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Index

04 Editorial

Monica Salvadori, Federica Toniolo, Andrea Tomezzoli, Marta Nezzo, Monica Baggio, Luca Zamparo

ESSAYS

07 For Fame or Fortune: Forgery of Archaeological and Palaeontological Artefacts

Noah Charney

17 Può Winckelmann dialogare con Authenticity?

Maria Elisa Micheli

30 À propos d'un vrai-faux fragment de balustrade amarnienne

Maxence Garde & Marta Valerio

43 Il carro della collezione Marchetti: analisi preliminare

Daniele Zumerle

63 Note su un falso cratere pestano nella collezione Rossi di Padova

Alessandra Cannataro

81 Falsi e pastiche. Considerazioni su un gruppo di legature "romaniche" del XIX secolo

Alessia Marzo

105 Un quadro a olio riferito a Domenico Induno: un esercizio di attribuzione

Alberto Corvi

123 A short genealogy of authenticity. Tracing concepts of the real in the preservation discourse from the 19th century to today

Alexander Stumm

130 Fake originals or authentic replicas? Authenticity and conservation practices of historic vehicles

Francesca Benetti

143 La copia cinese come fonte di nuova autenticità. Analisi storico-artistica del fenomeno, delle sue conseguenze nel sistema dell'arte e nel rapporto con l'Occidente

Nicole Galaverni

167 Better Sensors, Better Forgers: An Adversarial Loop

Irina-Mihaela Ciortan, Sony George, Jon Yngve Hardeberg

REVIEWS

194 Satiryca signa. Estudios de Arqueología Clásica en homenaje al Prof. Pedro Rodríguez Oliva

Isabel López García

196 A multidisciplinary operational protocol for the study of manuscripts and metals: proposals by Ahmed Hosni

Luca Zamparo

197 Alceo Dossena e il Rinascimento italiano dell'Otto-Novecento

Elisa Bernard

Editorial

Authenticity Studies. International Journal of Archaeology and Art is a new scientific adventure that blossoms from an idea born during the long months of spring 2020, an idea that has now become a shared project within the Department of Cultural Heritage at the University of Padua. This first issue marks its launch.

Archaeological and art-historical studies at the University of Padua date back to the end of the nineteenth century. However, the roots of the University's attention to the protection and enhancement of the local cultural heritage date to earlier times, when the first university collections were established and opened to students and the public. New lifeblood for studies on authenticity and attribution arrived in 2014 when Bruno Marchetti, a prominent local politician, bequeathed his collection of archaeological objects (or deemed to be so) to the University of Padua. The study of this extensive collection (including ceramics, glass, metals, marbles, etc.) dictated the need for an international debate on art and archaeological forgery. In 2017, a path was set in motion that leads us directly to these pages: the first edition of the International Winter School "*Anthropology of forgery. A Multidisciplinary Approach to the Study of Archaeological Fakes*" was organised. Scholars and students from all over the world gathered in Padua to start a debate on the notion of art forgery and how to study it. The lectures held during the winter school are now published under the same title in the University's series "Quaderni di Antenor" by Padova University Press). A few months later, the MemO Project ("*La memoria degli oggetti. Un approccio multidisciplinare per lo studio, la digitalizzazione e la valorizzazione della ceramica greca e magnogreca in Veneto*"), coordinated by Professor Monica Salvadori and financed by the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Padova e Rovigo within the "Progetti di Eccellenza 2017" began.

