

Thesis Seminar:

Authorship in the Ancient World

Alexander Beecroft, Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum, and Sophus Helle

How does one study authorship in the ancient world, where literary works were predominantly anonymous, and where biographical information is either scarce or unreliable?

Though the historical reality of ancient authorship is mostly lost to us, emic narratives of authorship are in fact rich sources of information about ancient perceptions of literature and the cultural dynamics that shaped them.

The thesis seminar explores two main avenues of research.

First, ancient authors are often depicted not as original creators, but as textual mediators, raising a number of issues. Can we even refer to such figures as “authors”? And what would that mean for ancient notions of literary production?

Second, the appearance of authors in the ancient world is often connected with times of intense cultural contact, crisis, and transformation. What is the relation between individual authors and the much larger issue of cultural self-definition?

November 20th

13.00 – 16.00

Room 1584-120

Langelandsgade 139

No registration needed

The discussion will be based on two articles by Sophus Helle, and you are invited to read these in advance.

Please contact him at sophushelle@cc.au.dk.

Alexander Beecroft is Associate Professor of Classics and Comparative Literature at the University of South Carolina, and author of *Authorship and Cultural Identity in Early Greece and China*.

Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum is Professor of Assyriology at Freie Universität Berlin, and the author, with Jochem Kahl, of *Erste Philologien. Archäologie einer Disziplin vom Tigris bis zum Nil*.

Sophus Helle is a PhD student in Comparative Literature at Aarhus University, working on the project *The Invention of Authors: Narratives of Authorship in Cuneiform Cultures*.