

Marriage Strategies in Communities of Southern Portugal (17th – 18th Centuries)*

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Abstract

This study has two main goals. The first part intends to analyse the marriage strategies developed in the 17th and 18th centuries in urban and rural communities in the southern region of Portugal, highlighting the specificity of their demographic behaviours in comparison to other Portuguese populations, particularly in the north of the country. We will analyse temporal variations in the seasonality of marriages, the evolution of the mean age at first marriage, and the spatial model of spouse selection. To achieve this, we have employed micro-analytical procedures based on the characteristics of the demographic and genealogical databases at our disposal, built from the application of the parish reconstitution methodology (Amorim, 1991). The basic sources used to build these databases were the birth and marriage parish registers, from which the information was collected and organised into family records through systematic nominative linkage.

The second part of this study intends to identify the marriage strategies adopted by a privileged class of society – the *familiars* of the Holy Office. The sources employed in this approach were the processes of genealogical investigation and of pure blood inquiry the Portuguese Inquisition conducted on the *familiars*. These documents refer to members of the local nobility in the city of Évora and the rural elites of a neighbouring parish (Divor), including also detailed information on the ancestor generations of the individuals under investigation, on the lineage of their brides, as well as the corresponding places

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of birth and professions. This information was crossed with the family records that were incorporated in the demographic databases, which served to identify differentiated behaviours in this specific social group, in comparison with those observed in the general population.

Key words: Historical demography, parish reconstitution methodology, communities of Southern Portugal, micro-analytical approach, *familiares* of the Holy Office, demographic behaviours, differentiated marriage strategies.

Estratégias matrimoniais em comunidades do Sul de Portugal (séculos XVII–XVIII)

Resumo

Este estudo visa dois objectivos principais. Na primeira parte pretendemos analisar as estratégias matrimoniais desenvolvidas ao longo dos séculos XVII e XVIII em comunidades urbanas e rurais da região Sul de Portugal, evidenciando a especificidade de comportamentos demográficos aí observados por comparação com outras populações portuguesas, sobretudo as do Norte do país. Para este efeito, recorremos a procedimentos micro-analíticos permitidos pelas características das bases de dados demográficas e genealógicas de que dispomos, construídas por aplicação da metodologia de reconstituição de paróquias (Amorim, 1991). As fontes básicas que originaram estas bases de dados foram os registos paroquiais de nascimentos e casamentos cuja informação foi recolhida e organizada em fichas de família através de cruzamento nominativo sistemático.

A segunda parte deste estudo visa identificar as estratégias matrimoniais adoptadas por um estrato privilegiado da sociedade – os *familiares* do Santo Ofício. Para esta abordagem, as fontes exploradas foram os processos de investigação genealógica e de inquirição da pureza de sangue dos *familiares*, conduzidos pela Inquisição portuguesa. Esta informação foi cruzada nas fichas de família que integram as bases de dados demográficas, permitindo detectar comportamentos diferenciados neste grupo social específico, relativamente aos que foram observados no conjunto da população.

Palavras-chave: Demografia histórica, metodologia de reconstituição de paróquias, comunidades do Sul de Portugal, abordagem micro-analítica, familiares do Santo Ofício, comportamentos demográficos, estratégias matrimoniais diferenciadas.

Stratégies matrimoniales dans les communautés du Sud du Portugal (XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles)

Résumé

Cette étude a deux objectifs principaux. Dans la première partie, nous souhaitons analyser les stratégies matrimoniales développées au cours des

XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles dans des communautés urbaines et rurales de la région Sud du Portugal, en mettant en évidence la spécificité de comportements démographiques observés ici par comparaison avec d'autres populations portugaises, en particulier celles du Nord du pays. Pour cela, nous avons eu recours à des procédures micro-analytiques permises par les caractéristiques des bases de données démographiques et généalogiques dont nous disposons, construites en appliquant la méthodologie de reconstitution de paroisses (Amorim, 1991). Les sources qui ont donné origine à ces bases de données ont été les registres paroissiaux des naissances et des mariages dont les informations ont été recueillies et organisées en fiches de famille grâce au croisement nominatif systématique.

La deuxième partie de cette étude vise à identifier les stratégies matrimoniales adoptées par une couche privilégiée de la société – les *familiares* du Saint-Office. Pour cette approche, les sources exploitées ont été les processus de recherche généalogique et de recherche de la pureté du sang des *familiares*, menés par l'Inquisition portugaise. Ces informations ont été croisées sur les fiches de famille qui intègrent les bases de données démographiques, ce qui a ainsi permis de détecter des comportements différenciés dans ce groupe social spécifique, par rapport à ceux observés dans l'ensemble de la population.

Mots-clés : Démographie historique, méthodologie de reconstitution de paroisses, communautés du Sud du Portugal, procédures micro-analytiques, les *familiares* du Saint-Office, comportements démographiques, stratégies matrimoniales différenciées.

INTRODUCTION

Despite Portugal's small size, demographic patterns in its North and South regions reveal major contrasts in the 17th and 18th centuries. Among other factors, specific geographical and climatic conditions associated with different land use systems may explain this regional differentiation. During the historical process of nation-building dating back to the 12th century, the plains of the South favoured extensive farming on large agricultural holdings, whereas the mountainous North with abundant rainfall led to intensive farming and diversified land use within a subsistence family economy.

In order to examine these issues, we believed that only by applying historical demographic techniques and methods would it be possible to increase our understanding of the demographic framework that characterised the Old Regime in both regions.

Demographic and genealogical databases, built by means of the parish reconstitution methodology (Amorim, 1991; Amorim, 2008), are available for the South region (Alentejo), which include the urban parish of Santo Antão (city of Évora) and the rural parishes of Divor and Selmes¹. Another genealogical database was also built based on information gathered from the “pure blood” processes conducted on the *familiars* of the Holy Office. These individuals, holding important positions within the hierarchy of the Inquisition, were lay collaborators of the Tribunal who were recognised as members of local elites.

The main objective of this study consists of a micro-analytical approach to matrimonial behaviours and strategies adopted by populations in rural and urban environments, considering the different factors which would have determined age at first marriage, the evolution of seasonal variation, geographical exogamy and spouse selection models. These matrimonial behaviours will be compared to those observed during the same period in other Portuguese regions, particularly in the North of the country where contrasts tend to be more clearly apparent.

The strategies developed by a specific social group – the *familiars* of the Holy Office – will also be analysed from a perspective of social differentiation. These individuals, members of the local elites, were lay collaborators of the Tribunal of the Inquisition who formed a privileged social class. Given their non-ecclesiastical status, they were allowed to marry and form a family. However, in order to uphold their social status, this involved an extremely selective spouse selection process, often resulting in consanguineous unions and significant medium or long-distance marital mobility.

1. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The basic sources used in this study were birth and marriage parish records, organised and analysed according to the “parish reconstitution” methodology (Amorim, 1991). This methodology is based on information collected from vital records held in several types of parish registers (birth, marriage and death records), which

1 Our thanks to Anabela Godinho for providing the Selmes parish data.

is then systematically intersected for each individual person. Taking advantage of recent computer resources, a software called “Sistema de Reconstituição de Paróquias” (SRP)² was implemented, which supports the current procedures applied to the reconstruction of a community. In a first phase, a file of INDIVIDUALS is built with all the personal data available, which is automatically transposed to a file of FAMILIES, and constitutes the basis to the systematic nominative linkage.

The family’s situation (legitimate or illegitimate), date of marriage, ages at marriage, and marital status of the spouses is entered directly in this last file, as well as the family’s classification intended for fecundity studies.

Throughout this process, potential problems associated to the occurrence of homonyms are minimised as individuals are identified, not only by the name present in the records, but also by their family relations.

