

Viella Historical Research

Social Mobility in Medieval Italy (1100-1500)

edited by
Sandro Carocci and Isabella Lazzarini

viella

Copyright © 2018- Viella s.r.l.
All rights reserved
First edition: January 2018
ISBN 978-88-6728-820-5

This volume has been published with fundings from the Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca (PRIN 2012: La mobilità sociale nel medioevo italiano) and from the Department of History, Humanities and Society of the University of Rome Tor Vergata.



viella

libreria editrice

via delle Alpi, 32

I-00198 ROMA

tel. 06 84 17 758

fax 06 85 35 39 60

www.viella.it

Contents

SANDRO CAROCCI - ISABELLA LAZZARINI Introduction	9
1. <i>Frameworks</i>	
CHRISTOPHER DYER Social Mobility in Medieval England	23
FRANÇOIS MENANT La mobilité sociale dans la France médiévale et son historiographie	45
PIERRE MONNET La mobilité sociale dans les villes de l'Empire germanique à la fin du Moyen Age	61
FREDERIK BUYLAERT - SAM GEENS Social Mobility in the Medieval Low Countries (1100-1600)	77
DAVID IGUAL LUIS The Christian Kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula (1100-1500): Concepts, Facts and Problems Concerning Social Mobility	101
2. <i>Surveys</i>	
SANDRO CAROCCI Italian Church and Social Mobility (1200-1500)	121
ANDREA GAMBERINI Officialdom in the Early Renaissance State. A Channel of Social Mobility? Hints from the Case of Lombardy under the Visconti and the Sforza	139

GIUSEPPE PETRALIA	
Social, Economic and Political Upward Mobilities. On Communal Italy in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries	151
SIMONE M. COLLAVINI	
Mobility and Lordship	171
ISABELLA LAZZARINI	
Italian Diplomacy: an Open Social Field (1350-1520 ca.)	185
SERGIO TOGNETTI	
Businessmen and Social Mobility in Late Medieval Italy	199
SERENA FERENTE	
Women, Lifecycles, and Social Mobility in Late Medieval Italy	217
GIULIANO MILANI	
Cacciaguida as Sociologist. Representations and Social Change in the Italian Communes	229
 3. <i>Themes</i>	
FRANCESCO SENATORE - PIERLUIGI TERENCE	
Aspects of Social Mobility in the Towns of the Kingdom of Naples (1300-1500)	247
BIANCA DE DIVITIIS	
Architecture and Social Mobility: New Approches to the Southern Renaissance	263
ALESSANDRO SILVESTRI	
Social Mobility in Late Medieval Sicily: Continuity and Change	285
OLIVETTA SCHENA	
Aspects of Social Mobility in the Kingdom of Sardinia (1300-1500)	303
MASSIMO DELLA MISERICORDIA	
Common Goods in the Flow of Social Mobility. <i>Res</i> , Values, and Distinction in Rural Environments (1200-1600)	319
MARIA ELENA CORTESE	
Rural <i>Milites</i> in Central and Northern Italy between Local Elites and Aristocracy (1100-1300)	335

ALMA POLONI	
Italian Communal Cities and the Thirteenth-Century Commercial Revolution: Economic Change, Social Mobility, and Cultural Models	353
LORENZO TANZINI	
Guilds of Notaries and Lawyers in Communal Italy (1200-1500). Institutions, Social Contexts, and Policies	373
JEAN-CLAUDE MAIRE VIGUEUR	
Conclusions	391
Index	401

FRANCESCO SENATORE - PIERLUIGI TEREZI

Aspects of Social Mobility in the Towns of the Kingdom of Naples (1300-1500)*

1. *Introduction*

Social mobility for citizens of the Kingdom of Naples in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was possible on different levels. Being from one of the kingdom's towns opened up "national", regional and local spaces for mobility either in the administrative apparatus or via routes such as commerce, the military, etc. Bringing clarity to this complexity is no easy task. In most places the sources are inconstant and the number of case studies is insufficient for the construction of a synthetic framework.

Furthermore, any study of themes such as social mobility, pre-eminence or elites has to take into account a consolidated tradition that took root in the sixteenth century, after which it became increasingly clear that social pre-eminence was structured around the formal recognition – usually by the monarchy – of noble status. In this context, many noble families constructed not always reliable family histories and genealogies, with the tendency to backdate pre-eminence in order to demonstrate historical noble lineage.

It is on these profiles that many subsequent reconstructions have been based, resulting in the projection of a sixteenth-seventeenth century urban social framework on to the previous centuries, when the situation was actually very different. Some of the families were as yet neither noble nor pre-eminent, others were but then for various reasons either disappeared or were transformed and, generally speaking, urban society was much more fluid, with the closed ranks of classes not yet really defined. Despite this, the question of a formalised and titled nobility has been imprinted on the historical consciousness of the Mezzogiorno, especially in the case of Naples, which, for a number of reasons, has become the paradigm for the entire kingdom, right up to the last centuries of the Middle Ages.¹

These premises have been conditioning research into southern Italian urban society for a long time. More recent studies on a number of cities, however, have

*This essay is the fruit of the shared reflections of both authors. Sections 1 and 2 were written by Pierluigi Terenzi and sections 3 and 4 by Francesco Senatore.

1. For a problematic summary see Giuseppe Galasso, *Napoli capitale. Identità politica e identità cittadina. Studi e ricerche 1266-1860*, Naples, Electa, 1988.

shed light on the reality of urban social life prior to the sixteenth century, making it possible to perceive the fluidity mentioned above and to argue that the phenomena that took place in southern Italy were similar to those in other European cities. The accumulation of wealth opened new upward social mobility fronts (*militia*, university qualification, etc.), while social, political and ecclesiastical ties could contribute to social emergence, also through “ennobling” marriages, confraternity appointments, etc.

Another channel to be added to these was the king’s service, which offered the possibility of a career in the administrative apparatus of the kingdom culminating in the central magistratures and Court entourage, even though no actual *cursus honorum* existed. Some of these paths, both individual and family, have been studied profitably,² also because interest in these careers has been prevalent in historiography ever since the Modern Age, due to both the ready availability of sources and the “high up” starting point, at the heart of the kingdom’s political rule.

