

Re-conceptualizing the Pacific's history A Framework for the Study of Connectivity in the Pacific world

Reconceptualización de la historia del Pacífico
Un cuadro para el estudio de la conectividad en el mundo del Pacífico

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ABSTRACT

This study exposes the need for a revised new model for the History of the Pacific to dispel two ideas presented in the topic's literature; the first being that the eastern rim (Western Hemisphere) of the Pacific Basin had no substantial interaction with the Pacific Ocean prior to the arrival of European explorers, and the second that the only method to write a history of the Pacific World is to focus on the trans-Pacific interactions in this planet's largest body of water. Due to the complexity of this endeavor, the theoretical foundation for this research is the classical model on Mediterranean History—the first waterbody-centered regional framework—after the historian Fernand Braudel, in *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1975), as well as the theoretical schemes of the historians Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, as found in *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (2000).

KEYWORDS

Pacific Ocean, Ferdinand Braudel, Nicholas Purcell, XVIth-XXth centuries, *longue durée*

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RESUMEN

Este trabajo parte de la suposición de que es necesario un modelo revisado de la historia del Pacífico para disipar dos ideas presentes en la literatura del tema; el primero es que el borde oriental (hemisferio occidental) de la cuenca del Pacífico no tuvo una interacción sustancial con el océano Pacífico antes de la llegada de exploradores europeos, y el segundo, que el único método para escribir una historia del mundo en el Pacífico es centrarse en las interacciones transpacificas en la masa oceánica más grande del planeta. Debido a la complejidad de este esfuerzo, la base teórica de esta investigación es el modelo clásico de la historia mediterránea, el primer marco regional centrado en torno a una cuenca oceánica gestado por el historiador Fernand Braudel en *El Mediterráneo y el mundo mediterráneo en la era de Felipe II* (1975), así como los esquemas teóricos de los historiadores Peregrine Horden y Nicholas Purcell, como se encuentran en *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (2000).

PALABRAS CLAVE

Océano Pacífico, Ferdinand Braudel, Nicholas Purcell, siglos XVI-XX, larga duración

Not long after Russian President Vladimir Putin declared—in the Novo-Ogaryovo Palace during a meeting with international academics and journalists—that the world's center of global economic activity was shifting from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, twelve countries from the Pacific Rim signed in late 2016 the controversial Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement that would have united nearly half of the world's economic yield². Although, since then, trade negotiations are at a standstill and other options are presently being evaluated, the idea of a connected Pacific has acquired considerable attraction in people's imagination, and is, at the very least, backed by the apparently rapid regional interconnection that has developed in recent years—to quote South Korea's former-President Lee Myung-Bak, «Koreans are drinking Latin American liquors such as pisco sour, and at the same time tango, samba and salsa are gaining

2 For Vladimir Putin's entire interview, see «Full text: Vladimir Putin interview,» *Financial Times*, 10 September 2006, <https://www.ft.com/content/76e205b2-40e5-11db-827f-0000779e2340>. For more on the TPP, see «TPP: What is it and why does it matter?», *BBC News*, 23 January 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-32498715>.

popularity among the younger generation in Korea»³. Nonetheless, contrary to modern popular imagination, the current interaction between the nations of the Pacific Basin is not new; rather it is part of a historical process that this essay evaluates in the following pages. Among the questions that this essay addresses is whether or not the existence of a history about the Pacific can cement its status as an important world-system. Considering the vastness of the Pacific Ocean, the largest of planet Earth's oceanic divisions, could its history be written so that it includes the multiple regions and peoples that inhabit the entire basin (rim and islands)? Are there geographic aspects that unify the Pacific region and its peoples? Most importantly, what can this research significantly add to the present discussion and theoretical development of a Pacific World history?

This work assumes that a revised Pacific History model is needed to dispel two ideas present in the topic's literature; the first being that the eastern rim (Western Hemisphere) of the Pacific Basin had no substantial interaction with the Pacific Ocean prior to the arrival of European explorers and, the second, that the only method to write a history of the Pacific World is to focus on the trans-Pacific interactions in the planet's largest body of water. Due to the complexity of the endeavor, this research's theoretical foundation is the classical model on Mediterranean History —the first waterbody-centered regional framework— as gestated by the historian Fernand Braudel, in *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1975), as well as the theoretical schemes of the historians Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, as found in *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (2000). Through the use of these studies, the central argument of this investigation is that a proper history of the Pacific World needs to place greater emphasis on the micro-ecology of each region along the Pacific Basin as the basic unit of connectivity in such a vast body of water, and that only after determining this fundamental element can a proper *longue durée* of the region be studied in progression over the course of time without forcing a trans-Pacific vision of its history.

