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TO ARRANGE A MARRIAGE WITH A FOUNDLING: FRENCH IMMIGRANTS BETWEEN INTEGRATION AND EXCLUSION IN EARLY MODERN BARCELONA (1532–1601)

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ABSTRACT

The study of prenuptial agreements of the Hospital de la Santa Creu of Barcelona (1532–1601) has revealed how a significant number of French immigrants arranged to marry foundlings. These unions could have entailed, on occasion, a downward social mobility for the husbands-to-be. By analyzing the socioeconomic profile of the French men, the value of the dowries provided by maidens, and examining, moreover, the historiographical contributions regarding the integrative role of mixed marriages, I explore this unprecedented finding. This, I intend to show, would demonstrate a self-generated strategy for social integration based on the social and juridical benefits of marrying an indigenous woman, if not motivated by a high degree of social exclusion.

Keywords: Hospital de la Santa Creu, early modern Barcelona, French immigration, foundlings, intermarriage, prenuptial agreements, integration

ORGANIZZARE UN MATRIMONIO CON UNA TROVATELLA: IMMIGRATI FRANCESI TRA INTEGRAZIONE ED ESCLUSIONE NELLA BARCELLONA DI ETÁ MODERNA (1532–1601)

SINTESI

Lo studio degli accordi prematrimoniali del Hospital de la Santa Creu di Barcellona (1532–1601) ha rivelato quanto significativo sia il numero di immigrati francesi che si sposarono con delle trovatelle. Queste unioni potevano implicare, in alcuni casi, una mobilità sociale discendente per il futuro sposo. Analizzando il profilo socioeconomico degli uomini francesi, il valore delle doti portate dalle fidanzate ed esaminando, inoltre, i contributi storiografici riguardanti il ruolo integrativo dei matrimoni misti, esploro questa scoperta senza precedenti. Ciò, come intendo evidenziare, dimostrerebbe l'esistenza di una strategia autoprodotta di integrazione sociale, basata sui benefici sociali e giuridici derivanti dal matrimonio con una donna indigena, se non motivata da un alto grado di esclusione sociale.

Parole chiave: Hospital de la Santa Creu, Barcellona di età moderna, immigrazione francese, trovatelle, matrimonio misto, accordi prematrimoniali, integrazione

FRENCH IMMIGRATION IN EARLY MODERN CATALONIA: SOME PRELIMINARY NOTES[1]

From the end of the fifteenth century and for over two hundred years, the Hispanic Monarchy experienced an influx of immigrants from the Kingdom of France who settled in the Peninsula, either temporarily or permanently.

Although the medieval migratory flow between both sides of the Pyrenees can be traced back to the early centuries of the Christian kingdoms' expansion,[2] late fifteenth-century Catalonia witnessed an unusual increase in the arrival of the French and the Occitan. This coincided with its own declining population rates due to epidemics, internal and external wars, and natural disasters that had converged for over 150 years, resulting in a noticeable demographic deficit at the beginning of the following century (Gual, 2005, 6–7; Gual & Masdéu, 2021, 15–16; Simon, 1999, 79–80). Therefore, between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, "a depopulated country" (*un país despoblat*) (Simon, 2004, 79) took in a French contingent that demonstrated a stronger inclination to settle permanently compared to other regions of the Peninsula (Amengual & Pujadas, 2020, 1; Capdevila, 2021, 205).

Thus, the pioneering work of Enric Moreu-Rey (1959) and, more significantly, those of Jordi Nadal and Emili Giralt (1992; 2000; 1966) depicted a massive influx of immigrants that would have served as a cornerstone for the demographic recovery in Catalonia. Since then, many historians have sought to elucidate the characteristics of this Gallic contingent, often through local and regional quantitative analysis run by the frameworks established by the co-authors (Nadal & Giralt, 1966; 2000). The bibliographic output on this topic, albeit late, has been remarkably prolific.[3] In addition to demonstrating numerous divergences regarding the same event across Catalan geography, it has also underscored the inescapable historiographic projection of this line of research: a trigger for historical demography in Spain (Alberola,

1 The completion of this work was made possible thanks to the Collaboration Grant awarded to me at the beginning of 2024 by the Càtedra UB d'Estudis del Renaixement de Molins de Rei, within the framework of its project to promote and disseminate studies on the Catalan Renaissance, particularly among young researchers. This article is also based upon work from the COST Action CA22149 *Research Network for Interdiciplinary Studies of Transhistorical Deliberative Democracy (CHANGECODE)*, supported by COST (*European Cooperation in Science and Technology*). My thanks to the anonymous reviewers for their valuable observations and recommendations, which have undoubtedly helped enhance this article. Likewise, I would like to highlight the contribution of professor Valentí Gual in the interpretation of numerous toponyms, anthroponyms and professions provided by the documentation, whose willingness and advice I also greatly appreciate.

2 To delve deeper into these migratory flows led by the French during medieval times, cf. Christian Bouret (1995), Philip Banks (1988), Carme Batlle (1959) and Josep Lladonosa (1958).

3 Indeed, the work of Nadal and Giralt sparked a late but prolific surge in academic research surrounding the migratory phenomenon. From the fewer than twenty studies that Jaume Codina (1992, 55) lamented the 1990s, the number increased to 251, as counted by Carles Millàs (2005, 21) in the early twenty-first century, up to the point of, as Gual and Raimon Masdéu (2021, 12) recently noted, it is now challenging to provide an accurate estimate of the current volume of research. Local and regional studies played an essential role in this historiographic production that emerged in the 1990s.

1995, 15);[4] integrator of numerous localist efforts—and, consequently, a catalyst for an archival revitalization—and a driving force in historiographic debates concerning the demographic recovery of Catalonia (Dantí, 1982; Gual, 1991; Simon, 2004, 87) are just a few of the traits that ratify its significance.

Scholars agree that Southern France was the primary focus of emigration, replicating the tripartite division of the Midi geography in the main three areas that drained immigrants, highlighted by Nadal and Giralt (2000, 121–120): Pyrenees and Pre-Pyrenees, Languedoc and the Garonne Basin and, finally, the Highlands and the Massifs. Likewise, the co-authors established the periodization of immigrant arrivals in four stages which, despite some spatial divergences (Capdevila, 2021, 227; Millàs, 2005, 20), have been largely reaffirmed in subsequent studies (Gual, 2021, 285).[5] These consist of: an ascendant phase (from the end of the fifteenth century until 1540); the climax (1540–1620); a declining phase (1620–1660); and, finally, a period of moderate recovery (1660–1700). It should be noted that this last phase was led by immigrants focused on more specialized tasks (Amalric, 2003, 31; Nadal & Giralt, 2000, 129–132; Salas, 2009, 26) and, therefore, exhibited professional behaviors that differed from the trends that were dominant previously.

Indeed, until the second half of the seventeenth century, most of the migratory flow consisted of single men[6] between the ages of 10 and 21 who settled in Catalonia (Amengual, 2018, 235; Capdevila, 2014a, 112–115; Nadal & Giralt, 2000, 187–189; 1966, 32–33; Torres, 2002, 352–353) as unskilled laborers[7] (Abadal, 1966, 8; Amengual & Pujadas, 2020, 2; Capdevila, 2011, 228; Colls, 2002, 208; Fargas, 1994, 719–793; Nadal & Giralt, 1966, 53–54; 2000, 191–192; Salas, 2009, 46). Even so, and despite their predominance in the primary sector and in tasks that did not require specialization, it is common to find them performing all sorts of jobs[8] (Almazán, 1992, 33; Fargas, 1994, 792–793; Gual, 2005, 9; Moreu-Rey, 1959, 22; Nadal & Giralt, 2000, 191–192; Torres, 2002, 353).Their greater presence in the crafts has

4 On her part, María Begoña Villar (2007, 430) asserts that Nadal and Giralt played a crucial role in consolidating the emerging field of historical demography with their work, while Miquel Amengual (2018, 50) acknowledges their significant role in the development of the discipline, although he also associates the work of Antonio Domínguez Ortiz (1960) with this driving force.

