

Adapting to new markets: the income and expenditure of a Catalan peasant family, 1686 to 1812*

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Abstract

Greater market involvement by households, as producers and consumers, has been a key factor in explanations of economic change, particularly the notion of an industrious revolution. The degree, nature and implications of market involvement, however, varied across households, depending on many factors such as the type of farming, size of holdings and demand for labour. Identifying market involvement in the sources is also not easy. This paper reflects on these questions through the study of a Catalan peasant household over the years 1686–1812. This family was able to take advantage of new markets by increasing sales of wool to the growing textile industry. Comparison with their hired labourers, however, suggests that such flexibility was often dependent upon landholdings, particularly where these enabled continued self-sufficiency in foodstuffs in an era of rising prices. Peasant accounts need to be read carefully, however, and may reveal as much about tradition as they do about innovation or changing mentalities.

For some time now, the debate surrounding the transition to capitalism in Europe has focused on household decision-making processes. Both as producers and as consumers, households are the key protagonists of Jan de Vries' 'industrious revolution'.¹ In this model, peasants are seen as adapting to changing markets by choosing to specialize in certain activities which commanded higher levels of market remuneration, whether that be commercial agriculture, or proto-industry, and by choosing to work more intensively in terms of longer hours, more days per year, and an increased use of female and child labour. The additional income generated by such activities allowed households to be more active as consumers, purchasing more goods and particularly, new goods.

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¹ Jan de Vries, *The industrious revolution. Consumer behaviour and the household economy, 1650 to the present* (2008).

While the hypothesis of the industrious revolution has proved hard to substantiate empirically, particularly in terms of labour allocation and the degree of choice involved, household decision making remains key to explaining the transition to capitalism.² For de Vries, such an idea requires the abandonment of any notion that peasants were rigidly risk-averse in terms of their economic behaviour.³ Indeed, historians have long recognized that peasant self-sufficiency was a myth.⁴ At the very least, peasants needed to generate a cash income with which to pay taxes and there were always some products, for example salt, which could only be obtained from markets. Pastoral farming and rural manufacturing by definition required a certain degree of commercialization.⁵ The more relevant question becomes one of the degree and nature of the relationship between peasants and markets. For many historians, peasants are only 'partially integrated into incomplete markets'.⁶ For Robert Brenner, the crucial distinction is between market involvement and market dependency.⁷ Larger producers, with better access to land and credit, may have chosen to specialize or to diversify in order to benefit from market opportunities, whereas smaller producers may have been forced to turn to markets for subsistence when their own holdings proved inadequate to meet their needs.⁸ Involvement or dependency may have varied from year to year, depending upon the vagaries of the harvest, for example, or over the life cycle, as the dependency ratios within the household changed.⁹ It is also crucial to remember that markets were indeed plural, often interlocking and could be formal or informal.¹⁰ Market growth was not straightforward: Epstein distinguishes between 'widening', that is, an increased geographical range of exchanges, and 'deepening', that is, an increase in the total or per capita volume of traded goods and services, or the trading of new goods and services.¹¹ A key contention of this

² For criticisms, see M. Overton, J. Whittle, D. Dean and A. Hann, *Production and consumption in English households, 1600–1750* (2004); J. Marfany, 'Was there an industrious revolution in Catalonia?', *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie*, 59 (2011), pp. 76–91; ead., *Land, proto-industry and population in Catalonia, c.1680–1829. An alternative transition to capitalism?* (2012).

³ Jan de Vries, 'The transition to capitalism in a land without feudalism' in P. Hoppenbrouwers and J. L. van Zanden, *Peasants into farmers? The transformation of the rural economy and society in the Low Countries (Middle Ages – 19th century) in light of the Brenner debate* (2001), pp. 67–84.

⁴ M. Aymard, 'Autoconsommation et marchés: Chayanov, Labrousse ou Le Roy Ladurie?', *Annales E.S.C.*, 38 (1983), pp. 1392–1410.

⁵ A. Antoine, 'Entre macro et micro. Les comptabilités agricoles du XVIII^e siècle', *Histoire et mesure*, 15 (2000), p. 267; S. R. Epstein, *Freedom and growth. The rise of states and markets in Europe, 1300–1750* (2006), pp. 38–49.

⁶ F. Ellis, *Peasant economics. Farm households and agrarian development* (sec. edn, 1993), pp. 219–20;

J. Whittle, *The development of agrarian capitalism. Land and labour in Norfolk 1440–1580* (2000), p. 11; C. Dyer, *Making a living in the middle ages. The people of Britain, 850–1200* (2002), pp. 163–78.

⁷ R. Brenner, 'The agrarian roots of European capitalism', in T. H. Aston and C. H. E. Philpin (eds), *The Brenner debate. Agrarian class structure and economic development in pre-industrial Europe* (1985), pp. 300–2. See also P. Hoppenbrouwers and J. L. van Zanden, 'Restyling the transition from feudalism to capitalism. Some critical reflections on the Brenner thesis', in P. Hoppenbrouwers and J. L. van Zanden, *Peasants into farmers?*, pp. 19–40.

⁸ C. Dyer, *Standards of living in the later middle ages. Social change in England, c.1200–1520* (1989), ch. 5; Aymard, 'Autoconsommation', p. 1394.

⁹ Aymard, 'Autoconsommation', p. 1395.

¹⁰ R. Domínguez, *El campesino adaptativo. Campesinos y mercado en el norte de España, 1750–1850* (1996), pp. 16–23, 181–90.

¹¹ Epstein, *Freedom and growth*, p. 57; Marfany, *Land, proto-industry and population in Catalonia, c.1680–1829: an alternative transition to Capitalism?* (2012), pp. 17–18.

paper, however, is that market involvement is hard to capture in practice, given the limited sources available.

This paper offers some thoughts on these questions via the in-depth study of the household accounts of an eighteenth-century Catalan peasant family, the Quatrecases. They were fairly typical of the Catalan peasantry or *pagesia de mas*, owner-occupiers of farms of varying sizes, practising mixed cultivation depending upon the area. Traditionally, the *mas* was seen as primarily aimed at subsistence farming and the reproduction of the family unit, but more recent studies have emphasized the capacity to adapt and innovate and the degree of market integration such holdings could possess.¹² The account books offer insights into the income from mixed arable and pastoral farming, showing how sales of wool became increasingly important with the growth of proto-industry in the area, and reveal the main items of expenditure, allowing a picture to be formed of the local market networks. The wages paid to servants and day-labourers provide some glimpses of how the rural labour market functioned over this period. Local commodity markets in particular were already integrated into commercial networks reaching to Barcelona and other coastal areas and to markets in the Castilian interior by the late sixteenth century.¹³ The eighteenth century, however, saw profound transformations at all levels of economy and society and the creation of global networks across the Atlantic, with the expansion of commercial viticulture, the growth of proto-industry, rapid population growth and increased regional specialization.¹⁴ As elsewhere, household decision making has been shown to be crucial in driving these changes and the intensification of labour in particular is evidence of ‘industrious’ behaviour, though not always in the ways hypothesized by de Vries.¹⁵

I

Account books have been seen as evidence of a ‘capitalist or commercial mentality’: the desire to record transactions in a rational fashion that ultimately allows for economic calculation and profit making.¹⁶ This discussion, however, has largely focused on merchant accounts. It is not until the nineteenth century and even later in many parts of Europe that peasant or farm accounts can really be described as accounting proper, that is, the systematic use of double-entry book keeping, with a clear separation between family or household accounts and farm or business accounts.¹⁷ Before the nineteenth century, accounts were often combined with

¹² Ignasi Terrades, *El món històric de les masies* (1984); Pere Roca Fabregat, ‘Una masia de la muntanya vallesana a l’inici del segle XVIII. El Llibre de notes dels hereus de Can Torres de Matadepera’, *Arraona*, 18 (1996), pp. 9–45; Pere Pascual, ‘L’agricultura de finals de l’antic règim (1833–1847). Una aproximació de tipus microeconòmic’, in *idem*, *Agricultura i industrialització a la Catalunya del segle XIX* (1990), pp. 21–81.

¹³ Albert García Espuche, *Un siglo decisivo. Barcelona y Cataluña, 1550–1640* (1998).

¹⁴ The classic account of these transformations remains P. Vilar, *La Catalogne dans l’Espagne moderne*

(3 vols, 1962). See also Francesc Valls Junyent, *La Catalunya atlàntica: aiguardent i teixits a l’arrencada industrial catalana* (2004).

¹⁵ Marfany, *Land, passim*.

