II.1

Bede’s De schematibus et tropis

In the metrical handbooks of Aldhelm and Bede, we were introduced to the concept of the schema as a framework for describing the combination of smaller linguistic units into larger ones. Both authors presume a degree of linguistic sophistication in their audiences sufficient to track more than one unit of analysis running in parallel. Aldhelm, whose primary interest is in formal metrical units per se, asks that we be able to work simultaneously with the hexameter line as a schema of the possible combinations of six dactyls and spondees (in the De metris) and the metrical shapes of each part of speech (in the De pedum regulis). In the De arte metrica Bede, who is more concerned with the relationship of sense-units to verse-units, asks that we read (and write) with an eye to the interplay of the beginnings and endings of sensus and versus. The terms in which he relates verse structure to other linguistic structures disclose some of the levels of analysis that were available to him in describing the workings of language to his students. In his De schematibus et tropis, the companion volume to the De arte metrica, and in the De orthographia, Bede engages more directly with element order and syntactical relationships and brings into play new units of analysis and more ways of deploying those he introduced in his treatment of metrics.

Bede conceived the De schematibus et tropis (henceforth DST) as Book II to the De arte metrica’s Book I.1 Although schemes (figures) and tropes began life as part of the

\[^1\text{Bede, De schematibus et tropis, CCSL 123A:142-171, ed. C.B. Kendall. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975). The DAM and DST are also available in a single-manuscript edition with English translation by C.B. Kendall: Bede,}]

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ancient rhetorical curriculum and have descended to us as “rhetorical” figures, they reached the early Middle Ages as part of the elementary grammar, disseminated most widely through Book III of Donatus’s *Ars maior*, which was Bede’s chief source and model in the DST. Bede thus should not be thought of as offering a digest of ancient rhetorical handbooks, but rather as adapting a by-now traditional part of the *ars grammatica* to the needs of his monastic students and turning the focus of the rhetorical figures definitively onto scripture and away from classical poets.  

DST takes as its framework the seventeen figures and thirteen tropes from Donatus's *Ars maior* III.5-6. This thirty-item inventory developed slowly through antiquity and achieved a standard place as the third part of late-antique Schulgrammatik. Unlike metrics, the study of figures and tropes does not flow naturally from the "elements" of elementary grammar, nor does it habitually justify its place in the curriculum. Its place in the exegesis of the poets would seem to be self-evident, and it reflects the techniques of grammatical

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3 Holtz, *Donat*, 663-674
commentary on the auctores. The selection of thirty terms, give or take a few, from all those actually used in commentary, and their juxtaposition with accounts of the parts of speech, are more conventional than systematic. The practical place of the figures and tropes in Latin teaching was open for interpretation as the elementary grammar made the transition to the monastic classroom.

The canonicity of the Donatan list of figures and tropes is reflected in Bede's conservatism in adapting it: instead of the thoroughgoing revision and reorganization of the available material that we saw in the DAM, DST is an expansion of and commentary on Donatus's definitions, with new examples and some other material added from the

4 The relationship of the material in Ars maior III to Donatus's work as a commentator is the subject of Ulrich Schindel, Die lateinischen Figurenlehren des 5. bis 7. Jahrhunderts und Donats Vergilkommentar. (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1975).

5 The juxtaposition of these figures with elementary accounts of the parts of speech in the grammars of late-antiquity in itself suggests a grammatical potential in the description of the figures that was never explicitly articulated. As Marc Baratin and Françoise Desbordes note – “La 'troisième partie' de l'ars grammatica,” The History of Linguistics in the Classical Period, ed. Daniel J. Taylor. Studies in the History of the Language Sciences 46, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1987) 41-66, at p. 41 – it has been traditional to see the treatment of barbarisms, solecisms, figures, and tropes, the “vitia virtutesque orationis”, as occupying the rightful place of syntax as the third part of the Roman “Schulgrammatik” – a place syntax did hold in Priscian (Institutiones grammaticae, ed. Heinrich Keil, Grammatici Latini 2:1-597, 3:1-377. Leipzig: Teubner, 1855-80.) and in his model, Apollonius Dyscolos (see David L. Blank, Ancient Philosophy and Grammar : The Syntax of Apollonius Dyscolus. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982.). This “third part” of the grammar presents deviations, whether viewed as faults (barbarism, solecism) or virtues (figures, tropes) from “normal” modes of expression (Baratin and Desbordes, 43). The omission of any discussion of what constitutes the “normal” mode against which these deviations are measured is, as with so much in the late Roman grammars, understandable in textbooks aimed at students of native-speaker competence or at learners with access to native-speaker instructors. That is, “faults” and “virtues” of discourse are presented as deviations from an unspecified standard – unspecified because mastery of the standard was presumed.
Christianized Donatus and Donatus commentators. The Bedan revolution lies precisely in those new examples: in the sixth and seventh centuries, Christian examples had been added to those Donatus used from the pagan poets, but Bede replaces the ancient citations entirely with passages from the Psalter, above all, from elsewhere in scripture, from Christian Latin poets, and from the Fathers. Even here, the weight and status of the Donatan terms shows in the way Bede explains what he is doing to them:

Et quidem gloriantur Graeci talium se figurarum siue troporum fuisse repertores. Sed ut cognoscas...quia sancta Scriptura ceteris omnibus scripturis non solum auctoritate, quia diuina est, uel utilitate, quia ad uitam ducit aeternam, sed et antiquitate et ipsa praeminet positione dicendi, placuit mihi collectis de ipsa exemplis ostendere quia nihil huiusmodi schematum siue troporum ualent praetendere saecularis eloquentiae magistri, quod non in illa praecesserit. (DST I, pp. 142-43)

And indeed the Greeks boast that they were the discoverers of such figures and tropes. But so that you might know...that Holy Scripture holds pride of place over other writings, not only in authority, because it is divine, and in utility, because it leads to eternal life, but in antiquity and in its very circumstance of speaking, it has pleased me to show with examples collected from Scripture that the masters of

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7 See Holtz, Donat, 256-58 and passim.
8 See note 12, below, for explanation of citations.
secular eloquence can offer nothing in the way of schemes or tropes that did not appear first in it.

The claim is for the authority of Scripture and against the claims of secular masters, but that claim is proved by the presence of axiomatically authoritative figures and tropes in Scripture. Bede might have reflected his actual interests more accurately had he said that the interpretation of Scripture often requires knowledge of figures and tropes and that he would exemplify this technique.\(^9\)

The examples that had traveled with the figures and tropes through antiquity were as conventional as the terms they ostensibly exemplified. As the inventory of terms shifted and reassorted itself ever so slightly before reaching, for all intents and purposes, a final form in Donatus, the fund of examples flowed from Ennius to Virgil and ultimately to Scripture, a century or three behind the pace of change in the wider world of literature. Moreover, since the inventories of terms and of examples did not shift in lockstep, interpretive spaces opened between the figures and the lines intended to clarify their meaning. The terms’ definitions, more fluid in the grammatical tradition than either the terms or the examples, seek to fill this space, with more or less success.\(^10\) Donatus's characteristically telegraphic format (term, definition, example, and on to the next term) allows no room for explanation where there is a

\(^9\)Compare the attitude of Aldhelm, characteristically doubt-free about his own auctoritas, who claims that his De metris is designed to explain his Aenigmata. Bede’s claim for the eloquence of scripture echoes the discussion by Augustine in De doctrina christiana, Book 4, especially at sections 25-60. (Augustine, De doctrina christiana, ed. R.P.H. Green. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 204-222.)

