

FRENCH MONASTIC URBAN WEALTH : METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW AND PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

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French monasteries lost their vast wealth during the Revolutionary sequestration and ultimate sale of both real estate and chattel properties. The seizure, purchase and redistribution of the Church's landed possessions have given rise to an enormous body of literature most recently summarized by Bernard Bodinier and Eric Teyssier¹. Herein, I shall studiously avoid the debate surrounding the sale of this coveted property; however, the various inventories painstakingly compiled by early 20th century positivist historians provide the starting point for a regressive inquiry into the nature of mortmain urban landed possessions.² Several prior studies have been conducted into the sale of the *biens nationaux* and this research provides further means to compare the relative wealth of urban monasteries, and more generally urban mortmain institutions, among various French and foreign towns.

It behooves me to add, more as a parenthetical remark, that this study may conveniently be fit into the several other case or comparative studies involving Turin, Milan, Spain and Portugal – to cite recent undertakings.

My central concern lies not in cataloguing real estate holdings, although such a catalog needs to be undertaken as a preliminary stage in our investigation. Rather, my research seeks to understand the extent of urban institutional real estate ownership and use the data culled from such study to explore urban morphology, urban economy and urban society. Obviously, I do not seek to descry the Church's landed wealth or bemoan its cruel expropriation while extolling its charitable activities. From my vantage, we must consider the various individual "foundations" within the Church's constellation of forms as "benefices" taken in the following sense : "sources of revenue allocated to various ecclesial usages".³ The material aspect of the Church's wealth, and its transfer to lay ownership, reveals aspects of urban (or rural) land use. The acquirers of property in towns might often have been those who already occupied the premises thus acquired, this latter point being an

¹ Bodinier (Bernard) and Teyssier (Eric), *L'événement le plus important de la Révolution " : la vente des biens nationaux (1789-1867) en France et dans les territoires annexés*, Paris : Société des études Robespierriennes : Ed. du CTHS (Ed.) (2000).

² [Charléty](#) (Sébastien), *Documents relatifs à la vente des biens nationaux*, Département du Rhône, Lyon, 1906.

³ Perronnet (Michel) , « Les espaces religieux (aspects méconnus de la série Q : les espaces religieux du diocèse de Montpellier) », *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest*, tome 90, n°2, 1983. L'espace et le sacré, pp.185-195.

observation I have made from close examination of sales in Paris.⁴ However, further research should seek to generalize this observation to other towns.

Most crucial among the results of surveying ecclesiastic urban wealth, and the foremost gain from such inquiry, lies in the fact that ownership by mortmain communities perdured over extensive time periods. This secular continuity provides us with the potential *ligne directrice* for undertaking serial analyses of neighborhood occupancy. As the dwellings belonging to religious institutions were more often leased, and as these leased properties formed a continuous source of receipts extending beyond the lives of their managers, the monks or other trustees perforce kept minutious records of these properties.

A methodological tool may thus be furnished from the amassed documentation which draws upon both the mortmain archives and other sources of social information, in particular, notarial archives with probate inventories, marriage acts, wills and testaments.

However, prior to any specific inquiry, the extent of this phenomenon needs to be fully described. Moreover, we need to discern the specific characteristics of mortmain urban rental properties in order to fully grasp their utility.

Set then, is the goal of this present research.

Paris : an exceptional case?

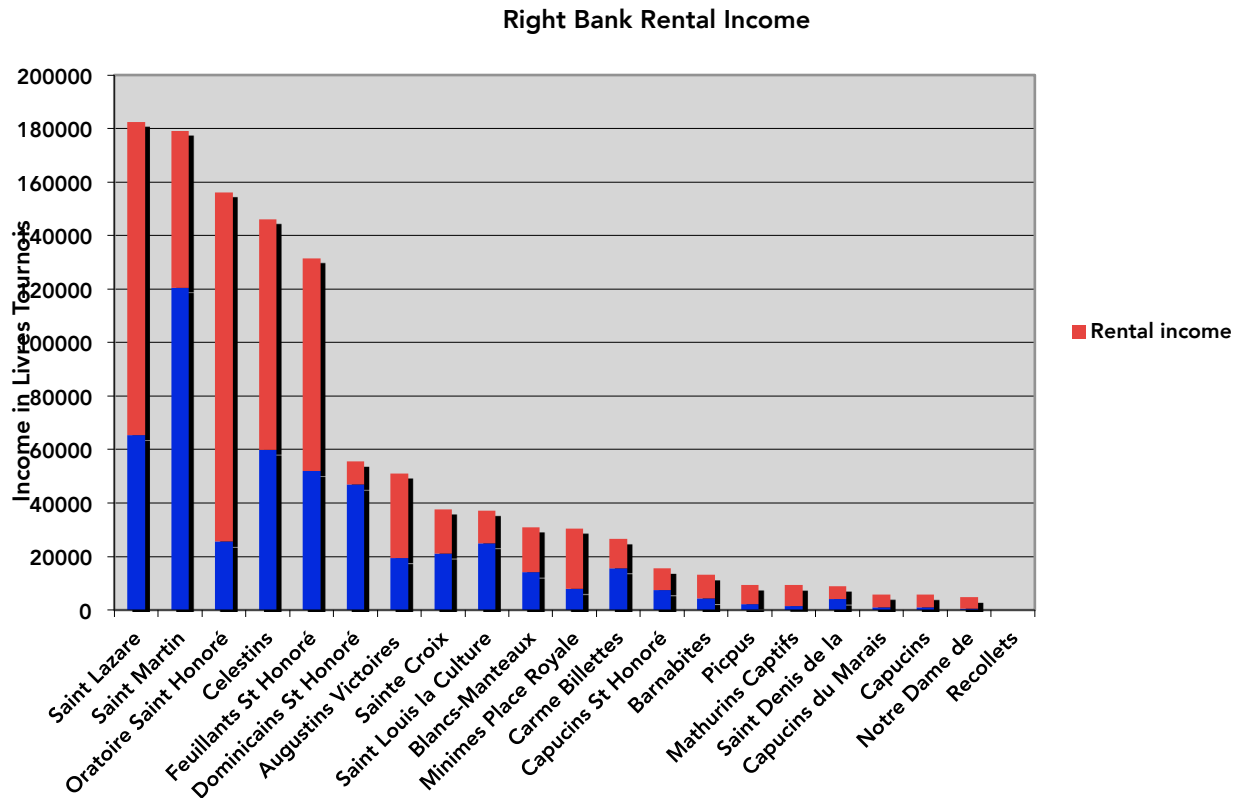
Before reviewing the provincial cities, the situation in Paris should be mentioned. Paris affords a stark example of monastic urban investments. Recall several fundamental statistics: in 1749, the only date for which we possess a single uniform inventory, out of a total 23,103 residential buildings and shops within Paris, 3140 houses and 103 boutiques belonged to mortmain owners.⁵ Accepting these figures we have a startling number of mortmain-owned buildings, some 13.6% at mid century.

