

***Entrepreneurial Behaviour of the  
'Botiguers' from Barcelona.  
Textile Retail Shops in the Second Half  
of Seventeenth Century***

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**1. Introduction.**

The role played by fabrics in European trade during the Ancien Regime, is already well known, thanks to an extensive bibliography: in particular their outstanding place in large commercial circuits, especially those which linked European countries and those which connected Europe with Asia and America has been emphasised. In this way, the quantity and the value of the wholesale trade in textiles have given it a justifiably privileged position in early modern European economic historiography. This important focus of attention is in marked contrast with the permanent disregard for the textile retail trade.

In fact, studies about trade rarely include an analysis as to how textiles finally reached consumers. On the side of supply, these studies forget that the retail trade is the last essential link in the chain of distribution and, on the side of demand, they ignore that the rise in production and the great economic value of trade in fabrics was due to the growth and the diversification of textile consumption.

With respect to supply, and taking as an example the city of Barcelona between 1650 and 1720, in this article I study the businesses which in Barcelona, as in all the cities of early modern Europe, occupied the last stage of textile supply: shops (*botigues*) and retailers (*botiguers*) of fabrics, that is, the enterprises and the

entrepreneurs<sup>1</sup> who were in charge of the final distribution of fabrics to customers.

The existence and spread of textile retail shops was already characteristic of urban development in Barcelona in the Middle Ages but the best known and best studied are the eighteenth-century shops, which were examined by P. Vilar, who noted that economic growth in Catalonia during the eighteenth century was sustained by a multiplicity of operations carried on through a dense web of 'elemental enterprises' formed by textile retail shops<sup>2</sup>.

Since then, other studies<sup>3</sup> -not as many as we would wish nor with homogeneous methodological criteria- have shown that this small-scale trade in fabrics, carried on in public establishments where all types of textiles were sold to the consumer, was, owing to its scale and its high number of transactions, the most important business in early modern Barcelona. These studies have also shown that fabric shops were, due to their high number and the size of the capital mobilized, the basic form of enterprise. In this sense, this study analyzes, as fully as the source allows, an extensive group of textile retail shops operating in Barcelona in the second half of the seventeenth-century, a period of great interest for economic historians, though little studied in Catalonia<sup>4</sup>.

## **2. The enterprises. Structural characteristics of textile retail shops.**

The textile retail trade was a business that allowed individual or collective organization. In fact, fabric shops could be opened by one

<sup>1</sup> Both concepts are used in P. Vilar's sense: 'enterprise' is an 'activity to accomplish an aim' and 'entrepreneur' is a 'businessman who mobilises capitals, makes investments, takes risks, learns profits and balances the books'; see: P. Vilar, "La noción de empresa y empresario desde los tiempos modernos a los contemporáneos" in *Dinero y Crédito (siglos XVI al XIX). Actas del Primer Coloquio Internacional de Historia Económica* (Madrid 1978), pp.241-248.

<sup>2</sup> P. Vilar, *Catalunya dins l'Espanya moderna*, 4 vols. (Barcelona 1986), IV, pp.165-217.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the case studies done by P. Molas, some of them collected in P. Molas, *Comerç i estructura social a Catalunya i València als segles XVII i XVIII* (Barcelona 1977).

<sup>4</sup> I have already partially studied these enterprises in I. Lobato, *Compañías y negococios en la Cataluña preindustrial* (Sevilla 1995), pp.110-113.

entrepreneur alone or they could be incorporated as a partnership. In this case, partnerships could be formed through a verbal agreement or by public contract, signed before a notary, consisting of the articles of incorporation that would include the rules of the partnership. Of course, only the shops incorporated as registered partnerships have left documentary proof of their existence and a public record of their rules, and only these shops allow systematic research into their entrepreneurial structure.

An analysis of Barcelona firms that were incorporated in the second half of the seventeenth century brings out the great importance of fabric shops. Between 1650 and 1720 a total of 151 partnerships were founded and a total investment of 1,321,779 '*lliures*'<sup>5</sup> was achieved. From those, 71 companies (47.02 percent) were textile retail shops and the investments in them amounted to 976,614 '*lliures*' (73.89 percent)<sup>6</sup>.

