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CLANDESTINE BIRTH: CARE OF UNWED PREGNANT WOMEN AND PARTURIENTS WITHIN THE DUBROVNIK FOUNDLING HOSPITAL IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT: Through the analysis of the accounting records of the Dubrovnik *Hospitale misericordiae* and comparison with similar processes elsewhere in Europe, the article examines the context of the establishment and operation of the first lying-in hospital in Dubrovnik as a result of the specific social policy of the Dubrovnik Republic. Although the sources generally conceal the identity of the parturients, the daily rhythm of their admission, delivery and discharge is analyzed. Midwives contributed significantly to the social and medical care of the unwed pregnant women and parturients admitted to the foundling hospital.

Key words: childbirth, foundling hospital, lying-in hospital, midwives, unwed pregnant women, Dubrovnik Republic, eighteenth century

Introduction

As late as the mid-twentieth century, in the eyes of the general public childbirth was still considered an act that was to take place in the privacy of one's home and in the presence of a confident person, most commonly a midwife. The women who for various reasons could not give birth at home, did so in the

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foundling hospitals. The process of the institutionalisation of childbirth is related to foundling hospitals which expanded the care of abandoned children to the needy unwed pregnant women, so that the first lying-in hospitals developed within foundling homes, such as that in Dubrovnik.

Foundling hospitals operated within the charity system which provided for the abandoned and were common throughout the Mediterranean Europe, first maintained within the infrastructure of the Church, and later also as hospices for the poor. *Hospitale misericordiae* in Dubrovnik was founded by the state in 1432 as a specialised institution for the care of abandoned children. With time, the foundling hospital also opened its doors to the children of the living and known yet needy parents, by offering either paid wetnursing or direct support to poor mothers for the breastfeeding of their own children. The care of the abandoned, most often illegitimate children, was expanded to the care of (unwed) pregnant women and parturients. Recent research has shown that childbirths had taken place in the foundling hospital at the close of the eighteenth century.¹ Spurred by various socio-political motives, lying-in hospitals were founded in most of the European centres in the course of the century. In absolutist monarchies, such as that of Prussia and of the Habsburgs, the establishment of lying-in hospitals was the result of the sovereign policy to increase the population by providing for the socially most disadvantaged strata.² In England a major role in the founding of lying-in hospitals in the eighteenth century was played by doctors obstetricians, who contributed to the advancement of obstetrics into a significant branch of medicine.³ In addition to the early modern lying-in hospitals, Italy saw the founding of schools in which the new medical practitioners—midwives and obstetricians—were educated.⁴ Indeed, childbirths in public

¹ Risto Jeremić and Jorjo Tadić, *Prilozi za istoriju zdravstvene kulture starog Dubrovnika*, vol. II. Beograd: Biblioteka Centralnog higijenskog zavoda, 1939: pp. 206-207.

² See Roy Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind. A medical history of humanity from antiquity to the present*. London: Fontana Press, 1997: pp. 293-294; Dorothy Porter, *Health, civilization and the state: a history of public health from ancient to modern times*. London: Routledge, 1999: pp. 49-54.

³ Bronwyn Croxson, »The Foundation and Evolution of the Middlesex Hospital's Lying-In Service, 1745-86«. *Social History of Medicine* 14/1 (2001): pp. 35-36 (<http://shm.oxfordjournals.org>; accessed on 14 March 2010). Cf. Lisa Forman Cody, »Living and Dying in Georgian London's Lying In Hospitals«. *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 78 (2004): p. 315 (<http://muse.jhu.edu>; accessed on 14 March 2010); Adrian Wilson, *Making of man-midwifery: Childbirth in England, 1660-1770*. London: UCL Press, 1994: p. 148.

⁴ Claudia Pancino, *Il bambino e l'acqua sporca, storia dell'assistenza al parto dalle mammane alle ostetriche (secoli XVI - XIX)*. Milano: Dipartimento di teoria, storia e ricerca sociale dell'Università di Trento, 1984: pp. 92-127.

institutions were no novelty; a model of a lying-in hospital opened within a foundling home may be traced in the Italian communes as early as the fourteenth century.⁵ What were the motives that guided the government of the Dubrovnik Republic to set up a lying-in hospital considering its administration, interior politics and the fact that social welfare was mainly the responsibility of the state?⁶ In this light, do we recognize the influence of the population policies of the great European states on the Ragusan patricians, or possibly, the efforts of the Ragusan physicians to participate in the world trends of the establishment of midwifery through state institutions? What was the character of Dubrovnik's lying-in hospital: social welfare as an evolution from the foundling hospital, a typical communal institution, or an institution which corresponded to the early modern scientific demands?

An air of clandestinity surrounded childbirth at the foundling hospital as much as it did the person who would leave a newborn in the 'wheel', a revolving device designed for the purpose, discretion being warranted by the state regulations governing the work of the hospital. The need for keeping regular accounting records in order to exercise control over the expenditures resulted in the evidence that may provide the answers to some of the issues concerning the care of the pregnant women and parturients at the state foundling hospital. What was the number of childbirths at the hospital? Who were the parturients and how was the care organised? How long did they stay there and did they participate in the hospital expenses? Was the state-provided care of the pregnant women limited to single cases at first?

Modern medical science and the development of public health were to put new demands before the midwives: specialized training and work licence.⁷ Aware of their importance for the health and welfare of the parturients and their children, an increasing number of modern cities tended to employ midwives in public service on permanent basis, such status in earlier periods being reserved for physicians and surgeons only.⁸ Did the Dubrovnik Republic employ midwives

⁵ Volker Hunecke, *I trovatelli di Milano. Bambini esposti e famiglie espositrici dal XVII al XIX secolo*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1989: p. 93.

⁶ See Zdenka Janeković-Römer, *Okvir slobode: dubrovačka vlastela između srednjovjekovlja i humanizma*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 1999: p. 252.

⁷ Helena Bunijevac, Željko Dugac and Stella Fatović Ferenčić, *120 godina škole za primalje u Zagrebu*. Zagreb: Gandalf, 1997: pp. 20-28.

⁸ Cf. Biserka Belicza, »Primaljstvo u srednjoj Dalmaciji«, in: *Radovi međunarodnog simpozija prigodom proslave 700 obljetnice ljekarne u Trogiru*, ed. Hrvoje Tartalja. Zagreb: Institut za povijest prirodnih, matematičkih i medicinskih znanosti JAZU, 1973: pp. 343-351.

in public service during the eighteenth century, or was their work independent? What status did they have at the foundling hospital? Lastly, who were the midwives employed at the foundling hospital and what was the nature of their work?

The work of Dubrovnik's *Hospitale misericordiae* has been studied by Jeremić and Tadić on the basis of a single preserved book on this topic, as suggested by its title.⁹ The Book of Parturients (*Libro delle Partorenti all'Ospedale della Misericordia*) for the period 1793-1798 contains the records of the admission of the pregnant women, with names rarely mentioned, the length of stay, expenses and sometimes a note on the reason of the discharge from hospital.¹⁰ A survey of all the accounting records showed that the Book of Expenditures, Journal and the Main Books also contain entries of the expenses related to deliveries within the hospital. The Book of Expenditures (*Libro delle spese*) contains a series of payments to the governess for the care of the pregnant women, as well as the payments to the midwives.¹¹ The Journal (*Giornale*) contains entries in chronological order of the payments to wetnurses, governess and other employees of the foundling hospital, along with some of the hospital's regular associates, such as masons, bookshop keepers, apothecaries and other craftsmen. The year 1778 marked the entries of payments to the governess for the care of parturients, payments to midwives, also cash payments made to the parturients themselves, yet no names mentioned.¹² The Main Books (*Libro Maestro* and *Administratio Nosocomii Pietatis*) contain mostly breastfeeding contracts—that is, foster care with exterior wetnurses, payments to internal wetnurses, as well as to the hospital governess, but also a series of expenditure records related to the admission and delivery of the pregnant women which, in terms of content, correspond to those from the already known book, if of later date, the Book of Parturients.¹³

The records concerning the care of the pregnant women and parturients in the accounting books of the *Hospitale misericordiae* are neither uniform nor continual, and viewed statistically, they have certain limitations. Notwithstanding,

⁹ R. Jeremić and J. Tadić, *Prilozi za istoriju zdravstvene kulture starog Dubrovnika II*: pp. 206-207.

¹⁰ *Libro delle partorenti all'Ospedale della Misericordia*, ser. 46, vol. 20, State Archives of Dubrovnik (hereafter: SAD).

¹¹ *Libro delle spese*, ser. 46, vol. 15 (SAD).

¹² *Giornale 1773 in 1788*, ser. 46, vol. 7 (SAD).

¹³ *Libro Maestro 1792 in 1798*, ser. 46, vol. 12 (SAD); *Administratio Nosocomii Pietatis 1784*, ser. 46, vol. 11 (SAD).

they are valuable evidence of the organisation and approach to childbirth in that state institution and the basis for the future study of obstetrics in the period of the Habsburg Monarchy. In this research we have analysed the Main Books of the foundling hospital, the Books of Expenditures and the Book of Parturients with an aim to broaden our knowledge on the lying-in hospital from the time of the Dubrovnik Republic, to position the institution of Dubrovnik's lying-in within a wider context of the European trends in social welfare and medicine, to highlight the social position of the parturients at the foundling hospital and to define the status of midwives engaged in the lying-in hospital as assistants at childbirth.

Dubrovnik's lying-in ward within the foundling home is the first early modern institution of this kind in Croatia, on which, apart from the abovementioned study of Risto Jeremić and Jorjo Tadić, there is no other literature. In order to tackle the topic, we have consulted the literature on the establishment and operation of the maternity hospitals in some of the major European centres, such as Vienna, London, Paris and Göttingen.¹⁴ In addition, on the basis of the literature selected, we have drawn a parallel between the position of the parturients at the Dubrovnik hospital and similar institutions of the Italian communes, placing the status of the Ragusan midwives within the Croatian and European context.¹⁵

¹⁴ V. Hunecke, *Itrovatelli di Milano*; R. Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind.*; L. Forman Cody, »Living and Dying in Georgian London's Lying In Hospitals«; Giovana Da Molin, *I figli della Madonna. Gli esposti all'Annunziata di Napoli (Secc. XVII-XIX)*. Bari: Cacucci Editore, 2001; B. Croxson, »The Foundation and Evolution of the Middlesex Hospital's Lying-In Service, 1745-86«: pp. 27-57; Jürgen Schlumbohm, »The Pregnant Women are here for the Sake of the Teaching Institution'. The Lying In Hospital of Göttingen University, 1751 to c.1830«. *Social History of Medicine* 14/1 (2001): pp. 59-78 (<http://shm.oxfordjournals.org>; accessed on 14 March 2010).

