

16
can be traced back to the Renaissance. The first important triumph of this art was ^{achieved} ~~manifested~~ when Lorenzo Valla, a Latin scholar and Papal secretary, showed that the Donation of Constantine was not genuine. This document, which claimed to be an official paper of the Roman emperor Constantine (4th cen. A.D.) and which assigned the central part of Italy to the Pope, was shown to be a forgery, written ^{several centuries after Constantine,} ~~in the 10th century,~~

About this ^{same} time, the Dutch humanist, Erasmus, ^{also} questioned the authenticity of a group of 148 letters reputedly written by Phalaris, a tyrant, who ruled Sicily in the ^{sixth} ~~6th~~ cen. ^{twy} B.C. However, it was not until 1699 that the Englishman Richard Bentley succeeded in showing that these letters were written about 200 A.D. They were not intentional frauds, apparently, but composition exercises ^{by} students. ~~Less successfully,~~ Bentley ~~attempted to show that about half of Milton's Paradise Lost was written by his secretary.~~

In 1761 and 1763 two epic poems were published in Scotland, which were later collected under the title The Poems of Ossian. These were represented by James Macpherson as ancient Celtic epics, which he had found and translated. In an age of great sentimentality and interest in the heroism of primitive people, the poems became very popular. Goethe translated them into German, and Napoleon carried an Italian translation with him on his campaigns. However, Dr. Samuel Johnson, ^{the} ~~a~~ noted literary critic, questioned their authenticity. When he was presented with the "original manuscripts," he showed they were of recent origin. Nevertheless, the controversy continued