A Study of Scribal Practices in Early Irish and Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts

G. L. Tunbridge, St Cross College, Oxford

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
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Abstract

This thesis describes and accounts for certain innovative scribal practices in Irish and Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of the seventh to ninth centuries, seeing these as both graphic and linguistic phenomena.

Part One deals with the linguistic context in which the scribes were working, examining the general role of grammar during the period and those aspects of grammatical teaching which would most concern the scribe. The presence of Latin as a non-vernacular Church language in Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England resulted in a dependence on and enthusiasm for the study of Latin grammar, and innovations in scribal practice must be seen in the context of this special linguistic environment. Irish grammarians understood their own language in terms of syntactic groups rather than distinct parts of speech: this and other differences between Irish and Latin may have encouraged the practices of separation (and abbreviation) in the copying of Latin, as a means of making the latter easier to read. The traditional teaching of the Latin grammarians on the eight parts of speech was especially popular with Insular grammarians, and this analysis underlies the practice of word separation, but a lack of explicit teaching on word boundaries accounts for the characteristic 'errors' of Insular separation.

Part Two examines the practices of word separation and abbreviation as displayed in early Insular manuscripts. The physical and the linguistic aspects of word separation are considered, and the early development of the practice is described. Standard patterns of separation are seen to reflect Latin morphological teaching. The practice of heavy abbreviation, although modified by various non-linguistic factors such as type of script or the intended function of a book, is basically an orthographical convention which, like the adoption of word separation, brings into the alphabetic system an ideogrammatic element which is symptomatic of a tendency to view Latin primarily as a graphical means of communication.

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Long Abstract

Any scribe, as a copier of written language, is to a certain extent consciously engaged in or unconsciously reflecting some kind of linguistic analysis. The argument of this thesis is, in short, that certain innovative scribal practices manifested in the earliest Irish and Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of the seventh to ninth centuries represent (in the fact of their emergence and in the particular shape that they take) a form of linguistic analysis which can best be understood in relation to the linguistic context in which the scribes were working and the different ways in which they perceived Latin and their vernacular language.

Part I deals with aspects of the grammatical theory of the period, placing linguistic study within its historical and cultural context, and examining in more detail some areas of grammatical doctrine, both native and Latin, which appear to have been particularly important in shaping the linguistic understanding of scribes, and therefore to have influenced the graphical practices described in Part II.

In Chapter One I argue that the presence of Latin as a non-vernacular Church language in early Christian Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England resulted

in an enthusiastic embracing of and dependence on the ancient *ars grammatica* as the means of access to the book-based culture of the written Latin word. The culture of that period from which our earliest Insular manuscripts survive was therefore shaped in many respects by the concerns, methods and teachings of the grammarians, and there are indications of a heightened interest in and awareness of linguistic questions. Evidence of this enthusiasm for grammatical study is seen in the many copies of ancient and late antique grammars made, and new grammars compiled, in the seventh and eighth centuries. A further insight into the high value placed on the *ars grammatica* is found in the preface to the anonymous Insular grammar known as *Ad Cuimnanum*, which at great length both defines the scope of grammatical study and insists on its fundamental importance as the means of access to all knowledge, including knowledge of God. Another Insular writer who expresses similar ideas is Boniface in the prefatory epistle to his grammar, which urges the necessity of grammatical studies for the student of scripture.

The influence of the *ars grammatica* is seen not only in the content and method of many Insular Latin texts, but also in the way in which they are written down. New developments in the layout of texts in this period include the use of enlarged letters or display pages to mark new sections (books or chapters) within a work, and the use of different scripts and other graphic means to distinguish lemmata (quotations from the primary text) in commentaries; it is from this early Insular period that the earliest examples survive of books combining text and commentary on the same page. These practices represent an attempt to make the written information on the page more accessible to the reader; they are a practical outworking of the ancient grammatical concept of *enarratio*, the explication

of texts. But it is not only at the level of *enarratio* that scribal practices reflect grammatical concepts; certain scribal innovations at the level of individual words can also be seen as aids to the reader engaged in the primary act of the *ars grammatica*: *lectio*, the careful distinguishing of each word. This thesis aims to show that two such practices - word separation and the heavy use of abbreviations - are the outcome of a changing approach to reading; and that these practices, just as much as the texts themselves, are evidence of the linguistic ideas and activity of the period.

The oral traditions of the vernacular languages, whose non-relatedness to Latin was the cause of the Insular dependence on Latin grammar, at the same time provided an alternative linguistic perspective which encouraged comparisons between the languages. Awareness of these different perspectives may have freed Insular scribes from inhibitions about making changes to the tradition which they had inherited and on which they were dependent.

The next two chapters turn from the wider role and influence of the *ars grammatica* to look at the particular linguistic framework and grammatical doctrines which informed the reading and copying in which the scribes were engaged. First Chapter Two examines vernacular linguistic concepts, concentrating (in the absence of any direct textual evidence of Anglo-Saxon linguistic thought in this early period) on the early Irish grammar of Irish, the *Auraicept na nÉces*. Many concepts and terms in this work, with its accumulation of later commentary, were borrowed and adapted from the teaching of the Latin grammarians, but native ideas are also present: thus the Latin paradigm format is extended to include all possible combinations

of preposition with noun as inflections of the noun. The native grammarian appears to have seen the Irish language in terms of syntactic groups, rather than breaking it down into distinct words, or parts of speech, as the Latin grammarians did to their language. This understanding is reflected graphically in the way in which the earliest examples of Old Irish were written down as word groups; modern linguists have recently arrived at a similarly wider understanding of word boundaries which allows a more accurate description of Celtic languages. This native linguistic analysis, very appropriate for Irish, would not have been very helpful to the Irish student learning to read Latin, who also had to contend with differences in the syntax of the two languages. The identification of word boundaries in Latin (an aspect of *lectio*) was therefore a particularly difficult matter for the Irish student and reader, who was not helped in this struggle by the fact that in the Continental manuscripts from which he would at first have been reading no attempt would have been made to indicate those boundaries graphically. Thus Irish scribes when copying Latin began to abandon *scriptio continua* in favour of a layout which clarified the syntax and morphology of the language and hence met the needs of the non-native Latin speaker. The different approach to spacing in the writing of Latin and of Irish confirms that two different kinds of linguistic analysis were being used to determine word boundaries.

In Chapter Three I argue that the traditional teaching of the Latin grammarians on the eight parts of speech and on morphology, which was especially popular with and emphasised by the Insular Latin grammarians (and on which the grammatical education of all scribes would have been based), became the principle underlying the separation of words in Latin texts. The particular emphasis of this teaching, as handled by the Insular

grammarians, and the limitations of the grammarians' understanding of word boundaries, may in part explain the characteristic confusions found in Insular separation. The tendency of scribes sometimes to treat conjunctions, adverbs and other non-inflecting parts of speech as enclitics or proclitics of an inflecting word may reflect the greater importance attributed (and space devoted) by the grammarians to the inflecting parts, especially the noun and the verb, at the expense of the other parts; those parts, being considered less significant, may not always have been deemed worthy of the status of separate words on the page. The parts of speech on the whole correspond to word boundaries which the scribe could express graphically by writing them separately; but this correspondence does not always hold good, especially in the case of the *praepositio*. The ancient grammarians included in this category both free-standing prepositions and prepositional prefixes, and the teaching inherited by the Insular grammarians is very confused on the question (phonetic, not graphic) of when prepositions should be joined and when separated. This confusion must underlie the very common tendency of Insular scribes either to group prepositions or to separate them unnecessarily.

It should not be assumed that scribes when copying and excerpting from grammars necessarily showed particular interest in details (such as these passages on the separation of prepositions) which might have helped them to improve their layout and presentation of the text. An appendix analysing the nature of an Insular copy of excerpts from the commentary of Pompeius reveals no such preoccupation on the part of the scribe, whose carelessness and lack of comprehension of what he was copying is a reminder of the potential gap between the ideal and the reality of grammatical education. Insular grammarians, in their commitment to the ideal of grammar,

faithfully reused and adapted the traditional concepts and methods of antiquity. Accepting this framework, they did not have the language to describe and address the needs of their situation as non-native Latin speakers; but the scribes' introduction of new graphic practices, in which traditional teaching is put to original use, bears witness to the creative linguistic activity of the period.

Part II turns from grammatical theory to scribal practice, giving detailed accounts of the two practices mentioned above whose innovative nature and unusual characteristics require some explanation. Chapter Four, on word separation, explains that this practice, apparently first introduced into Latin manuscripts by Irish scribes, has until recently been overlooked by scholars. The practice of word separation has both physical and linguistic dimensions; this chapter begins with a description of the various physical means by which separation was indicated in this period, and goes on to consider the linguistic aspect of separation, including an analysis of the common kinds of word groupings and mistakes in separation. This general description is based on the established practice of the eighth and early ninth centuries; in Chapter Five, a more detailed study of the earliest surviving Insular manuscripts (mostly of seventh-century Irish origin) reveals the gradual development of the practice. The early stages appear to include a tendency to separate text into syntactic groups, while a more advanced stage, which never became the established practice, tended towards syllabic separation. In the earliest English manuscripts separation was very hesitant and used minimal spacing, but from the late seventh century onwards the practice is as likely to be conspicuous as to be discreet, so that exaggerated separation should not be seen as a purely Irish

phenomenon.

These two chapters are concluded with a consideration of the different influences which may have shaped the practice, pointing out the extent to which non-linguistic factors (for example, aesthetic considerations, conservatism and the nature of the exemplar) combined with and modified the linguistic influences discussed in earlier chapters. Yet these other factors notwithstanding, the change from copying in *scriptio continua* to copying word by word was primarily a linguistic phenomenon, which can be seen not only as a practical response to the difficulties of reading Latin, but also as the result of changing perceptions of written language. The new practice introduced an ideographic element (with signs representing concepts) into a basically phonographic alphabetic system (where each sign represents a single sound); it is a symptom of a changing attitude which saw written language as a means of communication in its own right, not merely as a record of spoken sounds.

Chapter Six describes what I believe to be another such symptom. The Insular practice of heavy use of abbreviations, in contexts where previously such usage had not been admitted, is well known. Yet scholars have concerned themselves primarily with the questions of which symbols are used, and where these originated. This chapter seeks to answer the question of why this practice should have emerged during this particular period and in this particular place. After demonstrating that the use of abbreviation varies according to the context, I try to determine which factors influenced its use, and conclude that the nature of the book being copied, and the type of reading for which it is intended, were the most important factors. De-luxe books intended for public use, and especially

those intended for reading aloud in a liturgical context, are most likely to contain few abbreviations, while technical works and other books intended for private reading and study, including pocket Gospel books, contain an abundance of abbreviation symbols. Detailed study of the frequency of the use of abbreviations in several texts indicates that, in the absence of other factors, the scribes' preference was to use the abbreviated form.

It would appear from these observations that abbreviated forms were not seen by Insular scribes primarily as a means of saving space or time in copying, but as an alternative way of spelling or representing a word or syllable, equally as acceptable as the full form (or more so because it was easier to write while being just as easy to read). The sudden increase in the use of abbreviated forms in this period should, therefore, be taken to indicate neither a desperate desire to economize on parchment, nor a need to produce many copies in a great hurry; it should rather be seen as a symptom of the same change in the perception of written language. Irish and Anglo-Saxon scribes, their own vernaculars being unrelated to the written Latin which they were copying, felt less bound than did late Latin or Romance speaking scribes to reproduce words letter by letter in a way that could be seen to relate to the spoken sound. They were quite happy to substitute symbols which conveyed the whole or part of a word without reference to the spoken sound.

A STUDY OF SCRIBAL PRACTICES IN EARLY IRISH AND ANGLO-SAXON MANUSCRIPTS

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St Cross College

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It is all too easy to take language, one's own language, for granted - one may need to encounter another language, or rather another *mode* of language, in order to be astonished, to be pushed into wonder, again.

Oliver Sachs, *Seeing Voices*

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List of Abbreviations

Alexander	J. J. G. Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts: 6th to 9th Century*, Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, 1 (London, 1978)
ASE	*Anglo-Saxon England*
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CLA	E. A. Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores: A Palaeographical Guide to Latin Manuscripts prior to the Ninth Century*, 11 vols and Supplement (Oxford, 1934-71)
CLA Addenda	B. Bischoff and V. Brown, 'Addenda to *Codices Latini Antiquiores*', *Medieval Studies*, 47 (1985), 317-66
Codex Lindisf.	*Evangeliorum quattuor Codex Lindisfarnensis*, edited by T. D. Kendrick, T. J. Brown, R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford *et al.*, 2 vols (Olten and Lausanne, 1960)
DIL	*Dictionary of the Irish Language, Based Mainly on Old and Middle Irish Materials*, Royal Irish Academy (Dublin, 1913-76)
EEMF	Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile
Eng. Uncial	E. A. Lowe, *English Uncial* (Oxford, 1960)
facs.	facsimile
fig(s).	figure(s)
fol(l).	folio(s)
Gilbert	*Facsimiles of the National Manuscripts of Ireland*, edited by J. T. Gilbert, 5 vols (Dublin, later London, 1874-84), I (Dublin, 1874)
GL	*Grammatici latini*, edited by H. Keil, 8 vols [vol. VIII = *Anecdota Helvetica*, edited by H. Hagen] (Leipzig, 1857-80)
JRSAI	*Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*
Kirchner	J. Kirchner, *Scriptura latina libraria* (Munich, 1965)
Mittelalt. Stud.	B. Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Studien: ausgewählte Aufsätze zur Schriftkunde und Literaturgeschichte*, 3 vols (Stuttgart, 1966-1981)
Morrish, 'Dated'	J. Morrish, 'Dated and Datable Manuscripts Copied in England During the Ninth Century: a Preliminary List', *Medieval Studies*, 50 (1988), 512-38

Pal. Lat.	*Palaeographia Latina*, edited by W. M. Lindsay, 6 vols, St Andrews University Publications, 14, 16, 19, 20, 23, 28 (Oxford, 1922-1929)
Pal. Soc.	*Palaeographical Society: Facsimiles of Manuscripts and Inscriptions*, edited by E. A. Bond, S. M. Thompson & G. F. Warner, 1st series, 3 vols (London, 1873-83); 2nd series, 2 vols (London, 1884-94)
pl(s).	plate(s)
PL	J. P. Migne, Patrologiae Latinae Cursus Completus ..., 221 vols (Paris, 1844-64)
PRIA	*Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*
Scribes, Scripts and Readers	M. B. Parkes, *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London and Rio Grande, 1991)
Staerk	A. Staerk, *Les manuscrits latins du V^e^ au XIII^e^ siècle conservés à la bibliothèque impériale de Saint-Pétersbourg*, 2 vols (St Petersburg, 1910)
Steffens	F. Steffens, *Lateinische Paläographie*, 2nd edition (Trier, 1909) or 3rd (unaltered) edition (Berlin, Leipzig, 1929)

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Preface

This thesis aims to describe and account for two practices employed by early Irish and Anglo-Saxon scribes as they copied Latin texts: word separation, and consistent use of abbreviated forms for words. I have concentrated on the practice of word separation, since this has not previously been studied in any depth, and since, as a major contribution of Insular scribes to the writing of language in the West, it deserves to be better known and understood. Insular abbreviation, by contrast, has long been of interest to palaeographers, but some questions about this practice still remain unanswered.

The connection between both practices is that they are not only graphic but also linguistic phenomena; both are ways of representing language in graphic form, and presuppose an analysis of language on the part of the scribe. Therefore, in spite of the difficulties involved in attempting to straddle two fields, and the danger of ending up in a muddy ditch in between the two, I have tried in this study to be both a palaeographer and a linguist. Such a double approach is, I believe, essential in order to arrive at a full understanding of the nature of these practices and of the reasons for their presence in manuscripts produced at this particular time and place. Part One of the thesis therefore explores the linguistic context in which the scribes were working, while Part Two describes the practices from a palaeographical perspective and seeks to account for their characteristic features.

The period covered by this study is the seventh to the early ninth centuries. I have limited myself to a consideration of the practices in Latin manuscripts copied by Irish or English scribes during this period; it has been beyond the scope of this thesis to deal either with the development of these practices by Continental scribes, or with how they were later applied in the writing down of the vernacular languages in the British Isles, both of which are subjects worthy of study in their own right.

Of the Latin manuscripts copied in England or Ireland during this period, approximately two hundred and fifty are known to have survived, either complete or, in many cases, in fragments (the number continues to grow as more fragments are discovered). Most of these have been catalogued in the eleven volumes and supplement of E. A. Lowe's *Codices Latini Antiquiores* (*CLA*) (Oxford, 1934-71), or, in the case of the more recent discoveries, in the 'Addenda' to the catalogue published by B. Bischoff and V. Brown in 1985. The facsimile of each manuscript provided by the plates in *CLA* were the starting point of my investigation. These plates remain an invaluable research tool, although, inevitably, the dates and origins ascribed by Lowe to the manuscripts have in many cases been revised, in the light of more recent discoveries and research, since the various volumes of the catalogue were published.

An additional resource has been Lowe's original photographs from which many of the *CLA* plates were made, and which are now kept on the open shelves in Duke Humfrey's Library, next to the catalogue itself. Wherever possible I have used these photographs, which show entire pages (and often several pages) from the manuscripts, rather than relying on the small

sections reproduced in the catalogue. I have also consulted other published facsimiles, especially of complete manuscripts, where available, and have examined those original manuscripts which were readily accessible, or of particular interest and unavailable in reproduction. The "List of Manuscripts Cited in the Text" includes only those which I have studied, either in the original or in the *CLA* plates and Lowe's photographs, or other published facsimiles. Bibliographical details of the latter are listed with each manuscript.

As it would have been prohibitively expensive, if not impossible, to provide illustrations of all the manuscripts discussed in the thesis, the five plates included here are intended simply to illustrate some of the general characteristics of the practices under discussion, since a picture can be worth a thousand words in elucidating calligraphic details. The plates are all taken from a collection of three early English copies of grammatical texts, bound in one volume at the end of the eighth century and now located at the Benedictine monastery of St Paul im Lavanttal, Austria (MS 2/1). I have chosen to illustrate this collection because, apart from the plates in *CLA*, no facsimiles of any of the three manuscripts have been published, and they deserve to be better known. Being among the very few surviving early Insular grammar books, they are of considerable palaeographic and textual interest, and of particular relevance to the subject of this thesis. Some of the texts contained in the collection are discussed in Chapters One and Three, and in the Appendix; while aspects of the word separation and abbreviation practice of two of the manuscripts are analysed in Chapters Four and Six.

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

The Articulate Page: Language, Books and the Study of Grammar in Early Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England

I Latin as a non-vernacular Church language in Ireland and England

Tírechán's collection of memoranda concerning St Patrick's missionary travels in Ireland,[1] which he put together from oral and written sources some time in the second half of the seventh century, contains several accounts of a custom of Patrick's whose significance is not immediately clear. As he travelled from place to place, Patrick performed many baptisms, ordained many priests and bishops, and founded many churches; but in addition, it is said, he also wrote out many alphabets. The writing of these alphabets is associated with the sacraments of baptism and ordination:

> And behold, a man came to them, Macc Dregin by name, with seven sons (still) pagan, and he requested the baptism of God from Patrick, and Patrick blessed him and his sons, and he chose one of them, whose name was Macc Erce, and wrote an alphabet for him and blessed him with the blessing for a priest.[2]

He baptized people daily and read the letters to them and wrote

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[1] See *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh*, edited by L. Bieler, with a contribution by F. Kelly. Scriptores Latini Hiberniae, 10 (Dublin, 1979), pp. 122-67.

[2] *Et ecce quidam uir uenit ad illos nomine Macc Dregin cum filiis septem gentilibus et postulauit babtismum Dei a Patricio, et benedixit illum cum filiis et elegit unum filium ex ipsis cui nomen erat Macc Ercae et scripsit elementa et benedixit eum benedictione praespiteri* (Tírechán, 43,1 (references are to chapter and subsection in Bieler's edition)).

> alphabet-tables for them.[3]
>
> For him Patrick wrote an alphabet on the day Senachus was consecrated.[4]

The tradition of Patrick's alphabets is not found only in Tírechán. There is also a poem which credits him with having written three hundred of them alongside his other labours;[5] while according to the *Historia Britonum* the number was three hundred and sixty-five, as many as the churches that he founded.[6] Receiving an alphabet seems to have been seen as part of a rite of initiation into the Church, along with being tonsured and baptized:

> He is tonsured, he is baptized, an alphabet is written for him.
> He reads his psalms in one day, as hath been handed down to me.[7]

What were these alphabets exactly, and what was their significance? Tírechán uses two different words: *elementa* and *abgatoria* (or *abgitorium*). *Abgatoria* is a Latinized form of the Irish *aipgitir*, which in turn is a loan word from Latin *abecedarium* (alphabet); *aipgitir* or *abgitir* is the word used in the Irish accounts. *Elementa* can refer to the alphabet itself (the

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[3] *Babtitzabat cotidie homines et illis litteras legebat ac abgatorias [scribebat]* (Tírechán, 6,1). On the emendation, see note 12 below.

[4] *Cui scripsit Patricius abgitorium in die qua ordinatus est Senachus* (Tírechán, 37,3). Further mentions of this custom in Tírechán are found at: 13,1; 33,1; 45,2; 47,2. Cf. the Irish translations of these passages, e.g.: *Is dó sidi roscrib Patraic aipgitir isindláu roordned epscop Senach*, in *The Tripartite Life of Patrick, with Other Documents Relating to that Saint*, edited with translations by W. Stokes, Rolls Series, 89, 2 vols (London, 1887). I, 112/6-7.

[5] For the poem, from a chronological tract in the Lebor Brecc, see *Tripartite Life of Patrick*, II, 552/1-8.

[6] See *Tripartite Life*, II, 500/12-13.

[7] *Berrthir, baitsithir, scribthir abgitir dó. Légaid asalmu anóenló, ut mihi traditum est* (*Tripartite Life*, I, 190/7-9).

elements of reading), but is also used more generally to mean the first principles or rudiments of any art or science.[9] It has been suggested that these words might refer not literally to the letters of the alphabet written out on a writing tablet or piece of parchment, but rather to some kind of religious primer, the "elements, the ABC, of the Christian doctrine".[9] If the *abgitoria* were indeed texts rather than simply alphabets, they may well have had an alphabetical structure, with each section or stanza beginning with successive letters of the alphabet. The Scriptures furnished models for this type of composition,[10] and such devices were popular with early Irish hymn writers: there are four examples of alphabetical hymns in the late seventh-century Bangor Antiphonary.[11] On the other hand, the accounts in almost every case state that the *abgitoria* or *elementa* were written for, not simply given to, the person concerned, the implication being that the writing occurred on the spot, at the time of the baptism or ordination.[12] In such circumstances, it is much more likely that what was written was something

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[9] See Bieler, p. 217.

[9] Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, I, cliii; Stokes notes the gloss abgitir crabaith for *initium fidei* (Wb, 33c, 13), and refers to a work entitled *Aibgitir in Crabaith* (The Alphabet of Piety), an inventory of Christian virtues and values (see extract, p. xvii).

[10] e.g. the first four chapters of Lamentations, and the abecedarian psalms (notably Psalm 119 in praise of the Torah) which are structured on the Hebrew alphabet. The latter must have been particularly influential, given the important role of the Psalter in Christian education and worship; on the Psalter as the basis of elementary education see P. Riché, *Les écoles et l'enseignement dans l'Occident chrétien de la fin du V^e siècle au milieu du XI^e siècle* (Paris, 1979), p. 223.

[11] See F. E. Warren, *The Antiphonary of Bangor*, Henry Bradshaw Society, 4 and 10 (London, 1893 and 1895), II, 51.

[12] The exception is a case where reading, not writing, is referred to: *Babtitzabat cotidie homines et illis litteras legebat ac abgatorias* (see note 3 above). Stokes suggested the emendation ... *ac abgatorias scribebat*, but notes (*Tripartite Life*, I, cliii) that this insertion is unnecessary if '*abgatorias*' is taken to mean 'religious primers'.

short, like a simple alphabet, rather than a longer poem or primer.[13]

The gift of a Latin alphabet to these candidates for baptism and ordination would have had both a practical and a symbolic value: practical as the first step in the process of learning (or teaching others) to read, and symbolic of the authoritative position of written texts in the Church, which communicated itself to them in Latin through the written word.[14] The tradition of St Patrick's alphabets, whatever precise form these took, draws our attention to the close association which existed, in the minds of those who compiled these accounts in later centuries, between the Church and the written (Latin) word.[15]

It would be an over-simplification to argue that Irish culture before the fifth century was entirely illiterate, and that literacy and knowledge of Latin came only with the arrival of Christianity. The large numbers of Irish burial inscriptions in the Ogam alphabet which are found in Southern Ireland (and, usually with parallel Latin inscriptions in the Roman alphabet, in the Irish-colonized areas of Britain, chiefly the south-west of Wales) are solid evidence that some form of literacy, however limited, existed among the Irish

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[13] Bieler concludes (p. 217) that the words refer to 'alphabet-tables', dismissing as improbable the idea that they may have been abecedarian psalm texts.

[14] Just as the gift of a New Testament to a deacon and a Bible to a priest - a formal part of the Anglican ordination service - in no way implies that those being ordained are unfamiliar with the Scriptures, but is symbolic of the authority on which their ministry is to be based, so the gift of an alphabet need not imply that the recipient was illiterate, but is symbolic of the importance of the written word in the Christian life.

[15] A similar point is made by J. Stevenson, in 'Literacy in Ireland: the evidence of the Patrick dossier in the Book of Armagh', in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, edited by R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 11-35 (pp. 21-22).

from the fourth century at least.[16] Furthermore, it is generally accepted that the inventor of Ogam was familiar with the teachings of the Latin grammarians on the divisions of the Roman alphabet.[17] At least one Irishman, therefore, had some formal knowledge of Latin grammar: such knowledge would have been easily accessible to Irish colonists in Roman and sub-Roman Britain, as the bilingual inscriptions set up by Irish speakers remind us. Trading links constitute another context in which at least a rudimentary knowledge of Latin must have been acquired; recent archaeological research has revealed a degree of material reliance on the Roman empire which suggests that "pre-Christian Ireland was not so culturally isolated and unromanized as has been imagined".[18] In the light of these findings, and of recent work on the Ogam inscriptions, Jackson's long-accepted view that Latin in pre-Christian Ireland was "a foreign language, unfamiliar not only to the illiterate masses but also to those educated in the native learned tradition who set up or could read the Ogams"[19] has been challenged, and a case has been made for the presence of at least some degree of naturalized latinity in

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[16] On the Ogam inscriptions see K. Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain* (Edinburgh, 1953), pp. 151-57.

[17] This Latin classification has usually been described as that of the fourth-century grammarian Donatus (see e.g. Jackson, *Language and History*, pp. 151-52), but the inventor of Ogam appears in fact to have based his classification on the teaching of Varro, as circulating in the late second or early third centuries in the Roman provinces: see A. Ahlqvist, 'The Early Irish Linguist: An Edition of the Canonical Part of the *Auraicept na nÉces*, with Introduction, Commentary and Indices', *Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum*, 73 (1982), 1-81 (pp. 9-10).

[18] A. Harvey, 'Early Literacy in Ireland: The Evidence from Ogam', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 14 (Winter 1987), 1-15 (p. 6); the archaeological evidence is summarized in L. and J. Laing, *Celtic Britain and Ireland, A.D. 200-800: The Myth of the Dark Ages* (Dublin, 1990), pp. 154-61.

[19] 'Notes on the Ogam Inscriptions of Southern Britain', in *The Early Cultures of North-West Europe*, edited by C. Fox and B. Dickins (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 199-213 (p. 207).

Ireland at a very early period.[10]

Nevertheless, in order to participate in the life of the Church, the Irish, and the Anglo-Saxons in their turn, were faced with the need to acquire both latinity and literacy on a scale which, whatever their previous knowledge either of Latin or of reading and writing, must have been unprecedented. Priests and monks needed to learn to read, and to read Latin, in order to be able to read and study the Scriptures and other Christian writings, in order to understand and participate in the liturgy, and for the purposes of communication and administration within the Church. H. I. Marrou referred to St Patrick's alphabet writing as proof of an automatic association between monks and the written word, which in his view was characteristic of the West, even in an environment, like Ireland, "tout à fait étranger à la culture classique".[11] If the Irish associated Christianity with the written word, however, it was not in spite of their remoteness from classical culture, but precisely because of that remoteness. As a people speaking a vernacular language unrelated to Latin, and with its own orally transmitted culture, the Irish were the more inclined to make this association between Latin, the written word and the Church.

When considering the medieval period, we are so accustomed to the idea of Latin as the *lingua franca* of the western Church, existing as a Church language independent of the vernacular language of the people, that we rarely stop to wonder how this came about, or to realize that it need not have been

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[10] By Harvey, in the article cited in note 18; see especially pp. 9 and 13-15.

[11] *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité*, 6th ed., revised (Paris, 1965), p. 476.

so. However, as Dennis Bethell has pointed out, in the East, when whole new peoples had been converted, the Bible and the liturgies were translated into the vernacular, whether Syriac, Armenian, Coptic or Ethiopian.[12] In the West, meanwhile, it was natural that Latin should be used by the Church not only in Rome but also in countries which had formed part of the Roman empire and where, therefore, Latin was still popularly understood. One such country was Britain, where, even after the Roman withdrawal, Latin persisted beside the native Celtic language and continued to be taught and used, not only within the Church.[13] Ireland, however, had never been under Roman occupation; Latin, if not totally unknown there before the conversion to Christianity, cannot have been as widely spoken or understood as it was elsewhere in the West. Why therefore did Patrick introduce Latin into Ireland rather than translating texts and liturgies into Irish? Bethell suggests that perhaps he was conscious of the need for help and support from the British Church during his mission, and therefore so as not to alienate them tried to avoid making any changes. Patrick may also have believed that the convenience, and the theological symbolism,[14] of a universal Church language outweighed the difficulty of having to teach Latin to the Irish and the problem that the uneducated would be entirely excluded from Church life.[15] It may be that there was in fact no conscious choice on Patrick's

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[12] 'The Originality of the Early Irish Church', *JRSAI*, 111 (1981), 36-49.

[13] On Latin in sub-Roman Britain, see Jackson, *Language and History*, pp. 117-21, 247-61; on education in Latin see also the more recent study of M. Lapidge, 'Gildas's Education and the Latin Culture of Sub-Roman Britain', in *Gildas: New Approaches*, edited by Michael Lapidge and David Dumville, Studies in Celtic History, 5 (Woodbridge, 1984), pp. 27-50.

[14] The theological significance was certainly not lost on later Insular writers: see below p. 21 and note 69.

[15] Some of the same arguments have been used in the debate over the use of Latin or the vernacular in the modern Roman Catholic Church.

part; he was simply following the only obvious path, since the Church culture that he knew used only Latin, and he was probably not aware of the Eastern precedents for translation. Whether the result of conscious policy or simply a reflection of the unquestioned identification in the West of Christian culture with the Latin language, the fact remains that in Ireland the language of the Church, which was also the language of books and the written word, was quite distinct from the vernacular.

A similar situation existed in England after the coming of Christianity to that country. The early Anglo-Saxons may have had some limited contact with Latin before the arrival of the Church;[16] nevertheless their vernacular, like Irish, but unlike the languages spoken at this time by the peoples of Gaul or Spain, was a language entirely distinct from Latin, and the use of the latter as the language of the Church after their conversion gave rise to a need to study so as to be able to read, write and speak what was basically a foreign language.[17] As Boniface and other missionaries converted the north German tribes, they introduced there too the idea of the Latin-speaking Church. Bethell argued that there arose a "northern Church" distinct from the southern, mediterranean Church, in which the Irish were a leading influence, and of which one of the principal characteristics was the non-vernacular Church language. In Ireland and England therefore, for the first time in the Christian West, there was an urgent and continuing need for

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[16] On Latin words borrowed into Anglo-Saxon during the settlement period, see Jackson, *Language and History*, pp. 246-256.

[17] In England, as presumably in Ireland too, the initial preaching of the gospel must have been done in the vernacular: Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III,3, describes Aidan, not yet fluent in English, preaching in Irish, and Oswald translating for him into English.

education that would teach a foreign language,[11] since the priests and monks of the first and every succeeding generation needed to be trained to read and write Latin. "An untrained Italian or Spaniard wrote bad Latin; an untrained Irishman could write no Latin at all."[12] One consequence of this situation in early Christian Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England was the enthusiastic embracing of and dependence on the grammatical tradition of antiquity - the *ars grammatica* - as the means of access to the book-based culture of the Church.

II The study of Latin grammar

a Grammatical texts, old and new

Evidence of Insular dependence on the grammatical tradition and enthusiasm for the study of Latin is found in the considerable degree of copying and writing of grammatical texts which occurred during this period. "Whenever grammatical manuals increase in number, it is a sign that there is a direct interest in the study of language, an attempt to put language into scholarly form. Whenever there is such an interest in Latin, this is something of international concern arising from a need to master the language

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[11] See V. Law, *The Insular Latin Grammarians*, Studies in Celtic History. 3 (Woodbridge, 1982: hereafter cited as *ILG*), p. xiii.

[12] B. Löfstedt, *Der hibernolateinische Grammatiker Malsachanus* (Uppsala, 1965), p. 81.

that was *par excellence* the medium for communicating what was written."[10] The seventh and eighth centuries in Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England were such a time as this: a time in which not only were a number of the grammatical works of the classical and late antique world studied and copied, but also many new grammars and commentaries were composed.

Vivien Law, in her survey of Insular grammarians, lists twenty earlier grammars, mainly of late antique origin, known in the British Isles or Insular circles, or allegedly used by Insular authors in the seventh, eighth and early ninth centuries.[11] Of these some of the most widely known were works by Donatus, Isidore of Seville[12] and Priscian.[13] The fourth-century Donatus was the most popular of all; his name had become almost synonymous with grammar itself.[14] Other popular works were the late antique commentaries on Donatus, by Pompeius, Servius and others,[15] which surrounded Donatus's concise, brief text with detailed explanations and exemplifications. All of these works - both the short summaries of

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[10] L. Holtz, 'Irish Grammarians and the Continent in the Seventh Century', in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, edited by H. B. Clarke and M. Brennan (Oxford, 1981), pp. 135-52 (p. 135).

[11] pp. 14-29.

[12] *Etymologiae*, Book I: *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarum siue originum libri XX*, edited by W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols (Oxford, 1911).

[13] His short, elementary treatise *Institutio de nomine, pronomine et verbo* (*GL*, III, 443-56), rather than the much longer *Institutiones*. On knowledge of Priscian, see Chapter Three, pp. 102-03 below.

[14] See Louis Holtz, *Donat et la tradition de l'enseignement grammatical: Étude sur l'*Ars Donati *et sa diffusion (IV^e-IX^e siècle) et édition critique* (Paris, 1981) on the popularity of Donatus's works, and the forms in which they were known, in early Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England.

[15] Pompeius, *Commentum artis Donati* (*GL*, V, 95-312); Servius, *Commentum in artem Donati* (*GL*, IV, 405-48).

grammatical doctrine found in Donatus or in the first book of Isidore's Etymologies, and the painstakingly detailed commentaries like that of Pompeius - were written for pupils who already spoke at least some form of Latin, if not its pure classical form;[16] they were not intended to serve as elementary text books for the teaching of a foreign language. The problem of learning Latin, from elementary to advanced level, which drove the Irish and English to study these traditional works (and thanks to which so many of them have been preserved which might otherwise have been lost), forced them to go further and write their own, since they found that the inherited texts did not quite suit their needs.[17]

All scholars working in the field of early Insular grammars are agreed that a large number of grammatical works were composed or compiled in these islands during this period, and that this is a significant fact for cultural and linguistic history. Unfortunately there is far less agreement on precisely how many grammars were written, at which date, or which can be attributed to Ireland and which to England, not to mention Insular centres on the Continent. As almost all survive only in Continental copies largely from the ninth century or later, and very many are anonymous, giving no external clues to authorship or origin, the identification of Insular texts depends on internal evidence - palaeographical, linguistic, and the recognition of characteristic themes and doctrines. This identification is made the more

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[16] On the nature and purpose of the teaching of grammar in Roman and late antique society, see S. F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome: From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny* (London, 1977), pp. 227-47, and Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation*, pp. 400-11. See also R. A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley and London, 1988), especially his detailed studies of Servius and Pompeius, pp. 139-97.

[17] The point is made by Law, *ILG*, p. 106

difficult by the "technical, impersonal and objective form of grammatical manuals and their apparently timeless quality".[8] Holtz recommends caution: he identifies "at least twelve major pre-Carolingian grammatical texts from the general area of these islands"; his estimate grows if one includes the works on metrics which some Anglo-Saxon writers produced.[9] Law does not find this estimate cautious enough, however; several of the texts to which Holtz confidently ascribes an Insular origin she would rather place on the Continent,[10] or at least in an Insular centre on the Continent.[11]

On the question of distinguishing Irish from English products, scholars are also at odds. Holtz argues for an Irish origin for many anonymous texts from internal evidence, and Bischoff also emphasizes the Irish contribution.[12] Law, however, reacting against what she describes as "the alluring theory of Ireland as the repository for countless rare texts",[13] argues instead for an English or Continental origin for many.[14] These disagreements must be seen within the context of a continuing (and often

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[8] Holtz, 'Irish grammarians', p. 136.

[9] ibid., pp. 136-7.

[10] e.g. the *Ars ambrosiana* and the *Ars Asporii* (see *ILG*, pp. 93-97 and 35-41).

[11] A Continental location "cannot be ruled out" for the anonymous commentary *Ad Cuimnanum*, argues Law (p. 90); but see below, p. 18.

[12] See 'Il monachesimo Irlandese nei suoi rapporti col continente', *Mittelalt. Stud.*, I, 195-205, especially pp. 198-99.

[13] p. 97.

[14] For example she argues that Virgilius Maro Grammaticus, concerning whose origin many different hypotheses exist, may have been based in Britain; and that the *Ars Bernensis* was produced in Anglo-Saxon circles on the Continent (see *ILG*, p. 51 and pp. 74-5). On Virgilius, see M. Herren, 'Some New Light on the Life of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus', *PRIA*, 79C (1979), 27-71.

somewhat partisan) debate concerning the characteristics and merits of Irish culture on the one hand and Anglo-Saxon on the other.[15] However, the distinction between the products of Irish and Anglo-Saxon grammarians has little meaning until perhaps the end of the seventh century, or for as long as the Irish influence persisted in certain Anglo-Saxon centres and English scholars continued to study under Irish teachers both in England and in Ireland.[16]

For my present purposes it is sufficient to note that both in Ireland and in England new grammars were being written. The necessity of learning Latin caused grammatical studies to flourish and generated new texts during a period when elsewhere in the West education was at a very low ebb; in Merovingian Gaul between the sixth and the eighth centuries not a single grammatical manual was written.[17] The new grammatical writings cover a wide range: elementary grammars like those of Boniface[18] and Tatwine[19] (early

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[15] See also Law's 'Notes on the Dating and Attribution of Anonymous Latin Grammars of the Early Middle Ages', *Peritia*, 1 (1982), 250-67, criticizing the criteria used by Löfstedt (in *Der hibernolateinische Grammatiker Malsachanus*) to establish Irish authorship; and Holtz's critical response to her arguments in 'Les grammairiens hiberno-latins étaient-ils des Anglo-Saxons?', *Peritia*, 2 (1983), 170-84.

[16] See Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III,3 and 27. Rather than making a straightforward distinction between Irish and English products, it is much more important to try to distinguish between the different centres within Anglo-Saxon England; but this is not an easy matter: see Law's attempt in 'The Study of Latin Grammar in Eighth-Century Southumbria', *ASE*, 12 (1983), 43-71. More studies on the nature of the teaching at individual centres are needed, like those of M. Lapidge on the school at Canterbury in the seventh century ('The school of Theodore and Hadrian', *ASE*, 15 (1986), 45-72; 'The Study of Greek at the School of Canterbury in the Seventh Century', in *The Sacred Nectar of the Greeks: The Study of Greek in the West in the Early Middle Ages*, edited by M. W. Herren and S. A. Brown, Kings College London Medieval Studies, 2 (London, 1988), pp. 169-89).

[17] Holtz, 'Irish grammarians', p. 137.

[18] *Ars grammatica*, edited by G. J. Gebauer and B. Löfstedt, *Bonifatii (Vynfreth) Ars grammatica*, CCSL, 133B (Turnhout, 1980), 15-99.

eighth-century England); exegetical works, commentaries on Donatus, like the anonymous work dedicated to one Cuimnanus, and the *Ars Malsachani*;[50] the metrical works written by Aldhelm[51] and by Bede, and the latter's *De orthographia*.[52] Holtz, Law, Irvine and others have written in some detail on the content of these works, showing how they relate to the inherited tradition of the *ars grammatica* on the one hand and to the needs of the contemporary situation on the other. In Chapter Three I shall examine certain specific aspects of the linguistic doctrines in these and the earlier grammars, as they relate to the activities of scribes copying Latin texts; here I am concerned simply to show that the extensive copying of old and composition of new grammars during this period implies both the recognition of a basic need for linguistic instruction and an enthusiasm for further study of Latin. The exegetical grammatical works in particular reveal an interest not only in Latin but in other languages, especially Greek and

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[50] *Ars*, edited by M. De Marco, in *Tatuini opera omnia*, edited by M. de Marco and F. Glorie, CCSL 133, 2 vols (Turnhout, 1968), I, 1-93.

[50] The latter (more correctly entitled *Congregatio Salcani filii de uerbo* - see Law, *Insular Grammarians*, p. 90) is edited by Löfstedt, *Der hibernolateinische Grammatiker Malsachanus*, 194-260. No edition of *Ad Cuimnanum* has yet been published; it is to be hoped that the recent death of Professor B. Bischoff will not prevent or greatly delay the eagerly-awaited appearance of the edition on which he has been working in collaboration with Dr B. Taeger. On the dates and origins of both of these texts, see below pp. 17-18 and notes 59 and 61.

[51] *De metris et enigmatibus ac pedum regulis*, edited by R. Ehwald, in *Aldhelmi Opera*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi, 15 (Berlin, 1919), pp. 59-204.

[52] *De arte metrica* and *De schematibus et tropis*, edited by C. B. Kendall, in *Bedae Venerabilis Opera*, [V]I, *Opera didascalica*, 1, edited by C. W. Jones *et al.*, CCSL, 123A (Turnhout, 1975), pp. 59-171; *De orthographia*, edited by C. W. Jones, ibid., pp. 1-57. See M. Irvine, 'Bede the Grammarian and the Scope of Grammatical Studies in Eighth-Century Northumbria', *ASE*, 15 (1986), 15-44. On the *De orthographia*, see further below, Chapter Three, p. 121 and note 66.

Hebrew, and a curiosity about language in general.[53] This is seen in a tendency to provide Greek and Hebrew translations for certain terms;[54] a liking for lists of synonyms; and in such questions as the following:

> In eo quod dixit "latina non sunt" cuius ergo linguae sunt? Id est, partem per totum dixit, quasi dixisset "nullius linguae sunt".[55]

More direct evidence for this enthusiasm for grammatical study is to be found, however, in the prologue to the Donatus commentary *Ad Cuimnanum*, which affords a rare insight into the contemporary understanding of the role and importance of the *ars grammatica*.

b The prologue to *Ad Cuimnanum*

This anonymous treatise on the *Ars maior* of Donatus,[56] dedicated to an

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[53] This is also a feature of Insular, especially Irish, biblical exegesis: see R. E. McNally, '"Tres linguae sacrae" in Early Irish Biblical Exegesis', *Theological Studies*, 19 (1958), 395-403; P. Grosjean, 'Sur quelques exégètes irlandais du vii^e^ siècle', *Sacris Erudiri*, 7 (1955), 67-98; B. Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte in der Geschichte des lateinischen Exegese im Frühmittelalter', in *Mittelalt. Stud.*, I, 205-73.

[54] For examples of the use of the *tres linguae sacrae* in grammatical texts, see Bischoff, 'Das griechische Element in der abendländischen Bildung des Mittelalters', reprinted in *Mittelalt. Stud.*, II, 246-75, especially pp. 249-51; on the extent of knowledge of Greek shown by the glossators of grammatical texts, see A. Ahlqvist, 'Notes on the Greek Materials in the St. Gall Priscian (Codex 904)', in *The Sacred Nectar of the Greeks: The Study of Greek in the West in the Early Middle Ages*, edited by M. W. Herren and S. A. Brown, Kings College London Medieval Studies, 2 (London, 1988), pp. 195-214.

[55] From the unedited text known from its incipit as *Quae sunt quae omnem ueritatem scripturae commendant*; for this example and other indications of linguistic curiosity in the exegetical grammars, see Law, *ILG*, pp. 83-85.

[56] The text has been discussed by Holtz in *Donat et la tradition*, pp. 267-71, 284-94, 311-12 and in 'Irish grammarians', pp. 141-142; by Law, *ILG*, pp. 87-90; and the prologue in particular by Bischoff, in 'Eine verschollene Einteilung der Wissenschaften', *Mittelalt. Stud.*, I, 273-88,

unidentified Cuimnanus,[57] was composed no earlier than the mid-seventh century[58] and survives in a unique copy written in Anglo-Saxon cursive minuscule no later than the first half of the eighth century, and located at Murbach by the end of that century.[59] Bischoff argued that the dedication to Cuimnanus suggests that the text originated in an Irish milieu, and that the language and nature of the work are characteristically Irish;[60] he believed it to have been written in the second half of the seventh century, judging by its similarity in method and sources to other works datable to the

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and by Irvine, 'Bede the Grammarian', especially pp. 19-29. As was mentioned above, no edition of the text has yet been published, though one was in preparation by Bischoff before his death; Irvine edits a short section of the prologue (foll. 23ᵛᵃ-23ᵛᵇ) in an appendix to his article, pp. 43-44.

[57] Bischoff detected the dedication, which is buried towards the end of the text (fol. 41ᵛᵃ) at the close of the chapter on prepositions: *sciensque Cuimnanum cuius nomini hanc dedicaui expossitiunculam philosophum esse magis quam philocomphum rationis conpendium appetere non dubitaui melior est enim inserta prodentia quam stulta loquacitas rerum enim studia et causas nosse prodest non ornamenta uerborum*. Law (*ILG*, p. 86) notes that the terms *philosophus* and *philocomphus* are opposed and defined in the text *Quae sunt quae*, which appears to have been one of the sources used by the anonymous author.

[58] The *terminus post quem* is provided by the author's use of the works of Isidore.

[59] St Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek 2/1 (foll. 21-42); *CLA*, X, 1452. In *CLA* this manuscript is dated, along with the other two bound with it (1451 and 1453), as s. viii; but Bischoff ('Eine verschollene Einteilung', p. 282) refines the dating of the *Ad Cuimnanum* copy to the first half of the century. The script of this manuscript (see Plate 3), with its pointed and compressed ductus and its many ligatures (in which the distinctive e with reversed bow occurs frequently) and variant letter forms, is a form of T. J. Brown's "Phase I cursive minuscule" (as described in 'The Irish Element in the Insular System of Scripts to circa A.D. 850' in *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, edited by H. Löwe, 2 vols (Stuttgart, 1982), I, 101-19 (p. 112)), datable examples of which are of late seventh- or early eighth-century origin.

[60] 'Eine verschollene Einteilung', especially p. 282.

period before A.D. 700.[61] Law proposes a wider date range of mid-seventh to mid-eighth century, and while not challenging the Irish connection outright, suggests that an Irish milieu on the Continent cannot be ruled out.[62] Considering that the only extant manuscript is English, not Continental, this last suggestion seems an unnecessary complication, requiring an additional stage in the transmission of the text as it returned from the Continent to be copied in England such a short time after it had been written. It is more reasonable to suppose that the text may have been written, if not in Ireland itself, then in an English centre with strong links with Ireland, perhaps in Northumbria or in the South West.

The prologue to this commentary consists of a long, elaborate and carefully structured definition and defence of grammatical study, which sets the *ars grammatica* within a general academic and theological framework, and argues that it is the key to the knowledge preserved in texts and thus to an understanding of the truth of the Catholic faith. The value of this prologue, in giving a glimpse of late seventh- (or early eighth-) century Insular attitudes to grammatical study, has been recognized by all who have studied the text. Irvine has shown that much of the material in the prologue is identical in substance and often in wording to several short, anonymous treatises on the *ars grammatica* and other arts, which are found in four

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[61] The *Ars Malsachani* and *Ars Ambrosiana*, which Bischoff and Holtz argue can be no later than the second half of the seventh century because they contain some Old Irish glosses, dated to *c.*700; Law, however, argues that the glosses in Malsachanus, and possibly in the *Ars Ambrosiana*, were contained in the source material used by the writers of these treatises and incorporated along with the Latin text into the new works, which must in that case have been written after 700 (see 'Malsachanus Reconsidered: A Fresh Look at a Hiberno-Latin Grammarian', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 1 (1981), 83-93, and *ILG*, p. 94).

[62] *ILG*, pp. 87-90.

grammatical miscellanies in Continental manuscripts, all later than the copy of *Ad Cuimnanum*.[13] Although the dates of these later compilations mean that in theory the *Ad Cuimnanum* prologue could have been their source, the correspondences of wording and arrangement of the treatises in some of the later copies by contrast with the earlier prologue point rather to a common source, or sources, lying behind both.

Irvine suggests that the author of *Ad Cuimnanum* (known as the Anonymus) was drawing on a collection of anonymous compilations and prefaces on the subject of grammar and the arts, which was being transmitted in Insular circles around or before 700, and was very probably Insular in origin.[14] The prologue, however, unlike the later miscellanies, is not simply a collection of separate treatises copied one after another; the author has rearranged and expanded the material, changing the wording of his sources from dialogue form to direct speech,[15] and weaving in information from other unidentified sources along with arguments of his own to form a coherent and continuous text. As Irvine's study concentrates principally on the material found also in the later miscellanies, and does not give an overview of the structure and argument of the prologue, it will be useful before commenting

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[13] Oxford, Bodleian Library Add. C. 144 (central Italy, s. xi[1]); Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Pal. lat. 1746 (Lorsch, s. viii/ix); Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, IV.A.34 (Luxeuil, s. ix[1]); Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 13025 (Corbie, s. ix[1]); see Irvine, pp. 19-20.

[14] See pp. 19 and 22-24.

[15] Compare the beginning of the section on the division of the arts (fol. 21[1]):

Quae trivarie dividuntur, idest aut ars animi aut corporis aut animi simul corporis ...

with the wording of the parallel passage in the treatise Irvine calls *Nunc de grammatica dicamus* (see p. 23):

Artium genera quot sunt? Tria. Quae? Animi tantum, corporis tantum, animi simul et corporis ...

further on these to outline its contents in more detail.

The prologue falls into five sections; in the first, after an invocation of the Trinity and a request for Christ's aid in the composition of the work, the author briefly explains the purpose (and acknowledges the sources) of the treatise which follows. It is to consist of *glossemata* (glosses) on three-fold *latinitas*, which will explain the rules of the grammarian Donatus with the help of other Latin grammarians. *Latinitas* is defined as *obseruatio incorrupte loquendi secundum romanam linguam*, and is based upon *ratio* (the technical rules or principles established by the grammarians), *auctoritas* (the authority of the writers of the past), and *consuetudo* (custom or usage). This definition is based on that of the late antique grammarian Maximus Victorinus,[16] which the author expands by explaining the three-fold sources of latinity in more detail.[17]

The second section, which is by far the longest, deals with the origin and division of the arts, beginning with the statement that all arts, languages and forms of knowledge were originally contained in Adam.[18] The author first traces the gradual diversification and division of *artes* or

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[16] See *GL*, VI, 189/1-7. This definition is also found in the treatise *Nunc de grammatica dicamus*; see Irvine, p. 28.

[17] *Ratione scilicet secundum tecnicos, idest secundum eos qui artes tradunt ut sunt grammatici, quorum est princeps idem de quo sermo disponitur donatus. auctoritate autem secundum ueterum lectionum dicta, idest aut secundum poetas ut fuit uirgilius et alii, aut etiam secundum antiquarios scilicet historiarum scriptores. consuetudine uero quae et ipsa duobus modis constat, uidelicet imperitorum quibus barbarismi adscribuntur aut eorum qui medie loquuntur* (fol. 21").

[18] *Sed sciendum est omnes artes et omnes linguas et omnes scientias primitus fuisse ac diuitius in Adam, qui spiritum sapientiae habuisse scribitur* (fol. 21"). There being no passages parallel to this in the Continental miscellanies, Irvine suggests that this section is based on a lost treatise; see p. 23.

technical skills, drawing on Genesis 4:21-22; the invention of music, of metal working, and of the skills needed to build the ark. He refers to the division of languages at the time of the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9), commenting that what the pride of the sons of the first Adam divided, the humility of the sons of the second Adam (Christ) has reunited,[11] but also showing interest in the diversity and number of languages resulting from this division (traditionally 72, the number of the daughters of Adam). Diversity of race and language is equated with diversity of *artes*; and the artes are classified into three types - mental (*ars animi*), physical (*ars corporis*), and arts both physical and mental. Examples of each are given: grammar is included under *artes animi* along with philosophy, law, rhetoric and others.[10]

Having thus traced the *artes* from their origin to their full development, the author gives a similar account of *sapientia*, which was ingrafted (*inserta*) in Adam, displayed in Solomon, and then discovered by the Greeks who claimed it for their own. It was eventually divided by Plato into three parts: physics, ethics and logic, or natural, moral and rational philosophy. The bulk of this section is devoted to detailed accounts of these three parts of philosophy, especially to the seven subdivisions of physics: arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy, astrology, mechanics and

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[11] A reference to Latin as the language of the universal Church. Cf. Bede, *Expositio actuum*, II,4: "The unity of languages which the pride of Babylon scattered is gathered together again by the humility of the Church", and his commentary on the Genesis passage in the *Hexaemeron* (PL, 91, 123-128). Bede shows less interest in the diversity of languages than the Anonymus, being more concerned with the pride that caused it. On the interest in the Babel story shown by Irish vernacular grammarians, see Chapter Two, p. 55 and note 29.

[10] This division of the arts is also found in *Nunc de grammatica*; see note 65 above.

medicine.[11] The author does not content himself simply with defining each of these, but provides a substantial example of the content of each discipline.[12] This second section ends with the argument that all these different skills and forms of knowledge are to be found within every rational human being, though only distinct and perceptible in a few. An analogy, attributed to Augustine, of a person in a dark house full of precious things yet unaware of the treasures around him unless a light is brought in, is quoted to sanction the view that man contains within himself all kinds of knowledge of which he remains unconscious unless illuminated through teaching.[13]

The citing of Augustine links the second section with the third, which is concerned with the use of these different kinds of knowledge, and in particular with whether grammar should be used by the Church. The author argues that some branches of wisdom are appropriate to gentiles, some to the Catholic Church, and some to both. To defend the last part of this statement, Augustine's well-known trope is quoted: just as the gold and silver carried away from the Egyptians was used by the Jews in the building of the Temple, so the arts pertaining to the interpretation of scripture

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[11] This section is the subject of Bischoff's article, 'Eine verschollene Einteilung'; it corresponds to the text beginning *Qui primus philosophi*, found in the Oxford and Vatican miscellanies, but the version in *Ad Cuimnanum* is much fuller. The material is derived originally from Isidore's *Differentiae*, II,39 (PL, 83, 93-94) and related matter in the *Etymologiae*. See also M. Smyth, 'The Physical World in Seventh-Century Hiberno-Latin texts', *Peritia*, 5 (1986), 201-34.

[12] Under arithmetic, for example, occurs a lengthy discussion with numerous examples of perfect numbers, that is, those equal to the sum of their parts: e.g. six is divisible by one, two and three, which add up to form six (21''-22'').

[13] *Ita homo totum scientiae genus habens in se non sentit nisi inluminetur a docente* (fol. 22''); cf. Augustine, *Soliloquies*, I,8,15 (PL, 32, 877).

should not be rejected just because they are derived from the gentiles.[14] The author then lists examples of philosophers and rhetors who converted to Christianity and put their skills to the service of the Church. Citing parts of Jerome's commentary on the Epistle of Paul to Titus, the author raises the question of the truth in relation to the grammatical art. The knowledge achieved through grammar (which is the knowledge of the rules for correct speech - *rationem recte loquendi*) is true in itself though this is not religious truth (*veritas quae non habet pietatem*). The truth of grammar lies in its ideal of correcting speech (*veritas est grammatica ars pertinens ad emendatione loquendi*).[15] though this true art can be put to the service either of Holy Scripture or of the lies and fables of the poets; for grammatical knowledge is a kind of outer covering, like a vessel ready to receive any sort of liquid.[16]

Continuing this distinction between the container and the contained, the author quotes a saying attributed to Origen: *Nolumus uerba considerari sed res*. This leads into an attempt to show that statements from various Church Fathers which could be interpreted as criticisms of grammar are in fact nothing of the sort. Origen's comment was made not to criticize but

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[14] *In his autem omnibus generibus sapientiae quaedam religioni catholicae quaedam gentili conueniunt quaedam utrique, quia scriptura sancta ut ait Agustinus non ideo debet suas iecere partes quod eas sibi gentiles uendicant: auram namque argentumque Aegyptiorum commotato domino in aedificationem tabernaculi Dei adsumptum est* (fol. 22[v]); see Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, II,40-42 (PL, 34, 63-66).

[15] This part of the prologue corresponds with a brief note in the Oxford and Vatican compilations, *Est grammatica ars veritas*, for which Irvine knows of no sources; see p. 21.

[16] *Quia scientia exterior est more uassis omni parati liquori ab eo bibere uolenti* (fol. 23[r]). According to Holtz ('Irish grammarians', p. 141) this also is an Augustinian argument.

"fearing lest he had erred in speaking".[17] Sayings of Jerome and Augustine that appear derogatory are similarly explained away; the author emphasizes instead Jerome's approval of grammar by pointing out that Jerome was happy to admit that he was a pupil of Donatus, and described himself as having been classed among grammarians and philosophers almost from his cradle.[18] By approving Donatus, Jerome approves all grammarians: to confirm this point, the author quotes a well known passage of Gregory which states that the words of divine revelation should not be constrained by the rules of Donatus:

> Donatum autem palam est esse grammaticorum principem, dicendo Grigorius romanus non constringam inquit uerba caelestis oraculi sub regula Donati. (fol. 23[v])

Gregory's words have been interpreted by some modern scholars as a rejection of the study of grammar in general, rather than as an objection to its misapplication in certain circumstances.[19] But the Anonymus is not concerned here with Gregory's objection; his words are used simply as authoritative proof that Donatus is recognized as the prince of all grammarians, and that therefore his name is synonymous with grammar.

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[17] *Non quasi uituperans grammaticam dicit artem sed timens ne forsitan in loquendo erraret* (fol. 23[v]).

[18] See Holtz, 'Irish grammarians' p.141, on the original context of Jerome's statements, which incidentally help to establish the dates of Donatus's career. This information about Jerome and Donatus is found also in the text *Incipit interrogatio de grammatica*, contained in the Paris miscellany, and in a related treatise *Quot sunt quae* in London, British Library, Cotton Cleopatra A.vi, fol. 37[r]; see Irvine, pp. 20–22.

[19] The original context of Gregory's statement was in a letter accompanying a copy of his *Moralia in Iob*: *Quia indignum vehementer existimo, ut uerba caelestis oraculi restringam sub regulis Donati* (*Moralia, epistola missoria*, V; PL, 75, 516b). For discussion of Gregory's attitude and its modern interpretations, see Fontaine, *Isidore de Seville et la culture classique dans l'Espagne wisigothique*, 3 vols (Paris, 1959 and 1983), I, 33–36 and supplementary bibliography, III, 1028–9.

Having thus disposed of the opposition to grammar in general, the author proceeds with a technical introduction to the particular grammatical text which is the subject of his treatise. He begins with the three topics under which the composition of a work was traditionally discussed: the *locus*, *tempus* and *persona*.[10] The discussion which follows concerning the correct place for a grammarian to begin his art is a traditional concern among the late antique commentators[11], who are clearly the sources here; the author concludes that the proper place to begin is with the eight parts of speech, which are the particular domain of grammarians, as the order of Donatus's works shows; for Donatus first wrote the *Ars minor* on the eight parts of speech, and then the *Ars maior* which deals with voice, letters and other questions as well as the parts of speech in greater detail.[12] As he has been discussing what subject matter is proper to grammarians, this seems to the author an appropriate place to define the functions of a grammarian:

> In hoc nihilomino loco oportunae est interrogandum quot sunt officia grammatico conuenientia. Respondendum iiii. Quae sunt? Lectio, enarratio, emendatio, iudicium. (fol. 23[r])

This traditional definition of the four processes of which grammatical study

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[10] The author appears to have used as his source for this passage the text *Quae sunt quae*, an introduction to Donatus's *Ars minor* (see Irvine, pp. 21-22; Law, *ILG*, pp. 85-86).

[11] e.g. Pompeius, *GL*, V, 95/1-96/18.

[12] *De octo autem orationis partibus disputare hoc proprie est grammatici. Huius sententiae ueritatem testatur ordo regulas scribendi Donati grammatici, qui a proprio suo inchoans, id est ab octo partibus orationis quas artes minores uocari non est incautum, suum et nomen et officium sagacissime ostendit, et conuenienter praetermitens ea quae aliorum essent propria aut commonia omnibus, quae suis artibus maioribus praeponens, id est secundae aeditioni* (fol. 23[r]). Cf. Pompeius: *Nam de partibus tractare, hoc grammatici est. Idcirco etiam Donatus inde inchoavit, ab ipsis partibus. Perite et callide exclusit omnia illa de voce, de littera, quae aut propria essent aliorum aut communia multorum, non tamen essent ipsius propria* (*GL*, V. 96/14-17).

is composed appears in various forms in the works of late antique grammarians.[11] *Lectio* was the process of identifying the components of the written text so that it might be read with "proper pronunciation according to the requirements of accent and of meaning"; *enarratio* was exegesis, interpreting the subject matter of the text, and commenting upon vocabulary and rhetorical figures; *emendatio* was *errorum reprehensio*, the process of identifying and correcting the errors that have crept into the text in the course of transmission; and *iudicium* was the "approval of things well said", expressing a judgement on the text in aesthetic or moral terms. Here the definition is given in an expanded version, with particular attention paid to the four subdivisions of *lectio*: *accentus*, *discretio*, *pronuntiatio* and *modulatio*.[12]

In the final section of this long prologue, having thus made clear the technical function of grammar, the author raises again the question of its place within Christian society. For the benefit of those who are ignorant or disdainful of the *ars grammatica*, a letter of Dynamius the rhetor is quoted, which describes and warns against the dire effects of neglecting learning.[13] The necessity of a grammatical training within the Church is then exemplified

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[11] e.g. in Maximus Victorinus (*GL*, VI 188/6-23) and Diomedes (*GL*, I, 299-529).

[12] This section, which is edited by Irvine, pp. 43-44, corresponds to the treatise *De officiis grammaticae artis* which survives in the Oxford compilation. The author appears to have incorporated this treatise into his prologue with only slight modifications; see Irvine, p. 26. A shorter version of the definition of the four *officia* is found as an addition, in a Anglo-Saxon hand, to the last page of a ninth-century Insular (possibly Welsh) copy of Bede's *De temporum ratione* now in Kansas, Missouri (in the collection mentioned by L. E. Voigts, 'A Fragment of an Anglo-Saxon Liturgical Manuscript at the University of Missouri', *ASE*, 17 (1988), 83-92).

[13] fol. 23". The letter is found also in the Vatican collection; see Irvine, p. 24.

in a discussion, drawn from the second book of Isidore's *De ecclesiasticis officiis*,[16] of the skills required in a *lector*, the minor office which involved reading aloud and preaching on the scriptures. These skills - knowledge of syllables, accents, and where to put the pauses in a sentence - are exactly those entailed in *lectio*, and in no way can anyone become a lector without knowledge of grammar.[17] Finally, the author reminds us, the language of latinity is the means by which one acquires knowledge of God. To those who censure the desire to read and know this language[18] he addresses the concluding sentence of the prologue, which argues for the integral relationship between means and end, or container and content, in a mounting crescendo moving from the material to the spiritual, with the inseparability of grammar and wisdom as the crowning example:

> Whoever loves wine should not despise the bowl, whoever loves the kernel should not despise the shell, whoever loves oil should not despise the lees, whoever loves milk should not despise the cow, whoever loves the ploughed field should not despise the ox, whoever loves faith should not despise works, whoever loves God should not despise his neighbour, whoever loves sons should not despise his wife, and whoever desires wisdom should not abhor the art of grammar, without which no-one is able to be learned and wise.[19]

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[16] II,11 (*de lectoribus*); PL, 83, 791-2.

[17] *Lector in aeclesia catholica ordinari non finitur nisi qui legere et scire potest syllabas et accentuum rationem et species et naturas dictionum et discretiones sententiarum* (fol. 23[v]).

[18] *Sunt enim nonnulli expertes scripturae uituperatores tamen legere et scire uolentium mundelam linguam latinitatis per quam scientiam Dei discere solent* (fol. 23[v]).