¹⁵ On midwifery in Croatia: Mirko Dražen Grmek, *O meštiriji pupkoreznoj*. Zagreb: Kulturo-prosvjetno društvo Hrvatskih Zagoraca "Matija Gubec", 1958; B. Belicza, »Primaljstvo u srednjoj Dalmaciji«; H. Bunijevac, V. Dugački and S. Fatović Ferenčić, *120 godina škole za primalje u Zagrebu*; Gustav Piasek, »Varaždinska gradska primalja – Ana Marija Kromlin«. *Acta medicorum: glasilo djelatnosti za znanstvenoistraživački rad Opće bolnice Varaždin*. 23/1-2 (1997): pp. 70-73; Dubravko Habek, »Primaljstvo i prve primalje u Bjelovaru 1756.-1856.« *Arhiv za higijenu rada i toksikologiju* 59/3 (2008): pp. 223-232; On midwifery elsewhere in Europe: Thomas R. Forbes, »The regulation of English midwives in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries«. *Medical History* 8/3 (1964): p. 354 (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>; accessed on 10 June 2010); C. Pancino, *Il bambino e l'acqua sporca*; A. Wilson. *Making of man-midwifery*; Jacques Gélis, *History of childbirth. Fertility, Pregnancy and Birth in Early Modern Europe*. Malden: Polity Press, 2005.

Foundling hospital—Hospitale misericordiae in Dubrovnik

Exposure of children in public places so as to be taken in by someone is a phenomenon we are able to trace in ancient Rome.¹⁶ On the Council of Nicaea in 325 it was decided that the Church should take upon itself the care of the sick, the infirm and abandoned.¹⁷ After Christianity had been recognised as religion during the reign of Constantine, hospices were built first throughout the Christian East, in Antioch, Sebaste and Caesarea, followed by those in the Latin West. The Roman hospice was founded in 390 by Fabiola, a wealthy convert.¹⁸ On the Councils of Vaison and Arles in the middle of the fifth century, the Catholic Church established a new system of laws which, down to the smallest detail, regulated the care of the abandoned, that task having become the responsibility of its institutions as part of the charity programme.¹⁹ Specialisation of hospices towards exclusive charitable care of the abandoned children resulted in foundling homes as such. Their main purpose was to prevent infanticides and abortions, and to save the lives and souls. The foundling hospital in Milan is considered to be the first, established by Archbishop Datheus in 787.²⁰ The establishment of numerous early foundling homes owes much to the order of the Holy Spirit, which in the mid-twelfth century set up a foundling home in Montpellier, followed by those in Italy, Germany and Spain.²¹ In 1198, Pope Innocent III founded a home for the abandoned children in the Roman hospice of *Santo Spirito*, equipped with the wheel.²²

The foundling hospitals, which usually started as wards of general hospitals, later to develop into independent institutions, were mainly governed by lay boards in close collaboration with the institutions of the Church.²³ Probably the best known

¹⁶ John Boswell, *L'abbandono dei bambini in Europa Occidentale*. Milano: Rizzoli, 1991: p. 75.

¹⁷ Ignacij Voje, »Otroška sirotišnica v srednjeveškem Dubrovniku«, in: *Mohorjev koledar 2003*. Celje: Mohorjeva družba, 2002: p. 178.

¹⁸ R. Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind*: pp. 87-88.

¹⁹ Pierre Verdier, »Histoires de l'aide sociale à l'enfance et de ses 'bénéficiaires':«: p. 1. A lecture on the ANPASE study days of 14 October 2003 ([www.lavieaugrandair.fr/apdf/Histoires de l'aide sociale à l'enfance et de ses beneficiaires.pdf](http://www.lavieaugrandair.fr/apdf/Histoires%20de%20l'aide%20sociale%20à%20l'enfance%20et%20de%20ses%20beneficiaires.pdf); accessed on 10 December 2008).

²⁰ Baldo Marinović, »Jedna važna ustanova starog Dubrovnika«. *Dubrovački liječnik* (1933): p. 23; Roman Jelić, »Zadarsko nahodište«. *Radovi Instituta JAZU u Zadru* 10 (1963): p. 213; Miloš Škarica, »Nahodišta i nahodi u Dalmaciji«. *Radovi Instituta JAZU u Zadru* 8 (1961): p. 231.

²¹ P. Verdier, »Histoires de l'aide sociale à l'enfance et de ses 'bénéficiaires':«: p. 2; J. Boswell. *L'abbandono dei bambini in Europa Occidentale*: p. 114.

²² B. Marinović, »Jedna važna ustanova starog Dubrovnika«: p. 23.

²³ David I. Kertzer, *Sacrificed for Honor. Italian Infant Abandonment and the Politics of Reproductive Control*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993: p. 10.

early foundling hospital, *Spedale degli Innocenti* in Florence, was established by the commune and the confraternity of the silk weavers, opening its doors in 1445. By the sixteenth century, these homes had become common in all the Italian towns, but equally so in France, Spain and Portugal.²⁴ In northern Europe this process had a different course: it was not until the eighteenth century that the problem witnessed a more systematic approach, when the ideas of the Enlightenment and the concern for the population decline prompted the setting up of the foundling hospitals.²⁵

Organised care of the abandoned children in Dubrovnik had its roots in the asylum which operated within the convent of St Clare, founded in 1290.²⁶ The Dubrovnik charity hospital is probably the oldest foundling hospital on the eastern coast of the Adriatic.²⁷ A short stay at the hospital itself, in combination with the internal and external wetnurses, a free and at least declaratively anonymous access to the wheel and, with time, admission of poor legitimate children and pregnant women, helped consolidate a rounded welfare system.²⁸

²⁴ D. Kertzer, *Sacrificed for Honor*: p. 81. The decision on the building of the Florentine foundling hospital was passed in 1419. The building was designed by Filippo Brunelleschi, while the famous statues of the foundlings in swaddling clothes, *bambini*, are the work of Andrea della Robbia. Cf. Lawrence Kahn. »The 'Ospedale degli Innocenti' and the 'Bambino' of the American Academy of Pediatrics«. *Pediatrics* 110/1 (2002) (<http://pediatrics.aapublications.org/cgi/content/full/110/1/175>; accessed on 26 January 2009).

²⁵ Alysa Levene, *Childcare, health and mortality at the London Foundling Hospital 1741-1800. 'Left to the mercy of the world'*. Manchester-New York: Manchester University Press, 2007: p. 2.

²⁶ B. Marinović, »Jedna važna socijalna ustanova starog Dubrovnika«. pp. 23-24; Vladimir Bazala, *Pregled povijesti zdravstvene kulture Dubrovačke Republike*. Zagreb: Dubrovački horizonti, 1972: p. 23; Zdenka Janeković Römer, *Rod i grad*. Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku; Zavod za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta u Zagrebu, 1994: p. 108; Niko Kapetanić and Nenad Vekarić, *Stanovništvo Konavala*, vol. 1. Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 1998: p. 359.

²⁷ Roman Jelić, citing older Zadar historians who associated the name of a tower and a quarter of Zadar ('Bablja kula' and 'Babe') with the existence of a foundling hospital in that part of the city, holds that Zadar had a foundling home at the end of the thirteenth century, and most certainly before 1409, if the city quarter and the tower had been named after it. The sources fail to confirm such an assumption. One foundling home was located in 1452 next to the Fort of St John. Apostolic visitation confirms the existence of a foundling home in Zadar in 1603. See: R. Jelić, »Zadarsko nahodište«. pp. 215-218, 263-265. Besides Dubrovnik and Zadar, the foundling homes also existed in Šibenik (1808, mentioned also around 1612), Split (1704), Kotor (1610) and Hvar (1579). See: M. Škarica, »Nahodišta i nahodi u Dalmaciji«. p. 232.

²⁸ Rina Kralj-Brassard, »Između skrbi i nasilja: životni ciklusi napuštene djece u Dubrovniku (XVII.-XIX. st.)«, in: *Filii, filiae...: položaj i uloga djece najadrijskom prostoru*, ed. Marija Mogorović Crljenko. Poreč: Državni arhiv u Pazinu, Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli-Odjel za humanističke znanosti, Zavičajni muzej Poreštine-Museo del territorio parentino, 2011: p. 205; Rina Kralj-Brassard, »Nikola (1673-1674) "The Child of the Commune"«. *Dubrovnik Annals* 15 (2011): p. 123.

Hospitale misericordiae was established by the *Ordo hospitalis misericordiae*, passed on the session of the Major Council of 9 February 1432.²⁹ Its preamble is strewn with quotations from the Scriptures, thanksgiving for God's mercy and an awareness of the need for Christian charity. The establishment of the state foundling hospital may be viewed as one of the measures of state paternalism, a consequence of the Christianisation of moral norms and everyday life under state control.³⁰ The provision regulates in detail the manner in which the children were to be provided for, the funding source, the staff and governing board. It also took into consideration poor parents who could bring their children to hospital and take home again free of charge. The person who brought the child was guaranteed discretion. Originally, the hospital was intended to care only for the abandoned children, since the provision made no mention of the care of pregnant women, eventual deliveries at the hospital or out of it at state expense.³¹ The apostolic visitator Giovanni Francesco Sormano, who, among other things in Dubrovnik, visited all the hospices and the foundling hospital in January 1574, makes no mention of either the pregnant women or the parturients.³²

Children born out of wedlock constituted the bulk of the abandoned. Although a birth of an illegitimate child in Dubrovnik had no direct legal consequences

²⁹ *Acta Consilii Maioris*, ser. 8, vol. 4, ff. 180v-182v (SAD). The provision was also included in the collection of the Ragusan laws *Liber viridis*, caput 252, f. 103; *Liber Viridis*, ed. Branislav Nedeljković [Zbornik za istoriju, jezik i književnost srpskog naroda, vol. III.23]. Beograd: SANU, 1984: pp. 198-201.

³⁰ Zdenka Janeković-Römer, »Nasilje zakona: Gradska vlast i privatni život u kasnosrednjovjekovnom i ranonovovjekovnom Dubrovniku«. *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 41 (2003): pp. 30-31.

