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**Sascha Kansteiner (ed.), *Pseudoantike Skulptur I: Fallstudien zu antiken Skulpturen und ihren Imitationen. Transformationen der Antike*, 45. Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2016. Pp. viii, 131; 56 p. of plates. ISBN 9783110474527. \$112.00.**

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### [Publisher's Preview](#)

In the historiography of reception of antique monuments the creation of antique-like statues from the Renaissance onward has not yet played a great role. Of course, identifying forgeries has often formed an irritating topic, part of a never-ending story of art market and collectors' greed,<sup>1</sup> but the *mentalité* of making antique-like statues as a genuine product is a relatively new topic of investigation.<sup>2</sup> A research group in Berlin has taken up the theme and the slim volume under review is one of its results focusing on the 16th and 17th centuries. In his introduction, the editor describes which sort of new antiques were produced. In the first place, he stresses that fragmentary antique statues were completed according to the taste of those days: old and new parts (legs, arms, torsos, bases) were pieced together, so that a collector would possess a complete work of art which could properly be exposed in his private circles. Kansteiner calls these additions, of which the heads are the most important elements, 'Pseudoantike'. The distinction between ancient and new parts has not always been made in scholarship and sometimes conclusions about pseudo-antiques have been drawn as if they were genuine antiquities. A few torsos were also made in the baroque period, although this kind of addition is more frequently a modern phenomenon. Kansteiner exemplifies the research with the analysis of the Antinous Farnese in Naples, generally considered one of his early portraits, but which is rather a 1796 product of the restorer Albacini who, at a minimum, created arms, legs, and head. The addition of this last made the broken figure a real Antinous.

Claudia Kryza-Gersch discusses works by the the early 16<sup>th</sup>-century Venetian sculptor Simone Bianco which show a great 'Antikentreue' (p. 10). He met the commission of his patrons by making statues 'all'antica' which were emulations of antique figures. Kryza-Gersch reconstructs the intellectual and artistic milieu of the artist and considers the famous poet Pietro Aretino instrumental for Bianchi's oeuvre. Bianchi apparently never

intended to make forgeries and/or to sell his works as genuine antiques. Otherwise, the author concludes, he would have earned much more money.

The editor himself presents the phenomenon of 'Teil-Imitationen', that is, baroque works which showed a number of antique characteristics next to modern traits. A male bust in Fiesole, for instance, comes from the old Giustiniani collection in Rome, where it was acquired as ancient in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. The same is true for a replica of the Apollo Centocelle Torso in the Lansdowne collection. Such a head as that of the torso could form the inspiration for further replicas like that made by Carlo Albacini around 1780 for the eponymous Apollo Centocelle Torso. Kansteiner debunks various statues ordinarily seen as antique, and his detailed criticism is convincing — it might make modern scholars suspicious, when they study old collections with many pieced together statues having a venerably old pedigree, like those made as souvenirs of the Grand Tour in Great Britain and for the traditional galleries in Rome. Kansteiner also labels some recent acquisitions as forgeries. Among the artists involved he almost condemns the 'gerissenen' Camuccini brothers who, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, saw no problem in selling new products as antique monuments for extremely high prices (pp. 35-36).

This research may also go in the opposite direction: pieces traditionally considered post-antique on the basis of presumed anomalies can be ancient. Federico Rausa presents two athletes, now in Dresden and in the Port Sunlight museum, exported from Rome in 1739 and 1787 and usually seen as 18<sup>th</sup>-century forgeries. He investigates their pedigree and concludes that the Dresden figure, despite some iconographic peculiarities, is genuine, coming from a Roman villa outside Porta del Popolo, just like the piece in the Lady Lever Art Gallery, which was found before 1615, the year it entered the collection Cardelli in Rome as a torso with its head preserved. Rausa argues the figures' genuineness in an exemplary way.