5 For a detailed analysis of the volume and rhythms of French immigrants' arrivals, as well as their distribution across the various territories that make up the Principality, cf. the study by Maria Alexandra Capdevila (2021, 220–229).

6 Although scholars agree that the migration flow predominantly involved men (Amengual, 2018, 274; Nadal & Giralt, 1966, 32–33; Gual & Masdéu, 2021, 75; Simon, 1999, 90; Salas, 2009, 76), Capdevila (2017) has examined the migration of French women to Catalonia, outlining the main characteristics of this influx in order to mitigate its historiographic marginalization. Likewise, and more recently, Miquel Amengual and Joana María Pujadas (2024) have explored the marital behaviors of these women, concentrating their research on the diocese of Barcelona.

7 This pre-eminence of workers engaged in unskilled tasks was also noted by Domínguez (1960, 70) while analyzing the migratory flow within the territories of the Hispanic Monarchy.

8 We even find French priests, as evidenced by Enric Moliné (1988–1989) in the diocese of Urgell, Nil Beixora (2019) in Solsonès and, later, Capdevila (2023) in the Principality as a whole.

been documented in certain cities, such as Lleida (Vilalta, 2001; 2003), Girona (Domènech, 1999) and Barcelona (Nadal & Giralt, 2000, 191; Amengual, 2018; Amengual & Pujadas, 2020). The more specialized group of craftsmen has often been associated with emigration from the area of the Highlands and the Massifs.

Indeed, another historiographical approach to the professional behavior of the French settled in Catalonia relates their level of specialization with the migratory center of origin (Capdevila, 2011, 226–227; Nadal & Giralt, 1992, 33; 2000, 189–191). This professional diversity predicated on geography indicates a greater tendency among emigrants from the areas of Languedoc and the Garonne Basin and, especially, from the Pyrenean region to engage in occupations that did not require specialized skills. Similarly, Nadal and Giralt (2000, 331) added the variable of the emigrants' age upon arrival to the equation: in this sense, learning the trade in their birthplace would explain why individuals from the northernmost lands would move in successive stages to childhood (Nadal & Giralt, 2000, 331).

As for the causes behind the migration flow, the historiography has traditionally suggested a set of structural and circumstantial factors. On one hand, those that would have compelled the natives of France to emigrate while, on the other, those that would explain the allure of Catalan lands. This explanatory model, which aligns with the theoretical framework of pull and push proposed by Ernst Ravenstein (1885a–b; cf. Salas, 2009, 23)—reiterated by Jan Lucassen (1987; cf. Bade, 2003, 7)—, has been vindicated since the masterful work of Nadal and Giralt.

Thus, a number of pull factors have been identified in the historiography since the 1960s. The demographic deficit of the Principality of Catalonia on the threshold of modernity (Capdevila, 2001, 108; Gual, 2005, 6; Gual & Masdéu, 2021, 83; Millàs, 2005, 18; Nadal & Giralt, 2000, 172–174; Simon, 1999, 79)—which had gained special relevance after the Arbitral Decision of Guadalupe in 1486[9] and the resulting restructuring of the Catalan countryside (Abadal, 1966)—was an early argument. The inherent demand for labor for its barren fields (Dantí, 2021, 203; Nadal & Giralt, 2000, 174–176; Torres, 2002, 349), as well as the potential for higher wages in the peninsular territory (Domínguez, 1960, 71; Nadal & Giralt, 2000, 180–182) was another early explanation. On the other hand, the literature also notes a number of push factors, like the chronic state of overpopulation in certain regions of Southern France and its consequent poverty (Busquets, 2012,

9 General and binding in nature, the Arbitral Decision of Guadalupe issued by Ferdinand II of Aragon sought to put an end to nearly a century and a half of conflicts between the servile peasants known as *de remença* (or remences) and their lords (cf. Feliu, 2011; Freedman, 1993, 2013; Lluch, 2010) by regulating the legal and social relations of the Catalan countryside (cf. Feliu, 2020; Gual, 2004; Lluch, 2020; Pons, 1989). For a segment of the more affluent emphyteutic peasantry, this sequence of events together with the appropriation of abandoned holdings due to wars and epidemics (*masos rònecs*) (cf. Ferrer, 2001) resulted in a patrimonial gain (Torres, 2002, 349; cf. Vicens, 1978; Serra, 1988). However, the resulting expansion of agricultural holdings required, in order to be completed, labor to carry out the fieldwork. Based on the demographic deficit that Catalonia faced at the dawn of the early modern period, some authors argue that French immigration helped to compensate for the labor shortage (d'Abadal, 1966; Torres, 2002).

35; Capdevila, 2018, 89; Salas, 2009, 25; 2019, 124). It is worthwhile to note that the outbreak of the Wars of Religion in the second half of the sixteenth century likely swelled the ranks of emigration (Almazán, 1992, 31; Cadpevila, 2014a, 206; Codina, 1999, 206; Nadal & Giralt, 1992, 33; Torres, 2002, 348). This circulation would have been promoted by the existence of religious and dynastic ties between Catalonia and the Midi (Nadal & Giralt, 2000, 166).

This framework, however, has become more nuanced over the last decades—in line with advances in the study of family and migration history of Europe (Fernández & Eiras, 2003, 147–149). As such, studies now point out, as José Antonio Salas Auséns (2009, 19) highlights, to a multicausality that considers "family, personal, and environmental circumstances" (*las circunstancias familiares, personales y del entorno*) and their connection to the political, economic and demographic context. Thus, the coexistence of an individual migration model with diffuse motivations is generally accepted, alongside a trend rooted in networks of personal relationships between French people on both sides of the Pyrenees. These networks would have facilitated the arrival of new workers, primarily temporary laborers, and especially from Auvergne (Amalric, 2003, 27; Amengual & Pujadas, 2021, 1; Salas, 2009, 26).

The demographic contribution of the French contingent who settled in the Principality of Catalonia and their fundamental role in the recovery of the Catalan population during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was noted by Nadal and Giralt (2000). However, the expansion of the geographical areas analyzed in subsequent studies revealed dissonant numbers regarding the model proposed by the duo for the entire Principality. While the role of this injection of Gallic blood as a compensatory phenomenon for the low demographic density in Catalonia tends to be accepted (Amalric, 2003, 35; Amengual & Pujadas, 2020, 2; Millàs, 2005, 15, 128; Capdevila, 2021, 206), Valentí Gual (1991) and Jaume Dantí (1982) have shown its uneven impact on the territory, resulting in a lower presence of immigrants in the interior regions.

Although it is hard to gauge the demographic extent of French immigration, Jean-Pierre Amalric (2003, 135) estimated its contribution to the Spanish population at half a million people. In the case of Barcelona, the Register of French residents on the Catalan coast in 1637 served Moreu-Rey (1959, 16) in assessing its demographic weight at around 10% of the population of the city. Even higher numbers are provided by the 1640 census, studied by Albert García Espuche and Manuel Guardia (1986, 31), which allowed them to establish the ultra-Pyrenean presence in the capital at 16% of the total.

