



Translation

1. Introduction

This exhibition presents the impact of the Reformation on daily life in Geneva. Although this year celebrates the 500 years of Martin Luther's protest (1483-1536) against the indulgences using his 95 theses in October 1517, this event had no real repercussions on Geneva until the beginning of the 1530s. Lutheran ideas, which were disseminated in the city as of 1520, brought about religious ferment that was not the individual act of a reformer but rather a collective mobilisation and it is this that the exhibition wishes to illustrate. This means demonstrating at the same time how the Genevans were involved in this process of Reformation and how the religious conversion of the city affected their daily lives. The archives are in fact the echo of the activism, resistance or the adaptation of various players – men, women, and children – and underline the real – or mythologized – changes imposed by the practice of the new form of worship.

The exhibition approaches this topic in three stages. The first period (1517-1555) charts the introduction of the Reformation in Geneva. Guillaume Farel's (1489-1565) sermons feed the religious stirrings which sometimes manifest themselves in iconoclasm. The second period (1555-1575), describes the Reformation as it was lived in daily life. The population adjusted to the new liturgies, mixed with students of the Academy, took in the influx of refugees and submitted to disciplinary constraints. Finally, the third period (1575-1617) saw tempers calming down and discipline being relaxed. The people of Geneva slowly found a new equilibrium and the year 1617 provided the opportunity to celebrate the first hundred years of the Reformation.

The Archives of the State of Geneva maintain, restore and digitalise the documents that historians use in their work. The presentation of a digitalisation project and the restoration of the archives of the Protestant Church complete this exhibition and highlight the historical work linked to the archives.

This exhibition is held in the context of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation (1517). It is commonly believed that the Reformation in Geneva began in 1536. However, it was officially adopted by the citizens of Geneva's Assembly on May 21st, 1536, prior even to Jean Calvin's arrival in the city, and was merely the ratification of a long procedure whose origins appeared in Geneva – as more or less everywhere in Europe – some fifteen years earlier, when Lutheran ideas began to spread.

A virtual exhibition, in the form of a storymap, calls for an on-line visit: www.ge.ch/archives

2. First period (1517-1555): a Zwinglian Reformation

At the end of the 1520s, a number of circumstances favoured the dissemination of new religious ideas in French-speaking Switzerland. As of 1522, with a preference for sermons based on evangelical commentary, Bern followed the Reformation movement begun in Zurich by Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) and finally rejected Mass in 1528. As of the following year, Bern therefore worked on promoting “evangelical” sermons in the direction of the Pays de Vaud and Geneva, where they hoped to extend their territories.

The merchants and artisans, members of the ruling elite in Geneva, were at this time seeking to bring their city closer to the Confederates – a project that won them the title of “Eidguenots” (*Eidgenossen*). Fribourg and Bern in particular represented to this group a model of republican government and a guarantee against the Duke of Savoy who was trying to consolidate his sovereignty over Geneva. After several years of fighting between the “Mamelus”, partisans of the Duke of Savoy, and the Eidguenots, the latter prevailed and managed to conclude an alliance or “combourgeoisie” in 1526 with Fribourg and Bern, thus ensuring military aid for the city should Savoy attack.

This alliance made it easier to spread Zwinglian ideas in Geneva. As of 1532, with the support of Bern, the Dauphinois preacher Guillaume Farel became the principal advocate of these ideas. He had the help of other preachers, amongst whom Antoine Froment (1508-1581) then Pierre Viret (1511-1571), and on a wider scale from those citizens who became the militants of the Reformation. Their basic resources for action included: sermons preached in private and then in public; the circulation of printed matter; people refraining from the ritual obligations linked to the traditional liturgical calendar; communion celebrated separately; perturbing Catholic services and the harassment of clergy. This strategy rapidly bore fruit. The Council of Two Hundred suspended celebration of Mass on August 10th, 1535. The General Council made this decision irrevocable on May 21st, 1536.

Geneva then definitely became part of the Reformation while consolidating its allegiance with Berne. The majority of the Catholic clergy left the city. It was therefore urgent to construct a Reformed Church. It was to support him in this enterprise that Farel named Jean Calvin (1509-1564), who happened to be in the city during the summer of 1536. Together they tried to lay the foundations for this Church by having “Articles” adopted in January 1537 that provided them with a sort of constitution and by exerting themselves to get all citizens to take an oath to guarantee religious unity. This first attempt failed however due to opposition on the part of the citizens. It ended with the two preachers being exiled in 1538.

On his return in 1541, thanks to a reversal of majority in the Councils, Calvin managed to negotiate ecclesiastical Statutes with the magistrates which would provide the legal basis for the Reformed Church of Geneva for the duration of the Old Regime and were a source of inspiration for many Reformed Churches.

3. The early reformers

As of the end of the 1520s, small groups of itinerant preachers, mainly French, were taken on and given the support of the city of Bern as “ministers” of the Word. With the exception of Guillaume Farel, who came from Gap in Dauphiné, and had previously been a professor of grammar and philosophy in Paris, these preachers were not university-trained theologians and had been trained in other professions. They came from various social origins and did not belong to the local elite: there were clerks and clerics who had left their monasteries, men of letters, but also merchants like Baudichon de la Maison Neuve (~1493-1551).

The first clandestine sermons were held in private places: a garden, outside the walls, near one of the doors, or in the houses of one militant of the Gospel or another. Farel had the support of his fellow countryman, Antoine Saulnier, a man of letters who had been imprisoned in Paris for heresy and became the pastor of Grandson and Payerne under the protection of the Bernese. They soon received the help of two young preachers: Pierre Viret and Antoine Froment.

Pierre Viret was the only Swiss French reformer of the group. He was born in Orbe where his father was a sheerman and tailor. He joined Farel’s group at the end of 1530 after studying liberal arts in Paris. He preached in Orbe and in Geneva before becoming a pastor in Lausanne.

Antoine Froment, who came from the Dauphiné, introduced himself as a school master in Geneva where he preached a first sermon at the Place du Molard in 1532. Following this he also worked as a wine merchant. His wife, Marie Dentièrre (1495-1561) from Tournai, who had previously been a nun, also took part in the evangelical sermons to convert the women of Geneva and particularly the nuns. From 1534 the propaganda was supported by the magistrates. The Reformation was adopted in May 1536. Two months later, a young scientist from Picardie, John Calvin, was traveling through Geneva on his way to Strasburg. Farel convinced him to stay in order to lend his support to the movement of religious construction. Due to the tensions arising from their initiatives, Farel and Calvin were expelled from Geneva in 1538. Antoine Marcourt (1485-1561) was then appointed, the first pastor of Neuchâtel, who had previously been a cleric and came from Picardie. He was the author of numerous treatises against traditional religion. He resigned in 1540 because of the opposition encountered in his activities. He was not reinstated by the Church of Neuchâtel where Farel was then the primary leader and he ended his days in the rural parish of Saint-Julien-en-Genevois. The authorities in Geneva then called upon Viret, who finally solicited the return of Calvin.

