



PRIFYSGOL CYMRU
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
UNIVERSITY OF WALES
Trinity Saint David

Faculty of Humanities and Performing Arts

Graduate Diploma in Bible and Theology

Independent Project - **Proposal Form**

Student Name	Jacob Burbidge
Student Number	2205624

Please indicate the semester during which this module is being taken

Semester 3

NB This proposal counts for 20% of the final mark for this module. It should be 1000 words in length, excluding the bibliography.

Proposed Title: Interpolations in Paul: A Rejoinder to William Walker Jr.

Aim(s), Methodology and Objectives:

For centuries, scholars of the Bible have been fascinated by the textual flexibility of its writings, particularly the letters produced by the apostle Paul. Many passages in his letters have been subject to scrutiny as potential interpolations:

secondary additions added by a later scribe after the letter had been sent to its intended recipients.

The premiere scholar of Paul who has specialised on the subject of interpolations in the letters of the apostle is William O. Walker Jr. Building upon the foundations of earlier scholars such as J. C. O'Neill¹ and Winsome Munro,² Walker spearheaded the case for alleviating the burden of proof for those who propose Pauline interpolations with his first publication on the subject in 1987, outlining the obscurity of the Pauline text prior to the third century and the potentiality for more interpolations being larger than had previously been proposed.³ He went on to criticise the oft-cited appeal to stable textual traditions as evidence against interpolations the following year, arguing that the stability of a textual tradition (whether for a specific passage or a whole text) in no way presents a sufficient counterargument to the pervasiveness of secondary material.⁴ His research eventually culminated in his magnum opus, *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters* (2001),⁵ which was published by the Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement series.

¹ J. C. O'Neill, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1975), p. 314.

² Winsome Munro, *Authority in Paul and Peter: The Identification of a Pastoral Stratum in the Pauline Corpus and 1 Peter*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series Vol. 45 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 151; "Interpolations in the Epistles: Weighing Probability," *New Testament Studies* 36/3 (1990): pp. 431-43.

³ William O. Walker Jr., "The Burden of Proof in Identifying Interpolations in the Pauline Letters," *New Testament Studies* 33/4 (1987), pp. 610-616.

⁴ William O. Walker Jr., "Text-Critical Evidence for Interpolations in the Letters of Paul," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50/4 (1988): pp. 622-31.

⁵ See also his comparatively short essay summarising his monograph in "Interpolations in the Pauline Letters" featured in Stanley E. Porter (ed.), *The Pauline Canon*, Pauline Studies Vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 189-235.

Following this publication, Walker continued to advocate for more interpolations in Paul, including Galatians 2:8⁶ and 1 Corinthians 15:29-34. In total, Walker sees dozens of later scribal alterations in the letters of Paul,⁷ suggesting an extremely unstable textual tradition and the need for scholars to apply much more scepticism when dealing with the words attributed to the apostle.

It has been more than twenty years since Walker published his monograph, albeit through a sea of controversy regarding his case for an a-priori assumption of interpolations based upon an extrapolation from his analysis of the background probability (e.g. interpolations in classical authors like Thucydides, general textual instability of the rest of the New Testament, rules of evidence in history, etc.). In the years since Walker's retirement, however, there has been very little work done to further enhance our ability to identify inserted material in Paul's letters. Certainly nothing akin to Walker's 2001 monograph has since been published on the subject. In light of this stagnation, I believe Walker's proposals should be reconsidered.

Walker found both emphatic support and ardent resistance when he published his monograph. Scholars who cited his work with favourable

⁶ William O. Walker Jr., "Galatians 2:7b-8 as a Non-Pauline Interpolation" *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 65/4 (2003), pp. 568-587; "Galatians 2:8 and the Question of Paul's Authorship," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123/2 (2004), pp. 323-27; "1 Corinthians 15:29-34 as a Non-Pauline Interpolation," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 69/1 (2007), pp. 84-103.

⁷ William O. Walker Jr., *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 213 (New York/London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), pp. 16-20.

undertones include (but are not limited to) Khiok-Khng Yeo,⁸ Brook Pearson,⁹ and George J. Brooke.¹⁰ Others, however, including Veronica Koperski¹¹ and Michael Hull,¹² (among many others) have made it clear that they find Walker's argumentation rather wanting. It is notable, however that no matter which side of the debate these scholars have chosen, none of them give any precise attention to detail Walker's work in their treatments his case. Indeed, Walker is lucky to receive any more than a footnote or a short paragraph in their explication of his analysis of the phenomena of interpolations. This has had the regrettable effect of leaving whichever author open to faulty assumptions about the nature of interpolations, issues that Walker had addressed in years past and could be rectified if his work was given the attention it deserves.

