Carolingian Developments and Later Anglo-Saxon England

More than two centuries of curricular development lie between the composition of Bede’s grammatical handbooks and the Latin studies of the Benedictine Reform, at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period. Anglo-Saxons both contributed to and benefited from that development. At the end of the eighth century, Alcuin went from York to Charlemagne’s court and became a prime mover of the Carolingian renovatio studii. From the mid-tenth century, Continental scholars and Englishmen who had studied abroad began to bring Carolingian books and expertise back to the monastic schools of England.¹ The Carolingian period is marked by significant advances in the study of syntax, both because Priscian’s Institutiones grammaticae was now widely available and

widely studied for the first time in the medieval west, and because the new interest in philosophy and dialectic supported syntactical inquiry in the more advanced schools. But the period was also characterized by significant continuities with the earlier, Insular grammatical curriculum. Bede’s *De arte metrica* and *De schematibus et tropis* were standards in their fields and received extensive commentary by Carolingian masters. Insular elementary grammars continued to find audiences in the first Carolingian generations. Donatus’s *Ars minor* and *maior* were adapted and supplemented in slightly different ways, but they continued to be the bedrock of elementary grammatical instruction.

Vivien Law has said that in grammatical studies the Carolingian period is, above all, one of diversity: more ancient grammars were available in more centers and more approaches to supplementing the basic grammars were developed. We could perhaps add to this that linguistic study was carried out in more areas of the curriculum: it is in the ninth century, especially, that we see linguistics used speculatively in conjunction with the new sciences of logic, dialectic, and philosophy. This emerging linguistic speculation, which was in part inspired and supported by readings of Priscian’s *Institutiones grammaticae*, has been the subject of several important studies in recent years, and I signal some of these below in my discussion of Priscian. But there are questions yet to be answered about how students at the Latin-learning stage were taught syntax in this period of efflorescence of syntactical study. It is unclear, as yet, to what extent and at what rate

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Priscian’s teaching on syntax filtered down to substantially alter the way Latin reading was taught to beginners. If this filtering did happen in Carolingian schools, it is unclear how far schools in England benefited from any new developments.

Two important editions of abridgments of Priscian are currently underway which should contribute to a clearer answer to these questions. The first is an abridgment of the Institutiones grammaticae made by Alcuin in the earliest years of Carolingian study of Priscian; the second is a rather different Priscian abridgment that was the source of Ælfric’s Grammar. Both these abridgments, and the relationship of the second to Ælfric’s Grammar, should show what elements of Priscian’s advanced grammar teachers thought useful and worth conveying to lower-level students. Besides these abridgments, there is other evidence from the later Anglo-Saxon period from which we can get a sense of the place of new syntactical doctrine in the practical teaching of Latin. Syntactical glossing in manuscripts written or used in Anglo-Saxon England shows significant continuities with the kind of grammatical doctrine we saw in Donatus and Isidore in the Introduction, but it also gives evidence both of doctrine that was new in the Carolingian period, and of techniques unattested elsewhere in the grammatical sources. Finally, from the school of Ramsey in late-tenth and early-eleventh-century East Anglia, we have a test case in the transmission of Continental learning to English students: Abbo of Fleury’s Quaestiones grammaticales and his English protégé Byrhtferth’s Enchiridion offer hints, if no more than that, of the balance between the avant-garde and the old-fashioned in post-Carolingian grammar teaching.

In this concluding chapter I would like briefly to suggest avenues for further research in these areas. I will look first at Priscian’s syntactical doctrine – not so much the nitty-gritty of his two books on syntax, but the principles by which he allows the incorporation of syntax as a separate subject into the plan of a traditional partes-grammar. Then I will consider what we know so far about the Alcuinian and Ælfrician abridgments of Priscian, and the extent to which they incorporate or exclude syntactical doctrine. In a brief glance at the field of syntactical glossing, I will suggest points of contact and discontinuity between glossing practice and the doctrine of the grammars. Finally, Abbo and Byrhtferth, master and student, will provide a last check on the relative proportions of continuity and change in grammar teaching from the beginning of the Anglo-Saxon period to the end.

**Priscian’s *Institutiones grammaticae***

Priscian’s *Institutiones grammaticae* (IG) is a huge work of eighteen books which, as modern commentators often observe with dismay, occupies nearly a thousand pages in Keil’s edition.\(^5\) For the prospective student of syntax, the IG offers a radical innovation: two books (17 and 18) devoted explicitly to syntax: broadly speaking, Book 17 is devoted to the syntax of the noun and Book 18 to that of the verb. Books 1 through 16 of the IG form a giant partes-grammar, comparable in subject matter to Donatus’s *Ars maior* I and II but enormously enlarged: Book 1 covers *vox* and *littera*; Book 2 the syllable, *oratio*.

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and the noun; Books 3 through 7 continue the treatment of the noun, including the noun’s
derivational sub-types, classification into declensions, and inflectional morphology.
Books 8, 9, and 10 are devoted to the verb, Book 11 to the participle, and books 12 and
13 to the pronoun. Book 14 through 16 cover the preposition, adverb and interjection, and
conjunction, respectively.

The very vastness of this grammar, even without the new material in Books 17
and 18 (De constructione, known in the Middle Ages as Priscianus minor), presented
challenges as the process began of integrating the IG into the grammatical curriculum.6

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6 For the manuscript transmission of the Institutiones, see Margaret Gibson, “Priscian, Institutiones
Codici di Prisciano. (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1978). Important studies that touch on the
Carolingian reception of the IG include Margaret Gibson, “Milestones in the Study of Priscian, circa 800-
circa 1200,” Viator 23 (1992): 17-33; eadem, “Rag. Reads Priscian,” Charles the Bald: Court and
Law, “Carolingian Grammars and Theoretical Innovation,” Diversions of Galway: Papers from the 5th
International Conference on the History of Linguistics, eds. Anders Ahlqvist, and et al. (Amsterdam: John
Benjamin, 1992) 27-38; eadem, “The Study of Grammar,” Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation,
the Concept of Transitivity in Greek and Latin Grammars,” Papers on Grammar 3 (1990): 19-56; eadem,
“On the Origins of the Medieval Concept of Transitivity,” Diversions of Galway: Papers on the History of
Dialectic in Carolingian Commentaries on Priscian's Institutiones Grammaticae,” History of Linguistic
Thought in the Early Middle Ages, ed. Vivien Law. Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of
Benjamins, 1993) 145-191; Anneli Luhtala, “Considerations on Word Order in the Early Middle Ages,”
Beiträge zur Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft 3 (1993): 209-240; Lief Feltenius, Intransitivities in

On Irish-Continental Priscian studies, see inter alia Paul Edward Dutton, “Evidence that
Dubthach's Priscian Codex Once Belonged to Eriugena,” From Athens to Chartres: Neoplatonism and
On the one hand, the IG is stuffed with Greek examples, which could be – indeed had to be – eliminated for the average Carolingian student.\footnote{Priscian taught in early-sixth-century Constantinople, and his grammar was designed for highly literate Greek-speaking students.} On the other hand, even after one has stripped away the Greek material, the IG offers a goldmine of material to supplement what Donatus and his commentators had offered previously. Aspects of Priscian’s doctrine on the \textit{partes} differed from that of Donatus – most obviously the order in which he discusses the parts of speech – and early Carolingian grammarians were eager to throw themselves into this metagrammatical conflict.\footnote{See pp. 16-17, above.} Given the amount of material Priscian offered, and the fact that sixteen books’-worth of that material was prepackaged in the familiar \textit{partes} format, it is no surprise that much of the interest in the first generations of Carolingian study of Priscian focused on the first sixteen books and ignored or used only lightly the material in Books 17 and 18. Still, there were masters who were interested in the \textit{De constructione}, the expatriate Anglo-Saxon Alcuin prominent among them.

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7 Priscian taught in early-sixth-century Constantinople, and his grammar was designed for highly literate Greek-speaking students.

