

*Alternative currencies and quality of life in late thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Marseille: Negotiating labour in times of turmoil\**

In late August 1297, Doucette Bermond, a young woman who was fearing a postpartum surgical intervention, was granted a miraculous recovery by Saint Louis of Anjou: she was healed after vowing to clean every Saturday for the rest of her life the Franciscan church of Marseille, where the holy man was buried, because «she was too poor» to buy beeswax offerings. Years later in 1308, when summoned to testify before the papal commission investigating the canonization case of the Angevine prince, she reiterated, more pointedly this time, that she had requested to be fed by the friars while on duty in the sanctuary for «she had to work with her own hands to make a living».<sup>1</sup> In other words, she had offered the Minor Brothers her worthy ancillary services with two ends in mind: to clear a spiritual debt and to obtain earthly sustenance. In November 1326, Raymond Garrigue approached the jurist Bertrand Aydolphe to remit his person, goods, and labour into his hands, «given Bertrand's sincere affection toward him» and willingness to ensure his basic needs for the remainder of his life. Although Raymond explained his decision on the grounds that having nothing to live on he had to beg, he was a family man with a minimum of resources since, prior to the transaction, he had returned half his assets in repayment for his wife's dowry and children's alimony.<sup>2</sup> Emotional and psychological factors –

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<sup>1</sup> «[U]nam ymaginem de cera portaret et omni die sabbati, quamdiu viveret, cum una vigilia suum tumulum visitaret; et eodem die, si fratres sustinere vellent, suam ecclesiam scoparet, erat enim pauperrima mulier»: Bibliothèque d'Autun, France, Ms. S 88, 69, *Liber miraculorum sancti Ludovici episcopi* (LMSL), f. 17r-v. The book of miracles attributed to Saint Louis of Anjou was edited in 1951 along with the canonization proceedings by the College of St Bonaventure: *Processus canonizationis et legendae varie Sancti Ludovici O.F.M. episcopi Tolosani. Vol. VII. Analecta franciscana* (AF). Quaracchi-Florence: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas. For the quotation cited above, see AF 1951, 301; for the second quotation, «habet querere panem cum manibus suis», AF 1951, 166.

<sup>2</sup> «Cum non habeo unde vivam et vadam mendicantem, videns et aspiciens affectionem quam vos, dominus Bertrandus Aydulphi jurisperitus de Massilia, erga me habetis et hactenus habuistis, idcirco dono me personaliter et totum laborem meum ac fatigam quam facere potero in futurum quamdiu vixerò ». In turn, the jurist pledged to support Bertrand in all his essential needs until the end of his days: «juravit dictum Raymundum Garrida tenere et custodire quamdiu vixerit sanum et egrum et sibi providere in victu, vestitu, et calciamentis iuxta facultatem persone sue»: the transaction was struck on November 10, 1326, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), nouvelles acquisitions latines (n.a.l.), Fonds Mortreuil, 321, 291.

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although indebtedness cannot be ruled out – may well have been at play, but Raymond and Bertrand’s mutual agreement was not predicated on chronic material destitution: akin to a corrody, it was rather a reciprocal understanding of goods and service exchange requiring no money transfer.<sup>3</sup> No cash was transacted either in December 1375 when Monette Lambert, a single woman, accepted a wet nurse position in the household of the noble Jacques Ricau, whose wife Lucie had just given birth. Monette contented herself with a salary consisting of her meals and her shoes, one veil and one shirt, in addition to a dress of striped fabric that had belonged to her mistress.<sup>4</sup> Yet, the very same day, Monette had also initiated another labour contract along with her employer to hire out Antoinette Féraud, an acquaintance of hers (they were both from Les Arcs, a village in the Var Valley), to nurse Monette’s own newborn son. Unmarried herself, Antoinette was living with her mother and willing to settle for modest wages, no more than 10 florins. Despite her wageless salary, Monette had perhaps wisely calculated that, given her personal circumstances, the quality of her living conditions under the nobleman’s roof together with the care of her child by a trusted third party was more advantageous. What Monette, Raymond, and Doucette – a cleaning lady, a family man, and a wet nurse – had in common was their unequivocal willingness to accept, if not welcome, commodities and other forms of tangible goods rather than money in return for their output.

Workers in late medieval Marseille, a society hard-wired by a monetized economy, proved keenly attentive to forms of non-pecuniary payments in labour agreements. In this commercial harbour, the trades were loosely organized and, notably with respect to work conditions and wages, bereft of strict corporate regulations. This is made plain and manifest in the municipal statutes, formally enacted in the middle of the thirteenth century, when Charles I of Anjou, the new count of Provence, solemnly acknowledged the city’s privileges (Pernoud 1949; Lesage 1950). Governed by the spirit of contractual law binding two free individuals or their families, work conventions rested on the transfer of specie for the vast majority of adult labourers, but then again rarely without due consideration to other

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<sup>3</sup> Another case of personal donation, this time to an institution, surfaces in a notarial act drawn in 1397, whereby a certain Pons Trani from Aix-en-Provence, a man «without any obligation toward wife or children,» donated himself for life to the Holy Spirit hospital owing to his «profound devotion toward the civic institution,» with all his belongings and labour, promising to look after the hospital’s swine herd in exchange for decent conditions of life, in good health as in sickness: «propter devotionem quam habet, ut asserit, erga hospitale Christi Pauperum Sancti Spiritus dicte civitatis Massilie, dedit sive donavit ac causa dedicavit se et eius mercedes et operas nunc et per in perpetuum ... pro custodiendis porcis et aliis serviciis et operibus eiusdem hospitalis nunc et in perpetuo. ... Et dicti domini rectores ... teneant et debeant ipsum Poncium nunc et [in] perpetuo tenere, salvare, et custodire sanum et egrum ac sibi quamdiu vixerit perpetuo providere in victu, vestitu, et calciamento decentibus juxta suam conditionem, tam in sanitate quam etiam in infirmitate quod absit»: BnF, n.a.l., 1348, f. 181v-82r. On the well-to-do background of corrody beneficiaries in Flanders, see Thoen (2010).

<sup>4</sup> «[P]ensione videlicet seu loquerio potus et cibi ac calciamenti dedi et etiam ... unius veli, et unius camisie, et unius tunice de “mesclate” dicte domine Lucie, quam tunicam dicta Mon[et]a a dictis conjugibus confessa esse habuisse»: December 3, 1375, Archives départementales des Bouches-du-Rhône (ADBDR), notarial series (E), 351 E 44, f. 83v-84v. While a «*tunica*» was a simple dress often covered by a overgarment, «*mesclate*» was a type of fabric (Pansier 1927, 113), probably a woven mixture of woolen threads of different tinctorial dyes (Gérard-Marchand 1995, 93 note 19; 2013, 544; 558).

exchange currencies, such as goods and services.<sup>5</sup> Weighed against their market value, these loomed large in agreements involving young and vulnerable dependants, who represented a considerable segment of the workforce (Michaud 2016).<sup>6</sup> All the while, material goods and services were carefully assessed, especially in periods of economic downturn, severe inflationary trends, or sharp demographic fluctuations, which characterized the better part of the late thirteenth and fourteenth century in Marseille, and Provence as a whole (Coulet 1988; Bourin et al. 2011-13).<sup>7</sup> That a landowner in 1371 accepted to give in salary bonus to his hired ploughman a pair of stockings worth up to one florin, which, in case of a breach of contract, he would expect a tenfold repayment in the form of a houppelande worth ten florins, speaks volume of the trade value assigned to goods, especially in times of high living costs.<sup>8</sup>

For this paper, I have examined the oldest apprenticeship and work agreements from the notarial series of Marseille (1076 contracts) between 1248 to 1400, along with other pertinent archival materials and narratives from the legal, administrative, judicial, and religious records, with a focus on what appears to have mattered the most to the contracting parties across all trades<sup>9</sup>: victuals, clothing, education, and health care.<sup>10</sup> In the first instance I discuss the contemporary understandings and the nature of compensation in labour agreements, before turning to the contractual parties' expectations and obligations with respect to payments in kind and/or service for rendered labour. In final analysis, I place attention on labour negotiations to question whether and how the fourteenth-century crises, foremost in the wake of the Black Death, altered significantly conceptions and expectations relative to goods as currencies.

