



At first glance, anyone can make out the text to be something along the lines of “dicebano illir. quid faciar qdnlicet in fabbaar. Ererpondenribrad eardix”. This indicates that Carolingian minuscule has many similar characteristics to modern English and yet this is clearly still incomprehensible due to some unique features.

Here are my main observations. There is something similar to a tilde above the letters d,n,b,x but it isn't a fixed part of those letters because the first “d” has no tilde. The letter i doesn't have a dot above it. The text is only partially cursive and the spaces don't appear as obvious to me. There is only one capitalised letter: E and this appears after a full stop, which is intuitive to modern English, but this is contradicted with the earlier lowercase “q” that is also after a full stop.

On further research, I gained much more clarity in the rules of Carolingian minuscule. A full stop is the biggest pause in modern English; in Carolingian minuscule, a full stop (a ‘punctus’) is the smallest pause there is. There are various other punctuation marks not seen here that are used for longer pauses and questions.

I learnt that capital letters (or Carolingian Majuscule letters) are written at the start of new sentences. That capital E was a mistake in my initial transcription because it's actually a “&” called an ampersand. This doesn't have the same meaning as the modern ‘and symbol’ but instead was the ligature for writing e and t together (despite the fact that Carolingian minuscule used less ligatures than other scripts). Indeed, there are spaces between the words because it is not a ‘scriptio continua’.

What I thought was an f in the beginning of the second line is the distinctive Carolingian s. Another letter that confirms this is Carolingian minuscule is the t, which is composed of a c with a horizontal crossbar above it. Part of why these letters took these forms was that it managed the page space better. I struggled to understand the tildes because my findings wouldn't obey what was written in this image.

As a result, this can be transcribed more accurately as “dicebano illir, quid faciar qdnlicet in sabbaar, etrespondenribrad eardix”. I mainly wish I could distinguish the spaces better and an r from an s.

Sources:

<https://sites.dartmouth.edu/ancientbooks/2016/05/23/how-to-write-caroline-minuscule/>

<https://sites.dartmouth.edu/ancientbooks/2016/05/24/carolingian-minuscule/>