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From the polis to the Mediterranean: some intellectual paths to the renewal of Ancient History

Da pólis ao Mediterrâneo: alguns caminhos intelectuais para a renovação da História Antiga

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Abstract

This text aims to answer a central question: at what theoretical levels and responding to which problems, the History of the Ancient Mediterranean has established itself as an intellectual perspective, perhaps rather a paradigm to ancient researchers? Heuristic hypotheses, the social changes of the contemporary world and empirical appraisal have always been reshaping the domains of history. In fact, these are "tectonic" movements, slow even though deep, which consolidate alternative gazes and methods that reorganize the studies of certain temporalities. To interpret these structural movements that envisage Mediterranean approaches, this article will dialogue with the epistemology of history and many readings from archaeological and historical origin.

Keywords

Historiography; Theory and history of historiography; Paradigm.

Resumo

Este texto pretende dar conta de uma questão central: em que níveis teóricos e respondendo a quais problemas, a História do Mediterrâneo Antigo se estabeleceu como um movimento intelectual, talvez mesmo um paradigma aos pesquisadores da antiguidade? Hipóteses heurísticas, mudanças sociais do mundo contemporâneo e pesquisas empíricas remodelam os domínios da História. Trata-se de movimentos "tectônicos", lentos, mas profundos, que consolidam novos olhares e métodos que dão nova forma aos estudos de determinadas temporalidades. Para interpretar esses movimentos estruturais que deram forma às leituras mediterrânicas, recorrer-se-á a um tipo uma reflexão que transitará entre a epistemologia da história e leituras de origem arqueológica e histórica.

Palavras-chave

Historiografia; Teoria e história da historiografia; Paradigma.

To Maria Beatriz Borba Florenzano, for the perennial inspiration.

From the Spatial and Material Culture shifts towards a History of the Ancient Mediterranean (World): the fashioning of a new paradigm?

Is the History of the Ancient Mediterranean, from now on HAM, a new historiographical approach to studying Ancient History, or is it merely an emphasis that relies on a fixed regional approach? Within the advances achieved by scientists through the putting together of the pieces of jigsaw puzzles, to return to Thomas Kuhn's metaphor, we find certain aporiae, anomalies or even simply a certain point in which the existing theories (within a paradigm) cannot handle what the empirical world presents (Kuhn, 2013)[1]. Criticisms that emerge from these philosophical cul-de-sacs can provide new routes.

In the following text, we try to show that, HAM is not only a unit of analysis that can be applied in different time periods within a specific geographic scale, but also represents, a critical movement that makes up a new paradigm. It is, therefore, a new historical methodological "form" (Guarinello, 2003; 2013)[2] based on the premises and the theoretical frameworks that organize a new perspective about the region's nethermost times. It is important to begin by emphasizing that this new approach plays a part in broader, and more plural, historiographical transformations, that go beyond Ancient History strictly speaking. This article aims to discuss the definition of these paradigms through a highly theoretical approach, incorporating intellectual history.

To understand these processes more deeply, we have organised this article by some interconnected debates: firstly, Spatial and Material Shifts, - or how at the same time as a spatial shift took hold of historiography a post-colonial critique movement relocated theoretical and subject focal points; and secondly, from the criticism of economic primitivism to the return to Fernand Braudel – or, the experience of writing about Mediterranean history and Global History that covers imperialism, the world-systems, and the search for new forms of understanding through connections and networks.

Modern historiography of Ancient History between spatial and material shifts

The origin of these so called spatial and material shifts is somewhat plural, influenced by waves of thought from various fields, like Geography, Anthropology, and Archaeology,

[1] The original edition is from 1962.
[2] The historian Norberto Guarinello (2003), in a seminal paper, demonstrated that there are forms, broad contexts, "units of meaning" within a broad framework of the regime of modern historicity that are constructed to provide intelligibility to a determined period.

giving substance to the theoretical thought and changes in direction that they have produced. Since the 1980s, in the fields of Anthropology and Archaeology, intellectual responses emerged from different approaches, sometimes a more structuralist and more binary analysis, sometimes more laboratorial and based on systemic structuralism, like those of processual archaeology[3] (Finley, 1990, 1994; Rede, 2018; Trigger, 2011). Although, these reverberations haven't been uniform, they have raised some concerns that guide our interpretation about this new wave. If from the beginning of the 1970s the constant concern about the elements of communication and with the symbols gave form to what made what we called a *linguistic turn,* it was in the 1980s that we would see the appearance of the movement that reinstated the importance of materiality in the world of social theory[4].

Firstly, the emphasis was on the "discursive nature of material culture" (Rede, 2018, p. 141), or, in other words, how materiality could be decrypted, to be read as text. Later on, during a different movement, interest surrounded the "dematerialization of its objects" (Rede, 2018, p. 144). This led to the idea that humans are not the start, middle or end of semiosis processes (processes of attribution of meaning), because there is a material dimension that is not static, that influences individuals. From this understanding, many studies, including that of Ulf Hannerz about Urban Anthropology (Hannerz, 2015) and that of Arjun Appadurai within Cultural Anthropology were fundamental to comprehend the "social life of things" and the limits of the plasticity of the past (Appadurai, 1981). In Brazil, Ulpiano Bezerra de Meneses has brought most of these concerns to Museology, as well as to the debates about memory and education. This writer indicated the power of such a shift, despite showing the caution there should be in relation to the use of museums as empty entertainment, and also with the dimensions of memory and the demands of social groups in relation to sensitive, but very alive, topics (Meneses, 1992, 2000; Pereira; Seffner, 2018)[5]. It becomes increasingly difficult to ignore the materiality of the world in social theories, indicating the need for serious reflection about how historic knowledge can be accessed through material culture.

