

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00073-5 - The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake: Latin Pseudepigrapha in Context

Irene Peirano

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

The use of a pseudonym unites a taste for masks and mirrors, for indirect exhibitionism, and for controlled histrionics with delight in invention, in borrowing, in verbal transformation, in onomastic fetishism. Clearly, using a pseudonym is already a poetic activity, and the pseudonym is already somewhat like a work. If you can change your name, you can write.

—G. Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, 53–4

## MISCELLANEOUS “SPURIOSITY”

This book deals with a category of texts that have traditionally lived on the margins of classical scholarship. Pseudonymous writings or *pseudepigrapha* – Greek for “wrongly” or “falsely entitled” – can be defined as texts that are suspected, and in many cases proven, not to be the work of the author to whom they are ascribed.<sup>1</sup> The traditional attribution of such writings is typically challenged on the basis of internal evidence, such as blatant incongruities with the style of the purported author, external testimony or both. The bases on which the provenance of a work might be misidentified are so extremely varied that the term “pseudepigraphic” is better taken as an indication of a text’s problematic status within the canon than as a descriptive label attached to writings that share specific formal characteristics. For the pseudonymity, or wrongful authorial ascription, of a text is sometimes primary and organic to the work itself and sometimes secondary, the result of the text’s reception history. Thus the term *pseudepigraphon* applies both to works that falsely purport to have a

<sup>1</sup> Speyer (1971) is the most comprehensive study of Graeco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian *pseudepigrapha*. Guzman Guerra (2005), Cerri (2000), Syme (1971b), Paratore (1971), Ronconi (1955), Clift (1945), and Gudeman (1894) survey the different typologies of *pseudepigrapha*. Zwierlein (1999) deals with questions of authenticity in relation to texts from the Augustan and early Tiberian periods. Brox (1977) is a collection of essays on Judaeo-Christian and classical *pseudepigrapha*.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00073-5 - The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake: Latin Pseudepigrapha in Context

Irene Peirano

Excerpt

[More information](#)

specific provenance and to texts mistakenly attributed to a given author by readers and editors.<sup>2</sup> The ambiguity of the term is intrinsic in its very etymology: unlike the English term “forgery,” which implies an intent to deceive, the word *pseudepigraphon* leaves the question of authorial intentionality ambiguous, as the adjective *pseudes* can mean both “wrong” (hence “mistakenly attributed”) and “deceitful” (hence “deceitfully attributed”).<sup>3</sup> From a historical point of view, the term “*Pseudepigrapha*” has been used in biblical studies to denote a diverse group of Jewish religious writings that are excluded from the Biblical canon.<sup>4</sup> In the case of Old Testament *Pseudepigrapha*, the label “pseudepigraphic” is clearly a function not of authorial misattribution or self-presentation but of canonical status. Thus, while a text’s false claim to authorship might be used to exclude a work from the canon, there exist several canonical books that purport to be written by one of the patriarchs, as in the case of the *Deuteronomy*, which is written in the persona of Moses, or by one of the apostles, as, for example, in the case of the letters of Paul, some of which are believed to be the work not of Paul but of one of his disciples.<sup>5</sup> Conversely, only some of the extra-canonical Jewish texts that go under the name of *Pseudepigrapha*

<sup>2</sup> Thus in his essay on the Attic orator Deinarchus, where the word *pseudepigraphon* is first attested in the context of a discussion of textual attribution, the Augustan writer Dionysius of Halicarnassus uses *pseudepigraphon* of misattributed speeches, as for example private speeches composed before the orator was as much as ten years old (*Dein.* 13.1), but none of the examples of *pseudepigrapha* that he provides include speeches written in the persona of the orator to be passed off as his work. For a review of the different kinds of classical texts that fall under the broad category of *pseudepigrapha* see Speyer (1971) 13–44 and Eco (1990) 174–202, with essential discussion of the theoretical issues raised by the various ways of defining and categorizing *pseudepigrapha*.