[19] *Qui amat uina non execret crateras et qui nucleos non crinos qui oleum non amorcam qui lac non uaccas qui segites non boues qui fidem non opus qui Deum non proximum qui filios non coniugum et qui sapientiam desiderat non orreat artem grammaticam sine qua nemo eruditus et sapiens esse potest* (fol. 23[v]).

One remarkable feature of this prologue is the large amount of space within it devoted to the outline of the divisions of philosophy. Bischoff sees this as "the attempt of an Irish teacher to ... give some account of the content [of each subdivision] at a time when literature known in Ireland was limited to what chance had brought to the island".[10] This part of the introduction is of great interest, both because of the light it sheds on the extent of the knowledge and of interest in the physical sciences in Ireland at that time, and because of the possible relationship between this scheme of division and those found in contemporary and later writers.[11] Yet at first sight it is not clear why this material has found its way into the introduction to a grammatical commentary, for very little of it is concerned specifically with the art of grammar. It is not enough to recognize that this section of the prologue is an incorporation of a separate tract on the divisions of philosophy;[12] the question remains as to why the author thought it appropriate to include such a lengthy treatise as part of his *apologia* for the study of grammar, when grammar is only one of the various branches of knowledge which it describes.

The answer lies in our author's view of grammar as the means of access to all wisdom. Just as the noun is rightly placed first in the list of the eight parts of speech, since *nemo enim potest discere omnem artem cuius nomen non nouerit* (fol. 24[v]), so grammar necessarily precedes all other *artes*, providing the necessary skills with which to approach them. The classical

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[10] 'Eine verschollene Einteilung', p. 283.

[11] On similar passages in Aldhelm and Alcuin, and their possible sources, see Bischoff, 'Einteilung', pp. 276-82.

[12] See note 71 above, and Law, *ILG*, p. 88, n. 40.

system of grammatical education survived the Dark Ages, as Holtz puts it,[13] "entre les mains de Donat"; within the hands of Donatus also were carried other branches of learning, as grammar became the custodian of all *scientia*. Grammar holds the key to the study of other disciplines, since these other disciplines are transmitted through written language which is the proper concern of grammar, and therefore no branch of learning is irrelevant to a grammarian. The *Etymologiae* and other works of Isidore of Seville exemplify the encyclopaedist tendency of an author whose methodology and categories of thought are grammatically based.[14] Isidore's influence on the author of *Ad Cuimnanum* may be observed not only in the prologue but also within the commentary, where Donatus's text is used as a springboard from which the author can leap into diverse subjects, which include rhetoric and even arithmetic as happily as grammar itself.[15]

For the Anonymus, the *ars grammatica* provides the framework within which all other kinds of knowledge, and ultimately the knowledge of God, can be pursued. Its all-encompassing nature is the result of its concern with the processes of reading, interpreting and preserving texts. The author calls his work an *expossitio* [sic] *latinitatis*, and *latinitas* is the first word which he defines. The word stands for more than simply the Latin language; it entails a tradition of authenticity in language, derived from

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[13] *Donat*, p. 226.

[14] See Fontaine, especially I, 37-47.

[15] e.g. in the first chapter of the treatise (fol. 23[v]) the analysis of Donatus's sentence '*Partes orationis sunt octo*' begins with an excursus into arithmetic, discussing the nature of the number eight. Next the continuation of the sentence (being a list, without intervening conjunctions, of the eight parts) is subjected to a rhetorical analysis: we are told that this sentence is an example of the figure *dialiton*, the traditional definition and example of which then follow.

grammatical rules, custom and the authority of past writers. Because *latinitas* presupposes the vesting of authority in written texts, it also entails the means of interpreting those texts, and of guaranteeing their authenticity by preserving them from error in transmission.[16] *Lectio*, *enarratio*, and *emendatio* are essential processes within a Christian culture, in so far as the reading and understanding of the Scriptures are seen as the means to knowledge of God.[17] The continuing necessity of grammatical study as the means to this spiritual end is the more deeply appreciated and eagerly accepted by the Anonymus because without it he and his fellow Irish or Anglo-Saxons would have no ability to read or understand the language of *latinitas*. Grammar was not simply the means of acquiring correct or polished language; it was the key to reading and understanding.[18]

Can the understanding of the function of grammatical study expressed by the author of the prologue be taken as typical of the outlook of his contemporaries, and used as a guide to the cultural assumptions of the period? Irvine believes it can, and uses the prologue as a way of setting

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[16] See Irvine, pp. 26-29 on the relationship between *latinitas* and the *scientia interpretandi* as expressed in the prologue.

[17] Thus the biblical commentaries of the Church Fathers are an example of *enarratio*, and Jerome's work in producing the Vulgate represents the process of *emendatio*. Augustine in *De doctrina christiana*, especially in the prologue, 4-5 (PL, 34, 17), and in Book II, argues for the necessity of grammar in Christian education. On the extent to which Augustine's exegesis betrays his grammatical training, see Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*, Bibliotheque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 145 (Paris, 1938), especially pp. 422-44. See Fontaine, *Isidore*, I, 31-36 (and supplementary bibliography III, 1027) for a convenient summary of the attitudes of early Christian writers to the study of grammar; for a different emphasis, see Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, pp. 70-95.

[18] On the study of grammar as the means to a spiritual end in the early Western monastic tradition, see J. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, translated by C. Misrahi, second edition (New York, 1974), pp. 13-30.

Bede's grammatical treatises in context."[99] Holtz, however, has argued that such a full and elaborate defence of the study of grammar implies a climate of suspicion or opposition towards the subject. He envisages a context of debate between rigid monastics who regarded with suspicion all forms of study not directed to Holy Scripture, and those, including our author, "who have understood that knowledge, represented by grammar, is a necessity for a deeper appreciation even of Holy Scripture and for its transmission".[100] Debate there may well have been; my reading of the prologue, however, suggests to me an attitude of confidence rather than defensiveness. Consider the way in which the author assembles his quotations from the Church Fathers which could potentially be read as criticisms of grammatical study, and in particular his silence regarding the implied criticism in Gregory's statement, which he quotes to prove a quite separate point. He would surely have restricted himself to mentioning positive statements by Church authorities, not their criticisms, if he were facing strong opposition. This confidence suggests that the author was far from being entirely alone in his views; he appears to have been working in an environment that allowed open discussion of such matters.

The kinds of sources apparently used by the Anonymus are another indication that his concerns were not unique but shared by others; the dissemination in Insular circles of a collection or collections of short treatises, prefaces and notes in support of the study of grammar, which Irvine postulates to explain the textual tradition, presupposes a climate of

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[99] "Bede's grammatical works are best understood in the cultural context provided by the outline of grammatical methodology in the Anonymus's preface" (p. 29).

[100] 'Irish Grammarians', p. 142.

much interest in the subject.[101] The continuation of this interest can be observed from marks in the margin of the manuscript of *Ad Cuimnanum*, which show that the prologue was being read and studied by later readers. There are frequent marks picking out the beginnings of sections and of significant quotations; these appear to be by the original scribe, and may have been copied from the exemplar. Other marks, which appear to have been added later by a different hand or hands, draw attention to the divisions of philosophy, the definitions of *latinitas* and of the functions of grammar, and to several of the quotations from Jerome. By one of the latter, the reader has written *laus artis*;[102] from the script this would appear to have been written on the Continent in the late eighth or ninth century. The author's interest in the traditional definition of grammar and in the praise of this and other *artes* was evidently shared by later readers, as well as by some, if not all, of his contemporaries.

Another Insular grammarian who also wrote a preface to his grammar, the Anglo-Saxon Boniface,[103] was somewhat more cautious in his recommendation of grammar and of all forms of secular study. He advised the student by all means to read widely in all fields, including grammar, metrics and history as well as in the Scriptures, but warns him to

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[101] It would be interesting to know whether the Anonymus's many patristic quotations relating to the study of grammar are drawn directly from his own reading, or whether some earlier writer had already taken the trouble to compile a convenient list of them.

[102] At the foot of fol. 22^{r_1}, linked, by means of a symbol repeated in the margin, to the beginning of a quotation from Jerome's commentary on Titus: *Sanctus quoque Hironimus in commentario aepistulae pauli ad titum ueritatem grammaticae artis in aliquibus laudat ubi scribitur ... .*

[103] *Praefatio ad Sigebertum*, edited by G. J. Gebauer and B. Löfstedt, in *Bonifatii (Vynfreth) Ars grammatica*, CCSL, 133B (Turnhout, 1980), pp. 9-12.

> direct the thoughts arising from these writings to the most secure circle of the Catholic faith, and not to presume to wander with inconstant mind outside the walls of this circle.[104]

This idea of a walled citadel of faith, a discipline of faith to which all learning must be subjected, is quite absent from the prologue to *Ad Cuimnanum*, where all knowledge is seen as contained within a divine framework. Nevertheless, Boniface is insistent on the usefulness and necessity of grammar for the study of the Scriptures:

> A knowledge of the art of grammar is extremely useful to those who wish to come to a knowledge of the more subtle meanings that are often to be found in Scripture, because a reader who is ignorant of these rules will often fail to grasp the full meaning.[105]

Whether embraced with the enthusiasm of the author of *Ad Cuimnanum* for its value in relation to all knowledge, or accepted as a necessary tool without which no-one could effectively read and understand the Scriptures, the *ars grammatica* was fundamental to the culture of early Christian Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England.

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[104] See *Praefatio*, p. 12: *Ad tutissimum catholicae fidei circulum sensus tui litteris occurrentibus dirigas et extra moenia huius circuli mentis inconstantia uagare non praesumas, ne forte uulnerantes te tulerint pallium tuum custodes murorum.*

[105] *Praefatio*, p. 11: *Quia peritia grammaticae artis in sacrosancto scrutinio laborantibus ad subtiliorem intellectum, qui frequenter in sacris scripturis inseritur, ualde utilis esse dinoscitur, eo quod lector huius expers artis in multis scripturarum locis usurpare sibi illa quae non habet et ignotus sibi ipsi esse conprobatur* (translation by J. Leclercq in *The Love of Learning*, pp. 47-49, n. 9). Leclercq (pp. 46-47) emphasizes the necessary connection between grammarians and missionaries in contexts where there was no previous knowledge of Latin.

III Book production in a culture shaped by the *ars grammatica*

The dependence upon the *ars grammatica* reflected in the copying and writing of grammar books, and expressed by the author of *Ad Cuimnanum*, may also be seen in the way in which texts were being written down during this period. In the earliest surviving Irish and Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, produced during the seventh, eighth and early ninth centuries, the manner in which texts are laid out and displayed on the page bears in many respects little resemblance to the conventions observed in classical and late antique manuscripts. The obvious differences of form and layout observable in Insular manuscripts have been seen by some, and especially by scholars of classical culture, in terms of a degeneration from the classical conventions and a break with antique usage; Insular scribes' neglect or ignorance of earlier standard graphic practices thus becomes a graphic reflection of the remoteness of early medieval Ireland from the culture of classical Rome. Renato Raffaelli, in an article investigating the function of double vertical rulings in left-hand margins of copies of various texts, shows how the practice was used consistently in Latin manuscripts up to the end of the sixth century to permit the indentation of certain parts of texts (such as citations, or sections in a different metre within polymetric texts), so that they might be clearly distinguished by the reader. The decline of this convention - the "defunctionalization" or "desemanticization" of the double line - began in the seventh century, and Raffaelli blames this break with antique usage principally on the Irish monks with their "lack of structural awareness (*senso poco organico*) of any closed space, including the written

page".[106]

Published in the same collection as Raffaelli's article is a study by Holtz which takes a very different view of the contribution of Insular scribes to the development of the format and layout of texts.[107] Holtz is considering the relationship between the principal text - that which the reader is trying to understand - and secondary textual elements - anything written to aid the reading and comprehension of the primary text, including subtitles or introductions, glosses or commentary which were not part of the original author's text. He traces the rise of "éditions commentées": books in which the primary text and the commentary (the secondary textual element) are combined in one volume, their integration being planned and allowed for in the production of the book. Such editions did not exist in antiquity; according to Holtz the earliest surviving example of a book combining text and commentary is the fragment of a late eighth-century Irish manuscript with the text of Ezekiel in a central column, surrounded on either side by extracts from Gregory's commentary.[108] Two ninth-century Carolingian manuscripts which contain the text of Virgil combined with a commentary also, Holtz argues, appear to be derived ultimately from Insular circles. Holtz sees the rise of the commentary-edition as a response to the need not just to

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[106] 'La pagina e il testo: sulle funzioni della doppia rigatura verticale nei codici latini *antiquiores'*, in *Atti del convegno internazionale Il libro e il testo, Urbino, 20-23 settembre 1982*, edited by C. Questa and R. Raffaelli (Urbino, 1984), pp. 3-24; see p. 9. Raffaelli illustrates his argument about lack of spatial awareness by referring to the full-page depiction of the figure of the evangelist (fol. 19') in the Cadmug Gospels (*CLA*, VIII, 1198), but does not elaborate any further.

[107] 'Les manuscrits latins à gloses et à commentaires: de l'antiquité à l'époque carolingienne', in *Atti del convegno internazionale Il libro e il testo,* pp. 139-67.

[108] Zürich, Staatsarchiv A.G.19, No. XII (foll. 24, 25 = pp. 61-64); *CLA*, VII, 1008; see pp. 156-57 and 160.

unite text and commentary in one volume for the sake of convenience, but also to simplify and make accessible to a less cultivated generation the prolix exegetical material of antiquity. He attributes the development of this new format in the British Isles to the same need for "concentration pédagogique" which is also manifested in the Irish grammatical compilations of the eighth century. The Irish, therefore, were not "defunctionalizing" the graphic conventions of antiquity, but devising new forms of page layout to facilitate the process of *enarratio*, in response to the particular needs of their own culture. In Holtz's view they were responsible for an important innovation in the evolution of the relationship between principal text and commentary, and helped to define "*une nouvelle relation entre l'homme et le livre*".[109]

The innovations in the layout of texts for which Insular scribes are responsible are not confined to the invention of commentary-editions. A wide range of new graphic conventions was evolved by Irish scribes and adapted and modified by the Anglo-Saxons.[110] These include the use of greatly enlarged initial letters, and display pages filled with abstract designs or depicting the symbol of an evangelist, in order to mark the beginning of major new sections within a work, such as the opening of a chapter or the beginning of one of the Gospels.[111] Similarly, lesser subdivisions within a text tended to be marked by means of smaller initial letters, often projecting into the

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[109] See p. 163.

[110] See the detailed discussion of these practices by M. B. Parkes in his article 'The Contribution of Insular Scribes of the Seventh and Eighth Centuries to the "Grammar of Legibility"', in *Scribes, Scripts and Readers*, pp. 1-18.

[111] See for example the enlarged and decorated initial PA ligature in Plate 1, which marks the opening of the text, and the similarly distinctive initial IN in Plate 3, which indicates the start of the text proper after the prologue.

margin and still large enough in comparison with the ordinary letter size to be easily distinguishable.[112] Insular scribes began to exploit the hierarchy of their system of scripts, often using a more formal grade of script for the first few words, or lines, of major sections of texts; in combination with the *litterae notabiliores* and decorated initials, these served as a graphic aid to the reader in locating the relevant parts of the text.[113] Use was also made of different grades of script in commentaries, in order clearly to distinguish lemmata (extracts from the primary text) from the commentary itself. Finally, Insular scribes developed the punctuation system inherited from antiquity, evolving new punctuation marks which were better suited to their script system and which could be used with greater precision to isolate the constituent parts of a text at the level of sentence and clause.[114]

These practices represent an attempt to make the written information on the page more accessible to the reader; they are a practical working out of the principle of *enarratio*, the explication of texts. Interlinear and marginal glosses, added to existing manuscripts by readers wishing to interpret the subject matter of the text, are obviously products of

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[112] Plate 4 shows the use of small *litterae notabiliores* to mark the beginning of each definition in an introduction defining the eight parts of speech, and a slightly larger displayed initial No, which unlike the smaller initials occupies space within the text column, and indicates the start of a section discussing the noun.

[113] See the more formal script of the first few lines of column a in Plate 1, and the first line of every subsection in Plate 4.

[114] These developments in punctuation, discussed briefly by Parkes in 'Grammar of Legibility', pp. 6-7, are described in greater detail in his forthcoming book *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Aldershot, 1992).

enarratio.[115] But scribes too had their contribution to make in this process; through the development and exploitation of these graphic conventions, which "in themselves constitute a kind of mute commentary"[116] they were able to render the page articulate and the text more readily comprehensible to the reader.

But it is not only at the level of *enarratio* that scribal practices reflect the processes of a grammatical education; certain innovations in graphic conventions at the level of individual words can be seen as aids to the reader engaged in the primary act of the *ars grammatica*: *lectio*, the careful distinguishing of each word.

> Lire, c'était déchiffrer, séparer les mots, les phrases, et décider de la coincidence entre signes graphiques et unités de sens. Voilà pourquoi le lecteur pouvait être tenté à chaque instant, s'il n'était pas retenu par quelque scrupule, d'intervenir lui-même dans le livre pour corriger, souligner, annoter, bref, aider matériellement d'un trait de calame sa compréhension.[117]

By such means as Holtz describes readers might help themselves to overcome the difficulties entailed in *lectio*. Insular readers often added glosses (in Latin or in the vernacular) or construe-marks to identify the grammatical form and the sense of individual words and the syntactical relationships

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[115] Cf. Irvine, p. 27. Irvine mentions the development, from the eighth to the eleventh centuries, of the format of combined text and gloss as an sign of the influence of grammatical methodology on the form of book production.

[116] Holtz, 'Les manuscrits latins à gloses', p. 146; Holtz was talking specifically about the use of signs, e.g. for punctuation, and separation of words.

[117] Holtz, 'Les manuscrits latins à gloses', pp. 145-46.

between words.[118] Equally or even more valuable as an aid to the reading of texts, however, was the practice, first introduced into Western script by Irish scribes, of leaving a small space between each word on the page, thus making graphically distinct the "unités de sens" which the reader needed to be able to distinguish.

The practice of word separation has received very little critical attention, either from a palaeographical or a linguistic perspective. This thesis aims to explore the practice in Insular manuscripts, in relation to the cultural and linguistic context in which the practice first emerged and was developed. It has been the aim of this introductory chapter to show the importance of that context in considering any aspect of the production of books; the tradition of the *ars grammatica*, especially as embraced by peoples for whom the language of *latinitas* was quite unrelated to their own vernacular language, and for whom Latin was associated primarily with the written word, had a pervasive influence not only on the composition of texts but also on the manner in which they were written down. It is reasonable therefore to suppose that a practice such as word separation may in this context reflect something of the teaching of the grammarians;[119] and so

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[118] Cf. Irvine, p. 27; see the studies of the function of glosses and construe-marks in late eighth and ninth century Irish manuscripts by M. Draak: 'Construe Marks in Hiberno-Latin Manuscripts', *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde*, new series, 20 (1957), 261-82; and 'The Higher Teaching of Latin Grammar in Ireland During the Ninth Century', *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde*, new series, 30 (1967), 109-44.

[119] In a study of 'Syllabification in Latin Inscriptions' (*Classical Philology*, 1 (1906), 47-68), W. Dennison assumed that the practices of the Roman workmen who carved the inscriptions could be relied upon to reflect the natural syllabification of the spoken language, rather than conforming to the technical rules of the grammarians (see p. 50); no such assumption can be made about Insular scribes, who would all of necessity have had at least some acquaintance with the rules of Latin grammar.

Chapter Three is an investigation of those specific aspects of traditional and Insular grammatical doctrine which are likely to have influenced scribes trying to decide on what basis to separate words.

The same circumstances which caused the particular dependence of the Irish and the Anglo-Saxons on the grammatical tradition - the fact that they spoke vernaculars unrelated to Latin - may also have encouraged in Insular scribes a certain independence in relation to the scribal conventions of antiquity. The parallel existence of Latin and the vernacular languages, and the thriving oral traditions of the latter, provided a double linguistic perspective and encouraged comparisons between the languages.[120] Approaching the copying of Latin texts from such a perspective may have freed Insular scribes from inhibitions about introducing innovations; they were willing to take liberties with the traditional layout of texts in order better to respond to the actual needs of readers in their particular context. The linguistic perspective of a speaker of Old Irish, and some of the difficulties he would have encountered in learning to read Latin, are examined in Chapter Two.

The practices of Insular scribes with regard to the separation of words, and also their characteristically uninhibited and regular use of abbreviations, are both indications that written language (more specifically written Latin) was perceived by them as a series of silently communicating graphic symbols rather than as a record of spoken language. In Part Two of

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[120] This is clearly seen in the tradition of vernacular grammar in Ireland, as represented by the text *Auraicept na nÉces*, in which not only are comparisons made between the Latin and Irish languages, but also proud claims are made as to the superiority of Irish above all other languages. On the *Auraicept*, see Chapter Two.

the thesis I describe in detail the characteristics and development of these two practices (which are related in several ways) and discuss the principles on which they are based, showing that they, just as much as the contemporary grammatical texts, are signs of a kind of linguistic analysis.

The difficulties of learning and reading Latin as a foreign language, and the circumstance of living and working within a complex linguistic environment with the spoken vernacular alongside written Latin, are not discussed by the Insular grammarians. This, I would maintain, is not because they were not aware of such matters, but because they had not developed the terms in which to discuss them. Having inherited the tradition of *latinitas*, and the language of the grammarians, they worked within that language and that tradition, and were therefore unable to express ideas or discuss problems unfamiliar to the grammarians of the past. The innovative activities of Insular scribes, however, constitute a silent language or commentary upon the relationship of readers to books in this period.

PART ONE

GRAMMATICAL THEORY

CHAPTER TWO

The Vernacular Linguistic Framework and the Difficulties Encountered by Old Irish Speakers in Learning Latin

I Language study in Ireland and in England; the reason for dealing only with Irish in this chapter

When we begin to learn a foreign language, we approach the task not with a perfectly clean slate but with a large number of assumptions which derive from our apprehension of our own language. Whether or not we have studied them formally or are aware of them consciously, the structure and the characteristics of our mother tongue will have shaped our view of language in general; so that our first encounter with a foreign language will suddenly bring us up against new concepts and new structures which may be difficult to grasp. Thus modern English children learning French struggle with the concept of grammatical gender, and students whose own language does not possess a present continuous tense have great difficulty in distinguishing between "I go" and "I am going" in English.

This chapter explores some aspects of the vernacular linguistic framework and concepts from within which Irish students approached Latin, and which, together with the doctrines of the Latin grammarians, must to some extent have informed the reading and the copying in which Irish

scribes were engaged. I do not mean to argue that an apprehension of the structures of their own language would necessarily have influenced scribes directly in their practices as they copied Latin. I hope rather to show that speakers of Old Irish, with an understanding of language derived from their vernacular, would have encountered different concepts and experienced certain difficulties in learning Latin; and that these difficulties were a significant factor in their study of the Latin grammarians and in their encounter with Latin, when participating in the Divine Office or when reading or copying texts. It is not my intention here to discuss the differences between Latin and Irish from the (supposedly) neutral perspective of the modern comparative philologist, but rather to examine how the Irish themselves understood their own language, by looking at the early tradition of vernacular grammar in Ireland, and to consider the implications of this for their study of Latin. With a knowledge of the particular problems encountered by Irish students, it should be possible to understand better the use they made of the traditional Latin grammarians, and also to explain some of the characteristic Insular scribal practices, which are the graphic representation of linguistic analysis.

This investigation is concerned only with the Irish vernacular, and does not attempt to describe the linguistic perspectives or problems of early Anglo-Saxons learning Latin. Such a description would be very valuable if it were realisable, for however hesitant one may be about attempting to distinguish between Irish and English contributions to Insular culture,[1] and in spite of all the problems associated with identifying characteristics specific to one race or another, there is

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[1] See above, Chapter One, pp. 13-14.

undeniably one continuing difference which separated the two peoples: they spoke different languages. Linguistically speaking, therefore, the Irish and the Anglo-Saxons approached life from different perspectives, and their problems in learning Latin are unlikely to have been identical. If these differences could be shown to have given rise in turn to different graphical characteristics in the way they wrote Latin, these characteristics could be used as additional criteria for distinguishing between Irish and Anglo-Saxon products, in disputed and difficult cases.

Unfortunately, such a comparison cannot easily be made, because of the lack of written sources for the study of vernacular grammar in Anglo-Saxon England in the early period with which this thesis is concerned (i.e. the seventh and eighth centuries). There are no texts surviving from this period (if any were ever written) which offer an insight into native Anglo-Saxon linguistic analysis of the vernacular equivalent to that preserved on the Irish side in the *Auraicept na nÉces*, the principal source for this chapter. This is not to say that no such analysis ever took place during this period - far from it. There is abundant evidence of linguistic study in Anglo-Saxon England during the late seventh and eighth centuries; we know that a wide variety of Latin grammatical texts were available and being studied, and we see the result of that study in the Latin writings (grammatical works and others) of Bede, Aldhelm and others. Although all this constitutes evidence only for the study of Latin grammar, not of the vernacular, there is good reason to believe, along with Helmut Gneuss, that "the systems and the categories of Latin grammar to which the Anglo-Saxons were thus exposed were also applied by them to their own language".[1] The

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[1] 'The Study of Language in Anglo-Saxon England', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 72 (1990), 3-32 (p. 4).

adaptation of the Latin alphabet and the development of a system of orthography (under the influence of Old Irish orthography)[3] for the writing of Old English implies an analysis of the sound system of the vernacular; while the practice of glossing Latin texts in the vernacular would have required the glossator to identify the individual lexical items and morphological forms in English which corresponded to the Latin forms.[4] In spite of the linguistic analysis implicitly present in such activities, however, there are in the early Anglo-Saxon period (i.e. the seventh and eighth centuries) no surviving texts in which grammarians concern themselves explicitly with grammatical analysis of the vernacular.[5]

Such textual evidence is available for the later Anglo-Saxon period, notably in the form of Ælfric's grammar, which has been called "the first grammar in any vernacular".[6] This work is written in both Latin and Old English; it deals mainly with the eight Latin parts of speech, but many of the definitions, examples and quotations have been given in English as well

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[3] See Campbell, *Old English Grammar* (Oxford, 1959), §55; Gneuss, pp. 10-11.

[4] On glossing and linguistic analysis, see further below in Chapter Three, pp. 148-49 and note 110. On how glosses appear to point to an environment in which "questions of grammar and translation were dealt with in English", see Gneuss, p. 10 and further references.

[5] See Gneuss, p. 10. Gneuss's article summarises the state of our knowledge of Anglo-Saxon linguistic study both in the early period, with which we are here concerned, and in the later period, for which there is far more surviving material. Dealing exclusively with the later period is D. A. Bullough's 'The Educational Tradition in England from Alfred to Aelfric: Teaching *Utriusque Linguae*', *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo*, 19:2 (1972), 453-94.

[6] Bullough, 'Educational Tradition', p. 489; see also Gneuss, p. 13. The *Auraicept* really deserves this title, but Ælfric's work, dating from the late tenth century, is certainly the first grammar by an identifiable author to cover the vernacular.

as or instead of in Latin.[7] Ælfric makes it clear in his Latin preface that he intended by this method to teach an understanding of English as well as of Latin: with this little book "*potestis utramque linguam, videlicet Latinam et Anglicam, ... inserere*".[8] The analysis of the vernacular which he offers is based on an equation of English with Latin; he seeks to describe his own language in terms and categories borrowed from the Latin. Thus he introduces the eight parts:

> Witodlice on ðisum eahta dælum is eal ledenspræc belocen, and ðæt englisc geðwærlæcð to eallum ðam dælum; swa swa we nu sceortlice trahtnodon.[9]

In proceeding from the Latin categories to identifying equivalents in Old English Ælfric imposes on the vernacular a structure which is not always appropriate;[10] he attributes to Old English certain categories which an independent analysis would not regard as being integral to the language. Thus he identifies in English the same six nominal cases as in Latin, despite the fact that no separate forms exist for the vocative or the

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[7] For an edition of the text, see *Aelfrics Grammatik und Glossar: Text und Varianten*, edited by J. Zupitza, second edition with foreword by H. Gneuss (Berlin, 1966); all subsequent references are to the page and line of this edition. The grammar is discussed briefly and with disapprobation by R. H. Robins in *Ancient and Medieval Grammatical Theory in Europe* (London, 1951), pp. 71-73, where Ælfric is described (inaccurately) as the "first author of a Latin grammar in England" (p. 71); more recently a belated recognition of the importance of the work has led to some detailed studies, including G. Bolognesi, *La grammatica latina di Aelfric. Parte prima: studio delle fonti* (Paideia, 1967), and references cited by Gneuss, pp. 13-16.

[8] *Grammar*, 1/5-8; see Gneuss, pp. 13-14 and n. 44.

[9] *Grammar*, 11/5-7: "Indeed all Latin is confined within these eight parts, and English agrees in every part, as we shall explain shortly."

[10] It is this aspect of Ælfric's work which gives rise to Robins's disapproval: it is "bad practice" for him to assume that "the categorical framework devised in antiquity for Greek and Latin will be satisfactory for another language without question" (p. 72).

ablative in Old English.[11] He also tries to extend the range of tenses in English to correspond with the Latin, in spite of the fact that Old English had no independent form for the future tense.[12] On the other hand, he is far from being unaware of differences between Latin and English, and often draws the student's attention to them.[13]

This analysis of English, based as it is on the analysis of Latin, although it does not preclude a recognition of the ways in which the vernacular diverges from the Latin in structure or in detail, is not the same thing as the native apprehension of the vernacular language which I described at the beginning of this chapter. That the early Anglo-Saxons possessed some understanding of how their own language worked, even before the arrival of Christianity and the written word (and with it, Latin grammar) is, as Gneuss reminds us, beyond doubt: both the adaptation of runes to the Old English phonological system and the rules of accent and quantity underlying the traditional alliterative verse presuppose this.[14] In the same way the early Irish poetic tradition reflects in its metrical

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[11] See *Grammar*, 21-22, where the "ablative" forms in the paradigm are preceded by '*fram*' to distinguish them from the dative, and the "vocative" by '*eala ðu*' to distinguish them from the nominative; the corresponding Latin forms are preceded by '*ab*' and '*o*' respectively, but these (at least in some declensions) also exhibit distinctive inflectional terminations.

[12] e.g. *Grammar*, 123/14-124/1: *praesens tempus ys andwerd tid: sto ic stande; ... futurum tempus is towerd tid: stabo ic stande nu rihte oððe on sumne timan*. See comments by Bolognesi, p. 95.

[13] e.g. *Grammar*, 14/21-15/3 on patronymics: *patronomica þæt synd fæderlice naman, æfter greciscum þeawe, ac seo ledenspræc næfð þa naman. hi synd swa ðeah on engliscre spræce: Penda and of ðam Pending and Pendingas*; 18/19-19/1 (on differences in gender): *ys eac to witenne, þæt hi beoð oft oðres cynnes on leden and oðres cynnes on englisc. we cweðað on ledyn hic liber and on englisc þeos boc*. Bolognesi, p. 94, briefly discusses the original material, especially the comments on the English language, which Ælfric adds to his Latin sources.

[14] Gneuss, p. 4.

structures native linguistic perceptions that predate the influence of the Latin grammarians. In both cases, it was the encounter with Latin grammar which precipitated a more formal linguistic study of their own language. Such study need not, however, simply consist of applying Latin categories to the vernacular, as Gneuss seems to assume for the Anglo-Saxons (see p. 45 above), and as proves to be the case in Ælfric's grammar. The formal study of Irish in the early period, although owing its existence and much of its method to the Latin grammatical tradition, does not, as I hope to show, accept all of the latter's categories and structures, but attempts to formulate its own analysis.

If it were possible to discover more about the early Anglo-Saxons' study of their own language, the most useful thing to know would be how dependent it was on Latin grammatical categories: the later evidence of Ælfric suggests that it would have tried to stick closely to them. That it was possible for Ælfric to do this is itself an important point; Old English was close enough to Latin in structure to allow, for example, the eight parts of speech to be identified in English, although the correspondences could only be taken so far, and some grammatical peculiarities of Old English were, as we have seen, ignored. On the evidence available, it seems that the Anglo-Saxons were taught or were able to recognize the similarities between their language and Latin, unlike the early Irish, who (as I hope to show below) appear to have been much more aware of differences between their own vernacular and Latin.

Non-textual evidence for linguistic analysis of the vernacular should not be overlooked. In addition to the analyses implied in the act of glossing, and in the development of English orthographic usage, mentioned

above, p. 46, there is that which underlies the scribes' practice of separation of words, both in Latin and English. But since in the practice of word separation it is the Irish who were the innovators, with English adopting and modifying the practice as they adopted and modified the Insular script system from their Irish teachers, I believe that there is justification for concentrating on the Irish evidence for the remainder of this chapter, and so to investigate the relationship between such scribal innovations and the study of Latin and the vernacular by the Irish.

II The *Auraicept* as evidence for native linguistic analysis of Irish

a The date and nature of the text

We are extremely fortunate to have access to the native tradition of Irish language analysis through the text known as the *Auraicept na nÉces* or "Scholar's Primer".[15] The text survives in a large number of manuscripts (none of them earlier than the late fourteenth century), among which three

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[15] *Auraicept na n-éces: The Scholars' Primer, Being the Texts of the Ogham Tract from the Book of Ballymote and the Yellow Book of Lecan, and the Text of the Trefhocul from the Book of Leinster*, edited by G. Calder (Edinburgh, 1917); this was the first edition, and it is still the only edition of the full text: Calder prints the texts of two different recensions, with a translation of the first. This edition is supplemented by the recent work of A. Ahlqvist, who edits the oldest parts of the text only (the "canonical text") in 'The Early Irish Linguist: An Edition of the Canonical Part of the *Auraicept na nÉces*, with Introduction, Commentary and Indices', *Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum*, 73 (1982), 1-81; Ahlqvist lists (pp. 22-24) all the manuscripts known to him at the time of publication, including many not used by Calder, and argues (p. 3 and p. 22) that much work is needed on the complicated manuscript tradition before a definitive critical edition can be produced.

groups can be distinguished, preserving various amounts of additional material alongside the core text shared by all.[16] The *Auraicept* consists of an early, and originally fairly brief, account of aspects of the Irish and Latin languages, surrounded, and often completely submerged, by layers of commentary; one of the three manuscript families preserves a distinction between original text and commentary by writing the former in a larger script.[17] The glosses and commentary upon the original text appear to have been added over the course of several centuries during which the *Auraicept* was very popular and much studied; some time after 1100 it seems that the common tradition of commentary came to an end, but additional material continued to be added to different copies of the text, and the various recensions took their individual shapes after this date.[18]

As to the date of the original or canonical part of the text, there is general agreement in placing it at least as early as the eighth century, partly on linguistic grounds,[19] and partly to allow sufficient time for

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[16] Calder recognized only two families of manuscripts and printed his two versions of the text on the basis of these (see p. xiii). but Ahlqvist distinguishes a third (see pp. 24-27).

[17] Calder prints these passages in bold type in his edition; see also Ahlqvist, pp. 26-7 and p. 33 (this scribal practice is one of the criteria, along with the date of the language and the nature of the subject matter, used by Ahlqvist to determine what makes up the original text).

[18] So argues Ahlqvist, p. 32; Calder (p. xxxi) believed that accretions to the commentary continued at least until the mid-tenth century, if not until the end of the eleventh. Thurneysen in his review of Calder's edition, 'Auraicept na n-éces', *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, 17 (1928), 277-303 (p. 285), argues that the division of traditions occurred in the eleventh century.

[19] Although the language of the manuscripts is basically Middle Irish, the canonical parts of the text preserve some archaic linguistic features from the early Old Irish period (see Thurneysen, p. 281; Ahlqvist, pp. 36-39); for example the archaic accusative form **inmbein** ('the woman') in one of the paradigms appended to the text (Calder, line 1835 = Ahlqvist, Paradigms, 4) points to an origin in at least the beginning of the eighth

the accumulation of gloss and commentary.[10] The prologue and first book of the *Auraicept* are attributed in the commentary to Cenn Fáelad. Unlike the purported authors of other parts of the text (legendary characters such as Ferchertne and Fenius) Cenn Fáelad was a genuine historical person whose death around A.D. 680 is recorded in the annals; furthermore his connection with the *Auraicept* is supported by references in two historical sources.[11] His authorship of at least part of the *Auraicept* (and thus its origin in the middle or second half of the seventh century) is accepted by Calder and by several others following him,[12] but most scholars who have since had occasion to study the language or content of the text in any depth have treated the ascription with some suspicion.[13] Ahlqvist agrees with this caution, but while not insisting on the authorship of Cenn Fáelad argues that the canonical text (as reconstituted in his edition) quite possibly

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century for parts of the primary material; see Thurneysen, p. 287; Ahlqvist, pp. 30 and 62.

[10] See Calder, p. xxxi; Ahlqvist, p. 18. The latter points out that the *Auraicept* is even more heavily glossed than the early law tract, the *Uraicecht Becc*, which is held to have originated no later than the eighth century because of the scale of its accumulated commentary (other similarities between the *Auraicept* and early legal material are discussed on pp. 11-14).

[11] See Calder, pp. xxvii-xxviii; Ahlqvist, pp. 18-19. On Cenn Fáelad see also P. Mac Cana, 'The Three Languages and the Three Laws', *Studia Celtica*, 5 (1970), 62-78.

[12] Calder, p. xxvii, and e.g. Grosjean, 'Quelques exégètes', p. 95.

[13] See Thurneysen, p. 281 (in his view there is nothing in the language to suggest composition as early as the seventh century); H. Meroney in 'Fénius and Gáedel in the *Lebar Cindfáelad*', *Modern Philology*, 43 (1945-46), 18-24 (pp. 18-19), questions the ascription on stylistic grounds; van Hamel (in 'Primitieve Ierse Taalstudie', *Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandsche Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde, Niewe Reeks*, 9 (1946), 295-339) argues (p. 299) that the authorship is not in itself implausible, but on linguistic grounds cannot be proved, and notes that Cenn Fáelad's fame as a scholar with a memory of legendary proportions makes it likely that his name would be used to lend authority to scholarly texts. See also Mac Cana, p. 64.

represents only a stage in the tradition of material, which could well have originated in the seventh century and undergone modernisation of its archaic linguistic forms.[14]

There are two problems in relying on the *Auraicept* as a source of early Irish ideas about language. The first stems from the nature of the text; although the original text can be identified with a reasonable amount of certainty,[15] much work still needs to be done to distinguish between the different strata of commentary, extending over several centuries, and so to identify the earliest parts of this material, which will be close to the original in date. The complicated textual tradition will make this a difficult task: the work has clearly suffered in transmission, with material being displaced or lost altogether. In this chapter I concentrate my attention on concepts and material which occur in the canonical text, and which can therefore be assumed to be at least as old as the eighth century. However, the glosses and commentary added not only in the eighth but also in the ninth or tenth century are the product of a continuing tradition of grammatical study, and part of a body of teaching material which kept growing in use; they should not be considered as completely unrelated and irrelevant to the earliest material, but as having grown out of and developed from it. Therefore I have felt justified in turning occasionally to the later commentary material for help in understanding the earlier text.

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[14] See pp. 18 and 34.

[15] Ahlqvist stresses (p. 34) that the canonical text as he presents it is offered as a working hypothesis, and reminds us (p. 18) of the possibility of confusion between original text and later commentary as the text was copied.

The second problem is the question of the extent to which the ideas in the *Auraicept* are derived from the Latin grammarians, rather than being purely native in origin. Even a very brief glance through the text will reveal that both the original author and the commentators of the *Auraicept* were acquainted with the names and the works of Latin grammarians; this is shown not only by their use of Latin grammatical terminology, but also by direct references to and quotations from some grammarians.[16] Even where no Latin source is acknowledged, the influence of the Latin grammarians' ideas can be discerned in much of the material.[17] Given this apparently extensive influence, is it really possible to find independent, native linguistic ideas within the *Auraicept*? Before discussing this question in more depth, it will be useful briefly to outline the contents of the text; from this outline alone it should be apparent that the relationship of the *Auraicept* to the Latin grammarians is very different from the close dependence of Ælfric's grammar on that of Priscian.

b Outline of contents [18]

1-311 [1] Prologue

This consists mainly of a pseudo-historical account of the origin of

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[16] Grammarians cited include Priscian, Donatus, Pompeius and Consentius; see Calder, p. xxii.

[17] See Thurneysen, p. 278 and Ahlqvist, pp. 40-46 on the possible Latin sources and models available to and used by the author of the canonical text.

[18] This outline follows the first of the two recensions edited by Calder, lines 1-1925. Line number references are all to this recension unless otherwise indicated; numbers in square brackets refer to the sections of Ahlqvist's edition of the canonical text. Quotations from the commentary are taken from Calder's edition, and those from the original text are from Ahlqvist.

the Irish language, fusing biblical and apocryphal traditions concerning the Tower of Babel with native origin-legends and arguments for the superiority of Irish.[29] Lines 79, 100-01, and 104-05 are part of the canonical text [1,1], introducing the story of Nimrod's tower; most of the rest of this section is commentary on the story and on the way it is told.[30] Some brief passages about the vowels in the Ogam alphabet, and the eight parts of speech in Latin, appear out of sequence here and really belong in the next section.

312-734 "Book of Cenn Fáelad" [31]

Containing:

312-519 [2] a description and comparison of vowels and consonants in Latin

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[29] Prominent in the account are the eponymous pseudo-ancestors Gáedel Glas and Fénius Farsaid, who are mentioned in archaic Leinster genealogical poems of the seventh century or earlier, and who were to become some of the principal characters in the later origin-legend, the Lebor Gabála; see D. O Corrain, 'Irish Origin Legends and Genealogy: Recurrent Aetiologies', in *History and Heroic Tale: Proceedings of the Eighth International Symposium ... 21-22 November, 1983*, edited by T. Nyberg *et al.* (Odense, 1985), pp. 51-96, especially pp. 63-64. O Corrain argues (p. 64) that "perhaps in the seventh century, a number of scholars were engaged in fabricating a pre-history of Ireland which traced the ultimate origin of the Irish tribes and dynasties back to the origins of the nations and the languages as set out in Genesis 9-11". He does not mention the *Auraicept*, which however is discussed briefly in A. Borst's monumental work *Der Turmbau von Babel: Geschichte der Meinungen über Ursprung und Vielfalt der Sprachen und Völker*, 4 parts in 6 vols (Stuttgart, 1957-63), part II:1 (1958), pp. 611-14. See also the article by Meroney mentioned above (note 22), and Ahlqvist, pp. 40-41.

[30] The continuation of the canonical text [1,2-1,17], upon which much of this prologue is a commentary, has, Ahlqvist argues (pp. 33-34), become displaced from its original position, being found as a secondary prologue later in the text (lines 1034-50 in Calder) followed by further commentary.

[31] Although the names of most of the authors are spurious and the division of the material into separate books is apparently an invention of later commentators and not part of the structure of the original text (see Ahlqvist, pp. 18-19 and p. 34) I have thought it useful to indicate these divisions here, as some modern scholars have discussed the material using the names of these individual books.

and in Irish; original text ([2,1-10] = 312-13, 392-93, 445-47, 492-96) interspersed with commentary;

520-638 [3] a discussion of gender in Irish ([3,1-14] = 520-70), including in the canonical text the concept of the three **airlainn insce** ('markers of gender'), i.e. demonstrative pronouns, which reveal the gender of the noun;

639-734 [4] a section on **etargaire** ('distinctions' [31]) ([4,1-9] = 639-59), including in the commentary (713-20) discussion of the differences between **irlond** (i.e. airlann, 'marker of gender') **insci** (gender) and **etargaire**.

As is the case throughout the text, the commentary here consists not only of general discussion of the statements in the original text but also much detailed and lengthy etymologizing and definition of the individual words making up those statements. It also includes other miscellaneous detail which is not easily summarised. For example, the section on vowels and consonants opens with the statement

> **Attaat di ernail forsind apgitir Laitindai .i. guttai , consona** (There are two categories in the Latin alphabet, namely vowels and consonants),[33]

but before we reach the parallel statement

> **attat dano di ernail forsin beithi-luis-nin ind oguim .i. feda , táebomnae** (There are two categories in the Ogam B-L-N, namely vowels and consonants),[34]

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[31] This, Ahlqvist's translation of the term, is preferable to Calder's 'inflection'; see below, note 107.

[33] [2,1] = l. 312.

[34] [2,2] = l. 392. Note that the terms used for Irish vowels and consonants (**feda** and **táebomnae**) differ from those for their Latin counterparts (**guttai** and **consana**).

the first statement is subjected to detailed commentary, beginning with analysis of the opening word **Attaat** ('there are'). **Attaat** is equated with Latin *sunt*; the commentator then asks what part of speech *sunt* is, and in answering lists all eight parts of speech in Latin, giving Irish equivalents;[35] in addition the verb *sum* is conjugated, again with a parallel Irish version **atáim** (304-11)).[36]

735-1027 "Ferchertne's Book"

This begins with the introductory topos giving the time, place, person and reason for composition (not in the canonical text).

739-40 [5] lists the "heptad by which the Irish language may be analysed: that is, letter and syllable, declension and accent, juncture, gender, and distinction";[37]

741-852 the commentators explain each of these terms (including **seachta** -'heptad' and **tomus** -'analysis') by giving etymologies and listing what is peculiar, proper, common and inappropriate to each;[38]

853-95 the subdivisions of each category are listed[39] and

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[35] See below, pp. 67-68.

[36] This method of commenting on a text, involving the parsing and discussing of each word from every possible angle, is similar to that employed by the anonymous commentator of Donatus in *Ad Cuimnanum* (see e.g. Chapter One, note 95 above) and represents an extreme manifestation of the process of *enarratio*.

[37] On these seven kinds of analysis, see below, p. 71.

[38] On the similarity of this method of analysis with that found in early legal commentaries, see Ahlqvist, p. 11.

[39] The commentator asks whether each is a species or genus, and if a genus, what are its species.

896-916 the essence of each is described.

917-942 The general question is posed "What is the nature of analysis with respect to these seven?",[10] followed by

943-1027 [6] the specific question "What is the nature of analysis in respect of letters?",[11] which is answered by discussion of the number, form, force, function and other aspects of Ogam letters, this being followed by further commentary.[12]

1028-1101 [1,2-8] "Primer of Amairgen Whiteknee"

This "book", shorter than the first two, is, like the prologue, concerned with the origin of Goidelc (Irish), and may in fact have belonged originally to the prologue, being displaced during the course of copying with the accumulation of additional commentary.[13]

1102-1636 "The Book according to Fenius, Iar mac Nema and Gael mac Ether"

This "book" as designated by one of the commentators is the longest and by far the least coherent in content; it contains little of the original text, many passages appear to be misplaced and no underlying structure is evident. Thurneysen describes it as a mixture of all kinds of

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[10] **Cate tomhus fri sechta?**, l. 917.

[11] **Catte tomus fri fid?** [6,1] = l. 943.

[12] In Ahlqvist's view, this section discussing 'analysis in respect of letters' is part of the original text ([6,1-13] = 943-61) but the preceding section discussing the heptad in general is not. As fid (letter) is the first of the seven kinds of analysis, but apparently the only one treated in detail in the original text as it survives, it is possible that the text originally discussed the nature of analysis with respect to each of the seven in turn, and that the passages dealing with the other six have been lost, or displaced. The section on **etargaire** at the end of the "Book of Cenn Fáelad" may in that case originally have belonged here (see Thurneysen, pp. 282-84).

[13] See note 30 above.

grammatical and metrical observations from all kinds of sources including other parts of the *Auraicept*, and argues that it gives us a glimpse of the kind of material being learnt in schools of poetry (or monastic schools) around the tenth century.[14] Among the topics covered are:

a) alphabets: comparison of Hebrew, Greek and Latin[15] with the Beithe Luis Nin ([7-8]; 1129-1212; 1254-63);[16]

b) changes in the value of consonants, including airdibdud (loss of s and f) (1264-1301);

c) the five different kinds of Irish (1302-1338);[17]

d) deach (syllables), including the greatest number of syllables possible in a word in Latin and in Irish, with examples (1213-42, 1409-38, 1454-1514);

e) perfect and imperfect numbers (1439-53);[18]

f) a paradigm for the 25 prepositional inflections or filltigthi (1515-43);[19]

g) accent (forbaidh) (1544-76);

h) various terms connected with syllables and metre (1577-1636).

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[14] See p. 286.

[15] [7,1-2] = 1129-31. A table of the characters of all three alphabets (reproduced by Calder, p. 86) appears to have been part of the original text; see Ahlqvist, pp. 45-46.

[16] A brief statement regarding the force of letters in the B-L-N (1201-02) is apparently the last fragment of canonical material (= [8]).

[17] On this subject, which also occurs in the commentary on the prologue, see Meroney, pp. 21-24.

[18] Cf. *Anonymus ad Cuimnanum*; see Chapter One, note 72.

[19] See below, p. 72. Ahlqvist considers that this paradigm and the similar ones found later in this section were not originally part of the canonical material, but formed a separate tract, in origin probably equally as old as the original *Auraicept* text; see pp. 29-31.

The 'body of the primer' is said to end at line 1636, but after this several short texts covering similar material are found:

1637-74	Second paradigm of prepositional inflections (see (f) above).
1674-1720	Repetition in briefer form of material in (g) and (h) above.
1721-58	Grammatical oddments: the origin of the words aipgitir and littir; a grammatical joke; and the longest words in Latin and Irish again.
1759-1879	Third and fullest paradigm of prepositional inflections, giving plural forms and all three genders.
1880-92	Fourth paradigm: the shortest, with only 20 cases.
1893-1925	Discussion (unfortunately not at all clear) of "two views of analysis [or parsing], that is, analysis according to the meaning it denotes and analysis according to the method which it uses".

c The degree of dependence on Latin

The few scholars who have paid any attention to the content of the *Auraicept* have divergent views on the question of the position of this text within the native grammatical tradition and the relationship that it bears to classical Latin grammar. Osborn Bergin,[50] whose main interest was in the later medieval Irish grammatical tradition, is dismissive of the *Auraicept*. He saw it as an "attempt to construct an Irish grammar on the

[50] 'The Native Irish Grammarian', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 24 (1938), 205-35.

model set by the Medieval Latin grammarians"[51] - an attempt which (he argues) led nowhere, and since it was abandoned can be ignored by the student of the native Irish grammarian. Indeed Bergin writes off the early period entirely: he states that "the ancient Irish knew nothing about grammar" and observes of the detailed study of Latin grammar by Irishmen evidenced by the Irish glosses in the St Gall Priscian that

> this has nothing to do with the study of Irish grammar. The grammatical systems of Irish and Latin are far apart, and in any case there was in those days no reason why the Latin system should be applied to Irish. The motive was lacking.[52]

This statement and his description of the *Auraicept* already quoted are at odds: if this is indeed an "attempt to construct an Irish grammar on the model set by the Medieval Latin grammarians" then we do have an example of the Latin system being applied to Irish. Bergin is looking for a 'pure' native grammatical tradition, and can find no evidence for it during the early period. The blame for this deficiency lies with Latin: "The application of the Medieval Latin system to Irish studies was an unmixed evil. It resulted in an enormous waste of time and energy in futile speculation."[53]

O Cuív, whose main interest is again in the Middle Irish period, does however see some continuity between the *Auraicept* and the medieval Irish

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[51] p. 207.

[52] 'Native', p. 205.

[53] p. 206; it is not clear whether this latter comment is directed against the *Auraicept* in particular, or the wide-spread etymologizing tendency ("crazy etymologies", p. 207) with which Bergin, in common with most nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars, had very little patience. Cf. Gneuss, 'Study of language', p. 22: "Only recently has [antique and medieval etymology] begun to be viewed with more sympathetic eyes again".

bardic tracts, at least with regard to the grammatical terminology used.[54] Tracing the origin of the later medieval terms to a mixture of both native and classical sources,[55] O Cuív observes that even the title *Auraicept na nÉces* is a hybrid of foreign and native learning: aicept 'lesson' from Latin *acceptum*, and Irish eces 'poet, sage, scholar'.[56] Van Hamel, who entitled his detailed study of the *Auraicept* 'Primitive Irish Linguistics',[57] provides the best description of this mixture which Bergin found so abhorrent. Van Hamel points out that the only pure Celtic, native elements in the *Auraicept* are to be found in the sections on metrics, where neither terminology nor examples are drawn from Latin.[58] He comments that in the tradition of Irish poetics

> there were elements which offered a point of contact with the grammatical scholarship acquired along with knowledge of Latin. From the convergence of these two arose the first Irish language-study. Initially this betrayed all too clearly its double origin. It made a somewhat amphibian whole; we cannot see the *Auraicept* as anything other than this.[59]

Here van Hamel recognizes that, far from being an irrelevance or an 'evil' distraction, the study of Latin grammar was the catalyst which began the

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[54] See for example 'Linguistic Terminology in the Medieval Irish Bardic Tracts', *Transactions of the Philological Society* (1965), 141-64 (p. 160).

[55] ibid., p. 154.

[56] ibid., p. 158.

[57] See his article 'Primitieve Ierse taalstudie', cited in note 23 above.

[58] See p. 337.

[59] pp. 338-39 (my translation): "Er scholen in die Ierse poetica elementen, die een aanrakingspunt boden voor de mèt de kennis van het Latijn verworven grammaticale geleerheid. Uit het samengaan van die twee ontstond de eerste Ierse taalstudie. Aanvankelijk verraadde die maar al te duidelijk haar dubbele oorsprong. Zij vormt een tamelijk amfibisch geheel; als iets anders kunnen wij de *Auraicept* niet zien."

process of turning latent consciousness of linguistic phenomena into conscious grammatical analysis of the vernacular. This study led inevitably to the making of comparisons and distinctions between Latin and Irish, such as we see in the *Auraicept*.[60] There is no reason to regard this process as invalid, and irrelevant to some supposedly pure native tradition, simply because it was occasioned by a foreign stimulus; and although the resulting amphibious mixture of vernacular and Latin ideas and terminology is not easily classifiable, the value of the *Auraicept* as evidence for early Irish ways of understanding and analysing language is surely not lessened.

d Absence of the Latin model of analysis - the eight parts of speech

The *Auraicept* should be seen not as a failed attempt to make Irish fit the model of Latin grammar, but as, in part, a recognition that Irish did not fit that system, and an attempt to find other ways of describing Irish which seemed more appropriate. The extent to which the text depends upon Latin categories and doctrines is not as great as may first appear. Calder appears at first to over-emphasize the similarities between the matter of the *Auraicept* and that of the Latin grammarians:

> The matter is largely identical with that treated of by the Latin Grammarians in their early chapters - the alphabet, classification of letters, sounds and syllables, consonants and vowel changes, gender and declension of nouns, comparison of adjectives, prepositions governing dative and accusative cases, the accent, artificial and natural, genus and species, and a

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[60] For example, the comparison of vowels and consonants in both languages at the beginning of the "Book of Cenn Fáelad".

few other incidental points.[61]

This long list of common material rather obscures the fact that, while many of the terms and concepts of the Latin grammarians (including those of Isidore of Seville, to whom the Auraicept authors are particularly indebted)[62] have been appropriated by the Irish, the structure of their analysis has not. Even allowing for the muddled state of much of the text, and the obscuring of the original structure of the canonical text by layers of commentary, it is clear that the Irish grammarians were not going about their work in the same way as, for example, Donatus and his commentators. Elementary Latin grammar starts with the eight parts of speech, and these are structurally important also in advanced works such as the *Ars maior* of Donatus. One would therefore have expected the Irish to have made use of this method of analysis in the *Auraicept*, if they were indeed simply applying the Latin system to Irish. Yet, although at least one commentator was clearly familiar with the concept of eight parts of speech,[63] none of them made any attempt to structure their grammar of Irish around it. The concepts of gender, declension, comparison etc, which the Latin grammarians regard as properties of particular parts of speech and discuss within the context of the appropriate part,[64] are discussed as concepts in their own

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[61] p. xxii.

[62] See Calder, pp. xxxi-xxxii; however, Thurneysen (pp. 276-77) is more cautious about identifying Isidore as the direct source in some of the instances which Calder offers. The use (direct or indirect) of Isidore is helpful in establishing the date of the material: no part of the text which makes use of his *Etymologies* can have been composed before the publication of that text at Isidore's death in 636.

[63] See p. 57 above; this passage is discussed in detail below, pp. 66-69.

[64] e.g. Donatus in the *Ars minor* identifies gender, number, case, form etc. as properties of nouns: *Nomini quot accidunt? Sex. Quae? Qualitas conparatio genus numerus figura casus* (Holtz, *Donat*, 585/8-9).

right, not as aspects of the grammatical function of any one word category.

However, Calder's account goes on to point out the absence of analysis in terms of parts of speech:

> The omissions are almost equally significant. There is no classification of declensions, no declension of adjectives which are tacitly included with the substantives, no treatment of pronouns except as tokens of gender (*aurlonn*, 585), or as emphasized by *féin* = *met* (726), and the whole accidence of verbs is wanting. The similarity between Latin and Gaelic failed at this point. The paradigm of the verb is tentative and native (304, 653).[45]

The reference to adjectives is potentially misleading, since the Latin grammarians themselves also had no separate category for these, but included them with substantives within the category of *nomen*. As for the verb, it is quite true that this receives no systematic treatment as a separate word category. The first of the verb paradigms referred to is an incidental addition; it occurs in the commentary on the sentence quoted earlier (**Attaat di ernail...**) as part of the analysis of the first word **attaat**, in parallel with the paradigm for Latin *sunt*.[46] The second of Calder's references is to the section on **etargaire** (distinctions), where paradigms of the perfect active of **do·gní** ('does') and the present passive of **caraid** ('loves') are given as examples of two of the seven types of **etargaire** - distinction of person in the active and in the passive; it is the concept of 'distinction', not the category of verb and its properties, which is important here.[47] In both this latter case and in the incomplete

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[45] pp. xxii-xxiii.

[46] See pp. 56-57 above.

[47] These are part of the canonical text [4,5-6]; see Ahlqvist, pp. 42-44.

discussion of pronouns we see again the tendency to ignore word categories in favour of certain characteristics or phenomena of language which cross the boundaries of the divisions used by Latin grammarians.

Calder implies (and Bergin argues) that there was a deliberate attempt to analyse Irish in terms of the Latin parts of speech, an attempt resulting in only limited success because, whereas the noun could be made to fit, the Old Irish verbal system was too highly complex and remote from the Latin system for the parallels to be obvious; "the similarity ... failed at this point". Yet the impression that I have gained from the *Auraicept* (both the canonical text and the commentary) is rather that the Irish did not work at all with the concept of word categories in their own language. The canonical text makes no reference to 'parts of speech', either as a group or individually; the only place where they are mentioned is, as was noted above (p. 57), in the commentary, as part of the discussion of the words **attaat** and *sunt*:

> **Coich raind indsce in focul is sunt, ar itat uiii randa insci and .i. nomen** ... (What part of speech is the word '*sunt*'? For there are eight parts of speech, i.e. '*nomen*' ...)[11]

The Latin terms are given first, with Irish equivalents; in the longest version of the text, some of the terms are defined in Irish as well as being given Irish names.[12] It is worth taking a closer look at these names and observing how frequently, and with what meaning, they occur

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[11] Lines 316-7.

[12] See Calder's second recension, lines 2659-71.

outside this passage.[70]

nomen:	**ainm**	primary meaning 'name'; here (and in the St Gall glosses) = 'noun'; used only once elsewhere in *Auraicept*, when it refers to a combination of letters or an inscription.[71]
pronomen:	pronomen	Latin loan word used only here in the *Auraicept*.[72]
verbum:	**briathar**	primary meaning 'word'; here (and in St Gall glosses) = 'verb' (used in this sense several times in the second recension but only within this passage); used elsewhere once to mean 'written word' and once 'word or reference'.[73]
adverbium:	doibriathar	from do **bríathar** ('to-word'), a translation of *adverbium*; used only here in the *Auraicept*, and also found in the glosses.[74]
participium:	**randghabthach**	'part-taking' (from **rann** 'part' and **gaibaid** 'takes') = 'participle'; used here only (in second recension appears as **randgapál**, only

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[70] I have given the words in the form in which they occur in Calder's edition; definitions, and observations on occurrence of the terms in the St Gall Priscian glosses (see note 78 below), are taken from the *Dictionary of the Irish Language* (*DIL*). Calder's glossary was the source for different usages of the terms within the *Auraicept*.

[71] See *DIL* **ainmm** (c).

[72] This is the only occurrence listed in the *DIL*, though as van Hamel points out, it does occur also in the St Gall glosses (see note 78 below).

[73] See *DIL* **bríathar** (e).

[74] See *DIL* **dobríathar**; Thurneysen, *Grammar*, p. 506.

	in this passage (2668) - this form is also found in the glosses).[75]
coniunctio: comhfhocul	'with-word' (from co n- 'with' and focull 'word'); used only here to mean conjunction; elsewhere in *Auraicept* with meaning 'a full sound';[76] the second recension has comaccomal 'conjoining', 'coordinating'.
praepositio: remshuidhiugud	'a placing before' 'anteposition' (verbal noun from remi-suidegadar 'to place before'); used commonly in the glosses to mean *praepositio*, but in the Auraicept only here in this sense, and elsewhere as a metrical term to describe syllables interposed or placed before others.[77]
interiectio: interiacht	a Latin borrowing used only in this passage.

There are two things to note about the terms in this list: first, that their use in the *Auraicept* is confined mainly to this passage, with four of the terms occurring only here and the rest being used only rarely elsewhere, and then usually not in the same technical sense; secondly, that most of them are either direct borrowings of the Latin term (pronomen, interiacht) or calques, translating the elements of the Latin into their

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[75] See *DIL* ranngabál and ranngabthach.

[76] The word is used to mean 'maxim' and 'synonym' in non grammatical texts. There is one other instance of it being used to translate *coniunctio*; see *DIL* comfocal.

[77] See *DIL* remsuidigud (a) and (b).

Irish equivalents (doibriathar, randghabthach, comhfhocul, remshuidhiugud), while only two, ainm and briathar, are drawn from pre-existing native vocabulary. The borrowing or translating of terms suggests that these were not concepts that had traditionally been expressed in Irish before they were encountered in Latin; while the fact that they occur almost exclusively (and in the case of direct borrowings, exclusively) in this passage and are not used in the same sense in the rest of the *Auraicept*, indicates that they were not found to be useful categories for describing Irish by the author of the original text or the commentators working within this tradition.[18]

So although the eight parts of speech were to the Irish a grammatical commonplace when discussing Latin, and as such are referred to in passing in the course of a commentary, it appears that division into word classes was not considered a useful approach to the study of Irish.[19] This must be because the morphology of Irish did not correspond closely enough to the morphology of Latin to enable the Irish to establish word classes on the same morphological criteria as those found in Latin. The situation was different when the early Latin grammarians began to analyse their own

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[18] These terms are used more frequently, on the other hand, in the glosses on the St Gall Priscian (St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek 904), because they were needed to describe the Latin parts of speech. Van Hamel (pp. 331-33) pointed out the many correspondences in terminology between the glosses and the *Auraicept* (which suggest that both belonged to the same grammatical tradition), and argued that the use of a borrowed term indicates that the concept either truly has no equivalent in Irish (e.g. acuit = *acutus* Sg.213a8, graif = *gravis* Sg.212a13), or that it was thought at the time to have no equivalent (e.g. pronomen = *pronomen* Sg.208a6, posit = *positivus* Sg.39a1, comparait = *comparativus* Sg.39a26, 40a6, superlait = *superlativus* Sg.40a11). On the non-recognition of pronouns and of degrees of comparison as independent concepts in Irish, see below, pp. 81-83.

[19] The abstract noun randatu (from rann 'part') is used in the glosses to express the property of belonging to a certain part of speech (see *DIL*); this term is not found in the *Auraicept*.

language, borrowing Greek concepts and classifications, including the parts of speech; the similarities between the two languages were such that the Romans were able to transfer the Greek system of parts of speech almost wholesale, having only to reconcile themselves to the absence of the article in Latin, and adding the concept of interjection which the Greeks had not used.[80] Much of the writing of Latin grammarians, especially in the detailed commentaries, is concerned with justifying and explaining the ways in which Latin departs from Greek, for the study of Latin grammar continued to be dominated by the Greek model.

The *Auraicept*, on the other hand, is not a slavish attempt to impose the Latin model on Irish. For all its borrowing of Latin grammatical terms and references to Latin grammarians, it reveals a distinctly Irish way of studying language. This independence can be seen not only in negative terms - the absence of the model of eight word classes - but also in positive terms, as revealed in several interesting methods of analysis and ways of combining and structuring material, which appear to be peculiarly Irish, though some of the individual concepts can often be traced ultimately to Latin grammarians.

