



Who is this lady?



A SURPRISING ANSWER

About three years ago in Paris, turning the pages of the François-Roger de Gaignières collection in search of someone I might know, I came to the picture of this lady, Jeanne de Frolois, and in my mind flashed note 77 at the bottom of page 66 of Andre Perret's "Essai sur l'Histoire du Saint-Suaire...": Jean, seigneur de Charny, father of Geoffroy, had married Marguerite de Joinville and Jeanne de Frolois; and note 24 page 54, Jean de Charny was married three times.... Upon my return home, I immediately sent copies of her picture to medievalists, asking, Who is this lady? And while waiting for answers, went thumbing through the usual sources.

For, yes, the inscription says Madame Jeanne de Frolois, dame de Marigny-sur-Ouche and Monjay, who died in 1342. She was buried in the abbey church of La Bussière, also on the Ouche. Along with the seigneurs of Sombernon, one of the founders of La Bussiere was Ponce de Mont-Saint-Jean, seigneur de Charny, who was buried there with Sybille de Noyers, his wife.

But from the XIth century through succeeding generations, the Frolois genealogy is studded with *Jean* and *Jeanne*, even in contemporaneous branches. Did not Jeanne de Frolois, dame de Savoisy, marry Amadeo IV, Count of Geneva, about this same time?

And if the Jeanne de Frolois of Marigny-sur-Ouche died in 1342, could she have been one of the wives of Geoffroy's father, who died before 1319? And if she was his widow, she must have married again, for the dexter half of the dimidiated shield — in black and white at least — could be Burgundy, which is blasoned *three bends Or and Azur, with bordure Gueules*. Anselme reproduces the identical drawing, in black and white, for Arnoul d'Audrehem!

Scattered throughout my medieval notes, copies of the lady's effigy lay waiting, asking me again and again, Who am I?

Then, while preparing this issue of *Spectrum*, an electrifying answer came to me from Europe: A document of 1315 with the seal of Jean de Charny pere: "And that town of Jaugey, Jean my son, because of Jeanne de Frolois his wife ... holds in fief from me...." There were then two Jean de Charny, father and son!

Jaugey is in Burgundy, south of Sombernon. Very nearby, one comes upon the ruins of the chateau of Marigny-sur-Ouche; La Bussiere lies a bit south of Marigny.

The identification of this lady brings to four the children of Jean de Charny pere: Jean, Dreux, Geoffroy and Isabeau, in what order I do not know. Long buried in dusty documents, the members of the Charny family emerge to our patience, taking form again not as tomb effigies but as living souls.