

## Introduction

The Venerable Bede was born in 672 or 673, in the vicinity of what was to become the Jarrow monastery. At the age of seven,<sup>1</sup> he joined the monastery of Wearmouth founded in 673 by Benedict Biscop.<sup>2</sup> When Biscop founded the twin house at Jarrow, Bede and Ceolfrith (later to become abbot of the joint foundation) went to the new house.<sup>3</sup> During this time, a plague hit Northumbria and the inhabitants of the Jarrow monastery were severely affected, leaving only Ceolfrith and a small boy (usually identified as Bede) to sing the offices.<sup>4</sup> He studied under Ceolfrith for many years.

Most of our knowledge of Bede comes from his own writings. He tells us in the final chapter of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* that he was ordained deacon aged nineteen (in advance of the canonical age, a sign of his precocious talent). He was ordained priest later, presumably at the canonical age of thirty. We know of the monasteries in which Bede lived from his *HE* and *Historia abbatum* and from the Anonymous *Life of Ceolfrith*, written by a monk at the same foundation.<sup>5</sup> Bede is largely silent about his life, though he admits to being greatly upset when Ceolfrith, his life-long friend and mentor, left for a final journey to Rome which was cut short by his death.<sup>6</sup>

Bede states that ‘it has always been my delight to learn, to teach or to write.’<sup>7</sup> His surviving works bear witness to this: chronologies, histories, biblical commentary and works for the schoolroom.<sup>8</sup> He started writing around the time of his ordination to the priesthood in 703.<sup>9</sup> He was presumably one of the monastery’s main teachers, though there is little written evidence to support this, other than a few

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<sup>1</sup> Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum (HE)*, ed. and trans. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford, 1969), V.24, pp. 566-71.

<sup>2</sup> For a biography of Biscop see E. Fletcher, *Benedict Biscop*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow, 1981).

<sup>3</sup> For a biography of Ceolfrith see I. Wood, *The Most Holy Abbot Ceolfrid*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> B. Ward, *The Venerable Bede* (London, 1998), p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Bede, *Historia abbatum*, in *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, ed. C. Plummer, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1896), vol. I. Anon., ‘Life of Ceolfrith’, in *The Age of Bede*, trans. D. H. Farmer and J. F. Webb, rev. edn (Harmondsworth, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> Bede, *In Samuhelis*, ed. D. Hurst, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina (CCSL) 119 (Turnholt, 1962), IV, lines 4-22, p. 212.

<sup>7</sup> ‘semper aut discere aut docere aut scribere dulce habui,’ *HE* V.24, pp. 566-7.

<sup>8</sup> See Ward, *The Venerable Bede*, pp. 51-78, pp. 97-8 and pp. 114-32 for a discussion of the individual works.

<sup>9</sup> C. Plummer, ed., *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1896), p. xxi and p. cxlv.

remarks about those of meaner intellect,<sup>10</sup> and the plethora of school-texts he composed. He does not appear to have held any high office within the monastery and he never became abbot. This may be because of his humble origins; though Ceolfrith did not disdain manual work he was of noble birth, like Eosterwine and Benedict Biscop. The large number of the nobility found governing Anglo-Saxon monastic foundations has often been noted; it seems that while Bede's scholarship would commend him anywhere, he was effectively debarred from high office because of his birth.<sup>11</sup>

He was not a widely-travelled man; he visited York and Lindisfarne at least, and probably other places in Northumbria.<sup>12</sup> Unlike his abbots, Ceolfrith and Benedict Biscop, he never visited the continent. His was in many ways a world of books, and in his imagination he could visit the Holy Land through reading texts such as *De locis sanctis* by Adomnán of Iona, or he could listen to Benedict and Ceolfrith talking about their visits to Rome and Gaul. Thacker suggests that Bede was unusually remote from the practical world of royal and church government.<sup>13</sup> This is true in one sense; he was never responsible for the monastery's interaction with the outside world. However, Bede was in correspondence with bishops and abbots across England; Bishop Acca at Hexham and Abbot Albinus at Canterbury are two examples. While some of this correspondence was about matters historical and theological, there are examples of Bede's pastoral involvement. Bede may not have been a political figure; nevertheless, he was influencing the theologies of important churchmen across the country. This may well have led to a more subtle political influence. Ward even suggests that noblemen came to visit Bede.<sup>14</sup> The problem in ascertaining the extent of his influence is that relatively few letters by Bede survive. We may surmise a vigorous correspondence from the fleeting mentions in the *HE* and the prefatory letters which survive at the beginning of some of Bede's books.<sup>15</sup> But, unlike other authors, such as Aldhelm, Gregory the Great or

<sup>10</sup> C. Grocock, 'Bede and the Golden Age of Latin Prose in Northumbria', in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. J. Hawkes and S. Mills (Stroud, 1999), pp. 371-82, p. 371; Bede, *Epistola ad Ecgbertum*, in *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, ed. C. Plummer, vol. I, pp. 408-9.

<sup>11</sup> On the importance of noble birth in Anglo-Saxon England, see H. Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Pennsylvania, 1991), pp. 253-4.

<sup>12</sup> Ward, *The Venerable Bede*, p. 12.

<sup>13</sup> A. Thacker, 'Bede's Ideal of Reform' in *Ideal and Reality Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. P. Wormald *et al.* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 130-53, p. 130.

<sup>14</sup> Ward, *The Venerable Bede*, p. 13.

<sup>15</sup> a) Biblical Commentaries:

- *On Genesis*: Bishop Acca asked for a commentary, so Bede sent him a revised version of his commentary on Genesis, begun several years earlier.

Alcuin,<sup>16</sup> we do not have enough letters by Bede to uncover the influence of his correspondence, nor do any of the replies survive. For this, perhaps the Viking raids in England were largely responsible.

During his lifetime his fame increased. As noted above, he wrote to people all over the country, in Winchester, Hexham and Canterbury, and other monasteries not mentioned by Bede. Acca commissioned some of his works, convinced of their use in the semi-Christian society in which they still lived.<sup>17</sup>

‘During his lifetime this Bede lay hidden within a remote corner of the world, but after his death his writings gave him a living reputation over every portion of the globe.’<sup>18</sup> Thus wrote a Durham historian in the twelfth century. One of our major

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- *On Samuel*: commissioned by Acca.
  - *Thirty Questions on Kings*: Nothelm sent Bede the questions.
  - *On the Tabernacle*: no prologue.
  - *On the Temple*: commissioned by Bishop Albinus.
  - *On Ezra and Nehemiah*: commissioned by Acca.
  - *On Tobit*: no prologue.
  - *On Proverbs*: no prologue.
  - *On the Song of Songs*: no prologue, though there is an introductory book refuting the theology of Julian of Eclanum.
  - *On Habakkuk*: an unidentified nun requested this commentary.
  - *On Luke*: commissioned by Acca.
  - *On Mark*: commissioned by Acca again.
  - *Exposition of Acts*: commissioned by Acca.
  - *Retraction on Acts*: no commissioner mentioned: Bede felt the need to set some things straight.
  - *On the Seven Catholic Epistles*: no commissioner mentioned in the prologue.
  - *On the Apocalypse*: dedicated to Eusebius.

b) Hagiographies, histories, hymns and homilies:

- *Homilies*: no prologue.
- *Hymns*: no prologue.
- *Ecclesiastical History*: dedicated to King Ceolwulf (the only lay recipient of Bede’s writings).
- *The history of the Abbots*: for his own house of Wearmouth-Jarrow.
- *Prose Life of St Cuthbert*: commissioned by the monks at Lindisfarne.
- *Verse Life of St Cuthbert*: dedicated to priest John (as yet unidentified).

c) School texts:

- *De orthographia*: no introduction.
- *De arte metrica*: for a monk named Cuthbert.
- *De schematibus et tropis*: no introduction.
- *De natura rerum*: no introduction.
- *De temporibus*: no introduction.
- *De temporum ratione*: Hwætbert, abbot of Wearmouth-Jarrow, is mentioned in the prologue.

