

I. EDITORIAL

The search for contact with what is understood as superhuman or sacred is something that runs throughout human History, manifesting itself in multiple varieties and contexts. In the same way, the forms (Guarinello, 2003) in which these religious expressions are described and analyzed by those who seek to understand them also vary. The recent *Material Turn* identified by Sonia Hazard (2012) for the fields of History and Social Sciences is an example of this. From the 1990s onwards, there is a claim to the centrality of objects and material phenomena in studies on religion.

This movement opposes itself to the Western conception, inherited mainly from the Protestant Reformation, which understands religion from its discursive forms – such as doctrines, scriptures, philosophies, mythologies, folklore, etc. Thereby, artifacts, practices, spaces, bodies, sensations and affections are highlighted under the justification that, according to Julian Droogan in *Religion, Material Culture and Archaeology* (2013, p. 3), “human religiosity is rarely separate from the material environment through which it is expressed, and that to conceive of material culture and religious culture as opposing or mutually exclusive spheres of human experience and activity is to limit our understandings of both fields.”

In the area of Archeology, in turn, the consolidation of Archeology of Religion in the 1990s also broadened the field's boundaries by validating the possibility that, as exposed by Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke in *Archaeology of Religion, Material Religion and the Ancient World*, “archaeological data can be used to reconstruct rituals and inquiries about underlying ideologies or belief systems to social action” (2015, p. 2). This allowed not only greater access to the material sources of the past, but also for archaeologists to develop important works on the materiality of religion.

As a result of these movements, the strengthening of interdisciplinary approaches has been witnessed in recent years. They analyze the symbolic values of material religious culture, their genealogy, their phenomenological variables, their aspect of *Lived Religion*, the possibility of agency of its objects, and the development of the so-called *New Materialism*. All these approaches are, to some extent, part of the transdisciplinary research area of *Material Religion*, a field that reflects the growing adherence to the *material turn* by researchers of religions and religiosities.

Especially since the founding of the Religion Material Journal in 2005, an international space for debate has opened up. In the same way, the possibility of exploring the numerous variables of the materiality of religion has also been expanded: religious images, devotional and liturgical objects, sacred spaces, art and artifacts, architecture and, likewise, clothing, idols, relics, iconographies, shrines, landscapes, ritualistic instruments, among others. The examples are many, and the possibilities open to scholars of ancient religions are multiple.

The definitive proof of the latter in the case of Brazil resides in the vast, varied and highly qualified contributions to the present volume, which came from different Brazilian universities, such as UFRN, IFGoaino/UFG, UFES, UFOP, FURB, UFBA, UFMG, UNIRIO and USP. Such a positive response from national researchers made it necessary to divide the dossier *Religion, Religiosity and Material Culture in the Ancient World* in two volumes, from which the present one is the first.

Volume 11, n. 2 of 2020 initiates with the section “Dossier”, composed by eight articles which are at the same time thematically divided – Egypt, Greece, Rome and Byzantium – and chronologically organized. Following it, the section “Articles” presents a thematically free contribution. Coming after there is an unprecedented Portuguese translation of a historical source in the section “Documents”, which is followed by two reviews that close the volume.

Opening the dossier *Religion, Religiosity and Material Culture in the Ancient World* we have Rafael dos Santos Pires (USP), who presents the interrelation between religious materiality and politics in Antiquity, especially in ancient Egyptian history. In *God, Father, Intermediate: the Function of Amun in Hatshepsut’s Discourse*, the author investigates how the religious aspect (personified in the divinity called Amun) was directly involved in the political contours behind the social construction Pharaoh Hatshepsut’s power during the beginning of the New Kingdom (c. 1479-1458 BCE). In doing this, he firstly considers the specificities in the Egyptian tradition of sacralizing images and texts, and conceiving them not as representation, but as divinities *per se*. In the following, he analyses iconographical and hieroglyphical contents of the mortuary temple of Deir el-Bahari in western Thebes, in order to interpret the implications of the Egyptian religious world conception in the consolidation of a discourse about the State. By this ways, Rafael Pires analyses the importance of constructions, destructions and imagetic aspects of religious materiality in Egyptian culture to explore also other spheres of interpretation in the highlighted context.

