Women and Work in Preindustrial Europe

Hanawalt, Barbara

Published by Indiana University Press

Hanawalt, Barbara.
Women and Work in Preindustrial Europe.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/113363.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/113363

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=3628846
Municipal Wet Nurses in Fifteenth-Century Montpellier

Much of women's salaried work in preindustrial societies—and even many industrial societies—mirrors those tasks women have traditionally performed in the context of their homes. The domestic servants found in middle- and upper-class homes perform the tasks relegated to the housewife in humbler classes. Prostitutes provide a professional service equivalent to the conjugal debt of the wives in all strata of society. Nurses or child caretakers offer services normally rendered by mothers.

Studies of this kind of women’s work in late medieval Europe are rare, owing largely to the difficulties encountered in trying to amass sufficient documentation, usually scattered in diaries and notaries’ registers. The fact that two of these normally private services—prostitution and wet nursing—were sometimes channeled through the municipalities in late medieval Languedoc makes it possible to approach the subject from one angle, relying on the documentation generated by municipal administration. The object of analysis in this chapter is information on wet-nursing contained in the municipal financial documents of Montpellier, the most important town of eastern Languedoc.

By the fifteenth century it was generally acknowledged in Montpellier that the municipality had the duty of caring for abandoned children. The town had no institution serving as an orphanage, but relied rather on individuals who were paid to take care of the children in their own homes. These people were referred to as nurses or wet nurses (nourrice or nutrix), as their principal task was to feed (nutrire) or breastfeed (lactare) the children. There is little in the way of narrative sources concerning these special municipal employees, but the municipal account books, many of which have survived from the fifteenth century, list methodically the people hired and the payments made to them.

The nature of the sources exploited presents important methodological
problems. Only a handful of account books have survived from the first six decades of the century, and from 1460 to 1498 there are five lacunae, making systematic analysis of the material available difficult. The information presented is also frustratingly laconic, as is typical of account books. But uneven and sparse documentation is indeed the classic problem facing the medievalist interested in social history, and the information concerning this kind of work in particular is so rare for the Middle Ages that any source is precious. The financial documents give at least an indication of the kind of person who nursed for the municipality, and the nature of the work involved.

Municipal wet nursing was a booming business—or rather, an expanding service—in the second half of the fifteenth century. In the early fifteenth century, only an occasional mention is made of a person being paid to take care of a municipal foundling. In the early 1440s, the payments become regular, but to only one employee, whereas by 1450 five women were hired. Throughout the 1460s an average of seven people a year were paid to nurse the children; by the 1470s the average had climbed to eighteen a year, and in the eighties, twenty-four a year. In the last decade of the century the average number of nurses hired annually reached twenty-six; forty were paid in the year 1496 alone.

During the thirty-eight years studied, 305 people were paid for their services as nurses. One must refer to people rather than women, for out of the 305 persons listed, 30 are men with no mention of women. In the majority of cases, however, the men were probably only collecting the pay, whereas a woman—usually a spouse, but perhaps a sister or even a domestic servant—was actually rendering the service in question. We may take the example of one of the most frequently cited employees: William Blat, scribe, received a total of seventy-four payments over a twelve-year period (from 1472 to 1485) for caring for two little girls; only twice in all those years is reference made to his wife, Guillermina, whereas it is clearly she who was looking after the children.

Of the women listed (275), the majority (243, 88 percent) are identified as being married women at the moment of first payment, seven of whom were widowed during the course of their services. Twenty-five women (9 percent) were widows at the time of the first payment; most widows were "dry" nurses, but eight were paid for breastfeeding. Two women in the series are identified as mothers, and two as sisters. Only rarely is a woman not identified as being married, widowed, or otherwise related to a man, although the absence of the name of a husband or late husband does not necessarily mean that the woman in question was single. Most married women are identified by their first names, followed by the full names of their husbands, but some bear second or family names of their own, making...
reference to the husband's full name not essential in order to identify the woman. Thus a woman who began her child-care services in 1480 is often identified in the books as Thoneta Cabassude without mention of her husband, Peter Tyrasson.  