This study, however, concentrates on the local level. It will attempt to reconstruct the “autogenous” mobility of certain individuals and groups (in the broad sense) in an exclusively urban setting.³ Its aim is to pick out the channels and processes of social mobility in towns in order to grasp the characteristics and dynamics of social fluidity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, going beyond the historiographical tradition referred to above. The sources are sufficient for doing this, but not for constructing adequate prosopographies, apart from in a handful of cases. Only in a few cities, such as Naples, L’Aquila and Trani,⁴ have there been detailed and informative chronological prosopographic analyses, and the phenomena encountered in these cannot be extended to the whole kingdom, with its highly varied social configurations. These three cities, like others such as Capua, Barletta and Lecce, were extremely lively economically, politically and socially, and therefore their fluidity was highly accentuated. A typical difficulty arising in the analysis is the sudden emergence of people or families in certain contexts and in certain sources, such as in the acquisition of significant fiscal assets or the loan of large sums of money to the city or sovereign. These subjects appear to be already established socially, but their pre-eminence is not referred to in other coeval sources, which, moreover, are often too few for exhaustive verification.

2. See for example Giuliana Vitale, *Élite burocratica e famiglia. Dinamiche nobiliari e processi di costruzione statale nella Napoli angioino-aragonese*, Naples, Liguori, 2003; Serena Morelli, *Per conservare la pace. I Giustizieri del regno di Sicilia da Carlo I a Carlo II d’Angiò*, Naples, Liguori, 2012.

3. Sandro Carocci, “Introduzione: la mobilità sociale e la «congiuntura del 1300». Ipotesi, metodi d’indagine, storiografia”, in *La mobilità sociale nel medioevo*, ed. by Sandro Carocci, Rome, École française de Rome, 2010, pp. 1-37.

4. For example, Giuliana Vitale, “La formazione del patriziato urbano nel Mezzogiorno d’Italia: ricerche su Trani”, *Archivio storico per le province napoletane*, 19 (1980), pp. 99-175; Pierluigi Terenzi, “Forme di mobilità sociale all’Aquila alla fine del Medioevo”, in *La mobilità sociale nel Medioevo italiano. 1. Competenze, conoscenze e saperi tra professioni e ruoli sociali (secc. XII-XV)*, ed. by Lorenzo Tanzini and Sergio Tognetti, Rome, Viella, 2016, pp. 165-193.

Despite these difficulties, new research paths in the study of social mobility can be proposed, focusing in particular on aspects that can be related to a single field, namely, the institutions. The importance of the institutions in southern Italy's urban social history has already been stressed, but what also needs to be emphasised is that most of the available documentation is institutional too.⁵ In this study, the institutions will be considered in two ways: politically, by seeing how social structure was reflected in the citizen councils, and fiscally, by looking at the spaces opened by the farming out of some local revenue sources. In both cases, we shall verify both the possibilities for and processes of social mobility through institutional channels.

2. *Admission to the universitas nobilium*

In many towns in the Kingdom of Naples, the institutional bodies – government, councils and some of the more important magistratures – were divided up in different ways between two groups, nobles and *popolari*.⁶ In some cases, more and more frequently in the course of the fifteenth century, more complex divisions were created or consolidated, often into three groups, such as that of nobles, merchants and plebeians in Trani, Puglia (1466).⁷ Whatever the institutional dividing lines, the “social principle” remained the same: nobles on one side, non-nobles on the other. This is not to imply that urban societies were crystallised in the kingdom in the late Middle Ages. On the contrary, all the evidence in our possession points to the occurrence of important social changes and institutional experiments in that very period, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

In the urban centres, the social structure was more complex than the institutional organisation. As well as the “qualified strata” (nobles, *popolari* and their variants) there was also a more flexible hierarchy, with three tiers: *maiores*, *mediani*, *minores*. The nobles were all definitely *maiores*, but the rest of the population was divided up between the three groups, with the possibility of richer and more influential *popolari* being classed as *maiores*.⁸ This latter tier constituted a composite social stratum that may have corresponded to the city's political leadership, but the institutional organisation was not modelled on this pre-eminence. The council structures assumed more rigid forms, within which there could be space not only for representatives of that pre-eminence but also for less important social groups, families and people. Before the formal restriction of access to power came about in the early Modern

5. E. Igor Mineo, “States, Orders and Social Distinction”, in *The Italian Renaissance State*, ed. by Andrea Gamberini and Isabella Lazzarini, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 323-344.

6. For a discussion of this, see Giancarlo Vallone, “Riflessioni sull'ordinamento cittadino del Mezzogiorno continentale”, *Rivista internazionale di diritto comune*, 2 (1991), pp. 153-174.

7. This set-up could have been integrated with or replaced by divisions of a topographical nature; see Romolo Caggese, *Roberto d'Angiò e i suoi tempi*, Florence, Bemporad, 1922, vol. I, pp. 369-380.

8. Giuseppe Galasso, *Il Regno di Napoli*, I, *Il Mezzogiorno angioino e aragonese (1266-1494)*, Turin, Utet, 1992 (*Storia d'Italia*, XV/1), pp. 440-446.

Age, the institutions were wide open and, for this very reason, were used by some to obtain or sanction their ascent.

There was yet another form of organisation in society, acting alongside the social divisions and mirroring the institutional order. Nobles and *popolari* also constituted *universitates* and were thus both collective entities and separate juridical persons, with each citizen's membership based on their individual condition.⁹ Each *universitas* took decisions regarding its members, but these decisions affected the entire city. In several cases, the *universitates* declared themselves representatives of the whole community, especially when presenting petitions to the sovereign regarding such key questions as taxation.¹⁰

Which *universitas* one belonged to had social, fiscal and political implications. Members of the *universitas nobilium* were, in a certain sense, "certified" nobles. On a fiscal level, the two groups were taxed differently, as nobles benefited from exemptions and immunities not granted to *popolari*. Also, access to councils and offices was based in many cases on membership of one of the two *universitates*, from whose ranks there came the established quotas of governors, councillors and magistrates.

