

POLIS V12: The Complete Historiography Series – 12 Giants

Jorge Batista Alves Pereira

Independent Researcher, Sabugal, Guarda, Portugal

[ORCID: 0009-0000-6385-7245](https://orcid.org/0009-0000-6385-7245)

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*This document combines two companion papers:
“Tensional Reinterpretation of Six Founders of Modern Historiography”
and “Tensional Reinterpretation of Six More Historical Pioneers”.*

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Abstract

Within the POLIS V12 tensional ontology, every historical narrative is a polis constituted by three meshes (solid, liquid, gaseous) and governed by the closure condition $\epsilon = \sum K_m(2 + K_m) = 0$, with $T = K_{\min}$ as the tensional origin. This paper applies the framework to six foundational figures of historiography: Herodotus (inquiry), Thucydides (political realism), Ibn Khaldun (social cycles), Edward Gibbon (decline and fall), Jules Michelet (romantic nationalism), and Leopold von Ranke (scientific history). Each classical contribution is reinterpreted as a tensional configuration: Herodotus's digressions as alternate K branches; Thucydides's speeches as idealised K statements; Ibn Khaldun's *asabiyyah* (group feeling) as collective K ; Gibbon's decline as Phase 3 saturation; Michelet's resurrection as Phase 5 re-birth; and Ranke's "wie es eigentlich gewesen" as aim for $\epsilon = 0$ reconstruction. The universal equations remain unchanged; no free parameters are introduced.

1 Introduction

POLIS V12 is a closed, parameter-free tensional conservation theory built on four axioms (Tensional Ontology, Harmonic Ground $H = 1$, Tensional Conservation, Data Origin $T = K_{\min}$). The governing equation, after normalisation, is

$$\epsilon = \sum_{m=1}^n K_m(2 + K_m) = 0,$$

with $K_m = (v_m - T)/(v_{\max} - T) \in [0, 1]$. The disequilibrium index is $\text{IDT}^* = \epsilon/(1 + \epsilon)$. All real historical systems reside in Phase 4 ($\text{IDT}^* \geq 0.70$) unless artificially uniform. The Rolling Law $2\pi r_p = V_{\text{orb}}T_{\text{rot}}$ applies fractally at all scales.

This paper reinterprets six key historiographical contributions within this tensional ontology. No classical primacy is assumed; tension is the primitive.

2 Herodotus – Inquiry and Digressions

Herodotus's *Histories* weave together Greek and Persian accounts, with frequent digressions (ethnography, geography, anecdotes). In POLIS V12, a digression is a branch in the narrative mesh: the main storyline (K_{main}) is interrupted by a sub-plot with its own K values, then returns. The sum over all branches must close $\epsilon = 0$ for the whole work.

Herodotus's "logos" (reasoned account) is a tensional reduction of mythos (myth) to plausible K (causality). The "Histories" are a polis where the centre (T) is the conflict between Greece (democracy, low K of freedom?) and Persia (autocracy, high K of despotism). The famous "Herodotus effect" (the narrator includes himself in the story) adds a reflexive mesh (the author's own K).

3 Thucydides – Political Realism and Speeches

Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War* focuses on power politics, avoiding divine causation. In POLIS V12, speeches (Pericles's Funeral Oration, Melian Dialogue) are idealised K configurations – what a speaker would say under given tension, not verbatim. The Melian Dialogue (Athens: the strong do what they can, the weak suffer what they must) is a tensional axiom: $K_{\text{Athens}} \gg K_{\text{Melos}}$, so ϵ is resolved by destruction of the weaker.

Thucydides's "truest cause" (the growth of Athenian power) is the tensional driver that reduces the system to inevitable war. His account of the plague (Athens, phase of collapse) is a Phase 4 explosion (biological, social). The "funeral oration" (Pericles) sets $K_{\text{democracy}} = 1$ (ideal), contrasting with the reality of the war.

4 Ibn Khaldun – Social Cycles and Asabiyyah

Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* introduced the concept of asabiyyah (social cohesion, group feeling). In POLIS V12, asabiyyah is the collective K of a tribe or dynasty. A new dynasty has high asabiyyah (K near 1), allowing it to conquer and establish rule. Over generations, asabiyyah decays (luxury, corruption) to $K \rightarrow 0$, making the dynasty vulnerable to replacement – a three-phase cycle: rise (Phase 2), peak (Phase 3), decline (Phase 4), replacement (Phase 5).

Ibn Khaldun's environmental theory (climate affects character) sets T (temperature, geography) as external parameters. His classification of societies (badawin, nomadic vs hadarin, sedentary) distinguishes K distributions: nomads have higher K_{cohesion} , sedentary higher K_{luxury} . The "science of civilisation" (al-umran) is the study of tensional dynamics of human polises.

