

Fraud and imposture

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I

RONALD SYME

Fraud and Imposture

FRAUD AND IMPOSTURE

I. INTRODUCTION

The occasion of the present colloquium is felicitous on two counts. It marks the inception of a project that was brought to the notice of the Fondation Hardt about seven years ago, in the design of filling a gap in classical studies : there existed no book on the theme of forgery in Greek and Latin literature. Today we have in our company Dr. Speyer, already a known expert in the field, whose large and handsome volume came out this month ¹. The briefest inspection shows it comprehensive, penetrating, impeccable. Indeed, its excellence might appear to render the colloquium superfluous—or at the least to constitute a challenge of abnormal gravity.

Speyer's book is not confined to classical antiquity. As is proper, it includes the rich treasures of Jewish and Christian productivity. As in rhetoric and erudition, so in invention and fraudulence, each religion in turn exploited the audacities of *Graecia mendax*. And wide perspectives offer. Our investigation will concern definitions and categories, types of fraud and imposture, the various devices that clever rogues have used to simulate the authenticity of a document. For example, the alleged provenience, its accuracy (notably the plausible details, the fabricated names and invented persons). Again, questions of purpose and motive come in all the time, with a further refinement : how far has there been in some instances a serious and sustained effort to deceive.

The colloquium itself is devoted to a severely restricted selection of test cases. Yet it should not be solely or prima-

¹ W. H. SPEYER, *Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum*, Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft I, 2 (C. H. Beck, 1971).

rily directed to segregating the false and the true. The theme brings up for assessment each and all of the scholarly criteria valid for verification.

The following remarks are designed merely to introduce a discussion, the trend and results of which it cannot by the nature of things anticipate. They are general or cursory in character (albeit at the same time condensed) and will allude to a number of themes, aspects and items which are not expected to turn up in this particular colloquium.

II. PARALLELS IN OTHER MEDIA

They are variously instructive for comparison. First of all, fakes in art and archaeology¹. Here, as with a manuscript or a map, material and fabric can be put to the test of an advanced laboratory technique, such as that which recently condemned most of the small pottery idols emanating from Hacilar in Anatolia. That may not be necessary when the anachronism is flagrant. For example, the frieze of turkeys superimposed on the wall of a medieval edifice at Schleswig (the American bird had not yet been imported into Europe). Nor did it require much artistic flair to discredit the effigy of Etruscan Diana that stood for many years in the museum at St. Louis. On the other hand, the spurious Vermeers are admirable; and some unpretentious products of skilled workmanship, like the fragments of archaic Greek sculpture made by Dossena, might have baffled suspicion, had there not emerged precise information about the agents who employed and exploited him. Indeed, the detection of a single fake may lead to the discovery of whole factories serving a profitable market.

¹ Useful specimens will be found in O. KURZ, *Fakes*² (1967).

However, all question of profit apart, these branches of forgery will permit entertaining inferences about human motives—the spur of emulation, the aspirations of an unrecognized artist, the artistic delight in deception for its own sake.

To this rubric bogus inscriptions stand in close relevance. Of some the original text is not available for scrutiny, only a copy, but others, though preserved on stone or metal, can also be treated as literary texts, since they originated as such. Hence a method independent of the purely epigraphic criteria of material and letter forms. They are liable to betray their nature through style and language, through gross errors or clear anachronisms. And once again the incentive may not be far to seek—the expert's passion and the collector's mania, the desire to extend knowledge. And finally, as elsewhere, sheer exhilaration and the spirit of mockery.

III. CRITERIA OF AUTHENTICATION

First of all, doubts may be provoked for external or surface reasons. The general impression may suffice to condemn. That is manifestly the case for Plutarch, *Parallela Minora*, with its rich equipment of spurious erudition. And it is totally implausible that certain documents can ever have existed, such as a letter of M. Aurelius to the Roman Senate testifying to the role of Christian soldiers in the Miracle of the Thundering Legion.

In fact, the genre itself often conveys initial suspicion. The prime instance is letters of sages and statesmen. Richard Bentley showed the way when he exposed the letters of Phalaris; and in the sequel the fatuity of his opponent, a young nobleman called Boyle, served only to reinforce his axioms. Parallel to letters as a favourite branch of prose fiction were the biographies of those whose lives lacked

action or any full and accurate record: that is, poets and philosophers. The suitable line of succession runs towards Lives of Saints and Acta Martyrum (few of the latter genuine or based on genuine documentation).

