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Reduced forms in the nominal morphology of the Lindisfarne Gospel Gloss. A case of accusative/dative syncretism?

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Abstract: One of the most characteristic features of the grammar of the Lindisfarne Gospel gloss is the absence of the etymological *-e* inflection in the dative singular in the paradigm of the strong masculine and neuter declension (*a*-stems). Ross (1960: 38) already noted that endingless forms of the nominative/accusative cases were quite frequent in contexts where a dative singular in *-e* would be expected, to the extent that he labeled the forms in *-e* ‘rudimentary dative.’ The aim of this article is to assess to what extent the dative singular is still found as a separate case in the paradigms of the masculine and neuter *a*-stems and root nouns. To this end a quantitative/statistical analysis of nouns belonging to these classes has been carried out in contexts where the Latin lemma is either accusative or dative. We have tried to determine whether variables such as syntactic context, noun class, and frequency condition the presence or absence of the *-e* inflection, and whether the distribution of the inflected and uninflected forms is different in the various demarcations that have been identified in the gloss. The data have been retrieved using the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus*. All tokens have been checked against the facsimile edition and the digitised manuscript in order to detect possible errors.

Keywords: glosses, Lindisfarne gloss, Old Northumbrian, syncretism

1 Introduction

The aim of this article is to examine accusative/dative syncretism in the Lindisfarne Gospel Gloss, the first extant translation of the Gospels into the vernacular and the most substantial witness that has come down to us written in Old Northumbrian (10th century). One of the reasons why the Lindisfarne gloss continues to

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receive so much attention is that it shows evidence that some features that have generally been ascribed to Middle English were already in progress in Old Northumbrian, such as accusative/dative syncretism, the extension of the *-s* inflection to the present indicative paradigm, the weakening of unstressed vowels and the incipient loss of grammatical gender (cf. Blakeley 1948/1949; Blakeley 1949/1950; Jones 1987; Ross 1934; Ross 1936, among others). Despite the great deal of attention that it has received in the past, there are still problems that remain unresolved that might benefit from the application of variationist methodologies not available to our predecessors.¹

Case syncretism has been described as the diachronic merger of two or more cases within an inflectional paradigm (Baerman et al. 2005: 4). It can have two sources: phonological change, as in the merger of nominative and accusative singular in the first declension nouns in Vulgar Latin, which resulted from the regular loss of word final *-m*,² or more complex morphosyntactic readjustments, such as the development of the Proto-Indo-European dative and locative singular, which were combined in Ancient Greek into the case traditionally known as the dative. However, there is not always a clear-cut distinction between phonological and morphological change. For Baerman et al. it is useful to retain the label syncretism as a cover term that will apply to all instances of inflectional homophony regardless of their origin and interpretation (2005: 7). Similarly, Barðdal and Kulikov argue that the general mechanisms which lead to case syncretism (phonetic processes, overlapping of syntactic and semantic functions, analogical developments) often work together “so that several factors create favourable (albeit not always sufficient) conditions for the case mergers” (Barðdal and Kulikov 2006: 33).

Syncretism can be either intraparadigmatic, involving the extension of a form at the expense of others within a paradigm, or interparadigmatic, which can be described as the influence of “external analogical pressures from other declensional classes” (Adamczyk 2018: 26). As will be shown, in the case of accusative/dative syncretism in the Lindisfarne Gospel Gloss, both analogical processes (within a paradigm and from other noun classes) are found to be operative. As regards whether it is possible to predict which form serves as the basis for analogical change in a paradigm, Bybee (2007, 2015) stresses the significance of

¹ Among the numerous studies on the morphosyntax of the gloss are Lea (1894), Fücksel (1901), Carpenter (1910), Ross (1937, 1960), and Berndt (1956). More recent studies on the gloss include Pons-Sanz (2000, 2001, 2004, 2013, 2016), Hogg (2004), Cole (2014), Fernández Cuesta and Pons-Sanz (2016), Gameson (2017), and Rodríguez Ledesma (2018).

² See also Blake (1994: 171).

frequency effects rather than markedness (Jakobson 1939; Tiersma 1982).³ She formulates a general hypothesis that “high-frequency forms are resistant to change on the basis of the structure of other forms and patterns, and more likely to serve as the basis of such change in low-frequency forms” (Bybee 2015: 102). The rationale is that “forms that are strongly represented in memory will be less likely to change, and they are likely to be the forms accessed and used when a less frequent form is difficult to access” (2015: 102).⁴

As with all Indo-European languages, case syncretism in Old English is already attested in its earliest stages (e.g. nominative/accusative syncretism in neuter nouns). Compared with other dialects of Germanic, however, Old English shows a higher degree of syncretism, both in the nominal and verbal paradigms. As is well known, already in Old English the richest declension, the masculine *a*-stems, had only five distinct categories, the four local/movement cases (dative, ablative, locative and instrumental) having already merged into the so-called ‘dative’, although some remnants of the old locative and instrumental remained in various dialects (locative *rodi* and instrumental *blodæ* provide evidence of the merger of these two cases in the dialect of the Ruthwell Cross inscription).⁵

As is also well known, Old Northumbrian is more advanced than other dialects of Old English as regards morphological simplification and, more specifically, case syncretism. Old Northumbrian accusative/dative syncretism has been studied by Ross (1937) and later by Blakeley (1948/1949), who focuses on accusative/dative syncretism in the Lindisfarne Gospel Gloss (henceforth Lindisfarne). The results of their studies are summarised in the standard grammars of Old English (Brunner 1965; Campbell 1959) and, more recently, Hogg and Fulk (2011: 74), who refer to the alternation of the zero and *-e* inflections in Lindisfarne as “an early indicator of the loss of the dative singular evidenced in early Middle English texts.”

This type of syncretism entails the neutralization of a core/grammatical case (accusative) and a peripheral/‘concrete’/semantic case (dative). Core cases encode

3 Bazell (1960: 6–7) accounts for accusative/dative syncretism in Old Northumbrian in terms of Jakobson’s markedness theory. He notes that the dative singular was distinguished from the nominative/accusative inflection by final *-e*, which in phonological terms is minimally “marked” in the Old English phonological system, i.e. the dative would differ from the nominative/accusative only by the presence of the feature “vocality”.

