

This article analyses the early ethnographies of Mediterranean societies. These were carried out in the 1950s and 1960s and mainly written by researchers (PhD candidates) from the University of Oxford. Although initially there was no project to create a specific research field on the Mediterranean, these ethnographies have many common features. Far from the contested subject of "honour and shame", this article maintains that other issues characterise these works—for example, they could be presented as ethnographies of the disappearing Mediterranean rural world. Finally, we will try to locate the texts on the North-South axis that existed in anthropology at that time.

[ANTHROPOLOGY OF
THE MEDITERRANEAN,
OXFORD, RURAL
WORLD, NOSTALGIA,
HONOUR AND SHAME]

*This article is based on research carried out at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Oxford from January to June 2005. This research was made possible by the postdoctoral research grant *Batista i Roca*, awarded by the Generalitat de Catalunya (2004BBR-00045). I want to thank the ISCA for their warm welcome. I am very grateful to David Parkin and Gina Burrows, and would also like to thank Mike Morris, the ISCA Librarian, for his kind help. Moreover, in Oxford I received help and wise advice from John Campbell, Renée Hirschon, Lidia Sciana, Davide Però and Elisabetta Zontini.

article

“EXACTLY WHAT I HAD BEEN LOOKING FOR” The Anthropology of the Mediterranean 1950-1970*

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“The village itself turned out to be, in its main characteristics, exactly what I had been looking for. It had a priest and a local council; it was remote, high (600 metres), and had snow in the winter; it was small, airy, and very beautiful.”

Juliet Du Boulay, *Portrait of a Greek Mountain Village*

1. INTRODUCTION¹

Much has been written about the social anthropology of the Mediterranean in the period 1950-1970, that is, the work of the first British anthropologists who went to study Mediterranean societies. In general, their interpretations have been criticised, and some authors, such as Llobera (1990), have even questioned the existence of this anthropology. Recently, however, their work has been defended -at least partially. In line with this vindication of the Anthropology of the Mediterranean, this paper revisits some central themes in the ethnographies carried out in the Mediterranean from 1950 to 1970. Such themes include the honour/shame complex, the fixation with rural society, and political economy in this anthropology. Our argument is supported by an analysis of the ethnographies (i.e. what the ethnographies reveal about certain topics) and how these topics affect the anthropologists themselves and their ethnographic understanding. For example, in the citation at the head of this article, Du Boulay anticipates remoteness and tranquillity, which will subsequently pervade her ethnography. What we cannot judge from the ethnography itself, is whether this society was less remote from urban Europe and more troubled than the book indicates.

¹ This essay is mainly based on doctoral theses on the Mediterranean area submitted to the Institute of Social Anthropology (the ISA, subsequently the ISCA) of the University of Oxford between 1950 and 1970. In chronological order of submission, the authors are Peters, Stirling, Pitt-Rivers, Abou-Zeid, Campbell, Miller, Maraspini, Lisón-Tolosana, Gilsenan, Cutileiro, Abu-Zahra, Hilowitz and Du Boulay. An ethnography by Kenny has also been added to this list, although it was a Bachelor of Science thesis rather than a Doctor Philosophy. Another four ethnographies, from the same period but submitted at other universities, have also been taken into account, due to their impact on subsequent studies of the Mediterranean area. These monographs are by Halpern, Davis, Boissevain and Blok. In short, this essay is based on 18 ethnographies on the Mediterranean area from the period 1950 to 1970. Detailed references can be found in the bibliography. Published versions of the theses have been used in all cases in which these versions exist.

2. OXFORD AND THE MEDITERRANEAN: AN UNPLANNED PROJECT

In 1951, the then director of the Institute of Social Anthropology (ISA) of Oxford, Evans-Pritchard, explained in *Oxford Magazine* that before the war the Institute had never more than 10 students in the same academic year. In contrast, after 1946 the number of enrolments increased gradually, until reaching around 50 students per year. Evans-Pritchard stated that not only did the ISA have more students than ever, it also had enough funds available to “encourage them to embark on an anthropological career being assured that funds would be available for their research” (Evans-Pritchard, 1951). Some years later, he confirmed the growth of anthropology in Oxford, assuring that more than half of the graduates of different levels had obtained professional appointments within the field of anthropology (Evans-Pritchard 1959).

In his introduction to *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, Talal Asad (1973) describes the situation of anthropology after the Second World War, noting that despite the fundamental changes in the world -changes which affected Social Anthropology, its object, its ideological support and its organisational base- Social Anthropology had not disappeared. Instead, its departments had developed and the discipline expanded, thus consolidating it as a profession. As stated by Raymond Firth, “The intellectual strength of British social anthropology in the post-war years has been undoubtedly helped greatly by the expansion of research facilities and of teaching posts” (Firth, 1960: 38).

Evans-Pritchard (1951) offers another interesting explanation. Among the various reasons attributed to the growing number of anthropology students, he emphasises the interest Oriental and African people had aroused in former officers whilst on overseas service. This could also be a reason for interest in

the Mediterranean area. Some anthropologists confirm this explanation. For example, John Campbell (1992: 149) states that one of his reasons for choosing Greece was that he had spent the last months of the war there; and Jeremy Boissevain (1969: 1) explains that one of the main reasons for the sudden interest in the Mediterranean was the experience that many -who like him would later become Mediterraneanists- had in the region during the war. Even Jack Goody, in his *Foreword* to Peters (1990), assesses the lectures given by Evans-Pritchard in 1946 by writing that “quite apart from their intellectual qualities, his analyses of the internal and external struggles of the Nuer of the Sudan and the Sanusi of Libya were of deep interest to those of us who have spent much of our adult lives engaged in war or war-related activities” (Goody 1990: ix).

According to Evans-Pritchard (1951), Oxford was the main British centre of field research during the post-war years. Oxford was also leading field research on the Mediterranean. However, there is no evidence of the existence of a strategic movement towards an *Anthropology of the Mediterranean*. The anthropologists working in Mediterranean countries did not come together as a group. Thus, they did not discuss common problems in seminars or other academic meetings in Oxford. John Campbell, for example, makes it clear that his decision to go to Greece did not respond to “any Oxford plan (as some have suggested) to despatch bright young anthropologists to different Mediterranean destination to demonstrate the new historical approach”. Later on in the text he adds: “Nor did Evans-Pritchard particularly encourage Mediterranean studies as such” (Campbell, 1992: 150). On the contrary, as Campbell states, Evans-Pritchard was even annoyed when Peristiany decided to give up his African studies to work in a

Cypriot village².