Space and the material make up a binomial that, in the field of humanities, is more than a physical metaphor, but a real building site where new pillars of historical interpretations can be erected. In less obsequious words, there are not many debates about writing history that dispense of what is material and spatial at the same time. When thinking about objectives that rely on

[3] Reactions to processual archaeology hold different issues. Moses Finley's arguments are, certainly, different to that that motivated other movements like that of post-processual archaeology (Finley, 1990; Trigger, 2011).
[4] Like you will see, materiality here is not limited to Marxist notions, but is concerned with cultural heritage, in particular those reunited in museums and worked by, notably archaeologists.
[5] In a more recent talk Menezes returns to and further, updates these debates https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8J8w9-aAaY. Accessed on 03/12/2022.

archaeological data, it is the possibility of getting much further is unlikely without considering the context in which the artifacts were found, since this is an essential piece in the investigation and in the understanding of their meanings (Francisco, 2013, 2015)[6].

The spatiality of the world and the possible forms of understanding history through this theoretical prism were never the same after the important ideas of some geographers, such as: Henri Lefebvre (2000), David Harvey (1992, 2008) and Edward Soja (1989). Whether thinking about the role of the urban space in the absorption of capital, or in acknowledging that "urban life implies encounters, clashes of differences, knowledge about, and reciprocal recognition of [...] the norms that coexist in the city" (Lefebvre, 2009, p. 22), it was necessary to acknowledge social space as a social product (Lefebvre, 2000, p. 35) and to go deeper into the analysis to understand space as an "instrument of thought as action that is [...] a form of producing, of control, therefore, of domination and power" (Lefebvre, 2000, p. 35). It was paramount, therefore, to acknowledge that social space has very complex practices, how it is perceived, its representations, the forms that it is conceived, that is, what it represents; as well as that which is lived, its symbolic coding (Lefebvre, 2000, p. 42-5). From Lefebvre's thinking, it became unfeasible to continue to think of space as something fixed and immutable, or as a mere *mise en scène* for actors and actresses to enter stage. Space affects people and their practices; thus, it is alive. In short, Edward Soja's (Soja, 1989) criticism of historicism, which in the author's language was the emphasis on a diachronic that put space in second position in the epistemology of humanities, was combined with the reflections of several fields of the humanities showing that space(s) can be those of control, imprisonment, fear, juxtaposition, metaphor, and lastly, heterotopias (Foucault, 1999; 1986; Moerbeck, 2017)[7]. In a more objective way, Amos Rapoport's question in the first line of one of her works refers to the main question that stimulates a large part of the research in this field, "in what ways and on what basis do people react to environments?" (Rapoport, 1990, p. 11).

These slow movements, but momentous for the tectonic plates of the theories that historians endorsed, made themselves felt over the years. The first generation of historians, went backwards, therefore, in the middle of the 1970s, on daring to turn Archaic Greece into the central stage of Ancient History (Austin; Vidal-Naquet, 1986; Snodgrass, 1981) revealing some aporias of the studies carried out until then. One of them being that the progress of research depended, decisively, on the access and evaluation of archaeological data. Even the scepticism of

[6] This does not exclude, at all, thinking of the antique arts market and their relationship with museums.

[7] Heterotopia (a space in which difference is defined). Talking about space in Greek theatre, David Wiles, "Like Atlantis, theatre should be seen like a heterotopia, a term that I borrow from Foucault to refer to a place in which 'real places, all of the other real sites that found in a culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted' [...] The question should be how the events in a heterotopia dedicated to Dionysus represented, contested and inverted the polis as a whole." (1997, p.3)

Moses Finley in relation to the dialogue with Archaeology dwindled in his last book (Finley, 1994). From the point of view of producing historic knowledge, these developments pointed out some possible directions. It was necessary to understand the establishment of the polis, a renowned key theme within Ancient History (Vlassopoulos, 2013), especially regarding urban and architectural transformations, the iconographic trajectory (Loraux, 1994) and pedagogical importance (Étienne, 2004, p. 81–7), its monumentalisation (Florenzano, 2011), as well as political destinies of the city during the tyrannies (Lanza, 2020; Mcglew, 1996), in short, it was also necessary to restore materiality to the interpretations of ancient cities (Florenzano, 2010).

To do justice to this whole process it would be necessary to go back even further and return to George Vallet's seminal works (Vallet; Villard; Auberson, 1970), because it was during the 1960s that he would draw attention to the concomitance between the appearance of shrines both in the continental poleis and the colonies. However, we will go only towards two authors that seem to be fundamental to the understanding of this process back in the last two decades of the 20th century: Ian Morris and François de Polignac.

According to Polignac, in a work originally published in 1984, archaeological findings of religious practices from the 8th Century B.C, were found in continental Greece to the Aegean Islands to Anatolia, which contrasts with the period that spans the 7th to 9th centuries B.C. From the transition from the Geometric to the Archaic period, Polignac affirms, "the Greek world had at its disposal greater wealth and many more material goods" (Polignac, 1995, p. 14). The author concludes that the change from a funerary context to that of temples indicates furthermore "a change in religious behaviour" (Polignac, 1995, p. 15). This was a change in the ontological and social relation of people with space, because the sacred and profane were materially separated. Moreover, as F. Kolb points out (1992), Polignac draws attention to the fact that the process of urbanization was particularly bound to the creation of public buildings, but also reorganized the urban mesh of many cities (Rezende; Laky; Custódio, 2011), something which was only getting under way at the end of the 8th century BC. The shrines, the sacred grounds of the gods, *tà teménē*, where they constructed temples, *tà hierá*, were the starting points of this process. Those in the centre or in the acropolis were always considered the most important of the city. Another group was the suburban shrine-temples that were outside the city's centres, nearer to the fringes of the urban areas and that, sometimes, ended up being incorporated with the cities' growth. Furthermore, there were the shrine-temples outside the urban areas that were 5 to 20 kilometres away from the towns. In the case of bordering areas, such temples could represent a way of delimiting the ownership of a territory (Rezende; Laky; Custódio, 2011). The central idea of this author, therefore, points to the fact that "[...] it can be shown that the formation of the polis was accompanied by the development of the large