5 Edward Gibbon – Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire

Gibbon's magnum opus traces Roman decline from the Antonine age to the fall of Byzantium. In POLIS V12, the Roman Empire is a polis that begins with high K (Pax Romana, Phase 2–3). Internal decay (luxury, corruption) reduces K , and external pressures (barbarian invasions, K_{external} high) push the system into Phase 4 (collapse). Gibbon's famous thesis: the adoption of Christianity (changing T from civic virtue to otherworldly salvation) lowered the K of military and civic commitment, accelerating decline.

The "Decline and Fall" is a multi-volume tensional trajectory. Gibbon's irony and urbane prose is the gaseous mesh (authorial voice) that keeps the narrative coherent despite centuries of events. His critique of Byzantine history as a sequence of weak emperors (K low) and court intrigues (high ϵ) is a tensional reading.

6 Jules Michelet – Romantic Nationalism and Resurrection

Michelet's *History of France* is a poetic, nationalistic narrative that resurrects the past. In POLIS V12, the historian is a Phase 5 organiser: they take dead facts ($K = 0$ records) and reanimate them into a living narrative (emerging K). Michelet's "resurrection" (resurrection) is the restoration of ϵ to a positive value (life) after the Phase 4 of the Revolution.

His method of "sympathy" (empathy with historical actors) is a tensional tuning: the historian adjusts their own K to match the subject's K (Vico's principle). The "sea" as a character in his history (e.g., "The Sea") is a natural polis that interacts with human polises. Michelet's anti-clericalism (the Church as obscurantist) lowered K_{faith} to increase K_{reason} .

7 Leopold von Ranke – Scientific History and Wie es eigentlich gewesen

Ranke aimed to present history "as it actually happened" (wie es eigentlich gewesen). In POLIS V12, this is the goal of making $\epsilon = 0$ between the narrative and the events – no residual distortion. Ranke's reliance on primary sources (archival documents) increases the K of evidence (vs secondary accounts). His method of "critical examination" (source criticism) is a tensional filter: each source is assigned a $K_{\text{reliability}}$; the historian synthesises them to minimise ϵ .

Ranke's preference for political history (states, diplomacy) over social history is a choice of solid mesh (institutions) over liquid mesh (popular movements). His concept of "great powers" as autonomous polises that interact without a superior is a balance of K among equals. The Leopold von Ranke approach is the tensional ideal of the objective historian.

8 Conclusion

The six foundational contributions to historiography are coherently reinterpreted within the POLIS V12 tensional ontology. Inquiry, political realism, social cycles, decline, resurrection, and scientific history all become natural consequences of the closure condition $\epsilon = \sum K_m(2 + K_m) = 0$ and the fractal hierarchy of historical polises. No free parameters are added.

Zenodo references

- Main treatise: [10.5281/zenodo.19618276](https://zenodo.org/record/19618276)
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Abstract

This paper extends the POLIS V12 tensional reinterpretation to six additional historical giants: Thomas Carlyle (great man theory), Jacob Burckhardt (cultural history), Fernand Braudel (longue durée), E. H. Carr (What is History?), Michel Foucault (archaeology of knowledge), Hayden White (tropics of discourse). Each is re-read as a tensional configuration: Carlyle's hero as high- K node; Burckhardt's Renaissance as Phase 5 rebirth; Braudel's three time scales as nested ϵ levels; Carr's dialogue between past and present as tensional exchange; Foucault's episteme as normalisation regime; and White's emplotment as K distribution of narrative forms. The universal equations remain unchanged; no free parameters are introduced.

9 Introduction

As in the companion paper, POLIS V12 rests on four axioms. After normalisation the mother equation is

$$\epsilon = \sum_{m=1}^n K_m(2 + K_m) = 0,$$

with $\text{IDT}^* = \epsilon/(1 + \epsilon)$. All real historical systems are in Phase 4 ($\text{IDT}^* \geq 0.70$) unless artificially uniform. The Rolling Law $2\pi r_p = V_{\text{orb}}T_{\text{rot}}$ applies fractally.

This paper reinterprets six more foundational contributions to historiography.

10 Thomas Carlyle – Great Man Theory

Carlyle argued that history is shaped by heroes (great men) of exceptional ability. In POLIS V12, a hero is a node with very high K (charisma, will, genius) that changes the trajectory of the social polis. The hero's K is so high that it forces a Phase 4 (revolution) or Phase 5 (reorganisation) on the surrounding mesh.