To compose orations on set themes was normal and indeed necessary practice in the schools of rhetoric. Sometimes the subjects are fictitious and anonymous, but scenes and characters from history had a strong appeal. The alert and scholarly Asconius has a cursory reference to speeches of Catilina and of C. Antonius, ostensibly delivered in the electoral contest of 64 B.C. Barely worth the mention, he says, for they were written by anti-Ciceronians, the *obtrectatores Ciceronis*. The notice is valuable for it demonstrates a motive that was more literary than political. Impersonations of this type were called *prosopopeiae* by Quintilian. He registers the argument we might adduce when *suadentes Caesari regnum*; and Juvenal in fatigue and disdain alludes to the pack of pupils who advise Sulla to give up the dictatorship. An extant specimen of the genre (it may be suggested) is the pair of *suasoriae* that bear the name of Sallust and the title *Epistulae ad Caesarem senem*.

Letters are not sharply to be distinguished from orations. They were used as exercises in style or as *jeux d'esprit*. It may be doubted whether authenticity was asserted (or credited) in the Letter of Hannibal to the Athenians published recently in the Hamburg Papyri. The amiable habit has persisted into the modern time. In Proust some of his *jeunes filles* wonder whether *mon cher Sophocle* is the proper form for Corneille to employ when addressing the Athenian dramatist.

Next to the genre, the provenience. For example, when a piece of writing does not belong to the main tradition of an author's corpus. Again, when what is offered purports to be the translation of a missing original. Nor is any confidence inspired by a manuscript said to have been dis-

covered in a library, a temple or a tomb (the circumstantial details added for plausibility generally help to give the thing away) ¹.

The person who guarantees a document is likewise relevant. Any inscription depending on the sole testimony of a notorious forger like Ligorio is suspect. It is only by a rare chance that it can be redeemed—and that happens through extraneous confirmation.

IV. MOTIVES

As has been indicated, certain types of writing are *prima facie* under a cloud. Similarly, when the purpose behind a fabrication is all too patent: a detailed exposure, however seductive to the curious and the erudite, may not always be essential or even possible.

First of all, a political purpose. To compromise an individual, a party, or a government, recourse has been had in every age to the forging of incriminatory material. One of the earliest instances may well be the letter which Pausanias the Regent sent to Xerxes, conveying an offer to marry his daughter. It is reproduced by Thucydides—and is generally held authentic.

Next and obviously, national or local pride. When seconded by antiquarian zeal, it is betrayed by its excesses. An inscription “discovered” beside the river Rubicon in 1525 stood for long years in the marketplace at Cesena: it reproduced a decree of the Roman Senate forbidding any governor, *sive praeses sive proconsul*, to bring an army into Italy. Other copies were reported. The original, however, was already on literary record, in the commentary on Lucan published in 1471 ².

¹ W. H. SPEYER, *Bücherfunde in der Glaubenswerbung der Antike* (1970).

² For the whole story see the annotation on *CIL* XI *30.

The "Rubicon Decree" may well call to mind the so-called "Themistocles Decree" found at Troezen. The plea for any kind of authenticity is debilitated by the evidence of other patriotic Athenian documents which appear to emanate from literary composition ¹.

Nor has America failed the challenge of curiosity or fame. Two palmary exhibits authenticate explorations before Columbus. First, the runic stone at Kensington in Minnesota, disinterred from the roots of a tree: it was set up (it proclaims) by a party of Norsemen in 1362 ². Second, the Phoenician inscription observed and copied on the coast of Brasil in 1881 (the original is no longer extant): it commemorates the survivors of an expedition despatched by Hiram the King of Tyre, setting out from Eziongebir on the Red Sea ³.

Next, fabrications devised to reinforce the claims of a religion or the antiquity of its doctrines. The Hellenistic Age witnessed a plethora of Jewish *pseudepigrapha*, notably such as were designed to demonstrate that the science and learning of the Greeks was late and derivative. Thus Plato as anticipated by Moses, or Abraham the parent of astronomy.