The data collected from the different types of registers were organised into family records and subjected to systematic nominative linkage, which served to build demographic databases for one urban community and two rural communities in the Alentejo, covering a long period stretching over approximately two centuries. These databases are still being developed, with a view to broadening their temporal limits in the future. As they are, though, at the present time, the different analyses follow a periodisation that does not always coincide with the initial date of each community. For Santo Antão, a continuous series of birth records dating from 1640 to 1799 were examined, whereas the marriage records date from 1635 to 1799. In the case of Selmes, the time frame covers the period from 1631 to 1799, although the birth records between 1640 and 1648 are missing, as are the marriage records between 1723 and 1733. The Divor database includes information collected from birth and marriage records between 1570 and 1799.

As expected, the quality of the birth and marriage records of the studied parishes has improved significantly from the mid-18th century. Nevertheless, for the previous period, the collected information was

2 SRP - Sistema de Reconstituição de Paróquias. SEED – Módulo de Aquisição de dados. Guimarães. NEPS/ Departamento de Informática da Universidade do Minho (2004).

sufficiently consistent to ensure the success of the reconstitution. These older birth records always indicated the individual's first name, the parents' name and, more rarely, the grandparents' names. The marriage records always included the names, marital status and place of birth of the spouses.

From about 1745, the birth records became more complete, indicating the parents' names, the maternal and paternal grandparents' names, as well as their places of birth, professions and place of residence. The marriage records also came to clearly and explicitly include the family history for each bride and groom.

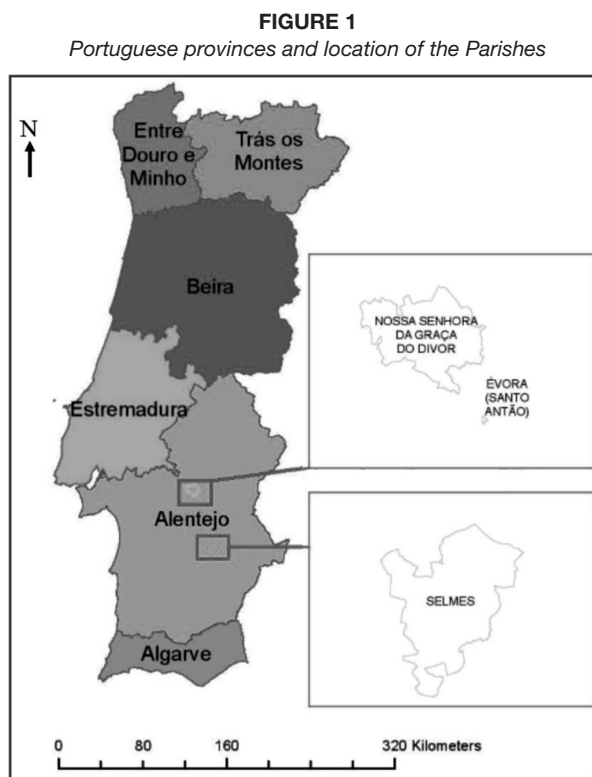
The mean age at first marriage of individuals born in each of the communities studied was calculated by crossing the exact birth and marriage dates documented on the family records of each demographic database. By opting for a transversal analysis, we considered all the potentially "useful" first marriages from the viewpoint of the women's reproductive capacity, which theoretically starts at 12 years of age and rarely goes beyond 49 years.

Information obtained from other sources, such as the qualifications of the *familiars* of the Holy Office, including the "pure blood" inquiry processes as well as the information on their brides, was used to build databases which include all the available information on this specific social group (Olival, 2004). These processes constitute key sources regarding the history of the family in Portugal (Junior, 2011), as they serve to trace the lineage of aspirants to inquisitorial positions in an area extending beyond regional or even national contexts. Indeed, *familiars* were individuals who were recognised in society, because they were considered "pure of blood" and corresponded to local elites in the area where they lived (Rodrigues, 2011; Lopes, 2013a; Lopes, 2013b).

Finally, so as to conduct a differential analysis of the demographic behaviours and the marriage strategies observed in the population in general and the group of the *familiars* of the Holy Office, we crossed the information collected on the latter with the original demographic databases which include all the reconstituted families in each community.

2. GENERAL FEATURES OF THE ALENTEJO PROVINCE AND THE PARISHES STUDIED

Until the early 19th century, mainland Portugal was divided into six large administrative provinces, which followed the natural layout of regions with distinct ecological characteristics and different forms of land use: Minho, Trás-os-Montes, Beira, Estremadura, Alentejo and Algarve (Figure 1).



Sources: Adapted from <http://arkeotavira.com/Mapas/Prov1755/index.html>

The Alentejo province occupied 28.2% of Portugal, delimited by the Tagus and Guadiana rivers. It was the least populated province in the country and the only province that lost a significant number of residents between the beginning and end of the 18th century. Between 1700 and 1732, this loss corresponded to over a quarter of its population and, despite a slow recovery over the following decades, by 1801 its initial numbers

had still not been recovered (Serrão, 1993: 54-57). However, regional demographics were far from homogenous, as shown in the data obtained with regard to the Archdiocese of Évora in 1720, revealing the existence of population hubs where significant population spurts occurred, which were reflected in average population densities varying between 8.7 and 10 inhabitants per km². Even so, these figures differ noticeably from the national average of about 30 inhabitants per km² (Rodrigues, 2008: 258).

The main urban centres which sustained this region over several centuries were Évora, Elvas, Portalegre, Estremoz and Beja (Bluteau, 1712: 236).

The city of Évora is particularly noteworthy in this group. It had been the seat of the Tribunal of the Inquisition since the 1530s (Coelho, 2002) and became home to a university run by the priests of the Company of Jesus in 1559. In 1720, the city had 11,000 inhabitants, followed by Beja, with only 6,000 inhabitants (Rodrigues, 2008:263).

The exploitation of agricultural resources under a *latifundium* system characterised the rural landscape of Alentejo (Santos, 2003), where extensive cereal cultivation was predominant as a result of a long historical and political process of land distribution associated to the morphology of the landscape. These characteristics also extended to the South Ribatejo region and part of Beira, resulting in a specific type of settlement (“*alentejano*”) where the population was agglomerated in large rural villages, separated by vast, almost deserted areas (Livi-Bacci, 1971: 30). In contrast with the North of the country and in particular with the province of Minho, where rural communities engaged in intensive farming in family subsistence smallholdings based on the *minifundium*, in the Alentejo, individuals with distinct social and occupational statuses coexisted within each property: the farmer, who would run the operations (under allodia, emphyteusis or leasehold), agricultural workers, caretakers and slaves (Fonseca, 2002). Additionally, they would be joined by the other members of each individual’s family, as exemplified by the nine hundred estates that in 1708 comprised the land registry of Évora, many of them containing just three or four *casais*³ (Costa, 1706, 2: 430).

3 According to Bluteau (1712, 2: 175-176), a “*casal*” consisted of one or two houses on an estate, or a country house where cereal was grown, or a settlement with only a few houses.

In the specific case of the municipality of Montemor-o-Novo, located approximately 25 kilometres from Évora, its agricultural population was roughly 1,080 inhabitants in 1699, of which 20.2% were farmers and 79.8% were agricultural workers, figures that correspond to a ratio of four workers to each farmer (Monteiro, 2010: 83).

In this study, our analysis has focused on the urban parish of Santo Antão and two geographically distant rural parishes: Divor and Selmes. The first two belonged to the “district” of Évora which, at the start of the 18th century, encompassed five urban parishes⁴ and fifteen rural parishes⁵.