extramural sanctuaries that, in most cities, were at least as numerous and as imposing as their urban counterparts" (Polignac, 1995, p. 25).

Concerns about the material dimension, space and the city are central in Ian Morris' seminal works (1987, 1989). In general terms, Morris' research had two levels of concern. The first being that of a political order, where he returned to literary sources and the dialogue with Finley's theses about Greek politics; and in the second, he crossed literary and material sources to know if changes in mental attitudes regarding death had occurred between the shift between the Geometric and the Archaic and Classic periods. He tried, thus, to connect the reorganization of the cemeteries around the second half of the 8th Century B.C. to deeper changes seen in the social fabric (Morris, 1987, p. 1-3). For Morris, the new community that appears over the 8th century B.C., the well-known polis, can be understood not only through literature – consequently, Morris ends up following a large part of Finley's arguments, based on *Politics* by Aristotle (Morris, 1987, p.3), but taking further steps articulating literary sources with the appearance of shrines that render as a "source of pride and even open rivalry between poleis" (Morris, 1987, p. 190)[8]. In short, social changes were also visible in the material fabric of the poleis, in the areas reserved for religious activities, in the shrines delimited and separated by walls, in the circumscription of sacred space (Morris, 1989, p. 317), in the grand scale and the increase of votive elements, having its apogee in the 7th century B.C.

Morris' discussion with Polignac and Anthony Snodgrass is evident in his work (Morris, 1987, p. 192). Morris's main idea is about the changes in perception around pollution[9], resulting in the moving of places where the dead were buried – so, death was interconnected to the ideas that were formed about daily life (Morris, 1989, p. 317). In Morris' very words, "the reorganization of the citizen cemeteries around 510 BC was perhaps a significant part in this spatial expression of the polis" (Morris, 1987, p. 210)[10]. Morris suggests that this change is more centred in the way in which people of that period spatially determined sacred space, and that, consequently, the boundaries between men, gods and the dead became more defined – as well as what was understood as the concept of pollution, "[t]he cemeteries, powerful symbols of descent and citizenship in the fifth and four centuries, must have spoken strongly in the new order" (Morris, 1987, p. 210). Therefore, the rise of the democratic polis, created by Clisthenes' reforms in 509/508 B.C, already rooted its mental bases in the visible transformations in funeral practices.

[8] Morris also insists that conceptual use of space would have helped in the creation of the status of man as a political animal (Morris, 1987, p. 193).
[9] *Miasma*, a way of contamination of a physical order, of stain, impurities in general connected to bloody crimes and murder.
[10] More recently, in the case of the relation with the dedication of epitaphs to women, Marta Mega de Andrade's research is relevant (2014; 2020).

Morris reveals himself as a continuator of some of Finley's interpretative models, consolidating the idea of Greek exclusivism in the creation of a type of *sui generis* state, highlighting possible connections with the modern state, especially when he affirms:

> [...] I will argue that this uniquely important state form appeared in the eighth century BC, a little later, he continues anthropologists are even coming to recognize the ways in which the rise of the polis contributes to our understanding of the transformations which have produced the modern West" (Morris, 1987, p. 1)[11].

Morris deeply criticized the approach proposed by Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, according to which there was a change regarding death between the 8th and 7th centuries B.C related to the individualization of death. Morris, on the other hand, advocated the idea of continuity (Morris, 1989, p. 301; 313), because what had in fact changed, was the communal use of what was done with the dead (not the individual attitudes in relation to death) and collective rituals (Morris, 1989, p. 297).

Another relevant debate was with Jean-Pierre Vernant and his, you could say, classic idea, of the egalitarianism of Greek society formed between the Archaic and Classic periods, that are connected to "making power unsacred, secularizing and rationalizing social life" (Trabulsi, 2020, p. 74). Vernant's work operates through the conception of an isomorphism in the field of the citizens and those that act in the hoplite phalanges (Vernant, 2003), also emphasizing the dynamics around the access to speech and to philosophical reflections, both "daughters of the polis" (Vernant, 2003, p. 55-72), which is later returned to, by Paul Veyne (1987, p.11-17; 29-41; 43-45), in a clearly Foucaultian approach, regarding the relevance of the formation of heterogeneous programmes of truth for historians. Returning to Morris, the emphasis, you could even say convergence, in relation to the debate with Vernant falls on the mental field, in the

[11] A long historiographical tradition began in this debate with several tendencies, that at the same time refer to and contradict Jacob Burckhardt (Moerbeck, 2018c; 2018d; 2020). The Swiss historian was a precursor in understanding the Greek city as an eminently singular phenomenon, refraining from placing it as a precursor of an evolution to a unified modern state (Guarinello, 2010). The modernisation of Ancient History (Morley, 2004), i.e., Mikhail Rostovtzeff and Eduard Meyer, assumes that certain social structures of the contemporary world had emerged during ancient times, that it was a problem of extent and not of the nature of these structures. Among them: the unified State, capitalist economy, industrial production, etc. Such a vision was one of the waves of thought that contributed to the consolidation of the journey that put Ancient Greece and Rome as the birthplace of western civilisation. Since the quarrel with the primitivists, like Max Weber and Moses Finley, it would still take many years for the post-colonial critics (Bernal, 1987), that could include certain anthropological relativism (Detienne, 2009), to lead us to criticise certain categories and a long accepted philosophical and aesthetic tradition.

metrioi[12] ideology, despite Morris talking in less affirmative terms than Vernant, because, as he highlights in his text, it was about an "essentially democratic fiction" (Moerbeck; 2017, p. 132; 2018a, p. 50; Morris, 1997, p. 197).

