

Literary and archaeological falsifications

1. LITERARY FORGERIES

In one's work with the sources one constantly has to bear in mind that some of them might prove unauthentic. We shall provide the reader with some extremely edifying examples of forgeries, demonstrating the broad scope of their action. Another thing that shall become clarified in the process is the pressure that often needs to be overcome for the demonstration of the very fact of forgery.

On the other hand, as we are beginning to understand now, some of the sources declared counterfeit by the Scaligerian history today may, on the contrary, prove authentic. They may have been condemned as false for the sole reason of their contradicting the Scaligerian history too explicitly.

Y. Lann wrote the following in his famous work entitled *Literary Mystifications* ([463]): "The hoaxer, like a good hunter, would follow the scent of a writer's popularity. Before the Renaissance, the pious monk would forge the works of the "Holy Patriarchs"... In this epoch, mystification was used as an "ideological reserve" of sorts and introduced numerous forgeries into the arsenal of the church: Saint Bernhard, forged by Jean Garland in 1449; the polemical book of St. Athanasius, aimed at the heretics and written by Bishop Vigilus; the comments of St. Ambrose and the Epistles of Paul the Apostle, counterfeited by the Donatist Tychonius in 1532 etc" ([463], page 99; see also [544], Volume 7, pages 679-680).

We are quoting from the book by Y. Lann according to the large overview made by N. A. Morozov ([544], Volume 7, page 665 ff.)

One of the famous humanist scholars by the name of Sigonius published several previously unknown fragments from Cicero's *De Consolatione* in 1583. The imitation was so artful that it was only identified as such two hundred years later, and even that was a chance occurrence – a letter of Sigonius was found where he confesses being guilty of falsification.

In the XVIII century a Dutch scientist by the name of Heerkens published a tragedy under the alias of Lucius Varus, allegedly a Thespian poet from the epoch of Augustus. It was only by chance that one could determine it to have been written by the Venetian Corrario in the XVI century - under his own name and without mystification attempts of any sort.

Wagenfeld, a XIX century German student, claimed to have translated the history of Phoenicia written by Sanchoniatos, a Phoenician historian, from Greek into German. The Greek translation was said to have been made by Philo from Byblos. The discovery made a great impression; one of the professors wrote a foreword to the book, and it got published. When the Greek manuscript was demanded from Wagenfeld, the latter refused to provide it.

In the 1920's a German called Schennis sold several fragments of "classical" texts to the Leipzig library. Among those, in particular, was a fragment from the works of Plautus written in purple ink. The Manuscript Department keepers from the Berlin

Academy of Sciences claimed the following: “It is written in fantastic handwriting, and bears all the distinctives of a very old period. It is obviously a fragment of a luxurious book; the use of purple ink attests to its prior location in a library of a rich Roman – possibly, the Imperial library. We are convinced that our fragment is part of a book that was actually written in Rome” ([463], page 58). However, two years later a scandalous divestiture of all the manuscripts presented by Schennis took place.

In 1720 Montesquieu published a French translation of a Greek poem resembling Sappho, having mentioned in the preface that these seven songs bearing the collective name of “Temple de Cnide” were written by an anonymous Greek poet who had lived after Sappho, and presumably discovered by Montesquieu in the library of some Greek bishop. Later Montesquieu confessed that it had been a mystification.

An effective forgery of the “ancient classics” was implemented by Pierre Louis. The volume of his “Songs of the Poetess Bilitis” came out in 1894; prior to that, he published her separate songs in *Mercure de France*. Louis mentioned having discovered the songs of this unknown Greek poetess of the VI century B.C. in the preface, mentioning that a certain Dr. Heim even managed to find her grave in Palaeo Limisso. Two German scientists (Ernst and Willamowitz-Müllendorf) immediately wrote their articles about the newly-discovered poetess, and her name was included into the Lollier-Gidel “Dictionary of Writers”. In the next edition of the “Songs” Louis cited a portrait of the poetess, no less, for which, as it was discovered later, the sculptor Laurance copied a terra-cotta from the Louvre. The success was tremendous. As late as 1908, the news of mystification hadn’t reached everyone yet, and Louis received a letter from an Athenian professor who was enquiring about the location of the originals.

“The history of world literature is aware of its numerous falsified monuments and tries to forget about them” – writes E. Lann, and also: “In the XVI century Erasmus was bitterly complaining that there wasn’t a single text written by the Church Patriarchs (in the first four centuries of Christianity, that is) which could be unequivocally declared authentic” ([463]).

N. A. Morozov was claiming that “even the main part of the famous *Arabian Nights* may have been written by Gallant in French for the courtiers of the

French king between 1707 and 1713, and the Arabic manuscripts found later are really edited and largely extended translations from the French original” ([544], Volume 7, page 701).