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[80] See C. Lambert, *La grammaire latine selon les grammairiens latins du IV^e^ et du V^e^ siècle* (Paris, 1908), p. 1. The situation was also different in England, where the Latin categories were readily applied to the description of Old English and, as we have seen (p. 47 above), Ælfric in his grammar expressly notes that English too has eight parts of speech.

e Alternative Irish methods of analysis

i "seven things by which Irish is measured"

Instead of a list of eight parts of speech, the *Auraicept* offers a list of seven concepts which are used in the analysis of Irish:

> **Sechta frise-toimister Góedelg .i. fid , deach, réim , forbaid, alt , insce , etargaire.**[11]

Some of these seven - **fid** 'letter', **deach** 'syllable' (translated by Calder as 'verse foot', which is its meaning within a metrical context). and **forbaid** 'accent' [12] - are concepts which would be dealt with in secondary level Latin grammar: for example each of these is the subject of a separate chapter in Book I of Donatus's *Ars maior*. The remaining concepts - **réim** 'declension', **insce** 'gender' and **etargaire** 'distinction' (equated in the text with Latin *conparatio*) - are also found in the *Ars maior*, but as sub-sections within chapters on the parts of speech rather than forming major categories of analysis, since in Latin these are treated as properties of various parts of speech.[13] Yet in the *Auraicept* all seven are grouped together, all apparently being regarded as primary categories used in the analysis of Irish. Classification in heptads is a common Irish

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[11] The heptad by which the Irish language may be analysed: that is, letter and syllable, declension and accent, juncture, gender and distinction (739-40 = [5]).

[12] And possibly also **alt**, which appears to mean 'juncture', and which Ahlqvist (p. 44, n. 16) suggests is related to the Latin term *positurus* denoting the concrete sign indicating juncture; but further research is needed on the usage of this term within the *Auraicept* commentary.

[13] See p. 64 and note 64 above.

characteristic, found especially in legal texts;[14] the number of categories here, as also in the case of the seven kinds of distinction, is likely to be a reflection of this fondness for the number seven, and the author may well have recognized other categories which he has excluded from his list. This particular grouping of different types of concept does not seem to be based on any known Latin source;[15] the treatment of declension, gender and comparison as primary categories of analysis is a reflection of the importance they have assumed for the Irish grammarian, who means something rather different by these terms from what we would expect.

ii prepositional inflections (**filltigthi**)

Among the most interesting sections of material found in the *Auraicept* are the paradigms or lists of **filltigthi**, which Calder translates as 'prepositional flections' or 'prepositional cases'. Although it is fairly certain that this material did not figure in the original *Auraicept* but formed a separate tract,[16] parts of it are probably as old as the canonical text, dating from no later than the first half of the eighth century,[17] and the development of the paradigms and their incorporation into the *Auraicept* give us an insight into the way in which the Irish understood declension within the native language. The word **réimm**, meaning literally 'run' or 'course', is used in this technical context to mean 'declension' or 'inflection'. (It can also mean 'alliteration' when used

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[14] See Ahlqvist, p. 44 and n. 11.

[15] See Ahlqvist, p. 44.

[16] See Ahlqvist, p. 29.

[17] The date is deduced from the presence of the archaic accusative form **inmbein**; see Thurneysen, p. 287, and note 19 above.

in discussion of poetics; terms with two meanings, one grammatical and one metrical, are common in the *Auraicept*, and some of the obscurity of the text is due to commentators switching in quick succession and without warning from one sense to another, thus effectively writing about two different concepts at once.) The essence of **réimm** is defined by one commentator as "the inflected, voiced, articulate change which obtains from the nominative singular to the ablative plural".[10] There is nothing unusual in this, except that Irish does not have an ablative case, according to modern grammarians. Like Ælfric's identification of an ablative in Old English,[11] this definition follows the Latin model which does have an ablative case; but **fochsal** 'ablative' (literally = 'a taking away') occurs also as one of the prepositional inflections listed below.[12] Elsewhere, however, we read that "there are twenty-five prepositional flections (**filltigthi**) in declension (**réimm**)",[13] and the paradigm of the noun **fer** ('man') which follows (1516-1543) contains the singular forms for in fact twenty-six 'cases', followed by a few plural forms. These twenty-six include the five cases recognized by modern grammarians of Old Irish - nominative, vocative, accusative, genitive and dative.[14] The remaining

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[10] 905-07.

[11] See note 11 above.

[12] This and the following examples are all quoted in the form given by Ahlqvist, pp. 52-53, with normalised spelling. The literal definitions of the case names are based on Ahlqvist's glossary, and the translations of these into latinate equivalents are also Ahlqvist's, who followed and improved upon Calder's example here: see his comments in an earlier article on the subject of these paradigms, 'Notes on "Case" and Word-Boundaries', *Eriu*, 25 (1974), 181-89 (p. 181).

[13] 1515.

[14] See Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old Irish*, revised and translated by D. A. Binchy and O. Bergin (Dublin, 1946), §246. All of these except the nominative and genitive forms are combined in the paradigm with a prefix: the vocative with an interjection, the accusative with the definite

cases do not add any new forms of the noun fer itself, but consist of some form of the noun in combination with a prefix which is the 'case' determinant. Thus the paradigm contains not only fer 'man' (ainmniugud 'naming' i.e. nominative case), fir 'of a man' (selbad 'possessing' i.e. genitive case) and dofiur 'to a man' (rath 'bestowing' i.e. dative case) but also tarfer 'across a man' (tairsce 'trespassing': "translative" case), ifer 'into a man' (inotacht 'entering': "illative" case), ifiur 'in a man' (attrab 'dwelling in': "inessive" case) etc. These prefixes are mainly prepositional, but also include the copula is: isfer 'it is a man' (túarascbáil 'account, description': "descriptive" case), and in one case the article combined with a preposition: frisinfer 'against the man' (tórmach 'increasing': "augmentative" case). Each of these cases is individually named; the terms used are mainly verbal nouns which convey the force of the preposition (or other prefix), thus sechfer ('past a man') is in the 'passing by' (sechmall) or "praeterlative" case, ófiur ('from a man') is in the 'taking away' (fochsal) or "ablative" case. This consistent grammatical terminology emphasizes the unity of the paradigm which makes no distinction between cases which we would regard as genuine, such as accusative and vocative, and those which we would regard as spurious, such as "illative" and "praeterlative".

At least four different versions of this declensional paradigm appear in the manuscripts.[13] As Ahlqvist has pointed out,[14] the first of these (1637-74) does attempt to distinguish between the two different kinds of

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article, and the dative with the preposition do 'to'.

[13] See Ahlqvist's edition, p. 31.

[14] In 'Notes on "Case"', p. 183.

case. It talks of **filliud** or **filltiugud** meaning an inflection or case that involves prepositional or other syntactically significant phrases, and **de(a)lba filltecha** 'inflected forms' meaning cases in the accepted sense; and it groups the prepositional and other cases in three different categories, according to which flectional case they take.[15] The other two versions of the paradigm do not make such a distinction. The last of them (1893-1925) is shorter than the rest, containing only twenty cases. This is thought to be the oldest of the four paradigms:[16] it also clearly counts prepositions as part of the system of inflections.

The fullest list (1759-1879), which includes paradigms for feminine (**ben** 'woman') and neuter (**nem** 'heaven') nouns as well as for the masculine **fer**, is a further elaboration of the same principle. Here we find not only prepositions (and other words coming before the noun) being counted as part of the inflection; all kinds of additions to, subtractions from and alterations of the basic forms **fer**, **ben** and **nem** are included in the list. Thus we find **feron** ("hyperbole"), **feer** ("retarding"), **ser** ("change of initial"), **fel** ("change of final"), **refer** ("inversion"),[17] **firine** ("diminutive"), **fe** ("theft of a hard"), **ferr** ("doubling a final") etc. The list also includes potential cases which do not occur with this particular

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[15] There are twelve **filliud** which go in the form of **ainmnid** (nom.) and **áinsid** (acc.) (i.e. **fer**); seven go in the form of **tabarthaid** (dat.) and **fochlaid** (abl.) (i.e. **fiur**); and one goes in the form of **togarthid** (voc.) and **genitil** (gen.) (i.e. **fir**). Ahlqvist notes that these six case names are used in the glosses to describe inflectional cases in Latin; they have been taken over for the same use in Irish (hence the inclusion of the ablative case), rearranged into three groups "to fit the *Auraicept* concept of Irish as a language with three inflectional forms of nouns" ('Notes', pp. 183-84).

[16] See Thurneysen, p. 286.

[17] This should probably read **ref**, since the example for **ben** is **neb**.

example, thus "ferfer its reduplication is not found". At the end of the list come the urlunn indsci (i.e. airlainn insce 'markers of gender'): the copula together with stressed personal pronoun ise, issi, ised (literally 'it is he, she, it', = 'this is').[98] These also appear to be conceived as a modifier of the words to which they are prefixed, and therefore in some sense as a kind of inflection.

What made the Irish count prepositional and other phrases as "inflections" of a noun? Thurneysen thought that these paradigms were simply a case of the Irish being more consistent than other European grammarians in the Middle Ages. Pointing out that the paradigms of the Latin grammarians always include '*a*(*b*)' before the noun in the ablative case, and '*o*' in the vocative, he argues that the Irish interpreted these words as integral parts of the cases, and extended the principle to other prepositions and particles preceding the inflecting form.[99] The inclusion within the paradigm of non-prepositional elements (such as the copula is) and of the non-grammatical "cases" described in the previous paragraph would seem to be a later, Middle Irish elaboration of the system, but the idea of prepositional inflections themselves would appear to have been developed within the Old Irish period.[100] Thurneysen also points out that Irish scribes wrote such combinations as one word-unit: not i fiur, co fer (as Calder had printed his version of the paradigms) but ifiur,

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[98] See below, pp. 77-79.

[99] Thurneysen, 'Auraicept', p. 287.

[100] See Ahlqvist in his edition, pp. 29-31, on the three phases in the development of the paradigms.

cofer.[101] Van Hamel's brief comment on the filltigthi paradigms, that

> they could do this more readily since in Irish the proclitics were regarded as part of the word-whole and were attached thereto in writing,[102]

again draws attention to the connection between the graphical representation of Irish and the kind of analysis found in these paradigms. The comment rather begs the question of where the Irish acquired this approach to word boundaries. Does it, as Thurneysen suggests, simply derive from a logically consistent extension of including '*ab*' before the ablative in Latin paradigms, or does it, as Ahlqvist has argued,[103] represent an attempt to develop a system of analysis which suited the particular characteristics of the Irish language as perceived by the native grammarians? Leaving aside, for the time being, the filltigthi, I believe that an examination of some of the other unusual concepts to be found in the *Auraicept* provides further evidence of a distinctively Irish method of analysis.

iii airlainn insce ('markers of gender')

Gender (insce) is another of the seven concepts by which Irish is to be analysed, and a discussion of gender occupies a large portion of the canonical text of the *Auraicept* ([3,1-14]). The term airlainn is spelled

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[101] 'Auraicept', p. 286 and n. 2. Ahlqvist makes a point of not separating nouns and proclitics in his edition of the paradigm; see pp. 31 and 52.

[102] "Zij konden dat te geredelijker doen, daar in het Iers de proclitica als delen van het woordgeheel worden beschouwd en daaraan vast worden geschreven" (p. 323).

[103] See his edition, p. 29 and n. 48, and especially the article 'Notes on "Case"'.

in a variety of ways in the manuscripts (e.g. urluime, urlaind, aurlaind). Calder identified it with the form airlaime meaning 'readiness' or 'preparation' and translated it either as 'leading word' or 'prefix', the former presumably because the airlainn leads on to the following word by preparing one to recognize its gender. However, it is more likely that the original term was airlann, with the primary meaning 'end' or 'handle';[104] thus the airlann insce is a particle which provides a 'handle' for (i.e. allows the recognition or naming of) the gender of the word which follows it.

After introducing the three genders, the author asks "catte dechor eterru?" ('What is the difference between them?') to which the answer is "nos·dechrigetar a tri airlainn insce" ('Their three markers of gender keep them distinct'): these 'markers' are the combinations of copula and pronoun is é, is sí, is ed ('it's him, it's her, it's it) which serve as demonstrative pronouns [3,3-3,4]. In one passage of commentary (1621-1636), airlainn refers to any particle or combination of particles coming before a noun which happen to have distinct forms for the different genders. Thus not only the demonstrative pronouns but also the declining numerals dá tri cethir (masc.). di teora ceitheora (fem.), are classed as airlainn. Another passage (585-94) tries to distinguish between erlonn (i.e. airlainn) and remshuidigud, the term used to translate Latin *praepositio* in the passage on the eight parts of speech, and elsewhere used to refer to a prefixed or interposed syllable in metrics. Yet another passage (713-20) feels the need to distinguish between airlainn, insce 'gender' and etargaire 'inflection'.

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[104] See *DIL* under 2 airlann, airlam (c) plus corrigendum, and airlaime.

The concept that demonstrative pronouns mark the gender of nouns is not exclusive to the Irish: the grammarian Consentius argued this for Latin, and the Irish grammarians probably derived the idea from him or other Latin sources.[105] What is striking about the concept of airlainn, especially as it is discussed in the commentaries, is the close relationship which is perceived between the marker and the word it marks. What would normally be regarded as four separate words, is é in fer ('it is he the man'). are seen as a unit, iséinfer, in which one function of the isé- prefix or 'handle' (itself a compound of is and é, but treated as one unit) is to manifest the gender of the noun to which it is attached.

iv seven etargaire or 'distinctions'

Etargaire or 'distinction', the last of the seven concepts for analysis of Irish listed in the canonical text (739-40 = [5]), is outlined earlier in the text (639-59 = [4,1-9]), and both passages have accumulated extensive commentary. Some of this commentary, especially on the earlier passage, is confused and bizarre, and was seen by Thurneysen as an attempt in the course of the later tradition to explain a term whose meaning was forgotten.[106] The equation of the concept in the original text with the Latin degrees of comparison [4,1], and the examples which follow, clearly show that the word must have meant some kind of distinguishing, separating, or differentiating by means of inflection.[107] One commentator certainly

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[105] See Ahlqvist's edition, p. 42.

[106] See pp. 282 and 284-85.

[107] Hence Calder's translation of etargaire as 'inflection'; but this term is potentially confusing, and I have preferred Ahlqvist's 'distinction', which preserves the force of the preposition eter 'between'; gaire is the verbal noun form from gairid 'calls' or 'names' (see

understood the word in this way, defining the 'essence' of etargaire as "the consideration of the size, smallness, quality, denotation, difference, variety or distinction which God hath fashioned among created things".[108] There are countless varieties or species of etargaire, according to this commentator, "for it is the genus that differentiates among all things".[109]

It seems that it is the principle of distinguishing that is being referred to; etargaire can take any number of forms depending on what is being differentiated - whether gender, person, number, quality, size etc. The canonical text says there are seven forms of etargaire:[110]

etargaire n-inchoisc i persainn cétumus: uind-se uind-si ondar (distinction of meaning in [one] person first: 'he sees', 'she sees', 'one sees')[111]

etargaire n-inchoisc phersaindi: mé fadén tú fadén hé fadén sinni fadesin sibsi fadesin siat-som fadesin (distinction of meaning of person: 'me myself', 'thou thyself', 'he himself' etc.)

Thurneysen, *Grammar*, §725), and thus literally etargaire is a 'naming between'.

[108] 913-16: Int attfegadh mete no laiget no inde no inchoisc no edardeifrighi no etardelighthi no edarderscaigthe rodealbh Dia eter duilib (note recurrence of etar/edar).

[109] 894-95: Iss e in cenel etardefriges na huili.

[110] On the significance of the number seven, see pp. 71-72 above.

[111] This passage is obscure: Ahlqvist offers this as a tentative interpretation; see pp. 43 and 59-60 of his edition.

etargaire persainde i ngním: do·rignius do·rignis do·rigni do·rigénsam do·rigénsaid do·rigénsat (distinction of person in the active 'I have made', 'thou hast made' etc.)

etargaire persainde i césad: no-m·charthar-sa no-t·charthar-su carthair-som no-n·carthar-ni no-bar·carthat-si cartair-som (distinction of person in the passive: 'I am loved', 'thou art loved' etc.)

etargaire derscaigthe i nderscugud .i. maith , ferr , ferr-són (distinction of difference in differentiating: that is 'good', 'better', 'truly better')

etargaire méte i mmétugud: mór , móo , móo-són (distinction of magnitude in magnifying: 'big', 'bigger', 'truly bigger')

etargaire lugaigthe i llugugud: bec , lugu , lugu-són (distinction of diminution in diminishing: 'small', 'smaller', 'truly smaller')

The paradigms which illustrate this list are drawn from very disparate grammatical categories: emphasizing and stressed forms of pronouns; verbs in the active mood and in the passive, the latter with infixed and suffixed personal pronouns; and three adjectives with irregular forms of comparison. Ahlqvist has identified Latin parallels for most of these paradigms, which may on an individual basis have served as models for the analysis of Irish; but there appears to be no source for this structure which groups all such material together, treating it all as manifestations

of the concept of distinguishing.[112] The principle of 'distinction' which unites these paradigms recognizes the morphological and other modifications undergone by the stem of a word in order for the gender, person, number, quality or size to be specified. This modification may involve the addition to the stem of varying enclitic particles: no distinction is made between the operation of the principle at the level of a simple word form, for example in the degrees of comparison of adjectives, and a more complex form, for example the paradigm of the passive verbal form (no-m·charthar-sa) with infixed and suffixed pronominal particles indicating the subject.

The *Auraicept* recognizes that etargaire is sometimes equivalent to Latin *comparatio* and sometimes to *pronomen et verbum*,[113] and yet, perceiving the same process to be at work in all cases in Irish, feels no need to take the analysis further, or to separate morphological from semantic manifestations of the process. Van Hamel argues[114] that the inability to separate the verb from other parts of speech (such as pronouns

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[112] For discussion of the sources, see Ahlqvist's edition, pp. 42-44.

[113] The canonical text states that the degree of comparison (a ngrád condeilg) according to the latinist is termed etargaire by the poet (filid - i.e. the Irishman) [4,1], but one commentator observes that "the poet's inchosc [i.e. the first two etargaire, distinctions of inchosc (meaning)], however, is with the Latinist not comparison at all, but *pronomen et verbum*" (677-79). Awareness of the different categories contained within the list of seven etargaire is seen also in the following passage of commentary: "What makes him say that 'comparative degree with the Latinist is named distinction by the poet', seeing there are but three degrees of comparison with the Latinist, and the poet has seven distinctions? It is not indeed to equate them [that he does so] ... Not every distinction is comparison, but every comparison is distinction." (680-86). (I have substituted 'distinction' for Calder's 'inflection' throughout this translation.) Note that both the original author and the commentator refer to the analyst of Irish as "the poet", contrasting this with "the latinist"; a reminder that the origins of Irish language study lie in the metrical tradition of the filid.

[114] p. 329.

and other enclitic particles) as an independent unity with its own morphology, is striking proof that familiarity with the Latin grammatical sources had had no influence on the handling of the material. Yet the *sum*/**attaat** paradigm[115] shows that at least one *Auraicept* author was capable of isolating the verb from pronouns and particles; if in the etargaire passage this is not done, I suggest that this indicates that pronouns and particles were seen as part of the morphological structure. It is not so much a failure to apply the Latin grammarians' teaching as a recognition of the inappropriateness of doing so from an Irish perspective.

v the longest Irish word

This Irish perspective seems to be based on an understanding of word boundaries rather different from that found in grammatical analysis of Latin. Further evidence of this (though not necessarily dating from the Old Irish period) is found in the passages of commentary which discuss the greatest number of syllables which can be found in a word (focul) in Latin and in Irish.[116] The thirteen-syllable example given for Latin - *honorificabilitudinetatibus*[117] - monstrous though it is, is recognisably one word; however the Irish examples are of a different kind:

fianamailecharatartha ('warrior-friendship')[118]

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[115] See pp. 57 and 65 above.

[116] 1435-38 and 1739-41.

[117] Listed by Petrus grammaticus, *GL*, VIII, 164/17-8; see also *Love's Labours Lost* V,i. All bar one of the *Auraicept* manuscripts in fact contain incorrect reading *tinerificabilitudinetatibus* here; see Ahlqvist's edition, p. 27.

[118] (4523). The translation is provided by Thurneysen (p. 277), who notes that Calder offered none, even in his glossary. Calder did, however, attempt to translate a somewhat different (and probably corrupt) version of

and

> **anrocomraircnicsiumairne** ('all the mistakes which *we* have committed')[118]

The first of these, a compound of two polysyllabic words, would probably be treated as one word if printed in a modern edition, but the second would not; yet the argument of these passages in the *Auraicept* depends on the fact that a syntactically close grouping like the second example was regarded as a single word unit. Calder noticed this fact and linked it to the **filltigthi**:

> The word **inrocomraircnigsiomairne** gives the key to the plan of inflection called **filltigthi**, prepositional cases. These eight syllables are held to form one word. According to our present grammatical methods the basis or unity is the compound word of five syllables **comroircnigsemmar**. It is preceded by a relative pronoun an- and by an enclitic or pre-verb -ro-, and it is followed by an emphasising pronominal suffix -ni. But the native Irish grammarian regarded all these syllables as parts of one word, and the scribes wrote the whole as one word. In their opinion, proclitics were not separate words, but rather **filltigthi**, inflections of the accented word. Accordingly they wrote **frissinfer** as one word, an inflected form of **fer**, and gave it a distinct technical name.[120]

vi a different understanding of word boundaries

Underlying the **filltigthi**, therefore, and reflected also in the concepts of **airlainn insce** and **etargaire**, and in the above example of the longest possible word in Irish, is an understanding of word boundaries rather different from that arrived at by what Calder (writing in 1917)

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the word which occurs elsewhere (1435): **fiannamailcecheterdarai** ('Fiann-like-every-second-one-of-them'). On long words see also the short article by Paul Walsh, 'A Mere Trifle', *The Irish Book Lover*, 28 (1941-42), 92.

[118] 1435.

[120] p. xlvii.

terms "our present grammatical methods", which were based, of course, on the methods of the ancient Latin grammarians. The European inheritance of and dependence on the classical analytical framework has resulted in the native Irish understanding being either overlooked or dismissed by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century grammarians and editors of Irish. So Celticists (and readers of Modern Irish and Gaelic) are accustomed to seeing a graphical layout, reflecting a grammatical analysis, which tends to separate particles, prepositions, the article, and other non-stressed or syntactically subordinate elements in the language.[121]

However, in the last thirty years a few Celticists have begun to rethink the question of word boundaries in Irish, following general work on the definition of linguistic units. Their approach is strikingly similar to that revealed in the *Auraicept*.

III Modern linguistic theory and descriptions of word boundaries in Irish

In an article published in 1965,[122] Alf Sommerfelt, working on the Modern Irish dialect of Torr, Co. Donegal, suggested a method for

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[121] Thurneysen in his *Grammar* separates words whenever this is consonant with general orthographical rules, but by use of the turned point (·) and the hyphen indicates the close relationship between particles and elements of a word-group; his practice is set out in §34, after a description of the graphical practices of Irish scribes (see p. 89 below).

[122] 'Word Limits in Modern Irish', *Lochlann*, 3 (1965), 298-314. In another article published in the same year, Sommerfelt illustrates the results of this method by presenting a story written in morph-groups ('The Phonemic Structure of the Dialect of Torr, Co. Donegal', *Lochlann*, 3 (1965), 237-54).

determining word limits, based on the concepts of 'morph', 'morph substitution class', 'thematic sequence' and 'nucleus' as defined by Joseph Greenberg in 1957.[123] According to this method, word limits are determined in relation to the possibility of inserting other elements into the existing group of morphs and/or other linguistic units. Thus to decide whether elements like the article or preposition in Irish form a word with the following element, one must see whether it is possible to insert anything between the two without disturbing the grammatical relationship between them. If there is no limit to the possible number of such insertions, then they are indeed two separate words; if, however, there is a limit (which may be zero) on possible insertions, then the two elements are part of the same word.[124]

Carl Borgström, meanwhile, was applying a very similar test of the possibility of insertion to the dialect of Barra in the Outer Hebrides.[125] By his method the article, prepositions, pronouns and numerals would all constitute prefixes within word units, rather than separate words. He notes that if this theory of word boundaries in Gaelic is accepted "it will entail changes in many statements of traditional Gaelic grammar. Instead of the dative case, there will be some thirteen cases, each one characterized by a prefix."[126] Borgström points out that his way of drawing word boundaries agrees fairly well with the practice "more or less

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[123] *Essays in Linguistics* (New York, 1957), Chapter II: "The definition of linguistic units" (pp. 18-34).

[124] Sommerfelt, 'Word Limits', pp. 300-01.

[125] 'Notes on Gaelic Grammar', in *Celtic Studies: Essays in Memory of Angus Matheson, 1912-1962*, edited by J. Carney and D. Greene (London, 1968), pp. 12-21.

[126] p. 16.

consistently followed in Old and Middle Irish manuscripts";[127] if he had known of the filltigthi in the *Auraicept* he would no doubt have seen them as further confirmation that his proposed method is valid for Old and Middle Irish as well as for modern Gaelic.

While Sommerfelt and Borgström were working on modern Celtic dialects, Lewy was writing a brief description of Old Irish which opens as follows:

> Old Irish is written in groups of words. This way of writing can have been introduced from no other civilization, because it is found nowhere, and must therefore build upon close observation of the spoken language.[128]

Although Lewy does not go so far as to argue that these 'groups of words' could in fact be defined as groups of morphs constituting single words, he clearly perceives the phenomenon (however described) to be a central feature of the language, not a peripheral peculiarity: he not only introduces the word-groups in his opening sentence but also refers to them constantly in the remainder of his description.

Oftedal, reviewing the work of these three scholars, pointed out the overlap between their conclusions and recognized the interesting implications for the grammar of all Goidelic languages;[129] but it was Ahlqvist who first added the evidence of the *Auraicept* to strengthen the

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[127] ibid.

[128] E. Lewy, 'Kurze Beschreibung des Altirischen', in *Beiträge zur Indogermanistik und Keltologie: Julius Pokorny zum 80. Geburtstag gewidmet*, edited by W. Meid (Innsbruck, 1967), p. 217.

[129] 'Modern Celtic Languages', in *Current Trends in Linguistics*, 9 (1972), 1202-31, especially pp. 1206-08.

case.[130] Most reviewers of Börgstrom's article had dismissed as an unnecessary complication his suggestion that there might be thirteen cases in Gaelic;[131] Ahlqvist draws their attention to an ancient precedent for such a system in the filltigthi. He argues that the independence from Latin in terms both of the number of cases in the system and of the native terminology used for all the prepositional cases supports the view that the framework seen in the *Auraicept* was devised to suit the Irish language.[132]

Borgström and the rest, and Ahlqvist in that particular article, are mainly concerned with establishing the validity of this approach for the description of the Gaelic languages, ancient and modern,[133] whereas my present concern is to show that the early Irish had an understanding of their own language which, whether or not it was valid, was not dependent on, but quite different from, the categories of traditional Latin grammar. Either way, however, it is impossible to discuss the Irish concept of word boundaries without making reference to the practices of Old and Middle Irish scribes with regard to separating words on the page.

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[130] In his article 'Notes on "Case" and Word-Boundaries', cited above, note 90.

[131] M. Dillon (*Celtica*, 9 (1971), 338-9) and D. MacAulay (*Scottish Gaelic Studies*, 12 (1971), 112) both reject the '13 cases' suggestion; P. Mac Cana (*Eigse*, 15 (1973), 68) mentions it without comment.

[132] 'Notes on "Case"', p. 185. Cf. Lewy's view that the graphical practice must "build upon close observation of the spoken language" (see above).

[133] These ideas do not appear to have been taken up in the recent grammar of Modern Irish by M. ó Siadhail, *Modern Irish: Grammatical Structure and Dialectal Variation* (Cambridge, 1989), except in the general discussion of the verb (p. 169), where the observation that "there is no absolute distinction between morphology and syntax" in verbal inflections obliquely raises the question of word boundaries.

IV Scribal practices with regard to word separation in Old Irish

In his *Grammar of Old Irish* Thurneysen describes these practices as follows:

> In general all words which are grouped round a single chief stress and have a close syntactic connexion with each other are written as one in the manuscripts. Thus conjunctions and pronouns affixed to them are written with the following verb, the article and attached possessives with the following noun, the copula with the following predicate, prepositions and affixed pronouns or article with the following verb or noun, enclitics with the preceding stressed word, etc. Examples: **actmachotchela** Wb. 5a9 for **act ma cho-t chela** 'save that it conceals it'; **innádcualaidsi** 5a21 for **in nád cúalaid si** 'have ye not heard?'; **istrissandedesin** 4d33 for **is tri-ssan déde sin** 'it is through those two things'; **díarfírianugudni** 4b17 for **di ar fíriánugud ni** 'to our justification'; **nímcharatsa** 5c6 for **ní-m charat sa** 'they love me not'. Occasionally, however, some of these elements are written separately.
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> This writing of word-groups rather than single words is a characteristic feature of Old Irish.[134]

As we have seen, scholars working either on the *Auraicept* or on the word boundaries question frequently refer to this feature of the manuscripts (or to Thurneysen's description of it) and point to the correspondence between the scribal practice and the understanding of words found in the *Auraicept*, or arrived at by modern methods. Some have tried to take Thurneysen's description a stage further by deciding which of his two criteria, the phonological ('grouped round a single chief stress') or the grammatical ('having a close syntactic connection with each other'), is most important in determining the shape of the written words.[135] Borgström believed that

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[134] §34 (pp. 24-5).

[135] The syntactic and phonological parameters of word groups are not necessarily identical: see the recent attempt to establish a universally applicable model for the positioning of clitics: J. L. Klavans, 'The Independence of Syntax and Phonology in Cliticization', *Language*, 61 (1985), 92-120.

the syntactic connection would prove to be the most important factor, but felt that this could not be established without a more detailed examination of the scribal practices.[136] Accepting Borgström's assumption of the priority of the grammatical criterion, Ahlqvist argues that

> in early Irish writing practice syntactic units, i.e. groups functioning as predicate (verbal or nominal), subject, object or adverbial, were felt to be more worthy of being separated from each other by word-boundaries, in other words of forming graphemic 'words', than the elements they were made up of. From this it would have been a natural step to considering any alteration inside such a unit as a change within a paradigm, in this instance [he is talking about the **filltigthi**], prepositions and the copula alternating with 'true' cases in the Latin (but not e.g. Finnish or Hungarian) sense like the nominative and accusative, as long as these also gave the noun the status of a syntactic constituent.[137]

Another instance, as we have seen, is the way groups consisting of verb plus infixed and suffixed pronominal elements are taken as single 'inflecting' units whose paradigms are classified along with purely verbal or adjectival forms as kinds of **etargaire**; which indicates, as I argued earlier, that pronouns and other particles are seen as part of the morphological structure.

Ahlqvist's words direct us to the crucial point of interaction between the grammatical analysis of a language and its graphical expression. When we find written language broken down by scribes into

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[136] p. 18.

[137] p. 185. A study by J. F. Huntsmen apparently also discusses syntactically defined word groupings in written Old Irish, according to P. Saenger ('Silent Reading: Its Impact on Late Medieval Script and Society', *Viator*, 13 (1982), 367-414 (p. 377)) who refers to an article 'On the Linguistic Understanding of the Early Celtic Grammarians', *Studia Celtica* (1981), "forthcoming". (I have been unable to trace this article, which was not published in the 1981 volume or in any subsequent volume of *Studia Celtica*.)

units which we recognize as words or word-groups, the scribe may simply have copied these units from his exemplar. However, if the text in the exemplar was not broken into word-units, or if it was being written down for the first time, not copied from an exemplar, the scribe must himself be responsible for analysing the language into elements "worthy of being separated from each other by word-boundaries". This analysis might be intuitive, or consciously based on learned grammatical principles. The scribes who first wrote down Old Irish were by definition not dependent on exemplars: they were displaying on the page a process of linguistic analysis, and revealing a particular understanding of what constitutes a 'word'.[138] The uniqueness of the Irish scribes' practice would suggest, as Lewy argued, that it was not copied from any other source, or taught on the basis of any foreign grammatical system, and must therefore be based on observation of the native language. The relative consistency of the scribal practice when writing Old Irish offers by far our best guarantee that some of the unusual features of the analytical method found in the *Auraicept* are not the obscure inventions of confused grammarians and commentators but an attempt to articulate, by careful selection from and adaptation of Latin grammatical concepts, a (perhaps intuitive) understanding of the structure of the vernacular which appears to have been common, at least among scribes.

Scribal practices such as word separation are the graphical manifestation of a particular perception of linguistic structures. They may be the only evidence of that perception, if it is not also manifested in grammatical texts of the period. If we knew nothing of the grammatical

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[138] See Chapter Five, pp. 228-33, for further discussion of such analysis.

education which scribes received, nevertheless the way in which they copied a language would tell us something of the way in which they perceived that language. In the case of Old Irish, the graphical evidence of the manuscripts confirms the evidence of the *Auraicept* in showing us that the Irish preferred to think of their language in terms of syntactic clusters rather than eight (or any other number of) grammatically distinct 'parts of speech'.

This brings us to the question of how the Irish perspective on the vernacular language affected their approach to Latin, and what problems they may have had in learning to read and write (both in terms of composing and of copying) the latter language. Here the practice of the scribes with regard to the separation of words again offers us some vital clues:

a) As we have already seen, Irish scribes wrote Old Irish in 'word groups' or syntactic clusters;
b) but they confined this practice to the copying of Irish and did not follow it when copying Latin;
c) however, they did introduce to the copying of Latin a practice not found hitherto in Western manuscripts: that of separating each word (according to their understanding of Latin) with a space, instead of writing in *scriptio continua*.

In other words, Irish scribes not only distinguished between their own language and Latin by following different practices when copying; they apparently also invented a new practice for copying Latin. What lay behind this innovation?

V The problems facing an Irish student of Latin

Maartje Draak, in her fascinating studies of the system of construe-marks and construe-glosses in the St Gall Priscian and other ninth-century Irish glossed manuscripts of Priscian and other texts, challenges Bergin's statement (quoted above, p. 61) that the technical study of Priscian's Latin grammar had "nothing to do with the study of Irish grammar".[139] One cannot begin to study a foreign language without making comparisons with one's native language and becoming aware of the differences between the two; and Draak argues that the construe-marks and glosses are evidence that Irish scholars were indeed aware that "the grammatical systems of Irish and Latin" were "far apart".[140] Elsewhere she draws attention to some of the important differences between the two systems which, she argues, created problems for an Irish student trying to read Latin.[141] The differences she highlights are those of syntax:

1 Irish, in spite of abundant inflections, normally maintains a strict word order: predicate-subject-object-adverbs or adverbial phrases;[142] while Latin is more fluid, but with a tendency to put the verb at the end of a phrase. Therefore Irish students would begin to read a Latin sentence by identifying the verb, as Draak

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[139] 'Construe Marks in Hiberno-Latin Manuscripts' and 'The Higher Teaching of Latin Grammar in Ireland During the Ninth Century'.

[140] 'Higher Teaching', pp. 142-43.

[141] 'Construe Marks', pp. 264-65.

[142] See Thurneysen, *Grammar*, §513: "In prose the finite verb always stands at the head of its clause"; this order is maintained even when another word is brought forward before the verb for special emphasis, such words being then preceded by a form of the copula is, thus forming a separate clause.

shows in an example[113] where a gloss is written not at the beginning of the Latin phrase which it explains, but above the verbal form which comes at the end of the phrase, and which an Irish student would have seen as the starting point.

2 In Irish, relativity is marked not by inflected relative pronouns but [through word order and] by altering the verbal form, e.g. berid in fer in claideb (the man carries the sword) beside is in fer beires in claideb (it is the man who carries the sword).[114] Therefore "the *pronomina relativa* of Latin syntax must have been stumbling-blocks for Irish students", and so construe-marks were used to help link these relative pronouns to their antecedents.

3 Irish favours parataxis in building up its sentences, while Latin is hypotactic. Draak argues that an Irish student, faced with the intricate structure of long Latin periods, would have had some difficulty in construing, relating a verb to its correct subject and object. Thus the construe-marks in the glossed manuscripts served to show the reader which words belonged together in the sentence (or to remind the teacher to make this clear to students).

Draak obviously did not intend this to be an exhaustive list of the differences between Irish and Latin and the difficulties that might be encountered by Irish students; these are simply observations arising out of

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[113] 'Higher Teaching', p. 119.

[114] These examples are mine - Draak gives only English ones. Irish has an invariable relative particle, **a'**, used only in one kind of relative construction: see Thurneysen, *Grammar*, §492; for a full description of the other methods by which relativity is marked, see §§493-511.

her interpretation of the significance of the construe-marks. But her observations are also a useful starting point for further exploration of this area. Is it possible that there is some connection between the unfamiliarity to the Irish of the concept of a 'relative pronoun', and the frequency with which in Insular manuscripts the Latin *pronomina relativa qui*, *quae*, *quod* etc. are abbreviated, using symbols which are often very similar to each other and to those for other small words and particles beginning with q-, such as the conjunctions *quia* and enclitic *-que*, so that it is sometimes unclear which word is in fact being represented in a carelessly written copy?[115] Scribes may have preferred to use abbreviated forms because this allowed them to conceal any uncertainty over the correct full forms, an uncertainty arising out of unfamiliarity with the grammatical role of these pronouns.

Taking Draak's argument a stage further with the help of the *Auraicept*, it could be said that all pronouns, not just relative pronouns, were a problem for the Irish student of Latin. We have seen that the Irish grammarian who translated the eight parts of speech into their Irish equivalents was unable to translate *pronomen*. Old Irish had no equivalent to the free-standing inflected personal, demonstrative and other pronouns found in Latin. Personal pronouns as objects are either infixed or suffixed to the verb or a preposition, while the stressed form of personal pronoun is usually used in conjunction with the copula or in emphatic form with the addition of the emphasizing enclitics, which can also be attached to various other word groups (preposition plus suffixed pronoun, possessive

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[115] For the large number of abbreviations for q- forms used by Irish scribes in copying Latin, and their preference for the abbreviated forms, see the sample studies of the practice in Irish manuscripts in Chapter Six.

pronoun plus noun, verb plus infixed pronoun etc.).[146] Since in Irish none of these pronominal particles were analysed as separate parts of speech but were seen as a kind of "inflection" within a verbal or nominal syntactic unit (according to the concepts of etargaire and airlainn insce), the independent pronoun in Latin, personal as well as relative, would in general have caused the Irish student some difficulty.

The less complex syntax of Irish, and the consequent difficulty experienced by Irish speakers as they attempted to understand Latin's intricate hypotactic structures, arise out of the Irish tendency (observable in *Auraicept* and confirmed by modern linguistic analysis of both Modern and Old Irish) to treat as one word those elements which are closely related syntactically. Irish is paratactic rather than hypotactic because its word boundaries are wider than those of Latin, and therefore it is incapable of doing as Latin does (separating related parts of speech by inserting other unrelated parts) without violating those word boundaries and separating elements which are considered to be part of a word-whole.

Draak identifies the problem in general terms as one of syntax; but in fact it is rather a problem of word boundaries which Irish students faced. The dividing line between syntax and morphology is at the level of words, and here Irish and Latin conceptions differed.[147] Some of what is

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[146] See Thurneysen, *Grammar*, §§401-455.

[147] Cf. Oftedal, p. 1206: "Grammar is traditionally divided into morphology and syntax. ... Writers of Modern Celtic grammars have often attempted to arrange their material according to this traditional division, but with little success. Their difficulties arise chiefly from the fact that they have accepted word spacing, as practised in the Modern Celtic written languages, as if it were a linguistic reality instead of a purely graphic device. In the writing and printing of all Modern Celtic languages, word spacing is modelled on the patterns of English or French,

considered to be syntax, or supra-word language structure, in Latin (e.g. the combination of a preposition and a noun) is regarded as morphology or sub-word language structure in Irish (e.g. the **filltigthi**). Therefore the main problem in learning Latin for students used to speaking Old Irish lay in recognizing the narrower limits of word boundaries in Latin and the consequent greater freedom of movement of elements within a sentence; it lay in identifying in Latin the various unbound elements of the language, the parts of speech which would not have been independent in their own language, and in seeing how these fitted together to form the sentence.

VI Conclusion

In order to be able to identify words in Latin the Irish studied the accounts of the morphological categories provided by the ancient grammarians. They would also have learned to recognize individual lexical forms (nouns in particular) through their use of Latin glossaries, in which the words are, by the nature of the text, already isolated. Glossaries aside, they would not have been helped by the layout of manuscripts. The Continental manuscripts in which they would originally have encountered and begun to learn to read their Latin were in a sense part of the problem, since they were written in *scriptio continua*, whose unbroken lines of letters made no concessions to foreigners who had not yet learned to recognize and distinguish the parts of speech. The graphical practice of

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which are not at all suited for the purpose." For a recent attempt to clarify the difference between syntax and morphology (i.e. phrase structure and word structure) see A.-M. Di Sciullo and E. Williams, *On the Definition of Word* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1987), especially pp. 1 and 19.

word separation is already established (though not yet fully developed) in the earliest surviving Latin manuscripts copied by Irish scribes. This practice, which, by isolating the parts of speech graphically makes them so much more distinct and accessible to the reader, must be seen as a practical outcome of the study of the Latin grammarians undertaken with the particular outlook and problems of a native speaker of Irish. The emphasis given to the eight parts of speech in Irish study of Latin grammar, and the role played by glossaries (and of the process of glossing texts) in helping students to identify words in the sense of lexical items, are the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

The Teaching of the Latin Grammarians on the Parts of Speech: The Theoretical Basis for Word Separation

I Introduction

> Stæfcræft is seo cæg, ðe ðæra boca andgit unlicð.[1]

> Chaque grammaire, malgré l'anonymat de ses règles, la technicité froide de ses formules, le conservatisme de ses exemples, fournit à sa manière la clef d'un monde, à une époque où la science grammaticale se confond avec la science tout court.[2]

Since for Insular scholars and scribes grammar was the key giving access to the world of written Latin, so for the modern student the grammar books written and studied in this period can be used as a key to the understanding of Insular culture. At the most basic level all would-be readers of Latin, if Irish or Anglo-Saxon was their first language, were dependent on "stæfcræft" - the science of letters, or in other words the *ars grammatica*. Without at least an elementary education in Latin grammar, books remained closed to their understanding. This dependence was the root of the widespread and pervasive influence of the *ars grammatica* on Insular

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[1] "Grammar is the key which unlocks the understanding of books" (Ælfric, *Grammar*, 2/16).

[2] L. Holtz, 'Tradition et diffusion de l'oeuvre grammaticale de Pompée, commentateur de Donat', *Revue de Philologie*, 45 (1971), 48-83 (p. 48).

culture; and it is also the reason why we can expect to find the teachings of the grammarians reflected in the practices of scribes. All Insular scribes engaged in copying Latin texts would have received some kind of education (however rudimentary) in Latin grammar, based on and adapted from the teachings of the classical and late antique grammarians. In this chapter I examine some aspects of the traditional teaching which were especially popular with and emphasized by the Insular Latin grammarians (and which are likely therefore to have formed the basis of any scribe's education) and argue that this teaching became the theoretical framework which underlay the separation of words in Latin texts. I hope also to show how the particular emphasis and the limitations of this teaching, as transmitted and adapted by the Insular grammarians, may in part explain the characteristic confusions and (in terms of modern linguistic analysis) irregularities found in word separation in Insular manuscripts.

The point has already been made in general terms that the classical and late antique Latin grammars, being written by and for native speakers of Latin, were in fact quite unsuitable texts for the purposes of foreign learners such as the Irish or Anglo-Saxons.[3] Vivien Law demonstrated this point,[4] and in her general survey of Insular Latin grammars began the work of examining how Insular grammar teachers selected from and added to the traditional material in order to make it more useful to foreign students,

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[3] See above, Chapter One, pp. 11-12.

[4] *ILG* pp. 53, 81, 106; see also her article 'The Study of Latin Grammar in Eighth-Century Southumbria', especially pp. 57-59.

whether at an elementary or a more advanced level.[5] What follows is a more detailed investigation of particular aspects of the traditional teaching and the way in which it was handled: approaching the material with the scribe and with word separation in mind, I have concerned myself only with those areas of grammatical theory dealing with the definition of linguistic units and with the recognition of word boundaries.

II The traditional doctrines

a The general scope of grammatical teaching

The subject matter generally treated by the Latin grammarians fell into three parts: first the concepts of *vox*, *littera* and other preliminary topics; next the parts of speech; and finally the vices and virtues to be found in the poets and in contemporary speech (barbarisms, solecisms and metaplasms), and rhetorical tropes and figures.[6] The three books of Donatus's *Ars maior* follow this pattern, and most of the other grammarians either cover all three areas, or concentrate on one or more subjects within those areas. Thus between them the grammarians discussed elements of

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[5] Further, more detailed textual studies of the way in which the writings of individual grammarians were used and adapted by the Insular teachers are much to be desired; but this is slow and difficult work owing to the complex nature of the textual traditions of grammatical works and the inadequacy of most printed editions. See further discussion of this problem on pp. 114-16 below.

[6] This three-fold structure of subject matter was inherited from the Stoic model; see Law, *ILG*, p. 12. For a detailed account of the origins and development of Roman grammar, see K. Barwick, *Remmius Palaemon und die römische ars grammatica*, *Philologus*, Supplementband 15:2 (Leipzig, 1922), pp. 215-68.

phonology and theoretical linguistics, of morphology, and of metrics and rhetoric; but with one major exception they tended to ignore syntax.

The neglect of this important area of grammar is explicable when we recall the context in which these texts were written and the use for which they were intended. The classical and late antique grammatical texts were products of schools of grammar devoted to the reading and explication of literature, especially the poets. The exposition of texts tended to proceed on a word-by-word basis, rather than commenting on phrases or sentences as a whole, and the grammars reflect that emphasis by concentrating on the syllable, the foot (in prose and in verse), and on the analysis of individual parts of speech rather than attempting to describe the arrangement of those parts of speech within larger structures.

The exception mentioned above is the late fifth- or early sixth-century grammarian Priscian, in his *Institutiones grammaticae*. The two final books (XVII and XVIII) of this long and detailed grammar deal with "the construction or ordering of the parts of speech among themselves", that is, with surface syntactical relationships (concord and government).[7] These two books were found to be very useful in the later middle ages; they were often copied separately and circulated without the rest of the work.[8] It is not clear how widely known these books were in the British Isles before the ninth century. The *Institutiones* as a whole do not survive in copies earlier than *c.*800, and though sixteen of the many Carolingian copies contain the complete text including Books XVII and XVIII, another

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[7] *GL*, III, 106-377.

[8] See M. Gibson, 'Priscian, "Institutiones Grammaticae": A Handlist of Manuscripts', *Scriptorium*, 26 (1972), 105-24 (p. 105).

eight stop short at Book XVI.[9] Only a few Insular authors make use of the *Institutiones* in their works; on the other hand, the antiquity of some of the language used by the Irish glossator of the ninth-century St Gall Priscian (which only contains books I-XI) suggests a tradition of the study of this text in Ireland dating back possibly to the seventh century. Whether the text they knew contained the final two books dealing with syntax is not clear.[10]

But unless they happened to encounter a copy of these two books of Priscian's *Institutiones*, early Insular students of Latin would have found no teaching in the traditional grammarians to help them come to terms with the complexities of Latin syntax. According to Gneuss, this would not have been too much of a problem for the Anglo-Saxons, at least as regards acquiring a passive knowledge of Latin;[11] but the Irish, being accustomed in their own language to a very different syntactic pattern, would perhaps have been grateful for some theoretical guidelines as they struggled to recognize the relationships between various parts of speech. The reality of this struggle is shown by the fact that in the ninth century, several centuries after the introduction of Latin into Ireland, advanced students of Latin grammar (or their teachers) still found it useful to have construe-marks to guide them through the text and tie the correct words

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[9] See Gibson, p. 105.

[10] Aldhelm is one of the few Insular authors who use the *Institutiones*, according to Law (*ILG*, p. 21), whose statement that Priscian was *not* widely known in Insular circles before the ninth century is challenged, with reference to the evidence of the glosses, by Ahlqvist, in his article 'Notes on the Greek Materials in the St. Gall Priscian (Codex 904)', in *The Sacred Nectar of the Greeks: The Study of Greek in the West in the Early Middle Ages*, edited by M. W. Herren (London, 1988), pp. 195-214 (pp. 197-98).

[11] Gneuss, "The Study of Language", p. 9.

together.[12] One Insular text apparently written as an aid to construing is Bede's *De schematibus et tropis*; the figures which Bede discusses, with examples drawn from the Bible, are mainly those which disrupt the normal word order.[13]

It is perhaps easier to understand how early Insular students of Latin could manage without any teaching on syntactical construction if we realise that at this period their priority was reading and understanding the language, not composing in it. To this extent at least the late antique grammatical texts were very well suited to their needs, for these works are reader-based, intended to help the (often provincial[14]) student recognize and understand good Latin and so partake of classical culture. For this reason the grammars do not contain many rules for composition, but rather are mainly concerned with parsing; their emphasis on the parts of speech proved to be very useful for Irish and Anglo-Saxon readers.

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[12] See M. Draak's two articles, referred to above in Chapter One, note 118 and in Chapter Two, pp. 93-94, and M. Korhammer, 'Mittelelterliche Konstruktionshilfen und A.E. Wortstellung', *Scriptorium*, 37 (1980), 18-58. Draak thinks the marks were made by and for the teacher, as cues to remind him to point out to his students those constructions they might find difficult; it is also possible that marks were made by a reader for his own benefit in private study.

[13] On this, and the use in the ninth century and later of the rhetorical *circumstantiae rerum* as construction aids, see the article by M. B. Parkes, 'Le Haut Moyen Age occidental', forthcoming in *La storia della lettura nel mondo occidentale: Norme e pratiche/Histoire de la lecture dans le monde occidental: Normes et pratiques*, edited by R. Chartier and G. Cavallo (Rome/Paris), text accompanying notes 44-47.

[14] Donatus taught at Rome, but Pompeius was based in North Africa and Priscian taught in Constantinople.

b The component parts of language

If there was no teaching available on the ordering of linguistic units, there was on the other hand no shortage of traditional doctrine on the definition of individual units of language. Donatus and most of the other grammarians offer two methods of analysing Latin. The first analysis describes *oratio* (speech or discourse) in terms of phonological and metrical concepts, starting with *vox* ('voice' or 'sound', which can be articulate or inarticulate, but in the case of *oratio* is always articulate) and building up through *littera* ("the smallest articulated part of speech"[15]) and *syllaba* to *pedes* (feet), with discussion also of concepts such as accent and *positurae* (the marking of major and minor pauses in discourse). The ancient grammarians saw that spoken language could be broken down into individual sounds, represented by letters, which the ear could recognize as being grouped into syllables, metrical feet and ultimately into the sound patterns of different metres. Their second method of analysis divides *oratio* into grammatical *partes*: *nomen*, *pronomen*, *uerbum*, *aduerbium*, *participium*, *coniunctio*, *praepositio*, *interiectio*. This is the order in which Donatus treats the parts, in the *Ars minor* and *Ars maior* book II;[16] not all grammarians followed the same order, or agreed on the same number of parts, as Donatus points out:

Multi plures, multi pauciores partes orationis putant.[17]

and Servius adds:

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[15] Donatus, *Ars maior*, I: *Littera est pars minima uocis articulatae* (Holtz, 603/6).

[16] Holtz, 585-602 and 613-52.

[17] Holtz, 613/5-6.

> Aristotelici duas dicunt esse partes orationis, nomen et uerbum, Stoici quinque, grammatici octo, plerique nouem, plerique decem, plerique undecim.[18]

But most grammarians after Donatus accepted the eight parts which he defined, and indeed this eight part classification continued to be the basis of Latin grammar as taught throughout the middle ages and beyond.

In their treatment of the *partes*, the grammarians give pride of place to the noun and the verb, on the basis that these two parts are essential to the formation of meaningful discourse. Thus the brief statement of Donatus:

> Partes orationis sunt octo... Ex his duae sunt principales partes orationis, nomen et uerbum.[19]

is explained in the commentary of Servius:

> "Duae sunt principales partes orationis, nomen et uerbum", eo quod ipsae solae faciunt elocutionem, ut 'Cicero scripsit', 'Virgilius fecit', et sine ipsis nulla alia pars inplet elocutionem. nam quando dicimus 'ipse legens', minus est aliquid, puta 'dixit', ut sit 'ipse legens dixit'.[20]

and at rather greater length Pompeius comments on the indispensability of nouns and verbs, arguing, with many examples, that utterance is impossible ("cannot stand" and "does not exist") and incomplete ("not full") without them:

> non potest stare ipsa elocutio, nisi et nomen habeat et uerbum. pone solum pronomen, pone participium, coniunctionem, praepositionem, noli ponere nomen et uerbum, et non est plena

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[18] *Commentum in artem Donati*, *GL*, IV, 428/11-13.

[19] *Ars maior* (Holtz, 613/3-5)

[20] *GL*, IV, 428/8-11.

> elocutio. ergo ideo dictae sunt principales partes orationis, quoniam et ipsae faciunt elocutionem, et alia elocutio sine ipsis nulla est.[11]

Pompeius also demonstrates the priority of these two parts of speech over the remaining parts by arguing that the latter in their names and their functions depend on their relationship with the former, and therefore any significance that they have in discourse is derived from nouns or verbs:

> The remaining parts of speech only have a name because they have acquired one from these principal parts. If you take away the noun, the pronoun is nothing, for it performs the function of a noun. An adverb is something which is joined to a verb: take away the verb, and there can be no adverb. A participle cannot be, unless it receives part of a noun and part of a verb: take away these parts, and there can be no participle. Prepositions are placed before (*praeponitur*) nouns, and conjunctions join together (*coniungunt*) verbs. Therefore you see that no other part can possess meaningful utterance (*habere plenam elocutionem*) nor have any function (*officium*), unless these two principal parts of speech, the noun and the verb, are added.[12]

It was by virtue of the fact that the verb was an especially important part, the grammarians argued, that '*uerbum*' could be used not only to denote the verb specifically but also to stand for speech as a whole.[13]

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[11] *GL*, V. 134/19-23.

[12] *GL*, V, 134/30-135/2. Pompeius omits the interjection from this explanation; its name also derives from its relationship to the other parts of speech, in that it is 'thrown in between' them, but it is not thereby specifically related to nouns or verbs. The argument is not quite accurate in the case of prepositions or conjunctions, for prepositions are placed before other parts of speech besides nouns (and verbs), and conjunctions can join other parts besides verbs.

[13] See Servius, *Comm. in artem Donati*, *GL*, IV, 405; *Explanationes* I, *GL*, IV, 488; Pompeius, *GL*, V, 97). Their explanations are complicated by the fact that they accept a traditional derivation for the term *uerbum*: *uerbum dictum est hac ratione, quod uerberato aere motu linguae fit sonus, unde ipsa particula emergit* (Pompeius, V, 97/6-8). which description they recognized could apply equally well to any other part of speech; both this fact, and the fact that one can say '*uerba fecit Tullius in senatu*', i.e. Tully 'spoke verbs' rather than 'made a speech', are explained by the (not very convincingly demonstrated) claim that the verb is the most frequently

That the grammarians held the noun to be of primary importance, meanwhile, is evident not only from the fact that they place this part at the head of the list and treat it first, but also from their justification of this order of treatment on the grounds that knowledge of any thing is generated from its name:

> rite enim nomen primum ponitur, quod ex ipso omnium rerum notitia procreatur.[14]

This emphasis on the primary importance of nouns and verbs is maintained throughout the teaching of the grammarians; their concern with these two parts is not surprising since in addition to being the essential constituents of any sentence, they are also inflecting parts with a complex morphology, with which students must become familiar if they are to be able to read with ease. Several grammarians wrote grammars dealing with these parts (or one of them) alone;[15] while within accounts of all eight parts of speech, such as those of Donatus and his commentators, the sections on the noun and the verb are by far the longest, and much of the discussion in the remaining sections concerns the relationship of the part in question to the principal parts.[16]

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occurring part of speech.

[14] Servius, *GL*, IV, 406/10-11; see also Pompeius (*GL*, V, 96/29-30): *idcirco quoniam nomina primigenia sunt in rebus omnia, haec prima debent poni*.

[15] In the fifth century, Phocas, *Ars de nomine et verbo* (*GL*, V, 410-39) and Consentius, *Ars de duabus partibus orationis nomine et verbo* (*GL*, V, 338-404), and in the sixth century Eutyches, *De verbo* (*GL*, V, 447-89). The latter two texts were well known to Insular Grammarians; see Law, *ILG*, pp. 17 and 21.

[16] For example, the chapters on *praepositiones* are concerned to a great extent with the cases which prepositions take, in other words with the way in which they modify the inflection of the following noun.

c Independent units of language

The practice of word separation depends upon some concept of isolable units within language. Neither the phonological nor the grammatical categories into which the grammarians divided language result in anything which corresponds exactly with the modern concept of a 'word'. Linguists in the western tradition have yet to arrive at a satisfactory general definition of this concept,[17] although in everyday usage the meaning of the word 'word' appears to be perfectly straightforward. One attempt at a definition states that the term 'word' denotes "the smallest independent, indivisible, and meaningful unit of speech, susceptible of transposition in sentences".[18] A word is in fact a very complex linguistic unit, in the definition of which not only morphological and syntactic criteria, but also stress patterns and lexical content must be taken into account.

In our largely literate modern culture the popular concept of what constitutes a word is very much influenced (and perhaps even created) by the fact that we are accustomed to a graphical convention which isolates elements of speech from each other by leaving gaps between them. Thus a word is simply that part of written language which is normally written as a

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[17] At least, not one that will suit the conditions of every language.

[18] H. Marchand, *The Categories and Types of Present-Day English Word-Formation: A Synchronic-Diachronic Approach*, second edition (Munich, 1969), p. 1. More briefly, Bloomfield defined a word as "a minimum free form" (*Language*, revised edition (London, 1935), p. 178), but went on to describe some of the difficulties in distinguishing between phrases, words and bound forms (pp. 178-83). An example of the kind of definition produced by transformational generative grammarians is found in N. Chomsky and M. Halle, *The Sound Pattern of English* (New York, Evanston and London, 1968), pp. 13, 163 and 366-70. For a recent, detailed study see Di Sciullo and Williams, *On the Definition of Word*, referred to in Chapter Two, note 147 above.

whole with space around it. Some linguists indeed have argued that 'word' is merely a graphical concept without linguistic validity.[28] Yet although it is difficult to arrive at a precise definition which will work for all languages, nevertheless there remains the basic idea of isolable, meaningful units within the larger structures of discourse. This concept involves a recognition of the balance between the independence and the interdependence of different elements of language. A phrase is a syntactic unit, all of whose elements are dependent on each other to express the intended meaning, but this larger unit contains some elements of language which are bound together by a tighter bond than others, and some which are more capable of being used in isolation. The recognition of these degrees of independence can be expressed in speech by articulating each tightly bound unit distinctly from the next, or it can be expressed graphically by the use of gaps of space on the page between written letters instead of by stress patterns in utterance.

The Roman and late antique grammarians read, wrote and studied texts written in *scriptio continua*, without such graphical articulation. But in their systematic account of the parts of speech they defined and categorized the articulation of discourse according to morphological criteria. Latin-speaking pupils learned to read by isolating the *partes orationis* according to those criteria; they did this without any graphical aid, except in those instances when confusion could arise over which letters belonged to which part of speech, when the teachers would make the

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[28] Bloomfield (*Language*, p. 178), discussing the influence of the graphic practice, mentions that non-literate people "have some difficulty when, by any chance, they are called upon to make word-divisions"; but he concludes that the very fact that word spacing has become part of our tradition of writing indicates that the recognition of the word unit is natural to speakers.

boundary clear by punctuating their texts for them, to avoid mistakes in reading.[30]

This analysis of discourse, although not originally intended to be interpreted graphically, was later given physical expression on the page by Insular scribes, who, by thus dividing and classifying *oratio* for the eye of the reader, made the text more immediately accessible. This innovation was only possible because, as the next section demonstrates, Irish and Anglo-Saxon scribes (having had at least an elementary grammatical education) would have had the concept of the parts of speech thoroughly instilled within them.

III The popularity of the parts of speech with Insular teachers

a Selection and adaptation of traditional material

"Nothing resembles a grammatical manual quite so much as another grammatical manual" observes one scholar who has spent a great deal of time studying these texts;[31] traditional material is used and reused, as the definitions, doctrines and examples of one grammarian are repeated, paraphrased, abbreviated or commented upon by others. As a result, grammatical works can appear to be timeless and impersonal, lacking an

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[30] Pompeius (*GL*, V, 132/12) gives the example of the need to punctuate *conspicitur sus* 'a sow is espied' (*Aeneid*, VIII,83) to prevent the wrong reading *conspicit ursus* 'the bear espies'.

[31] Holtz, 'Irish Grammarians', p. 135.

individual voice or original thought. Yet behind the technical language and traditional formulae there must always be an author or compiler working with a particular situation in mind; and if the resemblances and the overlap of material between grammars is so great, then the differences - the omissions, additions and re-wordings - are all the more telling, for no two grammatical works,[32] however similar, are exactly alike.[33] Grammar books are in fact far from being timeless; they are products of a tradition which is constantly in the process of selection and adaptation in response to changing historical and cultural conditions. Therefore from the new grammar books which were written by the Irish and Anglo-Saxons in the seventh and eighth centuries, as well as from the copies and versions of earlier grammars which were produced, we can expect to learn something of the special interests and concerns of the teachers of Latin grammar in this period, and to see the particular emphasis of their teaching. As Law argues, "it is in the process of selection that the hand of the Insular authors is most visible: their omissions, now of archaic forms, now of Greek, now of superfluous technicalities, hint *ex silentio* at those aspects of linguistic doctrine which they found most important".[34]

The process of selection and adaptation operates on various levels. First there is the question of selection from among the corpus of earlier grammatical works: which of the classical or late antique grammarians were known to and used by, and which were most popular with, Irish and Anglo-

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[32] Or even copies of the same work - see below, p. 114.

[33] On the uniqueness of each grammatical work, and the importance therefore of studying such texts for their own sake, and not simply in order to identify sources, see Holtz, 'Tradition', pp. 48-50.

[34] *ILG*, p. 107.

Saxon teachers? The argument *e silentio* here is not conclusive, for we cannot know for sure that those authors who were not used, copied or referred to had been deliberately rejected as being of no interest; the range of grammatical works known in the British Isles must have been at least partly determined by the chance which brought certain texts and not others to these shores. Yet deliberate selection must also have played some part, at least to the extent of deciding which of the grammars which did arrive were the most useful.[35] Unless a text has been copied or annotated by an Insular hand, exists in a later copy which was copied from an Insular exemplar, or is mentioned in a contemporary catalogue or other non-grammatical context, we can only know that it was known in Insular circles if an Insular author quotes from it. Other grammars may have been known, but as we are concerned to discover which were found to be most useful, we can happily leave aside those which were neither copied nor quoted. It is not only the range of grammatical texts known, but the relative popularity of different works and authors which is revealing of Insular interests, and we can assume that the parts of texts or areas of material most frequently quoted or referred to are of greater interest than others and reflect particular concerns.

The new grammars written by Insular authors were almost entirely the products of this process of selection and adaptation. They were not based on independent grammatical analysis; such an approach was not conceivable because the Insular Latin grammarians were working within the framework of the existing tradition. Rather, their composition involved gathering

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[35] On the acquisition of grammar books from the Continent, see Holtz, 'Irish Grammarians', pp. 145-48. Holtz argues that in the mid-seventh century the Irish went in search of texts of a more comprehensive nature to supplement Donatus's concise summary.

together the most useful pieces of information from previous grammarians, imposing a greater or lesser degree of order on them, and filling them out with additional commentary or examples.[16] As Law argued (see page 112 above), the topics omitted and included in these new grammars are useful pointers to the preoccupations of Insular grammar teachers. Another level at which selection is seen to operate, and preoccupations may be revealed, is in the copying of grammatical texts. Not only has the scribe (or whoever has instructed him to copy the book) decided that the text is worthy of being copied; it may also be the case, since no two copies are identical, that his copy may contain additions to or omissions from the original text which betray the interests, in this case, of the scribe rather than the teacher (though the two could be the same person). The impersonal and technical nature of grammatical texts, with their often unacknowledged quotations, and lists of examples and paradigms, encourages and makes easy both the interpolation of additional material and the omission or abbreviation of existing material. It is therefore not simply a matter of each text being unique; every copy of a grammatical text is unique and should be considered as a separate version of the text. The dividing line between a copy of a text, an abridgement or expanded version, a paraphrase and a new grammar, is not always easy to draw.[17]

This fact was until recently not sufficiently taken into account by editors of grammatical texts, who have tended either simply to reproduce a

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[16] Law, *ILG*, p. 53.