Gilsenan (1990: 226) explains that while he was preparing his fieldwork in Cairo in the mid-1960s, no one at Oxford remembered that only ten years before Abou-Zeid had submitted his thesis on Egypt. By that time, Peristiany had already left Oxford. Thus, we can assert that there was no explicit intention in Oxford to study Mediterranean societies or to create a new field of study parallel to the prevailing Africanism. Nevertheless, 12 out of a total of 81 doctoral theses submitted at Oxford between 1950 and 1970 were based on fieldwork carried out in the Mediterranean³. The following table shows the evolution of doctoral theses submitted at Oxford and the proportion of theses devoted to Mediterranean societies:

² In fact, Peristiany was one of the anthropologists who most strongly encouraged the anthropology of the Mediterranean, being the main promoter and editor of the Mediterraneanist conferences that took place up to 1970: Conference at Burg Wartenstein, 1959 (Pitt-Rivers, 1963; and Peristiany, 1966); Conference in Athens, 1961 (Peristiany, 1966); Conference in Athens, 1963 (Peristiany, 1968); Conference in Athens, 1966; Seminar in Nicosia, 1970 (Peristiany, 1976). Peristiany clearly argues that all these works “reveal the continuity and persistence of Mediterranean modes of thought” (Peristiany, 1966: 9). He was a lecturer at London and Cambridge before becoming senior lecturer at Oxford from 1948 to 1963. His work, up to that date, had focused on the systems of customary law among the Kipsigis of Kenya (Barrett, 1991: 533). Campbell himself states that he moved from Cambridge to Oxford to do his doctoral thesis because Peristiany was at Oxford. During a personal interview with John Campbell in Oxford in June 2005, he mentioned that his move to Oxford -following the advice of Meyer Fortes- was due to a Greek professor at the Institute, Peristiany. He also stated that Peristiany had not done fieldwork in the Mediterranean before and that it was as a result of supervising him -an English anthropologist working on Greece- that Peristiany decided to undertake fieldwork in Cyprus.

³ One more thesis should be added to these twelve, *The Cult of the Mother Goddess in early Anatolia* (1957-58) by C. Serei. However, I have not included it in the list because it is a study on classical times.



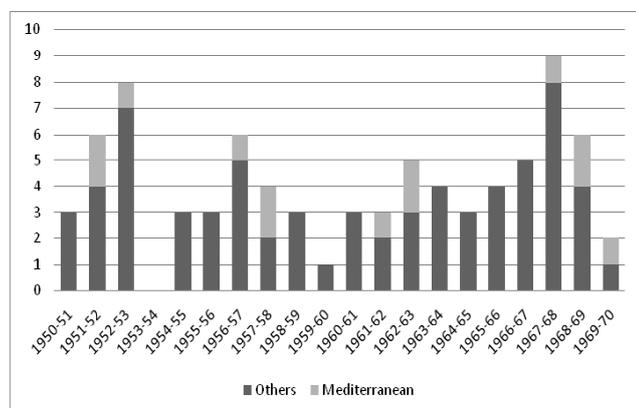


Table 1: Evolution of Ph.D. theses on Social Anthropology at Oxford, 1950-1970

Source: University of Oxford, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, List of Theses (unpublished).

As can be seen, the number of theses undertaken on the Mediterranean is small in relation to the total number submitted -the majority of which were carried out in Central and Eastern Africa⁴. However, there is continuity in the number of students whose theses were on the Mediterranean (approximately three every five years). We could thus draw the conclusion that although there was no project to develop an anthropology of the Mediterranean in Oxford, a considerable amount of research on this area was certainly undertaken between 1950 and 1970. The theses rarely express the intention of creating a field of study, although some comparisons can be drawn between them -a clear sign of some attempt in this

⁴ Nineteen of the 37 theses submitted were by Africanists, whereas between 1960 and 1970 the proportion was 22 out of 44. Even within the theses on the Mediterranean it is possible to detect an Africanist tendency. As Pina-Cabral states, “the work of the Mediterraneanist anthropologist in Britain in the 1950s depended on insights derived from their Africanist supervisors” (Pina-Cabral, 1987: 716). Campbell also recognises this fact: “And yet, as I went to the Greek mountains, my anthropological preconceptions remained essentially African” (Campbell, 1992: 151).

sense⁵. However, most importantly, the studies contain common features that we will try to describe in the following pages.

First, it is important to explain the historical framework (1950-70) used in this paper. Between 1935 and 1950, not a single thesis was dedicated to Mediterranean societies in the ISA. After 1970, there were profound changes in the style of Mediterranean ethnographies. Around 1970-71, Renée Hirschon was conducting fieldwork in an urban neighbourhood of Athens. Therefore, as early as 1970, the anthropology of the Mediterranean was no longer an anthropology of the rural world. In the 1970s, the work of Hirschon (1998), Sciamia (1981) and others from Oxford’s Centre for Cross-Cultural Research on Women (now IGS) already contained a critique of the honour/shame interpretation, which was one of the main shortcomings attributed to Mediterranean anthropology. In short, the Mediterranean ethnographies produced in Oxford in the seventies (Herzfeld, Hirschon, and Ott) are, in many ways, very different from those of the 1950s and 1960s, and actually anticipated some of the critiques of earlier interpretations. In my opinion, there is a *style of anthropology of the Mediterranean* that starts with Peters and finishes with Du Boulay.

3. HONOUR AND SHAME, THE COMMON CRITICISM

Perhaps the main common feature of the early anthropology of the Mediterranean is that it was widely criticised from the 1980’s onward (see Albera, 2006), particularly some of its ideas about Mediterranean honour and shame. As Shippers (2001) pointed out, the notion of the Mediterranean region as a cultural unit has been largely criticised by southern European anthropologists, who see in this notion a type of

⁵ See for example Campbell (1964: v) and Abu Zahra (1982: 16; 19; 46).

invention by northern anthropologists or even a sort of colonisation (Moreno, 1985). Thus, anthropologists from southern Europe -many with a British training- such as Llobera (1986 and 1990) and Pina-Cabral (1989) have expressed strong reservations about the anthropology of the Mediterranean carried out from 1950 to 1970.