Further and likewise, the need was soon felt for additional documentation about Christian origins. The correspondence between Christ and Abgarus the ruler of Edessa was extracted from the archives of that city and duly given credit by an ecclesiastical historian (Eusebius). Less pretentious is the anonymous romance that recounts the travels

¹ This estimate of the problem is maintained by C. HABICHT, *Hermes* 89 (1966), 356 ff.

² See now S. E. MORISON, *The European Discovery of America. The Northern Voyages, A. D. 500-1600* (1871), 74 ff.

³ Authenticity is defended by CYRUS GORDON, an eminent expert in Semitic languages, in *Orientalia* 37 (1968), 75 ff.; 425 ff., and also in his book *Before Columbus: Links Between the Old World and Ancient America* (1971).

of Paul and his lady companion Thecla, well furnished with suitable edification and plausible inventions. Tertullian knew who had written it, a presbyter in Asia.

Late Antiquity produced an exchange of letters between Paul and Seneca which, as Jerome says, *a plurimis leguntur*. His comment falls short of an expression of belief in authenticity. Jerome was both a good scholar and a master in the art of fiction, as he discloses by his life of Paul, the proto-hermit: that is, the predecessor of Antony, who found him in the wilderness and superintended his obsequies, a pair of lions excavating the grave. The purpose of the letters seems clear enough, namely to bring into close and amicable relations at an early stage the best of two worlds, the Christian saint and the pagan philosopher. For, as Tertullian had said, *Seneca saepe noster*.

Similarly, philosophical sects had fostered the production of *pseudepigrapha*. The purpose was to defend, expound (or even modify) the doctrines of a school or teacher. The most peculiar specimen is perhaps the *Pythagorea*, originating in southern Italy. The collection appears to contain pieces of different dates.

A final motive was the satisfying of curiosity about the lives and early writings of authors who subsequently acquired the rank of classics. Hence the circulation of *iuvenilia* like the *Culex* which Antiquity without exception believed to be Virgilian; as for Horace, Suetonius reports elegiac verses and a letter to Maecenas.

So far so good. The class of writing, its provenience, its motive: any one of these reasons may be enough to justify suspicion and charge the defence with the *onus probandi*.

V. INTERNAL EVIDENCE

A clear anachronism of fact or language may suffice to condemn, likewise a historical error or grave misconception.

When the composer betrays knowledge of future events, his prescience is not easy to explain away. The Second Letter of Sallust (in the manuscript order) is assigned by most of its recent champions a date shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War, but its author was inadvertent. He writes under the influence of three assumptions: he knows that war will come, Caesar will win, Caesar will increase the size of the Roman Senate.

Next, the criteria of style and language. Imitation of a later writer may be surmised or detected. The *Ciris*, it can be maintained, is not an early work of Virgil for it reveals the use of Ovid as well as Virgil. Moreover, the imitation itself may be weak and defective, the whole workmanship incompetent. That is the case with the *Culex*. Advocates of authenticity must argue that after an unpromising début the poet made rapid and startling advances. Suetonius, it may be noted, pronounced a summary verdict on the Letter to Maecenas of "Horace". His reason was stylistic, namely obscurity, *quo vitio minime tenebatur*.

By contrast and by paradox, a skilful performer incurs the risk of imitating all too closely an author with a distinctive idiosyncrasy. Exaggeration of salient features is a common tendency in parody and pastiche. And there is another trap. An impersonator may be reproducing the general manner of an author whose style has changed and developed. There is an early Plato and a late Plato; and if one were to compose a Tacitean pastiche it would be well to decide whether to imitate, for example, the *Historiae* or to attempt the mature and concentrated manner on show in the first hexad of the *Annales*.

To conclude. It is clearly *la bonne solution, la solution élégante*, if a fraud collapses on internal evidence, a single item dealing the decisive blow. When that is not possible, cumulation or convergence has to be applied, not without labour and hazard, but sometimes furnishing instruction and delight.

