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## Glossing with Runes: The Old Northumbrian Gloss to the *Lindisfarne Gospels*

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The purpose of this contribution is to offer a thorough examination of the use of the  $\text{M}$  and  $\text{N}$  runes in the Old English gloss to the *Lindisfarne Gospels* in the context of the studies of Anglo-Saxon *Runica Manuscripta*. The book known as the *Lindisfarne Gospels* is a religious and artistic world treasure and thus has received considerable attention for centuries. In this sense, it is highly regarded by palaeographers, art historians, linguists and collectors alike. From a philological point of view, research within diachronic variation studies has centred on the Old English gloss, and in particular on the analysis of the distinctive dialectal features. Other lines of research have focused on the English dependence of the gloss on the Latin text. However, the glossator's use of runes has never been subjected to exhaustive scholarly study. In this sense, this article constitutes the first in-depth study to examine the runic material in the gloss to the Latin text.

Keywords: *Lindisfarne Gospels*; glosses; Old Northumbrian; *Runica Manuscripta*; runes

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### Glosar con runas. La glosa a los *Lindisfarne Gospels* en antiguo nortumbrio

El propósito de esta contribución es ofrecer un examen completo del uso de las runas  $\text{M}$  y  $\text{N}$  en la glosa en inglés antiguo de los *Lindisfarne Gospels* en el contexto de los estudios de las *Runica Manuscripta* anglosajonas. El libro conocido como los *Lindisfarne Gospels* es un tesoro religioso y artístico mundial, por lo que ha recibido mucha atención durante siglos. En este sentido, paleógrafos, historiadores del arte, lingüistas y coleccionistas lo

valoran extraordinariamente. Desde un punto de vista filológico, la investigación dentro de los estudios de variación diacrónica se ha centrado en la glosa del inglés antiguo y, en particular, en el análisis de los rasgos dialectales distintivos. Otras líneas de investigación se han centrado en la dependencia de la glosa del texto en latín. Sin embargo, el uso de runas por parte del glosador nunca ha sido objeto de un estudio académico exhaustivo. En este sentido, este artículo constituye el primer estudio en profundidad que examina el material rúnico en la glosa al texto latino.

Palabras clave: *Lindisfarne Gospels*; glosas; antiguo nortumbrio; *Runica Manuscripta*; runas

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The *Lindisfarne Gospels* (London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero D. iv) is a Latin Gospel Book produced in Britain sometime around 700 AD. There is no conclusive evidence relating to where the book was made, but most scholars point to the monastery of Lindisfarne on Holy Island, off the coast of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria in north-east England. It is thought that the community of St. Cuthbert took it with them to Chester-le-Street and then to Durham. By the early seventeenth century it was in London, eventually passing from Sir Robert Cotton to the British Museum.

The book contains a Latin text of the Gospels based on St. Jerome's Vulgate and a tenth century interlinear gloss to nearly all the Latin text (including the prefaces) added around the 950s-960s and written in Old Northumbrian, which makes it a bilingual gospel book (Marsden 2017). The Old English gloss to the *Lindisfarne Gospels* is thus the earliest recorded version of the gospels in English. In this sense it is of great importance for Old English dialectology since the first Old English records that have been preserved are written in varieties of Northern English and also because of the scarcity of texts written in Northumbrian. Although a great number of manuscripts, both in Latin and Old English, were copied during the period of Northumbrian dominance, the textual evidence that we have for Northern English in this period is scarce as the monastic communities in Northumbria were severely affected by the Viking invasions, which started in the late eighth century, and many manuscripts were destroyed.

Early texts in Old Northumbrian (traditionally termed *Early Northumbrian*) comprise the runic inscriptions on the Franks Casket and on the Ruthwell Cross, three short poems (*Caedmon's Hymn*, *Bede's Death Song* and *The Leiden Riddle*) and names recorded in the early manuscripts of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* and in the *Liber Vitae Dunelmensis*, all from the seventh to the ninth century. There are no other surviving Northumbrian texts until the second half of the tenth century, in this case written in what is known as *Late Northumbrian*. They include three interlinear glosses to Latin texts: Aldred's gloss to the *Lindisfarne Gospels* and to the *Rituale Ecclesiae Dunelmensis* and Owun's gloss to the *Rushworth Gospels*.

There is no decisive evidence pertaining to where the *Lindisfarne Gospels* were produced. The most widely accepted opinion points to the scriptorium at the monastery of Lindisfarne in the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Northumbria around 715-720. According to Gameson (2017), it is unlikely to have been started before the late 690s, or to have been completed later than ca. 710 since by then the bishop would have been too elderly to pursue the daunting task. The Gospels were produced in honour of St. Cuthbert by a monk named Eadfrith who served as bishop from 698 to 722 (Ross et al. 1960; Brown 2003, 2017). Brown (2003) maintains that the distinctive display capitals developed in the *Lindisfarne Gospels* provide valuable evidence of proximity to features in other material from late seventh to early eighth century Lindisfarne. She further states that these letters should be viewed not only in relation to manuscript art but also within the context of contemporary epigraphy, to which they are closely related. According to Brown, the tradition of simultaneously combining Roman capitals and runic letter-forms in inscriptions was a feature probably devised in the scriptoria. In the Latin text of the *Lindisfarne Gospels* there is no sign of runic material, but according to Brown (2003) the designer consciously wanted to allude to the vernacular tradition of runic script by using angular features.