In terms of organization, this study is divided into two major parts, the first being a focus on the Braudelian view on the *longue durée*, and the second part focusing on the theme of micro-ecological connectivity discussed by Horden and Purcell in *The Corrupting Sea*. Since this investigation is not the first attempt at a comparison between the Mediterranean

3 Agence France-Presse, «Peru summit hits sour note with 'Pisco diplomacy'», *ABS-CBN News*, 23 November 2008, <http://news.abs-cbn.com/classified-odd/11/23/08/peru-summit-hits-sour-note-pisco-diplomacy>

Sea and the Pacific Ocean, an examination will be done of the geographer Paul Blank's essay «The Pacific: A Mediterranean in the Making?» (1999). As a point for further comparison and contrast, this essay's first part also contains an evaluation of three recent attempts at crafting a *longue durée* of the Pacific World, the geographer Donald Freeman's *The Pacific* (2010), the historian Matt Matsuda's *Pacific Worlds: A History of Seas, Peoples, and Cultures* (2012), and the historians David Armitage and Alison Bashford's edited volume of *Pacific Histories: Ocean, Land, People* (2014). This evaluation is conducted not only to acknowledge existing academic works on the subject, but also as a way for this analysis to interject its voice in the existing literature. Inserted in the middle of the two parts is the criticism of a history about the Pacific World by scholar Rob Wilson, as found in a chapter of his book *Reimagining the American Pacific: From South Pacific to Bamboo Ridge and Beyond* (2000) —Wilson's thoughtful critique not only clarifies some of the studies on the Pacific World, but additionally stresses the importance of examining the Pacific World as a collection of micro-regions rather than forcing a pan-Pacific perspective. Due to the complexity of describing the topic with just the use of words, some visual aids will be applied in the second part to clarify some points —thus further complementing this section to the presentation style of Horden and Purcell's book (in which images are also used for the reinforcement of ideas). Both parts shed the necessary illumination for the crafting of a Pacific World connectivity framework that effectively challenges and adds ideas to existing thoughts.

Prior to discussing the recent works of Pacific history, it is imperative to first review the perspective of Fernand Braudel and comprehend the meaning of the *longue durée* in history. The *longue durée* is an approach to history that challenges minimalist academic views highlighting only specific negligible events. In more specific relation to the Mediterranean's history, Braudel explains his vision of the *longue durée* by criticizing past scholars and their scholarship in the preface to the first edition of *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, complaining that «[t]heir concern is not the sea in all its complexity, but some minute piece of the mosaic, not the grand movement of Mediterranean life, but the actions of a few princes and rich men, the trivia of the past, bearing little relation to the slow and powerful march of history which is our subject»⁴. Basically, Braudel's vision is concerned with the significant long-term understanding of society and its larger application to regional systems. This

4 He also refers to these older studies as dead works that «need to be revised, related to the whole, before they can come to life again» (Braudel, 1975, p. 18).

should not, however, be confused as an approach without temporality; in Braudel's view, the *longue durée* has a beginning and an end (Lee, 2012, p. 3). Consequently, the Braudelian view gives the production of history a far more complex meaning than just a random, timeless collection of facts and dates.

Having reviewed the meaning of the Braudelian *longue durée*, the argument can properly shift to the studies that have attempted to link with Pacific History the world-system models theorized from Mediterranean History. These studies were not selected hazardly, but rather they were found in the suggested readings listed by the historians Armitage and Bashford (2014). Blank (1999) is described by the authors as «a Braudelian comparison between the Pacific and the Mediterranean» and the monographs from Freeman (2010) and Matsuda (2012) are noted as «[t]he best one-volume surveys of the Pacific and its histories» (Armitage and Alison Bashford, 2014, p. 335). Armitage and Bashford are also not shy from using kind words to describe the importance of their own edited volume, defining it as containing for «the first time within a single volume, the full range of historians who study the Pacific, its peoples and the lands within and around it» (Armitage and Alison Bashford, 2014, p. 20). The subsequent paragraphs will, thus, present these works in greater detail, and then will proceed to evaluate them before continuing on to the formation of a revised proposed framework based on Horden and Purcell (2000).

In his essay «The Pacific: A Mediterranean in the Making?» (1999), the geographer Paul Blank makes the case that the Pacific World is becoming more like the Mediterranean World, because the modern Pacific region is increasingly inter-connected. Blank's *longue durée* vision for what he denotes as the «contemporary Pacific» only begins in the 16th century, as «Europe began to weave the Pacific Basin into an emerging global economy» (Blank, 1999, p. 267). Blank is quick to disregard any prior connections in the Pacific Ocean; in his view, the first true meaningful link between Asia and the Western Hemisphere was Spain's establishment of the Manila galleons trading system (Blank, 1999, p. 267). He justifies his comparison of the Pacific with the Mediterranean under the assumptions that both the «historic Mediterranean» and the «contemporary Pacific» house (or housed) multiple civilizations of equal power status, and that faster and increased mobility in the Pacific has reduced the region's scale to a point where now there can be «enduring cultural, political, and economic interactions» (Blank, 1999, p. 266). Interestingly, despite mentioning certain «unifying characteristics» —such as the El Niño/Southern Oscillation climate phenomena, the Ring of Fire volcanic activity, and Polynesian mariners that traversed the islands of the basin— that

demonstrate a Pacific unity beyond his *longue durée* perspective, Blank also quickly disregards these elements (Blank, 1999, p. 267). His view is that the only relevant Pacific History is the trans-Pacific aspect began by Europeans.

