



THE FRIGONS

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FRIGONE, FREGO, FREEGO,
FREGOE, FREGON, FREGONE FAMILLIES

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THROUGH ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS - THE PLAGUE

Pierre Frigon⁰⁰⁴



« Un mal qui répand la terreur,
Mal que le Ciel en sa fureur
Inventa pour punir les crimes de la terre,
La peste¹ (puisqu'il faut l'appeler par son nom)
Capable d'enrichir en un jour l'Achéron,
Faisoit aux animaux la guerre.
Ils ne mouroient pas tous, mais tous étoient frappez;
[...]»²

And humans are not spared. Bubonic plague, mainly transmitted by fleas infected with rats carrying the bacillus *Yersinia pestis*, was relentless and without a cure before the discovery of antibiotics. Plague can also be transmitted by air from person to person through respiratory droplets thrown into the air by coughing. The pneumonic plague is devastating and kills in a few days. The handling of infected corpses is also a mode of transmission. One imagines the terror that was taking hold of the affected populations.

To protect themselves, doctors dressed from head to toe. The "17th century plague doctors who wore a bird-shaped mask were called "beak doctors." Straps held this protective mask in front of the doctor's nose. The mask was equipped with **bésicles**³ and a curved beak with two holes for breathing. The beak could contain dried flowers (including roses and carnations), herbs (including mint), spices, camphor or a vinegar sponge. The aim was to ward off bad odours that were supposed to be the main cause of the epidemic according to the

(Continuation on page 18)

¹Description of the illness : <https://www.pasteur.fr/fr/centre-medical/fiches-maladies/peste>

²Jean de La Fontaine, « Les animaux malades de la peste », in *Fables choisies mises en vers par M^r de la Fontaine, troisieme partie*, Paris, Denys Thierry, rue S. Jacques, and Claude Barbin, au Palais, 1678, avec privilège du roy, 222 pages, page 9. Downloadable from Gallica.

³Bésicles = glasses.



Doctor Schnabel from Rome carrying the « black plague ». Engraving by Paul Fürst, 1656. Source : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plague_doctor_costume

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miasma⁴ theory then in force. This theory will be refuted by the microbial theory. Doctors used wooden chopsticks to examine the victims without touching them (including removing their clothes and taking their pulse)⁵.

The cause of the disease was not known, but it was known to spread from person to person. Thus, between 1582 and 1640, the Parliament of Brittany issued numerous warnings for the prevention and control of the plague⁶. The current measures put in place to combat COVID-19 are quite similar to those taken in the past. Here are some of the measures promulgated at one time or another between 1582 and 1640.

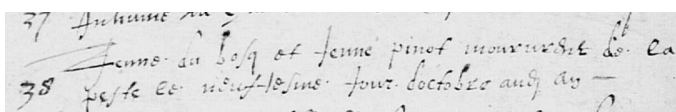
To limit the spread in the city of Rennes, house arrest measures are taken against those affected. For example, "the placing of padlocks on the house of councillor André de la Porte, whose wife is ill" and "the servants of Mr. André de la Porte cannot leave the house of their master." Wandering beggars are put in prison or chased out of the communes. The Jesuit school is closed. Students from surrounding municipalities are prohibited from coming to Rennes. Markets are forced to move out of the city. Belongings of the dead are disinfected. It is forbidden to go to fairs or attend religious gatherings such as the Feast of Corpus Christi and of the Blessed Sacrament. It is forbidden to drink and eat in hotels, taverns and cabarets. Curfew is at 10:00 p.m. Information sessions are even imposed: "The Senechal must bring the inhabitants of Rennes together three times a week to discuss measures relating to the "contagion." Funds were allocated for the fight against the disease: "allocation of 3,000 pounds for the service of plague patients on the farm of the Abbey of Saint Melaine kept by Georges Henry." A sum of 2,400 pounds was drawn "from the money allocated to maintain the palace." The "sale of personal property in Rennes and the "nine parishes of the *chastellennye*" are prohibited, in particular, by clerks, bailiffs, sergeants. Debt payments are delayed: "debt prisoners are released for six months,

quarantined in the village of Gros Chesne." "Public hearings of parliament⁷" are suspended. "Family reunions, weddings or other gatherings are prohibited." The entry of goods is controlled: "Goods are not allowed in Rennes from Normandy without notifying the police commissioners." Those who go to the hospital for the wrong reasons are severely punished: "the inhabitants of this city are forbidden [...]... to go to the health care home of this city and drink with the staff [...]... upon pain of hanging and being strangled without any other form of trial. »