In the north-east of England, on the sites of various monasteries, a few memorial stones have been found in quadrants, each with a cross and names (Parsons 1999; see also the medieval carved-name stone Lindisfarne XV found during excavation on Lindisfarne and currently in the care of the Department of Archaeology, University of Durham). Various bilingual name-stones with Roman letters and runes survive from Lindisfarne. There are in fact six well-preserved stones on Lindisfarne, each bearing two names—one of the six is wholly Roman, one wholly runic and four use Roman script for one name and runes for the other (Parsons 1999).

The Ruthwell Cross also has extensive Roman and runic inscriptions. The Franks Casket bears texts in Old English and Latin, runic and Roman. St. Cuthbert's coffin has on one side the names Petrus, Andreas and Iohannis in Roman script, while on the top, the names of Matthew, Mark and John are runic and Luke is Roman. According to Page (1989), the runes on St. Cuthbert's coffin may derive directly from manuscript tradition.

The *Lindisfarne Gospels* contains the following sections: a) Prefaces (f. 3r to f. 9r); b) Canon tables (f. 10r to f. 17v); c) the Gospel of Matthew (f. 18v to f. 89v); d) the Gospel of Mark (f. 89v to f. 130r); e) the Gospel of Luke (f. 130r to f. 203r); f) the Gospel of John (f. 203v to f. 259r); and g) Colophon (f. 259r).

The Old Northumbrian gloss to the *Lindisfarne Gospels* has traditionally been attributed to Aldred, a member of the St. Cuthbert community who apparently also glossed the tenth century *Durham Ritual*—or *Durham Collectar* (Ross et al. 1960; Stanley 2017). Aldred glossed the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and the beginning of John in a neat cursive hand using black ink. However, from 5.10 and in mid-verse, the Gospel of John and the colophon are glossed in the same hand but using red ink

(Brown 2016; Stanley 2017). According to Stanley (2017), the Gospels were written between 950-970 and the Collectar around 970. The gloss provides a translation of the four gospels and other texts, namely, several prefaces and *capitulum* lists (Ker 1957; Marsden 2017).

Glossing was very rare in England before the tenth century (although we should not overlook the gloss to the *Vespasian Psalter* from the second quarter of the ninth century or the scholarly activity at Canterbury and other centres). By Aldred's time, however, glossing was becoming a popular pedagogical tool in Northern Britain (Stanton 2002; Nees 2003). Another well-known Old English gloss is that added during the tenth century to an early ninth century Irish Latin Gospel Book in the Mercian dialect, the *MacRegol Gospels*, which seems to rely upon Aldred's gloss or a shared source (Brown 2003). According to Brown (2003), Aldred may have been trained outside Northumbria, perhaps in the Danelaw in Southern or Western England, or on the Continent. Marsden (2017) believes that the Lindisfarne and Rushworth glosses were not created in isolation but were part of a wider glossing tradition. There were many gospel-books in use in Anglo-Saxon England, and it is likely that some were at least partly glossed.

Some debate has arisen as to the authorship of the gloss and the colophon of the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. Ker (1943), for example, maintained that Aldred wrote the gloss and the colophon without copying it from another manuscript. However, due to the appearance of variant linguistic forms in the gloss, Skeat (1871-87) argued that the gloss was copied by two or more scribes speaking different dialects, although palaeographical studies indicate one hand only. In explaining this, Brown (2003), for example, believes that Aldred wrote the gloss and the colophon but consulted some translations and relied on an exemplar that several scribes had been involved in: "Aldred's approach to language and its variant forms was as fluid as his approach to script, his hand, as analysed by Ker, exhibiting an exceptionally wide range of letter-forms and styles, again perhaps reflecting in part the influence of his exemplars" (Brown 2003, 100).

According to some of the most recent studies on the language of the glosses (Cole 2014; 2016; 2017), in writing the gloss Aldred relied on a variety of sources. Cole (2016, 187) suggests that the possibility of other hands being involved in the glossing process cannot be ruled out:

The sharp differentiation in the use of the s-forms across the gloss makes it highly unlikely that the language of the gloss represents the speech of an individual speaker and even begs the question of to what extent the language of the gloss represents the features of a particular dialect. The distribution of the variant under discussion lends credence to the hypothesis that Aldred relied on a variety of different sources from which he copied the variant forms as well as incorporating his own forms.

It is therefore possible that Aldred copied all or part of his gloss from pre-existing glosses. Ross (1958) maintains that Aldred's Old English gloss is essentially word-

for-word and therefore almost entirely a direct translation. He also maintains that the scribe very frequently could not understand the Latin text. However, Nagucka (1997, 180) argues that “the glosses in the *Lindisfarne Gospels* are not one-to-one mechanical renderings, but rather conscious, occasionally very careful ‘interpretative translation’.” According to Marsden (2017, 190), the gloss is more complex than the description word for word suggests:

The evidence adduced so far seems to show Aldred to be a very competent glossator, accurate in his interpretation of the Latin and alert to the possibilities available in the target language. However, this impression of competence is occasionally undermined by clear errors of translation, a few of them real ‘howlers,’ and not apparently attributable to any corruption of Lindisfarne’s Latin text.

