

# THE CHALLENGES OF MEDIEVAL HISTORIOGRAPHY IN BRAZIL AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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## ABSTRACT

Brazilian research in the field of humanities is emerging on the international scene as something of a new feature, particularly due the amount of papers published by Brazilian researchers in European and American journals. The unprecedented participation of so many South Americans in international projects is due to an investment made some decades ago to promote the training of researchers and centres that are beginning to give visible results in the international scientific community. This study therefore proposes to identify the way this has been achieved, and is divided into two parts: the first one will briefly present the main aspects of the institutional basis for postgraduate research in Brazil. In the second part we will present an overview of the effects of government policy for supporting historical research, providing a diagnosis of the major historiographical contributions of Brazilian researchers and centres dedicated to studying the medieval Iberian Peninsula, particularly institutional history and politics.

## KEY WORDS

Historiographical Overview, Brazilian Medieval Historiography, Brazilian Research Centres in Medieval Iberian Studies, Institutional and Political History of Medieval Iberia, Brazilian Research Promotion Agencies.

## CAPITALIA VERBA

Status quaestionis historiographicus, Historiographia Medii Aevi Brasiliae, Instituta Brasiliana ad studia Iberica Medii Aevi investiganda, Historia institutionum atque civilis Medii Aevi Iberiae, Cura negotiorum ad Brasilianam investigationem promovendam.

## 1. Introduction

Making historiographical assessments is always difficult because, beyond the risk of upsetting susceptibilities, objectivity is also required, as the author forms part of the universe under analysis.

There are two points to this study: firstly, I will present the main aspects associated with the institutional basis of research in second- and third-cycle courses and PhDs in history in Brazil. Secondly, I will present an assessment of the effects of government policy to support historical research, revealing a diagnosis of the main historiographical contributions of researchers and Brazilian centres involved in studying the institutional and political history of the medieval Iberian Peninsula.

The two main organisations responsible for financing research in Brazil are CAPES (Coordination of the Improvement of Higher-Level Staff)<sup>1</sup> and the CNPq, the National Council for Scientific and Technical Development.<sup>2</sup> The researchers of my generation in the disadvantaged field of ancient and medieval history in Brazil owe a great deal to the CAPES and CNPq agencies, which have, to date, maintained investment in the training of higher education staff and support for the research carried out in Brazil as a priority policy. The training of my generation of researchers has been the result of phenomena linked to internal government policies, which, in a context of great institutional, political and economic fragility, have miraculously been capable of identifying the scientific research needs in the area of human sciences and of maintaining programmes and sustaining the basis for making progress in them. The CNPq's researcher statute allows it to train staff, promote quality bibliographical production, establish scientific and academic cooperation and form the body of examiners for proposals sent to agencies on an *ad hoc* basis. This is undoubtedly a privilege but it also involves a commitment to provide a return on the investment received, giving in exchange work and support for the general development of research in Brazil.

The regulation of Masters degrees and doctorates (courses following the 4-year degree course) in Brazil has been promoted by the Ministry of Education and Culture and dates from 1971. Since then there has been institutional concern to establish criteria to unify the operation of these courses, firstly for Masters degrees and then for doctorates. In this process, the oldest public universities in Brazil—the Federal University of Paraná and the State University of Sao Paulo— have been instigators working on its behalf. The former, founded in 1912 in cultural circles linked to European immigration, particularly Germans and Italians, and the Order of Marist Brothers,<sup>3</sup> had its Higher Studies Programme (Masters and Doctorates) in history recognised for the Masters course in 1972 and for the PhD ten years later, in 1982. The latter, founded in 1934, based the establishment of its Faculty of Philosophy,

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1. <<http://www.capes.gov.br>>.

2. <<http://www.cnpq.br>>.

3. The History Department at the UFPR was officially recognised and organised just as it is now in 1958.



Arts and Human Sciences on the work of Fernand Braudel, with a desire for outside links, particularly after 1971, with the establishment of post-graduate programmes in social history and economic history.

The CAPES agency has existed since 1951. However, it did not receive its official status as being responsible for drawing up the National Higher Education Plan *Stricto Sensu* until 1981, when it was recognised as an executive agency of the Ministry of Education and Culture in the national science and technology system, with responsibilities including drawing up, evaluating and coordinating activities involved in higher education and the establishment of various categories of support for research. Based in Brasilia, CAPES maintains its role coordinating research and higher education throughout the country, which allows it to centralise rules and general directives in this area.

The other essential research institution in Brazil, CNPq, the National Council for Scientific and Technical Development, is an agency of the Ministry of Science and Technology intended to support scientific and technical research and to train human resources for research in the country, with several categories of support for individual research projects, international cooperation, publication and conferences. This body is concerned with all areas of research, including that of human sciences, which includes history. On its Internet site, this agency maintains the LATTES platform, which, for ten years, has brought together the CVs of all interested Brazilian and international researchers, which encourages the integration of the database. Such information centralisation helps with the analysis of the quality and competence of those asking the agencies for help, but it also serves as a diagnostic base for general support actions. As an example of the possibilities offered by this database, we might refer to the increase shown above for which LATTES has served as a data collection source.