Blank's toolkit of analysis revolves around four concepts that supposedly are what unify the Mediterranean and are increasingly also unifying the Pacific: synthesis, hegemony, «mirror cities», and postmodernism. The first tool, synthesis, is a repetition of the first assumption that justifies the comparison between the Mediterranean and Pacific, meaning that it refers to the unity of the region as a whole and the flow of goods, peoples, and ideas within the system that allowed «the civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and the Mediterranean littoral [to become] cultural and economic subsets of a larger world» (Blank, 1999, p. 268). The second tool, hegemony, refers to the «process of economic and cultural integration» that, he contends, reduces xenophobia and forms a happy regional society with people of multiple ethnicities—he uses as examples the *Pax Romana* in the historic Mediterranean and the *Pax Americana* in the modern Pacific, dismissing the use of armed force as a necessary opportunity cost for maintaining stability and welfare (Blank, 1999, p. 271). The third tool, «mirror cities», Blank considers to be the metropolitan port cities that help blend customs and other sociocultural aspects from throughout the region—as examples, he points to the French port of Marseilles and the difficulty in distinguishing certain parts of it from North Africa, and the Canadian port of Vancouver and its increasing similarity to Hong Kong (Blank, 1999, p. 273). The fourth and last tool, postmodernism, in his view is the increasing interconnection between the elites and other cosmopolitan individuals that engage in «the universal language of commerce and technology», but also includes the economic gap that separated peasants from Hellenistic Greeks in the historic Mediterranean as now separates the poor and the English-speaking elite in the modern Pacific (Blank, 1999, p. 274-275). Thus, Blank considers that the Pacific World will inevitably emulate the Mediterranean World, as determined by advancing technology and, if necessary, force.

One of the biggest flaws in the argument presented by Blank is his lack of vision outside the trans-Pacific system and his disregard for local developments in the Pacific. Blank is only interested in the big picture of the Pacific, disregarding obvious ecological signs that indicate a connectivity in the Pacific that is far older than the interaction between shifting states. He also is disinterested in smaller systems of connection both in the Mediterranean in the Pacific; to him, these insignificant parts only become important when considered in a larger structure. His quick dismissal of the Polynesians and the lack of non-Westerners as actors in his vision of the

Pacific Basin is indicative of another flaw in Blank's argument: Eurocentricity. While it was thanks to European dynamism that the trans-Pacific connection developed strongly, a history of the Pacific World—or any other region for that matter—cannot be properly completed without including all communities that inhabit and operate in the system (especially the indigenous peoples).

Another geographer, Donald Freeman, provides a somewhat different perspective of the *longue durée* in *The Pacific* (2010), retaining the emphasis on themes and its influence in the trans-Pacific world, but with no comparisons to the Mediterranean World. The most significant difference from Blank's argument is that Freeman places much more value on the geographic elements (climate, tectonic shifts, tsunamis, and other environmental effects) influencing the whole region⁵. Freeman also considerably extends the timeframe of his Pacific vision, dating it back to the times of the first human beings that reached East Asia from Africa during the Pleistocene Era, and later those early humans that made the trek into the Western Hemisphere—he focuses his argument on the rise of East Asian and Oceanian societies, such as the Chinese and Polynesians, because he considers that these were the dominant forces in the Pacific region up until the early 15th century⁶. His vision of the *longue durée* is that the connectivity of the Pacific region was then picked up and enhanced by the European explorers and imperial powers, in particular Spain, the Netherlands, and Great Britain (which enjoyed a period of *Pax Britannica* in the Pacific), and was later further maintained by the United States (Freeman, 2010, pp. 64-98). Throughout the entirety of his depiction of the *longue durée*, Freeman never loses sight of the importance of East Asia, even pointing out that the European Pacific colonies were populated by substantial Asian immigrant communities from China, Japan, and other areas of mainland Asia; their varied labor in the Pacific region in general made them a particularly relevant group for the operation of regional socioeconomic activities (Freeman, 2010, pp. 94-95). Essentially, the Pacific World crafted by Freeman is one that places greater weight on the indigenous East Asian and Oceanic populations, but without losing track of the grand schemes of the European trans-Pacific connections also in Blank's study.

Just as in Blank's argument, Freeman also retains themes as a toolkit for his analysis; in this case, his toolkit for the unification of the Pacific

5 Albeit Freeman does indicate that he has the benefit of scientific discoveries that have reshaped scholar's understanding of the Pacific region (Freeman, 2010, pp. 8-36).

6 The peoples from the American Pacific Rim are barely mentioned (Freeman, 2010, pp. 36-63).

World is based on five concepts: advances in transport technology, the exploitation of resources, military struggle, the imagined imagery, and economic development. The first element, advances in transport technology, is similar to Blank's idea of faster mobility and its shortening of physical distances; of course, Freeman's view is that this interconnection had first been propelled by the Polynesians, whom he denotes as «without a shadow of a doubt, the greatest seafarers the world has ever known» (Freeman, 2010, p. 101). The second element, resource exploitation, is an interesting argument; Freeman considers that a common history of environmental degradation unites the Pacific region, with episodes such as illegal whaling and pearling in Oceania, sandal wood exploitation in China, inhumane guano mining in Peru, and lawless gold rushes in California (Freeman, 2010, pp. 126-149). Similar to this second point, the third element of warfare is a negative reality that has shaped the region, including fight for economic wealth such as the Opium Wars in China and the War of the Pacific in South America, regional rivalries such as between Japan and China, and led to the hegemony of the United States (Freeman, 2010, pp. 150-186). Freeman also sees a unifier in the images made of the Pacific World, by painters, filmmakers, and writers, that have tended to focus on the exotic images of the islands in the Pacific; he considers that this has also shaped the identity of the region (Freeman, 2010, pp. 187-210). Lastly, he contends that the increasing multinational works for economic development are another strong regional unifier that will only serve to furtherly link all corners of the Pacific Basin towards a common goal of improving regional living standards (Freeman, 2010, pp. 211-236). As before, these themes leave open the idea of an incomplete Pacific connection that is destined to strengthen with time due to advances in general technology, mobility, and communication.

