

I. EDITORIAL

The present issue of the *Mare Nostrum Journal* is mainly composed of a dossier on work in the Ancient World, exploring multiple study objects related to different Mediterranean peoples and temporalities. The opening article by Thomas Henrique de Toledo Stella deals with the 20th Dynasty of Ancient Egypt (c. 1.186-1.069 BC), one that witnessed a series of crises that eventually undermined various aspects of Pharaoh's centralized power, as well as the state that was based on it. In “Social Convulsions in Ancient Egypt: Theban Necropolis Workers at the End of the New Reign” we have a detailed overview of the working conditions of royal and noble tombs builders in the region of the ancient Thebes, as well as their contextualization in the various contradictions within Egypt's economy, highlighted in the last centuries of the New Kingdom. The article argues that the workers of the Theban Necropolis, in claiming the payments due to them in a context of economic crisis, demonstrate a clear awareness of the incongruities between their own economic interests and those of the Egyptian state. This would have enabled them to mobilize as a class – whether through the first registered strike in history or by setting up a tomb-plundering industry – and eventually challenge essential aspects of Pharaonic authority.

The second article in the dossier, entitled “Slavery and Athens' Economic Efflorescence: Mill Slavery as a Case Study”, fits into the recent bibliographical stream that sees a significant economic growth in Greece from the sixth to the third centuries BC, one driven by an economic thinking not fixed (but supported) by social institutions. Here, Jason M. Porter deals more specifically with the institution of slavery in Athens during the fifth and fourth centuries BC, through the viewpoint of the New Institutional Economy. The purpose of the article is to highlight the role played by slavery in the Athenian “economic efflorescence”, a factor often overlooked or badly connected to the Greek economic growth by its advocates. This is done through a case study of the use of slaves in commercial mills, a practice that allowed less expensive access to an essential commodity to the Athenian diet – even if through the cost of captivity, of the exploitation of forced and strenuous labour from countless slaves.

The third article in this issue, written by David M. Lewis, remains on the subject of slavery, but this time focusing on another phenomenon: piracy. After a

detailed reconstruction of the techniques and technologies available to Aegean corsairs, the article “Piracy and Slave Trading in Classical and Hellenistic Greece” examines the connection of piracy with the supply of slaves to the ancient Greek market of people. The discussions presented here show that piracy – both a skilled labour and a provider of labour – was a phenomenon that permeated several essential aspects of the old economy, from the costs of international transactions to the supply of part of the (forced) labour demand of the Hellenic poleis.

The following article, “Columella’s Stoic Slavery: Hierarchy and Incentive to Slave Competition”, sets Columella’s *De Re Rustica* in its social and intellectual context, focusing on a set of prescriptions that would aim at slave control through their exhortation to competition. Hierarchization, division into specific works and groups are some of the tools analysed by Helton Lourenço, who also show us how Stoic thinking influenced the way Columella and some of her contemporaries viewed and thus treated their slaves. Such an effort provides us with a less bilateral picture of the relationship between masters and slaves, revealing levels of co-optation through the granting (and the competition for) lesser privileges in a scenario that is thought to have been composed only of overt rebellion or absolute submission.

The fifth article in the dossier is by José Ernesto Moura Knust and its main object of study is wage labour in the Roman Mediterranean. Taking into account different historiographical approaches both to work and to the nature of the Roman economy itself, the author analyzes mainly (but not exclusively) Roman treaties on agriculture to delimit the extent of the action of workers employed in Roman *uillae* and their surroundings. Thus, the article “Salaried Rural Work in the Roman Rural World (second century BC and first century AD)” argues that relations catalysed by the search and supply of labour, also channelled by institutional means, acted not only economically but also in other spheres, these even more important when we consider contexts prior to the development of the market economy.

The dossier is closed by the article “William L. Westermann between Antiquarianism and Comparative History of Slavery: A Rereading of *The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity*” by Fabio Duarte Joly. Here we have a welcome rescue of William Westermann’s contributions to the study of ancient slavery. His work, reread in the context of the University Seminar Movement,

shows how transdisciplinary debates organized at the Columbia University influenced the coinage of key concepts by Westernmann and one of his department colleagues, Frank Tannenbaum. In this context, concepts still important such as “slave system” and “slave society” come to light, and are later disseminated by authors not always friendly to Westernmann’s ideas - such as Moses I. Finley himself. We have in such an article, therefore, an essential tool for any student of slavery, not only that in its ancient shapes.

Finally, the volume is closed by the review of Sebastian Conrad’s (2016), *What is Global History?*, composed by Santiago Colombo Reghin. Such a contribution represents a valuable introduction to an approach that is becoming increasingly popular among historians – including those interested in Antiquity and how their multiple local histories can be articulated to a broader global history.