Nevertheless, and given the uncertain quantification of immigrants, scholars point to numerous traces of the Gallic imprint in Catalonia that not only allow for confirming its demographic impact, but also for measuring a contribution that extended beyond the population sphere in statistical terms. This includes the proliferation of streets with Gallic toponyms in Catalan cities and towns (Almazán, 1992, 31; Capdevila, 2008, 880) as well as the numerous French confraternities that spread throughout

the territory (Busquets, 2012; Cabruja, 1989; Codina, 1999; Nadal & Giralt, 2000, 102–106; Moreu-Rey, 1959, 15–16; Teixidó, 1998). Scholars have also highlighted the importation of new construction, artistic, and artisan techniques (Millàs, 2005, 131; Moreu-Rey, 1959, 48; Simon, 1999, 92; Torres, 2002, 254), as well as agricultural tools (Codina, 1980, 245) which undoubtedly contributed to the development of both urban and rural areas.

MARRYING AN INDIGENOUS WOMAN: SOCIAL, LEGAL, AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF INTERMARRIAGE

The most common approach to evaluating the willingness and capacity of French immigrants to settle permanently has relied on the quantitative analysis of mixed marriages; however, scholars have also focused on numerous qualitative aspects of this phenomenon, thereby complementing the traditional practice of historical demography. Thus, in addition to a copious reproduction of the methods used by Nadal and Giralt (Pérez & Sven, 1992, VII), new methodologies and analytical perspectives soon prevailed. These illustrated how the study of French immigration, although always indebted to its founders, has gained its own trajectory (Vila, 2024, 13–18). In the specific case of marriages, recent decades have seen the emergence of studies focused on the marital behavior of immigrants and its role in in their integration into host communities (Amengual, 2018; Amengual & Pujadas, 2021; Salas, 2019).[10] Indeed, marrying a local woman was one of the primary mechanisms for adaptation among French immigrants, alongside their seamless integration into work and parish life (Simon, 1999, 90).

As numerous studies point out, mixed marriages stand as one of the strongest indicators of the social integration of immigrants in historical societies, both in the *Ancien Régime* (Almazán, 1992, 31; Amengual & Pujadas, 2020, 2; Capdevila, 2014a, 139; Codina, 1999, 208–209; Fargas, 1994, 789; Pérez, 2012, 345) and in the contemporary period (Coleman, 1994, 113; Puschmann et al., 2012, 4). As noted by Paul Puschmann et al. (2012, 5–6), the marital behavior of an immigrant could result in one of four processes: *segregation* if he opted for exogamy; or *integration*, if he married a non-local woman from a different geographical origin to his own; *assimilation* if he married a native woman; or, he could remain single, which would lead to his *marginalization*.[11]

In the specific case of French immigrants, marrying an indigenous woman also became a significant indicator of their commitment to the host community and, with it, a promising pathway to other forms of integration. While this did not always ensure the full acceptance of the immigrant within their host communities

10 It is also worth highlighting María José Vilalta's (2006), which offers insight into the matrimonial behavior of French immigrants, nevertheless within a broader study on Lleida's marriage market.

11 This theoretical framework has also been highlighted in Amengual's (2018) study, to which this paper is deeply indebted.

(Pérez, 2012, 328), it was indicative of their progressive assimilation. This is the case of juridical integration, recognized both through the acquisition of the *vecindad*—this is, the citizenship in local communities—and the *naturaleza*—translated here as *nativeness*, thus adhering to the terminological adaptation offered by Tamar Herzog (2003, 8). The latter status enabled *new Catalans* to avoid coercive measures during times of conflict between the Hispanic and French Monarchies, such as seizure of property (Amengual, 2018, 276) or expulsion (Salas, 2003a, 686; Sales, 1997, 681). It is worth noting that, while Núria Sales (1997, 677) argues how the derivative acquisition of nativeness allowed the exercise of all the rights and privileges granted to *original* natives (*naturales*), Encarna Roca (1978, 29) contends that Catalan provisions barred the political integration of immigrants, even from those who were naturalized, thereby preventing them from holding public office. This was not the case for the children born of mixed marriages who lived in Catalonia (Ginebra, 2002, 92–93; Roca, 1978, 15), who were considered natives (*naturales*) of the Principality for all intents and purposes, due to the application of *ius soli* (Ginebra, 2002, 93; Simon, 1999, 95)—that is, birth in Catalonia, even if the parents were not native.

For her part, Herzog has addressed the issue of juridical integration in modern Castile highlighting the existence of an unwritten law that elevated nativeness, much like citizenship in local communities (*vecindad*), into a complex socio-legal construction, based on the assumption that, "people who wanted to live together and were willing to commit themselves permanently to the community had the right to consider themselves members of it, both as *vecinos* and as *naturales*" (Herzog, 2006, 177).[12] Often combined with other loyalty indicators—such as having children, paying taxes or breaking bonds with one's homeland—marrying a native woman became compelling evidence of the foreigner's intention to settle and to achieve assimilation in the eyes of the authorities and citizens. This could lead to the immigrant's derivative acquisition of nativeness or acceptance as a neighbor. With such evidence of their desire to belong, the immigrant could successfully mitigate the danger associated with the rootless condition of outsiders (Herzog, 2006, 116–117, 119, 249).

Scholars do not seem to recognize the existence of this implicit social and legal category based on the immigrant's expressed desire for assimilation in the case of Catalonia.[13] However, it can be observed how those proofs of loyalty, commitment, and connection to the territory played a fundamental role among the criteria used to resolve the formal concessions of nativeness (*naturalización*). And while

12 "*Las personas que querían vivir juntas y estaban dispuestas a comprometerse de forma permanente con la comunidad tenían el derecho a considerarse miembros de ella, a la vez como vecinos y como naturales*" (Herzog, 2006, 177).

13 As the researchers point out, the definition of the quality of being Catalan essentially responded to the need to limit foreigners' access to public office and ecclesiastical benefits (Ginebra, 2003, 14–15). Thus, the legal doctrine of Catalan nativeness was not subject to specific legislative treatment (Roca, 1978, 7–8).

the modern Catalan doctrine on nativeness primarily relied on the application of *ius soli* and *ius sanguinis*—being a child of Catalan parents—as well as on the applicant's prolonged and continuous residence in territory (Ginebra, 2003, 17; Roca, 1978, 29–33), Sales (1997, 677) acknowledges that marrying a native woman could facilitate the derivative acquisition of the native (*natural*) status, just as the adoption of local customs and language. Mixed marriages, therefore, were also interpreted in Catalonia as clear evidence of an immigrant's decision to settle and commit to the territory. Although they were not considered constitutive elements of naturalization *per se*, they transformed the immigrant's social and even juridical status, as demonstrated by their exemption from the prohibition against bearing arms extended to all French residents in the Principality by the 1542 Courts of Monzón (Ginebra, 2002, 93).

This consideration of "less foreign" (*menys estrangers*) (Ginebra, 2002, 93), therefore, was particularly redefined in the case of French men. In a context in which, as Rafael Gibert (1958, 185) highlighted, "the faith community acts in shaping the statute, even pushing the boundaries of nationality and foreignness",[14] the foreign status of the ultra-Pyrenean was exacerbated by the potential heretical influence attributed to him by society and the authorities (Capdevila, 2014a, 151; 2014b, 406; Colls, 2002, 210; Simon, 1999, 95; Torres, 2002, 356), turning him not only into a stranger and, therefore, dangerous, but also into a religious and political enemy (Castelnau, 1993, 145).

