

Books, Crooks and Readers

The Seduction of Forgery, 1600-1800

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Jacqueline Hylkema



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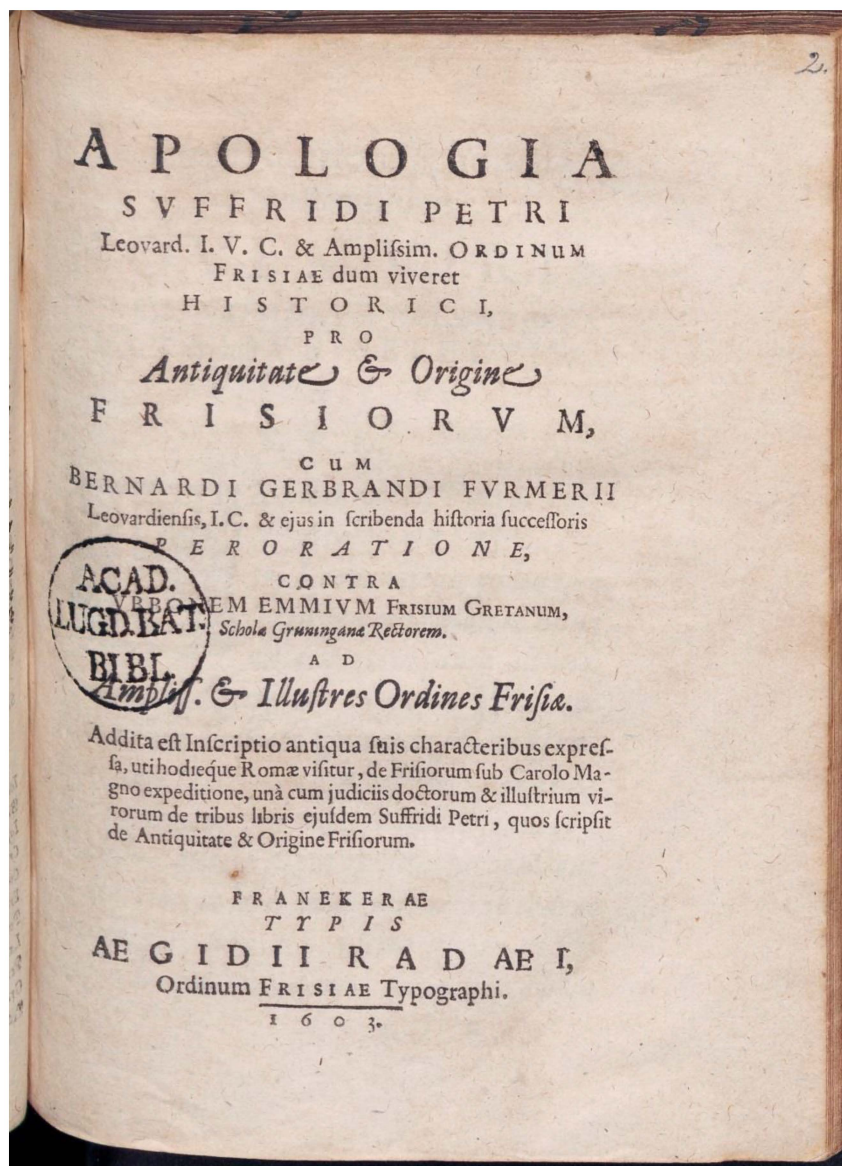
Introduction

‘If a book printed obtrudes a falsehood, if a Man tells a Lye in Print, he abuses Mankind and imposes upon the whole World’, Daniel Defoe wrote in 1704. The invention of print provided early modern forgers with a particularly seductive medium: it gave them access to unprecedented numbers of readers and offered new strategies, textual as well as visual, to seduce these readers into believing their printed lies. As a result, the early modern world found itself imposed on by a multitude of forged books, ranging from fabricated travel accounts to faked classical texts and from simple hoaxes to wholly invented national histories.

Many of these forgeries have found their way into Leiden University’s Special Collections, as well as the books that supported and attacked them. This exhibition presents a small selection of these books to offer an introduction to the highly complex game of seduction played between forged books, crooks and readers in the 17th and 18th century. In addition to the books and prints from the Special Collections, the exhibition includes items from the Koninklijke Bibliotheek and the British Museum. The organizers of the exhibition are very grateful to these institutions for giving permission for them to be included in this online version of the exhibition.

1. Forging books (1600-1800)

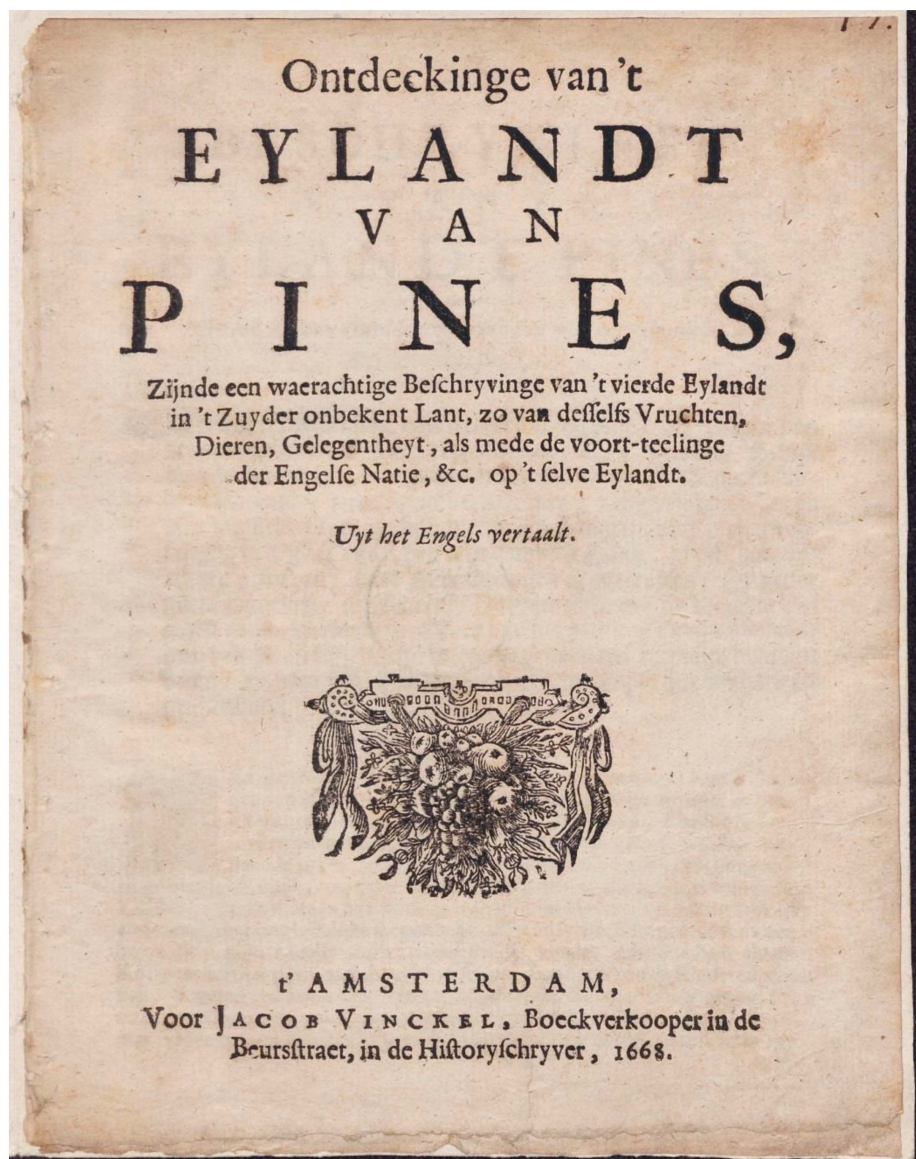
Early modern forgers were seduced by the medium of the printed book as it gave them the opportunity to reach large groups of readers and spread lies faster than ever before. Forgery appeared in almost every subject and ranged from political propaganda to simple attempts to play a joke.



1.1 | Friesland's Indian origins — In the 16th century a wholly fictitious history of Friesland had developed, according to which the province had been founded by three Indian scholars called Friso, Saxo and Bruno in the 4th century BC. The Frisian scholar Suffridus Petri was one of the driving forces behind this forged history, which aimed to give Friesland a past to match and trump that of the other Dutch provinces. After fellow Frisian Ubbo Emmius had publicly accused him of scholarly fraud, Petri produced this book, published several years after his death, to counter Emmius' attacks and provide further evidence for his claims for Friesland's Indian origins.

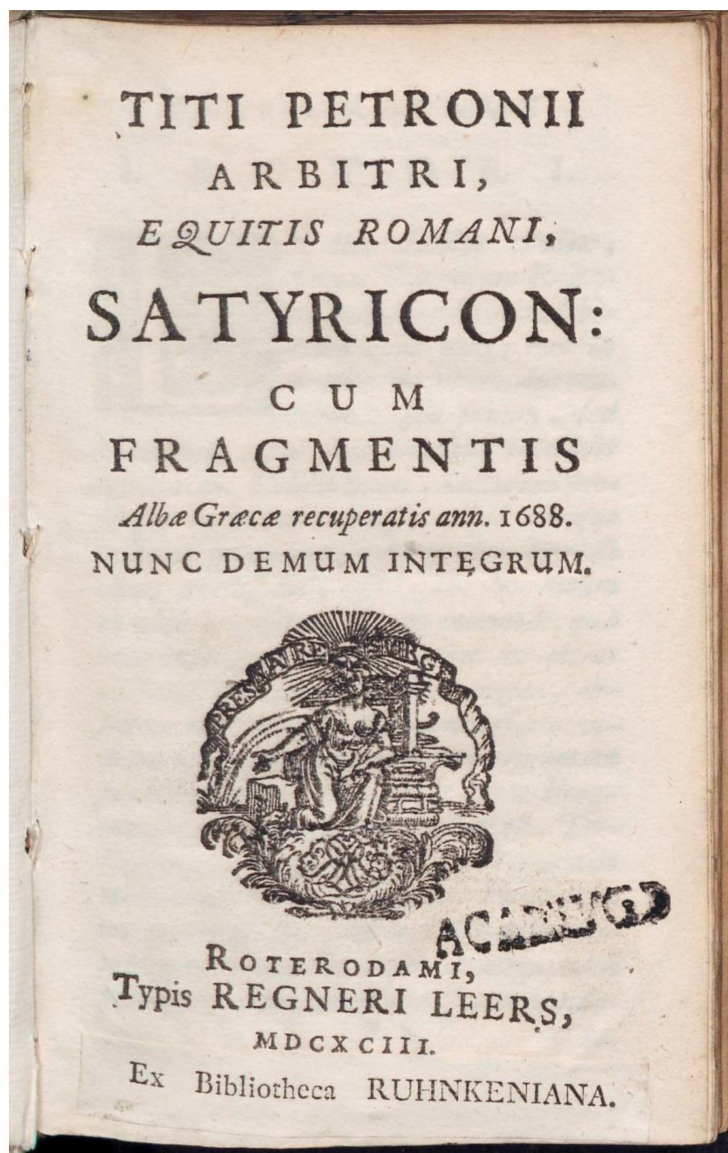
Petrus Suffridus, *Apoloogia pro antiquitate et origine Frisiorvm*. Franeker 1603.

[394 B 20: 2]



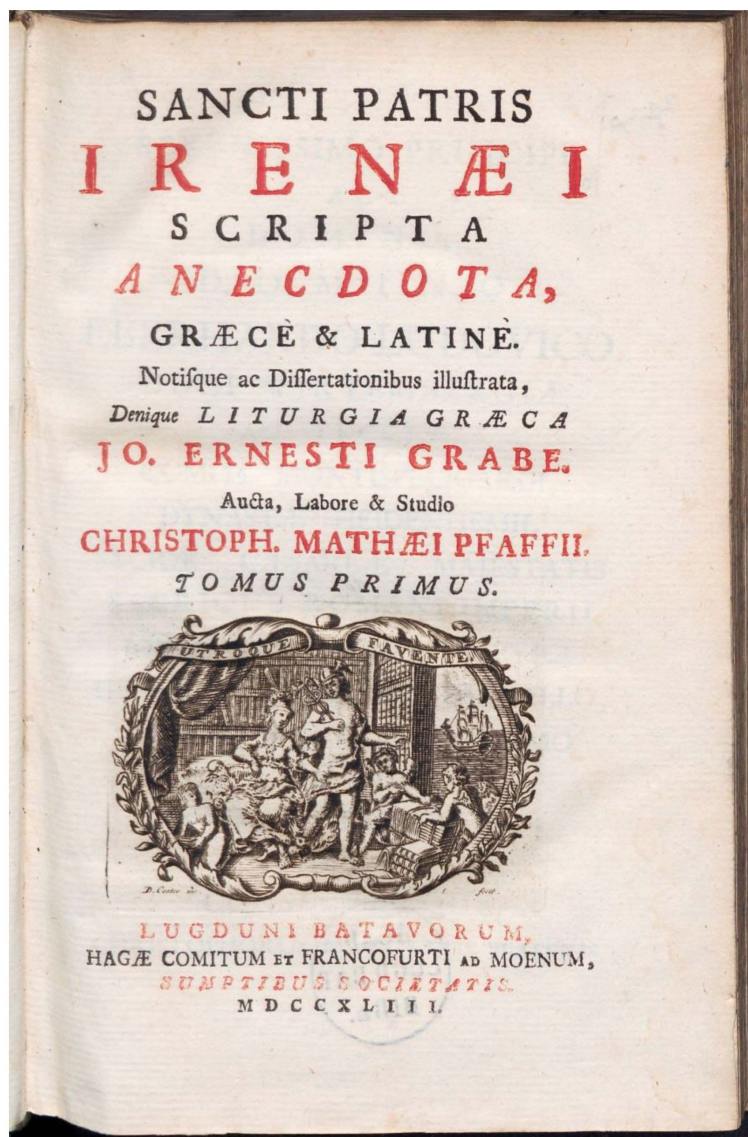
1.2 | Trouble in paradise — First published in English by Henry Neville in 1688, *The Isle of the Pines* was a literary hoax in the genre of the travel narrative, recounting the discovery by a Dutch sailor of a tribe of English castaways whose free sexuality and abundant natural resources were not enough to keep their tropical island from falling into civil war. The forgery was obviously intended to titillate its readers but also had political motives. Henry Neville was a Republican with a strong aversion to James II and the pamphlet's positive representation of the Dutch (who come to the tribe's rescue) and their pragmatic approach to politics reflect his admiration for the Dutch Republic.

Henry Neville, *Ontdeckinge van't eylandt van Pines*. Amsterdam 1668. [PAMFL 1668: 16]



1.3 | Satyricon: the missing fragments — *Satyricon* is an incomplete work of fiction, generally thought to have been written by the Roman courtier Titus Petronius Arbiter during Nero's reign in the 1st century AD. Early modern readers were gripped by the misadventures of the book's protagonist Encolpius as well as the missing parts of Petronius' story. Several forgers attempted to close this gap by presenting the long lost fragments. This is the attempt by the French author François Nodot, whose fabricated 'missing fragments' were published in a new edition of the *Satyricon* in Paris in 1693. As Nodot must have hoped, the publication was highly successful and was quickly followed by other editions, such as this Dutch one.

Titus Petronius Arbiter, *Satyricon*. Rotterdam 1693. [685 F 4]



1.4 | Patristic authority — In 1715, the ambitious theology student Christoph Matthaus Pfaff claimed to have discovered four Greek fragments written by the Early Church Father Irenaeus. The authorship of Irenaeus lent patristic authority to Pfaff's Pietist beliefs and the discovery of the fragments laid the foundation for Pfaff's distinguished scholarly career. Although there were doubts about the authenticity of the fragments (Scipione Maffei was a particularly suspicious of them), they continued to be included in editions of authentic texts by Irenaeus, such as this work from 1743, until the theologian Adolf von Harnack finally exposed them as a forgery in 1900.