## 1. Labour compensation

In the language of Marseille's thirteenth-century statutory law, masters' and servants' material obligations were expressed in monetary terms, whether applying to

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<sup>5</sup> Of course scholars have long recognized the dominance of coins in labour payments at the end of the Middle Ages, while acknowledging the importance of mixed salaries.

<sup>6</sup> While at least 32% of household domestics were young workers, and considering that apprentice contracts form 31% of the entire labour corpus, in the seafaring sector alone – if one excludes coral expeditions left to seasoned specialists – young fishermen and sailors aged 10-20 years represented roughly 46% of the workforce (88 youths out of 190 seafarers under contract).

<sup>7</sup> «Il n'est que d'écouter les hommes qui, en 1350-1352, renoncent à leur tenure "*propter raritatem hominum et mortalitatem que precessit et nimiam caritiam operatorum*"» (Coulet 1988, 136).

<sup>8</sup> However, the terms of their understandings proved unusual only because the dissuasive penalty was to apply if the ploughman, who evidently suffered from a gambling addiction, relapsed into playing for money or 'other things': «*ut ipse Jacobus [Raolini, laborator,] non ludat neque ludi faciat ad denarios seu aliam rem valente in tempus infra declaratum, aliqua vice infra duos annos proxime venturos, quatenus submitit se dare pro dictis caligis predicto Johanni [de Laureis] unam chopam usque ad valorem decem florinorum*»: May 4, 1371, ADBDR, 351 E 31, f. 26r.

<sup>9</sup> While most occupations are represented in the corpus, quantitatively the data mirror crafts dominated by the land and sea extractive sectors (38%) and their derivatives industries (Michaud 2016).

<sup>10</sup> I will leave out from the analysis the occasional tools offered to apprentices upon the completion of their training.

income or penalty in case of contractual violation.<sup>11</sup> However, the term *«loquerium»*, commonly used in contracts to signify labour payment, encompassed both specie and kind, a mixture of which applied to the majority of labourers, old and young, men and women alike.<sup>12</sup> The concept also extended to the compensation masters may receive for the training of junior apprentices «by reason of their instructional labour».<sup>13</sup> The more lucrative the trade (and expensive in regards to production cost or capital outlay), the higher the teaching fees. Yet these often assumed the form of commodities – foremost wheat – in lieu of or in addition to pecuniary fees. Handed out as a salary, the *loquerium* sometimes excluded hard cash altogether. Indeed, between 1310 and 1395, I recorded no less than a dozen contracts whereby adult male workers, both unqualified and skilled, satisfied themselves with the necessities of life by way of income, like Raymond Garrigue, the *«donatus»* mentioned in the introduction. All the same, many more labourers settled for their keep with only a few coins in complementary earnings.<sup>14</sup>

Wageless income, though, was evidently more often bestowed on apprentices and young servants –especially girls, two-thirds of whom exclusively worked from hand to mouth.<sup>15</sup> To take only one example, goldsmiths never handed out anything but food, clothing, and shelter to their pupils, no matter how old or productive they were. Bermond Pellisier, a 16-year-old *«aurifaber»*, found a new placement with Raymond de Fabregas in 1390 in exchange for food, cloths, shelter, and, but not least, the ‘secrets’ of the master’s art.<sup>16</sup> When another goldsmith, the Englishman Robert de Rocha, who had emigrated to Marseille shortly after the Black Death, entrusted his son *«pro famulo et dicipulo»* with a local colleague to be trained for eight years in the trade, he did not expect his child to earn wages during all these years, even though the boy had surely been acquainted with some basic rudiments and know-how pertaining to the mysteries of his father’s own art. More to the point, Robert underscored the importance of good education «to secure a God-given honest living in this world».<sup>17</sup> Education was a priceless immaterial good held dear by many a parent, an ethical duty beholding masters to instruct dutifully their *dicipuli*

<sup>11</sup> *«[M]erces conventa seu debita»*: see statutes 2 and 47, book V (Pernoud, 1949, 165; 187).

<sup>12</sup> The ubiquitous meaning of *«loquerium»* pervades the data and is well illustrated by the case of 19-year-old Jean de Saint-Maximin, who was offered a yearly *«loquerium»* of *«viginti solidorum, unius tunice valoris decem solidorum, et unius camisie, et femoralie [breeches], et calciamentorum michi necessariorum»*: September 5, 1312, Archives municipales de Marseille (AMM), notarial series (ii), 1 ii 33, f. 33r.

<sup>13</sup> *«[R]atione laboris docendi»*: apprenticeship with a master barber, January 25, 1398, ADBDR, 355 E 81, f. 105v-06r.

<sup>14</sup> Notably young workers, but also migrants were mostly paid in goods, such as Guillaume Henri from Corail in Piedmont who, at the age of 20, found work for four years in the domestic service of Guillaume L’Anglais, in return for food, shelter, shoes, clothing, and one florin in cash: December 2, 1381, ADBDR, 351 E 38, f. 130v-31r.

<sup>15</sup> The documentary base for girls in domestic service – excluding adult women – is fourteen contracts.

<sup>16</sup> Nine contracts among goldsmiths are known between 1303 and 1390; for the case related here, see circa March 20, 1390, ADBDR, 351 E 39, f. 169r.

<sup>17</sup> *«[C]upiens ipsum arte instrui ut possit vitam in opere deffendere et Deo dante honeste vivere in hoc mundo »*: July 9, 1362, ADBDR, 351 E 25, f. 73r-v.

«out of equity», a principle that had been reminded to a fisherman, as he pledged to a fellow fisherman and his wife to teach the trade to their son to the best of his abilities.<sup>18</sup> Even senior apprentices, such as Bermond Pellisier just mentioned, exchanged their labour exclusively for advanced training, including intellectual knowledge. Jean Breton, a teaching assistant to the «*scolarum doctor*» Barthélemy de Fazino (schoolmaster), was willing to have his employer instruct him in the «science» of liberal arts in lieu of wages.<sup>19</sup> In the same spirit, Ayceline Durand, a widow from Aix-en-Provence, approached Loup Mini, a friar from the Third Order of the Penitence, to take her 8-year-old son Peyret in domestic service for six years, in return for his formal education, «as if he were his own son or brother».<sup>20</sup> Overall and until the time apprentices could master skilfully an art that enabled them to make an «honest living,» the pupils' and, especially, their parents' main concern was fair treatment at the hands of the master.

If in certain sectors or trades pecuniary salaries may be doled out to mature and experienced apprentices, children's limited ability to earn a few coins for their output while in artisanal training was hardly an issue for parents. After all, many were themselves artisans who relied on apprentices' cheap labour in their daily business operations. They tacitly supported the trade-off implied in competent professional training, as long as masters kept their children safe and sound, and under decent material conditions, which were themselves weighed against their market value in accordance with the dependant's social status (*iuxta qualitatem seu statutum vel conditionem*).

