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[...] no tengo hacienda ni otra cosa sino aquello que gano cada dia con mi trabajo.
I don't have any property and I just have what I earn every day with my work.
Sworn statement of a French. Registration of Frenchmen, 1637 (Council of Aragon)

INTRODUCTION

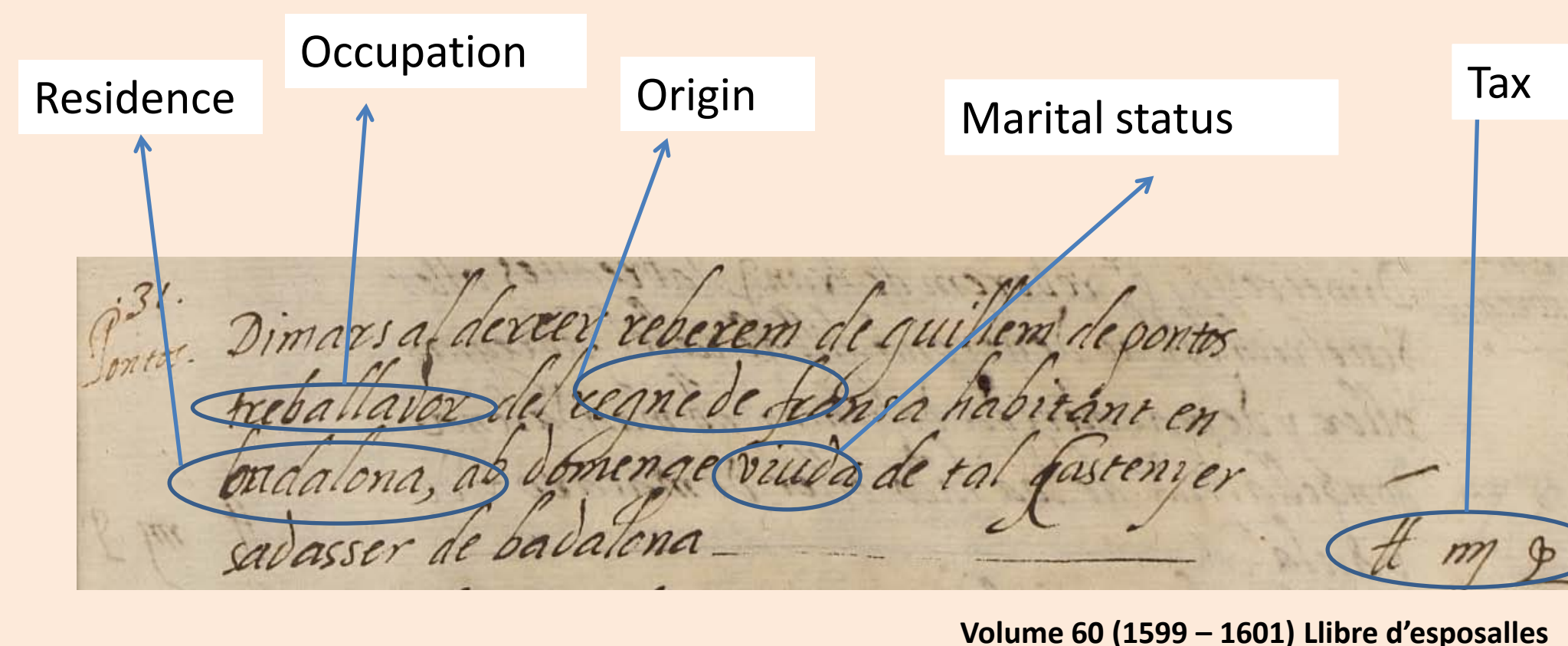
In the recent years, Spain and Catalonia have experienced extraordinary population growths (over 15% in 10 years) due to the arrival of unprecedented international migratory flows. But are they really unprecedented?

Many authors have documented the importance of the French migration to Catalonia and other regions at the South side of the Pyrenees (Aragon, Navarra, Basque Country) during the 16th and 17th century, through monographs and local studies.

The causes of this migration, despite its importance, are not well known. Some causes were economic in nature. Wages were significantly higher in Spain than in France. On the other hand, Catalonia was ravaged by plagues and wars from middle of the XIVth and XVth century which lead into to a significant reduction in the population. In addition, during the period France suffered the consequences of the wars of religion .