What seems clear is that Aldred was a creative glossator. The Old English text is indeed more than a gloss. Generally speaking, most of Aldred’s ‘innovations’ with regard to the Latin original are connected to lexical (semantic) and morphological aspects rather than syntactic ones. In this sense, Stanton (2002, 50) explains:

It is entirely possible that Aldred, the glossator of the Lindisfarne Gospels, copied all or part of his gloss from a pre-existing gloss. [...] But even if a version of an English gloss lies behind Aldred’s work, we must still wonder about the function of the double, triple and quadruple glosses such as the one to *desponsata* discussed above. Multiple glosses could be signs that the translator was unsure, but it is more likely that they were added specifically to expand Old English vocabulary and the semantic range of existing vocabulary.

The purpose of the gloss in the *Lindisfarne Gospels* is uncertain. According to Stanton (2002), it was probably used for translation and commentary rather than at mass. He thinks it highly unlikely that glosses in such a book would have been used for instruction in Latin: “The general assumption has been that neither the concept of the classroom nor the library book applies here” (50). Marsden (2017) maintains that “[...] the primary intention of such glosses must have been to enhance understanding of the Latin gospel-text for those with English as their mother tongue—a complement to, not a substitute for, the sacred text” (188).

## 2. OLD ENGLISH *RUNICA MANUSCRIPTA*

It is generally accepted that runes were invented to be used epigraphically. Nonetheless, they were also employed in manuscripts both in England and Scandinavia. Denmark, for instance, owns a *Codex Runicus*, a manuscript written entirely in runes in the early 1300s which is presently part of the *Arnemagnæan Collection* at the University of Copenhagen. As Page (1999, 186) states, “it was part of an attempt, which failed, to

develop runes as a script to be written as well as carved.” In England, however, there is no manuscript resembling the *Codex Runicus*, the Anglo-Saxons, in contrast to the Scandinavians, preferring to employ Roman script. Nonetheless, runes do appear in English manuscripts.

In England some runic knowledge entered the scriptoria. It seems, indeed, that there was a general acceptance of runes in the classroom and the scriptorium, perhaps owing to interaction between Latin and English in the first steps of the Latinisation of the island. Runes were used in manuscripts from the late eighth century until sometime after the Norman Conquest. But how and why runes were incorporated into Christian lore remains unexplained. Perhaps, though, it was due to the fact that, in order to establish a relationship between Germanic and religious people, monks had to make use of whatever strategies they came across. Among those strategies was the Germanic writing system, which ultimately achieved religious purposes in the hands of the Church. Christianity also gave a new impetus to the use of runic literacy. In this sense Parsons (1999, 92) highlights the fact that “[...] no one, I think, doubts that practically all manifestations of Anglo-Saxon Roman script literacy should be traced back, ultimately, to its use in early Christian centres. I suggest that a knowledge of later Anglo-Saxon runes spread in (some of) the same ways.”

In 1954 Derolez published his *Runica Manuscripta: The English Tradition*, whose aim was to collect and examine the Anglo-Saxon runic material known of up to that point. *Runica Manuscripta* in its broadest sense means manuscripts containing runes and covers a wide range of runic writing:

- a) Use of runes as additional letters. The Latin alphabet proved a poor instrument for rendering Germanic sounds. Many Old English manuscripts use the þ-rune to render the dental spirant and the w-rune for the bilabial spirant.
- b) In some manuscripts runes are used as reference marks, for example for indicating the passage to which a marginal note refers, or for numbering the quires.
- c) Runes were occasionally used for writing short notes, such as the name of the scribe or a reader.
- d) *Futhorcs* and runic alphabets.
- e) The Rune Poems.
- f) In Anglo-Saxon times some runes were used to represent the word that supplied their name. These are the so-called *Begriffsrunen* or *concept runes*. For instance, the m-rune is used to substitute its name (*mann*) in the preface to the *Rushworth Gospels* in the word *FarM* (for ‘Farman’), which hides a proper name, probably the signature of the scribe. It also occurs in *The Vercelli Book* f. 99v (*gefean M meabte*) and in MS B of the *Poetical Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn* in the word *SaloM* (abbreviated form of Solomon). In *Beowulf*, *Waldere* and in Alfred’s translation of Orosius’s *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII*, X substitutes the word *ēpel*. In the *Durham Ritual*, M stands for *dæg*. The same rune is employed in the same way in *The Ruin* (*Exeter Book* f. 124r). In *Fates of the Apostles* P appears instead of *feob*

and in the *Junius Psalter*, Psalm 99 the word *wynn* is replaced by the rune  $\mathfrak{P}$ . This graph is also employed twice in *Elene* (f. 128v and f. 131v) and once in Riddle 91 (*Exeter Book*, f. 129v; Senra Silva 2006).<sup>1</sup>

There are other Old English runic passages where runes stand for their names. In the *Exeter Book's* runic riddles—numbers 19, 24, 64 and 75 according to Williamson (1977)—, runes are part of the verse form and carry alliteration. Besides, runes provide clues to the solving of the riddles, which presupposes a learned audience familiar with the runic alphabet (Senra Silva 2006). Editors often take the graphs to be read logographically, since they are marked with dots (Senra Silva 2006).

