

Past, Present and Future of Japanese Studies in Spain¹

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1. General perspective

In recent years, the emergence of new undergraduate and postgraduate studies specializing in Japanese Studies has been a constant trend in Spain. An updated study on the situation of Japanese Studies has also recently been published by Professors Blai Guarné and Takuro Iwasa (Autonomous University of Barcelona 2020), and on university research groups by Professor Guarné (2022). Since the intervention of A. Falero at the EAJRS Congress in 2004, many things have changed and others not so much. In this paper we intend to present a new balance.

"Oriental studies in Spain originated at the University of Salamanca. At the Council held in Vienne (France) in 1311, Pope Clement V decreed a Canon authorizing and ordering the universities of Salamanca, Oxford, Paris and Bologna to teach Oriental languages, specifically 'Arabic, Hebrew and Chaldean'" (Agud 2013; Peña 1904). Despite this early initiative, historical circumstances prevented the expansion of this academic interest towards oriental languages to Japanese or Chinese, despite the great impact of the Iberian missions in these territories, and the availability of the first glossaries. Among these, we cannot fail to recall the figure of the Dominican Diego Collado, author of the first grammar of Japanese written by a Spaniard in Latin, the *Ars grammaticae Japonicae linguae*, in 1632, and a pupil of the Salamanca classroom. The work of the so-called "Iberian century" is kept in the private archives of the Jesuits and Dominican friars mainly, and the documentation of the official exchanges in the Archivo de Indias in Seville, which can still be consulted today.

Despite this, the Spanish academic world turned its back on these advances and Orientalism went into a long decline. Of course, the great wave of Japanism crossed the Pyrenees, and from Catalonia or later from Madrid publishers in Spain, news of the great international milestones of modern Japan returned. But we had no scholars during the first half of the 20th century. We have to wait for what we call the first postwar generation of scholars, inaugurated by the ex-Jesuit Alvarez Taladriz, pioneer of the recovery of "Iberian" studies in the 1950s, and the Jesuit Juan Masiá, pioneer of inter-religious dialogue.

But we had to wait until the beginning of this millennium for studies from Japan to take root in Spanish universities. In 2003, the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science changed the name of the studies that include Japan, abolishing the old label of "Languages and Cultures of the Far East" and establishing the current name of "East Asian Studies", "thus moving

¹ Paper ascribed to the Recognized Research Group "Humanism Eurasia" of the University of Salamanca.

from an archaic name, with a markedly orientalist tone, to an area of knowledge in line with its definition in European universities" (Guarné 2022). Starting with the parallel initiative of the two autonomous universities of Barcelona and Madrid in 2003, in this year, for the first time, degrees in East Asian Studies were offered, followed immediately by the University of Salamanca, and research centres and groups began to be founded in the same universities. These are the matrix of the current degrees in East Asian Studies, which are offered at the autonomous universities of Barcelona, Madrid, and the universities of Salamanca and Seville, with a Minor in Japanese Language at the University of Granada.

Master's degrees are organized immediately to meet the great public demand for these studies at the major universities. Starting in 2007 with the Master's in Contemporary East Asia at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, 2009 saw the inauguration of the double Master's in East Asian Studies/Japanese Studies in Salamanca, the first Master's in Spain to offer a degree in Japan as a specialization, and not only as a specialization or itinerary in East Asia. It is followed by the University of Granada and recently by the universities of Zaragoza, Autónoma de Madrid, and a second Master in Advanced Studies in the Languages, Literatures and Cultures of East Asia, with a specialization in Japanese Studies, recently inaugurated in Salamanca (2021).

The teaching and knowledge of the Japanese language has been and continues to be an important pillar of these curricula. Many of the students entering these programmes are encouraged by their previous, albeit partial, knowledge of the Japanese language. The study of Japanese in university facilities dates back to the mid-1980s, inaugurated in the Faculty of Translation and Interpretation at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Today it is possible to study the language in most university centres in Spain, including official language schools.

But research is initiated through doctoral programmes. Today it is possible to obtain a doctoral degree in Japanese studies at the above-mentioned autonomous universities, in Salamanca and in Zaragoza. Doctoral studies open up the possibility of joining research groups. The main ones are the following (see Guarné 2022).