Joannes Ernestus Grabe, *Sancti Patris Irenaei Scripta anecdota*. Vol. I. Leiden, The Hague and Frankfurt 1743. [1366 E 37]

G E S C H I C H T-
H I S T O R I A A L R Y M,
O F
R Y M C H R O N Y K

V A N D E N H E E R

K L A A S K O L Y N,

B E N E D I C T I N E R M O N I K D E R A B T D Y E
T E E G M O N T;

B E G I N N E N D E M E T D E N

S I M B E R S C H E N V L O E D,

E N E Y N D I G E N D E M E T D E D O O D V A N

G R A A F D I R K, V a d e r v a n F L O R E N T S d e n I I I.
G R A A F v a n H O L L A N D,

In 't jaar elfhonderdzesenvyftig voorgevallen:

Zynde voords nog met de noodige zoo Taal-als Historikundige Aantekeningen opgehelderd, en met eenen Bladwyzer der Oude Nederduytsche Woorden verrykt,

D O O R

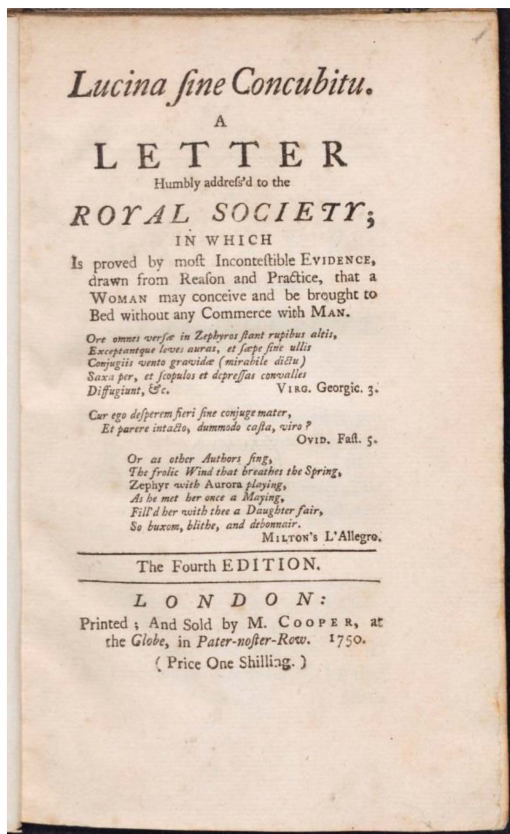
M R. G E R A R D V A N L O O N.



I N 'S G R A A V E N H A A G E,
By P I E T E R D E H O N D T
M. D. C. C. X L V.

1.5 | A Leiden forgery — The *Rymchronyk* van Klaas Kolyn claims to be a medieval rhyming chronicle that describes the foundation of the county of Holland. Although there is still no agreement on the identity of its maker, the forgery was probably created in Leiden in the late 17th century – the main suspects include a Leiden student named Reinier de Graaf Jr. and the Leiden philologist and historian Petrus Scriverius. The aim of the forgery however is clear: it was intended to provide Holland with a detailed and glorious past. Between its discovery in 1700 and its exposure by the Amsterdam philologist Balthasar Huydecoper in 1772, the chronicles were published twice. This is the second and most important edition, which sports a beautiful and unintentionally ironic printer's mark by the Leiden engraver François van Bleyswyck.

Klaas Kolyn, *Gesicht-historiaal rym, of Rymchronyk*. The Hague 1745. [366 A 1]



1.6 | Revenge — Sometimes forgers just want to play a joke – or take revenge. In 1750 the British Royal Society received a report with the curious title *Lucina Sine Concubitu*. Its author, Abraham Johnson, informed the society that women could indeed fall pregnant without any sexual intercourse, thanks to the presence of so-called animalcula, miniscule human beings floating in the air. Johnson proposed to test his theory by banning, by Royal Decree, sexual intercourse for a whole year. The real author of the report was the scientist John Hill, who not only had an axe to grind with the Royal Society after failing to become one of its Fellows but also wanted to satirize the theory that sperm was made up of tiny human beings that would grow into children once inside the female body. Hill's hoax was hugely successful: not only did it manage to trick the Royal Society but it also appeared in translation throughout Europe where even more were fooled.

Abraham Johnson, *Lucina sine concubitu* [...] in which it is proved that a woman may conceive and be brought without any commerce by a man. London 1750.

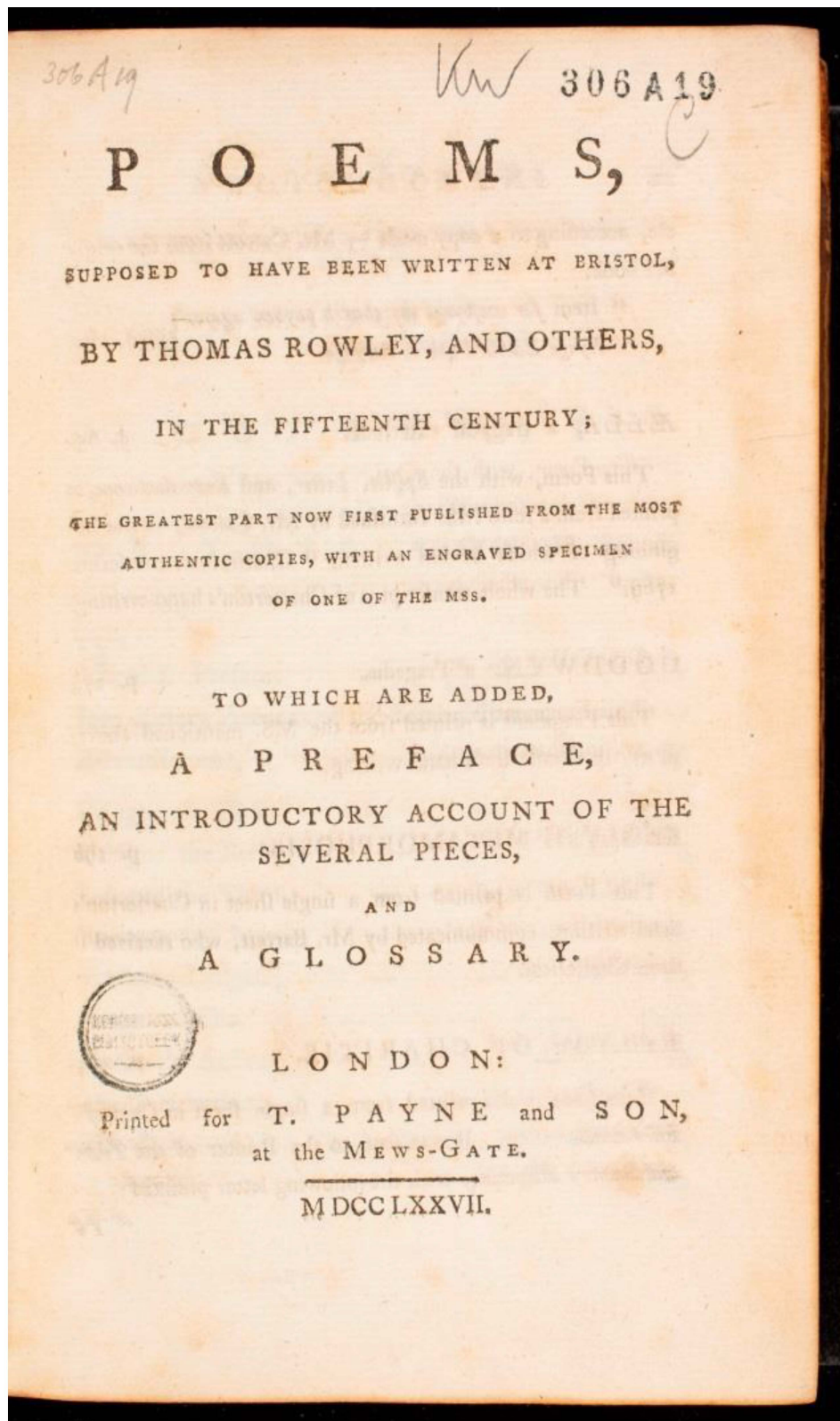
[461 F 9: 1]



1.7 | A mercenary forger — The death of the famous – and infamous – Amsterdam astrologer Johan Christophorus Ludeman in 1757 led to a number of publications about his life and work, one of which stood out immediately. *Spiegel der Weereld* claims to be a collection of Ludeman’s secret observations, an idea that readers found so thrilling that the book became an immediate bestseller – to the delight of Franciscus Lievens Kersteman, its real author. Kersteman was no stranger to deception: as a young man he had been convicted of swindling a jeweler and in 1756 he had published a highly mendacious but lucrative biography of the Dutch author J.C. Weyerman, who had died in 1747. After Ludeman’s death, Kersteman saw an opportunity to repeat his deception – though it is doubtful that even he could have imagined just how profitable the book’s many successful editions, including this one from 1763, would be to him.

Johan Christophorus Ludeman, *Spiegel der weereld, of Geheime waernemingen van den beruchten astrologist Johan Christophorus Ludeman*. Rotterdam 1763.

[1211 A 6: 1]



1.8 | The marvellous boy — Profit was the last thing on Thomas Chatterton's mind when he created his first medieval fantasies at the age of twelve. Chatterton was a highly imaginative and precocious boy who was fascinated by the medieval treasures at the Bristol church of St Mary Redcliffe, to which his uncle, a sexton

there, gave him ready access. Chatterton started writing medieval works for his own pleasure and found a persona for himself in his creation of Thomas Rowley, a 15th-century monk. He soon realized the potential of his Rowley poems and offered them to a number of potential patrons, claiming to have discovered the manuscripts at St Mary Redcliffe. However, very few people took the bait and after a brief, failed career as a writer, Chatterton committed suicide in 1777, at the age of seventeen. The Rowley poems were published after his death, which immediately led to a debate about their authenticity.

Thomas Chatterton, *Poems supposed to have been written at Bristol by Thomas Rowley, and others, in the fifteenth century*. London 1777. [Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague: 306 A 19]

RAW 194 L96

PRECIOUS RELICS;
OR THE
TRAGEDY OF VORTIGERN
REHEARSED.

A DRAMATIC PIECE.

IN TWO ACTS.

WRITTEN IN IMITATION OF

THE CRITIC.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

Cheatre-Royal, Drury-Lane.

Forre usse andde ourre tragyedye,
Heere stoopynge toe yourre clemmyncy,
Wee begge your hearrynge pachyentlye.
M.S. OF HAMLET.

L O N D O N:

Printed for DEBRET, HOOKHAM, and CLARKE, Bond-street; WHITE
and OWEN, Piccadilly; LEE, New-street, Covent-Garden; MURRAY,
Ruffel-court, Drury-lane; CROSBY, No. 4, Stationer's-court, Lud-
gate-street; and SYMONDS, Paternoster-row.

1796.

1.9 | Forging Shakespeare — One of the first rules of forgery is that where there is a void, forgeries will appear. At the end of the 18th century, there was no greater void than the life of William Shakespeare, who in the course of the century had been rediscovered as Britain's greatest playwright. Relatively little was known about Shakespeare's life and collectors like the antiquarian Samuel

Ireland keenly hunted any Shakespearean ego documents that had survived. In order to please his father and to imitate his own idol, Thomas Chatterton, the young William-Henry Ireland began to forge Shakespearean documents. He started with a simple signature but soon graduated to forging letters and other extensive documents and eventually, an entire lost play. Unfortunately *Vortigern and Rowena* was not particularly good and its first production, at Drury Lane Theatre, closed after its opening night on 2 April 1796.

William Shakespeare, *Precious relics; or, the tragedy of Vortigern rehearsed: a dramatic piece in two acts*. London 1796. [Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague: KW 194 L 96]

2. Forging history: Curzio Inghirami

In 1634, a young Tuscan gentleman named Curzio Inghirami went fishing on his family's estate and accidentally – or so he claimed – returned with a bigger catch than expected. On his way to the river, he discovered an ancient capsule that contained a manuscript by an Etruscan called Prospero of Fiesole and gave a tantalizing glimpse of the still relatively obscure Etruscan world. Over the next years, more than 200 hundred of these capsules, or scariths, would be found on the Inghirami estate – all forged by Inghirami. The scariths and their contents found a warm welcome in Tuscany as they provided it with a past that could hold its own against the history of Rome. However, they also caused controversy.

ETHRUSCARVM
ANTIQUITATVM
FRAGMENTA.

Quibus Urbis Romæ, aliarumque gentium
primordia, mores, & res gestæ
indicantur

A
CVRTIO INGHIRAMIO
REPERTA

Scornelli propè Vulterram.

DVPLEX INDEX
omnia edocet.

Ad usum fratris Luang. Ponzij *in vrb. Minoy. de vrb. S. Francisci*



FRANCOFVRTI

Anno Salutis M. DC. XXXVII.

Ethruscoverò cl̄o cl̄o cl̄o cl̄o CCCCXCV.

2.1 | Fragments of Etruscan Antiquities — Inghirami had made several serious errors, most notably in his choice of materials. He had for instance used paper for Prospero's writings whereas it was known that Etruscans had written on cloth. Inghirami realized that the medium of the printed book offered a way to evade questions about this issue and in 1636 he produced *Ethruscarum antiquitatum fragmenta*. This gorgeous book (published in Florence and not Frankfurt, as the title page claims) used a range of techniques to present facsimiles of the manuscripts, illustrations of the scariths and other finds, and detailed maps of the Etruscan world described by Prospero.

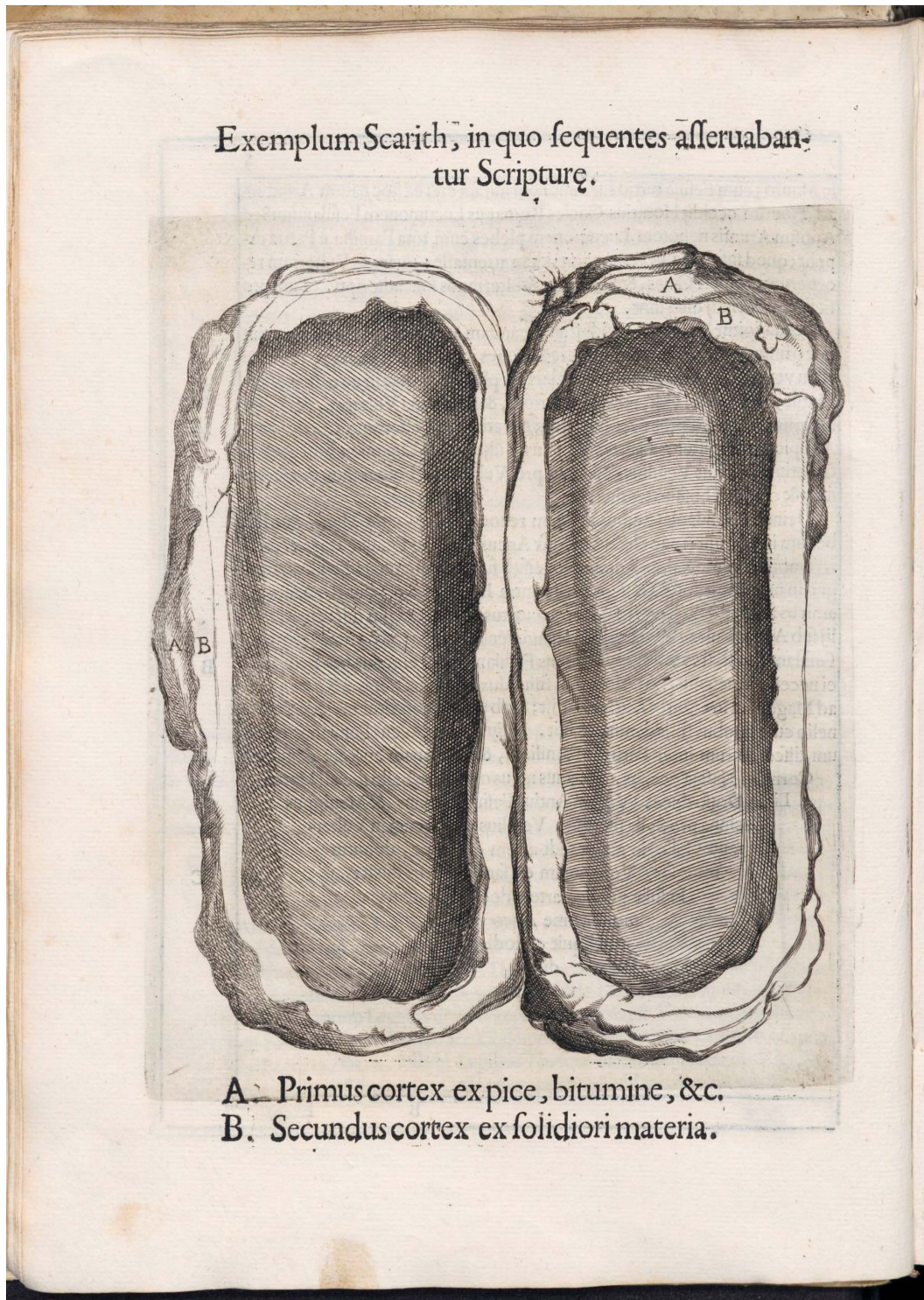
Although the book was extremely expensive, it was an instant bestseller, especially in the Republic of Letters. This however increased the controversy surrounding the authenticity of Inghirami's finds. Now that the scholars of Europe had access to the texts, they embarked on a major debate about the peculiarity of Prospero's Etruscan script, the style of his Latin and historical inaccuracies in his texts.

