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The work reviewed here, titled *Banquetes, Rituais e Poder no Mediterrâneo Antigo* ("Banquets, Rituals and Power at the Ancient Mediterranean") and organized by Maria R. Candido, consists of a product of the II International and IV Nacional Meeting of Studies on the Ancient Mediterranean, promoted by the Núcleo de Estudos da Antiguidade ("Nucleus of Ancient Studies", UERJ). First and foremost, the volume highlights one NEA's clearest interests: to see the Mediterranean as the main stage of action and connection of multiple ancient societies – something that goes back at least to 2009 (the year of the I National Meeting of Studies on the Ancient Mediterranean) and that dotted the recent national academic history with several works in this direction.²

The volume is divided in four parts. The first of them gathers the papers whose object of study is mainly the banquet practices in Antiquity, the second does the same concerning the ritual practices and the third to the power relations. Lastly, the paper of José Maria G de S. Neto closes the volume under the theme of the teaching of Ancient History. It should be made clear that, in its entirety, the contents of the papers aren't limited to the topic of the section in which they were situated, but deal also with the other themes proposed by volume.

From the seven papers that integrate first part of the book, I highlight three of them. The first one, written by María C. Colombani and titled "Banquet, pain and Subjectivity: The Marks of the *philía*", has its main merit in the use of the concept of the space "between", coined by Martin Buber (*I and Thou*, 1937), as

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² See, e.g., the *Memórias do Mediterrâneo Antigo* ("Memories of the Ancient Mediterranean". Rio de Janeiro: UERJ/NEA, 2010), the *Práticas Religiosas no Mediterrâneo Antigo* ("Religious Practices at the Ancient Mediterranean", 2 vols. Rio de Janeiro: UERJ/NEA, 2011) and the *Práticas Alimentares no Mediterrâneo Antigo* ("Feeding Practices at the Ancient Mediterranean". Rio de Janeiro: UERJ/NEA, 2012), all of them organized by Maria R. Candido.

a reading key to the understanding of the rituality showed in two of the *Odyssey's* banquet scenes. The author reads the stages of the reception of a foreigner (Telemachus and Odysseus) and his introduction to a banquet context maintained by a host (Nestor and Alcinous, respectively) as a kind of ritual. This ritual creates a space “between” the two individuals, a space that allows the acknowledgment of both as peers and, therefore, a dialogue between equals. In my opinion, the author’s main argument – that this process allows that the pain felt by the guest/foreigner be attenuated by his introduction to the host’s social circle – is well based, but less seminal than the reading key defined there, whose test in other contexts could present interesting results.

In this section, we can also highlight the paper of Daniel Ogden, titled “The Banquet of Darius and the Transfer of the Persian Throne to Alexander the Great in the *Alexander Romance*”. The author sees two rereadings of the Macedonian Argead dynasty’s foundational myth, this in its version presented by Herodotus in his *Histories* (8.137-8). The first studied case, the *Alexander Romance* (c. third century AD), of anonymous authorship, narrates the episode that opens Alexander’s conquest of the Achaemenid empire through a narrative loaded with metaphors. This narrative takes a series of features from the herodotean story aforementioned – features that doesn’t fit in this brief synthesis. The second studied case is the *Romance of Ardeshir* (mid-sixth AD), also from an anonymous author. The section of the narrative analyzed by Ogden tells the mythical beginning of the foundation of the Sassanid dynasty, more specifically when it overturns its precedent, the Partian dynasty. The hero of the narrative, Ardeshir, to establish himself as king, follows episodes interestingly similar to those which the Argeads followed to establish themselves at the Macedonian throne and which reappear in the conquest of Persia at the *Romance of Alexander*. We have, therefore, a notorious work on the reception of the “classics” in the Antiquity itself; a work that covers a tradition of at least ten centuries of life.

The third chapter that I highlight is the one written by Anderson M. Esteves, titled “The Banquet of Tigelinus: A *Topos* of Manners Corruption”. Here we see the author (exemplarily) articulating the narratives of Suetonius, Tacitus and Dion Cassius of a polemic episode associated to Nero, the banquet of Tigelinus. The author seeks to show how these narratives are sculpted – either with the choosing of the terms used and with the positioning of the arguments within the texts – in a way to characterize the emperor as maintaining a morality so corrupted that, implicitly, makes him the main suspect for the fire of 64 AD at Rome. A really exemplar contribution on the construction of the neronian image and of the moral values associated to this process.