8 See pp. 16-17, above.
Besides devoting a section of his work to syntax as a separate subject, Priscian wove into the organization of the IG as a whole elements of syntactical doctrine which gained some currency even where the *De constructione* was not yet, or not fully, assimilated. Two aspects of syntactical doctrine in IG that seem particularly to have intrigued later grammarians were Priscian’s teaching on the order of the *partes* and his rationale for integrating the two books on syntax with the earlier books on smaller elements of discourse. The latter derives from the linguistic philosophy of Priscian’s chief source and inspiration, Apollonius Dyscolus, who believed that the way linguistic elements combine to form larger units was strictly analogous at every level, from individual letters all the way up to continuous text. Apollonius calls this *analogia* and Priscian calls it *ratio*. He explains the principle near the opening of Book 17:

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9 It has often been noted, and rightly, that the single greatest innovation in the approach to grammar that Priscian offers is the pervasive use of dialectic in the IG, and in particular his self-consciousness about terminology and definitions. The interest in dialectic sparked by Priscian’s methodological reflectiveness contributed to the Carolingian rediscovery of dialectic as an art in its own right, and this would eventually dovetail with new, philosophical or speculative approaches to syntax. However, the integration of dialect and grammar was slow to take root. Dialectic was applied in the first place to debates over the status of the traditional grammatical terminology, rather than to the creation of a newly sophisticated analysis of the syntax of statements that would be of use to students. On the place of dialectic in Carolingian grammar, see esp. Anneli Luhtala, “Syntax and Dialectic in Carolingian Commentaries on Priscian's Institutiones Grammaticae,” *History of Linguistic Thought in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Vivien Law. Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science, Series III: Studies in the History of the Language Sciences 71, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1993) 145-191, and Vivien Law, “Carolingian Grammars and Theoretical Innovation,” *Diversions of Galway: Papers from the 5th International Conference on the History of Linguistics*, eds. Anders Ahlqvist, and et al. (Amsterdam: John Benjamin, 1992) 27-38.

In supra dictis igitur de singulis vocibus dictionum, ut poscebat earum ratio, tractavimus; nunc autem dicemus de ordinatione earum, quae solet fieri ad constructionem orationis perfectae, quam admodum necessariam ad auctorum expositionem diligentissime debemus inquirere, quod, quemadmodum litterae apte coeuntes faciunt syllabas et syllabae dictiones, sic et dictiones orationem. Hoc enim etiam de litteris tradita ratio demonstravit, quae bene dicuntur ab Apollonio prima materies vocis esse humanae individua. Ea enim non quocumque modo iuncturas ostendit fieri literarum, sed per aptissimam ordinationem, unde et “litteras” verisimiliter dicunt appellari, quasi “legiteras”, quod legendi iter praebent ordine congruo positae. Nec non etiam auctiores literis syllabae idem recipiunt, cum ex eis coeuntes iuncturae pro debito dictionem perficiunt. Igitur manifestum quod consequens est, et etiam dictiones, cum partes sint per constructionem perfectae orationis...aptam structuram recipiant...Est enim oratio comprehensio dictionum aptissime ordinatarum, quomodo syllaba comprehensio literarum aptissime coniunctarum; et quomodo ex syllabarum coniunctione dictio, sic etiam ex dictionum coniunctione perfecta oratio constat. (IG 17.i.2-4, GL 3: 108-109.)

In what we said above, we treated the individual forms of words, as their ratio demanded; but now we will speak of their ordering, which generally comes about for the construction of complete oratio, which we ought to inquire into very diligently as in the highest degree necessary to the exposition of the auctores, because, just as letters fitting neatly together make syllables, and syllables words,
so also words make oratio. For the transmitted ratio makes this clear about letters, which are rightly called by Apollonius the first, indivisible matter of the human voice. For this ratio shows that letters are not just put together any which way, but by the best ordering, whence they say that litterae are rightly called as it were legiterae, because when placed in a suitable order they show the way to read. Furthermore, syllables, made larger by letters, assume the same role when combinations of them coming together of necessity form words. Therefore it is clear that it follows that words, too, since through construction they are part of complete oratio...take on a fitting structure...For oratio is a gathering of words most fittingly ordered, just as a syllable is a gathering of letters most fittingly joined; and just as from the joining of syllables a word is made, so also from a joining of words complete oratio is made.

Apollonius was so deeply invested in this doctrine that he believed that solecism was a kind of syntactical “misspelling”: his treatise on syntax is devoted to proving the operation of analogy in this sense. Priscian adopts Apollonius’s doctrine as a rationale for the structuring of the IG, that is, as a way of linking the two books De constructione to the partes-format grammar that precedes them. The explanation of analogy quoted above is followed by several pages (GL 3: 109-115) documenting different kinds of correspondence between features of the Latin spelling rules and features observable in the way parts of speech combine with one another. For example, syncopated spellings are analogous to syntactical ellipsis; metathesis in spelling is analogous to variations in the mutual ordering of parts of speech; and just as the letters can be divided into vowels,
which can be sounded on their own, and consonants, which must be sounded with other letters, so there are parts of speech (nouns and verbs) which form self-sufficient statements, and others (like adverbs) that make sense only when combined with other partes. After several such examples, Priscian takes up the question of the ordering of these analogous elements, and his discussion of ordering also touches on the self-sufficiency of the noun and the verb:

Solet quaeri causa ordinis elementorum, quare a ante b et cetera; sic etiam de ordinatione casuum et generum et temporum et ipsarum partium orationis solet quaeri. Restat igitur de supra dictis tractare, et primum de ordinatione partium orationis, quamvis quidam suae solacium imperitia quaerentes aiunt, non opporere de huiuscemodi rebus quaerere, suspicantes fortuitas esse ordinationum positiones. Sed quantum ad eorum opinionem, evenit generaliter nihil per ordinationem accipi nec contra ordinationem peccari, quod existimare penitus stultum. Si autem in quibusdam concedant esse ordinationem, necesse est etiam omnibus eam concedere. Sicut igitur apta ordinatione perfecta redditur oratio, sic ordinatione apta traditae sunt a doctissimis artium scriptoribus partes orationis, cum primo loco nomen, secundo verbum posuerunt, quippe cum nulla oratio sine iis completur, quod licet ostendere a constructione, quae continet paene omnes partes orationis. A qua si tollas nomen aut verbum, imperfecta fit oratio; sin autem cetera subtrahas omnia, non necesse est orationem deficere, ut si dicas, “idem homo lapsus heu hodie concidit,” en omnes insunt partes orationis absque coniunctione, quae si addatur, aliam orationem exigit. Ergo si tollas nomen aut
verbum, deficiet oratio, desiderans vel nomen vel verbum...Ante verbum quoque necessario ponitur nomen, quia agere et pati substantiae est proprium, in qua est positio nominum, ex quibus proprietas verbi, id est actio et passio, nascitur. (IG 17.ii.12-14, GL 3: 115-116)

People often ask about the cause of the ordering of elements, why a before b, etc.; likewise people ask, too, about the ordering of the cases and genders and tenses and of the parts of speech themselves. It remains therefore to treat the aforementioned, and first of all the ordering of the parts of speech; albeit some people, taking refuge in their ignorance, say that one ought not to ask questions about this sort of thing, suspecting that the places in the orders are fortuitous. But as for their opinion that nothing generally happens through ordering nor sins against ordering, to think that is completely stupid. For if they concede that there is ordering in certain things, they must concede that there is ordering in everything. Therefore just as complete oratio is brought about by an apt ordering, so the parts of speech have been transmitted by the most learned writers of artes in an apt ordering, when they put the noun in first place and the verb in second, since indeed no oratio is complete without these. This can be shown by a construction that contains almost all the parts of speech. If you take from it the noun or the verb, it becomes an incomplete oratio, but if you take away all the rest, the oratio is not necessarily deficient, as if you were to say, “The same man slipping alas fell down today.” Look: all the parts of speech are here except the
conjunction; if you added a conjunction, it would require another _oratio_.\footnote{This is a crucial clue to exactly what Priscian means by _oratio_: when he says that the addition of a conjunction would require another _oratio_, it sounds as if he is using _oratio_ to mean “clause”: this would be in keeping with the doctrine that the noun and the verb are sufficient for _perfecta oratio_, and comes closer than anything we have met so far to a unit defined purely or mainly on syntactical criteria.} If you take away the noun or the verb, then, the _oratio_ will be deficient, wanting either the noun or the verb…Also, the noun is by necessity placed before the verb, because to act and to suffer are proper to substance, in which the placement of the noun resides, and out of these the property of the verb, that is acting and suffering, is born.

