

# Cambridge Elements

Elements in Early Christian Literature

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## THE AUTHOR IN EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

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**Abstract:** While scholars of ancient Mediterranean literature have focused their efforts heavily on explaining why authors would write pseudonymously or anonymously, less time has been spent exploring why an author would write orthonymously (that is, under their own name). This Element explores how early Christian writers began to care deeply about “correct” attribution of both Christian and non-Christian literature for their own apologetic purposes, as well as how scholars have overlooked the function that orthonymity plays in some early Christian texts. Orthonymity was not only a decision made by a writer regarding how to attribute one’s own writings, but also how to classify other writers’ texts based on proper or improper attribution. This Element urges us to examine forms of authorship that are often treated as an unexamined default, as well as to more robustly consider when, how, for whom, and for what purposes an instance of authorial attribution is deemed “correct.”

**Keywords:** authorship, early Christianity, ancient Mediterranean literature, apologetics, book history

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