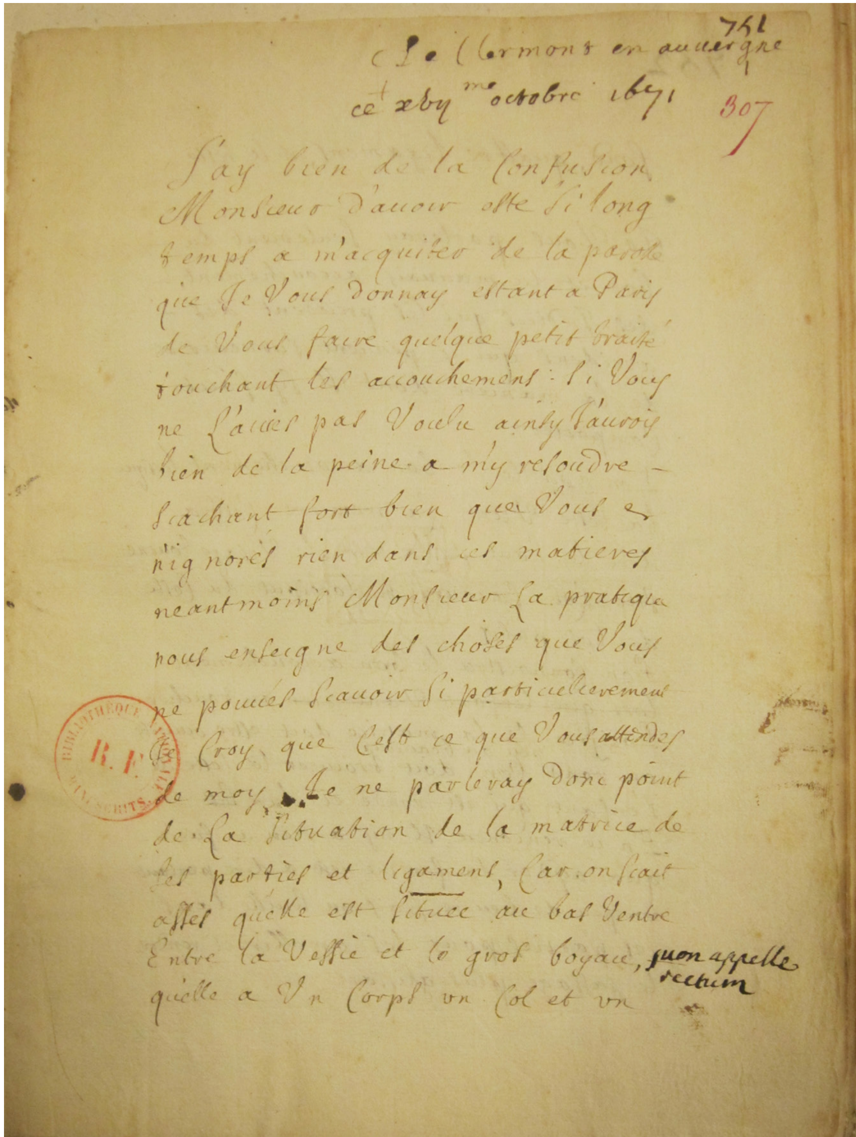
Introduction

The Other Voice


a Clermont en auuergne 751

ce xbyme octobre 1671 307

Jay bien de la Confusion
Monsieur dauoir este si long
temps a macquiter de la parolle
que je vous donnay estant a Paris
de vous faire quelque petit traitte
touchant les accouchemens si vous
ne laviés pas voulu ainsy jaurois
bien de la peine a my resoudre
scachant fort bien que vous
nignorés rien dans ces matieres
neantmoins Monsieur la pratique
nous enseigne des choses que vous
ne pouués scauoir si particulierement
je croy que cest ce que vous attendés
de moy. Je ne parleray donc point
de la situation de la matrice de
ses parties et ligamens car on scait
assés quelle est situee au bas ventre
Entre la vessie et le gros boyau, quon appelle rectum
quelle a un corps un col et un

Figure 1. First page of Mme Baudoin's epistolary treatise to Dr. Vallant.
BnF Ms. Fr. 17057, f. 1r, 751, 307r.

On October 17, 1671, the chief mistress-midwife and governor of the Hôtel-Dieu in Clermont-Ferrand, Marie Gosse, or Madame Baudoin as she was more frequently known in medical circles, wrote a forty-page "little treatise on the art of childbirth" in letter form to the renowned Parisian physician Noël Vallant.[1] She also wrote a separate cover letter, dated six weeks later on November 29, 1671, and a short undated and unsigned review of an anonymous obstetrical book he had sent her.[2] Ostensibly she wrote her treatise at Vallant's personal request in response to the promise that he would publish it. He never did. Whether this was intentional or accidental is unclear, but he did read it—and apparently quite carefully, as the manuscript treatise is annotated in his hand.

Vallant kept the treatise in an extensive collection of correspondence, notebooks, and other materials, much of which he accumulated during his years as the physician and secretary of his primary patron, the *salonnière* Madeleine de Souvré, marquise de Sablé (1598–1678). He bequeathed his paperwork—"books, manuscripts, and light desks"—to the Benedictine community of the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, with the exhortation that they "keep my books without exchanging them."[3] The manuscripts were eventually acquired by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BnF), and are now known as "Vallant's *portefeuilles*"—fifteen folios (Mss Fr. 17044–17059) ranging from one hundred to six hundred pages in length, into which are pasted the loose-leaf papers and unbound notebooks Vallant had collected and stored over his career. And the *portefeuilles* do not represent all of Vallant's paperwork; his ego-documents and copies of some of the correspondence with his patron Mme de Sablé found their way to other archives after his death.[4] All of Vallant's paperwork across these diverse archival

1. Bibliothèque Nationale de France (henceforth BnF) Ms. Fr. 17057, f. 307–346v. I refer to her as "Marie Gosse" or "Mme Baudoin," rather than "Baudoin," to avoid confusion with Claude Baudoin, her husband.

2. BnF Ms. Fr. 17057, f. 367. In it she says she had waited for an opportunity to send the treatise to him safely, and was giving the letter to a friend who was traveling to Paris the following week. It seems to have been sent ahead of the treatise.

3. Archives Communales de Bourg-Saint-Andéol (henceforth "AC BSG") GG 73 bis, Copy of the last will and testament of Dr Vallant, including five appended additional legacies (May 7, 1684), and Inventaire après décès Vallant, July 12, 1685–October 22, 1685, 394ff, at f. 15, 16, 58, 160r–62. Vallant's papers were found in lots of boxes and closets in his apartment. The "books, manuscripts, and light desks" were inventoried and valued by the printer Jean Coignard at 1,277 *livres* and 10 *sols* before being handed over to Placide Porcheron, the librarian of the Bibliothèque de Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Coignard's ten-page catalog does not appear to have survived. The only books singled out in the inventory were religious: a multivolume set of Saint Augustine's works bound in red Moroccan leather, the New Testament in two volumes, and two volumes on Saint Catherine of Genoa.

4. Vallant's personal journals and other financial papers were separated from the rest of his paperwork (i.e., what would become known as the *portefeuilles*), and are housed in the AC BSG. It is unclear why the documents were split up in this way. For more on the separation of papers after Vallant's death, see "Vallant's *Portefeuilles*: Record-Keeping and Archival Afterlives."

repositories embodies his dual role as Mme de Sablé's physician and secretary, incarnating the "paperwork of kinship," of multiple layers of patronage, and of his intersecting roles in medical and religious communities; indeed, in some sections, it is difficult to tell where Sablé's material ends and Vallant's starts.[5] This material also gives us some insight into the controversial Catholic movement known as Jansenism and its extensive late seventeenth-century networks, whose members included Vallant, the marquise de Sablé, and Mme Baudoin. Mme Baudoin's embeddedness in these Jansenist networks underpinned her knowledge production and ultimately the preservation of her text to this day.