On the other hand, runes are seldom used as abbreviations of their names in Old English inscriptions. An English epigraphical example would be the inscription in the coin legend  $\mathfrak{wBERHT}$ , taken as the proper name *Wynberht*.<sup>2</sup>

In Scandinavia runes are known to have been employed in manuscripts as a system of the abbreviations which scribes had adopted from England. This use is found mainly in legal texts such as AM 325 VII 4<sup>o</sup> (ca. 1250-1300), preserved at the Royal Library, Stockholm. Other manuscripts are AM 249 I. f. (ca. 1190), which contains a calendarium with Icelandic glosses, and AM 673 a, 4<sup>o</sup> (ca. 1200), which includes fragments of *Physiologus*. The runic graphs most often employed were  $\mathfrak{m}$  for *maðr* and  $\mathfrak{f}$  for *fé*. In Norway, runes were made use of as abbreviations in manuscripts during a short period; runes as abbreviations no longer appear in manuscripts after 1300.

### 3. RUNES IN THE GLOSS TO THE *LINDISFARNE GOSPELS*

In the gloss to the *Lindisfarne Gospels* the glossator uses the runes  $\mathfrak{M}$  and  $\mathfrak{M}$  as abbreviations for their names—OE *mann* with its spelling variants *man/monn/mon* (Campbell 1959) and OE *dæg*, respectively. In order to achieve this purpose, the glossator needed to have a knowledge of rune-names and a mastery of this practice, unless he was simply copying from other sources that employed runes, such as glosses or glossaries. Despite the fact that in the gloss the rune names *fēh*, *gyfu*, *geafa* and *gēr* appear quite often and *nēd* occasionally, they are never glossed with runes (Senra Silva 2003).

There has not been a thorough study of the use of runes by Aldred in the glosses, although some works have mentioned the fact that he employs runes (Eaton 1986; Lendinara 2016; Roberts 2016). In Ross's review of Derolez's *Runica Manuscripta* (1954), while praising Derolez's work, he notes one main omission, namely, that there is no mention of the use of runes for *dæg* and *monn* in the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. In a footnote, Ross (1955) also thanks his MA student, Miss Constance O. Elliott, for having

<sup>1</sup> For an exhaustive list, see Birkett (2017). For a study of some Anglo-Saxon manuscript texts containing runic letters, see Senra Silva (2003) and Symons (2016).

<sup>2</sup> For more information, see Senra Silva (2006).

collected these from the text and he lists them. Interestingly though, Derolez (1954) did mention the use of runes in the gloss to the *Durham Ritual*: “Such a systematic use on a small scale is found in the Durham Collectar, also known as the Durham Ritual. [...] It is not impossible that this usage of runes for their names is found in other manuscripts as well, but instances are probably very rare” (401–402).

The two main reasons to use abbreviations in manuscripts are the economy of time and the economy of space. In order to save both space and time, Latin texts were normally heavily abbreviated. A large body of accepted abbreviation symbols was thus developed for Latin texts by the early medieval period. Old English texts, however, are much less abbreviated. In the case of the Old English gloss to the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, abbreviation—suspension—does indeed occur, especially with nominal forms and adverbs (*middan*’ for *middangeord*; *faed*’ or *fad*’ for *faeder*; *uut*’ for *uutudlice*), and prefixes, as in *f’estydon*, *f’driofo*n and *of’foerdon* for *forestydon*, *fordriofo*n, *oferfoerdon*. As for the runes, they are employed as a sort of *notae*.

Despite the fact that abbreviations were often used to save space and effort when writing, in the case of runic abbreviations in the gloss to the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, these are normally exceptional, and are not applied consistently nor demanded by constraints of space, as will be clear from the following sections of this article.

It is at least surprising that no runes are employed in the gloss until the Gospel of Mark. None appear in the Prefaces, Canon tables or the Gospel of Matthew (even though the words *monn* and *dæg* do occur in the gloss to the Gospel of Matthew), either standing on their own to gloss the Latin *homo* and *die*, respectively, or as part of phrases or compounds (cf. *ænig monn*, *ænig monn*, *sunnadæg* for Latin *nemo*, *quisquam*, *sabbato*, respectively).

FIGURE 1. An example of Latin *die* glossed in full (<dæge>) in the Gospel of Matthew (f. 72r)<sup>3</sup>

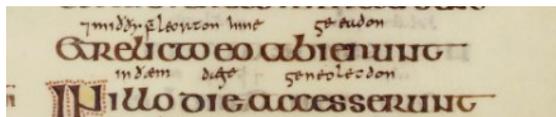
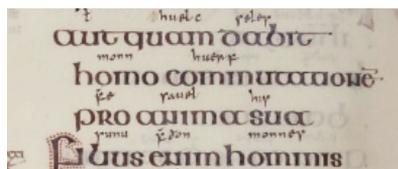


FIGURE 2. The Latin words *homo* and *hominis* glossed in full (<monn> and <monnes> respectively); the Gospel of Matthew, f. 60v)



<sup>3</sup> All the photos have been retrieved from The British Library Digitised Manuscripts page: [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=cotton\\_ms\\_nero\\_d\\_iv](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=cotton_ms_nero_d_iv)

Furthermore, there are only two instances in which runes appear as abbreviations for their names in the Gospel of Mark (ff. 114r and 117v); the rest are scattered throughout the Gospel of Luke and the Gospel of John. In total there are 38 appearances of either  $\mathfrak{M}$  or  $\mathfrak{N}$ ; more specifically 34 instances of  $\mathfrak{M}$  and 4 of  $\mathfrak{N}$ , which is a very small number taking into consideration the frequency with which the words *monn* and *dæg* are used to gloss Latin words in the Gospels. Aldred employs the Old English word *monn* plenty of times, together with *ænig/nænig*, in compounds (cf. *monnslaga* for Latin “homicida”; *monnmaegegn* for Latin “cohors”) or standing alone to render Latin *homo*, but the rune is not employed in many of these cases.