This mistrust often manifested itself in a Francophobic attitude, as exemplified by the consolidation of the derogatory *gavatx* to refer to these immigrants as a whole. The term was frequently accompanied by a string of pejorative adjectives, illustrative of the suspicions this group provoked among their fellow citizens. It has been documented by numerous scholars in the notarial and official records of modern Catalonia (Capdevila, 2014a, 168; Gual, 2021, 249; Gual & Masdéu, 2021, 30; Moreu-Rey, 1959, 13), as well as in proverbs and songbooks that attest to the popularization and derogatory connotation of this designation (Capdevila, 2009, 210). On not a few occasions, it foreshadowed physical assaults (Almazán, 1992, 34). Indeed, the legal and economic inequalities, political and institutional tensions, inquisitorial actions, and the unease generated by some social conflicts such as banditry all contributed to the newcomer becoming a scapegoat for ongoing tensions and issues troubling both the authorities and the native population (Capdevila, 2014a, 151; Simon, 1999, 96–97; Torres, 2002, 355–359), subjecting them to exhaustive control and persecution (Almazán, 1992, 36; Blázquez, 1990; Capdevila, 2014b; Codina, 1992, 54; Monter, 1988; Simon, 1999, 94–97). It does not seem too risky, therefore, to conjecture the added value that demonstrating signs of loyalty to the host community could represent for the French men.

14 "*La comunidad de fe actúa en la formación del estatuto forzando incluso el marco de nacionalidad y extranjería*" (Gibert, 1958, 185).

In addition to the assimilationist role I have outlined, the socio-economic benefits underlying mixed marriages must also be considered. This has been emphasized by specialists when analyzing the integrating implications of these unions (Amengual, 2018; Salas, 2009). In this sense, a "fortunate marriage" (*matrimonio afortunado*)—borrowing Salas's term (2009)—borrowing facilitate upward mobility for French immigrants, thereby improving their condition. While marriage was fundamentally aimed at preserving and transmitting family wealth to ensure the reproduction of the social group (Amengual & Pujadas, 2020, 25; Baixauli, 2003, 91), marital behavior was also conditioned by the limitations of the marriage market (Amengual, 2018, 272; Salas, 2009, 274) and by the attraction generated by certain individual characteristics (Amengual, 2018, 272).

The unions between French immigrants and Catalan widows fit within this explanatory framework. On the one hand, the limited presence of women of the same origin and the disadvantageous position of the ultra-Pyreneans in the marriage market influenced the criteria for forming couples (Salas, 2003b, 156), often leading them to marry widows. This trend became so prominent that it is highlighted in the literature as one of the defining features of immigrants' marital behavior (Amengual & Pujadas, 2020; Capdevila, 2014a, 143; Nadal & Giralt, 1966, 33; Salas, 2003b, 156; 2019, 239), along with the higher age at marriage compared to local men (Amengual, 2018, 279–285; Salas, 2019, 231–233). On the other hand, the need for widows to overcome their legal, economic, and social vulnerability (Amengual & Pujadas, 2020, 20), as well as their challenging reintegration into the local marriage market—which was particularly aggravated by old age due to its reproductive vocation (Tovar, 2014–2015, 94)—made them more prone to descend the social ladder (Amengual & Pujadas, 2020, 4). This symbiotic relationship was highlighted by Miquel Amengual and Joana Maria Pujadas (2020, 4), pointing out that, "a French immigrant would provide the widow with hands to work the land, or to run a craft workshop, while at the same time restoring her to a legal, social, economic, and even moral status accepted by the whole of society".[15]

In the case of the Barcelona area,[16] Amengual & Pujadas (2020, 20) pointed out how 29% of French men who married widows between 1566 and 1620 experienced upward mobility. In addition to a pre-existing home and access to her family and kinship networks, a peasant widow could offer an immigrant day laborer land to cultivate, whether owned or rented (Amengual & Pujadas, 2020, 6; Salas, 2009, 277) and, with it, "a guarantee of secure, deeply stable employment" (*una garantía de trabajo seguro profundamente estable*) (Vilalta, 2006, 32). In the case of the widows

15 "*Un inmigrante francés proporcionaría a la viuda unos brazos para trabajar la tierra, o para sacar adelante un taller artesanal, al mismo tiempo que la restituiría a una situación legal, social, económica e, incluso, moral, aceptada por el conjunto de la sociedad*" (Amengual & Pujadas, 2020, 4).

16 The terminology used by Amengual and Pujadas (2016, 39–41) is followed, who employ the term "area" to refer to the deanery of the former Diocese of Barcelona, known as the *Oficialitat*.

further removed from the rural world, they could facilitate access to the guild system[17] (Salas, 2009, 277) and their own artisan workshops or even commercial businesses (Amengual & Pujadas, 2020, 6).

THE PRENUPTIAL AGREEMENTS OF THE HOSPITAL DE LA SANTA CREU (1532–1601)

Nevertheless, these fortunate unions did not reflect the overall patterns of French immigrants' marital behavior. Social mobility was, in some instances, downward, evidencing how matrimonial strategies were driven by other objectives and causes that extended beyond socioeconomic advancement and even social endogamy, as I have pointed out. Their marriages to young women who had been abandoned at the Hospital de la Santa Creu in Barcelona are highly representative of this statement.[18]

The foundling has passed unnoticed as a historical subject in studies on the matrimonial behavior of French immigrants and in the traditional historiography on migration, which has primarily focused on Catalan maidens and widows, French women, and second-generation immigrants. This constraining framework, however, is insufficient to explain the omission of foundlings' role in the integration processes of the newcomers. The scant interest that the Hospital de la Santa Creu has generated among modernists is striking,[19] as it stands in contrast to the abundant contributions dedicated to the fifteenth century. Regarding the daughters of the Hospital, only Àurea Roldan (1982) has offered some approaches to the abandoned children at the institution during the sixteenth century, as reflected in her unpublished Bachelor's Thesis and a brief, mostly quantitative article in the Catalan magazine *L'Avenç* (Roldan, 1983). For their part, Teresa Vinyoles, Ximena Illanes and Salvatore Marino have conducted thorough and prolific research on foundlings[20] and have extended some of their studies to the first decade of the 1500s (Illanes, 2013a; Illanes & Vinyoles, 2012; Illanes, Marino & Vinyoles, 2023). However, they have not dedicated any specific academic work to the prenuptial agreements. Instead, we find only a few approximations (Illanes, 2013a, 86–87;

17 This aspect was reviewed by Maarten Prak et al. (2020, 428), for the case of widows of masters in some European cities. On the other hand, the tendency towards social endogamy among artisans has been highlighted by Vilalta for the city of Lleida (2006, 32). Capdevila (2014a), Salas (2009), and again Vilalta (2003) have pointed out the extraordinary difficulties faced by the French in both entering and, more importantly, advancing within the guild system.

18 I have presented a preliminary approach to the phenomenon in my unpublished Master's Thesis (Vila, 2024), which includes an exercise in quantification and periodization of French men in prenuptial agreements, as well as a more detailed analysis of their geographical origin and occupational profile.

19 It is worth noting the recent contribution of Josep Capdeferro (2020) to the jurisdictional dimension of the Hospital and its various fields of action during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and which adds to Josep Danon's (1978, 27–31; 75–85) forays into the 1500s Hospital in his classic study on the history of the institution.

20 Among other titles, cf. Vinyoles (1986; 2013), Vinyoles & González (1981), Illanes (2010; 2011; 2013a, 2013b; 2016; 2018; 2019) and Marino (2018, 2019).