The available bibliographical sources show that these companies had two outstanding characteristics: a small number of partners and the extensive kinship relationship which existed between them. The shops in Barcelona that I analyze here fully confirm the first characteristic but also to a lesser extent the second one. In fact, as we can see in Table 1, in most cases the companies studied had the minimum number of partners - two - while the rest of the companies

	No. of SHOPS	%
2 PARTNERS	41	57.75
3 PARTNERS	18	25.35
4 PARTNERS	9	12.60
5 PARTNERS	3	4.22

<sup>5</sup> During the Ancien Regime, the '*lliura*' (in the Catalan language) was the local currency in Barcelona.

<sup>6</sup> The articles of incorporation of all these partnerships in (A)*rchivo* (H)*istórico* de (P)*rotocolos* de (B)*arcelona*; I omit specific references to notaries and registers due to their high number; they can be consulted in detail in my doctoral thesis, I. Lobato, *Capital mercantil y actividad económica en la Cataluña preindustrial. Compañías y negocios en Barcelona en la segunda mitad del siglo XVII* (Universidad de Barcelona 1993), 'Documentary Appendix', II, pp.731-882.

had at most five partners. On the other hand, the kinship relationship can only be seen in nine companies and only three companies were formed exclusively by relatives<sup>7</sup>.

The magnitude and composition of capital stocks in textile retail shops also deserve specific attention. Concerning investments, P. Vilar asserted that eighteenth-century fabric shops in Barcelona were 'modest enterprises'<sup>8</sup>. Since then, this assertion has been repeated without being checked on many occasions. The data shown in Table 2 does not allow us to refute it absolutely but the scarce economic entity of textile retail shops is brought into question.

Leaving out the three partnerships with investments smaller than 1,000 pounds, a great majority, 60 partnerships, were small and medium-sized enterprises, in which investments did not surpass the threshold of 25,000 pounds. Only eight shops can be classified as large or extra-large and incorporated partnerships with investments larger than 25,000 pounds.

Moreover, this data shows that the entrepreneurial structure of the textile retail trade in Barcelona in the second half of the seventeenth century was not dominated by small companies, but by

**TABLE 2 - Investment magnitude in textile retail shops  
(in 'lliures' in Barcelona)**

Magnitude	No.shops	Total investments	Average by shop
Less than 1,000 'lliures'	3	896	299
1,000 to 5,000	12	46,660	3,888
5,000 to 10,000	14	107,304	7,665
10,000 to 15,000	15	180,318	12,021
15,000 to 20,000	10	174,161	17,416
20,000 to 25,000	9	201,447	22,383
25,000 to 30,000	2	50,964	25,482
30,000 to 35,000	3	94,865	31,622
35,000 to 40,000	1	35,839	35,839
More than 40,000	2	84,160	42,080
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>976,614</b>	

<sup>7</sup> The articles of incorporation reveal these noted kinship relationships; I have not used alternative sources that would make clear other relationships not implicit in the articles.

<sup>8</sup> P. Vilar, *op.cit.* (1986), IV, pp.157-162.

medium-sized companies in which investments fluctuated between 10,000 and 25,000 'lliures'. In fact, according to their numbers (34 partnerships) these were the most important partnerships (47.88 percent), but the most remarkable thing is that they mobilized 555,926 'lliures' (56.92 percent) with an average of 16,350 'lliures' per *botiga* - a large sum for a 'modest' trade like the textile retail trade. These figures are important, for example, compared with the 672,486 'lliures' that the lessees of the *bolla* paid in Barcelona between 1650 and 1670, with an annual average of 33.624 'lliures'<sup>9</sup>.

On the other hand, it is very important to emphasize that investments in fabric shops in Barcelona were of a heterogeneous nature. While the investments had a monetary value they were not made up exclusively of money because the formation of capital stocks involved a combination of money, commodities, assets<sup>10</sup>, credit<sup>11</sup>, and work<sup>12</sup> contributions. We can see in Table 3 that a small number of fabric shops

**TABLE 3 - Nature of Investments in textile retail shops  
(in 'lliures' from Barcelona)**

Investment kind	Amount	%	No. shops	%
Only money	88,750	9.09	11	15.49
Only commodities	36,905	3.78	5	7.04
Money+commodities	98,030	10.05	11	15.49
Money+work	12,160	1.24	2	2.82
Money+commodities+assets	244,744	25.06	15	21.13
Commodities+assets	439,705	45.02	23	32.39
Commodities+assets+credit	25,029	2.56	1	1.41
Commodities+assets+work	31,291	3.20	2	2.82
Without specifying	0	0.00	1	1.41
<b>Total</b>	<b>976,614</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100.00</b>

<sup>9</sup> In the Crown of Aragon, in the medieval and early modern periods, the *bolla* was a tax on the textile retail trade; the leases and the lessers' payments in (A)rxiu de la (C)orona d'(A)ragó, Generalitat, G-24, vols. no. 35, 36 and 37.

