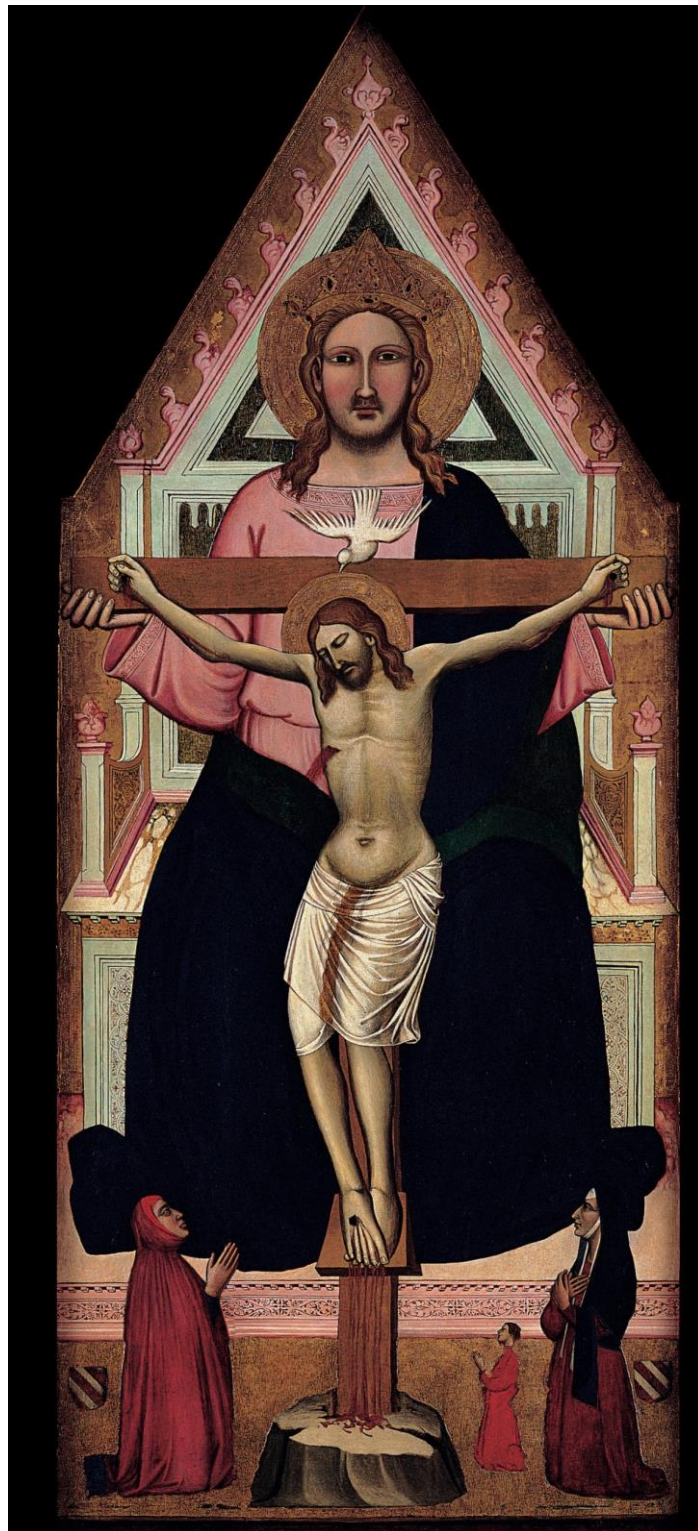


## The Datinis and The Never Ending Search for Wet Nurses



*Niccolò di Pietro Gerini: Trinità (approx. 1405–1410), Capitoline Museums, with profile views of Francesco Datini (in the lower left corner) and Margherita Datini (right corner)*

## Mediation of Wet Nurses: Case 01

### *Abstract:*

Schiatta (a worker of Francesco Datini) offers the services of his wife as wet nurse and asks Margherita Datini to act as mediator. Margherita does not want to help Schiatta and his wife without telling them openly. According to Margherita, Schiatta's wife is too old and has too much milk to be a good wet nurse and Margherita does not want to put her reputation at risk.

MD Letter n. 85 (22 March 1395) (Florence → Prato)

*Original Wording in Italian (edited by Valeria Rosati)*

iSchiatta ci fu qui domenicha, egli e lla donna sua: veniva per tōre uno fancullo a balia, non si achordò cho' niuno; lasc(i)ò che venisono a favelare a mme, a 'formarsi mecho, perch'è nostro lavoratore; no' ci sono mai venuti a me per darmi la risposta, lascomi ch'io ne gli facessi cerchare d'uno; io non n'ò fatto cerchare e non ne farò cerchare, perch'è chosa d'averne pechato e verghogna, perché la donna è vechia e 'l late abundato, bene ch'ella dica che gl'abia pocho; sì che, pertanto, digli che se ne prochaci chostà e guarda che 'l Saccente nolla sapia, che gle ridirebe subito ch'io no' llo volesi servire.

*English Translation (Carolyn James/Antonio Pagliaro)*

Schiatta and his wife were here on Sunday. He came to get a baby [for his wife] to wet nurse, but he didn't come to an agreement with anyone. He left word that they should come to speak to me for further information because he is one of our workers, but no one came to give me a reply. He has left it to me to search for a baby but I haven't done so; and I won't, because it would be wrong and shameful. The woman is old and the milk too abundant, despite the fact that she says she has very little. So tell him to try in Prato and be careful that Saccente doesn't find out, because he would tell Schiatta immediately that I didn't want to help him.



## References

- *Le lettere di Margherita Datini a Francesco di Marco (1384-1410)*, edited by Valeria Rosati. Prato: Cassa di Risparmi e Depositi, 1977.
- Datini, Margherita. *Letters to Francesco Datini*. Translated by Carolyn James and Antonio Pagliaro. Toronto: Iter, CRRS, 2012.