Towards the end of the XIX century a certain Jerusalem merchant by the name of Shapira offered an ancient manuscript to the British museum (allegedly dating to the first millennium B.C.) for a million pounds. The text was in “Moabite” writing, and contained a tale of the Jews’ wanderings in the desert after the exodus from Egypt; the narration didn’t quite coincide with what the canonized version of the book of Deuteronomy is telling us today. It is possible that Shapira had really found or copied some old text that contradicted the Scaligerian version of history. The discovery had created a great resonance – many specialists didn’t hesitate to confirm the manuscript’s authenticity. C. D. Ginsburg, a keeper of the manuscript department from the British Museum, commenced a detailed study of the document, and H. Gute, a prominent expert in Palestinian studies, published his translation of the text. The French Ministry of Education sent Clermont-Ganneau, the famous scientist, to London for a study of the manuscript. However, he ran into unforeseen difficulties – neither Shapira himself, nor even the administration of the British Museum allowed him a study of the original! It took Clermont-Ganneau a great deal of effort to get near the manuscript for a few minutes. He declared this to have sufficed for suspecting the manuscript of being a forgery. Later it was claimed that Shapira collated several cut-off edges of old synagogue Torah scrolls and wrote some of the texts from the Deuteronomy upon them in an “ancient” writing. The final inference was published in the *Times* and accused Shapira of forgery. Shapira committed suicide, and the actual manuscript made a strange disappearance ([463] and [544], Volume 7, pages 37-38). Let us reiterate that here we may be confronted with a situation when Scaligerian history prevented an authentic text from entering scientific circulation due to its being at odds with the consensual version.

Hardly any hoaxers ever confessed of their own accord. McPherson and Venceslav Hanka died with their impostures remaining undiscovered. Prosper Mérimée, Senkowski and Sreznevskiy did confess, but one can hardly consider their mystifications sufficiently serious.

In the 1850's a multitude of private epistles attributed to Byron, Shelley and Keats swarmed the London auctions. Twenty-five of such letters were published with a foreword written by Robert Browning. It was by pure accident that Palgrave noticed one of the "letters" to be a fragment from an article that his father published in a magazine in 1840. The entire collection proved a forgery.

The scandal with Michel Chasles who made public the letter of Pascal to Boyle relating the theory of objects being drawn to each other is a notorious enough event. During another session of the French Academy, Chasles read aloud another "fresh" letter of Pascal to Newton, a student at the time, where the former acquaints the latter with the law of gravity. These letters resulted in a great scandal, and the falsification was only discovered two years later. The author had been a certain Vrain-Lucas.

In December 1791 William, the 17-year old son of Samuel Ireland, a renowned bibliophile from London, gave his father a mortgage bond signed between W. Shakespeare and Frazer, the land-owner. Three months later William reported having found a great many documents related to Shakespeare – theatrical marginalia, several contracts with actors, books with Shakespeare's marks on the margins, a re-written copy of King Lear with variants, fragments of Hamlet which were never published, and two of the poet's love letters addressed to Anne Hathaway – one of which included a lock of Shakespeare's hair! An exhibition of these relics was set up in his father's shop. Boswell, the famous biographer of Samuel Johnson, knelt down before the glass-case. Every Londoner that bore some relation to either literature or science visited the shop. Both Irelands were received by a member of the Royal Family. The Shakespearean scholars had been jubilant, with the sole exception of Edmond Malone. Meanwhile William made the "discovery" of an unknown Shakespearean tragedy called "Vortigern and Rowena" written in blank verse which was telling of the battle between the English and the forces of the Picts and Scotsmen after the Roman legions of Honorius sailed away from England. The tragedy was staged at the famous Drury Lane theatre by Richard Brinsley Sheridan on 2 April 1796 and proved a disaster; after that, William finally confessed to being the author of all these "antiquities". However, his father

disowned him, claiming the relics to be authentic. Then William published a brochure with a detailed account of the mystification. Let us remind the reader that we're using Y. Lann's overview here ([463]).

A separate group is comprised of hoaxers who are genuinely devoted to some historical personality and write texts that would credit the latter. A most mediocre, but very touching little ditty was published on behalf of Marie Stuart in 1765 – allegedly written before her execution. Despite the fact that a journalist named Querlon was identified as the author, many of Stuart's biographers continued to attribute this "farewell song" to her.

The two volumes entitled *Memoirs of an Aristocratic Lady* are also a forgery, allegedly written by a female agent of the Duke of Rovigo spying upon the Bourbon family in England. The real authors were Lamothe-Langon, Amédée Pichot and a certain Ferrier. The four volumes entitled *Mémoires d'une femme de qualité sur Louis XVIII, la cour et son règne* are also a forgery. The authors were identified as Lamothe-Langon, Pichot and Charles Nodier. A sequel entitled *Révélations d'une dame de qualité sur les années 1830, 1831* came out as a two-volume edition the next year, also by Lamothe-Langon, likewise the memoirs about Marie-Antoinette written on behalf of a court lady, Countess d'Adhemar, published as a four-volume oeuvre in 1836; the next year, in 1837, the same prolific author published two volumes of the alleged memoirs of Sophie Arnould in London, while Paris saw the presumed memoirs of Duchess Du Barry published in three volumes.

The diplomat de Villamarest had been a skilled hoaxer who was singled out by Napoleon once. Using about a hundred pages of Bourienne's memoirs (the former secretary and then minister of Napoleon), de Villamarest published ten volumes of *Monsieur Bourienne's Memoirs of Napoleon, the Directory, the Consulate, the Empire and the Restoration* in 1829-1830 – they came out in Paris and enjoyed a scandalous success due to their being filled by well-related pornographic anecdotes ([463]). De Villamarest also forged the *Memoirs of Josephine's Maid on the Private Life of the Empress, Likewise her Kin and Court* which was published as a two-volume edition in 1833, and the memoirs of the composer Blangini published in 1835.

