

Chapter IV: The Grammar of Legibility: A Manuscript from Wearmouth-Jarrow

We owe the term ‘grammar of legibility’ to Malcolm Parkes. In his opinion, the graphic distinctions introduced into copies of texts from the seventh century onwards indicate a new way of perceiving the text as a purely written entity. For Parkes,

a written text presupposes an indeterminate audience disseminated over distance or time, or both. A scribe had no immediate respondent to interact with, therefore he had to observe a kind of decorum in his copy in order to ensure that the message of the text was easily understood. This decorum – the rules governing the relationships between this complex of graphic conventions and the message of a text conveyed in the written medium – may be described as “the grammar of legibility”.¹

So this term, ‘grammar of legibility’, can be used to describe the relationship between scribe and reader, a relationship in which the scribe anticipates the readers’ needs in apprehending the text, and accommodates those needs by presenting the text in a particular manner.² However, this relationship between scribe and reader can also operate in more complex ways. The reader may become a glossator, and therefore become an intermediary between the scribe and subsequent readers. The need for this ‘grammar of legibility’ arose when new generations of readers in the more remote parts of Europe wished to read and consult ancient texts in what was for them an alien, second language.³ The new problems found by those learning Latin sparked the corresponding development of new solutions: basic grammars were written, particularly in Southern England, and page layout was improved to help learners with what was for them a written language, not the language of everyday conversation.⁴ Two important developments in page layout were the introduction of word-separation, discussed by Tunbridge in her doctoral thesis,⁵ and the increasing use of punctuation.

¹ M. B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Aldershot, 1992), p. 23. Chapter 2 of his book expands upon his article, ‘The Contribution of Insular Scribes in the seventh and eighth centuries to the “Grammar of Legibility”’, in his *Scribes, Scripts and Readers* (London, 1991), pp. 1-18.

² Or it can be used to describe the converse: how the scribe *fails* to accommodate these needs, and produces a near-illegible, near-incomprehensible text. Accuracy is an important part of the grammar of legibility – a legible text might have poor, mangled Latin.

³ Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 19.

⁴ Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 23. V. Law, *The Insular Latin Grammarians* (Woodbridge, 1982), especially ch. 4 and 5. Her ‘Grammar, Latin (Study of)’, in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. M. Lapidge *et al.* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 217-8, contains a useful summary.

⁵ Tunbridge, *A Study of Scribal Practices*, pp. 127-35.

Punctuation is essentially a guide to interpretation, and it is a phenomenon of written language, though a text may be pointed with stress marks for reading aloud.⁶ The beginnings of punctuation lie with the teachers of grammar, who made an exposition of a text to their pupils. Either teacher or pupil would mark up the text, indicating where words should be separated or linked, the vowel length and pauses. Grammatical treatises and commentaries were written, and copies of the text marked up, to aid comprehension.⁷ By the sixth century, scribes began to insert punctuation into their texts.⁸

Isidore of Seville (c.560–636) in his *Etymologiae* describes a system of punctuation similar to that first set out by Donatus. It used points of various heights (*distinctiones*), and related them to the rhetoricians' parts of discourse.⁹ It will be shown later on that points at various heights are by no means irrelevant to the system of punctuation in the eighth-century manuscript which is discussed later in this chapter. Some readers required help not only with sentence boundaries, but also with the boundaries of the clauses within it; the *distinctiones* were intended to provide this help. By this time, the *diple* (a mark rather like a bass clef) had a special function – it was used to indicate Scriptural quotations; we shall encounter this later. A new feature, the *positura*, was used to separate section ends from beginnings; it was a mark indicating the larger structure of a work, rather than the grammatical units. This indicates that scribes were working on ways of marking off larger units of a text.¹⁰ The *Liber etymologiarum* was immensely influential in the Early Middle Ages, particularly among the Irish. With their new minuscule scripts, these new conventions developed.¹¹ The Anglo-Saxons learnt 'the practices of word-separation, layout and punctuation from Irish teachers.'¹² At Wearmouth-Jarrow, the scriptorium introduced a hierarchy of scripts, using capitular uncial and insular minuscule to distinguish parts of the text, using scripts modelled on those found in their books

⁶ L. Boyle, "Vox paginae": *An Oral Dimension of Texts* (Rome, 1999), p. 25.

⁷ Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, pp. 11-13.

⁸ Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 16.

⁹ Isidore, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi etymologiarum sive originum libri xx*, (*Etymologiae*), ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford, 1911), I.xx.2.

¹⁰ Isidore, *Etymologiae*, I,xxi.13.

¹¹ B. Bischoff, 'Die europäische Verbreitung der Werke Isidors von Sevilla', in *Isidoriana: colección de estudios sobre Isidoro de Sevilla*, ed. M. C. Díaz y Díaz (Leon, 1961), pp. 317-44, especially pp. 327-36. This is particularly true at Wearmouth-Jarrow, where scribes tended to follow their exemplars faithfully, and it is only with the introduction of minuscule scripts that we find the regular use of punctuation. See further Tunbridge, *Scribal Practices*, pp. 217-27.

¹² Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 26.

imported from Italy.¹³ The system of *distinctiones* was not the only system in use: there was punctuation *per cola et commata*, which was used by Jerome in the Vulgate Bible; that was primarily a matter of layout, not of marks, though it too was based upon marking out clauses.¹⁴

The systems in use were by no means consistent, even if they were derived from the same source. This is true even of manuscripts produced at Wearmouth-Jarrow.¹⁵ By the Carolingian era, new systems of punctuation had begun to displace *distinctiones*, which can be seen in some of the manuscripts discussed in chapter V.¹⁶

One may see many features pertaining to the ‘grammar of legibility’ in the layout of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 819, a particularly interesting manuscript for several reasons.¹⁷ It is a copy of Bede’s Commentary on Proverbs, dating from the first half of the eighth century,¹⁸ copied in scripts associated with Wearmouth-Jarrow, Bede’s own monastery.¹⁹ It is the only manuscript of one of Bede’s biblical commentaries to survive in a copy from his own monastery.²⁰ There are no such manuscripts of the homilies which survive, making Bodley 819 a useful study of how Bede’s exegetical writing was presented by scribes from his own monastery not long after his death. It appears to be the work of one scribe, with

¹³ Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 26.