<sup>10</sup> These were mainly bills payable by customers which in the accounts were headed 'dèbits'.

<sup>11</sup> Money lent to the company, under a category named 'canvi', and included in its capital stock.

<sup>12</sup> Taking into account only when some of the associates contribute to the capital stock of the partnership exclusively with their work.

were incorporated with 'only money' and 'only commodities' contributions. On the whole, partnerships had heterogeneous investments: those which combined money, commodities and assets and, above all, those which only combined commodities and assets.

The role played by commodities and assets is overwhelming. Sometimes, the source permits us to calculate the ratio of money, commodities and assets in the investments<sup>13</sup>. In 12 shops with investments in 'money+commodities+assets' the ratio for money was 14.56 percent; for commodities+assets together it was 85.44 percent. In another 10 shops with investments in 'commodities+assets' the ratio for commodities was 66.62 percent and for assets 33.38 percent.

This outstanding presence of assets and, above all, commodities in the investments of textile retail shops reflects another fundamental characteristic of these partnerships, their long-term stability and their continuity force, though the law prohibited partnerships from being open-ended in duration<sup>14</sup>. It is true that in all articles of incorporation it was compulsory to establish the expiry date of the partnership<sup>15</sup>, but once this term had finished, the textile retail shops were not closed nor were the partnerships liquidated. They continued to operate and these shops, as we can see in Table 4, were renewed more than other partnerships in branches.

	<b>All Partnerships</b>		<b>Textile Retail shops</b>	
New	64	(42.38 percent)	19	(26.76 percent)
Operative	31	(20.53 " )	11	(15.49 " )
Renewed	56	(37.09 " )	41	(57.75 " )
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>(100.00 percent)</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>(100.00 percent)</b>

<sup>a</sup> Shops already opened before being incorporated as partnerships.

<sup>13</sup> In most cases, the articles of incorporation do not specify what share of the investment is made up of money, commodities or assets.

<sup>14</sup> See: A. García Sanz and J.M. Madurell, *Societats mercantils medievals a Barcelona*, 2 vols. (Barcelona 1986), I, p.159, and also J. Martínez Gijón, *La compañía mercantil en Castilla* (Sevilla 1979), pp.245-246.

<sup>15</sup> See: for example, the notary's guidebook, Josep Comes, *Viridiarum artis notariatus sive tabellorum omnis generis contractuum*, 2 vols. (Girona 1706), I, pp.325-329.

The incorporation of existing shops into partnerships was due to the need to financially reinforce the enterprise and to widen its mercantile horizons. Renewals were the unequivocal proof of the will to remain in the business world, although such continuity could be established on different bases from those on which the shop had been operating until then. It was precisely an expiry date that made it possible, before renewal, to share out the profits and to introduce a new entrepreneurial structure changing both the number of partners and the amount and nature of investments. Obviously, each of these operations brought about their respective modifications to commodities and assets which, in this way, remained constantly in circulation even though shops or partnerships changed. Of course, in the end, the enterprise's continuity or closure depended on the success or failure of entrepreneurial behaviour.

### **3. The entrepreneurs. Management, profits and social elevation of textile retailers.**

Entrepreneurial activity in the fabric shops incorporated as partnerships essentially concerned the partners. However, the nature of their participation in the company was not the same, though all members of the company were formally partners (*companys*). Partnership contracts in Barcelona in the seventeenth century had a bilateral legal structure: they were an agreement between two contracting parties, and each party was distinguished by the tasks that it performed in the partnership<sup>16</sup>. In this way, partnerships were formed on the one hand by the managing partners who took charge of the management of the fabric shops, and, on the other hand, by the capitalist partners, simple investors who limited their functions to the control and supervision of management. Thus the real entrepreneurial

<sup>16</sup> The legal structure of partnerships in Barcelona in the early modern age had a medieval origin; see, for example, A.F. Sayous, *Els mètodes comercials a la Barcelona medieval* (Barcelona 1975); J.M. Madurell and A. García Sanz, *Comandas comerciales barcelonesas de la Baja Edad Media* (Barcelona 1973) and their noted book, *Societats mercantils...*, *op.cit.* (1986).

activity, based on daily decision-making and resource allocation, was a task exclusively performed by the managers.

