

Northumbrian Rounded Vowels in the Old English Gloss to the Lindisfarne Gospels

Johanna Wood
Aarhus University

Abstract

This paper¹ investigates the distribution of mid-front rounded vowels in the Northumbrian glosses to the Lindisfarne gospels. Rounding after /w/ is a dialect feature of late Old Northumbrian. Numerical counts for the distribution of the feature are merged with new data. The goal is to see whether the data support already hypothesized demarcations in the text. The main finding is that the gospel of Luke and the second half of Mark have the most frequent occurrences of this feature and therefore are the most conservative sections of the glosses.

1. Introduction

The debate regarding the authorship of the Old English Gloss to the Lindisfarne Gospels has maintained a continued presence in academic literature for at least 150 years. This paper contributes to that debate by further investigating the distribution of mid-front rounded vowels throughout the four gospels.

The Lindisfarne bible in Latin was written at Lindisfarne Priory on Holy Island and ascribed to the monk Eadfrith, who was Bishop of Lindisfarne between 698 and 721. The Lindisfarne community, after being

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forced to flee to the mainland with their remaining treasures and relics due to Viking raids, eventually settled at Chester-le-Street, Durham where, around 970, interlinear glosses in the Northumbrian dialect were added to the Latin bible. The glosses are generally attributed to the priest, and later provost, Aldred, and the gospels include a colophon he wrote, describing his part in the enterprise, but even then it is a matter of dispute as to whether he is claiming authorship of the entire work or just the Gospel of John.

As early as 1857, K. W. Boutererk writes, “In der Glosse selbst sind mit Bestimmtheit zwei Hände zu unterscheiden” [In the gloss itself two hands may be differentiated with certainty] (as cited by Brunner 1947-8, p. 32, translation my own). This “multiple author” view is countered by paleographic evidence, most notably Ross et al. (1960), that claims the gloss to be the work of only one hand, in which case differences in ink color and grapheme size and spacing are attributed to the writing having taken place over different time periods and under different conditions. Nevertheless, the uneven distribution of linguistic features throughout is puzzling, given the “one author” view, and the gospel has provided substantial material for ongoing investigations. A prevalent view is that there was one glossator who drew on multiple exemplars, and in that way introduced the variant features. However, recently Cole (2016) reignites the debate in noting that “the commonalities between the linguistic and paleographical demarcations could indicate that the involvement of other hands in writing the gloss remains a possibility” (Cole, 2016, p. 187).

Although the paleographical evidence points to only one hand, Ross et al (1960) suggest a division into two main parts with a transition at ff. 203r–203v, that is, at the end of Luke. Evidence for this split cites the neat and compact script that follows, in contrast with the untidiness of that preceding the end of Luke; also notable is that here orthographic <u> is replaced by a more pointed form, <v> (Ross et al, 1960, p. 23), and this is used for ‘w’ instead of the runic letter form, *wynn*. (ƿ). However, demarcations based on orthographic evidence are not the only ones found. A series of investigations into linguistic features has established demarcations at various places, but demarcations that do not follow the gospel divisions. The feature that is the focus of this paper, mid-front rounded vowels, was noted in the first systematic attempt to investigate the distribution of features (Brunner, 1947) which looked at the spelling of the stems of the verbs, *wesan* ‘be’ and *cuepan* ‘say’. These vary between *wōēr-* or *wēr-* and *cuoep-* or *cuep-*, the <oe> spelling representing a rounded vowel. The observation is that forms of *wesan* in <oe> are rare in Matthew

and the first five chapters of Mark, and approximately equally frequent for the rest of the gospels. Forms of *cueþan* in <e> are comparatively rare after the first four chapters of Mark, but become frequent again in the first three chapters of John. Thus, there seems to be an uneven distribution of rounded vowels throughout the gospels, though the descriptive distribution is a little different when *wesan* and *cueþan* are compared. Two other observations in the same study, first that the accusative singular feminine form *ðyu* (as opposed to *ðiu*) does not occur after MkGl (Li) 5,32, and also that *heonu*, ‘behold’ often used to gloss Latin *ecce*, does not occur after MkGl (Li) 3,34 (although the alternative *heono* occurs throughout the glosses) lead to the overall conclusion that there is at least one break, at MkGl (Li) 5,40 and possibly others (Brunner, 1947, p. 35).