Santo Antão was located in the affluent part of the city and occupied the largest area within the walls surrounding the city. There were six convents and three hermitages, as well as the main streets, where large, noble residences were built (Grilo, 1994). It also included a group of streets where a substantial part of the township’s trade was concentrated and where a large number of the *familiares* of the Holy Office, whose work was related to that sector, namely merchants (Lopes, 2013b: 290-291), resided during the first half of the 18th century.

The rural parish of Divor, situated approximately 10 km to the north of the urban centre of Évora, extended over countryside comprised of several valleys where cereal was cultivated, mainly wheat rather than barley or rye (Grilo, 1988). In 1758, this area possessed 52 estates, which accounted for 5.8% of the total number of estates existing in the entire municipality.

The other rural parish under analysis, Selmes, belonged to the municipality of Beja, roughly 25 kilometres from that city and 60 kilometres from Évora. It was a small village partially located on plains and partially on rolling hillsides⁶. The estates mainly cultivated wheat and rye, although olive oil production was also mentioned.

4 Santiago, Santo Antão, São Mamede, São Pedro and Sé.

5 Nossa Senhora da Boa-fé, Nossa Senhora da Graça do Divor, Nossa Senhora da Tourega, Nossa Senhora de Machede, São Bento de Pomares, São Brás do Regedouro, São Jordão, São Manços, São Marcos da Abóbada, São Matias, São Miguel de Machede, São Sebastião da Giesteira, São Vicente do Pigeiro, São Vicente de Valongo and Torre de Coelheiros.

6 Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisboa [ANTT], *Memórias Paroquiais*, vol. 34, n.º 117, p. 885-888.

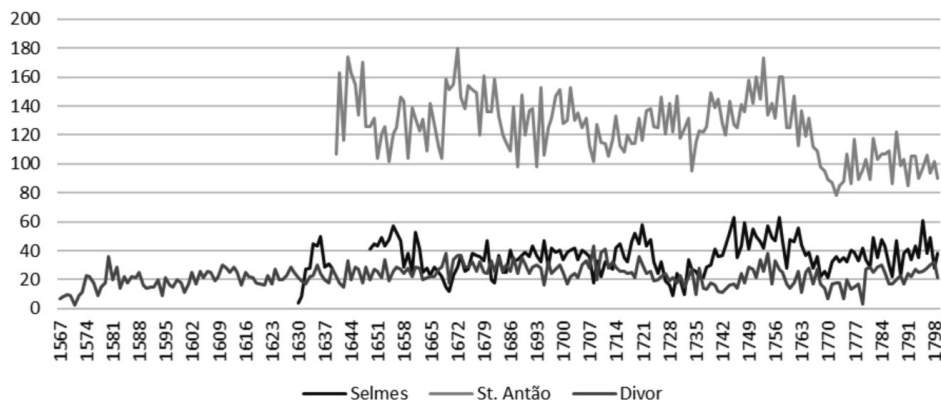
3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Evolution of births and resident populations

The annual number of births (Figure 2), the 9-Year moving average (Figure 3) and the information provided by the *Memórias Paroquiais* for 1758 were used to examine the demographic evolution and population size of each parish.

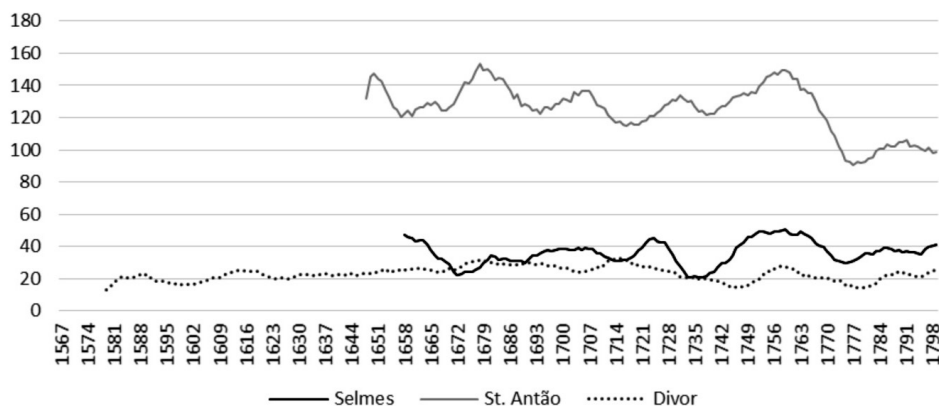
At first glance, as would be expected in an urban zone, the annual rate of births was always considerably higher in Santo Antão, differing substantially from the numbers recorded in Selmes and especially in Divor. From 1652, the annual number of baptisms in the town fell steeply and continued to decrease over the next two decades. This phase of decline may be related to an abrupt rise in mortality rates caused primarily by the appearance of the plague in Portugal in 1645-1646 and the return of typhus, typhoid fever and outbreaks of influenza during the 1650s and 1660s, which were most widespread between 1657-1659 and 1662-1663 (Rodrigues, 2008: 184). Hunger and other diseases also affected the Alentejo during the second half of the 1660s (Santos, 2005: 357-358; Pardal, 2015: 119-120), as was also the case in the Lisbon area (Rodrigues, 1988: 183-191) and in rural and urban communities in the North (Amorim, 1980: 102; Amorim, 1987: 293-296).

FIGURE 2
Evolution of births(per year)



Sources: Santo Antão, Divor and Selmes data sets.

FIGURE 3
Evolution of births (9-Year moving average)



Sources: Santo Antão, Divor and Selmes data sets.

After a period of recovery between 1670 and 1680, there was a persistent drop in the number of births in the urban parish, a trend that lasted until the mid-18th century despite a few cyclical fluctuations. Between 1747 and 1758, the number of births tended to match the levels observed during the periods of highest growth, but began to fall sharply in 1760, a decline which was only interrupted fifteen years later (Santos, 2003, 242-244). The decrease largely resulted from the occurrence of mortality crises which continued to decimate the population in several regions throughout the country until the end of the century, especially those residing in more built-up urban areas (Moreira, 2009: 273-276).

In rural parishes, the variations in annual births accompanied the trends observed in Santo Antão, although Divor was the most stable over the entire period under analysis. This fact may be related to the smaller impact of the mortality crisis. As the area was sparsely populated, the risks of contamination and spread of epidemics would be lower than in urbanised areas.

The data available for 1758 refers to the number of inhabitants in Santo Antão, while only the number of individuals older than 7 years was mentioned with regard to Divor and Selmes. In this case, we have determined that individuals under 7 years of age represented 18% (Dias, 1996: 50-51), in order to obtain an approximate figure for the resident population (Table 1).

TABLE 1
Inhabitants and households in 1758

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Households</i>	<i>Inhabitants</i>	<i>Average household size</i>
Santo Antão	1185	4247	3.6
Divor	157	840*	5.3
Selmes	287	917*	3.2

Source: Grilo, 1988:187-212; 1994-1995: 89-156.

Notes: *Estimated population

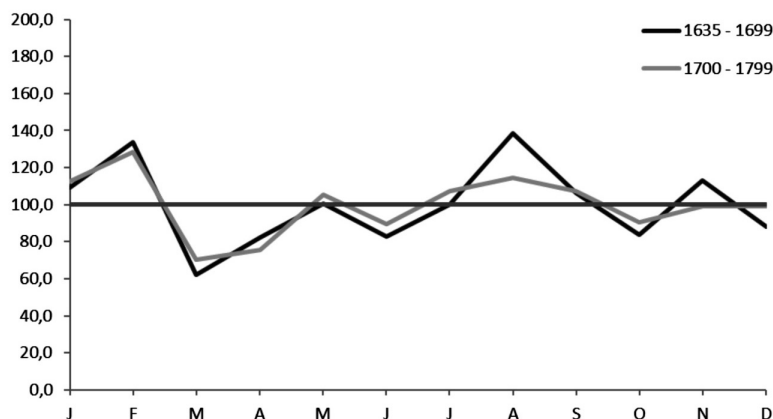
As indicated, the average household size varied considerably in each community, with Divor showing the highest average size. In fact, this was the rural region with the largest estates, where a considerable number of *familiars* of the Inquisition lived, and where the slaves they owned and their servants were included in the households.