\(^10\)Holtz, Donat, passim, but esp. 112-21.
disjunction between these three points of reference. Bede the teacher draws on the tradition of exegetical grammars, the techniques of the Fathers, and his own experience in expounding Scripture to update Donatus. In effect, the recourse to practical examples of exegetical technique gives the lie to Bede's prefatory statement of purpose: his focus is Scripture and the schemes and tropes are tools in the interpretation thereof. Bede's deployment of examples also moves the work in the direction of a practical handbook of reading technique, reading here meaning construing, paraphrasing, interpreting, and relating present to prior reading.

Bede's complete revision of the fund of examples also provides an occasion to check the flow of terms and definitions as of the early eighth century. It is sometimes possible to detect through Bede's examples a shift between Donatus's and Bede's understanding of a term. Opacities in the definitions remain, and collating Donatus with Bede's examples does not always clarify Bede's meaning. Still, as always with the intensely conservative grammatical terminology, it is worth interrogating the meaning of old terms in their present context.11

Bede opens the DST by drawing a distinction between schemata and tropes. Schemata are variations in the *ordo uerborum*, the order of words, whereas tropes are transferences of meaning:

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Solet aliquoties in Scripturis ordo uerborum causa decoris aliter quam uulgaris uia dicendi habet figuratus inueniri. Quod grammatici Graece schema vocant, nos habitum uel formam uel figuram recte nominamus, quia per hoc quodam modo uestitur et ornatur oratio. Solet iterum tropica locutio reperiri, quae fit translata dictione a propria significatione ad non propriam similitudinem necessitatis aut ornatus gratia. (DST I, p. 142)

It happens more than once in the Scriptures that, for the sake of elegance, the order of words is found to be arranged differently than the common way of speaking has it. This, which the grammarians call “schema” in Greek, we properly call “habit” or “form” or “figure”, since through this, discourse is so to speak dressed or adorned. And again one often finds a figurative expression, which comes about when a word is transferred from its own meaning to the likeness of something else, for the sake of necessity or ornament.12

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12Citations of Bede’s text are by chapter and entry number, as well as page number in Kendall’s CCSL edition. (DST is, technically, Book II and DAM Book I of the composite work, but I have not used this number in my citations. Chapter I of DST is “De schematibus” and Chapter II is “De tropis”; each scheme or trope has its own unique entry number, and therefore I thought it superfluous to give line numbers. Thus, e.g., “DST I.vii” is the entry for Epanalempsis. The two paragraphs preceding entry I.i are without number.) Translations from Scripture are my own and are designed to elucidate (as far as possible) Bede’s grammatical points about the Latin. In some cases where Bede’s point is a phonetic one this has not been possible. The text is Kendall’s (CCSL 123A: 142-171), but I have here and there silently repunctuated the text where Kendall’s punctuation obscures Bede’s point.

Citations from Scripture are from Robertus Weber, et al., ed., Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem, (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983), which includes both the Psalter “iuxta LXX” and the Psalter “iuxta Hebraeos”. The former, Jerome’s first, “cursim” revision of the Old Latin Psalter with reference to the Septuagint, approximates the Roman Psalter which Bede and his students knew from daily liturgical use and from which Bede conventionally quotes unless he states otherwise. The latter, Jerome’s third revision of the
In Bede, as in the tradition on which he draws, this distinction is not perfectly maintained: we find classified as tropes what we might expect to find called figures, and both figures and tropes are found with a mix of semantic and structural implications. Broadly, however, the distinction holds, and as a result we find more of syntactical interest among the schemata than among the tropes. The schemata with syntactical implications – either in themselves or in the terms in which Bede presents them – are prolepsis; zeugma and its opposite, hypozeuxis; syllepsis; anaphora; epanalepsis; epizeuxis; schesis onomaton; paromoeon; homoeoteleuton; homoeoptoton; hirmos; and polysyndeton and its opposite, dialyton. Among the tropes, the five varieties of hyperbaton are of interest: hysterologia, anastrophe, parenthesis, tmesis, and especially synchisis.

Several important themes of the DST emerge from the opening definition of schema in the preface to DST. Bede defines schemata 1) as pertaining to the *ordo uerborum*; 2) in contrast to the *uulgaris uia dicendi*; and 3) as an ornament to discourse. *Ordo*, as will become apparent in the course of the DST and of this chapter, is a trickier concept than it might seem. *Ordo uerborum* should refer unproblematically to the simple sequence of the parts of speech as formal units, and *aliter quam uulgaris uia dicendi* to the “unmarked” order of popular speech. More often, however, *ordo* seems to mean something closer to the logical-semantic

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sequence of the meanings of words. Furthermore, it is not always clear from what “normal” standard Bede understands a given schema to differ – or rather, the standard shifts according to the schema being presented. Finally, in emphasizing the “appearance” sense of schema/figura (“hoc quodam modo uestitur et ornatur oratio”), Bede de-emphasizes the purely formal aspect of the schema that so interested Aldhelm – a difference in focus seen also in the emphasis on the interrelationship of verse forms with sense units in the DAM.

**Figures of Repetition**

Four of the schemata, anadiplosis, anaphora, epanalepsis, and epizeuxis, concern the repetition or variation of single terms within a given unit of text, and here it is the evidence for the delimitation of that unit that concerns us. The unit of text within which repetition is observed is the *uersus*. The meaning of *uersus* is not always clear in DST. Whereas in the DAM a *uersus* was a single metrical line within a given metrical verse form, a purely formal unit consisting of a fixed number of feet or syllables, Bede in the DST sometimes seems to use *uersus* to refer to a scriptural “verse” – although our system of biblical verse-numbering

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13On this see the discussion of hyperbaton, below, and my survey in Part III of recent investigations of the early medieval understanding of *ordo*. A concise survey of this topic is Anneli Luhtala, “Considerations on Word Order in the Early Middle Ages,” Beiträge zur Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft 3 (1993): 209-240. The term *ordo verborum* is very frequent in patristic exegesis, especially in Ambrose, Augustine, and Cassiodorus, as a way of signalling an explanation or authoritative interpretation of a difficult passage; see for example Bede’s treatment of synchesis, below. The relationship between a handbook of exegetical method like DST and techniques of grammatical criticism in biblical exegesis requires further investigation. Carmella Vircillo Franklin is contemplating a study of Bede’s own exegesis from this point of view (personal communication, 1999). I suggest some implications of Bede’s exegetical techniques for syntactical teaching in the chapter on his *De orthographia*, below.
is post-medieval\textsuperscript{14} – and sometimes to one of the internal divisions of the verse. Biblical verse boundaries and their internal divisions per cola et commata are defined by a coincidence of syntactical and semantic criteria, not by formal, metrical criteria. As Père Spicq noted, although the term \textit{versus} in ancient book-layout was originally a rough measure of line-length, equivalent to the Greek \textit{stivcoß}, by Latin Late Antiquity \textit{versus} had become a unit of sense: “Il ne s’agit plus de ‘lignes de longueur’, mais de ‘lignes de sens’, non plus conventionelles, mais imposées par la texte.”\textsuperscript{15}

On the other hand, Donatus, Bede’s main source for the schemata, uses the \textit{versus} as his point of reference – meaning metrical verse line – because all his examples are from Vergil and Ennius. Donatus’s terminology, as well as the belief that parts of scripture exhibited classical metrical forms,\textsuperscript{16} presumably influenced Bede’s choice of terminology. But while Bede may have inherited through Donatus a system designed to identify the operation of rhetorical patterning across metrical boundaries, the application of the schemes to Scripture in effect re-orient those patterns to syntactical and semantic boundaries. The

\textsuperscript{14}The numbering of biblical verses as we have them was the work of the sixteenth-century printer Robert Estienne. The Gospels were divided into verse- or paragraph-sized units very early, to facilitate the concordance of the four versions as in Eusebius’s canon tables, but this division did not survive the early Middle Ages and was not, in any case, applied to the Old Testament texts Bede habitually cites. The text of the Psalter in the Codex Amiatinus, for example, has numbers for each Psalm but no internal numbered divisions beyond the cola-et-commata layout. On the history of the divisions of the Bible see Jean Vézin, “Les divisions du texte dans les Évangiles jusqu’à l’apparition de l’imprimerie,” \textit{Grafia e Interpunzione del Latino nel Medioevo}, ed. Alfonso Maierù. (Rome: Edizione dell’Ateneo, 1987) 53-68.

