



International Colloquium Mortality Crises in Medieval Western Mediterranean: Sources, Cycles and Socioeconomic Dynamics

IN MEMORIAM
ANTONI RIERA I MELIS

Universitat de Lleida, Facultat de Lletres

28-30 January 2026

Edifici Rectorat, Sala Roberto Fernández (2.26)

This colloquium will focus on some of the fundamental aspects of mortality crises recorded in the western Mediterranean during the medieval period. More specifically, it will address the sources and the initial results of the reconstruction of those cycles in which mortality exceeded ordinary levels as a consequence of sudden events such as epidemics, famines, wars, or natural disasters.

To this end, the scope and limitations of primarily documentary sources providing either direct or more indirect evidence of this sequence of phases of abnormal mortality from the late thirteenth century to the early sixteenth century will be assessed, with particular attention paid to those arising from plague outbreaks and other diseases. This will include obituary books, burial records, and death registers, as well as series of wills and other types of documents such as official correspondence and narrative and iconographic sources. These materials come from a wide range of territories across the northwestern Mediterranean arc, extending from the Italian peninsula to Iberia.

At the same time, the analysis of the factors and dynamics involved in these mortality crises in these same territories will be initiated, alongside an examination of their effects on various socio-economic phenomena. The latter encompasses from the general functioning of the economy to specific markets such as labour and slave markets, levels of inequality, and even the impact of excess mortality as a driver of cultural change.



28 JANUARY

16h00 — Welcome and Introduction.

Antoni Riera i Melis (1944-2025), historian of the crises

1st Session

Chairs: Pere Benito i Monclús (Universitat de Lleida)
and Sandrine Victor (Institut Nationale Universitaire
Champollion, Albi)

16h45 — Vicente Pérez-Moreda (Universidad Complutense
de Madrid - Real Academia de la Historia)

*Topics deserving further research: a reexamination of primary
sources and modern studies on the arrival and spread of the
Black Death in Europe, 1347-48*

17h30 — Folco Vaglianti, Carolina Manfredini, Mirko Mattia,
Cristina Cattaneo (Università degli Studi di Milano)

*The Milan Death Registers (1451-1524). The nature of the
source, an overview of the situation and research prospects*

18h15 — Break

18h45 — Lorenzo Freschi (Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa)

*Obituary books between general and local perspectives. The
overview of northern Italy and the Friuli case study (14th-
16th centuries)*

19h30 — Claire Clément (Université Avignon)

*Des testaments pour faire l'histoire de la peste : retracer les
vagues épidémiques à Marseille au XV^e siècle*

29 JANUARY

2nd Session

Chair: Pere Verdés Pijuan (Institució Milà i Fontanals – CSIC)

9h00 — Abigail Agresta (The George Washington University)

*Plague, News, and Rumor in the Crown of Aragon: The 1510
'Plague of Bugia'*

9h45 — Milena Viceconte (Universitat de Lleida)

*'Fue esta imagen prodigiosa remedio a tanta dolencia':
Devotional Images of Our Lady against the Plague in Early
Modern Valencia*

10h30 — Break

11h30 — Guided visit to the Cathedral (Seu Vella) of Lleida
by Joan Josep Busqueta Riu (Universitat de Lleida)

13h30 — Lunch

3rd Session

Chairs: Vicente Pérez-Moreda (Universidad Complutense de Madrid - Real Academia de la Historia) and Marcelo Cândido da Silva (Universidade de São Paulo)

15h30 — Alberto Barber Blasco, Joan Busoms Cabanas, Pere Benito i Monclús, Albert Reixach Sala (Universitat de Lleida)

*Sources for the study of mortality crises and epidemics in the
Late Medieval Crown of Aragon (1): burial records and last
wills*

16h15 — Carmel Ferragud Domingo (Universitat de València), Ignacio Nebot Segarra (Universitat de Lleida)

*Sources for the study of mortality crises and epidemics in the
Late Medieval Crown of Aragon (2): The Chancellery
registers and other royal sources*

17h00 — Break

17h30 — André Filipe Oliveira da Silva (CIDEHUS - Universidade de Évora)

*From 'Finis terrae to Caput mundi': Mortality crises in
Portugal from the 11th to the 16th Centuries. Sources,
methods and challenges*

18h15 — Sandrine Victor (Institut Nationale Universitaire J. F. Champollion, Albi)

*Des pratiques testamentaires particulières en temps de crise?
Le cas des artisans géronais*

19h00 — Lucas Fassio (LaMOP, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne/CNRS)

*Demography and Memory of the Black Death: A Case Study
(Ganges, Languedoc, 1348 and Beyond)*

30 JANUARY

4th Session

Chairs: Alexis Wilkin (Université Libre de Bruxelles) and Albert Reixach Sala (Universitat de Lleida)

9h00 — Samuel K. Cohn (University of Glasgow)

*New Evidence of the Black Death's impact on popular culture
and piety*

9h45 — Philip Slavin (University of Stirling)

*Plague Reservoirs and Waves in the Mediterranean during
the Earlier Stages of the Second Pandemic, c.1347-1520: A
New Database Approach*

10h30 — Break

11h00 — Pere Verdés Pijuan (Institució Milà i Fontanals - CSIC, Barcelona), Laura Miquel Milian

*Epidemics, inequality, and social mobility in Catalonia
(fourteenth-sixteenth centuries)*

11h45 — Alberto Luongo (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata)

*Mortality crises, economy and society: the case of Italy after
the Black Death (1350-1400)*

12h30 — Iván Armenteros Martínez (CAIMMed, Institució Milà i Fontanals - CSIC, Barcelona)

*Epidemics and Slave Markets in the Christian Western
Mediterranean (ca. 1350-1500)*

13h15 — Conclusive round table:

Marcelo Cândido da Silva (Universidade de São Paulo)
Alexis Wilkin (Université Libre de Bruxelles)
Carmel Ferragud Domingo (Universitat de València)
Guillem Roca Cabau (Universitat de Lleida)



Scientific organising committee

Pere Benito i Monclús (Universitat de Lleida)
Albert Reixach Sala (Universitat de Lleida)

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ARQHISTEC: Consolidated Research Group ‘
Food Economies and Population Dynamics in Western
Mediterranean: Archaeology and History of Pre-modern
Societies’ (2021 SGR 1607 – UdL)

MORTALITAS: Mortality crises in the Northwestern
Mediterranean, 11th-16th centuries: Narrative memory,
serial records and the construction of sociodemographic
indexes (Project PID2023-151785NB-I00 funded by
MICIU/AEI/10.13039/501100011033)

*Inequality, mobility and social conflict in the urban
world (Catalonia and Majorca, 13-16th centuries)*
(Project PID2022-141368NB-C22 funded by
MCIN/AEI/10.13039/501100011033,
and by ERDF A way of making Europe)



Universitat de Lleida

ARQHISTEC
Economies alimentàries i dinàmiques poblacionals a la
Mediterrània occidental: grup d'arqueologia i història de les
societats premodernes