Farel, Viret and Froment were recognized in their time as being the principal proponents of the Reformation, even by their opponents. Their movement collaborated with many other propagandists of evangelical ideas, both men and women. However, personal conflicts and ecclesiastical tensions led to divisions. Froment did not manage to obtain recognition as a reformer; his wife, Marie Dentièrre, was also criticized by Farel and Calvin for her freedom of speech.

4. Exorcise idolatry: religious conversion through iconoclasm

The destruction of images was one of the ways the first converts could play a role in the events that marked the transition of the city towards the Reformation. Iconoclasm mixed several targets in its violence: images, such as paintings or statues; liturgical objects such as utensils, communion wafers; or liturgical furniture such as crosses, bells or altars, most of which contained relics.

There were several mixed motivations in this violence: bad feeling against the clerics; in particular the bishop, whose sovereignty over the city was an obstacle to its political emancipation, the monks and nuns who were accused of using Christian charity for their own ends, more generally the priests whose “tyranny” over consciences via confession was rejected. It was also an opportunity for enrichment, through the sale of valuables. And it was political, in the sense of a “cleansing” of the churches that sanctioned the victory of the ideas of the Reformation. However, it remained above all religious because it challenged a certain modality of divine presence in the world. Decapitating the statue of a saint, giving communion wafers to dogs or horses to eat, cracking reliquaries or taking apart altars all come back to the exorcism of the material presence of the sacred; either by demonstrating the mechanics of the deception – the voices previously heard in such and such an altar are in fact just pipes that were hidden in it – or by forcing the divine to defend itself: the lack of reaction on the part of a saint whose image has been damaged proves the saint’s powerlessness.

The iconoclasm of the Geneva Reformation was deployed in three phases. The first corresponds to an act of conquest. The destruction marks religious dissidence by attacking images on show in public areas. It is the fruit of clandestine violence.

The second phase gave rise to a purifying violence. This exploded when militants of the new faith took over the places of worship. They emptied them of the objects of traditional devotion that they considered to be idolatry and defiling because they detract from the honour due only to the single “Creator” towards images produced by the “creature”. This work of purification first began with the taking of the Convent de Rive in March 1534; then it occurred again when the militants invaded the Cathedral of Saint Pierre, in August 1535.

The third phase began when the authorities tried to put an end to the collective violence by taking control of the process of elimination of the vestiges of idolatry in the churches. The goal was both to re-establish order and to make a profit on the sale of ecclesiastical goods to increase the finances of the city and, in particular, public charity. Public space was cleared of all religious images and the churches are radically transformed. Not only were the paintings, statues and altars removed, but all the images and decoration painted on the walls were covered up with white paint. Thus the churches received an aesthetic style that they would maintain throughout the Old Regime. This phase was prolonged until 1556, when lightning fell on a cross that still decorated the spire of the cathedral and sounded a divine warning to complete the work of purification. All the crosses that were still upright at that time in the city or in the country parishes were finally knocked down.

5. Children, actors in the Reformation

The place of children in the Reformation of Geneva was important in more than one way. From the beginning, they played an active role. The account provided by the reformer, Antoine Froment, of these events underlines their participation at key moments of the Reformation with the intent to show by this that God himself acts through children. According to this account, children were counted amongst the central actors of the dissemination of new ideas in the city. When these same ideas gained a sufficient number of partisans that the power relations in the city began to tilt in their favour, they were to be found at the heart of it all. On August 8th, 1535, the militants of the new faith took over the cathedral and committed acts of iconoclasm. The iconoclastic violence was initiated by children.

Children were also a stake in the Reformation. One of the first acts accomplished by the partisans of the new faith in order to establish a separate community was baptism: celebrated by Pierre Viret himself, it was held on February 22nd, 1534. The custom then was to weave tight networks of allegiance by the designation of godfathers and godmothers. Even if they broke away from the Catholic theology of the baptismal sacrament, the reformers maintained this custom by choosing powerful sponsors for the first children to be baptized into their emerging community, in the person of two representatives of the reformed city of Bern.

On the other hand, the progressive victory of reformed ideas was apparent the following year in the abolition of another custom related to baptism: it consisted in placing a child who died at birth on an altar or in front of a miraculous image, that might possibly have the power to bring them back to life for a short instant, providing just enough time to baptise them, thus ensuring their salvation and avoiding them being cast into limbo for eternity. Observing, in the words of their secretary, that “no-one has seen any of them return to life”, the Small Council forbade the Augustin monks of Notre-Dame-de-Grâces to take in dead children to present them before the image of the Virgin reputed for its miraculous effectiveness. The Council was not however happy to merely prohibit. It took advantage of the opportunity to requisition the bell used to announce the miracle to the whole city to melt it down for use in the manufacture of cannons.

Following the Reformation, the role of children did not cease and was even extended in a rather paradoxical manner. While they endeavoured to set up institutions for the collective singing of psalms, they also counted on the children to ensure the instruction of... their parents. In effect, during the first years of the Reformation, there occurred a strange situation in which the parents had acquired their religious background in a Catholic context and their children, growing up and being instructed in the new faith were becoming more competent and more in conformity with their faith in the city's religion than their parents. The Consistory, that ensured the teaching of all, did not hesitate to order some of them to ask their offspring to help them acquire the rudiments of the reformed faith.

6. The Psalms: conversion and unification of faith through song

Geneva converted to the Reformation quite quickly at an institutional level. There were less than ten years between the first signs of the dissemination of Protestant ideas and the abolition of Mass which made the rupture with the Church official; and only half that if one goes back to the first traces of real Protestant activism in the city. The conversion of minds and the unity of faith within the population took much longer. A lot of resources were put in place to effect the change. One of the most effective vectors of religious unification was, without doubt, the singing of psalms.

As of 1537, pastors counted on song to stimulate religious ardour and cultivate religious unity. In submitting a series of Articles designed to provide the Church with its first foundations, Guillaume Farel and John Calvin suggested the introduction of psalm singing in religious services. To progressively familiarize the people of Geneva with this new custom, they suggested teaching the children to sing first, hoping that the adult worshippers would learn to imitate them in time. At the beginning, the project was abandoned. The Ecclesiastical Ordinances, adopted in 1541, revived it. They stipulated in fact the introduction of the « *chantz ecclesiastiques pour myeux inciter le peuple à prier et louer Dieu. Pour le commencement on apprendra le petis enfans, puis avec le temps toute l'église pourra suyvre* » (ecclesiastical songs to better incite the people to pray and praise God. In the beginning the small children will be taught and then, over time, the whole congregation will be able to follow).