\textsuperscript{15}Ceslas Spicq, \textit{Équisse d'une histoire de l'exégèse latine au moyen-age} (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1944), 164-165, n. 3.

\textsuperscript{16}See e.g. DAM X.41-44, p. 110.
lack of formal criteria delimiting the biblical *versus* gives point to the rhetorical criteria of delimitation.\textsuperscript{17}

It is possible, then, using the biblical verse and its subdivisions as the units of reference, effectively to distinguish between simple repetition of the same word in the same function, and the same word repeated across verses, whether repeated in the same function and so articulating the parallelism of multiple units, or repeated in a slightly different function and so modulating the relationship of one unit to another. Epizeuxis is an example of the former situation:

Epizeuxis est eiusdem uerbi in eodem uersu sine aliqua dilatione geminatio, ut (Is. 40.1): “Consolamini, consolamini, populus meus, dicit Deus uester.” (DST I.viii, p. 147)

Epizeuxis is the doubling the same word in the same verse without any expansion, as in: “Be comforted, be comforted, my people, says your God.”

\textsuperscript{17}Although a comma is traditionally a smaller unit or phrase and a colon a larger one, a clause whose sense is complete, Bede notes in the DAM that the terms *colon* and *comma* are used interchangeably: (DAM XII.43-46, p. 118) “Quae...nomina apud oratores indifferenter ponuntur, qui integram sententiam periodon appellant; partes autem eius cola et commata dicuntur.” “These names are used interchangeably among prose authors, who call a complete statement a ‘period’ and its parts ‘cola’ and ‘commata’.” The division of the text *per cola et commata* – or, more accurately, *per cola* – was already common in Bede’s time; on this see the remarks of Richard Marsden, *The Text of the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon England*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 32-35. Malcolm Parkes reports that T.J. Brown told him that the precise division *per cola et commata* varies from manuscript to manuscript in Bede’s time: Malcolm B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1992), p. 16 and p. 120, n. 91.
In contrast, in Bede’s first example of anadiplosis, the first repetition of the apostrophe to Jerusalem both opens a new *versus* and introduces a series of additional qualifiers of Jerusalem.

Anadiplosis est congeminatio dictionis in ultima parte praecedentis versus et prima sequentis, ut (Ps. 121.2-3): “Stantes erant pedes nostri in atris tuis, Hierusalem,| Hierusalem, quae aedificatur ut ciuitas...” (DST I.v, p. 146)

Anadiplosis is the duplication of a word at the end of the preceding verse and the beginning of the following verse, as in: “Our feet were standing in your halls, Jerusalem,| Jerusalem, which is built as a city...”

In the second example of anadiplosis, the repetition of *cisternas* serves the same function of that of *Hierusalem* above, to introduce a series of qualifiers of the cisterns:

Et Hieremias (Ier. 2.13): “Me dereliquerunt fontem aquae uiuae, et foderunt sibi cisternas, cisternas dissipatas, quae continere non ualent aquas.”

And Jeremiah: “They have deserted me, the font of living water, and have dug cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns, which cannot hold water.”
Similarly, in the examples of anaphora across *versus*-divisions *dominus* and *si* each introduce a series of closely parallel clauses: 18

Anaphora, id est, relatio, cum eadem dictio bis saepiusque per principia uersuum repetitur, ut (Ps. 26.1): “Dominus inluminatio mea et salus mea, quem timebo? Dominus defensor uitae meae.” Et infra (Ps. 26.3): “Si consistant aduersum me castra, non timebit cor meum; si exsurgat in me proelium, in hoc ego sperabo.” (DST I.vi, pp. 146)

Anaphora, that is, carrying back (reference), is when the same word is repeated twice or more at the beginning of each verse, as in: “The Lord (is) my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord (is) the defender of my life.” And further down: “If they should make camp against me, my heart will not fear; if a battle should rise up against me, in this will I hope.”

Anaphora within a *versus*, or what Bede calls “at the beginning of each sensus,” articulates a series of parallel noun phrases:

Fit autem anafora et in eodem per principia sensuum uersu, ut (Ps. 28.4-5): “Vox Domini in uirtute, uox Domini in magnificentia, uox Domini confringentis cedros.”

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18Bede will introduce another way of viewing the syntactical parallelism in Ps. 26.3 when he discusses hypozeuxis, below.
Quae figura in psalmis usitatissima est. Hanc quidem epanaforam uocant. (DST I.vi, pp. 146-147)

Anaphora also happens within the same verse at the beginning of each sense-unit, as in: “The voice of the Lord in strength, the voice of the Lord in majesty, the voice of the Lord breaking the cedars.” This figure is used very frequently in the Psalms. It is also called epanaphora.

Epanalepsis, repetition at the beginning and end of one *versus*, marks out the boundaries of that *versus*:

Epanalepsis est sermonis in principio versus positi in eiusdem fine repetitio, ut (Phil. 4.4): “Gaudete in Domino semper, iterum dico, gaudete.” Et in psalmo (Ps. 82.2): “Deus, quis similis erit tibi? Ne taceas neque conpescaris, Deus.” (DST I.vii, p. 147)

Epanalepsis is the repetition of a word from the beginning of a verse at the end of the same verse, as in: “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice!” And in the Psalm: “O God, who will be like you? Do not keep silent and do not keep still, O God.”

I do not want to claim that the doctrine of these figures of repetition offers any internal or external structural or functional analysis of the units delimited by the repetitions. In the discussion of anaphora, for example, we are not told that the repeated “si”s introduce a
pair of protases in a pair of parallel and independent conditional sentences. What the
taxonomy of figures of repetition does offer the less experienced reader, however, is a
practical tool for tracking through continuous text. In the absence of a pedagogy of syntax
that would have allowed the analysis of “heavy groups” as functional sentence constituents, the reader who had been trained to be alert to simple kinds of rhetorical repetition would have been able to construct stepping-stones for himself across the text. Seeing the second “si” in Psalm 26 or the second “Hierusalem” in Psalm 121, the reader could say to himself, “Here comes something else like or closely related to what I’ve just read.” Remembering the types of schema and representative examples he had learned, he could test what he saw against those templates and ask whether he was still within the same verse or had moved on to a new one, and check the extent and contents of the previous unit in the repetitive series to see how large a group he should expect to find next.

This kind of road-mapping of unfamiliar passages – finding signposts and being alert to whether the road is about to bend – is of obvious utility in reading a foreign language, whether for silent reading or for reading aloud. This would be especially true when reading

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19 The kind of analysis permitted by the doctrine of figures is comparable to that identified by Thomas Habilne in the ancient analysis of the periodic sentence: units of similar rhetorical “weight” are seen as comparable for the purposes of the linear processing of the period. Habilne (The Colometry of Latin Prose. University of California Publications: Classical Studies 25. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), following Eduard Fraenkel, emphasizes the importance of regularly-occurring signals – discourse particles, rhythmical patterns, and various kinds of repetition and parallelism – in marking out the period into processable chunks.

