

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### PATRIMONY, BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES IN EUROPE, 1789-1914/18

Date: 7-8 November 2008

Venue: Leuven

Proposals for papers (max. 300 words) should be sent by e-mail to Maarten Van Dijck (maarten.vandijck@kadoc.kuleuven.be) by 31 December 2007.

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Unlike medievalists, modern historians have paid scant attention to the economic side of the history of Catholic religious institutes. Up to this day, most interest has been devoted to the spiritual aspects and apostolate of the different orders and congregations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Given the spiritual calling of religious institutes, the economic activities necessary to keep the institutes running in a technical sense are seen by most historians as irrelevant to the essence of an organization that consists of education, preaching, charity, contemplation, and liturgy. Yet many religious institutes were very successful in re-establishing themselves after the French Revolution, sometimes accumulating large patrimonies, against the background of often-hostile political forces.

The long nineteenth century is remarkable because, after the seizure of the estates of the regular clergy during the French Revolution, the religious institutes succeeded in building (or rebuilding) their material base over the course of the century. The religious institutes flourished and consolidated themselves, through the provision of educational and charitable services, but also through inheritances, gifts and sound investments. The newly built property and economy of the religious institutes aroused much political discussion until well into the twentieth century. Most governments were interested in this patrimony for financial and political reasons. Anti-clerical agitation was strengthened due to the success of the congregations in the fields of charity and education. The opponents of the religious institutes accused them of violating their vows of poverty.

Interest in the economic aspects of religious institutes among historians of the modern period, however, is growing. In 2004 the *European Forum for the Research on Religious Institutes in Europe* called for more research on Catholic orders and congregations from an economic point of view, provocatively speaking of 'religious business companies'. The possible tension and interaction between aspects of the religious life and temporal issues form an important backdrop for the discussion of the theme. This workshop wishes to focus on the economic history of Catholic orders and congregations during the period from the French Revolution to the First World War. The diverse world of orders and congregations offers perspectives for comparisons. Proposals that address this issue from the following historical perspectives will be considered:

1. The first is the income and the accumulation of patrimony in the long nineteenth century. How large was this newly accumulated patrimony? Where did the income of the orders and congregations originate? Which sources of revenue were the most important? Were there any other sources outside of labour, gifts and legacies, such as financial investments? How was the capital of the religious institutions invested? What kind of economic activities were carried out? What was the money spent on? Were choices made for religious or for financial reasons? Contributions dealing with poverty or the contrast between individual poverty and the affluence of the religious institutes will also be considered. The economic impact of religious institutes on the local economy is another subject of potential interest.

2. The second issue is the management of orders and congregations. The internal structures of orders and congregations are an explicit focus. How was the management structure organised? How were the relations between centre and periphery of the institutes structured? What instruments for control and accountability were in place? How was the accounting system organised? Was there a clear human resource management, with personnel being exchanged and with function specialisation? Were laymen involved in the management of these religious institutes and in which functions? What did employment contracts for servants look like? Legal issues can also be addressed: how did the orders and congregations try to by-pass the legal limitations for possession installed by different nineteenth century governments?

3. The last point of interest is the mentalities and culture of the orders and congregations. The economic and work ethics of religious institutes can be addressed using normative sources, while confronting them with practice. How did orders and congregations relate to modern industrial capitalism? Did they perceive an opposition between economics and religion? Were any modern management techniques used? Is a comparison to corporations or family businesses justified? We especially welcome papers addressing the question of how religious institutes coped with the concepts of enterprise, profit, innovation and competition. Were financial matters regarded with suspicion? Cases that deal with conflicts between religious institutes and the Church hierarchy are welcomed. Possible sources could be internal correspondence, justifications to the outside world, conscious reflections on economics, etc.

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#### PRACTICAL INFORMATION:

Proposals for papers (max. 300 words) should be addressed by e-mail to Maarten Van Dijck (maarten.vandijck@kadoc.kuleuven.be) by 31 December 2007.

Selected participants of the conference will be asked to produce an article for a volume in the international peer reviewed series KADOC Studies on Religion, Culture and Society (University Press Leuven).

The workshop is organised in the framework of a research project of the Fund for Scientific Research Flanders (FWO) and involves scholars of the University of Leuven and the Free University of Brussels. The organising committee consists of: Dr. Roel de Groof (History department, VUB), Prof. dr. Jan De Maeyer (MoSa and KADOC, KULeuven), dr. Peter Heyrman (KADOC, KULeuven), Prof. dr. Emiel

Lamberts (MoSa, KULeuven), drs. Rik Röttger (History department, VUB), Prof. dr. Fred Stevens (Division for Roman Law and Legal History, KULeuven), Prof. dr. Jeffrey Tyssens (History department, VUB), dr. Maarten Van Dijck (KADOC, KULeuven), Prof. dr. Els Witte (History department, VUB)

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