While Freeman is much more ambitious in his endeavor than Blank, positively expanding the Pacific World's *longue durée* and taking more consideration of its geography, his argument is also limited by the erroneous idea that the Pacific World can only be studied as a trans-Pacific system. Freeman's expanding *longue durée* is an improvement, because he is pushing the boundaries in a way that prevents the Eurocentrism present in Blank's argument. Commendable as well is his emphasis on the geography and ecology of the Pacific environment, bolstering this notion of creating a history of the Pacific region rather than a history in the Pacific Ocean. However, and despite displaying the regional connectivity of the relatively distinct areas of East Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania, Freeman seems to become insecure about continuing this type of narrative and quickly returns to the trans-Pacific narrative starting with the European

colonization of the Pacific Basin. He seems to be of the opinion that the only possible existence of a Pacific World is a pan-Pacific one, and this is a problem because it forces the narrative to continuously look outwards rather than truly understand internal micro-environments. Moreover, even though much can be praised about Freeman's attempt at continuously re-incorporating East Asia and Oceania into the later stages of his narrative, much can also be criticized for his decision to largely exclude the Pacific Rim in the Western Hemisphere—the Pacific coasts of the Americas were more often than not an afterthought of Freeman's examination. This inadvertently creates the notion that the eastern Pacific Rim was a region without history. Thus, Freeman's Pacific World, albeit an improvement from Blank's version, is also incomplete.

Only a couple of years after Freeman published his work, historian Matt Matsuda had, in what perhaps may be described as a Braudelian moment, his own vision of the Pacific World's *longue durée* published in an attempt to correct the alleged disconnection between all of the smaller regional histories of the Pacific. Appropriately titled *Pacific Worlds* (2012), Matsuda's book is the first streamlined attempt at a narrative history of the Pacific World—albeit, to be fair, those aforementioned scholars were not historians. He begins the narrative with the seafarers of the Oceania region, then quickly proceeds to focus on China, elaborates on the importance of Malaysia as the door between the Indian Ocean and the «Asian» Pacific, and finishes the first phase with the development of an elaborate East Asian trade system (Matsuda, 2012, pp. 9-46). Matsuda also eloquently includes the importance of Arab traders and Muslims into the narrative, such as highlighting the accounts of the voyager Ibn Battuta and the feats of Chinese Admiral Zheng He thanks to his unique skillset due to his Muslim upbringing (Matsuda, 2012, pp. 42-48). Unfortunately, for all that was written and stated about East Asia, the narrative again barely mentions anything about the pre-Columbian Pacific World in the Western Hemisphere; with half a page or so dedicated to it, this story quickly is overshadowed by the arrival of the Spanish—and their establishment of their «European» Pacific entrance at the Strait of Magellan—and other European imperial powers into the Pacific (Matsuda, 2012, pp. 64-73). After a back-and-forth between more European and East Asian or Oceanic history, the narrative briefly discusses the British discovery and colonization of Australia, and then again returns to a history of East Asia and Oceania involving conflicts with Europeans (Matsuda, 2012, pp. 73-175). Matsuda's book ends with the struggle for decolonization in East Asia and Oceania, and the subsequent near-modern problems in these regions and their relation to the complicated history of their Pacific World (Matsuda, 2012,

pp. 175-354). Although his perspective is skewed towards one end of the Pacific Basin, the narrative is impressive.

Matsuda's argument is also noteworthy in comparison to prior studies on the Pacific World, because he masterfully demonstrates that the European trans-Pacific was not an entirely new development, and also because he showed some signs of de-emphasizing a macro trans-Pacific view by effectively highlighting the importance of micro regional dynamics. To further elaborate on this latter point, Matsuda excels at describing regional systems early in his narrative. For example, he is very attentive in describing the links in the early kingdoms of present-day Malaysia with imperial Chinese traders to its east and intrepid Arab traders to its west (Matsuda, 2012, p. 38). He also describes the island-to-island connectivity established by Austronesian peoples in Oceania, including the establishment of a Tongan Empire that operated a tribute system across island chains (Matsuda, 2012, pp. 18-19, 28-29). These regional systems demonstrate that the history of the Pacific does not inherently require a trans-Pacific approach. To be more clear, Matsuda, in the introduction to his book, writes: «[f]or our purposes here, however, «the Pacific» is better described as multiple sites of *trans-localism*, the specific linked places where direct engagements took place and were tied to histories dependent on the ocean» (Matsuda, 2012, p. 5). This also demonstrates the existence of an incipient network prior to the arrival of the European navigators; in fact, Matsuda is clear that Europeans used the established systems as a foundation. For instance, he writes that European explorers of Oceania, like the famed Dutch voyager Abel Tasman, would sail their vessels «exactly along» the same routes used by the indigenous Polynesians (Matsuda, 2012, p. 29). Even the formation of an imperial hegemony in the region preceded European arrival, as demonstrated by the impressive story of the fortunes (and misfortunes) of the Chinese treasure fleet commanded by the Muslim Admiral Zheng He —thanks to his travels, maritime trade networks were established from China, across Indonesia, into Ceylon in the Indian Ocean (Matsuda, 2012, pp. 44-48). Hence, Matsuda demonstrates that no new system was established by the Europeans; rather, they took regional structures that had operated for centuries and built upon them to expand the networks into today's trans-Pacific system.