20 Sentence constituent: “a group of words that can be replaced by a single word without a change in function and without doing violence to the rest of the sentence.” The definition is H. and E. Clark’s, quoted in Habilne, p. 13.
from a text with limited visual aids. Bible manuscripts written *per cola et commata* and Latin hexameters written in verse lines both provide significant visual help in breaking the text into manageable chunks; punctuation marks supplement or duplicate these divisions. Absent these aids, the simpler rhetorical figures serve for the reader of long-line text a role analogous to that of morphological analysis in the reading of *scriptio continua*, offering aural/visual cues to the boundaries of significant units.

**Figures of Sound**

The figures of sound serve a similar function to the figures of repetition in signposting continuous text. Like prose rhythm, they would be both an ornament and an aid

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22 Marsden suggests (*Text of Old Testament*, 33-34) that the division of biblical text *per cola* was seen in late antiquity as serving the needs of less experienced readers who could not understand punctuation marks – although the if we take Isidore as evidence, the study of punctuation would seem to have been a fairly elementary and widely-studied subject. The divisions would have been of little help in reading faultlessly – *inculpabiliter* is Cassiodorus’s term (*Institutiones* 1.12.4) – had they not corresponded with meaningful units. Malcolm Parkes calls attention to the parallels between early punctuation techniques and the kind of rhetorical marking taught in the grammars: Malcolm B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West*. (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1992), 11, 68. E. Otha Wingo contrasts grammatical theory of punctuation with the practice in the oldest Latin manuscripts and inscriptions in *Latin Punctuation in the Classical Age*. (The Hague: Mouton, 1972) 20-28.
to the processing of long periods, but an aid more accessible to non-native Latin speakers.\textsuperscript{23} Here again, the units across which these sound effects are said to be deployed are of interest.

As Bede notes, figures of sound tend to be language-specific and it is consequently tricky to find examples in Latin, the second or third language into which his scriptural citations have been translated.\textsuperscript{24} So, for example:

\begin{quote}
Paromoeon est cum ab hisdem litteris diuersa uerba ponuntur. Quae nimirum figura, quia ad positionem litterarum pertinet, melius in ea lingua qua Scriptura est edita\textsuperscript{25} requiritur. Habemus tamen nos et in translatione unde demus exemplum. Dictum est in psalmo (Ps. 117.26-27): “Benediximus uos de domo Domini; Deus Dominus et
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{24}Tricky for me to render the figures in English, too.

\textsuperscript{25}Remigian gloss: “edita: id est composita.”
inluxit nobis.” Et (Ps. 57.5): “Ira illis secundum similitudinem serpentis, sicut aspidis surdae.” (DST I.xi, pp. 148-49)

Paromoeon is when different words are spelled beginning with the same letter. No doubt this figure, which pertains to spelling, is better looked for in the language in which Scripture was produced. Nonetheless, we have that in the translation from which we might give an example. In the Psalm it is said: “We have blessed you from the living-place of the Lord; the Lord God has also illumined us.” And also: “Their wrath is similar to that of a serpent, similar to that of a stone-deaf asp.”

Paromoeon and homoeoptoton (harmony of endings in a continuous series of words) have limited structural function. Homoeoteleuton, however, Bede crafts into a punctuating figure. Interestingly, homoeoteleuton is said to be not just any repetition of endings, but repetition in specific places, linking the middle and end of a unit, whether a metrical unit or a sense unit. Bede reverts to the metrical sense of *versus*, apparently contrasting it with *sententia*.

Homoeoteleuton in a metrical verse produces a leonine hexameter:

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26 *Positio* in ancient grammar is “spelling” when applied to letters and I have rendered so in this context; see for example Eutyches in the preface to his treatise *De verbo*, GL 5: 448 “...tam uocales quam consonantes ante o uel or finalem positionis uerbi considerans;” “…considering the vowels as well as the consonants before the final o or or in the spelling of the verb.” The term *positio* is also used of the placement of words or feet within larger units, and I have translated this “placement” or “use” according to context.
Homoeoteleuton, that is, like ending, is the name of the figure when the middle and end of a verse or sentence finish with a similar syllable. Both poets and prose authors often use this figure, poets in this manner:

“The sea-blue paths lay open through the divided ocean.”;

whereas in prose it reinforces the correlation of a pair of tanto...quanto clauses:

...oratores uero ita (Gregory, Moralia in Iob 23.1): “Beatus Iob Deo soli sibique cognitus in tranquillitate ad nostram notitiam perducendus tactus est uerbere, ut odorem suarum uirium tanto latius spargeret, quanto more aromatum melius ex incensione flagraret.” Quo schemate ipse, qui hec dixit, beatus papa Gregorius saepissime usus fuisse reperitur. Et huiusmodi orationes esse reor, quas Hieronimus concinnas retororum declamationes appellat. (DST I.xii, p. 149)

...and prose authors thus: “Blessed Job, known to God and himself alone in his tranquillity, when he was to be brought to our notice, was struck with a rod, so that he

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27 As the Remigian commentary notes here, “oratores” are “qui in prosa scribunt”.

might scatter the odor of his strength more widely, the sweeter he burned like spices from the fire.” The blessed Pope Gregory, who said these things, is found to have used this figure very often. And I believe it is passages of this sort which Jerome called “elegant declamations of rhetors”.

Bede’s usage here differs from that of Donatus. Donatus’s definitions of homoeoteleuton and homoeoptoton resemble each other and Bede’s emphasis on the placement of the repetitions in the verse or in the sentence is lacking (Holtz, Donat, pp. 665-66):

Homoeoteleuton est cum simili modo dictiones plurimae finiuntur, ut (Ennius, Scenica 390-91):

eos reduci quam relinqui, deuehi quam deseri
malui

Homoeoteleuton is when very many words end in the same way, as in:

I have preferred that they be brought back rather than abandoned, carried out rather than deserted.

Homoeoptoton est cum in similes casus exeunt uerba diversa, ut (Ennius, Annales 1.103):

maerentes flentes lacrimantes commiserantes

Homoeoptoton is when different words end in the same case, as in:
mourning, weeping, crying, commiserating

These definitions reflect a distinction in ancient rhetoric according to which homoeoteleuton came to be restricted to verbal endings and homoeoptoton to nominal endings, although the phrasing of Donatus’s definitions does not make this clear. In shifting the emphasis away from the purely morphological, Bede recasts a figure of sound as a principle for recognizing and ordering short syntactical units.

**Figures of Syntax**

A few of these figures serve a function similar to that of the figures of repetition and sound: they help the reader formally to delimit manageable and meaningful units of text. Such is the case with polysyndeton (“oratio multis nexa coniunctionibus,” “discourse bound with many conjunctions,” p. 151) and its opposite dialyton, or asyndeton (“figura superiori contraria, carens coniunctionibus,” “the opposite figure to the one above, lacking conjunctions”, p. 151). Both the presence and the notable absence of conjunctions call attention to the joins in a series of short clauses in parataxis, as in the illustration of dialyton:

(Ps. 65.1-3) “Iubilate Deo omnis terra, psalmum dicite nomine eius, date gloriam laudi eius; dicite Deo: quam terribilia sunt opera tua.” (DST I.xvii, p. 151)

“Rejoice in the Lord every land, say a Psalm in his name, give glory to his praise; say to God: How terrible are your works.”