<sup>16</sup> Aldhelm, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. M. Lapidge and M. Herren (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 152-70; Alcuin, *Alcuin of York: His Life and Letters*, trans. S. Allott (York, 1974).

<sup>17</sup> C. Leonardi, ‘Il venerabile Bede e la cultura del secolo viii’, *I Problemi dell’Occidente nel secolo VIII*, Settimane di Studio 20 (Spoleto, 1972), 603-58, p. 643.

<sup>18</sup> Anon., *Simeon’s History of the Church in Durham*, trans. J. Stephenson (repr. Lampeter, 1993), ch. XIV, p. 644.

sources of information about Bede is Cuthbert's letter on the death of Bede, describing Bede's last days.<sup>19</sup> Bede died on 25 May 735, the Vigil of the Ascension, after a short illness during which he continued to teach and to pray. On his death-bed he distributed his few possessions, in an act recalling the deaths of St Anthony and St Cuthbert.<sup>20</sup> He was buried at the church in Jarrow, but Durham legend has it that his bones were removed and placed in Cuthbert's coffin in the eleventh century.<sup>21</sup> The remains were removed in the twelfth century from the coffin and interred in the memorial in the Galilee chapel of the cathedral in the fourteenth century until the Reformation, when the current memorial was built with the words 'haec sunt in fossa / venerabilis baedae ossa' upon it.<sup>22</sup>

As the Durham historian noted, it was Bede's writings which gave him his fame. Bede's work was focussed on turning out an educated Anglo-Saxon clergy.<sup>23</sup> It is tempting to split Bede's work into categories; it is probably more fruitful to regard them as a coherent whole, governed by that overarching aim. As noted above, Bede started writing after he reached the age of thirty, probably as a result of his ideas about the importance of listening to and learning from elders before starting to teach.<sup>24</sup>

Bede's theology is remarkably orthodox yet profound, both from a contemporary point of view and a modern one. His theology seems familiar to us, because it influenced so many subsequent theologians and his selections from writers such as Augustine proved formative to the theology of the Western Church.<sup>25</sup> As mentioned above, Bede was working in a semi-Christian society, with a mission to teach. This is exactly what he did. He did not speculate about the nature of God, or

<sup>19</sup> Cuthbert, 'Epistola de obitu Bedae', in *Ecclesiastical History of the English Church and People*, ed. and trans. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), pp. 580-7.

<sup>20</sup> A. Thacker, 'Lindisfarne and the Origins of the Cult of St Cuthbert', in *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD 1200*, ed. G. Bonner *et al.* (Woodbridge, 1989), pp. 103-122, p. 109. He refers to Athanasius' Life of St Anthony, chs. 58-9, found in C. White, *Early Christian Lives* (Harmondsworth, 1998), pp. 7-70, p. 67. Here we have an example of the knowledge of what a saintly death looks like influencing the action of a person, thus providing a recurring motif in hagiographical literature.

<sup>21</sup> Ward, *The Venerable Bede*, pp. 140-143.

<sup>22</sup> Ch. XLII of *Simeon's History of the Church in Durham*, pp. 678-9 has the story of Bede's bones. An Icelandic manuscript has an account of the composition of the lines of verse, in a legend justifying Bede's title of 'venerabilis'. Anon., *The Saga of Hacon and a Fragment of the Saga of Magnus with Appendices*, trans. G. W. Dasent, 2 vols. (repr. Felich Fawr, 1997), vol. II, pp. 448-9.

<sup>23</sup> J. McClure, 'Bede's *Notes on Genesis* and the Training of the Anglo-Saxon Clergy', in *The Bible in the Medieval World: Essays in Memory of Beryl Smalley*, ed. K. Walsh and D. Wood (Oxford, 1985), pp. 17-30, pp. 18-19.

<sup>24</sup> M. T. A. Carroll, *The Venerable Bede: His Spiritual Teachings* (Washington, 1946), pp. 243-4.

<sup>25</sup> See particularly Bede's theology of the six ages, where he selected the non-millenarian opinions of Augustine, who at one point expressed a strongly millenarian attitude, which he later repudiated.

heaven, or grace; this was not appropriate for his society and it might have led people into error. We might therefore describe Bede as being ‘goal-oriented’, restricting his work to the instructional and leaving aside the speculative.

Bede’s theology is complex, deep and coherent.<sup>26</sup> However, we do not always see the profundity of his thinking; for the most part it would not have been appropriate for his purpose. His theology is expounded not in thematic or systematic treatises, but through his biblical commentaries (and, more subtly, through his other works).<sup>27</sup> This means that there is no overarching discussion of elements in Christian theology; rather, the source material (the Bible) is picked over piece by piece, small components leading to the discussion of great principles. Line-by-line analysis and commentary is a practice still used in schools and universities today. No doubt, in the schoolroom, a larger discussion of the issues arising could have happened; Bede often chose to limit his discussion in favour of providing a thorough understanding of the text.<sup>28</sup>

Bede’s practice when it comes to writing theology has been much examined in recent years. The basic lineaments have long been determined; Bede tends to make extensive use of earlier theologians.<sup>29</sup> This led earlier scholars to dismiss Bede’s theology as wholly unoriginal and merely a piecemeal derivative of other authors,<sup>30</sup> but this is not entirely true. There is great value in careful synthesis, as many scholars have acknowledged. Providing extracts from Augustine is a valuable service; for, prolific though Bede was, Augustine’s output is an order of magnitude bigger. Augustine also provides contradictory views in his writing, so Bede’s selections have often proved influential in determining the most useful and orthodox sections of Augustine. Bede’s synthesis of earlier authors thus proved influential to later Western theologians.

Bede did not slavishly copy either; he occasionally provides undigested extracts, but then, that may be all that was required or requested of him. He very often, particularly in the homilies, disguises his source, and blends it in seamlessly

<sup>26</sup> See chapter I, pp. 24-6.

<sup>27</sup> Carroll provides a study of themes in Bede, arranged as though it were a systematic theology of Bede. This is somewhat misleading. Carroll, *The Venerable Bede*.

<sup>28</sup> He allows himself more freedom in his commentary on the Temple, for example.

<sup>29</sup> C. Jenkins, ‘Bede as Exegete and Theologian’, in *Bede, His Life, Times, and Writings: Essays in Commemoration of the Twelfth Centenary of His Death*, ed. A. Hamilton Thompson (Oxford, 1935), pp. 152-200, p. 153.

<sup>30</sup> Carroll, *The Venerable Bede*, p. viii: ‘In no respect do the monk’s concepts represent an attempt to be original.’

with his own thought. Earlier theologians have had a profound influence on him, yet he has incorporated their words and used them in a new way. It is these aspects of Bede's theological writing that demand examination, particularly in his homilies.

