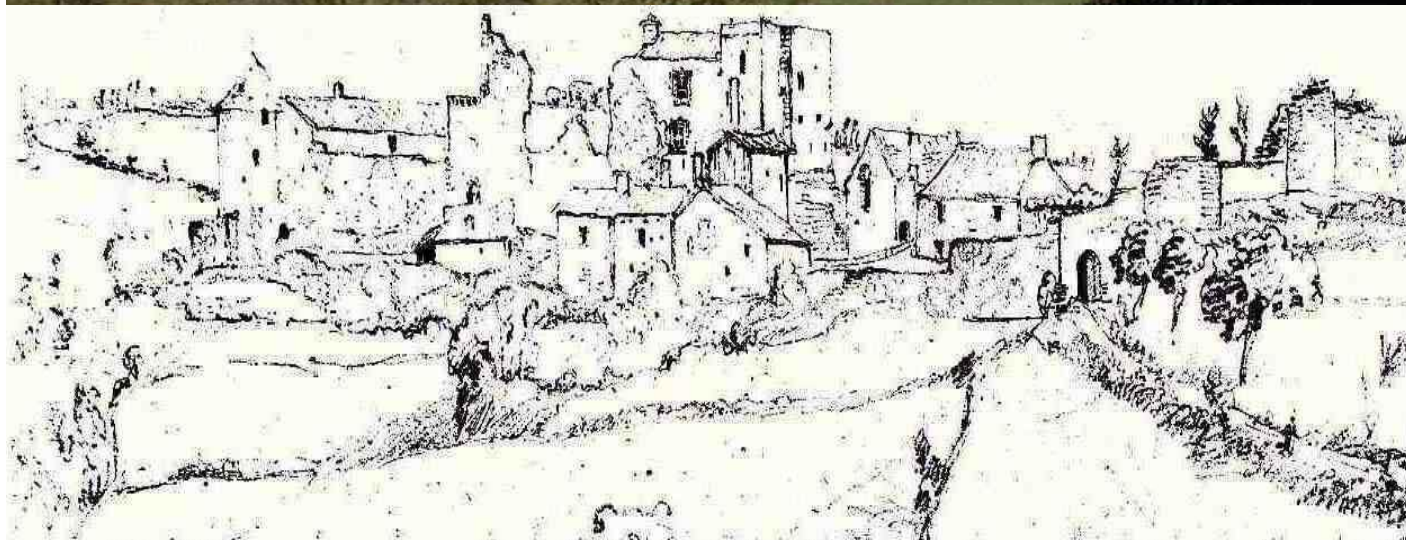


MONTFERRAND-DU-PÉRIGORD

MONUMENTS

Overlooking the prehistoric Couze valley, Montferrand-du-Périgord awaits your visit. A listed site, it has conserved the authentic charm of its old houses, some of which are beautiful examples of Périgord residences with Renaissance facades.



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« CHARTREUSE » STYLE HOUSE IN THE VILLAGE DATING FROM THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES ?

This house is not a real « Chartreuse » because it is in fact two buildings side by side. But the back part, invisible from the road, reminds us of the « Chartreuse » style with its roof structure – four slopes with dormer windows. Also note a window topped with a triangular stone with another small oval window.



This is visible from the road, on the north side of the house and used to have a balcony underneath it.

