

Uses and Misuses of Ancient Mediterranean Sources

Edited by
Chiara Meccariello and
Jennifer Singletary

*Studies in Education and Religion in Ancient and
Pre-Modern History in the Mediterranean and Its Environs*



Mohr Siebeck

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Erudition, Authority, Manipulation

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Introduction

CHIARA MECCARIELLO AND JENNIFER SINGLETARY

The use of material from sources is a key feature of both texts and artifacts throughout the ancient Mediterranean world. Strategies such as quotation, citation, and reference to sources; the combination, incorporation, redaction, translation, and copying of source material; or the attribution of information or inspiration to historical or fictional sources are detectable in a variety of ancient texts and artistic productions. Especially in texts pertaining to religion and myth, citing sources, whether historical or supernatural, is a common strategy to imbue texts with authority, antiquity, or sacredness. The use of source material also highlights writers' access to knowledge and tradition and emphasizes their scholarly or literary acumen, while simultaneously legitimating, contesting, or manipulating the knowledge that is disseminated through its reuse. In addition, ancient sources have also been employed in later times for an equally wide variety of purposes, from liturgical to popular, from historical reconstruction to forgery, from scholarly analysis to creative reinterpretation.

The basic premise of this volume is that the use of ancient Mediterranean sources, both in antiquity and in modern times, is a fruitful area for examination by both Classicists and scholars of the ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible, and that attention to the way sources are used in different contexts improves our understanding of the myriad of ways in which this phenomenon plays out. Interdisciplinary dialogue between these fields already informed the development of a scientific approach to sources in the late eighteenth century, when the work of Johann Gottfried Eichhorn in the field of source criticism of the Hebrew Bible served as a model for Friedrich August Wolf's deconstructivist approach to the Homeric text, which, in turn, laid the foundation for the fundamental if now largely outdated practice of *Quellenforschung* among Classical philologists of the nineteenth century.¹ The contents of this volume are a step towards an increasingly interdisciplinary approach to this topic, by encouraging cross-cultural comparison through the juxtaposition of essays that examine the use of sources in a wide range of cultural and historical contexts.

¹ Grafton/Most/Zetzel 1985: 18–26; Most 2016: 935.

This introduction, co-authored by a Classicist and a scholar of the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near East, briefly showcases some of the possibilities for such comparative work. The subsequent sixteen essays examine the use of sources in and from ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Israel, Greece, and Rome in different historical contexts that span more than four millennia. Aside from the obvious and long-recognized benefits of an attention to unique cultural contexts, examining a phenomenon that occurs across cultures in individual historical periods is an essential first step to facilitate effective comparison.² Phenomena that occur cross-culturally exhibit characteristics that are both similar to other exemplars and unique to their individual textual and social-historical contexts. Cross-cultural comparison is thus worthwhile for a variety of reasons: it can usefully serve to highlight similarities and differences, spur new questions, and enable the formation and refinement of explanatory theories in scholarship.³ We hope that the essays in this volume will form fodder for additional comparative work on this topic in the future; the remainder of this introduction is one such effort in this direction.

The complex nature of the use of ancient Mediterranean sources in both antique and modern times is encapsulated by the history of the Greek thinker Euhemerus. Euhemerus himself is a somewhat paradoxical figure. His name made it into modern dictionaries, as the eponymous representative of what was later perceived as a philosophical theory, Euhemerism, or, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition, “The method of mythological interpretation which regards myths as traditional accounts of real incidents in human history”. But Euhemerus’s work, and even his historical identity, are largely mysterious to us. As is the case with several ancient Greek authors, we only have fragmentary remains of his writing, and not one single word-for-word quotation.

The way in which one of our major witnesses to his work introduces him is a good illustration of the complexities of source use in antiquity:

The ancient author Euhemerus, who came from the city of Messene, gathered together the deeds of Jupiter and of others thought to be gods and wove together a historical narrative from commemorative tablets and sacred inscriptions that were kept in the oldest temples and especially in the temple of Jupiter Triphylus. The commemorative tablet there

² As Smith 2000: 239 suggests, the “requirement that we locate a given example within the rich texture of its social, historical, and cultural environments that invest it with its local significance” must be the first step in the four “moments in the comparative enterprise”.