The name of the hoaxer de Courchant is remembered in conjunction with the memoirs allegedly written by the famous Giuseppe Balsamo (Duke of Cagliostro), who had been the star of many a salon in Europe before the French Revolution. In 1789 Balsamo had been sentenced to death in Rome “for thau-maturgy”; however, the Pope changed his sentence to lifelong incarceration. Balsamo had died in prison in 1795 when he was 52 years of age ([463]). In 1841 the Parisian newspaper “Presse” announced the publication of Balsamo’s memoirs. The first episode entitled “Val funeste” had been published earlier; later, in October of the same year, an article came out which proved that large episodes of these pseudo-memoirs were borrowed from the Polish novels of Potocki. As a result of a loud and prolonged scandal, the “Press” newspaper sued de Courchant, and the counterfeit nature of “Cagliostro’s memoirs” was attested in court.

In 1829 Balzac published his *Memoirs of an Executioner* on behalf of the executioner Samson, a representative of a renowned dynasty of Paris executioners whose activities had always been shrouded in mystery. In 1830 Gregoire published the “memoirs” of the Parisian executioner Charles-Henri. The third counterfeit of this kind enjoyed a tremendous success – 1863 saw the publication of *The Seven Generations of Executioners. 1688-1817. Memoirs of the Samsons Edited, Arranged and Published by A. Samson, the Executioner of the French Court* in six volumes. The foreword was telling the reader sternly that the author, the last Samson left alive, had put a cup of water before the portraits of his ancestors and solemnly washed “the blood of his fellow men” off his hands. All six volumes were translated into foreign languages, with their countless copies sold. The scandalous mystification was brought into the open in 1875 ([463]).

Prosper Mérimée decided to travel to the East due to his interest in the Slavs. But this was a costly endeavour. He confesses himself that he “decided to describe our journey and sell the book first, and then spend the royalties verifying the exactness of my description”. And so he published a book of songs entitled *Gusli* in 1827 – allegedly translations from Balkan languages. The book was a great success – in particular, A. S. Pushkin translated the book into Russian in 1835, thus proving more gullible than Goethe, for instance, who had been extremely suspicious about

this book. Mérimée wrote an ironic preface to the second volume, mentioning the ones who were taken in by his hoax ([544], Volume 7, pages 669-677). Pushkin wrote later that “The poet Mickiewicz, a discerning and well-versed critic of the Slavic poetry, didn’t doubt the authenticity of these songs, and some learned German used them for writing a voluminous dissertation”.

An interesting book was published in the XVIII century under the title of *I. B. A. Baringer’s Philos. Et Medic. D-ris, Prof. etc. Lithographia Wirceburgensis, ducentis lapidum figuratorum, a potiori insectiformium, prodigiosis imaginibus exornata. Edition secunda. Francofurti et Lipsiae, apud Tob. Göbhardt. 1767.*

The book contained 200 amazing pictures of fossilized insects and small animals. Its author (name of Baringer), a professor and a Doctor of Philology, Medicine etc, added an extensive scientific tractate to the first edition where he pontificated on the benefits of studying fossils and vehemently condemned his opponents who were spreading the rumours that the figurines in question had been made of clay, no less, and planted into the exploits of the excavations conducted by the professor as a practical joke. Baringer had proved all of the findings to be authentic fossils rather convincingly; however, the slanderers called the students together, and the latter demonstrated the entire process of forging the fossils to the amazed public. Baringer spent a hefty sum of money buying copies of his own book, but failed to get them all. 40 years later, already after his death, Göbhardt, a publisher from Frankfurt (qv above), published this voluminous work once again as a curio.

Manuscripts known to be “very old” are often received with a priori glee – we are quoting verbatim: “This last year 1891 shall remembered by the scholars of classical philology for many years to come, since it had... brought us two large and precious findings – Aristotle’s book about the Athenian Republic and scenes from quotidian life by Herodes. What happy chance we owe these two findings two is a mystery kept secret by those who should be in the know [why would that be? – A. F.] ; still, the fact of the occurrence remains indisputable – and this being known, the necessity to question ceases to exist” ([296], page 96). We are of the opinion that the origins of these “ancient manuscripts” are of the greatest interest.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL FORGERIES

In 1873 the British Museum purchased an ancient terra-cotta sarcophagus that instantly became popular as a work of ancient Etruscan art. Eminent museum experts dated it to the VI century B.C. Ten years later, Enrico Penelli, a restorer from the Louvre (!) informed the archaeologist Solomon Reinach that the sarcophagus was made by himself and his brother – Piero Penelli. They buried their forgery in Certeveri, and then successfully staged its discovery ([540], page 82).

Towards the end of the XIX century, a batch of figurines surfaced in Jerusalem. All of them were covered in dots and seemingly meaningless scriptures. All of these “Moabite antiquities” were bought for 20,000 thaler by the Prussian government at the insistence of learned experts in Oriental studies. The Frenchman Clermont-Ganneau declared the entire batch counterfeit. A political scandal flared up. The 1,700 articles of “Moabite culture” were a prized possession of the Berlin museum. It turned out that the company that forged all these thousands of antiquities was presided over by an icon artist called Selim from Jerusalem ([540]).