4 See also Bybee (2007: 10).

5 The etymological ending of locative feminine *ō*-stems is *-æ*, so the expected form should be *rodæ*, whereas in the case of *blodæ* (an instrumental neuter of the *a*-stems) *blodi* would be the etymological form. Etymological endings are preserved in the early manuscripts of Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica*, and in other inscriptions: locative *bergi* (neuter *a*-stems) is found in Thornhill III and feminine *cæstri* in the Franks Casket (Campbell 1959: 154 and 224 respectively). For an attempt to explain the unetymological forms in the Ruthwell Cross, cf. Lass (1991). Page (1995: 46), however, appears to attribute them to an error on the part of the rune-cutter.

the complements of typical one-place and two-place transitive verbs (nominative and accusative) (Blake 1994: 34). A possible outcome of this neutralization involves the reduction of the paradigm to an opposition between the unmarked core case and a so-called ‘oblique’ form (Baerman et al. 2001: 20), which, as will be shown below, is the result in Old Northumbrian. In their cross-linguistic typological study of syncretism in both Indo-European and non-Indo-European languages, Baerman et al. (2005: 40) show that this type is less common cross-linguistically than the syncretism of the two grammatical/core cases (nominative and accusative). With the accusative, we typically find the genitive (Finnish and Slavonic), or the dative, or both (Eastern Armenian). “It is generally held that these two cases, along with the core cases, together constitute the structural or syntactic cases which express basic syntactic functions. These are opposed to the semantic cases such as directional cases or the instrumental, which typically serve as adjuncts” (Baerman et al. 2005: 51–52; cf. also Blake 1994: 33–34). In the present article we are going to focus on accusative/dative syncretism in the basic syntactic functions of direct and indirect objects, but especially in adjuncts, mostly directional, where semantic factors could also play a role.

2 Aims and method

One of the most characteristic features of the grammar of Lindisfarne is the frequent absence of the dative singular inflection in the so-called ‘Type α ’ (alpha) declension, mostly comprising nouns belonging to originally *a*-stems (*stān*), short *ja*-stems (*bedd*), long *ō*-stems (*hwil*), long and short *jō*-stems (*synn*), long *i*-stems (*sēd*), long *u*-stems (*hond*), and root nouns (*mann*) (Ross 1937; Ross 1960: 39). In the paradigm of these nouns, the etymological dative singular in *-e* (as found in West Saxon) alternates with the zero inflection. Ross (1960: 38) refers to the forms in *-e* as ‘rudimentary datives’ and does not include them in the paradigm of this type of nouns, implying that the dative in *-e* was in the process of being lost.

The traditional classification which takes etymology as a criterion (Campbell 1959) has been questioned by Krygier (2002) and Hogg and Fulk (2011) on the grounds that it fails to reflect the reorganization of the nominal paradigms that was already taking place in the Old English period due to analogical processes. In fact, Hogg and Fulk (2011) offer both the traditional diachronic and a synchronic classification of the Old English nominal declensional system, although for the latter they also resort to etymology in order to explain the allomorphic variation present in the different paradigms. Similarly, Kolasinska’s (2013) study of the nominal system of the gloss to the Vespasian Psalter classifies nouns from a synchronic

perspective according to their inflectional endings.⁶ Although we agree with Krygier (2002) that etymology is not an adequate criterion for a synchronic analysis of Old English, we prefer to keep the traditional classification, along with Hogg and Fulk (2011), as this is relevant when it comes to identifying the different types of syncretism we are dealing with (intraparadigmatic and interparadigmatic).

For the present article we have carried out a quantitative analysis of 18 nouns: *burg*, *byrgen*, *dæg*, *deað*,⁷ *disc*, *gast*, *god*, *hælend*,⁸ *hus*, *land*, *mann*, *mor*, *scip*, *tid*, *weg*, *word*, *wuldor*, *yfel*. Most belong to the traditional *a*-stems (*as*-declension following Hogg and Fulk 2011: 72), except for *byrgen* (feminine *jō*-stems),⁹ *tid* (feminine *i*-stems), and the root nouns *burg* and *mann*. The reason for selecting these nouns is that, although they have a different ending for accusative and dative singular in classical Old English, they have all been shown to present syncretism in Old Northumbrian (Blakeley 1948/1949; Ross 1937).¹⁰

As regards methodology, the data have been retrieved using the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus*, which is based on Skeat's edition (1871–1887). We have searched *DOEC* for all occurrences of these nouns and, since it is an untagged corpus, it has been necessary to identify the syntactic functions of all the relevant forms: direct object, indirect object and adverbial. Given that Skeat's edition has been shown to present some errors and inaccuracies (cf. Fernández Cuesta 2016; Kruger 2019; Walkden 2016: 244), all instances have been checked against the facsimile edition of the manuscript (London, British Library, Cotton Nero D. iv (Kendrick et al. 1956)). Collation with the digitized manuscript has also allowed us

6 Lass (1994: 132) also points out that “the Old English paradigm shows why the conventional listing of nouns by (historical) stem classes can be misleading ... Old English *giest* is morphologically an *a*-stem ... and it is only comparison with Go *gast*-s and a cognate with L *host*-i-s that shows why it is classified as an *a*-stem. The *i*-umlaut of the root vowel is the only evidence left for its original declension; and even this is opaque except by comparison with Gothic or Latin, which show the old back vowel”.

7 *Deað* is generally classified as a masculine *a*-stem “with some vestiges of cl. 4 endings in poetry and in Northumbrian” (*DOE*). According to the *OED*, occasional forms may perhaps reflect original *u*-stem inflection, such as apparent cases of genitive singular *deaða* in verse or dative singular *deoða* in late Northumbrian. We have only found one example in MtGl (Ru) 15.4: *qui maledixerit patri matri morte moriatur seþe wæрге fæder oþþe moder deaða swælteþ* ‘he that shall curse father or mother, let him die the death’ (Douay-Rheims Bible).

8 Originally *hælend* was an *-nd* stem (Hogg and Fulk 2011: 63). In *DOE* it is classified as a masculine class 7 noun.

9 According to *DOE*, *byrgen* is a feminine class 2 noun. However, it is occasionally found as neuter (mainly in Lindisfarne) or masculine.

10 We use the traditional terminology: accusative, which is the result of syncretism between nominative-accusative in these noun classes, and dative, which is the usual term found in standard reference grammars for the result of the syncretism of the dative, local and instrumental cases.

to identify whether what appear to be uninflected forms in the *DOEC* are in fact truncated forms, as in Figure 1:



Figure 1: f. 42vb22.

f. 42vb22

Latin *cum Iesu*

Mt.Gl. (Li.) 9.10 *mið ðone hæþ*

DOEC *mið ðone hæþend*

‘with the Saviour’

The data have been analysed taking into account the following variables: a) syntactic function: direct object, indirect object and adverbial; b) noun class: vocalic stems and root nouns and c) lexical frequency. With regard to syntactic function (a), the expected inflection for direct object is zero and therefore the tokens with *-e* have been coded as instances of syncretism. In the case of indirect object and adverbials, however, since the expected inflection is *-e*, tokens with zero have been coded as instances of syncretism. The possible influence of the Latin lemma has also been considered in cases where the Latin nominative and ablative are identical (*L. hora, gloria, via*), since this may have triggered the occurrence of the uninflected form of their Old English glosses (*tid, wuldor, weg*).¹¹

Our aims are, on the one hand, to assess to what extent these variables condition accusative/dative syncretism in the gloss, and on the other, to determine whether the degree of syncretism is different in the various demarcations that have been identified by previous scholarship on the basis of both linguistic and palaeographical grounds (Brunner 1947/1948; Roberts 2016; Ross et al. 1960; van Bergen 2008; van Gelderen 2019a, 2019b).