This decision brought about a liturgical and symbolic revolution. Up until then, liturgical song had been the domain of specialists. It even contributed to distinguishing between the world of clerics who had the exclusivity of song, and the secular world composed merely of listeners. When the reformers tore down the rood-screen in Saint Pierre – the barrier separating the church's nave from the choir stalls reserved for the clerics – they extended liturgical singing to the whole congregation. They also rejected polyphonic singing in favour of singing in unison, a vector towards a group united by the convergence of the melody and the text: to each note of the melody corresponded to a syllable of text. Partisans of *sola scriptura* – the Scripture alone defines Salvation – finally, they excluded any non-biblical text from singing and therefore gave priority to the singing of psalms.

However, this great ambition encountered a number of difficulties. The psalms had to be translated. The poet Clement Marot (1496-1544) undertook the task and his work was used by Calvin as of 1539, and then passed on by Theodore de Beze as of 1548. Following over twenty years of exertion, the first complete reformed psalter finally made its appearance, going on to become the primer for the reformed services and the exclusive collection of the Calvinist Church's liturgical song. The music still had to be composed and printed, which the printers in Geneva were only able to do after 1551. Finally the singing and reading of music must be taught, which is why the reformed cantors soon wrote methods to facilitate learning. Notwithstanding, the experience in Geneva was sometimes discouraging and the people of Geneva did not want just sing psalms in Church, so they subverted the melodies, adding saucy words and sang them in the taverns.

7. The women of Geneva preach. Women's activism and resistance

From the start of the Reformation, women of varying social origins intervened in the religious debate and encouraged the dissemination of the new ideas. Other women however fought the conversion of cities to Protestantism: this was often the case of nuns who opposed the dissolution of their communities. Genevan sources document the implication of both secular women and nuns in the troubles, their involvement in preaching and their resistance to reformers.

The manuscript *Petite chronique* by Jeanne de Jussie (1503-1561), from Jussy-l'Eveque and a nun in the convent of Clarisses, is an important source for the history of the origins of the Reformation in Geneva. After abandoning the city with her colleagues, she notes in her writings that many women have resisted attempts to convert them by refusing to submit to the will of their fathers or husbands. Two women of the upper classes, Guillaumette de la Rive and Leonarde Vindret, helped the Clarisses during the conflict opposing them to the magistrates. The Council registers show their request for material support for the then isolated women's community. Jeanne de Jussie also relates the numerous actions led by the evangelical propagandists. The Protestant inhabitants do their washing on holidays and spin their wool ostentatiously during the solemn Corpus Christi procession, to show their opposition to the old religious practices. They participate in debates and are sometimes abused and attacked in the streets. In his chronicles Antoine Froment related the story of Claudine Levet : wife of a bourgeois apothecary in Geneva, this urban lady was very active as a preacher following her conversion. She was known for her capacity to explain Scripture, which enabled her to enlighten several people in Geneva. Because of her gifts, the magistrates charged her with preaching to the Clarisses, who attacked the preacher when she expressed her views against their vow of chastity.

Marie Dentiere, the wife of Antoine Froment, participated actively in the implantation of the Reformation in Geneva. In an open letter published in 1539, she propounded her religious ideas, defended preaching by women and criticized the magistrates who had banished the "really servants" of Jesus-Christ like Farel and Calvin. Her strong character and her freedom of speech led to her being criticised by the magistrates who censored the publication. Some years after his return to Geneva, John Calvin himself took exception to the explicit criticism of Froment's wife regarding certain aspects of his ecclesiastical reform. Due to her theological commitment, Marie Dentiere's name was engraved on the Reformation Wall in 2002.

8. Civil registry before the civil state

In the XVI century, the Churches and States made concerted efforts throughout Europe to systematically register births, marriages and deaths, thereby providing the embryo of what would later become the civil state. The reformed territories were particularly precocious and diligent: Bern made this registration mandatory as of 1528 and Geneva followed suit ten years later. The responsibility for making sure the information was kept up-to-date was attributed to the men of the church.

While putting these decisions into practice was often haphazard, in Geneva the series of civil registers is continuous as of the time in 1550 when cupboards were integrated in the pulpits for the pastors to keep these precious books.

These registers must not be seen as merely an administrative activity. While they effectively provided knowledge of the state of the population – in Geneva they were used very early to establish statistics on plague deaths – and if private citizens had an interest as these documents allowed them to identify their legitimate heirs – their use was primarily religious. It was not individuals who were registered as so many constituents, as the believers called upon to follow a Christian path in the community of Salvation formed by the parish. In Geneva, before the last quarter of the XVI century, it was not the date of birth that the ministers entered in these registers, but that of baptism, which marked the new-borns' entry into the community of the parish where they would thereafter be required to attend services.

The civil register, as it was seen at the time, therefore made up a sort of collective accounting and consequently it is not surprising to read other things that our contemporaries did not expect to find: the ministers were not satisfied to just enter the names of the faithful whose lives make up the warp of this accounting, but entered many other things such as important events for the parish or instructions for their successors.

9. Second period (1555-1575): the triumph of the Calvinist Church

On his return to Geneva in 1541, Calvin worked on editing the Ecclesiastical Ordinances and collaborated on the Civil Edicts, two founding texts that set out the organization of the Church and the form of government. The Ecclesiastical Ordinances of 1541 established the Consistory, the disciplinary organ made up of pastors from the city and former attachés from 25 districts of the city and named by the Petit Conseil. Its implementation, the way it worked and particularly the right of excommunication provoked tensions and opposed Calvin and his followers to the representatives of the leading families, the Perrins, Bertheliers and Favres, who had been active in the fight for Geneva's independence during the 1530s, and were closely linked through their network to the exercise of power and the pro-Bernese position. The party of the "Enfants de Genève", also known as the "Perrinists" after one of its partisans, Ami Perrin, looked upon the authority the pastors had acquired with disapproval.

During the elections in February 1555, the four elected syndics were favourable to the reformer. After some sixty French citizens were granted citizenship in Geneva tensions grew and an uprising took place on May 16th, 1555, triggered by the Perrin partisans. The Perrinists were forced to leave the city. Trials were rapidly conducted and resulted in four of the most influential members, including Ami Perrin, being sentenced to death in absentia.

The defeat of the "Enfants de Genève" brought about the renewal of the political class that was then comprised mainly of men from the religious immigration, who upheld Calvin and the reforms he introduced. This event was the beginning of a period of consolidation for the Calvinist Church.

The Reformation entered a period of stability, despite being affected by the death of Calvin in 1564. This period saw the induction of Theodore de Beze (1519-1605). Rector of the Academy from 1559 to 1563, he managed the Church during Calvin's illnesses and death. He continued to defend the Consistory, which was menaced in the 1570s by a gradual increase in the power of the Small Council over the Church and by the strengthening of the State's judicial system.

