

Any document which was not produced in the time, place and manner claimed by it or its publisher is a forgery. (Willrich).

Forgery is "the false making...of a written instrument of other document for the purpose of deceit and fraud." (Webster)

General rules for testing for forgery (Blass):

1. Assume the document is genuine.
2. If you do not accept it as such, supply a credible explanation of its origin.
3. You may NOT assume that it is a clever forgery.
4. Take the whole document into consideration—the longer the better.
5. Concentrate on the concrete, historical rather than subjective parts.
6. Look for details "too trifling, too inconspicuous, and too troublesome to re-produce" without actual experience.
7. Reject "whatever lies outside the usual and familiar", but ONLY if you can supply a credible explanation in its place.

I. Internal evidence: some of the tests—

1. The mere existence of the document: somebody has gone to a lot of trouble—why?
2. The size of the document: the longer a document, the more easily tested and the harder to fake. A long history is terribly hard to compose, even with notes.
3. Is it a history giving times, places, persons, events? Or is it vague and general?
4. Does it claim religious immunity? Is it full of double-talk, mystic or abstract terms?
5. Is it a work of creative writing, full of fantasy and exaggeration?
6. If the story is complex, it will be impossible for a forger to avoid contradictions.
7. If the author of the book shows intelligence & experience, his vocabulary will be commensurate with his education. The B.M. vocabulary is only about 3000.
8. Vanity is the Achilles' heel of the forger. Every forger is a show-off, attempting to be clever. Does the writer try to be smart?
9. A forger must have strong motives—especially if he is running a great risk—why would a forger write THIS kind of document? It is dangerous & unpopular.

II. External evidence requires three conditions to be effective:

1. The document must make clear and specific statements about concrete things.
2. OTHER sources must make like statements about the same things.
3. There must be no possibility of collusion between the two sets of sources.

For example, proper names (Paianki), stories (the 2 garments of Joseph), trifling details (the garrison of 50).

III. Circumstantial evidence is indirect but often very telling.

1. The testimony of witnesses.
2. The youth and inexperience of Jos. Smith.
3. Absence of notes and sources, e.g., the unpunctuated Ms.
4. Short time of production.
5. Only one version ever published.
6. Smith's unchanging attitude towards the book (Ed. Meyer).
7. Complete lack of secrecy and sophistry.
8. Type of people accepting the story.
9. Failure of 130 years of searching to discover the fatal flaws.
10. " " " " " " " " invent a convincing alterzative story.

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