VI. COMPLICATIONS AND PERPLEXITIES

When a document is unobjectionable at first sight and cannot be condemned outright for anachronism, inaccuracy, or defects of style, the enquirer runs into trouble. Collections of letters are suspect, but they may include genuine items—which in fact have been the incentive and starting point for supplementation, sometimes by different hands and at long intervals of time. Most of the Platonic epistles betray their true nature at once, not least *Ep.* XIII, with its ingenious equipment of “corroborative details”, such as the robes destined for the daughters of Cebes. They shall be Sicilian linen, it is specified, not the expensive fabrics of Amorgos; and the identity of Cebes is conveyed by an allusion to the *Phaedo* under its alternative title. But *Ep.* VII continues to divide the experts, evoking arguments of wide range and singular subtlety, as is fitting, for this is a piece of superior workmanship, and the problem is of paramount importance not only for Platonic studies but for the history of Sicily.

No other collection offers a comparable appeal. Some letters of Apollonius of Tyana were in the possession of the Emperor Hadrian, so Philostratus avers in his biography of the sage. Which may, or may not, be true. As for the extant collection, *Ep.* LXIII (to the address of Julia Domna) has been admitted by critics almost without exception; and there are curiously local details about Samos, for example, that look convincing (*Epp.* XXXIX f.). None the less, doubt is legitimate.

The Greek epistles of Brutus, which enjoyed some favour, have now been firmly discounted¹. On the other hand, as a warning against excess of scepticism, it is salutary to

¹ J. DEININGER, *RbM* 109 (1966), 356.

observe that strong reasons have recently been adduced for accepting the letters of Demosthenes ¹.

A further problem arises. Astute fabrications blend the false and the true. Though it be pseudepigraphic, a piece of writing may yet be close to the events it describes or transmit information from good sources no longer extant. With what degree of confidence can it therefore be utilised? *Ep.* VII, if not by Plato himself, is an apologia for his actions (it is held), composed by a member of the school familiar with the thoughts and motives of the Master.

Similarly the *Commentariolum Petitionis* attributed to Cicero's brother. To waive the question whether Cicero stood in need of advice from his brother (and that is not perhaps a valid objection), the content of this electioneering manual is far from contemptible. Some who hesitate, or reject the authorship, have nevertheless been tempted to cite the pamphlet as illustrating the practices of political life at Rome.

When the whole genre is suspect, the plausible or the unobjectable conveys no guarantee. Philostratus' romantic biography mentions (as was natural) a number of historical characters, such as Nerva and the Guard Prefect Casperius Aelianus. But his "authority" for sundry transactions, namely Damis, is probably bogus; and it is no easy task to separate facts from fiction. Again, the correspondence between Paul and Seneca is in error about the date of the great fire at Rome; yet some are disposed to accept the total and the categories of buildings then destroyed.

Caution is to be prescribed everywhere. Adepts in historical fiction had at their call a multitude of devices. Notably tricks with personal names. Two contrasted types are in evidence. The rare name suggests authenticity, the common and unobtrusive excites no distrust. A noble lady

¹ J. A. GOLDSTEIN, *The Letters of Demosthenes* (1968).

called "Falconilla" appears in the Acts of Paul and Thecla: the name is unusual, it adheres to the family of Q. Pompeius Falco (consul suffect in 108), which was not unknown in the province of Asia¹. By contrast "Procla" as the procurator's wife in the letter of Pilate to Herod: "Proculus" shows one of the highest frequencies among Roman *cognomina*.

VII. DEFINITIONS

"Forgery" is no doubt a convenient term. Yet it should now be asked how far it is useful or correct. The word exudes an odour of personal guilt and criminal handiwork; the intent is to defraud or at the least to deceive; and notions of legal penalty or redress may not be far distant.

Various questions therefore come up. First, who suffers injury from a "literary forgery", and how can the damage be assessed? When the act is contemporary, no grave problem. Passing one day through the book market at Rome, Galen noticed that spurious tracts were on sale, bearing his name. In this instance, the purchaser would be victimised. Also Galen, but perhaps less so, for the fraud bore witness to his fame. It is another matter when deceased worthies are impersonated, let alone such as never existed.

As concerns names and labels it is a further step when an author, from diffidence or discretion, prefers that his work should circulate anonymous or carry a name not his own. There is a world of difference between faking for profit and using an innocent pseudonym. All in all, "imposture" will often prove a more helpful designation than "forgery".

¹ His granddaughter Sosia Falconilla is attested by Dessau, *ILS* 1105.

