In the course of the modern era, among the towns on the Apulian Adriatic coast Monopoli stands out as being one of the most important centres of the Kingdom of Naples for the commerce of olive oil, which is widely produced along the whole coastal stretch of the province of Bari. Two main sectors form the hub of the town’s economy: the primary sector, based on fruit tree cultivation, and the mercantile sector, with its dense network of commercial relations and assortment of partners.

Ex gratia property conveyances have been chosen as the basis for the analysis. This approach – in a field where it is traditional to draw on documentation with goods as the subject of exact economic assessment - makes it possible to ascertain whether, and how, ex gratia property conveyances might reflect the economic situation of a centre of population from a different perspective. Precisely because of the considerable variety and complexity of the social fabric, in our analysis of family property strategies it seemed appropriate to investigate the behaviour of the population as a whole, rather than concentrate on any one social group.

Each of these forms of conveyance provided significant elements that reflected the roles of the contracting parties, their rights and duties in strategies for the management, division and defence of the family assets. Thus it is possible to identify certain features in common in the different dispositions, and to outline a trend in property conveyances over the twenty year period of the study, even in a comparative point of view with an analogous investigation relating to Monopoli in the early 17th century.