Portraits were beloved collector's items and therefore subject to imitations, forgeries, and new antique-like creations. The relief of a dying Demosthenes (18<sup>th</sup> century) and a Chrysispos head (normally seen as a forgery, but probably antique) are presented by Emmanuel Voutiras as examples of the interest for ancient authors and philosophers from the Baroque onwards. The narrative relief cannot be antique because of the history it depicts, the herm was probably anonymous and was provided with Chrysispos' name when it came into the collection of cardinal Albani in Rome. Katharina Lorenz concentrates on the 'Ottaviano Giovinetto' (young Octavian) in the Vatican Museums. She meticulously relates the methodological approaches of Bernouilli (portrait showing Octavian's character), Wickhoff (portrait on the brink of new art concepts), Sieveking (like Bernouilli), and Brendel (portrait types marking specific events or changes in an emperor's life). After Mingazzini judged the head a forgery, the discussion changed, often indeed dismissing its identification as a young Octavian (or one of Augustus' grandsons), until Bignamini could reconstruct the pedigree of the piece, found in Ostia in 1800-1802. Similar heads had played a certain role in the various views. Lorenz therefore

underlines the importance of this sort of provenance research — an entirely justified plea also advocated by other scholars in this volume.

Carlo Gasparri reconstructs the compilation (1884-1885) of the catalogue of sculptures in the Torlonia collection by two members of the well-known Roman archaeologist families of the Visconti, Pietro Ercole and Carlo Ludovico. Apparently many entries were written by Gherardo Ghirardini. Gasparri points out many mistakes in the mentions of provenance (older collections like the Giustiniani and Albani), condition, find spot, and genuineness. Apparently there was a hidden agenda in the Torlonia family, 'Fälschungsaktion' (p. 95), to ensure the genuineness and/or to 'enhance' the quality of their pieces, or to conceal the sometimes rather irregular acquisition, partly by suggesting that a piece was found on Torlonia properties. More serious were the gypsum replicas exposed in Villa Albani to fill the lacunae caused by the transport of the originals to the Museo Torlonia (list at p. 99; pls 38-45). In later research some of these casts were (re-)published as genuine antiquities.

The last contribution, by Hans-Rupprecht Goette, discusses four pseudo-antique sarcophagi. These are real forgeries made from plain Roman chests. Their (almost) smooth surfaces show elaborate fighting scenes whose sources are easy to recognize and which have been sold as antique 'Schlachtsarkophage'. Goette suggests that close study of other sarcophagi might yield similar cases. A peculiar example is a strigil sarcophagus in the museum of Santa Barbara with a central motif depicting the San Ildefonso Group in shallow relief. On the sides are mounted warriors, taken from one of the afore-mentioned battle sarcophagi, which alarmed Goette and prompted him to study this work in California as a forgery. Unfortunately, he does not mention whether or not the museums bought these pieces as genuine sarcophagi for a high prize.

The book is well edited, with good text figures and black-and-white plates. A bibliography of frequently cited (but not all) publications and a museum index conclude the volume. It may be food for thought for the keepers of museum collections housing pieces that have old provenances, contain restorations and look very old, both by style as by surface condition. Close inspection and cleaning can do a lot (cf. p. 103).

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**Notes:**

1. See most recently, S. Lehmann (ed.), *Authentizität und Originalität antiker Bronzefiguren: ein gefälschtes Augustusbildnis, seine Voraussetzungen und sein Umfeld / Authenticity and originality of ancient bronze portraits: a forged portrait of Augustus, its prerequisites, and its surroundings*. Dresden: Sandstein Verlag, 2015.

2. One of the anonymous reviewers pointed at a similar pioneering study: Raffaella Bosso, *Alcune osservazioni su Piranesi restauratore e sui Vasi e Candelabri: il recupero dell'Antico tra eredità culturale ed attività imprenditoriale*, in Siri Sande & Lasse Hodne (eds.), *Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia* 20 (n.s. 6), 2006, 211-239.

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