

# Source Criticism

## THE ROMANS

24 May 2019

# What is a source?

- Primary sources: texts & objects providing first-hand testimony & direct evidence to the object of study.
  - Polybius for the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE;
  - Augustan sculpture for the turn of the millennium;
  - Pliny's letters for the late 1<sup>st</sup> / early 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE;
  - Massimo Pigliucci's *How To Be a Stoic* (2017) for reception of stoicism
- Secondary sources: anything that relates to the object of study and is not a primary source, i.e. something that gives information *about* it:
  - Zosimus on Constantine (?)
  - Modern literature (?)

→ "Sources" and "Literature"

# Types of Sources

- Narratives (“Tradition”): made with the intent to inform posterity
  - Annals
  - Narrative histories (Pol., Plin., Tac., Euseb., ...)
  - Memoires (Caesar’s *BG*, *RGDI*, ...)
  - Many government documents (e.g. minutes)
- Relics (“Überrest”): focussing solely on present
  - Most archaeological sources (trash, ruins, burials, ...)
  - Newspapers
  - some business / government documents & files (tax records, laws)
  - Private correspondence (if no intent to publish)
- Fuzzy: where to draw the line?
  - Inscriptions? Coins? Letters?



Johann Gustav **Droysen**

# Source Criticism

## Galatians 3.26–28

2,16! Χριστόν, ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν· 25 ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως οὐκέτι ὑπὸ παιδαγωγόν ἐσμεν. 26 Πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ ὁτῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ· 27 ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστόν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστόν ἐνεδύσασθε. 28 οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλλην, οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ· ἅπαντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. 29 εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ, ἄρα τοῦ Ἀβραάμ σπέρμα ἐστέ, κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι.

**4** Λέγω δέ, ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ὁ κληρονόμος νήπιός ἐστιν, οὐδὲν διαφέρει δούλου κύριος πάντων ὢν, **2** ἀλλ' ὑπὸ ἐπιτρόπους ἐστίν καὶ οἰκονόμους ἄχρι τῆς προθεσμίας τοῦ πατρὸς. **3** οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὅτε ἦμεν νήπιοι, ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ἦμεθα δεδουλωμένοι· **4** ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον, **5** ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ, ἵνα τὴν υἰοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν. **6** Ὅτι δὲ ἐστε υἱοί, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα ἰσοῦς αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν κρᾶζον· αββα ὁ πατήρ. **7** ὥστε οὐκέτι ὁ εἶς δοῦλος ἀλλ' υἱός· εἰ δὲ υἱός, καὶ κληρονόμος (διὰ θεοῦ).

**8** Ἀλλὰ τότε μὲν οὐκ εἰδότες θεὸν ἐδουλεύσατε τοῖς ὀφύσει μὴ οὔσιν θεοῖς· **9** νῦν δὲ γνόντες θεόν, μᾶλλον δὲ γνωσθέντες ὑπὸ θεοῦ, πῶς ἐπιστρέφετε πάλιν ἐπὶ τὰ ἄσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα οἷς πάλιν ἄνωθεν δουλεύειν θέλετε; **10** ἡμέρας παρατηρεῖσθε καὶ μῆνας καὶ καιροὺς καὶ ἑνιαυτοὺς, **11** φοβοῦμαι ὑμᾶς μή πως εἰκῆ κεκοπίακα εἰς ὑμᾶς.

9 Kol2,20!· 5,1: 3,23 |  
Mc1,15 E1,10 Tob  
14,5 Kol1,19·  
J5,36 IJ4,9· 3,23!  
3,13· 1K6,20!· R8,15!  
| 3,26 R8,14!  
  
R8,15 Mc14,36  
L11,2!p |  
3,29 R8,17  
  
ITh4,5!  
2Chr13,9 Is37,19 Jr  
2,11 1K8,4!s; 12,2 |  
1K13,12!  
  
3!  
R14,5 Kol2,16! IHen  
72-82  
| 2,2!· 1K15,10!