Buried deep in the fourteenth volume of the *portefeuilles* is Mme Baudoin's forty-page treatise in a letter, which appears to have been written in a bound notebook, then unbound for pasting into the larger folio volume. It is mentioned in the Bibliothèque Nationale's manuscript catalogue entry for vol. 17057 of the *portefeuilles*, and extracts of the treatise were published in a nineteenth-century medical thesis on Vallant's *portefeuilles*, but finding either of those requires some knowledge of Vallant and his collection.[6] Six of Vallant's volumes have been digitized, but not the one containing Mme Baudoin's letter. "Hidden in plain sight," then, the existence and survival of Mme Baudoin's text raises questions about record-keeping, layers of archival organization, decision-making, and "archival afterlives"—factors that shape the accessibility of sources, and, significantly, the questions historians ask and can purport to answer.[7] Indeed, we might ask how

5. Here I draw on Elaine Leong's use of the term "paperwork of kinship" to denote the relationships and familial networks evident in seventeenth-century English recipe collections, and build on it to include patron-client and religious networks in Vallant's archives. See Elaine Leong, *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge: Medicine, Science, and the Household in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 17. On patron-client relationships in early modern France see Sharon Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). On patronage as a frequent strategy for women writers see Elizabeth C. Goldsmith's introduction in her *Publishing Women's Life Stories in France, 1647–1720: From Voice to Print* (Aldershot, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001). On Vallant's patron-client networks see Lisa W. Smith, "Women's Healthcare in England and France (1660–1775)," PhD diss., University of Essex, 2001, chap. 5.

6. I am grateful to Lisa Smith for showing me the letter many years ago. In 1899 physician Paul-Emile Le Maguet published and annotated extracts from the letter in his medical thesis on Vallant's portefeuille, *Le Monde médical parisien sous le Grand Roi, suivi du portefeuille de Vallant* (Paris: Maloine, 1899).

7. Questions about the construction of archives, long asked by archivists, are receiving more attention from historians. Of note are the following: on the construction of colonial archives, Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016); on race and slavery: Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *small axe*, 26 (2008), 1–14; Jessica Marie Jackson, *Wicked Flesh. Black Women, Intimacy, and Freedom in the Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020); on the history

many other such documents remain undiscovered, deliberately kept but not demarcated by their original owners, or by subsequent archivists, from copious bundles of other miscellaneous papers, especially since so few female-authored midwifery texts have reached us from this period. It is primarily because Vallant kept Mme Baudoin's treatise that we know of her existence, making it possible to trace her across numerous other archival sources, unpacking where she lived and worked, and to whom she was connected.[8] This reminds us that but for her connection to Vallant and the rest of her Jansenist network, Mme Baudoin might well have shared the fate of all the other early modern midwives we have lost to obscurity. As Vallant gave legitimacy to and ensured posterity for Mme Baudoin's voice, he also limited its reach, preserving, but not promoting it, and submerging it in his voluminous paperwork. Whether this was intentional or not is impossible to say with certainty. Mme Baudoin's text cannot therefore be fully analyzed without exploring the context in which it was produced and preserved, as well as the nature of the relationships which made that possible and have enabled her voice to reach us today—even if, ultimately, shifts in those relationships were probably responsible for it remaining in manuscript form. This book is primarily concerned with Mme Baudoin: with the midwife's voice, her life, her obstetrical practice, and her communities. To access Mme Baudoin's voice, however, and to understand her knowledge-making process, we have to go, in part, through Vallant and his paperwork. We need to place our reading of her text in the context of her daily life, and work, and the nexus of gendered and mixed-gender medical and Jansenist communities in which she and Vallant were embedded between Paris and Clermont-Ferrand. We also need to consider Vallant's record-keeping practices and archival thinking.[9]

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of science, medicine, and information management: Ann Blair and Jennifer Milligan, eds., "Toward a Cultural History of Archives," special issue, *Archival Science* 7, no. 4 (2007), and Randolph C. Head and Ann Blair, eds., "Archival Knowledge Cultures in Europe, 1400–1900," special issue, *Archival Science* 10, no. 3 (2010); and on early modern European history: Alexandra Walsham's introduction to *The Social History of the Archive: Record-Keeping in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Liesbeth Corens, Kate Peters, and Alexandra Walsham, supplementary issue 11, *Past and Present* 230 (2016): 9–48; Julie Hardwick, *Sex in an Old Regime City: Young Workers and Intimacy in France, 1660–1789* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 24–32. For "archival afterlives" see: *Archival Afterlives: Life, Death, and Knowledge-Making in Early Modern British Scientific and Medical Archives,* ed. Vera Keller, Anna Maria Roos, and Elizabeth Yale (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018).

8. Scholars debate the authorship of *The Trotula* and Jane Sharp's *The Art of Midwifery*. See Monica H. Green, ed. and trans., *The Trotula: An English Translation of the Medieval Compendium of Women's Medicine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001) and Green's "Who/What is 'Trotula'?" <https://www.academia.edu/4558706/Monica_H._Green_WHO_WHAT_IS_TROTULA_2015>. Katharine Phelps Walsh, "Marketing Midwives in Seventeenth-Century London: A Re-examination of Jane Sharp's *The Midwives Book*," *Gender and History* 26 (2014): 223–41.

9. I am grateful to Elaine Leong for suggesting the approach of accessing Mme Baudoin through Vallant. Lisa Smith discussed the problem of note-taking, record-keeping and silences with me.

The scarcity of female-authored midwifery texts in French alone points to the necessity of this reconstruction of Mme Baudoin's knowledge production and networks. But Mme Baudoin and her text together contribute to our understanding of women's lives in seventeenth-century France in many additional ways. This is not to suggest that Mme Baudoin is a model for understanding a universal notion of seventeenth-century French "woman," or even "midwife." Evidently, these are not singular categories, and women's historical possibilities were, as now, greatly and divergently shaped by a range of intersectional factors, including, but not limited to their social and economic status as well as the religious, geographical, and political context in which they lived.[10] But Mme Baudoin can help us to understand better the situation of provincial midwives in mid-seventeenth-century France. We still do not fully appreciate the complex spectrum of early modern French female midwives' "capabilities": what they could be, and what they could do.[11] As Monica Green points out this issue is twofold; evidence and method. Because of the ways in which in premodern medical and institutional records

10. Laurence Fontaine underlines the "multidimensional" experiences of agency and social, political, and economic actions for women in preindustrial Europe. See "Makeshift, Women and Capability in Preindustrial European Towns," in *Female Agency in the Urban Economy: Gender in European Towns, 1640–1830*, ed. Deborah Simonton and Anne Montenach (New York and London: Routledge, 2013), 56–72, at p. 56. Evidently, what it meant to be a midwife varied, not only across preindustrial Europe, but also within France. For France, see Lawrence Brockliss and Colin Jones, *The Medical World of Early Modern France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 262–73; Laetitia Dion, Adéline Gargam, Nathalie Grande, and Marie-Elisabeth Henneau, eds., *Enfanter dans la France d'Ancien Regime* (Arras: Artois Presses Université, 2017); and Wendy Perkins, *Midwifery and Medicine in Early Modern France: Louise Bourgeois* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 2. For European differences, see Hilary Marland, ed., *The Art of Midwifery: Early Modern Midwives in Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994); Anna Bellavitis, *Women's Work and Rights in Early Modern Europe* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), chap. 10; Paloma Moral de Calatrava, "A Spanish Midwife Appeals to the King: Luisa Rosado's Challenge to Eighteenth-Century Male Medical Corporatism," *Early Modern Women* 11 (2016): 162–76; Jennifer F. Kosmin, *Authority, Gender, and Midwifery in Early Modern Italy: Contested Deliveries* (London and New York: Routledge, 2021) and Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen, "Midwives as Expert Witnesses in the Eighteenth-Century Finnish Courts of Justice," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 45 (2020): 433–56.