Like CNPq, CAPES has a permanent technical and administrative staff and a considerable group of Brazilian researchers participating in the scientific committees responsible for establishing the general or *ad hoc* policies to evaluate the potential scientific quality of proposals sent and classified in the form of Knowledge Areas. There is a hierarchy that distributes them in the Large Areas category, such as human sciences, where there is a second level of areas, such as history, and then the sub-areas, such as medieval Portuguese history.

When we speak of medieval history in Brazil, a multiplicity of Higher Education Programmes in history can be seen, normally linked to public universities —either federal or state ones. This situation is due to the fact that public higher education institutions are very much in demand as a result of productivity indices, the qualification of the lecturers, the development of Masters dissertations and PhD theses and the evaluation of the quality of defended studies and examiners. Other areas, such as the indexing of bibliographical production, the standardisation of the indices supporting the ranking of periodical publications, among other measures seen, initially, as excessively quantitative, have led to a general improvement in results.

Another side of this policy is the evaluation and marking process for registered programmes making up the national league table of fifty-four registered history



programmes which, recently, included all private university programmes. The evaluation of the programmes in general involves an annual assessment carried out through reports sent by the programmes to CAPES. This is the DATACAPES report. This tool serves as an evaluation base for a scientific committee in each area, consisting of history researchers and recommended by the CAPES Director of Programmes. Every three years, this public body publishes the ranking of the Brazilian programmes, which can show progressions, regressions and even radiations. Such position at national level, of course, includes policies of expanding or restricting resources, research grants for Masters degrees and PhDs and even the possibility of other benefits encouraging the improvement of the quality and quantity of production by teachers and students.

In addition, the teaching staff, largely consisting of permanent lecturers, show a greater commitment to their area of reference, which should clearly have a positive effect on their educational responsibility. In this way, professional stability brings a greater return in terms of research productivity and hours worked, as well as access to more favourable conditions for carrying on research.

Another important element is the survival of the concept of specialism and research areas in universities, despite the existence in Brazil of voices calling politically and demagogically for a diversification and dissolution of the contents of university course curriculum content, largely calling for free access to university knowledge. We really hope that this movement will be simply an echo of fleeting trends, given that, if implemented, it would go against the plans implemented by previous governments and government agencies over the years, which have just begun to have lasting results. Even the MEC, through its university course evaluation criteria, and CAPES, with the Masters and doctorate level programmes, present elements linked to the training of teaching staff and courses of study in research concerning the disciplines offered to students. Requirements for specialisms for teaching staff posts in universities are also a good sign.

The structural objectives of the lines of research and internal subdivisions of the programmes show a desirable and increasingly close integration between teaching and research, establishing historiographical coherence between some researchers in programmes with contributions from members at other Brazilian and international study centres. CAPES, in turn, evaluates programmes with respect to their coherence, consistency, breadth and the up-to-date nature of the area they concentrate on in terms of the research areas and projects linked to the educational structure of higher level courses. This is an internal integration project leading to a harmonious set of individual research projects, integrated into groups with external visibility and links.

Of course, it is an institutional project and, as such, there are likely to be many mistakes. However, it should be considered that the persistence of certain general principles linked to rigour in the production and qualifications of teachers and students is contributing to improving research, notably in the area of history.





ILLUSTRATION 1. BRAZILIAN UNIVERSITIES.

## 2. Assessment

We will now move on to the second part of this study, where we propose to present an assessment of the current contributions of Brazilian historiography with respect to the institutional and political history of the medieval Iberian Peninsula, as the research organisation and support policy reported above has led to some noteworthy effects on Brazilian historians.<sup>4</sup>

Medieval historical research in Brazil officially begins with the thesis defended in 1942 by Professor Eurípedes Simões de Paula in 1942<sup>5</sup> at the Universidade de São Paulo (USP) and has, to date, shown an increase in quantity and a considerable variety of subjects. The seventies and eighties saw the establishment of the first genealogies of teams training generations of medievalists in the main public

4. See the map of Brazilian research groups by Eliane Veríssimo (Mestranda Universidade Federal do Paraná [UFPR]).

5. Macedo, José Rivair. "Os estudos medievais no Brasil: uma tentativa de síntese". *Reti Medievali Rivista*, 7/1 (2006), <[http://www.dssg.unifi.it/\\_RM/rivista/saggi/RivairMacedo.htm](http://www.dssg.unifi.it/_RM/rivista/saggi/RivairMacedo.htm)>.



university programmes —figures who have trained the majority of researchers on university teaching staffs today.<sup>6</sup>

The contact between these medievalists and universities and medieval research centres in Europe has become frequent and is leading to a more or less direct understanding of the methodologies and debates maintained by the Brazilian academic sphere. These initiatives have engendered a degree of criticism, above all among the partisans of historiographical trends linked to more orthodox historical materialism, who insisted, and still insist, on falsifying medieval reality with anachronistic perceptions and dual results in their research. However, we must note the need for reflection by these early academics on the relevance of carrying out medieval studies in Brazil, which has sometimes made this speciality look rather exotic on the Brazilian research scene.

Focusing on solely theoretical debates has promoted a trend to concentrate concerns on the historiographical debate, often reproducing the ideas of European researchers. It must also be considered that, during this period, the French historiographical schools were going through a period of revision and very rapidly assimilating new analyses, methods and aims, and they had a great influence on this generation of Brazilian medievalists. Such circumstances stimulated the future Brazilian researchers while also disconcerting them with old, complex debates they were not yet accustomed to. Thus, these researchers assimilated many trends without having an effective critical position.

