

## **SOURCES AND DOCUMENTS ON ANTIQUITY: FROM MONUMENTS TO THE DIGITAL WORLD**

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### **Abstract**

This article "*Sources and Documents on Antiquity: From Monuments to the Digital World*" discusses the historiographical evolution of the concepts of monument, document, and source in the study of Antiquity. It explores how these ideas were transformed through theoretical shifts, particularly with the Annales School, which broadened the scope of historical documents beyond written texts. The text also highlights the interdisciplinary nature of historical research, incorporating archaeology, anthropology, and semiotics. Finally, it examines the role of Digital Humanities in enhancing access to historical sources through databases and digital tools.

### **Keywords**

Historiography; Antiquity; Monument; Digital Humanities; Archaeology.

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## **Resumo**

O artigo "*Fontes e Documentos sobre a Antiguidade: Dos Monumenta ao Mundo Digital*" analisa a evolução historiográfica dos conceitos de monumento, documento e fonte no estudo da Antiguidade. A obra destaca como essas noções foram reformuladas a partir das mudanças teóricas, especialmente com a Escola dos Annales, que ampliou o conceito de documento para além dos textos escritos. Além disso, enfatiza a interdisciplinaridade da pesquisa histórica, incluindo contribuições da arqueologia, antropologia e semiótica. Por fim, discute o impacto das Humanidades Digitais na acessibilidade das fontes históricas por meio de bancos de dados e ferramentas digitais.

## **Palavras-chave**

Historiografia; Antiguidade; Monumento; Humanidades Digitais; Arqueologia.

## Introduction

The theme addressed here, **Sources and Documents on Antiquity**, already defines the approach to be taken. It is necessary to think about the writing of History over the last three centuries. An argument about the concept cannot be made without laying out some fundamental elements for analysis.

The first point to be presented should be based on specific questions about classical studies and, more specifically, about Antiquity. We do not intend to cover the entire theoretical-historiographical path on the subject, but to outline it from the problematizations of the concept of document. Paulo Martins, when addressing the multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinary issue related to Classical Studies, emphasizes the need to address two matrices that underpin its characteristics: the documentary and the monumental. In defining these matrices, the Brazilian researcher uses the precepts of Jacques Le Goff in the entry written for the Einaudi Encyclopedia and published in Portuguese in the collection History and Memory.

## Monument and Document

In defining this dichotomy between *Monument* and *Document*, Jacques Le Goff evokes specific historiographical questions about Classical studies. The first point to be discussed is the relationship between the two concepts, monument and document, in relation to the analysis of collective memory and the scientific way of writing History.

The Latin word *monumentum* refers to the Indo-European root *men*, which expresses one of the essential functions of the spirit (*mens*), memory (*memini*). The verb *monere* means “to remind,” hence “to warn,” “to enlighten,” “to instruct.” The *monumentum* is a sign of the past. Given its philological origins, the monument is anything that can evoke the past, perpetuate remembrance, for example, written acts. (Le Goff, 1990: 536, our translation)

This definition of monument is directly related to the permanence of Antiquity in the collective memory, although not only of it. The concept makes it necessary to think about the temporal relationship of its permanence and also of its absence. In this dynamic process, note that *monumenta* may or may not be related to the process of constructing historical knowledge. This concept is very much present in the German historical tradition, which assumes a *monument* to be a collection or set of documents on a particular theme/subject for the maintenance or preservation of collective memory. In addition, its analysis also requires a theoretical-methodological complexity of a trans/inter/multidisciplinary

nature. This topic will be returned to later, since the historiographical foundations lead to a more elaborate discussion of 20<sup>th</sup> century historiography.

The definition of the concept of *Document* dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The very concept of document is related to the conception of History and its writing. In the conception of this idea, the meaning of testimony or historical evidence is inherited from the legal sciences of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and has borrowed this restrictive meaning. So much so that, based on this conception, traditional positivist historiography took on the concept of document as an evidentiary element, restrictively understood as texts that take on the role of *historical evidence*.

With the historiographical changes of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially with the *Annales School*, its founders brought about debates that provoked a conceptual and epistemological change in these concepts.