Bede was always carefully analysing his sources. He was occasionally wary of Jerome; Bede's pupil Cuthbert tells us about the work he was doing during his last days to provide a list of 'sound' extracts from Jerome. Bede regarded Jerome as an interesting secondary source, but he did not have to be followed faithfully.<sup>31</sup> While Bede's thinking was dominated by the four authors still considered the Great Latin Fathers of the Church (Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory, Jerome), he also used works by Isidore, and by many other authors.<sup>32</sup> Bede mentions many theologians by name, but he often makes no acknowledgement of his source (particularly if he does not quote it directly), so we are reliant on the skill and effort of the modern editor to make these references apparent to us. Bede may well have left more guidance for us than now survives; he is known to have used source marks in some of his works, and may have done in others, but we have to rely on the diligence of long-ago scribes, who have not always been particularly careful.<sup>33</sup> The Corbie scriptorium seems to have been seized with the importance of these marks, and it is largely thanks to the Corbie copyists that the source marks Bede mentions can be seen today.<sup>34</sup>

His chronology was wholly original, so original that it led to his being accused of heresy. Yet he also provided a standard work on the subject for the next 800 years, until the change of calendar meant that his calculations of the Easter cycle became inaccurate. This accusation of heresy wounded Bede deeply.<sup>35</sup> He was vehemently opposed to heretics and took great care in his teachings to stick to the strictly orthodox. His accusers went to Bishop Wilfred shortly after the publication of *De temporibus* in 703, stating that Bede had placed the incarnation of Christ in the wrong age.<sup>36</sup> Bede was able to refute this with ease, pointing out that his accusers were following incorrect millenarian thinking and that they were using the wrong

<sup>31</sup> B. Ward, "'In medium duorum animalium': Bede and Jerome on the Canticle of Habakkuk", *Studia Patristica* 25 (1993), 189-93, p. 191.

<sup>32</sup> M. L. W. Laistner, 'The Library of the Venerable Bede', in *Bede: His Life, Times and Writings*, ed. A. Hamilton Thompson (Oxford, 1935), pp. 237-66, especially pp. 263-6.

<sup>33</sup> See Laistner, 'The Library', pp. 237-8, Bede, *In Lucam*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 120 (Turnholt, 1960) Prologus, p. 7 and appendix C below, p. 152.

<sup>34</sup> M. Stansbury, 'Source-marks in Bede's Biblical Commentaries', in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. J. Hawkes and S. Mills (Stroud, 1999), pp. 383-89, especially pp. 384-5.

<sup>35</sup> *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, trans. F. Wallis (Liverpool, 1999), pp. xxx-xxxi and pp. 405-415 for a translation of the Letter to Plegwine.

<sup>36</sup> See six ages of the world, below, chapter I, pp. 32-4.

text of the Bible and were therefore making mistakes. It is Bede's calculation which came to dominate, spread throughout Europe in *De temporum ratione* (DTR), the premier chronological and computistical handbook of the Middle Ages.

While Bede used the Fathers in his exegesis, like Augustine he uses scripture to interpret scripture.<sup>37</sup> This is probably because Bede likes the idea of *ruminatio* – it is a monk's duty to meditate on scripture.<sup>38</sup> This word is associated with Bede's story of Caedmon.<sup>39</sup> After the cowherd Caedmon heard the angelic message, he ruminated on the teachings and reproduced it in Old English verse. *Ruminatio* may also explain why Bede was content to leave opaque or difficult passages in his writings; one was allowed and expected to take time to meditate upon them. Bede is concerned with understanding scripture at all levels. 'Bede tends to avoid modifying, obscuring or negating the literal meaning ... but he regularly adds a second meaning.'<sup>40</sup> Bede makes a connection between the world of the Gospel story and world of the audience.<sup>41</sup> The Gospels were, for Bede, an essential means of understanding contemporary life and human nature.

Carroll has already provided an analysis of Bede's themes. However, she was not concerned with any differences in presentation between various genres. Undertaking a new thematic survey is of limited value; nevertheless, a brief analysis of some themes can shed light on Bede's *Weltanschauung*. Bede's theology is closely interconnected; one theme leads seamlessly into another, with the words of his sources deeply assimilated into his own writing. I have chosen to examine the theological influences upon him and how he handled them. Bede's fondness for the six ages was noted by Levison, and his handling of this subject deserves closer attention.<sup>42</sup> Bede also responded strongly against heresy, despite his lack of contact with it.<sup>43</sup> This may be a result of Augustine influence on Bede's view on unity:

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<sup>37</sup> J. F. Kelly, 'Bede's Exegesis of Luke's Infancy Narrative', *Medievalia* 15 (1993), 59-70, p. 61 and p. 68.

<sup>38</sup> A. Crépin, 'Bede and the Vernacular', in *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede*, ed. G. Bonner (London, 1976), pp. 170-92, p. 172.

<sup>39</sup> *HE* IV.24, pp. 414-21.

<sup>40</sup> C. W. Jones, 'Some Introductory Remarks on Bede's Commentary on Genesis', *Sacris Erudiri* 19 (1970), 119-198, p. 169.

<sup>41</sup> L. T. Martin, 'The Two Worlds in Bede's Homilies: The Biblical Event and the Listener's Experience', in *De Ore Domini: Preacher and Word in the Middle Ages*, ed. T. L. Amos *et al.*, Studies in Medieval Culture 27 (Kalamazoo, 1989), pp. 27-40, pp. 28-9.

<sup>42</sup> W. Levison, 'Bede as Historian' in *Bede, His Life, Times and Writings*, ed. A. Hamilton Thompson (Oxford, 1935), pp. 111-151, p. 116.

<sup>43</sup> See G. Hardin Brown, *Bede the Educator*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow, 1996), pp. 9-10.

Augustine uses John 10:16 as authority for the unity of the apostolic church, one flock in Christ, a verse which inspired Bede also.<sup>44</sup> Ecclesiology is especially relevant when considering the homilies: 'Of great importance in Bede's ecclesiology is the growth of the Church through preaching.'<sup>45</sup> Together, these themes make a substantial contribution to Bede's understanding of the world in which he lived.

While the theology is clearly inspired by and derived from that of Gregory and Augustine, many of these concerns are of particular relevance to the Anglo-Saxon Church. Although heresy was not necessarily an active concern, unity certainly was, as even in Bede's time a few communities held onto an incorrect date for celebrating Easter. More abstract ideas like the six ages of the world and ecclesiology were firmly rooted in the importance of pastoral practice and personal attempts to do good. Bede is like John Scottus Eriugena; scholars have primarily looked to the past for the source of his thinking. Though the influence of the past is strong, their use of the past is entirely conditioned by the present, and awareness of what is important in the present.<sup>46</sup>

The homilies are an interesting medium through which to examine the content and method of Bede's theology, as they belong to a somewhat different genre from the majority of his theological work, which was presented in his biblical commentaries. Martin suggests that 'Probably fairly late in his writing career, perhaps around the year 725, Bede decided to try his hand at a new genre, the literary homily ... Bede's homilies are carefully-wrought pieces of literary art, designed to explain the reading of the day, but also to move the reader or listener spiritually.'<sup>47</sup> Bede's pastoral mission is viewed as essentially literary.<sup>48</sup>

The homilies are also somewhat problematic. Sharpe has expressed doubt about their authenticity.<sup>49</sup> It was Morin who first identified the collection now

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<sup>44</sup> M.-F. Berrouard, 'Deux peuples, un seul troupeau, un unique Pasteur: Ecclésiologie de Saint Augustin et citations de Jean 10:16', in *Collectanea Augustiniana: Augustine: 'Second Founder of the Faith'*, ed. J. C. Schnaubelt and F. Van Fleteren (New York, 1990), pp. 275-301, p. 291.

