Books have many purposes: I would suggest that you use this book as a hands-on tool. This is why I not only offer you a series of reconstructions of Western notions of freedom, but I also put on the table, so to speak, the most relevant textual material for my arguments: the book is thus replete with footnotes and, more important, quotations.

Nowadays, the sheer overabundance of secondary literature and the complete reliance on translations risk keeping you away from the original sources: the former, by inflating your need for expert mediation, the latter, by boasting the independence of the text from its specific language expression. In both cases, the supposed meaning of the text is unduly detached from its written configuration and, more generally, from its context.
In this book, quotations in the original version and script are instead meant to render immediately visible to you the long and tortuous process of construction and reconstruction of texts across times, cultures and languages. Western notions of freedom, similarly to other main Western ideas, trace a path that is both convoluted – as it is often bent over its past – and discontinuous: subsequent waves of translations from Greek (and sometimes Hebrew) sources into Latin first, and into European national idioms later on, are major turning points in such a turbulent course. Moreover, deviations and jumps in the use of notions of freedom do not only result from translations and transliterations, but also from language manipulation, which only the original reference can show.†

The display of the transformations of freedom-related terms, both within and without specific languages, is intended to give you visual evidence of a plurality of uses that can only forcibly be reduced to the fictitious unity of a single notion of freedom. But of course, you may use this material as you wish: to verify, to take further, or to question my suggestions. However, so long as my quotations allow you an escape from the monolingual cage of contextless abstractions, their presence in the text is not useless.

† I write the word ‘god’ as referring to both Christian and other deities with the lower-case initial letter, whilst I write ‘God’ in quoted text when capitalised by other authors.