

TEN YEARS OF THE MIDDLE AGES HISTORIC STUDIES SEMINAR (SEHSEM-UNAM) 2007-2017. PREMISES, BALANCE AND PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a balance of the achievements that were obtained throughout a decade's worth of work (2007-2017) by the Middle Ages Historic Studies Seminar (SEHSEM, acronym in Spanish) developed by the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), and which focuses on the three main areas of the Mexican university: research, teaching and dissemination. Even though the balance considers important achievements such as the integration of a specialized bibliographic collection, the considerable number of graduates in the field of Medieval studies or the appearance of published works on the matter, the analysis also shows that there are still important tasks to be carried out such as the strengthening of liaisons with Latin America and the Anglo-Saxon world.

KEYWORDS

Mexico, Middle Ages, History, Historiography.

CAPITALIA VERBA

Mexicum, Medium Aevum, Historia, Historiographia.

1. Introduction

In the year 2010 I subscribed to these same pages an article entitled “The State of the Discipline of Medieval History in Mexico” in which I presented a balance about the state of medieval studies in Mexico.¹ In such text, I pointed out the difficulties that Medieval studies had had to face for their development in the North American country —linked, mostly, to a historiographical vision that focused the study of the past on national frontiers—, as well as the contributions Mexico had made to medieval studies, particularly in the area of editing classical texts in Spanish, including those by Marc Bloch,² Henri Pirenne,³ Alfons Dopsch,⁴ James Brundage⁵ and Georges Duby,⁶ or more recent texts among which we can mention one of Jacques Le Goff’s latest works and a project by Umberto Eco about the Middle Ages.⁷ Likewise, it highlighted the contributions made in the area of literature and philology through the project *Medievalia* and its homonymous⁸ scientific dissemination work, of historiography through contributions such as those by Norma Durán⁹ or Alfonso Mendiola¹⁰ and which proposed a programmatical plan with the purpose of promoting medieval studies in Mexico in the fields of history, historiography art history and archaeology.

One of the steps that were proposed—one that had been previously proposed—was the creation of a permanent research seminar that served as breeding ground for research projects —particularly for college and postgraduate students, as a space for discussion and creation of scientific texts, as a receptacle for visiting professors, as a central axis for institutions outreach and, generally, as mainstay for dissemination

1. Ríos, Martín. “The State of the Discipline of Medieval History in Mexico”, *Imago Temporis. Medium Aevum*, 4 (2010): 93-116.

2. Bloch, Marc. *Los reyes taumaturgos (Miracle worker Kings)*. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988. [New edition published in 2006].

3. Pirenne, Henri. *Historia económica y social de la Edad Media*. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1939; Pirenne, Henri. *Historia de Europa. Desde las invasiones al siglo XVI*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1942.

4. Dopsch, Alfons. *Fundamentos económicos y sociales de la cultura europea, de César a Carlomagno*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1951.

5. Brundage A., James. *La ley, el sexo y la sociedad cristiana en la Europa Medieval*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000.

6. Duby, George. *Obras selectas de Georges Duby. Selección y compilación de Beatriz Rojas*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999.

7. Le Goff, Jacques. *Hombres y mujeres de la Edad Media*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1914; Eco, Umberto, ed. *La Edad Media. I Bárbaros, cristianos y musulmanes*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2015.

8. *Medievalia*, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 15 December 2017 <<https://revistas-filologicas.unam.mx/medievalia/index.php/mv/index>>.

9. Durán, Norma. *Formas de hacer historia. Historiografía grecolatina y medieval*, Mexico: Ediciones Navarra, 2001 [2nd edition 2017].

10. Mendiola decided to study the items from medieval historiography present in the chronicles of Mexico’s conquest: Mendiola, Alfonso. *Retórica, comunicación y realidad: la construcción retórica de las batallas en las crónicas de la conquista*, Mexico: Universidad Iberoamericana, 2003.



and social promotion works that promote the knowledge generated through the research work that is so expensive for the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Thus the Seminario de Estudios Históricos Sobre la Edad Media (“Middle Ages Historic Studies Seminar”) (SEHSEM) was created, coordinated by this paper’s author, whose seat lies at the Historic Research Institute of the UNAM, and which decided to focus on history,¹¹ given the important development of medieval language studies and given the scientific nature of the institution where its nestled. In that sense, this text is meant to serve as a balance of the achievements made throughout a decade’s worth of work by the research group linked to the SEHSEM, as well as a projection of the challenges that lie ahead, in mid and long term, in a regional context marked by the development of Medieval studies in Argentina,¹² Brazil,¹³ Chile¹⁴ and, recently, Costa Rica.

And so, first I present the precedents of the early medieval studies made at the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, and then I analyze the achievements by the SEHSEM based on the three main areas of the UNAM: research, teaching and dissemination, synopsis which will be complemented by an additional part referring to institution outreach and the development of group projects.

11. “Seminario Estudios Históricos Sobre la Edad Media”, *Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas*. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 22 December 2017, <http://www.historicas.unam.mx/investigacion/seminarios/s_ehed.html>.

12. About Argentinian Medieval studies read, among others: Carzolio, María Inés. “L’histoire du Moyen Âge en Argentine: Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz et ses disciples”. *Études et travaux*, 7 (2002-2003): 99-112; González de Fauve, María Estela. “Don Claudio Sánchez Albornoz y el Instituto de Historia de España de Buenos Aires”, *Cuadernos de Historia de España*, 77 (2001-2002): 207-211; González de Fauve, María Estela. “El medievalismo en la República Argentina”, *Medievalismo. Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Estudios Medievales*, 12 (2002): 273-289; Guiance, Ariel. “La historiografía española y el medievalismo americano: Sánchez-Albornoz, Américo Castro y la construcción de la identidad nacional a través de la Edad Media”, *La influencia de la historiografía española en la producción americana*, Ariel Guiance, dir. Madrid: Marcial Pons-Instituto de Historia Simancas, 2011: 25-58; Pastor, Reyna. “El Instituto de Historia de España de Buenos Aires y la figura de don Claudio Sánchez Albornoz”, *El destierro español en América*, Nicolás Sánchez-Albornoz, ed. Madrid: Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana-Sociedad Estatal del V Centenario, 1991: 125-132.

13. Regarding Brazilian Medievalism: Rivair, Jose. “Os studios medievais no Brasil: tentativa de síntese”. *Reti medievali*, 7/1 (2006): 1-10. <<http://www.camerablu.unina.it/index.php/rm/article/view/4652/5242>> (Consulted 12th December 2016); Fernandes, Fátima. “The Challenges of Medieval Historiography in Brazil at the Beginning of the 21st century”. *Imago Temporis. Medium Aevum*, 6 (2012): 99-114; Barros Almeida, Néri de. “La formation des médiévistes dans le Brésil contemporain : bilans et perspectives”. *Bulletin du Centre d’Études Médiévales d’Auxerre*, 12 (2008): 145-159; Colares Asfora, Wanessa; Aubert, Eduardo; Carvalho Godoy, Gabriel de. “Faire l’histoire du Moyen Âge au Brésil: fondements, structures, développements”. *Bulletin du Centre d’Études Médiévales d’Auxerre*, 12 (2008): 125-143; and Cândido da Silva, Marcelo. “Les études en histoire médiéval au Brésil: bilan et perspectives”. 14 June 2017 <https://www.academia.edu/5739458/LES_%C3%89TUDES_M%C3%89DI%C3%89VALES_AU_BR%C3%89SIL>.

14. About Medievalism in Chile: Rojas Donat, Luis. “Medieval Studies in Chile. Review of their Formation and Publications”. *Imago Temporis. Medium Aevum*, 9 (2015): 47-65.



2. Luis Weckmann and Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz: two outdated precedents

The development of Medieval history at the Historic Research Institute has several important precedents. The first person to cultivate it was Luis Weckmann Muñoz (1923-1995), who in 1944 got a master's degree in history by the UNAM and who later moved to the University of Berkely, where he wrote his doctorate thesis mentored by Ernest Kantorowicz, and where he obtained his Ph.D. in 1949. After a study period in Paris (1950-1952) he returned to Mexico and retook his class at the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature at the UNAM. In 1952 he began his diplomatic career as a secretary of the embassies of Mexico at the Czech Republic and France, until he became an ambassador in 1967. Since he was stationed at the Mexican embassies in Israel, Austria, Iran, the German Federal Republic, Italy, the United Nations and the European Union, he abandoned his historical work for over two decades, although at the end of his diplomatic career he rejoined the world of teaching and research at the Colegio de México.¹⁵ Between 1988 and 1995 he took the seat number 23 at the Mexican History Academy.¹⁶

Weckmann wrote three books in his early youth. The first one, *La sociedad feudal. Esencia y supervivencia*, was published in 1944 by Jus. Weckmann was mentored by Pablo Martínez del Río and since that early age he showed a tendency to study the Middle Ages.¹⁷ In the book's prologue, the young college student said that it was *necesario conocer una época histórica para juzgarla* and he considered that no era was *tan mal conocida entre nosotros y por lo tanto, tan mal juzgada, como la feudal*. And so, this text that he described as an 'essay' was meant to be only a *modesta aportación a los estudios históricos* in which the author tried to *dar un poco de luz sobre la más gallarda y menos comprendida de las épocas, la Edad Media, y sobre la más noble de sus manifestaciones, la jerarquía feudal [...]*. For Weckmann, the lack of knowledge about the Middle Ages was attributed to *la ausencia de un régimen feudal en América*, of which the young author wanted to specify *los caracteres* that he considered *específicos del feudalismo*.¹⁸

15. Mussacchino, Humberto. *Milenios de México. Diccionario enciclopédico de México*, 4 vols., Milan-Mexico: Sifra International-Raya de Arena, 1994: IV, 3255.

16. "Luis Weckmann Muñoz, 1923-1995", *Academia Mexicana de la Historia*, 6 April 2018 <<http://www.acadmexhistoria.org.mx/>>.

17. Pablo Martínez del Río had made his postgraduate studies in England and he had specialized in ancient civilizations. He was a founding member of the Historic Research Institute of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, and he was head of this institute in two periods: 1945-1949 and 1956-1963.

18. "necessary to study a historic era in order to judge it"; "as little known and thus, as poorly judged, as the feudal era"; "modest collaboration to historic studies"; "offer a little enlightenment about the most striking and least understood of all eras, the Middle Ages, and about the most noble of its manifestations, the feudal hierarchy [...]"; "absence of a feudal regime in America"; "characters"; "exclusive of feudalism" Weckmann, Luis. *La sociedad feudal. Esencia y supervivencia*, Mexico: Editorial Jus, 1944: 9-11. I would like to point out that there's a coincidence of time between Weckman's work and the pioneer works by Sánchez-Albornoz in Argentina, whose book *En torno a los orígenes del feudalismo* had been published in Mendoza in 1942 and whose *Cuadernos de Historia de España* had begun to be edited in 1944.



There are three elements that without doubt cause interest: the first, the similarity of the title with one of Marc Bloch's most important works and of which the author makes no reference along his more than two hundred pages. I can't determine whether this was due to a lack of knowledge of the book's existence by the Mexican author or due to the fact that the first French edition (1939) had not yet reached Mexico. The work's bibliography suggests that the title was inspired by a homonymous text by Joseph Calmette, published in 1930.¹⁹ Secondly, the use of bibliography that was very current in that time and among which we find works by Johan Huizinga —translated by Gaos—²⁰, Jemro Pirenne —edited by the Fondo de Cultura Económica as was mentioned above²¹— or even Calmette.²²

Lastly, the reproduction of documents —sources— with which we can analyze a society and an institution —feudalism— which seemed to be too difficult to find in Mexico. As far as my research allows me to establish, this could be the founding book of Mexican Medievalism.

