

# INTRODUCTION

## Argument

Standard editions of the Old English translation of *Alexander's Letter to Aristotle* (BL Cot Vit A.xv, fols. 107r–131v) print the words, which come predictably packaged between equalized blank spaces. Editions of *Beowulf* and two other prose texts in the same manuscript do the same. Not only that, the words also come compressed so that no spaces are allowed to occur within them. That is, the editions disregard the spacings in the manuscript, assuming them to be unimportant for being either arbitrary or capricious. The manuscript texts have been treated generally as if they were nothing more than alphabetical strings representing sequences of vowels and consonants, and even that simple letter-to-sound analog has been regarded as having been drawn in a very clumsy fashion: spacings are found conveniently between words, except when they are not; inconveniently between roots of compound words, most of the time; gratuitously between syllables within words, some of the time.

The purpose of this Argument is to set out the theme that at least some texts were produced by Anglo-Saxons who, to their credit and our good fortune, had not embraced ‘canonical word separation’ and instead used spacing to record something more than lexical demarcations. Much is to be learned, I believe, from the graphotactics of vernacular texts written by native speakers of English before the mid eleventh century.

By ‘graphotactics’ is meant the patternings of letter-string formation. The nature of graphotactics is best illustrated (just as in the *Beowulf* edition on this site) with a swatch from one of the manuscript texts of Ælfric’s *Grammar* of Latin, British Library MS Royal 15.B.xxii; see Fig. 1. Below it is a conventional editorial representation of the text. The *Grammar* is composed in English, describing a language foreign to native speakers of English. It is a teaching text, to be read aloud from in the process of instruction, presumably, and at any rate to be as clear as possible in transmitting information through a graphic analog of speech. It is meaningless to refer to ‘normal word spacing’ in a text of this kind. Some word sequences are written without intervening space, some words have internal spacing, and the spacing between letter strings that correspond to words is anything but normative. Certainly it is not a function of justifying the right margin, as in printing with metal type. Instead, the spacings—where they occur, and their relative magnitudes—correspond in part to the sequence of syntactic structures at the sentence level and the phrasal level, and to some divisions at the syllable level. Pointing is ancillary, and so is use of majuscule letters and rubrication. Spacings also correspond in part to morphotactic patterns, as in *stæf-cræft* (first sentence), *lēden-spræce* and *lēden-bōca* (second sentence), and so on. Fig. 2 illustrates text edited to represent the spacings for their locations, their morphological contexts, and their magnitudes.

beforan . TRIGINTA DIUISIONES . GRAMMATICÆ  
**G**ramma . ongrēcisc . is littera on lēden: ARTIS .  
 7 on englisc stæf . 7 grāmātica is stæf cræft . Se cræft  
 geopenað 7 gehylt . leden spræce . 7 nan mann næfð  
 leden boca andgite befullon buton he þone cræft  
 cunne . Se cræft is eall ra bōclīca cræfta ord  
 fruma . 7 grundweall . Grammaticus . is se ðe cann  
 þone cræft grāmāticam befullan . 7 se cræft hæfð  
 þrītig tōdāl . 7 for me tōdāl is <sup>stemn</sup> uox . 7 oðer <sup>stæf</sup> littera . .i. .ii.  
 7 þridde is <sup>stæf-gefēg</sup> sillaba . Be þissum þrīm tōdālum se .iii.  
 awriton on forewerdre þyssere bēc . 7 se cræft þyrru

FIG. 1. British Library MS Royal 15.B.xxii, fol. 65r.