However, assessing the quantity as well as the quality of these provisions remains a formidable challenge, for few contracts detail them beyond the formulaic clause «*cibo et potu, vestimentis, et calciamentis*». Some agreements, though, yield of few clues. For instance, in 1335 the draper Pierre Élie estimated that to feed the 14-year-old son of a fellow merchant-draper, Jacques de Vaquières, it would cost him yearly no less than 7 *librae* (140 *solidi*), a sum that represented roughly 25% of the annual pay Pierre offered one of his hired draper-artisans two years later; meanwhile, the daily salary of a painter then was around 2.5 *solidi*.<sup>21</sup> Yet, the notion of decency, commonly stipulated in labour contracts, was evidently adapted to cultural expectations shared across medieval societies, that is, an individual's social and domestic status within a master's household. Thus, co-workers hired as a team may have received differential earnings, not only in wages but also in commodity goods, owing, at least in part, to age and experience. For instance in 1382 three sailors sold their services together: in yearly income, the first was offered 16 florins, plus two pairs of stockings (*caligarum*), two robes – one in colour worth 1 florin the *canne*, the other made of white coarse

<sup>18</sup> «[S]ecundum exigenciam equitatis»: March 16, 1320, ADBDR, 381 E 30, f. 80r-81r.

<sup>19</sup> «[S]erviendum eum ut scolaris litteralis [causa docenti liberos dicti magistri]... et loquerio videlicet quod magister ipsum docere sciencia liberali et teneatur sibi providere continue in cibo et potu decenter et custodire [in]firmita sua»: April 14, 1357, ADBDR, 355 E 35, f. 12v.

<sup>20</sup> «[C]um pacto quod ipsum doceat literas pro posse, velut filium aut fratrem»: December 6, 1386, ADBDR, 351 E 41, f. 121v.

<sup>21</sup> November 15 and 17, 1335, ADBDR, 381 E 58, f. 30v and 32v. The painter's contract, with a local merchant, included free meals tough, in addition to «all the needed pictorial material (*omnes colores*)»: May 7, 1319, BnF, n.a.l., 1321, f. 86r.

wool cloth— and two hoods; the other two men got only 8 florins each, while one of them obtained two marine dresses and the other only a simple tunic.<sup>22</sup> One may surmise that the robe of «colour» (*unius raube coloris*) requested by the team leader was conceived as a distinctive, status-granting good (Kucab 2022, 192-93).<sup>23</sup> Neither did blood-related family, governed by birthright hierarchies, escape a graduated quality-scale for payments due in kind. When in 1398 Jean Raimbaud found work for himself and for his son Antoine as swineherders for the Holy Spirit Hospital, he was content to share a sum of 20 florins in wages with Antoine, as long as the white, heavy woolen dress given to him in extra income was worth a whopping 14 florins, and his son's, only 6 florins.<sup>24</sup> A few years earlier, the brothers Pierre and Antoinet Olivier, both water carters (*aegueserii*), were hired to guard and tend the sixteen horses of a nobleman; even though each was given 3 florins in meat supplement for their meals (*companagium*), Pierre was promised 6 florins in cash, 12 *eminas* of wheat, 9 *eminas* of barley, 8 *millerolas* of pure and good wine, and one *canne* of fabric, while Antoinet would only receive 5 florins in wages, 10 *eminas* of wheat, and 6 *millerolas* of wine, and no piece of cloth.<sup>25</sup>

## 2. Goods and services: Between expectation and obligation

When, as in the cases just related, the masters were willing to offer additional income in kind, it was most likely the fruits of customized agreements (*pacta*) beyond conventional trade practices. It should also be pointed out that these arrangements belong in their vast majority to the post-plague years, a time when the job market had somewhat tightened up. Not surprisingly, a significant number of these *pacta* surface in the context of a short, but intense economic boom in the late 1370s and early 1380s, when low-wage workers could bargain for improved commodities allocated as complementary income. Arguably, in the pre-plague era these provisions were no less subject to bargaining forces, which then, however, favoured largely the masters. Marseille in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century was marked by a period of inflation, economic decline, and reduced monetary velocity (Lesage 1950,

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<sup>22</sup> 22 April 1382, ADBDR, 355 E 28, f. 8r-v. The «*canne*» measured about two meters (Baratier, Reynaud, and Villard 1951, 905).

<sup>23</sup> According to sumptuary laws in this time period, white and black were colours discriminatorily ascribed to the poor and the sick (Pastoureau 2022, 223).

<sup>24</sup> November 14, 1398, Paris, BnF, n.a.l., 1351, f. 21r-v. The reduced value (57% less) assigned to Antoine's garment can only partially be explained by his assumed smaller frame. Following sartorial regulations codified in the municipal law, children's clothes were cheaper to make for they required less material, but only by a third of the cost for those under the age of 14 down to 9 years old: «Si vero sint minoris etatis 14 annorum descendendo usque ad novem annos, accipiant dicti sartores minus tertia parte de predictis taxionibus [in personis XIV annorum et supra]», statute 39, book II (Pernoud 1949, 112).

<sup>25</sup> July 14, 1393, ADBDR, 355 E 77, f. 76v. In Marseille, the «*emina*» and the «*millerola*» had respectively a capacity of about 38.5 and 64.5 liters (Baratier, Reynaud, and Villard 1951, 903).

163-65; Baratier, 1951, 23-62).<sup>26</sup> When Pierre de Saint-Thomas, a pastry maker from Flanders, was transiting through Marseille in August 1320 awaiting for safe passage to the Holy Land in the following spring, he offered his professional services as a *discipulus et servitor* to a local fellow artisan at no wages; all he wanted in return was shelter and decent food, so «to avoid digging into his savings for his intended pilgrimage»<sup>27</sup>. Victuals were a dear currency. In 1338 a school master, hired as a tutor in a private household, did not hesitate to sue his client for one florin of gold because she had failed to provide his meals, as agreed.<sup>28</sup> Evidently food security was a dire issue in times of scarcity, which was a recurring threat in a city chronically dependent on grain imports to feed its community (Drendel 2011, 275; Buti 2003, 769-99). Revealing the pervasiveness of this endemic problem, a master on his deathbed in 1320 purposely left to his handmaid life-time commodity provisions in the form of bread and wine, rather than money.<sup>29</sup> At the time of the 1322-23 bread famine (Lesage 1950, 146), the coral fisherman Raymond Catalan, with his wife Jordana on his side, obtained from his new employer Jordan de Bosse the monthly provision of wheat (*unam eminam annone*) before sailing off, in addition to receiving in cash 18 *denarii* for his wine and *companagium*.<sup>30</sup>

Food provisioning did not come cheap, at least to the minds of those who had to defray its cost. From beginning to end of apprenticeship periods (hovering around seven years in many crafts), a youth's productivity input was expected to grow exponentially and, conversely, maintenance expenditure to decline.<sup>31</sup> This consideration determined in great part whose responsibility it was, overall, to supply not only food, but also clothing and medical care. A trainee in coral carving from Manchester emphatically declared in 1278 to his prospective master, a Manchester man himself recently established in Marseille: «it is customary to provide the necessities of life to apprentices in the art».<sup>32</sup> Yet this seems at variance with other

<sup>26</sup> By judicial decision in 1319, a widow saw the value of her dowry increase by 25% owing to the inflation rate her marriage contribution had suffered from the day (undisclosed) it had been settled, a time when the money «was good» – *bone monete* (Michaud 1994, 117-18, note 4).

<sup>27</sup> «[C]um primum ver expectare cupiens ne perdat quod habet pro sua perigracione faciend»: August 7, 1320, AMM, 1 ii 49, f. 51r-v.

<sup>28</sup> May 7, 1338, ADBDR, judicial series (B), 3 B 33, f. 63.

<sup>29</sup> Testament of Foulques Beroard, July 24, 1320, ADBDR, 381 E 14, f. 98v-100r.

<sup>30</sup> October 11, 1322, ADBDR, 381 E 52, f. 27r. Also, on Christmas eve of 1380, the sailor André Millérole managed to secure wheat supply for his wife while on duty: «cum pacto etiam providendi uxori dicti Andree ipso interim de blado, quantum sibi opus fuerit pro comescu ipsius uxoris dicti Andree», ADBDR, 351 E 37, f. 149r-v. A mason bargained a similar deal with his employer who accepted to supply him and his new bride with daily meals: «quod possit ire comescum ad domum suam quando intrari ire voluerit cum uxore, quam accipere intendit de proximo, et quod tunc teneatur eidem Poncio [employee] dictus Anthonius [master] pro illis victibus dare quod erit usum pro victu suo», November 27, 1389, ADBDR, 351 E 29, f. 123r.

