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Representing Authority in Ancient Knowledge  
Texts

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## Representing Authority in Ancient Knowledge Texts

In this paper we would like to discuss some questions concerning authority and knowledge with obvious relevance to our research group *Personal and apersonal authorization* (B-5). After briefly summarizing how the phenomenon of ‘authority’ is viewed in general, this paper takes up the specific case of authority and tradition. We then consider text as a special case of tradition, and finally knowledge texts as a special case of texts. The most significant section of the paper is the second half, where we sketch out two complementary methods of constructing or representing authority in such texts, one personal and one non-personal. Ancient Greek, religious studies, theology, church history, ancient history and Chinese studies are our areas of expertise, so most of the examples we have chosen come from those fields. But our intention is to draw broad conclusions that could also apply to other traditions as well.

Authority; personal; apersonal; ancient Mediterranean; imperial China; mathematics; Autorität; authorship; tradition.

### I What is ‘authority’?<sup>1</sup>

Scholars have written extensively about authority as a feature of communication. But it is still surprisingly difficult to define authority, or even describe it adequately. In recent decades the focus has been on loss of authority in the modern age, not on authority itself.<sup>2</sup> Sennett in his well-known essay ‘Authority’ wrote: “Assurance, superior judgment, the ability to impose discipline, the capacity to inspire fear: these are the qualities of an authority.” Luhmann understands authority as “temporally generalized influence”. Laden sees a “family” of various activities linking “credentials” and the setting of norms.<sup>3</sup>

Hannah Arendt put forward the influential thesis that authority cannot be established – or where already established disappears – if imposed by force.<sup>4</sup> Arendt argues authority may reside in a single individual as well as in a government organization. Authority is obeyed without question or hesitation, and respect for the individual or the government organization is the sole grounds for obedience.<sup>5</sup> The greatest threat to authority, therefore, is contempt.<sup>6</sup> It cannot be a coincidence that many of the elements listed here originate with the recipients of authority. Authority then may be chiefly an effect.<sup>7</sup> We believe that

- 1 Parts of this article and its main underlying structure originate from a paper read by Markus Asper at the Topoi conference *Knowledge* (Berlin, November 2013). Certain overlaps with the published version of that talk (forthcoming) were unavoidable.
- 2 See for example Arendt 1968; Bourdieu 1984; Bauman 1987; Giddens 1996; Luxon 2013 and most recently Furedi 2013. Cf., however, Eschenburg 1965. For the issue of authority in the broad field of the study of religion see Renger 2015.
- 3 Sennett 1993, 17; Luhmann 1988, 75; Laden 2012, 55–59 (“credential-normative capacity pairing”, 63); see also Horkheimer 1972, 301–302.
- 4 Arendt 1970, 35–56.
- 5 Arendt 1970, 45.
- 6 Arendt 1970, 45.
- 7 This is the basic premise of Lincoln 1994, although primarily limited to political discourse and advice.

authority is a quality or attribute that motivates external action. The famous Milgram experiment is an excellent demonstration of this approach to authority.<sup>8</sup> Someone does something or refrains from doing something believing that this is what a certain authority demands. This means that alternatives to authority would be ‘power,’ ‘violence’ or ‘advantage.’ ‘Authority’ obviously indicates hierarchies in social relationships.<sup>9</sup> It can be assumed that those at the lower end of the social hierarchy are most affected by it and are most likely to experience it as a ‘social emotion.’

In defining ‘authority’ there is a strong and unfortunate temptation to resort to analogies (for example, conductors) or anecdotes instead of carefully reviewing the facts. The concept of authority described in the following text verges on caricature. It is Hans-Georg Gadamer’s recollection of the soon-acclaimed symposium “The Problem of the Classical and Antiquity”, held in Naumburg in 1930 and Gadamer’s first academic conference, which he attended while a junior scholar:

The famous conference on the classical was held in Naumburg in 1929 [should read 1930]. It was like a convocation for the ‘New Humanism’ presided over by its holy patriarch, Werner Jaeger. [...] I was amazed by Werner Jaeger’s practically boundless authority over the scene in Naumburg. Brilliant classicists such as Eduard Fraenkel or Friedländer hardly uttered a sentence without looking eagerly at Jaeger for some sign of approval, who himself appeared to be anything but a reigning despot. But the scene there perfectly matched that [i.e., the craving of authority].<sup>10</sup>

In this example there is no exercise of power, only the possibility of the exercise of power projected on someone who has that capability. In other words, authority comes into focus as a receptive phenomenon. For an outsider like Gadamer this seems bizarre; for insiders it is terrifying. Gadamer makes an ironic parallel to the dogmatic battles for ecclesiastical authority in late antiquity. These professional peers (Fraenkel was the same age as Jaeger, Friedländer six years Jaeger’s senior) engage in a *performance* in a ‘scene’ defined by hierarchy and assumption of authority. Jaeger is at the top of the hierarchy, but the primary function of his *performance* is to embody authority for the others. The others, in turn, create his authority by their projections.<sup>11</sup> The projections in this situation are probably rooted in a certain local tradition, here the tradition of classical philology in Berlin.<sup>12</sup> This kind of link between authority and tradition is the topic of the next section.

## 2 Authority and tradition

Max Weber’s thought is an important source of concepts describing the relationship between authority and tradition. Since authority is a central aspect of legitimate rule, Max Weber’s famous analysis of legitimate rule also offers insights into authority. Weber dis-

8 Milgram 1974. For the experiment’s critical reception see Lunt 2009.

9 Sennett 1993, 10–11. Authority is one of many “bond[s] between people who are unequal.” It is uncertain whether authority is always performative or not (for the connection between *auctoritas* and performance in Augustan Rome see Kray, Pfeiffer, and Studer 1992; Lowrie 2009, 280–281, especially 285–286.)

10 Gadamer 2012, 47–48. For the correct date, see Gadamer 1995.

11 Performance and projection should probably be thought of as “mutually adapted” as in Gumbrecht 2012, 212–213 or as “reciprocal” as in Berger and Luckmann 1966.

12 On this topic see the following anecdote. Wilamowitz served for a long time as an emeritus professor on the Department of Classics’ council. Since age determined the voting order in the council as in the Roman senate, he was always the first polled. That in fact meant his decision was final – even though he held no office and there was no agreement to that effect – simply because no one dared not follow his vote, to the great annoyance of his successor as chair of the department (see Calder 1990 including sources cited).

tinguishes three essential ('ideal') forms of authority found in various combinations in every society, and that define rule as 'legitimate'. In this context, 'legitimacy' does not imply rationality, rectitude or natural justice. Legitimacy here simply refers to the fact that these forms are accepted by both the dominant and the dominated individuals or groups. Weber writes about 'legitimate rule' that:

Authority will be called traditional if legitimacy is claimed for it and believed in by virtue of the sanctity of age-old rules and powers. [...] Obedience is owed [...] to the person who occupies a position of authority by tradition [...].<sup>13</sup>