The distinction between managing and capitalist partners in textile retail shops went beyond the tasks that were performed in the partnerships. As we can see in Table 5, their socio-professional status and the quantity and nature of their investments were unequal.

Viewing this data, three important aspects should be highlighted. First, all textile retail shops had the traditional management system based on only one manager (71 shops and 71 managers) whose positions were specifically designated in the articles of incorporation of each partnership<sup>17</sup>. Second, we should emphasize, the majority of managers belonged to distinguished guilds of textile retailers (*botiguers*

**TABLE 5 - Socio-professional status and investments of managing and capitalist partners in textile retail shops (in 'lilures' in Barcelona)**

	No. partners	%	Investments	%
<b>A) Managers:</b>				
Textile retailers	65	34.57	169,395	17.35
Merchants	4	2.13	6,278	0.64
Without specifying	2	1.06	2,000	0.21
<b>*Subtotal A</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>37.76</b>	<b>177,673</b>	<b>18.20</b>
<b>B) Capitalists:</b>				
Merchants	28	14.89	260,184	26.64
Craftsmen	23	12.24	113,246	11.60
Textile retailers	15	7.98	106,181	10.87
Noblemen	10	5.32	98,591	10.09
Widows	9	4.79	97,356	9.97
Others	21	11.17	69,355	7.10
Without specifying	11	5.85	54,028	5.53
<b>*Subtotal B</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>62.24</b>	<b>798,941</b>	<b>81.80</b>
<b>Total A+B</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>976,614</b>	<b>100.00</b>

<sup>17</sup> This system was already used in medieval partnerships in Barcelona and was reproduced throughout the early modern age, see: N. Coll, 'Compañías mercantiles barcelonesas del siglo XV y su estrato familiar', *Estudios Históricos y Documentos de los Archivos de Protocolos*, IX (1981), pp.27-104; P. Molas 'La companyia Feu-Feliu de la Penya (1676-1708). Comerç de teixits vers el 1700' in *op.cit.*(1977), pp.121-171, and also *botigues* examples "Alegre" and "Amat" studied by P. Vilar, *op.cit.* (1986), IV, pp.166-194.

*de teles*) in Barcelona whose privilege consisted of their exclusive monopoly right to sell textiles in a shop<sup>18</sup>. On the contrary, the capitalist partners belonged to a wider socio-professional group even though in most cases they also belonged to the mercantile elite of the city<sup>19</sup>. Finally, it is obvious that the investments made by managers were considerably smaller than those made by capitalist partners (a rate of almost five to one).

In a sense, the smaller investments of managers was logical because they *always* provided their labour. The managers' duties were established in detail in the articles of incorporation and the first duty was to live with their family on the shop's premises. The textile retail shops were, in fact, both shop and home where it was possible to carry on business and private life, whose respective spheres were often difficult to separate<sup>20</sup>.

The purchase of fabrics, more than their sale, was the most important decision facing shop managers and to fulfil this they had to make a myriad of decisions. Although the shops sold retail, they bought wholesale and this operation needed specific knowledge. Thus, managers had to know the places of production and the current prices at each moment and in each place and, on the basis of this information, they had to choose the supplier, who was often foreign. They also had to decide very carefully about the quantity, quality and variety of the textiles to buy and had to choose the most suitable transportation. Lastly they needed to decide on the insurance and payment of commodities, including methods of payment and the

<sup>18</sup> For the evolution of textile retailers guilds see J. Carrera Pujal, *Historia política y económica de Cataluña, siglos XVI-XVIII*, 4 vols. (Barcelona, 1946-1947), II, pp.173, 227-229, 600-602; III, pp.201-203 and IV, pp.293-299; a social analysis of the guild is given in P. Molas "El comerç de teixits en la societat estamental" in *op.cit.* (1977), pp.7-46, see esp. pp.32-41.