FIVE CENTURIES OF MARRIAGES (5CofM) – BARCELONA HISTORICAL MARRIAGE DATABASE (BHMD)

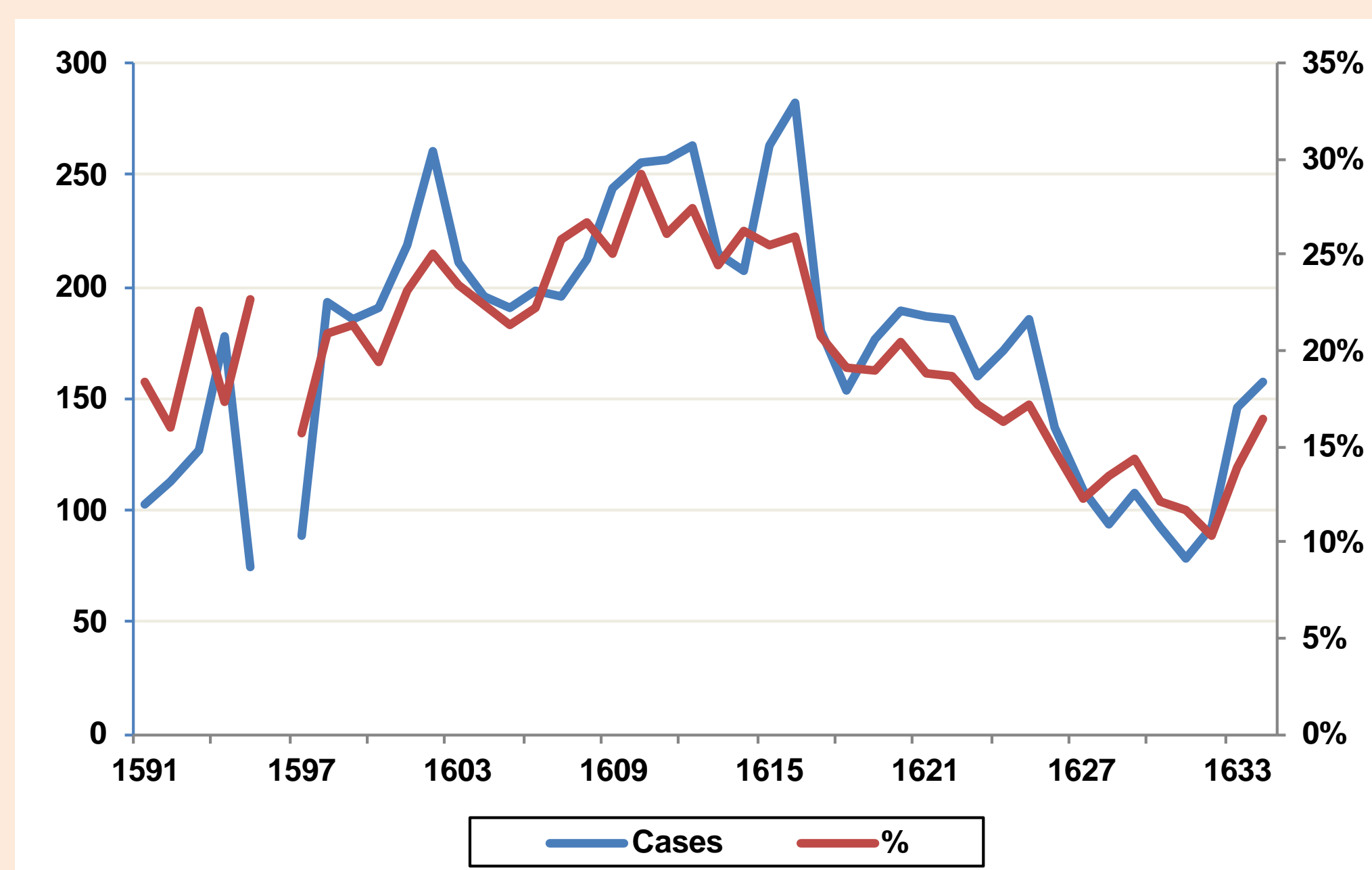
Five Centuries of Marriages (5CofM) is an Advanced Grant project directed by Professor Anna Cabré funded by the European Commission, through the IDEAS Programme of the European Research Council . This project is a long-term research initiative based on the data-mining of the *Llibres d'Esposalles* conserved at the Archive of the Barcelona Cathedral for the period 1451-1905. A unique documental source that will be used to create the Barcelona Historical Marriages Database.