Of course the topic here is not how obedience can be coerced by violence, but how a text or a textual tradition inspires belief. (In the case of ancient texts, at least three other important aspects of the transmission of authority must be taken into account depending on whether the author, the copyist or the recipient is the primary agent of authority.) Still it is obvious that age or the quality of being 'age-old' also plays an important role in establishing the authority of texts, and that this is especially true in ancient cultures. A good example is the debate in Jewish and Christian apologetics about whether Moses or the Greek authorities were more ancient. After discussing Democritus, Epicurus, the Stoics, Aristotle, the Pythagoreans, Plato and Hesiod, Philo of Alexandria concludes: "A very long time before (sc. those Greek philosophers) Moses, the lawgiver of the Jews, had said in his sacred volumes that the world was both created and indestructible."<sup>14</sup> Age and truthfulness here are mutually dependent. In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer discusses in detail the concept of authority based on tradition.<sup>15</sup> He counters Weber's argument by claiming that authority is a form of understanding, not a form of obedience.<sup>16</sup> For Gadamer, it is the understanding that someone else knows better:

The true essence of authority is based [...] on the claim that it is not unreasonable, indeed, that it can be a command of reason itself, to assume that the insight of others who are superior in other matters exceeds your own judgment. To obey authority means to have insight that the other – and so also the other voices that resound from tradition and the past – can see something better than oneself. Everyone who searched for a way in the human sciences as a young beginner knows this from experience. I myself remember how I argued with an experienced scholar about an academic matter, which I claimed to know with certainty. He abruptly instructed me in my error on this issue and when I asked him, in a very embittered tone, "How do you know that?" His answer was, "When you are as old as I, you'll know it too." That was the correct answer. But who would, even as a teacher of the natural sciences or as a student, take that as an answer?<sup>17</sup>

There can be no doubt that Gadamer's interlocutor here is making a very simple, archaic and unscientific claim to authority based on age (and it was also a lack of age that was the cause of the young Gadamer's astonishment at Jaeger's authority). It is less surprising that

13 Weber 1978, 226–227.

14 Phil. *aet.* 7–19; μακροῖς δὲ χρόνοις πρότερον ὁ τῶν Ἰουδαίων νομοθέτης Μωυσῆς γενητὸν καὶ ἄφθαρτον ἔφη τὸν κόσμον ἐν ἱεραῖς βίβλοις (19, volume 6, p. 78 Cohn & Wendland); see Phil. *quaest. in Gen.* II 6; volume 33A, p. 198–199 Mercier (Socrates either learned from Moses or was *ex rebus ipsis motus*), VI 167; volume 34B, p. 400 Mercier (philosophers learn from Moses); see Pilhofer 1990, 173–192; Pollmann 2012, 169 n. 155.

15 See also Luhmann's brief comments at Luhmann 1988, 75–76.

16 Gadamer 2010, 284: "[...] authority has nothing directly to do with obedience, but rather with knowledge."

17 Gadamer 1993, 39–40, (for the same story with the name and identity of the senior scholar revealed: "my teacher in classical philology, Paul Friedländer"; see Gadamer 1996, 120–121). See also Luhmann 1990, 221.

tradition is the basis of the authority of knowledge. In that regard authority and reason are not at odds.<sup>18</sup>

We would suggest, however, that texts on their own should be considered a special and extreme case of tradition, and that they transmit tradition in its purest form. That transmission was particularly explicit in the ancient world, when papyrus books had to be copied every 70 years to survive. Any text that did not immediately disappear created a tradition. And each tradition in turn created an authority.<sup>19</sup> So every ancient text that survives today owes its existence to its individual author as well as to a great number of largely anonymous copyists, editors, translators and especially readers who – for whatever reason – valued the text highly enough to copy, translate, archive, hide or, as in the case of the *Gospel of Peter* and the other writings in the now lost Akhmim Codex (P. Cair. 10759), choose it as a solemn burial gift.<sup>20</sup> At the same time the countless miraculous and carefully orchestrated ‘rediscoveries’ of secret old writings in the ancient world betray a certain mistrust of tradition and the knowledge it transmits.<sup>21</sup> For example, the hermetic texts boast of having avoided the fallible agents of transmission by surviving concealed until their rediscovery.

O sacred books [...] remain forever beyond the reach of destruction and of decay, invisible and concealed from all [...] until the day shall come when ancient heaven shall bring forth beings worthy of you.<sup>22</sup>

This mediating structure was at bottom the Achilles heel of any tradition. Ancient religious reform movements (for example the Marcionites or Manichaeans in the Christian world) were fond of attacking these weak links in the tradition, and attempting to reconstruct the ‘original’ teachings and texts by minutely dissecting the oral and written transmission. In those two particular cases, the goal was to liberate the teachings of Jesus from the distortions inflicted on it over time.<sup>23</sup>

What is more surprising in the ancient Greek context is the phenomenon opposite of traditionality: namely, that authority could also be based on a claim of belonging to no tradition. Radical newness was one method of making a claim to authority in the field of knowledge discourse. A typical example was the historian and geographer Hecataeus:

Hecataeus of Milet says: I write here what I consider true. For Greek accounts are in my view both numerous and laughable.<sup>24</sup>

Radical newness could be a source of authority not only in scientific, medical or technical discourses in the ancient world<sup>25</sup> but also in religious expression.<sup>26</sup> This phenomenon is found in the language of the biblical prophets, for example, or in Paul.<sup>27</sup> As a central aspect of early Christianity, the experience of newness elicited sharp polemics from pagan intellectuals focused on tradition. This in turn prompted a multilayered and nuanced

18 Gadamer 1996, 121–124 on authority and “critical freedom”. See also Horkheimer 1972, 299–310; and Arendt 1968, 93.

19 Gadamer 2010, 276–277; see also Oesterreicher 2003, 15 on “media”.

20 On writing culture in the ancient world see Reynolds and Wilson 2013. For early Christianity in particular see Haines-Eitzen 2000. On the discovery of the *Gospel of Peter*, see most recently Foster 2007.

21 In general on this topic: Speyer 1970.

22 *Korē Kosmou* 8 (Nock and Festugière 1954, 3).

23 On Marcion see in general May, Greschat, and Meiser 2002; Moll 2010; on Manichaeism in particular see Hoffmann 1997.

24 *Genealogiai* FG̃rHist 1 F 1: Ἐκαταῖος Μιλήσιος ὧδε μυθεῖται· τάδε γράφω, ὡς μοι δοκεῖ ἀλήθεια εἶναι· οἱ γὰρ Ἑλλήνων λόγοι πολλοί τε καὶ γελοῖοι, ὡς ἐμοὶ φαίνονται, εἰσίν.

25 D’Angour 2011.

26 Lane Fox 1986, 168–261.

27 Most recently on the Old Testament: Leene 2014. On Paul: Mell 1989; Kertelge 1997; Hubbard 2002.

defense of the church.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps the greatest champion of radical newness in Christian teachings – as he understood them following Paul – was Marcion.<sup>29</sup> Convinced of the uniqueness of Christ’s teachings, he produced the first New Testament as a self-contained collection of holy texts while rejecting Jewish writings and other oral teachings of the Church.<sup>30</sup> The established church later heaped scorn and disdain on Marcion as well as his “alien, new God”. For example, Tertullian writes:

I am aware that in boasting of their god as ‘new,’ they (i.e. the Marcionites) mean new in men’s knowledge of him. It is, however, this supposed newness so striking to common minds, as well as the natural gratification which is inherent in novelty that I wanted to refute it, and with it the idea of their unknown god.<sup>31</sup>

At the same time the idea of *novitas christiana* remained an ideological, social and – in particular during the reign of Constantine the Great – political challenge for the church in late antiquity.<sup>32</sup>

In the Hellenistic Roman period, the literary construction of successions validating the transmission of knowledge in Jewish writings offers a unique example of the interplay between the notions of ‘authority,’ ‘tradition,’ ‘knowledge’ and ‘text.’ The prosaic ‘genealogies’ in the novelistic writings of Tobit (chapter 1) and Judit (chapter 8), the poetical-historical list of examples in the books of Jesus Sirach (chapters 44–50) and Sapiientia Salomonis (chapter 10), as well as the scholarly constructions of succession in various Jewish Hellenistic historians and mythologists demonstrate<sup>33</sup> how certain bodies of knowledge can be transmitted, standardized and authorized by choosing to cite specific names together with the locations and narrative traditions associated with them.