In 1789, Parisian men's regular communities owned more than 500 buildings (or more appropriately, rental units, since there was a degree of geometric variation due to sectional rentals of large apartment buildings) in Paris and for a total revenue attaining 2,762,176 livres tournois, 1,320,628 livres resulted from urban income, accounting for 48%. Not all of this urban income, however, arose from rental property, some was in the form of *lods-et-ventes*, that is, seignorial dues paid when a building was sold.

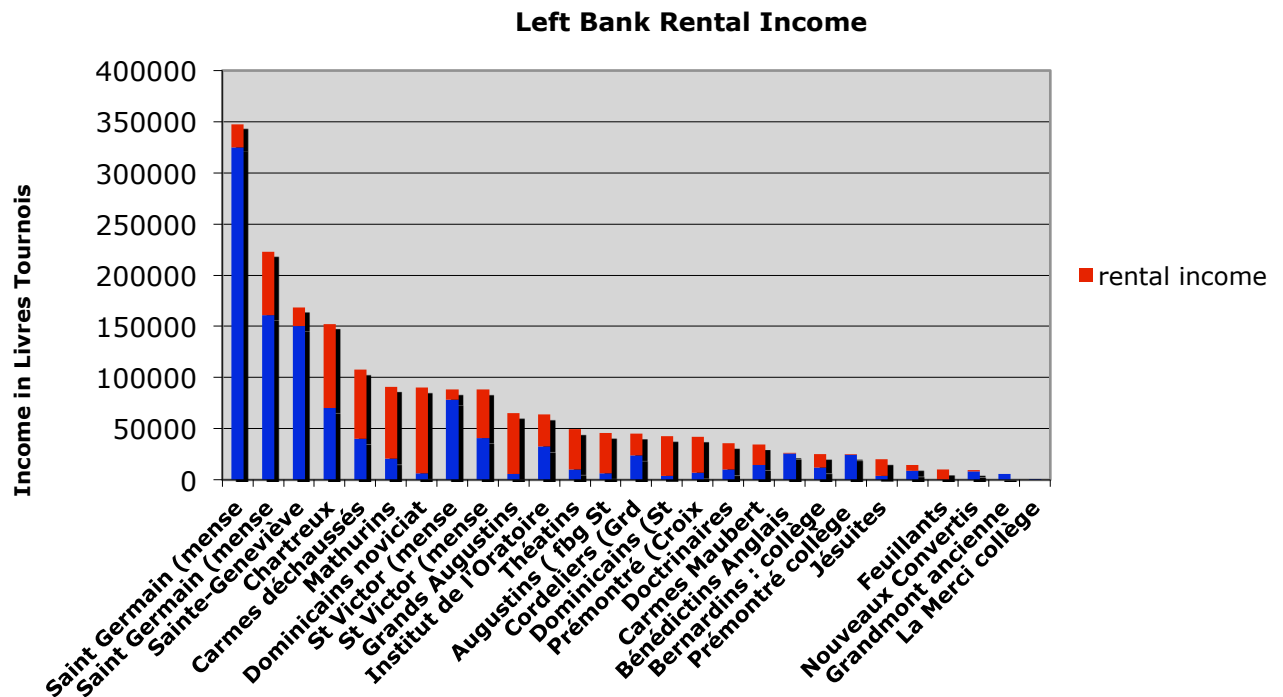
⁴ My work concerns the rue Dauphine and neighboring streets where half the 30 buildings owned by the ci-devant Austin Friars were purchased by their main tenants.

⁵ Arch. nat, Q¹*1099 56 : *État des maisons boutiques et échoppes dans la ville de Paris appartenant à la mainmorte jusqu'à la fin du mois d'août 1749.*

Graphically, we can represent the percentages given for each religious regular community as follows:

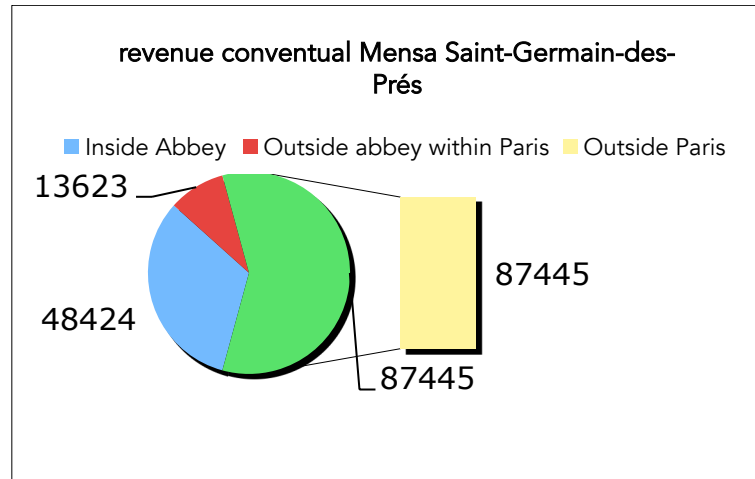


For those communities located on the Left Bank of the Seine a similar graph provides a telling fact, a majority of the communities depended on urban based incomes for the lion’s share of their incomes. More importantly, even those communities richly endowed in rural estates, understandably considered as the most substantial source of income in a pre- or “proto” industrial economy, possessed significant revenue from urban rental properties.



For example if consider the eminent Benedictine abbey, Saint-Germain-des-Prés, we observe that in 1789, its total income was divided into 2 parts, the conventual mensa and the abbatial mensa. The conventual mensa belonged to the Maurist monks, the abbatial mensa redounded to the Crown since no abbot had be named for several years. Within the diocese of Paris, the monks enjoyed an income of 149,492 livres tournois out of a total income of some 222,788 livres tournois. While the lion's share arose from rural sources (some 72%), the rental incomes in Paris were far from negligible : 62,047 l.t. per year. Moreover, these incomes were largely the result of rental properties built within the monastic enclosure starting from 1698.

While this example seemingly contradicts my emphasis on urban rental properties importance within the total income earned by ecclesiastic institutions, the case of Saint-Germain-des-Prés is quite telling for it reveals the growing attraction that urban landed improvement held in the eyes of rational investors. The Benedictine monks (Maurists, to be precise, so-called after the reform of Saint Maur) had no financial motive per se to undertake extensive construction projects within their monastic precincts. Yet they did so, using the proceeds from the sale of a seignury near Versailles (the seignury of Bièvres, purchased by Dr Mareschal, Louis XIV's surgeon) to build a large apartment building.



