

Abstract I

This thesis examines the homilies of the Venerable Bede (c.673–735) and their theology, style, transmission and audience response. It extends upon work done by Hurst (who edited the homilies), van der Walt and Carroll. It investigates why people were reading Bede's homilies, how they read and understood them, and how they responded to them. There is a brief survey of important themes in the homilies: grace, heresy, the six ages of the world and ecclesiology, and how they combine in Bede's theology as expressed in the homilies and elsewhere. These themes are also examined in connection with Bede's sources. Particular attention is given here to Gregory the Great, who also wrote a collection of homilies which may have influenced Bede.

The style of the homilies is examined, with particular attention given to Bede's sentence structure, as that is the principal barrier to understanding them. Bede's style is complex, but it is clear that he used grammatical structures to facilitate reading. There is a study of Bede's use of cadence in the homilies, using statistical methods. Cadence is particularly useful for those listening to the homilies, as it indicates the end of a clause.

The analysis of sentence structure is accompanied by an analysis of punctuation in one of the few surviving manuscripts from the scriptorium of Wearmouth-Jarrow. The layout and punctuation of this manuscript demonstrate that the scribes there were working to a system which would enable the reader of the text to assemble the grammatical structures correctly.

Finally, the dissemination of manuscripts of the homilies across Carolingian Europe is analysed. The homilies spread widely and were popular. An analysis of the punctuation of these manuscripts shows that the punctuation style of Wearmouth-Jarrow had an influence on subsequent scribes, though the changing tastes in punctuation can also be witnessed in the changes made by subsequent scribes and readers.

Abstract II

This thesis examines the homilies of the Venerable Bede (c.673–735) and their theology, style, transmission and audience response. It extends the work done by Hurst (who edited the homilies), van der Walt and Carroll, among others. It investigates why people were reading Bede's homilies, how they read and understood them and how they responded to them. The homilies were originally written for Anglo-Saxon monastics and clerics, though they achieved more widespread recognition and popularity through the Carolingian homiliary of Paul the Deacon. The homilies therefore found a place in the liturgy of the Carolingian night office, and their form also implies that they were intended to be part of the liturgy of the Mass. It is unclear whether they were originally preached, but they are able to be used both in public liturgy and in private meditation, or as a source of inspiration for a new sermon. Whatever Bede's original intent (and there is no clear evidence of this), he produced a flexible collection which was susceptible to being used in many different ways.

In the thesis there is a brief survey of important themes in the homilies: grace, heresy, the six ages of the world and ecclesiology, and how they combine in Bede's theology as expressed in the homilies and elsewhere. Ultimately, it was for the theology contained within them that people read the homilies.

Grace is one of the mainstays of Bede's theology. Worried about potentially Pelagian tendencies among the Anglo-Saxons, he was careful to give a portrayal of God's grace as the essential means for personal salvation. He discusses grace at length in the homilies and he gives there one of his most complete expositions on the subject.

Heresy was a *point d'appui* for Bede. He reacted violently against all forms of heresy, and though he eschewed detailed discussions of both the concept of heresy and of individual heresies in his homilies, he often mentioned heresies by name, and gave much attention to providing orthodox accounts of dogma, particularly that associated with grace. Here, Bede's aversion to heresy interacts with his knowledge of history. Bede was aware that Pelagius was British, and that the Pelagian interpretation of grace was heretical. In the homilies, Bede is concerned to give an accurate account of dogma in non-technical language, thus ensuring that he would not propagate error.

The six ages of the world provide an overarching framework for Bede's chronology and theology. In doing so, they allow Bede to explore theological parallels between the microcosm of the days of creation and Christ's death and resurrection, and the macrocosm of history. This has led scholars to accuse Bede of not being aware of the passage of time; however, his strong grasp of chronology as expressed in his scientific works mitigates against this.

Ecclesiology is another mainstay of Bede's theology. The building up of the Church on earth throughout time is almost the most important thing to be done; this also ties in with Bede's strong sense of pastoral responsibility, as the pastor is responsible for the cure of individual souls who make up the Church. The Church is built up with the help of God's grace, and should be kept free from internal strife; this is one of the reasons Bede reacted in such a violent fashion to heresy.