Another aspect causing confusion in the proper understanding of these phenomena even today is the promotion of poor translations of source and bibliographical works into Portuguese, which has led to many misinterpretations of the original ideas of the authors concerned. However, medieval historical production in Brazil can now be seen and this is encouraging the new generations being trained.

This debate has, of course, developed based on a demand from agencies for new benefits and grants. This has led to work that is thematically and methodologically relevant, also attending to international developments.

In the nineties, a generation of new medievalists with qualifications from European universities, financially supported by the CAPES and CNPq agencies, began to emerge on the national scene and, while they were not very numerous, these increasingly autonomous researchers did undertake medieval historical research in Brazil. At the same time, other young medievalists were becoming partially qualified at European centres, preserving their critical viewpoint even though they were not directly linked to the debates. It was at this point when the national medieval associations, such as ABREM, the Brazilian Medieval Studies Association, were set up<sup>7</sup> along with the regional sessions of ANPUH, the National Historical Association<sup>8</sup> which concerned themselves with publications and events where debate concerning the

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6. Asfora, Wanessa C.; Aubert, Eduardo H.; Castanho, Gabriel de Carvalho G. "Faire l'histoire du Moyen Âge au Brésil: fondements, structures, développements". *Bulletin du Centre d'études médiévales d'Auxerre*, 12 (2008), <<http://cem.revues.org/document6602.html>>.

7. <<http://www.abrem.org.br>>.

8. <<http://www.anpuh.org>>.



challenges of medieval historiography went through the research existing in the country. The increase and dissemination of available medieval sources achieved by ABREM undoubtedly strongly encouraged research, particularly among beginners, now that the lack of documents was no longer a limiting factor. The growing presence of medievalists on university teaching staffs has promoted some beneficial effects at this level, because it has allowed the recommendation and acquisition of sources and bibliography by university libraries in reasonable quantities and of decent quality. This cumulative task owes its first steps to what we might describe as the heroic action of the first researchers in the country, who purchased works with their own resources and then made them available to their students. The sharing and availability of materials with the group, now very quick and easy thanks to the Internet and in institutional areas, are preserved as one of the factors identifying Brazilian researchers, who have become almost traumatised by the inherent need for sources. Thus, making them available to the academic world as a whole and even to the general public is a moral obligation required of all those who come to possess them. Another important factor on this scene is the rigorous criteria for the translation of sources and bibliography made available in the Brazilian publishing world. This rigour is due on one hand to the increase in investment and, on the other, to the opinion of specialists in medieval history always maintaining reference to international specialists as a criterion for the assessment and credibility of translation work and also Brazilian historiographical production.

One of the most common criticisms of medieval historiographical production in Brazil is its rare access to manuscript sources. Brazilian researchers who have been entirely trained in Portuguese, Spanish and French centres in the area of palaeography, Latin and historical linguistics represent a generation who better trained to analyse these sources, without restrictions linked to the nature and support of the materials, freeing research from the thematic dependence on printed sources. This difference encourages an interest in mastering these sciences, which are considered indispensable for carrying out the task of historian. The barriers are gradually being broken down, and the revision of the boundaries mentioned above looks very close.

In a recent survey of the picture of medieval historical studies in Brazil, one result was that 97% of the theses defended in the country were on the subject of the medieval West in the Lower Middle Ages, on the Iberian Peninsula, notably Portugal.<sup>9</sup> In our opinion, the dominance of this choice is due to factors concerning, firstly, the origin of our Portuguese institutional, linguistic and religious tradition. Without wishing to propose a debate on the cultural, anthropological and sociological axes of the composition of the formative elements of the Brazilian nation, from a historiographical point of view, the contribution of the Portuguese tradition, particularly at institutional level, is undoubtedly a notable one. The conscious or unconscious perception of this influence promotes the appeal of

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9. Asfora, Wanessa C.; Aubert, Eduardo H. ; Castanho, Gabriel de Carvalho G. "Faire l'histoire du Moyen Âge au Brésil...".





themes from medieval Portuguese or even Iberian history to Brazilian researchers, who contribute to the concept of frontier certain specific features broadening the limits of the Portuguese kingdom. And another more pragmatic factor can be added —that of linguistic access to the Portuguese sources, as they have an easier mastery of Galician-Portuguese than other medieval languages. This leads us to an understanding of the preference for subjects concentrating on the end of the Middle Ages, when the sources begin to be written in Romance languages as well as in Latin. It goes without saying that some interpretive readings of the survey in question may need to be qualified or confirmed, but they do constitute an attempt to understand the data obtained.

Our reflection will now take a look at the individuals and groups carrying on research in the area of the institutional and political history of the medieval Iberian Peninsula in Brazil.

