

GRAND STAIRCASE AND RENAISSANCE FIREPLACE

REMARKABLE ELEMENTS

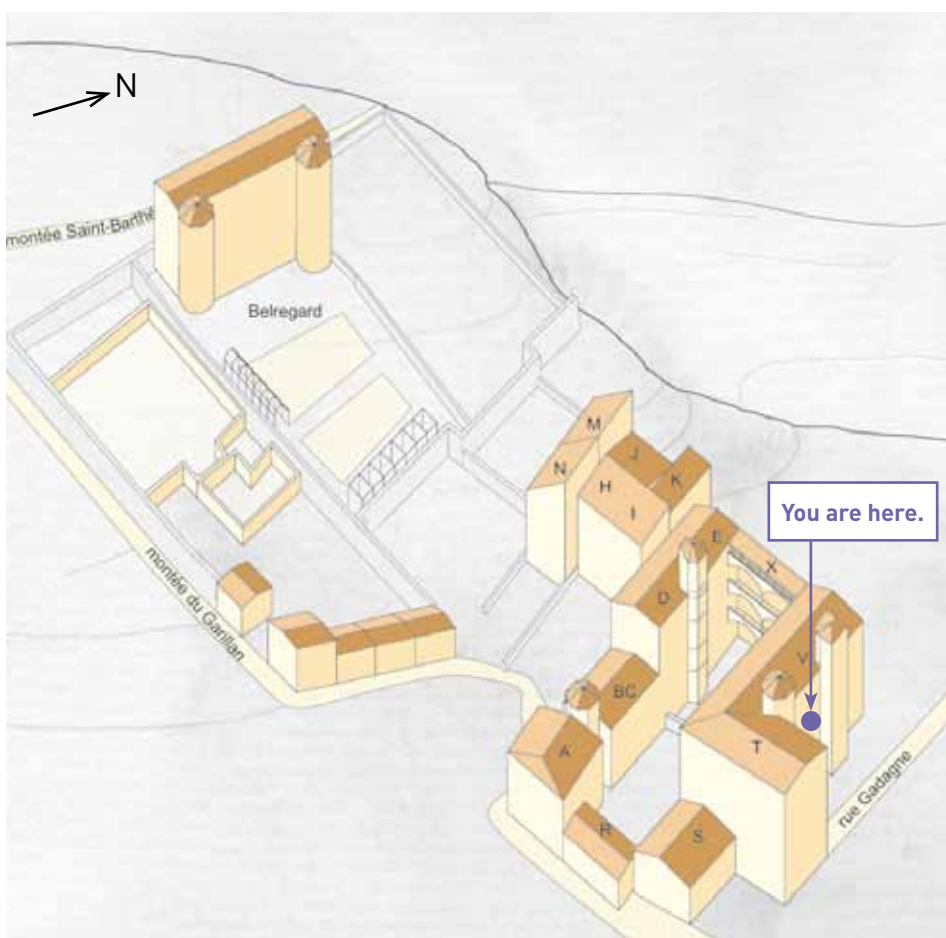
ROOM 6



At that time...

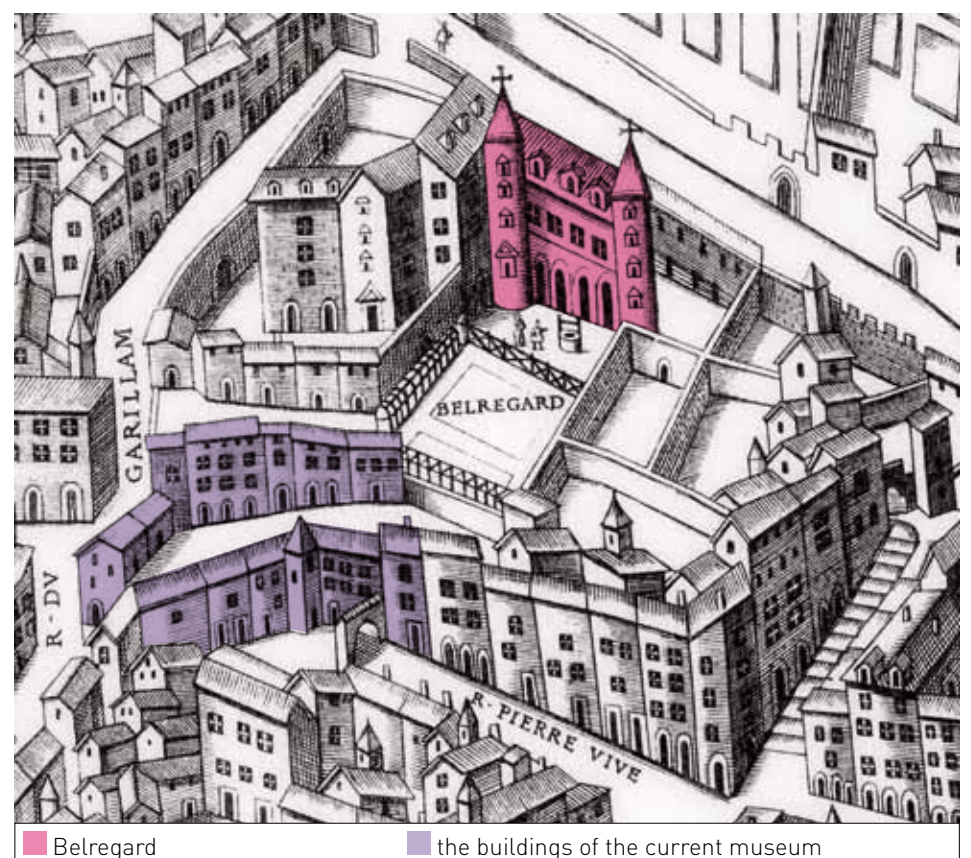
First half of the 16th c.: the work of the Pierrevive Brothers

