

Chapter III: The Style of the Homilies

Style is a vital component of deciphering the meaning of the homilies, regardless of whether they were to be read in public or in private. It seems likely that Bede did not deliver these sermons *ex tempore*, to be recorded by stenographers as Augustine's were;¹ at the least, the sermons were carefully revised before they were copied and distributed.² The style may provide clues about who the original audience was, as well as containing grammatical information readers used to comprehend the homilies. Although the homilies became popular in the Carolingian Empire, where for some readers the language was not totally dissimilar to the one they spoke every day, they were originally written in Northumbria, where Latin would always be a second language.

Early students of Bede's style have commented on its simplicity and its resemblance to Classical Latin. Plummer made this comment on Bede's Latin: 'Bede's command of Latin is excellent, and his style is clear and limpid, and it is very seldom that we have to pause to think of the meaning of a sentence.'³ Wetherbee states that 'Bede's Latin ... is pure, simple and efficient.'⁴ De Bruyne characterises Bede's Latin as 'clear, even elegant', and as presenting a 'classical character.'⁵

We find ample evidence that Bede was familiar with the Classical forms of rhetoric, and was able to use them with flexibility and ease, as van der Walt has shown.⁶ As we may assume that a Wearmouth-Jarrow audience would be taught such forms, probably using Bede's own textbook (*De schematibus et tropis*), Bede would have felt quite assured that most of his audience would be able to understand them. These forms also provide direction to the listener, bringing important words and phrases to the fore, linking ideas through wordplay or chiasmus, repeating important concepts.

¹ R. J. Deferrari, 'St Augustine's Method of Composing and Delivering Sermons', *American Journal of Philology* 43 (1922), 97-123 and 193-219, p. 104.

² See the Introduction, pp. 12-3 for a discussion of the read/spoken argument.

³ Plummer, *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. 1, pp. liii-liv.

⁴ W. Wetherbee, 'Some Implications of Bede's Latin Style' in *Bede and Anglo-Saxon England: Papers in Honour of the 1300th anniversary of the Birth of Bede, Given at Cornell University in 1973 and 1974*, ed. R. T. Farrell, British Archaeological Reports 46 (Oxford, 1978), pp. 23-31, p. 23.

⁵ A. de Bruyne, *Études d'esthétique médiévale* (Bruges, 1946), p. 149.

⁶ Van der Walt, *The Homiliary of the Venerable Bede*, p. 92, p. 175.

But subsequent commentators, particularly those who have studied Bede's exegetical writings rather than the *HE*, have reached a somewhat different conclusion. Bede is not writing the simplest, most unadorned Latin; he is writing complex Latin that compares well to that of Augustine, who received a formal rhetorical training. At times, Bede may go beyond this and become convoluted. Connolly has noted this complexity, and, commenting on Plummer's statement that 'Bede's command of Latin is excellent ... and it is very seldom that we have to pause to think of the meaning of a sentence,' states '[The words] simply do not reflect this translator's experience of reading and translating Bede's *exegetical* writings. The plain truth is quite often the reverse.'⁷ Sharpe has analysed this phenomenon, showing how tricky Bede's Latin can be.⁸ He notes that perhaps those works with a thematic (such as *De templo*), rather than a strictly verse-by-verse approach (such as Bede's commentary on Luke's Gospel) are more prone to contain difficulties; the homilies offer a halfway house here, being concerned with both theme and verse. The difficulty for the modern reader is compounded by the format of the CCSL editions, which do not include much punctuation. Sharpe hypothesises that this may be because the editor was 'insufficiently secure in his understanding of the syntax to feel able to punctuate without risk of misleading the reader. Not without reason, because sometimes the sentences require a real effort to understand them.'⁹ It is apparent from an analysis of the homilies that sometimes the sentence can be construed in more than one way.¹⁰ Bede is not easy on his readers, and expects them to have a comprehensive knowledge of rhetorical features of *De schematibus et tropis*; without this knowledge, one would be lost. Sharpe provides examples from Bede's commentary on Samuel, particularly the sections commenting on I Samuel 7:2 and I Samuel 10:17-9, demonstrating some of the more misleading sentences. He finds a parallel for this kind of expansive discourse in Jerome's commentary on Ezekiel. He suggests that some of this unclarity may stem from Bede not being a native speaker of Latin; however, one finds long and convoluted sentences in English, written by native speakers, whether in literature, by authors such as James Joyce, or in scholarship, by scholars such as Judith Butler (one of the

⁷ S. Connolly, trans., *Bede: On Tobit and on the Canticle of Habakkuk*, (Dublin, 1997), p. 15.

⁸ Sharpe, 'The Varieties of Bede's Prose', pp. 7-8.

⁹ Sharpe, 'The Varieties of Bede's Prose', p. 8.

¹⁰ See my analysis of I.10.1-3, pp. 69-70 below.

proponents of feminist literary criticism). Moreover, Bede is not unaware of the nuances of Latin style; he corrected the Life of St Anastasius to improve its Latin idiom,¹¹ and as Sharpe also points out, Bede rewrote *De locis sanctis* by Adomnán of Iona, finding the florid style unhelpful to students. He asserts that this is because of Bede's models; furthermore, he characterises Bede's style as 'showing a deliberate neutrality'.¹² It may well not be possible to define a personal style for Bede. He has no especially favoured vocabulary, unlike Aldhelm.¹³ He uses a wide range of vocabulary, has mastered many complex Latin constructions, and has mastered many styles of discourse. This may make the attribution of Bede's *dubia* on stylistic grounds particularly difficult.

Bede's style has received a certain amount of attention in recent years, with some studies focussing specifically on the homilies.¹⁴ Much of this analysis is devoted to examining Bede's use of rhetorical devices. As van der Walt has demonstrated, Bede follows his own pedagogical advice, contained in *De schematibus et tropis*, and even goes beyond it.¹⁵ Bede was a careful reader of the grammarian Donatus, and was able to implement the stylistic teachings found in his models.¹⁶ One point, which is little noted by those who examine Bede's style in the homilies, is that they are not all of a piece. The homilies contain considerable stylistic variation: in some, Bede uses many rhetorical devices; in others, he exhibits a plainer style. This may be a reflection of Bede's attitude to the subject matter, or may be symptomatic of the homilies being written over several years, then being collected at a later date.

Scholars have suggested several stylistic influences on Bede. As discussed above, Sharpe suggests that the later, bloated prose of Jerome may have influenced Bede's style in some of his obscurer passages.¹⁷ Martin has demonstrated that Bede

¹¹ P. Meyvaert, 'Bede the Scholar', in *Famulus Christi*, pp. 40-69; p. 49.

¹² Sharpe, 'The Varieties of Bede's Prose', pp. 10-18.

¹³ For a study of Aldhelm's prose style, see M. Lapidge and M. Herren, trans., *The Prose Works of Aldhelm*, (Cambridge, 1979), Introduction; A. de Bruyne characterises Aldhelm's style as 'Hisperic' in his *Études d'esthétique médiévale*, pp. 127-30, though this is a description not widely favoured now.

¹⁴ Namely, van der Walt's thesis, *The Homiliary of the Venerable Bede* and Martin's article, 'Augustine's Influence'. West has provided a close analysis of some of the homilies, focussing on structural and liturgical features. P. J. West, 'Liturgical Style and Structure in Bede's Homily for the Easter Vigil', 1-8 and 'Liturgical Style and Structure in Bede's Christmas Homilies', *American Benedictine Review* 23 (1972), 424-38.

¹⁵ Van der Walt, *The Homiliary of the Venerable Bede*, p. 175.

¹⁶ M. Irvine, 'Bede the Grammarian and the Scope of Grammatical Studies in Eighth-Century Northumbria', *ASE* 15 (1985), 15-44, p. 17.