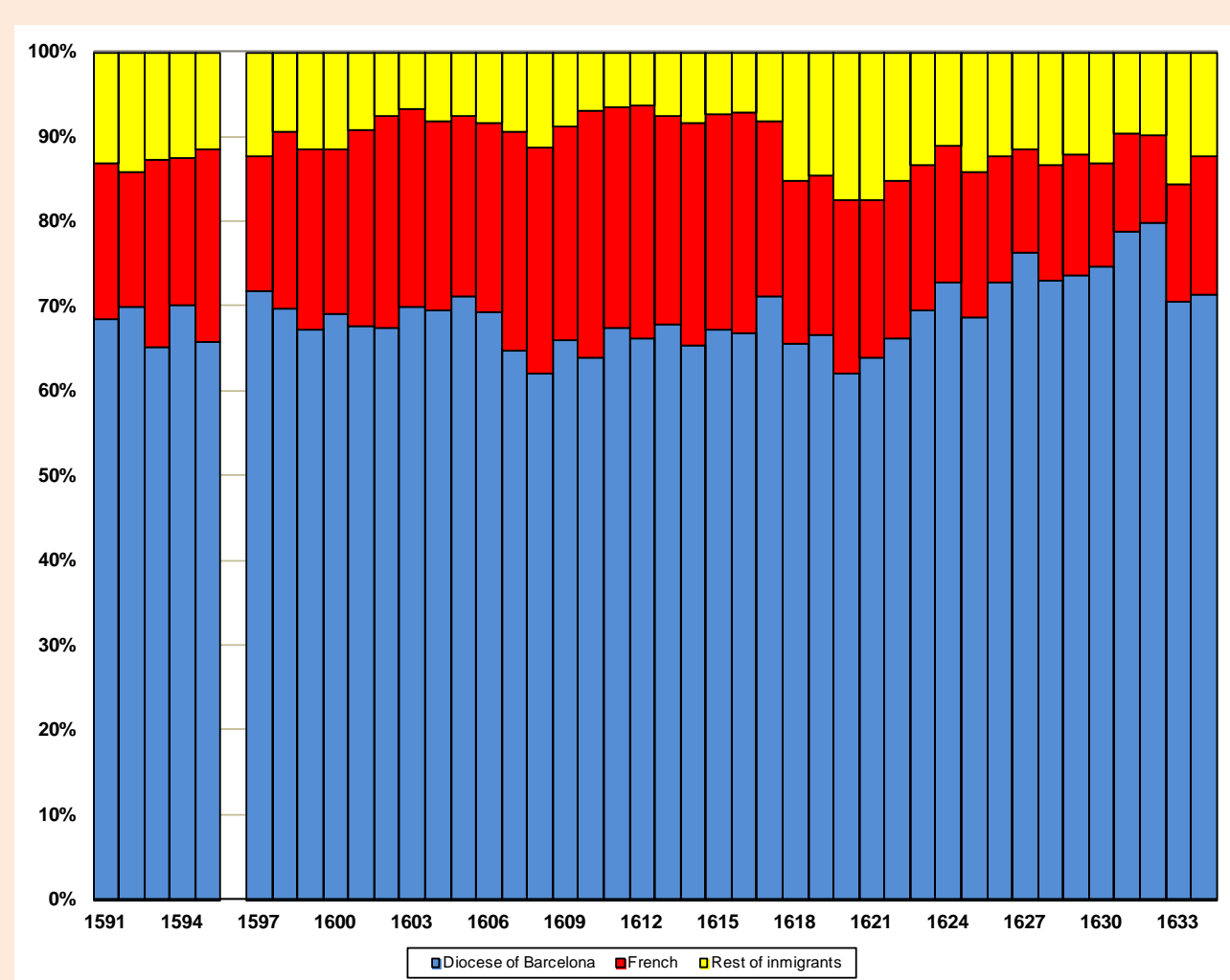
The Barcelona Historical Marriage Database (BHMD) will allow for the first time the precise and continuous measure of the relative weight of the French in the adult population, their part in the total migration and their comparative profile, and this for a large and heavily populated region, the Diocese of Barcelona. From 1581 to 1641, 8677 marriage licenses were given in the area of Barcelona to a French groom. This period is the richest in information, containing variables of origin, residence, marital status, the tax posed on each couple, the occupation of the groom, of his father and of his father in law.

