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*Social mobility in the towns and countryside of the late medieval Crown of Aragon (c. 1300-c. 1550): sources and methodological approaches*¹

1. Introduction

Social mobility is a subject implicit in many dynamics traditionally studied by the historiography of the late medieval Iberian kingdoms, in general, and the Crown of Aragon, in particular (Iradriel 2010; Igual 2018; Reixach, Burguera 2024). It includes phenomena such as the making and evolution of urban oligarchies (Viciano 2008b; Laliena 2010; Sabaté, 2013; Fynn-Paul 2015). Rising social mobility in the mercantile sectors has also been the object of many studies since the 1990s (Fernández Trabal 1995; Aurell 1996; Cruselles 2001; Soldani 2010; De la Torre 2019), a process that could also affect families from smaller settlements (Viciano 1993; Aparisi Martí 2019-2020). Other works deal with entrepreneurship and upward mobility within the milieu of craftsmen (Iradriel, Igual, Navarro and Aparici 1995; Navarro 1998, 2004, 2018; Librer 2014) or skilled professionals like jurists or notaries (Graullera 2009; Cruselles 1998). These analyses have not been limited to towns, since some scholars have also drawn the attention to the inhabitants of rural areas and their possible migration to cities (To 2010; Furió, Garcia-Oliver 2010; Mas 2000; Ortí 2013). Studies on the trajectories of peasant families in the kingdom of Valencia stand out. They show, for instance, peasants that, thanks to their socio-professional mobility, could become shopkeepers in a second generation and merchants in a third (Viciano 1995), as well as others who joined the professional body of notaries (Aparisi Romero 2025, forthcoming). However, more global approaches are needed, especially given recent research on inequalities and connected economic trends (Furió et al. 2020; Morelló et al. 2020; García-Montero 2020).

As is well known, the Iberian domains of the kings of Aragon are endowed with a rich documentary series from the beginning of the fourteenth century onward. However, there is still archival evidence that is unexplored or pending systematization. The first section of the paper will be devoted to describing the most important features of these sources and their application to both quantitative and qualitative research on social mobility. We will mainly focus on three types of sources: fiscal registers, municipal records that provide long-term perspectives and notarial

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records, especially testaments, probate inventories and marriage contracts. In each case, we seek to build series of sequential data from these documentary series. In doing so, we will discuss their scope and limitations, as well as methods that can be applied in order to assess both upward and downward mobility during the late Middle Ages. We will focus on several representative cases of the urban network of Catalonia, Valencia and Majorca.

2. Description of archival sources

The first group of registers to be employed to examine social mobility derives from direct taxes in the different territories or within specific municipalities as a source to assess, in the long run, the evolution of membership in specific socio-professional groups, as well as those belonging to different socioeconomic strata. These data can also be supplemented with sources arising from the activity of urban governments and notary offices.

2.1. Fiscal records: from general to local direct taxes

It is important to distinguish between direct taxes collected by the Crown and those imposed by local authorities. Generally speaking, they all tended to tax the assets or wealth of family units, but with important differences that influence how they can be used by researchers.

Beginning with general taxes imposed by the Crown, the *monedatge* or *morabatí* was a direct undifferentiated tax collected in the kingdoms of Aragon, Valencia and Majorca (López Elum 1972; Baydal 2006-08; 2020). In Valencia, the taxes often included a detailed list of taxpayers as well as the total number of hearths per settlement, so these sources can be employed to study demographic elements or anthroponomy, as several studies on Valencia and also Majorca show (Arroyo 1969; 1986; Ferrer 1975; 2005; Cabanes 1973; Sevillano 1974; Guinot 1988; Sastre 1989; Aparici Martí 2009a). With regard to social mobility, a crucial element is the existence of a minimum income threshold for taxpayers, which was set at 105 *solidos*; below this sum, people were considered exempt or *nichils*. This feature allows us to observe the oscillation above or below the minimum wealth threshold in order to see possible socioeconomic transformations. When there are *morabatí* records for a given place from different years, we can identify taxpayers whose status as payers or exempt (*nichils*) changed, and in some cases, the collectors even pointed out the reasons for an individual taxpayer's fiscal impoverishment.

In Catalonia, *fogatjaments* were general surveys that included the number of hearths or family units in each community, who were obliged to share the tax burden arising from subsidies approved in *Corts* or parliaments. Only the later general *fogatjaments* (from 1496 onwards) include nominal lists of the holders of hearths (or taxpayers) within each place. They can provide insights into the occupational or socio-professional structure of towns, but not into their wealth distribution (Orti 1999).

The most important group of fiscal registers arise from the imposition of direct taxes by both urban and rural communities. These local taxes (*talla* in Catalonia or *peita* in Valencia) consisted of direct taxes on wealth based on the estimation of the value of the assets belonging to the families in the community. The tax was recorded in a book, a wealth register, called *llibre d'estimes* o *padró*, which provides information on the socio-professional background of the taxpayers, an assessment of their wealth, and details on their assets. The sums that taxpayers owed were recorded in another source, the so-called *llibres de talles* or *de la peita*. These books contained information similar to that in the wealth registers, but it was less detailed, since each kind of assets was not listed. Literature on these sources is extensive for Catalonia and Valencia (Turull, Morelló 2005; Morelló et al. 2020; Furió et al. 2020; Viciano 2023a). There are also studies dealing with Majorca and Aragon (Barceló 2002; Tudela, Pascual 2023; Medrano 2006; Vispe 2022, respectively).

Changes in the ownership of assets, whether through the property market or family transfers, made it necessary to update these registers. These changes were usually recorded in the form of marginal annotations next to relevant older entries in the wealth register, until the accumulation of entries made it difficult to use them and a new one was drawn up. In at least one place (Castelló de la Plana), the updates were recorded in a separate book, the so-called *llibres de compres i vendes* (books of purchases and sales) in which all transfers during a year were detailed, and not only through the market, as the name would suggest (Viciano 2023b).

These local tax records from Catalonia and Valencia have mainly been studied to assess economic inequalities and to discern how general parameters in this respect evolved. In Catalonia, recent case studies have illuminated cities such as Tortosa (Miquel, Morelló 2025 forthcoming), Girona (Reixach 2022) and Balaguer (García-Montero 2020), along with smaller towns such as Cervera, Igualada (Miquel, Verdés 2024), Valls and Reus (Morelló 2017). There have been similar case studies for Valencia such as the small towns of Alzira or Castelló (Furió 1982, 2017; Peris 1985; Joli, Doménech 1996-1997; Domingo 1998; Viciano 2008a; 2008b; Furió et al. 2020). The City of Majorca has also been studied (Barceló 2002, among other works by the same author; Tudela, Pascual 2023).

The methodology used to study social mobility in registers that only record payments differs somewhat from that used to simply assess economic inequalities. The increase or decrease of tax sums attributed did not necessarily indicate changes in the volume of wealth because the amount of tax depended on the rate applied each year to the tax base, according to the needs of the municipal treasury. Thus, knowing the rate applied by taxable income, information that appears in the same collection booklet or in the books of municipal acts, is needed to reconstruct the taxable wealth of the taxpayers. But the homogeneous series of data of a group of taxpayers, corresponding to different collection books, does make it possible to follow the fluctuation of a person's wealth over the course of his or her life cycle. For longer periods, the methodological question that arises is the same as in all the fiscal sources we are examining: to establish the links of kinship between different generations of taxpayers, for which it is necessary to resort to complementary sources, notarial records in particular.

Since our purpose is not to follow the evolution of the wealth held by an individual or family but rather to track relative changes in wealth within a community, the focus is on the numeric strata in the declared wealth or sums attributed to taxpayers. Then it is a matter of measuring the percentage of changes or continuities within a certain bracket (decile or quartile) and, in the case of groups that have changed their standing, the bracket where they end up.

The detailed description of the assets of taxpayers in the wealth register offer even more stimulating avenues for research, notably the possibility to observe how the proportion of urban immovables, land and movable assets, generally conditioned by the socio-professional condition or age of taxpayers, evolved. In this regard, we can often observe patterns such as the transition from land to commercial investments in the case of well-to-do farm families, or from productive investments in the most active years to an emphasis on security and honor at the end of an individual's life journey. Several studies illustrate part of these dynamics in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Valencia (Viciano 1995; Furió 2007; Vercher 2017; Aparisi Romero 2025 forthcoming). This type of exercise, however, requires complex analyses in terms of the checking of different sources.

2.2. Municipal registers: lists of offices and newcomers

The municipal archives of many cities and small towns in Catalonia, Aragon, Valencia and Majorca are endowed with several sources to study social mobility (Batlle 1988; Narbona 2007; Bernabeu, Narbona 2023). First of all, there are the proceedings of the municipal councils. They have been examined in the case of Catalonia (Miquel, Reixach 2022), and especially with respect to the kingdom of Valencia, including its capital (Anyó 2001; Bernabeu, Narbona 2023), Xàtiva (Boluda 1999; Terol 2006), Gandia (Olaso 2005), Alzira (Lairón, Vercher 2017), Vila-real (Aparici Martí 2021) and, particularly, Castelló (Rabassa, Sánchez Almela 2017; Viciano, Guinot 2018; Navarro, Aparici 2018; Royo, García Edo 2019; Baydal, Ruiz 2019). These proceedings, apart from other evidence, include the appointments of officers or elections of representatives of local governments. These institutions are interesting with regard to social mobility if we consider them a showcase of economic and social dynamics more than a mere space of political struggles. Access to municipal offices in itself was a parameter of social status. In addition, the access to many organisms or offices of the municipal government according to three divisions within the political community opens windows to changes of position in the upper-middle part of local society.