Of course, some difficulties are inherent in this sample, associated on one hand with the existence of a now considerable number of researchers and, on the other, to a phenomenon of thematic inconsistency among some representatives of this category. For example, we are obliged to establish certain selection criteria in order to ensure the quality of the sample, such as choosing groups and individuals actively working on medieval Iberian studies and not on current readings and revisions of the Middle Ages. In addition, for this study, the core subject areas preferred by researchers are considered, based on information declared in the database in the LATTES CV platform, according to the authors, and also on information obtained from ABREM<sup>10</sup> and other more general previous surveys. Another criterion is the selection of researchers with PhDs active in teaching and research institutions, although maintaining the reference to the most important researchers and their role in training new generations.<sup>11</sup>

This is how we have arrived at the definition of a universe of nineteen researchers at national level, meeting the required profile. They show a difference of thirteen years in the date when they obtained their PhD qualifications, from 1993 to 2009, showing the fact that they are recently qualified and the annual concentration of them has been growing since 2005.<sup>12</sup>

These researchers have carried on their PhD studies evenly divided between the more traditional medieval history education centres in the south-east of the country, the Fluminense Federal University and two more recent centres in the south-east and southern regions of Brazil, the Júlio Mesquita Paulista University and the Federal

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10. Despite the fact that the data is from 2007, *Who's who in ABREM* has helped a great deal in finding the researchers.

11. Asfora, Wanessa C.; Aubert, Eduardo H. ; Castanho, Gabriel de Carvalho G. "Faire l'histoire du Moyen Âge au Brésil...".

12. Concerning PhD qualification, the spread is from 1993 to 2009, with an increasing annual average of qualifications: one for each year (1993, 1996, 1997, 2004, 2007 and 2009), 2 per year (1998, 2000, 2003), 3 per year (2008) and 4 (2005).





University of Paraná. It is important to note that a third of the medievalists involved in this assessment did their entire PhDs abroad.<sup>13</sup>

Considering the regions where these researchers are active, it can be said that they are evenly concentrated in the south-eastern, central-western and southern regions of the country. The seven researchers working in the south-eastern region are distributed between the federal universities of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Minas Gerais and the São Paulo state universities,<sup>14</sup> and, above all, they have emerged from education in the same region.<sup>15</sup>

The six other researchers identified in the central-western region are distributed between the federal universities of Mato Grosso and Brasília, with the largest concentration in Goiás<sup>16</sup> and they come from PhD studies carried out particularly in other Brazilian and foreign centres.<sup>17</sup> This trend is in accordance with the most recent centres in the area of medieval history.

Six researchers can also be identified in the southern region, distributed between the universities of Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina and Paraná and the Maringá State University.<sup>18</sup> Depending on the case, a growing trend is noted towards education in their own region and PhDs abroad,<sup>19</sup> which is explained by the recent establishment of these education centres. In both cases, there is the advantage of having greater circulation of lecturers from other regions of the country, many of them with experience abroad, and external links contributing to a greater diversity of historiographical perspectives applied at the universities where they work.

Concerning the main areas developed by the group of researchers analysed, a concentration of work in medieval Portuguese history between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries can be noted, according to the data obtained from the LATTES

13. Three at the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR), three at the Fluminense Federal University (UFF), four at the Júlio de Mesquita Paulista University (UNESP), one at the University of Brasília (UNB), one at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and one at the University of São Paulo (USP). Seven others abroad: one at the Complutense University in Madrid, three in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Porto, three at the University of Lisbon, one at the Humboldt University in Berlin and one at the University of Bielefeld, Germany.

14. At the federal universities, two in Rio de Janeiro (one at the UFRJ and the other at the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro [UFRRJ]), one in São Paulo (Federal University of São Paulo [UNIFESP]), one in Espírito Santo (Federal University of Espírito Santo [UFES]), one in Minas Gerais (Federal University of Alfenas [UNIFAL]) and two at universities in São Paulo (one at the UNESP and the other at the State University of Campinas [UNICAMP]).

15. PhD education carried out between 1998 and 2005, above all at Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF), Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and Universidade Estadual Paulista “Júlio de Mesquita Filho” (UNESP), and a single case of education abroad, at the University of Lisbon.

16. One at the Federal University of Mato Grosso (UFMT), two at the Universidade de Brasília (UNB) and three at the University of Goiás (UFG).

17. Predominant education: UNB, UFPR, UNESP, Complutense University and University of Porto (2). Between 1993 and 2009.

18. As follows: 4 at the federal universities (Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina [UFSC]-1, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul [UFRGS]-1, UFPR-2), 2 at the state university (Universidade Estadual de Maringá [UEM]-2).

19. Particularly: UFPR, UNESP, Humboldt, University of Bielefeld and University of Porto. Between 1997 and 2008.



platform. Certain phenomena have been observed in which production is shown to be rather dissipated among various themes. In other cases, production is shown to be interrupted by long periods of time. However, we wanted to select the most common themes with a continuous trajectory, according to our own criteria.

Another general aspect concerning the researchers' production is that it is published in Brazilian journals or editions, which ends up limiting its dissemination in foreign centres, although this shows us that the Brazilian publishing market does offer growing capacity for production in the medieval institutional and political history of the Iberian Peninsula.

In accordance with the theme of the survey, it can be said that researchers in the northern and north-eastern regions of Brazil have a very small share of the volume of production, due to the tradition of research on local themes.

From now on, we are focussing on the core subjects of research carried on by the professionals working on the medieval institutional and political history of the Iberian Peninsula.

