

Similarities and differences between the old and the new

Before I started transcribing the text, I decided to do some further research about the font “Carolingian minuscule”, and I came across this image of each individual letter in the alphabet at the time. This proved very useful as I could compare the image on the right, to the image of the Brittany gospel to make sure I had the right letter. This is the transcription I came up with:



“dicebano illir. quid faciur qdnlicet in sabbaur.
&respondens ihradeur dix”

As this was written in old English / Latin, some words looked similar to words I already knew. For example, the “&” sign and the word “in” is the same, and the word “respondens” sounds like responded. Also, the word “dix” is the number ten in French so this could be representing a number or some way of measuring something.

Whilst transcribing the document, I found it difficult to distinguish between certain letters. For example, the letter “a” and “u” were difficult to tell apart, which could be why in modern times, many people tend to write the letter “a” in this Calibri style rather than writing it in a comic sans style: “ɑ”. The letters “i” and “l” were also difficult to tell apart, which could be why nowadays we write a dot above the line to indicate that it is an “i”. Finally, the letter “r” and “s” were especially difficult to tell apart. The only difference I could tell was that the old “s” was longer and had an interesting bulge on the side. Again, this could be why we now resort to writing a round “s” rather than an elongated “r”.

To conclude, I found this task very interesting. It was fascinating to study a precursor to our modern alphabet and see the differences. It was also interesting to speculate why those changes might have happened. I am also very interested in the ancient Greek alphabet, and I think it would be interesting to see if there are any similarities between this alphabet and the ancient Greek alphabet.