¹⁴ The *cola et commata* system is most useful for those reading aloud, and it was, in my opinion designed for that very purpose. On this system, see Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 16.

¹⁵ The Codex Amiatinus is laid out *per cola et commata*, whereas the manuscripts in insular minuscule contain points.

¹⁶ See pp. 108-111 below, for example.

¹⁷ The discussion which follows develops part of my paper, ‘Bede: Educating the Educators of Barbarians’, *Quaestio: Selected Proceedings of the Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic* 3 (2002).

¹⁸ Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 181. Other, later dates have been suggested, for example s.viii², by T. J. Brown, in ‘Late Antique and Early Anglo-Saxon Books’ in *Manuscripts at Oxford: R. W. Hunt Memorial Exhibition*, ed. A. C. de la Mare and B. C. Barker-Benfield (Oxford, 1980), pp. 11-14, p. 14. For a discussion of Bede’s Commentary on Proverbs, and its use of Salonius of Vienne, see Laistner, ‘The Library’, pp. 136-38.

¹⁹ M. B. Parkes, *The Scriptorium of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow, 1982), p. 12. In this lecture, Parkes also discusses the punctuation of other manuscripts from the same monastery.

²⁰ The other surviving manuscripts (listed by Parkes, *The Scriptorium*, pp. 3-4 and p. 12) are Bible fragments: London, British Library, Additional MSS 37777 and 45025, Loan 81 (Kingston Lacy fragment), and Loan 74 (The Stonyhurst Gospel); Utrecht, University Library MS 32, ff. 94-115; Durham, Cathedral Library, MS A.II.17, ff. 103-11; supply leaves in Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, MS Mp.Th.F.68 manuscripts of the *HE* (including the Moore Bede, Cambridge, University Library, MS Kk.v.16 and the Leningrad Bede, St Petersburg, M. E. Saltykov-Schedrin Public Library, MS Lat. Q.v.1.18) and London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius A XIV; fragments of *DTR*, Bückeburg, Niedersächsisches Staatsarchiv, dep. 3, Bedafragment III-VI B plus Münster-in-Westfalen, Staatsarchiv, MSC I 234, ff. 1v and 12v, and Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, MS 4262; as well as a fragment of Gregory’s *Moralia in Iob*, New Haven, Yale, Beinecke Library, MS 516.

some contemporaneous corrections in a second hand. In the tenth century it was glossed, probably by Aldred, the glossator of the Lindisfarne Gospels (London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero D.IV).²¹ Alterations ‘to punctuation and abbreviations were made at Durham Cathedral Priory in the twelfth century, in preparation for the copying of London, British Library, MS Harley 4688, using this manuscript as an exemplar.’²² It was also on this occasion that the text of f. 74 was recopied, as the script on this leaf dates from the twelfth century,²³ and the ink appears to correspond with that used in the alterations to the punctuation.²⁴ There are 115 folios. The manuscript is incomplete, lacking at least the first quire and the outer sheet of the second quire, several sheets of Book III and the outer sheet of the final quire. The quires are formed of gatherings of four bifolia, and there were originally 16 quires, as can be determined from the quire numbering. The second quire (now the first), has lost some leaves, and the remaining ones have been rearranged, so that the penultimate folio is now the first, disrupting the order of the text. At the end of some quires, the number of the following quire has a quire marking, surrounded by a decoration of leaves.²⁵ The ending of the second quire (now the first quire) is not marked, and this is the case for most of the quires. The numbering is very erratic, with some numbers added in the twelfth century, and some of the original quire numbers also remaining.

The text is beautifully laid out and is very easy to read. There are twenty-two lines to a page. Occasionally at the last line of a page, a word is added, or the end of a word is added, for example, as at f. 4r, where the -mur of *percepimur* is found below the final line. The *lemmata* from the text of Proverbs are copied in ‘the Amiatinus form of Capitular Uncial’, while ‘the commentary was copied in the

²¹ T. J. Kendrick, *et al.*, ed., *Evangeliorum quattuor codex Lindisfarnensis: MS BL Cotton Nero D.IV*, 2 vols. (Lausanne, 1960), vol. II, p. 33.

²² T. J. Brown, ‘Late Antique and Early Anglo-Saxon Books’, p. 14. Following the designations in the CCSL edition, I shall call the four hands I identify in this manuscript O¹, the scribe of the main text; O², the hand of the eighth-century corrector (possibly the same person as the scribe); O³, the hand of Aldred; and O⁴, the hand of the twelfth century editor who prepared the manuscript for copying.

²³ F. Madan and H. H. E. Craster, *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford* (Oxford, 1933), vol. II part I, p. 502, no. 2699.

²⁴ Images of small portions of the manuscript may be found in Parkes’ *The Scriptorium*, p. 13, f. 16; the rest of this leaf can be seen in his *Pause and Effect*, pp. 180-81; T. J. Brown in ‘Late Antique and Early Anglo-Saxon Books’, has a facsimile of f. 11r on p. 1; and a part of f. 29r is reproduced in E. A. Lowe’s *Codices Latini Antiquiores* (Oxford, 1934-72), II. 235. All these reproductions are in black and white, which makes it almost impossible to see contrast in the ink colours used.