³ Bodel and Olyan summarize such benefits of comparative work in the introduction to their edited volume: “Comparison has the potential to generate new questions and novel insights; it can lead us to a more nuanced understanding of the category of religious behavior that interests us by revealing points of similarity as well as difference; and it can enable us to distinguish that which is common to a larger Mediterranean and West Asian cultural sphere from that which is particular to one or another cultural setting” (Bodel/Olyan 2008: 3–4). See also the similar benefits of comparison across the ancient Near East, as well as pitfalls to be avoided, outlined by Stökl 2012: 5–7 and Nissinen 2017: 43–50.

claimed that a gold column had been set in place by Jupiter himself, on which column he recorded his deeds so that it would be a memorial of his deeds for posterity. Ennius translated and followed this historical account. These are his (Ennius's) words: "There Jupiter gives rule of the sea to Neptune, so that he would rule over all islands and over all places bordering the sea".⁴

Here Lactantius, a Christian writing in Latin in the early fourth century CE, uses a second-century BCE translation by the Latin poet Ennius of the work of Euhemerus, which in turn is a Greek fourth/third-century BCE narrative account allegedly interwoven out of epigraphic records, including one put up by the god Jupiter – that is, Zeus himself – as a perennial monument to his own deeds.

There are several degrees of separation between the reader of this passage and the ultimate alleged original source, Zeus, and potential for distortion lurks at every step. Going through the various layers of this stratification of sources, we encounter several intriguing issues.

First, Lactantius's report of Ennius's words. These were only available to him in a prose version, probably not coinciding with Ennius's original translation, which might well have been in verse; at any rate, scholars have shown that several fragments quoted by Lactantius cannot possibly be literal quotations of Ennius's work.⁵ Lactantius's own religious agenda is also, potentially, grounds for suspicion: Euhemerus features in a book entitled *De falsa religione*, which sets out to demonstrate that pagan religion is false, and leverages Euhemerus's work precisely to this purpose.

Second, Ennius's translation. This was a rendering in another language and context, and perhaps medium (verse vs. prose), presumably with some kind of artistic intent and/or ideological engagement; and we know enough of Latin translations of Greek originals in this and later periods to expect a far greater amount of freedom than in what we consider translation today.

Third, Euhemerus himself. He claims to be drawing on inscriptional records of historical deeds: but did he really find such a glaring proof of the real origins of the gods, one that had been standing in place for a long time, though remaining unnoticed and unable to dismantle the whole of Greek religion? Is this a fictional claim of Euhemerus, a rhetorical construct, or even a forgery?

And finally, at the bottom of our pile of layers, we find none other than Zeus, in Euhemerus's view a human being deified after death, who is supposed to have recorded his own *res gestae* as a monument for future readers – if such an individual existed, can we trust his account of his own exploits?

When confronted with this intricate web of sources, the modern reader is likely to be easily led to incredulity by different factors. One factor would certainly be our presumable reluctance to believe in a historical Zeus whose deeds

⁴ Lactant. *Div. inst.* 1.11.33–34 = Euhemerus, test. 3a + fr. 19 *BNJ* (all translations of Euhemerus's fragments and testimonia are by Christensen 2014, at times slightly adapted).

⁵ See especially Laughton 1951.

became the stuff of Greek mythology, which of course might go hand in hand with our reluctance to acknowledge Zeus's existence *tout court*; but other factors also come into play. For example, the numerous (alleged) stages of transmission, and the fact that of this long and complex process we only see the tip of the iceberg, while all the named sources are lost: we have no Ennius, no Euhemerus, and of course no inscribed column put up by Zeus. Another factor may be our disenchanting take on human ability and willingness to report sources faithfully, not only when their use is part of a specific agenda, as in the case of Euhemerus's revolutionary assertions and of Lactantius's Christian exploitation of them, but also when sources are simply translated, summarized, or even cited. Last but not least is our awareness of the existence of fictional and quasi-fictional literature, with its array of rhetorical devices, and its inherent keenness to invention and distortion – indeed, despite the title *Sacred Register* (*hiera anagraphe*), many scholars now see in Euhemerus's work a philosophical-religious treatise in the format of a utopian novel, a fictional first-person account of the author's journey to the places where he uncovered the gods' true nature.⁶

