

**THE ACCOUNTS OF BLANCA DE LLORACH, ABBESS OF SANT PERE DE LES PUEL·LES (1373)<sup>1</sup>****Montserrat Richou i Llimona**

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**Resum**

L'article analitza el primer manual de Blanca de Llorach, abadessa del monestir benedictí de Sant Pere de les Puel·les de Barcelona. És un llibre de comptes que recull tant els ingressos obtinguts per aquest cenobi com les despeses generades durant l'any 1373. Entre d'altres aspectes, es destaca l'estudi dels hàbits alimentaris i les feines vitícoles realitzades pels temporers que treballaven a les vinyes del monestir.

**Paraules clau:** Barcelona, monestir, Sant Pere de les Puel·les, abadessa, alimentació, forment, vi

**Abstract**

This article analyses the earliest handbook of Blanca de Llorach, the abbess of the Benedictine nunnery of Sant Pere de les Puel·les in Barcelona. It is a ledger that records the incomes obtained by the nunnery, as well as the expenses generated during 1373. Among other aspects, it highlights the study of eating habits of the nuns and of the vine-growing tasks carried out by the seasonal workers who used to work at the vineyards of the convent.

**Key Words:** Barcelona, nunnery, Sant Pere de les Puel·les, abbess, food, wheat, wine

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

On 20 November 1372, Blanca de Llorach, subprioress of the Benedictine nunnery of San Pere de les Puel·les in Barcelona, was elected abbess. However, she did not manage the properties of the convent until the following January, but from then on and up to her death in 1384, Blanca de Llorach recorded both the income generated by the patrimony of the nunnery and the expenses in her ledgers.<sup>2</sup>

The study of the first ledger of Abbess Blanca de Llorach, dated 1373, allows us to study how she managed the nunnery's patrimony during the first year of her abbacy; it also helps us delve into the monastic life of the house and observe central aspects of the Late Middle Ages, such as the eating habits of the nuns and the vine-growing tasks carried out by the seasonal workers who worked at the vineyards of the convent. This source also shows the education of Blanca de Llorach, which allowed her to control the accounting of the properties of the nunnery and the costs incurred by the thirty-seven nuns and six choirgirls who were under her care.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. THE PATRIMONY OF SANT PERE DE LES PUEL·LES AND ITS MANAGEMENT

### 2.1. The Patrimony

The first church of the nunnery of Sant Pere de les Puel·les was consecrated in 945. The female monastery was founded near the *via Francisca* and the *rec comtal* by Count Sunyer and Countess Riquilda, the parents of a certain Adelaida who joined the Benedictine community. Sunyer, Riquilda, and Wilara, Bishop of Barcelona, endowed the nunnery with lands in the city and on the Plain of Barcelona, in Parets and Castellar del Vallès. Wilara also granted it the tithes and first fruits of his properties in Montmeló.

From the eleventh century onwards, Vilanova of Sant Pere, one of the most dynamic bourgs of Barcelona, grew between the nunnery and the stream of Merdancà. In 1072, the house was granted a papal bull that exempted it from episcopal jurisdiction, joining the group of monastic houses known as "speciales beati Petri." Thus, it achieved autonomy from the bishop of Barcelona and had to pay an annuity to the Holy See. The nunnery was also authorized as a burial place, a right that, in practice, it had already exercised for fifty years. The bequests left to the nunnery, the dowries of the girls who joined the community, and the acquisitions made in the eleventh century, expanded the domains of this nunnery across the territory of Barcelona, the Vallès, and the Baix Llobregat, creating part of the patrimony that can be seen in the 1373 abbess' ledger.

<sup>2</sup> Arxiu del Monestir de Sant Pere de les Puel·les (AMSPP hereinafter), *Llibre d'abadessa*, 10.

<sup>3</sup> Other examples of monastic accounting can be found in CASTELLANO 1998, VICIANO 1991: 111-132, LLUCH 2013: 57-71 and BENITO 2013: 73-92.

Unfortunately, no study has yet analysed the patrimony and the management of this nunnery. Therefore, the data from the first ledger of the abbess Blanca de Llorach are quite useful to approach this subject.

This ledger shows that in the fourteenth century, specifically in 1373, the nunnery had lands, houses, and ovens and collected tithes in Barcelona, the Plain of Barcelona Plain, the Lower Llobregat, the Eastern and Western Vallès, and the Upper Penedès. Specifically, in the following locations: Aqualonga, Bajols, Barcelona, Corbins, Corró Jussà, Esplugues, Llicà Sobirà, Montmeló, Paludàries, La Palma, Sant Andreu del Palomar, Sant Boi, Sant Joan Despí, Terrassa, Viladellops, and Vilafranca.

Previously, with the emergence and consolidation of the legal figure of the emphyteutic lease, the nunnery had progressively transferred in perpetuity the *dominium utile* [beneficial dominion] of part of its lands in return for the payment of an annuity in kind and / or in money. Thus, the convent shared the ownership of these lands with emphyteutic tenants and subtenants. Therefore, in the fourteenth century, it still held the *dominium directum* [direct dominion] over these lands and, in return, perceived the corresponding income. The nunnery even gave up the direct exploitation of part of its vegetable garden, as the entry recorded in Blanca's ledger for the reception of five *lliures*, eighteen *sous*, and five *diners* shows: "Reebudes del ort del convent de lauró del monastir." The considerable amount received by way of annuity suggests that this garden was quite large. The payment of this sum was made in two installments:

Primerament rehavem del ort del monastir que.ns dóna en Terrades, diumenge a XX de febrer,  
II lliures, X sous.  
Ítem rehavem del ortolà pel ort del covent a XIX de vuitybre, III lliures, VIII sous, V diners.

In this century, the nunnery only took care of a part of the garden and of some lands dedicated to cereal and vineyard. Unfortunately, the ledger analysed here does not place these lands nor reflects their extension.

From the eleventh century onwards, the nunnery also regulated through emphyteusis the joint ownership urban and rural properties. Therefore, the 1373 ledger also included the collection of incomes related to the ratification of leases previously agreed upon and ratified with a *carta precària sales*.

Houses, houses with vegetable garden, and lodges are mentioned among the urban housing-related properties, while rural properties include *masos*. Thus, Pere Artigues, from the bailiwick of Palma, paid the nunnery nine *lliures* and seven *sous* as *laudemium* because he had bought *mas* Fabregues for twenty *lliures*. Moreover, Jaume Pujol, from *mas* Mata, and Antic ça Tapia, both

from Terrassa, paid one *lliura* and nineteen *sous*, and one *lliura* and nine *sous*, respectively, to defray the *ferma d'expoli*, one of the six so-called *mals usos* [bad usages]. Roure, a bonded man of the nunnery, from the bailiwick of Palaudàries, ordered in his will the payment of two *sous* to the Sant Pere in recognition of seignury.