“<sup>26</sup>For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup>For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. <sup>28</sup>There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all none in Christ Jesus.” (NKJV)

26 °P<sup>46</sup> P 2464; C1 | ' Χριστου Ιησου P<sup>46</sup> 6, (f 1739, 1881 sy<sup>p</sup>) sa | - P • 28 Γαπαντες N A B<sup>2</sup> | ' εν εστε εν Χριστω F G 33 | εστε Χριστου P<sup>46</sup> N<sup>c</sup> A | εστε εν (vel εν?) Χριστου N\* (vg<sup>ms</sup>) | txt N<sup>2</sup> B C D K L P Ψ 0278, 81, 104, 365, 630, 1175, 1241, 1505, 1739, 1881, 2464 M; C1  
¶ 4,3 Γημεν A B C D<sup>1</sup> K L P Ψ 81, 104, 630, 1241, 1505, 1739, 1881, 2464 M; C1 | txt P<sup>46</sup> N D\* F G 0278, 33, 365, 1175 • 6 ° B 1739 sa | ° P<sup>46</sup> | Γυμων D<sup>2</sup> K L Ψ 33, 81, 365, 630, 1505, 2464 M vg<sup>cl</sup> sy bo<sup>pl</sup> | txt P<sup>46</sup> N A B C D\* F G P 0278, 104, 1175, 1241, 1739, 1881 lat sa bo<sup>pl</sup> • 7 ° F G | ' δια θεον F G 1881 | δια Χριστου 81, 630 sa | δια Ιησου Χριστου 1739<sup>c</sup> | θεου δια Χριστου N<sup>2</sup> C<sup>3</sup> D K L 0278, 104, 365, 1175, 1241, 2464 M ar | θεου δια Ιησου Χριστου P 6, 326, 1505 sy | κληρονομος μεν θεου, συγκληρονομος δε Χριστου Ψ | txt P<sup>46</sup> N\* A B C\* 33, 1739\*<sup>vid</sup> lat bo; C1 • 8 ° K b d; Irlat Ambst Spec • 9 Γδουλευσαι N B | txt P<sup>46</sup> A C D F G K L P Ψ 0278, 33, 81, 104, 365, 630, 1175, 1241, 1505, 1739, 1881, 2464 M • 10 Γ παρατηρουντες P<sup>46</sup> • 11 Γεκοπιασα P<sup>46</sup> 1739, 1881

# Source Criticism

## L. ANNAEI SENECAE

---

### DE BREVITATE VITAE

1 Maior pars mortalium, Pauline, de naturae malignitate conqueritur, quod in exiguum aevi gignimur, quod haec tam uelociter, tam rapide dati nobis temporis spatia decurrunt, adeo ut exceptis admodum paucis ceteros in ipso uitae apparatu uita destituat. nec huic publico, ut opinantur, malo turba tantum et imprudens uulgus ingemuit: clarorum quoque uirorum hic affectus querellas euocauit. inde illa maximi medicorum exclamatio est, 'uitam breuem esse, 2 longam artem'; inde Aristotelis cum rerum natura exigentis min-

# Source Criticism

## Seneca, *De Brevitate Vitae*

### (On the Shortness of Life)

118

COMMENTARY: *BREV.* 1–1.1

do have an *inscriptio* at the head of each, even of *Tr.* which lacks one in the *Ambrosianus*. The transmission of *Ot.* as an *addendum* to *V.B.* in the MSS may be a relevant factor (speculative theories in Dionigi 43–6), though a copyist confused by this would have been alerted to the discrepancy by the list of contents in the *Ambrosianus* (Reynolds ix).

#### De breuitate uitae

##### 1 Exordium

In a characteristically brisk opening S. establishes the trajectory of his argument by countering what he portrays as popular but misguided opinion: life is too short. Not so: life is long enough if well managed. Far from coaxing Paulinus (and his general reader) into agreement, S. affects a dogmatic tone which is sustained throughout the treatise. Hippocrates and Aristotle are made to lend support to the case against which S. will argue; he thus ennobles his own status as a corrector of even distinguished opinion, but not without subtly manipulating the Hippocratic and Aristotelian evidence on which he draws (1.1 n. on *'uitam . . . artem'*, 1.2 n. on *'aetatis . . . stare'*). Echoes of Sallustian moralizing can also be heard (1.1 n. on *conqueritur*).

