

CALL FOR PAPERS

III Doctoral School in Economic History of the Middle Ages

ON THE DEMAND SIDE.

CONSUMPTION AND CONSUMERS IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE

JULY 8-10, 2024

UNIVERSITAT DE VALÈNCIA



The research group *Cultures i Societats de l'Edat Mitjana* (CiSEM) of the Universitat de València organizes, between July 8 and 10, 2024, the III Doctoral School in Economic History of the Middle Ages. This third edition is entitled *On the Demand Side. Consumption and Consumers in Medieval Europe* and aims to show the possibilities offered by the study of consumption patterns and the different profiles of consumers in medieval and modern Europe.

The study of consumption patterns and consumers during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance has been a recurring theme in the field of economic history over the last decades. Debates around concepts such as the "consumer revolution" and the "industrious revolution," initially developed for the Modern Age, have been extended to the Middle Ages, helping to abandon the old idea that consumption and demand were simply by-products of supply and offer. Until recently, it was believed that the Industrial Revolution and the material civilization in Europe arose primarily from supply-side factors such as technology, production, and labour. However, from the 1990s

on, historians of the Modern Era have begun to question this narrative, arguing that parts of the European population had experienced a considerable increase in their assets before 1800, in a process that took place during the "long seventeenth century." More recently, medievalists have traced the roots of this process to the second half of the fourteenth century and the fifteenth century, attributing it to the rise in real wages after the Black Death (1348), although others remain sceptical of this seeming "Golden Age" of workers.

On the other hand, although there seems to be a growing consensus on the multiplication of goods between the mid-fourteenth century and the nineteenth century, questions about the revolutionary nature of this increase in consumption, its geographic scope, and the underlying causes remain unclear. Comparative discussions on the dimensions and scope of this process are limited, mainly due to single-nation or single-source approaches while analysing consumption. International comparisons are therefore considered essential to address questions that remain unanswered: what triggered the initial increase in consumption in various European regions during the fourteenth century, and why did it persist? How did these experiences differ or align across Europe in terms of purchasing power, industrial revolution, and the social importance of fashion? Addressing these (and other) questions will contribute to a more complete understanding of the historical dynamics of consumption and consumer behaviour in the medieval and Renaissance eras.

Therefore, the Doctoral School will address the most recent research on consumption and consumers, with special emphasis on crucial areas such as food and textiles. First, we will delve into the study of food consumption patterns, exploring the cultural, social, and economic aspects that shaped food choices in medieval societies. We will also analyse the forms of consumption of textile industry products, considering not only preferences and qualities, but also changes over time, also considering the gender perspective, which will inevitably lead us to the study of fashion. The Doctoral School will also seek to understand trends, styles, and buying behaviours, looking closely at the influence of fashion on personal and cultural identity. Through the convergence of these three fields, the doctoral school aims to contribute to knowledge about consumption in the Middle Ages. The lectures and papers will be the essential mechanism for understanding the living standards and socio-economic complexities of the medieval population, thus providing a more complete picture of how these aspects were intrinsically linked to everyday life and social structures.

Applications

With the aim of highlighting the wide range of available sources and methodological approaches to the topic, the Doctoral School will feature internationally renowned researchers who will give keynote lectures, giving way to the presentation of papers by doctoral students and young PhDs. The three invited professors are Jessica Dijkman (Utrecht University), Laurent Feller (Université Panthéon-Sorbonne), and Evelyn Welch (University of Bristol). In addition, professors and senior researchers from various Spanish universities will also participate.

Through this call we encourage doctoral students and young PhD students interested in the topic to send us their proposal. This should be sent in pdf format to lledo.ruiz@uv.es and laura.miquel@uv.es before April 30, 2024 and should include:

- Short résumé (1,000 characters max.)
- Contact information
- Summary of the proposal (2,000 characters max.) highlighting:
 - The sources employed
 - The geographic and temporal scope

In order to ease the dialogue between researchers from different countries, the language of preference will be English, although presentations may also be made in Spanish, Catalan, French, and Italian. Those using one of these languages should complement their oral presentation with a PowerPoint presentation in English.

The scientific committee will select the accepted proposals in May 2024. Selected participants will have 20 minutes for their presentation during one of the different sessions of the Doctoral School.

The Universitat de València will cover the accommodation and living expenses of the speakers during the days of the School. Travel expenses will be paid by the participants. The Spanish Society of Medieval Studies (SEEM) and the Association *Societas Historicorum Coronae Aragonum* (HISCOAR) offer complementary grants for members who wish to attend (see <https://medievalistas.es/becas-seem/> and <https://hiscoar.org/participation-in-events/>).

This course is supported by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation research project "Mercados, instituciones e integración económica en el Mediterráneo occidental (siglos XIII-XVI)" (PID2021-128038NB-I00) and the Generalitat Valenciana excellence project "Rompiendo jerarquías. Movilidad social, dinamismo económico y desarrollo institucional en el Mediterráneo Occidental (siglos XIII-XVI)" (CIPROM/2022/46). In addition, it is part of the research *groups Cultures i Societats de l'Edat Mitjana* (CiSEM) and of the *Arca Communis* network on fiscal history.

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