Studies dating back decades have already been conducted on municipal office-holding in Catalan towns such as Perpignan (Daileader 2000), Girona (Reixach 2019), Manresa (Torras 2006; Fynn-Paul 2015, 68-91) and Cervera (Turull 1992). In Valencia, municipal proceedings have led to quantitative analyses of the accumulation of offices by families, enabling assessment of their rise or fall in local political society. Such case studies include the city of Valencia (with the lists of municipal officers from 1306 to 1516 published in Narbona, Bernabeu 2021) (Narbona 1994; 1995; 2007), Castelló (Viciano 2008b), Alzira (Bernabeu 2014; Bernabeu, Garés 2018) and

the region of Oriola (Barrio 2002). Municipal registers have also served as a basis for prosopographical studies such as those developed for the patriciate of Valencia (Narbona, 1988-1989; 1999) or the local elites of small towns such as Castelló (Viciano 1993; 1995). Even when the sources have not been as well preserved, the prosopographical technique has been profitably applied to the study of the political leading actors of the city of Zaragoza (Mainé 2006; Velasco 2022) and other urban centers in Aragon, such as Huesca (Iranzo 2005) and Teruel (Navarro 2002). This approach has also been applied in Majorca, although in a less systematic way, in part connected with a particular share of power due to Palma's undisputed leading role in the government of the whole island since the representatives of the municipality were representatives both of the city and of the kingdom (Planas 2005).

Municipal records of new inhabitants or freedoms, like the books called «llibres d'aveïnaments» in Valencia, also allow us to capture the dynamics of geographical mobility and broader migration flows (Morelló 1999). Some of these studies focus on the capital of this kingdom (Cruselles 1999, 2003) and also other places like Castelló (Sánchez Adell 1976) and Vila-real (Aparici Martí 2009a; 2009b). Other works center on immigrants arriving in Valencia from a specific territory, like Aragon (Salvador 1989; Cebrián 1990; Cabanes 1997; Navarro 2002; Ferrer 2008) and, to a lesser extent, Catalonia (Salvador, Benítez 1998). These processes often also implied upward or downward mobility. The study of social mobility can be enriched if we combine examination of the degree of settlement or continuity in a specific place, with these registers of newcomers and records of the collection of direct taxes discussed before. There is a literature illustrating this for small towns in Valencia like Vila-real (Ferrer 2005) and Castelló (Sánchez Adell 1978) or rural places like Sueca (Furió 1982).

2.3. The wide range of possibilities of socially representative notarial records

In order to track the socioeconomic trajectory of individuals and families, notary records can be very useful. They allow us to trace family links and to disambiguate cases of homonymy and similar problems of personal identification. The great preservation of this kind of sources in north-eastern Iberia, part of the so-called Latin Arch, for both larger towns and smaller settlements in Catalonia, Valencia, Majorca and part of Aragon, offers many possibilities. A point to underline: as has been argued in Tuscany or other Italian regions, notarial culture penetrated lower down the social scale (Cohn 1998). That is why notarial records provide a wide range of information for most social groups. For instance, the representativeness of wills is beyond doubt, as confirmed by several works on Catalonia and Majorca, such as samples from fifteenth-century Barcelona (Casamitjana 2005, 193-203) and the City of Majorca (Barceló 2019, 289-308) that cover a wide range of social strata, from the nobility to peasants and freedmen and poor women.

Wills, probate inventories and marriage contracts in notarial registers can offer different types of information about wealth and status. In last wills or testamentary documents, there are obviously indications on family wealth that can be compared

across generations (Malta 2022; Vela 2007; Tortosa 2022b), which is also possible through probate inventories (Benito 2008). Yet several sources' limitations must be taken into account, as several works on Majorca, Catalonia, Valencia and Aragon show (Barceló 1994; Bolòs, Sánchez-Boira 2014; Palarea 2024; Almenar 2017; García Marsilla, Almenar 2022; Aliaga, Almenar 2023). Specific monetary valuations for each item, for example, were often only recorded after auctions (García Marsilla, Vela, Navarro 2015). For the rest, valuations have to be made according to the quality and nature of the goods based on information from outside the source itself. Overall, only the dowries in marriage contracts provide a proper quantitative element since they were usually monetary or expressed in cash in many regions, even for the peasantry (Donat, Marcó, Orti 2010; To 2016). Ongoing research is, however, beginning to show the great possibilities these sources offer for the study of inequalities in cities like Valencia (Tortosa 2022a) and Girona (Pérez 2024).

In the case of the urban centers of the Crown of Aragon, there is no significant gap separating the groups represented in the records produced by the municipal authorities and the most common clients of the notaries, who ranged from the wealthy and privileged to people with scarce resources. Although in certain cities, especially the larger ones, the most frequent users of each notary's office may present a specific socio-professional profile (in part due to their residence in town), this cannot be considered an impediment to finding traces of practically the same people and families in the fiscal sources, municipal records, and notarial acts.

Notary records help us to face the two most important methodological challenges encountered when tracing social mobility: name linkage and diachrony. The existing literature shows that family names in the late medieval Crown of Aragon became relatively consolidated from the late 12th-13th centuries onwards (To 2002; Guinot 1999; Mas 2001).² The increasingly widespread use of socio-professional labels is also a factor (Kowaleski 1995, 120-26; Bernardi 2004; Hanne, Judde de Larivière 2010, 235-349). In the area under scrutiny, these labels appear to be more common for craftsmen and specialized occupations such as practitioners, notaries or university-trained professions like physicians and jurists. In highly hierarchical social sectors, such as commercial groups, some identifications can be confusing. In a similar vein, it is necessary to treat with caution the ambiguous category of citizen (Obradors-Suazo 2017).

The need for a diachronic dimension to assess social mobility is a challenge in itself. In other words, any changes in the social scale can only be measured within a minimum period of time. If the phenomena of intragenerational mobility are to be studied, possible transformations should be observed over the course of a person's adult life, i.e., from about 20 to about 40 years. If the aim is to look at intergenerational mobility, the perspective ought to be extended to at least half a century or more. This period increases the volume of documentary mass to be processed, which in turn points to the importance of cross-referencing different

² The debate on the use of surnames as a source for estimating social mobility is well known: Clark 2014; Clark, Cummins, Hao, Díaz Vidal 2015. The case in point, however, presents different strengths and weaknesses from the paradigmatic observatory of pre-modern England. Furthermore, in our methodology explorations we do not propose the simple tracking of family names as a method, but rather try to complement it with other types of information.

sources. It also leads to the need to resort to the reconstruction of individual careers including the sometimes reviled methodologies used to produce genealogies (Marí 2015) and prosopography (Sesma ed. 2006; Verboven, Dumolyn 2007). This does not exclude the possibility of exploring methodologies of quantitative analysis applied for later periods in the same area, for example, in Brea-Martínez, Pujadas-Mora 2019.

3. Dynamics of social mobility: several approaches tracing individuals and families in different kind of sources

The objective of the second part of this work is precisely to test some methodologies by exploring several approaches to tracking upward and downward mobility in different places in north-eastern Iberia. These case studies include data from large cities like Palma (formerly known as City of Majorca) and Girona that ranged from 20,000 to 5,000 inhabitants to smaller urban centers like Castelló de la Plana and Sant Mateu, both in the northern kingdom of Valencia (Tab. 1).

We offer here four specific case studies that track families in the fiscal and municipal registers of Girona, the evolution of relevant family names in the City of Majorca based on the list of members of the municipal executive and, finally, the trajectory of family names from records of the collection of *morabatí* in a small town in the northern kingdom of Valencia, Sant Mateu, and that from the wealth registers preserved in another small urban settlement of the same region, Castelló de la Plana.

Tab. 1. Evolution of the approximate number of inhabitants (based on lists of households) of the towns in the sample from 1350 to 1500

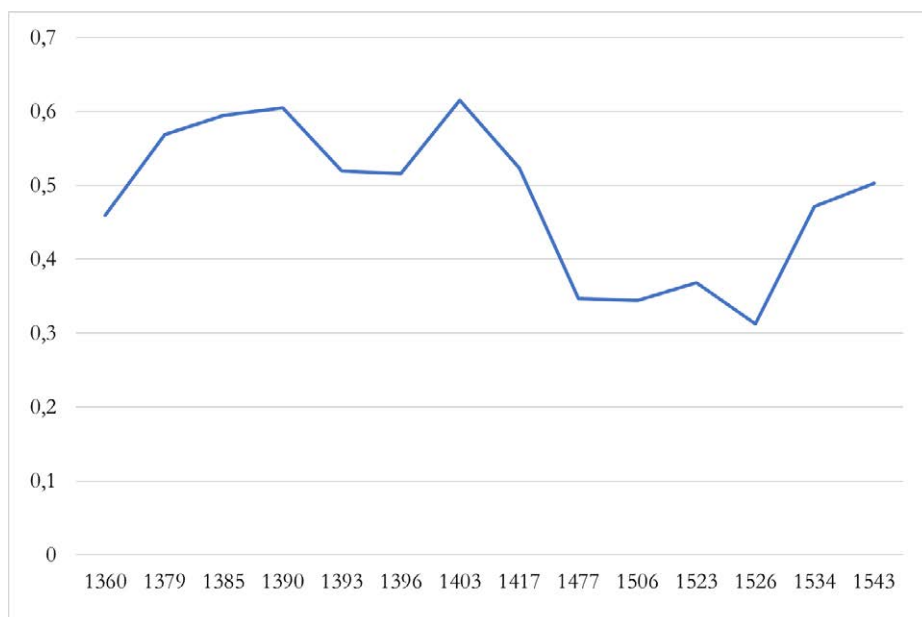
Place	Population and (Year)			
	c. 1350	c. 1400	c. 1450	c. 1500
Palma (City of Majorca)	19,735 (1350)	13,990 (1421)	11,100 (1452)	12,528 (1503)
Girona	8,370 (1360)	6,989 (1403)	3,928* (1462)	4,464 (1496)
Castelló de la Plana	4,950 (1357)	4,374 (1415)	2,920 (1451)	2,178 (1499)
Sant Mateu	4,279 (1373)	3,334 (1415)	1,872 (1451)	1,386 (1499)

Sources: Successively: Sevillano 1973-5, 247-49; Reixach 2022, 571; Guinot 1988, 229-49. For the specific figure of Castelló in 1357: Roca 1953. In all the figures arising from number of households or hearths the generally accepted multiplier of 4.5 inhabitants per hearth for urban centers is applied.

