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V. K. MARINICH

PhD student in philosophy

National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine, Ukraine

e-mail: narmer.scorpion@gmail.com

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3206-1436>

M. I. MYKLUSH

Law Firm “FOX” of Marina Myklush”, CEO

NGO “Cosmic Law Portal”, CEO, Ukraine

e-mail: spaceprinciples@gmail.com

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2202-9482>

THE PRISM OF TIME: THE FACTOR OF INFORMATION TRANSFER

Abstract

The article is aimed at a general analysis of events and circumstances influencing the change and/or distortion of historical information over time. **The methodological basis** of the article implies a set of principles and methods of cognition, the choice of which is determined by interdisciplinary approaches to the disclosure of the topic, the assigned tasks, and the specifics of the sources. In the research process, critical and comparative methods of analysis of sources of ancient information are used as well as analysis and systematization of events and circumstances influencing the information with their subsequent classification. **The scientific novelty** of the research is defined by the fact that, in contrast to the generally accepted analysis of individual cases of distortion of information, this study attempts to identify groups and types of events and circumstances that influenced or could influence the distortion of information throughout the entire period of its existence, and subsequently systematize and classify them as separate phenomena or factors that shall be taken into account when studying such information. **The results of the research** are based on the analysis of ancient information as well as on the analysis of many events and circumstances that influenced or could influence the perception of such information or its physical distortion. Given the limited time frame, this study analyzes events and circumstances that can be attributed to only one type, since all of them are associated only with the transfer of information from one medium to another (for example, when recording an oral story on a hard medium, when restoring text from the original, when editing, copying or translating text, or the other way of transferring information to a new medium). These events and circumstances are combined into a factor, which can roughly be called “the factor of information transfer”. At the same time, during the study, it was established that the influence of this factor on information mostly occurred for three reasons, namely: due to negligence, ignorance, or pretense.

Keywords: ancient information, information transfer, information distortion, change of information, the prism of time, the factor of information transfer

ПРИЗМА ЧАСУ: ФАКТОР ПЕРЕНОСУ ІНФОРМАЦІЇ

Анотація

Метою дослідження є загальний аналіз подій та обставин, що з плином часу впливають на зміну та/або спотворення історичної інформації. **Методологічну основу** статті становить сукупність принципів та способів пізнання, вибір яких визначався міждисциплінарними підходами до розкриття теми, поставленими завданнями та специфікою джерел. У процесі дослідження були використані критичний та порівняльний методи аналізу джерел давньої інформації, а також

аналіз та систематизація подій і обставин, що впливають на інформацію, з їхньою наступною класифікацією. **Наукова новизна** статті полягає в тому, що на відміну від загальноприйнятого аналізу окремих випадків спотворення інформації, в даному дослідженні зроблено спробу виявити групи та види подій та обставин, які вплинули або могли вплинути на спотворення інформації протягом усього періоду її існування, та згодом систематизувати та класифікувати їх як окремі явища чи фактори, які необхідно враховувати під час дослідження такої інформації. **Результати дослідження** ґрунтуються на аналізі стародавньої інформації, а також на аналізі безлічі подій та обставин, які вплинули чи могли вплинути на наше сприйняття такої інформації чи на її фізичне спотворення. Враховуючи обмежені часові рамки, в цьому дослідженні були проаналізовані події та обставини, які можна віднести лише до одного типу, оскільки всі вони були пов'язані лише з перенесенням інформації з одного носія на інший (наприклад, при записі усного оповідання на твердий носій, при відновленні тексту з оригіналу, під час редагування, копіювання або перекладу тексту або при іншому варіанті перенесення інформації на новий носій). Ці події та обставини було об'єднано в один фактор, який умовно можна назвати "фактором перенесення інформації". При цьому в процесі дослідження було встановлено те, що вплив даного фактора на інформацію найчастіше відбувався з трьох причин, а саме: внаслідок недбалості, непоінформованості чи вдавання.

Ключові слова: стародавня інформація, перенесення інформації, спотворення інформації, зміна інформації, призма часу, фактор перенесення інформації

Introduction. Today it is difficult to imagine the civilized development of society without such humanities as philosophy, history, and jurisprudence. However, these sciences are not a product of modern society. Their development began in the period of the Ancient World and formed in the early Middle Ages.

In this development, the greatest works appeared (from literary ones to architectural monuments), containing information that had a fundamental influence on the formation of the humanities and the development of society as a whole.

However, despite the mentioned enormous influence, almost none of the original media (which contained the original ancient information) have been preserved to nowadays (except for some information carved on stones and recorded on several papyri and other similar materials). But even the information that has reached our time or has been preserved in ancient media causes a lot of controversy among scientists, both in terms of its reliability and correct understanding.

It turns out that the information light coming from distant times does not pour out on its contemporaries directly and understandably. Until the moment ancient information overcame thousands of years of history and reached consciousness, many different events and circumstances influenced it and the perception of this information.

This process can be compared to the journey of a beam of light through a prism, during which the beam is refracted and changed many times. Only in the case of long-standing information, this prism is filled not with physical matter, but with circumstances and events that occur over time. Each facet of such a Prism of time is a set of certain events and circumstances (peculiar factors) that at some time had a certain impact on the information under study and on the way the contemporaries perceive and understand it.

At the same time, given the influence that has been exerted on the information and our perception of this information over a long period, the researcher may face quite a logical question: how much can one trust the information that has come down to our times?

In turn, this question leads to another equally important question about how much the development and formation of modern humanities are based on original long-standing information but not on a compilation of medieval and modern assumptions.

To answer these questions, any researcher, first of all, needs to identify and investigate directly the sources of such information and identify events and circumstances that may have contributed to its misstatement.

At this point, provided it is impossible to confirm the reliability of long-standing information, there is no need to refuse categorically its investigation (at least until it is completely refuted). It is simply necessary to understand and always take into account those factors that could have influenced such information throughout the entire time of its existence.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Throughout the entire period of the study of history, from the time of Thucydides to the present day, many scientists, exploring the sources of ancient information, paid attention to some inconsistencies and investigated the events and circumstances that influenced the change and/or distortion of historical information.

Among these scholars are Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh Alfred Edward Taylor, Emeritus Professor at The University of Newcastle Harold Tarrant, Professor of the University of Georgia William Alan J. Watson, British historian Tom Holland, American linguist and historian Roland G. Kent, American biblical scholar Bruce Manning Metzger, English professor of biblical studies at the University of Sheffield John William Rogerson, researcher of the History of History and Cultural History at Ohio Wesleyan University Donald Lateiner and many others.

However, in general, such studies were not global and systemic but concerned either specific sources of information or specific circumstances influencing the distortion of information.

In turn, this article is part of a global study that attempts, for the first time, to analyze all the unique events and circumstances affecting the distortion of information, their combination, and systematization as particular phenomena and factors with subsequent classification based on determining the nature of their influence on information.

The aim of the article. Using examples of works that had a significant impact on the formation of the humanities, in this article we are going to highlight the events and circumstances that influenced or could influence information.

The main tasks of this article are the following: the study of specific examples of sources of ancient information (works of ancient authors) as well as analysis, systematization, and classification of specific events and circumstances that influenced or could influence information when it was transferred from one medium to another (for example, when recording an oral story on a hard medium, when restoring text from the original, when editing or copying text, or in another variant of transferring information to a new medium).