In Barcelona, the nunnery also had other income related to two immovable properties that were essential for the provision of food: ovens and mills. Initially, both facilities belonged to the royal monopoly. However, over time, the monarch gradually granted building privileges that escaped his control.

According to the ledger of the abbess, in 1373 the sum of all monthly payments related to ovens and mills in Barcelona amounted to eighty-eight *lliures* and eighteen *sous*. That is, fifty *lliures* and eight *diners* for the annual lease of four ovens and thirty-four *lliures*, seventeen *sous*, and four *diners* for the annual tithe of the seven mills that belonged to the house of Sant Pere.<sup>4</sup>

The milling facilities included the following mills: the mill of the Temple, or mill of the Hospital, Pere Ferrer's mill, the mill of Sant Quirze, the mill of na Mora, the mill of Terçal, the new mill, and Forester's mill. All of them paid a monthly tithe to the convent.<sup>5</sup>

The nunnery also received an annual payment for the mills it owned in Montmeló. The payments were made in two installments, each one of six *lliures* and ten *sous*. In her BA dissertation, Montserrat Cabré discussed the ownership of these mills in the tenth century and mentioned that the nunnery also had mills in Castellar del Vallés, Cervelló, Lliçà, and Santa Maria d'Olost (CABRÉ 1985: 164). The 1373 ledger does not mention any of these facilities.

This coenobium also received tithes for some products in towns such as Montmeló, where the “delme the Cànem” [tithe on hemp] was charged, and Sant Boi that satisfied the “delma de carne de venema” [tithe on meat and grape harvest].

## 2.2. The Management of the Patrimony

### 2.2.1. The bailiffs

In the same way as other religious institutions, such as the Pia Almoina of the cathedral of Barcelona, Sant Pere also delegated part of the management of its properties, much of which were rural.

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<sup>4</sup> The oven of Argilagars paid nineteen *lliures* and six *sous* in total, the oven of na Company paid thirteen *lliures* and six *sous*, the oven of na Vila paid eighteen *lliures* and eleven *sous* and the oven of Sant Joan only paid three *lliures*, seventeen *sous*, and eight *diners*.

<sup>5</sup> These mills are not identified in the abbess's ledger of 1373. See ORTÍ 2000: 275, 347 for the amount of the tithe in 1334, 1335, 1336, and 1339.

Bailiwicks were created for the territories in which the nunnery had more properties and bailiffs were chosen to act as their representatives in assumptions of ownership, in the collection of rents, and in sales of products in kind obtained through the payment of annuities. In return, bailiffs received a salary, the *redelme*.

In 1373, the nunnery leased the income of the bailiwick of Terrassa and Polinyà to Raimon March, from Sabadell, for two years. He promised to pay nineteen *lliures* during the first year and eighteen over the second year. With these payments, March advanced capital to the convent and then could enjoy the capital and the products in kind he received. Over time, many ecclesiastic and aristocratic seigneuries leased the right to collect to traders, who could then access a direct supply of rural products without having to deal with the market and its dynamics, or to depend on the intervention of the various powers that could interfere in the process.

In addition to the bailiffs, the nunnery also had two lawyers: the prior of Santa Eulàlia and Bernat de Lunes, who received in two installments a pension of five *lliures*, and two *lliures* and ten *sous*, respectively.

The administration of such a vast territory, often involved the obligation to notarize letters and subpoenas issued to debtors such as Bernat Soler, who owed six *lliures*, twelve *sous*, and six *diners* because he had not settled the annuity for two years. Officers called *saigs* were sent to carry the letters of royal officers to emphyteutic tenants who did not pay the laudemiums; these *saigs* also organized executions of court orders and auctions. In February 1373, the monastery paid two *sous* and ten *diners* to subpoena “alguns hòmens de Sant Andreu i de fer una empara en los diners que ha d’en Nicholau Barber en la taula d’en Puigvert.”

### 2.2.2. The Entries of 1373

The abbess’s ledger is divided into a number of sections that orderly comprise the income of the annual payments of the different bailiwicks in kind and in money, and the monthly expenses of the nunnery. Unfortunately, in most cases, the entries corresponding to the annuities of emphyteutic leases paid by the bailiwicks did not include the date or the type of payment; that is, if these were proportional parts of the harvest or fixed payments.

The payments in kind show thirteen different rural products. Specifically, in 1373, the nunnery received: 3 ducks from Sant Boi, 44 capons, mostly from Palaudàries; five *quarteres* of broad beans, 366 *quarteres* and four *quartans* of wheat—100 *quarteres* and 4 *quartans* from the bailiwick of Barcelona; 15 hens (7 from Lliçà Sobirà, and 8 from Palaudàries), one pound of ginger, and five pounds of pepper from the bailiwick of Barcelona, one *quartera* and one *quartà* of millet from Palaudàries; 90 *quartans* of oil, most of them from the bailiwick of Barcelona;

63 and a half *quarteres* of barley, most of it delivered by Pere Torres and Vicenç Ermengol, the bailiffs of Esplugues, Sant Joan Despí, and Bajolí; 763 eggs, 311 of which come from Palaudàries, 250 from Montmeló, and 122 from Esplugues, Sant Joan Despí, and Bajolí and 16 chickens, most of which also came from these villages.

Wheat was the only one of these products that was included in the annuities of all bailiwicks, because, as we shall see, it was one of the basic elements of late medieval diet. The entry of 763 eggs and 44 capons is also noteworthy; these products respectively corresponded to the everyday diet and to the special diet reserved for festivities.

The quantities of the rest of the products, with the exception of the 90 *quartans* of oil and the 63 and a half *quarteres* of barley, were less significant, which could have two possible explanations: either the bailiffs sold most of these products and delivered the money resulting from these transactions, or some bailiwicks had commuted the payment of their annuities in kind for a payment in money, as happened in the Maresme.