Around 1489-1492, the four Pierrevive brothers, from a rich family of grocers and apothecaries in Piedmont, settled, like many Italian merchants and bankers, close to the place du Change where so much of the city's commercial activity was conducted. They acquired a large property extending from the current rue Gadagne as far as the montée Saint-Barthélemy, on which the Boyssette House, an opulent mediaeval townhouse, stood. The Pierrevives destroyed it to undertake a huge building project



The buildings under the Pierrevives, a volume reconstitution of the 2nd quarter of the 16th c., figure 123, DARA No. 29, Lyon Series No. 10, edited by C. Becker, I. Parron-Kontis, S. Savay-Guerraz, 2006

grey words: items that can be seen in this room



Details of the scenographic map of the city of Lyon, view of the city from the east, anonymous, circa 1550, facsimile by J. Séon and F. Dubouchet for the topographic society of Lyon, between 1872 and 1876, Inv. 656

Did you say Gadagne?

It would therefore have been legitimate for the museum buildings to be named after the Pierrevives... but history decided otherwise! The Gadagnes, who began as tenants of the northernmost plot (10-12 rue Gadagne), bought it from the Pierrevives in 1545 for 16,750 livres.

*"To all who shall see this document (...) we do make known that the nobleman **Anthoine de Pierre Vive**, lord and baron of Vaulx en Lyonnais, advisor and steward to the King our Sire, (...) hereby sells, assigns, delivers and leaves by sale, assignment and delivery (...) to the noble persons **Guillaume Gadaigne**, lord and baron of Laval, and **Thomas Gadaigne**, lord of Beauregard near Lion (...) the house in which did dwell, during his lifetime, the late and noble Nicolas de Pierre Vive."*

.../...

They sold it again in 1581: a very short spell of time for an illustrious family which apparently only lived in it from 1548 to 1561! It is an irony of the history of Lyon that it is their name that went down in posterity in 1648, since their splendour and power had left a strong impression on the city. The "rue Pierre-vive" mentioned in **the scenographic map** became "rue Gadagne" a few years later...

The grand staircase

This spiral staircase, built from 1515 by Nicolas Pierrevive, was the main entrance to the house: the door on the ground floor is surmounted, on the street side, by a three-centred arch basket and framed with ogee moulding. Its newel is made up **twisted roll mouldings**. The cross-bar windows let in a lovely amount of light. Guests took the staircase to climb to this **large reception room** and the upper floors. It serves the first Pierrevive house to the south. Then it opens up to the north on a brand new building: the future home of the Gadagnes, hence these **doors on staggered levels**.

The fireplace

The **huge fireplace**, which is contemporary with the grand staircase, is the centrepiece of this room which during the day was almost certainly used for business receptions and in the evening for balls and banquets. Its **monumental abutments*** are made up of three crenellated columns that intertwine around a roll moulding. **The opening into the back wall** was a cupboard used to dry store salt, which at the time was absolutely essential for preserving food.

At the centre of the mantel stands the French **coat of arms**. It could be a tribute to Guillaume de Gadagne, who became seneschal of Lyon - the royal officer of justice - in 1567... although it would seem to have been made much later, at an unknown date.

Beautiful traditional architecture!

In the early 16thc., these functional premises took their inspiration from the late Gothic tradition: prismatic mullioned windows, outside vaulted arch galleries, spiral staircases... In this room, on either side of the windows overlooking the courtyard, you can see some small masonry benches or **window seats** from where you can enjoy the light.

Not all the Gadagne building is a Renaissance townhouse. Only a few elements (wells, fireplace) are innovative. This is because important families did not necessarily want to display their power by the street side. It was only higher up, further away from the business district, that the real Renaissance houses were to be found, overlooking the city: the Belregard house belonging to the Gondi-Pierrevives, or country houses such as the Grand-Perron of the Gondis in Oullins, or the Gadagne's Beuregard Estate in Saint-Genis-Laval.

Portrait:

Pierrevive, the VIPs at Gadagne House

The Pierrevive, or *Pietra Viva*, family hailed from Chieri in Piedmont, and settled in Lyon around 1470. Four brothers acquired this house: Jean-Michel, chief physician to King Charles VIII, Amédée, an apothecary, a wealthy grocer merchant and tax collector for the King's estates and their two brothers Nicolas and André.

The son of Amédée, Nicolas, who like his father was also a tax collector, became a city councillor in 1508, which led to his ennoblement.

Nicolas's three children also had illustrious lives. Charles became treasurer general to François I and general of land and finance to Catherine de Medici. Antoine was lord and baron of Vaulx en Lyonnais and ordinary butler to the King. Marie-Catherine, called Marion, born at 14 rue Gadagne, married the banker Antoine de Gondi in 1516 and became lady in waiting to Catherine de Medici and governess to the children of France!



Portrait of Marie-Catherine de Pierrevive (? -1574), Vecelli (artist), Claude Duflos (engraver), late 17th c., Inv. 1317.13

Choice of restoration

Respect, restore, invent

The renovation of the Gadagne site was based on three major principles:

- restoration of the parts that had been sufficiently well preserved, in particular ancient wall coatings;
- contemporary architecture, shapes and materials in the areas created ex nihilo;
- the same materials as the original but in a contemporary style in the ancient parts where none of the decoration had survived. For instance in this room: the floor is composed of terra cotta rectangular **tiles**; the walls are coated with **lime plaster** but without plagiarising the period decor (which can be admired in rooms 22 to 26); the **French ceilings** are painted in the original style using colours that mimic the pigments of the period.

glossary

income property: building housing several housing units rented by the same owner, designed by the owner as an investment.

abutment: each of the jambs of a door or window or any of the uprights supporting the start of a vault or arch.