In the 1920’s the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York purchased three Etruscan warrior statuettes – unique works of art created more than 2,300 years ago. Specialists were triumphant. Only Parsons, a Roman antiquity collector, had doubted the authenticity of the findings. 30 years later Parsons met the Italian Alfred Fiorovanti who confessed to have created a workshop with brothers Riccardi half a century ago where old ceramics were forged en masse. The museum refused to believe this report, and a specialist arrived in Rome with a plaster casting of a hand belonging to one of the statues with a missing finger, which was found in the possession of Fiorovanti who had kept it as a memento ([540], page 84).

A truly amazing craftsman was the jeweller Y. Rakhoumovskiy (or I. K. Roukhomovskiy, or I. H. Roukhomovskiy, see [95], page 86), who employed his talent for the creation of a whole series of “ancient relics”. His “tiara of Saitaphernes” brought him worldwide acclaim – Louvre bought it in 1895 for 200,000 francs as a true work of Greek art. The Greek inscription on

the tiara declared the latter to have been given to Saitaphernes, the Scythian king of the alleged III century B.C., by the inhabitants of Olvia, a Greek colony in the delta of Bug. Later on it turned out that the figures on the tiara were taken from an atlas on the history of culture published in 1882. Rakhoumovskiy’s authorship claim wasn’t believed, so he demonstrated other works of his own art – among those a rhyton (drinking horn), a golden group of statues (Athena and Achilles) etc. After that, the management of the Louvre was forced to take the tiara of Saitaphernes away from the exhibition hall with antiquities and put it on display as modern decorative art ([540], pages 84-85). See more details concerning this famous forgery in [95], pages 86-95.

The management of the Louvre bought a “Scythian” artefact again in 1939. This time it was a silver drinking horn made in the likeness of a boar’s head with embossed figures of the Scythians. The horn proved a forgery – a propos, a similar rhyton was purchased by the Moscow Museum of History as early as 1908. Both rhytons came from the same workshop of the Gokhman brothers in the town of Ochakov. They ran a whole shop, distributing the orders between jewellers (Y. Rakhoumovskiy being one of those). L. Gokhman would sketch out antiquities-to-be, and they promptly incarnated into “relics” of silver and gold. Among the shop’s clients (as it became known later) were the museums of Russia, Germany, France, England, Greece (!) and Italy (!). There was an extensive network of agents – a modest peasant woman by the name of Anyuta from the Peroutino, a village located on the site of the “ancient” Greek city of Olvia, made quite a few visits to museums and private collectors offering “antiquities” of silver and gold. Anyuta would earnestly tell a very plausible story of the finding; one of the sceptical collectors was given the opportunity to find the forgery all by himself (it was buried in a grave exhumed in his presence, which had been considered indisputable proof of the finding’s authenticity for a long time thence).

The production scale of the shop can only be estimated roughly, judging by the disclosures that could be made. E. R. Stern, the director of the Archaeological Museum in Odessa, was forced to make a speech at the X archaeological seminar on the subject of classical relics being counterfeited in the south of Russia.

The shop would forge everything. “Ancient inscriptions” were cut into slabs of marbles, with their conceptualization and creation done by professional epigraphists. As a result, the director of the museum in Odessa bought four counterfeit inscriptions in 1892-1893.

“Ancient” marble would be procured from the excavation findings in Kerch. Then real inscriptions would be chiselled off, with new ones taking their place – those concurring with the hypotheses made on the subject of the “ancient” Olvian history based upon the contents of popular textbooks ([540], pages 86-87).

After the divestiture of the hoax it became known that “towards the end of 1896 the Gokhman brothers managed to foist the golden figurines of Nike and Eros riding a centaur upon one of the prominent Russian collectors (as “antiquities” found during excavations)... Every wall in the modest abode of the jeweller from Odessa [Roukhomovskiy – A. F.] was covered in exquisite drawings of ancient palmettes; Roukhomovsky himself had been working on a golden skeleton for half a year, claiming it was done for his own amusement. However, later it became known that the skeleton had also been ordered by Gokhman, and destined for the collection of the Viennese banker Baron Rothschild ([481], pages 46-47).

In 1957 a counterfeit “ancient” icon was accidentally discovered in Greece. Investigation discovered a whole factory that provided America and England with thousands of such “antiquities”. 17 of them were found in museums.

In November 1958 a Gothic sculpture of Our Lady dating to 1380 entered the catalogue of Dorotheum, the State Auction of Vienna. It had remained a sensation until the November of the same year when Riefesser, a woodcarver from Southern Tyrol, recognized his own work in its photograph. It turned out that the merchant Joseph Auer, who had sold the statue for 60,000 schillings, sold quite a few of Riefesser’s carvings in this manner. Authorship recognition took a considerable amount of effort from the latter.

However, it is Alceo Dossena who can be declared king of ancient forgeries. His workshop had been active for many a year, flooding the world market with counterfeit ancient artefacts. After exposure Dossena was saying that “it is true that I have forged these

countless works – sarcophagi, statues of Our Lady with a child, relief carvings and other things. However, none of them can be called counterfeit; I did not deceive anyone. I never copied, I only reconstructed” ([481], page 59).

He was a brilliant counterfeit artist – one that had entered history as “the genius of counterfeits” ([481], page 59). The range of his produce was very wide and included Athenian statues of the “archaic epoch”, sculptures resembling Italian masters of the XV century, Gothic statues and marble sarcophagi, frontispieces and figurines which allegedly remained buried for 3.000 years etc.