**1.1 malignitate** 'meanness', as opposed to the kindly generosity attributed to nature in S.'s riposte (2.1 *illa se benigne gessit*); cf. against parallel charges of meanness *Marc.* 16.1, *Ben.* 7.1.6. **conqueritur**: S. uses the compound verb sparingly, here to consolidate the massed chorus of complaint as at *Pol.* 2.2 *conqueramur* 'let us lament together', 3.3. But S. also modifies Sallust's use of *queror* at *Jug.* 1.1, a passage conspicuously echoed here: *falso queritur de natura sua genus humanum, quod imbecilla atque aevi brevis forte potius quam uirtute regatur*. Through verbal and thematic reminiscence S. arguably pays homage to Sallust (Traina (1987) 164; modifications in Borgo (1989)); but whereas Sallust begins by summarily dismissing mankind's groundless protestations (*falso queritur . . .*), S. delays his rejoinder (1.3 *non exiguum temporis habemus*), first constructing a hierarchy of misguided opinion (*imprudens uulgus / clari uiri / Hippocrates and Aristotle*) before finally supplying his corrective. **quod . . . gignimur, quod . . . decurrunt**: *decurrunt* Reynolds after Gertz (1874) 146. Most editors read *decurrant* with the MSS, thereby (over-)straining to distinguish the universal truth of the first *quod* clause from the opinion reported in the second ('Not everybody feels that "life fails us just as we begin to live"', Alexander (1945) 81). **gignimur**:

COMMENTARY: *BREV.* 1.1

119

with *in* + acc., a post-Augustan variation on *nasci* with the same construction (*TLL* vi 2.1992.29–32; McKeown on *Ov. Am.* 1.9.41–2); favoured by S., e.g. 1.2, *Ir.* 2.13.1, *Ben.* 4.4.3. For the temporal phrase accompanying the verb, *Ir.* 3.42.2 *tamquam in aeternum genitos*. **aeui**: perhaps 'le temps du Monde' (Grimal 15) as opposed to 'the mortal span' (*OLD* 5a), thereby distinguishing the meaning of *in exiguum aevi* and *dati nobis temporis spatia*; the twofold complaint (*quod . . . quod*) is then that (i) in the context of universal time man lives only for a moment (*Ep.* 77.20, 99.10, 31), and (ii) within that moment the time granted to us passes too quickly. Cf. *Ep.* 74.10 *quicquid nobis dedit [sc. providentia] breue est et exiguum si compares mundi totius aeuo*. **tam . . . rapide**: the anaphoric arrangement of advs. (used synonymously) redoubles time's swift progress; *uelociter* rare in S. (*Ep.* 89.2, 110.7, *N.Q.* 1.14.5, 7.5.2), *rapide* only here, but cf. in combination *Marc.* 16.7 *rapidum ueloxque tempus*, *Ep.* 108.25 *uelocitatem rapidissimae rei*, also of time. **spatia decurrunt**: the laps of life 'run their course', so to speak (*OLD* *decurro* 5c). The verb is more often used transitively with *spatium* in reference to elapsed time (*Pl. St.* 81 *decurso aetatis spatio*; *OLD* *decurro* 8b). **exceptis . . . paucis**: the abl. abs. neatly isolates the very (*admodum*) few who live long enough to break the general rule (*ceteros . . . destituit*). **in ipso . . . apparatu** 'while they are still only getting ready to live'. Cf. 9.1 for ridicule of those who waste their lives in always preparing to live better. **uitae . . . uita**: for the polyptoton to underline a paradox, 9.1 *impedio uitae uitam instruunt*, *Ep.* 22.9, 62.3, 97.14 (cited by Traina (1987) 83). **destituit** 'leaves in the lurch' (*OLD* 3b). **publico** 'universal'; *Ot.* 4.1 n. **ut opinantur** qualifies *malo*; S. distances himself from the popular view. **turba . . . et . . . uulgus**: the contemptuous combination also at *Lucr. D.R.N.* 2.920, *Stat. Theb.* 3.606. **ingemuit**: of unreasonable or irrational complaint also at *Ep.* 99.3, 115.16, 120.13. **quoque** 'even' (*OLD* 4a). **affectus** 'feeling'. Pejorative, equivalent to πάθος: the *sapiens* who subordinates the passions to reason is ἀπαθήs and hence immune to disturbance (*Ep.* 85.9 *si ratio proficit, ne incipient quidem affectus*). For the Stoic ideal, *SVF* III 108.21–109.14 with Rist 25–7 on ἀπάθεια. **maximi medicorum**: Hippocrates of Cos, similarly described at *Ep.* 95.20. **exclamatio** 'dictum', post-Augustan (e.g. *Tac. Dial.* 31.6). **'uitam . . . artem'**: a close rendering of the first two cola of Hippocrates' first aphorism (ὁ βίος βραχύς, ἡ δὲ τέχνη μακρὴ, IV 458 Littré), but with chiasmic rearrangement to emphasize the contrasting adjs. S. imposes a loaded interpretation on the aphorism; for to assert that life