While Matsuda's work is largely praiseworthy, a couple of critiques can be made; one is on his limited geographic focus, and the other on his quickness to shift his narrative into a trans-Pacific narrative. As in Freeman (2010), Matsuda leaves the eastern Pacific Rim largely as a small addendum to the central story of Polynesia and East Asia —at least until the rise of the United States, and then the focus is really on this country's incursion

into Oceania. Matsuda also is part of the trend of Freeman (2010) and Blank (1999) in that his narrative focus rapidly leads him to an analysis of the trans-Pacific connections, quickly leaving in disregard his early micro focus on the regional connections that shape the western Pacific Basin.

Unfortunately, and contrary to all early expectations, the historians David Armitage and Alison Bashford's edited volume of *Pacific Histories* (2014) is not all that effective at fulfilling the gaps of Matsuda's work nor does it significantly advance the study of the Pacific World. For example, the level of technicality found in the «Connections» chapter is almost a *déjà vu* of the study by Donald Freeman (2010); while it does provide new scientific content, it frankly is nothing truly unique. Among the few noteworthy qualities of this study is that it places emphasis on the micro level relations between peoples and their environment, such as pointing out that the Oceanians are people that have «various ways of understanding and regulating their changing relationships with the ocean» (Tucker Jones, 2014, p. 127). Yet, this is not all distinct from what already was written by Matsuda (2012). This leads to the second point, it being that again the history presented in this volume is like a broken record that repeats again a densely specific view for the history of Oceania and East Asia. The general feeling of *déjà vu* is further incremented when reading the afterword on the writing of Pacific History by Matt Matsuda, who spends most of the first page of his contribution attempting to explain to the reader that what they just read is not necessarily the Pacific History the reader could have had in mind, but rather «some of the ways that early seafarers and later explorers might have experienced it» (Matsuda, 2012, p. 326). Based on this and prior readings, it seems that «seafarers» is a code word for the Oceanians and «later explorers» refers to the Europeans and the Americans that took imperial, or hegemonic, control over the Pacific Ocean.

All in all, to conclude this first phase of the essay, the central problem with all of these different narratives attempting to craft a *longue durée* for the Pacific World is that they are tied down by the idiosyncrasies of the authors and by the narrow idea that the only possible way to write a world systems history is through a trans-regional analysis. Particularly troublesome is the lack of coverage that the oriental Pacific Rim (Western Hemisphere) has received in these studies of the Pacific World system. While this is certainly not something that can be attributed as an intentional mistake, it requires a correction. The problems, however, are better understood in context to the debate between studies of the Pacific Rim versus the Pacific Islands.

Apparently, older studies of the Pacific Basin have tended to obscure the role of the local islanders over the importance of the dominant

powers found in the Pacific Rim. According to the geographer O. H. K. Spate, the first histories of the Pacific Ocean tended to focus on the exploits of Europeans, including the exploration and colonial administration, and of historic diplomatic relations of the powerful countries of the Pacific Rim (O. H. K. Spate, 2002, pp. 11-12). As a result, Pacific peoples —especially the islanders— have been in the outskirts of the narrative of their world⁷. Due to this situation, the scholar Rob Wilson argues in *Reimagining the American Pacific* (2000) that a history of the Pacific World is a modern invention that is meant to serve the purpose of European and American imperial ambitions over this ocean, using history to justify their capitalist hegemony over peoples that would seemingly have absolutely no history of their own (Wilson, 2000, pp. 103-112). While the logic behind Wilson's perspective has merit, the issue in this view is that it takes the extreme position that the Pacific Rim must be excluded from a true history of the Pacific region. According to Wilson, «[t]here is little Pacific content in any Pacific Rim vision, in short» (Wilson, 2000, p. 111). Based on what has been thus far analyzed in this essay, it seems that modern scholars of the Pacific World have taken Wilson's perspective at heart, placing greater focus on the Oceanic center of the Pacific Basin to rescue the history of the formerly obscured locals.

As mentioned earlier, Wilson's thoughtful critique not only clarifies some of the studies on the Pacific World, but additionally stresses the importance of examining this vast region more thoroughly, as a collection of micro-regions rather than forcing a pan-Pacific perspective that inherently excludes much of what can be learned about Pacific societies and economies. While not an answer to all problems, a thoughtful solution can be found in the theories of connectivity found in the book *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (2000) by Horden and Purcell, and their stress to analyze the relationship between human society and its environment.

