

**Strategic Change at the l'Hôpital du Saint Jacques,
Roeulx, in the 17th Century, from the Account Book
of Sister Magdelaine Delcourt.**

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1202:

Baldwin (Boudouin), bailiff of Roieux went on Crusade.

He gave his house and its associated income to found a hospital.

The purpose of the hospital was to support the poor and pilgrims travelling to Santiago de Compostella.

In the middle ages the pilgrimage to Compostella was very popular. About 500,000 pilgrims would make the Camino de Santiago every year.

The medieval method was to start from your home, wherever it was, and walk all the way.

Even now, 100,000 pilgrims a year make the journey, (and 200,000 in a holy year).

These days pilgrims tend to start from certain defined points. The most popular is the Camino Frances, which begins at St Jean Pied de Port in southern France, crosses the Pyrenees, and continues 800 km across northern Spain.

Unfortunately, due to a mistaken assumption, it turned out that very few pilgrims passed through Roeulx. Fulfilling one of its two objectives became impossible.

To justify the hospital's continued existence they redefined their objectives to include the care of the sick as well as the poor, but pilgrims were no longer part of their mission. This revised mission continues to the present day.

Despite additional donations and despite the best intentions of the nuns who operated it, the hospital struggled through the middle ages, and almost failed on several occasions. However, records of these times are patchy.

In the early 1600s the Augustine Sisters of La Magdelaine at Ath took over the running of the hospital.

This paper focusses on the accounting records kept by Sister Magdelaine Del Court for the year from 1st October 1625 to 30th September 1626, which have survived reasonably intact in the Public Social Welfare Centre at Roeulx.

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Autre mises et delivrance
faictes pour L'office d'uy d'urant le t'emps de
les comptes ainsi quil s'esuit
le premier

A Monsieur le pasteur du Roduz
pour avoir .c. sols et fait le
devoir aux obsèques de son
seigneur mag' d'air de court coprent
son service et messes du mois de
la t'uzance de l'uminaire xpe L

Au p'oyent du Roduz pour avoir
le .c. sols en messes le jour
de la t'uzance de may de
vi L

Messire le Pasteur du Roduz
pour avoir .c. s. b. et saint b.
obuoir aux obseques de son mes-
sire mag. Martin de court coprint
son service et messe du mois de
La Trinzance de Luminair
xj s. l.

Du Royent du Roduz pour avoir
obuoir la messe en musique le jour
de Jaques de saint de may de
vi s. l.

Du Royent pour avoir chant
une messe en musique le jour de
Augustin de
vi s. l.

Messire Pierre yellaig pour avoir
obuoir trois messes en musique l'an
de saint Augustin de 38 et
de 39 et

These records are not easy to interpret:

- First the writing is archaic;
- Secondly they are written in early French;
- Thirdly the monetary amounts are written in Roman numerals;
- Fourthly the Roman numerals show some unusual abbreviations and variations;
- Fifthly the monetary amounts are expressed in the “livres: sous: deniers” system. This is equivalent to the English “pounds; shillings: pence” system. One pound of silver (silver alloy, but initially quite pure) was beaten onto a thin flat sheet and 240 silver pennies were struck from it. This resulted in pennies that were way smaller than $\frac{1}{240}$ of a pound, but allowed payment to the coiner for his work and a seigneurage for the king.

Some examples of revenues and expenditures follow:

| Description | Original amount | Modern |
|--|---|------------|
| First | CL xxiiij £ xi ß x d. | £174.59 |
| Other receipt: annuity given by the late Sire Jean preuosz | V £ ix ß Vj d. | £5.48 |
| Other receipt: inheritances and annuity | C xxi £ x ß ix d. | £121.54 |
| Other receipt: for rent receivable due in the city of Triviere both capons and money | Lx £ ij ß Vj d. | £60 .125 |
| Other receipt: for rent receivable each year in the towns of Maurage, of Haisn and Bracquegnies | iiii ^{xx} V £ Vi ß 3 d. | £85.31 |
| Other receipt: for rent received from the late Sir J preuosz for the year in various places | Cij £ xV ß ix d. | £102 .79 |
| Other receipt: for a legacy belonging to this hospital for nine and six years after the person declared it | ij ^m ix ^c LVJ £ iij ß | £2,956 .15 |
| Other receipt: for the renting of chaussy land owned next to this hospital | xV ^c xV £ | £1,515.00 |
| Other receipt: farms during the term of the account by consent of the directors, the account of our prelate St Feuillin and others | Cxx £ | £120.00 |
| Total | | £5,140.98 |

| Description | Original amount | Modern notation |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| <p>Jean Bertou on his home and inheritance at the town on haine each year on the day of Christmas two capons (illi s value.) one and a half chickens (illi s value.), one ninepenny bread, and one My of oats 20 £</p> | Xj £ Viiij ß | £11.40 |
| <p>And on St Feuillen Day ijß iijd (2ß 3d.) each year for three years</p> | Vj ß ix d | £0.34 |

| Description | Original amount | Modern notation |
|--|--|-------------------------------|
| From aubert bouchain for the tithes of bermains each year ij ^c XL (240) for three years | <p>Vj cent XXX £</p> <p>Deleted and corrected by the controller (auditor) to:</p> <p>Vij cent XX £</p> | <p>£630.00</p> <p>£720.00</p> |

| Designation | Original Amount | Modern notation |
|--|--|-----------------|
| Payments made by any of the parties heretofore named in full revenue, but not received for the reasons set after and other payments stolen | iij ^c xxxViiij £ viij β Vj d. | £338.33 |

| Description | Original Amount | Modern notation |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Other payments made: to people for bread from this hospital | ix ^c xxxVj £ | £936 |

| Description | Original Amount | Modern Notation |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| Other expense made: for medicine and bleedings that the doctor that provided for both the sick and for nuns | C xxVij £ ii β | £127.10 |

| Description | Original Amount | Modern notation |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Other Payment: for the Divine Office | V ^c xi x £ βVi d. | £511.53. |

| Designation | Original Amount | Modern notation |
|--|---|-----------------|
| Other payments made during the term of account for several goods such as fat, hops and eggs | Viii CL xx £ iiiij ii β Vi d. | £874.13 |
| Other payments for beer and wine consumed at the hospital for teaching sisters, treatment of counselors coming and going from the hospital for the care of the sick and others | ii ^c LV j £ iij | £256.15 |
| Other payments for butter consumed during the term of this account | xV ^c iiiij Vi £ Vjβ | £1,586.30 |
| Other payments made for grain during the term of this account | ix ^c xx Viiiij £ Xvi β ix d. | £929.84 |
| Other payments made for meat for the treatment of the sick and the conventuals | ii ^m Lix £ i β Vj | £2,059.08 |
| Total | | £5,706.89 |

| Description | | Receipts | |
|---|--|---|---|
| Receipt receivable in in corn and wheat payable to this hospital | calculation | 38 hogsheads 16 quarters | |
| Other receipts of wheat from farms leased out by this hospital | calculation | 81 hogsheads 8 rasières 16 quarters | |
| Payment for delivery of grains receivable as rents each year by this hospital | Memoire | | Memoire |
| Our issue of grain at so much per person in bread because of alms paid to men and women at the wish of the sisters. | Memoire and xx ^{iiij} M iiR iQ | | Memoire and 80 hogsheads 2 rasières 1 quarter |
| Other payments made for grains | | illegible | illegible |

Summary:

- These records pre-date double entry book-keeping;
- There is no attempt to record any summary data (though such a report may have been made separately);
- There is a mixture of monetary and non-monetary transactions.