<sup>45</sup> T. Echlin, 'Bede and the Church', *Irish Theological Quarterly* 40 (1973), 351-62, p. 358.

<sup>46</sup> J. Marenbon, *From the Circle of Alcuin to the School of Auxerre: Logic, Theology and Philosophy in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 10.

<sup>47</sup> L. T. Martin, 'Augustine's Influence on Bede's *Homiliae Evangelii*', in *Collectanea Augustiniana: Augustine: 'Second Founder of the Faith'*, ed. J. C. Schnaubelt and F. Van Fleteren (New York, 1990), pp. 357-69, p. 357.

<sup>48</sup> G. Bonner, 'Bede: Scholar and Spiritual Teacher', in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. J. Hawkes and S. Mills (Stroud, 1999), pp. 365-70, p. 367.

<sup>49</sup> R. Sharpe, 'The Varieties of Bede's Prose', in *Aspects of the Language of Latin Prose*, forthcoming, p. 5.

published as the fifty homilies in the CCSL edition.<sup>50</sup> My research has confirmed Morin's conclusions. Bede himself mentions two books of homilies in *HE* V.24; Paul the Deacon mentions fifty homilies in two books by Bede, many of which he included in his own composite homiliary. Morin discovered that Boulogne, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 75, said to be by Bede, contained fifty homilies in two books, many of which are indeed in Paul the Deacon's collection. However, homilies are easily assigned to a new author, so some care is needed. However, the same collection consistently travels under Bede's name, and it has homily I.13, which is an account of Benedict Biscop. As Hurst has noted, many manuscripts mistake this homily as being about a different Benedict; we should therefore consider this homily a strong indicator of authenticity. The other homilies in Boulogne 75 consistently travel together; many of these manuscripts contain insular features. I therefore suggest that we regard the fifty homilies as genuine. This in no way addresses the question of whether some more of the hundreds of homilies contained in early editions of Bede are also authentic; this may be the case, though it is fairly unlikely. On the manuscript evidence alone, it seems likely that the fifty homilies are genuine. Stylistically and theologically, the homilies also seem to fit comfortably into the Bedan *oeuvre*. There is a danger that this argument may become circular; nevertheless, the theological concerns and their method of presentation are very similar to those found in Bede's biblical commentaries.<sup>51</sup>

The second area of difficulty is the question of whether or not the homilies were preached. As noted above, Martin regards them as literary products only. West notes that liturgical features are at the basis of the homilies and he assumes a monastic audience, very familiar with the scriptures.<sup>52</sup> This may suggest a certain contact with the context of a delivered sermon. It seems at first sight that we are looking at a set of homilies for a monastic community, like Gregory's homilies on Ezekiel. But this merely redirects the question of whether or not the homilies were delivered. They may of course have been delivered in a different form; Bonner suggests that perhaps the homilies were based on talks given in English to the brethren.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> G. Morin, 'Le recueil primitif des homélies de Bede sur l'Evangile', *Revue Bénédictine (RB)* 9 (1892), 316-26.

<sup>51</sup> See chapters I-III below.

<sup>52</sup> P. J. West, 'Liturgical Style and Structure in Bede's Homily for the Easter Vigil', *American Benedictine Review* 23 (1972), 1-8.

<sup>53</sup> Bonner, 'Bede: Scholar and Spiritual Teacher', p. 369.

I suggest that Bede deliberately wrote homilies which can be used in many different ways by people with differing degrees of Latinity. As discussed in chapter III below, the Latin of the homilies is complex. We know little for certain about Bede's preaching. Echlin asserts that 'Bede himself preached at St Paul's, Jarrow.'<sup>54</sup> However, other than the existence of the homilies, we have nothing to confirm this. While preaching was for a long time strongly directed by bishops,<sup>55</sup> and later in fifth- and sixth-century Gaul there was a question about whether monks should serve as priests within their monastery (some thought an outside priest desirable),<sup>56</sup> it is clear that this had changed. The Irish had monk-priests and monk-bishops.<sup>57</sup> The Benedictine rule encouraged monk-priests.<sup>58</sup> Both these cultures had profound influences on Christianity in Northumbria, so preaching was not solely the province of bishops and monk-priests were not uncommon in Anglo-Saxon England. The evidence for the preaching ability of Bede's theological predecessors is not always clear-cut. Around half of Gregory's Gospel homilies were not delivered by Gregory in person. Gregory was not concerned with his audience, unlike Caesarius and Augustine.<sup>59</sup> Evidence for Gregory as an exceptional preacher comes from John the Deacon, based on the account of Gregory of Tours.<sup>60</sup> Bede may well have been inspired by the accounts of Gregory the Great's preaching, even though Gregory did not necessarily preach that frequently. There are also legends of Bede as a preacher, suggesting that he did in fact preach.<sup>61</sup>

Bede writes inspiringly about preaching.<sup>62</sup> Eckenrode notes: 'When Bede espoused his notions on the art of preaching, how much was he inspired by the

<sup>54</sup> Echlin, 'Bede and the Church', p. 362.

<sup>55</sup> A. Olivar, *La Predicación Cristiana Antigua* (Barcelona, 1991), pp. 142-5.

<sup>56</sup> T. L. Amos, 'Monks and Pastoral Care in the Early Middle Ages', in *Religion, Culture and Society in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of Richard E. Sullivan*, ed. T. F. X. Noble and J. J. Contreni (Kalamazoo, 1987), pp. 165-80; p. 167.

<sup>57</sup> Amos, 'Monks and Pastoral Care', p. 167.

<sup>58</sup> Amos, 'Monks and Pastoral Care', p. 169.

<sup>59</sup> J. McClure, *Gregory the Great: Exegesis and Audience* (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1978) pp. 163-4.

<sup>60</sup> McClure, *Gregory the Great*, p. 267.

<sup>61</sup> See R. Pfaff, 'Bede among the Fathers? The Evidence from Liturgical Commemoration', *Studia Patristica* 28 (1993), 225-9, p. 229. The story appears in Oxford, University College MS 9 (a late fourteenth-century manuscript from the East of England); the story also appears in the section on Pope Pelagius towards the end of the thirteenth-century *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobo da Voragine. Jacobo da Voragine, *Iacopo da Vorazze: Legenda Aurea*, ed. G. P. Maggioni, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 2 vols. (Florence, 1998), vol. II, pp. 1267-8.