The first is linked to monarchical political theory, if the concept of history is considered based on a political analysis such as the construction of theories of royal, papal and noble supremacy. It is an area focused on exploring works of *Espelhos de Príncipes* and of Iberian chroniclers, Fernão Lopes, Gomes Eanes de Zurara and Pero Lopes de Ayala, as well as the doctrinal works of Alvaro Pais.<sup>20</sup> The production of the court of Alfonso X of Castile also holds interest for Brazilian historiography,<sup>21</sup> as well as the Princes of Avis and treatises on royal

20. Guimarães, Marcella L. *Estudo das representações de monarca nas Crônicas de Fernão Lopes (séculos XIV e XV). O Espelho do rei: 'decifra-me ou te devoro'*. Curitiba: Universidade Federal do Paraná (PhD. Dissertation), 2004; Guimarães, Marcella L. "Os protagonismos do Cruel e do Cru, antes dos favoritos de Fernão Lopes e Pero Lopez de Ayala". *História. Questões e Debates*, 41 (2005): 107-129; da Costa, Ricardo. *A Árvore Imperial-Um Espelho de Príncipes na obra de Ramon Llull (1232/1316)*. Niteroi: Universidade Federal Fluminense (PhD. Dissertation), 2000; da Costa, Ricardo; Theml, Neyde; Chevitarrese, André; Moura, José F.; Machado, Carlos Augusto R.; Oliveira, Bruno; Mattos, Carlinda; Zierer, Adriana; Macedo, José Rivair, org. *Testemunhos da História-Documentos de História Antiga e Medieval*, Ricardo da Costa, ed. Vitoria: Editora da Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo, 2003; de Souza, Armenia Marialvaro. *Os pecados dos reis: A proposta de um modelo de conduta para os monarcas ibéricos no Estado e Pranto da Igreja e no Espelho dos Reis do franciscano galego D. Álvaro Pais (1270-1349)*. Brazil: Universidade de Brasília (PhD. Dissertation), 2008; *Escritas da História: Memória e Linguagens*, Armenia Maria de Souza, org. Goiânia: Editora da Universidade Corporativa de Guarulhos, 2004; *Escritas da História: Intelectuais e Poder*, Armenia Maria de Souza, org. Goiânia: Catholic University of Goiás, 2004.

21. Franca, Susani. "Formas da verdade na poesia religiosa de Afonso X", *Novas leituras, novos caminhos: Cantigas de Santa Maria de Afonso X, o sábio*. Ângela Vaz Leão, dir. Belo Horizonte: Veredas & Cenários, 2008; Rui, Adailson J. "A sucessão de Afonso X e a legitimidade de uma linhagem". *Pós-História*, 2 (1993): 207-218; Rui, Adailson J. "A elaboração da História na Idade Média: o exemplo de Afonso X, o Sábio", *A Ciência e a Organização dos Saberes na Idade Média*, Luís Alberto de Boni, org. Porto Alegre: EDIPUCRS, 2000: 211-217; Pedrero, María G.; Rui, Adailson J.; Santos, E.; Moraes, W.G. "Fontes Primárias da Idade Média", *Fontes Primárias da Idade Média séculos V-XV*, Lênia Marcia Mongelli, org. Cotia: IBIS, 1999: II, 137-208.



government;<sup>22</sup> issues linked to the Western Schism and the exile in Avignon and its effects on the Portuguese monarchy are also of interest to Brazilian researchers.<sup>23</sup>

Another core theme developed by Brazilian medieval historiography is that of power relationships and noble, urban and ecclesiastical socio-political groups understood as the agents making up political society surrounding the king. On this point, we have some research based on prosopographic methodology on the Iberian nobility and the medieval city,<sup>24</sup> the debates about society surrounding the kings of the Avis dynasty,<sup>25</sup> political matrimonial strategies,<sup>26</sup> and Parliaments.<sup>27</sup> The concentration of researchers applying themselves to this subject can be seen at the universities in the south of the country.

There is another core research area linked to medieval royal legislation and jurists, the theoretical terms of Law and the empirical tools for exercising justice and administration, an area developed by many Brazilian researchers in the selected thematic universe. A preference for research linked to legislation and political centralisation in Portugal and Castile can be seen,<sup>28</sup> as well as for

22. Franca, Susani. *Os reinos dos cronistas medievais*. Sao Paulo: Annablume, 2006; Coser, Miriam. C. "A dinastia de Avis e a construção da memória do reino português". *Especiaria*, 10 (2007): 703-727; de Nascimento, Renata Cristina Souza. "O Poder do Discurso: A Crônica da Guiné e a Construção da Imagem Mítica do Infante D. Henrique (Século XV)", *Anais do II Colóquio da pesquisas da História- Arte, Poder e Sociedade*. Goiânia: Crônidas-Universidade Federal de Goiás, 2009.

23. Fernandes, Fátima R. "O conceito de Império no pensamento político tardo-medieval", *Facetas do Império na História*, Andréa Doré, Luís Felipe Silvério Lima; Luiz G. Silva, dirs. Sao Paulo: HUCITEC, 2008: 185-198; Fernandes, Fátima R. "A monarquia portuguesa e o Cisma do Ocidente (1378-85)", *Instituições, Poderes e Jurisdições*, Renan Frighetto, Marcella L. Guimarães, eds. Curitiba: Juruá Editora, 2007: 137-155.