#### TRIGINTA DIUISIONES GRAMMATICÆ ARTIS

*Gramma* on Grēcisc is *littera* on lēden, ond on Englisc *stæf*; ond *grammatica* is stæfcræft. Se cræft geopenað ond ge-hylt lēden-spræce, ond nān man næfð lēdenbōca andgit befullon būton hē þone cræft cunne. Se cræft is eallra bōclīca cræfta ordfruma ond grundweall. *Grammaticus* is, sē ðe cann þone cræft *grammaticam* befullan. Ond se cræft hæfð þrītig tōdāl. Þæt forme tōdāl is *uox* 'stemn.' Þæt oðer *littera* 'stæf.' Þæt þridde is *sillaba* 'stæf-gefēg.' Be þissum þrīm tōdālum wē āwriton on forewerdre þyssere bēc....

*Gramma* in Greek is *littera* in Latin, and in English *staff*; and *grammatica* is *staff-craft* [i.e., the art of letters]. That craft reveals and rules the Latin language, and no one has understanding of latin-books entirely unless he knows that craft [i.e., grammar]. The craft is the beginning and foundation of all book-like arts. *Grammaticus* is that one who knows the art of grammar entirely. And that craft has thirty divisions. The first division is *uox* '(vocal) sound.' The second *littera* 'letter.' The third is *sillaba* 'syllable.' We have written about these three divisions in the early part of this book. . . .

Gram<sup>1</sup>ma. <sup>7</sup> on <sup>0</sup> grēcisc. <sup>4</sup> is <sup>0</sup> littera <sup>4</sup> on <sup>1</sup> lēden / and <sup>0</sup> on <sup>1</sup> englisc <sup>4</sup> stæf. <sup>5</sup>  
 and <sup>0</sup> grammatica <sup>4</sup> is <sup>2</sup> stæf-<sup>2</sup>-cræft. <sup>7</sup> Se <sup>0</sup> cræft / ge-<sup>1</sup>-openað <sup>4</sup> and <sup>0</sup> ge-<sup>1</sup>-hylt  
<sup>3</sup> lēden-<sup>1</sup>-spræce. <sup>5</sup> and <sup>1</sup> nān <sup>1</sup> man <sup>2</sup> næfð / lēden-<sup>1</sup>-bōca <sup>6</sup> andgit <sup>3</sup> be-<sup>1</sup>-fullon <sup>6</sup>  
 būton <sup>2</sup> hē <sup>2</sup> þone <sup>2</sup> cræft / cunne. <sup>6</sup> Se <sup>0</sup> cræft <sup>4</sup> is <sup>1</sup> eall<sup>3</sup>ra <sup>3</sup> bōc-<sup>1</sup>-licra <sup>4</sup> cræfta  
<sup>5</sup> ord-/-fruma. <sup>6</sup> and <sup>0</sup> grund-<sup>2</sup>-weall. <sup>7</sup> Grammaticus. <sup>3</sup> is <sup>1</sup> sē <sup>0</sup> ðe <sup>0</sup> cann / þone  
<sup>3</sup> cræft <sup>4</sup> grammaticam <sup>3</sup> be-<sup>0</sup>-fullan. <sup>3</sup> and <sup>1</sup> se <sup>0</sup> cræft <sup>3</sup> hæfð / þritig <sup>4</sup> tō-<sup>1</sup>-dál.  
<sup>7</sup> þæt <sup>2</sup> forme <sup>1</sup> tō-<sup>1</sup>-dál <sup>3</sup> is. <sup>2</sup> uox. <sup>6</sup> stemn ? þæt <sup>1</sup> oðer. <sup>3</sup> littera. / stæf ? þæt  
<sup>2</sup> þridde <sup>3</sup> is. <sup>3</sup> sillaba. <sup>7</sup> stæf-gefēg ? Be <sup>0</sup> þissum <sup>4</sup> þrim <sup>2</sup> tō-<sup>1</sup>-dālum <sup>3</sup> wē /  
 ā-<sup>0</sup>-writon <sup>4</sup> on <sup>0</sup> fore-<sup>2</sup>-werdre <sup>3</sup> þyssere <sup>2</sup> bēc. <sup>7</sup> . . .

FIG. 2. Text shown in FIG. 1 edited to include graphotactic information.