<sup>19</sup> In the group 'Merchants' and 'Textile retailers' we also find 'Noblemen' (*ciutadans honrats* and *cavallers*, who were in most cases ennobled merchants or textile retailers), 'Widows' (also of merchants or textile retailers) and a significant number of 'Others' who carried on trade, like drug retailers (*adroguers*, who mainly sold sugar, rice, cocoa and spices).

<sup>20</sup> On this subject see, for example: C. Carrère, 'La vie privée du marchand barcelonais dans la première moitié du XVe siècle', *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, nº 3, pp.263-292.

expiry date for credit. And, of course, managers always had to think about their customers' tastes and the sales potential of each fabric<sup>21</sup>.

Managers did not work as sales assistants. This task was performed by hired workes, the officials of the textile retailers guild (*fadrins*), assisted by apprentices, (*aprenents*). The manager decided the number of workers to hire and the quality of their work and efficiency was his responsibility. He also had to pay their wages and for this purpose the articles of incorporation ordered an annual fixed sum to be delivered to the manager which was to be used exclusively for the payment of workers' wages which normally included their maintenance.

After the purchase of fabrics, the management's most important task concerned accounting and the financial control of the enterprise. The manager received the partners' investments and noted them in the accounts, did the company's book-keeping and controlled the cash, in the book-keeping sense and in the physical sense, because the manager always had one of the two keys that opened the shop's safe. The manager collected money from debtors and paid creditors, signing the necessary receipts and money orders. He wrote the enterprise's correspondence, the purchase orders and signed the delivery notes. Finally, every year he did the stock-taking and balanced the books, delivering a signed copy to the capitalist partners. He repeated these operations every time that the partnership wound up or was renewed.

Despite these wide areas of authority, the entrepreneurial activity of textile retail shops managers was subject to restrictions. The first was the prohibition of doing personal business and forming other enterprises<sup>22</sup>. There were also limitations on the purchase of

<sup>21</sup> The mercantile correspondence from Pau Dalmaes, merchant and capitalist partner in a textile retail shop, proves the complexity of the business; the correspondence relates to 1687 and 1696-1697, see it in (A)*rxiu* (H)*istòric* (M)*unicipal* de (B)*arcelona*, *Fons Comercial*, B-81 and B-82.

<sup>22</sup> This prohibition did not apply to capitalist partners. For managers who contravened the prohibition there were punishments, normally, the seizure of illegitimate profits; however, in the *botiga* managed by Ramon Julià the latter was punished by expulsion, A.H.P.B., B. Cerveró, *Libro de concordias*, 1705-1743, fol.147-156v<sup>o</sup>.

commodities since in some shops purchases in foreign markets (*fora Regne*) needed the express agreement of all or some of the capitalist partners<sup>23</sup>. Sales were restricted too. Only in a few shops did the most important sales require the consent of partners but in no cases could managers sell on credit (*fer fiança*) to customers above the quantity of money fixed by the articles of incorporation<sup>24</sup>.

The entrepreneurial action of managers was also subject to the inspection of the financial accounts performed by the capitalist partners. They had to receive and assess the annual balance sheet drawn up by the manager and they could order at any time of the year new inventories and balance sheets to which the manager was forced to comply. Furthermore, it was forbidden for the managers to underwrite (*fer fermansa*), to take loans (*manllevar a canvi*) and to issue bills of exchange on foreign places without the express agreement of all or some of the partners.

In spite of the quantity, complexity and risks of decision-making, the accounts of fabric shops showed an acceptable profitability. As we can see in Table 6 the profit rates were not high but, in general, the medium and long-term trend showed a very interesting level of stability.

Obviously, profits replenished the capital stock invested, but in textile retail shops, as in other partnerships, profits remunerated the management too. The rule in shops was to give managers one sixth of the profits exclusively for management expenses and separate profits belonging to them for their monetary investments, which were shared out among all partners<sup>25</sup>.

To remunerate management by way of profits was a very important rule mainly for two reasons. On the one hand, this was the way in which partnerships solved possible agency problems, and, on the other hand, managers, in comparison with other partners, enjoyed

<sup>23</sup> If the manager did not comply he, not the enterprise, was liable for the purchases and their payment.

<sup>24</sup> The manager had to take responsibility for anything in excess of the stipulated sum.