The discussion of the relationship between society and the institutions will be continued elsewhere. What we have ascertained so far is enough to open a window on the obscure world of urban social mobility in the Kingdom of Naples. It should be noted at the outset that, notwithstanding the fluidity of overlapping tiers and social hierarchies, the definition of the two groups – *nobili* and *popolari* – functioned as a resilient criterion for the organisation of society. It was on this basis, in fact, that society crystallised and the institutions "closed" in the sixteenth century. Whatever the social category, it was traced back to this bipartition and, whereas previously each group had its own physiognomy (e.g. merchants) that accompanied it in the other categories it belonged to (*maiores / mediani, nobili / popolari*), at the start of the Modern Age everybody was either *nobile* or *popolare*.

But before this definition the institutional structure was at the same time both sufficiently defined and sufficiently open to allow mobility between different groups and within the same group. Thus, certain phenomena in the institutional sphere could give us knowledge of certain channels and processes of local social mobility. Events in Bitonto and Barletta, two centres in what is now Puglia, lead one to reflect on some aspects of the link between the institutions and social mobility, namely: the criteria for and ways of access to the *universitas nobilium*; the relationship between institutional recognition, pre-eminence and social qualification; the role of family membership in social mobility and consolidation of status.

9. To others, in the Abruzzi, in 1362 there is the attestation of a "matricula popularium civitatis Adrie": Luigi Sorricchio, *Il Comune Atriano nel XIII e XIV secolo*, Atri, De Arcangelis, 1893, p. 360. On the *universitates*, see now E. Igor Mineo, "«Faire l'université». Délimitation de la communauté dans les villes de l'Italie méridionale (XIV^e-XV^e siècles)", in *Consensus et représentation*, ed. by Jean-Philippe Genet, Dominique Le Page and Olivier Mattéoni, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 2017, pp. 497-509.

10. Giovanni Vitolo, *L'Italia delle altre città. Un'immagine del Mezzogiorno medievale*, Naples, Liguori, 2014, pp. 128-130.

The town of Bitonto was directly subordinate to the monarchy, and here we can look at the social mobility of a small group of people via the institutions in the mid-fourteenth century. In July 1347 Queen Joanna I approved a citizens' request to carry out a fiscal census (*appretium*), separating *nobili* from *popolari*, for the payment of taxes to the Crown.¹¹ Twenty-two citizens appealed to the Queen because they wanted to be taxed as nobles but the *popolari* had included them in their ranks. To support their request, they pointed out that some of them were "*licterati*" and that others had been living as "*nobiliter*" for a long time, without carrying out any manual work or trade. The queen agreed, confirming the validity of their arguments and adding that noble customs were worth more than noble blood.

The twenty-two citizens thus gained official endorsement at an institutional level. The success of their petition depended on social ascent that had already occurred. The change of status was probably fairly recent, otherwise the *popolari* would have been unlikely to have tried to keep them in their fiscal group.¹² The important thing to note, however, is that this change was not determined by the monarchy. The monarchy simply acknowledged it, in response to a specific request from the people concerned for the Crown to uphold their rights. The monarchy would not normally have intervened directly in the social dynamics of a city by advocating changes in social rank. At most, a sovereign would either confirm or strengthen an individual's or family's status by certifying it or making it more prestigious with the granting of noble titles, fiefs or the *cingulum militiae* (military belt).

In the Bitonto case, the queen merely acknowledged the petitioners' status, on the basis of their profession and lifestyle. What is of particular importance here is that Joanna I underlined that the main criterion for being judged as noble was not blood, but way of life. This concept, evidently widely held throughout kingdom society, made it possible for members of families without an aristocratic past to achieve noble status, provided they had a suitable lifestyle and did not practice mechanical crafts. The criteria were precise but, at the same time, access to the nobility group was left open.

In this context, the case of Barletta – directly subordinate to the monarchy (as from 1190) – opens up new perspectives on the fifteenth century. Here, in 1473, following complaints from a number of citizens, King Ferrante instigated a process of institutional reorganisation in which, amongst other things, the composition of the councils was changed from two groups (*nobiles* and *mercatores et plebeos*) to three (*nobiles*, *mercatores*, *populares*). The social and economic power of merchants had grown in the previous decades, and this was the political result they had managed to achieve. Of particular interest here, however, is the second chapter of the ruling, in which it is stated that "if a noble is a merchant, he must be placed between the noble councillors, and not the merchants".¹³ Trade was thus

11. Nunzio Federigo Faraglia, *Il comune nell'Italia meridionale (1100-1806)*, Naples, Tip. della Regia Università, 1883, pp. 87-88.

12. Some of them had an important role in a public deed of 1341, in *Libro Rosso della Università di Bitonto (1265-1559)*, ed. by Donato Antonio De Capua, Palo del Colle, Liantonio, 1987, doc. 1, pp. 67-72.

13. Edited document in Sabino Loffredo, *Storia della città di Barletta con corredo di documenti*, Trani, Vecchi, 1893, vol. II, doc. XXXVIII, pp. 381-414: 385.

no longer an activity that prevented one from being a noble, especially if the status was already achieved and had been successfully consolidated.¹⁴

The fact that this had to be formally stated in the ruling indicates that the idea of merchanthood and nobility being irreconcilable was still widely held in society. At the same time, though, an important change in the opposite direction was taking place. Some, at least, of the merchants had risen socially in such a way as to render their noble status undeniable, with a corresponding political influence that had enabled them to obtain formal recognition of this dual condition. Hence, the road towards the closure of the noble class in the sixteenth century was by no means linear. On the contrary, the opportunities for ennoblement in the late fifteenth century were still many.

