

Abstracts

Claudine Cohen

Comment les impostures savantes sont-elles possibles? Éthique, politique, et historicité des preuves.

A scientific forgery is an intentional act that disguises a fact or a result. It can have a number of motivations, from the lure of gain and desire for personal prestige, to economic or ideological stakes on a large scale. Its manifestations can be very diverse, from the gross deception of the amateur to the subtle makeup of data made by a researcher to reinforce his own theses, to collective impostures engaging important means to erase or cheat data, and even to State lies including persecution of researchers who are opposed to a pseudo-scientific dogma. The nature of fakes also varies according to the domains: rigging of experiments or calculations in the experimental sciences, making up an object in the sciences of observation, or a document in the historical disciplines. The history of science is fraught with scandals of frauds involving scholars, some of which have had a glorious, fascinating or tragic destiny, sometimes leading to resounding trials, suicides or even murders.

Is the activity of impostors and counterfeiters merely a pathological, parasitic activity which delays or encumbers the domain of pure science and its triumphal march toward truth? To understand forgeries in science, it does not suffice to blame the perversity of their authors, or the credulity of those who accepted them. For the very existence of frauds within the realm of knowledge raises a real problem: if science, in its practical modalities, its theoretical elaborations and its norms, aims at the truth, how can one understand the existence of forgeries and their very frequent, even endemic character? How are scientific impostures possible?

We will examine here three kinds of answers which can be proposed to this question: - the first considers impostures in the context of a relativistic view of truth and the social construction of knowledge; the second views impostures in relationship with questions of ethics and scientific morality; and the third places scientific forgeries in relation with the development of knowledge and the changing modes of evidence throughout its history.

Grazia Semeraro

La falsificazione dell'antico. Osservazioni metodologiche sui falsi.

The extensive application of physical-chemical analysis to cultural heritage had a deep impact on the way we define nowadays the archaeological research strategies. Even the problem of forgery has often looked for solutions in the field of the so-called 'hard sciences'. This paper focuses on the difficult relationship between 'scientific' and 'humanistic knowledge', through a series of case studies taken from the recent history of 'archaeological forgery'.

We draw attention on the role played by archaeometrical analysis in the debate about the authenticity of some important documents attributed to classical antiquity, as an opportunity to reflect on the most appropriate research approaches in this important field of studies.

Catherine Bréniquet

Faux et usage de faux en Mésopotamie. Le "monument cruciforme" de Sippar.

Archaeologists and curators are well aware of the many issues produced by the presence of fakes in collections. However, fakes occur early during the Antiquity and can be considered as "authentic" pieces. This paper will examine the case of the so-called Cruciform Monument of Manishtusu, found in Sippar in Mesopotamia during the XIXth century's excavations, and now kept in the British Museum. The shape of the object is quite unusual but it is covered by a long inscription which can hardly be counterfeited. For this reason, the object has always been considered as a fake, created in Antiquity. We purpose to examine the object, within the frame of its historical and archaeological contexts (as it was found in situ in the city temple of Shamash). This will drive us to consider the conditions of its manufacture and use and to try to identify the forgers. The keys of the affair are the archaeological practice of the Mesopotamian kings and the need for regular incomes for the temple of Shamash. The materiality of the object, exhibited in Antiquity to Nabonidus as an authentic piece from an early period which already proved the existence of royal gifts to the

temple, is another determinant parameter of the stratagem, probably imagined by the clergy of Sippar.

Gianluca Tagliamonte

I falsi in Etruria: aspetti della problematica.

The presentation aims at focusing on the cases of forgery of Etruscan antiquities, even if partial. Other forms of reproduction and reuse of antiquities (such as copies, pastiches, alterations, imitations) will not be considered here. The definition of 'fake' is based on the recognition of an intentional and fraudulent purpose, behind the creation of artefacts imitating or being inspired by the original ones.

A reconsideration of the falsification of Etruscan antiquities deals with the interest towards the Etruscan civilization that increased from the fifteenth century onwards into Western culture, mainly in Italy. At the same time, it deals with the simultaneous development of those critical and aesthetic trends to which forgers usually adapted their action.