This observation regarding *wesan* and *cueþan* is regularly quoted but, as far as I am aware, has not been extended to other lexical items that show similar conditioned vowel rounding. Also, the raw figures quoted by Brunner (1947) are somewhat difficult to interpret and compare without recourse to the same 64 approximately equal divisions she constructed. Later work tends to identify possible section demarcations by chapter and verse number. Therefore, in this paper I take as a starting point already established demarcations, in addition to that at MkGl (Li) 5,40, that have been hypothesized in the subsequent literature. First, I rework the raw numbers for *wesan* and *cueþan* from Brunner (1947, p. 51) into percentages for the established sections. Next, I select other lexical items that show the same vowel rounding and investigate their distribution throughout the four gospels. Finally, I put my own data together with Brunner’s to find the overall picture. Section 2 discusses the Northumbrian dialect, the vowel system, and the variant features found in the Lindisfarne gospels which have been used for suggested demarcations. Section 3 reports the method and results, and section 4 is a conclusion. The purpose is to find whether there is uneven distribution of mid-front rounded and unrounded vowels and whether or not these examples support the already established demarcations in the gospels.

2. Variation in Old English: Northumbrian dialect

For convenience, the dialects of Old English are traditionally divided into four distinct areas that mirror the political structures of the time: Northumbrian, Mercian, West Saxon and Kentish, as shown in Figure 1. Early Northumbrian is represented by, for example, *Cædmon’s Hymn* and runic inscriptions on the Franks Casket and the Ruthwell Cross. The most

significant examples of Late Old Northumbrian are the interlinear glosses to the *Lindisfarne Gospels* (London, British Library, MS Nero D.iv), the *Durham Ritual*, (Durham, Cathedral Library, MS A.iv.19) and the parts of the *Rushworth Gospels* known as Ru² (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. D.2.19) (Cuesta & Pons-Sanz, 2016, p. 1).