<sup>31</sup> This logic appears plainly in other contracts, such as the one agreed between the shoemaker Durand Reboul and Alice Porcelle, who promised the master 8 librae for her son's training, but only for the first two years of an eight-year commitment: «ad standum cum eo hinc ad octo annos continue numerandos et ad addicendum misterium sabbaterie, loquerio dicto Duranto dando pro primis duobus annis octo librarum regalium», November 5, 1320, ADBDR, 381 E 31, f. 78v-79r.

<sup>32</sup> «[D]ebes michi providere in victu et vestitu competenter et sicut consuetum ut providere scolariis eiusdem officii»: October 10, 1278, BnF, n.a.l., 1321, 234.

agreements in the trade, unless the practice had changed in the field – the second earliest contract being dated from 1327 –, or that it was the native expression of a labour culture shared by contemporary English artisans.<sup>33</sup> In light of the vast majority of the apprenticeship agreements drawn during the pre-plague period, it was normally a parental duty to provide for children in training, either through the disbursement of yearly fees or outright commodities handed out to masters. Even wealthy artisans and businessmen, with easier access to cash, sought cereals by way of payments for their instructional services. In 1248, the money changer Jean Cordier charged his *scolaris*' father, the lawyer Jean de Saint-Maximin, a large quantity of good and pure wheat and 50 *solidi*, with the additional expectation that he shoulder the cost for clothing his own child.<sup>34</sup> In 1303, a father also committed to provide his son's footwear and all his needed garments for the first two years of his training in goldsmithery, while paying the master's *loquerium* in wheat payments every Michaelmas for three years.<sup>35</sup> Never in abundant supply, cereals remained throughout the entire period under study a sought-after currency, even in the post-plague years. This may explain why, in the second half of the fourteenth century, the chief guardian of the royal gaol in charge of hiring alms collectors, allowed the latter to keep for their labour half the coins, but only one third of all the bread loaves donated.<sup>36</sup>

Admittedly, seafarers' hiring contracts stipulated in generic terms that meals would be provided as additional earnings; however, these represented the bulk of their junior staff's income, along with shoes and pieces of clothing in the form of professional gear adapted to the environmental conditions of the trade (*calciamentis et vestibus ad usum maris*). When a mariner affirmed in 1387 that «indeed, it was customary in seafaring that youngsters be provided with clothes, in health as in sickness»,<sup>37</sup> he was by all accounts fairly accurate. After all, the number of masters who procured these essential goods did so for optimal output. Furthermore, their *familiares, famuli, nuncii, servitores, seu garciones*, mostly aged between 15 and 17,

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<sup>33</sup> All but one of the other six apprenticeship contracts in coral carving, dated between 1327 and 1393, remain silent on this point.

<sup>34</sup> «[P]ro expensis dicti Guillelmeti cibariis, ut est pani et vini et companagii, XIII eminas pulchre et bone annone et L solidos monete curribilis in Massilia ad voluntatem tuam, et [promitto] providere eidem Guillelmeto in vestibus ei necessariis»: this was understood as a two-year obligation, the length of the contract, May 12, 1248, AMM, 1 ii 1, f. 97; the document was edited by Blancard (1885, 155-56).

<sup>35</sup> «[D]ebet providere ex pacto dicto Hugueto filio suo (Poncii Basterii) hinc ad duos annos proximos in vestitu et calciamentu, et dicto Bertrando (Isnardi aurifabro) dare promisit ex pacto de loquerio suo decem et octo eminas annone bone et pulcre ... apud Massilie proponit expensas dicti Poncii solvendas per terminos infrascriptos, scilicet in festo Sancti Michaelis proxime futurum sex eminas, et singulis annis in dicto festo alias sex eminas donec fuerint solute dicte XVIII emine», March 30, 1303, ADBDR, 381 E 4, f. 53v-54r.

<sup>36</sup> September 28, 1375 and May 17, 1379: ADBDR, 355 E 22, f. 80v and 355 E 26, f. 25r-v.

<sup>37</sup> «Et prout exercitu marinagii est consuetum talibus famulis de vestibus provideri, et hoc tam in sanitate ipsius Arnaudi quam in egritudine, quod absit», November 14, 1387, ADBDR, 351 E 57, f. 146r-47v. References to the expression «ad usum maris ut solitus est» recur in the documentation at a regular frequency in the second part of the century.



represented a profitable source of manpower at low salary cost, that is, 2 florins in wages a year on average, for up to ten to twelve years of service.<sup>38</sup>

From time to time, these provisions were carefully detailed in notarized agreements – often the result of vigorous negotiations – and likely reflected the sartorial outfitting of seafarers, in quantity and in type. On May 3, 1376 Jean Audoard, a young fatherless migrant from Salon-de-Provence, secured a four-year placement with the fisherman Guillaume Audibert at the rate of 2.5 florins a year, payable at contract's end only, but with the assurance of receiving every year two white tunics in wool, two shirts, and two pairs of trousers, in addition to shoes – generally a lesser expense.<sup>39</sup> Although the quality of vestments varied greatly in the marketplace, these agreements typically point to modest, essentially work-related apparel.<sup>40</sup> All the same, even tunics or simple dresses were not cheap, since they could easily fetch up to 32 to 40 *solidi* a piece, while a contemporary cordmaker's wages were in the region of 1.7 *solidi* a day without meals.<sup>41</sup>

Either for personal or professional use, clothing was distinctly held as a valued currency in labour contracts. A good case in point is that of Laurent Vincent, a mariner from Berre who, while waiting to sail off on a galley, received in advance salary only pieces of garments (robes, shirts, and a hood) for his *loquerium*, and was specifically forbidden to alienate or sell them until after his return to port, upon completing his labour commitment.<sup>42</sup> In the urban crafts, notably before the Black Death, these expenses, as mentioned earlier, were often disbursed by parents until the time their children proved sufficiently productive to offset their maintenance costs, even when masters had themselves access to the commodities' raw materials. In 1332, the tailor Guillaume d'Albi accepted Thomas Albin's son in his shop, with

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<sup>38</sup> The average is 4.1 years, but the median value is 6 for the fishermen and 3.5 for the sailors. The documentary base rests on 86 contracts (40 for fishermen and 46 for mariners).

<sup>39</sup> «[L]oquerio decem florinorum pro dictis quatuor annis in fine temporis et duarum tunicarum panni albi, et duarum camisarum, et duarum brayarum pro anno quolibet ipsorum quatuor annorum et calciamenti»: ADBDR, 355 E 23, f. 15v-16r. While I cannot expand here on the differential market value of clothing and footwear, suffice to mention anecdotally that in 1398 a pair of shoes (*sotulariis*) was worth 8 *solidi* (0.25 florin), while a tunic of white woolen cloth could cost as much as 6 to 14 florins: see, for instance, the work contract with an agricultural worker, November 3, 1398, ADBDR, 351 E 69, f. 5v, and also that of the two swineherds – father and son – mentioned previously (above, note 24).

<sup>40</sup> Parties often specified vestments made of lambswool cloth (among several examples, mariners' labour contract, December 12, 1359, ADBDR, 355 E 10, f. 94r), which was considered an average to low-cost fabric (Gérard-Marchand 1995, 93, note 20).

<sup>41</sup> A merchant offered his 15-year-old recruit not only 12 florins in wages, a shirt, and a hood, but also a pair of stockings and a tunic made of dyed wool, each worth 40 *solidi*: June 14, 1380, ADBDR, 351 E 50, f. 125r-v. While the businessman and his apprentice's social standing may explain the provision of such a luxury item as a coloured garment, a migrant from Barjols at the employ of a packsaddle maker, who was offered only goods in kind in salary, also got a «tunica valoris quadraginta solidorum», September 21, 1390, ADBDR, 355 E 74, f. 119v. For the cordmaker's contract: May 22, 1366, ADBDR, 351 E 28, f. 70r-v.