At the end of the summer of 1572, Theodore de Beze had to deal with the Saint-Barthelemy massacres that took place not only in Paris but in the provincial cities; an event that led to the writing and publication in Geneva of his treatise *Du droit des Magistrats sur leurs sujets* (1574) (The rights of Magistrates over their subjects), a text that legitimized resistance to a tyrannical regime. In the autumn of 1572, refugees flocked to the city, bearing the first account of events. At this point, the city is just getting over a long plague epidemic that had lasted three years. Lacking means, the city called upon the solidarity of the Swiss Cantons. The plague of 1568-1571 was one of the most serious in Geneva's history, killing above all during the summer months (483 dead in 1568 and 113 just in the month of August 1568) and leading to the Academy being closed for several months. Famine struck in 1573-1574 with poor harvests leading to soaring prices, particularly for bread, and the increase of poverty.

10. The Reformation in the public space

The Reformation has often been presented as an enterprise to deconsecrate space, because it does not consider churches to be places close to the divine. In reality, it was more a question of refusing the old strong distinction between secular and sacred, preferring the concept of the city placed both under the eye of divine providence and entirely dedicated to the divine.

This concept became visible in the city shortly after its conversion to the Reformation and has lasted throughout modern times. As of 1542, it was decided to inscribe the gates of the city with “Jesus”, meaning the abbreviation JHS, above the coat of arms, thereby placing the city under divine protection. In 1555, when the Calvinist party won a final victory over the internal opposition carried on by the “Enfants de Genève” a plaque was engraved that loudly proclaimed that the event was the result of this same protection.

This concept is expressed in the same way in the prayers written by the government secretaries at the top of their registers or in those of the workers engaged on building the fortifications. But this protection is also part of a relationship of exchange. It effectively supposes that the lives of the people of Geneva should be lived in conformity with God’s will. The reminder of this is the Ten Commandments which were not only on display in the churches of both town and countryside, but also in the halls where business was conducted or in the room where justice was rendered.

11. Discipline and social control

The most significant impact of the Reformation on daily life was the introduction of a novel institution for the supervision and correction of faith and the morals of the faithful: the Consistory. This ecclesiastic court has the specificity of comprising not only pastors, but also twelve representatives from the various sovereign assemblies in the city, that were known by the name of “Elders”. The Consistory therefore contributes to bring about the Lutheran idea of “universal priesthood”, entrusting to “laymen” offices of an ecclesiastical nature. This court, established by the Ecclesiastical Ordinances of 1541, exercised extremely close surveillance over the inhabitants of the city during the XVI century.

The urban space was under surveillance: elders and pastors shared out the neighbourhoods and collaborated with the “dizeniers”, the civil captains responsible for the neighbourhoods (“dizaines”) of the city. Some years, the Consistory secretary maintained several registers in which are preserved the minutes of the Consistory meetings and that contain lists of those summoned or sanctioned: the procedures instituted can therefore be followed with great rigor if necessary. It has been estimated that between 1559 and 1569, a little over 6% of the adults were summoned before this court. At least once a year everyone received a visit from a delegation from the Consistory, often before the Easter Communion.

During the first years the Consistory was preoccupied mainly in establishing the unity of faith within the city, chasing down Catholic beliefs and rites in particular. Thereafter, it concentrated more on the morals of the faithful: correcting those guilty of sexual relations outside of marriage, drunkenness, gambling, dancing and even disobedient children. Authorized to chastise the offenders, to impose public humiliations to be administered during religious services to the scandalous sinners and to forbid communion, even to banish the unrepentant from the Church (excommunication), the Consistory was perceived as a means of repression. This is to forget that they saw their actions as a “medicine”, destined to bring the sinner back to a penitent attitude and that an important part of their efforts were designed to reconcile enemies, neighbours or families involved in conflictual situations. The Consistory’s actions contributed much to the stereotype of a “puritanical” Geneva.

12. Channel excesses: the sumptuary laws

In the Middle Ages sumptuary laws were passed to restrain, with varying degrees of success, extravagant clothing expenditures and overindulgence in various States and sovereign courts in Europe.

In Geneva, the first laws on these subjects were passed in the context of a process that existed already, but stood out by the spiritual and moral dimension directly related to the Reformation. Calvin himself understood the difficulty in legislating on this subject and it was only in September 1558 that the Consistory directed the magistrates to draw up laws and sanctions against those resistant to pastoral reprimands. Police regulations – which would only bear the name of *Sumptuary Ordinances* in 1668 – were an answer to the multiple complaints from ministers confronted with the resistance of a population that refused to submit to the moral constraints that the Consistory imposed upon them.

These “proclamations” of 1558 touch only lightly on clothing and dietary restrictions. A few articles regulate the quality of fabrics and limit ostentatious and superfluous luxury. However the fines were limited to just a few sols. In the ideal reformed city, order and modesty would reign while the faithful should flee from those pleasures and distractions that lead them away from the Word of the Scriptures. Fearing “divine ire” the ministers and magistrates tried to protect the city from the excesses coming from abroad and ordered that “tous et chacun de nos citoyens, bourgeois, habitans et sujets, et quelque estat, aage ou condition qu’ils soyent, [...] ayent desormais à s’habiller et vestir en toute modestie convenable à chrestiens et gens honnestes” (each and every one of our citizens, burghers, inhabitants and subjects, of whatever estate, age or condition they may be (...) must henceforth dress and clothe themselves with all modesty as becomes Christians and honest people).

Although the laws applied to all, there was a distinction for the “artisans mécaniques, vivans de l’œuvre de leurs mains” (mechanical artisans, living on the work of their hands): they and their wives, children and servants were banned from wearing fabrics or headdresses that were too expensive.

As of 1560, the complaints from ministers and the numerous infractions gave rise to new interventions by the Council and the ordinances continued. In 1581, as well as the multiple clothing restrictions, new prohibitions were applied to social usage: the reduction of the number of dishes and desserts that could be served at banquets and feasts; the limitation of the number of guests; the suppression of gifts or ornaments of excessive worth. The reform of old customs concerning the celebration of marriages, baptisms, “churching” and funerals show the intent to eliminate the paraliturgical rituals that were practised by the population.

The restrictions with regard to ornaments, accessories and jewellery increased and, above all, became ever more precise, as witnessed in 1617 by the prohibition of “drawbridge shoes” and “garters with points”. The “Chambre de la Reformation” was instituted in the middle of the XVII century and was in charge of ensuring respect of the sumptuary laws.

13. Bringing Christianity to daily life: taverns, dance, theatre

One of the goals of the Reformation was to bring Christianity into daily life as piety should not be reserved for churches. The edict adopted by the magistrates in May 1546 was characteristic of this project. Following the failure of a previous edict that banned the frequentation of taverns, its aim was to transform these social gathering spots in which contracts were signed, conflicts emerged and reconciliations were sealed and where excesses of wine and the flesh occurred, into places where prayer and instruction from the reading of the Bible would be accompanied by modest pleasures.

