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Functions of Glossaries

Rolf H. Bremmer Jr

Introduction

Glosses and glossaries are typically the product of a literate culture. They respond to a deep human desire for communication across linguistic and conceptual borders. As such, they occupy a special position within the storehouses of early medieval learning. In what follows, the geographical focus is on both early medieval England and the Germanic speaking Continent. The first generations of missionaries that proclaimed the Gospel in these regions had brought with them chests filled with Latin books (→ BIBLICAL LEARNING). When neophytes read these books, they were often prompted to provide difficult words and passages with glosses, both in Latin and in the vernacular. Much of the earliest vernacular writing therefore consists of glosses, whether added to an already existing text in a manuscript or assembled from glossed texts into glossaries. For English, we have the Épinal Glossary, dating from the turn of the seventh to the eighth century (→ ÉPINAL-ERFURT GLOSSARY). The Germans can boast of the → THE OLD HIGH GERMAN *ABROGANS*, a mid-eighth-century alphabetical glossary. The *Glossarium bernense*, an alphabetical Latin–Dutch glossary dating from c. 1240 is one of the earliest texts where Dutch is used (→ MIDDLE DUTCH GLOSSARIES). No bilingual glossary survives from Frisia, but it is notable that the oldest Frisian available is found in two glossed psalters, the earliest dated to c. 1100, the other to c. 1200. Quite exceptionally, the latter concerns a psalter extensively provided with context glosses: Latin words are followed by their Frisian interpretation, rather than glossed above the Latin (Bremmer 2007a and Langbroek 2015). Dutch, too, surfaced for the first time in a glossed psalter, the so-called Wachtendonck Psalter, from the ninth century but now lost (T. Klein 2013). Indeed, psalters were probably the most frequently glossed text in early medieval western Europe (Blom 2017).

Because of the juxtaposition of lemma and interpretamentum, often as a bilingual conversation leading to ‘insight and instruction’ (Jolly 2016: 361) on behalf of both the glossator and the reader, glosses and glossaries confront us with two concepts that play an important role in present-day scholarship in various ways: translanguaging and transculturation. The former concept centres around a paradigm ‘that sees difference in language[s] not as a barrier to overcome or as a problem to manage, but as a resource for producing meaning in writing, speaking, reading, and listening’ (Horner and others 2011: 303). As we concern ourselves with north-western Europe in the early Middle Ages, it must be realized that all Anglo-Saxon, Bavarian or Alemannic authors were translin-



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gual, or linguistic hybrids: they were fluent in Latin, the *lingua franca* of *Christianitas*, and in their mother tongues, Old English or Old High German. Cases in point are, for England, → ALDHELM of Malmesbury and his contemporary, the Venerable Bede, both active *c.* 700; and, somewhat later for Germany, Hrabanus Maurus and Walahfrid Strabo. Prolific as they were, these highly learned men hardly wrote any English or German so far as we know; they preferred to express all their ideas and epistolary communications in immaculate Latin. As far as Anglo-Saxon England is concerned, the number of authors who moved effortlessly between Latin and their native tongue would have been low — a recent estimate of their number around the year 1050 is about 5500 in a population of about 1.1 to 2.5 million inhabitants, that is, between 0.55% and 0.27% (Timofeeva 2010: 14–15). Yet, the deep influence these authors exercised on the culture of Anglo-Saxon England is hard to fathom. This point brings us to the other concept, that of transculturalism.

Transculturalism is an approach to cultural studies that no longer complies with ‘geographical or national stipulations’, but follows ‘pure cultural interchange processes’ as ‘a consequence of the inner differentiation and complexity of [...] cultures’ (Ghosh-Schellhorn 2006: 23; see also Hoerder 2013). *Trans-*refers to continuities across borders and to the permeability of borders and other dividing lines. In contrast, *inter-* (as in *international*) or *multi-* (as in *multiculturalism*) presuppose distinct entities in contact over demarcated and accepted boundaries (Skelton 2020: 88). One of the possibilities to see translingualism and transculturalism in action is offered by studying glosses and glossaries, as I hope to show. To do so, I will first focus on the original functions of glossaries before I outline their multifaceted uses by modern scholars.