Priscian then goes through his example sentence, showing what happens as you remove each part of speech. Several features of this passage require comment. By a sort of grammarian’s sleight of hand, Priscian here transitions neatly from Apollonian analogy to ordering, to a distinction between essential and dispensable parts of speech, to a demonstration of the utility of this concept. In doing so, he switches back and forth between linguistic and metalinguistic criteria. At first, after his preliminary discussion of analogy, it looks as if he is going to talk about the ordering (_ordinatio_) of the parts of speech as used in actual sentences. Instead, having asserted that there is order in everything and that it is stupid to think otherwise, he appeals for proof to the authority of grammarians, who have handed down the parts of speech in no random order – that is, the order in which they list the parts of speech. (Priscian himself presents the _partes_ in an order which conflicts with that of Donatus, and the conflict would exercise generations of commentators.) But, having appealed to the authority of the received order, he gives a
rationale for that order which actually does have significant real-world syntactical utility: the noun and the verb come first in the transmitted order of the partes because they are the two indispensable parts of speech.

The mutual ordering of the noun and verb are then explained in the Aristotelian terms of substance and accidence – a different kind of criterion yet again from syntactical self-sufficiency and from the metalinguistic sequence of grammatical categories as such. The order noun-verb, while philosophically defensible and even necessary, is of little more utility in dealing with the reality of Latin texts than are the grammatical lists of the partes.12

All of these approaches to ordinatio acquired followings in the Carolingian period, although to various degrees. The question of the ordering of the partes by the grammarians was by far the most popular, since it brought Priscian and Donatus into conflict. The application of Aristotelian categories to grammatical categories inspired great excitement among the Scotti peregrini in the more advanced schools of the mid-ninth century, what Margaret Gibson has called the crucial period for the assimilation of Priscian into the schools.13 The sufficiency of the noun and the verb, and the use of a sentence with all the parts of speech to illustrate this, found favor with the occasional,


idiosyncratic Carolingian master.\textsuperscript{14} The idea of analogy among all the elements of language took on a life of its own, quite apart from its Apollonian underpinnings.\textsuperscript{15} It seems that none of these necessarily had to travel in company with all of the substance of the remainder of the \textit{De constructione}. Priscian’s IG was mined for various kinds of doctrine. It was perhaps inevitable, given the scope of the IG, that it would rarely be comprehended entire.

\textbf{Digesting the \textit{Institutiones}: Alcuin’s Priscian}

One approach to the assimilation of the IG was to abridge Priscian’s text to a more manageable size. Abridgments of Priscian were made from the earliest years of Carolingian work on the IG, and continued to be a useful tool in adapting the IG for classroom use. We have Priscian-abridgements associated with two of the most prominent Anglo-Saxon grammarians. Alcuin made an abridgment of Priscian in the 790s, when he was working on establishing the text of the IG. At the far end of the Anglo-Saxon period, it has been shown that the immediate source of Ælfric’s \textit{Grammar} was an abridgment known as the \textit{Excerptiones de Prisciano}. These abridgments offer two different approaches to Priscian’s text: the compiler of the \textit{Excerptiones} drew on sources other than the IG, and assimilated Priscian’s material to fit more closely with the traditional model of the school grammar. Alcuin’s abridgment, on the other hand, takes the format of the two books of \textit{Priscianus minor} as its template, and adapts the traditional

\textsuperscript{14} E.g. the author of the \textit{St. Gall Tractate}; see my discussion under Syntactical Glossing, below, 217-218.

\textsuperscript{15} See my discussion of Ælfric’s \textit{Grammar}, below, 205-210.
partes material to what was newest in Priscian’s treatment. Editions are under way of both of these abridgements, and an assessment of their methods and significance will have to await their editors’ conclusions. I present here a synopsis of the most recent studies on these texts.

Alcuin’s Priscian abridgement survives in three St. Amand manuscripts of the early ninth century, and is titled in one of the manuscripts Albini in Priscianum. In 1976, J.R. O’Donnell published a list of the chapter headings of Alcuin’s abridgement of Priscian and edited a sample chapter. Louis Holtz is preparing an edition of Alcuin’s Priscian; what follows is a summary of his remarks on the text in a 1997 conference paper.

Holtz cited evidence from Alcuin’s correspondence and from the forms in which Priscian citations appear in Alcuin’s Dialogus Franconis et Saxonis de octo partibus

16 The manuscripts are Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, MSS 391 (374), 392 (375), and 393 (376). Mario de Nonno has called attention to a fourth manuscript, a palimpsest possibly from Tours, in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 7502. The cluster of manuscripts from St. Amand may well result from the friendship of Alcuin with Arno, Abbot of St. Amand from 782 and later Bishop of Salzburg. On Alcuin’s association with Arno and the Salzburg and St. Amand scriptoria, see E.A. Lowe, ed., Codices Latini Antiquiores X (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), viii-ix.


orationis\textsuperscript{19} to suggest that Alcuin was at work on the text of the IG in the latter half of the 790s. The limited manuscript survival of Alcuin’s Priscian abridgment has heretofore suggested that the work achieved little popularity outside St. Amand. However, Holtz has said that as he works on Alcuin’s text, it is becoming clear that citations in other Carolingian grammars that have been thought to be from the IG proper are instead from Alcuin’s version. O’Donnell’s list of chapter headings of the abridgment obscured the changes Alcuin made to Priscian’s text, and thus obscured possible later use of Alcuin’s version of Priscian. Holtz is convinced that when Alcuin’s text is established, we will find more and more evidence that Alcuin’s abridgment was used by others.

Most interestingly for our purposes, Holtz argues that the plan of Alcuin’s abridgment was built around the framework of IG 17 and 18, the two books De constructione. O’Donnell was puzzled by the two-book arrangement of Alcuin’s work, which, from the chapter headings, looked like it involved much repetition and no clear division of material between the two books.\textsuperscript{20} Holtz argues that Alcuin’s Book 1 corresponds broadly to IG 17 and the beginning of 18; the transition to Alcuin’s Book 2 comes in the middle of IG 18, where Priscian begins discussing the construction of the verb. The result is two books on syntax ordered according to the partes: the syntax of parts of speech that have case is treated in Book 1 and that of parts without case is treated in Book 2. Into this two-book framework, Alcuin has brought forward relevant material from IG 1-16: as Holtz, puts it, Alcuin has tracked down Priscian’s internal citations of

\textsuperscript{19} PL 101:854-902

\textsuperscript{20} O’Donnell 222-223.
the earlier books and made material from Priscianus maior available in the places where Priscian refers to it in the minor.

The Excerptiones de Prisciano and Ælfric’s Grammar

A second abridgment of Priscian is also in the process of being edited. It is now recognized that the proximate source of Ælfric’s Grammar is a Priscian abridgment known as the Excerptiones de Prisciano, which survives in three eleventh-century manuscripts. David W. Porter is preparing an edition of the Excerptiones. Meanwhile, we can look to Vivien Law’s 1987 study for a sense of what the plan of the abridgment is. According to Law, the Excerptiones includes material not only from the Priscianus maior and minor, but also from the Partitiones (Priscian’s exhaustive commentary on the first line of each book of the Aeneid) and De accentibus, as well as Donatus and another, unidentified source. Law shows that the compiler of the Excerptiones uses Donatus’s doctrine, rather than Priscian’s, as a framework, and often prefers Donatus’s

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21 Vivien Law, “Anglo-Saxon England: Aelfric's Excerptiones de arte grammatica anglice,” Histoire Épistemologie Langage 9 (1982): 47-71. The relationship between the Excerptiones and Ælfric’s Grammar was first suggested by Max Förster, “Die altenglische Glossenhandschrift Plantinus 32 (Antwerpen) und Additional 32246 (London),” Anglia 41 (1917): 94-161, at 98-99. The manuscripts of the Excerptiones are Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS nouv. acq. lat. 586; Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum, MS M 16.2 + London, British Library, MS Additional 32246; and Chartres, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 56 (83). The first two are of English provenance, the last from the region of Chartres. The Chartres manuscript has been missing since World War II and has been declared destroyed by the librarians there, but not all scholars have given up hope that it will surface one day. (Ron Buckalew, personal communication.)

