

Preface

Both the contemporaneity of fake news and the attention it has received in public and academic debate often feel unprecedented. However, while the term ‘fake news’ and the specific concept as we understand it today are modern, embedded in societies characterized by the existence of mass media, significant aspects of this phenomenon can be traced in various facets of ancient Greek society, aspects which even appear to have occasionally become objects of reflection, analysis, and further development by various ancient writers. By delving into the rich historical tapestry of ancient Greece, this volume seeks to uncover the history, mechanisms, and impacts of false information within a culture possessing a wide-ranging literary tradition that spans many centuries and genres.

This collection of papers has its origins in a double conference that took place in June 2022 in Trier, Germany, and in September 2022 in Athens, Greece. These events provided a unique platform for classicists, historians, philosophers, and papyrologists from Trier University and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens to engage in fruitful discussions, share research findings, and together read and analyze various texts documenting or depicting the spread of false information in ancient Greece, always against the backdrop of what is nowadays known as ‘fake news’. The entire project was generously funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) under the program “Hochschuldialog mit Südeuropa.” We express our heartfelt gratitude to the DAAD for its financial support, which made this international collaboration possible.

When reviewing the most recent output in the field of classics, it becomes evident that there has been a resurgence of interest in ancient information environments over the past few years. It is our hope that this volume will serve as a significant resource, inspiring further research and dialogue on the topic of misinformation in ancient contexts and its implications for understanding ‘fake news’ today.

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The Editors