¹¹ Donka Minkova (p.c) suggests that phonotactic factors, such as the initial sound of the following word, should also be taken into consideration. She notes that in *Beowulf* there is evidence of pre-vocalic elision of *-e*, which might indicate that the phonological environment may be significant. We agree that this variable should be considered in a poem meant to be read aloud, but the purpose of a gloss was an aid to understand the Latin text (which had to be recited daily). Therefore, phonotactic factors across word boundaries do not seem to be particularly relevant. Besides, since there is evidence of atomistic glossing in Lindisfarne, we doubt that this factor is significant.

3 Data analysis

3.1 Adverbials

Blakeley (1948/1949) studied accusative/dative syncretism in Lindisfarne with five prepositions which in standard Old English generally govern dative (*æt*, *from*, *mið*, *of* and *to*) and a selection of nouns belonging to different classes: masculine *a*-stems (*dæg*, *weg*), neuter *a*-stems (*hus*, *land*, *scip*, *word*), neuter *ja*-stems (*bedd*, *cynn*), feminine *ō*-stems (*hwil*, *lar*) and mutated nouns (*burg* and *mann*). He concluded:

[t]he five prepositions are construed with clear dative in the plural except in a very few instances [...] for all save one of which (*ælaruas*, p. 10) an explanation can be found. In the singular these same five prepositions are often construed with a clear dative, but, often too, they are construed with an apparent accusative (Blakeley 1948/1949: 30).

Blakeley's empirical analysis is comprehensive, but does not consider what variables may condition the choice of inflection, nor is there any statistical analysis of the data. As regards possible causes of the syncretism found, he states that it cannot be attributed to a phonological loss of final *-e* or to analogy with the few old endingless datives. He suggests that in some cases the uninflected form may derive from Indo-European instrumentals or locatives and refers to Ross (1937). However, given the widespread occurrence of these forms, he concludes that in the singular there is accusative-dative syncretism, which he attributes to analogy, since in many noun classes there was no etymological distinction between accusative and dative singular (Blakeley 1948/1949: 31).

The following examples illustrate the variation between the inflected (dative) and the uninflected form (accusative) with a preposition that normally governs dative in Old English:

- (1) f. 103vb2
 Latin *ne se expelleret extra regionem*
 MkGl. (Li.) 5.10
ne fordrife buta ðæt lond
 not would.send.away out.of the.ACC.SG town.ACC.SG¹²
 'he would not send them away out of the town'¹³

¹² Unless morphological information is necessary for the argument, only word-by-word glosses are provided to the Old English texts.

¹³ All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are our own.

(2) f. 11rb10–12

Latin *eduxit eum extra uicum*

MkGl. (Li.) 8.23

<i>of</i>	<i>gelæde</i>	<i>ðene l hine</i> ¹⁴	<i>buta</i>	<i>ðæm</i>	<i>lond-e</i> ¹⁵
of	led	him	out.of	the.DAT.SG	town-DAT.SG

‘he led him out of the town’

As Blakeley also observed, this variation is not found in the plural. In example (3) there are three nouns in the accusative in Latin following the preposition *apud*. Those in the singular (*deum*) are glossed by the uninflected form (accusative *god*), but plural *homines* is glossed by dative plural *monnum*. In all cases the nouns follow the preposition *mið*, which usually governs dative in classical Old English.

(3) f. 116ra1–3

Latin *iesus ait apud homines impossibile est sed non apud deum omnia enim possibilia sunt apud deum*

MkGl. (Li.) 10.27

<i>se</i>	<i>hælend</i>	<i>cuoeð</i>	<i>mið</i>	<i>monn-um</i>	<i>unmæhtig</i>	<i>is ah ne</i>
the	Saviour	said	with	man-DAT.PL	impossible	is but not
<i>is</i>	<i>mið</i>	<i>god</i>	<i>alle</i>	<i>forðon</i>	<i>mæhto l eðelico</i>	<i>sint mið</i>
is	with	God.ACC.SG	all	therefore	possible	are with

god
God.ACC.SG
‘Jesus said with men it is impossible, but not with God, for with God all things are possible’

One of the reasons that has been adduced for the resilience of dative plural *-um* in late Old English is that it was a very stable marker occurring across all declensional classes, both in the nominal and the adjectival paradigms (Adamczyk 2018: 45–46; Bazell 1960: 6): “[T]he appearance of superstable markers in the system has been viewed as indicative of the early stage of morphological simplification, which potentially leads to deflection” (Dammel and Nübling 2006: 100).¹⁶ Nevertheless, although not so distinctive as dative plural *-um*, *-e* was also the general inflection for dative singular in most declensions in Old English and this does not seem to have been an obstacle to the accusative/dative syncretism observed in the gloss.

Blurring of the accusative/dative distinction can also be seen in the Lindisfarne gloss with prepositions which could govern either case in Old English

¹⁴ The symbol *l* (Latin *vel*) is used to separate two glosses to the same lexical item.

¹⁵ Although this preposition normally takes dative, *DOE* gives some examples of accusative.

¹⁶ This superstable marker will be reduced in early Middle English: *-um* > *-en*.

depending on whether they expressed location (dative) or direction (accusative). The following examples illustrate that this distinction does not always hold:

(4) f. 103ra3

Latin *adsumunt eum ita ut erant in nauī*¹⁷

MkGl. (Li.) 4.36

togenomon hine suæ þ hia weron in scip

took him as that they were in ship.ACC.SG

‘They took him as they were in the ship’

(5) f. 41vb1

Latin *ascendente eo in nauicula*¹⁸

MtGl. (Li.) 8.23.

ða he ofstag in lytl-um scip-e l in cuople

when he entered into small-DAT.SG ship-DAT.SG

‘When he entered into the small ship’

Further evidence of variation is found in double glosses. In example (6) and Figure 2 inflected *dæge* is modified by both the accusative and the dative forms of the demonstrative:

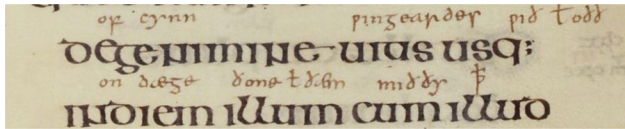


Figure 2: f. 124rb14.

(6) f. 124rb14

Latin *non bibam de genimine uitis usque in diem illum*

MkGl. (Li.) 14.25

ne drinco ic of cynn wingeardes wið l oðð

not will.drink I of fruit vine's until

¹⁷ The Lindisfarne text has *erant* whereas the usual reading in the Vulgate is in the singular (*erat*).