### 3.1. The m-Rune

The rune  $\mathfrak{M}$  in the gloss is mostly employed to abbreviate the second element of the Old English phrases *ænig monn* (16 times) to gloss Latin *quemquam/quisquam/quis* and *nænig monn* (10 times) to gloss Latin *nemo*. The rune is also used, though less frequently, to gloss other Latin words: a) *quidam* (3 times) (*sum*  $\mathfrak{M}$ ); b) *omnis* (once) (*ælc*  $\mathfrak{M}$ ); and c) *omnibus* (once) (*allū*  $\mathfrak{M}$ ū). The rune appears on a single occasion as the second element of the Old English word *sgiiremonn*,<sup>4</sup> as a gloss for the Latin word *dispensator*, and twice to gloss Latin *homo*. Again, the rune is mostly used as the second part of a phrase or compound.

FIGURE 3. Lat. *homo* glossed with the m-rune < $\mathfrak{M}$ > on folio 197v

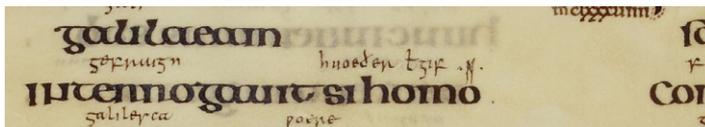
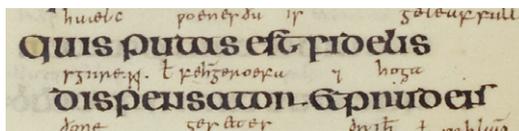
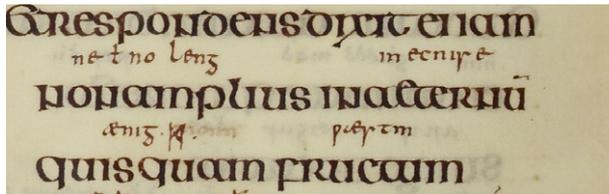
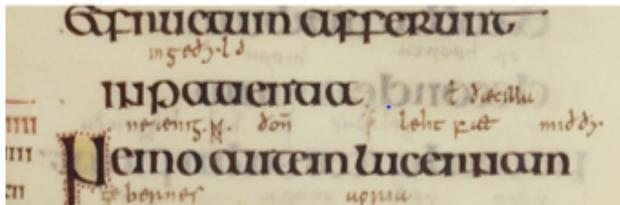
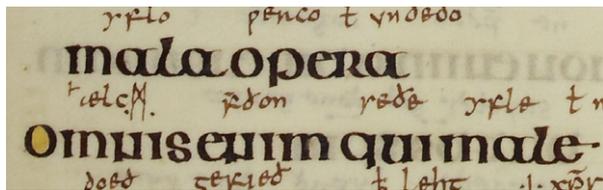
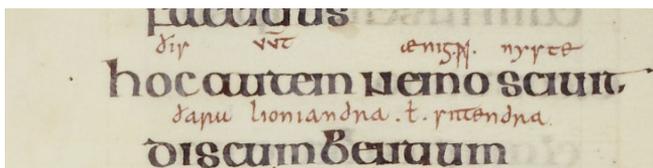


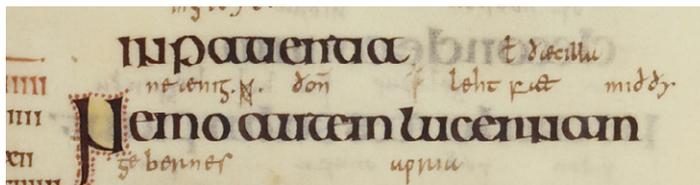
FIGURE 4. Double gloss for *dispensator*. The m-rune appears as the second element of *sgiiremonn* <*sgiiere* $\mathfrak{M}$ > (f. 173r)



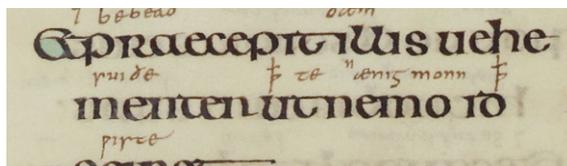
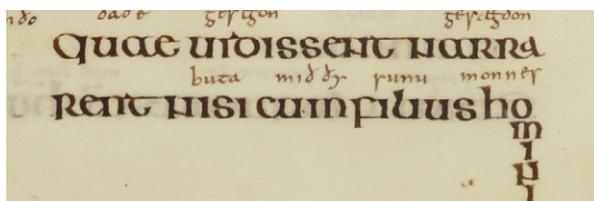
<sup>4</sup> Aldred provides a double gloss for the Latin word *dispensator*: a) OE *sciremonn* “dispensator, an official, officer, ruler, one who discharges the duties of a scír” (Bosthworth and Toller online) and as *fehgeroefa* (OE *feohgerefa*).