²⁵ For example, ff. 11v, 19v, 26v.

distinctively disciplined Wearmouth-Jarrow minuscule'.²⁶ The *lemmata* are distinguished from the commentary in two further ways: firstly, in the margin beside the first line of the *lemma* we find a *diple* (and often a smaller *diple*, which looks more like ʒ, by the side of the other lines); secondly, at the transition from text to commentary and back again, there is the *hedera*, which is leaf-shaped.²⁷ The *hederae* were sometimes later erased.²⁸ The smaller *diple* may also be seen in the margin opposite lines of the commentary which contain biblical quotations, for example on f. 16v, where Bede quotes Ps. 28:12, *quia tenebrae non obscurabuntur*.²⁹ While these are found throughout the manuscript, they do not mark out every quotation from scripture, but merely serve as an occasional guide.³⁰ The scriptural quotations embodied in the text, though occasionally marked out with small *diple*, are in the same minuscule script as the rest of the commentary, not in the uncial of the *lemma*.

The *lemmata* are not always laid out as one might expect from the sequence in the Vulgate or Vetus Latina Bible. While the verses are cited in order, the physical arrangement of a given verse may have its words in an unexpected sequence. The last lines of the lemma sometimes appear before the beginning of the verse quoted, on the line above.³¹

So the lemma can run :

text of commentary: Γ LEMMA ROW II OR III
BEGINNING OF LEMMA
 LEMMA ROW II text of commentary

For example:

.....Γ LOCUTA EST
 QUIS EST PARVULUS DECLINET AD ME ET UECORDI

The start of the *lemma* is still marked out with the large *diple*. The fact that some of the *lemma* is displaced is indicated with a *paragraphus* (indicated in the example above with the Γ symbol). This arrangement seems to be used in order to use the space as efficiently as possible. However, this *paragraphus* and the large

²⁶ Parkes, *The Scriptorium*, p. 12.

²⁷ Parkes, *The Scriptorium*, p. 12.

²⁸ See below, p. 100.

²⁹ *In Proverbia Salomonis*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 119B (Turnholt, 1983), I.v.139.

³⁰ See for example, f. 14v; CCSL 119B, p. 50, I.v.74.

³¹ For an example, see f. 28r, line 15, CCSL 119B, p. 64, I.ix.65.

initial at the beginning of the line, allow one to follow the order of the text even though at first sight it seems slightly displaced.

There are no abbreviations used in the *lemmata*. The words themselves are unshortened, although Bede does not include all of the text of Proverbs, and some of this text was filled in later by Aldred. The *lemmata* thus appear to be the primary means of navigating the text.

The commentary is written in insular minuscule. The word-separation is relatively clear, though not always sufficiently large, it appears, for the twelfth-century editor,³² who inserted fine lines indicating where two words close together should be separated.³³ These fine lines can also be found separating words in the *lemmata*. The prepositions are usually attached to the next word, and the twelfth century editor has occasionally separated them. But in most respects, the word divisions are as one would expect from modern custom. Apart from that, abbreviations are used relatively sparingly, though they are not eschewed altogether. Such abbreviations as are used are not used consistently. One will not find *est* abbreviated at all places, nor *autem* nor *quod*, though these are commonly abbreviated, as is final -m. More rarely *ergo* and *enim* are abbreviated.

The overall structure of the work is indicated for the reader. Each book begins with an elaborate initial letter. The initial of the first book has of course been lost as the first quire no longer exists. However, books II and III begin with their own initials. So on f. 29r there is a large initial 'P', and on f. 74v there is an initial 'H'. Both these exhibit typical features of insular art of that time, and are very reminiscent of the vine scrolls found on the binding of the Stonyhurst Gospel and the interlaces of the Lindisfarne Gospels. The books also have an incipit: book II begins: *incipit liber ii*. At the beginning of book III the incipit is written in silver ink. It seems unique in the period to use such high-grade ink for an incipit, but the script is undoubtedly contemporary. With the incipit phrase there is also a small decoration of leaves, slightly different from the leaves found as decoration round the quire numbering and the *hedera*, ♠. The decoration is also very slightly different for each book.

³² This editor is designated as O⁴ in the CCSL edition. See below, pp. 99-101.

³³ For example, see f. 17v.

The hierarchy of the structure is further indicated by the initial ‘M’ used to begin the *Mulierem fortem* section, which begins on f. 105v and completes the work.³⁴ All the other biblical *lemmata* begin with identically sized capitals; it is only at the beginning of the books and at the beginning of the *Mulierem fortem* section that we have varying sized initials. The ‘M’ is not decorated at all, it is simply rather larger than usual, descending two lines instead of one. This makes it considerably smaller than the decorated initials used to begin the books, which are approximately six lines in height. The *Mulierem fortem* section was frequently copied on its own, and often travelled separately from the rest of the work.³⁵ The larger initial letter at the beginning of the *lemma* for that section indicates that very early on this section was recognised as in some way marked out from the rest, if not that it was so distinguished by Bede himself. This section is a beautiful piece of ecclesiological exegesis, which was of particular interest to medieval readers, and was often copied in the twelfth century.

Furthermore, smaller divisions are from time to time indicated by a small insular ‘g’ in the margin at the beginning of each new chapter of Proverbs, for example at ff. 13v³⁶ and 17r.³⁷ The marks become sparser as one moves through the manuscript, and after f. 50, they virtually disappear. For the most part, they correspond with modern chapter breaks, perhaps beginning the subdivisions which Hurst uses in his edition, where the books are divided according to the chapters of Proverbs. The reason the ‘g’ is used as the marker is unclear.

There are other features of note, one of which I have been unable to date, and that is what resembles a capital ‘I’ in red ink alongside the *lemma* at f. 83v.³⁸ I am unable to determine the significance of this. It is presumably some kind of highlighting mark, though I have not been able to ascertain why this particular verse deserves special attention.

On f. 17v there is some Greek included in the text.³⁹ It is marked over the top with a scroll decoration. This again is a way of highlighting an unusual or potentially difficult feature of the text. The Greek is very carefully and accurately written, and

³⁴ CCSL 119B, p. 149, III.xxxi.74.

³⁵ See Laistner and King, *A Hand-list*, pp. 56-67. They date Bodley 819 to s.viii-ix.