In fact, as we have already established above, bailiffs sold part of the products they received from the annual payments on behalf of the nunnery. Thanks to these sales, the nunnery was spared being in direct contact with the market, as well as paying for the transportation of these products. In May, Pere Puig, bailiff of Lliçà Sobirà, rendered accounts to the abbess during the Feast of the Holy Cross. The bailiff handed 28 and a half *quarteres* and 2 *quartans* of wheat, 80 eggs, 5 capons, 7 hens and 15 *lliures*, 14 *sous*, and 10 *diners*. More than a quarter of the total sum, that is, 4 *lliures*, 16 *sous*, and 8 *diners* was obtained from the sale, by Pere Puig of 7 and a half pairs of capons—at 4 *sous* each pair—4 hens, at almost half a *sou* each, half a *quartà* of oil for 4 *sous* and 3 *diners*, and 2 *lliures*, 12 *sous*, and 8 *diners*, obtained from the sale of “forment et de tot gra, diners censals, oli, capons, gallines e altres coses.”

In 1373, the total revenue resulting from the contribution of the bailiwicks amounted to 1,151 *lliures*, 10 *diners*. This figure would have been slightly higher if Guillem Parera, bailiff of the bailiwick of Barcelona, had not made a series of payments on behalf of the nunnery. These payments amounted to 152 *lliures*, 1 *sou*, and 5 *diners*. Most of the annual revenues came from the bailiwick of Barcelona, which paid 691 *lliures*, 13 *sous*, and 2 *diners*; second stood Montmeló, with 146 *lliures*, and 5 *sous*. In contrast, the bailiwick of Corbins contributed the lowest sum, 2 *lliures*, and 15 *sous*. Obviously, the amount of the contributions was related to the patrimony the nunnery owned in each of these bailiwicks.

The income in money came from different sources, some of which have already been presented: payments related to emphyteutic leases (initial payment of the lease and *carta precària* sales, annuities in money, commutations of annuities in kind into annuities in money, and laudemiums);

settlement of *fermes d'espoli* showing the existence of peasants submitted to *mals usos*; tithes; revenues from sales of products in kind carried out by the bailiffs; benefices established in the nunnery to commemorate the perpetual anniversaries of the dead; the yield from the dowries of the nuns that entered the convent; and the settlement of debts.

Except for the bailiwick of Barcelona, the contributions in money are presented in a disordered manner, and the dates were not recorded for any of the territories. Revenues from the bailiwick of Barcelona were managed by its bailiff, Guillem Parera, and are classified according to different concepts: *extravagants* [extras], vegetable garden of the convent, annuities, annuities paid in wheat, annuities paid in oil, annuities paid in spices, ovens, tithes from the mills, laudemiums, and other non-specified categories.

In the *extravagants* section—which amounted to 72 *lliures*, 9 *sous*, and 10 *diners*, and together with the annuities yielded by the vegetable garden, were directly managed by the abbess—the sum of 53 *lliures*, 1 *sou*, and 10 *diners*, surrendered by Esclarmunda de Peguera, prioress of the nunnery, who was responsible for its management in 1372, stands out. The 3 *lliures* resulting from the sale of Malvasia wine produced in the nunnery should also be mentioned. However, this is the only entry in the ledger related to the sale of wine, which leads us to suggest that it was not a fixed income.

Let us recall that the income “Reebudes del sençal de Barcelona qui leva Guillem Parera” [received from the annuity of Barcelona, collected by Guillem Parera], which resulted in 324 *lliures*, 11 *sous*, and 8 *diners* would have been higher if the bailiff had not used some of this revenue to make payments on behalf of the nunnery. In this section, the specified dates facilitated our study, because they allowed us to identify most of the amounts deducted from the total contributed by the bailiff; at any rate, although the concepts were not recorded, we believe that they were related to emphyteutic lease payments settled in money.

The previous section and the one devoted to “Reebudes de luïsmes e esdavaniments de la Batllia de Barcelona” [laudemiums], which amounted to 194 *lliures*, 10 *sous*, and 3 *diners* were the ones that contributed the most to the annual revenue of the nunnery. The main goal of direct owners, that is, the lessors of emphyteutic contracts, was to ensure profits that were higher than the annuity through the perception of initial payments, and the exercise of the rights of laudemium. With regard to the rest of the sections, the tithes from the ovens and mills have already been discussed in the section dedicated to the patrimony of the nunnery. It should also be noted that the money related to the three remaining items, the annuities paid in wheat, oil, and spices, yielded little money because these three products were destined for consumption. Thus the the annuities paid in wheat provided 100 *quarteres*, 52 *sous*, and 10 *diners*; the “Salze” from Barcelona consisted of 5 pounds of pepper, and one pound of ginger, and finally, the annuities in oil yielded 42 *quartans* of oil, 2 *lliures*, 3 *sous*, and 2 *diners*.

### 3. THE EXPENSES OF THE NUNNERY IN 1373

According to the 1373 ledger of the abbess, the expenses of that year amounted to 1,191 *lliures*, 3 *diners*, and thirty *quarteres* of barley.