This may all seem clear to the modern scholar. But what about the ancient reader? Believing in Euhemerus's account seems to us an act of faith comparable to believing in Zeus, and admittedly Euhemerism was not so widespread in antiquity as to encourage one to deem his sacred history a masterpiece of persuasion or an ideological success. But an epitome of Lactantius's work, prepared by the author himself, introduces a summary treatment of the same Euhemerus story that we have seen in the full version by naming two linchpins of its credibility, namely *rerum fides*, “the trustworthiness of facts”, and *temporum vetustas*, “antiquity”.⁷ Obviously this well serves Lactantius's religious agenda, to which Euhemerus's alleged proof of the non-divinity of pagan gods is a precious ally; but *fides rerum* and *vetustas* are key concepts here, and they are used precisely because they are known to be effective. In particular, resorting to an epigraphic source is an attested *topos* in demonstrations of reliability, and it is easy to see why: an inscription is a tangible object, often associated with templar contexts; it is an original potentially available for the public to see, against which anyone could theoretically check an author's claims. As to antiquity, the older the source, the closer it is, at least chronologically, to the event itself, and the more likely it is to be or to directly derive from an autoptic account; and even if an old written record may undergo material decay, and a report of a very old account may be affected by the familiar telephone game effect, antiquity of the ultimate source is widely and persuasively used to boost an argument. These elements certainly helped to characterize Euhemerus's sources as good ones and to create an impression of diligent research or, to put it in Augustine's words, “*historica diligentia*”.⁸

⁶ On the scholarly debate on the genre of this work see Winiarczyk 2002: 19–27.

⁷ Lactant., *Epit.* 1.11.33–34 = Euhemerus T 3b.

⁸ August., *De civ. D.* 6.7 = Euhemerus T 4g.

Ultimately, we may find that our response to a passage like Lactantius's is largely different from the expected response of his contemporary readers. Among them, the density of named sources in Lactantius's passage may have inspired, rather than a sense of remoteness from the original account, one of admiration for Lactantius's knowledge, erudition, and familiarity with textual resources; and this could have proven key to persuasion. As for Euhemerus himself, it is significant that Lactantius's and other Christian authors' keenness to trust and exploit his work is in striking contrast with the less flattering portrayal of this author in non-Christian Greek literature. Plutarch, for example, refers to his account as "quackeries" (φενაკισμοί), and accuses him of "having himself constructed copies of an unbelievable and non-existent mythology", thereby "sowing atheism over the whole of the inhabited earth".⁹ Plutarch's motive is as religious as Lactantius's, but the different religious view leads to a different approach to Euhemerus's alleged use of inscriptional records: for Plutarch, the fact that no other has ever seen these records is suspicious, and he concludes his brief treatment of Euhemerus by denying – pretty much like modern scholars – the very existence of the places where Euhemerus purports to have found them.

The example of Euhemerus showcases some of the crucial aspects of the use of ancient sources tackled in the three sections of this volume, from the discovery and preservation of past knowledge to the complex intertwining of source use and authorization strategies, to the adaptation of old sources to new contexts. References to a written copy of the Torah in two texts from the Hebrew Bible as well as two later parabiblical texts highlight similar issues.¹⁰

Though a number of scholars have suggested that one of the key hallmarks of Judaism, as distinct from earlier Israelite or Judean religions, is the central role given to the written Torah,¹¹ the literary and rhetorical strategies used by biblical and parabiblical writers to construct and disseminate the Torah as the authoritative text *par excellence* are just beginning to be explored.¹² The oldest text that seems to reference the written Torah as a single, unified entity is the narrative of its discovery by the high priest Hilkiah, and subsequent delivery to King Josiah, in 2 Kings 22–23. In this biblical text, the protagonists call for radical religious innovations that claim to be based on this supposedly newly recovered copy of the Torah, which they cast as reforms or restorations of older Israelite and Yahwistic practices. This tale imbues the Torah with both a special antiquity and authority, bolstered by the support of the religious establishment (represented by the high priest), confirmed through divination by the prophetess Huldah, accredited by the educated elite (the scribe Shaphan), and decreed as authoritative

⁹ Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 23.360A = Euhemerus T 4e.

¹⁰ Jennifer Singletary thanks Prof. Reinhard Kratz for many productive discussions about these texts during her time at the Collaborative Research Centre 1136.

¹¹ Collins 2017, Lee 2011, Satlow 2006.

