Manufacturing a Past for the Present

Forgery and Authenticity in Medievalist Texts and Objects in Nineteenth-Century Europe

Edited by

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The Long Shadow of Ossian[1]

Editors' Preface

The two concepts in the subtitle of this book would in fact demand two essays on their own. However, in this preface we intend only to highlight some aspects relevant to the matters presented in this volume in an attempt to place the studies into context. We will also mention a few similar contemporary artifacts not discussed here in order to round out the "landscape of forgery" mainly in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

Forgery seems to be a straightforward matter: something that pretends to be (or is presented as) what it is not.[2] If we stick to this definition, relatively few items would remain for discussion in the context of "alternative antiquities," a subject discussed in many aspects in workshops held and volumes produced at the Collegium Budapest.[3] In the present project we intended to look at a wider circle of texts and objects, all of which are somehow "not quite" what they claim to be. They are of varied character and could be located at different places on an ascending scale from outright forgery to poetic liberty.

Only in some of the cases presented here are texts or objects produced, as it were, from whole cloth, merely based on the creative ideas of its author or authors. Best known among them are the "medieval" manuscripts "discovered" at Königinhof/Králové Dvor and Grünberg/Zelena Hora in early nineteenth-century Bohemia, containing epic and lyric poetry in allegedly Old Czech. Pavlína Rychterová (pp. 3–30) shows the background of the writing and of

1 The copyright for this formulation is held by Dan D.Y. Shapira, see 161, below.

2 The issue in general is discussed with great erudition by János György Szilágyi, below, 173–223. We asked him to permit us to include his essay, even though it is not within the framework of "medievalism," because of the exemplary character of the theoretical and comparative investigation of the forged Antique vases. See also Umberto Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation* (Bloomington Indiana University Press, 1990), 69–82, where a number of variants of "fakes" is outlined in greater and more analytical detail than we can do here.

3 Most of the studies in the present volume are products of a research group ("focus group") organized in Collegium Budapest—Institute for Advanced Study in 2008/9 on the theme "Medievalism, Archaic Origins and Regimes of Historicity," convened by Patrick J. Geary and Gábor Klaniczay. A few additional articles were written at the request of the editors. Another group of these studies was published recently in a companion volume under the title *Manufacturing Middle Ages. Entangled History of Medievalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. by Patrick J. Geary and Gábor Klaniczay (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

the reception of these texts: the emergence of Slavic philology,[4] the need for a truly "national" past, and the support by Austro-Bohemian aristocratic circles. Václav Hanka, the discoverer of the manuscripts, a respected student of the leading Slavist, Jozef Dobrovský, was not alone in his times with such a project.

Another respected scholar, a highly regarded Byzantinist and editor of important Greek texts, "added" an anonymous letter to his edition of Leo the Deacon's *History* describing the siege of Kherson in 988 (?) A.D. and its submission to the rulers of Rus'. The possible motives and circumstances for manufacturing this text, commonly referred to as the *Toparcha Gothicus*, "discovered" by Karl Benedikt Hase, the authenticity of which remained debated for some 150 years—and beyond—is described here by Igor P. Medvedev (pp. 144–55).

There were several other medieval narratives forged in this period, serving different purposes, not all discussed in this volume, but belonging to the same intellectual and political atmosphere. In Poland the *Slavic-Sarmatian Chronicle* of Przybysław Dyjamentowski (1694–1774) was published around the same time as Hanka's manuscripts. Its editor pretended that it was written in the early Middle Ages by a certain Prokosz vouching for the name of the Poles well before any other source did and connecting them to ancient peoples, Sarmatians and east Indians.[5]

Less known are the illustrated "Hungarian chronicles" and ancient Magyar inscriptions in runic, Chinese (!) and other strange characters, sold (and written?) by Sámuel Literáti Nemes, presented here by Benedek Láng (pp. 129–43). Literáti was above all a bookseller, but augmented his acquisitions with objects that he or his accomplices dreamt up—or naively accepted as original. Láng describes the surviving files of Literáti's productions and their temporary reception including some strange revival of one of the fakes into our own days. The so called *Chronicle of Metodi Draginov*, published in 1870 on the forceful

4 She wrote on this in detail in the companion volume of this project: "The Czech Linguistic Turn: Origins of Modern Czech philology 1780–1880", Geary and Klaniczay (eds.), *Manufacturing Middle Ages*, 259–278.

5 The so called *Prokosz Chronicle*, allegedly from the tenth century (with additions from the eleventh), was published by Hipolit Kownacki in 1825 in Warsaw as *Kronika polska w wieku X napisana. Z dodatkami z kroniki Kagnimira*. Kownacki got the manuscript from Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, one of the leading intellectuals of the late Polish enlightenment, who in turn got it from Franciszek Morawski, a general and sentimentalist-classicist poet, who bought it somewhere ("at a Jewish bookstall in Lublin"). The forgery was soon unmasked by the founder of Polish historical scholarship, Joachim Lelewel in the *Biblioteka polska*, 1825–26. See H. Markiewicz "O polskich mistyfikacjach literackich," [On Polish literary mystifications] *Dekada Literacka* nr 8/1994; [http://dekadaliteracka.pl/index.php?id=3181]—We are grateful for these references to Maciej Janowski.