At the Autonomous University of Barcelona, the Group "GREGAL: Cultural Circulation Japan-Korea-Catalonia/Spain" (<https://grupsderecerca.uab.cat/gregal/es>) operates. This group has as its precedent the creation of the Centre for Japanese Studies in 1988, a pioneer of its kind, now transformed into the Centre for East Asian Studies and Research (CERAO). Since 2013, it has launched the "Library on Japanese Studies" of the Bellaterra publisher. The GREGAL group "studies the circulation, reconfiguration and fitting together of the creative, linguistic and representational flows that, with Japan and South Korea as main vectors, affect and transform Spanish society in globalizing processes on a worldwide scale" (Guarné 2022). It has open access resources such as the virtual exhibition "Stories of Clay: The Lives and Works of Chosŏn Korean Potters in Tokugawa Japan" (<https://aftermath.uab.cat/stories-of-clay/>), and the multilingual database "The Database of Research on the Imjin War" (<https://aftermath.uab.cat/about-the-database/>).

The University of Zaragoza is a pioneer in the study of artistic Japonism in Spain. It is home to the Group "Japan and Spain: Relations through Art" (<https://jye.unizar.es/#:~:text=Skip%20to%20content-,El%20grupo%20de%20investigaci%C3%B3n%20Jap%C3%B3n%20y%20Espa%C3%B1a%20relaciones%20a%20trav%C3%A9s,del%20arte%20japon%C3%A9s%20en%20Espa%C3%B1a.>). Founded in 2004, it focuses on the "study of the reception, presence and influence of Japanese art in our country" (Guarné 2022). This group has been joined at the University of Zaragoza since 2012 by the "Japan" Research Group (<https://gi-japon.unizar.es/>), which "focuses its scientific work on the analysis of the synergies between Japan, Europe and Spain in the Social, Legal and Human Sciences" (Guarné 2022). The University of Zaragoza offers its "Federico Torralba Collection of East Asian Studies" as a site for publications on Japan.

The complete list of museums with Japanese works of art is published on the website of the inter-university research group "Japan and Spain: Relations through Art", mentioned above, and which is coordinated by E. Barlés.² This research group also has the "List of Japanese Art Collectors in Spain."³ There is also a list of the "Main Agents which Have Played an Essential Role in the Phenomenon of the Presence and Impact of Japanese Art in Spain: From the Modern Age Up to Our Days"⁴ (see list of archives below). Soon they will publish the "Bibliotheca Japonica", which is a very complete bibliographic repertoire on Japanese art and culture from the Modern Age to the present day in Spanish languages.⁵ We also have on the website <https://jye.unizar.es/> all the activities (including courses, weeks, congresses, exhibitions, theses, master dissertations, etc. which the research group has carried out since it was created in the year 2004.

At the Autonomous University of Madrid, we have the Centre for East Asian Studies (<http://departamento.iii.uam.es/ceao/>) since 1992, which has been publishing the "Japan Collection" since 2017.

The "Asia" Research Group (<https://giagroupucm.wixsite.com/grupogia/sobregia>) has been housed at the Complutense University of Madrid since 1994. "It focuses on developing knowledge about Asian art in Spain, promoting the study of Asia in Spanish universities, and facilitating the work of Spanish researchers in this field of study" (Guarné 2022). The same university also runs the "Group for the Study of Interactions Europe-Asia", which "has based its research project since 2015 on the field of East Asian history from an interdisciplinary perspective, fundamentally from contemporary history and international

² It is the result of the R+D project: Cataloging and Study of the Collections of Traditional and Contemporary Japanese Art in Spain (Public and Private Museums), reference code HUM2008-05784 (Ministry of Science and Technology), main researcher: Dr. E Barlés (University of Zaragoza).

³ This is the result of the R&D project: HAR2011-26140 "Japanese Art Collectors and Collectors in Spain" (Ministry of Science and Innovation, main researcher: Elena Barlés, PhD (University of Zaragoza).

⁴ A product of the R&D Project: "Protagonists of the Presence and Impact of Japanese Art in Spain (reference code HAR2014-55851-P, Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness, main researcher: Elena Barlés, PhD (University of Zaragoza).

⁵ It will be the result of the R&D Project "Art and Culture of Japan in Spain: Diffusion and influence" (reference code PGC2018-097694-B-I00, Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities, main researcher: Elena Barlés, PhD (University of Zaragoza), which ends in 2022.

relations, and an epistemological orientation that combines a global perspective with a specific focus on countries such as Japan, China, Korea and the Philippines" (Guarné 2022).

In 2017 the "Humanism Eurasia" Group was launched at the University of Salamanca, but this group is presented in the second section of this essay.

At the University of Granada, focused on the study of language, we have the Group "Didactics of Foreign Languages" (<https://masteres.ugr.es/ele-lengua-cultural-metodologia/investigacion/grupos>), with a research line on the teaching of Japanese.