The most significant point of reference for all the ‘genealogical’ constructions mentioned above is the Torah (the Pentateuch), which as a macro-text attained the status of a holy book and an important source of divine revelation in all Jewish groups no later than 300 BC. The Torah is the ultimate authoritative text according to Jesus Sirach (chapter 24) because it incarnates cosmic wisdom, and because as the “law of life” (chapter 17) it contains everything relevant to ethics and epistemology. This in turn is due to it being itself a gift of god, called by Jesus Sirach “the All” (in Hebrew *ha-kol*, in Greek τὸ πᾶν) following Stoic concepts and pagan pantheistic ideas.<sup>34</sup>

The ‘genealogical’ assignment of Tobit and Judit to individual characters in the Torah, the choice of heroes from the Books of Genesis to the Second Book of Kings, and the aretalogical commentary on the power of wisdom (σοφία) in history from Adam to Moses in Sap 10 demonstrate that the key authoritative references for Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman period were Enoch, Abraham, Jacob/Israel and Moses. For early Judaism, these figures were seen as outstandingly pious, wise worshippers of the one true god who had received extraordinary revelation and had set down extraordinary laws and concepts.<sup>35</sup> Jewish identity was defined by its link to these figures, by its reliance on them and by its transmission of the divine texts they left behind.

28 Christianity as *novum*: Prümm 1939. On pagan criticism: Wilken 1984; defense: Fiedrowicz 2001, especially 219–222; Kannaday 2004, 61–64; Buell 2005.

29 Von Harnack 1924; Moll 2010.

30 BeDuhn 2013. Provocative, controversial and revisionist: Vinzent 2011 and Vinzent 2014.

31 Tert. *adv. Marc.* 1,9,1 (Braun 1990): *Scio quidem, quo sensu nouum deum iactitent, agnitione utique. Sed et ipsam nouitatis cognitionem percutientem rudes animas ipsamque naturalem nouitatis gratiositatem uolui repercutere, et hinc iam de ignoto deo prouocare.*

32 Kinzig 1994.

33 Eupolemus (FGrH 723); Pseudo-Eupolemus (FGrH 724), Artapanus (FGrH 726), Cleodemus Malchus (FGrH 727); see Denis 1970.

34 Sir 43:27.

35 See Bloch 2011.

A good example is the anonymous author of the book of Tobit, who has his hero assert that “we are the sons of prophets” to validate his ethical instructions addressed to his son – and therefore to the reader.<sup>36</sup> This assertion is also evidence of a discourse in early Judaism concerning the establishment of authority as well as the fundamental requirements for understanding whether through revelation, inspiration, tradition or individual existential experience. An instance of this discourse – which may involve a critique of the authority of the Torah as well<sup>37</sup> – is the Book of Job, which was completed in the 3rd century BC and which is referred to in various ways<sup>38</sup> by the writings cited above (Tob, Jdt, Sir, Sap). Even in its Greek version which appeared in the 2nd century BC (the Septuagint Job), this book gives an example of how authority, tradition and knowledge converge in texts. For example, the Greek Book of Job places its hero in a genealogy found in the first book of the Torah (see Genesis 36) and links Job with Abraham, thereby inscribing him in the Israelite-Jewish story of salvation.<sup>39</sup> The Testament of Job from the 1st / 2nd century AD took this tendency even farther, identifying Job’s wife<sup>40</sup> (who remained anonymous in the Hebrew and Greek Books of Job) with Dina, the daughter of Jacob (see Genesis 34), so that Job and his children were fully integrated into Judaism. From the Hebrew original’s existential paradigm of the righteous sufferer who rises from the mythical depths without any genealogy,<sup>41</sup> Job becomes a historical anomaly who serves as a role model but is ultimately entirely inaccessible. Historicizing a narrative through genealogy in this way – a phenomenon that is also found in the redaction history of the Torah, for example in the secondary addition of genealogies in the prehistoric paradigms of Genesis 1–11 – is a modern innovation from a literary-historical point of view and, given that genealogies are usually linked with certain cultural achievements and certain localized spaces,<sup>42</sup> also reflects a growing awareness of time and space. On the other hand, historicization of mythical traditions results in a reduction of their paradigmatic and existential content.<sup>43</sup> An approach that strikes a balance between these two is the genealogically structured example list of the righteous from Adam to Moses in Sap 10. Here the heroes are not named, but textual allusions to the Books of Genesis and Exodus allow them to be identified by readers who are familiar with those texts. This also opens the possibility of identifying them with the named characters. In addition, the sequences concerning the actions of the Jewish σοφία personified – who is equivalent to Isis – are constructed in a way so that a pagan reader could in theory connect them with figures from their own tradition, for example Sap 10.4 with Deucalion.

Historicization and the addition of genealogies are not associated with a loss of authority for the texts or traditions in question. On the contrary, it may be that the ancient Judaism’s authoritative texts or texts that established authority survived precisely because they were continually reframed from a historical point of view, and adapted to new cultural or religious contexts.

Political strategies of representation also demonstrate how authority and tradition are closely linked. A good example here is provided by the Jewish Hellenistic Hasmonean

36 Tob 4:12. See Macatangy 2011.

37 See Witte 2013, 81–100.

38 The Book of Sirach also reflects this discourse, on the one hand recognizing the Torah as revealed on the Sinai and at the Temple of Jerusalem (two central authorities for the majority of Jewish groups in the Hellenistic period) as the universal law of life, but on the other hand singing the praises of the Israelite prophets (see Sir 48–49) and characterizing its own author as an inspired scribe and teacher of wisdom (see Sir 24:30–34; 38:34–39, 11; 50:27–29) whose great model was the high priest Simeon II, a descendent of Aaron who was active at the Temple of Jerusalem.