**space numeral space** represents separation of words,

**hyphen numeral hyphen** represents morphemic separation,

**numeral (alone)** represents separation at other than morpheme or word boundary,

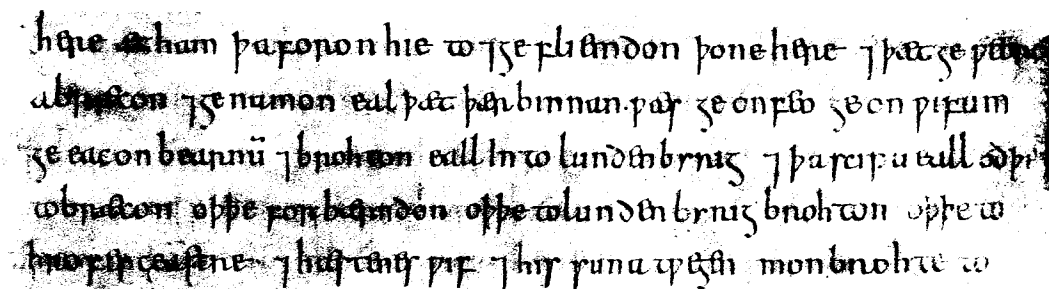
0-7 represent relative widths of spaces between letter strings.

Another illustration is drawn from the Parker Chronicle, a segment dealing with Ælfred's wars with the Danes, at a turning point of those fateful events; see Fig. 3. It can be read aloud interpreting the spacings as analogs to timing. Or the marble-slab method can be used to dissect the corpus in a series of cuts correlated with measure of spacing, starting with the largest measures. A rather good parsing of the passage is produced by this means. A translation with graded separation marks based on the spacing variations is included in the figure.

The linguistic information encoded in spacings has been little studied and less understood, a predictable result of English (and Germanic) philology having developed mainly on the basis of the information encoded in printed editions of Ælfric's *Grammar*, *Alexander's Letter*, *Beowulf*, and the other Anglo-Saxon texts. Printed editions imposed conventions of printing on the texts that were then studied and reduced to rules. Those conventions did not materially affect the information encoded in the alphabetical elements of the original texts, of course. On the other hand, they obliterated the information encoded in the spacings between letter-groups. Spacing was assigned to word boundaries alone. Its measures were then equalized within each line of print to accommodate the fixed width of the type-frame.\* The letters were cast in metal that couldn't be shrunk or stretched. There was no common understanding of the text between its original composer and its modern compositor.

In the case of *Alexander's Letter*, the better we understand what this writing of the West Saxon dialect represents, the better we may come to understand what the writing represents in *Beowulf*. 'The writing' refers to manuscript texts in BL Cot Vit A.xv, with one person writing all of *Alexander's Letter* and the first (and

\* A partial exception is Charles Plummer's *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*; see, for example, the opening lines of the entry for 894.



... <sup>4</sup> 7 <sup>1</sup> þæt <sup>0</sup> ge<sup>-1</sup>-weorc / ā<sup>-0</sup>-bræcon <sup>3</sup> 7 <sup>1</sup> ge<sup>-1</sup>-nāmon <sup>3</sup> eal <sup>1</sup> þæt <sup>1</sup> þær <sup>1</sup> innan  
<sup>2</sup> wæs <sup>3</sup> ge <sup>1</sup> on <sup>0</sup> feo <sup>3</sup> ge <sup>1</sup> on <sup>1</sup> wifum / ge <sup>1</sup> ēac <sup>0</sup> on <sup>1</sup> bearnu = <sup>3</sup> 7 <sup>1</sup> brōhton <sup>3</sup>  
eall <sup>1</sup> in <sup>0</sup> tō <sup>1</sup> lunden<sup>-0</sup>-byrig <sup>4</sup> 7 <sup>1</sup> þā <sup>1</sup> scipu <sup>1</sup> eall <sup>1</sup> oðþe / tō<sup>-0</sup>-bræcon <sup>3</sup> oþþe <sup>2</sup>  
for<sup>-1</sup>-bærndon <sup>3</sup> oþþe <sup>1</sup> tō <sup>0</sup> lunden<sup>-1</sup>-byrig <sup>2</sup> brōhton <sup>3</sup> oþþe <sup>1</sup> tō / hrōfes<sup>-1</sup>-ceastre  
<sup>5</sup> 7 <sup>1</sup> hæstēnes <sup>2</sup> wif <sup>3</sup> 7 <sup>1</sup> his <sup>2</sup> suna <sup>1</sup> twēgen <sup>3</sup> ...