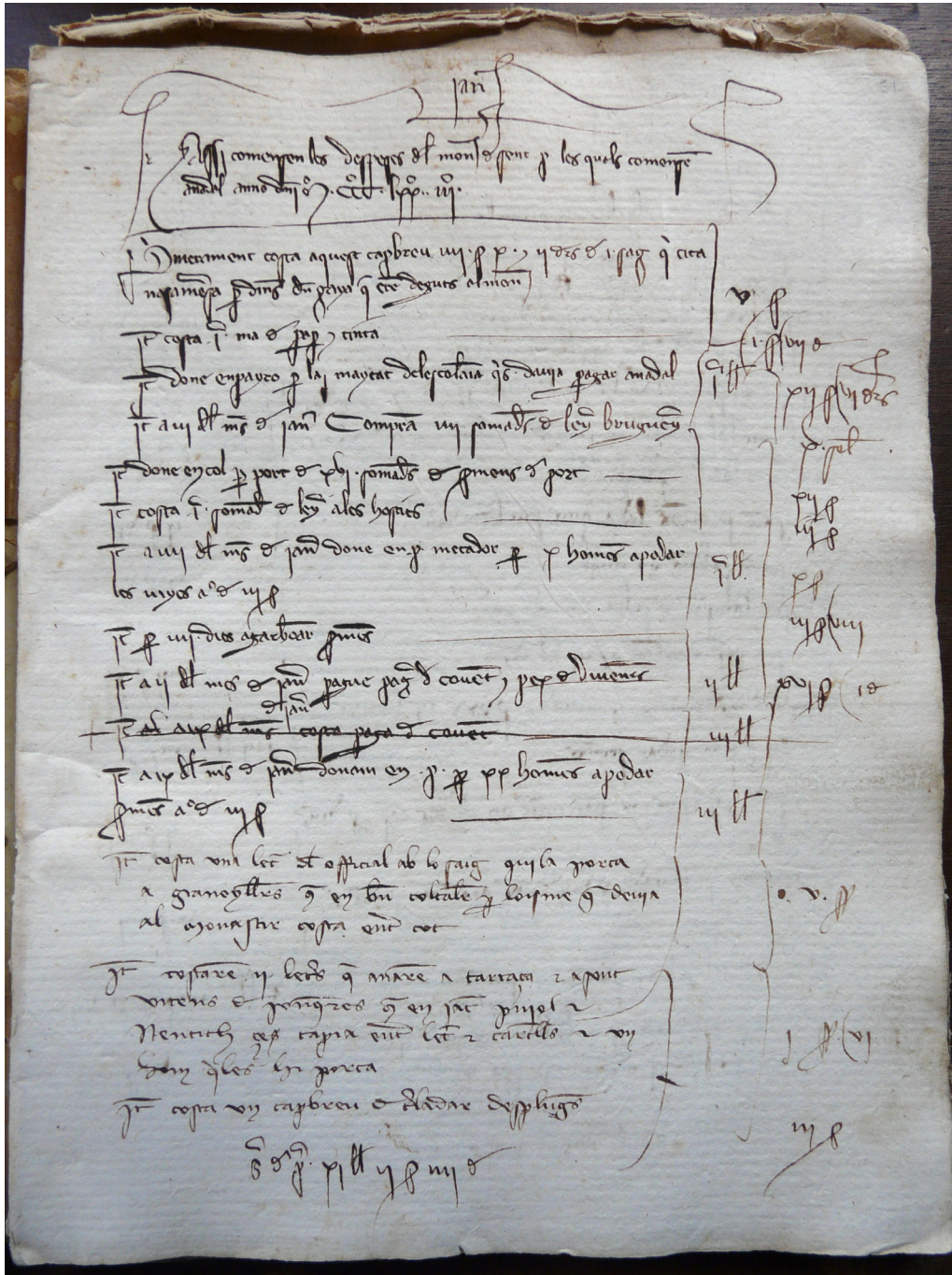


Fig.1. First leaf of the expenses from the 1373 ledger of the abbess Blanca de Llorach. Archive of nunnery of Sant Pere de les Puel·les (AMSPP), Ledger of the abbess, 10, f.51v.



Since the monetary inputs, discussed in the previous section, added up to 1,151 *lliures*, 10 *diners*, plus 152 *lliures*, 1 *sou*, and 5 *diners* paid by Guillem Parera, bailiff of Barcelona, on behalf of the monastery—also listed among the expenses—there was an overall positive balance of 114 *lliures* and 4 *sous*.<sup>6</sup>

As for the monthly expenses recorded in 1373, it is noteworthy that the months with the highest expenses were December—19% of the total expenditure, 217 *lliures*, 14 *sous*, and 5 *diners*—March—17% of the total expenditure, 207 *lliures*, 5 *sous*, and 8 *diners*—and February—10% of the total expenditure, 120 *lliures*, 10 *sous*, and 11 *diners*. In fact, the month with the highest expenditure was actually March, for Blanca had recorded an expense of 129 *lliures* in December that the bailiff of Barcelona had already paid for the most part with the annuities from his bailiwick, and was therefore recorded twice in the ledger.

The payments made and recorded in the ledger can be divided into nine concepts: acquisition of objects, food, firewood, labour hiring, expenses related to Manel, the slave, oil, repairs, church services, and others. The most costly sections were food (43%), whose expenses amounted to 513 *lliures*, 18 *sous*, and 1 *diner*, and church services (25.5%), amounting to 306 *lliures*, 8 *sous*, and 8 *diners*, and hired labour (12%) for 145 *lliures*, 13 *sous*, and 10 *diners*.<sup>7</sup>

Ranking	Concept	Total expenses
1	Food	513ll, 18s, 1d
2	Church services	306ll, 8s, 8d i 15 q of barley
3	Hired staff	145ll,13s,10d
4	Firewood	91 ll,18s,7d
5	Others	94 ll, 5s, 8d i 15 q of barley
6	Object acquisition	16 ll, 4s, 1d
7	Repairs	15 ll, 9s
8	Oil	13 ll, 2s
9	Miquel, slave	4 ll, 6s,2d

Table 1.- Expenses in 1373

### 3.1. Food

The food expenses item on the first management ledger of Abbess Blanca de Llorach include different aspects. First, food products provided for the consumption of the nuns and choirgirls in 1373; second, the inability of the urban convent to source some products, and how Sant Pere

<sup>6</sup> For the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, the revenue of the nunnery of Pedralbes must have been around 75,000 annual *sous*, CASTELLANO 1998: 153. In 1494, the balance of the nunnery of the Saïdia was 318 *sous* and 11 *diners*, and in 1495, it was 503 *sous* and 2 *diners*, VICIANO 1991: 131.

<sup>7</sup> In 1494 and 1495, the expenditures of the Valencian nunnery of the Saïdia were also led by food, VICIANO 1991: 125.

commuted them into payments in money through Sunday allowances; and, finally, the adaptation to the Benedictine monastic rule and the Christian liturgical calendar.

Once again, Sunday allowances—recorded twice by Blanca Llorach—place December at the top of the monthly expenditures. Leaving aside this error, it appears that the months when food expenses were higher were October (64 *lliures*, 13 *sous*, and 7 *diners*), July (53 *lliures*, 2 *sous*, and 2 *diners*), and March (51 *lliures*, 12 *sous*, and 2 *diners*). In the first two cases, the purchase of wheat and wine caused this increase. In the third, the reason was the meal celebrating the blessing of the new abbess; the meal itself was held in February, but the payments were made in March.

Although, in 1373, the nunnery was able received a lot of produce in kind through tithes and annuities, it also devoted much of its income to acquire more. The three products that lead the list of these acquisitions were wheat (46%), wine and fish (16%), and meat (12%). Next, the item labelled as “others” provided for the payment of several services and products, among these, the remuneration of two cooks for the feast of the blessing of the new abbess, and the acquisition of broad beans, salt, and 240 eggs to celebrate Easter. Finally we find honey (2%) and rice, chickpeas, and cheese (1%). These data confirm the importance of grain and wine in the medieval diet, exemplify the obligation to refrain from eating meat during fasting periods, and display the inability of the nunnery to supply the nuns with others foodstuffs.

