

An 'architect' of Brazilian historiography: history and historians in José Honório Rodrigues

Andre de Lemos Freixo*

RESUMO

O artigo analisa a história da historiografia brasileira, segundo a perspectiva de José Honório Rodrigues (1913-1987), como parte dos esforços que na década de 1930 começaram a investir nos aspectos profissionais da História como disciplina no Brasil – enfatizando, por exemplo, a função central da metodologia histórica como diferencial frente às escritas amadoras. Uma das principais contribuições de Rodrigues consistiu na organização e periodização de uma história para a pesquisa histórica brasileira. Ao construir essa narrativa histórica, ele organizou um passado, mas também indicou um futuro possível para aquilo que idealizava como um campo profissionalizado. Seu projeto de um Instituto de Pesquisa Histórica, que asseguraria a formação teórica e metodológica adequada aos jovens historiadores brasileiros, faria a escrita histórica se afastar das visões mais conservadoras e tradicionalistas e desvendar os verdadeiros caminhos para uma revolução no processo histórico nacional.

Palavras-chave: História do Brasil; Historiografia Brasileira; José Honório Rodrigues.

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the history of Brazilian historiography, according to the perspective of José Honório Rodrigues (1913-1987), as part of the efforts which began to be made in the 1930s to invest in professional aspects of History as a discipline in Brazil – emphasizing, for instance, the central function of historical methodology as an advantage over amateur writings. One of the main contributions of Rodrigues consisted of the organization and periodization of a history for Brazilian historical research. When composing this historical narrative, he not only organized a past, but also indicated a possible future for what he idealized as a professional field. His project of a Historical Research Institute, which would guarantee adequate theoretical and methodological training to the young Brazilian historians, would make history writing depart from more conservative and traditionalist views in order to uncover the true paths of a revolution in the national historical process.

Keywords: History of Brazil, Brazilian historiography, José Honório Rodrigues.

* Temporary Professor of the Sector of Theory and Methodology of History of the Institute of Philosophy and Social Sciences of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (IFCS/UFRJ). PhD Student in the M.A./PhD Program in Social History of the IFCS/UFRJ, with a research grant from Faperj. Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Sociais (IFCS). Largo de São Francisco, 1. Centro. 20051-070 Rio de Janeiro – RJ – Brasil. andredelemos@gmail.com

In Clio's domains there are several mansions. From their balconies we contemplate the world, feel universality and understand eternity. It is there that we are introduced to man and get to know him. And it is there, moreover, that he performs his liberation.

Rodrigues, 1949, p.23

The name of José Honório Rodrigues has a varied range of interpreters that, during the 20th century, recognized him as an eminent historian dedicated to questions pertaining to the writing of History and the theoretical and methodological training which would lead towards the professionalization of Brazilian historians. This did not happen, surely, through a passive incorporation of his arguments about such problems, but through the admiration and the active critical investment with which a significant group of intellectuals – today one may say a historiographical field – also concerned with issues about the writing of history, sought to understand his contributions and situate themselves in relation to them.¹ It is no less significant that the collection of texts with Rodrigues' signature is something of a monument, considering its scope.

Perhaps this is the reason that some of the main ideas and perspectives of José Honório remain little studied. Despite the fact that there are some important essays,² there is a lack of in-depth analysis about his historiographical perspective. Most essays have an excessive encomiastic or biographical tone, or even consider different editions of his texts as one and the same thing, ending up by naturalizing some ideas, disregarding changes made by Rodrigues himself in new editions, such as additions and suppressions incorporated into his texts. The main studies carried out about the work and perspectives of Rodrigues are few, the most striking of which are the doctorate thesis of Raquel Glezer, *O fazer e o saber na obra de José Honório Rodrigues* (1976), the master's dissertation of Ana Luiza Marques, and *Historiografia e cultura histórica: notas para um debate* by Manoel Salgado Guimarães.³

From Rodrigues' point of view, the movement towards levelling the topography of his texts and opinions in order to give them a more homogeneous character is perfectly understandable, having become a constant after 1970. His manner of writing sought a relationship with the political themes and issues of the time in which he was writing and publishing. Having in mind that his texts extend from the mid-1930s to the early 1980s, one is not surprised that his rewriting effort had as its horizon the construction of a coherent, univocal, closed oeuvre. Nevertheless, it is necessary to analyze each one of these texts in

its own historicity, understanding them as parts of sets of distinct possibilities and dialogues. This methodological premise is the reason of my approach and of the issues to be tackled. To keep dealing with Rodrigues' texts as part of a closed oeuvre can lead to an illusion analogous (I wouldn't say identical) to the 'biographical illusion' analyzed by Pierre Bourdieu, since some of the most important texts of Rodrigues were rewritten and had new editions during his lifetime, especially his texts dedicated to the history of Brazilian historiography, undergoing considerable changes and becoming, therefore, new texts – in spite of the same titles' having been kept. However, the new editions were published in circumstances different from the ones José Honório experienced when he published the first editions of texts such as *Teoria da História do Brasil* (*Theory of the History of Brazil*) and *A pesquisa histórica no Brasil* (*Historical Research in Brazil*) – both of which had new editions on more than one occasion.

So, treating Rodrigues' texts as a closed oeuvre might retain intact the professional identity he tried to consolidate and communicate, in later moments, to the writing of great part of his work. An identity that would be presented by this 'oeuvre'. For example, the first edition of the methodology manual of José Honório was published in 1949 by the Instituto Progresso Editorial S.A. of São Paulo. It had, besides the preface, eighteen chapters. The general tenor of the manual was to offer those who wanted to write History a means of learning how to do so professionally, that is, following the basic procedures of an "own, peculiar, specific method of history," as he said.⁴ In its second edition of 1957, published in two volumes, there was a new preface and fifteen chapters. This was the first time that this text was published by the prestigious "Coleção Brasileira", which in that year had come under the direction of Américo Jacobina Lacombe, a friend of Rodrigues' and an admirer of his work.

The first edition of his text had an enterprising character. It asked for a till then inexistent course of "Introduction to historical studies", along the lines of the one he got to know when he studied in the United States (between 1943 and 1944), for the courses of Geography and History taught at Brazilian universities. An example of his pretensions was the advanced course on History of Brazil of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in which he taught methodology, theory, and history of historiography from 1946 on. In 1957, however, his text had already a combative character, for it fit in with a struggle against the model established in the forty Colleges of Philosophy in Brazil, in which the courses of History and Geography had already been separated according to Law 2594 of August 8, 1955.

His criticism was aimed at the proposal of historical instruction in Brazilian universities, partially because of a logic that, analyzed José Honório, would contemplate more the teaching of contents and the training of teachers of History and Geography than historical research. His proposal was to offer to the country a school of high studies that “similarly to the ones of its kind, both nationally and worldwide, would promote historical research and form historical researchers”. To Rodrigues, the Brazilian university meant “the fossilization, the ultraconservatism, the stupidity of certain public instruction institutions, official or not, which transform history into a tomb”. Such accusation served to legitimate his proposal of an education for researchers, of a historiography of liberation from the colonial past towards a modern future. He indicates as a solution the new historiography, based on research and the modern methodological procedures of the German historical science. In the lines following this criticism, Rodrigues concludes that to reverse the situation, “although there are always those [belonging to certain public instruction institutions] who want to use them in order to cultivate and feed a nostalgic, sterile and passive traditionalism, useless trash at a time Brazil is overcoming the old by the new”, the task of the new historians would be crucial, for with them the History of Brazil would be revised and rewritten and would become an instrument of change for the advancement of the Brazilian nation and not its definitive burial. When the new discipline – which Rodrigues hoped would become a cathedra – was approved, he realized the opportunity of revising and preparing a new edition of his text of 1949, long out of stock, incorporating criticism and altering some elements of the general plan of the book, save some suppressions – like, for instance, the one of chapter eight of the first edition, called “Historical certainty”. José Honório associated the characters who conducted debates in the universities, and many times occupied chairs in History courses, with an ‘ultraconservative’ tradition. Thus, he announced it was time to “reform the university teaching of History”, for “the myopic division of History into ancient, medieval, contemporary, and of the Americas, in which teaching History in Brazil concentrates, disserve or disprepare generations and inoculate a false sense of continuity and a mistaken view of European preponderance...”⁵