¹² Otto 2017.

by the royal house. Yet, the specific contents of this supremely authoritative work are not recorded here, either through direct quotation or even paraphrase. What exactly Shaphan read to Josiah, and Josiah read to the populace, is a mystery.

The report of the reintroduction of the laws of the Torah by Ezra in Ezra 7–10 and Nehemiah 8 also includes the instigation of radical religious innovations that claim to be based on antique prescriptions and practices from a written copy of the Torah. But though the reading of its contents in public is described in these texts as well, the exact contents remain unknown. In 1 and 2 Maccabees, again the foundation of a major religious reform (cast this time as a polemic against Greek religion, Hellenism, and Hellenized Jews) is presented as a re-statement of older, more original practices, and a written Torah is cited, but not directly quoted or paraphrased, to prove this assertion. Compare this text to the Letter of Aristeas, which takes a different stance regarding Hellenization: this pseudepigraphic work seeks to legitimate the Greek translation of the Torah by relating a legendary tale of its miraculous completion by 72 unanimous priests. Both these parabiblical stories continue to use the rhetorical technique of attributing unique antiquity and authority to their sources to justify what are actually sharp departures from previous practice, without revealing many key details about the source itself.

These four texts share a number of common features: they all present innovations in religious practice as restorations of older, more original practices based on a particular antique text; they all describe the public reading of the written Torah's contents to an audience who are portrayed as previously unaware of its contents. Yet each of these texts was composed in a different context, and each also purports to depict different historical settings. Each text thus reveals the features of the Torah the different writers found most significant and thus chose to highlight for their audiences, providing a lens into a variety of strategies for legitimating and authorizing the text, as well as the development of these strategies over time. Much about who composed these texts and why, however, remains unclear, as do the contents and form of the Torah(s) they reference. What documents made up the Torah(s) described in these four texts? Is the Torah referenced in 2 Kings 22 co-extensive with some version of Deuteronomy, or is it referring to a version of the larger Pentateuch? What was most likely included in Ezra's Torah? In Judas Maccabeus's? To which version of the Septuagint does Aristeas refer, and what did its Hebrew *Vorlage* look like? We can only speculate, yet how, why, and in what forms the written Torah became authoritative for different communities is crucial to our understanding of how Judaism eventually became known as a "religion of the book".

These examples from ancient Greece, the Hebrew Bible, and parabiblical texts have several enticing commonalities: for example, a narrative of discovery, which is so construed as to imbue the recovered source with antiquity and authority; the rooting of religious innovation or contestation in an antique text;

and different reactions of different writers to the same source, either in selecting and highlighting what is most relevant or in the overall assessment of the source. These, of course, only represent a fraction of the many aspects and facets of the use of ancient Mediterranean sources that beg examination. The remainder of this volume discusses many more. The essays that follow are based on papers delivered at the international conference “As It Is Written? Uses of Sources in Ancient Mediterranean Texts”, held in Göttingen in October 2018 as part of the activities of the DFG-funded Collaborative Research Centre 1136, *Bildung und Religion in Kulturen des Mittelmeerraums und seiner Umwelt von der Antike bis zum Mittelalter und zum Klassischen Islam*. The volume also includes contributions based on papers delivered at the workshop “(Mis)use of Sources: Ancient and Modern”, organized by Jennifer Singletary at the 64th *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (Innsbruck, July 2018), as well as two additional contributions solicited by the editors to ensure balanced representation of the various fields.

Building on these two events, the overall purpose of this book is to explore uses and misuses¹³ of ancient Mediterranean sources in a variety of periods, places, and contexts, focusing on strategies of incorporation of derivative materials as a key to understanding the dissemination of religious and mythological knowledge.¹⁴ Of course we make no claim to comprehensiveness, either in the geographical and chronological coverage or as regards genres and topics. What this volume offers is rather a series of case studies displaying multiple approaches to and perspectives on the ways in which various writers dealt with ancient Mediterranean sources.