¹⁶ The discussion ultimately goes back to Weber and Sombart. For a critical discussion, see Jack Goody, *The East in the West* (1996), ch. 2 and Giacomo Todeschini, ‘La comptabilité à partie double et la “rationalité” économique occidentale: Max Weber et Jack Goody’, in N. Coquery, F. Menant and F. Weber (eds), *Écrire, compter, mesurer. Vers une histoire des rationalités pratiques* (2006), pp. 67–76.

other types of information, such as diary entries, news and extracts copied from other texts, to the extent that a recent strand of scholarship views them as a form of autobiography or life writing.¹⁸ Strictly speaking, the kind of account books used here, which are fairly typical of the period and place in which they were written, were what Winifred Rothenberg describes as memoranda books, that is, books in which entries were made haphazardly, in the order in which they occur, compared with ledgers, which distinguish between debt and credit, and accounts proper, which distinguish assets, liabilities and equity.¹⁹ Nevertheless, some of the Catalan examples of memoranda, rather than being entirely haphazard, list transactions under sub-headings, such as 'wool sales', 'harvest labour' and so on. Later on, some households kept separate books for each category.²⁰

The limited number of peasant account books in existence and the form they tend to take as memoranda reflects, first, the question of skill and, second, the private nature of such accounts. On the first point, the failure to keep accounts may be evidence not of a lack of market orientation but simply of illiteracy or innumeracy. Conversely, however, a rise in literacy and numeracy may reflect a desire to acquire skills that were increasingly important once peasants became more integrated into markets. Cause and effect are hard to separate.²¹ On the second point, as Saguer and Jover point out, whereas business accounts were eventually required by legislation, no such obligation pertained to family and household accounts.²² Accounts tended to be produced where an element of stewardship existed, so for large estates managed for a distant landlord, or sometimes on behalf of minors. Owner-occupiers were not accountable to anyone except themselves and perhaps to future generations.²³ Here, however, there is an important question as to which kinds of documentation survive. As Pere Gifre notes, there is a distinction to be drawn between documents that households needed to keep for the long term, such as titles to land, or records of important sales or transfers, and documents with a more immediate purpose.²⁴ Gifre suggests that accounts, receipts of sales and the like may well have been kept in the short term, but perhaps did not merit being bound into volumes and thus are less likely to have survived.

¹⁷ W. Rothenberg, 'Farm account books: problems and possibilities', *Agricultural Hist.* 58 (1984), pp. 106–12; E. Saguer and G. Jover, 'Les comptabilitats com a font per a la història rural', in E. Saguer, G. Jover and H. Benito (eds), *Comptes de senyor, comptes de pagès. Les comptabilitats en la història rural* (2013), pp. 15–32. Goody argues too much emphasis has been placed by Western historians on double-entry bookkeeping at the expense of other types of financial records.

¹⁸ Adam Smyth, *Autobiography in early modern England* (2010), ch. 2, but for a more sceptical view, see Jason Scott-Warren, 'Early modern bookkeeping and life writing revised: accounting for Richard Stonely', in Liesbeth Corens, Kate Peters, and Alexandra Walsham (eds), *The social history of the archive: record-keeping in early modern Europe* (*Past and Present* supplement 11,

2016), pp. 151–70.

¹⁹ Rothenberg, 'Farm account books', p. 110, n. 8.

²⁰ For examples from the nineteenth century for Catalonia and Majorca, see Terrades, *Món històric*, pp. 156–84; Antònia Morey, 'Un exemple de comptes de pagès. Els amos de possessió: Mallorca (segles XIX–XX)', in Saguer, Jover and Benito (eds), *Comptes de senyor*, pp. 147–70.

²¹ Saguer and Jover, 'Les comptabilitats', p. 27.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²³ Pere Gifre, 'En els orígens de la comptabilitat de la pagesia del mas (reflexions sobre el cas gironí, s.XVII–XVIII)', in Saguer, Jover and Benito (eds), *Comptes de senyor*, pp. 129–31.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

Given the compelling explanations for why peasants might not keep accounts, we are left with the question of why some did. It is perhaps no accident that the Catalan peasant accounts that have survived all seem to be for households in which pastoral farming was important. All were also hiring labour, and often leasing out land on a sharecropping or other basis. In short, they had diverse activities to manage.

Account books have the advantage of recording transactions with the market directly, whereas historians who rely on inventories have to speculate about commercialization based on the scale of, for instance, food processing equipment owned by a household.²⁵ The private nature of peasant accounts, however, has considerable influence on what information they record. As Rothenberg notes, peasants did not transact with themselves, so there is rarely any record of the use of family labour, especially that of women, their own livestock or tools.²⁶ We rarely know how large the household is at any one time. Gifre argues that Catalan peasant accounts are more likely to record expenditure, since there was a concern not to over-pay, but are less likely to record income. The same may be true of accounts elsewhere.²⁷ There is, as Rothenberg also emphasizes, an overwhelming 'preoccupation with debt', reflective of a period in which credit was essential to the functioning of the economy. This last point on context brings us to a key issue when it comes to thinking about the emergence of a commercial mentality and the degree to which peasants were integrated into markets, namely, the question of risk and certainty. Rothenberg makes the valuable suggestion that we should distinguish between accounting as a tool for recording and as a tool for control. Peasants appear to be doing the former but not the latter, since they do not record transactions in a way that would allow for calculations of profit, productivity and projections into the future. However, they were operating in a world over which they had little or no control, in which markets were far from perfect, and thus cost accounting made little sense.

II

The case study in this paper is of the peasant accounts kept by three (possibly four) generations of the Quatrecases family of Pruit, a parish near the town of Vic, in central Catalonia. The family's *mas* or farmstead was situated in the Collsacabra mountain range, in an area of dispersed settlements, approximately 80 km from Barcelona.²⁸ The parish of Pruit had 19 households in 1687, and 30 in 1780 with a population of 337 inhabitants.²⁹ The parish archives were burned in 1936 so few other sources survive, but a tax register (*cadastre*) from 1757 gives

²⁵ For attempts to measure production and consumption, as opposed to just consumption, within the household economy using probate inventories, see Overton *et al.*, *Production and consumption*; Marfany, *Land*, chs. 5 and 6.

²⁶ Rothenberg, 'Farm account books', pp. 108–9.

²⁷ R. W. Hoyle, 'Farmer, nonconformist minister and diarist: the world of Peter Walkden of Thornley in Lancashire, 1733–4', *Northern History* 48 (2011), pp. 280–3.

²⁸ On this area, see Antoni Noguera, *Collsacabra*

(1963); Quirze Parés, *La despoblació rural i les masies del Collsacabra* (sec. edn, 2001). The Quatrecases farmhouse still survives, though it had ceased to be a working farm by 1936.

²⁹ The figure for 1687 comes from Antoni Pladevall, 'El bisbat de Vic entre 1685 i 1688', *Ausa* 82–3 (1976), p. 49. The 1780 figures are taken from id., 'Un cens demogràfic i econòmic del bisbat de Vic del 1780', *Revista Catalana de Geografia* 1 (1978), p. 587.

some idea of the scale of the property.³⁰ In that year, the household paid tax on an area of approximately 80 hectares.³¹ Some land was leased out, likewise a smaller building adjacent to the main farmhouse, described as a *cabanya*.³² There is no mention of the leasehold or the *cabanya* in the *cadastre*, nor do the tenants feature, though in theory either they or the Quatrecases would have been liable for tax. As a result, the property recorded in 1757 may not be the full extent of holdings, though it is likely to be very close. Only property held in the parish was included in the *cadastre* but it seems reasonable to suppose that had the family owned land in another parish, there would have been some mention of this in the accounts. Similarly, the fact that no sales, purchases or transfers of land are recorded other than the leases just mentioned, allows us to be confident that the total holdings did not change size during the period covered by the accounts. The balance between cultivated and uncultivated land, however, may well have varied over time. As was typical of most *masos* in Catalonia, the Quatrecases practised mixed farming. In 1757, only a small proportion of land (6.3 ha or 7.9 per cent) was used for grain. Another 0.1 hectares were for vegetables, 0.17 for fruit trees. Just over 10 per cent (8.5 ha) was categorized as rocky, and therefore not worth cultivating. A significant amount (13.6 ha or 17 per cent) was wooded, but most of the land (51.2 ha or 64 per cent) was uncultivated, presumably for pasture. These different land uses are discussed in more detail below.

The three generations in question are Joan Quatrecases, who died in 1745, his grandson Vicenç, whose dates of birth and death are unknown, though he died some time before 1792, and Vicenç's son Francisco, born 1746. The editor of the memoranda, Rafel Ginebra, believes these to be the sole authors, with no entries attributed to Joan's son and Vicenç's father Francisco, who died in 1752.³³ Certainly, whereas the other three frequently begin entries with phrases such as 'I, Vicenç Quatrecases', the only entry in the accounts where Francisco appears as author is in partnership with his son. In Book 2, one page is headed: 'Notes and book of accounts of Francisco Quatrecases and Vicenç his son to know what I spend and what work I have done'.³⁴ In Book 1, however, there are three entries from 1730 concerning repayment of a debt to Joan Costa, 'brother-in-law'. These are likely to be by Francisco, since he was married to a Magdalena Costa, unless Joan Quatrecases' second wife, whose surname is unknown, also happened to be called Costa. Nevertheless, the bulk of the accounts were kept by Joan and Vicenç. They are contained in three surviving account books, small bound volumes. These do not correspond to the three generations. The first book, following the catalogue listing,

³⁰ ABEV, AVV 673, 'Relación del repartimento por menor de la Real Contribución del Catastro del lugar de San Andres de Pruyt para el año 1757', unfoliated manuscript.

³¹ Land measurements in the *cadastre* are given in *quarteres* and *cortans* or *quartans*. There were 12 *qurtans* to the *quartera*, which varied across Catalonia. My calculations are based on the assumption that a *quartera* in the Vic area equals 3,400 m², following C. Alsina, G. Feliu and L. Marquet, *Pesos, mides i mesures dels països catalans* (1990), pp. 215–8.