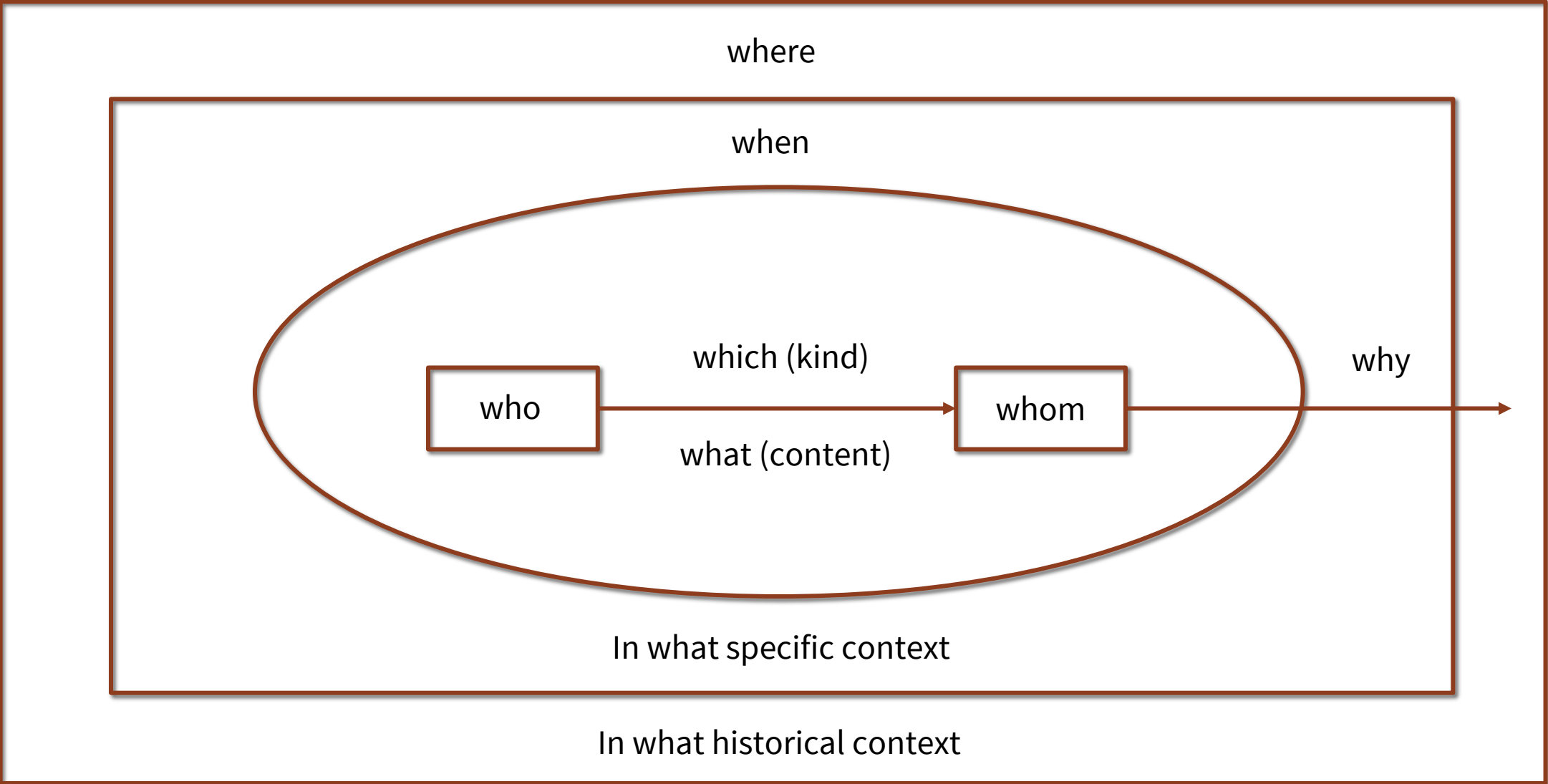
# Source criticism

- External criticism
  - Origin (who, when, where, how)
  - Authenticity
  - Originality (primary vs. secondary)
  - Accuracy (possibility, plausibility, transmission errors, forgery)
- Internal criticism
  - Linguistical analysis (translation, archaic language, technical language)
  - Merit (allusions, topoi, context)
- Interpretation
  - Summary
  - Historical context (broad & specific)
  - Author (biography, intent, “ideology” / interests)
  - Reception (effects, influences, consequences)
  - Epistemological value (scholarly evaluation, relevance)

# Source Criticism

whence	Where was the source found?
who	Who wrote it (bio, status, authenticity, closeness)?
where	Where was the source created?
when	When was the source created (& what could that mean)?
which	Which type of source is it?
what	What is the source about (abstract, structure, contradictions, gaps)?
whom to	To whom is the source addressed, what is their relation?
why	Why was this source made, what was the intent?
context	What was the historical and specific context of the source creation?
reception	What was the source's effect, how was it understood?
value	What's the source's scholarly assessment & relevance for research?

# Source Criticism



# Source Criticism

Who, whom, which, what, why, when, specific context, where, historical context

1. Pliny's *Letter 10.96 to Trajan* (on the Christians)

# Source Criticism

Who, whom, which, what, why, when, specific context, where, historical context