In 1927 Dossena made a self-disclosure. Just like Rakhoumovskiy, he was selling his creations through a firm that specialized in forging “classical” art. However, a conflict of a monetary nature took place, and Dossena decided to revenge himself upon his partners. It is curious that no museum would believe Dossena’s claims initially; he had gone to great lengths before his authorship was proven ([481]).

“All across Europe and America one would encounter sculptures born in Dossena’s workshop and sold by Fasoli and Palesi – in antiquity shops, private collections and museums. The beautiful statue of Core in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, which was ascribed to a Greek master of the VI century B.C.; an Etruscan Diana in the St. Louis museum, an archaic Athena in Cleveland, and a frontispiece group from Velia in Vienna “reconstructed” by F. Studnicki, a famous specialist in the field of ancient art, as well as dozens of statues in other collections ascribed to Donatello, Verocchio, Mino da Fiesole, Rosselino and other renowned sculptors of the Renaissance. The artful hoaxer even transformed Simone Martini, an Italian artist of the XIV century, into a sculptor...” ([481], pages 54-56).

We must also say a few words in re F. Studnicki’s reconstruction. The matter is that the “original” of Dossena’s work only consisted of two figures whose bases were neatly broken off for the sake of “extra age”. After the “frontispiece group from Velia” became world famous, F. Studnicki, an acclaimed specialist, added another figure to the composition – the third, which wasn’t even implied by the piece chiselled out by Dossena. The latter would have been confused by such “reconstruction” himself.

“The last unbelievers gave in after the film that Dr. Hans Kürlich had made in the workshop of Dosena. The sculptor was calmly and level-headedly making his last forgery, this time a legal one – the statue of an ‘ancient’ goddess – all of it in front of a camera, under bright lights” ([481], page 59).

On 2 May 1937 a peasant by the name of Gonon from a small village near Brizet had found a marble statue when he was ploughing his field, with minor defects. The specialists were unanimous in their identification of the statue as one of Venus, dating in to the I century B.C. Gonon is offered 250.000 francs for “the work of Praxiteles or Phidias”. Next year, in 1938, Francesco Cremonese, an Italian sculptor, claimed to have personally buried a statue of his own creation in the field, demonstrating the missing fragments as proof. The purpose of the falsification was declared to have been the demonstration of his abilities.

In 1830 a certain Becker had died in Germany – he turned out to have been a professional false-coiner of the ancient profile. He had carved 622 stamps which he used for “the coinage of a great many counterfeit coins of gold and silver – Roman aurei and denarii. These forgeries were littering many museum collection until the beginning of the XX century” ([345], page 14).

Many museums of the world display large numismatic collections of ancient coins. The cases of their countless forgeries are known very well. Apart from that, any coin only makes sense if it is widespread enough. Unique coins are suspicious. The value of a coin has to be set rigidly, that is, all coins must be minted according to a certain standard and not individually. Unique coins are of no market value and tend to get suspected of being forgeries. These relics are in great demand among tourists since they are portable, and the creation of a stamp requires neither any particular skill, nor a long period of study; therefore, the workshops of forgers came to existence near every historical place. It is obvious that the state benefits from minting a large number of similar coins in order to avoid chaos in its system of finance. A forger hardly benefits from minting many identical coins since it is a certain way to get his workshop discovered, and also due to the fact that a large number of similar coins makes them less valuable from a tourist’s point of view. The only coins that can claim being real

are those of a single weight and a single title, made with a single stamp; several dozen such coins need to be found at the very least. One has to point out that “ancient” coins are unique for the most part, which leads to the existence of such oddities as coins minted by Pythagoras the philosopher and Joshua Siragh the moralist ([544], Volume 7, pages 79-83) – they are all the more suspicious if a different stamp was used for each coin. All such unique artefacts are suspicious even if they are said to surface during excavations – especially considering how often such findings would be made during the excavations of Pompeii and in the presence of distinguished guests ([389]), who would then be invited to keep them as souvenirs of their visit ([544], Volume 7, pages 79-85).

On the other hand, many coins declared counterfeit today may be real. For instance, it is presumed that the workshop of Giovanni Cavino, a Paduan citizen, made a great many coins “of the ancient profile” in the XVI century ([345], page 14). These coins, called “Paduans” nowadays, are declared false on the sole basis that “there was no antiquity in the XVI century”, according to Scaligerite historians. However, we are beginning to understand that they are wrong, and that the XVI century was the time “antiquity” was in full bloom. Therefore, the “Paduans”, or the coins minted in the XVI century Padua, might prove authentic.

The first attempts to make numismatics a science were made as late as the end of the XVIII century. Therefore, a vast numismatic material had already been arranged and classified according to the Scaligerian chronology, which had already become consensual at that time. Therefore, the existing numismatic scale is by no means independent due to its being based upon the Scaligerian version in its entirety. It shall change once chronology is changed. The Scaligerian numismatic scale names Joseph Hilarius Eckhel (1737-1798), the keeper of the Viennese Münzkabinet, as its founding father. He published two volumes describing all the coins of the Viennese numismatic collection ([345]). A while later he published a catalogue in eight volumes (1792-1798). Before the publication of this oeuvre, coins would be collected and described only on the basis of random details of their appearance – owls, bows, wheels etc. Let us reiterate that Eckhel was naturally adhering to Scaligerian chronology.