¹⁸ Notice that in Classical Latin we would expect accusative: *in nauiculam*. The case distinction after the preposition *in*, which takes accusative when it indicates movement and ablative to express location, was less frequently observed from the third-fourth century onwards in Vulgar Latin (cf. Sidwell 1995: 368). Clackson and Horrocks (2007: 253) also state that “the core grammatical uses, nominative as subject, accusative as object, dative as indirect object and genitive as the case of adnominal dependency, are preserved in the classical languages. But the peripheral uses of the cases, and in particular the construction with prepositions, show signs of confusion.”

on *dæg-e* *ðone* *l* *ðæm*
 on day-DAT.SG that.ACC.SG or that.DAT.SG
 ‘I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day’¹⁹

In example (7) and Figure 3 variation between the accusative (zero ending) and dative (-e) is found in the noun. In both cases the demonstrative is in the accusative:²⁰

- (7) f. 85ra11-12
 Latin *usque in hodiernum diem*
 MtG. (Li.) 27.8
wið *ðone* *longa* *dæg-e* *l* *wið* *ðiosne* *onduord*.
 until the.ACC.SG long day-DAT.SG or until this.ACC.SG present
dæg
 day.ACC.SG
 ‘until this day’

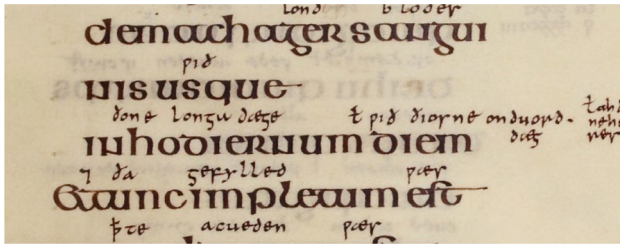


Figure 3: f. 85ra11–12.

The above examples illustrate the occurrence of both uninflected and inflected forms in adverbial contexts with prepositions that govern dative (*mið*), with prepositions that may also govern accusative (*wið*), and with those that can be followed by dative or accusative depending on whether they express ‘state’ or ‘direction’ (*in*). It could be argued that in examples (6) and (7) the Latin accusatives *illum* and *hodiernum diem* might have triggered accusative forms in Old English: *ðone* and *ðiosne onduord dæg* respectively. While Latin influence cannot be discarded, the fact that these forms occur beside dative forms in double glosses might be indicative of syncretism in the idiolect of the gloss, in the sense that both

¹⁹ In the parallel passage in Matthew, inflected *doege* is modified by the accusative form of the demonstrative: MtGl. (Li.) 26.29 *oð ðone doege* glossing L. *usque in diem* ‘until that day’ (f. 81vb23–82ra4).

²⁰ Latin *usque in* is glossed by OE *wið* followed by both dative and accusative (-e and the zero ending), as can be seen in example 7. However, in Rushworth *usque in* is invariably glossed by *oð* followed by accusative.

Table 1: Accusative/dative syncretism in Lindisfarne in adverbials with the prepositions *æt*, *from*, *mið*, *of*, *to*.

	Syncretism	No syncretism	Total <i>N</i> = 211
<i>æt</i>	5 (71.42%)	2 (28.57%)	7
<i>from</i>	8 (19.04%)	34 (80.95%)	42
<i>mið</i>	11 (50%)	11 (50%)	22
<i>of</i>	24 (35.29%)	44 (64.70%)	68
<i>to</i>	25 (34.72%)	47 (65.27%)	72
Total	73 (34.59%)	138 (65.40%)	211

accusative and dative are permissible in the same contexts. What is more, there is evidence that Aldred does not always follow the Latin original in both morphology and syntax. For instance, in his study on null subjects in Lindisfarne, Walkden concludes that they are more frequently found in the third person than in the first and second, and that this distribution is not predictable on the basis of the Latin original (2016: 256). In the same way, Fernández Cuesta and Langmuir (2019) have identified cases in the Durham Collectar in which a Latin indicative form is glossed by a subjunctive, in what might be an attempt on the part of the scribe to “correct” a ‘corrupt’ Latin form. As regards word order, Rodríguez Ledesma has found that in some instances in Lindisfarne a preposed genitive glosses a postposed one in Latin (2016: 232–33). Stanley (2017: 208) also remarks that Aldred is not a slavish glossator, especially in the section corresponding to the gospel of John.

For the present study we have focused on the five prepositions analysed by Blakeley (*æt*, *from*, *mið*, *of* and *to*) and the nouns mentioned above: *burg*, *byrgen*, *dæg*, *deað*, *disc*, *gast*, *god*, *hælend*, *hus*, *land*, *mann*, *mor*, *scip*, *tid*, *weg*, *word*, *wuldor*, *yfel*. Since these five prepositions govern dative in classical Old English,²¹ the expected form in this context is *-e* or the umlauted form (in the case of the root nouns *burg* and *mann*). Therefore, in the tables that follow the zero ending or the base form (in the case of root nouns) have been coded as instances of syncretism.

Table 1 offers the results for the five prepositions studied. Although the number of tokens is very low, syncretism can be observed to occur in all contexts. The results show that the percentage of syncretism is basically the same in the cases of nouns following *of* and *to* (35.29 and 34.72% respectively), where we find the highest number of tokens. The results for *æt* are not significant, given the small number of tokens found.

²¹ There are exceptional examples of accusative which could be an occasional choice of the scribe (see entries for *æt*, *of*, *from*, *mið* and *to* in Bosworth and Toller (1882–1898) and *DOE*).

We have further analysed the distribution of inflected and uninflected forms in the four gospels in order to assess whether they differ significantly in the presence/absence of syncretism. Tables 2–6 show the results for the five prepositions.

Table 2: Accusative/dative syncretism in Lindisfarne in adverbials with the preposition *æt*.²²

	Syncretism	No syncretism	Total <i>N</i> = 7
Matthew	3	0	3
Mark	1	1	2
Luke	1	1	2
John	0	0	0

Table 3: Accusative/dative syncretism in Lindisfarne in adverbials with the preposition *from*.

	Syncretism	No syncretism	Total <i>N</i> = 42
Matthew	0	6 (100%)	6
Mark	2 (33.33%)	4 (66.66%)	6
Luke	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	10
John	0	20 (100%)	20

Table 4: Accusative/dative syncretism in Lindisfarne in adverbials with the preposition *mið*.

	Syncretism	No syncretism	Total <i>N</i> = 22
Matthew	4 (57.14%)	3 (42.85%)	7
Mark	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	5
Luke	3 (42.85%)	4 (57.14%)	7
John	2 (66.66%)	1 (33.33%)	3

Table 5: Accusative/dative syncretism in Lindisfarne in adverbials with the preposition *of*.

	Syncretism	No syncretism	Total <i>N</i> = 68
Matthew	9 (69.23%)	4 (30.76%)	13
Mark	6 (66.66%)	3 (33.33%)	9
Luke	6 (37.5%)	10 (62.5%)	16
John	3 (10%)	27 (90%)	30

²² Percentages are not given for this preposition because of the scarcity of data.