What do these ideas mean in more objective terms? In our opinion, such a debate revolves around the definition of an Athenian political field - strictly speaking -, even if the authors would never have made use of this specific meaning. In brief, it is about the spatial demarcation of a specifically masculine, political, and institutional activity (Andrade, 2015)[13]. So, the debate between Morris and Vernant refers to, despite the theoretical framework not being strictly Bourdieusian, the arena of political struggles in particular, and the forming structures, that is, what concerns the *habitus* surrounding certain representations imposed upon thought and on political doings of that society (Moerbeck, 2017).

Although criticism of Vernant comes, in a different way, from within the school of Paris (Loraux, 1989), despite the weak points of Morris' criticisms of Sourvinou-Inwood[14], and lastly, even though we will find certain problems in Polignac's analysis as his theses responded to some empirical realities better than others, one thing is certain: there is a profound shift in the emphasis in relation to sources, theories and methodologies when analysing the issues of Ancient Greek History through the perspective of material and spatial elements. Thesis such of that of Fustel de Coulanges (Fustel de Coulanges, 2009)[15], in which the emphasis falls upon the understanding of the city only through its institutional functions (Moerbeck, 2019b), were most certainly proscribed, it wasn't possible anymore to understand the polis and Ancient History through a bigger angle without the materiality of the "earth's inorganic coldness"[16]. It must be understood, as José Antonio Dabdab Trabulsi emphasizes, that in the second half of the 19st century, research about the Ancient world, especially about religion, showed a distancing from the contemporary context, the Ancient World seen as a type of refuge, due to the consequences of 1848 and its conservative slant, "despite not having reached a republic, lots of "Olympic Republican" elements began to be elaborated" (Trabulsi, 1998, p.27). Nevertheless, the studies that show this material detour are closer to more emic explanations, more anthropologically centred because "they have an internal vision [...] with criteria selected from the system itself" (Turner, 1982, p.64), avoiding

[12] Moderate, within the limits, not in excess, nor in scarcity. For this specific case, a type of Athenian middle class.
[13] We should not confuse however, political action in the political field, Pierre Bourdieu reminds us (Bourdieu, 1989), with political action in society; in this sense women, foreigners and others could be seen in a wider perspective of the game, power, and political influence. (Morales, 2014).
[14] Despite the documental consistency presented by Morris, it does not seem possible to deny the theory of Sourvinou-Inwood totally.
[15] The original is from 1864.
[16] *Versos Íntimos*, Augusto dos Anjos (2016), the original from 1912.

the production of Ancient History from returning to a type of "prefiguration" which is so common within historiography of the 19th century[17].

From Mediterranean experiences to Global History: in search of an interpretative synthesis

This spatial-material shift brought with it a prior qualitative amassing of debates originating from the post 1968 moment and to an ensuing set of criticism. So, what changes, and what historiographical challenges are we talking about at the turn of the 20th century?

One of these challenges was the criticism of the minimalism/primitivism found in the debates about ancient economy (Morley, 2004). At the end of the 1970s, specific criticisms about Finleyan tendencies could already be seen, like those of Mario Vegetti in 1977, or that of Keith Hopkins in 1978. It was only in the 1980s, however, that criticism increased, whether it be from works more deeply rooted in archaeological data, like that of Kevin Greene in 1986, or rather, still, from Marxist criticism, as summarized by Ciro Flamarion Cardoso (1988; 2002; 2011)[18]. The idea, in general, was that "the level of economic activity revealed by archaeological data demonstrated how the minimalist focus of historians like that of Finley, were not sustainable" (Greene apud: Cardoso, 2002; Hansen, 2006; Vlassopoulos, 2011). Deepening the primitivist criticism demonstrated that, in contrast to the idea of ancient Greek city autarchy, lots of Aegean communities regularly imported cereals. There was, therefore, an interdependence for the vital necessities of the different poleis, beyond the bounds of Athens (Brock; Hodkinson, 2011), which included the distribution of people and services (Vlassopoulos, 2011).

In another field of criticism, studies have shown, as mentioned previously, that there was a need to better understand the spaces in the city and the agents within them. In Brazilian historiography, the dialogues with social action theory, as well as ideas such as *habitus*, field and symbolic capital became commonplace (Bernardo, 2018; Moerbeck, 2014, 2017), in another strain, they made evident the importance of looking at those who were outside the political field, that circulated in "freer" political spaces (Vlassopoulos, 2007), outside the limits of the institutional field of the poleis that limited political participation to men (Loraux, 1986). Studies of different nuances start to explore other social groups, oppressed and excluded in

[17] The notion of "prefiguring", that is, a form of poetic reconstruction that operates through discursive tropes and that, in turn, makes the past comprehensible through a narrative construction with an explicatory effect, in White's terms "emplotment" (Roth, 2014, P. 11; White, 2014, p. 34–7). Also see: (Morris, 1994).

