



## Medieval Chronicles – Foreword

### Crónicas Medievais - Apresentação

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Interest in medieval historiography has boomed in the last thirty years, in no small part because of the realization that genres previously regarded as straightforward historical sources were also goldmines for literary and cultural studies. A plethora of important comprehensive publications<sup>1</sup> and major research projects<sup>2</sup> have focussed on what annalists and chroniclers reveal about their own agendas, worldviews, preferences, and blind spots. Many gems of medieval historical writing have appeared in new editions or translations<sup>3</sup>. Art historians have made great strides in elucidating the relationship between text, layout and images<sup>4</sup>. This interdisciplinary interest is exemplified in the establishment of the Medieval Chronicle Society, which has held regular conferences since 1996<sup>5</sup>. The present volume represents a sampling of current research on the topic, including works from Portugal, Spain, France, England and Hungary in the high and late Middle Ages. Most of the contributions focus on one particular work, but the cross-sectional nature of the historiography of the period means that each has a broader relevance.

One group of papers is dedicated to the biographies and methods of the historians themselves. Leah Shopkow explores the personal connection between the

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<sup>1</sup> For example DELIYANNIS, Deborah (ed.) - *Historiography in the Middle Ages*. Leiden: Brill, 2003; DUNPHY, Graeme (ed.) - *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*. Leiden: Brill, 2010, now available also online with regular updates; BURGESS, Richard W. & KULIKOWSKI, Michael – *Mosaics of Time: The Latin Chronicle Traditions from the First Century BC to the Sixth Century AD*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2013, first of a multivolume work; WOLF, Gerhard & OTT, Norbert H. (ed.) – *Handbuch Chroniken des Mittelalters*. Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Examples include the Digital Humanities projects *The Online Froissart*, at <https://www.dhi.ac.uk/onlinefroissart/> the *Fernão Lopes Portal*, at <https://fernaolopes.fcsh.unl.pt> and the *Estoria de Espanna Digital*, at <https://blog.bham.ac.uk/estoriadigital/>

<sup>3</sup> The edition of Alphonso X's *General Estoria* illustrates the accomplishment of a massive editorial project: ALFONSO X EL SABIO – *General Estoria*. Coord. Pedro Sánchez-Prieto. Madrid: Biblioteca Castro / Fundación José Antonio de Castro, 2009 (10 vols).

<sup>4</sup> A fascinating recent example is ROE, Nina – *The Illuminated World Chronicle: Tales from the Late Medieval City*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020.

<sup>5</sup> The proceedings of these conferences and other articles on chronicles have been regularly published by Brill in the book series *The Medieval Chronicle*, which in future is likely to be a journal. The first volume of this series appeared in 1999 (KOOPER, Erik (ed.) - *The Medieval Chronicle*. Leiden: Brill, 1999); volume 15 is currently in press.

thirteenth-century historians William of Andres and Thomas of Marlborough, showing how their overlapping legal careers and shared connections with other key players in cases argued before the curia led to them producing strikingly similar legal chronicles. Likewise Anna Probert examines the literary connections of the fifteenth-century English chronicler Richard Fox, using documents external to the chronicle to chart the author's relationship to Abbot John Whethamstede and translator Eleanor Hull, among others. Adrien Quéret-Podesta proposes a hypothesis about the origins and purpose of the fifteenth-century Hungarian (but German-language) *Chronicle of Spisšká Sobota*, also known as the *Georgenberger Chronik*. This paper locates the chronicle in the legitimation struggle of the German-speaking community at a time when their autonomy was in immediate danger, and suggests the work was redacted in Levoča. Meanwhile, Rodrigo Furtado reveals how the thirteenth-century *Historia de rebus Hispaniae* by the Iberian historian Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada used and was inspired by the work of one of the most important foundational historians of the early medieval period, Isidore of Seville.

Another group of papers explore the presentation of particular historical figures and events. Lisa Ruch's study of the fifteenth-century Prose *Brut* manuscript in Edinburgh University Library traces the sources which allowed this work to offer a depiction of the Anglo-Saxon king Athelstan which was unique in the *Brut* tradition. A slightly broader approach is taken by Gergely Kiss, whose study of Clemence of Hungary surveys the perception of this daughter of Charles Martell in a range of fourteenth-century narrative sources. And in a similar vein Carol Sweetenham looks at the divergent presentation of the Norman duke Robert I in a group of English chronicles by Orderic Vitalis, William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon.

Elizabeth Freeman's study of Aelred of Rievaulx revisits the genre question, showing how all of the seven works by this twelfth-century Cistercian that are traditionally classed as historiographical transcend the strict boundaries of traditional historiographical forms. Nineteenth-century scholarship defined very narrow genre categories for historical writing, annals being clearly distinguished from chronicles and so forth, and looked sceptically on works that transgressed these. However the current consensus increasingly sees the types as being fluid, with more texts proving

anomalous than perfectly fitting the categorizations. It is therefore interesting to see Aelred at home in a variety of “hybrid” genres. The broad issue of literary genres is also reappraised, with particular regard to historiographical forms and their rhetorical traits, by Leonardo Funes, who traces the evolution of the use of direct speech in Castilian historical writing from Alphonso X to John II (thirteenth to fifteenth centuries). This innovative contribution focuses on the capacity of this stylistic resource to create an environment of emotion and verisimilitude, which favours the conveying of what was considered to be the “historical truth”.

Finally, Filipe Alves Moreira’s piece on the *Crónicas abreviadas dos reis de Portugal* by Cristóvão Rodrigues Acenheiro is a good example of the important work on codicology, sources, and the circulation of manuscripts. For three hundred years, scholars have sought to bring order to the vast and chaotic tradition of historiographical manuscripts, but the task is by no means complete, and this contribution to the identification of the codex used by the 19<sup>th</sup> Century editors of Acenheiro’s work, previously considered as lost, is therefore very welcome.

The publication of this collection of essays on Medieval Chronicles is thus part of the on-going work that has been developed on the subject in recent years. These ten ground-breaking and inspired articles showcase the diverse range of possible approaches to the complexity of chronicle texts. They epitomize the current vitality of the field, and point the way forward, as so much remains to be done.

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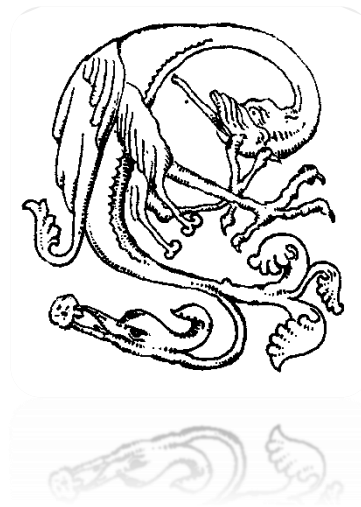
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