
Drawing upon a vast array of evidence from fifteenth- and sixteenth-century sources, Christopher S. Wood analyzes the shift in interpretive modes for older artifacts from one dominated by the “substitutability” of one object for another to a mode that made the artifact a witness to its own time and production. In so doing, he attempts to bring sense to the large number of misidentifications and inaccurate claims made by scholars in late medieval and early modern Germany, in order to see these not merely as mistakes, falsifications, or aberrations, but as “moments where the deep structure of thinking about artifacts and time are revealed” (12).

Wood starts with the tale of Conrad Celtis (1459–1508), who claimed to have found ancient druid statues in the Böhltegebirge. As Wood demonstrates, however, these “druids” were likely Biblical figures on the Premonstratensian monastery church at Speinshart. It seems unlikely that Celtis could have missed this context, and that he easily could have determined that the statues were not ancient remains, but rather were more recent creations. Moreover, two contemporaries of Celtis accepted his testimony and incorporated it into their own publications as evidence of an ancient druid presence in Germany, even though they also were probably aware that the information was likely wrong. Their credulity provided the impetus for Wood’s monograph.

In looking at the broader context of Celtis’ “discovery,” Wood finds an “epochal shift in thinking about the relationship between artifacts and time” (12). The early stage of an archeological view of artifacts was growing out of the advances in print technology, both in movable type (which systematized scholarship and its dissemination) and the woodcut (which “captured the item and created a new relationship between the scholar and the artifact).

Critical to Wood’s interpretation is the notion of “substitutability,” in which one artifact could be substituted for an earlier one and still be considered direct evidence of ancient events or an “originary reference point” (15). On the other hand, an artwork is a historical document, attached to a specific time and place, and thus a copy could not be the same as the original. Artifacts could gain their referential context through replica chains (one item replacing another), typology (something that clearly stood in place of something else), labels (identifying the special nature of the artifact), or onomastic exercises (based on etymologies of names). Wood claims that “[o]ver the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries substitution (which is basically a system of forgery without criminality) was replaced by fictionality (which is basically a system of lying without dishonesty)” (107).

Citing examples from the attempts to undergird institutional history through retrospective tombs to the creation of pseudo-ancient scripts, to the description of paintings and engravings by Albrecht Dürer, Hans Burgkmair, Urs Graf, and many others, Wood divides his results under the broad headings of “Forgery,” “Replica,” and “Fiction.” He describes in detail the tomb of Saint Simpertus from Saints Ulrich and Afra in Augsburg and the never-completed tomb of Maximi-
lian I. The search for classical Greek and Roman models led to renewed interest in Romanesque arches and Roman scripts in epigraphs, even though many of the models found were of much more recent vintage than generally realized.

Wood provides an incredible amount of evidence to support his arguments, drawing heavily on evidence from sculpture, paleography, epigraphy, painting, engraving, and several other sources. This is a dense, challenging text that rewards the reader with both detail and new directions for research. It offers the opportunity to rethink fundamental shifts between medieval and modern modes of thought in the German-speaking world.

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This edition of Coleridge's translation of Goethe's Faust deserves respect for its excellence of presentation. Coleridge specialists will be joined by scholars in English and in German, linguists, and translators interested in versions of the same work, textual editors, and statisticians with competence in stylometric analysis. A committee would be needed to evaluate this book adequately, but I find it a definitive contribution to the field for its impeccable research and clarity of editorial organization.

All the greater is the achievement for the muddle surrounding Coleridge's work. Too long to recount here, the short version is that Coleridge was commissioned to translate Faust in 1814, reneged, then published it anonymously with a different press in 1821—probably, as Coleridge never acknowledged authorship and, in fact, explicitly denied ever having undertaken a translation of Faust (xxx). However, by laying out a chronology of all the English versions from 1814 to 1865, by clarifying cross-relations among them, and by explaining clearly why Coleridge might not have wanted his name associated with Goethe's, Frederick Burwick and James McKusick move speculation to probability and probability to near-certainty. Coleridge had already created admired translations of Schiller's Piccolomini and The Death of Walleinstein, so his command of German and his poetic ability were, of course, not in question, and those translations bear strong stylistic similarity to the anonymous Faust. More evidence for Coleridge's authorship of this 1821 Faust emerges from McKusick's comparative stylometric analysis (312–30), but if that were the only argument, however persuasive, I might be left impressed but unconvinced, since stylometric methods are somewhat unfamiliar and challenging. As it is, though, the combination of time line, analysis of relevant correspondence and entries in the Table Talk, evaluation of Coleridge's responses to Madame de Staël's précis of Faust in De L'Allemagne, and statistical breakdown bring the probability of Coleridge's authorship as close to certainty as it likely can be in default of documentary proof.