Throughout the 17th century, plague struck in one region or another of France. Archives show that there were outbreaks in Normandy, in particular, in the communes of Sainte-Mère-Eglise, Appeville, Saint-Thomas-de-Saint-Lô and Sainte-Croix-de-Saint-Lô, during the years 1625 and 1635. Based on the death registers of these parishes, let us see if the cases are isolated or if mortality has significantly increased during these years.

Note that the following data on deaths in Sainte-Mère-Eglise come from only one source: baptisms, marriages and burials listed in the Departmental Archives De la Manche, available on the Internet. There may therefore be other lists of deaths due to plague or other deaths that are not listed here.

Sainte-Mère-Eglise, in 1626.



38-Jeanne Dubosq et Jeanne Pinot moururent de la peste le neuvième jour d'octobre aud^{it} an⁸. (*died from the plague on the ninth day of October in the year of*)

These two deaths are the only ones specifically attributed to the plague in the register of burials of Sainte-Mère-Eglise in 1626. Does that mean they are the only ones? One thing is certain, death

(Continuation on page 20)

⁴Miasma : bad air emanating from rotting organic matter spread in the air and believed to be the cause of plague.

⁵https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plague_doctor_costume

⁶http://www.wiki-rennes.fr/Arr%C3%AAs_du_Parlement_de_Bretagne_pour_la_pr%C3%A9vention_et_la_lutte_contre_la_peste_1582_-_1640

⁷Parlement = courthouse.

⁸Departmental Archives De La Manche : <http://www.archives-manche.fr/ark:/57115/a011288085773Uk9IN0/cd152765ff>, Item 82 of 134, left page, 7



LE MOT DE LA PRÉSIDENTE

Hello dear members of the association of the large Frigon family.

First of all, I would like to convey to you all my best wishes for health and serenity at this difficult time we are all going through. I hope that none of you will be affected by this pandemic.

Unfortunately, the Association was affected, but fortunately not infected by this containment, which puts our collective activities on hold. This pause and containment may be an opportunity to further our research on the places of origin of our ancestor.

This is the appropriate time to consult the digitized archives of France. Indeed, the internet allows us to do research without having to travel or putting ourselves in danger. So I invite you to dig into these archives. To do this, you could consult the archives of one of the municipalities where the surname "Frigon" has been identified. On our website, in the tab "Doc. Membres" you will find the presentation made in 2018 by Claude where these municipalities are listed. In "Doc. Membres,"

Réjeanne Frigon¹⁷⁷

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click on "Documents de Claude Frigon": *Le lieu d'origine de François Frigon Dit Lespagnol — La grande question* (The Place of Origin of François Frigon Dit Lespagnol — The Big Question). What do you think about this? If you want to do research in any of the departments of France, inform the secretary of your choice so that he can coordinate the process (secretaire.frigon.org@gmail.com).

On the other hand, this break is also an appropriate time to begin a reflection on the future of the association, given the involvement of fewer and fewer members. It is important to attract the accession and involvement of new members to ensure its sustainability.

I would like to acknowledge the members of the Board and Board+ who have not been out of work despite the situation and who continue to ensure the smooth running of the association including the postponement of the Annual Meeting to August 2021. Special thanks to Claude, François, Francine, Jean-René, Gérald and Pierre, who are truly dedicated.

I look forward to your comments and suggestions.