¹⁷ See above, p. 62 and Sharpe, 'The Varieties of Bede's Prose', p. 17.

also pays homage to Augustine, though he keeps his rhetorical flights to a minimum, and tends to use stylistic features which also appear in Old English.¹⁸ However, Crépin suggests that ‘it would be risky to suppose Old English linguistic habits underlying Bede’s Latin. His style is from Latin authors.’¹⁹ Like Augustine, Bede uses antithesis, paradox and wordplay. Augustine also uses alliteration, which Bede uses relatively infrequently. Martin states that Augustine used the Bible as a stylistic model and that ‘it is to a large extent these biblical features of Augustine’s sermon style which influenced Bede when he set out to write his own eloquent series of *Homeliae Evangelii*.’²⁰ This notion of a biblical style, copied across Christian Latin authors from diverse cultures is discussed by Howlett.²¹ He enumerates ten rules of Biblical style, which may be summarised as the use of parallelism, chiasmus and word-play in various combinations.²²

Bede makes considerable use of parallelism and chiasmus. While Howlett makes a case for Bede following these principles in his Letter to Cuthbert, it is harder to make such a case for the homilies. More daringly, Howlett suggests that the arrangement of the number of words in each section of this letter follows the proportions of the Golden Section. Why would this proportion be significant to Bede? How would he observe the proportions of this decimal, given the restrictions of Roman numerals?²³ How would he construct the geometric figure and then convert it into a proportion to be used as a guide while writing?²⁴ As Riché has noted, Aldhelm, who had greater arithmetical training, had great difficulty with fractions.²⁵ While Bede does state and restate his ideas, the structure of the homilies is not dictated primarily by rhetorical rules, but by the Gospel story upon which the commentary is centred.²⁶ While he does use parallelism and chiasmus, it is harder to claim that he does so over long passages, as the structure is less open to that kind of manipulation than it is in a sermon.²⁷ It is also hard to claim that Bede used these

¹⁸ Martin, ‘Augustine’s Influence’, p. 364.

¹⁹ Crépin, ‘Bede and the Vernacular’, p. 173.

²⁰ Martin, ‘Augustine’s Influence’, p. 360.

²¹ D. Howlett, *British Books in Biblical Style* (Dublin, 1997), especially pp. 1-31 and pp. 101-193.

²² Howlett, *British Books*, pp. 6-7.

²³ Howlett, *British Books*, pp. 167-8.

²⁴ For a brief note on the knowledge of arithmetic and geometry in Bede’s time, see M. Lapidge, ‘Schools’, in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 408-9, p. 409.

²⁵ P. Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West: Sixth Through Eighth Centuries*, trans. J. J. Contreni, (Columbia, 1976), p. 385.

²⁶ See detailed analyses below, pp. 69-76.

²⁷ However, an example of Bede’s use of repetition can be found in his use of *transeamus* in homily I.7.

figures only because they appeared in the Bible: he read widely, including some Vergil and also Augustine and Jerome.²⁸ The repetition of ideas may well arise independently in oral cultures – Bede need not have used these techniques solely because of their use in the Bible.

Ray has hinted that perhaps Bede may have been acquainted with Cicero.²⁹ In his article, Ray shows convincingly that Bede would not have avoided any of the pagan texts he chanced to encounter (for indeed, we know he read Vergil),³⁰ but his suggestion that Bede knew Cicero's *De Inventione* must wait for further analysis of possible Ciceronian traces in Bede.³¹ However, as Sharpe has noted, Pope Pius II, before he took that office, wrote in 1444: 'sed fuerunt et alii apud Anglos Tullianae cultores eloquentiae, inter quos Venerabilem Bedam nemo non posuit', a useful reference from an age when people were familiar with the works of Cicero.³² But Bede may have had other stylistic models who also exhibit 'Tullian eloquence'.

However, Oberhelman has noted that in the homilies of Augustine and Ambrose, 'formal rules of rhetoric are avoided, and certain elements of an oral homiletic style present to the audience the essential truths under discussion.'³³ He notes that Augustine's early homilies do not conform to this pattern of avoiding the rules of rhetoric, and tend to have long periodic prose, showing the influence of his Classical training.³⁴ He goes on to note the following features of Augustine's later homilies: the stringing of paratactic cola, without conjunction or subordination; parenthetical phrases that shatter the syntactic unity of a sentence; frontal positioning of verbs for stress; the stress of the *élément nominal* by omission of verbs; placement of a relative pronoun clause or of a nominative phrase in anacoluthon at the

²⁸ As noted on p. 64 above, Martin considers Augustine to have a biblical style.

²⁹ R. Ray, 'Bede's Vera Lex Historiae', *Speculum* 55 (1980), pp. 1-21. Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0038-7134%281980%2955%3A1%3C1%3ABVLH%3E2.0.CO%3B2-T> Last accessed July 2005.

³⁰ N. Wright, 'Bede and Vergil', *Romanobarbarica* 6 (1982), 361-79. This refutes P. Hunter Blair's argument in 'From Bede to Alcuin', in *Famulus Christi*, ed. G. Bonner (London, 1976), pp. 239-260, p. 250.

³¹ Ray, 'Bede and Cicero', pp. 14-5. However, it is still possible that Bede only knew Cicero through extracts contained in other works. See further, G. Knappe, *Traditionen der Klassischen Rhetorik* (Heidelberg, 1996).

³² Sharpe, 'The Varieties of Bede's Prose', p. 4; Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, *Epistulae*, ed. R. Wolkan, *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*, Fontes rerum Austriacarum 61 (Vienna, 1909), Letter 143. 'But there were other cultivators of Tullian eloquence among the English, amongst whom no-one would fail to place the Venerable Bede.'

³³ S. M. Oberhelman, *Rhetoric and Homiletics in Fourth-Century Christian Literature: Prose Rhythm, Oratorical Style and Preaching in the Works of Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine*, American Classical Studies 26 (Atlanta, Georgia, 1991), p. 102.

³⁴ Oberhelman, *Rhetoric and Homiletics*, p. 109.

beginning of a sentence; the repeated use of short questions for didactic purpose; the very frequent use of *ergo* before and after a verb at the beginning of a sentence and preference for the popular *quia* over the more formal *quoniam* in causal clauses.³⁵

Bede tends to eschew these aspects of oral delivery, instead using complex subordination, with the verbs sometimes well buried in the substance of the sentence.³⁶ Grocock notes that Bede was writing at a time when word order was moving away from Subject-Object-Verb towards Subject-Verb-Object, though he also notes that Bede seems unconcerned with this in his writing.³⁷ He does on occasions address questions to the audience, and frequently addresses them directly in the text. However, it would seem that Bede has avoided aspects of informal, oral style in favour of a more carefully constructed rhetoric, imitating the non-homiletic aspects of his predecessors' style. This may suggest a greater concern for readers than for listeners, and indeed Martin has suggested that Bede created a new genre, that of the literary homily.³⁸ Unlike most of his predecessors (and unlike his sources, for he was not aware of many Latin homilists), Bede does not note that he preached these in church, or that he used stenographers. Indeed, at the time Bede was working on the homilies, it is unclear whether Bede dictated his work or not, as in his commentary on Luke he famously notes that he acted as his own secretary,³⁹ but Cuthbert's letter on Bede's death notes that he dictated his translations.⁴⁰ However, this does not prove that anyone at Wearmouth-Jarrow would be able to cope with taking notes at normal speaking speed; we have no evidence that Tyronian notes were known there. Gregory the Great sometimes noted that he had dictated a homily, through being too unwell to preach personally, suggesting therefore that for the other homilies, he had a member of staff taking notes in the congregation.⁴¹ Augustine did likewise.⁴² Perhaps we are simply seeing that Bede is less confident at speaking *extempore* than a native speaker, such as Augustine, and that therefore he would at least wish to tidy up any stenographic or dictated notes.

³⁵ Oberhelman, *Rhetoric and Homiletics*, pp. 102-4.

³⁶ See my analysis of I.10, pp. 69-74 below, where Bede's complex subordination and signals can be seen.

³⁷ Grocock, 'Bede and the Golden Age of Latin Prose', p. 373.

³⁸ Martin, 'Augustine's Influence', p. 357.

³⁹ *In Lucam*, CCSL 120, Prologus, lines 94-6, p. 8.

⁴⁰ 'Cuthbert's Letter on the Death of Bede', pp. 582-3.