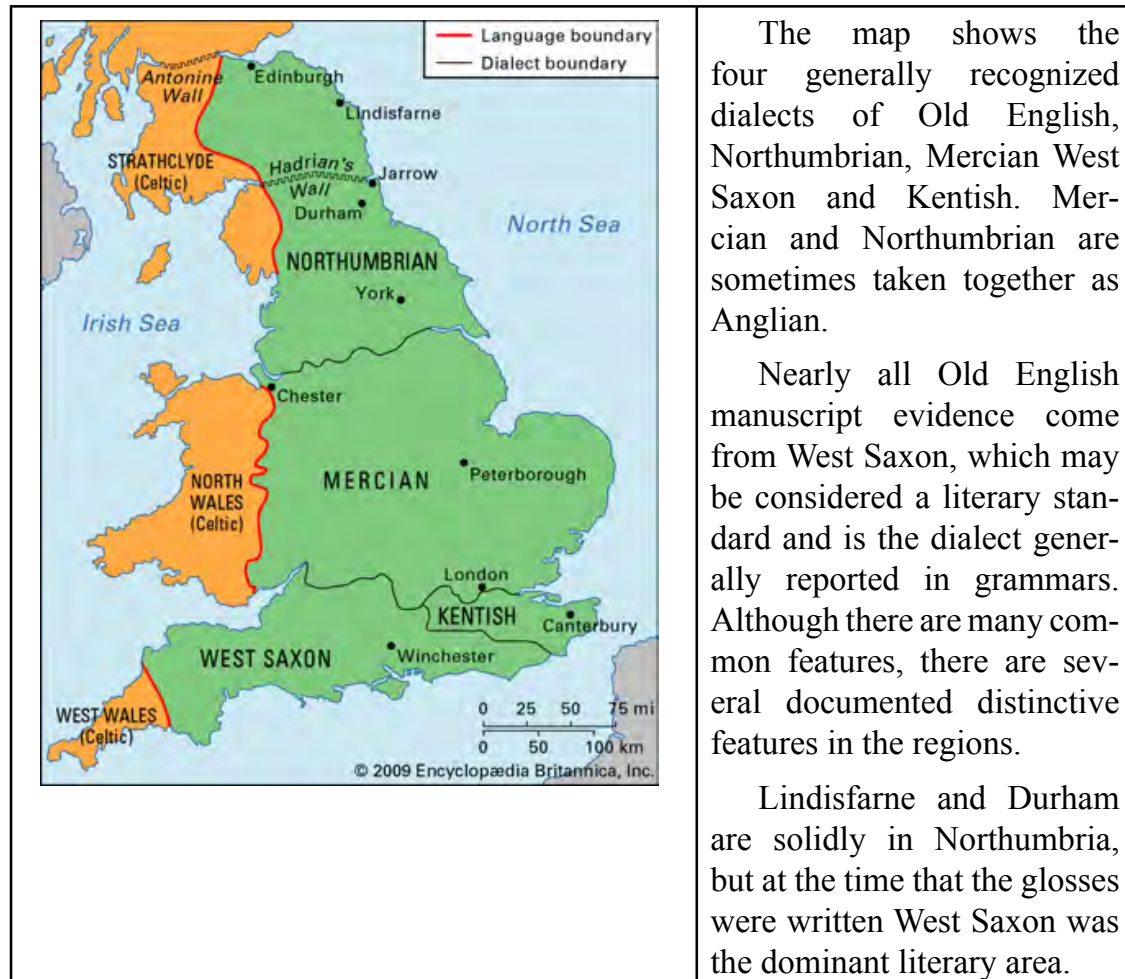


Figure 1. Old English dialect areas

A number of phonological, morphological, lexical and syntactic characteristics of Northumbrian have been identified, some exclusively Northumbrian, some more generally “northern” or Anglian, distinguishing these varieties from West Saxon. They include contracted negative verbs and adverbs (Levin, 1958; Wood, 2002; Van Bergen, 2008), Scandinavian vocabulary (Pons-Sanz, 2000), extensive use of 3rd person singular ‘s’ (Blakely, 1949; Cole, 2014, 2016), periphrastic and inflected genitive (Ledesma, 2016), and general early loss of inflectional morphology on nouns and verbs. (See also Cuesta et al, 2008, for a summary of features).

It is well known that English dialects show considerable variation in vowels, and somewhat less variation in consonants. I will assume that for the vowels in Old English, there is a direct correlation between grapheme and phoneme, as demonstrated by (Hogg, 1992, p. 85). Evidence for the sound system of Old English comes from investigations of contemporary scribal practice, and descriptions of the sound system rely on criteria such as “the later history of English, linguistic plausibility, etc.” (Hogg 2011, p. 12). The phonological contrasts of the Old English vowel system are: height, (high, mid and low), backness (front and back) and lip-rounding. Additionally, there is a quantitative contrast in vowel length, although this is not generally indicated orthographically in historical documents (Hogg, 1992, p. 85). (The tradition of modern editors, that I will adopt, indicates vowel length with a macron for long vowels). Rounding was contrastive only for the non-low front vowels.

In the 10th century, when the glosses were written, the mid-front rounded vowel that is the main focus of this paper, /ø(:)/, is present only in Northumbrian. “In W(est) S(axon) and K(en)t especially, /ø/ and /ø:/ are unrounded to /e/ and /e:/, and unrounding can be seen to a limited extent in Anglian) also. . . . In E(arly) W(est) S(axon) /ø/ remains only in *oele* alongside more frequent *ele*, [oil], and /ø:/ remains only in *ōēþel* alongside more frequent *ēþel*, [fatherland]. In L(ate) W(est) S(axon) only unrounded forms are to be found. Thus in these dialects we may assume that the unrounding was virtually complete by the time of the earliest texts” (Hogg, 2011, p. 121). Unlike West Saxon, these rounded vowels were still present in late Old Northumbrian texts.

The conditioning that favours vowel rounding is a preceding /w/; this is the result of the transfer of the rounding feature inherent in /w/ to the following vowel. So, one particular feature of later northern Northumbrian is a tendency to round /e/ and /e:/ to /ø/ and ø:/ after the back approximant /w/. The change is dated between *c.*800 and *c.*950 and is not present in early Northumbrian, as evidenced by, for example, Caedmon’s Hymn which has *uerc*² ‘work’; however the rounded vowels are frequent in Lindisfarne, represented orthographically by <oe>. Typical examples are *woer* ‘man’; *wōēron* ‘be’ (past ind.pl); *woeg* ‘way’; *woerc* ‘work’; *cwoeða* ‘say’; *cwōēdon* ‘they said’, *swoefen* ‘dream’; *twoelf* ‘twelve’; *woenda*

² The back approximant was sometimes represented orthographically by <u> or <uu> but more commonly by the runic symbol *wynn* (p) for which editors usually substitute <w> to avoid confusion with the runic symbol *thorn* (b).

‘go’; *wōēde* ‘garment’; *wōēpen* ‘weapon’; *hwōēr* ‘where’; *twōēge* ‘two’; *wōē* ‘we’ (Hogg, 2011, pp. 199-202). These contrast with orthographic <e> which, in all dialects, represents a mid-front unrounded vowel, both short and long (Hogg, 2011, p. 13). Hence, in West Saxon, *wer* and in Northumbrian *woer*, ‘man’ and so on. Although a scribe trained in the north would be expected to use the <oe> spelling, someone with a less conservative pronunciation, or influenced by West Saxon would have a tendency to use <e> in the words listed above, except with the verb ‘be’ which is a special case, as explained below.