In the course of the centuries, the activity of faking Etruscan antiquities was inspired by ideological and propagandistic reasons, often in order to celebrate municipal and family glories, or aimed at supporting the interests and theories of erudite scholars. In some cases, there were also strong personal ambitions and explicit economic goals. Over the last decades the forgery of Etruscan antiquities was almost always made for economic reasons. However, in some cases, especially in those of more refined execution, the authors of the fakes seem to aim at an original reinterpretation of antiquity, on the basis of a high self-awareness of their artistic ability, together with a certain narcissism and vanity.

Julie Labregere

L'urne de Porsenna. Itinéraire d'un faux dans la Toscane du XVe siècle.

In 1492, the Republic of Siena offers to Lorenzo the Magnificent an antique terracotta urn on which is a Latin inscription, « PORSENNAE CINIS HAC TEGITUR QUAM CERNITIS URNA », obviously apocryphal and added in order to authenticate the object as the urn that contained the ashes of the famous Etruscan king of Chiusi: Porsenna. The parallel between the image of the former leader who had gathered all Etruria and threatened Rome in the VIth century a. C. and the figure of Lorenzo the Magnificent, architect of peace and Florence's cultural influence in the whole peninsula is one of the first manifestations of the myth that will link the Etruscan past to the Medici dynasty.

But the Porsenna's urn could have been « made » in a previous context, that of *Gesta Porsennae*, a pseudo-historical chronicle drafted by Leonardo Dati for Pope Pius II, Enea Silvio Piccolomini. The itinerary of the so-called Porsenna's urn in Quattrocento's Tuscany reveals the close ties that unite the rising archaeological curiosity to the need to recreate an ancient history at the service of the political ideology of cities and princes.

Natacha Lubtchansky

Le cône dans l'architecture étrusque: impostures romantiques en Toscane?

The study proposes the expertise of a conical tower nearly seven meters high from Chiusi and reconstructed on a nineteenth century drawing in the portfolio of the architect Henri Labrouste (1801-1875). Since the monument is no longer localizable today, the investigation moves towards a history of taste, in line with the works of Francis Haskell, and takes into account all the documentation of the time: letters, archives, antiquarian publications.

It appears that the conical shape was object of the interest of antiquarians between 1826 and 1832 and that it is associated with the oldest Etruscan culture and in particular with Chiusi (Porsenna's tomb described by Varro). The study proposes that the fortune of this form led to the false invention of the discovery of this conical tower in Chiusi, on the model of cippi found in 1831 in Volterra. The role of Giusto Cinci in this forgery is advanced, a character whose archaeological probity has also been disputed.

Mario Lombardo

Nuove scoperte e falsi nell'epigrafia greca tra XIX e XXI secolo. Falsi, imposture erudite e scoperte problematiche.

After a short introduction to the 'history' of the forgeries in the field of Greek epigraphy, the paper proceeds to discuss three cases. The first one, about which I mainly build on a recent work by Olivier Masson, is the 'strange case' of François Lenormant, the French 'great scholar' (*grand savant*), who in the Sixties of the 19th Century published an astonishingly great number of false Greek inscriptions, always denying, even in the face of the most authoritative accusations, of having done so. The second one is that of a short inscription on a golden leaf, never published in the original, said to have been reported by an informant to G. Manganaro as found in Gela; it presents four names, allegedly those of three devoties and their father – but the names of two devoties are Greek, the other indigenous -, all of which find important comparisons in literary or epigraphical existing evidence, giving rise to the suspicion that the inscription may be a forgery. The last and most intriguing case is that of the so-called Soletto's Map (*Mappa di Soletto*), a little *ostrakon*, allegedly found in 2003 in the course of archaeological excavations, with a graffiti on the black paint, representing a geographical map of the coasts of the Southern Salento Peninsula with the location of several ancient settlements indicated by dots and abbreviated names. If most of those names find good comparisons in literary and inscriptional evidence, the geographical localizations, on the map, of some of the settlements whose names are recorded mainly in coin legends result today to be certainly wrong, but they were in the past currently discussed and sustained by several scholars, until the Conference on the Messapians held in Taranto in 1990 came to shed new light on the topic. Among other clues, this circumstance strongly suggests the hypothesis of a forgery to be read, with all probability, as an *imposture savante* realized in the years before 1990.

Flavia Frisone

Les objets fous de Palerme et autres histoires fantastiques d'épigraphie creative.