The best-known theoretical critique of the anthropology of the Mediterranean of this period was written by another anthropologist trained at Oxford during the 1970s, Michael Herzfeld. In *Anthropology through the Looking-Glass* (1987), Herzfeld defines the anthropology of the Mediterranean as a product of stereotypes belonging to the societies from which anthropology emerged. This would explain its ethnocentric bias. For example, according to Herzfeld, the notion of *honour* comes more from the bourgeois nationalism of northern Europe than from Mediterranean men. The same occurs with the notion of *shame*, more appropriate to the sexual self-control that characterised the Victorian ethos than to Mediterranean women.

In this regard, the work by Mozo and Tena (2003) reveals a link between the Romanticism of the 19th century and the anthropology of the Mediterranean in the 20th century. Northern European literature's romantic models of southern women -sensual, attractive and uninhibited- became exactly the opposite in modern anthropology -chaste, obese and dressed in black- in order to fit the anthropological canon of Mediterranean women.

However, a review of these early ethnographical studies on Mediterranean societies allows us to relativise the weight of the honour/shame complex within the whole contribution. About 50% of the ethnographies examined (those by Halpern, Cutileiro, Blok, Boissevain, Maraschini, Abou-Zeid, Peters, Miller and Gilsenan) do not mention these subjects⁶.

⁶ We are referring to the early ethnographies that these authors undertook for their doctoral theses. Some of these authors, such as Abou-Zeid, deal with honour and/or shame in later works.

Of the remaining works, Lisón-Tolsana speaks of these topics as a *vigencia* of the past; whereas Kenny considers that the Spanish *vergüenza* has a positive connotation that cannot be interpreted in the negative sense of *shame*. As described below, Kenny takes on the terminology of the fascist regime and applies it to the entire Spanish population of the time.

Du Boulay (1974: 107) addresses this issue from the perspective of Campbell and Peristiany, although she admits that the people from Euboea rarely speak of honour. For Davis (1973: 70-2), honour is a tool used in neighbourhood-based social control. Men's financial weakness entails women's sexual weakness, leading to a loss of honour for men and shame for women -the wives and daughters- who are left to be considered "loose women"⁷ (Davis, 1973: 94-5). We can find a similar approach in the ethnography of Abu-Zahra (1982: 117).

Within the Oxfordian ethnographies on the Mediterranean, the themes of honour and shame mainly appear in the work of Campbell and Pitt-Rivers. Campbell (1964: 19) explains that honour and shame -derived from a lack of honour- is, along with sheep and sons, the main concern of Sarakatsani shepherds. According to Campbell, the notion of honour has been deeply rooted in Greek culture since Homeric times. In Pitt-Rivers' work, the references to women's *vergüenza* are clear. Furthermore, he uses the Spanish term, which he defines as "the essence of womanhood" (Pitt-Rivers, 1954: 112). However, one could suggest that the theme of honour in Pitt-Rivers' *People of the Sierra* was subsequently exaggerated by others. He used the terms *hombria*, *manliness* or even *pride*, which was translated in the Spanish edition as *honor*⁸.

⁷ This vision of women with a lack of independence or capacity to manage their honour has been criticised by Lidia Sciana, who is against the vision of Mediterranean women "as tokens in the relationship between men" (Sciana, 2003: 140).

⁸ Compare page 89 of the original English edition with page 118 of the Spanish translation where *pride* is translated as *honor*.



As shown above, the concepts of *honour* and *shame* do not have a univocal meaning for all of the Mediterranean. Instead, the aforementioned ethnographies reveal that these terms have different nuances of meaning according to the area. They were unified *a posteriori*, as a result of both Peristiany's attempts to create something like the Africanist anthropology for the Mediterranean, and the fact that the *honour/shame complex* was used to support subsequent criticism of the anthropology of the Mediterranean. In other words, critics of the anthropology of the Mediterranean were partly responsible for the Mediterranean stereotype that they wrongly accused these early authors of creating.

I consider that the problem arose in the attempt to define the anthropology of the Mediterranean, which is more difficult than it appears. The most experienced anthropologists, such as Davis (1991) or Albera and Blok (2001), perhaps a little tired of so much controversy on the topic, ended up stating that the anthropology of the Mediterranean was simply that which was carried out by Mediterraneanist anthropologists. However, this tautology leads to another question: who are the Mediterraneanist anthropologists? This question is not easy to answer either. Are they like the Africanist anthropologists but working in the Mediterranean? Some, such as Pina-Cabral (1987), suggest that this is the case.

To overcome this problem, Albera and Blok (2001:23) suggest that the idea of the Mediterranean as an *object* of study should be abandoned. Instead, it should be considered a *field* of study. In other words, the Mediterranean should not be seen as an object that needs to be defined, but rather as a broad, significant, identifiable context.

As described above, in the 1950s a group of recently graduated anthropologists -educated at Oxford under Evans-Pritchard and Peristiany- undertook fieldwork in Mediterranean countries for different reasons, including their previous experiences. At the end of this decade, on the initiative

of Julian Pitt-Rivers, a conference was celebrated in Burg Wartenstein (Austria). This would lead to the publication of a book: *Mediterranean Countrymen* (1963). The aim of Burg Wartenstein's conference was to examine the accumulation of knowledge on the culture and social structure of riverside people in the Mediterranean. The problematic concept of the *people of the Mediterranean* -or the more problematic concept of *Mediterranean countrymen*- became gradually consolidated in the subsequent meetings in Athens, promoted by Peristiany (see footnote 2), and in the review by Davis (1977).