A few remarks are in order for the verb ‘be’. In ‘be’, the West Saxon past tense uses orthographic <æ>, which in all dialects represents a low front unrounded vowel, both short and long, normally transcribed as /æ/ and /æ:/ (Hogg, 2011, p. 14), whereas <e> and <oe> variants are found in Lindisfarne. Differences between West Saxon and the other varieties are due to another sound change, raising of low front unrounded long vowels which took place in Anglian but not West Saxon. In all varieties of OE West Germanic [ɑ:] fronted to [æ:]. In West Saxon it remained as [æ:] but underwent subsequent raising to [e:] in Anglian (Mercian and Northumbrian). (Moore & Marckwardt, 1969, p. 25; Jones, 1989, p. 11). The lower pronunciation with [æ:] is typical of West Saxon and [e:] is typical of the north³ as evidenced by variant spellings, for example, *englas/ængles* ‘angels’. This change only affected long vowels, hence *wæs* in the singular, but *weron* in the plural. Table 1 shows spelling variants for *be* found in the gospels.

Indicative sing.	Indicative pl.	Subjunctive sing.	Subjunctive pl.
wæs, wæss, uæs	weron woeron, uoeron, ueron,	were, wære woere, uere, uoere	uoere

Table 1. Alternative spelling of *was/were* in Lindisfarne

Note from Table 1 there is a need to distinguish orthography that merely represents conventional practice and not variant pronunciation, i.e. the choice between the rune *wynn* (𐝿) (represented by modern editors as <w>) and <u> depends on scribal practice, and the pronunciation is the same, as opposed to the spelling variation of the vowels, which usually represents pronunciation differences.

³ A separate change in Kentish, the “Kentish Collapse” had a similar outcome, raising of [æ:] to [e:].

Orthographic variation as well as linguistic variation on all levels has been used to identify possible section breaks in the gospels, and the hypothesized breaks used in this study are shown in Table 2. For comparison purposes with studies that reference results by gospel name, note that section 1 could be considered most of Mathew, section 2 half of Mark, section 3 the second half of Mark, section 4 most of Luke and section 5 most of John.

Section	Sec 1	Sec 2	Sec 3	Sec 4	Sec 5
Chapters	- MtGl (Li) 26,16	MtGl (Li) 26,17 - MkGl (Li) 5,40	MkGl (Li) 5,41 - LkGl (Li) 2,9	LkGl (Li) 2,10 - JnGl (Li) 3,13	JnGl (Li) 3,14-end.
Skeat (1871-1887) pages	-Mt.215	Mt.215-Mk.41	Mk.41-Luke 29	Luke 29-John 54	John 54-

Table 2. Suggested section breaks taken from previous research

As mentioned above, Brunner (1947) identified a definite break in the 5th chapter of Mark and a possible one near the start of John. This is substantiated by Blakeley (1949, p. 91-94) who, in his investigation of the distribution of *-s* and *-ð* verbal endings, finds convincing support for dividing the text into four blocks with divisions at Mt. 26,16; Mk. 5,40 and Luke preface 2,9. The break at Mt. 26,17 is justified based on the lower proportion of verbal *-s* endings compared with *-ð* endings, as *-s* is more frequent in section 1 and also frequent in section 3 and somewhat less frequent in sections 4 and 5. In a more detailed study of *-s* endings, Cole (2016, p. 181) finds an increase in the rate of *-s* in section 3 followed by a drop in Luke which increases again from JnGl (Li) 3.14 onwards.

The figures reported in Cole (2016, p. 181), which, she reports, are statistically significant, are reproduced in Table 3. As is well known, the *-s* verbal ending spread from the north to the other areas and can be considered the less conservative morphology.

	Sec 1	Sec 2	Sec 3	Sec 4	Sec 5
N (total)	975	194	318	947	619
N <i>-s</i>	794	55	185	209	261
% <i>-s</i>	81%	28%	58%	22%	42%

Table 3. % *-s* endings from Cole (2016, p. 181)

This extra division of John as a separate section is intuitively appealing, as several others have also singled out the gospel of John as potentially different from the others, and even suggested that the translation of John was the work of Bede (Elliott and Ross, 1972). Notable also in John is orthographic <v> for <u> (Ross et al 1960, p. 23) and the infrequent use of the rune *wynn*, as well as the use of different colored ink. Others have supported these divisions to a certain extent. For example, Luke shows a more frequent use of uncontracted negatives, Van Bergen (2008, p. 291), and only Luke and John use an intensive ‘self’, whereas all four gospels have a reflexive ‘self’ (van Gelderen, 2000; 2018). Recall also, that Ross et al (1960) suggest a paleographic division at the end of Luke.