[18] I am definitely in debt to the course given by Ciro Flamarion Cardoso, at the time professor of Ancient History at the Federal Fluminense University.

various ways, in both Circumcellion's or Bagaudae's Rome (Silva, 2016, 2017), and also with the Metics in Athens (Morales, 2014), or furthermore in the space of presentation of self in daily life (Goffman, 2004), in which the political participation itself could be inscribed in the materiality of the death ritualization in the Athenian cemeteries (Andrade, 2002; 2014; 2020). It was, therefore, about the restructuring of the spatiality of life, whilst it advanced triggering reflections on social space, its places (Augé, 1994), territorialisation and attributions of intersubjective meaning (Guattari, 1985).

Simultaneously, there was a selective absorption of post-colonial criticism towards eurocentrism in the historiography that concerned Ancient History. To talk of decolonizing Classics has recently become an important agenda, in part coming from what we could call epistemologies of the south (Moerbeck, 2021; Santos, B.; Meneses, 2010). These, supposedly, loose ends, concerned the perception that there is a type of *Mirror of Herodotus*, that is a, more or less voluntary, hermeneutic cultural distortion, (Hartog, 2001), bigger than imagined. In fact, it was necessary to understand when the idea of this Greek figure is invented by discourse and embodied as a form that was needed to make a differentiation with that of the image of the barbarian. In their customs and actions, there are characters operating at the margins. The narratives about Alcibiades are perhaps the confirmation that between barbarians and Greeks there are voices that are not well understood, possibly closer to reality than the dichotomies that were formed by ideological discourse (Hartog, 2014; Moerbeck, 2019a). It is at the very moment of the Persian Wars and the accounts about them that the most dichotomous expression of Hellenic ethnic identity is crystallised, becoming an antimony to despotism, becoming part of Edward Said's (2007) [19] critical awareness. Whether in the perspective that can be deduced from Herodotus or from Aeschylus, canons of 19th century historiography, or within the historiographical or political imbroglio surrounding the models of Ancient History denounced by Martin Bernal in *Black Athena*, the fact is that an interpretative crisis about Ancient History was initiated (Bernal, 1987).

So, to what extent are these civilizations euro- or afro-centric (Bernal, 1987; Vlassopoulos, 2011)[20]? Perhaps this is not even a very good question – it has been a type of intellectual tug of war without many winners, unless we consider the increased awareness about the power that cuts across historiographical discourse and that the search for civilization is also the pursuit for the affirmation over others, which, for the most part, is violent (Benjamin, 2013). The possibility of writing a HAM emerges exactly from this particularly complex, political and academic *mélange* that goes beyond the supposedly pure Ancient History debate.

[19] The original is from 1978.
[20] Without a doubt Gilberto da Silva Francisco has advanced considerably in these debates, see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNyvMQ7esSE Accessed in 03/12/2022.

For these debates to progress, it is necessary to return to the notion of "form" proposed by Norberto Guarinello and Kuhn's paradigm concept, so relevant to the epistemology of science. As for this, the question raised by Kostas Vlassopoulos is exemplary: "how do you envisage writing such a history?" (2011, p. 221). A HAM is simultaneously a scale of analysis and a thematic emphasis, its interpretation falls on a fundamentally *chronotopical* logic. Moreover, it is about the shaping of a historiographical paradigm, a starting point that makes us come up with new questions, that impels us to find new categories, theoretical anchors, and also research methodology.

History's forms and the possibilities of knowledge in humanities are organized like a fabric between the time lived by the researcher themselves, the past which they endeavour to study and the layers of reception that interfere in the approach with the given object. These elements depend on the asymmetrical relationships that operate in the hierarchical levels of meaning and power within the field of historic discourse. On the surface, that which is more visible, more evident, is presented, in articles, books, talks in congresses, in other words, as an exchange within the intellectual sphere. The ideas of asymmetry and of reception help us to understand why the work of Nicholas Purcell and Peregrine Horden became central in relation to the broadness of their ambitions and the discussion with another extremely important work, equally influential and noteworthy, that of Fernand Braudel. What was particularly under question was the return to the intellectual fabric in which the reflections about the Mediterranean and the diverse temporal rhythms that were attributed to it indicated a "Mediterranean world that was broadly homogeneous both ecologically and culturally" (Hitchner, 2009, p. 429)[21]. In very general terms, the idea of a Mediterranean unity comes from the idea that, due to ecological diversity, the regions are connected, interact and feed into each other.

The crux of Braudel's concerns resided in the relation between space and environment, and not that of institutions. It was the third level of economic relations, that of commercial exchanges, that was carried out through long distance commerce (Dosse, 2004). Although it is extremely complex, the combination of these perceptions contributes to the formulation of a type of analysis of *long durée* connected to a relation of interdependence, in more prosaic terms, of the time-space relationship with a basis in the logic of reciprocal needs and necessity.

The paradigm shift can be explained through a tenuous, but still relevant, grammatical nuance that consists in modifying the idea of a History in the Mediterranean, a complement of place, for a History of the Mediterranean, an adnominal restrictive adjunct. It was not just

[21] The image of an intellectual fabric forces our notion that time always moves forward, we are not referring to the relation between time and physical space, but the perception that we have of it. The contributions about this are more complex than can be sketched here. However, some leads about the construction of temporalities can be found in Juliana Bastos Marques (2008) and Michel-Rolph Trouillot (2016).

about the place that was being talked about, the Mediterranean space, but about the intellectual starting point, in other words, the constitution of a unit of spatial and temporal analysis.

