

REVIEW

INTERRUPTED SPEECH IN *LUKE-ACTS*

Daniel Lynwood Smith, *The Rhetoric of Interruption: Speech-Making, Turn-Taking and Rule-Breaking in Luke-Acts and Ancient Greek Narrative*. BZBW 193. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2012. Pp. vii + 337. Hardcover, £82.99/\$154.00. ISBN 978-3-11-029642-6.

This substantial (and expensive) monograph is a revision of Daniel Lynwood Smith's doctoral dissertation at the University of Notre Dame under the direction of the distinguished New Testament scholar Professor (now Emeritus) David E. Aune, whom Smith credits with drawing his attention to the need for further research on the multiple uses of interrupted speech in *Luke-Acts* (5, 14), rather than on the much-studied speeches. Smith presents his research in five main chapters. Chapters 2–4 examine background evidence in ancient historiography and novels, which is then used to shed light on the interruptions in *Luke* and *Acts* discussed in chapters 5–6. Four appendices allow readers to consult occurrences of interrupted speech corresponding to the main chapters of analysis. Along with the well-documented bibliography, readers can seek further detailed information via the indexes of ancient sources, modern authors, and subjects.

Smith focuses on the narrative-rhetorical level, namely, the reasons for which Luke includes interrupted speech in his narration, rather than the historical arguments whether these interruptions actually took place, or whether, if so, Luke recorded them accurately (3). Smith grounds his work in the Greco-Roman and Jewish historiographical traditions, and to a lesser degree in the Greek novels. This approach requires significant interaction with primary sources as well as with Classical literary scholars and biblical exegetes. Since the main contribution of this book focuses on Luke's writings, Smith presents his claims for the value of his enquiry within biblical research. His main dialogue partners are thus in biblical studies rather than Classical historiography. The introduction, however, does discuss briefly the contributions of some Classical scholars in the main text (F. W. Walbank; J. Marincola; E. Minchin; D. Beck) and in the footnotes (V. Bers; D. Beck).

Previous research has suffered from a lack of agreed criteria for establishing interrupted speech, as is illustrated by the varying number of speeches in *Acts* identified by biblical scholars (8, 15). Insufficient work also has been done on interrupted speech in *Luke* (14). Smith further seeks to offer a corrective to Martin Dibelius' claim that Greek historians rarely used interrupted speech

(2, 27). Thus, from a rhetorical perspective, Smith mainly builds on the research of Henry Cadbury, Richard Pervo, and David Aune, which demonstrated that interrupted speech in *Acts* is the equivalent of a double underline, especially highlighting the final words of the speaker (15). Smith assumes the narrative unity of *Luke* and *Acts*, accepting the hyphen between the two works without giving any justification about this methodological choice until much later in the monograph (211–12). Although the notion that Luke's writings can and should be read as one story is very common in New Testament studies, it is not universally accepted. Smith's position should have been set out in the introduction and the issues briefly explained to readers unfamiliar with the debate.

A crucial preliminary question is Smith's definition of interrupted speech and his criteria for identifying instances of it. Owing to the lack of definitions in ancient literature, Smith turns to modern discourse analysis to shed light on the subject. He follows Jack Bilmes' definition of the 'violation of the interrupted party's speaking rights, or at least an attempt as such violation'.¹ Adapting this definition to ancient literature, Smith proposes two criteria: (1) the presence of a claim of interruption and (2) the identity of interlocutors who interrupt; this excludes external events from the analysis. The presence of interruptions is signalled by explicit claims of interruption or more often via a closing formula or involuntary completion of speech flagged by a phrase indicating continuous speech (e.g. 'while he was still speaking ...' 23).

Chapter 2 is the longest chapter (27–120) as it covers 'Interrupted Speech in Greek Historiography: From Homer to Appian'. Smith justifies the decision to include Homer's works by invoking Simon Hornblower's observation that the *Iliad* evinces 'a preoccupation with the past'.² The influence both of *Iliad* and of *Odyssey* on Greek historians from Herodotus and Thucydides onwards is of course widely admitted, but perhaps needs more careful calibration. Smith also provides no discussion of the date of Luke's writings as a means of establishing the limits of influence on him. On any dating of *Luke* and *Acts*, Appian's and Arrian's writings are too late to have exerted direct influence on Luke, as Smith concedes in a later footnote (123 n. 12), though their writings may have general comparative value. In any case, discussion of the redactional period of *Luke* and *Acts* (123) should surely have been retrojected to the first chapter.