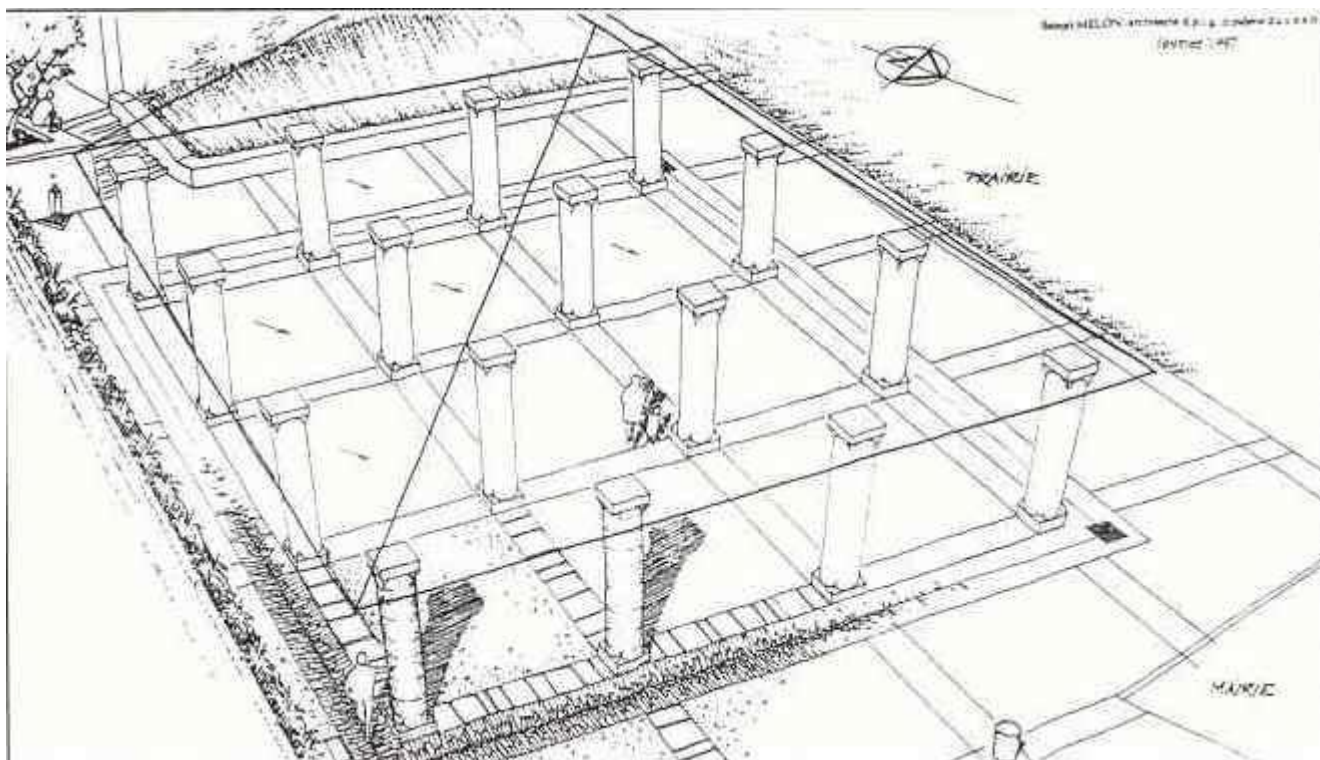


THE COVERED MARKET OF **MONTFERRAND**



Historical (according to Jean Darriné, « THE BEAUMONTOIS PAGES » N°4)

The covered market of Montferrand dates from the third quarter of the sixteenth century. The oldest document describes it in 1778, rectangular (29m long by 19,5m wide) standing on 24 circular pillars of cut stone. It is in this document that an iron collar (for criminals) placed at a pillar of the covered market is mentioned. This is most likely to be on the north side, where there is the only pillar to have a square high part. At the Revolution, the covered market belonged to GONTAUT-BIRON. The village bought it in 1862 in very poor condition. Between 1827 and 1850, 8 pillars were demolished to create its present form—almost square and with only 16 pillars. Important restoration work was carried out in 1889. In 1912 the timbers were replaced and are those visible today. Listed on the 1948 supplementary inventory of historical monuments, the last restorations giving its current aspect and integration with neighbouring buildings were carried out in 1999 under Mr.MELON Architect DPLG.



D'après B.Melon

Functions :

In the olden days, public court hearings were held under the covered market (see the plan by J.Darriné). This was destroyed in 1788 and has completely disappeared. Fairs, an important commercial event, were held under the covered market. Under the « Ancien Régime », only the dates are known : 25th January, 27th April, 25th July and 28th October. In 1884 there were five annual fairs. Another was added on the 23rd January and reserved for pig trading. The last fairs were held in 1949. .