3.2. Seasonal variation in marriages

Throughout the Old European demographic system, the season and the month of the year chosen for marriage were determined by a number of factors such as religious constraints, which discouraged wedding celebrations during Lent and Advent (Guilhaume & Poussou, 1970). In rural communities, this choice also depended on when agricultural tasks were performed, pushing marriage celebrations into the months of lower activity. Furthermore, the occurrence of migratory flows involving predominantly the male population was another factor determining the seasonality of marriages (Amorim, 1987; Kussmaul, 1990).

The indices of marriage seasonality were calculated according to the method proposed by Henry (1976), in order to detect any discrepancies between behaviour in urban and rural environments, taking into account two century-long periods, chosen in view of the start dates of the marriage records in each of the parishes.

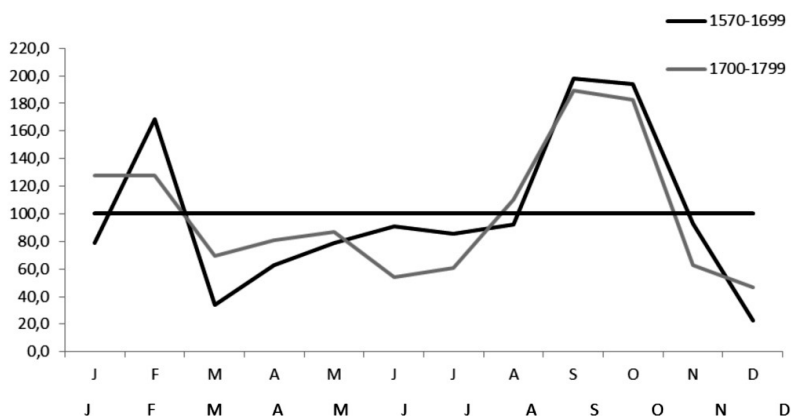
FIGURE 4
Seasonal variation in marriages in Santo Antão



Sources: Santo Antão data sets.

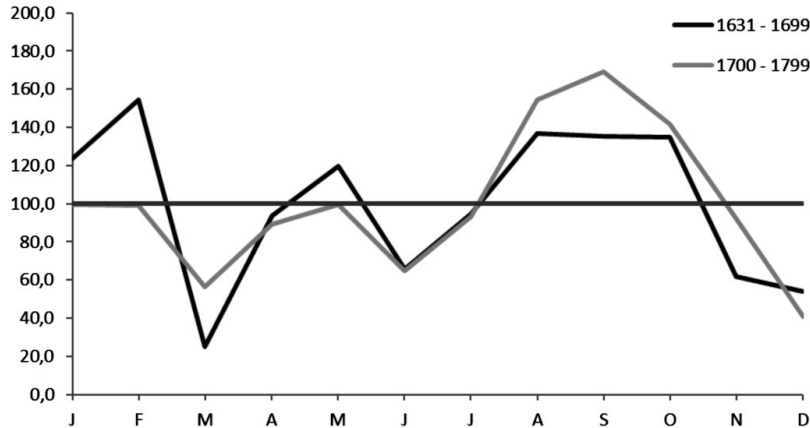
In Santo Antão (Figure 4), the periods of abstinence during Lent and Advent stipulated by ecclesiastical rules were always observed, resulting in a rise in seasonality during the months of February and November. Throughout the 17th century, the month of August corresponded to the highest seasonality, falling during the 18th century as a result of a more homogenous distribution, in favour of the months of May and July.

FIGURE 5
Seasonal variation in marriages in Divor



Sources: Divor data sets.

FIGURE 6
Seasonal variation in marriages in Selmes



Sources: Selmes data sets.

In rural parishes (Figure 5 and Figure 6), the ecclesiastical interdictions with regard to Lent and Advent were strictly observed, explaining the sharp rise in the indices of seasonality in February, similarly to the cases found in the urban area. On the contrary, the highest seasonality in both periods occurred in September and October and, in the case of Selmes, also in August. The months of June, July and November stand out due to a significant reduction in the number of marriages. In fact, these seasons correspond to times of intense agricultural activity related to cereal harvests at the start of summer, and to planting wheat, rye and barley, from October onwards.

The rural communities of the North of Portugal, reconstituted according to the same methodological procedures, revealed a divergent seasonal pattern. Indeed, for identical time periods, we found a lower number of marriages in September and October, both in Guimarães and Trás-os-Montes (Amorim, 1987), as well as in several parishes in the northwest of the country closer to the coast and to the Spanish border, such as Gontinhães (Rego, 2013: 174-176), Santa Eulália (Brettell, 1986: 137) and Romarigães (Santos, 1999: 121-124). Seasonal migration flows of varying sizes contributed to these regional differences. In the entire Northern region the active male population migrated in different directions, within the country and across the border, during the harvest season, which accounts for the low number of marriages during those times. In contrast, the Alentejo was an

important hub with an influx of workers during the summer months and early autumn, taking in workers from all over the country.

3.3. Age at first marriage

The age at first marriage is one of the most relevant indicators of nuptiality, playing a determinant role in the population dynamics of preindustrial European societies (Hajnal, 1965; Flinn, 1981) due to its impact on fertility rates and family size.

We calculated the mean age at first marriage for these communities based on a sample of men and women with known birth and marriage dates, not including consequently individuals born outside the parishes.

The results obtained for the three periods (Table 2) reveal a pattern of late marriage for men and a relatively early marriage for women, as well as a tendency for a gradual rise in the mean ages at first marriage both for men and women. In Santo Antão and Selmes, marriage always occurred earlier for males than in Divor, where average ages were considerably higher. As regards women, the evolution of the respective figures tends to be more homogenous and presents less time variations.

TABLE 2
Mean age at first marriage, by gender and period

<i>Marriage periods</i>	<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Age</i>
<i>Santo Antão (urban parish)</i>				
1680-1699	41	25.1	82	23.3
1700-1749	117	26.5	204	22.8
1750-1799	170	27.2	254	23.9
<i>Divor (rural parish)</i>				
1620-1699	37	27.6	64	21.8
1700-1749	19	30.3	43	23.4
1750-1799	27	27.1	41	24.1
<i>Selmes (rural parish)</i>				
1680-1699	17	24.9	22	20.4
1700-1749	66	26.5	119	22.3
1750-1799	134	26.6	190	22.1

Sources: Santo Antão, Divor and Selmes data sets.

Notes: Partners marrying for the first time and aged under 50.

Taking into account the periods established for each of the parishes according to the start dates of the marriage records, we found significant variations in the difference between mean ages for both genders. In the urban area, this difference corresponded to the lowest figure during the last two decades of the 17th century (1.8 years), whereas the first half of the 18th century showed the highest difference (3.7 years).

In the rural parishes, the difference in age between men and women was always higher. In Divor, it was 5.8 years between 1620 and 1699, increasing to 6.9 years between 1700 and 1749, as a result of a sharp rise in the average age of men. In the second half of the century, a minimum value of 3 years was recorded, resulting from a fall in the age at marriage for men (to 27.1 years) and the simultaneous rise in the women's age (up to 24.1 years). In Selmes, the difference between ages consistently stood at around 4.5 years, mainly due to the lower marriage age for women.