Going further into his scientific interests about the Middle Ages, Weckmann published in 1949 the results of his doctoral thesis entitled *Las bulas alejandrinas de 1493 y la teoría política del papado medieval. Estudio de la supremacía papal sobre las islas 1091-1493* ("Alexandrian papal bulls of 1493 and the political theory of medieval papacy. A study of papal supremacy over the islands 1091-1491"), which was complemented by an introduction by Ernest Kantorowicz.²³ If *Feudal Society* was an 'essay', the new book was the first scientific monography —according to those times— published in Mexico by a mexican who worked as a medievalist: In it he quotes, for example, the *Patrología Latina, Monumenta Germaniae Historica* and Duchesne's edition of *Liber Pontificalis*; in the appendix, he reproduces several Roman documents —such as the *Cum universae insulae* bull by Urban II— and he includes an ample and updated European and North American bibliography that allowed the author to learn about the debates that were in vogue about the exercise of power in the Middle Ages. Weckman pointed out in this work that Alexandrian papal bulls of 1493 were Medieval documents both in form and in concept, given that they obeyed what he called the 'Omni-Insular Doctrine'. In order to prove it, he took his study back to the eleventh century with the purpose of analyzing the way in which the Roman seat, throughout the Middle Ages, had considered the diverse islands it knew of and that were under no prince's jurisdiction as its

19. Calmette, Joseph. *La société féodale*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1930.

20. Huizinga, Johan. *El otoño de la Edad Media*, Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1930.

21. Pirenne, Henri. *Historia económica y social de la Edad Media*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1941.

22. Calmette, Joseph. *Le monde féodal*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1937.

23. Weckmann, Luis. *Las bulas alejandrinas de 1493 y la teoría política medieval. Estudio de la supremacía papal sobre las islas 1091-1493*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México-Instituto de Historia, 1949. It was reedited for decades later under the title *Constantino el Grande y Cristóbal Colón: estudio de la supremacía papal sobre islas (1091-1493)*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1992.



own. The work's rigurocity allowed Kantorowicz to define it as a "[...] remarkable contribution to medieval historical studies in general".²⁴

Weckmann's third work, edited in 1950, had the purpose of *divulgar algunos de los fundamentos trascendentales del pensamiento político del medievo* and to offer material that helped value the use that said thought could have in the times when it was written *para el mejoramiento y la consolidación de las relaciones internacionales*²⁵. The book which was also produced based on his doctoral thesis, analyzed the political principles of international relations since Medieval Times to Contemporary times, concentrating on topics such as the Christian Republic, the idea of empire, vassalage, and the concepts of power and sovereignty elaborated by the Church, and that clearly coincided with Kantorowicz's idea. It's clear that with this work Weckmann found a practical use for the study of Medieval Times in Mexico and that the knowledge he had acquired during the process of elaboration of his doctoral thesis, such as language proficiency and knowledge of the law were instruments that enabled his diplomatic career. Weckmann's work in Mexican foreign service and his later work at the Colegio de México, which we mentioned above, explain that his book *La herencia medieval de México* was not published until 1984 and not by the UNAM but by the Fondo de Cultura Económica.²⁶

The second precedent is the famous Spanish medievalist Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz (1893-1984). The relationship between Sánchez-Albornoz and Mexico had, at the same time, some important precedents. During the Spanish Civil War, as people know, the Mexican government invited several university and scientific Spanish authorities to continue their activities in our country while the conflict ended. Sánchez-Albornoz received said invitation in 1938 during his French exile in Cauderán;²⁷ however, the dean of the Universidad Central also held a scholarship

24. Kantorowicz, Ernest. "Introducción" in Weckmann, Luis. *Las bulas alejandrinas de 1493 y la teoría política medieval. Estudio de la supremacía papal sobre las islas 1091-1493*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México-Instituto de Historia, 1949: 7-11, especialmente 9.

25. "disseminating some transcendental principles of medieval political thought"; "for the betterment and consolidation of international relations": Weckmann, Luis. *El pensamiento político medieval y las bases para un nuevo derecho internacional*, México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México-Instituto de Historia, 1950.

26. Weckmann, Luis. *La herencia medieval de México*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1984. Weckmann dejó testimonio de su labor diplomática en el libro Weckmann, Luis. *Diario político de un embajador mexicano, 1967-1988*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1997. Quisiera remarcar la similitud entre la trayectoria vital de Weckmann y la del medievalista argentino José Luis Romero, quien en 1949 había publicado su propio ensayo en la colección "breviarios" del Fondo de Cultura Económica: Romero, José Luis. *La Edad Media*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1949. Tras varios años dedicados a la docencia en la Universidad de Buenos Aires, donde llegó a ser decano de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, sirvió también a su país como embajador. Sobre José Luis Romero véase: Astarita, Carlos. "José Luis Romero y la historia medieval". *Anales de Historia Antigua y Medieval*, 28 (1995): 15-23; Burucúa, José Emilio; Devoto, Fernando; Gorelik, Adrián, eds. *José Luis Romero. Vida histórica, ciudad y cultura*, San Martín: Universidad Nacional de General San Martín, 2013.

27. The letter was published by María Mercedes Rodríguez Temerley: Rodríguez Temperley, María Mercedes. "Lo que guardan los libros: la biblioteca de don Claudio Sánchez Albornoz", *VI Jornadas Internacionales de Filología Lingüística y Primeras de Crítica Genética 'Las lenguas del Archivo'*, La Plata: Universidad Nacional de la Plata, 2013: 1-13.



established by the Rockefeller foundation with the idea of staying in France, so he rejected the Mexican invitation. When he had to flee France in June 1940 as a consequence of the Nazi occupation, he contacted the Mexican government but this time it was unable to welcome him. Sánchez Albornoz was finally received by Argentina, a republic to which he arrived on December 1940. From there, Claudio held close relationships with some important republicans from Spain who had established in Mexico, including Rafael Altamira or Agustín Millares Carlo, who were frequent collaborators at the *Cuadernos de Historia de España*.²⁸ Almost two decades later, on February 1959, after a research stay at the University of Princeton, Sánchez-Albornoz had the chance to visit Mexico and give a series of conferences, according to a letter he sent to his student Emilio Sáez and dated in Buenos Aires on April 1959. Considering doing further research about this trip, it's possible to think that it was during this time that the UNAM declared the possibility of publishing one of this Spanish medievalist's works.²⁹

The book was printed in 1965 under the title *Studies About Spanish Medieval Institutions*. It was actually a miscellaneous work that reproduced articles corresponding to the different research stages of this historian from Madrid and that were not easily accessible in American territory and that the publishing house even considered to be an authentic *rareza* in the Mexican historiographical panorama.³⁰ The editors' goal was to *contribuir al estudio de la historia institucional española y de señalar en ella importantes raíces de la realidad socio-económica de los pueblos hispanoamericanos*. For the Historic Research Institute of the UNAM, Mr. Claudio possessed *como historiador a reputación bien cimentada* and was considered *primer plano, no sólo de los medievalistas españoles, sino entre los conocedores más completos de la historia española en todos los tiempos*.³¹

The 1500 copies that make up the first edition and the length of the volume—800 pages—show the value Mr. Claudio's scientific work had for the UNAM. His

28. Read the imminent article: Ríos Saloma, Martín. "De Europa a América. Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz y la fundación de los Cuadernos de Historia de España". *Medievalismo*, 27, forthcoming.

29. Sáez, Emilio. "Epistolario de Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz y Emilio Sáez V (1959-1967)". *Signo. Revista de historia de la cultura escrita*, 9 (2002): 105-123, especially 108. According to Sonsoles Cabeza de Sánchez-Albornoz, Mr. Claudio visited Mexico again in his early years as president of the Republic in exile, a position he held from March 1962 to February 1971; the author, however, doesn't specify the date of the trip. Cabeza de Sánchez Albornoz, Sonsoles. *Semblanza histórico política de Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz*, Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española-Diputación Provincial de León, 1992: 124 and 176 respectively. My research about the topic have been unfruitful so far. Only further research that goes beyond this work's scope could answer this question and reconstruct Mr. Claudio's trips to Mexico. Given the political nature of his second trip and the number of pages of the published work, I believe it's possible to assume that the editorial project was established in 1959 during an academic visit and during the second period of Pablo Martínez del Río as head of the Historic Research Institute, a man who, as we have seen, showed a profound interest on the development of Medieval studies.

30. Sánchez-Albornoz, Claudio. *Estudios sobre las instituciones medievales españolas*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México-Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1965.

31. 'oddity'; "contribute to the study of Spanish institutional history and to point out important roots of the socio-economical reality of Spanish American people"; "as a historian"; "well-founded reputation"; first, not only by Spanish medievalists, but also among the most knowledgeable people in Spanish history of all times": Sánchez-Albornoz, Claudio. *Estudios sobre las instituciones medievales...* back cover.



works were grouped by theme in three great groups: studies about social classes, tax and economical history and, lastly, [...] *los consagrados a la historia de las instituciones jurídicas y políticas —legislación, feudalismo, señorío, monarquía*³². The volume is constituted by a total of sixteen articles of which the oldest is entitled *La potestad real y los señoríos en Asturias, León y Castilla* (“Royal power and seigneuries in Asturias, León and Castille”) (pp. 791-822), originally published in 1914.³³

Since 1965 when the work by Sánchez-Albornoz was published until 2007 when the direction of the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas created a research position to promote the study of the Middle Ages, more than forty years went by and during those years, this specialization was abandoned. This fact creates the question: How can this abandonment be explained?

For the author of this work, the hypothetical answer considers three elements that coincided. The first one, Pablo Martínez del Río’s passing in 1963. As head of the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas he had given a special support to the development of medieval studies, as can be seen in the chronological coincidence of the aforementioned works that were published during his period. From 1963 to 1975 Miguel León-Portilla was head of the institute. He specialized in history of indigenous people in Mexico and, to him, studying the Middle Ages was not a priority, even if he acknowledge the important of this period of European history and its influence on Mexican history.³⁴

In second terms, the popularization of historic-materialism and serial and quantitative history that promoted the elaboration of works about economic and social history and whose most evident result was the study of the *encomienda*, haciendas and the prices of corn in New Spanish times;³⁵ in that sense, the study of economical and social history of European Middle Ages was practically impossible to cultivate given the impossibility of getting access to archives.

Lastly, the validity of a nationalist speech of an indigenous quality among a great audience that presented the European past as foreign to the history of Mexico, that privileged the study of Mesoamerica and that continued to considered Spaniards as invaders and barbarians that had destroyed the ‘great’ American Civilizations. Said speech had an academic corollary in the fact that the Historic Research Institute focused its work on studying the historical processes that took place within its borders and maintained its administrative structure among three great research areas that were linked to national history —‘Prehispanic Mexico’, ‘Colonial Mexico’,

32. “those consecrated to legal and political institutions —law, feudalism, seignury, monarchy”: Sánchez Albornoz, Claudio. *Estudios sobre las instituciones medievales...*: 7.

33. Sánchez-Albornoz, Claudio. “La potestad real y los señoríos en Asturias, León y Castilla”. *Revista de Archivos Bibliotecas y Museos*, 21 (1914): 263-293.