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28Holtz, Donat, 197-98.
Of a middling level of complexity are figures of small-scale rhetorical variation using case rection and concord. These range from word-by-word lexical or morphological variation to syntactical strategies like zeugma. On the simpler end is schesis onomaton, a grouping of different nouns or noun phrases of similar meaning:

Schesis onomaton est multitudo nominum coniunctorum diuerso sono unam rem significantium, ut (Is. 1.4): “Vae genti peccatrici, populo gravi iniquitate, semini nequam, filiis sceleratis.” (...) (DST I.x, p. 148)

Schesis onomaton is a multitude of nouns together, with different sounds but signifying one thing, as in: “Woe to a sinful nation, to a people heavy with iniquity, to a wretched seed, to impious children.”

Polyptoton is variation on a single word through different cases:

Polyptoton est, cum diuersis casibus uariatur oratio, ut Apostolus (Rom. 11.36): “Quoniam ex ipso et per ipsum et in ipso sunt omnia; ipsi gloria in saecula saeculorum.” (...) (DST I.xiii, pp. 150-151)

Polyptoton is when discourse is varied with different cases, as the Apostle: “Since of him and through him and in him are all things, glory to him for ever.”
Hirmos, which even Louis Holtz admits is a somewhat mysterious term, seems to be a freer variation without grammatical constraints on the form of the variant terms. The sustaining of the theme provides unity within which variation can happen:

Hirmos, id est, conuenientia, dicitur, quando series orationis tenorem suum usque ad ultimum seruat, nulla uidelicet alia uel causa uel persona mutata, ut in psalmo (Ps. 53.1, 3): “Deus, in nomine tuo saluum me fac,” et cetera, usque dum ait, “non proposuerunt Deum ante conspectum suum.” Orat enim propheta ut auxilio Domini saluatoris ab hostium insecutione liberetur. (DST I.xv, p. 151)

Hirmos, that is, fitting together, is when a series in discourse keeps its course right to the end, that is, with no subject or person changed, as in the psalm: “O God, in your name, save me,” etc., all the way to where he says, “They have not set God before their sight.” For the prophet prays that with the help of the Lord Savior he might be liberated from persecution by his enemies.

The figures zeugma, hypozeuxis, and syllepsis are more purely syntactical in nature, although they have in common with the figures of repetition that they can encompass different sized units of language. Bede’s discussion of zeugma draws a parallel between the relatively simple phenomenon of a compound subject answered by a single verb, on the one

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29 “assez énigmatique”: Donat, p. 190.
30 The part Bede omitted is: “Deus exaudi orationem meam; auribus percipe uerba oris mei; quoniam alieni insurrexerunt aduersum me, et fortes quaesierunt animam meam;” “God hear my prayer; receive the words of my mouth with your ears; for foreigners have risen up against me, and the strong have sought my soul.”
hand, and, on the other, a long series of parallel substantive relative clauses likewise recapitulated and sharing a single predicate:

Zeugma, id est coniunctio, dicitur figura, quando multa pendentia aut uno uerbo aut una sententia concluduntur. Verbo, ut Apostolus ait (Ephes. 4.31): “Omnis amaritudo et ira et indignatio et clamor et blasphemia tollatur uobis.” Sententia autem, ut psalmista praeponens (Ps. 14.2-3): “Qui ingreditur sine macula et operatur iustitiam; qui loquitur ueritatem in corde suo,” et cetera, ad ultimum ita concludit (Ps. 14.5): “Qui facit haec non mouebitur in aeternum.” (DST I.ii, p. 144)

Zeugma, that is, joining, is the name of the figure when many dependent words are concluded by one verb or one sentence. By a verb, as when the Apostle says: “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and blasphemy be removed from you.” With a sentence, as when the Psalmist begins: “He who walks without sin and works justice; he who speaks the truth in his heart...”, etc., and ends thus: “He who does these things shall never be moved.”

Although Bede does not have the terminology to express the functional parallelism of the nouns and the noun clauses, the fact that zeugma can cover both classes gives them an effective likeness within the terms of the doctrine of figures. (The use of the terms dependentia and concluduntur in this definition points to a binary relationship between subject and predicate which we will explore further under synchisis, below.) The explanation
of hypozeuxis, the opposite of zeugma, also applies one figural construct to different-sized syntactical units, words, phrases, and clauses:

Ypozeuxis est figura superiori contraria, ubi singula uerba uel sententiae singulis quibusque clausulis subiunguntur. Verba, ut in psalmo (Ps. 144.6-7): “Virtutem terribiliorum tuorum dicent, et magnitudinem tuam narrabunt. Memoriam abundantie suauitatis tuae eructabunt, et iustitiam tuam exultabunt.” Et Apostolus (1 Cor. 13.8), “Siue prophetiae,” inquit, “euacuabuntur; siue linguae, cessabunt; siue scientia, destructur.” Sententiae, ut (Ps. 26.3): “Si consistant aduersum me castra, non timebit cor meum; si exsurgat in me proelium, in hoc ego sperabo.” (DST I.iii, pp. 144-45)

Hypozeuxis is the opposite figure to the one above, when each word (or verb) or sentence is subjoined to each and every clausula.31 Verbs, as in the psalm: “They will speak of your terrible acts, and they will tell of your greatness. They will utter the memory of your abundant goodness, and they will extol your justice.” And the Apostle: “If there are prophecies, they will be voided; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be destroyed.” Sentences, as in: “If they should make camp against me, my heart will not fear; if a battle should rise up against me, in this will I hope.”

31 Hypozeuxis can be regarded as the “opposite” of zeugma in the sense that the latter relies on a single term being supplied across a series of clauses, whereas the former allows a different term to each of a series of clauses.
Syllepsis is the construction ἀπὸ κοινοῦ, in which a word is attracted into a construction not proper to itself under the influence of a neighboring construction. This sense is not entirely clear from Bede’s definition, but in his first example, adtendite, which could properly govern aurem, has been made to govern legem meam, and in his second, the singular gerundive faciendam governs both uindictam, with which it agrees, and increpationes, with which it does not. This figure is, in a way, a strictly grammatical one that might be more at home among the oddities of case usage gathered in the De orthographia. Its rhetorical cast comes from the fact that it happens in contact with other constructions. I suspect, from Bede’s examples, that he thought of syllepsis as an aspect of variatio.

Sylempsis est, cum casus discrepantes in unam significantiam congregamus, ut (Ps. 77.1): “Adtendite, populus meus, legem meam; inclinate aurem uestrām.” Et item (Ps. 149.7): “Ad faciendam uindictam in nationibus, increpationes in populis.” Quod enim ait “ad faciendam uindictam,” singularis numeri est; quod addit “increpationes,” pluralis. (DST I.iii, pp. 145)

Syllepsis is when we gather different declensional forms into one meaning, as in: “Observe my law, my people; incline your ear.” And again: “To execute vengeance upon the nations, punishments upon the peoples.” For when he says “to execute vengeance,” it is singular in number; when he adds “punishments”, it is plural.

Bede’s third and fourth examples are a sort of “false concord of sense”:

Syllepsis also happens in sense, that is, when one is given for many or many for one. One for many, as in: “He sent a dog-fly against them and it devoured them; a frog, and it destroyed them,” even though he did not send one fly or frog to destroy the Egyptians, but countless ones. Again, many for one, as in: “The kings of the earth stood by, and the princes gathered together.” For the apostles understood “kings” to have been written for “Herod” and “princes” for “Pilate”. Read their Acts. (viz. Acts 4.26-27.)

This last example is of interest chiefly because the grammatical construction of the Psalm is made to depend on its New Testament exegesis.