39 See Witte 2009a, 355–394.

40 Hi 2:9.

41 Hi 1:1.

42 On this issue see Renger and Toral-Niehoff 2014.

43 See Witte 2009b, 323–345.



dynasty's attempts to legitimate their authority using the authority of genealogies. These efforts to consolidate their position provide an excellent specimen of what Max Weber termed a 'traditional' authority that relies on the authority of the rulers' genealogical line, or as Jan Assmann's succinctly described it, of an instance where "authority needs ancestry."<sup>44</sup> The First Book of Maccabees,<sup>45</sup> a "skillful presentation of the origin and legitimacy of the dynasty,"<sup>46</sup> describes how a Jewish priest named Mattathias from Modiin led his followers, the Maccabees, in a revolt against a law of Antiochus Epiphanes<sup>47</sup> intended to prevent all Jews from practicing their religion. The entire family of the Maccabees joined this struggle for freedom, gaining high acceptance and great authority among the Jewish population (which can still be seen in modern Jewish society today)<sup>48</sup> because their successes proved that god was on their side.<sup>49</sup> When the power of the Seleucids was finally broken, the people designated the Maccabees as their high priests and ethnarchs.<sup>50</sup> This method of legitimizing permanent political offices<sup>51</sup> using an extraordinarily heroic achievement thought to reflect god's will features in the Jewish tradition in the 4th Book of Moses as well:

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them [...]. [...] And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood [...].<sup>52</sup>

But the (collective) divine heroic achievement of the family of the Maccabees was not the only source of legitimacy required to ensure their rule for more than a century in Judea. They also used a genealogical construction to connect themselves to the legitimate priest families that were allowed to hold the office of high priest. This was apparently quite important, because it is emphasized in the Second Book of Samuel 7:16 and in the First Book of Chronicles 17:14 that the kingdom of the Jews is primarily linked to David and his descendants, and that the priesthood must remain with the Zadokites.<sup>53</sup> That demonstrates as well that the idea was deeply embedded in Jewish consciousness.<sup>54</sup> This is also why Matthathias in his testament urges his sons to consider themselves in a line of ancestors including David, Phinehas, Joshua and so on, as well as to measure themselves against those figures' achievements.<sup>55</sup> But the Maccabees did not attempt to claim a direct genealogical connection with King David.<sup>56</sup> Instead, the First Book of the

44 He also describes this as the retrospective side of the phenomenon of authority: Assmann 2005, 71.

45 The First and Second Books of the Maccabees however contain differing accounts. For example, in the Second Book the establishment of the dynasty of the Maccabees is not made explicit because it ends with Judas Maccabee. Goldstein 1989, 294 therefore sees the Book as contrasting with the First Book. This position has since been disputed, see for example Eckhardt 2009.

46 Sievers 1990, 36.

47 1 Macc 1:41–42.

48 A great example: the various Jewish sporting associations in Israel as well as in the diaspora that use 'Maccabee' in their names. For instance, the Jewish sporting association in Germany is called *Makkabi Deutschland e.V.* and the largest sporting association in Israel is called *Maccabi Tel Aviv*.

49 See for example 1 Macc 5:62. See also Wilker 2011, 235.

50 1 Macc 14:41–49.

51 Not all scholars understand this passage as trying to establish a dynasty, see for example Sievers 1990, 127 and Baltrusch 2001, 168. Among those who believe the passage *does* establish a dynasty, see Eckhardt 2009, 29–30 (n. 33).

52 Num 25:10–13.

53 2 Sam 15:24–37 and 1 Kg 2:26.

54 For the relevance of this biblical concept in the Hellenistic period and a discussion of these passages see for instance Wagner 2005.

55 1 Macc 2:50–61.

56 See also Eckhardt 2009, 29.

Maccabees and Flavius Josephus<sup>57</sup> emphasize that Mattathias came from the family of Joarib, an old priest family named in Chronicles as one of the families chosen by lot to hold the priesthood since Aaron.<sup>58</sup> Scholars take genealogical justification to be so essential that Morton Smith, for example, has argued that later Hasmoneans may have added the passage themselves<sup>59</sup> in order to adorn the legitimation of their authority with yet an additional dimension. Since the Maccabees at that time did not belong to the most influential priest family in Judea, the Zadokites, they attempted to adequately legitimate their authority by claiming a genealogical link with another biblical family of priests. In this way they linked themselves to the collective, personal authority of a family, but also to the Holy Scripture that codified this link. It is also quite easy to trace the origins of the Maccabees' genealogical construction in the Jewish tradition. For example, in the First Book of the Maccabees there is a letter from Jonathan, Simeon's elder brother, to the Spartans, as well as a letter in response. Here the Jews and the Spartans create a genealogical bridge between Greece and Judea, emphasizing that the Spartans and the Jews are blood relatives because they share a common ancestor, Abraham.<sup>60</sup> With these constructed types of politically relevant genealogies, authority remains personal, i.e. attributed to individuals. It has, however, also collective aspects, that move towards the abstract and therefore the non-personal.

### 3 Authority and textual knowledge

Our chief focus is on authority as it interacts with 'textual knowledge.' We use the term 'textual knowledge' as a convenient way to avoid terms such as 'theory' and 'science' which always come with some anachronistic baggage. Textual knowledge is knowledge that is conveyed explicitly in texts or could, at least, be entirely conveyed textually (for example, the history of the Persian Wars in contrast with competent tango dance, or an introduction to conic sections in contrast with ship building).<sup>61</sup>

Where comes authority into play in this area of knowledge? Luhmann summed it up in a one-liner: "Those with knowledge have authority."<sup>62</sup> This, however, requires further explanation. The process of conveying knowledge is based on asymmetries. This means that in a variety of ways the dynamic relationship between author and recipient is determined by asymmetries in knowledge that connects the two. In a certain sense, the social relation of author to recipient is similar to that of teacher or scholar to pupil. The pupil requires guidance and support from the teacher to gain expertise. At the same time, developing the pupil's potential opens the possibility that he or she will make innovative, productive contributions to the very same tradition, become a source of knowledge themselves and eventually achieve major successes. Similarly, a recipient who interprets a text creatively may escape the asymmetry of the relationship. As with the teacher-pupil relationship however, initially this is not the case. Just as power or powerlessness may define participants in social interactions, knowledge and the lack of knowledge determine the relationship between the authors of knowledge texts and their recipients – even on the level of motivation. Those with knowledge clearly have the authority, and the recipient

57 1 Macc 2:1 and *Ios. ant. Iud.* 12:265.

58 1 Chr 24:7. See however Neh 10: 3–9 and 11:10. The older list differs in its presentation of the order and importance of the families.

59 Smith 1996, 323.

60 1 Macc 12:21. See also Bickerman 1988, 184–185.

61 It would be particularly interesting to apply the three forms of authority identified by the writer Jean Starobinski (Starobinski 1995) to scientific literature.

62 Luhmann 1990, 149; more specifically 346. Zschocke 2012, 13–19 gives a short overview of authority and science.

is at the shorter end both in terms of knowledge and authority. Actions initiated or prevented by social authority are mirrored in the area of textual knowledge by changes in epistemological conditions. In the area of textual knowledge under consideration here, the equivalent would be whether people voluntarily ‘believe’ or trust an author. By ‘voluntarily’ we mean without any formal proofs, evidence and so on. A major part of all written transfers of knowledge depend on this sort of trust if only to allow brevity in communication.<sup>63</sup>

We have all had the experience of granting an authorial authority a certain level of blind trust. For example, we assume that a proof of Archimedes is ‘correct’ because we lack the patience to go through it in detail (although of course that is exactly what we should do). Or if an author we know and admire for their previous work makes a claim, we tend to believe without careful consideration that the author can or at least could in principle substantiate that claim. We are less likely to blindly trust the claims of an author we do not know, or one we believe has no authority.<sup>64</sup>

In the Summa from the middle ages, a quote from an authority – i.e. *auctoritas* in the technical sense – is often used to open, structure or, above all, conclude the *articulus* of a *quaestio*. Here is an example from Thomas Aquinas:

But an action is not absolutely good unless it is good in all those ways, since “any single defect causes evil, while good is caused only by an integral cause”, as Dionysius [Areopagita] says.<sup>65</sup>

This is a similar phenomenon to the one observed above: texts that have proved to be correct in a large number of cases are now granted the authority to settle an issue.