34. Thus he said on the numerous times we had the chance to converse and he has also said so in several different conferences.

35. Here are two examples that are considered as classics within these historiographic traditions: Florescano, Enrique. *Precios del maíz y crisis agrícolas en México (1708–1810): ensayo sobre el movimiento de los precios y sus consecuencias económicas y sociales*, Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1969; Semo, Enrique. *Historia del capitalismo en México. Los orígenes: 1571-1763*, Mexico: Era, 1973.



‘Contemporary Mexico’— and the Middle Ages did not fit in this administrative organization.

Anyway, the fact is that the cultivation of Medieval history that rigorously began with Luis Weckmann had a long interruption —40 years— and the SEHSEM had to retake medieval studies practically from zero while also being conditioned by geographical and institutional circumstances, but always looking to add theoretical and methodological perspectives developed by medievalism during the last few years.

3. Works by the Middle Ages Historic Studies Seminar (SEHSEM)

3.1 Research

3.1.1 Graduate and postgraduate thesis³⁶

Research in the area of medieval studies at the UNAM was linked, traditionally, with the fields of literature and philology. This was due not only to the fact that literary studies at the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature and the Instituto de Investigaciones Filológicas were very strong, but also to pragmatic reasons such as the difficulty to access primary sources in times when internet did not exist yet and in times when research stay trips were extremely expensive. In that sense, the pioneer works by Luis Weckmann regarding the papal sovereignty over the islands,³⁷ the works by Sánchez Albornoz regarding Spanish medieval institutions³⁸ that we previously mentioned, or the works by Antonio Garrido Aranda regarding the evangelization of Moors in Granada were, more than an ‘oddity’, exceptional works.³⁹

During the first decade of the 21st century these two difficulties were overcome: on one hand, the web offers plenty documented materials⁴⁰ through different scientific websites linked to renowned institutions of international prestige, such

36. At the National Autonomous University of Mexico the graduation of students of bachelor's degree and master's degree is preferably made through a rigorous monographic research, sustained in primary and secondary sources in which the author shows his knowledge of the topic and whose length ranges between 90 and 250 pages, reasons why they're also called 'thesis'. They differ from a doctoral thesis in the sense that the latter has a greater length, depth and originality. There is free access to the thesis that are mentioned in this part at the TESIUNAM website: <tesis.unam.mx>.

37. Weckmann, Luis. *Las bulas alejandrinas de 1493...*

38. Sánchez-Albornoz, Claudio. *Estudios sobre las instituciones medievales española*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México-Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1965.

39. Garrido, Antonio. *Moriscos e indios: precedentes hispánicos de la evangelización en México*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México-Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, 1980 [2nd edition, 2013].

40. Garrido, Antonio. *Moriscos e indios...*



as the Biblioteca Nacional de España⁴¹ or the Bibliothèque nationale de France⁴² —or to specific research projects.⁴³ On the other hand, the UNAM has established numerous programs of academic mobility both for teachers and students and this has offered the opportunity to review specialized European bibliography and documents that were not easy to access from Latin America.

Despite these advances, it is true that the weight of the historiographical tradition of the UNAM —marked by a deep historicist approach represented by the works of authors like Edmundo O’Gorman or Álvaro Matute—⁴⁴ it is still important in the education of students, and this, together with the study plan that does not contemplate learning ‘auxiliary sciences’ cause medieval paleography and diplomacy to be inaccessible to those who are interested in the medieval period.

These factors, to which we add the impossibility of having systematic and continuous access to European archives, have caused the study of medieval historiography to be a privileged field of analysis for members of the seminar who have carried out noteworthy research in which they combine a profound knowledge of the contexts in which narrative sources were elaborated, proficiency in medieval languages —particularly English, French and Italian—, knowledge of Latin for the corresponding cases, and theoretical and methodological tools nurtured by the proposals made by Gabrielle Spiegel,⁴⁵ Rosamond McKitterick,⁴⁶ Jaume Aurell,⁴⁷ Michel de Certeau,⁴⁸ Bernard Guenée⁴⁹ or Walter Ong.⁵⁰ Therefore,

41. Biblioteca Nacional de España, 2018, 14 January 2018 <www.bne.es>. The Hispanic Digital Library is particularly important for Hispanic medievalism. The project is part of the National Library of Spain.

42. *Gallica*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, 14 January 2018 <<http://gallica.bnf.fr>>.

43. I underlined the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, 25th December 2017 <<http://www.mgh.de>>; *Documenta Catholica Omnia*, Cooperatorum Veritatis Societas, 25 December 2017 <<http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu>>; and thes *Cartae Cluniacenses Electronicae*, Universidad Münster Universität, 25 December 2017 <<http://www.uni-muenster.de/Fruehmittelalter/Projekte/Cluny/CCE/Welcme-e.htm>>.

44. O’Gorman, Edmundo. *La invención de América*, Mexico, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1961; O’Gorman, Edmundo. *Cuatro historiadores de indias*, Mexico, Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1972; Matute, Álvaro. *Teoría de la historia en México*, Mexico: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1974. About O’Gorman and his relationship with historicity read the recent publication by Gilardi, Pilar. *Huellas heiddegerianas en la obra de Edmundo O’Gorman*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México-Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 2015.

45. Sipiège, Gabrielle. *Romancing the Past. The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993; Sipiège, Gabrielle. *The past as text. The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography*, Baltimore: The John’s Hopkins University Press, 1999.

46. McKitterick, Rosamond. *The Carolingians and the Written Word*, Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press, 1989; McKitterick, Rosamond. *History and Memory in the Carolingian World*, Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press, 2004; McKitterick, Rosamond. *The Formation of a European Identity*, Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press, 2008.

47. Aurell, Jaume. *La historiografía medieval: entre la historia y la literatura*, Valencia: Universidad de Valencia, 2016.

48. Certeau, Michel de. *La escritura de la historia (Writing History)*, Mexico: Universidad Iberoamericana, 2006.

49. Guenée, Bernard. *Histoire et culture historique dans l’Occident médiéval*, Paris: Aubier, 1980.

50. Ong, Walter. *Oralidad y escritura. Tecnologías de la palabra*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2004.



Ana Avila, for example, elaborated a first approach and translation into Spanish of the work by Gregorio de Tours,⁵¹ while Tania Ortiz has focused on the study of Carolingian historiography.⁵² In that same sense, Ricardo Sánchez has studied the representation of Richard the Lion Heart in the chronicles of the crusades.⁵³ On the other hand, Fernanda Mora has analyzed the relationship between the Church and the Monarchy in the *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos* ("Chronicle of the Catholic Kings") by Hernando del Pulgar,⁵⁴ while Ana Clara Aguilar has focused on the study of literature and Italian chronicles of the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries.⁵⁵ Ramón Jiménez, while being part of the seminar, wanted to study the History of Spain by father Mariana and even though it can't be said that this is a medieval historic work in strict sense, it is true that she developed the methodology proposed by Spiegel and that the knowledge of this Jesuit forced her to study in great detail the medieval roots of her fields of study.⁵⁶

In the same sense, research linked to cultural history, conceptual history or anthropology of image have had in Hans-George Gadamer,⁵⁷ Roger Chartier,⁵⁸ Norbert Elías,⁵⁹ Pierre Bourdieu,⁶⁰ Reinhart Koselleck,⁶¹ Lévy-Strauss,⁶² Clifford Gertz⁶³ or Hans Belting⁶⁴ its main representatives. Here we can include the works by Diego Améndolla about the reflection of "feudal" valued on the work by Chrétien

51. Ávila García, Ana. *Entre la historia eclesiástica y la historia nacional: Gregorio de Tours, libros I y II de la Historia de los Francos*, Mexico: Instituto Cultural Helénico-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (PhD Dissertation) 2011.

52. Ortiz, Tania. *De la 'Vita' a la 'Gesta'. Construcciones historiográficas de Carlomagno en el siglo IX*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (PhD Dissertation), 2017.

53. Sánchez, Ricardo. *La imagen de Ricardo Corazón de León en las crónicas anglonormandas y del norte de Francia, (1189-1205)*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2017.

54. Mora Reyes, María Fernanda. *Propio es a los reyes el mando, y a los súbditos la obediencia: las relaciones de la monarquía con la Iglesia en la Crónica de los Reyes Católicos de Hernando del Pulgar*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (PhD Dissertation), 2017.

55. Aguilar, Ana Clara. *Clero y religiosidad en el Decameron de Boccaccio*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (PhD Dissertation) 2013; Aguilar, Ana Clara. *Florenia y la Iglesia a través de seis ciudadanos florentinos que escribieron su historia (siglos XIII-XV)*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Master Dissertation) 2016.

56. Jiménez, Ramón. *El rey y la potestad espiritual en la Historia general de España de Juan de Mariana*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Master Dissertation) 2017.

57. Gadamer, Hans-George. *Verdad y método*, 2 vols., Salamanca: Ediciones Sígueme, 2005.

58. Chartier, Roger. *El mundo como representación: estudios sobre historia cultural*, Barcelona: Gedisa, 1992.

59. Elías, Norbert. *La sociedad cortesana*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1982; Norbert, Elías. *El proceso de civilización: investigaciones sociogenéticas y psicogenéticas*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1987.

60. Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and symbolic power*, Oxford: Polity Press, 1991.

61. Koselleck, Reinhart. *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing concepts*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002; Koselleck, Reinhart, *Historias de conceptos: estudios sobre semántica y pragmática del lenguaje político y social*, Madrid: Trotta, 2012.

62. Lévi-Staruss, Claude. *Antropología estructural*, Barcelona: Paidós, 1987.

63. Gertz, Clifford. *La interpretación de las culturas*, Barcelona: Gedisa, 1996.

64. Belting, Hans. *Antropología de la imagen*, Madrid: Katz, 2007.



de Troyes;⁶⁵ those of Fernando Velázquez about the abbey of Saint-Denis and the political project of the abbot Surger;⁶⁶ those of Julián González about the myth of Arthur;⁶⁷ those by Marianne Hurtado about friendship in medieval Castille;⁶⁸ those of Jessica Chávez about Christine de Pizan;⁶⁹ those of Olinca Olvera about divine justice in the *Flos sanctorum*;⁷⁰ those of Fernando López about the preaching of Vicente Ferrer and the religious problems of Castile in the 15th century;⁷¹ those of Alberto Trejo about the construction of space in the battlefield of the Navas de Tolosa⁷² and those of Walter de Santa María about the political conceptions of the Visigothic reign.⁷³

On the other hand, research of a historiographical nature in which they have studied the use of the Middle Ages for the formation of contemporary nationalism, the vision that has been built throughout the last centuries regarding the Middle Ages—based on proposals such as those by Marc Fumaroli⁷⁴ or Chantal Grell⁷⁵—or in the formation of concepts related to medievalism. These studies are nurtured by the development of a line of research

Regarding the origin, consolidation and use of the concept of Reconquista in contemporary Spanish historiography.⁷⁶ In that sense, Fernando Velázquez analyzed

65. Améndolla, Diego. *Chrétien de Troyes y la Francia del siglo XII: una aproximación a las estructuras del feudalismo a través de la literatura cortesana*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Graduate Dissertation), 2009; Améndolla, Diego. *Creación del modelo de caballería a través de la cultura lúdica: producción, transmisión y recepción de las obras de Chrétien de Troyes, 1165-1300*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Master Dissertation), 2013.

66. Velázquez, Fernando. *La abadía de Saint-Denis: imagen del poder político*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Master Dissertation), 2013.

