

## Adterpolation

E Bruce Brooks

University of Massachusetts at Amherst

(15 Dec 2013)

Recognizing additions to texts is basic for working with texts. The usual term is “interpolation.” Now, “inter” implies an insertion *between* two portions of a text, and one basic test of an interpolation is if those portions make consecutive sense when the suspected passage is removed. That test is not fully available for ends or beginnings, but those parts of a text are rhetorically hot, and thus are attractive spots for additions. For passages added to *one end* of a text, I here propose the term adterpolation.<sup>1</sup>

### Additions at the Beginning of a Text

**Analects 1-3.** The chronologically earliest Analects chapter is the sayings collection of LY 4; higher-numbered chapters show increasingly sophisticated literary form and philosophical thought. They suggest the usual accretion pattern: successive additions appended at the easiest place: the end of the text. The three chapters *before* LY 4 can be coordinated with points in that development: the Kǔng family emphasis on ritual in LY 3 (going with the trashing of the early disciples in LY 11); the new statecraft in LY 2 (continuing the markedly Mencian tone of LY 12-13), and the shift from public to personal in LY 1 (following the school’s loss of political influence, after its renunciation of war in LY 15). Analects 1-3 were, exceptionally, put up front to make those changes seem more integral to the movement itself.<sup>2</sup>

**Luke 1-2.** Fitzmyer 1/310f has noticed that the Lukan Birth Narrative is a later addition, overriding the old beginning of the Gospel which can still be seen in the sonorous synchronisms of Lk 3:1f. The Lukan Birth Narrative was a literarily superior response to the briefer Birth Narrative of Matthew, whose Gospel had appeared not long after Luke’s original work, and was now imitated in the second stage of Luke.<sup>3</sup>

**The Telemachia.** Odyssey 1-4, which show Telemachus traveling to hear news of his father and to establish a reputation, have been suspect as later additions; they often conflict with details in the rest of the text. They have the effect of shifting the focus of the narrative toward Telemachus himself.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>I am reminded by Tim Lubin that this is not a very orthodox word-formation. So be it.

<sup>2</sup>For a detailed study of the effects of these adterpolations, see Brooks **Analects** 295-312.

<sup>3</sup>For this two-stage Luke scenario, see in detail Brooks **Acts-Luke**.

<sup>4</sup>Such a view was first voiced by Kirchhoff. Note that the elaborate Prologue in Heaven in the added Od 1-4 (Od 1:22-95) conflicts with the simpler Prologue in Heaven of the probable original work (Od 5:1-42). The transformation was done to focus the text on Telemachus, rather than on his mother Penelope, its original heroine (note the word of Agamemnon at the original end of the text, Od 24:191-198, which makes the Odyssey a song of praise for Penelope).

### Additions at the End of a Text

**The Gortyn Code** (mid 04c) was carved into the stone walls of the public hearing chamber of that Cretan city. Its provisions are topically arranged. At one point, the topics begin to repeat; further on, they begin to repeat again, updating some clauses.<sup>5</sup> That pattern alone will suggest later additions, a suggestion decisively confirmed by the fact that the third section was engraved on the chamber stones *by a different hand*.

**John 21** overrides a perfectly satisfactory ending at Jn 20:30-31, a summary of the Gospel's purpose and content, and a final blessing for the reader:

**Jn 20:30-31.** Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book, [31] but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye may have life in his name.

In John, Peter is upstaged by Andrew (the indirect call of Peter, Jn 1:40-41), an unnamed person (entry to the High Priest's courtyard, Jn 18:15-16), or the "beloved disciple" (who outruns him at the Tomb, Jn 20:3-4). But in Jn 21, Jesus gives Peter the care of his "flock" (Jn 21:15-17). This restores the prominence of Peter, and gives the Gospel Petrine credentials, the better to gain a place in the nascent canon.<sup>6</sup>

**6 Esdras** (Esdras 15-16) is a Christianizing addition to the original Esdras.<sup>7</sup>

**Horace Carmina IV.** Horace's function at the court of Augustus was to create a Latin poetic tradition equal to the Greek. He then retired. In the first three Books of his Carmina, Horace displays his facility with Greek meters, and extols Roman virtues. In the last poem in Book III, he sums up his poetic achievement in this way:

I have made a monument / than bronze more enduring  
and than Egypt's royal / pyramids yet more lofty,  
which no eroding rains / nor powerless northwind  
can ever snatch away, / nor the innumerable  
years in their succession, nor the flight of the times.  
Not wholly shall I die; / the greater part of me  
shall outlive the Grave Goddess, / and in the after time  
I shall grow, with new praise, / while to the Capitol,  
with the silent virgin, / ascends the Pontifex.  
Be it told, where loudly / thunders the Aufidus,  
and where, scant of water, / Daunus once reigned over  
a rude and rustic people; / how, from humble station,  
I first Aeolian / song into Italic  
meters had brought over. / Accept the great honor  
due to thine own merits, / and with Delphic laurel  
do you now deign to bind, / Melpomene, my hair.

Quite apart from its repetition of First Asclepiadian meter from the opening poem, 1/1, which amounts to a metrical framing device for the entire collection as it then existed, few endings could more convincingly display their intended function *as* endings.

<sup>5</sup>For an outline of the contents and their interrelations, see Willetts **Gortyn** 34.

<sup>6</sup>For this phenomenon, which is widespread in this period, see Brooks **Apostles**.

<sup>7</sup>See Fried **Christianization**, and note that 5 Esdras (Esdras 1-2) is an earlier Christianizing addendum to the *beginning* of the original text (Esdras 3-14).

Ten years later, as Suetonius tells us, Augustus called Horace back from retirement to write poems in praise of Augustus' relatives. This Horace did. He also added poems of his own, revisiting some old themes with deeper poetic wisdom and metrical grace, in what is now Book IV. His former epitaph (3:30) is now surpassed by 4:3 –

Whom thou, Melpomene, hast once  
 at his nativity, with kindly gaze, beheld,  
 him no exertions Isthmian  
 will render a boxer; no steed imperious  
 draw, in Achaian chariot  
 to victory, nor deed of war, with Delian  
 laurel all bedecked, will lead him,  
 for that he has crushed the arrogant threats of kings,  
 to display at the Capitol;  
 but the waters that flow past the fertile Tibur  
 and the dense leafage of the groves,  
 these shall make him famous for Aeolian song.  
 Of Rome, foremost among cities,  
 the children deem it fitting to rank me among  
 the pleasant chorus of poets,  
 and less am I bitten by the tooth of Envy.  
 O thou, that of the golden shell  
 the sweet clatter, Pierian maid, dost modulate,  
 O thou, that to silent fishes  
 might, if thou didst desire, give the notes of the swan,  
 the whole of this gift is of thee:  
 that I should be pointed out by those who pass by  
 as minstrel of the Roman lyre.  
 That I breathe, that I please – if I please – is from thee

If we had only the literary contrast of this mature and autumnal retrospective with the confident and assertive 3:30 claim, we would be led to regard 4:3 as a later inspiration. Details indicating the intended finality of 3:30, and anecdotal evidence for Horace's resumption of poetic composition in *Carmina IV*, merely confirm that we were right.

What identifies these passages as later additions is not the *continuity* of the context when they are removed, since the context exists only on one side of them. It is rather the *completeness* of the adjoining text on its own terms, after that removal.

### Works Cited

- E Bruce Brooks. Acts-Luke. Alpha v1 (2017) 143-157  
 E Bruce Brooks. The Apostolic Alignments. Alpha v1 (2017) 199-200  
 E Bruce Brooks and A Taeko Brooks. The Original Analects. Columbia 1998  
 Joseph A Fitzmyer. The Gospel According to Luke. 2v Doubleday 1970, 1985  
 Lisbeth S Fried. The Christianization of Esdras. Alpha v3 (2019) 193-197  
 Adolf Kirchhoff. Die Homerische Odyssee. 2ed Hertz 1879  
 Michael C J Putnam. Artifices of Eternity: Horace's Fourth Book of Odes. Cornell 1986  
 Ronald F Willetts. The Law Code of Gortyn. de Gruyter 1967