Original functions of glossaries

Broadly speaking, glosses and glossaries offer keys to difficult words and concepts, and can be divided into four categories: (1) they concern words that belong to a language different from that of the speaker/reader; (2) they are words of the speaker’s native language that, through the passage of time, have become obsolete or opaque; (3) they concern words that belong to a special domain or topic, requiring further specification, such as the flora and fauna of a given area or legal terminology (→ HERBAL GLOSSARIES, → ANIMAL GLOSSARIES, → LEGAL GLOSSARIES); (4) in the context of early medieval glossaries, they provide further encyclopaedic or exegetical information on a particular word or passage. Glossaries, then, served different if related purposes: primarily, they were didactic tools in the process of foreign language learning; secondly, they offered advanced learners an opportunity to expand their vocabulary; thirdly, when ordered alphabetically, they had an enhanced heuristic function; and fourthly, they functioned as channels through which encyclopaedic, exegetical and educational knowledge was passed on.

The role of glossaries as resources for lexical learning is deeply rooted, going all the way back to the oldest bilingual glossaries. Examples combining the aforementioned categories (1) and (3) include Sumerian–Eblaist wordlists, dating to 2500–2250 bc and found in the 1970s during excavations in the historic city of Ebla, Syria (Küster 2006: 101–18); and a Sumerian–Akkadian wordlist covering about two dozen clay tablets and known as *Urra: Hubullu*, the Sumerian and Akkadian words, respectively, for ‘interest-bearing debt’. The latter, designed for future civil servants in the Sumerian empire, is organized according to topic. Tablet 4, for example, lists furniture and boats, tablets 13 and 14 enumerate domestic and wild animal names, tablet 16 lists stones and tablet 17 plants (Veldhuis 2019: 31–33).

Similarly, medieval glosses, in whichever form (interlinear glosses written immediately above the word prompting a reaction, marginal glosses or interpretamenta in a glossary) often enabled the user to gain a better understanding of a term, through renderings that took different, non-exclusive, forms, such as a rough translation into another language, a near-synonym or hyperonym in the same language, basic grammatical information, etc. Class or topical glossaries, which, like the *Urra: Hubullu* tablets, organize their lemmata around a certain topic, such as the names of birds, fish, cattle, trees, buildings, tools, and so on (Wich-Reif’s Type 2; → TYPOLOGY) and which are usually bilingual, illustrate the important role of medieval glossaries as pedagogical tools for language learning.¹ Examples include → *VOCABULARIUS SANCTI GALLI* (St Gall, StB, MS 943; s. viii²), ‘the oldest class glossary of Germany’ (Haubrichs 1995: 187), which was compiled by an Englishman who had begun to learn German in north-west Germany, sojourned for a while in Hesse and Thuringia, and ended in Bavaria (Klein 2012); and the Latin–Old English glossary compiled by Ælfric of Eynsham (c. 950–1010; Godden 2004), known simply as → ÆLFRIC’S GLOSSARY. This glossary, which as explained below demonstrates the usefulness of this glossary type for language learning in different sociocultural contexts, was appended to the Latin–Old English Grammar Ælfric wrote around 990 for his pupils in Cerne Abbey, Dorset. The glossary, dubbed ‘the first attempt at a bilingual dictionary of Old English’ (Thomson 1981: 155), is not keyed to the grammar preceding it, as could be expected, but is rather a stand-alone wordlist geared towards mastering the Latin language (Butler 1981: 19). The glossary includes c. 1000 entries from Isidore of Seville’s → *ETYMOLOGIES* (Porter 2010: 305) and follows its source in ordering its material according to subject, beginning with the topic of cosmology, then body parts, and followed by a long enumeration of titles, ranks, social relations and kinship terms, occupations, and so on. Here the similarity between the glossary and its source ends: while Isidore’s method is encyclopaedic casting a wide net, Ælfric takes great care in limiting himself to present words that are especially useful for the beginning student of Latin (Butler 1981: 20). The following listing of body parts may serve as an illustration of his approach: *sanguis*:

1 For a typology of individual glosses and glossaries, see Wieland (1983: Chapter 1), Lendinara (1999: 3–17), Blom (2017: 26–35), besides → TYPOLOGY.