2019; Vinyoles, 1989, 2014), due to the limited number of contracts preserved from the fifteenth century. This led Vinyoles (1989, 262) to conjecture that, "not all girls must have found husbands, as we have very few records of foundlings who got married".[21]

However, in the early modern era, foundlings did marry in significant numbers; or at least they were predisposed to do so.[22] This was the ultimate goal of Renaissance welfare institutions for abandoned children—social integration. Only then did the Hospital conclude its guardianship over them (Illanes, 2019), thus completing, in principle, the life cycle of institutionalized young women.[23] And in the sixteenth century, French immigrants played a fundamental role in this process. Even a superficial look at the prenuptial agreements of the institution—preserved in the notarial protocols of the Historical Archive of the Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau (AHSCP)—is enough to confirm the unusual frequency with which the administrators of the Hospital arranged marriages for the daughters of the institution with individuals from the neighboring country.

For the sixteenth century, the AHSCP holds 53 manuals belonging to the eight notaries who succeeded each other throughout this period, although we do not find strict prenuptial agreements until 1532. By that, I mean complete documentary units, written in Catalan (Gifre, 2010) and containing specific clauses in addition to those inherent to a contract, which was repeated with a homogeneous structure until 1601.

The document structure begins with the introduction of the contracting parties. In the case of grooms—and, to a lesser extent, their fathers—in addition to specifying the name and surname, information is usually provided about both their geographical origin (naturalization and/or residence) and professional background. As for the future wife, her name is usually given—rarely compounded and, even less frequently, accompanied by surnames—along with her status as a foundling (*filla del Hospital* or *filla de la present casa*, literally, a daughter of the Hospital, or house) when applicable.

21 "*No totes les noies devien trobar marit, ja que tenim poquíssimes notícies d'expòsites que es casin*" (Vinyoles, 1989, 262).

22 In fact, prenuptial agreements, as private contracts signed by the future husband and wife to establish the economic regime of the new family as well as the laws governing their juridical relationships, only allow us to ascertain the intention—implicit in the documentation—to enter into marriage. Corroborating, however, their formalization requires other documentary sources that fall beyond the means of the present research.

23 The examination of prenuptial agreements has allowed us to note how some widowed foundlings resorted to the institution to arrange a second marriage (AHSCP-PC, Manual de Miquel Cellers, 3, fol. 75v–76r; 9, fol. 42r–43r; Manual de Miquel Joan Cellers, 20, fol. 49r–59r; 7, fol. 80v–82r; Manual de Joan Sala, 8, fol. 16v–18r). Although, as Maria Isabel Baixauli asserts for sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Valencia, families could disengage "*de la nova aventura matrimonial*" since "*ja havien complit amb el primer matrimoni*" (2003, 152), the hospital once again provided them with a dowry, taking charge of receiving their wages, and, we presume, acting as *afermadors* of their labor contracts or even hiring them to weave within the institution itself (AHSCP-PC, Manual de Joan Sala, 8, fol. 16v–18r). Thus, we suspect that a long-term bond existed between the Hospital and the foundlings that goes beyond the placement of the girls in marriage; a topic we intend to explore in future research.

The donations that constitute the dowries are usually presented thereafter. These primarily consisted of 10 Barcelonian pounds (*lliures*), which the administrators of the Hospital typically offered upon marriage. In cases where they had provided domestic services,[24] the remuneration received is documented, along with any extraordinary donations from their masters-employers. Also common were contributions from Pious Works established by individuals outside the Hospital aimed at marrying off poor maidens[25] and, to a lesser extent, alms and donations from employees and residents of the institution, as well as external agents. Likewise, a clause was set forth to regulate the foundlings' ability to make a will regarding their dowry.

Once the amounts were determined, the dowry constitution was established. This section is usually introduced by an explicit statement of the *consent and will* (*consentiment i voluntat*) of the Administrators and the Prior concerning the marriage arrangement which can also involve the masters of the foundlings. I believe this may indicate the individuals who participated in arranging the marriage. Likewise, the total amount the bride contributes to the marriage is usually specified, along with the conditions for the restitution of the dowry.

The *creix* usually follows the dowry constitution. This prenuptial payment does not appear in all contracts since, as noted in previous studies, it was not mandatory. In this regard, historiography generally presents it as a donation made by the future husband to the woman in recognition of her virginity (Gascón, 2009, 8; Pérez, 1994, 49), thereby acknowledging, implicitly or explicitly, a continuity with the Germanic *Morgengabe* tradition. However, it seems more complicated to clarify its casuistry in the studied prenuptial agreements, as some foundlings who did not receive the *creix* were not recorded as widows. Lastly, the fate of the *creix* following the death of the foundling was determined.

Finally, the parties committed to a date for the celebration of the marriage and for its solemnization, under penalty of a downpayment for non-compliance, ranging from 25 to 100 Catalan pounds.

Of the more than 380 prenuptial agreements preserved in the notarial protocols for the sixteenth century, I have analyzed 366. Numerous methodological criteria

24 As Illanes (2013a, 81) highlighted when studying the modalities in which the abandoned children of the Hospital de la Santa Creu left the institution between 1401 and 1510, it is difficult to discern between the learning of a trade and the domestic service. However, the scholar has verified that it was much more common for girls to leave the Hospital *para servir específicamente en el ámbito doméstico* (Illanes, 2013a, 83). In the case of the prenuptial agreements analyzed, the object of the service is not specified either, with the expression "for the time she has spent in his house" or "for the time she has served in his house" (*per lo temps que ha estat en sa casa or per lo temps que ha servit en sa casa*) being very common. Thus, and given that domestic service was always implied in the contracts of young women (Illanes, 2013a, 85), we have opted to refer generically to these services, understanding, however, that the foundlings might also have assisted in the workshop or performed tasks related to the trades of their employers.

25 Pious Works refers to institutions or legacies established by individuals in their wills for charitable purposes. Among these, it was very common in late medieval and early modern Catalonia and Spain to endow poor maidens (cf. Baixauli, 1993; Rivasplata, 2020; Vinyoles, 1980).

Table 1: Origin of future husbands in the prenuptial agreements (1532-1601).

	Num.	Absolute total	Relative total
France	187	51.1%	-
"Naturals" (natives) of France	*107*	*29.2%*	*57.2%*
"Naturalitat" (nativeness) not recorded, sons of natives of France	*69*	*18.9%*	*36.9%*
"Naturalitat" (nativeness) not recorded, sons of inhabitants in France	*2*	*0.5%*	*1.1%*
"Naturalitat" (nativeness) not recorded, inhabitants in France	*1*	*0.3%*	*0.5%*
"Naturalitat" (natives) of Catalonia, sons of natives of France	*5*	*1.4%*	*2.7%*
French future husband or father (undetermined)	*3*	*0.8%*	*1.6%*
Catalonia	115	31.4%	-
Rest of the Crown of Aragon, Castile and Europe	22	6.0%	-
Not recordered	29	7.9%	-
Undetermined	13	3.6%	-
Total	**366**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

have converged in this delimitation, ranging from the prioritization of documentary homogeneity and coherence I have pointed out, to the exclusion of contracts signed by non-foundling women. These principles have taken precedence over the accounting of French immigrants (Vila, 2024, 65–71). On the other hand, I have classified as French men all future husbands who appeared in the source as natives of France along with those indirectly related with the country whose nativeness was not documented—thus adhering to the methodology established by Valentí Gual, Xabier Gual and Carles Millàs (1998, 134; Millàs, 2005, 28) and Josep Maria Llobet (1989, 46–47). Consequently, the total number of husbands directly or indirectly associated with France amounts to 187 (51.1%) (Table 1); a figure that should be interpreted as a minimum threshold.

TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE RATIONALE OF MARRIAGES: PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR AND SOCIAL MOBILITY OF THE FRENCH HUSBANDS-TO-BE

The analysis of the unpublished prenuptial agreements from the Hospital de la Santa Creu demonstrates, therefore, that during sixteenth century French immigrants chose to marry foundlings in greater proportions than the natives, while also providing figures that are difficult to compare with previous studies. Indeed, the most significant percentages recorded for the city—24.9% of those married in the parish of Sant Just i Pastor (1566–99) (Fargas, 1994, 790)—and for the diocese of Barcelona—42%, in Sant Boi de Llobregat (1584–1620) (Codina, 1992, 51)—do not exceed the 51.1% of French men who arranged marriages with the daughters of the Hospital. While it is true that the documentary source does

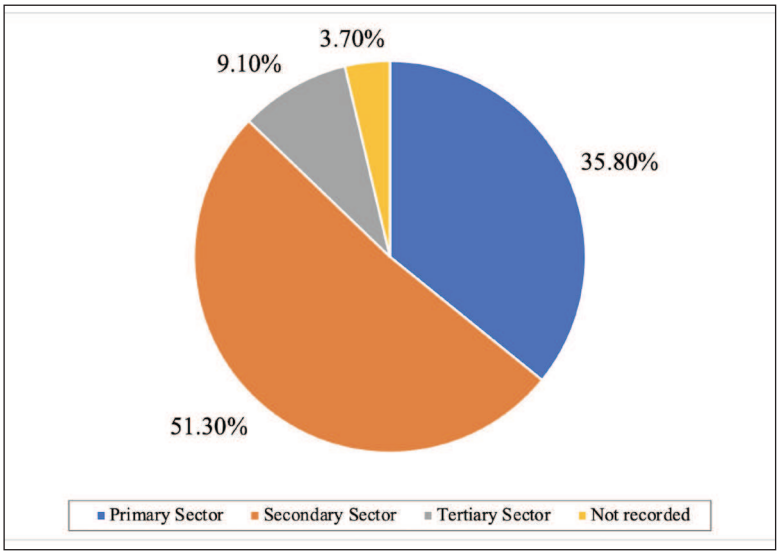

Chart 1: Distribution of French future husbands in professional sectors (1532–1601).

not allow us to corroborate the formalization of the marriages,[26] this high rate underscores the considerable appeal that this matrimonial strategy held for the French community.

The study of the occupational profiles of the contracting parties has revealed that 51.3% of the husbands-to-be worked in professions within the secondary sector, compared to 35.8% dedicated to the primary sector (Chart 1), as well as a significant number of French individuals engaged in tasks that required a certain level of qualification (57.2%).[27]

This finding, while broadly aligning with professional diversification and the trend toward specialization observed by researchers for the Barcelona area (Amengual, 2018; Moreu-Rey, 1959; Nadal & Giralt, 2000), suggests a trend of downward social mobility when it comes to marriages involving foundlings from the Hospital de la Santa Creu.

26 Nonetheless, prenuptial agreements have been widely used as an approach tool to the demographic volume of French immigrants (Capdevila, 2021; Llobet, 1989; Massanell, 1989; Millàs, 2005; Rafat, 1993, etc.).

27 The analysis and classification of professional information according to the level of qualification required for the job has been based on the guidelines established by Nadal and Giralt (2000, 193–201). Likewise, we have categorized the data into productive sectors and economic activities, primarily following the criteria set forth by Amengual (2018, 217), particularly regarding subsectors. To a lesser extent, we have also utilized the works of, in order of preference, Nadal and Giralt (2000, 187–202); Millàs (2005, 105–116) and Antoni Massanell (1989). We delve into the methodology and present the resulting table in Vila (2024).

Indeed, if the social mobility resulting from marriage is generally assessed in relation to the occupations of the bride's parents—or the profession of the deceased husband, if it happens to be a widow (Amengual, 2018, 285)—in the case of foundlings (who were under the guardianship of the welfare institution and largely uprooted from Barcelona society)[28] a bleak scenario unfolds. With minimal dowries derived from their remunerations as domestic servants and sometimes supplemented with charitable donations, these young women were characterized by a high degree of poverty.

Thus, the arithmetic median of the dowries for foundlings who were arranged in marriages with French immigrants amounts to 28.8 pounds for the entire period studied. However, the statistical analysis of the data through its representation in a boxplot diagram reveals that the wives-to-be brought amounts primarily ranging from 20 to 36.4 pounds (50% of cases). Based on the positive skewness presented by the chart, a higher concentration of values between the first quartile and the mean (Chart 2) is observed. Accordingly, it can be asserted that dowries ranging between 20 and 25.8 pounds were the most common in the marriage contracts of French immigrants. From this latter figure the data exhibit greater dispersion, which sharpens until reaching the maximum value of 60.9 pounds. Finally, it is worth noting how, thanks to the generous aid from masters and external agents, four foundlings managed to gather dowries exceeding this threshold, such as Agnes and Catharina, who, in 1583 and 1592, contributed 89.5 and 100 pounds, respectively, to their marriages (AHSCP-PC, Manual de Miquel Joan Cellers, 19, fol. 39r–41r; Manual de Joan Sala, 1, fol. 85r–41v). Nevertheless, these figures are represented in the graph as outliers.

According to the figures obtained, and if we adhere to the socio-professional classification proposal that Isaac García-Oses (2021, 158) elaborated for modern Barcelona based on a sample of prenuptial agreements, the contributions of foundlings to their respective marriages would place these young women within the lowest social typology, which includes the poorest families and urban officials in the Comital City, with dowries ranging up to 99 pounds. Of the 187 cases analyzed, only Catharina managed to escape this category, although by one pound.

The amounts that foundlings brought to their marriages with future Catalan husbands also failed to surpass, on average, the threshold that placed them within the lowest strata of sixteenth-century Barcelona society. However, these sums were somewhat higher, with a median almost five pounds greater than that extracted from the prenuptial agreements of French immigrants. In this case, two differentiated patterns are also observed. First, within the 50% of dowries, ranging from 23.9 to 41.5 pounds, a greater concentration is seen between this latter figure and 30.3 pounds. Thus, the most frequently brought amounts by foundlings were up to 4.5 pounds higher in the case of marriages arranged with Catalans. Second, a greater dispersion is observed as amounts exceed the median, with a maximum value of 67.5, that is, 6.6 pounds higher than the one shown for the French immigrants. In any case, these differences are of little significance when we refer, once again, to the figures provided by García-Oses (2021) for the city of Barcelona.

28 On this issue, cf. Illanes (2013, 185–188).

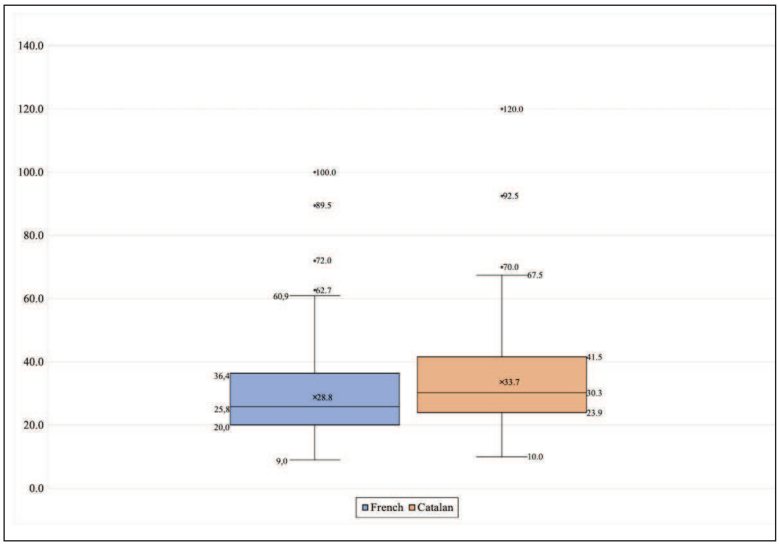

Chart 2: Dowries of foundlings according to the geographical origin of future husbands (1532–1601).

