

# Lyon - Musée Gadagne



Lyon, formerly known as Lugdunum, was a Roman colony founded by Lucius Munatius Plancus in 43 B.C. Located at the confluence of the rivers Rhône and Saône, it quickly became an important city in the Roman Empire, particularly

thanks to its strategic position. It welcomed governors, soldiers and merchants, and developed into a major political and economic centre of Roman Gaul. Remains from this period, such as the ancient theatre at Fourvière, still bear witness to this past greatness.



Over the centuries, Lyon kept growing. During the Renaissance, the city experienced a real commercial and cultural expansion. It was a time when many printers set up in Lyon, making the city a major centre for book production. Lyon's renowned fairs attracted

merchants from all over Europe, strengthening its economic role. The city also became a financial crossroads, with the arrival of Italian bankers contributing to its dynamism. One of these was the Pierrevive family, a noble family from Piedmont, who set up a mansion in the heart of the historic district of Old Lyon, completing its construction in 1527. In 1545, the Gadagne family, a wealthy Florentine banking family, bought the building, which then took their name. Over the centuries, the building lost some of its prestige. It was bought by the city in the 19th century, which undertook restoration work and became in 1921, the Museum of History of Lyon.



The 19th century marked a new stage in Lyon's history. The city entered the industrial era, thanks to the production of silk. This sector employed a large number of workers, known as the canuts, who worked in the workshops

of the Croix-Rousse district. They were literate people, and were organised into factories, managed by a silk manufacturer. Sometimes, when the rates did not suit them or when they felt threatened by machines (luddism), the canuts revolted, as they did in 1831, 1834 and 1848.



Following the example set by Baron Haussmann in Paris, Lyon underwent a period of major modernisation, largely carried out by Claude - Marius Vaisse.

He launched a number of major works, including the creation of new bridges to link the two banks of the river, the construction of quays and the installation of a modern sewer system. In 1857, he asked the Bühler brothers to design the Parc de la Tête d'Or, inspired by London's large parks, to provide a place for people to stroll and relax. One of Vaisse's major projects was the transformation of the peninsula, between the rivers Rhône and Saône: rue Impériale (now rue de la République) and rue de l'Impératrice (now rue Edouard-Herriot) were built. Consequently, 289 houses had to be demolished and 1,200 people relocated. Many new buildings were constructed, including the Palais du Commerce and the Croix-Rousse hospital. The Brotteaux district was also developed.

However, despite these improvements, social inequalities remained high and political tensions persisted. At the end of the 19th century, these tensions were expressed especially during the Dreyfus affair