22 GL 3: 457-515

23 GL 3: 517-528.

24 Law, “Aelfric’s Excerptiones” 52.
selection and ordering of material to Priscian’s where they are in conflict. “Such a change,” she says, “signals a step down in the level of the intended audience: an attempt has been made to render the doctrine of the Institutiones grammaticae accessible to those who had advanced little beyond the level of the Ars maior.”

Certainly the arrangement is less adventurous than Alcuin’s, and may reflect less of a complete immersion in and commitment to the internal rationale of the IG. Again, a true assessment of the methods and purposes of the Excerptiones will have to await Porter’s edition. Porter is now suggesting that Ælfric himself may have been the compiler of the Excerptiones; if so – and Porter admits that the hypothesis is unprovable – the content and methods of the abridgment will be of even greater interest for the history of Anglo-Latin grammar. The question at stake in the attribution of the Excerptiones is to what extent Ælfric had himself mastered the IG, the new text of the Carolingian schools, and other, rarer texts like the Partitiones. Even if he was working from an abridgement and compilation by someone else – an abridgment of Continental origin, as Law suggested – he was

25 ibid., 53.

26 David W. Porter (personal communication). Law (“Ælfric’s Excerptiones” 66, n. 10) notes that Chartres 35, a now-lost twelfth-century ms, seems from a catalogue description to have contained a text related to that of the Excerptiones, and may preserve a state of the text intermediate between that of the Excerptiones as they survive and that of Ælfric’s Grammar – possibly Ælfric’s own redaction of the Excerptiones from which he went on to make his translation into OE.


28 Law, “Ælfric’s Excerptiones,” 52.
benefiting from Carolingian work on the IG. If he made the compilation himself, that
would suggest the kind of command of the whole of the IG that Alcuin showed in his
Priscian abridgment.

Ælfric’s Grammar itself, Law notes, steps down the difficulty of the IG even
further towards the Donatan classroom standard.29 Its emphasis is overwhelmingly on
Latin morphology.30 Ælfric includes a version of Priscian’s explanation of analogy from
the opening of IG 17 in the early pages of his Grammar, but the alterations he makes to
the statement confirm Law’s sense that Ælfric was adapting the IG to resemble the more
familiar elementary grammars. In his opening chapter De littera, Ælfric says:

    We todælað þa boc to cwydum and syðdan ða cwýdas to dælum, eft ða dælas to
    stægefegum and syðdan þa stægefegu to stafum: þonne beoð ða stafas
    untodæledlice, forðan ðe nan stæf byð naht, gif he geð on twa. (Grammar, pp. 4-5)

29 ibid., 55. Gabriele Knappe comes to a similar conclusion after comparing the Grammar to the Paris ms
of the Excerptiones; see Gabriele Knappe, Traditionen der klassischen Rhetorik im angelsächsischen
30 The Grammar is edited in Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar, ed. Julius Zupitza. trans. Introduction by
Helmut Gneuss. 2nd ed. (Berlin: Max Niehans, 1966). In addition to Law’s remarks in “Ælfric’s
Excerptiones,” important studies of the Grammar’s content and Old English terminology are Teresa Pàroli,
“Le opere grammaticali di Aelfric.” Annali Istituto Universitario Orientale, Napoli, Sezione Germanica 10
(1958): 453-462, which together largely supersede Lawrence Kennedy Shook, “Ælfric's Latin Grammar:
A Study in Old English Grammatical Terminology,” Harvard University, 1939.
We divide books into statements and statements into parts of speech, and then parts of speech into syllables and syllables into letters: then letters are indivisible, since no letter is anything if it splits in two.

In a sense, there could be no clearer statement of the doctrine of analogy, and the point is apropos for a chapter on letters, the minimal unit of language. Ælfric has neatly reversed Priscian’s formula – that we combine letters into syllables, syllables into partes, and so on – so that it leads not up the scale to construction, but down the scale to the irreducible starting point. But in separating Priscian’s account of analogy from its place at the beginning of the De constructione, Ælfric has lost the association with syntax as a subject worth studying in its own right, with the partes as constituents of a clause, and with any of the doctrine of the partes’ ordering that allowed Priscian to clarify the function of the noun and the verb in a clause. Either Ælfric or the compiler of his source has decided that all this new syntactical teaching is far beyond the kind of help his pueruli need.

The pueruli do get help, of course, in a form not offered by any of the Grammar’s predecessors: every point of doctrine and every example is systematically translated into the vernacular. As has often been observed, there is little contrastive analysis of the structures of Latin and Old English: the Old English is a tool to elucidate the meaning of the Latin. This must have been useful to students not only in mastering the target language, but in mastering the superstructure of technical Latin terms that came with – or
constituted – grammar. The mixture of loan-translation and explanation of terms that provides the bulk of the Old English in the Grammar is as it were a published version of classroom practice that must have been going on for centuries. Indeed, it is hard to imagine non-Latin-speaking students learning Latin from marginally-Latin-speaking teachers purely by reference to Donatus unglossed, either orally or in writing.32

Occasionally in Ælfric’s Grammar there is a particularly happy coincidence of useful examples with useful translations. In the chapter in noun declensions (“Incipit quinque declinationes nominum,” pp. 21 ff.), Ælfric presents case forms with their traditional tags, the appropriate form of the demonstrative hic-haec-hoc to signal case and gender, o to mark the vocative, and ab to distinguish the ablative from the dative, and he translates each noun phrase into OE. These form identifications are followed by an explanation of the meaning and function of each case with examples, as in Isidore’s Etym. I.vii.31-32: 33

hic homo equitat: †es man rit (this man rides)...huius hominis filius: †isses mannes sunu (this man’s son)...huic homini do equuum: †issum men ic forgye hors (I give this man a horse)...quid das mihi? hwæt gyfst ðu me? (what do you give me?) unum librum do tibi: ane boc ic ðe gife (I give you a book.) (Grammar, pp. 22-23)

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31 An exception is Ælfric’s remark that sometimes the same words have different genders in Latin and in English (De generibus III, pp. 18-19). See Vivien Law’s comments on this point in “Ælfric’s Excerptiones,” 60.

32 See p. 17, above.

33 See p. 43, above.
and so on. Isidore’s examples were more helpful than anything in Donatus’s account of the cases, but Ælfric’s vernacular equivalents go a step further towards making it clear exactly what each case is for, not only because he translates the examples but because he gives several permutations of each usage.

This is an improvement in utility not because the description of syntax has suddenly been informed by an improved theoretical grasp of the linguistics underlying the target language, but because of the pedagogical acumen of its author. Like Bede with the inherited stock of metrical material, Ælfric made good use of the tools at his disposal. It will be interesting to see, when we have the whole of the Excerptiones to compare to the Grammar, just what the range of tools was from which Ælfric chose, and at what stage in the composition of the Grammar he made his choices.

**Syntactical Glossing**

The use of the vernacular, which emerges into the written canon of artes with Ælfric’s Grammar, would have given learners a way to associate familiar meanings with Latin syntactical patterns, without necessarily inducing any particularly clear understanding of the internal structure of Latin statements. The translated examples of Latin constructions in the Grammar serve a similar function to the classroom dialogues of the Colloquies, or indeed to any Latin text which Anglo-Saxon students would have
memorized and had glossed for them. That is, the juxtaposition of Latin expressions with their vernacular equivalents does not, on the surface of it, force the student to grapple with the peculiarly Latin internal structure of the target text, unless it was part of the teacher’s technique to point out similarities and differences between the two languages’ ways of expressing the same thing. It is reasonable to expect that a teacher like Ælfric, who was so acutely aware of the problems of translation, would have done precisely that. To draw those comparisons is not the method of the Grammar, however, or of grammars in general. However, we do have in the manuscript record a store of glossing that takes the Latin on its own terms, that works directly with the structure and patterns of Latin texts.