³⁶ CCSL 119B, p. 49, I.v.1.

³⁷ CCSL 119B, p. 52, I.vi.1.

³⁸ CCSL 119B, p. 128, III.xxv.145.

³⁹ CCSL 119B, p. 53, I.vi.27, where the Greek is written as three words, unlike the manuscript where there is no separation.

is then translated for us by Bede. There are other places in the text where Bede uses a Greek word, but this manuscript does not always use Greek letters there, perhaps indicating that the exemplar was harder to read, or that Bede was not consistent in his use of Greek script in his autographs.⁴⁰ This may support the idea that he was often dictating his work.

The overall impression of the manuscript is that it was designed to be particularly easy to read. For example at one point, there is a hole in the vellum (f. 28r). The scribe has had to break up the word *divinare* around the hole and he has marked a set of dots over the imperfection in the vellum in order to lead the eye across to continue reading.⁴¹ This is a very unusual scribal aid to readers. This indicates that in Wearmouth-Jarrow, there was great consideration given to the readability of a text – that they were aware of the need for a ‘grammar of legibility’.

This manuscript also contains corrections which are contemporary with the main text. This can be seen at f. 2v, line 1, and f. 20r line 20, where *divinae* is added above the line. The ink is dark, whereas the tenth-century glossator’s ink on this folio is much lighter. The ‘a’ is open-topped, which is characteristic of Anglo-Saxon hands of this period, and the ‘d’ and ‘e’ have the same form as the letters of the main hand, and are dissimilar to O³ (Aldred) and O⁴ (the twelfth-century editor). This can also be seen on f. 1r where one can see that one word, *populo*, has been added by O⁴ above the line; however there has also been a correction in an insular minuscule hand, O² (the eighth-century corrector). The pen used is very fine and, on some of the folios where there is discolouration, this makes it particularly difficult to distinguish in some cases between the ink of the corrector and alterations made by the subsequent glossator and editor. Where the corrector adds a word, three small dots lead up to the added word from between the two words between which it should be inserted. These are reminiscent of the symbol used by proof-readers today to indicate an addition above the line. This speaks of consideration for the reader and of an effort to enable the reader to grasp more readily the meaning of the text, even when the scribe has made an error. The eighth-century corrector’s hand can also be seen at several other places where corrections have been made, though it cannot

⁴⁰ See for example CCSL 119B, p. 61, I.vii.63, where Bodley 819 (manuscript O) has *yperifanos* in Roman letters.

⁴¹ Dots are a decorative feature frequently used in Hiberno-Saxon art. They can be found surrounding the initial letters of the Lindisfarne Gospels.

always be identified certainly.⁴² Quite often the correction is of an ‘e’ to an ‘i’ at the end of a third declension noun or adjective. It is much more difficult to demonstrate that this correction is contemporaneous with the text as the forms of the letters are not sufficiently different from that of later hands for one to be certain, especially on folios where the later inks are dark, or on discoloured folios. However, in the light of other indications one can assume that at least some of these corrections are due to the early Anglo-Saxon corrector rather than any of his successors.

At f. 82v, line 17, there is a small *signe de renvoi* indicated in the middle of the line, and in the margin we have *apostolus* in the hand of the corrector. The spacing here is such that *apostolus* would have interfered with the letters in words on either side of it, as it is such a long word, and therefore the corrector has carefully moved it out to the margin.

It is possible that this corrector should be identified with the scribe. However, I do not think the two hands are sufficiently alike, though there is very little text from which to make an accurate comparison of letter-forms.

When one considers the punctuation, it can be seen that most points are contemporaneous with the main hand, and that they are in the same ink. As a general rule, points appear to be in the eighth-century ink and pen, rather than in those of later annotators. This can most easily be seen on f. 19-20, where the glossator’s ink is much lighter, as is that of the twelfth-century editor, whereas the eighth-century ink is very dark. As previously mentioned, on some folios, particularly towards the beginning and the end of the manuscript, the parchment has darkened sufficiently so that the ink colours are much more difficult to distinguish. And on any given folio in between, the glossator’s ink can be lighter or darker, or the original scribe’s ink can be lighter or darker, thus making it difficult to distinguish between the two. However, having obtained the general principle from the folios where the distinction is very clear, one can examine the more difficult leaves in the light of this. In the oldest ink, we find points at two heights: on the base line and above the line, slightly below the level of the main body of the letters. These points do not necessarily

⁴² For example, at f. 20r, line 11, and f. 112 r. 112r can certainly be identified as the eighth-century corrector, but at 20r, line 11 it is less easy to be sure.

correspond to the breaks that we as modern readers would make; however, they are used very consistently.

The points that are used have certain syntactic functions. A point is mainly used at the close of a syntactic unit containing a verb, whether in the indicative or subjunctive, whether in a main or subordinate clause. We can see the points marking the end of a main clause at f. 83v.⁴³ We can see also at the beginning of f. 13v⁴⁴ how the point is used to mark out subordinate clauses.

The point is not used to show *all* subordinate clauses in a sentence, though it is often used for that purpose. It is not used to mark out clauses containing gerunds, gerundives or other participle forms unless there is part of the verb *esse* either written or assumed, converting it into a main verb. The point is not always placed directly after the verb, but after whatever is included within the whole verb-clause, including any noun phrases or adjectives that may follow the verb. Thus it renders slightly easier one of the more difficult features of Bede's Latin, which is the occasional postponement of a noun or adjective to a position after the verb with which it belongs.⁴⁵

The point also marks paratactic constructions, clauses connected by *et*, *-que*, or *sed*, for example f. 17v, lines 20-1.⁴⁶ The point can be used to mark balanced clauses, as shown previously, or even, as in this case, phrases. This parataxis, the marking out of parallel phrases, the juxtaposition, rather than the subordination of two simple clauses to produce a desired effect, is perhaps influenced by Old English grammar, where parataxis is common.⁴⁷ *Et* is considered a reasonable word to be used at the beginning of a clause continuing the commentary, and it is set up as a point of conjunction around which the larger structure (whether a sentence or a clause) works. For example, at f. 14v, line 5,⁴⁸ the point is functioning almost as a

⁴³ CCSL 119B, p. 128, III.xxv.147.