³¹ For more on the decision ordering the establishment of the hospital and the system of external wetnurses who cared for the wards see: Rina Kralj-Brassard i Ivica Martinović, »Dojilje za nahočad-javna služba u Dubrovačkoj Republici«, in: *Bioetika i dijete. Moralne dileme u pedijatriji*, ed. Ante Čović and Marija Radonić. Zagreb: Pergamena, Hrvatsko društvo za preventivnu i socijalnu pedijatriju, 2011: pp. 63-120.

³² Petar Kačić and Zdravko Šundrica, »Zdravstvena služba u Dubrovniku po izvještaju apostolskog delegata Giovanni Francesco Sormani-ja iz 1574. godine«. *Acta Historica Medicinae Pharmaciae Veterinae* 12/2 (1973): p. 53. See Atanazije Matanić, »Apostolska vizitacija dubrovačke nadbiskupije god. 1573/4. prema spisima sačuvanim u Tajnome vatikanskom arhivu«, in: *Mandičev zbornik*, ed. Ivan Vitezić, Bazilije Pandžić, Atanazije Matanić. Rim: Hrvatski povijesni institut, 1965: pp. 193-209. Cf. Sergio Pagano. »Le visite apostoliche a Roma nei secoli XVI-XIX: repertorio delle fonti«. *Ricerche per la storia religiosa di Roma. Studi, documenti, inventari* 4 (1980): pp. 317-464. On Sormano see also Irena Benyovsky, »'Parochiae dentro la Citta'- Beccadellijeva podjela Dubrovnika na župe«, in: *Sacerdotes, iudices, notarii... Posrednici među društvenim skupinama*, ed. Neven Budak. Poreč: Državni arhiv u Pazinu, Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, Pučko otvoreno učilište Poreč – Zavičajni muzej Poreštine, 2007: pp. 159-167.

either before the secular or ecclesiastical court, extramarital pregnancy was a threat to the woman's social position, it dishonoured the family's good name, and challenged the hierarchy of the patriarchal family relations, in which the surveillance of sexual behaviour of the inferior members, notably women, was the responsibility of the male head.³³ Young domestic servants, peasant and common women, particularly those without direct family protection, were most often the victims of seduction and false pretences of their masters, male servants, labourers and soldiers.³⁴ If such an affair resulted in pregnancy, the child may easily have found its way to the revolving wheel of the foundling hospital. Equally difficult was the position of the rejected pregnant fiancées. By taking the child to *ošpedo*, the man's parental responsibility was erased, yet the girl's honour remained for ever marred by the illegitimate pregnancy.³⁵ Poor women in the city, who arrived from various parts of the Dubrovnik Republic, mostly gave birth to illegitimate children,³⁶ although children were known to arrive at the foundling hospital from the remote villages of the Republic.³⁷

The revolving wheel offered anonymity to the deliverer and safety for the delivered child, as it was left in a sheltered space, but at the time of abandonment the wheel was limited to one turn around the axis of the wooden cylinder. There must have been cases when the wheel proved impractical or beyond reach for some reason. The socially unacceptable alternative of infanticide or abortion had to be prevented while the child was still in the mother's womb. The care of an abandoned child began with the care of the woman carrying it.

Research to date has not clearly ascertained as to when exactly the Dubrovnik hospital expanded its work to the care of pregnant women, nor whether such a turn in welfare policy was grounded in the legislation.³⁸ Accounting books of the hospital provide a broader insight into the time frame of the integration of the care of pregnant women into the charitable activities of the hospital, but given the fact that the books have only partly survived, a complete picture of

³³ Nella Lonza, »'Two Souls Lost': Infanticide in the Republic of Dubrovnik (1667-1808)«, *Dubrovnik Annals* 6 (2002): pp. 79, 84.

³⁴ Slavica Stojan, *Vjerenice i nevjerenice. Žene u svakodnevnici Dubrovnika (1600-1815)*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2003: p. 25.

³⁵ S. Stojan, *Vjerenice i nevjerenice*: pp. 51-94.

³⁶ N. Kapetanić and N. Vekarić, *Stanovništvo Konavala* I: p. 358.

³⁷ *Libro del batesimo di pietà*, ser. 46, vol. 21, passim (SAD); N. Lonza, »'Two Souls Lost'«: p. 83.

³⁸ R. Jeremić and J. Tadić, *Prilozi za istoriju zdravstvene kulture starog Dubrovnika* II: pp. 206-207.

this practice is hardly obtainable. The first mention of childbirth at the hospital we have found on a receipt issued on 6 March 1684 to the governess of the *Hospitale misericordiae*, *abadessa* Anica, for the payment of 3 *perperi*, since several women assisted a certain woman at childbirth over a number of days.³⁹ The record reveals neither the names of the midwives nor the woman assisted. The term *certa persona* is used as if aimed to secure discretion, but at the same time leaves us under impression that the identity of the person was no mystery. Were there more payments of this kind? Several pages with possibly similar records have been extracted. The mention of childbirth testifies that the foundling hospital had operated as maternity from at least 1684. The next mention of a pregnant woman is found in the Book of Expenditures dated 7 February 1750, confirming thus the hospital's role as maternity from the middle of the eighteenth century.⁴⁰ In an earlier sample of the book of a kind, *Libro delle spese*, extant for the period 1710-1715, there is no evidence of the care of pregnant women or the expenses.⁴¹

The first lying-in hospitals within foundling homes were established in the Italian communes even earlier. Namely, the foundling hospitals of Milan admitted pregnant women for delivery as early as the fourteenth century; in the *Ospedale del Brolo*, and later in St. *Celso*. In St. *Celso*, which from the fifteenth century operated both as a foundling home and maternity, the number of parturients increased to such an extent that, according to the board's decisions from 1558, their admission was narrowed only to those in urgent need.⁴² The Milan *Ospedale Maggiore* had a foundling home set up within shortly upon its establishment, in the middle of the fifteenth century, and from the seventeenth century that institution also admitted poor parturients. A lying-in hospital also operated within the Naples foundling hospital *Santa Casa dell' Annunziata* from the seventeenth century. The children born in the foundling hospital were recorded to have been born in the wheel (*nati in rota*'), since from the moment of their birth they became the wards of the institution they were born in. Parturients, unwed mothers, sometimes acted as internal wetnurses. Among the parturients there were also some of the 'familiar faces', former wards of the foundling home, living-in maids, who delivered their illegitimate children at the institution.⁴³ The purpose of the early lying-in wards within foundling homes in the Renaissance communes was primarily charitable.

³⁹ *Libro maestro dell'anno 1683*, ser. 46, vol. 8b, f. 80 (SAD).

⁴⁰ *Libro delle spese*, ser. 46, vol. 15, f. 3 (SAD).

⁴¹ *Libro delle spese diverse dell'Ospedale della Misericordia*, ser. 46, vol. 14 (SAD).

⁴² V. Hunecke, *I trovatelli di Milano*: pp. 93-95.

⁴³ G. Da Molin, *I figli della Madonna*: p. 76.

By the mid-eighteenth century, numerous lying-in hospitals were founded in the northern and central Europe due mainly to the awakened interest of the Enlightenment rulers for the improvement of public health. Administration system based on mercantilism prompted the enlightened rulers of the states of modern Europe to secure a multitude of subjects ready to serve one's sovereign as military or work force.⁴⁴ This gave way to health reforms; the rulers financed the changes that were to result in a healthy population of considerable size, and a wealthy and prosperous state. With an aim to prevent abortions and infanticides, the lying-in hospitals became a tool of the ruler's population policy, which envisaged a potentially able subject in each individual. The lying-in hospital in Göttingen, founded in 1751, is one the earliest in Germany, which also operated as a training institution for future obstetricians and midwives.⁴⁵ In the reign of Joseph II Habsburg, many hospitals with maternity wards were established,⁴⁶ and in the foundling hospitals throughout the monarchy unwed pregnant women who wanted to leave their child there were admitted.⁴⁷ The Vienna lying-in hospital, founded in 1784, operated within the foundling hospital from the very beginning. A mother who intended to abandon her child was to deliver it under supervision at the lying-in ward of the foundling hospital. Child welfare became the domain of the enlightened state which, in the spirit of the current population policy, acted towards the lowering of child mortality. The women who could not pay for the service rendered were to surrender their own bodies as 'research material' instead. The possibility of childbirth free of charge and abandonment of child to state care was 'paid' by offering one's own body for the training of the future obstetricians and midwives. In the early days between 1,000 and 2,000 women gave birth at the Vienna lying-in hospital. In the last decade of the nineteenth century that number exceeded 10,000. Although exchange of this kind could have been avoided by paying the services, such a possibility was resorted to by only a few women. At the Vienna lying-in hospital maids, working women, labourers, often from other parts of the monarchy, delivered their children. From 1784 to 1908 more than 750,000 women passed through this medical institution.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ D. Porter, *Health, civilization and the state*: p. 49.

⁴⁵ J. Schlumbohm, »The Pregnant Women are here for the Sake of the Teaching Institution«: p. 60.

⁴⁶ R. Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind*: p. 297.

⁴⁷ Mislava Bertoša, *Djeca iz obrtaljke: Nametnuto ime i izgubljeni identitet: Imena i prezimena nahoda u XIX. stoljeću*. Zagreb: Profil international, 2005: p. 51.

⁴⁸ Verena Pawlowsky, »Zu Unterrichtszwecken sich prostituieren zu müssen' - Der geburtshilfliche Unterricht in Wien im 19 Jahrhundert«, in: *Wiener gespräche zur Sozialgeschichte der Medizin*, ed. Helmuth Grössing, Sonia Horn, Thomas Aigner. Wien: ÖGW Österreichische Gesellschaft für Wissenschaftsgeschichte, 1996: pp. 237-238.