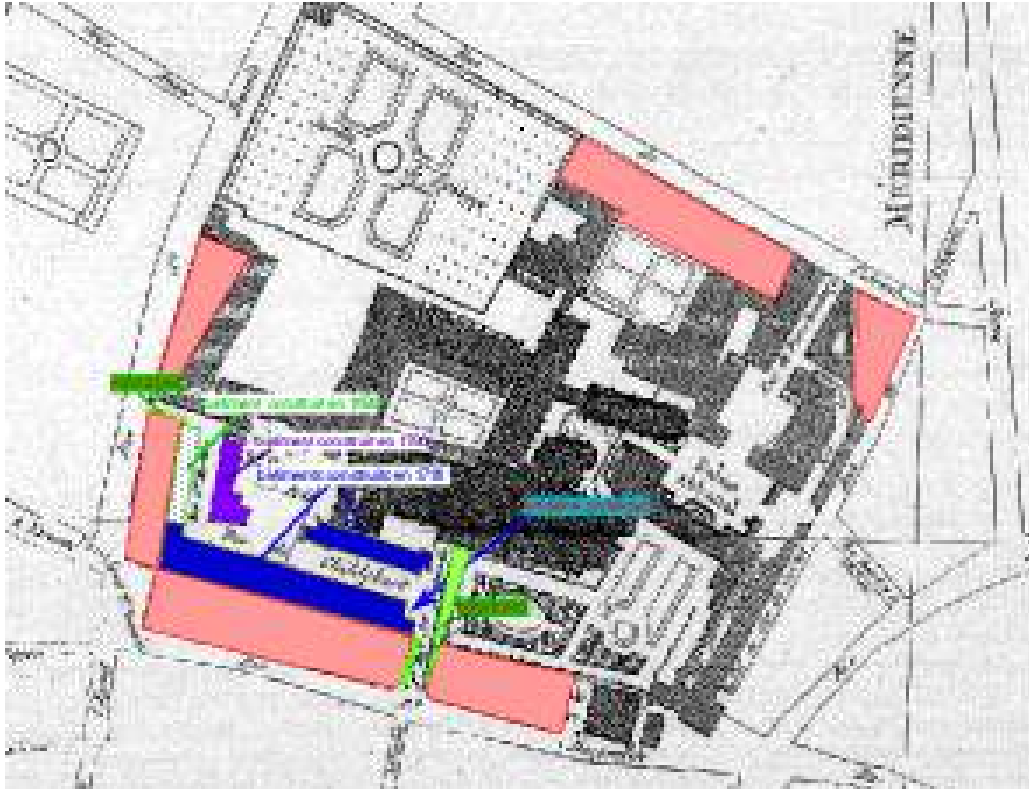
Certainly the aforesaid project, as well as others undertaken by numerous Parisian regular communities, arose from population pressure and the besetting need to convert unused or underused sacrosanct terrains into viable social spaces. Examples abound : the Carthusian fathers in the Luxembourg gardens edified several luxurious townhouses on the edge of the priory; the Congregation of the Mission, which occupied the ancient priory of Saint Lazare, equally invested in aristocratic mansions (*les hôtels aristocratiques*) on the rue du Faubourg Saint-Laurent. The venerable priory of Saint-Martin-des-Champs also undertook a vast construction campaign in the 1760s to build a marketplace and four major apartment dwellings at a cost in excess of 100,000 livres tournois. This list is far from exhaustive; the examples underscore the massive projects characteristic of the late 17th and 18th centuries undertaken largely to improve relatively large swaths of land which had formerly lay outside the use of town dwellers. Whether the monasteries sought to extend their urban clientele as argued Françoise Le Houx, or, as I would suggest, they felt the need to assuage the smoldering discontent of a populace yearning for *lebenraum*, thus new habitable spaces arose within the cityscape.⁶

The priory of Saint-Martin-des-Champs undertook the construction of four apartment buildings around a central square as well as a market place on marsh land inside the cloister. On March 25th 1765 the priory's monastic community obtained royal authorization to borrow 400,000 l.t. to finance their project.⁷

Notwithstanding the aforementioned construction projects, it should be borne in mind that other urban rental properties belonged to the monasteries. The various types of properties merit a rapid description. The typology herein proposed is strictly for heuristic use, it should not be taken as a hard-and-fast categorization.

⁶ Le Houx, Françoise, "La cour du monastère de Saint-Germain-des-Prés dans les premières années du XVIII^e siècle", *Mémoires de la Fédération des sociétés de Paris et de l'Île de France*, t. IX, 1957-1958 (1958), p. 92.

⁷ Arch. Nat. MC Et CXV/781. « Approuvé les plans et élévations de l'autre que les prieur claustral et religieux de St Martin des Champs désirent faire exécuter tant pour faire un marché qui leur a été demandé par la police pour la commodité du peuple que pour les autres bâtiments énoncées aux dits plans pour loger différents artisans, marchands et autres habitans le tout dans l'intérieur de la clôture du prieuré de St Martin et par derrière les bâtiments qui sont déjà construits dans la grande cour privilégiée Paris le premier Octobre mil sept cent soixante six. »



Verniquet Map (1790) in blue(built in 1716),green (1696) and violet (1786) are various rental clusters owned by the Saint-Germain-des-Prés
 The red zones correspond to building plots paying a feudal due (the cens) but no longer part of the fully owned domain (*l'utile*)

Basic categories of rental property

We can distinguish 4 fundamental types of rental properties owned by urban communities. First, dispersed dwellings, often bequeathed by devout owners. These most often concern buildings located randomly in town : the college of the Grand Carmes owned a single dwelling on the Right Bank, rue de Temple and also 3 houses located in the Left Bank's faubourg Saint Marcel. The Carmes Billettes on the Right Bank owned 6 dwellings adjacent to their cloister but also a major aristocratic hôtel situated at the "Barrière de Grenelle" on the Left Bank as well a smaller building nearby the *hôtel*, both far removed from their monastery in the Marais.

The second type of rental property consisted in buildings located either adjacent to or in the immediate proximity of the monastery : these structures could be immediately adjoining the cloister's walls, affixed to the church or situated on land once included within the monastery's surrounding estate. This type of rental property gives rise to "rental clusters", that is, groups of dwellings built essentially to accrue rents from tenants. The dwelling could be noble hotels, as in the case of the

discalced Carmelites, the Novitiate of the Dominicans in the Faubourg Saint Germain, the Carthusian monastery of the Luxembourg Gardens, or buildings belonging to the Feuillants, whether adjoining their *noviciat* rue d'Enfer or their *Maison profès*, on rue Saint-Honoré. Often the aristocratic structures possess extensive gardens and courtyards with stables. As such, these types of habitat are most often found in the zones occupied by post-Tridentine communities which obtained land at the outskirts of the built environment in the first half or even the first decades of the 17th century.

The third type of structure concerns the “attached buildings” or “agglomerated dwellings”. Medieval foundations, usually located at the periphery of the town, near the walls, possessed smaller surrounding plots and thus did not have noble tenants : the Austin friars possessed 32 houses surrounding their monastery. The Grands Carmes also had a series of 11 buildings literally abutting their monastery – in one case part of the structure was incorporated into the monastery itself! However, it should be borne in mind, that the urban dynamics would lead to reconstruction of certain “agglomerated buildings” or those even separated from the main cloister’s block. The Dominican college on the rue Saint-Jacques owned a number of buildings both adjoining the college and also further down the street near the Sorbonne. Several buildings were rebuilt during the 18th century. The monastery itself fell into disrepair and the church was forbidden from any use by police order just prior to the Revolution.

