



Hume's beefing up of his attack on miracles

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Critical to my interpretation of Hume's *Of Miracles* is a dating claim, a highly novel one. Specifically, in London, Hume greatly expanded this Essay at the death-knell, much strengthening its Part 1 and Part 11 argumentation. Indeed his burst of writing fell in the few weeks before the first edition text of David Hume's 'Of Miracles' was eventually both completely out of his hands and completely in those of his printer. As against Stephen Buckle, Hume took his Part 1 argument against miracles as decisive; what explains this is his hurried additions. Other additions made the combination of both Parts overwhelmingly decisive against them.

How did Hume's far too hurried re-think and re-write come about? The crucial trigger, this paper argues, seems to have been a last minute awareness of the contents of two advanced manuscripts relating to miracles. These were by Peter Annet, a learned, innovative, but riskily belligerent Deist. Probably priming Hume for such a triggering was a combination of two facts. First, while still in Scotland, his personal involvements heightened his concern with the iniquities of religion and particularly its clergy. Second, arriving in England for publishing, there was there an interlude, rare in his lifetime, where more radical and outspoken attacks on religion were escaping censorship and imprisonment.

As to the strictly philosophical advance of his re-thinking, it lies in the considerable beginnings of a new understanding of the concept of laws, there happening to be small further advances on this in his next few editions.