### 3.1.1. Wheat and Wine

According to other studies for subsequent periods, it appears that the strategy employed by Blanca de Llorach, at the head of Sant Pere, was to purchase wheat when it was needed instead of accumulating it.<sup>8</sup> The results of this are reflected in Chart 1.

In this figure, Series 1 shows the *quarteres* of wheat purchased by the nunnery of Sant Pere monthly; the second series represents the average price per *quartera*; and series 3 shows the inpuot of the annuities paid in wheat whose dates were recorded.

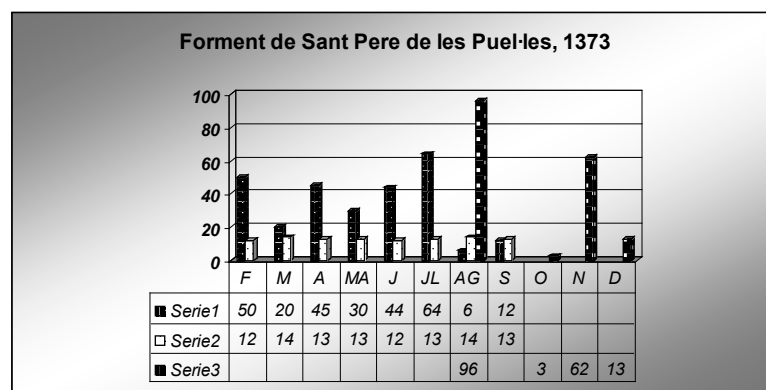


Chart 1.- Wheat of Sant Pere de les Puel·les, 1373

<sup>8</sup> On Santa Maria de Jonqueres, see SERRAHIMA 2013: 220. On the nunnery of the Saïdia, see VICIANO 1991: 127.

Therefore, in 1373, Sant Pere purchased 271 *quarteres* of wheat for 170 *lliures*, 1 *sou*, and 8 *diners* between February and September. This amount also includes the expenses of transportation. Since it was a good year, the price of wheat remained very stable, between 10 and 14 *sous*. Consequently, wheat was bought as it was needed make good quality white bread and the nunnery did not accumulate stocks.

From August onwards, the arrival of 96 *quarteres* and 7 *quartans* of wheat through the annuities of several bailiwicks caused a decline in the acquisition of cereal, and this expense disappeared from October to December.<sup>9</sup> In this period, the nunnery paid for the transportation of these annuities in wheat. In total, it received 174 *quarteres* and a half and 5 *quartans* of wheat; 50 *quarteres* came from the bailiwick of Vilafranca, while the rest originated from the supply of small quantities, the sum of which added up to 43.5% of the total amounts contributed as annuities. Therefore, these small contributions should not be underestimated.

In addition, in these months, we find the only payments recorded for transportation and milling. One entry records 26 *sous*, and 9 *diners* for 15 millings and their transportation; another one registered one *lliura* and one *sou* for the transportation of 12 millings “que fem moldre als molins” for 31 *diners* each.

As for wheat acquisition, 21 purchases were made from February to September. The abbess did not identify the sellers in 11 of them; it is therefore plausible that these purchases were made at the Plaça del Blat, in Barcelona. For the rest, Bruniquer sold 49 *quarteres* of wheat in four transactions that took place on 28 March, 30 March, 5 April, and 1 May. The second most important provider is Guillem de Puigvert provider, who sold 28 *quarteres* of wheat in two transactions. In the third place we find different vendors who sold between 8 and 14 *quarteres* to the nunnery: on 5 February, Bernat Ferrer sold 10 *quarteres* of Sicilian wheat; on 20 April, Pere Blanc sold 8 *quarteres*; in that same month, Bernat Torrent sold 12 *quarteres* of bread wheat; and finally, on 10 July, a certain Puyalt sold 14 *quarteres* and received his money from the *taula de canvi* [exchange counter] of Prohençal.

As I already pointed out above, the prices were quite stable and remained between 10 and 14 *sous*. Until mid-July, these amounts only correspond to the gross price of this cereal, but transportation also had to be covered. From that date onwards, a slight price rise accounts for the inclusion of transportation expenses. Previously, the monastery had also used the strategy of acquiring wheat at different prices from a single vendor and in a single purchase.

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<sup>9</sup> In August, the bailiwick of Montmeló delivered 69 *quarteres* and 4 *quartans* of wheat, the bailiwick of Paludàries contributed 13 *quarteres* and 3 *quartans*, the bailiwick of Esplugues delivered 12 and a half *quarteres*, and finally, the bailiwick of Sant Boi handed over one *quartera* and a half.

In 1373, Sant Pere received a total of 637 *quarteres* and 4 *quartans* of wheat: 366 *quarteres* and 4 *quartans* came from annuities and 271 *quarteres* were bought. Using other Benedictine nunneries, such as Sant Daniel de Girona, as a reference, and bearing in mind that the 37 nuns and 7 choirgirls received a pound of bread daily, this would add up to the yearly consumption of 117 *quarteres* (VILA 1995: 447). That is, 8,132 kilos of wheat. Thus, the difference between the wheat received at the nunnery and the minimum quantity perceived by the “women” of the convent—using Blanca de Llorach’s usual expression—had to be used for the preparation of other dishes and also for alms.<sup>10</sup>

Since the nunnery had its own oven, flour was kneaded and the bread was baked within the monastic enclosure, which spared the nunnery from paying for such expenses.

Month	Supplier	Amount	Price/q	Total	Observations
February	Bernat Ferrer	10 q	10s,3d	5 ll,2s,6d	5 February Sicilian wheat Transportation: 2s,2d
	---	40 q	13s,4d	26ll,13s, 4d	Transportation: 8s,6d
March	Bruniquer	10 q	14s	7 ll, 6s, 8d	28 March Transportation: 2s,1d
		10 q	13s,4d	6 ll	30 March Transport: 2s,1d
		15 q : 8 q + 7 q	14s,6d+13s	10 ll, 7s	5 April Transportation: 18 florins.
April	Pere Blanc	8 q	11s	4 ll,8s	20 April
	Bernat Torrent	12 q	13s,5s	---	Bread wheat. 8 ll,1s, payment not recorded. Transportation: 4s,3d
	---	10 q	13s	6 ll,10s	9 April Transportation: 2s
May	Bruniquer	14 q	13s, less than 2d per q	9 ll (less than 4d per q)	11 May Transportation: 3s
	---	16 q	12s, less than 2d per q	9 ll	22 May Transportation: 4s
June	---	16 q	12s, 2d	9 ll,14s, 8d	1 June Transportation: 4s
	Puigvert	16q: 8q + 4q + 4q	12s, 3d + 12s,10d + 13s	10 ll, 8s	13 June
	Puigvert	12 q: 6 q + 6 q	13s,2d + 13s,6d	8 ll, 6s	Transportation: 6s
July	---	16 q	13s,6d	10 ll,16s	1 July, Transportation: 4s
	Puyalt	14 q	13s,6d	10 ll, 3s	10 July Transportation: 3s,6d
	---	16 q: 8 q + 8 q	14s,6d + 12s	10 ll,12s	Transportation: 4s
	---	12q: 6 q + 6 q	14s,6d + 12s	7 ll, 2s	Transportation expenses included
	---	6 q	11s,6d	3 ll, 9s, 6d	Transportation expenses included