mass Islamization of Bulgarians in the Western Rhodope mountains in the seventeenth century was alleged to have been written by an eye witness village priest in order to explain the origin of the Pomaks (Muslim Bulgarians).[6] Another fake chronicle of the Székely of (the district of) Csík "emerged" in 1796, attempting to prove that these Transylvanian former border guard communities are descendants of the Huns but in some way also connected to the Scythians, and preceded the Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin.[7]

This mixture of authentic historical sources with inventions and forgeries was not unique to East-Central Europe. It was an all-European feature during this age. In France a former local politician of Napoleon times, Étienne-Léon de Lamothe-Langon, who forged himself the title of a baron and became an archival historian and a popular romance writer from 1820 on, published, in 1829, a precious collection of historical sources on the history of the Inquisition in France. Among the large quantity of authentic documents, which subsequently became the basis of historical analyses by Jules Michelet and others, he also inserted the earliest medieval testimonies (from the year 1276) on the witches' Sabbath including colorful descriptions on the accused women's fornication with the Devil.[8]

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6 A good short discussion of the issue is written by Maria Todorova, "Conversion to Islam as a trope in Bulgarian historiography, fiction and film" in Eadem, ed., *Balkan Identities: Nation and Memory* (London: C. Hurst, 2004), 129–157.

7 The *Székely Chronicle of Csík*, written in poor Latin (some 20 pages in print) was supposed to be a copy of a hundred years old copy of a 1533 original. It begins with the Hun origin of the Székely clans, their alliance with the Magyars of Árpád and then the story of several clans across the centuries, especially of the descendants of a certain Sándor. It has been suggested that it was concocted by a Transylvanian nobleman, Zsigmond Sándor, a young jurist, in order to prove ancient rights of his family to a certain piece of land. Its anachronisms and poor Latin betray its being a modern forgery and this was proved by the academician Lajos Szádecky in his inaugural lecture at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (*A csíki székely krónika*, [The Székely Chronicle of Csík] Budapest: MTA, 1905). It was followed by a heated discussion, raising doubts, among others, about the ability of the assumed author to write such an elaborate fake. There are still people who maintain its originality. On the Scythian issue in general, see Gábor Klaniczay "The Myth of Scythian Origin and the Cult of Attila in the Nineteenth Century," in Gábor Klaniczay, Michael Werner, & Ottó Gecser (eds.), *Multiple Antiquities, Multiple Modernities: Ancient Histories in Nineteenth Century European Cultures* (Frankfurt – New York: Campus Verlag, 2011), 185–212.

8 Étienne-Léon de Lamothe-Langon, *Histoire de l'Inquisition en France*, (Paris, 1829), II, 614–15, III, 235–40; on his literary career, which included a number of other forgeries and fake memoirs ascribed to various court-ladies of Napoleon, leading to the production of a fake

The prime example of allegedly ancient poetry that became an inspiration for many compilers and forgers was, of course, Macpherson's Ossian. In all likelihood most or all of the great "collection" of pre-Christian Bulgarian (or Macedonian) folk poetry *Veda Slovena* was written single-handedly by the village teacher Ivan Gologanov.[9] As its title suggests, the poems were supposed to prove the descent of the Slavs of the Balkans from India.

A mixed form which contains authentic material that has been restructured and revised by the collector or editor was the "*kuruc*" (anti-Habsburg rebel) poetry collected by the Hungarian historian, poet, and academician Kálmán Thaly (1839–1909), who then added his own poems, beautifully imitating the historical verses.[10] It is open to debate, to what extent the Finnish *Kalevala* belongs here or to a less invasive category of "stylizing," and editing. Pertti Anttonen (pp. 58–80) discusses the close to the 180 year old debate about the

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Mémoires de Napoléon in 1838, and also one of Louis XVIII, see Richard Switzer, *Étienne-Léon de Lamothe-Langon et le roman populaire français de 1800 à 1830* (Toulouse: Privat, 1962).

9 Two volumes of poetry allegedly going back to the roots of his people's ancient Indian origin and including Alexander the Great and many other past heroes into the Slavic-Macedonian Pantheon were published by Stefan Verkovič, "collected" by his Bulgarian-Macedonian colleague. The question of originality is not really solved, inter alia, by doubting the ability of the author to produce such a corpus of elaborate verse all alone. The most recent Bulgarian Encyclopedia calls it a "mystification." Bi-lingual edition: *Le Véda slave: chants populaires des Bulgares de Thrace & de Macedoine de l'époque préhistorique et préchrétienne. 1–2 = Веда словенска: български народни песни отъ предисторично и предхристиянско доба. 1–2 / откриль въ Тракия и Македония и издалъ Стефанъ И. Верковичъ* (Belgrade-St. Petersburg: Državna štamparija, 1874–1881). For a full discussion, see Gane Todorovski, "Za i protiv Veda Slovena," [For and against *Veda Slovena*] *Godishen zbornik Universitetot do Skopje* 19 (1967), 393–444; online http://makedonija.rastko.net/delo/11724 (accessed 1.11.2011). An English summary of the pro-Veda side is on http://www.omda.bg/engl/history/mistificacia.html (accessed 12.02.2012).

