

# "WHO IS WHO" IN SPANISH MEDIEVAL STUDIES

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## ABSTRACT

Based on the author's experience as a member of the consultative council of "Historia a Debate" and one of the coordinators of the recent experience of the History Workshop at the University of Saragossa, this article offers a provisional balance of the first results obtained in the consecution of a test for research into the tendencies in Spanish academic medievalism at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The central nucleus of the study is a database with two hundred professors in Spanish universities who have staff in this field of knowledge. This database puts special emphasis on the subject of directing doctoral theses as a primary indicator for detecting such important questions in the analysis of tendencies as the forming of consolidated groups of disciples or the conscious promotion of certain themes over others in the doctorates. This is an ongoing project from which it is hoped to complete results and draw some deeper conclusions in the near future.

## KEY WORDS

Historiography, Medievalism, Spain, University, History under Debate, History workshop.

## CAPITALIA VERBA

Rerum Scriptura, Studia Mediaevalia, Hispania, Universitas, Historia in discrimine posita, Ludus historicus.

## 1. Aims and context

As a research group, we have recently published a book that summarises our experience in a history workshop held at the university<sup>1</sup>. One of the chapters of this work tackles a very controversial aspect of the discipline, namely the question of how to recognise historiographical identity. This is an important problem for students of history, who tend to have difficulties with diligent reading, and consequently with the comprehensive reading of bibliographies. How, therefore, can students identify current historiographical trends if their teachers do not make them practice the diligent and comprehensive reading of an author's work? Furthermore, students need to learn to *investigate* tendencies and not merely know what these consist of. This question is not as straightforward as it may seem, as it is not a matter of describing existing trends, but rather requires experimenting with the skill to recognise these. In this sense, identifying tendencies, assessing our inherited legacy and evaluating any indication of generational change among historians, are some of the questions that were introduced some years ago in the 'Manifesto 2001' via the discussions in *History under Debate*<sup>2</sup>. Such approaches lead directly to the analysis of recent Spanish historiography and, within it, to the examination of specific subjects, as in the case examined here, namely medieval history.

If I teach the subject of "Current Historiographical Trends" as part of the history degree in any Spanish university, and I want to focus my explanations on the evolution of "Spanish Medievalism", the first questions I ask myself are, "How many publications exist on this subject? How many doctoral theses have been written and how many of these have been published for the use of students? Does anyone know of any doctoral theses on 'Current Historiographical Trends in Spanish Medievalism'? Is this type of initiative only being developed by contemporary historians?" If the answers to these questions leave me without points of reference for the successful teaching of my subject, then I will need to consider other possibilities. Nowadays, explaining subjects such as "Current Historiographical Trends" to groups of students studying medieval history necessarily means having access to empirical studies like the one that I will present here, in order to facilitate short-term comparisons with other areas of historical knowledge and, more generally, with the situation in other parts of the world. In fact, this is not the first time that I am proposing this initiative. With this aim, and taking advantage of the most recent international congress of *History under Debate* in 2004, I coordinated the presentation of a paper in which we had studied a group of 212 specialists in medieval history who then comprised the

1. Corral, José Luis; García, Carmen; Navarro, Germán. *Taller de historia. El oficio que amamos*. Barcelona: Edhasa, 2006.

2. Barros, Carlos; Navarro, Germán. "El manifiesto Historia a Debate. Una nueva tendencia historiográfica abierta y global". *Anales de la Universidad de Alicante. Historia Medieval*, 13 (2000-2002): 365-378; Barros, Carlos; Igual, David; Navarro, Germán. "Historia a Debate. Manifiesto historiográfico". *Revista d'Història Medieval*, 12 (2001-2002): 331-388. See also Barros, Carlos, ed. [www.h-debate.com](http://www.h-debate.com), or *History under Debate. International Reflection on the Discipline*, Carlos Barros, Lawrence J. McCrank, eds. New York: The Haworth Press, 2004.

tenured teaching staff of Spanish public universities and who therefore constituted, in our view, the institutional vanguard from which any research or educational innovation relating to the subject area in question was disseminated<sup>3</sup>.