<sup>62</sup> See van der Walt, *The Homiliary of the Venerable Bede and Early Medieval Preaching* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, London, 1980), p. 11, p. 26.

monastic dynamic of the Irish missionaries?’<sup>63</sup> It seems inconceivable that he would not have exercised this part of his priestly ministry at all. It is likely that monks, including Bede, were involved in missionary work and pastoral care.<sup>64</sup> In Carolingian times, a lack of trained priests caused monks to undertake pastoral work;<sup>65</sup> perhaps it was the same in Anglo-Saxon England. Preaching is not necessarily associated with the pulpit;<sup>66</sup> stone crosses in Northumbria may have provided a focus for missionary efforts.<sup>67</sup> It is likely that preaching to the laity took place primarily in Old English, for two reasons. Firstly, the laity were almost certainly not sufficiently schooled in Latin to be able to understand a Latin homily. Secondly, many priests may not have had sufficient Latin to be able to deliver a sermon in that language, as Bede indicates in his *Epistola ad Ecgbertum*.<sup>68</sup> In the Carolingian era, this was taken into account, and some church councils recommended that sermons be in the vernacular. This was even more important to the Carolingians as they regarded the sermon as the best way to instruct people in the Christian way of life.<sup>69</sup> The homilies seem unlikely to have been preached outside the monastery; the monastic arena seems to have forged them completely,<sup>70</sup> though ‘vernacular sermons would perhaps have generally been transcribed into the literary language, Latin.’<sup>71</sup> But laypeople may have attended services at the monastery and given that the monastery was probably responsible for a fair amount of pastoral care, it seems likely that Bede would have had at least some responsibility for preaching.<sup>72</sup> Though Bede was a man of his books, it would seem unlikely that Bede derived this ethic of preaching from them without putting them into practice. The liturgical echoes detected by West suggest a strong awareness of the context of a sermon, which may reflect actual delivery, or at least a strong intent for the sermons to be used in the context of the Mass.<sup>73</sup> Also, a sermon was not only

<sup>63</sup> T. R. Eckenrode, ‘The Venerable Bede and the Pastoral Affirmation of the Christian Message in Anglo-Saxon England’, *The Downside Review* 99 (1981), 258-78; p. 267.

<sup>64</sup> Amos, ‘Monks and Pastoral Care’, p. 165.

<sup>65</sup> Amos, ‘Monks and Pastoral Care’, p. 166.

<sup>66</sup> McClure, *Gregory the Great*, p. 131.

<sup>67</sup> R. Hill, ‘Christianity and Geography in Early Northumbria’, in *Studies in Church History*, ed. G. J. Cuming, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Leiden 1966), pp. 126-39, pp. 131-9.

<sup>68</sup> *Epistola ad Ecgbertum*, *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, ed. C. Plummer, pp. 408-9.

<sup>69</sup> R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms 789-895* (London, 1977), p. 14.

<sup>70</sup> Van der Walt, *The Homiliary of the Venerable Bede*, p. 52. He refers particularly to homilies I.5 and I.13.

<sup>71</sup> McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, p. 97.

<sup>72</sup> See II.17.193-99, p. 366 (trans. L. Martin, Cistercian Studies Series (CSS) p. 170-1) for suggestions that laypeople may have been in the audience, and, for the suggestion that monks went out to preach, ‘Bede: Life of Cuthbert’, in *The Age of Bede*, ed. D. H. Farmer and J. F. Webb, rev. edn (Harmondsworth, 1998), ch. 9, pp. 56-7.

<sup>73</sup> West, ‘Liturgical Style and Structure in Bede’s Homily for the Easter Vigil’, pp. 1-8.

a way to instruct in the faith, ‘but was also a direct appeal to the imagination, aesthetic sensibilities and social consciousness of the people.’<sup>74</sup>

If we accept that Bede did preach, whether to laity or to monastics (more likely), in Latin or English, the next question is to what extent did Bede’s preaching affect the Gospel homilies. Did he, as Martin suggests, regard them as a purely literary endeavour? It would seem an unnatural separation; his school texts mostly sprang out of a need in the schoolroom, so we may presume that the homilies had some basis in his preaching. Bede used complex rhetoric: ‘Since it was useful alike to those within and without the faithful community, rhetoric was to be used by the good to combat the evil. It was to be feared and embraced. In Bede’s writing this basically Ciceronian attitude survives.’<sup>75</sup> The use of this rhetoric had several effects; firstly, it highlighted important words for the less able listener; secondly, it produced an emotional effect; thirdly, it provided depth for the most able listeners. This is an appropriate layering for a monastic audience, all of whom would have been exposed to some Latin, but who would not all have reached the same standard. We should also remember that Bede frequently uses rhetorical figures described in *De schematibus et tropis* (which presumably formed staple school material at Wearmouth-Jarrow). Moreover, *De schematibus et tropis* is much concerned with figures which use hyperbaton, providing monks with a tool for understanding Bede’s more complex Latin. However, Bede was quite prepared to stretch his audience and in the homilies he uses rhetorical figures not found in *De schematibus et tropis*.<sup>76</sup> It may be that in a culture where oral tradition still played a strong part Bede was content to let people memorise phrases they did not quite understand, for future contemplation.

Van der Walt argues that the homilies were actually preached; Martin regards them as literary constructions. This represents the polarity on the issue. As I discuss in chapter III, there are stylistic features which point in both directions. The direct address to the audience and the emotional writing suggest that the homilies were delivered; the complex constructions used, which were frequently eschewed even by native speakers when speaking *ex tempore*, suggests that at the very least Bede was revising his own notes. It is highly unlikely that the homilies could have been taken

<sup>74</sup> McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, p. 81.

<sup>75</sup> R. Ray, ‘Bede and Cicero’, *Anglo-Saxon England (ASE)* 16 (1987), 1-16, p. 8.

<sup>76</sup> Van der Walt, *The Homiliary of the Venerable Bede*, p. 175.

down while Bede was speaking them, as Tironian notes were unknown to the early Anglo-Saxons.<sup>77</sup> I suggest that, while firmly rooted in his preaching in terms of theme and pericope,<sup>78</sup> the homilies as we have them are carefully-wrought literary artefacts. They were probably still intended, at least in part, for reading aloud. However, it seems likely that Bede was also aware that they would be useful meditative or inspirational reading, especially since it seems likely that his monastery, like others in Northumbria, followed the Benedictine practice of private reading. They could be read by monks, bishops and priests. They were used for many of these purposes in the Carolingian age, and they continued to be read into the twelfth century, during which the style of preaching changed substantially.<sup>79</sup>

We are to a certain extent able to see how those who read Bede understood him. While there are no contemporary accounts of his preaching, we do have manuscripts containing his homilies. As Tunbridge notes, ‘The innovative activities of Insular scribes, however, constitute a silent language or commentary upon the relationship of readers to books in this period.’<sup>80</sup> This is just as true of Carolingian Europe, whence come a number of surviving manuscripts.<sup>81</sup> But we also have a window into scribal practice at Bede’s own monastery, suggesting that Bede was well aware of the weakness of his readers and accommodated this.<sup>82</sup> Examining manuscripts from Wearmouth-Jarrow and manuscripts containing the homilies gives insight into what accommodations were made for readers, and which of them might have come from Bede’s own hand, and also we can observe how readers and scribes responded to the homilies. As is discussed in chapter IV, we have a valuable resource in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 819, the only surviving manuscript of one of Bede’s biblical commentaries from the Wearmouth-Jarrow scriptorium. This manuscript shows many interesting features of layout and punctuation which may have influenced later scribes. It is such features that allow us to determine how later audiences responded to Bede’s writing.

<sup>77</sup> See M. B. Parkes, ‘Tachygraphy in the Middle Ages: Writing Techniques Employed for the Reportationes of Lectures and Sermons’, in his *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London 1991), pp. 19-34, esp. pp. 19-20. (This was first published in *Medioevo e rinascimento*, Annuario del Dipartimento di Studio sul Medioevo e il Rinascimento dell’Università di Firenze 3 (Florence, 1989), 159-69.)

<sup>78</sup> The pericope was the (Gospel) reading for the day.

<sup>79</sup> See chapter V below, and D. L. d’Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 20-1.