RESULTS

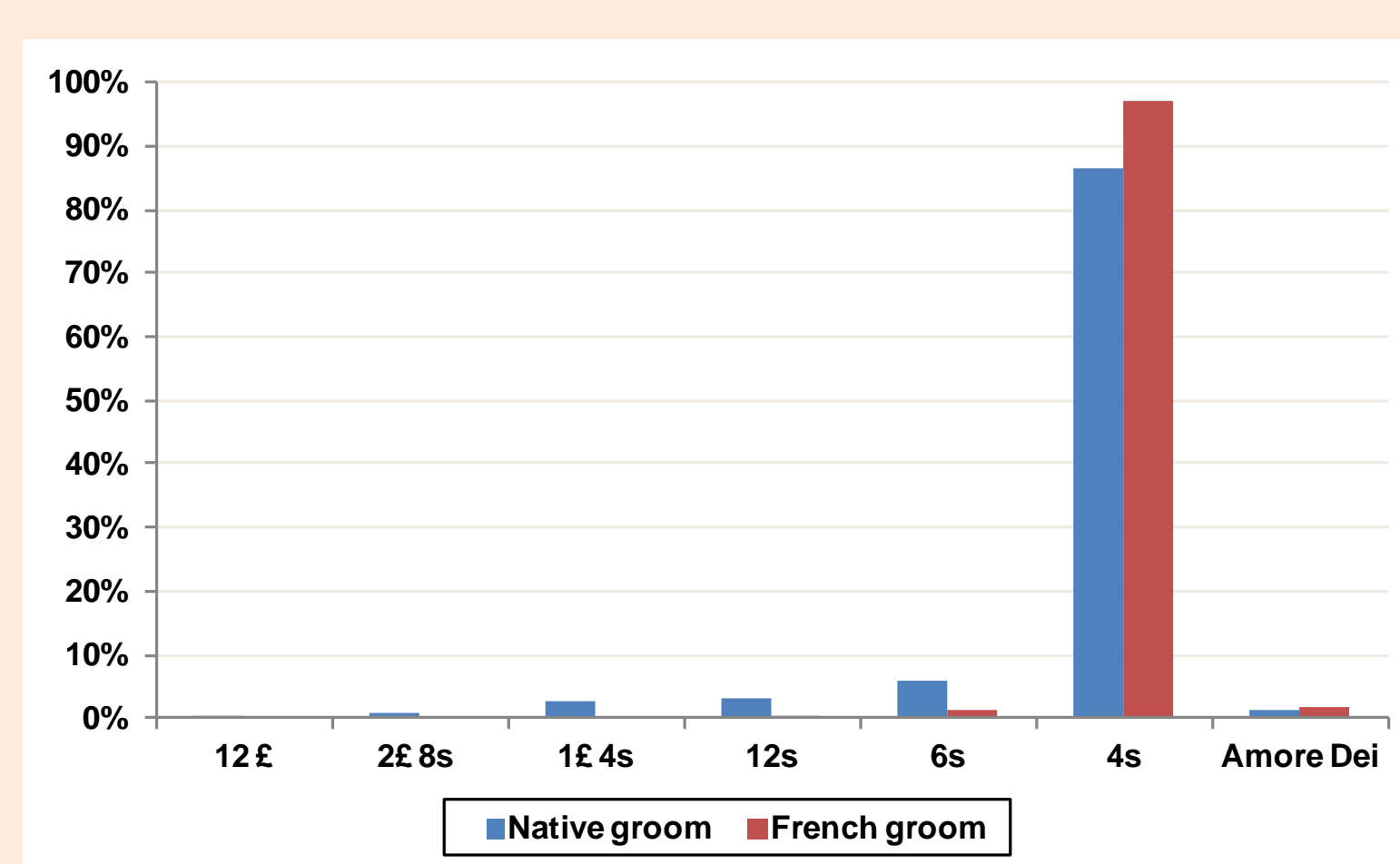
Proportion of French grooms in the area of Barcelona, 1591-1634



