



DIEGO OLSTEIN

Areas of Research and Teaching

Medieval Iberia

My first field of research is Medieval Iberia. To date, my contributions to this field are contained in my book *La Era Mozarabe. Los mozárabes de Toledo (siglos XII-XIII)*. (Reviews of this book: Glick, T. F. *Afers*, 61 (2007); Rodríguez Picavea, E. *Studia Historica. Historia Medieval*, 27 (2009)) There are two major innovations that I introduced to the history of medieval Toledo and the history of the Mozarabs. First, I reorganized the wide repertory of sources. So far, a linguistic criterion prevailed, resulting in the artificial creation of two documentary series: on the one hand the Arabic documentation, on the other hand the Latin/Romance documentation. By contrast, I considered components other than the language of the sources such as the type of contents and the parties involved in them in order to rearrange them. By doing so, I realized that the royal as well as the ecclesiastical documentation is written in Latin until the 1240's, private documentation is mainly written in Arabic until the 1260's, and the Romance documentation represents the continuation of both the royal documents after the mid 1240's and the economic private documentation mainly since the 1260's. The substitution of the Arabic vs. Latin-Romance dichotomy paves the way for many new insights, which represent my second set of innovations. Relying on the information accumulated in a data base I designed regarding 11,712 men and women of the years 1085-1338 and including all relevant documentation, whether Latin, Arabic, or Romance, I was able to depict the patterns of interaction between the two largest groups – the Christian settlers and the local Mozarabs– establishing two main stages in the emergence of the new society. From 1085 to 1180, during the “dual period”, each community, proceeding according to its institutional practices, dwelled in its own circumscribed area and interacted following inner-community lines. However, the intermingling of the systems of property rights allocation into a new synthesis enabled economic interactions between all the communities. This new institutional arrangement became the distinctive feature from the 1180's and throughout the thirteenth century. Its consolidation resulted in the demographic homogenization of the landscape, which in its turn fostered social integration as the rate of inter-community marriages, economic and neighborhood relationships increased. These processes also

involved two major cultural transformations. By redefining their identity and adopting the Romance languages, the Mozarabs became assimilated into the new society. However, amidst its own assimilation, the Mozarab community was able to acculturate the northern Christians by providing them with part of the Muslim economic, legal, and notarial legacy. I explored this last process in “The Arabic Origins of Romance Private Documents” that I include in this submission as an example of my writing in this field.

Currently, I am working on a complementary study that approaches the history of the Mozarabs amidst the encounters and conflicts between northern Christians and Muslims during the ninth and tenth century. The central objective of my ongoing research on the Mozarabs in the early centuries of Muslim and Christian Iberia is to provide a synchronic view of five major processes: conversion to Islam, voluntary martyrdom, internal revolts in al-Andalus, military and settlement successes of the Asturian kingdom, and eschatological writings. In order to evaluate the nature of the relationship between these processes, I adopt medieval Iberia as an integrated unit of analysis, instead of the widely accepted fragmentation between and within Muslim and Christian political entities. Both the expansion of the unit of analysis and the synchronic approach of the time dimension will contribute to a better understanding of each of these five central processes as well as of the entire period. (I will present this project at the Dept. of Religion Studies at Pittsburgh University on November the 10, 2009).

World/Global History

Simultaneously, for the last nine years, I have been dealing with the emerging field of World/Global History. So far, my major tasks in this field have been the preparation of an introductory course on World History for freshmen, an advanced seminar for outstanding students in the honors program as well as the enhancement of collaboration between the departments of history and area studies departments at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. In order to foster these goals, I have conformed and directed a multidisciplinary team in which seventeen PhD candidates and young PhD holders have already participated. (For a detailed description of these enterprises see: Olstein, D. (2004) “World History: an Integrative Model”. World History Bulletin, Vol. XX, Number 2, pp. 4-6). In addition to these teaching and administrative tasks, my first research incursion in the field of World and Global History was devoted to the history of globalization and has led to the publication of articles and presentations in international conferences on this topic including an invitation by the Weather Center for International and Global Studies and the Duke Center for International Studies to deliver a lecture on that topic at Harvard University. (The English translation of my “Le molteplici origini della globalizzazione. Un dibattito storiografico”. Contemporanea 3 (2006), pp. 403-422, included in this submission exemplifies this line of work).