Besides the first two editions, other three editions of THB can be cited: the one of 1969 (binding the text again in only one volume, to which two chapters and two appendices were added), published after the radical toughening up of the dictatorial regime in Brazil, and after the 1968 university reform as well, and ‘two’ editions of 1978, in which Appendix II (of the third

edition) was replaced by a postface. The quotation marks are justified, because the so-called fifth edition seems to be only a reprinted edition of the fourth one of the same year of 1978 – there is no difference between them. The case of the alterations between the first (1952) and second (1969) editions of *A pesquisa histórica no Brasil* [*Historical Research in Brazil*] is even more significant for, as the author himself recognizes in his preface to the second edition, it is actually a new book, then also published by “Brasiliana” and together with the third edition of THB. It is interesting to stress here that Rodrigues himself, even acknowledging all the changes made and the basically new character of the 1969 *Historical Research in Brazil*, treats the text as “part of a series begun in 1949, which would comprise three complementary studies about Theory (and Method), Research and Historiography, and that was never finished”; and he justified, “because I could not finish the historiography.” And he added: “I hope now to offer the three volumes in a same series by the same publishing house in which I was first published in 1940.”⁶ These volumes would be the Historiography, the “History of the history of Brazil”, in three volumes: colonial historiography (published in 1978), national historiography, and historiography and ideology. Besides them, he also intended to write a great synthesis, his “Modern History of Brazil”. That is, he reorganized his production himself and built for it a sense, relating its texts to an oeuvre that he would have begun in 1949. Such efforts mark the new editions, which, therefore, demand an analytical treatment different from that used for the first editions.

This study analyzes a fraction of Rodrigues’ efforts. I inquire about *how* he understood the relationship between the History of Brazil and Brazilian historians. I intend to analyze the idea of Brazilian historiography itself, which would mean to him, simultaneously, the history of History (its past and evolution) and the writing of History, evaluating how this idea is presented in his narrative for the evolution of historical research in Brazil. The metaphor of the architect, used in the title of this paper, derives from the epigraph chosen and will be applied to what I call his project of a ‘building’ for Brazilian historiography, a sort of school-mansion in ‘Clio’s domains’. In Architecture a project can be carried out or not; let us say, materialized. In this sense, I inquire also how much José Rodrigues’ idea of a Brazilian historiography can be seen as the core of his project for his professional aspirations. A mirror, therefore, in which he projected his own perspective of how the History of Brazil should be written and by whom this operation could be performed.

Here I follow the remarks of Alfred Schütz and Gilberto Velho, according

to whom a project would be a manifestation of conduct of a rational cognitive individual subject (Schütz), and, as Velho argues, one also tied to life circumstances (education, prejudices, dislikes, values, emotions) when pursuing specific goals through one's actions.⁷ This individual-subject, in the case of José Honório Rodrigues, defended an awareness of the existence of a singular and specific group – the 'true' Brazilian historians (or the real Brazilian historiography as he understood it). A retrospective and prospective view, in Gilberto Velho's terms, would determine this Brazilian historiography, establishing sense and meaning for his project of creation of a Historical Research Institute, and no doubt for his actions – present in his texts, as a link in the succession of steps presented for the 'trajectory of life' of the Brazilian historiography he organizes. His narrative about the historians of the past, constructed in a *reflexive* way, would be complemented by a future projection as well, a horizon of expectation in which José Honório deposits his hopes and intentions of seeing his project fulfilled.

I try to present his idea of Brazilian historiography based on this project as a historical category. Nevertheless, a project can only exist with an intersubjective frame, a fundamental part of a 'negotiation of reality' with other individual subjects, other groups. It is a means of communicating interests, objectives, feelings, aspirations to the universe with which it dialogues. Rodrigues projected, therefore, within a determined space of experiences, a certain field of possibilities in which he placed himself and with which he dialogued, and this implies certain specific restrictions, constraints, and limitations.

I believe that his concerns over the architecture of a historiographical pantheon would be a means of, at the limit, legitimate and validate his research institute (a mansion?), for it would be bound by the historical valorization that his narrative carefully built, allied to the commitment to preserve this Brazilian historiographical legacy, which he called a research *tradition* and history researchers. *Grosso modo*, it can be said that architecture is born of the human need of shelter, due to our great fragility when exposed to nature. In this case, if the building projected by Rodrigues did not aim at protecting Brazilian historians from weather factors or from the dangers of wildlife, he may have wished to preserve the writing of the History of Brazil and his writers from the damages caused by autodidacticism, amateurism, traditionalism, and recklessness with the documents of 'our history', as he used to say – something which José Honório considered would have somber consequences not only for the work of historians, but also for the enterprise of writing the History of Brazil itself.

In order to do that, I propose to treat Rodrigues' idea of Brazilian historiography analytically neither as a a-historical datum, whose fragmented existence in scattered traces in time and space had been rescued by José Honório and carefully organized into the 'evolution' of historical research in Brazil, nor as a careful catalogue of works and authors (Guimarães, 2005, p.33, 34, 37 *passim*). I treat it as a category of thought, playing with a possibility of description of a reality in negotiation, whose dimensions of historical (and historiographical) value present and constitute themselves as significant terms within his own narrative plot, which constitutes an interpretation for his Brazilian historiography – presented as historical experience, according to Rodrigues' proposal and project, but also as a horizon to be pursued. In the particular case of José Honório, a historian who talked to historians about the historians of the past, the way he builds his narrative plot is crucial to understand not only the *value type* of these researchers' contributions for him, but also the meaning of this history, narrated as an evolution. Its valorization does not exist 'in itself', nor does it come to us independently of the sequential structure of beginning, middle, and end proposed by Rodrigues, nor even detached from its uses in view of its bigger project.

In theoretical terms, I think about Rodrigues' narrative according to some contributions by Paul Ricoeur e Reinhart Koselleck.⁸ Thus, I argue that when narrating an evolution for the Brazilian historiography as a historical experience, José Honório synthesizes it in a historical time, which aims at a specific horizon for this 'experience' itself. Periodizing, he marks in the relationship between past and future a breach in which he inserts himself (his present) and acts. Thus, his narrative offers a good example of how a historiographical discourse synthesizes, in a linear and evolutive temporality, the great plurality – 'synthesis of the heterogeneous', to use Ricoeur's terms – of human experiences and temporalities in a narrative dimension which follows the thread of the plot Rodrigues weaves for his present. He does this, for he recognizes himself as heir and debtor of the masterful past experience which, as he believes, drives him towards the future of the new Brazilian historiography, which he designs through his project of a "Historical Research Institute".

Another important point is the emphasis given to Capistrano de Abreu in his historical narrative. I believe the role of this 'Master' in the project in question is that of furnishing a pillar for its construction. Hypothetically, if the building projected by Rodrigues, as I propose to think it, had been constructed, as it was his wish, it could not have been raised without a powerful pillar. Nor would it, however, restrict itself only to it. The constant repetition of the

‘Capistranean’ image he created established it so successfully that it is almost impossible to speak of Capistrano de Abreu without mentioning many of the texts and works of Rodrigues, and the reverse is also true. His most significant investments in the defense of this relationship can be found in the introductory texts of *Correspondência de Capistrano de Abreu*, in the fourth series (still unpublished) of *Ensaios e estudos*, as well as in the new editions of *Capítulos de História Colonial* and *Descobrimento do Brasil*, all of which duly include prefaces and revisions by José Honório himself. Nonetheless, I believe it is necessary to understand when this relationship began heading towards consolidation, for being a ‘Capistranean’ was not second nature to José Honório.

From 1953 on, when Rodrigues published a text in the *Journal of the Brazilian Historic and Geographic Institute* (IHGB), the image of his Capistrano received clearer contours for the essay links, since its title, the name of the master to Rodrigues’ project. The text, part of the commemorations of the institute and its members in honor of the centenary of the historian, was called “Capistrano de Abreu and Brazilian historiography”. Rodrigues begins by praising Capistrano’s efforts in his obituary of Varnhagen, written in 1878, shortly after his arrival in Rio de Janeiro. Rodrigues said that “the true understanding of the tasks of Brazilian historiography, already accomplished or still to be accomplished, of its deeds and discoveries, of the state of the art at that time, nobody revealed them so early, with so clear, logic, and precise a view as this young man in his essays from 1878 to 1882, the best ones written so far.”⁹ Our author argued that Capistrano had redefined and rehabilitated the figure and the contribution of Varnhagen with his obituary, that he had, on some other occasion, credited that text to be the founding text of the history of Brazilian historiography, characterizing it as “the true beginning of Brazilian historiography”. This happened because Capistrano, a historian, pointed out the accomplishments of another historian, comparing them with the ones of his predecessors and contemporaries, and concluded that no other Brazilian at that time could be compared to him. But he did not limit himself to indicating what the “master, guide, lord of the generation of the 19th century” had done, for he examined the “deficiencies”, pointed out the “gaps”, summarized the “state of the art” of Brazilian historiography, named scholars, and cited the works which were advancing historical studies in Brazil after Varnhagen. And Rodrigues concluded his thought by stating that “whoever begins this way, begins well.”¹⁰ This is exactly the task Rodrigues carried out when he began his career: talking about historians, the true ones, recognizing masters, reviewing works, and pointing out new paths. The text of this lecture

also served as introduction to the first volume of *Correspondência de Capistrano de Abreu*. It is placed after a preface, which is also revealing of what would follow. It configures, thus, a program of Rodrigues' perspective for a Brazilian historiography, mirrored in this 'honorian-rodriguean' Capistrano de Abreu, so to say.