Origins of the grooms in the area of Barcelona, 1591 - 1634

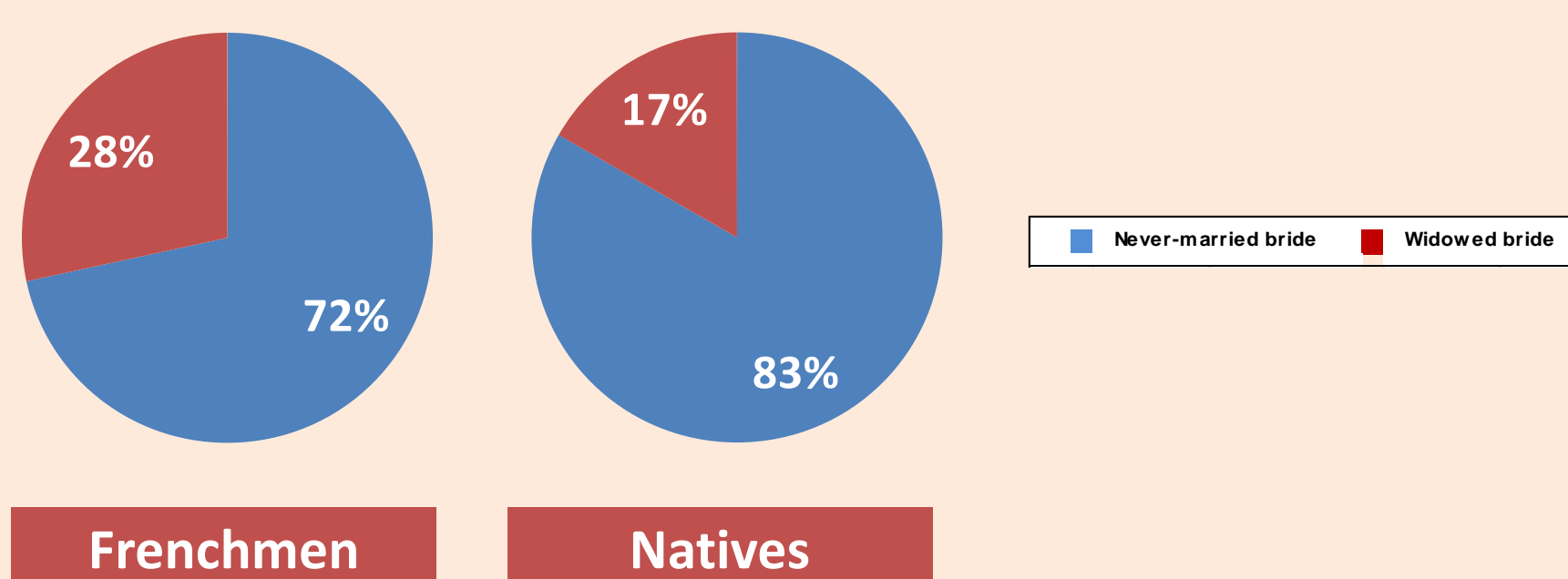


Fees paid for the marriages in the area of Barcelona, 1591 - 1634



- ✓ **Importance:** On the whole period under study, 1591-1634, 20.11% of the marriages involved a French groom. Some years this proportion approaches 30%.
- ✓ **Chronology:** The proportion of French grooms in the marriages at the Barcelona area goes *in crescendo* from 1591 to 1616 and decreases quite sharply after 1622. The causes of the decline may be related to political tensions between France and Spain caused by the European Thirty Years War.
- ✓ **Exclusivity:** Among the non-natives from the Barcelona area, French husbands represented the 64,86%. Therefore, two thirds of any-distance migrant grooms were French.
- ✓ **Socio-economic status:** considering the fee paid for the marriage license as an indicator of status, it appears that the French husbands concentrate with great regularity in the lowest categories: no cases in the three highest, only 4 and 110 cases in the two following (shop-owners and master craftsmen), 8407 cases in the lowest paying group and 154 among the non-paying poor. Among the French, 97% are paying the lowest fee and 2% do not pay, while amongst the natives the figures are 87% and 1%.
- ✓ **Female migrants** cannot be directly identified but we have estimated a rough amount: two thirds of the maiden brides with no reference of parents (sign of being non-native) and an equal proportion of French among the widow brides. On the whole, the French brides would have been around 1,75%.
- ✓ **French groom/native widow** appears as differential matching with respect to natives. 28% of the never-married French grooms marry widow women, to be compared with 17% among the native grooms. The differences are much lower when considered widower grooms, but the go in the same direction.
- ✓ **Sex composition of the migrants:** the male/female ratio among the French spouses would therefore have been 11.5 to 1. This can be interpreted as the respective weights of both sexes in the migratory wave. The effects of such a sizable and unbalanced migratory flow on the marriage market may have resulted in some kind of appreciable marriage squeeze.

Never-married grooms



Widowed grooms