[17] The significance of this fact is not drawn out very fully in Law's study, especially in relation to the texts of the pre-Insular grammarians; she does recognize in the discussion of individual texts of Insular origin that different copies can preserve very different versions (see her discussion of the different versions of the *Declinationes nominum*, and of the *Ars Ambienensis*, *ILG*, pp. 56-64 and 67-74).

single version of the text, or to attempt to reconstruct the original version, and whose editions therefore do not readily facilitate the study of how that original text was adapted in different circumstances. For example, the not infrequent confusions, repetitions and indeed unintelligibility in the texts attributed to Sergius and, in particular, Pompeius in Keil's editions must be in part due to the interpolations and interpretations of generations of students which have made their way into the manuscript tradition at various stages; these printed editions should be used with caution, and supplemented with careful study of the manuscript versions.[10] Fontaine argues that the version of Pompeius used by Isidore (which he refers to as *Pompeius auctus*) was fuller than the extant text;[11] Holtz notes that one section of the text, displaced and mistakenly repeated, occurs in two different versions, one of which is much longer and could be a fragment of this *Pompeius auctus*.[12] Holtz suggests that such diverse versions of the commentary may have existed from the very start, having their origin in different forms of notes taken during lessons by pupils or *notarii*. There may never, he argues, have been one archetype of the written text, supervised or revised by the author, but instead several sets of notes of varying quality.[13] Critical editions, such as that of

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[10] See Holtz, 'Tradition', pp. 51-52, on the unreliability of Keil's edition of Pompeius.

[11] *Isidore*, pp. 193-94.

[12] 'Tradition', p. 82.

[13] The three-part article by H. D. Jocelyn on the text of the classical grammarian Probus ('The Annotations of M. Valerius Probus', *Classical Quarterly*, new series, 34 (1984), 464-72 (part I), 35 (1985), 149-61 (part II) and 466-74 (part III)) illustrates the tendency of such texts to accumulate additions and interpolations, and hence the need for caution when approaching a text or citations attributed to early grammarians.

Donatus by Holtz,[12] which does justice to the complexity of the textual tradition, and studies the diverse forms in which the text appeared and the various uses for which it was adapted, are badly needed. Until more editions of this scope are published, our picture of the interests and concerns of the grammarians of any particular period will remain incomplete. Individual studies of particular manuscripts, to establish the nature of each individual version of a text, are a useful prelimiary to such editions, and one such study (of the earliest Insular copy of Pompeius) is offered as an appendix.[13]

b The emphasis revealed by the process of selection

If among the ancient grammarians in general a central place was given to the *partes orationis*, this is especially true of those texts known to and used by the early Irish and Anglo-Saxons.[14] There are very few of these which are not concerned at all with the parts of speech,[15] and this

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[12] See Chapter One, note 34.

[13] See p. 301 below.

[14] Law provides a useful working list of "those Classical grammars which were known in the British Isles, or in Insular circles on the Continent, or have been alleged to have been used by Insular authors, in the seventh, eighth or early ninth century" with brief descriptions of their content and of where they are used (*ILG*, pp. 14-28). ('Classical' is not the best description for a list which ranges from the fourth-century Donatus to the seventh-century Isidore of Seville.) As Law herself points out (p. 14), her list should not be regarded as complete and comprehensive; but until new editions of grammatical works and studies of their transmission improve the picture, Law's survey is a sufficient starting point.

[15] One exception is Sergius *De littera* (*GL*, IV, 475-85), a commentary on Donatus's *Ars maior* I, known to (among others) Aldhelm and Bede (see Law, *ILG*, p. 17). A version of this text follows the copy of pseudo-Sergius *Explanationes* II in the eighth-century Anglo-Saxon manuscript St

matter is predominant in most works, and is the exclusive subject of several."[14] These texts include some which are treatises not on all eight of the parts of speech, but on only one or more of the inflecting parts, the noun, pronoun and verb.[15] That Insular teachers and scholars had a particular interest in the noun and the verb is seen not only in the popularity of works confined to those parts of speech, but also in selective quotation by the Insular grammarians from more general works covering all parts of speech (and other topics). For example, two Insular grammarians, Tatwine and the author of *Ad Cuimnanum*, make use of the third book of Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* (Book III is a brief, general treatment of the grammatical art), but only of sections relating to nouns or verbs. Tatwine borrows the section on the formation of the perfect tense; the Anonymus uses parts of the same section and also the section on noun terminations."[16]

Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek 2/1, foll. 43-75 (*CLA*, X, 1453).

[14] Donatus's *Ars minor* deals only with the parts of speech, as does the widely known commentary by Sergius (pseudo-Cassiodorus) on Donatus (PL, 70, 1219-40) which confines itself to the *Ars maior* Book II (on the parts of speech).

[15] Priscian's *Institutio de nomine et pronomine et uerbo*, *GL*, III, 443-56 (among the best known of all the grammatical works) covers all three; the grammars of Consentius (widely used) and Phocas (apparently less well known, being used only by Aldhelm and Boniface) both cover only the noun and the verb; the most specific is the *Ars de uerbo* of Eutyches, well known among Insular grammarians (see note 25 above).

[16] See Law, *ILG*, p. 23. It is possible, as Law points out, that both grammarians were (independently) relying on a source consisting of excerpts, rather than a complete text of Book III or of *De nuptiis*; but whether it was they or the person responsible for such extracts who made the selection of material, either way it is "indicative of a common bias" towards nouns and verbs.

While the variety of forms which they take should not be disregarded[49] (a variety which reminds us that each new grammar was written by a different author to meet a particular kind of need), the new grammars written by Insular authors share a common characteristic, as the studies of both Law and Holtz have shown.[50] They exhibit in general an extreme development of the earlier tendency to concentrate on the parts of speech, and especially the inflecting parts. Those which Law terms the elementary grammars are "characterised by their concern with the inflecting parts of speech, sometimes to the complete exclusion of the non-inflecting parts. Paradigms and long lists of examples typically occupy most of the text, and commentary is often brief or altogether lacking".[51] The interest appears to be very specifically in accidence: there is "a marked tendency to eliminate all information not directly relating to accidence, even at the expense of facts essential to the construction of a correct Latin sentence, like noun-gender".[52]

The most extreme example of this is the text called *Declinationes nominum*, which, as its name suggests, consists entirely of paradigms of nominal declensions with examples.[53] Other elementary grammars include the *Ars Tatuini*, in which the accidence of nouns and verbs receives

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[49] Law concludes that "the amount of variety manifested in this [process of] selection is unexpected" (*ILG*, p. 107).

[50] Law, *ILG*, pp. 53-97; Holtz, *Donat*, pp. 264-322, see especially p. 270.

[51] *ILG*, p. 54.

[52] ibid.

[53] The work survives in several versions, the material being frequently reworked and incorporated into other texts; see Law, *ILG*, pp. 56-64.

disproportionately long treatment;[54] the *Ars Ambianensis*, which survives in five incomplete manuscripts, three treating the noun only, one breaking off part way through the verb section, and one reaching the middle of the participle;[55] the *Ars Bernensis*, which seems to show a particular interest in difficulties offered by accidence, although we cannot be sure of this since the sections on the uninflected parts are missing;[56] and the *Ars Bonifacii*, in whose noun, pronoun and verb sections two or three sources are carefully spliced together, while the sections on the uninflected parts of speech contain extended verbatim passages from sources without the same effort of integration.[57]

Displaying the same interest in paradigms of inflecting parts is the so-called *Ars Malsachani*, part of which at least is more accurately named *Congregatio Salcani filii de uerbo*.[58] This latter text confines itself to the verb and participle, the former being treated in far greater detail

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[54] See *ILG*, pp. 64-67.

[55] *ILG*, pp. 67-74. The rest of the work is lost: the text breaks off at the end of a quire, and several quires are missing (*ILG*, p. 71). It is impossible to know whether the text would have covered all eight parts of speech.

[56] *GL*, VIII (Andecdota Helvetica), 62-142; *ILG*, pp. 74-77. The text survives in a single incomplete manuscript, which reaches halfway through the pronoun; Law suggests that the scribe was "perhaps caught unawares by a defective exemplar" (p. 74); but we cannot be sure that the text was necessarily ever completed.

[57] *ILG*, pp. 77-80. This suggest a greater care taken over, and thus a greater concern for or interest in the noun, pronoun and verb. On the other hand Boniface includes fewer and shorter lists of examples and paradigms in his work.

[58] On the title of this work and the name of the author, see Löfstedt, *Der hibernolateinische Grammatiker Malsachanus*, pp. 25-26, and Law, *ILG*, p. 90 and n. 49. Law (pp. 90-92) counts this work among the exegetical grammatical works, though one which parts from the usual pattern, but Holtz (*Donat*, pp. 295-300) sees it as an elementary teaching manual akin to the grammars of Tatwine and Boniface.

than the latter; but in one of the two surviving manuscript versions it is preceded by a short tract on the noun and the pronoun,[59] producing a complete discussion of the declinable parts of speech. Holtz sees this as a work ideally adapted to the pedagogical necessities of the period:[60] "Son manuel est centré sur l'apprentissage de la morphologie. Il inclut sous forme systématique et raisonnée tous les paradigms, et un grand nombre d'éléments lexicaux." [61]

The texts written with more advanced study of grammar in mind (the exegetical grammars, in Law's terms) do not to the same extent as the elementary grammars display a preoccupation with the inflecting parts of speech, and instead of paradigms and examples they are filled with definitions and discussion of theoretical and technical concepts. In this they resemble the earlier commentaries on the *Ars maior*, on which most of them are modelled and from which they draw their material. Because of this ultimate dependence on the works of Donatus, these works too are mainly preoccupied with the parts of speech, although some also deal with the definitions of such terms as *vox* and *littera*, and barbarisms (the subjects of Books I and III of the *Ars maior*). The work known as *Quae sunt quae omnem ueritatem scripturae commendant* is one such,[62] while the *Anonymus ad Cuimnanum* and the *Ars Ambrosiana* are both commentaries on Book II, which

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[59] In Löfstedt's edition this is treated as part of the *Ars Malsachani*.

[60] On the disputed date of composition of this text, see Chapter One, note 61.

[61] *Donat*, p. 300.

[62] See Law, *ILG*, pp. 85-87.

deals with the parts of speech.[41] Another anonymous text, entitled *Aggressus quidam*, is a brief reworking of the noun section only of the *Ars maior*; associated with this in some manuscripts is a short tract on noun declensions with declined examples.[42]

The discussion so far could give the false impression that the Insular grammarians were interested in no other area of grammar (in its widest sense) than the parts of speech, and then only the inflecting parts. It is important to remember that metrics and rhetoric were also studied and written about, as we see from Aldhelm's *De metris et enigmatibus ac pedum regulis*, and Bede's *De arte metrica* and *De schematibus et tropis*.[43] There is also Bede's *De orthographia*, an interesting text which is exceptional in being a practical grammatical and orthographical reference book, rather than a systematic teaching work. The text appears to have been compiled as much with copyists as with readers in mind: grammatical and orthographic, as well as semantic, information is given about words organised in alphabetical order, so that uncertainties over the correct form or meaning of particular words could be easily resolved by scribes or scholars without their having to comb through grammars looking for examples.[44]

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[41] On the *Ambrosiana* see Holtz, *Donat*, pp. 284-94; *ILG*, pp. 93-97. As noted in Chapter One, note 61, Law dates the text to after 700; unlike Holtz, Bischoff and others she does not accept its Insular origin.

[42] Law, *ILG*, pp. 92-93.

[43] On the latter as a text intended to help readers to construe unusual word order, see above, p. 103 and note 13.

[44] On Bede's priorities in grammar, see Holtz, *Donat*, pp. 318-19 and Irvine, 'Bede the Grammarian'. On the *De orthographia*, see A. C. Dionisotti, 'On Bede, Grammars and Greek', *Revue Bénédictine*. 92 (1982), 111-41, especially p. 122.

Before drawing conclusions from the apparent emphasis on the noun, pronoun and verb in those texts which are concerned with the parts of speech, we should remember that other factors may be involved besides conscious selection on the grounds of interest or usefulness. These three inflecting parts happen to be the first three of the eight parts of speech in the order in which they are traditionally treated by Donatus and other grammarians, and therefore by virtue of their position alone they feature more often than other parts, given the tendency of long works to be left incomplete in the writing by over-ambitious authors or abandoned in the copying by weary scribes,[67] and also the tendency of copies to be damaged by loss of final quires (such damage being more likely to remain unnoticed, and thus not be repaired, than loss of the opening of a text).

On the other hand, the order in which the parts of speech were treated was itself not accidental, but, as we saw above,[68] reflected the teaching of the grammarians that the noun and the verb are the *principales partes orationis* because, unlike the other parts, no sentence can be formed without them. The Insular authors were conscious of the order of treatment in general (both of the parts, and of material within each part), and were concerned to understand its significance.[69] The author of *Ad Cuimnanum* repeats, with his own examples, the traditional explanation of the noun and verb as principal parts. His example of a valid sentence (containing both a noun and a verb) is '*uoluit magister docere discipulum sapientiam*

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[67] For an example of an abandoned or interrupted copy, see Appendix, p. 312.

[68] See pp. 106-108 above.

[69] See Law's examples, *ILG*, pp. 82-83; she regards "concern with the details of order in Donatus's expostion" as one of the characteristic interests of Insular grammarians (p. 96).

docelem';[70] in the passage cited above,[71] Servius used '*Cicero scripsit*' and '*Virgilius fecit*', and Pompeius similarly used '*Cicero cras faciet aut dicet*'.[72] This is one of very many instances in *Ad Cuimnanum* where examples involving the world of Roman literature have been replaced by examples that relate to the world of the school room, with *magistri* and *discipuli*, or Donatus himself, as the most frequent protagonists. Another example is found in a section explaining the difference between a pronoun and an article: where the late antique commentators exemplified their argument with '*hic Aeneas*', *Ad Cuimnanum* uses '*magistrum quare et hunc audi*' and '*hic magister bonus est*'.[73] The Anonymus knew that Donatus was right to begin his list with *nomen*, and his justification:

> nemo enim potest discere omnem artem cuius nomen non nouerit[74]

is very close to that of Servius quoted above.[75]

It is fair to conclude that the early Irish and Anglo-Saxons in their study and teaching of grammar concentrated most of their attention on the parts of speech, and, at the elementary level in particular, especially on the inflecting parts and above all the noun and the verb. The popularity of texts with large numbers of paradigms and examples suggests the importance of the lexical factor in the elementary study of Latin. Instead

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[70] fol. 24[r].

[71] See p. 106.

[72] *GL*, IV, 134/23-25.

[73] fol. 24[r].

[74] fol. 24[r]. See Chapter One, p. 28.

[75] p. 108.

of trying to apply the principle underlying each category of inflected forms, students were apparently taught to recognize many individual lexical items in all their various inflected manifestations. This concentration on the parts of speech represents not only a devoted and dependent following of the lead of the earlier grammarians, but also a development of their ideas into a pragmatic response to the basic needs of foreign learners. Holtz argues that the priority of the parts of speech should not be surprising:

> Les maîtres irlandais ne font que tirer les ultimes conséquences d'une tendence générale, sensible depuis le v^e^ siècle et depuis Donat lui-même, à considérer que le mot dans la phrase est l'unité fondamentale du language.[76]

"Mot" here means '*pars orationis*', and in graphical terms the "ultimate consequence" of this view, which formed the basis of Insular grammatical education, was the introduction of the practice of word separation, or separating of the parts of speech - the fundamental units of language - on the page.

IV A grammatical basis for the characteristic groupings and inconsistent separation in Insular manuscripts?

I have argued that the eight parts of speech are the underlying grammatical principle on which word separation in Insular Latin manuscripts is based. Yet even in manuscripts from the eighth century and beyond, when the practice has become well established, it is very common to find that

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[76] *Donat*, p. 270.

the scribe when copying did not separate all parts of speech, but often grouped two or more parts together, or separated elements within one part of speech. Fully consistent separation into individual parts of speech is not found before the twelfth century.[17] The particular characteristics of the groupings and unexpected separations found in early Insular manuscripts are analysed in greater detail in Chapter Four;[18] in the remainder of this chapter I wish to argue that these characteristics may be explained, in part at least, by the priorities and emphasis of both traditional and Insular grammarians, and by certain limitations in their understanding of boundaries between units of speech.

a Grouping influenced by the grammarians' emphasis on the principal parts

Chapter Four demonstrates that scribes will frequently treat conjunctions, prepositions, adverbs and other non-inflecting parts of speech as enclitics or proclitics of an inflecting word, so that sentences are broken down partly into larger syntactic units based on nouns or verbs, rather than into individual parts of speech only. This tendency can be seen as a reflection of the importance attributed (and space devoted) by the grammarians to the inflecting parts, especially the noun and the verb, at the expense of the other parts. As their education has taught them to regard these other parts not only as less significant than, but also as

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[17] See Parkes, 'Tachygraphy in the Middle Ages: Writing Techniques Employed for *Reportationes* of Lectures and Sermons', in *Scribes, Scripts and Readers*, pp. 19-33 (p. 24).

[18] See below, pp. 176-92.

dependent on the principal parts, scribes may not always have deemed the non-inflecting parts to be worthy of the status of separate, isolated units on the page; instead, the grammatical dependence of an adverb on a verb might be expressed by the scribe prefixing the former to the latter as part of a verbal group.

The emphasis by grammar teachers on the principal parts is not the only possible explanation for these characteristic groupings. They may also reflect stress patterns of the spoken language, unstressed or lightly stressed elements accompanying strongly stressed elements. These two explanations are not mutually exclusive, since the same units or parts of speech which are held to be grammatically less significant are also those which are phonologically less weighted. The relationship between the phonological and grammatical explanations will be discussed further at the end of Chapter Five;[73] my purpose here is to show how far the form which the practice of word separation takes in early Insular manuscripts can be seen to be influenced by the content and nature of the teaching of Latin grammar.

b Teaching on the preposition - a source of confusion?

One of the most common and characteristic features of separation in Insular manuscripts (and one which was passed on to Continental scribes and endured until the twelfth century) is the tendency to group a preposition with the following noun, or, rather less frequently, to separate the

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[73] See pp. 230-33.

prepositional prefix of a compound form."[80] This confusion over the separation of prepositions has its roots, I believe, in the limitation in the ancient grammarians' understanding of (or at least in their ability to explain) free and bound morphological forms. This is reflected in confusion in their discussions of the preposition.

The grammarians included in the category of *praepositio* both prepositional prefixes attached to other parts of speech, and free-standing prepositions which are in relation to, but not bound to, the following word. Thus both the *in* of '*in templo*' and the *in-* of '*ineo*' - the first an independent preposition, the second a dependent verbal prefix - were classed as *praepositiones*. The preposition *in* was therefore a form which could be either bound or free (in the scribe's terms, joined or separated). But the category of *praepositio* also included forms which are always free (i.e. never function as verbal prefixes), and others which are always bound (i.e. signify nothing if isolated). The latter group includes prefixes such as *di-* and *con-*; the inseparable negative prefix *in-* was also counted as a preposition.

The grammarians recognized the fact that their category *praepositio* embraced two distinct sub-categories, and they made some attempt to define and distinguish between the two different linguistic functions. In their view, '*prae*' was one part of speech, a preposition, which could function in two distinct ways: either joined to the following part of speech, or separated from it. Thus the chapters on *praepositio* are one of the few places in the Latin grammarians where, however obliquely, the question of

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[80] See the analysis in Chapter Four, pp. 179-90.

the boundaries of morphological units is discussed. The following pages examine their teaching on the preposition in detail, to see how far it manages to clarify this question or whether it could have offered any guidance to the Insular scribe struggling with the identification of words. This discussion does not cover all the traditional grammars with Insular connections (proven or suggested), but concentrates on those apparently most familiar to Irish and Anglo-Saxon grammarians and, of course, on those among them which have something to say about prepositions.

i Donatus

Donatus deals with the preposition twice: it is defined in brief, question-and-answer form with the other seven parts of speech in the *Ars minor*, and in more detail in Book II of the *Ars maior*. The latter chapter (II,16) opens thus:

> Praepositio est pars orationis, quae praeposita aliis partibus orationis significationem earum aut conplet aut mutat aut minuit. Nam aut nomini praeponitur, ut invalidus; aut pronomini praeponitur, ut prae me, uel subponitur, ut mecum tecum nobiscum uobiscum; aut uerbum praecedit, ut perfero, aut aduerbium, ut expresse, aut participium, ut praecedens, aut coniunctionem, ut absque, aut se ipsam, ut circumcirca. Praepositiones aut casibus seruiunt aut loquellis aut et casibus et loquellis. Aeque aut coniunguntur aut separantur aut et coniunguntur et separantur. Coniunguntur; ut di, dis, re, se, am, con: dicimus enim diduco, distraho, recipio, secubo, amplector, congredior; separantur, ut apud, penes; coniunguntur et separuntur ceterae omnes. (Holtz, 648/4-14)

The corresponding chapter in the *Ars minor* is very similar:

> Praepositio quid est? Pars orationis, quae praeposita aliis partibus orationis significationem earum aut conplet aut mutat aut minuit. ...
> Quae praepositiones sunt, quae dictionibus seruiunt et separari non possunt? Vt di, dis, re, se, am, con. Quo modo? Dicimus enim diduco, distraho, recipio, secubo, amplector, congredior.

> Quae sunt, quae iungi non possunt? Vt apud, penes. Quae iunguntur et separantur? Reliquae omnes. (Holtz, 600/8-9 and 601/17-20)

The *Ars maior* chapter too explains that some prepositions take the ablative case and some the accusative;[11] lists and examples follow.[12] Donatus's basic definition of a preposition (a part of speech which, being placed in front of another part of speech, in some way affects the meaning of that part), is broad enough to include both prefixes and independent prepositions.[13] The examples of prepositions in combination with other parts of speech (the interjection is the only one which does not form such a combination) consist mainly of prefixes. The example of preposition with pronoun, '*prae me*', is the only instance given where the preposition is a free morpheme, but no distinction is made between this and the other examples. The distinction is made in the next few sentences: prepositions serve either cases (*casibus*) or words (*loquellis*), or both. If this terminology is somewhat obscure, the following sentence about joining and separating, and the examples of each type that follow, soon make it clear that Donatus is referring to free forms — those independent prepositions which are followed by a declining part of speech whose case is modified by the preposition — and to bound forms — those prefixes which are joined to the following part of speech and do not affect its case.

Because two different functions are contained within Donatus's concept of *praepositio*, his discussion of this part of speech is bound to

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[11] Holtz, 649/5-650/3.

[12] Similar lists and examples occupy most of the *Ars minor* chapter.

[13] Indeed, without further qualification the definition could be applied equally well to other parts of speech, for example the adverb, which qualifies a verb, adjective or other adverb when placed before it.

contain sections which deal with each function independently as well as definitions which apply to both; but his material is so organized that he alternates between one function and the other without making clear that he is doing so. The existence of the two different functions remains implicit except in the section which defines them. Thus the last part of the *Ars maior* chapter, which lists which prepositions take the accusative and which the ablative, is by definition concerned only with "case-serving" (i.e. free-standing) prepositions, but there is no explicit setting aside of prefixes.

This alternation between the discussion of prepositions and prefixes might have caused some confusion to Irish students learning to recognize the *praepositio*, but on the other hand the *Auraicept* has several examples of grammatical terms covering more than one concept, with definitions and commentary alternating without warning between the different concepts.[11] The real problem with Donatus's teaching on prepositions is that although it lists both those which are always bound and those which are always free, it offers no help with "all the rest" which may be either, depending on the circumstances. Thus an Irish student would learn from Donatus that *con-* is always joined to the following part of speech, and that *apud* is never so joined, but he is given no rules, morphological or semantic, to help him know when *prae* is a prefix and when it is an independent form. Donatus's pupils had no need of such rules, perhaps because they were instinctively able to distinguish between the two functions, but more likely because there was no practical reason for them to do so, since, reading and writing in *scriptio continua*, they did not attempt to distinguish them graphically

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[11] See Chapter Two, pp. 68 and 72-73.

and were not constantly having to decide, as they wrote, whether or not to leave a space between certain parts of speech. Irish or Anglo-Saxon scribes faced with such decisions may well have been confused by the teaching of Donatus; how far would the other grammarians known to Insular scholars have been able to help them?

ii Other grammarians: general definitions

Not surprisingly, those works which are commentaries on the works of Donatus follow his definition fairly closely, and do not add very much new material. However, in the process of amplifying and exemplifying Donatus's statements, these works tend to separate from the outset (although still not explicitly) the two functions of *praepositio*. Pompeius,[85] for example, treats Donatus's definition in two parts, the first exemplified with independent prepositions, the second with prefixes:

> Praepositio dicta est eo, quod in loquendo praeponitur, ut siqui dicat 'apud amicos'; nemo potest dicere 'amicos apud'... (269/27-28)
>
> Ergo plerumque praepositiones augent, ut praeclarus; minuunt, ut subdolus; in contrarium vertunt, ut insanus; nihil significant, ut confieri. (271/28-30)

Pompeius has also changed the terminology for the different ways in which a *praepositio* can affect the meaning of the following part of speech: instead of '*conplere*', '*mutare*' and '*minuere*' we find '*augere*', '*minuere*' and '*in contrarium vertere*', the latter pointing explicitly to the inclusion of the negative prefix *in-* within the definition of *praepositio*. In addition, Pompeius recognizes that some prefixes have no effect on the meaning of the

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[85] In his chapter *De praepositione*, *GL*, V, 269/27-281/3.

following word (*nihil significant*); these, like the occasional prepositions which defy their name by following the other part of speech (e.g. *mecum*, *vobiscum*), are the exceptions which prove the definition.

Other commentaries follow a similar pattern to Pompeius in the definition: the (pseudo-Sergius) *Explanationes in artem Donati*, which discusses both the *Ars minor* and the *Ars maior* chapters,[16] also separates the definition into two parts and uses many of the same examples; while the commentary by Sergius (pseudo-Cassiodorus) on *Ars maior* Book II (on the parts of speech) covers the same ground rather more briefly.[17]

When we turn to other grammarians not dependent on the Donatus tradition, we find some variation in the definition of *praepositio*. Charisius, whose work gathers the opinions of various grammatical authors,[18] gives the definition according to Cominianus:

> Praepositio est pars orationis quae praeposita alii parti orationis significationem eius inmutat aut simplicem servat, ut scribo subscribo rescribo. (298/2-5)

This simplifies the description of the effect of the preposition on the following word, but gives only prefixes as illustrations. Charisius also records the definition of Palaemon, however:

> Praepositiones sunt dictae ex eo quod praeponantur tam casibus quam verbis; casibus incusativo tantum et ablativo. (299/14-17)

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[16] *GL*, IV, 517-18 (*min.*) and 561-62 (*mai.*).

[17] PL, 70, 1239-40.

[18] *Flavii Sosipatri Charisii artis grammaticae libri V*, edited by K. Barwick (Leipzig, 1925), reprinted with addenda and corrigenda by F. Kühnert (Leipzig, 1964), II,15 (pp. 298-311).

Unlike any of the general definitions so far examined, this one explicitly mentions the two different functions, using slightly different vocabulary from that of Donatus (*verbis* instead of *loquellis*). Diomedes, a fourth-century grammarian who derived much of his material from Charisius, treats the verb and the preposition particularly fully, and these sections were often used by Insular grammarians.[11] The wording of his basic definition -

> praepositio est pars orationis quae conplexa aliam partem orationis significationem eius inmutat ... (408/26-27)

- is a little unusual ('*conplexa*' instead of '*praeposita*') and points more to the prefix function than to the independent preposition.

From careful study of these various definitions with their slightly different emphases, and by paying careful attention to the examples given, the Insular students would have come to understand the primary meaning of the term *praepositio* and the two types contained within that term; but only if they had access to the *Institutiones grammaticae* of Priscian[10] would they find a definition which immediately and explicitly introduced the two types of *praepositio*:

> Est igitur praepositio pars orationis indeclinabilis, quae praeponitur aliis partibus vel appositione vel compositione. (III, 24/13-14)

Here Priscian makes a basic distinction between two different ways in which

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[11] *GL*, I, 299-529; De praepositione: 408-15. See *ILG*, p. 20.

[10] *GL*, II, 1-597 and III, 1-377; Book XIV De praepositione: III, 24-59. On knowledge of this work in Insular circles before the ninth century, see above, pp. 102-03 and note 10. Priscian's shorter work, the *Institutio de nomine et pronomine et uerbo*, was certainly well known, but this of course contains no teaching on prepositions.

a word can be placed before (*praeposita*) another; this, although a grammatical, not a graphical distinction, would be immediately useful to scribes with their practical problem of spacing. We will examine how Priscian explains and develops these terms 'apposition' and 'composition' in the next section, when we compare how the other grammarians tackle the *loquellis/casibus* distinction.

iii Other grammarians on joining and separating, or *praepositiones loquellares* and *casuales*

Most of the grammarians, like Donatus, took care to explain that there are some prepositions which 'serve cases' and cannot be joined, some which 'serve words' (*loquellis* or *verbis*) and cannot be separated, and some which serve both and can be either joined or separated. All are agreed that *apud* and *penes* are the only two which can never be joined, but the lists of *praepositiones loquellares* which can never be separated show some variation. Donatus lists six: *di-*, *dis-*, *re-*, *se-*, *am-*, *con-*; Pompeius and *Explanationes*, following Donatus, have the same list, though Pompeius adds *o-* as an afterthought:

> Ergo scire debemus omnes istas praepositiones lóquellares, con di dis re se am o (nam addiderunt plerique o, idcirco septem esse voluerunt, propter hoc verbum omittit)... (IV, 280/32-281/1)

Sergius (pseudo-Cassiodorus) lists only four, omitting *am-* and *con-*; and in Charisius we see that Cominianus lists a different four (*con-*, *di-*, *re-*, and *se-*), while Gaius Iulius Romanus maintains that there are eight, adding *de-* and *au-* to Donatus's six. Diomedes at first mentions only two (*di-* and *dis-*) but later lists seven (the six plus *au-*). With the exception of

Diomedes's initial two, which are probably meant as examples only, all of these lists seem to have been intended to be exhaustive; the variations between them indicate slight disagreements between the grammarians over what qualified as an inseparable prefix, though it is hard to see why Gaius Iulius Romanus thought that *de-* was inseparable. These disagreements would not have helped the Insular scribe very much, but if he stuck to Donatus's list of six he would not go far wrong.

With one notable exception, there is very little in the other grammarians (until one reaches Priscian) that would help the Irish student struggling with decisions about when to join and when to separate. *Explanationes* talks about *praepositiones loquellares* in terms that make it a little clearer what is implied by Donatus's terse description '*coniunguntur*':

> Loquellares praepositiones semper cohaerent nec aliquid valent solae positae, sed figuram faciunt coniunctae, ut conpono diduco disiungo revoco separo ambulo ambio. (IV, 518/21-23)

"Having no value when placed alone, but making a *figura* (a complete or viable form[91]) when joined" is a reasonable definition of an inseparable prefix. Sergius (pseudo-Cassiodorus) when illustrating the 'prepositions which cannot be joined' uses an interesting phrase:

> ... casibus applicantur, et non coniunguntur, ut, apud amicum causatum est; apud praepositio non coniungitur, quia nemo dicit coniuncte apudamicum ... (PL, 70, 1239)

"For nobody says 'apudamicum' as one word": in the printed edition the two

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[91] '*Figura*' in grammatical terminology often means a particular form of a word, or inflection; here it must mean 'form' in a more general sense, with the idea of a single, complete and valid unit.

words *apud* and *amicum* in this example are printed not as one unit as I have done here, but separately, as in the previous example, thus rather obscuring the point of the illustration. The point is of course not one of graphics: it is '*nemo dicit*', not '*nemo scribit*'.

The exception mentioned above is Pompeius, the only one of the grammarians popular among early Insular scholars who takes the question of word boundaries further and asks "How do we know when prepositions can or cannot be separated?" It is worth quoting this section of his chapter in full because, repetitive and long-winded though it is, it contains a very interesting attempt to answer this question.

Omnis praeterea praepositio hanc habet vim, ut aut casibus serviat aut loquellis. casibus serviunt praepositiones quae iungi possunt et segregari; loquellis serviunt quae non possunt segregari. casibus serviunt praepositiones quae et cohaerere possunt ad unam partem orationis et non cohaerere, ut puta 'prae dolore feci'. ista casualis est, quia, si volo, facio illam unam partem, praetulit; ecce modo duae sunt partes, sed istae duae in unam coierunt. ergo prae illa praepositio, quae et iungi potest et segregari potest, casualis est. si autem iungi tantum possit, nec possit segregari, loquellaris est, ut sunt illae sex, con di dis re se am. exceptis illis sex reliquae omnes casuales sunt. praeterea istae ipsae casuales, id est quae casibus serviunt, hanc habent naturam, ut aliquando possint cohaerere; sunt aliquae quae numquam possunt cohaerere. semper cohaerent illae praepositiones, con di dis re se am: numquam enim inveniuntur segregatae. ita dicimus, conduco. numquid possum dicere 'con duco', ut sint duae partes? unde intellegimus? quoniam non possum interponere aliquid. reliquae praepositiones ideo apparet quoniam possunt segregari, quoniam recipiunt verbi interpositionem. puta 'apud amicum': interpono, si volo, 'apud illum amicum', 'apud te amicum'; ecce interposui partem orationis. in illis praepositionibus non possum facere: si dicas recipio, non possum dicere 're illum cipio'; conduco, non possum dicere 'con tibi duco'; secubo, non possum dicere 'se ab illo cubo'. quia non potest interponi aliquid, hinc apparet quoniam semper cohaerent. ergo sunt praepositiones semper cohaerentes. item semper non cohaerentes, id est numquam cohaerentes, sunt illae, apud et penes. ita enim dico, apud amicum, penes arbitros; non possumus unam partem orationis facere, apudamicam, ut sit una pars orationis, nec penesarbitros potest cohaerere. reliquae vero et cohaerere possunt et disiungi, ut est puta pro: pro

> amico loquor, ecce modo non cohaesit; protulit, modo cohaesit. similiter prae, prae dolore, praetulit. (V, 271/31-272/20)

How do we know that we cannot say '*con duco*' as if there were two parts of speech instead of one (lines 16-18)? The answer given by Pompeius (lines 18-26) sounds very much like the intercalation test, recently favoured by linguists attempting to formulate rules for word boundaries.[12] '*Conduco*' counts as one part, not two, because it is impossible to insert any other part of speech between *con* and *duco* (impossible, that is, without destroying the grammatical relationship between the two). Where such insertion is possible, the two parts count as distinct parts of speech. Pompeius illustrates the intercalation test with the two forms of preposition which are invariable: those which are always joined, and those which are never joined; he contrasts the (unrestricted) possibility for insertion between *apud* and *amicum* with the total impossibility of insertion between *re-* and *-cipio* or *se-* and *-cubo*. What he does not make explicit is that the same test can be used on all the remaining prepositions whose function varies, to determine whether in any given context they form one word or two; in other words that after *pro* or *prae* there is a limited possibility of insertion, and it is because one can say '*pro meo amico*' that *pro* and *amico* are said not to be joined, and because one cannot say '*pro mihi tulit*' that the *pro-* of *protulit* is said to be joined.

Like Sergius (pseudo-Cassiodorus), Pompeius describes the impossibility of making '*apud amicum*' into one part of speech: *non possumus unam partem orationis facere, apudamicam.*[13] Pompeius's editor, unlike

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[12] See Chapter Two, p. 85.

[13] Lines 29-30 above; cf. Sergius: *quia nemo dicit conjuncte apudamicum.*

Sergius's, saw fit to represent this impossible conjunction by omitting the space between the two words,[14] thus creating the superficial impression that the point is a graphical one; but as in Sergius, this example, originally no doubt conveyed vocally,[15] is in fact intended to illustrate a grammatical argument. Yet it is also an argument which can very usefully be applied to the problem of the correct graphical representation of word boundaries, and Pompeius has taken us a stage further than Sergius towards solving this problem by introducing the principle of intercalation.

However, Pompeius devotes very little space to this principle in his long chapter on the preposition, and as none of the other grammarians mentions it at all, it is unlikely to have had a wide influence on the understanding of Insular grammarians or the practices of Insular scribes. Priscian does not discuss intercalation either; after his *Institutiones* became popular from the beginning of the ninth century, grammarians learned to describe prepositions in a new way, and acquired a new rule of thumb which proved to be a sufficient means of determining word boundaries.

Priscian's new approach is based on his distinction between apposition and composition, the latter being used of the relationship between an inseparable prefix and its following part of speech, while

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[14] It would be interesting to know how the manuscript copies present this illustration. The earliest surviving copy of Pompeius (St Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek 2/1, foll. 1-20; *CLA*, X, 1451) lacks the section on prepositions (see appendix, p. 316), so we are unable to see how the scribe would have handled this point; later surviving copies may well reveal that scribes took advantage of the opportunity to make the point graphically.

[15] The text of Pompeius probably originated as transcriptions of lectures delivered to his students; see above, p. 115, and Holtz, 'Tradition', pp. 82-83.

apposition refers to the less inflexible link between such a part of speech and an independent preposition. Unlike the 'separate'/'conjunct' terminology, this method of description makes it clear that in both cases there is a bond between the *praepositio* and the other part of speech, but that in one case this bond is less tight than in the other. Whether a preposition is linked by apposition or by composition is almost entirely a matter of what part of speech it is linked to:

> Igitur nomini quidem et per appositionem et per conpositionem, pronomini vero per appositionem solam, licet quibusdam 'mecum, tecum, secum, nobiscum, vobiscum' composita esse videatur, participio [per compositionem] per derivationem vel consequentiam compositorum verborum vel per appositionem, ceteris autem partibus per solam compositionem praepositio iungitur. (III, 28/11-16)

Thus only in the case of a noun or a participle is there any doubt over whether the preposition is joined by apposition or composition: with pronouns it is always by apposition,[16] with any other part of speech it is always by composition. There are further guidelines for the noun:

> Compositae quidem tam in nominativo quam in obliquo casibus ab eo nominativo composito flexis inveniuntur, ut 'indoctus indocti indocto indoctum indocte', appositae autem non nisi cum accusativo vel ablativo, ut 'in hostem, pro patria' (III, 27/26-29)

so that uncertainty remains only where a noun is in the accusative or ablative case. Participles, being composed "partly of nouns and partly of verbs" may contain prepositions-in-composition

> secundum verborum figuram, ex quibus nascuntur, ut 'inducens, extorquens, percurrens, (III, 28/1-3)

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[16] Except possibly for the enclitic "postpositions" *mecum*, *tecum* etc. which are forever worrying the grammarians by their refusal to fit within standard definitions.

but may also may be linked by apposition

> in accusativo et ablativo secundum nomina, ut 'in amantem, pro docente'. (III, 28/3-4)

Although Priscian does not describe any method for determining whether a preposition is in apposition or composition when followed by a noun or participle in the accusative or ablative case, his description is a great improvement on Donatus's observations in this area, since it makes it clear that the important distinction is between declining and non-declining parts of speech.[17] Apposition only occurs with the declining parts of speech, noun, pronoun and participle, and only in relation to two cases. It is this, Priscian argues, which distinguishes prepositions from adverbs or conjunctions, since "the conjunction is wont to be joined by apposition to both nouns and verbs and all parts of speech, both declining and non-declining; nor is it only placed in front, but is also joined to the ends of words by both poets and prose writers; but the preposition, as is often said, is not only always placed in front (when put in the right order), but also is only ever joined to verbs and other non-declining parts of speech by composition."[18]

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[17] Donatus's talk of prepositions '*qui casibus seruiunt*' and '*qui loquellis seruiunt*' was presumably trying to make the same distinction; but lacking more detailed explanation, especially of what was being referred to by '*casibus*' and '*loquellis*', his point remained obscure.

[18] *Praepositiones quoque tam pro adverbiis quam pro coniunctionibus inveniuntur, ut ostendimus. non bene tamen stoici praepositionem inter coniunctiones ponebant, praepositivam coniunctionem eam nominantes, cum coniunctio et nominibus et verbis et omnibus tam declinabilis quam indeclinabilis per appositionem soleat adiungi; nec solum praeponitur, sed etiam subiungitur tam apud poetas quam apud sine metris scribentes; praepositio vero, ut saepe dictum est, et praeponi vult semper, cum recto ordine ponitur, et verbis ceterisque partibus indeclinabilis nisi in compositione non adiungitur* (III, 34/18-35/3).

These lengthy and detailed explanations of Priscian's *Institutiones* may not have been well known in the early Insular period. The concise definitions contained in Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, published in 636, were, however, certainly familiar to and frequently used by Irish and Anglo-Saxon grammarians.[99] Isidore's chapter on *praepositio* is typically short; and as elsewhere in this encyclopaedic work his purpose is to provide etymological explanations of the terminology, so that discussion of grammatical principles or phenomena only occurs in so far as these arise out of the names used to describe them.

> Praepositio dicta, quod nominibus praeponatur et verbis. Accusativae et ablativae praepositiones a casibus, quibus serviunt, dictae. Loquellares vero, quia loquellis, id est verbis semper cohaerent, nec aliquid valent solae positae, ut 'di' 'dis'. Coniunctae vero verbis figuram faciunt, ut 'diduco', 'distraho'.[100]

This account does not add anything new to earlier descriptions; in fact, Isidore is very selective in the terms he choses to define, and though in spite of his brevity and selectivity he manages to cover most of the principal issues that we have been examining, much remains implicit rather than explicit, with very little illustration. By reducing to just the noun and verb the list of parts before which prepositions are placed, he implicitly highlights the two different functions, and, avoiding the term *praepositiones casuales* and instead defining "accusative and ablative prepositions", he indicates the possible alternatives for prepositions followed by nouns, but without overtly linking the two definitions. His definition of *praepositiones loquellares* repeats almost verbatim that found

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[99] See Law, *ILG*, 23-4.

[100] *Etymologiae*, I,13 (*Isidori Hispalensis episcopi etymologiarum siue originum libri XX*, edited by W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols (Oxford, 1911), I).

in *Explanationes*,[101] conveying with clarity the idea that there are some prepositions which cannot be isolated (*nec aliquid valent solae positae*), although he does not bother to include the full list to explain which prepositions fall into this category. Isidore's account refers to the idea of 'joining' ('*cohaerent*', '*coniunctae*'), but the question of separable prepositions is only dealt with implicitly, not spelled out either in definitions or with examples.

iv Insular grammarians and the preposition

We have seen in Chapter Two how (on the evidence of the filltigthi or prepositional inflections in the *Auraicept*) Irish grammarians of the vernacular regarded prepositions as an aspect of nominal inflection, with each combination of preposition and noun constituting a different case. Irish students are likely therefore to have been unfamiliar with the concept of a preposition as an independent morphological and lexical unit in isolation from the following part of speech; and given their particular linguistic perspective, they may have had some difficulty coming to terms with this phenomenon when they encountered it in Latin. This factor in itself may be partly responsible for the tendency not to separate prepositions in Latin manuscripts, especially when popular definitions such as those of Isidore laid more emphasis on joining than on separating prepositions, and when the accounts given by earlier grammarians are so often complicated and confusing.

It is interesting to see what the Insular Latin grammarians made of

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[101] See p. 135 above.

their legacy of teaching on the preposition, and whether they appear to have understood, or showed any particular interest in, the question of how to determine boundaries of parts of speech and how to know when a preposition is joined and when separated. From the treatment of the preposition in the *Anonymus ad Cuimnanum* it would appear that some confusion remained about this question. In a discussion which (like the rest of this commentary) closely follows Donatus, questioning and justifying his definitions in minute detail from every possible angle, there are several places where the original ideas have been misunderstood, or at the least obscured, having been overwhelmed by further interesting but usually tangential observations.[102] The following is an outline of some of the more interesting or unusual features of this discussion.

The influence of Isidore may be seen in the concern shown by the author to locate the force or *potestas* and the meaning or *significatio* of the preposition in its name. He repeats the earlier grammarians in explaining that it is from its position, being placed before other parts, that this part is called praepositio, and argues that when not placed in front it loses both its name and its meaning (*et nomen et significationem non praepossita perdit*). Yet, recognizing that prepositions do sometimes occupy other positions, he wonders why those which are placed after another part are not called "suppositions" (*quando subponitur, ut 'mecum', cur non subpossitio uocatur?*) and those joined (i.e. prefixed) to another part, "conjunctions" (*et quando iungitur cur non uocatur coniunctio, ut est*

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[102] The section on the *praepositio* occupies foll. 41ᵛᵃ-41ᵛᵇ of the manuscript.

'expraesse'?).[103] The distinction made here between 'pre-posed' and 'con-joined' prepositions is interesting; but the author is not here concerned with degrees of dependence between parts of speech, but with how the *potestas* and *significatio* are affected by these changes of location. These, he argues, are transfered into the other part of speech when a preposition is prefixed or subjoined to that part:

> quando coniungitur uel subponitur non esse suae potestatis sed in aliam transisset partem orationis. (fol. 41")

With a similar concern to locate the *significatio*, he argues a little further on that prepositions, unless "joined to their own cases", move over into the meaning of the other part:

> intellegendum quoque generaliter praepositiones, nisi cassibus propriis iunguntur, transire in alterius partis significationem. (fol. 41")

Prepositions which '*cassibus propriis iunguntur*' must refer to those which are free-standing and followed by an inflecting form; as independent lexical and morphological units they retain their own *significatio*, while those which act as prefixes lose theirs in order to modify that of the other part.

The author adds little by way of explanation to Donatus's comment about prepositions being either separated or joined, though his gloss contains one interesting detail:

> 'separi', 'coniungi': idest separantur in opere prepossitiones cassui seruientes, aut in conpossitionem figuras iunguntur. (fol. 41")

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[103] fol. 41"a. All quotations are from my own transcription of the manuscript; I have added punctuation where necessary for clarity.

The use of '*in opere*' in this context is unusual, and would make most sense if translated 'in a work' or 'in a book'. If this interpretation is correct, it suggests that the author was thinking of separation as something that would be physically manifested - as indeed it would have been by the time he was writing.

In discussing the inseparable prefixes (*praepossitiones uerbiales*), the author is not very interested in explaining their inseparability: instead he notes that while three of them are 'never able to be anything but prepositions', the other three exist also as other parts of speech:

> iii ex eis sine dubio semper praepossitiones non esse nequeunt, ut 'di' 'am' 'con', nam nisi sint praepossitiones nihil sunt; ut[104] 'dis' 're' 'se' nomina et pronomen finitum esse possunt, ut est 'dis' 'ditis', 're' ablatius 'rei', 'se' ablatius 'sui'. (fol. 41[rb])

Thus the author equates lexical items within one morphological category with identically written but lexically unrelated forms in different morphological categories;[105] the same sequence of letters designates the ablative of the noun *res* as well as the inseparable preposition *re-*, and the author, viewing 're' primarily as a sequence of letters, is concerned to point out the two quite distinct grammatical categories within which it can operate.

Immediately following this, the author talks about two kinds of separation:

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[104] Read '*sed*'?

[105] These forms are homographic but not in all cases homophonic, since the vowels in the nominal forms *dis* and *re* are long, but those in the inseparable prepositions *dis-* and *re-* are short.

> duobus modis separantur: aut numquam conponuntur, aut numquam uerbo nisi nominis cassui iunguntur in praeponendo. (fol. 41[v])

This is apparently said in relation to the (always) separated prepositions, *apud* and *penes*; but the argument is not illustrated, and the meaning is not particularly clear. Donatus's statement that '*ceterae omnes*' can be both joined and separated receives almost no comment, nor are any examples given here either.

However, exemplification of the different functions of prepositions is found further on in the commentary. Following Donatus's structure still, the author comments in turn on those prepositions which take the accusative case, and the ablative, and both. These are by definition the 'case-serving', free-standing prepositions; Donatus lists each one and gives an example of its use in combination with a noun. The author of *Ad Cuimnanum* quotes Donatus's lists, but then immediately (before going on, in two instances, to a detailed discussion of particular and exceptional cases) points out that some of these also act as verbal prefixes, and gives examples of each of these:

> Praepositio in accusatiuo: ad apud ante aduersus cic citra circumcirca contra erga extra inter intra ob pone per prope secundum post trans ultra pro praeter supra usqūe penes. Sed expedit sciri quod harum quaedam uerbis iunguntur, ut est: post ob inter circum ante trans ad per; ut: postpone obduc interueni circumfer antefer transueche adfer perlege.[106]

Although such comments represent a departure from the topic under discussion, and mix up the subject of prefixes with that of case-serving prepositions, the result is helpful rather than confusing, because the

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[106] fol. 41[v]. The author (or the scribe) omits from Donatus's list *iuxta* and *propter* and mistakenly adds *pro*, which occurs again in the list of ablative-taking prepositions.

examples given here of prepositions as prefixes, in combination with those given by Donatus of the same prepositions acting as independent parts of speech, provide a complete illustration of the different ways in which Donatus's '*ceterae omnes*' can be used.

c The importance of examples

Although Pompeius was one of his main sources,[107] the author of *Ad Cuimnanum* made no use of the former's rules for distinguishing between separable and inseparable prepositions. His treatment of separation and joining is not particularly clear; yet from the lists of examples that he gives it is clear that he understood the distinction between verbal prefixes and case-taking prepositions. The grammar of Diomedes, which was also an important source for *Ad Cuimnanum*, has in its preposition section little theoretical analysis, but a full treatment of individual prepositions and their different meanings. Likewise, Priscian's *Institutiones* contains, in addition to its general, analytical account of the *praepositio*, a great deal of detail on each preposition individually. The extent to which Insular scribes were able to separate prepositions correctly probably had little to do with their having a conscious grasp of linguistic principles such as intercalation, since such principles are rarely made explicit in the earlier grammars, and the Insular grammarians do not seem to have emphasized this matter at all. A more important factor was probably their familiarity with the numerous examples of the use of individual prepositions in works like that of Diomedes, and later in that

[107] See Law, *ILG*, p. 89; Holtz, 'Irish Grammarians', p. 142.

of Priscian. Such accounts illustrate the use of the preposition in context, so that students would be made familiar with the patterns of use in combination with other parts of speech; while the status of each preposition as an isolable, meaningful unit is implicit in the fact of its isolation for discussion.

The scribes' familiarity with numerous individual, isolated examples of words must have been an important factor in the development of the practice of word separation, not only in the case of prepositions, but for all the parts of speech. Such examples occurred not only in the grammar books, for example in the copious paradigms which were the mainstay of Insular texts like *Declinationes nominum*, but also in glossaries. The layout used in glossaries, with individual words listed in one column and their meanings given in a separate column, presupposes a concept of isolable and meaningful lexical units; as M. B. Parkes comments in discussing the Épinal glossary (of late seventh-century English origin), "a glossary is the kind of text which requires a scribe to separate words".[108] With the necessity of separation in the copying of such texts, scribes will have become more accustomed to recognizing the isolable forms, and this must have encouraged the spread and acceptance of the practice in other kinds of text.

The vernacular glossing of Latin texts is another activity which

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[108] 'Palaeographical Commentary', in *The Épinal, Erfurt, Werden and Corpus Glossaries*, edited by B. Bischoff, M. Budny, G. Harlow, M. B. Parkes and J. D. Pheifer, EEMF, 22 (Copenhagen and Baltimore, 1988), pp. 13-25 (p. 15). Parkes notes that in Épinal, not only are the lemmata, or headwords, clearly separated from the following explanation by virtue of being written in a separate column, but even when the lemma consists of two or more words these have been carefully separated from each other.

educated scribes in the recognition of the boundaries of morphological and lexical forms. In identifying vernacular forms corresponding to the Latin word, the glossators (and subsequent scribes copying the text with gloss) were learning to separate their own language into meaningful units, but at the same time the process required them to recognize and isolate the separate elements of the Latin sentence, whether or not these were physically separated in the pages of the text they were glossing.[103]

Thus exposure to the paradigms and numerous examples of the grammars, together with the experience of copying glossaries or glossing texts, familiarized scribes with the process of isolating the interrelated but distinct parts of a Latin sentence, and encouraged them to give physical expression to this process whose theoretical basis they learned from the categories of the Latin grammarians.

V Conclusion

The Anglo-Saxons and Irish had inherited the grammars and commentaries of antiquity, and although these were not suited exactly to their needs, they studied them faithfully, since they were committed to the tradition of the *ars grammatica*. They rearranged the traditional material and, concentrating on the inflecting parts of speech, supplemented it with new examples in an attempt to meet the needs of pupils at elementary level, but they remained dependent on traditional structures and repeated the

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[103] See Parkes, 'Palaeographical Commentary', p. 15, and *Scribes, Scripts and Readers*, p. xvii.

traditional questions and answers. Yet meanwhile scribes were being far from traditional in their practices, introducing not only word separation, but innovative approaches to punctuation and other aspects of graphic display which presuppose an analysis of the language of a text. These scribal innovations were not based on any formal, explicit discussions of the issues in graphical terms by the grammarians (either Insular or earlier), who, writing with the reader in mind, on the whole ignored the specific needs of scribes as copyists;[110] rather, in the case of word separation at least, they represent a practical application to written Latin of the theoretical categories which the scribes had learned in their grammatical education.

Insular grammatical texts reveal the concerns and the ideals of early Irish and Anglo-Saxon teachers of grammar; but to see the reasons for their concern, and the impact of the ideal on reality, we must examine the practices of scribes, for the copying of manuscripts is the point at which the theory and the practice of grammar meet.

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[110] An exception to this statement is Bede's *De orthographia*: see p. 121 above. Holtz argues (*Donat*, pp. 272-83) that the grammar of Asper (or Asporius), which he believes to be of early seventh-century Irish origin, is especially preoccupied with the correctness of written language, and was intended to be useful above all to copyists; but Law (*ILG*, pp. 35-41), who argues in any case for a Continental origin for the text, interprets the grammarian's concern as being with the mistakes typically made by *speakers* of late Latin, not those of a foreigner dependent on grammars and written texts. A fuller study of this text is desirable, whichever of these two scholars is correct.

PART TWO

SCRIBAL PRACTICE

CHAPTER FOUR

Word Separation in Insular Latin Manuscripts: A General Description

I An overlooked practice

> Les écritures alphabétiques basées sur la décomposition du mot dans ses éléments phoniques simples ne peuvent pas négliger le caractère insécable du l'unité de signification, et elles emploient en général divers procédés pour le mettre en valeur. A cet égard, il est très important de noter quelles écritures comportent ou ne comportent pas des séparations de mots.

This recommendation to pay attention to the practice of word separation was made in 1958 by M. Cohen, in his comprehensive study of the emergence and development of the alphabetic system of writing.[1] Elsewhere in the same work he argues that the separation of words is one of a number of practices which can be understood as a continuation of ideographic notation (that is, signs representing ideas) within the basically phonographic system (signs representing sounds) of alphabetic script. This interaction between phonography and ideography should, he argues, be central to any study of the history of the alphabet, which is the history of an instrument of intellectual communication, and of the mechanism of

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[1] *La grande invention de l'écriture et son évolution*, 3 vols (Paris, 1958), text vol., p. 224.

representing language.[2] Scattered throughout Cohen's book are many references to word separation, both descriptions of the practice as it occurs in many different scripts, and attempts to define the principles which underlie the practice or to suggest reasons for changes.[3]

This interest in the theory and practice of word separation is a fairly rare phenomenon, at least among scholars of the western European tradition. Editors of ancient texts tend to follow modern conventions of separation,[4] so students of the text remain unaware of ancient practices unless they turn to the manuscripts;[5] meanwhile, the attention of palaeographers has generally been concentrated on the shapes of letter forms, in their concern to define and describe the development of script types, and so to provide evidence for the date and origin of manuscripts.

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[2] See text vol., pp. 420 and 423. R. Marichal also discusses the concept of words as ideograms, in relation to scribal errors and their causes: modern and medieval scripts, in contrast to the capitals of the fourth century, use letters of different heights, ligatures and accents, and separate words by space, thus giving each word its own, recognisable silhouette, and transforming an alphabetic script into an ideographic one. See 'Critique des textes', in *L'histoire et ses méthodes*, edited by C. Samaran (Bruges, 1961), pp. 1247-1366 (p. 1258).

[3] See the many references under "Séparation" and "Intervalles" in the index, especially pp. 150 and 245-46 (on Greek writing), pp. 259 and 348 (on Latin), pp. 223-24 (on general principles).

[4] For example, H. Gneuss, in 'Guide to the Editing and Preparation of Texts for the Dictionary of Old English' in *A Plan for the Dictionary of Old English*, edited by R. Frank and A. Cameron (Toronto, 1973), pp. 9-24 (p. 18), advises editors to divide Old English according to the parts of speech, not according to the groupings found in the manuscripts.

[5] But some recent editions are more sensitive to the layout and practices found in the original; see e.g. E. Tov, *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Nahal Hever (8HevXIIgr)*, edited with the collaboration of R. A. Kraft and a contribution by P. J. Parsons (Oxford, 1990). The editors have printed, parallel to the normalized edited text, an unreconstructed transcript "so as to represent as closely as possible the contents of the scroll": this includes an attempt to represent the spacing of words.

Word separation (or the lack of it) rarely receives more than a passing reference; the practice is not, for example, among the regular list of features included in the catalogue descriptions of Lowe's *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, and indeed is seldom mentioned there.[6]

A few early studies have looked at the question of word separation within a limited corpus of material and primarily from a linguistic point of view. Walter Dennison's analysis of 'Syllabification in Latin Inscriptions', which covers both the splitting of words at line-ends and the separating of syllables by points, was concerned to provide evidence for the correct pronunciation of disputed consonant clusters.[7] Margarete Rademacher studied the practice with regard to the vernacular language in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, trying to discover the principles underlying the way in which Old English was separated; and Wolfgang Keller, pursuing Rademacher's conclusions and including some Latin manuscripts in his investigations, pointed out some of the difficulties encountered in studying separation by space and compared this with separation by points - the latter practice, Keller observes, is older, and by medieval times much rarer, but easier to analyse than separation by space because it is positive and unambiguous.[8]

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[6] *CLA*. See below, p. 213 and p. 220, notes 58 and 59, for some of the rare instances when Lowe refers to the practice; he does quite often mention "word division", but this term refers to a different practice: see p. 155 and note 10 below. The editors of facsimiles of individual manuscripts sometimes have a few words to say on word separation, but far less than on word division or abbreviation.

[7] *Classical Philology*, 1 (1906), 47-68 (see Chapter One, note 119).

[8] M. Rademacher, *Die Worttrennung in angelsächsischen Handschriften*, published doctoral dissertation, University of Münster, 1921 (Münster, 1926); W. Keller, 'Zur Worttrennung in den angelsächsischen Handschriften', *Britannica: Max Förster zum sechzigsten Geburtstage* (Leipzig, 1929), pp. 89-105; see also his brief remarks in *Angelsächsische Palaeographie*,

In spite of the interesting conclusions and observations of Dennison, Rademacher and Keller,[9] which point to a large and fruitful body of material waiting to be explored, no further major investigation appears to have been carried out on the area, from either a linguistic or palaeographical point of view. By contrast, the subject of word division at line-ends has attracted a fair amount of attention. This practice is commented on frequently by editors and palaeographers;[10] and recently some detailed, statistical studies have emerged, notably that of Wetzel (though all of these are restricted to Anglo-Saxon manuscripts in the vernacular).[11]

There are good reasons for this concentration on the practice of word

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Palaestra, 43 (Berlin, 1906), pp. 51-52.

[9] For example, Keller, summarising Rademacher, states that in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts "die Trennung geschicht nicht nach Einzelwörtern, sondern nach Akzentgruppen. Es werden also die Wörter zusammengeschrieben, die einen gemeinsamen Akzent haben" ('Worttrennung', p. 89). His analysis of some eighth- and ninth-century Continental manuscripts with point-separation reveals, he argues, the same underlying principle (pp. 99-104). For discussion of their conclusions, see Chapter Five, pp. 231-33.

[10] See the frequent, terse remarks in *CLA*, e.g.: "syllabification abnormal" (II, 133); "grotesque syllabification" (III, 326); "barbarous word division at line ends" (III, 329); "impossible word division" (V, 684). Here the norm is assumed and only abnormal cases are mentioned; D. H. Farmer, in his facsimile edition of *The Rule of St Benedict: Oxford, Bodl. Lib., Hatton 48*, EEMF, 15 (Copenhagen, 1968) tells us that "word division at line-ends is usually normal" (p. 14), and devotes a paragraph to describing both the norm and the exceptions.

[11] C.-D. Wetzel, *Die Worttrennung am Zeilenende in altenglischen Handschriften*, Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe 14, Bd. 96 (Frankfurt, 1981); see also A. Lutz, 'Die Worttrennung am Zeilenende in altenglischen Handschriften', *Indogermanische Forschungen*, 90 (1985), 227-38 (review of Wetzel) and 'The Syllabic Basis of Word Division in Old English Manuscripts', *English Studies*, 67 (1986), 193-210. Lutz makes use of Wetzel's comprehensive data regarding line-end division to support her arguments about Old English syllabic structure.

division and neglect of word separation.[12] Firstly, the question of whether and where to break a word at the end of a line has been a live issue over the centuries: the grammarians wrote rules for it; compositors had their guidelines; in contemporary typing lessons certain principles are taught. A modern editor or palaeographer therefore is usually fairly sensitive to the conventions being employed in a manuscript, and will tend to comment on anything unexpected or abnormal.[13] On word separation, however, as we have seen, the antique grammarians were silent, for theirs was the era of *scriptio continua*; neither do later writers bother to comment on the practice once it had become established, and modern scholars have continued the tradition of taking it for granted. Secondly, line-end division is an unambiguous, easily quantifiable practice: unless the margins of a page are damaged, there is no doubt as to whether or where a word is split; whereas word separation, especially in its most usual Western form of separation by space, is not so easily pinned down. In one

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[12] I use the term 'word *division*' to refer to the splitting apart of words at line-ends, and 'word *separation*' for the indication of individual word units within the line. This follows Cohen's term '*séparation des mots*', and is parallel to Bischoff's use, in *Paläographie des römischen Altertums und des abendländischen Mittelalters*, Grundlagen der Germanistik, 24 (Berlin, 1979), of '*Worttrennung*' for word separation as opposed to '*Wortbrechung*' for the splitting of words. However, many palaeographers have used the terms interchangeably, so that it is often not clear immediately (e.g. from the title of a book or article) which practice is being referred to. In the English translation of Bischoff's book (*Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, translated by D. O Cróinín and D. Ganz (Cambridge, 1990)) the term 'word-division' is used twice, once in a passage quoted below (p. 158) to describe what I have called 'word separation', once on p. 87 in the quite different sense of word splitting: "... the indifference to proper word-division (for example, *diceba-nt*, *M-artha*)...". Wetzel (followed by Lutz) uses '*Worttrennung*' for the practice at line-ends; and Bischoff also uses '*Silbentrennung*' (p. 216) for the same practice, which Lowe (see above, note 10) calls both 'syllabification' and 'word division'.

[13] For a survey of ancient and modern practices, see Kenneth Sisam, 'Word-Division', Society for Pure English Tracts, 33 (London, 1929), pp. 436-49.

sense, there is literally nothing to talk about: it is a question of blank space, of an absence of marks on the page. Spacing in handwritten script is infinitely subtle and ambiguous, and hence is very hard to describe and measure objectively. Keller tried giving the size of the gaps in millimetres to indicate the variation found within one line;[14] E. Tov, in the edition referred to above (note 5), talks of a scribe leaving "more than one space" as if the space were an absolute and fixed size, but recognizes the problem involved.[15]

Word separation, therefore, has long been an invisible practice, too obvious and ubiquitous to provoke much comment, and evasive of objective and systematic study when noticed. Yet most palaeographers, although they rarely bother to spell it out, recognize implicitly (and make use of in their arguments for dating[16]) the fact that at some point in the early medieval period, scribes in the West, starting apparently in the British Isles, began to abandon the *scriptio continua* of antiquity in favour of

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[14] See 'Worttrennung', pp. 89-90, e.g. *Beowulf* 233: bræc 4 mod 1 ge 3 hyg 2 dum. Keller is arguing that the spaces between syllables are smaller than those between syntactic units, but he admits that often the difference between large spaces and small is so negligible as almost to invalidate his argument.

[15] pp. 11-12. Tov comments: "The very recognition of a space is sometimes subjective, when the space is recognized only by comparing the extant space with the surrounding text and not by any absolute measure". But his transcription indicates the presence of a space with the symbol _ , rather than merely by leaving a blank; longer spaces are shown as __ , _____ etc. This has the disadvantage of making the practice look more regular than it is in reality, but the advantage at least of drawing the reader's attention to the use of space.

[16] e.g. the arguments over the date of Oxford, Bodleian Library Hatton 48 (*CLA*, II, 240): the fact that the manuscript is written in *scriptio continua* has caused some to give it an early date (*c.* 700), while others have argued that this practice is an example of deliberate archaism at a later date of s. viii med; see Farmer's facsimile edition, p. 23. On this manuscript see further p. 223 and note 67 in Chapter Five.

separating words by spaces. This change and innovation is referred to in passing and in general terms by various scholars, who sometimes attempt to explain why it should have occurred at that particular time and place: Sisam remarks that

> the practice ... became general in the eighth century, when the users of classical Latin had to learn it artificially and word by word from grammarians or glossaries, because their native languages were either wholly different (as in England) or had diverged widely from classical standards (as in France),[17]

while Cohen offers a different date, and implies a connection with the beginnings of writing in the vernaculars:

> cette application d'une notation idéographique ... s'est généralisée en Europe autour de l'an 1000 - au moment où les langues parlées qui devaient devenir des langues nationales commençaient à s'écrire.[18]

Bernhard Bischoff's comments, tucked away at the end of a supplementary section on 'Punctuation and related matters' in his general and thorough introduction to Latin palaeography. make more explicit the historical development of the practice and the special role of Insular scribes:

> The principle of word-division was slowly recognised. In the first century, and also still in the second, points are placed after every word in Roman texts. Later the writing practice switches over to scriptura continua. The need to make the word units recognisable was probably first felt among the Celts and Germans, and the Insular scribes seem to have been the first to aim at that. In Carolingian times it is still generally the practice to draw prepositions and other short words towards the following word. From the twelfth century on the division is mostly quite clear.[19]

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[17] 'Word-Division', p. 446.