The British scholar and forgery hunter Meric Casaubon – the son of Isaac – added an appendix about the *Ethruscarum antiquitatum fragmenta* to his *Treatise of Use and Custom* (1638). After describing the book's beauty, he continues: 'Were but the tenth part of those things that are exhibited, true and ancient indeed, as they are pretended, the book might very well be worth 30, or 40 shillings to be bought; neither is there, I think, any true Philologist, or lover of learning in general, that would grudge to purchase it at that rate. [...] The Title indeed, and the specious dress and furniture of the Book promise great Treasures; but those Treasures, well looked into, prove mere thrash, and children's bables'.

Thanks to the book's initial popularity, copies of the *Ethruscarum antiquitatum fragmenta* can still be found in libraries all over the world – Leiden's Special Collections hold two copies. The copy in the Bibliotheca Thysiana is especially beautiful and has been particularly well preserved. Although the book, as Meric Casaubon remarked, is of little value to those who wish to learn about the

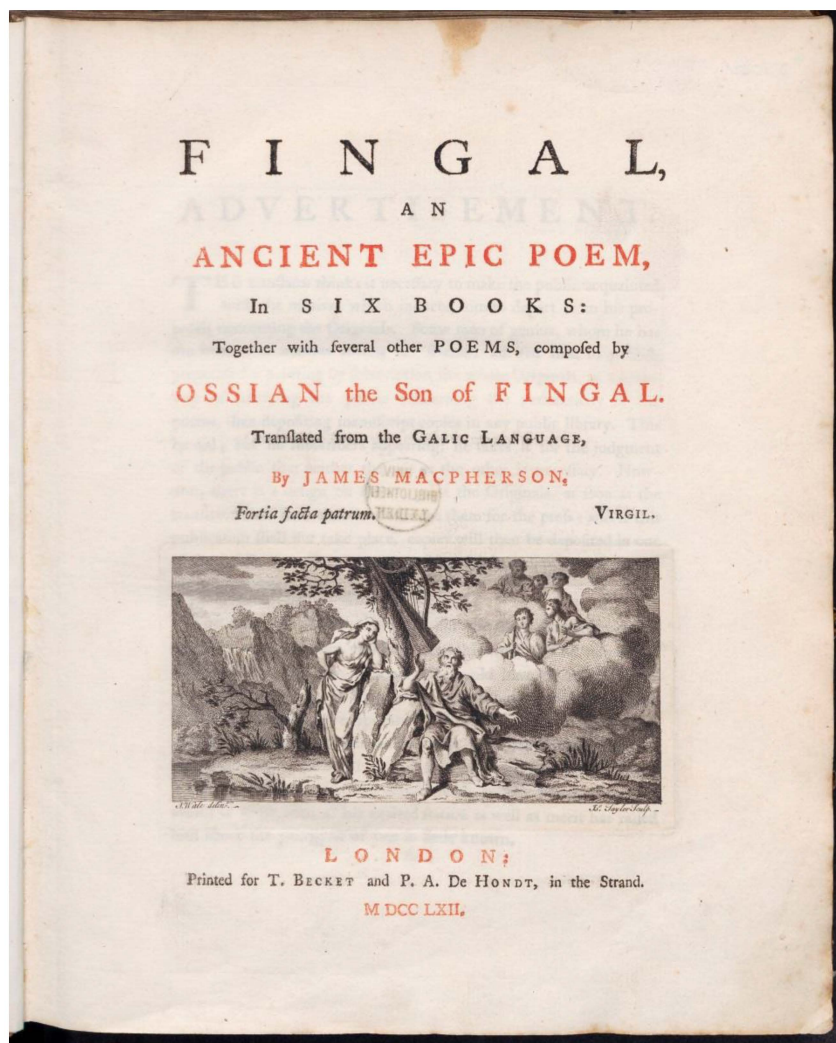
Etruscan world, it is still very much a treasure for book historians, historians of art and other lovers of learning.

Curzio Inghirami, *Ethruscarvm antiqvitatvm fragmenta*. Frankfurt 1637. [425 B
25 / Bibliotheca Thysiana: THYSIA 2087: 1]



3. Presentation and persuasion

However different in terms of subject and motive, all exposed forgeries go through five stages: creation, presentation, reception, exposure and aftermath. In the presentation stage, the forgery is introduced to the world as what it pretends to be and for the forger this phase is crucial: will the reader be persuaded of the lie? The most powerful tool in forgery is the reader's desire for a text to be true and authentic but early modern forgers had more tricks up their sleeve to seduce their readers into believing printed lies. These tricks included the following three golden rules of presentation in early modern book forgery.



3.1 | Rule 1: keep a distance — One of Curzio Inghirami's biggest mistakes was to remain too close to his fragments. After his discovery, he took complete ownership of them and defended their authenticity and importance with too much passion and too much knowledge. If a forgery is to be successful, it is important for the forger to avoid any suggestion that he might be its creator. This is why many early modern book forgers presented themselves as the work's translator: this secondary role allowed them to pretend that they had nothing to do with its creation but also enabled them to remain close enough to the text to benefit from their association with it.

One of the most famous examples of this practice is found in the case of the ancient Scottish bard Ossian and his Scottish-Gaelic poetry, which was the last and most famous of the great early modern nation-building forgeries. The persona of Ossian and the poetry allegedly written by him were the creations of

ADVERTISEMENT.

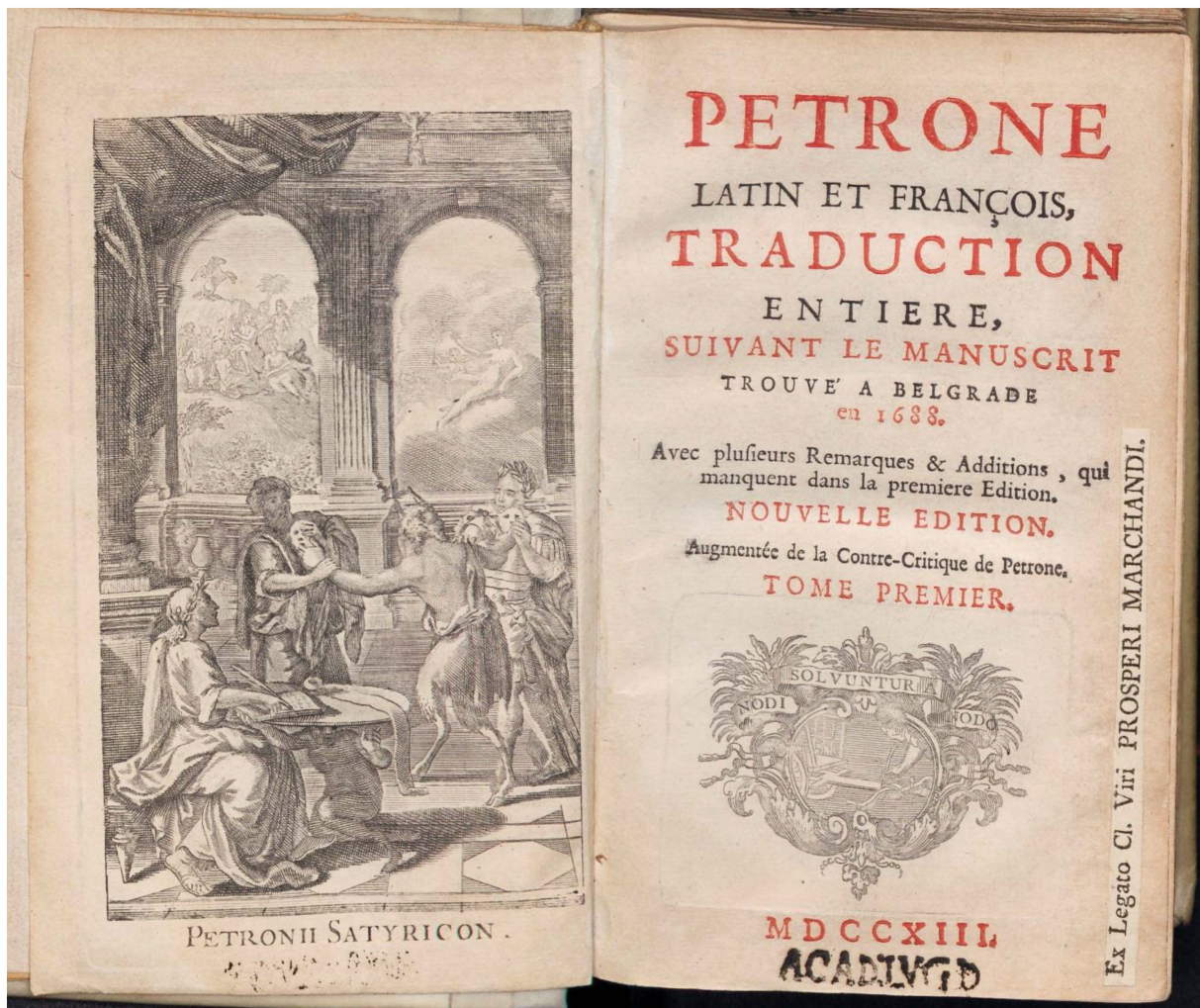
THE translator thinks it necessary to make the public acquainted with the motives which induced him to depart from his proposals concerning the Originals. Some men of genius, whom he has the honour to number among his friends, advised him to publish proposals for printing by subscription the whole Originals, as a better way of satisfying the public concerning the authenticity of the poems, than depositing manuscript copies in any public library. This he did; but no subscribers appearing, he takes it for the judgment of the public that neither the one or the other is necessary. However, there is a design on foot to print the Originals, as soon as the translator shall have time to transcribe them for the press; and if this publication shall not take place, copies will then be deposited in one of the public libraries, to prevent so ancient a monument of genius from being lost.

THE translator thanks the public for the more than ordinary encouragement given him, for executing this work. The number of his subscribers does him honour. He could have presented to the public the first names in the nation; but, though more have come to his hands, than have appeared before the works of authors of established reputation, yet many more have subscribed; and he chuses to print none at all rather than an imperfect list. Deeply sensible of the generosity of a certain noble person, the translator yet avoids to name him, as his exalted station as well as merit has raised him above the panegyric of one so little known.

A 2

the Scottish teacher and writer James Macpherson, who aimed to give his beloved country a national poet to rival Homer and, through his poetry, a past that could rival England's cultural history. In order to avoid suspicion, Macpherson presented himself as the translator of the manuscripts that he had acquired on his travels through Scotland. However, as this advertisement shows, Macpherson did get into trouble over these manuscripts: when skeptical readers asked to see them, he was unable to produce them, which added to the controversy about the authenticity of Ossian and his poems.

James MacPherson, *Fingal, an ancient epic poem, in six books: together with several other poems, composed by Ossian, the Son of Fingal*. London 1762. [1833 B 9]



3.2 | Rule 2: create a backstory — One of the first things a skeptical reader will want to know when presented with a supposedly long-lost text is where was it found. When? How? By whom? In order to persuade this reader, the forger must think about them in advance and prepare a story that will provide convincing answers.

François Nodot's forgery of the missing fragments of Petronius' *Satyricon* was particularly obliging to its readers and provided answers to two of the main questions on its title page. 'Trouve a Belgrade en 1688', it confidently asserts and in his introduction Nodot repeats the main points of the story he had written to François Charpentier, the President of the Académie Française, in 1690. The manuscript had been discovered by a French officer, a certain Du Pin, at the house of a Greek renegade during the sack of Belgrade. Le Pin had the manuscript copied and then wrote Nodot who in turn had a copy made of the

copy. The story was clever: not only did it explain the origins of the texts but it also removed Nodot from the discovery and made it unnecessary for him to produce the original manuscript. Needless to say, neither Le Pin nor the original manuscript have ever been traced.

T. Petronius Arbiter, *Petrone Latin et François, traduction entière, suivant le manuscrit trouvé à Belgrade en 1688 (par Nodot)*. S.l. 1713. [685 F 6]



ISAACI
CASAVBONI
DEREBVS SACRIS ET
ECCLESIASTICIS
EXERCITATIONES
XVI.

Ad Cardinalis BARONII
*Prolegomena in Annales, & primam eorum
partem, de DOMINI NOSTRI
IESV CHRISTI Natiuitate, Vita,
Passione, Assumptione.*

AD
IACOBVM, Dei gratia, Magnæ
Britanniæ, Hiberniæ, &c.
Regem Serenissimum.

LONDINI

Ex officina Nottoniana apud Ioan. Billsum.
cl. B. C. XIII.

Cum privilegio Regiæ.

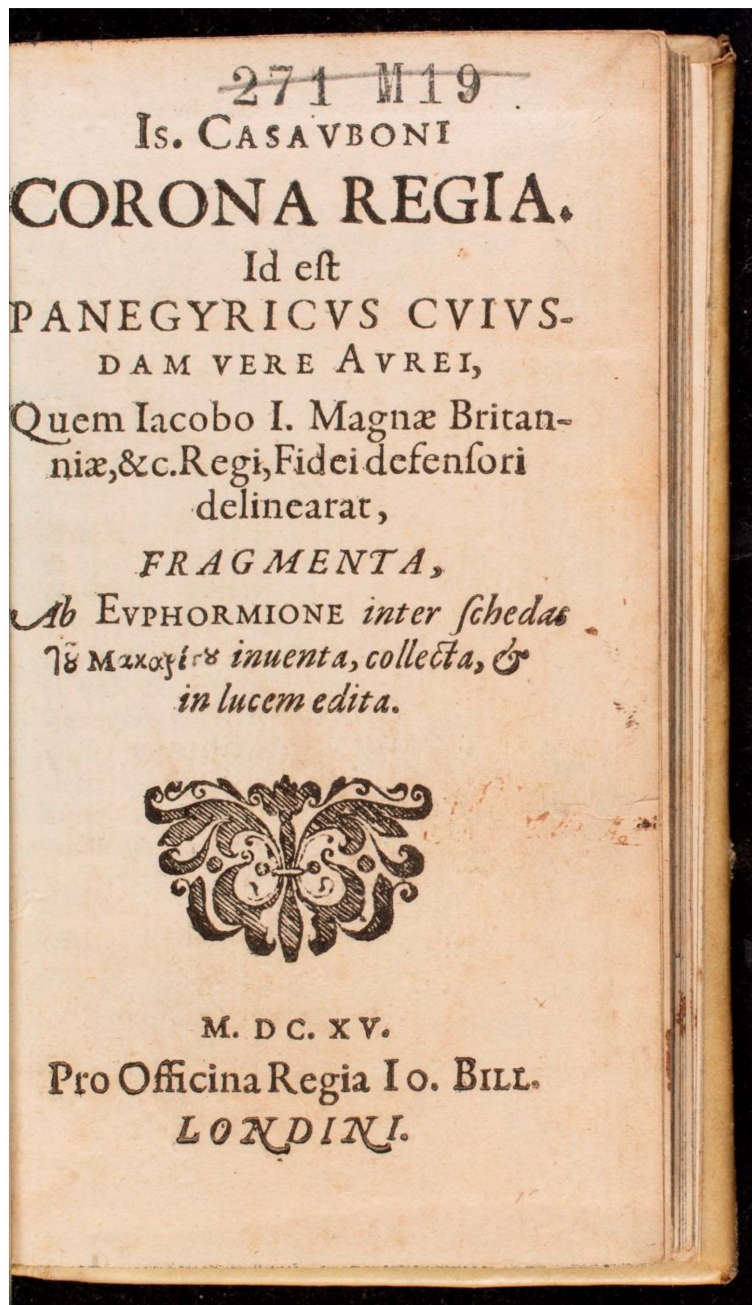
ACAD

LVGD

Ex Bibliotheca RUHNKENIANA.

