

I. EDITORIAL

Mare Nostrum's dossier on *Vegetarianism in Antiquity* opens with the article *A History of Vegetarianism in Antiquity* by Alexandra Kovacs, which presents an overview of the various studies about this topic since the 18th century. The author argues that vegetarianism was for a long time a marginalized subject in the historical field, and points out the many interpretative possibilities offered by an historical approach of this issue, especially due to the dialogue between history and archaeology. Kovacs also indicates that the concept of vegetarianism varies according to the period, society and social actors being analyzed, in such a way that it would be more appropriate to talk about “vegetarianisms”.

Alberto Bernabé's article, *Vegetarianismo en la Grecia Antigua* (*Vegetarianism in Ancient Greece*), develops the idea that there is not only one meaning for the concept of vegetarianism. Hence, Bernabé argues that ancient and modern authors tend to mix aspects of distinct forms of vegetarianism. He then discusses some types of vegetarianism in ancient Greece pointing out the differences between them. In this process, he highlights the political and ideological use of agriculture as a civilizing force associated with the myth of Demeter.

In *Justice for Animals According to Plutarch*, Damian Miszczyński claims that Plutarch created a theory of justice for animals inspired both by the Pythagorean and Orphic traditions and by the rationalist tradition of the Platonic Academy. According to this theory, justice applies to the relationship between species, i.e., justice is not restricted to the world of men, but also applies to relations between men and animals. Thus, Plutarch seems to encourage his audience to reduce the consumption of meat, to refrain from abusing animals as tools for work, and to not mistreat them.

Cintia Alfieri Gama-Rolland's article, *Alimentação e Tabus Alimentares no Egito Antigo: Pode-se Tratar de Vegetarianismo?* (*Food and Food Taboos in Ancient Egypt: May That Be Vegetarianism?*), discusses textual, archaeological and epigraphic evidence in order to identify whether the idea of what we call vegetarianism did exist amongst the ancient Egyptians. To do that, Gama-Rolland looks at the evidence from classical sources, archaeology and epigraphy related to the consumption of animal and vegetal products and their relationships with food

taboos. To the author, written texts such as the ones by Herodotus and Plutarch which indicate the existence of food taboos associated with the consumption of meat, are biased and belong to a later period of the history of Egypt. Thus, these sources cannot be generalized to the history of Egypt as a whole, especially when the information they provide are challenged by archaeological and epigraphic evidence. Gama-Rolland then argues that there was only one food taboo constant throughout the history of ancient Egypt: to avoid hunger, be it in the world of the living or in the world of the dead. To her, there was no such a thing as vegetarianism in ancient Egypt, even if the sources suggest that products of animal origin were rare on the table of less favoured groups.

Besides our dossier, there are three more articles on varied subjects. The first article, *Potes, Pratos e Contatos Culturais: Práticas Alimentares na Núbia durante o Reino Novo (c. 1.550-1.070 a.C.) (Pots, Dishes and Cultural Contacts: Eating Practices in New Kingdom Nubia (c. 1550-1070 BC))* by Rennan Lemos e Fábio Frizzo, deconstructs traditional ideas on the interactions between Egyptians and Nubians in the ancient world, pointing out the colonialist and racist aspects of such interpretations which were based anachronistically on the relations between Europeans and Africans in the modern world. In this way, the authors analyse tableware pottery produced during the New Kingdom period from the perspective of the consubstantiality of gender, race and class relationships emphasizing its potential as a means of cultural resistance in an imperial context. The second article, “*És Tácito ou Plínio?*” (*Plin. Ep. 9.23.3.2*): *Considerações acerca da Aristocracia Senatorial do Período Nerva-Trajanino* (“*Are you Tacitus ou Pliny?*” (*Plin. Ep. 9.23.3.2*): *Notes on the Senatorial Aristocracy under Nerva and Trajan*) by João Victor Lanna de Freitas, approaches the dynamics of provincial and municipal aristocracies in the centre of the Roman political power through a study of the letters from Pliny the Younger to Tacitus. The third article, *A Tradição na Produção de Estatuetas Cicládicas (3.200-2.700 a.C.) (Tradition in the Production of Cycladic Statuettes (3.200-2.700 a.C.))* by Francisco de Assis Sabadini, analyses the statuettes known as “canonical type” or “arms folded” produced by the Keros-Syros culture in the Cyclades.

Last but not least, we have a book review of James Scott’s *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States* (2017) by Uiran Gebara da Silva.