32 The Psalter iuxta LXX has cynomiam for muscam, but is otherwise as Bede cites it here. Note that the version iuxta Hebraios has the plural: “omne genus muscarum”...“ranas”.
**Prolepsis, Hyperbaton, and the problem of ordo**

The syntactical figure prolepsis and the trope hyperbaton deal with disturbances to the ordo uerborum, which, I suggested above, is not always what it appears. The ordo against which the figures and tropes are measured is unexpressed except through the examples given of figurative or tropic ordo. Those examples suggest that the standard of measurement shifts, too, from figure to figure.

Bede’s discussion of prolepsis does not invoke ordo explicitly, but appeals to related concepts. Prolepsis is a dislocation in sequence between grammatical forms and their referents, or a violation on a strictly grammatical level of ordo rerum, the order of real-world things to which linguistic sequences refer. In Bede’s first example, a pronoun (whose discourse function is to refer to someone already named) appears before its named referent:

Prolepsis, id est, praeoccupatio siue praesumptio, dicitur figura, quando ea quae sequi debent anteponuntur, ut in psalmis: (Ps. 86.1-2) “Fundamenta eius in montibus sanctis; diligit Dominus portas Sion.” Anteposuit “eius” et postea cuius, id est Domini. (DST I.i, pp. 143-44)

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33 Donatus’s definition does use the term ordo: “Prolepsis est praesumptio rerum ordine secuturarum.” “Prolepsis is an anticipation in the order of the things that are to follow.” On ordo rerum and other ordines, see the introduction to Anna A. Grotans, and David W. Porter, eds., The St. Gall Tractate: A Medieval Guide to Rhetorical Syntax, (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1995). I discuss recent studies on ordo and its relationship to evidence from syntactical glossing in Part III.
Prolepsis, that is, seizing beforehand or anticipation, is the name of the figure when those things that ought to follow are placed first, as in the Psalms: “His foundations are in the holy mountains; the Lord loves the gates of Zion...” For he put “his” first and afterwards whose, that is, the Lord’s.

In the second example, Bede’s point seems to be that the perfect tense is used when the event referred to has not yet taken place – the event being the division of Christ’s garments to which Psalm 21 is seen as referring:

Et alibi (Ps. 21.18): “Diuiserunt sibi uestimenta mea, et super uestem meam miserunt sortem,” pro “diuident” et “mittent”. (DST I.i, pp. 143-44)

And elsewhere: “They have divided my garments among themselves, and have cast lots upon my clothing,” instead of “will divide” and “will cast”.

The third example invokes that most stereotypical (to our ears) Biblical tic, the initial conjunction:

Et Hiezechiel nihil anteponens ita incipit (Ez. 1.1): “Et factum est in tricesimo anno.” Sermonem coniunctionis posuit, nihil aliud ante cui hic subiungeretur praeponens.

(DST I.i, pp. 143-44)

34 The “tic” arises from the attempt to translate the underlying Hebrew construction; see Thomas O. Lambdin, Introduction to Biblical Hebrew. (New York: Scribner, 1971), 162. It is interesting that what feels odd to us in English also struck Bede as odd in Latin.
And Ezekiel, putting nothing before, begins thus: “And it happened in the thirtieth year...” He placed a conjunction, putting nothing else before it to which this statement was to be joined.

Prolepsis is a figure and hyperbaton a trope, but they have much in common. The introduction to the general term hyperbaton points to the same kind of dislocation in ordo that we saw in prolepsis:35

Hyperbaton est transcensio quaedam uerborum ordinem turbans, cuius species sunt quinque: hysterologia, anastrophe, parenthesis, tmesis, synchisis. (DST II.x, p. 158)

Hyperbaton is a kind of transgression that disturbs the order of words. It has five varieties: hysterologia, anastrophe, parenthesis, tmesis, synchisis.

Hysterologia, indeed, seems to be precisely a “proleptic” failure of the order of words to reflect the order of events:

Hysterologia uel hysteroproteron est, sententiae cum uerbis ordo mutatus, ut (Ps. 23.5): “Hic accipiet benedictionem a Domino, et misericordiam a Deo salutari suo.” Prius enim Dominus miserando iustificat impium et sic benedicendo coronat iustum. (DST II.x, p. 158)

35The classification of hyperbaton as a trope had been controversial since antiquity; see Holtz, Donat, 212-13.
Hysterologia or hysteron-proteron is when the order of a statement with its words is changed, as in: “He will receive blessing from the Lord, and mercy from God his salvation.” For the Lord first justifies the wicked man by being merciful and then crowns him with blessing when he has been justified.

The difference is that in prolepsis there was conflict between the ordo rerum and the grammatical form of the expression, whereas in hysterologia the sequence of events depicted in the statement conflicts with the “real” sequence.36

In anastrophe, quite another ordo is violated. The disruption of order is of “words only”:

Anastrophe est uerborum tantum ordo praeposterus, ut (Iob 5.8): Quamobrem ego deprecabor Dominum” pro “ob quam rem.” (DST II.x, p. 158)

Anastrophe is the order of the words only back to front, as in: “Which for reason I beseech the Lord” instead of “for which reason”.

There is no sense here that the “anastrophe” quamobrem is actually the usual, idiomatic Latin word order; it is, instead, a deviation from the ordo internal to the parts of speech as categories, what Carolingian grammar would call the ordo naturalis.37 Quamobrem violates

36 Compare Bede’s example of “syllepsis in sensu” discussed above.
37 See the discussion in Grotans and Porter, 12-20.
this metalinguistic **ordo** because the **quam** is separated from its head and the **preposition ob** is ejected from first place in its phrase.

Parenthesis is a violation of sequence in the sense that it interrupts the flow of discourse. To be able to identify it when it appeared would have been especially important in a world without parentheses ()

Parenthesis est interposita ratiocinatio diuisae sententiae, ut (Gal. 2.7-9): “Cum uidissent gratiam quae data est mihi (qui enim operatus est Petro in apostolatum circumcisionis, operatus est mihi inter Gentes), Iacobus, Cephas, et Iohannes dextras dederunt mihi et Barnabae societatis.” (DST II.x, p. 158)

Parenthesis is an interposed thought that divides a sentence, as: “When they had seen the grace that was given to me (for he who worked through Peter for the mission to the circumcised worked through me among the gentiles), Jacob, Cephas, and John gave their right hands to me and to Barnabas in friendship.”

Tmesis is to a single word what parenthesis is to a sentence. It is not a syntactical phenomenon in any sense, but it is a disturbance of **ordo** precisely analogous to the larger-scale disturbances, and it also offers Bede an occasion to call attention to the multiple language substrates in Scripture:
Tmesis est unius conpositi aut simplieris uerbi sectio, una dicione uel pluribus interiectis. Quae species non facile in Scripturis sanctis, quae ex Hebraeo uel Graeco sermone translatae sunt, potest inueniri. Est autem huiusmodi:

“Hiero quem genuit solymis, Dauitica proles,”

hoc est “Hierosolymis.”

38 (DST II.x, p. 159)

Tmesis is the cutting of a single compound or simplex word, with one or more words interposed. This variety of trope cannot easily be found in the holy scriptures, which are translated from the Hebrew or the Greek. There is this sort of thing, though:

“David’s race, Jeru- born to -salem,”

that is, “Jerusalem”.