Smith is balanced and transparent in his analysis of various types of interruption, even those outside his own criteria, for example, external interruptions such as messengers and omens (75, 83, 87). In the selected texts, which are presented neatly both in Greek and in Smith's own translation, he

¹ Bilmes, J. (1977) 'Being Interrupted', *Language in Society* 26: 507–31, at 508.

² Hornblower, S. (1994) 'Introduction', in S. Hornblower, ed., *Greek Historiography* (Oxford) 7.

has identified eighty intentional interruptions and twenty-six interruptions by external events. Smith admits when examples of intentional interruptions are not present (as, for example, in Thucydides), and he does not force occurrences to fit his paradigm. He also makes a helpful distinction between light rhetorical interruptions (*in oratio obliqua*) and strongly marked ones (*in oratio recta*, 73). Smith's discussion of each example is cursory enough, but it allows readers to have a general idea of the rhetorical situation. Nonetheless, owing to the variety of material from various authors, his treatment does not allow readers to appreciate the rhetorical force of each occurrence within the plot of each work. Smith helpfully provides a section summary of each author's use of interruption, a final chapter summary, and a table where he draws some general conclusions (112–20). Briefly, his findings in this section are the following: (1) turn-taking is the rule, and rhetorical interruptions are the exception (116); (2) interruption then is an 'extraordinary event' mostly due to two factors: intense conflict or enthusiastic reception (or 'cooperative interruptions'); and (3) another interruption of lesser rhetorical force occurs through an interrupter of higher social status or authority (117). Further, Smith identifies four sources of conflict-rooted intentional interruptions: 'heated rivalries between peers, despair of the defeated, righteous rebuttals of the wicked, and impious incursions against the just' (117).

Chapter 3 focuses on the same questions in Jewish historiography and related literature (121–66). Smith does well to include the Septuagint (LXX) in this section owing to the collection's significance for the nascent Christian movement. It is, however, questionable to include writings such as *Job* and the prophetic books. Given the religious nature of these texts, Smith includes prayers in interrupted speech, as well as intentional and external disruptions via human and divine sources. His analysis benefits from the rules of 'turn-taking' evidenced in Qumran literature, 1QS vi, 10–11 (126, 164). The LXX yields only seven intentional interruptions, which, Smith admits, probably did not make a significant impact on the author of *Luke-Acts* (139). The bulk of the chapter, however, focuses on interruptions in the writings of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (141–63), probably a contemporary of 'Luke'. Smith's task here is not to demonstrate literary dependence between the two authors (an old, important, and still unresolved debate), but to compare and shed light on Luke's use of interruptions and their link with Jewish scriptures (141). Josephus records twenty-four intentional interruptions and ten external ones. In his use of sources, he occasionally omits interruptions or adds them (149). Smith identifies an increase in the use of rhetorical intentional interruptions in Jewish literature. These can also be classified in three broad categories: conflict, cooperation, and status (164). Smith alludes to the parallels in *Luke-Acts* (e.g. trial or forensic settings), which are further discussed in their respective chapters.

Chapter 4 briefly surveys interrupted speech in Greek novels (167–85), following some New Testament researchers who compare features of *Luke-Acts* to that genre. Smith explores selectively the *Cyropaedia* of Xenophon (a hybrid work, but undoubtedly with novelistic qualities and itself influential upon the Greek novel) and the *Callirhoe* of Chariton, noting their similarities with historiographical works. Two points are worth mentioning: interruptions in these works are generally positive (rather than conflictual) and also take place in private conversations, even among lower-class speakers.

Following these preparatory chapters, Smith turns his attention to Luke's writings. Chapter 5 discusses the evidence in the *Gospel According to Luke* (186–210). Smith first addresses the question of Luke's sources in relation to his main question, which he reiterates as intentional interrupted speech ('the violation of a speaking turn' 192). Yet much of this chapter deals with interruptions from external events (five occurrences). It seems that Smith wishes to make up for a lack of significant evidence (only three intentional occurrences) by commenting on interruptions that are not specifically his main research question. When Smith claims, 'Again, as we will see in Luke's second volume, *Acts*, interruption is a favourite Lukan literary device' (208), he is referring to interruptions in general. Of the three intentional interruptions, certainly the most significant one in *Luke* concerns the story of Jesus' rejection in Nazareth (*Luke* 4.28), which is located within a programmatic pericope for Luke's two volumes. Jesus' own people interrupt him and reject his mission. Smith (209–10) perceptively points out that the emphasis is placed on the crowd's hearing (*ἀκούοντες ταῦτα*) rather than on the speaker, which underlines the problem of hearing (i.e. obedience in Jewish-Christian terms), which is raised again forcefully at the end of *Acts* (28.26–8). The second interruption (*Luke* 11.27) also provides a strong rhetorical contrast through an unnamed woman's acclamation of Jesus among a crowd. Her interruption highlights Jesus' reception among the unlearned gentry. Smith briefly comments on the third instance (*Luke* 21.5), which shows Jesus interrupting those admiring the glories of the temple in Jerusalem, whose destruction Jesus then predicts. Smith could have spent more time fleshing out the rhetorical value of the three occurrences of intentional interruption and discussed more briefly the examples of external interruption. He draws this conclusion from the three examples: 'The primary function of rhetorical interruption in the Gospel of Luke, then, is to highlight an audience's reaction of hostility and rejection' (209).