The founders of the journal “*Annales d’histoire économique et sociale*” (1929), pioneers of a new history, insisted on the need to broaden the notion of document: “History is made with written documents, no doubt. When they exist. But it can be done, it must be done without written documents, when they do not exist. With everything that the historian’s skill allows them to use to make their honey, in the absence of the usual flowers. So, with words. Signs. Landscapes and tiles. With the shapes of fields and weeds. With the eclipses of the moon and the hitching of draft horses. With geologists’ examinations of stones and chemists’ analyses of metals. In a word, with everything that belonging to man, depends on man, serves man, expresses man, demonstrates man’s presence, activity, tastes, and ways of being.” (Le Goff, 1990: 99, our translation)

Le Goff identifies this change as the documentary revolution of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This conception is present, mainly, in Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, founders of the *Annales*, who defended these changes in their research.

And, for his part, Bloch, in *Apologie pour l’histoire ou métier d’historien* [1941–42]: “It would be a great illusion to imagine that each historical problem corresponds to a single type of document, specialized for that use... What historian of religions would be content to consult theological treatises or collections of hymns? They know well about dead beliefs and sensibilities, the images painted or carved on the walls of shrines, the arrangement and furnishings of tombs, have at least as much to tell them as many writings.” (Le Goff, 1990: 498, our translation)

With these paradigmatic changes, the conception of the document took on new nuances, discarding the direct and exclusive relationship to written texts. The change takes on quantitative and qualitative proportions, as the historian’s main objective becomes an approach to collective memory and the comprehensive social perception of “all men.” Historical memory is

undergoing a paradigmatic and epistemological change and is the basis for theoretical dialogs with other sciences that can help in historical and historiographical writing.

It is in this context that we must also return to the concept of monument, which Le Goff contrasts with the concept of document. This concept cannot be analyzed in the light of the 20<sup>th</sup> century without thinking about a direct dialog with social anthropology and, above all, archaeology. Unlike the concept of *monument* from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it is important to point out that the concept of monument brings within itself a problematization of its constitution, its maintenance, and its political and social use in the construction of discourses (visual, imagetic, and textual) of identity and collective memory. Therefore, it now takes on the perspective of analyzing these vestiges in a more complex epistemological way. As a result, not only does the object of historical and historiographical analysis change, but the theoretical and epistemological foundations undergo significant changes. Therefore, derived from these discussions on document and monument, a new conceptualization of the basis of analysis for the construction of historical knowledge takes place: the concept of source.

Epistemologically, the term is composed of the word *Fons* (Latin) – source of something, origin. According to Funari (2005), the term is used as a metaphor to allude to the ability of the document to be studied by the historian to “gush out” historical information.

Le Goff brings us this conception when he defines this new concept by establishing that:

The document is not just anything that remains from the past, it is a product of the society that manufactured it according to the relations of forces that held power there. Only the analysis of the document as a monument allows the collective memory to recover it and the historian to use it scientifically, that is, with full knowledge of the facts. (Le Goff, 1990: 503, our translation)

Even assuming Le Goff's conception, we cannot help evoke the conception put forward by Arnaldo Momigliano, who defines the original and derived authorities present in the historical methodology of the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. For the Italian author, the original authorities are those based on eyewitness accounts and documents and material records contemporary to the events. This definition corroborates what Le Goff presents as the origin of the term *document* linked to legal-discursive aspects. Derived authorities, on the other hand, are those resulting from the interpretative processes and analysis of the originals. Momigliano names both authorities sources and already points out that this organization will be one of the fundamental changes for historical studies.

Moses Finley will follow Momigliano's precepts in his approach to the concepts of Document for the antiquarian.