I begin my considerations, therefore, by presenting the changes in 'Rodrigues' Capistrano de Abreu'. Changes in relation to what? To the way he was portrayed by Rodrigues in the texts quoted here in terms of significance and symbolic importance, inasmuch as he dialogued with the already consolidated image of Abreu as the 'greatest Brazilian historian', adjusting the most eminent traits the discourses in favor of the memory of this master presented to his project of a new Brazilian historiography. The Brazilian intellectual community with which Rodrigues dialogued was already busy with the debates about the professionalization of History in the field of "Brazilian Studies", efforts into which José Honório inserted himself.¹¹ The memory of Capistrano as a master already existed even before Rodrigues began his studies in History – a portrait largely established by the intelligentsia in the late 1920s, most members of which belonged to the Capistrano de Abreu Society (SCA). To Rodrigues, however, this image would not be enough if it did not gain new impulse, sense, and meaning. José Honório diagnosed, therefore, that it was possible

to notice very soon the contrast between the esteem devoted to him and the lesson he taught. Capistrano de Abreu has become a legend in the field of historiography, where everybody worships the master. It has been fashionable to praise him, but his advice has been despised. The reason for the contrast is easy to find. He is unpleasant company for those who seek immediate success, for he combined a sort of Socratic irony with a puritan intolerance against presumption. (Rodrigues, 1953, p.137)

The central pillar of the project he designed needed not only the solidity of an interpreter, but also the trustfulness of a great researcher and humanist. So it asked for the inspiration of "clarity and criticism, sobriety and competence, rightfulness and erudition [that] complete and form the qualities of his spirit and his works". If the Capistrano's patrimony were modest, as some of his critics at the time claimed, Rodrigues replied by saying that "the thick volumes did not matter; we should concentrate not only on what Capistrano achieved as historian, but also on what he aspired to achieve, on what he wanted, on

what he postulated. It is in the novelty of his project and in the strange energy with which he knew how to keep it that resides his essential and incomparable merit” (ibidem).

Nevertheless, the path taken by Rodrigues to the ripening of his project and even of the structural function of his Capistrano de Abreu was long. In spite of the relevance of this tie beam, his project was larger, and the other characters of his narrative, including himself, would also be crucial for the idea of an ‘evolution’ of historical research. I present below some less known moments of José Honório’s first writings, as well as an apparently forgotten ‘Freyrian’ side of his, a Freyre who is always remembered as one of the most diligent ‘disciples of Capistrano’. My intention is that of relating these characteristics to the gestation of Rodrigues’ project.

I

Between 1933 and 1937, José Honório Rodrigues attended the Law School of Catete, in Rio de Janeiro. He began his huge bibliography with short articles in literary supplements, as it was usual at the time, of *Jornal do Brasil* and *O Jornal*, or in magazines like *A Época* and *Idéia*, among others. Rodrigues frequented and dialogued with men of letters of great visibility and intellectual projection since 1937. He worked with Sérgio Buarque de Holanda at the Instituto Nacional do Livro between 1939 and 1944. Already in 1937, thanks to a monograph written together with Joaquim Ribeiro, João Ribeiro’s son, he won the First Prize of Erudition of the Academia Brasileira de Letras – a text published in 1940. He participated, almost since its genesis, in the collection of documents and the development of the part referring to the Dutch in Brazil of the *Handbook of Brazilian Studies*, under the direction of William Berrien and Rubens Borba de Moraes, published in Brazil only in 1949 with the title of *Manual bibliográfico de estudos brasileiros*. With a B.A. in Law and Social Sciences, Rodrigues his initial studies followed a path that approximated him of what was called at the time “Brazilian Studies”, with a strong sociological stress. As there were not well-marked disciplinary boundaries at the time, his transit in history, geography, sociology, and anthropology was facilitated and brought him near different important intellectuals at the time, like, for instance, Gilberto Freyre.

His proximity to Freyrian ideas, present in his first writings, can be seen, on the one side, in his friendship and correspondence with Freyre himself, in which one can notice, through photographs and letters of August 6 and

December 14, 1938, his presence on trips with Freyre, accompanied by wife and friends, as well as in the meeting of the Sociology *Club* of the University of Distrito Federal.¹² The founder and first director of the *Club* was Freyre, but when those letters were written, the director was already José Bonifácio Martins Rodrigues, since the “master of Apipucos” had returned to Recife. Freyre responded to the requests of bibliographical help that José Honório sent him on July 25 of that year. But Freyre also inquired of him, “and the Sociology *Club*? Have you been there?”¹³ And, on December 14, “I wish you would always be in contact with the Sociology *Club* of the University, whose president is José Bonifácio.”¹⁴ Besides that, two articles of 1939 allow us to think that Freyre’s perspectives assumed central position in Rodrigues’ formation years. The second article that I will analyze here supports this position, but it deals, curiously enough, with Capistrano de Abreu. It is a kind of ‘article-review’, because of the publication of the third series of *Ensaios e Estudos*, a collection of the SCA. Published in *Revista do Brasil*, his article-review establishes, in a way, relations between his author and SCA. The journal, then in its third phase and directed by Octávio Tarquínio de Souza, already had contributions by Mário de Andrade, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, and Graciliano Ramos, among others.¹⁵

The first article I analyze, however, was published in the literary supplement of *O Jornal*, on April 30, 1939, and is called “Culturalist interpretation of history”. Rodrigues defends that “history must be ... the genetic social science working side by side cultural anthropology in a struggle to explain the repetitions and uniformities in the development of the human social life.”¹⁶ In his text of 1937 about the Dutch, Rodrigues quoted 21 times Freyre’s texts and interpretations of ‘culturalist’ and anthropological slant, which assumed centrality in the way he interpreted the Dutch period of Pernambuco. Capistrano was mentioned only a dozen times. To José Honório, the “biographical and descriptive essays” or the “old dogmas” (author’s terms) that history was “the political past” or the “collective biography” would be permanences in the “national historiography” (he uses the term) that should be “urgently abandoned” (*ibidem*, 1st and 2nd paragraphs), in favor of interpretations like Gilberto Freyre’s in *Casa-grande e senzala* and his own, in Freyre’s wake, in his awarded monograph, still in the press.

In this article, José Honório defined history as “the greatest psychological laboratory for the concrete study of human action in the past”. In the case of Pernambuco, Rodrigues defended the culturalist and psychological interpretation as an essentially new path that, allied to the careful research of

sources, would allow one, for example, to move away from racial explanations, a very strong perspective in the historiography of the time. The impact that *Casa-grande e senzala* produced in 1933 when it did away with some commonplaces of racist theories is well-known. It is the echoes of that impact that can be heard in Rodrigues' first texts. In this sense, it is worth underlining that for José Honório it was important to call the attention of historians to the methods of analysis of Cultural Anthropology, for only thus "a true change in the course of historiography" could be achieved (ibidem, 9th and 18th paragraphs).