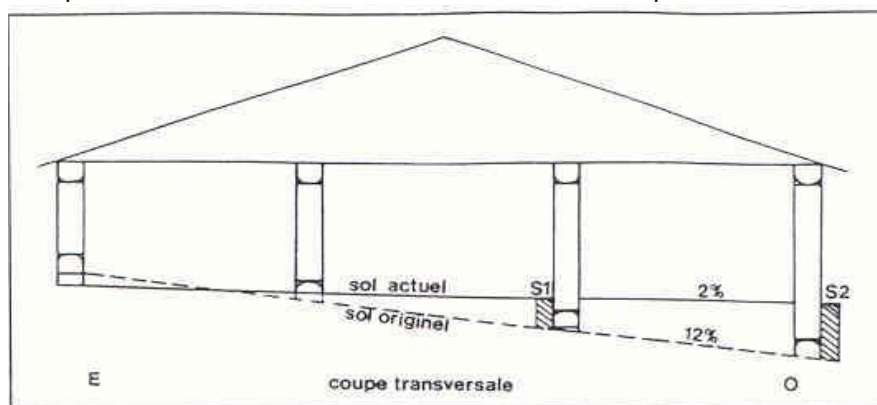


Entertainment and cultural activities :

Entertainment and cultural activities : The covered market has always been used for the village fête held on the last Sunday in July. Various concerts and shows have been put on. The last work in 1999 has made the area more pleasant for these cultural activities

Current state of the covered market :

The covered market is now on a virtually flat platform, whereas before it was on a steep slope of a 12% incline. New column bases were placed at the new floor level (see photo).



Round stones that were too damaged were replaced and certain pillars straightened. The timbers dating from 1912, were reinforced. (doc.page 1A). A small drinking fountain was created with access steps between the

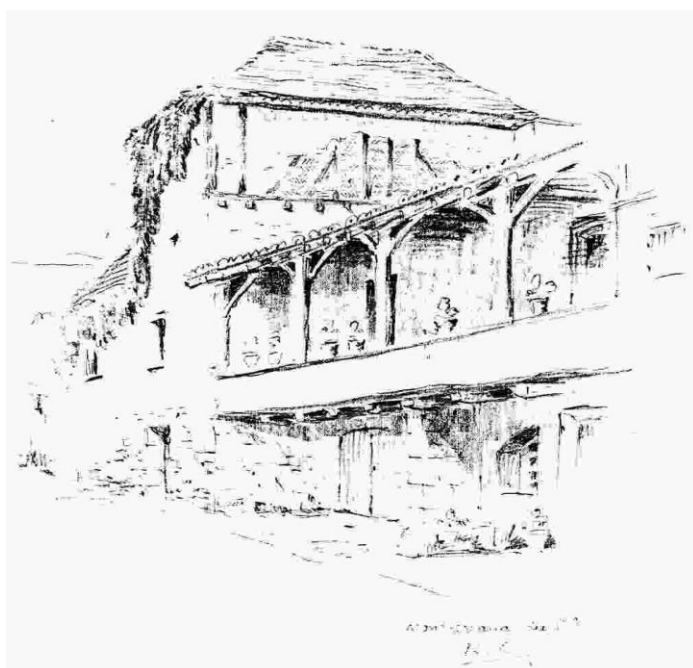
covered market and the church. The floor was redone – the tarmac has disappeared and a fixed gravel surface has replaced it. A stone gully runs round the building. (doc. page 1B).

Lighting of the area is now in progress.

MAISON RENAISSANCE

This house dates to approximately the seventeenth century, but has even older bases. Its twin roof is covered with tiles. The upper floor of the « pigeonnier » (dovecote) is half timbered, the wall is built of small flat bricks, not too thick, surrounded by roughcast. The house has a covered gallery. This stands on wooden beams at each end. Simple wooden pillars strengthened by struts hold up the master beam of the roof. On the gable wall, there is a lovely stone mullioned window decorated with Renaissance style friezes.

D'après Jean Secret.



MAISON RENAISSANCE II

This house has undergone numerous transformations over the centuries. Several characteristics date from the sixteenth century ; the large arched door at the bottom of the tower, the door with its oval shaped arch, the stone mullioned window and little



windows above. The square tower is made of blocks of stone at the bottom and half timber and cob at the top. It is a « pigeonnier » (dovecote) with five holes allowing for the pigeons' access..