<sup>42</sup> «[A]d ipsam rationem quatenus tempore ipse Petrus [Girardi] accesserit et ire voluerit in galea, cum pacto solvendi ipsum loquerium in raubeis, camisis, et capa necessariis eidem Laurentio in ipso interim, et cum pacto solvendi residuum in redditu viagii. Item de pacto quod dictus Laurentius [Vincentii] de Berra non possit vendere seu alienare ipsas raubas et capam, nisi in redditu predicto»: May 3, 1378, ADBDR, 351 E 35, f. 25r.

the expectation that, for the first year of apprenticeship, Thomas would provide for his child a doublet (*gipa*) with a cotton shirt (*cotondia*), but only one single doublet for each of the subsequent three years.<sup>43</sup> Even waged apprentices were to procure their own clothes and shoes, as an innkeeper made clear to the father of her new 18-year-old trainee.<sup>44</sup> For their part, apothecaries not only imposed hefty educational fees on their pupils' parents, but also the obligation to cover all sartorial necessities, in addition to medical goods and services, if and when required.

Sickness incurred both loss of productivity and costly medical care. Pierre, a physician from Fréjus who was himself blind, while in Marseille awaiting for a miraculous cure from Saint Louis in 1297, admitted to living off charity because he had fallen into poverty after spending all his resources – chattels and landed properties – on expensive medicines from «all over the world», as well as on pilgrimages to other shrines.<sup>45</sup> Just as much as food and clothing, healthcare (that is, medicinal costs and doctors' fees) proved somewhat a matter of intense negotiations with prospective masters, even those specializing in the medical trades. The barber Sansonet de Valveine declared in an apprentice contract that it was an honorable duty for a master to look after the well-being of his charge, even in sickness.<sup>46</sup> Yet a good many masters committed themselves to far less. When the apothecary and candlemaker Jacques of Orange entered an apprenticeship agreement with Gantelme Bermond, he promised to train the latter's son in his arts for two years, «as long as he remained healthy».<sup>47</sup> A less parsimonious artisan might be willing to cover the expense for an apprentice's health care, but only when traveling outside the city.<sup>48</sup> Other masters, such as the cooper Bertrand Candell, may concede to look after their charge in illness, but only in so far as they got sick under their roof, and nowhere else.<sup>49</sup> The carpenter Antoine Lucy's goodwill toward his new recruit went as far as

<sup>43</sup> In return, Guillaume agreed to procure the boy's essential needs by way of food, shoes, and clothes, in sickness or in health: June 15, 1332, ADBDR, 391 E 6, f. 53v.

<sup>44</sup> January 7, 1346, ADBDR, 391 E 9, f. 133v-34r.

<sup>45</sup> «[E]xpectans helemosinam monasterii vel regis cum aliis pauperibus, quia victum suum non valebat acquirere et omnia bona que habebat, mobilia et immobilia, expenderat in medicinis requirendis per diversas partes orbis et in sanctorum peregrinationibus pro recuperanda luce oculorum»: LMSL, f. 22r-v and AF, 309-10.

<sup>46</sup> «Et dictus magister [Sansonet de Valveine] teneatur et debeat dictum Johannetum famulum suum docere et bene et legaliter in dicta arte barbarie et eum tenere sanum et egrum sicut quilibet bonus hono[r]abiliter facere debet»: November 6, 1399, BnF, n.a.l., 1351, f. 18r-v. Yet, the barber Jeannet de Messine asked 15 florins to his new recruit (a former patient) in payment for fixing his broken arm, in addition to his 'teaching labour': «Promittens ipsius dictus Petrus dare dicto Johanneto magistro suo tam ratione cure per eum facte in infirmitate brachii dicti Petri, quam etiam ratione laboris docendi eundem in arte predictae [barbarie], videlicet quindecim florinos auri»: January 25, 1398, ADBDR, 355 E 81, f. 105v-06r.

<sup>47</sup> «[Q]uamdiu tamen sanus fuerit»: October 25, 1378, ADBDR, 391 E 26, f. 41r. It is worth noting that among 28 work contracts initiated by apothecaries, only a handful mentioned this coverage, while others explicitly excluded it. See in particular, April 15, 1324, AMM 1 ii 8, f. 44v-45r; December 15, 1334, ADBDR, 391 E 5, f. 109r-v; September 27, 1338, ADBDR, 391 E 12, f. 54v-55r.

<sup>48</sup> This was a mariner's condition upon hiring a 12-year-old child: July 11, 1390, ADBDR, 351 E 62, f. 13r-v.

<sup>49</sup> «[E]t specialiter ... tam in sanitate quam egritudine, quod absit infra tamen domum suam et non extra, ac etiam de necessariis in infirmitate»: January 31, 1395, BnF, n.a.l., 1347, f. 25r-v.

exempting him from refunding his day of work and meals if he cut himself or fell while on the job, «which often occurs in the trade», he confessed, but with the caveat that «if he got ill due to fever or other ailments, he would have to pay back his food and all the additional expenses in medicines and physicians' care made on his behalf».<sup>50</sup> Similarly concerned by such liabilities, goldsmiths interrupted their teaching in case of illness and sent their pupils back to their parents to be cared for and convalesce at their expense.<sup>51</sup> The baker Gauthier Bourgogne additionally held accountable the parents of his 10-year-old apprentice for any workday lost to illness.<sup>52</sup> A few lawsuits over the payment of medicine suggest that this high-priced expenditure was not lightly afforded or faithfully delivered.<sup>53</sup> Conversely, when merchant Pierre Austria, intent on recruiting talent, hired a junior *mercator*, he promised to provide for him even in sickness, in addition to his meals, footwear, and 25 florins of gold in wages.<sup>54</sup> Evidently, when there was a reasonable balance of power between the contractual parties, this particular good was, indeed, carefully considered.

### 3. Negotiations in the post-plague years

With the advent of the 1348 pandemic and the massive labour shortages that ensued, new habits started to emerge in the way commodities were, or could be,

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<sup>50</sup> «Item fuit de pacto quod si idem Johannes infirmaretur ex insicione seu ictu alicuis ferri dicti artis vel ex lapsu operando, prout sepe contigit, quod non qua teneatur ad refectionem jornalium amissorum seu ad interim temporis nec ad refectionem victus. Si vero alias quod absit infirmaretur ex febre, aut aliter eo tunc, teneatur ad refectionem sumptus seu victus ordinarii, alia vero extraordinaria in medicis et medicinis necessariis de proprio ipsius Johannis solvantur»: December 1, 1398, BnF, n.a.l., 1351, f. 22v-23r.

<sup>51</sup> «Ita quod de pacto quod si dictus Johannetus [de Longa Villa] infirmaretur, quod dictus Johannes [de Longa Villa, avunculus] debeat ipsum tenere in domo sua tempore dicte infirmitatis ad expensas eius, et quod liberari dicte infirmitatis, dictus Jacobus [Britoni magister] debeat eum recipere»: September 7, 1324, ADBDR, 3 B 18, f. 101v-02r. See also a similar «non eger» clause at the behest of the goldsmith Étienne de Manosque: April 3, 1320, ADBDR, 381 E 31 f. 3v-4r.

<sup>52</sup> May 22, 1385, ADBDR, 355 E 31, f. 6r.