THE FRENCH ARE IMPRESSED BY AUGUSTIN FRIGON

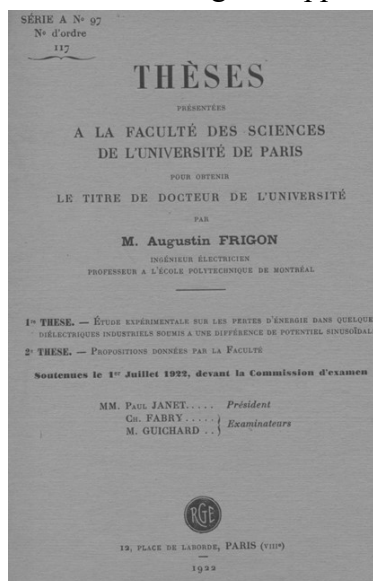
Pierre Frigon⁰⁰⁴

At the end of January 1932, Georges Dejardin, a professor of physics at the Université de Lyon, arrived in Montréal aboard the Île-de-France to give a series of twelve lectures at the École Polytechnique de Montréal at the invitation of the Institut scientifique franco-canadien. Augustin Frigon was at the time director of the school and a fervent promoter of the Institute which was responsible for scientific exchanges between France and Québec. In fact, Frigon was a member of the board of directors of the Institute¹.

On the occasion of the arrival of Georges Dejardin, the press was summoned and the President of the Institute, Louis-Janvier Dalbis presented the speaker. Dejardin had previously worked at the Fabry laboratory in Paris, named after the scientist Charles Fabry². Dejardin knew him well.

Here is what was reported in the newspaper *Le Devoir*³: « Regarding Mr. Fabry, Mr. Dejardin added

that he had a conversation with him a fortnight ago and that Mr. Augustin Frigon was mentioned. Mr. Fabry, he said, was the chairman of the jury before which Mr. Frigon supported his thesis, and Mr.



Fabry always had a vivid memory of Mr. Frigon and the very special subject of his thesis ». In fact, if the text on the cover of Frigon's thesis is correct, Fabry was an examiner and the chair of the jury was Paul Janet, Frigon's mentor during his stay in France in 1920, 1921 and 1922.

¹Fernand Harvey, « L'Institut scientifique franco-canadien, 1926-1967, précurseur de la coopération franco-québécoise », *Bulletin d'histoire politique*, vol. 20, n° 1, automne 2011, p. 72 à 83. <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1055964ar>

²Information on Charles Fabry : https://data.bnf.fr/fr/12519646/charles_fabry/

³« Nos entrevues. M. Georges Dejardin », *Le Devoir*, 1^{er} février 1932, p. 3

(Continued from page 18)

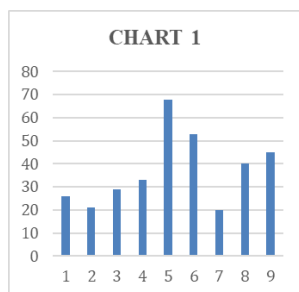
struck hard that year. We have identified 68 deaths between January 1st and December 31st. Table 1 shows that October was by far the deadliest month.

Table 1 Burials in Sainte-Mère-Église 1626												
Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
4	3	7	2	3	4	0	3	5	25	9	3	68

These deaths, of course, cannot all be attributed to the plague. However, records show multiple deaths in some families in 1626. For example, the Lagouche family: four adults (February 14, November 16, November 22, and December 1), and one child (October 14). Among the Du Bosq, in addition to Jeanne, three other adults (October 7, 10 and 11). Thus, in cases where many adults died in the same family during a year, it could well be that some were infected even if the fact is not mentioned in the death certificates.

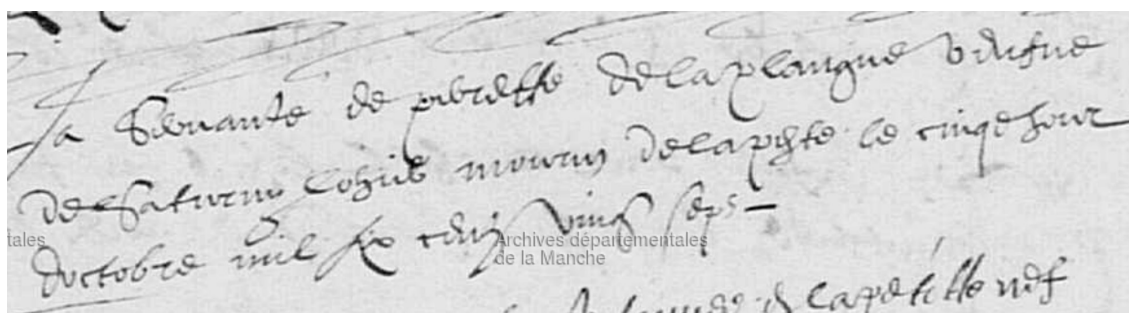
Moreover, the hypothesis that there were more deaths from the plague than the two mentioned in the registries is all the more plausible since for the previous four years (1622 to 1625) and the following four years (1627 to 1630), mortality was up to three times lower than in 1626 (Table 2, and Chart 1).