11. I am drawing on Laurence Fontaine's use of Amartya Sen's notion of "capabilities," meaning the intersection of "what a person can do and can be," depending on the legal context and their abilities expressed through their participation in "economic, social, and political actions"; see her "Makeshift, Women and Capability," 56. I also draw on recent scholarship on women and work: Anne Montenach, "Legal Trade and Black Markets: Food Trades in Lyon in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries," in Simonton and Montenach, eds., *Female Agency in the Urban Economy*, 17–34; Bellavitis, *Women's Work and Rights*; Geraldine Sheridan, *Louder Than Words: Ways of Seeing Women Workers in Eighteenth-Century France* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2009); Maria Agren, ed., *Making a Living, Making a Difference: Gender and Work in Early Modern European Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Jane Whittle and Mark Hailwood, "The Gender Division of Labour in Early Modern England," *Economic History Review* 73 (2020): 3–32; and Jane Whittle, "A Critique

were constructed, it can be very difficult to locate women medical practitioners and midwives in existing administrative archives so we need to look elsewhere and ask different questions. Medical men effectively wrote female practitioners out of "authoritative knowledge" and out of official archives for centuries through restrictions on access to guilds and universities and control of the cultural narrative.[12] As Mary Fissell notes these evidential difficulties are compounded when historians of midwifery think about "female midwives mostly in reference to man-midwives" rather than "in relation to skilled women workers," or indeed other female medical practitioners, such as nursing sisters.[13] Thus, much scholarship has focused heavily on the cultural discourses produced predominantly by male midwives, surgeons, and physicians, who were themselves campaigning for "professional recognition" and their place in the medical hierarchy, alongside explorations of the few "exceptional" female midwives who emerged in the seventeenth century to join in the printed debates.[14] This heavily skewed traditional reconstructions of midwifery in early modern Britain and France toward a straightforwardly gendered struggle for control of the birth chamber during normal and difficult births, despite some scholars efforts to paint a more nuanced analysis.[15]

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of Approaches to 'Domestic Work': Women, Work and the Pre-Industrial Economy," *Past and Present* 243 (2019): 35–70.

12. For Monica Green's call for more creative approaches to sources to uncover women's medical practice see Monica H. Green, "Women's Medical Practice and Health Care in Medieval Europe," *Signs* 14 (1989): 434–73; her "Documenting Medieval Women's Medical Practice," in *Practical Medicine from Salerno to the Black Death*, ed. Luis García-Ballester, Roger French, Jon Arrizabalaga, and Andrew Cunningham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 322–52 and her, *Making Women's Medicine Masculine. The Rise of Male Authority in Pre-Modern Gynaecology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Sandra Cavallo developed the concept of "bodywork" in her *Artisans of the Body. Identities, Families and Masculinities in Early Modern Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007) and Mary E. Fissell urged historians of female medical practitioners and healthcare providers to investigate women's "bodywork" in her "Introduction: Women, Health, and Healing in Early Modern Europe," special issue, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 82, no. 1 (2008): 1–17. Moral de Calatrava ("A Spanish Midwife Appeals to the King") notes the linguistic erasure of women's medical and obstetrical skills in Spanish archives.

13. Mary Fissell, "Man Midwifery Revisited," *Reproduction. Antiquity to the Present Day* ed. Nick Hopwood, Rebecca Flemming and Lauren Kassell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 319–32, at p. 331.

14. On historians' skewing of the history of women's healthcare see Monica H. Green, "Gendering the History of Women's Healthcare," *Gender and History* 20 (2008): 487–518. On physicians' rhetorical and written campaigns see Lynn Bennett, *Rhetoric, Medicine, and the Woman Writer, 1600–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) and Hannah Murphy, *A New Order of Medicine. The Rise of Physicians in Reformation Nuremberg* (Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019).

15. For Britain this narrative derives largely from Adrian Wilson, *The Making of Man-Midwifery: Childbirth in England, 1660–1770* (London: UCL Press, 1995). Work in this vein for early modern France includes Jacques Gélis, *La Sage-femme ou le médecin: Une nouvelle conception de la vie* (Paris: Fayard, 1988); Wendy Perkins, "Midwives Versus Doctors. The Case of Louise Bourgeois," *Seventeenth*

We know far less about seventeenth-century French midwives than we do about their eighteenth-century counterparts, and far less about provincial than Parisian midwives; not only did they produce far fewer texts than their successors, as we will see, but there is less surviving material about their lives and practices than there is about the rules regulating those practices, and of course there is an abundance of male-authored cultural and medical discourse accompanying those regulations.[16] Consequently, scholarship on seventeenth-century female French midwives understandably remains dominated by work on royal midwife, Louise Bourgeois, the first female author of a midwifery treatise in any European vernacular, and her struggles and collaborations with other (mostly male) medical practitioners.[17] By contrast, historians of other European contexts,

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Century 3 (1988): 135–57; Adéline Gargam, "Un nouveau critère d'évaluation du 'genre' en obstétrique: Les opuscules d'accouchement écrits par les femmes au XVIIIe siècle (1677–1800)," in Dion et al., eds., *Enfanter dans la France d'Ancien Régime*, 51–65, at p. 64, "Paroles de sages-femmes: Réflexions sur la condition des femmes en obstétrique dans la France des Lumières (1677–1800)," *Lumières* 24 (2016): 117–31, and *Les Femmes savantes, lettrées et cultivées dans la littérature française des Lumières ou la conquête d'une légitimité (1690–1804)* (Paris, Champion, 2013), 1:84–115. Lianne McTavish, Valerie Worth-Stylianou, and Géraldine Ther offer more nuanced readings of the gendering of early modern French midwifery. See Lianne McTavish, "On Display: Portraits of Seventeenth-Century French Men-Midwives," *Social History of Medicine* 14 (2001): 389–415; McTavish, "L'ambivalence du corps féminin en France au début de l'époque moderne," in *Femmes en fleurs, femmes en corps: Sang, santé, sexualités, du Moyen Âge aux Lumières*, ed. Cathy McClive and Nicole Pellegrin (Saint-Etienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Etienne, 2010), 183–201; McTavish, *Childbirth and the Display of Authority in Early Modern France* (Aldershot, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005); Valerie Worth-Stylianou, ed. and trans., *Pregnancy and Birth in Early Modern France: Treatises by Caring Physicians and Surgeons (1581–1625)* (Toronto: Iter Inc. and Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2013); and Géraldine Ther, "La représentation des sages-femmes dans les *factums* de la fin de l'Ancien Régime," in Dion et al., eds., *Enfanter dans la France d'Ancien Régime*, 81–95. On male physicians' long-standing interest in obstetrics and gynaecology see Monica H. Green, *Making Women's Medicine Masculine*, and Helen King, *Midwifery, Obstetrics and the Rise of Gynaecology: The Uses of a Sixteenth-Century Compendium* (Aldershot, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007).

16. On the regulation of midwifery in early modern France see Brockliss and Jones, *The Medical World of Early Modern France*, 263–72, 6101–7; Susan Broomhall, *Women's Medical Work in Early Modern France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), chap. 1; "Editor's Introduction," Louise Bourgeois, *Midwife to the Queen of France: Diverse Observations,* trans. Stephanie O'Hara, ed. Alison Klairmont Lingo (Toronto: Iter Press; Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2017), 20–37; R.L. Petrelli, "The Regulation of French Midwifery During the Ancien Régime," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 26 (1971): 276–92 and Tiffany D. Vann Sprecher and Ruth Mazo Karras, "The Midwife and the Church: Ecclesiastical Regulation of Midwives in Brie, 1499–1504," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 85 (2011): 171–92. For a British perspective see, Samuel S. Thomas, "Early Modern Midwifery: Splitting the Profession, Connecting the History," *Journal of Social History* 43 (2009): 115–38.