⁴⁴ CCSL 119B, p. 49, I.v.29-34.

⁴⁵ Bede may be postponing these words in order to use *clausulae*, the rhythmical form which indicates a clause ending. In order to have a valid clausular rhythm, the order verb+noun or verb+adjective must normally be used. See chapter III for further analysis.

⁴⁶ CCSL 119B, p. 53, I.vi.25-6.

⁴⁷ B. Mitchell and F. C. Robinson, *A Guide to Old English*, 5th edn. (Oxford, 1992), p. 100. Another feature of Old English poetic composition is frequent repetition of an idea in different words. This is found in the homilies – perhaps indicating that they were intended to be read aloud. Bede's use of parataxis and subordination deserves more attention. Might the use of the point to indicate parataxis as well as subordination indicate that the two were considered broadly equivalent in their grammatical function, with the point indicating a relationship between two clauses, not necessarily the *nature* of that relationship (*i.e.*, whether the clauses are paratactic or subordinate)?

⁴⁸ CCSL 119B, p. 50, I.v.67.

semi-colon. Yet points are not always used to mark out balancing clauses around *et*, as we can see at f. 14v, lines 11-12: ‘merito scilicet fidei et scientiae maioris’.⁴⁹ The points are also used to mark off asides, as is shown at f. 14v. lines 6-7, where the points bracket off a phrase where Bede says ‘id est conventum plurimorum ad invicem.’⁵⁰

The points can also be used to mark out scriptural quotations, for instance at f. 14v. lines 13-14.⁵¹ Here the point marks the beginning of the quotation, after Bede has said ‘dicit Deus . Congregetur aqua in congregationem unam.’, and the end of the quotation where Bede returns to direct commentary. They are not always used to mark out all of the scriptural quotation, for example at f. 16v,⁵² where the points mark the grammatical breaks, as the quotation is wholly assimilated into the main text. Nor are they used throughout the manuscript; particularly towards the end of the manuscript where the punctuation is generally sparser (though still present), they are not used for this purpose. However, the very occurrence of this at all aids the reader in picking their way through the grammar, since the grammar of the quotations can step outside the grammar of the rest of Bede’s sentence, as it is treated as direct speech. Without punctuation this would be difficult to read, as it could appear that there were too many verbs or subjects for one sentence.

The punctuation does not follow the system delineated in Isidore’s *Liber etymologiarum*⁵³ or in Augustine’s *De doctrina Christiana* IV.vii.11 where he talks about *membra* and *caesus*.⁵⁴ Though Bede undoubtedly knew both these texts, at least through extracts, the points do not match the systems described, since in Bodley 819 there is no differentiation of the height of the points to indicate different clauses in the sentence. In fact the actual height of the points seems to be rather random, grammatically speaking. While on one folio one might think one can discern a given system, on another folio it does not work consistently, or is inverted. It seems that the height of the point is more determined by the letters that surround it than by grammatical usage. If a letter has a particularly curved tail or a strong cross stroke,

⁴⁹ CCSL 119B, p. 50, l.v.72-3.

⁵⁰ CCSL 119B, p. 50, l.v.68.

⁵¹ CCSL 119B, p. 50, l.v.74.

⁵² CCSL 119B, p. 51, l.v.139-40.

⁵³ Isidore, *Etymologiae* I.xx. Parkes, in *Pause and Effect*, gives a cogent summary on pp. 21-2.

⁵⁴ *Saint Augustine: On Christian Doctrine*, trans. D. W. Robertson, Jr, (Indianapolis, 1958), pp. 124-5, with examples on pages 125-32. *Membra* and *caesus* are synonymous with *cola* and *commata*.

the point will be placed in such a location where it cannot be confused with the flourish on the letter. So while this system might not have the full versatility of a three- or even a two-height system of *distinctiones*, what it does have is a guarantee of legibility. And in a sense, the differentiation of the grammatical clauses is not so important once one has identified that points mark out clauses, as at a stroke this renders the whole work much easier to read. Once one has discovered which words are surrounding which verb, the precise nature of that clause in relation to those around it is much easier to determine. The use of the punctuation is thus in keeping with the attitude to the reader displayed in the rest of the manuscript.

The third hand which we find in this manuscript is the hand of the tenth-century glossator, found on folios 1-50. This is Aldred's hand, identified by Julian Brown in the facsimile edition of the Lindisfarne Gospels.⁵⁵ He lists sixteen points of comparison between Aldred's handwriting in the Lindisfarne Gospels, the Durham Ritual (Durham, Cathedral Library, MS A.IV.19) and Bodley 819.⁵⁶ T. J. Brown has extensively described the nature of the glosses and the identification of the hand. Aldred's hand mostly expands the *lemmata* so that on the folios that he has worked on, we have a complete text of Proverbs. Secondly, there is a small amount of exegesis of both *lemma* and commentary, introduced by the words *id est*. It may be his hand that introduced some of the marginal crosses – there are two forms of the marginal cross: one with bars across the end and one without. The ones without the bars seem to be the older, see for example ff. 11r and 21r.⁵⁷ The later crosses are almost certainly from the twelfth century, see for example ff. 13v and 17v.⁵⁸ I presume that the crosses are there to point out verses of especial interest to the reader. Aldred's hand in this manuscript provides one of our best pieces of evidence for assuming that this manuscript was, as Gneuss says, at Chester-le-Street before it went to Durham.⁵⁹ His glosses indicate that in Chester-le-Street there may have been a desire for a complete text of the Bible book within a biblical commentary – to have the whole biblical text visible in the manuscript as it was being read, accompanied by

⁵⁵ Kendrick, *Evangeliorum*, vol. II, pp. 33-6.