3. Method and Results

3.1 Method

First, I take the numerical results from Brunner (1947) and convert them into percentages as shown in Table 4. The sections in Table 2 are of unequal length so, in order to compare, the calculations show the percentage of <oe> in the overall total for each section. I then use a concordance programme to search for the following six lexical items; *hwōēr* ‘where’; *twōēge* ‘two’; *twelf* ‘twelve’; *wōē* ‘we’; *woeg* ‘way’; *woerc* ‘work’ and their variants *hwēr*, *twēge*, *twelf*, *wē*, *weg*, *werc*. These are the most frequently occurring items of those that have a mid-front vowel following /w/. The data are taken from Skeat (1881-1887) and spot checked against the manuscript. In terms of orthography, <u> and <w> are treated as equivalent. For the four nouns, *twēge*, *twelf*, *weg*, and *werc*, which are inflected for case in Old English, I count all inflected and non-inflected forms. Compounds of *werc*, that is, *wercmenn* ‘workmen’ and *wercmonn* ‘workman’ are included. For *weg*, ‘way’, I also searched for *aweg* and *awoeg* ‘away’, but did not find examples. Percentages of <oe> for these six lexical items are calculated, enabling direct comparison with Brunner’s figures. The raw figures are shown in Table 5; the individual percentages in Table 6 and the overall percentages in Table 7. For *wesan* there are 7 examples with the vowel spelled <æ>. These will be discussed in section 3.3.

3.2 Results

As can be seen from Table 4, which shows figures taken from Brunner’s research, the rounded vowel of forms of *wesan* is fairly infrequent in

the first two sections of Lindisfarne, as Brunner (1949, p. 35) describes. However, when it comes to an overall comparison with forms of *cueþan*, sections 1 and 2 are markedly different from each other. Forms in <e> are said to be comparatively rare after the first four chapters of Mark, but become frequent again in the first three chapters of John (Brunner 1947, p. 35). As can be seen from Table 4, this essentially sets sections 3 and 4 as markedly different from the others. However, there is little similarity between sections 1 and 2 as there was with *wesan*.

		Sec 1	Sec 2	Sec 3	Sec 4	Sec 5	Total
<i>wesan</i> 'be'	<e>	120	68	23	139	65	415
	<oe>	8	5	28	132	38	211
	%<oe>	6.3%	6.9%	54.9%	48.7%	36.9%	
<i>cueþan</i> 'say'	<e>	126	18	1	18	20	183
	<oe>	64	29	71	166	38	368
	%<oe>	33.7%	61.7%	98.6%	90.2%	65.5%	

Table 4. Frequency of rounded high front vowel <oe> vs unrounded vowel, <e>
Raw numbers from Brunner (1947)

Assuming that /ø:/, the more marked form and the one that is already lost from West Saxon, is the most conservative pronunciation, comparison of Table 4 and Table 3 shows that the results for *wesan* and verbal –s taken together show an overall tendency towards a less conservative variety in section 1. After this, the correlation falls apart. For example, phonology figures in table 4 support a similarity between sections 3 and 4, the ones for morphology, in table 3, do not.

Turning now to the new data, the six selected lexical items, arranged alphabetically in Table 5, it is apparent that they are not as frequent as the forms of *wesan* and *cueþan* in Table 4. However, some general trends are apparent. Most notable is that, if the results for 'we' are ignored, there are very few examples of unrounded <e> in sections 3 and 4, a similar result to that found for *cueþan*. Also notable from the 'total' column is that there are more examples of rounded vowels than of unrounded ones for all the items except *hwēr* and *wē*.