D'après Jean Secret.

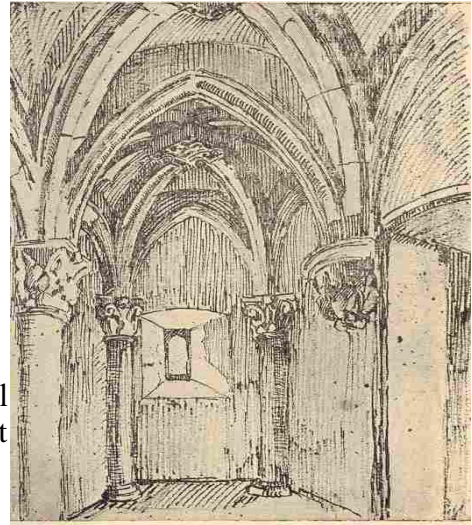


DESCRIPTION OF THE CHATEAU

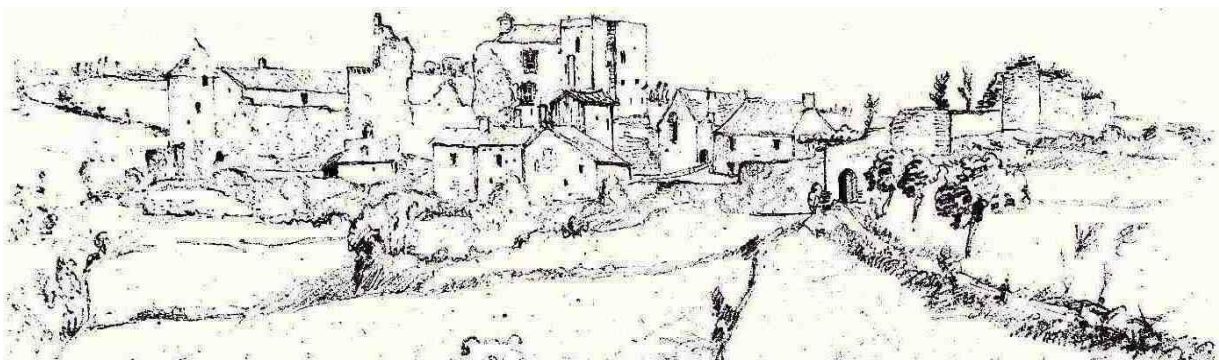
private, no visiting.

Above the village of Montferrand, the tall silhouette of the château stands out. Rooted to the hillside, isolated by moats, the château kept a watch on the surrounding countryside from the height of its Romanesque keep. Eight round towers scanned the 700m of ramparts.

This was where Aymeric IV hid and set out on his cavalcades against Bergerac and Limeuil. The château suffered at man's hand and from the climate, but the small chapel dating from the end of the Renaissance has still got its « ribs » (the arch supporting the vault) with their strange sculpted key stones.



During the Wars of Religion the Saint Suaire (shroud) of Cadouin was kept here for six or seven years - the monks wanted to shield it from desecration. The shroud's chapel is not that of the feudal château strictly speaking. it is in a dwelling next to the old keep, raised above the ditch. In the second half of the sixteenth century it is supposed to have been used to hide the precious shroud. The chapel dimensions are 2,76m long, 1,06m wide and 2,40 high.



THE ST.CHRISTOPHE CHURCH

In 1849 Montferrand was provided with a new church, built in the village. Little by little the St.Christophe chapel was abandonned - the former parish building built in its little cemetery at some 800 metres was as from then deprived of its church services. The State of the building required major work and public money was scarce ; decisions had to be made. It was decided, no doubt reluctantly, in the second half of that century, to demolish the main part of the nave, leaving one vaulted section with a lowered roof next to the bell tower, instead of undertaking expensive repairs. This explains the disproportions of the existing monument : a minute nave dominated by an enormous chevet. We will attempt to reconstitute the monument's history with an architectural analysis. Firstly, as for the contemporary period, there are three dates to be noted : 1973 registration on the historical monuments list. 1980 discovery of the medieval wall paintings. 2001 classification as a historical monument.