In terms of philosophy, works from the *Corpus Platonicum* can be attributed to the mentioned masterpieces, although the religious texts of the *Bible* and the *Qur'an* had no less influence on the development of philosophy.

As for modern jurisprudence, certainly, its main source can be considered ancient Roman law and the most famous collection of texts in the field of Roman law called "*Digesta Iustiniani*".

In the field of historical science, everything is much more complicated with the choice of fundamental works since the number of such works is quite large. And it is simply unrealistic to describe all the works in one research, that's why one can specify only some of them – for example, such as "*The Histories*" of Herodotus or "*De vita Caesarum*" by Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus and many others.

In turn, in natural science "*Naturalis historia*" by Pliny the Elder can be attributed to such work.

Methods and methodology of the study. Using the diachronic analysis method, critical and comparative approaches to the sources of ancient information, analyzing and systematizing the events and circumstances that influenced or could affect this information

throughout the entire period of its existence (the history of information), the author has distinguished (identified and classified) the appropriate types of factors that should be taken into account when researching such information. **The research methodology** is based on the principles of objectivity and systematicity, used according to the main goals of epistemology.

Presentation of the main research material.

1. “*Corpus Platonicum*”.

Take as an example a group of works “*Corpus Platonicum*”.

It is generally assumed that all the works from this group were written by the ancient Greek philosopher Plato (in Greek as *Πλάτων*), who presumably lived in the period from 424 to 348 BC (Taylor, 1955, pp. 1, 14, 17).

However, to date, no original works from this group have been found. Also, not a single official document was found confirming the existence of such a person as Plato.

Therefore, the existing statement that all the works of the “*Corpus Platonicum*” group were written by Plato is rather conditional and is based only on the few mentions of these works concerning Plato by several ancient philosophers and scientists.

Professor of Moral Philosophy of the University of Edinburgh Alfred Edward Taylor presumes the opinion prevailing in scientific circles that all thirty-six works from “*Corpus Platonicum*” are authentic only because “*the thirty-six ‘dialogues’ were currently regarded as genuine by the librarians and scholars of the third century B. C.*” (Taylor, 1955, p. 11).

However, this statement is very controversial, because to date no original text of the third century BC have been found, which would mention the names of all the works of the group “*Corpus Platonicum*” regarding the name “*Πλάτων*”.

At the same time, there are other hypotheses on this topic.

Thus, William John Slater in his comments to the book “*Aristophanes Byzantii Fragmenta*” suggests that the Hellenistic Greek scholar and head librarian of the Library of Alexandria *Aristophanes* of Byzantium may have been involved in the creation of a collection of several philosophical works under the unifying name of Plato in the second century BC (*Aristophanis Byzantii*, 1986, pp. xvi, 85, 158). Considering the large-scale work of scientists of the Library of Alexandria at that time to restore, preserve, and replenish the library fund, it is quite logical to assume that they could copy the texts of ancient philosophical works and form a single collection of them under the unifying name of Plato. In this case, the same assumption is expressed by Alfred Edward Taylor with the reference to the letters of the biographer of the Greek philosopher *Diogenes Laertius*, written in the 3rd century AD or later (Taylor, 1955, p. 11).

However, Emeritus Professor of The University of Newcastle Harold Tarrant expresses another well-known hypothesis on this topic. According to his version, for the first time, all the works from the “*Corpus Platonicum*” group were organized into a single collection under the name of Plato (consisting of nine tetralogies) and published in a new edition (using punctuation marks) in the period between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD under the leadership of *Thrasylus of Alexandria*, who was Egyptian grammarian, astrologer and a personal friend of the Roman emperor *Tiberius* (Tarrant, 1993, pp. 4, 6). The American philosopher and expert on ancient philosophy who was the Emeritus Henry Putnam University Professor of Philosophy at Princeton University John Madison Cooper (Plato, 1997, p. x) adheres to the same hypothesis. Moreover, John Madison Cooper claims that all the extant Plato works and their division into the nine tetralogies came from *Thrasylus* since it was *Thrasylus* who collected, selected them as authentic, edited, rewrote, and published them (Plato, 1997, pp. viii, ix, x).

However, it should be understood that all these assumptions are just very controversial hypotheses.

For example, the same Alfred Edward Taylor, conducting an analysis of the structure of the works of “*Corpus Platonium*” in his book “Plato. The Man and his Work”, underlines the following:

“*It is not certain by whom or when this arrangement was made, though it certainly goes back almost to the beginning of the Christian era and perhaps earlier. It is commonly ascribed by later writers to a certain Thrasyllus or Thrasyllund Dercylides*” (Taylor, 1955, p. 10).

At the same time, he also reports that it is almost impossible to identify *Thrasyllus* and confirm his activities in compiling “*Corpus Platonium*” due to a lack of reliable information (Taylor, 1955, p. 11).

In any case, even if such people as *Aristophanes* and *Thrasyllus* existed, they lived hundreds of years later than the date that is considered to be the date of Plato’s death. This means that all their activities for copying and editing these works were carried out without the participation of the author of such works. In turn, even in modern times, it is very difficult to restore correctly and without errors information that was created 200-500 years ago. What kind of correctness of information recovery could then be discussed in the pre-Christian period?! In those distant times, such work was always accompanied by the risk of making technical and editorial mistakes.

At the same time, it is impossible to verify this now since to date neither manuscripts created by *Aristophanes* of Byzantium or *Thrasyllus* of Alexandria nor the sources of such manuscripts have been found. For the same reason, it remains unclear whose works and on what principle were combined into one collection under the name of Plato.

In turn, the first complete publication of works under the unifying name of Plato, which survived to our times, appeared only in 1484 AD. As reported by Professor of the University of Michigan Michael J. B. Allen, this publication was made by the eminent Florentine Platonist Marsilio Ficino in the form of a translation into Latin (Allen et al., 2002, pp. xiii, xvi), which, in turn, significantly complicates the process of establishing its ancient Greek sources.

Despite such several difficulties, some attempts have been recently made to investigate and systematize all the manuscripts, which with a certain degree of probability could be attributed to the “*Corpus Platonium*” group.

The results of one of these studies were presented by Nigel Guy Wilson in his article “A List of Plato Manuscripts”, in which a catalog of all known manuscripts with works of this group was published (Wilson, 1962). At the same time, all the manuscripts listed in this article were dated to the period from the 9th to the 19th centuries AD, and their main number falls on the 13th-16th centuries AD. That is, all of them are most likely copies, while made from other copies.

At the same time, attempts to find and investigate other, earlier, manuscripts with Plato texts were also carried out by other scientists at different times. For example, we can cite the results of the study of the papyrus “*Fouad I*” (which presumably contains part of the text of the work “*Gorgias*” from the group “*Corpus Platonium*”), obtained by Irish classical scholar and Professor of Greek at the University of Oxford Eric Robertson Dodds (Dodds, 1957, p. 24). He dated this papyrus to the 2nd century AD but was never able to unequivocally prove or disprove its authenticity (Dodds, 1957, p. 24). There are many other controversial manuscripts with texts that could be attributed to works from “*Corpus Platonium*”. However, all of them date back no earlier than the 2nd century AD.