<sup>25</sup> The profit-sharing procedure, fixed in the articles of incorporation, made it compulsory to deduct the manager's share of profits from annual profits and to share out the rest among all partners, including the managers, if they had investments in the business.

more of the profits in the end. Thus, a small but continuous transfer of profit from the capitalist partners to the managers took place. An example of this profit redistribution mechanism can be seen in the investments and annual profit figures in the period 1670-1674, which for the Domingo Mora and Antoni-Pau Duran textile retail shop are shown in Table 7.

Domingo Mora was the capitalist partner and Antoni-Pau Duran the manager of the shop. One sixth of the annual profits belonged to the latter for his work. Year by year the profits were shared out between the partners but they were not distributed since the profits remained as the capital stock to increase each partner's investments<sup>26</sup>. Year by year, the best rate of profit on his investment passed to the manager. This fact enabled Antoni-Pau Duran in only four years to accumulate 2,132 pounds, quite an important sum especially by

**TABLE 6 - Annual profit rates of some textile retail shops<sup>1</sup>**

Shop (Partners' name)	Year	Profits on Investments (percent)
"Linàs, Rosell, Arquer"	1668	13.50
"	1671	44.09
"Linàs, Sió"	1674	12.54
"Mora, Durán"	1670	13.70
"	1671	13.07
"	1672	16.00
"	1673	9.83
"	1674	15.77
"Dalmases, Ferrer"	1675	22.17
"	1676	11.97
"	1677	11.47
"	1680	4.84
"Jaume Circuns & Co."	1682	39.13
"	1685	12.98
"Morera, Alemany"	1698	9.24
"Brichfeus, Pineda, Guàrdia"	1704	23.82
"Nadal, Beiras"	1711	21.97

<sup>1</sup> According to the balances sheets attached to the articles of renewed partnerships.

<sup>26</sup> As we can see in Table 7, at the beginning of 1672 the manager, Antoni-Pau Durán, made a supplementary investment of 671 *lliures*.

comparison with his initial investment which did not consist of money but only of his labour.

This greater capacity for accumulation was common to other textile retail shop managers and often gave rise to large fortunes, social distinction and even noble titles. In most known cases, the '*cursus honorum*' of textile retailers who were successful in their business followed the same pattern: a small but continual process of accumulation, increasing participation in the capital stock, abandonment of management, transformation into being a capitalist partner and entry into the business of another new partner as manager, withdrawal from the retailers' guild, and admission into the merchants' guild to begin the diversification of the business without leaving the shop, and participation in other partnerships and other businesses outside the textile retail trade. From economic success to social distinction and nobility the path was very short.

The well-known case, in Catalonia, was that of Salvador Feliu de la Penya, son of a textile retailer who became a merchant, a capitalist partner in two shops (one of which had been managed by his father, a tax farmer), the promoter and principal partner of the "*Companyia*

<b>Years and Partners</b>	<b>Investments</b>	<b>Profits</b>	<b>% Profits on investments</b>
1670 Mora	11,000	1,256	11.41
Durán	0	251	-
<b>*Total 1670</b>	<b>11,000</b>	<b>1,507</b>	<b>13.70</b>
1671 Mora	12,256	1,363	11.12
Durán	251	272	108.36
<b>*Total 1671</b>	<b>12,507</b>	<b>1,635</b>	<b>13.07</b>
1672 Mora	13,619	1,861	13.66
Durán	1,244	518	41.64
<b>*Total 1672</b>	<b>14,863</b>	<b>2,379</b>	<b>16.00</b>
1673 Mora	15,480	1,326	8.56
Durán	1,762	370	21.00
<b>*Total 1673</b>	<b>17,242</b>	<b>1,696</b>	<b>9.83</b>
1674 Mora	16,806	2,337	13.90
Durán	2,132	660	30.95
<b>*Total 1674</b>	<b>18,938</b>	<b>2,997</b>	<b>15.82</b>

*Nova de Gibraltar*”, the founder of an insurance company, town councillor and nobleman (*ciudadà honrat de Barcelona*)<sup>27</sup>.