In his March 1939 article-review in *Revista do Brasil*, the path taken by our historian follows the same course, but now it deals with texts by Capistrano de Abreu. Being José Honório's first publication commenting on texts by Abreu, an author who, as mentioned above, would have structural function in his project, this is a very important text. Nevertheless, it becomes even more interesting here precisely because it does not seem to be one of his texts eminently concerned with a renovation of historiography, as in the article already analyzed. Being then 25 years old, the young José Honório did not differ much from the praise choir to the master figure of Capistrano de Abreu, nor of the honor to the memory of the patron of the SCA – institution founded in Rio de Janeiro on September 11, 1927, by a group of disciples of Capistrano de Abreu, who had died less than a month before, and by Adriano de Abreu, the historian's son. José Honório respected the tone and tenor established by SCA, underlining that, essentially, "the work of our greatest historian" was characterized by a "unity of thought". He limited himself to gloss over the epithets strewn by the association and part of the history scholars of the time, to say like Angela de Castro Gomes, which exalted Capistrano as the greatest historian the country had ever had. Capistrano's unity of thought stood out to José Honório, for

the autodidacticism, so harmful to the formation of culture, has been one of the main causes of perplexity and confusion of some of our writers faced with the doctrinaire currents. Some let themselves be amazed by the new theory that has come up without knowing the roots which made its formation possible; to what has the new doctrine really contributed for a better knowledge, and what was already a definite acquisition of science; others confuse modern currents, coinciding in time, but disagreeing in their essential points, and so mix up more than explain.¹⁷

He estimated, moreover, that the “evil of autodidacticism”, in terms of historical studies, would be almost permanent in Brazil. “Sometimes”, he continued, “we lack a clear view of philosophical theories. The unity of thought, the logical coherence of ideas, the system of a discipline are confusedly shuffled in a disharmonious presentation”. Thus, Capistrano’s work, then published by SCA “for the joy of Brazilian scholars”, as Rodrigues said, came in due time, for “it is without a doubt that Capistrano de Abreu is, without favor, one of the most beautiful expressions of unity of thought. Whoever has the good taste of reading his pages of history and criticism will hold at least this conviction—the coherence of his ideas” (ibidem).

After successively praising the great historian Capistrano de Abreu, José Honório mentioned some limitations in his writing. To do so, he stressed the dialogues between the readings of Capistrano and those of other intellectuals, listing some authors and their respective views on the Dutch rule in the Northeast; the role of the native-Indians; the contribution, if any, of the Jesuits to the History of Brazil and the polemics about Capistrano de Abreu’s comments on its dispensability. José Honório also commented Capistrano when discussing the theses of Silvio Romero. In relation to the contributions of native-Indians and Africans for the formation of Brazilian civilization, Rodrigues said that that was an issue “which seems to us of great prevalence nowadays”: on the one side, Romero, asserting that “to the bands of Africans of diverse origin that came together, directly, to enlarge this nation, is that the most part of the diversity that exists between the Brazilian and his European ancestor must be attributed”. And, on the other side, Capistrano de Abreu: “whatever there is of diversity between the Brazilian and the European I attribute it, mostly, to the climate and the native-Indian elements. Without denying the action of the African element, I think that it is of a lesser degree than the one of the two other factors, taken in conjunction or isolatedly.” This debate of ideas, according to José Honório’s reading of it, becomes interesting here, for at the end of his article Rodrigues classifies both stands, Abreu’s and Romero’s, as “intolerant”, and affirms that “neither of them is right”. In Rodrigues’ opinion, Gilberto Freyre is right, because

the correct would be to state that Brazilian civilization is a ‘composite’ of diverse cultures, which can be separated into determined areas of more marked influence in this or that culture, but that present overall a determined unity of general culture. In the formation of families, in the economy, in short, it would be unnecessary to remind one here of the amount of influence that the Indian and

the Black cultures brought to Brazilian civilization. Even because this has been the objective of some of the works that have come out lately.

In the following lines, he asserts:

in *Casa-grande e senzala* there is a synthesis and even an analysis of the Indian and Black influences. There can be no doubt that *Capistrano erred* when he said, referring to the Tupinambás: “Thus they represented the end of the evolution to which Portuguese and Africans tended, at each progress the acclimatization of the incoming races made, it was a step that approximated them to the ‘caboclos’”. (ibidem, p.62-63, my italics)

Without lessening his praise of Capistrano, José Honório makes critical comments on some of his interpretations. Thus, he lets us infer the possibility of a greater proximity with Gilberto Freyre’s ideas and perspective.

Another important aspect is that the Capistrano portrayed in this text is more likely an intellectual given to Spencer’s determinisms, or belonging to a ‘positivist school’, than the ‘German’ Capistrano (methodical) presented by Rodrigues later. The emphasis on a methodical training akin to Ranke’s German historical science, for instance, would be the predominant trait in the characterization of the master of Brazilian historiography in the text “Capistrano de Abreu e a historiografia brasileira,” of 1953. In this text, Rodrigues values the brief mention by Capistrano, in a letter of 1904 to the baron of Studart, to Ranke’s work. In his reading of 1953, Rodrigues proposes a comparison between the positivist and the methodical Capistrano, making it clear that, from 1900 on, he would have become ‘germanized,’ leaving behind the remains of positivism present in his thesis of 1883 about Brazil’s ‘Discovery’ – presented in the selection process for a teaching position at the Colégio Pedro II. After the arrival of the 20th century, Capistrano would have let himself be guided by Ranke’s seminar methods and by Ratzel’s anthropogeographical doctrine, following the critical-philological method of weighting testimonies and researching sources, their authenticity and credibility, cleansing, so to say, the documents of all suspicion.

If we compare the positivist school, to which Capistrano was linked until he learned German, with the historians of historical realism, with whom he came to associate ... only after germanizing his spirit did he turn to the research of sources on a critical-philological basis, to critical edition, to the exam of the trustworthiness and the interpretation of sources. It is neither any text nor any testimony that

should serve to the historian, it is only that one which passed the rigorous exam of historical criticism.¹⁸

Thus, José Honório will assure that Capistrano “renovated the whole method and spirit of Brazilian historiography” with his critical editions of *História Geral do Brasil* by Varnhagen – idealized by Capistrano, but practically all carried out and concluded by Rodolfo Garcia – and of *História do Brasil* by Frei Vicente Salvador. The latter would have been “the most serious and perfect example of historical criticism, with all the rigor of German methodology”, as José Honório characterized it (*ibidem*, p.136).

What does all that mean? Firstly, it is only too evident that in no line of the quoted article-review of 1939 does he use the term ‘historiography’ to speak of Capistrano de Abreu, as he did when speaking of the historiographical renovation stemming from a culturalist interpretation of History. He speaks of history and a historian, that is, our greatest historian, or the most authentic historian we have, but he does not say anything about the historiographical change in a text that, instead of enthroning the greatest Brazilian historian, as he repeated over and over, criticized him and paid homage to the line of interpretation followed by Gilberto Freyre and Rodrigues himself at the time. His admiration for the work of the “master of Apipucos”, however, was strong enough, almost filial, despite the praise of Capistrano. Praise that, at the limit, appeared just as a necessary part of his discourse to his readers, since by doing so his small pieces of criticism, would perhaps not hurt the feelings of his audience, which Rodrigues knew well who would be.

So, I believe that his vision of historiography was not yet constituted in its horizons in the way he would, later, systematize it in the form of a project. The image of the ‘modern’ historian, the greatest of all, Capistrano de Abreu, was already a constant, which he knew how to use and with which he would dialogue, for it was also shared by a major part of the intelligentsia of the time. Nevertheless, there was not a clear interest on Rodrigues’ part in a narrative of a history of History; what prevailed was Freyre’s perspectives and the contributions of Cultural Anthropology for what historiography produced then.

II

In 1943, after a brief encounter with William Berrien in Rio de Janeiro to solve some issues related to Rodrigues’ participation in the preparation of the

Handbook of Brazilian Studies, an invitation to study for about a year in the United States came up. Three students were chosen by Berrien: Rodrigues, Mattoso Câmara (a philologist), and José do Prado Valadares (a specialist in museums). When he got there, Rodrigues was invited by Professor Frank Tannenbaum and audited the course “Introduction to historical studies”, given by Charles W. Cole, in which questions about the theories, methods, philosophies of history, and especially, historiography or ‘history of history’, came to mean a lot to Rodrigues. Since then, José Honório started to characterize them in his texts as basic knowledge for the ‘spiritual formation’ and professional training of Brazilian historians. Historiography, as he understood it, would be one of the central elements of this formation, since it was through it that young students could learn to write History correctly, and also based on the contact with the ‘great masters’ of the past.

When he came back from the United States, and throughout 1945, José Honório began to publish texts in which the term ‘historiography’ gained more and more importance, sometimes meaning the Brazilian historical production coeval with him, the writing of History as vocation, or even the history of History. Regarding contemporary Brazilian historical production, Rodrigues threw himself into evaluating and acknowledging (or not) the historiographical production in the country. This can be noticed in two articles called “Brazilian historiography in 1945” and “Brazilian historiography in 1946”, which, together with some other texts, have become particularly eloquent.