A particularly intriguing indicator of textual authority is forgery. There were an enormous number of texts circulating in the ancient world written in the names of the great philosophers, writers, scientists and physicians entirely without their cooperation or assent. This was true after the deaths of these authors, but also to their great annoyance and indignation even while they were still alive. In a famous autobiographical passage in Galen, the physician-philosopher is both outraged and amused by the discovery and exposure of a forgery written in his name that was on sale at the local book market in Rome.<sup>66</sup> Yet behind his obvious indignation the passage also betrays a certain pride on Galen’s part. This seems entirely understandable given the assessment of the late antique Neoplatonist David in the prologue to his commentary on Porphyry’s *Isagoge*. There David remarks that those who were undistinguished and worthless but wanted their texts to be read would write under the name of an ancient and respected author, hoping that the forged author’s reputation would improve their work’s reception.<sup>67</sup>

The rampant, creative, and unabashed phenomenon of literary forgeries in antiquity remains a largely unexamined subject, even though the Christian revolution is inconceivable without it.<sup>68</sup> However, forgery’s greatest triumphs came not in those cases when its products found acceptance as Holy Scripture, but rather when a work written under the name of a great author succeeded in escaping the fanaticism and destructiveness of adverse circumstances. This was the case, for example, when the writings of the Origenist Evagrius

63 Gadamer 1996, 121.

64 See Aristot. *top.* I 1, 100 b 21–23; see also Hamblin 1970, 43.

65 Thom. Aq. *sum. theol.* II, qu. 18, art. 4: *Non tamen est actio bona simpliciter, nisi omnes bonitates concurrant, quia quilibet singularis defectus causat malum, bonum autem causatur ex integra causa, ut Dionysius dicit.* For Thomas Aquinas’ reference see Ps.-Dion. Areop. *div. nom.* IV, 30.

66 Gal. *libr. prop.* (xix, 8–9 Kühn).

67 Dav. *in Porph. Isag.* pr. 1 p. 81,31–82,4 Busse (cited by Speyer 1971, 132). For the Armenian version see Muradyan 2015, 60.

68 Speyer 1971 and most recently Baum 2001; Ehrman 2013.

Ponticus were copied under the name of Nilus of Ancyra,<sup>69</sup> or when ancient statues and reliefs of a pagan character were later artfully attributed to great sculptors of the classical period.<sup>70</sup> This all suggests that vague discussions of authority as a social phenomenon – in particular in the context of knowledge – are far from adequate.

## 4 Representation and mediality of authority

When we turn our attention to agents of textual knowledge, it is clear that frequently they strive to embed their authority in some way in the text. This is because the performance of the asymmetry described above is a fundamental goal of their work.<sup>71</sup>

Social relationships that at any place or time immediately establish authority (or the lack thereof) in daily life are of course completely hidden in a text (aside from the fact of the very existence of that text). The author/text must somehow convey these relationships (for example with symbols), invent surrogates or come up with some other device.<sup>72</sup> A stone pillar with an inscription, or a leaf of papyrus covered in writing, by themselves did in fact possess a kind of medial authority – an authority that in ancient societies certainly could be quite significant (good examples are monumental Mesopotamian and Greek law inscriptions, or Attic tribute inscriptions). Monumentality, writing and authority are closely linked here. However, at least with some forms of written record, the personal dimension of the authority is completely or partially lost. From this point of view, then, the text has no inherent authority. Once separated from its author and its original context, its status is at risk.<sup>73</sup> These kinds of materials on their own contain or evoke no social relationships in the sense of a social relationship to the author that could evoke ‘social emotions’ in their potential readers. That means that knowledge texts must imitate or substitute the structures, symbols and situations of real authority in some way. This could also be called the authorization of texts (i.e. the granting of authority to texts) by their own authors. In effect, authors must devise methods to convey authority or to manufacture it. What are these methods? To put it differently: how can authority be embedded in a text?<sup>74</sup>

### 4.1 Personality (‘personal authorization’)

The notion of ‘personality’ here refers to all aspects that facilitate the real or fictional ascription of texts to persons or personae of authors. These aspects range from indications of location to actual descriptions of the author.

#### 4.1.1 Authorizing texts by association with location

One method available to authors for authorizing texts is construction of authority by association with location. An excellent example is Conon of Bidana’s martyrrium.<sup>75</sup> The martyrrium is firmly linked to the landscape of Isauria and in particular to the city of

69 Guillaumont 2009, 84–88.

70 Squire 2013.

71 For an insightful discussion of modern scientific literature and collectivity see Eberle 1995, 85.

72 See Malinar 2012, 126.

73 Plato’s critique of writing (*Phdr.* 275 D 5 – E 5; see in general Kullmann 1991) focuses on the implicit erosion of authority through circulation.

74 Kray, Pfeiffer, and Studer 1992, 15–16 seem to believe that authorization (they refer to “autorisation”) of media is always fiction. That, however, depends on the concept of authority. We assume in what follows that there are texts with non-fictional authority.

75 Here we follow the text of Trautmann and Klostermann 1934 (= BHG 2077). The text was probably written at the end of the 4th century AD. A new edition of this text is being prepared by Philipp Pilhofer.

Isaura by the inclusion of a variety of local details and allusions. These mechanisms of authorization apparently worked so well that at the end of the 5th century, Conon was mentioned as a saint of the city of Isaura in a legal text.<sup>76</sup>

The association with the location is even evident in the saint's name. There is perhaps no other region where the otherwise not particularly popular name *Conon* is so common. Even the names of his adversaries are certainly not Greco-Roman, they are indigenous ancient Luwian names (Cottis, Couttonios).<sup>77</sup> In addition the text is full of references to locations, even though aside from a single exception (Iconium) the entire action is limited to an extremely small geographical area. The mountain range that defines the region is referred to by name several times (the Tauros), as is the nearby city Isaura and some additional villages in the region the location of which has yet to be identified. Specific names for other landmarks whose locations also remain unknown (a mountain, a spring, two caves) appear as well. In addition, according to the martyrdom Conon knew his mountainous region better than the others that lived there.

The martyrdom begins after Paul has arrived in Isauria and decided not to spread the gospel there. Conon, however, a native of the region, was proselytizing there. As the text emphasizes at two points, he was able to do this because he could speak the local language. As many other inhabitants of the mountainous Isaurian area probably were, he was “a beginner and coarse in the Greek language.”<sup>78</sup> In other words, special language skills were required to communicate with the local population. Since this martyrdom text contains countless allusions to Paul's missionary journeys contained in the Acts of the Apostles, the reference to Conon's language skills should be read in the context of *Acts* 14:11: Conon in these regions is more effective than Paul because aside from his excellent knowledge of the region he speaks the local language! The martyrdom ends with the trial conducted by the governor Magnos against Conon. As is common in martyr literature, after an interrogation in the course of which Conon refuses to abandon his Christian faith, he is tortured. But in contrast to other examples of the genre, here he does not die after long sufferings in the arena, nor is he saved by a miracle. Instead the Isaurians take up arms and rush to Conon's defense. They overthrow the governor, Conon returns with them and then dies peacefully some years later at an old age. A violent liberation of this sort is an extremely unusual feature of the narrative. In Isauria, however, it suited the local situation well. The Isaurians were as famous for their protracted armed rebellions as well as for being audacious soldiers of Constantinople. A large portion of the recent scholarship on the Isaurians is devoted to this phenomenon, referring for example to “barbarian citizens” or “a limes with the Isaurians in the middle of the Roman Empire.”<sup>79</sup> The episode therefore is making an allusion to this people's reputation in war; in any other region an armed intervention of this sort would be implausible. So the text gains authority by displaying knowledge of the region's history of armed uprisings against the Roman state authorities. After Conon performed his most wondrous act but was still alive, the martyrdom describes a nighttime torchlight procession where a certain slogan was shouted by the participants. The author comments: “They still shout the slogan today when they gather on that glorious day to commemorate holy Conon.”<sup>80</sup> The torchlight procession visiting the most important stations of the martyrdom is also still a part of the celebration ‘today’. Clive Foss writes: “This is one of the most vivid descriptions of