Table 6: Accusative/dative syncretism in Lindisfarne in adverbials with the preposition *to*.

	Syncretism	No syncretism	Total N = 72
Matthew	10 (52.63%)	9 (47.36%)	19
Mark	4 (25%)	12 (75%)	16
Luke	6 (27.27%)	16 (72.72%)	22
John	5 (33.33%)	10 (66.66%)	15

If we take into account the contexts with the highest number of tokens, our results indicate that the section corresponding to John's Gospel stands apart from the others with regard to the presence of syncretism, which is especially low after the prepositions *from* (0%) and *of* (10%).

3.1.1 Distribution of syncretism across the gloss

Previous studies, both linguistic and palaeographic, have shown that the language of the Lindisfarne gloss is far from homogeneous. Brunner (1947/1948) identified a demarcation at Mark 5.40 based on the distribution of the variant forms of some morphosyntactic features such as the nominative/accusative singular of the feminine determiner *seo*, the third person singular of the verb *cweðan*, the preterite plural of *wesan* and the final vowel of the adverb *he(o)nu*. The variants *ðy/ðyu* and *he(o)nu* are found frequently in Matthew and the first chapters of Mark, and then replaced by *ðio/ðiu* and *he(o)no*. On the other hand, the present stem of *cweðan* occurs as *cweð-* in Matthew and the first four chapters of Mark, but is rare in the rest of the gloss except for the first chapters of John. Similarly, for the preterite plural of *wesan*, *e*-forms (*wer-*) predominate in Matthew and the first five chapters of Mark, whereas in the second demarcation both *e-* and *oe-* variants (*wer-* and *woer-*) are equally frequent (Brunner 1947/1948: 34–35). Matthew also seems to be different from the other gospels in that it is most advanced in the grammaticalization of the article *the*, which, according to van Gelderen, could be a native development. The use of grammaticalized *ðe* (as an incipient article) is most frequent in Matthew, followed by John, Mark and Luke (van Gelderen 2019a: 127).

Although van Bergen's study on negative contractions in Old English dialects (2008) confirmed the lack of homogeneity in the language of the gloss, she also showed that there is no neat division at Mark 5.40. The language of the section corresponding to John differs from the rest of the gloss in that it presents a higher percentage of contracted forms (van Bergen 2008: 291), showing a more "southern"

tendency compared to the other gospels.²³ Similarly, van Gelderen (2019b) observes that the use of *self* as an intensifier is only found in Luke and John, and that John has significantly more *self*-forms than the other gospels (229).²⁴ Likewise, Roberts (2016: 54) comments on one occurrence of *sin* (vs. *his*) in John's Gospel (*sinum ambehtum* glossing L. *iesus discipulis* in Jn 21. 14) which is not found in the rest of the gloss and which could be taken as evidence that Aldred was copying earlier glosses.²⁵

At the lexical level, Pons-Sanz (2018) has argued that John also differs from the synoptic gospels in that it appears to be more concerned with legal terminology.²⁶ From a palaeographical point of view, John also stands apart by the use of red ink and of pointed <v> instead of <u>, as noted by Ross et al. (1960: 23). In the colophon (f.259r) Aldred himself draws a distinction between John and the other gospels, stating that he glossed John for the salvation of his soul:

(ic) Aldred p(re)'s'b(yte)r indignus 7 misserim(us)? mið godes fvlv(m)mę 7 s(an)c(t)i cudberhtes hit of(er)glōesade ón englisc. 7 hine gihamadi. mið ðam ðríim dalvm. Matheus dǣl gode s(an)c(t)e cuðberhti. Marc' dǣl. ðæm bisc(ope/um?). 7 lvcas dal ðæm hiorode 7 æht 'v' ora s[eo] 'v'lfres mið tó inlåde. 7 sci ioh(annes) dǣl f(or) hine seolfne 'i(d est) f(or)e his savle' 7 feover óra s[eo] 'v'lfres mið gode 7 s(an)c(t)i cvðberhti. þ(æt)te he hæbbe ondfong ðerh godes miltsæ on heofnv(m).

(I) Aldred, unworthy and most miserable priest? [He] glossed it in English between the lines with the help of God and St. Cuthbert. And, by means of the three sections, he made a home for himself: the section of Matthew was for God and St. Cuthbert, the section of Mark for the bishop[s], the section of Luke for the members of the community (in addition, eight ores of silver for his induction) and the section of St John was for himself (in addition, four ores of silver for God and St Cuthbert) so that, through the grace of God, he may gain acceptance into heaven.

(Trans. Brown 2016: 25–26)

23 In her study of the subjunctive, Wood (2019) also finds variation among the gospels. Although the evidence is scarce, Luke stands out from the others in having a higher ratio of subjunctive to indicative in temporal clauses (177). Luke also stands out, together with John, in having instances of double glosses in which the Latin third person singular imperfect subjunctive *esset* is rendered with both *were* and *wæs* (183).

24 *Self*-forms are more frequent in the Mercian than in the Northumbrian section of the Rushworth glosses (van Gelderen 2019b: 229). The use of *self* glossing L. *ipse-ipsa-ipsum* (as an intensifier) is also found in the gloss to the Durham Collectar, which presents other 'southern' features as well (see Fernández Cuesta and Langmuir 2019).

25 She argues that, since this use is also found in the Durham Collectar (*in londe sinvm* Lindelöf 1927: 107, 13), it could have been part of Aldred's idiolect (Roberts 2016: 53–54). Another feature that the section corresponding to John shares with the Durham Collectar is the use of prefixal *gi-* rather than *ge-* (Skeat 1878: x).

26 There have also been studies that show that John is fairly similar to the other gospels, such as Walkden (2016) on null subjects.

It has been argued that Aldred might have been working with various exemplars, that is, that the Lindisfarne gloss is based on previous translations of the gospels that have not survived. In fact, Roberts (2016: 53) has suggested that Aldred could have based his gloss to the gospel of John on a translation that Bede was supposed to have been working on shortly before he died in 735:

There is the question as to whether the qualitative differences between his practice in the three synoptic Gospels and in John sets the fourth Gospel apart, as inheriting something of Bede's deathbed translation or as in some way more original (Roberts 2016: 53).²⁷

In fact, there is some evidence in the gloss that Aldred was familiar with Bede's exegesis, if not with his actual translation. For instance, in one of the marginalia referring to John 19.37, Aldred alludes to a comment by Bede on the day of Judgement: *post /i. est in die examinis iudicii. districti Iudicis* (Figure 4, example (8)).

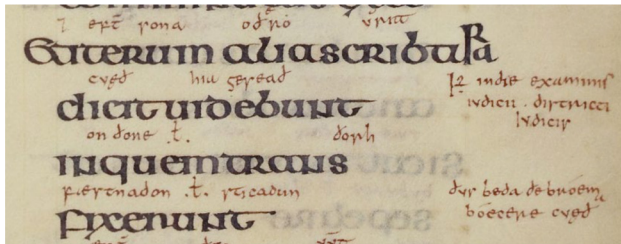


Figure 4: f.255rb22.