⁴¹ D. Hurst, trans., *Gregory the Great: Forty Gospel Homilies*, CSS 123 (Kalamazoo, 1990), p. 4 (Introduction) and p. 157 (Homily 21).

⁴² Deferrari, 'St Augustine's Method', pp. 102-4.

If this is the case, it could have interesting implications for preaching at Wearmouth-Jarrow. Were sermons carefully prepared beforehand, or were a few grammatical errors allowed in *extempore* preaching? Was there a limited elite permitted to preach, and was Bede's tidying up of his own homilies therefore simply a desire to ensure a high standard of Latinity for his work? Or did preaching occur in Old English within the monastery, as it presumably did outside?⁴³

But it seems unwise to look for a single stylistic source, or a single reason for the complexities of Bede's style, just as it is unwise to seek a single source of his theology. Bede was a master chameleon. Especially in later life, Bede was fond of exceptionally long sentences, full of complex subordination, which can be difficult to disentangle without the benefit of some kind of punctuation.⁴⁴ Unlike in the *HE*, the subordination is not always clearly signalled by the choice of words and the surrounding agreements. A brief analysis of the *HE* IV.3 (which discusses Chad and the diocese of Lichfield) shows that Bede frequently begins his sentences with verbs. On the occasions he does not, he uses a relative pronoun (*qui*), to refer us back to the bishop under discussion, and a temporal clause, before beginning the main clause of the sentence with a verb. It is easy to separate off the subordinate clauses and return to the main thrust of the sentence; the beginning of each subclause is clearly signalled, as is the return to the main text, where Bede has usually used a verb. The passage then moves to a long section in which the sentences begin with *qui*, as Bede is reinforcing the fact that the subject of the sentence has not been mentioned by name for a while. There is a strong tendency to begin the sentence with either the subject, or a verb.⁴⁵ Closure of the previous sentence has usually been indicated by a verb.⁴⁶ Even without the benefit of punctuation (and the editors of the *HE* are exceptionally helpful here) the structure of the sentences is apparent:

Habuit autem sedem episcopalem in loco qui vocatur Licidfelth in quo et defunctus et sepultus est ubi usque hodie sequentium quoque provinciae illius episcoporum sedes est. Fecerat vero sibi mansionem non longe ab ecclesia remotiorem in qua, secretius cum paucis id est septem sive octo fratribus quoties a labore et ministerio verbi vacabat orare ac legere solebat.⁴⁷

⁴³ The local laity may have come to the monastery for services. See Introduction, p. 11.

⁴⁴ See chapter IV, p. 88, for a further discussion of the benefits of punctuation.

⁴⁵ See *HE* IV.3, p. 336, line 11 (*suspectum*) and line 18 (*habuit*).

⁴⁶ See *HE* IV.3, p. 336, line 11 (*compulit*), line 17 (*permanent*), p.338, line 3 (*solebat*).

⁴⁷ *HE* IV.3, p. 336, p. 338; Translation: 'He had his episcopal seat at a place called Lichfield, where he also died and was buried, and where the succeeding bishops of the kingdom have their see to this day. He built himself a more retired dwelling place not far from the church, in which he could read and

Here we can quickly see that the subject contained in the verb *habuit* must come from the preceding sentence. The *in quo* indicates that the subordinate clause introduced by *qui* has ended, and *ubi* reintroduces us to the main thrust of the sentence, telling us that the see is still situated there. Likewise, in the following sentence, the postponement of the adjective *remotiozem* (agreeing with *mansionem*) allows us to determine more easily that *qua* refers to *mansionem*, not to *ecclesia*, which otherwise would be difficult to determine. A similar mechanism is used in the following clause, in which *fratribus* is postponed in order to indicate that the ablative clause and its subclause are finished. Though Bede uses extensive subordination, the word order allows us to understand where his clauses begin and end, and the sentences are not overlong.

A brief analysis of homily I.13 provides a rather different picture. Bede still does occasionally begin a sentence with a verb (e.g. *habebit*, line 15), or the subject (*nemo*, line 27). However, he is much more likely to begin the sentence with some form of conjunction, often a subordinative conjunction.⁴⁸ The clauses nest together in the sentences, and the sentences nest together in a long paragraph. The homilies and the *HE* share these long arcs of thought, but in the *HE* the subdivisions are more clearly signalled to the reader. Some of this clarity may be due to the *HE* being narrative, and thus easier to follow than the more discursive nature of biblical commentary, which makes the latter an inherently difficult genre to read. To make matters more difficult for the reader of I.13, Bede often ends his sentences with a biblical quotation, or with a noun, adjective or participle.⁴⁹ The sentences do not always end in a verb. One reason for this is analysed below; Bede may have been using *clausulae*, and final verbs do not always scan particularly easily. Bede was presumably aware of the difficulties his language might present; after all, he had

pray privately with a few of his brothers, that is to say seven or eight of them; this he did as often as he was free from his labours and from the ministration of the word.', pp. 337-9.

⁴⁸ This is partly dependent upon editorial punctuation; however, as I show in chapter V, pp. 131-2, editorial punctuation is much more minimalist than that found in most manuscripts. The manuscript punctuation does not tend to create more sentences; it merely subdivides those that already exist. For examples of subordinative conjunctions, see I.13.7, p. 88 (*ubi*), I.13.38, p. 89 (*quia*).

⁴⁹ For a biblical quotation, see I.10.6-7, I 10.35; adjective, I.10.79; noun, I.10.74; participle, I.10.38.

written other, quite clear, works. We therefore must seek a reason for his complexity.

A detailed analysis of the individual homilies reveals that they have a deceptively simple overall structure. They also exhibit some of the features of Bede's exegetical prose. In some ways they seem like exhibitions of 'good style'; many of the features found in Bede are those of the classroom over centuries.

I shall begin with a detailed analysis of homilies I.10 and II.25. Homily I.10 is one of the shortest in the corpus – if Bede were writing and then reading aloud his homilies, this may be because this homily is to be read on the feast of Holy Innocents (December 28th), after a number of Christmastide homilies. II.25 is for the celebration of the dedication of a church, and is considerably longer. While there are stylistic variations between the homilies, the basic structure remains the same; a function of the genre.

In homily I.10, the first half of the homily is formed of an explanation of the significance of the Gospel reading for the feast of the Holy Innocents.⁵⁰ The second half is a meditation upon martyrs, including a commentary on some verses from John's vision of the martyrs in the Apocalypse.⁵¹ This structure is generally followed throughout Bede's homilies: the first half focusses on the Gospel meditation, the second half may then provide a freer meditation on the subject, occasionally commenting on other portions of the Bible, and sometimes providing Bede's own thoughts on the subject, as in homily II.15 for the Ascension.⁵² As mentioned in chapter I, many themes may be entwined in one homily, depending on where the verse-by-verse exegesis goes. In the case of homily I.10, the general structure is as follows: there is a paraphrasing of the Gospel verse, usually introduced by *quod*, followed by an explanation of its significance. The significance may be further enlarged upon, or the next verse may be adduced.⁵³ This continues in the second part of the homily, where the verse from the Apocalypse is introduced and explained.

The homily contains some difficulties, as well as exhibitions of Bede's latinity. We can see this in the complex first sentence:

⁵⁰ I.10, CCSL 122, pp. 68-72. The Gospel reading for this homily is Matthew 2:13-23.

⁵¹ Apocalypse 7:9-10, 14-5.

⁵² The one can be seen in homilies I.2, I.12, II.1, II.17, II.24, II.25, the other in homilies I.4, I.6, I.11, I.13, I.21, II.7, II.16.

⁵³ I.10.31ff; or I.10.14ff.