This edict also stated that people might only go to the tavern in their own neighbourhood, in the same way that they could only attend church services in their own parish. Innkeepers who tolerated drunkards or refused to acquire a Bible to be placed at the disposal of their clients were to be prosecuted. Efforts were also to be made to completely ban dancing, not only in public areas but also in private, because it is seen as an incitement to sexual desire. The various forms of gambling were also repressed because they bring with them blasphemy, conflicts amongst the players and the ruin of families. The theologians published treatises condemning these pursuits and preached against these habits from the pulpits

It may be that Geneva gives the impression of having become a city in which festivities were banned under the Reformation, where, as a Catholic polemist speaking franco-provençal denounced it: “*tou du lon / Du jour on demourise à fâre sa besogni / Sen jeu ne passa-ten*” (all day one is bound to one’s work, without games or pastimes).

However, the people of Geneva never completely renounced the pleasures so dear to their contemporaries. The ministers’ repeated denunciations of dance and gaming confirm their continuation. When dancing masters reappeared in the XVII century, discreetly invited to give their lessons in bourgeois houses, it became clear that the conventions of civility of the salons and courts are beginning to gain ground over the moral rigor defended by the Consistory.

The same thing happened to the theatre that Geneva and the Reformed Protestants in general, have the reputation of having banned. Despite the reticence of some of his colleagues, Calvin was not against it. Plays continued to be staged on several occasions in the XVI century to instruct schoolboys or to serve the anti-Catholic controversy. It was even a pastor, Simon Goulart, who, in 1584 wrote a “Pastorale” to celebrate the allegiance between Geneva, Bern and Zurich. It was only during the XVII century that the idea that the Reformation was fundamentally opposed to the theatre arose: during the Enlightenment, the descendants of the XVI century reformers therefore fiercely defended this opposition, even when troops were massing in Carouge, on the perimeter of the city.

14. Educating the Christian: the College and the Academy

For the early reformers Calvin and Farel, children were important actors in transmitting new ideas and as of 1541, the Ecclesiastical Ordinances, state that “a College must be set up to teach them, in order to prepare them not only for the ministry but for civil government”.

Prior to the Reformation, other than teachings destined for clerics, there was only the “grande école” founded in 1428. The masters taught reading, writing and liberal arts. In 1535, this establishment was transferred to the Convent of the Cordeliers de Rive and became the College de Rive. Antoine Saulnier was named its regent and published the “Ordre de l’Ecole” in 1538. Thereafter, Mathurin Cordier (1480-1564), then Sebastien Castellion (1515-1563) followed each other as regents. Up to 1559, the quarrels and discords amongst the ministers and members of the Small Council impeded the development of the college that was confronted with a chronic lack of material and human resources.

In 1556, after disposing of his last opposants, Calvin managed to have a new building constructed: the College Saint-Antoine (today known as the College Calvin).

The new establishment was placed under the control of the Company of Pastors. The college cursus – or *Schola privata* – is divided into seven levels. The children began by learning to read and write in Latin and went on to learn Greek, history, dialectics and rhetoric. Outside of the day’s classes and on Saturdays and Sundays there was the successive recital of prayers, the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the confession of faith and the singing of Psalms. On Wednesdays and Sundays the schoolchildren attended sermons and catechism in the various churches of the city.

The schoolchildren and students arriving from Switzerland, France or Italy were lodged by the pastors, professors or regents. Their growing numbers caused lodging difficulties in a city that was already full of people. The registers of the Consistory and criminal affairs – for the most serious cases – report on numerous deviations from discipline.

In parallel to founding the college, Calvin created an Academy – or *Schola publica* – with Theodore de Beze as its first rector. The teaching of Theology, reserved for older schoolchildren, was originally intended to train future ministers destined to spread the Gospel outside Geneva. It was to be completed by legal training several years later.

15. Private life in front of the judges

In the XVI century, the fears engendered in Europe by the plague epidemics, political uncertainties and religious wars brought about harsher sentences. Prosecution for heresy and the denunciation of witches and “plague spreaders” multiplied.

Geneva did not escape this climate of anxiety and had to furthermore adapt its judicial practices to a new political and religious situation. Before the Reformation the civil and ecclesiastical judges came under the authority of the Bishop, while criminal justice was the jurisdiction of the syndics of Geneva. Cases were heard in public with the exception of those deserving corporal or capital punishment which were judged according to a secret inquisitorial procedure in writing and authorising torture.

From 1526 to 1535, the disappearance of the ecclesiastical court following the departure of the Bishop and the House of Savoy lead to a reorganization of the judicial institutions.

Certain edicts or ordinances motivated by the intention to reform behaviours had consequences on the daily life of the population. For example, in 1566, the adoption of the edict against bawdiness and adultery caused the citizens to demonstrate in the General Council to show their opposition and their anger.

Although the Reformed Church claimed not to interfere in the political and judicial affairs of the city, the Consistory did not hesitate to send reoffending blasphemers or any other person who had resisted the reprimands of the Consistory to trial. When ministers judged the syndics to be too lenient with those guilty of moral lapses, they complained to the Small Council. From 1550 to 1570, the joint activity of the Consistory and the courts aroused the dissatisfaction of the population against the magistrates who were too influenced by the ministers.

16. Practicing charity: the general hospital and public assistance

The creation of the General Hospital was accepted by the General Council on November 14th, 1535. The consequence of this decision was a profound reorganization of the modalities of assistance. Assistance had been, until then, the responsibility of the city's seven hospitals administered by the clerics and a charitable foundation, the "Boîte de toutes Ames" (All Souls Box), managed by the elite. Henceforth, assistance is centralized and secular. This process, that Geneva's adhesion to the Reformation helped to strengthen and redirect, was part of a wider movement of restructuring and renovation of charitable and curative institutions designed to help the poor. This movement was driven by a desire for order (fight against begging) and efficiency on the part of the urban municipalities.

The creation of the General Hospital came about one year after the founding of the Aumône générale in Lyon, while similar establishments already existed in several cities. The Reformation would provide the financing for a new institution that received revenues from the largest share of seized ecclesiastical goods and the use of a building, the Convent Sainte-Claire du Bourg-de-Four (at the site of the present Palais de justice), that the Clarisses had left just a few months earlier.

From a Protestant point of view, the sale of liturgical objects acquired by the clergy by the diversion of money from the poor and the reassignment of the revenue from tithes to the Hospital enabled the act of charity to return to its primary function. Another category requiring assistance, the poor foreigners passing through, were lodged at the hospital Saint-Esprit (20, rue Saint-Léger) then, as of 1547, at the Coudrée house (where a Lutheran Church can currently be found). The infirmary for plague victims remained outside the wall, in Plainpalais, where it was built at the end of the XV century.