Likewise, the comparative study of dowries does not reveal significant variations according to the French future husbands' professional activities. On one hand, young women drew on the same means to constitute their dowries, established by the institution long before their marriages were arranged; and, on the other, the observed fluctuations do not approach the amounts stipulated for the same professions across Barcelona as a whole. For example, this was the case of blacksmiths—considered part of the most highly skilled artisanship group (Amengual, 2018, 208)—for whom García-Oses (2021, 159) established an endowment capacity ranging from 100 to 249 pounds. However, when marrying foundlings from the Hospital de la Santa Creu, they had to settle for amounts that, on average, reached 38 pounds (AHSCP-PC, Manual de Miquel Cellers, 1, fol. 66r; 9, fol. 79v; Manual de Miquel Joan Cellers, 5, fol. 75r; 7, fol. 80r; 10, fol. 45v; 19, fol. 39r).

It is important to note that the socio-professional categorization that serves us as a model is based on Catalan individuals, or at least the text does not explicitly mention the presence of foreigners. However, the consulted bibliography does not appear to address any wage disparity depending on the workers' origins. Even so, we must interpret the data with caution since, as Salas (2009, 281) highlighted, "being listed in a record as a worker in a certain activity is at most an indication that the person performing it may have achieved a certain status or socioeconomic level",[29] thus referring to the sensitivity of

29 "*Figurar en una relación como trabajador en una determinada actividad no pasa de ser un indicio de que quien la desempeña haya alcanzado un determinado status o nivel socioeconómico*" (Salas, 2009, 281),

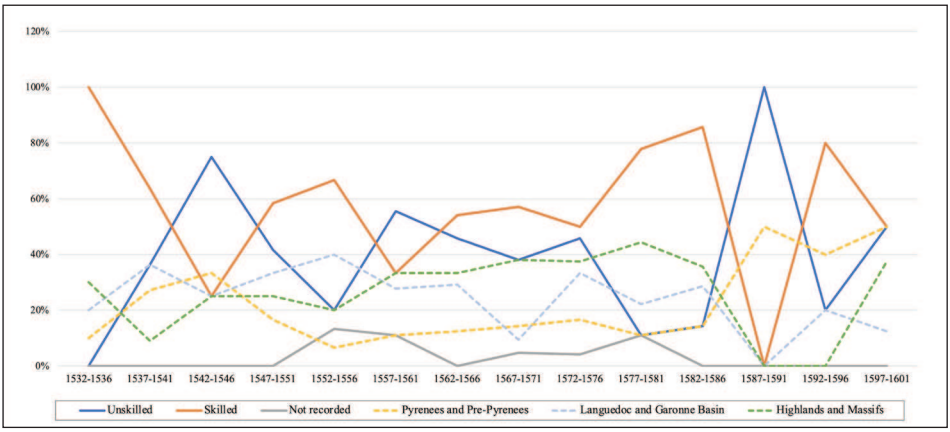

Chart 3: Distribution of French future husbands according to area of origin and level of specialization (1532–1601).

immigrants and, especially, their economic status to changing circumstances. Likewise, it should be noted that the prenuptial agreements do not provide information on the position that French husbands-to-be held within the guild structure (master, journeymen or, perhaps apprentice). Thus, in order to determine the level of social mobility that they had to experience by marrying foundlings with a greater degree of confidence, a study of the individual trajectories of the French men is therefore required, which is certainly beyond the scope and resources of this research. On the other hand, considering that immigrants engaged in artisanal trades or qualified jobs are presumed to have achieved greater social integration (Almazán, 1992, 33; Capdevila, 2014a, 142), the question must be asked regarding the reasoning behind their decision to marry foundlings who, mostly, lacked significant social ties within Barcelona's society.

I have outlined various interpretative lines to address this question. I consider the geographical-professional correlation suggested by the correspondence between the periods of greater influx of immigrants from the Highlands and the Massifs and the predominance of ultra-Pyreneans engaged in specialized professions (Chart 3). Thus, by cross-referencing data related to the geographical and professional background of the French husbands-to-be (that is, their distribution between specialized and non-specialized occupations) and organizing it into five-year intervals, a correlation can be observed between the periods of highest immigration from the Highlands and the Massifs (1532–36 and 1557–86) and the Languedoc and the Garonne Basin (1537–41 and 1547–56), with the predominance of French men in specialized professions. Similarly, the peak moments of unskilled immigration largely coincide with the preeminence of immigrants from the Pyrenees and Pre-Pyrenees (1542–46 and 1587–91).

While a relationship between the specialization of the immigrants and their geographical origin appears to be confirmed, the small number of cases in the overall

sample makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions. As such, I can only propose this correlation as a possible interpretation. Notwithstanding, following this hypothesis and considering the greater-than-usual absence of kinship ties in Barcelona among emigrants from this northern region (Capdevila, 2009, 5–6), as well as the integrative role of these networks of compatriots (Amengual, 2018, 283–284; Capdevila, 2006, 204; 2014a, 149–150), we are faced with a question: could this lack of introducers and ties reduce the chances of marrying the rest of the Catalan maidens or widows?

It is worth asking, then, to what extent the strategy of marrying a foundling would be induced by a higher degree of social exclusion among the contractors. Or, to put it another way—and contrary to what historiography had reported (Amengual & Pujadas, 2020, 25; Codina, 1980, 244, 249)—we should ask if the social condition of French immigrants would respond more to their status as foreigners than to their socioeconomic situation. In this sense, the French contingent emerges as the indisputable protagonist of these unions (Table 1). As such, it can be argued that, *a priori*, the foundling marriage market would have been less restrictive than that of Comtal City maidens; or, at the very least, the ultra-Pyreneans would no longer occupy the disadvantaged position previously demonstrated in analyses of their marital behavior in the Barcelona area (Amengual, 2018, 367) and in the Early Modern Spain as a whole (Amengual & Pujadas, 2020, 2; Salas, 2009, 269–270; 2019, 225, 231). Nevertheless, the significant numerical imbalance between the two marriage markets must not be overlooked: in the Barcelonian one, which included the entire female population of the city, ultra-Pyreneans would hardly outnumber Catalans in marriages due to their smaller demographic presence. In spite of that, this realization underscores the considerable appeal that the strategy of marrying foundlings held for the Gallic contingent.

As I had already pointed out, one of the best knowkn pieces of evidence regarding the unfavorable position occupied by French immigrants in the marriage market lies in their age of nuptial entry (Amengual, 2018, 279–285; Salas, 2019, 231–233). In the case of the Barcelona area, Amengual (2018, 328) concludes that immigrants would marry, on average, at the age of 27.7, a figure "higher than that of the native Catalans for their time, but also, and by a greater margin, than that of their place of origin".[30] Indeed, immigrants had to undergo a prior period of integration into the host society in order to marry (Amengual, 2018, 280–281; Capdevila, 2021, 220). For her part, Maria Alexandra Capdevila (2014a, 142) pointed out how "the younger they arrived, the greater the chances of marrying a local maiden, and vice versa".[31] Thus, another possibility we have outlined regarding the logic that motivated these unions—also in relation to the greater openness we hypothesized for the foundling marriage market—is that they may have provided an opportunity to shorten the late age at which French men typically entered marriage. This would have expedited the social integration process,

30 "*Més elevada que la dels autòctons catalans per a la seva època, però també, i amb més diferència, que la del seu lloc d'origen*" (Amengual, 2018, 328).

31 "*Com més joves arribaven, les possibilitats de casar-se amb una donzella del país augmentaven, i viceversa*" (Capdevila, 2014a, 142).