3.1. The evolution of families in Girona through tax registers and lists of municipal offices

Girona, the leading city in north-eastern Catalonia, kept robust series of fiscal registers and records of the municipal government. Indeed, it is the most important Catalan town, along with Tortosa, endowed with local tax series from the fourteenth century onwards. Its fiscal registers are mostly *llibres de talla*, which record the amounts attributed to all taxpayers for the period between 1360 and the mid-sixteenth century, with examples almost every five years or less, apart from a gap between 1417 and 1477. Municipal acts do not specify the criteria used for valuation, although analysis of the source compared to other records shows that the lion's share of valuations corresponded to immovable properties. The possession of annuities was also important in some portfolios. By contrast, there is no evidence concerning the inclusion of other sources of income. The quality of the sources improved in the latter decades of the fourteenth century, but it becomes less precise at the first half of the sixteenth century (Reixach 2022). The stratification of taxpayers suggests that the valuations are consistent with those derived from the value of dowries paid or received (Pérez 2024). If used with caution, fiscal registers offer avenues for the analysis of various long-term trends like inequalities. Graph 1 charts the evolution of the taxes via the Gini coefficient, a statistical measure generally admitted as proxy of unequal distribution of wealth.

Graph. 1. Evolution of the Gini coefficient in the city of Girona (1360-1543)



Source: Based on direct tax sources from AMGi listed and described in Reixach 2022, 570.

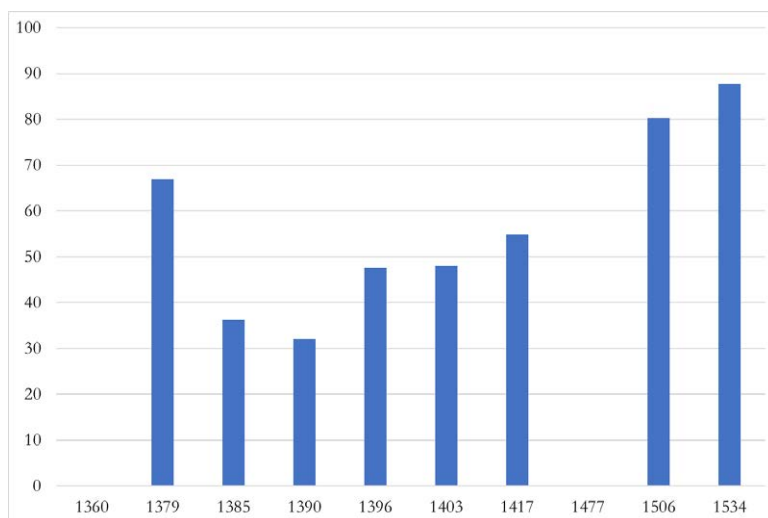
These data, combined with other parameters, stress a tendency towards growing inequality in Girona throughout the second half of the fourteenth century with an important reduction during the decade after 1390, although this trend could possibly be due to some particularities of the registers arising from political struggles in the city during this period (Reixach 2019, I, 212-13, 304-11). In any case, during the central decades of the fifteenth century, the inequality figures declined again before slowly recovering during the first decades of the 16th.

It is beyond the scope of this work to analyze the possible reasons for the evolution of inequality levels in Girona. Our aim is rather to examine the extent to which tax records can be useful in order to capture the dynamics of social mobility taking into account the challenges described in the previous section. In addition, the technical impossibility of reconstructing the links of all the individuals, i.e. taxpayers, who appear in the fiscal registers, means that we propose here an intermediate solution, which relies on categorizing taxpayers by deciles according to the tax sums they had to pay. A necessary initial remark is that, apart from the gap already pointed out between the register of the year 1417 and 1477, there are some other gaps that imply some differences in temporal distances.

If we start by observing the evolution of the richest decile (decile 10) of taxpayers in successive registers from 1360 to 1534, it is necessary to understand that this social stratum in Girona was composed not only of well-off citizens or rentiers but also merchants and even some wealthy craftsmen in the leading manufacturing sectors.³ One kind of mobility can be assessed by calculating the percentage of newcomers in subsequent tax deciles compared to people that remained from one register to the following one (Graph 2). This exercise shows that there was more mobility in the top decile in the 1370s than in the following two decades. A similar trend is evident when we extend this exercise to five leading socio-professional groups: the so-called patriciate, the merchants and three relevant craftsmen, clothmakers, tanners and shoemakers (Graph 3).

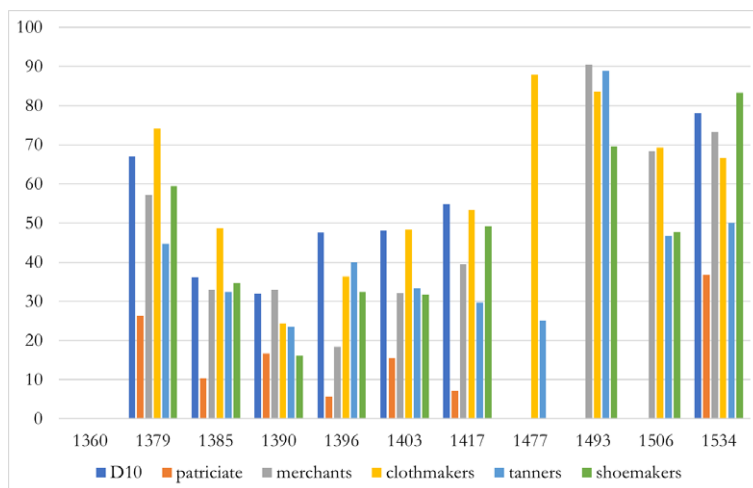
³ For context, between 1360 and 1534, from 33 to 17% of the members of this decile were part of the families representing the so-called patriciate of the city, while from 35 to 20% were merchants, 18 to 6% experts in law, 11 to 3% textile craftsmen, 17 to 3% leather craftsmen, and finally, from 27 to 5% held other occupations (the latter percentages are affected by the declining usage of socio-professional labels in some late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century registers).

Graph 2. Evolution of the members of decile 10 in Girona (1360-1534) expressed by percentages of new individuals in the tax records



Source: Based on direct tax sources from AMGi listed and described in Reixach 2022, 570.

Graph 3. Evolution of the members of several socio-professional groups in Girona (1360-1534) expressed by percentages of new individuals in the tax records⁴



Source: Based on direct tax sources from AMGi listed and described in Reixach 2022, 570.

⁴ As in the previous graph, we have omitted the data about the groups in which there were practically no cases of continuity notably the records between 1417 and 1477 to avoid giving an even more distorted picture.

These results do need to be nuanced. The number of newcomers, especially during the last phase of the period under study, should be reduced because transformations in some groups like craftsmen, rather than internal transformations, could be directly attributed to geographical mobility. For instance, from the mid-fifteenth century onwards there was a non-negligible flux of immigrants coming from other kingdoms of the Iberian peninsula, several parts of France and other territories of the western Mediterranean or even the Germanic Empire, which strongly influenced the clothmaking occupations.⁵

