

**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'uzant & t'uzant de
les comptes ainsi quil s'ensuit
le premier

A Monsieur le pasteur du Roduz
pour avoir .c. s. b. et fait &
devoir aux obseques de son
seigneur mag. d'uzant de court coprent
son service et messes du mois de
la tuzance de l'uzance de l'uzance
xix L.

Au Royent du Roduz pour avoir
c. s. b. la messe en musique & pour
le service de son seigneur de may
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 copme
son frere 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 Jacquet de mist de may de
vi s. l.

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

Messire Pierre yellaig pour avoir
obuoir trois messes en musique l'an
de son de Augustin de 38 et
de 30 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 $1/240$ 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>	<p>Xj £ Viiij ß</p>	<p>£11.40</p>
<p>And on St Feuillen Day ijß iijd (2ß 3d.) each year for three years</p>	<p>Vj ß ix d</p>	<p>£0.34</p>

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

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.