THE



EXTERIOR



The high tower is seen from afar, a medieval mark rousing above the countryside, dominating the Couze valley from the plateau. The nave (or what remains of it) gives us some important information if we look at its construction. A « fish bone » effect can be observed where the rows of oblique stones have been placed inversely one after the other and interspersed with small horizontal layers. As this method was used before the twelfth century, we can gather that the vaulted chancel was added on to an older nave - the new construction inserted its western wall between the vertical chains of the nave using them as buttresses. On the south side of the church,

three openings can be observed. Only the central window is original. It was during a new era of construction at the end of the Romanesque period and at the beginning of the Gothic period that the tower, seen today, was raised above the single vault. It is remarkably in harmony. The

change in method is seen straightaway. The rows of horizontal stones are of regular cut limestone. A cornice at the top marks the end of the first elevation and the start of the bell chamber. This cornice rests on simply curt projecting stones that, for some, have indistinct sculptural shapes. Only the corner decorations are clearly visible and represent human faces. The bell chamber is pierced on each side by two Gothic bays with broken arches. These bays are of identical proportions, but differ in the pillars supporting the vaults and in their arches.

The belfry is composed of enormous oak beams that could be original. These just sit in hollows in the walls to avoid the transmission to the stonework of the sound waves. The bell is recent (nineteenth century). Upon examination of the building the architectural evolution can be observed and we realise that the part visible today is not the only transformation and that over the centuries the monument has undergone several alterations.

The wall paintings of St-Christophe Church

THE WALL PAINTINGS :

In Montferrand, as everywhere in France, the wall paintings were covered and concealed between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries due to the sensitivity of the period, the liturgy and the « council of thirty ». It was not until recently therefore (1980) and, almost by chance, following a parish council decision to expose the stonework at the monument that the remarkable religious heritage was discovered. As opposed to a fresque, the technique used here is with a thickened paint. After application of a lime wash to the wall, it is painted with a water-based paint of vegetable and mineral pigments mixed with a thickener such as glue or egg white. The base is thinner with less penetration of the paint and therefore more fragile. before a commentary of the paintings, it is necessary to remind ourselves of certain elements particular to the medieval period for a general understanding : 1- The same permanent theme during all the medieval period. 2- The importance of imagery as a substitute for the written word as the population was illiterate. 3- The Christian monument must be perceived as a progressive pathway to the sacred, firstly longitudinal with the nave, then the choir and altar (accompanied by a rise in the floor level) then vertical, the walls symbolising the terrestrial and the vault the heavenly.

Romanesque wall paintings : saint Léonard :

The romanesque paintings : Saint Leonard Following chronological order, we still start our description with the painting situated in the first arcade on the left in the chancel. In the centre of the composition there is a figure whose height (the tallest) shows his position in the hierarchy. This is confirmed by the red colour of his robe, which depicts power.

His face is encircled with a saint's halo. The inscription higher up « LEONARDUS » in latin make identification easy. Saint Leonard. Two figures kneeling at the saint's feet have their arms



raised in homage and gratitude. One of them is holding the saint's left hand. At the top of the scene are two angels ; one dressed in yellow symbolising the heavenly, the other in red symbolising authority, pointing in turn to the saint and to one of the other figures. In the bottom right hand

rand-du-Périgord

corner, we note a small building with the door open. St Leonard a man of faith and a hermit, accomplished miracles by prayer.

Around the year 500 Queen Clotilde was having a difficult childbirth and everyone feared the worst. Leonard was called to her, prayed and saved mother and child. King Clovis was so grateful he wanted to reward him, but Leonard refused. Instead he accepted the privilege to free prisoners at his discretion. The scene in the painting now becomes clear. St Leonard has just freed some prisoners, the building with the open door represents the prison and the kneeling figures are the prisoners thanking him, and the angels represent the relationship between the saint and his heavenly powers. The bottom of the painting is of course badly damaged. The faces are barely discernible. It is thought that a former prisoner, freed by Leonard, could have been the artist. A work of gratitude. On the left of the painting is a bird of prey. Under careful observation, this was added afterwards. This type of bird was often used in medieval symbolism, but it would be unwise to hazard a guess at its meaning in this context.