24. de Almeida, Cybele Crossetti. "Uma introdução ao método prosopográfico: fontes e questões para pesquisa", *Ciências Humanas: Pesquisa e Método*, Celi Regina Pinto, Cesar Augusto Guazzelli, orgs. Porto Alegre: Editora da Universidade, 2009; de Almeida, Cybele Crossetti. "Topografia e estratificação social: representações e mecanismos de poder na cidade medieval". *Anos 90*, 14 (2000): 294-311; Fernandes, Fátima R. *Sociedade e poder na Baixa Idade Média portuguesa*. Curitiba: Editora da Universidade Federal do Paraná, 2003; Fernandes, Fátima R. "Os exílios da linhagem dos Pacheco e sua relação com a natureza de suas vinculações aos Castro (segunda metade do século XIV)". *Cuadernos de Historia de España*, 82 (2008): 31-54.

25. Fernandes, Fátima R. "A construção da sociedade política de Avis à luz da trajetória política de Nuno Alvares Pereira", *Actas das VI Jornadas Luso-Espanholas de Estudos Medievais: A Guerra e a sociedade na Idade Média*. Torres Novas: Almondina, 2009: I, 421-446.

26. Gimenez, José C. "Alianças matrimoniais como estratégias políticas na Península Ibérica", *Instituições, Poderes...*: 157-173; Gimenez, José C. *A Rainha Isabel nas estratégias políticas da Península Ibérica-1280-1336*. Curitiba: Universidade Federal do Paraná (PhD. Dissertation), 2005; Souza, Armenia M. "A Política de Casamento de Dom Afonso IV, Rei de Portugal, para com seus filhos D. Pedro e D. Maria (séc. XIV)". *Temporis(ação)*, 5/6 (2001): 25-42.

27. de Nascimento, Renata Cristina Souza. "As atitudes do rei em favor da nobreza e as queixas apresentadas em cortes: A permanência dos abusos da fidalguia durante o governo de D. Afonso V (1448-1481)", *Anais-XXIV Simpósio Nacional de História-História e Multidisciplinaridade: territórios e deslocamentos*. Sao Leopoldo (RS): Unisinos, 2007; Fernandes, Fátima R. "As Cortes medievais portuguesas e sua relação com o poder régio-segunda metade do século XIV". *Anais da XIX Reunião Anual da Sociedade Brasileira de Pesquisa Histórica*, 19 (1999): 141-144.

28. dos Reis, Jaime E. *Território, legislação e monarquia no reinado de Alfonso X, o Sábio (1251 - 1284)*. Assis: Universidade Estadual Paulista "Júlio de Mesquita Filho" (PhD. Dissertation), 2007; dos Reis,



the *Enquêtes et Concordats*,<sup>29</sup> where there is a concentration of researchers from universities in the central-western region and some in the southern region.

Other core areas show a more irregular contribution from Brazilian researchers, such as the Reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula generally developed along the lines of textbooks,<sup>30</sup> Military Orders, above all Portuguese ones,<sup>31</sup> the nature of political and legal relationships established or practised between Christians, Muslims and Jews,<sup>32</sup> the size of councils of nobles,<sup>33</sup> and also ecclesiastical power and reforms, notably monastic ones.<sup>34</sup>

The predominant research themes do not prevent the researchers mentioned developing other isolated subjects depending on their circumstances and universities.

Jaime E. "O Setenário de Alfonso X, o Sábio: código jurídico ou espelho de príncipe?", *Educação, História e Filosofia no Ocidente: Antiguidade e Medievo*, Tereziha de Oliveira, dir. Itajai: Univali, 2009: 259-266; de Nascimento, Renata Cristina Souza. "A Sociedade e o Estado Português no Final do Século XIV". *Estudos (Goiânia)*, 26 (1999): 359-370; de Nascimento, Renata Cristina Souza. "A imagem de Nobreza em Portugal no Governo de D. Afonso V (1438-1481)". *Fragments de Cultura*, 14/9 (2004): 1657-1663; Coelho, Maria. F. "Justice et apparences: discours et pratiques dans la tradition portugaise en Amérique", *Normes juridiques et pratiques judiciaires*, Benoît Garnot, ed. Dijon: Editions Universitaires de Dijon, 2007: 415-424; Coelho, Maria F. "Monarquia feudal e propaganda política. As inquirições portuguesas como fonte de estudo (séc. XIII)", *Idade Média: abordagens interdisciplinares*. Rio de Janeiro: PEM, 2009: 150-154; Fonseca, Celso S. "Itinerário de estudo: o processo de organização do estado português nos séculos XIV e XV". *Revista Múltipla*, 18 (2005): 163-174; Fonseca, Celso S. "Uma introdução ao estudo da centralização monárquica portuguesa", *Um passeio com Clio*, Cléria Botelho da Costa, dir. Brasília: Paralelo 15, 2002: 61-74; Paes, Flávio F. "Leis Contra a usura na Idade Média portuguesa (séculos XIII e XIV)", *Os Pecados Capitais na Idade Média*. Porto Alegre: PPG-História-Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, 2004: 41-44; Vidotte, Adriana. "Cerimônia política e legitimação do poder em Castela no período de Enrique IV", *Anais do I Ciclo Internacional de Estudos Antigos e Medievais e VII Ciclo de Estudos Antigos e Medievais*. Assis: Universidade Estadual Paulista "Júlio de Mesquita Filho", 2005; Vidotte, Adriana. "A historiografia espanhola sobre o reinado dos Reis Católicos", *Anais do XVII Encontro Regional de História da Associação Nacional de História (São Paulo). O historiador e seu tempo*. Assis: Universidade Estadual Paulista "Júlio de Mesquita Filho", 2006; de Almeida, Cybele C. "Legislar para o bem comum: direito e centralização política em Afonso X". *Biblos*, 21 (2007): 9-32; de Almeida, Cybele C. "Considerações sobre o uso político do conceito de justiça na obra legislativa de Afonso X". *Anos 90*, 16 (2002): 13-36; Fernandes, Fátima R. "A recepção do Direito Romano no Ocidente europeu medieval: Portugal, um caso de afirmação régia". *História. Questões e Debates*, 41 (2005): 73-83; Fernandes, Fátima R. *Comentários à legislação medieval portuguesa de Afonso III*. Curitiba: Juruá Editora, 2000.