On one of the sarcophagi in Louvre we can see Psyche and Eros; the right arm of the latter is missing, but the hand survived – it is on Psyche’s cheek. Two archaeologists transformed this hand into a beard on their drawing. Then this obvious absurdity entered the catalogue of Louvre with commentary stating that “the author of the sarcophagus wasn’t familiar with the subject very well, making Psyche, who wears a woman’s attire, sport a beard!” ([379], page 39).

Julius Meier Graephe, the German art critic, had once been sightseeing in Egypt, accompanied by a guide, and found an “ancient” statuette in the sand. When he returned to the hotel, he boasted about his finding to the merchant who, according to Meier Graephe himself, “invited me into the back of his shop, opened a cabinet and showed me four or five statues that looked exactly the same. Each of them was covered in millenarian sand. They were made in Bunzlau, but he had received them from some Greek agent in Cairo” ([379]).

In 1925 André Malraux became acquainted with some collector whose travels were paid for by the Boston Museum in a Singapore bar. He had shown to Malraux five small ivory elephants that he had purchased from some Indian several instants ago, with the following words: “You see, my dear friend, – said he – I buy these little elephants. When we make excavations, I put them into some sepulchre before burying it again. If the sepulchre is opened again by other researchers in 50 years, they will find these little elephants, which shall no longer be looking brand new, covered in green film, and be forced to ponder their finding a great deal. I am always happy to oblige my successors with such riddles. For instance, upon one of the towers in Angkor Wat I scribbled a most obscene phrase in Sanskrit, having daubed over it to make it look very old. Some rascal is bound to decipher it” ([379], page 153).

A most edifying story is associated with the name of Hubert Grimme, a German archaeologist. In 1906, eight inscriptions were found upon rocks near Sinai; they were in a Semitic dialect and got dated to the XIV-XV century B.C. In 1923 Grimme published a work where he claimed to have deciphered two of the writings. According to Grimme, they were clear indications that “back in the days of yore” the cult of

Yahweh already existed around Sinai, confirming the existence of Joseph and Moses, as well as the fact that the latter had been pulled out of the Nile by the Pharaoh’s daughter in his early childhood. The scientists were polemizing profusely. Some of them claimed the interpretation to have been incorrect, whereas others declared the whole thing a forgery. Grimme defended himself. The most interesting thing is that no one had cared to study the originals of the writings for a long time. The discussion revolved around the drawings made by Grimme himself. It was only after a while that the Egyptologist Sethe got the idea to turn to the originals and published a clear photograph of the Sinai inscription. It turned out that “there was nothing remotely resembling Grimme’s readings. The fraud was exposed” ([445], page 100). The inscription didn’t survive except for several semi-obliterated signs, with the remaining surface beyond legibility. These perished texts were “reconstructed” by Grimme, who had apparently counted upon his colleagues to show little interest in either the original or the photograph of the inscription. The only reason why Grimme became exposed as a fraud was that his “interpretation” was too sensational – had he been more modest, he could have got away with it. M. Liebmann and G. Ostrovskiy wrote in their book entitled *Counterfeit Masterpieces* that “it appears no one can be sure anymore; neither the tourist who buys a “real” Egyptian scarab for a few coins near the pyramids in Gizeh, nor the collector who had accidentally found an “indubitable” painting by Corot in one of the numerous little Parisian antiquity shops, nor even the art critic who purchases a Rembrandt’s painting (whose authenticity was attested by many experts) for a large museum at Sotheby’s. It is for a good reason that, starting with the second half of the last century, a great many books were published with warnings, advice and recipes for safety from hoaxers” ([481], page 6).

“A new era in collecting was opened by the Americans at the end of the XIX century. In their attempt to compensate for the previous lack of opportunity, they started to buy everything they could lay their hands on, paying ridiculous amounts of money for it. The prices for works of art rocketed immediately... Some witty Frenchman called Corot the author of 3,000 works, 10,000 of which were sold to America.

However, reality proved more sensational than any joke: René Hugues, the famous museum scientist, counted 30,000 works of Corot in Europe alone. A certain Dr. Jussome possessed a collection of 2,414 works and autographs of the famous French painter. Unfortunately, all of them proved counterfeit with no exceptions... according to French statistics, only the USA imports included 9,428 of Rembrandt's paintings and 113,254 works of Watteau..." ([481], pages 12-13 and 15-16).

In 1864 de Nolivot brought an exquisite ancient bust of Girolamo Benivieni, a friend of Savonarola and follower of Petrarch. After a while the bust was sold at an auction for a great deal of money and then exhibited in one of the Louvre's main showrooms among the greatest Renaissance masterpieces. This doubtlessly genuine work of an anonymous XV century master had been a great joy for the public as well as the specialists. Paul Manz, a famous expert in art history of the Renaissance art, published his review of the exhibition in the "Gazette des beaux arts", singling out this sculpture in particular. Then a large number of articles got written, some of them containing results of scientific research, with various hypotheses concerning the possible author of the sculpture ([481], page 24). The issue was far from simple, but the scientists were making progress. No one knows how many more works would get written if the "Chronique des Arts" hadn't published the following report from Florence in December 1867: "Giovanni Freppa, an antiquarian, reports that the bust of Benivieni was made to his order in 1864 by Giovanni Bastianini, an Italian sculptor, who had received 350 francs for this work. Giuseppe Bonaiuti, a worker from a tobacco factory, served as model. The antiquarian claimed that, when he was selling the sculpture to Mr. Nolivot, it had been the furthest from his mind to present it as a work of XV century art; however, he had nonetheless refrained from divulging the identity of its real author" ([481], page 29).