A fourth type of construction needs to be considered : the interior apartment complex. Both Saint-Germain-des-Prés and Saint-Martin-des-Champs undertook major construction projects within their very cloisters. They built a specific, and unique, rental structure : apartment buildings with ground floor shops. These were not medieval-style superimposed dwellings with one family occupying the building composed of double rooms on each floor, but apartments rented by storey and containing an enfilade of rooms.

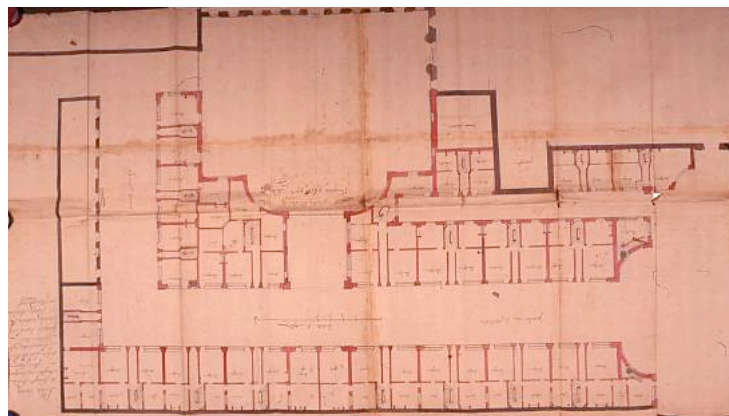
Obviously, a given monastery might own buildings belonging to various categories and these categories could coexist as in the case of the Reformed Augustinians of the Province of Bourges which occupied a block of land originally donated by the Queen Marguerite of Valois.

Finally, a curious form of habitat bears mention : the presence of interior rentals, that is, either rooms, apartments or even entire building let to outsiders whether lay or ecclesiastic, is fully attested by numerous documents. This type of rental arrangement was more akin to furnished apartments, (the term “locations meublées” is often used). However, this practice did not serve as a major source of income and most clearly arose from various social and political obligations. The Austin Friars are a case in point since their monastery harbored the headquarters of the Royal Order of the Saint Esprit, the bureau of the French Clergy’s General Assembly and also had rooms periodically rented out to auctioneers.

As a summary of these real estate holdings, the following table recapitulates the situation in Paris in the mid 18th century for only one class of regular communities, the monastic colleges. However, this table provides a glimpse of the various rental configurations.

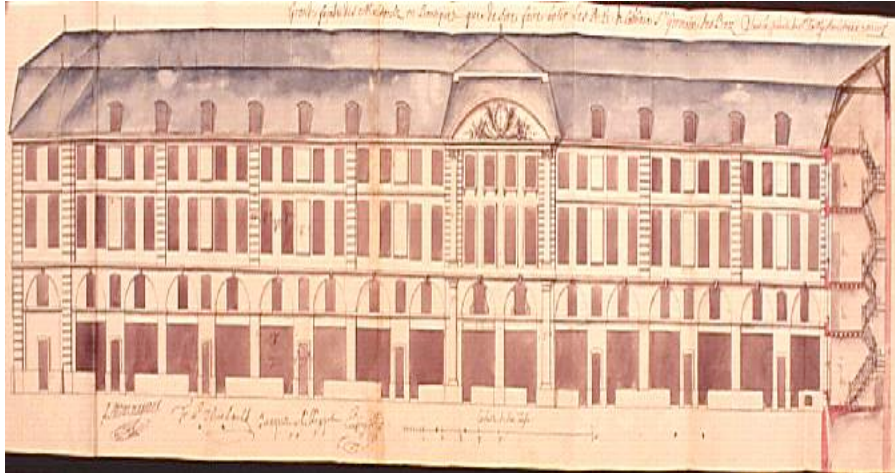
Community	Number of rental houses	Percent of rental income in total	Number of units in rental clusters	Dispersed units	Source
Grandmont College	4 houses	71 %	4	0	Arch. nat., S 7508
Austin Friars	34 houses 12 shops	78%	34	0	Arch. nat., S 3632
Dominican College "Jacobins"	23 houses, 1 butcher shop, 8 large shops, 29 small shops, 2 work site, 29 book stalls	68%	23 (on several adjoining blocks)	0	Arch. nat., S 4228
Grands Carmes	15 houses of which one possessed 4 stories with individual appartments	54%	12	1 Right Bank 3 Left Bank	Arch. nat., S 3734
College of Premonstratarians	2 buildings	5 %	2	0	Arch. nat., S 4243
Collège des Bernardins	12 hôtels or houses + 10 storage structures +3 carriage houses	75%	22	0	Arch. nat., S 3658
Franciscan college	6 houses 5 boutiques	25 %	6	Half of one building rue de Grenelle	Arch. nat., S 4161
Mercy college	Wine cellar rented out	100 %	0	0	Arch. nat., S 4285
Benedictines of Cluny college	5 houses 2 boutiques 2 storage spaces 4 appartments	59 %	4	1 building rue de la Harpe	Arch. nat., S 6415

Below is an architect's drawing of the major apartment building constructed by the Benedictines of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. The ground plan for the 1716 construction is quite clear. One building possessed 17 rental units while the other across the street had 9 units. A public fountain served the inhabitants. All told, the Maurist monks had built 34 rental units within the monastery.



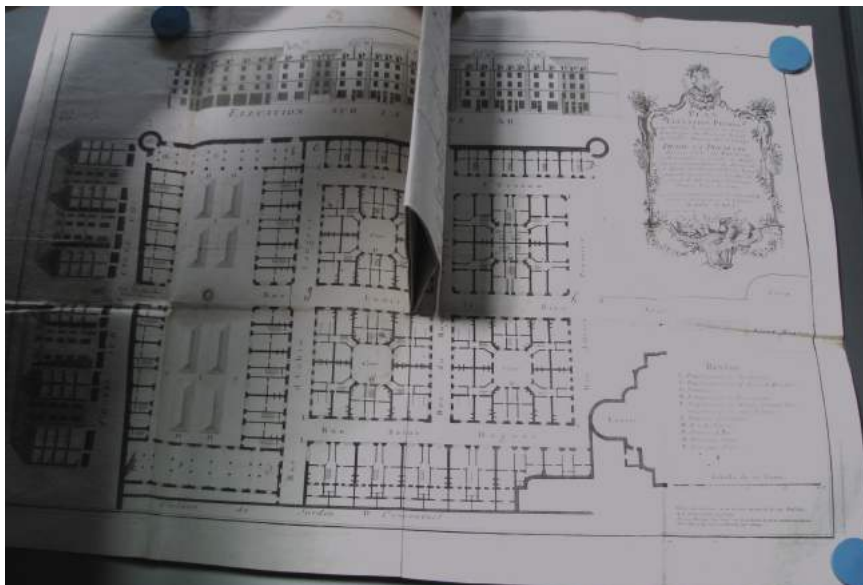
Ground plan for the apartment complex built within the cloister of Saint-Germain-des-Prés in 1716
M.C., étude XCI, 630

Below is one façade for the same apartment complex.



