Thomas Meier / Michael R. Ott / Rebecca Sauer (eds), Materiale Textkulturen. Konzepte – Materialien – Praktiken. Materiale Textkulturen 1. Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin / München / Boston 2015. € 129.95. ISBN 978-3-11-037128-4. 746 pages with 185 illustrations.

Since the emergence of postprocessual archaeology in the 1980s material culture has been, and is still approached (at least by some) as a form of text. Considerably less numerous are those authors who treat texts as material culture. Nowadays, the dichotomy between 'material-oriented' and 'text-oriented' historical disciplines is slowly but surely dissolving. Nevertheless, this dissolution asks for a reflexive engagement with the concepts which triggered it. The book under review therefore comes in good time.

"Materiale Textkulturen" comes in medium format and high-quality hardcover with both colour and black and white illustrations. The price of the book makes it less suitable for individual customers and more so for institutions and university libraries. This goes well with the aim, scope and contents of the book considering that it is to be understood and consumed as a handbook, although its editors insist that it should not be understood as an encyclopaedia (p. 5).

The book is the result of the collaborative research group (Sonderforschungsbereich) SFB 933 "Materiale Textkulturen. Materialität und Präsenz des Geschriebenen in non-typographischen Gesellschaften", funded for three years from 2011 onwards by the German Research Foundation (DFG). The editors and contributors see the book as a guiding map of their research within the group (pp. 7–16). It opens with a preface, contents, introduction and explanation on the formation of the SFB 933 research group.

It is divided into three main parts: I. "Konzepte" ("Concepts", p. 19–246), II. "Materialien" ("Materials", p. 247–454), and III. "Praktiken" ("Practices", p. 455–746). Each of the three parts brings together key terms related to material text cultures. Each of these terms is presented with an introductory text and one to four examples or short case studies with the aim to demonstrate the use of each particular term. These examples and case studies are indeed very rich and come from cross-cultural contexts because of the wide variety of research focuses of those involved in the project and in the preparation of this book (Prehistoric, Classical, Roman, Medieval, Near Eastern Archaeology; Egyptology; Assyriology; Classical studies and Philology; Sinology; German studies; Islamic studies; Papyrology; Art History; Ancient History; Ethnology etc.). Next to these main texts there are also so called box-texts. They are presenting some more concepts, yet without case studies. Their purpose is to connect either different terms or different parts of the book.

The first part of the book deals with concepts. It opens with the term "Material" (Thomas Meier, Friedrich-Emanuel Focken and Michael R. Ott, p. 19–32) which defines material as the physical "stuff" out of which a materially conceptualised thing is composed (p. 19). In contrast to material, materiality is defined by the authors as material "thingness of things" (p. 21). The authors argue that properties of materials are not inherent but processual and relational (p. 27). Clearly, all of these ideas are influenced by current anthropological and archaeological discussions on materiality. This term is very often used by authors without definition and it is to be welcomed that Th. Meier, F.-E. Focken and M. R. Ott clarify their understanding and use of the term. This is at the same time one of the main discussion points as not all scholars would agree with them, bearing in mind that others tend to see materiality as "socialness of things".

This leads to the second term discussed in this part of the book, namely "Materialität" ("Materiality") itself (Angeliki Karagianni, Jürgen Paul Schwindt, Christina Tsouparopoulou, p. 33–46). Unlike Th. Meier, F.-E. Focken, and M. R. Ott, these three authors see materiality as a form of investigating the relations of analytic categories belonging to concrete entities (p. 33). A. Kara-

gianni, J. P. Schwindt and Chr. Tsouparopoulou further discuss materiality within the framework of the Actor-Network-Theory (*sensu* Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, and John Law) as an assemblage (p. 37). With all their right to have different views on the same term, the obvious problem here is the potential misunderstanding by the reader when the term is used throughout the book.

Another concept discussed is "Artefakt" ("Artefact"), which A. Tsouparopoulou and Th. Meier define as a product of human action through acts and crafts (p. 47–62). They however stress that in a symmetrical world it is hard to differentiate between arte- and eco-facts (p. 49). This dilemma emerges in the second part of the book within the term "Naturmaterialien" (natural materials). "Affordanz" ("Affordance") is the first box-text (Richard Fox, Diamantís Panagiotópoulos and Christina Tsouparopoulou, p. 63–70). Christian D. Haß, Daniele C. Luft and Peter A. Miglus understand the term "Bedeutung" ("Meaning") as the results of human reception practices made on and with things (p. 71). They do not distinguish between the German concepts of "Sinn" (sense) and "Bedeutung" (meaning). They emphasise the numerous discrepancies such as those between signifier and signified, object and perception, perception and discourse, as much as the historical distance between contemporary conventionality and the context of research theme. Additionally, they stress the problem of the relativity of our own scientific reception practices, arguing that functions and meanings are not stable, but multi-layered. Meanings are embedded in "cultural code" and the main problem in acquiring meanings from distant cultural contexts is their often fragmentary state. The danger is that we (un)consciously project our own values back to the past.