[18] Text vol., p. 423. See also pp. 259, 348; p. 340 notes that in Greek the separation of words "s'est implantée peu à peu" from the seventh century onwards.

[19] p. 173, in the translation cited above (note 12).

Bischoff's authoritative statement has been accepted by other palaeographers,[10] but until very recently no-one appears to have realized the significance of this development or sought to clarify its origins and the reasons for its emergence.

However, recent developments in palaeography have included a shift of emphasis away from the study of purely graphical data such as letter forms, towards a recognition of the historical and linguistic contexts with which they are inextricably bound; palaeography is to be seen, among other things, "in relation to the development of the medium of written language itself".[11] In this new climate, two articles have recently drawn our attention to the significant change brought about through the introduction of word separation, and to the importance of the Insular contribution in this area. Paul Saenger, investigating the change-over from reading aloud to silent reading which occurred during the medieval period, sees word separation as "the singular contribution of the early Middle Ages to the evolution of Western written communication".[12] Noting that the practice is found regularly in England and Ireland in the eighth century while still an exceptional characteristic of display scripts on the Continent, he comments, as did Cohen and Marichal, on the ideographic nature of this new presentation:

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[10] For example, J. J. John, 'Latin Paleography', in *Medieval Studies: An Introduction*, edited by J. M. Powell (Syracuse, 1976), pp. 1-68 (p. 40): "The separation of words by blank space was given an impetus by those, such as the Irish and English, for whom Latin was not a native tongue. Nevertheless, prepositions were often not separated from the noun they governed well into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries."

[11] *Scribes, Scripts and Readers*, p. xv.

[12] 'Silent Reading: Its Impact on Late Medieval Script and Society', *Viator*, 13 (1982), 367-414, especially pp. 376-78 (p. 377).

> When word separation thus appeared in literary texts, lines of written Latin became for the first time a series of comprehensible images intelligible to the reader without syllabic pronunciation. Word separation, without sacrificing the inherent pedagogic advantages of a phonetic alphabet, gave written Latin an ideographic value analogous to the pictorial system of ancient China.[13]

Saenger (taking further the brief remarks of Sisam and Bischoff) believes the adoption of the practice at that particular time and place to be the consequence of the linguistic and cultural situation in the British Isles: it was "not the result of conscious palaeographic reform but an accidental result of the traumatic contact in Ireland between the ossified literary traditions of late Roman antiquity and the oral culture of the illiterate Celts".[14] In contrast to a Roman élite reading its own language and trained to recognize the groups of syllables as words,

> eighth-century Saxon and Celtic priests, living on the fringes of what had been the Roman Empire, had a weak grasp of Latin and needed spaces between words to recognise them in order to pronounce liturgical texts correctly as they read aloud.[15]

The Continent was hesitant in its reception of the practice, Saenger suggests, because word separation was perceived not as a major advance but as a concession to the ignorant.[16] Saenger then uses modern theories of

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[13] ibid.

[14] ibid.

[15] ibid.

[16] In antiquity, the reliance on interpunctuation to separate words, and on other forms of punctuation, was beneath the dignity of an educated reader (see Cicero, *Pro Murena*, 25; *De oratore*, III,173). The practice was associated with non-literary texts and with the semi-literate: Cohen points out that among surviving examples of early Greek script, word separation is found most often in the short documents of everyday life, reflecting the practice of people with little education; he also mentions some technical works (on grammar and astronomy) from the Alexandrian period which contain word separation (text vol., pp. 245-6).

the psychology of reading to explain the advantages obtained by placing spaces between words: increased reading speed and more rapid copying.[17]

Saenger was the first to spell out the significance of this Insular innovation within the Western medieval tradition; but his remarks are still fairly brief and general, forming only a small part of long article. In 1987 M. B. Parkes published a more detailed account of 'The Contribution of Insular Scribes of the Seventh and Eighth Centuries to the "Grammar of Legibility"',[18] seeing the introduction of word separation as one of a range of new graphical conventions introduced by Irish scribes and adopted by the Anglo-Saxons "to improve the intelligibility of minuscule scripts, and to facilitate access to the information transmitted in the written medium".[19] In Parkes's view, the adoption of word separation was not an accidental by-product of the language difficulties of scribes, as Saenger argued, but a conscious and deliberate application of principles of morphology learned from the Latin grammarians:

> When Irish scribes copied Latin texts they soon abandoned the *scriptio continua* which they had found in their exemplars. Instead they adopted as the basis for their scribal practices the morphological criteria which they had encountered in the analyses of the grammarians: they set out the parts of speech by introducing spaces between words. This process is well advanced in the datable manuscripts produced at the end of the seventh century, such as the Bangor Antiphonary (Milan, Ambrosiana, MS C.5. inf.; *CLA*, 311; copied *c* 680-91), and the beginning of the eighth century, such as the Iona manuscript of Adomnan's *Vita Columbae* (Schaffhausen, Stadtbibl., MS Gen.1; *CLA*, 998; copied before 713).[20]

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[17] p. 378.

[18] Reprinted in *Scribes, Scripts and Readers*, pp. 1-18.

[19] *Scribes, Scripts and Readers*, p. 1.

[20] ibid., pp. 3-4.

Parkes contrasts this practice with that adopted for writing the vernacular language (i.e. the writing of word-groups according to stress or syntactic patterns).[31] arguing that in the latter case the scribes were influenced by spoken phenomena in their own language, whereas Latin they perceived in graphic terms.[32]

The studies of Parkes and Saenger encourage us to pay serious attention to word separation, and their statements about the reason for its introduction and the basis on which it was developed deserve further investigation. The nature of the linguistic analysis underlying separation in Latin manuscripts needs to be clarified: was it morphological, as Parkes argues, or phonological as Keller believed; does it differ from that found in the vernacular, and what part did the scribe's spoken vernacular (as part of the linguistic system within which he works) have to play in determining the way in which he separates written Latin? The role of other, non-linguistic, factors in the development of the practice, such as the type of text being copied, the nature of the script, aesthetic considerations, and the manuscript tradition and influence of the exemplar, also need to be considered. Furthermore, it will be useful to know whether word separation in this early period exhibits much regional or chronological variation, such as might provide additional clues in determining the date and origin of manuscripts.

To answer these questions satisfactorily, we need to move beyond

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[31] See Chapter Two, pp. 89-90.

[32] ibid., pp. 18-19; Saenger also refers briefly (p. 377, n. 57) to the Irish practice of separating the vernacular into "syntactically defined word groupings".

general descriptions and assertions and engage in detailed and comparative study of the practice as it is found in individual manuscripts. To do this for all early Insular manuscripts would be a huge task, and (for many reasons, including those discussed above, pp. 156-57) not a straightforward one. The study that is presented in this and the following chapter is limited to Latin manuscripts, paying particular attention to the very earliest surviving Insular books in the hope of obtaining a clearer picture of the origin and early development of the practice. I begin in this chapter by establishing terms and a method for describing and discussing the practice. In Chapter Five there follows a detailed examination of separation in the earliest Irish manuscripts, and a briefer survey of how Anglo-Saxon scribes adapted and developed the practice; in a concluding section I consider some of the questions raised above in the light of these detailed observations.

II Describing word separation

The ancient grammarians distinguished between *vox articulata* (articulate utterance) and *vox confusa* (indistinct utterance): according to Donatus, the former could be expressed in letters ('*litteris comprehendi potest*'), that is, divided into minimal phonological units, while the latter could not.[11] In some of the commentaries copied and studied by the Insular grammarians, *vox articulata* was defined very much in terms of written language: it is called *articulata*, Pompeius says, because it can be

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[11] *Ars maior*, Holtz, 603/3-4.

written, by the fingers (*articulis*) which hold the reed."[11] Word separation is one aspect of the articulation of written language, dividing into distinct and significant parts the continuous letter-strings of alphabetic script. There are two aspects to the practice, both of which must be included in any description: the distinctness of the parts (that is, the physical, graphical aspect) - the means used by scribes to indicate separation; and the significance of the parts (that is, the linguistic aspect) - the question of word-boundaries and the grammatical status of the letters grouped together by graphical means. In other words, any description of word separation must be concerned both with *how* words are separated, and also with *where* and *why*.

It is impossible, when describing the practice, to treat these two aspects entirely independently, or to make purely physical observations without making some use of linguistic concepts and analysis; even to talk about 'word separation' presupposes some understanding on our part of the concept of a word. But by discussing the two aspects separately in the following pages I hope to clarify the terms and outline some of the

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[11] Pompeius, *GL*, V, 99/15-19: *Ideo articulata dicta est, quod potest articulo scribi. ... Digitis autem tenemus calamos.* The definition offered in the commentary *Explanationes in artem Donati*, I (*GL*, IV, 487/5-8) which occurs in the St Paul im Lavanttal collection of grammatical texts, adds little to Donatus's definition and does not mention fingers or writing: *articulata est quae auditur et percipitur et est interpretabilis intellectum habens uel faciens litteram. articulata uox litteris conprehendi potest.* However, following the copy of *Explanationes* in the St Paul manuscript is a copy of Sergius *De littera*, in which the following definition occurs (fol. 54", lines 26-29): *articulata est quae scribi potest quae subest articulis idest digitis qui scribunt uel quod artem habeat aut exprimat.* This definition is not found in the printed edition of *De littera* (*GL*, IV, 475-85), and may be an addition to the original text, possibly based on Pompeius's definition (I have not been able to trace a similar passage in any other late antique grammarian). It reflects an emphasis on the idea of written language not found in the definitions of Donatus and most earlier grammarians.

problems encountered in the descriptions and analysis offered later. This section also aims to offer a picture of the norm or norms against which the detailed descriptions of individual manuscripts can be measured; for it should be realized that normal word separation in an eighth-century Insular manuscript is not at all the same as that found in a modern printed book.

a Distinct parts - the physical aspect of separation

Several graphic conventions were employed in Insular manuscripts in order to mark the separation of words: sometimes a scribe relied on one alone, but equally well a combination of two or more might be used.

i space

To leave space between words is, to the modern mind, the most obvious way of indicating the separation of one from the next; and the use of space does indeed form the basis of the practice in Insular manuscripts. It is usually a fairly straightforward matter to determine whether or not a particular sample of script manifests some kind of space separation, but to describe the use of space in empirical, objective terms is less easy. I have already referred above to the difficulties posed by the ambiguous nature of spacing.[35] Do we need to go to the lengths of Keller in recording the measurement of each individual space, or is it possible to give an accurate picture using subjective terms like 'minimal' or 'ample', 'subtle' or 'clear'? Probably the best solution for a general description

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[35] See pp. 156-57.

is to give an idea of the average width of spacing in relation to character width,[16] and also to indicate whether spacing is fairly even and consistent, or erratic.

The ambiguity of space goes beyond the problem of general description; it is often hard to distinguish between deliberate spaces intended to mark the end of a word, and accidental spaces arising as a consequence of the shapes of the letters, especially when the former are relatively narrow and the latter relatively wide. Our eyes are used to perceiving words as separate units, so we tend to read the smallest of gaps as deliberate spaces when we are expecting them, but may ignore similarly small gaps if they occur in places where we do not expect separation. In ways that differ slightly with different scripts and hands, letter forms create their own space around themselves (for example a tall s or an l in minuscule may create space to their right). Letters with tails or cross-strokes (e.g. a, e, t) are often linked to preceding or following letters, so that where a space occurs next to them, it is fairly certain to be deliberate; on the other hand, tails and cross-strokes are often carried right across spaces apparently intended to mark word boundaries,[17] and in the case of smaller gaps, the intention often remains obscure. Free-standing letter forms like o and u remain isolated from their neighbours even in mid-word, so that it is sometimes unclear whether the apparent

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[16] e.g. in the opening page of the St Paul im Lavanttal Pompeius (Stiftsbibliothek 2/1 (foll. 1-20); *CLA*, X, 1451), spacing is generally clear, with spaces being roughly the width of the letter n, and occasionally as wide as an m; see Plate 1.

[17] See e.g. the treatment especially of the cross-stroke of final t by the scribe of the Pompeius manuscript as seen in Plate 2; and see the discussion, pp. 202-04 below, of the Cathach of St Columba (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy S.N.; *CLA*, II, 266).

marking of a word boundary with a space is simply the effect of the occurrence of one of these letter forms in initial or final position.[8] The clarity of spacing depends partly on such factors as the density of the script, and whether the characters are contiguous: often word separation is less ambiguous on a tightly packed page where all letters are rubbing shoulders and any space, however slight, is clearly deliberate, than in a script that is more spacious to look at.

The problem of uncertainty in identifying spaces is a significant one, because it affects any attempt to analyse the principles underlying word separation. The analyst must interpret the manuscript evidence: total accuracy cannot be guaranteed, and as Keller observed, the conclusions resting on such interpretations remain open to question.[9] Fortunately the scribe's use of other conventions often clarifies the interpretation of doubtful instances of spacing.

ii points

The practice of separating words by points was common in Latin inscriptions and manuscripts until the end of the first century AD, but appears to have died out within the second century.[10] Keller identified

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[8] See the discussion, pp. 204-06 below, of the Folger Eusebius fragment (*CLA* Addenda, 1864).

[9] 'Worttrennung', p. 90.

[10] See Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, p. 169, n. 40, and p. 173, quoted above; Keller, 'Worttrennung', pp. 95-98. For interpunctuation in inscriptions, see plates in A. E. Gordon and J. S. Gordon, *Album of Dated Latin Inscriptions* (Berkeley, 1958-1965); for papyri, see e.g. the fragment of Cicero (Giessen, Hochschulbibliothek Papyrus Iandana 90 (Inv. 210); *CLA*, VIII, 1201), and further examples in Richard Seider, *Paläographie der lateinischen Papyri*, 3 vols (Stuttgart, 1972-81), I and II:1.

several Continental manuscripts, two of them eighth-century, in which regular word separation by points is found;[11] but these are exceptional, and the practice is not employed in Insular manuscripts in this way. However, Insular scribes, following a tradition that dates back through Latin manuscripts to early Greek inscriptions, do make use of points to isolate certain special categories of words or signs. The most common example is the convention of placing a point before and after numeral letters;[12] in grammar books the same convention is employed to distinguish letters or syllables under discussion, and sometimes to set apart words being quoted as examples, or sequences of words in a paradigm.[13]

The latter practice is found in late Antique grammar manuscripts

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[11] Épinal, Bibliothèque Municipale 149 (68), written in 744 (*CLA*, VI, 762); Laon Bilbiothèque Municipale 423, s. viii (*CLA*, VI, 766); see Keller, pp. 98-104. See also Lindsay, 'Collectanea Varia III: Aids to Readers', *Pal. Lat.*, 2 (1923), 16-17 on separation of words by dots (mentions Laon 423 and several other eighth- and ninth-century Continental manuscripts).

[12] Keller ('Worttrennung', pp. 92-94) briefly traces the development of this convention, which was intended to prevent confusion between such special signs and ordinary letters (though, as he points out, there is a tendency in later medieval English manuscripts for the practice with regard to the numeral i to spread by analogy to the graphically identical first person singular pronoun i, e.g. in a fifteenth-century copy of Chaucer's *Troilus*: "They set hem down and seyde as .i. shalle telle"). The problem of distinguishing Roman numerals from words is now being faced by computers: the Spell Check facility on my word-processor queries such forms as 'xv' or 'ix' and suggests alternative spellings for what it reads as misspelt words.

[13] Examples of pointing to distinguish letters under discussion can be seen in Plate 2, col. b, lines 33, 35 and 36 (but note that the convention is not always observed: there are no points surrounding the e of ab e lit in line 34). Occasional use of points to distinguish the elements of a paradigm can be seen in Plate 5 (the eighth-century English copy of *Explanationes*, St Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek 2/1 (foll. 43-75); *CLA*, X, 1453), e.g. lines 4-5, but not lines 9-10; also visible are further examples of pointed individual letters (lines 5 and 8).

written in *scriptio continua*.[14] The need for such pointing within *scriptio continua* is obvious: even if one is used to reading normal prose without the help of word separation, strings of syntactically unrelated words, and, above all, isolated letters and syllables, are liable to cause a certain amount of confusion, and therefore need to be clearly marked. Once separation by space was introduced, one might expect this practice to become redundant, but in fact it was not only retained in Insular manuscripts but persisted throughout the Middle Ages and can be found in a modified form in early printed grammars. The practice in effect underwent a slight change of function, from merely separating the words and letters in question, to distinguishing them from the main text and emphasizing them in much the same way as an italic typeface is used in printed books.

Once separation by space has become the norm, point-separation is reserved for special cases where extra emphasis is needed; in addition to the conventions mentioned above, pointing can be used for display, to aid the reader in locating significant parts of a text,[15] or to emphasize the metrical structure of the text.[16] Pointing is much more definite than spacing, and consequently far easier to discuss and analyse; the only problem the student encounters is the fact that, unlike spaces, points could be later additions and not part of the original scribe's intentions.

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[14] e.g. in the fifth-century copy of Claudius Sacerdos, *Artes grammaticae*, Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale Lat. 2 (Vindobon. 16) (foll. 112-139); *CLA*, III, 398; points are visible in the *CLA* plate (fol. 131').

[15] e.g. in Spangenberg, Pfarrbibliothek s.n. (*CLA*, S, 1806), a fragment of a mid-eighth-century copy, made in south-west England, of Servius's commentary on the Aeneid, a single point usually precedes and follows each lemma to set it apart from the commentary.

[16] e.g. marking the division of verse into metrical feet: see the example discussed below, p. 178 and note 65.

iii tags and flourishes

One characteristic feature of word separation in many Insular manuscripts is the exploitation of the calligraphic flourishes which scribes tend to give to certain letters occurring in final position. Letters with tails and cross-strokes, which in mid-word serve to link them to the following letter, often undergo some modification when they stand at the end of a word, sentence or line. The final stroke may be written with an exaggerated flourish (extending it further than usual above, below or along the line), or finished off with a point- or comma-shaped tag, or frequently both. The letters which most commonly receive such treatment are e and t; either the cross-stroke is extended and tagged, or the lower stroke is finished with a tag, or sometimes both features are found together. The final strokes of a and r are often tagged, and sometimes end with an upward swing; the letters n and especially m are frequently either tagged or have their final stroke extended well below the line and possibly finished with a tag. Occasionally other letters (e.g. tall s and l) receive similar treatment.[1]

Such tags and flourishes may be seen in all grades of script within the Insular system, from cursive minuscule, through the more formal set minuscule of the examples cited in note 47 above, to the most formal

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[1] Many examples of the extending and flourishing of letters at line-ends can be seen in Plate 2; this scribe also occasionally finishes word-final t with a tag (e.g. col. a, line 26 sicut and docuit, line 32 erit, col. b, last line est and sint). Tagged final t can also be seen in Plate 1 (e.g. col. b, line 3 decurrunt, line 10 dicunt), as can final m with last stroke extended below the line (see col. b, line 35 proprium); many examples of the latter practice are visible in Plate 4, from the St Paul *Explanationes*, (e.g. col. a, line 15 bucolicam and dicam), sometimes finished with a tag (e.g. col. a, line 1 auem).

Insular half uncial"[48] - Keller illustrates the practice with reference to formal Gospel books.[49] He states that the habit of terminating final letters in "ornamental points" was widespread in half uncial and later scripts, and especially prevalent in Irish script, "which is generally prone to calligraphic mannerisms";[50] and he sees this practice as a kind of calligraphic remnant of the earlier word separation by points. I would argue the reverse: not that functional pointing degenerated over the centuries into mere calligraphic ornament, carried to excess by Irish scribes, but rather that a calligraphic feature, originally quite unrelated to any system of pointing or word separation, was exploited especially by Insular scribes as a means of emphasizing the termination of a word. Certain letters lent themselves to tags and flourishes when space permitted (and thus generally only at the ends of lines or sentences in pre-Insular manuscripts in *scriptio continua*); with the adoption of spaces between words the incidence of final letters was greatly increased and scribes often found themselves rounding off these letters, and hence the words,

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[48] The concept of an Insular system containing scripts of different degrees of formality, and my use of the terms 'set' and 'hybrid minuscule' etc. to describe the different grades, is based on T. J. Brown's account of the development of the Insular script system, in 'The Irish Element in the Insular System of Scripts to circa A.D. 850' in *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, edited by H. Löwe, 2 vols (Stuttgart, 1982), I, 101-19 (the hierarchy of grades is described on pp. 101-02), and 'The Oldest Irish Manuscripts and their Late Antique Background', in *Irland und Europa: Die Kirche im Frühmittelalter*, edited by P. Ní Chatháin and M. Richter (Stuttgart, 1984), pp. 311-27.

[49] e.g. the Book of Kells (Dublin, Trinity College 58 (A.I.6) (*CLA*, II, 274), and the McRegol, Lindisfarne and Canterbury Gospels (Oxford, Bodleian Library Auct. D.II.19 (*CLA*, II, 231); London, British Library Cotton Nero D.IV (*CLA*, II, 187), and Royal 1.E.VI plus fragments (*CLA*, II, 214 and 244)); see Keller, 'Worttrennung', pp. 94-95. These examples cover a wide range of dates, from the late seventh to the ninth century (on the ninth-century date of Royal 1.E.VI, written in mannered hybrid minuscule rather than in half uncial, see Morrish, 'Dated', p. 529).

[50] "Sehr auffallend ist es in der irischen Schrift, die ja überhaupt zur kalligraphischen Künstelei neigt" (pp. 94-95).

with a tag or flourish. So this calligraphic convention came to complement and often clarify the separation of words achieved through spacing.[51]

On the whole, scribes of early ninth-century manuscripts, especially in the calligraphic cursive minuscule often used as a book hand, employed tagged or modified forms at word ends more frequently and consistently than did earlier Insular scribes,[52] though complete consistency is not found even here. Modified forms are quite often absent where one would expect to find them, and are occasionally present in mid-word where they are not expected.[53] In several examples of informal cursive or current minuscule

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[51] Where room for spacing is limited, for example near the ends of lines, tags and flourishes often serve to clarify separation: e.g. in the early ninth-century biblical fragment Salisbury, Cathedral Library 117 (foll. 163-64) (*CLA*, II, 259) spacing is generally clear, but at the penultimate line of col. b in the *CLA* plate, the tag on the final t of est helps to separate it from the following word mensium. On the exploitation of final letters "terminating in a delicate finial" (among other graphic features) in order to designate word boundaries without resorting to leaving spaces, in another manuscript of the first half of the ninth century (Oxford, Bodleian Library Bodley 426 (*CLA*, II, 234)) see Morrish, 'Dated', p. 524, n. 45.

[52] For the ninth-century manuscripts, see Morrish, 'Dated', pp. 522-25, and her plates, especially of Oxford, Bodleian Library Hatton 93, *CLA*, II, 241 (pl. 2); Cambridge, University Library Ll.1.10, foll. 2'-99' ('Book of Cerne') (pl. 1); London, British Library Royal 2.A.XX, *CLA*, II, 215, second hand (pl. 6). The Book of Nunnaminster (London, British Library Harley 2965, *CLA*, II, 199), also dating from s. ix^{1}, and written mainly in a mannered hybrid minuscule (see Morrish, pp. 518-22 and 525-26) is particularly consistent in its use of tagged forms: in two sample pages examined (foll. 4' and 11'), t and e with tags and lengthened final strokes are used at almost every possible opportunity in word-final position, and final m, though not normally extended and tagged, is regularly thus modified before a punctuation mark.

[53] That is, mid-word according to the word boundaries indicated by spacing: one is then led to ask whether the scribe intended to mark further separation by means of the tag or flourish, or whether it is a case of the frequently recurring tagged forms influencing the usual forms of letters, even in an environment where tags would not usually arise. For Keller, the effect (if not the intention) of tags used medially, at the ends of syllables (which practice he finds to be especially common in the ninth century), is very definitely to split up the word: "ein Auseinanderreißen des Wortes bewirkt wird" (p. 95). Examples of tagged m in mid-word can be

from the late seventh to mid-eighth centuries, tagged forms do not appear at all;[54] and in many manuscripts in more formal script they are largely confined to the ends of lines, and thus not exploited for the purpose of word separation.[55]

iv variants

Another way of signalling and emphasizing the boundaries of words is

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seen in Morrish's plate of Bodley 426 (pl. 4), line 2 (the m of mihi) and line 15 (the first m of animam).

[54] The Spangenberg Servius fragment (see note 45); a fragment of Boniface's grammar, Marburg, Hessisches Staatsarchiv fragm. s.n. (*CLA*, S, 1803) (on the script of these two fragments, see M. B. Parkes, 'The Handwriting of St Boniface: A Reassessment of the Problems', in *Scribes, Scripts and Readers*, pp. 121-142); a fragment of a late seventh-century Irish copy of a commentary on Amos, St Omer, Bibliothèque Municipale 342 bis (fol. B) (*CLA*, VI, 828); and a fragment of Consentius's grammar, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 11411 (*CLA*, V, 610; see p. 178, note 65 below). Tagged forms are however found occasionally at word ends in the cursive minuscule of the marginal glosses in the Codex Fuldensis (Fulda, Landesbibliothek, Bonifatius 1; *CLA*, VIII, 1196), where there is little room for separation by spacing; see e.g. the m of aquilonem in the fourth line of the gloss (by glossator B) illustrated in Parkes, 'Handwriting', pl. 23, fig. 4. The early eighth-century cursive minuscule script on fol. 63 of Leningrad, Public Library Q.v.I.15 (*CLA*, XI, 1618), (which, like the writing of glossator A in the previously mentioned manuscript, is closely associated with St Boniface) is for its date unusually consistent in its tagging of word-final forms (see facs. in A. E. Burn, *Facsimiles of the Creeds from Early Manuscripts*, Henry Bradshaw Society, 36 (London, 1909), pls. XVIII and XIX (fols. 63' and 63'), and the comment by Parkes on p. 15 and n. 25 of 'Palaeographical Commentary', in *The Épinal, Erfurt, Werden and Corpus Glossaries*).

[55] See e.g. luxury manuscripts in half uncial like the late seventh-century Lindisfarne Gospels (see complete facs.: *Evangeliorum quattuor Codex Lindisfarnensis*, edited by T. D. Kendrick, T. J. Brown, R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford *et al.* (Olten and Lausanne, 1960)) and, probably from the same scriptorium, the Durham Gospels (Durham, Cathedral Library A.II.17; *CLA*, II, 149; complete facs.: *The Durham Gospels, Together with Fragments of a Gospel Book in Uncial*, edited by C. D. Verey, T. J. Brown, E. Coatsworth, EEMF, 20 (Copenhagen, 1980)), in both of which clear and uniform spacing is sufficient to separate words. On the Lindisfarne scriptorium see T. J. Brown in *Codex Lindisf.*, II, 89-106). See further discussion of Durham A.II.17 on pp. 187-89 below.

the restriction of the use of certain variant letter forms to the beginning or ends of words. For example, in Insular minuscule script the letter i is usually short and resting on the line, but the variant long form of the letter, extending above the minim height and often dropping below the base line, is very often used at the beginnings of words.[56] Where this practice is followed, the forms whose use is thus restricted are usually those from a higher grade of script; for example uncial N, R or S instead of minuscule n, r or s.[57] These signals, like the tagged forms, reveal their functional nature particularly when shortage of space (at the end of a line or in a cramped text) renders impracticable the (to the modern reader) far more familiar method of indicating separation by leaving a gap.[58]

As with tagged letters, the convention is rarely employed with complete consistency, and many scribes use two variant forms of a letter equally frequently in initial, medial or final position.[59] Sometimes

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[56] See e.g. Plate 5, line 6, the initial I of item and in. Morrish (p. 524, n. 45) comments on the regular use of long i, and also the variant, underslung form of l, in initial position in Bodley 426. See also Lindsay, 'The Letters in Early Latin Minuscule (till *c.* 850)', *Pal. Lat.*, 1 (1922), 26-29, on "I longa" and the possible reasons for its use: in initial position the long form is "a handy indication of the beginning of a word" (p. 27).

[57] Cf. the modern typographical convention of indicating the beginning of a new sentence (and in German, all nouns) with an upper-case letter.

[58] e.g. in the eighth-century St Paul *Explanationes* (see Plates 4 and 5) separation is normally clearly indicated by space, but at the ends of lines words may be somewhat squashed together, so that for example in line 6 of Plate 5 the tall I of casuIn|us indicates that in was to be read separately from casu, and again the tall I of Ita in line 12 separates it from the preceding Ergo.

[59] e.g. in Leningrad, Public Library Q.v.XIV.1 (*CLA*, XI, 1622), a copy of Paulinus Nolanus *Carmina* in hybrid minuscule, the variant forms N, R and S are found, but on a sample page (fol. 2'; facs. in Staerk, II, pl. LXXI) the distribution is as follows: N is rare, occuring twice only (once

variants are exploited for a different purpose, emphasizing not (or not only) the beginnings or endings of words but larger divisions of the text such as the openings of chapters or sections;[60] for this reason study of the distribution of variants should not be based exclusively on the opening lines of a text.

By means of this repertoire of conventions, using not only space but also points, tags and variant letter forms, Insular scribes were able to make the words on their pages distinct. In ninth-century manuscripts this is achieved more clearly than in eighth-century products, with scribes exploiting the available graphical techniques to the full. Morrish identifies good word separation, "indicated by clearly defined spaces of predictable dimensions", as one of the palaeographical characteristics of manuscripts produced in the first half of the ninth century, implying a contrast with the practice of the previous century.[61] Because of this clear spacing, the reader is not usually dependent (as he is to a certain extent in the case of the compressed and tightly-packed script of Bodley

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initially, once after initial I); uncial and long s are used interchangeably in all positions (initially, S 5 times, long s 7 times; medially, S 11 times, long s 7 times; finally, S 18 times, long s 23 times); uncial R is used for the only two occurences of initial r, while both forms are used in other positions (medially, R 15 times, r 18 times; finally, R twice, r 3 times).

[60] e.g. the opening 14 lines of the St Paul Pompeius (see Plate 1, col. a) contain a higher proportion of higher-grade variant forms than is found in the rest of the page. These occur mainly, but not only, in word initial and final position (e.g. uncial N and R in Nam Reliqui line 8, Nomen line 11, fungituR line 13; but uncial N at the beginning of line 6 happens to be in mid-word); their presence is to be seen as part of an attempt, seen also in the more careful, mannered appearance of the script, to dignify the beginning of the text with a greater formality of writing. See also Chapter Five, p. 201 and note 18.

[61] 'Dated', p. 524.

426) on the scribe's exploitation of tags and variants in order to distinguish words; but the scribes' regular use of such graphic features in this period represents a graphically more sophisticated approach to the indication of word boundaries than that found in earlier manuscripts. In eighth-century manuscripts the full range of techniques is rarely employed, and often, especially in the less formal manuscripts in minuscule, separation is achieved by somewhat haphazard means.[11] Some of the variations in technique and practice will be discussed in Chapter Five.

b Significant parts - the linguistic aspect of separation

Any comparison of an Insular copy of a Latin text with a modern printed edition of the same text will reveal that the Insular scribe and the modern editor have different ideas about when and where to separate words. One of the most common distinctive characteristics of Insular separation (which Continental manuscripts adopted along with the practice) is mentioned in the brief descriptions by Bischoff and John, quoted above,

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[11] e.g. the Spangenberg Servius fragment uses neither tagged letters or variant forms, and has minimal spacing: separation is rather unclear and erratic, and occasionally incorrect (e.g. **a ccipiuolant**, **inq uaiura uerunt**, **sub dolocircum** (for *subdole circum*), **uidituri cremis** (for *uidit turicremis*), visible in *CLA* plate) but points are used to distinguish lemmata; in Leningrad, Public Library F.v.I.3, foll. 1-38 (*CLA*, XI, 1599), an eighth-century copy of Job in Anglo-Saxon uncial with contemporary interlinear glosses from the commentary of Philippus in cursive minuscule, there is little room for spacing between words in the gloss, and e with extended final stroke often occurs in mid-word rather than being used to clarify separation, but in the *explicit* (fol. 38^{r}, visible in *Eng. Uncial*, pl. XXXVII and in *CLA* plate), written in a studied, more elaborate form of minuscule, words are much more clearly spaced and all possible final letters are tagged. In the rather more formal script of the St Paul *Explanationes* there is clear separation by space, and long i and extended m are commonly used at word boundaries, though tagged forms are scarce (see Plate 5).

page 158 and note 20: the tendency for prepositions and other short words to be joined to the following word. There is a danger, as we look back at the Insular practice, of imposing our own graphical conventions and linguistic concepts on the past, so that where the Insular scribe differs from the modern editor, the latter's practice is seen as normal, and the former, measured against this norm, is guilty of incorrect separation. Yet the scribes of the eighth century had their own norms and conventions, which may tell us much about contemporary linguistic ideas.

i the basic unit of separation

In the first place, although I have been referring throughout to 'word separation', it is not always the case that the linguistic units graphically isolated are words, in the sense of individual parts of speech, more or less corresponding to the modern concept of a word. Sometimes the units are smaller: some manuscripts display a tendency to separate syllables, possibly distinguishing the larger unity of the word by leaving a wider gap at the word boundary that at the syllable boundary.[1] In other cases the unit is larger than the word: in some manuscripts the text is separated into groups or clusters of words, which may be of a syntactic nature or stress related. As was discussed in Chapter Two, pp. 89-90 above, this is the kind of separation used by Irish scribes in writing Old Irish; but division into long units containing several words is also found in some of the earliest surviving examples of Latin texts written by Irish

[1] A notable early example of this is the copy of Adamnan's *Life of St Columba* (written before A.D. 713), Schaffhausen, Stadtbibliothek Gen.1 (*CLA* VII, 998); see description in Chapter Five, pp. 212-14 below.

scribes.[64] Word groups can be a sign of conservative copying from exemplars in *scriptio continua*, rather than necessarily being a manifestation of a particular kind of linguistic analysis. The dividing line between separation into words and into word groups is not easily drawn, since within a fundamentally word-based pattern of separation there are usually frequent conjoinings of certain words or types of word, and in a text copied mainly in clusters of words one can still find individual words in isolation. Likewise, syllabic separation is not always clearly distinct from word separation. But in Insular manuscripts of Latin texts (as opposed to the written vernacular) from the late seventh century onwards, it is rare to find separation based primarily on the syllabic or the word-group principle: separation into words is the norm, though in many manuscripts one finds either sporadic bursts of or slight tendencies towards separating syllables or larger groups of words.

In certain special contexts other kinds of separation are occasionally found. For example in a one-leaf fragment of a grammatical work (excerpts from Consentius) copied in the eighth century, part of the text consists of lines of verse quoted to illustrate one form of *metaplasmus* (grammatical irregularity) - in this case the shortening or lengthening of a vowel in order to make a line scan. These verse quotations are divided on the page not into parts of speech but into metrical feet, separated by points.[65] Unusual separation like this serves

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[64] See e.g. pp. 196-98, 199-200 and 208 below. The relationship between the practice with regard to the vernacular and that found in the early Irish manuscripts is considered below, p. 233.

[65] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 11411, fol. 123 (*CLA*, V. 610), written in cursive and small hybrid minuscule, s. viii^{2} according to *CLA*, possibly by an Anglo-Saxon scribe south of the Humber according to Brown, 'Irish Element', p. 117. For example, the scribe has written

to clarify the point under discussion, and implies a degree of conscious linguistic analysis not always found even among scribes copying grammatical works.

ii linguistic patterns in Insular word separation

Bernhard Bischoff's brief description of the characteristics of word separation in Carolingian times - "it is still generally the practice to draw prepositions and other short words towards the following word" - provides a starting-point for a fuller analysis of the practice in Insular Latin manuscripts. We need a more detailed picture of which elements or parts of speech are regularly drawn towards the following word, before we can understand on what principle this practice is based; is it, for example, related to the length of the word, as Bischoff's statement seems to imply?

I begin with an analysis of the separation of words in one sample manuscript, the early eighth-century English copy of Pompeius's Donatus commentary contained in the St Paul im Lavanttal collection.[66] The following transcription of one column of the text (fol. 2"; see Plate 1) attempts to represent as accurately as possible the word separation practiced by the scribe. Spaces have been left where they are clearly present in the manuscript; smaller-than-average spaces, and other contexts where separation is somewhat ambiguous, have been represented by linking

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dumpela.gode.saeuit.hiempseta.quosuso.rion
instead of
dum pelago desaeuit hiemps et aquosus orion. (*Aeneid*, IV,52)

[66] See Chapter Three, note 94; for discussion of the script and date of this manuscript, see Appendix, p. 302, note 3.

the doubtfully separated words with the symbol ^. Italics represent expanded abbreviations: I have felt it useful to indicate the presence of abbreviations, rather than expanding silently as is the usual practice when transcribing Latin texts, because it allows one to see more clearly the relationship between word separation and abbreviation.[67]

Partes orationis dona | tus quidem·uiii·difini | uit
·aristotilis·sto{i}ci· | ·u· Ideodixitmulti plures |
multi^pauciores partes oratio | nis^putant · Etsiquerimusaris |
totiles benedifiniuit nomen | etuerbum · Nam^reli^quiue | lut
appendi[cis]ces hincoriginem | trahunt nonpotest enim ut |
sciatur res nisi^nomen fuerit | exnomine^autem nascitur prono |
men · quia^ipsius^officio fungitur ni | hilenim interest
sidicas ego aut sidicas ego ua | lentianus · deuerbo nascitur
participium | participium dictumest quasiparticapium |
Aduerbium^denomine quasi^do{c}tus^docte | Con{i}unctiouero
uelpraepositio uelinteriectio | iam interoration{e}m conpositam
cadunt ideo | nonnulli quinque partes difiniunt quia |
sunt^istae superflue· Greci interiectio | nem non^habent
nos^articulum nonadnu | meramus· Ceterum habemus sediunc | xit
cumpronomine · Interarticulum autem | etpronomen hoc interest
quia articulumest | cum nomini iungitur ut hic aeneas pro |
nomen^autem hic haec hoc · Plerique^qui | artem scribunt
adefinitione ipsius | artis inchoant etqua{e}runt quidest ars |

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[67] On this, see further in Chapter Six, pp. 293-97. Other symbols used here and in later transciptions: {} for corrections or omitted words and letters inserted by scribe between lines or in margins; [] for scribal deletions; () for letters supplied where omitted by scribe; | for line-end and || for column-end.

etitadefiniunt · Ars*est* rei cuiusqu*e*^sci | entia queritur eni*m* ethimologiaipsius | artis multi^dicunt^artem esse apotes | arites id*est* auirtute · Na*m* uirtusd*icitur* aput | grecos scientia^omniu*m* reru*m* sicut^aput | latinos~dicta*est* ars · apos^arites id*est*auir | tute ascientia unius cuiusqu*e* rei · ali(i)re | futauerunt istam definitionem etdix | erunt artemessedictam qu*o*d artis^pra*e*ceptis || (col. b) cuncta concludat

The lack of separation, or the slight and ambiguous separation, between many of the words in this passage results in groupings of two or more words. The following analysis shows which are the parts of speech and the individual words that are being joined as prefixes or suffixes to other parts.

1 prepositions attached to following noun:

exnomine; deuerbo; denomine; *inter*orationem; cumpronomine; interarticulu*m*; adefinitione; auirtute (twice); ascientia."

2 the negative *non* attached to the following word:

nonpot*est*; nonadnumeramus; non^habent.

3 the conjunction *et* attached to following word:

etsiquerimus; etuerbum; etpronomen; etquaerunt; etitadefiniunt; etdixerunt.

4 other conjunctions attached to previous or following word:

nihil*enim*; sidicas (twice); coniunctiouero;

" Note also the incomplete separation of the Greek words apotes | arites and apos^arites (for *apo tes aretes*).

uel*prae*positio; uelinteriectio; exnomine^*autem*;
nam^reli^quiuelut; nisi^nomen; quia^ipsius; sediuncxit;
*pro*nomen^autem.

5 adverbs attached to following (once to preceding) word:
ideodixit; benedifiniuit; reliquiuelut; hincorigine*m*;
quasiparticapiu*m*; itadefiniunt; quasi^doctus; sicut^aput.

6 pronouns joined to following or preceding word:
ethimologiaipsius; ali(i)refutauerunt; sunt^istae;
ipsius^officio; nos^articulum; plerique^qui;
cuiusque^scientia.

7 *est* joined to preceding word:
dictum*est*; articulum*est*; quid*est*; ars*est*; id*est* (twice);
dicta*est*.

8 others verbal forms joined to preceding word:
uirtusdicitur; artemessedictam; latinos^dicta*est*;
multi^dicunt; orationis^putant.

9 adjectives attached to following or preceding word:
multi^pauciores; multi^dicunt; scientia^omniu*m*.

Some word groups involve more than two parts of speech; in some cases slight separation is found between some of the elements, but larger gaps divide the whole from the surrounding text:

ideodixitmulti; etsiquerimusaris|totiles; nam^reli^quiue|lut;
exnomine^*autem*; aduerbium^denomine; multi^dicunt^artem;
id*est*auirtute; latinos^dicta*est*; artemessedictam.

The mere presence of all these groupings is not sufficient evidence to show the patterns of separation: the number of occurrences of a

particular type of group must be seen in relation to the frequency with which the same part of speech occurs in isolation (in a context where it might have been joined, and therefore not at the end of a line). Measured in this way. prepositions are the part of speech most regularly and consistently joined to the word that follows them: prepositions occur ten times in groups, and only appear separately at line-ends (aput|grecos). Also very regularly unseparated are the conjunction *et*, which occurs six times, always joined to the following word, and the negative *non*, which appears three times, twice clearly not separated, once with only slight separation. Other conjunctions are on the whole not so regularly joined: isolated conjunctions are almost as frequent as those attached or nearly attached to other words (but *si* occurs three times, always joined). Other adverbs are usually joined (the exception is *quidem*, which occurs once, standing alone).

The substantive *est*, occurring seven times, is consistently found attached to the previous word, always abbreviated in the usual Insular manner as ÷. Other forms of *sum* also occur here in groups (sunt^istae; artemessedictam; but *esse* also occurs in isolation once). Other verbs are usually grouped with conjunctions, adverbs or pronouns when the context allows, but may equally well be written as separate units.

Not all pronouns are joined (e.g. *istam*, occurring once, is separate); pronouns in the genitive form occur four times, in three cases more or less attached to the noun they relate to (ipsius^officio; ethimologiaipsius; cuiusqu*e*^scientia), but in one case separate (ascientia unius cuiusqu*e* rei). Nominal forms, like verbs, are frequently found in conjunction with other parts of speech (prepositions, conjunctions,

pronouns and adjectival forms) when the context allows, but frequently stand alone.

On the evidence of this one column, therefore, the pattern of separation in this manuscript can be summarised as follows: nominal and verbal forms are usually clearly separated from each other, but there is a tendency for the other parts of speech, which qualify or connect nouns and verbs, to be written as a unit with the latter. This is especially the case with prepositions which are consistently written together with the following noun; likewise *et* and *non* are always grouped with following words, and *est* always with the preceding.

One page of a manuscript should not be relied upon as a necessarily representative sample; but analyses carried out in other parts of the manuscript reveal a similar pattern. On fol. 17", in fourteen out of seventeen occurrences, prepositions are not separated (the two which occur separately are the disyllabic forms *aput* and *propter*, though these are also found joined); more than half of the conjunctions and adverbs are not separated, most frequently *et*, *si* and *ut*, and the abbreviation for *enim* (again it is the longer, two-syllable forms such as *tamen*, *ergo*, *etiam* which are not joined); the negative *non* is either joined or only slightly separated whenever it occurs; *est* occurs only twice, in both cases in abbreviated form and joined to the preceding word, and the plural form *sunt* is once similarly joined. On fol. 6" the following are not separated: prepositions (four times), *est* (three times), *si* (five times), and negatives (*non* and *ne*).

Fol. 12', whose script is markedly smaller and more compressed than

that of the rest of the manuscript (although apparently by the same hand), displays a rather different pattern of separation. In spite of the compressed nature of the script, resulting in fairly small gaps between words, separation is carried to much greater lengths than elsewhere, with prepositions being regularly separated (including the preposition *a*, marked with a length mark: á), and occasionally even the prepositional prefixes of compound verbs and nouns (e.g. prae posui, inter rogauero, prae nomen). There is also some syllabic separation: dica mus, ha buit, ter ra. Yet despite this greater tendency to separation, the abbreviation ÷ for *est* is still almost invariably joined to the preceding word, and the few other cases of non-separation (conjunctions and *non*) accord with the familiar pattern.

How does the pattern followed by a scribe writing no later than the mid-eighth century compare to that used in the first half of the ninth century? An analysis carried out on Oxford, Bodleian Library Hatton 93 (a manuscript in which separation is, in graphical terms, particularly clear[69]) reveals that although in general there is more separation, the pattern of groupings which do occur is similar to that found in the St Paul Pompeius. In three sample sections of the manuscript, from the beginning, middle and end (foll. 2'-4', 21'-23' and 38'-40')[70], the occurrence of groupings was noted and compared with the occurrence of the constituent parts of speech in isolation. Here the most consistently joined element is the conjunction *et*: out of forty-two occurrences, thirty-eight are joined

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[69] *CLA*, II, 241; on the date and palaeographical characteristics, see Morrish, 'Dated', pp. 513-14 and 522-24, and pl. 2.

[70] Hatton 93 contains far fewer words to the page than does the Pompeius, so longer samples are needed to gain a fair impression of the pattern of separation.

to the following word, four are slightly separated, but none clearly separated. Prepositions, again, are far more likely to be joined than not; with a total of sixty-five opportunities for separating a preposition, in only eleven cases is this done clearly, while forty-nine are clearly attached, and five are slightly separated.[71] Pronouns also tend to form word groups: nineteen are attached to other elements (sixteen closely, three with slight gaps between), against five clearly separated.[72] Conjunctions besides *et* are, as in the Pompeius, less certain to be joined, although in the majority of cases they are still not separated: of fifteen occurrences, seven are joined, six not, with two uncertain cases.[73] *Non* occurs only a few times in these sample pages, once clearly separated, once (in abbreviated form) joined, and twice with slight separation; elsewhere in the manuscript it is sometimes clearly separated and sometimes not. Unlike in the Pompeius, *est* (whether in full or abbreviated form) is habitually separated: the only occasions on which it appears joined or almost joined to the preceding word in these pages[74] are in the context of the phrase *idest*, though even this is not always written as a unit.

Groups of more than two parts of speech are quite rare in these samples; these usually involve *et* or a preposition with one of the other

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[71] Prepositions joined are: in-, ad-, ab-, ex-, a-, pro-, cum-, ante- (and -ante), per-; separated are: ad, pro, ex (?), per (?), intra, in, sine.

[72] Pronouns joined are: qui-, quod-, id-, eo-, -se, -quo, -hanc; separated are: eo, se, id, qui, uos.

[73] The conjunction most frequently joined after *et* is ut; ac- is also found; but ut is also found separated.

[74] Five times, compared with twenty-two occurrences of free-standing *est* where joining would have been possible.

frequently-joined words, and a nominal or verbal form.[75] The only groupings within these sample pages which do not fit into the usual categories involve elements of Greek vocabulary: cyryeleson and christeeleison on fol. 2'.[76] A few cases occur of elements being separated which we would treat as one unit: for example, the separation of a prepositional prefix (inter pellationes, fol. 40') or of enclitic *-que* (reciprocaciter que, fol. 2'); but such instances of hyper-separation appear to be rare.

Thus although Hatton 93 was copied about a century after the St Paul Pompeius, it exhibits very similar characteristics in its tendencies to group certain words together. One change appears to be the avoidance of 'noun + adjective' groups and of longer verbal groups, even the substantive being regularly separated. Both of these manuscripts are in minuscule script; but a similar pattern can be observed equally well in more formal books written in higher grades of script. A sample page (fol. 66') from the late seventh-century Gospel book, Durham, Cathedral Library A.II.17, written (probably in the Lindisfarne scriptorium) in Phase II Insular half uncial,[77] reveals the following grouped elements:

1 prepositions grouped with following noun:

exillo; inpredium; promultis; degenimine; inmeinnocte; indiem; cumillud; ingalileam; innoctehac.

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[75] e.g. quietconsti|tuit (fol. 3'), quidenocte (fol. 21'), utetdeus (fol. 23').

[76] Cf. the uncertainty about separation of Greek words in the Pompeius manuscript (see note 68 above). This is not the only time the scribe of Hatton 93 had problems separating his Greek: see below, p. 191.

[77] See note 55 above.

2 *et* grouped with following word:

etbenedicens; etaccepto; etait (x3); etdedit; etsiomnes; etueniunt; etiacobum; etbiberunt; etiohannem; etsioportuerit; etadsumpsit; etdispargentur; etomnes.

3 other conjunctions and adverbs with preceding or following word:

etsiomnes; atille; etsioportuerit; quiatuhodie; quiascriptum; petrus*autem*aitei; similiter*autem*; sednonego; termenegaturus.

4 *non* grouped with following word:

nonbibam; nontenegabo; sednonego.

5 pronouns joined to following or preceding word:

hocest; termenegaturus; atille; petrus*autem*aitei; corpusmeum; hicest; sanguinismeus; dicotibi; cuinomen; aitillis; quiatuhodie; commoritecum; innoctehac.

6 *est* joined to preceding word:

hocest; hicest.

7 other groups with verbal forms:

scandalizatifuerint; amendico; dicotibi; aitillis; petrus*autem*ait.

8 adjective with noun:

nouitestamenti.

Prepositions and *et* form groups at every possible opportunity on this page; the joining of *-est* and *non-* to their preceding or following words respectively also appears habitual, though *est* does occur once in isolation. The number of occasions on which adverbs, conjunctions and pronouns are separated is slightly smaller than the number of times in which these parts occur in groups; those apparently habitually joined

include *si*, *autem* (appearing here only in its abbreviated form) and possessive pronouns.[71] Besides *est*, the verbal forms that tend most regularly to be grouped are the frequently recurring forms *dico* and *ait*.[72] As in the two manuscripts in minuscule script, nominal and verbal forms tend (with the above exceptions) to be clearly separated from each other, either standing alone or with any of the above elements prefixed or suffixed to them. The practice on other pages of the manuscript confirms this pattern: thus on foll. 2' and 69', prepositions, *et*, *non*, *autem* (abbreviated), other conjunctions, adverbs and pronouns, and *est* are regularly joined; so also are other forms of *sum*, including *erat* and *sunt*.[73]

The following table summarizes the patterns of separation found in these three manuscripts, and clearly shows the high degree of agreement between them, the late seventh-century and eighth-century scribes being very close indeed in their practice and the ninth-century scribe still showing the same basic pattern although to a lesser degree:

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[71] Seven conjunctions and adverbs are separated, including *simul*, *donec*, *iam*, *sed*; pronouns are separated ten times, including twice in the phrase ait illi(s), which, however, is also found as a group aitillis.

[72] Cf. in the Pompeius manuscript the tendency not to separate the forms *dicitur*, *dicunt*, *dicta* (frequently recurring in the technical prose of a grammatical author).

[73] Also found on fol. 2' is the group luxuera; this combination of noun and adjective, like nouitestamenti on fol. 66', can be seen simply as a reflection of the grammatical relationship between the two parts of speech, but may also reflect the close association in which these two particular lexical items were held by the scribe of a Gospel book, accustomed to hearing and reading them in this combination and thus writing them as a single unit. See further discussion of this below, p. 233.

Parts of speech and individual words tending to be joined to preceding or following words (Yes = consistently joined; Yes = mostly joined)

	St Paul Pompeius	Durham A.II.17	Hatton 93
Prepositions	Yes	Yes	Yes
et-	Yes	Yes	Yes
non-	Yes	Yes	Sometimes
Other conjunctions and adverbs	Yes (majority)	Yes (majority)	Yes (about half)
Pronouns	Yes (majority)	Yes (majority)	Yes (majority)
-est	Yes	Yes	Only a few
Other verbal forms	Sometimes	Sometimes	No
Adjectives joined to nouns	Sometimes	Occasionally	No

These tendencies to non-separation in the copying of Latin are common to most Insular scribes from the late seventh through to the ninth centuries. While probably no two scribes would have separated words identically, and there is no question of their consciously following a rigid set of "rules" for word separation, nevertheless the consistent non-separation of prepositions and *et* and the tendency not to separate other auxiliary elements must be seen as the normal practice of the period, and any peculiarities of separation found in individual manuscripts[41] should be measured against this norm, rather than against modern conventions. The linguistic or other principles underlying this tendency will be considered at the end of Chapter Five, pp. 228-34, after a more detailed examination of the practices found in the earliest surviving Insular manuscripts.

[41] Such as the sudden switch to syllabic separation in fol. 12' of the Pompeius; or indeed such as the consistent separation even of prepositions in an early manuscript (see discussion of separation in the Leningrad Bede, pp. 225-27 below).

iii errors of separation and what they reveal

If *et*, *non* or prepositions joined to the following word are to be regarded not as errors but as part of the standard practice of the day, this does not mean that there is no such thing as an error of separation in Insular manuscripts. The transfer of one or more letters, or syllables, rightly belonging to the end of one word, to the beginning of the next (or vice versa) constitutes an error of separation; such errors are frequently to be found, and are worth noting, for they can be a source of useful information about the scribe and his exemplar. For example, on fol. 21' the scribe of Hatton 93 made an error in the separation of an item of Greek vocabulary, rendering

> quia greci catholicon latine universalitas dicitur (for '*catholicon*' in Greek is '*universalitas*' in Latin)

as

> quia greci catholi conlatine universalitas dicitur.

The displacing of the syllable con from the end of the word *catholicon* to the beginning of *latine* destroys the meaning of the sentence (and thus it is an error because the parts, though distinct, are no longer significant). This small slip tells us something about the scribe's knowledge of Greek: it would appear that he was not familiar enough with the language to recognize the accusative case ending *-on*, but read this with the surrounding letters as the Latin prefix *con-*. The same error also gives a clue to the nature of the exemplars lying behind this copy. In order for this confusion to arise, the text was probably originally written without separation, so that the scribe introducing spacing was faced with

quiagrecicatholiconlatine. The text of Hatton 93, the mass commentary *Primum in ordine*, is a new text of early ninth-century Continental origin; the interesting conclusion to be drawn from this error is that new texts could apparently still at this late date be circulating in copies written in *scriptio continua* (or at least with separation indistinct enough to allow the above error to creep in).[81]

[81] Whether it was the scribe of Hatton 93 or of a previous copy who was responsible for the error cannot be determined on the strength of this evidence, though the exceptionally spacious separation found in Hatton 93 would suggest that its immediate exemplar already contained some separation. The text was composed no later than 822, so there is room for one or more intervening copies between the original and the production of this copy, though no earlier copies have survived. On the date of the text and of this manuscript see Morrish, 'Dated', pp. 513-14.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Origins of Word Separation in Insular Manuscripts

I Separation in the earliest Irish Manuscripts

a The practices in the earliest surviving manuscripts

In the previous chapter I have described the characteristic features, both physical and linguistic, of the practice of word separation generally to be observed in Insular manuscripts of the late seventh to early ninth centuries. I now propose to take a closer look at the earliest Irish manuscripts, to trace as far as possible the emergence and development of the practice, and to see if any light can be thrown thereby on the question of the principles, linguistic or other, underlying this graphic phenomenon.

The first thing to note is that the practice cannot be traced right back to its origin, since (with the exception of one fragment which is probably not significantly older than the rest[1]) all of the earliest surviving Irish manuscripts already contain some kind of separation. As with so many aspects of Insular palaeography, the practice of word separation has its roots in a period which is beyond the reach of scholars, the period between the arrival of Christianity (and the writing of books) in Ireland and the first surviving manuscripts of roughly the late sixth or

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[1] The recently discovered fragment of Eusebius; see below, pp. 204-06.

early seventh century. Books must have been copied in this period, but no trace of them survives to show exactly when and how the first steps towards the separation of words were taken. But a study of the surviving early manuscripts shows that the practice did not spring into existence fully fledged; although we cannot observe its very earliest stages, we can trace its development during the course of the seventh century until we reach the examples quoted above (p. 161) by Parkes, where the process of separation is "well advanced".

Probably the two oldest surviving examples of the work of Irish scribes are the Gospel book known as *Codex Usserianus Primus*[1] and the set of waxed tablets found in Springmount Bog containing Psalms 30-32.[2] The script of both items is more primitive than that of books originating in the first half of the seventh century, and so it seems likely that these two are older than that, though whether they were written before or after the year 600 cannot be determined with any certainty.[4] The primitive nature of the word separation found in these two items seems to confirm their presumed early date.

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[1] Dublin, Trinity College 55 (A.IV.15); *CLA*, II, 271.

[2] Dublin, National Museum S.A. 1914:2; *CLA*, S, 1684.

[4] On the script and the dating of these two, see T. J. Brown 'The Irish Element', pp. 104-05 and 'The Oldest Irish Manuscripts', p. 312. Almost all the manuscripts discussed in this section are described in both of these articles, and unless otherwise attibuted, my statements concerning their date, origin and script are based on the information and opinions given therein by Brown. See also D. H. Wright, 'The Tablets from Springmount Bog: A Key to Early Irish Palaeography', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 67 (1963), 219.

i Springmount Bog Wax Tablets

The most legible and best preserved of the Springmount Bog tablets is Tablet 3', containing Psalm 31:1-7; the following observations are based on the evidence of this tablet.[5] Macalister, describing the tablets, noted that a blank space was sometimes, but not always, used to indicate the end of a verse;[6] a similar irregularity characterizes the separation of words. The spacing of letters is very uneven: in some words the letters are very much spread out, but elsewhere they are packed tightly together. This is partly a matter of the characteristic shape of certain letters: N in uncial form (the minuscule n also occurs) is exaggeratedly large, and often has a noticeable space left either side of it, even in mid-word; the cross stroke of T trails far to the left, leaving much blank space around it, again even in mid-word. The unevenness of spacing may be explained by the medium: however skilful the scribe, it must have been hard to control subtleties of spacing when writing on wax with a stylus. The use of spacing with regard to word boundaries is very uncertain: in some instances spaces occur between words, but in other cases several words are run together, or syllables are separated, or individual letters are displaced and attached to a neighbouring word, e.g.:

remtota die quoniam die (col. a, l. 6)

con uer sussumin er omna (col. a, l. 8)

temp ore op or tuno (col. b, l. 4)

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[5] Reproduced in *CLA*, and more legibly in E. C. R. Armstrong and R. A. S. Macalister, 'Wooden Book with Leaves Indented and Waxed Found Near Springmount Bog, Co. Antrim', *JRSAI*, 50 (1920). 160-66 and pl. XV (tablets 3' and 4).

[6] p. 162.

remisisunt ini quitatis |
‹ ›tectasuntp eccata |
‹ › suis cui noninpotauit dn̄specca /tum |[1] (col. a, ll. 1-3)

Thus while the scribe clearly felt that it was appropriate to break down the verses into smaller elements by introducing spaces, he does not appear to be following a consistent convention for distinguishing syllables, words, or word groups, but rather mixes all these in an unsettled manner. His usage with regard to words at the ends of lines suggests some awareness of word boundaries and an attempt to respect the unity of the word: in only two cases out of a possible eighteen are words split over the ends of lines, while in one case the scribe has avoided starting a new line with a split word by running it over into the space in the line above. In spite of this awareness, the scribe does not consistently mark word boundaries as they occur in mid-line; on the other hand, he is clearly not writing *scriptio continua*. This erratic usage alone need not imply that the practice of word separation is still in its uncertain infancy: it might be the work of a particularly inexpert scribe, or one struggling with the medium of stylus on wax.[2] But turning to the *Codex Usserianus Primus*, it appears that word separation was no further advanced in manuscripts than on wax tablets.

ii *Codex Usserianus Primus*

The practice in this early Gospel book is more consistent than that

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[1] -tum is run over onto the line above, separated from the rest of the line by an oblique stroke.

[2] In *CLA*, the script is described as "eclectic" and "by an inexpert hand", but Brown, in 'Oldest Irish Manuscripts', calls it "mature and expert", noting that "to write well on wax was not easy" (p. 312).

in the tablets, but nonetheless primitive.[1] Carefully graduated spacing is used to break the text into smaller units of sense: a clear space of more than the average letter width marks the beginning of a sentence or larger sense unit; within sentences smaller spaces separate shorter syntactic groupings, and sometimes single words. At the lower levels of word and word group separation, the usual ambiguity of spacing is found; it is not always clear which slight gaps arise simply from the shapes of the letters, and which are deliberate attempts to indicate a grammatical or syntactic boundary. But despite the ambiguity of particular cases, it is clear that the text is divided into units which, though they sometimes correspond to a single word, more often consist of two, three or more words strung together, e.g.:

factumestautem, utaudirentuerbum (fol. 90r)

nontamen agnoueruntdiscipu<li> (fol. 77r)

etcreditinmeno<n> (fol. 58r).

In the cases where units consist of a single word, that word is usually a verb or a noun; as became standard in later practice, conjunctions like *et*, *ut* and *autem* are almost always part of a larger group. *Et* and *ut* always occur at the beginning of a group (**etrogabateum, etlauabant; utaudirent**); and when such a grouping is not possible because a line-end intervenes, the conjunction is left standing alone, not joined to the preceding word group.

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[1] 180 foll. of the manuscript survive, all damaged, with margins lost, and many reduced to scraps, from having been kept in a *cumdach* or book shrine (see P. McGurk, *Latin Gospel Books from A.D. 400 to A.D. 800* (Paris, 1961), p. 79). The following description is based on a study of foll. 58r, 77r, 78v, 90r, and 149v (Lowe's photographs; foll. 78v and 90r are reproduced in *CLA)* and of the foll. reproduced in T. K. Abbott, *Evangeliorum versio antehieronymiana ex codice Usseriano*, 2 vols (Dublin, 1884), pl. of fol. 26r; *Pal. Soc.* II, pl. 33 (foll. 64v, 111v); Gilbert, p. vi and pl. II (foll. 110v, 111r); R. Cochrane, *JRSAI*, 5th series, 111 (1893), 404-05, figs. 21, 22 (foll. 1r, 21r).

Likewise, *autem*, which is usually added at the end of a group (factumestautem), is left free-standing when this is not possible (piscatore<s> | autem descenderant).[10]

The above evidence suggests that the convention being employed in *Usserianus Primus* is not strictly one of 'word' separation but of separation according to syntactic units; this is really a form of punctuation,[11] as is, of course, the practice of separating individual words. When the latter becomes the norm, it is no longer possible to use space alone to indicate the larger units of sense, and a system of pointing must be used; but at this stage a scribe may still use graduated spacing to punctuate the text.

The fact that the simple point is also used occasionally for punctuation, and that at least some individual words are separated, suggests that the manuscript was being written at a time when the conventions were in a state of flux. However, it should be noted that two different scribes were responsible for the copying (the first scribe writing the first two gospels Matthew and John, and the second Luke and Mark); yet there is no obvious difference between them in their conventions of separation.[12] It has already been noted that the scribes were of similar training;[13] clearly they also shared the same approach to word

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[10] All the above examples are from fol. 90'.

[11] Cf. the *CLA* description under punctuation: "sense-pauses are normally marked by leaving a space".

[12] See description accompanying *Pal. Soc.* plate. The examples quoted above are taken from the work of both scribes: foll. 58' and 77' are by scribe 1, and 90' by scribe 2.

[13] Brown, 'Oldest Irish Manuscripts', p. 312.

separation. Therefore the practice in this manuscript cannot be seen as an entirely *ad hoc* experiment: this use of space to punctuate syntactic units seems to represent one stage in the emergence of fully developed word separation out of *scriptio continua*.

iii Milan Orosius

The manuscript which comes closest to *Codex Usserianus Primus* in use of spacing is the Milan Orosius, probably written by Irish scribes at Bobbio after 613.[14] Here also there is some separation of individual words, but these are very much in the minority: much more common are clusters of two, three or more words separated by a slight space from the next group. This is not merely a matter, as in later manuscripts, of prepositions, conjunctions and other particles tending to be attached to nouns and verbs; the combinations of parts of speech in these groups are infinitely more varied, e.g.:

> iudiciolaborasti, sitamen^eumuoluntateconatuque,
> naturainsitumest, nutusignouemit|tantur (fol. 2ʳ).

The spaces that separate these groups occur in more or less the same places as the punctuation marks found in printed editions, and it is clear that, as in the Ussher codex, space is being used to punctuate clauses: larger spaces are used to separate sentences, and smaller spaces indicate minor pauses within the sentence.

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[14] Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana D.23, sup.; *CLA*, III, 328. My observations are based on study of Lowe's photographs of foll. 2ʳ, 5ʳ and 33ʳ (*CLA* reproduces foll. 2ʳ and 5ʳ) and of fol. 12ʳ, reproduced in Steffens, pl. 26B. See also A. R. Natale, *Studi paleografici: Arte e imitazione della scrittura insulare in codici bobbiesi* (Milan, 1950), pp. 21-22 and pl. II (fol. 2ʳ).