Tab. 2. Evolution of the percentage of continuity, upward mobility and downward mobility according to deciles in Girona (1360-1523)

period	D10			D9			D8			D7			D6			D5			D4			D3			D2			D1		
	=	% ↑	% ↓	=	% ↑	% ↓	=	% ↑	% ↓	=	% ↑	% ↓	=	% ↑	% ↓	=	% ↑	% ↓	=	% ↑	% ↓	=	% ↑	% ↓	=	% ↑	% ↓	=	% ↑	% ↓
1360-1379	54.5	0	45.4	31	15.5	53.4	15.1	39.6	45.3	27.9	9.3	62.8	6.12	40.8	53.1	27.3	36.4	36.4	14.3	32.1	53.6	0	60	40	31.2	43.7	25	23.1	76.9	0
1379-1385	67.6	0	32.3	49.3	18.2	32.5	29.6	39	31.5	27.7	26.5	45.8	18.6	34.9	46.5	16.4	42.5	41.1	17.1	54.9	28.0	5.3	47.4	47.4	20	64.6	15.4	36.4	63.6	0
1385-1390	84.3	0	15.7	66.7	11.1	22.2	50	19.1	30.9	25.4	29.8	44.8	40.6	29.3	30.1	34.8	41.9	23.3	48.8	51.2	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1390-1396	85.6	0	14.4	49	27.1	24	18.8	37.6	43.6	25	28.3	46.7	32	20.6	47.4	30.7	37.3	32	9.4	36.7	53.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1396-1403	86.7	0	13.3	30.8	31.9	37.4	42.6	40.7	16.7	34.2	48.9	17.1	7.3	46.9	45.8	17.7	43.7	38.5	18.9	56.8	24.3	15.1	72.8	12.1	30.4	67.2	2.2	12.5	87.5	0
1403-1417	73.8	0	26.2	37	21.9	41.1	14.1	35.2	50.7	15	30.6	54.2	16.7	33.3	50	3.6	41.8	54.5	10	40	50	17.9	51.3	30.8	15.6	68.9	15.6	40	60	0
1477-1506	69.6	0	30.4	29.2	20.8	50	18.2	54.5	27.3	0	70	30	13.8	48.3	37.9	31.2	43.7	25.5	0	58.3	41.7	0	66.7	33.3	0	100	0	100	0	0
1506-1523	78.6	0	21.4	32.3	26.5	41.2	5	35	60	4.8	61.9	33.3	12.9	48.4	38.7	5.3	31.6	63.2	11.1	77.9	11.1	5.9	70.5	23.5	33.3	33.3	33.3	0	100	0

Source: See graph 3. For the records between 1385 and 1396 there is no data concerning the deciles 3-1 because the small difference in values makes it impossible to establish different strata.

For a more dynamic view of these changes within the deciles of the successive records of local taxes collected in Girona between 1360 and 1534, we can link the original decile of a taxpayer with his or her decile in the following tax. Individuals or families for which continuity between two successive records cannot be established are excluded. Focusing on those who do remain, we can calculate the respective percentages of continuing in the same tax decile, moving up to a higher decile or

⁵ The importance of French immigration during the 16th and 17th centuries has been traditionally stressed by scholarship on early modern Catalonia (Armengual-Bibiloni, Pujadas-Mora, 2017). However, collections of sources like those employed here suggest the need to explore this type of urban migration that probably began as early as the end of the fourteenth century.

moving down to a lower decile, which allows us to derive gross percentages of upward, downward and non-mobility (Tab. 2). By adding the percentage represented by both upward and downward mobility, we can also obtain a gross parameter of total mobility, which is, in fact, the percentage of change with respect to families or individuals who remain in the same decile, without taking into account the possible large number of cases that do not enter the calculation because they have not continued from one record to the other (Tab. 3).

Tab. 3. Evolution of the percentages of total mobility according to deciles in Girona (1360-1523)

period	D10	D9	D8	D7	D6	D5	D4	D3	D2	D1
1360-1379	45.45	68.97	84.91	72.09	93.88	63.64	85.71	100	68.75	76.92
1379-1385	32.35	50.65	70.37	72.29	81.40	58.9	82.93	94.74	80	63.64
1385-1390	15.73	33.33	50	74.63	59.35	76.74	51.16	0	0	0
1390-1396	14.44	51.04	81.19	75.00	68.04	68	90.63	0	0	0
1396-1403	13.33	69.23	57.41	75.00	92.71	61.46	81.08	100	69.57	87.50
1403-1417	26.21	63.01	85.92	84.72	83.33	45.45	90	82.05	84.44	60
1477-1506	30.43	70.83	81.82	100	86.21	75	100	100	100	0
1506-1523	21.43	67.65	95.00	95.24	87.1	36.84	100	94.12	66.67	100

Source: See graph 3 and tab. 2.

Another approach to assess social mobility looks at changes in the status of the more than 300 individuals and families who at some point between the years 1345 and 1520 held one of the six offices of juror (*jurat*) that made up the executive of the municipal government of Girona. The city's inhabitants eligible to participate in the municipal council and hold offices were divided into three socio-political groups called *mans* («hands»). Some authors had asserted that these categories actually depended on the tax assessments expressed in sources such as those discussed above (Guilleré 1994, II, 254-265; Fynn-Paul 2015, 77-91). However, several elements point out that the “hand” is an indicator of social status, so, as established by many scholars, based on a mixture of material wealth, position on the social ladder and more or less formal political influence in relation to the rest of the neighborhood (Dumolyn 2013; Brown 2019). It is important to acknowledge that those holding

municipal offices were only a minority within the urban community as a whole: around 6%.⁶

It is even more important to clarify how family links across generations are established. Fortunately, the case of Girona has been the object of prosopographical studies based on the use of the extensive collections of notarial records preserved in the city during most of the period observed (Guilleré 1994; Reixach 2018; 2019). It is for this reason that the succession of different members of the same family holding municipal offices can be traced with a fair degree of certainty: links can be tracked, for example, between parents and children (or even grandparents and grandchildren in the longest-lasting families) and, at the same time, solve homonymy problems in the more common family names. As shown by several works on other cities of the Crown of Aragon cited above, the exercise of political functions at the local level tended to be inherited through patrilineal transmission,⁷ as was also the case with family names, as indicated above and also proven by this existing literature (for instance, Bensch 1995, Fynn-Paul 2015 or Narbona, Bernabeu 2021) perfectly consolidated in the region since the thirteenth century, especially in the strata eligible to participate in government bodies.⁸

Beyond these methodological cautions, the reconstruction of the list of the six members of the municipal executive renewed annually shows mostly continuity according to membership to strata of access to the executive organism of the municipality. But there are several significative examples of families whose status changed over time (Tab. 4). Upward political mobility occurred in families that moved from the lower to the middle «hand» and those that left this middle «hand» to climb to the upper stratum. The first upwardly mobile group usually consisted of craftsmen, mainly linked to dynamic manufacturing sectors such as leather or textile, who entered the world of commerce: in general terms, they had shifted their focus from family-based production to the marketing of manufactured products or raw materials. The second trend was commonly experienced by rich merchants who became rentiers or entered occupations in law or medicine, after an investment in higher-level training, which enabled them to acquire prestige thanks to their

⁶ These figures vary between 3 and 10% in different towns in the western dominions of the kings of Aragon, and the city of Girona shows a relatively high proportion in this respect considering its size: Reixach 2019, 2, 517-18.

⁷ This also meant that it was exceptional for a single family from which different branches emerged to continue to occupy a prominent place in the political community of the city. In Girona, during the chronology studied, there are only a few merchant families that managed to do so for one or two generations (no more because their own dynamism led them to geographical mobility or to the convergence with social sectors disconnected from local politics) and, likewise, unwritten rules always prevented two cousins from simultaneously occupying a position at the head of the municipal government.

⁸ The focus on family names passed down through male lineage means that the family groupings employed in the study exclude connections arising from marriage. This is also consistent with the fact that the female group, despite being able to head a household for different reasons, was excluded from holding offices and participating in municipal politics in general.

profession. Some upward mobility may also have been due to marriage alliances or to connections to the royal administration or entourage.⁹

Tab. 4. **Permanence or changes within the three strata of access to the municipal executive in Girona (1345-1520)**

Changes in strata	No. of individuals/families	percentage within the total cases
Remain lower	143	46.58
Remain middle	63	20.52
Remain upper	48	15.64
Lower to middle	31	10.1
Lower to middle to upper	2	0.65
Lower to upper	2	0.65
Middle to upper	19	6.19

Source: Based on the list of members of the executive in Reixach 2019, 2, 710-18; Sobrequ es 1955. For the period between the years 1471 and 1520, it is directly based on Arxiu Municipal de Girona, Ajuntament de Girona, *Manuals d'acords* (Proceedings of the municipal council), register years 1471-1520.

The mentioned lists have been cross-referenced with the prosopographical information gathered in the research partly published in Reixach 2018 and 2019. From a methodological viewpoint it should be noted that, in order to try to capture both possible intragenerational and intergenerational mobility, the sample includes both individuals who held office more than once and who may have experienced a social rise in their own person, along with families, i.e. the succession of different generations whose members have been appointed on different occasions.

These upward trajectories, specifically, 31 examples of ascents from the lower to the middle stratum and 19 from the middle to the upper «hand», apart from the aforementioned four exceptional cases that rose from the lower to upper strata, usually took place within two or three generations. It means the father could be part of the lower or middle political strata, while his son or grandson moved to an upper stratum. This process also occurred more quickly for entrepreneurial craftsmen who entered the merchant class, although it took more years and even decades to get into the upper strata.

⁹ Many examples on both figures can be found in: Reixach 2018, and Reixach 2019. A well-known example of sustained upward mobility is the Bell-lloc family, originally in the trade of furs, which is the subject of a classical monograph: Fern andez Trabal 1995. However, even more exceptional and meteoric were the trajectories of other small business families such as the Beuda (originally linked to the leather sector like the Bell-lloc) or the Cavalleria (whose second well-known member was an apothecary who stood out as a supplier to the royal household and the following one a physician) as well as the Seguriolles.

In terms of chronology, the majority of changes in status occurred during the second half of the fourteenth century or between approximately 1350 and 1450 (Tab. 5). This trend is consistent with the analysis of the fiscal sources in which the ratios of changes clearly increased between the records of 1396 and 1417 (Graph 3).

