

Carpenter, Rhys, Folk Tale, Fiction and Saga in the Homeric Epics (Univ. of Calif. Press at Berkeley & Los Angeles) 19 46

p. 173

" . . . The Bellerophon passage . . . is one of the few incidents in the Iliad which betrays the date of its composition. . . .

p.174

There cannot be much doubt that, in spite of the evasively allusive language, a written message is here intended. A suggestive picture or a group of pictorial symbols might meet the requirements of the narrative but hardly the actual words of the poet. "Graving on a folded tablet" is surely a periphrasis for writing a letter. The story therefore originated in a literate environment; hence it either was imported from some such region as Egypt or Phoenicia or Assyria, or it was evolved in Ionia after the introduction of writing. It cannot be a stray of Mycenaean times, because the epic tradition of heroic illiteracy is clear. Indeed, this must be the very reason why the poet uses such veiled phrases: since writing is for him a modernism, contrary to all epic usage for the Age of Heroes, it must be mentioned with the same indirection as, for example, telescopes by the author of Paradise Lost or machinery by a Victorian Romantic. The passage must therefore be of later date than the Ionic contact with the literate East, which (in my partial judgment) would force it well down toward the end of the eighth century.

Contrast the above with the following statement
of Bowra on the Mycenaean use of writing as established by more recent
discoveries

Perhaps not valid - See p. 28