This use of space to divide sentences was noted by Steffens in his commentary on fol. 12'.[15] Steffens also notes that "Die Wörte sind nur selten getrennt"; it is an indication of the unusual nature of the practice here compared with that in both earlier (*scriptio continua*) and later (fully separated) manuscripts that he bothered to comment on it. One would dearly love to know in this case, and indeed in the case of all these early manuscripts, what was the nature of punctuation and separation in the scribe's exemplar. An earlier copy of this text exists, written in uncial in the sixth century, probably in North Italy;[16] it is similar in layout, written in long lines with medial points for all pauses, and in addition space left for longer pauses, but otherwise without separation of words. It was probably from a manuscript similar to this that the Irish scribe at Bobbio copied his text, substituting spaces for points to indicate the pauses. Between such punctuating spaces there is usually very little separation of words; in the places where we find gaps not required for the punctuation of clauses and sentences, we can perhaps see the beginnings of word separation proper.

An interesting example of half-developed separation occurs in the *incipit* line on fol. 2'. The line is divided into three very widely-spaced blocks; two of these blocks correspond with individual words, but one is a cluster of several words:

innominedeiuiui prologus occipit

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[15] "Die Sätze sind durch einen kleinen Zwischenraum getrennt"; *CLA* does not mention the spacing, merely commenting that punctuation in the form of virgulas and points was quite scarce.

[16] Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana LXV.1; *CLA*, III, 298.

Separation is clearly being used as a display technique, to create an impact and draw attention to the heading; but note how '*in nomine dei uiui*' is written as a unit, perhaps because of the formulaic nature of the phrase.

The script of the Milan Orosius contains several variant letter forms: both the uncial and half uncial forms of the letters d and n are present, and occasionally uncial R and G are used. While it appears that these variants are used with some sensitivity to word boundaries,[17] there is no evidence that uncial variants are being exploited for the purposes of word separation. The distribution pattern of these variants from a higher grade of script does suggest however that they are being used consciously for display purposes: they are most highly concentrated in the script of headings and of the first few lines of sections.[18]

In this manuscript tagged forms of the letters t and e can also be observed. These occur mostly where space allows at the end of word groups, but not at every available opportunity. and (in spite of one example of a tagged form occurring at the end of a word within a cluster) appear to be a purely calligraphic feature, not at this stage a means of emphasising word boundaries. Finally it is worth noting the high proportion of words which are split at the end of the line,[19] in order to avoid leaving a ragged

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[17] For example, in the main text on fol. 2' uncial R is never used in mid-word, except once at the beginning of a line when the word has been split.

[18] For example, the six occurrences of R on fol. 2' are all found in the first five lines, following the *incipit* (quoted above), which itself contains a high concentration of uncial forms; and on fol. 33', r only is used in the text, but in the colophon R is found consistently.

[19] Roughly one line in two ends in a divided word.

right margin; this fact reminds us that this is a formal manuscript, in the writing of which calligraphy was given priority over respect for the unity of words.

iv Cathach of St Columba

Roughly contemporary with the Milan Orosius, but almost certainly originating in Ireland rather than on the Continent, is the Psalter known as the Cathach of St Columba, dated by T. J. Brown to approximately the first half of the seventh century (possibly after 630).[10] The word separation in this manuscript is somewhat different from that found in either the Orosius or Ussher I, and the tendency to separate individual words is perhaps a little more advanced.[11] This book, like the Orosius, is written in a formal script, and the initial impression that it leaves is one of spacious layout, yet with very few immediately apparent spaces between words. In fact the separation of words is quite clear once one looks more closely and attempts to read the text: it is merely that the spaces are obscured at first glance by a tendency to extend the concluding stroke of letters at the ends of words so that they touch or almost touch the initial letter of the following word. Thus the verse (from Psalm 75)

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[10] Dublin, Royal Irish Academy s.n.; *CLA*, II, 266; the presence in the manuscript of certain decorative motifs, evidently derived from a book something like the copy of Gregory's *Cura Pastoralis* produced in Rome before the author's death in 604 (*CLA*, VI, 838), makes the sixth-century date which some have argued for the Cathach very unlikely; see 'Oldest Irish Manuscripts', p. 313 and n. 4, and 'Irish Element', p. 105.

[11] These observations are based on Lowe's photographs of foll. 32' and 36' (reproduced in *CLA*) and on the following published facsimiles: H. J. Lawlor and W. M. Lindsay, 'The Cathach of St Columba', *PRIA*, 33C, (1916), 241-443 and pl. XXIII (fol. 52'); Gilbert, pls. III-IV (foll. 4', 48', 50', 51'); E. O'Curry, *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History* (Dublin, 1861), pl. B (fol. 19'); Kirchner, p. 20 and pl. 14a (fol. 12').

inluminas tu mirabiliter de montibus aeternis

is written as

inluminas tumirabiliter demontibusaeternis (fol. 36'),

but because the s of inluminas stretches to touch the t of tu, and the final r of mirabiliter almost joins the d of de, the spaces are partly hidden. As this one example already indicates, there is still much grouping of words, not only the expected grouping of preposition with noun, adverb with verb etc., but also longer groups such as predicate and subject (magnumnomeneius, fol. 36'). On the other hand the proportion of individually separated words, and of shorter word groups of the kind later to become standard, is greater than in the other manuscripts examined so far; and there is even some separation of short unstressed words like *et*.[11]

Separation in the Cathach is not being used as a means of punctuating the larger structural units of the text: this function is performed by the layout, with each psalm verse, and usually each half verse, beginning on a new line (two short half verses on the same line being separated by two points ':'). The function of the separation which is found within these lines, therefore, is restricted more specifically than in the previously examined manuscripts to the defining of word boundaries, although this has not yet reached its most advanced stage. With the practice of separation and spacing being still in a state of flux, there is room also for special one-off adaptations to emphasize certain features of the text; for example

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[11] Et is frequently written with the cross bar of the t lengthened but joined to the following word; if elsewhere in the manuscript this practice is counted as separation, it must be so counted in these cases also.

on fol. 51' the following layout is found:

Cantate domino canticumnouum
cantate domino omnisterra
cantate domino benedicitenomeneius
adnuntiate diem dedie salutare eius
adnuntiate inter gentes gloriam eius
inomnibus populis mirabiliaeius

and further down the page:

adferte domino patriaegentium
adferte domino gloriam et honorem
adferte domino gloriam nominieius
tollite hostias etintroite inatria eius.

Here an effort is being made to isolate the repeated imperative and the abbreviated '*domino*' (dn̄o) which follows it, and to emphasize the structure of these verses by aligning the repeated elements; in the remainder of each half verse separation is not carried through so consistently or clearly.

v Folger Eusebius fragment

The recently discovered bifolium from a hitherto unknown copy in seventh-century Irish half uncial of Rufinus's translation of Eusebius is most interesting for its almost complete lack of separation.[11] The script of the fragment is very like that of the Durham A.II.10 fragments (see below, p. 208) and of the Cathach, which it also resembles in decoration and abbreviation forms; it was probably written, therefore, in the first

[11] *CLA* Addenda, 1864; discovered in 1984 in the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C. (shelfmark X. d. 536) and sold at Sotheby's in 1985: see Sotheby sale catalogue, *Western Manuscripts and Miniatures ... Day of Sale Tuesday, 25th June 1985*, lot 50 (includes complete facsimile).

half, or no later than the middle, of the seventh century.[14] The only clear spaces in the eight columns of text surviving in the fragment are those following the points or commas used to indicate major pauses; thus, as in the Milan Orosius, spacing is being used to punctuate sentences, though, unlike in the Orosius, only in conjunction with other punctuation. While the Orosius scribe also separates short clauses and sometimes individual words, in the Eusebius fragment there is no clear separation below the level of sentences, so that the script "on the whole may be called scriptura continua".[15] In the first column, the opening of the text, there are some minor indications that the scribe was sensitive to word boundaries: in the script generally the final stroke of letters like t, e, r and s tend to touch the following letter, but sometimes at the end of a word a minute space is left between this final stroke and the initial letter of the next word,[16] and occasionally the final stroke is elongated at the end of a word, so that, although it still touches the following letter, a slight sense of separation is conveyed.[17] But such slight separations are rather ambiguous, and can sometimes be found between letters within a word.[18]

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[14] B. Bischoff and V. Brown in *CLA* Addenda are not prepared to be more specific than s. vii; the Sotheby's catalogue argues for s. vii¹, "possibly (but not at all certainly) within the first third."

[15] *CLA* Addenda.

[16] Thus in line 7 of fol 1ᵛᵃ (visible in the *CLA* plate but more clearly in the Sotheby's facsimile) the s and e of secutionibus are contiguous, but the s does not quite touch the e in -bus erat (in the same line) and in nostris et (in line 6).

[17] For example in line 7 of fol. 1ᵛᵃ the elongation of the head-stroke of t in erat adque separates the two words slightly.

[18] Thus the x of pax nostris in line 6 of the same column is in fact slightly separated from the a, but touching the following n.

There is some indication that separation became more advanced further into the copy: in the second column of fol. 2', which contains part of chapter 10, gaps are more immediately apparent, though some of these may simply be caused by the shape of the letters.[11] Nevertheless it is clearly not normal practice in any part of this surviving fragment for the scribe to separate even minor clauses or syntactic groupings, let alone individual parts of speech. The manuscript appears to exhibit one of the very earliest stages in the development of the practice of separation; and this supports the argument for dating it fairly early in the seventh century (assuming that it was not written later by a particularly conservative scribe).

vi St Gall Isidore fragments

The word separation observed in the fragments of Isidore's *Etymologiae*, found in the St Gall Stiftsbibliothek and copied in Ireland in the second quarter of the seventh century,[12] is far more advanced than that in the Folger fragment, and indeed in all the manuscripts so far discussed. The script gives the impression of having been flattened and stretched out laterally: its letters are short and broad, and usually

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[11] e.g. in line 12 (visible only in Sotheby's facsimile) initio quae appear to be separated; but o is normally followed by a small, clear space even in mid-word, e.g. line 11 po | pulo co nuo cato· - the space after the final o in populo is only marginally larger than the others.

[12] St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek 1399.a.1.; *CLA*, VII, 995; complete facs. in A. Dold and J. Duft, *Die älteste irische Handschriften-Reliquie der Stiftsbibliothek St Gallen mit Texten aus Isidors Etymologien* (Beuron, 1955). See also B. Bischoff, 'Die europäische Verbreitung der Werke Isidors von Sevilla', in *Mittelalt. Stud.*, I, 171-94; J. Hillgarth, 'Visigothic Spain and Early Christian Ireland', *PRIA*, 62C (1962), 167-94, especially pp. 182-85, and pl. XLV; Parkes, 'Grammar of Legibility', in *Scribes, Scripts and Readers*, pp. 7-8 and pl. 1 with transcription.

linked to each other within words where tails and cross-strokes allow; in this generally spacious environment, spacing between words does not stand out very obviously (sometimes it is obscured by an extended cross-stroke of a final e or t) but it is nevertheless both clear and very regular. Separation is more or less according to individual words, rather than word groups; the few fragments that have survived furnish very few examples of groupings of words, and all of these are of the kind still commonly found in the following century:

‹uoca›taeautem; infraocculos; etgenae; etuirg*ilius*; dictum*est*.[31]

Even prepositions are apparently more likely to be separated than joined, and there is a tendency to separate prepositional prefixes:

sub iugunt; co operiuntur; super cilia.[32]

It is interesting that one of the few unseparated words should be the abbreviated form of *est* (÷), which is especially prone to being joined even in later manuscripts. Other verbal forms, including *sunt* in both abbreviated and full form, are clearly separated.

Tagged forms do not appear in the fragments, but occasionally the variant uncial S is found in place of the usual half uncial form; it is another indication of the scribe's sensitivity to word boundaries that this variant is used only in word-initial position, so becoming an additional means of isolating words.

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[31] These are the only examples of groupings on the recto of the first fragment.

[32] These examples are from the recto of the fourth fragment.

vii Durham A.II.10 Gospel fragments

Probably the product of an Irish or Irish-trained scribe working in Northumbria during the period when Irish influence there was still very strong, the Gospel fragments Durham A.II.10 (etc.)[11] (dated s. vii med. in *CLA*) display separation which is not quite so advanced as that in the roughly contemporary Isidore fragments, or at least rather erratically executed. Some individual words are quite distinctly separated, with unambiguous use of space; and the usual groupings of *et-* and prepositions with following words are regularly found, but so too are much longer groups of words, consisting sometimes of entire clauses. In many places spacing between words is only very slight, so that the effect is produced of very long groups with slight, hesitant sub divisions. The following transcription of some lines from C.III.13, fol. 192[r] aims to give an idea of this somewhat erratic separation:

> Tunc prae | cipit discipulissuis utneminidice | rent quia^ipse
> esset *ihesus christus* ex | inde coepit *ihesus* ostendere discip
> | ulis^suis quiaoportet eumire^in | hierusolimam
> etmultapati^asen | ioribus etscribis etprincipibussacer | dotum
> etoccidi ettertiadie^resur | gere etadsumens^eum^petrus |
> coepit increpare {eum} etdicere absit | atedomine
> noneritibihoc^quicon | uersus^ait petro uade post | me
> satanas scandalum | esmihi quianonsapis^eaquaedei | sunt

[11] Durham, Cathedral Library A.II.10 (foll. 2-5, 338, 339) + C.III.13 (foll. 192-195) + C.III.20; *CLA*, II, 147. The following observations are based on study of Lowe's photographs of A.II.10, fol. 2[r]; C.III.13, fol. 192[r] (reproduced in *CLA*), and fol. 192[v]; C.III.20, fol. 2[v]; see also R. A. B. Mynors, *Durham Cathedral Manuscripts to the End of the Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1939), pp. 17-18 and pl. 4 (A.II.10, fol. 2[r]).

sedeaquae hominum tunc | *ihesus*dixitdiscipulissuis siquis |
uultpostme uenire abnegetse | ipsum^sibi ettollatcrucemsua*m* |
etsequaturme quienimuoluer ||.[34]

The script of these fragments contains some variant letter forms: the uncial N, S and R occur frequently in addition to the half uncial forms. There does not appear to be any attempt to restrict these forms to word-initial or final position, however. But a variant form of m, with the final stoke extended and curved below the line, is used only in final position, and not within word groups: in the above transcription, these special m forms are indicated by underlining.

There is no consistent attempt to use larger spaces before new sentences (the large space before etadsumens, like those before petro and scandalum, was apparently left in order to avoid a split in the surface of the vellum); indeed, sometimes only the smallest of gaps may occur between the end of one clause and the beginning of the next (e.g. nonerittibihoc^quicon | uersus). The proportion of longer groups in relation to individual words and common word groups seems to be lower at the opening of major sections,[35] when the scribe is likely to have been copying very carefully, and to increase towards the foot of the page, where a scribe's concentration frequently relaxed.[36] The impression given is

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[34] m indicates a variant form of m; see following paragraph.

[35] See *CLA* plate, showing the opening of Mark's Gospel.

[36] Manuscripts in formal, high grade scripts frequently lapse into minuscule in the last few lines of a page (e.g. Durham A.II.17) or of a major section (e.g. the cursive elements in the script of the last few lines of Mark in this manuscript, mentioned by Brown, 'Oldest Irish Manuscripts', p. 314), and those in minuscule into a more cursive variety

that of a scribe copying from an exemplar without (or with less advanced) separation, trying to introduce more spacing between words but tending to be influenced by the exemplar's practice as concentration waned.

viii Bangor Antiphonary

Two dateable manuscripts from the late seventh and early eighth centuries display further advances in word separation. In the Bangor Antiphonary,[17] copied *c.* 680-691,[18] spacing is ample, and separation usually clear; at first glance there appears to be a tendency towards syllabic separation. The scribes[19] of this basically minuscule script usually avoid making letters contiguous, and even letters such as a, e, r and t, whose forms easily allow linkage to preceding or following letters, are often written separately; therefore there is a clear space between most letters as well as between words, though the latter are usually greater.

The apparent syllabic tendency in separation may be nothing more than

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of script. A higher incidence of ligatures and abbreviations is also often found in the last few lines: e.g. the last few lines of the prologue of *Ad Cuimnanum* (see Plate 3, col. b) are very cursively formed using many ligatures unusual elsewhere in the text except at the ends of pages. These phenomena appear to be signs of the scribe's tendency to relax concentration near the end of a page or section (perhaps out of relief at having nearly finished), thus allowing the emergence of certain features which he had been trying to suppress.

[17] Milan, Bilioteca Ambrosiana C.5.inf.; *CLA*, III, 311; complete facs. in F. E. Warren, *The Antiphonary of Bangor*, Henry Bradshaw Society, 4 and 10 (London, 1893 and 1895).

[18] The years of the abbacy of Abbot Cronan of Bangor, who is mentioned as the current abbot in a poem in the manuscript.

[19] Two main scribes wrote most of the manuscript and about fifteen others added short entries; all the hands are to be regarded as practically of the same date (Warren, p. xx).

the visual effect produced by the abundance of spacing between letters: there is certainly not a systematic policy of separating syllables, for many words remain unambiguously intact. Where divisions do occur within words, the resulting syllables often do not conform to the classical norms of syllabification.[10] The following typical examples, taken from fol 19', show the uneven subdivision of words, and the irregularity of some of the syllabification - (sup er for *su per*, sib us for *si bus*, op er for *o per*):

> sup erueni entibus | dei miseri cordiam ...
>
> di|uinis sen sib us tenebra|rum op eribus. [11]

Although separation here cannot be said to be on a regular syllabic basis, it certainly represents, like that in the earlier St Gall Isidore fragments, a stage in development beyond that of the syntactic groupings of the older manuscripts. The word groups commonly occurring are of the familiar kind, involving *et*, *est* and prepositions, but these are less regularly found than in some later manuscripts: *et* in particular frequently stands alone. Prepositions, on the other hand, are fairly consistently treated as one word with the following noun; this is seen very clearly on fol. 30', where the text (the liturgy for an exorcism) consists of a list of all the different parts of the body, each preceded by the preposition *de* which is always written with the noun: e.g. decapillis, decerebro etc.

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[10] Summarised by Farmer, *The Rule of St Benedict* (see Chapter Four, note 10 above).

[11] However, in dividing the syllables so that they are made to begin with a vowel, the scribe is not necessarily revealing ignorance of grammatical rules; Pompeius (*GL*, V, 112/6-17) explains that in calculating the length of a syllable, one reckons not from the first letter of the word, but from the first vowel.

This page is an interesting pointer to the importance of repetition as a factor influencing the scribe's practice with regard to grouping. In a case where, as above, the same grammatical structure is repeated many times over, the scribe is likely to be aware of the pattern and to reproduce the practice followed in the first instance, either joining all or separating all.[11] Another aspect of repetition is the frequency with which particular lexical items (as opposed to grammatical forms) occur together, either generally in the language or in particular texts or types of texts. The more frequently certain words recur in combination, the more likely they are to be viewed as one word and treated as such on the page; for example most early Insular scribes write *id est* as idest, as if the two elements were as closely bound as those in *potest*. In this particular manuscript, the elements of commonly-occurring preposition and noun combinations like *in paradiso* are so closely attached that they are not merely written as one word but have also undergone modifications in spelling, resulting in assimilated forms like ymparadiso.[13]

ix Schaffhausen Adomnan

If the presence of syllabic separation in the Bangor Antiphonary is doubtful, it is more clearly present in the Schaffhausen copy of Adomnan's

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[11] Cf. the repeated pattern in the Cathach, Cantate domino, quoted p. 204 above.

[13] This is in spite of the usual orthographical practice in this manuscript, according to which the prepositional prefixes in such forms as *adnuntiat* and *adprehendo* do not usually undergo assimilation or modification. See Warren, p. xxv.

Life of St Columba, written before 713 AD,[14] which Parkes mentions together with the Bangor manuscript for its advanced word separation.[15] Indeed the practice in the Adomnan is striking enough to have elicited one of Lowe's rare comments on the subject in his description in *CLA*: "words and often even syllables are well separated". The letters in this minuscule script are less well spaced and more frequently contiguous than in the Antiphonary,[16] so the spaces that do appear can be interpreted with greater certainty; words are clearly and regularly separated, and syllables often so, usually with smaller spaces. Some of the usual groupings are to be found (intempore, desuis, dedomu, hoc*est*); but more often similar combinations are clearly separated (in oceano, ab illa, ad caelum, et non, non minus, comissum *est*); and there is frequent separation of prefixes (in sula, ad sistens, per ductus), as well as separation of other syllables (bo nis, ac tibus, no lens, mo|ri entem). The following transcription of a few lines[17] shows the relative scarcity of word groups compared with the frequent syllabic separation:

dosis carub dis brecani aes | tib*us* ual de periclitatur |
am bas q*ue* ad caelum in pro | ra sedens palmas eleuat |

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[14] Schaffhausen, Stadtbibliothek Gen. 1; *CLA*, VII, 998; the following observations based on *CLA* pl. (p. 17) and pl. opposite *CLA*, II, xvi (fol. 3' = p. 6); W. M. Lindsay, *Early Irish Minuscule Script* (Oxford, 1910), pl. 2 (p. 108); *Adomnan's Life of Columba*, edited by A. O. Anderson and M. O. Anderson (London, 1961), pp. 3-18, 164-74 and 4 pls. (pp. 14, 55, 93, 108); M. B. Parkes, 'The Scriptorium of Wearmouth-Jarrow', in *Scribes, Scripts and Readers*, pl. 17 (p. 2).

[15] See p. 161 above.

[16] See Anderson and Anderson, p. 166: "Within words or parts of words, letters make contact or do not make contact with one another, according to a system that results primarily from their shapes..." and following detailed description.

[17] From p. 17 (visible in *CLA* plate from qua ipse).

turbatum quo q*ue* et tam for | midabile pelagus benedicit |
quem tamen d*ominus* sic terret | non ut nauis naufragio in
| qua ipse resedet un dis ob | ruatur sed potius ad or |
an dum in tentius sus cite | tur ut adnos deo propitio |
post trans uadatum perue | ‹ni› at peri cu lum |.

b A simple chronological development?

The following table summarizes the developments in the practice of word separation which these early manuscripts have revealed.

The development of word separation in the earliest Irish manuscripts.

Manuscript	Date	Text	Separation
Springmount Bog Wax Tablets	? s. vi or s. vii	Psalter	Primitive and erratic - some separation of syllables, but also some groups of words.
Ussher I	? s. vi or s. vii	Gospels	Consistently separated (by both scribes) into syntactic units.
Milan Orosius	s. vii[1]	History	Sentences separated by a large space, clauses (and occasionally single words) by smaller ones.
Cathach	s. vii[1]	Psalter	More advanced: still much grouping, but separation of individual words more common.
Folger Eusebius fragments	s. vii[1]	History	Clear spacing (with points) only at major sense pauses; almost no separation otherwise.
St Gall Isidore fragments	s. vii 2nd 1/4	Grammatical and Ency-clopaedic	Words not groups the basic unit; common groupings only; some separation of prefixes.

Manuscript	Date	Text	Separation
Durham A.II.10 Gospel fragments	s. vii med.	Gospels	Erratic: many words clearly separated but long groups also appear.
Bangor Antiphonary	680-691	Liturgical	Advanced; ample spacing; some words subdivided but not strictly syllabic.
Schäffhausen Adamnan	ante 713	History/ Hagiography	Advanced; some syllabic separation.

There appears to be a more or less chronological development from the earliest manuscripts with separation into syntactic units or clauses, through those of the middle and later seventh century in which the single part of speech emerges as the basic unit of separation, to the advanced separation with syllabic tendencies observed in the early eighth-century Adamnan. It would be wrong, however, to link the practices in these manuscripts too closely together and see them as directly following on from each other. Given the uncertainty of some of the dates, and more importantly the fact that these are only the few surviving, isolated and possibly idiosyncratic examples of early Irish book production, we can be sure that the full truth must be more complex than this. The discovery of the Folger fragments, whose lack of separation upsets the apparent order of development, is a warning against over-simplifying the question. For example, we might expect to find word-based separation such as that found in the Isidore fragments being used at an earlier date (especially in less formal writing, and in copies of grammatical and technical works) at the same time as the clause-based separation found in Ussher I and the Milan Orosius, since it was well enough established as a practice to be handed on to Anglo-Saxon scribes by the middle of the seventh century. It is

significant that the earliest surviving example of full word separation should be found not in formal liturgical books but in the more informally written copy of the *Etymologiae*, a text specifically concerned with the definition of words.

It is also potentially misleading to end this survey with the syllabic separation of the Schaffhausen Adamnan; this extension of the principle of separation to the smallest possible unit of language above the letter, although it may seem to be the logical end towards which the practice was developing, is in fact quite exceptional: most scribes, both Irish and Anglo-Saxon, were content from the late seventh century onwards to go no further than isolating the word-unit.[11]

II Separation in early Anglo-Saxon manuscripts

The habit of separating words was learned by the Anglo-Saxons from their Irish teachers, along with the Insular script system itself and with other Irish innovations in graphic conventions and layout, like a new system of punctuation and the frequent use of abbreviations.[12] In the following brief look at some of the earlier Anglo-Saxon manuscripts I am

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[11] Separation of syllables is not a necessary progression from separation of words: in the latter case it is units of sense which are being isolated, while in the former it is units of sound. Most Insular scribes and readers of Latin were apparently more concerned with recognizing and conveying morphological information than phonological.

[12] On the Irish basis of the early Anglo-Saxon script system see Brown, 'Irish Element', especially p. 106, and on other scribal practices see above, Chapter One, p. 36 and note 110, and Parkes, 'Grammar of Legibility', in *Scribes, Scripts and Readers*, p. 12 and following.

therefore not concerned with tracing the practice of separation from its origin in *scriptio continua*, but with showing how the Anglo-Saxons used the practice which they had inherited, and seeing to what extent they modified or refined it.

According to Parkes, the word separation of Anglo-Saxon scribes is characterized by its delicacy: "the space between words is minimal but adequate".[50] This delicacy, Parkes argues, is just one aspect of a more restrained and decorous approach to book production brought about by contact with and reverence for Roman models.[51] The description of separation as "minimal but adequate" is true of many Anglo-Saxon products, especially of those in uncial script which were most directly influenced by Roman practice; but there is considerable variety in the way in which the practice is used, both in the earliest English manuscripts and later into the eighth and early ninth centuries: Anglo-Saxon scribes were not all as delicate or as cautious in their use of separation as Parkes suggests.

a Restraint and inhibition: the influence of Continental models

Among the best examples of cautious word separation are those found in the leaves supplied by seventh-century Anglo-Saxon scribes to replace missing pages from two ancient uncial manuscripts, the sixth-century

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[50] 'Grammar of Legibility', p. 14.

[51] On the Anglo-Saxon zeal for Roman Christian culture, and the influence of Italian books in both Northumbrian and Kentish centres, see Parkes, 'Grammar of legibility', pp. 12-13 and 'The Scriptorium of Wearmouth-Jarrow', pp. 117-18.

Burckhardt Gospels[52] and a fifth-century copy of Jerome on Ecclesiastes.[53] In the Burckhardt Gospels the difference between the original leaves in *scriptio continua* and the restored leaves is barely perceptible, but some slight spacing can be seen in the latter, more clearly before groupings such as *et-* (e.g. aetate etgratiaapud | deum ethomines). The Jerome supply leaves are a little more obviously separated, with some clear gaps and with more subtle spaces between some words and occasionally between syllables (e.g. dicens quo mo do nouit). One reason why separation is more apparent in this manuscript may be that it is written in long lines, unlike the Burckhardt Gospel leaves which are in two columns. With the latter layout there are fewer words to the line and therefore fewer opportunities to mark word boundaries, as a much higher proportion of these will fall at the end of the line. With long lines, by contrast, there are many more occasions for the scribe to use spacing to separate words, and the extent to which he does so is more immediately apparent. From a functional point of view, word separation must have been more necessary in longer lines: short lines in a large script contain few enough words for the reader to be able to analyse them without much extra help from separation, but the longer the line and the more words to the line, the more separation would be needed to break the text into manageable and meaningful units. The groupings which

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[52] Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek m.p.th.f.68 (foll. 10-21, 95-96); *CLA*, IX, 1423[b]; see Brown, *Codex Lindisf.*, pp. 34-37, and facs. in *Eng. Uncial*, pls. III-IV (foll. 144[r] (from the original manuscript) and 96[r]); Parkes, 'Wearmouth Jarrow', in *Scribes, Scripts and Readers*, p. 95 and n. 11.

[53] Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek m.p.th.q.2 (foll. 10, 13, 63, 68, 81, 82); *CLA*, IX, 1430[b]; see Lowe, *English Uncial*, pls. I, V (foll. 12[r], 1[r] and 63[r]). On this manuscript see P. Sims-Williams, 'Cuthswith, Seventh-Century Abbess of Inkberrow, Near Worcester, and the Würzburg Manuscript of Jerome on Ecclesiastes', *ASE*, 5 (1976), 1-21. The separation in the Anglo-Saxon leaves of both these manuscripts is discussed briefly by Parkes, 'Grammar of Legibility', pp. 13-14.

occur in the Jerome leaves are of the usual types, including conjunctions, pronouns and negatives, as well as prepositions (e.g. etsaepe, etha|benti, conscientiatua, nonfacile, nonloquendum, inoculo, defestuca).[54] The Burckhardt and the Jerome leaves (the only examples Parkes cites to illustrate Anglo-Saxon delicacy of separation) are conspicuous evidence of how the practice of word separation, once learned, was almost impossible to suppress, even in a situation where the scribe was trying to reproduce faithfully the style of the original manuscript in script and layout. It is hardly surprising that separation in such a conservative context should be cautious in the extreme; but these should not be taken as typical examples of Anglo-Saxon word separation.

In the group of uncial manuscripts produced in the scriptorium of Wearmouth-Jarrow at the end of the seventh and beginning of the eighth centuries in a disciplined style, respectfully imitative of Roman uncial books,[55] separation is generally understated, but the practice is surprisingly varied considering the discipline and restraint which in other ways is characteristic of these manuscripts.[56] In the formal uncial script of the most famous of these manuscripts, the Codex Amiatinus,[57]

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[54] Parkes (ibid., p. 14), mentions only the prepositional groupings, describing the practice in terms of the confusion between free and bound morphemes picked up by scribes from the teachings of the ancient grammarians.

[55] See Parkes, 'Scriptorium of Wearmouth-Jarrow', pp. 93-95.

[56] In several instances this prompted one of Lowe's rare comments in *CLA*.

[57] Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana Amiatino 1; *CLA*, III, 299; facs. in *Eng. Uncial*, pp. 8-9 and pls. VIII-IX (foll. 1', 989'); E. A. Lowe, 'A Key to Bede's Scriptorium', in his *Palaeographical Papers 1907-65*, edited by L. Bieler, 2 vols (Oxford, 1972), II, 441-49 and pl. 97 (fol. 1006'); see also D. H. Wright, 'Some Notes on English Uncial', *Traditio*, 17 (1961), 441-56 and pls. I-III, V d-e (foll. 1', 195', 255', 221', 218', 276',

separation is certainly very restrained, spacing being kept to a minimum and in longer, crowded lines being scarcely perceptible. Similarly, in the London fragments of the two other pandects copied at the same time as the Amiatinus,[58] there are some clearly discernible gaps between words but also many lines which appear at first glance to be almost continuous strings of letters, although slight spaces are in fact present. However, in the less formal uncial used in Amiatinus for the capitula (hence known as 'capitular uncial'), separation is a little less subtly or hesitantly practised, and individual words are more obviously isolated. This is also true of the Stonyhurst St John's Gospel,[59] written entirely in capitular uncial. The Cambridge Psalter fragment, also written in capitular uncial, displays separation described in *CLA* as "well advanced":[60] clear, unambiguous gaps occur between words or word groups, and especially large spaces are found, some occurring before the initial of a new verse, but others within the verse, e.g.:

> Adadnuntiandum mane | misericordiam tuam et ueritatem tuam per | noctem· Indeca cordopsalteria cum cantico | ‹e›t cithara quia delectasti me d*omi*ne infactura | ‹t›ua et inoperibus

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797'); *Codex Lindisf.*, II, pp. 13-14, 51-58 and pls. 21, 24 (foll. V, 798').

[58] London, British Library, Additional 37777 and 45025, and a fragment discovered in 1982 at Kingston Lacy, now on deposit in the British Library (Loan 81); *CLA*, II, 177 and Addenda, p. 351. Lowe in *CLA* comments that "the separation of words is not quite perfect". Facs. in *Eng. Uncial*, pl. X (verso of 37777), and (Kingston Lacy fragment, recto) in *The Guardian*, 21 October 1982.

[59] Stonyhurst College, Gospel of St John; *CLA*, II, 260, where word separation is said to be "fairly advanced"; complete facs.: *The Stonyhurst Gospel of St John*, edited by T. J. Brown (Roxburgh Club, 1969).

[60] Cambridge, University Library Ff.5.27 (fol. i); *CLA*, S, 1682; facs. in T. A. M. Bishop, 'A Fragment in Northumbrian Uncial', *Scriptorium*, 8 (1954), 111-13 and pl. 1 (= recto); *Eng. Uncial*, pl. XIV (= recto).

manuum tuarum exultabo· |.

The overall impression created by this separation is slightly irregular and uneven. As the above example shows, grouping of prepositions is common, but other frequently grouped words, including *et*, are here usually separated.

Unlike the other Wearmouth-Jarrow manuscripts discussed above, which are written *per cola et commata*, this Psalter was copied in long lines (hence the need to leave space to indicate the start of a new verse). This fact may partly explain the more extreme use of separation (see p. 218 above). The type of script being used (the informal capitular uncial rather than the more formal variety) may also have encouraged greater freedom in the practice - not simply because the script is less formal, but because the capitular uncial appears not to be a direct imitation of a Continental script, but to have been developed by the Wearmouth-Jarrow scribes themselves, who may have had fewer inhibitions about introducing the innovation of separation into such a script than they had when copying the formal Roman uncial.[61]

b Varieties of practice in uncial, half uncial and minuscule scripts

Delicate separation is less in evidence in those early Anglo-Saxon Gospel books which are written in Insular half uncial rather than in uncial. In the Lindisfarne Gospels and the other Gospel books related in

[61] On the development of capitular uncial and the lack of Continental models see Parkes, 'Wearmouth-Jarrow', pp. 96-97 and n. 17.

script and style (Durham A.II.17 and the Echternach Gospels[61]), separation is clearly marked by means of uniform, regular spacing. The spaces are not large, being usually only about half the width of the average letter, but clarity of separation is enhanced by certain features of the script. Words appear as compact blocks whose unity is emphasized by the way in which the tops and bottoms of the wedge-shaped serifs and feet create the impression of continuous horizontal lines binding the individual letters together. Only the occasional final -t, with its head-stroke extended to touch the initial of the following word, and so continuing the horizontal line across the gap, interrupts the unambiguous alternation of word-block and space. Separation is as clear in the minuscule script in which most of the Echternach Gospels are written as in the half uncial of the first page; this clarity appears not to be affected by the length of the line, for it is no less true of Lindisfarne (in *cola et commata*) than of Durham A.II.17 (in long lines).

Tagged forms of R, E and T are sometimes used at the ends of words, though far more frequently, along with other variant forms, at the ends of lines. These would seem to be simply a calligraphic device to finish off non-contiguous letters, not an aid to the recognition of word boundaries, since these are clear enough already.[63] The 'words' isolated by this unequivocal separation include the usual groups involving prepositions,

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[61] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 9389; *CLA*, V, 578; see *Codex Lindisf.*, II, pp. 96-106, 246-249 and pls. 3, 5, 7, 9, 12-14. Only the first page is in half uncial - the rest is written in a large, set minuscule; see Brown, 'Irish Element', pp. 108-09.

[63] See Chapter Four, note 55.

pronouns, *et* and so on;[64] there is no sign in these manuscripts of the tendency seen in the Cambridge Psalter fragment to separate *et*.

Other English manuscripts, from the late seventh century through to the early ninth, display separation which varies from the very conservative to the very clearly marked, with the majority falling somewhere in between. Unusually conservative separation is found not only in the Wearmouth-Jarrow group but in some other books in formal uncial, like the early eighth-century Gospel fragments in Avranches[65] and the related eighth-century fragment of St John's Gospel now in Marburg,[66] and most notably in the eighth-century uncial copy of the Rule of St Benedict, which appears quite free of word separation.[67] But the use of uncial script does not automatically mean the suppression of separation: for example the uncial copy, dating from the second half of the eighth century, of the text *De ordine creaturarum* (formerly attributed to Isidore but now thought to be of seventh-century Irish or Northumbrian origin).[68] is rather erratically

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[64] See the analysis of the groups in Durham A.II.17 on pp. 187-89 above.

[65] Avranches, Bibliothèque Municipale 48 (foll. 1-11) + 66 (foll. 1-11) + 71 (foll. A-B) + Leningrad, Public Library O.v.I.1; *CLA*, VI, 730; other facs. in *Eng. Uncial*, p. 22 and pl. XXIXa; Staerk, I, 27-28 and pl. VII (Leningr. foll. 1'-2'); II, pl. XXV (Leningr. fol. 1').

[66] Marburg, Staatsarchiv Hr. 1,2; *CLA*, S, 1729 (pl. of verso).

[67] Oxford, Bodleian Library Hatton 48; *CLA*, II, 240; complete facs. edited by Farmer (see Chapter Four, note 10 above). The very large script and the use of a two-column layout result in very few letters to the line (between ten and twelve); this substantially reduces the need for word separation, since longer words occupy a whole line to themselves; but where more than one word does occur on a line, there is very little sign of space between them.

[68] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 9561; *CLA*, V, 590; Lowe, *English Uncial*, pl. XXXV (fol. 18'); see M. C. Diaz y Diaz, *Liber de ordine creaturarum: Un anónimo irlandés del siglo VII* (Santiago de Compostela, 1972), pp. 13-28 (on the authorship) and pp. 47-48 (on the manuscript).

separated, with some very clear spacing but elsewhere little care taken to mark word boundaries. This careless practice may be the work of an inexperienced or undisciplined scribe.[69]

It is much less usual to find highly conservative or very delicate separation in manuscripts copied in minuscule scripts. The Moore Bede[70] is one of the exceptional cases, provoking comment in *CLA* ("words are barely separated") and from the editor of the facsimile, who notes that "the space left between adjacent words is normally no greater than the space left between adjacent letters in the same word" and that punctuation added later often had to be inserted above the line because "there was no room even for a comma between the words which [the scribe] wished to separate".[71] Such slight hints of spaces as do occur are found between words, not between syllables. This manuscript is the more exceptional for its heavy use of abbreviations; it is unusual for a scribe who so thoroughly avoids separation to make anything but the most discrete use of abbreviation symbols.[72]

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[69] In *CLA* the script is described as "not very expert".

[70] Cambridge, University Library Kk.5.16; *CLA*, II, 139; complete facs.: *The Moore Bede: Cambridge University Library Kk.5.16*, preface by P. H. Blair, with a contribution by R. A. B. Mynors, EEMF, 9 (Copenhagen, 1959).

[71] *The Moore Bede*, pp. 15 and 18-19. Blair also notes that sometimes "the last and first letters of adjacent words are ligatured", but the examples he gives (detractu, desemet, desuo) are all of a kind which would have been treated as one word by almost all eighth-century Insular scribes, so the use of ligature within such 'words' is not surprising. I have not, in a rapid inspection, come across any ligatures between words that would not normally have been grouped.

[72] See Chapter Six, pp. 270-72 for discussion of the use of abbreviation in this manuscript.

c The development of the practice within one scriptorium

The absence or restraint of separation in Anglo-Saxon minuscule script should not be interpreted necessarily as an early feature, or as reflecting the influence of an exemplar in *scriptio continua*. In the Wearmouth-Jarrow scriptorium at least, it appears that the reverse is true: more restrained, subtle separation is one of the characteristics of the later stage in the evolution of a local style of minuscule writing, which can be observed in another early copy of Bede's *History*, the Leningrad Bede.[73] In this manuscript, copied by four different scribes in two stages between 731 and 746, the most distinctly and spaciously separated handwriting is that of Scribe D, which represents an earlier stage in the development of Wearmouth-Jarrow minuscule than the hands of the other three scribes.[74] Scribes A and B (and also C, writing at the same time as D but closer in style to A and B), in compressing and disciplining their script, have also eliminated much of the space between words, so that separation is far less obvious than in the older hand of D. Ample spacing appears to be one of the characteristics of early Insular minuscule which the discipline of the scriptorium sought to suppress.[75] However, the avoidance of spacing by Scribes A and B does not mean a lack of awareness of word boundaries: their sensitivity to these is shown, for example, by the fact

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[73] Leningrad, Public Library Q.v.I.18; *CLA*, XI, 1621; complete facs.: *The Leningrad Bede: An Eighth Century Manuscript of the Venerable Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum in the Pulic Library, Leningrad*, edited by O. Arngart, EEMF, 2 (Copenhagen, 1952).

[74] See the detailed comparison of the hands of the four scribes, and discussion of the development of Insular minuscule within the scriptorium, in Parkes, 'Wearmouth-Jarrow', especially pp. 100-06. The different practices of Scribes A and D with regard to spacing were noted briefly by Arngart, in *Leningrad Bede*, pp. 18 and 19.

[75] Cf. Parkes, pp. 104-06 and 112.

that they restrict their use of the variant upright d, used frequently in any context by Scribe D, to the beginnings of words (or subsections).[76] Another difference between the separation practice of Scribe D and the later scribes is in the degree to which they retain groupings of words. Separation in D is linguistically unusually sophisticated: of all the elements frequently grouped elsewhere, only prepositions tend to be joined, and the rest are usually clearly separated.[77] With the later scribes, on the other hand, far more of the usual groupings are found, though not as consistently as in the Pompeius analysed in Chapter Four.[78] Scribes A and B were either not capable of analysing the language to the extent that D did, or, if they were aware of D's linguistically more advanced separation, presumably did not regard the consistent separation even of auxiliary parts of speech as a necessity in the production of a legible text.[79] Yet

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[76] Parkes notes (p. 105 and n. 52) that most of the rare instances of variant forms of d and a in Scribe A are found in the first few pages that he copied, and suggests that A was initially influenced by what he found in his exemplar, until he settled down in his stint. The fact that the separation of words on the first page is much more spacious and clear confirms this suggestion.

[77] For example, on fol. 99[v1] all instances of *et* (once), *non* (once), *est* (twice), conjunctions (seven times), adverbs (once) and pronouns (six times) are clearly separated; of ten prepositions, six are joined and four (including *in* three times) are separated.

[78] For example, on fol. 20[r1] (Scribe A) et is twice separated, twice joined; non is three times separated, twice joined; est is joined five times (always ÷) and separated twice (÷ x1); conjunctions and adverbs are joined three times and separated eleven times; pronouns are joined twice, and separated six times. Prepositions are joined only three times, against eight separations (though these include four instances of contra, which, compared with monosyllabic prepositions like de, is rarely joined).

[79] Could the exceptionally advanced separation found in the writing of Scribe D be another argument in favour of identifying this scribe with Bede himself? The question of D's identity was left open by Parkes (n. 45); but certainly such advanced and consistently manifested linguistic analysis is what one would expect to find in the handwriting of a scholar and linguist of Bede's calibre (see also additional note by Parkes, p. 120, on the superior punctuation of Scribe D).

another difference between the writing practice of Scribe D and the others lies in their use of abbreviations. There is a difference not only in the forms used[10] but also in the density of abbreviation: perhaps surprisingly, it is Scribe D who is most sparing in his use of abbreviated forms, while A and B especially use them quite freely.[11] This increasing use of abbreviations may be seen as part of the attempt to make the copying of texts less time consuming;[12] it also performs the function of helping to distinguish words in a compressed script, since the distinctive abbreviated forms either occur at the beginnings or ends of words (or word groups), or stand for an entire word.[13]

The handwriting of early Insular scribes is notoriously idiosyncratic, containing a "bewildering amount of variation";[14] this variety extends to their practice of word separation, both in extent and in consistency.[15] Delicacy of separation is characteristic of some, but by no means of all Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, and the practice of individual scribes may vary in the course of copying.[16] The products (whether in uncial or minuscule script) of the Wearmouth-Jarrow scriptorium are

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[10] See Arngart, p. 21; Parkes, p. 105.

[11] See detailed analysis in Chapter Six, pp. 273-75.

[12] Parkes suggests it was the urgent need to meet the demand for works by Bede that led the Wearmouth-Jarrow scriptorium to turn from capitular uncial to the less time-consuming Insular minuscule as their principal book hand (see p. 111).

[13] See further discussion, Chapter Six, pp. 295-97.

[14] Parkes, 'Wearmouth-Jarrow', p. 116.

[15] See the examples in Chapter Four, note 62.

[16] See for example p. 184 above, on the change of practice on one folio of the St Paul Pompeius.

exceptional for their consistency and conformity,[87] and the consistently cautious word separation which is one of their characteristics is also exceptional for the time. The variety of practice is somewhat reduced in the ninth century; by this time consistently clear spacing seems to be the norm, although there are still exceptions.[88]

III Conclusion

a The linguistic basis of the practice

The practice of word separation, like any other scribal practice, cannot be considered in isolation. As the above survey has shown, it is affected by a number of historical and palaeographical factors: the nature of the exemplar; the type of text being copied and the script in which it is written; the intended purpose of the book; the discipline and the particular requirements of the scriptorium; aesthetic considerations; and the calligraphic and linguistic skill of the individual scribe. Yet although shaped by such largely non-linguistic factors, the practice fundamentally represents a kind of linguistic analysis: the physical manifestation of word boundaries reflects the intellectual concept of a word as an isolable phenomenon.

It might be argued that only in the early stages of the development

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[87] 'Wearmouth-Jarrow', p. 116.

[88] See Chapter Four, p. 175 above.

of the practice is the scribe actively engaged in linguistic analysis, and that once the practice of indicating word boundaries by separation is established it becomes a graphical convention which later scribes inherit and copy unthinkingly from their exemplars. But so long as scribes continued (as they did throughout this early period) to encounter not only Continental manuscripts written without separation but also any kind of grouping of words or indistinct separation in Insular manuscripts, the question of how much and where to separate words must have remained a live issue; and in the initial writing down of new texts, either by the author or through dictation, there would of course have been no exemplar to serve as a model for separation.

Moreover, when copying books scribes are always readers: they must read their exemplar (whether or not this already contains any separation), and, like all readers, must analyse the written language that appears before them. In copying, scribes transfer text a segment at a time from the exemplar to the new copy; these 'segments' cannot be seen purely in terms of the highest number of letters which can be visually apprehended and correctly remembered in transcription, regardless of the boundaries of linguistic units.[11] Unless the text is in a completely unknown foreign language, a scribe cannot copy without at some level reading the text and relating what he reads to his own linguistic system by identifying word forms. It is this personal linguistic system of the scribe, derived from his knowledge both of Latin and of his vernacular, and dependent on his own

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[11] Saenger, quoting modern research into the psychology of reading, implies that the division of a text into single visual units is determined by the eye's physiological incapability of grasping anything more than approximately 15 characters at a time (p. 378); he makes no reference to the element of linguistic analysis which ensures that word groups are not random strings of characters, but significant linguistic units.

experience (that is, the words with which he is already familiar), which underlies the way in which the text is subdivided in any copy.[10] However, the influence of the various non-linguistic factors referred to in the previous paragraph means that it is rarely a straightforward matter to draw conclusions about the nature of individual scribes' linguistic systems.

The syntactical and morphological structure of Latin (unlike that of Old Irish) easily allows of separation into isolated forms which are readily identifiable on the page by their inflected elements.[11] This can be done independently by any scribe with a knowledge of Latin; the Anglo-Saxons learned the principle of graphical separation from the Irish, but applied it for themselves. If the same characteristic tendencies to group certain words together are found in both Irish and Anglo-Saxon Latin manuscripts, it is not because the English scribes learned those particular patterns of separation from the Irish, but because they were working within similar linguistic systems and reflecting the same kind of linguistic analysis.

The underlying basis of the tendencies to group certain elements has not been satisfactorily explained. The question of the amount of text which can be held in the scribe's mind is not irrelevant, but this factor alone cannot explain the consistent grouping of some elements and separation of others. Nor can it simply be a question of the length of

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[10] The idea of the scribe's personal linguistic system is discussed further in the forthcoming article by Parkes on the history of reading from the seventh to the eleventh centuries (see Chapter Three, note 13).

[11] Cf. Parkes, 'Tachygraphy' in *Scribes, Scripts and Readers*, p. 25, and see above, Chapter Three, pp. 110-11.

words."[11] Certainly the majority of words tending to be joined consist only of one syllable, and in the case of those parts of speech which are not consistently joined (i.e. pronouns, adverbs, conjunctions), it is often the longer forms of two or more syllables which are separated. But one finds many short words, or monosyllabic forms, standing alone: it was not usual practice to join such forms as the verb *do* ('I give') or the noun *res* ('thing') to the following word, so size of word alone cannot have been the governing principle.

According to Keller and Rademacher, the principle is accentual: lightly stressed or unstressed elements are clustered around the accented part of speech, so that each written word-group contains one main accented form. This was the explanation offered by Rademacher for the groupings in written Old English;[12] and Keller argued that the same 'rule' was being followed in the writing of Latin.[13] The phonological principle is, I believe, part of but not the whole explanation; the rhythms of spoken Latin, experienced especially in the daily chanting of the Office, must have formed part of most scribes' linguistic systems, and certainly it is possible to describe the consistently recurring groups in terms of stressed

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[11] Cf. T. J. Brown's reference to "the rule that monosyllables should adhere to the beginning or end of a longer word, or to each other" in *The Durham Gospels*, p. 37, and Bischoff's mention of "prepositions and other short words" (see p. 158 above), though both of these were presumably only intended as convenient brief descriptions of the phenomenon rather than explanations of it.

[12] She shows (p. 6), that this principle leads to the regular separation of compound words, even proper names, because they contain two accents (e.g.: **gear dagum**; **wis dom**; **beo wulf**).

[13] See Chapter Four, p. 155, note 9 above.

and unstressed forms.[95] But it is not necessary to see (as Keller does) accent-grouping in opposition to the grammatically based principle of separating every part of speech - a principle which, Keller argued, only triumphed over the accentual principle in the twelfth century.[96] The morphological principles taught by the grammarians were as much a part of Insular scribes' language system as were the spoken sounds they heard, and both must be reflected in the patterns of words they produced on the page.

As was shown in Chapter Three, the teaching of the grammarians provided the principle of dividing Latin into isolable units or parts of speech, with special emphasis on the two principal parts, the noun and the verb. The tendency of scribes to separate nouns and verbs clearly from each other and to write other parts of speech as a unit with either a noun or a verb can be seen as a reflection of this teaching, in so far as scribes were likely to see the other parts as less important, and thus less worthy of separation, than nouns and verbs (or because they appreciated the close syntactic links between adverb and verb, possessive pronoun and noun, and felt it appropriate to express this link by writing them as a unit). The persistent confusion in the grammarians on the question of separable and inseparable prepositions is reflected in the particularly persistent scribal practice of non-separation of prepositions and occasional wrong separation of prefixes. The patterns of separation resulting from such a grammatical analysis would be very much the same as those based on phonological principles.

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[95] Thus the monosyllabic verbal and nominal forms mentioned above are written alone because they are stressed forms, while *est* in many constructions is unstressed and enclitic.

[96] See 'Worttrennung', p. 89.

Another important aspect of the linguistic analysis on which separation is based is that of the concepts which the words signify. Scribes often prefer to write as one unit the letters which denote a particular concept, even if that unit is made up of several parts of speech, or more than one stressed form.[17] In addition, familiar and often-repeated phrases or collocations of particular words, just as much as lexical items consisting of a single part of speech, will have a unity of association with each other which the scribe may reflect.[18] The combined influences of stress and of conceptual or lexical unity on a morphologically based principle of isolable units will produce the characteristic patterns of early Insular word separation.

It might seem at first that the tendency in many of the earliest Irish manuscripts to separate text into larger syntactic groups, rather than into individual words or shorter groupings, is connected to the practice with regard to writing Old Irish, and reflects the native Irish understanding of word boundaries discussed in Chapter Two. However, the linguistic systems of Latin and Irish are too dissimilar for such a direct influence to be possible; the patterns in the early Latin manuscripts are far more likely to be a reflection of the punctuation and layout of their exemplars, and perhaps of the needs of the reader in a liturgical context.[19] The significance of the different vernacular system lies not

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[17] Hence such groupings as luxuera, nouitestamenti (see Chapter Four, note 80), and perhaps also the treatment of idest and utest as a unit signifying that examples follow.

[18] e.g. innominedeiuiui (see p. 200 above).

[19] In particular the units of text in the early Gospel books, which may in fact reflect lectionary units similar to (and possibly based on) the layout *per cola et commata* devised by Jerome to facilitate liturgical reading.

in a direct influence on the practice in copying Latin, but in the consequent difficulties for an Irish student trying to read Latin.

b Written language as a direct means of communication

The emergence and ready acceptance of word separation in Insular circles is related to the necessity faced by the Irish and Anglo-Saxons of learning and studying in a foreign language, and reflects their need to make the written page more accessible and more readily yielding of the information it contained. This need must have been especially urgent in the case of informally written books (for example the many grammatical and exegetical works which must have been copied before and during the seventh century) intended for private study rather than for reading aloud, and written in a basic, cursive grade of script in which words would be particularly hard to decipher without the aid of separation. The St Gall Isidore fragments, in a script with cursive elements, and with their clear separation, are the earliest surviving testimony to this need and its resolution.[100]

The willingness of scribes to abandon *scriptio continua* in favour of copying word by word is one of a number of symptoms of a changing perception of written language and a new way of reading. In antiquity the written language was seen as a means of recording and preserving spoken language, the primary means of communication; for Augustine, the written word does not directly convey a meaning, but is a sign of a spoken sound,

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[100] See pp. 215-16 above.

which in turn signifies the meaning.[101] Although the importance of spoken language and of reading aloud survives in the liturgy of the Church, from the sixth century onwards there is an increasing emphasis on silent reading and signs that the written language is regarded as a means of communication in its own right.[102] Thus for Isidore in the seventh century, the written word acts directly (and silently) as the sign of a concept, not indirectly via the spoken sound:

> Litterae autem sunt indices rerum, signa uerborum, quibus tanta uis est, ut nobis dicta absentium sine uoce loquantur.[103]

Such a view of written language, and specifically of written Latin, is more readily held by those, like the early Irish and the Anglo-Saxons, for whom Latin was already a different mode of communication from their non-latinate (and, at this stage, rarely written) vernacular, and to whom the heritage of the Church they had joined was transmitted primarily through the written Latin word. Because they perceived written Latin as an autonomous linguistic medium, not dependent on the spoken sound, they felt free to alter the way in which it was presented on the page so that, rather than

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[101] Augustine, *De trinitate*, XV,10,19 (PL, 42, 1071): *Inuentae sunt autem litterae, per quas possemus et cum absentibus colloqui: sed ista signa sunt uocum, cum ipsae uoces in sermone nostro earum quas cogitamus signa sunt rerum.* See also *De doctrina christiana*, II,4 (PL, 34, 38); *De magistro*, 4,8 (PL, 32, 1198).

[102] In his forthcoming article on the history of reading in the early medieval period (see note 90 above), Parkes shows that silent reading was practiced regularly at a much earlier date earlier than Saenger allowed for in 'Silent Reading'; see also Parkes, *Scribes, Scripts and Readers*, p. 297 (note to Chapter 14).

[103] *Etymologiae*, I,3; on the emphasis given by Isidore to *littera* above *vox*, and on letters as signs, see Fontaine, *Isidore*, I, 57 and 60; Fontaine also discusses Isidore's interest in diacritical signs and stenography, and in the discipline of orthography, which was growing in importance given the increasing dissociation between written Latin (faithful to classical norms) and the spoken language in phonetic evolution (pp. 74-84).

simply recording the individual sounds that made up words, they isolated graphical units which the eye could apprehend, directly conveying the signified concept to the mind. In Cohen's terms, Insular scribes reintroduced an ideographic element into the basically phonographic alphabetic system of writing. In the following chapter I argue that the extended use of abbreviation symbols in Insular manuscripts is another symptom of this shift towards silent reading and a partially ideographic writing system.

CHAPTER SIX

The Use of Abbreviations in Insular Manuscripts

I Previous study of Insular abbreviation

The use of a large repertoire of abbreviation symbols, including some unusual forms not used elsewhere, is a well-known characteristic of Irish and Anglo-Saxon scribes and has been referred to as "a notoriously 'Insular' feature of all Insular script".[1] This feature of Insular practice has, unlike the practice of word separation, been the subject of much detailed research and has also in the past been at the centre of a certain amount of controversy. Earlier scholars, approaching the subject either as textual critics seeking to emend corruptions, or as palaeographers looking for clues to the date and origin of manuscripts or tracing the development of abbreviation practice, have asked certain types of questions. These have tended to be 'what?', 'whence?' and 'whither?' questions: what are the symbols used and in which manuscripts are they found? From where did the Insular scribes acquire these symbols, and on what models, if any, did they base their new forms? To which Continental scriptoria was the Insular practice exported and what was its impact on the later development of medieval abbreviation? The answers to these questions provide the necessary starting material for an attempt to answer some further questions which so far have remained unasked, namely, how and why

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[1] T. J. Brown, 'The Oldest Irish Manuscripts', p. 318.

are abbreviations being used, and why is the practice of Insular scribes of this period so different from that of their Continental contemporaries?

The single most important work in the area is W. M. Lindsay's *Notae Latinae*, whose main object was "to provide statistics of the actual use of symbols in the early minuscule period".[1] Lindsay's interest was not confined to abbreviations in Insular manuscripts: his work sets out to cover the usage in every extant eighth-century Latin manuscript, both Insular and Continental, and "a sufficient number" from the first half of the ninth century.[2] But his comprehensive survey of all the "common"[4] abbreviation symbols, listing the manuscripts in which each is found, makes abundantly clear the unusual nature of the Insular practice contrasted with that found in Continental manuscripts of the same period, in respect of both the size of the repertoire and the forms of symbols used.

The two tables of symbols which form an appendix to the survey conveniently summarize its detailed information. The first table compares Insular forms with those found in Spain, Italy, and elsewhere on the Continent; out of the one hundred and ten word symbols listed in the table,

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[1] *Notae Latinae: An Account of Abbreviation in Latin MSS. of the Early Minuscule Period (c. 700-850)* (Cambridge, 1915; hereafter cited as *Not. Lat.*), p. ix. See also D. Bains, *A Supplement to Notae Latinae (Abbreviations in Latin MSS of 850 to 1050 A.D.)*, with a foreword by W. M. Lindsay (Cambridge, 1936) with corrections to *Not. Lat.* listed in the foreword.

[2] *Not. Lat.*, p. vii. The manuscripts and especially fragments which have only come to light since the publication of *Not. Lat.* in 1915 (including such important early items as the St Gall Isidore fragments and the Springmount Bog wax tablets) are of course not included in the survey.

[4] That is, the standard forms in common usage as opposed to those suspensions (which Lindsay calls "capricious") confined to copies of particular texts or types of text. On "capricious suspensions" see below, note 34, and further discussion, p. 284.

only eight of those found on the Continent (including two rare forms) are not to be found in Insular circles, while thirty-nine symbols are exclusive to Insular manuscripts. Another nine words for which Insular scribes regularly use abbreviated forms are so written by their Continental contemporaries only rarely, and the abbreviation of a further twelve words is restricted to Insular circles and one other area only. The table also clearly shows that, while there is some difference between the symbols used in different Continental regions, there is a far greater difference between Continental symbols in general and those used by Insular scribes. The second table illustrates the distribution of symbols within Insular manuscripts, comparing the practice of the Irish with that of the Anglo-Saxons, and revealing that the repertoire of the latter was rather more limited than that of the former, though containing some characteristic symbols of its own.[5]

Lindsay offers very little in the way of interpretation of the mass of data published in *Notae Latinae*. He confined himself to gathering and presenting detailed and accurate information (a large enough task), and left it to others to elaborate "theories of how or why this symbol is used here and that symbol there", while also warning them of the dangers inherent in such interpretations:

> Those who prefer it may galvanize a dull record of facts, such as: 'aū for 'autem' is found in English scriptoriums earlier than Irish,' into a more animated statement such as: 'Irish scribes learned the use of aū for 'autem' from their English neighbours.' *Nec veto nec jubeo*. But let them remember that even the genius of Traube could not keep him (in his article on the abbreviation of 'autem') from some speculations which new

[5] *Not. Lat.*, pp. 495-500.

material shews to be mistaken or improbable.[6]

Lindsay first approached the subject of abbreviations from the perspective of an editor of classical Latin texts. He realized that many of the textual corruptions found in ninth-century copies of classical texts were caused by the scribe's misunderstanding and wrong expansion of unfamiliar abbreviations in the exemplar. Editors familiar with the different forms of abbreviation and especially with the unusual and characteristic Insular forms would be equipped with a sound and scientific basis for textual emendation, and to this end Lindsay published first a short study, also in the form of alphabetical lists, of abbreviation symbols current in the eighth century.[7] This was followed by similar studies of the repertoire of individual scriptoria or regions, and of the development of particular symbols,[8] for Lindsay now perceived the importance of abbreviations in helping to provide "clues to the date and the home of a MS. and to throw light on the history of the writing centres, and their relations with each other".[9] In compiling a more comprehensive account in *Notae Latinae*, Lindsay saw himself as continuing the task begun

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[6] *Not. Lat.*, p. ix.

[7] *Contractions in Early Latin Minuscule MSS* (Oxford, 1908).

[8] 'The Bobbio Scriptorium: Its Early Minuscule Abbreviations', *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, 26 (1909), 293-306; 'Breton Scriptoria: Their Latin Abbreviation-Symbols', *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, 29 (1912), 264-72; 'The Abbreviation-Symbols of *ergo*, *igitur*', *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, 29 (1912), 56-64, and many further studies, especially in the series Palaeographia Latina.

[9] *Not. Lat.*, p. vii.

by Traube in *Nomina Sacra*,[10] which the latter intended as the first volume of a projected history of Latin abbreviation.

The lesson that abbreviations can be important indicators of the date and origin of a manuscript was well learned by the palaeographers and editors who followed after Traube and Lindsay. Many of the suggested dates and origins of manuscripts proposed by Lowe in *CLA*, including his distinctions between Irish and Anglo-Saxon products, rest at least in part on the evidence of abbreviations, and Lowe made a point of presenting that evidence by providing in the description of each item a list of the abbreviated forms and symbols contained within it. These lists are not intended to be exhaustive: for pre-eighth-century manuscripts and those in which abbreviation is restricted Lowe's aim was to give a fairly complete list of the forms occurring in the manuscript, but in the case of (Insular or Insular-influenced) eighth-century manuscripts with heavy use of abbreviation his lists are not intended to be complete. Some of the most common forms (for example the almost ubiquitous contractions of the *Nomina Sacra*, omitted **m**, and syllables **b·** (*-bus*) and **q·** (*-que*)) are often omitted from the *CLA* lists, although distinctive Insular forms (for example, the h-shaped *autem* symbol ( ) are listed even if they occur only once in the manuscript.[11]

The information on abbreviations collected in *CLA* serves principally

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[10] L. Traube, *Nomina Sacra: Versuch einer Geschichte der christlichen Kürzungen*, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters, 2 (Munich, 1907).

[11] See *CLA*, I, xi: "The aim has been not so much to draw up exhaustive lists as to register the telling forms", and similar statements in the prefaces to other individual volumes (e.g. II, xi; IV, ix-x).

to highlight the presence of particular symbols which are significant for dating or localizing, but is not sufficiently detailed or explicit (it could not be, given the scope of the work) to form the basis of a study of the use of abbreviations. It is tempting to regard its lists as convenient summaries of the repertoire of abbreviation forms used by particular scribes, but such deductions are dangerous. Not only is it unclear in most cases how complete the list is, but also no attempt is made to distinguish between the practices of different scribes within the same manuscript.[11] Furthermore, in the case of the many *CLA* items consisting of fragments rather than complete manuscripts, in no way can the list of forms occurring in the surviving fragment be regarded necessarily as a guide to the full repertoire of the scribe - the non-occurrence of a form in the fragment is in itself no guarantee that it would not have been used, occasionally or regularly, in the rest of the manuscript. The information in *CLA* is also not sufficient to show how frequently or consistently the symbols are used. Very occasionally Lowe comments that abbreviations are "freely" or "sparingly" used, or that symbols are "numerous" or "few", but such comments are ambiguous: whether they refer to the number of different symbols found, or to the frequency with which the scribe uses such symbols in preference to the full form, or to both, is unclear.