17. Alison Klairmont Lingo gives a detailed overview of approaches to Bourgeois's life and texts in her "Editor's Introduction," *Midwife to the Queen of France*, 1–57; Klairmont Lingo, "Louise Bourgeois's School of Learning and Action," *Women's Studies* 49, no. 3 (2020): 229–55. See also, Perkins, *Midwifery*

where male midwives did not really take off, have used a broader array of sources and questions to produce important histories of the spectrum of ordinary early modern midwives and their practice.[18] Recent studies also successfully analyze women's skilled medical work outside the realm of midwifery in multiple early modern European contexts, clearly demonstrating that their increasing invisibility in administrative sources did not always equate to their marginalization in practice.[19] Nina Gelbart, Nathalie Sage-Pranchère, Scottie Hale Buehler, and Margaret Carlyle have made creative use of more abundant archival sources and printed material to write innovative histories of ordinary as well as extraordinary eighteenth-and nineteenth-century French midwives showcasing what is possible

and Medicine; Perkins, "Midwives Versus Doctors"; Bridgette Sheridan, "Whither Childbearing: Gender, Status, and the Professionalization of Medicine in Early Modern France," *in Gender and Scientific Discourse in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Kathleen P. Long (Farnham, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 239–58; Sheridan, "At Birth: The Modern State, Modern Medicine, and the Royal Midwife Louise Bourgeois in Seventeenth-Century France," *Dynamis* 19 (1999): 145–66; Sheridan, "From a Manly Knowledge to a Man's Helpmeet: Changing Conceptions of Midwives' Roles in Seventeenth-Century France," in *Creating Women: Representation, Self-Representation, and Agency in the Renaissance*, ed. Manuela Scarci (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2013), 129–47; Sheridan, "Patronage and the Power of the Pen: The Making of the French Royal Midwife Louise Bourgeois," *Early Modern Women*, 13, no.1 (2018): 58–79. Notably, evidence about seventeenth-century surgeon-midwives also largely derives from printed medical texts: see McTavish, *Childbirth and the Display of Authority.*

18. See, for example, Kosmin, *Authority, Gender, and Midwifery*; Angela Joy Muir, "Midwifery and Maternity Care for Single Mothers in Eighteenth-Century Wales," *Social History of Medicine* 33 (2020): 394–416; Moral de Calatrava, "A Spanish Midwife Appeals to the King"; and Vainio-Korhonen, "Midwives as Expert Witnesses." Social and cultural histories of early modern English midwives which complicate the replacement narrative include: Doreen Evenden, *The Midwives of Seventeenth-Century London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Julia Allison, "Midwives of Sixteenth-Century Rural East Anglia," *Rural History* 27 (2016): 1–19; Lisa Forman Cody, *Birthing the Nation: Sex, Science, and the Conception of Eighteenth-Century Britons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Sarah Fox, *Giving Birth in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: University of London Press, 2022).

19. See Broomhall, *Women's Medical Work*; Alisha Rankin, *Panaceia's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Sharon T. Strocchia, ed., "Women and Healthcare in Early Modern Europe," special issue, *Renaissance Studies* 28, no. 4 (2014) and all the essays in the special issue, especially Annemarie Kinzelbach, "Women and Healthcare in Early Modern German Towns," *Renaissance Studies* 28, no. 4 (2014): 619–38; Strocchia, *Forgotten Healers: Women and the Pursuit of Health in Late Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019); *Health and Healing in the Early Modern Iberian World. A Gendered Perspective,* ed. Margaret E. Boyle and Sarah E. Owens (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 2021), and Sara Ritchey, *Acts of Care: Recovering Women in Late Medieval Health* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021). For similar work on women in science see Nina Rattner Gelbart, *Minerva's French Sisters. Women of Science in Enlightenment France* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2021) and Michelle DiMeo, *Lady Ranelagh: The Incomparable Life of Robert Boyle's Sister* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021).

when we interrogate sources from a broader range of perspectives.[20] The case of Mme Baudoin can help us to dig more deeply into the complexities of midwifery in seventeenth-century France in a number of ways.

Looking at Mme Baudoin's life and writings from the perspectives of social, religious, and women's and gender history, the history of work, as well the history of medicine, knowledge, and science, considerably enhances our understanding of what was possible for a seventeenth-century French midwife working in provincial France, rather than Paris, even if she cannot be taken as representative of seventeenth-century French midwives. This volume does not merely add a new, overlooked voice, another treatise, to the tiny library of known female-authored midwifery texts (although that is important); it analyzes her expression of her voice through her text, in the context of what we can know about Mme Baudoin's life, work, and the relationships that both made her knowledge production possible, and preserved her voice to this day.

A microanalysis of Mme Baudoin's life, networks, and text greatly enhances what we can learn about the possibilities of women's (medical) work, lay women's situations in religious networks, and what it meant to live as an independent woman in provincial France, as well as the opportunities for midwives.[21] Exploring Mme Baudoin's life and career as a married, separated, and finally widowed woman, as a Jansenist lay woman and part of a persecuted religious minority, and as a female midwife and hospital governor in a provincial town underscores her capabilities and her agency, and connects historiographies of midwifery, hospital administration, and public health.[22] Mme Baudoin was constrained by her

20. See Nina Rattner Gelbart, *The King's Midwife: A History and Mystery of Madame du Coudray* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998); Nathalie Sage Pranchère, *L'Ecole des sages-femmes: Naissance d'un corps professionnel, 1786–1917* (Tours: Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, 2017); Scottie Hale Buehler, "Aborted Dreams and Contested Labors: The Société Royale de Médecine's 1786 Survey of Midwives," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 95, 2 (2021): 137–68; Hale Buehler, "Being and Becoming a Midwife in Eighteenth-Century France: Geographies of Pedagogical Practices and Objects," Phd diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2020, and Margaret Carlyle, "Phantoms in the Classroom: Midwifery Training in Enlightenment Europe," *Know*, 2,1 (2018): 111–36.

21. I draw here on Deborah Simonton and Anne Montenach's review of the definition of "agency." Simonton and Montenach move beyond the traditional binary of women as either empowered or as victims reacting exclusively in resistance to patriarchal oppression; applying instead the understanding that actors are products of the environment which produces the patriarchal structures they resist in order to define agency as arising from "everyday interactions in which women accommodated, negotiated or manipulated social rules and gender norms," necessitating the specific contextualization of what women did and could do. See their introduction to *Female Agency in the Urban Economy*, 1–14. For an overview of recent approaches to women's work see Bellavitis, *Women's Work and Rights*. For Fontaine's use of "capabilities" see n11.

22. An increasing body of literature points to the significant medical and caring roles women occupied in hospital nursing and public health in early modern Europe. In 1989 Colin Jones made the case for

gender in many ways typical of female midwives, working, and married women in seventeenth-century France. But she also seized upon various "pockets of opportunity" in her everyday life, and through her daily connections, to marshal her capabilities, her obstetrical knowledge, and her economic and managerial abilities.[23] Mme Baudoin manoeuvred herself into a position of financial independence and administrative responsibility that enabled her to protect herself as a separated and widowed woman, to dictate the daily running of the Clermont-Ferrand Hôtel-Dieu for more than thirty years as its governor, and, following her death, by tying the hands of her successors through a wealth legacy. As well as information about her extensive participation in local credit networks and financial acumen, surviving notarial documents also provide evidence of her values, intentions, and desires. Her investment choices were not simply pragmatic, but also point to her "emotional communities" revealing the intersecting affective as well as confessional ties that bound her to Vallant, to the Pascal Périer family, to the Hôtel-Dieu, and to her local Jansenist network. Reading these documents along and against the grain, and drawing on methods developed in the history of emotions, we can gain insight into her performance of her emotions and the ways she shaped and communicated the myriad layers of her identity, and her capabilities, as a working midwife.[24] Analysis of notarized contracts, her will, her other letters to Vallant,

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"viewing the sisters [of Charity] as medical practitioners." See his: "Sisters of Charity and the Ailing Poor," *Social History of Medicine*, 2, 3, (1989): 339–48, at p. 340. Marie-Claude Dinet-Lecomte "Les Hôpitaux sous l'Ancien Régime: Des entreprises difficiles à gérer?" *Histoire, Economie et Société* 18 (1999): 527–45, at pp. 541–42, and her *Les soeurs hospitalières en France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Champion, 2005), chap. 7; Tim McHugh, "Expanding Women's Rural Medical Work in Early Modern Brittany: The Daughters of the Holy Spirit," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 67 (2012): 428–56. On the roles of lay as well as religious women in hospitals see: Broomhall, *Women's Medical Work in Early Modern France*, chap. 3; Alison Klairmont Lingo, "Women Healers and the Medical Marketplace of Sixteenth-Century Lyon," *Dynamis*, 19 (1999): 79–94; Natalie Zemon Davis, "Scandale à l'Hôtel-Dieu de Lyon (1537–1543), "in *La France d'Ancien Régime. Études réunies en l'honneur de Pierre Goubert* (Toulouse: Privat, 1984), 1:175–87. On women holding office in public health administration see Annemarie Kinzelbach, "Women and Healthcare"; Richelle Munkhoff, "Poor Women and Parish Public Health in Sixteenth-Century London," *Renaissance Studies*, 28, 4 (2014): 579–96 and Jane Stevens Crawshaw, "Families, Medical Secrets, and Public Health in Early Modern Venice," *Renaissance Studies* 28, 4 (2014): 597–618.