Clearly, not all social groups could aspire to the highest echelons of society. An analysis of the social and professional qualifications of the “ennobled” citizens of Bitonto and the nobles of Barletta reveals the concrete possibilities and actual limits of the mobility. The Bitonto group consisted of six judges, six notaries, one *sir* (*dominus*) and nine with no qualification. Of the 24 noble councillors of Barletta listed in the 1473 ruling, four are *domini* – two *legum doctores*, one judge and one *armiger regius* – and the rest are unqualified. In the previous list, dated 1466, the 26 noble councillors included 3 *domini* doctors of law, 1 judge of jurisprudence, 1 notary and the rest were unqualified.¹⁵

The composition of these lists invites reflection, firstly, on the professions. Being a judge, doctor of law or notary was one of the possible ways to become a noble. This means that family wealth was a necessary prerequisite, at least for bearing the costs of studying. But being *liciterati* did not automatically lead to noble status, as can be seen in the particular case of notaries. In the Barletta ruling, *iudices* appear only amongst the *nobiles*, whereas notaries are to be found amongst both *nobili* and *popolari*. A *iudex* or a doctor of law could be considered *naturaliter* socially pre-eminent – if not noble – but something extra was required of the notary. In order to enter the ranks of the nobility he would have to adopt a suitable lifestyle and, above all, make great efforts to be recognised as noble. This aspect is very important because it means that we cannot always base our reasoning on the mobility of entire social or professional groups. Individual members and, possibly, families have to be considered. And this is precisely because fourteenth-fifteenth century urban society had not yet crystallised.

Secondly, it should be noted that the practice of certain professions was not necessary for “institutional ennoblement”, as shown by the considerable number of unqualified people in the three lists. In all probability, these were wealthy merchants or craftsmen and as such were not qualified in any way, given that professional qualification or social status were indicated when compiling the documents, as in the case of “*dominus*”. Also of significance here is the small number of *domini* in

14. Also members of the titled nobility indulged in trade, e.g. the count of Montorio Pietro Lalle Camponeschi († 1490); see Pierluigi Terenzi, *L'Aquila nel Regno. I rapporti politici fra città e monarchia nel Mezzogiorno tardomedievale*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2015, pp. 219-264.

15. The 1466 list can be found in Loffredo, *Storia*, vol. II, doc. XXXVII, pp. 363-380: 364-365.

the lists: 1 out of 22 in Bitonto and 3 out of 26 and 4 out of 24 in Barletta. This title, known to indicate pre-eminence, was only attributed under certain specific conditions in “official” documents: titled nobles, doctors of law, clergymen and graduate doctors were *domini*.¹⁶ Consequently, in the social structure outlined here, not all *domini* were nobles nor were all “institutional nobles” *domini*. This complicates the historian’s task of interpreting social dynamics; at the same time, it shows that having a title was not necessary to be a noble, and nor did everybody strive to get one. What mattered, once pre-eminence was achieved, was having it recognised in the institutions, for either fiscal or political reasons.

The third point on which to reflect emerges from an analysis of the kinship links between the nobles in the three lists and their families. From the Bitonto case, it would appear that being the son of a judge or notary enhances ennoblement, in that the nine unqualified ennobled persons listed include the son of one of the notaries, the son of one of the judges and the brother of another one. Thus, an “ennobling” occupation may have exerted a pull on relatives, provided they too had an adequate lifestyle. This does not mean, though, that all the members of these families could become nobles.

Family membership, as such, was not yet the main criterion for access to the nobility. This was to become the case in the sixteenth century. Before then, both personal and family pathways of ascent were possible, with neither having a necessarily lasting outcome. Members of the same family (in the broader sense) could belong to two different institutional groups at the same time. This was the case for the De Riso family, a family of great importance in Barletta which had several of its members amongst the *nobiles* but also some amongst the *mercatores*.¹⁷ This also confirms that the merchant category had become the intermediate step immediately below that of the nobles, increasing the chances of ascent and social and occupational intermingling.

Still on the subject of families, it should be noted that although family membership was not the main criterion for access to the nobility in the fifteenth century, belonging to certain families could increase the probability of ennoblement. On comparing the lists of noble councillors in Barletta in 1466 and 1473, it can be seen that the number of families with more than one member in the first list was four, whereas in the second it was three. However, most of the noble councillors in 1473 (19 out of 24) were either the same as in 1466 or belonged to the same families. Thus, in the 1473 list, the concentration of power in the hands of some families was reduced and spaces opened for members of other noble families, whereas the number of real changes (5 out of 24) was actually very small. This example confirms that the dynamics of ascent and descent or institutional turnover within the same group were still open to different possibilities, depending often on the agency of the individuals, by will or by necessity.

16. See E. Igor Mineo, *Nobiltà di stato. Famiglie e identità aristocratiche nel tardo medioevo. La Sicilia*, Rome, Donzelli, 1998, pp. 196-205.

17. For the De Riso family in previous centuries, see Victor Rivera Magos, “Rapporti di potere a Barletta tra età sveva e primo angioina (1232-1282)”, *Archivio storico pugliese*, 62 (2009), pp. 43-111.

Finally, it should be emphasised that personal ascent did not in itself result in the keeping of a prominent position by descendants. They would have to keep it by their own efforts, unless they inherited a noble title. The case of the only *dominus* in the Bitonto ennobled group is of particular significance here. Sir *Marcus de Saraceno* belonged to an important city family¹⁸ and, despite being a *dominus*, he had to go to court to have his “institutional nobility” recognised. The case of *Marcus* helps to clarify the nature of the social fluidity discussed in the introduction, which, while allowing ascent could also mean descent. Despite not having enough information to construct prosopographic and genealogical profiles, the phenomenon is clear. Also, however, pre-eminence could be expressed in many ways, even within the same institutional field, as the following focus on tax farming will show.

3. Local tax farming

The public tax farming market was a sphere in which substantial fortunes were made and efficacious networks of relationships formed. It should thus be seen as an important channel for social ascent within the monarch’s entourage on a higher level and, on a lower one, in the towns.