Editors of facsimile editions of complete manuscripts have been able to provide more detailed information on abbreviation practice than was possible within the scope or intention of *CLA*. It is usual for editors not only to list all the forms which occur and to note differences of practice

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[11] Except the distinction that is made between main scribe(s) and corrector(s) when it is pointed out that a certain symbol is found only in the hand of the corrector (e.g. *CLA*, II, 256; III, 299 etc.).

among different scribes, but often also to make some comment about the frequency or infrequency with which they are used and the contexts within which they are used.[13]

In spite of Lindsay's warning quoted above, there has been no shortage of attempts to interpret the data which he and others have collected. The questions which have aroused most interest in other scholars and which have been the principal subject of debate (and which Lindsay himself, for all his warning, by no means shied away from) are those of the origins of the various symbols, and of the route by which they made their way into Insular manuscripts. Some of the symbols used by Insular scribes, like the abbreviations for *bene*, *esse* and *non*, were recognized to be the same as the ancient *notae communes* which can be observed in copies of legal texts, in the marginal annotations of some late antique manuscripts,[14] and in the informal writing of some documents. Some, like the characteristic h-shaped symbol for *autem* and the 7 symbol for *et*, had their origin in the Latin shorthand system of Tironian notes.[15] Others appear to have been invented by Irish scribes, perhaps

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[13] See e.g. the facsimile of the Lindisfarne Gospels, *Codex Lindisf.* II, 70-71, and *The Commentary on the Psalms with Glosses in Old-Irish Preserved in the Ambrosian Library (MS. C 301 inf)*, edited by R. I. Best (Dublin, 1936), pp. 32-33.

[14] e.g. the Bembine Terence (Vatican, Biblioteca apostolica Vat. lat. 3226; *CLA*, I, 12; complete facs.: *Il codice di Terenzio Vaticano latino 3226: saggio critico e riproduzione del manuscrito*, edited by S. Preti, Studi e testi, 262 (Vatican City, 1970)) and the Bologna Lactantius (Bologna, R. Biblioteca Universitaria 701; *CLA*, III, 280).

[15] On the ancient *notae communes*, see Lindsay, *Not. Lat.*, p. 2, and 'The Abbreviation-Symbols of *ergo*, *igitur*', pp. 56-58; on these and Tironian notes see G. Cencetti, *Lineamenti di storia della scrittura latina* (Bologna, 1954), pp. 353-475, which traces the growth of the complex later medieval abbreviation system from its earliest roots, emphasizing the importance of the Insular practice within this development, and classifying according to their origin the symbols used by Insular scribes (pp. 416-22).

modelled on similar forms among the ancient symbols.[16] Two rival theories have been proposed to explain the number of new abbreviations formed by contraction (e.g. dt̄, dn̄t = *dicit*, *dicunt*; pr̄, fr̄ = *pater*, *frater*), which was to become a principal characteristic of the later medieval abbreviation system. Traube, in *Nomina Sacra*, argued that these came about because of the ever-present influence of the special contracted forms for Christian sacred names (ds̄, dī, xp̄s, dn̄s = *deus*, *dei*, *Christus*, *Dominus* etc.): words frequently found in collocation with the *Nomina Sacra* would tend to be abbreviated according to the same principle (dn̄s ds̄ nr̄ = *Dominus deus noster*) and so this practice gradually spread to include an increasing number of words. However Luigi Schiaparelli, followed by Cencetti, saw these contractions as an extension of the principle of contraction already found in *notae* in legal books, and derived ultimately from Roman tachygraphic systems.[17]

The question of how and when the older abbreviation symbols entered the Irish repertoire has been another controversial subject, and one very much bound up with arguments about the dates of manuscripts and the general understanding of the development of Insular writing and book production. Early theories have had to be revised or abandoned as new material has come to light. Thus Steffens, basing his argument on the practice found in what

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On shorthand see also Parkes, 'Tachygraphy', and works cited.

[16] On the creation of new symbols, see Lindsay, 'The Abbreviation-Symbols of *ergo*, *igitur*', pp. 58-63.

[17] See Traube, *Nomina Sacra*, pp. 237-66; L. Schiaparelli, 'Le *notae iuris* e il sistema delle abbreviature latine medievali', *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 73:1 (1915), 275-322, especially p. 306 and following; Cencetti, *Lineamenti*, p. 369 and pp. 405-06. Bischoff follows Traube; see *Latin Palaeography*, p. 153 and n. 21.

were then believed to be the earliest surviving Insular manuscripts,[18] held that the system of abbreviation could not have been developed within Ireland, but must have been imported there from Bobbio at a fairly late stage, because whereas the oldest manuscripts copied in Ireland contain very few abbreviations, early products of the Bobbio scriptorium are full of the typical Insular symbols. According to Steffens's theory, the Bobbio scribes must have come across the ancient *notae* in old legal manuscripts, which would have been readily available in Italy but not in Ireland. Both Lindsay and Schiaparelli furnished good reasons for rejecting this theory. Lindsay pointed out that as the ancient *notae* are found not only in legal texts but also in marginal annotations of theological texts, among others, as well as more generally in non-calligraphic writing,[19] Irish scribes would have had ample opportunity to become acquainted with them without necessarily having access to ancient manuscripts of legal texts. He also argued that the differences between the ancient *notae* and the forms used by Insular scribes suggest a long period of continuous use and adaptation, which the theory of recently resurrected ancient symbols does not allow for.[20] In an article devoted to Irish script and its abbreviations, Schiaparelli presented a thorough criticism of Steffens's theory, arguing that the scarcity of abbreviations in the oldest Irish books must be seen

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[18] F. Steffens, 'Ueber die Abkuerzungsmethoden der Schreibschule von Bobbio', in *Mélanges offerts à M. Émile Chatelain par ses élèves et ses amis* (Paris, 1910), pp. 244-54, especially pp. 252-52; the argument is repeated in *Lateinische Paläographie*, p. xxxvii. These early manuscripts included not only the Bangor Antiphonary and the Lindisfarne Gospels, but also the Book of Kells, then dated as s. vii[ex].

[19] For this reason, Lindsay prefers to describe these as *notae antiquae*, not *notae iuris* as Steffens calls them: the latter name should properly be restricted to the abbreviations of technical legal terms found only in legal manuscripts.

[20] 'The Abbreviation-Symbols of *ergo*, *igitur*', pp. 56-58.

in relation to the kind of texts that they contain, and the nature of the script in which they are written: the earliest surviving books happen to be formal, elegantly written Gospels or liturgical books, in which, he argued, abbreviation is naturally restrained. Furthermore, although few abbreviation symbols are present in an early manuscript like the Bangor Antiphonary, those which are employed are among the most characteristic of the Insular system, notably the h symbol for *autem*.[11]

Schiaparelli's argument received corroboration with the discovery at St Gall of the fragments of Isidore's *Etymologiae*, written in Irish minuscule older than that of the Bangor Antiphonary, and containing (for the size of the fragments) a large number of abbreviations. The evidence points to the early development within Ireland itself of a system of abbreviations which was then exported to Bobbio and elsewhere: Bischoff argues that part at least of the repertoire was certainly established by the middle of the seventh century, as it was probably passed on to the Anglo-Saxons before A.D. 665.[12]

The abandonment of the Bobbio theory did not itself settle the question of the source or sources from which the Irish derived and developed their symbols. Bischoff suggested that scribes may have had access to lists of *notae* from which they could have learned *sigla* such as the (originally Tironian) reversed c for con-;[13] but more recently it has

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[11] 'Intorno all'origine e ad alcuni caratteri della scrittura e del sistema abbreviativo irlandese', in *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 74:2 (1916), 3-126, especially pp. 105-24.

[12] *Latin Palaeography*. p. 86, n. 18, and p. 153.

[13] *Latin Palaeography*, p. 86.

been convincingly demonstrated that a basic stock of ancient *notae* must have been part of the Insular script system from its origins. This is the argument put forward by T. J. Brown as part of his theory (developed in the light of the discovery, since the time of Lindsay and Schiaparelli, of examples of provincial Roman and late antique documentary script[14]) that the Insular scripts developed from a sub-Roman system of lower-grade scripts written by semi-professional writers, similar to the literary cursive (Lowe's "quarter uncial") of the marginal scholia mentioned above, in which *notae* are freely used.[15] If the Irish did inherit such a system from sub-Roman Britain, they would have had no need of lists of *notae* from which to extract symbols: a stock of abbreviations would have been a normal feature of their basic script. It was, Brown argues, the long period of cultural isolation of the British Isles (from the middle of the fifth century to the end of the sixth), during which the Irish were free to develop this inherited system, which explains how, by the seventh century, their repertoire came to be both larger than and different in detail from that used by contemporary Continental scribes.

The large stock of unusual abbreviation symbols used by Insular scribes is only one of a number of features which distinguish early Insular manuscripts from books written by Continental scribes of the same period, and which Brown's theory seeks to explain. His argument regarding abbreviations must be taken in conjunction with his arguments on the construction of books (the method of folding and arranging sheets in a

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[14] The Tablettes Albertini and the Vindolanda tablets: see *Tablettes Albertini: actes privés de l'époque vandale (fin du v^e siècle)*, edited with commentary by C. Courtois *et al.* (Paris, 1952), and A. K. Bowman and J. D. Thomas, *Vindolanda: The Latin Writing Tablets* (London, 1983).

[15] See 'The Oldest Irish Manuscripts', especially pp. 318–20.

quire) and the development of the Insular script system. The latter argument involves a reversal of the former generally accepted view: instead of seeing Insular minuscule as derived from Insular half uncial ("majuscule" in Lowe's terms), ultimately developed from Continental half uncial, Brown argues that a cursive minuscule was the basic script used by the early Irish, and that Insular half uncial was derived from this minuscule, representing an attempt to modify and formalize the basic script in contexts (for example, in liturgical books) where a more formal script was required.[15]

Brown's hypothesis was compelling because for the first time it offered not piecemeal explanations for various practices but a single explanation which took into account the different aspects of Insular book production and made sense of the whole. Acceptance of his theory as a whole has important implications for the study of Insular abbreviation: it has become clear that the use of abbreviation symbols is bound up with the nature of the script being used, the stock of ancient *notae* being associated with the informal, low-grade minuscule script from which higher grade Insular scripts were developed. This leads one to ask how far variations in the use of abbreviations (for example, in the number of symbols used and in the density with which they are employed) were linked to the nature of the script which the scribe chose to write; in other words, to wonder whether modifications to and upgrading of script lead to modifications in the use of abbreviations. The following investigation of

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[15] Parkes, discussing several examples of early formal half uncial in connection with the dating of the Épinal Glossary ('Palaeographical Commentary', p. 16 and n. 43) accepts Brown's argument with slight modifications, placing emphasis on the *ad hoc* nature of the script in each case, determined by the particular function of the book.

where, how and why abbreviations are used by Insular scribes tries to bear in mind such questions.

II Abbreviations in context: where and how are they used?

It should be clear from the above summary that thus far, although the unusual nature of Insular abbreviation practice has been much studied and commented upon, little or no attention has been given to the questions of where, how (and how much) abbreviations are used, and why Insular usage differed in the way it did from contemporary Continental practice. These questions arise from a desire to understand how abbreviation practice fits in with other aspects of the layout and presentation of texts, as part of a set of graphical conventions for the transmission of written language. The idea of a scribe's stock or repertoire of abbreviation symbols needs to be explored, and the matter of the variety of different kinds of usage found in different manuscripts (and even the variations between the writing of different scribes within the same manuscript) needs to be addressed.

The remarkable nature of Insular abbreviation practice has less to do with what symbols the scribes used than with where they saw fit to use them. Many of the symbols had existed previously, but in late antiquity the ancient *notae*, although freely used in everyday, informal writing (a scholar's marginal annotations, or documents of an ephemeral nature), were excluded from formal, calligraphically written books, products of a more deliberate and permanent nature, where the only accepted abbreviations were those for *-bus*, *-que*, final m or n, and the various forms of the *Nomina*

Sacra in Christian texts. Insular scribes were apparently the first to admit forms of abbreviation previously associated with "non-calligraphic" writing "into (more or less) calligraphic texts",[17] disregarding or being ignorant of the convention which prohibited such practice in Continental manuscripts.

Yet by no means are all books produced by Insular scribes equally full of abbreviations: the "notoriously Insular feature" is more prominent in some Insular products than in others, and in some it is almost absent. The scarcity of abbreviations in some early manuscripts, mostly Gospels and liturgical books, has already been noted above, in the context of Steffen's Bobbio theory, which involved the assumption that where abbreviations are not used, it is because they are not known. Schiaparelli's defence of the Irish origin of the abbreviation system depended on the argument that the symbols were indeed known in Ireland at this early date, but scribes deliberately avoided using them in copying certain types of book written in certain, more elegant, kinds of script.[18] The absence or very restrained use of abbreviations in certain kinds of books, when other books of the same period contain a high proportion of abbreviated word forms, cannot be seen in terms of the scribe's ignorance of the symbols, but must be indicative of what was felt to be appropriate in the context of the kind of book being copied.

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[17] The terms are Lindsay's ('*ergo*, *igitur*', p. 58).

[18] The scarcity of abbreviations in these manuscripts can be seen "in relazione col genere del codice o colla maggior eleganza con cui fu scritto, e non ... in rapporto col sorgere e collo sviluppo del sistema abbreviativo" ('Intorno all'origine', p. 110).

a Studies of the practice in individual manuscripts

In order to obtain an accurate picture of the extent to which the use of abbreviation varies in different contexts, and to understand more fully the circumstances which would lead a scribe to indulge in or refrain from free and frequent use of abbreviated forms, a more detailed examination is required of the practice in a range of manuscripts. In studying the following manuscripts, I have not only been mindful of the repertoire of forms used; I have also attempted to ascertain the density of abbreviation (how often a word occurs in abbreviated form rather than in full) and the context of its use within a text (whether abbreviations are restricted in use to, for example, the ends of lines). This study is based on close examination of sample sections from complete manuscripts, in a variety of scripts and containing a variety of texts, and ranging in their use of abbreviation from the very restrained to the most free. For the reasons discussed above, pp. 241-42, the information on abbreviations provided in *CLA* is inadequate for the purposes of such a study; the number of different abbreviation symbols occurring in a manuscript does not of itself reveal anything about the density of abbreviation, and it should not be assumed that manuscripts containing a wide range of different symbols are necessarily those that make frequent use of individual symbols. Complete facsimile editions of manuscripts are much more useful, usually containing in their editorial matter a reliable list of all the standard forms used in the manuscript, and some commentary on the context of their use. I have therefore drawn on such information, where available, in the following study, most of which, however, is based on my own observations of the manuscripts.

i Lindisfarne Gospels

I begin with a book which is a formal product for liturgical use, and in which the employment of abbreviations is very restrained: the Lindisfarne Gospels,[29] written in late seventh-century Insular half uncial. Where abbreviation is limited, its use is briefly and easily described: the practice in this manuscript has been thoroughly studied by the editors of its facsimile edition,[30] and what follows is largely quotation from and summary of their findings, with some additional observations of my own. As is usual in all manuscripts, however free from other abbreviations, in the Lindisfarne Gospels the *Nomina Sacra* are always abbreviated wherever they occur. The contractions for *noster* are used rarely, and are mainly confined to phrases involving the *Nomina Sacra*[31] (dn̄i n̄ī ih̄u xp̄i = *domini nostri ihesu christi*), though once, at the end of a line, nr̄s for *nostris* occurs in the phrase *in oculis nostris*. The commonest abbreviations are those for *-bus* and *-que*, which are used anywhere in the line; abbreviated *-bus* is usually that of the dative and ablative plural but is occasionally used for the nominative case, e.g. iacob:; q: usually stands for the enclitic *-que*, but is very occasionally used in mid-word, for example in the imperfect tense of *loquor* and *sequor*. The m stroke is practically confined to line-ends; in only three instances is m omitted in mid-word, all three cases (quaecu*m*que, ru*m*pit, que*m*qua*m*) occurring at the end of a line. "The remaining abbreviations ... [are] all rare and mostly occur only at or near the ends of lines". The h shaped

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[29] See Chapter Four, notes 49 and 55.

[30] See *Codex Lindisf.*, II, 70-71.

[31] By association with which the *noster* abbreviations probably originated.

symbol is sometimes used for *autem*; *eius* is generally written in full, but the symbol occurs several times at line-ends.[32] ÷ for *est* is fairly common, and not confined to line-ends: it is also used in the compound forms de*est* (once) and pote*st* (twice). in all three cases at line-ends. *Non* is seldom abbreviated. *Per* in isolation is not abbreviated, but the symbol is used in super, permisit, superveniens, and perseuerarent;[33] the abbreviation for *pre* is rare, occurring as a prefix or within a compound form (e.g. in prefert, oppressi); the *pro* symbol occurs only in the rubrics to the Canon Tables. *Quoniam* is only once abbreviated, at the end of a line; the forms for *qui* and *quae* occur only in a correction; *sunt*, however, like *est*, is freely abbreviated, though usually at or near the end of a line.

In addition to these *notae communae* (the standard forms for common words, which are used in all types of manuscript), there are some examples of what the editors term "capricious" abbreviations - suspensions of terms which occur frequently within this particular text or type of text, but not commonly enough in others for a standard form of abbreviation to have been employed consistently. These are rare in the first hand, which was responsible for the text of the Gospels, but they occur frequently in the Canon Table rubrics for often repeated words (e.g. māt, mār, lūc, iōh, iohān, fīn, cān).[34]

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[32] Of the four examples quoted by the editors, all occur at line-ends.

[33] With only one exception the examples quoted by the editors occur at line-ends.

[34] The only justification for calling such abbreviations "capricious" - a term which Lindsay also used (*Not. Lat.*, pp. 413-16) - lies in the fact that they do not occur in one standard form, but may "take any shortened expression that the fancy of the copyist suggests" (Lindsay, *Contractions in Early Latin Minuscule MSS*, p. 3); thus, in this instance,

ii Stonyhurst St John

If the scribes of the Lindisfarne Gospels were restrained in their use of abbreviations, even more so was the scribe in the Wearmouth-Jarrow scriptorium who wrote the small copy in capitular uncial of St John's Gospel.[35] In spite of its pocket-book size (it was presumably intended not for liturgical use but for private reading) abbreviations are avoided as much as possible, as in the other uncial manuscripts produced by the same scriptorium. As Brown comments in the facsimile edition: "Abbreviations are rare in the line, excepting the commonest of the Nomina Sacra: *Israhel* is written in full at 55'16, abbreviated as isr̄l at 3'11, 9'19. Most others occur at or near line-ends."[36] These others consist of the stroke for final m (not n); b; and q; ; nr̄, nm̄, nō for *noster*, *nostrum*, *nostro*; qm̄ for *quoniam*, and sc̄ificauit for *sanctificauit*,[37] which each occur once only. "Capricious abbreviations are limited to disc̄p at 54'11 and abrah̄ at 41'19, for *discipulis* and *abraham*."[38] The former of these occurs near the end of a long line, the latter in the middle of the

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Iohannes (or *Iohanni* etc.) is abbreviated both to iōh and to iohān. In *CLA* such abbreviations are often referred to as "arbitrary suspensions" (e.g. VII, 988; VIII, 1227; XI, 1599), but there is nothing either capricious, arbitrary or fanciful about the use of such shortened forms. See below, p. 284.

[35] See Chapter Five, note 59.

[36] *The Stonyhurst Gospel*, p. 60. Ligatures and subscript letters, which are admitted into this manuscript more readily than into those books written in the more formal Wearmouth-Jarrow uncial used in the Codex Amiatinus, are, like abbreviation symbols, confined in their use to the ends of lines: see Parkes, 'Wearmouth-Jarrow', p. 96 and n. 18.

[37] This latter is an example of a contraction influenced by the forms of the *Nomina Sacra*: *sancti* is consistently abbreviated to sc̄i when it occurs in conjunction with *spiritus*, and by analogy is so treated also when occurring within a verbal form.

[38] ibid.

bottom line of the page, which is also a long line.

The scribes of both of these books were clearly aiming to keep abbreviation to a minimum, preferring to write the word or syllable in full rather than use the symbol, but occasionally allowing the abbreviation, usually at the ends of lines (or bottom of a page). The exclusion of abbreviation, or its limitation to the ends of lines, is far more complete in the Stonyhurst book than in the Lindisfarne Gospels: even the common forms for *-bus* and *-que* are more or less confined to line-ends in the former, but in the latter these are used more freely, being the normal way to write those syllables wherever they occur. The Lindisfarne scribe also frequently allows *est* and *sunt* to be replaced by abbreviations, not only at line-ends. The Stonyhurst scribe shows no tendency to use symbols within compound forms, or to use the m stroke in mid-word; the Lindisfarne scribe does, though limiting them on the whole to the line's end. Another difference between the practice in the two manuscripts is that the Stonyhurst scribe uses only the commonest abbreviation forms found in Continental manuscripts and avoids using any of the characteristic Insular symbols in a script that did not originally form part of the Insular system but was developed under the influence of Continental models. The Lindisfarne scribe, by contrast, does admit Insular forms such as the symbols for *autem* and *eius*, and especially the ÷ *est* symbol.

iii Book of Mulling

To turn from the Stonyhurst St John to consider the use of abbreviation in the Book of Mulling,[9] an Irish pocket Gospel book written s. viii-ix, is to move from one extreme to the other. These Gospels are written in the small, compressed cursive minuscule full of ligatures called by Brown "Phase I cursive minuscule", which he argues is a descendant of the documentary cursive that would have been part of the system of scripts originally inherited by the Irish from sub-Roman Britain, and of which a number of Anglo-Saxon examples exist, dating from approximately a century before the Book of Mulling and other Irish examples.[10] The scribes of this manuscript,[11] far from avoiding the use of abbreviations, employed a large number of different symbols, and appear to have used them at every available opportunity. This results in a high density of abbreviation, with practically one word in two on the page being either wholly or partially represented by an abbreviated form.[12] The following table, summarizing the practice on one sample page (fol. 38'), shows how consistently the abbreviated form is used in preference to the full word or syllable:

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[9] Dublin, Trinity College 60 (A.I.15); *CLA*, II, 276; see McGurk, 'The Irish Pocket Gospel Book', pp. 252-53; Lindsay, *Early Irish Minuscule Script*, pp. 16-24 and pls. 7, 8 (foll. 38', 88').

[10] See Brown, 'Irish Element', pp. 112-14 and 117; 'Oldest Irish Manuscripts', pp. 314 and 321.

[11] There are two scribes; the one responsible for copying St John's Gospel uses a somewhat different range of symbols from the other scribe (see Lindsay, *Early Irish Minuscule Script*, pp. 16-24).

[12] On one sample page, fol. 38', there are 392 words (counting according to modern word separation), among which there are 188 abbreviations (counting separately the combination of two or more symbols in the same word, e.g. ūbꝫ = *uerbum*).

Table 1: Use of abbreviated forms in the Book of Mulling, fol. 38'

word or syllable	abbreviated	in full
autem	12	1[13]
-bum	4	0
con-	3	3[14]
cum	7	0
dicens	3	0
eius	3	0
est	19	0
et	24	4 (as et ligature)[15]
final m	35	1
meam	2	0
non	7 (including *non*ne twice)	0
per	5 (mostly in compounds[16])	0
pro	5 (all in compounds[17])	0
quae	2	0
qui	11 (some in compounds[18])	0
quia	3	0
quod	6	0
-rum	4	0
-runt	6	0
sed	2	0

[13] This occurs as the second word in the first line of the page, the first few words being written in a larger script.

[14] In continuo, constitutione and absconsa.

[15] Two of these occur at the beginning of lines, and one as the first word in the second column.

[16] super twice, persecutione, aperiam.

[17] profete, -am; propossuit twice; propter.

[18] quippe, quidem twice.

word or syllable	abbreviated	in full
-ter or *ter-*	2 (in compounds[49])	0
-tur	5	0
uer-	6 (all in u*er*bum)	0

Here we see a strikingly consistent pattern of preference for the use of abbreviated form rather than the full form; the only exception to this pattern is the syllable *con*, which the scribe seems as likely not to abbreviate as to abbreviate. In addition to the above, a number of other words and syllables which occur only once on this page are also abbreviated.[50] From such isolated occurrences alone one cannot argue for consistency of usage; but these add to the general picture, which clearly shows that where an abbreviation symbol for a particular word or syllable is known to the scribe, it is the norm for that symbol to be used wherever possible, and a rare exception for the scribe to write the word in full.

One apparent exception to this practice is the case of the final syllable *-bus*. In the passage analysed, *-bus* occurs six times, but only once is it represented by the abbreviated form b$_3$. However, in the other five occasions on which the syllable occurs, it is written in the form of a ligature of b and s, with a suprascript u (). This ligature, like the form b$_3$, is a distinctive way of representing the shortened syllable, and can be considered if not precisely as an abbreviation, then at least as functioning here in the same way as an abbreviation symbol, as an

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[49] prop*ter*, *ter*ram.

[50] h*ae*c, h*o*c, om*n*ia, om*n*is, p*r*imum, usq*ue* (but not *que* in loquebatur), t*u*nc, *uero*, u*n*de.

alternative way of writing which is preferred to the writing of bus in full.

iv Glossed Psalm commentary Milan C.301 inf.

The preference for using abbreviated forms appears to be almost as strongly marked in another Irish manuscript roughly contemporary with the Book of Mulling: the Psalm commentary with Latin and Old Irish glosses, Milan C 301 inf.[51] This book, written in a Phase II-type set minuscule with cursive elements and with interlinear and marginal glosses in a small, neat cursive, was copied *c.* s. viii/ix by a single scribe, Diarmait, possibly at Bangor.[52] A similar analysis to the above, carried out on a sample section of the text,[53] revealed again a decided preference in most cases for the use of the abbreviation symbol in place of the full word, though some differences of practice are also apparent. The scribe used a very large repertoire of symbols in the manuscript as a whole;[54] twenty-seven of these do not occur in this sample section, since the words in question do not arise in the text. Where words for which common symbols exist do arise, in most cases the symbol is so consistently used in place of the full word that the latter does not occur at all, as the following

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[51] Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana C.301 inf.; *CLA*, III, 326; complete facs. cited in note 14. On the glosses, see *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, edited by W. Stokes and J. Strachan, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1901-03; reprinted Dublin, 1975).

[52] See facs. edition, p. 21; Brown, 'Irish Element', p. 117.

[53] foll. 45''29-46''37 (the commentary on Psalms 22(23)-24(25)). The Irish glosses are printed and translated, with a partial transcription of the Latin commentary, in *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, I, 132-140.

[54] Listed in the facs. edition, pp. 31-33.

table shows:[55]

Table 2: Use of abbreviated forms in Milan C.301 inf., foll. 45''29–46''37

word or syllable	abbrevi-ated	in full	word or syllable	abbrevi-ated	in full
atque	4[56]	0	*aut*	4	0
-bus	6[57]	0	*con-*	23[58]	0
dicit, dixit etc.	5[59]	0[60]	*eius*	8	0
enim	3	0	*esse*	3	0
est	17[61]	3[62]	*haec, hoc*	7	0
idest (·i·÷)	7[63]	0	*mihi*	6	1
non	13	0	*per*	24[64]	0
prae	15	0	*pri*	3	0
pro	16	0	*propter*	5[65]	0

[55] The table does not record cases where the word occurs fewer than three times, though a similar pattern is to be observed in such instances also; the following words appear in abbreviated form once or twice, but never in full: *contra*, *ergo*, *meus*, *meum*, *nihil*, *nisi*, *post*, *quando*, *quasi*, *quoniam*, *sine*, *siue*, *tamen*, *tantum*, *uero*.

[56] aq̄ twice, atq3 twice.

[57] In addition, p3 once, m3 once.

[58] Including four in Irish words in the glosses.

[59] Also *dicunt* and *dicuntur*; two of these abbreviated forms occur in the gloss.

[60] Other forms of *dico* for which no standard abbreviated form existed (e.g. *diceret*) do occur in full.

[61] Three times in gloss.

[62] All in gloss.

[63] Twice in gloss; in addition, the symbol ·i· occurs over fifty times within the gloss as an introduction to individual glosses (the form ·i·÷ is not used in this context).

[64] Once in Irish: epert.

word or syllable	abbrevi-ated	in full	word or syllable	abbrevi-ated	in full
quae	11	0	*quam*	6	0
-que	52[66]	1[67]	*qui*	15[68]	6[69]
quia	6	0	*quibus*	3[70]	0
quo	3	1	*quod*	5	0
quoque	3	0	*reliqua*	7[71]	0
secundum	3[72]	0	*sed*	3	0
sunt	9[73]	0	*-ter*	16	5
-tur	16	0	*uel*	15[74]	0

However, in a few cases the balance of abbreviated and full forms is more equal, and in some others the use of the abbreviated form is relatively rare, as this next table shows:[75]

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[65] p̄p twice, ꝑpt̄ twice, ꝑpter once.

[66] Many in usq*ue*.

[67] In mid-word (delinquentes).

[68] Including one compound form (exq*ui*rent); once in gloss.

[69] Including one compound; once in gloss.

[70] qu*i*bꝫ twice, quibꝫ once.

[71] In gloss.

[72] ⅋ twice, ⅋um once.

[73] 2 in gloss.

[74] 11 in gloss.

[75] Again, in several cases the word appears too infrequently for the consistency of usage to be fully apparent: *nomen*, *populus* and *uester* each occur once or twice, here always in full, although abbreviated forms are sometimes used elsewhere in the manuscript.

Table 3: Cases of limited abbreviation in Milan C 301 inf., foll. 45r°29-46r°37

word or syllable	abbrevi-ated	in full	word or syllable	abbrevi-ated	in full
cum	2	3	*etiam*	1[76]	3
in	1	many[77]	*qua*	1	2
quis	1	7[78]	*-rum*	3	17
(-)uer-	5	15	final m	13[79]	many (over 50)

The limitation of the use of the suspension stroke for final **m** is notable, in contrast with the practice of the Mulling scribe who scarcely ever writes final **m** in full. It seems that this scribe associates the suspension of **m** in particular with the ends of lines (perhaps as a means to save space and prevent the margin from becoming too ragged), as over half of the instances of suspended **m** in this section occur in that context. Apart from this one case, however, there is here as in Mulling no tendency to limit abbreviation to the ends of lines. It is not clear why the use of certain forms should be limited when the majority are so consistently preferred to the full form; but especially in the case of the abbreviation of a syllable within a word as opposed to the replacing of an entire word with a symbol, the practice seems to vary according to the context - that is, a syllable may be consistently abbreviated within certain words but not within others. For example the syllable *uer* is here consistently abbreviated as **ū** in the word *conuersus* which occurs several times, but is

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[76] Not the symbol listed by Best (et$\bar{\imath}$), but simply the suspension of final **m**: et**iā**.

[77] 16 in first 2 columns alone.

[78] 4 in gloss; one in compound (**inquissitionis**).

[79] Of which 7 occur at line-ends; 2 in Irish gloss (one at line-end).

written in full in *reuersus*. In this case it may be the use of one abbreviation symbol which encourages another, for the *con-* of *conuersus* is always abbreviated.

In the great majority of cases, therefore, the scribe's preferred way of writing commonly occurring words is to use an abbreviated form. In some instances, more than one such form is used: sometimes a combination of syllabic symbols and suspensions is used instead of a simple symbol.[80] As in Mulling, some symbols which are used to represent isolated parts of speech, like those for the prepositions and pronouns *per*, *pro*, *qui* and *quae*, are as freely used within longer words as on their own. The contexts in which they are used suggest that such symbols were not necessarily or exclusively regarded as representing particular lexical units, but could be used wherever that syllable, or particular sequence of letters, occurred within a word, regardless of lexical content. Thus the symbol q·, which we expect to be used at the end of a word, since it usually stands for the enclitic *-que*, is also used by these scribes for the syllable *-que-* occurring in mid-word (e.g. subsequetur;[81] delinquentes). The abbreviation for *qui* is used not only in the lexically related compound *quidem*, but also in *inquit*; and the symbol for *quam* is used to abbreviate the lexically unrelated *aquam*. The combination of two or more abbreviated elements in the representation of one longer word is fairly common in the

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[80] e.g. *atque*, *propter*, *quibus*, *secundum* (see notes 56, 65, 70 and 72); also *inter* and *propterea*, which do not occur in the short forms ⁊ and p̂ea, but as int̄ and ꝑpt̄ea.

[81] This example also occurs occasionally in the Lindisfarne Gospels; see p. 252 above.

Psalm commentary.[11]

A significant aspect of the scribe's use of abbreviation which has not been mentioned so far is his treatment of the lemmata from the Psalm text. Before each section of commentary begins, the appropriate verse or verses of the Psalm are cited, followed by '*usque*' and the last few words of the relevant section (e.g. Dominus reget me usque deerit·, referring to Psalm 22:1). When copying these words the scribe makes frequent use of suspension, often writing only the first two or three letters, with an abbreviation mark written above (e.g. mā = manibus, accī = accipiet, glō = gloriae, porr = portae, erū = erubescam, bonī = bonitatem). The suspension does not necessarily take the same form each time the word appears (e.g. both mis and miserī are written for misericordia). The practice should not however be regarded as arbitrary: such suspensions are only found within the lemmata, and within this context any longer word is liable thus to be shortened, especially if it occurs more than once. These shortened forms could not be used in place of the full word in other contexts; they are not standard symbols, and provide too little morphological information to enable them to be correctly decoded. Their use here depends on the fact that the reader knows the text of the Psalms and will be able to supply the rest of the information having been given these cues. For the same reason it is unnecessary for the author to quote the whole verse - the first and last words are sufficient.

Another context in which these context-specific suspensions (or so-called 'arbitrary' suspensions) are frequently used is within the gloss.

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[11] e.g. p̄dī = *praedicit*, adūsisq· = *aduersisque*, subseq·t' = *subsequetur*.

Most of the longer interlinear and marginal glosses are in Irish, and relate to the content of the commentary; but there are also occasional single-word glosses which clarify the syntax by identifying the case or tense of individual words in the text (for example fū, abl̄, uō, impēr (and impēra) for *futurus*, *ablatiuus*, *uocatiuus*, *imperatiuus*). Here again, these forms contain little morphological information, but in the context their referents are immediately obvious, and by their very brevity the reader is able at once to distinguish these glosses conveying grammatical information from the longer explicatory glosses in Irish.

In several respects different conventions with regard to the use of abbreviation operate within the gloss and main text. Whereas in the text *et* is never represented by the symbol 7, in the gloss the abbreviation is consistently used, both for Latin *et* and the Irish *ocus*. In the body of the text, *idest* is represented by the combined symbols ·i·÷, never ·i· alone: the latter symbol occurs very regularly in the gloss, however, and appears to have been limited in function to the introduction of explanations. Compared with the Book of Mulling, this manuscript contains a somewhat lower density of abbreviation: within the main text of the commentary approximately one word in three is abbreviated (either replaced in its entirety with a symbol, or containing an abbreviated syllable or suspended final m).[13] The glosses on the commentary contain on average even fewer abbreviated forms than does the main text: of the one hundred or so words occurring as gloss on the commentary on Psalm 22, for example,

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[13] Again, words have been counted according to modern word division, rather than following the separation in the manuscripts: the latter method would have resulted in a smaller total of words (hence a higher ratio of abbreviation), given the tendency to group certain elements together. The main reason for the lesser density of abbreviation compared with Mulling is the limited suspension of m and the non-abbreviation of *et* in the text.

only twenty-two are abbreviated, and of these, eleven consist of the symbol ·i·, six are abbreviations of Latin words (mainly suspensions of grammatical terms), and the remaining five are abbreviations of Irish words (mostly the 7 sign for *ocus*). Since the majority of the glosses are in Irish - only ten words in this section are in Latin, discounting the occurrences of *idest* - the density of abbreviation in the vernacular is far lower than that in the Latin parts of the text. The use of abbreviation symbols in the Irish, apart from the 7 sign, is rare; the very few standard shortened forms then current[84] appear to be used consistently in place of the full form,[85] and very occasionally one of the Latin symbols is used to represent an equivalent syllable in Irish,[86] but apart from this Irish words tend to be written in full. A similar avoidance of abbreviations is characteristic of all of the earliest surviving examples of written Irish; the significant contrast between this avoidance of abbreviated forms in the vernacular, and their abundant use in Latin written in the same period, has been discussed by Parkes.[87]

v *Ad Cuimnanum*

So far the consistent use of abbreviated forms in preference to full

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[84] The following are found in this manuscript: am̄ for *amal* 'like'; dā for *dano* 'moreover'; dī for *didiu* 'hence'; iar̄ for *iarum* 'then'; im̄ for *immurgu* 'however'; nī for *ní anse* 'not hard' - the formula for beginning a reply to a question; ṫ for *tra* 'then'; see Best, facs. edition, p. 33.

[85] e.g. in the section analysed *amal* appears four times abbreviated, never in full, *tra* twice abbreviated and never in full.

[86] The *con* symbol is used several times in Irish words, and the *per* symbol occurs once in epert 'saying'.

[87] See 'Grammar of Legibility', pp. 5-6, with references to the other examples of early written Irish.

forms in two Irish manuscripts written in the late eighth or early ninth centuries has been compared with the restrained practice in two English manuscripts written about a century earlier. Free and extensive use of abbreviation symbols is however neither confined to Irish manuscripts, nor to copies from the end of the eighth century, as is clear from the practice in the unique copy of the grammatical commentary *Ad Cuimnanum*, written in cursive Anglo-Saxon minuscule in the first half of the eighth century.[88]

From an analysis of one long section of the text[89] it appears that the practice in this manuscript is similar to that in the Irish manuscripts, although the density of abbreviation is rather less (approximately only one word in eight is abbreviated) and the preference for the abbreviated form is not quite so strikingly consistent. Of all the words or syllables which might possibly be abbreviated,[90] some occur too infrequently to be able to reveal very much: *quando* appears twice in full, three times abbreviated; *tamen* twice in full and once abbreviated; *tantum* once in full and three times abbreviated; and *frater* occurs only once, in abbreviated form. The words *propter* and *inter*, abbreviations for which occur elsewhere in the manuscript, do not appear at all in this section, but the symbol for *inter* is used once in a compound abbreviation for

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[88] On the date and script of this manuscript, see Chapter One, pp. 16-18 and note 59.

[89] The prologue, foll. 21"1-23"17; Plate 3 shows fol. 23'.

[90] My list is based on the symbols listed in *CLA*, plus others noted during my examination of the manuscript. Lowe omits to mention the common forms *noster* (etc.), *per*, *prae* and *-bus*, and also the suspension of final *-rum* (which occurs three times in this section), and an abbreviation for *quid* (occurring once only in this section); also not mentioned in *CLA* are the suspensions et r̄l̄ = *et reliqui* (frequent), gram̄ = *grammaticus*, *-os*, *-orum* (used only three times out of many possible occasions); and apos̄ = *aspostoli* (used once only).

interpraetatur (five opportunities for abbreviating *inter-* as a prefix are not taken). A couple of other symbols occur very infrequently despite numerous opportunities for their use: these are the reversed c for *con-*, which is used on only four occasions although the prefix *con-* occurs well over forty times; and the abbreviation for final *-tur*, which is used only six times out of an equally large number of opportunities.

The remainder of abbreviations are of fairly or very commonly occurring words or syllables, all of which usually, if not almost invariably, occur in abbreviated form rather than in full, as the following table shows:

Table 4: Use of abbreviation in *Ad Cuimnanum*, foll. 21"1-23"17

word or syllable	abbreviated	in full
autem	20	4
-bus	44	11
dicit, *dicitur*, *dicunt*, *dicuntur*	24 (mainly *dicit* and *dicunt*)	3 (*dicit* twice, *dicunt* once)[91]
enim	16	1
est	80 (including *potest* twice)	26 (including *potest* three times)
et reliqua	14	2 (*et relica*; *et reliqua*)
esse	13	2
haec	18	2
hoc	16	3
idest[92]	25	4

[91] Other forms of this verb occurring in this passage (*dixit*, *dixerunt*, *dicens*, *diximus* etc.) are not abbreviated.

[92] That is, the symbol I÷; sometimes the form Id÷ occurs: this has been counted under *est*.

word or syllable	abbreviated	in full
non	36 (2 in compounds)[93]	18 (2 in compounds)[94]
per	51 (31 in a compound, 20 alone)	6 (4 in a compound, 2 alone)
prae	32 (many in compounds)	6 (most in compounds)
pro	45 (40 in a compound, 5 alone)	7 (all in compounds)
quae	36 (5 in compounds)[95]	13 (9 in compounds)[96]
-que	65	1
quod	30 (28 ꝙ ; 2 qđ)	2
quoque	6	2
sunt	19	9 (including *possunt* three times)
uel	13	3

In addition to the above abbreviations, the m stroke is also used, though not at all frequently: out of the numerous possible occasions it is found only thirteen times, and largely restricted to the end of the line.[97] With the exception of the m stroke, however, and also the *-rum* abbreviation which occurs three times only, always at the end of a line,

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[93] Necn̄, n̄nulli.

[94] The same two words as also appear abbreviated. Four of these non-abbreviated occurrences of *non* appear in a highly cursive passage full of ligatures, at the end of the section (see Plate 3, col. b), where *non* is written with the first n and the o in ligature.

[95] *quaedam* four times; *quaerentibus* once.

[96] *quaedam* seven times; *quaestus*; *quaerentes*.

[97] Only three of the thirteen cases are not at line-end: one is on the bottom line, one near the line-end (argentum*que*|): the third occurs in mid-line.

there is no tendency to confine abbreviations to line-ends. Only seven of the sixty-five occurrences of q·, and only eight of the forty-four uses of b·, are at line-ends; the other abbreviations are equally freely distributed across the whole line. The right-hand margin of the manuscript is fairly ragged: the scribe felt no need to attempt to keep it even and thus to use abbreviations at line-ends to help keep the text within the allowed space. As in the two Irish manuscripts, abbreviation is not here being used as a means of saving space; it is rather the usual way of writing a large number of commonly recurring words and parts of words. It is noteworthy that on the two occasions on which the scribe wrote *et reliqua* in full instead of representing it as et r̄ as usual, he used two different spellings (see table): apparently he was so accustomed to using the suspended form (itself regarded as one way - the usual way - of 'spelling' the word) that he was unsure of the full form.

vi Moore Bede

A preference for abbreviated forms is not confined to scribes copying technical works like grammars in cursive minuscule; they are also freely used in the writing of one of the earliest copies of Bede's *History*, the Moore Bede, written in Phase II Anglo-Saxon minuscule in the second quarter of the eighth century.[11] The density of abbreviation in this manuscript is as high as that in the Milan Psalm commentary, with approximately one word in three being abbreviated in some way. In the sample section examined (foll. 34'-35'), the abbreviated form is used for the representation of almost all commonly occurring words and syllables:

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[11] See Chapter Five, p. 224 and note 70.

Table 5: Use of abbreviations in the Moore Bede, foll. 34'-35'

word or syllable	abbrevi-ated	in full	word or syllable	abbrevi-ated	in full
-bus	16	0	*con-*	17	0
eius	5	0	*esse, esset*	5	0
est	3	0	*etiam*	1	2
non	4	0	*per*	8[99]	2[100]
prae	11	0	*pro*	5	0
quae	7	0	*-que*	16	0
qui	2[101]	8[102]	*quia*	3	0
-rum	17	0	*sunt*	4[103]	0
-ter/ter-	2[104]	4[105]	*-tur*	11	0
uester	2	1	final m	27	24

Cases where the word or syllable occurs fewer than three times are not recorded in the table. In addition to the above, the word *ergo* appears five times in full, and never in abbreviated form; this is one of a couple of words for which the common abbreviation symbol is only used very rarely by the scribe.[106] The suspension of final m is more frequent here than in the Psalm commentary or the *Ad Cuimnanum* manuscript, and the practice does

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[99] Including super*stitionem*, super*iae*.

[100] operata, cooperante.

[101] Once on bottom line of page, and once in qu*i*bus.

[102] The word *qui* three times, and the syllable *qui* in quidem, quid twice, quippe, qu*i*bus.

[103] Including poss*unt*.

[104] Both final syllables: clement*er*, mirabilit*er*.

[105] In initial and medial syllables: terrae three times, subsisterent.

[106] According to the editor of the facs. edition (see pp. 17-18); the other is *uero*.

not seem to be associated with the ends of lines in particular. The cases where the abbreviated form is used only some of the time are interesting, revealing a restriction of use to certain contexts: the suspended form t̄ for *-ter*, for example, seems to be confined in use to the representation of final syllables; and the symbol for *per* is less regularly used for the syllable when it occurs in the middle of a word than it is for the preposition or prepositional prefix.

In addition to the common symbols of abbreviation, there are again in this manuscript many context-specific suspensions. Words such as *abbatis*, *brittania*, *evangelii*, *historiae*, *pontificatum*, *saxonum*, and many others commonly recurring in a text of this nature, are frequently or occasionally represented by a suspended form.[107] In certain more specific contexts abbreviation is especially abundant: in the standard formulae at the opening of the letters and documents quoted by Bede, such frequently recurring words as *carissime*, *reuerendissime*, *salutem*, *seruus* are often suspended; and in quotations of passages from scripture severe abbreviation is often practised, not only by substituting abbreviated forms for the full word but also by the omission of words altogether.[108] As with the abbreviation of the cues in the Psalm commentary, this latter practice depends on the fact that the scriptural passages will be well known to the reader, who will know from the context how to read the abbreviated forms.[109]

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[107] See full list of such words in facs. edition, p. 18.

[108] See facs. ed., p. 18, for further description of this practice.

[109] It is less likely perhaps that the epistolary formulae would have been familiar to all of Bede's readers; but even if they could not expand the abbreviations correctly, they would probably recognize their function: the more simplified forms in a line, the more "complimentary" the address.

vii Leningrad Bede

Thus far I have compared and contrasted the practices of scribes in different manuscripts; but it is interesting also to consider how much variation in the use of abbreviation there can be between different scribes working on the same manuscript, copying the same text in more or less the same script. As was noted in Chapter Five (pp. 255-57), there are some striking differences between the practices of the four scribes responsible for writing the Leningrad copy of Bede's History. One student of the manuscript has commented that the use of abbreviation is "excessively sober",[110] but this description could only be applied with any accuracy to that part copied by Scribe D; the other three scribes are far more ready to make use of abbreviated forms, though their practice is nevertheless more restrained than that found in the Moore Bede.[111] Table 6 compares the treatment of some of the most commonly abbreviated words and syllables in sample pages copied by each scribe.[112] The tendency of Scribe D to avoid abbreviated forms regularly used by the other scribes is quite striking. His practice with regard to the abbreviation of *autem* and *non* is not clear from these sample pages, where these words rarely or never occur, but an examination of several other pages reveals that both words are regularly

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[110] O. Dobiache-Rojdestvensky, 'Un manuscrit de Bède à Léningrad', *Speculum*, 3 (1928), 314-21.

[111] Arngart (pp. 18-19 of the facs. edition) contrasts the practice of Scribes A and D, and points out that some of the symbols used by Scribe D differ from those used by the others.

[112] foll. 8^{r} and 16^{r} by Scribe A; foll. 43^{r} and 47^{r} by Scribe B; foll. 64^{v} and 66^{r} by Scribe C; and foll. 82^{v}, 103^{r} and 130^{r} by Scribe D (three pages rather than two were analysed in the latter case to provide a fairer basis for comparison, there being far fewer words to the page in this less compact script).

written in full rather than abbreviated.[113] The various p and q symbols, apart from those for *prae*, *quae* and *que*, are used sporadically by the first three scribes, but appear to be avoided altogether by Scribe D (with the exception of *quoque* which occurs in abbreviated form four times in the sample pages, and once in full). None of the scribes use the suspension mark for final m very often, but Scribe D is the most consistent in confining this practice to the ends of lines.

Table 6: Comparison of use of abbreviation by the four scribes of the Leningrad Bede

word or syllable	Scribe A		Scribe B		Scribe C		Scribe D	
	abbr.	full	abbr.	full	abbr.	full	abbr.	full
final m	10[114]	72	4[115]	72	6[116]	97	9[117]	67
autem	4	0	6	0	6	0	0	1
-bus	7	0	6	1	14	0	2	8
est	2	0	5	1	0	2	0	7
non	6	1	1	1	0	3	0	0
prae	8	0	7	1	1	5	0	7
quae	2	9	0	1	0	1	0	5
-que	15	0	13	0	8	0	10	6
-tur	4	3	6	3	0	9	0	3

[113] e.g. on foll. 73^{b}, 84^{b}, 98^{a} and 135^{b}, *autem* is written in full a total of 5 times, and never abbreviated; on the same pages, *non* is written in full 8 times and also never abbreviated. On the rare occasions when Scribe D does abbreviate *autem* (mainly at or near the ends of lines, or in insertions) he usually uses the Insular h-shaped symbol (see references in facs. ed., p. 21), rather than the a$\bar{t}$ form used by the other scribes, though the latter is used at least once (fol. 100^{v}23).

[114] 5 at line-ends.

[115] 3 at line-ends.

[116] 4 at line-ends.

[117] All at line-ends.

In several instances the practice of Scribe C appears closer to that of D than to that of the other two scribes.[118] This is in keeping with what is known of the relationship between the writing of the four scribes, with Scribes A and B representing a later stage than D in the development of minuscule script within the scriptorium, and Scribe C falling somewhere between.[119] However, in so far as this development is seen in terms of the disciplining and repressing of some of the typical characteristics of Insular minuscule script,[120] it is surprising to find that the earliest of the four hands is the most restrained in its use of abbreviation, and that the change in practice seems to be in the direction of freer and more frequent use of abbreviated forms, when one might have assumed the reverse would be the case. One must conclude from this that the free use of abbreviations was not regarded as an excessively exuberant practice, only acceptable within informal, cursive writing, but was felt to be entirely compatible with disciplined, orderly script, at least within this context. The context was one of an increasing demand for copies of Bede's works, and the need to speed up the production of books; if Wearmouth-Jarrow scribes were prepared to allow the use of Insular minuscule as a book hand because it was quicker to write than capitular uncial,[121] it may be that their increasing use of abbreviated forms was also for the sake of efficiency of production.

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[118] See Scribe C's treatment of *est*, *non*, *prae* and *-tur*.

[119] See Chapter Five, p. 255.

[120] The use by the first three scribes of the contraction a$\bar{t}$ for *autem*, instead of the Insular h-shaped *autem* symbol preferred by D (see note 113 above), is in keeping with this aspect of the development.

[121] See Chapter Five, p. 227 and note 82.

viii Bangor Antiphonary

The use of abbreviation may vary within one manuscript not only because the practices of scribes differ, but because different practices are appropriate to different types of text or parts of a text. Such variations can be observed in the late seventh-century Irish manuscript containing a collection of canticles, collects, hymns and antiphons, known as the Bangor Antiphonary.[122] This book was copied by two main scribes, with many others adding to the collection at the end of the book.[123] The layout of the page varies depending on the text being copied: some, like canticles, are in long lines,[124] some, like collects and antiphons, in two columns of continuous prose,[125] and others, especially hymns, in a two-column layout in stanzas which are either treated as paragraphs of continuous text[126] or have each verse set out on a separate line.[127] The use of abbreviated forms differs somewhat with each item, being in each case appropriate to the context, reflecting the structure and use of the text, and the physical constraints imposed by the layout (which is itself determined by the type of text).

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[122] See Chapter Five, pp. 210-12.

[123] On the portions copied by the different scribes, see facs. edition, p. xx.

[124] e.g. the canticle beginning '*Cantemus domino gloriosae enim*', foll. 7'-8'.

[125] e.g. the collects on foll. 19'-26'.

[126] e.g. the hymn beginning '*Spiritus divinae lucis gloriae*', foll. 13'-13'.

[127] e.g. the hymn beginning '*Ignis creator igneus, lumen donator luminis*', foll. 11'-11'.

For example, the first canticle in the collection, the Canticle of Moses, copied by Scribe A (foll. 1'-3') begins with an antiphon, '*Audite caeli quae loquor*', which is to be repeated as a refrain after each section of the canticle. The antiphon is written in full the first time it occurs, but afterwards is indicated by the first word only, written in abbreviated form - usually audī, but occasionally aū (mainly at the ends of lines when space is short). These suspensions are written with the usual mark of abbreviation above them. On one occasion (fol. 2'5) the scribe wrote *audite* in full, but still added the abbreviation stroke above the last three letters (audite). The stroke above the word (whether this is heavily abbreviated or written in full) acts as a cue for the reader, the whole signalling the refrain which is to be repeated. Within the text itself, there is very little abbreviation; the *Nomina Sacra* and the syllables *-que* and *pro* are abbreviated whenever they occur, *bus* is less consistently abbreviated (once out of three opportunities), and final m is suspended only three times out of a possible forty eight - all three occurring at the ends of lines.

This canticle is written in long lines of continuous prose; in the hymn which follows next in the book ('*Hymnum dicat turba fratrum*', foll. 3'-4'), also written by Scribe A but (from fol. 3' onwards) in two columns, there is one major difference in usage of abbreviation which is probably a reflection of this different layout. M is quite frequently suspended (eighteen times, compared with twenty-eight occasions when final m is written out); the suspension is even used once in medial position (columba, fol. 3''3) and once before enclitic *-que* (maiestatem*que*, fol. 4''5), and it is not confined to the ends of lines. This increased use of suspended m probably arises out of the need to make the verses of the hymn fit into the

available space. Because it is a two-column layout the lines are short, but the scribe starts each verse of the stanza on a new line, and tries to avoid run-overs; by frequently suspending the broad letter **m** he economizes on space and is able to achieve this. It is no doubt for the same reason that the scribe uses the suprascript form of **u** far more frequently in this hymn than when copying the canticle.

In a canticle copied by Scribe B, the *Benedicite* or 'Song of the Three Children' (foll. 8'-9'), the structure and nature of the text again determine the layout, and result in a use of abbreviated forms specific to this context. Each verse of the canticle begins with the imperative '*Benedicite ... dominum*', and the second half of the verse each time consists of the refrain '*Ymnum dicite et super exaltate eum in saecula*'. The scribe writes the first verse in full, but thereafter until the last verse uses the Insular symbol for *bene* (**b̄**) to stand for *benedicite*, and **ym̄** to signify the second half of the verse. *Dominum*, as a sacred name, is of course always abbreviated. The final verse contains a doxology and the verbs are in a different tense, so the refrains are written in full. The scribe manages to confine each verse to a single long line, beginning with the symbol for *benedicite* and ending with the form **ym̄**; in the intervening text abbreviations are rare. Rather as the scribe of the Cathach did in copying a similarly repetitive passage in one of the Psalms,[121] the scribe exploits the graphic conventions available to make the structure of the text visually very apparent to the reader.

Using these abbreviated forms for often-repeated elements of a text

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[121] See Chapter Five, p. 204.

not only saves time and space in the copying; it also allows the scribe to lay out the text in such a way that draws attention to its structure, making it easy to identify refrains and responses when reading from the book in a liturgical context. The concluding formulae which occur repeatedly at the ends of collects, and for which the reader would need no more than a cue, are usually fairly heavily abbreviated, as also are the words in titles (e.g. **matū** or **matutīn** for *matutinam*), but the same words occurring within the texts rather than in these special contexts remain unabbreviated.[123]

b Some general observations

From these detailed observations on the practice in a variety of manuscripts, some general conclusions can be drawn. First of all, it is clear that there is some relationship between the script employed and the use of abbreviation. In the Book of Mulling and the *Anonymus ad Cuimnanum*, examples of Insular cursive minuscule descended (according to Brown) from an earlier documentary cursive, abbreviations are most prevalent, used at almost every available opportunity for the writing of commonly recurring words or syllables. Although Mulling and other Irish examples of this frequent use of abbreviation are late copies, the similar usage in the earlier Anglo-Saxon grammar book shows that such practice was not a late development; the stock of abbreviations were a part of the script from the beginning and would be used by the scribe in preference to the full form of

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[123] For a list of the words abbreviated in titles, refrains and formulae, and of the smaller range whose abbreviation is admitted in the main text, see Warren, facs. edition, p. xxiv.

a word when writing this script in this kind of text, unless there were other reasons for restricting the practice.

A scribe writing in a higher grade of script within the Insular system will restrict this practice of abbreviation to varying extents. Thus in the set minuscule of the text of the Milan Psalm commentary, slightly more formal than the cursive of the Book of Mulling, there is no abbreviation of *et*, and suspended m is largely confined to the ends of lines; but this restriction is seen to a far greater extent in the larger, rather more formal minuscule of the Bangor Antiphonary and in the half uncial of the Lindisfarne Gospels, where abbreviations within the body of the text are kept to a minimum, though allowed more frequently at the ends of lines and in other specialised contexts. However, the formalisation and disciplining of a script does not necessarily lead to the exclusion of abbreviated forms, as the developments within the minuscule script of the Wearmouth-Jarrow scriptorium reveal.

If the free use of abbreviation was associated originally with the cursive grade of the hierarchy of Insular scripts, it is not surprising to find in an example of Anglo-Saxon uncial script like the Stonyhurst Gospel so nearly complete an absence of abbreviated forms. The absence is even more complete in the Codex Amiatinus and other products of the Wearmouth-Jarrow scriptorium written in formal uncial, rather than the more informal capitular uncial of the Stonyhurst book. Abbreviated forms were not (apart from the *Nomina Sacra*, *-bus* and *-que* and suspended m) part of the graphic conventions of uncial script, and the scribe is no more likely to use one of the common Insular symbols in the middle of his text than he is to use an Insular minuscule or half uncial letter form. Uncial script full of

Insular abbreviations is a sign of an inexperienced scribe - one who has not fully mastered the conventions of the script he is using and imports a practice which belongs elsewhere.[130]

It might be maintained that the practice of abbreviation varies as much according to the type of text being copied as according to the script being used. When Schiaparelli argued that it was natural for Gospel books written in elegant Insular half uncial to contain few abbreviations,[131] he was assuming that the nature of the text as well as the type of script were important factors in determining how abbreviation was used. But text type alone cannot have been the principal factor; for although it is true in general, for example, that Gospel books contain few abbreviations, while commentaries and technical books like grammar books are full of them, on the other hand among the books most full of abbreviated forms are the Irish pocket Gospel books, including the Book of Mulling. A more important factor than the type of text, it appears, is the nature of the book being produced, or in other words the use for which the book is intended. The format, script and other aspects of book production appropriate for books intended for private reading and study, whether grammar books like *Ad Cuimnanum*,[132] scriptural commentaries like the Milan Psalm commentary, or

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[130] e.g. the carelessly written eighth-century English uncial copy of *De ordine creaturarum* (*CLA*, V, 590), with a very high concentration of abbreviated forms (approximately one word in three; see *CLA* plate). Word separation in this manuscript is of variable quality. See Chapter Five, p. 223 and notes 68 and 69.

[131] See pp. 245-46 above.

[132] For another example of a technical book with numerous and frequently recurring abbreviated forms see the copy of Isidore's *Etymologiae* in Anglo-Saxon minuscule, s. viii-ix, in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 4871 (foll. 161-168) (*CLA*, V, 559): words frequently recurring in the formulation of definitions (*dicuntur*, *dicitur*, *quia*, *non*, *esse*, *sunt* etc.) are consistently abbreviated (see *CLA* plate). Besides

copies of the Gospel designed to be easily portable like the Book of Mulling, may not be appropriate in books intended for liturgical use such as the Bangor Antiphonary or the Lindisfarne Gospels, especially those, like the latter, which are high quality products presumably expected to last for generations. The extent to which, and the manner in which, a scribe uses abbreviation is determined ultimately by the context in which the book is intended to be used and read, for this, more than the nature of the text itself, determines the choice of script and format, and the quality and care of execution. Differences in the extent of the use of abbreviation between different copies of the same text intended for similar use (for example between the Moore and Leningrad copies of Bede) or even between different scribes within one copy of a text (as in the Leningrad Bede) alert us to other factors which can influence the practice: the idiosyncrasies of scribes, the discipline and chronological developments of practice within a scriptorium, and the possible historical circumstances giving rise to these.

Another interesting point which has emerged is that scribes make different uses of abbreviations depending on the context within the text. This may be a spatial, graphical context: scribes who are reluctant to use abbreviated forms elsewhere will often admit them at or near the end of a line, in order to maintain a neat right hand margin, or to avoid splitting a word. The space-saving character of abbreviation symbols must also in

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grammars, and encyclopaedic works like the *Etymologiae*, other technical books such as works of computus (including Bede's *De temporum ratione* and Dionysius Exiguus on the calculation of the date of Easter) are also written with extensive use of abbreviation: see e.g. the fragment of Bede's text, Vienna, Nationalbibliothek lat. 15298 (*CLA*, X, 1511; Irish minuscule, s. viii-ix) - in the four surviving folios alone a very large range of symbols is used.

part explain their admission in corrections even where avoided in the main text;[133] in the context of any interlinear or marginal writing, abbreviation may be exploited to fit the text into the available space.[134] In other contexts, however, it is not a question of saving space. There are many examples of abbreviations (both standard symbols and suspensions of frequently recurring terms) being used more freely in capitula and canon tables, prefaces and titles, than in the body of a text. This cannot necessarily be explained in relation to the nature of the script used for these parts of a text, for the same practice is found even when the prefatory matter is in a higher grade of script than the rest of the manuscript.[135] There would appear to be a hierarchy, dependent on the function of different parts of a text: abbreviation is more acceptable in those parts which are working sections for reference and information, than in the main part of the text which is simply to be read, especially if it is to be read aloud.[136] The higher frequency of abbreviation in

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[133] See p. 253 above; many other examples are mentioned in *CLA*, e.g. II, 240; II, 256; II, 265; III, 299; III, 312.

[134] See e.g. in the calligraphic half uncial Gospel book, Gotha, Landesbibliothek MBR.1.18 (Anglo-Saxon, s. viii; *CLA*, VIII, 1205): the *CLA* plates show two corrections consisting of passages inserted in the top and bottom margins in minuscule hands with a high density of abbreviations.

[135] e.g. the Vespasian Psalter (London, British Library Cotton Vespasian A.I.; *CLA*, II, 193; complete facs.: *The Vespasian Psalter: British Museum Cotton Vespasian A.I*, edited by D. H. Wright, with a contribution on the gloss by A. Campbell, EEMF, 14 (Copenhagen, 1967)), with prefatory matter in rustic capitals containing more abbreviation than the body of the text in uncial.

[136] This hierarchy can be observed in the fragment of the text of Ezekiel with parallel commentary (*CLA*, VII, 1008) referred to in Chapter One, p. 35. Abbreviation is used more frequently in the commentary than in the primary text, though it is far from sparingly used even there; the glosses between the lines of the primary text also exhibit heavy use of abbreviation (see *CLA* plate). When the primary text is quoted as a lemma within a commentary, and therefore serving a different function, it tends to be quite heavily abbreviated, as we have seen in the Milan Psalm commentary.

interlinear and marginal glosses[137] is probably as much due to this factor of the hierarchy of functions within the text as it is due to the need to economize on space.

The frequent use of non-standard suspensions for repeated technical terms, and for refrains, scriptural quotations and the opening or closing formulae of letters or prayers, is a significant aspect of scribal practice. Precisely because such abbreviations are context-specific, and do not necessarily exist in one standard, common form used in all kinds of manuscript, they have tended to be ignored by previous scholars, or dismissed as "capricious" or "arbitrary"; yet an appreciation of how these specialised abbreviations work is essential to an understanding of the function of abbreviation in general. Because they are not standard forms, and do not in themselves convey enough information for the reader to be able to reconstruct the full word being represented, they are only used in those contexts where the reader can have no doubt as to the word signified, and where the first few letters suffice as a cue for a word or for an entire refrain or scriptural verse. The function of the written text is to communicate information to the reader, and abbreviation is one of the conventions available to a scribe to facilitate that process; abbreviated forms can be used only where they will be immediately understood and will in no way hinder the process of communication.[138]

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[137] e.g. in the Latin parts of the gloss in the Milan Psalm commentary.

[138] The reader did not necessarily have to be able to supply the full form of the abbreviated word in order to understand its meaning, or its function within the text, just as modern readers may not know how to expand the short form e.g., but know that it signifies that an example is to follow.

The difference between the use of abbreviation in Latin and in Irish reminds us of the fact that all Insular scribes were working in a bilingual linguistic context, communicating both in Latin (primarily through the written word) and in their own vernacular language (primarily, at this early period, through the spoken word). This linguistic factor is, as I shall attempt to show in the following section, of considerable relevance to the question of why the Insular practice with regard to abbreviations is so different from Continental practice in this period.

III Why is the Insular abbreviation practice so unusual? Some possible explanations

T. J. Brown's theory of the origin of the Insular script system provides an explanation for the presence of many ancient *notae* in the handwriting of seventh- and eighth-century Insular scribes. The difference in detail and size between the Insular and the contemporary Continental repertoires is thus explained by the period of the cultural isolation of Ireland which lasted until the end of the sixth century, during which the Irish developed the abbreviation system they had inherited, adding new symbols, and, being unaware of or ignoring the Continental convention which excluded almost all abbreviations from formal books, using them regularly in many (though not all) contexts in the copying of books.

This explanation, however, really only answers half the question; we are still left wondering why the Irish should have developed the system in the way they did (that is, increasing the stock of abbreviations by

adapting symbols and inventing new ones, rather than simply maintaining or even reducing the repertoire), and why Insular scribes should have continued to use and develop this complex system even after cultural contact with the Continent was resumed. What lies behind the Insular enthusiasm for abbreviation? In order to answer this question we must try to understand what the purpose and function of abbreviation was for the Insular scribe and reader.

a A means of saving space?