29. Paes, Flavio F. "Estratégias de poder: inquirições, concordatas e definição de fronteiras em Portugal (séc. XIII e XIV)". *Territórios e Fronteiras*, 2 (2001): 63-74.

30. da Costa, Ricardo. *A Guerra na Idade Média-Um estudo da mentalidade de cruzada na Península Ibérica*. Rio de Janeiro: Paratodos, 1998; Rui, Adailson J. "Uma mentalidade em transformação: o culto de São Tiago da Reconquista Espanhola à Conquista da América". *Pós-História*, 5 (1996): 53-66.

31. Fernandes, Fabiano. "Na 'ribalta' das inquirições: a dissolução da Ordem do Templo e as comendas de Ega, Soure, Redinha e Pombal. 1308-1310", *XXV Simpósio Nacional de História. História e Ética*. Fortaleza: Universidade Federal do Ceará, 2009; Fernandes, Fabiano. "As chaves do reino nas mãos do rei: A luta pela redefinição das esferas de poder e a criação da Ordem de Cristo (1319-1325)", *Anais do XI Encontro Regional Associação Nacional de História. Democracia e conflito*. Rio de Janeiro: Associação Nacional de História, 2004; Fernandes, Fabiano. "Poder religioso e centralização régia nas vilas de Ega Soure, Redinha e Pombal. 1248-1348", *Atas da IV Semana de Estudos Medievais*. Rio de Janeiro: Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 2002.



These are the ones we think are most important for identifying researchers in the general picture.

In the universe of research groups and laboratories, the need to slightly expand the original approach of our survey—the political and institutional history of the medieval Iberian Peninsula—can be seen. The groups identified below include the vast majority of the researchers already mentioned and still others who work at these centres. All these researchers make their projects available, registering with the CNPq, and must update them if they do not want to lose the approval of their host institution and the CNPq.

The classification of these groups' proposals can become difficult, depending on the case, because the categories are too broad. So for this study we identify a large number of the research centres investigating the medieval Iberian Peninsula, above all those more specifically concerning themselves with its institutional and political history in the medieval Iberian Peninsula. Among them is the *Medieval Studies Programme* at the Federal University of Goiás; *Speculum: Medieval Studies Centre* at the Federal University of the Mato Grosso, both in the central-western region of the country. In the south-eastern region, the most traditional programme in terms of the research referred to, the *Medieval Studies Programme* at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, promotes events, as does the *Medieval Studies Laboratory* of the University of São Paulo and the *Centre of Ancient and Medieval Studies* of the Paulista Julio de Mesquita Filho State University.

With a rather interdisciplinary dimension and aimed at collecting and publishing sources, we have the *Translation Studii—Dimensions of the Middle Ages Centre* at the Fluminense Federal University. Similarly, there are *Sources for teaching and research in the History of the Middle Ages* at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul and the *Ancient and Medieval Studies Laboratory* of the State University at Maringá, in Paraná.

Representing a more direct approach to the medieval institutional and political history of the Iberian Peninsula, there is the *Centre for Mediterranean Studies and Power and Society on the ancient and medieval Iberian Peninsula*, both at the Federal

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32. de Silveira, Aline D. "Política e convivência entre cristãos e muçulmanos nas Cantigas de Santa Maria", *Reflexões sobre o Medievo*, Nilton Mullet Pereira, Cybele Crossetti de Almeida, Igor Salomao Teixeira, dirs. São Leopoldo: OIKOS, 2009: 39-59; de Silveira, Aline D. "Cristãos, Muçulmanos e Judeus na Medievalística alemã: reflexões para um novo conceito de Idade Média". *Aedos*, 2 (2009): 143-169; *Fontes Primárias da Idade Média Séculos V-XV*, Lenia Marcia Mongelli, ed. São Paulo: Íbis, 1999, 2 vols.

33. de Nascimento, Renata Cristina Souza. "Nobreza/Poder Concelhio: Conflitos existentes no reinado de D. Afonso V (1449-1481)", *Medievalismo: Leituras Contemporâneas*. Londrina-Maringá: Universidade Estadual de Londrina-Universidade Estadual de Maringá, 2005: III, 533-537; Alves, Gracilda. "A atuação dos tabeliães em Portugal. Século XIV e XV", *O Portugal Medieval*. Salvador: Associação Brasileira de Estudos Medievais, 2003; Alves, Gracilda. "Tabelionato: poder social, econômico e político". *XXII Simpósio Nacional de História*. João Pessoa: Associação Nacional de História, 2003.