De morte pretiosa martyrum Christi innocentium sacra nobis est,
fratres carissimi, euangelii lectio recitata in qua tamen omnium Christi
martyrum pretiosa est mors designata.⁵⁴

Bede postpones the introduction of the subject *lectio* until after we have heard what the celebration is for – the precious death of the innocent martyrs of Christ. There is ambiguity here about how *sacra* is to be construed: it can either be agreeing with *morte*, in parallel with *pretiosā*, encapsulating the nature of the feast; alternatively, it can agree with *lectio*, forming a frame with *recitata*, encapsulating the act of listening to the reading. The translator has opted for the latter interpretation, as it would be unusual to have two parallel adjectival forms separated by so great a distance, though only manuscript punctuation or the marking of quantities can show us how a medieval audience understood it.⁵⁵ A listener would of course have the benefit of being able to hear the difference in quantities for the final -a. The second word, *morte* is referred to by the *in qua* of the last clause, where Bede has used an unusual cadence – the penultimate word is a monosyllable.⁵⁶ Bede has also chosen to use an interlacing word order (chiasmus); the noun phrase *pretiosa mors* is intertwined with the verb form *est designata*, giving the arrangement *pretiosa est mors designata*, leaving *mors* as the penultimate word, paralleling *morte* at the beginning, with *pretiosa* echoed in the nominative and ablative forms.⁵⁷ This sentence is a classic example of periodic prose; the meaning of the sentence is not fully unlocked until the final word.

We then move into a series of sentences beginning with *quod*, in which the slaying of the innocents is given a significance related to martyrs and the Church which Christ was yet to found. In the third sentence we see Bede's fondness for the construction *non solum...sed et*, which he uses frequently, with minor alterations in wording.⁵⁸ This allows him to use grammatically parallel constructions to illustrate his point.⁵⁹ We see Bede's love of antithesis in the last phrase of this sentence,

⁵⁴ I.10.1-3, p. 68.

⁵⁵ CSS 10, pp. 96-102, p. 98. See chapters IV and V below for more details on punctuation.

⁵⁶ See further below, p. 77, about cadences.

⁵⁷ I.10.1-3.

⁵⁸ See for example, chapter V, p. 118, fn. 57.

⁵⁹ As mentioned above, parallelism is frequently used in both the Bible and the works of Augustine, on p. 64.

‘persecutionem saevituram perfidorum et piorum patientiam.’⁶⁰ This sentence finishes with the classic Ciceronian cadence *esse coronandam*.⁶¹

On page 68, line 18 we find that Bede ends his sentence with a Biblical quotation: *Sive enim uiuimus siue morimur domini sumus*. It is necessary to know that this is a quotation in order to understand the grammar of the sentence. It is the nverb together with the next *quod* which indicates that a new sentence has begun. In a manuscript, only capitalisation or punctuation would indicate this transfer, as quotations are at best marked by marginal *diple*.⁶²

The next sentence introduces one example of Bede’s association; he introduces a verse from Jeremiah, in order to demonstrate that the Lord listens to his people.

Quod iuxta uaticinium Hieremiae: *Vox in Rama*, id est *in excelso*, *audita est ploratus et ululatus multus*, manifeste denuntiat luctum sanctae ecclesiae quo de iniusta membrorum suorum nece gemit non ut hostes garriunt in uacuum cedere sed usque ad solium superni ascendere iudicis; et sicut protomartyris Abel ita etiam sanguinem ceterorum martyrum de terra clamare ad dominum iuxta illud uiri sapientis.

Bede’s style and method are here closely connected; his allusions can make understanding sense and content difficult. He provides a gloss of *Rama*, suggesting that while Bede was familiar with Jerome’s *Nomina Hebraica*, his audience might not have this knowledge at their fingertips. We see here his consideration for the less able; he is providing spiritual education for people at all levels of learning. Bede then adduces another Old Testament reference – Abel the ‘protomartyr’ (a favourite appellation of Bede’s, which he also uses in his Commentary on Genesis, among other places).⁶³ Bede uses a biblical quotation to conclude this small section, forming a kind of punctuation. Biblical quotations may well have formed a kind of punctuation for monastic audiences, as they would be much more familiar with the Bible than many modern readers. This would be particularly if heard aloud, as the lector would be able to alter his tone of voice to indicate the use of quotation.

The next section is focussed on Rachel as a type of the Church, and we have a greater variety of words at the beginning of each sentence, though new verses are still introduced by *quod*. We find an example of Bede’s tendency towards using

⁶⁰ I.10.10-11, CSS 110, p. 96.

⁶¹ I.10.11, see Oberhelman, *Rhetoric and Homiletics*, pp. 5-7 for a brief discussion of Cicero’s cadences.

⁶² See chapter V, below.

⁶³ I.10.75, *In Genesim*, CCSL 118A, p. 39, I.1209.

many subordinate clauses.⁶⁴ This is not typical for an oral style, and is one of the factors which militates against a purely oral delivery.⁶⁵

Quod Rachel plorasse dicitur filios suos nec uoluisse consolari quia non sunt significat ecclesiam plorare quidem sanctorum de hoc saeculo ablationem sed non ita uelle consolari ut qui saeculum morte uicerunt rursus ad saeculi certamina secum [35] toleranda redeant quia nimirum non sunt ultra reuocandi in mundum de cuius aerumnis seme euaserunt coronandi ad Christum. Rachel namque quae ouis aut uidens Deum dicitur ecclesiam figurate demonstrat cuius tota intentio ut uidere eum mereatur inuigilat. Et **ipsa** est ovis centesima quam [40] pastor bonus relictis in caelo nonaginta nouem ouibus angelicarum uirtutum abiit quaerere in terra inuentamque suis inposuit humeris et sic reportauit ad gregem. **Quaeritur** autem iuxta litteram quomodo Rachel plorasse dicatur filios suos cum tribus Iuda quae Bethleem tenebat non de Rachel sed de [45]sorore eius Lia fuerit orta. **Ubi tamen** facilis patet responsio **quia** non tantum in Bethleem uerum etiam in omnibus finibus eius pueri sunt omnes trucidati. Tribus autem Benjamin quae de Rachel orta est proxima fuit tribui Iudae. Unde merito credi debet quod plaga crudelissimae necis non paucos etiam [50] Beniamineae stirpis pueros inuoluerit quos progenies Rachel elata est in excelsum uoce plorauerit. **Potest et aliter intellegi quia** Rachel iuxta Bethleem sepulta est sicut titulus monumenti eius manens usque hodie testatur ad occidentem ciuitatis ultra uiam quae ducit Hebron.⁶⁶

In the first sentence of this paragraph, Bede repeats *saeculum* in three different cases, and uses *revocandi* and *coronandi*, two different verbs of the same conjugation and in the same gerundive form, using the repeated sounds to draw the audience through the sentence. In line 39 we have *ipsa* referring back to Rachel in the previous sentence; in some cases the noun thus indicated is a long way away.⁶⁷ This series of sentences forms a tree: *ipsa* in line 39 refers back to Rachel. The *quaeritur* relates to the previous section *quod Rachel plorasse*. This question is answered in the next sentence (which incidentally contains another *non tantum ... uerum etiam* construction). This is amplified in the next sentence, and concluded in the final one. Then we seek an alternative explanation of the question in line 41; this alternative

⁶⁴ I.10.31-37.

⁶⁵ See above, pp. 65-6.

⁶⁶ I.10.31-54 p. 69. Emphasis mine. Numbers in square brackets give the line numbers of the edition.

⁶⁷ See pp. 75-6, below, discussing homily II.25.

explanation is introduced by *quaeritur autem*. The structure of the previous answer is paralleled; there is a phrase indicating that an answer can be expected: *ubi tamen facilis responsio* and *potest et aliter intellegi*, both followed by *quia*. The second answer calls on Bede's knowledge of the Holy Land derived from Adomnan's *De locis sanctis*. As can be seen, Bede uses complex structures in his paragraphs. In this example, he gives four interpretations of the verse: two metaphorical (focusing on the etymology of *Rachel*) and two literal. The first metaphorical interpretation is given, then *ipsa* introduces the next. *Quaeritur* introduces the literal interpretations, which each have a construction introducing them. But each sentence is still referring to the biblical verse which began the paragraph. Given Bede's fondness for subclauses, it is not surprising that such texts soon become difficult to follow.

The next section is similarly constructed, with *quod* introducing the paraphrase of the biblical verses, with expansion over the next sentences. Line 92 has Bede using the opposition of light and dark to illustrate the difference between sinners and the faithful. Bede was fond of using such antithesis, as indeed was Gregory the Great.⁶⁸ Following this is a slightly more difficult sentence.