67. González de León, Julián. *Arthur, pen teyrnedd yr ynys hon*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Graduate Dissertation) 2012. González de León, Julián. *El mito artúrico y la cultura imperial en la elite de Inglaterra (1100-1272): un análisis histórico del mito bajo la teoría neo-estructuralista*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Master Dissertation) 2015.

68. Hurtado, Marianne. *Lazos de sacrificio. El concepto de amistad en la literatura castellana bajo medieval, S. XII-XV*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Graduate Dissertation) 2016.

69. Peña, Jessica. *La ciudad de las damas, el pensamiento de las mujeres expresado por Christine de Pizán. Francia, siglos XIV y XV*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Graduate Dissertation) 2016.

70. Olvera, Olinca. *El juez supremo: la justicia divina en el Flos Sanctorum con sus etimologías*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Graduate Dissertation), 2016.

71. López, Fernando. *Vicente Ferrer y el cisma de occidente: un análisis de la predicación en Castilla*, Mexico, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Graduate Dissertation), 2016.

72. Trejo, Alberto. *El campo de batalla, ¿un lugar excepcional? las navas de Tolosa (16 de julio de 1212)*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Graduate Dissertation), 2014.

73. Santa María, Walter. *La conversión de los visigodos al catolicismo como vía para superar la crisis y legitimar al Estado*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Graduate Dissertation), 2014; Santa María, Walter. *La imagen del rey. Articulación del discurso simbólico en torno a la legitimación en el reino de Toledo*, Mexico, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Master Dissertation), 2016.

74. Fumaroli, Marc. *L'âge de l'éloquence : Rhétorique et 'res literaria' de la Renaissance au seul de l'époque classique*, Paris: Droz, 2002.

75. Grell, Chantal. *L'histoire entre érudition et philosophie. Étude sur la connaissance historique à l'âge des Lumières*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1993.

76. Ríos, Martín. *La Reconquista: génesis y desarrollo de una construcción historiográfica (s. XVI-XIX)*, Madrid-Mexico: Marcial Pons-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2011; Ríos, Martín. *La Reconquista en*



the speech contest held in the late 18th century dedicated to Suger of Saint-Denis, by highlighting images that were constructed throughout medieval centuries in the transit from the Old Regime to the French Revolution.⁷⁷ Mikel Luege, on the other hand, focused on analyzing the use of the Middle Ages in the formation of nineteenth-century German nationalism,⁷⁸ while Francisco Vera analyzed the representation of the battle of Crécy in Anglo-Saxon contemporary historiography⁷⁹ and Erik Luna studied contemporary historiography about the Holy Office in times of the Catholic Kings linking said production with the political and historiographical moments in Spain during the 19th and 20th centuries.⁸⁰ At the same time, Isis Guerreño studied the use of Andalusian past in the Spanish press during the first Franco regime⁸¹ and Lizette Gauzín studied in her doctoral thesis —the first one in the postgraduate studies in History at the UNAM linked with the study of the Middle Ages— the origin and development of the concepts of cohabitation and tolerance in nineteenth-century Arab times.⁸² Presently, Diego Améndolla is about to finish his doctoral thesis regarding the origin and consolidation of the concept of ‘feudalism’ in French historiography during the 18th and 19th centuries, which will be publicly presented in summer 2018. The development of these research works is naturally linked to the author’s research lines, focusing on the genesis, development and use of the concept of Reconquista in Spanish historiography of modern and contemporary times.⁸³ In that sense, it seems to me that it’s possible to prove not only the validity of the method that has been developed but the richness and value of having a distant approach, not only geographically but also epistemologically.

la historiografía española contemporánea, Madrid-Mexico: Sílex Ediciones–Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2013.

77. Velázquez, Fernando. *La elocuencia histórica de la Edad Media. Suger de Saint-Denis en el arte oratorio francés del Siglo XVIII*, Mexico, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Master Dissertation), 2017.

78. Luege, Mikel. *La formación de la nación alemana a través de su tradición medieval (1820-1920)*, Mexico, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Graduate Dissertation), 2012.

79. Vera, Francisco. *Nexos en la historiografía: la construcción de la batalla de Crécy en la historiografía inglesa y estadounidense, 1885-2013*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Graduate Dissertation), 2016.

80. Luna, Erick. *La fundación del Santo Oficio en la historiografía española: (de 1874 a la década de 1960)*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Graduate Dissertation), 2016.

81. Guerrero, Isis. *Las relaciones político-culturales entre el franquismo y el islam a través de la prensa escrita durante la posguerra, 1945-1955*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Graduate Dissertation), 2012. Presently, Isis Guerrero is working on her doctoral thesis at the Metropolitan Autonomous University (UAM) on the topic of Arabism in the 19th century. She is now on a research stay at the Higher Council for Scientific Research in Madrid mentored by professor Eduardo Manzano. Regrettfully, unfavorable academic perceptions regarding the historiographic scope in our postgraduate studies didn’t allow this research to be carried out at the UNAM. Fortunately, the criteria and visions have changed in recent times.

82. Gauzín, Lizette. *La tolerancia entre musulmanes y cristianos en al-Andalus a través de la historiografía española del siglo XIX*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (PhD Dissertation) 2017.

83. Ríos, Martín. *La Reconquista: génesis y desarrollo de una construcción historiográfica*, Madrid-México: Marcial Pons-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2011; Ríos, Martín. *La Reconquista en la historiografía española contemporánea: un siglo de investigaciones*, Madrid-Mexico: Sílex-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2013.



This allows to gain a particular perspective and analyze these historiographical, political and cultural problems in a calm way that's free of ideological determining elements.

The only two thesis that focused on political and social history (both at a bachelor's degree level) during the Middle Ages—one about the city of Florence⁸⁴ and the other one about the conquest and repopulation of Seville in the 13th century—⁸⁵ have the great virtue of working with complex topics using the bibliography and sources that are available in Mexico, but they lack—one must admit—originality given the impossibility to have access to unedited documents that allow to produce new facts or make new interpretations that enrich the general framework that is already known.

The doctoral thesis of Luis del Castillo and Rubén Andrés focus on New Spanish commerce in the 18th century, the former,⁸⁶ and equestrian games in New Spain during the viceroy, the latter.⁸⁷ They have nurtured from comments in the seminar and, above all, the visions that have enabled them to insert their research into broader historic dynamics and to project the experiences in the Mediterranean territory onto the Atlantic territory. This could also be said about the master's degree work by Claudia Hernández, which results from a first approach to the chronicles about the conquest of New Spain with the purpose of tracking the concepts about fair war and holy war of medieval origin that these chronicles portray.⁸⁸ If we consider the three research works as a whole we could point out that they continue on the line that was inaugurated by Luis Weckmann when studying the 'medieval legacy' in Mexico and Brazil, although from a renewed perspective that has incorporated the new contributions of contemporary medievalism.⁸⁹

When making a general balance of the research made within the SEHSEM throughout ten years, we can point out that twenty seven research works about the Middle Ages have been presented as means to obtain a degree: two for doctorate

84. Reyes, Ari. *Historias de Florencia. Desarrollo político, social y económico de una ciudad medieval italiana: siglos XIII, XIV y XV*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Graduate Dissertation), 2016.

85. Contreras, Karina. *La reconquista y repoblación de Sevilla (1248-1255)*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Graduate Dissertation), 2012.

86. Luis del Castillo's thesis will be presented in 2018. In his graduate dissertation, Castillo had already talked about the problem of nobility in America: Castillo, Luis del. *La nobleza y el comercio en la Nueva España del siglo XVIII: el primer conde de la Cortina (1741-1795)*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Graduate Dissertation) 2008.

87. Andrés, Rubén. *Caballo y poder en el mundo hispánico: los juegos ecuestres y la traslación de un habitus caballeresco entre las élites española e india de la Nueva España*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (PhD Dissertation) 2017.

88. Hernández, Claudia. *Los conceptos de la guerra justa y la guerra santificada en los relatos de los conquistadores de México, Siglo XVI*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Master Dissertation), 2017. Several situations impeded the author from analyzing some aspects of this research in greater depth, but the work has the virtue of showing the possibilities that lie when making a new reading of the chronicles of the conquest of America eliminating the traditional chronological methods that are, in all terms, unfruitful.

89. Weckmann, Luis. *La herencia medieval de México*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1984; Weckmann, Luis. *La herencia medieval de Brasil*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993.



studies, six for master's degree —equivalent to the European Master II— and the rest for bachelor's degree. Some of these research —as well as others that have been elaborated in the postgraduate seminars by members of the SEHSEM, were also the seed to create dissemination articles⁹⁰ or scientific texts such as those by Diego Améndolla,⁹¹ Julián González de León,⁹² Francisco Vera⁹³ and Walter de Santa María⁹⁴ which have already been published in Argentina, Spain, the United States and France, thus offering an international impact to this research group that was missing only a few years ago. In other cases, it allowed the authors to continue their postgraduate studies in the United States or Spain and, for some others, it opened the doors to their first participations in international congresses.⁹⁵

Currently there are two doctoral theses being developed, six for master's degrees and several others for bachelor's degrees all of which will be finished in the following years. In them, apart from continuing working on the lines of work previously described, it's possible to notice an interest to portray the concepts they had in the Middle Ages in art and in layout restoration works in nineteenth-century Spain and also in historic dissemination as well as the impact generated on great audiences by TV series that have been produced in the last few years. Without doubt, just as

90. Among the articles of dissemination we can quote, for example: Mora, María Fernanda. "Adso de Melk, un cronista en busca de los signos". *Scriptorium*, 9 (2016): 9-14; Vera, Francisco. "La tecnología al servicio de la guerra: los primeros pasos de las armas de guerra en Inglaterra, 1327-1346", *Scriptorium*, 10 (2016): 5-12; Jiménez, Ramón. "La disolución de los recuerdos. Reflexiones en torno a la memoria a partir de tres momentos de la 'Divina Comedia'". *Scriptorium*, 12 (2017): 19-26; Noguez, Gabriela. "Reseña de la película 'Hermano sol, hermana luna'". *Scriptorium*, 14 (2017): 13-15.

91. Améndolla, Diego. "Una mirada desde la historia conceptual: orígenes lexicales e ideológicos del término «feudalismo», siglos XVII-XVIII". *Circé. Histoires, cultures & sociétés*, 7 (2015): 1-8 <<http://www.revue-circe.uvsq.fr>> (Consulted 17th November 2017); Améndolla, Diego. "Et qui or me vaurra entendre, cuer et oreilles me doit rendre", *Espacios de lectura y público de los roman courtois de Chrétien de Troyes (ss. XII-XIII). Cuadernos Medievales*, 20 (2016): 51-74.

92. González de León, Julián. "The Arthurian Legend: A Vehicle for Symbolic Appropriation of the Insular Space", *UCLA Historical Journal*, 26-1 (2015): 1-15.

93. Vera, Francisco. "El orden de los factores si altera el producto: el uso de las fuentes primarias en la construcción de la batalla de Crécy por los historiadores ingleses, 1885-2015". *E-Stratégica*, 1 (2017): 161-199.