Annette Hornbacher, Tobias Frese and Laura Willer introduce the term "Präsenz" ("Presence") as physical presence of things but also as presence of bodies as appearances (p. 87–100). They continue the discussion in direction of the ontological difference between real and represented and mention Jacques Derrida's criticism of logocentrism and metaphysics of presence. They state that this led to the crisis of representation which was surpassed by the Actor-Network-Theory of Bruno Latour and the philosophy of "presence" of Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht. The question is what constitutes presence and if an artefact is present only when it can be perceived, or if invisible presence is enough for an artefact to have agency? Can a hidden artefact have a stronger presence in a paradoxical way so that its "presence" is depending on knowledge of it, rather than on perception of it?

Daniela Christina Luft, Michael R. Ott and Christoffer Theis introduce the term "Kontext" ("Context") and argue that when artefacts transporting text are concerned, context is seen as a specific function of the written (p. 101–112). It is changing depending on text and text carrier. In material-oriented disciplines context describes use areas whereas in text-oriented disciplines it describes relations within a text or between different texts. In this sense "Topologie" ("Topology"), according to Jens-Arne Dickmann, Wilfried E. Keil and Christian Witschel, deals with conditions of spatiality (p. 113–128). It explores the texts in their spatial context with their perception seen as a dynamic constellation. The second box-text "Material(itäts)profil – Topologie – Praxeographie" ("Material[ity] Profile – Topology – Praxiography"), introduced by Friedrich-Emmanuel Focken, Friederike Elias, Christian Witschel and Thomas Meier (p. 129–134), discusses the theoretical and methodological aspects of these terms concentrating on praxiography, which deals with individual actions and routine practices. Both the material aspects of an artefact and its spatial context can influence practices on it and with it in different measures. J.-A. Dickmann, F. Elias and F.-E. Focken further explain "Praxeologie" ("Praxeology") as a term which deals with practices as actions conducted on a routinely basis by several members of a society (p. 135–146).

The third box-text "Netzwerkanalyse" ("Network Analysis") by Julia Lougovaya-Ast differentiates social network analysis from the Actor-Network-Theory (p. 147–156). She points to the use of this method in prosopography. However, she suggests that if we include words as actors, with

Actor-Network-Theory as an ontological basis, new and exciting results could be produced. Michael R. Ott and Sarah Kiyanrad introduce the term "Geschriebenes" ("The Written") in order to cover all aspects of what is written which go beyond the writing, script and text, to include help-lines, practices, techniques, conventions, seals, erasures, corrections, additions etc. (p. 157–168). Annette Hornbacher, Sabine Neumann and Laura Willer discuss "Schriftzeichen" ("Script Signs") as symbols constituting a script (p. 169–182). Tino Licht discusses "Ludwig Traubes Überliefe-rungsphilologie" ("Ludwig Traube's Philology of Tradition") within the next box-text (p. 183–190). Michael R. Ott and Rodney Ast argue that "Textkulturen" ("Text Cultures") are not there to be found; they are constructed through the analysis (p. 191–198). They broadly define them as acts on and with the texts. In the next box-text labelled "Typographisch / non-typographisch" ("Typographic / Non-typographic") Carla Meyer and Thomas Meier discuss the difference between those societies which have the technical means for mass production of texts as opposed to those which do not (p. 199–206). The biggest role in differentiation of "the west from the rest" was the Gutenberg revolution. Nevertheless, they argue that difference should not be reduced to this historical context, as there are other cases where one can also speak of the difference between typographic and non-typographic (cuneiform clay tablets, hieroglyphs and Hieratic on papyrus etc.). Jan Christian Gertz, Frank Krabbes, Eva Maria Noller and Fanny Opdenhoff discuss "Metatext(ualität)" ("Meta-textuality"), a term which originates in poststructuralism and is the umbrella term with meta-text being the specific term signifying a text shaped by meta-textuality (p. 207–218). Meta-textuality is a comment within a text on another text without necessarily quoting it (*sensu* Gérard Genette). Kay Joe Petzold, Joachim Friedrich Quack and Jakub Šimek discuss "Edition" ("Edition") as different ways to make textual artefacts available as representations, whereby one is continuously balancing between reception of ancient and modern audience, as the edition is always a transformation and translation (p. 219–234). Where interpretation and philological commentary are concerned there is a difference in editing texts in languages with historical continuity and those in languages which had to be reconstructed anew.   Paul Schwindt introduces the readers to "(Radikal) Philologie" ("[Radical] Philology"), located between Part I "Concepts" and Part II "Materials" (p. 235–246). One major problem encountered by the reader is that the terms introduced in the first part of the book do not influence the discussions in the last two sections in great manner. As a consequence, nuanced knowledge of anthropological, archaeological and philological theory is not particularly important for reading the terms discussed in the latter chapters of the book.