<sup>80</sup> G. Tunbridge, *A Study of Scribal Practices in Early Irish and Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts* (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1992), p. 41.

<sup>81</sup> See appendix C.

<sup>82</sup> See chapter IV.

The transmission of the homilies is complex and cannot be fully addressed in this thesis. Homilies are usually transmitted in groups in homiliaries; but what exactly are homilies and homiliaries? Gregoire, when discussing homiliaries of the Middle Ages, states that ‘les lectionnaires liturgiques sont des recueils de textes ... *lectio*, destinés à un usage spirituel, soit personnel, soit communautaire.’<sup>83</sup> He goes on to state that there are two kinds of these lectionaries: patristic and biblical. The patristic types were called homiliaries, because the texts often filled the function of a sermon or homily. However, these lectionaries may also contain excerpts from biblical commentaries, rewritten to a greater or lesser extent to fit the form of a homily, and rewriting was common in later Carolingian times.<sup>84</sup> Homilies, if the term is strictly applied, are works of biblical exegesis, in the form of a verse-by-verse commentary. Sermons tend to discuss a given theme, perhaps inspired by a biblical verse, or the day’s liturgy. The term ‘sermon’ can be used to embrace homilies as well. So while a homily may be called a sermon, the reverse is not always true; in effect, homilies are a subset of sermons. In origin, both terms imply some kind of verbal delivery, whether by the author or by an appointed deputy; Gregory and Augustine used both methods. But a homiliary may contain works of both kinds: there is no English equivalent of the French term *sermonnaire*. If an extract from a commentary is turned into a homily, then the intention for delivery can be attributed to the compiler, not the author. However, one must consider the possibility that the sermon was regarded as a purely literary form – a work which might not have been read aloud. This was probably not the case until the Carolingian age, when the notion of the homiliary seems to have started to merge with the florilegium, in which excerpts from Patristic texts (which may or may not be sermons) are combined in books for private reading.<sup>85</sup> However, as McKitterick has shown, these collections had a significant part in inspiring preachers, even if they were not originally designed for reading aloud.<sup>86</sup> In the context of the discussion about constructing homiliaries, it seems preferable to refer to the ‘authors’ of homilies and homiliaries which they

<sup>83</sup> R. Gregoire, *Homéliaires liturgiques médiévaux: Analyse des manuscrits* (Spoleto, 1980), p. 5. ‘Liturgical lectionaries are collections of texts, of lections, intended for a spiritual use, whether personal or communal.’

<sup>84</sup> H. Barré, *Les homéliaires carolingiens de l’École d’Auxerre: Authenticité – Inventaire – Tableaux comparatifs – Initia*, Studi e Testi 225 (Vatican, 1962), p. 29. We see this with Bede’s own works. See Leclercq, ‘Le iii<sup>e</sup> livre des homélies de Bède le Vénérable’, *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale* 14 (1947), 211-8, and appendix C, pp. 162-3.

<sup>85</sup> Barré, *Les homéliaires carolingiens*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>86</sup> McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, p. 102.

wrote and compiled themselves, and ‘compilers’ of homiliaries, who took the sermons of others or texts from commentaries, and may or may not have reworked them to a greater or lesser extent.

A further division may be applied to both authorial and compilers’ homiliaries; between those intended to be read aloud to a group, and those intended for private reading. The former would most likely have had a liturgical function, whether at the Mass or the divine office. The latter would have been used outside the liturgy itself, but were very probably used in *lectio divina* – the reading prescribed by St Benedict in his rule. The homiliaries for public reading could probably have reached a wider audience, including laypeople, whereas collections for private devotion are more immediately associated with a monastic environment, at least in the early middle ages. Homiliaries for the liturgy tend to be biased towards the hermeneutic and homiletic, in connection with readings or Gospels just heard, though not exclusively so. Homiliaries for private devotion tend to include more sermons and more thematic works, though this is an over-simplification of a more complex combination of materials. As will be shown in chapter V, Bede’s homilies could be used for either purpose.

It may be more constructive to examine the purpose of the compiler, as this is a sounder guide to the content of the homiliary. Olivar has pointed out that preachers were formed by their personal predilections and the circumstances in which they found themselves.<sup>87</sup> It would seem probable that the same is also true of the compilers of homiliaries. Compilers seem to have intended their homiliaries for one of three purposes: for personal devotion (late Antique and later Carolingian compilers) or for the night office (early Carolingian compilers, such as Paul the Deacon and in the sixth century, the compiler of the Roman homiliary) or for the Mass (the homilist of Toledo).<sup>88</sup> These homiliaries may or may not have been intended as exemplars or stimuli for preachers, but we know that some were used in this manner.<sup>89</sup> Authors may have collected their compositions for future use by themselves or by other preachers, or in order to refute a particular position (for example, sermons preached against Arianism), or for private meditation. They may have used a group of sermons as a means of controlling their biblical commentary

<sup>87</sup> Olivar, *La Predicación Cristiana*, p. 319 and p. 334 for example.

<sup>88</sup> D. J. F. Rivera Recio, ‘El “Homiliarum Gothicum” de la Biblioteca Capitulare de Toledo’, *Hispania Sacra* 4 (1951), 147-68, p. 149.

<sup>89</sup> G. Morin, ed., *Sancti Caesarii Arlatensis: Sermones*, CCSL 103 (Turnholt, 1953).

(for example, Gregory's *Moralia in Iob*), for biblical commentary was not a purely academic exercise, but a means of revealing spiritual truth, providing nourishment and encouraging spiritual growth. The form of a sermon with its direct address may have seemed ideal to the teachers of the Church – a means of dealing with difficult texts to unlock their meaning in a way which encouraged Christian faith and life. They may also have collected their sermons for private reading, either for moral development or for the further comprehension of Scripture. There is a tendency to think of the learned men of the Early Middle Ages as the academics of their day, an image perhaps lent strength by the schools and universities of the later Middle Ages. However, this can also leave us with the impression that these men were removed from external life, an impression exacerbated if they were monastics. These men were often passionately and actively involved with society, as priests and bishops, in constant contact with ordinary people. In fact, one who was a cloistered academic for his whole life was something of a rarity. Unfortunately, we have no clues as to why Bede wrote his Gospel homilies; in none of the surviving manuscripts is there an introductory letter to shed light on his motivation.

The homiliary for private reading originated in the late patristic period, as witnessed by Gennadius.<sup>90</sup> This form was dominated by the homiliaries intended for use at public worship, whether the office or the mass. In the later Carolingian period, these homiliaries were revived, especially at the school of Auxerre, as Henri Barré has demonstrated.<sup>91</sup> In these later collections, the compiler begins to take a more active role (as did Smaragdus): the compiler would rewrite sections of biblical commentary to make the structure conform to that of a homily, or fillet sermons to produce a more useable whole. These compilations still used the Church year for their structure – they were a set of private readings in the form of a homily or sermon. Bede does not seem to feature prominently in such collections, at least from the Carolingian period. The first homiliaries specifically connected to the liturgy arose in the early medieval period. A liturgical homiliary in use at St Peter's basilica in Rome in the sixth century can be reconstructed; it formed the basis of Agimond's homiliary and for that of Alan of Farfa. These homiliaries are notable for the extensive use of St Augustine's homilies. It was at the Carolingian court, with the homiliary of Paul the Deacon, that the homiliary for public worship came into its

<sup>90</sup> Barré, *Les homéliaires carolingiens*, p. 7.