Art forgery is one of the cornerstones of the MemO Project. Within this framework, a multidisciplinary debate started that led to the second edition of the winter school "*Anthropology of Forgery. Art Collecting, Authentication, and Innovative Tools for a Culture of Legality in Cultural Heritage*" (Padua, Vicenza and Castelfranco Veneto 2019). The proceedings of this winter school will be published next spring in the volume "*Anthropology of Forgery. Collecting, Authentication and Protection of Cultural Heritage*". In December 2020, the University organized the International Conference "*Forma e immagine. Nuove prospettive di studio e valorizzazione della ceramica greca e magnogreca*", whose proceeding are forthcoming for Il Poligrafo Casa Editrice di Padua. More recently, the International Spring School "*Pottery in Ancient and Contemporary World. Materials, Societies, Economies, (and Forgeries)*" was held online last spring, gathering over 90 participants worldwide. Our commitment to investigate and possibly understand the phenomenon of forgery from a multidisciplinary perspective has led us to collaborate with the Department of Private Law and Legal Criticism of the University of Padua (thanks to the support of Professor Paolo Moro). Two projects saw the light: "*Fake on trial. Processo al falso d'arte antica*" (2020-2021, whose proceedings are forthcoming) and "*Diritto alla Bellezza. An interdisciplinary course for jurists, cultural professionals and collectors*" (2021-2022), a massive open online course, (MOOC), i.e., a course certified by the University but accessible free of charge to anyone.

The volume "*La poliedricità del falso. Arte, cultura e mistificazioni nel mondo contemporaneo*" is further evidence of our interdisciplinary approach to forgery. Moreover, the need to secure and protect authentic cultural goods has been recently included in the exhibition "*Argilla. Storie di vasi*", held at

the Gallerie d'Italia - Palazzo Leoni Montanari in Vicenza and organised as part of the MemO Project on behalf of Intesa Sanpaolo's Art, Culture and Historical Heritage Department.

At the same time, students in the PhD course in History, Criticism and Conservation of Cultural Heritage (coordinated by Prof. Federica Toniolo) organised the International Conference "*Interrupted stories. The recognition and valorisation of forgotten heritage*", allowing young researchers to meet and discuss the study, recognition, cataloguing and protection of cultural heritage in all its forms (tangible and intangible).

National and international commitment has always gone hand in hand with laboratories for students at the University of Padua: laboratories include the *Connoisseurship Laboratory* (in tune with the long tradition of art-historical studies in the Paduan area), the *Laboratory of Authentication of Archaeological Heritage* (2018-). Starting from the current academic year (2021-2022), a new graduate course has been established within the Master's degree in Archaeological Sciences entitled *Authentication: concepts and methods*.

Authenticity Studies. International Journal of Archaeology and Art, founded by Monica Salvadori (Editor-in-Chief), Federica Toniolo, Andrea Tomezzoli, Marta Nezzo, Monica Baggio, Luca Zamparo (Managing Editor), is a further step in our aim to further the debate on the delicate topic of art forgery. Why a journal on "authenticity studies"? If we open the pages of any daily newspaper, it is pretty easy to come across news about cultural heritage.

Most news refers to serious (and/or criminal) events such as thefts, illicit transfers, counterfeiting, or the destruction of places and things of particular cultural interest for the national and the global community.

Unfortunately, the persistence and increase of criminal phenomena (consider that the European Union has included these issues in the funding provided within the HORIZON 2021-2027 funds) do not go hand in hand with university training on these issues. For example, regarding the Italian context, an up-to-date snapshot of illicit conduct against cultural heritage is provided by the annual reports of the Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, which is functionally attached to the Ministry of Culture. Over the last ten years, in Italy, 1116 people were reported for clandestine excavation, 649 for illegal export and 2123 for counterfeiting cultural goods, leading to the seizure of almost 67,000 fake objects. If these objects had been put on for sale, they would have caused

economic damage estimated at around 5 billion euros, not to mention their damage against culture and history. In the same period, the data provided by the IPERICO Report of the Ministry of Economic Development and published in spring 2021 show that the value of counterfeit goods is around 6 billion and based on the seizure of approximately 570 million goods. Comparing these simple numbers reveals the enormous scale of the problem, which is still highly present in our contemporary national and international society.

However, the protection of national and international cultural heritage is not only the task of the States and their internal organisations, but it is also a fundamental task of all those involved in archaeology, art history, restoration, and diagnostics of cultural heritage, as well as of the entire national, European and international community (as provided for by the recent "Nicosia Convention" or by the many UNESCO Recommendations).