This distinction between original authorities and non-contemporary historians became the common patrimony of historical research only in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. The distinction is of course to be found before that time, but it was not formulated with any degree of accuracy or generally considered to be a necessary presupposition of historical study. In the formation of the new historical method – and consequently in the creation of modern historical writing on the ancient world – the so-called antiquaries played a conspicuous part and posed essential problems. (Momigliano, 2014: 21)

Taking this perspective, Moses Finley (1994: 4), in his work *Ancient History: Evidence and Models*, points out that the field of social history, including Ancient History, is constantly changing. The author bases his assertion on two elements: the changes in the volumes of data that the historian uses as historical sources, as well as the techniques and technologies applied to the study of these sources. For Finley, the combination of these two elements means that the writing of History is constantly changing and that each historiographical discourse is the result of the present in which it was constructed. According to the author (1994: 5), "every historian has greater 'historical experience' than his predecessors, however outstanding." This statement demonstrates that the historian must be aware that the writing of History needs to be analyzed according to the ways of thinking about historical knowledge and how it was developed, what the historical sources were, and the technologies applied to construct this knowledge. It is therefore necessary to think about the relationships that exist in historiography with regard to historical sources and their approaches. These relations are intrinsically linked to the social function of History. This social function is directly related to the need to maintain the past in order to build an identity in the present.

### **Social Function of History**

The historiographical construction of Antiquity is no exception to this logic. The identities and diversities that are present between us and the ancients are reflected in the historiographical discourses that are produced.

The intervention of the historian who chooses the document, extracting it from the set of data from the past, preferring it to others, assigning it a testimonial value that, at least in part, depends on their own position in the society of their time and their mental organization, is part of an initial situation that is even less 'neutral' than their intervention. The document is not innocuous. It is first and foremost the result of an assembly, conscious or unconscious, of the history, of the era, the society that produced it, but also of the successive eras during which

it continued to live, perhaps forgotten, during which it continued to be manipulated, albeit by silence. The document is something that remains, that lasts, and the testimony, the teaching (to evoke the etymology) that it brings must first be analyzed, demystifying its apparent meaning. The document is a monument. (Le Goff, 1990: 505, our translation)

Le Goff, when talking about the social function of history, refers to one of the founders of the *Annales* and his conception of the past and History: “[The] interaction between past and present is what has been called the social function of the past or of history.” Lucien Febvre [1949] also points out that: “History systematically collects, classifying and grouping past events according to their current needs. It is in function of life that it questions death. Organizing the past according to the present: this is how the social function of history could be defined.” (1990: 26, our translation)

In this same perspective of epistemological changes in the writing of History, its relationship with the vestiges of the past and collective memory, it is essential to bring up Michel de Certeau, also a member of the *Annales* School, and his conception of the construction of a historical discourse: “each society thinks ‘historically’ with its own instruments” (2011: 65, our translation). Certeau also points out that it is in function of this place that “methods are established, a topography of interests is outlined, and the documents and questions that will be proposed to them are organized” (2011: 47, our translation). And he reinforces the definition of what these documents/sources would be in their new material constitution: “from residues, papers, vegetables, even glaciers and ‘eternal snows’, the historian does something else: they make history out of them. They artificialize nature. They take part in the work that transforms nature into the environment and thus modifies the nature of man” (2011: 67, our translation).

For Certeau, the identification of the historian’s social place determines the whole process of constructing historical and historiographical writing:

The place, thus, has a double function, since it both makes certain research possible—as a function of common conjunctures and problems—and makes others impossible; it excludes from discourse what is its condition at a given moment; it represents the role of a censorship with regard to the postulates present (social, economic, political) in the analysis (Certeau, 2011: 63, our translation).

This same perspective can be identified in François Dosse, from the same school, when he reinforces the role of the historian’s social place and their writing:

As the very place of the realization of history, historical writing is caught in a fundamentally ambivalent relationship by its double nature of mirror writing that refers to the present as a fiction that manufactures secrecy and lies at the same time as truth, as well as performative writing by its crucial role of building a 'tomb' for the dead, thus playing the role of the burial rite. Historical writing would have a symbolizing function that allows a society to situate itself by attributing past in language (Dosse, 2004: 202, our translation).

Regarding the debate on the writing of History, its documentary and source bases, the epistemological process based on this relationship between the present and past, one cannot fail to mention Reinhart Koselleck and his theories on the writing of History based on concepts. The author brings complementary elements to this debate based on a German historical tradition, but one that does not fail to talk directly to the Annales School, especially with regard to Social History. For Koselleck, "social history cannot do without the aid provided by the historical-critical implications of the history of concepts." (2006: 120, our translation)

### **The History of Concepts**

Thus, in order to address the issue of the concepts dealt with here, *Sources and Documents on Antiquity*, it is essential to establish that the approach will start from the dialog between the approaches of Social History and the History of Concepts. The main element that will guide this debate is the inter/multi/transdisciplinary perspective with an emphasis on semiological principles and discourse analysis in the interpretative processes of the objects in question.

