Aulus Gellius’ *Noctes Atticae* (NA) is a book made of texts; that is, it consists of numerous accounts of reading and interacting with the written word. Although the material interspersed throughout the work is primarily literary, Gellius also includes a variety of documentary texts, ranging from legal writings, to letters written by prominent figures, to inscriptions legible on the buildings of his day. While Gellius draws upon these two branches of written material simultaneously, it is important to examine what distinctions, if any, he makes between these two broad categories of texts (i.e. “literary” and “documentary”). To that end, in this paper I examine Gellius’ treatment of different kinds of evidence, with a view towards understanding their relative authority in the *Noctes Atticae*, and the extent to which these categories of text are seen as distinct from one another.

Gellius intersperses numerous letters throughout the NA from prominent historical figures including Cicero, Caesar, and others. However, these letters are rarely cited for their documentary value: indeed, Cicero’s letters are only cited three times as lexical examples (NA 1.22.19, 4.9.6, 12.13.21-22), and virtually all remaining letters in the miscellany are likely to be fabrications. While these letters may offer some glimpse into a perceived historical record, their inclusion participates in a broader taste within Imperial literature for letters as a literary form (compare those of Aelian and Alciphron). Similarly, the rare appearances of, including the building inscription in the Forum of Trajan (13.25.1), are prompts for broader philological discussions. That Gellius had access to these documents and seen them first hand increases his own cultural authority and the weight of his work; however, he does not present these documentary sources as especially distinct from the other material cited throughout the NA, and they do not carry any more authority than is afforded books and other literary works.

The treatment of the “documents” that surround Gellius suggests that he sees them as a part of a broader nexus that includes more literary works—all of these together constitute a world characterized by what Ferraris terms “strong textualism.” Indeed, the worldview propagated in the NA is one in which the written word is a necessary component of the social order. The inability to interact with documents is what causes societies to change, as he illustrates in his declaration that the laws of Draco were allowed to lapse *tacito in litteratoque Atheniensium consensu oblitteratae sunt* (11.18.4). Documents in Gellius are thus instrumental markers of society, but are heavily dependent on the authority of the written word—text is paramount to his understanding of the Roman world, with little distinction drawn between books and other forms of writing.