Chapter 6 examines interrupted speech in Luke's second volume, the *Acts of the Apostles* (211–43). Smith identifies seven intentional interruptions (*Acts* 4.1; 7.54–57; 13.48; 17.32; 22.22; 24.25; 26.24) and one external interruption (10.44). Given the general importance of 'speeches' in *Acts*, he reiterates his focus on intentional interruptions of 'speech' and discards occurrences that

other scholars had identified as interruptions (*Acts* 2.37; 17.32; 19.28; 23.7). Smith provides a constructive analysis of the narrative rhetoric of the seven occurrences, using a good balance between diachronic and synchronic data (238–40). As noted in his analysis of other Greco-Roman and Jewish works, Smith highlights the presence of interruptions in relation to conflict, here specifically regarding Jesus' resurrection and the salvation extended to non-Jewish nations. The interruptions often underline both the final words of the interrupted discourse and the reaction of the interrupters (240–1).

Chapter 7 presents a summary of Smith's results as well as implications and limitations for further research (244–51). He has certainly demonstrated the rhetorical continuity of intentional interruptions in Luke's writings. Although it cannot be claimed that Luke was an innovator in this literary device, it can be demonstrated that he used it to support his theological narrative, which posits a Jewish Messiah at the crossroads of Greco-Roman and Jewish religion and culture (as, for example, in the defences of that theology before Jewish councils and Roman governors). Nevertheless, I do find Table 7 ('Who uses interrupted speech most frequently?') somewhat misleading in relation to the main research question. Here Smith presents statistics in four columns: text, word count, number of interrupted discourses, and word count/number of interruptions (246). While this might be helpful for a general picture, an additional column 'intentional interruptions' with another separate column based on word count would have provided more specific guidance for readers—and indeed for the author. For some of his claims are exaggerated, e.g. 'Then, in our survey of Josephus, we found a tremendous frequency and variety of interrupted speech' (245). Yet, even the most frequent use of the device in Josephus's writings (in the *Life*) represents only three interruptions for 16,293 words at an average of one interruption per 5,431 words. Similarly, Smith's claim, 'Again and again, intentional interruptions underscored references' to the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ and the salvation of the Gentiles (247), is based on only five interruptions in all of *Luke-Acts*. Again, from only four events (five occurrences), he concludes: 'Luke employs interruption repeatedly to mark Jewish rejections of the salvation offered by God through Jesus' (249). These interruptions undoubtedly have emphatic value, but they are not frequent enough from the beginning of *Luke* to the end of *Acts* to be considered a consistent, strong force on the rhetorical level. They have a role in the drama, but are only distinctly present in the second volume.

Despite these overstatements, this book is a valuable resource that illustrates an occasional rhetorical device rooted in ancient literary traditions, both Classical and Jewish. Several examples evince the notion of 'tragic style' in historiography as well as biblical literature, a topic that continues to be debated in current research. The author has covered much ground to unearth and explore various types of interruptions. Nonetheless, given Smith's

specific restriction to intentional interruption of speech, his extensive commentary on external interruptions is somewhat redundant and some of his textual choices in his discussion of historiography are suspect. This expanded treatment certainly makes the analysis more interesting, but this is not the focus of his work. The present reviewer has the impression that Smith wished to incorporate additional material in order to make his theme more substantial. It would have been more profitable to explore in greater depth the emphatic character of each occurrence as it affects the reader's perception and to discuss the interruptions by external events in a more cursory fashion. Overall, however, this book may be considered a useful resource for the analysis of various types of interrupted speech and thus of value both to Classicists and biblical exegetes. Appendices 1–4 are especially valuable for quickly locating occurrences and obtaining a summary of their rhetorical contexts.

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