23. For "pockets of opportunity" see Daryl M. Hafter, *Women at Work in Preindustrial France* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 1.

24. I draw throughout on various approaches to the history of emotions discussed in *Early Modern Emotions: An Introduction,* ed. Susan Broomhall (London: Routledge, 2017) and Katie Barclay, "State of the Field. The History of Emotions," *History*, 106, 371 (2021): 456–66. On institutional records as evidence of emotions see Susan Broomhall, "Beholding Suffering and Providing Care: Emotional Performance on the Death of Poor Children in Sixteenth-Century French Institutions," in *Death, Emotion and Childhood in Premodern Europe*, ed. Katie Barclay, K. Reynolds and C. Rawnsley (Houndsmill: Palgrave, 2016): 65–86. On "emotional communities" which map onto social communities, revealing the systems of feeling and their expressions which underpin what those groups or

and Vallant's paperwork, in conjunction with her treatise, illustrates what she did to make the most of these "pockets of opportunity," and how she might have felt about her life and work, revealing a fuller and more complex picture of what a seventeenth-century provincial French woman and midwife, operating outside the sphere of royal patronage, and removed from corporate and faculty oversight in Paris, could be, do, and become, than we previously thought possible.

I address all of these issues in this introduction, but first we will turn to an exploration of who Mme Baudoin was, of the role of Jansenism in her personal life and in her writing, and what she accomplished at the Hôtel-Dieu in Clermont-Ferrand. Next, we will examine the role her emotional communities: her extensive Jansenist, scientific, and financial networks, played in her life and her knowledge production, highlighting her considerable obstetrical, financial, and managerial skills. We will then reflect on Mme Baudoin's text in the context of what we know about writing on midwifery, and midwifery training and practice in seventeenth-century France, before turning to look in more detail at the format and materiality of Mme Baudoin's treatise in a letter. We conclude with a discussion of the treatise as a hidden, unpublished document, the implications of record-keeping, and the archival afterlife of a text that has survived to be read and studied three hundred and fifty years after it was written.

A Midwife's Life and Work

Who was Marie Baudoin?

Marie Gosse was born ca. 1625 in Paris, probably in the parish of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois.[25] She died in Clermont-Ferrand on February 15, 1700, and was buried on the same day at her parish church of Saint-Pierre.[26] We know that she trained at the Hôtel-Dieu, Paris, under the tutelage of the renowned chief mistress-midwife Madame Le Vacher, to whom she paid homage in an aside in her letter to Vallant, and that she moved to Clermont-Ferrand in 1651 to spend her fifty-year career as a midwife and ultimately governor of the Hôtel-Dieu there.[27]

Marie Gosse came from a Parisian artisanal family. She married into the bourgeoisie, but her origins were by no means elite. Unlike Louise Bourgeois, she did not have close family connections to medicine or surgery apart from a distant paternal uncle who worked as a master-surgeon in Parthenay, Deux-Sèvres, more

communities perceived as valuable or harmful see Barbara Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," *American Historical Review*, 107, 3 (2002): 821–45, esp. 842–45.

25. I have been unable to trace the entry for her baptism.

26. Archives Départementales du Puy (hereafter ADP) 3E 500 476, Parish register Saint Pierre 1696–1717.

27. See pp. 34–39.

than three hundred miles from Paris in Aquitaine.[28] It is unlikely that she even met him, since he worked in Parthenay from 1618, dying there in 1642—although he does seem to have contributed, if indirectly, to her dowry, a point we will return to later.[29] Her father, stepfather, brother-in-law, and maternal uncle were all master craftsmen in their guilds. As such they belonged to the most secure ranks of artisans, even though their trades were not associated with the six most powerful and wealthy guilds in Paris.[30] Marie's father, Salomon Gosse, master saddler in the Queen's company, died when she was very young; her mother, Marie Desmontz, of the rue Saint-Germain, parish of Saint-Germain de l'Auxerrois, contracted a second marriage on July 25, 1630, to Jacques Trouvé, a merchant and master silversmith of the same parish, with her brother-in-law, André Courcelle, a master furbisher and polisher of swords, as witness.[31] Trouvé, with DeSimontz, became official tutor and guardian of Marie and her older sister Magdeleine.[32] By the time Magdeleine contracted marriage on August 16, 1637, the blended family had moved a short distance, changing parishes to the rue de la Tannerie in the parish of Saint-Jacques-la-Boucherie, in the butchers' quarter, but staying on the right bank of the Seine within walking distance of the Île de la Cité and the Hôtel-Dieu. Magdeleine was a minor when she married Jacques LeBlanc, master beltmaker of Paris, son of a deceased winemaker of Clermont, but her exact age is not given. Unlike her younger sister, Magdeleine did not sign her marriage contract because she said she could not write.[33]

Marie Gosse herself contracted marriage with Claude Baudoin on February 5, 1641, at the unusually young age of sixteen.[34] They were married a little more

28. Bourgeois's husband trained and worked with renowned royal surgeon Ambroise Paré for more than twenty years.

29. Archives Nationales, Minutier Central (hereafter "AN MC") ET/LXVIII/124, December 15, 1635, "Pierre Gosse, peintre, transaction entre les héritiers de son frère Daniel Gosse (chirurgien à Parthenay), autres frères défunts Salomon Gosse, et Magdeleine Gosse."

30. On guild structures and artisans see James R. Farr, *Hands of Honor: Artisans and Their World in Dijon, 1550–1650* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988).

31. AN MC/ET/XIII/12, July 25, 1630. Marriage contract Marie Desmontz and Jacques Trouvé. Thanks to Julie Hardwick for help deciphering the notarial documents pertaining to Gosse's Parisian family.

32. This is stipulated in the contract settling Pierre Gosse's inheritance in 1635. AN MC/ET/LXVIII/124, December 15, 1635.

33. AN MC/ET/XIII/26 16 August 1637 Marriage contract Jacques Leblanc and Magdeleine Gosse.

34. AN MC/ET/XIII/33, Marriage contract Claude Baudoin, coursier en vin and Marie Gosse, February 5, 1641. By 1648 Trouvé and Desmontz had moved to the rue Saint Jacques de la Boucherie. AN MC/ET/II/187, 1, December 9, 1648, Salomon Gosse, transports de droits successifs par Jacques Le Blanc et Madeleine Gosse. Inventaire des biens de Jacques Trouvé et de Marie Desmontz; AN MC/ET/II/188, January 3,1649, Post-mortem Inventory following the death of Marie Desmontz, formerly widow of Salomon Gosse, wife of Jacques Trouvé, transport of inheritance rights Madeleine Gosse.

than a month later.[35] We cannot know how the intersection of affection and pragmatism played out in their courtship.[36] Before his marriage Claude Baudoin lived with his mother, Marie Lucas, who was separated by property from his father, Denys Baudoin. In 1641 Claude and Marie Lucas lived on the same street as Marie Gosse, her mother, and stepfather, rue de la Tannerie, near the Notre-Dame bridge and the Port aux Changes, which is presumably how they knew each other.[37]