Therefore, this new Journal has three primary objectives:

1. Providing an international scientific forum for a multidisciplinary discussion among archaeologists, art historians, diagnosticians, restorers, scientists, jurists, and museum professionals over the issues of authenticity and attribution of objects and works of art.
2. Promoting inter-trans-multi-disciplinary studies for the development of new operational guidelines and methods, new techniques, and new tools for the identification of forgeries in the cultural sphere.
3. Promoting a culture of legality by updating and sharing scientific results within the international community.

We believe this will only be possible by imposing the highest international scientific standards on ourselves. The Journal, published by Padova University Press, is entirely free of charge for both authors and readers, accessible online, and based on an anonymous double-blind review system.

It has an international scientific committee consisting of leading experts in the various fields concerned. In addition, the authors are willing to submit a contribution to *Authenticity Studies. International Journal of Archaeology and Art* guarantee the originality of their work, the intellectual property of the contribution, and the absence of any conflicts of interest or economic interests arising from the publication. At the same time, *Authenticity Studies* does not accept studies on the attribution or

authentication of objects offered for sale, nor does it accept searches for attribution or authentication of objects of uncertain provenance (and/or ownership) or incorrect or partial reconstruction.

Authenticity Studies accepts, instead, original and unpublished contributions in the form of essays, short news items, or reports focusing on three main lines of research:

1. The theory and methodology of archaeological and art-historical attribution, also through technical-scientific investigations (and the development of techniques and methods) arising from archaeometry, conservation, and diagnostic approaches.
2. Investigations into the phenomenon of forgery and how objects are authenticated, with particular attention to the history of the phenomenon, the models of analysis (humanistic and technological-scientific), the impact of forgery on knowledge and scholarly disciplines and its perception by society (past and contemporary), the connections with the art market and the history of collecting, historical forgeries and those inserted, over time, in museums, both public and private.
3. Studies on provenance, i.e., where an object comes from (how it was made, where, by whom, who sold, acquired, stored, moved, displayed, studied it) and its current implications on the global social, cultural and economic context.

All this is possible because the Journal proposes several modalities. Essays should mainly investigate the theoretical and methodological aspects of authentication, attribution, forgery, and provenance studies. On the other hand, short reports should present practical, original, and relevant cases of attribution or authentication, protection, and conservation of Cultural Heritage. Finally, the reports are intended to be a place of continuous updating on publications, exhibitions, controversies, and the most relevant cases of the year in the authentication and attribution of archaeological and art-historical objects.

A Journal on “authenticity studies”, then. However, what does “authentication” mean?

“Authentication” is the operation by which an object is recognised as authentic and its originality is declared, or affirming its origin (thus affirming the truth expressed, shown, from the Latin *vērītās -atis*, a derivative of *verus* “true”). Counterfeiting means the contrary, i.e., the mental, artificial and

manual operation through which a technical artifice is designed, created, and/or elaborated to make an object appear to be what it is not, i.e., an authentic good endowed with authority and recognised as such.

In the contemporary world, speaking of *forgery* entails speaking of malice, whether *forgery* (action, behaviour, object) is thus deceptive (otherwise, one can speak of imitation). The term derives from the Latin *falsum* (*fallēre*, to put one’s foot in the wrong, to deceive), and mirrors the primary meaning of the Latin word, that is, partial or total alteration of the truth in documents, literary texts, legal acts, signatures, seals, keys, goods, products, weights, measures, works of art, theories, scientific research, religious and political doctrines.

These terms are based on the dialectical and the relationship between truth and deception, presence and absence, authentic and false, original and reproduction. As this Journal proves, these concepts are inherent in human artistic expressions, both visual and literary, and the subject of humanistic and technological-scientific studies, which have recently increased considerably.

This first editorial cannot close without due thanks. First of all, we would like to thank the Department of Cultural Heritage of the University of Padua for its administrative support, without which all this would not be possible. Secondly, our heartfelt thanks go to all those who, together with us, believe in the project, from Padua University Press to the members of the Scientific Committee, the anonymous reviewers who have generously shared with us their experience. Moreover, we are grateful to the authors who believed in this project and submitted their texts. Finally, our most sincere thanks to our editorial staff: Elisa Bernard, Clelia Sbrolli, Giulia Simeoni, and Eleonora Voltan deserve gratitude.

Padua (Italy), February, 15, 2022

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