In the following, Márcia Severina Vasques (UFRN) discusses the importance of materiality linked to legitimation and delegitimization of Roman dominion over Egypt after the Battle of Actium. In *Propaganda and Resistance in Roman Egypt: the Stele of Cornelius Gallus*, the author analyses the main symbolical, political and religious implications involved in the construction and destruction of a stele located in the temple of Isis in Philae, financed by Cornelius Gallus – first *praefectus* of Egypt and Alexandria. Rich imagetic descriptions are presented by the author, as well as interpretations of hieroglyphic, Greek and Latin texts present on the stele, which make evident both the political project of Gallus in making himself represented as a powerful ruler – equal to Augustus – and the resistant position of Egyptians when facing foreign dominion. Stressing the religious attributes of the Pharaoh as the keeper of *Maat*, as well as the magical aspects traditionally involved in imagetic representations and in Egyptian traditional writing, the author firstly demonstrates how the confection and strategic positioning of the stele aimed to exalt the rule of Gallus/Augustus as dominator and pacifier of Egypt; secondly, she analyses how the purposeful destruction of the artifact can be interpreted as a double movement of *damnatio memoriae* by both Egyptians and classical authors like Cassius Dio.

In the third article with an Egyptian thematic, the author highlights the material aspect of religion that comes from the fears and insecurities of everyday life and which is reflected in the creation of small objects which contained in themselves protection attributes. By this way Hariadne da Penha Soares (UFES) explores the importance of analyzing magical gems as primary research sources to understand the magical-religious practices of Late Antique Roman Egypt. In the article *The Apotropaic Attributes of Magical Gems in Late Egypt, According to the “Greek Magical Papyri” (300-500 AD)*, the author presents the definitions, production contexts, possible functionalities and typologies of magical gems used as protection amulets in the period. Besides the exposition and iconographical analysis of five distinct examples, Hariadne Soares also approaches the prescriptive writings for the apotropaic amulets which are present in the *Greek Magical Papyri*. In conclusion, she does the comparison between prescriptions and artifacts, pointing to the possibilities and limitations of interpretations aiming different levels of direct identification between them.

After that, Lilian de Angelo Laky (USP) brings to debate the importance of studies about the sanctuaries in Ancient Greece. In *The Archaeology of Two Cretan Sanctuaries of Dictaeon Zeus: the Case of Palaikastro and Praisos from the Iron Age to Hellenistic*

Period, the author thoroughly analyses the archaeological sources, votive offerings overall, and compares textual sources (Strabo, Apollodorus, Diodorus of Sicily, etc) to demonstrate the social role of two Cretan sanctuaries dedicated to Dictaeon Zeus in Palaikastro and Praesos. To fulfill it, Lilian Laky describes them according to their geographical localization, cultural activities, archaeological documentation, texts, and epigraphy. She also considers the different phases of their (re)construction and cults, in order to argue in favor of the importance of both the sanctuaries in the creation and reinforcement of a common identity to the eastern portion of Crete, associated to local religious tradition around Dictaeon Zeus.

Luis Henrique Carminati (UFOP) opens the portion of the dossier dedicated to Roman history. In *The Communication Through Coinage: the Monumentalization of Religiosity* the author presents the discussion of religion materiality in ancient coins and its relation to the constructions of diverse political discourses. With that aim, he uses the imagetic analysis of numismatic tradition as a key to the comprehension of Roman political disputes involving memory (through the mobilization of religious iconographical elements) in the context of the Roman Republic. The author analyses eight monetary types and the various divinities, symbols and religious rites represented on them, making evident how the coins were used to monumentalize, communicate and spread ideas, memories and exemplarities, which aimed the building and consolidation of identification networks between Roman *gentes* in the republican period.

Following it, Macsuelber de Cássio Barros da Cunha (IF Goiano/UFG) discusses the importance of temples in the political program of initial Principate (I BCE - I CE), which was based in the idea of returning to Roman religious and moral traditions. In *The Construction of Temples: the Religious Architecture in the Augustan Period*, the author analyses how Augustus, promoting a discourse of restoration of the *res publica*, dedicated himself to the construction, reform, aggrandizement, and embellishment of diverse temples. He also explores the main architectonic, landscaped, political, and religious implications on the city of Rome in consequence of this systematic building program. Using Vitruvius' *De Architectura* (27 BCE), Augustus' *Res Gestae* (first century CE) and the iconography of a contemporary coin (RIC I 66) as primary sources of analysis, Macsuelber Cunha brings to debate the importance of the materiality of religion as a interpretative key to an important political context of Roman history through the established comparison between material, iconographic and textual sources.