Contrary to such an administration of the social welfare institutions in which the sovereign takes over the initiative, the ideas of the Enlightenment encouraged the English upper class philanthropists to provide care of the needy pregnant women, but also help improve the sanitary and health conditions of the poor members of the society in general.⁴⁹ Although the idea for setting up the London lying-in hospitals in the mid-eighteenth century came from the medical circles, they were supported by philanthropic contributions, nor did the medical profession take part in their administration.⁵⁰ In the everyday practice of the lying-in hospitals the physicians studied and taught obstetrics, actively assisting their wards in childbirth. France has a somewhat older tradition in obstetrics; at the Paris hospital *Hôtel Dieu*, in the sixteenth century, the midwives themselves placed childbirth in the domain of medical care and within the maternity ward taught midwifery to future midwives. With the development of science in the period of the Enlightenment and the general trend of childbirth being assisted by an obstetrician (*accoucher*), that practice in France also became the responsibility of specialised obstetricians.⁵¹

In such circumstances physicians and reformers of health care saw an opportunity for the affirmation of particular branches of medicine, notably obstetrics, which would develop within the newly founded institutions. The majority of the first modern lying-in hospitals were established with the purpose of training surgeons-obstetricians and midwives, with which obstetrics tended to become part of the male world of science and medicine.⁵² Lying-in hospitals were a place where only the poor women gave birth to their children, whether married or not. There they found shelter, delivery free of charge and a few days of rest before they returned to the daily routine with their newborn baby. Doctors expected cooperation from them, their delivery to be transparent to science and education. However, doctors' invasive methods and the use of various instruments without justified need but solely for the purpose of demonstration to the students were disapproved by the parturients, who concealed the first

⁴⁹ R. Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind*: p. 299.

⁵⁰ In London five lying-in hospitals were established between 1747 and 1768. L. Forman Cody, »Living and Dying in Georgian London's Lying In Hospitals«: p. 309.

⁵¹ H. Bunijevac, V. Dugački and S. Fatović Ferenčić, *120 godina škole za primalje u Zagrebu*: p. 20.

⁵² Cf. B. Croxson, »The Foundation and Evolution of the Middlesex Hospital's Lying-In Service, 1745-86«: pp. 27-57; J. Schlumbohm, »'The Pregnant Women are here for the Sake of the Teaching Institution'«: pp. 59-78.

signs of labour until it was too late to use either the forceps or the dilatation instruments.⁵³ A historian Verena Pawlowsky describes the conditions at the Vienna lying-in hospital and foundling home as a form of prostitution, underlining the presence of three essential elements: body, sexuality and exchange. In lieu of the admission of an illegitimate child, unwed mothers were used as 'material' for medical purposes. The parturients of the Vienna lying-in hospital stemmed from the lowest social ranks, and were often physically or mentally disabled. Viewed as victims of seduction or careless and shameless wantons, unwed mothers were commonly labelled as promiscuity prone. It was believed that their children were naturally prone to syphilis. Statistical data, however, indicate the contrary: the tables of morbidity and mortality show but a minimum portion of deaths due to syphilis transmitted by the mother. Offering their bodies in lieu of the exemption from parental responsibility, the parturients of Vienna being left with no choice, 'prostituted themselves' for the sake of science.⁵⁴

What guided the administration of the Dubrovnik foundling hospital to admit parturients considering the time and context of the European trends in social politics? Can the establishment of the foundling hospital be associated with the population policy of the Dubrovnik government? Whether the methods of cameralism, mercantilism and the Enlightenment had any impact and application in Dubrovnik is disputable: could the principle by which the absolutist sovereigns governed themselves be applied to an aristocratic republic such as that of Dubrovnik? The works of the Enlightenment were widely read by the learned City elite.⁵⁵ Some Ragusans adopted the ideals of freedom, enlightened society, community welfare, and considering that the majority among them were noblemen and clerics, the reception of the Enlightenment in Dubrovnik was far from turning into revolutionary Jacobinism. The '*frančezi*' of Dubrovnik, as the Ragusans commonly referred to their compatriots passionately inclined towards French fashion, philosophy and literature, embraced the Enlightenment of Montesquieu, Diderot, Voltaire and Rousseau, yet remained loyal to the traditional structure of the Ragusan society and Republic's sovereignty. Tomo Bassegli, the most prominent exponent of the Ragusan Enlightenment, by discussing the

⁵³ J. Schlumbohm, »'The Pregnant Women are here for the Sake of the Teaching Institution'«: pp. 70-77; Cf. J. Gélis, *History of childbirth*: p. 101.

⁵⁴ V. Pawlowsky, »'Zu Unterrichtszwecken sich prostituieren zu müssen'«: pp. 242-243.

⁵⁵ Miljenko Foretić, »U procijepu prodora novih ideja i realiteta dubrovačke zbilje (Dubrovačka Republika i Francuska revolucija)«, in: idem, *Dubrovačka Republika i Francuska revolucija*. Dubrovnik: Matica hrvatska, 1996: p. 17.

'society of reason' also addressed topics such as motherhood, upbringing of children and state welfare. In his opinion mothers ought to breastfeed their children themselves instead of engaging wetnurses; the fact that children are being deprived of nourishment to which they are entitled by nature he considered theft and assassination.⁵⁶ In the reform he proposed to the Dubrovnik Republic, Bassegli, among other things, criticised the foundling home administration: instead of appointing three young patricians to a term of two years, that position may have been entrusted to mature women of good heart.⁵⁷ Bassegli's propositions founded on the ideas of the Enlightenment met with no approval by the dominant conservative circles in the Senate, therefore he spent a certain period in the offices outside the City, in Ston and in Župa. The sources illuminating his family and social ties prove the existence of the pro-Enlightenment climate in a group of the Ragusan patricians, especially among the members of the Gučetić, Đurđević and Sorkočević families.⁵⁸ They were able to see at least some of their ideas and attitudes come to fruition; if not on the highest level, then at least as state officials, within the frame of their responsibilities.

Further, the starting point of the rulers of the Enlightenment about the population multitude as a source of welfare was no novelty to the Ragusan government. In the decision ordering the establishment of the foundling home, 'the blessing of the multitude' is emphasised as a secondary motive for its founding,⁵⁹ whilst the interest in the population multitude the Republic showed by carrying out a census in 1673/1674 for statistical purposes only.⁶⁰ The census was conducted after the great earthquake that struck Dubrovnik in 1667, in which, by some estimates, around 42 per cent of the inhabitants were killed.⁶¹ Following great population loss in the disaster itself, war and plunders, epidemics and years of famine, slow economic recovery was also accompanied by demographic stagnation.⁶² According

⁵⁶ Žarko Muljačić, *Tomo Basiljević-Baselji. Predstavnik prosvjete u Dubrovniku*. Beograd: Srpska akademija nauka, 1958: p. 28.

⁵⁷ Ž. Muljačić, *Tomo Basiljević-Baselji*: p. 52.

⁵⁸ Ivo Banac, »Tomo Baseljić i pitanje dubrovačkih "Frančeza"«, in: *Dubrovačka Republika i Francuska revolucija*: pp. 63-64. The author comes forward with an assumption that one-eighth of the nobility adhered to the ideas of the Enlightenment.

⁵⁹ R. Jeremić and J. Tadić, *Prilozi za istoriju zdravstvene kulture starog Dubrovnika II*: p. 201.

⁶⁰ Zdravko Šundrica, »Popis stanovništva Dubrovačke Republike iz 1673/74. godine«. *Arhivski vjesnik* 2 (1959): pp. 421-422.

⁶¹ Nenad Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, vol. I - *Korijeni, struktura i razvoj dubrovačkog plemstva*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: HAZU Zavod za povijesne znanosti u Dubrovniku, 2011: p. 271.

⁶² Nenad Vekarić et al., *Vrijeme ženidbe i ritam poroda*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti u Dubrovniku, 2000: pp. 11-12.

to the most recent demographic research, the population rise started in the 1730s.⁶³ Around that time the number of poor women giving birth at the foundling home was witnessing an increase—that is, the activity itself tended to become more transparent in the sources. Despite the lack of direct evidence we cannot exclude the impact of the Enlightenment streams upon the advent of the first Dubrovnik lying-in hospital, while the new charity face of the Ragusan social policy may well be directly associated with the intent of the Ragusan government to renew the population size. It is disputable, however, whether the work of the lying-in hospital may have had any impact on the rise of the population considering a relatively small number of births at the foundling hospital and a relatively high mortality rate of the wards.⁶⁴ The plan for the population growth by setting up a maternity hospital saw no success, not even in the cameralistic Vienna, where a lying-in hospital with the foundling home was founded in 1784, because the mortality rate of the wards greatly exceeded 50 per cent.⁶⁵

Of equal interest was the question whether physicians or surgeons had taken any part in the establishment and work of the Dubrovnik lying-in ward. What was the attitude towards contemporary methods in obstetrics at the Dubrovnik maternity hospital? Did any training of the midwife medical staff take place in it? We have no data related to the training of midwives at the lying-in ward of the foundling home, nor of any interference of surgeons during childbirth. While in some European maternity hospitals physicians specialising in obstetrics played an important role during delivery, in the lying-in hospital in Dubrovnik midwives were the only medical staff present at childbirth and traditionally used no instruments or tools in order to provoke delivery, but also assisted in grave cases.⁶⁶ The foundling hospital did have a barber-surgeon on its permanently employed staff even before the opening of the maternity ward, caring for the children's health.⁶⁷

⁶³ N. Vekarić et al., *Vrijeme ženidbe i ritam poroda*: pp. 11-12.

⁶⁴ For almost 40% of the wards recorded in the hospital's baptism registers between 1748 and 1757 death was established at an early age, mainly up to the age of three, with the wetnurses or at the foundling hospital. Rina Kralj-Brassard, »Između skrbi i nasilja«: pp. 219-220.

⁶⁵ Martin Scheutz, »Demand and Charitable supply: Poverty and Poor Relief in Austria in the 18th and 19th Centuries«, in: *Health Care and Poor Relief in 18th and 19th Century Southern Europe*, ed. Ole Peter Grell, Andrew Cunningham and Bernd Roeck. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2005: p. 81.

⁶⁶ The Books of Expenditures bear record of the payments made to the midwives for assistance at delivery over two days in one case, and over three days in another: *Libro delle spese*, vol. 15, ff. 44, 45.

⁶⁷ A barber Pietro Ferri was paid five *perperi* on 25 July 1676, *per haver medicato*, for treating the children of the hospital over a period of three months, from 1 May to the end of July 1676. *Registro delle polize dell'Ospedal della Misericordia*, ser. 46, vol. 17, f. 173 (SAD).

We are not quite certain of his role during delivery once the maternity was founded; as he received his salary annually, his single interventions among the everyday expenses of the foundling home were not recorded.