Syntactical glossing is the use of symbols and words in manuscripts of Latin texts to elucidate aspects of the structure of Latin sentences. The practice appears to have been widespread in the early and high middle ages: an Anglo-Saxon reader would have been likely to encounter syntactical glosses in imported manuscripts and glosses transmitted with their texts from imported exemplars, as well as to glosses recently entered by readers who shared his native tongue. Syntactical glossing can employ symbols that

34 Scott Gwara and David Porter discuss “conversational Latin” and Ælfric’s teaching in the introduction to their Anglo-Saxon Conversations: The Colloquies of Ælfric Bata. (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1997), at 24-43.

link sentence elements, alphabetic or numeric systems that indicate an order for construing, and glosses using words that supply information important to understanding the syntax. Early investigators of syntactical glosses tended to assume that the glossing was uniquely a feature of the culture in whose manuscripts they had encountered it. Martje Draak, for example, considered what she called “construe marks” in a number of ninth-century Irish or Irish-Continental manuscripts to be aids particularly designed for Irish-speaking readers. She asserted that “some groups of the glosses and all the ‘construe marks’ can only be understood if one keeps in mind in which ways the syntax of Old-Irish differs from Latin syntax.” Fred Robinson, in a seminal article on syntactical glosses in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, speculated about the use of such glosses as evidence for vernacular word order, but was hesitant about pushing such a claim. His speculations have yielded occasional promising results: Patrick O’Neill convincingly argued that syntactical glosses in the Lambeth Psalter seem designed to coordinate with that text’s continuous Old English lexical gloss.

36 Gernot Wieland has an extensive catalogue of the types of glossing in his The Latin Glosses on Arator and Prudentius. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1983): 98-146. I mention several of the most important types below.


38 Draak 4.


More fruitful on the whole, however, have been approaches to syntactical glossing that treat them as evidence of pedagogical practice. In this category are syntactical glosses that closely mirror the techniques of the basic grammars and the reading strategies of Bede’s treatises, as well as others that have no counterpart in the grammars. Some of the most common types of syntactical glosses supply the lacunae that we observed in the basic grammars’ approach in the Introduction.

Glosses that signal a revised sequence of sentence elements provide a good test case for the relationship between syntactical glossing and grammatical doctrine. To take one example, Fred Robinson suggested that there are several Anglo-Saxon, Welsh, and Irish manuscript glosses that mark a verb-subject order, and suggested that this might reflect “a pedagogical principle (‘first locate the verb, then construe the rest of the sentence’) which could have originated on the continent or anywhere else...”\textsuperscript{41} The “find the verb first” principle is familiar to all modern Latin students, and so when we encounter it in medieval glosses, it strikes us as a natural way to approach a long and complex sentence. An example of the “find the verb first” principle can be found on fol. 2v of a mid-ninth-century Breton copy of Eutyches’ \textit{Ars de verbo}, now the first section of St. Dunstan’s Classbook, (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct.F.4.32) and thus

\footnote{Robinson 474. Gernot Wieland has more examples of glosses that give priority to the verb; see for example \textit{The Latin Glosses on Arator and Prudentius}. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1983) 103.}
demonstrably a syntactically-glossed Continental manuscript seen in Anglo-Saxon England.  

Without closely following the glosses, I translate:

But although the observation of the final syllable of the second person, from which writers of artes wanted the conjugations to be recognized, is among the Romans entirely uncertain – since we are compelled by no reason to say whether the verb scribo, scribis, is of the third conjugation, or scribas, of the first conjugation, and to say whether cubo has cubas in the second person, or cubis – I will endeavor to show certain distinctions among the conjugations based on the first person, as far as I am able, considering vowels as much as consonants before the final o or or, in the spelling of the verb.

Despite (or perhaps because of) having followed the “principle” correctly, the glossator has not been entirely successful at teasing out the structure of this sentence. (It should be noted that the g and s are missing from the sequence, which may indicate that there has been some disturbance in the copying of the gloss.) Following the principle underlying verb-first glossing, he goes right for the main verb, conabor, and next to its infinitive complement, ostendere. The verb and its complement are further linked by a matching pair of subscript dot-commas. The glossator then correctly fills out the members of the main clause between conabor and ostendere, giving prima and persona the same letter, to show that they belong together. The same thing happens with rationale...aliaqua above; sit incerta get a pair of k’s, but the glossator fails to sign observatio, which incerta modifies, with a linking letter. He loses control completely of the three subordinate clauses that begin the sentence. In trying to control a very long sentence by a single sequence, the glossator has actually obscured the relationship of the subordinate clauses.

43 ms securi
Successful or not, the glossator seems to be sticking to a find-the-verb-first principle, and the fact that he does so despite its limited utility suggests that he has been taught to apply the technique reflexively. But this “pedagogical order” does not appear as one of the ordines of the treatises we have been considering: it is not Augustine and Bede’s clarifying ordo for elucidating difficult hyperbata; it is not the metalinguistic ordo of the parts of speech discussed by the Donatus-commentators or the alternative, substance-and action ordinatio advocated by Priscian that gives priority first to the subject and afterwards to the verb. Robinson must be right, that “find the verb first” is the principle at work, but, lacking other evidence, we must conclude for the time being that this was a technique transmitted in the classroom and among glossators.

In the Eutyches glosses quoted above, the sequence-gloss incorporates another frequent syntactical glossing technique: the use of matching symbols to link pairs of words that “go together”. This idea of linking in binary pairs is well within the practice of the grammars, but as used by the glossators the linking system goes beyond what the grammars offered. For example, in the Eutyches glosses, the same sequential letter appears above nouns and the adjectives that modify them (prima...persona; ratione...alia). Gernot Wieland has called attention to a number of glosses – usually in

44 See pp. 135-149, above.
45 Anneli Luhtala treats these competing doctrines on the order of the parts of speech in “Considerations on Word Order in the Early Middle Ages,” Beiträge zur Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft 3 (1993): 209-240. With her, I refer to them as “metalinguistic” orders because their rationales derive entirely from characteristics said to attach to the partes as categories, whether etymological affinities between the names of the partes or the Aristotelian notions of substance and action. In no case does the rationale spring from
the form of matching arrangements of subscript dots - that serve the same function, to identify noun-adjective concord.\(^{46}\) Recall that in Donatus, the noun-adjective relationship was obscured by the fact that adjectives were classed as a subset of nouns.\(^{47}\) Similarly, dot-glosses often link relative pronouns with their antecedents: Draak was particularly intrigued by these glosses and thought that they responded to the special concerns of Old Irish speakers, but Wieland also documented a large group of these glosses in CUL Gg.5.35, which is a late Anglo-Saxon manuscript.\(^{48}\) The problem may well be simply that Latin pronominal reference is difficult to grasp – especially where the pronoun is at some remove from its antecedent - for anyone to whom the principles have not been clearly explained. Pronominal reference, especially in relative constructions, is a weak point in the grammars; linking glosses on the pronoun would reinforce the kind of exemplification of the use of the pronoun that Isidore offers.\(^{49}\)

**Ordo** glosses and linking glosses provide just a few examples of techniques of analysis that have left traces in manuscripts but that are scantily documented, if at all, in the grammars. In other cases, we have glosses in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts whose function we cannot fully understand without reference to grammatical treatises. I have argued elsewhere that a group of glosses in later Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of curriculum authors use a system of analysis otherwise documented only in an obscure treatise from


\(^{47}\) See pp. 60-61, above.