Thus, if we assume that Plato is a person who lived and created philosophical works in the period from 424 to 348 BC, then all the manuscripts found can be considered only copies of such works, and most likely made from other copies.

That is, these works have undergone at least two transfers of information to a new medium. At the same time, during such transfers, the texts of the works were repeatedly edited (with syntactic formatting and possible division and/or unification of different parts of the texts) without the participation of their author. In turn, such a process is always accompanied by the risk of distortion of the original texts (if any existed at all).

In this regard, any researcher of “*Corpus Platonium*” works should always take into account the likelihood of such distortions, since they could have a significant impact on distorting the very essence of the philosophical ideas outlined in these works.

2. “*Digesta Iustiniani*”.

There is an equally confusing situation in jurisprudence concerning the study of ancient Roman law created in the period from the beginning of Ancient Rome to the end of the Principate in the third century AD.

One of the main documents used for such studies is “*Digesta Iustiniani*”.

This work consists of 50 books, each of which is divided into titles, fragments (which were previously called “*leges*”), and paragraphs. At the same time, each fragment indicates its source, namely, the work of the lawyer whose information was taken. In total, the work uses quotations from 1,625 works by 39 lawyers.

According to the generally accepted opinion expressed by the Scottish legal historian and distinguished research Professor of the University of Georgia William Alan J. Watson, the history of “*Digesta Iustiniani*” began in 530 AD, when Byzantine emperor Justinian I initiated the creation of this document (Justinian, 1998, p. 111).

The preparation of this work was carried out by a commission of 16 people under the leadership of the outstanding lawyer of his time *Triboniani* and was completed already in 533 AD (Justinian, 1979, p. 48). That is, this project was implemented in just three years (Justinian, 2010, p. 6).

At the same time, according to the information contained in the texts “*Deo Auctore*” and “*Omnen*”, which are inextricably linked with the “*Digesta Iustiniani*”, when creating this document the works of Roman lawyers over the past 1500 years were studied (Justinian, 2008, p. 28), which were contained in two thousand books, totaling three million lines (Justinian, 2008, p. 34).

That is, in fact, “*Digesta Iustiniani*” can be considered a compilation of ancient Roman law, judicial precedents, and legal commentaries on them for the entire period of the existence of Ancient Rome.

In this regard, this work could be considered an ideal source for the study of all ancient Roman law.

However, can we trust the results of the work of this commission, especially about the compilation of Roman law of the period of the republic and the Principate?

To answer this question, it is necessary to understand what difficulties the working committee had to overcome during the implementation of this large-scale literary and legal project.

Naturally, the main difficulty of the project was that the members of the commission had to process manually a huge number of documents. Given the limited time frame, most likely, the work on the implementation of this project was divided into directions or periods, so that each member of the commission could deal with his segment separately, writing out quotations of interest from archival documents and excluding repetitive texts at his discretion (Justinian,

2010, p. 5). At the same time, given the same limited time frame, it is unlikely that the results of the work of each member of the commission were carefully and repeatedly rechecked by other members of the commission. Most likely, the whole project was based on *Tribonian's* absolute trust in the qualifications and pedantry of each member of the commission. In turn, such an organization of work has always contained risks associated with technical errors that occur at the stage of manual copying. At the same time, such errors could not be detected and eliminated without repeated and thorough rechecking of the copying results, which the commission simply did not have time for. In addition, there was also the next stage of copying, when information from the drafts of the commission members had to be transferred to a common draft document for its analysis, literary processing, and editing. And only after that, the information could be transferred to the main document.

Thus, it can be concluded that the process of preparing this work involved several stages of information transfer, at each of which technical errors could have been made.

At the same time, it is not possible to identify potential errors in this process today, since neither the original text of this work nor most of its sources have been found. Only a few fragments of this work have been found, dated the same period when the work itself was created. However, they are only copies.

Professor emeritus of the history of ideas at the University of Groningen Arjo Vanderjagt in his book "The *Corpus Iuris Civilis* in the Middle Ages. Manuscripts and Transmission from the Sixth Century to the Juristic Revival" presents a list of such copies, among which the following manuscripts are considered the most reliable versions: "CLA III, 295: Florence, Bib. Laur. S.N. *Codex Pisanus*", "CLA III, 402: Naples Bib. naz. IV.A.8 (fol. 36–39). Palimpsest", "CLA VIII, 1221: Heidelberg, Univ.-Bibl. Pap. 1272 (Fragment of Digest from papyrus codex found in Egypt)", "CLA IX, 1351: Pommersfelden, Gräfl. Schönborn'sche (Bib. Lat. pap. 1–6; Supp. 1723: Manchester, John Rylands Library Pap. 479; Fragment of Dig. XXX from papyrus codex; Addenda 1858: Fragment" (Radding & Ciaralli, 2007, p. 37).

However, at the same time, it is also necessary to take into account that all these manuscripts contain only parts of the work, and all of them are only copies although the closest in time to the original. In turn, the replication of works during this period was still done by manually copying the text. Therefore, the researcher should also take into account the possible risks associated with the distortion of the text at this stage.

At the same time, the earliest printed edition of "*Digesta Iustiniani*" appeared only in the period 1475-1477 (Justinian, 2008, p. 19). Although this edition became the basis for all subsequent publications of "*Digesta Iustiniani*" (including those that can be bought in the store today), it is difficult to call it reliable since its sources, which were used to restore the text of "*Digesta Iustiniani*" during the preparation of this edition, remain unknown and unverified.

In any case, it is possible to outline that information from sources of ancient Roman law created in the period before the 3rd century AD, which was used to create the "*Digesta Iustiniani*" underwent at least three transfers of information before it got to the information carrier, which has survived to our time.

Furthermore, one can see that when studying ancient Roman law before the 3rd century AD based on the texts of the "*Digesta Iustiniani*", it is desirable for the researcher to take into account the likelihood of distortion of the texts of the sources that are presented in this work.

3. "The Histories" of *Herodotus*.

In turn, historical science also still cannot come to a consensus on the reliability of the information in one of the most famous and most controversial historical works of the Ancient World – "The Histories" of *Herodotus*.

At the same time, it is very difficult to confirm or refute the information told by Herodotus, because the original text has not yet been found and accordingly no one knows how *Herodotus* described everything.

However, at the same time, the modern version of “The Histories”, with punctuation marks and division into chapters reached its contemporaries after many editorial edits and through copies made by ancient scientists about 150 years after the death of *Herodotus*.

It may be difficult to imagine, but the original version of “The Histories” most likely did not have syntactic signs and division into chapters since at the time of *Herodotus* in Ancient Greece such a text design was used very rarely or was not used at all.

According to the British historian Tom Holland, initially, the text of “The Histories” had no division into chapters, there was no division into sentences and there were no diacritics – all this is the merit of scientists from Alexandria (Egypt) who worked in the library in the third century AD (Herodotus, 2015, p. 53).

Certainly, it is perfectly conceivable that scientists from Alexandria could have access to high-quality *Herodotus* texts, which would greatly facilitate their work.

In this regard, according to Tom Holland, the Alexandria editors had many more opportunities to determine the authenticity of the text than any of the modern researchers despite all the difficulties of working with the papyrus roll (right there).