		Sec 1	Sec 2	Sec 3	Sec 4	Sec 5	Total
<i>hwēr</i>	<e>	8	0	1	6	8	23
<i>hwōēr</i>	<oe>	0	0	0	2	1	3
<i>twēge</i>	<e>	3	0	1	1	1	6
<i>twōēge</i>	<oe>	23	4	10	26	5	68
<i>twelf</i>	<e>	7	4	0	0	3	14
<i>twoelf</i>	<oe>	4	1	11	12	3	31
<i>wē</i>	<e>	49	16	24	55	66	210
<i>wōē</i>	<oe>	3	0	5	12	2	22
<i>weg</i>	<e>	11	1	1	4	1	18
<i>woeg</i>	<oe>	11	2	13	16	2	44
<i>werc</i>	<e>	12	1	0	1	7	21
<i>woerc</i>	<oe>	2	0	2	14	25	43

Table 5. Instances of rounded high front vowel <oe> and unrounded vowel, <e>
Selected lexical items

Why might *hwēr* and *wē* behave differently from the others? Possibly, little weight should be given to the results for *hwēr*, as it is not frequent enough for definite conclusions to be drawn. Puzzling, however, are the results for ‘we’, where there is an overwhelming absence of rounded forms. There are a number of possible explanations for the low incidence of rounding. First, *we* differs from the other lexical items on the list in being a function word, which means that the spelling may be more conventionalised. Also, the vowel is word final, unlike the other examples, and this may have a phonological effect, or even influence the orthography. Note also, the low overall figures in sections 2 and 3. This highlights the fact that sections 2 and 3 are relatively short, containing only 6 units and 7 units respectively of the 64 equal units that Brunner used, as opposed to section 1 which contains 24 units and, and sections 4 and 5 which contain 21 and 12 units respectively.

In Table 6, the percentages of <oe> for each section are shown, calculated from the figures in Table 5 and merged with the percentages in Table 4. As has already been noted, sections 3 and 4 stand apart. There is consistently a higher percentage of rounding in sections 3 and 4 for all the lexical items. Even for those lexical items where the overall total instances of rounding is low, such as ‘we’, sections 3 and 4 still have the most. What is not apparent at all is the clear break at MkGl (Li) 5,40, so marked for *wesan*.

		Sec 1	Sec 2	Sec 3	Sec 4	Sec 5
		-MtGl (Li) 26,16	MtGl (Li) 26,17 - MkGl (Li) 5,40	MkGl (Li) 5,41 – LkGl (Li) 2,9	LkGl (Li) 2,10 – JnGl (Li) 3,13	JnGl (Li) 3,14- end.
<i>wesan</i>	%<oe>	6.3%	6.9%	54.9%	48.7%	36.9%
<i>cueþan</i>	%<oe>	33.7%	61.7%	98.6%	90.2%	65.5%
<i>hw(ō)ēr</i>	%<oe>	-	-	-	25%	11%
<i>tw(ō)ēge</i>	%<oe>	88.5%	20%	90.9%	96.3%	83.3%
<i>tw(o)elf</i>	%<oe>	36.3%	80%	100%	100%	50%
<i>w(ō)ē</i>	%<oe>	5.8%	0%	17.24%	17.9%	2.9%
<i>w(o)eg</i>	%<oe>	50%	33.3%	92.8%	80%	66.6%
<i>w(o)erc</i>	%<oe>	14.3%	0%	100%	93.3%	78.1%

Table 6. Percentages of rounded high front vowel <oe> for selected lexical items

One factor that could have an influence is the difference in vowel length. The short vowel /e/ tends to be rounded more frequently than the long vowel /e:/ (Hogg, 2011, p. 199), which would go some way to explaining the low incidence of rounding in *w(ō)ē*. However, in the case of the numerals, ‘two’ and ‘twelve’ it might be expected that *tw(ō)ēge* with its long vowel would have less frequent rounding than *tw(o)elf*, but that is not so. In sections 1 and 5 it has considerably more, and in sections 4 and 5 there is little difference between the two numerals.

Finally, Table 7 shows the overall percentages when the figures in Tables 4 and 5 are combined.

	Sec 1	Sec 2	Sec 3	Sec 4	Sec 5
	<u>-MtGl (Li)</u> 26,16	MtGl (Li) 26,17 - MkGl (Li) 5,40	MkGl (Li) 5,41 – LkGl (Li) 2,9	LkGl (Li) 2,10 – JnGl (Li) 3,13	JnGl (Li) 3,14-end.
<e>	336	108	51	224	171
<oe>	115	41	140	380	114
	25.5%	27.5%	73.3%	62.9%	40%

Table 7. Total percentages of rounded high front vowel <oe>

Here, the differences between the 5 sections are clearly revealed. Overall there is much less use of the rounded vowel in the first two sections, supporting Brunner's original suggestion of a break at MkGl (Li) 5,40. There is a considerable increase in sections 3 and 4 followed by a reduction in the final section, supporting the often cited break at the end of Luke. Comparison of table 7 with table 3, shows conservative morphology and phonology in section 4 and more innovative morphology and phonology in section 1, but little correlation otherwise.