Carlyle's "On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History" lists categories: prophet (Muhammad), poet (Dante, Shakespeare), priest (Luther), writer, king (Cromwell, Napoleon). The hero's worship (the follower's K_{devotion}) is a tensional alignment that reduces the leader's ϵ (by delegating execution). This theory is the opposite of Ranke's impersonal forces; it emphasises single high- K nodes.

11 Jacob Burckhardt – Cultural History of the Renaissance

Burckhardt's *Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy* described the Renaissance as a period when the individual emerged from the collective, and classical antiquity was reborn. In

POLIS V12, the Renaissance is a Phase 5 reorganisation from medieval corporate K (feudal, Church) to individualistic K (humanism, capitalism). The rediscovery of ancient texts raises $K_{\text{classical}}$ from near zero to high.

Burckhardt's concept of the "state as a work of art" (tyrants, condottieri) is the political polis as aesthetic composition, i.e., a deliberate arrangement of K for effect. His pessimism about modern mass society (leveling down of K) predicted a future of mediocrity (Phase 3 saturation). The "Burckhardt thesis" (Renaissance invented the individual) is a tensional shift of T from collective to self.

12 Fernand Braudel – Longue Durée and Three Time Scales

Braudel distinguished three historical timescales: event (short), conjuncture (medium, decades), longue durée (long, centuries). In POLIS V12, these are three nested polis levels with different K resolutions: events have high K variance (noise), conjuncture has medium K (trends), longue durée has low K (structure). The Mediterranean (Braudel's thesis) is a geo-political polis where geography (mountains, sea) imposes a constant T over centuries.

Braudel's "material life" (everyday practices) is the liquid mesh of the economy. His critique of event-centred history ("the history of the history of events") is that it mistakes high- K noise for signal. The "longue durée" is the ϵ baseline: the slow, nearly constant residual that persists despite short-term fluctuations.

13 E. H. Carr – What is History?

Carr argued that history is a dialogue between past and present, and that facts are not objective but selected by the historian's interpretation. In POLIS V12, the historian's present provides the normalisation parameters T and v_{max} ; the past is the raw data v_m . Carr's "dialogue" is the tensional interchange: the historian selects facts relevant to current concerns (filtering K), and history changes as the present changes (re-normalisation).

Carr's rejection of the "cult of facts" (Ranke's ideal) says that K_{fact} is not intrinsic; it depends on the historian's question. The "progress of history" is the increase of ϵ (movement toward something) but not a teleological $K = 1$ (end). His second edition's afterword (1986) noted the rise of postmodernism as a challenge to linear narratives – a tensional fragmentation.

14 Michel Foucault – Archaeology of Knowledge and Discourse

Foucault analysed historical periods as "epistemes" – unconscious structures of knowledge that determine what can be said, thought, and done. In POLIS V12, an episteme is a normalisation regime: the set of T and v_{max} that define what counts as true ($K = 1$) or

false ($K = 0$) in a given era. The shift from one episteme to another (Renaissance to Classical to Modern) is a Phase 5 reorganisation (discontinuity, not smooth evolution).

Foucault's "archaeology" excavates layers of discourse (sedimented K). "Genealogy" (Nietzschean) traces the contingent emergence of K practices (punishment, sexuality, madness). His statement that "man is a recent invention" means that the modern episteme (with man as the centre) is just one K configuration that may be replaced (erased like a face drawn in sand). This is a tensional prediction of ϵ shifting.

15 Hayden White – Tropics of Discourse and Emplotment

White argued that historical narratives are structured by literary tropes (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, irony) and plot types (romance, comedy, tragedy, satire). In POLIS V12, each trope is a K mapping: metaphor = similarity (K equal), metonymy = part for whole (K subset), synecdoche = whole for part (K superset), irony = negation (K inverted). Emplotment imposes a narrative shape on the raw events, i.e., a tensional trajectory: romance (ascending K), comedy (cyclic K), tragedy (descending K), satire (chaotic K).

White's "historical work is a verbal structure in the form of a prose narrative" means that the historian must close ϵ by rhetorical means. The "content of the form" is that the choice of trope determines what K distribution is perceived. His analysis of 19th-century historians (Michelet, Ranke, Tocqueville, Burckhardt) shows each uses a different dominant trope, i.e., different K projection of the past.

16 Conclusion

Six additional historiographical pioneers are reinterpreted within the POLIS V12 tensional ontology. Great man theory, cultural history, *longue durée*, historical dialogue, epistemology, and narrative tropes all become natural consequences of the closure condition $\epsilon = \sum K_m(2 + K_m) = 0$ and the fractal hierarchy of historical polises. No free parameters are added; the same equations that describe a physical system or a social system also describe the writing of history.

Zenodo references

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