||| ... || and (they) broke into that encampment || and seized | all that was  
there within | both in property | and in women | and also in children | and brought  
| all into London | and the ships all either broke up | or burned up | or brought to  
London | or to Rochester ||| And Hasten's wife and his two sons...

Fig. 3 Graphotactics of a portion of the Parker Chronicle

longer) of the two main segments of the *Beowulf* text, as well as two shorter prose texts. The assumption for this is that the features of the writing of prose are the basic ones, and those of the writing of verse will be those same ones modified only to represent the distinctive elements of metrical discourse.

In either case, the writing should not be approached as a primitive and inept text that needs the helping hand of modern editors (who are not only a thousand years away, but conditioned as well by ubiquitous texts set in movable type cast from a small set of matrices). It should be approached, rather, to see whether it may represent something more than the succession of vowels and consonants that the roman alphabet was designed to represent. I believe that the graphotactics can guide a spoken realization of the text, and seems to have been carefully composed to do just that.

The way to begin, I think, is to assume that the person who penned *Alexander's Letter* was following conventions of writing that were fully adequate in his eyes and in the eyes of his contemporaries in at least some of England. Those conventions left out many things. Something so fundamental as vowel length was not represented, even though it was a distinctive feature in the phonology of the language, as historical linguistics has shown. It was also a crucial feature in the scansion of traditional verse, as the metrists all insist. Yet there is no method for

marking a letter as standing for a short or a long vowel. Word boundaries are marked by spacing most of the time, but spacing is used to mark other boundaries as well. Only in late Old English texts does a hyphen-like mark appear at the end of a line to signify that a morphemic string continues in the following line. Sentence boundaries—such a basic unit in the syntax of an utterance—were not regularly marked. A raised point occurs between some patterns we recognize as sentences, but the same mark occurs at places other than sentence boundaries, and does not occur at many of the sentence boundaries. ‘Paragraph’ divisions—major turns in discourse—are not recorded with any reliability. The beginning and end of direct discourse has no distinctive graphic representation. And so on. The writer of these texts did not provide the training wheels that we learned with and continue to rely on routinely.

Our training wheels were developed to keep us from bruises and discouragement in rapid reading for information. Entry points are marked by section and chapter headings, paragraphing, full stop and capitalization, and other devices. We now have a hodge-podge of spelling conventions to mark free and checked vowels (a general reflex of long and short vowels). And above all we depend upon separation of word-length letter-strings by regular lineal spacing, and the use of this spacing for no other purpose. The hyphen assures that a word boundary is *not* present, whether at the end of a line of text or between parts of a compound word. (Never mind that English has never been consistent in writing compounds—with space, without space, with hyphenation.)

The matter is otherwise in *Alexander's Letter* (like Ælfric's *Grammar* and other texts). There is some pointing, and there is use of pointing and majuscule letters together to mark a number of sentence boundaries. But there is also division of letter-strings in these texts which seems to be here, there, and everywhere, from our modern perspective. Clearly, the places where spacings occur are not at all restricted to word boundaries, however narrowly or broadly the term *word* is defined.