blod ('blood'); *caro*: *flæsc* ('flesh, body'); *cutis*: *hyd* ('hide'); *pellis*: *fell* ('skin'); *scapula*: *sculdra* ('shoulder'); *dorsum*: *hrycg* ('back'); *uenter*: *wamb* ('stomach'); and *brachium*: *earn* ('arm'); Zupitza and Gneuss 2003 [1880]: 298.10 and Healey 1994). Sometimes Ælfric shows great interest in contemporary cultural practices, as when, in the topic of clothing, he enters L *mastruga* ('fur coat') and glosses it with OE *crusene*. He must then have realized that *crusene* was a relatively new word: it was actually borrowed from the Continental Saxons, who in turn had borrowed it from Slavic-speaking traders. Consequently, Ælfric hastened to extend the interpretamentum with *oððe deorfellen rocc* ('or a mantle of animal skin'; Bremmer 2018: 55). On one occasion Ælfric charmingly confesses the shortcomings of the English vocabulary: in the section on trees, he remarks that Latin *cypressus* ('cypress') *næfð nænne engliscne naman* ('has no English name') (Zupitza and Gneuss 2003 [1880]: 312.10). There are limits, apparently, to moving from one culture to another in this often-complicated process of negotiating between languages (cf. Sauer 2008 and → HERBAL GLOSSARIES).

Ælfric's Glossary enjoyed an afterlife after the Norman Conquest of 1066, testifying to its appeal as a didactic tool. It attracted users who could not resist the temptation to gloss the glossary with further Latin, Anglo-Norman and Early Middle English words (Seiler and Pagan 2019; → ANGLO-NORMAN GLOSSARIES). Most noteworthy, perhaps, is an adaptation made around 1100 for a Cornish audience, known as the *Vocabularium cornicum* (Blom 2013). The name is somewhat misleading, though, for this glossary, uniquely surviving in London, BL, MS Cotton Vespasian A XIV, is a testament to the multilingual nature of post-Conquest Britain. True, its core consists of interpretamenta in Old Cornish, but it also contains numerous Old English, Anglo-Norman, Old Welsh and even, possibly, Old Breton words (Mills 2013; → CELTIC TRADITION). By 1200, interest in Ælfric's Glossary had as good as disappeared. However, a notable exception is a copy of it, together with Ælfric's Grammar, made in the thirteenth century by the 'Tremulous Hand of Worcester' (Worcester, CL, MS F. 174, fols 1–63; s. xiii¹; Ker 1957: no. 398). This scribe made a concerted effort to make Old English accessible to himself, and perhaps also others, some 150 years after the Norman Conquest when Old English had already become so antiquated as to pose serious difficulties in comprehension for thirteenth-century readers. His project resulted in his glossing about 50,000 Old English words in as many as two dozen manuscripts, sometimes into Middle English, but much more frequently into Latin. He also began to compile an alphabetically arranged Old English–Latin glossary, the first of its kind (Franzen 1991 and → MIDDLE ENGLISH GLOSSARIES).

Awareness of the existence of Ælfric's Glossary was renewed in the sixteenth century, notably during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, when English literature and scholarship benefitted from relative political stability and from the social and intellectual desire to re-establish England as a Protestant nation, rooted in the Golden Age of Englishness. This awakening resulted, amongst other cultural renovations, in the publication of the Anglo-Saxon laws in 1568 and the Anglo-Saxon Gospels in 1571. Antiquaries, such as John Leland (1503–1553; see Buck-

alew 1978), avidly copied Ælfric's Glossary, which they used to learn Old English through Latin (Buckalew 1982; → RENAISSANCE LEXICOGRAPHY).

However, the didactic purposes of glosses in general, and glossaries in particular, often went beyond mere lexical acquisition and expansion, as the following examples, many of which bring to the forefront the close relationship between textual glosses and glossaries (Wich-Reif's Type 1; → TYPOLOGY), make clear. They refer to the general role of glossaries in broader educational endeavours, as well as their significance specifically in the transmission of encyclopaedic or exegetical material. The first and second examples concern *glossae collectae*. Words that had been glossed in a text, or a selection thereof, were collected together with their interpretamenta, no matter whether these were originally written between the lines or in the margin. Such a method resulted in a 'batch', that is a sequence of glosses, which retained the original order in which they had appeared in the text, without any alphabetical arrangement. Moreover, the lemmata often retained their original inflexions and were sometimes accompanied by prepositions. The interpretamenta that followed closely corresponded to the senses of the words in the original context. The underlying principles for the selection of particular lemmata are often unclear, but fragmenting the text by a reader/glossator into a limited number of its constituents effectively resulted in a dissembling of its original contents. The fragments were then reassembled into new and differently shaped containers of knowledge serving a new purpose.