³² The term *cabanya* was usually used to describe an

outbuilding for storage, but in some places they were larger and incorporated living space as well. The Quatrecases' *cabanya* is cited as a more impressive example than most by Parés, *Despoblació rural*, p. 74.

³³ Rafel Ginebra (ed.), *Guerra, pau i vida quotidiana en primera persona. El llibre de memòries de Bernat Puigcarbó de Muntanyola (s.XVI-XVII), el llibre de notes de Francesc Joan Lleopart de Vilalleons (s.XVII-XVIII), i els llibres de comptes i notes dels hereus Quatrecases de Pruit (1686–1812)* (2005), p. 110.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 125. All translations are my own.

covers the years 1686–1735 in terms of transactions, recorded entirely by Joan, though there are notes referring to later years made towards the end by Vicenç. The second book runs from 1696 to 1812, with entries by all three men. The third covers 1740–1768, written entirely by Vicenç. Books 1 and 2 are typical of many other Catalan memoranda books, in that while accounts make up the bulk of both volumes, they are interspersed with observations on the weather, descriptions of the War of the Spanish Succession, and, in particular, descriptions of the activities of both Joan and Vicenç as *batlles* (bailiffs) for the neighbouring village of Rupit. Book 1 also records at the end various payments signed before notaries, such as dowry payments, with notes on which notaries. Book 3, the shortest, contains some notes on births, baptisms, marriages, deaths and burials of family members, and also a remedy for toothache on the inside front cover, but is otherwise almost entirely taken up with accounts. What makes the Quatrecaes accounts more valuable than others used so far, however, is that they survive for a longer run of years.³⁵

Book 2 has been transcribed and edited in its entirety by Rafel Ginebra, and it is his edition that is used here.³⁶ Some excerpts from Book 1 have also been transcribed and edited by Ginebra in the same volume, though most of these extracts are not concerned with the household economy. The remainder of Book 1 and the entirety of Book 3 have been consulted in the manuscript versions.³⁷ Book 1 follows a more chronological sequence than the other two, but is much harder to read. Books 2 and 3 are organized quite differently. Both tend to group transactions with the same individual in a particular year together, but without any chronological order. So, for example, in Book 3, payments to a farm servant, Joan Camps, for 1749–51 appear on fos 29r–v, while payments to the same Joan Camps for 1752 appear earlier, on fo. 25v. It may be that the volume was bound after the entries were made.

There is no firm explanation for why the accounts were kept. Joan Quatrecaes describes Book 1 as a record ‘of the accounts I have had ... and other things that have happened to me ... out of curiosity and to note them and to remember what has happened to me’.³⁸ Interestingly, he began the accounts before becoming head of the household. Joan’s parents were still alive when the accounts began: in 1701 they recognized Joan officially as their heir, suggesting perhaps that he was taking over management of the household.³⁹ Joan’s father was dead by October 1705, when an entry refers to an arrangement made ‘in my father’s time’, but his mother was still alive in 1706, when the book records her falling and breaking her arm.⁴⁰ Either Joan’s role as bailiff was more important than the household accounts alone in prompting him to keep a record, or he was literate where his parents were not. There is no evidence either way for the second point, but the first is supported by the title he gave to Book 2: ‘A book for

³⁵ Of the accounts published or used so far by historians, cited in the notes to this paper, most are from the nineteenth century and often survive for only short runs or single years. Earlier accounts, such as the seventeenth-century memoranda of Joan Guàrdia, from the neighbouring Collsacabra parish of Santa Maria de Corcó, are patchier than the Quatrecaes’ memoranda and only cover 40 years. For Guàrdia, see Antoni Pladevall and Antoni Simon Tarrés (eds), *Guerra i vida pagesa a la Catalunya del segle XVII* (1986).

³⁶ Ginebra, *Guerra*, pp. 109–233.

³⁷ These are held in ABEV, Arxiu Patrimonial Quatrecaes de Pruit, numbers 1 and 3, cited here as Book 1 and Book 3. The only extract published from Book 3 is the remedy for toothache.

³⁸ Book 1, fo. 1r. Book 2 has a similar statement at the start.

³⁹ Book 1, fo. 47v.

⁴⁰ Book 1, fo. 57r; Ginebra, *Guerra*, pp. 226–7 (Book 1, fo. 57v in the original).

accounts ... and other things that have happened to me, especially as bailiff ...'.⁴¹ For Vicenç and Francisco, keeping accounts may have been a case of following precedent and updating the record, particularly since in Book 2 they inserted notations between entries made by their grandfather and great-grandfather. Vicenç added a note at the start of Book 2, directly below that of his grandfather just cited: 'Today, 3 May 1747 I, Vicenç Quatrecases, became bailiff ... And I continue the work begun by my grandfather above'.⁴² However, for Vicenç there may also have been an element of stewardship involved, since he notes at the start of Book 3 that he had to take over the household because his father was ill and his grandfather and mother dead.⁴³ Vicenç seems to have had some sense of keeping a record for future generations. At one point, referring to Joan Font, who had worked for the household as a shepherd for 30 years, he addresses Francisco directly. Font had stopped working in 1752 and had been paid his remaining wages, but the family gave him bed and board until his death in 1763 when they paid his funeral, 'as if he were one of the family'.

In case, Francisco my son, anyone should ever ask you about him [Font], you will find the receipt [for his wages] and the paper he signed to say he had been paid everything, it is in the house, and if anyone suggests that I kept anything of his, the answer is no.⁴⁴

Joan and Vicenç kept more careful and detailed accounts than Francisco. From 1780 onwards, when the accounts were solely down to Francisco, the only record is for leases of the cottage or *cabanya* and the adjoining plots of land, and some expenditure on building work, discussed below. Other types of transaction are no longer recorded. We thus know most about the household's activities for the period 1686–1779.

III

Taken together, the three books include 1,567 transactions, loosely defined, which involved either expenditure or income on the part of the household. Many transactions do not record actual sums, but simply the settling of accounts. Some transactions are in cash, some in kind, but in the latter case sometimes with the value of the goods noted. As should already be clear, these books are far from being an accurate record of the household's income and expenditure. Nonetheless, they do provide insight into some activities, and the family's relationship to the market.

First, Gifre's suggestion that expenditure was recorded to a greater extent than income is borne out here. Of the 1,567 transactions, 1,004 (64 per cent) were payments of some sort, whether purchases or wages, whereas only 563 (36 per cent) were sales or income from rent or other sources. Second, the accounts show the same priority as accounts for other peasant households, namely, expenditure on maintaining the household and ensuring family reproduction. Table 1 shows the proportion of total number of payments for different types of expenditure for two sub-periods. The analysis goes only until 1779, as from 1780, with a couple

⁴¹ Ginebra (ed.), *Guerra*, p. 122.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁴³ Book 3, fo. 3r.

⁴⁴ Ginebra (ed.), *Guerra*, p. 181. There is a similar statement in Book 1, fos 66v–67r.

TABLE 1. Types of expenditure as percentage of recorded payments, 1686–1731, 1732–1779

Category of expenditure	1686–1731		1732–79	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
blacksmith	38	7.9	1	0.2
building	11	2.3	18	3.5
carpenter	0	0.0	3	0.6
clothing	3	0.6	25	4.9
debt repayment	39	8.1	3	0.6
dowries and inheritance	9	1.9	28	5.5
food	78	16.2	10	1.9
kitchenware	2	0.4	6	1.2
livestock	41	8.5	21	4.1
loans to others	1	0.2	12	2.3
medical	1	0.2	58	11.3
other	2	0.4	1	0.2
funerals, masses and tithes	3	0.6	31	6.0
schooling	0	0.0	15	2.9
seed	1	0.2	0	0.0
tax	3	0.6	1	0.2
textiles	38	7.9	46	9.0
wages	209	43.5	234	45.6
war	2	0.4	0	0.0
Total	481	100.0	513	100.0

Source for Tables 1–5: author's calculations from ABEV, Arxiu Patrimonial Quatrecentes de Pruit, numbers 1 and 3 and Rafel Ginebra (ed.), *Guerra, pau i vida quotidiana en primera persona. El llibre de memòries de Bernat Puigcarbó de Muntanyola (s.XVI–XVII), el llibre de notes de Francesc Joan Lleopart de Vilalleons (s.XVII–XVIII), i els llibres de comptes i notes dels hereus Quatrecentes de Pruit (1686–1812)* (2005), *passim*.

of exceptions, only leases were recorded. Most of the categories are self-explanatory. 'War' refers to two entries in 1709 and 1712 estimating losses incurred during the War of the Spanish Succession, when crops were stolen by both French and Spanish troops, the house was taken over and Joan Quatrecentes had to pay to pasture livestock elsewhere.⁴⁵ It is clear that we are not seeing the full picture of household expenditure here. Only four tax payments, for the *cadastre*, normally paid three times a year, are recorded.⁴⁶ Both figures are dominated by wage payments,

⁴⁵ Ginebra (ed.), *Guerra*, pp. 230–2.

