



THE STUDY OF MEDITERRANEAN CONNECTIONS AND HUMANITIES

*Juliana Figueira da Hora*¹

*Maria Aparecida de Oliveira Silva*²

*Vagner Carvalho Porto*³

Studies on Mediterranean connections are an ongoing field of research since the 1980's. In this field, historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, geographers, and literati began to observe more accurately and critically models that emphasized the static and limiting character of cultures. This process heightened more acutely the fluidity and connectivity of peoples, considering both the present time and Antiquity.

Editorial

1 Postdoctoral researcher at the Museum of Archeology and Ethnology at the University of São Paulo (MAE-USP), doctorate, and Master in Archeology by the same institution. Professor of the Interdisciplinary Master's Degree at the University of Santo Amaro (UNISA) and a research member of the Laboratory of Studies on the Ancient City (LABECA). To consult other publications by the author: <https://usp-br.academia.edu/JulianaHora>. E-mail: juliana.hora@usp.br

2 Ph.D. in Social History (2007) from the University of São Paulo, with internships at École Française de Rome (PDEE / CAPES) and at Universidade Nova de Lisboa (FAPESP). Post-Doctorate in Literary Studies at Universidade Estadual Paulista (2010) and in Classical Letters at Universidade de São Paulo (2012). Researcher at Heródoto / Unifesp Group, Research Group on Mortuary Practices in the Ancient Mediterranean (Taphos / USP). Ad-hoc Advisor professor at PPGH / UnB and leader of the CNPq LABHAN / UFPI Group. To consult other publications by the author: <https://independent.academia.edu/MariaAparecidaOliveiraSilva>. E-mail: madsilva@usp.br

3 Professor at the Museum of Archeology and Ethnology at the University of São Paulo (MAE-USP). He is Co-coordinator of The Laboratory for Roman Provincial Archaeology (LARP/MAE/USP), in which he develops teaching research on the Roman provinces of Syria-Palestine and the Iberian Peninsula. He is Coordinator of the Research Group ARISE - Interactive Archeology and Electronic Simulations. To consult other publications by the author: <https://usp-br1.academia.edu/VagnerCarvalhoPorto>. E-mail: vagnerporto@usp.br



Since the beginning of the 20th century and again more intensely in the past 40 years, criticisms have been made to models of understanding connectivity, many of them based on a Eurocentric and nationalist perspectives. Such models neglected the strength and prevalence of local concepts to the detriment of an emphasis given to 'global' ones, observed from the economic standpoint of center-periphery. This global perspective was inserted in the concept of the world-system, with its bases in the world-economy concept, created by Braudel (1949) and developed by Wallerstein (1974, 1980, 1989), Arrighi (1994) and Amin (1974), with anti-colonialist bases.

We also highlight Price's study (2012), which states that there are two types of cults in the Roman provinces: ethnic cults and elective cults - the latter, responsible for more significant interaction and cultural circulation of the deities. According to the author, elective cults were mostly foreign cults, and thus needed the creation of new groups of worshipers in the places where they were located. In this way, cults moved, circulated just like people, as well as ideas (PRICE, 2012, p. 7-8). New reflections brought to the fore new understandings of cultural, political, and religious manifestations that revolved around a fluid, timeless Mediterranean. They strengthened the need to find more specific analytical categories. It is known today how important it is to recognize the need to respect the singularities of peoples - what we can call research on localism - amidst the global nature of political and economic relations and their cultural, social, and religious intragroup repercussions.

Another study of fundamental importance was carried out by Polanyi (1944) because it presented to the world an innovative anthropological perspective to the analysis of the economy of the ancient peoples. Further on, Braudel revolutionized studies on the Mediterranean economy and culture by encompassing the natural world and material culture, economics, demography, politics, and diplomacy within the Mediterranean of the second half of the 16th century. Renfrew and Cherry (1986) developed the concept of Peer Polity Interaction in Archeology to explain changes in society and material culture. According to this model, in summary, there were three main types of interaction: The first one is competition, including war and competitive emulation. The second type is 'Symbolic transmission,' in which societies would absorb symbolic systems from their neighbors, such as number systems, social structures, and religious beliefs because they filled an empty niche in their society. Finally, the third one is the 'transmission of innovation,' where technology would spread through commerce, donations, and other forms of exchange.

Given the theoretical resources that these famous and fundamental authors have bequeathed to us, this dossier *Mediterranean Connections: East and*



West through History, Literature, and Archeology aims to present the reader with questions concerning the connectivity between the peoples who inhabited the East and West coastlines of the Mediterranean. Seven articles, an interview with Hans Beck, a professor at the University of Münster, Germany, and a postscript written by Tamar Hodos, a professor at Bristol University, England, make up this dossier. These seek to reflect on this intricate network of commercial, political, and religious relations existing in the cities that surrounded the Mediterranean and in those that entered towards the interior, with conceptual discussions and case studies with outstanding quality and depth.

Just like the navigators, material goods and ideas that sailed this 'liquid cement' - using the term coined by Gras (1998: 7) -, researchers, throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, have been working on the concepts that surround this immense sea and the peoples who passed through and depended on it. We believe that the contributions of our authors will make the reader navigate with us in this sea of reflections, and be enchanted by the suggested reciprocal propositions and interactions.

Good reading!

REFERENCES

- AMIN, S. **Accumulation on a World Scale: A Critique of the Theory of Underdevelopment**. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974.
- ARRIGHI, G. **The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times**. New York: Verso, 1994.
- BRAUDEL, F. **La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II**. Paris: Armand Colin. 1949.
- GRAS, M. **O Mediterrâneo Arcaico**. Lisbon: Ed. Teorema, 1998 (1995).
- POLANYI, K. **The Great Transformation**. Foreword by Robert M. MacIver. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1944.
- PRICE, S. Religious Mobility in the Roman Empire. **The Journal of Roman Studies**. Vol. 102, 2012, p. 1-19
- RENFREW, C.; CHERRY, J. F. (Eds.): **Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-Political Change**. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986.
- WALLERSTEIN, I. **The Modern World-System, Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century**. New York/London: Academic Press. Vol. 1, Vol. 2 e Vol. 3, 1974, 1980 e 1989.