This pattern confirms what had already been detected in other rural communities in the South of Portugal in the 18th century (Rowland, 1988; Pinto, 1996; Marques, 1999), contrasting with the prevalent matrimonial system in the north of the country, characterised by late marriage for both genders (Amorim, 1980; Amorim, 1987). In this geographical setting, the northwest region comprised a specific subsystem where the age of women at first marriage tended to be close to or even higher than that of their spouses in some periods (Brettell, 1986; Santos, 1999; Rego, 2013). This behaviour was also common in the rural communities of the neighbouring Spanish region of Galicia (Pérez Garcia, 1979: 114-116; Ferreiro, 1985: 422), reflecting the close affinities on both sides of the border.

Distinctive factors of a cultural and socioeconomic nature contributed to these deviations in Portugal, associated with the land ownership systems (small-sized properties in the North and large properties in the South), the rules of family residence (patrilocal in the North and neolocal in the South) or to regionally divergent hereditary practices. In the northern region, families attempted to avoid the legal system associated to equal inheritance, by delaying the distribution of small property among the heirs. They would rather favour one of the latter by giving them the *third* available (Durães, 1987; Durães, 2009), thus avoiding excessive parcelling of the land. On the contrary, large farmsteads in the southern region excluded

the majority of the population, reducing consequently obstacles to marriage at a young age.

In urban areas, these factors would have played a more minor role in marriage, but long-term micro-analytical studies which would help obtain conclusive comparative results are still very scarce. One pioneering paper, based on the reconstitution of urban and rural parishes in Guimarães (Amorim, 2013: 92-95) revealed significant deviations in the marriage behaviours observed in each area. In the urban zone, men married about 2 years later than women, although this difference practically ceased to exist between 1740 and 1759. Although the rural area revealed less accentuated differences, the ages did tend to be higher in both genders. Indeed, the average age of women was higher than that of men between 1700 and 1759, and again in the mid-18th century.

In the region of Évora, the differences between urban and rural environments were less in evidence, as the women had consistently lower marriage ages in all of these contexts and it was the later marriage age of men that determined the large divergences that occurred in rural areas.

3.4. The spouse selection model

The analysis of marital mobility and of how this changed over time serves to evaluate the degree of openness of the populations to the outside, with direct implications on the structure of kinship and the process of transmission of family heritage. In this approach, we considered the information on the bride and groom's place of birth available in the demographic databases, involving a total of 7,026 marriages in Santo Antão, Divor and Selmes, corresponding to 66.5%, 14% and 19.5%, respectively (Table 3).

We found rather high rates of exogamous marriages in Santo Antão and Divor. In contrast, Selmes stands out with the highest percentage of endogamous marriages in any of the analysed periods.

Until the end of the 17th century, 32.1% of the marriages that took place in the urban area involved at least one spouse from outside the parish, while in Divor the percentage came to 32.6%, more than double the figure observed in Selmes (13.7%). Although marital mobility in urban environments is not surprising, the differences in behaviour

TABLE 3
Endogamous and exogamous unions (percentages), 1570-1799

<i>Santo Antão (urban parish)</i>						
<i>Periods of marriage</i>	<i>Total number of marriages</i>	<i>Endogamous unions (both from the parish)</i>	<i>Exogamous unions</i>			
			<i>All exogamous unions</i>	<i>Male Outsider</i>	<i>Female Outsider</i>	<i>Both Outsiders</i>
		%	%	%	%	%
1635-1699	1613	67.9	32.1	12.3	5.1	14.7
1700-1749	1601	14.9	85.1	18.0	15.9	51.2
1750-1799	1456	10.2	89.8	21.5	15.6	52.7
<i>Divor (rural parish)</i>						
<i>Periods of marriage</i>	<i>Total number of marriages</i>	<i>Endogamous unions (both from the parish)</i>	<i>Exogamous unions</i>			
			<i>All exogamous unions</i>	<i>Male Outsider</i>	<i>Female Outsider</i>	<i>Both Outsiders</i>
		%	%	%	%	%
1570-1699	519	67.4	32.6	17.5	9.4	5.6
1700-1749	264	26.8	73.2	35.2	14.6	23.5
1750-1799	202	20.8	79.2	30.7	17.8	30.7
<i>Selmes (rural parish)</i>						
<i>Periods of marriage</i>	<i>Total number of marriages</i>	<i>Endogamous unions (both from the parish)</i>	<i>Exogamous unions</i>			
			<i>All exogamous unions</i>	<i>Male outsider</i>	<i>Female Outsider</i>	<i>Both Outsiders</i>
		%	%	%	%	%
1631-1699	608	86.3	13.7	8.6	2.8	2.3
1700-1749	388	40.5	59.5	30.7	13.7	15.2
1750-1799	375	47.5	52.5	25.9	17.2	9.6

Sources: Santo Antão, Divor and Selmes data sets.

found in rural areas seems mainly related to the distance separating them from the capital of the municipality and the social and economic dynamics of the regions where they were located. Both Divor's proximity to the city of Évora, as well as the cyclical occurrence of medium and long-distance seasonal migration involving agricultural workers who would travel to large estates during the planting and harvesting seasons, would have favoured contacts between men and women and led to future marital ties. On the other hand, the geographical

isolation of Selmes was mainly a result of its greater distance from the city of Beja, the main urban hub in the region and the capital of the municipality that community belonged to.

These same trends were maintained throughout the 18th century, although there was a sharp increase in the rates of exogamy, reaching 85.1% between 1700/1749 and 89.8% between 1750/1799 in Santo Antão. These values correspond not only to the intense mobility between the different communities in the city, but also to the temporary passage of many individuals who lived there or even started a family there.

The percentages of exogamic marriages also registered a sharp rise in Divor, reaching 73.2% between 1700 and 1749, and 79.2% between 1750 and 1799. This strong marital mobility is undoubtedly related to the presence of local elites in this parish, particularly the *familiares* of the Holy Office, whose marriage strategies were extremely selective. They implied mobilising a wide network of influences aimed at increasing heritages and maintaining social status in descendant generations.

In the case of Selmes, although the levels of exogamy were always far lower than those of Divor and Santo Antão, they rose significantly to 59.5% and 52.5% in the first and second halves of the century, respectively, achieving similar percentages as those calculated for identical periods in Évoramonte (Marques, 1999: 102-103).

Until the end of the 18th century, the levels of endogamy were always very high in the majority of the northern rural communities (Amorim, 1987: 366; Santos, 1999:145-147; Rego, 2013:104-109), particularly for women whose reduced marital mobility was also detected in some urban areas (Amorim, 1987: 365).

3.5. Marriage strategies in a privileged social group: the *familiares* of the Holy Office

3.5.1. Socioeconomic characterisation of the *familiares*

The *familiares* of the Holy Office were usually individuals related to local elites wielding economic, political and religious power. Symbolically, they were considered old Christians of pure blood, a status that was greatly desired by the people under the Old Regime. To be a *familiar* or to possess another position in the hierarchy of the Holy Office's Tribunal, boosted the individuals' ascendant social

mobility, as several studies have shown for other places in the Alentejo, such as Arraiolos (Lopes, 2013a) or Beja (Olival, 2010), as well as for Portuguese territories in the empire (Calainho, 1992; Monteiro, 2015; Rodrigues, 2011). Similar situations were also found in Spain (Ortega Gómez, 2013; Torres Arce, 2006; Valiente, 2013: 333-348).

In the three locations under analysis, 110 *familiares* who started families in Santo Antão, Divor and Selmes were identified in the demographic databases (Table 4). Although *familiares* already lived in these communities in the first quarter of the 17th century, it was only possible to identify them as starting families in Évora after 1625. In the parish of Selmes, this would only occur during the 18th century, a time which coincided with an exponential growth in the number of *familiares*, as the historiography on this matter has documented (Torres, 1994).