Façade as depicted from the rue Childebert
M.C., étude XCI, 630

A similar project, on even grander scale, was undertaken by the Benedictines of Saint-Martin-des-Champs in 1766.



Rental project undertaken within the cloister of Saint-Martin-des-Champs
Arch. Nat. M.C. Et CXV/781

Concession forms, spatial questions and plot structures

Monastic urban rental property investment and construction raise a variety of issues. First, we insist on the fact that these properties remained in the hands of the communities. Obviously, examples of sales, emphyteutic concession and even seigneurial forms of tenure occurred. The Cistercian college conceded lots in the form of feudal rents.⁸ The standards means of improving urban land involved subdividing a terrain into lots (*lotir* in French) and selling the subdivision to investors who formally promise to build. This method enjoyed widespread popularity but clearly left the sellers at a disadvantage of losing control over their land. Thus, the preference for rental properties from which the income could be indexed to the rise in prices; obviously the rent could only be readjusted at the end of a lease. Leases were usually granted for 9 years although they could be as short as three years. Subdivided property could be improved and then let out. Hence many of the rental properties earlier described fit into this paradigm. Equally possible would be the acquisition through purchase or donation of pre-existing dwellings. This contingency occurred; but not as often in the 18th century when property prices rose and monastic incomes did not increase *pari passu*.

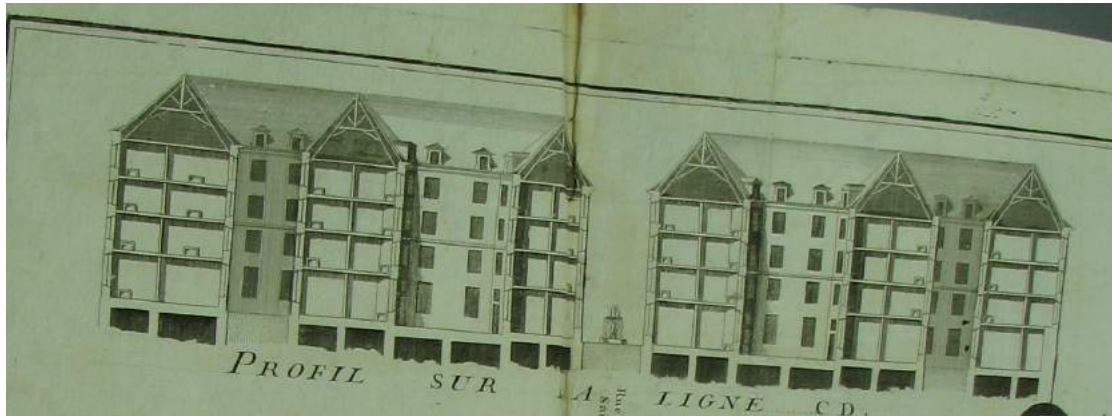
The two aforesaid interior projects cannot be considered as subdivisions (*lotissements*) in the strict sense, since the plot structure of the cloister does not provide a true idea as the habitat any more than a modern high apartment complex's plot structure provides ample insight into the land value. Here, clearly, the dwelling (*la bâtisse*) bears the plot's essential value, it is, truly, in Conzen's terms a "plot dominant" if the term "plot" itself might be adequately applied. Obviously, the examples provided are exceptional since the space at each convent's disposal greatly exceeded the norm. Saint-Germain-des-Prés and Saint-Martin-des-Champs each had extensive space, the Maurists possessed 34,000 square meters. The priory de Saint-Martin-des-Champs held as much.

The use of space depends on how much can be organized and what constructions can there be ordained. Space, power and social occupancy all conspire to configure the built environment. Financially, only the most powerful communities could risk undertaking massive investments such as those shown above. These projects were largely underwritten through sale of rural properties owned by the two communities or at least guaranteed by the income from rural properties. Although, it should be emphasized, the investments thus incurred proved profitable.

Clearly not all communities could afford the costs and indebtedness necessary to finance such vast projects. As a further precondition, extensive landholdings were also necessary. The communities which undertook projects were those initially located outside the walled city (in the *faubourgs*), ineluctable urban growth led to their envelopment with the built environment. Pressures arose, particular during periods of economic boom, to develop the enclosed land. However, some communities transferred terrains and even parts of their monasteries through ninety-nine year emphyteutic leases. These were normally used by communities unwilling to incur heavy debts for dwellings or terrains which could often not be let for shorter periods (the Discalced Carmelites in the Faubourg Saint-Germain could grant live-

⁸ Dumolin (Maurice), "La censive du collège des Bernardins", *Bulletin de la société d'histoire de Paris et de l'Île de France*, 62e année, 1935, Paris, Champion, p. 86-90

time leases; the Theatines did the same). This intermediate form of lease involved a heavy payout from the leasee.



Archives Nationales Françaises
Minutier Central CXV 781

Having thus categorized the various rental structures (and I have excluded the widespread practice of renting parts of the cloisters themselves for various storage uses). The question arises as to whether similar practices occurred in other French towns. More appropriately, the question is to know how frequent were such practices and to what extent did other towns have their habitable space controlled by regular communities.

To provide a preliminary answer to the question, we need to call upon the inventories of nationalized church properties. These inventories were created prior to the sale of church domains. In certain cases, the communities remitted detailed declarations of their income and expenses in 1790. However, not all did abide by the *Constituante's* injunctions and some declarations appeared to have been destroyed. Our inquiry is abetted by prior scholars' labors : for several French *départements*, eminent historians at the beginning of the 20th conducted painstaking archival compilations of documents resulting from the nationalization of Church properties, these properties are termed "*les biens nationaux de première origine*" as opposed to those of "*deuxième origine*" which were seized from émigrés having fled.

Urban Monastic Presence and Urban Development

What characterizes the monastic urban wealth for communities elsewhere in France ? As an initial object for study consider the situation in Lyon in 1790 with a population of some 170,000 inhabitants.⁹ There were 9 canonical chapters—Saint-

⁹ Charléty (Sébastien) *Documents relatifs à la Vente des Biens Nationaux*, Lyon, Imprimerie Schneider, 1906. 53. Garden (Maurice) *Lyon et les Lyonnais au XVIIIème siècle*, Paris Belle Lettres, 1970 : la population de Lyon intra muros reached 146,000 in 1785.

Croix, Saint-Etienne, Saint Jean, Saint-Paul, Saint-Just, Saint-Nizier, Ainay, Notre Dame de la Platière and Fourvière—3 abbeys: Saint Pierre, La Déserte, Chazeaux— one priory (Saint-Benoît) and three secular houses of priests (one Oratorian, one for the Mission of Saint Joseph and one for the Lazarists). There was equally two colleges and two seminaries (Saint-Irénée and Saint-Charles). Fifteen men’s regular communities existed in Lyon, one of which, the Célestins, had been secularized in 1779. Lyon possessed sixteen women’s communities as well.