Marie Gosse was particularly adept at managing her finances in later life; a skill she may have acquired as a result of experiences early on in her marriage. The marriage contract of Claude Baudoin and Marie Gosse set up a long-term complex microcredit arrangement for payment of Marie's dowry by her mother and stepfather, and was perhaps Marie's first direct experience of the system of peer-to-peer lending she would use to great profit later on.[38] Instead of a lump sum, Marie and Claude would receive a *rente* of twenty *écus* on the eve of the nuptials based on the sum of 320 *écus*.[39] An *écu* was valued at between three and five *livres tournois* in 1641, depending on whether it was struck in silver or gold (the contract does not specify). This meant that the dowry was roughly worth between 960 and 1,600 *livres*, close to the average range of 1,200 to 1,400 *livres* Julie Hardwick identifies for artisans in seventeenth-century Lyon and Nantes.[40]

35. AN MC/ET/XIII/33, Transport by Jacques Trouvé to Claude Baudoin and Marie Gosse, his wife, March 9, 1641.

36. On the "emotional fabric" of decisions about marriage in seventeenth-century France see Julie Hardwick, "'He asked her why she was crying'. Young People's Intimate Relationships, Emotions, and the Making of Marriage in Early Modern France," in *Courtship, Marriage and Marriage Breakdown: Approaches from the History of Emotion*, ed. Katie Barclay, Jeffrey Meek, and Andrew Thomson (London: Routledge, 2019), 33–47.

37. AN MC/ET/XIII/33. February 5 1641.

38. Microcredit refers to the system of peer-to-peer lending of small amounts of money.

39. AN MC/ET/XIII/33. February 5 1641. The families used this system in 1630 when Marie Desmontz remarried. See AN MC/ET/XIII/12 25 July 1630. Desmontz's dowry was 400 *livres*, of which she paid 37 *livres*, 10 *sous* of *rente*. Transfer of dowry payments into a sort of credit agreement or *rente* seems to have been common in various provincial towns. Farr also notes that "payment of apports was frequently deferred or made in instalments over a number of years" in Dijon; see *Hands of Honor,* 94n20. Allan A. Tulchin notes this practice in sixteenth-century Nîmes in "Low Dowries, Absent Parents: Marrying for Love in an Early Modern French Town," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 44 (2013): 713–38, at p. 726. Marielle Romier claims that such agreements were very common in eighteenth-century Grenoble: "Le régime matrimonial des commerçants et artisans au XVIIIe siècle (1724–93) d'après les actes des notaires grenoblois," *Revue historique de droit français et étranger* 77 (1999): 191–211, at p. 20. Françoise Hildesheimer finds that dowries were paid on average over a period of three to five years in seventeenth-century Nice: "L'organisation familiale à Nice au XVIIe siècle," *Revue historique de droit français et étranger* 54 (1976): 177–202, at pp. 182–83.

40. Julie Hardwick, *Family Business: Litigation and the Political Economies of Daily Life in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 63. It is higher than the average dowries of daughters of masters James Farr identified in Dijon from 1601 to 1650 (*Hands of Honor*, 96).

The first payment was made to Claude Baudoin on March 9, 1641, indicating that their marriage took place the following day, March 10.[41] Magdeleine's considerably smaller dowry of 500 *livres* does not follow this pattern, and was instead paid in a lump sum. Magdeleine's dowry was paid to her and her husband by various members of her family, including her grandfather, and a portion came from her inheritance from her paternal uncle Pierre Gosse.[42] Four years later family finances presumably precluded the direct payment of Marie's larger dowry, and a more complex microcredit agreement was used. This agreement tied into existing interfamilial credit arrangements between Daniel Gosse, the Parthenay master-surgeon, and the other heirs of Pierre and Salomon Gosse, involving an earlier loan made to Daniel, presumably to fund the costs of his surgical training and mastership examinations.[43]

Marie's dowry was two-to-three times larger than her sister's which is probably another reason it was paid in instalments. We might ask whether there is a medical connection here between the paternal uncle master-surgeon and Marie's future midwifery training at the Hôtel-Dieu, but there is no direct evidence for this. Perhaps the difference in dowry may be explained by the difference in wealth and status of Magdeleine and Marie's husbands. LeBlanc was an artisan with a similar background to the Gosse/Trouvé family, whereas Baudoin was a member of the Parisian bourgeoisie and represented a considerable step up in status for Marie. Or the larger dowry may be a sign of Marie being the favored child. She certainly appears to have received a better education than her older sister which is difficult to explain. A period of hardship for the family between the death of Marie and Magdeleine's father and their mother's remarriage to Trouvé may account for why Marie, who was five years old in 1630, benefited from an education her older sister, did not. Both Marie and her mother could sign their names far more neatly than Jacques Trouvé and Jacques LeBlanc, for instance, and yet Magdeleine could not manage this most basic sign of literacy.[44] The most elegant signature on Marie's marriage contract is that of her future husband Claude, another sign

41. AN MC/ET/XIII/33, March 9, 1641. I have not been able to consult the entry in the parish registers for their wedding owing to Covid-19 restrictions on travel.

42. Magdeleine Gosse's considerably lower dowry of 500 *livres* comprised 150 *livres* from her maternal grandfather, 300 *livres* from Trouvé and her mother which included her share of her uncle Pierre Gosse's inheritance and 200 *livres* from her mother left to her by her first husband, plus 50 *livres* for a trousseau. AN MC/ET/XIII/26 16 August 1637.

43. AN MC/ET/XIII/33, March 9, 1641; AN MC/ET/LXVIII/124, December 15, 1635.

44. Estimations of literacy are often based on the capacity to sign rather than to read and write and demonstrate significant discrepancies between urban and rural areas, and between the north and south of France. They are also usually gendered male. The pattern in Marie Gosse's family bucks this trend, with the exception of her husband. See Pierre Goubert and Daniel Roche, *Les Français et l'Ancien Régime*, vol. 2: *Culture et société* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1991), 144–52.

of the higher status and greater wealth of his family, in addition to the gendered nature of education in mid-seventeenth-century France.

Claude Baudoin's bourgeois status and wealth may have enabled Marie's exclusive and expensive training at the Hôtel-Dieu. His contribution to the marriage was 2,800 *livres*' worth of wine given to him by his mother in 1639—almost double Marie's dowry.[45] This suggests that Claude had been preparing for marriage for a while and that he was probably older than Marie. How much older is not clear since the marriage contract does not state their ages. However, Claude was also under the age of majority since his father supplied a procuration, in absentia, permitting Claude to contract marriage to whom he chose. These documents could also suggest that Claude and Marie had wanted to marry earlier, but that her family had not given their permission, obliging the couple to wait until Marie was sixteen, or until Claude himself was financially secure in his office.

In 1641, Claude Baudoin was a wine broker (*courtier de vin*).[46] Claude, like his father Denys, occupied a venal municipal or public office in Paris created by the Crown to oversee the quality and sale of all wines coming into the city; this oversight ostensibly ensured that the wine had not been watered down or spoiled in transit, but also controlled and recorded the sale of wine in the city, certifying that the correct taxes were paid. In essence these offices worked on a credit system; another example of Marie's early exposure to financial practices. The Crown created and sold these offices in 1572 to individuals who received certain economic and social privileges in return for their initial investment of capital.[47] One of these was an individual's right to call himself a "bourgeois de Paris."[48] Another was the right to collect tax on wine sales. In 1641 Claude and his father were two of twenty-nine wine brokers in Paris; this number increased to forty-nine by 1644. Wine brokers were paid five *sols* per barrel of wine sold under their brokerage, rising to eight *sols* in 1644, even if they were not present physically at the point of sale.[49] Michel Surun estimates that in about 1637, each Parisian consumed a little under half a litre of wine per day. In a city of 415,000, that amounted to 64,368,000 litres of wine per year, creating a healthy regular income for wine brokers.[50] How

45. The gift was notarized in 1639 and appended to the marriage contract as was Denys Baudoin's procuration. AN MC/ET/XIII/33. February 5 1641, f. 3.