However, even if the scientists of Alexandria did their work qualitatively, we do not know in what form this text reached them and how many times it was rewritten before they started their work. As Tom Holland correctly noted, a lot could have happened to the text in the period between 420 BC and 280 AD (Herodotus, 2015, p. 53).

Thus, the availability of high-quality texts still did not simplify their work. After all, to preserve the work of *Herodotus*, the Alexandrian scientists had to copy huge volumes of text manually. At the same time, they acted both as copyists and as editors of this text, determining and selecting what needed to be restored and copied – and all this was done without the participation and support of the author.

The mentioned editorial influence was well described by David Lateiner in his commentary on “The Histories” of *Herodotus* (Herodotus, 2004, pp. 22–23). He was particularly outraged by the senseless division of this work by Alexandrian scientists into 9 books named after the nine muses, also without any meaning. And this is even though in fact, we know absolutely nothing about the structure of the work, or even about its name, except for the information in the first sentence of the work.

Moreover, later, after the work of Alexandrian scientists on editing and copying, the texts of *Herodotus* were copied and edited many more times before they acquired the form in which it is studied by modern historians.

In turn, most likely as a result of multiple stages of editing the source text (carried out almost every time the information was transferred to a new medium), happened that the arrangement of some parts of “The History” of *Herodotus* (in the form in which the text has reached the contemporaries) acquired a certain illogical order.

One could take as an example the description of the tribes, which is contained in sections 168-187 of Book IV of “The Histories” (Herodotus, 1928, pp. 372–373). In these sections, *Herodotus* describes the tribes living outside Egypt, among whom he also describes the Atlantians tribe and even points the way to them.

Provided one considers this text of “The Histories” as a single fragment, it may seem that *Herodotus* describes the way to the Atlantians through the lands of the Libyan tribes who lived in the territories located to the west of Egypt, right up to the *Tritonian* Lake and the Atlas Mountains.

Moreover, subsequently, taking this fragment into account, researchers of the texts of “The Histories” by *Herodotus* compiled a map, according to which it is assumed that *Herodotus* believed that the Nile River (along which the way to the Atlantians could lie) turned near ancient Thebes (modern Luxor) 90 degrees to the West and flew through the Sahara Desert to Mount Atlas.

However, when studying this fragment more carefully, one can see that it is divided into three parts: section 168 – the first sentence of section 181; the third sentence of section 181 – the fourth sentence of section 185; and section 186 – section 187.

At the same time, after a separate analysis of each part, the impression can completely change.

So, in the first part of this fragment (section 168 – the first sentence of section 181), the tribes “*νομάδων Λιβύων*” (translated from ancient Greek as “the nomad Libyans”) live within the territories that are sequentially located one after another outside Egypt (*Herodotus*, 1928, pp. 374-375). At the same time, it immediately becomes clear that we are talking about tribes that lived in the western direction from Egypt since the text often mentions the phrase “*τὸ πρὸς ἐσπέρας*” (translated from ancient Greek as “towards the west”) (right there, p. 376). In addition, the indication of the places of residence of such tribes is most often carried out relative to the coastline of the sea (most likely, the Mediterranean Sea is implied). This is noticeable by how often such words and phrases as “*λιμένος*” (translated from ancient Greek as “harbor” or “bay”), “*παρὰ θάλασσαν*” (translated from ancient Greek as “near the sea” or “on the seashore”) and “*νήσους*” (translated from ancient Greek as “island”) (right there, p. 377) is used.

In this case, the description of the tribes in the first part of the fragment is performed in the following order (sequentially according to their place of residence to the West one after another): “*Ἀδυρμαχίδαι*” (reads as “the Adyrmachidae”), “*Γιλιγάμαι*” (reads as “the Giligamae”), “*Ἀσβύσται*” (reads as “the Asbystae”), “*Κυρηναῖοι*” (reads as “the Cyrenaeanes”), “*Ἀύσχισαι*” (reads as “the Auschisae”), “*Βάκαλες*” (reads as “the Bacales”), “*Νασαμῶνες*” (reads as “the Nasamones”), “*Ψύλλοι*” (reads as “the Psylli”), “*Γαράμαντες*” (reads as “the Garamantes”), “*Μάκαι*” (reads as “the Macae”), “*Γινδᾶνες*” (reads as “the Gindanes”), “*Λωτοφάγοι*” (reads as “the Lotophagos” and is called as “the Lotus-eaters”), “*Μάχλυες*” (reads as “the Machlyes”), “*Ἀύσέες*” (reads as “the Ausees”) (right there, p. 378–379).

As the place of residence of the last of the listed tribes, *Herodotus* indicates the coast of “*Τριτωνίδα λίμνη*” (the author translated from ancient Greek as the “*Tritonian lake*”) (right there, p. 381).

Thus, the first part of the given fragment ends with the following first sentence of section 181: “*οὔτοι οἱ παραθαλάσσιοι μὲν τῶν νομάδων Λιβύων εἰρέαται, ὑπὲρ τούτων δὲ ἐς μεσόγειαν natural θηριώδης ἐστὶ Λιβύη, ὑπὲρ δὲ τῆς θηριώδους ὄφρῦν ψάμμις*” (right there, p. 382) – “here it is said about the nomadic coastal tribes of Libya, over which, far from the water, Libya abounds with wild animals, over which, beyond the land abounding with wild animals, is the sandy bar” [the author’s translation].

That is, *Herodotus* concluded that in his previous description, only the coastal nomadic Libyan tribes were listed. At the same time, in this sentence, he prepared us for the fact that next we would discuss the lands of the inland Libyan tribes (living above the coastal tribes, in lands abounding with animals), behind which there is a sandy ridge (that is, a desert).

However, there are several inconsistencies in this sentence concerning the previously described information and several illogical conclusions.

Firstly, the conclusion that only the coastal nomadic tribes were previously described does not correspond to reality. It is easy to notice this by studying sections 172 and 174 of

this book, which describes the tribes “the Nasamones” and “the Garamantes” living above the seashore (that is, inland) in places abundantly populated by animals (Herodotus, 1928, pp. 374–376). At the same time, section 175 of the book just describes that below the tribe “the Nasamones” (that is, closer to the sea) live seaside tribes such as “the Macae” (right there, p. 378).

Secondly, in this sentence, the lands deep into the territory of Libya are described illogically – that is, first the lands abounding with animals, and then the desert. In reality, to the south of the seaside strip (that is, deep into the mainland), the desert first stretches, and only much further south behind it tropical jungles are teeming with wild animals. That is, in this conclusion, the sequence of territories is confused.

Thirdly, this means that the tribes “the Nasamones” and “the Garamantes” not only were not seaside, but they generally lived very far from the sea, as far as the sandy ridge (behind the desert), in a land teeming with wild animals – that is, somewhere in the area of the tropical jungle (in the south of the modern states of “Chad” and “Sudan”).

That is the conclusion stated in the first sentence of section 181 does not correspond to reality and most likely does not belong to Herodotus and appears as an artificial editorial insertion.

Further, in the second part of this fragment (the third sentence of section 181 – the fourth sentence of section 185), the tribes located just behind the Egyptian region “*Θῆβαι*” (reads as “Thebes”), which is located in southern Egypt (Upper Egypt), are listed.