All but five of the people hired as nurses in Montpellier in the fifteenth century were residents of the town. Three women were from the outskirts of Montpellier: one from the village of Laverune, three miles west of the town,\(^9\) one from Teyran, eight miles north of Montpellier,\(^{11}\) and another from Castelnau, a mile and a half east of the town.\(^{12}\) Two other child caretakers were from the diocese of Nimes.\(^{13}\)

In almost two-thirds of the cases listed in the municipal account books (192 out of 305), the social status of the nurse is indicated. They were generally of humble status. Frances Pojada, spice seller (\textit{spéciatre}), probably the most socially prestigious person mentioned, was paid only once, in December 1472, and that for feeding the daughter of a carpenter who died of the plague that year,\(^{14}\) not for caring for an abandoned child.

Among those whose profession—or whose husband's profession—is indicated, there is a roughly equal number of craftsmen (eighty-seven) and agricultural workers (\textit{cultor} or \textit{lavorod}, eighty-one),\(^{15}\) whose presence within city walls was typical of southern French towns. One may assume that most of the unidentified persons were engaged in one of these two professions. In general, scribes tended not to forget to specify the status of an important person in society. One may note, moreover, that in the decade of the 1470s, when all but three persons out of seventy were identified professionally, the above-mentioned spice seller and a master craftsman are the most socially prestigious persons mentioned.

A large number of crafts (thirty-one) were represented; nurses and nurses' husbands included six bakers (\textit{fornier}), six stone cutters (\textit{peyrier}), five tailors (\textit{sartor}), and five dyers (\textit{tector}). Municipal wet nursing seems to have been an activity particularly popular among the wives of carpenters (\textit{fustier}), for considering that these craftsmen were by no means the most numerous in Montpellier, a disproportionately great number (fifteen) of them are found in the list of municipal nurses.\(^{16}\) Most of the craftsmen mentioned were of a relatively humble status, as only two are referred to as Master (\textit{magister}):\(^{17}\) the painter Nicolas Leonard, who cared for the girl Johanna and eventually adopted her in 1480, and who was paid by the municipality for his work in the great church Notre Dame des Tables,\(^{18}\) and the master carpenter Vincent Boyer, whose widow, Johanna Fornière, nursed a certain Johanna for five months in 1480.\(^{19}\)

If one analyzes the professions by decades, one notices that whereas agricultural workers and their wives outnumbered craftsmen in the 1460s and 1470s (fifteen to twelve in the first case, thirty-four to twenty-seven in
the second), the opposite is true in the last two decades of the fifteenth century: there were twelve craftsmen and only seven agricultural workers in the 1480s, and thirty-seven craftsmen as opposed to twenty-three agricultural workers in the 1490s. It would be tempting to see in this trend a pauperization of craftsmen’s wives, who turned increasingly to rounding out the family budget by engaging in this rather ill-paid work. The presence of numerous unidentified persons in the later decades makes it impossible, however, to confirm such a trend, and reduces it to the level of speculation.

Members of what might be called the medieval “tertiary sector” were also represented among municipal nurses and husbands of nurses. It is not surprising to find four “hospitalers:” Gilleta, wife of William de Veytoris, hospitaler of St. James in 1403,20 Marguarita Clamadella of the hospital of St. Martha in 1461,21 Anthonia, wife of Master Alardin du Ponchel of St. Eloi from 1488 to 1491,22 and the wife of John of Dijon of the hospital St. James in 1493 and 1495.23 What is perhaps surprising is to see no more than four such people, as hospital work and charity were closely connected in the Middle Ages; the small budget for municipal wet nursing in the Provençal town of Tarascon, for instance, came from hospital coffers.24

A scribe (novel scriptor de letra formata) and five sergeants are included among nurses’ husbands. The largest category of the tertiary sector represented is that of municipal employees: nine “squires” (scutifer) of the municipality are listed as having nursed, or having had their wives nurse, municipal foundlings. This social group enjoyed a greater than average “longevity” in this service: in only one case was the child kept less than a year and in two cases “squires” and their wives kept the same child for more than four years.25 They also seem to have enjoyed a somewhat preferential salary.26

Nurses were usually assigned only one child at a time. Only in two cases were two children assigned simultaneously to the same woman. In 1490 Margarita, wife of Thadeus Michie, breastfed two boys (duos pueros) for a month; she was paid no more, however, than the standard rate for breastfeeding one child.27 Anthonia, wife of the agricultural worker John Ferreyres, on the other hand, was paid for the keep of each of the children she looked after simultaneously from November 1493 to June 1494: Columbeta, whom she breastfed, and Bartholomew, whom she simply nourished.28 In all other cases, only one child at a time was taken care of by a municipal nurse.