The University of Valladolid is home to the Research Group on the "Reception of the Japanese Imaginary in English and French Travel Literature, XIX-XXI Centuries" (<https://www.watatsumi.org/>), which "is interested in mythical-symbolic studies of the Japanese imaginary and its reception in modern European travel literature, with the main objective of analysing the influence of Japan on English and French travel writers" (Guarné 2022).

Finally, at the University of Seville, which offers one of the degrees in East Asia, and has distinguished emeritus researchers such as Fernando García Gutiérrez (1928-2018, Japanese art) and Fernando Rodríguez-Izquierdo (1937-, haiku), there is the research group "Equipo de Filosofía de la Cultura" (<https://investigacion.us.es/sisius/grupo/HUM153>), which includes research on Japanese culture.

2. Research Group "Humanism Eurasia" of the University of Salamanca

First, I will briefly summarize the history of the research group up to the present, continue with a very brief mention of its structure, and expand on the contributions and work we have been doing throughout this time.

2.1 History

The "Humanism Eurasia" Research Group was established in 2017 with the idea of forming a transdisciplinary group of researchers covering various fields related to languages, cultures, and societies of the vast geographical and cultural concept to which we give the name of Eurasia.

In addition to the intention of claiming the integration of this space from the point of view of intellectual flow, an idea that has been embodied in the focus on the passage from local and regional frameworks to a global orientation, the objective of the Research Group is the multi-disciplinarity of the field of Humanities, interweaving humanistic approaches from art, literature, religion, philosophy, or history, with the prism of the Social Sciences. The objective is, ultimately, to try to understand how a society explains itself.

2.2 Structure

After its consolidation, the Research Group was structured into several work units specialized in more specific disciplines or fields of study. Thus, originally the units of Anthropology (later Folklore Anthropology), Societies, Art and Aesthetics, Contemporary Literatures and History and Classical Texts were created. Later, the Contemporary Pop Culture unit, which I personally coordinate, was added.

Each of the units has a coordinator and several researchers belonging both to the University of Salamanca and to other Spanish or international universities, who are coordinated by a Steering Committee for the whole group. To highlight the international vocation of the Group, we have researchers belonging to Japanese institutions such as Kokugakuin University, Tokai University or Waseda University; I would also like to mention Carmen Amado, President of Macau Scientific and Cultural Centre and professor at the University of Coimbra.

2.3 Projects

Between 2018 and 2020, the Research Group carried out the Research Project "Transversal Anthropology of Knowledge: Castilla-León and East Asia", funded by the Junta de Castilla y León and continuing the work initiated by Alfonso Falero in a previous project carried out between 2009 and 2011 of translation and study of the work of the Japanese ethnologist and philologist Orikuchi Shinobu.

In addition, between February 2021 and the end of December of the same year, David Doncel, co-director of the Group and coordinator of the Societies work unit, was the PI of the Research Project "Educational and Professional Guidance, training of Chinese human capital in Spanish culture", financed by the University of Salamanca.

2.4 Conferences

One of the activities that the Humanism Eurasia Research Group has focused on carrying out periodically has been the International Conference on Research and Training Humanism Eurasia, conceived as a congress that brings together the most relevant contributions not only about East Asia, but also exploring its connection with Europe, in such a way that they try to give value to the concept of Eurasia.

The first edition of the Conference was held on March 14 and 15, 2019, under the thematic title of Transversal Anthropology of Knowledge. It was attended by about forty researchers from Spain and abroad, many of them of recognized prestige, belonging to each of the specialties related to Eurasian studies in which the structure of the Research Group is divided. Due to the success of the I Conference, very soon the Group decided to repeat them the following year trying to make them an annual event. The II International Conference on Research and Training Humanism Eurasia was planned for March 16 and 17, 2020, but as we all know, due to the declaration in Spain of the State of Alarm caused by the Covid-19

pandemic, its celebration in person had to be suspended. However, instead of choosing to postpone the Conference to the following year, we considered the option of delaying it for a few weeks and reorganizing it in an exclusively virtual format, through the Studium platform of the University of Salamanca. In this way, the Conference could be held between April 1 and 15 of the same year, and we consider it to have been a success given the circumstances, as well as discovering that the format offered an interesting means of interaction between speakers and attendees.

The III International Conference on Research and Training Humanism Eurasia was held on May 27th and 28th, 2021 in the Aula Magna of the Faculty of Philology of the University of Salamanca. Due to the restrictions imposed by the health situation, the Conference also had a virtual support, which facilitated the live participation of researchers living in places like Japan, and the attendance of a part of the public who could attend the lectures from their own computer. In addition, for the first time the Conference was structured around a monographic theme, "Women and/or water in East Asia", so that many of the papers provided different points of view on the subject, trying to conclude a global vision of the proposed theme.