At the end of his examination of the year 1945, Rodrigues indicates some measures which he thinks are urgent and which “might free and fecundate” Brazilian historiography. To him, if and only if the adequate professional training of historians is established in the undergraduation courses of History, in which courses on methodology of history and historiography would be mandatory, the knowledge of methods, of the nature of historical evidence, and of the auxiliary sciences could contribute to the “ripening of Brazilian historiography”. Similarly, “the integral publication of unpublished documents, knowledge of the evolution of research and its methods, of historiography, and a better contact with the great classic works, ours or foreign, would make it possible to prepare new historians and avoid the autodidacticism which has such harmful effects”. So that, to conclude, he said that the preparation of guides, catalogues, indices, and bibliographies was fundamental to the knowledge of the “treasures we have and the ones we need to have sent us from Europe”. These demands met, he closed at last by saying that “we would prepare the turnabout of Brazilian historiography.”¹⁹

It is noticeable that José Honório's texts plan this turnabout. That is, what he was proposing would be a total 'modernization' of the History of Brazil. How would it take effect? Through a university education ruled by critical norms of 'universal validity', which Rodrigues believed was the method of History, and the knowledge of historiography – precisely the courses he knew in the United States. Allying these 'needs' (author's term) to more serious investments in the publication of documents and annotated indices (of archives and libraries), and in the adequate coordination of researches, following the example of what Rodrigues stressed was the custom in Europe.

Such examinations are important simply because they appeared in a column Rodrigues had in a literary supplement of wide circulation like that of *O Jornal*, and because they let us see more than José Honório's judgments about those publications as well as the valorization of writing History not only as a genre, but as a *need*. For his defense of the establishment of methodological norms seems to be an index of what he defended as 'true' historiography, that is, those who could write or contribute for a change in the ways taken by the History of Brazil, till then characterized by traits of the colonial period, by little or no transformation, when not inert, by a conservative tendency or nature, and not as a process, a progressive and evolutive movement, as was José Honório's wish and the wish of several other intellectuals at the time.

After 1945, Rodrigues started to occupy himself with the identification of an intellectual lineage of Brazilian historians. By Brazilian historians one should understand: the great and lesser masters who had contributed to the writing of history in Brazil, or, better still, to the writing of the History of Brazil. Considering his not very optimistic diagnosis of what was being written in terms of history in the country, Rodrigues began to invest more and more seriously in his search for a lineage of true Brazilian historians. In his view, this lineage would descend from Varnhagen ('Father and Master'), pass through Capistrano (greatest disciple and, then, 'Master'), arriving at Rodolfo Garcia and Affonso Taunay ('disciples' that also became 'masters'), among others. The importance of methodology in research was the criterion of selection and judgment of his *masters*.

In an article about Garcia and Taunay, José Honório announces that with Varnhagen "a systematic renovation of his work *methods* began in the history of Brazilian history". Thus, he asserted that Varnhagen would have been "in fact" the one responsible for the secularization of Brazilian history, till then "just a *demonstratio evangelica* and its interpretation a strictly theological task". He would have been, therefore, the one who transformed those sermons of

“priests absorbed in ecclesiastical history” into narratives of “civil and political facts, supported by good material sources”. Furthermore,

if we compare him with those who preceded him, excluding Southey, who does not belong to our historiography save by chance, and whose work did not influence our historical literature much, we will see the huge step that the unexpected apparition of Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagen represents. The revolution in Brazilian historiography was done.

To Rodrigues, therefore, Varnhagen “received the influence of those who began the *Monumentae Germaniae Historica* of Ranke and his disciples, who edited the most authorized collection of documental sources”, but he had been forgotten for a long time or was “reproved or even taken advantage of in secrecy by those who felt his undeniable authority”. His “rehabilitation”, said José Honório, was undertaken by Capistrano de Abreu, who “endowed, like Varnhagen, with superior knowledge of methodological research, bibliography, and Brazilian documentation, could resume in Brazilian history the good and classic orientation of German historiography, begun by the Master.”²⁰

The pattern of a plot woven with the thread of the importance of methodology in research (discovery of unknown facts and sources) would be synonym, in Rodrigues’ reading of it, of grandiosity, authority, professionalism, trust, and deservedness of respect and recognition,²¹ that is, of a deserved place and guaranteed prominence in this “history of Brazilian research”. Garcia and Taunay, therefore, would belong to this tradition, as the two “great disciples” of Capistrano and, consequently, of Varnhagen. In the author’s terms, “these two great historians [Garcia and Taunay] represent the genuine current which since Varnhagen has urged for the improvement of the material, be it in the archive, discovered for immediate use, be it edited according to the rigorous norms established by German methodology”. Thus, he continued,

Rodolfo Garcia and Affonso Taunay learned with Capistrano de Abreu and soon became masters in this same line of so valuable results. Capistrano, when he died, could tell them as Ranke had told his disciples in 1877: you fulfill my professor’s glory. The fecund industriousness, exemplary diligence, and authenticity of researches soon revealed the two historians, who the Master, for our benefit, had formed.

The periodization established by Brazilian historians is of great import to José Honório. In 1949, already in THB, Rodrigues characterized periodization

as one of the most important and difficult undertakings of historians. When emphasizing the importance of discussions about periodization at IHGB, for example, he does not only underline one of the concerns of these intellectuals, but also, *pari passu*, offers a birth certificate for the modern Brazilian historiography he projected. José Honório defended that thinking about history implied dividing and periodizing it. Applying this perspective to the writing of the History of Brazil, in terms of a periodization of the first historical books, Rodrigues announces that the historical research in the country had been developed since the foundation of IHGB, “our main stimulator of historical studies”. He also outlines, parallel to it, a periodization for his lineage, stemming from IHGB, for this would have been the first center of historical research in the country, inspired, said he, “by the best and most correct principles that had just been launched by the German school” (Rodrigues, PHB, 1952, p.25-26 *passim*).

Another example of this can be found in the comments about Karl F. Ph. von Martius (Bavarian naturalist), who would have been the “first to call attention to the importance of the three races for Brazilian history.”²² The point about Martius’ contributions will come up in his periodization, once more in an outstanding position together with two other authors: Capistrano de Abreu and Gilberto Freyre – in this order, something which marks a change in Rodrigues’ posture regarding what seemed to be his former idea about these authors. Idea which, as said above, prioritized Freyre’s perspectives. This change – it is worth mentioning – would not only be part of a chronological organization of his periodization in narrative terms, but also an index of a possible reconfiguration of Capistrano de Abreu’s place and function, according to a project that showed signs of organization. But this does not mean only that Capistrano would be the most important. All of Capistrano’s relationship with this project would be linked to the narrative plot it wove, whose sense would be given by Rodrigues’ project. José Honório had the intention of stressing some contributions of those he read as his predecessors or even of IHGB, treated as an institution exclusively dedicated to historical research and free from struggles and disputes among its members. This past pointed out to what, in his present, not only was being consolidated as his perspective and his projects, but also allowed him to refer to ‘yesterday’, seeking to establish a lineage to which he associated his vision of a Research Institute, that is, the future of historical research in Brazil.

The way Rodrigues read Capistrano’s writings deepened in the years that followed the publication of THB. Especially when he took over the direction

of the Division of Rare Books and Publications of the National Library and embarked on the preparation of *Correspondência de Capistrano de Abreu*, which allowed him to consolidate his plan and interpretation for the birth of that which he identified as a history of Brazilian historical writing. Rodrigues would identify in the “Necrológio de Francisco Adolpho de Varnhagen,” written by Capistrano on account of the death of the master in 1878, a cradle for his initiatives. An obituary is, first of all, an eulogy to the memory of a recently deceased intellectual, a portrait, so to say, painted with words. Nevertheless, in spite of Capistrano’s having rendered Varnhagen high praise, pointing him out as a great example to follow and honor,²³ he took advantage to create a space for himself. When praising what Varnhagen had done, he mentioned what he did not do, or what his writing missed in aesthetical terms. Thus, said Rodrigues,

it is not by chance that the greatest Brazilian historian [Capistrano], not by his material contribution, but by his acuteness and critical ability was also the one who best distinguished the periods of our history. Capistrano de Abreu felt the spiritual need of seeking, under critical methods of research, the roots of our true epochs, distinct, unique, and singular. His periodization is not only objective, empirically based on facts and material sources, but sociological.

