

TRANSCRIPTION: dicebant illir. Quid facitir qot rilicet in fabbatir. & rerpondenritir ad eor dix.

This section of the Carolingian Minuscule, extremely well-preserved and drawing almost identical parallels to modern-day English lettering, was scribed by hand in what I imagine would've been a meticulous duty, occasionally causing an erratum in print. This being said, during a few instances, my initial reaction for the 8th and 21st century grammatical differences reasoned it was clerical error. Upon further inspection however, I realised this seemingly misplaced full-stop, or arbitrary spelling choice, was the true intention of scribe Alcuin; the difference being so minute yet differentiable that it was easily mistaken for a typo.

Within this excerpt, I presumed the *macron* (a diacritic, characterized by a dash above a letter, marking long and heavy sounds) was an accidental slash of the hand, since the macron is virtually not in use today. But the slash was penned a total of three times, once interestingly above the 'x' in "dix", convincing me that this wasn't unplanned. This accent indicates to interpreters that inflection guidelines for spoken words existed then, helping the masses pronounce even obscure-looking sounds like the 'x'.

Secondly, I found the use of the '&' symbol quite shocking – less commonly known as the Ampersand, this character is an abbreviation for the Latin 'et', which translates to the conjuncture 'and'. For such an influential piece of scripture, I was surprised to see its nonchalant use, as one would hardly find the symbol in formal, scholarly essays today, and certainly not in writings of this significance; nowadays, the Ampersand is considered an informal contraction.

Another striking use of lettering is Alcuin's spelling; he used letter 'i's in "facitir", "fabbatir" and "rerpondenritir". The Latin tense denoted here is the passive, meaning that today, the penultimate letter of each word would be spelt with a 'u' rather than an 'i'. The letter 'u' was in fact, in prevalent use back then – it's clearly marked in "quid". Hence, we can discern that this bizarre spelling wasn't an issue of inaccessibility of some letter that hadn't been invented yet. Instead, I'm led to believe that it concerns a development of verbal dictation: saying the words aloud, "facitir" seems slightly more burdensome to pronounce than "facitur", which is a possible explanation to the later change of its spelling.

The most noteworthy implication I found was the oddity of punctuation rules regarding pauses and the termination of sentences. Within this

section, there seems to be full stops right in the middle of sentences that don't result in capitalisation afterwards. Yet, looking at the whole page, there were times where the full-stop did fruition into a capitalized letter. I assume here that there was little to no dichotomy between a shorter pause and the conclusive rest. Thus, the full-stop was manipulated like one would the comma, and it represented both. Again, it's likely the full-stop progressed over time into the comma, to help distinguish between shorter and longer rests wherever capitalisation was not plainly obvious.