<sup>10</sup> At the female monastery of Montsant, the abbot of Valldigna defined the individual ration of bread as a piece of 22 ounces, that is, 725 grams (GARCÍA-OLIVER 1991: 140).

Month	Supplier	Amount	Price/q	Total	Observations
August	---	6 q	14s (less than 2d per q)	4 ll, 4s, 4d	Transportation expenses included
September	---	6 q	13s,9d	4 ll, 4s	Transportation expenses included
	---	6 q	13s,9d	4 ll, 4s, 4d	Transportation expenses included

Table 2.-Purchase of wheat in Sant Pere de les Puel·les, 1373 (q=*quarteres*)

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, wine and bread became the staples of all Christian social groups. The dissemination and consumption of wine were due to its high nutritional value, its antiseptic properties, and the fact that it was easy to tax, store, transport, and sell. In these centuries, the spread of the emphyteutic lease property prompted a new period of expansion of the vineyard. For convenience, the jurisdictional lords, the territorial lords, and the ecclesiastical apparatus demanded the delivery of aliquots of the harvest of the fruits of bread and wine.

The nunnery of Sant Pere cultivated vineyards investing 12% of their income. So, unlike wheat, a 42.5% of which was purchased, the wine the nuns consumed was mostly homegrown, because the annuities paid in grapes had been gradually commuted.

The only acquisitions recorded in 1373 increased expenditures in October and December. In October, 27 *somades* of wine—according to the measurement of Mataró—were bought for 7 *lliures*, 29 *sous*, and 4 *diners*, and in December, the nunnery paid 9 *lliures* for a *cafis* of wine of Espugues, and 4 *lliures*, 13 *sous*, and 11 *diners* for 98 *quarters* of wine. Transportation and measurement expenses amounted to 4 *sous*, and 6 *diners*. In contrast, the white and red wines purchased in February for the blessing of Blanca de Llorach costed less than 14 *sous*.

### 3.1.2. Monastic Diet and the Liturgical Calendar

The monastic diet was subject to the liturgical calendar, the rule governing the monastery and the regulations of each house. It had a customary, repetitive, and ritualistic character, which was only altered in some extraordinary celebrations (VINYOLÉS 1988: 139), as shown by the purchases of food products for the preparation of meals at Sant Pere. However, the fact that the nuns received dominical allowances also demonstrates the inability of the nunnery to provide them with some products.

The importance of fish, a 16% of the food expenses of Sant Pere, is due to the mandatory consumption of this product on Fridays, Lent and Advent, when meat was forbidden. The purchase of fish for Saturdays, for the eve of major festivities, the eve of All Saints' Day, and Ember days is not recorded. Given that Barcelona was a maritime city well stocked with fish, Sant Pere had

no problem in supplying the nuns and choirgirls with fish that was bought near the beach at the fish market by the sea. Therefore, this suggests that, at this time, with the exception of salted fish, such as the 300 herrings bought in mid-February, the nuns at Sant Pere only ate this product on Fridays, Lenten and Advent periods.

During the seven weeks of Lent, there were 46 acquisitions of fish that originated an expense of 26 *lliures*, 14 *sous*, and 2 *diners*. Through these acquisitions, on fasting and Lenten days, the nuns and choirgirls of Sant Pere were supplied with fresh and salted fish, which is not identified, and with a variety of fish that were systematically recorded for the first two weeks of Lent: eels, elvers, herring, conger eels, common pandoras, salmons, sardines, blotched picarels, and tuna fish.

For these days of abstinence, Blanca de Llorach also bought 2 quintals and 2 *arrobas* of rice for 1 *lliura* and 2 *sous*, 2 *quarteres* and a half of broad beans for 7 *sous* and 6 *diners*, and 30 *quartans* of chickpeas for 5 *lliures*, 19 *sous*, and 8 *diners*. During this period of abstinence, they ate porridge made with rice and legumes that complemented the consumption of fish and increased the caloric intake.

During the four weeks of Advent, the total expenses on food were 27 and amounted to 17 *lliures*, and 4 *diners*. Most of these entries only recorded the cost of fish purchases. The only fish mentioned on this occasion were: hakes, common pandoras, sardines, and mackerels; that is, less variety of fish than in the Lenten period. Furthermore, during this last fasting period of the year, the abbess reserved 2 *lliures* for the weekly cold cuts of the nuns, and paid Na Romieta, Na Portela, and Na Rossina 3 *sous* each for “parar una quartera de fave.”

Easter and Christmas are the two most important holidays in the Christian calendar and this is also reflected in monastic meals. In the 1373 ledger, there are almost no references to the purchase of meats tolerated during Easter and Christmas, except for the feast to commemorate the blessing of the new abbess, and the feast of Sant Pere.<sup>11</sup> This does not mean that meat was not consumed. The mendicant orders that included meat in their daily diet, abstaining from consuming it only on the fasting days prescribed by the Church to all believers, influenced the fact that “el 1352, la carn està absolutament consolidada a la dieta dels monjos cluniacencs, ja que apareix a les despeses del monestir com un aliment més” [in 1352, meat is absolutely consolidated in the diet of Cluniac monks, for it appears in the expenses of the monastery as just another foodstuff] (BANEGAS 2009: 15 and 17).