3.3 West Saxon <wær->

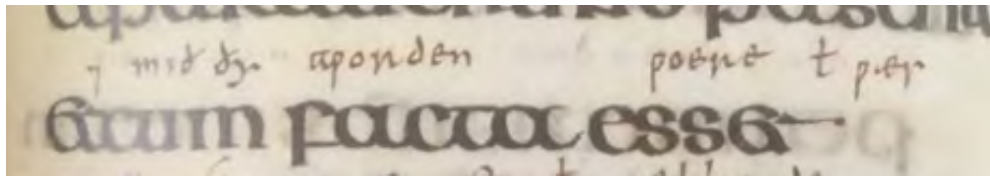
Recall that in section 3.1 it was mentioned that 7 examples were found with the vowel spelled <æ>.

As was explained in section 2, the lexical items under consideration are those that have either a short or long mid-front rounded vowel in Northumbrian (/ø(:))/, of which the southern equivalents are /e/ and /e:/. The one exception is the stem of *wesan*, which is *wōēr-* and *wēr-* in the north but *wǣr-* in West Saxon, thus <ǣ> being typical of West Saxon.

Surprisingly, Brunner (1947) does not mention the occurrence of West Saxon <æ> in Lindisfarne, even though she carefully documents her methodology to the extent of mentioning two examples of <eo>, which she judges as mistakes for <oe>. My electronic searches revealed 7 examples of this spelling. The question here is whether these are actually in the manuscript or are editorial mistakes; Cuesta (2016) is one of the most recent researchers to critique the editorial license taken by Skeat's (1871-1887) editions. If they are real examples penned by the glossator, the question becomes how they are distributed and what significance can be attached to their inclusion.

The examples are found in the following verses: MtGl (Li)13,35; MtGl (Li) 23,23 (both section1); MkGl (Li).15,42; MtGl (Li) 16,11 (both section 3); LkGl (Li) 8,9; LkGl (Li) 15,20; LkGl (Li) 19,11 (section 4). There seems to be no regularity in this distribution, with examples in 3 of the 5 sections. The most significant observation that can be made is that there are no examples in John's gospel. It remains to be determined whether the manuscript confirms these 7 examples. I examined the remaining examples, and confirmed all but one as <æ>.

One of the easiest ways to see the orthographic difference between <oe> and <æ> in the manuscript is to examine a doublet, i.e. when a Latin word is given a double gloss, the two Old English words separated with the symbol 'þ'. Doublets are not unusual, and the gloss contains over 3000 in total (Kotake, 2006, p. 37). Such an example is shown in Figure 2, the doublet showing the Latin singular preterite subjunctive *esset*, glossed with both the indicative *wæs* and the subjunctive *woere*.



&	mið ðy ^l .	aworden	woere þ wæs	
<i>et</i>	<i>cum</i>	<i>facta</i>	<i>esset</i>	
and	when	done	were	(LkGl (Li) 22,14)

Figure 2. Doublet showing adjacent *woere* and *wæs*

Note the initial grapheme in each is *wynn* and that *wæs* ends with a long 's'. The vowel in *wæs* (past singular indicative of *wesan*) is always <æ>. (Recall that the short vowels do not raise in northern varieties, unlike /æ:/. See Table 1). The difference between the two vowels is clear in Figure 2. Next, compare the orthography in Figure 2 with that in Figure 3, which shows one of the 7 examples of <æ> under examination. This example also happens to be in a doublet. Here the vowels in *wæs* and *wære* are clearly similar to each other and similar to the *wæs* in Figure 2.

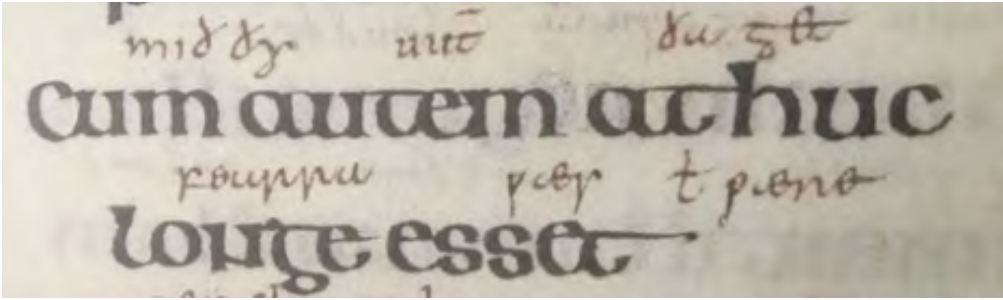
					
mið ðy	uutedlice	ða get	fearra	esset	
<i>cum</i>	<i>autem</i>	<i>athuc</i>	<i>longe</i>	<i>wæs t wære</i>	
when	indeed	then	far	were	(LkGl (Li) 15.20)