⁴⁶ The single year of accounts for Jaume Brugués, of Castellolí in central Catalonia, for 1841–2, show that

taxes were 12% of expenditure, though the proportion might have been lower in the eighteenth century. Pascual, 'Agricultura', p. 46.

because of the turnover of labour, as well as the tendency to pay wages in instalments. Other types of payment occur more in the second period than in the first, reflecting the life-cycle of the family: thus there were 28 payments of dowries and inheritance portions between 1732 and 1779, compared with nine payments before 1732. Similarly, the second period saw more payments for medical expenses and funerals and anniversary masses. Other payments, for food and clothing in particular, are clustered in certain years. No food payments are recorded for the years 1713 to 1725, for example. Food payments are for sugar, salt, nuts, spices, rice, wine and oil, suggesting that the household was largely self-sufficient in provisioning of grain, meat, dairy, fruit and vegetables. The same was true of other households, such as that of Jaume Brugués from Castellolí, a village in central Catalonia. As late as 1841–42, only 3.8 per cent of his income went on food purchases.⁴⁷ All the Quatrecases' food purchases came from a single shopkeeper. Terrades sees this practice, common to other areas, as control over the market for certain consumer goods by one or two individuals with whom households were forced to shop.⁴⁸ As discussed below, initially, this same shopkeeper purchased the wool sold by the Quatrecases, but this relationship would change. Clothing payments are intriguing: all except three payments occurred between 1769 and 1778 and were to the same tailor, Francisco Vilagran Corominas, alias Candalero. This might suggest a switch in household production from domestic production of clothing to market purchases, except that a similar annual agreement is recorded in 1707, with another Candalero, presumably Francisco Vilagran's father. It may be that the balance between domestic production and market purchases of clothing varied over time depending on the number of women in the household and other demands on their time. Uneven patterns of expenditure on food and clothing and for the blacksmith may also simply be due to more diligent recording in some years, or to particular individuals requiring stricter account keeping than others. Candalero would seem to be an example of this last point: he was paid in advance more than once and frequently ended up owing money to the Quatrecases.

The value of these different types of expenditure is shown in Table 2. These are limited to the 731 payments with a cash value recorded, that is, those made in cash or where the payment in kind was valued in cash, again, up to 1779. Payments for funerals and masses do not appear after 1731 and only account for a tiny proportion of expenditure before then, because although the accounts were strict in recording that these important obligations had been fulfilled, they rarely stipulate how much was paid, simply that it was the customary amount.⁴⁹ Tithes, which were not regularly recorded, were always paid in grain with no cash value assigned to it. The single medical payment before 1732 was also in kind with no cash value. The wage bill, while accounting for the most frequent payments, only made up 16 per cent of cash expenditure. This reflects in part the small sums involved, and also the fact that many servants were paid in bed, board and clothing only.

Some of the differences in proportions of expenditure follow on from the numbers of payments shown in Table 1, such as the much greater outgoing on dowries and inheritance portions after 1732. Vicenç, for example, had to pay dowries of 500 *lliures* each to his three sisters and smaller

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 46.

⁴⁸ Terrades, *Món històric*, pp. 161–2.

⁴⁹ These costs could be considerable. See *ibid.*, pp. 171–2.

TABLE 2. Types of expenditure as percentage of total cash value of payments, 1686–1731, 1732–79

Category of expenditure	1686–1731				1732–79			
	lliures	sous	diners	%	liures	sous	diners	%
blacksmith	27	2	4	0.6	0	0	0	0.0
building	41	1	0	0.9	57	4	0	1.6
carpenter	0	0	0	0.0	35	19	0	1.0
clothing		16	1	0.0	29	11	6	0.8
debt repayment	1698	2	0	37.2	6	14	0	0.2
dowries and inheritance	644	0	0	14.1	2092	0	4	57.0
food	290	9	0	6.4	5	18	0	0.2
kitchenware	10	7	0	0.2	40	7	0	1.1
livestock	370	5	11	8.1	514	15	0	14.0
loans to others				0.0	64	9	10	1.8
medical				0.0	179	12	6	4.8
other	1	4	0	0.0	2	2	0	0.1
funerals, masses and tithes	0	11	4	0.0	0	0	0	0.0
schooling	0	0	0	0.0	25	11	0	0.7
seed	2	12	6	0.1	0	0	0	0.0
tax	26	18	10	0.6	13	4	0	0.4
textiles	56	5	8	1.2	104	11	10	2.8
wages	736	6	11	16.1	501	1	10	13.6
war	655	0	0	14.4	0	0	0	0.0
				100.0				100.0

Source: as for Table 1.

inheritance portions, including livestock, to two brothers and an uncle. Other differences, however, are more striking, such as the predominance of debt repayments in the earlier period. They were mostly of two kinds. First, there was a concerted effort by Joan Quatrecases to liquidate debts in the form of *censals*. *Censals* were a type of disguised loan to get round the question of usury. The creditor purchased the right to an annuity (*pensió*), which until 1750 was 5 per cent of the capital and after that, 3 per cent. *Censals* were the most common form of credit in early modern Catalonia. They were of indefinite duration and could be inherited, sold, or transferred. For the creditor, they represented a regular income for only the effort required to collect the annual payment. For the debtor, they often reflected a need for cash to cover a payment that could not be made in kind. In 1704, Joan Quatrecases paid off a *censal* of 50 *lliures* owed to Joan Girabou of Falgas. He had initially borrowed the money to pay his brother's inheritance portion, and had raised the cash to pay back the loan from the sale of livestock.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Book 1, fo. 51v.

The Quatrecases accounts give a distorted picture of debt since they never record payments of *pensions*, which would have been fixed each year. Instead, what is recorded are the payments made to *lluir* or *quitar a censal*, that is, to pay the capital back and any arrears. These, like dowry and inheritance payments, mattered for future generations, and are always accompanied in the account books with a note of which notary registered the repayment, as well as often the details of the original loan. However, they show the larger, but one-off payments rather than the small amounts that would have been paid out regularly each year.

The other type of debt repayments were those made by Joan Quatrecases for loans from his father-in-law, Joan Francesc Bassas. These are more complicated to follow, but seem to involve loans to buy livestock, with some kind of sharecropping arrangement, though it is not clear whose animals were pastured where. In addition, Joan Francesc had taken over two *censals* that the Quatrecases family had previously paid to the cathedral of Vic. The debts ran until 1714, paid in instalments, often livestock. In 1707, when Joan Francesc died, Joan Quatrecases came to an arrangement with his mother-in-law Beneta Bassas whereby one of the two *censals* was repaid, and the Quatrecases family pastured livestock for Beneta instead of paying the *pensions* on the other. In 1714, the second was finally repaid, by this time to Joan Francesc's daughter Magdalena, who had been bequeathed the annuity in her father's will. Between 1714 and 1753, the debt repayments recorded are only small, including six to two brothers-in-law. After that, there are no more debt repayments, suggesting that larger loans were no longer necessary as the family became more prosperous. It is possible that later loans were not recorded in the accounts, but this seems unlikely, given the importance given to recording such transactions.

A similar sign of greater prosperity, visible elsewhere in the Collsacabra, was the increase both in relative and absolute terms in expenditure on building.⁵¹ Some payments were for repairs, but the house was also expanded and the kitchen newly built in the 1760s and 1770s. In fact, the increase was greater than appears here, since Francisco Quatrecases undertook a particularly expensive bout of rebuilding, including a new cistern, in 1788 and 1789, which he estimated at 1000 *lliures*. Moreover, such expenditure was carried out without incurring debt or retrenching on charity to the poor, as Francisco made a point of noting.⁵²

Table 3 shows the frequency with which different types of income were recorded. Again, the picture is incomplete. The picture regarding debt is as distorted as our view of the expenditure side. The income from loans is mostly that discussed above, from Joan Quatrecases' father-in-law. These payments were concentrated in a three-year period, from September 1696 to September 1699. Income from loans made by the Quatrecases family to others, from *censals*, is under-recorded: there are a cluster of payments of interest (*pensions*) between 1747 and 1768, some with arrears, suggesting perhaps a flurry of activity to collect in overdue payments, which may in turn reflect a need for ready cash. The original loans are not recorded, though the notes make clear that one *censal* was for 300 *lliures*, loaned to Josep Marcet of Olot, who may in fact have taken over an original loan to Ignasi Bassols, surgeon, as the amounts and the day for payment are identical. Another, for 110 *lliures*, was to Joan Coma of Falgas, who paid four

⁵¹ For other examples of building projects, see Xavier Solà Colomer, 'La febre de la construcció en el segle XVIII: urbanisme i arquitectura en el Collsacabra',

Ausa 26 (2014), pp. 991–1019.

⁵² Ginebra (ed.), *Guerra*, p. 124.

TABLE 3. Sources of income as a percentage of recorded payments, 1686–1731, 1732–79

Type of income/ expenditure	1686–1731		1732–79	
<i>censals</i>	0	0.0	13	5.9
dowries and inheritance	0	0.0	9	4.1
grain sales	5	1.7	1	0.5
leases	190	64.4	116	52.3
livestock sales	70	23.7	22	9.9
loans	13	4.4	0	0.0
other	5	1.7	2	0.9
wool sales	13	4.4	52	23.4
	296	100.0	215	100.0

Source: as for Table 1.

pensions in 1765 that had been owed since 1761, but apparently owed four more. These were fairly substantial sums to have loaned out, suggesting the Quatrecases family had a reasonable amount of credit at their disposal by the mid-eighteenth century, having previously owed substantial amounts. They may have had more, since other debtors, perhaps more trustworthy or less recalcitrant, may have gone unrecorded.

