

1. INTERPOLATIONS

DEFINITION: To avoid multiplication of terms, “interpolation” will also be used of material added at one or another end of a text.

EVIDENCE: One or more of these signs will tend to signal an interpolation:

1. It differs in content, style, or typology from the rest of the text, or its immediate context.
2. It violates the formal pattern of the immediate context.
3. It is ignored by passages following it, which relate instead to passages preceding it.
4. It may be narratively or otherwise discontinuous in immediate context.
5. It may be removed leaving a more continuous immediate context.

PLAUSIBILITY: A plausible interpolation hypothesis should ideally include a reason why it might have been interpolated; a “scenario.”

PRESUMPTION: The default expectation is that interpolated material is *later than* the text into which it is interpolated.

EXAMPLE. Mark 14:28

27. And Jesus said to them, You will all fall away, for it is written, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.
28. *But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.*
29. Peter said to him, Even though they all fall away, I will not.
30. And Jesus said to him, Truly, I say to you, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.
31. But he said vehemently, If I must die with you, I will not deny you. And they all said the same.

v29 ignores the encouraging v28, and replies instead to the insulting v27. The subsequent text behaves as though v28 were simply not present. Removing it yields a perfectly consistent and narratively intelligible text. Therefore v28 was probably a later interpolation.

2. ACCRETION LAYERS

DEFINITION: A text may receive additions at several times during its formation process. These need not be related to each other. But sometimes interpolations made at different places in the text are related, whether by content or by another factor. These interpolations may validly be grouped together as an accretional layer.

EVIDENCE: Given previously identified interpolations, those thought to constitute a layer should be linked by similar content, style, or typology.

PLAUSIBILITY. A plausible layer should meet these tests:

1. The order of accretional layers A (early) and B (late) should be fixed by evidence for interpolation of at least one element of B into some part of A.
2. It is not acceptable to posit a situation where B is at some points interpolated into A, and A at other points seems to be interpolated into B.
3. It is *not* required that traits should distinguish only one layer. An interpolator may well seek to maintain the style, or imitate the characteristic devices, of the preceding text. A new concept, once introduced, may easily be retained in later layers.
4. As with interpolations, there should be a plausible motive for the addition of each layer.
5. The layers themselves should make consecutive developmental sense.

EXAMPLE: Mark 16:7 reveals itself as an interpolation in the same way as 14:28, namely:

5. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were amazed.
6. And he said to them, Do not be amazed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.
7. *But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you.*
8. And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had come upon them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Interpolation Argument. v8 ignores the encouraging v7, and instead responds to the shock of the uncanny announcement in v6; it behaves as though v7 were simply not present. Removing it yields a perfectly consistent and narratively intelligible text. Therefore v7 was probably a later interpolation.

Layer Argument. 16:7 has the same content as 14:28, previously examined. The two together may thus form a layer. The case is clinched by the fact that 16:7 refers to the announcement in 14:28. These are the only two passages in Mark which refer to an Appearance in Galilee. In the present reconstruction, these passages, and *only* these passages, are considered to constitute Layer 6, the latest prescribal additions to the text of Mark.