<sup>3</sup> Nagel and Wood (2010) 275–87, esp. 283 on the history of the term forgery. Constable (1983) on medieval forgery; Ruthven (2001) 34–41 and Groom (2002) 16–50 in relation to Anglo-American literature are very helpful on the problematic overlapping of terms such as “fake,” “forgery,” “fiction,” “pastiche,” “counterfeit,” and “hoax.”

<sup>4</sup> By the term *Pseudepigrapha*, scholars have referred to texts that are excluded from both the Old Testament and the so-called *Apocrypha* – from the Greek “hidden, secret things” – a collection of Jewish works included in the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible known as the Septuagint but excluded all or in part from the Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic canons. Old Testament *Pseudepigrapha* are collected by Charlesworth (1983–5) and Old Testament *Apocrypha* by Sparks (1984). Texts that are excluded from the New Testament are usually referred to as New Testament *Apocrypha*: McDonald (2007) 342–9; a collection of them is found in Elliott (1993) and Schneemelcher (1991–2). On Judaeo-Christian pseudepigraphic writings and the history of the term, see Metzger (1972), Meade (1986), Baum (2001), K. D. Clarke (2002), Mülke (2007) and Frey *et al.* (2009). Owing to the constraints of space and time, I have excluded from the present study the phenomenon of authorial impersonation in religious writing.

<sup>5</sup> To avoid the issues raised by this use of *Pseudepigrapha* to denote extra-canonical works irrespective of their literary presentation and authorial ascription, Metzger (1972) 4 proposes “to make the term ‘apocrypha’ include all extra-canonical writings, and to use ‘pseudepigraphic’ as a literary category, whether the book is regarded as canonical or apocryphal.” For a critical assessment of the use of the term “*Pseudepigrapha*” in religious studies, see Kraft (2009) esp. 3–60 and 93–106.

are properly described as authorial impersonations, while others are simply anonymous.<sup>6</sup>

The Graeco-Roman pseudepigraphic corpus embraces a continuum of widely diverse misattributed texts that range in the definitions of their interpreters from forgeries, to playful hoaxes, to fakes, to anonymous misattributed writings, to derivative works that became attributed to the author whose style they sought to recreate. In this study, I focus on a specific subcategory of Roman *pseudepigrapha* that I call “fakes”: texts which self-consciously purport either to be the work of the author to whom they are attributed or to be written at a different time from that in which they were composed. In these texts, pseudonymity is an integral part of the work, not an allographic phenomenon resulting from the intervention of later editors, scribes, or compilers. Broadly speaking, fakes claim authorship either through explicit authorial statements (the so-called *sphragis*) or through subtle allusion to and manipulation of the master-author’s text. The aim of such intertexts, however, cannot be described as simply that of giving a general stylistic patina to the work. On the contrary, impersonations typically purport to be the work of a given author, either by reworking lines that are specifically *autobiographical* in content in the original or, as in the case of some of the pseudo-Virgilian poems in the *Catalepton*, by foisting onto the authorial persona the attributes of the characters in the master-author’s work. Thus the allusions function in essence as a signature: they help readers to identify the text as a pseudo-autobiographical narrative centered on the persona of the master-author by forging links with his original works and autobiographical modes of understanding them. A second category of fakes, and one that I analyze in Chapter 5 in relation to the *Consolatio ad Liviam* and *Elegiae in Maecenatem*, are texts in which the fabrication of provenance focuses not on authorship but on chronological setting and ambiance. These chronological fictions, as I call them, purport to be addressed to famous personalities of the Augustan period – respectively Livia and Maecenas – and to have been composed on a specific historical occasion that is in fact significantly earlier than their actual date of composition. In these cases, the presence of anachronisms of various kinds often reveals the poem to be a retrospective fiction.