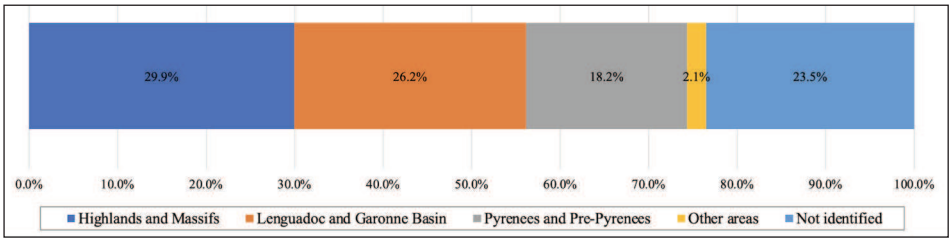

Chart 4: Distribution of French future husbands by region of origin (1532–1601).

particularly in the case of immigrants from the Highlands and the Massifs, who constitute the most-represented group in the marriage contracts of the Hospital de la Santa Creu, accounting for 29.9% (Chart 4), and for whom the literature has noted a later age of emigration.

Nonetheless, the documentation does not provide data on the ages of immigrants that may allow us to assess whether this hypothetical advantage would compensate for the social decline associated with marrying a daughter of the Hospital, as I conjectured in the case of artisans and other more skilled workers.

Regardless, in either of the two assumptions, the decision to enter marriages with foundlings would have been driven by a need for assimilation, highlighting their integrative role. Thus, and as Amengual and Pujadas (2020, 15) pointed out, downward social mobility often indicated "the necessity, given their migrant status, to marry at any cost […] in order to achieve integration into the host society".[32] In this way, access to land or artisan work, as well as social reproduction, appears to be subordinated to the social and legal benefits of marrying an autochthonous woman or to the necessity of demonstrating loyalty to the host community—when not relegated by a greater exclusion of foreigners in the Catalan marriage market, which would surpass the limits of their social condition. The institution of marriage, therefore, would no longer be established merely as a tool for the transmission of assets and group reproduction; instead, it would become a mechanism for social integration, serving both French immigrants and foundlings.

CONCLUSIONS

Our study provides a new subject and source to the prolific line of research on French immigration of great qualitative value that, in addition to ratifying the scope of hospital documentation as a cross-sectional tool for examining historical processes, compels us to reflect on the self-generated strategies for social integration employed by newcomers. The decision made by some French immigrants to marry young women

32 "*La necesidad dada por la condición migrante de casarse a cualquier precio* […] *para lograr la integración en la sociedad de acogida*" (Amengual & Pujadas, 2020, 15).

from the lowest strata of sixteenth-century Barcelona society, who were characterized by a high level of social uprooting, may be indicative of an integrative role of marriage that would outweigh the search for the socioeconomic integration of those foreigners willing to settle in Catalonia.

This phenomenon is attributed not only to the significant appeal of the strategy of marrying foundlings—offering a marriage rate between French and native women (51.1%) that surpasses all previous studies on this topic—but also to the downward social mobility that a significant portion of the husbands-to-be would experience. The potential access to land or artisanal work that a fortunate marriage could provide—it is worth recalling the 29% of immigrants who experienced upward social mobility in the Barcelona area by marrying widows (Amengual & Pujadas, 2020, 20)—, along with the social endogamy typically associated with the institution of marriage, appear to be subordinated, in this case, to the other advantages derived from marrying a native woman.

In this sense, the bibliographic analysis of the socio-juridical status of immigrants in modern Castile and, above all, modern Catalonia reveals how mixed marriages became evidence of foreigners' desire to settle in the eyes of society and the authorities. Consequently, these unions could be instrumentalized by these same foreigners to achieve their integration into the host community. Additionally, for French immigrants, marrying a native woman not only improved their social and juridical standing but also, while not making Catalans *per se*, made them *less foreigners*, distancing them, at least partially, from the suspicions associated with the lack of roots intrinsic to their status of foreigners and the political and religious threat perceived by their contemporaries due to their ultra-Pyrenean background.

Likewise, the necessity of escaping social exclusion finds its correspondence in the unions with foundlings. Thus, the greater absence of family ties in Barcelona that the historiography associates with the emigrants from the Highlands and the Massifs—who constituted the majority of the French men who engaged in jobs that required a certain level of skill in the bibliography and, as I estimate, in the prenuptial agreements—and therefore the impossibility of benefiting from the protection and integration offered by these networks of compatriots, could have limited their opportunities of entering into marriage, especially with non-institutionalized maidens and widows. In this case, the strategy of marrying a foundling would be attributed to a higher level of social exclusion, which, contrary to the assertions of historiography, is more closely linked to the status of French immigrants as foreigners rather than their socioeconomic situation.

Therefore, as a result of the social and legal benefits associated with marrying a native or of a social consideration that would subordinate their economic situation to their foreign status, I consider that French immigrants could have experienced a decline in social standing by marrying a daughter of the hospital in order to facilitate their social integration, thus redefining the meaning and main function of marriage in the societies of the *Ancien Régime* to result in a strategy of symbiotic integration. Nevertheless, a future and forthcoming exercise of family reconstruction that focuses on the individual trajectories of ultra-Pyreneans who chose to marry foundlings between 1532 and 1601 would likely allow us to confirm the hypotheses presented throughout these pages.

SKLENITI POROKO Z NAJDENKO: FRANCOSKI IMIGRANTI MED INTEGRACIJO IN IZKLJUČENOSTJO V ZGODNJENOVOVEŠKI BARCELONI (1532–1601)

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POVZETEK

Zgodovinopisje zagovarja tezo, da so mešane poroke imele integrativno vlogo pri asimilaciji in akulturaciji tujcev. O francoskih migrantih, ki so se v Katalonijo priseljevali med 15. in 18. stoletjem ter njihovi udeležbi na poročnem trgu obstaja le nekaj študij. Te so sicer temeljite, toda pretežno kvantitativne, obenem pa v svoji konceptualizaciji poročnih vezi kot integracijskih mehanizmov poudarjajo čezpirenejsko iskanje družbene in gospodarske vključenosti. Ta članek prispeva nov vir k analizi poročnih strategij francoskih imigrantov in nov historični subjekt k bogatim raziskavam migracij: predporočne pogodbe iz let 1531–1601, ki so vključevale mlade ženske, ki so jih kot najdenke vzgojili v špitalu sv. Križa (Santa Creu) v Barceloni. Medtem ko je bila kvantitativna študija teh imigrantov že opravljena na podlagi metodoloških smernic Jordija Nadala in Emili Giralt, je pričujoča razprava osredotočena na prišlekom lastne družbeno-integracijske pristope. Članek prouči na čem so temeljile obravnavane zveze in analizo virov dopolni z bibliografsko študijo družbenih, pravnih in gospodarskih koristi porok med Francozi in domačinkami. Raziskani so število in družbeno-poklicni profili pogodbenih strank, kot tudi vsote, ki so jih najdenke prinesle v zakon. Analiza pokaže, da so bili nekateri imigranti pripravljeni znižati svoj družbeni položaj, da bi premagali izključenost zaradi svojega statusa tujcev ali da bi olajšali svojo družbeno in pravno integracijo. Sklepati gre, da so imele tovrstne poročne odločitve funkcijo simbiotične integracije, kar je v primeru posameznih francoskih imigrantov pomenilo podreditev družbenoekonomskega vzpona oziroma družbene endogamije potrebi po asimilaciji.

Ključne besede: špital Santa Creu, zgodnjenovoveška Barcelona, francoska imigracija, najdenke, mešani zakoni, predporočne pogodbe, integracija

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