Or, continuing, Rodrigues assures about the “Necrológio...”:

it will not be exaggerated to say that Capistrano de Abreu knew, in these few pages, how to raise himself to heights not yet really reached by any Brazilian historian. And it is here, then, that he observes a fundamental deficiency in Varnhagen, his lack of philosophical perception. And it is here, when he adopts these great divisions, when he characterizes and connects them that he shows the properly philosophical element in the history of Brazil and demonstrates his piercing theoretical ability, which distinguishes him from any pedant, any rat or bureaucrat of history, in order to raise him to the true level of a historian. (Rodrigues, THB, 1949, p.72 e 74)

The perpetuity of a master’s grandiosity seems to be one of the ways of praising and commending also his disciples in the educated community involved with the writing of history in the early 20th century. Some disciples gain renown by being in charge of publishing texts of the deceased master and, when possible, even by organizing and writing prefaces to some collection of unpublished texts by their mentor. Manuscripts and letters are very valuable

in this symbolical 'economy', for they indicate the proximity and effective intimacy between master and disciple – seen as heir. When this relationship is no longer possible, it seems to be assigned to the disciples the kind of 'moral duty' of annotating the master's work.

In 1952, José Honório Rodrigues had already begun divulging his project and his contributions for a renewal of Brazilian historiography, whose initial sketches can be found, as I proposed above, in some articles of 1945 and in his methodology manual of 1949. With the publication of *A pesquisa histórica no Brasil: sua evolução e problemas atuais* (PHB) in 1952, his project gained well defined contours. The author proposes to offer an 'evolution' for Brazilian historical research, a path taken by several researchers, and he also points out some solutions to what José Honório identified in his present as 'current issues' of Brazilian historiography – already diagnosed in his critical examinations and taken note of in PHB.

In the wake of Manoel S. Guimarães (2005, p.34-35), it can be thought that such investment led, in the final part of PHB, to the proposal of creation of a "Historical Research Institute", which would crown the proposed evolution, in his reading, for Brazilian historiographical tradition. I add that such an institute would materialize, literally, that mansion that would shelter historians, since an institute of such nature "would direct all historical research in Brazil and abroad, planning the works of recording places as historical sites, of registering and cataloguing all documents, and would carry out deals and programs of microfilming in Brazil and abroad as well". For him, historical documents would be "national heritage". Collecting and preserving them from "total destruction" would mean "avoiding a spiritual rupture and keeping alive our historical tradition". This, in a certain way, also fits in the category of "weather hazards" I mentioned in the beginning of this paper, from which José Honório tried to preserve national historiography; consequently, he sought to free the History of Brazil from amateur, conservative, or traditionalist views. According to his criteria, "the true apology of historical research consists of helping fulfill these tasks, without which the mature development of Brazilian historiography and historiography about Brazil is impossible".

The creation of the Historical Research Institute, inspired by *the best of our traditions*, is a national need and aims at stimulating historical investigation, promoting regional technical aid to public and private archives, collaborating with the training and improvement of historians and researchers. (Rodrigues, PHB, 1952, p.164 e 169, my italics)

Thus, one of the epigraphs chosen by the *carioca* for the first edition of his PHB, in which, quoting Capistrano de Abreu in a letter of May 17, 1920 to João Lúcio de Azevedo, he affirmed that “Brazil does not need History, it needs documents” can be better understood.²⁴ And this was so, because only through actual documental research, believed José Honório, the real paths of the History of Brasil could be revealed.

III

In his narrative, José Honório passes through Capistrano de Abreu as a main character and dividing point between a ‘before’ and an ‘after’ in historiographical terms in his periodization. The latter would have been born at the IHGB and, with Varnhagen, the first History of Brazil would have been written. Rodrigues’ narrative, however, had the intention of ‘making one see’, or even of making this genealogy self-evident for historical research. Moreover, a tradition like this would have home and address guaranteed in his IPH [Historical Research Institute]. A historiographical tradition, narrated as history of historical researchers who preceded him, turns to a future projection of what he wanted to build in his present, ascribing value to a noble lineage at the same time he narrated and invited his contemporaries to read it. In the light of this history of Brazilian historians, each one of those belonging to it – for they are respectful disciples of the masters that configure such current – would also gain emphasis and importance. Brazilian historiography, said Rodrigues, would, therefore, be “a mirror of its own history” (Rodrigues, THB, 1957, v.1, p.9). Mirror that would reflect all the grandiosity of yesterday’s masters and today’s disciples (candidates for mastery). In this sense, Capistrano de Abreu is important for José Honório, as well as all the other Brazilian researchers. In his narrative, all of them lead to the moment in which Rodrigues idealizes his project. It is worth remembering that the author inscribes himself in the same narrative: from the second edition of PHB in 1969 on, his name appears among the ones of the great and lesser masters of historical research, curiously followed by a date, “1950”, in parenthesis, strategy that was not used for any other. The date refers to the year of publication of *As fontes de história do Brasil na Europa*, short brochure published by the Departamento de Imprensa Nacional, in which José Honório believed he could find his contribution for historical research in Brazil (Rodrigues, PHB, 1969, p.103-104).

Why then was Capistrano the chosen name? For some reasons. The first is that Capistrano de Abreu was not only a historian. It was commonplace to

consider him 'the greatest'. And if he aimed at the greatest, no doubt he intended a similar greatness for his project. The second reason is that Capistrano would have inaugurated Brazilian historiography. Not in the sense of writing the History of Brazil – to José Honório, Varnhagen's unquestionable merit – but in the sense of making a history of the historical writing, of proposing a critical revision of the works of a historian, knowing how to acknowledge a master and honoring him as his disciple, while also criticizing and indicating revisions. A third reason stems from the contact with the modern German historical school, which had had, in José Honório's reading, direct impact on Capistrano's directing himself towards writing national History. To our historian this contact defined Capistrano's theoretical education and modern methodology and, consequently, became exemplary in a field which was still to be professionalized. For a historian who wrote a methodology manual, the weight of this trait is significant enough.

It is necessary to remember, however, that the gathering of so diverse intellectuals and the plot involving them as parts of an evolution are products of José Honório's narrative structure and of his interpretation – a possibility, therefore. Only as a function of his narrative do the authors ('true historians') achieve more or less relevance for what he defended, for in this plot they can be synthesized in a historical time and understood in a determined field (present) and its horizons. The narrative seeks to make 'visible' the passage of time and the change that would allow Rodrigues to weave the fundamental difference between what was (past), what have been (his present), and what would be his project (future) for Brazilian historiography. Each one of his characters would be a milestone in a periodization that depended, above all, on other characters and, consequently, on the narrative itself, whose plot (or scheme) is the basis from which one could visualize his historiography as something 'in itself, but dynamic – in an evolutive movement, whose sense (*télos*) would be his IPH.

At the end of his 1949 text, Rodrigues had already stressed what he characterized as a "program" for the task of "historical understanding and synthesis", which he would develop later. Moreover, he emphasized that such program, "so clear and lucid, so simple and noble, has been achieved by the most modern Brazilian historiography". And, going further, he asserted that "its matureness"

reveals itself in the works of understanding and synthesis, interpretation and analysis, control over the text and adequate theoretical application, with which

Capistrano de Abreu, Oliveira Viana, Paulo Prado, Gilberto Freyre, and Sérgio Buarque de Holanda have revealed the meaning of our evolution. There are in them an accurate historical understanding, a fine and acute psychological perception, an extraordinary theoretical ability and, oftentimes, a philosophical breath ... No matter the occasional convergence or divergence of theses and syntheses; they stand side by side in their capacity to examine texts in the light of theories and in the special historical consciousness they possess. (Rodrigues, THB, 1949, p.255)

Rodrigues, therefore, favors the dimension of a project that guides his intention to “put the young students in touch with their predecessors, reveal the main directions, as well as the method of teaching history and, so far as possible, of teaching to write history” (Rodrigues, “Apêndice”, in THB, 1978, p.455, *my italics*). To understand the relations between history and historians of and in Brazil, he was concerned with defining a history for this ‘historiography’.