Nearly two-thirds of income payments overall were rent from the leasing of the *cabanya*, usually with a plot of land attached. In some periods, the two storeys were leased out separately, with one tenant occupying the upper floor and another the lower. Sometimes, the lease also included two *vessanes* of land for planting, and an unspecified area for fruit and vegetables (*hort*), with reference to apple and plum trees.⁵³ The frequency of these income payments reflects the short-term nature of the lease, between one and four years, but with payment usually annually. After these leases, wool and livestock sales represent the most frequently recorded sources of income over the entire period. Only six grain sales are recorded, and two at least of these appear more like loans. As elsewhere, and in keeping with the small surface area dedicated to cereals, most grain production was probably for household consumption, though it was sometimes used for payments in kind, discussed below.⁵⁴ Roca points out that hiring labour required a grain surplus, as even servants hired by the day expected to be fed.⁵⁵

Table 4 gives the value of different types of income, again, restricted to those with a cash value, 390 of the 563. As with expenditure, we see life-cycle effects in the income from dowries in the second period. Francisco's wife Caterina brought in 1000 *lliures*, a fairly large dowry by contemporary standards. However, the sums spent on dowries and inheritance portions totalled over 2000 *lliures*, whereas the income from dowries was only just over 1400 *lliures*.

⁵³ A *vessana* was roughly equivalent to 2.2 m².

⁵⁴ The two households from central Catalonia studied by Pascual for the 1840s sold no grain in those years,

despite having fairly substantial harvests. Both were in a viticultural district. 'Agricultura', pp. 47 and 56–7.

⁵⁵ Roca Fabregat, 'Una masia', pp. 19–21.

TABLE 4. Proportion of income with a cash value from different sources, 1686–1731, 1732–1779

Type of income/ expenditure	1686–1731				1732–1779			
	lliures	sous	diners	%	lliures	sous	diners	%
<i>censals</i>	0	0	0	0	214	4	0	4.6
dowries	0	0	0	0	1412	10	0	30.2
grain sales	37	14	0	1.8	1	18	0	0.0
leases	756	10	10	35.5	202	5	6	4.3
livestock sales	1164	0	8	54.7	898	18	11	19.2
loans	61	4	9	2.9	0	0	0	0.0
other	6	15	8	0.3	2	16	0	0.1
wool sales	103	4	3	4.8	1943	1	10	41.6
				100.0				100.0

Source: as for Table 1.

Nevertheless, the income side also shows the family's growing prosperity, as there was a shift from debt owed to others to a modest income from credit (*censals*). Income from leases shrank in absolute terms, and even more proportionally to other types of income. The most striking change over time, however, is the decreasing importance of livestock sales, to be replaced by a massive increase both absolutely and proportionally in the value of wool sales. We turn to these next, then to wool sales and finally to labour. We consider both in turn before turning to what the accounts tell us about the Quatrecases' use of labour.

(a) Livestock

The Collsacabra mountain range, due to its rich natural pastures, had traditionally been an area for livestock raising.⁵⁶ The Quatrecases kept various types of livestock. Both sales and purchases refer to mules and mares; sheep; cows and oxen, goats and pigs. They were engaged in breeding sheep and pigs, as is evident from differences in sales and purchases depending upon the age and sex of the animals. The 1757 *cadastre* records two oxen, two horses, eight pigs, 40 sheep and ten goats on their holding. It is not clear if this is all the livestock, or just that present in the parish when the register was drawn up, in March. The size of flocks and herds would vary over the year, but also from year to year. On 7 November 1749, Vicenç paid to send 57 young ewes for pasture at another *mas* in nearby Folgueroles for two months.⁵⁷ The flock was returned on 24 December, and on 29 December 34 young ewes, presumably part of the same flock, were sent for pasture on another farm in Sallent. These are the largest figures given for head of livestock; other sales or purchases, or mentions of pasturing are for smaller numbers. Joan sold 33 sheep in 1695, however, so no trend towards an increased size of flock or otherwise is discernible.⁵⁸ The highest number of pigs recorded in the accounts is 21.

⁵⁶ Joan Vilà Valentí, 'La ramaderia a Catalunya' in *Geografia de Catalunya* 1 (1958), pp. 447–66.

⁵⁷ Book 3, fo. 31v.

⁵⁸ Book 1, fo. 10r.

TABLE 5. Value of livestock sales, 1686–1779

Type	Value of sales			% of total value
	lliures	sous	diners	
Cows and oxen	429	2	0	20.8
Goats	36	2	0	0.8
Mules and horses	382	18	0	18.6
Pigs	615	16	9	29.9
Sheep	618	1	0	30.0

Source: as for Table 1.

Payments refer not only to sales and purchases of actual animals, but also to expenditure for pasturing animals on other farms and (conversely), receipts for allowing animals to be pastured on their land. In fact, such payments dominate the expenditure side: there is far less evidence of where livestock were initially obtained. There seem to have been regular exchanges of grazing for flocks with other farmers in the vicinity, resulting in complicated reckonings per head and per month. The accounts clearly reveal a practice known as *transtermitància*, movements of livestock down from the mountains to the plain known as the Plana de Vic in late autumn and winter, and back up to the mountains for spring and summer. (This is a distance of about 35 km each way.) The exchanges of livestock with farms in Folgueroles and Sallent above are clear examples of this.

Sales were recorded with much greater frequency. Table 5 shows sales with a cash value (the majority) according to type of livestock. Horses and mules, mostly the latter, would have been work animals, used for ploughing and transport. Oxen dominated over cows and calves. For both categories, transactions were only ever for one or two animals at a time. Oxen could also be used for ploughing, though one ox was sold to a butcher (see below), as was a cow in 1704.⁵⁹ Pigs and sheep, however, were the main types of commercial livestock. The importance of pigs is unsurprising since the area around Vic specialized in raising pigs and in pork products (and still does). Sheep were sold for meat, but as discussed below, also for wool. Sales of pigs tended to be smaller, occasionally single animals, more usually five, six or seven pigs at a time, with the largest sale in 1723 of 11 piglets and 14 pigs to someone nicknamed 'lo Frare' from Sant Pere de Torelló. Sheep sales ranged more widely from single animals to 33 at one time.

As discussed above, by definition pastoral farming requires engagement with markets. However, livestock sales are perhaps the best example of how market widening or deepening is hard to identify on the basis of household accounts. Sometimes sales were very local, at the market in Rupit or other villages down in the Plana de Vic, another way in which livestock connected plains and mountains. Other sales were further afield, to the urban markets of Olot and Vic. In 1700, Joan Quatrecases sold 15 lambs to the municipal butcher of Olot.⁶⁰ In 1752,

⁵⁹ Book 1, fo. 51r.

⁶⁰ Book 1, fo. 27r.

Vicenç recorded the sale of an old ox, purchased on behalf of the town of Vic, perhaps here for the leather industry, which was prominent there.⁶¹ On a couple of occasions, however, sales were further afield, twice to purchasers from Barcelona and once from Girona. The Barcelona sales were to individuals described as the *comprador* (official purchaser), a clear example of how markets in the interior were part of wider networks satisfying urban demand. Distinguishing local from more distant markets is tricky, however. On 30 June 1701, Joan sold 17 lambs, five sheep and one ox in Sant Pere de Torelló, some 12 km from Pruit, to Ando Feliu, the *comprador* for the municipal butcher of Olot.⁶² In other words, local sales may have been to satisfy local demand, but they may equally have been the first link in a longer chain. The accounts are silent as to whether the latter option was becoming more dominant over time.

What is interesting is that livestock do not feature in the accounts after 1758. In fact, the last recorded sales of pigs and sheep are in 1754, followed by a single record in 1758, with no cash value given, that 30 sheep were sent to pasture for two months at an unidentifiable location. Wool sales, however, continue to be recorded. There may well have been a switch from breeding for meat to breeding for wool, given the evidence discussed in the next section, or livestock sales may have been recorded in a separate account book, now lost. While this would explain changes in the recording of sales, however, it does not explain why the costs of grazing cease to be recorded.

(b) Wool

It is with markets for wool that the greatest degree of change in the household's market orientation can be seen. Initially, wool may have been produced more to meet domestic needs, as sales are recorded only very infrequently before the mid-eighteenth century, as shown in Figure 1. On the expenditure side, there are payments to weavers and clothiers for producing cloth for household needs. Only on one occasion, in 1738, did the household record a purchase of cloth from a shopkeeper.⁶³ Until 1729, various individuals were paid for weaving or for other tasks of cleaning, carding, and preparing wool that were carried out by clothiers (*paraires*). Fifteen names appear only once, including a female weaver, Magdalena Espona. There were some individuals who seem to have enjoyed a more regular relationship with the family. Jaume Targarona, a clothier, was paid in 1695, in 1702, and in 1705–07. He also did some agricultural work for the family. From the 1720s, however, these relationships became more long-standing. An individual known only as 'Pedretes' appears from 1722 to 1739, both as a weaver and a clothier, though mainly the former.⁶⁴ He overlapped with another weaver, described only as of 'La Pedrera', who appears from 1732 to 1761, overlapping in turn with a clothier, Llorenç Quatrecazes (no apparent relation), who prepared cloth for the household from 1753 to 1764, followed by Salvador Noguera in 1764 and 1765, after which the accounts record no more payments of this kind.⁶⁵ Whether one-off or regular, payments were often in kind, most commonly in wheat, or a sucking pig, though payments in apples or cheese also occur. By the

⁶¹ Ginebra (ed.), *Guerra*, p. 205.