At the same time, the description of the tribes in the second part of the fragment does not contain any indication of their cultural or national identity, their way of life (nomads or farmers), or their location relative to parts of the World or relative to Egypt. Thus, these tribes most likely have no connection with Libya. Among them, such tribes as “*Ἀμμώνιοι*” (reads as “the Ammonians”), “*γαράμαντες*” (reads as “the Garamantes”), “*Ἀτάραντες*” (reads as “the Atarantes”) and “*Ἀτλαντες*” (reads as “the Atlantes”)(Herodotus, 1928, pp. 384–388) are listed. The binding location of the last of these tribes (“the Atlantes”) is made with the geographic areas called “*ὄρος Ἀτλας*” (translated from the ancient Greek as “the mount of Atlas”) and “*Ἡρακλέους στῆλαι*” (translated from ancient Greek as “the Pillars of Heracles”) (right there, p. 386). The second part of this fragment ends with the texts of the second and third sentences in section 185, which say that ten days after “the Atlantes” there lives an unknown tribe that builds houses out of salt. That is the second part of the fragment does not contain information linking it to the first part.

That is, we can conclude that the second part of the fragment described above does not contain information connecting it with the first part.

In turn, in the third part of this fragment (sections 186 – 187) the narrative returns again to the description of the geographical object “*Tritonian Lake*” (which was described earlier in the first part of the fragment, in sections 178 – 180) and to the description of the Libyan nomadic tribes living near it (which were also described earlier in the first part). And here again, indications of the western location of the territories are used.

Due to such a consistent description of the tribes, which begins in the first part and ends in the third part with a description of the same Libyan tribes, it seems that the second part of the fragment also contains a description of Libyan tribes allegedly located in the desert, in the western direction from “Thebes” to “*Tritonian Lake*”.

However, this impression is deceptive for several reasons.

Firstly, none of these descriptions of the tribes in the second part of the fragment contain any mention that these are “Libyan” or “nomadic” tribes.

Secondly, there is not a single indication here at all either to the West or to any other parts of the World.

That is, in the second part of the fragment there is no connection with the descriptions of the tribes in the first and third parts of the fragment.

The only allegedly controversial point in the second part of the fragment is the description of the tribe “the Garamantes”, which has the same name as the Libyan nomadic tribe described in the first part of the fragment. However, this point is not controversial, since the tribe “the Garamantes” from the second part of the fragment and the tribe with the same name from the first part of the fragment are two different tribes that are radically different from each other. So, in the first part of the fragment (in section 174), the nomadic tribe “the Garamantes” is indicated, which avoided every person, had no weapons, and did not know how to repel enemy attacks. In turn, in the second part of the fragment (in section 183), the tribe of farmers “the Garamantes” is already indicated, which sowed the land, grazed bulls, and was quite belligerent, since it hunted cave Ethiopians (who by the way lived in an absolutely different part of the continent concerning the Mediterranean coast). Perhaps the tribes “the Garamantes” from the first and second parts of the fragment have a consonant name, but they were different tribes. Most likely, one of the scribes of the Herodotus texts by mistake or on purpose (to confuse the reader) corrected the similar name of the second tribe so that it coincided with the name of the first tribe.

Thus, the tribes described in the second part of the fragment (sections 181 – 185) cannot be attributed by any parameters to the Libyan nomadic tribes described in the first and third parts.

Hence, it can be assumed that the first part of the fragment (description of the Libyan tribes and “*Tritonian Lake*”) ended with the first sentence in section 181 of this book and contained information not only about the coastal tribes but also about all Libyan nomadic tribes (both coastal and inland) living in the territory that stretched from the western border of Egypt to the “*Tritonian Lake*” (that is, in the western direction). At the same time, the information indicated in the third part of the fragment, beginning with section 186 (where the description of the Libyan tribes and the “*Tritonian Lake*” continues), should have been mentioned just after it.

In turn, the second part of the fragment was most likely a separate story that had no connection with either the first or the third part of the fragment. For unknown reasons (perhaps mistakenly or on purpose, to create confusion), the scribes and editors of the Herodotus texts artificially placed this story (the second part of the fragment) between the descriptions of the Libyan tribes (between the first and third parts of the fragment).

There are quite a lot of such confusing moments in the text of “The History” of *Herodotus*. What is the reason for this confusion? – technical errors or deliberate distortion of the text by its editors and copyists? – this is unknown to anyone.

In any case, this requires additional research and new discussions in the scientific world, and the researcher should be careful and take into account the likelihood of such distortions.

4. “*Naturalis historia*”.

Similar situations have developed with many ancient and even medieval works. However, the most striking example of the influence of the process of transferring information on its distortion is the work “*Naturalis historia*”, the author of which Denis Diderot once described as the naturalist, subtle, ingenious, sometimes sublime, always incisive, often obscure, and ended his description with the conclusion that there is so much in this man all that his works could not be teeming with errors (Diderot, 1969, p. 802).

Denis Diderot was referring to Pliny the Elder (or *Plinius Secundus*) who created “*Naturalis historia*”, which is the earliest encyclopedia of all surviving similar works of the Ancient World (Murphy, 2004, p. 2).

The fact that this work is often called an “encyclopedia” means that “*Naturalis historia*” is not the work of a natural scientist but the literary work of a researcher-editor. In fact, “*Naturalis historia*” is in the main a second-hand compilation from the works of others (Plinius Secundus, 1967, p. IX).

As Professor of Ancient Greek and Roman Studies at the University of California Trevor Murphy notes, “*Naturalis historia*” is the result of literary tradition, not research, since Pliny most often copied what had already been researched and written by other writers instead the conducting his investigation (right there, p. 5).

At the same time, Trevor Murphy believes that Pliny was proud of the fact that he received information not as a result of his research but from third parties (right there, p. 5–6).

However, this cannot be blamed on Pliny since he didn't have a task to explore something new. Pliny sought the systematization of existing knowledge for the convenience of its use, as Byzantine emperor Justinian I did many years later in the field of jurisprudence when he initiated the creation of the “*Digesta Iustiniani*”, the unified collection of Roman law.

In this regard, when creating “*Naturalis historia*”, the main role of Pliny was the role of a copyist and literary editor – that is, a person who carried out the selection and editing of information as well as organized and controlled its transfer from the original source (oral narrative or literary work) to the work “*Naturalis historia*”.

At the same time, to create such a large-scale work consisting of 37 books (including a table of contents), Pliny had to read more than 2000 manuscripts written by more than 100 authors, as he indicated in the “*Prefatio*” to this work:

“lectione voluminum circiter duorum milium, quorum pauca admodum studiosi attingunt propter secretum materiae, ex exquisitis auctoribus centum inclusimus triginta sex voluminibus, adiectis rebus plurimis quas aut ignoraverant priores aut postea invenerat vita” (Plinius Secundus, 1967, p. 12).

Thus, it was a very difficult task, which was influenced by many external factors: the limitations of the day and the lack of good lighting at night, the inconvenient format of storing ancient documents, and a small number of qualified assistants as well as much more. Pliny had to process a huge amount of information in a very limited time and in very difficult conditions.

At the same time, to cover a large amount of information, Pliny resorted to the help of many educated slaves.