In their book, Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell aim to correct the gaps in the work of Braudel (1975), specifically the study of historic continuity in the Mediterranean Sea. It seems that Braudel did not intend to leave this gap in his work; Horden and Purcell indicate that Braudel perished before publishing (or finishing) his manuscripts on further histories of the Mediterranean (Horden and Purcell, 2000, p. 1). In any case, the result of their work was a study that focuses on what they term «human geography» and by which they mean the relationship between human beings

⁷ A mistake that Spate, also known as the «Braudel of the Pacific» acknowledges as also having made (Spate, 2002, pp. 12, 24).

and their environment— this being done not just to acquire a sense of how humans in the Mediterranean operate on a daily basis, but rather to also find the enduring history of these processes over the course of time (Horden and Purcell, 2000, pp. 1-5). In other words, their research finds in the micro-histories of these environments a true meaning of Mediterranean society over the *longue durée* of human existence.

The remainder of this essay will focus on exploring this aspect of connectivity from Horden and Purcell (2000) while applying it to the Pacific World, thus proposing a new framework through which the *longue durée* of human existence can be studied in this part of the planet. As the works that have been discussed tended to focus on the western side of the Pacific Basin, for practical purposes as well as to make a statement of protest in response to these other works, the focus on the applications of these theories will mostly be on the eastern side of the Pacific Basin. However, the entirety of the basin is aimed for a full coverage of the model.

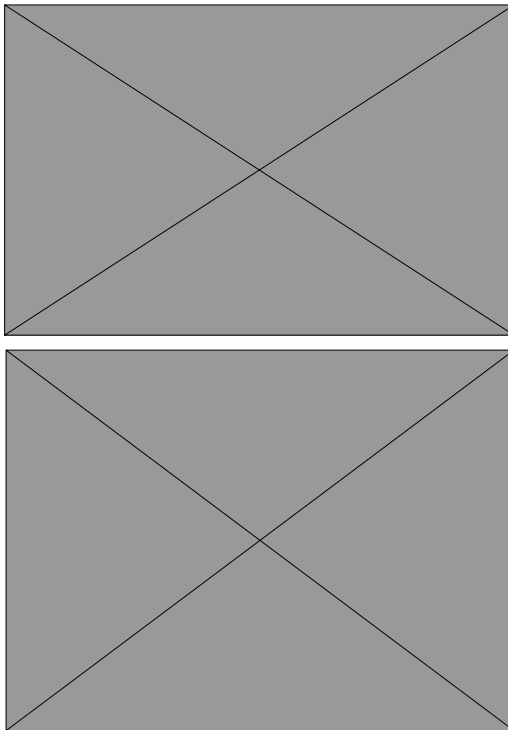
A central argument of Horden and Purcell (2000) is that to fully understand the Mediterranean as a world system, it must first be broken down into what the authors define as «micro-ecologies.» These micro-ecologies should not simply tell a narrative of a particular region's geography or climate, which the authors consider a «Romantic tradition» about the Mediterranean that is «seductive but misleading» but instead they must serve the purpose of gaining a better comprehension of the system of operation in this region; i.e., how do human societies interact with and within their environment (Horden and Purcell, 2000, p. 54). A very convincing aspect of this theory is based on the concept of visibility, meaning that lines of sight define the boundaries of the micro-ecologies. According to Horden and Purcell (2000), «[i]n the conceptualizing of locality and space, sight can play a still greater part than sound. [...] Fields of perception and their foci are characteristic ingredients in the definition of Mediterranean micro-regions» (Horden and Purcell, 2000, pp. 124-125). To further prove their point, the authors provide a map that shows the reasonable lines of sight across the Mediterranean Sea; this map clearly shows that certain deep areas of the Mediterranean were inherently outside of human's line of sight (Horden, and Purcell, 2000, p. 127). A contrast of Horden and Purcell's «lines of sight» map with a map of the Pacific Ocean (please see figure 1, in Page 12) can more directly relate this idea of micro-ecologies within the Pacific region.

When viewing both, the Mediterranean and the Pacific maps, in figure 1, some similarities and differences can be more clearly comprehended than in a textual description. As it pertains to micro-ecologies, we can see that the Pacific's line of sight is practically separated into east and west,

and that the Mediterranean's is separated into north and south (except for a couple of points in Sicily and Sardinia). Also, just as the islands in the Mediterranean provide extensions for the visibility, so do the islands of Oceania provide peculiar extensions across the vastness of the Pacific. However, the Pacific islands do not provide a safe or steady connection between the two rims of the Pacific (unlike Sardinia and Sicily do for the Mediterranean). Another difference is that while the Strait of Gibraltar is another point of connection between the northern and southern areas of the Mediterranean, the icy Bering Sea in general is not a stable point of connection without a more advanced seafaring technology. In total, nonetheless, the map of the Pacific Basin should at the very least give the impression that micro-ecologies can also occur within this region, and that studying them actually is more logical than to aim straight away for a trans-Pacific approach.

In the pages that follow, micro-ecological examples from across the Pacific Basin will be discussed, and these will be compared with the

FIGURE 1. Comparative line of sight, the Mediterranean (above) and the Pacific (below)



Top citation: Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), p. 127. Bottom citation: «Pan the Submerged Continent of the Pacific Ocean,» Oahpse Study, accessed 15 March 2017, <http://oahspstandardedition.com/OSAC/PanSubmergedContinent.html>.

examples found in Horden and Purcell (2000). The societies examined in the essay are: the Moche, the Incas, the Makah, and the Polynesians.

