

Michael Ladenburger (Beethoven-Haus Bonn)

*Facsimile – Fakesimile – Fake*

Fakes are not at all only a phenomenon of our times, but stem mainly from earlier times. This paper will deal with musical manuscripts, mostly connected to Beethoven, of course – not with forged paintings by Wolfgang Beltracchi, or with Adolf Hitler's diaries as fabricated by Konrad Kujau, etc. As a subject for scholars, forgery also has a history: A first book about a true factory for fakes was published in Paris 1870 by Henri Leonard Bordier and Emile Mabilie, entitled *Une Fabrique de Faux Autographes, Ou Recit de L'Affaire Vrain-Lucas*. (published in English as *The Prince of Forgers*).

In recent years more and more Beethoven fakes have appeared, some of them of an astonishing quality. Some are not fakes with criminal intention, but rather handmade facsimiles, manuscripts traced after authentic manuscripts. Others are true fakes. But if we have a close look from various points of view – questioning the handwriting, paper, provenance, and whether the music is reasonable etc. – it's possible to identify even a well-done fake. This talk will present a variety of such manuscripts and will discuss several crucial leads.