

# Book Reviews

*Edited by Heather Allen*

FREEMAN, Arthur. *Bibliotheca Fictiva: A Collection of Books & Manuscripts Relating to Literary Forgery, 400 BC–AD 2000*. London: Bernard Quaritch, 2014. ISBN 978-0-956-30128-4. Pp. xvi, 423. Hardback \$95.

For more than half a century, rare book dealer and author Arthur Freeman and bibliographer Janet Ing Freeman have collected books and manuscripts documenting the history of literary forgeries. Beginning with sources on the nineteenth-century English scholar and forger John Payne Collier, the collection expanded both chronologically and geographically to eventually represent spurious texts produced in various languages and countries of the Western world between 400 BC and 2000 AD. The collectors' ultimate goal was to create "a comprehensive history of literary and historical forgery, as a genre or tradition from antiquity to the near-present . . . for despite the much increased attention now given this complicated, venerable, and culturally significant field of literary activity—creative or criminal or both—critical and scholarly treatment, from simple acknowledgement and recognition to classification and analysis, remains still in flux" (xi).

Arthur Freeman emphasizes that the focus of the collection is "the forgery of texts, whether historical, religious, philological, or 'creatively' artistic . . . the original publications of such *spuria*, and their first and ongoing exposures (or obstinate endorsements)" (xii). Although conventional physical forgeries are included, the "main interest lay not in such bibliopolic and bibliophilic foolery; rather in the deceptive creation of spurious text and fictive record, and the history of its investigation and discredit, or indeed its survival in present-day controversy" (xii).

Acquired *en bloc* in 2011 by the Sheridan Libraries of Johns Hopkins University, this remarkable gathering of texts is documented in *Bibliotheca Fictiva*, an illustrated guide to and inventory of the collection. In addition to scholars already engaged in this area of study, the volume will be of interest to literary, historical, and cultural researchers interested in

specific eras and regions; collection development and reference librarians in special collections or general academic libraries; and bookdealers who may encounter such materials in their work. Those not able to conduct extended research at Johns Hopkins will still be able to profitably utilize the volume. Other copies and alternative editions of the vast majority of the printed works can be located by searching national and international online union catalogues and consulting the bibliographic references cited for particular items.

The volume consists of two complementary sections, both organized chronologically and geographically: a lengthy overview (1–82) providing concise introductions to the specific authors and works listed in the inventory and a short title catalogue comprising 1,676 entries in thirteen sections, including a final list of general works on literary forgery. (For readers desiring a broad introduction to forgeries, this last section includes monographs, exhibition catalogues, and conference proceedings which will be helpful.) Representing the notable range of works found in the collection, the sections include Western eras before 1700 (classical, medieval, renaissance to 1600, and the seventeenth century); eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century British and American forgers; Western European forgers after 1700; and Central European, Russian, Greek, and Near Eastern forgers after 1700. It should be noted that individual entries are included in a particular section to reflect the intended approximate date and presumed local origin of the forged texts, rather than the actual date and location where the forgeries were created. For example, the section on medieval forgeries includes fourteen entries on the Donation of Constantine with sources dating from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and twentieth centuries (120–121).

The engaging and accessible overview focuses on the specific authors and texts in the collection. Particular names and works highlighted in boldface in the text lead to entries in the parallel section of the inventory. However, for a comprehensive gathering of all of the entries for a particular author or title, consulting the index is absolutely essential. The individual entries include author, title, and imprint information and, depending on the item and the copy, annotations may include binding and provenance information as well as bibliographic references. Most useful are the notes regarding the content and the location of the forgeries in specific texts and editions.

The extensive index (399–423) readily provides access to the authors and texts, with item numbers in the catalogue highlighted in boldface.

Supplementary references found on additional pages are also included. While subjects are not exhaustively indexed, fourteen topical entries provide tantalizing possibilities for research. These include subject listings for archaeological, biblical, scriptural, and bibliographic forgeries; fiction as forgery; imaginary books; imaginary or forged maps; and travel forgeries.

Potential uses of the collection are also explored in the 2014 Johns Hopkins exhibition catalogue *Fakes, Lies, and Forgeries: Rare Books and Manuscripts from the Arthur and Janet Freeman Bibliotheca Fictiva Collection*. Edited by Earle Havens, the Sheridan Libraries curator of rare books and manuscripts, this complementary publication to the work under review includes five extensive, illustrated essays by Johns Hopkins faculty and graduate students based on material in the collection. While *Bibliotheca Fictiva* will be of most immediate interest to researchers already concerned with literary and historical forgeries, the remarkable range of texts gathered and documented in this volume may also provide inspiration for new avenues of research concerned with issues of authenticity and incorporating examples of fabrications, falsifications, and forgeries.

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GAILEY, Amanda, *Proofs of Genius: Collected Editions from the American Revolution to the Digital Age*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015. ISBN 978-0-472-05275-2. Pp. 162. Paper \$29.95.

“Editorial choices have stealthily shaped the American literary canon for centuries”, Amanda Gailey reminds us, “forging authorial legacies, producing regional and national propaganda, and generally working as a determinant for what and how we consider American literature” (1). *Proofs of Genius* is based on a clear formal observation: collected editions reflect ideas about authorship, including a surviving emphasis on Romantic authorial genius. Out of this claim, Gailey builds a tightly constructed book that that lays deep foundations for future comparative studies of canonization.

Gailey lays out her findings thoroughly, but demonstrates her methods with élan and wry humor. She begins with comparisons to the British context, which was crucial both for modeling the genre and as a foil for those attempting to establish U.S. cultural sovereignty through writers’ collected editions. From the Early Republic through the antebellum, spirit was