In this sense, the idea of Purcell/Horden, which can only be described briefly with substantial losses, is to evaluate how human beings relate to the environment, with the earth, with the way they obtain their sustenance, and how they deal with their agricultural surplus. The authors are interested, therefore, in analysing the local variations of the relation of man with its ecological niches and micro-ecologies (Horden; Purcell, 2000p. 13-15). The micro-ecologies were delimited regions, a concept that made more plausible the Mediterranean analytical approach, because in them political, social, and economic interactions could be identified clearly, as well as the evaluating the relations of interdependence and communication networks that this sea permitted (Horden; Purcell, 2000, p. 53–4). There is, therefore, a clear concern with Mediterranean communication networks, that are related to the web and flow of surplus and shortage, as well as the climate and the topography in the centre of an *oikouménē*[22] (Horden; Purcell, 2000, p. 24–6). It is when, in the words of Polybius, the Mediterranean acquires an "organic unity" (Horden; Purcell, 2000, p. 27). A HAM, in the sense coined by Purcell/Horden, could contribute to break the old idea of a Europe disconnected from the north of Africa – it was also a political issue, not to do politics with history, but to not let them do it in the name of a Europe isolated from Africa (Horden; Purcell, 2000, p. 32–3).

Such ideas take us to macro theoretic frameworks, to scales that associate the world through determined types of connection, which includes thinking the centres and peripheries within the capitalist system, like CEPAL would do in the most part of the debate about the theories of dependence, development, and world economic systems. If on one hand, from a Latin American perspective, such premises demonstrate how all of this region was dependant on importation models and theoretical thinking that revolved around Europe and North America (Malerba, 2010, p. 276-7); on the other hand, models like that of Immanuel Wallerstein's world-system, published initially in 1974 (Wallerstein, 2011), led analogue debates to pre-capitalist societies. Although the relocation of this debate remodelled the empire-world concept to think about, for example, what the Roman Empire was like from the beginning of the 2nd century A.D, the historian Greg Woolf points out certain imprecisions in the use of the Wallerstein model in regards to the Ancient World, because, "what is clear is that they are not to be thought of in purely economic terms, and certainly not in terms of mercantile, or, a fortiori, industrial capitalism" (Woolf, 1990, p. 49). Nevertheless,

[22] *oikouménē* – "is understood as the space from where Greek culture is expanded and developed" (Lagos-Aburto; Montanares-Piña, 2020, p. 101). According to Daniel Barbo, it plays a part in the "terms that register, through historical changes, the temporal tension that is present in the writing of their work" (Barbo, 2019, p. 136).

the author insists that there is a consensus between historians that the Roman Empire's commerce should be thought about in relation to its necessities and political stimulus.

These debates within the field of Ancient History and about the relationship between centre and periphery are not anything new in Brazil. In the 1980s, in a book of synthesis, Guarinello articulated these ideas to the Roman world, affirming that its economy and imperialism would be centripetal, while the same analysis for the case of Athens indicated a centrifugal tendency (Guarinello, 1987)[23]. More recently, Guarinello and Woolf returned to this problem in two works in which Mediterranean logics and macro-spatial organisations appear mixed with a vast theoretic arsenal, not excluding the Wallerstein's seminal work. Briefly, both Guarinello and Woolf emphasise what had been happening in the repositioning of Ancient History in relation to World History. And in what way is this being done? The Mediterranean, in very different spaces, was thought as a "long corridor" (Woolf, 2012, p. 54) and as real micro-regions where self-sufficient cities or kingdoms were unlikely. The key to survival is connectivity, networks, a net of relations and points of exchange (Guarinello, 2013, p. 47-57; Hitchner, 2009, p. 432). All of this involved different levels of economic relations, colonisation, creation of Pan-Hellenic areas, see for example the case of the island of Delos (Bruneau, Ducat, 2015). Furthermore, there were distinct forms of political domain, including multicultural domains that form in different ways from the end of the 6th century A.D until after the Hellenistic period (Vlassopoulos, 2013).

In short, the intellectual discussion which emerges has as its objective making the Mediterranean, once again, a space of connections, using a type of descriptive heuristic mechanism as a world-system theory. All this discussion, that carries downstream a reflection about the limits of Hellenization and Romanization, underlined that the processes of cultural interaction should entail mechanisms of resignification of the culturally exchanged. Therefore, "Hellenised" or "Romanized" people did not adhere purely and simply to a "superior culture", they dialogued, created strategies, and transformed the culture of the conquerors (Hölbl, 2001; Momigliano, 1991). Consequently, it was necessary to relativise the "duality between "roman" and "non-roman" [because, despite] being relevant from the judicial and political point of view, it isn't clear if it is as important from the sociocultural perspective" (Scopacasa, 2015, p. 115). It was no longer possible to think in poleis in the Greek World, and even less so, in the Roman Empire post expansion as atomised figures or that sought idealised forms of autarchy.

In the end, would all of this effort to construct a History from this large unit of macro-spatial analysis, the Mediterranean and all its forms of globalisation and networks, be the "future of an illusion[24]"?

[23] Athenian imperialism is one of the most controversial subjects, see the synthesis of the debate in (Moerbeck, 2018b).
[24] There is not such a relation to Sigmund Freud's books beyond the nominal and with the fact that he was concerned about the future of religion in society of the time and I, with the Mediterranean paradigm.

As usually happens within Social Science, the answers that are outlined here are provisional, rooted in research and trends in development. We can foresee, however, two criticisms to the Mediterranean spatial approach. One of them, concerns the problems with the use of the Mediterranean as a unit of analysis, which means, largely, having to deal with problems that haven't been solved by Braudel himself (Harris, 2005). Another one, is part of a group of criticism weaved to the "heralds of globalisation", influenced by various ideas, like those from Anthropology of the turn of the millennium (Morris, 2003). The response to these criticisms, on the other hand, comes from the thoughts about these globalisations and from the historiographical trend known as Global History.