The lying-in hospitals of pre-modern Europe often witnessed the spread of infections, particularly of puerperal sepsis.⁶⁸ At the *British Lying-in Hospital* parturients sometimes stayed even longer than the period prescribed for the discharge because of the treatment of post-natal complications.⁶⁹ No such case has been registered at the Dubrovnik maternity ward, whose sources bear record only of the date when the parturients were discharged, as a rule fifteen days upon delivery.⁷⁰ Moreover, the maternity of the foundling home was not an institution of the hospital type, it did not offer medical treatment. Were there any similar cases which were transferred to the Ragusan hospital *Domus Christi*? Poor parturients were known to have received treatment for post-natal complications at the *Domus Christi* hospital, but so far we have only the data pertaining to married women who did not give birth at the foundling home.⁷¹ In all likelihood, there were no post-natal complications at the foundling home; had there been an isolated case, it was not recorded. In European eighteenth-century maternity hospitals, markedly those which operated as hospital wards, the possibility of infection was greater. Apart from overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions in some European hospitals, doctors and students who came in contact with other patients at the hospital, or who performed autopsies, carried the infection on their contaminated hands without knowing it.⁷² It was not until 1847 that the Hungarian physician and obstetrician Ignaz Semmelweis observed this phenomenon.⁷³ A risk of this kind at the Dubrovnik lying-in ward was minimal, because the parturients were cared for at the foundling home or at midwives' homes, and not in the hospital; delivery was assisted by midwives, who had no contact with the hospital patients.

The first Dubrovnik maternity was an institution of the communal charity type rather than a modern scientific one. Its purpose was not to supply military and labour recruits for the absolutist monarch, nor was it to provide practice for obstetricians and midwives by taking advantage of the misery and distress

⁶⁸ Puerperal sepsis is an infection following childbirth characterised by fatal symptoms (fever, vomiting, abdomen pain), the cause of which is *streptococcus pyogenes*.

⁶⁹ L. Foman Cody, »Living and Dying in Georgian London's Lying In Hospitals«: p. 335.

⁷⁰ Exceptions are the cases of marriage and 'false' pregnancy when the girls were discharged before giving birth at the foundling hospital.

⁷¹ *Acta Sanctae Mariae Maioris saec. XVIII*, ser. 76, fasc. 3192, no. 4 (SAD).

⁷² Cf. R. Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind*: pp. 297-299.

⁷³ R. Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind*: p. 369; V. Pawlowsky. »'Zu Unterrichtszwecken sich prostituieren zu müssen': p. 241.

of young girls; it was established to provide social relief to poor unwed girls and to prevent abortions and infanticides, these goals being directly correlated with the population policy of the Dubrovnik government in a broader sense.

Parturients under state care

In the Book of Expenditures from the second half of the eighteenth century, there is record of a series of payments made to the *abadessa*, governess Marija, and some midwives who assisted at childbirth or cared for the expectant mothers in their own homes. Instead of the parturients' names, which are not entered, except in one case,⁷⁴ the terms commonly used are *donna gravida*, most commonly *giovine gravida*, but also *ragazza gravida*, *giovine*, *giovine povera*, *donna*, *donna gravida povera*.⁷⁵ The lying-in hospitals for unwed pregnant women which served as first clinics for the training of midwives and obstetricians paid particular attention to secrecy. Thus in Ferrara women could wear a veil, and in Russia a mask.⁷⁶ Was the identity of all the women staying at the hospital a matter of discretion, so as not to have their honour marred, or were the cases isolated? By the payment made for a young pregnant woman on 14 February 1764, it was explicitly stated that her identity be kept in secrecy, *mantenuta secretamente*.⁷⁷ What with those women whose names were entered? Anica, Kata, three Marijas, Ore and Cvijeta gave birth at the hospital during 1784 and 1785.⁷⁸ Ana, Frana, Lucija, Kata, Anica from Orašac and Jela came to the hospital between February and July 1795.⁷⁹ Did they stem from marginal groups in which extramarital pregnancy and childbirth were not connected to dishonour, but were victims of poverty and absence of family support instead? In a number of cases the entered names were made illegible afterwards. Full anonymity in Dubrovnik was not guaranteed to all the pregnant women, but the records in the accounting books were accessible only to a narrow circle governing and supervising the foundling hospital.

⁷⁴ Anica Matova was admitted into the hospital on 26 February 1776, where she stayed for a couple of months, probably until childbirth. (*Libro delle spese*, vol. 15, f. 147.) The scribe at one moment considered it necessary to note that the pregnant woman, for whose upkeep governess Marija had received five *perperi* the previous day, came from Pelješac (*Libro delle spese*, vol. 15, f. 141).

⁷⁵ Throughout, of which we cite several examples. *Libro delle spese*, vol. 15, ff. 23-24, 27, 30, 31, 43-44, 46, 51, 58, 74, 78, 141, 146, 149.

⁷⁶ D. Kertzer, *Sacrificed for Honor*: pp. 40-46.

⁷⁷ *Libro delle spese*, vol. 15, f. 65.

⁷⁸ *Administratio Nosocomii Pietatis 1784*, vol. 11, ff. 1, 39, 32, 40, 147-148, 187.

⁷⁹ *Libro delle partorienti dall'Ospedale della Misericordia*, vol. 20, ff. 14-16.

The practice of not entering the names of the pregnant women admitted to hospital probably contributed to considerable disorder in the accounting books. Pregnant women were assigned numbers, though with little consistency. Mistakes happened, possibly because the records of the parturients were not generally kept in separate books, but in the Main books inserted among the breastfeeding contracts. Explicit request of the foundling hospital administrator for the *abadessa*, to state under oath the number of pregnant women in hospital care points to the flaws in the records, but also a certain amount of mistrust of the hospital governess.⁸⁰

For some parturients it is recorded that they were admitted to hospital at the direction of the Minor Council, whilst for the others there is no data.⁸¹ A pregnant woman could stay at the hospital for several months, from the moment she felt pregnant until fifteen days after delivery. Most extreme is the case of a pregnant woman who stayed at the hospital for eight full months, but there were also those who were admitted on the day of the delivery.⁸² The women who were found not pregnant were discharged from hospital. Decisions of this kind were brought even after the woman had spent several months at the foundling hospital.⁸³ It is possible that some of the wards used the hospital as shelter, faking pregnancy in order to secure food and roof over one's head.⁸⁴ Similar cases have been recorded in the Middlesex lying-in hospital in London.⁸⁵ Contrived pregnancy may also have been a sign of mental disorder.⁸⁶ Marriage was also among

⁸⁰ Junije Resti and Mato Sorgo, having established a series of errors, demanded a sworn report about the number of pregnant women at the hospital on 4 May 1793, when they were appointed *ufficiali*. *Libro delle partorienti dall'Ospedale della Misericordia*, vol. 20, f. 2.

⁸¹ *Libro delle spese*, vol. 15, ff. 3, 146; *Libro delle partorienti dall'Ospedale della Misericordia*, vol. 20, f. 30; *Giornale 1773 in 1788*, ser. 46, vol. 7, ff. 102v, 112 (SAD).

⁸² For instance, a pregnant woman admitted on 4 September 1792 remained at the hospital until 18 May 1793. Two pregnant women were admitted on 12 March 1793 and both gave birth on the same day. (*Libro Maestro 1792 in 1798*, vol. 12, ff. 104, 109, 117). A woman was admitted to hospital only a few hours prior to delivery. (*Administratio Nosocomii Pietatis 1784*, vol. 11, f. 33).

⁸³ A woman admitted on 25 October 1782 was discharged on 2 April 1783 upon proof that she was not pregnant as believed. Similar was the case of a woman admitted on 7 October 1783 and discharged on 21 January 1784, as she proved not to have been pregnant as claimed (*Libro Maestro 1792 in 1798*, vol. 12, ff. 188, 302). An alleged pregnant woman was admitted on 24 November 1793 and discharged on 22 February 1794, as she was not pregnant (*Libro delle partorienti dall'Ospedale della Misericordia*, vol. 20, f. 5).

⁸⁴ Did Ore's pregnancy give rise to suspicion for being discharged from hospital only two days upon admission? *Administratio Nosocomii Pietatis 1784*, vol. 11, f. 32.

⁸⁵ B. Croxson, »The Foundation and Evolution of the Middlesex Hospital's Lying-In Service, 1745-86«: p. 35.

⁸⁶ A woman admitted on 18 October 1783 was discharged upon proof of insanity (*Libro Maestro 1779 in 1784*, ser. 46, vol. 10, f. 139, SAD).

the reasons for discharge of a pregnant woman from hospital.⁸⁷ Childbirth at the foundling hospital was primarily intended for unmarried pregnant women whose children most certainly faced abandonment. Marriage greatly diminished the attempts at abortion, infanticide and the possibility of the child's becoming a ward of the foundling home. Termination of pregnancy either by delivery, miscarriage or proof of faked pregnancy implied discharge from hospital.⁸⁸ Did the women at the Dubrovnik lying-in hospital have freedom of movement or were they under strict surveillance carried out in the quasi-confinement conditions? In Italian lying-in hospitals of a somewhat later period, women who could not pay for the services of hospitalisation and delivery were kept in poor conditions, overcrowded and filthy rooms, leave and visits being prohibited except, at best, for the immediate family. In Ferrara unwed pregnant women were taken to the lying-in hospital by force. A similarity of the conditions in lying-in hospitals with those prevailing in prisons, as viewed from current perspective, is best illustrated by the example of Bologna, where due to the absence of a lying-in hospital unwed pregnant women were admitted from the late 1820s into the correctional home or *Casa di Corezione*, intended at first for keeping petty male offenders. Unwed women did not wear any special clothes, nor were they forced to work like prisoners, but had no freedom of movement.⁸⁹ A recorded case of escape provides material for such an interpretation of the conditions in the Dubrovnik foundling hospital as well, yet from the (other) cases of faked pregnancies one may rightly conclude that to some women admission to the foundling hospital was a thing to be desired.⁹⁰

Jeremić and Tadić draw attention to a possibility of direct payment of the services rendered at the hospital, or if not paid then counted as debt, which would be in collision with the very idea of foundling hospital as shelter for all, unless this rule concerned exclusively the pregnant women who left hospital for the sake of marriage.⁹¹ The procedure of the hospital's administration regarding payment resembled that of the parents who came to take their own child previously left at the hospital, most likely anonymously, already recorded in the regulation on the establishment of the

⁸⁷ After a three-month stay at the hospital, a pregnant woman was discharged on the day of her marriage (*Libro Maestro 1779 in 1784*, vol. 10, f. 168). A poor pregnant woman, upon discharge from hospital on 15 December 1792 for the purpose of marriage, was given 5 *perperi* and 4 grossi as support (*Libro Maestro 1792 in 1798*, vol. 12, f. 104).