The paper presents two particular experiences in which the "challenge" of the forger, in both instances fluctuating between arrogance and blatant naivety, is intrinsically connected with the perspective of the archaeologists who were implicate in these forgeries. In this sense, therefore, both the cases are interesting as far as they are mirroring those scholar perspectives.

The first example explores the case of the "strange" artifacts with mysterious inscriptions which were discovered in the territory of Taormina/Giardini-Naxos, in Sicily, in the 19th century. They were presented as genuine discoveries by the main archaeologist entrusted with excavations in Sicily at that time who claimed their importance concerning the historical knowledge of local populations in relation to Greek colonization. They caused instead a scandal, at that time, and now they let us to catch a glimpse to that shady space in which credited archaeologists operate side by side, and sometimes in complicity, with clandestine excavators of antiques.

The same space "in between" true discovery and manipulation of archaeological remains through inscriptions is also well illustrated by the example of a inscribed lekytos from Selinus, a singular and obscure "twin" of the well known object now exposed in the Archaeological Museum Salinasof Palermo, whose epigraphical text is published in all the repertoires of archaic Greek inscriptions in Sicily.

Katia Mannino

La falsificazione di monete antiche. I. Problematiche numismatiche e archeologiche fra Rinascimento e XIX secolo.

The report highlights certain aspects of the counterfeiting of ancient coins from the Renaissance to the 19th century, with the aim of identifying the characteristics, dynamics and purposes of the phenomenon in a range of cultural and social contexts. The adoption of various approaches to the phenomenon helps to understand both the goals of those who created the counterfeit ancient coins and the function of the forgeries. In addition to the production of fakes as a market-driven form of fraudulent behaviour, the studies have made it possible to recognise a number of other aspects. In this particular framework, special attention is reserved for the "fantasy" coins – forgeries based on an assortment of features found in ancient specimens – produced in the 16th century. Such coins have played a significant role in the interpretation of the archaeological record even in recent times. The fantasy coins produced by the famous Renaissance artist and humanist Hubert Goltz inspired by historic events and myths centred on the ancient Salento peninsula are studied in detail.

Adriana Travaglini

La falsificazione di monete antiche. II. Categorie, finalità, tecniche di realizzazione.

The report shows that the growth of the practice of collecting ancient coins in the 20th and 21st centuries – today fuelled by online vending sites – helped to make the techniques used to produce counterfeit coins and their global distribution channels both more complicated and more sophisticated. Today the practice is of an exclusively commercial nature, in some cases serving to meet the needs of a clientèle in search of pieces with which to complete collections of a specific character. It leads to the production of coins that either seek to perfectly reproduce the originals, even being struck or cast using ancient metals, or imitate the prototypes more freely. In some cases – the so-called “fantasy” coins – the forgeries bear no relation to any coin that existed in antiquity, and yet they are found even in public and private collections.

Cristina Mitsopoulou

Le rituel des plémochos éléusiniennes: invention moderne d'une iconographie antique non existante? a. Triptolemos Sandalenbinder.

Les objets antiques « uniques » suscitent évidemment la méfiance ... Surtout quand ils proviennent du marché de l'art et non pas de contextes assurés et concrets. Pourtant, quand un tel objet fait partie d'une collection importante, quand il est publié et commenté à maintes reprises par de respectables chercheurs et savants, quand il se trouve exposé, et réexposé dans un musée national en toute solennité, et – surtout – quand il porte une scène iconographique qui semble fidèle à des sources antiques et à des données archéologiques peu ou pas connues à l'époque de son apparition sur le marché, une éventuelle imposture peut rester assez longtemps sans être décelée.

Tel est le cas d'un diadème en or appartenant à la collection Hélène Stathatos et exposé depuis 1957 dans la salle homonyme, au Musée National d'Athènes. Les deux fines feuilles d'or qui le constituent sont ornées de la même scène figurée, s'intégrant au cercle iconographique éléusien: la frise décorée a été interprétée comme une interprétation narrative figurée du rituel final des Mystères Éléusiniens, les *plémochos*. Or, il n'y a pas d'équivalent à cette scène dans l'art antique. Le seul parallèle est la brève description du rituel par Athénaïos (*Banquet des sophistes*, 11495-6). De rares scènes de la céramique figurée du IV^{ème} siècle av. J.-C. offrent quelques arguments interprétatifs, pour des motifs complémentaires de la scène centrale. Pourtant, depuis 2006, date à laquelle cet objet fut étudié à nouveau, observé systématiquement en relation de question liées au culte éléusien, il fut évident que le diadème posait une série de graves problèmes d'interprétation ... Très récemment, en 2013, les impasses du raisonnement interprétatif furent résolues, avec la simple constatation finale que l'objet doit être un faux moderne. Une fois ce fait établi, le scénario peut se démontrer, il semble bien, aisément ...