Lindsay suggests in passing that the main purpose of abbreviation is the lightening of a scribe's work,[139] but he also offers a specific explanation of the Insular practice based on the assumption that the function of abbreviation was to economize on space so as to save vellum. He argues that "Irish minuscule scribes employ every conceivable device" - including a small script, with frequent subscript letters; crowding the words together; ignoring the laws of syllable division between lines; running text over into blank space left on the line above - to save space. The heavy use of abbreviation is, in Lindsay's view, part of this desire to economize on space, which was strong enough to break down the barriers which excluded most symbols from bookhand.[140] Lindsay adds that although Continental scribes writing minuscule followed a similar practice, they did not do so to the same extent, "either because the economy of vellum was not practised in other countries to the same extent as in Ireland, or for some

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[139] *Not. Lat.*, p. 1.

[140] *Not. Lat.*, p. 2; see also an earlier statement of the argument in '*ergo, igitur*', p. 58.

other reason".[141]

There are two problems with Lindsay's argument. The first is that while it is true that Irish scribes often appear to have been keen to use every available square inch of space on the page, they were also, as we have seen in Chapters Four and Five, responsible for 'wasting' additional space by introducing word separation; this suggests that the wish to save space in order to economize on vellum was not quite so strong as Lindsay maintains. That abbreviation can have a space-saving function is undeniable: this aspect is clearly recognizable in those manuscripts which limit the use of abbreviations largely to the ends of lines. In Lindsay's view, the main concern of a "careful scribe" was to avoid faulty syllable division between lines, preferably by ending a line with a complete word; abbreviations are used at the ends of lines when necessary to achieve this aim. As we have seen, however, their use in Insular manuscripts is far more extensive than this, and cannot be understood simply in terms of an economic use of space.

The second problem is that even if he is right in emphasizing the factor of space economy. Lindsay fails to explain why the Irish practice is more extreme than that in other countries, his raising of this question tailing off rather lamely with "or for some other reason". The reason must be sought in a different understanding of the use of abbreviation.

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[141] p. 3.

b A means of saving time?

Explaining the sudden development of the abbreviation system which occurred from the end of the twelfth into the thirteenth century (when many new symbols were created and the grammatical structure of Latin was exploited to allow the greatest possible degree of contraction of a word while retaining the elements essential for its interpretation), Bischoff links this phenomenon with "the rapid expansion of the specialist disciplines, whose teaching methods were newly organised in the universities around 1200".[142] With the emergence of the universities, the demand for books suddenly increased, and the expansion of the abbreviation system represents one aspect of the scribes' response to this demand: heavy use of abbreviation meant speedier book production.[143]

Could speed of writing also have been a factor in the Insular development of the abbreviation system? Abbreviations undeniably save the scribe time and effort, as well as space; but this is true for all periods, and I can think of no general historical reason (to match the rise of the universities in the thirteenth century) why the early Insular scribes should have been more keen than scribes of any other time or place to economize on time or energy. There may well have been pressure on scribes in individual scriptoria and in particular circumstances to increase the speed of book production: at Wearmouth-Jarrow, for example, the demand from the Continent for copies of Bede's *History* may have encouraged the

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[142] *Latin Palaeography*, p. 154

[143] See also Parkes, 'Tachygraphy', pp. 24-27, on the essential role of abbreviations in tachygraphy - rapid writing for taking lecture notes and making *reportationes* of sermons.

increasing use of abbreviation observable in the copying of the Leningrad Bede. When so little is known about the precise date or place at which most early Insular manuscripts were copied, it is impossible to know whether similar explanations might be given in other cases of extensive use of abbreviation (many of them far more extreme than that practised by the Wearmouth-Jarrow scribes); but in any case such explanations on an individual basis cannot provide a general reason for such a widespread practice. Both the time saving and the space saving explanations are unsatisfactory because they do not explain why the practice was developed in this extreme manner by Insular scribes rather than elsewhere or at another time.

c Abbreviation as an orthographic convention

One way in which Irish and Anglo-Saxon scribes did differ from their Continental contemporaries and earlier Continental scribes was in speaking a non-Romance vernacular, and therefore in having to learn and use Latin as a second or foreign language. It is this linguistic factor which provides the best explanation for the unusual Insular abbreviation practice. According to the argument put forward by Parkes, the use of abbreviations is one of a number of graphic conventions, also including word separation, which indicate that Irish scribes regarded Latin "primarily as a written or 'visible' language used for transmitting texts" - and apprehended it as much by the eye as by the ear."[1] The hesitation of the Irish to abbreviate their own language, compared with the freedom with which they

[1] 'Grammar of Legibility', p. 2.

used abbreviations in Latin,[145] points to their different attitudes to the two languages; abbreviations were appropriate to Latin, but not (at first) to Irish. Whereas early written Irish, Parkes argues, was an attempt to represent on the page the sounds of the spoken language, written Latin was for the Irish a means of direct visual communication; abbreviations, as part of written Latin, were regarded by them "not so much as written conventions representing spoken phenomena but as purely graphic symbols each of which could be substituted for a group of other purely graphic symbols."[146]

"The purpose of written language is to convey meaning, and the representation of sounds is only a means not an end in itself";[147] abbreviation symbols achieve the purpose of conveying meaning often without representing sounds at all. Abbreviations are essentially simplified forms of words - simplified ways of spelling (that is, graphically representing) words, following certain conventions. Letters are graphic units representing particular sounds; letters combined to form words are graphic units primarily intended to convey lexical and morphological information, while incidentally representing the sounds of the spoken word; abbreviations are graphic units whose primary function is also to convey lexical or morphological information, which they may do without any representation of acoustic properties - for example the Insular symbols  and  for *autem* and *eius* represent the whole word without bearing any resemblance to the letters used to represent the full form of the word, and

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[145] See p. 266 and note 87 above.

[146] 'Grammar of Legibility', p. 6.

[147] Parkes, 'Tachygraphy', p. 25.

therefore without suggesting the sounds which make up the word.[118]

Continental scribes of the seventh century, whether Italian, French, or Spanish, would have regarded written Latin as a series of graphic conventions for representing the sounds of the language they spoke: it appears that there was at this time no conceptual distinction between Latin and the vernacular language, which only emerged later as the Romance languages, distinct descendants of spoken Latin.[119] But for Insular scribes, written Latin was always conceptually distinct from their spoken vernacular, being an entirely different language; and this fact must have encouraged them to view Latin as a graphic medium without any necessary reference to spoken sounds, and therefore to allow the use of abbreviation to a hitherto unprecedented extent. Insular scribes did not hesitate to make frequent use of a convention which operated without reference to the spoken sound; abbreviations were for them interchangeable with words spelled out letter by letter as a means of conveying meaning, and, especially when encouraged by the desire to save time, effort or space (or a combination of all three) they used this means in preference to writing words in full.

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[118] On abbreviations as simplified forms of words, and the idea that written Latin was perceived as a succession of letters rather than sounds, see Parkes, 'Tachygraphy', pp. 25-26.

[119] See the argument put forward by Roger Wright in *Late Latin and Early Romance in Spain and Carolingian France* (Liverpool, 1982), and in a recent article in a collection edited by him ('The Conceptual Distinction Between Latin and Romance: Invention or Evolution?', in *Latin and the Romance Languages in the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1991), pp. 103-13). Elsewhere in this collection there is some discussion of the idea that (Latin) written words in Romance-speaking contexts gradually became ideographic or logographic rather than alphabetical in nature as the distance widened between the spoken vernacular and written Latin: see Wright's introduction, pp. 3-4. On the ideographic elements in Western script, see below, pp. 297-98.

It is not only in the extent of their use of abbreviations that the Insular scribes were unusual; they also differed from their Continental contemporaries in the range of symbols that they used. A comparison of the forms used by Irish and Anglo-Saxon scribes with those found in Spanish, Italian and other Continental manuscripts[150] reveals that where different abbreviation symbols exist for the same word or syllable, the Continental scribes are most likely to have used a form which bears a close resemblance to the full word or which at least partially represents its sounds, while the Insular scribes appear to have been happy to use symbols which may be quite unrelated to any of the letters of the word, or which represent no more of the word than the initial letter (with some modification). Continental scribes of this period prefer suspensions (which represent the sounds of the first part of a word, allowing the reader to supply the rest in his mind) to contractions (which by retaining initial and final letters, and perhaps a medial letter, contain the essential information to suggest the full word without representing its sounds). One of the most obvious examples is the abbreviation of *autem*: Insular scribes use the symbol ꝶ or the contraction aū, while Continental scribes use the suspensions aū or auī (in Spain the contraction aum̄ is used). A few other examples will illustrate the point: for *est* the symbol ÷ is preferred in the British Isles, but in France the suspension ē is used; Continental scribes prefer the suspension id̄ or the contractions idī, idst̄, idś to the Insular symbol I÷ for *idest*; Insular scribes prefer to use dī and dx̄ for *dicit* and *dixit*, while Continental scribes more often use dic̄ and dix̄; for *cuius*, *eius*, and *huius*, Insular scribes use the contractions or symbols cś, ⊇, n̄ or hs, while Spanish scribes prefer the suspensions cuī, eī, huī; *nobis* and *uobis*

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[150] As set out in the table in *Not. Lat.*.

become nb̄ and ub̄ in Insular manuscripts but the fuller forms nob̄ and uob̄ are used by most Continental scribes. These differences in the type of symbol used, as well as the far smaller total repertoire of symbols, suggest that the Continental scribes preferred those symbols consisting of letters and elements which could be interpreted as sounds, whereas Insular scribes were prepared to use graphic symbols not suggestive of the sounds of the spoken language. On the Continent people still expected to read alphabetically, interpreting signs on the page as sounds; but the Irish and Anglo-Saxons were happy to read books in which entire words were consistently replaced by a single graphic symbol.

The books in which abbreviation was particularly restricted are largely liturgical books, from which people would have had to read aloud; in this context the association between the written and the spoken Latin word is obviously much greater, as the reader would need to be able to translate the written forms quickly into spoken sounds. The exclusion of most abbreviation symbols from such manuscripts may have been for the benefit of the reader: abbreviation symbols which do not convey much acoustic information require an extra step in the translation from written word to spoken word, and may therefore cause the reader to stumble or hesitate.

IV Word separation and abbreviation

The later expansion and development of the medieval abbreviation system in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was possible. Parkes has

argued, because during the course of the twelfth century the standard and consistency of word separation had improved: frequent drastic abbreviations presented difficulties if scribes and readers could not easily identify the boundaries of an abbreviated form.[151] If inconsistent word separation was a hindrance to the use of abbreviation, how much more of a hindrance must the complete lack of separation between words in pre-Insular manuscripts have been. In the absence of clearly marked word boundaries, frequent abbreviation would have given the reader some difficulties and potentially caused confusion; it was natural, therefore, that in *scriptio continua* abbreviation should be very limited. And if abbreviation is to some extent dependent on the presence of word separation, it is also natural that it should be in the early Irish and Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, the first to display word separation with a high degree of consistency. that extensive use of abbreviation in books is first found.

However, there was no separation of words in the quarter uncial marginalia and other early samples of semi-professional or informal writing in which the ancient *notae* are used; clearly it was perfectly possible to use abbreviation while writing in *scriptio continua*. If Parkes is right in suggesting that abbreviation in a context without clear word boundaries is less easily comprehended, then the restrictions on the use of abbreviations at this period may reflect the standard of legibility which was acceptable in different sorts of writing: high-quality, calligraphic books which were intended to last, and to have many readers, required a high standard of legibility, but informal writing of a more personal or ephemeral nature was allowed to be less easy to read.

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[151] 'Tachygraphy', p. 24.

The practices of word separation and abbreviation in Insular manuscripts appear to have been linked in several ways. There are parallels in their early development: among the earliest Irish manuscripts, those which make moderate or frequent use of abbreviation (the St Gall Isidore, the Bangor Antiphonary, the Schaffhausen Adamnan[152]) are also those in which word separation is most advanced. Once the practice of separation has become widely established from the end of the seventh century, it is still possible to find examples of manuscripts in which words are separated, but abbreviation is avoided.[153] The reverse (avoidance of separation but regular use of abbreviation) is, however, much more rare,[154] which reinforces the suggestion that the frequent use of abbreviation was dependent on a degree of word separation.[155]

The real connection between the two practices lies at the level of the individual word, not the complete manuscript. Abbreviation can be seen as one of the ways in which word boundaries are delineated. Some symbols, like those for *autem*, *eius*, *enim*, represent a lexical unit and thus also indicate that the letters preceding or following belong to a distinct word; some symbols for morphemic (or syllabic) units, such as those for *con-*,

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[152] The latter is especially notable both for its high frequency of abbreviation and for its very advanced separation.

[153] e.g. the hand of Scribe D in the Leningrad Bede, with very clear separation but scant use of abbreviations.

[154] One of the most notable exceptions is the Moore Bede, with its heavy use of abbreviation in a script with few discernible spaces between words.

[155] Other factors such as the intended use of the book, the type of text, the quality of production and the nature of exemplar are involved here also: the desire to imitate Continental models which led to the avoidance of separation in Oxford, Bodleian Library Hatton 48, Rule of St Benedict (*CLA*, II, 240; see Chapter Four, p. 157, note 16) would also have discouraged the use of abbreviations.

-bus, *-que*, *-tur*, *-rum*, are largely confined to initial or final position in longer word units and their distinctive shapes tend therefore to function for the reader as signifiers of word-end or word-beginning in addition to representing particular morphemes. The omission of final **m** especially, in those manuscripts where the practice is found regularly and not confined to the ends of lines, was apparently being exploited in the same way as the tagged and exaggerated final **m** and other variant letter forms, to emphasize word boundaries.[156] Similarly the et ligature for *et*, which is another kind of simplified graphic form,[157] is usually written as one unit with the following word, and serves to signify the start of a new word; while the ÷ symbol for *est*, being (as was shown in Chapter Four) so frequently written as one unit with the preceding word, helps the reader to perceive at a glance that the word is finished.[158] Abbreviation could

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[156] See for example how final **m** of word groups is either suspended or represented by a modified letter form in the Durham C.III.13 Gospel fragments (see transcription, Chapter Five, pp. 208-09). See also the practice in the uncial copy of *De ordine creaturarum* (*CLA*, V, 590), referred to in note 130 above, where word-final **m** is regularly replaced by a stroke above the preceding letter which differs from the normal mark of abbreviation in sitting to the right-hand side of the letter, thus forming a distinctive marker of the end of a word.

[157] The distinctive Insular form of the **et** ligature (which is included within the discussion of abbreviations in *Codex Lindisf.*) is derived, like many of the abbreviation symbols, from earlier documentary script; and the many other unusual ligatures found in early Insular minuscule script, including cursively written subscript letters, appear to have been developed, like the abbreviation system, during the period of isolation (see Brown, 'Oldest Irish Manuscripts', p. 318). It is presumably because they regarded the et ligature as a modified and simplified graphic symbol equivalent to an abbreviation symbol that early Insular scribes felt no need to use the 7 symbol to abbreviate this extremely frequently recurring word: the latter is not used regularly before the late eighth century.

[158] The sign ÷ even occurs sometimes in ligature with the preceding letter (e.g. joined to the cross-stroke of e: see the *CLA* plates of two Irish Gospel books, St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek 51 and 60; *CLA*, VII, 901 and 902). The very marked non-separation of the symbols for *autem*, *eius*, *est* and *enim* from the preceding words in a fragment of another Gospel book at St Gall (Stiftsbibliothek 1394 (pp. 101-104); *CLA*, VII, 980) is pointed out by Lowe in *CLA*.

therefore serve to facilitate the recognition of word units and word boundaries, as long as the abbreviation symbols are familiar to and expected by the reader, forming recognizable and often-repeated patterns in combination with the letters.

The parallel development and apparent interdependence of word separation and abbreviation, and their emergence at this particular time and in this particular place, can, I believe, be understood if both practices are recognized as symptoms of a shift in the way in which written language was perceived and understood - a shift from a purely alphabetic or phonographic system to one which contained ideographic elements. The introduction of spacing to separate word units, and the habitual replacing of certain combinations of letters, including entire words, with graphic symbols, are both indications that readers were taking in written language not letter by letter, but word by word, recognizing the unique pattern or shape formed by each word unit as a whole.[159] This method of reading

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[159] On ideogrammatic elements within an alphabetic script see Cohen, especially text vol., p. 420: "Celle-ci ne s'exprime plus dans le système alphabétique par les blocs que sont les signes-mots, excepté les chiffres et les signes servant au calcul, mais par des combinaisons des lettres elles mêmes, quelquefois par leur forme (lettres finales de certaines langues sémitiques, majuscule en tête de phrase dans l'écriture latine) et par la séparation des mots et l'articulation de la phrase au moyen de la ponctuation." Elsewhere (pp. 352-53) Cohen discusses the et ligature and abbreviations as ideographic elements within modern written French and English, contrasting the generally "direct" ideographic reading in French (whereby ex. is read as '*exemple*' and v. as '*voir*') with the "indirect" reading - or reading at a second remove - found in English, whereby etc. may be read as 'and so on' or e.g. as 'for instance'. These indirect readings, or translations of the symbols into quite unrelated sounds, are of course necessary because the abbreviated words are Latin not English; since most modern readers of English have no knowledge of Latin, they tend to learn the function and English meaning of such abbreviations as i.e. or e.g. without reference to the Latin, and often simply pronounce them phonetically.

allows written information to be absorbed at a much faster rate;[160] and the change to a partially ideographic approach to written language, in place of a purely phonographic approach, was therefore an important development in the history of language and communication.[161] If the Irish and the Anglo-Saxons played a leading role in bringing about this change to a partially ideographic system, it must have been because of their unique position for the time in relation to the written language of Latin. The hesitancy both to separate words and to use abbreviations in early written Irish, compared with Irish scribes' treatment of Latin, suggests that in the case of the vernacular scribes were trying to represent the sounds of the spoken language, while in the case of Latin they were happy to represent a word without necessarily suggesting its sound - happy, for example, to write uiitrionale for *septemtrionale*, representing the element *septem* within the word by the Roman numeral symbol uii, which is meant to be taken as a unit, not pronounced as individual letters.[162]

Abbreviations in Insular manuscripts, therefore, were primarily neither a means of saving space (whether to keep margins straight, avoid

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[160] Cf. Saenger's discussion (referred to in Chapter Four, p. 161) of the way in which word separation increased the speed of reading; and Marichal on abbreviation as a means of facilitating reading: in medieval writing, "les abréviations n'y sont pas seulement un moyen d'économiser du parchemin, elles facilitent la lecture: aīa est plus clair, se lit plus vite que *anima*, sb̄a que *substantia*" ('Critique des textes', p. 1258).

[161] Saenger recognized the important contribution to this development made by the Insular scribes in their introduction of word separation; he does not mention Insular abbreviation practice.

[162] This example (visible in *CLA* plate) is taken from a fragment of the *Etymologiae* in Anglo-Saxon hybrid minuscule, s. viii^{2} (Düsseldorf, Staatsarchiv Fragm. 28; *CLA*, VIII, 1189). See also Appendix, p. 307, for an example of a textual corruption involving the substitution of numeral letters for a misread word.

faulty syllable division or simply to conserve parchment in general), nor a means of saving time or effort for the scribe, though either of these factors may have some influence on the extent to which abbreviation was used. Abbreviations are basically a graphic convention, a way of spelling words or parts of words; and the types of symbols preferred by Insular scribes, the great frequency with which they used them, and the greatly increased number of contexts in which they felt it appropriate to use them, all suggest that Insular abbreviation practice should be understood as one symptom of a shift to a partially ideographic approach to written Latin.

CONCLUSION

In his study *Ancient and Medieval Grammatical Theory in Europe*, R. H. Robins devotes very little space to linguistic analysis in the early medieval period, arguing that since it is "to a large extent the continuation of former theories and methods, and based on the old masters, [it] is not of great interest to us."[1] The Insular grammarians (apart from Ælfric, who is criticised for his bad practice in applying the Latin framework to English) are not even mentioned. But Robins was writing forty years ago; the works of the early Irish and Anglo-Saxon grammarians are now somewhat better known, and their contribution to Insular latinity is beginning to be appreciated. The contribution of Insular scribes deserves equal recognition. Their practices of word separation and use of abbreviations are reflections of the way in which they read and understood Latin as they worked within a bilingual environment. As graphic manifestations of linguistic analysis, these practices are of considerable interest, and, exported by Insular scribes to the Continent, have had a lasting influence on Western conventions for representing written language, and on the history of communication.

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[1] p. 71.

APPENDIX

A Study of the Only Extant Insular Copy of the Commentary of Pompeius on Donatus

Each manuscript copy of any text is unique, but as was observed in Chapter Three,[1] copies of grammatical texts (which can easily accommodate additions, subtractions and any other alterations the copyist may wish to make) have an observed tendency to be often so different from each other as to constitute quite distinct versions. The scribes who copied grammar books could in the process make changes (and also mistakes) which will indicate to us something of their level of interest in and understanding of different aspects of grammatical teaching. Each copy will tell a different story; the following study is an attempt to tell the story contained in one of the two earliest surviving copies (and the only surviving early Insular copy) of the African Pompeius's commentary on the *Ars maior*.[2] This copy, now bound with the collection of three commentaries on Donatus which also includes the *Anonymus ad Cuimnanum*, was produced in England during the

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[1] See pp. 114-16.

[2] St Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek 2/1, foll. 1-20. For a list of the other surviving manuscripts of Pompeius, see Holtz, 'Tradition', pp. 53-57; the earliest of these (Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek Weissenburgensis 86, pp. 1-390 (*CLA*, IX, 1394)) is dated *c.* s. viii^{med} and is written in pre-Caroline minuscule, copied from an Insular exemplar; the other early manuscripts are also Continental and dated s. viii^{ex} or later. On the date of the St Paul copy, see note 3 below.

eighth century,[1] and has been described as a series of extracts from Pompeius's full text. Comparison of the version of the text contained in this copy with other versions not only affords an insight into the grammatical interests (of an unknown scribe) of the period but also provides an indication of the degree of competence in Latin grammar which such interest implies.

Pompeius's commentary covers only the *Ars maior*, with the *Ars minor* dealt with briefly in the preface; its intended audience must therefore have been fairly advanced Latin students. The standard of Latin was,

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[1] Lowe (*CLA*, X, 1451) assigns this manuscript, along with the other two in the collection (*CLA*, X, 1452 and 1453), simply to the eighth century; but although there is no external evidence that would help date it more precisely, I believe that there are palaeographical grounds for supposing that the Pompeius was copied no later than the middle of the eighth century. As we have seen in Chapter One (p. 17, note 59), the copy of *Ad Cuimnanum* can be dated to the first half of the eighth century or even to the late seventh, on the basis of its Phase I cursive minuscule script. The script of the Pompeius is a more formal set minuscule which nevertheless contains various cursive elements, by no means always confined to the ends of lines or pages. It contains a repertoire of ligatures nearly as large as that of the *Ad Cuimnanum*, including the s-shaped g in ligature, various subscript forms and the suprascript sickle-shaped u (but not the reversed e), and a number of variant letter forms including open and closed a, curved and upright d (occasionally, especially in ligature, with open bow and exaggeratedly looped ascender) and several forms of g including the flat-topped, 3-shaped form, often with a downward slope to the left (see Plates 1 and 2). Such extensive use of ligatures and variant forms is more typical of Phase I than of Phase II minuscule (see Brown, 'Irish Element', p. 115), and suggests that the manuscript was copied earlier rather than later in the eighth century. The three separate manuscripts in the St Paul volume were apparently bound together early, probably by the end of the eighth century at Murbach. The outer leaves of each of them are worn and stained, and each has been folded vertically, pointing to a period of independent circulation in the form of booklets, folded for ease of carrying (on booklets and folded books see P. Robinson, 'The "Booklet": A Self-Contained Unit in Composite Manuscripts', in *Codicologica*, edited by A. Gruys and J. P. Gumbert, vol. III: *Essais typologiques* (Leiden, 1980), pp. 46-69 and Bischoff, 'Über gefaltete Handschriften, vornehmlich hagiographischen Inhalts', in *Mittelalt. Stud.*, I, 93-100, with reference to the St Paul manuscript, p. 97). A date in the earlier half of the century for the Pompeius as well as for *Ad Cuimnanum* would allow plenty of time for this period of circulation prior to binding.

however, rather lower in fifth-century provincial Africa than in fourth-century Rome; the Tablettes Albertini, late fifth-century African legal documents, provide a very clear picture of the mediocre standard of Latin written in one isolated region.[4] The needs of students in such a context were perhaps the cause of the great length and detail of Pompeius's commentary; certain details seem to be addressed to specific contemporary problems. For example, spellings like dicserit and dixserit for *dixerit* in the Tablettes Albertini[5] explain why Pompeius bothered to spend some time explaining that the letter x stands for the sound cs.[6]

Law has suggested that "Pompeius's African students probably provided him with a range of problems similar to those encountered by Celtic and Old English speakers in the British Isles" and that this accounts for the popularity of Pompeius among Insular grammarians.[7] In so far as this implies that Africans in the fifth century, like the inhabitants of the British Isles, were not native speakers of Latin, the suggestion is misleading, since Latin was by this time the common language of the African province (though the Latin spoken would probably have been scarcely recognizable to an inhabitant of first-century Rome);[8] but this does not invalidate the point that the detailed and expansive commentary which the provincial Africans found to be an indispensable supplement to Donatus's condensed teaching also suited the needs of the Irish and Anglo-Saxons,

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[4] On the language of the tablets, see *Tablettes Albertini*, pp. 66-79.

[5] ibid., p. 70.

[6] See *GL*, V. 108/4-24.

[7] *ILG*, p. 16.

[8] See *Tablettes Albertini*, p. 79.

who, as non-native speakers, were still further removed than the Africans from the source of the language that they were trying to understand and master. The following study of this early Insular copy of Pompeius was undertaken in the hope of discovering whether Insular scholars found all of Pompeius's painstaking exposition equally helpful, or whether there were specific passages in his text (such as, for example, his explanation of prepositions, discussed in Chapter Three above) which were found to be especially useful. The evidence provided by this copy cannot fully answer the question, but it provides some interesting and somewhat surprising insights.

In the introduction to his edition of Pompeius, Keil explained that he had not used the St Paul version, to which he gives the siglum L, as one of his base texts because it is so heavily abridged ('*in compendium redacta*'), particularly in the latter part, as to be more a collection of excerpts than a full copy of the text.[9] Holtz in his article on the textual tradition of Pompeius's work describes this manuscript as containing extracts, more and more widely spaced, and skeletal in the last pages;[10] although of great interest because of its antiquity and Insular origin, the copy is "disappointing because of its lacunae and its extreme negligence".[11] Yet the lacunae and the negligence which frustrate the attempt to reconstruct a full and accurate text are nevertheless a useful

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[9] *GL*, V, 86. Keil does make some use of L's readings, notably to restore the beginning of the prologue, lost in other manuscripts known to him. On the problem of identifying the beginning of the text, see Holtz, 'Tradition', pp. 58–64, who prints there the fullest known version of the prologue.

[10] 'Tradition', p. 53.

[11] ibid. p. 71.

starting point for studying both interest and competence in grammar in England in the early eighth century. The terms used by these two scholars to describe the copy immediately prompt further questions: Keil's talk of abridgment and excerpts suggests that a deliberate editing process lies behind the St Paul copy. but Holtz's mention of lacunae and negligence suggests rather a different picture of careless or uncomprehending copying. Which of these views correctly conveys the nature of the copy? And are we obliged to accept that this is an abridged copy, or could it not rather represent (as one of the earliest surviving witnesses to the text, if not the earliest) a more concise version of which all later copies are expansions?

The suggestion that L might be an original, shorter version of the text, rather than a collection of extracts from (or an abridgment of) the full version, is shown to be untenable on the basis of the picture of the textual tradition provided in Holtz's study.[12] Holtz demonstrates that one branch of the tradition was quite independent of the Insular version and its descendants, having apparently diverged while the text was still in Spain and then being transmitted through Italy rather than the British Isles. Although this version is clearly independent of the Insular and Carolingian versions, it has readings that agree sometimes with the former, sometimes with the latter. Since the Italian text agrees with the Continental family in containing matter not found in L, these corresponding passages cannot have been arrived at independently but must be part of the original text; therefore the differences between L and the Continental copies should be seen as a matter of omission in the former rather than

[12] 'Tradition', pp. 64-79.

amplification in the latter. This deduction is confirmed as soon as one begins to read the St Paul copy, which, as rapidly becomes clear, is not a continuous text inviting expansion but disjointed and obviously the result of some kind of abbreviation.

The following study of L's relation to other copies of the text is based on a comparison of the text of L with that printed by Keil. Although this edition is in many ways unsatisfactory, nevertheless its text is based principally on the witness of eighth- and ninth-century manuscripts copied from Insular exemplars or descended from the Insular stage of the tradition: it must therefore represent a version known in Insular circles, something fairly close to the text available to the scribe of L or to whoever made these excerpts.[13]

What, therefore, are the ways in which this text differs from the fuller version? What is omitted, what retained? What evidence is there for careful, deliberate selection and editing, or on the other hand for careless or incompetent copying? Unfortunately - but perhaps not surprisingly considering the nature of the text - the evidence is somewhat confused and conflicting. To begin with, on every page there are numerous small variations, some quite insignificant, some very revealing. For example, L frequently reverses word order (e.g. '*in loquendo utimur*' instead of '*utimur in loquendo*'[14]), usually with no effect on the sense;

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[13] Keil's principal witness (A) is the Wolfenbüttel manuscript mentioned in note 2, which was copied in pre-Caroline minuscule at St Martin de Tours in the mid-eighth century from an Insular exemplar: his two other main witnesses are Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 13024, foll. 1-119 (B) and 13025, foll 75-168' (C), both ninth-century Carolingian copies derived ultimately from Insular copies.

[14] *GL*, V. 97/10.

yet sometimes the scribe has corrected the reversal with marks above the words concerned, which indicates that though there may be carelessness in the copying, there is also a concern to correct even such minor deviations from the exemplar. Other small variations include the addition or omission of single words, mainly conjunctions, or the replacement of single words with their equivalent, with no alteration to the meaning. But alongside these are many cases where a single variant word indicates that a whole passage has not been understood: the scribe has misread or guessed at the word in his exemplar and produced something which makes nonsense of the passage. For example, the following sentence in Keil's edition:

> y vero et z graecae sunt; sed etiam apud nos sic habentur, quem ad modum apud Graecos (110/27-111/1)

appears thus in L:

> si uero z· grecae sunt xui· aput nos sic habentur quem ad modum aput grecos. (fol. 7^{r_5})

Here not only has the letter '*y*' been replaced by the conjunction '*si*', so that half of the subject of the sentence has been lost and a plural verb and adjective are left with a singular subject, but also the words '*sed etiam*' have mysteriously been replaced with the numeral xui; these two changes make nonsense of the sentence. The latter reading is explicable as a misreading of '*sedetiam*' (presumably written thus as one word in the exemplar) as '*sedecim*' (sixteen), which was then written in roman numerals, as was customary, rather than in full. There are countless more cases like the above where changes in tense, mood or person of verbs, or case or gender of nouns, are not consistently carried through a sentence, making it ungrammatical nonsense. This suggests both a lack of concentration and a poor grasp of morphology on the scribe's part. By such small but vital

misreadings and miscopyings the meaning of a passage is often completely undermined, and one is left with the impression that the scribe had little understanding of what he was copying.

When we move on to consider variation at phrase and sentence level, we find further diversity. There are a few additions in the early part of the text, sometimes of a few extra examples, or even of matter not covered at all in the other copies (this may be a question of original text lost from the other versions, rather than new material added by our scribe); but mostly we find omissions. In many instances this appears to be due to sensible editing of Pompeius's long-winded text: a line or two may be removed, and the remainder spliced together, without any loss of substance; for example, the repetitive phrases in this passage:

> iam videamus, quando accidit u litterae ut omnino nihil sit. quando u nihil est? tunc u nihil erit, vide qua subtilitate nihil erit, si dicas 'quoniam' (104/15-17)

are neatly cut in L:

> iam uideamus quomodo accidit ·u· litterae ut omnino nihil sit uide qua suptilitate nihil erit si dicas quoniam. (fol. 5ᵛ)

However, many other cases of omission seem more likely to be due to eye-skip than to editing; in a text so full of repetition it is very easy for the scribe's eye, returning to the exemplar, to alight on a later occurrence of the word just written, and so begin copying from the wrong place, missing perhaps several lines. This will usually obscure the sense of the passage, or at least result in the loss of relevant matter, as for example in this passage:

> hae litterae calumniam patiuntur, ut est x. idcirco non

> littera dicitur, sed duplex littera. k et q neque ab e inchoant neque in e desinunt. h et ista similiter in calumniam venit. idcirco dicuntur... (101/19-22)

which is reduced in L to:

> hae litterae calumniam uenit idcirco dicuntur...; (fol. 4")

but there are also many doubtful cases where an omission could be due either to eye-skip or to deliberate cutting, for example:

> ...'verba fecit apud senatum', 'verba fecit apud populum'. numquid quando dico 'verba fecit apud senatum' aut 'verba fecit apud populum', numquid tantum verbis locutus est et non omni parte orationis? (97/16-19)

compared with:

> ...uerba facit aput senatum et uerba facit ad populum numquid uerbis tantum locutus est et non omni parte orationis, (fol. 2")

where it is not clear whether the scribe has deliberately avoided repeating the quotations, or has simply skipped from the first to the second occurrence of '*populum*' and '*numquid*'. Eye-skip is presumably responsible for one repeated passage[15] - the scribe probably did not notice that he was copying the same lines twice over, since repetition is so characteristic of the whole text.

Miscomprehension and muddled copying are particularly in evidence when the text includes quotations and illustrations: for example, in a passage analysing the component parts of a typical sentence (97/10-17), Pompeius gives the example:

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[15] 152/12-15 is repeated after line 19 when the reoccurrence of the words '*unde apparet*' led the scribe's eye back to line 12 again.

volo ire et videre amicum meum ad forum

followed by a breakdown and enumeration of the parts of speech contained in it; in the analysis in L, however, both '*ad*' and '*et*' are replaced with '*atque*', which suggests that the scribe did not recognize them as quotations from the example and tried to turn them into grammatically functional parts of the sentence. To be fair to the scribe of L, he is not alone in thus confusing examples and quotations; Keil's apparatus shows instances when all manuscripts are equally and differently muddled. There is a good example of this in a passage where Pompeius illustrates the fact that the vowel e is sounded before those consonants known as *semiuocales* (101/15-16); the different readings are as follows:

A puta fe et e f sonat l e et e l sonat r e et e r sonat s e et e s ergo

BC puta fe et f sonat le et l sonat r e et r sonat s e et s sonat ergo

L ut puta ef et f sonat le et el sonat re et er sonat se et es em et m sonat en et n sonat ix et ix sonat ergo

and Keil suggests the following reading:

ut puta ef et f sonat, el et l sonat, er et r sonat, es et s sonat, em et m sonat, en et n sonat [ix et x sonat]. ergo... .

In fact, L is here the least muddled version, and the one on which Keil was able to base his reconstruction of the text. This sort of confusion indicates, I believe, not so much the poor grasp of grammar or the carelessness of the scribe, as the difficulty of reading, understanding and correctly copying such passages in the absence of clear punctuation or other consistent graphical conventions for distinguishing quotations and examples, or individual letters and syllables under discussion, from the

rest of a sentence.

All the variants and omissions so far discussed have been minor, if numerous; but it is the omission of large sections - corresponding to anything from fifteen lines to eight pages at a time of Keil's edition - which has led to this version of the text being described as a collection of excerpts. These gaps are too large to have been the result simply of careless copying, and must involve a deliberate choice (either by this scribe or by a previous student or copier of the text). In one instance, an apparently accidental omission of a long section (151/25-153/2) is corrected by the insertion of an extra leaf (fol. 14), half the normal width, containing the omitted text; if other omissions are allowed to stand when this one is corrected by the scribe, we must assume that they were intentional, or the result of previous selection.

Sometimes entire passages are omitted, indicating perhaps a lack of interest in the topic being discussed; but often the procedure seems haphazard: the text breaks off abruptly in the middle of one topic and leaps at once to the beginning or middle of the next, usually with no break or punctuation to indicate a new sentence, let alone new subject matter. Some method is apparent in a tendency to 'top and tail' sections of the text, retaining their basic definitions and concluding statements but omitting most of the examples and discussion in between; for example, of the twenty-eight lines of the chapter '*de posituris*' in Keil's text,[16] only the first four, the last three, and one other are found in L. There is also a tendency to omit long preambles or extensive arguments countering

[16] 133/3-134/2.

pedantic objections.[17] Both of these tendencies suggest that the scribe (or previous selector) was aiming to extract the essentials from the text - not, apparently, to compile a series of distinct extracts from Pompeius, but rather to shorten and condense a text which very much lends itself to such treatment.

The extent to which the text is thus condensed or abbreviated increases as the copy progresses: in the first few chapters, until '*de syllaba*', the text is copied more or less in full; after this the large omissions begin, and towards the end the extracts are further and further apart, until the copy tails off altogether in the middle of the chapter on the verb, thus entirely abandoning the remaining half of Pompeius's text. We can be sure that the copy did end where the manuscript in its present state ends, and that the scribe did not carry on in a second volume, since the last lines copied are in the first column of the recto of the last folio of the quire, with plenty of space that could have been filled if the copy had continued. The lack of an *explicit* at the end is another indication that the copying tailed off or was interrupted and left incomplete.

Can we learn anything about the interests or needs of the scribe (or whoever was responsible for making these extracts) from the passages retained and omitted? Since the text remains full until the chapter on the syllable, the early part of the text, including the prologue and the

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[17] Thus L omits a passage at the beginning of '*de nomine*' (137/13-138/1) which discusses the principles of definition and queries and justifies the validity of the opening definition of *nomen*; L resumes where the text turns to consider instances of defective nouns lacking certain cases.

chapter '*de littera*' (which includes *vox*), were apparently of interest to the scribe. The only major omission concerning letters deals with the special properties of i and u, specifically when they have consonantal value. This is among Pompeius's more confusing passages and may have been omitted because it obscured rather than clarified the subject.

The chapters on syllable, foot, accent and *positurae* which precede the parts of speech are on the whole fairly heavily cut, and much is omitted which one might have expected an Anglo-Saxon scribe to find useful. One interesting omission in '*de syllaba*' is a passage describing how to calculate where a syllable begins and ends.[18] '*De pedibus*' is the fullest of these chapters, in which the only omission is a rather confusing passage on *resolutio* or the interchanging of metrical feet.[19] By contrast, more than two thirds of '*de accentibus*' is left out, including a passage explaining how to represent accents graphically as part of the process of punctuating the text (*codicem distinguere*).[20] Again, only one third of the (already very brief) section on *positurae* or punctuation is retained,[21] and there is an indication that the scribe did not fully understand the little he did copy, since he replaces the crucial word

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[18] 112/6-20.

[19] 121/25-122/2: the scribe replaces these sixteen lines with one short definition: *resolutio ut si in heroico metro pro spondeo procleomaticum* [read *proceleumaticum*] *ponas* (fol. 9va).

[20] This passage (132/1-15) is one of the rare occasions when Pompeius is talking directly about graphic signs rather than about grammatical or phonological concepts: *Quando vis acutum accentum facere, lineam a sinistra parte in dexteram partem sursum ducito.*

[21] See above, p. 311 and note 16.

'*distinguatur*' with the meaningless '*desanguator*'.[22]

By far the longest chapter in the remainder of the text is that on the noun, and this has been far less heavily abbreviated than some other parts: about one third of the text as it appears in Keil has been omitted, and much of that from the end of the chapter where material on number, *figura* and case is repeated.[23] That the scribe should be interested especially in nouns is not unexpected, given the general bias of the period towards the study of nouns and verbs; but it is surprising to notice that he is more interested in such matters as the classification of different types of noun[24] than in declensions, since he omits a long passage (188/24-197/19 - see note 23 above) on the ablative singular, full of rules for declension with plenty of examples and exceptions. The two other parts of speech which the scribe covered before he abandoned his copy or was interrupted - the pronoun and the verb - are very heavily abbreviated

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[22] 133/4-5; L (fol. 11[r]) reads: *docet quem ad modum desanguatur codex*. The letters ti in insular minuscule script, especially if in ligature, could possibly be misread as an a by a careless reader or if written sloppily. As we have seen, the section on *distinguere* in the previous chapter was omitted, so we cannot compare this reading with what the scribe made of the word elsewhere.

[23] Pompeius deals in turn with the six 'accidents' of nouns, *qualitas conparatio genus numerus figura casus* (139/25-174/11), and then returns again to the last three with further discussion, some of it repetition of earlier matter (174/12-197/19). In L the first sections on number, form and case have been copied fairly fully, but in the repeated sections only selected extracts have been retained, amounting to far less than half of the original text. The omitted passages are sometimes paraphrases or repetitions of material in the earlier sections (e.g. the beginning of the second '*de figura*' (178/10-33), which largely repeats parts of the first (169/1-27), is entirely omitted) but also entire sections of new material are omitted, notably the second half of the second '*de casibus*' (188-197), which is a lengthy discussion of the ablative singular according to the five different vowels with which words in this case terminate.

[24] The section '*de qualitate*' (139/25-150/31), which discusses the different types of proper and common nouns, is copied with few major omissions.

indeed: only about one-eighth of the pronoun chapter is retained, forming a sketchy summary of the general points, while the chapter on the verb - the second longest chapter in the full text - is given no title and consists of three short, unconnected passages.[25]

To what extent the editing of the text and the errors in copying are due to the scribe of L, rather than inherited from his exemplar, is impossible to say. One possible explanation for the nature of this copy is that the scribe, rather than copying and extracting from a full copy of Pompeius, was producing (with some calligraphic skill but little grammatical understanding) a neat copy of rough notes made by someone else who had been concerned to extract material of particular interest from the lengthy text. This would account for the mixture of deliberate selection and omission (implying an awareness of the content) and careless copying (revealing a poor grasp of grammar and suggesting a lack of understanding of the text) which are evident in this copy.

However it came into being, L enables us to draw some conclusions, albeit rather negative ones, about the kinds of grammatical questions that interested and bothered the Anglo-Saxons in the late seventh and early eighth centuries. The person (or people) responsible for producing this book does not appear to have been very interested in elementary grammar; Pompeius is in any case not a text for beginners, and passages of basic

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[25] These three short sections are: the definition of the *modus coniunctivus* (or as L consistently reads, *coniunctatiuus*), the fifth of the eight verbal modes discussed under *qualitas* near the beginning of the chapter (215/19-36); the beginning of the section on conjugations (222/15-26); and just two lines from the middle of the discussion of deponent verbs (228/32-34). The text of L ends at this point; at the foot of the page (fol. 20^{v}) is written: legor · legeris · legetur · legemur.

information like declensions of nouns have been omitted. Although the major part of this copy is taken up with detailed commentary on the noun, it would be unreasonable to argue that the scribe (or whoever's notes he was copying) was only interested in the first three of the eight parts of speech (and mainly in the first), since we do not know what circumstances lie behind the abandonment or interruption of this copy and hence the omission of all discussion of adverbs, prepositions and the remaining parts of speech. Whether the scribe (or note-maker) had any particular interest in such passages as those in the preposition chapter which deal with the question of word boundaries cannot be determined from this copy. But in general it does not appear that the selection of material reflects any special interest in word separation or in any topics which might have been of practical use to scribes in handling other aspects of graphic display, such as punctuation, the marking of accents, or the correct division of syllables. Indeed, these are often precisely the passages which have been omitted in preference to more purely grammatical and phonological discussions.

Given that Insular scribes were innovating and experimenting not only with word separation but also with punctuation and layout, these omissions are rather surprising. Of course, we should not try to read too much into the choices of a single scribe, especially one who appears at times not to understand what he is copying. But if we are surprised by the kinds of omissions seen in the Pompeius copy, perhaps it is because we are making false assumptions about the way in which scribes and scholars studied their grammar, and about the nature of the relationship between grammatical teaching and graphic innovations. It should not be assumed that a scribe (even one who was responsible for originating or improving on new graphic

practices) would, when reading, copying or making extracts from a grammar text, consciously be looking out for the kind of detail which we have been discussing which appears to us to be of particular relevance to scribal practices. Such details are, after all, few and far between, and furthermore were rarely written with graphic practice in mind; if Insular scribes had really depended on them as the basis for their graphic innovations, or even simply as the means of clarifying problem areas arising as a result of the introduction of a particular practice (for example, how to know when and when not to separate a preposition), they would never have achieved what they did.

The evidence of this particular scribe's copying practice is valuable because it reminds us how wide the gap could be between grammatical theory as studied and taught by the grammarians and the actual level of competence in Latin which could be expected of a scribe with (presumably) a basic grammatical education: the gap, in other words, between ideal and practice. On the one hand, grammar as an ideal was important enough for people to be interested in reading and copying lengthy, repetitively detailed texts like Pompeius; on the other hand, the degree of competence in writing Latin even at a basic level could, as this copy of Pompeius reveals in places, be very low. Devotion to a subject does not of course preclude incompetence in it. The difficulties with Latin experienced by the Irish and Anglo-Saxons partly explain their dedication to the study of its grammar: certainly these difficulties continue to be in evidence even in periods when Insular scholars are renowned for their interest in the subject.

Notes to Plates

Plate 1

St Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek 2/1, fol. 2' (reduced). Pompeius, *Commentum artis Donati*, beginning of prologue (*GL*, IV, 95-96/20). *CLA*, X, 1451. Copied in England, probably not later than the first half of the eighth century. On the date, see note 3 in Appendix, p. 302; examples of some of the cursive elements in the script mentioned there can be seen in col. b: subscript i in line 32, and suprascript sickle-shaped u in line 18. On the use of the decorated initial PA ligature to mark the opening of the text, see Chapter One, p. 36. Note also the use of a more formal grade of script for the opening lines: there is a gradual transition, from the top of col. a in a somewhat stilted set minuscule containing some higher-grade variant letter forms (R and N), to the more fluent and informal minuscule of col. b. Word separation is reasonably clear: the use of space is usually not ambiguous, and the scribe occasionally uses tagged or modified final letter forms to emphasise the end of a word (e.g. tagged final t in col. b, line 3, decurrunt, line 10, dicunt; final m with last stroke extended below the line in col. b, line 35, proprium). For a transcription of col. a. and analysis of the word groups contained in it, see Chapter Four, pp. 180-84.

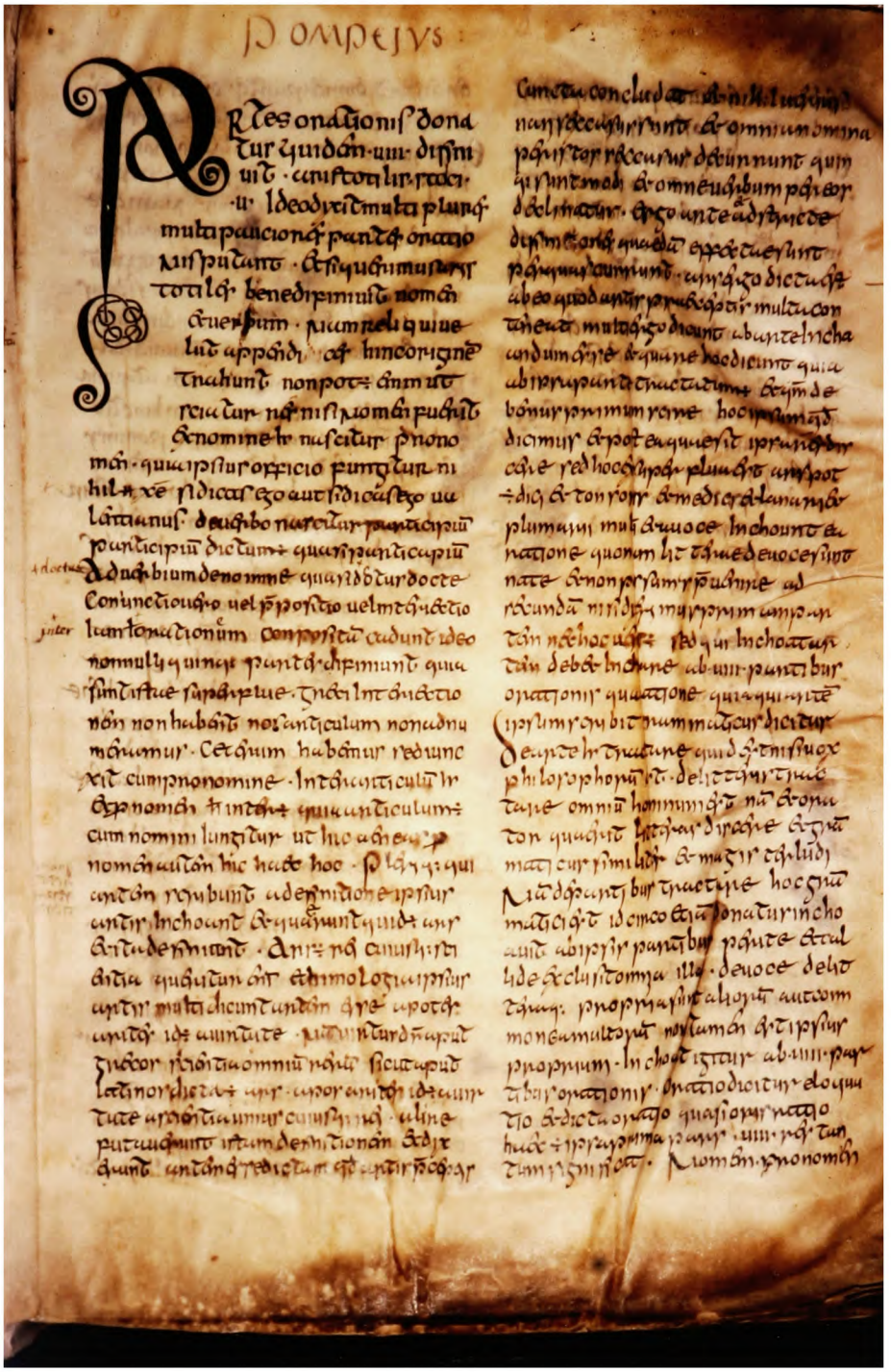


Plate 1

St Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek 2/1, fol. 2' (reduced)
Pompeius, *Commentum artis Donati*

Plate 2

St Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek 2/1, fol. 6' (reduced). Pompeius, *Commentum artis Donati*, part of the discussion of *uocales* and *semiuocales* (cf. *GL*, IV, 106–108: lines 107/16–19 and 108/1–3 are not found in this copy). On the date and script, see Plate 1. More of the cursive elements of script are visible in this plate: an example of the s-shaped g in ligature can be seen in col. a, line 20; the variant flat-topped, 3-shaped form of g, sometimes with the head-stroke extended to the left over other letters, occurs frequently, e.g. in col a, lines 4, 7 and 14. Spacing between words is reasonably clear. Flourishes on final letters are particularly obvious at the ends of lines (see final e and a in col. a, t, r and a in col. b), but word-final t in mid-line is also often treated with a flourish, and sometimes a tag (for the latter, see col. a, line 26, sicut and docuit, line 32, erit, col. b, last line, est and sint). In col. b, lines 33, 35 and 36, points are used to set apart the letters being discussed, but the convention is not used consistently (see line 34, where ab e l̄t is written with no points surrounding the e.

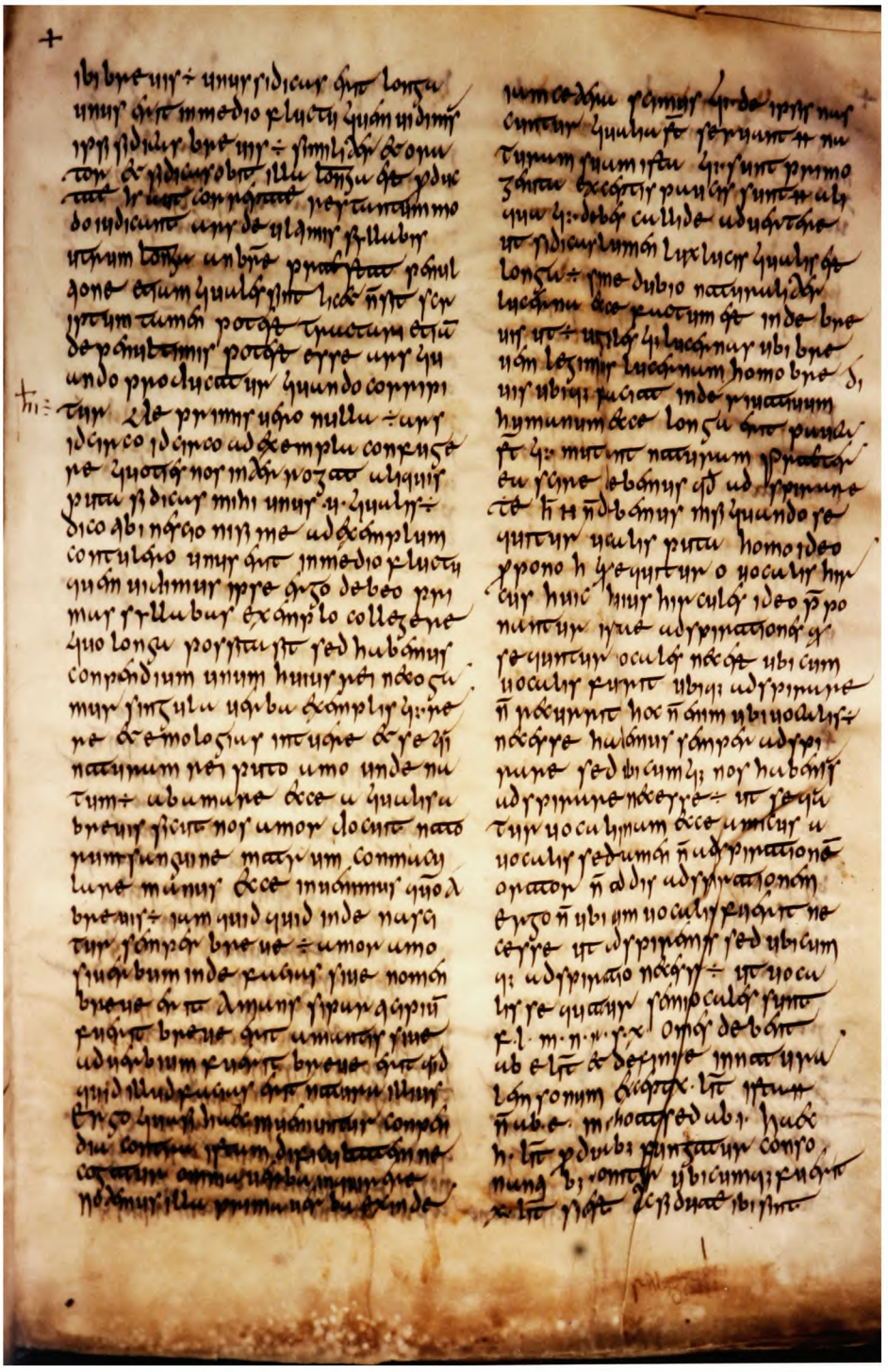


Plate 2

St Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek 2/1, fol. 6' (reduced)
Pompeius, *Commentum artis Donati*

Plate 3

St Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek 2/1, fol. 23' (reduced). *Anonymus ad Cuimnanum*, end of the prologue and beginning of the commentary. *CLA*, X, 1452. Copied in England between the end of the seventh and middle of the eighth centuries (see Chapter One, p. 17, note 59). Many examples of the ligatures mentioned there, including the e with reversed bow, can be seen in the plate, especially in the first 16 lines of col. b: e.g. the et ligature at the beginning of line 10, the eri ligature in peritur in line 11, the no and ro ligatures in line 14. On the tendency of scribes to use a more cursive script full of ligatures at the bottom of a page or at the end of a section, as here, see Chapter Five, note 36. This scribe's use of abbreviations is analysed in Chapter Six, pp. 266-70.

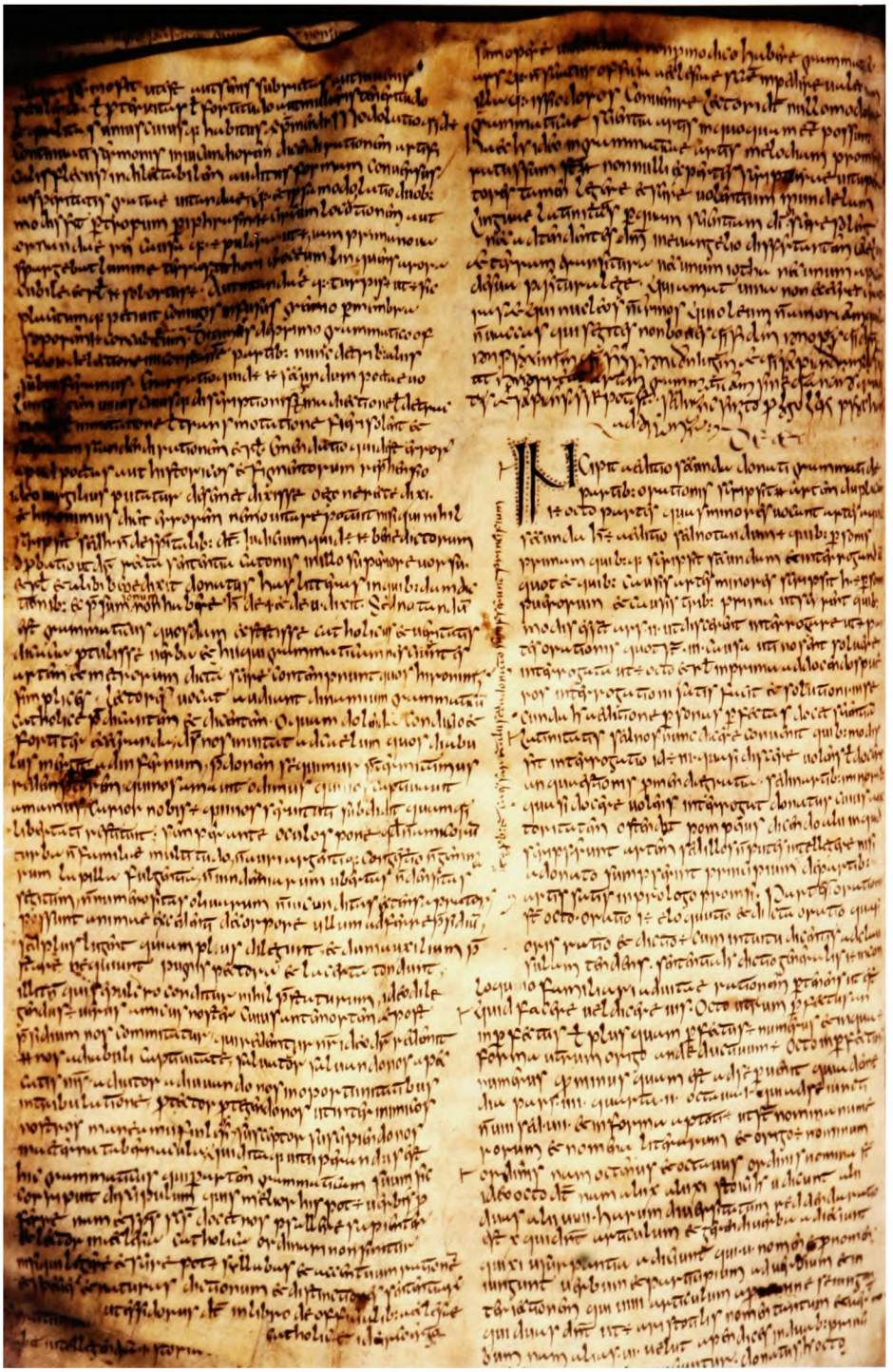


Plate 3

St Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek 2/1, fol. 23' (reduced)
Anonymus ad Cuimnanum

Plate 4

St Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek 2/1, fol. 44' (reduced). *Explanationes in Artem Donati*, definition of the parts of speech and beginning of the section on the noun (*GL*, IV, 488-89). *CLA*, X, 1453. Copied in England before the end of the eighth century, by which time it was at Murbach, bound together with the two preceding manuscripts (see Appendix, note 3). Note the use of small decorated initials, and a line of a more formal grade of script, to help the reader find the beginning of each definition; the beginning of the chapter on the noun is distinguished with a larger initial No. Separation is usually clearly indicated by space; in addition there is occasional use of variant forms in word-initial or -final position, e.g. in col. a, the third line of the *pronomen* section, m with extended final stroke in bucolicam and dicam. Tagged final letters are, however, rare (see Chapter Four, note 62): one example can be seen in col. a, line 1, the final m of auem.

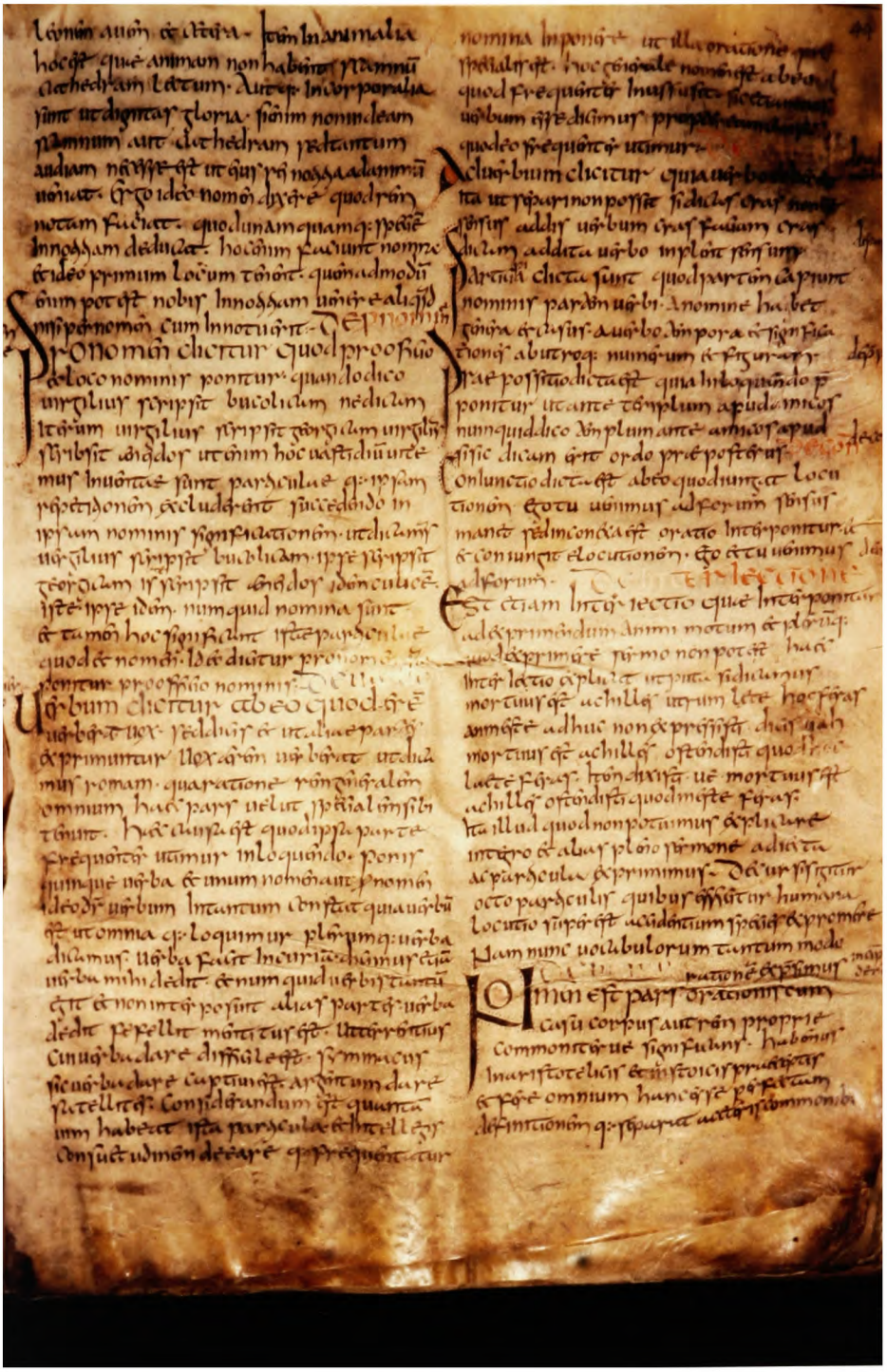


Plate 4

St Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek 2/1, fol. 44' (reduced)
Explanationes in Artem Donati

Plate 5

St Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek 2/1, fol. 47ra (detail). *Explanationes in Artem Donati*, part of the chapter on *nomen*. This plate illustrates the use of variant forms to reinforce separation by space. The variant long form of I is confined in use to the beginnings of words, and especially where space is more limited near the end of a line, helps to indicate the separation of words, e.g. in line 6, casuIn|; line 8, terminaturInablatiuo|, line 12, ergoIta|. Note also the use of points to separate the letter x in line 5, and to separate elements of the paradigm in lines 4 and 5 (but not in lines 9–10).

Plate 5

St Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek 2/1, fol. 47" (detail)
Explanationes in Artem Donati

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