For the men’s communities, overall, out of the eighteen, seven had more than half their income from urban rental properties. The number of buildings owned by the masculine communities exceeded 102 (and this number excludes the buildings owned by the Célestins, as their order had been effectively suppressed in 1778-1779). The total annual urban rental income for the above said communities reached

	Community	Total Income	Urban rental income	Rural Income	Bond Annuities	Percentage Urban	Number of urban rental units in Lyon
1	Grands Augustins Lyon	20503	17825	—	625	87% (97% with cloister rentals)	36 buildings
2	Augustins réformés Croix Rousse	2487	—	2360	127		
3	Capucins de Fourvière	16864	?	?	?	?	?
4	Capucins du Petit Forêt (Lyon)	43574	?	?	?	?	?
5	Grands Carmes des Terreaux	31113	26211	2914	1495	84%	11 buildings
6	Carmes déchaussés	16049	—	13286	2763	0%	None
7	Chartreux	49935	18810	21125	2207	37%	10 buildings
8	Cordelier de l'Observance	5867	2060 (enclos)		3807	0%	
9	Cordeliers St Bonaventure	25176	19930 (shop and chairs)	1000	3426		Several small buildings & shops
10	Feuillants	23510	21060	—	1453	90%	8 buildings
11	Jacobins Lyon	41351	20610	4328	15913	50%	10 buildings (71 leases)
12	Minimes	25528	5918	15018	4592	23%	4 buildings
13	Recollets Lyon	4665	none	none	546	0%	none
14	Picpus	12515	8279	none	3436	66%	
15	Célestins						
16	Oratoire	20567	17012	3645	—	82%	10 buildings
17	Missionaries of Saint Joseph	54983	40164	7200	7619	73%	9 buildings
18	Lazarist Missionaries	24639	(8450) 4745 rentals outside cloister	5650	10529	20%	5 buildings

206,329 l.t. out of a global income of 419,326 l.t., equal to 49%. This figure takes into account a portion of cloister rentals and in several cases of church seat rental agreements (often leased to collectors “*fermiers des chaises*”). The two colleges also had 14 rental buildings in Lyon. The two seminars owned 17 buildings.

For the women’s communities, five among the sixteen earned the majority of their income from rental properties, however three others earned nearly half their revenue from urban real estate. Several amounts of urban income appear exaggerated

	Community	Total Income	Urban rental income	Rural Income	Bond Annuities	Percentage Urban	Number urban rental units
1	Annonciades	23005	10335	0	12701	45%	6 buildings
2	Antiquailles Visitation	17,682	14139	3013	530	80%	8 buildings
3	Bernardines	18,070	7356 (boarders)	726	4014	40%	None
4	Carmelites	9311	1311	0	8000	14%	2 buildings
5	Chazeaux	11,208	624	10584	2548	5%	
6	Collinettes	7796	5103	0	2693	65%	2 buildings
7	La Désert	14,880	5100	1078	2024	34%	7 buildings
8	Saint-Benoît	15,810	7630	5000	4364	48%	1 building "Soleil d'Or quai St Vincent
9	Sainte-Claire	?	0	0	0	--	
10	Sainte-Elisabeth	15,675	654	1114	9050		
11	Abbay de Saint Pierre	149,007	38,390	81,081	29,535	25%	5 buildings
12	Ursulines Saint-Juste	5604	300	1100	4204		
13	Ursulines Vieille Monnaie	17,056	8007	0	9049	47%	5 buildings
14	Verbe Incarné	9660	7847	840	973	81%	10 buildings
15	Visitation de Sainte-Maire-de-Bellecour	35,179	18,930	0	16,249	53%	6 buildings
16	Visitation de Sainte-Marie-des-Chaines	6106	4010	1060 (enclos)	1036	66%	4 buildings

All told, out of a total declared annual income of 356,049 l.t., the convents earned 129,736 l.t. from urban rental properties, just slightly over 36%. A total of 56 rental buildings belonged to Lyon’s feminine communities. Interestingly, the

women's communities' gross revenue equaled 84% that of the men's. This near equality marks a clear distinction from Paris where the women's communities' income was 73% that of the men's; while the women's urban income reached 45% of their total.¹⁰

A specific example : Lyon's Celestins

The French Celestin monasteries was secularized in 1779 as one of the aftermaths of the *Royal Commission des réguliers'* conclusions. The monastery in Lyon did not escape the order's fate; nor did the Paris monastery. The Lyon monastery had been founded in 1407.¹¹



SECTION OF THE SÉRAUCOURT MAP OF LYON (REPRODUCTION FROM THE 19TH CENTURY)

As of 1427 the Celestins rebuilt their decrepit wooded convent situated in an area subject to the Saone's periodic flooding. The various donations granted to the monks allowed them to reconstruct their cloister and also to acquire rural domains. Importantly, however, in a report written at the time of the community's suppression, the Celestins insist upon the major reason for the monastery's

¹⁰ Perluss (Preston), *Monastic landed wealth in late-eighteenth-century Paris : major traits and principal issues*, Leuven, p. 53.

¹¹ Archives nationales France, S//7485B–S//7486A (The carton has a double call number). The monastery has been the object of several studies E. Cuaz's *Histoire du Couvent et du Théâtre des Célestins*, Lyon, Waltener et Cie, 1902, 308p ; CHOMARAT (Michel), « Les Célestins, du couvent au théâtre, 6 siècles d'histoire » dans *Bulletin municipal officiel de la ville de Lyon*, N°5602, 5 September 2005; *Les Célestins, du couvent au théâtre : exhibition organized by the city of Lyon at the Theater of the Célestins*, from June 1st to September 18th 2005, catalogue, Lyon, 2005.

prosperity “*c’est l’agrandissement de la ville qui a couvert leur quartier d’édifices remplis d’une population considérable...*” as well as town-dwellers’ generosity and, of course, the monks’ managerial acumen “*leur grande économie et leur bonne administration*”.¹² The monastery burnt on several occasions, first in September 1501 and in November 1622. The 17th century reconstruction led to the widening of the river bank quay to some 36 feet. The city accepted to maintain the roadway. The Celestins spent 10,967 l.t. on their building and rented out the ground floor section facing the quay. In 1644 and the following years, the monks edified two adjacent buildings at the angle of their cloister facing the *Place du Port du Roi*: the corner building bore the name Notre Dame and following building was denoted Saint-Pierre Célestin. These two rental structures, with the associated stables and haylofts cost 32,013 l.t.

In 1721, the Celestins undertook the total reconstruction of their monastery. Running the length of the cloister, a series of 26 arcades with shops and entresols were built. These shops and entresols were rented out, the rest of the structure on higher stories remained for monastic usage.

Afterwards, the monks erected a large structure on the “*cul-d-sac Rontalon*” which adjoined the *Place du Port du Roi* : the structure consisted of two buildings equipped with large warehouses on the ground floor and two stories above. On the same impasse the monastery erected stables, carriage houses and hay lofts.