⁶² Book 1, fo. 30v.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

⁶⁴ The two nicknames 'Pedretes' and 'La Pedrera'

probably indicate the names of farmhouses: Can Pedretes, in Rupit and La Pedrera, in l'Esquirol (Parés, *Despoblació rural*, pp. 107 and 390).

⁶⁵ Ginebra (ed.), *Guerra*, pp. 186–7, 194–5, 206–7.

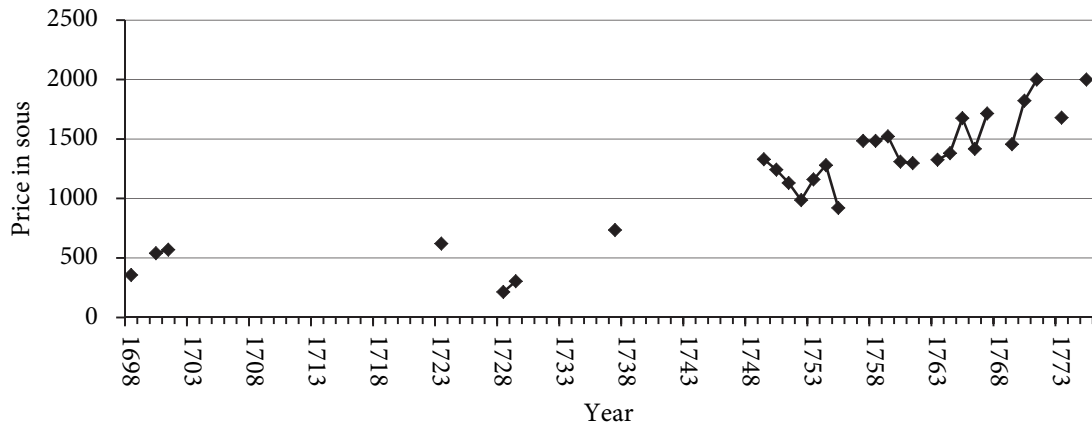


FIGURE 1. Wool sales, 1698–1788

1760s, payments were entirely in cash, and hint at changes in the production process. Thus the last payment to Llorenç Quatrecases, on 8 January 1764, was 8 *lliures*, 14 *sous* and 2 *diners* for his work as a clothier, including the costs of weaving, and a payment of 2 *lliures*, 10 *sous* and 11 *diners* for the *bolla*, a tax on cloth. Vicenç noted that Llorenç ‘has taken care of everything’.⁶⁶ Instead of employing a weaver and a clothier separately, as they had done previously, here the Quatrecases household appears to be leaving the putting-out of spinning and weaving to the clothiers. The growth of proto-industry in Catalonia was associated with increasing control over the production process by clothiers, often at the expense of weavers, whereas previously, weaving had been considered the more skilled task.⁶⁷ Indeed, in 1696, Joan recorded a payment for weaving 24 *canes* of cloth to Antoni Roca, along with the additional payments for carding, fulling and the *bolla*, but does not mention the clothier by name.⁶⁸ Interestingly, however, the Quatrecases family had not abandoned self-provisioning when it came to textiles. A note accompanying the payment to Salvador Noguera on 8 December 1765 records that he was paid for carding, spinning and finishing the cloth, with some of the spinning done by his wife and some by the women of the Quatrecases household.

Sales of wool also reflect changes in the woollen industry. The two accounts, payments for cloth and sales of wool, overlap in just one instance in 1752, when a clothier, Esteve Llosas, settled part of his account for purchases of wool in cloth rather than cash.⁶⁹ Otherwise, the household had separate arrangements with different individuals when it came to selling wool as opposed to making cloth for domestic needs. Wool sales, shown in Figure 1, are recorded from the start of the accounts, though there are long gaps. From 1723 to 1748, wool was occasionally sold to two grocers, Joan Angelats and Josep Serra, in exchange for goods purchased in their shops. In some years, these exchanges had a cash value recorded, in others, they did not. From 1749 until the last recorded wool sale in 1779, however, the Quatrecases sold direct to clothiers.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 108.

⁶⁷ Jaume Torras, *Fabricants sense fàbrica: Els Torelló, d'Igualada (1691–1794)* (2006); Marfany, *Land*, pp. 56–76.

⁶⁸ Book 1, fo. 14r.

⁶⁹ Ginebra (ed.), *Guerra*, p. 192.

Six names appear, but the longest relationships were with Esteve Llosas of Sant Esteve d'en Bas, from 1749 to 1756 and Joan Sobrero of Rupit from 1763 to 1779. The other four appear only for a maximum of two years. There was no overlap between clothiers: the arrangement seems to have taken the form of an annual contract, with wool sometimes paid for in two instalments. Payments are only ever recorded in cash. The impression is of a more formal, commercial set of transactions, at least from the mid-eighteenth century, which, again, fits with more capitalist structures and wider market networks.

Figure 1 shows the value of annual wool sales in *sous*, for those years where this is known. In some years even after 1749, the clothier was paying in arrears and it is impossible to ascertain the year to which the payment relates. Despite the gaps, there is a marked upward trend in the value of wool sales over time. For those years in which the Quatrecases recorded the price per weight, this fluctuated around 18–22 *ll* per *quintar*, sufficient to explain short-term fluctuations but not the overall trend.⁷⁰ The conclusion, therefore, is that the Quatrecases were producing more wool for sale, taking advantage of the increase in demand following the expansion of the Catalan woollen industry. This commercialization, while fitting to some extent de Vries' view of economically rational peasants, did not require direct engagement by peasants with more distant markets. Rather, the sales were local in the extreme, particularly as they became more important in terms of income. Again, local sales may have been the first link in a longer chain, but equally local demand for wool was high. A survey by the Barcelona Junta de Comerç (Chamber of Commerce) in 1764–65 identified 411 looms in the Vic district, with clothiers manufacturing a variety of cloths using both local and Aragonese wool.⁷¹

(c) Labour market

For a long time the *mas* was thought of as a family farm and thus it was assumed that most labour was supplied from within the family. However, while on smaller *masos* this might have been possible, there were always times when labour was in demand, either at busy times of the year such as harvest, or to fit within the life-cycle of the family. For larger *masos*, recent studies have shown that there was a need for hired labour throughout the year.⁷² Conversely, alongside the *masos*, there existed a mass of smallholders with insufficient land for subsistence who therefore needed to hire themselves out.⁷³ The Quatrecases hired labour through the year and by the day or the task when needed. The clearest distinction in the accounts is between the labour hired at harvest, usually a team of threshers, who were paid by the day, and the

⁷⁰ A *quintar* was about 40 kg.

⁷¹ My calculation based on Antoni Pladevall, 'Estado de la fabricación de lana en la comarca de Vich en los años 1764 y 1765', *Ausa* 5 (1965), pp. 249–56.

⁷² Roca Fabregat, 'Una masia'; idem, '¿Quién trabajaba en las masías? Criados y criadas en la agricultura catalana (1670–1870)', *Historia Agraria* 35 (2005), pp. 49–92; Carme Sanmartí Roset, 'El treball assalariat en els masos de la Catalunya interior al segle XIX. L'exemple del mas Santmartí (Bages)', *Estudis d'Història Agrària* 10 (1994), pp. 143–55.

⁷³ Josep Colomé, 'Pequeña explotación agrícola, reproducción de las unidades familiares campesinas y mercado de trabajo en la viticultura mediterránea del siglo XIX: el caso catalán', *Revista de Historia Económica*, 18 (2000), pp. 281–307; Josep Colomé, Enric Saguer and Enric Vicedo, 'Las condiciones de reproducción económica de las unidades familiares campesinas en Cataluña a mediados del siglo XIX', in J. M. Martínez Carrión (ed.), *El nivel de vida en la España rural, siglos XVIII–XX* (2002), pp. 321–56.

longer-term contracts, most commonly for a year, of farm servants. The majority of these were hired to look after the livestock, though sometimes with the proviso that they could be called upon for other tasks as needed.