Table 2 Burials in Sainte-Mère-Église 1622 to 1630								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1622	1623	1624	1625	1626	1627	1628	1629	1630
26	21	29	33	68	53	20	40	45



Sainte-Mère-Église, Saint-Thomas-de-Saint-Lô and Sainte-Croix-de-Saint-Lô, in 1627

In 1627, there are at least two cases of plague in Sainte-Mère-Église⁹. The presence of the plague is also confirmed by the high number of deaths (53) during this year. The two identified cases of plague are:



(Continuation on page 21)

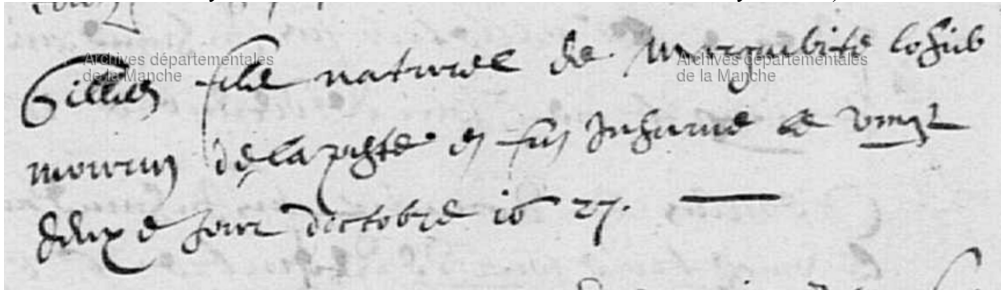
⁹ Sainte-Mère-Église Commune : <http://www.archives-manche.fr/ark:/57115/a011288085773Uk9IN0/85ad2cfbe0> , item 104 of 134, right page, 3 and 5.

(Continued from page 20)

La servante de Perette de la Planque veufve

de Saturnin Lohier mourut de la peste, le cinquiesme

octobre mil six cent vingt sept. (*The maid of Saturnin Lohier widow, died of the plague, on the fifth of October in the year one thousand six hundred and twenty-seven*).

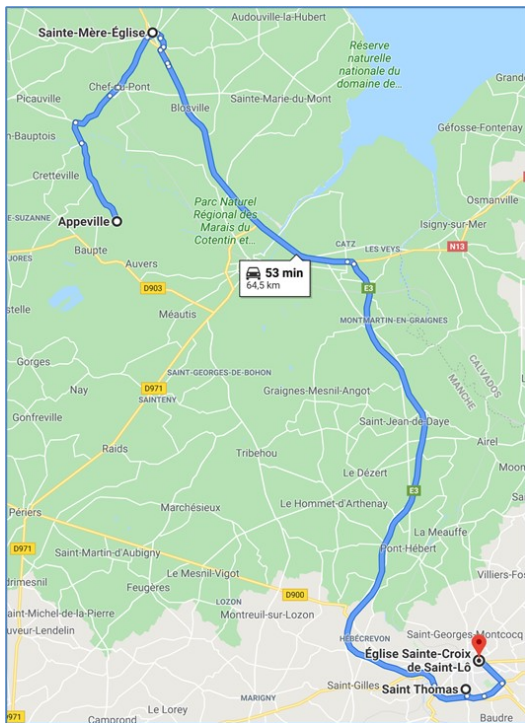


Gilles, fils naturel de Marguerite Lohier (*natural son of*)
mourut de la peste et fut inhumé le vingt
deux^{iesme} jour d'octobre 1627.

(*Died of the plague and was buried on the twenty second day of October 1627*).

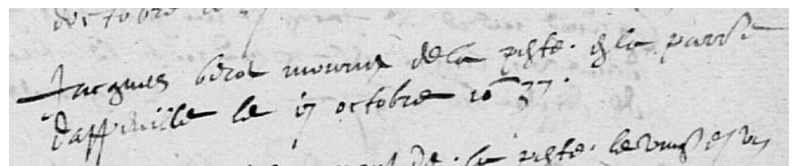
In addition to Gilles' death, others members of the Lohier family died: Guille's child (October 24); Michel's two children (November 25, December 11); Robert and Honoré (December 4, 17), Michel's wife, Girette de La Lande (December 8).