This independent project will analyse some of the work that Walker has published, the suggestions that he posed about the nature of interpolations, and how we can identify them. The topic of interpolations has obvious implications for both the student and teacher of New Testament studies. Such suggestions that often incur the wholesale restructuring of the text of the New Testament to fit conjectural emendations will undoubtedly have significant ramifications for

⁸ Khiok-Khng Yeo, *Rhetorical Interaction in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10*, Biblical Interpretation Series Vol. 9 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 79-80.

⁹ Brook W. R. Pearson, *Corresponding Sense: Paul, Dialectic, and Gadamer* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 155-56.

¹⁰ George J. Brooke, "2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 Again: A Change in Perspective," in Jean-Sebastian Rey (ed.) *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Pauline Literature*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah Vol. 102 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), p. 6.

¹¹ Veronica Koperski, *The Knowledge of Christ Jesus My Lord: The High Christology of Philippians 3:7-11*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology Vol. 16 (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996), pp. 71-72.

¹² Michael F. Hull, *Baptism on Account of the Dead (1 Cor 15:29): An Act of Faith in the Resurrection* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2005), pp. 74-75.

future study should they be demonstrated by interpolation advocates. Those like Walker and his successors who share the conviction that the New Testament is deeply permeated with later scribal additions must have their arguments addressed prior to any discussion of material that is suspected of being later insertions. If the consequences of interpolations are as severe as suspected, Walker's proposals should perhaps even be consulted *prior* any study of Paul's letters whatsoever. As pointed out by Murphy–O'Connor, our understanding of Paul will be forced to undergo significant modifications if Walker is correct.¹³ Horrell agrees,¹⁴ noting that interpretive interests are very much at stake when it comes to suggesting interpolations, particularly for passages that may be politically discomforting for moderns and are deemed unfit for Paul's worldview (e.g. 1 Cor. 15:34-35). Academics specialising in Pauline literature need more robust standards of verification if there is to be a sober assessment of the epistles that were produced by the apostle.

Multiple goals are in mind with my piece: (1) Interpolations will be defined and differentiated from other literary phenomena, (2) Walker's case for an a-priori assumption of interpolations will be analysed, (3) some of the readily accepted criteria for isolating interpolated material will be assessed in conjunction with Walker's contributions, and (4) a proposal will be submitted as to the viability and sufficiency of our identification process in relation to the

¹³ Jerome Murphy–O'Connor, *Keys to First Corinthians: Revisiting the Major Issues* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 257.

¹⁴ David G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), p. 185.

current state of Pauline scholarship. This piece will not comment on individual passages that are proposed to be later insertions; my own opinions as to the authenticity of any particular passage will be reserved for the sake of brevity. I will also not endeavour to delve into the history of the question of interpolations, tracing the conversation back from Walker to the Tübingen school; such summaries are readily available elsewhere. Instead, my focus will be on the future: where can we go from here regarding our criteria for identifying interpolations in Paul's letters?

Abstract:

Many passages in the New Testament epistles, particularly those of Paul, have been subject to interpolation theses. Despite the existence of a wealth of literature written on individual interpolations, a concrete general methodology for identifying these insertions has rarely ever been outlined prior to investigation. This article will reconsider the contributions that were offered many years ago by William O. Walker Jr. in the hopes of encouraging the development of more robust principles for isolating and analysing potential interpolations in the Pauline Corpus.

Short Introductory Bibliography:

Brooke, G. J. "2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 Again: A Change in Perspective," in Jean-Sebastian Rey (ed.) *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Pauline Literature*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah Vol. 102 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), pp. 1-16.

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Walker Jr., W. O. "The Burden of Proof in Identifying Interpolations in the Pauline Letters," *New Testament Studies* 33/4 (1987), pp. 610-16.

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Walker Jr., W. O., "Galatians 2:8 and the Question of Paul's Authorship," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123/2 (2004), pp. 323-27.

Walker Jr., W. O., "1 Corinthians 15:29-34 as a Non-Pauline Interpolation," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 69/1 (2007), pp. 84-103.

Yeo, K. K., *Rhetorical Interaction in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10*, Biblical Interpretation Series Vol. 9 (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

Proposed Supervisor: Catrin Williams

Please indicate whether ethical approval is required – YES/NO

Please indicate whether sufficient resources are available for the project – YES/NO

The above topic, proposal, and supervisor have been agreed:

Signed: Programme Director

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