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Autor: [s.n.]
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Monasteries and churches in Fribourg

The monasteries of Fribourg have always formed a center of religious culture, including architecture, sculpture and painting, and have contributed to the culture of the city. The **Franciscan** monastery was donated by Jakob von Riggisberg in 1256. It was closely associated with the city council because it housed the city archives, and its monastic church was used for town meetings until 1433.

Likewise, the **Augustinian** monastery was founded in the mid 13th century, and enjoyed the support of the noble Velga family for a long time. Additionally, Maigrauge Abbey has existed since 1255, and has belonged to the **Cistercians** since 1262. An important institution was the public hospital, opened in the mid 13th century, which provided services for the poor.

During the Reformation, Fribourg remained Catholic, although it was nearly surrounded by the Protestant Bern. This led to repeated conflicts over religion in border regions, and in areas controlled jointly by Fribourg and Bern. The city was a major center of the Counter-Reformation. At the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th, new monasteries were established in the city, including: a **Capuchin** monastery (1608), another on Bisemberg (1621), an **Ursuline** monastery (1634), and a **Visitation** monastery (1635). The most important monastery, however, was that of the **Jesuits**, which heavily contributed to the advancement and prosperity of the city. It established the College of Saint Michael in 1580, the religious faculty of which formed the origin of the University of Fribourg. The concept of an objective press was also begun by the Jesuits.

The College St. Michel was closed following the expulsion of the Jesuits by the Bernese from Fri-

bourg after the canton's defeat in the Sonderbund war.

In 1613 Fribourg became the seat of the Bishop of Lausanne, who, after the reformation, was forced first into Evian, and then into exile in Burgundy. Today it is the seat of the Diocese of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg.

[Wikipedia](#)

The Patricians – an Oligarchy

Several prominent families developed as a result of the cloth and leather trade, beginning in the 14th century. They formed the 15th century Patrician class. This contributed to the decline of the cloth trade, however, as the families involved in the industry began to worry more about governing the city and its surrounding possessions.

An important milestone for the politics of the city came in 1627, when the patricians wrote a new constitution, in which they declared that they were the only people capable of ruling the city, and thereby took control of all voting rights. The strong patrician regime, consisting of no more than 60 families, filled all of the influential positions in the city and performed a leading role in the political, social, economic and cultural arenas. Multiple times, the citizens joined together to attempt a revolt, including in 1781 under the leadership of Pierre-Nicolas Chenaux. The revolt was repressed with the help of Bern.

The invasion of Switzerland by French troops in 1798 lead to the downfall of the Ancien Régime and freed the way for the first municipal elections.

The patricians regained control of the city in 1814 during the Restoration period, and ruled until 1830.

Fribourg was part of the Sonderbund, a "separate alliance" of Catholic cantons, for the short period of

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