10 Thaly's volume of poetry, *Kuruczvilág* [World of the *kuruc*] was published in 1903 in Budapest and caused a major controversy about the authenticity of some poems and the "forgery" of others. In the most recent history of Hungarian literature, the issue of "philological forgery" and literary value for the reader is radically separated and Thaly's poetry, either collected or composed, was included in the canon; see Krisztián Benkő "Filológia, ideológia, poétika. 1903 Thaly Kálmán: *Kuruczvilág*" [Philology, ideology, poetics etc.], in Mihály Szegedi-Maszák (ed.), *A magyar irodalom történetei* [Histories of Hungarian literature] (Budapest: Gondolat, 2007), II, 649–662. Actually, this post-modern attitude, disregarding the formal "authenticity," the core of the debates for more than a century, and concentrating on the poetic value, is now prevailing in the judgment about *Kalevala* as well.

extent of its being an "authentic" collection of folk ballads or an epic poem by the country doctor, philologist and collector, Elias Lönnrot. Stylizing and "editing" is typical for poetry and tales collected by devotees of folk culture, but adjusted to the taste of their assumed audience or to the alleged forms of ancient lore. Unsuitably "vulgar" passages are censored out, but, on the other hand, what did not meet their expectations of being "folksy enough," jazzed up. From the brothers Grimm through János Kriza to Vuk Karadžič this holds true for the first generations of folklorists and ethnographers. The Hungarian Kriza even asked the help of the leading literary critic of his time, "If the [Transylvanian] Székely savor was added by me too strongly—he wrote—Mr. Gyulai be good enough to pare it down with his critical ability [...] and adjust everything as he pleases."[11]

One step further away, and leaving the category of "forgery" altogether is, when lacking a badly missed Magyar national heroic epic, János Arany, envious of *Kalevala*, decides to write a Hungarian one, but in his own name. László Szörényi (pp. 81–95) presents how Arany studied the scholarly handbook on the ancient Magyar mythology of his contemporary, Arnold Ipolyi, underlining and commenting on passages of the monograph to be used for his project of "making up" a missing Hungarian heroic epic. The Latvian Andrejs Pumpurs had the same motives when in 1872–87 he wrote a major epic poem about the ancient Baltic times, *Lāčplēsis* (the Bear-slayer) based on some unidentified "local legends" of his country and people.[12]

Then, a forged object may be in parts "original" (pretending that the whole is so), but to a lesser or larger extent tempered and augmented with elements that did not belong to the pristine exemplar. The "Second Cuman Law" (presented as if from 1279) discussed here by Nora Berend (pp. 109–28) contains one paragraph from a genuine charter of that year granting certain rights to the recently settled Cumans in the Hungarian Plain but is expanded with additional legal claims. The forged deed was used in an attempt to recover lost privileges. Berend proves that there was never an "original" to which some of the

11 Quoted by Péter Niedermüller, "Adatok a magyar folklór szövegbázisának megkonstruálásához a 19. században" [Data to the construction of the textual basis of Hungarian folklore in the 19th C.], *Ethnographia* 101 (1990), 96–105; here 104.

12 From the extensive literature on it, see e.g., Stephan Kessler, "Literatur und werdende Nation in Lettland und Litauen: Die Versepen *Lāčplēsis* (1888) und *Witoloraunda* (1846)," in Jürgen Joachimsthaler (ed.), *National-Texturen—National-Dichtung als literarisches Konzept in Nordosteuropa*, 127–80 (Lüneburg: Nordost-Inst., 2009) Nordost-Archiv; N.F. 16.—An English translation of the poem by Arthur Cropley is accessible on http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/17445.

late eighteenth-century authors refer. Parts of the Czech manuscripts are based on the twelfth-century *Chronica Bohemorum* by Cosmas of Prague. Similarly, the Bulgarian *Draginov chronicle* seems to have been constructed with the help of two other, fairly well documented reports. From the close to 20 thousand lines of the Estonian epic poem *Kalevipoeg* (Kalev's Son) by Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald (published in 1867–72) some 3000 are considered as "authentic."[13] The *Székely chronicle* (and, of course, Literáti's concoctions, too) contains names and dates from the received historical tradition, meant to prove the ancient pedigree of certain peoples or families (just as medieval *gesta* did). Something similar is the case of the so-called *Sylvester Bull*, a fake papal letter allegedly from the eleventh century, but most probably written around 1636 and published in 1644, attempting to legitimize the "apostolic" title and ecclesiastical privileges of the kings of Hungary (at that point, the Habsburg rulers). It contains words and ideas from an early twelfth century legend of St. Stephen the king, tidbits of papal correspondence, and was embedded into a book on church history.[14] In contrast, the scrutiny of literary historians established that one third of *Kalevala* is a verbatim rendering of what Lönnrot collected from folk singers in Karelia, one half is based on their texts, but edited by him, 14 percent is compiled by the editor from fragments of folklore and only 3 percent was written anew by the devoted doctor, by then able to generate verses fitting the rest.

An extension of this category would include such "non-forgeries" as the poetic transformation of a genuine thirteenth-century *gesta* about the mythical origin of the Magyars in Scythia and their systematic conquest of their present country, into a national Pantheon, engendering painted and sculptured figures of imaginary heroes for centuries to come. János Bak (pp. 96–108) shows, how the chronicle, first edited in 1746, became the basis of the Grand Narrative of the Hungarian past, mainly by having it made into a major epic poem, the *Flight of Zalán*, by the young Romantic poet Mihály Vörösmarty (1800–55). Similarly, Väinämöinen, Ilmarinen, and Lemminkäinen would not

13 From the extensive literature on it, see e.g., Cornelius Haselblatt, "Geburt und Pflege des estnischen Epos. Zur Funktionalisierung von Kreuzwalds *Kalevipoeg*," in Joachimsthaler, *National-Texturen*, 103–26.