Romanesque paintings, other remains : We can guess that the inside of the church was covered in paintings originally and that they have since been covered over or worn away. As well as the main St Leonard scene, there are other traces from the same period. On the south wall of the nave, the remains of a composition can be seen, almost totally destroyed by the construction of an opening. We can just make out the heads of three haloed figures and the surround. We can ascertain that the work was carried out with great care and it dates from the Romanesque period. The faces are pale on a dark red background. The first saint seems to be holding a book, the second has an arm raised and his right hand is touching a sort of garland, the third saint is very damaged and only his forehead and halo can be made out. The facial expression and attention to detail were extremely important to the Romanesque artist. We are however looking at a completely different style to that of the St Leonard painting, which confirms the theory of that painting being older. The last trace is a scarcely visible circle which decorates the south pillar of the chancel and traces of pigment at the base of the chevet wall.

The Gothic Wall Paintings :



There is a large composition in the chancel that covers the whole of the vault. The first part evokes the universe with stars that rule our existence. They have human faces, which suggests these representations could be the remains of earlier paintings.

The second part is painted in the most sacred part – in the chancel at the top of the vault – and represents Christ. Over a blue robe (the colour of which has almost disappeared), he is wearing a dark red tunic (symbolising power) with pleats flaring out to above the knee and is sitting on an enormous throne. His right hand is raised in blessing, the index and middle fingers parted to symbolise his dual human and holy nature.

It is with this same symbolism that Christ is represented horizontally on the vault (heaven) and with his feet on the vertical wall (earth) – reiterating the human and holy. Around Christ are the four evangelists often included in medieval religious works. St. Matthew is represented by a winged man



on Christ's right with a phylactery containing the very faint words « HOMO MAT. » St. Mark is a lion, with the words « LEO MARCHUS ». On Christ's left is a bull representing St. Luke v(well preserved) identified by the words « VITULLUS LUCHAS ». The eagle symbolising St. John has disappeared due to an infiltration of water via the hole for the bell rope. St. Matthew, the lion and the bull have their heads turned upwards towards Christ.



This superb work is influenced by the Byzantine style – the throne, Christ's features (almond shaped eyes). We can also observe the graphical shape and the density of motifs which fill the spaces between the figures as well as the highly decorated bands framing the scene. This illustrates the great exchange of Eastern and Western influences.



On the east wall of the chancel there is a representation of Mary, dressed in blue and kneeling on a marble stool. In her left hand she is holding a holy book and her right hand is raised, palm open, expressing welcome or consent. In this type of representation, the angel Gabriel normally appears on the right of the Virgin Mary, but there exceptionally he is on the left. He is wearing a yellow (holy) cape and has come to announce to Mary her future maternity and the importance of the son she will bear. The inscriptions surrounding the scene remind us of the gospel according to Luke.



On the north wall, the artist has painted a vase, a holy symbol, separate from the rest of the composition to give it more importance. On a reddish brown background, the pale characters are well defined. The method is different to that of the four figures and could have been painted at a different time or by a different artist. Above the Virgin Mary there is a sort of vague, white triangle which can also be found on the right of the bay, representing a holy symbol (the Holy Ghost ?), but this is difficult to identify.

On the right of the window is the patron saint of the church – Christopher. He is represented as a powerful character with a large head, unrefined features and a chin covered with a white beard. He is wearing a turban and has a mass of hair underneath. He is wearing a yellow tunic covered with a large blue coat. His left arm is folded and his right hand is holding a thick stick with buds. On his shoulders is a small figure whose right hand is raised in blessing and who is carrying a cross in his left hand – it is Christ as a child. According to the study of hagiography (the literature of the lives and legends of saints),



Christopher was a sort of giant who wanted to serve God. He was invited by a hermit to practise prayer and fasting. He replied that he was more a man of action than prayer and would be incapable. So the hermit suggested he used his height and strength to help travellers cross the dangerous river that ran nearby. It was thus that Christopher helped people ford rivers. One day a child approached him to cross the river. Christopher took him on his shoulders, but during the crossing the child became heavier and heavier, until the Saint had to use all of his strength to fight against the current. He was amazed. The child then told him that he had carried Jesus and that in memory of this he should plant the dry stick that he carried on the bank and that it would bud. Everything is now explained – the child on the back, the budding stick and we understand the origins of the name « CHRISTUS FORENS » - Christ's carrier. Helped by the legend, he later became the patron saint of travellers.