At the above-mentioned congress, our work was criticised on two fundamental points. The first was that it was not deemed advisable to separate the study of a specific subject, such as medieval history, from the other areas and fields of study that constitute Spanish historiography. What was recommended was a more general perspective. The second criticism labelled the proposal as elitist on account of its focus on tenured university teaching staff, thereby ignoring not only the contribution of dozens of pre-doctoral and postdoctoral research assistants or the non-permanent teaching staff advancing Spanish medieval history, but it also overlooked the significant group of historians who research into, and contribute to, medieval studies from outside the universities. The response to these objections is obvious. It was never intended to focus exclusively on Spanish academic medievalism outside the general evolution of Spanish, European or world historiography, but it was considered appropriate to specify a very precise first analytical step, which was to be followed by other, further ones. In fact, given the enormous quantity of recent historiographical material generated by over two hundred active people, our paper already contained sufficient material to write a doctoral thesis on the topic, and it was therefore unimaginable what composing in-depth studies of so many authors would have meant. It was thus a strategy to make the study more operative and prevent it from becoming a kind of self-complacent ego-history. I have no doubt that the non-permanent teaching and research personnel in the universities are not only more numerous than the tenured staff but also, given their professional situation, are generating the most recent doctoral theses, as well as quantitatively superior historiographical material. However, the difficulties of coping with this material and, in general, the problems of identifying such personnel became very important obstacles to undertaking such a study. Moreover, as it was evident that we were not unaware of this reality nor did we seek to underrate it, it had to be emphasised that our project was guided first and foremost by the performance and the practicality of the research strategies followed. It would have been impractical to extend our modest analysis to the thousands of people who research medieval history outside the universities, and who often do so with as much consequence and historiographical impact as is done in the academic world, especially if they have access to the main commercial publishers<sup>4</sup>. A start had to be made somewhere, and this approach was what we chose. We can only take the responsibility for the constraints of this decision and offer the first results for consideration.

The question that lay behind this study was of a general nature: what tendencies or propensities were identifiable within the established historiographical confines of

3. Navarro, Germán; Villanueva, Concepción; González, Daniel. "Tendencias historiográficas actuales en el medievalismo académico español", *III Congreso Internacional Historia a Debate*, Santiago de Compostela, 14-18th July 2004, paper presented at the Round table G: Groups, Networks, Historiographic Movements.

4. As an example see the new *Anuario y Directorio de Asociados* published by the Spanish Society of Medieval Studies in 2006.



Spanish academic medieval studies? Of course, a historiographical tendency is not only an ideological abstraction, but is represented and endorsed by the sum of a series of specific personal trajectories substantiated by their publications. The implicit or explicit consensus of certain historians is discernible through the profound disparity of their works and constitutes one of the more evident indicators of the existence of specific trends. If in any other field of historical research it was considered essential to have substantial empirical studies as a basis on which to construct general interpretations from a comparative perspective, it seems incomprehensible that in the immediate history of the current subjects in Spain this approach was not taken, nor was it employed to strengthen the subjects dedicated to scientific evaluation. On the contrary, the most extensive working model available was, and still is, the classic state of the question shaped by general geographic, chronological or thematic reflections, that does not respond to pure research in immediate historiography, but rather derives from individual academic experiences characterised by a subjective bibliographical repertoire, where, of course, habitually nobody dares to talk about specific trends mentioning names and surnames. In fact, it always remains to be seen who is who, that is, who represents the identifiable areas, schools, teams or general tendencies, and by which means.