Of all the municipal nurses recorded in the financial documents of the fifteenth century, the vast majority (279 out of 305, 91 percent) took care of no more than one child. Only 17 nurses cared for two children, 7 for three, and 1 each for four and five children successively. For most of the employees involved, municipal child caretaking was a once-in-a-lifetime venture.
The majority of municipal nurses not only limited their engagement to one child but cared for that child for a very short period of time. One can calculate the period of time for 266 of the 279 nurses who cared for only one child; 174 of them (65 percent) kept that child for less than one year, the shortest time being a mere eight days.¹⁹ Fifty-six (21 percent) kept them from between one and three years, only 26 (10 percent) for between three and five years, and a mere 10 (4 percent) for more than five years, the record being over eight years.

Even those people taking on two children successively usually did so for a short period of time. In sixteen out of seventeen cases the length of time can be calculated; ten nurses cared for the children for a period totaling less than one year; four for a period from one to four years, one for seven years, and one, Guillarmina, wife of the scribe William Blat, for eleven years and two months, in a veritable career that spanned thirteen years.

Of the seven women looking after three children successively, five worked for a total of less than three years (in only one case did the “career” span more than three years). Anthonia, wife of the agricultural worker James Melet, worked for a total of six years and seven months, taking care of three girls successively in a career spanning ten years, from 1473 to 1483,²⁰ and Peyronella, wife of the bolter (baralerius) John Bux, nursed two girls and a boy for ten years and ten months over a fifteen-year period, from 1478 to 1493.²¹

Anthonia, wife of the agricultural worker John Aygalene, had the longest career; over a nineteen-year period, from 1479 to 1498, she spent ten years and nine months caring, successively, for three girls and a boy.²² Anthonia, wife of Alardin du Ponchel, nursed five children successively, but only for short periods (a total of one year and nine months) over a short span of time (three years).²³ This short but intense bout of municipal nursing was certainly related to the fact that Anthonia’s husband was master hospitaler of St. Eloi, Montpellier’s most important municipal hospital. The number of women to have taken on several children over a long period of time was very small; even they were not employed constantly, but often waited several years before taking on a new municipal child. They may perhaps have engaged in private wet nursing during those interims. And for the vast majority of women, taking on only one child for a brief period, municipal nursing was a very short-lived venture, not a veritable career.

The laconic nature of the documents makes it difficult to detect the attitude of municipal nurses to their charges. It would seem natural that nurses should have taken an emotional as well as financial interest in their work, especially those who kept the same child for a number of years. It would seem to have been fairly common for the children to be named after the nurse or nurse’s husband through the 1460s,²⁴ but this custom seems to
have died out afterwards. There is only one example of a nurse adopting his charge: In 1480 Nicolas Leonard, master painter, adopted Johanna, whom he had looked after for almost two years.\textsuperscript{35} One may also note that taking care of abandoned children was an activity that could be engaged in by volunteers as well as by paid professionals, as is often the case in charity work. In 1496, the child John, who had been kept for twenty-four days by Katherina, wife of Sebastian Dict, was handed over to Master Peter Amelet and his wife, Alexandra, who promised to take care of the child "for the love of God."\textsuperscript{36}

Such a case was exceptional, however; caring for municipal foundlings was generally salaried work. Two important developments can be observed concerning the wages of wet nurses: the decline in income throughout the century, to some extent in absolute terms, but more strikingly in real wages; and the distinction made by the consuls between wages for those women breastfeeding children and for those using other means of nourishing them.

