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Regular clergy and the Republic of Venice in Early Modern Period

Since the beginning of the xviii century Venice, whose fame of laicity was widespread across Europe, established a strict system of legal control and limitation of the properties of the Regular clergy settled inside its borders. In 1605 the Venitian Senato extended to the whole State a law limiting the consistence of legacies to ecclesiastical institutions. Before and, moreover, after that year severe forms of fiscal drawing were established on the regular clergy's properties: the Republic of Venice would apply the highest rate of fiscal drawing on ecclesiastical properties of the early modern Italy. Also on the so-called decime, form of taxation paid by the citizens of the State to the Holy See, the local churches and other religious institutions, Venice put strong form of taxation and limitation. After important suppressions of the mid xviii century Venitian State and large owners took finally advantage of a wide amount of land. Fiscal sources produced by the Holy See between the beginning of the xvth Century and the end of the xviii century show that Venice was the last of the important Italian States (after Realm of Naples, Holy See, Lombardy, Tuscany, Piedmont and Genua) as far as revenue on real estates. According to some historians there would be a link between the legislative framework and the progressive tendency of monasteries and abbeys to invest the large part of their accumulation on lowrate credits, both to the local aristocratic families and to the peasants. The other common form of clergy's investment would have been the public debt: in 1787 the 52,3% of the Venitian debt was in fact owned by ecclesiastical institutions.

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