

INTRODUCTION BEYOND THE SEAS: A MEDIEVALISTS' MEETING IN TOKYO

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This book is a partial result of the Third International Colloquium *The Middle Ages seen from other horizons: theoretical and methodological problems (La Edad Media vista desde otros horizontes: problemas teóricos y metodológicos)* and the Special Seminar on “*mudejarismo*” and “*mozarabismo*”, both held at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, from 12 to 15 October 2017.

The Colloquium commenced in Mexico in 2013 to discuss the limits and possibilities of studying the Middle Ages from non-European perspectives. The second session was held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in 2015, and the third was celebrated for the first time in Asia. From the preceding events and because the organizer specializes in Spanish Medieval Art History, it is no surprise that many of the participants gathered in Tokyo were “Hispanists”. That is why the Special Seminar on some themes particular to the medieval Iberian Peninsula was held concurrently; it seemed to me to be a unique opportunity to deepen the academic conversation on subjects that remain controversial in Spanish History and Art History.

To be sure, several remarkable achievements have already been made in attempted dialogues among intercontinental medievalists. In Latin America, Brazil is an outstanding presence in this field¹. MAP (Medieval Association of the Pacific) has developed activities principally in English-speaking countries such as North America, Australia and

¹ A series of meetings was organized by Eliana Magnani under the title “Le Moyen Âge vue d’ailleurs” (Auxerre, 2002/ São Paulo, 2003/ Madrid, 2005/ Buenos Aires, 2006). The programs and the reports can be read in on-line journals: MAGNANI, Eliana (dir.), “Le Moyen Âge vu d’ailleurs”, *Bulletin du Centre d’études médiévales d’Auxerre*, hors série n° 2, 2009, édition en ligne: <http://cem.revues.org/index3912.html>. et al. Another outstanding development is: MEHU, Didier, BARROS ALMEIDA, Néri de, CANDIDO DA SILVA, Marcelo (dirs.), *Pourquoi étudier le Moyen Âge? Les médiévistes face aux usages sociaux du passé, Actes du colloque tenu à l’Université de São Paulo du 7 au 9 mai 2008*, Paris, 2012. I referred to the importance of Brazil in the field of European Medieval Studies in Latin America in: KUME, Junko, “European Medieval Studies in Latin America” (Current Issues), *Medieval European Studies (Japan Society for Medieval European Studies)* 8 (2016), pp. 229-241.



New Zealand, for half a century². We must also mention CARMEN (Co-operative for the Advancement of Research through a Medieval European Network) that consists of a worldwide network of medievalists³.

Our Colloquium began as a more intimate project based on personal friendship links rather than formal relationships between institutions. Another characteristic of our events is that Spanish plays an important role as the *lingua franca* for scholarly exchange, though it is also open to other languages, as readers will notice from the table of contents.

In the third round of our events, too, we had very productive discussions about Medieval Studies, thanks to the presence of fifteen researchers, ranging from young scholars to career-long experts who are internationally recognized for their professional experience and research quality. This book is a compilation of papers presented during those four days.

In the first paper, “Apuntes sobre la vida y obra de Christine de Pizan (1364-1430). Una mirada desde el siglo XXI”, Diana Arauz Mercado presents us the essence of the works of Christine de Pizan (1364-1430), one of the Middle Ages’ most famous and controversial female writers. Arauz Mercado convincingly proposes a new reading of de Pizan’s life and works from the perspectives of Medieval History and History of Women.

The next article, “A Sensory Reading of Rabanus Maurus’ *De Universo*”, also proposes a new reading of a classical text from an intersectional point of view comprising Medieval History, Literature, and History of Emotions. In this case, Gerardo Rodríguez explores, in a splendid way, the sensory world of the High Middle Ages by using, as a clue, the text of one of its most representative Carolingian authors.

The following two authors both cover medieval realities in the border lands between Christianity and Islam in the Iberian Peninsula, but with contrasting approaches. While Martín F. Ríos Saloma shows us an exemplary historiographical study, meticulously gathering previous studies and summarizing their arguments in his paper “La frontera entre cristiandad e islam: un modelo para el estudio de las realidades medievales en la península ibérica”, Yuga Kuroda deals with the problem from a micro viewpoint, analyzing, in outstanding manner, local documents of the fifteenth century

² <http://www.medievalpacific.org/>

³ <http://www.carmen-medieval.net/>

from the Castilian-Granadan frontier towns, under the title “La vida y diplomacia local en la frontera castellano-granadina: casos de Cazorla y Jerez de la frontera del siglo XV”.

The same methodology based on original documents is applied in “Conflictos de identidad socio-urbana en la baja edad media hispánica (Castilla-siglo XV)” by Mariana Zapatero and Cecilia Bahr. They start from six inquisitorial faith processes from Castilian towns in the time of the Catholic Monarchs and brilliantly examine the social conflicts that caused accusations of being Judaizers (*judaizantes*) among urban residents.

Regardless of whether you view the Middle Ages from within Europe or from without, it is always the historian's primary goal to draw closer the social, political and cultural realities of that era. However, exploring how concepts and images of the “medieval” have been formed in the Modern Era is also an important task for contemporary researchers. Sara Satoh, a young scholar about to start her academic career, shows us the different thoughts and practices of two important architects who participated in the restoration of the Alhambra from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, relying on visual and textual materials.

In the last paper, “Symbolic Figures in the *León Bible of 960*: An Attempt to Interpret the Bible’s ‘Program’”, Mieko Kezuka proposes a novel typological interpretation of the ornamental figures appearing beside the text columns of the New Testament, that were hitherto considered simply decoration. This essay reminds us of how illuminated manuscripts are one of the more popular works of art for Art Historians working at remote locations, thanks to elaborate facsimiles accessible at some university libraries. It also underscores the importance of digital archives, which have been rapidly improving in recent years and are very useful for any researcher in any circumstance, although surveying original materials remains essential for academic study.

Readers may be surprised by the diversity in these papers. This variety of academic disciplines and themes obviously stems from the varied personal backgrounds of the authors. The only point connecting us is, no doubt, an inexhaustible interest in the European Middle Ages that makes us embark on our long intellectual journeys beyond the seas, in spite of the many difficulties and limitations hindering us, for a glimpse of a new unknown and exciting world.

I am indebted to the many individuals and institutions that have sustained and supported me from this Colloquium’s inception until now. First of all, I wish to express

my deepest gratitude to all the participants who rallied in Tokyo, including those who were unable to get their manuscript into this issue for various reasons. I am particularly happy that Martín F. Ríos Saloma, organizer of the first Colloquium in the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Gerardo Rodríguez, person in charge of the second meeting in the Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, and Diana Arauz Mercado of the Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas, who participated in all events without fail, got involved. Also, I am very honored that Flocel Sabaté of Lleida University not only accepted my offer to come to Japan to deliver some lectures, but also took the trouble to write an inspiring preface for this book.

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