The contributors in Burg Wartenstein dealt with the topics of land ownership, inheritance, the family, the demography and the economy of the local community. These issues were tackled in relation to two general themes that emerged from the meeting: first, the local community's relation to the city, the state and national cultures; second, the community's development over time. Only one of the six sessions was dedicated to the topic of honour and shame. Thus, rather than being the central theme, this was just one of the subjects discussed. Of course, Peristiany (1966) and Pitt-Rivers (1977) put increasing emphasis on the honour/shame complex as a topic of study in the Mediterranean. However, as shown by Albera and Blok (2001:742-3), comparisons between the Mediterranean cultures extended to other issues as well, related to political, legal and religious aspects, among others.

Honour and shame became the main topic of the debate on the anthropology of the Mediterranean. Critics insisted that Honour and Shame was something like the prototypical theme in the work on anthropology of the Mediterranean. This emphasised the view of early Mediterranean anthropologists as "backward anthropologists" -to use Bandfield's unfortunate expression. However, I consider that the scope of this anthropology was limited by its almost exclusive interest in rural matters. This limitation was not overcome until Hirschon's generation.

4. LAND AND WORK, AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN RURAL WORLD

In our opinion, the unifying aspect of these ethnographies is the theme of attitudes towards land, land ownership⁹ and agricultural work. In other words, the early studies form an anthropology of the Mediterranean rural world and its forms of life. Most of the societies under study still depended on agriculture to survive, as noted by Halpern (1967: 49). The anthropologists studying these societies stressed this fact. A comparison of the ethnographies that we would like to highlight reveals important findings on attitudes towards land and work.

For example, in his research on the Sicilian mafia, Anton Blok (1974: 37) notes that in Genuardo, land constitutes the basis of social life: all the population depends, in one way or another, on the land. Thus, land is the main source of power and the vicissitudes of the mafia over time are linked to the fight to control it. Maraschini (1968: 16) notes that in the case of Calimera, in the peninsula of Salento, land ownership is not only a question of wealth but also of status and political power. Lisón-Tolosana (1966: 16) goes further and states that in Aragon, land is desired but not loved. Pitt-Rivers notes the same pattern in the case of Andalusia, in a discussion of “the value system of a people who dwell in towns from which they go out to cultivate the earth, but who do not love it” (Pitt-Rivers, 1954: 47). Furthermore, in the last note to the third chapter, Pitt-Rivers considers that a lack of affection for the land is a common feature throughout the Mediterranean region, from east to west.

⁹ Dimitros Theodosopoulos (2003: 29-30) summarised the different cultural uses and meanings attributed to land and its ownership within the agricultural societies of the Mediterranean as they appear in the ethnographies of that time. They include: security and independence, substantiation of local identity, self-sufficiency of the rural household, status, respect, political power and social stratification, marriage strategies, and finally, cross-generational relationships.

Cutileiro emphasises that land ownership constitutes the basis of social inequality. Little more than 5% of the population of Vila Velha owned enough land to avoid having to work as day labourers. Curiously, Stirling (1965: 122) notes that as a consequence of inheritance practices, the distribution and layout of the fields in Anatolia constitute a sort of genealogical map. In turn, Abou-Zeid (1956: 130) states that in El-Kharga the vertical segmentation of lineage is horizontally translated into field distribution. Moreover, Cutileiro (1971: 41) argues that in Alentejo, land provides a charter for social stratification.

Authors such as Boissevain and Stirling emphasise social egalitarianism while others such as Cutileiro and Blok stress inequality. The case of the kibbutz studied by Miller during the 1950s is an exception. In this case, land ownership and work are influenced by a complex system of values comprising religion, nationalism and socialism. In general, we can see an interesting contrast between the ethnological statements of the aforementioned authors and those of Abu-Zahra, Abou-Zeid and Stirling, who worked in the Muslim Mediterranean.

In the village of Sidi-Ameur, studied by Abu-Zahra, attitudes towards land are very different from those of the northern shores of the Mediterranean. Rather than being linked to the land itself, ownership is associated with olive trees, which are the basis of the culture’s agriculture, diet, security and prestige. Thus, land is understood in terms of place-associated with symbolic and identity values-rather than its financial value. Land is the origin of the founder’s group and his grave; it provides its inhabitants with an identity and is valued by the people living on it. Or as the saying goes, “the value of a place depends on the kind of people that dwell in it” (Abu-Zahra, 1982: 15).

Abou-Zeid finds a very special case in the Egyptian oasis of El-Kharga. In this place land is abundant, but water is scarce. Therefore, “land is not an object of property in itself and wealth is not



spoken in terms of land” (Abou-Zeid, 1956: 125). Instead, water is the most important asset and people own units of irrigation time, which are distributed among the owners of each spring. As land is abundant and water scarce, the amount of land cultivated corresponds to the amount that can be irrigated by the available water.

Finally, Stirling also notes that in central Anatolia the great amount of available land prevents conflicts from arising over property. Instead, problems are related to the rudimentary agricultural technology, which, in addition to the rigours of the climate, prevents families from cultivating more land. Even so, Stirling (1965: 48) considers that the farmers of the village of Sakaltustan do not work much, and he notes that a Turkish farmer would dread having to work day after day for a wage as English farm workers do.

This brings us to the second subject: attitudes towards work. Here, the dividing line between Muslim and Christian countries of the Mediterranean is not as clear. Abou-Zeid, Abou-Zahra and Peters find positive attitudes towards agricultural work in northern Africa. Abou-Zeid (1956:7) states that agricultural work is considered an honourable profession in the El-Kharga oasis. Peters (1990:41) explains that young Bedouins consider farming the land the starting point of their future wealth: flour will bring sheep, sheep will bring camels and camels will bring a wedding, sons and prestige.

But such a positive view of work, linked to the idea of personal progress, is in marked contrast with other ethnographical statements collected in the Muslim Mediterranean, in which agricultural work was described more negatively. Stirling had already mentioned such negative attitudes in the case of Anatolia. Bourdieu (1963) also discusses this negative view in his ethnography on Kabília, where work is considered a part of life, like illness and death, but not a virtue in itself. This view is closer to the pessimism of the northern shores. Davis (1973: 93)

states that in Pisticci agricultural work is considered a physically and morally degrading activity. In addition, Cutileiro (1971: 60-4), affirms more radically that “the pride of the old labourer is like the pride of the prostitute: it makes a virtue of what is in fact a necessity”. However, other attitudes in the Northern Mediterranean are more ambivalent. For example, Lisón-Tolosana (1966: 321) states that agricultural work in Belmonte is considered an honourable way of achieving a perfect lifestyle, which consists in “living without working”. Thus, work is honourable but viewed with distaste. In other ethnographies, any apparent progress in the agricultural world is considered the cause of major evils for the farmer (Cutileiro, 1971; and Blok, 1974), and land is abandoned at the earliest opportunity (Boissevain, 1969; and Hillowitz, 1976). Consequently, it is interesting to consider why Mediterraneanist anthropology put so much emphasis on rural society.