⁵⁶ Kendrick, *Evangeliorum*, vol. II, pp. 33-6; T. J. Brown *et al.*, ed., *The Durham Ritual: A Southern English Collectar of the Tenth Century with Northumbrian Additions*. *Durham Cathedral Library A.IV.19*, Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile 16 (Copenhagen, 1969).

⁵⁷ CCSL 119B, I.iv.52 and I.vii.1.

⁵⁸ CCSL 119B, p. 49, I.v.40, and p. 52, I.vi.4.

⁵⁹ H. Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 241 (Tempe, 2001), no. 604.

additional notes to explore the *lemma* and commentary which were desired. This may suggest that some readers were having problems dealing with Bede's work, or it may be that Aldred was writing notes for himself; no colophon survives, but the first and last leaves of the manuscript are lacking, and they might not have been so when Aldred was at work. But why did Aldred gloss in Latin? His Gospel glosses are in Old English. Perhaps it was because an Old English gloss of the Gospels was needed for a large number of readers, all of whom should have some knowledge of the Gospels. However, Bede's commentary on Proverbs was of much more limited interest, and so any comments could be made in Latin, as someone who had poor Latin was unlikely to be reading it, and could more profitably be studying the relatively easy Latin of the Gospel text.

In the twelfth century, the manuscript was certainly in Durham, as that is where Harley 4688 was written and that manuscript was copied from Bodley 819.⁶⁰ At that point, as T. J. Brown suggests, the manuscript was worked over in preparation for copying and the punctuation was completely revised, the abbreviations were altered. The quire numbers were emended. The fine lines, as mentioned above, were introduced to demonstrate where word separation should occur, as the corrector clearly thought that the copyist would need this extra assistance to provide a legible manuscript for a twelfth-century audience. The punctuation was changed to the system that was then current throughout most of Western Europe. This was first found in liturgical texts in the eighth century. It consisted of four main symbols: the *punctus elevatus*, *punctus flexus*, *punctus interrogativus* and *punctus versus*.⁶¹ The origins of these symbols, known as *positurae*, are obscure, yet they fulfilled the need for 'more accurate indication of the nature of pauses required to elucidate the sense of a text when it was to be intoned or sung in the liturgy.'⁶² The earliest securely dated *positurae* are from the 780s, and were further developed at the court of Charlemagne, where their clarity made them most useful to the correctors of manuscripts.⁶³

⁶⁰ As mentioned above, p. 90, n.22.

⁶¹ Parkes *Pause and Effect*, p. 36. A depiction of these symbols can be found on p. 302.

⁶² Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 36.

⁶³ Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, pp. 36-7.

When the punctuation was edited, the *punctus elevatus* and *punctus versus* were added to the existing point. One can see where a low point has been turned into the tail of a *punctus versus*, or a high point into the uplift of the *punctus elevatus*, or simply where an existing point has a tail added above or below it. The *hederae* are sometimes erased and repunctuated with *puncti versi*, or a *punctus versus* is added as well as the *hedera*, as Parkes has already shown.⁶⁴ Quire numbers, especially of later quires, are erased; the leaves, however, are usually left, indicating where the erasure has occurred, and the new quire numbers added, though outside the area marked out by the leaves, see for example, f. 111v. Sometimes the original quire numbering is left untouched, and the new number added below and to one side, as it is at f. 19v.

The abbreviations are frequently altered, for example on ff. 4r and 5r we can see that the abbreviations for *ergo*, *autem* and *quod* are usually changed. The abbreviation for *est* is left unaltered – it was still current and well understood, but the earlier Insular abbreviations had been changed to more modern versions, as they were dissimilar enough to cause confusion, particularly the q- initial abbreviations.⁶⁵

The spelling of the manuscript is also altered. One interesting example is at f. 23r, line 6, where *temtat* is corrected to *temptat*. Similarly at f. 9r line 12, *inrident* is corrected to *irrident* – that particular correction is very common, where by the twelfth century, assimilation of the two consonants had occurred and the etymological origin of the word had become slightly obscured. The spelling must have seemed rather archaic, though this lack of assimilation of these consonants can be seen in his work on spelling, *De orthographia*.⁶⁶ All this indicates a particular concern for the legibility of the text in the twelfth century, and how a medieval reader is able to interact with that text, continuing the tradition of the scriptorium of Jarrow. To the twelfth-century editor, it was quite clear that for a current readership, a manuscript could not have old-fashioned abbreviations and unusual spelling and what they would have considered to be an inadequate system of punctuation.

The system of punctuation introduced by the twelfth-century editor is much more sophisticated than that of the eighth. There are four marks that can be found;

⁶⁴ Parkes, *The Scriptorium*, p. 12.

⁶⁵ This indicates that the editor of the manuscript was familiar with the older forms, as well as the modern ones. Perhaps this indicates that Durham at that time still had a number of early Insular manuscripts, and that at least some of the monks at Durham were aware of the conventions governing their presentation.

⁶⁶ See Bede, *De orthographia*, ed. C. W. Jones, CCSL 123A (Turnholt, 1975), pp. 30-31.

one is the simple point. This is usually left untouched from the eighth-century original. There seem to be very few, if any, points added in the twelfth century. We also find the *punctus elevatus*, which is mostly a new addition; the *punctus versus*, which is usually a conversion of an existing point; and an eighth-century point over a *virgula plana* ¸, which latter form was used by some scribes to mark a final pause.⁶⁷ The *virgula plana* combined with the point is not a piece of punctuation that appears to be in common use (Parkes does not mention it). An underline is sometimes used to indicate a deletion, but these points are used in a grammatical context which would normally demand a *punctus versus* or a *punctus elevatus*. This form seems to be in the twelfth-century ink for the majority of cases. There are a few instances where the colour of the ink is very difficult to determine. However, given that this point and *virgula plana* are not used consistently, it might be thought that the *virgula plana* was a later addition, and the preponderance of examples suggests that this is indeed the case. This can be seen at f. 17v, lines 20-22,⁶⁸ where ‘ ¸unde et graece αποτοΥΔΡΚΙΝ. id est a uidendo dorcas nuncupatur ¸ ’, but earlier on the same leaf it functions as a *punctus versus*.⁶⁹