Tab. 5. **Periods in the sequence of rises from one political stratum to another (1345-1520)**

period	change in strata	No. of cases	percentage (%)
1350-1400	Lower to middle	8	16
1350-1400	Middle to upper	4	8
1401-1450	Lower to middle	4	8
1401-1450	Middle to upper	2	4
1451-1500	Lower to middle	9	18
1451-1500	Middle to upper	4	8
1501-1520	Lower to middle	1	2
1501-1520	Middle to upper	0	0
1350-1450	Lower to middle	8	16
1350-1450	Middle to upper	4	8
1350-1500	Lower to middle	0	0
1350-1500	Middle to upper	3	6
1400-1500	Lower to middle	1	2
1400-1500	Middle to upper	2	4

Source: See Tab. 4.

3.2. An approach to changes in the status of families holding offices in the City of Majorca (1348-1500)

Turning to the City of Majorca, the undisputed capital of the island and kingdom of the same name and a fundamental port enclave in the western Mediterranean, as well as a notable urban center with around 20-12,000 inhabitants during this period, we can offer an approach based on municipal offices similar to the one we have just discussed for Girona. In Palma the municipal executive was formed of six members, called jurors (*jurats*) as in other parts of the Crown of Aragon. They were annually renewed and the positions were distributed as follows among the groups with access to local political power. The first position of juror was held by local nobility (in general, lower nobility compared to other Aragonese territories); the second and third

positions were held by citizens, rentiers or members of the urban elite; the fourth and fifth by merchants of a certain level and, finally, unlike in other places, only the sixth position was left free for artisans or craftsmen (Planas 2005, 148-58).

The approach to assessing social mobility consists of reconstructing the family links of all the individuals who held offices in the executive of the City of Majorca (as mentioned, an organism also representing the whole kingdom) between 1348 and 1523. This exercise captures 684 individuals grouped in 307 different families or family groups, although 164 of them, in reality, are individuals who hold one office (or at most two) in their lifetime, and there was no other immediate family member with whom they shared a family name. The latter cases were considered given the possibility they could experience intragenerational mobility.

The same considerations on family grouping and the prevalence of patrilineal transmission discussed for Girona apply to the case of Majorca, where there is also an important consolidation of family names from the end of the thirteenth century (Mas 2001). It is also a fact that cases of homonymy, at least among those eligible for municipal government positions, are proportionally rare.¹⁰ Nonetheless, unlike in Girona, we do not have enough information to guarantee the validity of some of the established relationships.

Be that as it may, this exercise shows some clear cases of social rise (Tab. 6). Around one-third of all families underwent changes, while the remaining two-thirds (65.5%), did not change position over the years. It is true that among the large group that did not undergo changes, 74% are actually individuals who held the position of juror at some point in time and no other individual with whom they shared a family name held this office. We must also pay attention to 10% of cases in which no significant changes are recorded and in which isolated individuals account for a smaller proportion, only 35% of the total. In this sense, we only consider significant changes when the leap in position implies moving, for example, from 6th position for the artisans to 4th and 5th for the merchants or 2nd or 3rd for the citizens, but not if they are simple changes between two positions in the same group; that is to say from 5th to 4th, remaining within merchants, or from 3rd to 2nd, remaining within citizens.

¹⁰ Among the 307 different families, we detect only 12 possible cases of family names that probably belonged to two or more unrelated families. This possibility is suggested by the significant social distance between, for example, artisans and wealthy citizens or nobles and/or by their appearance in disconnected chronologies or marking an illogical trajectory as that of a family belonging to the urban elite in the fourteenth century and another with the same name being artisans in the fifteenth century (a figure that is very often likely to be due to the conversion of Jews under the patronage of certain prominent townspeople who gave them the family name). Specifically, these family names are the following: Ferrer, Miró, Mora, Pagès, Riera, Roig, Santjoan, Serra, Tomàs, Umbert, Valero and Vidal. In all these cases, two or more different families have been considered or counted despite the coincidences of family names.

Tab. 6. Changes in the position by family groups within the municipal executive of the City of Majorca (1348-1523)

Changes in position	No. of cases	Percentage within the total
remain 1 (nobility)	29	-
remain 2 (patriciate)	15	-
remain 3 (patriciate)	19	-
remain 4 (merchants)	35	-
remain 5 (merchants)	29	-
remain 6 (craftsmen)	74	-
No changes	201 (149 of them families with only one represented member)	65.5
2 (patriciate) to 1 (nobility)	3 (1 of them a family with only one represented member)	1
3 (patriciate) to 1 (nobility)	6	2
4 (merchants) to 1 (nobility)	3	1
5 (merchants) to 1 (nobility)	3	1
6 (craftsmen) to 1 (nobility)	2	0.7
4 (merchants) to 2 (patriciate)	7 (1 of them a family with only one represented member)	2.3
4 (merchants) to 3 (patriciate)	3	1
5 (merchants) to 2 (patriciate)	9	2.9
5 (merchants) to 3 (patriciate)	4	1.3
6 (craftsmen) to 2 (patriciate)	2	0.7
6 (craftsmen) to 3 (patriciate)	1	0.3
6 (craftsmen) to 4 (merchants)	9 (2 of them families with only one represented member)	2.9
6 (craftsmen) to 5 (merchants)	8	2.6
No significant changes	31 (11 of them families with only one represented member)	10.1
“Downward” (including cases of doubtful tie)	15	4.9
Total number of families	307 (164 of them families with only one represented member)	

Source: Based on lists of *jurats* in Campaner 1881, 92-5, 198-202.

From this first approach, further analyses could be carried out. Regarding the chronology of examples of upward mobility, no phase with a particular concentration of cases is detected. In fact, in most cases the evolution requires two or three generations, so that it may take 50 to 100 years to confirm the significant rise from one position to another higher one. However, only focusing on the most relevant transformations from the 6th or 5th position to upper strata, which implies 38 cases, in 19 of them the first member of the community is already documented in the second half of the fourteenth century, in 14 it does not appear until the first half of the fifteenth century and only in five until the second half of the same century. More significantly, for most of the 38 families mentioned it took almost a century to consolidate a descendant in a position clearly superior to that of the first family representative at the top of the municipal government. Only in six cases starting during the second half of the fourteenth century (families Pagès, Font, Hug, Reial, Castell and Conilleres) and a further two beginning during the first part of the fifteenth century (families Lledó and Mestre) was it possible in 50 years or less. It goes without saying that these preliminary results could be improved by refining some individual identifications and family groupings in the sample cross-checking with the unfortunately sparse literature on urban elites in Majorca or the wide range of unedited primary sources preserved in its archives (Barceló 2002; Planas 2005; Burguera 2024).

3.3. Mobility through the minimum threshold of income in a small town of the northern kingdom of Valencia, Sant Mateu

By turning to fiscal sources, in this case generated by the monarchy, it is possible to evaluate the evolution of the family fortunes of some communities in Valencia. It deals with registers deriving from the collection of *morabati* in this territory. Concretely, we will examine a small town with a series of records of this direct tax for several years, Sant Mateu. It was a small town with around 1,000 hearths under the jurisdiction of the order of Montesa.¹¹ Assuming the limits of the source compared to wealth registers for taxes levied by municipal authorities, we will pay attention to the individuals identified as «nichil» in these sources.

From a methodological viewpoint, this qualification, meaning exempt, requires some clarifications if it is to be considered a parameter of social mobility. On the one hand, «nichils», that indicate the correction of an administrative error, normally because the taxpayer was already registered in another part of the register or because he died between the time of drawing up the payroll and the start of the effective tax collection, have no economic significance. However, even when it was indicated that, due to no longer possessing sufficient assets, a taxpayer was considered a «nichil», this did not always mean downward social mobility. It could be a case of parents who donated all or part of their assets to their children during their lifetime, or the children of a father or mother who were taxpayers could appear as «nichils». Those cases in

¹¹ ARV, Mestre Racional, 11.779, f. 105r-130r (year 1415); Ibidem, 11.783, f. 130r-165v (year 1421).

which a person qualified as a «nichil» appears linked by direct kinship with a real taxpayer have not been counted as «poor» for the purposes of socioeconomic mobility. Rather, it was more likely to be incidents linked to the life cycle of the taxpayers.

Although the only condition for being considered «poor», from the point of view of wealth possessed, was not to reach the limit of 105 *solidos*, the qualifiers used by the collectors – or by their scribes to designate those exempted for economic reasons – «pauper», «no ha béns» (has no assets) or «no aver béns valents CV *solidos*» (has no assets valued at 105 *solidos*) – could suggest a gradation of the level of poverty, especially when it indicates that an exempted person was living from charity. In this case, they would be truly poor, while the fact of not having sufficient assets, bearing in mind that the estimation was based above all on property, and that some «nichils» were artisans, could not always be assimilated to poverty in the strict sense.

When wishing to follow the evolution of a specific person over their course, which can imply only few collections of the *morabati*, the only question that arises – apart from the availability of sufficient records for a given place – is how to identify them on the basis of their name and family name. This is a relatively simple problem to solve if we bear in mind that the anthroponymy was fixed as explained above. Only the indications of the occupation or of the status of age (i.e. the comparative labels of senior or junior), when missing in some registers, could cast doubt on the identification of the taxpayer, although these cases lack statistical significance. On the other hand, in a long-term view, which goes beyond an individual biography, it would be necessary to establish direct kinship links between a taxpayer and his descendants, in order to assess the family trajectory. The *morabati* registers do not usually provide this information, so it is necessary to resort to other sources, especially notarial documentation. However, an approximation can be made on the basis of the taxpayer's family names, given that – with a small margin of error – the same family names would correspond to taxpayers linked by direct kinship.