The first such *glossae collectae* to be compiled in England, to the extent that is now known, date from the time of Theodore of Tarsus (602–690), archbishop of Canterbury, and Hadrian (c. 630–709), abbot of St Peter's and St Paul's in Canterbury. These two men were sent to Canterbury tasked by Pope Vitalian with reorganizing ecclesiastical life in England. One of the measures they took was the founding of a school of theology in Canterbury. Their names are mentioned in a series of *glossae collectae* from books of the Old and New Testaments preserved in a number of glossaries that ultimately derive from a Canterbury original, of which the → LEIDEN GLOSSARY is the oldest representative. These glosses, it has been cogently argued by Lapidge (1986) and suggested or hinted at by others before him (notably Baesecke 1933: 10), almost certainly derive from notes that were taken by students who attended the lessons of Theodore and Hadrian. The original compilation of the collected glosses is evidently lost, but a large family of about twenty-five glossary manuscripts, all of them with glossaries related to the Leiden Glossary, has been preserved. Such glossaries compiled on the basis of batches of *glossae collectae* came into existence above all for reasons of efficiency. They exempted the user from having to go over an interlinearly glossed text for a better understanding of its contents; instead, the words with their glossed interpretamenta lifted from the text and neatly arranged into columns enabled the intended users — varying from learners of Latin to advanced scholars — to read that text without needing recourse to the interlinear glosses. Thus the Leiden Glossary enabled its users to grasp selected interpretational niceties of no fewer than forty-eight texts.



It is, however, not necessarily the case that glossaries helped their users read a specific text. Consider, for instance, a short Latin–Latin glossary on fols 105^v–108^r of Leiden, UB, MS VLF 24, a de-luxe glossary chrestomathy (on the term, see McKitterick 2012a: 70 and Dorofeeva 2018: 148) compiled in Tours c. 900 (Bremmer and Dekker 2006: 77–87). This glossary consists mainly of *glossae collectae*, primarily of biblical texts. Its first column contains examples of three kinds of interpretamenta: *Carismata: dona* (‘gifts’); *Acitabula: similitudo facta quod ciatus sed minor est graticula* (‘bowls: they resemble a cup but one that is smaller than a griddle’); *Lux: boni angeli* (‘light: good angels’) (ed. Bremmer and Dekker 2016: 263, nos 7 [1 Cor. 12.31], 2 [Ex. 25.29] and 8 [Gen. 1.3], respectively). This opening part of the glossary does not exemplify continuous *glossae collectae*, although it clearly takes its origin in such batches. The latter is demonstrated by the inflected form of its first item: *In terrasilem: id est sculptum* (‘Interrasilem: that is carved’; [Ex. 25.25]). Yet, how helpful was the explanation of *acitabula*? It told the reader about its size relative to a *ciatus* and a *graticula*, suggesting that the meaning of these three words was somehow familiar. As a matter of fact, preceding this glossary in VLF 24, on fols 100^r–105^v (Bremmer and Dekker 2006: 79, no. 5a), there is another series of *glossae collectae*, closely related (where they overlap) to the Leiden Glossary. Here their meanings are given as follows: *acitabula. uasa modica* (‘moderate-sized vessels’), *ciati. minores et angusti* (‘smaller and narrower [pl.]’) and *graticula, in qua assantur carnes* (‘in which meat is fried’) (ed. Vaciago 2004: 263, lines 2, 4 and 12, respectively). The three glosses discussed above relate to three different texts: Genesis, Exodus and Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians. This part of the glossary was not practical therefore as a reading aid for any particular text. The three entries rather show the tendency of glossaries to expand and function as containers of learning. They are the result of *collectio*, the assembling of shorter and longer glosses with explanations ranging from the semantic to the allegorical, ‘an essential part of early medieval scholarly practice’ (O’Sullivan 2017: 5).

Reading such glossaries, digesting their contents and storing them in one’s memory enabled readers to interpret texts and this meant that glossaries made up a specific genre of text in their own right (Lendinara 1999: 6). This was the case even in those cases where there was no one-to-one relation between gloss and text, as with alphabetized glossaries (Wich-Reif’s Type 3; → TYPOLOGY). They were particularly helpful because they allowed for individual items to be found with relatively little effort. The Épinal Glossary, with its two alphabetical ordering systems (*a*- and *ab*-order) offers an interesting example of such glossary type; indeed, it stands at the beginning of the development of completely alphabetized dictionaries in England. Its compiler used a range of different sources. Sometimes he culled his lemmata from other glossaries, such as the *Herme-neumata Pseudodositheana*, the *Abstrusa-Abolita* Glossaries and, in all likelihood, from a number of *glossae collectae*, such as those that make up the Leiden Glossary. Furthermore, the compiler extracted lemmata from a number of grammatical works (including Focas’s *Ars grammatica*), Isidore’s *Etymologies*, the Vulgate, Gregory the Great’s *Dialogues* and Paulus Orosius’s *Historia adversum*