So, his nephew Pliny the Younger wrote that Pliny devoted all his free time to studying, slept little, preferred to be carried in a stretcher (since he could not read on the move), constantly read or forced a slave to read to him, constantly dictated to the scribe excerpts from what interested him, and even during the massage, he made a huge number of notes (Murphy, 2004, p. 3).

At the same time, to have time to complete this work before the end of his life, Pliny was in a hurry and forced everyone to work at an accelerated pace (Plinius Secundus, 1967, p. 11).

In this creative process, Pliny the Elder acted as a kind of conductor – he dictated to the slave who was on the right and at the same time listened to the slave who was reading and was on the left (Murphy, 2004, p. 9).

Given such difficult working conditions, it can be assumed that the risk of distortion of information existed already at the initial stage of its transfer from primary sources to “*Naturalis historia*”.

At the same time, Pliny's attempt to assume the functions of an editor and, at the same time, a researcher and a scientist, with a simultaneous lack of knowledge, only worsened the situation.

Already in the 15th century AD, the famous Italian physician and humanist Niccolo Leonicensis reported a large number of errors in the text of “*Naturalis historia*”. At the same time, he attributed this not only to the poor work of the copyists of the text but also to the authority of Pliny himself who independently made decisions about editing the source text (Doody, 2010, pp. 146–147). Niccolo Leonicensis especially drew attention to errors in the use of terminology that arose due to a misunderstanding of Greek terms (right there, p. 146). That is when transferring information from primary sources to “*Naturalis historia*”, instead of transliterating Greek names into Latin, Pliny replaced Greek names with Latin analogs. According to Eric Herbert Warmington, Professor of Classics at the Birkbeck University of London, Pliny gave wrong Latin names to things dealt with by his authorities in Greek (Plinius Secundus, 1967, p. 11).

Since most of the Pliny sources have not been preserved, it is now difficult to determine the number of errors that he made when transferring information. However, given the scale of the entire project (especially for that time), it can be assumed that the number of errors was quite large.

But all the difficulties of time travel of information did not end there. After all, “*Naturalis historia*” still had to survive the stage of replication carried out by scribes in the conditions of the Ancient World.

It is known that even Pliny himself was very much afraid of mistakes that could be made during the subsequent copying of his work. That is why he tried not to make complicated descriptions of objects in the work. Thus, in section 8 of book 25 of “*Naturalis historia*”, he even explains his simplified approach to the description by the fact that many distortions can occur precisely because of the imperfections of the scribes: “*multumque degenerat transcribentium fors varia*” (Plinius Secundus, 1966, p. 140), that is, “*many distortions were caused by scribes*” [the author’s translation].

However, even the precautions taken by Pliny did not protect his work from possible distortions in the future. The reason for this was that “*Naturalis historia*” contained a lot of scientific terms as well as borrowed and rare words, which created a huge number of opportunities for the scribes to distort this text.

And although the original manuscript of “*Naturalis historia*” has not been found to date (and most likely it has not been preserved), many copies were made during its replication, from which copies or excerpts were subsequently also made for the works of other scientists. And this is understandable. After all, “*Naturalis historia*” was created, in fact, as a guide for various types of civil servants of the Roman Empire.

However, despite a large number of copies, a full restoration of the original text is hardly possible, since not a single whole manuscript has been found. All the copies found are fragmentary, damaged, and very different from each other (Reynolds, 1983, pp. 308–309). This is because most of the surviving manuscripts were compiled carelessly and with a large number of semantic, grammatical, and spelling errors.

In this regard, it is not possible to determine which copy corresponds more to the original.

To date, all found and more or less preserved manuscripts with copies of “*Naturalis historia*” (they are called codex) are divided into two groups according to the time of creation.

The group “*vetustiores*” (translated by the author from Latin as “an older”) is more ancient (V–VIII centuries) and includes five manuscripts, each of which has its scientific code: M, N, O, P, Pal. Chat (Reynolds, 1983, p. 308).

The group “*recentiores*” (translated by the author from Latin as “a recent”) is more modern (IX–X centuries) and includes seven manuscripts, each of which also has its code:

D+G+V (these three *codexes* are combined into one for convenience), Ch, F, R, E (right there, p. 311).

However, as it turned out, such a division into groups is more formal than real. This strange fact was described by the British Latinist Leighton Durham Reynolds in his book “Texts and Transmission”. He notices that the dating of the manuscripts is so badly distorted that some of the so-called “*recentiores*” are older than some of the applicants for the “*ordo vetustiorum*” due to confusion between age and quality (right there, p. 308).

After much research, the first attempt to restore and publish a single collection of “*Naturalis historia*” was carried out in 1469 in Venice and the second in 1476 in Parma (Plinius Secundus, 1967, p. xiii). However, the most popular version of the work was the edition published in Berlin in 1866. It became the main source for most modern publications of “*Naturalis historia*” (Plinius Secundus, 1967, p. 13).

And although all published editions of “*Naturalis historia*” allow us to get acquainted with the approximate text of the work, it is necessary to understand that all of them are only possible versions of the work and not its original version. But it will most likely be impossible to restore the original version of the work, because, as Eric Herbert Warmington noticed, many of the textual problems raised are manifestly insoluble (Plinius Secundus, 1967, p. 12).

5. The Bible.

At the same time, both “*Naturalis historia*” and the works of other ancient and medieval authors can be confidently called classic examples of how the repeated transfer of a text from one medium to another led to the occurrence of different versions of the text as well as questions about the authenticity of the text and its connection with the author.

But if the existence of such questions about the works of ancient and medieval authors is quite understandable, then the presence of such discussions about the Bible is very surprising. However, there are many more questions about the Bible than answers.

After all, we don't know anything about the origin of the Christian Bible (which consists of “The Old Testament” and “The New Testament”), because to date no guaranteed confirmed originals of biblical texts have been found.

Professor of biblical studies Jerry L. Sumney asked wonderful questions about this: where are the guarantees that we are reading the Bible today, which the church defined in ancient times as such through which God speaks most clearly and authoritatively? Where are the guarantees that these texts have not changed over time, and how did these texts get to us at all? (Sumney, 2014, p. 19).

Here is an example from “The New Testament”, which was written and compiled later than other biblical texts, which theoretically should make it easier for the researcher to determine the authenticity of its texts.

So, conditionally, 27 books belong to “The New Testament”, namely, 4 canonical gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), the Acts of the Apostles, 14 Pauline epistles, 7 general epistles (Catholic letters), and the Book of Revelation (Parker, 2008, p. 5).

According to the traditional point of view as well as according to the information contained in the “Gospels” (in Greek “*εὐαγγέλιον*”) and in the “Acts of the Apostles” (in Greek “*πράξεις Ἀποστόλων*”) all the texts of “The New Testament” were written by the twelve apostles (Rogerson, 2005, p. 21).

Based on this, it can be assumed that all parts of “The New Testament” should have been written before the end of the 1st century AD, when the apostles were still alive.

However, to date, not a single manuscript with biblical texts has been found that could be dated to the 1st century AD and is guaranteed to be considered an original document.

As usual, only copies of the original texts were found.

At the same time, the found manuscripts with copies of the texts of “The New Testament” can be divided into the following three classes: the Greek manuscripts, the ancient translations into other languages, and the quotations from “The New Testament” made by early ecclesiastical writers (Metzger & Ehrman, 2005, p. 52).