3.3 | Rule 3: make it look authentic — When forging manuscripts, it is crucial, as Curzio Inghirami found out, to make them look authentic. To a certain extent, the medium of the printed book offered a solution to this problem but some forgers were aware that printed books too had visual markers that could make or break a forgery. This is an authentic copy of an authentic book: Isaac Casaubon's masterpiece *De rebus sacris* (1614), published in the year of Casaubon's death. As King James I was Casaubon's patron, the book was published by John Bill, the royal printer.

Isaac Casaubon, *De rebvs sacris et ecclesiasticis exercitationes XVI*. London 1614.
[571 A 11]

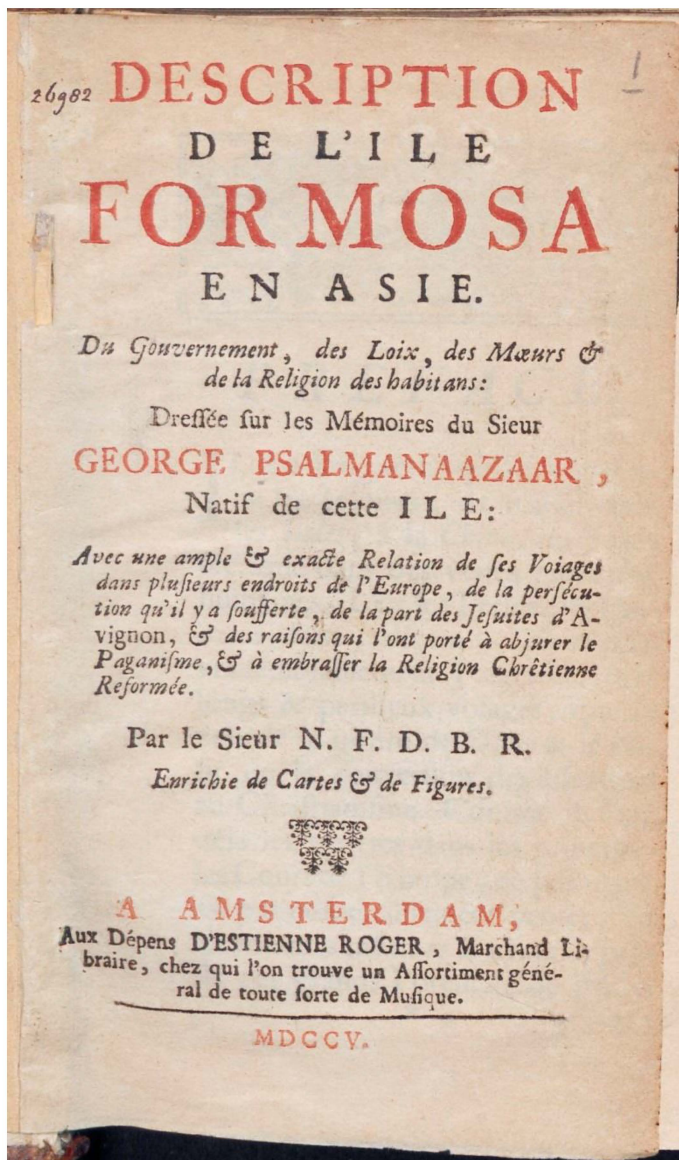


3.4 | Forging the publisher — A year after Casaubon's death, a particularly nasty forgery appeared under the title of *Corona Regia*. The book claimed to have been written by Casaubon and in order to make his authorship look more convincing, it presented itself as having been printed by John Bill, like Casaubon's *De rebus sacris*, even though it was published on the continent.

Isaac Casaubon, *Corona Regia. Id est, Panegyrici, quem Regi Britanniae destinaverat, fragmenta*. London 1615. [Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague: KW 3037 H 4]

4. Presentation and persuasion: George Psalmanazar

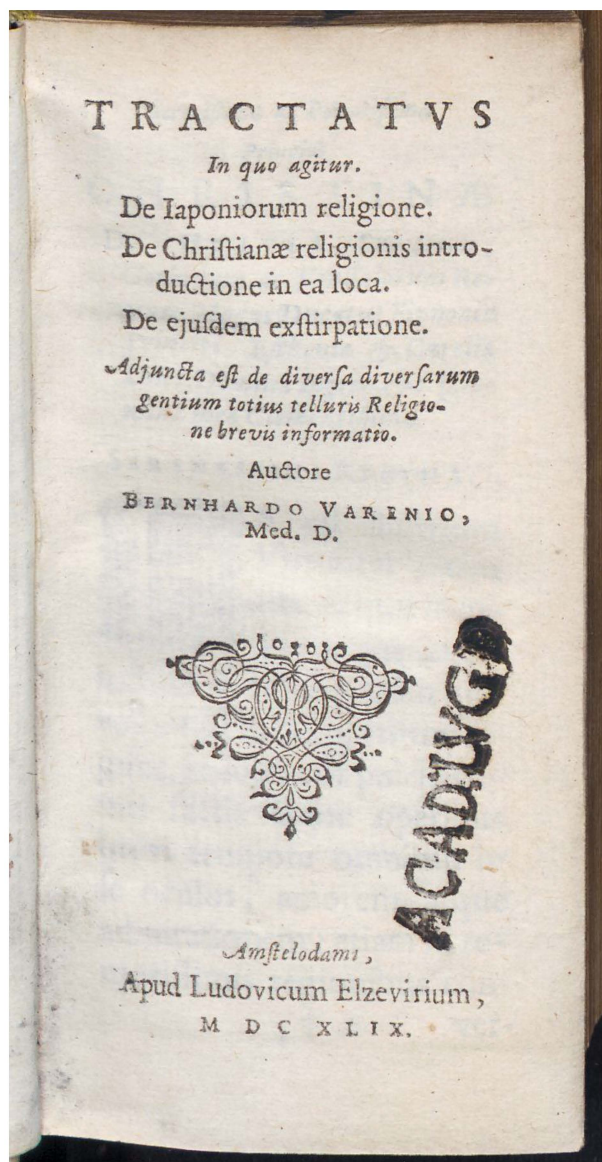
George Psalmanazar arrived in London in 1703, claiming to be an aristocrat from Formosa, today's Taiwan. Psalmanazar was the first Formosan ever to visit Britain and his wild tales of the Orient (told in a curious mixture of beautiful Latin, broken English and snippets of Formosan) quickly turned him into one of London's most famous and feted men. Less than a year later, Psalmanazar published *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa*, a detailed account of his native island, its people, their language and customs (which included cannibalism, polygamy and mass child sacrifice). Of course none of it was true – Psalmanazar was a young, penniless Frenchman who had never been to Asia.



4.1 | Psalmanazar's bestseller — Psalmanazar's *Historical and Geographical Description* was an instant bestseller and was followed by a second edition (with even more outrageous lies) and translations into Dutch and French (both published in Amsterdam) and German.

George Psalmanazar, *Description de l'île Formosa en Asie*. London 1705. [701 F 15]

4.2 | Varenius — Psalmanazar's most important tool was his readers' ignorance of Formosa. Very little was known about Formosa in early 18th century England – only Dutch merchants and French Jesuits had ever visited the island. However,



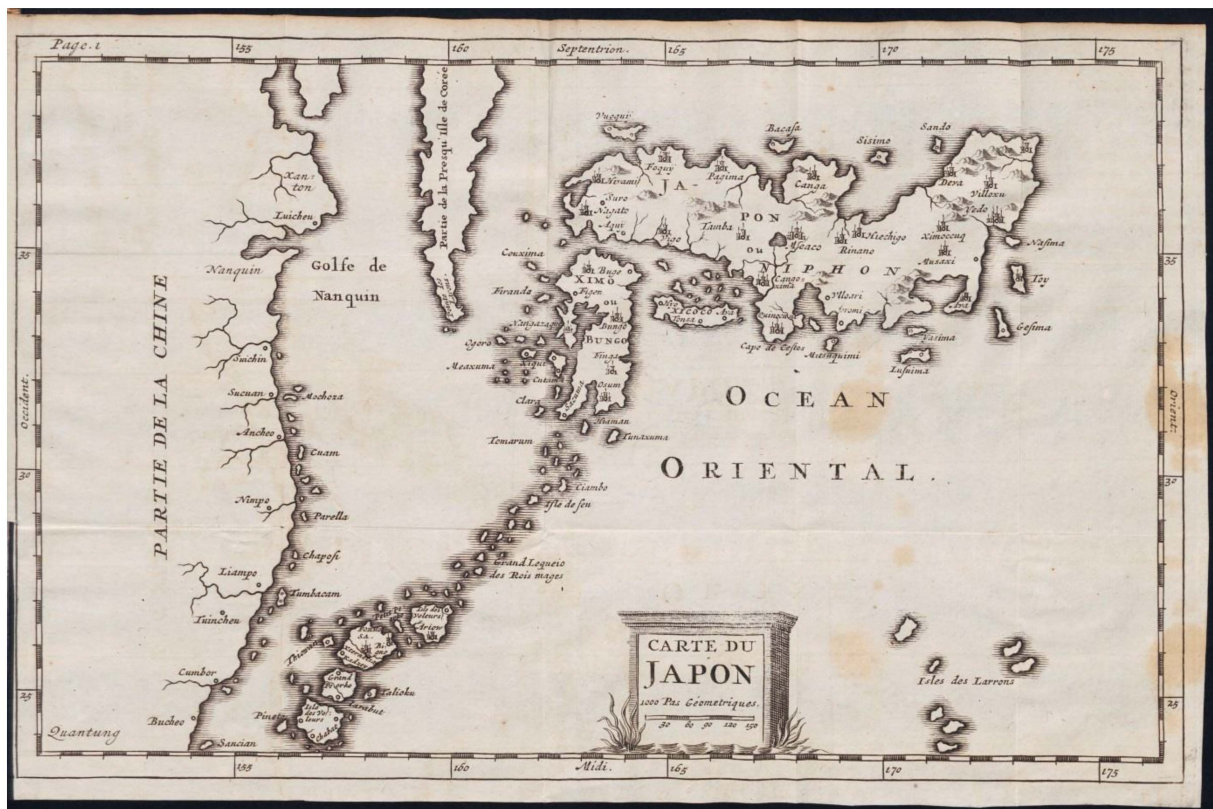
his accounts did need to match what they had written about the island and be in accordance, in various ways, with authentic accounts of the Far East. This notion of authenticity does need to be taken with a pinch of salt though. In his section on Formosa in *Descriptio Regni Japoniae* (1649), the Leiden educated geographer Bernhardus Varenius confidently describes several completely fabricated stories about life on Formosa. Although these did raise some suspicions, Varenius' book was generally thought to be the most important and reliable source of information on Formosa. Psalmanazar therefore took great care to incorporate Varenius' observations in his *An Historical and Geographical Description* – and match Varenius' tall stories with even taller ones.

Bernhard Varenius, *Descriptio Regni Japoniae*. Amsterdam 1649. [276 G 2]



4.3 | Formosa: Chinese or Japanese? — In his deceptions, Psalmanazar abided by one rule: never change your story. When he first presented his Oriental persona, in the Dutch town of Sluis, he had claimed that he was Japanese so when he settled on a Formosan persona instead, he had to assert that Formosa belonged to Japan. He knew this was incorrect – Formosa was part of China at the time – but he found several ways to argue the point in *An Historical and Geographical Description*. The first map, from Athanasius Kircher’s *China monumentis* (1667), is correct and presents Formosa as part of China. By reframing the map, Psalmanazar managed to make Formosa look as if it belonged to Japan.

Athanasius Kircher, *Toonneel van China, door veel, zo geestelijke als werreltlijke, geheugteekenen, [...] geopent en verheerlykt*. Translated by J. H. Glazemaker. Amsterdam 1668. [705 A 13]



George Psalmanazar, *Description de l'île Formosa en Asie*. London 1705. [701 F 15]



4.4 | Illustrations — Like most books on the Far East, *An Historical and Geographical Description* included a number of illustrations, based on Psalmanazar's own drawings. Here too Psalmanazar was very aware of genuine publications about the Far East and his readers' knowledge of their illustrations. To avoid suspicion, Psalmanazar took great care to repeat certain visual elements from these books: the similarity between Psalmanazar's illustration of a Formosan funeral procession and this image of a Vietnamese Oriental funeral procession in Jean-Baptiste Tavernier's *Recueil de plusieurs relations et traités singuliers et curieux* (1679) is particularly striking.

J. B. Tavernier, *Recueil de plusieurs relations et traités singuliers et curieux*. Paris 1679. [465 B 14]



George Psalmanazar, *Description de l'île Formosa en Asie*. London 1705. [701 F 15]

ATHANASII KIRCHERI
E SOC. JESU

CHINA
MONUMENTIS,

QUA
Sacris quâ Profanis,

Nec non variis

NATURÆ & ARTIS
SPECTACULIS,

Aliarumque rerum memorabilium
Argumentis

ILLUSTRATA,

AUSPICIIS

LEOPOLDI PRIMI,
ROMAN. IMPER. SEMPER AUGUSTI,

Munificentissimi Mæcenatis.



AMSTELODAMI,

Apud JACOBUM à MEURS, in fossa vulgò de Keyfersgracht,
ANNO M. DC. LXVII.

4.5 | After Kircher — In the same vein, Psalmanazar made sure that his images of Formosan men and women followed the conventions of ethnographical book illustrations and the highly popular genre of the costume print. Athanasius Kircher's *China monumentis* in particular provided Psalmanazar with visual inspiration. Although Father Kircher was no saint either when it came to telling the truth, *China monumentis* was widely read and accepted as an authoritative source of information on the Far East in early modern Europe. By making his illustrations similar to Kircher's (while adding subtle differences to support his claim that Formosa was in fact Japanese), Psalmanazar increased their credibility and managed to weave his fictitious Formosa further into the European perception of Far East Asia.

ri, potissimum ex ea muri parte, quæ in Austrum tendens ad regiones magis habitatas, ut *Quamsi, Junnam* & *Tibet* appropinquat; hinc enim ad fluvium croceum, murisque vicina loca, dum ætis siccitatisque conferta, certis anni temporibus, dum pabuli, tum venationis causa agminatim se conferre solent.

Egressi itaque hanc stupendi muri vastitatem dicti Patres, statim rivum piscibus refertum obvium invenerunt, quorum non exiguam copiam cœnæ in subdiali tentorio apparatus refervarunt. Transito quoque flumine croceo extra muros, statim vastissimum illud desertum *Kalmak*, desertum montibus & campis sterile, horridum & formidabile ingressi,

ad *Barantolæ* Regnum usque trimestri spatio confecerunt. Hoc desertum quantumvis squalidum sit, à *Tartaris* tamen, quos *Kalmuk* vocant, constitutis anni temporibus, ubi ad ripas fluminum major pascuorum copia est, per hordas, quæ portatiles non incongruè civitates dici merentur, habitatur; *Tartaris* desertum hinc indè longè latèque latrocinandi causa divagantibus; undè ad *Tartarorum* insultantium violentiam propulsandam valida manu *Caravanam* instructam esse oportet. Patres uti sæpè in eorum habitacula per hoc desertum sparsa inciderunt, ita quoque singulorum habitus, eodem modo, quo hic exhibentur, delinearunt.

