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Editorial – To the readers of this volume.

Michael Maas

Nicola Di Cosmo

It is a pleasure to see that Empires and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity. Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe, ca. 250-750 (2018), now translated as Impérios e Trocas na Antiguidade Tardia Eurasiática (2023), has found a place in Brazilian scholarship and has helped set the stage for this special issue of *Diálogos Mediterrânicos*.[i]

The editors and contributors to "Between the Mediterranean and Eurasia: Connectivity and Transformations in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages" have responded to the challenge that we posed for finding coherence over time within a huge geographical space "…not in terms of a single grand and all-encompassing narrative, but rather at a more granular and local level of the diverse places, cultures, societies, and empires whose piecemeal interaction led to large-scale, permanent change…".[ii] In other words, we sought to "offer unity in what had previously been seen as fragmentary and disassociated. This is quite far from saying that Eurasian Late Antiquity possessed a common, homogeneous culture or that its history can be told as one smoothly unrolling ribbon of causes and effects."[iii] As Averil Cameron noted in the book's epilogue, "Overall, this is a de-centered history, with multiple connections and multiple influences. It pulls us away from Eurocentric and triumphalist narratives. Teleology cannot be part of it." [iv] Nor were we writing global history. She pointed out, "In contrast, the present volume places its focus on local, fluid, and shifting connections with the period of Late Antiquity itself". [v]

The essays presented below extend the period of coverage beyond Late Antiquity through the Middle Ages, but the quest for interconnections of all sorts is no less evident and important. The varied papers gathered here within the broad Eurasian frame illuminate networks of language, trade, and power relations across vast regions as well as intersecting religious controversies and debates regarding the apocalypse and attitudes about historical writing. Texts in numerous languages are explored. Each author offers a

case study that stands alone, but each also helps delineate the manifold complexities of the Eurasian map as the tides of history swept across it.

We congratulate editors Renan Frighetto and Murilo Moreira de Souza and the contributors for assembling this rich and thoughtful volume that illustrates the importance of Eurasian perspectives in such an engaging fashion.

Sincerely,

Michael Maas (Houston, TX)

Nicola Di Cosmo (Princeton, NJ)

July 9, 2026

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[i] Nicola Di Cosmo and Michael Maas, eds., Empires and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity: Rome, China, Iran and the Steppe, ca. 250-750. (Cambridge University Press, 2018); Impérios e Trocas na Antiguidade Tardia Eurasiática. Roma, China, Irã e a estepe por volta de 250-750, translated by Felipe Vale da Silva (Editora Unicamp, 2023)

[ii] ibid, p. 2.

[iii] ibid, p. 15.

[iv] Averil Cameron, "Epilogue," in Nicola Di Cosmo and Michael Maas, eds., Empires and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity: Rome, China, Iran and the Steppe, ca. 250-750. (Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 426.

[v] Cameron, ibid, p. 427.