## 1. Pliny's *Letter 10.96 to Trajan* (on the Christians)

- Pliny, to Trajan, letter, on the treatment of (alleged) Christians, to know how to deal with them, c. 112CE, when he is governor of Bithynia & Pontus and Trajan emperor, in Nicomedia (?), during the high Roman empire.

# Source Criticism

Who, whom, which, what, why, when, specific context, where, historical context

## 1. Pliny's *Letter 10.96 to Trajan* (on the Christians)

- Pliny, to Trajan, letter, on the treatment of (alleged) Christians, to know how to deal with them, c. 112CE, when he is governor of Bithynia & Pontus and Trajan emperor, in Nicomedia (?), during the high Roman empire.

## 2. Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* (today's source)

# Source Criticism

Who, whom, which, what, why, when, specific context, where, historical context

## 1. Pliny's *Letter 10.96 to Trajan* (on the Christians)

- Pliny, to Trajan, letter, on the treatment of (alleged) Christians, to know how to deal with them, c. 112CE, when he is governor of Bithynia & Pontus and Trajan emperor, in Nicomedia (?), during the high Roman empire.

## 2. Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* (today's source)

- › Eusebius, to the public, panegyric, on the life & deeds of Constantine, to praise him & record his reign, in 339 CE (unfinished!), just after Constantine's death under Constantinus II (C.'s son) who fights against Persia, in Caesarea (?), during the late Roman empire.