A great scandal ensued. Eugène Louis Le Quesne, the renowned sculptor, made the following public statement: "I am prepared to temper clay until the end of my days for anyone who can prove the authorship of 'Benivieni'" ([481], page 29). De Nieuwerkerk, Director General of the Imperial Museums, declared that he would pay 15,000 francs to anyone who could

make a bust to serve as a pair for "Benivieni" (ibid). Le Quesne published a large article, declaring the work of art in question indisputably ancient in a quiet and scientific manner, basing his judgement on historical materials of all kinds, as well as his knowledge of the differences between the ancient and the modern style of sculpture.

The finale came when Bastianini, the author, made an appearance. Much to the embarrassment of the connoisseurs headed by De Nieuwerkerk, the sculpture had to be transferred into the Museum of Decorative Art ([481], pages 24-33).

The most famous of Malskat's forgeries was his work on the frescoes in the Lübeck church of St. Mary. This case is all the more remarkable since an official restorer acted as a hoaxer here. When a part of the plasterwork fell off as a result of the bombings, it revealed the old artwork; Malskat was invited to do the restoration. However, as it turned out later, there was hardly anything left from the old murals, which rendered the restoration impossible. In his reluctance to lose a profitable contract, Malskat played his part in a tremendous hoax which had remained unknown to everyone except for a couple of his colleagues, presenting his own work as the XIII century original. He had remained secluded in the church with a couple of assistants for a long time, painting freestyle compositions which combined the meagre remnants of the Marienkirche frescoes with elements of Romanic and Gothic art. As for the walls of the altar part, he wasn't bound by any original work whatsoever and painted Mary with the infant Christ giving blessings surrounded by saints. In September 1951 Lübeck celebrated 700 years of its famous church; the saviour of the national treasure was in the centre of attention and received a generous bounty. However, the glorified party hadn't been Malskat but rather Fey, his employer. Malskat decided to revenge himself upon the latter, and made a personal confession to Dr. Hebel, a church councillor.

There was hardly any other scandal at the time to par this one. It had been referred to as the greatest hoax of the XX century all across Europe. Specialists, scientists, restorers and members of the monument preservation committee all showed a lack of readiness to believe Malskat, accusing him of megalomania. It was only after a considerable period of time that

Malskat managed to arrange for a special commission of experts headed by Dr. Grundman, a well-known authority, to perform an investigation. The scandal was growing ever louder. The commission discovered other chefs-d'oeuvre of Fey's restoration agency – in particular, the “restored” murals of the Holy Ghost Hospital chapel and the church of St. Catherine in Lübeck were declared counterfeit. Fey and Malskat had been responsible for those as well. It also turned out that Malskat didn't even bother about removing the old plasterwork – he painted right over it to evade excessive labour. Old XIII century artwork, or, rather, the scant remnants thereof, had indeed been discovered after the removal of the modern artwork by the commission. Hardly anything remained from the old murals after the passage of 500 years: “this layer was dark grey, with a few exiguous flecks of colour scattered here and there” ([481], page 95).

[481] contains a list of methods used for testing the authenticity of a given work of art. These methods may be applicable to paintings, after a manner, but are all but worthless with sculptures. Apart from that, they are based on the subjective opinion of experts to a large extent, hence the vague pontificating on the mysterious sense of authenticity allegedly possessed by eminent experts, such as “some special sense is telling one that the article in question is definitely genuine, or warns one of something being not quite right [voices in one's head, mayhap? – A. F.]. This expert's sense is not so much based on the subconscious, but rather a trained memory, a large body of knowledge and a high enough level of general culture. It goes without saying that one cannot quite trust this instinct...” ([481], pages 105-106).

Accumulated experience definitely plays a major part in expertise. However, in the cases listed above, we have witnessed it to be based on the rickety foundations of the Scaligerian chronology, as well as the upbringing and education of the modern experts in general.

A most notable phenomenon is the falsification of the holy relics and various other holy objects. This issue is extremely babelized and obfuscated by Scaligerian history. On one hand, one apparently comes across originals amongst numerous Christian halidoms that were fortunate enough to survive until the present day. On the other hand, due to the competi-

tion that existed between various ecclesiastical movements in the XVII-XIX century, many of these holy objects may well be forgeries slyly declared original. After a while it became hard to tell who had been in the right altogether. Finally, one has reasons to suspect that the counterfeit halidoms were fabricated on purpose, in order to make the original halidoms fall into obscurity and replace them with forgeries.

Apart from that, when the Great = “Mongolian” Empire fell into a multitude of new states, the rulers of the latter may have condoned the creation of the “local duplicates” of the unique Christian holy objects in order to make new religious centres flourish on their territory.

In 1821-1822 Colin de Plancy, a French historian, published the three volumes of his *Dictionary of Religious Criticisms*. The list of forgeries collected in this renowned work (at least, the objects De Plancy himself decided to be counterfeit) is nothing short of mind-boggling. The history of John the Baptist's remnants, for instance, as well as the objects related to him in some way, is most complex indeed. The sword that he was beheaded with is kept in the Avignon cathedral in France. The rug that John's head was put on after the execution is kept in the Aachen Cathedral. The stone that the rug lay upon is in San Marco, Venice. The platter used for serving John's hear to Salome is kept in the Genoese church of St. Laurence. Apart from John's sandals, the cave where he hid and his bed of stone bearing the image of his body are all popular tourist attractions. Legend has in that Emperor Julian ordered for the excavation of John's grave, whose remains were to be mixed together with the bones of various animals and burnt. This version opened limitless opportunities for the demonstration of John's ashes. Pounds and pound of ashes are kept in the churches of Rome, Genoa, Viennes, Ardres, Dua, Puis en Velle etc. However, the most interesting relic of them all is John's head.