In the year 2022, the University of Salamanca and the East Asian Studies Area of the Department of Modern Philology of the Faculty of Philology is responsible for hosting and organizing the celebration of the XV National and VI International Congress of the Association of Japanese Studies in Spain, which will take place between 26 and 28 October. Because of this, the Humanism Eurasia Research Group has been actively involved in the organization of this Congress, and we have chosen to integrate our participation in it, so that, in a way, our annual conferences are assumed within it.

Something similar is planned for June 2023, when the University of Salamanca will host the next III Congress of the Association of East Asian Studies in Spain, and again our Group is integrated into the organization of this.

Beyond the organization of the Conferences and Congresses, the Group has had the opportunity to be present at Congresses such as the II International Congress of the East Asian Studies Association, held virtually in Madrid between June 2 and 4, 2021, and in which we participated by presenting several thematic panels.

2.5 Publications

In addition to holding the Conference and participating in different Congresses, our Research Group has also focused on the elaboration of publications, with the aim of contributing to the framework of knowledge of Eurasian studies.

In this sense, it is worth mentioning the *Eurasia* book series, whose first volume, subtitled *Research Advances*, we published in 2021 in the publishing house Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, within the Aquilafuente collection. This book, of about 370 pages, coordinated by Alfonso Falero and David Doncel and edited by myself, is the result of the highest quality work initiatives presented at the II International Conference on Research and Training

Humanism Eurasia, so it has chapters of different specialties written by a total of 36 researchers. In addition, one of the innovations that we consider most relevant is our commitment to offer opportunities to researchers from both China and Japan, so that the book contains a bilingual section of contributions written in Chinese and Japanese that have a translation into Spanish or English, according to the specific preference of the researcher. Thanks to the good result that we consider that *Eurasia: Research Advances* had, after the celebration of the III Conference, the Group took the decision to take advantage of this opportunity to turn this publication into a series, so we are currently finishing editing its second part: *Eurasia Volume 2: Women and Water*. This second work has been structured, like the edition of the Conference to which it is associated, around the central theme of women and water in the Eurasian context, covering both specific studies on one of the two elements and multiple approaches to their cultural, anthropological, historical or even religious connections. Therefore, this volume, which we will also publish with Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, is expected to be less ambitious in quantity, with around 270 pages, but more succinct in its content, with the participation of a total of 24 authors.

In addition to the *Eurasia* series, some of the units of the Research Group are working on their own publications. The most outstanding and soon to be published is *Orikuchi Shinobu: Fundamental Texts*, a compendium of translations of this ethnologist and philologist by the Anthropology of Folklore unit, whose line of research has focused on the comparative study of Japanese and Castilian folklore. The book is coordinated by Alfonso Falero, Masako Kubo and Sara Gómez, who in turn form the work and translation team together with Wakako Kikuda and Rumi Tani, being the work edited by me. It will be published very soon by Satori publishing house, inaugurating a new collection of academic essays, *Studia Japonica*, directed by Alfonso Falero and Santiago Martín Ciprián, the latter a professor of Hispanic Language and Culture at Tokai University (Japan) and a researcher of the language and texts of ancient Japan at the University of Salamanca.

Finally, the Contemporary Pop Culture unit, which I coordinate, is currently compiling a volume tentatively entitled *Between kawaii and moe: Two-dimensional fascination in contemporary Japan*, which aims to highlight the study on two socio-cultural concepts so famous and relevant to understand the current pop culture in Japan, and which includes prestigious authors in this type of studies within the Japanese field, such as Morikawa Kaichirō or Patrick W. Galbraith, a reference in studies on Japanese otaku culture in English, who also participated in the III International Conference on Research and Training Humanism Eurasia.

Before concluding, it is necessary to point out that most of the researchers of Humanism Eurasia contribute to academic knowledge through individual publications regarding their specific lines of work, but on many occasions integrated and linked to the research carried out by the Group itself.

2.6 Future of the Research Group

By way of conclusion, I would like to say a few words about the short and medium-term future of the Group. In addition to the above-mentioned publications that have not yet been published, we will continue to hold the International Conference on Research and Training Humanism Eurasia, and thus the Eurasia book series, as well as the *Studia Japonica* collection of the Satori publishing house.

We also plan to work towards a greater concretization of our lines of research, limiting the existing work units in order to achieve greater cohesion from an academic and organizational point of view. In addition, we are preparing to apply for new projects that will allow us to further develop and deepen our work.