The section on the practice of banquets has yet for other papers, but a detailed analysis of each one doesn't fit here. It is enough, therefore, to weave some considerations on them in a way that the reader doesn't remain unaware of its main contents. The paper of Maria R. Candido ("The Greeks, The Banquet and the *Art of the Good Table*") displays a study proposal: to relate a set of "innovations" of the Hellenic feeding practices – more specifically the substitution of meats for fishes considered "exotic" at the menus of the Greek symposiums – with the hegemony maintained by Athens during the fifth century BC, what centered trade routes at the Piraeus that gave the Athenian "aristocracy" access to foods of more difficult acquisition. The work of José Roberto de P. Gomes ("Anacreon and the Festive *Komós* at the Copenhagen Crater") seeks a connection between features of the ancient tradition regarding Anacreon, the lyric poet, and the iconography of a black-figure Athenian crater, attributed to the Cleophrades painter and dated to the late sixth century BC. The paper written by Norma M. Mendes ("The Banquets as Romanization Discourses") takes on a much more theoretical position, being its main argument that the romanization and the actions that carried it out (the practice of banquets in roman terms amongst them) allowed the creation by the individuals of shared discourses and, thus, of a dialogue space between two cultures (the "local" and the "roman"). In the last chapter of the section ("Saint Patrick and the Pagan Festivity at the Banquet of the Tara Province: religion and society at the Early Christian Ireland from the work of Muirchú Moccu Machteni") Dominique Santos sees at the chapter 15 of the *Vita Sancti Patricii*, here translated unprecedentedly to the Portuguese language, the use of conversion strategies immersed in narratives with traditionally pagan features, this with the goal of making them more easily understood by its target – precisely the pagans from the seventh century AD Ireland.

From the second section of the book, on the ancient ritual practices, I highlight the paper of Mario Torelli, titled "The Convivial Spectacles of Classical Age: Archaeological Documents of Possible Genetic Facts and Developments". Dealing with the Archaic Greece banquets, Torelli seeks (primarily through archaeology) the genealogy of its practices and its configuration. Firstly, the author turns his eyes to the Assyrian reliefs' iconography and highlights in them the origin of certain features of the Greek banquet, amongst them its relation with religious practices – a model adopted by the Greeks posteriorly, in the seventh century BC. After this, Torelli concerns himself in highlighting how the sympotic practices taken in its Asian shapes are transformed in accordance with each localities specificities, either by considering the domestic architecture and scenes of Greek vases from the sixth century BC. However, in accordance with Torelli, a "hard to kill" feature would have been the "spectacle" that these events had taken form its first form: at least in Etruria,

where the conservatism was harder, scenic and musical features remained in the ceramic iconographies founded there in contexts from the fifth century BC. This feature, as has already been said, survives or disappears in different Greek contexts, what makes Etruria a place where one can see some of the archaic banquets features in a better-preserved state. The only suspicious feature is precisely this Etruscan unity, what makes the Etruscan banquet something without any local idiosyncrasy, almost the pure opposite of the Greek diversity.

Two other papers also compose the second part of the volume. The one written by Cláudia B. da Rosa ("*Fortuna Muliebris*: Building the Boundaries of Rome") contextualize the resumption of the story of Coriolanus and the building of the *Fortuna Muliebris* temple, as told by Titus Livius (2.40), in the period of the "moral reform" enacted by Augustus. The paper written by Renata R. Sancovsky ("Readings on the Body in the High Middle Ages: Rituals and Rabbinic Discourses between the Fourth and Fifth Centuries AD"), perhaps the best written of the volume, analyzes the multiplicity of features present in the rabbinic preaching of the early Middle Ages and its contrasts in relation to the western patristic theology, highlighting cultural continuities and transformations that influenced the western Jewish communities in the period.