76 In the law CJ I 3, 35 § 3, where it is mentioned that Isaura had been granted municipal laws, and that even πρὸς τιμὴν καὶ θεραπείαν τοῦ καλλιπικίου μάρτυρος Κόνωνος.

77 Concerning their origins see Houwink ten Cate 1961, 150–153.

78 Trautmann and Klostermann 1934, 317 Z. 19–20.

79 For example Feld 2005; Lenski 1999; Shaw 1990.

80 Trautmann and Klostermann 1934, 306 Z. 16–21.

pilgrimage in any source”<sup>81</sup> – and it is no coincidence that this description is firmly linked with the locations mentioned. The recipients of the text in the region of Isauria would certainly have been well aware of the procession. This means that the text claims authority primarily through a strong connection with place and precise knowledge of local conditions. This method of constructing authority by association with location is in fact quite common, particularly in martyr literature, as for example Pionios of Smyrna and Thecla of Seleucia ad Calycadnum clearly indicate. But at the same time, the strong connection of Conon’s text to certain places makes it less appropriate for cross-regional (for example liturgical) use. In later versions this shortcoming was remedied by simply reducing the level of connections to places, for example by removing regional references. This, however, fundamentally changed the way in which authority was constructed in the text. By that time, writings about Conon belonged to what is referred to above as the ‘age-old’, and could rely on that for their authority instead.

#### 4.1.2 Imitation

There is a group of strategies that involve the *imitation* of authorial authority. Here authors seek to make themselves as present as possible in the text as a figure of authority. A similar imitative strategy is to present the entire text as a speech delivered in the first person, anchoring the text in a real context and securely linking these two features (i.e., in a textually explicit way) with each other. This approach appears regularly in early Greek scientific literature. An example is the opening of Empedocles’ text *On nature*: “Listen well, Pausanias, son of wise Anchites!”<sup>82</sup> The text is of course fragmentary, so it is uncertain whether the author identified himself before or after this passage. But for any other recipient except Pausanias, i.e., a normal recipient, the processes produced by the text to establish its authority are indeed quite complex. Presumably they include a process of identification regarding the role of accepting authoritative knowledge in order to obtain that knowledge. Another example from approximately the same period provides a clearer illustration of these processes. Here is the opening of the philosopher and physician Alcmaeon of Croton’s text: “Alcmaeon of Croton, son of Peirithous, said the following to Brotinus and Leon and Bathyllus.”<sup>83</sup> This text opening became common relatively early in the history of Greek scientific literature, and has among its origins the formula used by Persian kings in letters to transmit their authority.<sup>84</sup> That means there is a sort of proud presumption in using this type of opening sentence. This is therefore an excellent example of how authority can be embedded in scientific texts, and of which forms of authority they adopt: they transform symbolic forms of political power.<sup>85</sup> Another example, this time culled from Christian late antiquity, are the so-called canonical letters and papal *decretales*, normative written answers that were composed by bishops in response to concrete demands (of a canonical or disciplinary nature), and that were based on imperial rescripts.<sup>86</sup> In modern scientific literature, paratexts such as blurbs or lists of contributors may serve the same function, particularly in the case of dust covers that boast the names of distinguished academics who hold positions at famous institutions or have won coveted prizes. They also serve a similar function to ancient author portraits found at the front of special editions, as for example with the biography of Virgil found

81 Foss 2002, 135–136.

82 Empedocles Fr. 31 B 1 Diels & Kranz: Πασσανία, σὺ δε κλύθι, δαίφρονος Ἀγχίτεω υἱέ.

83 Alcmaeon Fr. 24 B 1 Diels & Kranz: Ἀλκμαίων Κροτωνιήτης τάδε ἔλεξε Πειρίθου υἱὸς Βροτίνω καὶ Λέοντι καὶ Βαθύλλω.

84 For an overview see Asper 2007b, 80 with n. 75.

85 See in general Bourdieu 1991, especially 222.

86 Louth 2004, 394–395.

in ancient and later editions of his work, or the portrait of the evangelist Mark in the Rossano Codex.<sup>87</sup>

But that is just the beginning. The personal in scientific and scholarly texts – that is, the personal authorization of textual knowledge – appears in many other forms. Many ancient scientific authors address their readers in what could be called a depersonalized first person. This first person ‘I’ is always grander and more paradigmatic than the concrete person of the author. In other words, it is a *persona* that can be thought of as defining the roles of the scientist.<sup>88</sup> And since there are so many possible roles (the observer, the critic of predecessors, the theoretician, the grand arranger of knowledge, etc.), this form of constructing personality is extremely flexible. There are many examples of this phenomenon in the physician and philosopher Galen.

In this kind of discourse the author typically does not employ a proper name. A particular recipient is implied or not implied depending on whether a particular statement prompts identification or evokes individuality. For example, the texts of Aristotle feature a much milder form of this kind of personalization. His first person ‘I’ is almost exclusively reserved for the authorial function of establishing a definition. Otherwise an inclusive ‘we’ dominates the texts, referring to everything from the peripatetic school to the entire human race. Modern studies of the ‘professorial voice’, for example, have identified similar phenomena.<sup>89</sup> From among the many available, we choose an example from the *Poetics*:

We enjoy looking at accurate likenesses of things which are themselves painful to see, ugly beasts, for instance, and corpses.<sup>90</sup>

Who is the ‘we’ here? Clearly this is simply a rhetorical device inviting inclusion.<sup>91</sup>

Personal authority of course encourages exaggeration and as a result fictionalization. Many Greek scientific texts fictionalize their author, or fabricate an exclusive situation for the transfer of knowledge or its addressees. Similarly, in the personal accounts of seers and prophets a depersonalized ‘I’ often appears. The narrative ‘I’ in ancient descriptions of visions and sounds (“I saw...” or “I heard...”) is a guarantee of the truth of the revelation (as an eye-witness account), but even more importantly an expression of a literary tradition. In personal accounts of revelation there is always an echo of a paradigmatic past, a kind of past that also appears in a large number of ancient and late antique writings. The personal aspects of the account are eclipsed by the paradigmatic, literary topos. The individual seer/prophet is inconceivable without the voices of his countless predecessors. Thus, the ‘I’ of the prophet is in reality always a plural form. This effect is even more prominent when the target group or readership often identifies with the prophetic ‘I’ in order to have an unobstructed view of the reality beyond this world.