Currently, I am working on my first major research project in the field of World\Global History that focuses on the globalization crisis during the twentieth century (1914-1989) as a period of de-globalization. In my project, this crisis is related to the global rise and defeat of a particular political regime, which I define as the anti-hegemonic party-state. The first objective of this project is to search for the connections between political regimes that have so far been compartmentalized conceptually and segregated regionally despite their functional similarities. My aim is to portray the diffusion processes that brought to the simultaneous or consecutive

emergence of political regimes characterized by a reliance on state bureaucracy and party apparatuses leading to social mobilization in order to maximize the monopoly on violence, with the ultimate goal of improving the state's position in the world division of wealth and power. The second objective is to correlate the measurement of economic globalization with the processes of rise and fall of the anti-hegemonic party states. The historical narrative is arranged accordingly in three waves of anti-hegemonic party states: a) the rise of Communism in the Soviet Union and its impact in Mongolia Guomindang China, and Turkey under Atatürk; Fascism in Italy, and Nazism in Germany; and Cardenas' rule in Mexico; b) Vargas' second presidency in Brazil, and Peron's Argentina; Communist China, Egypt under Nasser, and Ghana under Nkrumah; c) Islamic Iran, Sandinist Nicaragua, and Venezuela under Chavez. The research entails three stages: conceptualization, historical research, and comparative study in order to track, on the one hand, the wide series of political, economic, and ideological transfers involved in the diffusion of the structure of the party and the combination of party and state into a particular structure of power concentration, central planning, land reforms and collectivization, and discourses of legitimization. On the other hand, the correlation between these trends of transfers of the anti-hegemonic party states model and the fate of economic globalization. I expect this research to contribute to the conceptualization of political regimes, to provide a new perspective on twentieth-century history and the history of globalization, and to open a research agenda on many related phenomena: alternative regimes to the anti-hegemonic party-states (democratic regimes, formal democracies, military regimes, traditional regimes); the relationship between state position in the world system and political regimes along time, and the regional and interregional coalitions and organizations arranged by particular types of regimes.

Historiography

My third field of research is that of the history of historiography, which I apply to both above-mentioned fields. In the case of medieval Iberia, I studied the changing paradigms of the history of the Mozarabs during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the political, social, and cultural conditions that brought about these changes. Similarly, I devoted several articles and lectures to the historiography of world history and other macro-historical approaches such as comparative history, civilization analysis, and historical sociology. I provide in this application also an example of this type of writing.

Teaching

During the last twelve years, I have been teaching progressively in all of these three fields of knowledge: Medieval Iberia, World\Global History, and Historiography (see detailed list of courses, pp. 3-4). I very much enjoy teaching and my courses have obtained high scores among the students. The subjects of my courses are broader than my writing. Therefore, in my courses I cover larger time spans and thematic units than in my books. Particularly, I am aiming to deconstruct the strong divide between Medieval and Modern histories. My seminars on "Political Processes in European History 700-1700" and "From Medieval Frontiers to Modern Empires: the History of European Expansion" exemplify this attempt. Both of these courses correspond with the fields of Atlantic History and History of Empires. Part of my courses in World History is even broader in time and space dimension incorporating Mediterranean and Indian Ocean History, as well as Pacific Rim History. My courses on Medieval Iberia, dealing with the

encounters and conflicts between Muslims, Christians, and Jews are deeply engaged with questions of religion and ethnicity. All of these courses have a major textual dimension, by fostering debates based upon careful analysis of both primary and secondary sources. However, there are also the historiographical courses, those that I fully dedicate to questions of text and contexts that seem to correspond to an existing teaching category of the graduate program at the Hebrew University.