The General Hospital was managed by four procurators with the help of a hospitaller. The institution took in old people and poor people who were ill, as well as children, whether they were orphans, bastards or given to the institution by parents who could no longer afford to keep them.

The Hospital also assisted the poorest Genevans with alms, most usually given in the form of bread, sometimes wine and more rarely, clothes. In 1538, 72 people were lodged at the Hospital; there were 95 in 1602; between the months of October 1538 and 1539 nearly 10,660 poor foreign travellers took advantage of the ad hoc support offered by the Hospital before leaving the city.

In order to cope with the surge of refugees, two bursaries were created in succession, one French (around 1545), the other Italian (around 1552) from substantial legacies. They shared the care of those requiring assistance based on their origins.

17. Foreigners in the city: Geneva, a city of refugees for religious reasons?

“Foreigner” This term, which is frequently used in institutional sources to denounce those responsible for political or public problems, defines in a critical way a specific segment of the Genevan population that played a central role in the social and economic construction of the city following the Reformation. From the 1540s onwards, Geneva took in several thousand migrants and especially the refugees from the religious persecution that was taking place in France and other parts of Europe: Flanders, Italy, the Iberian States and England.

The population went from 13,100 to 21,400 individuals between 1550 and 1560 (before the epidemics at the end of the century decimated the citizens again). Sometimes simple, destitute travellers, such as former clerics and scholars who had been chased away; sometimes the organised family groups of rich merchants or artisans who wished to establish themselves permanently; these various immigrants rapidly aroused criticism from a segment of the population who feared for their political privileges, the modification of traditional customs or economic competition. The battle of the “Enfants de Genève” against Calvin fanned these tensions in order to solicit support from the Genevans against the foreign ministers.

The magistrates had to confront frequent problems of public order and the Consistory had to resolve identity conflicts of a daily basis. A policy which on the whole was favourable to the concession of naturalisation – or the right of bourgeoisie – for the foreigners and the exercise of economic activities in exchange for the payment of a modest tax which allowed the social integration of the refugees and encouraged the development of new manufacturing activities imported by the immigrants: silk production, the wool industry and, above all, printing, which became the economic activity that marked the cultural identity of Geneva throughout Europe.

The famous Genevan typesetters and editors such as Jean Girard, Jean Crespin, Conrad Badius, Robert and Henri Estienne, Laurent de Normandie, Antoine Vincent, but also many other less well-known or anonymous artisans of the printing world arrived here after treading the difficult paths of religious exile and social insecurity. Throughout the modern age, the Republic demonstrated an ambivalent policy towards these “late arrivals”: the religious refugees as well as the regional migrants, wavering between assimilation and exclusion, according to the periods of social need and economic crises.

18. Third period (1575-1617): confessionnalisation at the time of Theodore de Beze

The period from 1555 to the end of the 1560s was considered to be that of Calvin's triumph and the zenith of his Church, a time during which a specifically Calvinist Reformation reached maturity. The period that followed marked a progressive return to normality. In Geneva, the last quarter of the century was marked by the same evolution as seen in a large part of Europe. This period is described as being that of "confessionnalisation". It is characterized by the hardening of denominational identities and a closer collaboration between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, the better to guide their subjects and the faithful.

This strengthening of the institutions was the response to the difficulties that were being confronted at this time: religious wars, regular plague epidemics and famine due to climatic cooling. In conflict with the Duke of Savoy, Geneva consolidated its allegiance with Bern and Zurich in 1584, and finally went openly to war with the Duke of Savoy (1589-1593). The city confronted four outbreaks of plague (1568-1572, 1596-1599, 1615-1617 and 1628-1631) which claimed more than 6000 victims. In Geneva as elsewhere, the revival of witch-hunts was also a symptom of this crisis.

In this context, the magistrates concentrated the power in their own hands, wearing clothes that underlined the prestige of their function and demanding to be addressed using formulae that denoted their distinction. The city's government tended towards oligarchy.

Under the direction of Theodore de Beze, who succeeded Calvin as moderator and remained a tutelary figure until his death in 1605, the Church is also more subject to the authority of the magistrates. The pastors and professors at the Academy then systematized reformed theology within the bounds of narrowly defined orthodoxy and engaged in endless controversies with the Catholic and Lutheran orthodoxies. The moral discourse of the ministers hardened also, while nothing changed in liturgical practice.

"I beg you not to change anything or innovate", said Calvin in his final speech to the ministers. These words seemed to have become a sort of general rule of the Church which hardened at the end of the XVI century into a faith punctilious about its very young tradition.

19. Lightning of the disciplinary guidelines

While there was a certain balance between the power of the magistrates and that of the magistrats after 1555, civil power began to affirm its preponderance as of the 1570s.

In this context the disciplinary vise was loosened in the last quarter of the XVI century, people were less and less forbidden to partake of communion and the magistrates little by little asserted their ascendancy over the ministers. The golden age of the power exercised by the Consistory over the faith and morals of the faithful faded. The Reformed city began to lose certain of the features that had given it its unique nature.

The reintroduction of customs the Consistory had fought to abolish was symptomatic of this evolution which led to a form of normalisation. In 1606, following Theodore de Beze's demise, the ecclesiastical court excommunicated two magistrates who were guilty of celebrating the Feast of Three Kings. A sign of the times, this sanction was repealed by the Council of Two Hundred: the civil power had asserted itself as the dominant power.

Little by little other feasts began to be observed, although previously banished from Geneva's calendar that, since 1550, contained no holidays other than Sunday. While the Genevans resumed the habit of not working on Christmas Day or New Year's Day, even if it was not a Sunday, the Company of Pastors finally authorised sermons and song to mark these special days. This evolution finally found its confirmation in the liturgical formulae of the XVIII century.

20. Commemorating the Reformation? The expanded time of memory

While the centenary of the Lutheran Reformation was widely celebrated in autumn 1617 throughout Protestant Germany and as far as Denmark and Sweden – marked by various festivities on the initiative of the University of Wittenberg and the Elector of Saxe, no special commemoration came to trouble the secular year in Geneva.

The date of the centenary was no less present in every mind at the graduation ceremony at the college in May 1617. In the speech he gave on this occasion the Rector of the Academy, Theodore Tronchin, began, “in this anniversary year for a Church fully restored and delivered from servitude”, to retrace the history of the various jubilees since the secular games of Antiquity, to better denounce the formula adopted by the Papacy and praise Martin Luther (“this veritable hero, unequalled”) and Ulrich Zwingli (“the very courageous servant of Christ”), who rose up against the “infamous traffic” of indulgences. In a significant way, Zwingli is found here associated with Luther.

On January 1st, 1619, the Genevan deputies at the Synod in Dordrecht (1618-1619), Theodore Tronchin and Jean Diodati, are invited by the theologian from Zurich, Johann Jakob Breitinger to commemorate the centenary of Zwingli’s first sermon in Zurich.