14 The most recent inquiry into the background of this forgery is by Sándor Bene, "A Szilveszter-bulla nyomában (Pázmány Péter és a Szent István-hagyomány 17. századi fordulópontja)" [Tracing the Sylvester-Bull: Péter Pázmány and the seventeenth-century turning point in the St. Stephen tradition], in László Veszprémy (ed.), *Szent István és az államalapítás*, 143–62 (Budapest: Osiris, 2002). Also accessible at: http://radaygyujtemeny.hu/bene.htm.

have become the heroes of all the Finns, had Dr. Lönnrot not written them up into one beautiful epic poem.

Archaeological and art forgeries also fall on a spectrum from entirely new creations to imitations of authentic ancient artifacts to highly speculative restorations of genuine fragmentary objects. Forgers of antique vases took their figures and scenes from originals, frequently from more than one (thus betraying their forgers), sometimes even using antique pieces freshly painted or re-painted according to the taste of modern collectors. János György Szilágyi (pp. 173–223) examined—with extensive comparative material—six of them, presently in the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts, produced between the 1830s and the 1940s and mostly managed—at least for a while—to trick collectors and keepers of museum collections. This "trick" was attempted also for the rich "find" of gilt objects—swords, helmets, breastplate, and jewelry—allegedly from a Lombard grave that appeared in London in 1930 and referred to as the "Lombard Treasure" discussed here by Cristina La Rocca (pp. 224–66). It is possible that the iron cores of the fake objects in the treasure were indeed of Lombard origin. The inscriptions were copied from the few surviving originals, especially from the Agilulf plate (*Lamina di Agilulfo*) in the Museo Bergallo in Florence. In another way, most of the old gravestones in the Crimean Jewish cemetery are still in situ, only Avraham Firkowicz (1787–1874), whose forging career is outlined by Dan D.Y. Shapira (pp. 156–72), published their inscriptions which were altered so as to suggest that Karaite Jews arrived there centuries earlier than they did. Firkowicz produced also some archaeological finds of the "Mountain Jews" of the Caucasus and spurious historical texts copied into more or less authentic Biblical manuscripts, allegedly acquired in Derbend, Daghestan in support of the imagined past of this people.

Finally (though there may be even more categories), a monument may be "authentic" (more on that notion below), but it is being presented differently from the way it was "found": adjusted to taste, special purpose, moral or aesthetic demands and so on (just as the folklore texts mentioned above). This is the paradox of Skansen and all open-air ethnographic museums following its example, and of the splendid collection of medieval art in the Cloisters of New York. (Well, in fact this is true for all museums, but that is an issue by itself.)[15] Johan Hegardt (pp. 287–306) explores the modes and motives of Artur Hazelius to "make time stand still" by collecting and removing to Stockholm site houses and artifacts from all around the country, and to present an image

15 See for example Ernő Marosi, Gábor Klaniczay & Ottó Gecser (eds.), *The Nineteenth-Century Process of "Musealization" in Hungary and Europe*, Collegium Budapest Workshop Series 17 (Budapest: Collegium Budapest, 2006).

of an allegedly "eternal Sweden." Sándor Radnóti (pp. 307–16) outlines the history of the Cloisters and explores the ideas concerning the preservation and presentation of art of the past in general and regarding Gothic architecture and art in the metropolitan surroundings of New York in particular. The trunk of a truly ancient oak tree, named Baublys by Dionizas Poška, was transported into his garden, given a mythical history, and transformed into something of a museum of Lithuanian national poetry. Giedrė Mickūnaitė (pp. 267–86) follows up the emergence of this idea, its reluctant acceptance at the outset, and its gradual elaboration into a shrine of sorts.

The purpose of producing and presenting something else than what the final product is purported to be was quite different from case-to-case. Our chapter headings hint at some of these. The studies grouped under "Searching for the voice of the nation" point to examples, in which the main aim was to find—or if not available, then produce—texts that could serve as the rallying points of emerging national consciousness. Those under the heading "Inventing the past" are more cynical projects presenting alleged historical texts and objects for the purposes of the present in order to prove some non-existent ancient rights or traditions. Our third group, "'Ancient' objects: Fakes and fantasies" discusses either outright fakes used for misleading the present or such projects that attempt to preserve a long lost time as if it were still alive.

In our examples, the most usual motive of forgery, straightforward financial gain, is relatively rare. Besides the masters of the fake antiques, only Dyjamentowski is known to have been a professional forger for pay of charters and genealogies. In the case of the "Lombard Treasure," it was the dealers, the Durlacher Brothers who expected thousands of pounds sterling for their "find." La Rocca documents with unedited records, how they tried to obtain a buyer for the fakes.[16] Whether Samuel Literáti's fantastic forgeries were produced mainly for profit or mainly for dreaming up an alternative national past—probably both—is not quite clear. Some of them may have simply not been recognized by the not very learned bookseller. Nor is the motive of the assumed author of the *Székely Chronicle* clear: to what extent was it meant to prove an ancient history for his Transylvanian fellows and to what extent was it compiled to justify property rights of his family. It is likely that the *Sylvester Bull*'s forger, or one of his accomplices, expected that the confirmation of his benefice would be guaranteed by his concoction. The carefully constructed text of the *Toparcha Gothicus* by Professor Hase may have on the one hand intended to enhance his, otherwise well established, professional reputation, but on