<sup>91</sup> Barré, *Les homéliaires carolingiens*, p. 30.

own. Gregoire notes that Alcuin is also alleged to have made a homiliary, indicating the influence of the Carolingian court in this area.<sup>92</sup>

The homiliary of Paul the Deacon was compiled at the court of Charlemagne, as part of the program of religious reform overseen by Alcuin. This homiliary, unlike that of Alan of Farfa, was based on the Roman breviary, and gave 244 readings for the divine office throughout the year.<sup>93</sup> It took sermons of the Church Fathers, and occasionally extracts from their other works, and assigned them to various dates through the year. Fifty-four of the readings are taken from Bede's homilies or his Gospel commentaries, on Mark and Luke.<sup>94</sup> This need not surprise us overmuch in this context; Alcuin is known to have been very fond of Bede's work and presumably brought a number of manuscripts with him from York. Both Paul's homiliary and Alan's were arranged to suit the liturgical year, which then fell into two parts: Advent to Holy Saturday and Easter Day to Advent.<sup>95</sup> Paul states in his introduction that his readings were designed for the night office,<sup>96</sup> when Old Testament, New Testament and Patristic readings were heard, especially during the winter months.<sup>97</sup>

The use of homiliaries at the night office is closely connected to their use in private study, since these were the two main opportunities for reading Patristic texts. However, homiliaries connected to the Gospel pericopes also arose at a similar period (the fifth century – a time closely connected to the formulation of the Sacramentary). The homiliary of Toledo was intended for use at the celebration of the Eucharist.<sup>98</sup> Homiliaries were not only compiled for personal spiritual edification, but also in order to help preachers. Caesarius of Arles compiled his homilies and also those of others (mainly Augustine) in order to help out the preacher – his parish priests and deacons who had to give a sermon each week. This was not the case before the fifth century, when only bishops had an obligation to preach, and priests preached only with the bishop's approval.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Gregoire, *Homéliaires liturgiques médiévaux*, p. 66.

<sup>93</sup> R. Gregoire, *Les homéliaires du moyen âge: Inventaire et analyse des manuscrits*, *Rerum Ecclesiasticarum documenta series maior: Fontes VI* (Rome, 1966), p. 71.

<sup>94</sup> Information derived from Gregoire, *Les homéliaires*, pp. 78-113.

<sup>95</sup> Gregoire *Les homéliaires*, p. 6.

<sup>96</sup> 'ad nocturnale officium', *Patrologia Latina* (PL) 95, ed. J.-P. Migne, (Paris, 1886), col. 1159.

<sup>97</sup> P. Salmon, *L'Office Divin: Histoire de la formation du Bréviaire*, *Lex Orandi* 27 (Paris, 1959), p. 141. For further discussion of Bede's homilies in the homiliary of Paul the Deacon, see below pp. 19-20.

<sup>98</sup> Gregoire, *Les Homéliaires*, p. 293.

<sup>99</sup> 'Homiletics', <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07443a.htm>

Where we have any clear idea of the form of homiliaries compiled by their own authors, as a general rule they seem to have grown out of the author's own preaching. This may mean that they used the liturgical year as the basis for their preaching, though this is not always the case. Reverentius, who wrote the *Vita S. Hilarii Arelatensis*, stated that St Hilary composed sermons for use on feasts throughout the year.<sup>100</sup> It is probable that the sermons of Caesarius of Arles could be assigned an order; one Germanic collection is called *De anni circulo*.<sup>101</sup> Within this preaching basis, different authors may use their sermons differently. Leo the Great's collection is liturgical: it is firmly centred on the major feasts of the Church year.<sup>102</sup> As indicated above, Caesarius' collection would seem to function as a preaching manual, guide or lectionary. Most probably Cassian's *Collationes* were intended for private reading. Augustine's *Tractatus in Iohannem* have a primarily exegetical function, and in fact became one of the most important works written about that Gospel. The different titles used for compilations of homilies should not confuse us: Augustine and Gregory the Great used a variety of titles such as *moralia*, *enarrationes*, *homilia*. However, they all describe collections of sermons, and were originally intended to be preached.

The context of this preaching may be debated. Homilists operating in a monastic environment could not only have preached at the Eucharist but at other points in the horarium, though it would seem unlikely that this would have replaced the reading of the orthodox Church Fathers. Their sermons need not have been short. Of the homilies in Augustine's Tractates on John, the longer ones are the ones he preached himself, which were taken down by secretaries, and the ones he dictated to be read out by someone else are shorter.<sup>103</sup> In Mayer's edition, the preached sermons cover, on average, ten pages, whilst those dictated average only two to three.

In this context, it is important to remember that relatively few authorial homiliaries survive in their original state. Collections which form a complete commentary upon a book of the Bible are likely to survive intact, but homiliaries connected to the Church year are apt to become at least slightly disrupted during the

<sup>100</sup> Gregoire, *Homéliaires liturgiques médiévaux*, p. 44.

<sup>101</sup> Barré, *Les homéliaires carolingiens*, p. 2

<sup>102</sup> Olivar, *La Predicación Cristiana*, pp. 313-4.

<sup>103</sup> Augustine, *Tractatus in Iohannem*, ed. A. Mayer, CCSL 36 (Turnholt, 1954), p. vii.

process of transmission. This is because the Church year and the cycle of readings were not stable, and a homiliary composed at one time for one place would need alterations in order to function elsewhere. Some authors, such as Caesarius of Arles, have been largely hidden beneath false attributions to another author: in the case of Caesarius, this was Augustine whose style Caesarius imitated, too successfully it seems. Works by authors such as Augustine, Jerome and Ambrose were swamped with pseudepigrapha. Authorial homiliaries are also often distributed piecemeal among compiler's homiliaries, adding to the difficulties of accurate attribution. Though authorial collections largely grew out of preaching, they were probably intended to be read in private when they were issued, not to be recycled at another church, if only because in the Patristic era, the number of preachers was limited.

Bede's homiliary contains only fifty homilies. If the monks at Wearmouth-Jarrow celebrated the Eucharist every day, then the homilies we have represent a very small percentage of the number of homilies Bede presumably delivered, even if a homily was not delivered at every Mass. There is also the question of how often Bede would have preached; surely the abbot would have preached on at least some occasions. This may suggest that Bede's homilies date from later on in his life, after his mentors were dead, when he was one of the most senior members of the monastery. It seems that the homiliary as we have it was a deliberate selection on the part of Bede (and that this selection was made by him is suggested by its inclusion in his short biography), and therefore its composition may indicate the direction of his interests.