FIGURE 5. *Quisquam* glossed as <ænic·M̄> (f. 159v)FIGURE 6. Latin *nemo* glossed as <ne ænic·M̄> (f. 165v)FIGURE 7. Latin *omnis* glossed as <ælc·M̄> (f. 227v)FIGURE 8. Latin *nemo* glossed as <ænic·M̄> (f. 243r)<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Here Aldred mistakenly glosses Latin *nemo* as <ænic·M̄> instead of as <nænic·M̄>. Aldred repeatedly shifts the negative element *ne* ænic/nænic to a positive one, as in this case (Nagucka 1997).

FIGURE 9. Latin *nemo* is glossed as <næniġ·M̃> (f. 159v)

Although it is apparent that the use of the *m*-rune is closely linked to some Latin lemmas, it should be noted that there are numerous instances where the rune has not been employed to gloss these Latin words.

FIGURE 10. <ænig monn> for Latin *nemo* written in full in the Gospel of Mark (f. 105r)FIGURE 11. Latin *homini* glossed in full, <monnes>, on f. 112v

### 3.2. The *d*-Rune

In the gloss the *d*-rune employed by Aldred is the variant  $\mathfrak{M}$  which displays two staves and two branches, with staves extended beyond the cross-arms. In Scandinavia and on the Continent the usual variant is  $\mathfrak{M}$ , as at Kylver (Parsons 1999), with two staves and two branches reaching the bottom.  $\mathfrak{M}$  is a form that later became common in England. According to Parsons (1999, 28), “[...] within England at least, there is reason to wonder whether this variant was perceived to be distinct from  $\mathfrak{M}$  or whether it should be regarded as a stylistic rearrangement of essentially the same graph.” He explains that it is impossible to detect any pattern in their distribution, though  $\mathfrak{M}$  is rather more common overall. It is found on the Hartlepool I name-stone, but  $\mathfrak{M}$

appears on Hartlepool II. In the north-west of England,  $\mathfrak{M}$  appears in the most northerly inscriptions, the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses,  $\mathfrak{M}$  on the Great Urswick stone further south, but  $\mathfrak{M}$  at Overchurch, even further south. The Franks Casket has  $\mathfrak{M}$ . Exceptionally, both variants clearly appear in a single inscription on the eighth century silver tweezers from Brandon, Suffolk. Both variants appear on coins (where  $\mathfrak{M}$  is more common) and in manuscripts (where  $\mathfrak{M}$  is much more common; Parsons 1999).

In Lindisfarne, Aldred uses the  $\mathfrak{d}$ -rune 4 times: twice to gloss Latin *sabbato* (*sūn*  $\mathfrak{M}$ ),<sup>6</sup> and twice to gloss Latin *dies/die*.

FIGURE 12. Latin *sabbato* glossed as <suñ• $\mathfrak{M}$ > (f. 200r)

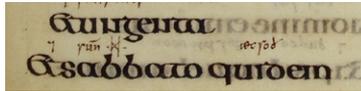


FIGURE 13. Double gloss to render Latin *sabbati*, the second one being <suñ• $\mathfrak{M}$ > (f. 200r)

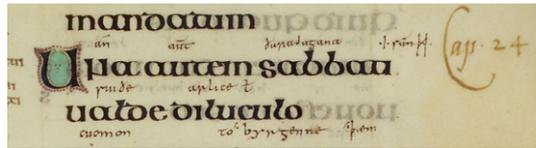
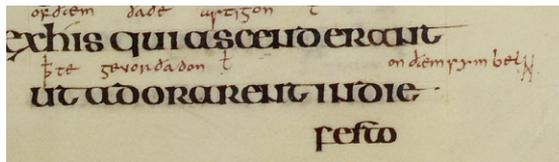
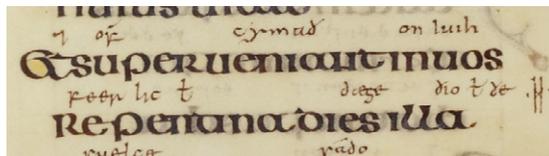


FIGURE 14. Latin *die* glossed as < $\mathfrak{M}$ > (f. 240r)



<sup>6</sup> Aldred glosses Latin *sabbato* in different ways: *sundae*, Sabbath. The Jewish Sabbath, as in the Ten Commandments, became the Lord's Day, the Sunday, of Christianity. Aldred, in Matthew 12:8, renders Latin *sabbati* as *to sunna dæ* *t to seternes dæg* ("on Sunday or on Saturday") and adds in the margin the explanation *þæt wæs ðæra iudea sunna dæg* ("that was the Sunday of the Jews"). It is surprising that on this folio (49r, Gospel of Matthew) the word *sabbati* appears a good number of times. We have to wait until its third appearance to see the double gloss followed by the explanation.

