

Alfred R. Wallace: from extensionism to permanentism

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Alfred Russel Wallace developed the most refined dispersionist model of Darwinism. His ideas persisted as the dominant approach to historical biogeography until the mid- 1960s. His model is conceived as the construction of a large and unitary ongoing project started from *Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro* (Wallace, 1853), continued with *The Malay Archipelago* (Wallace, 1869), reached its full development in *The Geographical Distribution of Animals* (Wallace, 1876), and finally culminating with *Island Life* (Wallace, 1880). However, our purpose is to show how the evolution of biogeographical thought in Wallace, rather than following a linear development was a complex process that suffered major changes. During the first years of his stay in the Malay Archipelago, Wallace openly adopted a extensionist stance and rejected dispersion as a cause of major biogeographic patterns. However, since the last few years in the Malay Archipelago, Wallace made a sharp turn toward permanentism and considered dispersion as the main cause of the organic distribution. The change in biogeographical conceptions of Wallace was influenced not only by empirical evidence, but also by epistemological assumptions that he endorsed.