In April, with the celebration of Easter, 3 *sous* were paid for 2 pounds of mutton and 1 pound of bacon to prepare the *morterol*. Shortly after, the nunnery bought again 10 *sous* of bacon; they

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<sup>11</sup> Between the 8 and 10 July, the nunnery paid 3 *sous* and 8 *diners* for 3 pounds of mutton, and pumpkins; 5 *sous* and 6 *diners* for milk; and 3 *sous* for 2 pounds of bacon.

also spent 3 *sous* to purchase milk for the *morterol*.<sup>12</sup> In addition, 4 *lliures* served to buy kid meat for the convent and the confessor, and the nunnery also purchased mutton for Easter Monday for 9 *sous*, cheese for 1 *lliura* and 15 *sous*, and 240 eggs and a dozen cheeses for 18 *sous*; in all likelihood, as in the nunnery of Pedralbes, the nuns at Sant Pere made *flaons* (egg custard with cinnamon). Also the only documented acquisition of bread wheat was made during these days. Excluding cereal and wine, this meal should cost around 8 and a half *lliures*.

At Christmas, the extraordinary purchases consisted of *burrifaldes* for choirgirls, worth 3 *sous* and 3 *diners*, and one pound of bacon, for one *sou* and 6 *diners*. The portions of bacon for nuns and choirgirls costed 2 *sous* and 11 *diners*, and were commuted into 7 *diners* per nun and 1 *malla* per altar girl. The same happened with the commutation of mutton into 2 *diners* per nun and 1 *diner* per altar girl.

A feast was also held for all the friends of the nunnery where 27 pairs of capons and 3 pairs of hens were served. Cheeses were bought for the price of 10 *diners*, 2 pounds of mutton loin for the entrance, and some of the purchased wine was probably consumed at the feast along with some of the 120 eggs that were delivered to the nunnery by Bartomeu Lirana, bailiff of Montmeló, on Christmas' Eve.

For the feast of Sant Pere, another meal was organized for the friends of the nunnery. Therefore, during the eve of the festivity, the nunnery was supplied with 34 geese and 8 ducks for 6 *lliures* and 19 *sous*, 8 pairs of chickens for 1 *lliura* and 2 *sous*, 3 chicken breasts for 4 *sous* and 4 *diners*, figs, blackberries, and apricots for 2 *sous* and 1 *diner*, and finally, 1 *arroba* of cheese for 11 *sous* and 3 *diners*. The costs of this feast, which were probably 11 or 12 *lliures* including bread and wine, far exceeded the expenses caused by the previous festivities.

The feast of the litanies, Corpus Christi, and All Saints' Day were minor liturgical celebrations. In late May, for the feast of the litanies, the nunnery acquired confections and 3 “blancs a ops d'alcuns canonges” for 6 *sous* and 6 *diners*. On 4 June, the feast of Corpus Christi, the ledger reads: “el senyor rei feu fer cristiganes (...) e panadeces e costa entre salça, mel e altres coses XI sous.” For All Saints' Day, they spent 17 *sous* and 5 *diners* for cheese, bacon, livers and saffron—“formatges a ops de les sopes dels morts, una lliura de carnsalada, tres fetges i dues unces de safrà a obs de la reblada que.s dóna lo dia dels morts.”

At the meal that celebrated the blessing of Blanca de Llorach as the new abbess of the nunnery, the services of two cooks were remunerated with 1 *lliura*, 3 *sous*, and 5 *diners*; 11 kids were bought for 4 *lliures* and 19 *sous*; 10 hens for 1 *lliura*, 5 *sous*, and 6 *diners*, 2 large loaves of

<sup>12</sup> The *morterol* was prepared with lamb, eggs, onions, “savallons de Palma”, and was probably seasoned with cinnamon, CASTELLANO 1998: 315.

bread, white and red wine. The price of these products alone amounted to 8 *lliura*, 6 *sous*, and 11 *diners*; a considerable expense that shows the importance of this feast and likens it to the two most important holidays in the Christian liturgy: Easter and Christmas.

On the days when the consumption of meat was allowed, Sant Pere, like other nunneries, had to provide the nuns and choirgirls of foodstuffs that were obtained through its income, from its vegetable garden (legumes, vegetables, fruits, and herbs), or were directly purchased. In July, a pig was bought for 4 *lliures*, and 6 *sous*. Chances are that it was subsequently slaughtered; sausages were probably made, such as those made at the “domo” of the Monastery of Santa Anna (VINYOLES 1988: 108), and the rest was salted for later consumption.<sup>13</sup> In 1373, the nunnery purchased 6 *quarteres* of salt, which was used to season and salt food. In addition, the nuns and choirgirls perceived payments and extraordinary allowances to commute those foodstuffs that the nunnery could not procure. Moreover, the nuns and choirgirls who had their own income could also complete their own meals with the returns.

Finally, when the nuns were old, sick, weak, or during their menstrual period they could receive rations of broth made with hens and chickens, the most valued animals at that time.

### 3.2. Church Services

The most important function of the 37 nuns and 7 choirgirls who lived in the nunnery of Sant Pere de les Puel·les in 1373 was prayer. With their prayers, they had to intercede for the souls of the founders of the monastery and all who had instituted benefices or commissioned masses for the dead. The dedication of the convent to this social demand also involved expenditures.

Excluding the remuneration of Caterina de Bellpuig—the nun who worked as the infirmar of the nunnery—which consisted in 22 *lliures*, 5 *sous*, and 3 *quarteres* of barley, the expenses of the spiritual services dispensed by the nunnery in 1373 amounted to 306 *lliures*, 8 *sous*, 8 *diners*, and 15 *quarteres* of barley.

March accumulated the largest expenses, with 134 *lliures*, 18 *sous*, and 7 *diners*, for this entry included the extraordinary payment of 133 *lliures*, 9 *sous*, and 11 *diners*, which originated as a result of the election of Blanca de Llorach as abbess of the nunnery. This amount covered the payment of 126 *lliures*, 6 *sous*, and 11 *diners* to Fabre, who held a benefice from the Cathedral of Barcelona, to confirm the abbess in office; 4 *lliures* and 8 *sous* went to the chamberlain of the archbishop, and 2 *lliures* and 15 *sous* were paid to his scribe of the archbishop. In the previous month, on 20 February, the prior of Santa Eulàlia also received 14 *lliures* and 13 *sous* for carrying

<sup>13</sup> In December, 10 *sous* were paid to the Dominican friars for livestock, and for the same reason, 2 *sous* went to the friars of Sant Agustí, to the Carmelites, to the Mercedarians, and to the Friars Minor.



out the formalities for the election of the abbess. Therefore, this event involved an extraordinary expense of 148 *lliures*, 2 *sous*, and 11 *diners*. The costliest usual expense was the payment of 50 *lliures* to the cardinal: 20 *lliures* as wages and 30 as the annual tithe.

