



THREE TYPES OF BELIEF ON AUTHORITY

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A normative account of belief on authority aims to clarify (1) what belief on authority is, and (2) why believing on authority is the best way to achieve truth-related epistemic goals. Linda Zagzebski, who pioneered the notion of normative belief on authority, develops a *preemptive* account addressing both aims. It says that belief on authority amounts to replacing any reasons you may have for or against the authority's belief with the reason given by the fact that the authority holds that belief. I discuss two common situations in which preemption is not the best way to achieve truth-related goals, and present two alternative accounts of belief on authority that can achieve them. *Corroborating* belief on authority covers situations in which you have a reason independent of the authority (either for or against the authority's belief). *Guidance* authority covers situations in which you have a reason for the authority's belief which depends on the authority for its status as a reason. Of the three types of belief on authority – preemptive, corroborating, and guidance – only the latter two are epistemically desirable when you have a good reason of your own.