In the period that interests us, virtually all indirect taxes were farmed out each year, although the appointment of an administrator *ad credentiam* – to use a technical term from the Constitutions of Frederick II – for the office of *baiulo* or *baglivo*, was not uncommon.¹⁹ This was the case both for Crown fiscal assets and any kind of revenue source (trade, tolls, use of infrastructure, monopoly products, etc.) owned by any kind of subject: feudatories large and small, *universitates*, religious bodies (mendicancy rights too were farmed out).²⁰ Some collection rights involved a minimum level of jurisdiction and coercive power for penalising contraventions. We should note here, to quote a colourful example, that the exactor of the gabelles on prostitutes in Naples, a feudal right of Toraldo di Aversa, had a prison cell in his small court apartment and was given full civil and criminal jurisdiction (*mero et mixto imperio*).²¹

The main kingdom and town administration offices were not farmed out. Until the late fifteenth century, the venality of offices was limited to minor, usually local, ones, although there were exceptions in cases of indebtedness. Of the courts

18. Attested to in 1189 by the judge Nicola de Saracino (*Le pergamene di San Nicola di Bari. Periodo normanno (1075-1194)*), ed. by Francesco Nitti, Bari-Trani, Vecchi, 1902, doc. 153, pp. 260-261); in 1267 Angelo de Saraceno was appointed procurator of the Archbishop of Bari, the diocese that included Bitonto (*Le pergamene del duomo di Bari. 1266-1309*), ed. by Giovanni Battista Nitto De Rossi, Francesco Nitti, Bari-Trani, Vecchi, 1899, doc. 12, pp. 23-26).

19. *Die Konstitutionen Friedrichs II. für das Königreich Sizilien*, ed. by Wolfgang Stürner, Hannover, Hahnsche Buchandlung, 1996 (M.G.H., *Leges, Legum sectio IV: Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum, II, Supplementum*), nn. I, 64 and I, 71.

20. See the contracts of the hospitals of Sant’Eligio in Naples and Capua for mendicancy rights (1492), Giovanni Vitolo, Rosalba Di Meglio, *Napoli angioino-aragonese. Confraternite, ospedali, dinamiche politico-sociali*, Salerno, Carlone, 2003, pp. 130-145.

21. In 1480 the tax was worth 200 ducats a year, Archivio di Stato of Naples [from now on referred to as ASNa], *Sommaria, Relevi* 1, ff. 87-97.

of justice, the *bagliua*, with civil jurisdiction over compensation for damages and other such matters, was almost always farmed out. This was not so for the office of governor (*capitanìa*), a first instance criminal court, even though, from the Durazzo period onwards, the royal concession of this office to feudatories and courtiers became more frequent, generally in smaller towns.

The tax farming market was a major stimulant for private capital, attracting all sorts of operators from all kinds of social and professional backgrounds, not so much the Tuscan and – after the Aragonese conquest – Valencian and Catalan merchant bankers and large-scale international financiers, but more likely southern Italian merchants with greater or lesser amounts of available capital and ranges of operation and anybody else who had the ready cash: city patricians, landowners, shopkeepers and professional tax farmers. This latter category appears the most fleeting, but some examples of it will be given here.

In principle, according to the rules of sale by auction, often restated by royal and local authorities, the taxes should have gone to the highest bidder. On many occasions however, because of financial needs, they would be awarded directly, either by what we would now call private treaty or by agreements with trusted buyers who would acquire the tax one or more years in advance or even without a time limit. The advanced selling of future revenues was the most widespread form of indebtedness in monarchical states, where, as we know, debt was personal. This, it should be stressed, was the case also at local level; generally, in fact, credit and financial practices were the same both at the centre and peripheries of the kingdom.²²

In the towns too, tax farming and indebtedness were closely linked. The fact that *universitas* creditors were often (but not always) members of the political oligarchy may seem risky, to our eyes, as indeed it was when private interests took precedence over public ones. And yet, as has been said, “loans from foreigners are not taken gladly”.²³ The urban elites much preferred dealing with tax farmers and creditors from within their own ranks. Clearly, the pools of tax farmers and creditors did not coincide perfectly – but overlaps were frequent.

The tax farmers of the town’s revenues took the form *de facto* of a branch of the administration, in that they were habitually called on to make payments on behalf of the *universitas* and because they were the first to be turned to for shouldering a current deficit, with requests for advance instalments on a previously agreed sum. It is likely that the tax farmers knew the financial potential of the town’s total assets and offices better than anyone else. They were practically involved with the management of them all, regardless of whether they belonged to the Crown, a feudal lord or an individual. Local taxes, of the Crown or others, were the preferred area of investment for small and medium-scale local operators. This was not only because the amount of capital they had was limited but also – we repeat – because it was convenient for all local fiscal matters to remain in the hands of fellow citizens.

22. Francesco Senatore, *Una città, il regno: istituzioni e società a Capua nel XV secolo*, Rome, Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medioevo, forthcoming, vol. I, cap. 3.

23. Luciano Pezzolo, “Tradizione e innovazione. I debiti governativi nell’Italia del Rinascimento”, in *Debito pubblico e mercati finanziari in Italia. Secoli XIII-XX*, ed. by Giuseppe De Luca and Angelo Moioli, Milan, FrancoAngeli, 2007, pp. 15-37: 25.

Just as in commerce, in the tax farming and loans market there were different orders of magnitude, which intersected thanks to the many different types of companies and loan transactions: advance sales, buying and selling of loans, renegotiation of debts (often involving the doubling of the original loan and deferred repayment), setting off loans against farmed-out taxes, companies of tax farmers and creditors and the breaking down of tax farming concessions into sub-concessions.

And it was precisely in the hands of fellow citizens that revenues and offices ended up when, because of impellent needs, they had to be granted in advance in return for increased annuities, or even alienated (i.e. granted indefinitely). In domanial towns, alienation was subject to the king's approval. The king too, either for these same reasons or to reward a subject's loyalty, would grant local revenues on a fixed basis, sometimes devolving them entirely for one or more generations or permanently.