These two principles, semiotics and discourse analysis, are the theoretical and methodological elements that will permeate the writing of History from the Annales Schools onwards and will lead to Cultural History. However, this discussion will not be held because we believe it is necessary to establish a focus in the approach to the themes developed here. This approach will be guided by the problematization of themes as concepts constructed by historians' present and social places. Thus, Koselleck's assumptions will also be fundamental for constructing the proposed interpretations.

We will therefore reinforce the methodological procedures proposed by the German theorist:

The history of concepts is, in the first place, a specialized method of source criticism which pays attention to the use of socially and politically relevant terms and which analyzes with particular commitment fundamental expressions of



social or political content. It is clear that a historical analysis of the respective concepts must refer not only to the history of language, but also to data from social history, since all semantics relates to content that goes beyond the linguistic dimension. This explains the marginal and precarious position of semantics in the language sciences, but also its generous contribution to history. (Koselleck, 2006: 125, our translation)

The analysis to be developed in this text is based on the foundations proposed by Social History, assuming linguistic and semiotic principles as inter/trans/multidisciplinary elements in the construction of historically and historiographically established concepts in the discourses present in historiography from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards. In order to carry out this analysis, authors who have contributed to the historiography of Antiquity in relation to these specific sections will be approached.

Based on these elements of conceptual and theoretical foundations, it is important to return to what Finley established as the great complexity inherent in the process of writing about Antiquity. Thinking about the documentary complexity related to studies on Antiquity, especially in the debate on monument/document/source, is the first step for any researcher who undertakes this endeavor. One cannot advance in the typology of documents and sources on Antiquity without understanding the consequences of what Le Goff calls the *documentary revolution*. It is from this revolution that new historiographical perspectives on Antiquity have become possible. Multi/trans/interdisciplinarity is the main element to be highlighted in order to build historical and historiographical approaches to Antiquity, as well as a proposal for a typology of sources to be used in the process of building this historical knowledge. With the *documentary revolution*, new problems, new objects, and new approaches became possible and, with that, the constant rewriting of Antiquity became a premise.

Thus, we agree with Crawford that

even with all the available explicit evidence put to use, there is a long way to go; and in discussing the sources for Ancient History it must be remembered that often the most important evidence is that drawn from the well-documented practice of another age or society. (1983: X)

If documents and sources are made up of the various gifts that constituted them as such, in Antiquity this complexity becomes even greater and defines the approaches to be established in their analyses. It is therefore necessary to address the diversity derived from each of the typologies.

With the conceptual scope of Social History as opposed to Positivist History, the restrictive definition of document as text falls apart and becomes problematized. Archaeology, which emerged as an anthropological technique in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but gained its scientific autonomy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, promotes a clear scope in the conception of sources and documents and overturns the restrictive conception of the positivist school. Therefore, it is only possible to talk about sources and documents for Ancient History from the understanding that both textual and material sources should make up the list of sources and documents for the classicist.

In relation to this set of documentary materiality, it is important to return to Crawford (1983) when he points out that one cannot lose sight of the documentary practice of other societies. Just as the entire philological movement applied to the written and preserved documentation referring to the manuscripts repeatedly produced by medieval copyists cannot be put on the back burner, neither can the various movements of archaeological exploration and discoveries that intensified in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Without these, we would not have the wide range of literature, written manifestations of various genres, archaeological collections and holdings, definitions of archaeological sites, and constant technological advances applied to classical studies. Both Finley and Le Goff point out that the different technical and technological processes applied to sources/documents can alter their analyses and new approaches can be taken. One of the technological changes that should be highlighted in this process is the use of information technology. In the 1970s, Le Goff was already advocating that some of them would be fundamental to these changes.

