Who invented writing?
Ancient Greek narratives on the invention of the alphabet
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Ancient Greek literature contains a considerable number of stories about the invention of script and writing and the implementation of the (Greek) alphabet. This paper will examine some of these narratives from the perspective of both Anchoring Innovation and innovation studies. It will be argued that these first-founder myths employ different forms of 'anchoring' to structure these stories. Among the examples to be discussed will be the stories of Theuth, Prometheus, Danaus, Cadmus and Palamedes, encountered in authors like Hecataeus, Herodotus, ps. Aeschylus, Plato and Diodorus.

In this paper we will distinguish at least four types of *vertical* anchoring: anchoring (1) by presenting the alphabet as a divine gift, (2) by assigning the invention of writing to a (Greek) hero or historical figure, (3) by attributing the invention of writing to a specific culture or region and (4) by placing the invention of writing within a larger series of inventions: 'anthropologies' about the rise of culture and civilization. All of these narratives are making an effort to connect writing to a familiar figure or moment in the past. We will discuss the different functions of such vertical anchoring strategies.

Besides these four types of *vertical* anchoring, this paper will discuss instances of *horizontal* anchoring: how do these stories embed the invention of writing in existing cultural value systems and cultural practice? For example, is there any reflection on the use and potential of writing? How crucial is the alphabet to the Greek ideal of civilization? And how is the invention of writing presented to match Greek ideas about skill, knowledge and art?

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