Plague also affects other towns in Normandy. For example, 65 kilometres south of Sainte-Mère-Eglise, the parish priest of Saint-Thomas-de-Saint-Lô recorded a total of 723 deaths between 1625 and 1628 compared to 274 in the previous five years. Three kilometres away, in Sainte-Croix-de-Saint-Lô, records mention 267 deaths in the years 1626-1627. Mortality drops to 33 in 1628¹⁰. Then there is a 10-year decline and a new peak.



Saint-Thomas-de-Saint-Lô and Sainte-Croix-de-Saint-Lô, in 1635, and Appeville, in 1637

A peak was observed in 1635, with 148 deaths in Sainte-Croix-de-Saint-Lô, and 778 in Saint-Thomas-de-Saint-Lô¹¹. In 1637, the plague struck Appeville, located about fifteen kilometres south of Sainte-Mère-Eglise. There is at least one case in the burial registers.



Jacques Bérot mourut de la peste en la paroisse
d'Appeville le 17 octobre 1637¹². (*died of the plague in the parish of Appeville on Oct. 17, 1637*)

Jacques Bérot, from the parish of Sainte-Mère-Eglise, dies in the parish of Appeville where he was buried.

(Continuation on page 22)

¹⁰ <http://www.archives-manche.fr/Histoire-et-documents/p1735/1627-epidemie-de-peste-dans-le-Cotentin>

¹¹ <http://www.archives-manche.fr/Histoire-et-documents/p1735/1627-epidemie-de-peste-dans-le-Cotentin>

¹² Appeville Commune <http://www.archives-manche.fr/ark:/57115/a011288085773cnv34H/03dbcfef9d>, item 93 of 114, right page, 7.

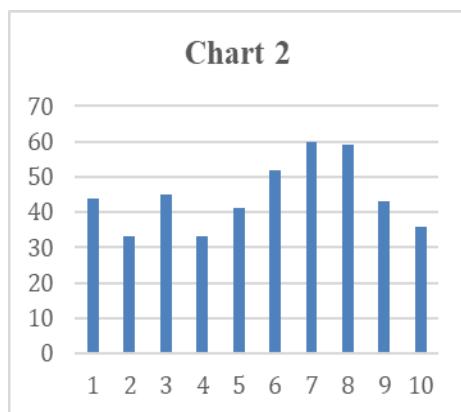
(Continued from page 21)

Unfortunately, the archives of baptisms, marriages and burials of the commune of Appeville are only available from 1753 in the departmental archives which prevents further study.

Sainte-Mère-Église, in 1637

In Sainte-Mère-Eglise (Table 3, and Chart 2), there was a peak in the years 1635-1640. Indeed, deaths in 1636, 1637 and 1638 are clearly above the average of previous and subsequent years.

Table 3 Burials in Sainte-Mère-Église 1631 to 1640									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1631	1632	1633	1634	1635	1636	1637	1638	1639	1640
44	33	45	33	41	52	60	59	43	36



In conclusion, there was an epidemic of plague during the years 1625 and 1635 at Sainte-Mère-Église, Saint-Thomas-de-Saint-Lô and Sainte-Croix-de-Saint-Lô. But other towns in Normandy were also affected.

Thus, between the beginning of July 1625 and the beginning of January 1626, the plague struck Grandville and claimed 74 victims¹³.

In 1626, the illness caused deaths in Cherbourg, probably brought by Captain Jean d'Aulière's ship from La Rochelle. In Bayeux, in the parish of Saint-Floxel, there were 30 deaths in 1626, nearly 50 in 1627 and from January to April 1628, fifteen deaths. In 1627, the commune of Sainte-Suzanne-sur-Vire was also affected.

"In 1628, nearly two hundred people died in this village [Villedieu-les-Poeles] from a disease that was very close to the plague."

In 1636, Valognes was touched. Twenty people have died in the parish of Saint Floxel. The following year: twenty more. And the list of affected parishes keeps growing: Caen, Buais, Sevigny-le-Vieux, etc.

