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Stephens, Walter, and Earle A. Havens, eds., assisted by Janet E. Gomez. Literary Forgery in Early Modern Europe, 1450–1800

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Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533): Faith, Antiquity, and the Witch Hunt

Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533) : Foi, Antiquité et chasse aux sorcières

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theatres, indicates an important aspect of continuity with the “medieval religious world of festival” (318).

Performance and Religion in Early Modern England is a wide-ranging monograph that provides a valuable window into the performance culture of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. By mapping the mutual interactions and influences of so many different dramatic forms, and by demonstrating their connections with the religious life of the period, Smith helpfully debunks the notion that public theatre was a largely autonomous, secular, and proto-modern artistic mode. As a work of scholarship that aims primarily to identify affinities and chart continuities, the book is stronger on similarities than it is on differences, and its conclusions can seem to elide some important distinctions between genres and periods. Nonetheless, this monograph makes important contributions to our understanding of English performance culture, the relationship between early modern religion and theatre, and the broader history of secularization.

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Stephens, Walter, and Earle A. Havens, eds., assisted by Janet E. Gomez.

Literary Forgery in Early Modern Europe, 1450–1800.

Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018. Pp. ix, 285 + 9 ill. ISBN 978-1-4214-26877-7 (hardcover) US\$54.95.

This collection that Walter Stephens and Earle A. Havens have edited with the assistance of Janet E. Gomez examines the connection between forgery and scholarship and also treats forgery as a form of literary production in Europe from 1450 to 1800. Stephens and Havens consciously take up what Anthony Grafton discussed in *Forgers and Critics* (1990), that is, creativity and duplicity in the scholarship of the West. As Stephens and Havens explain, a collection, the Bibliotheca Fictiva, acquired by the Johns Hopkins University in 2011, prompted this volume: “This remarkable gathering of learned lies, formidable fakes, and resourceful forgeries was carefully assembled over nearly half a century, and the many fresh discoveries and refinements to the historical record proposed in the present volume will surely enhance the collection’s permanent

utility to the academy” (1). The importance of the library of fictions is that literary forgeries have been around since at least ancient Egypt and seem to be closely connected to writing itself (2). Such forgeries took off between 1400 and 1800 when, as Stephens and Havens remind us, attitudes to history and scholarship in connection with society evolved (3). Authenticity and forgery became preoccupations (4).

Sometimes texts taken to be authentic turn out to be forgeries. For instance, Marsilio Ficino’s translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum* from Greek to Latin, which was printed in 1471, was a forgery and not translations of holy books from Egypt (4). It and like forgeries were supposed to adumbrate Christianity and its doctrines; no matter how much in 1614 Isaac Casaubon demonstrated *Corpus* to be a fake, it was still popular (4). Another example, as Stephens and Havens note, was the collection of eleven supposedly ancient texts that Anniius of Viterbo published in 1498 (4). Stephens and Havens see their collection as showing the problems that literary falsification raises in early modern Europe and that flow from the *Bibliotheca Fictiva* and its holdings in archeology, classics, theology, history, and literature (5).

An overview of the volume gives a sense of this contribution. Arthur Freeman begins by reflecting on the patient book-collecting that went into the *Bibliotheca Fictiva*. Havens discusses the theory and practice of literary forgery in the Renaissance, as represented in this library, and the role of authorial claims and scholarly judgments (6). E. R. Truitt examines forgeries before and after the Renaissance—for instance, two eyewitness accounts of the Trojan War—and demonstrates how Guido delle Colonne added his own fictitious accretions while saying he was correcting the same in Benoît de Sainte-Maure’s *Roman de Troie* (ca. 1155–60) (7). Frederic Clark explores the case of Aethicus Ister, supposedly an ancient Sophist and author of a forgery, *Cosmographia*, which fooled both Conrad Gesner and John Dee (7). James K. Coleman analyzes Laudivio Zacchia’s forged letters that he claimed—in presenting them to Sultan Mehmed II, the conqueror of Constantinople in 1453—were translations of epistles from Levantine languages (7–8). Shana D. O’Connell examines the only genuine text—an elegy by Propertius—among the eleven forgeries in Anniius’s *Antiquities* (8–9). Anthony Grafton explores Anniius’s use of the work of earlier biblical scholars, commentators, and interpreters in his forgeries (9). For Walter Stephens, the work of Gaspar Barreiros (d. 1574) to debunk Anniius’s texts and commentaries is vital to the question of forgeries (9). Richard Cooper discusses