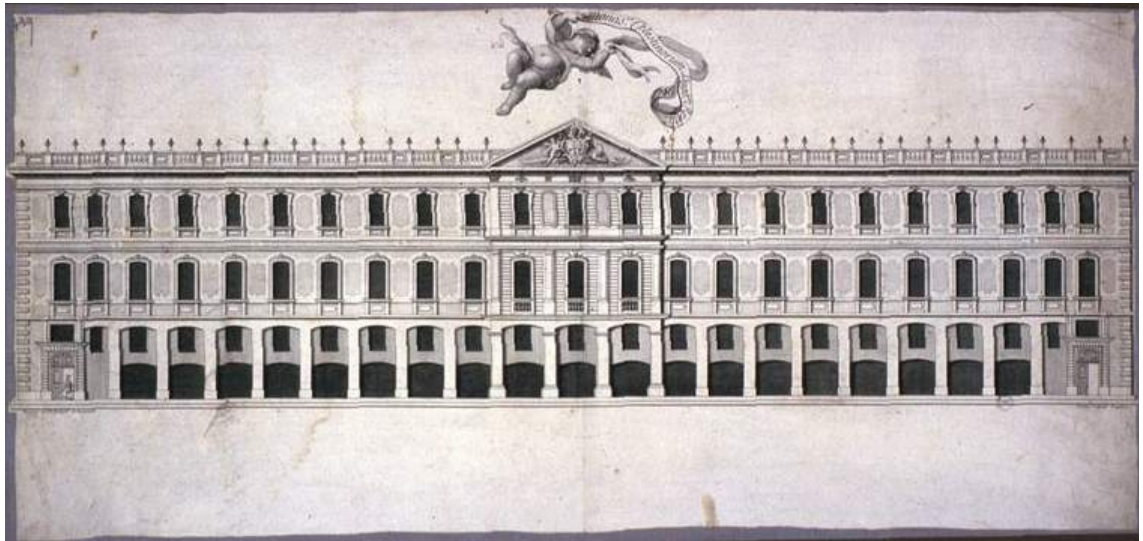
Continuing the construction campaign, the monks built at the end of their garden, adjacent to the buildings on the rue Ecorchboeuf, several large buildings for housing gold and silver smiths and dye works. A specific entrance was built between the buildings to the north of the monastic chapel. On the southern side of the monastery, a series of stables, carriages houses and wood sheds were built. This project cost the enormous sum of 269,818 l.t. For which the monastery sold several rural domains for 87,378 l.t. and borrowed 182,439 l.t. Among the domains sold figure seven lots within the cloister which were conveyed for 24,459 l.t. in consideration of various feudal dues (cens) on the land. Hence we observe a clear sale of property with the feudal dues granting the monastery rights to a sale’s tax each time property would change hands (*les lods et ventes*).

In 1744 the monastery again suffered from two fires which destroyed the library and various structures had to be rebuilt for 95,246 l.t. In 1779, these aforesaid rental properties provided an annual income of 19,365 l.t. with an increase of 1200 l.t. to be applied.

But other rental properties surrounded the cloister as well. In 1656, for 42,495 l.t. the monastery built two large four story structures with several sheds behind them. In 1762, for 117,295 l.t. in place of the sheds, another large structure was built whose rental income was 17,306 l.t.

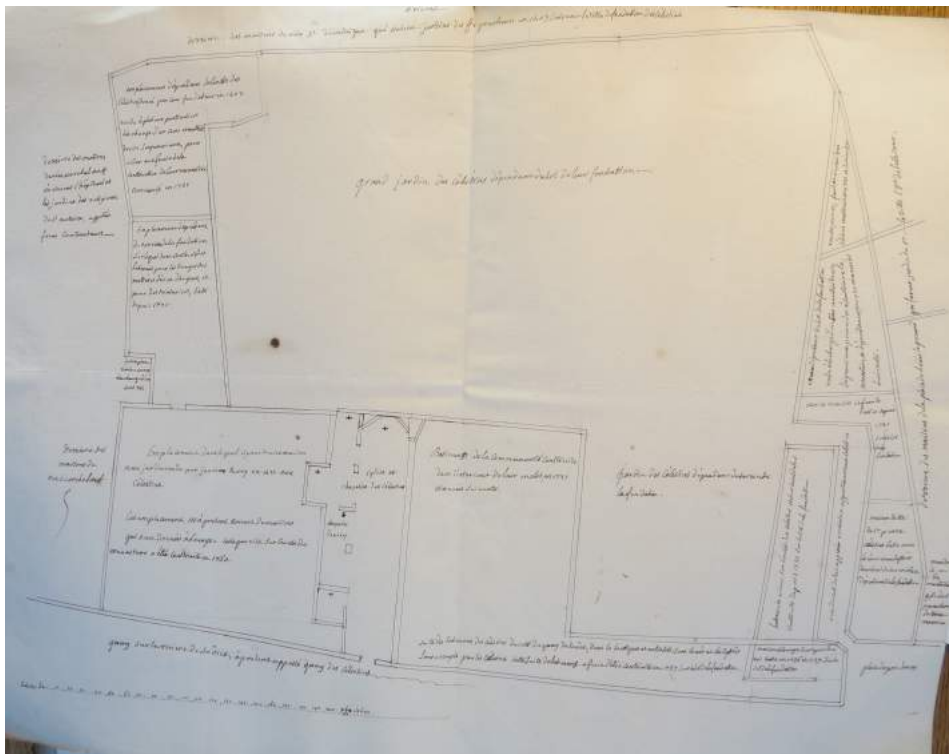
In 1779, the minimum rental income from the Celestins’ rental cluster reached 36,671 l.t. and was susceptible to an increase.

¹² Ibid.



Façade of the Celestine's building on the quay

Here we have a good example of an initial development within a city block by a regular order. The apartment dwellings, the shops and store fronts.



Ground plan of the Celestin's monastery
French National Archives S 7485//B

The successive constructions and subdivisions (le term *lotissement* must be used prudently) undertaken by the Celestins underscore and exemplify my argument : the communities progressively restructured their cloisters to adapt to urban development and consequently became inextricably linked to the urban environment.

Bordeaux

The monastic urban land-holdings in Bordeaux have not been the object of any specific research. Eric Suire, has written several articles on Bordeaux's monasteries and religious life; in particular his master's degree dissertation provides an overview of the men's communities' incomes and expenditures for the 18th century.¹³ However various studies have referred to them. Marcel Marion's comparative study on the sale of "*biens nationaux*" in the departments of the Gironde and the Cher and the collection of documents edited by Professor Marion and his colleagues.¹⁴ Obviously the data garnered by research into the *biens nationaux* concerns the period 1789-1790.

The number of urban rental properties owned by the Bordeaux men's monasteries totaled some 135 dwellings. Note as a means of comparison that chapter Saint-André of Bordeaux owned 90 buildings.