It was during the 1460s that the consuls developed the custom of usually paying nurses one of two fixed sums, according to whether the child in question was breastfed or not. Typically the breastfeeding woman was paid 17s. 6d. a month,\textsuperscript{37} whereas the person feeding the child other foods received only 12s. 6d. a month. This distinction would seem to indicate a recognition of the value of mother's milk for children, and/or the need for nutritional supplements to the lactating woman. It was only in the 1470s, however, that the municipal scribes began to note more carefully whether the activity of the nurse was to breastfeed \textit{(lactare)} or merely to feed \textit{(nutrire)}.\textsuperscript{38}

Thanks to this distinction, it is possible to get an idea of how long the municipal wet nurse breastfed, by studying those cases in which the transition from breastfeeding to other food is recorded. There are thirty-eight such recorded cases of weaning; the time during which the nurse gave the breast ranges from one month to four years,\textsuperscript{39} the median length of time being one year, nine and a half months. In twelve of the above thirty-eight cases, however, the child had already changed hands during the breastfeeding stage. The accumulated lactation period in these cases ranges from ten months to two years, ten and a half months, the median being two years, one week. If one readjusts for these twelve cases, the median for the thirty-eight rises from one year, nine and a half months to one year, ten and a half months.

Were the children newborns when given to a wet nurse for the first time? Indication of age is given only rarely, but the introductory paragraphs to the lists of nurses that are present in the account books starting in 1479 indicate that the consuls took only those children "whose parents were unknown" \textit{(quorum parentes ignorantur)}, a policy that made it difficult for a resident of
the town to deposit on the town-hall steps a child who was already a few
months or years old. So one can conclude with few reservations that the
typical lactation period of somewhat less than two years corresponds more
or less to the age of the children at weaning.

Although the two-tier system of wages (17s. 6d. for breastfeeding, 12s.
6d. for others) was typical in the late fifteenth century, other rates exist in
that period, the rationale for which is nowhere explained. In two cases we
see a transitional period of nine months after breastfeeding when the nurse
was paid 15s. per month before falling to 12s. 6d. a month.40 There are
numerous cases of people being paid only 10s. a month; two where the sum
was 8s. 9d., three at 7s. 6d., and two, a mere 5s. a month.41

The wages of nurses were low—even a woman grape harvester earned
about 1s. 3d. a day in fifteenth-century Languedoc, and that wage itself was
half of what a man earned.42 The wages of nurses were not only low,
however; they declined throughout the century. The decline was at first in
absolute terms; whereas in the forties, fifties, and early sixties it had been
common to pay nurses a livre or more a month,43 by 1464 17s. 6d. was the
maximal rate possible.

The decline was in relative rather than absolute terms in the later de-
cades—that is, it was a decline in real wages or buying power. The two-tier
system remained stable throughout the end of the fifteenth century and the
first half of the sixteenth century, a time of inflation when food prices in
particular were rising considerably. Real wages were falling for most workers
in that time period, but the situation was particularly dramatic for these
municipal employees, whose wages were absolutely frozen at the same level
for exactly a century, from 1463 to 1563.44

One would like to know much more, but the financial documents reveal
only the minimum, enough to give but a sketchy profile of the typical
municipal wet nurse in fifteenth-century Montpellier. Usually a married
woman, the wife of an agricultural worker or a craftsman of modest stand-
ing, and a resident of the town, the typical nurse engaged but briefly in
municipal nursing activity, taking in only one child, for a very short period
of time, usually several months. The pay she received was greater if she
breastfed (which she probably did for no more than two years), but in cases
of both breastfeeding and other feeding, the wages were low, and their
buying power was steadily diminished by inflation. If increasing numbers of
women were hired by the municipality in this capacity, it was not because of
the financial attractiveness of the wages, but because of the demographic
situation; whereas only three children were supported by the municipality in
1450, the number had risen to at least twenty-one by 1498. The increased
number of abandoned children and the degradation in the real wages of the
women who cared for them are both indications of the trends of the times: the demographic increase and the "pauperization" of a large portion of the population. The early sixteenth century was "hard times" for many in Languedoc, but hardest of all, it would seem, for women and children.

Notes

1. On prostitution in late medieval Europe, see my Prostitution in Medieval Society: the History of an Urban Institution in Languedoc (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), which includes an ample bibliography. Domestic servitude and wet-nursing are discussed in a book devoted principally to medieval slavery: Jacques Heers, Esclaves et domestiques au moyen-âge dans la monde méditerranéen (Paris, 1981). The bibliography on wet-nursing in early modern times is larger; Elisabeth Badinter presents a synthesis of recent research in her L'amour en plus, l'histoire de l'amour maternel, XVIIe–XXe siècle (Paris, 1980), which has been translated into English.