The variety of operators involved in local tax farming is striking. Commercial companies are frequent, right up to the extreme case of the Capua constabulary office, generally taken on by a group of 5 or 6 people – some of whom must have been no more than ordinary policemen – guaranteed by fideiussors of a higher social rank. Constables constituted both the city's public police force and prison guards, at the service of the royal governor and the king himself.²⁴

We will now look at a concrete example: the tax farmers for the *bagliva* of Calvi, a revenue source belonging to Capua *corpo*, or rather, to the *universitas* of the urban centre in the district called "Capua e casali". Calvi, currently in the province of Caserta, was a tiny diocese with less than 1,000 inhabitants.²⁵ Capua, the kingdom's third city, had feudal rights over it and expropriated part of the revenue, namely, that of the *bagliva* and the proceeds from the local *capitanìa*. The *bagliva* in this case is the *cabella baiulationis*, part of an old office consisting of a 3% tax on purchase and sale transactions.²⁶

Table 1. *Tax farmers for the bagliva of Calvi*²⁷

<i>Year</i>	<i>Tax farmers</i>
1467-68	Agostino and Tuccillo Caruso of Calvi
1469-70	Francesco Martone of Calvi
1470-71	Francesco Martone of Calvi
1471-72	Francesco Martone of Calvi and Cristoforo di Castellano of Calvi
1472-73	Altobello di Palma of Capua
1473-74	Cola di Bruno
1474-75	Francesco di Guglielmo and Altobello Cappella of Capua

24. Senatore, *Una città*, I, § 2.9.

25. *Ibid.*, I, § 1.8. Calvi had 132 households in 1447 (Fausto Cozzetto, *Mezzogiorno e demografia nel XV secolo*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 1986, p. 59) and 210 in 1490 (ASNa, *Sommaria, Diversi*, I num., 175/2, f. 5r).

26. ASNa, *Sommaria, Partium* 1, f. 51r.

27. Senatore, *Una città*, Tables 19-20 and *Appendice* 5.

The operators are quite low-profile. The amounts too were small (less than 100 ducats). Citizens of Capua *corpo* (di Palma, di Guglielmo and Cappella) alternate with those of Calvi. In 1467-68 the Caruso brothers of Calvi managed to procure the gabelle thanks to a citizen of Capua *corpo*, Antonio Bisanti, negotiating directly and using an old loan of Bisanti's to secure the tax – basically, the Carusos took over the *universitas*' debt thanks to the intermediation of Bisanti, who also provided them with funds.²⁸ Thus, an important local society family reaped the benefits of links, the nature of which are unknown to us, with a member of the elite of the dominant city. The office of Governor of Calvi, on the other hand, remained with the Capuans, who acquired it by taking over *universitas* loans.

The local tax farming market gives us glimpses of moderate but significant ascents: Francesco di Guglielmo of Capua, who in 1474-75 purchased the *bagliva* of Calvi in partnership with Altobello Cappella (a member of Capua's political oligarchy), is one of the professional tax farmers mentioned earlier. In Capua and the surrounding rural district he appears as both an ordinary exactor working for higher-ranking tax farmers and a tax farmer working with a company or individually.

Table 2. *The taxes of Francesco di Guglielmo*²⁹

<i>Year</i>	<i>Revenue</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Role</i>
1473	Bagliva of Capua	N.A. de' Monti	tax farmer or exactor
1474-75	Bagliva of Calvi	Capua <i>corpo</i>	tax farmer with Altobello Cappella of Capua
1478-79	Terra del Lagno <i>dazio</i> and new Forie gabelles	Crown	Exactor, with Giovanni Calderone (tax farmers: Francesco Cappellades and Cirello Sorrentino, merchant and banker, both of Capua)
1481-82	New Forie gabelles	Crown	tax farmer, with Pascarello Caiazza
1482-83	New Forie gabelles	Crown	tax farmer, individual
1483	New impositions	Crown	Exactor, individual (tax farmer: notary Giovanni de Bernardis of Capua)
1490-91	Terra del Lagno <i>dazio</i>	Crown	“principal” tax farmer, with Giovanni Calderone

Could this series of contracts be considered a “career”? We do not have enough evidence to say this. Certainly, the economic successes of Francesco di Guglielmo, known as *Tizzone*, were linked to major exponents of the city's elites who engaged him as exactor: Francesco Cappellades, Cirello Sorrentino and Giovanni de Bernardis. They had the capital and social credit needed to win a contract (with no need, for example, for a fideiussor). We know that de Bernardis

28. *Ibid.*, I, § 3.6.

29. *Ibid.*, reprocessing of data in I, *Appendice 5*.

was a notary, but it is interesting to note that he invested the proceeds of his work in this way, by enlisting di Guglielmo. Cappellades was the son of a Catalan immigrant who, in 1445-46, was Governor of Capua and tax farmer of the *bagliva* (still then in the hands of the Crown); from the 1460s to the 1480s he was a member of city colleges (*Sei* and *Quaranta*), held important offices such as the *capitania* of Castel Volturno, was also a tax farmer by trade and, consequently, one of the city's creditors. He died in 1496 and had his sepulchre placed in the cathedral, to the right of the entrance. Sorrentino, a merchant and banker, member of two colleges and tax farmer, was more deeply involved in the government of the city than Cappellades: in the 70s, 80s and 90s he was a banker, a treasurer, an auditor, a lay councillor at the convent of San Pietro dei Minori and a court ambassador. These brief biographical details confirm the fluidity – still, at the end of the fifteenth century – of south Italian urban society, as mentioned at the beginning.

Di Guglielmo can probably be placed amongst the clientele of Nicola Antonio de' Monti, doctor and counsellor to King Ferrante. De' Monti, by royal concession, owned the *bagliva* of Capua, for which di Guglielmo was the tax farmer – or, more likely, the exactor – in 1473. When, on this occasion, after coming to blows with some French merchants, he was beaten and arrested, he replied to an insult (“traitor”) by the royal governor with the words “Io non fui may traditore, ma questo facite a li homini de messer Cola Antonio?” (“I have never been a traitor, but would you do this to the men of Sir Cola Antonio?”).³⁰ The hint of coercive power and link with a notable give form not only to di Guglielmo's social standing but also his psychology. Local offices and contracts were an opportunity for enrichment, both economic and symbolic.