(8) f.255rb22

Latin *dicat uidebunt in quem transfixerunt*

JnGl. (Li.)19.37

cwæð hia geseað on ðone .i. ðorh fæstnadon .i. sticadun
 said they look on him or through fastened or
 pierced

‘he said they shall look on him whom they pierced’

Marginalia 1:

post .i. est in die examinis iudicii. districti Iudicis

‘That is, in the day of the test of the judgment. Of the stern judge’

Marginalia 2:

þus beda ðe bróema bóecere cwæð
 thus Bede the famous scribe said
 ‘thus said Bede the famous scribe’

²⁷ Cf. Elliot and Ross (1972: 65), Jolly (2016), and Brown (2016).

Brown (2003: 97) refers to Boyd (1975) where he lists the sources that Aldred may have had access to, including Bede's Old and New Testament's commentaries and his homilies upon the Gospels. Although the above reference to Bede has so far been impossible to identify, it confirms that he was one of Aldred's sources in the composition of the gloss to John's Gospel:

It has proved impossible to pin down the precise reference in Bede. Aldred may have derived his explanation from Bede's *Explanatio Apocalypsis*. The great value of this marginal explanation is that Aldred confirms Bede's as one of the sources of his scholarship (Brown 2003: 97).

In order to determine whether the demarcations established in the previous literature are supported by our study of accusative/dative syncretism, we have considered, on the one hand, the results for Matthew versus the other three gospels and, on the other, the results for John as against the rest of the gloss. We have not included the first five chapters of Mark in the first demarcation since, as in the case of van Bergen's study (2008: 291), the data are insufficient in this section.

Figure 5 and Table 7 show the results for the five prepositions in these two demarcations: Matthew versus Mark, Luke and John. Figure 6 and Table 8 show the results for the five prepositions in the second demarcation: John versus Matthew, Mark and Luke. Results show that the difference between the two demarcations as regards case syncretism in this context is statistically significant.

Since John presents a very low percentage of syncretism (14.70%), it could be argued that the difference observed between the first and the second demarcations (Figure 5/Table 7) might be skewed by John section. In order to test this hypothesis, this section was excluded from the count and the results are shown in Figure 7 and

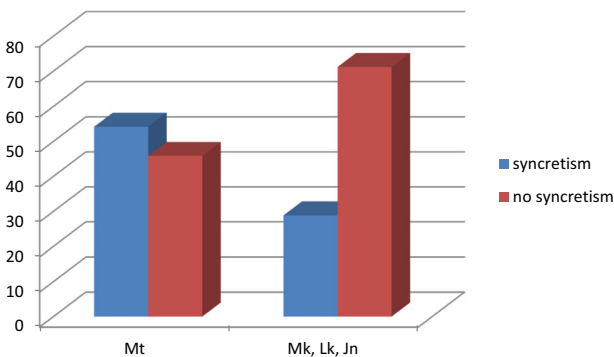


Figure 5: Accusative/dative syncretism after prepositions *æt*, *from*, *of*, *mið* and *to* in Matthew versus the other gospels (Mk., Lk., Jn.). Fisher's exact test: p -value = 0.001767.

Table 7: Accusative/dative syncretism after prepositions *æt*, *from*, *of*, *mið* and *to* in Matthew versus the other gospels (Mk., Lk., Jn.). Fisher's exact test: p -value = 0.001767.

	Syncretism	No syncretism	Total N
Matthew	26 (54.16%)	22 (45.83%)	48
Mark, Luke and John	47 (28.83%)	116 (71.16%)	163

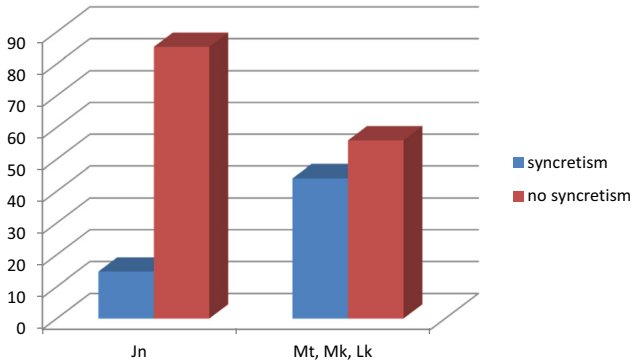


Figure 6: Accusative/dative syncretism after prepositions *æt*, *from*, *of*, *mið* and *to* in John versus Matthew, Mark and Luke. Fisher's exact test: p -value = 0.0000229.

Table 8: Accusative/dative syncretism after prepositions *æt*, *from*, *of*, *mið* and *to* in John versus Matthew, Mark and Luke. Fisher's exact test: p -value = 0.0000229 < 0.001.

	Syncretism	No syncretism	Total N
Matthew, Mark and Luke	63 (44.05%)	80 (55.94%)	143
John	10 (14.70%)	58 (85.29%)	68

Table 9. Our results show that the degree of syncretism in Matthew is not statistically significant once John has been excluded.

This is supported by a test of independence (homogeneity) in which only two factors have been considered, 'gospel' versus 'syncretism', in order to avoid the possible interference of other factors such as 'lexical effects' or 'preposition'. The results show that, when the entire gloss is considered, the variable 'gospel' conditions the presence of syncretism at a p -value of 0.00009 9.55e-05. However, once the section corresponding to John is excluded from the analysis, there is no association between the variables 'gospel' and 'syncretism' (p -value 0.259 < 0.01), i.e. syncretism is not conditioned by 'gospel'.

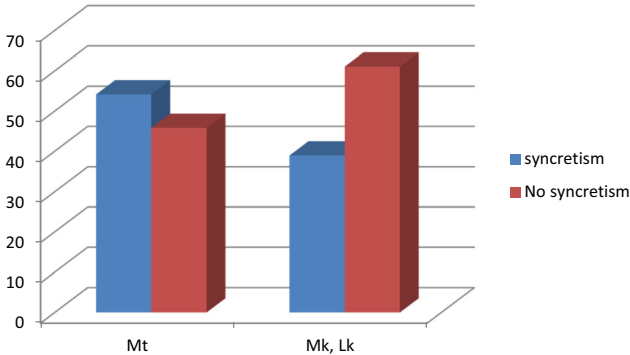


Figure 7: Accusative/dative syncretism after prepositions *æt*, *from*, *of*, *mið* and *to* in Matthew versus Mark and Luke. Fisher's exact test: p -value = 0.1084.

Table 9: Accusative/dative syncretism after prepositions *æt*, *from*, *of*, *mið* and *to* in Matthew versus Mark and Luke. Fisher's exact test: p -value = 0.1084.

