As a complex of historical reconstructions, the notion of “historical reality” raises a number of important concerns. What should serve as the basis for scholarly historical reconstructions? What sorts of information do sources provide and how should it be used in historical reconstructions? How reliable, and to what degree, is the retrospective information contained in a given source? Retrospective information in written sources can be classified into three large groups (verifiable, unique, and repeated information) and thereby provide answers to such questions.

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