<sup>53</sup> The case of Jacques Augier is particularly revealing. When Jacques sued a cooper in 1384 for breaching his son's apprenticeship contract, it was in part because the master had sent the 13-year-old child back home upon falling ill, «at Jacques' personal expense», despite the cooper's duty to keep him in health as in sickness: «Item [Jacobus Augerii] probare intendit quod dictus Gaufridus dicta pacta et questionem eidem Guillelmeto seu Jacobo, ejus patri, minime observavit, qui ymmo hoc anno Domini dictus Guillelmetus infirmaretur, ipsum a domo sua ejetit et congerium sibi dedit et ad domum patris sui redire fecit, in qua domo patris sui dictus Guillelmetus infirmus jacuit per duos menses vel circa sumptibus propriis dicti Jacobi patris sui»: October 17, 1384, 3 B 101, f. 132r (for the original apprenticeship contract, see March 13, 1384, ADBDR, 351 E 54, f. 15v-16r). One may also consider the case initiated by a sailor against his employee's father, who had retrieved his sick boy and pocketed his advanced wages to pay for medical expenses: November 30, 1386, ADBDR, 351 E 41, f. 65r.

<sup>54</sup> December 18, 1336, ABBDR, 391 E 10, f. 149r. It is worth noting that while in Avignon in the early decades of the second half of the fourteenth century, the merchant Giovanni di Marco Datini offered similar pecuniary wages to both his junior partners and the skilled textile artisans in his employ, with the consideration that «with that salary [the employee] must buy his own clothes and shoes» (Frangioni 2010, 265; 271-73; quote, 265).

used as currencies in salary payments. Attraction and retention factors led to the procurement of food to contractual workers. The generic *cibo et potu* was henceforth included in most agreements across the labour market. Likewise, to encourage new vocations instructional fees declined conspicuously, as did their payment in kind with the renewed velocity of money. Still, those among the craft masters who charged parents for their teaching labour, requested payments of the most basic of all foodstuffs: wheat. In 1363, a cooper took a 20-year-old youth under his wing in exchange for some quantities of wheat for two years of training and his keep.<sup>55</sup> When in 1371 the tailor Pons de Pan agreed to train the 10-year-old son of Pierre Gaucelin, a villager recently settled in Marseille, he had Pierre promise to give him copious quantities of wheat in addition to wine on the feasts of Saint-John the Baptist and Michaelmas to compensate for his child's *pensio*, that is, food and clothing.<sup>56</sup> While this expectation is reminiscent of the parental obligation prevailing in the pre-plague period,<sup>57</sup> another tailor, Perrin Gipponier, contended a few years later that «according to custom», he ought to provide his 15-year-old pupil with «not only good instruction, but also his essential needs».<sup>58</sup> One can only ponder about the antiquity and the longevity of so-called customary usages!<sup>59</sup>

As seen in the maritime trades before 1348, a new trend across other occupational sectors, already manifest in the early 1350s, was taking hold whereby additional provisions besides food, such as clothes and footwear, were granted to young workers at the employers' expense.<sup>60</sup> In more conservative circles, though,

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<sup>55</sup> «[L]oquerio pro quaquidem stagia et ut secum addiscat in dicta arte, dictus Monnetus [apprentice] pro suis necessariis vestimentis et calciamentis et camisis, et aliis rebus debitis et necessariis persone dicti Monneti, duas saumatas annone pro dicto toto tempore (usque ad duos annos) promisit dicto Mayffredo [master]: November 11, 1363, ADBDR, 351 E 6, f. 148r-49r.

<sup>56</sup> May 1, 1371, ADBDR, 351 E 83, f. 9r-v.

<sup>57</sup> Four in five of apprenticeship contracts concluded by master tailors before 1348 put the onus on parents to provide the essentials of life to their children.

<sup>58</sup> «[I]nstruere in arte sua necminus eundem induere, calciare, providere eidem in cibo et potu competenter secundum quod est de consuetudine»: May 4, 1379, ADBDR, 391 E 27, f. 29r.

<sup>59</sup> A similar claim to customary practice was raised by a miller who contended that in his art salaries were paid weekly: «cuiuslibet septimane dicti anni sex grossus argenti ad rationem duorum florinorum auri pro quolibet mense ipsius anni solvendorum qualibet septimana ut est moris»: May 10, 1397, ADBDR, 351 E 97, f. 17v-18v. However, in all other work contracts among millers recovered between 1366 and 1390, salary payments were expected in three yearly instalments, following the city's labour tradition. In the seafaring sector, though, periods of employment in large-scale coral fishing ventures may be scheduled for six to nine months. In 1359, a mariner referred to the «custom, until now (hactenus)», of hiring crews between Easter and Michaelmas: «a festo Pascatis proxime futuro usque festum Sancti Michaelis futurum iuxta consuetudinem in talibus observatam hactenus (underlined by me) in civitate Massilie», December 9, 1359, ADBDR, 355 E 10, f. 88v. Yet, other coral fishermen were equally hired on a yearly basis, such as Étienne Abeille, discussed below (see note 80).

<sup>60</sup> Alternatively, parents of very young pupils may have been required to supply a portion of their children's necessities in the early, 'unproductive' stage of their training. For instance, Mayfred Mataron agreed to procure both shoes and clothes for Philippone, his 10-year-old daughter, but only during the first year of a five-year apprenticeship with the dressmakers Antoinette Barban and her daughter Barbanette Dodone: July 30, 1386, ADBDR, 351 E 41, f. 29r-v.

masters resisted the change, notably in the lucrative trades where prudence reigned.<sup>61</sup> For instance, on 27 January 1350, the draper Foulque Raynulfé warned Marguerite de Casals that he would cover her son's meals during his two-year training, but nothing else.<sup>62</sup> Some masters had to compromise further still. In the wake of the Black Death, two orphaned teenagers placed their 12-year-old brother with the apothecary Bernard de Someyre, who promised to supply the child with sufficient food and footwear while the siblings took upon his other sartorial needs.<sup>63</sup>

A majority of employers, like seafarers before them, now seemed also inclined to offer meals to the adult workers performing under their roofs; a sign of times, derogations to this wider-spread usage warranted a restrictive clause in contracts.<sup>64</sup> To be sure, clothes, shoes, and health care provisions varied considerably between and within trades. Under pressure to find an experienced artisan to assist in her goldsmithery, the widowed Huguette Bertrand not only promised handsome wages to Raymond Bruni, a fellow artisan from Aix-en-Provence, but granted him a *cotehardie* with a complementary hood – a sartorial item likely not devoid of symbolic value (Kucab 2021, 193).<sup>65</sup> For their part, salaried butchers obtained footwear, but not the more expensive clothing

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<sup>61</sup> In the apothecary, drapery, and business arts, tuition fees were essentially linked to victualling expenses. Failing to meet payments could lead to judicial claims, as it did in the case of the apothecary Bernard Maximin who successfully sued his apprentice's father, Bernard Mayni – himself an apothecary – for 7.4 florins in arrears during the second year of training, «*ex quibus expensis in victu et potu*»: June 7, 1394, AMM, judicial series, FF 574, f. 119v. Likewise, in more modest trades, some masters imposed similar demands at similar costs. Hence, Guillaume Clavet, a shoemaker, charged his new recruit 8 florins for his food and clothing during the first year of training: «*quod dictus Jacobus pro victu ipsius et calciamento etiam [Guillelmo] dare teneatur octo florinos auri scilicet hinc ad unum annum septem florinos et nunc unum florinum*», c. May 20, 1364, ADBDR, 351 E 27, f. 49r.

<sup>62</sup> «*[C]ibo et potu tantum, et non plus*»: ADBDR, 355 E 34, f. 51v-52r. See also the draper Guillaume de Montilis who placed the same onus on his apprentice Monet Beriti: «*quod dictus Monnetus pro se et suis sumptibus ... providere se debeat de vestimentis et calciamentis decentibus*», August 12, 1362, ADBDR, 351 E 25, f. 107v-08r. This is also what Bertrand Rigord, a draper, expected from his 14-year-old trainee, Hugonet Alaman: «*cum pacto expresse providenti eidem Hugoneto de victu tamen interim in domo ipsius Bertrandi, sicut aliis suis familiaribus, et cum pacto quod ipse Hugonetus de suo proprio faciat sibi interim omnes alios sumptus necessarios persone sue pro vestimentis, calciamentis, et sotularibus et aliis pro persone sue*», March 23, 1374, ADBDR, 351 E 32, f. 265r-v.