This precise definition of my field of enquiry is necessary since within the corpus of Roman *pseudepigrapha*, many texts commonly considered pseudepigraphic are pseudonymous or anonymous in nature but do not

<sup>6</sup> Among Old Testament *Pseudepigrapha*, for example, the Testaments of the Patriarchs are anonymous but do not make false claims of authorship.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00073-5 - The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake: Latin Pseudepigrapha in Context

Irene Peirano

Excerpt

[More information](#)

necessarily fabricate a false narrative about their authorship and chronology. Several of the works transmitted in the *Appendix Vergiliana* cannot be by Virgil, but nothing suggests that these poems were composed with the deliberate intent of being passed off as Virgilian.<sup>7</sup> Occasionally, texts that are transmitted as part of an author's collection are suspected (if not proven) of being spurious. Yet, to the extent that the question of their nature and purpose has been raised at all, very few of these texts would be categorized as authorial impersonations, even by those who deny their authenticity.<sup>8</sup> Ettore Paratore aptly defined this type of composition "pseudofakes" ("pseudo-falsi"), texts that get attached to a famous name in the course of transmission but were not demonstrably conceived as fakes.<sup>9</sup> The phenomenon of secondary misattribution or pseudo-fakery is in itself extremely multifaceted. Oftentimes, anonymous texts might become attached to the corpus of whichever writer they are closest to in style or genre.<sup>10</sup> The *corpus caesarianum*, for example, includes both Caesar's own works – the *Bellum Civile* and the first seven books of the *Bellum Gallicum* – and those of his continuators dealing with events of Caesar's career outside of the scope of his own narrative.<sup>11</sup> Among the works transmitted under Ovid's name, the *Nux* and the *Halieutica* are undoubtedly written in the Ovidian manner, but their author nowhere explicitly casts himself as Ovid.<sup>12</sup> The widespread habit of linguistic imitation of well-established authors both in rhetorical education and in poetic practice accounts for the stylistic patina of these works, and need not imply an intent on the part of the author to impersonate the writer whose style he imitates, let alone to deceive his audience. Furthermore, in some cases, different kinds of *pseudepigrapha* are combined together in the course of

<sup>7</sup> I discuss in depth the case of the *Appendix Vergiliana* in Chapter 2. The most obvious example is the *Elegiae in Maecenatem*, which I discuss in Chapter 5.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Ovid, *Am.* 3.5 (the so-called *Somnium*), on which see Kenney (1969) and more recently McKeown (2002). The most tangled case of authenticity in relation to a collection is no doubt the case of Ovid's *Heroides*, esp. 15 (the Sappho epistle), on which see Tarrant (1981) and Rosati (1996), but see also Kenney (1996) on the double-epistles, and Knox (1986) and Hinds (1993) on 12. On issues of authenticity in the *Heroides*, see Courtney (1965), (1997), Knox (1995) 5–14, Hunter (2002) 89–94, and Barchiesi (1996c).

<sup>9</sup> Paratore (1971) 22.

<sup>10</sup> See Speyer (1971) 39–44 and Brockington (1953) on the Old Testament.

<sup>11</sup> The non-Caesarian works include the eighth book of the *Bellum Gallicum* by Hirtius, the *Bellum Alexandrinum*, *Bellum Hispaniense* and *Bellum Africum*: Barwick (1938) and Pascucci (1973). The real author of these last three was unknown already to Suetonius (*Iul.* 56.1), though he speculates that Hirtius may have composed them.

<sup>12</sup> See Knox (2009) 210–16; see also Lee (1958) on the *Nux*; Richmond (1959), (1962) and (1976) on the *Halieutica*, and Richmond (1981a) on the *Nux*, the *Halieutica*, and the *Consolatio ad Liviam*. I discuss the last in Chapter 5.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00073-5 - The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake: Latin Pseudepigrapha in Context

Irene Peirano

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Miscellaneous “spuriousity”*

5

the manuscript transmission: examples of this phenomenon include the Anacreontic and Theognidean anthologies, which contain an original kernel of genuine works by Anacreon and Theognis around which different kinds of anonymous texts written in a similar style were gathered, some but by no means all of which can be described as authorial impersonations.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, among religious *pseudepigrapha*, the late-antique Sibylline oracles, a miscellaneous collection of *uaticinia ex euentu* written by Jews and Christians in imitation of Pagan oracles, comprise some texts that purport to be prophecies uttered by the Sibyl, while others are written in the same genre but do not overtly claim to be the work of the prophetess.<sup>14</sup>