The moment for promoting an initiative of this kind seems very opportune. The conditions in which Spanish historiography found itself were right for making the definitive transition to the new paradigm of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The absence of historiographical schools in Spain coincided with ignorance outside Spain about most of what was being done here. Publications by Spanish authors are still fairly unknown beyond our borders, and translations into other languages were still relatively rare. In fact, from the end of the 1980s, Spain experienced a paradoxical situation, a wealth of opportunities within an acute social crisis in its history, contrasted with a strong historiographical revitalization of which *History under Debate* seemed one of the more obvious phenomena<sup>5</sup>. The implicit role of Spanish historiography in the international transition towards a new paradigm, the relation between political transition and historiographical renovation in Spain and, especially, the problem of generational change, are all issues which have attracted the attention of several authors<sup>6</sup>.

The first general evaluation of Spanish medieval studies<sup>7</sup> in the mid 80s reflected these transformations, emphasising the unwonted increase in new tenured teaching staff at the time of the reconstitution of the university departments and

5. Barros, Carlos. "La inacabada transición de la historiografía española". *Bulletin d'Histoire Contemporaine de l'Espagne*, 24 (1996): 469-493.

6. Barros, Carlos. "El retorno del sujeto social en la historiografía española", *Estado, protesta y movimientos sociales: Actas del III Congreso de Historia Social de España* (Vitoria-Gasteiz, Julio de 1997), José M<sup>a</sup> Ortiz Ortuño, Santiago Castillo, coords. Bilbao: Servicio Editorial Universidad del País Vasco/ Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea, 1998: 191-214.

7. Ruiz de la Peña, Juan Ignacio. "La investigación medievalista en España en los últimos años", *Introducción al estudio de la Edad Media*. Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 1984: 232-250. See also Ladero, Miguel Ángel. "Aproximación al medievalismo española (1939-1984)", *La historiografía en Occidente desde 1945: Actitudes, tendencias y problemas metodológicos: Actas de las III Conversaciones internacionales de Historia*. Universidad de

subjects, which occurred at the enactment of the previous University Reform Act of 1985. It was in those circumstances that the old non-tenured professors, who had been unable to join the civil service due to the lack of public entrance exams, entered *en masse* via a merit examination, and a single biological generation filled the posts then available for the rest of their lives. Moreover, there are currently at least five times more tenured personnel in the area of medieval history than there were in 1970. This means that the retirement of over 60 percent of current teaching staff can be expected between 2010 and 2020, and this will undoubtedly force another generational change of unexpected dimensions, or even a significant reduction of staff, if we anticipate the likely cuts of posts announced by different vice-chancellorships, whose policy of budget cuts is already making itself felt.

All considered, one cannot avoid the sensation that research has disintegrated; that we are not faced with the substitution of one paradigm, dominant up to a certain point, by another, as occurred when the so-called "historicising history", based on relevant events and on the hegemony of the narrative, gave way to structural economic and social history. According to Julio Valdeón<sup>8</sup>, the real problem is that a considerable proportion of publications on Spanish medieval studies still practise straightforward descriptive local history, lacking any possible integration in a comprehensive framework of general history. Moreover, regarding models of on-going research, the dependence on exterior models continues, and historiographical reflection is scarce. It is true that the autonomous regions of Spain have oriented historical research towards increasingly regional contexts<sup>9</sup>. However, this is not necessarily negative, as long as it does not coincide with a tendency towards self-sufficiency that sometimes ignores the work done on parallel themes in other regions.

In addition to this we have to consider the phenomenon of the vast increase in publications, especially when many university examinations still value quantity of work over quality. In his contribution to the Medieval Studies Week of Estella in 1998, which was dedicated specifically to taking historiographical stock of Spanish medieval studies, José Ángel García de Cortázar confirmed that the quality of the studies is high but suffers from an excessive abundance of research that, lacking conceptual spirit, is merely repetitive. In this sense, exclusively descriptive publications are still frequent, and researchers who write more than they read are not rare<sup>10</sup>. Moreover, in the minutes of the same Study Week, a register of public research centres in medieval history was compiled, the first of its kind in Spain, in-

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Navarra (Pamplona, 5-7 abril 1984), Alfredo Floristán Imícoz, Ignacio Olábarri Gortázar, Valentín Vázquez de Prada, coords. Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra. EUNSA, 1985: 69-86.