In any case, taking all that into account and, excluding the «nichils» for other reasons, there are 68 «nichils» for poverty in the 1415 *morabati*.¹² Among them, 31 (45%) do not appear in the following register, that of 1421, probably because they either died or left the town. The rest are divided almost equally between those who would remain in the same «poor» status and those who would experience upward mobility, as they are considered taxpayers with more than 105 *solidos* of wealth. From another perspective, if we consider the previous situation of the 40 «poor» of 1421, we can say that 11 did not appear in the 1415 payroll, the other 11 (27%) were already considered «poor» in 1415, while 18 (45%) had fallen in economic level, since in 1415 they appeared as taxpayers. In the *morabati* of the year 1421, among the 50 «nichils» there were five blind men and some of them had been considered taxpayers in 1415, so this disability was the trigger for their downward mobility.

However, among the 20 family names that make up the «nichil» taxpayers of 1415, 16 (80%) had disappeared by 1481, either due to emigration or the biological extinction of the lineage, both symptoms of social fragility and of the difficulty of

¹² The number of nichils was 78, so the poor accounted for 87.1% of the total. The rest corresponded to people who had emigrated (4) and other circumstances (6).

overcoming fiscal poverty in the long term. To these were added two families (10%) that would end up being «miserable and poor», while upward mobility from the level of poverty was only achieved by the other two families (10%), one of which, with five members in 1481, had an evidently better chance of perpetuating itself biologically. In fact, this demographic vitality of the lineage was also a symptom of upward mobility, since biological survival and local renewal were linked to the improvement of socio-economic conditions.

The records of Sant Mateu allow us to analyze the evolution of the number of «nichils» in relation to the general movements of the population.¹³ Normally, as can be seen from the cases studied (Furió et al. 2020), the decrease in the demographic volume, which can be considered an indicator of economic decline, was associated with a reduction in inequality measured by the Gini index. This aggregate result was associated with a reduction of the upper and lower wealth strata in favor of the middle

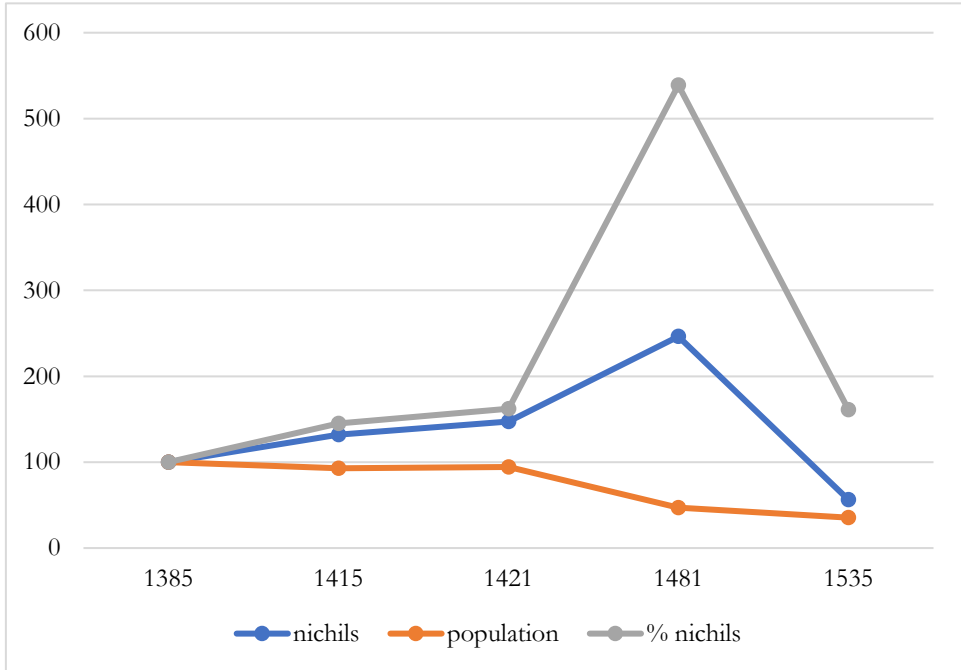
However, if we consider only the minimum income to contribute, which in fact – as indicated in the sources – was a poverty line, the dynamics are different from those expressed in the deciles on which the Gini index is based. Thus, we consider Graph 4, which shows the evolution of the indexes corresponding to the number of «nichils», the total population, and the percentage of «nichils» in relation to the population. As can be seen, the demographic decrease, which shows a long phase of decrease from 1380 to 1535, was not accompanied by a decrease in the index of fiscal poverty, neither in the number of «nichils» nor in the percentage of the «nichils» with respect to the population. Quite the contrary: when the demographic volume of the town decreases, the number of poor people and their weight in the population increases. In this sense, the most drastic demographic drop, from 733 to 360 households, i.e. a reduction of 50%,¹⁴ increased the number of poor people and, especially, their proportion in the population as a whole. Subsequently, between the late fifteenth century and the first third of the sixteenth century, the situation tended to stabilize, so that the continuation of the demographic depression – in reality a downward stagnation – did not bring about a new increase in poverty, but the two indicators of «nichils» were reduced. However, especially their percentage of the population continued to be higher than the general demographic index. This evolution suggests that a part of the economically weaker sector, in times of difficulties, was pushed into poverty, unable to benefit from the distribution of wealth through inheritances or the supply of land and other goods that flowed into the market during periods of depression. In this sense, they were unable to take advantage of the new favorable relationship between land and population, while they suffered the impact of epidemics or the fiscal pressure that caused the general demographic decline.¹⁵

¹³ The records do not specify the type of «nichils» for all years but rather their total number. However, taking into account the data cited from 1415, it can be considered that they represented the level of poverty.

¹⁴ This demographic evolution is shared by the northern region of the kingdom, since the population decreased by half between 1420 and 1450 (Ferrer 1975, Guinot 1988)

¹⁵ In a northern small town like Borriana, the excessive increase of the fiscal pressure caused by public indebtedness led to the emigration of many inhabitants, with a demographic fall from 264 hearths

Graph 4. Indexes of the registers of *morabatí* of Sant Mateu
Base 100 = 1385



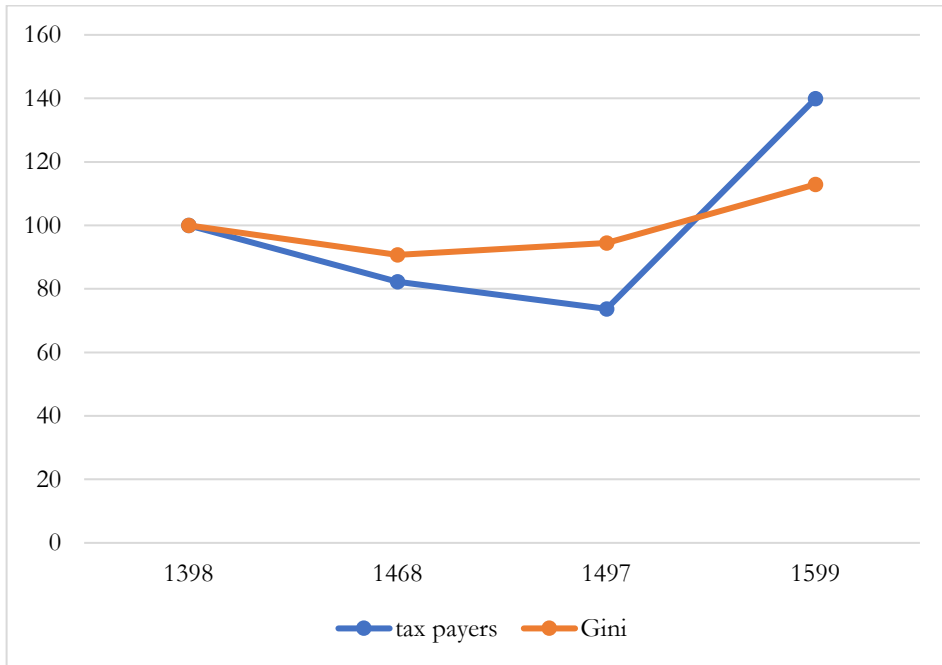
Source: ARV, Mestre Racional, 11.772, f. 75r-95r; 11.779, f. 105r-130r; 11.783, f. 130r-165v; 10.877, f. 138r-149r; 10.888, f. 480r-486r.

2.4. Social mobility and family names in Castelló de la Plana from wealth registers

Continuing with the kingdom of Valencia, similar exercises can be carried out with fiscal records for the small town of Castelló de la Plana. From wealth registers (*padrons de la peita*), it has been possible to establish the relationship between the inequality measured in the Gini index and the demographic evolution represented by the total number of taxpayers. In general (Graph 5), there is a correlation between the demographic trend and the level of inequality: in the moments of greatest demographic fall, from 1398 to 1468, the Gini index decreases, while in the moments of greatest population increase, from 1497 to 1599, it increases. The exception to this trend is during the second half of the fifteenth century, between 1468 and 1497, when the number of taxpayers declined but inequality increased, although less markedly than in the other stages.

in 1451 to 166 in 1469 and 160 in 1481, when 40% of the *morabatí* taxpayers were considered «nichils» due to poverty (Viciano 1992).