Consider first the obligatory break in the letter-strings imposed by the right margin of the text-space. The sequence of letters must be broken every time the writing comes to the right margin. The division may be at a word boundary. Or it may be at a root or prefix boundary, which is less than a word boundary (but will in any case be a syllable boundary as well). Or it may be at a syllable boundary which is not a morpheme boundary. Virtually without exception division of the letter-string occurs at one of these places. Its consistency in this regard rules out arbitrariness of divisions, in strict terms. That the division of words is rule-governed by phonological features is all the more apparent when we notice that the right margin tends to be ragged. (The verso of the leaves provide the main evidence, because of crumbling of the outer edge of all leaves). For example, an abbreviation mark to signify a following nasal consonant may occur at line-end at the margin, but it also occurs where there is still just enough room for a slender *m* (e.g., 120v.10). Or see fol. 116v, for the forms exceeding the ruled margin and those falling far short of it.

The first rule seems to be, Don't overrun the right margin, except by necessity or insufficient attention. The only occurrences of **þæm** with abbreviation mark instead of final **m** are at line-ends. In 116v.8 **forð** is written well beyond the ruled margin, to complete a VP prior to a PP: <sup>4</sup> **7<sup>0</sup> wē<sup>3</sup> þā<sup>0</sup> fōron<sup>2</sup> forð / bē<sup>1</sup> þæm<sup>2</sup> sǣ<sup>5</sup>**.<sup>5</sup> As a general, complementary rule, stop earlier, as much as is required to follow the main graphotactic rules in the continuing text. Especially, don't abridge those rules in anticipation of the right margin. On folio 112r.19 there is word division of **ge<sup>-1</sup>-sā/we**, where the final syllable would overrun the margin only a bit; but it would also make indefinite the spacing following this word, where the phrasal **ðone cyning** complement of **ic gesāwe** is appended to the clause which already had a pronoun **hine** as the complement. Fol. 113v.6 **gār<sup>-0</sup>-sec/ge** is another example: dividing the word thus leaves room for a point and a wide spacing to follow the word. Then consider fol. 129r, especially top half. In line 9, wide spaces for **þöhte** could easily have fitted on this line rather than being divided as **þöh/te**. Another example is **on becwōm**— fol. 124, 125, discussed elsewhere. Folio 124v offers a good illustration of the general principles of division of text at the end of a line of writing.

Folio 125v is also a good illustration of managing line-ends. The text is quite uneven in its extension to the right, lines 5–7 being quite short, line 9 exceeding the margin, lines 10–12 using abbreviation marks over the final letter of each line to save writing a nasal consonant, line 14 exceeding the margin, line 17 stopping very short to allow a raised point with space on either side to mark the end of a technical term (where we would use *italic*) and the end of a sentence.

Next consider the divisions of the letter-strings within lines of text. The places of the divisions of text within a line of writing are of exactly the same kinds as those that occur at the right margin of text. Divisions such as these, I believe, emphatically rule out the location of spacing being arbitrary.

Begin with the writing of compound words. Almost without exception the roots within a compound are separated: 107r.15–16 **þeod-/lond**, 114v.20 **þeod<sup>-1</sup>-lond**, 118r.14 **þeod<sup>-1</sup>-londes**, 126r.14 **þeod<sup>-1</sup>-londe**, 119v.14 **þeod<sup>-2</sup>-kyninges**; when the first element has two syllables the spacing is typically wider, as with 109v.16 **eor<sup>1</sup>nan<sup>-4</sup>-stānum**, 118r.13 **wæstm<sup>-3</sup>-berendeste**, 126v.14 **mænig<sup>-3</sup>-fealdum** (and see variants 107v.5 **monig<sup>-1</sup>-feald**, 108v.20 **moni<sup>-2</sup>-fealdlicor**). Another prominent set is the forms of **middan-geard**, or the compounds with **-kyning**.