<sup>63</sup> The two adolescents, Nicolas and Esmeniardé Milon, accompanied by Philippe Colradi, a third party of unknown relation, discussed the contractual terms with the prospective master on behalf of their brother Arnaud: «*quod ipsi Philipus, Nicholaus, et Esmetendeta teneantur et debeantur in dicto tempore tenere dictum Arnaudum vestitum debite, et ipse Bernardus teneatur de pariter tenere provisum de calciamentis et caligis*»: June 22, 1373, ADBDR, 351 E 32, f. 60r-v.

<sup>64</sup> Such as the cordmaker Pierre Lieutaud, who opened his workshop to a job seeker and fellow artisan, Guillaume de Montpellier, with the assurance of paying him every night in cash but without food: «*sero completa dieta sua ... duos alborum argentem seu valoris ipsorum pro qualibet dieta sine victu* [underlined by me], December 17, 1369, ADBDR, 351 E 82, f. 53v.

<sup>65</sup> «*[E]t unius cotardie (unius) caputi ac potus et cibi*»: October 22, 1352, ADBDR, 355 E 5, f. 63r. In specific contexts, seafaring for instance, hoods were a matter of necessity imposed by environmental conditions, and yet, these were in many cases objects of negotiation.

allocation.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, only one in three workers in the leather industry was offered shoes, despite employers' access to cheaper raw material, and even then, this particular benefit disappeared from the extant contracts beyond the mid-1360s. Meanwhile, wages had remained stubbornly stable. In fact, evidence shows that artisans such as shoemakers or bakers did not see their pecuniary income change significantly over several decades,<sup>67</sup> a reality that was also matched by agricultural labourers, lower-ranked seafarers, and a host of unqualified workers (Michaud 2023). Therefore, it is fair to assume that salaries remitted in tangible goods mattered more than ever.

With the stabilization of both wages and the local currency in the last third of the fourteenth century,<sup>68</sup> extra salary offerings in kind proved a matter of bargaining strategies regardless of the crafts' wage or wage-distribution practices. Even when the balance of power tipped in favour of an employee and a special clause was added to the contract, a master may have raised careful limitations when conceding goods, as the landowner Nicolas Nielli did with his newly hired ploughman, whom he paid in wages, food, and stockings 'only'.<sup>69</sup> Of course, many employees succeeded in getting extra benefits on their own terms. When Antoine Becamille accepted to till Antoine Ancelm's land for a year at good wages (20 florins), he also obtained in added bonus one *canne* of lambswool for the making of a robe «whenever he wanted». <sup>70</sup> In 1384, Jacques Augier brokered a special deal with his employer Doucette Joli, who needed an experienced ploughman to tend her vineyards and clear her land. Jacques offered to work at modest wages, that is, under market value (13 florins a year, instead of 20-22 florins<sup>71</sup>), in so far as Doucette was willing to provide for Catherine, his parturient wife, until after her postpartum recovery, upon which Catherine herself would perform ancillary labour in back payment for a midwife's anticipated services.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Only two in twenty-one workers, probably young ones given their modest wages, were offered clothing. On the higher value of clothes in relation to footwear, see above, note 39.

<sup>67</sup> For instance, paid-by-the-piece shoemakers made 2 *solidi* per dozen of shoes in 1350 as they did in 1379: February 22, 1350, ADBDR, 355 E 2, f. 178v-79r; March 26, 1379, ADBDR, 351 E 36, f. 5r-v. In 1360, bakers were offered 0.46 florin weekly while they roughly earned the same in 1389, i.e., 0.5 florin: September 9, 1360, ADBDR, 355 E 36, f. 81v; June 27, 1389, ADBDR, 351 E 29, f. 34v.

<sup>68</sup> While the local money (*minutum massiliensium*) was devaluated several times between 1324 and 1364, it remained unaltered at 32 *solidi* against the florin until 1400, a trend that mirrors a similar evolution across most regions in the fourteenth century (Fournial 1970, 112). In the Western Mediterranean regions, the possible reduction of the velocity of money toward the end of the fourteenth century must equally be taken into consideration, « [s]i l'on en croit les trouvailles, il se pourrait qu'il y ait une diminution de la circulation des espèces métalliques dans la seconde moitié du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle » (Bourin et al. 2011-13, 687 note 83).

<sup>69</sup> «[L]oquerio seu pentione 12 florinos auri fini ... et ultra victu et calciamentis sotularium tantum»: April 2, 1357, ADBDR, 381 E 81, f. 3r.

<sup>70</sup> «[E]t unum canna anhini pro una tunica facienca dum voluerit dictus Antonius Becamilli»: July 23, 1380, ADBDR, 355 E 37, f. 10r.

<sup>71</sup> At this time, Marseille's ploughmen earned the equivalent of what a municipal notary made (Michaud 2023, 68).

<sup>72</sup> December 12, 1384, ADBDR, 351 E 31, f. 184r.

In the post-plague years, ploughmen enjoyed a lot of clout amongst landowners: beside decent salaries, they gained additional perks in the form of commodities, mostly wheat, wine, and meat (Michaud 2023). In this regard, the case of Geoffroy Isnard is quite typical. In April 1374 he was hired by the noble Pierre Amel to manage his landed estate in the countryside for a whole year; along with his wages (20 florins), Geoffroy was to receive 60 *solidi* for his *companagium*, 8 *eminas* of wheat, 4 *eminas* of barley, and 8 *millayrolas* of pure wine or a larger quantity of both mixed and pure wine, and a bolt of fabric.<sup>73</sup> Competing for ploughmen's skills, many other propertied citizens had little choice but offer similar bonuses.<sup>74</sup>

The complementary commodities dispensed to workers specializing in wine and wheat production coincide with heightened activities in the maritime sector in the late 1370s and early 1380s, when coral extraction and trade were booming (Baratier 1951; Michaud 2016).<sup>75</sup> The local seafarers were then offered competitive wages,<sup>76</sup> meals included; among them, a number of mariners insisted to be fed on shore, before departure, and also at destination.<sup>77</sup> Others, concerned to be treated with decency, requested quality food. Even the best paid coral mariners raised this issue, such as Guillaume Donadieu, who headed a coral expedition to Sardinia at the yearly rate of 110 florins and the assurance of being served proper meals.<sup>78</sup> Laurent Vincent, the sailor from Berre hired to work on a galley, wanted to be fed the same as his master.<sup>79</sup>

Clothing *ad sufficientum* proved also a central concern for seafarers when they negotiated revenues in kind. The coral mariner Étienne Abeille, with a total

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<sup>73</sup> April 9, 1374, Paris, BnF, n.a.l., 1339, 44.

<sup>74</sup> The landowner Doucette Joli, mentioned above, is a good case in point, for between 1372 and 1384, she hired ploughmen with advantageous labouring conditions on at least four occasions (Michaud, 2023).

<sup>75</sup> The coral extractive industry in the Western Mediterranean throughout the fourteenth-century is still in need of a comprehensive study, while traditional and current scholarship largely depends on regional fifteenth-century data (Bresc 1986, 221-25; Bresc, 2000, 41-53; Barceló Crespi and Mas Forners 2021, 138-42).

<sup>76</sup> On average, coral fishermen earned above 40 florins a year, while 34% of these specialized seafarers could fetch anything between 50 and 100 florins, and some 15% above that threshold. These calculations rest on 177 contracts. By comparison, ploughmen earned around 22 florins, simple agriculturists and other unskilled labourers, 12 florins, while adolescent workers and maids rarely made more than 6-8 florins (101 contracts).