Quod damnato licet Herode Ioseph timore Archelai filii eius in Iudaeam ubi metropolim habebat ire formidans monente angelo in Nazareth Galilaeae secedit ultima praesentis ecclesiae tempora designat quando pro ea quae nunc est uniuersali gentis illius caecitate qua christianos in quantum ualet persecui non desistit acrior in quibusdam antichristi persecutio consugret et quidem plurimis ad praedicationem Enoch et Heliae a perfidia conversis sed ceteris ad instinctum antichristi tota intentione contra fidem dimicantibus.

It begins with *quod* once again. Next, *filii eius* refers back to Herod, then we have another subclause *ubi metropolim habebat* before finding out that Joseph feared to go there (there is also the repetition of fear – Joseph feared (*formidans*) to go there for fear of (*timore*) Archelaus); then there is another ablative absolute before we find out where he went instead. After navigating this paraphrase of the Bible, we discover Bede's interpretation. He uses chiasmus at the beginning: *ultima praesentis ecclesiae tempora designat*. A listener here has the advantage – it is clear that *ultima* is an accusative plural agreeing with *tempora*. Now there is a temporal clause, in which we have one thing replaced by another, *ea caecitate* is to be replaced by an *acrior persecutio*. This is again difficult to construe, as Bede inserts a subclause between *ea* and *caecitate*, to describe the extent of the blindness, and a second

⁶⁸ See chapter I and chapter II.

between *caecitate* and *acrior*, describing the results of the current blindness, and *acrior* is separated from its noun by a prepositional phrase and the causer of the persecution, the antichrist. The sentence then concludes by saying that some will be converted by Enoch and Elijah, but the rest will not; Bede contrasts these two groups.

This passage is an example of the emotionalism of Bede's writing. We know that he was a man who could be profoundly moved, as he himself witnessed in his prefatory letter to his commentary on Samuel, writing of Ceolfrith's departure.⁶⁹ Bede brings out many things here; the fear of Joseph, the horror of blindness, the bitterness of persecution. This, then is the function of the parallelism, chiasmus and hyperbaton, to excite a reaction in the reader. He uses emotionally loaded words such as *damnato* to create the initial atmosphere in the sentence. The hyperbaton (disruption of natural word order) brings out the key words, such as *caecitate*. This emphasis on key words allows the least Latinate of the audience to gain a flavour of the whole. We are seeing Bede's eagerness as a preacher to communicate with his flock, and his total concern for them. As he himself permitted, he is using the techniques of rhetoric to good effect; to sway his audience as Cicero used his Verrine orations to sway the Senate.⁷⁰

Homily II.25 is very similar in structure to homily I.10 – we have an explanation of the feast (that of the dedication of a church), followed by an explanation of the reading, followed by an explanation of the significance of the feast, in the form of a commentary on the Temple. Unlike in I.10, Bede returns frequently to his audience, drawing them away from the previous close analysis to initiate a new analysis.

Quia propitia diuinitate, fratres carissimi, sollemnia dedicationis ecclesiae celebramus debemus congruere sollemnitati quam colimus ut sicut ornatis studiosius eiusdem ecclesiae parietibus pluribus accensis luminaribus amplificato numero lectionum addita psalmorum melodia laetis noctem uigiliis ex more transegimus ita etiam penetralia cordium nostrorum semper necessariis bonorum operum decoremus ornatibus semper in nobis flamma diuinae pariter et fraternae caritatis augeat semper in sanctuario pectoris nostri caelestium memoia praeceptorum et euangelicae laudationis dulcedo sancta resonet. Hi sunt enim fructus bonae arboris hi boni thesauri cordis haec

⁶⁹ See Introduction, p. 1.

⁷⁰ Cicero, *The Verrine Orations*, ed. and trans. L. H. G. Greenwood, 2 vols. (London, 1928-35).

fundamenta sapientis architecti quae nobis hodierna sancti euangelii lectio commendat non nos formam solummodo sed uirtutem potius habere pietatis. Quod etiam mystica ueteris instrumenti nobis historis diligenter insinuat quando Moyses tabernaculum uel templum domino Salomon in sanctae ecclesiae typum condidit.⁷¹

Once again we see Bede using adjectives and their nouns to enclose his clauses, as in *ornatis ... parietibus*,⁷² *necessariis ... ornatibus*,⁷³ and *mystica ... historia*.⁷⁴ In this first case this renders the parsing considerably more difficult, as *parietibus* wraps up an ablative absolute, but it comes immediately before an ablative prepositional phrase *pluribus accensibus luminaribus*. The last case has Bede using a form of hyperbaton again: ‘**mystica** *veteris instrumenti* nobis **historia**’. These uses of hyperbaton have three functions: one, they provide a structural bracketing of clauses; two, they are ornamental; three, they can help indicate important words: in the last example, the key word is *historia*, which is postponed, attracting extra stress as the last word of a clause.

We see again Bede’s use of repeated words to indicate structure;⁷⁵ we see also repeated structures as a hint to the reader in the sentences in lines 21-31.

Ligna quoque erant inputribilia e quibus et tabernaculum omne factum et templum intus ornatum ac desuper tectum fulgebat. Aurum etiam de thesauro bono optimum proferebatur de quo et tabernaculi parietes intus ac foris uestiti et templi non tantum parietes uerum etiam laquearia trabes ostia postes et pauimenta erant cooperta. Sed et uasa uel utensilia domus utriusque cuncta paene aurea neque haec nisi de auro purissimo fieri licebat. Fructus etiam arborum qui in domum domini offerebantur purissimi et exquisiti esse iubebantur, hoc est uitis oliuae turis mirrae uel stactis et ceterarum huiusmodi.

The subjects for interpretation (also the subjects of the sentences), *ligna*, *aurum*, *fructus*, are the first words. For the first two, there is then a subclause containing a parallel construction, ‘*ligna .. a quibus et tabernaculum ... et templum*’;⁷⁶ ‘*aurum ... de quo et tabernaculi ... et templi*’.⁷⁷ These constructions emphasise that both the temple and the tabernacle may exemplify the Church. *Fructus*, while at first appearing part of the same sequence, has a different subclause, and contains interpretations which will be picked up later, in the analysis of the

⁷¹ II.25.1-17, p. 368.

⁷² II.25.3-4.

⁷³ II.25.7.

⁷⁴ II.25.15.

⁷⁵ *semper...semper* in II.25.7-8.

⁷⁶ II.25.21-2.

⁷⁷ II.25.23-5.

reading, particularly the list of offerings *vitis olivae turis*⁷⁸ The *quae* which begins the next sentence, on line 31, refers to the interpretations given in lines 15-30; this sentence too contains hyperbaton: *verbam ... sinceritatem*.⁷⁹

Bede later asks the audience two rhetorical questions.⁸⁰ It is such features, along with the constant use of first person plural verbs,⁸¹ and the direct addresses to the *fratres carissimi*, which suggest that the homilies may have been designed to be heard, written for delivery to a Wearmouth-Jarrow audience, or written as a direct model for delivery to an audience. The more complex features are there to provide food for thought and meditation for the most able; the structure of the sentences opening up into the fullness of the homily's meaning. The complexity is not impenetrable; the grammar is always correct, and Bede has built in many helpful structures. Some scribes went further, using punctuation to help orient the reader. Were it not for the long arcs of thought, the homilies would not be so difficult to understand. Moreover, the simpler are provided for too, with emotive words. A similar phenomenon can be observed in Bede's metrical *Life of Cuthbert*. As Lapidge notes,

This poetry of Bede can never have been easy to understand. Even with the anonymous *Life* [of St Cuthbert] as a guide, each line of verse often requires several readings before its meaning becomes clear...it is often extremely difficult, and was clearly intended to be so ... Bede's poem was intended as a meditation on the life and significance of Cuthbert.⁸²

I suggest that the homilies were written as meditations on the Gospels (in contrast with Bede's commentaries on them), and that his later commentaries (such as that on Ezra and Nehemiah) were also intended as meditations upon the subject, rather than primarily as an introductory guide to the entire book. This meditation could either proceed with a copy of the text in front of one, or as a piece to be heard in church, with snatches to be remembered and mulled over in private. Bede's Anglo-Saxon audience was still in many ways an oral culture, and we should remember that they would be more attuned to learning by heart, and remembering the spoken word.