Annius in the context of French antiquarians of the Renaissance (9–10). Ingrid D. Rowland, who has also written on Annius and Curzio Inghirami, discusses Melchior Inchofer, a Jesuit, who debunked the forged productions of Inghirami and then himself became a forger of the “Letter of the Virgin Mary to the People of Messina,” and forged a long defence of it (10). An archeological hoax concerns A. Katie Harris; her analysis uncovers books and relics in Spain from the 1580s and 1590s that were supposed to reach back—one as far back as Saint James. These hoaxes involve the appearance of rigour, testimony, and interrogation (11). Among various topics, Kate E. Tunstall examines myths, pseudonymity, authorship, and Adrien Baillet’s *Auteurs déguisez* (1691) (11–12). Jack Lynch looks at William Henry Ireland, forger of Shakespeare, and a play about the Vortigern story in the historical context (12). The production and reception of forgeries as part of literary production and reception are at the heart of this edited collection. Forgery and literary art are different parts of imagination and are both fictions (see 12–14).

Along the way, contributors stress the intricacies and ironies at the heart of the library and the book it inspired. Freeman speaks about “the extended and tortuous history of literary forgery” (15). Havens refers to “Babelic confusion” and to forgers who go for “fabulous inventions” and “ancient textual authorities” (33). For Clark, “books continually accommodated themselves to the vicissitudes of time” (93). Talking about the tensions between authority and credulity in medieval histories of Troy, Truitt sees the marvel as “the fulcrum between fiction and truth” (112). Examining invented letters as forged relations between East and West, Coleman sees Zacchia’s *Epistolae Magni Turci* as “a false reflection of the East” and “a true expression of humanist preoccupations in the West” (132). O’Connell argues that Giovanni Nanni (Annius) forged an Etruscan God onto Noah and sees the welcoming reception and imitation of Annius at the time as “a cautionary tale to latter-day scholars” (144). Looking at Annius as a student of the Jews, Grafton says that he “was as brilliant and prescient as he was malevolent” (165). Stephens seeks to demonstrate how important Barreiros is “to the history of forgery criticism” and examines his motivations, including being an ancient in the battle with the moderns (170, see 184). Cooper shows the tension between Rome and Gaul in Renaissance France in terms of ruins, tyranny, and barbarism (209). Harris traces material and textual forgery in the lead books of Granada and hopes the consideration of the material will include “the intimate relation between forged object and

invented text” (223). Furthermore, Rowland tells us that Inchofer, Jesuit and forger, was “discreetly assassinated” in the autumn of 1648 in Milan (236). “Author and text are one” in the *Testament*, as Tunstall says, in a work supposed to be by Cardinal Richelieu (251). Lynch says Ireland’s forged play “weakened British identity” when “it needed to be shored up” (269).

Literary Forgery shows many of the complexities in text and context in Renaissance Europe and deserves close attention in the field and beyond.

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Vigliano, Tristan.

Parler aux musulmans. Quatre intellectuels face à l’Islam à l’orée de la Renaissance.

Genève : Droz, 2017. 384 p. ISBN 978-2-600-04757-9 (broché) 43 CFH.

L’ouvrage de Tristan Vigliano relève un défi de taille qui pourrait (et il le précise lui-même) susciter une certaine polémique dans un monde où, bien malheureusement, les lectures anachroniques et parcellaires du passé sont nombreuses. S’il résume son ouvrage en indiquant qu’il n’a cherché qu’à présenter ce qu’avait pu être le dialogue du christianisme avec l’Islam à l’aube de la Renaissance, le lecteur comprendra que l’auteur a su développer une lecture plurielle qui interroge textes et contextes d’une époque souvent négligée par les spécialistes de l’histoire des altérités.

L’on pourrait, dans un premier temps, être déçu de l’approche abondant, les uns à la suite des autres, les parcours et les œuvres des quatre auteurs du corpus : Jean Germain, Pie II (Enea Silvio Piccolomini), Nicolas de Cues et Jean de Ségovie. C’est à la lecture de l’ouvrage que l’on comprend qu’il fallait probablement isoler chacun des intellectuels afin de mieux pouvoir saisir les particularités des intervenants. Le choix des quatre auteurs est d’ailleurs justifié dès l’avant-propos du livre par rapport à deux événements historiques. D’abord le concile de Bâle (qui s’ouvre en 1431) dont la polémique à propos de la supériorité du pape sur le concile conduit à une période d’effervescence qui amène « à réfléchir aux vertus du dialogue en matière religieuse » (18), puis