would obviously be very helpful in understanding the building. All of these ideas, however, must await future work.

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