Desertum
Kalmak.



I. Lama Tartarus.

III. Fœmina ex Kalmak.

II. Tartarus ex Kalmak.

A. Habitatio Tartarorum.

IV. Rota volubilis.

Habitus
Tartarorum
Kalmak.

Tartarus, quem Figura I. exhibet, habitum gerit *Lamae*, qui sunt Tartaricæ gentis *Kalmak* Sacrificuli, seu sacrorum præsidēs, pileo utuntur rubro colore tincto,

I 2

Athanasius Kircher, *China monumentis, qua sacris quæ profanis [...] illustrate*.
Amsterdam 1667. [375 A 11]



George Psalmanazar, *Description de l'île Formosa en Asie*. London 1705. [701 F 15]

ATHANASII KIRCHERI
FVL DENSIS BVCHONII

E SOC. IESV.

PRODROMVS
COPTVS SIVE ÆGYPTIACVS.

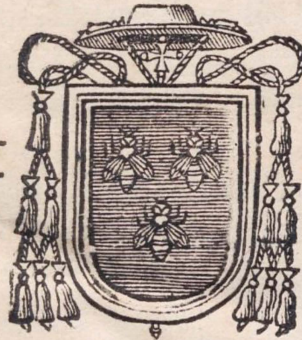
Ad

Eminentiss: Principem S. R. E. Cardinalem
FRANCISCVM BARBERINVM,

in quo

ACADIVGD

Cum linguæ Coptæ, siue Ægyptiacæ, quondam Pharaonica, origo, ætas, vicissitudo, inclinatio; tum hieroglyphicæ literaturæ instauratio, vti per varia variarum eruditionum, interpretationumque difficillimarum specimina, ita noua quoque & insolita methodo exhibentur.



Μηδὲν κεκαλυμ-
μένον ἢ ἐκ στακα-
λυφθῆσει

Μηδὲν κρυπτόν
ἢ ἐγνωθῆσει
Δακ. 6.

Romæ. Typis S. Cong: de propag: Fide. 1636.

Superiorum permissu.

Ex Bibliotheca Viri Illust. Isaaci Vossii. 40

4.6 | Alphabets — George Psalmanazar was a brilliant linguist and language formed a major part of his deception. Before his arrival in London he had fabricated an entire language for his imaginary Formosa and would present his English hosts with extensive Formosan translations of well-known texts. The Archbishop of Canterbury for example received a beautifully written copy of the Lord's Prayer in Formosan, which can still be found in Lambeth Palace's collection today. In order to add scholarly verisimilitude to Psalmanazar's invented Formosan, his *Historical and Geographical Description* included an alphabet table, designed in much the same way as genuine tables devised and used by early modern philologists. This, for instance, is the Coptic alphabet table in Athanasius Kircher's *Prodromus Coptus sive Aegyptiacus* (1636) – the similarities between the arrangement of the two tables are obvious.

Figura	Nomen	Nomen	Potestas
H η	ΗΙΤΑ	Hida	I
Θ θ	ΘΙΤΑ	Thita	Th
I ι	ΙΑΥΤΑ	Iaυta	I
R κ	ΚΑΠΑ	Kabba	K
Λ λ	ΛΑΥΤΑ	Lauda	L
U υ	ΥΙ	Mi	M
N η	ΗΙ	Ni	N
Ξ ξ	ΞΙ	Exi	X
O ο	Ο	O	O
Π π	ΠΙ	Bi	P
P ρ	ΡΟ	Ro	R
C ς	CΙΜΑ	Sima	S
T τ	ΤΑΥ	Dau	T
Υ υ	ΥΙ	H	E
Φ φ	ΦΙ	Phi	F
X χ	ΧΙ	Chi	Ch

Figura	Nomen	Nomen	Potestas
Ω ω	ΩΙ	O	O
Ψ ψ	ΨΕΙ	Scei	Sc
Ϝ ϝ	ϜΕΙ	Fei	F
Ϟ ϟ	ϞΕΙ	Chei	Ch
Ϡ ϡ	ϠΟΡΙ	Hori	H
Ϝ ϝ	ϜΑΥΤΑ	Gianga	Gi
Ϟ ϟ	ϞΙΜΑ	Scima	Sc
Ϝ ϝ	ϜΕΙ	Dei	Di
Ϟ ϟ	ϞΒΙ	Ebfi	Ps

CAPVT SECVNDVM.

*De Literarum quarundam
pronunciatione.*

- B**, Vīda. v. cōsonans, pronunciat̄ur vt β: velut
βηθανια. Vithania. Bethania.
- H**, Hida similis est literæ Græcæ η, quæ I longum est: pronunciat̄ur, vt I declinans ad E; sed quādo inuenitur cum accentu desuper η, pro-

Athanasius Kircher, *Prodromus Coptus sive Aegyptiacus*. Rome 1636. [877 C 7]

Alphabet De La Langue Des Formosans

Nom	Valeur	Figure	Nom
A ^m	A a a ^o	⊥ I I	⊥ I
M ^m	M m̃ m	⌋ ⌋ ⌋	⌋ ⌋
N ⁿ	N ñ n	⊥ ⊥ ⊥	⊥ ⊥
Taph	T th t	⊥ ⊥ ⊥	XI ⊥
L ^a m ^o	L ll l	⌋ ⌋ ⌋	⌋ ⌋
S ^a m ^o	S ch s	⌋ ⌋ ⌋	⌋ ⌋
Vomera	V w v	Δ Δ Δ	⊥ Δ
Bagdo	B b b	/ / /	⊥ /
Hamno	H kh h	⌋ ⌋ ⌋	⊥ ⌋
Pedlo	P pp p	⌋ ⌋ ⌋	⊥ ⌋
Kaphi	K k x	⌋ ⌋ ⌋	⊥ ⌋
O ^m da	O o ω	⊥ ⊥ ⊥	⊥ ⊥
Ilda	I y i	⊥ ⊥ ⊥	⊥ ⊥
Xatara	X xh x	⌋ ⌋ ⌋	⊥ ⌋
Dam	D th d	⌋ ⌋ ⌋	⊥ ⌋
Zamphi	Z t ^f z	⌋ ⌋ ⌋	⊥ ⌋
Ephi	E ε η	⌋ ⌋ ⌋	⊥ ⌋
Fandem	F ph f	X X X	⊥ X
Raw	R rh r	⌋ ⌋ ⌋	⊥ ⌋
Gomera	G g j	⌋ ⌋ ⌋	⊥ ⌋

George Psalmanazar, *Description de l'ile Formosa en Asie*. London 1705. [701 F 15]

5. Reception

After the presentation of the forgery, the reception stage begins, in which readers read and discuss the book. Some readers will actively but unknowingly take part in disseminating the forgery further, for instance by publishing new editions and translations or including it in new works and appropriating it for certain causes.

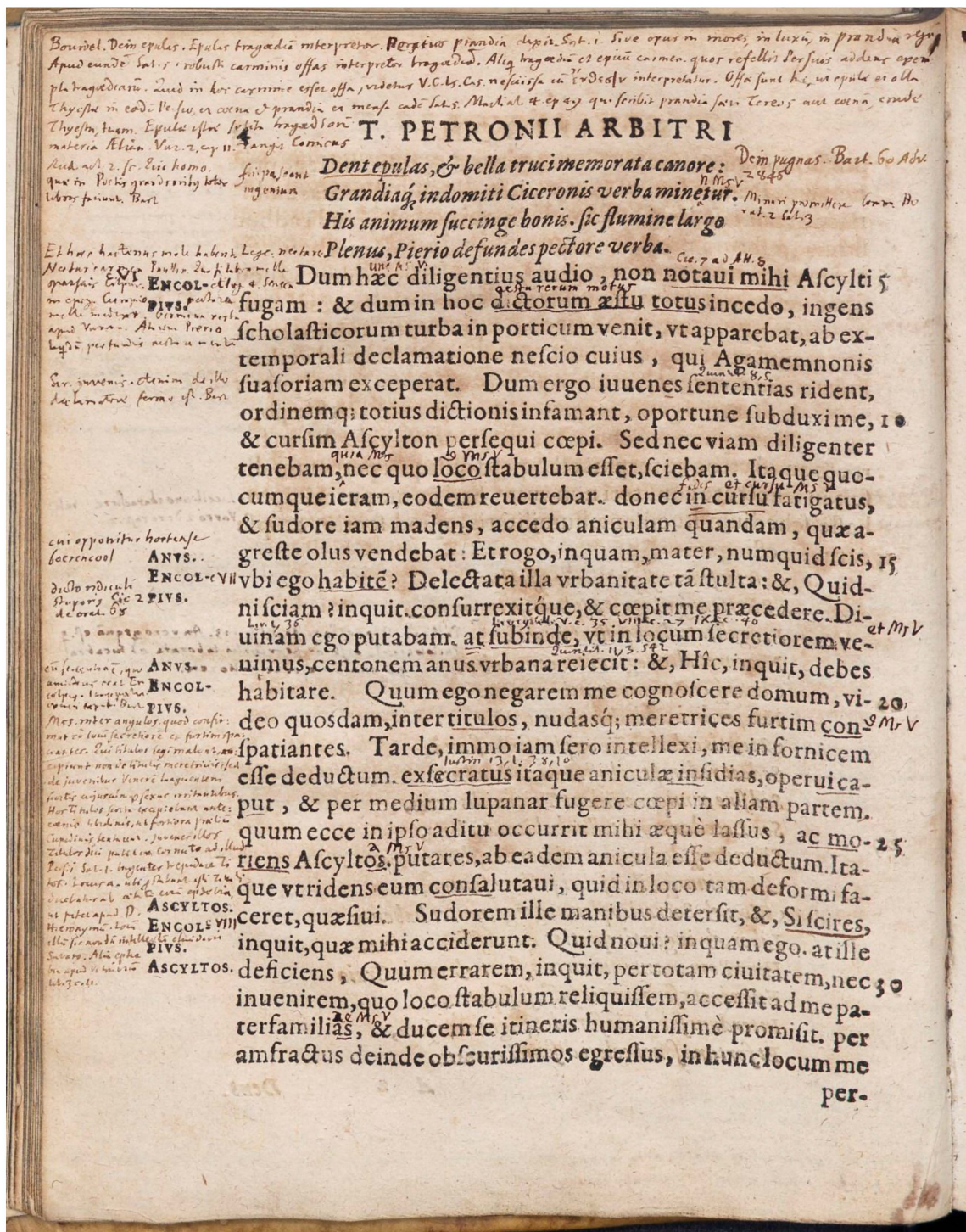


5.1 | One cautious owner — In 1629 the Spanish humanist José Antonio González de Salas published an edition of the *Satyricon* that presented a number of the missing fragments. De Salas claimed to have found these passages, which neatly link the genuine fragments, in an earlier French edition but he had in fact forged them.



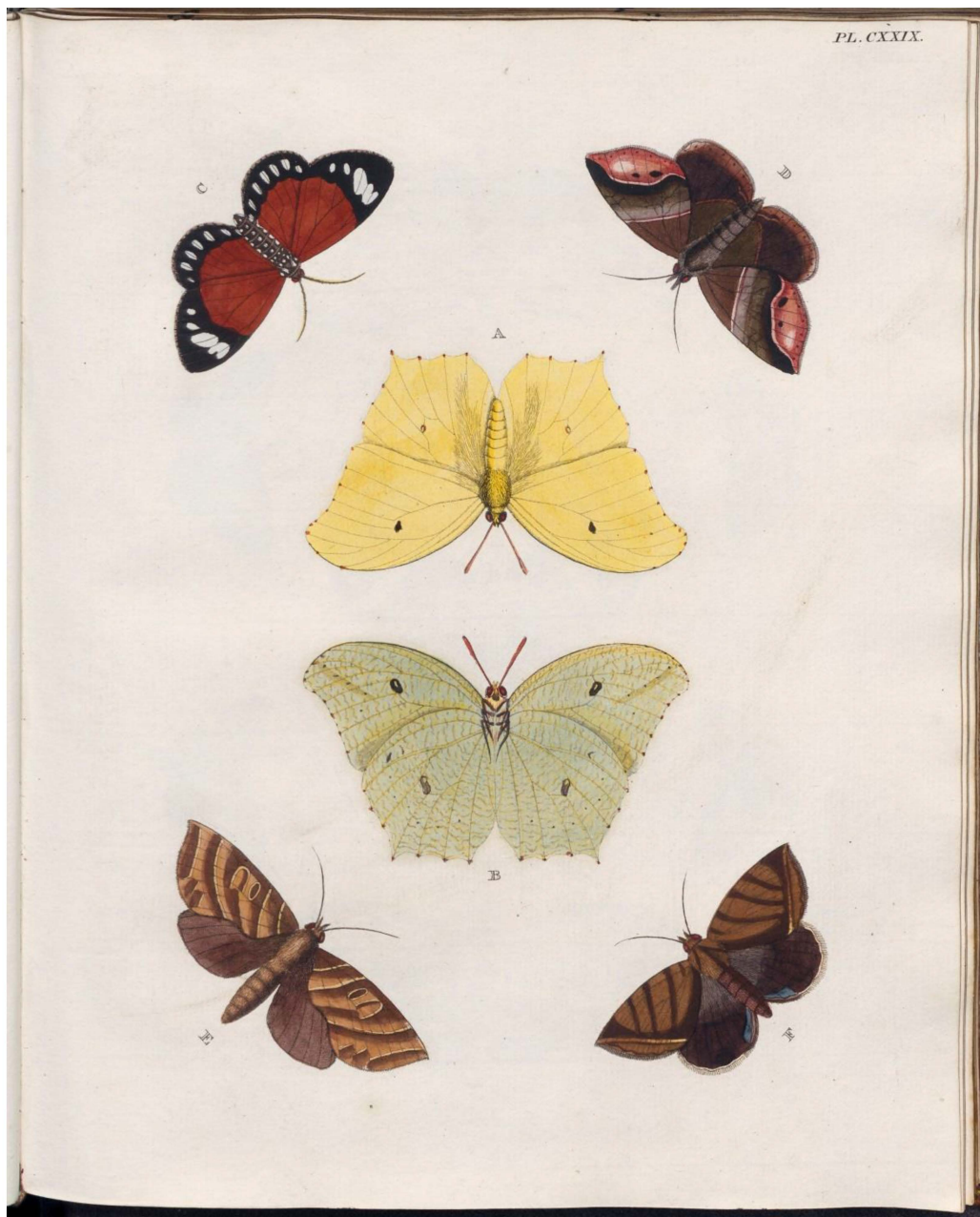
As the title page shows, the copy of the De Salas' *Satyricon* in Leiden's Special Collections belonged to the German classicist Johann Friedrich Gronovius, who became Professor of Greek at Leiden University in 1658 and the sixth librarian at the university in 1665. Gronovius edited many Greek and Latin texts and it is no

surprise that the margins of his copy of *Satyricon* are filled with notes on factual and philological points.