Section A, “Preserving, Archiving, and Detecting Sources”, includes essays that focus on the use of sources in historical periods ranging from the Neo-Babylonian period in Mesopotamia, to Imperial Rome, to Early Christian Egypt, and explore issues such as the preservation and archiving of earlier works or traditions in ancient texts as well as modern scholarly techniques to detect textual quotations. Marie Young and Tonio Mitto (“In Search of Former Kings: Copying *Sîn-kāšid*’s and *Sîn-iddinam*’s Inscriptions in the Neo- and Late Babylonian Periods”) contribute new editions of three school copies of royal inscriptions from the Neo-Babylonian and Late Babylonian periods, analyzing what they reveal concerning which aspects of the originals the apprentice scribes copying them studied most intensively. Laura Carlson Hasler (“Citation, Collection, and the Protection of Memory in 2 Maccabees”) analyzes citation practices in 2 Mac-

¹³ By “misuse” of a source – an umbrella term with no pretense of reflecting the views of ancient writers or readers – we mean any intentional or unintentional departure from the source that entails a significant change in the source’s message.

¹⁴ The inclusion of Greek mythological texts alongside more undisputedly religious texts is based on their role in preserving and disseminating knowledge on deities, heroes and heroines, and their interrelations. See e. g. the definition of myth in Loudon 2006: 9.

cabees, arguing that these help to form a culturally vital archive in the wake of destruction. Georgios Vassiliades (“Livy and the Legends of Rome’s Foundation: A ‘Double Standard’ Approach”) investigates the inclusion of legendary materials in Livy’s account of the early history of Rome, showing that the historian, while programmatically avoiding confirming or refuting the validity of myths, exploited the mythical tradition so as to endow his narrative of Rome’s foundation and early expansion with religious authority. Nereida Villagra (“Source Citations in the Scholia to the *Odyssey*: References, Subscriptions, and the Mythographus Homericus”) explores a tantalizing collection of Greek mythological narratives related to specific lines of the Homeric poems. By investigating the regular mention of authorities in the subscription of each narrative, Villagra highlights the combination of different sources into self-standing narratives as a typical feature of Imperial mythography. So Miyagawa and Heike Behlmer (“Quotative Index Phrases in Shenoute’s *Canon 6*: A Case Study of Quotations from the Psalms”) illustrate the use of a quantitative method of corpus and computational linguistics – the historical text reuse detection program TRACER, developed by the Göttingen Centre for Digital Humanities – for the investigation of biblical text reuse in the works of the Egyptian Christian abbot Shenoute and his successor Besa.

In Section B, “Authority, Divinity, and Power”, five scholars explore Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Graeco-Roman texts with a view to elucidating both the use of divine words and strategies of authorization based on the employment of sacred, secret, or other sources construed as authoritative. Carlos Gracia Zamazona (“Divine Words in the Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts [c. 2000–1500 BCE]”) proposes a classification of the interactions between gods and the deceased in a corpus of ancient Egyptian mortuary texts of a mostly dialogical nature, the so-called Coffin Texts, demonstrating that divine words are especially used to endorse the deceased in transitional or difficult moments or to equate them with the gods, thereby equipping them with a “powerful tool for legitimation”. Gina Konstantopoulos (“‘These Are of the Mouth of Ea’: The Divine Origin of Incantations and the Legitimation of the Exorcist’s Craft”) examines the ways in which *āšipūtu*, or the craft of the exorcist, is legitimated through association with Ea and Adapa in ancient Mesopotamia. Szilvia Sövegjártó (“Source Texts as Authority Constructions: A Conceptual Approach to the Old Babylonian Literary Discourse”) analyzes intertextual relations between the bilingual manuscript CBS 11341, Sing a Song for Šulgi, and the Šulgi hymns known as “fictional autobiographies”. Ilaria Andolfi (“A Writing Hard to Wash Out: A Reassessment of the Story about Acusilaus and his Bronze Tablets”) explores, through the case of the Greek mythographer Acusilaus, the *topos* of attributing the mythological, genealogical or historical content of one’s own writing to a material source, such as bronze tablets, as a way to demonstrate access to secret and authoritative knowledge. Finally, Francesca Boldrer (“*Sacra ... canam*: Propertius’s Aetiolog-

ical-Religious Poetry and His Use of Sources”) investigates Popertius’s “Roman elegies” with a view to bringing to light the poet’s antiquarian and comparative research and at the same time to unveiling the strategies he used to underscore his own divine inspiration.