The *Corpus Hermeticum* offers a number of superb examples. In the examples above, the goal was to construct authority on a foundation of aspects of reality and individual attribution. Here the goal is to invent authoritative primal scenes of knowledge transfer. This authority of knowledge is based on the exclusivity of charismatic mediation. A great example of this are the Hermetic writings. See, e.g., the primal scene of instruction as constructed in the following text: The god Hermes Trismegistus writes a summary of his teachings to his disciple Asclepius in the form of a letter. Here is how the letter begins:

87 On Vergil, Mart. 14, 186; on the evangelists see Friend 1927 and Friend 1929; for an overview see Weitzmann 1959, 116–127.

88 Debru 1992; von Staden 1994.

89 Clark 2003.

90 Aristot. *poet.* 4, 1448b 10–12: ἃ γὰρ αὐτὰ λυπηρῶς ὀρώμεν, τούτων τὰς εἰκόνας τὰς μάλιστα ἠκριβωμένας χαίρομεν θεωροῦντες, οἷον θηρίων τε μορφᾶς τῶν ἀτιμοτάτων καὶ νεκρῶν.

91 See Fleck 1980, 157; Laden 2012, 65–66.

In your absence, my son Tat wanted to learn the nature of all things, and he would not allow me any delay. Since he is my son and a newcomer who only recently gained knowledge of these things, I felt forced to speak at length about each detail so it would be easy for him to follow my teachings. For you, however, I wanted to select only a few of the most important subjects I spoke about to him and write them to you in the form a brief letter, giving them more of a mystical interpretation...<sup>92</sup>

It is hardly possible for a knowledge text to take a more personal approach. Even if such extreme forms are now less acceptable, authority strategies such as these are still effective to an extent today, as demonstrated by the paratexts in our publications, in particular forewords and acknowledgements.

These mechanisms are not limited to Western cultures. An entirely different tradition also demonstrates that authority in scientific texts can be constructed by means of (fictional) personalization. Across practically the entire imperial period, the most important technique of authorization for Chinese medical texts was through personal attribution or personal attributes. Starting in the Han dynasty, classical medical texts were attributed the mythical cultural heroes Huangdi 黄帝, the *Yellow Thearch*, and Shennong 神農, the *Divine Farmer*. The *Huangdi neijing* 黄帝內經 (the *Inner Classic of the Yellow Thearch*) even embeds the transmission of knowledge in a fictional dialogue between Huangdi and his advisors. Authors of this period were well aware of this device of authorization. For example, the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (the *Masters of Huainan*, 2nd century BC) notes:

The common people honor the ancient and hold the new in low esteem. That is why people who practice the Dao will only add their [own] explanations after they have based their writings on Huangdi and Shennong.<sup>93</sup>

Later texts such as the *Xianshou lishang xuduan mifang* 仙授理傷續斷祕方 (the *Secret Recipes of the Immortals for Treating Wounds and Fractures*, around 846) also claim the charismatic authority of a supernatural ‘sponsor’. These works were often embellished with a miraculous transmission narrative:

These recipes go back to the Huichang era of the Tang dynasty. At that time there was a monk who lived in a grass hut in a village near Yichun. He looked ancient, and he was 145 years old. [...] Among the village people there was an old man named Peng who frequently visited his hut. [...] One day Peng’s son climbed up a tree to cut off some twigs and fell out of carelessness. He broke his neck and his upper arm, and groaned constantly in pain. [...] The Daoist ordered [the father] to buy several medicinal drugs, and he personally prepared a cake from them. The pain immediately disappeared, and after a few days it was as if nothing had ever happened to him. People realized that this Daoist was capable of practicing medicine, and many called upon him [for treatment]. The Daoist soon grew tired of them and therefore taught [Mr.] Peng his recipes. He made Peng prepare [the medications] himself, but also had him swear that he would not shamelessly accept gifts, nor carelessly sell [the recipes], nor pass them on to the wrong people.<sup>94</sup>

What we find here is not only a reference to the extraordinary skills of the ‘sponsor’, but the writer of these lines is also placing himself in the tradition of the immortal. That in turn means that he belongs to the select circle of ‘right people’ who are worthy of receiving

92 *Corpus Hermeticum* 14.1 (Nock and Festugière 1945, 222). See Luhmann 1990, 628 on this style of authority.

93 Liu 1999, juan 19, p. 479.

94 *Xianshou lishang xuduan mifang*, cited in Anonym 2004 juan 6, 177–178.



the recipes. References to the author's own moral rectitude as a strategy for establishing authority also feature in the countless complaints of medical authors about their deceitful, incompetent colleagues. For instance, Xiao Jing 蕭京 in his categorization of doctors in the *Xuan Qi jiu zheng lun* 軒岐救正論 (the *On the Rescue of Orthodoxy through [the Teachings of] the Yellow Thearch and Qi Bo*, 1644) writes:

Xu Wenbo, Qian Zhongyang and Yang Shiying all made it their mission to help people without expecting fame or fortune. [...] These men devoted themselves with all their hearts to acting with sincerity and kindness. [...] There are [however also] those unskilled workers, those common handymen. They have not studied the classic books or the pulse principles. Regardless of how serious or minor the illness may be, they are always quick to prescribe medicinal preparations. They cause people's deaths, they turn over and slander the orthodox way it. They bear evil on their shoulders without ever repenting. I have seen that there are people like that!<sup>95</sup>

In books such as the *Chuan jia mi bao fang* 傳家秘寶方 (*Secret and Valuable Recipes Handed Down in the Family*, 1085) the authors rely instead on a family-centered personal form of authorization. They place themselves in a long family lineage of doctors, suggesting they have exclusive access to inherited recipes and living up to the common notion that the quality of medical practice could be assessed by the number of medical ancestors.<sup>96</sup> They also present themselves as the devoted students of their physician fathers, indicating that they conform to the Confucian ideal of filial piety so highly prized in society.

In the areas discussed briefly so far, we demonstrated how medial authority functioned as an imitation of personal, i.e. social, authority. There is, however, an entirely different, almost opposite way as well, which brings us to our next topic, compensation.

## 4.2 Non-personality ('non-personal authorization'): Compensation

There are forms of authority in texts that have nothing to do with people, real or fictional. The authority of these texts is in that sense non-personal. One could also describe this phenomenon as the compensational extension of text-specific strategies of authority. One example is the use of a particular terminology assigned to a group or a tradition. Astrological texts from late antiquity, for instance, are well known for their fondness for inventing terminology. Ancient magical texts and their 'technical' jargon (for example the *voces magicae*) provide a similar case.<sup>97</sup> A certain terminology can also be the mark of a particular school of thought or religious group. This is, e.g., the case with Neoplatonism, the Sethian Gnostics,<sup>98</sup> or the Manicheans<sup>99</sup>, whose writings are even identified by modern scholars by their theological-mythological nomenclature.

Here the classification of the text type is particularly significant. For example, a modern scientific paper usually follows the IMRAD structure.<sup>100</sup> Regardless of its functional advantages and independent of content, this structure validates the paper as 'scientific'. The structure or features of a text type therefore grant and imply an institutional context – in this case peer review, the system of scientific journals, and professional science in

95 Xiao 1983, juan 6, p. 515–516.

96 The saying from the *Li ji* 禮記 (*Book of Rites*) "if a doctor is not a third generation physician, do not take his drugs" (*yi bu san shi bu fu qi yao* 醫不三世不服其藥) was transmitted and discussed until the late imperial period, for instance in Xiao 1983, juan 6. For a discussion see Chao 2009, 26–44.