3. Resources and future prospects

As for resources in archives and museums, we refer to the list attached to this paper. In terms of the dissemination of academic results, the role played by the journal *Mirai. Estudios Japoneses* (*Mirai Nihon kenkyū kijō* 未来.日本研究紀要), founded in 2017, as the publication organ of the Association of Japanese Studies in Spain.

One year later (2018), the 150th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Spain was celebrated, which we can consider a turning point towards the current state of research in this country.

We conclude this paper by noting a series of challenges to be faced, and in return a series of values to be cultivated in the coming years. In terms of challenges:

- advanced level of Japanese language in university programmes
- mobility of university teaching staff
- overcoming linguistic mediocrity in Japanese studies research
- obsolete structure of area studies
 - 2003. Far Eastern Studies < East Asian Studies
 - verticalism of national studies
 - hegemonism in global studies
 - transversality of macro-regional studies
 - tendency to build an academic ghetto vs. interdisciplinarity
- rigidity of Spanish academic structures.

And in terms of values:

- human capital
 - young researchers
 - high demand for Japanese studies at the national level
- richness of Spanish as a vehicular language
- indigenous tradition of Japanese studies
- academic and human hybridization.

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ARCHIVES

Archivo de Indias

<https://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/cultura/areas/archivos/mc/archivos/agi/portada.html>

The General Archive of the Indies basically holds the collections produced by the institutions created by the Spanish Administration for the government and administration of the Spanish overseas territories. These institutions are: Council of the Indies and Secretaries of the Office, Casa de la Contratación and the Consulates of Seville and Cadiz. There are also other collections from smaller institutions and even from private individuals related to the Spanish colonies in America and Asia.

Archivo de la Frontera

<http://www.archivodelafrontera.com/category/archivos/archivos-pacifico/>

Description: Private archive holding a number of historical texts from the Iberian century

Biblioteca Nacional de España

<https://www.bne.es/es>

Description: National Library catalog and collections. Documents can be bought online

Dominican Archive in Ávila

<http://archiprov-avila.org/>

Description: Its contents include documents from the end of the 15th century to the present day. And we can get to know the reality of the whole Dominican Mission in the Far East - Philippines, Japan, China, Formosa, Vietnam, Korea, Singapore, Venezuela and Spain - and the culture and expression of it in those places with the situations lived both in religious and civil matters.

Franciscan Archives of the Immaculate Conception

<https://bibliotecas.ofminmaculada.org/>

Description: The year 2015 marked a great change in the Franciscan Order. After many years of work, the unification of the eight Franciscan provinces of Spain took place, forming the new Franciscan Province of the Immaculate Conception. One of the main projects initiated by the new province was the enhancement of the Franciscan archives and libraries that made up the new province.

Japón y España: Relaciones a través del arte

<https://jye.unizar.es/materiales/>

Description: A complete list of Spanish museums housing Japanese works of art. Also a list of collectors of Japanese art in Spain, ordered in chronological order. A list of the "main agents who have played an essential role in the phenomenon of the presence and impact of Japanese art in Spain (from the modern age to our days)", ordered by typology and chronology.

Jesuit Archive in Alcalá de Henares

<https://jesuitas.es/es/archivo-historico>

Description: The Archive of Spain of the Society of Jesus in Alcalá de Henares (AESI-A) is the historical archive of the Spanish Province of the Jesuits at the service of the Provincial Curia. It is a private archive that makes part of its holdings available to researchers, in accordance with the rules for the use of the Archive, which can be consulted on this page.

List of Main Museums and Institutions with Japanese Art Collections

List of Japanese Art Collectors in Spain

Main Agents Which Have Played an Essential Role in the Phenomenon of the Presence and Impact of Japanese Art in Spain (From the Modern Age Up to Our Days)

Bibliotheca Japonica

<https://jye.unizar.es/materiales/>

Description: The first one is ordered by autonomous community, the second is chronologically listed, and the third one is ordered by typology and chronology.

Portal de Archivos Españoles

<https://pares.culturaydeporte.gob.es/inicio.html>

Description: Digital repository of the Spanish government where the Archivo de Indias and the old archive of Simancas are uploaded.

Real Academia de la Historia

<https://www.rah.es/>

Description: Collections held on codices and manuscripts, printed books and documents. Documents can be bought online

University of Salamanca Libraries

<http://bibliotecas.usal.es/>

Description: access to the historical library with incunabula from the 16th c.

Salamanca, 20 December 2022