⁷⁸ II.25.30.

⁷⁹ II.25.32.

⁸⁰ II.25.59; II.25.64.

⁸¹ II.25.52.

⁸² Lapidge, 'Bede's Metrical *Vita S. Cuthberti*', p. 93.

In order to help an audience understand that a sentence had ended, Bede may have used *clausulae*.⁸³ According to the *OED*, a *clausula* is ‘the close or end of a period, esp. one in ancient or medieval Latin having a definable cadence’.⁸⁴ Cicero used Asiatic metres (dependent on syllable length, not stress) in his orations at the ends of his sentences. As Oberhelman and others have pointed out, during the fourth and fifth centuries, accent created by syllable length (as in Classical Latin poetry, referred to throughout as metrical stress) became modified by stress accent (familiar to English-speakers in Shakespeare’s iambic pentameter, referred to as rhythmical stress). Metrical forms were chosen which could also be scanned rhythmically. This form became known as the *cursus mixtus*. By the twelfth century, stress accent was almost exclusively used, and this cadence form was primarily known as *cursus*. Authors between this time may have used either, both (*cursus mixtus*) or no form of cadence. While, amongst others, Aumont has analysed some metrical *clausulae* used by fourth- to ninth-century authors, and Cupiccia has analysed Spanish authors from this period, no substantial analysis has yet been undertaken on Bede.⁸⁵ This analysis is valuable not only because a *clausula* is useful ‘oral punctuation’ as it were, but also because Augustine, Ambrose and Jerome all used *clausulae* to a greater or lesser extent,⁸⁶ authors whose work Bede read keenly, and whose style he imitated to at least some extent.⁸⁷

We can surmise that Bede observed the *clausulae* in their work – he was an able poet himself, able to manipulate both metre and rhythm, as demonstrated by his poetic life of Cuthbert and his hymns.⁸⁸ Lapidge notes that Bede used sophisticated metrical techniques.⁸⁹ This is in contrast with Aldhelm, who tended to stick to three of the sixteen possible forms of hexameter line in his poetry.⁹⁰ Did Bede, then, make use of his observation, and use *clausulae* himself? Bede does not discuss the form in either *De arte metrica* or *De schematibus et tropis*. Grocock has conducted a brief study of Bedan *clausulae*. He uses very small sample sizes, which may render his

⁸³ I am indebted to Professor Richard Sharpe for suggesting to me that Bede may have done this.

⁸⁴ *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn, (Oxford, 1989), headword: *clausula*, 2nd definition.

⁸⁵ J. Aumont, *Métrique et stylistique des clausules dans la prose latine: De Cicéron à Pline le Jeune et de César à Florus*, Travaux de Linguistique Quantitative 56 (Paris, 1996); M. Cupiccia, ‘Clausole quantitative e clausole ritmiche nella prosa latina della Spagna Visigotica’, *Filologia Mediolatina* 8 (2001), 25-110.

⁸⁶ Oberhelman, *Rhetoric and Homiletics*, p. 87 (Jerome); p. 59 (Ambrose); pp. 96-7.

⁸⁷ See chapter II, p. 45.

⁸⁸ See for example, M. Lapidge, *Bede the Poet*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow, 1993).

⁸⁹ Lapidge, ‘Bede’s Metrical *Vita S. Cuthberti*’, pp. 80-1.

⁹⁰ M. Lapidge, ‘Aldhelm’s Latin Poetry and Old English Verse’, in his *Anglo-Latin Literature 600-899* (London, 1996), pp. 247-70, p. 252.

conclusions uncertain; however, he does suggest that Bede used clausulae, especially in his preface to the *HE*, a piece written in a high style.⁹¹

Bede's theological culture has been investigated. Investigations of Bede's literary culture have tended to focus on his debt to Vergil (or his reading of Cicero). An investigation of his use of cadences may shed light on other aspects of his literary culture in which he may have been influenced by his theological reading. As noted below, *cursus mixtus* was used in the liturgy which Bede used at Wearmouth-Jarrow. This too may have influenced him. Cadence is a part of Latin style which may not be immediately obvious to the modern ear; this study has been undertaken in order to provide an outline of Bede's use of cadence in the homilies, so that we may better appreciate his understanding of prose style.

In the past twenty years, a good deal of work has been done on the statistical analysis of clausulae.⁹² The statistical method should at least be attempted, for Oberhelman has demonstrated that even a high percentage of cadence forms can arise by chance in Latin prose, and therefore a simple survey of the proportions of different types of clausulae may give misleading results.⁹³ Several methods have emerged which may be used to test the likelihood of Bede's having used various forms of clausulae. One of these was created by Janson, for the analysis of rhythmical prose, and relies on an internal comparison of the components of a clausula.⁹⁴ Another has been refined by Oberhelman, and is best used for determining whether a text is *cursus mixtus* or not, and in the process it can determine whether a text is either metrical or rhythmical. It relies on external comparison with a corpus of control texts.

Aumont uses a variety of complex techniques to determine the likelihood of the occurrence of various forms of metrical clausulae.⁹⁵ He pays great attention to the location of word breaks. This leads to a long and unwieldy process of analysis, in which the likelihood of each individual formation of a specific metric form is examined. This method was inappropriate for analysing Bede's use of clausulae in

⁹¹ Grocock, 'Bede and the Golden Age', pp. 378-9.

⁹² For the following discussion of statistical method, I am indebted to Mrs T. Allan, Senior Lecturer in Health and Care Statistics at City University, London, who provided me with instruction in the statistical sciences.

⁹³ Oberhelman, *Rhetoric and Homiletics*, pp. 1-18.

⁹⁴ T. Janson, *Prose Rhythm in Medieval Latin from the 9th to the 13th Century*, Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, Studia Latina Stockholmiensis XX (Stockholm, 1975), pp. 9-14.

⁹⁵ Aumont, *Métrique et stylistique*, pp. 15-35.

this study, as the amount of data is insufficient for the results to be significant.⁹⁶ He does, however, note the major problem with many of these statistical studies: there is a need to examine an author's lexicon for the metrical forms which may naturally arise.⁹⁷

Janson's method is exclusively for the analysis of *cursus* rhythms, and it breaks down the stress patterns of final words into two components. He focusses exclusively on two-word clausulae, and for the purposes of rhythmical analysis, only two things need to be known: for the penultimate word, only its accent is relevant; for the final word, its accent and its length in syllables need to be known. The penultimate word may have three kind of stress: it may be a monosyllable (*I*); a stress on the penultimate syllable (in words of two or more syllables), known as a paroxytone stress (*p*); or a stress on the antepenultimate syllable (in words of three or more syllables), known as a proparoxytone stress (*pp*). For the final word, these same stresses are also noted, along with the number of syllables, with the exception that a bisyllabic final word is noted as 2. So for the form *illum deduxit* we simply need to know that the first word is stressed on its penultimate syllable (so denoted as *p*) and the second word contains three syllables, with the stress on the second of these (so denoted as *3p*), giving a form of *p3p* for analysis.

Janson begins by asserting the problems of analysing a (presumed) rhythmical text in comparison with a known non-rhythmical one; he provides figures demonstrating that across authors, there are widely differing rhythmical patterns. He states that there is no such thing as a 'neutral distribution' of cadences against which to test.⁹⁸ His solution to that problem is to attempt an 'internal comparison'.

This method is intended to account for the fact that paroxytone-stressed words are more common than other forms in Latin, and will therefore appear more often in combinations. First, the occurrence of each component of a combination (*p4p*, for example) must be determined, and converted into a proportion of total occurrences.⁹⁹ So in Bede, the form *p* in the penultimate word occurs 241 times out of the 367 cadences sampled, giving us a proportion of 65.6%. The form *4p* for the final word occurs 56 times out of 367, giving a proportion of 15.2%. Janson uses the

⁹⁶ Aumont, *Métrie et stylistique*, p. 61.