Next, not all forgeries were made for profit in money or for the benefit of a party, a cause, a nation. The attempt might be made to draw a distinction, to seclude fabrications and works of propaganda intended to serve religious or political ends (most Jewish forgeries belong to this type).

Finally, a large number of literary impostures in any age have been perpetrated without any serious purpose or hope of deceiving the reader. When for one reason or another an author has chosen to write under an invented name, the deceit may be mild, venial or temporary; he may not be loath to allow the truth to percolate. Most important, a deed of deception may actually be intended to be seen through sooner or later. The contriver of a hoax derives a double delectation from his ingenuity. He fools the reader — and then the reader comes to realize that he has been taken in.

VIII. LIFE AND LETTERS

Investigation into literary imposture leads along many by-paths and throws up a number of entertaining by-products. It also illuminates central territories and the dark regions.

First, the psychology of fraud. Imposture has its roots among motives and impulses that lie beneath the decent masks and hypocrisies of normal existence. They range from vanity and conceit to the desire for secrecy or escape, the appeal of playing a false role, the seductions of deceit and mockery, the delight in mendacity for its own pure sake.

At the same time, and by contrast, the psychology of faith and belief. Many frauds have had a long survival, outlasting the decline of credulity and the advance of critical methods. It would afford a melancholy instruction to classify the attitudes and emotions that refuse to surrender

the patently spurious or the totally implausible. They are sometimes conditioned by education, creed and nationality. In the present age defenders have been found of pre-Columbian inscriptions, or the correspondence between Paul and Seneca.

Second, the sociology of literary production. Without underestimating energy and talent in the individual, it is desirable to insist again and again upon the conditions of time and place and milieu in which the different kinds of writing emerge and flourish. The pathological aspect of the whole subject is literary fraud, precisely. The term itself can hardly be applicable before a mature epoch in social development, when the existence of literature as such has come to be recognized: that is to say, books and authorship and a reading public. The spurious presupposes the genuine. Therefore fable and legend is extraneous to the theme.

The faking of history can serve for guidance, with Ctesias as the primordial exhibit. From the royal Persian archives this person produced a whole dynasty of rulers of Media, beginning with "Arbaces" (whose name is that of a contemporary general). Here the dishonest intention is obvious; and the term "fictional history" is appropriate, since the art and science of authentic history had already been created.

How and where a line might be drawn between fictional history and the historical novel is a question. It crops up almost at once with the work of an emulator. Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* is mostly romance, but the framework and the main characters are historical. It is much to be regretted that no book exists dealing with historical fiction in classical antiquity. The genre (if such it deserves to be called) was deliberately excluded from treatment by B. E. Perry in *The Ancient Romances* (1967). Whether justly, it might well be asked. And it may be added that modern attempts to provide a definition of the historical novel have not been notably successful.

To proceed. When with the process of time literature itself became a subject of study in the Hellenistic age, two contrasted phenomena ensued. First, scholars drew up canons of standard authors, they collated texts and devised criteria of authentication. Second, an educated public called for recreational matter. Hence an incentive to fraud as well as fiction; and, when royal libraries were established, clever men could trade upon the ignorance or cupidity of the custodians.

Furthermore, the widening of the geographical horizon consequent upon the conquests of Alexander encouraged a plethora of spurious ethnography and utopian romance. There were various categories. As elsewhere, a distinction might be drawn between the imaginary voyage and the mendacious travel report. Like the former, the latter might be pseudonymous.

IX. ERUDITION

The fashions in imposture vary from age to age, but there are constant features or repetitive patterns. When models of classic excellence were imitated by teachers and by their pupils, emulation might lead to impersonation; and the expounders of texts were often vain and unscrupulous. Scholars invented facts and names and authorities, bold and cynical, for, as Quintilian observed on this topic, it is not easy to refute that which never existed. The experts who were examined by Tiberius on Capri about "Hecuba's mother or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among the women" were no doubt equal to the challenge. There were five variants for Hecuba's mother; and, according to Hyginus, Achilles on Scyros bore the name "Pyrrha".

In Italy of the Renaissance the passionate zeal for Antiquity issued in all manner of fabrications: texts of classical

authors, inscriptions, works of art. The arch-impostor was Annius of Viterbo, who composed many fictional histories. He also carried out an excavation at a site well prepared and planted¹.