T. Petronius Arbiter, *Satyricon*. S.l. 1629. [760 D 7]

Christiaan Hagen, Portrait of J.F. Gronovius, professor at Leiden University. [Academisch Historisch Museum, BN 578]

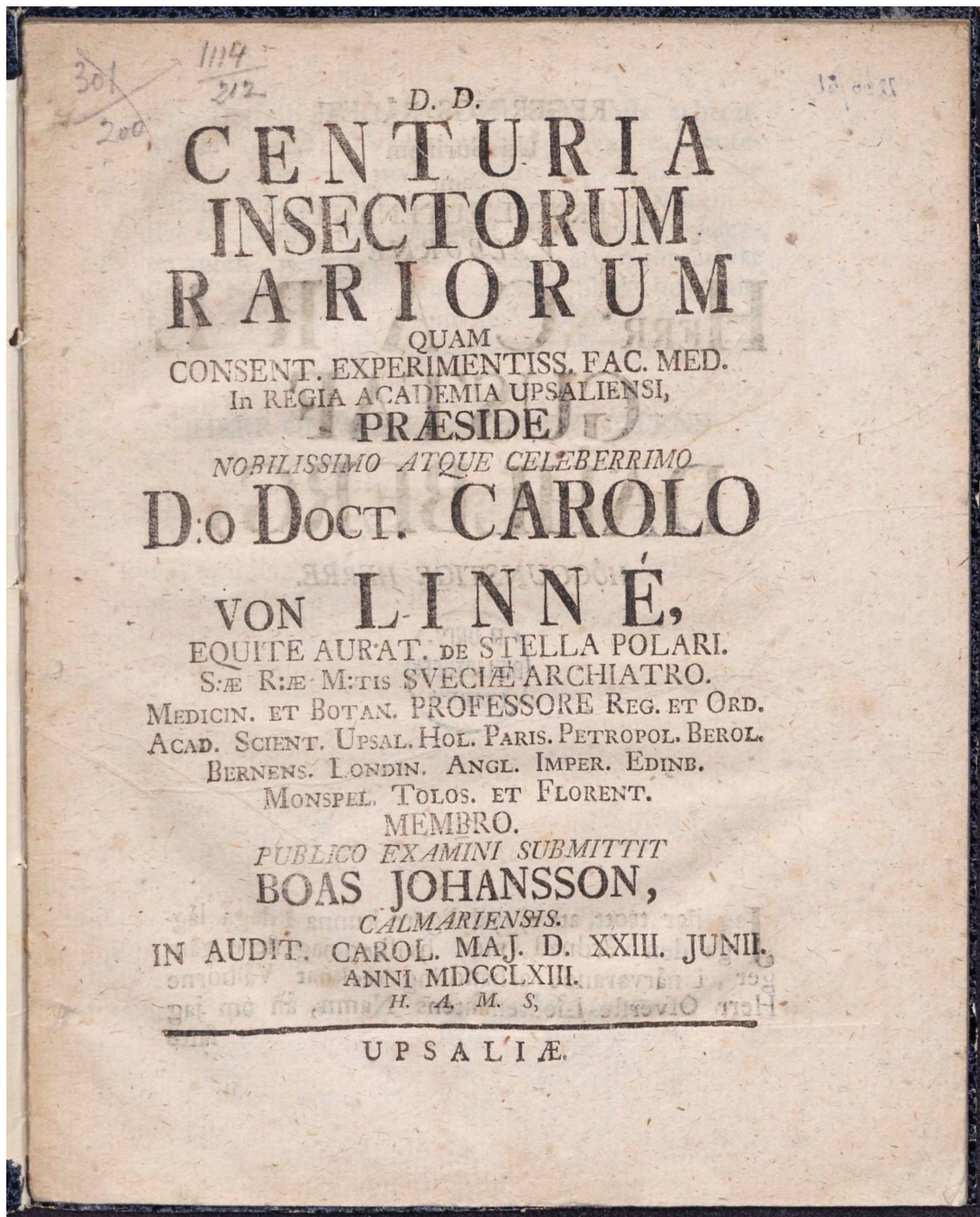


5.2 | A forged butterfly, a new species — It is uncertain whether his objective was fame or amusement, but when the English butterfly collector William Charlton painted black dots on the wings of a Common Brimstone (*Gonepteryx rhamni*) in 1702, he could hardly have known that some sixty years later this small butterfly would fool Carl Linnaeus, the greatest naturalist of the time. This scientific hoax began its life in earnest when Linnaeus, who had examined the preserved specimen himself, first published it as an apparent new species, the *Papilio eclipsis*, in his *Centuria insectorum rariorum* (1763). The butterfly made its way into subsequent editions of Linnaeus' seminal *Systema Naturæ* and, as

beautifully illustrated here in Cramer and Stoll's 1779 *De Uitlandsche Kappellen*, into the scientific community at large.

Pieter Cramer, *De uitlandsche kapellen voorkomende in de drie waereld-deelen Asia, Africa en America*. Amsterdam, Utrecht 1779-1782. [536 C 21-24: 23]

Boas Johansson, Carolus Linnaeus, *Centuria insectorum rariorum*. Upsala 1763. [2301 E 8]



nulle ad marginem tenuiorem. Postica macula alba magna versus basin; at omnes subtus albæ venis nigris. Thorax albo punctatus.

65. PAPILIO *Earydice* D. alis fuscis; subtus primoribus ocellis quatuor, posticis sex.

Habitat in Philadelphia. De Geer.

Similis *Pap. Hyperante*. Alæ integerrimæ, supra fuscæ; posticæ obsolete ocellatæ. Primores subtus ad marginem posteriorem ocellis quatuor nigris papilla alba. Posticæ ocellis quinque intra marginem posticum & sexto remotiori.

66. PAPILIO *Demophile* D. alis albidis fasciis duabus margineque fuscis; posticis subtus subincarnatis.

Clerk t. 28. f. 4.

Habitat in Indiis.

Statura *Pap. Brassica*. Alæ integræ vel parum repandæ. Superiores supra fasciis duabus albis, utroque apice attenuatis. Subtus pallidiores, fuscæ faciis duabus albo viridentibus, interiore lata. Posticæ supra fuscæ disco albo inæquali. Subtus subincarnatæ angulo antico croceo.

67. PAPILIO *ecclipsis* D. alis integerrimis angulatis flavis; primoribus punctis duobus maculaque nigris, posticis ocello cæruleo.

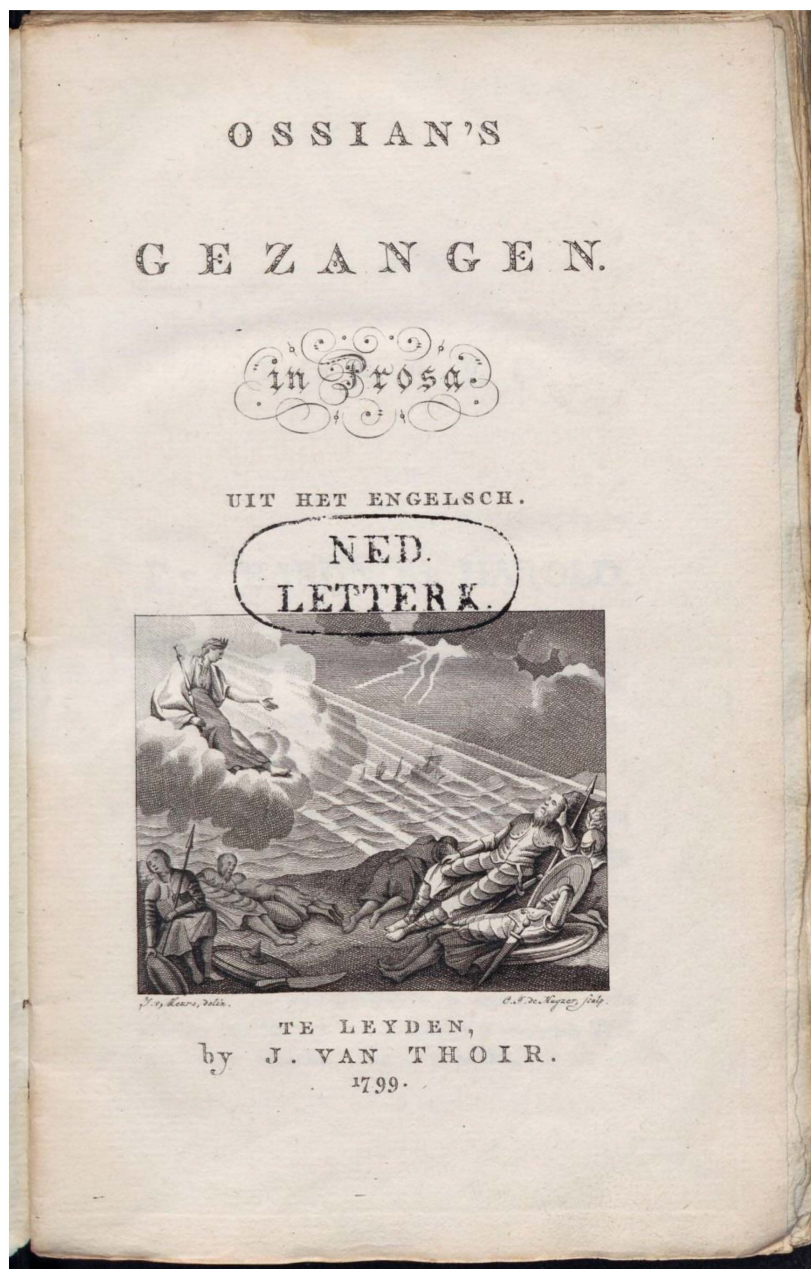
Pet. gaz. 16. t. 10. f. 6. bona.

Habitat in America Septentrionali De Geer.

Facies exactissime *Papil Rhanni*. Sed alæ primores in medio macula oblonga fusca, intra quam 2. puncta nigra. Posticæ puncto nigro & ad marginem anteriorem ocellus cæruleus.

68. PAPILIO *Canace* N. alis angulatis supra cæruleis fascia dilutiori; subtus luteo virideque marmoratis.

Statura *Pap. Atalantæ*. Alæ supra fusco-cæruleæ, dentatæ, angulatæ fascia communi cyanea, sive dilute cærulea; primo-



5.3 | The Ossian mania — Most forgers want their creations to be disseminated as widely as possible and the medium of print offered unprecedented opportunities for this. In terms of dissemination, James Macpherson's Ossianic fabrications were by far the most successful forgery of the early modern period. In spite of the authenticity debate that started almost immediately after its first publication, more editions followed as well as translations into French, German, Danish, Swedish, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Polish, Czech and Hungarian.

Ossian, *Gezangen, in proza*. Leiden 1799. [1210 H 39]



These translations led to even further dissemination: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who had translated part of Macpherson's text into German, incorporated part of it in his *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774). Ossian's poetry also found its way into other the other arts: a host of European artists translated his words into paintings, drawings and prints while the French composer Jean-François Le Sueur based an entire opera, *Ossian, ou Les bardes* (1804) on Macpherson's fabrications.

James MacPherson, *Edmund von Harald, Die Gedichte Ossians, eines alten celtischen Helden und Barden*. Düsseldorf 1775. [MRIJKE 1414 1589]

6. Forgery exposed

Even the best forgeries will be met with skepticism and the works in this exhibition are no exception. Debates about the authenticity of a certain work could go on for decades or even centuries before it was exposed. These controversies would result in the publication of even more books, increasing the infamy – and fame – of the forgery further.

26982

DESCRIPTION
DE L'ILE
FORMOSA
EN ASIE.

*Du Gouvernement, des Loix, des Mœurs &
de la Religion des habitans:*

Dressée sur les Mémoires du Sieur

GEORGE PSALMANAAZAAR,

Natif de cette ILE:

*Avec une ample & exacte Relation de ses Voiages
dans plusieurs endroits de l'Europe, de la persécution
qu'il y a soufferte, de la part des Jesuites d'A-
vignon, & des raisons qui l'ont porté à abjurer le
Paganisme, & à embrasser la Religion Chrétienne
Reformée.*

Par le Sieur N. F. D. B. R.

Enrichie de Cartes & de Figures.



A AMSTERDAM,
Aux Dépens D'ESTIENNE ROGER, Marchand Li-
braire, chez qui l'on trouve un Assortiment géné-
ral de toute sorte de Musique.

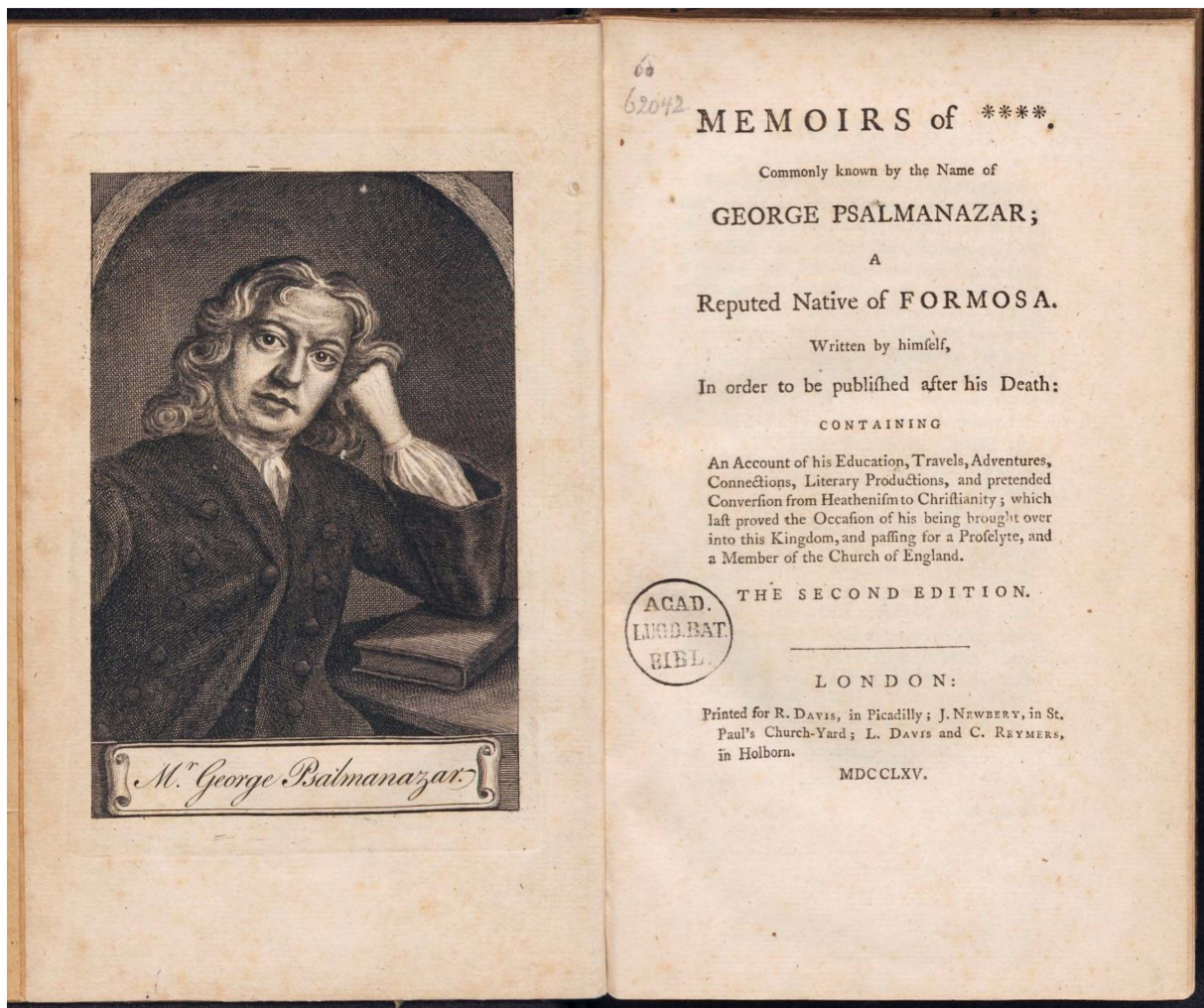
MDCCV.

6.1 | Psalmanazar fights back — George Psalmanazar may have been the toast of London after his arrival in 1703 but his outrageous stories soon attracted the attention (and suspicion) of the Royal Society. In February 1704, Sir Hans Sloane personally abducted Psalmanazar to Gresham College, the Royal Society's headquarters, where he was forced into a debate with the French Jesuit Jean de Fontaney, one of the few people in Europe who had actually been to Formosa. Although Father Fontaney was not able to conclusively disprove Psalmanazar's stories in the debate, the Royal Society had seen enough: George Psalmanazar was an imposter.