One relatively good micro-ecology comparison can be made of the Moche Valley in modern-day northern Peru and the Cyrenaica region in present-day northeastern Libya, both being regions where water resource management due to little rainfall is a central factor of their ecosystem. In Horden and Purcell (2000), the authors explain that water in Cyrenaica is a scarce resource due to limited rainfall and lack of permanent flowing rivers (Horden and Purcell, 2000, pp. 66-71). Weather changes in the region can be both a blessing and a nightmare, with wind enriched with minerals from the Saharan sands helping agriculture and pastoralism, but sandstorms proving disastrous if rain seasons end early (Horden and Purcell, 2000, p. 69). The only way to maintain a micro-ecology in the Cyrenaica is to connect with the mountain zones deeper inland, which Horden and Purcell denote as «north-south strips» where Bedouin tribes compete for control—in the mountains, the locals can benefit from the diverse environments from the varied altitudes in order to farm and graze their animals (Horden and Purcell, 2000, p. 69). Although this particular environment is not exactly replicated in the Moche Valley, clear similarities do exist. For example, the northern coast of Peru is one of the driest places in the world, and the people living there also have to carefully use what little water was available to obtain food from the surprisingly mineral-rich desert soil (Bourget, 2016, p. 3). The changes in weather is also a double-edged sword for the Moche Valley inhabitants, with the El Niño rainy season causing destructive flooding and the La Niña dry seasons bringing destructive windblown sand that would damage farm productivity (Bourget, 2016, pp. 3-4). According to the anthropologist Steve Bourget, the Moche culture (100-700 AD) had to, thus, create a connection with the inland Andean mountains that would provide a more sustainable water source and food, while also keeping a connection with the Pacific Ocean that provided them with a protein-rich diet (Bourget, 2016, pp. 3-6). Hence, what this example demonstrates is the intricate local connectivity for these micro-ecologies.

Another related micro-ecology comparison exists between the high mountain regions of the Mediterranean and the Andes Mountains in South America. Horden and Purcell (2000) write that high mountain zones were originally thought of as disadvantageous regions, barriers rather than elements of connectivity, where the cold, bleak environment created an area of low to no productivity for human beings (Horden and Purcell, 2000, p. 80). However, the complexity of the Apennine and Alpine ecologies tell a different story from the popular depiction of mountains.

Actually, the mountains are vibrant regions of connectivity as people from different altitudes need to connect in order to fully gain the benefits of the full ecosystem; animal husbandry and transhumant pastoralism was also a viable way of life that encouraged different lines of movement throughout the mountain, rather than limiting it (Horden and Purcell, 2000, pp. 80-83). Similarly, in the Andes, the diverse mountain ecology is at the root of a social system known even before the time of the Incas (1438-1533 AD). This led to the rise of a system referred by the Quechua name of *Ayllu*; this system operates as reciprocity, redistribution, and verticality (Ferreira and Dargent-Chamot, 2003, p. 13). Verticality is the name used by anthropologists in the Andes to describe human societies' use of the different altitudes of the mountains, their different agricultural productivity and wildlife, and is basically almost the same scheme as occurs in the high mountains in the Mediterranean (Ferreira and Dargent-Chamot, 2003, p. 13). *Ayllus* additionally refers in the Quechua language to family structure, which further reflects the deep connectivity in the mountain environments, which also had pastoralist systems of llama and alpaca herders (and later also cattle)—territorial connectivity could reach the Pacific Ocean into parts of the Amazon rainforest, leading to a diverse array of resources (Ferreira and Dargent-Chamot, 2003, p. 13). Basically, what we find in both the Andean and the Mediterranean high mountains is a vibrant microecology of connectivity, rather than a bleak barrier hindering connectivity.

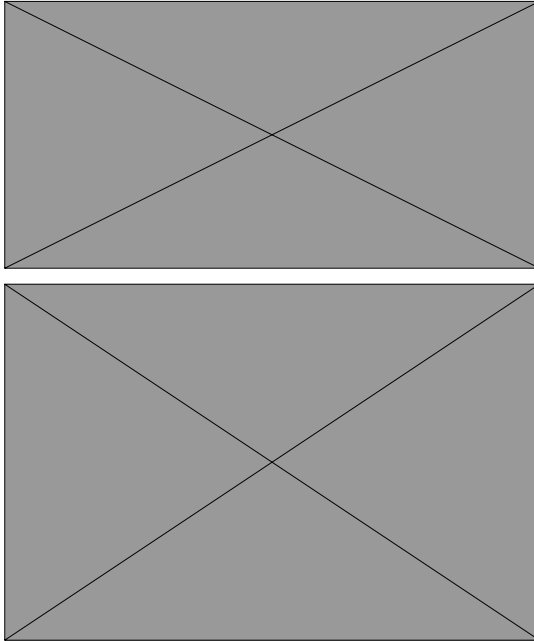
Horden and Purcell (2000) also spend a considerable amount of time discussing the model of transhumance throughout in the Mediterranean, and interestingly enough this also occurs in various parts of the Pacific Rim. An example used by Horden and Purcell is that of South Etruria in part of modern-day Lazio, which is a region that they highlight as unique due to its highly diverse environment, a «miniature of the characteristic of the entire [Italian] peninsula» that encourages a culture of constant movement of its inhabitants so that they can make use of its resources (Horden and Purcell, 2000, p. 59). Even more important, nonetheless, is that the strength of the notion of movement is such that seasonal migration is ingrained and accepted by the Etrurian society, meaning that there has to exist a strong socioeconomic and political order that coordinates the large-scale of this transhumance (Horden and Purcell, 2000, pp. 62-64). Similarly, the Pacific Northwest of the continental United States is home to a very diverse ecology, most notably a substantially rich marine biology and different species of vegetation. According to the historian Joshua Reid, a reflection of this region's diversity is the amount of different peoples that populated just this area during the 15th century, with 45 different languages belonging to 13 distinct language families (Reid, 2015, pp. 8-9).