According to American biblical scholar Bruce Manning Metzger, the Greek manuscripts should be considered the most important group among such manuscripts, because they date from the earliest period (2-6 centuries AD) and are written in ancient Greek, which is considered the language of the original text (right there, p. 54).

However, there are also versions of the texts of “The New Testament” translated into other languages.

The most famous among them are the following five Syriac Versions of “The New Testament”, created between the end of the 2nd century AD and the beginning of the 9th century AD: the Old Syriac, the Peshitta (or common version), the Philoxenian, the Hareclean, and the Palestinian Syriac versions (Metzger & Ehrman, 2005, pp. 96–97).

Among the Latin Versions, two versions are the most well-known, namely, the Old Latin Version and the Latin Vulgate. At the same time, the earliest manuscripts of the Old Latin Version date back to the third century AD. In turn, the earliest manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate date back only to the beginning of the fifth century AD. However, it was these manuscripts that were taken as a basis and approved by the Roman Catholic Church (right there, p. 122–123).

In addition, there are also several other versions of “The New Testament” in other languages, which also belong to the main versions of this work: the Coptic Version (the earliest manuscript dates from the fourth century AD), the Gothic Version (the earliest manuscript dates from the fifth century AD), the Armenian Version (the earliest manuscript dates from the eighth century AD), the Georgian Version (the earliest manuscript dates from the ninth century AD), the Ethiopian Version (the earliest manuscript dates from the tenth century AD), the Old Slavonic Version (the earliest manuscript was created by Cyril and Methodius and dates from the tenth century AD) (right there, p. 117–118). These texts are not just called versions – they differ from each other and, sometimes, significantly.

The reason for this was that the main texts of “The New Testament” (if they existed) were edited and changed already at the initial stage when creating their first copies.

For example, Bruce Manning Metzger reports that the manuscript “p66” (which dates back to the second century AD and is considered a partial copy of the text “The New Testament” in Greek) contains about 440 alterations placed throughout the text. At the same time, he notices that this text also contains many elements that are typically Alexandrian and Western as well as several passages with unique readings (for example, according to “p66”, in 13-5 of the Gospel of John, Jesus took not a “basin” but a “foot-basin”) (right there, p. 57–58).

If we abstract from the idea that the original texts of “The New Testament” once existed and look at the manuscript “p66” with an independent eye, then it may seem that this is not an attempt to create a copy of this work but an attempt to compose “The New Testament”. In this case, it can be assumed that this is not a copy of the text but its original, and in the first century AD none of the apostles wrote any texts of “The New Testament”.

Or perhaps it is an attempt to rewrite the original texts of “The New Testament” in a new way by the author of the manuscript. After all, isn't it strange that the very first copies of the texts of “The New Testament”, dated to the second century AD, survived during the 19th century to our times, and the original texts created only 50 years earlier than these copies were lost? In this case, it can be assumed that the original texts were not lost but

deliberately destroyed, so that no one could ever find out the truth, and allegedly copies with heavily modified text were created instead.

In any case, even if the original texts of “The New Testament” did exist, their frequent editing by scribes at their discretion already at the initial stages of copying led to the occurrence of many different versions of “The New Testament”, which do not allow to establish the authenticity of the original text.

In turn, modern publications of “The New Testament” are no longer even versions of “The New Testament” but a kind of interpretation of its different versions. Therefore, a modern researcher of the Christian religion should be very careful in his conclusions, if they are made based on modern publications of this work.

6. The Qur’an.

The situation is no better with the Qur’an (it can also be written as Koran), despite its much later appearance.

According to Islamic history, it was revealed to people by the prophet Muhammad who lived around the period 570-632 AD.

In the book “Muhammad and the Believers: at the origins of Islam”, the famous American scholar of Islam and Professor at the University of Chicago Fred M. Donner sets out the generally accepted religious tradition according to which the Qur’an appeared around 610 AD, when Muhammad first began to receive revelations from God, transmitted to him by the archangel Gabriel and recorded later by followers of Muhammad (Donner, 2010, pp. 40–41). According to the same tradition, finally, about twenty years after Muhammad’s death, the scattered written and unwritten parts of the revelation were collected by an editorial committee and compiled in definitive written form (right there, p. 53).

Thus, it can be concluded that the modern form of the Qur’an (which we can read today) is based not on the original texts written by the prophet Muhammad, but on texts that were repeatedly rewritten and edited by other people many years after his death.

German professor of Religious Studies and the History of Christianity at the University of Saarland Karl-Heinz Ohlig confirms this version and also reports that according to the main religious hypothesis (which, however, is disputed by some Shia Muslims), the work on combining the revelations of prophet Muhammad into a modern form of Qur’an was carried out eighteen to twenty-four years after the death of Muhammad by a commission of three Meccans under the leadership of Zayd ibn Thabit from Medina (this work occurred in the caliphate of Uthman between 650 and 656 AD) (Ohlig, 2010, p. 8).

There are also scientific hypotheses concerning the “pre-Islamic” origin and “late origins” of the Qur’an described by Fred M. Donner. According to the first theory, the Qur’an originated as pre-Islamic strophic hymns of Arabian Christian communities, which Muhammad adapted to form the Qur’an (Donner, 2010, p. 54). According to the second theory, the Qur’an crystallized slowly within the Muslim community over two hundred years or more and mostly outside of Arabia, mainly in Iraq (that is, the Qur’an is not a product of Western Arabia in the early seventh century C.E.), and its official origin is merely a pious back projection made by Muslims of later times who wished to root their beliefs and the existence of their community in the religious experience of an earlier prophetic figure (Donner, 2010, p. 54).

However, these hypotheses are not supported by proper evidence.

In turn, if we consider the main religious hypothesis, we can assume that before coming to us, the text of the Qur’an overcame at least five stages of transferring information to a new medium, namely: from God through the archangel Gabriel to the memory of

prophet Muhammad, from the memory and mouth of the prophet Muhammad to memory of his assistants, from the memory of his assistants to a set of initial separate solid media (individual revelations or parts thereof), selecting information from individual solid media and copying it to the first common solid medium (combining all revelations into a single document), copying from the first common solid medium into a book of modern format.

And if the first stage is a divine act that we can neither confirm nor deny (we can only believe in it or not), then the subsequent stages are ordinary human activities related to editing and transferring (copying) large amounts of information to a new medium (as in the cases of the Bible and “The Histories” of *Herodotus*).

In turn, we cannot exclude the fact that at each stage of such transfer of information, it could be distorted, which ultimately could lead to the loss of some of the information from the revelations of the prophet Muhammad.

Conclusions and prospects for further research.

1. The article includes many examples of events and circumstances that have influenced or could have influenced the perception of ancient information or its physical distortion.

Formally, all these events and circumstances belong to only one type, since all of them are associated only with the transfer of information from one medium to another (for example, when recording an oral story on a hard medium, when restoring text from the original, when editing, copying or translating text, or in another variant of transferring information to a new medium).

In this regard, they can be combined into one factor, which can be conditionally called the “**factor of information transfer**”.

As the examples have shown, the influence of this factor on the information most often occurs for three reasons: due to negligence, ignorance, or pretense.

2. The negligence may imply simple technical errors that text scribes make when copying large amounts of information.

It is possible to understand the extent of the influence of technical errors on the distortion of information if one regards the complicated way ancient information has overcome to reach the researcher since its creation.