46. Régine Pouzet mistakenly describes Baudoin as a lawyer ("maître"). which would indicate a very different and possibly higher status background. See her *Chronique des Pascal: "Les affaires du monde" d'Etienne Pascal à Marguerite Périer (1588–1733)* (Paris: Champion, 2001), 208; as well as the entry for Mme Baudoin in the *Dictionnaire de Port-Royal*, <http://archive.is/Cwo2L>, accessed February 1, 2014.

47. Stéphanie Lachaud-Martin, "Les Courtiers bordelais, intermédiaires de commerce de vin aux XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles," *Revue historique* 686 (2018): 321–46, at p. 324.

48. AN MC/ET/II/189, August 5, 1649, "Transports de droits successifts Trouve Jacques et Claude Baudoin, bourgeois de Paris agissant pour Marie Gosse sa femme, héritière du défunte."

49. Nicolas de La Mare, *Traité de la police* (Paris: Michel Brunet, 1719), 3.5.625.

50. Michel Surun, *Marchands de vin en gros à Paris au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007), 7.

wisely Claude Baudoin handled the income his office brought is perhaps a matter of contention given his subsequent financial separation from Marie. It is entirely probable that Marie learned about the dangers of financial mismanagement, as well as how to properly manage credit agreements, from her husband.

Claude Baudoin's municipal office technically required him to be physically present in Paris. However, it is possible that Claude moved to Clermont-Ferrand with Marie Gosse in 1651, employed a substitute in Paris, and continued to receive revenue from his Parisian office in absentia. Constant reiterations of the regulation that wine brokers be physically present at the point of sale to oversee the quality of wine and collect taxes suggest that many were in fact flouting this requirement.[51] Indeed, we know that in 1641, Baudoin's father Denys was doing just that, and it was perhaps even his mother who collected the tax in his stead.[52] It is also possible that Claude and Marie's marriage was already in trouble in 1651 and that he remained in Paris whilst Marie moved to Auvergne. Either way, Claude likely remained in office as a "maître courratier de vins de la ville de Paris" until his death.[53]

Marie Gosse and her husband may have converted to Jansenism within a few years of their marriage and before their move to Clermont-Ferrand, a noted Jansenist enclave. Perhaps Claude Baudoin was already a Jansenist when they married, and he converted Marie, or maybe she converted and he did not, and this led to their eventual separation. The impact of the ongoing Fronde on life in Paris may well have contributed to the Baudoins' growing unease in the capital, but their adherence to Jansenism was likely a factor in their move to Clermont, the municipality that would offer Mme Baudoin the position of midwife in July 1651.[54] In the meantime, on August 5, 1649, Claude and Marie were living outside the city walls of Paris in the meadow that was the "Grande rue du Faubourg-Saint-Jacques à la Croix de Fer" (at the Iron Cross) near the Jansenist church Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas,

51. Jacques Savary des Bruslons, *Dictionnaire universel de Commerce*, 3 vols. (Paris: Veuve Estienne et fils, 1748), 729; Pierre Richelet, *Dictionnaire françois* (Geneva: Jean Herman Widerhold, 1680), 193.

52. AN MC/ET/XIII/33. February 5, 1641 marriage contract. Denys Baudoin and his wife Marie Lucas were officially separated by property, but they were also actually living apart. She in Paris, rue de la Tannerie, and he in Puizeau, Gascony.

53. His occupation is given as "maitre courratier de vin de la ville de Paris" ("Master wine broker of the city of Paris") in the following notarized documents. ADP 5 E 16/25, "constitution de rente viagere pour Mme Baudoin," May 23, 1676; ADP 5 E 16/32, "Rente constituée par Mme Baudoin pour les administrateurs de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Clermont," September 2, 1679. Thanks to Rafe Blaufarb and Robert Descimon for discussing Baudoin's job title with me.

54. Etienne Pascal, father of Mme Baudoin's friend Gilberte Pascal Périer, and his children Blaise and Jacqueline escaped the tensions in Paris moving to safety with his daughter and son-in-law's family in Clermont-Ferrand from 1649 to 1651. On the lucrative offer made to Mme Baudoin by Clermont, see p. 35. The Fronde was a series of civil conflicts between Louis XIV and a combined opposition of French elites that began with the king's edicts to increase taxation.

and the Jansenist headquarters, the Port-Royal abbey, on the left bank of the Seine.[55] Such a move away from the tight-knit central network of streets where both Marie and Claude had lived with their mothers, and away from Marie's sister, crossing the Seine to the suburb of Saint-Jacques, and with a much further walk to the Hôtel-Dieu, is unquestionably significant. It may in part represent an initial attempt to flee the tumult of the city during the political upheaval, and possibly indicates emotional and familial conflict caused by the protracted and troubled wrangling over the inheritance from Marie Gosse's parents following her mother's death in December 1648.[56] Changing parishes from the familial Roman Catholic churches of her youth to live in such close proximity to Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas and Port-Royal undoubtedly marked a confessional as well as geographical shift, given what we know of Marie's adherence to Jansenism once she was in Clermont-Ferrand. Depending on exactly when Marie Gosse completed her training at the Hôtel-Dieu, the move may have meant a greater distance to travel to her place of work; if she were already practicing as a midwife in the city of Paris by this point (as her comment in 1671 that she had thirty years' experience of midwifery indicates was probably the case), the move would have brought other changes to her working practices. The largely rural Faubourg Saint-Jacques was heavily populated with newly established convents and monasteries in which she would have found very few clients in need of her obstetrical expertise.[57] She might have had to travel further through the city to reach the homes of labouring mothers, encountering competition from local neighbourhood midwives who lived closer to their target population. The difficulties of these travels for work, the death of her mother, and possible estrangement from her sister, if not also an unofficial separation from Claude, combined with her Jansenism, may well have been motivating factors in her move to Clermont-Ferrand. Indeed, it may well have been her Jansenist faith, as well as her reputation as a skilled midwife, that facilitated her recruitment on such favorable terms by the town of Clermont-Ferrand in 1651.

55. AN MC/ET/II/189, August 5, 1649.

56. Settling this inheritance was a long and drawn-out process from December 1648 to August 1649. Both Marie and Magdeleine renounced their claims to any of their late mother's estate, but not before Magdeleine's husband Leblanc was imprisoned in the Petit Châtelet. AN MC/ET/II/187 1–9 December 1648 Transport de droits successifs par Madeleine Gosse, femme de Jacques le Blanc, maître ceinturier à Paris, fille du défunt Salomon Gosse. Inventaire après décès de Marie Desmontz, acuparavant veuve de Salomon Gosse, femme de Jacques Trouvé; MC/ET/II 188 3 January 1649 Orfevre marchand Jacques Trouvé, inventaire après décès à la suite du décès de Marie Desmontz, sa femme, prisée de boutique, prisée d'orfeverie.

57. Barbara B. Diefendorf indicates that the "most dense development [of new religious houses] occurred in the Faubourg Saint-Jacques, altering the physical as well as spiritual geography of Paris." See her "Contradictions of the Century of Saints: Aristocratic Patronage and the Convents of Counter-Reformation Paris," *French Historical Studies* 24 (2001): 469–99, at p. 477.