This expansion of historical memory would certainly have remained in the state of intention, of the individual success of any historian who brought together a capacity for work and an innovative spirit within the traditional artisanal treatment of the document, if almost at the same time a technological revolution, that of the computer, had not taken place. (Le Goff, 1990: 499, our translation)

### **Sources on Antiquity**

In view of this theoretical-conceptual and methodological preamble, we will now go on to typify the possible sources that can be studied to build the historical knowledge about Antiquity. The first point to be highlighted in this typification is its distinction between the textual and material nature of the sources.

In view of this first characterization, it is important to define that the textual nature indicated here refers to documents that are made up of writings that have remained in their manuscript form and that have undergone copying, philological treatment, and printing processes, mainly after the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Those of a material nature, on the other hand, are sources derived from the methodological and technological advances of Archaeology and the New Archaeology. In other words, any and all documents that have arisen from a process of excavation, cataloging, constitution, and maintenance of collections.

However, this prior definition and initial separation by the choice of one of the elements that are present in the constitution of the sources are arbitrary, but they are present in the historiographical discussion on the subject. In each of these branches of typologies, other derivations can be brought to new typifications.

With regard to documents and sources of a material nature, it should be noted that these were constituted in certain processes of discovery and appropriation in the context of the formation of European Nation States as a way of constructing national identities, evoking European ancestry based on the classical world, North Africa, and the Near East. During the war and territorial incorporation movements, for example, both France and the United Kingdom built up their archaeological collections by establishing museum spaces and exhibitions that made the appropriations of the past a reality with the materialization of this past. Thus, the examples of exploration and appropriation of the ruins of Egypt and Greece in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries are examples of how material culture became the object of the constitution of a past incorporated by its materiality.

However, in this process, the material concept takes on forms of verification and “proof” of literary/textual documents. Both Finley (1994) and Beard (1998) reinforce this role of archaeological expeditions referring to the ancient world and the construction of an identity based on archaeological collections as a way of dominating the territories explored and guaranteeing that the historical past would be preserved for humanity. In scientific terms, it was only in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with discussions about the origins of the human species and the need to support anthropological theories, that archaeology began to be understood as an auxiliary “technique” in the studies of human evolution. For historians, despite the constitution of these collections and the exploration of archaeological sites, material culture also took on the role of “proving” textual documentation.

It is only with the New Archaeology, which brings theoretical and methodological innovations, that there is a paradigm shift that will establish key issues for material culture to be analyzed in its own right, in its autonomy as a source and trace. This change will further reinforce the classicist's need to establish a multi/inter/transdisciplinary process. The need to respect certain presuppositions regarding the exploration of archaeological sites with appropriate methodologies, the preparation of detailed reports on the excavation methods, and careful description of each of the artifacts that are the object of exploration will determine a differentiated relationship in the dialog with the source.

The "independence" of archaeological evidence consists in the fact that the hypotheses and arguments of the archaeologist are part of a great nexus of general archaeological theory and practice, which is something entirely independent of historical theory, if only because it has evolved partly from the findings of archaeologists working on fields that are not historically documented. (Crawford, 1983: 138)

Thus, material culture is fundamental for the historian as long as, given its complexity, they respect the processes of constitution of this source as the product of an archaeological excavation and talk with the theoretical foundations for its analysis. As was the case in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, archaeology should not be seen as a corroborative element of a historical discourse based on written documents.

Pedro Paulo Funari (2006: 89) states that the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century were fundamental for a significant expansion of the range of archaeological sources, and this was due to technical advances as well as epistemological and political changes. The Brazilian researcher points out that the advance of capitalism and European and US imperialist expansion provided the basis for archaeological research with the creation of archaeology schools linked to the universities of these great powers, which solidified archaeological research and expanded its spaces and encompassed new temporalities. One of the first historiographical currents influenced by these new forms of archaeological studies was the historical materialist, with the Russian historian and archaeologist Mikhail Rostovtzeff as a major reference for historical writing, who approached textual and archaeological source as equivalent for his studies. This equitable approach will remain in the Annales School, with Braudel as one of the great representatives of these approaches, as well as Lucien Febvre. This conception of the autonomy of material culture as a historical source was solidified and established as an autonomous historical source, independent of the textual source.