The most able operators extended their range of activities to beyond their own little native land. The tax farming market expanded enormously in the 80s because the Court, for a time, experimented with a tax reform that transformed the traditional direct taxation (hearth tax or general tax, usually exacted by officials) into a new form of indirect taxation, referred to as “the new impositions”.³¹ The effects of this can be clearly seen when going through the list of the seven bidders in the auction for the taxes of Aversa in March-April 1485. The auction was held mainly in the *Regia Camera della Sommaria* (the supreme fiscal magistrature of Naples) and involved the highest levels of the court: the renowned jurist Michele d’Afflitto and the king’s secretary Antonello Petrucci. Whoever raised the bid would be entitled to 1/5 of the increase, paid with the income from the revenue source, in accordance with a recent measure decreed by the sovereign.³² The bidding, opening at 1,272 ducats, ended at 3,600.

30. *Ibid.*, I, § 2.6.

31. Mario Del Treppo, “Il regno aragonese”, in *Storia del Mezzogiorno*, ed. by Giuseppe Galasso and Rosario Romeo, vol. IV/1, Rome, Il Sole, 1986, pp. 87-201: 122-127; Roberto Delle Donne, *Burocrazia e fisco a Napoli tra XV e XVI secolo. La Camera della Sommaria e il Repertorium alphabeticum solutionum fiscalium Regni Siciliae Cisfretanae*, Florence, Florence University Press, 2012, pp. 262, 275, 286.

32. “Iuxta le ordinacione del signor re”, ASNa, *Sommaria, Partium*, 23, f. 59r.

Table 3. *Auction for the new Impositions of Aversa, 1485*³³

<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Bid</i> (ducats)	<i>Bidder</i>	<i>Profit</i> (ducats, tari)
-	-	100	Silvestro Guarino of Aversa	20.00
-	-	222	Matteo di Falco of Aversa	44.02
-	-	272	Matteo di Pantoliano of Capua and Nardo Parziale of Capua	40.00 14.02
20 III 18.00 hrs	<i>Sommaria</i>	178	Antonio di Lamberto of Aversa and Geronimo Fusco of Aversa	
28 III, 24.00 hrs	house of Petrucci	300	Antonio di Lamberto of Aversa and Geronimo Fusco of Aversa	
4 IV, <i>aurora</i>	<i>Sommaria</i>	100	Antonio di Lamberto of Aversa and Geronimo Fusco of Aversa	115.03
5 IV, 16.00 hrs	<i>Sommaria</i>	100	Nicola Melloni and associates	

Most of the bidders were from Aversa. Silvestro Guarino was one of the city elect who wrote a chronicle on Aversa at the beginning of the sixteenth century,³⁴ while Antonio di Lamberto was councillor and bursar of Aversa's main hospital, the Annunziata³⁵ – both, thus, from the highest echelons of local society. The same is true for Matteo di Pantoliano of Capua, listed as noble and, in fact, part of Capua's political oligarchy.³⁶ He bidded together with a fellow citizen of whom nothing is known and who committed much less capital.

The three successive bids by the Lamberto-Fusco associates suggest pressure from the commissioner, in the persons of Petrucci – who summoned the two Aversa businessmen to his house and convinced them to go to as high as 300 ducats – and d'Afflitto, whose advice on the actual value of the asset resulted in a further last bid very early (“in aurora”!) on the day before the bid of the Melloni associates. We would choose not to judge these practices as illicit because the objective was, in the words of the royal officials, to ensure that the court benefited and, for the bidders, to ensure adequate remuneration for the risk undertaken. The winners, the *Sommaria* wrote, “procured greater profit for the Royal Court”.³⁷ These words reflect a widely held point of view in court circles. The contracting

33. *Ibid.* ff. 59r-60r, letters dated 6th April.

34. Silvestro Guarino, *Diario*, in *Raccolta delle varie croniche, diari, et altri opuscoli [...] appartenenti alla storia del regno di Napoli*, I, Naples, Perger, 1780, pp. 211-247. Guarino, “agent” of Queen Joanna II according to the editor of the diary (i.e. official, or *tax farmer*), took on the concession for the new impositions of Nocera and Roccapiemonte together with Matteo di Falco (ASNa, *Significatorie* 7 f. 111v).

35. *Aversa. Notai diversi 1423*, ed. by Nunzia Nunziata, Naples, Athena, 2005, nn. 109, 110, 112, pp. 113-115, n. 6, p. 137.

36. Senatore, *Una città*, I, *Appendice* 3.

37. “Hanno facta meglio la condicione de la regia corte”, ASNa, *Sommaria, Partium*, 23, f. 59v.

out, or *arrendamento*, of indirect taxes was considered worth it because of the greater profit and the greater freedom of action of tax farmers as against royal officials. These two reasons are given in the *de regimine principum* of Diomede Carafa, addressed (between 1472 and 1477) to King Ferrante's daughter Eleonora, destined to marry Ercole d'Este, duke of Ferrara:

Those who clearly understand the nature [of indirect taxes], must not have them collected by their own officials but must contract most of them out, especially the gabelles and tolls. Those who do otherwise cannot be considered good administrators. In the first place, if the tax farmers collect for themselves they will do it more diligently than for their lord because, in the latter case, knowing that their salary will be paid anyway, they will not make an effort or be watchful, so that not only will the profit be low, but also the income will decrease. And there is no need to worry about the fact that those acquiring the tax will earn from it, because it could be said that they will earn what his lordship the king does not lose, and the more they are seen to earn, the more the revenues can be contracted out for higher prices. This would not happen if they were handled directly by the court. [In the second place] what is permissible for the tax farmers would not be so for the lords, even though it must be ensured that they do nothing illegal. But these kinds of revenue must be contracted out and the tax farmers must be assisted, so that they earn from them.³⁸

These empirical arguments denote an openly “free market” attitude, of which, as we have seen, there is ample evidence in the sources. And this was the direction that the fiscal reform of the 80s was heading in, in the hope of boosting royal income enormously. One of the reasons for its failure was the discontent of local operators, who suffered because of the external competition.³⁹

4. Conclusions

The world of tax farming has taken us back to our starting point, namely, the “pervasiveness” of the monarchical institutions and the importance of the court as a driving force for economic initiatives and cultural elaboration. Was there mobility extraneous to the court, at local or sub-regional level? There certainly was: the importance of citizenship as a means of acquiring and maintaining status is a case in point in this regard. Even though the monarchy had a say in the concessions granted to citizens, there is no doubt that the movement to the towns had different causes and happened in different ways in different areas of the kingdom. Unfortunately, in quantitative terms, our knowledge of the migration flows to urban centres is limited.⁴⁰

One area of particular interest here is the canonical prebends system. Cathedral chapters could well have been a sphere of social distinction that was extraneous to both the royal and papal courts. The bishop could certainly appoint a new canon,

38. Diomede Carafa, *Memoriali*, ed. by Franca Petrucci Nardelli, Rome, Bonacci, 1988, pp. 179, 181= III, 37.

39. The new impositions interfered with local taxes, so much so that reimbursements were provided for the *appaltatori* involved, ASNa, *Sommaria*, *Partium* 18, f. 147r.