Although wage payments dominate among types of expenditure recorded, the accounts are less informative than those used by other studies. While most of the servants hired are named, we are not told their ages, and often not where they were from. The accounts are not always consistent in recording start and end dates of contracts, and annual wages, but until the mid-1750s, the Quatrecentos seem to have been diligent in keeping careful accounts of small sums paid out to servants, usually for purchases of clothing or to send home to families. After 1755, there is far less information. By contrast, payments of wages at harvest time to teams of reapers and threshers are recorded much more carefully from this date. Prior to this, there are only sporadic entries, except for a run of years in the 1720s when Joan was more diligent. Harvest payments are sometimes given as a total sum, sometimes as the daily wage, but the accounts do not always record how many days were worked by how many people and how much household labour was included, though from 1756 there is a note almost every year to the effect that household labour did contribute. The teams were occasionally from the same or the neighbouring parish, but usually from Vic, Manlleu or Roda de Ter, all located in the flat area known as the Plana de Vic, between 10–20 km away. Interestingly, the daily wage was 5 *sous* in 1701 and 5 or 6 *sous* in 1712, but then remained at 4 *sous*, 6 *diners* a head until suddenly increasing at the beginning of the 1770s. In 1771 the captain of the team and his son demanded 5 *sous* a day. The following year, the entry reads ‘having finished, they demanded 5 *sous* a day each, and on top the captain wanted 5 *sous*, 6 *diners*. I didn’t want to argue, so paid what they asked’. Up until the final recorded payment in 1775, the wages remained at this new level. Clearly, threshers were in a position to demand a higher wage in certain years, but the reasons are unclear. 1701 and 1712 were both war years, with possible labour shortages, but so was 1711, when the price was 4 *sous*, 4 *diners*.

Harvest labour aside, some 141 individuals appear in the accounts as receiving wages of some form or another.⁷⁴ The places from whence they came were recorded for 84 of these, showing an overwhelmingly local labour market of under 25 km for most. Many surnames occur more than once, suggesting servants followed older siblings, though only in two cases are relationships stated. It is not always easy to determine length of contract, as many people were hired for the year but left after a shorter time, while others, who are recorded as receiving payment for months worked, had possibly originally been hired for the year. Converting payments for shorter lengths of time into annual wages is highly problematic, as on the one hand, servants hired for the year were getting clothing as well, so their monthly cash wage may have been lower, but on the other hand, other studies have found that servants hired for short periods were paid only for days worked and not when bad weather prevented work.⁷⁵ There are 114 references to individuals being hired on an annual basis, of which 81 were references to males (71 per cent) and 33 to females (29 per cent). The gender balance is even more skewed if daily

⁷⁴ 141 is an estimate based on assuming that some names with variant spellings relate to the same person, and counting separately those individuals with illegible

or no surname given.

⁷⁵ Sanmartí, ‘El treball’, p. 151.

labour and short-term contracts are included. No women were hired by the day, and very few by the month. Two of those hired for the short term were wet-nurses. However, the Quatrecaes employed more women than are found in the other extant accounts. In the mid-nineteenth century, women made up 18 per cent of the servants hired by the Santmartí household in the Bages district, though this included all lengths of contract.⁷⁶ The accounts of the Torres family from the Vallès Occidental, in the mountain range north-west of Barcelona, record only two live-in female servants for the period 1699–1824.⁷⁷ By contrast, the Santamaria family of Serrateix usually hired four female servants a year out of around twelve servants in total.⁷⁸

Wages for servants varied considerably, a pattern found elsewhere in Catalonia and one that persisted until well into the nineteenth century. Garrabou and others attribute these differences to the persistence of different wage rates according to age, gender and task, the tendency to pay wages partly in kind, making wage rates hard to establish, and the limits to bargaining power set by local conditions.⁷⁹ Nineteen male and 21 female servants were paid only in clothing, but these contracts for men were concentrated between 1687 and 1700, whereas for women they continued until 1722. Other servants were paid wages ranging from 1 *lliura*, 8 *sous* to 16 *lliures*, 10 *sous* for men, and 4 *lliures* to 7 *lliures*, 10 *sous* for women. These money wages do not seem to have increased over time. They may have varied according to task, but contracts do not always state if servants were hired for particular tasks. Wages were only partly in cash; almost all male servants also received the right to pasture some of their own animals alongside the Quatrecaes' livestock, or the use of a plot of land and the right to keep the produce. No cash value is ever assigned to these rights, but variation in these may explain variation in the money wage. Women received clothing and footwear alongside cash. Only one female servant, Mariangela Pasqual, who was the highest paid in money terms, was allowed to keep livestock of her own, a single sheep. The shift away from contracts paid only in clothing may perhaps be a shift towards hiring older servants, since some of those paid in this way seem to have been children. Rosa Roca was hired in 1697 to look after the pigs, with a note that 'if she is too young to stay the year, she will be paid for however many months she has been here'. She lasted only seven days, and was paid 6 *sous*. Anna Maria Barcelons, hired the following day, lasted only a day.⁸⁰ There is also a pattern of recurring names, which may suggest that boys received only clothing until they had some experience. The next step was then to start building up livestock of their own by pasturing one or two animals with the owner's flock.

Certainly some male servants were older and more established. At least one, Jaume Costa, was married. It is likely that they had land of their own and supplemented their income by working as farm servants, still a common practice in the nineteenth century.⁸¹ There are glimpses of this in the strict accounting kept by the Quatrecaes of days owed to them when their servants took time off to work on their own land, as in 1752 when Vicenç made three separate notes that Joan Camps had taken a total of three and a half days to harvest his

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, my calculation based on p. 145.

⁷⁷ Roca Fabregat, 'Una masia', p. 24.

⁷⁸ Terrades, *Món històric*, p. 164.

⁷⁹ Ramon Garrabou, Josep M. Ramon-Muñoz and Enric Tello, 'Organització social del treball, salaris i mercat laboral a Catalunya: el cas d'una explotació

agrària de la comarca de la Segarra a la darrerria del segle XIX', *Recerques*, 70 (2015), pp. 105–11.

⁸⁰ Book 1, fo. 14r–v.

⁸¹ Garrabou, Ramon-Muñoz and Tello, 'Organització', p. 95; Pascual, 'Agricultura', pp. 63–4.

own wheat, even though it was 'a working day'.⁸² For these servants, wages often included foodstuffs, suggesting either that they were not given their board, or that they preferred to be paid in kind rather than buying in food for their households on the market, given rising prices.

An additional source of labour came from the family's tenants. These rented the *cabanya* or part of it, usually with rights to cultivate a vegetable plot, in return for an annual sum, valued in cash, though actual payment could take different forms. The amount varied depending on whether or not the whole cottage was rented. Renting the whole cost between 13 and 18 *lliures* a year, renting part between 5 and 9 *lliures*. There was no trend over time before 1784, so the variation may have been down to the amount of land involved, which is never stated, or to other terms of the contract, such as the amount and type of livestock kept, or rights to pick fruit. In 1784, a significant shift occurred when the household began renting the *cabanya* with two *vessanes* of land and no other terms stipulated, at a much higher price of 25 *lliures* a year. There is no explanation for this shift, and why the decision to change the lease to one with more land, though the initiative may perhaps have come from the tenants themselves, since the first new lease in 1784 was signed with the long-standing tenant Benet Cidrera but this time jointly with his son Joan. In 1785, only Joan renewed the lease. It may be that after years of leasing the cottage on more modest terms, the Cidreras had either the savings or the labour power to invest in a bigger lease.

Similarly, from 1784 on, the accounts simply record the annual agreement with the tenants, with a note of any arrears, whereas before, the accounts painstakingly record part payments of rent, in kind and in labour. For example, Joan Vinyeta rented the ground floor of the cottage in 1701, for 6 *lliures* a year, along with the right to cultivate a vegetable plot, keep a pig, and collect a certain amount of fruit and firewood. Over that year, he paid off his rent mainly in labour, such as six and a half days' ploughing in April, though he also sold a pig and some grain to Joan Quatrecases. All of these transactions were valued in cash, and where the day worked fell short for whatever reason (usually bad weather), the price was lower.

Clearly one advantage to the Quatrecases family in having tenants was the additional source of labour available from them, and one for which they did not have to pay cash. Whether the value assigned to this labour differed from the wages paid to those hired by the day is impossible to know, since there is no indication of what food and drink might be included. Tenants were available at short notice, however, and where labour was required for a run of days, probably cheaper insofar as they would not be given full board. How willing tenants were to work the Quatrecases' land rather than their own probably depended in part on how they chose to cultivate their land, and on the size of the debt owed to the family and the other means available to pay it off. Other members of tenants' households might also work. When Josep Casellas settled accounts with Joan in 1721, the payment included the days worked by his son.⁸³ It is unlikely that 1784 saw an end to tenants paying off debts in labour and kind, but neither Vicenç nor, more likely, Francisco, saw fit to record such payments any longer, unless they were recorded elsewhere.⁸⁴

⁸² Book 3, fo. 25v.

⁸³ Book 1, fo. 85v.

⁸⁴ The frequent phrase 'after going over the accounts,

we are even' suggests exchanges throughout the year rather than a one-off payment.

From the tenants' point of view, we see a different kind of interaction with markets, namely, the dependence upon landlords for access to interlocking markets of land, credit and labour. There were complicated exchanges of labour, including borrowing the landlord's mare for ploughing, or help with the harvest. Some also borrowed money to pay for seed and the like. What this access to land meant in terms of social mobility is hard to assess. In the last decades of the accounts, the tenants seem to have been managing to pay rent without significant arrears, some years recording that rent had been paid in full. Many leased the cottage for years, before and after 1784. Benet Cidrera first leased part of the cottage in 1750, and his son Joan was still leasing it in 1812, when the accounts end. The lack of detail here urges caution, but the rising prices of the 1780s, 1790s and 1800s may well have benefitted those with either enough land to produce a surplus or at least sufficient land with which to meet subsistence needs and thus be insulated from market prices.