Some of the hypotheses that could explain the centrality of the rural theme have already been mentioned. In the first section, we discussed some anthropologists’ preferences, or personal motivation, to live in the areas of the Mediterranean they had discovered during the War. Another potential hypothesis involves the influence of Africanism -which was predominant in the ISA of Oxford- on these early Mediterranean anthropologists (in the 1950s, Africanists as important as P. Bohannan, L. Bohannan, R. Lienhardt and J. Beattie, among others, submitted their theses to the ISA). However, I consider that the reason for the centrality of the rural theme in these ethnographies could be nostalgia for certain forms or rural life. This nostalgia can be found in the specific view of the past transmitted by these monographies, and is related to the political economy of part of this anthropology.

Nevertheless, this concept cannot be extended to all of the ethnographies under study. Two very different attitudes to history and the passage of time can be detected. Some authors, such as Cutileiro, Davis, Block, Gilsenan and Hilowitz, consider that it

is important to focus on social processes. For example, in her work on industrial development in Sicily, Hilowitz assumes a diachronic approach to Syracuse, focusing on productive processes and their social contexts. However, the prevailing attitude to history and the passage of time was based on a nostalgic view of disappearing ways of living.

One example of this attitude can be found in Lisón-Tolosana's monograph on Belmonte de los Caballeros, which Davis, in the last sentence of his work *People of the Mediterranean* classifies as "the anthropological future of history". There are three levels of historical depth in this monograph: the immediate past from the post-war period up to the Spanish Republic; the 19th century, or slightly earlier, which the author analyses using local historical information; and the remote past, in which the origins of the community can be found and which explains according to the author the social structure of the present. There is a significant imbalance in the entire work, caused by an ideological bias towards the social structure that emerged after the Civil War. As a result, Lisón-Tolosana exaggerates both the social disorder during the republican period and the economic success of Franco's regime¹⁰. In addition, the monograph contains historical speculations: the *pueblo* is compared to the Greek *polis*. Thus, the author justifies the oligarchic system, arguing that it was preferred by Aristotle (Lisón-Tolosana, 1966: 252), whilst ignoring the fact that the tensions caused by this system were largely responsible for the violent actions against the local oligarchy and the Church that occurred during the republican period.

Lisón-Tolosana uses this notion of time to justify an archaic social structure. This structure is no longer static and is even regressive, as the advance of time paradoxically leads not to social transformation, but to a return to the most deeply-rooted traditions. Such traditions reinforce the present social structure-

¹⁰ For a critique of the political economy of this ethnography, see: Narotzky (2001: 37-40).

from the political structure to that of the family-as illustrated in phrases such as: "all the weight of tradition reinforces the position of the husband as the lord of the family" (Lisón-Tolosana, 1966: 145). Thus, the subject is dealt with as if there had never been a social will or a revolutionary effort to transform society.

As Narotzky states (2001: 39), in this aspect, Lisón-Tolosana's monograph is almost a mirror image of that of Pitt-Rivers. For Lisón-Tolosana, the wealthy classes are the representatives of tradition and the community's values. In contrast, Pitt-Rivers considers that this role is played by the working classes exclusively. However, this does not prevent him from archaizing the Andalusians, as Mozo and Tena have argued (2003). Like Lisón-Tolosana, Pitt-Rivers (1954: 30-31) could not avoid comparing the *pueblo* with the *polis* to support his opinion-also held by Lisón-Tolosana and other Mediterraneanists-on the link between the local unit and the political structure. Likewise, Pitt-Rivers (1954: 26 and 1968) Hellenises the Andalusian culture in his discussion of the institution of the foreigner. For his part, Kenny (1961: 26) archaizes Castilian society by interpreting conflicts between the agriculturalists, herdsmen, and forest owners as a Celtiberian vestige, in reference to the pre-Roman settlers of the Iberian Peninsula.

Nostalgia is clearly shown by Juliet Du Boulay, who begins the first chapter of her monograph with the following evocative sentence: "This book is a study of a phenomenon which is becoming all too frequent in the present day-a dying village community" (Du Boulay, 1974: 3). This sentence evokes the kind of society that the author wanted to reproduce. Du Boulay found all of the clichés of the Mediterranean in Ambéli: a "remote", "small", "airy" and "very beautiful" town. The author confesses that Ambéli was "exactly what I had been looking for" (Du Boulay, 1974: 4) and that the aim of her book was to study "the traditional and static aspects of this society" (Du Boulay, 1974: 6). Indeed, the inhabitants were portrayed as being oblivious to the



passage of time and history. However, Du Boulay could not hide the profound changes that were taking place in that society as a result of the effects of the War. Therefore, towards the end of the book she was forced to recognise that “After 1950 everything was to change” (Du Boulay, 1974: 246). This was stated with sadness, with nostalgia, as a loss, for in Du Boulay’s opinion rural Greece would no longer be a coherent unit; it would lose some of its values.

Boissevain also refers to the changes in Maltese society brought about by the War. The inhabitants of Hal-Farrug themselves describe these changes, in statements such as: “Before the war we were farmers and very poor. Now we are much better off and we are not so ignorant as before” (Boissevain, 1969: 9). Even so, in the first pages of *Hal-Farrug*, Boissevain explains that his work does not reflect urban Malta, where most of the population lives. Instead it describes a small town where one can observe what Malta was like before the changes produced by the War, Independence and the Second Vatican Council. In other words, the author aimed to reflect a society that existed before these profound changes, a society that was governed more by the moral principles of the Church than by the political principles disputed in the new State. In short, he describes a society that resisted losing its local identity within national Maltese society¹¹.