FIGURE 15. Aldred uses a double gloss for Latin *dies illa* (<dæge ðio> and <ðe •M•>), the second including the rune (f. 193r)



#### 4. ALDRED'S RUNIC GLOSSATOR PRACTICE

In general, the runes in the gloss seem to be simply alternatives to Roman letters and, from a statistical point of view, they are used in a very small number of instances. However, looking closely at Aldred's practice of drawing runes in the glosses allows us to arrive at some conclusions:

- a) There is no consistency at all in the glossator's practice of employing runes to gloss Latin. On the same folio we can find one instance of a Latin word being glossed with a rune but many other instances of Latin words—glossed with a rune on other folios—are glossed with the Old English full word/phrase. One interesting example of this practice is folio 215r where the glossator had many chances to employ either the M or M runes to gloss a Latin lemma. However, the only occasion on which he drew the rune was to gloss a Latin word, namely *ænig*•M•. He did not use M to gloss Latin *in die festo*, neither did he use M for Latin *homo*—which appears twice—or even Latin *nemo*.

FIGURE 16. Even though words such as Latin *die*, *nemo* and *homo*, which are sometimes glossed with a rune, appear on folio 215r (see figures 17, 18, 19 and 20), Aldred only employs the m-rune in the double gloss <ænig•M• vel huelc> for Latin *quis*

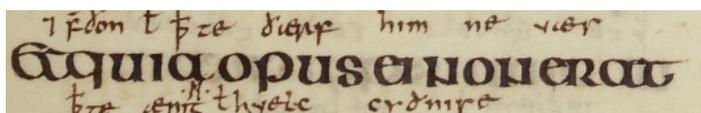


FIGURE 17. Latin *die* glossed as <dæge> on folio 215r

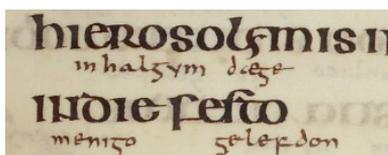
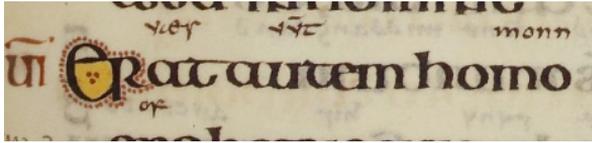
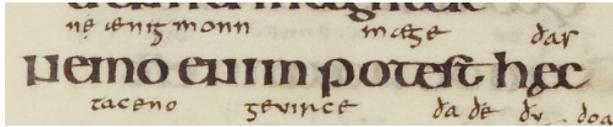
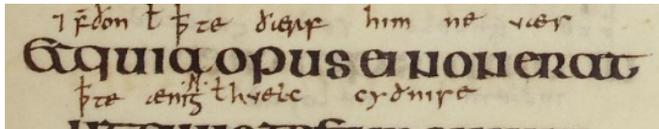


FIGURE 18. Latin *homo* glossed as <monn> on folio 215rFIGURE 19. Latin *nemo* glossed as <ne ænig monn> on folio 215r

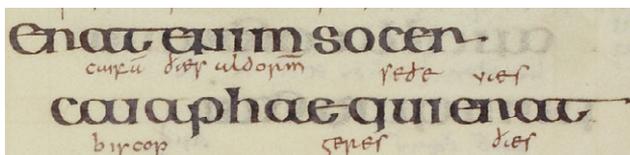
- b) The use of runes does not seem to have any relationship with a lack of space in the gloss. In a very few instances might we consider that Aldred uses the rune instead of the full name because of lack of space. On folio 215r, for example, the **m**-rune appears on top of the word it goes with, namely *ænig*. One possibility is that he forgot to gloss the second part of *ænig monn* and, lacking space to write *monn* in full, he decided to use the rune. However, Aldred may equally have simply forgotten to add the rune.

FIGURE 20. &lt;𐌺&gt; above &lt;ænig&gt; on folio 215r



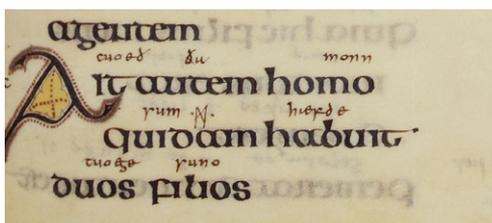
Furthermore, there are examples of the word *monn* abbreviated as <ṁ> (f. 251r). We might wonder why the glossator did not use the rune instead, especially when he uses some runes on the previous and following folios (247v, 247r, 248v, 249v, 255v).

FIGURE 21. &lt;aldorṁ&gt; on folio 251r



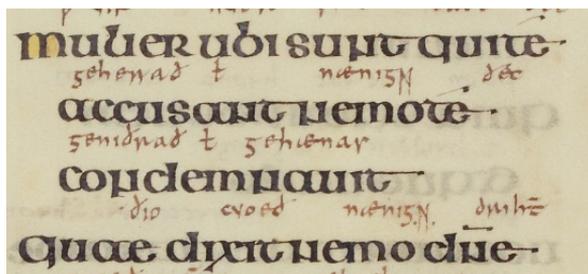
- c) In the gloss, the **m**-rune is often used as an abbreviation for its name and also seems to be strongly connected to certain Latin lemmas, such as *quidam*. This may be why Aldred made a mistake when glossing Latin *homo quidam* (OE *sum mann* “a certain person”) on folio 179r. Instead of glossing it as <sum mann> or <sum **•M•**>, he glossed both words separately, namely *homo* as <monn> and Latin *quidam* as <sum **•M•**>, eventually glossing *homo quidam* as *monn sum **•M•***, which is redundant.