Psalmanazar's clash with the Royal Society and his encounter with De Fontaney are described at length in the introduction to the first edition of *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa*, which was published later that year. Including the description in the forgery was a risky move but enabled Psalmanazar to defend himself (mainly by attacking the Jesuit Order and blackening the Royal Society) before the reader would get to the actual text. If anything, including the defense helped to increase Psalmanazar's infamy and turn the book into a bestseller.

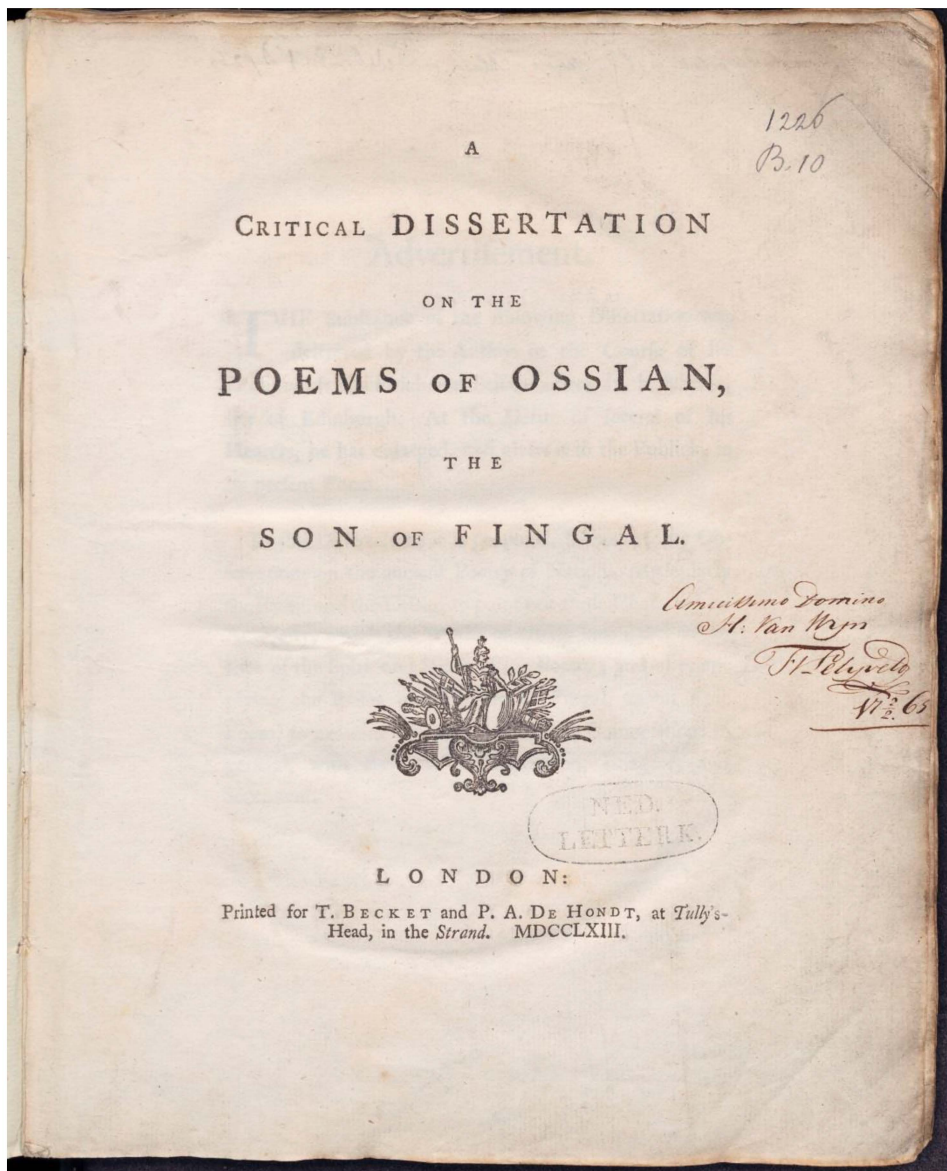
It would not be the last time Psalmanazar was attacked. Isaac d'Amalvi, a Huguenot minister, had met Psalmanazar in Sluis in 1703 and had not been fooled at all by his deceptions. Incensed by *An Historical and Geographical Description* and its account of Psalmanazar's stay in Sluis (which Psalmanazar had included as the backstory of his exotic persona), D'Amalvi published *Eclaircissemens nécessaires* in 1706. This furious but ultimately ineffective attack on Psalmanazar can be found in Leiden's Special Collections, sharing a binding with the French edition of Psalmanazar's forgery.

George Psalmanazar, *Description de l'île Formosa en Asie*. London 1705. [701 F 15]



6.2 | Psalmanazar confesses — George Psalmanazar was never publicly exposed but by 1710 it was clear to all that he was a fraud. Psalmanazar then became a scholar and although he kept his false name, his Formosan persona slipped quietly into the background. However, a year after his death in 1763, Psalmanazar once more caused a literary sensation with the publication of his memoirs. The book, which became an immediate bestseller, finally gave its readers an admission and full account of his deceptions. Leiden's Special Collections hold a beautifully preserved copy of this book, which has been a major source for forgery scholars as well as historians of Orientalism.

George Psalmanazar, *Memoirs of ****: commonly known by the name of George Psalmanazar; a reputed native of Formosa*. London 1765. [717 E 28]



6.3 | Professorial authority — The Scottish literary scholar Hugh Blair was a key figure in the Ossian case. He was presented with Macpherson's fabrications at a very early stage and, fully convinced of their authenticity, he was one of the driving forces behind their publication. He remained the work's biggest champion after the attacks on Macpherson began and in 1763 published a major defense: *A critical dissertation on the poems of Ossian, the son of Fingal*. From 1765, Blair's entirely uncritical essay was included in every English edition of Ossian to lend the work authority (Blair was now a full professor at Edinburgh University) and credibility.

Hugh Blair, *A critical dissertation on the poems of Ossian, the son of Fingal*. London 1763. [1226 B 10]

society. The first and earliest is the life of hunters; pasturage succeeds to this, as the ideas of property begin to take root; next, agriculture; and lastly, commerce. Throughout Ossian's poems, we plainly find ourselves in the first of these periods of society; during which, hunting was the chief employment of men, and the principal method of their procuring subsistence. Pasturage was not indeed wholly unknown; for we hear of dividing the herd in the case of a divorce*; but the allusions to herds and to cattle are not many; and of agriculture, we find no traces. No cities appear to have been built in the territories of Fingal. No art is mentioned except that of working in iron. Every thing presents to us the most simple and unimproved manners. At their feasts, the heroes prepared their own repast; they sat round the light of the burning oak; the wind lifted their locks, and whistled through their open halls. Whatever was beyond the necessaries of life was known to them only as the spoil of the Roman province; "the gold of the stranger; the lights of the stranger; the steeds of the stranger, the children of the rein †."

This representation of Ossian's times, must strike us the more, as genuine and authentick, when it is compared with a poem of later date, which Mr. Macpherson has preserved in one of his notes. It is that wherein five bards are represented as passing the evening in the house of a chief, and each of them separately giving his description of the night ‡. The night scenery is beautiful; and the author has plainly imitated the style and manner of Ossian: But he has allowed some images to appear which betray a later period of society. For we meet with windows clapping, the herds of goats and cows seeking shelter, the shepherd wandering, corn on the plain, and the wakeful hind rebuilding the stocks of corn which had been overturned by the tempest. Whereas in Ossian's works, from beginning to end, all is consistent; no modern allusion drops from him; but every where, the same face of rude nature appears; a country wholly uncultivated, thinly inhabited, and recently peopled. The

* P. 31.

† The chariot of Cuchullin has been thought by some to be represented as more magnificent than is consistent with the poverty of that age; in Book I. of Fingal. But this chariot is plainly only a horse-

litter; and the gems mentioned in the description, are no other than the shining stones or pebbles, known to be frequently found along the western coast of Scotland.

‡ P. 253.

D

grafs

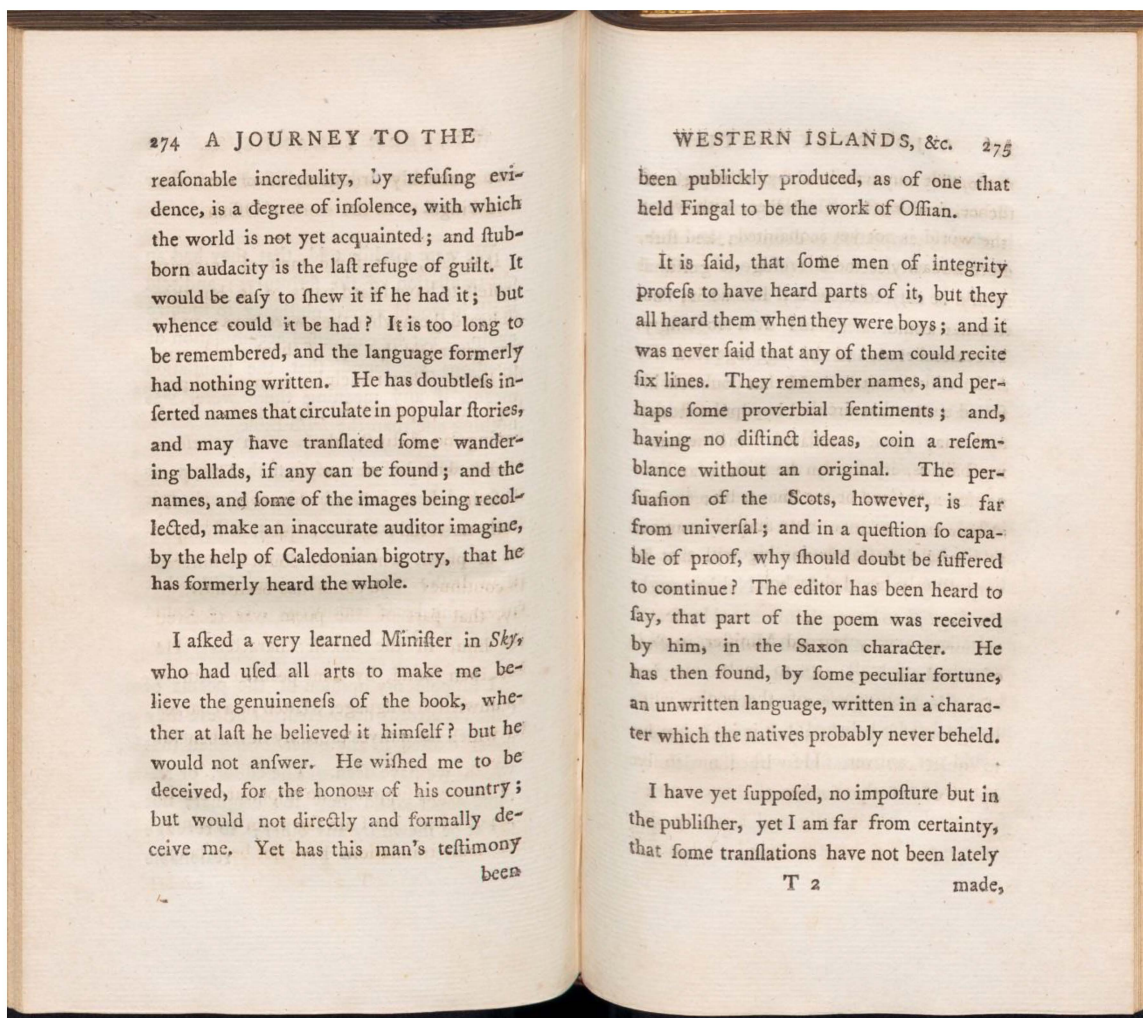
Hugh Blair, *A critical dissertation on the poems of Ossian, the son of Fingal.*

London 1763. [1226 B 10]

Though unacquainted with the original language, there is no one but must judge the translation to deserve the highest praise, on account of its beauty and elegance. Of its faithfulness and accuracy, I have been assured by persons skilled in the Gaelic tongue, who from their youth, were acquainted with many of these poems of Ossian. To transfuse such spirited and fervid ideas from one language into another; to translate literally, and yet with such a glow of poetry; to keep alive so much passion, and support so much dignity throughout, is one of the most difficult works of genius, and proves the translator to have been animated with no small portion of Ossian's spirit.

The measured prose which he has employed, possesses considerable advantages above any sort of versification he could have chosen. Whilst it pleases and fills the ear with a variety of harmonious cadences, being, at the same time, freer from constraint in the choice and arrangement of words, it allows the spirit of the original to be exhibited with more justness, force, and simplicity. Elegant however, and masterly as Mr. Macpherson's translation is, we must never forget, whilst we read it, that we are putting the merit of the original to a severe test. For, we are examining a poet, stripped of his native dress; divested of the harmony of his own numbers. We know how much grace and energy the works of the Greek and Latin poets receive from the charm of versification in their original languages. If then, destitute of this advantage, exhibited in a literal version, Ossian still has power to please as a poet; and not to please only, but often to command, to transport, to melt the heart; we may very safely infer, that his productions are the offspring of true and uncommon genius; and we may boldly assign him a place among those, whose works are to last for ages.

THE
FIRST
PART
OF
THE
POEMS
OF
OSSIAN
IN
SIX
BOOKS.

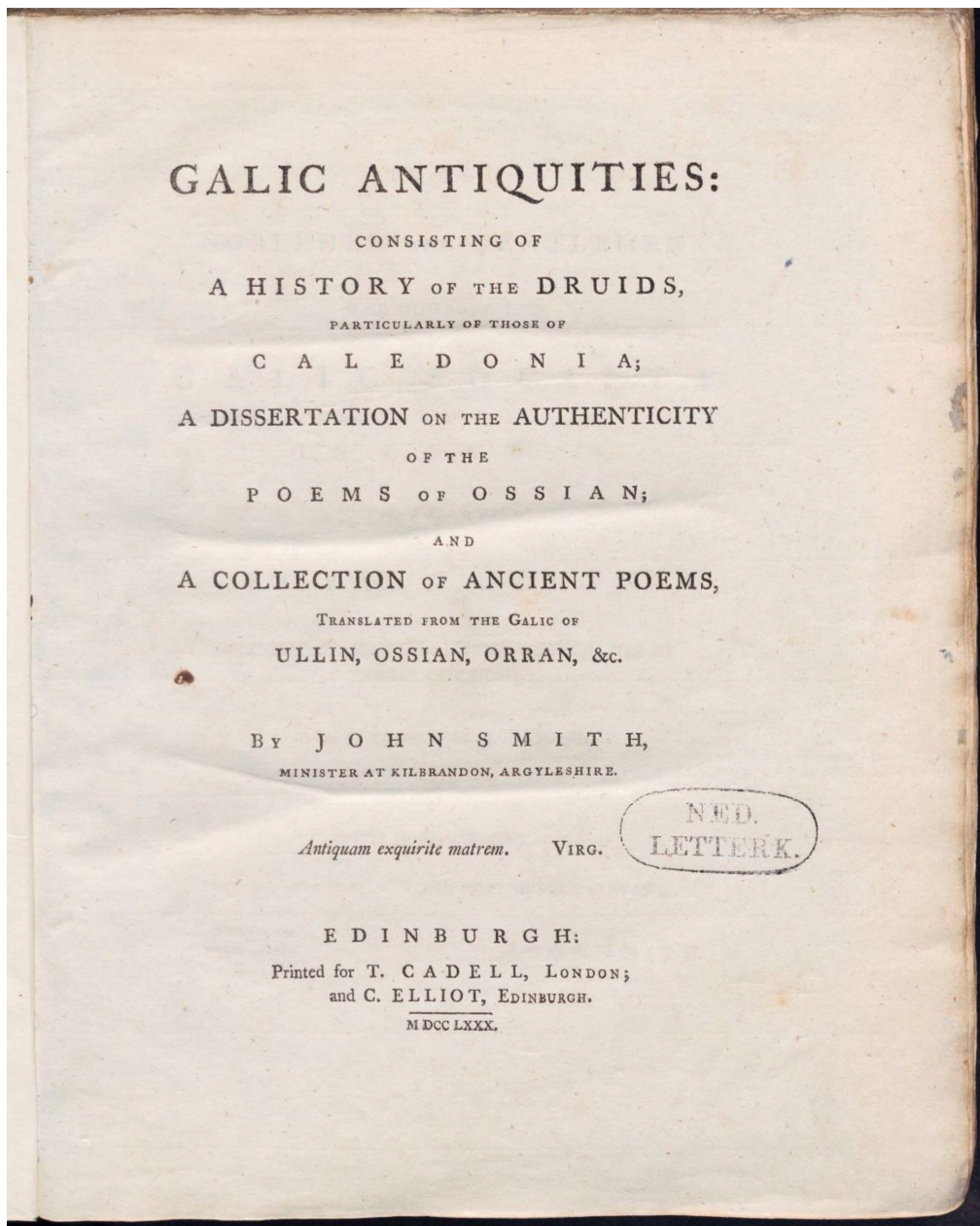


6.4 | Dr. Johnson — Blair's professorial authority was crucial to the survival of the Ossian forgeries as Macpherson had met with a most formidable opponent. Dr. Samuel Johnson, lexicographer supreme and England's most famous man of letters, had been critical of the Ossian poems from the very start, doubting their authenticity as well as their literary value. When Blair and Johnson met in London in 1763, Blair asked him whether he thought that any man of a modern age could have written such poems. Johnson responded: 'Yes Sir, many men, many women, and many children.'