The plague also devastated other areas in the country: "Toulouse was infected for three years in a row, 1626, 1627 and 1628. Lyon suffered during the same period of time. Provence was attacked in 1626 and 1630. The plague violently affected Montpellier during the same years. Finally, few cities were spared. . . It killed four to five thousand people there, or about one-third of the town¹⁴. » The great plague of 1626 also struck in Anjou¹⁵. In Bocage, "in November 1626, there were 58 deaths in Condé-sur-Noireau, while the monthly number of deaths under normal circumstances amounted to four¹⁶. » In those years, the plague also affected Brittany, the Loire region, etc. In Brittany, the city of Rennes was hit hard between 1624 and 1632¹⁷.

¹³The following information was taken from : Porquet, Louis, *La peste en Normandie du XIV au XVIIe siècle*, Éditions Vire, 1898, p. 23, 24, 31, 33, 42, 43. Downloadable from the Internet (archive.org).

¹⁴Anonymous author, *Dissertation sur l'origine des maladies épidémiques et principalement sur l'origine de la peste*, Imprimerie Jean Martel, Montpellier, 1721, p. 59, 60. Downloadable from the Internet (archive.org).

¹⁵François Lebrun, *Les hommes et la mort en Anjou aux 17^e et 18^e siècles. Essai de démographie et de psychologie historiques*, Mouton, Paris, La Haye, 1971, p. 312 à 323. Can be viewed in part in Google.

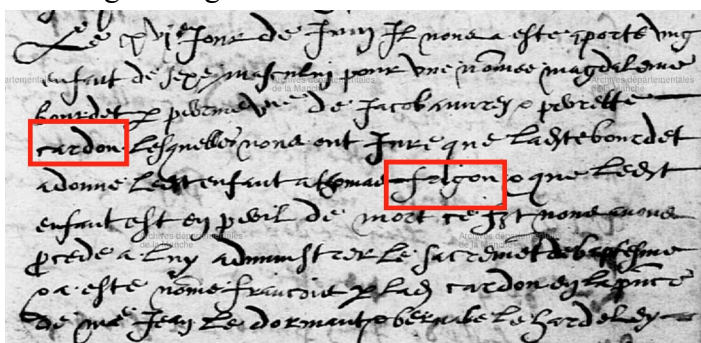
¹⁶Goujard, Philippe, *La Normandie aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles*, Éditions Ouest-France, 2002, 365 p., p. 175. Downloadable from Google.

¹⁷Philouze, Paul, *Notice sur le sanctuaire de Bonne-Nouvelle à Rennes*, Imprimerie Marie Simon, Rennes 1896, p. 61 and following pages.

Records of the 17th and 18th centuries present a number of difficulties. Among these, the writing of "on" and "or" at the end of words. We sometimes find Frigon. But is it rather Frigou?

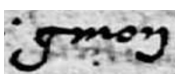
Here are two examples that illustrate this situation. The first is from the baptismal certificate of François Bourdet of the parish of Teurthéville-Bocage, dated 1631, and the other from the burial certificate of Jacques Frigou of Cretteville, dated 1791.

In the first text, how do you read the word framed on the right? Frigon?



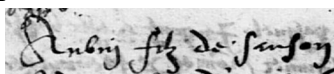
Baptism of François, illegitimate son of Madeleine Bourdet. Teurthéville-Bocage commune, Manche department, 1631-06-16¹.

Well no, it is rather Frigou. Indeed, the priest who wrote the baptismal act finishes his "on" at the

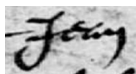


end of words like this: (Simon). He always finishes the "n" at the end of the word with one foot down, as is the custom at that time, for the sounds "ain", "in", "an", "on", "one".

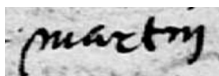
Here are examples from other acts written by this priest:



(Aubin fils de Sanson),

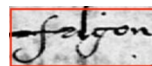


(Jean),



(Martin).