Considering the numbers of individuals residing in the municipalities of Évora and Beja once they completed their pure blood process and were appointed to their position, there is a significant concentration in the municipality of Évora, explained by the fact that this was one of the most important university cities in the country at the time, as well as being the seat of the Tribunal of the Inquisition and of the Diocese. It was, thus, a place that attracted people from several areas in the kingdom, as well as from various social levels.

TABLE 4

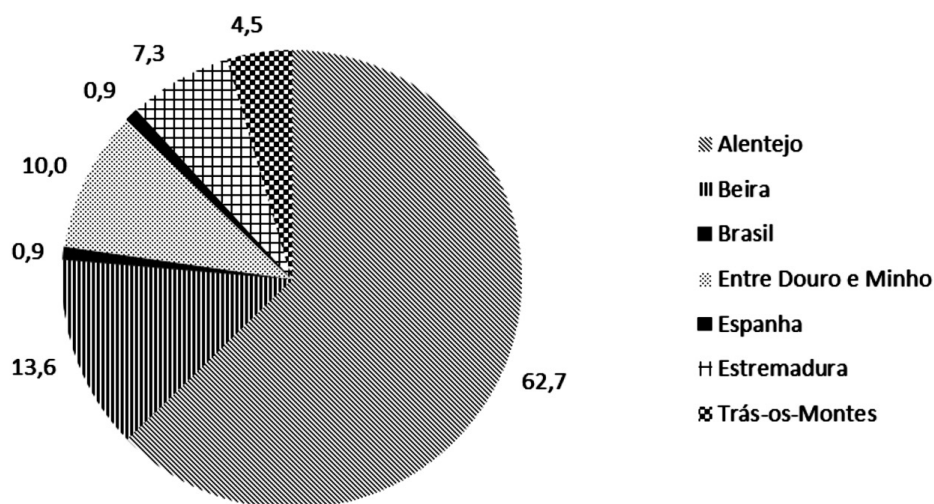
Familiares identified in Santo Antão, Divor and Selmes and those residing in the municipalities of Évora and Beja, 1600-1799

Periods	Familiars identified in the demographic databases			Évora (municipality)	Beja (municipality)
	Évora		Beja		
	Santo Antão	Divor	Selmes		
1600-1624	-	-	-	33	4
1625-1649	6	1	-	42	8
1650-1674	9	1	-	55	12
1675-1699	11	3	-	76	12
1700-1724	10	3	-	70	13
1725-1749	33	2	2	107	15
1750-1774	24	3	-	121	52
1775-1799	2	-	-	10	9
TOTAL	95	13	2	496	125

Sources: ANTT, *Habilitações do Santo Ofício*; ANTT, *Inquirição de Évora, livros de provisões e juramentos*.

As expected, it was in the urban parish of Santo Antão that the highest number of *familiares* was found (86.4%), followed by Divor (11.8%) and finally Selmes with an insignificant value (1.8%). As we will see, this preference for the parish of Santo Antão was not random and can in part be explained by the city's geography itself and the concentration of economic activities in this urban parish (Lopes, 2013b).

FIGURE 7

Place of birth of the *familiares*, by province and country

Sources: ANTT, *Habilitações do Santo Ofício*; ANTT, *Inquirição de Évora, livros de provisões e juramentos*; Santo Antão, Divor and Selmes data sets.

The majority of these individuals were born in the different Portuguese provinces, while a small number came from other countries (Figure 7).

The Alentejo province was the birthplace of 62.7% of the *familiares* and most of these were from the municipality of Évora. The adjoining province of Beira was the birthplace of 13.6%, followed, in decreasing order, by the provinces of Entre Douro e Minho (10%), Estremadura (7.3%) and Trás-os-Montes (4.5%).

In order to provide a social and economic characterisation of these individuals, we organised the different attributes referred to in the “pure blood” processes into categories (Table 5).

TABLE 5
Attributes of *familiares* according to categories

Sector or Activity ⁷	Number of <i>familiares</i> (cumulative) ⁸			Total	%
	Santo Antão	Divor	Selmes		
Artisans	10			10	6.3
Church	2			2	1.3
Colleges	7			7	4.4
Commercial activities	38			38	23.8
Farming	5	11	1	17	10.6
Government of the res publica	19			19	11.9
Health	9			9	5.6
Household: government and everyday life	1			1	0.6
Liberal arts	3			3	1.9
Living off their own resources	20	1	2	23	14.4
Militia	8			8	5.0
Without employment	1			1	0.6
Without employment – noblemen	21			21	13.0
No information	1			1	0.6
TOTAL	145	12	3	153	100

Sources: ANTT, *Habilitações do Santo Ofício*; ANTT, *Inquirição de Évora, livros de provisões e juramentos*.

As the vast majority of *familiares* lived in Santo Antão (94.8%), it is understandable that most of their attributes refer to occupations or positions related to urban society. Therefore, the category corresponding to commercial activities stands out, accounting for 23.8% of the references. This is followed by 14.4% of individuals belonging to the “Living off their own resources” category, without defined employment and whose families lived off their estate and their income. This was the case of the *familiar*, Pedro Caeiro de Abreu Caldeira, who often served as an appointed officer of the Évora Municipal Council⁹.

Évora also had traits of a “noble municipality”, which meant that the nobility who lived there was among the most important in the kingdom (Monteiro, 1997). It is in this context that the 13% of the attributes

⁷ Categories developed by Fernanda Olival in the project PTDC/HIS-HIS/118227/2010 – *Grupos intermédios em Portugal e no Império Português: as familiaturas do Santo Ofício (c. 1570-1773)*.

⁸ The same person can appear under more than one category.

⁹ «Lista dos vereadores da Câmara de Évora (1526-1831)» (1960), *A Cidade de Évora*, 43-44, pp 205-206.

that include the “Without employment – noblemen” category should be understood. Despite their high social status, these individuals were not impervious to the distinction that belonging to the Holy Office would afford them and, to this end, sought to increase the number of titles they already possessed (for example, royal charters and decorations from the Order of Christ) with those granted by the Inquisition. This was the case with Luís Lobo da Gama, a *familiar* since 1669, who was both a nobleman of the Royal House and lived off his inheritances and the rank that his father and paternal grandfather had also held¹⁰.

The “Government of the *res publica*” category is also one of the most relevant in Santo Antão, corresponding to 11.9% of the attributes, followed by “Artisans” (6.3%) and “Militia” (5%).

Although Évora was an important university city, no connections to the university were identified other than students, representing 4.4%. This low percentage reveals particularly the ascendant social mobility that affected this social group, as nineteen students were identified in a sample of *familiares* residing there in the first half of the 18th century, for a shorter timeframe than the period being analysed here (Lopes, 2013b: 296-299). In effect, students also sought positions as *familiares*, but many of them returned to their origins after concluding their degree or formed their family elsewhere, while others were set on an ecclesiastical career.

If we shift our attention to the rural space, we find a different situation. The *familiares* residing in rural environments were mainly engaged in activities related to agriculture. They were farmers who assumed the position of “leaders” in their parishes and belonged to local elites who owned lands and had the financial means to cultivate them. It should be noted that, from the end of the 17th century, «[...] the estates were explored on the basis of tenant contracts and dedicated to the production of commercialised agriculture, mostly the cultivation of cereals and livestock» (Costa, *et al.*, 2011: 223). See the example of the *familiar* João Perdigão Galego who, in 1747, owned four estates and an olive plantation¹¹. The fact that one individual worked on several parcels of land, sometimes in different parishes, was commonplace in the Alentejo during the Old Regime (Monteiro, 2010: 81-86). These individuals, who travelled to different areas and therefore developed

10 ANTT, *Habilitações do Santo Ofício, Luís*, Mç. 4, doc. 117.

11 ANTT, *Habilitações do Santo Ofício, João*, Mç. 87, doc. 1517, pp. 38-68.

several types of interpersonal relationships, sought the confirmation of their social importance by obtaining the status of *familiar* of the Holy Office. In return, the Inquisition was able to deepen its roots at local level. Furthermore, from 1723 onward, being a “farmer” was no longer considered a mechanical occupation in the Military Orders, another of the pillars sustaining the pure blood laws (Olival, 2001: 362).