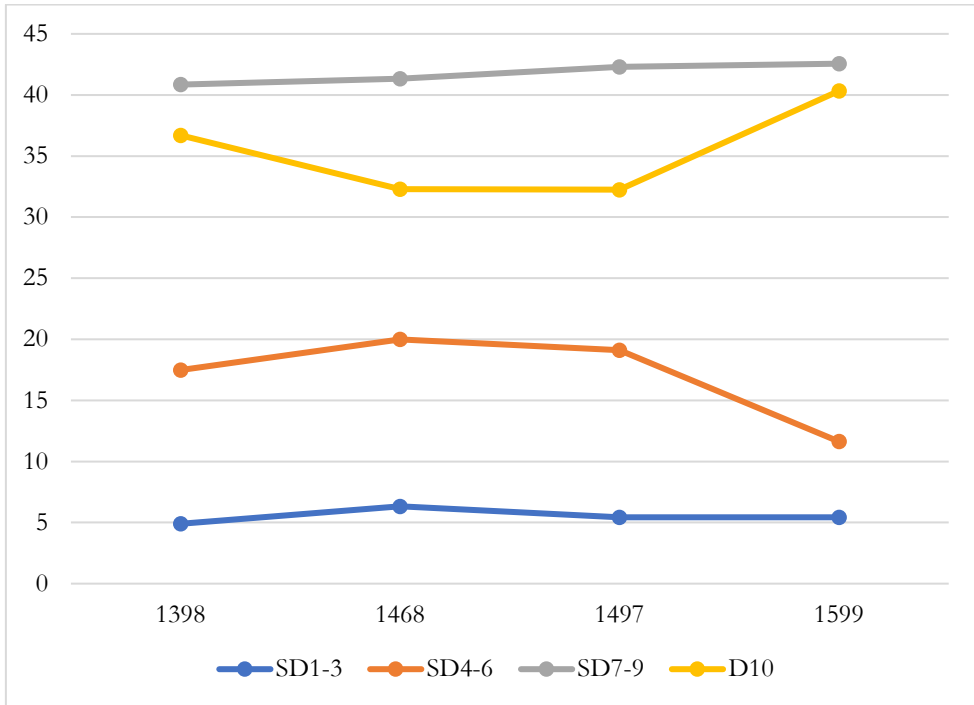
Graph 5. **Gini indexes of taxpayers in Castelló de la Plana**
Base 100 = 1398



Source: Furió et al. 2020, 200.

In fact, if we observe the evolution of the accumulated wealth for each decile (Graph 6), it can be asserted that the increase in the Gini index between 1468 and 1497 was not due to a concentration in the upper level, since the richest 10% (D 10) did not increase its share in the distribution of wealth, stable at 32.28% and 32.25%, respectively. What did happen was a reduction of the share corresponding to the lower (D 1-3) and medium-lower (D 4-6) strata in favor of the medium-higher (D 7-9). Although there was no mechanical correlation between the demographic trend and inequality, a general trend was detected, although it could be attenuated by the influence of other socioeconomic factors, such as the impact of the markets and the consolidation of a political oligarchy capable of obtaining advantages when it came to accumulating wealth.

Graph 6. Share of the total wealth in each register by deciles in Castelló de la Plana



Source: Furió et al. 2020, 195.

The analysis per decile, therefore, qualifies the aggregate value of the Gini index (Graph 5). Likewise, it offers a view of the economic mobility, taken as a whole, of the different wealth strata, but does not allow us to identify the social mobility processes of individual taxpayers or of the families to which they belonged. In order to carry out an analysis of social mobility from this perspective, it is necessary to follow the value of their patrimonies from one individual recorded in a register to a later one, separated by at least two or three generations. Given the difficulty of precisely identifying the descent of each taxpayer over time, which can only be achieved in the case of the best documented cases in other sources such as notarial ones, we make the assumption that all taxpayers with the same name were part of an extended family and their successors. Taking into account that the family names were already fixed and that the study focuses on a single community, the margin of error of this methodological solution is relatively low. The main issue arises for common family names, which were precisely shared by a much higher number of taxpayers than the average. Thus, in the 1398 register, the average number of taxpayers per family name is 2.12, while eight family names grouped 10 or more taxpayers, some

of them very common in other places such as Martí, Ferrer and Peris. It is possible that among these, which accounted for 1.9% of the family names and 10.4% of the individuals, identification errors were concentrated, but in general it can be considered that the taxpayers of the same family name were linked by kinship ties.

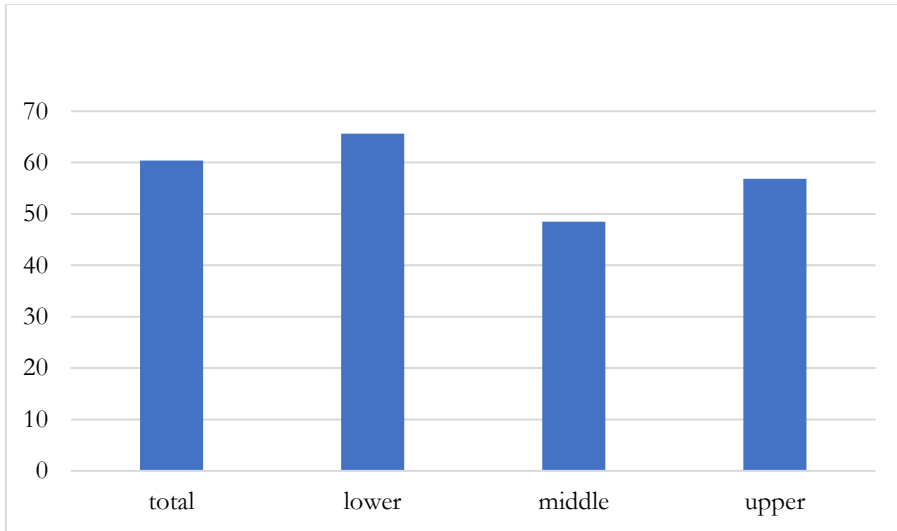
A second methodological matter is to assign a wealth level to each family, given that the taxpayers appeared in the registers on an individual basis, that is, as heads of a domestic aggregate. In this sense, it was decided to calculate the arithmetic mean of all the taxpayers with the same name. Subsequently, they have been classified into three wealth strata, defined both by the average wealth of the household and by the thresholds required to participate in the municipal government. Thus, both in 1398 and 1468, the two registers studied, the average wealth was around 2,000 *solidos*, which was also the value of the minimum patrimony to be able to be elected as a *conseller*, the lowest level of municipal office. Therefore, the lowest stratum of wealth that we define is between 0 and 2,000 *solidos*. The middle (middle) was between 2001 and 4,000 *solidos*, the latter figure being double the average income and the amount needed to gain access to the higher magistrates (juror and justice – *jurat* and *justícia*). Finally, the upper group was the minority that exceeded a patrimony of 4,000 *solidos*.

From this classification, it is possible to follow the mobility of the family names registered in 1398 by comparing them with those of 1468, two registers separated by 70 years, that is to say, from the perspective of two or three generations (Graph 7). First of all, it must be said that of the 414 family names of 1398, only 164 were recorded in the register of 1468. This means that 250 out of 1398 families, 60% of the total, had disappeared seven decades later.¹⁶ This disappearance could be due to the lack of male descendants, but there were also socioeconomic reasons that hindered the biological survival or the relocation of families with less wealth. In fact, of the 250 family names that disappeared, the majority (68.8%) belonged to the lowest stratum, while only 11.6% were of the highest level.¹⁷ This fragility of the lower stratum is confirmed if we consider, from an economic level, the percentage of families that disappeared, since of the poorest 1398, more than 65% were unable to perpetuate themselves. However, the percentage differences within each stratum are not as marked as in the absolute data, which suggests that, in addition to wealth, other social drivers were involved.

¹⁶ This proportion is similar to other small towns in Valencia (Sánchez Adell 1978, Ferrer 2005, Furió 1982).

¹⁷ Among the 250 disappeared families mentioned, 172 were from the lower, 49 from the middle, and 29 from the upper stratum.

Graph 7. Families missing from 1398 to 1468 by stratum



Average wealth by stratum : lower (0-2000 *solidos*), middle (2001-4000 *solidos*), upper (plus 4000).
Source: Appendix, Table C.

The number of individuals per family was a relevant factor (Tab. 7), since in all the wealth strata in 1398, the average number of individuals per family name of those who perpetuated in 1468 was double that of those who disappeared. It must be said that this parameter reflected biological attributes, but there was also a link with the wealth stratum, since the poorest had a lower average than the other groups. However, it should be noted that it was the middle stratum that had the most taxpayers per family name, while the upper stratum was even lower than the average, since family assets were distributed between only one or two parents.

Tab. 7. Average of individuals by family and stratum (1398)

stratum	Whole stratum	Missing in 1468	Continuity in 1468
lower	1.83	1.33	2.77
middle	2.95	1.69	4.13
upper	1.96	1.41	2.68
total	2.12	1.41	3.19

Average wealth by stratum: lower (0-2000 *solidos*), middle (2001-4000 *solidos*), upper (plus 4000).
Source: AMC, Llibres de Válués de la Peita 1398, 1468.