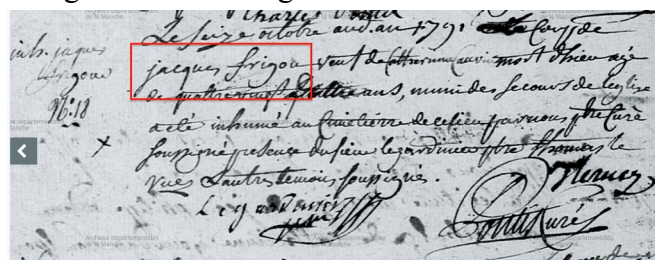
This leads us to conclude that the last letter of is not



an "n" and that the name is Frigou. Note that there are also Frigout in this commune. In the other red box of the same text, we read "Cardou" and not "Cardon".

Let us now look at the second text, produced 160 years later by the parish priest Pontis of Cretteville. We see from these acts written by this priest that the calligraphy begins to change and that we abandon the "paws" of the "n" at the end of words.

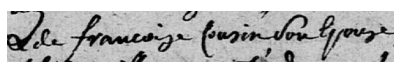
It then becomes very difficult to distinguish the "n" from the "u" at the end of words. So, in the text below, should we read Jacques Frigon or Jacques Frigou? As this priest no longer traces paws down in the "n" at the end of words, the only way to know if the word ends with « ou » or « on », is to make a substantial inventory of the "n" and the "u" at the end of words to see if a constant pattern emerges in this writing.



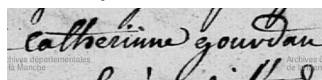
Burial act of Jacques Frigou, husband of Catherine Cauvin Cretteville Commune, Manche Department, 1791-10-16²

Here are samples of Pontis's writing of words ending in "n", then words ending in "u".

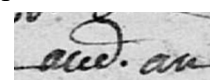
"N" at the end of words, as in Frigon



de Françoise Cousin son épouse



Catherine Gourdan (Gourda



audit an

(Continuation on page 24)

¹Departmental Archives De La Manche: <http://www.archives-manche.fr/ark:/57115/a011288085774gjPedz/a979d23b2b>
Item 174 of 196, right page, 2.

²Departmental Archives De La Manche : <http://www.archives-manche.fr/ark:/57115/a011288085768L8wm2g/058a513990>
Item 82 of 93, left page, 2.

(Continued from page 23)

jean philippe

Jean Philippe

Bernardin

Bernardin

parrain

Parrain

ce matin

Ce matin

marie videgram

Marie Videgra

Leon

Léon

jacques gagnon

Jacques Gagnon

tisseran

Tisseran

son oncle

Son oncle

La Bénédiction

La Bénédiction

jean gagnon

Jean Gagnon

Catherine le breton

Catherine Lebreton

Louise Jean

Louise Jean

son épouse

Son épouse

son épouse

Son épouse

madeleine baudain

Madeleine Baudain

Baptisé un fils

Baptisé un fils

jean pérotte

Jean Pérotte

Bénédiction nuptiale

Bénédiction nuptiale.

"U" at the end of words, as in Frigon

ai reçu

Ai reçu

curé de ce lieu

Curé de ce lieu

Inhumé au cimetière

Inhumé au cimetière

What do you notice when comparing the "n" and the "u" at the end of words? The "n" is sharper than the "u"... but not always!

The answer becomes clear if one consults the **alphabetical table of acts** which is at the end of the regis-

Capin

Frigon

ter. Let's compare

and

Comparing the movement of the scripter's pen, it is concluded that the last letter of

Capin

is a « n » and that the last letter of

Frigon

is a « u ».

Décès		
Frigon Jacques	16 juil	18
Leclerc Catherine	21 juil	20
Leclerc Anne	20 juil	19
Leclerc Marguerite Rose	14 janv	2
Leclerc Pierre Joseph	28 mar	9
Leclerc Marie	17 juil	13
Capin Louis Zacharie	16 juil	23
fin		

Alphabetical table of acts (births,, marriages, deaths) of the Teurthéville -Bocage commune for 1791.

Beyond these findings, what can be said about Frigout, Frigoult, and Frigot found in several communes of Normandy? They could be variants of Frigon, but it would be necessary to build the family trees to demonstrate it. A family tree was compiled for the Frigonds of Louiseville, Mauricie, all of which turned out to be Frigons. But in France, the archives are incomplete and it would be very difficult to establish links between these families...

³<http://www.archives-manche.fr/ark:/57115/a011288085768L8wm2g/cb75f90a7b> Item 83 of 93.