8. Valdeón, Julio. "La historia de España: historia medieval". *Revista de Historia Jerónimo Zurita*, 71 (1997): 19-30.

9. Segura, Cristina, ed. *Presente y futuro de la historia medieval en España, Actas de las Primeras Jornadas sobre la Investigación Medieval en las Comunidades Autónomas, Universidad Complutense (9-11 noviembre, 1988)*. Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1990.

10. García de Cortázar, José Ángel. "Glosa de un balance sobre la historiografía medieval española de los últimos treinta años (I)", *La historia medieval en España. Un balance historiográfico (1968-1998)*. Actas de la XXV Semana de Estudios Medievales de Estella (14-18 julio 1998). Pamplona: Gobierno de Navarra, 1999: 824.



cluding details of all teaching staff, for which the scientific committee received the collaboration of the university departments. This register was considered a useful tool of knowledge, information and rapprochement among experts<sup>11</sup>. Despite this, at an international seminar held in Zaragoza in May 2004 on the presence of the Middle Ages on the Internet<sup>12</sup>, the development of specialised web pages in other European countries became evident in an attempt to promote historiographical efforts with a view to identifying the different communities of researchers with their historiographical repertoires.

This is the case with *Reti Medievali* and its section dedicated to the professional profiles of Italian medievalists, or the *Spanienportal* of German Hispanic medievalism. Perhaps the new technologies will spur on the systematic classification of historiographical material and the creation of an updated general directory of Spanish medievalists, which would help our task significantly, given the distressing situation in Spain. A portal for Spanish medieval studies on the Internet ought to be promoted, like the one launched on 1 May 1998<sup>13</sup> by Jorge Maíz at [www.medievalismo.org](http://www.medievalismo.org).

## 2. Sources and methodology

The methodological difficulties of this type of research have already become evident with the publication of the first dictionary of contemporary Spanish historians<sup>14</sup>. This work begins by identifying the limited attention that collective groups of historians attract among Spanish researchers, in a kind of unawareness of the tradition. In contrast, since the beginning of the 1980s, prosopographical studies have become thoroughly accepted in the leading international historiographies, augmenting the publication of all kinds of collective repertoires. However, the selected authors in this dictionary are a small sample of the community of historians at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It names 526 people, of whom 70 percent are teachers. The main source of information are their publications, serving also to address the question of how historians construct history. It also includes social and

11. "Profesorado universitario de los Cuerpos Docentes. Historia Medieval", *La historia medieval en España. Un balance historiográfico (1968-1998)*, *Actas de la XXV Semana de Estudios Medievales de Estella (14-18 julio 1998)*. Pamplona: Gobierno de Navarra, 1999: 843-865.

12. *Pescar o navegar: la Edad Media en la red*, *Actas del Seminario Internacional de Doctorado organizado por el Departamento de Historia Medieval, Ciencias y Técnicas Historiográficas, y Estudios Árabes e Islámicos de la Universidad de Zaragoza (6-8 mayo 2004)*. Saragossa: Universidad, Departamento de Historia Medieval Ciencias y Técnicas Historiográficas y Estudios Árabes e Islámicos, 2005.

13. Maíz, Jorge. "El crepúsculo tecnológico del medievalismo hispánico. Nuevas tecnologías e historia medieval o el ocaso de lo desconocido", *Pescar o navegar: la Edad Media en la red. Actas del Seminario Internacional de Doctorado organizado por el Departamento de Historia Medieval, Ciencias y Técnicas Historiográficas, y Estudios Árabes e Islámicos de la Universidad de Zaragoza (6-8 mayo 2004)*. Saragossa: Universidad, Departamento de Historia Medieval Ciencias y Técnicas Historiográficas y Estudios Árabes e Islámicos, 2005: 67-83.