This was also the case with quite a lot of partners in the textile retail shops mentioned in Table 6, for example, the relatives of Salvador Feliu, the Llinàs family. The father was a merchant and partner of “Llinàs, Rosell & Arquer” until his death, but the son, who quickly became a nobleman, never took part in the shop’s activities, he, although indirectly, continued his participation by means of his widowed mother. His business became more and more speculative, less secure but perhaps more profitable including tax leases and grain purveyance for the Royal army stationed in Catalonia<sup>28</sup>. The same happened to Domingo Mora: in the 1680s he reduced his investments in the shop and at the same time increased his participation in other businesses, such as tax leases and insurance, and later became a nobleman (*cavaller*)<sup>29</sup>. Jaume Circuns soon left shop management and began to invest in other partnerships with activities as diversified as wood distribution, insurance and woollen manufacture<sup>30</sup>. Insurance and tax leases, in addition to a shop full of textiles and a storeroom full of strange commodities like sugar, cocoa or skins, formed the basis of Jaume Morera’s self-enrichment. Morera’s daughter married Melcior Guàrdia, manager of “Brichfeus, Pineda & Guàrdia”, giving rise to one of the most outstanding eighteenth-century bourgeois families who gained full economic success and social distinction<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> With respect to the economic and social life of Salvador Feliu see: P. Vilar, *Le manuel de la ‘Companyia Nova de Gibaltar’, 1709-1723* (Paris 1962) and P. Molas, ‘La Companyia Feu-Feliu...’, *op.cit.* (1977), pp.154-158.

<sup>28</sup> As I already indicated in I. Lobato, *op.cit.* (1995), pp.228-230.

<sup>29</sup> The shop’s growth and Domingo Mora’s merchant career is cited in I. Lobato, ‘Organización empresarial y resultados económicos del comercio de tejidos en Barcelona en la segunda mitad del siglo XVII. La *botiga* Mora y Durán’, 1669-1682’, *Actas de la III Reunión Científica de la Asociación de Historia Moderna*, 2 vols. (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1996), II, pp.47-54.

<sup>30</sup> As P. Molas has noted in, ‘La Companyia Feu-Feliu...’ *op.cit.* (1977), p.139, footnote 27; the articles of the partnerships in which Jaume Circuns took part are in I. Lobato, *op.cit.* (1993), II, Documental Appendix, pp.816,853 and 878.

<sup>31</sup> I. Lobato, *op.cit.* (1995), pp.231-239; the Guàrdia’s businesses in the eighteenth century are listed in C. Martínez Shaw, *Cataluña en la Carrera de Indias* (Barcelona 1981) and J.M. Oliva, *Cataluña y el comercio privilegiado con América* (Barcelona 1987); the Guàrdia’s social distinction is in P. Molas, ‘La Junta de Comerç de Barcelona. Els seus precedents i la seva base social’, in *op.cit.* (1977), pp.240-305.

There is no doubt that Pau Dalmases, partner in the textile retail shop "Dalmases & Ferrer", was the prototype of the typical Barcelona entrepreneur in the second half of the seventeenth century, strongly tied to the textile retail trade. His father was already a partner in a textile shop and he himself had a long association with the retailer Jeroni Ferrer. However, the shop was only his first business and was never his sole commitment, being one of his numerous merchant activities. In fact, Pau Dalmases was a merchant and he disliked other kind of businesses but, as a merchant, his correspondence with a wide network of correspondents in strategic places like Sardinia, Amsterdam, Marseille, Cadiz and Lisbon, shows that nothing escaped his interest. *Cavaller*, baron and marquis, Pau Dalmases' sons became monks, lawyers, writers, historians, artists and were never again merchants, while his daughters made aristocratic marriages<sup>32</sup>. Nevertheless, the splendour of Dalmases' family did not survive the Spanish Succession War (1705-1714), which hit Catalonia and Barcelona especially hard, and they became 'old' aristocracy by comparison with the 'new' entrepreneurial bourgeoisie which arose in the eighteenth century.

Of course, only a few of the most successful retailers reached these heights and the majority never left their guild or the position of shop manager. However, men who started as textile retailers were the originators of some of the largest fortunes and noble titles in seventeenth-century Barcelona and it is very important to emphasize the possibilities of accumulation and the outstanding role played by these 'modest' and elementary enterprises.

<sup>32</sup> More details of Dalmases' family are in I. Lobato, 'Activitat econòmica i actitud política de la burgesia mercantil barcelonina de final del segle XVII: la família Dalmases', *L'Avenc*, nº 184 (1994), pp.20-23.