<sup>77</sup> «[Q]uando navigabit et extra Massilie per terram»: June 11, 1380, ADBDR, 351 E 50, f. 114r-v. While references to «decenter cibo et potu» are ubiquitous among coral fishermen, some workers gained enough leverage to acquire wheat benefits for members of their households, as did Jordan de Bosse or André Millérole discussed earlier (see note 30 above).

<sup>78</sup> «[D]umtaxat de precio sive loquerio CX librae auri de regina ad rationem anni et victus decenter»: March 1, 1384, ADBDR, 351 E 53, f. 188r-v.

<sup>79</sup> «[E]t etiam quod dictus Petrus teneatur ipsi Laurentio providere in victu interim continue sicut sibi ipsi»: May 3, 1378, ADBDR, 351 E 35, f. 25r.

annual salary of 100 florins, also requested one *canne* of quality cloth.<sup>80</sup> The enhanced marketable position of sailors and fishermen also explains the larger number of contemporary contracts with sartorial descriptions, a clear indication that these provisions were valued beyond customary expectations. Hence, when these benefits were procured in *«pares»*, that is in double quantities of single articles of clothing, one suspects even greater bargaining power was at play. Unsurprisingly, documentary evidence peaks in the two noted periods of increased labour demand: in the early 1350s and, especially in this sector, around 1379-83. All the while, these detailed accommodations are mostly found in hiring agreements made with lower (*famuli*) to middle rank staffers within the maritime trades' hierarchy, perhaps in compensation for their modest wages. For instance, Jacques Arquier, a villager who hired himself to the mariner Jacques de Fonte at the annual rate of 10 florins, was given the assurance of good meals and a new pair of shoes whenever the old ones would wear out during his two-year service.<sup>81</sup> The 14-year-old *famulus* of a sailor also managed to obtain, besides his wages (5 florins *per annum*), one tunic, stockings, and shoes «worth at least 16 *gros*» (43 *solidi*).<sup>82</sup> In the winter of 1382, the sailor Bernard de Saint-Florentin found work with the mariner Albert Raynaud at the rate of 10 florins, but with the understanding that he would be handed additionally two tunics of lambswool, two pairs of trousers, two pairs of shirts, one of which «he could get whenever he wanted».<sup>83</sup> Mondono Corelli, a migrant from Arles, would be given «upon his first request » any of the clothing items he was promised by his new master, Geoffroy Rasso, himself a successful coral fisherman: one tunic, stockings, one pair of shoes, one pair of trousers, and two shirts.<sup>84</sup>

However, when the balance tipped the other way – increasingly the case after 1385 when perks dwindled conspicuously and garments granted in pairs all but disappeared – masters were keen to formally limit their commitments. In a special agreement with the mother of his new *famulus*, a fisherman consented to provide ‘only’ marine shoes and one tunic for the boy during the entire three years of

<sup>80</sup> Upon committing to the agreement, Étienne was immediately handed the two meters of cloth from Wervicq: February 3, 1379, BnF, n.a.l., 1342, f. 24r-25v; see also Baratier, who reported on the same case (1951, 76, note 4).

<sup>81</sup> «[C]ibo et potu bene et decenter et calciamento tanto quanto franget ipso tempore durante»: August 17, 1388, BnF, n.a.l., 1343, f. 11v.

<sup>82</sup> «[V]aloris ad minus»: December 24, 1379, ADBDR, 351 E 48, f. 195r-v. This was four times the estimate given to Antoine Étienne, a servant in the household of Pierre Giraud, for a pair of shoes valued at 4 grossos: April 2, 1388, ADBDR, 351 E 88, f. 2r-v. A monetary figure assigned to goods remitted as labour payment appears in a number of other contracts throughout the period under study, but recovering the market value of these articles in order to weigh the balance of power between employer and employee (or their parents) remains an insuperable task in the absence of price lists in contemporary Marseille.

<sup>83</sup> «[Q]uando ipse Bernardus voluerit»: February 20, 1382, ADBDR, 351 E 38, f. 172r-v.

<sup>84</sup> «[S]ibi dandi unam tunicam, caligas, una paria camisiarum, una paria brachiarum, una paria sotularium, et ad suam primam requisitionem dicti Mondoni»: November 15, 1381, ADBDR, 351 E 38, f. 125r.



service, «and nothing more».<sup>85</sup> In 1400, the artisan entrepreneur Geoffroy Aycard hired the ploughman Antoine Prime for one year of service; aware of his new employee's dire need for credit, Geoffroy agreed to give him 45% of his wages in advance salary, the remainder payable only at the year's end, with the warning that should Antoine's household fall into indigence in the interim, Geoffroy alone would decide, «according to his goodwill and own discretion – and not otherwise [an added note reads] – whether to remit his earnings in wheat or in coins».<sup>86</sup> Words, once more, spoke volumes. Given the volatility of the local money which, that year, lost 40% of its value vis-à-vis the florin, one may surmise that wheat, by far, would be what Antoine would have hoped for in currency.

## Conclusion

If it is true that «[p]ower hides, both visibly and invisibly, behind any conceivable form of credit», transacted goods and services may just as well serve to gauge the nature of social relations in labour agreements.<sup>87</sup> Between the end of the thirteenth and the turn of the fifteenth century in Marseille, market forces, themselves impacted by exogenous factors, affected these dynamics. Younger workers, women, and unskilled labourers, given their limited ability to earn cash for a living, had to rely more heavily on commodity goods dispensed by their masters. Even so, when Doucette Bermond, the 14-year-old girl who, after being granted a miraculous cure by Saint Louis of Anjou, had knowingly put herself in the domestic service of the Franciscans of Marseille in exchange for her meals, later in life, she sought elsewhere a better return for her labour. When in 1308, at the age of 25, she appeared before the papal commission to relate the miracle she had been granted by the holy man, she admitted to have reduced her commitment to clean the Friars' church because, «being a poor woman living from her hands», she had to make a (better) living elsewhere.<sup>88</sup>

Masters themselves followed two distinct approaches in the procurement of goods and services in payment for labour: either as compensation for lack – or limited amount – of cash or as salary bonus. The former typically applied to young, female, or unskilled workers, the latter to sought-after skilled artisans. Undoubtedly the frequency, quantity, and quality of the goods and services offered in exchange for work responded to the laws of supply and demand according to economic trends, themselves compounding personal circumstances in a century of ceaseless upheavals. The unprecedented labour shortages

<sup>85</sup> «[E]t ad amplius non teneatur»: March 12, 1387, ADBDR, 351 E 41, f. 82v-83r.

<sup>86</sup> «Pacto tamen retento simpliciter inter eos quod dictus Gaufridus Aycardi, iuxta sui beneplacitum et voluntatem <et non alias>, tradet dicto Antonio Prime de blado vel pecuniis, si illis indigeret ad usum et sustentationem sue domus»: April 19, 1400, BnF, n.a.l., 1352, f. 15v.

<sup>87</sup> «[C]omme une trame à la fois visible et invisible derrière chaque manière d'envisager le crédit, se tient le Pouvoir» (Fontaine 2008, 13).

<sup>88</sup> «[S]et pauper mulier est et habet querere panem cum manibus suis», AF 1951, 166.

following the Great Mortality of 1348 stimulated across many trades the supply of additional earnings, but essentially in the guise of food to workers of all stripes, young and old, with extra sartorial benefits offered to the former rather than hard cash. Yet, in-demand labourers, notably those specialising in the land and sea extractive industries, which underwent a thriving expansion through the 1370s and 1380s, enjoyed special extras granted by prospective masters. They did so, however, with a clear focus on commodity goods and services that mattered dearly: basic victuals – wheat, wine, and meat –, regular clothing, and health care. Notwithstanding competent teaching and training imparted on youngsters, those goods, which ensured a rudimentary quality of life, had been all along the most valued currencies at the heart of labour negotiations, whether led by employers or employees, parents or masters, and were well worth fighting for.

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