Section C, “Manipulating and Adapting Sources: Ancient to Modern”, explores free reuses of sources and adaptation of sources to new contexts and media, both in antiquity and in modern times. Michael Chen (“Adapting Ancient Egyptian Healing Spells onto Late Period Statuary”) examines the complexities of the adaptation of texts onto religious objects in the case of Egyptian healing statues of the Late period (c. 664–332 BCE). Inscribed with magical texts drawn from a known corpus, these statues reveal visual strategies for the adaptation or manipulation of the healing spell texts so as to enhance their efficacy as healing objects. David P. Wright (“The Covenant Code Narrative: Neo-Assyrian Influences and Context”) identifies texts within the Pentateuch that belong to a narrative associated with the law collection found in Exodus 20:23–23:19 (the Covenant Code), building on his thesis that this collection was created using the Laws of Hammurabi as a primary source, and arguing that the Covenant Code was contextualized through its placement within a larger narrative. Mathias Winkler (“The Book of Proverbs: Sources Become Invisible”) discusses the selection, manipulation, and concealment of Egyptian materials and source attribution in different versions of the book of Proverbs. Przemysław Piwowarczyk (“Using the Scriptures in Documentary Letters from Western Thebes”) analyzes scriptural quotations in Coptic monastic letters from Western Thebes in Egypt (sixth to eighth century CE), focusing on manipulative strategies such as decontextualization, conflation, and free creation of scriptural passages. Silvia Gabrieli (“Enuma Elish: A Glorious Past and a Curious Present”) highlights different transmission strategies used in both ancient and modern times for the Babylonian Epic of Creation, particularly in contemporary media. In the last essay in this section, Dustin Nash (“Assyriology and the Allosaurus: Sources, Symbols, and Memory at the Creation Museum and Ark Encounter”) also discusses contemporary uses of ancient Mesopotamian sources, focusing on the use, or perhaps more accurately misuse, of Assyriological material at the Creation Museum in Kentucky.

Our contributors focus primarily on texts that are related to the realm of religion. In the context of our work at the Collaborative Research Centre 1136, we worked to initiate a collective reflection on how textual products that presuppose and disseminate knowledge about religious and mythological contents reuse and repurpose existing knowledge, thereby functioning as links in more or less long and variously configured transmission chains. These transfers of knowledge, which could take place in different contexts (for example within families, religious institutions, political centers, or educational institutions), belong to the realm of education as conceptualized by the Collaborative Research Centre 1136,

which encompasses formal education, processes of socialization, as well as “the development of reflection on God, the world, and the self (according to the German concept of ‘*Bildung*’).”¹⁵

Three main aspects have emerged from our contributors’ work that are worth special mention here as particularly interesting areas for future comparative research. First, a recurring tension between tradition and innovation appears to underlie the use and manipulation of sources that inform the transfer and dissemination of religious knowledge. On the one hand, citing sources helped ancient writers to connect to the past and anchor their work in accepted traditions. The use of sources is, in this sense, a form of authorization, and underlines a writer’s competence and cultural capital. At the same time, source manipulation, adaptation of sources to new contexts, and deconstruction and reconstruction of source materials were often tools for innovation, as authors tried to legitimize or even mask departures from tradition by referencing the same authoritative, traditional sources they sought to go beyond.

Second, as several of the essays in this volume show, many of the processes of knowledge transfer encoded in written texts were reserved for elite recipients, an even more restricted group than the already restricted number of literates. In some cases, a small elite was the only actual addressee of a given text (Chen), or highly educated recipients were the only ones who could understand the subtlety of the use of sources (Winkler) or unmask deliberate manipulation or free use of sources. This raises many important questions about how the use of sources worked with respect to different audiences, intended or actual.

Third, a number of essays highlight the importance of materiality in a physical or metaphorical sense. For example, the insertion of long quotations in a narrative may function as a virtual surrogate for physical archive spaces (Carlson Hasler); while the attribution of the content of one’s own writing to a material source such as a bronze tablet may be used to demonstrate access to secret, ancient, or elitist knowledge (Andolfi); and the written word may be adapted to the materiality of iconographical media so as to achieve new effects (Chen). The interplay of text and material culture is another important avenue for future research on the use of sources.

Through these and other insights, we hope the following contributions will show that what is a somewhat unsettling and humbling truth – that in the study of antiquity we are often bound to refraction and mediatedness with regard to our sources – can turn into a challenging and exciting research tool, which ultimately allows us to glimpse the mentality surrounding several links in the transmission chain.

For the food for thought and new research directions that these essays have offered to us, we would like to thank the DFG-funded Collaborative Research

¹⁵ Gemeinhardt 2017: 327.

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