3. The following books have survived: 1403 (529), 1432 (530), 1441 (531), 1442 (533), 1443 (534), and 1450 (535). The dates indicate the year as calculated in the fifteenth century in Montpellier, from April to March 31; thus the book from 1403 runs in fact from April 1, 1403, to March 31, 1404. The books are cited henceforth by the medieval date, but any precise date given in the article has been converted to the modern style. The books are written both in Latin and in Occitanian ("Provençal").

4. The books missing at the moment of classification of the financial series include those from 1466, 1467, 1475, 1484, and 1487. The books from 1486 (568) and 1499 (582) have since been misplaced. That from 1489 (571) was misplaced while I worked on the series; it has since been found. Not only was it too late to incorporate it into my research, but the state of the book makes it virtually illegible in any case. The whole series of books (housed in the municipal archives of Montpellier) was in fact water-damaged several years ago, and some passages are extremely difficult to decipher. The series is now temporarily unavailable to scholars, pending restoration.

5. The children nursed were not always foundlings. In 1403, for example, Johanna, wife of William Bonet, was paid for feeding one of the children of a municipal employee who was a poor widower, Aymeric Pozata, scutiffer (529, 9v).

6. The number of nurses paid each year is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Nurses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1403-2</td>
<td>1450-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1432-2</td>
<td>1460-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1441-1</td>
<td>1461-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1442-1</td>
<td>1462-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1443-1</td>
<td>1463-10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Thoneta, "mater Francie filie sue et magistri Berenge Cabirii," 579 (1496), 66v, breastfed Johanna for three months. Maiota, mother of Guillerta, wife of Thomas Mere, breastfed Augustin for twenty-five days in 1493 (576, 40r); her daughter had breastfed William for nine months in 1492–93 (574, 576 passim). Catherina, sister of Leonarda, married to the fish-monger Matthew Coty, breastfed little Anthoneta in her sister’s stead during the latter’s illness in 1474 (555, 34r). Margaret, sister of John Chauchardi, took over the care of little Anthony from her sister-in-law in 1497 (579, 99r); the child stayed a year and a half with the latter, then two and a half years with the former.

8. Only three women are listed independently, without further identification: Marguarita Clamadella, hospitaler of St. Martha in Montpellier, 537 (1461), 42v–43r; Johanna Clamadella, apparently related to the above, 537 (1461) 64v–65r, and Guilemerta Primilohlla, 577 (1494) 52v.

9. 561 (1480)–565 (1483) passim.
11. Dalphine, wife and then widow of Laurence Vedier, agricultural worker, from 1468 to 1470 (544, 546, 548 passim).
13. John Teysser (530 [1432], 7r, 28r; 535 [1450], 14v) was a resident of Monoble, near Le Vigan. Berengaria, wife and then widow of John Cornairet, who lived in Santairargues (559 [1478]–563 [1482] passim), cared for little Ludovic for four and a half years.
14. 552 (1472), 21v. They took her in only because they saw that no one else was willing to feed her: "... per lo noyrement d'une petita filha, local era de Jehan Rinoche, fistier de Montpelhiar, local moric de l'empidimia; et sa molher et lodit Pojada, vezent que ladita filha moria de faim, et no s'y trobaria que la volgues alimentar, et la tenc per certan temps et la noiric."
15. Among the craftsmen are three ortolan (gardeners), whom one may choose to put in the category of agricultural workers.
16. For an indication of the number of members in each profession, see André Gouron, La réglementation des métiers en Languedoc (Thèse—Droit—Montpellier, 1957), pp. 95–101.
17. Masters were generally owners of their own shops, and the other members of the profession, valets and apprentices, their employees. For the hierarchy of the professions, see Gouron, Métiers, pp. 241–78.
18. 559 (1478), 26, 66v, 106v; 560 (1479), 58r, 62r.
19. 561 (1480), 50v–51r.
20. 529 (1403), 18r.
21. 537 (1461), 42v–43v.
22. 569 (1488), 572 (1490) and 573 (1491) passim.
23. 576 (1493), 70v; 578 (1495), 4r.
24. The financial series includes payments made to Leonarda Martina, wife of Anniel Terssa, by the rector of the hospital in August 1496 and January 1497 (AM Tarascon, CC 146).
25. Berengar Garmand was paid for one month’s care of Peter in 1464 (542);
Anthonia, wife of Peter lo Mercier, kept the girl Mathea for four and a half years, from 1474 to 1488 (555, 556, 558, 559 passim); Anthonia, wife of Anthony Allegre, cared for young Anthony for four years and two months, from 1476 to 1480 (556, 558, 559, 560, 561 passim).