The constitution of some collections and publications derived from archaeological excavations are fundamental to studies on Antiquity. It is impossible to mention them all in detail. However, some are worth mentioning because they have been present in historical research since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as the catalogs called *Corpus Inscriptionum*, for example. These catalogs present compilations of various transcribed or drawn inscriptions that reproduce the texts found in various archaeological excavations of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They served as the basis for a great deal of research in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and, even today, are the basis for searching for information on a variety of subjects, from political inscriptions on the appointment of emperors to tombstone information. Many of these *Corpi* are available digitally and can be consulted by classicist researchers. There are many compilations that vary according to the spaces and themes that can be found in the inscriptions, as well as the language in which the inscriptions are found. Some examples are the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, the *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*, and the *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum Graeciae*.

An example that needs to be presented, which is an exceptional case of material culture, is the city of Pompeii. Both Funari and Beard highlight the city as an example of archaeological possibilities. Funari points out that the city had been explored since the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century and the way it was explored was with the intention of forming private artistic collections without any kind of methodological care for the removal of artifacts from the excavation site. According to Mary Beard:

In the early excavations during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, skeletons were conveniently “discovered” in the presence of visiting royalty and other dignitaries. Romantic travellers gushed at the thought of the cruel disaster that had afflicted the poor souls whose mortal remains they witnessed, not to mention the more general reflections on the perilous fragility of human existence that the whole experience prompted. (2016: 15)

Not to mention the appropriations made by the Vatican itself of the artifacts found in the excavations of Pompeii, which became part of restricted and forbidden collections, such as the Secret Cabinet, made up of artifacts considered forbidden because of their apparently sexual nature. These assumptions applied to the processes of removal from the archaeological site ended up damaging some essential information in the use of these objects as historical sources. However, with the advances of the New Archaeology, excavations started to follow specific methodologies that began to preserve the inherent characteristics of the site itself. The excavations themselves have been improved in order to guarantee any and all important information about the soil, the location of the object, the characteristics of the spaces, and the integrity of the objects.

We will not go on to describe these processes, since we believe that would be another thematic proposal. However, it is important to point out that based on these changes in Archaeology and the New Archaeology, other types of sources can be identified which need to be studied using their own theoretical and methodological foundations. Some of these are numismatics (the study of coins), iconography (the study of images), and epigraphy (the study of inscriptions found on architectural monuments or tombstones). Not to mention the possibilities of studying statuary and architectural spaces.

As far as textual documentation is concerned, some processes of treatment and organization of its constitutions as they stand today need to be properly problematized. The first element to be highlighted is the process of copying and organizing manuscripts in the medieval world of monasteries and the organization of codices. In addition to these, it is of paramount importance to highlight the philological treatment that was applied to the codices and to the organization of their printed publications at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and intensified in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This editing and publishing process was fundamental to the widespread dissemination of literary and other works. Mary Beard (1998) points out that reading these works was essential for the construction of an identity in the British world and that they were part of the formative and educational process of the families of the British elite. According to the historian, these works were bedside books and made the ancient world as familiar as the world lived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

These textual sources can be found in various genres such as historical narratives, biographies, poetry, plays, novels and fables, memoirs, epistles, encyclopedias, philosophical and moral texts, manuals and treatises, among others.

In terms of printed collections, two major publishers stand out because they developed the translations and philological treatments in conjunction with major universities. The European editions are published by Les Belles Lettres together with the Association Guillaume Budé in partnership with French universities. The English-language editions, on the other hand, are published by Harvard University Press in a collection called Loeb Classical, also coordinated and produced in conjunction with American universities. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these editions were references for scholars of classical studies and underwent several revisions in terms of the philological treatment process and the process of translating the original works into French or English.

## Digital Humanities and Antiquity

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the advent of the world wide web, the spread of databases with collections of material culture and textual documents was intensified for online consultation. Many of these databases were set up with the help of computers, but they were restricted to CDROMS or the internal systems of many universities. From the 1990s onwards, digitalization and virtual access to these databases began to change research methods. To address these elements, we need to bring into the debate how Digital Humanities began to contribute to the process of organizing, making available, and making accessible historiographical sources, especially those linked to Antiquity.