The St. Gall Tractate’s method is to treat the elements of the sentence as semantic categories responding to the rhetorical *circumstantiae* – who, what, where, when, why, in what manner, and with what means – and thus to free the discussion of order from the parts-of-speech-based approach that had dominated earlier treatments. In several Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, we have the interrogative forms of the *circumstantiae* entered as glosses above words, phrases, or clauses in the Latin texts. Without the St. Gall Master’s explanation of this technique, we would not recognize the purpose of the glosses. The St. Gall Tractate, in turn, is one of the few Carolingian grammatical treatises to attempt to unite all the new resources of grammar, philosophy, rhetoric, and dialectic to a pedagogical end, and without the glosses we would have no evidence that its approach was known in Anglo-Saxon England.

What is clear even from these few examples is that syntactical glossing needs to be studied systematically along side and in light of the syntactical doctrine of the

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49 See above, p. 43.


51 The manuscripts are Cambridge, MS Trinity College O.2.31 (1135) Christ Church, Canterbury, saec. x/xi; and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Lat.Th.c.4 (saec. x2, ?Worcester).

52 Anna Grotans has suggested to me that the technique may have been of Anglo-Saxon origin; she has found no evidence of glossing of this type in St. Gall manuscripts.
grammars. A model study on these principles is Suzanne Reynolds’ work on the glosses to a twelfth-century manuscript of Horace’s *Satires*. One of her purposes in the study is, as she puts it, “to test glossing against grammatical theory.” Reynolds mines the Horace glosses for ways in which they reflect contemporary grammatical doctrine, and the result is a much-enriched sense of the combination of practical tools and linguistic preconceptions that a twelfth-century reader would have brought to a curriculum text. A comprehensive study of this sort for the pre-Conquest period is a huge project. Our knowledge of the origin and transmission of the various types of glosses does not at present allow us to say which types were practiced in which centers at which periods, and whether, in the course of the early middle ages, certain types of glossing fell into or out of favor. Work on the integration of new techniques of syntactical analysis into instruction-oriented treatises (as opposed to speculative works) between ca. 800 and ca. 1100 will have to progress farther, too, before we can correlate that evidence with the evidence from the glosses.

**Byrhtferth’s *Enchiridion* and Abbo’s *Quaestiones grammaticales***

The last monastic schoolmaster in Anglo-Saxon England to have left a substantial, attributable written record of his teaching is Byrhtferth of Ramsey, who worked in the

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53 Suzanne Reynolds, *Medieval Reading: Grammar, Rhetoric and the Classical Text*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); the manuscript on which she focuses is BAV Reg. lat. 1780 (R).
54 Reynolds 2.
first quarter of the eleventh century. With Byrhtferth, we have a return to the
exuberance at the immanence of number in all things that characterized Aldhelm’s
approach to metrics. That Byrhtferth should have been inspired by the spirit of Aldhelm
is not surprising: Aldhelm was the stylistic touchstone and patron saint of the literary and
linguistic revival of Byrhtferth’s age. Like Aldhelm, who prefaced his metrical treatises
with a disquisition on the marvellous number seven, Byrhtferth in his Enchiridion weaves
together the arithmological and the grammatical. Like Aldhelm, too, Byrhtferth was the
outstanding student of a master who came from overseas to teach English monks the finer
points of metrics and the mathematical sciences, above all computus. Abbo of Fleury
spent two years at Ramsey, probably in 985-987, and left behind as a record of his visit
the Quaestiones grammaticales, a book of answers to questions the Ramsey monks had
asked him during his stay. Abbo’s Quaestiones are almost entirely concerned with the
phonetics of Latin meter, rather than with the structure of the hexameter. On these

55 On Byrhtferth’s life and career, see Byrhtferth of Ramsey, Byrhtferth's Enchiridion, E.E.T.S., SS 15
56 On Aldhelm in the Benedictive Reform, see for example Michael Lapidge, “The Hermeneutic Style in
“Literary Culture in Late Anglo-Saxon England and The Old English and Latin Glosses to Aldhelm's Prosa
de Virginitate,” University of Toronto, 1993.
57 Abbo of Fleury, Quaestiones grammaticales, ed. Anita Guerreau-Jalabert. (Paris: Les Belles Lettres,
1982). Guerreau-Jalabert’s introduction deals at some length with Abbo’s intellectual background, the
school of Fleury, the grammatical doctrine of the Quaestiones, and Abbo’s latinity. On the school of
Fleury, see also Marco Mostert, The Library of Fleury: A Provisional List of Manuscripts. (Hilversum:
Verloren Publishers, 1989); on Abbo’s visit to Ramsey, see Mostert’s “Le séjour d'Abbon de Fleury à
58 Lapidge and Baker suggest that another of Abbo’s Ramsey students, Oswold the Younger, is the author
of two poems of versus retrogradi, hexameters that can be scanned correctly both forwards and backwards.
As they note, the ability to do this implies a command of the structure of the hexameter far beyond what
subjects, Abbo brings to bear better information on Greek than the English monks had
had previously, as well as the enormous store of morphological and phonetic detail to be
found in the *Institutiones grammaticae*. Abbo also answers a few questions which
concern syntax directly and show the results of the new Carolingian sophistication in
discussing constructions. For example, Question 40 is:59

Solet queri in libro Machabaeorum (2 Macc. 2.1) que constructio sit “et meminerit
testamenti sui quod locutus est ad Abraham, Isaac, et Iacob seruorum suorun
fideliun,” quasi dicere debuisset “ad Abraham et ceteros suos fideles servos.” Sed
dicimus quia zeugma est, ut sit: “meminerit testamenti sui quod locutus est” et
cetera, et “meminerit seruorum suorurn fideliun.” (Quaes. 40, p. 260)

It is often asked in the book of Maccabees what the construction is of “and may
he remember the covenant (gen.) which he spoke to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
(acc.) his faithful servants (gen.),” as if it ought to have said, “to Abraham etc. his
faithful servants (all in the acc.).” But we say that it is a zeugma, as it were, “and
may he remember his covenant (gen.) which he spoke,” etc., and “may he
remember his faithful servants (gen.).”

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59 Citations are by Question- and page-number in Guerreau-Jalabert’s edition. Translations are my own.
That is, in alleging that this is an example of zeugma, Abbo is suggesting that the verb *meminerit* is to be supplied to govern the second, problematic genitive. This strategy might be likened to the notion of subaudition as used by Augustine and Bede, and to the practice of suppletive glossing, glosses that supply a word omitted by ellipsis.\(^6^0\) At the end of the tenth century, Abbo and his student questioners are still solving problematic biblical syntax with reference to rhetorical figures, but what is striking is that a figure like zeugma is now offered as a solution to an overtly syntactical problem, and the problematic lemma is signaled by asking what *constructio* it is, rather than what its *ordo* is. Abbo goes on:

Illa etiam constructio “et sermonem quem audistis non est meus” (Joh. 14.24) similis est, “urbem quam statuo uestra est” (Aen. 1.573) et “lectionem quam audistis ubis prodest.”\(^6^1\) Que licet solecismo sit notabilis, hypallagem tamen figuram exigit... (Quaes. 40, pp. 259-61)

The construction “and the speech (acc.) that you have heard is not mine” is similar; likewise “the city (acc.) that I found is yours,” and “the reading (acc.) that you hear is good for you.” Although this is remarkable for its solecism, it requires explanation as the figure hypallage.

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\(^6^0\) See pp. 35-38, above, and for suppletive glosses, see Wieland, *The Latin Glosses*, 109-143.

\(^6^1\) Guerreau-Jalabert was unable to identify the source of this quotation and suggests that it is Abbo’s own example (260, n. 180). Likewise with the following couplet, which, however, she is inclined to assume comes from a longer work and was not made up for the occasion. (260, n. 182)
This is the same kind of problem that Bede addresses in the DST: a problematic reading in Scripture that can be understood if classified as a figure of speech. Abbo brings new vocabulary to the case: the lemma is now identified as a “construction” – a Priscianism – and the figure “hypallage” is otherwise unattested in the traditional grammatical inventory of figures and tropes. Similarly, Question 42 (p. 263) addresses a problematic reading in the Te Deum with a mixture of old and new techniques:

In Dei Palinodia quam composuit Hilarius Pictavensis episcopus, non iuxta quorundam imperatorum errorem “suscepisti”, sed potius “suscepturus” legendum est: “Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem [sc. non horruisti virginis uterum]” Futurus enim participii activi, cum eiusdem significationis verbo iunctus, suggerit consequentiam cuiusdam competentis ordinis condicionaliter, ut vix possibile sit alterum fieri, nisi alterum precesserit; ut “visitaturus fratres Anglicos, maxime Oswaldum archiepiscopum, non horrui maris periculum.”