14. Pasamar, Gonzalo; Peiró, Ignacio. *Diccionario Akal de Historiadores Españoles Contemporáneos (1840-1980)*. Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 2002.

prosopographic data with the aim of contextualising the people included, especially academically and ideologically. The final objective is to track down the emergence of trends, the appearance of new areas of research and the consolidation of scientific interests. This appears to be a worthy model of study.

This process results in a clearly-defined working method: the prosopographical study of a group in order to establish a common portrait of predominant and minor tendencies. However, I believe that the basic personal data (gender, age, class, academic category, etc.), the current conditions of life, or the ideological tendency closest to each person (left, centre or right), are only significant in the real impact which they have had on the contents of the publications in question, which are, after all, the fundamental material upon which research into historiographical trends is based, and not the other way round. In fact, an individual might be politically left-leaning and historiographically conservative, or vice-versa. On this issue the questionnaire is categorical: Do teaching staff express any kind of attitude towards political power in their publications (ignore it, criticise it, demand changes, etc.)? What is their position on ethical, social and political commitments? Do they reject these as a terrain for ideology and not for history? Do they consider it the most important dimension of our profession? To what extent does their condition as citizens affect them? Do they adopt it without abandoning rigor in their work? Do they feel that they have to produce a more humane history?

Another set of working hypotheses addressed in the questionnaire allude to the types or forms of sociability that each person shares and how this is reflected in their publications. This relates to groups, departments, institutes, faculties, subjects, national historiography, international projects, academic exchange, personal networks, congresses, journals, workshops, the internet, as well as other alternative contexts for professional relations, such as private companies, cultural management, archives, libraries, museums, etc. All of this, it can be argued, is latent in their publications. This is easy to observe, for instance, if we consider the academic environments in which these publications are produced, that is, the journals, publishers, congresses, be they local, regional, national or international.

From these main indicators, the current historiographical tendencies can also be defined by the question of whether there is consistent use of particular types of sources (written sources, material remains, iconography, etc.), which may result in the creation of groups of 'pure' document-historians or 'pure' archaeologists with a tendency to ignore types of sources other than their own. A similar situation arises when cooperation, or lack thereof, between history and other sciences or disciplines (literature, art, anthropology, sociology, psychology, etc.) is reflected in the publications themselves. It is obvious that the present survey has favoured the study of a confined area over a chronological study (of prehistory, ancient history, medieval history, modern history, contemporary history or current history), but it would be interesting to know what percentage of the teaching staff analysed have published anything relating to chronological areas other than the one that defines the group to which they belong. This indication of 'super-specialisation' can also be identified if we consider works which favour studies of single thematic areas (e.g. biography,

demography, economic history, social history, political history, history of culture or history of gender). It is also of great importance, where possible, to observe who each author addresses in their writing, and whether they pay attention to the divulgative style of their work (narration, repetition or other teaching resources).

In the analysis of current trends, it is also crucial to know which authors have most influenced each other, as indicated by themselves in their publications. However, the national historiographies that serve as references are also important (as in France, Italy, Great Britain, Spain, Castile or Aragon). This raises the question of whether or not we can recognise the existence of some teaching convention, or the affiliation with some historiographical school or tradition. In the case of an affirmative answer, the manifest degree of "group or school spirit" ought to be studied in greater depth, given that this constitutes one of the essential elements in the conscious construction of historiographical identity. In short, it is a complex exercise to try and identify the historiographical tendency which can be considered most closely related to each person, judging by their publications, and it is an exercise where we may be faced with multiple variants from one author to another, and even with different historiographical stages within in a single person's work, i.e. no explicit tendency, neo-positivism, functionalism, structuralism, historical materialism, etc. With regard to this, it appears to be very important to ascertain whether or not the relation between the ideology expressed by the individual, and the historiographical affiliations within which he or she participates, correspond or are coherent, and whether the author expresses his or her ideological tendencies in a relevant manner in the publication. In this context, it would be interesting to know if someone expresses in their work what they think the purpose of history, or the social function of this subject is, and why. There is a very wide range of possible responses: critical awareness, civic education, national conscience, respect for the other, better living conditions, transforming the world, guiding social action, giving the defeated a voice, or simply knowing about the past, enhancing the curriculum and achieving academic promotion, acquiring culture, as a hobby, for entertainment or as a profession. Thus, the great question, or the pinnacle, is to discern who is contributing to the historiographical renewal through their publications, and in what sense. In short, there is a whole set of questions that owe a great deal to the reflections raised by the international survey on the state of history among over 45,000 historians from all over the world, carried out by *History under Debate*, the results of which can be consulted at [www.h-debate.com](http://www.h-debate.com).