Information on monastic incomes for Bordeaux lacks a unified series of documents. "*Nos archives locales, wrote the authors, ne possèdent qu'une partie assez mince des déclarations imposées par la loi aux membres du clergé. Sans doute cette lacune peut être comblée par le fonds des Archives nationales (F19 604, Q2 60) mais partiellement*".¹⁵ Thus the following tables appear lacunary. The paucity of data can be partially remedied by information from prior years.

¹³ Suire (Eric), « L'univers matériel des gens d'Église en Bordelais à la fin de l'Ancien Régime » in *Contributions à une histoire du catholicisme: Papauté, Aquitaine, France et Outre-Mer : mélanges offerts à Marc Agostino*, ed. Champ (Nicolas), Laux (Claire) et Moisset (Jean-Pierre), Karthala Editions, 2013 ; Suire (Éric), *Les finances des religieux bordelais : les biens et revenus des communautés masculines du diocèse de Bordeaux d'après les enquêtes fiscales de 1730 et 1760*, Travail d'étude et de recherche, Université de Bordeaux III, 1992-1993 .

¹⁴ Marion (Marcel), *La vente des biens nationaux pendant la Révolution avec étude spéciale des ventes dans les départements de la Gironde et du Cher*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 1908. Marion (Marcel), Benzacar (Joseph) Caudrillier (Gustaaf), *Documents relatifs à la vente des biens nationaux, département de la Gironde*, Bordeaux, imprimerie Cadoret, 1911.

¹⁵ Marion, et.al., p X.

Community Bordeaux	Total Income En 1790	Urban rental income	Rural Income	Bond Annuiti es	Percentage Urban	Number of urban rental units in Bordeaux
Grands Augustins	20403					14.5 buildings
Bénédictins Sainte-Croix	57957					11 dwellings 1 mill 1 wine cellar
Capucins de Bordeaux	?	?	?	156	?	1 dwelling
Grands Carmes de Bordeaux	25736	17470	?	1252	68%	22 buildings 17 shops
Carmes déchaussés Chartrons	12000	—		250	%	30 dwellings
Petits Carmes de Peller	12985			150		18 dwellings
Chartreux	43189 (net)	?	?	?	?	1 building
Cordeliers	?	?		?	?	
Feuillants		?	—	?	90?	17 buidlings
Jacobins	48206	?	?	2008	?	14 buildings
Jésuites	?	?	?	?	?	College of the Madelaine
Lazaristes	?	?	?	?	?	?
Merci						1 dwelling
Minimes	12507					6 buildings
Recollets Bordeaux	?	?	?	?	0%	None
						135

For the women's communities we have the following a property distribution

	Community	Total Income	Urban rental income	Rural Income	Bond Annuities	Percentage Urban	Number urban rental units
1	Annonciades						29 dwellings
2	Benedictines						58 dwellings
3	Grands Carmelites						14 dwellings
4	Petites Carmelites						30 dwellings
5	Catherinettes						23 dwellings
6	Religieuses de la Madeleine						1 dwelling
7	Minimettes						6 dwellings
8	Religieuse de Notre-Dame	15792	9680 + 4825 interior rentals	58			7 dwellings + butcher's stall
9	Religieuses Orphelines	5296					3 dwellings
10	Ursulines						5 dwellings
11	Visitation						7 dwellings
12	Bon Pasteur						1 dwelling
							184

Bordeaux's monasteries owned some 319 buildings within the town. Such extensive holdings led Marcel Marion to emphasize this facet of monastic wealth affirming "...les congregations et la haute clergé bordelaise étaient surtout possesseurs de propriétés bâties d'une grande importance. Une notable partie des maisons du Bordeaux d'avant la Révolution appartenait aux Augustins, aux Bénédictins, aux Chartreux, aux Feuillants, aux Jacobins, aux Carmes, aux Cordeliers, aux Ursulines, aux Chapitres Saint-André et Saint-Seurin."¹⁶

Naturally the question arises as to how these communities obtained their rental holdings—through donation, acquisition, construction and improvement of the initial endowments— or a mixture of all the preceding methods such as we briefly saw with the Célestins. Did these communities undergo a shift in resources from rural properties and the seigneurial rights associated thereto in favor of urban resources? In Paris, we have startling examples of regular houses selling their rural seigneuries in order to finance urban real estate projects : as did both Saint-Germain-des-Prés and Saint-Martin-des-Champs. Joseph Benzacar in his preface to the collection of documents concerning the sale of les *biens nationaux du département de la Gironde Gironde* insists on the relatively feeble values of monastic real estate. Their

¹⁶ Marion (Marcel), *La vente des biens nationaux pendant la Révolution*, op.cit. p 55.

land holdings were clearly not aristocratic manors. Yet this absence of grandiose holdings does not infirm their potential domination over a wide swath of urban society.

Brief conclusions

Among the other features surrounding monastic urban presence, one major aspect must be emphasized: the monastic urban domain is linked to urban growth and development. As I posited in earlier work, the extension of the built environment engulfed what had been rural or semi rural fringe-belt establishments. The question then arises as in what manner should the sacred territory be linked to profane needs. We have seen that numerous monasteries converted cloistered land into rental property. Other land was sold. Some land remained within the sacred precincts reserved for holy usage. The growth of cities, the rise of metropolitan expanses, the pre-industrial sprawl, all overwhelmed, through outward growth, the previously distant sites reserved for monastic use. Even in the case of those communities most linked to urban proselytism, the mendicant orders in particular, which frequently laid their foundations near the towns' walls—not merely for having a preexisting wall and thus economizing on building materials,—but more critically settling at a point often unoccupied since the tillage had become impracticable due to inaccessibility from the main fields on the other side of the defensive fortifications.

Pierre Regaldo-Saint-Blancard has drawn up a remarkable plan for medieval Bordeaux which clearly displays the fringe installation of the various religious establishments. We can observe that lands granted or purchased by the respective monasteries gave rise to subdivisions while some land remained cultivated as well. Little by little the fields would give way to houses and the built environment would hem in and finally smother the arable.



Monastic presence in Bordeaux during the 15th century created by Pierre Régaldio-Saint Blancard

Source : *Atlas Historique de Bordeaux*, (E. Jean-Courret and S. Lavaud), vol. II (Notice Générale) p. 115, éditions Ausone, 1999, Bordeaux

While French urban monasteries did not rely exclusively on urban sources of income, many communities earned a significant--if not a predominant--share of their income from urban rentals. The factors underlying the distribution of monasteries, the successive surges in urban growth and the compelling need to satisfy bourgeois demand for lodging and workspace all conspired to enhance the monastic rental presence in pre-industrial cities.

These properties need to be catalogued, described and situated on both ancient maps and, using GIS systems, on today's urban cartography. Obviously, many properties will have disappeared and even their plots might have been expunged from the town plan. While such erasures are inevitable, careful reconstruction of past habitats

will lead us to painstakingly sketch out prior social configurations on millennial urban palimpsests.