

Interpolation

Interpolation is the term traditionally used to describe the deliberate interference of scribes and readers with texts. Sometimes it is applied particularly to the addition of extraneous material (even when the addition is not essentially deliberate), but often it includes the alteration of existing words. Hence the formulation of H.-C.Günther: 'any effect upon the text which is not purely mechanical but where some kind of intentional factor (if only a semiconscious one) is involved' (*Quaestiones Propertianae* [Leiden, 1997], p.96). It is worth noting that scribes can also omit or delete portions of text.

The phenomenon is extremely common and occurs for a variety of reasons. In 'Towards a typology of interpolation in Latin poetry' (*TAPhA* 117 [1987], 281-98) R.J.Tarrant has suggested and illustrated three useful categories of interpolation (in the sense of amplification): 'collaboration' (or 'emulation'), 'emendation' (i.e. supplementation of a defective text), and 'annotation' (subdivided into 'gloss', 'comment' and 'citation'). In the texts Tarrant is considering, it is the embellishments of readers that critics are concerned with, but performers too may decide to add their own improvements to an established work. Readers notice errors (or what they take to be errors), whether of metre, grammar, diction, or sense, and they attempt to correct. They read something of which they disapprove and censor it (here omission is especially likely). In texts where material is repeated they increase the length of the repetition ('Konkordanzinterpolation'). They write comments, explanatory glosses or parallel passages and these are in a subsequent copying incorporated into the main body of the text. Technical treatises were regarded as living texts, and each successive generation felt free to adjust and expand: for one instance, Euclid's *Elements*, see zweite Auflage.

The reference to Athens in Homer's Catalogue of Ships (2.546 ff.) raised problems for ancient scholars, and the Athenians were accused by the Megarians of having tampered with the text of 557-8. More generally in Homer the eccentric ('wild') papyri of Ptolemaic date offer a large number of additional lines which do not survive in the later tradition. Tragic texts are thought to have been affected by actors and producers from the 4th century onwards; a much discussed passage which appears to be an addition of this kind is Sophocles, *Ajax* 1028-39 (for Sophocles in general, see H.-C.Günther, *Exercitationes Sophocleae* [Göttingen, 1997]; for Euripides see [refs required]). Texts of tragedy have also been much affected by the intrusion of explanatory glosses, e.g. Aeschylus, *Ag.* 549, where the MS F has τυράννων, a gloss on κοιράνων, restored by Triclinius. So-called 'Binneninterpolation' (where the added material begins and ends in the middle of a verse) is surprisingly common: a fascinating case is Soph. *O.C.* 1321-2, where the words suspected of being an addition are in fact missing in one important branch of the tradition.

In prose additions and alterations are usually harder to detect, especially if an author is not concerned to be succinct.

Both in prose and verse the critic has to reckon with the problems created by the ancient or medieval reader who thought he could suggest an alternative or an improvement to the transmitted text. This can be related to rhetorical modes of education: see N.G.Wilson, *RHT* 17 (1987), 1-13 (esp. 8ff.). In Latin poetry the texts that have most attracted amplification are those of a 'rhetorical' nature — Ovid, Seneca's tragedies, Juvenal. Hexameters inevitably provoke more additions than lyric, but occasionally readers seem to have been stimulated to try their hand at an unusual metre: see Horace, *Odes* 3.11.17-20 and 4.8; and Catullus 61.92-6 (deleted by B.Georg, *CQ* 46 (1996), 302-4).

Because of the familiarity of the text Konkordanz-interpolation is particularly common in Virgil (e.g. *Aen.* 3.230, a repetition of 1.311 prompted by the presence in 3.229 of the last three words of 1.310 *sed rupe cauata*). The supplementation of half-lines is another important feature in the tradition of the *Aeneid*: *de collo fistula pendet* at 3.661 might be thought an attractive continuation of the moment for which we visualize Polyphemus as the figure of Theocritean pastoral if it were not absent from capital MSS. On the other hand editors preserve 11.309 in full despite the anomalous scansion of *ponite* before *spes* (Burgess and Porson deleted the last 8 words).

The Christian beliefs and knowledge of readers were bound to have an effect from time to time: so it is hardly surprising that the river Iardanus in *Iliad* 7.135 should become the Jordan in the lemma to the A-scholium *ad loc.* Christian attitudes were often responsible too for the occurrence of censorship, a comparatively rare phenomenon: see N.G.Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* (ed. 2, London, 1996), 12-18, 276. The Propertian MSS offer a couple of minor but instructive instances of corruption that may well be due to a prudish attitude on the part of a reader or scribe: at 2.31.3 the epithet *Poenis* (commonly written *penis* in medieval MSS) is omitted in F and L, MSS that derive from Petrarch's lost copy; and at 4.4.47 the most attractive replacement for *pugnabitur*, nonsensical in context, is Palmer's *potabitur*.