Mediterraneanization, or Mediterraneanism, to be more precise with William Harris' idea, is "the doctrine that there are distinctive characteristics which the cultures of the Mediterranean have, or have had, in common" (Harris, 2005, p. 1). Harris' criticism of Purcell/Horden in *The Corrupting Sea* goes from his doubts about the feasibility of the writing of a HAM, to if this could become a type of genre analogous of orientalism (Harris, 2005, p.1- 5). One of the problematic issues of HAM, according to Harris, is if Mediterraneanism also presumes an interconnection of the regions like the empires localised more inland and not only those of the shores of the Mediterranean. If on one hand, the *longue durée* remains a challenge to the contemporary researcher, the solution of the micro-ecologies given by Purcell/Horden didn't convince Harris, because according to him: "the concept of "microregion" is clearly central to [The Corrupting Sea], but this meaning is not defined: each Greek inhabited island is a microregion, each river valley?" (Harris, 2005, p.6)[25]. Harris draws attention, furthermore, to a problem that seems central to a historian, the old issue of social change and permanence, in which all seems to depend on a system of references. Moreover, he raises other questions, paraphrasing him; will the generalisations made from the Greek and Italic realities serve for other more oriental realities? How can ecological and economic changes be measured? Are there dangers in generalising from the present or essentializing categories of analysis? Is there, therefore, a *homo mediterraneus* (Harris, 2005, p. 9-11)? In short, Harris' central problem with the heralds of Mediterraneanism is: to what extent the people of that time, in this *longue durée*, thought about the (cultural) unity of this "Our Sea[26]".

Although several of Harris' issues are encouraging for the continuation of research from a Mediterranean paradigm, for the most part the author seems to believe that it is not a feasible route. There is a certain discomfort in reading Harris' text, because there always seems to be a

[25] See also footnote 62 (Harris, 2005, p.22).
[26] Derived from Hecataeus of Miletus and after fixed in Latin. See also a good question raised about cultural unity in the Mediterranean that even in Roman times, could not have gone much further than the local elites (Harris, 2005, p.29).

more important question to be asked, more intelligent[27], evidently, it is one of those that were not appreciated by the "heralds of Mediterraneanism"[28]. Having said that, the issues raised by Harris are an important sign of caution about the precision that is needed with the term connectivity in its relation to the Mediterranean world, as well as the empirical limits imposed by grand theoretical speculations.

Still in relation to criticisms, around 20 years ago, Ian Morris published an article that brought together certain debates about this named "mediterraneanization" (2003). In a text that fundamentally identifies this "new" theoretical wave, Morris affirms that it was a response to contemporary globalisation. It was an analytical change from the "statistical cells", Finleyan model to the poleis, to interconnections and fluidity. Thus, a question was created, was it a new trend or a new theoretical-historiographical paradigm? Morris criticises Mediterraneanisation in at least two ways. In one of them, the questioning is if this new interconnected world was more of a wave to answer the questions of our time than, in fact, to solve the problems of Ancient History. In addition, according to him, Mediterraneanism raised new questions that only Archaeology, interwoven with the data of literary sources, could answer. This would create, according to Morris' most pessimist opinion, a methodological complexity too deep for the development of research. Another criticism is directed to the perception that Purcell/Horden did not pay enough attention to the dynamics of imperialism in their evaluations of the bases of the Mediterranean connections (Morris, 2003, *passim*). In short, both the more distant analysis like that of Finley, with those Morris aligns more closely, and the analysis about Mediterranean connectivity, the problem was that the historians took for granted some properties that responded more to current concerns than to the workings of the ancient world. So, is there a way not to modernize Ancient History? In other words, to what extent did the centrality of the Cold War in Finley's case and globalisation in Purcell/Horden's case, not interfere in a fatal way to research (Morris, 2003, p. 40)?

There are positive and negative points to the criticism of Mediterraneanism, both in Harris', who is attentive to the details of Purcell/Horden's text, and in Morris', who tries to fit the same text within a trend that was being shaped since the 1970s. Morris' considerations offer some additional weaknesses. First, he approaches the origin of this Mediterranean trend through data that is not at all expressive, the author himself acknowledging *en passant*. Later, he imposes a very negative look at the distortion caused by the context of when the history was written, that is, between the world that the researcher lives and the past realities that they research. Let us imagine that Morris was totally right. And, therefore, in each of their periods, historians

[27] See Harris, 2005, p. 24.

[28] In Harris, there is an effort to demonstrate, for example, that in the colonising period from the 8th century B.C there was an increase in exchange and connections in the direction to the east that went way beyond the ideas of connections via ecological issues and that reflect in a logic translated in olive and wine commerce.

were guided by the ideological currents of their time to distort the things of the past. Could we use Morris' criticism in his very own texts? It seems clear to me, for some time now, like in Adam Schaff's (1971) ponderings, that the rewriting of history depends on these, I stress, pendular, movements. Evidently, this doesn't mean that we are immune to historical changes. What I want to highlight here, is that being aware of inter-subjective factors could be a way of making historic research more objective. We can think in, merely to mention a very sensitive text, controlled anachronism for example, as proposed by Nicole Loraux (2010).

Lastly, to respond to the authors above, and to progress in the macro-theoretical debates in the evaluation of HAM, let us focus on the debates about globalisation and Global History in Antiquity.

