

OMENA, L. M.; FUNARI, P. P. A. (Orgs.). *As experiências sociais da morte: diálogos interdisciplinares*. Jundiaí: Paco Editorial, 2017. 244p

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The book *The Social Experiences of Death: Interdisciplinary Dialogues* begins with nothing less than a poetry, by Aphonsus de Guimaraens, that describes the suicide of Ismailia in an almost transcendental and surreal way. Selected with sensitivity and subtlety by the organizers of this collection of chapters, Luciane M. de Omena, a PhD professor at UFG, and Pedro P. A. Funari, a full professor at Unicamp, this poem demonstrates, at the beginning of the reading, how much death is one of the the most mysterious conceptions of human life and senses. Its fear and symbolic character have always been present in different cultures, times and places.

In this perspective, in the preface, and in a complementary way, Renata Senna Garraffoni, a PhD professor at UFPR, begins her text with the *Funeral March (In Memory of a Comrade of Youth)*, by Herman Hesse (1956), in which the author deposits the human sense facing the lost, the anguish of the spirit and, above all, the memory, which does not only remember the dead, but that, at that moment, the music began to influence the cognitive mechanisms of memory, attenuating all the same senses of the consternation of death when it was heard later . Garraffoni describes the book as disquieting, because it deals with a subject considered as a taboo. As the same author mentions, death is something that leads with the unknown and, therefore, it is not thought of as part of human cultural experience.

Inspired by a visit at the *Recoleta* cemetery, in Buenos Aires, Luciane M. Omena begins the presentation of this work, between tombs and tombstones, realizing "how the world of the dead was intertwined with the world of the living" (Omena, 2017: 15). This motivation led her to study the symbology of death and to develop a doctorate at Unicamp, with Prof. Funari, entitled *Memory and Mourning: the symbolism of death in the philosophical logos of Lucio Aneu Sêneca in dialogue with the material remains (27 BC - 68 AD)*, with the support of FAPEG/CAPES. This work allowed the idea for the construction of the work referred here, which

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covers interdisciplinary perspectives, material and documentary sources, explores several historical moments and encompasses the meanings, effects and social mechanisms before death.

This work is divided into two sections: the first one, called *Death and memory in Mediterranean societies*, involves works such as that of Ana P. Pinto, a PhD professor at the Catholic University of Portugal, entitled *On the Threshold of Death: Homer, who worked with the Iliad and Odyssey*, demonstrating how Homer, with the Trojan War, proposes questions about death through the war scene, the funerals of Hector and through his own memory, which was used as a reformulating strategy of the present. The author also highlights the function of mythology as transgressor of the border between life and death, the consciousness of the death of Achilles, the fugacity of life, mortality and the criminal death of Agamemnon.

In addition, Luciane M. Omena and Pedro PA Funari present *The Ridicule of the Funeral: the symbology of death in Seneca's 'Apocolocyntosis' satire*, in which they begin by commenting about the end of the biological body and that it is able to create individual and collective meanings, characterizing itself as a social experience, that along with death, forms historical constructions, which assume cultural roles. The authors rely on the study of funerary representations from the *menipeia* satire *Diui Claudii Apocolocyntosis* and point out that funerals were like spectacles of power in the Roman empire, thus placing in relevance the analysis of the funeral procession and its unfolding in the urban space, which emphasized the dead and his position before family's generations, making his memory something public and domestic.

To conclude this first moment, Cláudio U. Carlan, a PhD professor of UNIFAL, writes about the representation of death in Constantine's coins, showing how coins, with the image of the face of Constantine I, represented his power even after his death, carrying on its circulation until the Muslim invasion, in the VIII century.

The second part of the book, entitled *Death and Archaeology under the Modern and Contemporary bias*, presents a greater diversity of time and place. It is initiated by Claudia Rodrigues, a PhD professor at UNIRIO, with the chapter called *The experiences of death in colonial Rio de Janeiro*, in which she explains how the Catholic Church, acting in accordance with the Lusitanian side, used death for the catechization of new believers, and evidenced the funerary culture of indigenous and African people. Soon after, Louise P. Alfonso, a PhD professor at UFPel, and Jaciana MG Araújo, an anthropologist by UFPel, who has a master and a PhD in

psychology by UCPel, in *The Death, Dying and the Social Role of Archaeology in Contemporary Society*, embrace the function of Archaeology for the debate about death and the deconstruction on the taboo of not talking about it. The authors make a psychological survey of bereavement that includes depression and anxiety. Yet, they show the difficulty of dealing with children on this topic and how heritage education can help them better understand this subject.

Maria E. Borges, a PhD professor at UFG, writes about the artistic contemporaneity of the tombs and cemeteries in Brazil, in *An Inquiring Look at Cemeteries: Modern Representations of Death*. The author recognizes European standards that allowed a vast artistic sample for the public, iconographic symbolism and expressions of universal meanings such as pain, pleasure and love, as well as other aphorisms about death. She emphasizes that the public power can promote a hierarchy of museums by the monumentalization and that these museums become the cemeteries-museums. In addition, she notes that the structure of the cemeteries should include concepts of death, relationships with death and various funeral rituals, so that the public can experience it. In this perspective, the author performs an analysis of the art in tombs from many parts of the world too.

Following the theme of funerary art, as in the last chapter, Flávia R. Marquetti, a PhD researcher, at the Unicamp, of the Historical Archaeological Research Group, inquires how to hold in an image such subjective symbolisms, as well as death, feelings to remember the absent and the finitude of life, by analyzing them, for example, through the use of plants in the celebrations of death. Nanci V. de Oliveira, a PhD professor at UERJ, and Luciano P. da Silva, UNEMAT Master Professor, describe the funerary rituals of a region from Mato Grosso, where there is an immense cultural diversity, which was called "crossroads of People". The authors of the chapter, called *Funeral Rituals in the Pantanal region of Cáceres, Mato Grosso, Brazil*, faced the problem of the disparity of these funerary rituals, due to the presence of different traditions, which could have had contacts and large networks of exchanges in that place.

The result of the content of this work confirms a very recent thinking about death, because, between taboos and forbidden themes, such as cannibalism, infant mortality, quartering of bodies, anguish for mourning, it is in the past that archaeologists and historians seek the clashes of the present, and this set of works reminds us that, in order to speak about death, much of life, of cultures, of diversity of thought, of expressions and of the human being as a whole must be mentioned.

What makes this book a special reading is the fact that the authors emphasize that funerary monuments, for instance, express, in a way or another, affective relations with the dead, and to make the cemetery a meeting point and a memory place. Before the different funeral rites, presented in this work, it is pointed out that the localities have an ability to cover the collective unconscious and the costumes that involve different religiosities, philosophy, moral and politics. In this context, authors evidence that records, such as the funerary arts and the written sources, demarcate and produce stories that simply expose the marvellous world of the unfathomable in places that perpetuate memories and allow to experiencing death.