The first head is kept in Aims, allegedly since the IV century. Then, in the alleged year 452, another head of John was found, and yet another in the alleged year 857. When Abbot Marole was paying his dues to John's head in Constantinople, he proclaimed: “Blessed be the Lord, for this is the sixth head of John that I have the privilege of kissing” ([444], page 207). There are twelve heads of John to date. The thirteenth

is presumed to have been kept in Moscow but lost at some point. The shoulders of John are kept in St. Denis near Paris, as well Longpont and other places, totalling four. The legs are in Abbeville, Venice, Toledo and Namur. There is a great amount of hands in existence – one of them became the possession of Paul, the Russian Czar, by the end of the XVIII century. Another is kept in Bologna, one more in Soisson, the fourth is in Rome and the fifth in Perpignan – 9 hands with 45 fingers altogether. Apart from that, one also encounters individual fingers, one of which is in Bezançon and another in Toulouse; their total number equals thirteen.

We see that a good method of fighting against former halidoms is the following. The reformers of the XVII-XVIII must have been thinking along the lines of “one has to condone the creation of similar relics in large quantities”. This would result in the status of the original object marred and eventually lost amongst a series of “similar relics”. Another virtue of this method is that any of the holy objects can be declared a forgery at any time, correctly so in most cases. Something of the sort must have happened in the XVII-XVIII century, when the older holy objects of the Great = “Mongolian” Empire were dealt with as a menace, and real holy objects and places either destroyed or drowned in a mass of newly-made forgeries in order to confuse the believers and make the past perfectly impenetrable. After a while, the hoaxers became confused themselves and started to believe “the true story” themselves and teach it to others.

Let us conclude with a very vivid example that bears no apparent relation to falsifications, being however very illustrative in what concerns the fantastic and fable-like transformations of real and more or less recent events in the minds of the generations to follow. The information related below came to our attention courtesy of Professor V. D. Grouba, Doctor of Physics and Mathematics (Moscow). The “Parlament-skaya Gazeta” newspaper published an article in No 55 (935), 22 March 2002, page 9. It was written by Vladimir Mikhailov and entitled “Buratino [the Russian analogue of Pinocchio from a book by Alexei Tolstoy] was human?” Let us quote a number of the passages contained therein (unfortunately, we could not find the original publication of the American archaeologists that the article is referring to, and are

thus forced to quote it according to the “Parlament-skaya Gazeta”).

“The fact that Tolstoy’s Buratino had originally been a brainchild of the Italian writer Carlo Collodi and called Pinocchio is common knowledge. However, the fact that the Italian wooden puppet had in turn possessed a prototype, and a living one at that, remained perfectly unknown for a long time.

This amazing discovery was made recently by a group of American archaeologists who were conducting excavations near the graveyard where the great storyteller and revolutionary... Carlo Collodi (real name Lorenzini) was buried. Quite naturally, the researchers did not intend to make any exhumations of any sort; however, they discovered a gravestone with the name of a certain Pinocchio Sanchez near the grave of the writer. Someone made a joke about whether this Sanchez could be related to Collodi’s writing in some way. The dates of birth and death were compared, proving the two to have been contemporaries...

The amusing assumption became a version, and, although no documents could be found, the Americans managed to receive the permission for the exhumation of Pinocchio Sanchez, buried in 1834.

This is where the sensation took place. Expertise proved that the lower part of the Sanchez character was made of wood! That is to say, he had wooden prostheses made with amazing skill and craft; furthermore, his intestines were bovine in origin, with just the head, the heart, the lungs, the kidneys and the liver being his own. However, the sceptical archaeologists remained doubtful, since they were suspecting the exhumed body to be a masterful forgery of some modern practical joker. However, new proof kept arriving – one of the halfway rotten prostheses bore a hallmark with the initials of the master Carlo Bestulgi. After that, the archaeologists, who all but studied every paper dating to the period under a microscope, found the church records, which survived rather miraculously, and got to learn of many interesting facts.

Pinocchio Sanchez, a midget, was born in 1890. Despite his being a dwarf, he was recruited into the army at the age of 18. He served for 15 years and became an absolute cripple. Then he was relieved from military duty and sent home to die. However, his chance encounter with the genius Carlo Bestulgi re-

sulted in an operation that allowed Pinocchio to live for another decade, and to be better off materially than most of his fellow villagers, since he would get paid rather well for his performances at fairs. His wooden body parts, nose, and the numerous stunts that he learnt, made him a “star” of the local “fair scene”. The most curious detail is that his death was unrelated to the operations and the transplantation – he simply fell to his death upon having made a mistake during one of the stunts.

Here we see how a real event became transformed into a children’s tale of Pinocchio, the little wooden man. The original had been forgotten completely, and we ended up with a fantasy image, which, as we are beginning to understand now, owes its existence to a real XIX century character. Similar transformations happened to other historical events and characters. For instance, we already witnessed a gigantic stone aqueduct transformed into the Trojan horse by the quills of the chroniclers.