If hyperbaton is disturbed ordo, then synchisis is ordo gone all to pieces, or, as Bede says (p. 159), “Synchisis est hyperbaton ex omni parte confusum,” “Synchisis is hyperbaton thoroughly mixed up.” If disturbed word order were merely a matter of discrete morphological elements being displaced – say, a noun and its modifier gratuitously placed fifteen lines apart – then the solution to extreme hyperbaton, while time-consuming, would be a simple morphological task, well within the bounds of elementary teaching on parsing, concord, and government. Instead, Bede’s example of synchisis is an instance of extreme opacity on many interpretive levels. In his choice, we see the rationale for classifying hyperbaton as a trope, rather than a scheme: synchisis is fundamentally a disturbance in meaning, and distended word order is one of the symptoms of that disturbance.
Bede’s treatment of synchisis is a passage lifted intact from Augustine’s exposition of Psalm 67. Kendall suggests that Bede may have intended to come back to this passage and revise it to integrate it better with his own text. I do not find such an explanation necessary. Bede’s purposes are well served when he rounds out his section on hyperbaton by showing a master exegete at work, bringing to bear all the interpretive skills with which the DST is concerned. The Psalter verse under discussion is a notoriously intractable one. The complete text of the verses in the Roman Psalter is as follows:

12 Dominus dabit verbum evangelizantibus uirtute multa  
13 rex virtutum dilecti et speciei domus diuidere spolia  
14 si dormiatis inter medios cleros  
pennae [uel pinnae] columbae deargentatae  
et posteriora dorsi eius in pallore auri  
15 dum discernit Caelestis reges super eam  
iuie dealbabuntur in Selmon

(Bede cites “Si dormiatis” down to “Selmon”, but verses 12-13 also enter into Augustine’s discussion.)

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38 The example is a made-up one deriving from the common source of Bede, Julian of Toledo, et al. See Schindel, “Die Quellen,” p. 183.
40 Libri II De arte metrica, 25.
The Psalter text is ambiguous on several levels. The most basic problem in the passage is form identification: *pennae deargentatae* may be genitive singular, nominative plural, or vocative plural, and Augustine entertains all three possibilities. (There may also be doubt as to whether *deargentatae* modifies *pennae* or *columbae*, but Augustine does not broach this question in the quoted passage. This small matter of concord does not, in any case, disturb the meaning or the syntax of the rest of the passage.) On the syntactical level, although the beginnings of several clauses can be discerned ( *si dormiatis*...; *dum discernit*...; and the independent clause that includes *niue dealbabuntur in Selmon*), the boundaries of those clauses are unclear. Does *pennae* belong in the *si*... clause? Is it the subject of *dealbabuntur*? The possibilities are tied up with the morphological identification of *pennae* and also with the broader interpretation of the passage. The relationship of the clauses to one another can only be solved with recourse to interpretive criteria: what intended statement might be supported by the available components?

The terms in which Augustine engages these questions are fascinating. The general problem, Augustine says, is the logical sequence of the elements:

“Prius enim hic,” ut Augustinus ait (Aug. in Ps. 67.17), “quaerendus est ordo uerborum, quomodo finiatur sententia; quae utique pendet, cum dicitur: ‘Si dormiatis...’” (DST II.x, p. 159)
“Here first,” as Augustine says, “we must ask about the order of words, how the sentence is completed; which is surely left unresolved when it says: ‘If you should sleep...’

Pendet sounds familiar enough. We are used to “dependent” in the sense of “syntactically subordinate to” or “governed by” another term, and since the question at hand is the relationship of the conditional clause to the whole sentence, this might seem to be a reasonable interpretation of pendet. The pairing with finiri, however, suggests that a different view of the internal relationships of the sentence is at work. Sententia is a statement of a complete thought or complete meaning. If a sententia pendet, then it is unresolved or incomplete from the standpoint of comprehension. Compare Isidore’s statement on the requirements for readers in De ecclesiasticis officiis 11:

[Lector] erit doctrina et libris imbutus, sensuum ac uerborum scientia perornatus, ita ut in distinctionibus sententiarum intelligat ubi finiatur junctura, ubi adhuc pendat oratio, ubi sententia extrema claudatur.”

[A reader] will be imbued with learning and books, highly adorned with the knowledge of meanings and words, so that in the divisions of the sentences he can understand where a segment is complete, where the discourse is still left hanging, where the end of the statement is rounded off.

41Ed. Christopher M. Lawson, CCSL 113, at p. 70.
Isidore’s usage also echoes the much later terminology for the *subdistinctio* and *distinctio*, the lowest and highest levels of punctuation in the simple three-point system. Bene Florentinus, author of the thirteenth-century *Digest of Candelabrum*, calls the *subdistinctio*, marking a comma or short phrase when a complete meaning amounting to a colon has not been reached, a *distinctio dependens*; and the *distinctio* or full stop, used when the *sententia* or *periodos* is complete, a *distinctio finitiva*.42

A point of entry for the solution to the general question of the *ordo uerborum* is the identification of *pennae*:


Then we must ask whether when it says “wings of a dove covered with silver,” we are to understand “of the feather”, in the singular, or “the wings”, in the plural. But the singular is excluded by the Greek, where the spelling is read as entirely plural. But it is still uncertain whether it is “the wings” or “O wings!” so that he would seem to be addressing the wings.

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42 Cited in Grotans and Porter, 9.
The reference to the Greek text underlying the Latin is an exegetical technique Bede will explore further in the De orthographia. Here it excludes the genitive singular from consideration but leaves unresolved the construction of pennae with the various clauses. One possibility is that the pennae are to be construed with what goes before (the verses that Bede did not quote); another is that they are to be taken with what follows. The term Augustine uses here, too, is finiatur: the present sententia may be “concluded” or “completed” by the preceding words or by the following words:

[Adhuc incertum est] Vtrum ergo uerbis quae praecesserunt finiatur ista sententia, ut ordo sit: “Dominus dabit uerbum euanegelizantibus uirtute multa, si dormiatis inter medios cleros, o uos pennae columbae deargentatae,” an his quae sequuntur, ut ordo sit: “Si dormiatis inter medios cleros, pennae columbae deargentatae niue dealbabuntur in Selmon...” (DST II.x, pp. 159-60)

[It is still uncertain,] therefore, whether this statement is completed by the words that preceded it, so that the sequence would be: “The Lord will give the word to those evangelizing with much virtue, if you should sleep amid lots, O wings of a dove covered with silver,” or by those that follow, so that the sequence would be: “If you should sleep amid lots, the wings of a dove covered with silver will be whitened by the snow on Zalmon...”

The ordo is determined by the decision whether to construe pennae with what comes before or with what comes after it. The actual sequence of the words in the Psalm does not change
with the various possible *ordines* (“ut ordo sit...ut ordo sit...”), but the meaningful grouping on which analysis is possible shifts, and with it both the constructions and the sense of text.

Augustine still needs to clarify how he is taking *pennae* in these proposed *ordines*. If *pennae* is nominative, as in the second *ordo* proposed above, it is the subject of *dealbabuntur* (and so is completed by what follows). However, this leaves the question who is meant by the second person subject of *dormiatis*. This needs to be understood from what went before, i.e., the utterly opaque verse 13 (“rex virtutum dilecti et speciei domus diuidere spolia”). In the passage quoted in the DST, Augustine refers back to verse 13 to identify the subject of the second-person verb as “qui speciei domus tamquam spolia diuiduntur”. Bede’s quotation of Augustine continues:

...“Si dormiatis inter medios cleros, pennae columbae deargentatae niue dealbabuntur in Selmon,” id est, “ipsae pennae dealbabuntur, si dormiatis inter medios cleros,” ut illis hoc dicere intellegatur, “qui speciei domus tamquam spolia diuiduntur,” id est, “Si dormiatis inter medios cleros, o uos qui diuidimini speciei domus per manifestationem Spiritus ad utilitatem, ut alii quidem detur per Spiritum sermo sapientiae, alii sermo scientiae secundum eundem Spiritum, alii fides, alii genera curationum in eodem Spiritu, et cetera; si ergo uos dormiatis inter medios cleros, tunc pennae columbae deargentatae niue dealbabuntur in Selmon.” (DST II.x, p. 60)

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43 Bede does not quote Augustine’s treatment of verse 13, but the gist of Augustine’s argument there is that the fruits of Christ’s victory over Hell are like spoils divided among the members of the Church.
“If you should sleep amid lots, the wings of a dove covered with silver will be whitened by the snow on Zalmon,” that is, “the wings themselves will be whitened, if you should sleep amid lots,” so that he should be understood as saying this to “those who are divided like spoils of the beauty of a house,” that is, ‘If you should sleep amid lots, O you of the beauty of a house who are divided through the manifestation of the Spirit for the purpose that to one man may be given by the Spirit a word of wisdom, to another a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith, to another kinds of healings in the same Spirit, etc.; if, then, you should sleep amid lots, then the wings of a dove covered in silver will be whitened by the snow on Zalmon.”