FIGURE 22. Latin *homo quidam* glossed as <monn sum **•M•**> on folio 179r



- d) In the *Exeter Book*, wherever a rune stands for its name there is a dot before and after it; when a sequence of several runes is to be read in the same way, each pair of runes is also separated by a dot. On the other hand, when several runes are to be read as one word, that is, only by their sound value, there is a dot before and after the whole group, but none between the runes (Derolez 1954). This practice is not consistent in the gloss to the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. Runes as abbreviation symbols sometimes appear with dots at either end, but sometimes without them. For instance, on folio 229r, the word *nænig* precedes **M** on two occasions. In the first example, there are no dots before and after the rune to show it stands for its name, whereas in the second instance the dots are used.

FIGURE 23. Two instances of **M**, one with dots before and after the rune and another without dots (f. 229r)



Besides, runes used together with other Old English words to gloss a Latin lemma sometimes appear joined together and sometimes separated by a space, regardless of whether there is a dot before and after the rune.

FIGURE 24. <ænigne>: space in between <ænigne> and M̅, and dots before and after it

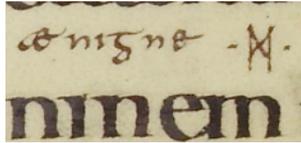


FIGURE 25. <næniġM̅>: no space between the two elements, and no dots before or after the rune either

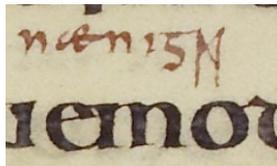
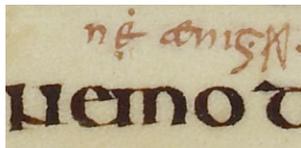
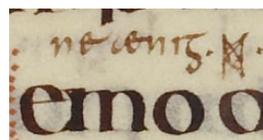
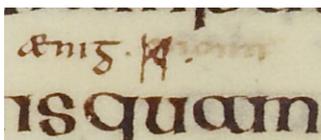


FIGURE 26. No space in between <ænig> and M̅. Dots have been employed



- e) It is not always easy to distinguish between transcription errors and lapses. However, in some cases the glossator seems to make a mistake when copying the rune and amends it, as on folios 117v, 119v.

FIGURE 27. Emendations on folios 117v and 119v



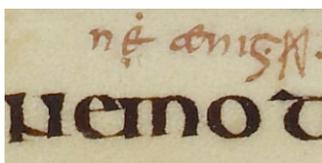
- f) The shape of the runes varies. Sometimes they are very narrow and some others very wide, regardless of the space available (cf. f. 197v, f. 175v).

FIGURE 28. Different shapes of the m-rune



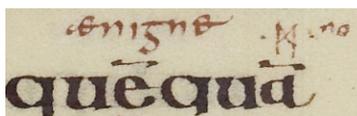
The runic symbols are usually written neatly. However, there are occasions on which they are not, as on folio 234v, where the m-rune has one stroke linking to the top and middle, but the other links the top and bottom.

FIGURE 29. <æniġ•M̄> (f. 234v)



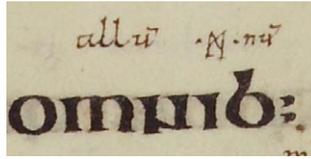
- g) The scribe does not normally use a rune plus an Old English inflectional ending, although in two examples he does (f. 229v, f. 192v). In one of these cases the inflectional ending is also abbreviated, as is the Latin word. However, the abbreviation should be *Mū* rather than *Mnū*.<sup>7</sup> Skeat (1871-87) expands both the rune and the truncated form, adding one <n> to the rune so that it does not turn into three <n>, namely *monnum*.

FIGURE 30. Latin *quēquā* glossed with the rune plus an inflectional ending, <•M̄no> (f. 229v)



<sup>7</sup> The glossator sometimes does this even when the rune is not employed (John, 5.41 <monnn >, cf. Bosworth and Toller online).

FIGURE 31. &lt;•M̄•nū&gt; (f. 192v)



## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The general scholarly view on the authorship of the gloss to the *Lindisfarne Gospels* is that in most cases the choice of a rune may have been purely arbitrary. My scholarly examination of the runes in this article, however, suggests that this arbitrariness reflects the fact that either more than one hand was responsible for glossing the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, or rather that Aldred—the glossator responsible for writing the gloss—relied on various pre-existing sources, some that included runes and some that did not. The use of runes in the glosses is neither homogeneous nor follows any practical consistency, such as being employed when space was limited.

In relation to the use of runes to gloss the Latin text, the Gospel of Matthew stands alone in its lack of runes in contrast to the rest of the Gospels and this fact may strengthen the belief that more than one hand was responsible for glossing the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. The Gospel of Matthew seems to stand as a single unit, not only from a linguistic point of view—as pointed out by Cole (2016)—but also from a runological perspective. Besides, the gloss to the Gospel of John seems distinctive in that very few runes are employed in it, which also seems to be the case when considering it from a linguistic point of view.

The task remains to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the runes in the gloss to the *Durham Ritual*, also glossed by Aldred, and collate the information about his runic scribal practice when glossing with what is found in *Lindisfarne*. This will help to shed some light on the contentious issue of whether Aldred alone was responsible for writing the gloss to the *Lindisfarne Gospels*.

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