

GLOSSOGRAPHY IN MEDIEVAL SCANDINAVIA

Fabrizio D. Raschellà

Istituto di Studi Anglo-Germanici, Università della Tuscia
(Viterbo), Italy.

0. Compared with the rest of the Germanic-speaking area, especially with Germany (which -- as is well known -- presents, particularly in the earliest stage of its literary tradition, an astonishing number of glosses of all kinds, scattered in hundreds of manuscripts), Scandinavia has not left us many attestations of gloss writing from the Middle Ages. This is perhaps the main reason why this field of research has never received great attention by scholars of Old Scandinavian -- an unjustified negligence, for, as a matter of fact, the study of glosses very often discloses elements of great importance for the history of culture.¹

The present study consists mainly in a summary presentation of the documentary evidence, i.e. in a provisional inventory and description of the manuscript material which testifies the presence of glossographic work in medieval Scandinavia.² Any attempt to evaluate the importance of this material both as a piece of linguistic evidence (I am obviously alluding here to bilingual, i.e. Latin-Scandinavian, glosses, which represent the bulk of the attestations) and as a means of a more intimate approach to new cultural patterns (those of Christian Latinity) is left, for the moment, out of consideration, waiting for a better and more comprehensive definition of the extant corpus.

What follows is the result of a preliminary investigation based, as far as the search of documentary material is concerned, on reference works -- mainly printed catalogues -- and other secondary sources. No direct inspection of unpublished catalogues and card-indexes of those libraries and other institutions where material of glossographic interest is likely to be preserved has been made; on the other hand, a careful scrutiny of the manuscripts involved in the discussion has been carried out every time it has been possible.³

1. The earliest records of gloss writing in medieval Scandinavia come from Iceland, where three MSS containing Latin-Icelandic glosses from about 1200 have been preserved. One MS is the renowned Icelandic Hómiliubók ('Book of Homilies'; codex Perg. 4to no. 15 in the Stockholm Royal Library),⁴ showing on fol. 68rv interlinear and marginal glosses to the Latin Credo (which, in addition, is accompanied by a contextual Icelandic commentary).

The other two MSS, each containing a collection of glosses, are Sks 1812 4to (a miscellaneous codex, formerly in the Copenhagen Royal Library, now at the Arnarnagðæan Institute of Iceland, in Reykjavík) and AM 249 1 fol (still in Copenhagen at the time of writing of the present note, but now presumably already in Reykjavík).⁵ Careful examination of the writing and composition of these two manuscripts has shown⁶ that the sections containing the glossaries were written by one and the same hand and that they originally belonged to a single MS, a miscellany of computistical and astronomical writings. This also applies to the glossaries themselves, which are only slightly later than the main text and may originally have been parts of a single glossary.⁷ A total of ca. 260 Latin lemmata, for the most part nouns, with their respective Icelandic glosses (or, using a more specific term, interpretamenta) are included in the two MSS. In the former, they appear in two different places (namely, on fols. 24r and 34v, which are, respectively, the first and the last page of the MS's oldest section, a computistical treatise⁸) and are arranged in parallel columns, while in the latter they are inserted in the blank spaces of a calendar (fol. 4rv), also in columns. The objects and concepts referred to by the words occurring in these glossaries are extremely varied, ranging from household utensils to agricultural and handicraft tools, from domestic animals to pieces of furniture and parts of the house, from officinal plants to names of stars and planets. A considerable number of verbs and adjectives, equally disparate, are also represented. The lemmata are grouped according to diverse criteria, partly on the basis of semantic and metonymical relationship, partly in consideration of their formal affinity. For example, in Sks 1812 4to we find word

sequences such as the following:⁹ OFFICINA/smiþar hus 'workshop, smithy', SERRA/soq 'saw', TEREBRUM/nafarr 'gimlet, drill', RUNCINA/greypiiarn 'plane, chisel', TORNUS/krinqiarn 'lathe', etc. -- i.e., a group of words belonging to the sphere of craftsmanship -- or PIX/bic 'pitch' and PAX/friþr 'peace'; NIX/sngr 'snow' and NOX/nott 'night'; FILUM/proþr 'thread' and PILUM/har 'hair' -- that is, word pairs linked together by alliteration and consonance and rhyme. The co-existence of such different grouping criteria is, among other things, a serious hindrance to any attempt to trace these glosses to a continuous Latin text -- should one have ever existed.¹⁰