16 See the Appendix to La Rocca's article, pp. 267–86, below.

the other, and above all, it was to gain tangible support from his friends at the Russian court. Some of that holds true for Václav Hanka, the "discoverer" of the "Old Czech" manuscripts as well. As a young Slavist he wished to improve his reputation and also enhance the prestige of Old Czech, but at the same time he was eager to please patriotic Czech patrons who could promote his career. In the Lombard case, Reginald Smith of the British Museum, who did not seem to have known that they were fakes, wanted to improve his professional standing by relentlessly promoting the impressive "Lombard gold find", disregarding the doubts of his German colleague. Foreign—mainly German—critiques of the Czech manuscripts and the *Kalevala* just gave a boost to their becoming pieces of "national pride"; this may have played a role in the English case as well. Baron de Lamothe Langon seems to be exceptional in this sense, as one cannot discern any interest behind his inserting a couple of fake testimonies in a source edition containing several hundred authentic documents, except for having fun in cheating his readers and the academic posterity. Quite a few of the "heroes" of the stories told below intended to serve some higher good, whatever that might have been. The glory of the nation or the specific rights or origin of a people or group (Czechs, Cumans, Karaites, Pomaks, Székely, Magyars, Finns, Rus' &c.) stand high on this list.

Authenticity again has many meanings and it is used differently in diverse disciplines (or discourses) and in various times. Basically, it should mean the exact opposite of forgery: an authentic item is what internal and external evidence proves that it is what it pretends to be, comes from the time that its proposed date suggests, and is made by the person or persons who are featured as its makers/authors, and records, presents or commemorates things that happened in reality. However, each of these criteria is problematic. Artifacts of the past (or faraway places) may not fit into the definitions of objects known to us here and now. We may not be able to identify what they were "meant to be." The dates are also tricky matters. Very often scholars with sophisticated methods cannot unequivocally decide about the "true" date of an object. Texts, for example, are rarely subject to "scientific" dating. Many a date based on style, language, or writing material has been debated for a century or more. "Authors" in the contemporary sense of unique persons (or groups thereof) creating an object that becomes their exclusive intellectual property is a very recent idea and is valid only in a limited part of the world. The vague notion of "collective" or anonymous authorship of things from folk art to monastic annals defies this demand of authenticity, to say nothing of the several frequent "authentic" variants of the same, both in folklore and in learned texts. Finally, most problematic is the reference to "reality," to past or remote "facts." This is not the place to discuss,

how "real" or "true"—thus "authentic"—reports, for example, on miracles or visions are. The discussion of the problem of *memoria* and its relationship to what may have *eigentlich* transpired would also take us too far from our limited project.[17] Moreover, the contents or the criteria of "authenticity" or "originality" changed in the course of time and so did the limits of tolerance for interference (restoration, stylizing, etc.) with a work of art or literature.[18]

In folklore, for example, the issue of authenticity is even more complicated. In the early nineteenth century Sándor Petőfi and others wrote poetic versions of folksongs, using motives supplied to them by family and friends. They were first received with reservation, but then became integral parts of national literary tradition. When they saw the success of their "folksongs" they asked themselves; why not write folktales, too. And so they did, thus preserving the earliest record of several motives and narrative structures. A couple of generations later, folklorists were able to collect variants based on them "from the mouth of the people" but never accepted the literate poets' version into the ethnographic canon as authentic.[19] The debate around *Kalevala* ran along two lines: it was fought not only over the question, whether (or how much of) the 22,795 lines were collected from "folk singers' mouths," but also, whether it is to be the main basis of the study of Finnish (regional? national?) folklore. Purist folklorists tried, as late as the 1970s, to replace the "unauthentic" *Kalevala* with an "authentic" collection of folk poetry.

Then, there is the confusion of the notion of authenticity and veracity; that is, giving the last of the aforementioned criteria a decisive role. In other words, if the contents are in some way fitting to a postulated or believed "truth," then the other criteria are subordinated to this or dismissed altogether. Or the other way around. So, for example, it was never in doubt that the *Gesta Hungarorum* of the notary of King Béla was written in the Middle Ages (whether in the eleventh or early thirteenth century was debated), but it was dismissed as a fable by the learned Karl Schlözer, for it contains incorrect data on Rus' principalities of the ninth century.[20] In contrast, Romanians of Transylvania based their political argument on the words of the anonymous notary serving their

17 See for example Patrick J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance. Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

18 More on this below in the essay by Sándor Radnóti at pp. 307–15; see also the study by Szilágyi, esp. pp. 218–21.

19 See Judit Gulyás, *"Mert ha irunk népdalt, mért ne népmesét?" A népmese az 1840-es évek magyar irodalmában* ["Once we write folksongs, why not folktales?" Folktale in the Hungarian literature of the 1840s], (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2010).