34. Almeida, Néri de Barros. "A 'Vida de Santo Amaro' entre as dinâmicas de uma tradição legendária e as tensões do estabelecimento da Ordem Cisterciense em Portugal (séculos XIII-XV)", *Inês de Castro: a época e a memória*, Ana Paula Torres, org. São Paulo: Editorial Alameda-Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo-Cátedra Jaime Cortesão, 2007: 79-102.



University of Paraná. And also *Scriptorium: Medieval and Iberian Studies Laboratory* at the Fluminense Federal University of Niterói (Rio de Janeiro) and the group *Iberian Peninsula: from Late Antiquity to the Reconquest*, at the Federal University of Alfenas (Minas Gerais).

All these groups plan to promote exchange with external Brazilian and international researchers, with the desire to establish scientific and inter-institutional links. However, the general need for own sources of finance prevents more lasting actions, as all the initiatives depend on the categories available at the CAPES and CNPq agencies and support from state agencies like FAPESP in Sao Paulo. The cooperation obtained from banks, public companies and mixed capital foundations is sporadic and sometimes lacks the prospect of long-term continuity.

For example, resources are associated with the performance of the applicant researchers and they constitute an exception on the national research scene. The permanence of centres is directly linked to the universities where they are based and the support for institutional grants for the undergraduate, masters and PhD or post-doctorate students acting as staff for these centres' initiatives.

Such limitations impose conditions on the centres' programmes, firstly in terms of the calendar fixed by the finance categories. These categories are presented in the form of continuous flow, that is, they are permanently open, above all those involved in the application process for research grants. Those involved in the publication of journals follow the agency calendar. This is the reason for the progress of events at regular intervals, subject to the opening of institutional support categories. We should also consider another aspect: the periods for sending, obtaining results and implementing proposals are often very short, requiring a great deal of time and coordination capacity from the person responsible concerning the teaching team and students involved.

Another functional difficulty is linked to the turnover in recipients of grants working to support the continuing operation of centres and collective research projects. The limited finance periods for their research depend on the level of qualification, up to three years for first-cycle scientific initiation,<sup>35</sup> up to two years for the Masters and four years for the PhD. Given that finance has not always been agreed at the beginning of the course, the time these students remain at the centres becomes very limited, a situation mitigated by the students' voluntary work during their years of study. Recently, quotas have been established for grants linked to REUNI projects to modernise Brazilian universities, which have a notable effect on research centres operating in higher education institutions.

Access to sources on the Internet reduces the urgent need for the compilation and publication of documents, although this is still necessary. This initiative has become quite important when it comes to the digitisation of little researched manuscript sources in Brazil, which have limited the subject choices of researchers.

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35. Grants agreed for research projects oriented towards these studies in which the students follow previously established plans.





Financial and institutional support is essential for the operation of research centres, but their existence and survival are subject to demands for solutions to the problems inherent in the research itself. The initiative is, moreover, the essential precondition for the researcher, which explains the typical medievalist solutions allowing the progress of research towards an increasingly broad level with the dissemination of results and the sharing of documents between scholars. Like true medievalist university doctors, today we maintain contacts with teaching and research centres by participating in congresses, sending materials to be published, staying up to date to show that the academic world in Brazil is emerging on the international scene with potential to take part in research at international level.

The contributions made by the first generations of medievalists in Brazil have been the contributions of founders and they occupy an important place in the pantheon of medieval history in Brazil: now it is the turn of new generations. The nature, quality and frequency of research carried out in this area in Brazil must be mastered and perfected. Firstly, there is the task of diagnosing the predominant areas in the study of medieval history through a periodic thematic survey from which needs can be identified and the emergence of interpretative and historiographical trends can be evaluated. The results can be important indices on which to base demands, criticism and direction for future public policies as well as cooperation associated with research in this country and abroad.

Today, I believe it is possible to say that, although Brazilian medievalists directly or indirectly owe their education to the European academic world, the growing maturity of our researchers and their welcome natural geographical distance in the context of the field of analysis should be exploited more. Despite globalisation, we, the Brazilians of the 21st century, are often involved in specific debates about our South American situation. As children of our time and place, we are incapable of achieving complete integration into the point of view of contextual analysis. We are victims of the unconscious subjectivity limiting analysis with respect to the phenomena that surround us, but our reasonable distance from the European situation and debate makes us capable of participating scientifically and objectively. The position of external spectator often attributed to the Brazilian medievalist therefore becomes an excellent point of view for analysis and must be exploited in institutions and scientific projects in order to multiply the generation of productive cooperation from the scientific and academic points of view.

Above all, there is an urgent need to promote reciprocal knowledge between researchers and centres engaged in research through historiographical assessment initiatives defined by clear, relevant approaches. In this sense, research centres are established as important tools for institutional visibility, as they offer research with specific, thematic or spatial approaches making it possible to establish fundamental links for science while promoting the implementation of productive interdisciplinary links.

European research centres are increasingly showing themselves as collaborators with their Brazilian counterparts, which allows the construction of unprecedented scientific cooperation projects with wonderful prospects for research. The proposal





for bringing together the contributions of Brazilian medievalists and European researchers working on the political and institutional history of the Iberian Peninsula heralds a new phase of research in this area on the two continents. The common, collective view, without forgetting the specific features of either side, makes it possible to achieve very considerable historical visions and revisions ultimately contributing to the renewal of medieval studies.