In these instances, the term *pseudepigraphon*, which is commonly used to denote these texts, is really a synonym for *adespoton* (lit. “without a master”), a Greek word used of works whose author is unknown: the attribution of these anonymous works to authors such as Virgil tells us more about the history of the creation and transmission of the Latin canon than it does about authorial self-presentation and the ancient audience’s understanding of the texts. The author to whom the anonymous texts are attributed acts as a sort of “organizing principle” around which works of uncertain authorship are gathered. The attribution, however fanciful it may seem, invests the anonymous texts with the authority normally bestowed on an *auctor* and allows for analytical engagement with a text that, if nameless, would have remained outside critical discourse.<sup>15</sup> Modern scholarship is to some extent still influenced by the same set of principles since the sole objective of many of the studies of *pseudepigrapha* that dispute conventional attributions is to replace the traditional ascription with a different one and they often do so on the basis of conjecture alone.<sup>16</sup> This drive to “authorize” otherwise anonymous texts is nothing new. Closely related to this use of authorial ascription as a mechanism to confer authority on a text is the phenomenon of pseudonymity in religious, philosophical, and scientific literature in which texts are attributed either by the authors themselves or by subsequent readers to the founding figure of the movement or school to which they belong. Thus, starting from

<sup>13</sup> Rosenmeyer (1992) esp. 115–46, and West (1974) 40–61 on the Theognidean sylloge. The case of the epigrams attributed to Seneca in the Latin Anthology is comparable: Prato (1964), Zurli (2000), and Holzberg (2004a).

<sup>14</sup> Lightfoot (2007) esp. 51–5.

<sup>15</sup> See Minnis (1984) for the role of the concept of authorship during the Middle Ages. Important remarks are also found in Curtius (1958) 515–18. On the history of anonymity, see Mullan (2007).

<sup>16</sup> This tendency is exemplified among others by Radford (1921) and (1923) making a case for the Ovidian authorship of the *Appendix Vergiliana*, and Skutsch (1901a) and (1906), most recently followed by Gall (1999), who argued that the *Ciris* was written by Cornelius Gallus.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00073-5 - The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake: Latin Pseudepigrapha in Context

Irene Peirano

Excerpt

[More information](#)

the sixth century BC, “Orpheus” became the favorite name to be attached to texts of a metaphysical nature.<sup>17</sup> The Hippocratean corpus attracted a diverse group of medical writings.<sup>18</sup> The third century Neo-Platonist and author of the *Life of Pythagoras*, Iamblichus, explains the phenomenon while commenting on the widespread habit on the part of Pythagoreans of attributing their treatises to the master himself:<sup>19</sup>

καλὸν δὲ καὶ τὸ πάντα Πυθαγόρα ἀνατιθέναι τε καὶ ἀπονέμειν καὶ μηδεμίαν περιποιεῖσθαι δόξαν ἰδίαν ἀπὸ τῶν εὕρισκομένων, εἰ μή ποῦ τι σπάνιον· πάνυ γὰρ δὴ τινές εἰσιν ὅλῳι, ὧν ἴδια γνωρίζεται ὑπομήματα.

It was a fine thing that they even attributed and assigned everything to Pythagoras and did not keep as their own any doctrines among those that they had discovered, except in rare cases; for there are in fact altogether very few people whose works are acknowledged as their own. (Iamblichus, *Vita Pythagorae* 198–9 ed. Deubner)

It is clear that in these contexts authorship has a radically different meaning from the modern notion of the author as possessing individuality of style and intention, and historical subjectivity. In the cases of Orpheus, Musaeus, and, later, Hippocrates and Pythagoras, authorial attribution, far from being the formulation of a traceable authorial source, is a required marker of discourse that wants to impose itself as “truth.” These figures encapsulate a given mode of scientific and religious thought and were appealed to as sources in order to give validity and authority to historical instantiations of such discourse.