94. Santa María, Walter de. "¿Podemos hablar de un Estado visigodo?". *Cuadernos Medievales*, 22 (2017): 84-95.

95. Julián González de León is currently studying his doctorate degree at the City University of New York (CUNY) where he's developing the thesis "A Medieval Myth for a Modern Empire: An Anthropological History of the Arthurian Myth in England (13th-18th centuries)", while Mikel Luege Mateos is writing his doctoral thesis at the Universidad del País Vasco mentored by José Ramón Díaz de Durana. In the case of international congresses, Fernando Velázquez presented in Paris the lecture entitled "L'éloquence historique de la domination féodale dans les éloges de Suger de 1779" amidst the congress *Moyen-Âge et médiévalisme : les formes de la domination* organized by the Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art (INHA) in March 2016. Walter de Santa María, on the other hand, presented the lecture "Arrianism, cultural differentiation and social cohesion in the Visigoth reign" at the *VII Coloquio de Historia Medieval. Circulación de ideas en la Antigüedad tardía y la Edad Media* hosted by the Geohistotirc Research Intitute of the CONICET in Buenos Aires on September 2017.



videogames called the attention of scholars,⁹⁶ I believe it's important to reflect on the popularity of said series, their social impact and the visions they project on great audiences regarding the Middle Ages.

The students have had the chance to present the results of their research in congresses and debate forums organized at the Institute's premises. In that sense, it must be said that local events have now become authentic international congresses in whose last edition (2016), history, literature, philosophy and art history graduate and postgraduate students from Argentina, Germany, Italy, France and the United States presented their reports; the growing participation of speakers has also served as a scale to calibrate the interest on medieval studies outside the research group whose works we have described. With the purpose of guaranteeing the quality of the lectures that have been presented, we have requested the authorization of professors Juan Francisco Jiménez Alcázar (Universidad de Murcia) and Gerardo Rodríguez (Universidad Nacional del Mar del Plata) to turn these events into the Mexican edition of the famous 'young medievalists' meetings that are held in Spain and Argentina. We trust that throughout the following months a miscellaneous volume that brings together the top quality scientific works that have overcome the required regulations will be published.⁹⁷

The description and analysis that have been made allow to establish two preliminary conclusions: firstly, that students show a growing interest in medieval history and that said interest has materialized in the exponential increase of graduate and postgraduate thesis that have so far been presented; nowadays, no one could say that studying the European Medieval Era is an 'oddity' —as was once said about Sánchez-Albornoz's volume— nor that it can't be done in a rigorous way, inserted also in international debates and incorporating the theoretical and methodological contributions that have been generated in other parts of the world without forsaking its own tradition.

The second conclusion makes me point out the urging need to transcend historiographical and cultural studies and to study political, social, economical and art history. In order to do this, it's necessary not only to make updated monographic studies —thanks to the important labor of material acquisition through trade, donation and purchase by the Rafael García Granados library of the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, the need for said materials we had ten years ago has been partially covered— but to study the sources.

And even though many institutions have made available texts of great importance thanks to the internet, it's necessary to be able to access fundamental works such as the *Actas de los reinos de Castilla y León* ("Charters of the kingdoms of Castile and Leon") or the *Colección Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa* ("Sources Collection and Studies of Leones History"), only to quote a few Hispanic examples. In that same

96. For example: Jiménez, Juan Francisco. "Cruzada, cruzados y videojuegos". *Anales de la universidad de Alicante*, 17 (2011): 363-407.

97. Find the whole program "Congreso internacional de jóvenes medievalistas 15, 16, 17 y 18 de marzo de 2016", *Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas*. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 18 November 2017 <http://www.historicas.unam.mx/eventos/2016/congreso_jovenes_medievalistas_2016.html>.



way, it's fundamental to go deeper into the study of European archives and the knowledge of medieval diplomacy and paleography. In that sense, one of the tasks the Seminar will have in the following years is the editing of primary sources, both chronicles and documentary collections.⁹⁸

3.1.2 Research projects

One of the most important reasons there is to study medieval history from Latin America lies in the possibility of understanding the processes of exploration, conquest and colonization of America —and in general the process of the conformation of the Catholic Monarchy— in a long duration perspective that allows to observe the continuities, ruptures and innovations in the impact of experiences of the Mediterranean territory on the Atlantic territory.

One product that derived from this interest was the initiation of the research project *El mediterráneo y su proyección atlántica: entre medievo y modernidad (s. XII-XVII)* (“The Mediterranean and its Atlantic impact: between the Medieval period and Modernity (12th-17th centuries)”) which was financed by the UNAM’s Dirección General de Asuntos del Personal Académico (“General Management of Academic Personnel Affairs”) (DGAPA) from 2013-2015 within the Programa de Apoyo a la Investigación e Innovación Tecnológica (“Research and Technological Innovation Support Program”) (PAPIIT) and co-directed by Estela Roselló and this work’s author.⁹⁹ As part of the project, four students that were part of the Seminar wrote their corresponding doctoral thesis thanks to a scholarship¹⁰⁰ while two scientific meetings were held: *Religión y espiritualidad en el ámbito mediterráneo y atlántico (s. X-XVI): una mirada multidisciplinar al fenómeno jacobeo* (“Religion and spirituality in the Mediterranean and Atlantic realms (10th-16th centuries): a multidisciplinary approach to the Jubilee phenomenon”) (2013) and *Consecuencias y proyecciones de la expansión mediterránea en el Atlántico: prácticas, discursos, representaciones* (“Consequences and impact of the Mediterranean expansion on the Atlantic: practices, speeches, representations”) (2014) as well as the conference cycle *Expansión atlántica y orígenes del Estado Moderno* (“Atlantic expansion and origins of the Modern State”), presented by Eduardo Aznar Vallejo. Currently we’re working on editing the works that were presented in both symposiums with the purpose of producing a volume that materializes the institutional and academic efforts that were made.

98. It must be noted that it was a very important scientific achievement for Mexican medievalism to make a Spanish edition of the *Crónica de la primera cruzada* by Foucher de Chartres which was carried out by the Multidisciplinary Seminar of Medieval Studies coordinated by Antonio Rubial at the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature of the UNAM. The translation was made from Guizot’s edition in Latin and from several available manuscripts through Gallica. We trust that it will be soon available for consultation by students and academics.

99. PAPIIT IN402913-3 Project.

100. Marianne Hurtado, Jessica Peña, Olinca Olvera and Alberto Trejo.



Finally, as part of the project, I must mention the editing, with the project's financial support, of the volume *El mundo de los conquistadores* ("The World of Conquerors") (2014), coordinated by this work's author and that brings together the works that were presented in 2008 at the International Congress *El mundo de los conquistadores. La península ibérica y su proyección en la conquista de América* ("The World of Conquerors. The Iberian Peninsula and its impact on America's Conquest").¹⁰¹ Although naturally it's other people's responsibility to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the editorial project, I'd like to point out at least three aspects that I believe are novelties: on one hand, it's a first proposal for the discussion that must be held as part of the celebration of the fifth centenary of the beginning of Cortes' quest; secondly, that it represents a fruitful dialogue among medievalists and modernists on both sides of the Atlantic—a dialogue that is not so frequent—and, lastly, that it highlights the scientific, epistemological and historiographical ineffectiveness of the traditional division between Middle Ages and Modern Times. It seems to me, as I've mentioned in different forums and texts, that the only way of truly understanding the processes that were triggered in 1492 we must not only abandon national history—nationalist—but also to eliminate the historiographical restraints of conventional temporary cuts.

After concluding the project and while awaiting the publication of its results, new goals have been established with the purpose of achieving an outreach with other centers and academics on both sides of the Atlantic who have an interest in the same issues. So far, there's been a first approach with the research groups that are mentored by Eduardo Aznar (Universidad de la Laguna) and Gerardo Rodríguez (Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata) and this has established the beginning of a joint research project that covers cultural, political, economical and military affairs regarding the Castilian expansion on the Atlantic.¹⁰²

3.1.3 International and national participations

A 'common lab' and privileged environment for critical discussion of ideas and knowledge, according to Michel de Certeau,¹⁰³ since the SEHSEM has welcomed, throughout ten years, numerous international guests who have had the chance to present their ongoing research or to present finished research works. In most cases, these are renowned professors, although we have also had the participation of young doctors and doctoral students with promising careers. Thus, among the first group we can mention Dominique Iogna-Prat, Martin Aurell, Glauco María Cantarella, Carlos Reglero de la Fuente, Pascual Martínez Sopena, Flocel Sabaté,

101. Ríos, Martín, ed. *El mundo de los conquistadores*, Madrid-Mexico: Editorial Sílex-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2015.

102. The project was presented under the name *Las Fronteras Ultramarinas: el Atlántico en los orígenes de la monarquía hispánica (c. 1300-c. 1600)* and it is waiting for approval and financing by the Casa Colón institution in Gan Canaria.

103. Certeau, Michel de. "Que est-ce que un séminaire?". *Esprit*, 11-12 (1978): 176-181, especially 176.



Martín Alvira Cabrer, Inmaculada Lorés, Enrique Rodríguez Picavea, Eduardo Aznar, Francisco Moreno Martín or María Isabel Pérez de Tudela; in the second group we can mention Jesús del Prado, Blanca Ángeles, Mercedes Pérez Vidal, Esperanza de los Reyes, Francesco Renzi, Gisela Coronado or Lucía Beraldi.¹⁰⁴

As far as national guests, so far we have only had the participation of professor Diana Arauz, a member of the Asociación Zacatecana de Estudios Clásicos y Medievales (“Classical and Medieval Studies Association in Zacatecas”) (AZECME) and full time researcher at the Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas (UAZ). The lack of participation of national colleagues is due, mostly, to a lack of colleagues that work on medieval studies, but also to a lack of work on the creation of networks with other latitudes such as San Cristóbal, in the state of Chiapas, home to Jérôme Baschet and where Antonio García Espada established recently. However, joint activities with the Seminario Interdisciplinario de Estudios Medievales (“Medieval Studies Interdisciplinary Seminar”) coordinated by Antonio Rubial at the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature of the UNAM have continued to take place, joining together students of history, literature and classical literature.

This brief review reveals two urgent tasks for the development of the SEHSEM in particular and of medieval studies in general: on one hand, it's necessary to broaden the seminar's international network with the purpose of inviting professors from Latin America (Argentina, Brazil and Chile, mostly) and from the Anglo-Saxon world, which has so far been absent from our direct interlocutions. On the other hand, it's important to promote the creation of medievalism poles within universities from other Mexican states in order to create a genuine school of medievalists nationwide.

3.2 Teaching

We have also had important achievements in teaching. In the year 2010 I pointed out the need to increase the offer of courses about the Middle Ages and that these should be taught by specialist. At the same time, I mentioned the opportunity that would lie in opening specialized courses for postgraduate studies. A series of administrative and sociological factors have enabled this.

In the case of graduate degrees, the retirement of one generation of professors who had taught, since the 1960s, courses in which the Middle Ages were talked about, added to the openness shown by authorities of the School of History, allowed young doctoral students to teach a subject, although with a very low teaching category. Most new professors are linked with the SEHSEM and have taken the courses of *Comentario de Textos* (“Text Analysis”), *Métodos de Investigación* (“Research Methods”), *Historia de España en la Edad Media* (“History of Spain during the Middle Ages”), *Imperio Bizantino* (“The Byzantine Empire”), and the *Seminario Taller General*.

104. “Seminario Estudios Históricos Sobre la Edad Media... (<http://www.historicas.unam.mx/investigacion/seminarios/s_ehed.html>).