97 Graf 1997.

98 Turner 2001; Williams 2005; Brakke 2010.

99 Van Lindt 1992. In particular on the writings from Kellis: Gardner, Alcock, and Funk 1999, 74.

100 See Sollaci and Pereira 2004; Day 1989.

general. It is striking how formally determined text types in today's science tend to hide the *persona* of the author.<sup>101</sup> Similarly, text structures producing persuasion and authority can be easily identified in a range of ancient literary genres. The typical narrative construction of an encomium, for example, integrates it into a traditional literary genre for the recipients. That in turn gives the text the authority of a genre in which all the classical examples harmoniously cohere. Esoteric texts from late antiquity also exploited this function of genre. For example the Cologne Mani-Codex (CMC), a biography of the Christian prophet Mani, cites five Apocalypses in a repetitive narrative sequence.<sup>102</sup> Whether pseudepigraphical or literary forgeries, the revelation writings in the CMC use a certain narrative framework to authenticate the truth of the revelation(s) it contains. The implicit premise is that the plot scheme of a divine revelation always has the same basic outline. The Apocalypses cited by the CMC therefore derive their authority from this repeated plot pattern.

But compensational non-personality has even wider applications. In Greek literature it appears in a variety of forms. An excellent example is the methodical presentation of early legal codes in Greece as *collective statements*.<sup>103</sup> In these cases, monumentalization is already an aspect of how authority is established through non-personality.<sup>104</sup> But the best example of non-personality and compensation is provided by theoretical mathematics, of which the major texts by Euclid or Archimedes are the best known. But here we would like to cite two examples from texts that precede these. The first is taken from Hippocrates of Chios (around 420 BC), whose text on the quadrature of lunes is preserved in various stages in Simplicius' commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*. As so often in cases of transmission, the accuracy of the text is debatable,<sup>105</sup> but the following short excerpt is very probably a quote from Hippocrates' original writings:

Let AB be the diameter of a circle and K its center. And let CD bisect BK at right angles, etc.<sup>106</sup>

The context (the topic is the conversion of geometric areas limited by arcs (called lunes) into triangles with equal areas) is not our concern here. Instead we would like to cite a second pre-Euclidean text, a mathematical proof of a dynamic form of the law of the lever from the pseudo-Aristotelian *Mechanics* (around 320 BC). This is a mathematical intrusion in a text about the use of levers:

That in the case of radii describing the circles from a fixed center the lesser radius has a greater non-natural component of his motion than the greater one is obvious from the following considerations. Let there be a circle BΓΔΕ and another smaller one inside it ΧΝΜΞ described about the same center A. And let the diameters be drawn, the larger circle ΓΔ and ΒΕ, and in the smaller circle ΜΧ and ΝΞ, etc.<sup>107</sup>

Here again we have excerpted only a short passage, and again our interest is not in the content but in the construction of authority in the text. This kind of discourse is typical

101 Oesterreicher 2003, 14–15 treats such text features as 'formal authorities.'

102 CMC 48–60. Reeves 1996.

103 Asper 2007a, especially 174–175.

104 For laws as models for the discussion of authority since Kant: see Laden 2012, 53–54.

105 Netz 2004.

106 ἔστω κύκλος οὗ διάμετρος ἐφ'ἧ AB, κέντρον δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐφ'ῶ K· καὶ ἡ μὲν ἐφ'ἧ ΓΔ δίχα τε καὶ πρὸς ὀρθὰς τεμνέτω τὴν ἐφ'ἧ ΒΚ. Text from Becker 1936, 418–419.

107 Aristot. *mech.* I, 849a 19–25: ὅτι δὲ μείζον τὸ παρὰ φύσιν κινεῖται ἢ ἐλάττων τῆς μείζονος τῶν ἐκ τοῦ κέντρον γραφουσῶν τῶν κύκλων, ἐκ τῶνδε δῆλον. ἔστω κύκλος ἐφ' οὗ ΒΓΔΕ, καὶ ἄλλος ἐν τούτῳ ἐλάττων, ἐφ' οὗ ΧΝΜΞ, περὶ τὸ αὐτὸ κέντρον τὸ Α· καὶ ἐκβεβλήσθωσαν αἱ διαμέτροι, ἐν μὲν τῷ μεγάλῳ, ἐφ' ὧν ΓΔ καὶ ΒΕ, ἐν δὲ τῷ ἐλάττωι αἱ ΜΧ ΝΞ.

for Greek theoretical mathematics – as it is for much of modern and even contemporary work in the field and of natural science in general.

The personal authority of the knower is delegated to a text that obscures personal authorship in what seems initially a paradoxical fashion. Peculiar imperative forms (even in the perfect passive!) describe objects that appear to be neither manipulated nor constructed by the author, as if they already existed beforehand. Such texts present geometric entities as existing in space independently of us. We can observe them only with the help of diagrams to prompt our imagination, diagrams which however appear without authorial intervention. The text and diagrams are thus combined to produce depersonalized evidence that cannot be deprived of its authority. (This suggests that we would do well to examine the implications of diagrams in terms of constructing authority beyond the field of theoretical mathematics. There are, for example, the editorial markings of Alexandrian text criticism (*asteriscus*, *obelus*, etc.) that conceal the identity of the editor, suggesting impersonal objectivity. The concrete meaning of an ‘obelos,’ for example, might be: “Aristarchus believes this verse is not authentic.” By avoiding any individual attribution, however, the deletion becomes instead an objectively determined change. Now the ‘obelos’ means: “This verse *IS* not authentic.” Diagrammatic visualizations may be assumed to serve a similar function.)

In this kind of literature, the personal or the authority of an author person(a) has vanished or been restricted to very specific areas. It is limited to, for example, the dedication, or the standardized formula *legō hoti* (“I assert that”) in the introduction to what is called the *diborismos* or standardized proof section.<sup>108</sup>

Nevertheless, these texts still have authority, and even enormous one. They simply lack personal authority. Sociologists have told us that bureaucratic power together with its discourse attempts to present itself as impersonal.<sup>109</sup> That means that even clarity, objective adequacy and order can become symbols of political authority.<sup>110</sup> Here we see how non-personality is effective in the context of knowledge as well.

These texts demonstrate how presenting authority as objectivity results in the rhetorical elimination of the author. And as a rhetorical device, it is always effective. The authority of the theory or of the theoretician is a direct product of the non-personal. So tradition or any kind of appeal to time can never be a source of authority. On the other hand, features determining text-type place the texts themselves in a strong tradition – a tradition that here has the attributes of a discipline. But it is nevertheless not a personal tradition. This authority of non-personality could perhaps be understood as a generalization of personal authority. It is actually quite remarkable that these two forms of textual authority, the personal and the non-personal one, existed side-by-side in Greek literature.<sup>111</sup> They certainly were up-shots of a differentiation of knowledge discourses, but the motivating factors are less clear.

108 Asper 2007a, 118; Netz 1999, 138.

109 Sennett 1993, 87–88.

110 Sennett 1993, 165 “The work of authority has a goal: to convert power into images of strength.”

111 Malinar 2012, 137–148 recently described a similar phenomenon in ancient Indian philosophical literature.

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