On the other hand, if the pennae are the subject of dormiatis, but the si dormiatis clause is to be construed with what follows, who is the subject of dealbabuntur? The unexpressed subject, “men” is to be “understood”, subintellegendur. The need to “understand” or “supply” a missing subject arises from the grammatical awareness that there are not enough nominatives for every clause; the identity of the missing subject is explained with further citations from scripture:

Potest et sic intellegi: “Si uos, pennae columbae deargentatae, dormiatis inter medios cleros, niue dealbabuntur in Selmon,” ut subintellegendur homines, qui per gratiam remissionem accipiunt peccatorum. Vnde etiam de ipsa ecclesia dicitur in Cantico Canticorum (Cant. 3.6): “Quae est ista quae ascendit dealbata?” Promissio quippe Dei
tenetur per prophetam dicentis (Is. 1.18): “Si fuerint peccata uestra tamquam foenicium, sicut niuem dealbabo.” (DST II.x, p. 160)

It can also be understood this way: “If you, wings of a dove covered with silver, should sleep in the midst of lots, they will be whitened by the snow on Zalmon,” so that “homines” is to be understood, who through grace receive remission of sins. Whence it says also concerning the church itself in the Song of Songs: “Who is this who ascends covered in white?” Indeed God holds out his promise through his prophet, saying: “Though your sins should be like scarlet, I will purify them like snow.”

Once the idea has been raised that something is unexpressed, another possibility suggests itself. The participle deargentatae could be part of a finite verb, with eritis unexpressed. Again, the scriptural basis for the grammatical solution needs explaining:

Potest et sic intellegi, ut in eo quod dictum est: “pennae columbae deargentatae,” subaudiatur “eritis,” ut iste sit sensus: “Vos qui tamquam spolia speciei domus diuidimini, si dormiatis inter medios cleros, pennae columbae deargentatae eritis,” id est, “in altiora eleuabimini, conpagini tamen ecclesiae cohaerentes.” Nullam quippe aliam melius hic intellegi puto columbam deargentatam quam illam de qua dictum est (Cant. 6.8): “Vna est columba mea.” Deargentata est autem, quia diuinis eloquiis erudita; “eloquia” namque “Domini” alio loco dicuntur (Ps. 11.6) “argentum igne examinatum terrae, purgatum septuplum.” Magnum itaque aliquod bonum est
dormire inter medios cleros, quae nonnulli duo Testamenta esse voluerunt, ut dormire
sit inter medios cleros in eorum Testamentorum auctoritate requiescere, id est,
utriusque Testamenti testimoniis adquiescere, ut quando aliquid ex his profertur et
probatur, omnis intentio pacifica quiete finiatur. (DST II.x, p. 160-61)

It can also be understood this way, so that in the part that says “wings of a dove
covered with silver”, “you will be” is to be understood, so that this would be the
sense: “You who are divided like spoils of the beauty of a house, if you should sleep
amid lots, you will be as the wings of a dove covered with silver,” that is, “you will
be raised to higher things,” still adhering to the structure of the church.” Indeed I
think the silver-covered dove is here understood as nothing other than that of which it
is said: “My dove is only one.” She is covered with silver because she is educated in
divine eloquence; for “the eloquence of the Lord” is elsewhere called “silver refined
in fire of the earth, purified seven times.” And so it is some great good thing to sleep
amid lots, which many people want to mean the two Testaments, so that to sleep amid
lots would mean to rest on the authority of those Testaments, that is, to acquiesce to
the witness of either Testament, so that when something is brought forward and tested
from them, the whole intention might be completed in peaceful quiet.

The notion of “subaudition” raised by Augustine here is a practical one with a long
exegetical pedigree. It is used equally in scriptural and poetic exegesis, appearing for
example in Servius’s commentary on Vergil and in Jerome’s Quaestiones Hebraicae in
Reges. Unlike eclipse, the syntactical phenomenon to which it responds, subauditio does not have the status of a technical term in grammar. It can be used not only of an “eclipsed” term that must be supplied, but of contextual or extra-textual information that must be understood for correct interpretation of the text. So Isidore, discussing vocal expression in the passage quoted above “on readers” from the De officiis (CCSL 113:70):

Multa enim sunt in scripturis quae, nisi proprio modo pronuntientur, in contrariam recidunt sententiam, sicuti est (Rom. 8.33): “Quis accusabit adversus electos Dei? Deus qui iustificat.” Quod si quasi confirmative, non seruato genere pronuntiationis suae, dicatur, magna peruersitas oritur. Sic ergo pronuntiandum est ac si diceret, “Deusne qui iustificat?” ut subaudiatur: “Non”.

For there are many things in Scripture which, unless they are pronounced in the proper way, relapse into the opposite meaning, as is the case with: “Who will bring a charge against the elect of God? It is God who justifies.” If this is said as if asking for confirmation, without preserving the manner of its pronunciation, a great perversity arises. For in this way it has to be pronounced as if he were saying, “Is it God who justifies?” so that “No” would be understood.

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44“Eclipsis est defectus quidam necessariae dictionis, quam desiderat praeclara sententia, ut (Aen. 1.37) ‘haec secum’: deest enim ‘loquebatur’.” “Eclipsis is a certain absense of a necessary word, which the precise meaning desires, as in ‘these things to herself’; for ‘she said’ is lacking. Donatus, Ars maior III.3 (Holtz, Donat, p. 659).
Conclusion

By the end of DST, Bede has given his intermediate readers and baby exegetes an unsystematic but serviceable set of tools with which they could begin to get a grip on longer passages of text. His explanations disclose powerful concepts which are not explained in beginner’s grammars but which must have played an important role in classroom practice: the cluster of notions that go under the name ordo, the syntactic relationship pendens-finiri/concludi, and the idea of subaudition. He has called upon no less a personage than Augustine to demonstrate the need for resourcefulness in the face of hard Latin. Finally, he has introduced here and there the need for cross-language comparison. This will be a prominent feature of the De orthographia, in which Bede’s focus on textual problems is narrower but his audience is more sophisticated.

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45 See for example tmesis, above, and the discussion of paranomasia at 147-48:


Paronomasia, that is, derivation, is the name of the figure when a word that is almost alike is used in a different sense, that is to say, with a letter or syllable changed, as in Psalm 21 according to the Hebrew original: “They confided in you and were not confounded.” The prophet Isaiah demonstrated this figure most elegantly in his own language, when he said: “I looked for him to do judgment, and behold iniquity, and I looked for righteousness and behold a cry.” For in Hebrew judgment is “mesphat”, iniquity is “mesaphaa”, righteousness is “sadaca”, and cry is “suaca”.