Edad Media. Metodología y Fuentes (“General Seminar and Workshop. The Middle Ages. Methodology and Sources”), while this work’s author has been teaching for eight years the subject *Historia de Europa en la Edad Media* (“History of Europe during the Middle Ages”). I point out this fact as a group achievement because, with the exception of Luis Ramos Gómez-Pérez—deceased—, Antonio Rubial and Guadalupe Avilez, who are in charge of teaching the subjects *Imperio Bizantino* (“Byzantine Empire”), *Cultura en la Edad Media* (“Culture in the Middle Ages”) and medieval art, respectively, those who used to teach general courses about the Middle Ages were not always specialists. This gives the chance to offer graduate students an updated bibliography, to offer a wide panorama of current debates and work with primary sources, something that awakens the interest of students on medieval studies and create an authentic youth academy.

In the case of the postgraduate degree in History at the UNAM, in 2008 we were present at the approval of the curriculum for the Masters and Doctorate degrees and, for the first time, they opened a specific study area about the Middle Ages: *Sociedades antiguas (antigüedad-siglo XV)* (“Ancient societies (antiquity-15th century”). The configuration of this area represented an authentic window of opportunity that was linked to the project the Historic Research Institute had of promoting the study of areas and topics that differed from those that studied the history of Mexico. This allowed young graduates to continue to specialize in medieval topics given that, otherwise, the reduction of funding programs for postgraduate studies abroad and the high tuition costs in Europe—particularly in Spain— would have made it impossible for them to continue to create successful careers.

As part of postgraduate education, the UNAM considers research trips and offering students support to participate in specialization courses and/or international congresses for which they give them financial support covering airfare costs. This has allowed students who have presented their master’s degree thesis—or who are finishing it—to make research stays and, in some cases—even for a couple of times—to go to Medieval Studies Weeks at the Center for Higher-level Studies of Medieval Civilization (CESCM) at the University of Poitiers (2014, 2015, 2016) and the *Semana de Estudios Medievales de Estella* (“Medieval Studies Weeks in Estella”) (2016). For the education of a European medievalist this is part of the usual *cursus honorum*, but in the case of Mexicans, it has become an authentic achievement and an important overcoming of geographical, administrative and financial obstacles.

Finally, thanks to the predominant system applied to the doctoral program that establishes that it’s imperative for an academic committee made up by the main tutor and two other members—who may not be academics at the UNA—to follow the research, it has been possible for prestigious international medievalists such as Martin Aurell, Dominique Iogna-Prat, María Isabel Pérez de Tudela or Francisco Moreno Martín to enrich the work of Mexican doctoral students. It seems to me that this is a great achievement before the inexistent liaisons from before and which contributes substantially to the education of future Mexican medievalists.

Despite the aims and goals that have been reached, there are still significant challenges remaining in teaching. The first of them is to maintain the students’



interest on medieval history. As it happens in other universities around the world, new generations prefer to study contemporary history moved by a legitimate interest on learning about their recent past in order to understand their present, but also, it seems to me, carried away by the relative simplicity of making history in the past few years thanks to the numerous sources they can find in their mother tongue and to their availability through the internet. In that sense, learning modern languages —English, French, Italian and German, the most important for medievalists—, learning Latin and being proficient in paleography and diplomacy represent additional efforts to an already demanding learning process that requires, like any other field in history, long hours of reading and studying.¹⁰⁵

The second challenge consists on making Mexican doctorate students increase their participation as auditors —or speakers, depending on the case— in courses and congresses that are part of the regular scientific calendar of international medievalism, from Summer Weeks at the Center for Higher Studies on Medieval Civilization at the University of Poitiers (CESSM) to those of Leeds, including the ones at Prato, Spoleto, Estella, Najera, Lerida or Buenos Aires. Likewise, it's necessary to increase the participation of said young students in scientific meetings and specialized seminars that are directly related with their fields of study. Lastly, it's imperative to increase the number of specialized publications in prestigious and renowned magazines both in America and Europe that allow them to participate in international debates, nurture the ongoing research developed in other centers and feed and enrich their own research with the observations offered by other young colleagues and consecrated teachers. The first achievements foretell a good result, but it's imperative to lead the way.

A third problem lies in the challenge of increasing institutional outreach with other entities of national and foreign Higher Education that promote student and professors exchange as well as research results. So far, the agreements signed with the Universidad Complutense and the Sorbonne Paris I University have enabled the teaching of specialization courses by professors Francisco Martín Moreno and Dominique Iogna-Prat about the Iberian peninsula in late-antiquity and about Medieval Church studies, respectively, but it's necessary for this mobility of professors to be systematic and planned in a four-year period, for example, in order to enrich the education of postgraduate students. In that sense, it's also necessary to formalize the mobility and scientific cooperation agreements that have been meant to be established with the Center for Medieval Studies at the University of Poitiers and that, for several administrative reasons have not been settled on. Lastly, it would be an important achievement to introduce co-tutorship and double degrees for Mexican students provided they make an annual or biannual stay at foreign renowned and prestigious research centers.

105. This is not a critic to those who cultivate history in present times. Recently, Russo analyzed in great detail and depth the limits and possibilities history has in present times and the complex historiographic, epistemological, heuristic and ideological debates that it demands. Rousso, Henry. *La última catástrofe. La historia, el presente, lo contemporáneo*, Santiago de Chile: Editorial Universitaria, 2018.



In order to achieve this it will be necessary to modify current legislations at the university given that double degrees are not contemplated by present-day regulations, but the corresponding authorities are already exploring possible ways. In a global and interconnected world, academic mobilization and internationalization must be a priority for university institutions and this must not only be reflected on speech but also materialized by granting financial resources and by eliminating bureaucratic obstacles.

A fourth problem has an administrative nature and constitutes a contradiction: maintaining the students' interest and promoting the development of doctoral thesis about medieval topics represents, however, the impossibility of Mexican universities to house a great number of medievalists, especially when studying the 14th and 15th centuries are not part of the institutional development of most national Higher Education Institutions (IES) and when the curricular space given to the Middle Ages in the career in history covers, in the best cases, two semesters. In that sense, it's important to point out the fact that some members of the Seminar have been in charge of the courses about the Middle Ages that are taught throughout the Bachelor's Degree in History at institutions nestled in Mexico City such as the Universidad Iberoamericana —an institution that's managed by the Society of Jesus—, the Universidad Anáhuac del Sur —also a private institution— or the “Dr. José María Luis Mora” Institute, a center for public research linked to the Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (“National Council for Science and Technology”) (CONACYT). If we add the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana and the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia, there would be no other higher education institutions where they offer the career in History in the Mexican capital; therefore, the members of the seminar have taught at universities in four of the six possible institutions. Thus, it is legitimate to ask: why form medievalists if sooner or later not all of them will have the chance to work as such? The problem has been already established in Europe and we know that in the cases of Italy, France and Spain, many young doctors with an outstanding curricula have had to migrate to other parts of the world, or in the worst cases, have had to abandon their scientific career. The solution lies in designing a new state policy that grants the necessary acknowledgement to humanist studies and social sciences in general and that this translates into the creation of new full-time positions. In practice, there's a great probability that Mexican medievalists that graduate in the following years will have to broaden their work areas or study other historic periods or topics, armed with the theoretical, methodological and instrumental background that medievalism offers.

We can conclude this section by highlighting the strength and interest graduate and postgraduate students have on medieval studies —a situation that contrasts, for example, with Spain, where the number of doctorate students has diminished considerably— the new possibilities that have opened in order to enrich the education of students and the need to stay alert before the new challenges that will come in the near future when the number of medievalists surpasses the number of available positions, even in the lowest levels of academic education.



3.3 Dissemination

For the UNAM, the impact that research results that are generated in its premises have on the society it is part of and for whom it works, is a priority. The UNAM designates countless resources—human, financial and infrastructural—to the labor it defines as knowledge socialization and dissemination of knowledge. There have been four main channels for dissemination: a) national and foreign specialists who have given conferences and keynote lectures; b) the organization of specialized congresses; c) teaching courses and diploma courses, and d) giving dissemination conferences in multiple settings.

In my article published in 2010 I had already pointed out how important it was for lectures, conferences and courses to leave behind the most overused topics and arouse the audiences' imagination—chivalry, Templars, literary cycles—in order to include more varied topics which are more important for current scientific debates in medievalism.

Throughout almost a decade, these academic activities, developed by specialists, were financed through the French Historiography Marcel Bataillon Chair housed by the Historic Research Institute or through the yearly exchange program of the UNAM which promotes the different collaboration agreements that the Mexican university has established with diverse foreign institutions.

The dissemination program regarding medieval topics opened in 2008 with the conference cycle *Introducción a la arqueología medieval: paisaje monumental en Hispania entre los siglos IV y X* ("Introduction to Medieval archaeology: monumental landscape in Hispania between the 4th and 10th centuries"), in the charge of Francisco Moreno Martín, which was followed, in that same year, by that of Víctor Muñoz Gómez about *El señorío castellano en la baja Edad Media: conceptos, fuentes y métodos de análisis* ("Castilian seignury in the lower Middle Ages: concepts, sources and analysis methods"). Francisco Moreno has become a regular spokesman, so in 2010 he presented, together with Laura Fernández, some *Lecciones sobre arte medieval hispano. Arquitectura y procesos históricos en la península ibérica antes del año 1000* ("Teachings about Hispanic medieval art. Architecture and historic processes in the Iberian peninsula before the year 1000") and in 2015 he presented new *Lecciones sobre alta Edad Media Hispana* ("Teachings about the Hispanic higher Middle Ages"). It's important to highlight the cycle of conferences entitled *Iglesia y sociedad en la Edad Media* ("Church and society in the Middle Ages") by Dominique Iogna-Prat as part of the Marcel Bataillon Chair in 2008. As a result, they published the homonymous book which made it possible to disseminate among Spanish speakers the most important thesis included in her works *Ordonner et exclure* and *La Maison Dieu*, which were not easily found in Latin America despite their fundamental content for those who study the medieval Church and religiousness.¹⁰⁶ On the other hand, Flocel

106. Iogna-Prat, Dominique. *Iglesia y sociedad en la Edad Media*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México-Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 2010. Iogna-Prat, Dominique. *Ordonner et exclure. Cluny et la société chrétienne face à l'hérésie, au judaïsme et l'islam (1000-1150)*, Paris: Flammarion, 2004; Iogna-Prat, Dominique. *La Maison Dieu. Une histoire monumentale de l'église au Moyen Âge*, Paris: Seuil, 2012.



Sabaté gave, in 2009, the cycle of conferences entitled *La Corona de Aragón en la Edad Media, siglos XI al XV* (“The Crown of Aragon in the Middle Ages, 11th-15th centuries”) and in the following year, Alessandro Vanoli talked about *El Mediterráneo en la Edad Media* (“The Mediterranean during the Middle Ages”).