All *pseudepigrapha* illustrate from different angles the flexibility of categories of authorship in different traditions and chronological periods, and the corresponding need to investigate the cultural specificity and the literary diversity of their instantiations. Fakes, in particular, engaging directly as they do with the literary past, shed light on the ambivalences and complexities of the reception of that very same canon from which they are so often marginalized. Looking at fakes not as inferior counterfeit objects, but as creative readings and interpretations of the master-author’s texts, allows us to gain a better understanding of their position within the Roman culture of literary imitation. In his account of *imitatio* in oratory, Quintilian

<sup>17</sup> On the attribution of works to Orpheus, see West (1983) 5.

<sup>18</sup> On the Hippocratean question, see Lloyd (1975). W. D. Smith (1990) collects ancient writings, letters, and speeches composed in the persona of Hippocrates.

<sup>19</sup> The issue of authorship among the Pythagoreans is further complicated by the fact that writings were composed and then attributed not only to the master, but also to his pupils: Burkert (1972) 218–38.

speaks of writers who think that reproducing the manner of a model is best accomplished by reusing his expressions or rhythm.<sup>20</sup> Speaking of the poet Passenus Paulus, Pliny the Younger praises him for writing elegies in the style of Propertius and lyric poetry in the manner of Horace.<sup>21</sup> Fakes illustrate the phenomenon whereby in the process of literary imitation, a canonical author and his texts are not simply a repository of praise-worthy passages but become a kind of language in which readers learn to express themselves to produce new texts in the style of that author.<sup>22</sup> Literary fakes stand in a continuum with these practices, being extreme manifestations of what is nevertheless a basic component of ancient practices of *imitatio* – the process whereby in writing *like* Cicero or Virgil, students and practitioners were invited to identify and become on some level one with the authorial figure.<sup>23</sup> Yet, for the composers of the fakes, the goal is to become neither better than the model, nor simply *like* the model, but the model himself. To use a phrase coined by Elaine Gazda, the Roman “ethos of emulation” in all its manifestations and inherent complexities provides an essential framework in which to understand authorial impersonations.<sup>24</sup>

## THE READER IN THE TEXT: FAKES AS RECEPTION

Scholarship on classical *pseudepigrapha* has generally consisted of studies of individual texts aimed at proving or disproving the conventional attribution and dating, with little or no attention paid to how the texts function in and of themselves as literary artifacts.<sup>25</sup> The centrality of the concept of the author in Classical Philology (and elsewhere) is what is largely at the root of this scholarly neglect. The fake is an intruder who, by pretending to pass as the master-author, threatens the scholar’s attempt

<sup>20</sup> Quintilian 10.2.13 “therefore, most people think that if they have picked out a few words from the speeches or some fixed rhythmical feet, they have reproduced in a prodigious way what they have read (*mire a se quae legerunt effingi arbitrantur*).” On the concept of *effingere*, see further Reiff (1959) 101 and n. 4.

<sup>21</sup> Pliny, *Ep.* 9.22.2: “He had lately turned his attention to lyric poetry, in which he reproduces the manner of Horace, just as in that other genre [sc. elegy] he has followed that of the other poet [i.e., Propertius] (*in quibus ita Horatium ut in illis illum alterum effingit*).” Cf. *Ep.* 1.10.5.

<sup>22</sup> On this distinction, see Barchiesi (1984) 91–122.

<sup>23</sup> See Kaster (1998) on the process of “becoming Cicero” in Imperial declamation.

<sup>24</sup> Gazda (1995) 123 with reference to “the variety of Roman behaviors and cultural practices that rely in one way or another upon the strategy of repetition to produce a desired effect.” Hers is a fundamental study of repetition and emulation in the visual realm. Cf. also Gazda (2002) and Perry (2005).