Others struggled, however. Many were soon in arrears. The most difficult cases were the widows of tenants, Maria Fiol, Magdalena Icart and Rosa Alou. Maria's tenancy seems to have ended with her husband Bernat's death in 1726, but it took her until 1735 to pay off all that was owed. The other two both tried to keep the tenancies going after their husbands' deaths, but were unable to sustain their holdings. In all three cases, the Quatrecentes ended up reluctantly buying agricultural tools from the widows. Rosa Alou struggled particularly. After the death of her husband Josep, she rented only part of the *cabanya* and seemingly no land. Eventually she ended up in the pauper hospital in Vic, and died at her mother's home. Her outstanding debt was paid by her brother, partly in labour.

IV

The wool and labour markets with which the Quatrecentes were involved show a shift from payments in kind to cash, and in the case of wool, a greater commercialization of output over time. Such shifts could be taken as signs of greater market involvement and a more commercial mentality. At the same time, however, the continued degree of self-sufficiency shown by the accounts and the persistence of payments in kind, 25 per cent of expenditure and 37 per cent of income, might suggest that this was still very much a traditional household economy, lacking the kind of economic rationality and commercial mentality discussed at the start of this paper. The issue is, however, more complex.

First, we have to acknowledge that payments in kind and a preference for self-sufficiency in some areas were perfectly compatible with a strong awareness of prices. Payments made exclusively in kind, with no cash value assigned to them, were rare. Much more usual was mixed payment, such as part of wages being in kind, or payment in kind with a cash value recorded, often one set by an expert from outside the household. A skirt for a female servant in lieu of part of her wages was valued by the tailor. When Joan and Vicenç reluctantly bought their husbands' tools from Maria Fiol, Magdalena Icart and Rosa Alou, they had the blacksmith value them. As Gifre notes, the market thus set prices.⁸⁵ The Gallardes household studied by Pascual kept a record of grain prices despite not selling any grain.⁸⁶ Even when

⁸⁵ Gifre, 'Orígens', p. 138.

⁸⁶ Pascual, 'Agricultura', pp. 56-7.

cash values were not recorded, it is likely that this is because the price was well known. All except six of the 94 payments received by the Quatrecases of this kind were for labour services performed in return for rent or loans of cash or ploughing animals, where the daily wage rate when recorded was fixed at three *sous* for a full working day. Similarly, the bulk of the 116 payments made by the Quatrecases exclusively in kind with no cash value were wages in the form of clothing, as described above. Otherwise, payments exclusively in kind were largely of a particular type: fixed annual payments in grain to specific individuals in return for medical services or clothing. Payments of this kind were made to a doctor, Josep Dorca; a barber surgeon, Joan Camps, and the tailor, Francisco Vilagran (alias Candalero).

More importantly, the Quatrecases accounts appear no more 'traditional' than those from the mid-nineteenth century studied by Pascual in terms of self-sufficiency in foodstuffs and a double flow of income and expenditure in cash and kind. Yet by the 1840s, Catalonia was well on the way to becoming a capitalist, industrialized economy, fully inserted into global markets for wine, spirits, textiles and other goods. The two households in question were both part of these market networks, exchanging significant amounts of output in the form of wine in the market. Once again, we need to be wary of how we read this kind of household account. Neither the Quatrecases, the Brugués nor the Gallardes households were operating as businesses with full cost accounting, but that did not prevent them from engaging with markets and displaying what was often a sophisticated understanding of costs.⁸⁷ If nothing else, they were managing flows of cash, kind and labour which had to be balanced in complex ways, often over generations. Doing so, however, allowed them to be commercially active while at the same time avoiding excessive risk. A striking difference in this regard was that, whereas the payments made wholly or partly in kind by the Quatrecases were very varied, including livestock, food, clothing and grain, the payments they received in kind were overwhelmingly in the form of labour services (74 per cent of the whole). That the Quatrecases preferred to make payments in cash but were more willing to receive them in kind makes sense, given rising prices. Elsewhere in Catalonia, landowners sought to insulate themselves from the effect of rising food prices by extracting more from their tenants in the form of shares of the harvest, rather than cash rents.⁸⁸ The main market from which the Quatrecases were insulated was the labour market. The evidence is scanty before the nineteenth century, but the impression is that nominal wages, particularly in the interior of Catalonia, were rising only slowly over the eighteenth century.⁸⁹ From the discussion above, however, it would seem that harvest wages at least were rising. If the daily wage of three *sous* used by the Quatrecases to keep account of work done by their tenants was the market rate, then it seems to have been unchanged for much of the period covered by the accounts. If it was not the market rate, then it suggests the Quatrecases were indeed able to use the leases of their land to secure cheap labour. In turn,

⁸⁷ See the description in *ibid.*, pp. 57–60 of Gallardes' attempts to estimate different kinds of costs when drawing-up a balance sheet for some building works.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 53–5, where the Gallardes household extracted grain and other foodstuffs from their tenants both for consumption *and* to sell; Marfany, *Land*, pp. 44–7.

⁸⁹ Ramon Garrabou, Enric Tello and Albert Roca, 'Preus del blat i salaris agrícoles a Catalunya (1720–1936)', in M. Gutiérrez (ed.), *La industrialització i el desenvolupament econòmic d'Espanya* (2 vols, 1999), I, pp. 422–60. There are only two wage series for the eighteenth century.

the tenants who accepted this lower rate presumably saw it as a trade-off between irregular employment on a higher wage but with no access to land, and a fixed-term tenancy on terms that were more secure but more exploitative. We know too little about rural wages in eighteenth-century Catalonia, however, for this to be more than speculation.⁹⁰

A second point is that the form payments took reflects a chronic shortage of cash in the countryside, which persisted into the nineteenth century. Some payments, such as taxes, had to be in cash. Dowries usually were. Purchases of livestock and all but three sales of livestock were in cash. The preference for cash might be a reflection of the greater value of livestock, but is more likely to have been the consequence of the geographical breadth of the market, particularly for sales. The Quatrecases were dealing with purchasers whom they did not necessarily know and over distances that made payments in kind more complicated. In one instance, Joan sold five pigs to someone from Santa Cecilia, with a note 'I don't know his name because he paid me the same day he took them'. Whereas payments in grain or other crops might require waiting until the harvest, cash meant payments could be settled instantly, with no need to establish relationships of trust. It did, however, require purchasers to have cash at their disposal, hence, dowry payments might require a loan or sale, as noted above. Pascual is therefore right to argue that peasants preferred to keep cash for those payments that could not be in kind, particularly given shortages of cash and the irregularity of monetary income flows.⁹¹ At the same time, cash was not necessarily hoarded: it was often also laid out on material improvements and consumption beyond mere subsistence needs, as shown in the building work done by the Quatrecases.

V

This study began with the question of market involvement and what household accounts can reveal about such involvement. Our first conclusion is methodological: this kind of source needs to be used with care. The Quatrecases accounts, like many others, are patchy. What the household chose to keep track of might well be significant in terms of the value of some activities and forms of income and expenditure to the household economy. Equally, however, it might be that income and expenditure less subject to variation, such as tithes and annuities, did not need recording since it was always the same. Questions of willingness and diligence also apply. Francisco Quatrecases can be assumed to be as literate and numerate as his father and great-grandfather (payments for his schooling appear in the accounts), but he chose only to record one income stream, and that in a more cursory fashion, unless there were other account books that have not survived. Finally, a single set of accounts makes widening and deepening hard to assess: the full network of sellers and buyers for commodities is hidden.

Second, there are issues of interpretation. The idea of a commercial mentality becomes elusive: what degree of hard-headed economic calculation is required? Similarly, 'risk averse' is a subjective term and one arguably unsuited to an early modern economy. To return to Rothenberg's valuable insight, peasants were not in control of their environment. Harvests could

⁹⁰ Most wage series are for urban building wages only. Agricultural wage series are very limited before the second half of the nineteenth century.

⁹¹ Pascual, 'Agricultura', p. 58.

fail, wars could damage property, prices could fluctuate. Operating a double system of cash and kind was in part imposed by a shortage of cash, but to a large extent a strategy that allowed the Quatrecases to take advantage of those markets which offered the best prospects, namely, livestock breeding and above all, wool sales, while simultaneously protecting themselves from the greatest risks. Brenner's distinction between involvement and dependency is clear here. The Quatrecases household was largely self-sufficient in terms of food provisioning, thus insulated from rising prices. They were also able to employ labour on favourable terms by drawing on their tenants. By contrast, the tenants and labourers who worked for the Quatrecases were less free to choose their markets. While forms of tenancy such as the renting of plots of land and a cottage by the Quatrecases offered some access to land, keeping it meant dependency upon these landlords for access to credit, livestock and labour. These smallholders were unlikely to have been self-sufficient, forcing them into the labour market and into market provisioning at a time of rising prices and falling or stagnant real wages. Widows struggled in particular to cope on smallholdings. Decision making in the household economy is key to understanding economic transitions in the past, but we need to acknowledge that different households had different priorities and different options at the same time. At a moment when some households may have sought increased market integration, others may have felt that it did nothing to serve their purposes. For many households, there may have been no real choice to be made.