With the purpose of not overwhelming the reader, I want to synthesize by naming Pascual Martínez Sopena, *Castilla y León entre los reinos de España. Territorio, sociedad y urbanización en los siglos XII-XV* (“Castile and Leon between the kingdoms of Spain. Territory, society and urbanization in the 12th-15th centuries”), 2010, Martín Aurell, *Cultura escrita y caballería, siglos XI al XII* (“Written culture and chivalry, 11th-12th centuries”), 2011; Jaume Aurell, *La historiografía medieval, entre historia y literatura* (“Medieval historiography, between history and literature”), 2011; Glauco María Cantarela, *El siglo XI, marcas de identidad* (“The 11th century, marks of identity”), 2011; Inmaculada Lorés, *El edificio románico. Espacios, funciones e imágenes* (“The Romanesque construction. Spaces, functions and images”), 2012; Martín Alvira Cabrer, *La cruzada contra los albigenses (1209-1229): historia, guerra y memoria* (“The crusade against the Albigenses (1209-1229): history, war and memory”), 2012; Iñaki Martín Viso, *Paisajes y sociedades en los orígenes del mundo medieval* (“Landscapes and societies in the origins of the medieval world”), 2014 and María Isabel Pérez de Tudela y Velasco, *Las mujeres en la Edad Media Hispana* (“Women in the Hispanic Middle Ages”), 2014.¹⁰⁷

Even if during the past three years the effects of the financial crisis have affected the participation of foreign colleagues for not being able to offer them the due commodities for their journey, a global balance allows us to note the participation of renowned European medievalists who have allowed us to go beyond the most recurring and popular topics and to promote a top level labor of dissemination. Despite these positive aspects, again, the absence of Anglo-Saxon and Latin American medievalists is noteworthy, and this absence will need to change in the upcoming years.¹⁰⁸ Before the lack of financial resources, it's imperative to appeal to the good will of colleagues in order to confront the corresponding bureaucracy and explore new ways of communication—such as video conferences, which are increasingly more frequent and whose quality improves thanks to advances in technology— and financing through the development of collective projects or the participation in international exchange programs such as the Marie Curie Program of the European Union.¹⁰⁹

107. “Seminario Estudios Históricos Sobre la Edad Media... (<http://www.historicas.unam.mx/investigacion/seminarios/s_ehed.html>).

108. However, he haven't stopped inviting Argentinian colleagues who have given lectures in different colloquiums. Among them: Ariel Guance, head of the Multidisciplinary History and Human Sciences Institute (IMICIHU) of the CONICET; Gerardo Rodríguez, researcher at the CONICET affiliated to the Mar de la Plata National University and Alejandro Morín, researcher at the IMICIHU.

109. “Les Actions Marie Sklodowska-Curie (A.M.S.C.)”, *Horizon 2020*, Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur, de la Recherche et de l'Innovation, 18 December 2017, <<http://www.horizon2020.gouv.fr/cid73279/les-actions-marie-sklodowska-curie.html>>.



Specialized congresses are an academic activity that is inherent to universities as it allows bringing together specialists in an area or theme in order to share the results of their research work. In some cases they have been questioned or affected by the world financial crisis, but they haven't been absent from the work program of this Seminar. Therefore, in 2008 we celebrated the *Congreso Internacional, El mundo de los conquistadores. La península ibérica en la Edad Media y su proyección en la conquista de América* ("International Congress, The World of Conquerors. The Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages and its Impact on the Conquest of America") which we mentioned above. Among the medievalists that participated in it we can point out the names of Carlos de Ayala Martínez, Francisco García Fitz, Carlos Reglero de la Fuente, María Isabel Pérez de Tudela, Francisco Moreno Martín, David Porrinas González, Marisa Bueno, Víctor Muñoz Gómez, Alessandro Vanoli, Daniel Baloup, Patrick Henriët, Hélène Sirantoine, Eric Palazzo, Eliana Magnani, Klaus Herbers, Alejandro Morín and Junko Kume. Never before had Mexico gathered such a great number of medievalists and perhaps this academic and intellectual achievement only has a precedent in Mexico: the participation of Jacques Le Goff and Georges Duby at the National School of Anthropology and History in the late 1980s of which, regretfully, there are few testimonies.¹¹⁰

The second congress was celebrated in 2011 and it was entitled "Ferdinand III, a Time of Crusade". It was co-coordinated by Carlos de Ayala and by this work's author as part of the project I + D *Iglesia y legitimación del poder político. Guerra santa y cruzada en la Edad Media del occidente peninsular (1050-1250)* ("The Church and the legitimization of the political power. The Holy War and the crusade in the Middle Ages of the western peninsula (1050-1250)"), financed by the ministry of Science and Innovation between 2008 and 2011 (HAR2008-01259) and directed by professor Ayala himself. Creating a financial synergy between the Autonomous University of Madrid and the UNAM it was possible to bring together most researchers linked to the project including Fermín Miranda, Santiago Palacios, Enrique Rodríguez Picavea, Philippe Jossierand, José Manuel Rodríguez, David Porrinas or Carlos Barquero as well as others whose lines of research were similar, including Ariel Guiance, Hélène Sirantoine, Laura Fernández or Alexander Pierre Bronisch. As it occurred with the congress *El mundo de los conquistadores* ("The world of conquerors"), the results of this scientific gathering were edited simultaneously in Madrid and Mexico thanks to a collaboration agreement between the Spanish editing house Sílex and the UNAM, something that guaranteed its accessibility and availability on both sides of the Atlantic. This model of collaboration could serve for other similar projects that are promoted in Latin America.¹¹¹

110. The full program of the congress can be found at: "El mundo de los conquistadores La península ibérica en la Edad Media y su proyección en la conquista de América: Ciudad de México, 4, 5 y 6 de junio de 2008", *Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas*, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 22 December 2017 <<http://www.historicas.unam.mx/eventos/2008/conquistadores.html>>.

111. Ayala, Carlos de; Ríos, Martín, coords. *Fernando III; tiempo de cruzada*, Madrid-Mexico: Sílex Ediciones-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2012.



Finally, in 2013 Mexico City hosted the first edition of the International Congress *La Edad Media vista desde otros horizontes: problemas teóricos y metodológicos* (“The Middle Ages as seen from other perspectives: theoretical and methodological problems”). It was promoted by the author with the notable collaboration of Junko Kume, professor at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS) in Japan. The congress’ uniqueness was that it was the first effort to bring together in Mexico medievalists who worked outside of Europe, regardless of their nationality. This, at the same time, had a double purpose: on one hand, it meant to promote an international collaboration network —particularly with Latin American countries— that was not necessarily linked to Europe: on the other hand, it was to generate a collective reflection upon theoretical and methodological problems —in sum, epistemological problems— those who study the Middle Ages from other geographical, methodological and historiographical settings face.

Naturally —as it usually happens— before this proposal there had been three similar reflections in Latin America. The first case was a series of meetings organized by the Brazilian medievalist Eliana Magnani en Auxerre (2002), Sao Paulo (2003), Madrid (2005) and Buenos Aires (2006) entitled *Le Moyen Age vue d’ailleurs* and which inspired the title of the Mexican congress as a humble acknowledgement of the work developed by this Brazilian medievalist.¹¹² The project promoted by Magnani had the main purpose of

*Dans un contexte de relative méconnaissance en Europe de ce qui se faisait dans la médiévistique latino-américaine, il s’agissait alors de stimuler les échanges entre de jeunes chercheurs et de chercheurs confirmés autour de l’actualité d’une recherche multiple en train de se construire.*¹¹³

The results of the four meetings were published in digital form by the Medieval Studies Center Bulletin in Auxerre and they represent a great effort to value studies on the Middle Ages that are being carried out outside Europe, as well as a reflection on the importance of non-European medievalism.

The second case was a reflection that took place in 2008 at the University of Sao Paulo and which was coordinated by Didier Méhu, Néri de Barros Almeida and Marcelo Cândido da Silva under the appealing title: *¿Por qué estudiar la Edad Media? Los medievalistas frente a los usos sociales del pasado* (“Why study the Middle Ages? Medievalists before the social uses of the past”) and in which Eliana Magnani,

112. The results of the meetings were published online in *Bulletin du centre d’études médiévales Auxerre*: Magnani, Eliana, ed. *Hors-série n° 2*. (2008) [Le Moyen Âge vu d’ailleurs] <<http://cem.revues.org/3912>> (Consulted 18th December 2018), only a few works were published in print: Magnani, Eliana, ed. *Le Moyen Âge vue d’ailleurs. Voix croisées d’Amérique Latine et d’Europe*, Dijon: Université de Dijon, 2010.

113. “letting Europe know everything that was being done by Latin American medievalists and to promote the exchange of young researchers and well established researchers around multiple research in construction”: Magnani, Eliana. “Avant propos”, *Hors-série n° 2*. (2008) : 1-3, especially 1 [Le Moyen Âge vu d’ailleurs] <<http://cem.revues.org/10652>> (Consulted 18th December 2018).



Joseph Morsel and Jerome Baschet participated, among others.¹¹⁴ The third case was a project directed by Gerardo Rodríguez and Andrea Vanina and that was entitled *¿Qué implica ser medievalista? Prácticas y reflexiones en torno al oficio de historiador* (“What does it mean to be a medievalist? Practices and reflections upon a historian’s work”). The coordinators invited researchers from both sides of the Atlantic with the purpose of reflecting on “The work of historians, the use of sources and the construction of historiographical and theoretical-methodological frameworks” and they had such collaborators as Flocel Sabaté, Maria Giussepina Muzzareli and even Nilda Guglielmi.¹¹⁵ Apart from the number of researchers, the text is notably interesting because it was elaborated in one of the main centers of Latin American medievalism: the Republic of Argentina. This represents a reflection upon the work made throughout half a century by several generations that meet every year at the annual meeting of the Argentinian Society of Medieval Studies.

Given this rich historiography, why was it necessary to organize in Mexico a new colloquium around this problem? The answer was simple: because Mexican medievalism was being consolidated and it was necessary to reflect on our daily work in contexts that *a priori* were not favorable and with the purpose of finding the meaning of said work by generating at the same time personal and institutional relationships with colleagues from American countries where medievalism already had a long tradition and where it was fully consolidated—such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Canada and the United States—and with colleagues from countries where medievalism is in the process of being consolidated, such as Japan or Australia. The Mexican event brought together professor Junko Kume, from Japan; professors Gerardo Rodríguez and Alejandro Morín, from Argentina; professors Diana Arauz and María José Sánchez Usón, from the University of Zacatecas, and other Mexican colleagues from the area of literature such as Laurette Godinas or Gerardo Román Altamirano.¹¹⁶

Regretfully, our guests from Australia, the United States and Brazil rejected the invitation, so the goal was not fully met and the institutions’ organizational problems did not allow us to materialize the efforts made in said reflection. Fortunately, this was continued by professor Gerardo Rodríguez at the Mar del Plata National University, who promoted a second meeting in 2015 under the same title that brought together some participants of the Mexican edition—who were met by Flocel Sabaté, among others—and in 2017 professor Junko Kume organized the third edition at the TUFU in Tokyo. There, the participation of Japanese and Spanish

114. Méhu, Didier; Barros Almeida, Néli; Cândido da Silva, Marcelo, *Pourquoi Étudier Le Moyen Age Au XXIe Siècle? Les Médiévistes Face aux usages sociaux du passé*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2012.

115. Vanina, Andrea; Rodríguez Gerardo, dirs. *¿Qué implica ser medievalista? Prácticas y reflexiones en torno al oficio de historiador*, 3 vols., Mar de Plata: Universidad Nacional del Sur-Sociedad Argentina de Estudios Medievales, 2012.

116. The full program can be found at: “La Edad Media vista desde otros horizontes: problemas teóricos y metodológicos 18 y 19 de febrero de 2013”, *Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas*. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 18 December 2017, <http://www.historicas.unam.mx/eventos/2013/coloquio_edad_media.html>.



colleagues was numerous; this last geographical context was truly different but it proved the possibilities that exist and the perspectives that dialogues and debates open.