40. Giuliana Vitale, *Percorsi urbani nel Mezzogiorno medievale*, Salerno, Laveglia & Carlone 2016, pp. 52-112.

but the rules governing the assignment of prebends provided guarantees to local clerics, and nor was the diocesan Ordinary authorised to dispose of the chapter's assets. In Pozzuoli, the chapter protested energetically not only against a cleric from outside the diocese (1406) but also against the bishop himself, guilty of having appropriated a prebend after the death of the incumbent (1416).⁴¹ Also of interest, still in Pozzuoli, are the emotional bonds between clerics of different ages, formally expressed in the titles *patrinus* and *filius spiritualis*, which seem to ensure mutual aid and the cultural development of younger people – a Roman, in the case in question – with a view to possible entry into the chapter.⁴²

In Capua, an extremely rich diocese, regulations dated 1322 recognised incumbents' right of pre-emption, in order of seniority, on prebends that became vacant, ruling that vacant prebends should go to *expectantes* canons who did not yet have them, again in order of seniority. They also guaranteed the subsistence of all others by protecting the "common mass" of the assets, which would not be allowed to fall below a certain level. Originally, the assets were divided into 20 shares and 20 half-shares, intended for 20 presbyters and deacons (10 sacerdotal prebends and 10 diaconal prebends) and 20 subdeacons (20 subdiaconal prebends).⁴³ The large number of land and building tenancies was kept under control by means of periodic inventories, such as those of 1457 and 1471.⁴⁴ This, quite clearly, was a defence mechanism for safeguarding the economic *status* of both the *canonici ordinati* and the canonical community as a whole. Moving up the list, so to speak, resulted in frequent changes of holdership, making any form of appropriation impossible. The surnames are not repeated very often, but the more important families are obviously there.⁴⁵ Possibly, for those with influence, especially if based on more recently acquired wealth, getting relatives into the city's monasteries or procuring them a remunerative benefice could be easier with the patronage of church or court dignitaries. It was they who, in petitions to the king, included requests for mediation in the assignment of local benefices to fellow citizens, probably their own relatives.⁴⁶ Exclusion and inclusion practices in the world of canons seem to have been very different to those of the rest of the citizens.

In conclusion, the aim of our analysis has been to demonstrate how the sources, both published and unpublished, can broaden discourse on mobility both in the society of the towns – before the Neapolitan *seggi* model came to dominate

41. Bruno Ruggiero, *Potere, istituzioni, chiese locali: aspetti e motivi del Mezzogiorno medioevale dai Longobardi agli Angioini*, Spoleto, Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1977, pp. 107-174: 147-149.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 149-150.

43. Michele Monaco, *Sanctuarium Capuanum*, Naples, Beltrano, 1630, pp. 264-265 e Capua, Archivio Storico Arcivescovile, [*Registro patrimoniale del capitolo di Capua*], ff. 35v-37r.

44. *Inventarium bonorum omnium demanialium capituli*, 29 luglio 1471, *ibid.*, Pergamene, Fondo capitolo, 2314, ed. by Giancarlo Bova and Cristina Alpopi, *Villaggi abbandonati e territorio tra Capua e Castelvoturno (X-XV sec.)*, Rome, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2013, pp. 309-362.

45. These include: d'Azzia and Fieramosca, and Mazziotta, Merola, Rinaldo, *ibid.* and register quoted in note 43.

46. Senatore, *Una città*, I, *Appendice*, 1, nn. 45.16, 113.19.

public discourse on the nobility – and on the lower echelons of society. Here, social movement, both upward and downward, had distinctive characteristics, to be reconstructed case by case.

Although royal authority, so important socially in southern Italy, was brought into play to sanction admissions to the *universitas nobilium*,⁴⁷ the newly acquired social status had been gained locally, following paths that we do not always know enough about but which we can guess were quite different from one place to another.

Moreover, in southern Italian towns there were opportunities for defending and raising one's status that were extraneous to royal service (as illustrated above in the citizenship and canonical college examples). The offices and officials of the monarchy were not the only ones to exist, and nor were they immune to local influences. Tax farming presented extraordinary opportunities – to less high-ranking subjects as well – for accumulating wealth and extending networks of relationships, and the “national” context (crown revenues) was not actually separate to the local (city revenues) and regional (tax farming in nearby towns) ones. In these economic spaces, different levels of wealth and skill came together: financiers – including both *milites* and *doctors* – , exactors, foreign merchants, professional tax farmers, companies and sub-concession holders.

It was a limited form of “capitalism”, branching off from the public administration (or any kind of administration), and it has not attracted the interest of economic and social historians not only because of the lack of case studies and shortage of sources, but also because of the continuing influence of a number of postulates: that economic progress comes only from international trade, that whoever gets rich from tax farming is not a “pure” merchant, and because of its ambiguous links with the political power. Irrespective of the comprehensive interpretations of the macroeconomic phenomena, there is still much to be learnt about the phenomena on a local scale.

(Trans. Robert Elliot)

47. Or, on the contrary, to authorise the constitution of the *universitas popularium*, as in Capua in 1270-71, Marianna Merola, “Ceti cittadini e tessuto urbano di Capua”, *Quaderni meridionali*, 31 (2000), pp. 3-28.