Giving sequence to the articles about the Augustan period, in *Undoing the Consensus: Subaltern Logic in the Altars of the Lares Augusti*, Giovanni Pando Bueno (USP) presents iconographic analyses of the *Belvedere* altars and of the *vicus Aesculeti* (2 CE), and investigates the historical agency of the *magistri* in the highlighted context (first centuries BCE and CE). The author investigates the existing images on the altars and interprets their significant data, like the reductive (or even absent) representation of lords in comparison with the symbols that publicly exalted local agents. Considering that the cult was permitted by the hegemonic order but not controlled by it, Giovanni Bueno proposes the interpretation of both the mobilization of these images and the materiality of altars dedicated to the *Lares Augusti* as a possible space of everyday action of freedmen and slaves. According to the author, these people practiced this cult with considerable autonomy and used it as form of identity expression, revindication and search of agencies that could surpass their subaltern social conditions.

In the article closing the dossier, Stephanie Martins de Sousa (UFOP) returns to the imagetic analyses of numismatic tradition as a possible interpretative tool to the comprehension of political and religious contexts, and their respective representations. In *The Diverse Faces of the Emperor: an Analysis of the Representation of Justinian in Coinage and the Chronicle of John Malalas*, the author makes a study about the representations of the emperor Justinian I in monetary artifacts and in the *Chronicle* of John Malalas (sixth century CE). Through a comparative analysis of numismatic and textual sources, she makes evident that the ambivalences of a context marked by conquests and political tensions can also be attested in contemporary sources of different natures. To accomplish this she analyses the attributes of Justinian I existent in the *Chronicle* of John Malalas, demonstrating that this author represents him as a theologian, less warlike, constructor of Christian edifications, and organizer of Roman law emperor. It can be observed, in this way, how the material aspect, circulation and officiality of the coinage under Justinian I offer, alongside the representation of the ruler in textual sources, the opportunity of comparing distinct yet contemporaneous perspectives about the same historical agent.

The “Articles” section has the contribution *Cinema and Ancient History: an Analysis of the Druids in the TV show Britannia*, written by Dominique Santos (FURB), Jéssica Frazão (USP) and Vitor Moretto Koch (ETEV/FURB). The text presents a reflection about the debate around the relation of History and Cinema/Television/TV shows, alongside the production specificities and interpretative finalities of the latter.

Parting from the concept of *historical fantasy* and the filmic analysis methodology, the authors present an investigation of historical sources connected to cinematographic analysis, with focus in the representation of druids during Roman invasion of Britannia, which is showed by the Anglo-American show *Britannia* (2018), produced by Jez Butterworth, Tom Butterworth and James Richardson. Studying the contemporary sociopolitical implications in the cinematographic representation realized by the show, the authors stress that the animalesque, exotic, and even barbaric stereotypes attributed to the Celts may be interpreted as a movement of degradation of *Celticity*. This degradation can be understood, in a disposal of opposites, as a search of England for identification with Roman civility showed in the same show. According to the authors, the identified movement has some sense when analyzed in the context of Brexit, a process contemporaneous to the production of *Britannia*.

After this, the text *The Criminal History of Rome Without the Letter 'L'*, by *Fulgentius the Mythographer: Translation of Book XI of the Lipogram De Aetatibus Mundi et Hominis* inaugurates the section “Documents” of *Mare Nostrum* Journal. In it Cristóvão dos Santos Júnior (UFBA/UNEB) presents the unprecedented translation to Portuguese, in the form of a lipogram, of the Book XI of *De aetatibus mundi et hominis*, attributed to Fulgentius the Mythographer (fifth and sixth centuries CE). The author offers to our readers a general presentation of the source’s context, followed by the original text as established by Latinist Rudolf Helm, and, finally, by the proposed translation, which keeps the suppression of words with the letter “l”, like the Latin version.

The present volume ends with two reviews. The first one, written by Igor B. Cardoso (UFMG) and entitled *The Perennity of Gilgamesh*, refers to the book *Sin-Léqi-Unninni. Ele que o abismo viu: epopeia de Gilgámesh. Tradução do acádio, introdução e comentários por Jacyntho Lins Brandão*, published in 2017. The second one is entitled *New approaches on the rising of historical conscience: the classics and their true relation with time, anachronism and historical difference*. It was written by Matheus Vargas de Sousa (UNIRIO) and refers to the book *Anachronism and Antiquity*, published in 2020 and written by Tim Rood, Carol Atack and Tom Philips. Both reviews bring important contributions to the research area of Ancient History and reflect the richness and the diversity of interpretations, sources, and theoretical-methodological references each day more abundant in the field.

We wish a good reading to all, and hope that this volume instigates the reader to expect the next one!

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