20 See pp. 98–9, below in the study by János M. Bak.

interest in acquiring equal status with other nationalities in the principality. A variant of the connection between "truth" and "text" is when an artifact is intended to complete received tradition not properly documented before. The prime example would be the famous Constantinian Donation, based partly on the established belief in the truth of the legend of Pope Sylvester I and partly on the logic of the emperor's grant that "should have been" written down in its own time—and the gap had to be filled if not.[21] The seventeenth-century forgery of the *Bull of Pope Sylvester* (this time of the second of that name) is a parallel to this: St. Stephen "deserved" all that the forged bull granted him, from having a cross carried before him to appointing the bishops without papal interference—even if no formal charter survived about this. This motivation was clearly present in the case of the flagship of modern forgeries and concoctions Ossian, or to the more honest attempt of Arany at a "naïve epic." As we have seen, this applies to a certain extent to *Kalevala* as well and even more to its Estonian counterpart, the *Kalevipoeg*, and many of the aforementioned artifacts. The idea of "there had to be such a thing" gives the forged, manipulated, concocted or mystified text a kind of authenticity.

Nineteenth-century scholars and authors believed that careful scrutiny and scholarship would offer answers about authenticity. The literary historian Ferenc Toldy was proud of not having written about anything he did not personally inspect and find authentic, yet he was taken by the courteous reception in Prague and vouched gladly for Hanka's texts that they were what they were told to be. The issue of literary authenticity is discussed in depth by Péter Dávidházi (pp. 31–55) using this example. Several "experts in Germanic art" were impressed by the "Lombard Treasure" after their visit to London and, we may presume, the lavish reception given to them by the art dealers. Some of Literáti's ancient Hungarian texts were hailed as great discoveries by respectable scholars. The other way around, Arany, studying carefully the work of Ipolyi for his planned epic on the mythical figure of Csaba, combined poetic license with "scientific" data to authenticate his poetic fantasy. Lönnrot started out collecting folk epics after having read Kristfrid Ganander's *Mythologia Fennica* and learning about Friedrich August Wolf's theories on the Homeric epics assuming that they were originally heroic songs and only later came to be written poems. In a vaguely similar way, when, in 1894, a heroic panorama of the "Entry of the Hungarians" was to be painted, the novelist Mór Jókai "divined" the imagery in poetic liberty, but the painters went to the museums in St. Petersburg to

21 This issue regarding medieval forgeries, but not irrelevant to the modern ones either, is elegantly summarized by Horst Fuhrmann "Von der Wahrheit der Fälscher," in *Fälschungen im Mittelalter*, vol. 1, 83–100 (Hanover: Hahn 1988), MGH Schriften 33.1.

study the actual dress and armor of steppe people in order to "authenticate" the details of an event thousands of years before.[22]

In the case of forged antiques the relationship between forgers and "authenticating" scholars is even more difficult. It can be shown that forgers followed carefully the results of excavations and scholarly debates and adjusted their handiworks to the most recent findings, thus satisfying the market which, in turn, was influenced by both scholarship and other motives of change in taste and fashion. That is what Szilágyi meant by giving the title to his study: "Wisest is Time."

Medievalism, to which almost all of the studies in this volume belong—and what has been the central theme of the project in which they were produced—is by now accepted shorthand for all those ideas and manifestations that in one way or another attempted to conjure up the pre-modern world of Europe, from romantic writings through the use of medieval elements in architecture to references to the Middle Ages supporting modern notions, such as nationalism.[23] In a wider sense, it also includes the use of medieval motifs in film, commerce, computer games and such. Here, we treat medievalism essentially in its literary and monumental aspects: texts and objects that were or are believed to originate in the centuries of European culture between the Fall of Rome and "modernity." In most of the cases, medieval matters, surrounded by the aura of a heroic past, are being summoned to serve very modern and contemporary concerns. But there was also another side of medievalism: Gothic romance, taking delight in or having fun with "medieval" horrors and obscenities, the world of Dracula, ghosts, torture chambers—a path followed by Baron de Lamothe-Langon, and some other contemporaries, such as Polidori, Byron, and Mary Shelley.

As discussed above, the variations of "medievalist" and pseudo-antique forgeries, falsifications, manipulations of texts or objects, confabulation, mystifications, products of poetic imagination, and so on are spread over a very wide palette. Some are outright bizarre, some highly puzzling, some aesthetically enjoyable, and some almost ridiculous. Nonetheless, their place in national memory may still be an issue of controversy.

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22 See János M. Bak and Anna Bak-Gara, "The Ideology of a 'Millennial Constitution' of Hungary," *East European Quarterly* 15 (1981), 307–26. Now in János M. Bak, *Studying Rulers and their Subjects*. ch. XVII (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010).

23 For a definition, see Richard Utz: "Medievalism," in Robert Bjork (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, vol. III, 1118–9 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). See also Umberto Eco, "Dreaming the Middle Ages," in *Travels in Hyperreality*, transl. by W. Weaver (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1986), 61–72.

The examples in this volume are taken from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century mainly from Northern, Central and Eastern Europe. The cultural movements of post-Napoleonic Europe, in Germany, France and elsewhere that are in the background of most of what is discussed below, are outlined in the Introduction of the first volume of this project.[24] In a wider sense, the recovery or establishment of national identity in the emerging independent states of Central Europe and the Baltic as well as the secularizing and reform-minded movements of the Jewish Enlightenment (*haskalah*) belong also to this intellectual background.