The centenary of the Reformation in Geneva did not give rise to any such ceremonies. Once again it was in the exclusive setting of the graduation ceremony at the College that the jubilee was commemorated in 1635. The Rector of the Academy, Frederic Spanheim, then praised the *Geneva restituta* in a speech in which “the famous Martin Luther, this second Elijah for Germany, animated by a courage both heroic and even divine” is not forgotten. This text was immediately published, as was the *Le Genevois jubilant* (The jubilant Genevan) by Jacob Laurent.

It was necessary to wait for 1735 for the official commemoration of the Reformation in Geneva to become the object of a specific celebration of thanksgiving along the lines of the jubilees in Zurich, Bern and Neuchatel to which representatives from Geneva had been invited. The date chosen was August 21st, the day the Small Council suspended Mass, and which had always been associated with the beginning of the Reformation in Geneva.

It was only in the XX century, on the 400th anniversary of the Reformation in Geneva that the date of adoption of the Reformation by the citizens and bourgeoisie of Geneva was imposed as being May 21st, 1536.

21. Stereotypes

- Tolerance or intolerance?

The question of tolerance was one of the most controversial points of the Reformation's heritage in Geneva. It is often seen as one of the impulses of the historical movement that managed to install tolerance at the heart of the values of modern societies. Did not Calvin proclaim after Luther the rights of conscience of the faithful with respect to the obligations imposed by tradition? Collective memory also retained the memory of the reformed martyrs burnt in the 1550s or massacred on Saint Bartholomew's Day in 1572, as symbols of the victims of intolerance by the Catholic Church and governments. Celebrations had been held for the demands of the Huguenots before the French monarchy for the liberty of conscience and freedom of religion and the consecration of these liberties through the pacts of religious peace, as providing legal expression for tolerance for the first time.

But the historical account that links the Reformation and tolerance is brought up short on the condemnation to death for heresy in 1553 of the Spanish doctor, Michel Servet by the authorities of Geneva, with the help of documents supplied by Calvin. The burning of Servet at the stake founded the sombre legend of Calvin's intolerance. Spread in particular by Voltaire then by Balzac, it found exemplary illustration in the book by Stefan Zweig, *Conscience contre violence, ou, Castellion contre Calvin* (The right to Heresy: Castellio against Calvin). Written in 1935-1936, this work assimilates Calvin to Hitler and allows its author to identify with Sebastien Castellio (1515-1563). A theologian and contemporary with the Reformer of Geneva, Castellio opposed condemning heretics to death and, in particular, Servet. At this time he formulated one of the first systematic defences of the idea of tolerance. But Servet's pyre also fuelled the internal controversies of Reformed Protestantism. It led one of the great thinkers of liberal Protestantism at the end of the XIX century, Ferdinand Buisson (1841-1932), to work for more than twenty years on a thesis on Castellio in which he upholds the latter as the founding figure of liberal Protestantism and of the Reformed attachment to the idea of tolerance.

It was this controversy that obliged those who built the Reformation Wall to first erect a memorial in Champel, not far from the place where Servet was burnt. The repentance there expressed by Calvin's heirs was to allow them to put an end to the controversies, so that no further shadows should mar the device « Post tenebras lux », which is written in large letters on the Reformation Wall.

□ Theocracy

Was the city of Geneva a theocracy at the time of Calvin? Did it live according to a regime in which authority was held by the pastors? The much-debated question relates both to the relationship between State and Church and to the extent of the power wielded by Calvin. Were the magistrates subservient to the ministers to a point where the State was subservient to the Church? Was the city entirely under the domination of the eminent figure of the reformer, who was both theologian and jurist, co-editor of the Ecclesiastical Ordinances and the Civil Edicts that regulated the political organisation of the city? Did Calvin impose a form of moral dictatorship on the people of Geneva, subjecting their daily lives to unprecedented disciplinary surveillance?

Published in 1897, the work of the pastor and historian, Eugene Choisy (1866-1949), *La théocratie à Genève au temps de Calvin* (The Theocracy in Geneva at the time of Calvin), seems to credit the idea of a regime founded on the domination of public life by the Church had taken hold in Geneva. When discussing the “theocratic system” Choisy concludes that the city had known more of a “bibliocracy”, in which society conformed to standards taken from the Calvinist interpretation of the bible. There are in fact elements that corroborate this hypothesis, such as the decision of the government of Geneva that recognizes Calvin’s fundamental work, *l’Institution de la religion chrétienne* (Institutes of the Christian Religion), sets out the doctrine officially received in the city, stating that this book is « saintement fait et sa doctrine, sainte doctrine de Dieu» (“sacred fact and its doctrine the sacred doctrine of God”) and forbidding “parler contre ledit livre ny ladite doctrine” (“speaking against this book or its doctrine”).

However historians have for the most part judged that the term “theocracy” cannot be applied to the political and ecclesiastical regime in Geneva: although Calvin may have effectively exerted a strong influence over the authorities, his power never extended beyond ecclesiastical affairs. The Church was certainly able to conquer a sphere of autonomy at the time by defending its right to excommunicate scandalous sinners, but for the rest it remained subject to the magistrates. In time, the authority of the latter tended to grow to the detriment of that of the ministers. In Geneva we are therefore in the presence not of a “theocracy” but of a State Church, in which the pastors, named by the magistrates and therefore dependent upon them, retain however a right of admonition over the actions of the civil powers – admonition founded on the interpretation of the Bible. It is this kind of equilibrium that is celebrated in the shared meal between the magistrates and the ministers as shown in the engraving.

22. Presentation of the sources

To implement the exhibition that you have just seen, historians have studied the sources, meaning the documents that have come down to us from that time and that have been preserved in the Archives of the State amongst others.

The archives are all the documents received or produced by a natural or legal person, or by a public or private institution, organised according to the activity of this person or institution and preserved with the intent of use for administrative or historical purposes.

The main sources studied here were the Council registers, the Church archives, criminal trials, parish registers and the ancient works in the AEG library. This display presents the Council registers and the archives of the Protestant Church of Geneva.

The Council registers

The Council registers form the main source for anyone interested in the history of Geneva. They comprise the registers containing the decisions, and their annexes, from the executive and legislative authorities of the Community of Citizens and Bourgeois, then City and Republic, then Republic and Canton of Geneva. Today these would be the minutes of the Council of State. This series has been preserved constantly since 1409 up to the present day, which is quite unique in Europe, with an interruption during the French period (1798-1813).

The registers from the years 1409 to 1541 have been edited, meaning that they have been transcribed, annotated and published.

The Church archives

In order to prepare an exhibition on Geneva at the time of the reformation, it is obviously essential to study the archives produced by the Church itself. Since 1937 these documents have been preserved in the State Archives.

How was the archival collection of the Church established?