The general trend of social mobility between 1398 and 1468 (Tab. 8) was, therefore, the disappearance of the majority of the families (60%), while those that

were perpetuated remained in the same stratum (21%) and the rest rose or fell by the same proportion (9%). There was, consequently, great instability in terms of the survival of the families, but a balance between stability and mobility among those who managed to perpetuate themselves.

Tab. 8. **Mobility of families in Castelló de la Plana from 1398 to 1468**

mobility	no. of families	percentage
missing	250	60.38
same level	87	21.01
ascent	39	9.42
descent	38	9.17
Total	414	

Source: AMC, Llibres de Válués de la Peita 1398, 1468.

If we break down these trends by detailing the changes in wealth status (Tab. 9), we can see that the most frequent case was that of families in the lower income bracket who did not manage to ascend (35% of the families), followed by those who ascended from this level to the middle (17%), but this tendency was offset by the descent from the middle to the lower level (14%), while a similar proportion of families remained in the intermediate level (13%).

Tab. 9. **Mobility by stratum from 1398 to 1468**

cases in each stratum and changes	no. of families	percentage
remain lower	58	35.36
remain middle	22	13.41
remain upper	7	4.34
lower to middle	28	17.07
lower to upper	4	2.48
middle to lower	23	14.28
middle to upper	7	4.34
upper to lower	6	3.72
upper to middle	9	5.59
total	164	

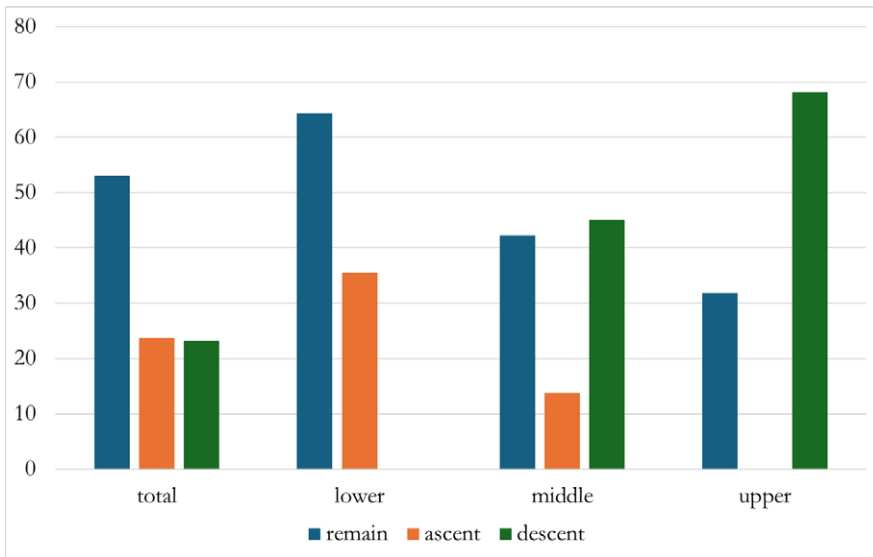
Average wealth by stratum: lower (0-2000 *solidos*), middle (2001-4000 *solidos*), upper (plus 4000).

Source: AMC, Llibres de Válués de la Peita 1398, 1468.

Mobility depended, to a large extent, on the family's level of wealth, since differentiated trends can be established according to the strata (Graph 8). Overall, half of the families in 1398 were stable and the other half were divided between those that ascended and those that descended. However, if we look at the trend within each income stratum, we can see that the most stable – or rather, the most stagnant – level was the lowest, since only slightly more than 35% managed to ascend to higher

levels. The middle sector was less stable, and tended to experience economic decline, since 45% of these families descended to a lower level, while only 13% ascended to a higher level. However, the stratum that experienced the greatest instability was the richest: only 31% of its families maintained their position in 1468, while the majority, almost 70%, descended to the middle and even to the lower stratum.

Graph 8. Percentages of stratum mobility from 1398 to 1468



Average wealth by stratum: lower (0-2000 *solidos*), middle (2001-4000 *solidos*), upper (plus 4000).
Source: AMC, Llibres de Vàlues de la Peita 1398, 1468

Thus, the analysis of the mobility of the families complements the observation of the deciles, since the instability of the upper group is coherent with the decrease in wealth concentrated in the hands of the wealthiest 10%. This great downward mobility explains that of the 10 main families in 1398, by average wealth, only two remained in the upper stratum in 1468, but only one – the Reus – remained among the top 10. However, the majority of the great families of 1398 disappeared, and only one descended to the lower level (Tab. 10).

Seen from the perspective of the 10 most relevant families of 1468, nine were new in this economic elite, although they were not immigrant families, since they all appeared as taxpayers in 1398 (Tabs. 10-11). In fact, half of them came from the upper stratum –although only one, as mentioned above, was among the top 10 –, but the other half had come from the middle and lower strata in 1398. Therefore, the general mobility that has been identified for the whole of the upper stratum was also present at its wealthiest apex. However, what should also be noted is that, without documenting significant changes in the taxation of wealth, the average value of the main patrimonies had decreased from 1398 to 1468. In fact, the average of 8,000

solidos that in 1398 corresponded to the elite in 1468 had disappeared. Once again, these data are consistent with the fact that the richest decile tended to lose participation in the taxed wealth from 1398 to 1468.¹⁸

Tab. 10. **Ten upper families in 1398**

Family	Average wealth (in <i>solidos</i>)	Individuals	Stratum in 1468
Tous	23200	1	lower
Barbarossa	17475	1	middle
Franc	12650	1	missing
Castellot	11300	1	missing
Reus	10525	1	upper
Ferrando	10400	5	upper
Alçamora	9275	2	missing
Espàrrec	9031	4	missing
Galí	8650	1	missing
Vilamanya	8375	1	missing

Source: AMC, Llibres de Vàlues de la Peita 1398

Tab. 11. **Ten upper families in 1468**

Family	Average wealth	Individuals	Statum in 1398
Reus	8787	2	upper
Serra	8325	1	middle
Capcir	8250	1	lower
Feliu	7575	3	upper
Rocamartí	7125	1	middle
Alquècer	6340	5	upper
Agramunt	5483	3	upper
Jover	5430	5	lower
Moliner	5300	2	lower
Sanxis	4975	3	upper

Source: AMC, Llibres de Vàlues de la Peita 1398.

¹⁸ However, this is not a mechanical reflection, since the deciles are measured on the basis of the wealth of individual taxpayers, while the analysis of families has been carried out using the arithmetic averages of the various individuals bearing the same family names.

3. Short conclusive remarks

In this contribution, conceived first and foremost as a discussion of sources and methodological proposals, we have described the main archival evidence available in the western territories of the late medieval Crown of Aragon for the study of social mobility. We have described the sources derived from the collection of direct taxes both at a general level and within the municipalities, the records resulting from the activity of the municipal administrations and, finally, some specific aspects of notarial sources. Among the latter, emphasis has been placed on wills, probate inventories and marriage contracts.

Particularly concerning tax and municipal records, no one would dispute their potential for detecting changes in socioeconomic positions among members of urban and rural communities within the geography and chronology investigated. However, their limitations have also been pointed out. Thus, two major challenges become evident in most cases: the need for relatively serial records that allow covering long periods of time in order to capture possible transformations and, at the same time, the various difficulties in linking individuals or even the same people recorded in different registers. In this regard, several strategies have been proposed based on the remarkable consolidation of family names in the Iberian Northeast from the thirteenth century onwards.

At the same time, we have commented on the main aspects for consideration when taking as a parameter of the level of wealth the values included in tax sources, whose features vary significantly depending on the exact type of registry; for instance, the amounts obtained in the wealth registers cannot be treated in the same way as what are merely lists of taxpayers and sums attributed to them.

Moving from theory to practice, many of these possibilities and weaknesses have been explored through various approaches to significant case studies. In particular, the examples of the cities of Palma and Girona and the small towns of Sant Mateu and Castelló de la Plana highlight the methodological challenges for assessing upward and downward mobility processes in premodern societies.

Although we only rely on provisory observations, an initial tentative final consideration would be that relevant changes took place within the societies of different urban centers (both large and small) of the Crown of Aragon between the mid-fourteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century. Certainly, this observation should be linked to many other economic and social dynamics that operated in this territory during the chronology in question, such as demographic evolution, the main economic trends (i.e., agricultural production, outcomes of manufacturing and commercial activity, wages or investment opportunities) or changes in the distribution of wealth and economic and social inequalities in general (Furió 2017, Catalán 2023). In this sense, based on the case of Girona, the correspondence between rising inequality parameters and indications of greater mobility in certain strata during some phases has been pointed out. In the approach to Castelló de la Plana, certain correlations between the redistribution of wealth and demographic increases or declines have also been noted. However, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to delve deeper into these interrelationships.

Our main conclusion is, therefore, that social fluidity was far from alien to the late medieval Crown of Aragon. In the light of the examples from Catalonia and Valencia examined through tax sources, the intermediate groups appear particularly dynamic, although this general pattern is clearly different depending on diversity of occupations and the social complexity of each place. In larger towns, it implies the existence of certain channels for social rise from the crafts or small trades to the intermediate stratum, with participation in the local political system. In smaller urban centers, on the other hand, this could translate into a relative instability of the top 10 fortunes and, therefore, the parallel existence of opportunities for getting rich and for social regression. In all of this there is a confluence of reasons and drivers that only the crossing of different sources in exhaustive case studies will allow us to ponder.

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