In the Palinodia Dei that Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, composed, one should not read suscepisti, according to the error of certain ignorant people, but rather suscepturus: “You, about to take up man to liberate him, did not scorn the virgin’s womb.” For the future of the active participle, when it is joined to a verb in the

62 Knappe, Traditionen 253.

63 The Te Deum was attributed in the Middle Ages to Hilary of Poitiers. The reading that Abbo rejects here is probably the correct one, but the reading suscepturus had been in use for centuries. See Guerreau-Jalabert’s note 189, p. 262.
same voice, suggests the sequence of a certain order that comes together conditionally, so that it is scarcely possible that one should happen unless the other precede it, as in “about to visit the English brothers, most of all Archbishop Oswald, I did not shudder at the peril of the sea.”

As in Question 40, Abbo is here responding to a questionable reading (and perhaps staving off its emendation), in the spirit of Bede’s DST and DO, by making sense of its lectio difficilior. But in so doing he can talk about the relationship between the finite and the non-finite verb in a way that accommodates both the passage’s construction and the internal logic of the statement. The kind of problem presented is similar to that of the tense of the infinitive after memini, but Abbo brings a little more syntactical precision and, perhaps, more originality to the solution.65

Byrhtferth’s Enchiridion is not the kind of text to disclose much more of Abbo’s grammatical teaching, or to show whether or not Byrhtferth assimilated his teacher’s apparent syntactical acumen. Byrhtferth’s Enchiridion is an Old English and Latin compendium of all kinds of interesting things Byrhtferth knew: mostly computus, the science of calendar calculation, but also arithmology, metrics, grammar, and

64 This example is certainly original with Abbo, and his explanation of the participle appears to be so, too. See Guerreau-Jalabert, n. 190, p. 263.

etymology. Byrhtferth’s editors characterize it as a commentary on a computus.

Whatever the purposes of the *Enchiridion*, it cannot have been intended as a grammatical handbook; instead, Byrhtferth’s main, arithmetical subjects here and there send him on digressions into grammatical material. These brief romps through the garden of grammar contain little coherent doctrine, but they give a taste of the grammatical curriculum at the very end of the Anglo-Saxon period.

In one of these excursuses, Byrhtferth offers a compressed and translated precis of Bede’s *De schematibus et tropis*, translating both Bede’s terms and his examples, and supplementing them here and there with material from the Remigian commentary on DST and his own memory of the scriptural passages Bede used as examples. The new material from the Carolingian commentary is entirely lexical: Remigius offers explanations of and alternative terms for the names of several rhetorical figures. In another place, Byrhtferth is prompted to extended grammatical free association by a coincidence of terminology between computus and metrics. He has been discussing the

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67 *Enchiridion* III.3.25-127. Gabriele Knappe deals at length with Byrhtferth’s treatment of the figures and tropes at *Traditionen* 272-303. The Remigian commentary is edited with Bede’s text in CCSL 123A.

68 Lapidge and Baker 328-331.
saltus lunae, the day omitted in the “leap month” in the nineteen-year cycle used in computus to correlate the lunar and solar calendars. The saltus lunae, “moon’s leap”, reminds him that Bede had described metrical elision, synaloepha, as a kind of saltus, and Byrhtferth is off and running, lighting on almost every aspect of grammatical doctrine that we have considered so far:

We cwædon herbufan hwanon se bissextus cymð, and manega þing we cyddon ymbe his fare, and þærefet we geswutelodon ymbe þæs saltus hlyp, and hwanon he cymð and hu he byð and to hwan he gewyrð binnan nigontyne wintrum we amearkodon. We wæron atende grimlice swyðe ær we mihton þas gerena aspyrian, ac us com hrædlice fultum, we gelyfð of heofenum, swa hyt rød ys þæt ælc æðele gife nyðerastihð fram þam fæder ealra leohata. Eac me com stiðlice to mode hu þa getyddusta boceras gewyrceað sinelimpha on heora uersum. Hwæt, hig ærest apinsiað værlcum mode þa naman and þa binaman and heora declinunga and gynæð hwylce naman geendið on .a. oððe on .e. and eac hwylce on .i. oððe on .o. oððe on .u...Syððan hig þa word æginnað to aweganne mid þam biwordum, swylce ic þus cweðe:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>nomen</th>
<th>pronomen</th>
<th>uerbum aduerbium</th>
<th>iterum uerbum</th>
<th>pronomen iterum nomen</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Byrhtferthus ipse</td>
<td>scripsit bene</td>
<td>beneque docet</td>
<td>ille</td>
<td>suis discipulis.</td>
</tr>
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70 DAM XIII.4-5
We said above where the leap year comes from, and we made known many things about its course, and after that we explained about the leap of the saltus, and where it comes from and how it is, and we wrote down what it comes to over nineteen years. We were inflamed most painfully before we could investigate these mysteries, but aid soon came to us – we believe from heaven – as we read that every noble gift descends from the Father of all light. It also came forcibly to my mind how the most learned scholars produce synaloepha in their verses. Lo, they first examine with careful mind the nouns, the pronouns and their declensions, and they note which nouns end with a, with e, with i, with o, or with u...Then they proceed to consider the verbs with the adverbs, as if I were to speak thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun</th>
<th>pronoun</th>
<th>verb</th>
<th>adverb</th>
<th>another verb</th>
<th>pronoun</th>
<th>another noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Byrhtferth himself wrote well, and well teaches he his students.72

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71 Citations are by book, section, and line number from Lapidge and Baker’s edition, and translations are the editors’ except where noted. For the specifics of Byrhtferth’s sources in this passage, see Lapidge and Baker’s notes at pp. 295-298.

72 My translation; Lapidge and Baker mistook the function ofipse.
To that they add the participle and they gather or order the conjunctions and they also set the part of speech [the preposition] in front...They also strike with noise the voices of the air, and with the tongue’s voice they make the sound pleasing, and they divide the voice in four ways, so that it will be known to those who hear it. They also very cleverly classify the syllable in three ways.73

Byrhtferth’s cursory treatment of synaloepha – elision of a final vowel – links the phonological information necessary to correct scansion with the morphology of the parts of speech: noun, pronoun, verb, adverb. Byrhtferth is here following Donatus’s order of the partes, not Priscian’s, but when he alludes to the definition of vox and the division of the syllable, he evokes the opening of Priscian’s IG: “Philosophi definiunt vocem esse aerem tenuissimum ictum uel suum sensibile aurium, id est quod proprio auribus accidit...Vocis autem differentiae sunt quattuor: articulata, inarticulata, literata, illitterata.”74 “Philosophers define vox as very thin air struck, or as its intelligibility to ears, that is, what properly pertains to ears...There are four distinctions of vox: articulate, inarticulate, written, unwritten.” The example of the use of the partes in a sentence has nothing to do with metrical elision, but it does evoke Priscian’s technique of giving a sentence using every part of speech to show that the noun and the verb are indispensable.75 Byrhtferth is not making that kind of syntactical point here, but he does provide a small sample of syntactically-glossed text, when he marks each major sentence

73 Sc. long, short, and common: Bede, DAM II.9
74 Priscian, IG I.1, GL 2:5.
75 See pp. 198-199 above.
element with its part of speech. Moreover, since he includes a conjunction (-que),
Byrhtferth has, by Priscian’s criteria, generated a sentence with two orationes.