<sup>25</sup> With the exception of the general surveys cited in n. 1, which focus largely on issues of categorization.



to reconstruct the writer's original personality, style, and poetic career. Richard Hunter has described the ideal picture of the author that the traditional commentator aims to produce and the fake threatens as "a closed circle, its circumference guarded by internal cross-references and parallels."<sup>26</sup> The drive to recover the genuine style, personality, and literary career of an author has traditionally been accompanied by a "policing" attitude towards the canon.<sup>27</sup> Perceived as a threat to the philological enterprise, texts that on the basis of either internal or external evidence are suspected of being fakes are taken into consideration only for as long as it takes either to rehabilitate them as authentic or to banish them from the canon as unwanted impostors. By exposing the intruder/spurious, the scholar defends the philological enterprise and reasserts the circle.

In turn, these authorless texts have for the most part "resisted" literary analysis, tied as this has traditionally been to the process of constructing and reconstructing authorial identity. This policing approach to authorially unstable texts has brought with it an almost legalistic tone of harsh moral and aesthetic condemnation. The presence of the spurious works in the canon is imagined as the product at worst of the deception of ill-intentioned impostors or at best of unscrupulous and uneducated medieval compilers who let the erroneously attributed works slip into the corpus. The result of traditional critical enquiry into authorship and attribution tends to re-establish the critic who performs it as the unbiased adjudicator of truth and thus as superior both to the gullibility of former editors and to the moral dishonesty of the fraudster, the intentions of whom become more interesting than the work itself.

Another reason for the restricted scholarly focus on issues of attribution in the study of *pseudepigrapha* lies in the uncomfortable affinity between philology and forgery. As Anthony Grafton first pointed out, the literary critic and the forger are in effect unspoken *rivals* operating within a similar set of conventions:<sup>28</sup> both rely on a set of rules and methods that they deem characteristic of a given writer or historical period; both share the common aim of revising or restoring the past. This similarity of intent and method is also evident in other areas: the forger, like the critic, addresses and supplements lacunae in the text and provides answers, which he seeks

<sup>26</sup> Hunter (2002) 97.

<sup>27</sup> A phenomenon eloquently summarized by Grafton (1990) 102: "the image conjured up is of a train in which Greeks and Latins, spurious and genuine authorities sit side by side until they reach a stop marked 'Renaissance.' Then grim-faced humanists climb aboard, check tickets, and expel fakes in hordes through doors and windows alike."

<sup>28</sup> Grafton (1990).



*The reader in the text: fakes as reception*

9

to market as authoritative facts. The forger therefore effectively defeats or is defeated by the critic at his own game.

Moving away from the narrow focus on authenticity and attribution that has so far characterized the study of *pseudepigrapha*, I investigate instead some aspects of the *cultural* work performed by these texts in the original circumstances of production (in so far as these can be recovered). Rather than exhausting my enquiry into problems of authorship at the point at which the text convicts itself as an imposture, I take its spurious ascription as the start and the object of my analysis. It is one of the contentions of this study that fakes can and should be studied as reception texts. I here primarily employ the term “reception” in a sense more narrow than that in which it is typically found. Thus this study is not exclusively focused on reception as a historical phenomenon – what Lorna Hardwick and Christopher Stray have aptly defined as “receptions,” namely, “the ways in which Greek and Roman material has been transmitted, translated, excerpted and interpreted, rewritten, re-imagined and represented.”<sup>29</sup> For sure, authorial impersonations can be read as creative commentaries on the persona and the poetry of the master-author and hence as another moment in the history of the reception of his texts. In this respect, fakes benefit from being read against the background of ancient discussions of the author impersonated, as I argue in detail in the chapters dealing with the pseudo-Virgilian *Catalepton*, *Ciris*, and *Culex*. Fakes can be approached and tested in a way similar to the manner in which recent scholarship has analyzed the Greek biographical tradition: more for what they tell us about how biographers read the great masters of Latin literature than for the information they can provide about the lives of the ancient authors.<sup>30</sup>

