

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Preface

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Abstract:

Volume preface, by the editors.

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Preface

The papers collected in this volume have their roots in the “[Coming Back to Life: Performance, Memory, and Cognition in the Ancient Mediterranean](#)” colloquium held at McGill University and Concordia University in May 2014. All but two of the papers were presented at that meeting; the contributions of Daphna Arbel and Troels Engberg-Pedersen were initially conceived for that colloquium, though neither author was able to attend. In their present form, all papers have been thoroughly refereed for publication, being subjected to both the editors’ critique as well as two independent and blind peer reviews. As the editors of this volume, we are delighted to present these papers in a digital format that is openly accessible around the globe.

The idea to publish the colloquium proceedings as an open-access eBook dates back to one of the early planning meetings between Fred Tappenden, Carly Daniel-Hughes, and the late Ellen Aitken. From the outset, we saw this publication as an opportunity to reimagine what conference proceedings might look like in the digital age. Two broad trends in the academy further fueled this vision. At a local level, the McGill University Library was looking to expand its [scholarly publishing](#) beyond journals to include also scholarly books and monographs. Supporting the collection, editing, peer review, and dissemination of papers associated with the “Coming Back to Life” colloquium presented an excellent opportunity to establish proof-of-concept for that initiative. At the international level, however, for some time now there have been strong currents in the broader academy moving toward publishing models premised on open accessibility. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), for instance, has recently mandated that as of May 1, 2015, all publications resulting from SSHRC funding must be openly accessible to the public at least

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twelve months after publication (see the [Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications](#)). Where public money is employed, public access ought to follow. While SSHRC's funding for the "Coming Back to Life" colloquium predated this policy shift, we are thrilled that the resultant *Coming Back to Life* volume is aligned with current Tri-Agency mandates.

Seeking to reimagine what conference proceedings might look like in the digital age meant thinking broadly and creatively about the potential afforded by a digital publication. One model to which we looked was the [Center for Hellenic Studies](#) (CHS) at Harvard University, which has a long history of supporting digital scholarship and open-access publishing. Ellen Aitken had been tangentially involved with the CHS throughout her career ([Aitken 2006, 2012](#); [Maclean and Aitken 2001](#); see also [Aitken 2015](#) and the foreword to this volume), and she naturally brought insights from the CHS into our planning meetings. At the same time, we wanted to explore the range of materials we might include in a volume of this kind. For example, might we include PDF files of student posters from the conference, video files of the meeting itself, the embedding of high-quality colour images and figures, links to online texts, museum exhibits, and the like? Moreover, in what formats might we present the material: as an HTML website, a PDF for download, or even an EPUB format for e-readers? Though we knew that not every idea would come to fruition in the final volume, from the outset we wanted to produce a volume that harnessed the power of digital technologies in ways that were impossible for a traditional print volume.

One of the chief ways we capitalise on the digital medium is by embedding hyperlinks into each paper, which direct readers to online resources directly relevant to the topic under discussion. Though the exact figure has not been calculated, we estimate that some 85% of primary source references in this volume include a hyperlink to an online scholarly edition and/or translation. In other instances, links connect to online museum exhibits, images of artifacts and archaeological remains, scholarly e-publications, and

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where relevant the occasional element of popular culture (e.g., books and/or movies). In researching and embedding these links, our primary guide has been the conviction that all linked data must be open access. For example, in places where a contributor cites Ignatius's [Letter to the Ephesians 7.2](#), our copyeditors have embedded a hyperlink to the older Loeb edition (Lake 1912–1913) rather than its newer counterpart (Ehrman 2003); the latter is also available online at the [Digital Loeb Classical Library](#), though its accessibility is restricted by the publisher's paywall.

The reader should take note that, because many of the linked texts are in the public domain, in many cases they therefore reflect older critical editions that must always be checked against the most up-to-date editions. For example, at several points Roger Beck cites the Seminar Classics 609 (1969) critical edition of Porphyry's *On the Cave of the Nymphs in the Odyssey*. Because that edition is not available online, we have embedded hyperlinks to Thomas Taylor's much older edition from 1823. In an effort to avoid confusion, many contributors have distinguished between the current critical editions they worked with when conducting their analysis (on the one hand), and the embedded digital versions that permit the reader quick reference (on the other). Where numbering systems differ between old and new editions, we have identified this parenthetically: for example, *De antr. nymph.* 6 (≈ §2 in Taylor 1823). We have also provided for each paper an independent bibliography of "Embedded Online Works." Taken together, these features should help the reader to distinguish newer critical editions from older, openly accessible ones.

In many instances, however, the embedded hyperlinks connect to texts that are in fact the most up-to-date scholarly editions, and thus these links put the best scholarly materials right at the reader's fingertips (literally so, when the volume is read on an e-reader!). This is the case with all New Testament and Hebrew Bible references, which are linked to the NA²⁸ or the BHS (respectively), both of which are available from the [Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft](#). Similarly, Troels Engberg-Pedersen makes several references to

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[volumes 2](#) and [3](#) of Hans von Arnim's *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (1903–1924), which still stands as a standard sourcebook despite its lapse into the public domain. One of the great benefits of the *Coming Back to Life* volume, then, is increased accessibility to quality scholarly resources on the internet.