⁸⁸ A pregnant woman admitted on 21 November 1796 had a miscarriage on 25 Decemebr 1796. *Libro delle partorienti dall'Ospedale della Misericordia*, vol. 20, f. 25.

⁸⁹ D. Kertzer, *Sacrificed for Honor*: pp. 47-48.

⁹⁰ The woman fled after seven days at the hospital. *Administratio Nosocomii Pietatis 1784*, vol. 11, f. 408.

⁹¹ R. Jeremić and J. Tadić, *Prilozi za istoriju zdravstvene kulture starog Dubrovnika II*: p. 207.

foundling hospital from the fifteenth century. According to the regulation, the expenses of boarding a pregnant woman in the mid-eighteenth century amounted to two *grossi* a day and the payment was made to the *abadessa*.⁹² By the end of the same century, probably due to the general rise in prices, it amounted to four *grossi* a day, including the payments to the parturients.⁹³

One of the reasons why some European foundling hospitals also had lying-in wards within was to secure a sufficient number of internal wetnurses who, particularly in the periods marked by a growth of abandoned children, were chronically lacking. The unpopularity of internal wetnursing may be accounted by low status of the women engaged for the job, poor wages, job risk, notably exposure to deceases and general conditions of work which often included strict surveillance, limited movement and prohibited contact with persons outside the foundling hospital. One of the ways to solve the problem of the shortage of internal wetnurses was to oblige parturients to breastfeed the wards on longer monthly basis. In lieu of admission and delivery at the hospital the parturients breastfed several children, but not their own. It was believed that the woman would favour her own child to the harm of the others. Compulsory breastfeeding may have served to compensate the costs of abandoning the child, *elemosine*, which, for example, was demanded by the foundling hospital in Bologna, since it had no lying-in ward under its roof.⁹⁴ In Dubrovnik a post-delivery stay of merely fifteen days was regulated, and although there were times when internal wetnurses were unable to provide for all the wards, nothing suggests that the parturients had been either forcibly or willingly engaged as wetnurses at the hospital upon expiry of that term.⁹⁵ Ragusan internal wetnurses, far better paid than their external counterparts, were often recruited among married women from the surrounding villages who had already earned their living as external wetnurses, thus exchanging roles in accordance with lactation and family conditions.⁹⁶ No record has been found on the possible limitation of movement of the internal wetnurses—that is, of any special procedure that may have governed their stay at the foundling hospital.

The exact number of the parturients admitted to hospital over a certain period can hardly be established on the basis of the extant accounting books because the records

⁹² *Libro delle spese*, vol. 15, ff. 23-24, 27, 31, 43-46, 49, 60, 73, 74, 118 and *passim*.

⁹³ *Giornale 1773 in 1788*, vol. 7, ff. 178, 180, 187, 196, 206, 220, 233, 255 and *passim*.

⁹⁴ It was the so-called *balia forzata*. D. Kertzer, *Sacrificed for Honor*: pp. 124-129.

⁹⁵ On 8 May 1769 the foundling hospital paid 4 *perperi* and 3 *grossi alle donne straniere* who breastfed the children, because the internal wetnurses could not provide for all. *Libro delle spese*, vol. 15, f. 102. A shortage of wetnurses was also recorded in January of the same year. *Libro delle spese*, vol. 15, f. 98.

⁹⁶ Margarita Grgurova from Petrovo Selo, external wetnurse, received a payment of 5 *perperi* for the ward Antun on 10 December 1673, whereas half a year later she appeared as *balia nuova all'hospitale*. *Registro delle polize dell'Ospedal della Misericordia*, vol. 17, ff. 147, 150.

of discharge were not kept consistently. In the payments made to the governess it is explicitly stated that there were two parturients at the same time,⁹⁷ even three at one point.⁹⁸ According to the Main Books where the payment records were kept for each parturient boarded, for example, in the middle of September 1792 there were nine.⁹⁹ Annual admission of parturients and the number of deliveries is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of admitted parturients and childbirths at the Dubrovnik foundling hospital 1779-1798

Year	Number of admitted parturients	Number of registered childbirths
1779*	2	
1780	4	3
1781	7	7
1782	12	9
1783	13	9
1784	9	5
1785	11	8
1786	14	10
1787	6	8
1788	7	6
1789	8	6
1790	3	3
1791	14	9
1792	21	15
Total	131	98
1793	33	31
1794	19	19
1795	18	16
1796	35	33
1797	13	17
1798**	15	10
Total	133	126
Total	264	224

* From 7 October 1779, as childbirths were not registered in the Main Books of prior dates.

** Until 16 May 1798, after which entries were made into a new book that has not survived.

Sources: *Libro Maestro 1779 in 1784*, ser. 46, vol. 10; *Administratio Nosocomii Pietatis 1784*, ser. 46, vol. 11; *Libro Maestro 1792 in 1798*, ser. 46, vol. 12; *Libro delle partorienti dall'Ospedale della Misericordia*, ser. 46, vol. 20. All sources are filed at the State Archives in Dubrovnik.

⁹⁷ *Libro delle spese*, vol. 15, ff. 61, 98.

⁹⁸ *Libro delle spese*, vol. 15, f. 124.

⁹⁹ *Libro Maestro 1792 in 1798*, vol. 12, ff. 104, 105.

Two were the sources we used for our analysis of the number of childbirths and parturients in the period 1779-1798: the Main Books and the only surviving Book of Parturients. The records in these books tend to correlate: a single entry contains record of a parturient and the costs pertaining to her stay, from admission to the foundling hospital until discharge. The difference between them is that in the Main Books these records are to be found among miscellaneous records of the dealings and expenditures of the foundling hospital, while, the Book of Parturients deals solely with the records of the lying-in ward. The Book of Parturients was begun in 1793, mainly because of the inconsistency of the manner the records of deliveries had been kept in the Main Books until then. The administrators of the foundling hospital demanded from the governess to confirm under oath the exact number of parturients at the hospital, and thereafter continued to register the parturients in a separate book.¹⁰⁰ The nature of the inconsistencies cannot be ascertained, yet the fact remains that the number of childbirths rose between 1793 and 1797, although the second period was considerably shorter (first period spanned 13 years, second 5). The total number of the admitted parturients for the period October 1779-May 1798 was 264, considering that not all the women brought their pregnancy to delivery at the foundling hospital. The discrepancy pertaining to the number of childbirths, which is 224, we ascribe to the earlier mentioned 'fake' pregnancies, marriage, flight from the foundling hospital, abortion, whereas some records simply fail to provide any information of childbirth. Given the mentioned inconsistencies, 224 wards born at the foundling hospital in the latter half of the eighteenth century is only the lowest certainly confirmable number.

A rapid rise in the number of the admitted pregnant women is discernible from 1791 onwards, annual average being more than 13, reaching a peak of 35 in 1796. The reasons underlying such an increase in the period stated are difficult to grasp. The registers of the baptised wards which could show whether there was a general growing trend of child abandonment as well as the number of births at the foundling hospital, have not been preserved for this particular period.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ *Libro delle partorienti dall'Ospedale della Misericordia*, vol. 20.

¹⁰¹ The house of the priest who served as chaplain, and with it the baptism registers of the foundling hospital for the period 1771-1808 were destroyed in a fire during the first siege of Dubrovnik by the Russian and Monteregean forces between 17 June and 6 July 1806. *Matica krštenih nahodišta 1808-1829*, pp. 339-340 (SAD). An entry entitled 'Borgo li 5 Maggio 1827'. For the first siege of the City see: Ilija Mitić. *Dubrovačka država u međunarodnoj zajednici (od 1358. do 1815)*. Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1988: p. 215.

Midwives in the books of the foundling hospital

The administration of the foundling hospital recorded the payments made to the midwives hired for assistance at delivery. These brief records on the attendance of midwives during childbirth and the payments for the service rendered have illuminated the status of midwives as the hospital staff; and broader: by analogy with the relationship between the hospital's administration and midwives, we will examine the relationship between the Republic government and midwifery in Dubrovnik in general.

In the eighteenth century most children were born with the assistance of midwives. Besides them, the woman in labour was assisted by other experienced women: mother-in-law, cousins, sisters and neighbours. They encouraged the woman in labour, provided her with refreshment and assisted according to midwife's instructions.¹⁰² Official medicine, physicians and surgeons intervened only in difficult cases of labour, often merely to remove by means of instruments the still born fetus from the womb.¹⁰³ For this reason the presence of a surgeon at labour had a negative psychological effect on the parturient, causing anxiety and fear and most certainly postponed his presence until the very last moment.¹⁰⁴ The women tended to resort to the traditional ways of pre- and post-natal care of expectant mothers and parturients, which mainly included the assistance of lay midwives and practitioners, as well as popular healers.¹⁰⁵ Commonly recognised as a female occupation, the status of midwifery in the Dubrovnik Republic was not regulated by law or written decrees, but probably only by practice

¹⁰² Here are some examples of female support of the women in labour from the literature we have studied: while the famous Ragusan physician Amatus Lusitanus was treating a young expectant mother for caruncle in the sixteenth century, *mulieres assistentes* did not allow him to draw blood, so he prescribed a different therapy. R. Jeremić and J. Tadić, *Prilozi za istoriju zdravstvene kulture starog Dubrovnika* II: p. 96. A. Wilson provides a detailed description of childbirth in England in the first half of the eighteenth century as a form of social gathering which, besides the midwife, was attended by at least five other women (*gossips*). A. Wilson, *The making of man-midwifery*: pp. 25-26. Thus J. Gélis rightly refers to childbirth as a public event. J. Gélis, *History of childbirth*: pp. 99-101. As testified by Jele Komajić, a teller from Konavle, the custom has survived until the present, for in 1964 she went into labour two months before expected. When the doctor arrived at her house, he 'sent the women out of the room' (*rasćero je žene iz sobe*).

¹⁰³ In his notes, Amatus Lusitanus describes several interventions in difficult deliveries and post-natal complications. R. Jeremić and J. Tadić, *Prilozi za istoriju zdravstvene kulture starog Dubrovnika* II: pp. 103-104. Cf.: R. Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind*: pp. 186-190, 231. A. Wilson, *The making of man-midwifery*: pp. 47-59.