According to Burdick (2012: 4), at the start of discussions on the Digital Humanities in 2012, previous computational uses and approaches applied to Humanities research – with an emphasis on the creation, preservation, and interpretation of the cultural record – the Digital Humanities greatly expanded the potential power and reach of the humanities disciplines, both within academia and outside its walls. In the field of History, a major change that has taken place is the production of historical knowledge and historical culture in the context of networks. This has led to a paradigm shift in the concepts of Public History and Digital History, for example.

In the field of classical studies, one of the experiences that best exemplifies these changes is the creation of the Perseus Digital Library (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/>) portal. This is one of the examples followed by CPEP, the Research Center of Plinian Studies under the responsibility of two research groups in the Department of History of the College of Letters and Sciences (FCL) of the São Paulo State University (UNESP), coordinated by the author of this article (<https://cpep.fema.edu.br>). Database tools provided the basis for the first Digital Humanities projects that were seeded around the world from the 1990s onwards (Santaella, 2021; Bondioli, 2021).

Although this work varied in nature, there were common and salient features: a concern with textual analysis and cataloging, the study of linguistic features, an emphasis on pedagogical supports and learning environments, and research questions guided by structured data analysis. The migration of materials into digital forms and the extension of traditional editing and analysis methods, enhanced by automation, took precedence, characteristics of the first generation of Digital Humanities.

In this respect, I fully identify myself because when I was working on the Index of Pliny the Younger during my scientific initiation in the 1990s, the

methodology applied was systematized reading of the Letters, typing and classifying the words listed with the tools of the text editor used at that time, which organized the information automatically. In other words, the use of technology was fundamental to the final result, even if it was primary. Today, on the portal, we do this with two clicks, in other words, in seconds.

What was once the result of months of reading, typing, classifying, and final formatting, today the data present in the portal's database enables infinite interactions and reuse of documentation to be determined by the user themselves, whether academic or not. Moreover, the construction of historical knowledge about it should not be limited to academia, nor should the translations made available be understood as ready and finished. There is, albeit in an experimental and primary way, an open channel for the users of the portal to submit suggestions for translation or textual adaptation. However, one of the most fundamental elements of this project, at the moment, is its application in the process of building digital and historical literacy together as a formal (school) and non-formal educational action with developments in this activity resulting from an interaction with the letters by the innovative CPEP portal. In short, it makes it possible to reuse the information in order to resignify the document itself. We can attribute this element to the translation of the letters, even though it is restricted to academic circles.

For the classicist historian based on the Digital Humanities, it is a way of conceiving the document and interacting with the information it contains, such as that constituted by the portal with hyperlinks, the structuring of a database, and the organization of a search system according to the interest of the researcher/user, essentially changing its "formatting." Nelson Bondioli points out that "it is necessary to recognize how the experience of the digital environment substantially alters the possibilities of research and to understand the specificity of this expansion of access and use, both in terms of techniques and its tools." (2021: 127, our translation).

We agree with Lúcia Santaella (2021: 10), when she states that the transdisciplinary nature of Digital Humanities brings objects such as processes related to open codes, mapping, game designs, augmented reality, algorithmic analysis, data mining, cloud computing, multimedia prose, transmedia scenarios, robotics, and artificial intelligence and promotes a process of "deterritorialization" of traditional humanist practice as it provides the possibility of participatory creation of open content, such as the wiki system, using collaborative networks. Thus, we reinforce the need to promote, for our research reality, a debate on the concept of authorship that establishes for the university researcher an



exclusive and unique form as possible to be understood as excellence, based on a traditional scientific method.

## Conclusion

Here we present a conceptual reflection on Sources and Documents on Antiquity with the specific outline given by the trajectory of the research developed with the Center for Ancient and Medieval Studies (NEAM) and the Research Center of Plinian Studies in partnership with #Veredas\_Digitais – Center for Research in Humanities and Technologies. We know that the possibilities offered by the digital humanities are leading to paradigmatic changes and, with this, to frequent questions about the ways in which History is written. With these reflections, we have only brought up some of the possible processes of action for the historian of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, who will inevitably have to work with these new realities.

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