⁹⁷ Aumont, *Métrie et stylistique*, p. 65. As Aumont has noted, the future of such analysis almost certainly lies in the use of computers to allow researchers to handle a larger dataset.

⁹⁸ Janson, *Prose Rhythm*, p. 18.

⁹⁹ I use the data I have collected for Bede, presented in table 27, appendix B, p. 140.

rule that the probability of two unrelated events occurring separately is the product of the probability of the two individual events, so in this case, the probability of p multiplied by the probability of $4p$, which gives a proportion of 9.97%.¹⁰⁰ This gives the ‘expected’ result – that is, the proportion of cadences which we would expect to find in this form, $p4p$. When analysed as a proportion, we would expect to find 37 occurrences of this form out of the 367. Janson then goes on to use the χ^2 test to determine the likelihood that the difference between the expected number of occurrence (37) and the actual number of occurrences (39) is statistically significant. The χ^2 test is designed to test whether the occurrence of a particular factor is significant or not, by testing against an ‘expected’ frequency – that which we would expect to find in the sample through pure chance.¹⁰¹

There is an important problem with this method: it assumes that the forms of the penultimate and final words are unrelated. However, the two words are not unrelated; although Latin grammar allows for considerable freedom of word order, the choice of penultimate word is going to have some influence on the final word. This method is also subject to overtesting – for example, if one performs an analysis involving the form p too often, then one runs the risk of overestimating its influence in the text. A more cautious statistician would recommend multiplying the probabilities by the number of tests performed on the material to overcome this.¹⁰²

Oberhelman’s method is primarily for determining the presence of *cursus mixtus*, and may well prove fruitful for the analysis of Bedan cadences.¹⁰³ As Bede lived during the long transition between rhythmical and metrical poetry, so he may have done with prose. This method involves contrasting the text under consideration with metrical, non-metrical, rhythmical and non-rhythmical texts (these categories need not be entirely exclusive). In order to overcome the variation in cadence distribution noted by Janson, several different authors have been sampled, forming the controls for my analysis, against which I compare Bede’s cadences. I have used

¹⁰⁰ $0.656 \times 0.152 = 0.0997$.

¹⁰¹ See R. R. Pagano, *Understanding Statistics in the Behavioral Sciences* 3rd edn (St Paul, Minn., 1990), p. 403. See appendix B, equation 2, p. 148.

¹⁰² This is known as the Bonferroni adjustment. Not all statisticians agree that it should be used, as it may give an excessively conservative answer. However, there is agreement that some adjustment should be used, to avoid false results through overtesting. J. M. Bland and D. G. Altman wrote an article discussing its use: ‘Multiple Significance Tests: The Bonferroni Method’, *British Medical Journal* 310 (1995), p. 170. This article is available online at <http://bmj.bmjjournals.com/cgi/content/full/310/6973/170>, last accessed May 2005.

¹⁰³ Oberhelman, *Rhetoric and Homiletics*, pp. 9-19.

the data of Oberhelman, who samples texts by Cicero, Descartes, Polydore, Dante, Gilbert of Sempringham and John of Salisbury. He chose these texts based on previous studies showing their use of cadences: Polydore and Descartes are non-metrical, non-rhythmical authors; Cicero uses metrical cadences, but not rhythmical; Dante, Gilbert and John all use rhythmical cadences, but do not seek out metrical ones. Oberhelman demonstrates this while explaining his methodology.¹⁰⁴ This choice of control texts appears well thought out; Oberhelman has refined this method in several exploratory articles. Yet the sample is still imperfect – it is merely a tiny fraction of the Latin prose surviving in the world.

In many ways, Oberhelman's analysis is more cautious than Janson's, using conservative figures. For each control sample, a '99% confidence interval' has been taken.¹⁰⁵ This is a method which enables us to determine the likelihood that a given sample lies within the normal range. It is used to determine the expected frequencies in the control group, which are then tested against when performing the χ^2 test. However, there are minor inaccuracies in Oberhelman's text which lessen one's confidence in the analysis.¹⁰⁶

Neither method is wholly reliable; however, Oberhelman's method provides a useful starting point for analysing texts, and supplying suggestions. I have nevertheless decided to use statistical methods as they are now commonly used for such analysis, and in any event, the raw data may be useful for future studies. In my analysis, I have sampled a random sentence from each page of the CCSL edition of Bede's homilies. I have not included sentences in which Bede is quoting from another source, nor any sentences where there would be a question of elision, as it is unclear what the general practice may have been at the time. Of the remaining sentences, samples were taken at approximately 25-line intervals. This provides a sample of 367 sentence ends for analysis (Oberhelman suggests a minimum of approximately 150).¹⁰⁷ I have scanned them, which provided a metrical pattern of long and short syllables, and a rhythmical pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables. The rhythmical patterns are noted both in terms of paroxytone and

¹⁰⁴ Oberhelman, *Rhetoric and Homiletics*, pp. 9-11, 15-17.

¹⁰⁵ See appendix B, equation 1, p. 133.

¹⁰⁶ There is an error in his table I, where the *medius* form is listed as occurring eighty-four times, when in fact it only occurs sixty-eight times, as given elsewhere in the table.

¹⁰⁷ Oberhelman, *Rhetoric and Homiletics*, p. 16.

proparoxytone stress, and in terms of the *cursus mixtus* forms (*planus*, *tardus*, etc.).¹⁰⁸ The metrical patterns are noted in terms of the Classical forms (cretic-spondee, ditrochee, etc.).¹⁰⁹ The raw data are found in tables 6, 7, and 27 in appendix B. The comparative data, taken from Oberhelman's tables, are found in tables 7 and 8, also in appendix B.

First, I tested Bede for rhythmicity; I tested the occurrence of *planus*, *tardus* and *velox* forms in Bede against those in Descartes, Polydore and Cicero (the non-rhythmical authors), and then against Dante, Gilbert and John of Salisbury (the rhythmical authors). I began by ascertaining the 99% confidence interval for the proportion of these forms in my control texts.¹¹⁰ Then, I used the χ^2 test to ascertain Bede's rhythmicity.¹¹¹ Bede's homilies are significantly more rhythmical than the non-rhythmical control texts;¹¹² but are significantly less so than the rhythmical controls.¹¹³ 65.3% of Bede's cadences contained a *planus*, *tardus* or *velox* rhythm, compared to 53.2% of the non-rhythmical control texts, and 79.5% of the rhythmical controls. Oberhelman suggests that unless the proportion of the three main rhythmical forms is more than 75%, further tests should be undertaken to determine rhythmicity.¹¹⁴ Therefore, I then tested the occurrence of *trispondaicus* forms in Bede against those in the control texts,¹¹⁵ with the results from Dante and John of Salisbury covered separately, as they both eschewed *trispondaicus* forms in their prose.

There are no significant differences between the frequency of *trispondaicus* forms in Bede and in the non-rhythmical control texts.¹¹⁶ He does, however, use significantly more *trispondaicus* forms than Dante and John of Salisbury, which is to be expected.¹¹⁷ However, there is no significant difference between Bede's use of

¹⁰⁸ Stressed syllables are represented by /, unstressed by x and lesser stressed syllables by \. *Planus* = / x x / x ; *tardus* = / x x / x x ; *velox* = / x x \ x / x ; *medius* = / x / x x ; *trispondaicus* = / x x x / x ; *dispondeus dactylicus* = / x x x / x x.

¹⁰⁹ See p. 83.

¹¹⁰ See appendix B, tables 9-10, pp. 133-4.

¹¹¹ See appendix B, tables 18-19, p. 136.

¹¹² See appendix B, table 18, p. 136.

¹¹³ Table 19, p. 136.

¹¹⁴ Oberhelman, *Rhetoric and Homiletics*, p. 18.

¹¹⁵ Table 20 (non-rhythmical control texts); table 21 (Dante and John); table 22 (Gilbert), pp. 150-1. Tables 11-13 set out the 99% confidence interval for these calculations, p. 147.

¹¹⁶ Table 20, p. 137.

¹¹⁷ Table 21, p. 137.

trispindaicus forms and that of Gilbert.¹¹⁸ These figures suggest that Bede did in fact use *cursus* rhythms to help his audience notice a sentence end.