paganos, to mention only a few sources (Lapidge 2007: 38–39). Thus, the glossary affords us an intimate insight into the state of learning in some English monasteries around 700. Just how essential this didactic tool was for Anglo-Saxon missionaries is demonstrated by the fact that they put it into their trunks, along with many other books, and brought it with them to the Continent (cf. Bremmer 2007b; → ÉPINAL-ERFURT GLOSSARY).

The next example shows more clearly the important role that glossing had in the transmission of various kinds of cultural information, including encyclopaedic or exegetical matters. In Leiden, UB, MS VLQ 106, fol. 10^r, in a blank space at the end of the second column of the table of contents for Aldhelm's *Enigmata*, the scribe, taking advantage of the blind ruling, neatly penned six glosses that together make up a taxonomy of classical mythological beings provided with their Anglo-Saxon counterparts:

Nimphae . aelfinni eadem . & muse
Oreades duun . aelfinni .
Driades . udu . aelfinne
Amadriades [.] wa&er aelfinn'
Maides feld . aelfinne
Naides sae . aelfinne (Merritt 1945: no. 7)²

The batch of elf glosses presents a fine example of *interpretatio germanica*, a term used for the renaming of classical gods and mythological figures by their nearest Germanic equivalents (Maier 2000), in this case their Anglo-Saxon equivalents, and can be linked to Book VIII 'Church and Sects' in Isidore's *Etymologies*. In this book, Isidore also discusses the pagan religion of the Romans and it is in this context that he mentions the nymphs:

Nymphas deas aquarum putant, dictas a nubibus. Nam ex nubibus aquae, unde derivatum est. Nymphas deas aquarum, quasi numina lympharum. Ipsas autem dicunt et Musas quas et nymphas, nec inmerito. Nam atque motus musicen efficit. Nympharum apud gentiles varia sunt vocabula. Nymphas quippe montium Oreades dicunt, silvarum Dryades, fontium Hamadryades, camporum Naides, maris Nereides (VIII. xi. 96–97; ed. by Lindsay 1911).³

2 'Nymphs . she-elves and at the same time muses; Oreades . hill-she-elves; Driades . forest-she-elves; Amariades . water-she-elves; Maides . field-she-elves; Naides . sea-she-elves'.

3 'They consider the nymphs (*nymphae*) to be goddesses of the waters, so called from clouds (*nubes*), for waters are from clouds, whence this name is derived. They call the nymphs goddesses of the water as though they were "spirits in the springs" (*numina lympharum*). And they call these Muses as well as nymphs, not without reason, because the movement of the water makes music. The pagans have various terms for nymphs. Indeed, they call nymphs of the mountains oreads (*oreas*), those of the forests dryads (*dryas*), those of the springs hamadryads (*hamadryas*), those of the fields naiads (*naias*), and those of the seas nereids (*nereis*)' (trans. Barney and others 2006: 189).



Most likely, the elf glosses were jotted down on that blank space in the Leiden manuscript to serve as a further explanation of Aldhelm's mention of *Castalidas nymphas* in the preface to his *Enigmata*. Remarkably, despite the presence of the Old English glosses, VLQ 106 was written in western France, probably at Fleury Abbey, in the early ninth century by a scribe who was not an Anglo-Saxon himself, judging by the Caroline minuscule script he used (Bremmer and Dekker 2006: 107). He must therefore have copied the glosses from an exemplar of Isidore's *Etymologies* that had been produced in Anglo-Saxon England and which had been provided with either marginal or interlinear glosses. Their presence in a Frankish manuscript testifies to the traffic of glossaries and glossed texts between the Continent and Anglo-Saxon England (→ INSULAR-CONTINENTAL CONNECTIONS). Notably, the Leiden batch of elf glosses occurs as part of the Third Cleopatra Glossary. This mainly Latin–Old English glossary was compiled in the eighth century from two interlinear glossed texts by Aldhelm, *Prosa de virginitate* and *Carmen de virginitate*, but preserved in a mid-tenth-century manuscript written in England, now London, BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra A III (Thornbury 2007: 90; → CLEOPATRA GLOSSARIES). The same batch was furthermore included in the London part of the → ANTWERP-LONDON GLOSSARIES (LONDON, BL, MS Add. 32246), in the margins of a collection of excerpts from Donatus's *Ars maior* and Priscian's *Institutiones grammaticae* (Bremmer and Dekker 2006: no. 4; → OLD ENGLISH GLOSSARIES). It is unclear, however, whether the six glosses in the Leiden manuscript were later incorporated into a much larger glossary, or had instead been lifted from an earlier version of the larger glossary and copied here as a small batch. Perhaps, the listing of elves did not start as part of a glossographic exercise but as an 'individual example of teaching practice that may well go back to the eighth century and circulated in England and beyond from that time onwards' (Dekker 2018: 188). As Dekker shows, such encyclopaedic notes regularly appeared in glossaries (→ WISDOM TEXTS).