### 3. Provisional results

For now, the sources used in the database have been limited to the analysis of the three thousand assorted publications that constitute the current work of each and every one of the people studied, although this increases from day to day. On another level of information, internet searches have been carried out in order to ob-



tain curricular and biographical data available from the web pages of departments, repertoires of medieval studies and other similar resources. In the near future, the typology of sources will be extended, as far as possible, especially through direct interviews with the people concerned. The most important provisional results are the 212 prosopographical files on teachers from an official census from January 2003 from the universities website of the Ministry of Education. With regard to this, we have also checked the data on tenured teaching staff in other subjects, which can be consulted on the ministry's website. To summarise, the main categories of our prosopographic database are the names of the teachers, their academic field, their university, the subject of their doctoral theses, the thesis supervisors and the year of completion. There are also other numerical fields and subfields for references to books, articles, talks, communications and other texts recorded for each person.

There were 46,950 tenured teaching staff in Spanish public universities at the time of the study (January 2003), divided into four categories, that is, 7,932 university professors (17 % of the total), 25,633 university lecturers (54 %), 2,271 higher education college professors (5 %), and 11,114 higher education college lecturers (24 %). The centres with the largest numbers of teachers were the Complutense University of Madrid (3,507 people) and the University of Barcelona (2,411). If we add up the number of teachers from all the universities in Madrid (Complutense, Autónoma, Carlos III, UNED, Politécnica and Juan Carlos I) and Barcelona (Barcelona, Autónoma, UOC, Politécnica de Catalunya and Pompeu Fabra) we can see that together they contain almost a third of the national total.

Of the 199 subjects taught in Spanish public universities, only 10 had over 650 teachers each: Applied Economics (1,440), Applied Mathematics (1,440), Applied Physics (1,200), Financial Economics and Accounting (1,079), English Philology (864), Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (775), Chemical Engineering (758), Nursing (732), Computer Languages and Systems (689), and Business Studies (666). Economics, mathematics and physics were the largest areas, three or four times larger than the areas of history, which were headed by Art History (536), Contemporary History (410), Modern History (255), Medieval History (212), Prehistory (172), American History (98), Archaeology (91) and Historiographical Sciences and Techniques (74). By way of example, the average number of teachers per area in Spanish public universities was around 236. As we have seen, this number is only exceeded by Art History, Contemporary or Modern History.

The subject of Medieval History comprised 141 men and 71 women (a third of the total and only 4 of them university professors). The average age was estimated at around fifty. The distribution by academic category was 45 university professors (21 % of the total) and 158 university lecturers (74 %), as well as 4 professors and 5 lecturers of higher education colleges (5 %). It was thus a teaching body assigned according to the nature of the degrees that were taught in the faculties of Philosophy and Arts, History or Humanities and, on very few occasions, in the old teacher training schools, now pre-school and primary education colleges. On the other hand, if we consider the field according to the number of posts, our database once again shows Madrid and Barcelona as the places with the highest concentration of

teaching staff, without counting the CSIC research personnel assigned to medieval studies in these cities and who are not included in this database. Apart from the departments in these two cities, among the forty departments with personnel in the assigned area, only Granada, Salamanca, Santiago de Compostela, Seville, Valencia, Valladolid and Saragossa had ten or more teachers. In other words, a quarter of departments contained more than half of all teachers.