Figure 3. Doublet showing adjacent *wære* and *wæs*

I examined the remaining examples, and confirmed all but one as <æ>. They are all similar to the graphemes <æ> seen in Figures 2 and 3. The doubtful example is shown in Figure 4. Here there is even a <wæs> for comparison in the following line. As can be seen, this example is different when compared with the other examples and could also be taken as a hastily written <oe>.

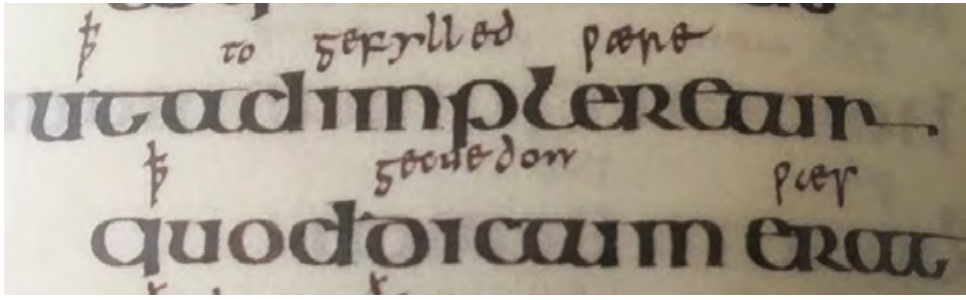
					
þæt ²	to gefylled ³ wære	þæt	gecuedon	wæs	
<i>ut</i>	<i>adimpleretur</i>	<i>quod</i>	<i>dictum</i>	<i>erat</i>	
that	fulfilled were	that	Said	was	(MtGl (Li) 13.35)

Figure 4. Doubtful example of *wære*, showing *wæs* on the line below

In conclusion it can be said that at least six of these seven examples are confirmed. How to interpret them remains a puzzle. There are not enough examples of <æ> to posit a southern influence and they are present in all the gospels except John. All that can perhaps be said is that the result for doublets underscores the singularity of John's gospel, already emphasized by much past research.

4. Conclusion

This investigation analyses the distribution of mid-front rounded vowels in the glosses to the Lindisfarne gospels. Rounding of these vowels when they follow /w/ is a dialect feature of late Old Northumbrian, one of the features that differentiates it from the dominant literary dialect of the 10th century, West Saxon. This feature is variable in the glosses of the Lindisfarne. The aim is to find whether there is uneven distribution that could either indicate a different glossator or a single glossator copying from existing exemplars and to look for correlation with other features to aid in confirming the demarcations. Already hypothesised demarcations in the gospels are presented and the investigation looks for evidence to support the division into sections. The data takes already published numbers for two verb stems. These are reworked into percentages together with new data taken from six of the most frequently occurring lexical items that have mid-front vowels following /w/.

Rounded vowels are found to be variably distributed throughout the different sections and also each lexical item showed different distribution. The most significant finding is that in sections 3 and 4 rounded vowels occur most frequently, setting Luke's gospel and half of Mark (sections 3 and 4) apart as more conservative than the other sections. This finds support in van Bergen (2008) who notes an increased use of uncontracted negatives, a feature found more often in northern varieties, in sections 3 and 4, i.e. MkGl (Li) 5,40 to the end of Luke, the data in section 2 being too sparse to reach any firm conclusion (van Bergen, 2008, p. 291). Another feature that sets Luke apart is that it has the lowest incidence of the –s verbal ending (Cole, 2014, and see Table 3 above) making section 4 also more conservative, though this does not extend to section 3.

The overall figures shown in Table 7 support the demarcation at MkGl(Li) 5,40 with sections 1 and 2 patterning similarly, though there is considerable variation when looking at each individual lexical item. It must be cautioned that in some of the sections the data is quite sparse. For future work it could be helpful to include other nouns and verbs as, even though many are infrequent overall, they would contribute to the overall result. Finally, seven instances of the vowel /æ:/ occurring in the past tense *wære* are investigated and found to occur sporadically in all the gospels apart from John, supporting the much cited singularity of John's gospel.

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