There are three general conclusions about these encounters. The first one is to highlight the need to promote the creation of networks in a Latin American and global level that allow to disseminate in the region's countries the knowledge that is generated regarding the European history time period that matters to us. The second one is to point out the level that has been reached by medieval studies in the region, something that allows its promoters to actively participate in international debates by having overcome —at least in some part— the problems linked to the geographical distance, including the difficulties to have access to sources and updated bibliography. Finally, the geographical distance has been established as a positive element that offers a different perspective which allows medievalists who work from other regions to offer new points of observation, to analyze processes rather than study specific cases and to contribute from their own historiographical local traditions to the medieval studies made in Europe. We must take into account the fact Fernand Braudel used to conceive his popular book about the Mediterranean during his stay in Brazil¹¹⁷, that Ernst Kantorowicz wrote *The two bodies of the king* from his North American exile¹¹⁸ and that Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz conceived his *España, un enigma histórico* ("Spain, a historical enigma"), from his Argentinian exile.¹¹⁹

The organization of courses —about which it's not necessary to say much— especially focused on the Middle Ages, has been, as we said before, one of the most privileged ways to disseminate a renewed and scientific vision among the general public but with a certain cultural level and varied interests. In that sense, the author has been able to prove in more than one occasion the lack of awareness there still exists about this period of European history and the persistence of negative

117. Braudel, Fernand. *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, Paris: Armand Collin, 1949. Paul Braudel, Fernand Braudel's wife, wrote: *L'énorme documentation que mon mari a entre les mains le pousse à prendre le large. Il va choisir la Méditerranée. C'est donc pendant l'épisode brésilien qu'il a changé son sujet de thèse [...] ("The enormous documentation with which my husband was working on pushed him to take some time off. He chose the Mediterranean. So it was during the Brazilian stay when he changed the topic of this PhD Dissertation")* quoted by Dax, Pierre, *Braudel*, Paris: Flammarion, 1995, p. 125. Sobre la importancia de la experiencia brasileña en la trayectoria intelectual de Braudel véase el capítulo IV, pp. 109-136 de esta obra.

118. Kantorowicz, Ernst. *The King's two bodies. A Studie in medieval political Theologie*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957. Recently Alain Boureau highlighted the fact that the book was conceived in 1945 due to an erudite discussion that Kantorowicz held in Princeton with his colleague Max Radin who was specialized in law: Boureau, Alain. *Kantorowicz. Histoire d'un historien*, París: Les Belles Lettres, 2018: 57-58.

119. Sánchez-Albornoz, Claudio. *España, un enigma histórico*, Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1956. It is known that the book was a response to Américo Castro's thesis, who was also in exile. Among a massive bibliography about Sánchez-Albornoz written as in Spain as in Argentina I just highlight the last work dedicated to him by José Luis Martín: Martín, José Luis. "Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz (1893-1984)", *Rewriting the Middle Age in the Twentieth Century*, Jaume Aurell; Francisco Crosas, eds. Turnhout: Brépols, 2005: 149-170.



topics surrounding the Middle Ages which conceive it exclusively as a ‘dark’, ‘violent’, ‘ignorant’ period in which ‘fanaticism’ and ‘witchcraft’ predominated. He is surprised at the lack of awareness that our time and culture still awe medieval times. Through these courses and conferences that are given in external forums and in the university premises, the members of the SEHSEM have the desire to contribute to the dissemination of a scientific vision of the Middle Ages.

Given this, we are aware of the demands ahead: of systematically giving way to publications about the knowledge that is generated in the Seminar. This would occur by creating a collection dedicated to monographs with a medieval theme within the Historic Research Institute —where naturally studies around the history of Mexico are still the most predominant— and to guarantee an adequate financing. Likewise, it would be desirable to create a scientific magazine such as those that already exist in Argentina (*Cuadernos de Historia de España; Estudios medievales; Cuadernos de Historia Medieval, Estudios de Historia de España*), Chile (*Revista chilena de estudios medievales*), Brazil (*Signum*) or the United States (*Iberian medieval studies*), or at least an annual or bimonthly bulletin such as the one the Argentinian Catholic University edits (*Scriptorium*).

3.4 Institutional Outreach

We mentioned above that one of the most important goals of the program —and actually one of its most urgent challenges— was the construction of institutional outreach programs with universities and national and international research centers dedicated to the study of the Middle Ages. With all that’s been said so far we believe that the goal has been met and even surpassed and that nowadays Mexican medievalism of a historic nature has become whole in the context of Latin American and European medievalism and in order to achieve this, a very important factor has been the unconditional and continuous support offered by several colleagues from these countries.¹²⁰ However, there are still goals to be met.

The first of them is to reinforce and increase the number of institutional relationships with Brazil. Despite social, economical and political problems that this South American giant has faced in the past few years, Brazil continues to be an important Latin American model in the field of social sciences and human studies —the University of Sao Paulo (USP) has the first place among all the universities in that region— and houses the greatest number of medievalists in Latin America. A first step has been given. In 2016 the Seminar was invited to participate in a work meeting of the Medieval Studies Latin American Network coordinated by professors

120. It’s important to say that the French medievalism website already has a classification for “Mexique” which was elaborated by Améndolla, Diego. “Institutions”, *Ménestrel, Médiévistes sur le net: sources, travaux et références en ligne*, 20 October 2015, Unité Régionale de Formation à l’Information Scientifique et Technique, 17 December 2017 <<http://www.menestrel.fr/spip.php?rubrique1428&lang=de>>. In that same way, three members of the Seminar (Martín Ríos, Walter de Santa María and Francisco Vera) have published entries and references in the Spanish portal *Dialnet*.



Marcelo Cándido da Silva from the University of Sao Paulo and Armando Torres from the National University of Heredia, Costa Rica which took place in October of that same year in the Central American country. Seen not as a society but as a work network about common topics, the Network is about to offer the scientific community its first editorial result coordinated by Armando Torres. From this contact it will be necessary to activate the existing exchange mechanisms that exist between the UNAM and Brazilian universities and to promote the circulation of professors, students and their published works.¹²¹

The second challenge is to create links with the Anglo-Saxon world. We must acknowledge that the lack of said links is due to the formation and scientific interests of the author, which focus on the Iberian Peninsula. In that sense, and given the huge task—starting in many cases not from zero but from a position of marginalization—when the works at the Seminar began we privileged an outreach with those institutions or colleagues that were more related. Establishing an outreach with Anglo-Saxon medievalists is utterly important and we will have to focus on directing our efforts in that direction.

The last goal is to found the Mexican Society of Medieval Studies. So far, the contacts and efforts we've made have been unfruitful. This is due, in part, to the lack of professional medievalists in the field of history, since all the full-time professors/researchers that work on medieval history, including art historians, is no more than ten in the whole country. We must add to this situation the marginalization of medieval studies before other fields of historic knowledge as well as the strength and ancestry that literary studies possess in relation with medieval topics. In that sense, it's necessary to maintain the efforts and promote the work with colleagues from other disciplines while also taking as an example successful projects such as those made by the Classical and Medieval Studies Society in Zacatecas, an association that already has a strong outreach that has been promoted by Diana Arauz and Luis Felipe Jiménez.¹²²

4. Conclusions

After all that has been said, we can conclude, in the first place, that the work developed by the Middle Ages Historic Studies Seminar (SEHSEM) throughout a decade at the Historic Research Institute of the UNAM has opened a scientific and

121. The proposals are also valid for other Latin American countries such as Argentina and Chile, although the outreach with institutions and colleagues from these countries has already been established and is positively growing. Financial reasons have impeded us from accepting more invitations as we would like to.

122. *Asociación Zacatecana de Estudios Clásicos y Medievales*, 17 December 2017 <<http://azecme.com.mx/>>. Recently, professor Arauz presented the results of a decade's worth of work made by this Society: Arauz, Dina, "Los estudios medievales en Zacatecas, México. Diez años de labores en la asociación zacatecana de estudios clásicos y medievales (AZECME)". *Estudios de historia de España*, 19-1 (2017): 22-45.



academic space for the study of medieval civilization through research, teaching and dissemination. This has translated into specialized publications, the elaboration of high-level bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctorate thesis with medieval topics and the organization of conferences, seminars, congresses and lectures that have turned the study of the Middle Ages from a historic perspective into something regular that has built its own scientific legitimacy before a historiographical tradition that was centered, until a few years ago, on the exclusive study of national history. In that same way, we can point out that the scientific production of this seminar is linked with the historiographical traditions that find their roots in the pioneer works by Luis Weckmann and Edmundo O'Gormann's historicism, but also in a series of editorial projects linked to the Middle Ages and that were promoted by the Fondo de Cultura Económica and the UNAM and that we have also nurtured in the past few years with specialized monograph studies, two collective books that resulted from the congresses and a dissemination book (Dominique Iogna-Prat).

In second terms, we can consider that Mexican medievalism represented by the Seminar is young in comparison with other Latin American schools, especially the Argentinian, Brazilian and, in a lesser way, the Chilean school—the Costa Rican school was recently created—, but it possesses the necessary impulse to be consolidated along the following decade thanks to the construction of a permanent work group, the existence of administrative and financial mechanisms that support research stays and academic exchanges and, in general, the countless communication and research possibilities that have been generated by the technological advanced linked with the internet. This maturity will have to be translated in an increase of the editorial production through the publication of monographic works and documentary collections, as well as through the conformation of a periodical scientific publication that becomes a way of communicating the research made in Mexico and a space for dialogue with other medievalist schools.¹²³

Despite the achievements that have been obtained, there are still important challenges that must be overcome in the short term: a) opening research fields beyond historiography and cultural history which have been practiced so far and for which it will be necessary to acquire the methodological tools proper of this discipline—paleography, diplomacy, consultation of documented collections and promotion of long research stays that allow researchers to work in European archives; b) increase institutional outreach with Mexican poles where medieval studies are cultivated, particularly Zacatecas and San Cristóbal de las Casas; c) develop and promote academic relationships with Anglo-Saxon centers and d) increase academic exchanges among professors, students and knowledge between the Mexican university and Latin American centers.

123. The efforts made by the magazine *Medievalia* in this regard have been notable, but despite its multidisciplinary promotion, it's true that the scientific nature of the group it belongs to has privileged literary and philological studies as one can prove by reading the indexes: *Medievalia*, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. 18 December 2017 <<https://revistas-filologicas.unam.mx/medievalia/index.php/mv>>.



For all these projects to be carried out it's necessary to have the personal effort of the members of the Seminar, but also to have the institutional support offered by the board of directors as well as permanent financial support. In that sense, I believe it's necessary for Latin American medievalism to acknowledge its condition of marginalization in the span of historical research which, for many reasons, continues to have a national character that translates into a recurring questioning by academic and educational authorities of the sense of studying the Middle Ages from Latin America, the lack of funds granted to research, academic exchanges and congresses, in the lack of creation—or lack of number—of full-time professor—researcher positions and the reduction of hours dedicated to the study of the Middle Ages in basic education. Therefore, it's necessary to raise awareness of the huge grounds that studies around contemporary history have gains, particularly among younger students, an interest that institutions echo for obvious reasons, but this should not translate into questioning such as the one made by the Argentinian secretary of education about the legitimacy of medieval studies in said country.

In that sense, I consider Latin American medievalism must join efforts through the development of collective research projects, joint editorial projects—this means overcoming bureaucratic obstacles that lie in signing these agreements—, academic exchange programs and, in general, through a permanent dialogue with European colleagues whose history we study. Perhaps the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century will be the right time to materialize a project that several colleagues on both sides of the Atlantic have established on more than one occasion: to build the Medieval Studies Ibero-American Society. Collective work will be a very fruitful weapon to help fight the new battles history faces in times of crisis.



II PART
THE PAST STUDIED
AND MEASURED