Bede's homiliary travelled largely intact within a larger collection – that of Paul the Deacon. Paul the Deacon's homiliary, as mentioned above, had, in its original recension, 244 homilies for use at the night office, assigned to various dates in the year. Some dates had more than one reading assigned to them. The homiliary is divided into summer and winter parts. There are fifty-four extracts of Bede, a fifth of the whole: a very respectable showing, when the other main contributors were Gregory, Caesarius and Leo (and pseudepigrapha, especially of Augustine, presumably under the misapprehension that these were genuine works). However, twenty of these extracts are not Bede's homilies, but extracts from his commentaries upon the Gospels of Mark and Luke. So not all of Bede's homiletic corpus travels in Paul the Deacon's collection. Missing are the two advent homilies (I.1 and I.2), both

on John the Baptist; the sermon on the Annunciation (I.3), and his Christmas homilies on the birth and the visitation of the shepherds (I.6 and I.7), though his tour-de-force on St John's Gospel is used (I.8). The homily on Benedict Biscop (I.13) is removed (for obvious reasons – no one in Carolingian France would have heard of him). His sermon on the calling of Nathaniel was excluded (I.17), as was his sermon on the purification of Mary (I.18). Four of his Lenten homilies were discarded: two healing miracles, one from John, one from Matthew (I.22 and I.23), the tale of the adulterous woman from John's Gospel (I.25), and the cleansing of the Temple (II.1). All of the ones for the Easter season itself are included. The post-Paschal homily on the betrayal of Judas (II.12), and Bede's Ascension homily (II.15) are removed. Three of his homilies on saints were also omitted: two on John the Baptist (II.20 and II.23) and the other for St James (II.21). It was mostly Bede's homilies on John's Gospel that were omitted, as well as healing miracles, where Bede's style was not appreciated, perhaps because of competition from Augustine. The other major omission is of his homilies on John the Baptist: Bede's great interest in him was evidently not appreciated by Paul.

'It is these homiliaries which were the distinctive contribution of the Carolingians to the didactic material of the church, for they were from the first designed to be of practical assistance in the Carolingian reforms.'<sup>104</sup> These homiliaries were similar in structure to lectionaries and eighth-century Gelasian-type sacramentaries.<sup>105</sup> They may have reached a wide audience; McKitterick suggests that 'Many compilations suggest that the homiliaries were intended for both a literate and an illiterate audience.'<sup>106</sup>

It is undoubtedly Paul the Deacon's homiliary which brought Bede's homilies to the largest number of readers. 'It seems clear that Ælfric knew Bede's homilies as whole items only through the homiliary of Paul the Deacon.'<sup>107</sup> Nevertheless, 'another important collection for the Carolingian Church appears to have been the collection of homilies by the Anglo-Saxon, Bede.'<sup>108</sup> The listing of manuscripts contained in CCSL 122 and in Laistner and King is conservative.<sup>109</sup> This

<sup>104</sup> McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, p. 90.

<sup>105</sup> McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, p. 91.

<sup>106</sup> McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, p. 93.

<sup>107</sup> J. Hill, *Bede and the Benedictine Reform*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow, 1998), p. 13.

<sup>108</sup> McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, p. 96.

<sup>109</sup> D. Hurst, ed., *Homiliae*, CCSL 122, pp. xvii-xxi, and M. L. W. Laistner and H. H. King, *A Hand-list of Bede Manuscripts* (Ithaca, 1943), pp. 114-8.

conservatism is necessitated because of the accrual of inauthentic homilies under Bede's name in a quantity only paralleled in Bede's scientific corpus.<sup>110</sup> The number of homilies printed in earlier editions is clearly more than Bede produced.<sup>111</sup> Manuscript catalogues are not always helpful in their descriptions of contents; therefore to ascertain the true number of manuscripts containing homilies by Bede would be a massive undertaking. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that at an early date extracts were made from Bede's Gospel commentaries and circulated separately as sermons.<sup>112</sup> Thus we have only an imperfect understanding of the continental transmission, though it seems to have been primarily through the collection of Paul the Deacon, as there is little Bede included in other collections, and a small number of manuscripts of the homilies.

Many commentators have noted the explosion in the number of manuscripts of Bede's works in the Carolingian era.<sup>113</sup> This explosion happened with the homilies too, though the main contact would be through the homiliary of Paul the Deacon, as over one hundred copies survive. Why did the Carolingians read Bede so much? The following argument pertains principally to the homilies, though some points are applicable to his other works.

Firstly, the explosion of Bedan manuscripts is not an isolated phenomenon. The Carolingian era saw an unparalleled explosion of manuscript production of all types. This was because 'Carolingian rule meant a ... positive attempt at the reshaping of a society within a Christian framework.'<sup>114</sup> As McKitterick notes, 'The development of the scriptoria and libraries is tightly bound up with the establishment and consolidation of Christianity.'<sup>115</sup> There was a requirement specified in the *Admonitio Generalis* of 789 to preach the faith and Christian virtues to the people.<sup>116</sup> As mentioned above, the preferred vehicle for this education was the sermon. The same proclamation notes that sermons should be free from heresy, and should, amongst other things, teach about the Triune God, God's son Jesus who was made man and came to judge, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal rewards.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>110</sup> C.W. Jones, ed., *Beda Opera de Temporibus* (Cambridge, Mass., 1943).

<sup>111</sup> See above, pp. 8-9.

<sup>112</sup> See chapter V and J. Leclercq, 'Le iii<sup>e</sup> livre des homélies de Bède le Vénérable', *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 14 (1947), 211-18, p. 218.

<sup>113</sup> Laistner and King, *A Hand-list*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>114</sup> McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, p. xx.

<sup>115</sup> McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, p. 27.

<sup>116</sup> McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, p. 5.

<sup>117</sup> McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, p. 82.

These concerns coincide well with Bede's teaching, which is undoubtedly orthodox, free from heresy, and covers all those things. McKitterick also notes that 'Both the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist were prominent in Carolingian theology because they were mortals, chosen by God to perform a special function in their association with Christ.'<sup>118</sup> Bede pays close attention to both these figures in his homilies; we find here an excellent match between what we find in Bede's Gospel homilies and what the Carolingian reformists were seeking. Moreover, 'the council of Aachen in 836 explicitly accorded Bede the same authority as that of the Fathers.'<sup>119</sup>

Scholars have long been discussing the mechanisms whereby English texts reached the continent. Evidence of English influence (and therefore routes through which texts may have been transmitted) was discussed by Levison. He notes that English scripts were found at Echternach, Fulda, Mainz, Lorsch, Amorbach, Würzburg, Salzburg, Corbie and Tours in the eighth and ninth centuries.<sup>120</sup> There are many vectors for the transmission of Bede's work to the continent. All shed light on who his subsequent readers were. We know that Boniface read Bede; in fact he particularly asked for a copy of Bede's homilies to be sent to him. We find early manuscripts of Bede in centres associated with Boniface.<sup>121</sup> Alcuin went out to Charlemagne's court; he particularly revered Bede.<sup>122</sup> Both of these English scholars provided routes whereby Bede's work could be transmitted to the Carolingian world, where, as we have seen, he found a receptive audience.

The punctuation and manuscript presentation give us valuable clues about how these continental readers understood and used Bede's theology; his theology provides us with reasons for the popularity of his writing with subsequent generations. All these aspects demand our attention and form the bulk of this thesis: first, a discussion of Bede's theology and the influences upon it; second, an examination of Bede's style and the linguistic clues he left for listeners and readers; third, an examination of the scribal conventions and punctuation of minuscule manuscripts at Wearmouth-Jarrow, and finally an examination of the continental manuscripts of Bede. This approach will use the disparate approaches of Hurst,

<sup>118</sup> McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, p. 105. Both are prominent in Paul the Deacon's collection and in Bede.

<sup>119</sup> J. Hill, *Bede and the Benedictine Reform*, p. 4.

<sup>120</sup> W. Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century: The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford in the Hilary Term 1943* (Oxford, 1946), p. 136.

<sup>121</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 140, p. 143. Laistner and King, *A Hand-list*, p. 5.

<sup>122</sup> See chapter V.

Carroll and van der Walt, giving an insight into the reasons for Bede's popularity in the early middle ages.