Surprisingly, transhumance in this area is also not only very diverse, but it also belongs to a highly intricate social organization. For example, Reid points out that the Makah societies in the Strait of Juan de Fuca have historically relocated and kept in so high a constant seasonal movement that they have developed a sense of «usufruct rights» meaning that it is socially accepted to use someone else's belongings and to move into someone else's territory as long as they are part of the same familial society (Reid, 2015, pp. 9-10). Thus, in both case it can be seen that high levels of transhumance reflected a micro-ecology that was not disorganized, but rather supported by a strong social order.

Lastly, just as the micro-ecological examination of Horden and Purcell (2000) ends with the island ecosystem of Melos, in the Aegean, so does this analysis end with a look at the islands of Polynesia that were so prominent in the aforementioned studies of the Pacific World. Horden and Purcell explain that the island of Melos is an area that has historically been difficult for societies to operate in autarchy due to heavy soil erosion, which prevents the formation of a stable environment for farming and pastoralism (Horden and Purcell, 2000, pp. 74-76). Yet, in spite of the island's vulnerability, it has typically held a relatively large population size —certainly larger than it can sustain on its own— so Horden and Purcell argue that this must mean the island is part of a larger system of maritime connectivity that can allow it to receive the resources it needs for sustenance and prosperity (Horden and Purcell, 2000, pp. 76-77). As has been the case in the other examples, there exists a near-mirror image to this situation in the Mediterranean in the Pacific Basin: the Polynesians. According to Matsuda, the sea level changes across the basin have created different environments —such as caves and marshes— but it has, in part also due to the soil erosion, reduced the space for the production of sustainable foodstuff in each of the islands (Matsuda, 2012, pp. 12-13). Consequently, this has led to two developments in the region. The first and most obvious is the migration of the Polynesian peoples throughout the region, and even to the present there continues to be humanitarian crises in which the inhabitants of small, endangered islands are moving to larger landmasses (Matsuda, 2012, p. 14). The second consequence is the formation of a chain of island empires throughout the region's history. For instance, the Tongan Empire (950s-1865) operated a system of trade in which each island under its control provided different resources for the sustainability of all; this included wood from Fiji, textiles from Samoa, and taro from Tongatapu (Matsuda, 2012, pp. 27-28.). Essentially, what can be understood from both of these island economies is that they also inherently require a system of connectivity for survival.

Ultimately, the importance of this discussion on the basic elements of the structures of the Mediterranean and the Pacific regions is that the connectivity of these areas can and should be first and foremost explored at the micro-ecological level. As Horden and Purcell (2000) point out in their study of regional connectivity, their intention was never to diminish the prominence.

FIGURE 2. Circulation patterns in the Mediterranean (sea, top) and the Pacific (wind, bottom)



Top citation: Matthias Tomczak and Stuart Godfrey, *Regional Oceanography* (New York: Elsevier Science, 2003), p. 304. Bottom citation: «Ocean Currents,» SEOS Project, accessed 14 March 2017, <http://www.seos-project.eu/modules/oceancurrents/oceancurrents-c02-p03.html>.

of the larger study of region-wide connections through the lanes across the sea and land; instead, they sought to bolster the meaning of this larger regional connectivity through first establishing a thorough comprehension of the fundamental structures under which human societies operate (Horden and Purcell, 2000, pp. 123-125). This research concurs with the perspective of Horden and Purcell, because the comparison of these many separate cases throughout the Pacific and Mediterranean demonstrate a basic sense of common unity throughout the region — such as transhumance, coast-to-hinterland connections, and mountain verticality—that can now provide greater meaning to wider regional connections in the Pacific Basin (please see figure 2, in Page 16).

Having now reached the conclusion of this essay, what has been discussed in the past few pages can be summed up as that there exists a dire need to revise the current frameworks on the *longue durée* of the Pacific World, because the current systems do not properly account for the socioeconomic complexity of the different corners of this vast region. By applying the theories of connectivity in the Mediterranean Sea, as developed by Horden and Purcell (2000), this research has demonstrated that it is most certainly possible to study each region of the Pacific Ocean without the need to strive for a rapid incursion into a trans-Pacific framework. In fact, just as Horden and Purcell demonstrate that a micro-ecological examination of the Mediterranean can teach far more meaningful concepts of human connectivity in this region, so has this study attempted to present the common elements that also unite the peoples of the Pacific Basin. Thereupon, it is hoped that this investigation will serve as a springboard for a future research on the Pacific World that can properly account for the great diversity of this vast body of water.

Author's contribution

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