If the Maltese recognised that they were much better off than before, and if in general-like Boissevain, or Hillowitz to cite another example-they recognised that cultivating the land would be abandoned at the first opportunity to leave for the city, clinging onto the rural world and disregarding the urban world could not only be a question of preferences for living environments or an “Africanism aesthetic”, so to speak.

¹¹ It is important to emphasize that in his later works on Malta, such as *Saints and Fireworks* and others, Boissevain will capture the urban life in the Mediterranean, far from the rural centrality of his first book about Hal-Farrug.

In fact, one element that was frequently mentioned when trying to define Mediterranean society was the tension between *rusticitas* and *urbanitas* (Caro Baroja, 1963). In an attempt to define the European Mediterranean as a cultural area, Pitkin (1963) argues that its most distinctive characteristic is precisely the strong tendency towards urban life. This is in marked contrast with Northern Europe, where Italian travellers of the 15th and 16th century were extremely surprised to find aristocrats living in isolated mansions in France and Britain.

I consider that this fixation of the Mediterraneanist for rural society is related to a yearning for a lost world. Even though the rural world in the Mediterranean was undergoing a process of transformation at that time, it enabled anthropologists from Northern Europe to find social values that were disappearing from their own societies. Mozo and Tena (2003) suggested that both British and American Mediterraneanist anthropologists sought in Andalusia the hegemonic models of male domination that were either in the process of disappearing in their countries of origin (particularly in university environments, due to the influence of the feminist movement), or were at least being seriously questioned. A yearning for certain cultural values could also explain the centrality of rural society in Mediterraneanist anthropology. Minimising the importance of social changes, illustrating a supposedly traditional society and archaising the inhabitants of the Mediterranean could all reflect nostalgia for something that had been lost. In *Culture and Truth* (1989), Renato Rosaldo speaks of *imperialist nostalgia*: a certain yearning for the colonised culture as it was “traditionally”; a certain interest in finding the cultural characteristics that the colonising culture had destroyed. There are aspects of this kind of nostalgia in the work of British social anthropology in the Mediterranean: the search in the South for those cultural characteristics that the North had lost, nostalgia for a world that would disappear, as would the fascination with the Mediterranean.

5. OUTSIDERS AND INSIDERS, NORTHERN ANTHROPOLOGISTS IN SOUTHERN COUNTRIES

Waldren (1996) explored the insiders/outside relation in Majorca, beginning with her own biographical experience as a resident and anthropologist on the island. However, the way *insiders* were considered in relation to *outsiders* was also a common topic in these early ethnographies on the Mediterranean.

Pitt-Rivers marked a tendency in what he defined as “the sentiment of attachment to the pueblo” (Pitt-Rivers, 1954: 8), as opposed to the hostility felt towards neighbours (see also Pitt-Rivers, 1968). This is also reflected in the hostility felt towards the State as an outsider-structure, an issue that appears in the ethnographies of Abou-Zeid, Stirling, Boissevain, Blok, Cutileiro and Maraschini. At the end of his book, Pitt-Rivers even ascribes Andalusian anarchism before the Spanish Civil War to the conflict between *pueblo* and State -the opposition of the community to the central power of the State. In contrast, Lisón-Tolosana describes a completely different landscape. During the Spanish Republic, the most active revolutionaries in Belmonte were “a small number of people not native to the community who had married into it” (Lisón-Tolosana, 1966: 44) -in other words, outsiders. Du Boulay’s ethnography also regards the Greek peasants of the quiet village of Ambeli as “victims of the struggles of others” (Du Boulay, 1974: 237), and Greek partisans during the war as external elements.

Campbell and Stirling, like Pitt-Rivers, pictured closed societies that were on the defensive against their neighbours and the external world. The Sarakatsani family, as described by Campbell (1964: 38), is a corporative group that strives to be politically and economically independent. Family is the centre of the world; outside there is only hostility and distrust. The same can be said of the family in the Turkish village of Sakaltustan. The family’s function in this

village is to preserve the political and economic unit, and, Stirling (1965: 98) adds, to meet the psychological needs of its members. In *The Bedouin of Cyrenaica*, Peters (1990: 67) describes the system by which the label of insiders/outside changes within the lineage scale. Thus, the duration and intensity of feuds depends on the existing distance between lineages and segments of lineages.

In Egypt, hostility towards outsiders -as Abou-Zeid argues in his ethnography on the oasis of El-Kharga- is explained by a long history of oppression, domination and subordination. The inhabitants of the oasis regard themselves as a whole against the rest of the world, or at least against the Nile Valley (Abou-Zeid, 1956: 60). This feeling is shared by the Turkish peasants of central Anatolia (Stirling, 1965: 267).

The distinction between insider and outsider is the main issue in Abu-Zahra’s ethnography. The social structure of the village of Sidi Ameur is marked by a primary division in the urban structure. The village is divided into two neighbourhoods: Zawiya and Ramada. In the first neighbourhood lies the grave of Sidi Ameur (the *wali*, or saint founder of the neighbourhood), which is a centre of pilgrimage. Those who are born in Zawiya are considered descendants of the saint and are thus insiders. However, even if they have lived in the village for several generations, the people from Ramada are considered strangers and are therefore outsiders. This structure led to the marginalisation of the latter group from religious and political decisions affecting the village and also from certain financial privileges. However, this descent-based inequality clashed with the new policy of the Tunisian government formed after independence in 1956. The inhabitants of Ramada took advantage of this policy by attempting to invert the situation-making it work in their favour-instead of trying to blur this sharp division of insiders/outside. Abu-Zahra (1982: 199) reaches an interesting conclusion by pointing to the cultural continuity of



the Mediterranean in terms of the exclusion of everything *outsider*, a custom that dates back to the ancient families of Athens and Rome as described by Fustel De Coulanges.

Davis (1973) offers another interpretation of the reaction against the outsider. In Pisticci there is a strong division between *u paese* (the village) and *forè* (the countryside). What takes place in the countryside is out of social control and public sight. Nobody knows what the people outside the village do, what they eat, with whom they speak, etc. Thus, people, and especially women, avoid staying outside the village. However, inside the village, with its half-lit houses and open doors, everyone knows the neighbours' movements.