It is not immediately apparent that Bede was using *cursus mixtus*, as Oberhelman deems the raw proportions too small to determine this.¹¹⁹ Therefore, I tested some of the more common metrical patterns: cretic spondee (- - - x), dicretic (- - - - - x), ditrochee (- - - - - x), cretic-tribrach (- - - - - x), dispondee (- - - x), spondee-cretic (- - - - x) and cretic-iambus (- - - - - x).¹²⁰ I performed four tests, testing Bede against: Descartes and Polydore (non-metrical, non-rhythmical authors) Cicero (a metrical author); Dante and John, and Gilbert (these last three are non-metrical, but rhythmical authors). Once again, I separated Gilbert off in case his different rhythmical patterns caused a different proportion of metrical patterns to arise. I performed the χ^2 test,¹²¹ and found no statistical difference in the global patterns employed by Bede and any of the control texts, except Gilbert, than whom Bede used significantly fewer metrical forms. Without further data then, it can be shown that Bede did use *cursus* forms, but he may not have used metrical, and therefore *cursus mixtus* forms; the results are inconclusive on this matter.

In order to understand Bede's use of rhythmical cadences, I attempted Janson's method of internal comparison. First, I generated the expected cadence forms, by multiplying the probabilities that each part of the cadence will occur separately, then performing a χ^2 test on the result.¹²² There are three cadence forms which appear significant: *12*, *p2* and *pp2*. Bede uses a very high number of *12* forms according to this analysis, but uses far fewer *p2* forms than expected, given the popularity of *p*. For *pp2* he uses a higher than expected number. This suggests that Bede was fond of particular 2 forms. There is the problem that this assumes that the penultimate word does not influence the choice of final word, which is not necessarily the case, as there are grammatical constraints.¹²³ The assumption that the variables are independent has set up a situation in which it is impossible to measure

¹¹⁸ Table 22, p. 138.

¹¹⁹ Oberhelman, *Rhetoric and Homiletics*, pp. 18-9.

¹²⁰ See table 6 for the data for Bede, and table 7 for the control authors, p. 132.

¹²¹ See tables 14-17, pp. 133-4 for the 99% confidence interval, and tables 23-26, pp. 138-140 for the test.

¹²² See tables 28 and 29, pp. 153-4. I used the table for the significance thresholds given in Pagano, which gives the number which the χ^2 must exceed if it is to be significant. With one degree of freedom, where $\alpha = 0.05$, the χ^2 value must be greater than 3.81. (Pagano, *Understanding Statistics*, p. 533).

¹²³ See above, p. 80.

the cadences accurately. Therefore, I pursued another method of internal comparison, using McNemar's test.¹²⁴ This is a test designed to use matching pairs, in which the presence and absence of related factors can be measured. For each cadence form, a table is constructed thus:

	<i>I</i> present	<i>I</i> not present	total
<i>4p</i> present	3	53	56
<i>4p</i> not present	27	284	311
total	30	337	367

When McNemar's test is performed,¹²⁵ the results give the likelihood that the result is due to chance: in this case 0.37%. Because of the multiple tests performed on the material, some adjustment must be made to account for this overtesting,¹²⁶ giving a result of 6.7%, which is slightly higher than the threshold value of the test, suggesting that it is not statistically significant. However, in cases where the result is significant, the entries in the off-diagonal cells (27 and 53 in the above example) will reveal Bede's preferred cadence.¹²⁷

For the *14p*, *13pp*, *1 other*, *pp4pp* and *pp3p* cadences, McNemar's test suggests that their occurrences could simply be due to chance.¹²⁸ In all remaining cases, Bede prefers not to use cadences where the penultimate word is a monosyllable,¹²⁹ instead strongly favouring all cadences beginning with *p*. He also favours, though to a lesser extent, certain cadences beginning *pp*, (the *pp4p*, *pp3pp*, *pp2* and *pp other* forms), despite their relative lack of frequency in Latin.¹³⁰

While we have found useful information about Bede's use of individual cadences in his homilies, a weakness of this revised method is that it strips him of his context – his choices cannot be evaluated in the light of his sources or his contemporaries. This statistical research could be fruitfully expanded in other directions, for example using Oberhelman's method.

First, some other genres of Bede's writing could be surveyed; it is notable that Augustine, Ambrose and Gregory (Bede's stylistic models) tend not to use cadences in their sermons as much as in some of their other writings. This made the late Latin sermon a genre which did not necessarily attract the use of formal

¹²⁴ Equation 3, appendix B, p. 141.

¹²⁵ Table 30, p. 142.

¹²⁶ See above, p. 81.

¹²⁷ Equation 3, appendix B, p. 142.

¹²⁸ Tables 30 (p. 142), 33 (p. 143), 35 (p. 144), 43 (p. 148), 44 (p. 149).

¹²⁹ Tables 31 (p. 142), 32 (p. 143), 34 (p. 144).

¹³⁰ Tables 37-42 (pp. 145-8), 45-7 (pp. 149-52).

cadences. Second, a more extensive analysis of the homilies could be undertaken, to give a more complete data-set.¹³¹ Ideally, this would include a survey of clausulae at clause endings, a feature which becomes prominent in the twelfth century, although it is entirely possible that they were used previously. Third, there could be a survey of the practice of Bede's contemporaries and near-contemporaries (such as Aldhelm and Alcuin) to see whether Bede is unique in his use of rhythmical cadences. There is still the problem of evaluating the reliability of the control texts, and adjusting for forms that occur naturally in Latin prose. Further data are likely to increase our understanding of how cadences function in prose.

The use of the cadences analysed in this chapter is not exclusive to Bede. He was certainly exposed to *cursus* rhythms in the liturgy, as well as in the works of the Church Fathers.¹³² In particular, Bede's theology was greatly influenced by these fourth and fifth century authors. Their influence upon his style is equally important, and the likelihood that Bede used *cursus mixtus* suggests that he was influenced by their use of this feature.¹³³ The presence of these rhythms in the liturgy to which Bede was exposed is of particular interest when considering his homilies. West notes that Bede used phrases from the liturgy in his homilies;¹³⁴ might Bede not also have used their familiar cadences, to blend the homilies in more seamlessly? It seems likely that he has done so. My study, alongside Grocock's preliminary survey, suggests that we should look further to find cadences in Bede. Moreover, Bede's understanding of Classical culture has been much investigated in the past, but the question of whether he used metrical cadences should be a part of future investigation.

It can be seen that Bede's style is full of apparent contradictions: he may often write convoluted Latin sentences, but he has clearly mastered many aspects of Latin style. I have shown that he is highly likely to have used rhythmical cadences and there are strong suggestions that he may have used metrical cadences. He can use parallelism and chiasmus – rhetorical forms which occur in both Old English and Latin. According to Ray, Bede can use forensic rhetorical argument. Perhaps he is trying to form a new way of reading biblical commentary; he is providing a structure

¹³¹ Grocock undertook a preliminary analysis. Grocock, 'Bede and the Golden Age', pp. 378-9.

¹³² D. M. Hope, *The Leonine Sacramentary: A Reassessment of its Nature and Purpose* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 154-5.

¹³³ See p. 83 above.

¹³⁴ West, 'Liturgical Style and Structure in Bede's Homily for the Easter Vigil', pp. 6-8 and 'Liturgical Style and Structure in Bede's Christmas Homilies', pp. 437-8.

of many layers – some of which open up instantly and are apparent to the listener or reader at once, others which lie dormant until ruminated upon. As shown above, Bede attaches considerable importance to the idea of *ruminatio*;¹³⁵ perhaps he desires his readers to ruminate upon each sentence, to take the time to pick it apart and thus meditate upon it. This process, unfamiliar to the modern reader, was a part of life for many monastics.

¹³⁵ See Introduction, p. 7 and L. T. Martin, 'Bede's Structural Use of Word-Play as a Way to Teach', in *From the Cloister to the Classroom: Monastic and Scholastic Approaches to Truth*, ed. E. Rozanne Elder (Kalamazoo, 1986), pp. 27-46, p. 30.