	Syncretism	No syncretism	Total <i>N</i>
Matthew	26 (54.16%)	22 (45.83%)	48
Mark and Luke	37 (38.94%)	58 (61.05%)	95

Our results corroborate that John is different (Pons-Sanz 2018; Ross et al. 1960; van Bergen 2008) and more southern than the other sections of the gloss (van Gelderen 2019a, 2019b). These findings support the hypothesis that the gloss to this gospel could have been based on a previous translation, whose author might have been Bede. Nevertheless, no statistically significant difference has been found between the three synoptic gospels as regards syncretism.

3.1.2 Lexical effects

Lexical effects have also been shown to play a role in language change (cf. Bybee 2000, 2007; Labov 1981; Phillips 1984, 2006). Phillips (1984) aligns analogical levelling with non-physiologically motivated sound changes in that in both cases the least frequent words are affected first. According to Bybee (2015) and Bybee and Hopper (2001), high frequency items tend to be more resistant to analogical processes of change and to maintain irregularity:

One of the difficulties in the articulation of this theory of lexical diffusion lies in the specification of the set of changes that proceed from low frequency to high frequency item ... Since high frequency irregulars are highly entrenched and easily accessible, they are the last to

undergo such changes. This pattern of lexical diffusion explains why irregularity is situated in the high frequency paradigms of a language. (Bybee and Hopper 2001: 17)

As shown in Table 10, our study reveals that nouns such as *burg* and *mann* are always found with the marked form (the unlauded dative), that is, they do not present syncretism. In the case of *burg*, there are 21 instances of the form *byrig* with the prepositions *æt*, *from*, *of*, *mið* and *to* (95.45%), as against only one of *burg*:

- (9) f.75rb4
 Latin *et persequimini de ciuitate in ciuitatem*
 MtGl. (Li.) 23.34
*ge biðon gewoehtat ȝ geohtas iuih of **burug** in*
you will.be persecuted or persecute you from town.ACC.SG to
burg²⁸
 town.ACC.SG
 ‘You will be persecuted from town to town’

In the case of *mann*, there are 11 instances functioning as adverbial, all of which present the mutated form *menn* (100%).

Table 10: Distribution of accusative/dative syncretism by lexical item.

	Mt.	Mt.	Mk.	Mk.	Lk.	Lk.	Jn.	Jn.	Total	Total
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
burg	1	3	0	3	0	3	0	12	1	21
byrgen	0	1	1	1	0	6	2	8	3	16
dæg	4	3	1	2	0	0	0	2	5	7
deað	0	4	0	6	0	5	0	6	0	21
disc	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0
gast	2	3	0	0	1	0	0	6	3	9
god	1	1	2	0	2	5	2	18	7	24
hus	4	0	2	2	5	4	0	0	11	6
land	0	0	1	0	1	4	0	2	2	6
mann	0	0	0	5	0	4	0	2	0	11
mor	3	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	5	2
scip	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	3	1
tid	0	0	1	0	3	0	4	0	8	0
weg	3	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	6	1
word	3	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	4	2
wuldor	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
yfel	0	5	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	8

²⁸ The past participle *gewoehtat* has been altered from previous *gewohtas*.

Some lexical items such as *deað*, *yfel* and (to some extent) *byrgen* appear to inhibit syncretism, while *tíd* and *weg* seem to promote it. One lexical item that has a higher number of tokens is *god*, which tends to occur with the inflected form (-e): 77.41%. The fact that 20 of the 31 tokens found appear in John's Gospel might skew the results, since this section has been shown to present less syncretism (see above).

A logistic regression has been carried out in order to test whether these results are statistically significant. As can be seen below, the coefficient associated with the lexical items that present a lower degree of syncretism (*burg*, *byrgen*, *deað*, *god*, *mann*, *yfel*) is negative, which indicates that these nouns inhibit syncretism in a statistically significant way (p -value = 0.001).

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)
(Intercept)	0.4796	0.2037	2.354	0.0186 *
grupo2Res	-2.6666	0.3776	-7.061	1.65e-12 ***

—

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Our initial hypothesis was that frequency effects might play a role. However, a examination of *DOEC* indicates that nouns such as *hus* and *tíd*, which present a higher degree of syncretism, are more frequent than for example *byrgen* and *burg*. It has been suggested that 'markedness' might also play a role in explaining why syncretism is rare in the root nouns *burg* and *mann*. Irregular forms have been shown to be more resilient to change since they are more deeply embedded in the mental lexicon as separate lexical units, rather than as forms belonging to the same paradigm:

Highly autonomous words have weaker connections to other related words—either words of the same paradigm or words of the same lexical class. The idea behind autonomy is that when words (and phrases) are highly frequent they can be accessed independently of related items and are thus not as interconnected in the network (Bybee 2007: 13–14)

However, the concept of markedness is not without problems, as has been amply discussed in the literature: cf. Lass (1997) and Haspelmath (2006). On the other hand, it should be pointed out that some lexical items which tend to present syncretism such as *hus*, *scip* and *word* are neuter nouns, which in Indo-European languages already presented syncretism of nominative and accusative “no matter what declension or number they belonged to” (Blake 1994: 41–42).

3.2 Direct and indirect object

In this section we have analysed syncretism in the syntactic functions of direct and indirect objects. The variables ‘demarcation’ and ‘lexical effects’ have not been considered in these functions because of the scarcity of data. Verbs which normally govern dative such as *gelefan* ‘believe’ and *hyran* ‘obey’, or genitive, such as *gemyndan* ‘remember’, have been excluded from the analysis, since the variation zero versus *-e* does not apply in these cases.

- (10) f.38rb2–3
 Latin *non potestis deo seruire et mamonae*
 MtGl (Li.) 6.24
*ne maga gie **god-e** gehera 7 dioble*
 not can you God-DAT.SG serve and devil
 ‘you cannot serve God and the devil’

As the expected inflection for direct object is zero, the tokens with *-e* have been coded as instances of syncretism. The results for the four Gospels are shown in Table 11:

Table 11: Accusative/dative syncretism in the function of direct object.

	Syncretism	No syncretism	Total <i>N</i> = 174
Matthew	3 (6.25%)	45 (93.75%)	48
Mark	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
Luke	1 (1.64%)	60 (98.36%)	61
John	1 (1.56%)	63 (98.44%)	64

The following examples (11–15) illustrate this type of syncretism. As was observed above (section 3.1), the glossator does not slavishly follow the original, since Latin has accusative in all these cases:

- (11) f. 189ra14
 Latin *interrogabo uos et ego unum uerbum*
 Lk. (Li.) 20.3
*wællō fregna iuih 7 ic **an-u'** **word-e**²⁹*
 will ask you and I one-DAT.SG word-DAT.SG
 ‘I will also ask you one question’

²⁹ It could be argued that in examples 11 and 12 the secondary direct object of *interrogabo* (*unum uerbum*) are glossed by adverbial datives and, therefore, are not cases of syncretism.