Geneviève Pierrat-Bonnefois

L'expert expertisé: ce que l'étude des faux nous apprend sur nos mécanismes d'expertise.

L'examen du dossier d'une série de figurines en terre cuite considérées soit comme des faux grossiers soit comme des antiquités énigmatiques, offre l'occasion d'une réflexion sur les mécanismes d'identification et de classement des historiens de l'art de l'Antiquité: analyse visuelle, synthèse intellectuelle, raccourcis mentaux. On essaiera à cette occasion de décrire la psychologie de l'expert ...

L'aventure de ce groupe d'objet met en évidence les risques élevés induits par la certitude intellectuelle que peut susciter l'expérience. Le risque n'est pas tant pour les experts que pour les œuvres elles-mêmes, classées comme indésirables et vouées à disparaître du champ de la connaissance, voire à disparaître réellement, avec le domaine culturel dont elles portaient témoignage.

Delphine Morana-Burlot

L'analyse matérielle des oeuvres dans l'expertise et les moyens de la contourner.

La littérature sur les faux en art et archéologie est vaste et variée, et il ne s'agit pas ici d'exposer l'histoire d'une fraude inédite, mais plutôt de comprendre les mécanismes par lesquels se construit la fraude archéologique, et ceux par lesquels elle est déjouée. Les fraudes dont il sera question ont eu pour cible des savants, historiens, antiquaires ou archéologues, des spécialistes de l'Antiquité que les faussaires ont tenté de tromper avant que leurs manœuvres ne soient révélées par des analyses matérielles. Depuis le XIX^e siècle, on observe un accroissement de l'importance de ces analyses dans l'étude des faux au détriment d'une expertise historique plus classique, et cela a une conséquence non négligeable sur leur fabrication puisque les faussaires vont chercher à orienter les résultats de l'archéométrie à leur profit. La réalisation de faux est donc assimilable à une course au progrès, comme celle du boulet et de la cuirasse, où les acteurs de la fraude, le faussaire et l'expert, affinent leurs méthodes au fur et à mesure des avancées effectuées par leur adversaire. L'étude de ces phénomènes nous permettra d'exposer les limites atteintes par les analyses matérielles dans la révélation des fraudes.

Paulette Pelletier-Hornby, Fabienne Dall'Ava
Le cas du miroir Strozzi de Sovana: la hantise du faux.

The history of the *Mirror Strozzi* began in Florence in a time when a new museum was created, the *Museo Egizio-Etrusco*, due to shelter the newly discovered archaeological materials so generously provided by the fertile soil of Tuscany, in that second half of the nineteenth century. The public finances being in a disastrous state and the museums miserable, these days were the heydays of collectors in a flourishing art market. The objects passed from hand to hand, to end up in Italy and beyond, in public and private collections. This was a new Golden Age for Antiquarians, and for forgers and experts as well.

The *Mirror Strozzi*, all along, has been doubted. This mirror *a rilievo* was first published in 1874 in the *Bullettino di Corrispondenza Archeologica* by Gian Francesco Gamurrini who stressed the singularity of its decor: a *Judgment of Paris* featuring a hermaphrodite. Praised as the most beautiful and elegant ever issued by any Etruscan grave, it was exposed as a fake in 1976. Only sixteen relief-mirrors – Etruscan or passed as such – are known to us, whose first systematic study was published in 2003. The historical background of the piece, the necessary intervention on a restauration dating back from the beginning of the twentieth century, pleaded for a reopening of the case. The technical study implied by this new intervention offered the possibility to lift perhaps the last doubt on this mirror – first seen in the hands of Alessandro Foresi, the author of *La Tour de Babel ou objets faux pris pour des vrais et vice versa* –, too good to be true and yet truly good.