In our sample, “Farming” corresponds to 10.6% of these individuals, concentrated mainly in Divor, where the first to reach the position of *familiar* in 1657 was José Rodrigues Gião¹², descended from a line of men with the same profession. Only two identical cases were detected in Selmes, individuals who were born and resided in that parish and started their families there.

3.5.2. Marriage strategies and social reproduction

The social reproduction of the family is necessarily associated with the marriage strategies adopted by its members, together with other factors such as biological reproduction, the challenges of the environment, and individual responses to the different circumstances (Fernández Cortizo, 1991; Pérez Álvarez, 2004; Pérez García, 2004; Soria Mesa, 2010; Girón Pascual, 2013).

The following analysis seeks to cast light on the processes that were developed by individuals of the highest social strata, both in urban and in rural environments, in order to guarantee or increase their wealth by virtue of a marriage which would allow them to keep their original social status. For the sake of comparison, see the case of one of the officers who worked in the Inquisition’s courts – the *bailiff* (Lopes, 2011). This position allowed individuals who were members of the elites where they resided, especially the rural ones, to rise socially, when they came to live in Évora, due to their inquisitorial position.

An analysis of the mean age at first marriage of the *familiares* of the Holy Office in Santo Antão and Divor between 1638 and 1770 (Table 6) shows that these marriages took place at a very late stage for men when compared to the records for the general population of this urban parish during an identical period. With regard to their wives, the differences found are not as marked, maintaining the trend towards fairly early marriage, around the age of 24, on average.

12 ANTT, *Habilitações do Santo Ofício*, José, Mç. 1, doc. 18.

TABLE 6
Mean age at first marriage by gender

Period of marriage	Men		Women	
	N	Age	N	Age
1638-1770	33	30.3	29	24.0

Sources: Santo Antão, Divor and Selmes data sets.

Notes: Partners marrying for the first time and aged under 50.

The late marriages in this specific social group shows the considerable influence of sociocultural aspects related to access to land ownership, also verified in other regions of Portuguese mainland and island territories (Brettell, 1986; Amorim, 1987; Santos, 2008; Amorim & Santos, 2009; Rego, 2013). Without neglecting the incidence of geographical mobility, which may have temporarily caused these individuals to move away from the parishes where they were born, the capacity of noble families living in towns or their wealthy rural counterparts was decisive in seeking out potential homogamous matrimonial alliances. Thus, their descendants would obtain advantages through a union that guaranteed their original social and economic condition and, whenever possible, would merge estates acquired or to be acquired by virtue of succession. This was often a slow procedure, as it implied activating networks of influence that could extend far beyond the geographical limits of the parish.

In this context, we decided to calculate the rates of endogamous unions for the entire municipality (Table 7), which shows that only 42.1% of marriages of the *familiares* of the Holy Office involved spouses who were born in a parish of Évora.

TABLE 7
Endogamous and exogamous unions (percentages)

Periods of marriage	Total number of marriages	Endogamous unions (both from the municipality)	Exogamous unions			
			All exogamous unions	Male outsider	Female Outsider	Both Outsiders
		%	%	%	%	%
1638-1770	110	42.1	57.9	35.1	7.0	15.8

Sources: Santo Antão and Divor data sets.

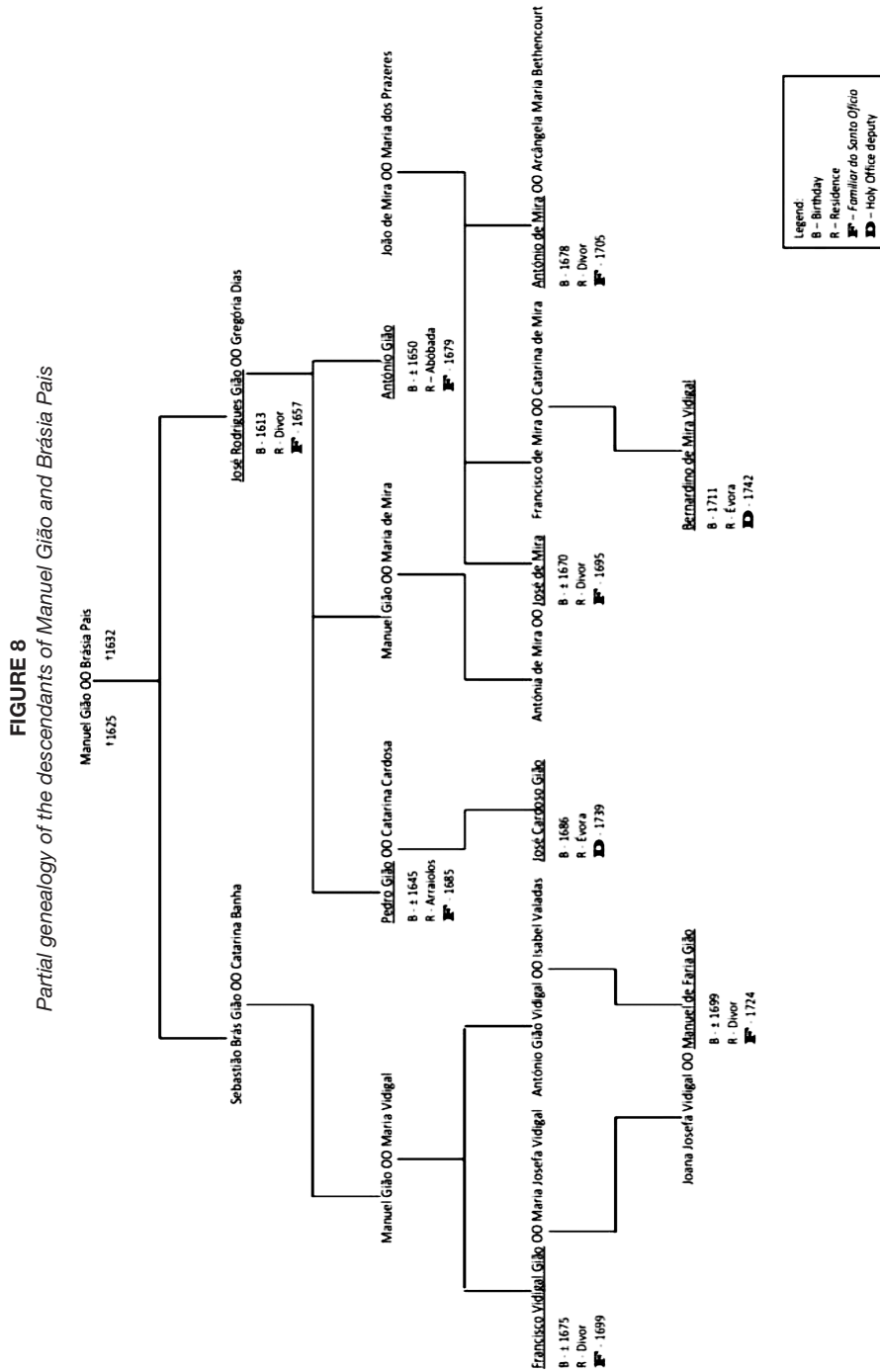
The percentage of exogamous unions shows that long-distance marital mobility was much higher among males, with 35.1% of men born outside the municipality marrying women who were born in this municipality, while only 7% of women revealed similar mobility. On the other hand, the 15.8% of marriages in which both spouses were born in other municipalities is also very meaningful, a sign of intense population flows in the Alentejo region and simultaneously the strong pull of the city of Évora.