¹⁰⁴ A. Wilson, *The making of man-midwifery*: p. 50.

¹⁰⁵ S. Stojan, *Vjerenice i nevjernice*: pp. 175-204.

and experience. Thus one should wonder about the role of the state apparatus in the supervision of midwifery in view of the growing requirements of the medical profession and medicalisation of childbirth in the eighteenth century.

Upon the initiative of eighteenth-century health reformers, European monarchs introduced certain measures concerning public health and hygiene by placing these services under state control. For midwifery this meant stepping out of the private sphere, education of midwives, issue of work licence and supervision of their work by the civil authorities and medical staff. By the early eighteenth century, English physicians started keeping training courses for midwives, issuing licence to successful attendants, which was a radical change in view of the earlier period when licences were issued by the Church authorities, mainly on the basis of the knowledge of baptismal rite in case of fatal danger for the child and the midwife's morale.¹⁰⁶ Elsewhere in Europe the state authorities tried to include childbirth into public health: in France the ideas of the Enlightenment contributed to the efforts to roots out charlatanism, while in the German lands education and licencing of midwives was required under the influence of cameralism.¹⁰⁷ In the Habsburg Monarchy a pioneering role in the field of public health was played by Gerhard Van Swieten, physician, scientist and reformer. By his health reform the licencing of midwives became obligatory throughout the Monarchy in 1770.¹⁰⁸ In Varaždin, then the capital of *Banska Hrvatska*, training courses for midwives were kept by his student, doctor Jean Baptiste Lalangue and midwife Elizabeta Gartin.¹⁰⁹ After the training, the midwives were issued work licence. In the second half of the eighteenth century in Varaždin, midwives were recruited into public service. In addition to regular salary, the city provided them with lodgings as well; in return, they were to assist at delivery poor women of Varaždin free of charge.¹¹⁰ Educated and licenced midwives of German and Austrian origin worked also in Bjelovar, part of *Vojna Krajina* at the time. Attached to the regiment, the midwives had arrived together with the military troops in the middle of the eighteenth century, but apart from their duties with the regiment, they assisted during childbirths in the town itself and in the suburbs.¹¹¹

In the official documents of the Dubrovnik Republic no evidence has been found to support the assumption that the city authorities employed midwives in

¹⁰⁶ T. R. Forbes, »The regulation of English midwives«: p. 354.

¹⁰⁷ R. Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind*: p. 274.

¹⁰⁸ H. Bunijevac, V. Dugački and S. Fatović Ferenčić, *120 godina škole za primalje u Zagrebu*: pp. 22-23.

¹⁰⁹ M. D. Grmek, *O meštiriji pupkoreznoj*: p. 8.

¹¹⁰ G. Piasek, »Varaždinska gradska primalja - Ana Marija Kromlin«: pp. 71-72.

¹¹¹ D. Habek, »Primaljstvo i prve primalje u Bjelovaru 1756.-1856.«: p. 225.

public service, at least until the beginning of the nineteenth century, unlike contract physicians and surgeons who received a salary from the city cash, their duty being to treat all the citizens of Dubrovnik without exception.¹¹² Namely, it was not until the state expenditure plan of 1804 that we find the record of an annual salary for two midwives, Marija Pozza Sorgo and Marijana Kapica.¹¹³ Annual salary is certain proof of stable employment, but we have no knowledge of the scope of their service and duties. Although until then the work of midwives in Dubrovnik could not be characterised as public service, it was recognised by the city authorities in a certain way. The state often engaged them in court proceedings as witnesses or experts. In cases of infanticide suspected in girls and women, they could recognise the signs of recent pregnancy and delivery.¹¹⁴ Gynecological examination helped them establish whether a girl was violated if rape was suspected,¹¹⁵ and their testimonies also reveal other details from the practice of Dubrovnik's midwives. They were well versed in female problems, and women sought their help in cases other than pregnancy or labour.¹¹⁶ Besides criminal proceedings, the government of Dubrovnik sought the help of midwives in other cases as well, and paid them upon the work done: among the expenditures of the prison in the Rector's Palace from 1765, there is record of the amounts paid to Anna Petrova Rossi for visiting a female prisoner from Pelješac, Jele Juričević. The midwife, apart from assisting during labour, visited the pregnant woman in order to examine her twice before delivery, in May and in June.¹¹⁷ Anna Petrova Rossi is probably Anica Petrova, midwife, who in 1769 assisted one delivery at the foundling hospital.¹¹⁸

¹¹² The institution of contract physicians in Dubrovnik can be traced from the fourteenth century. On municipal contract physicians and surgeons see: Risto Jeremić and Jorjo Tadić. *Prilozi za istoriju zdravstvene kulture starog Dubrovnika*, vol. I. Beograd: Centralni higijenski zavod, 1938 and vol. II; Mirko Dražen Grmek, »Srednjovjekovni ugovori o liječenju s hrvatskoga područja«, in: *Iz hrvatske medicinske prošlosti*, ed. Mirko Dražen Grmek and Stanko Dujmušić. Zagreb: Zbor liječnika Hrvatske, 1954: pp. 147-160; Tatjana Buklijaš, »Per relationem medicorum – povijesnomedicinska građa u dubrovačkim kaznenim spisima iz 15. stoljeća (1421-1431)«, *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 39 (2001): pp. 49-120.

¹¹³ Stjepan Čosić, »Administrativna struktura i plaće službenika Dubrovačke Republike (1700-1808)«, *Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru* 38 (1996): p. 153.

¹¹⁴ N. Lonza, »Two Souls Lost«: pp. 67-107.

¹¹⁵ S. Stojan, *Vjerenice i nevjernice*: p. 181.

¹¹⁶ Interesting is the case of a nun from Lopud, who complained to the midwife of a 'weakness', and 'some kind of a pain in the stomach'. When the midwife told her that she was with child, the nun denied, insisting on being 'weak', and not pregnant. See: S. Stojan, *Vjerenice i nevjernice*: p. 180. Cf. J. Gélis, *History of childbirth*: p. 110.

¹¹⁷ Both spouses were in the Dubrovnik prison. After birth, the boy remained in prison for a year with his mother, after which there is no mention of him. *Detta*, ser. 6, vol. 67, ff. 19v, 22v (SAD).

¹¹⁸ *Libro delle spese*, vol. 15, f. 103.

In the books of the foundling hospital a midwife was termed by one of the many Italian names—*mamana*.¹¹⁹ Slavic form *primaglia* was recorded only once, on 19 April 1773, by error of the administrator—author of the sources.¹²⁰ In the baptism registers of the foundling hospital the term *obstetrix* is used when baptism in fatal danger is mentioned.¹²¹ A midwife working for the *Hospitale misericordiae* had no status of a permanent employee, as confirmed by the payments. The governess, internal wetnurses and maids, full-time employees of the foundling hospital, received their salary on monthly basis; the chaplain and surgeon were paid once a year; the midwife, however, was paid per childbirth, on contract basis for the services rendered, like the rest of the ‘external contractors’: masons, soldiers, carpenters. However, judging by the notes of the municipal engineer Lorenzo Vitelleschi from 1827, the status of midwives apparently changed with the dawn of the nineteenth century. He describes the foundling hospital in this way: “Ground floor is divided according to the requirements of the foundling hospital, and on the first floor there is a living room with several other rooms occupied by the governess, midwife and wetnurses. The rooms for the parturients are in the attic”.¹²² Since they had a room, the midwives resided in the hospital, like the rest of the permanently employed staff, governess and internal wetnurse. On the basis of this note made by engineer Vitelleschi, we may conclude that the hospital began to employ midwives on full-time basis in the period between 1788, when we find the last single payment to Marija Benković, and 1827. The foundling hospital continued to admit unwed pregnant women in the early years of the nineteenth century.¹²³

Although the lying-in ward did not have a midwife on permanent contract basis over a longer period, at certain intervals it hired the same midwives (see Table 2). From 1758 to 1762 the accounting books of the foundling hospital mention two midwives, Marija Dominkova and Anica Ivanova. Later, over a

¹¹⁹ Italian terms for midwife are: *raccogliatrice, comare, comare da putti, arlevatrice, levatrice, obstettrice*. See: C. Pancino, *Il bambino e l’acqua sporca*: p. 61.

¹²⁰ *Libro delle spese*, vol. 15, f. 124. The term *primaglia* we also find in the Books of Expenditures of the Rector’s Palace of 1716. *Detta*, vol. 67, f. 79v.

¹²¹ *Libro del batesimo di pietà*, vol. 21, f. 1319; *Matica krštenih nahodišta 1808-1829*, pp. 2, 10, 13-14, 16 and passim.

¹²² Lorenzo Vitelleschi, *Povijesne i statističke bilješke o dubrovačkom okrugu*. Dubrovnik, 1827, ed. Vinicije B. Lupis. Dubrovnik: Matica hrvatska Dubrovnik and Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku, 2002: pp. 9-10, 89.

¹²³ The number of parturients increased considerably, so that on 25 April 1813 two extra beds were required for the parturients at the foundling hospital *Ospedale degli Esposti*, as the two extant did not suffice. *Acta Gallica*, Javna dobrotvornost, Tit. XII, Rub. 4 (SAD).

longer period 1766–1785, the foundling hospital engaged almost exclusively Margarita Benedettova, in the sources sometimes referred to as *mamana del Nostro Ospedale*, though, judging by the payments, she was not permanently employed either. In that period two other midwives are mentioned: Anica Petrova only once, while Magdalena Vuić did not assist at the hospital but in her own home (*in casa sua*). From 1786 to 1788 the pregnant women delivered their babies with the assistance of Marija Ivanova Benković.