An earlier revival of learning and letters may without impropriety be briefly invoked at this point. Towards the end of the Fourth Century certain writers of the imperial epoch were rediscovered after long oblivion. The texts were copied, edited and elucidated (the clearest instance is Juvenal). In the train of erudition entered erudite fraud. To that age (as most would now at last concede) belongs the *Historia Augusta*, a collection of biographies under the labels of six authors who purport to be writing in the times of Diocletian and Constantine. The *HA*, which is to be styled an imposture, or even a hoax, rather than a forgery, presupposes for its ingenious author a suitable milieu and reading-public.

¹ For erudite imposture in this age see C. MITCHELL, *Archaeology and Romance in Renaissance Italy*, in *Italian Renaissance Studies* (ed. E. F. Jacob, 1960), 455 ff.

DISCUSSION

(résumé par M. von Fritz)

Da schon früher beschlossen worden war, später nochmals *Entretiens* über dasselbe Thema zu veranstalten, bei welcher Gelegenheit diejenigen Aspekte des ausserordentlich weitverzweigten und reichhaltigen Gegenstandes behandelt werden sollten, die dieses Jahr nicht berücksichtigt werden konnten, entwickelte sich im Anschluss an den inhaltsreichen und eindringenden Vortrag von Sir Ronald Syme vor allem eine Diskussion über Titel, Inhalt und Methode dieser für die Zukunft geplanten neuen *Entretiens*. Diese Diskussion vollzog sich in sehr lebhaften, kurz aufeinander folgenden Meinungsäusserungen zu den drei genannten Fragen, ohne eine strenge Reihenfolge einzuhalten. Sie in der Reihenfolge, in der sie stattfand, möglichst wörtlich wiederzugeben, würde für den Leser vermutlich eine ziemlich verwirrende Wirkung haben. Es schien daher besser, ohne Rücksicht auf den tatsächlichen Verlauf der Diskussion das, was der einzelne Diskussionsteilnehmer zu jedem der drei Hauptproblemen zu sagen hatte, in einer mehr systematischen Reihenfolge zusammenzufassen.

I. Was den Titel der zukünftigen *Entretiens* angeht, so wurde gleich zu Anfang von mehreren Teilnehmern bemerkt, dass der Titel « pseudepigraphische Literatur » zu weit sei, da von den nur aus Versehen unter einen falschen Autornamen geratenen Werken nicht die Rede sein sollte, der Titel « Fälschungen » dagegen zu eng, da er den Eindruck mache, als ob es sich nur um mit sozusagen « krimineller » Absicht einem Autor untergeschobene Werke handeln sollte, während der Sinn der Diskussion gerade darin liegen sollte, zwischen den verschiedenen Anlässen und Motiven, artistischen, politischen, religiösen usw. zur Veröffentlichung von Schriften unter fremden Namen zu unterscheiden. In diesem Zusammenhang machte Sir Ronald Syme vor allem darauf aufmerksam, dass es eine ganz besonders interessante Art von pseude-

pigraphischer Literatur gebe, die man als Mystifikationen bezeichnen könne und deren Intention es sei, den naiven Leser zu täuschen, dem gewitzteren Leser dagegen gleichzeitig Hinweise darauf zu geben, dass das Ganze nicht ernsthaft gemeint sei, eine Literaturgattung, von der es wiederum die verschiedensten Abwandlungen und Nuancierungen gebe. Herr Hengel bemerkte dazu, man solle daher sich nicht auf einen Begriff festlegen, sondern zum mindesten zwei Begriffe miteinander verbinden, wie z.B. Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung.

Aus den für den Titel gemachten Vorschlägen lassen sich vor allem drei, die grösseren Anklang fanden, herausheben.

1. von Herrn Reverdin: « *Faux littéraires dans l'Antiquité* ». Hiergegen wurde von Herrn van Berchem der Einwand erhoben, dass, wenn auch in etwas geringerem Masse als bei « *Forgeries* » oder « *Falsifications* », doch auch diese Bezeichnung noch einen Anklang an « *kriminelle Intention* » enthalte.