This study, however, seeks to do more than show how fakes fit in a continuum of “receptions” of canonical authors. Rather, I use fakes as a privileged site from which to explore reception as a constellation of microscopic textual moves, as the creative process through which readers – and in particular, a specific set of readers, Roman audiences of the early Imperial

<sup>29</sup> Hardwick and Stray (2008) 1. This model of reception is fundamentally focused on constructing a model of literary history, one in which the meaning of a text is not a transcendental object to be comprehended but an ever changing construction based on the historical and cultural assumptions of its readers, i.e., to prove that “Virgil” is “nothing other than what readers have made of him over the centuries”: Martindale (1993) 10. Jauss’ essay “Literary history as a challenge to literary theory,” in Jauss (1982) 3–45, is a foundational study of reception as an approach to literary history.

<sup>30</sup> Beecroft (2010), Graziosi (2002), Lefkowitz (1981), Fairweather (1974) and (1984).

period – make meaning from a text in the act of reading.<sup>31</sup> “Reception,” in other words, is here understood as a study of the “phenomenology of reading,” the strategies by which meaning is produced.<sup>32</sup> If, as Wolfgang Iser and others have argued, the text is not a fixed transcendental entity to be recovered by the critic but rather the instantiation of the responses of its readers, we can think of authorial impersonations as proactive and creative manifestations of such responses.<sup>33</sup> In as much as no story can ever be told in its entirety, every text has gaps, blockages, omissions, and unexpected turns that give the narrative its dynamism and ultimately its meaning.<sup>34</sup> The text comes into being precisely when the reader fills in the gaps left in the narrative and bridges its omissions.<sup>35</sup> Fakes are in effect creative and performative instantiations of such a strategy of reading. Taking their cues from questions left open by the text, impersonations fill in the not-saids of literary works as well as of various cultural narratives (of patronage, literary initiation, childhood etc.).

Fakes, I argue, can be thought of as “creative supplements,” aimed at expanding canonical texts and filling in their gaps. In relation to the *Ciris*, for example, I argue that the idea of composing a neoteric poem on the subject of Scylla in the persona of the young Virgil is an attempt to confront a puzzle left open by Virgil’s refusal to tell that very story in *Eclogues* 6.74, where the *praeteritio* (*quid loquar?*, “why am I to speak of?”) invites readers to overwrite the text with their own answer to the question. Similarly, in relation to the pseudo-Tibullan *Panegyricus Messallae*, I discuss the ways in which Tibullus’ emphasis on his present poverty in poem 1.1 calls on readers to supply a narrative of his early life. Virgil’s warning, issued in his own voice at *Georgics* 3.425–39, against the dangers of lying in the grass at the time when snakes come out, has given rise to a fictional *aitia* in the form of the *Culex*, which explains his advice in the *Georgics* as the result of knowledge acquired through the composition of this youthful poem.

Creative supplements also treat authors and their lives as textual entities whose gaps can be productively filled with new texts. There are in fact good reasons to regard poets’ biographies as such texts. The author’s

<sup>31</sup> Holub (1984) 83–106 is helpful on the differences as well as the common intellectual background of these two approaches to reception (the historical and the phenomenological).

<sup>32</sup> See Iser (1974) 279–94 on phenomenological approaches to the reading process.

<sup>33</sup> Iser (1978) 10 “meaning is no longer an object to be defined, but is an effect to be experienced.” Cf. S. Fish (1970) on meaning as an event.

<sup>34</sup> On the concept of the gap, see Iser (1971) 1–45; see also Iser (1978) 170–9 on the indeterminacy of the text. Cf. Eco (1979) 47–66 on the concept of the “open work”: “the ‘openness’ and dynamism of an artistic work consist in factors which make it susceptible to a whole range of integrations” (p. 63); and 214–17 on reading as the process of making “inferential walks” and writing “ghost chapters.” On the notion of narrative gaps in ancient literary criticism, see Nünlist (2009) 157–73.

<sup>35</sup> See Edmunds (2001) 95–107 on possible worlds.