These themes are also examined in connection with some of Bede's sources. Particular attention is given here to Gregory the Great, who also wrote a collection of homilies, which may have influenced Bede. The arrangement of the two homiliaries is similar, though the themes explored by each man are different. Bede also read Augustine, and many verbal reminiscences from Augustine are found in the homilies. While Gregory was a profound influence on Bede's pastoral practice, Augustine was a strong influence on Bede's view of time and history. Bede tended not to express his indebtedness in the form of direct quotations in the homilies; instead, he used verbal allusions, only to be observed by the most learned, and he shows a close adherence to their ideas. While other works are in places intended to be florilegia of the Fathers (for example, Bede's commentary on Luke, where he marked the sources he used), the homilies are a more personal expression of Bede's orthodox theology.

Bede's theology is complex and closely interwoven; as we can observe, the different themes are interleaved within the homilies. Though Bede was profoundly influenced by Gregory, Augustine and the other Church Fathers, he combined their theologies in a new way that has had a lasting influence. For this reason, Bede's presentation of their theology became popular in Carolingian Europe, as is reflected in the number of manuscripts of his works from that time.

The style of the homilies is examined, with particular attention being given to Bede's sentence structure, as that is the principal barrier to understanding and reading them with ease. This may have been a problem as his Anglo-Saxon readers were not native speakers of Latin. Bede's homilies enjoyed a considerable vogue in the eastern Frankish Empire, where the native tongues were also Germanic rather than Romance. Bede's style is complex, but it is clear that he used grammatical structures to facilitate understanding, both for listeners and readers. He also used highly emotive language, using the words to produce a desired response in his listeners. These words tend to be arranged to stand out from their surroundings, so the less literate could gain an impression of the areas Bede wished to highlight.

Bede used many Classical rhetorical techniques in his homilies. In order to fully appreciate Bede's use of such techniques, there is a study of his use of cadence in the homilies, using statistical methods. Cadence is particularly useful for those listening to the homilies, as it indicates the end of a clause. It is probable that Bede used cadences to a certain extent, imitating the forms found in the liturgy and in Augustine and (to a lesser extent) in Ambrose, so the authors who influenced his theology also influenced his style. He was an able poet, and would have been able to observe these metrical and rhythmical patterns occurring in prose. Bede used a moderate number of *cursus mixtus* cadences, and a limited number of metrical cadences, enabling listeners to parse the complex structures more easily.

The analysis of sentence structure is followed by an analysis of punctuation in one of the few surviving manuscripts from the scriptorium of Wearmouth-Jarrow (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 819). The layout and punctuation of this manuscript demonstrate that the scribes there were working to a system which would enable the reader of the text to assemble the grammatical structures correctly. The scribes have marked out the paratactic clauses in the text. This manuscript also uses the *diple* to mark out biblical quotations, a feature found in other earlier manuscripts, but here consistently applied. The manuscript shows a pattern of use that can also be observed in the continental manuscripts of the homilies; in this case, we have tenth-

century marginal annotations, indicating private reading, and twelfth-century repunctuation.

Finally, the dissemination of manuscripts of the homilies across Carolingian Europe is analysed. The homilies spread widely and were popular. An analysis of the punctuation of these manuscripts shows that the punctuation style of Wearmouth-Jarrow had an influence on subsequent scribes, though the changing tastes in punctuation can also be witnessed in the changes made by these later scribes and readers. In many manuscripts, the same tendency to punctuate the paratactic clauses can be observed and in the majority of manuscripts, the *diple* is still used to mark out biblical quotations. As in Bodley 819, manuscripts were often repunctuated in the twelfth century to provide a more up-to-date and familiar method of punctuation for readers. The manuscripts show signs of being used both in public (in the liturgy) and in private, with marginal numerals indicating sections to be read aloud, or with marginal comments indicating private reading. The surviving punctuation allows us to determine how people read Bede; the marginalia shows us how they interacted with Bede's text.

The manuscript transmission shows signs of disorder at a very early date, with a disrupted order of homilies. This enables us to trace the continental transmission, at least in part. It is clear that there were at least two eighth-century Anglo-Saxon exemplars circulating on the continent, one of which was copied by scribes in the Jura area of France. The earliest surviving manuscripts were probably copied at St Gall and St Omer, sites which had strong contacts with the Carolingian court and with Anglo-Saxon England. The manuscripts show a strong unity in layout, reflecting the level of control exerted over scribes throughout the Carolingian empire, and also, perhaps, reflecting the quality layout of manuscripts from Wearmouth-Jarrow.

It is shown that Bede's work was flexible, apt for use in different ways and in different time periods. He was strongly influenced by his predecessors, but produced a complex new synthesis of their work, which were popular with readers of successive generations.