The second part of the book is dealing with different materials used either for writing or producing texts, or as text carriers. This section is indeed more material-oriented and very rich in archaeological and historical information on the use of different materials. The examples provided for each material are numerous and are again coming from a wide variety of cross-cultural contexts: 1. "Stein" ("Stone") by Thomas E. Balke, Wilfried E. Keil, Fanny Opdenhoff and Fabian Stroth; 2. "Putz" ("Plaster") as a box-text by F. Opdenhoff and W. E. Keil; 3. "Ton" ("Clay") by Th. E. Balke, D. Panagiotópoulos, A. Sarri and Chr. Tsouparopoulou; 4. "Metall" ("Metal") by S. Kiyanrad, J. Lougovaya-Ast, A. Sarri and K. Trampedach; 5. "Papyrus" ("Papyrus") by R. Ast, A. Jördens, J. F. Quack, and A. Sarri; 6. "Leder" ("Leather") by A. Jördens, S. Kiyanrad and F. J. Quack; 7. "Pergament" ("Parchment") by J. Becker, T. Licht and B. Schneidmüller; 8. "Zwischen Pergament und Papier" ("Between Parchment and Paper") as a box-text by C. Meyer and B. Schneid-müller; 9. "Papier" ("Paper") by C. Meyer and R. Sauer; 10. "Wachs" ("Wax") by A. Jördens, M. R. Ott, R. Ast and Chr. Tsouparopoulou; 11. "Holz" ("Wood") by L. Berkes, E. Giele, M. R. Ott and J. F. Quack; 12. "Naturmaterialien" ("Natural Materials") by S. Kiyanrad, M. R. Ott, A. Sarri and E. Giele; 13. "Papier oder Seide" ("Paper or Silk") as a box-text by M. Trede; 14. "Texti-

lien" ("Textiles") by S. Enderwitz, E. Giele, M. R. Ott and R. Sauer; 15. "Menschenhaut" ("Human Skin") by K. Oschema and M. R. Ott.

The discussion of "Beurkundungen" ("Certifications") by A. Jördens, Th. E. Balke, I. Berti and N. Maag bridges the second and the third part of the book, stressing that the text of a certificate and the material on which it is written is equally important as the act of reaching an agreement or issuing a law or a certificate.

The third part deals with practices such as: 1. "Auftragen, Malen und Zeichnen" ("Apply, Paint and Draw") by S. Enderwitz, Fanny Opdenhoff, Chr. Schneider; 2. "Mosaizieren" ("Mosaic") by K. Bolle, St. Westphalen and Chr. Witschel; 3. "Meißeln" ("Chisel") by I. Berti, W. E. Keil and P. A. Miglus; 4. "Ritzen" ("Carving") by I. Berti, W. E. Keil and P. A. Miglus; 5. "Gießen" ("Casting") by Th. Meier, I. Berti and M. R. Ott; 6. "Siegeln, Stempeln und Prägen" ("Sealing, Stamping and Shaping") by E. Giele, K. Oschema and D. Panagiotópoulos; 7. "Einweben und Aufnähen" ("Weaving and Sewing") by S. Enderwitz, R. Folger and R. Sauer; 8. "Abschreiben und Kopieren" ("Writing off and Copying") by J. Chr. Gertz, S. Schultz, J. Šimek and K. Wallenwein; 9. "Layouten und Gestalten" ("Designing and Shaping") by R. Ast, É. Attia, A. Jördens and Chr. Schneider; 10. "Mobile und immobile Schriftträger" ("Mobile and Immobile Text Carriers") as a box-text by Chr. Theis; 11. "Perzeption" ("Perception") by S. Neumann and E. M. Noller; 12. "Schriftakte / Bildakte" ("Text and Image Acts") as a box-text by T. Frese and W. E. Keil; 13. "Lesen und Entziffern" ("Reading and Deciphering") by I. Berti, Chr. D. Haß, K. Krüger and M. R. Ott; 14. "Rezitieren, Vorlesen und Singen" ("Reciting, Reading out and Singing") by D. Cubelic, J. Lougovaya-Ast and J. F. Quack; 15. "Transzendieren" ("Transcending") by Chr. D. Haß and D. Chr. Luft; 16. "Rollen, Blättern und (Ent)Falten" ("Rolling, Scrolling and [Un]folding") by E. Giele, J. Peltzer and M. Trede; 17. "Sammeln, Ordnen und Archivieren" ("Collecting, Ordering and Archiving") by R. Ast, J. Becker, M. Trede and L. Wilhelmi; 18. "Tradieren" ("Handing down") by Chr. Theis, L. Wilhelmi and L. Ledderose; 19. "Wiederverwenden" ("Re-use") by K. Bolle, Chr. Theis and L. Wilhelmi; 20. "Beschädigen und Zerstören" ("Damaging and Ruining") by Chr. Mauntel, R. Sauer, Chr. Theis and K. Trampedach.

The second and third parts of the book are, considering the terms discussed, indeed written like a handbook; and compared to the first section, they are much easier to read and follow.

In conclusion, this volume presents very detailed discussions on theoretical and methodological concepts related to the theme of materials and materiality in the context of text cultures. These discussions, however, do not become particularly visible in the parts of the book which, again in a very systematic manner, present the terms related to the materials and practices encountered in text cultures. Indeed, this might be advantageous, because in this way the reader can use the volume in a creative manner and address the possibility of application of certain concepts more critically. The authors are to be congratulated on fulfilling the task they had before them, and this book is going to be more than useful both for students and scholars in various disciplines.

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