Usefulness of medieval glossaries for modern scholars

Given their key position within the transmission of the vernacular languages, medieval glossaries have been exploited by historical linguists as evidence for the phonology, morphology, or dialectology of the languages in question.⁴ The potential for linguistic enquiry of this early glossarial material was realized by leading Neogrammmarian philologists, who adhered to the adage that 'linguistics is historical linguistics'. Particularly worthy of mention are Elias von Steinmeyer (1848–1922) and Eduard Sievers (1850–1932), with their monumental five-volume edition of Old High German glosses (1879–1922), and Henry Sweet

4 On the importance of glossaries for Old English dialectology see, for example, Voss (1988) and Toon (1983); on their significance for history of English more broadly, see Lendinara (2019b).

(1845–1912), with his ground-breaking anthology of the oldest English texts (1884).

Most notably, glossaries are invaluable sources in terms of the range of vocabulary transmitted in them. They regularly include words that are not attested elsewhere, in particular when it comes to specialized vocabulary, for example, in the fields of medical or zoological terminology. In fact, our knowledge of specialized registers, or *Fachsprachen*, of the Middle Ages very much depends on glossaries.⁵ Yet, the nature of glossaries and hence the status of the vocabulary transmitted in glossaries is often misunderstood. Because of their isolated transmission, words occurring exclusively in glossaries are often treated with suspicion. Indeed, some of the words presented as translation equivalents to Latin terminology in glossaries were not necessarily part of the spoken language. They appear to be ad-hoc translations or nonce formations, which were created by a glossator to fill a lexical gap or as a very close rendering of a Latin headword (→ HERBAL GLOSSARIES; → HIGH GERMAN GLOSSARIES, 1050–1515). However, words that are spontaneous lexical creations are still important evidence for morphology and word formation as they attest, for example, to the productivity of specific morphological patterns. On the other hand, glossary words are not necessarily nonce terms — even if they are *hapax legomena* (i.e. they are only attested once) within a certain corpus. For example, Sauer (1999b) has shown that, from the animal designations occurring in the Épinal Glossary (c. 700), a large majority survive in later English, though many of them are only attested in glossaries throughout the Old English period.⁶

The importance of glossaries for historical lexicology and semantics has long been recognized. In particular, glossaries have played a key role in historical lexicography and, as noted above in connection with Ælfric's glossary, they figure prominently in the earliest dictionaries of the medieval vernaculars — in many cases, the first editions appeared only later on. Du Cange's *Glossarium (ad scriptores) mediae et infimae latinitatis* (1678) not only makes extensive use of the material drawn from glossaries but also takes its title from the genre.⁷ William Somner used a number of glossaries for the compilation of the *Dictionarium saxonico-latino-anglicum* (1659), the first published dictionary of Old English (Fletcher 2017: 34–38; cf. Ladd 1960 and Lutz 1988). Somner also printed parts of the → ANTWERP-LONDON GLOSSARIES, together with Ælfric's Grammar, as an appendix to his dictionary,

5 On the specialized vocabulary attested in Anglo-Saxon glossaries, see Sauer (1999a); on glossaries as sources for Old and Middle High German bird names, see Suolahti (1909: v–vii); on specialized vocabulary in the *Abrogans* Glossary, see Splett (1999); on glossaries and medical language in medieval German, see Riecke (2004: 1, 59–64); see further → LEGAL GLOSSARIES, → HERBAL GLOSSARIES and → ANIMAL GLOSSARIES.