With every paper, we have judiciously selected the linked online content, giving overwhelming preference to reputable editions. As much as possible, we have sought to draw upon the digitisation efforts of academic institutions. This is seen most notably in our use of existing databases such as the [HathiTrust Digital Library](#), various university library collections in the [Internet Archive](#), and of course the [Perseus Digital Library](#). There are several noted benefits to drawing upon these databases. First, all three databases contain sources that have been digitised by academic libraries (e.g., University of Toronto, Harvard University, University of Michigan). Second, these databases provide stable links/identifiers so as to protect (as much as possible) against link rot. Finally, the design of these databases is oriented toward online reading and the engagement of printed texts in digital environments (see, for example, the HathiTrust user interface for [Ignatius, Eph. 7.2](#), where the Loeb layout of facing Greek-English pages is preserved). Though issues relating to public domain and online accessibility vary from country to country, the majority of materials (if not all) should be accessible to the majority of readers (if not all).¹

Where possible, preference has been given to displaying a linked text in its original language (either Greek, Hebrew, Latin, or

¹ Because public domain laws vary from country to country, it is possible some links that work in Canada will not work elsewhere in the world. All linked content has been tested in Canada over a period of eighteen months (early summer 2015 to early winter 2016); we have also tested some links with positive results in both the United Kingdom and the United States. Generally speaking, in Canada a written work enters the public domain fifty years after the author's death; in the United Kingdom, the European Union, and the United States, a written work enters the public domain seventy years after the author's death.

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Coptic). In many instances, the linked text has both the ancient language and modern translation set side by side (as in public domain editions of the Loeb Classical Library). In other instances, we link only the original language (notably, biblical citations link to the NA²⁸, BHS, or LXX-Rahlfs, all available from the [Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft](#)), and in a few instances only modern translations are available (notably, in the use of [ANF](#), [NPNF¹](#), and [NPNF²](#)). We also link to a handful of online scholarly databases such as the Packard Humanities Institute's [Searchable Greek Inscriptions](#), the online catalogue of the [Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum](#) (Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences), image publications of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sport, and even private websites such as Roger Pearse's "[The Roman Cult of Mithras](#)." Many of the decisions to incorporate these online resources—especially the few non-academic resources—have been made in consultation with individual contributors, thus ensuring the quality of linked materials.

In determining the format of this volume, we decided to make the entire collection available in three manifestations: (1) as an HTML website, (2) as a PDF file, and (3) as an EPUB file ready for download to e-reader devices. Additionally, and in keeping with our vision of reimagining conference proceedings in the digital age, we are also publishing the video file of Sarah Iles Johnston's keynote address at the "Coming Back to Life" colloquium (delivered May 9, 2014).

By drawing together this vast array of online resources, the *Coming Back to Life* volume utilises not only text but also image and audio/video content that is not easy—and sometimes impossible—to capture in print contexts. By extension, the volume also serves as a hub of connected information that contributes to a larger network of linked data across the World Wide Web. To these ends, and consonant with our theme of inquiry, we are hopeful that the present volume brings the literature, thought world, practices, and material cultures of the ancient Mediterranean *back to life* in ways that a traditional print volume simply cannot.

Acknowledgments and Dedication:

There are many people who have had a share in this project, both from its conception through to its conclusion. It is a joy to extend our thanks to these individuals for their contributions, encouragements, critical engagements, and insights.

As noted above, the papers in this volume stem from a scholarly colloquium held in Montreal in May 2014. In addition to this volume's contributors, that meeting included Laura Nasrallah, Judith Newman, Michael Peppard, Kelly Olson, Lynn Kozak, Ian Henderson, André Gagné, Lorenzo DiTommaso, Gerbern Oegema, Shayna Sheinfeld, Melanie Racette-Campbell, Meaghan Matheson, and Marla MacDonald. The scholarly exchanges at this meeting were deep and rich, and the papers in this volume benefitted greatly from both informal colloquium discussion and formal responses. Beyond the May 2014 meeting, many thanks are due to the anonymous peer reviewers who incisively and critically evaluated the papers.

The McGill University Library has been exceptional to work with throughout this process. We thank especially Jennifer Innes and Sarah Severson, as well as Amy Buckland (now at the University of Guelph) and Jessica Lange for their help in conceptualising and implementing this volume. Jennifer Innes should be singled out specifically; she both coordinated the peer review process and spearheaded the design and layout of this eBook's various manifestations. In addition to the McGill Library, the bulk of copyediting and hyperlink checking fell to Brad Rice; this volume would not have been possible were it not for his meticulous eye and attention to detail. Thanks are due also to Jeff Keiser for offering his expertise in design for the eBook's online graphic.

Funding for this publishing project was provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the McGill University Library Scholarly Communications, and the McGill University School of Religious Studies.

Finally, it is our great pleasure to dedicate this volume to the late Ellen Aitken, former Dean of the Faculty of Religious Studies and Professor of Early Christian History and Literature at McGill

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University. Ellen's sudden diagnosis of cancer came on the eve of the "Coming Back to Life" colloquium, and it was only six short weeks until her untimely death in June 2014. While the colloquium itself drew together the contributors to this volume, many were Ellen's colleagues, students, and/or friends. It is fitting for those of us who knew Ellen to honour her here, in this context, with contributions occasioned by one of her final scholarly projects (namely, the "Coming Back to Life" colloquium). Ellen was also a strong proponent of the digital humanities and the potential of e-publishing, and so this volume is all the more apropos. She has joined, along with countless other heroes of faith, what Hebrews calls the "great cloud of witnesses" that surrounds the living. As we reflect on and dedicate this volume to Ellen, her presence comes alive again in our memories and our company, and so the lines between death and life seem just a little more porous, even if for only a short moment.

January 2017
Montreal, QC

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