As Ossian's poetry conquered the Continent, Johnson's criticism intensified and his work is littered with stabs at Ossian and Macpherson – such as this remark in *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* from 1775.

Samuel Johnson, *A journey to the Western islands of Scotland*. London 1775.

[180 D 3]



6.5 | Forgery begets forgery — In the course of the 18th and 19th centuries many more books and pamphlets were published to defend and attack the authenticity of Macpherson's forged poetry. This one, by the Scottish minister Rev. John Smith, is particularly curious. In addition to a long defense of Ossian and his poetry, it presents a number of other 3rd-century Gaelic poems. It is now commonly thought that Smith forged these himself in order to prove the authenticity of Ossian's poetry, which he genuinely seems to have believed in.

John Smith, *Galic antiquities [...] A dissertation on the authenticity of the poems of Ossian*. Edinburgh 1780. [1225 B 26]

7. Aftermath

The moment of exposure is usually followed by a brief period of uproar, and this was no different in the early modern period. The revelation that a well-known work was in fact a forgery would be eagerly discussed in newspapers and the forgers and their victims would be mocked, with a mixture of anger and Schadenfreude, in satirical cartoons. After the uproar had died down most forgeries quietly slipped into obscurity. They were removed from the discourses they were once part of and would be remembered as mere curiosities. However, some forgeries did have a lasting impact on the world and the medium of the printed book played a major part in this too.

IOSEPHI SCALIGERI

IVL. CAESARIS F.

OPVS NOVVM

DE

EMENDATIONE TEMPORVM

IN OCTO LIBROS

TRIBVTVM.

Stoici.

Χρόνος ἔστιν ἐπαρόρθωσις καὶ ἀμύσησι καὶ τήρησι. p. 1. b.

Tatianus.

*Παρ' οἷς ἀσυνάρτητος ἔστιν ἡ τῶν χρόνων ἀναγραφὴ καὶ ἔστι
τοῖσι καὶ τῆς ἰστορίας ἀληθείης δυνάμει.
vid. pag. 2.*

*Ex libris Nicolai
Mabillonii 1587.*



Romae

A. Jacobi
Apud Sebastianum Niuellium, sub Ciconijs via Iacobæa.

M. D. LXXXIII.

CVM PRIVILEGIO.

7.1 | Forgery and scholarship: Joseph Scaliger — Forgery held a crucial place in early modern scholarship. In order to create chronologies, histories, canons and church doctrines, scholars developed all kinds of methods to separate authentic texts from fakes. Philologists, historians and theologians employed critical ways of reading in which they for instance looked at linguistic anachronisms, historical errors and markers of a certain style. Thanks to the medium of print, their work was disseminated which enabled them to learn from each other's conclusions and methods.

Joseph Scaliger, the famous Leiden philologist, was a great forgery hunter and the critical reading strategies he developed to find them still influence the way in which scholars read texts today. In his best-known work, *Opus novum de emendatione temporum* (1583), Scaliger compares and corrects the chronologies of various ancient authors and confronts several fakes in the process, including the late 15th-century master forger Annius of Viterbo.

Iosephus Scaliger, *Opvs novvm de emendatione temporvm in octo libros tribvtvm*. Lvtetiae 1583. [759 A 50]



513
 518

Aut signa.
 30 gros.

Ex Bibliotheca Viri Illust. Isaaci Vossii. 46

7.2 | Isaac Casaubon & Hermes Trismegistus — When the great Huguenot philologist Isaac Casaubon moved to England in 1610, at the express request of King James I, his focus shifted to theology. His royal patronage enabled Casaubon to fulfil one of his greatest ambitions: to refute the Catholic propaganda of Cardinal Baronio's *Annales ecclesiastici* (1588 - 1607). The result of this was Casaubon's masterpiece *De rebus*, in which he attacks Baronio by exposing inaccuracies in the sources of Baronio's history of Christianity and the Catholic Church. These sources included the *Corpus Hermeticum* and in a meticulous philological dissection Casaubon proves that Hermes Trismegistus and his work were fabrications. This particularly beautiful copy of *De rebus* belonged to Isaac Vossius and the many notes in his hand show how the book enabled him, long after Casaubon's death, to learn from his methods.

Isaac Casaubon, *De rebvs sacris et ecclesiastices exercitationes XVI*. Frankfurt 1615. [513 D 18]

A
DISSERTATION
Upon the EPISTLES of
PHALARIS.
WITH
An ANSWER
TO THE
OBJECTIONS
Of the HONOURABLE
Charles Boyle, Esquire.

BY
RICHARD BENTLEY, D. D.
Chaplain in Ordinary and Library-keeper
to His MAJESTY.

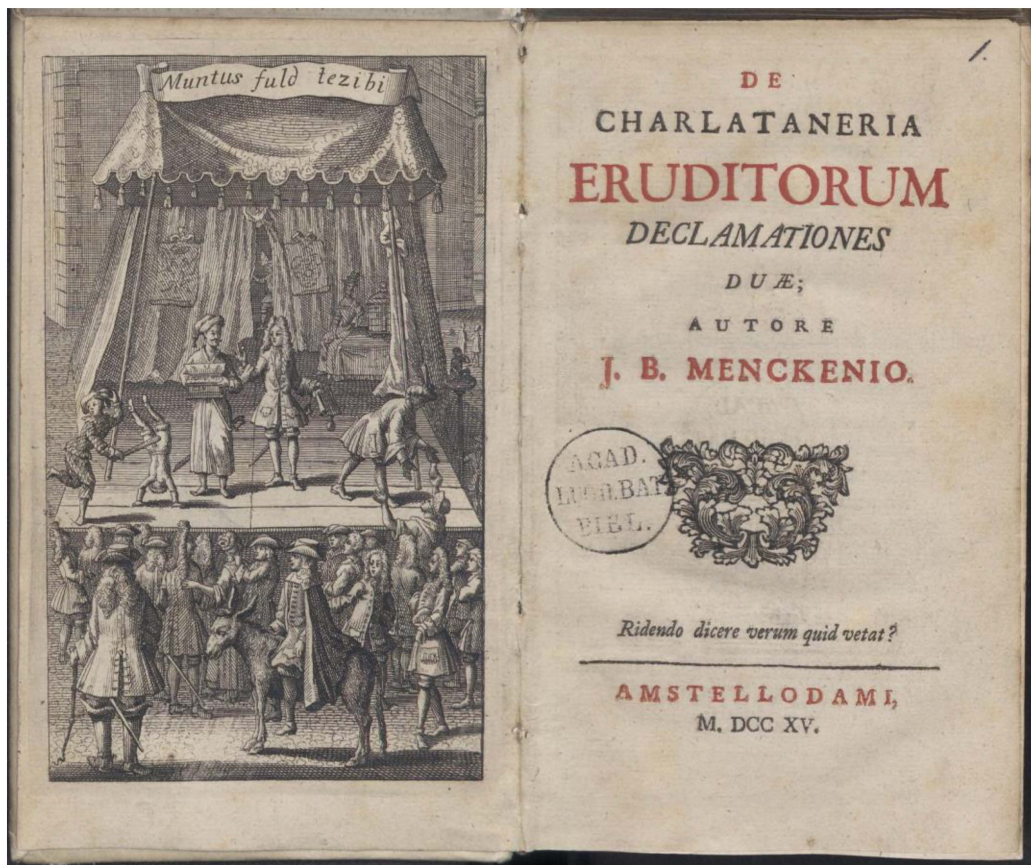
LONDON,
Printed by J. H. for Henry Mortlock at the Phoenix
in St. Paul's Church-Yard, and John Hartley
over-against Gray's Inn in Holborn, 1699.

ACADEMIA

Ex Bibliotheca RUHNKENIANA.

7.3 | Richard Bentley & Phalaris — In the early Middle Ages a set of 148 letters emerged that had allegedly been written by Phalaris, the tyrant of Agrigentum. *The Epistles of Phalaris* became particularly popular in the early modern period and although writers like Erasmus and Politian warned that the authorship of Phalaris was highly doubtful, the letters were generally praised for revealing the man behind the horrible myth created by Classical authors. In 1690, Sir William Temple praised the letters in his *Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning* as one of history's greatest achievements in prose. Temple's book was intended to explain the French Quarrel to England and the author was clearly on the side of the Ancients, arguing that modern authors had added very little to the knowledge inherited from ancient authors. Temple's arguments quickly ignited an English Quarrel, which reached its highest point in 1697 when classicist Richard Bentley, one of the Modern champions, used modern philological strategies to prove that *The Epistles of Phalaris* were a forgery. Bentley's exposure was read and discussed all over Europe and remains one of philology's major landmarks.

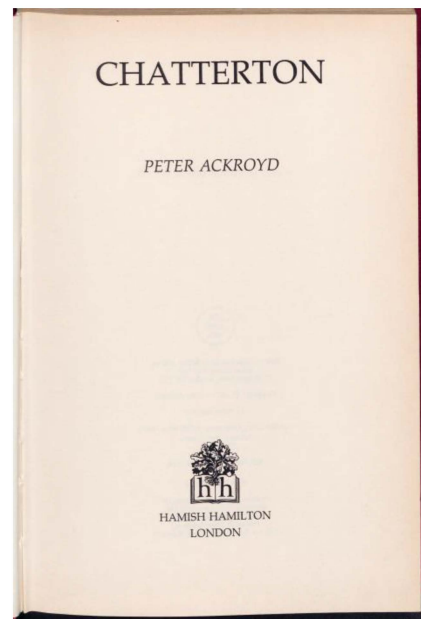
Richard Bentley, *A dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris*. London 1699. [681 C 15]



7.4 | De charlataneria eruditorum — However, many scholars continued to be seduced by forgeries and some, as this exhibition shows, even turned to forgery themselves. In 1715, the Leipzig scholar Johann Burckhardt Mencke published two of his lectures on deception in scholarship under the title *De charlataneria eruditorum*. The book is an exceptionally juicy who-did-what of early modern academia and covers a range of deceptions, from Athanasius Kircher's forged Coptic translations to Joseph Scaliger's forged family history. The book was quickly translated into several languages and would remain hugely popular throughout the 18th century.

J.B. Menckenius, *De charlataneria eruditorum declamationes duæ*. Amsterdam 1715. [712 G 18: 1]

7.5 | Forgery and literature — The relationship between literary fiction and printed lies was extremely complex in the early modern period. Although they shared many characteristics, it was very rare for forgeries to be accepted as



literature after they were exposed. Even literary texts that had been praised for their merits, like Nodot's forged *Satyricon* fragments, were hastily removed from the canon after their true authorship had been revealed. There was however one major exception to this rule: Thomas Chatterton. In the early 19th century, Chatterton's medieval forgeries and his short, tragic life attracted the attention of the Romantic poets. In 1803, Robert Southey edited a new edition of Chatterton's work, in which his poetry was no longer presented as forgery but an early expression of the Romantic imagination.

This very quickly turned Chatterton into a Romantic hero: in *Resolution and Independence* (1807) William Wordsworth called Chatterton 'The marvellous boy, the sleepless soul that perished in his pride' and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley all wrote poetry about him. This Romantic worship has earned Chatterton a firm place in the literary canon and he continues to make appearances in fiction today, for instance in Frans Kellendonk's short story *Death and Life of Thomas Chatterton* (1983) and Peter Ackroyd's acclaimed novel *Chatterton* (1987).

Frans Kellendonk, *De verhalen*. Amsterdam 2007. [1762 C 20]

Peter Ackroyd, *Chatterton*. London 1987. [3551 B 19]

8. *The Seduction Continues...*

The fate of the exposed forgery tends to be sad. Apart from extraordinary cases like Thomas Chatterton and forgeries that played, like the *Epistles of Phalaris*, a major part in the development of modern scholarship, they quietly slip into obscurity.

However, these exposed forgeries are of great interest to modern scholars and especially after the publication of Anthony Grafton's seminal book *Forgers and Critics* (1990), forgery studies have developed into a discipline of their own. The reception of forgeries like Petri's Frisian past, Inghirami's Etruscan fragments and Macpherson's Ossianic poetry can provide political scholars with crucial information on the dynamics of early modern nation building and George Psalmanazar for instance has become a popular subject among historians of the development of Orientalism. Literary historians like Jack Lynch and Kate Loveman have studied the relationship between forgery and fiction in the early modern period and book historians have discovered how much information exposed forgeries hold about the development of the printed book.

The aim of this small exhibition was to provide a first introduction to the game of cat and mouse between forged books, crooks and readers in the 17th and 18th century and how the medium of print affected all three players. The Special Collections at the Leiden University Libraries include many more early modern forgeries, ready to be explored. These 'lyes in print' books may have once, to paraphrase Daniel Defoe one last time, imposed on the whole world but they continue to seduce readers, even today.

9. Further reading

This exhibition owes much to Anthony Grafton's *Forgers and Critics*, which remains the best and most accessible (not to mention wittiest) introduction to forgery, printed or otherwise, as well as a number of other studies of specific cases or the general dynamics of early modern forgery. The following are recommended for further reading:

Foley, Frederic J., *The Great Formosan Impostor*. Taipei 1968.

Grafton, Anthony, *Forgers and Critics. Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship*. Princeton 1990.

Haugen, Kristine Louise, Richard Bentley: *Poetry and Enlightenment*. Cambridge, Mass. 2011.

Houdt, Toon van (ed), *On the Edge of Truth and Honesty: Principles and Strategies of Fraud and Deceit in the Early Modern Period*. Leiden 2002.

Keevak, Michael, *The Pretended Asian. George Psalmanazar's Eighteenth-Century Formosan Hoax*. Detroit 2004.

Loveman, Kate, *Reading Fictions, 1660 – 1740. Deception in English Literary and Political Culture*. Aldershot 2008.

Lynch, Jack, *Deception and Detection in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Aldershot 2008.

Rowland, Ingrid, *The Scarith of Scornello. A Tale of Renaissance Forgery*. Chicago 2004.

Trevor-Roper, Hugh, *The Invention of Scotland. Myth and History*. New York etc. 2008.

FORGERS
AND
CRITICS

*Creativity and Duplicity in
Western Scholarship*

ANTHONY GRAFTON

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

Colophon

'Books, Crooks and Readers. The Seduction of Forgery, 1600-1800' was published as an online exhibition (.xml) in the image database of Leiden University Libraries in 2014.

In 2018 the texts and images have been converted from the XML structure and (after some minor adjustments) saved as a PDF document in the new image database.

The original online exhibition is not available anymore.

André Bouwman

Universitaire Bibliotheken Leiden

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