But in the middle Ages he had another function – he protected from sudden death. Thanks to the appeal made by Gérard Mouillac, the meaning of the gothic letters was deciphered by Father De Veer. The first two lines relate that by carrying the Christ child on his shoulders, Christopher drew closer to God. The last two lines specify « look at Saint Christopher and be reassured », which for the Christian of then meant – having looked at the image of the Saint, a sudden death will be spared me.



Finally when studying the Gothic paintings in the chancel, it is important to mention the very colourful decoration of the surround and inside of the arches as well as of the cornice, the presence on the north wall of a cross in a circle and on the same wall a funeral text with a black band (particularly visible above St. Leonard) that was painted for seigneurial funerals. We can thus conclude that one or

several « seigneurs » of Montferrand have been interred here. This is confirmed by a reference in Aymeric II's will to a tomb of his ancestors in the St. Christopher church in Montferrand that is to be visited once a year by the canons of St. Avit Senieur.

The paintings in the nave



The Gothic period has also decorated the walls of the nave but overlapped existing paintings.

On the south wall, on the right of the Romanesque fragment representing the three characters, we can see the beginnings of a representation of The Last Supper, where only 2 participants appear. The careful composition shows the apostles clothed in large blue capes against a dark red background ; their haloes and short beards contribute to their expression of emotional piety. The table is set for the last supper – the plates, a goblet. The first disciple is holding a round loaf of bread and there are fishes on a plate. The base of the painting is very damaged, but there is an inscription containing several gothic letters which we think read « JUDE ». The whole work has a band around it. The motif at the top is floral and clearly visible whereas its left vertical side has deteriorated and the paint underneath is visible. The theme obviously continues in the former nave and reminds us of the other « Last Supper » scene clearly visible in the oratory of

the Château at Beynac, a few kilometres away. The two are so similar that it could have been the same artist or workshop.

The north wall of the nave is harder to decipher. Upon close examination an enormous, hideous monster 's head with no eyes and small ears can be made out on the right. Strange Shaped characters are writhing in its immense open mouth. According to the Book of Job it is « Leviathan » symbolising Hell. The characters are therefore devils or the condemned being sucked down by this misshapen mouth. The dark brown painting – whose contrasts have disappeared seems to fade into a ghost – like fog. On the left of Leviathan is another scene with a surround and added later. We can find here the classical theme of the association between the cardinal sins and Hell. We can see a procession of characters, each one symbolising a cardinal sin, heading for the monster's mouth. Of this procession, only the leading figure remains today – a vague silhouette, apparently feminine, sitting astride a feline representing lust. Behind this feline a dog is just visible. Conclusion : It is surprising to find such a wealth of religious paintings of such great beauty in such a modest monument. These symbolic, religious and ornamental works were common to medieval churches.

SMALLER MONUMENTS OF INTEREST

As in all rural villages where the inhabitants used to live in virtual self-sufficiency, small, utilitarian edifices were constructed such as wash houses, drinking fountains, bread ovens and small bridges, as well as small religious monuments such as crosses. The walker will often discover them dotted along the pathways.

The couquette cross, erected by the Geneste family of millers. Note the nickname of the last family member, Cadétou, written in wrought-iron letters.



The cross in the village in memory of the success of Father Fidèle's mission in 1887.



The bread oven at Boulègue (private property).



The little stone bridge seen on the right by walkers when they take the short walk pathway marked in green and white when walking up towards Saint-Christophe.