Competition among the peoples of Europe, also discussed in the first volume, was an important motive for the construction of an imaginary past: who has a more ancient history or culture. Macpherson's concern was to present a poetic corpus of the Scots, older and of greater aesthetic value than that of others (English, French, etc.). Ossian's verses and *Kalevala* were to match Homer and Virgil. Hanka's manuscripts were to prove literary qualities of Old Slavic in Czech lands, at least as "good" as German medieval epic poetry. The chalice of the invented leader Rabanban of the Székely (allegedly still in existence, even if "altered," so the *Chronicle of Csík*) was brought to them by a Scythian sage from ancient Greece. Samuel Literáti's runic texts and strange inscriptions were to present proof for an ancient Magyar past, and the *Veda Slovena* was to be even more ancient than the *Iliad*. The positive opinion of the alleged ninth-century Greek *strategos* about the "Barbarians," who were taken to be old Rus' in Hase's forged text, were to compliment the character of the ancestors of the Russians. The gold objects "from the Lombard royal grave" were to prove the superior artistic culture of Germanic ancestors. The "thousand years old" oak trunk Baublys bears the name of an alleged pagan god of the Lithuanians or even of their assumed ancestors, the Heruls, thus pointing to an ancient past, older than the Romans. A variant of this competition may be seen in the attempt at preserving the glorious or idyllic past in Skansen or by transplanting the beauties of the Middle Ages into the world of skyscrapers in New York.

Competition did not rule out mutual influence and imitation. The collections or mythical constructions in the Baltic lands all depended on *Kalevala*, and János Arany studied not only Hungarian mythology and folklore, but also Germanic ones and, above all, Firdowsi's *Shah-name* as a model for his planned national epic. The *Slavic-Sarmatian Chronicle* and the *Veda Slovena* had roots in contemporary learned writings from Friedrich Schlegel to Slavic philologists.[25]

24 Geary and Klaniczay (eds.), *Manufacturing Middle Ages*, 1–12.

25 See below in the study by Pavlína Rychterová, pp. 7, 11.

Wolf's *Prolegomena ad Homerum* in the background of *Kalevala* was already mentioned. Poška's oak-tree house had its predecessor in Goethe's *Borkenhaus* in the Weimar garden and was seen as a reduced sibling of the Temple of Sybil, a Neo-Classicist rotunda established in 1801 by Princess Izabela Czartoryska. A really amusing example of "borrowing" is suggested by Igor Medvedev: he proposes that Hase translated words and motives for his "discovered" Byzantine text from his friend Voltaire's *Candide* and *L'Ingénu*. Surely it was the best imaginable of all models, to paraphrase Candide's words to Pangloss. The manifold borrowings and imitations in the various forgeries or mystifications would need a more detailed study than could be done in the framework of this project.

Supply and demand, customers and sponsors were crucial for the production of various kinds of fakes and mystifications. Besides the general cultural-political climate, the forgeries were often engendered by actual needs. The *Second Cuman Law* emerged when the population, identified as Cumans, was fighting for its privileges in court and the Csík Székely phantasm may have been produced for a property dispute of the Sándor family. The Cuman's forgery was in a way successful. Even if not based on the fake law, their autonomy and free status was restored because it suited the interest of the count palatine. The *Sylvester Bull* was triggered by the desire to ground royal prerogative to appoint and transfer bishops in the face of papal opposition in a very concrete dispute between Vienna and Rome. It failed politically, because, ironically, it came to be published only some years after its invention when conditions had changed. These needs—the "market" for the forgeries—had their own history. Szilágyi shows that changes in modern art and contemporary politics were closely reflected in the choice of forgers which was adjusted according to the taste of their clientele.[26] The first exhibition of the "Lombard Treasure" in 1930 triggered an interest in the Dark Ages to which the forgers and their sponsors reacted swiftly by producing more and more impressive objects and advertising the find as the burial of one of the best known Lombard rulers: King Agilulf and his Catholic queen Theodelinda. It is very interesting how the fate of this forgery (and of authentic Lombard finds) reflected the divergent attitudes to the "German past" in Hitler's Reich and Mussolini's Italy.[27]

Another important element in the emergence of the different inventions was the aristocratic (or other elite) sponsorship of learning and of the establishment of a national antiquity. Dyjamentowski and Literáti lived on the

26 See the study by János György Szilágyi, below at pp. 173–223 passim.

27 See below in the study by Cristina La Rocca, pp. 224–66.

price of their artifacts bought by noble buyers and the manufacturers of fake antiques on the money of an even wider public of collectors. But Literáti would not have been successful had the rich collector Miklós Jankovich not been his first customer and lifelong sponsor. The original—not very sophisticated—"Lombard" forgers in Italy (?) needed the well-established London-New York art dealers, and the Durlachers' sponsorship to put their "treasure" on the market. Firkowicz was supported by Crimean Karaite tycoon, Simhah Babowicz, and Professor Hase wished to please (and milk) the Imperial Chancellor Count Nikolai P. Rumiantsev and his other friends in the Russian capital by presenting a "previously unknown" Byzantine text. Haselius's project for the Skansen was made possible through a land grant by the king of Sweden and was then underwritten by nobles and wealthy burghers. The Cloisters was built with the support of John D. Rockefeller, Václav Hanka and his teacher Dobrovský were valued guests in the palaces of Czech aristocrats and supporters of several projects of "national awakening."[28] This patronage even helped to overcome critical doubts regarding spurious texts when Dobrovský refrained from denouncing the Königinhof MS because it contained a poem praising an ancestor of Count Sternberg, one of his main sponsors.