Byrhtferth continues:

[...] Barbarismum hig wel snotorlice on heora gesetnysse forbugað, and eac
barbaralexin on Lydenre spræce hig forcyrrað. Se ðe his agene spræce awyrt, he
wyrcð barbarismum, swylce he cweðe “þu sot” þær he sceolde cweðan “þu sott”. Se
þe sprycð on Francisc and þæt ne can ariht gecweðan, se wyrcð barbarolexin, swylce
he cweðe, “inter duos setles cadet homo,” þonne he sceolde cweðan, “inter duos
sæles.” Wel gelome hig aspyrið þæs solecismus unÞeawas (þæt synd scema on
Lyden and on Englisc hiw), and eac hig prutlice gymeð þæs miotacismus gefleard þa
synd on Grecisc kakosyntheton gecwedene, and synt lyðre gesetnyssa, swylce ic þus
cweðe, “bonum aurum”, þonne ic hyt sceolde þus todælan, “bonu aurum” uel “iustu
amicum”. (Ench. II.1.449-460)

They very wisely avoid barbarism in their compositions, and they also evade
barbarolexis in the Latin language. He who corrupts his own language commits a
barbarism, as if he said, “you soot” where he should say “you fool”. He who
speaks in French but cannot speak it correctly commits barbarolexis, as if he said
inter duos chairs cadet homo when he should say inter duos chaises.76 They very

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76 My translation.
often investigate the faults of the solecism (schema in Latin and in English “figure”), and they proudly guard against the folly of motacismus, called kakosyntheton in Greek, that is, poor combining, as if I were to say bonum aurum (“good gold”) when I should divide it thus: bonu aurum or iustu amicum (“true friend”).

This section skips lightly from barbarism and barbarolexis (following Isidore, Etym. I.32), to a garbled allusion to solecism, and back to elision of final –m. But the section is really notable for the striking bilingual illustration of barbarolexis, in which French (spelled very much as if it were Latin) is corrupted by the substitution of an English word.77 This early example of “franglais” must come from Abbo’s teaching, and in its mixture of Latin, French, and English features, it looks forward to the grammatical quandaries of post-Conquest students. This example, borne presumably of a French-speaking visiting master finding a personal illustration for his English-speaking students, is characteristic of the use of the vernacular in the Enchiridion. Where Ælfric’s Grammar uses English as a comprehensive, internalized explanatory gloss, in the Enchiridion English is the vehicle of instruction, and the switching back and forth from English to Latin technical vocabulary feels unselfconscious. Both works may be products of the same kind of classroom practice, but in Ælfric the presence of the vernacular reads like the formal incorporation of a textual practice into a canonical text-type. In Byrhtferth, we

seem to be closer to the sound of a digression-prone schoolmaster holding forth in his native language for students used to hearing him switch in and out of the Latin technical terminology of his subjects. Scott Gwara and David Porter argue that the Benedictine Reform was the era of conversational Latin, and the emphasis on phonetic aspects of Latin in Abbo’s and Byrhtferth’s texts supports this. But there is no sense that conversational Latin crowded out conversational English as a teaching tool. Rather, they seem to have been complementary and closely intertwined tools.

After alluding in Isidoran terms to figures of speech and of sense (“...hīg gehlapāð on metaplasmum, ḥāt ys ḥāt hīg gewurōiāð heora sprǣc and heora meteruersa gesetnyssa, and cyrtenlice scemata lexeos and dianoeas ascrutnīāð.” “…they leap upon metaplasm, that is, they adorn their speech and their metrical compositions, and they elegantly scrutinize schemata lexeos and dianoeas [figures of speech and of sense]”, Ench. II.1.461-463), Byrhtferth takes up the metrical caesurae:

>//a wynsume boceras ðæger hīg todælāð ʰa scansiones uel cesuras (ʰæt synd ʰa todælednyssa on ʰam uersum), ʰa synd ʰus generme: coniuncta, districta, mixta, diuisa, ʰæt synd geþeodde, toslitene, gemengde, todæled. ʰa todælednyssa on ʰæm uersum synd feower, ʰæs ðe ʰa gleawe boceras tellað, and synd ʰus on Grecisc gecwedene: pentimemeris, eptimemeris, cata triton trokeon, bucolice ptomen. Hīg

78 Scott Gwara, and David W. Porter, Anglo-Saxon Conversations: The Colloquies of Ælfric Bata (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1997), 24-34.

79 Etym. I.35
The delightful writers elegantly divide the scansion or the caesuras (the divisions in the verses), which are called thus: coniuncta, districta, mixta, diuisa, that is, joined, parted, mixed, divided. There are four caesuras in the verses, as wise scholars tell, called thus in Greek: pentimemeris, eptimemeris, kata triton trokeon, bucolice ptomen. Those who know these things say that pentimemeris is the one
that divides the verse in the second foot, and one finds half a foot left over, as here:

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.d.   .s.
Cum sua gentiles (Though the gentiles their)
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**Eptimemeris** is when one finds a *syllaba* (syllable) after the third foot, as we say here:

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.d.   .s.  .d.
Cum sua gentiles studeant (Though the gentiles seek their)
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**Kata triton trokeon** is when one finds a trochee in the third position, though it cannot be there; but there is part of a dactyl, as if I spoke thus:

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.d.   .s.  .d.
Grandisonis pompare modis
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(fictions to show off in grandiloquent measures)

**Bucolice ptomen** is when there is nothing in the verse after the fourth foot, as if Byrhtferth spoke thus:

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Semper principium sceptrum iuge gloria consors
(Forever the beginning, the scepter, perpetual glory)
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We should not avoid informing priests about the writer’s leap, *synaloepha* in Greek...

Here Byrhtferth is reproducing Bede’s treatment of the caesurae (DAM XII), and showing how to track overlapping foot- and word-units. To this task he brings the moderately helpful technique of glossing the verse above the line with *d* for dactyl and *s* for spondee. Having wrenched the discussion back around to *synaloepha*, Byrhtferth rounds up his grammatical excursus, and the book, with a few more observations on correspondences
between metrical arithmetic and number in other fields, and his grammatical excursus is at an end.

It is striking that, in an age for which Aldhelm was both curriculum author and stylistic inspiration, Bede was nevertheless everyone’s grammar teacher. It appears that, if Anglo-Saxon England was somewhat eccentric in its enthusiasm for the native master Aldhelm as a stylistic model, it was entirely in the mainstream in using the native master Bede as a teacher of versification and figures. A synopsis of Byrhtferth’s pedagogical sources suggests that his basic grammatical library was very much what we saw in Parts I and II of this study: Donatus and Isidore’s Etymologiae, together with the handbooks of Bede. Byrhtferth’s use of other material is what we might have predicted from the work of Ælfric and the survey of Carolingian developments given above: Carolingian gloss material supplements Bede, but mainly to provide lexical information; the doctrine on vox and the partes reflects that of Priscian’s IG, partially assimilated to Donatus’s more familiar presentation.

Conclusion

The grammars and paragrammars of pre-Carolingian England offered a reader’s toolbox of approaches to understanding continuous Latin text, methodologically inconsistent and theoretically unsophisticated, perhaps, but serviceable. The grammars

and handbooks either teach or imply the teaching of a fairly comprehensive account of the relationship of words that require cases to the parts of speech that inflect for case. There is less explicit instruction on the relationship between the verbs of subordinate constructions and the verbs or conjunctions that govern them, but this, too, was clearly taught. These were supplemented by a great variety of tools for understanding the relationship between formal and semantic units. Expressions were understood as meaningfully complete or incomplete. These semantic units were overlaid – punctuated – by formal structures both metrical and rhetorical.

The later Anglo-Saxon period saw no revolution in this repertoire of approaches. The profoundly conservative nature of grammar teaching was supported by the native habit of cultivating native masters, and England was lucky in having Bede as teacher. New tools were assimilated gradually, integrated slowly into existing methodologies. Anglo-Saxon England seems not to have yielded any newfangled Latin textbooks incorporating separate and systematic instruction in syntax. Here and there we see evidence of a really adventurous teacher making a bold integration of newly-discovered modes of analysis for an audience of Latin-learners, but Ælfric and Byrhtferth are not in this mold. Instead, as the Anglo-Saxon centuries wind down, more and more evidence percolates to the surface of the techniques that bridged the gap between Donatus and Latin competence for medieval students. A thorough investigation of that evidence, informed by a knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the grammars, is the next step.