The third section of the book, dedicated to the relations of power, is opened by the paper "The Art of the Pisistratids: Power, Construction and Ritual Display in Archaic Athens", composed by Ana Iriarte. The author takes the point of view that sees the pisistratid period as a specially prosperous time in the cultural aspect, but adds to it the characterization of this feature as a consolidation tool for the tyrannical power. In other words, if in one hand the demonstration, on the part of the tyrants, of their appreciation for the people (made clear, amongst other actions, by the patronage of festivals and monuments) seemed to assure them its support and to grant them a democratic semblance, in the other hand, if multiple measures taken during the pisistratid tyranny are analyzed in the structures in which they were embedded, the conclusion is different. In accordance to Iriarte, although such actions were carried out alongside the discourse in favor of the masses and in order to distance the tyrant from an association with the aristocracy, these actions didn't really diminish the power and influence of the oligarchies, but only superficially changed the rules of the same political power game.

The second chapter of this section that I highlight here is the one titled "*Amicitia* and *Commendatio* in the Plinian Epistolary", by Renata L. B. Venturini. Considering the letters of Pliny the Younger, Venturini seeks to put

in evidence the mechanisms through which the *amicitia* and the *commendatio* made the power system of the imperial Rome function and how they reproduced it. However, the paper far exceeds the proposed objectives. We find here a good analysis of the transformation of the meaning of the Roman *ordines*; of how, even after the centralization of power in the emperor and the reforms of Augustus, its members articulate the prerogatives granted to them in order to maintain their *gravitas* within the Roman political system. A good introduction to the study of the Roman political patronage structures and their *praxis*.

The section on power relations contains three more papers. The one written by Julián Gallego ("Athens and Thebes in the *Oedipus at Colonus*: Political Power, Foreign War and Internal Sedition") uses intratextual and extratextual elements of the sophoclean *Oedipus at Colonus* to put in evidence an implicit debate inside the work: the existence of a *stasis* inside the Athens of the late-fifth century BC, posterior to the oligarchic *coup* of 411 BC. The contribution of Carlos Eduardo da C. Campos ("Nicholas of Damascus and Caius Octavius: Between Social Networks and Discourses"), highlights the usefulness that the biographical literary style has in the sense of rebuilding the social networks of the ones biographed, doing so using as examples the Augustinian biographies of the first century BC, especially that of Nicholas of Damascus. Finally, we have the paper written by Cláudio U. Carlan ("The Transformations in the Mediterranean World during the Late Empire"), which has a mainly narrative character about the political disputes between the Roman emperors of the third and fourth centuries AD.

José Maria G. de S. Neto composes the last paper, titled "The Athenian Theater in the Formation of the Historian", that closes the volume with golden keys. The author shows how the classical works, taking Euripides' *The Trojan Women* as an example, can be used in the classroom to go beyond the classical formats of History teaching (information given by the teacher and memorized by the student), more specifically, to help the development of an "analytical view of the world and its surrounding realities" (p. 250) in the students. Although the paper was initially composed in 2013 (the year of the event that produced the volume), it becomes even more valuable today, especially because of the context in which we find ourselves - that is, during the construction of a new National Curricular Bases that threatens to curb the same educational possibilities outlined by Neto.

Taken in its entirety, the volume treated here brings together the most varied approaches and objects of study, all of which are really inserted into one or

more of the proposed themes (banquets, rituals, and power) – something, we must agree, difficult to achieve in collections produced from academic events. The only point that can be criticized in this totality is the little space given to the Mediterranean within the volume. The papers revolve mostly around Greek and Roman contexts, with only a few welcome contributions on other conjunctures. Therefore, returning to the beginning of the review, the Mediterranean appears here mainly as the *stage* of certain Histories, and its role as the *connector* of these Histories appears only within the papers, and in a few cases in a central position. It lacks, therefore, a conclusive chapter that connects the various contributions.

If seen in its particularities, the volume treated here brings together proposals of study and seminal analyses on multiple subjects, something that would perhaps justify a second edition better revised – there are many errors of edition in the consulted copies, including an incongruence of pagination between two of them. Therefore, I recommend that chapters be read individually, both by those interested in the subjects and objects of study addressed there, and by those who seek an introduction to the more specialized bibliography.