THE PREHISTORIC SITE OF COMBE- CAPELLE

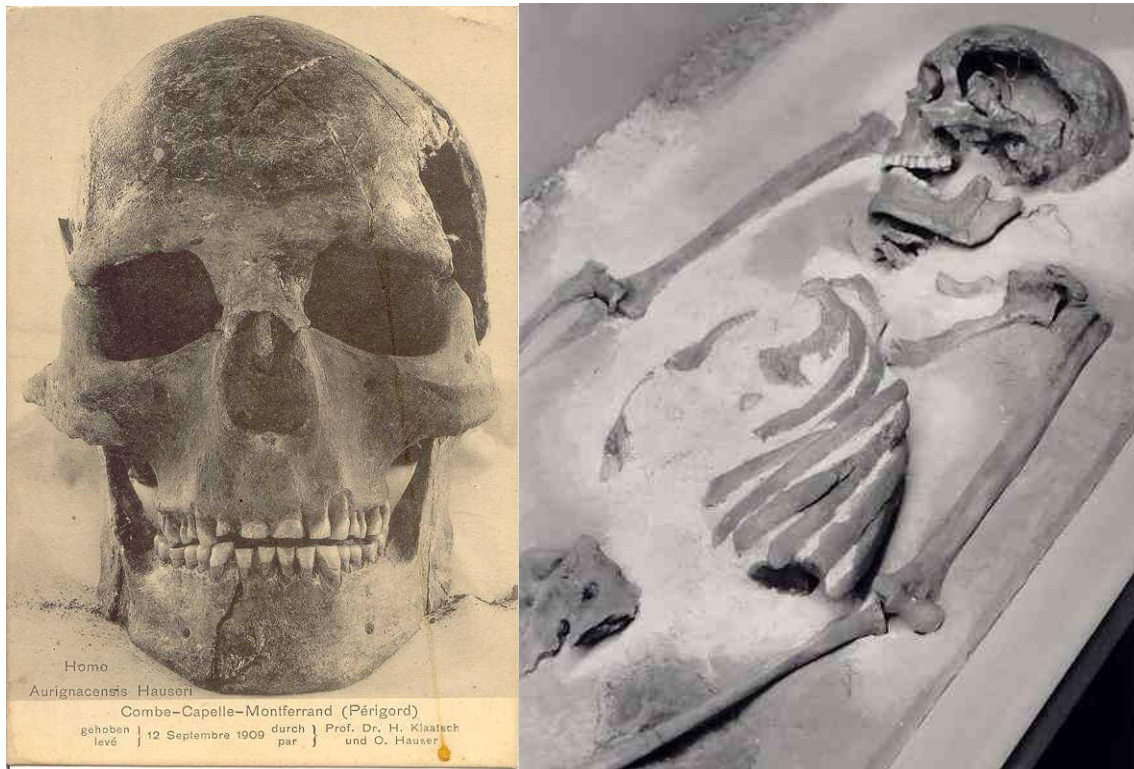


Biface à gauche et grand Racloir à droite

The Prehistoric site of Combe-Capelle is a three tiered complex situated on a hillside in the Couze valley near the village of Montferrand-du-Périgord. At the top of the hill, at the foot of a small cliff, the caves of ROC DE COMBE-CAPELLE and COMBE-CAPELLE HAUT were the first to be excavated. On the slope, COMBE-CAPELLE BAS was excavated more recently. The ROC DE COMBE-CAPELLE discovered in 1887 was excavated by Mr VILLEREAL and then by O. HAUSER, who discovered in 1909 a skeleton belonging to the CHATELPERRONIEN. It was buried intentionally with a cloth and a twin-edged tool next to its left hand. It was a small man measuring 1.60m. HAUSER published his discovery, sold the skeleton to the Berlin museum and gave a mould of it to the Périgueux museum. The circumstances of the discovery, the exact position and the skull characteristics (see photo) have been questioned by several prehistorians since the first criticisms by the prehistorian, DENIS PEYRONY. The site, having been completely excavated, has lost its stratigraphy.



Crâne et squelette retrouvé sur le roc de Combe-Capelle



COMBE-CAPELLE HAUT : This was excavated by DENIS PEYRONY in 1925.

COMBE-CAPELLE BAS : Several excavations were carried out by the priest LANDESQUE . In 1926 HENRI-MARC AMI excavated from the departmental road to half way up the hill. After his death, the results were published. The site was again excavated in the 1980s by H.L.DIBBLE and MICHEL LENOIR in order to clarify the sequence of activity on the site and to check on the effect of the mineral deposits and flint. (see objects relating to COMBE-CAPELLE BAS)