Then the writing of words with pre-base morphemes. The spacing is nearly always minimal, i.e., not exceeding '2', commonly '1', and not uncommonly '0'. On one leaf, for example (fol. 124), are found the following: **un<sup>-0</sup>-cūðes** **be<sup>-2</sup>-cwōme** **on<sup>-0</sup>-ǣ/led** **on<sup>-1</sup>-bær<sup>1</sup>nan** **tō<sup>-1</sup>-foran** **ge<sup>-1</sup>-wunelīce** **\*tō<sup>-?</sup>-\*weard** **un<sup>-0</sup>-rīm** **on<sup>-1</sup>-lōcode** **for<sup>-1</sup>-bur<sup>2</sup>non** **on<sup>-0</sup>-druncen** **ge<sup>-0</sup>-witon** **ge<sup>-0</sup>-restan** **up<sup>-1</sup>-hýran** **tō<sup>-0</sup>-þon** **up<sup>-1</sup>-ge<sup>-0</sup>-wende**.

Then the writing of intra-phrasal word sequences. Examples are given in two other sections of this Introduction, in 'Analysis of the Text' and the last segment of 'The Measure of Spacing.'

And finally the writing of words with internal spacing at other than morpheme

boundaries. These appear to be at syllable boundaries almost without exception. They also are limited to the ‘minimal’ range. On fol. 118, for example, are found these: wre<sup>1</sup>þedon wre<sup>2</sup>þe<sup>1</sup>don ā<sup>0</sup>-þrāwe<sup>1</sup>ne gim<sup>1</sup>miscu cris<sup>1</sup>tallisce boren<sup>1</sup>ne fun<sup>1</sup>/don Sið<sup>3</sup>þan innan<sup>1</sup>/-wear<sup>1</sup>de heri<sup>1</sup>ge wundra<sup>1</sup>de wund<sup>1</sup>/rade sæg<sup>1</sup>/don nædre<sup>1</sup>na hrīf<sup>1</sup>ra ðis<sup>1</sup>sum fel<sup>1</sup>dum ge<sup>1</sup>-mēt<sup>1</sup>te fēr<sup>1</sup>de in<sup>1</sup>die mī<sup>1</sup>/ne wilna<sup>1</sup>de ge<sup>0</sup>-læd<sup>1</sup>/don wun<sup>1</sup>der<sup>1</sup>-lice.

It can be noted as an aside, that divisions at less (or other) than morpheme boundaries reflect the phonotactic features so consistently that the divisions seem to be trustworthy guides to syllabication for such words as *fersc-an* and *alex-ander*.

With such frequent spacing dividing the letter-strings, with the specific linguistic positions at which they occur, with the variability in measure of the spacings, and with consistent uses of that variability—with all this ‘busyness’ the manuscript text can hardly be a hasty or careless production. There is further evidence in occasional instances of dittography.

118r.1    4 hīe<sup>2</sup> ūtan<sup>2</sup> wre<sup>1</sup>þedon<sup>3</sup>

118r.2    / hīe<sup>2</sup> ūtan<sup>2</sup> wre<sup>2</sup>þe<sup>1</sup>don<sup>2</sup>

118r.14–16

.<sup>2</sup> 7<sup>1</sup> ic<sup>1</sup> swīðe<sup>3</sup> wundra<sup>1</sup>de<sup>3</sup> þā<sup>0</sup> ge<sup>1</sup>/-sælignesse<sup>4</sup> þære<sup>2</sup> eorðan<sup>1</sup>

7<sup>0</sup> ic<sup>1</sup> swīðe<sup>3</sup> wund<sup>1</sup>/rade<sup>4</sup> þā<sup>0</sup> ge<sup>3</sup>-sælignesse<sup>4</sup> þære<sup>2</sup> eorðan<sup>1</sup>

And there are copying blunders in the lower half of 110r:

./ þā<sup>3</sup> hit<sup>3</sup> wæs<sup>3</sup> foran<sup>3</sup> tō<sup>1</sup> uhtes<sup>4</sup> þā<sup>1</sup> æt<sup>3</sup>-ēowde /

wōl<sup>2</sup>-beren<sup>1</sup>de<sup>4</sup> lyft<sup>4</sup> hwītes<sup>3</sup> hīowes<sup>3</sup> 7 /

ēac<sup>3</sup> missen<sup>1</sup>-līces<sup>4</sup> wæs<sup>3</sup> hēo<sup>1</sup> on<sup>2</sup> hring<sup>3</sup>-wīsan /

fāg<sup>3</sup> 7<sup>0</sup> monige<sup>5</sup> men<sup>2</sup> for<sup>3</sup> heora<sup>4</sup> þæm<sup>3</sup> wōl<sup>1</sup>/

-beren<sup>1</sup>dan<sup>3</sup> stence<sup>5</sup> swulton<sup>3</sup> mid<sup>1</sup> þære<sup>5</sup> wōl<sup>1</sup>/

-beorendan<sup>3</sup> lyfte<sup>5</sup> þe<sup>3</sup> þær<sup>3</sup> swelc<sup>1</sup> æt<sup>3</sup>-ēowde /

þā<sup>0</sup> ðær<sup>4</sup> cwōman<sup>2</sup> ēac<sup>3</sup>

Lineation is different in these sets, but the spacing features remain consistent. I believe it is a deliberate, committed, serious composition of written text, the last place to expect textual arbitrariness.

Now, if spacing features in the *Alexander's Letter* (as well as in *Beowulf*) do have extensive correlations with syntactic and morphotactic and syllabic patterns, what can we infer? The most obvious and natural inference to draw from these correlations is that the spacing features in the written text provide an analog to prosodic features of the spoken text: they would have been derived from them, and their purpose was in turn to cue the segmentation of the syllable string into coherent constructions and to guide the appropriate linkages of those constructions within sentences, not to mention separation of sentence units—or discourse units, more likely, that approximate sentence units.

Let us approach the matter next from the opposite direction by asking, What is the best notation system for texts of Old English? From our point of view it would be a system encoding everything we need in order to understand their

syntax and appropriate prosody. The latter would include notation for syllable prominence at the phrasal level (*not* the lexical level). And if prominence could be realized by more than one phonological feature—say, either stress or pitch contrast or prolongation—that should be accommodated in the notation system as well. Then what about phonological features such as lengthened timings, pauses, and pitch contours that can identify phrase-domain and clause boundaries?

Apparently the only means already in hand in the tenth century for writing English vernacular texts were alphabetic symbols in lineal succession and spacings of linguistic segments. The spellings could have been improved some, of course, but not developed to represent any new kind of information. The spacing, on the other hand, could be developed to represent linguistic information that the alphabetic system could not. There was no need for a different kind of system, say, to mark sentence-syntax—tree-diagrams, interlinear symbols for parts of speech or sequencing, for example—since the syntax was already encoded in sequence patterns of words, in the valence of the lexical items, and in the grammatical inflections. But variable spacing could clarify constituent structures and even some of their hierarchies, and certainly it was developed in this way for a number of texts. There was no need either to mark word-stress for native speakers. Phrase-accent, on the other hand, could be signified at least indirectly by variable spacing, in its correlation with constituent structure marking. Varied spacing would be a natural representation of timing features. And to the extent timing variations correlate with pitch patterns, the need to represent the ‘tune’ would not have risen to the level of needing separate representation, such as by rising and falling patterns in the letter strings or by pitch notation of one kind or another—typographical and annotational devices like those used in American linguistics in the latter half of the twentieth century. Spacing, with its varied measures, could also have represented enough prosodic information to cue the written text for oral interpretation in accordance with the author’s composition (or the copyist’s understanding).

Some of the prosody of *Alexander’s Letter* at least (and the other texts written by the same hand) has been encoded in the manuscript. It has been suppressed in the printed texts, but lies there in the original representation, waiting to be recovered.