His institute would serve as house, school, and fortress from which he would launch his combat against the model instituted in the Brazilian universities. His model of historian (professor and professional researcher) sought to guarantee scientific authority to historians within the Brazilian university sphere, having in mind his harsh criticism of the almost exclusive training of high school teachers by the History Courses in the country. This authority would be linked to Rodrigues’ projects for the writing of a new History of Brazil, carried out by those associated with his tradition: central link not only in the formation of true historians and in the guarantee of intellectual emancipation to the professionals of History in the country, but an investment legitimated by the own history he narrated. His project for the IPH, and reason of his architecture, however, never left paper.

IV

In the light of these remarks, one can inquire about the meaning and about some of the possibilities of the history of historiography in Brazil. It is clear that Rodrigues’ efforts have been important and, for a fairly considerable group of historians, they remain as pioneer and fundamental reference for what presently establishes itself as a field of research.

So, Manoel Salgado Guimarães’ suggestions about the task that is performed by the work of Historiography in Brazil today can be followed.

Work that moves in the direction of understanding the various forms of the writing of history and also, but not exclusively, the constitution of its disciplinary version – founded on strong narcissistic traits established by a perspective of history as a 'mirror' which would reflect the Brazilian past in a clear, crystalline, and most objectively possible way. This past, nevertheless, is understood today as a possibility or, at least, a projection of an (ego) present on a set of events synthesized both chronologically and teleologically.

To Guimarães, the effort of contemporary historiography would be in the direction of moving "from text to author and not vice-versa" (Guimarães, 2005, p.46). Rethinking these narcissistic traits, as well as the task of "breaking the mirror,"²⁵ would be part of the work of Historiography. Hard work, therefore. It must be remembered that the constitution of a disciplinary history in Brazil, or its professionalization – as José Honório Rodrigues defended – implied strong doses of legitimization and justification about its relevance and contributions based on a past chosen to be its – according to the scale, triangle, and compass used in designing his project in the light of the issues of his present. Established as a safe haven, this past would allow the fire of the grand task of historians to honor 'the' tradition. The past of historical research would be a certainty, a monumental presence, which would respond to the historians' invocation.

I believe that a historiographical awakening, as Pierre Nora announced for the French case, for instance, implies working the past as issue, as a problem for the present, not an object of certainties. Thus, "to question a tradition", continued the French author, "venerable as it might be, is no longer to recognize oneself as its sole bearer". That is, understanding the relation of worship with the past implies recognizing that there are other possibilities and possible interpretations. Venerating oneself and one's own projects as reflections of one – and only one – "grand past" might have been *one* valid strategy, among possible others, which as such deserve to be historically understood, but that can be read in different ways, so that new horizons become possible. If "all history has entered a historiographical age,"²⁶ as Nora proposed, following Michel de Certeau, marking the critical distance that instals the discontinuity between past (absence) and present (work) becomes a fundamental occupation for historians.

I believe that the texts and the perspective of José Honório Rodrigues about a history of Brazilian historical research represent well *one* possibility of historiographical making. Task which, it is important to acknowledge, crystallized identities and good doses of sacredness – always complex, because

of their own characteristics of relating to the past – in all efforts at a critical historicization of identities, among them the historian identity. So, I believe that it is Historiography's job to understand the several faces, the risks, and the possibilities of these projections of the present on the past. Self-critical effort above all, this job would reside at “the antipodes of a discipline” (or subdiscipline) as François Hartog would say. An approach not necessarily too tough (‘epistemologizing’) nor too esoteric (internal), for restricted to circles of specialists “more or less self-proclaimed”. Thus, continuing with Hartog,

this movement and this moment that can be called, for convenience, ‘reflexive’ (giving them this epistemological and historiographical double reach), concern, besides history, the totality of the social sciences. Different from methodical or positivist history, which rejected historiography, the present moment leads to a combination of history of history and method, or even, of historiography and epistemology. The term historiography suffices, in my view, to refer to this blend.²⁷

The writing of History becomes, therefore, an effort to make the many dimensions and interpretations of the past understandable, without forgetting that it is an interpretation in itself. It would be Historiography's job, therefore, to be aware of the dangers and possibilities of any and every effort to close or naturalize a narrative, especially about itself. To inquire, case by case, if and when something worrying can emerge from the past, almost always silent, which is established among recollection, memorization, and commemoration.²⁸

Thus, let the task of Historiography be larger than that of narrating or legitimizing a history of History, of keeping or adopting sacred and consecrated canons, of repeating pantheons. Let it not be restricted to an iconoclastic attitude in the face of traditions either. As part of its contribution to the historical education of humanity, it would be desirable that its commitment was more devoted to making intelligible to men their forms of understanding (historical and historicizing) of the past. To put it differently: Historiography would be committed to maintaining the historical view or the historical thought. Before all else, about its own paths.

NOTES

¹ In a schematic way, some names could be listed to represent such group. In the 1950s and 1960s, Américo Jacobina Lacombe, Francisco Iglésias, and Eduardo de Oliveira França. In

the 1970s and the 1980s, João Roberto do Amaral Lapa and Carlos Guilherme Mota. From the 1990s till today, Manoel Salgado Guimarães. To these intellectuals, despite the many differences among them, the image of Rodrigues as a pioneer of the constitution of the history of historiography as a field of research in Brazil has become a common link in the way of remembering him.

² IGLÉSIAS, Francisco. "José Honório Rodrigues e a historiografia brasileira". *Estudos Históricos*, Rio de Janeiro, n.1, p.55-78, 1988. This paper was published in a longer and revised version in: IGLÉSIAS, Francisco. "José Honório Rodrigues e a historiografia brasileira". In: _____. *História e literatura: ensaios para uma História das Ideias no Brasil* (Seleção e Organização de João Antônio de Paula). São Paulo: Perspectiva; Belo Horizonte: Cedeplar; Face; UFMG, 2009. p.169-204; AZZI, Riolando. "A interpretação da História do Brasil segundo José Honório Rodrigues". *Síntese Política Econômica e Social (SPES)*, n.14, p.111-152; SILVA, Alberto da Costa e. "José Honório Rodrigues: conciliação e reforma no Brasil". In: MOTA, Lourenço Dantas (Org.). *Introdução ao Brasil: um banquete no Trópico*. 2.ed. São Paulo: Ed. Senac São Paulo, 1999. p.381-392; SILVA, Ítala Byanca Morais da. "Anotar e prefaciar a obra do 'mestre': reflexões de José Honório Rodrigues sobre Capistrano de Abreu". *Revista de História da Historiografia*, Ouro Preto, n.3, p.83-105, set. 2009; FRANZINI, Fabio; GONTIJO, Rebeca. "Memória e história da historiografia no Brasil: a invenção de uma moderna tradição, anos 1940-1960". In: SOIHET, Rachel et al. *Mitos, projetos e práticas políticas: memória e historiografia*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2009. p.141-160; GUIMARÃES, Géssica Góes. *José Honório Rodrigues: por uma história combatente*. Rio de Janeiro: Departamento de História da Uerj, 2005; PEREIRA, Daniel Mesquita. *José Honório Rodrigues: três dimensões de uma consciência histórica*. Rio de Janeiro: Departamento de História da PUC-Rio, 1995; LAPA, José Roberto do Amaral. *A história em questão: historiografia brasileira contemporânea*. Petrópolis (RJ): Vozes, 1976; MOTA, Carlos Guilherme. *Ideologia da cultura brasileira (1933-1974)*. São Paulo: Ática, 1978; _____. "José Honório Rodrigues: a obra inacabada". *Estudos Avançados*, v.2, n.3, São Paulo, p.107-110, set.-dez. 1988; IGLÉSIAS, Francisco. "A pesquisa histórica no Brasil". *Revista de História*, São Paulo, v.XLIII, n.88, p.373-415, out.-dez. 1971; _____. *História e literatura: ensaios para uma História das Ideias no Brasil*. São Paulo: Perspectiva; Belo Horizonte: Cedeplar; Face; UFMG, 2009. _____. *Historiadores do Brasil: capítulos de historiografia brasileira*. Belo Horizonte: UFMG; Ipea, 2000; e CAMPOS, Pedro Moacyr; COSTA, Emília Viotti da. "Esboço da historiografia brasileira". In: GLÉNISSON, Jean. *Introdução aos estudos históricos*. 2.ed. Rio de Janeiro: Difel, 1977. p.250-293.