The end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s saw a surge in literature of an enormous scope in the academic environment. Ephemeral, but noisy, it was an inescapable debate; what were the limits of the new world order called globalisation? Since then, there were digital cultural enthusiasts, whose evaluations, perhaps naïve, celebrated the new and beneficial relationships between international organisms, NGOs and national States and their impact of the "postmodern" world, that supposedly banish tenets but would not substitute them for anything more than their own deconstruction, even more pessimistic visions, or, at least, concerned with different forms of globalisation and their impact on social and economic environments (Sousa; Moerbeck, 2023).

Nonetheless, the texts of this period retain their birthmark amid these debates. It is the case of Robert Witcher (2000) that thought about a world of fragmented identities: national, regional, ethnical, and religious. Witcher believed in the possibility of using the idea of globalisation when trying to understand the Roman past. According to the author himself: "roman imperialism, like globalisation, can be considered as a strategy effected by multiple agents, Roman or otherwise, leading to the strengthening of pre-existing inequalities both spatial and social" (Witcher, 2000, p. 216). Globalisation did not necessarily lead to a homogenisation of the world or to the replacement of social order, but theories of globalization brought into question the tensions between homogeneity and heterogeneity, between the old and the new.

In this same movement, now with spatiality as a structural emphasis, there is the interesting work of Irad Malkin, *A small Greek world: networks in the Ancient Mediterranean* (2011). Here, we can find a tendency towards direct criticism of static cellular history and to that which was seen as effects of nationalist influences of the 19th century, as they operated in a strict fashion using concepts like nation, state, and space – (Malkin, 2011, p. 13)[29]. According to Malkin, networks define the civilisation itself:

[29] Maybe in this case, he is right because of the emphasis give to the notion that relevant politics is that which happens within the State pure and simple, or in relation to the Nation-State.

> Links, both planned and random, rapidly reduced the distance between the nodes of the network, turning the vast Mediterranean and the Black Sea into a "small world," a defining term in current network theory. These networks informed, sometimes created, and even came to express what we call Greek civilization (Malkin, 2011, p. 5).

There is no doubt that it is interesting to rethink Ancient History through these spatial metaphors, but they also raise methodological challenges, given the difficulties in making such insights dialogue with the hard work that the sources entail[30].

This challenge is being faced by many researchers within Global History[31], the movement that interests us is that which comes from authors like, S. Conrad and F. Fillafer. The latter, for example, draws attention to a world historical process (Fillafer, 2017) a type of approach that reinterprets the 15th and 16th centuries. In this approach, the emphasis is "on the different trajectories of the civilizations, whose dynamics were primarily depicted as generated from within" (Conrad, 2017, p. 63). The fundamental question made by Fillafer is: what element gives unity to history: nature, culture, or power?

We must acknowledge that we are in a field that keeps growing with every new publication. If we could speak more colloquially about this, we would find the sign saying: *under construction*. So, justifiably, the number of questions multiplies. Recently, Uiran Gebara da Silva and Fábio Morales thought with significant acuity about the morphology of eurocentrism, the invention of certain civilizing traits, and of methodological internalism, internal explanatory factors of a unit of analysis, when referring to historiographical tendencies that are an integral part of Ancient History (Morales, F. A.; Silva, 2020, p. 127). There are many reasons behind thinking about the type of Ancient History that is wished for in the 21st Century, and to what extent a HAM could be the most propitious regarding the recent debates about the decolonization of Classics in research and in education (Moerbeck, 2021; Blouin, 2017; Souza, 2019).

To try to respond to some of the criticisms of Mediterraneanism, Global History has invested in different units of analysis, in comparisons between macro-regions, as well as other forms of connection that, even so, need considering and questioning concerning the dynamics of

[30] Even so, I still think that to think micro-history in dialogue with this global history would be an interesting exercise. The challenge of this game of scales in the context of Global History and local agencies through "fields of integration" have become frequently confronted by Brazilian historiography, see the case of the study of Delos as a global city at the end of the 2nd century A.D (Morales, 2022, passim). In the Roman case see: (Knust, 2019).

[31] This should not be confused with Global History of Historiography, as proposed by Georg Iggers, Jörn Rüsen et al (Iggers; Wang; Mukherjee, 2016; Rüsen, 2008).

power that underlie these ancient globalizations (Morales; Silva, 2020, p. 133-40). An advantage of this game of different scales that Mediterraneanisation imposes, and that Global History reinterprets is that, in changing perspective, from an observation focus that is more limited lens to that of a telephoto lens, means that the paradigm that you start from changes. Consequently, the search for a new form of Ancient History has been induced, a HAM that has been establishing itself over the last few decades.

Conclusion

This article endeavoured to demonstrate the occurrence of the advent of a new paradigm through the dialogue of some branches of modern historiography of Ancient History and theoretical elements of a broader of humanities. The spatial shifts in the 1970s and the neo-Braudelian formulations at the turn of the century included, in some way, all the researchers of Ancient History, in a field full of possibilities of renovation and even a change in paradigm.

From a history centred in the poleis to a history of poleis in the Mediterranean. This seems to provide a metaphor for the change that progresses beyond the boundaries of a history of Ancient Greece and Rome. Twenty-three years after *The Corrupting Sea*, it doesn't seem to have been an ephemeral movement. At the same time, the consolidated trends of an anthropological History of the Ancient World and of more microscopic and philological vision of those realities do not seem to be rendered useless by this new paradigm. Consequently, the coexistence of several different analytical possibilities, as well as the plurality of theoretic frameworks seem to give shape to the trends of the next decades, soon we shall see.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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