To sum up, as shown above, the categories of insider/outsider are not fixed. Du Boulay classifies the left-wing guerrillas as outsiders, but some men from Ambéli joined them during the civil war that followed the expulsion of the Germans from Greece (Du Boulay, 1974: 238). Furthermore, although Pitt-Rivers believed that the Spanish anarchists should be considered insiders, for Lisón-Tolosana they were outsiders. Lisón-Tolosana considered that the political structure of the Franco state was that of the *pueblo*, whereas Pitt-Rivers believed the opposite was true. Abu-Zahra illustrated how the change in the political situation in Tunisia with the onset of independence produced a reversal in the categories of insider/outsider in the town she studied. Peters describes how these categories move on the scale of the Bedouin lineage system. Thus, the categories of insider/outsider are not a fixed system in the Mediterranean. Instead they are mobile, as may be the case everywhere.

The same could be said about the anthropology of the Mediterranean. Is it an outsider's anthropology, compared to the local or insider's view? Or does it deal with moving, changing categories that vary in each specific case?

In fact, James Fernandez (1997) suggests that the existence in Europe of a North/South dialectic

is reflected in both northern and southern "popular cosmologies" that regard "other" Europeans as different, if not opposite. This dialectic has also been reflected in the anthropology of the Mediterranean carried out in the North, which was critically received in the South (Shippers, 2001), as previously shown. The underlying question is what we finally understand by insider and outsider in the context of an anthropology of the Mediterranean. This could lead to the question of whether there is also a North-South axis traced by an *ethnographic misunderstanding*.

Frigolé (1998) refers to the concept of *ethnographic misunderstanding* when reviewing a passage of *Tuhami* by Vincent Crapanzano. In this passage, the author asks Tuhami about the process of procreation. After a series of questions and answers on "How is a baby made", Crapanzano concludes that Tuhami "did not understand my question" (Crapanzano, 1980: 112). However, Frigolé shows that the anthropologist, rather than the informant, lacked understanding in this case.

Frigolé considers that Crapanzano could not let go of his biological idea of procreation. Therefore, he was incapable of understanding Tuhami's monogenetic conception of procreation, whose legitimation is divine rather than biological. Delaney (1991) explained this conception of procreation clearly. When Crapanzano asked Tuhami about women's contribution to procreation, the reply was couched in metaphorical terms (a woman is like a bag that dilates at the beginning of the process of procreation, through the intercession of angels). Consequently, Crapanzano considered that Tuhami had not understood his question, when in fact it was Crapanzano who was not prepared to understand the response.

Frigolé indicates that ethnographic misunderstanding can be due to "the clash of the different cultural conceptions of the people and the anthropologist, whose premises are embedded in the implicit or unconscious level of the culture" (Frigolé, 1998: 61). However, ethnographic misunderstanding can also

be due to unconscious manipulation. Furthermore, it can arise when an anthropologist's cultural conceptions coincide with the hegemonic discourse—a discourse that clashes with the people's cultural concepts in a repressive political context, such as a military regime that does not allow individuals to express themselves freely. This is the case in the explanation of Spanish society found in Kenny's monograph on Castile.

Michael Kenny's ethnography on Castile acritically assumes the official discourse of the fascist regime: a Spain without conflicts (1961: 48), with no remarkable social distinctions (1961: 76), where homosexuality hardly exists (1961: 81), where women "conform to their role and make of submissiveness a virtue" because their model is the Virgin Mary (1961: 78), where there are no gangs because children are continually under parental control (1961: 62), and where the *Auxilio Social*—a fascist organisation that, among other crimes, planned and executed the kidnapping of 30,000 children between 1940 and 1954 (Vinyes, 2002)—would lead, for the first time in Spain's history, to the creation of a welfare state (1961: 86). Kenny's ethnography was praised as "a vivid and detailed piece of descriptive ethnographical writing" by Evans-Pritchard in his introduction to the book. Thus, not only the methodological skills of the anthropologist, but also their personal involvement with the society under study makes their point of view closer or more alien, insider or outsider, faithful to or detached from the historical and social reality.

By assuming a fascist discourse on Spain, Kenny does two things. Firstly, he offers a limited and biased view of a society, which can be classified as an ethnographic misunderstanding. Secondly, he reproduces a discourse that favours the political power—in this case, a dictatorial regime. This is linked to the political economy of the anthropology, and is one of

the few cases of its kind in Mediterraneanist work¹².

This example shows how the ethnographic misunderstanding characteristic of the outsider's view can be more closely related to the political economy of the anthropology than to whether an anthropologist working in the south comes from the north. After all, Lisón-Tolosana, who was Aragonese, also transmitted a view of the social and political situation in Aragon that was similar to the discourse of the ruling classes. Clearly, these authors were reproducing a certain view of the Mediterranean societies that reflected the specific interests of the dominant groups.

Kenny connected well with Spanish officialdom of the period. In contrast, he could not see the social reality of the people; he made no connection with it. However, this was not always the case in Mediterraneanist anthropology; quite the opposite often occurred. For example, John Campbell (1990: 152) explains how he and his wife were invited by the Sarakatsani shepherds to join them in their move to winter pastures after his wife interceded in a street-fight between two boys of the village and a young Sarakatsan shepherd, in favour of the latter. This short anecdote provides us with quality information. The Sarakatsani were migrating shepherds. In summer, they lived in straw and mud huts above the town where John Campbell and his wife resided. The relation between the inhabitants of the town and the shepherds was not good. Both the town inhabitants and the professional people—lawyers and civil servants—considered the shepherds to be ignorant, violent and uncivilised (Campbell, 1992: 165). It is assumed that the Sarakatsani were treated by the people in their immediate social environment with

¹² Subsequently, Hansen (1977), in his book *Rural Catalonia under the Franco Regime* on the wine-producing region of Penedès (one of the regions where the unions of farmers were most active during the Republic in the fight for Agrarian Reform), gives a view of the rural world from the perspective of the major landowners in rural Catalonia, rather than the day labourer. Thus, he reproduces what the Catalan anthropologists called the ideology of *pairalisme* (Terradas 1973; Prat 1976).



scorn, at the very least. Mrs. Campbell's defence of the young Sarakatsan in the face of his aggressors was a small gesture that was interpreted by the Sarakatsani in terms of friendship. This gesture brought the Sarakatsani closer to the Campbells and made the ethnography possible: the shepherds built a hut so that the anthropologists could live with them. This anecdote shows how the opportunity to compile a good ethnography frequently depends on the way people are approached and dealt with, as well as on other theoretical and epistemological considerations. John Campbell referred to this idea when he stated: "The quality of any ethnography in part depends on how the community studied regards the anthropologist. I believe that our relationship with the Sarakatsani was founded on their recognition that we valued them" (Campbell, 1992: 165).