Since the convent was a female house, 8 priests had to be paid to attend to the spiritual life of nuns and choirgirls, to celebrate the ordinary masses of the nunnery, to take care of the benefices instituted for anniversary masses and other masses for the dead. Oliver and Antoni Prats, as *domers*, could perform all these tasks, while the beneficed could only officiate the masses of the instituted benefices.

Originally, the clergy were paid in kind. The remains of this payment in kind can be seen in the ledger because although the payments are made in money, they are recorded as cold cuts. Thus, in 1373, 6 bi-monthly allowances ranging between 7 and 10 *lliures* and covered the previous two months. Also, clerics who were absent from the nunnery were deducted the corresponding part of their wages. This was the case of a certain Codina who spent a year in Alexandria. Moreover, it should be noted that the *domers* perceived 6 *quarteres* of barley each in September, in addition to the commutation of their share of cold cuts.

As for the beneficed, they also received compensation for the time they had served one benefice and the masses they had officiated. On 14 August, the nuns and choirgirls of Sant Pere divided up 6 *lliures* and 6 *diners* (3 *sous* for nuns and 18 *diners* for choirgirls) that had been allocated by Esclarmunda Paguera, subprioress of the nunnery, for anniversaries.

For the provision of church services, the nunnery spent 6 *lliures*, 2 *sous*, and 7 *diners*. This amount included 5 *lliures* and 7 *diners* for the wine goblets that Peyró, one of the beneficed, and only twice a certain Font, left every day in the cellar,<sup>14</sup> 14 *sous* for 1 *quartera* of wheat for the sacristy *a ops de les hòsties* and 8 *sous* with which they bought two *somades* of firewood in July and December—at 4 *sous* each—to make the sacramental bread.

The only expense recorded as alms amounted to 5 *lliures*, 11 *sous*, and 3 *diners*. This amount served to pay for the acquisition of 12 *quarteres* of barley, broad beans, wine and fish, worth 5 *sous*; during the sixth week of Lent, 10 *sous* were given to the nun who took care of alms for broad beans and fish for a week, and 1 *lliura* for wine and broad beans of “temps passats.”

Given that the nunnery also had a choir, Peyró received a total of 3 *lliures* and 5 *sous* for the cold cuts of the previous Christmas and half of the allowance for the feast of Saint John in June. The last expense recorded in relation to regular religious services only cost 3 *sous*. This sum was

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<sup>14</sup> In general, these goblets of wine cost 3 *diners* each. As in the case of cold cuts, the payment was usually made bimonthly.

paid to an unidentified cleric to go to the hill of the Salada and carry out a *salpàs* [a visit to the households of the parish to bless them with water and salt] during Easter.

### 3.3. Hired Labour

Being the prayer the specific function of the nuns, hiring temporary labourers to perform the agricultural and wine-growing tasks was delegated to intermediaries, such as Pere Metador, whose organization was supervised and whose results were then managed.

As stated above, the nunnery of Sant Pere only dealt with the direct exploitation of part of their vegetable garden, a few pieces of land in Pont de Bigues, vineyards and young vineyards. These wine-growing lands supplied the nunnery with wine. Wine-growing tasks carried out by hired labour accounted for most of the expenses (12%), mainly devoted to pay wages.

The payment of the wages of these temporary labourers who worked the lands and the cellar of Sant Pere runs parallel to the agricultural calendar. Digging the vines during the months of January to April and November, April, and May was the most expensive activity, followed by pruning in November, December and January.

Month	TASKS IN THE FIELDS AND VINEYARD							
	Digging	Loosening the soil	Sheafing	Ploughing	Loosening up the vines	Pruning	Sowing	Harvesting
January	9 ll, 4s, 4d	---	1 ll	---	---	11 ll, 5s	---	---
February	15 ll, 7s, 5d	---	2s, 4d	---	---	---	---	---
March	10 ll, 14s, 2d	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
April	1 ll, 4s, 6d	---	---	---	14 ll, 19s, 8d	---	---	---
May	---	---	---	---	13 ll, 6s	---	---	---
June	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
July	---	---	---	10s	---	---	---	2 ll, 17s, 2d
August	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	2 ll, 2s, 4d
September	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	5s, 10d
October	---	---	---	10s, 6d	---	---	---	---
November	1 ll, 5s	2s, 8d	5s	1 ll	---	4 ll, 6s, 4d	1 ll, 16s	---
December	---	18s, 10d	14s	---	---	5 ll, 17s	---	---

Table 3.- Jobs and wages of seasonal workers at Sant Pere de les Puel·les, 1373

The large number of seasonal and temporary labourers, both men and women, hired for these tasks and the wages the intermediary received for each one of them explain the high figures paid by the nunnery. Throughout the year, these labourers carried out different tasks in the vineyard: pruning, gathering vine shoots, digging, loosening the soil, sheafing, loosening up the vines,

weeding, and harvesting the grapes. Then they had to carry the grape harvest to the cellar of the nunnery and begin the tasks related to winemaking. As the ledger describes:

costaren de fer les veremes lo dit any de M CCC LXX tres entre los traginiers e les dones que veremaren e hòmens qui folaren la venemia e levadors qui levaren alcunes bótes e manoyes e ab compenage dels venamedors e dels traginiers e d'aquells qui levaren los cups ab lo loguer de dits hòmens e bèsties, XXIII lliures, V sous, X diners.

Also during the month of September, Pere Romeu Xercavins received one *lliura* and 6 *sous* to fertilize the paths of the vineyards. Before the harvest, however, casks and vats had to be washed and repaired, which was done in the cellar of Sant Pere during the months of February, April, June and July. In September, during the grape harvest, the washing tasks continued, the storage of the harvest began, and carriers, *tornelers*, and hoops were acquired “que són IIII dotzenes i VIII sercles” for 11 *sous*. In addition, the cooper Bernat Creixell and another unidentified master cooper were paid 1 *lliura* and 4 *sous* for three days of work in the cellar. In early October, two men washed the bottom stills out from the vats for 6 *sous* and 6 *diners*. In November, the cooper Bernat Creixell and his men also received 2 *lliures*, 5 *sous*, and 4 *diners* to fix a hoop of the main vat, three hoops of the “botaça” [large vat] and other barrels, the bottom of two carriers, and 8 hoops of different carriers. During the last months of the year, they continued washing the emptied vats. In December, a certain Domingo also received 3 *sous* for washing two vats— “dues bótes a levar.”

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