So, in ancient times, at the initial stage, information was stored either in the memory of the narrator or in primitive ancient solid media.

According to Bruce Manning Metzger, in ancient times the main solid information carriers were clay tablets, stone, bone, wood, leather, various metals, potsherds (*ostraca*), papyrus, and parchment (vellum) (Metzger & Ehrman, 2005, p. 4).

At the same time, he emphasizes that the use of such ancient media was difficult since literary works were customarily published in the format of a scroll made of papyrus or parchment (the papyrus scroll was made by gluing together, side by side, separate sheets of papyrus and then winding the long strip around a roll; the normal Greek literary roll self-exceeded 35 feet in length (right there, p. 11–12).

In turn, the English professor of biblical studies at the University of Sheffield John William Rogerson reports that since most of the scrolls were prepared from the skins of animals, or on sheets of papyrus, they could only be reproduced by being copied by hand (Rogerson, 2005, p. 31).

At the same time, David Lateiner describes that an ancient “book” was very inconvenient to use since it existed in a stack of rolled papyrus manuscripts (before conventions of titling and dividing), it had no spine, each “book” had to be laboriously copied, written out by hand (Herodotus, 2004, p. 22).

The process of evolution of information carriers was very slow. According to John William Rogerson, ancient media began to take the form of a book (in the sense of sheets of paper or parchment bound at one edge so that the pages could be turned back and forth) only in the 2nd century AD (Rogerson, 2005, p. 31).

At the same time, according to Bruce Manning Metzger, in ancient times, most likely it was the church that first began to create prototypes of modern books (Metzger & Ehrman, 2005, p. 12). Such a book was made by folding one or more sheets of papyrus in the middle and sewing them together.

Certainly, the acquisition of a modern book form by manuscripts greatly simplified their use. However, even after that, copying information remained a very complex and time-consuming process for quite some time. According to the American biblical scholar Bruce Manning Metzger, until the invention of printing with movable type in the fifteenth century, the text of every ancient record could be transmitted only by laboriously copying it letter by letter and word by word (right there, p. 13).

As a result, there was a high risk of technical errors associated with the manual copying of large volumes of text, which has always been a very difficult process, especially in ancient times. Even today, with the availability of modern technologies (paper, fountain pen, computer, etc.), manual copying often leads to errors in texts. What then can we say about the ancient and medieval periods, when one had to copy large volumes of text without any technical assistance, from the skin to parchment or papyrus, and so on?! Naturally, as a result of such a rewriting of the text, simple human errors could appear, at the same time made repeatedly, both in the ancient and the Middle Ages. Perhaps if the text was applied or transferred to the stone, there would be fewer scribes and a lower probability of error. But we have what we have.

On this occasion, the outstanding American linguist and historian Roland G. Kent said the following:

“... the speed with which a copyist transcribes with pen upon paper or parchment, is a factor leading likewise to greater error than the slowness with which the engraver transfers his text, letter by letter (not word by word), to its place of permanent record. On the other hand, the inscription may be copied in an alphabet differing from that in which the original draft stands and this will produce a series of corruptions to which manuscript copies rarely afford parallels, except that we may compare how Greek words in Latin texts have been copied by the scribes” (Kent, 1920, pp. 289–290).

Thus, these examples show that ancient information in its journey through time, in most cases, underwent many stages of editing and copying (including manual).

At the same time, original media with original information recorded by its author may have been destroyed by scribes or time, or simply lost.

In this regard, most of the modern research on ancient works is carried out only based on their copies, most often made from other copies.

That is, very often the authenticity of these works remains unconfirmed. At the same time, there is always a risk that in ancient times under physically transferring (copying) information from one medium to another such information could be distorted as a result of a simple technical or editorial error.

2.3. As for ignorance, this is a kind of intellectual reason, since the distortion of information, in this case, is not accidental but intentional. That is, a person who transfers information from one medium to another meaningfully distorts such information, thinking at the same time that one is doing the right thing (for example, one uses the wrong font when writing a new copy of the text, or replaces old words with new ones but incorrectly, or incorrectly translates words from one language to another, etc.).

This can easily be understood by taking the example of the ancient works that initially did not have a modern structure and have come down to us in their existing form only from the manuscripts of ancient and medieval scribes, who, in turn, used the manuscripts of other scribes, used different alphabets, and also often edited and structured the text at their discretion.

In addition, ancient works could be repeatedly translated into another dialect or language by people who lived much later than the period of their creation.

In turn, the translation into another language additionally affected the distortion of the source text in not the best way.

For example, Bruce Manning Metzger describes the effect of translation on the distortion of the source text using the example of the “New Testament”, early versions of which were translated into Syriac, Latin, or Coptic, to assist in the propagation of the Christian faith. In his opinion, not only were some of the translations prepared by persons who had an imperfect command of Greek but certain features of Greek syntax and vocabulary cannot be conveyed in a translation (for example, Latin has no definite article; Syriac cannot distinguish between the Greek aorist and perfect tenses; Coptic lacks the passive voice and must use a circumlocution. In some cases, therefore, the testimony of these versions is ambiguous) (Metzger & Ehrman, 2005, pp. 94–95).

Naturally, all such processes of transferring information to a new medium, especially those related to its editing and translation, could lead to numerous errors. Such a probability of distortion of the text increased significantly, given the fact that medieval and ancient editors often used not logic but personal preferences. As a result, such actions could lead not only to errors but also to the appearance of new elements (which did not exist in the source text). In addition, it is necessary to take into account the fact that ancient and medieval scribes could, at their discretion, both borrow foreign words from the source text and replace obsolete words with new ones but with slightly different meanings. Such editors and scribes, despite all their efforts, did not have the opportunity to receive comments and explanations of the information directly from the ancient authors.

2.4. In other words, we can say that the imperfection and personal preferences of the person who acted as a copyist as well as the linguistic diversities and complexity of the process of transferring information from one medium to another in ancient and medieval times could have a significant impact on the distortion of the ancient information under study.

Thus, it can be concluded that there is a high probability that over time most of the ancient information could have undergone significant distortion during its repeated transfer from one medium to another.

Such distortions (committed by scribes of information intentionally or not) could affect both the structure and sequence of the presentation of information and the correctness of the information presented in the works of ancient authors. In turn, this could affect the essence of the information and our perception of such information.

2.5. However, the most unpleasant and unpredictable reason for the appearance of such a factor is pretense – when the real creator (or a group of creators) of the information declares that one is only a copyist, and the author of the information was another person who either lived much earlier and was more famous or was invented altogether. At the same time, subsequently, such a fictional person can be used by other ancient or medieval authors as a literary character (for example, to build dialogues or to make the work more interesting or meaningful). And this confuses the situation even more.

In this case, it is almost impossible to establish the authenticity and authorship of such a text without the original carrier of information, which in most cases is not preserved as well as official information about the existence of its author.

2.6. In any case, it is necessary to understand that regardless of the reasons for the occurrence of “**the factor of information transfer**”, its influence on ancient information is enormous.

Accordingly, a researcher of ancient information who is unable to work with the original, but is forced to work only with its copies, should take into account the possibility of the influence of such “**the factor of information transfer**” on the information under research.

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