The Campbells lived with the Sarakatsani for months while they followed their cattle, in the same way that the Stirlings lived with their Turkish neighbours isolated by the winter snow in Central Anatolia, the Peters with the Bedouins of the Libyan Desert, and the Halperns in the Serbian mountains. All of these couples¹³, young, foreigners, most of them open-minded and cultivated, were interested to the surprise and distrust of the locals in learning about their culture and spent long periods of time doing fieldwork. It is truly difficult to categorise their views as those of outsiders or "full of ethnographical misunderstanding" just because these anthropologists were foreigners or northerners. As we have already seen, this has more to do with a personal view of society.

¹³ It is very interesting to note that most of these research projects were undertaken by couples, even when the work was exclusively signed by the men. A particularly strange case is that of Bandfield who, in his introduction to *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society*, admits that he didn't even speak Italian, but his wife did. A far more interesting case is that of Stella Peters (1952), who undertook a Bachelor of Letters thesis on the Bedouins' Bait. Despite being a very interesting paper it went unnoticed.

The common features of the anthropology of the Mediterranean from 1950 to 1970 have been discussed in this article. The originality of this anthropology lies in it having been the first to arouse the interest of British social anthropology in societies that were extensively studied by other disciplines, such as history, geography or archaeology. Today, fifty years later, the situation is very different. Social anthropology has been very well developed in the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea (Albera, 2006). However, despite this positive movement towards the "world anthropologies" (Ribeiro and Escobar, 2006), as anthropologists it is also our duty to not forget about our ancestors.

6. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

The above discussion leads to the conclusion that when we speak of the anthropology of the Mediterranean, we are referring to ethnographies that adopted different positions on the social phenomena they studied. We have seen throughout this article that there were notable differences between the way the anthropologists tackled questions as central as history and social processes, or practices related to the concepts of honour and shame. As stated at the beginning of this paper, we consider that there was no planned project to develop an anthropology of the Mediterranean with identical characteristics. This work was unified *a posteriori*, both by the authors of reviews, and by their critics, as discussed in the second section of this paper. However, we can identify the corpus of ethnographies written in the 1950s and 1960s as Mediterraneanist, because all of the works deal with societies settled around the Mediterranean and focus on the rural world.

In conclusion, I consider that on the basis of an analysis of the first ethnographies in what was subsequently called the anthropology of the Mediterranean, it can be deduced that:

Despite the importance of the University of Oxford in the education of the first Mediterraneanist anthropologists, no group of anthropologists working to create a new field of study for the anthropology of the Mediterranean ever existed. The identification of different anthropologists as a group emerged both from attempts to compile reviews (Pitt-Rivers, Perisistany, Davis and others) and from the criticisms of younger generation of anthropologist (Herzfeld, Llobera, Pina-Cabral and others). At that time, the *honour/shame complex* that was used to criticise -and to a certain extent discredit- the early anthropology of the Mediterranean had a smaller role in the combined anthropological works than was subsequently claimed. Insisting on this complex was one way of undermining the importance of these anthropologists.

The most significant limitation of this early anthropology of the Mediterranean does not lie in its way of dealing with the aforementioned honour/shame complex, but in its fixation for the rural world. In general, the specific weight of urban society in the Mediterranean was not taken into account. This paper explains the interest in rural society in terms of nostalgia for disappearing ways of life. Thus, the anthropology was limited because it ignored the urban world, and also because societies tended to be archaized. This can be seen in the way history and the passage of time was dealt with in many of these ethnographies. In turn, this is related to the political economy of some of the early Mediterranean anthropologists.

In some cases (the most notable being that of Kenny), this political economy led to the anthropologist reproducing a discourse on Mediterranean society that favoured the discourse of power, whilst being distanced from social reality. This clearly favoured the ruling classes. Again, this limitation is not applicable to all of the Mediterranean anthropologists of the 1950-1970 generation. The works of these anthropologists should be studied case by case, as in reality -as stated at the start of this paper- the anthropology of the Mediterranean was not a joint project.

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RESUM

Aquest article analitza les primeres etnografies de les societats mediterrànies que van ser realitzades entre 1950 i 1970 per investigadors (doctorands) de la Universitat d'Oxford. Tot i que no hi va haver inicialment un projecte de crear un camp específic de recerca sobre el Mediterrani, aquestes etnografies mostren alguns trets en comú. L'article sosté que, lluny del tema criticat del "honor i vergonya", hi ha altres elements que caracteritzen aquests treballs; per exemple el fet que es presentin com a etnografies d'un món rural que desapareix. Finalment, tractarem de situar aquests textos dins l'eix Nord-Sud que existia en l'antropologia d'aquell temps.

[ANTROPOLOGIA DEL MEDITERRANI, OXFORD, MÓN RURAL, NOSTÀLGIA, HONOR I VERGONYA]

RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza las primeras etnografías de las sociedades mediterráneas que fueron llevadas a cabo entre 1950 y 1970 por investigadores (doctorandos) de la Universidad de Oxford. A pesar de no existir inicialmente un proyecto de crear un campo específico de investigación sobre el Mediterráneo, estas etnografías muestran algunos rasgos comunes. El artículo sostiene que, lejos del tema criticado del "honor y vergüenza", hay otros elementos que caracterizan estos trabajos; por ejemplo el hecho de que se presenten como etnografías de un mundo rural que desaparece. Finalmente, trataremos de situar estos textos en el eje Norte-Sur que existía en la antropología de entonces.

[ANTROPOLOGÍA DEL MEDITERRÁNEO, OXFORD, MUNDO RURAL, NOSTALGIA, HONOR Y VERGÜENZA]