



AN AGRARIAN HISTORY OF PORTUGAL, 1000-2000

Convenors: Dulce Freire (ICS-UL) & Pedro Lains (ICS-UL)

The Middle Ages, 1000-1500, António Castro Henriques (FE-UP), Susana Miranda (FCSH-UNL) & Ana Maria Rodrigues (FL-UL)

The Early Modern Period, 1500-1820, Leonor Freire Costa (ISEG-UTL), Margarida Sobral Neto (FL-UC) & José Vicente Serrão (ISCTE-IUL)

The Modern Period, 1820-2000, Luciano Amaral (FE-UNL), Amélia Branco (ISEG-UTL), Conceição Andrade Martins (ICS-UL) & Dulce Freire (ICS-UL)

Discussants: Rui Santos (FCSH-UNL) & Jaime Reis (ICS-UL)

This session intends to present and discuss the outline and draft chapters of a book proposal on Portuguese agriculture from the year 1000 to the present time. The chapters will be presented in groups of three, according to the three major historical epochs, and will be then discussed by two invited discussants. We intend to allocate 15 minutes to each group of chapters, 10 minutes to each discussant, and the remaining time to the floor.

The chapters in the book will address common sets of questions, although with variations across time, given the extension of the period, and will have both qualitative and quantitative focuses.

Portugal is an interesting field for the study of long term agricultural growth in Europe, as it provides a geographical unit for almost a millennium, and because the country belongs to one of the most backward and less studied areas of the continent. Despite distance and backwardness, the empire and the existence of a traditionally open economy will provide a good ground for the study of the evolution of agriculture in the appropriate international context. Our study will give a deeper knowledge on the constraints and possibilities of growth of output, population, land use, and factor productivity in the geographical periphery of the Continent.

The country is well positioned in the study of the causes of the great divergence in European economic development. Following a period of territorial expansion to the south, and the recovery from the Black Death epidemic, the Portuguese polity

commenced a period of overseas expansion that ultimately led to the creation of an empire. The empire had different territorial configurations and levels of economic activity and marked to a great extent the structure of the metropolitan economy. Such unique feature has led many to question the extent to which the Portuguese economy was hampered by the existence of the empire. The consequences of the empire will reflect in the conditions of agricultural development, either indirectly, through eventual changes in the supply of labor, or directly through competition from abroad of agricultural produce or the creation of an export market for agriculture. The empire was a source of opportunities too and it is not yet clear whether the domestic economic activity, particularly in the primary sector, did not respond positively to the expansion overseas. Agriculture is also a good field to assess the impact of changes in the institutional setting regarding the expansion and consolidation of the central state, changes in land ownership legislation, or monetary arrangements. Institutional change was intensified in the modern period and we need to consider how much that affected agriculture.

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