The points of the original are only left unchanged in the cases where they have been used to mark out parallel phrases or small clauses, for example ‘ecclesia convocatio . et synagoga congregatio’,⁷⁰ except where a point indicates the end of a sentence, then the *punctus versus* is used. The *punctus elevatus* is used more commonly to break up the minor clauses within a sentence, and as this is not always done in the original text, this is the piece of punctuation that is most frequently added to the text, rather than being formed over an existing punctuation mark. The *virgula plana* and the *punctus versus* are used to indicate something more final. This leaves us with the question – why was the *punctus versus* not used where the *virgula plana* was, especially as there was already an existing point which could easily have been converted, as we have seen above? Further research into these two punctuation marks may reveal differences in their use.

Again, these alterations render the text accessible to its desired audience, with the spelling and punctuation conventions that they had come to expect. Folio 74 is

⁶⁷ Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 307. This form in Isidore is used to indicate something doubtful in the text – this seems unlikely in this context. Isidore, *Etymologiae* I.xxi.4.

⁶⁸ CCSL 119B, p. 53, I.vi.26.

⁶⁹ CCSL 119B, p. 53, I.vi.19.

⁷⁰ CCSL 119B, p. 50, I.v.69, f. 14v, l.8.

clearly laid out, with punctuation included, demonstrating the same attitude that the original scribe betrayed. Ironically, it is all these layers of adaptation and updating that render this manuscript so hard to understand now, even though the script is perfectly legible. The multiple revisions have cluttered the page and distracted from the earliest features, making it difficult to appreciate the eighth-century ‘grammar of legibility’. This may lead us to assume that the eighth-century ‘grammar of legibility’ was in some way defective; however, the norms governing such a grammar change constantly. The norms in use in the twelfth century are as incomprehensible to the average twenty-first-century reader as the eighth-century customs were to twelfth-century readers.

Furthermore, we can consider the provenance of the text of the manuscript and consider how this may inform us of the text’s audience, and its relationship to the author’s text. If we compare Bodley 819 with other manuscripts known to have come from Wearmouth-Jarrow, we can see at once that it is a relatively high-grade manuscript.⁷¹ It does not compare to the copy of the *HE* that is in the Public Library in St Petersburg (the Leningrad Bede),⁷² with its elaborate illuminated initials throughout, nor with what remains of the Cotton manuscript of the same work. However, if one compares it to the Moore Bede, it is quite clearly a more considered piece of work and very well presented. If nothing else, this is characteristic of the presentation of manuscripts from Wearmouth-Jarrow, which tend to be of very high quality throughout.⁷³ In my opinion, the hands of the manuscript are most similar to scribes B and D of the Leningrad Bede, particularly with regard to word-spacing, and the loops on the letter ‘e’.⁷⁴ I would hesitate to identify the scribe with either of these latter, however, the general similarity would suggest that the date of writing was close to that of the Leningrad Bede, simply from the style of the manuscript and the

⁷¹ Parkes, *The Scriptorium*, *passim*.

⁷² O. Arngart, ed., *The Leningrad Bede: An Eighth Century Manuscript of the Venerable Bede’s Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum in the Public Library, Leningrad*, Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile 2, (Copenhagen, 1952).

⁷³ Parkes, *The Scriptorium*, p. 17.

⁷⁴ Both Parkes and Tunbridge have speculated that scribe D could have been Bede. If one could identify D as the scribe of Bodley 819, it would lessen the force of this suggestion. The scribe of Bodley 819 is considerably more careless in his copying, making many more errors. Given the great similarity between the hands at Wearmouth-Jarrow, I would not want to identify either B or D with the scribe of Bodley 819, though these are the hands which show the closest correspondence. Parkes, *The Scriptorium*, p. 27, fn. 45; Tunbridge, *Scribal Practices*, p. 226, fn. 79. Some commentators have identified hand D as Bede, though Michael Lapidge dismisses this in his article ‘Autographs of Insular Latin Authors of the Early Middle Ages’ in *Gli autografi medievali. Problemi paleografici e filologici*, ed. P. Chiesa and L. Pinelli (Spoleto, 1994), pp.103-44.

care taken in presentation. Bodley 819 presumably dates from the time after the demand for manuscripts increased, as it is not in capitular uncial, as the fragments of Bede's *De temporum ratione* are, which was completed in 725.⁷⁵ Even though these were manuscripts of works by a house author, they were considered sufficiently prestigious to be presented in the best possible script and format.

The text of the manuscript does not greatly help us to reach any conclusion about who received this manuscript, nor about Bede's authorial text. If one examines the text that is in Bodley 819 and the text that is published by Hurst in his CCSL edition, he reconstructs the text α , which is very close to three manuscripts, L, N and O. L is Vatican B. A. V., MS Pal. Lat. 284, s.ix¹, N is Laon, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 55, s.ix, and O is Bodley 819. Bodley 819 differs from the α -text in only small points and often these points have been corrected by the eighth-century corrector. But it contains many more errors than the Leningrad Bede, even within the first book. Since this text has errors in it, this then raises the question of from what kind of copy the scribe of Bodley 819 was working? There are two possibilities. Either the scribe was not as careful as it at first appears, and failed to make an entirely faithful reproduction of Bede's text. Or O is from a copy at one remove from Bede, though still probably made at his monastery.⁷⁶ The main difference between Bodley 819 and the α -text is that the biblical *lemmata* appear to be slightly different. Otherwise, all the manuscripts appear to be very faithful copies of α , containing only small slips, which, for the most part, do not obscure the sense. The biblical *lemmata* might actually be considered to be the part of the text that is most likely to be altered, as different translations of the Bible were current in different times and in different places, and therefore the text of the *lemmata* might well be altered to fit the local preference. The biblical text as used in Bodley 819 is not that of the Vulgate text of Proverbs – however, Bede does not faithfully follow the Vulgate by any means, and it is certain that he had available to him some books of the Vetus Latina, as well as some variants of the Vulgate, presumably used in the preparation of the Amiatinus text.⁷⁷ Therefore I would not say that deviation from

⁷⁵ Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 4.