6 On the Old High German lexicon, see Splett (2000: 1197–98). On the vocabulary in medieval Latin glossaries and dictionaries, see Sharpe (1996).

7 For a discussion of du Cange, see Stotz (1996–2004: 1, 193–95).



mistakenly labelling it *Ælfrici Glossarium*.⁸ Eberhard Gottlieb Graff's *Althochdeutscher Sprachschatz* (1834–1842) made extensive use of glosses and glossaries, many of which Graff excerpted from the manuscripts himself as editions were mainly lacking (Köbler 1997: 247–49).⁹ Both Somner and Graff not only use the vernacular material from the glossaries (and glosses in the case of Graff); they tend to use the corresponding Latin words to define the meaning of the vernacular terms. Elias von Steinmeyer's *Die althochdeutschen Glossen* (Steinmeyer and Sievers 1879–1922) was triggered by a plan for a new dictionary of Old High German, which, however, he never compiled but instead devoted his energies to the monumental task of editing the glossarial material (Bulitta 2010: 272; cf. above). Recent dictionaries still reflect the importance of glossaries for historical lexicology and lexicography: for instance, the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* includes more than 150 glossaries; the *Althochdeutsches Wörterbuch* (1952–) is ultimately based on Steinmeyer's material and cites glossarial material extensively; the precocity of the transmission of Old High German in glossaries is reflected in Seebold's chronological dictionary, in which glossaries figure prominently (Seebold and others 2001–2008: 1, 40–50).

In terms of sociolinguistics, glossaries provide valuable evidence for historical multilingualism. The majority of glossaries discussed in this volume include more than one language — most often Latin and one or more vernacular language, or even an invented language (Hildegard of Bingen's → *LINGUA IGNOTA*).¹⁰ As prototypically bi- and multilingual works, glossaries reflect the cultural background of the multilingual societies from which they originate and thus contribute to our understanding of medieval multilingualism. For instance, the primacy of Latin gives us an indication of its sociolinguistic standing as the language of religion, science, and learning.

However, despite an increasing interest in historical multilingualism in the past two decades, only a few studies have focused on glossaries as essentially multilingual texts.¹¹ Research has often concentrated exclusively on the vernacular elements transmitted in glossaries. This focus is reflected in the common editorial practice of printing only those entries from glossaries which include vernacular interpretamenta.¹² Such 'selective' editing has been criticized by

8 On the resulting confusion, see → *ÆLFRIC'S GLOSSARY* and → *ANTWERP-LONDON GLOSSARIES*.

9 An overview of the sources is provided in the Introduction to the first volume (Graff 1834–1842: 1, xxxiii–lxxiii); among the glossaries included are the *Vocabularius Sancti Galli*, *Abrogans*, *Summarium Heinrici* but also many smaller glossaries. Graff prints an excerpt from *Abrogans* (1, xliv), while the *Vocabularius Sancti Galli* is printed in full (1, lxxv–lxxvii).

10 See → *TPOLOGY* for a discussion of different types of language mixing in glossaries.

11 On glossaries and multilingualism, see Pagan and Seiler (2019), and Seiler (forthcoming).

12 Latin-only material has been discarded in all the material edited by Steinmeyer and Sievers (1879–1922), in the collection of early English vocabularies by Wright and Wül-

Lapidge (1992: 170–71 and 180–81; cf. also Dionisotti 1996: 205–6 and Dorofeeva 2018: 147–48), though it made sense at a time when a wealth of material was coming to light and editors were aiming to make vernacular vocabulary available for the dictionaries that were being compiled. It is true that glossaries are notoriously difficult to edit since it is often not possible to apply common methods for the identification of intertextual, or stemmatological, relations that work for other texts. Solving specific editorial problems regularly involves intricate — and time-intensive — philological groundwork.¹³ However, it is exactly this kind of work that makes it possible, for example, to trace glossary entries to their sources and to establish how different glossaries are related to each other. As Lapidge puts it, ‘glossaries are not merely mute conveyances of isolated [...] words, but, if studied in combination, are able to provide a fascinating glimpse of intelligent scholarly activity’ (1992: 180). Moreover, it is often the lengthier, Latin-only or mixed-language entries that enable one to identify potential sources of glossarial compilations.