³ GLEZER, Raquel. *O fazer e o saber na obra de José Honório Rodrigues: um modelo de análise historiográfica* Tese (Doutorado) – USP. São Paulo, 1977 (2v.); MARQUES, Ana Luiza. *José Honório Rodrigues: uma sistemática teórico-metodológica a serviço da História do Brasil*. Dissertação (Mestrado) – PUC-Rio. Rio de Janeiro, 2000; GUIMARÃES, Manoel L. L. Salgado. "Historiografia e cultura histórica: notas para um debate". *Ágora*, Santa Cruz do Sul (RS), v.11, n.1, p.31-47, jan.-jun. 2005.

⁴ RODRIGUES, José Honório. *Teoria da História do Brasil: uma introdução metodológica*.

São Paulo: Instituto Progresso Editorial, 1949. p.12. From now on THB, followed by date of edition and page of quotation.

⁵ The preface, from where the quotation in question was taken, was signed August 1958. See: RODRIGUES, José Honório. *História e historiadores do Brasil*. São Paulo: Fulgor, 1965. p.32. Along this paper there are several quotations. The great majority of them refer to primary sources. The strategy followed here to reduce the number of footnotes with “ibidem” was this: a note at the end of the paragraph containing all the references of the quotations *ipsis litteris*, used in the paragraph in question. The exceptions to this rule will always occur when some different text from the ones of the sequence in question is used, or another edition of the same, with a specific note for each case.

⁶ The book to which José Honório refers is *Civilização Holandesa no Brasil*, published in 1940 in the “Biblioteca Pedagógica Brasileira” of the Coleção Brasileira. See: RODRIGUES, “Prefácio”. In: _____. *A pesquisa histórica no Brasil*. 2.ed. São Paulo: Cia. Ed. Nacional, 1969. p.15. From now on only PHB, followed by date of edition and page of quotation.

⁷ SCHÜTZ, Alfred. *Fenomenologia e relações sociais: textos escolhidos de Alfred Schütz*. (Org. Helmut R. Wagner). Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1979; VELHO, Gilberto. “Memória, identidade, projeto”. In: _____. *Projeto e metamorfose: antropologia das sociedades complexas*. 3.ed. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2003. p.97-105.

⁸ RICCEUR, Paul. *Tiempo y narración*. I. Configuración del tiempo en el relato histórico. 6.ed. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2007. p.31; KOSELLECK, Reinhart. “Espaço de experiência” e “horizonte de expectativa”: duas categorias históricas. In: _____. *Futuro passado: contribuição à semântica dos tempos históricos*. Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto; Ed. PUC-RJ, 2006. p.305-327.

⁹ RODRIGUES, José Honório. “Capistrano de Abreu e a historiografia brasileira”. *Revista do IHGB*, v.221, p.120-138, out.-dez. 1953. p.121.

¹⁰ RODRIGUES, José Honório. “Nota liminar”. In: ABREU, João Capistrano de. *Ensaios e estudos: crítica e história (1ª série)*. 2.ed. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira; Brasília: Instituto Nacional do Livro, 1975. p.XI.

¹¹ Fábio Franzini’s doctoral thesis is about the material conditions of the production of the collection “Documentos Brasileiros” and its relationship with the diffusion and consumption of historical knowledge in Brazil in the first half of the 20th century. According to him, “the collection Documentos Brasileiros stood out among the other collections published at the same time, because it gathered authors and works committed to the renewal of knowledge about Brazil”. When he takes it as his object of study, Franzini intends to perceive it particularly as a privileged vehicle for the diffusion of different views of the Brazilian past, especially the innovative ones and, he adds, “those that played an important role in the transformation of the national historiography which happened from the 1930s on”. Thus, he understands it as a “point of convergence of different individuals related to the production, diffusion, and consumption of historical knowledge in Brazil”, between 1936 and 1959. The central goal of his thesis is to present an aspect of the constitution of something which may perhaps be called intellectual system, regarding

historical studies in Brazil, an effort of great help for the history of historiography. See: FRANZINI, Fábio. *À sombra das palmeiras: a coleção Documentos Brasileiros e às transformações da historiografia nacional (1936-1959)*. Tese (Doutorado) – FFLCH/USP. São Paulo, 2006. p.12-13.

¹² Founded in June 1937, the “Sociology Club” was an intellectual association organized by Gilberto Freyre and José Bonifácio Rodrigues. It kept, according to Simone Meucci, interrupted activities, but focused on the discussion of ideas about Sociology and the so-called ‘Brazilian culture’, with a clearly Freyrian emphasis, and “even after the closing of the UDF [University of Distrito Federal], the Club’s activities continued. On November 19, 1939, in the care of the Club, an event was organized: a conference with Almir de Andrade, Estado Novo intellectual, who had just published *Aspectos da Cultura Brasileira*.” See: MEUCCI, Simone. *Gilberto Freyre e a Sociologia no Brasil: da sistematização à constituição do campo científico*. Tese (Doutorado) – Unicamp. Campinas (SP), 2006. p.136.

¹³ Letter of Gilberto Freyre to JHR, Recife, Aug. 6, 1938.

¹⁴ Letter of Gilberto Freyre to JHR, Recife, Dec. 14, 1938.

¹⁵ About this periodical, published in Brazil since 1916, and its meaning for the construction of Brazilian national culture, see: LUCA, Tânia Regina de. *Revista do Brasil: um diagnóstico para a (n)ação*. São Paulo: Ed. Unesp, 1999. It is important to stress that the author evaluates different editorial projects for the journal in each of its phases.

¹⁶ RODRIGUES, José Honório. “Interpretação culturalista da história”. *O Jornal*, Rio de Janeiro, April 30, 1939. [3rd paragraph]. I decided here to count the paragraphs, because some articles by José Honório published in this periodical sometimes began and ended on the same page of the *Revista* – as the Sunday literary supplement of *O Jornal* was called. Other times, as will be seen further on, they began on one page of the *Revista*, but continued pages ahead (in general always on page 7 of the supplement), or even in the following weeks supplements.

¹⁷ RODRIGUES, José Honório. “Capistrano de Abreu”. *Revista do Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro, 3^a fase, ano 2, n.9, p.56-63, Mar. 1939. p.56.

¹⁸ Capistrano asked the Baron “why don’t you give the reference source of the documents you publish?... What is the reason, therefore, that you rise against an obligation to which all historians subject themselves, especially since time of the archive studies, of the creation of historical criticism, of the criticism of sources created by Leopold von Ranke in Germany the face of history was renewed?” See: RODRIGUES, 1957, p.125-126.

¹⁹ RODRIGUES, José Honório. “A historiografia brasileira em 1945”. *O Jornal*, Rio de Janeiro, Mar. 10, 1946, before last and last paragraphs, respectively. See also: RODRIGUES, José Honório. “A historiografia brasileira em 1946”. *O Jornal*, Rio de Janeiro, Jan. 12, 19, and 26, 1947.

²⁰ RODRIGUES, José Honório. “Rodolfo Garcia e Affonso de Taunay”. *O Jornal*, Rio de Janeiro, Dec. 30, 1945, 1st, 2nd, 4th and 3rd paragraphs, respectively.

²¹ “Educado nesses princípios, sentindo a força e grandeza do Mestre, [Capistrano]

compreendeu que a história sem documentos autênticos e sem edição crítica das fontes primárias não podia merecer confiança nem respeito”. Ibidem, 4º parágrafo.

²² RODRIGUES, “Rodolfo Garcia e Affonso de Taunay”, 1945, 5º parágrafo.

²³ ABREU, João Capistrano de. “Necrológio de Francisco Adolpho de Varnhagen”. In: _____. *Ensaio e estudos: crítica e história* (1ª série). 2.ed. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira; Brasília: Instituto Nacional do Livro, 1975, p.86.

²⁴ Rodrigues, PHB, 1952, p.vii. This epigraph was eliminated from the original text since the second edition of PHB, revised and enlarged, published in the “Brasiliana” collection in 1969.

²⁵ GUIMARÃES, Manoel L. L. Salgado. “A cultura histórica oitocentista: a constituição de uma memória disciplinar”. In: PESAVENTO, Sandra Jatahy. *História cultural: experiências de pesquisa*. Porto Alegre: Ed. UFRGS, 2003. p.14.

²⁶ NORA, Pierre. “Entre a memória e a história: a problemática dos lugares”. *Projeto História*, São Paulo, v.10, p.11, Dec. 1993.

²⁷ HARTOG, François. *O século XIX e a História: o caso Fustel de Coulanges*. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. UFRJ, 2003. p.22.

²⁸ RICCEUR, Paul. *A memória, a história, o esquecimento*. Campinas (SP): Ed. Unicamp, 2007. p.98.