Concerning the issue of thesis supervisors, we can identify up to three historiographical generations, the oldest of which are no longer active. We refer in first place to theses directed by José María Lacarra de Miguel (1907-1987), Emilio Sáez Sánchez (1917-1988), Álvaro Santamaría Aránde (1917-2004), Juan Torres Fontes (1919), Salvador de Moxó Ortiz de Villajos (1921-1980), Eloy Benito Ruano (1921), Antonio Ubieta Arteta (1923-1990), Luis Suárez Fernández (1924), Ángel Juan Martín Duque (1926) or Manuel Riu Riu (1929). They supervised at least a third of the doctoral theses of all teaching staff prior to 1990. At the same time, a second generation of working thesis supervisors emerged, direct disciples of the previous generation, born around 1936-1946. These include José Luis Martín Rodríguez, José Ángel García de Cortázar Ruiz de Aguirre, Julio Valdeón Baroque, Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, Manuel González Jiménez and Paulino Iradiel Murugarren, among others. Some of them have supervised over ten theses among the current functionary teaching staff, together adding another third to the total number of theses, the years of reading in this case concentrating on the period between 1980 and 1996. Finally, the third generation of younger supervisors, disciples of the latter constitutes the remaining third.

As a general observation, the themes of doctoral theses submitted by Spanish university teachers in medieval history focus mainly on analyses of cathedral chapters, councils and municipalities, noble lineages, monasteries, bishoprics and dioceses, military orders, royal administration, courts, municipal charters and domains. There is evidently a predominance of institutional history and, to a lesser extent, of economic, social or cultural history. Studies of poverty, marginalisation, religious minorities, women's history, mentalities or daily life have not received quantitatively significant monographic treatment. However, if we turn our attention to the subjects and topics of books, articles, papers, communications and other material, the situation tends to balance itself out.

One of the phenomena that stands out when the high degree of historiographical productivity is observed is that of contracted research, consisting of accepting invitations to congresses, seminars or publications that have to be delivered in a relatively short time, which generates a type of accelerated research with rates of production often far from the trajectory of the authors, avid to meet their professional commitments in the short term. As a consequence, a lot, perhaps too much, is published in a very disorganised way, without general research programmes, without attention to the historiographical debates, or even with revisions or critical updates of one's own material. This type of progress is thus accumulative and extensive, and bibliographical growth tends to diversify interests, and to saturate more in form of chaos than to group together themes and lines of research.

In conclusion, the twelve theses with which Alain Guerreau proclaims the imperatives that should guide the future of French medievalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can perhaps be applied as general reflections also in the Spanish case<sup>15</sup>. However, the question does not lie only in rethinking the sources that are used in the research, co-operating with other disciplines, or evaluating and arguing about the applicability of current interpretative models, among other questions, but rather, first and foremost, in knowing who is working on what, and how, because historiographical innovation is impossible without collective self-awareness of who we are and where we want to go from our dispersed workplaces. If this first step is not taken and the reflexive tradition persists, which does not identify trends with names and surnames, then it is likely that the flaw in the content will continue to undermine any attempt at change, and the future will continue to be uncertain. In this sense, the contents of that summer course organised by Flocel Sabaté and Joan Farré in Balaguer in 2002 about the new perspectives in Spanish medievalism<sup>16</sup> have become an essential starting point for a continuing debate about the future of our subject within the new European setting of teaching and historical research.

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15. Guerreau, Alain. *L'avenir d'un passé incertain. Quelle histoire du Moyen Âge au XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle?* Paris: éditions du Seuil, 2001.

16. Sabaté, Flocel; Farré, Joan, eds. *Medievalisme: noves perspectives*. Lleida: Pagès editors, 2003.