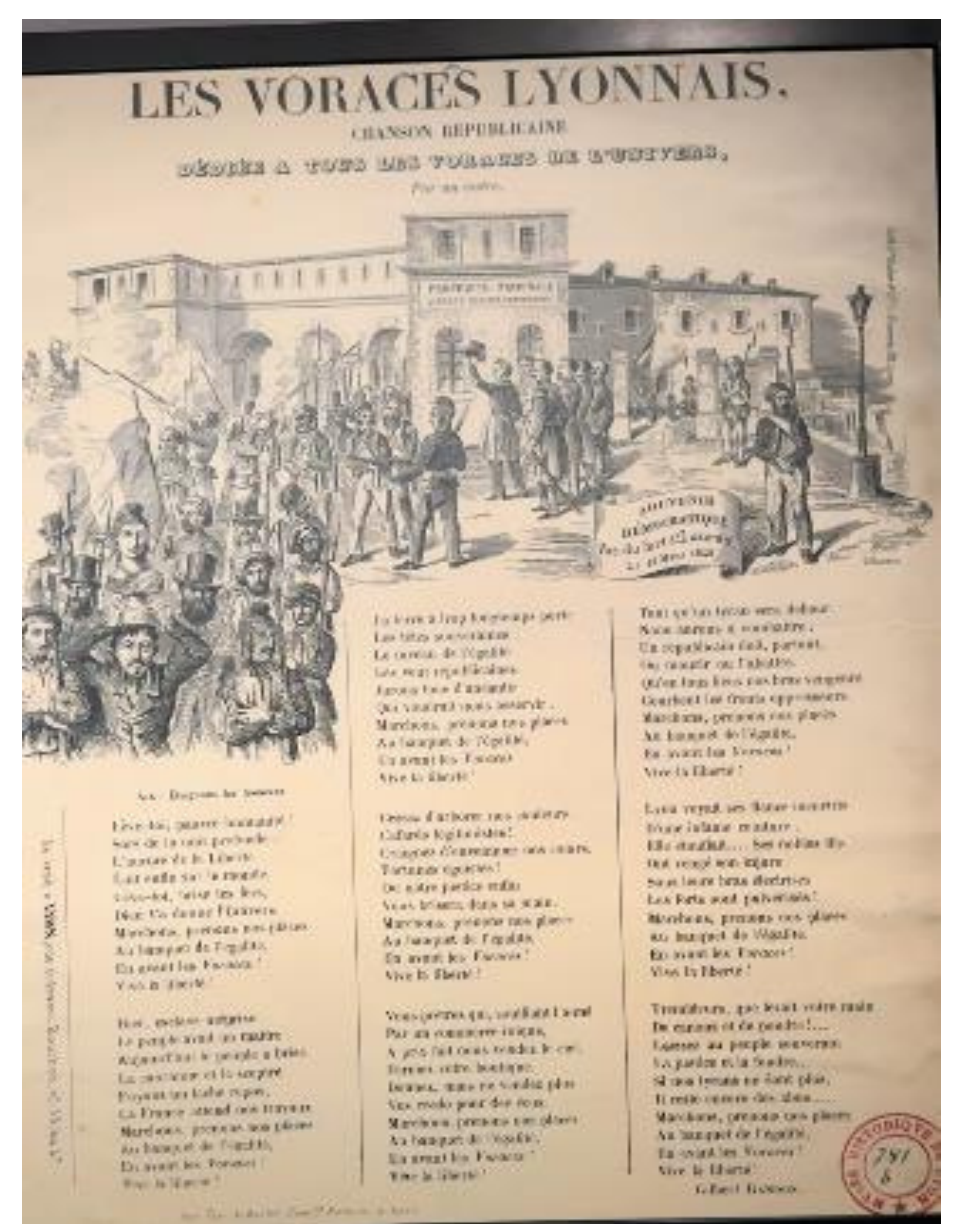


This affair deeply divided French society, and Lyon was no exception. Lyon's newspapers took a stand, intellectuals got involved and the city's inhabitants debated over. Lyon saw its first anti-Semitic demonstration in January 1898. Catholic university students shouted "Long live the army! Conspite Zola! Conspite the Jews!", before being spread out by the police. Between 500 and 1,000 people gathered in Place Bellecour around the statue of the King and arrived on Rue des Archers, in front of the shop owned by the Marix brothers, who were Jewish. Sometimes, 3kg paving stones were thrown into shop windows! By 11pm, Lyon was calm again and the students were fined 1 F. This episode shows how much the issues of justice, anti-Semitism and human rights affected the whole country. In Lyon, as elsewhere, the Dreyfus affair revealed the political and social divisions of French society on the eve of the 20th century.

At the Gadagne museum, a number of objects echo the history of the Dreyfus Affair.



Les Voraces Lyonnais is a song dedicated to the Voraces, a group of republican canuts and revolutionaries, active during the uprisings of 1848 and 1849. The Voraces were a group of working-class people who fought against social injustice, authoritarianism and inequality. Although this song has no direct link with the Dreyfus affair, the message and the struggle against injustice remain similar. Despite the values promoted by the



Voraces, the working class in Lyon was largely opposed to Dreyfus, which can be explained by the strong influence of Catholicism and nationalism in Lyon.



The press played a key role in the Dreyfus Affair, both in Lyon and elsewhere in France. Openly anti-Semitic newspapers such as L'Echo Lyonnais and the Nouvelliste de Lyon published anti-Semitic cartoons and slandered Dreyfus, influencing a section of the population. Despite a predominantly hostile press during the affair, some newspapers in Lyon rallied to defend Dreyfus. These included Le Progrès.



The model of Lyon's City Hall is a real eye-catcher. The town hall was built between 1646 and 1672 under the reign of Louis XIV, then quickly rebuilt after a fire two years later by Mansart, the king's architect. The town hall was to witness the deep division in the city over Dreyfus. There were many disagreements within the council. For example, Victor Augagneur, mayor of Lyon from 1900 to 1905, was a Dreyfus supporter, but had to deal with councillors who were hostile to Dreyfus, which led to numerous tensions. Just next door, at the Place des Terreaux, several rallies were organised by nationalist leagues after President Loubet pardoned Dreyfus in 1899. And it was in nearby Place

Bellecour, that the first anti-Semitic demonstration took place after the publication of Zola's famous J'accuse ...!