- (12) f. 118va22
 Latin *interrogabo uos et ego unum uerbum*
 Mk (Li.) 11.29
ic fregna iuih ec ic an-u' word-e
 I ask you also I one-DAT.SG word-DAT.SG
 'I will also ask of you one question'
- (13) f. 231vb8
 Latin *abraham pater uester exultauit ut uideret diem meum*
 Jn (Li.) 8.56
abraham fæder iuer gefeade þætte gesege dæg-e min'
 Abraham father your rejoiced that saw day-DAT.SG my
 'your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day'
- (14) f. 78va24
 Latin *nescitis diem neque horam*
 Mt (Li.) 25.13
nuuto gie ðone dæg-e ne ðone tid
 not.know you the.ACC.SG day-DAT.SG not the time
 'You know neither the day nor the time'
- (15) f. 72ra14
 Latin *et uiam dei in ueritate doces*
 Mt. (Li.) 22.16
7 weg-e godes in soðfæstnise ðu læres
 and way-DAT.SG God's in truth you teach
 'you teach the way of God in truth'

Further evidence of syncretism is found in example (16) and Figure 8, where there is a superscript <u> above the <y> which can be interpreted as indicating an alternative form (cf. Fernández Cuesta 2016: 272–273):

- (16) f. 71va14
 Latin *et ciuitatem illorum succendit*
 MkGl. (Li.) 22.7
7 byrug/burug hiora gebarn
 and city.DAT.SG/city.ACC.SG their burnt
 'and he burnt their city'

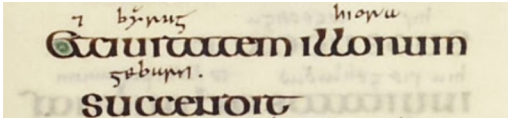


Figure 8: f. 71va14.

The figures in Table 11 do not include the tokens in the gloss corresponding to *mann*, which is found almost categorically as an *n*-stem in the accusative: *monno*, *monnu*.³⁰ As shown in Table 12, this lexical item does not present syncretism in Lindisfarne.

Table 12: *Mann* in the functions of direct and indirect object.

	Direct object	Direct object	Indirect object
	-o/-u	zero	<i>Menn</i>
Matthew	14	1	1
Mark	6	1	8
Luke	6		3
John	8		0
Total <i>N</i> = 48	34	2	12

As shown in Table 13 there are no instances of accusative/dative syncretism with the function of indirect object. The only example of syncretism has been excluded from the count since it follows the preposition *to*:

- (17) f. 112va2
 Latin *et respondens petrus ait iesu*
 MkGl. (Li.) 9.5
onduearde petrus cuoēð to ðæm hælen
 answered Peter said to the.DAT.SG Saviour.ACC.SG
 ‘Peter answered and said to Jesus’

Although inspection of the digitized manuscript reveals that there is no abbreviation sign accompanying *hælen*, the form cannot be considered a clear example of syncretism, because *hælend* is very often abbreviated in the gloss. What is more, the demonstrative is in the dative case.

³⁰ Root/mutated forms of *mann* (nominative/accusative sg. *mann*, genitive sg. *mannes*, dative sg. *menn*, nominative/accusative pl. *menn*, genitive pl. *manna*, dative pl. *mannum*) are the most commonly attested in the Old English corpus, whereas in the Lindisfarne gloss this noun occurs more often as a *n*-stem *manna/monna*.

Table 13: Accusative/dative syncretism in the function of indirect object.

	Syncretism	No syncretism	Total <i>N</i> = 26
Matthew	0	4	4
Mark	0	10	10
Luke	0	7	7
John	0	5	5

4 Conclusions

This paper lends support to the contention that there is accusative/dative syncretism in the Lindisfarne Gloss. For the most part, this syncretism could be regarded as intraparadigmatic, i.e. the extension of zero/base form from the accusative to the dative, and therefore involves the neutralization of a core (accusative) and a peripheral case (dative). However, there is also evidence of interparadigmatic syncretism with the nouns *byrgen* (feminine *jō*-stems) and *tīd* (feminine *i*-stems), which present instances of uninflected forms in both accusative and dative, rather than etymological *-e*.

Given that accusative/dative alternation is much more frequent in adverbials (where the noun is preceded by a preposition, see section 3.1.) than in nouns that function as direct and indirect objects (see section 3.2.), another interpretation might be that the preposition was in the process of becoming grammaticalised to mark syntactic function at the expense of semantic distinctions:

If prepositions grammaticalise to compensate for the loss of inflexional morphology like case endings, those prepositions can be expected to lose some of their lexical meaning (Los 2015: 43)

If this is the case, then we are arguably not dealing with a true case of syncretism in these contexts, but with the variable prepositional complementation that is characteristic of the incipient loss of case marking.

As regards lexical effects, the nouns *burg*, *byrgen*, *deað*, *god*, *mann*, *yfel* have been found to inhibit syncretism in a statistically significant way. There is no evidence that frequency plays a role, although the scarcity of the data does not allow any definite conclusions. Our data also show that syncretism tends to occur frequently in neuter nouns such as *hus*, *scip* and *word*, which in Indo-European already present nominative and accusative syncretism.

Perhaps the most salient finding of this study is that the degree of syncretism is not even throughout the Lindisfarne gloss, with John showing the lowest degree of

syncretism in a statistically significant way. This is particularly interesting because John has also been shown to be different from the rest of the gloss both linguistically and palaeographically. Linguistically, it presents a higher percentage of contracted negative forms and of *self*-forms, third person singular possessive *sin* (besides *his*) is occasionally used, and prefixal *gi-* is more frequent than *ge-*. At the lexical level, this section is also different in that it appears to be more concerned with legal terminology. From a palaeographical point of view, John also stands apart from the rest of the gloss by the use of red ink and of pointed <*v*> instead of <*u*>. In addition, Aldred himself draws a distinction between John and the other gospels, stating in the colophon that he glossed this section for the salvation of his soul. Some of these features, such as the low degree of syncretism, seem to be more “conservative”, i.e. closer to the standard West-Saxon, whereas others, such as the use of *self*, appear to be more “progressive”, i. e. in the direction of Middle English.³¹

The linguistic differences between John and the other sections strongly suggest that in the composition of the gloss Aldred relied on already existing translations of the gospels that were available to him. As mentioned previously, there seems to be some evidence that the section corresponding to John might have been based on a previous translation made by Bede (Brown 2003; Elliot and Ross 1972: 65).

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³¹ See Rodríguez Ledesma (2018: 640–41) for similar results in the Durham Collectar, which is “innovative” with regard to the genitive singular inflection (in the direction of Middle English), but “conservative” with regard to other features. See also Crisma and Pintzuk (2019), who show that Old English texts which are relatively close to Middle English in their nominal syntax, for instance, are not necessarily those which are close to Middle English in their verbal syntax (we thank George Walkden for pointing this out to us).

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