

Presentation of the dossier “Political-religious conflicts in Antiquity and the Middle Ages”

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The Antiquity and the Middle Ages encompassed numerous transformations in the political-religious field. We attest, in this time frame, the existence of several religious practices, as well as numerous conflicts involving them. We cite, as an example, polytheistic religions competing for space with the growing monotheistic creeds in Late Antiquity. Here we emphasize Christianity, which received a great boost during the fourth century CE, and which became quite influential during the medieval period. Within this context, the political sphere and its underlying demands were almost always involved, as religious disputes could encompass disputes over territories, borders, hegemony and power. In this way, we observe that religion is intertwined with Ancient and Medieval politics, as we understand that religious leaders also played roles of social and political leadership. Their functions in these areas, therefore, exerted a direct influence on their religious *status*.

The *dossier* “Political-religious conflicts in Antiquity and the Middle Ages” times is presented as a space for debate and reflection on issues involving political, religious and cultural realities during Antiquity and the Middle Ages. With that in mind, we highlight our position in favor of a History linked to its pluralities and particularities. We emphasize that the study of these themes is enriched by the interdisciplinarity of areas such as Archaeology, Anthropology, Arts, Architecture, Philosophy, Literature, and Theology. With the interview and the 8 articles present in this *dossier*, the reader will have access to different perspectives and analyzes on the political-religious reality of the proposed time frame, in addition to contemplating the most recent research being produced in Brazilian universities within this theme.

The interview with Prof. Dr. Margarida Maria de Carvalho plays a fundamental role on the subject of this *dossier*. The interviewee reflects on the political-religious conflicts in Antiquity while at the same time going through some highlights of her career and research. Carvalho's work revolves around the emblematic figure of the Emperor Julian, erroneously associated with the nickname "the apostate" over the centuries, but who concentrates in himself a great example of the philosophical and cultural diversity of the Roman Empire of his time. Throughout the interview, the reader will come across the definition of the term "political-religious", according to that researcher, as well as having contact with comments on the period of Late Antiquity and the nuances of Carvalho's current research.

We organized the structure of this *dossier* based on the chronological order of the research objects present in the articles. In this sense, the text *The terminology of "compassion" in Homer's Iliad: a brief contribution to the semantics of an emotion* opens this volume. Prof. Felipe Marques Maciel proposes to examine the semantic domain of "compassion" in Homer's *Iliad*. The conception of "compassion" emerges as one of the most significant concepts in the Homeric context, playing a crucial role both in the narrative development and in the anthropological dimension of the work.

In the text *Consulting the Sibylline Books: the atonement of prodigys in the Roman Republic*, Prof. Dr. Jhan Lima Daetwyler analyzed the mode in which the ancient Romans established new temples and cults for foreign gods and goddesses, by consulting the *Sibylline Books*. The author discusses divine integrations and how these actions were taken as a means to preserve Roman stability.

In *Fictio personae: the rhetorical use of the magical potential of the dead in Cicero's Pro Caelio*, Prof. Paulo Márcio Feitosa investigated how orator Cicero (106–43 BCE), in his speech *Defense of Celio*, used in a rhetorical way the political and religious aspect of the dead to build his argument around Celio's innocence.

The text of Prof. Ismael Wolf, *Conflicting religions: the uses of the "Mysteries of Mithras" as an argumentative element in the apologetics of Justin Martyr*, analyzes Justin Martyr's *First Apology* and *Dialogue with Trypho*, demonstrating the diversity and religious disputes portrayed in these works while emphasizing the explanation around the use of the "mythras of Mitra" in the argumentative construction of the aforementioned Justino.

In the article *Bodies in contest: the cult centers and the relics of Peter and Paul in the context of Late Antiquity*, Prof. Vanessa de Mendonça Rodrigues dos Santos explored the political-religious issues and disputes

that arose around the three main sites of worship of the figures of Peter and Paul and the relics of the apostles. In this sense, the author analyzed, together with the textual documentation, the similarities and differences, as well as the transformations over time, in the occupation by Christians of the Vatican Necropolis, the Ostiense Necropolis, and the *Ad Catacombs* region, on the Appian Way.

With the article *Converting into the “True Vine”*: Dionysian imagery in Christian context in Late Antiquity, Prof. Lucas Malafaia Figueiredo’s motto was to analyze the coexistence between Dionysian and Christian iconographies in the material culture of Late Antiquity. The author proposes that the incorporation of visual elements from cultures existing before the emergence of Christianity collaborated with the Empire’s own strategy of Christianization.

In *The monastery inserted in the world: observations from the writings of Basil of Caesarea and Augustine of Hippo (4th and 5th centuries AD)*, Prof. Dr. Janira Feliciano Pohlmann aims to examine elements of monastic life organized by bishops Basil of Caesarea and Augustine of Hippo in their monastic rules. Based on the movement between integration and estrangement, Basil and Augustine generated relationships between the monks and nuns with the temporal world and brought monastic ideals into the city environment, creating examples that should be followed by other Christians.

Finally, the *dossier* ends with the article by the organizers, Profs. Ana Carolina P. Sotocorno and Thaís de Almeida Rodrigues. With the text *Different perspectives on the political-religious conflicts of the Late Roman Empire: the views of Ammianus Marcellinus and Paulus Orosius (4th and 5th centuries)*, Sotocorno and Rodrigues discuss the perspectives of Amiano Marcelino and Paulus Orosius regarding the political-religious conflicts in Late Antiquity. Therefore, the productions selected for this article reveal particular contexts of the Western and Eastern Roman Empire that influenced the interpretation of the events described.

Thus, the *dossier* “Political-religious conflicts in Antiquity and the Middle Ages” encompasses a sample of research that has been developed in the Brazilian academic environment on the proposed theme. As explained, the periods from Antiquity to Middle Ages have a wide range of subjects that can be related to politics and religion.

We wish a fruitful reading to all readers.

Tradução de João Batista Ribeiro Santos