Claude and Marie were married for thirty years or so before they officially separated their financial assets (a procedure known as a *séparation de biens*). They do not seem to have had any living children during their marriage, and it is unknown whether their childlessness had any bearing on their separation of property. It is also unclear whether or not Marie had had any pregnancies. She did not mention any surviving children when she drew up her last will and testament in 1697, and I have not found any baptismal entries in the Clermont-Ferrand parish records. That does not mean that they did not have children during the first decade of their marriage in Paris before moving to Clermont-Ferrand in 1651, but it does suggest that if they did, these children did not survive into adulthood; I have been unable to consult the Parish registers for Paris. Claude staying in Paris might be one explanation for the lack of evidence that Marie gave birth whilst in Clermont, although of course they may also have suffered from infertility as a couple. Usually, qualified, licensed midwives were older than Marie Gosse and had already had at least one child, assuming she completed her apprenticeship in the early 1640s as she indicates; in fact, many were past the age of childbearing.[58] For those who wrote obstetrical texts, it was usual to mention pregnancy and childbearing as a means of claiming embodied experiential and epistemological authority in midwifery, and this was a subject of debate between male and female midwives.[59] In a letter to her daughter, Bourgeois even went so far as to describe being pregnant with her last child while working as a midwife.[60] Indeed, seventeenth-century surgeon-midwives also presented fatherhood as evidence of their embodied expertise: François Mauriceau (1637–1709) was attacked by his contemporary male rivals Philippe Peu (1623–ca. 1707) and Paul Portal (1630–1703) for his childless status and, therefore, his inability to empathize with the issues faced by pregnant, labouring, and newly-delivered mothers.[61] Jacques Duval (ca. 1555–1620) explained his caring approach to labour as a result of having

58. The 1560 statutes regulating midwives in Paris were greatly concerned with midwives' morals, but not their marital status or their age. Marriage was required for an apprenticeship at the Hôtel-Dieu however. Henriette Carrier, *Origines de la maternité de Paris: Les maitresses sages-femmes et l'office des accouchées de l'ancien hotel-Dieu (1378–1796)* (Paris: Georges Steinheil, 1888), 81. *Statuts et reiglemens ordonnez pour toutes les matronnes ou saiges femmes de la ville, faulxbourgs, prévosté et vicomté de Paris* (Paris, 1587), 3. I am grateful to Alison Klairmont Lingo for sharing her electronic copy of this with me. See also *Statuts pour la communauté des maistres chirurgiens-jurez de Paris* (Paris: Veuve de Pierre et Louis Colin son fils, 1701), 53. On the age of female midwives and their personal experience of childbirth see McTavish's analysis of Bourgeois in *Childbirth and the Display of Authority*, 87–91, 94–95.

59. Cody, "The Politics of Reproduction"; McTavish, *Childbirth and the Display of Authority*, 94–95.

60. *Midwife to the Queen of France*, 180, 266–67.

61. See McTavish, *Childbirth and the Display of Authority*, chap. 5.

lost his own wife during childbirth.[62] Other childless midwives who wrote texts used various strategies to justify their authority as female midwives. In 1690 the German-speaking royal midwife Justine Siegemund (1636–1705) explicitly justified her competence as a childless female midwife, pointing to her experience of a pregnancy which had not resulted in a live birth, and arguing that her learning and practice were more important than her embodiment.[63] Almost a century later, royal midwife Angélique Marguerite Le Boursier du Coudray (ca. 1712–1794; hereafter "Mme du Coudray") fashioned herself as a maternal figure to Mme Coutanceau to dispel questions about her familial and maternal roles.[64]

Strikingly, Marie Gosse simply did not mention whether or not she had experienced pregnancy and childbirth at all in her treatise. She did not draw on embodied expertise in this way, nor, surprisingly, did she rationalize the lack of it. Of course, the nature of her relationship with Vallant may well have meant that she did not need to explain her personal circumstances to him or to justify her (lack of) maternity, but this would suggest that the letter was entirely personal, and not written with a wider audience in mind. Perhaps the pain of infertility, or the loss of pregnancies or infants was not something she wished to revisit. Arguably, she may also have excluded any reference to her childlessness because she did not deem it relevant to her practice or her knowledge production; like Siegemund would do nearly twenty years later, Marie staked her claim to authority in the art of childbirth on her training and decades of experience.

When Claude and Marie officially separated their financial assets, they seem to have unofficially separated physically as well, as his parents had before, although this was by no means the usual outcome of a separation of property. In fact, as Julie Hardwick notes, most couples afforded a separation of property were legally obliged to continue to live together, and often did so in complex ways.[65] Only a separation of property and person legally allowed for a separation

62. As Worth-Stylianou (*Pregnancy and Birth in Early Modern France*, xxi–xxii) notes, the experience of his own wife's death was an important factor motivating physician Jacques Duval to write about childbirth. In his *Des Hermaphrodits, accouchemens des femmes, et traitement qui est requis pour les relever en santé et bien éléver leurs enfants* (Rouen: David Geuffroy, 1612), excerpted in Worth-Stylianou, 223–91, Duval explicitly describes the tragic circumstances that befell his first wife, Anne Le Marchant. The death of their child occurred in utero after she had endured four days of labor, and she herself died a week after the delivery (p. 287).

63. See Justine Siegemund, *The Court Midwife*, ed. and trans. Lynne Tatlock (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 1; Green, *Making Women's Medicine Masculine*, 288–89.

64. Lisa Forman Cody, "Sex, Civility, and the Self: Du Coudray, d'Eon, and Eighteenth-Century Conceptions of Gendered, National, and Psychological Identity," *French Historical Studies* 24 (2001): 379–407.

65. On separations in early modern France see Julie Hardwick, "Seeking Separations: Gender, Marriages, and Household Economies in Early Modern France," *French Historical Studies* 21 (1998): 157–80; Hardwick, *Family Business*, 24, 45–48.

of domiciles, but a wife might live separately temporarily during the adjudication of the petition. This was as close to an early modern divorce as possible, although neither a separation of property, nor a separation of property and person, allowed for remarriage. A quick visit to a notary could be involved if both parties were agreeable, or a longer process before a judge in cases of conflict. Hardwick has shown that it was a significant step for couples to turn to the civil courts to resolve conjugal difficulties, and often meant that their issues of violence, discord, and abuse and mismanagement of household affairs were aired in a public process involving witnesses and petitions. Separation was not automatically accorded, moreover, so the step was particularly risky for female petitioners. Legally, the success of women's petitions for separation of property hinged on proving that a husband was not supporting them financially, or was mismanaging the household economy. A separation of property and of person was sometimes granted in more extreme cases of physical violence. If the more usual separation of property was granted, wives were entitled to the return of their dowry, trousseau, and personal property.[66] Since Marie and Claude did live apart from 1670 onward, at least, the breakdown in their relationship appears to have been more than merely financial. Documents pertaining to their separation could not be located, so we cannot assess how closely or not their case matches Hardwick's patterns; in any case, their financial separation is noted in surviving notarial documents from 1676 onward,[67] although it seems likely that their separation occurred earlier than that.

In 1670, and possibly up to 1673, Marie Gosse lived in the townhouse of her Jansenist friends, the Pascal Périers, in the parish of Notre-Dame-du-Port in Clermont-Ferrand. Florin Périer (ca. 1605–1672), an influential lawyer at the financial court, *Cour des aides*, and a town elder, was married to Gilberte Pascal (1620–1687), the sister of mathematician and philosopher Blaise Pascal (1623–1662), and of Port-Royal nun and director of the convent's school for girls, Jacqueline Pascal (1625–1661). Marie appears on the town capitation tax rolls for Florin Périer's household, and had probably begun living with the Pascal Périers around the time when the notarial negotiations or court proceedings for her separation of property commenced.[68]

66. Hardwick, "Seeking Separations"; Hardwick, *Family Business*, 20–56. Hardwick found evidence that some women established separate households on a more permanent basis.

67. There is neither any surviving notarial agreement regarding their separation, nor anything I, or the archivist was able to find in the civil court records for Clermont-Ferrand. See, for example, ADP 1B 87, "Receipt of the legacy made by Dame Garrel to the Hôtel-Dieu which included the constitution in 1676 of a life annuity to Marie Gosse, separée de biens de Claude Baudoin, maîtresse sage-femme."

68. Gustave Guilmoto, *Inventaire sommaire des archives hospitalières de Clermont-Ferrand antérieures à 1790* (Clermont-Ferrand: Mont-Louis, 1887), 15; ADP, 3E 500/945, Rôle d'imposition de Clermont-Ferrand, 1670. Mme Baudoin paid 6 *sols* in tax and 22 *sols*, 3 *deniers* for subsistance. She is noted as having 16 *sols* in interests and debts. By contrast, her host, the noble Florin Périer, paid 29 *livres*. A capitation tax (also known as a "poll" or "head" tax) was assessed directly on individuals.