2. Herr van Berchem machte daher den Vorschlag, den weitesten Titel « *Littérature pseudépigraphique* » zu wählen und in einem Untertitel oder einer zusätzlichen Erklärung diese beabsichtigte Einschränkung zu vermerken.

3. Ein dritter Vorschlag von Herrn von Fritz war, die beiden von Sir Ronald Syme unterschiedenen Gattungen in den Titel zu setzen: « *Literary Forgeries and mystifications in antiquity* », oder eine entsprechende französische Formulierung.

Eine Entscheidung wurde vorläufig nicht getroffen.

II. Was den Gegenstand der zukünftigen Entretiens angeht, war man sich darüber einig, dass sie sich nicht, weil dieses Jahr griechische Literatur behandelt wird, auf lateinische Literatur beschränken, sondern vielmehr in noch grösserem Ausmass als dieses Jahr die jüdisch-christliche pseudepigraphische Literatur heranziehen sollte: und zwar vor allem deshalb wird sich die Psychologie der Motive der jüdisch-christlichen Fälschungen, wie die Herrn Hengel, Smith und Speyer betonten, von

der Psychologie der heidnischen Fälschungen sehr stark unterscheide und es sehr instruktiv sei, beide miteinander zu vergleichen. Erörtert wurde auch die Abgrenzung gegen die sozusagen völlig «unschuldige» Pseud-epigraphie, wo ein Schriftstück durch Zufall der Überlieferung unter einen falschen Namen geraten ist. Aber schon wo es sich um Briefromane und dergleichen handelt, bei denen vom Autor keinerlei Täuschung beabsichtigt war, wird die Grenze fließend, da solche aus rein literarisch-artistischen Gründen entstandenen Werke später aus verschiedenen Ursachen — z.B. um sie besser verkaufen zu können, oder auch um der Propaganda willen — als echt ausgegeben werden konnten. Herr Thesleff betonte, dass man vor allem die Psychologie und die soziale Motivation der Fälschungen festzustellen versuchen müsse, wozu Herr Smith bemerkte, dass beides in engem Zusammenhang zu einander steht. Herr Hengel wies darauf hin, dass Pseudonymität auch politische Gründe haben könne: sowohl politischer Verfolgung zu entgehen wie auch den politischen Zielen durch Berufung auf Orakel und Sibyllen und dergleichen eine stärkere Wirkung zu verleihen.

III. Was die Methode angeht, wurden vor allem zwei Fragen erörtert:

1. Sir Ronald Syme fragte, was die richtige Reihenfolge der Fragestellung sei; er stellte vier Fragen: Was war der Zweck der Fälschung? Für wen war sie bestimmt oder an welche Art von Lesern wendete sie sich? In welche Zeit passt sie? Von welchem Ort dürfte sie ausgegangen sein?

2. Eine Kontroverse entspann sich zwischen Sir Ronald Syme und Herrn von Fritz über die Frage, auf wen im Falle zweifelhafter Echtheit die Last des Beweises falle. Sir Ronald hatte die Meinung vertreten, dass, wer die Echtheit verteidige, den Beweis dafür führen müsse. Herr von Fritz wies darauf hin, dass es viel leichter sei, die Unechtheit einer Schrift zu beweisen, da eine Äusserung, die der angebliche Autor aus chronologischen oder anderen Gründen nicht getan haben kann, genüge, die Unechtheit zu erweisen, bei allen Gründen für die Echtheit man dagegen mit der Annahme eines ungewöhnlich gut unter-

richteten und genialen Autors operieren könne. Herr Aalders bemerkte dazu, dass alle Geschichtsschreibung darauf beruht, anzunehmen, dass die alten Dokumente und Handschriften echt sind, solange sich nicht Gründe für die Unechtheit finden. Anders könne man gar nicht anfangen zu arbeiten.

Nach Anführung von Beispielen für die mögliche Ambiguität von Beweisgründen für Echtheit oder Unechtheit durch Herrn von Fritz, machte Herr Hengel die Bemerkung, dass auch die Überkritik in der Geschichte der philologischen Echtheitskritik eine beträchtliche Rolle gespielt habe und dass es ein höchst interessantes Unternehmen sein würde, eine Geschichte der Echtheitskritik zu schreiben.