The fate of the forgeries, "mystifications," and poetic fantasies was quite varied, too. Dyjamentowski's chronicle was denounced right away and never obtained wide acceptance in Poland, though Pavol Jozef Šafárik, the great Slovak slavist, was an admirer of *Prokosz* and the Indian-Slavic connection (also present in the *Veda Slovena*).[29] Literáti's pieces soon encountered skepticism and even though the National Library bought his pieces (posthumously), librarian Gábor Mezey finally realized that most (or all?) of them were fakes. Hanka's manuscripts became the supporting pillars of Czech national consciousness and despite critical voices caused the re-writing of the early history of Bohemia, even by a man as learned as František Palacký. It took a few generations, the change of the political climate, and the emergence of new kinds of scholarship before a young sociologist by the name of T.G. Masaryk, supported by Slavist colleagues, was able to put the last nail in the coffin of the forgeries. They had served their purpose in the foundation of Czech national self-identity, but by the end of the century, a new kind of national consciousness,

28 On this see e.g., Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A comparative analysis of the social composition of patriotic groups among the smaller European nation*, transl. by Ben Fowkes (New York: Columbia UP, 2000).

29 Mentioned by Jan Jakubec, *Dějiny literatury české* [History of Czech literature], (Prague: Laichter, 1929).

supported by new social classes had no need for them anymore. The *Sylvester Bull*—though its authenticity was questioned by some right away—was finally shown to be a rather crude forgery only a century and a half later.[30] The Lombard gold—although right away identified as a *plumpe Fälschung*[31]—was unequivocally proven fake only in 1942, and finally neither the British Museum nor the Metropolitan of New York wished to purchase it even when the price was cut to its quarter. (Its later fate is yet unknown.)

Baron de Lamothe-Langon's fictitious witches' Sabbaths have misled historians for about 150 years, getting wrong the chronology and the reasons for the emergence of the mythology of the diabolic witches' Sabbath, until Norman Cohn and Richard Kieckhefer, independently from each other, unmasked the forgery in 1975 and 1976.[32] This discovery, incidentally, forced the entire field to rethink the whole issue of the witches' Sabbath, and led to a number of important new monographs and debates around this issue.[33] Professor Hase's text had a similar survival rate. It was only in 1971 that the Ukrainian-American scholar Ihor Ševčenko unequivocally unmasked it—and other fakes by Hase—as forgeries.

On the other hand, *Kalevala* came to be the cornerstone of Finnish national identity and the date of Lönnrot's Preface to the first edition, 28 February (1835) is now a national holiday. A rock-opera based on Pumpurs's *Lāčplēsis*, premiered in 1988, played a role in the emerging oppositional culture during the last years of the Soviet domination of Latvia.[34] Folktales—partly collected and in a good part written by scholars and poets—are to our very days part of the basic literary canon, even though, by now, mainly for children and

30 János Karácsonyi, *Szent István király oklevelei és a Szilveszter-bulla: Diplomatikai tanulmány* [The charters of King St. Stephen and the Sylvester Bull: A Study in Diplomatics] (Budapest: MTA 1891), 178–216.

31 See below in the study by Cristina La Rocca, p. 346.

32 Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons. An Enquiry inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), 126–46; Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials: Their Foundations in Popular and Learned Culture, 1300–1500* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976).

33 Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies. Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath* (New York: Penguin, 1991); Nicole Jacques-Chaquin & Maxime Préaud (eds.), *Le sabbat des sorciers XV^e–XVIII^e siècles* (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1993); *L'imaginaire du sabbat. Édition critique des textes les plus anciens (1430 c.–1440 c.)*, réunis par Martine Ostorero, Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, Kathrin Utz Tremp, en collaboration avec Catherine Chène. Cahiers Lausannois d'histoire médiévale, 26 (Lausanne, 1999).

34 See Guntis Smidchens, "National Heroic Narratives in the Baltics as a Source for Nonviolent Political Action," *Slavic Review* 66 (2007), 484–508.

youth. Skansen and the New York Cloisters remain pilgrimage sites for millions wishing to cherish the objects from the old Swedish or the European medieval past. Finally, Firkowicz's tombstones and other forgeries contributed much to the historical myth of the Karaites, the ramifications of which are manifold and played a role both in their survival during the Holocaust and the expulsion of the Tatars from the Crimea under Stalin. That there are still some dilettante "historians", especially in post-Communist Eastern Europe, who not only believe the stories of the forgers of two hundred years ago—such as the Sumeric-Magyar connection in the eleventh-century prayers sold by Literáti[35]—but add their own to them, is another tale for another night.[36]

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35 See the reference to the book by Veronika Marton in the study by Benedek Láng, below at p. 138.

36 For some of these fantasies about and instrumentalizations of the Middle Ages, see e.g., János M. Bak, Jörg Jarnut, Pierre Monnet & Bernd Schneidmüller (eds.), *Gebrauch und Missbrauch des Mittelalters, 19.–21. Jahrhundert/Uses and Abuses of the Middle Ages: 19th–21st Century/Usages et Mésusages du Moyen Age du XIX^e au XXI^e siècle* (Munich: Fink, 2009) and the strange manifestations of "medievalism" in the exhibition curated by Gábor Klaniczay, *et al.*: "Contagious Middle Ages" shown in Budapest and Berkeley, California in 2006 and 2007; see http://w3.osaarchivum.org/files/exhibitions/middleages/ (accessed 15.6.2012).