⁷⁶ The question here is what level of variation of quality can one expect from one scriptorium. The Moore Bede looks much less tidy than the Leningrad Bede. Bodley 819 is well-presented, but the text is slightly defective in comparison to other manuscripts from the monastery.

⁷⁷ The Codex Amiatinus was one of the three great pandects prepared at Wearmouth-Jarrow during the abbacy of Ceolfrith. See R. Marsden, *The Text of the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1995), for further information about the versions Bede used.

the Codex Amiatinus Vulgate text indicates any distance from the authorial manuscript.

Is it possible that this manuscript was commissioned by Lindisfarne? It is reasonable to assume that if Aldred was able to annotate it in the late tenth century it was at Chester-le-Street, with the Lindisfarne community, and subsequently it travelled to Durham, also with the Lindisfarne community. The library from Wearmouth-Jarrow scarcely survives at all – there are very few books that can be said to have been there: the now-lost Codex Grandior of Cassiodorus, the Laudian Acts (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Graec. 35) and the copies that the scriptorium produced are the only ones that can be said to have been there, and survived. However, the vastly different histories of these manuscripts suggest that the copies produced in-house were intended to be sent out, not kept, though the evidence of the surviving pandect fragments shows that they did keep high-quality manuscripts for their own use, and given that in the tenth century our manuscript was at Chester-le-Street it could previously have been at Lindisfarne. This could also be confirmed by the provenance of the Stonyhurst Gospel, which was copied at Wearmouth-Jarrow, but was found in Cuthbert's coffin.⁷⁸ Or perhaps it could have been at Wearmouth-Jarrow until the ninth century (by which time the monastery had fallen from notice – we do not know when it failed), when the Cuthbert community was gaining land, and the community of Cuthbert might have then obtained the manuscript along with the monastery buildings, and perhaps the remnants of the Wearmouth-Jarrow community.

This manuscript can confirm a certain close relationship between the scriptoria of Wearmouth-Jarrow and Lindisfarne. While this manuscript seems most likely to have been written at Wearmouth-Jarrow, possibly for the Lindisfarne community, at any rate the Lindisfarne community were able to obtain a copy of it, and to begin the process of glossation. We can deduce that there was an interchange of books between the two monasteries – Lindisfarne appears to have had access to the Italo-Northumbrian texts of the Bible, from Wearmouth-Jarrow.⁷⁹ Lindisfarne certainly commissioned Bede to write his prose Life of Cuthbert⁸⁰ – it is not

⁷⁸ T. J. Brown, ed., *The Stonyhurst Gospel of Saint John*, p. 6.

⁷⁹ Kendrick, *Evangeliorum*, II, p. 12.

⁸⁰ Bede, *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life*, ed. and trans. B. Colgrave (Cambridge, 1940), Prologue to Bede's *Life*, pp. 142-3.

improbable that they commissioned either the commentary on Proverbs itself, or at least a copy of the text.

The format of the manuscript I believe betrays the direction of the leaders of the scriptorium at Wearmouth-Jarrow, a scriptorium that was clearly very concentrated on presentation, accuracy and legibility – it is no good having a decorative book if one cannot understand it. The inclusion of punctuation is one interesting indication of this attitude. While Bodley 819 was probably produced in the scriptorium in the 740s or 750s, it is likely that the careful habits of scribes were set up early on in the working life of the scriptorium, under Abbot Ceolfrith, when the great pandects were produced, and that thereafter these high standards were maintained. The introduction of the new insular minuscule hand brought new challenges of layout, and allowed the creation of new conventions. Punctuation implies attention not only to the aesthetic aspects of page design, but also to the communicative aspect – the book is designed to be read, and it is designed to be read even by readers with a less-than-perfect grasp of Latin. That punctuation was also used in other insular minuscule manuscripts from Wearmouth-Jarrow which suggests that the author of the text, Bede himself, might well have included punctuation in his original drafts. Indeed, for reading texts with his students, he presumably marked up copies, just as the teachers of Antiquity did.⁸¹ So through work of the scriptorium, it is possible to get a glimpse of Bede's classroom. The 'grammar of legibility' was well understood by the scribes at Wearmouth-Jarrow, including the ways in which this visual grammar could interact with Latin grammar, for the benefit of the reader. Bodley 819 provides the paradigm for manuscript presentation, particularly in the matter of punctuation. The punctuation of later manuscripts of Bede can now be explored,⁸² to determine whether it might be traced back to the manuscripts produced at Wearmouth-Jarrow, and to see how the legacy of that scriptorium was developed by later scribes.⁸³ In Bodley 819, some part of this later tradition can already be detected in the glossing of Aldred, explaining and expanding upon Bede, and in the editing of the manuscript in the twelfth century, when the conventions of punctuation and abbreviation were revised and updated, to allow a more modern audience to

⁸¹ See above, p. 88.

⁸² See chapter V, pp. 114-5.

⁸³ Parkes has already begun this, with a brief examination of some manuscripts of Bede's commentary on Luke. However, I will be focussing on the homilies. Parkes, *The Scriptorium*, pp. 17-20.

understand Bede.⁸⁴ This process can be considered to have been continued in the present CCSL edition, with its modern system of punctuation and its normalised spelling.

⁸⁴ In order to appreciate this manuscript fully, one would need a full colour facsimile and transcription, with accompanying notes exploring the nature of Aldred's glosses.