By following the individual and genealogical paths of a family of rural landowners whose roots were in Divor (Figure 8), it is possible to summarise some of the mechanisms that ensured the social reproduction of the descendants of Manuel Gião and Brásia Pais over four generations, where nine individuals connected to the Tribunal of the Inquisition were identified between 1657 and 1742. While the first seven were *familiares* of the Holy Office, the last two, José Cardoso Gião and Bernardino de Mira Vidigal, were deputies. Although they did not have children due to their ecclesiastical position, they benefited from the social station of their parents to reach higher ranks in the Inquisition's hierarchy. It was thus a means of enhancing the social capital accumulated by their ascendants, a common strategy that the historiography on the *familiares* has identified (Lopes, 2013a; Ortega Gómez, 2013).

This family's circle of influence extended to adjoining municipalities, as can be seen from the life of Pedro Gião, the son of José Rodrigues Gião, who was the first *familiar* to be identified in Divor. In 1685, he lived with his wife Catarina Cardoso in Arraiolos, a border municipality located around 10 km away, and was a wealthy nobleman and farmer¹³.

The existence of consanguineous marriages could have been an alternative strategy for preserving or increasing the family lands, ensuring, as far as possible, the prestige brought by the positions in the Holy Office. This was the case with the *familiar*, Manuel de Faria Gião, who married a cousin – Joana Josefa Vidigal – the daughter of his uncle, Francisco Vidigal Gião, who was also a *familiar* of the Holy Office. We should also mention that the Inquisition forced both the wives of *familiares*, when they were already married, and their future wives, to undergo the process of pure blood inquiry. If a *familiar* married without the permission of the Tribunal and his wife's origins were considered "impure", he would lose his *familiar* licence, as well as the symbolic power associated with the inquisitorial position.

13 ANTT, *Habilitações do Santo Ofício, Pedro*, Mç. 8, doc. 229.



Sources: Santo Antão and Divor data sets; ANTT, *Habilitações do Santo Ofício*.

Figure 9 shows the genealogical tree of a family belonging to the nobility of Évora and living in the parish of Santo Antão. Over several generations, members of this family held prominent positions in local institutions, such as the government of the *res publica*.

As was the case in Divor with rural landowners, marriage strategies involved looking for a bride belonging to local elite families in other areas, thus ensuring the continued status of the next generation. However, this selection involved searching a wider geographical area, as can be seen from birthplaces in the towns of Cano or Moura, situated respectively 45 km and 62 km from Évora, although still within the boundaries of the Alentejo province. This selection process also involved choosing a bride whose family included representatives of the Holy Office. This situation was quite common, as documented in the municipality of Arraiolos, located 20 km from Évora, thus, contiguous to the space under analysis (Lopes, 2013a).

João de Macedo e Sequeira Reimão was the last descendant to be appointed to the position of *familiar*¹⁴, in 1749, while the first had been Francisco de Macedo de Sequeira¹⁵, in 1651. He married a woman from the town of Borba, located around 47 km away, Bárbara Isabel Vila Lobos Baioa, the daughter of a *familiar* of the Inquisition based in that municipality, who was also the granddaughter of another two *familiares*, one from that same town and another born in Castro Verde, further south in this region.

We can therefore conclude that this was a recurring strategy, both in rural and urban areas, in order to ensure the family estates, accrued over generations, were maintained or expanded. In rural parishes, such family estates were directly associated with land ownership, while in urban settings it would imply the additional prestige associated to positions held in local institutions.

14 ANTT, *Habilitações do Santo Ofício, João*, Mç. 91, doc. 1556.

15 ANTT, *Habilitações do Santo Ofício, Francisco*, Mç. 7, doc. 272.

FIGURE 9
Partial genealogy of the ancestors of João de Sequeira Reimão and of his wife Bárbara I. V. L. Baioa



Sources: ANTT, Habilitações do Santo Ofício.

FINAL REMARKS

This study was based on the “parish reconstitution methodology” and intended to analyse the marriage strategies practiced in communities of southern Portugal in the 17th and 18th centuries. As the aim was to develop micro-approaches, demographic and genealogical databases were built, for an urban parish (Santo Antão) and two rural parishes (Divor and Selmes) in the Alentejo region. The basic sources employed were the birth and marriage parish registers. The information collected was organised into family records through systematic nominative linkage. So as to identify marriage strategies of a specific, privileged social group —the *familiares* of the Holy Office—, the processes of genealogical investigation and ‘pure blood’ inquiry conducted by the Portuguese Inquisition into the *familiares* served as our secondary sources. This information was linked with the family records included in the original databases, and served to develop a differential analysis of the corresponding demographic behaviours.

Comparing the results obtained in this study with those acquired for a vast number of parishes in Northern Portugal, reconstituted according to the same methodology for identical historical timeframes, we found there were great regional contrasts in terms of seasonality and the mean ages at first marriage, as well as in the spatial model regarding the selection of a spouse. In the rural parishes of the North, a model of seasonal marriage prevailed, determined by the seasonality of the migratory flows of the male working population, which increased significantly during the harvest season in different directions, within the country and across the border, contributing to a low number of weddings in the months of September and October. The analyses developed for a representative set of populations in that same region served to establish a pattern of late marriage for both genders. In this geographical setting, the northwest region comprised a specific subsystem where the age of women at first marriage tended to be close to or even higher than that of their spouses in some periods. Until the end of the 18th century, the levels of endogamy were always very high in the majority of the northern rural communities, particularly for women whose reduced marital mobility was also detected in some urban areas.

Although the sample of reconstituted parishes for the South of Portugal is still very small and the results cannot be used to make broader generalisations at regional level, we can conclude that the marriage behaviours found in Santo Antão, Divor and Selmes correspond to a distinct pattern that differs from that which characterises the North. In a setting of relative differentiation between urban and rural areas, the seasonal distribution of marriages had high indices in the months of September and October in the latter region, whereas the indices in June, July, and November were very low. These months correspond to times of intense agricultural activity related to cereal harvests at the start of summer, and to planting wheat, rye and barley, from October onwards. An analysis of the mean age at first marriage revealed the prevalence of late marriage for men and a relatively early marriage for women, as well as a tendency for a gradual rise in the mean ages at first marriage both for men and women. In Santo Antão and Selmes, marriage always occurred earlier for males than in Divor, where average ages were considerably higher. Furthermore, even though the percentage of endogamous marriages was relatively high in all the communities throughout the 17th century, from 1700 onward, marital mobility grew steeply not only in the urban area but also in Divor. This fact is undoubtedly related to the presence of local elites in these parishes, particularly the *familiars* of the Holy Office, whose marriage strategies were extremely selective.

The behaviour of this privileged social group diverge significantly from those of the urban population in general. Very late marriage for men associated to intense, long-distance marital mobility, reflect the considerable influence of sociocultural aspects related to access to land ownership, including the capacity of noble families living in towns or their wealthy rural counterparts in seeking out potential homogamous matrimonial alliances. Thus, their descendants would obtain advantages through a union that guaranteed their original social and economic condition and, whenever possible, would merge estates acquired or to be acquired by virtue of succession. Tracking the individual and genealogical life paths of some *familiars*, we can conclude that consanguineous marriages could have been an alternative strategy for preserving or increasing the family lands, ensuring, as far as possible, the prestige brought by the positions in the Holy Office.

The results of this research are the starting point for a more comprehensive project, aimed at broadening the sample to a represen-

tative set of rural and urban areas in Alentejo. Thus, we also intend to analyse the impact that several marriage indicators may have had on fertility, on the average size of families and on population growth.

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