On November 20th, 1541, the General Council (the assembly of citizens) adopted the Ecclesiastical Ordinances. These Ordinances organized Church life by instituting four functions or ministries: the Pastors, Doctors, Elders and Deacons. It created two new organs: the Company of Pastors and the Consistory which were to produce documents and hence archives.

The Church archives consist of two principal collections:

- **The Consistory archives (1542-1929)**

The Elders formed the Consistory: it was a chamber composed of twelve pastors and twelve members of the government, presided by one of the supreme magistrates. There was a secretary who was responsible for taking the minutes of the meetings. The Elders, according to Article 37 of the Ordinances, must be divided amongst the various neighbourhoods of the city at a rate of one Elder per thousand inhabitants, “to keep an eye on everything”. The Consistory is charged with the surveillance of the behaviour of individuals, to admonish deviant practices and beliefs, to arbitrate conflicts between individuals and to obtain their amendment in cases of indiscipline. This sort of moral and matrimonial court could only pronounce ecclesiastical sentences, meaning the denial of communion. In cases requiring criminal sanctions, the guilty party was deferred to the Small Council. The Consistory met every Thursday.

The Consistory registers provided a very rich source for studying the numerous aspects of Geneva’s history. While Consistories have been introduced in all the Reformed Churches, it is rare to find a collection with registers of this scope and continuity for the entirety of the Old Regime (more than 90 registers). Numerous affairs are to be found in them concerning beliefs and religious practices, sexuality and marriage and all matters related to them: promises of marriage, fornication, adultery and divorce; but other subjects are also to be found such as drunkenness, blasphemy, usury, begging, dance and song, healers and seers, gambling, etc. It is through these minutes that little by little a certain image of popular culture may be perceived: the Genevan social fabric and the morality of the Geneva at this time.

- **The archives of the Company of Pastors (1546-1944)**

The Company of Pastors comprised all the ministers in Geneva, not only those in the city but also those in the countryside. The principle competences of the Company of Pastors were the doctrine and instruction. It keeps watch on the orthodoxy of its members, regulates worship, presents future ministers and teachers to the authorities, organizes charity, controls printed materials and maintains relations with other Reformed Churches. The Company of Pastors meets on Fridays; its deliberations and decisions are consigned in writing by a secretary.

The minutes of the Company of Pastors’ meetings provide study material of great diversity, that sheds light on religious history and also on the social history of Geneva, more specifically on the elaboration of ecclesiastical discipline in the new Church, the difficulties encountered in its organisation, education and exchanges with other countries. The questions debated by the Company of Pastors were of a more international character than those discussed in the Consistory; it was there that the questions posed by the Churches of France and elsewhere were discussed and where it was decided what response should be returned to them.

23. Digitalisation project

Why digitalise the archives?

Digitalisation of documents and placing them on-line answers a triple objective:

- To preserve the originals of the archive's collection (which will no longer be subjected to manipulation);
- For ease of access to sources from anywhere and at any time;
- To promote the archival heritage.

When digitalising old series, the original documents are of course retained.

The State Archives have a digitalisation workshop. The document series to be used in a digitalisation project are carefully selected (frequency of consultation, state of the original documents, etc.).

Digitalisation activity is supervised and documented by the "Policy and good practice for digitalisation at the State Archives of Geneva", a document which is available on the AEG internet site.

Once digitalised, the original documents are removed from consultation.

The images are then uploaded on Adhemar, the AEG database. The consultation interface provides for viewing in four different sizes.

Please note that on-line documents only represent, in quantity, a minute portion of the collections preserved. In fact, it would be impossible to digitalise the whole of the collections of a public archives institution covering one thousand years of history.

www.ge.ch/archives

The project of digitalisation and restoration of the Church registers and the Association for the restoration and digitalisation of the Consistory and the Company (ARRCC)

The Protestant Church of Geneva deposited a first part of its historical archives with AEG in 1937. These documents, the oldest dating from 1542 and much consulted, were no longer in a condition that met with the rules governing preservation and consultation.

To address the problem, ARRCC was created in 2012 with the goal of raising the funds necessary for the preservation of the Church's archives. In this way, through this project led by AEG, the 182 registers of the Consistory and the Company of Pastors' minutes are in the process of being restored and have been digitalised (XVI-XIX centuries). They can be accessed on-line at Adhemar, the AEG database AEG.

Two sets of microfilm for the security of the digital images have been produced and kept: one in the Confederation's central shelter and one in the shelter of the Geneva Protection of Cultural Property (PBC).

24. Materiality of the registers and restoration

Preservation

Each document in the archive is unique and must be treated with the greatest care. Their conservation, or preservation, is part of the mission of archive institutions.

Conservation is all the measures aimed at preserving the integrity of the documents and the information they contain. The notion of conservation covers several aspects: the storage of archives and the control of climate conditions, training of personnel and users, the manipulation, conditioning and storage of documents, the building and security.

It therefore means following a programme that enables the organisation of the various interventions in terms of preservation, using an integrated and global approach. This programme applies to all the archives in the service. The application of measures planned for the preservation management allows archive collections to be kept in good condition, namely to prevent, stop or delay their deterioration using adequate conditions of storage and use.

Preservation forms an integral part of the functions of each employee.

Restoration

When a document is very damaged, it is given to a professional restorer who will proceed with a treatment that best suits its original nature.

Thanks to the digitalisation and restoration project of the Church registers that began in 2012, the documents that need it will all be restored in time. 75 volumes were restored between 2013 and 2016.

There are a certain number of principles underlying restoration interventions. Firstly, the treatment must be the least invasive possible in order to preserve the document's integrity and its historical elements, while also allowing damage to be stabilized and delay the process of alteration. Furthermore, the chosen treatment must always be reversible. It is therefore essential that the object is not modified in an irreversible fashion and to maintain the possibility of return to the original. For example, when a conservation binding is made, the original binding is removed and kept with the restoration protocol. Finally, the restorer's intervention must remain visible.

Restorers are independent professionals who work on mandate in the workshop of the State Archives. This unique way of operating allows the documents being treated to be kept within the institution, to offer state of the art facilities and above all to call upon specialists in paper, parchment, binding, seals or plans as needed.

Each restoration mandate is the subject of a protocol which lists the treatments applied, the materials used, an assembly plan for the sections and photographs showing the detached elements that form an integral part of the history of the document. Furthermore, the analysis of the document and a detailed list of its characteristics, the choice of treatment and the methods used are carefully listed in the protocol to allow future generations to

understand the operations performed on the object and researchers to take note of the historical elements revealed during an intervention that were otherwise invisible.

It is in fact important to document the operations performed during each restoration so that future generations are able to ascertain the changes the document has undergone over time.

Those documents whose condition does not require restoration measures are to be placed in appropriate conditioning, meaning made to measure conservation boxes.