26. See below, n. 38.

27. 572 (1490), 7v.

28. She had breastfed Bartholomew until February of 1493. If her resuming breast feeding nine months later was not a case of relactation, it would indicate that she was nursing another child (her own, or that of a private individual) in the meantime. 576 (1493), 2v, 52r, 70r, 76v, and 577 (1494), 50r, 54r, 60r.

29. The reader stands warned that the following statistics on “longevity” effectively underestimate somewhat the average length of child care, as the missing account books are not represented. (The only cases I have not considered are those from before 1460 and those beginning in 1498 which probably continued beyond that year, that is, where payment is made up to the end of the book.) The only other alternative would have been to eliminate all ambiguous cases (there are thirty-seven), that is, where a nurse was paid through the last month of the account book preceding a lacuna. These ambiguous cases concern, however, a much larger than average number of examples of long-term child care, so eliminating them would have had more or less the same effect on the statistics—shortening “longevity”—as the calculation based on available information. The distortion, at any rate, is minimal.

30. 553, 555, 558, 559, 560, 562, 563, 565 passim.


33. See above, n. 22.

34. The presence of unusual names, such as Gilleta, Loyssa, and Dionisia, makes it possible to rule out pure chance.

35. 559 (1478), 26r, 66v, 106v; 560 (1479), 58r, 62r. “Dictus Magister Nicholaus Leonardi in presencia nobilis viri Johannis Noguerii consuli dicte ville obtulit acetero nutrire et alimentare dictam Johannah eiusdem Leonardi propriis sumptibus et non sumptibus ville aut alterius, de quo dictus consul pro se et aliis consulibus fuit contentus de quibus.”

36. 579 (June 1, 1496), 70r. “... quam diem consules tradiderunt Alexandre uxorii magistri Petri Ameleti, qui Ameleti promisit lactare et nutrire facere amore dei et sua causa.”

37. The first time this sum is mentioned is in June 1463, when Johannetta, wife of the scuiffer John Ayon, was paid 17s. 6d. a month for keeping Berengar (541, 8v and passim). The abbreviations l., s., and d. stand for livres, sous, and deniers (1l. = 20s.; 1s. = 12d.).

38. When the nurse was usually paid every three or four months, a transition within that period was noted, for instance, in 1484 Margarita, wife of the agricultural worker Deodat Galibert, was paid 30s. for two month’s work: “scilicet pro mense martii xviis. vid. quod lactabat, et pro mense aprili, xiis. vid.” (565 [1483], 29v). There seem to have been some exceptions to the rule, however, as in the case of Anthonia, who nourished (nutrire) Anthony for four years and two months at the rate of 17s. 6d. (from 1476 to 1480). The privileged rate was probably due to the fact that her husband, Anthony Allegre, was a municipal employee (scuiffer). We see the wife of another scuiffer (Anthonia, wife of Peter lo Mercier) paid the same amount for the simple “nourishing” of the girl Mathea from 1474 to 1479 (see above, n. 25).
39. The latter is quite atypical, the second longest period recorded being only two years, eight months.

40. Jaumeta, wife of the agricultural worker William Chaneau, and Katherina, wife of the locksmith Peter Colaric, were both paid at this rate from June 1474 to February 1475 (555, passim).

41. Payments of 5s. a month were made to Dionisia la Banastiera, wife of the agricultural worker William Calmel, in 1463 and 1464 (541, 542 passim), and to Gailhard Alboyn in 1482 (563, 63v, 67r).


43. The highest rate recorded was that paid to Johanetta, wife of John Pegorier, in 1450: 1l. 2s. 2d. a month (535, 4v). The last woman to have been paid 1l. per month was Florencia, wife of the carpenter Peter Medici, in September 1463 (541, 64r).

44. Le Roy Ladurie uses Montpellier’s wet nurses as one example of female “pauperization” in this period (Paysans I, pp. 276–79).