To have access to glossaries in their entirety is important because glossaries are not only sources of vernacular vocabulary, they also play an important role in the cultural transmission of knowledge, as outlined by Dekker (→ WISDOM TEXTS). Glossaries regularly attest to the texts that were studied and provide insights into what medieval readers made of them. Thus, they are key texts for the study of the history of science and learning as well as wider cultural issues (Hüllen 1999: 3 and Dorofeeva 2018: 148). As linguistic resources, glossaries hold an important position in the history of linguistic thought and practices (Gneuss 1990, Merrilees 1991, and Law 1994 and 2003: 54–55, 125–28, 193–99): they document the treatment of the word as a linguistic unit, they attest to grammatical knowledge, they reveal an understanding of semantics and lexicology, and they play a role in the history of lexicography. As tools used for language teaching and learning, glossaries are also relevant for the history of education (see further → OLD ENGLISH GLOSSARIES).¹⁴

Recent initiatives demonstrate how much more can be gleaned from glossaries when their entire text is available. Vaciago’s edition of biblical commentaries (2004), building on work by Bischoff and Lapidge (1994), is one case in point, as is the recently launched Épinal-Erfurt Project.¹⁵ Though different in scope and focus, both editions include the entire material attested in the respective glossaries and both edit a group of related glossaries in parallel. A number of

cker (1884), but also more recently in Pheifer’s (1974) edition of the Épinal-Erfurt Glossary and also in the material included in the *DOEC* (ed. diPaolo Healey and others 2009).

13 For a discussion of how to edit — and how not to edit — glossographical texts, see McCarren (1998), Pheifer (1994), Dionisotti (1996: 219–25). Cf. also the examples discussed by Lapidge (1992: 169–71).

14 See O’Brien (2011: 162–66) for a discussion of glossaries as reference books for medieval translators.

15 See → INSULAR-CONTINENTAL CONNECTIONS, → OLD ENGLISH GLOSSARIES and → ÉPINAL-ERFURT GLOSSARY.



online projects have started to make use of the possibilities offered by fully digitized editions, notably, the digital edition of the *Liber glossarum* (ed. Grondeux and Cinato 2016; → LATIN GLOSSARIES) and the *Early Irish Glossaries Database* (ed. Russell, Arbuthnot and Moran 2010; → CELTIC TRADITION). These databases enable new methodological approaches to research on glossaries as they provide access via different variables (lemmata or interpretamenta, sequencing of entries in different manuscripts, the sources of glossary entries, etc.). The *Dictionary of Old English Corpus*, though not devised with this purpose in mind, can be searched in similar ways: for example, it is possible to find all translation equivalents of a Latin headword across different glossaries or vice versa.¹⁶

A different type of access is provided by *BStK Online: Datenbank der althochdeutschen und altsächsischen Glossenhandschriften*, a digitized version of the printed catalogue edited by Bergmann and Stricker (2005). The online catalogue (Bergmann and Stricker 2014–) includes all manuscripts known to include Old High German glosses; it provides access to the material via various search parameters, which entail not only basic features, such as manuscript, time period, and place, but also more elaborate categories like the texts or authors that are glossed, specific glossographic phenomena, as well as the languages included.¹⁷ Combined with the availability of digitized images of many manuscripts, such resources move the study of glossaries to the next level. Future avenues will clearly involve collaborative online projects (such as *Gloss Engine*; see Moran 2019–).

Thus, glosses and glossaries had and continue to have diverse purposes, functions and uses, ranging from tools for linguistic exploration to repositories of broader cultural trends and knowledge. Because of their multifaceted nature, they invite ever new approaches from modern scholars, whether studying the manuscript context in which they appear or analysing the way compilers of glossaries ordered their world in semantic groups or indeed assessing the various functions glossaries could perform. One thing is certain: medieval glosses and glossaries continue to exercise their attraction to ever new generations of scholars. Paradoxically, these vessels of explanation keep begging for further explanation.¹⁸

16 The search can be limited to hits in glossaries by typing ‘d’ into the ‘Cameron number’ field as this is the prefix for all glossaries as established in *A List of Old English Texts* by Cameron (1973). (The exception is Ælfric’s Glossary, which is included in category B ‘Prose’ as item B1.9.2 together with Ælfric’s Grammar [B1.9.1], though the Colloquy [C3] is listed in C ‘Gloss’). Unfortunately, all-Latin entries are not included in the *DOEC*.

17 For more details, see → OLD HIGH GERMAN GLOSSARIES.

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