Table 2. Midwives from the books of the foundling hospital

Period	Names of midwives	Service
1758 – 1762	Marija Dominkova	Assistance at childbirth
1759 – 1762	Anica Ivanova	Assistance at childbirth Upkeeping of pregnant woman in her own home
1766 – 1785	Margarita Benedettova	Assistance at childbirth
1769	Catta Zuchinetti	Upkeeping of pregnant woman in her own home
1769	Anica Petrova	Assistance at childbirth
1779 – 1780	Magdalena Vuić	Upkeeping of pregnant woman in her own home
1786 – 1788	Marija Ivanova Benković	Assistance at childbirth

Sources: *Libro delle spese*, ser. 46, vol. 15; *Giornale 1773 in 1788*, ser. 46, vol. 7; *Libro Maestro 1779–1784*, ser. 46, vol. 10. All sources are filed at the State Archives in Dubrovnik

The midwives assisted at delivery (*asistito al parto*). Childbirths were known to be long and painful at times. Marija Dominkova from Pile assisted a girl in labour over two days in December 1758, whereas in March 1759 a girl was in labour for three days.¹²⁴ Emphasis on the grave circumstances of the delivery, midst otherwise scanty entries of the Book of Expenditures, were aimed at justification of a somewhat higher amount paid to the midwife. In the mentioned cases of 1759, it was 3 *perperi*, and for assisting a girl in labour that same year Anica Ivanova from the City received 2 *perperi* and 6 *grossi*. A slightly greater amount, 3 *perperi* and 6 *grossi*, was paid to Margarita Benedettova in December 1766 for assisting a pregnant woman at the hospital with some additional costs.¹²⁵ These extra costs may have included medical treatment and

¹²⁴ *Libro delle spese*, vol. 15, ff. 44-45.

¹²⁵ *Libro delle spese*, vol. 15, f. 78.

gynecological examination. At the foundling hospital maternity ward midwives also faced fatal outcomes of certain pregnancies. There is record of a woman who had miscarriage a month upon admission into the foundling hospital,¹²⁶ another pregnant woman died at childbirth,¹²⁷ there was a case of stillbirth,¹²⁸ of a baby who died ‘a few hours’ after birth.¹²⁹ The bulk of deliveries were normal (see Table 1). The sex of a newborn baby was often entered: ‘gave birth to a daughter’ or ‘gave birth to a son’, and on occasion even the child’s name. The most common female name was Marija, followed by Ana, Cvijeta, Rusa. Boys were most commonly named Ivan, Nikola, Bernard. The foundling hospital was also to become home for a pair of twins (...*ha dato in luce due ragazzi...*).¹³⁰

The foundling hospital cash provided for the upkeep of poor pregnant women outside the institution—at the midwives’ homes. A case of this kind was first recorded in the Book of Expenditures on 26 June 1762, when a payment was made to Anica Ivanova for the ‘upkeeping of a poor pregnant woman at her own home’.¹³¹ Although sparse and dating only from the period 1762–1780, the available evidence concerns the upkeep of pregnant women by these midwives in their homes: Anica Ivanova, Catta Zuchinetti and Magdalena Vuić (see Table 2). Due to the manner the expenditures were entered into the book, for only one pregnant woman we can establish with certainty the exact term of her upkeep at the midwife’s: at the home of Magdalena Vuić the pregnant woman stayed from 7 October 1779 to 16 February 1780,¹³² i.e. the the last four months of pregnancy and the usual 15 days after birth. The length of the stay with the midwife may be accounted by discretion. Anica Ivanova in September 1762 housed two pregnant women at the same time.¹³³ An uncommon case of a man housing a pregnant woman has been recorded. Niko Saulan from Vitaljina in Konavle, by order of the Minor Council, received a customary amount of 4 *grossi* a day for the upkeep of a pregnant Kate. As to who the man who provided for the young pregnant woman in his house was, as well as the circumstances that surrounded this case dealt by the Minor Council we can

¹²⁶ *Libro delle partorienti dall Ospedale della Misericordia*, vol. 20, f. 25.

¹²⁷ *Libro delle partorienti dall Ospedale della Misericordia*, vol. 20, f. 4.

¹²⁸ *Administratio Nosocomii Pietatis 1784*, vol. 11, f. 188.

¹²⁹ *Libro Maestro 1779 in 1784*, vol. 10, f. 264.

¹³⁰ *Administratio Nosocomii Pietatis 1784*, vol. 11, f. 409.

¹³¹ *Libro delle spese*, vol. 15, f. 58.

¹³² *Libro Maestro 1779 in 1784*, vol. 10, f. 15.

¹³³ *Libro delle spese*, sv. 15, f. 58.

merely speculate. In November the date of her discharge was entered.¹³⁴ Whether Kate was transferred to hospital prior to delivery or she was assisted at childbirth in Vitaljina by an experienced local woman remains unknown.

The upkeeping of parturients outside the foundling hospital was cancelled by a Senate decision of 18 May 1797, by which such form of support to the foundling hospital administrators was prohibited.¹³⁵ From the session agenda, at which the proposition for an increase of expenditures to be given to the foundling hospital was put to the vote, it may be gathered that such a decision was governed by a better control over the expenditures. The proposition was denied at first, only to be approved by a repeated vote and under a compromise: the requested amount was reduced by one *grossus*, and the state-supported upkeeping of parturients at midwives' homes was cancelled. We do not know how long this decision remained in force, but had it not been renewed earlier, this form of support was certainly re-introduced by the Austrian government by a decree on the prevention of infanticides issued for Dalmatia in 1821. The whole procedure is described in detail: municipal authorities were to secure shelter for 'pregnant women who wished to remain hidden' and appoint a midwife at whose house the woman would remain during pregnancy and childbirth. It was the midwife's responsibility to bring the newborn baby to the district foundling hospital. It was regulated that the midwives would recompense their costs from the parturient's family. Should the family be able to prove its destitute position, the midwife was to be paid from the cash of the *instituta beneficenza* as a special expenditure.¹³⁶ This system was evidently the legacy of Dubrovnik's Republic period, but whether it prevailed in the other Dalmatian cities in the period before Austrian administration yet remains to be studied.

Conclusion

Care of the abandoned children, later also of parturients, in early modern Europe was mainly organised in specialised hospitals. The Dubrovnik *Hospitale misericordiae* which was founded and supported by the state in 1432, fits into the network of the European foundling hospitals of the time, parts of urban

¹³⁴ *Libro Maestro*, ser. 46, vol. 9. f. 414 (SAD).

¹³⁵ *Maestro dell Ospitale della Misericordia 1798 in 1804*, ser. 46, vol. 13, on the back of the first unnumbered page (SAD).

¹³⁶ *Viene richiamata l'osservanza delle discipline dirette a privenire i delitti d'infanticidii di esposizione d'infanti*. Circolare del governo n. 21457-4488 of 6 November 1827, in: *Raccolta delle leggi ed ordinanze dell'anno 1827. per la Dalmazia*. Zadar: Antonio-Luigi Battara, 1829: pp. 379-381.

infrastructure of almost all larger towns. An abandoned child would pass the common path from a parturient to the rotating wheel and into the hospital, but that was not the only way of delivering children to state welfare. Foundling hospitals emerged as another branch on the tree of charitable care of the abandoned children. By offering shelter to pregnant women and parturients, child's life was protected from the eventual attempts at abortion or infanticide, but equally so from the risky period of the child's abandonment. In the regulation on the establishment of the Dubrovnik state foundling hospital there is no mention of parturients, possibly because deliveries had not been performed at the hospital in its earliest days. According to the present data, the foundling hospital functioned as a lying-in ward until 1792, which marked the beginning of explicit recording of the admitted parturients into a special book. A detailed examination of the accounting books of the foundling hospital shows that the lying-in ward had started operating much earlier. A single mention of a payment for the assistance at birth from 1684 testifies to the hospital's operation as lying-in hospital in the seventeenth century as well. The accounting books kept regular record of the expenses related to deliveries at least until the mid-eighteenth century, but due to the scarcity of sources it is not possible to ascertain the exact date from which the hospital started operating as a maternity ward, nor the reasons behind this expansion of the services of the state foundling hospital. The motives might be related to public welfare, the seeds of which we find as early as the fifteenth century, which points to the continuity of the state's concern over the citizens.

Notwithstanding the traditional and conservative nature of the Ragusan patriciate and its institutions, we cannot exclude the influence of the ideas of the Enlightenment on Dubrovnik's social policy. The Ragusans kept pace with the new developments in medicine, public health and social welfare prevailing in Europe. However, the Dubrovnik Republic lacked the bureaucratic structure typical of the great European states such as that of the Habsburg Monarchy, the innovations thus being introduced without special decrees and pomp, by modifying the current system of the state social welfare. Further, the sessions of the Senate and the Minor Council provide evidence on the involvement of the state authorities in the work of the foundling hospital, by either solving individual cases on the basis of precedent or deciding on the finances. Apparently, this model of approaching social welfare problematics suited the needs and size of the Dubrovnik Republic. In the eighteenth century the general conditions improved. For example, from the 1730s onwards an increase of population and a drop of infanticides is evident. Also, testifying to the improving economic,

political and health conditions was the fact that Dubrovnik was experiencing the process of demographic transition at the same time as France, 50 years prior to the other European states and one hundred years prior to the rest of Croatia. Although it did not fall among the major contributors to such an improvement, under the circumstances the foundling hospital represented an important segment of the system of social and health welfare of the Dubrovnik Republic.

At the *Hospitale misericordiae* the pregnant women were allowed to stay for several months and a fortnight upon childbirth. Full discretion was not guaranteed after all, although the accounting books record attempts at hiding the identity of the pregnant women. The lying-in hospital was intended for unmarried expectant mothers, but childbirth at public expense may have also taken place at the midwives' homes. Considering a relatively short post-delivery stay at the hospital, nothing suggests that the parturients may have served either voluntarily or by force as internal wetnurses. The number of childbirths is difficult to estimate, yet it is certain that several pregnant women may have stayed at the hospital at the same time.

The delivery of unwed pregnant women at the foundling hospital was not the responsibility of the Ragusan physicians, while the midwives engaged for the purpose were, most likely, lay but experienced women. Despite the lack of formal education, the Dubrovnik authorities trusted their testimonies in cases of rape, abortion and infanticide. They participated actively in the surveillance network of unwed pregnant women aimed at prevention of abortion and infanticide. Some midwives housed unwed pregnant women in their own homes, caring for them for a number of months at the expense of the foundling hospital. From the perspective of the state, the work of midwives may be interpreted in terms of social rather than medical contribution. Moreover, just as the authorities did not employ public, city midwives under contract, neither were they on the regular staff of the hospital, at least until 1788. This fact in no way hindered the work of the lying-in ward, which over certain periods witnessed the same woman to be called for assistance in labour and delivery. Between the years 1788 and 1827, midwives became members of the regular staff of the maternity ward within the Dubrovnik foundling hospital, yet the exact date and the circumstances of this affirmative change have remained beyond our research, leaving this question open.

Translated by Vesna Baće