Bilingual glosses are also attested, sporadically, in later Icelandic sources, as in the 14th-century MS AM 671 4to (Copenhagen),¹¹ where, interspersed among Latin marginal annotations in a section devoted to theological matters, there appear the following Icelandic glosses, translating terms denoting God's benefits (fol. 5r): [BENEFICIUM] EXPECTATIONIS/biðlundar '[the benefit] of waiting', IUSTIFICATIONIS/rettatlættingar 'of justification', CONSERUACIONIS/varðuettingar 'of preservation'.

A series of Latin-Icelandic glosses are also found at p. 120 of the codex AM 242 fol (Copenhagen), currently known as the Codex Wormianus of Snorri's Edda (second half of the 14th century),¹² namely after the section containing the text of the 'Four Grammatical Treatises'. The glosses, added to the MS -- together with miscellaneous Latin and Icelandic verse -- by a mid-15th-century scribe, consist of three verbal forms (in the imperative singular) and three adjectives (in the feminine nominative singular): ATTRAHE/tíl drag 'attract', SUSTENTA/styð 'support', STIMULA/sting 'spur'; UAGA/reikandi 'wandering', MORBIDA/siuklata 'morbid', SEXTA/setta 'sixth'.¹³ The mutual relationship of the glosses, as well as their external connection, is obscure.¹⁴

2. As far as Norway is concerned, mention should be made of a small collection of Latin-Norwegian glosses written, presumably by a mid-14th-century hand, in a notebook consisting of wax tablets, found in 1885 in the church at Hopperstad (formerly Hoprek-

stad), near Vik, in the Sogn region, and therefore known as Hopperstadtavlene 'Hopperstad tablets', but probably originating from the district of Voss, in Hordaland.¹⁵ Besides terms belonging to domestic and rural life, we find here names of animals, especially birds. the list is as follows: PILA/sopper 'basin', PILA/bruur foter 'pillar', PILA/puaræ 'stick', FFLOS/blomster 'flower', ERBA/gras 'grass', ARA/suinsti 'pigsty', KAMPUS/voler 'field', SSEPE(S)/vtgarder 'hedge', GRAKULUS/starre 'crow', GRUS/tranæ 'crane', PAUD/pafullg 'peacock', CICONNIA/storker 'stork', KAMELUS/vualdr 'camel'.

3. Comparatively richer and more varied is the evidence of gloss writing from East Scandinavia. This fact is likely to depend, to a certain extent at least, upon the more direct influence exerted on this part of Scandinavia by Germany, especially in the later Middle Ages (as pointed out above, the medieval German literature boasts a vast amount of glossographic work). Besides glossaries quite similar in form and scope to those mentioned in connection with Iceland and Norway, we have from this area instances of more or less systematic glossing of extensive Latin texts, notably writings of secular nature (concerning, for example, grammar, collection of laws, and medicine).

3.1. As to Denmark, two manuscripts containing glosses deserve particular mention. They are the codices AM 202 8vo and AM 11 8vo, both in the Copenhagen Arnamagnæan Collection.¹⁶

The former, compiled in the course of the 14th century (its place of origin seems to be Roskilde), consists in a miscellany of notes on Latin grammar and vocabulary. Glosses of all kinds (i.e. marginal as well as interlinear and contextual glosses), mostly translating Latin words taken as examples to illustrate grammatical and lexical peculiarities, crop up all through the MS and are, just as in the Icelandic records considered above, extremely varied in content. Some of them, however, especially those in the margins, do not bear any relation to the main text,

but refer rather to other works of Latin grammar, in particular to Priscian's writings. What is more interesting, in this connection, is that the words from Priscian's works that here are given a Danish translation are often the same as those occurring in analogous foreign works, particularly of German provenance, which allows the assumption that Danish glosses like these are directly or indirectly connected with glossographic activity in the South-Germanic area. One has even the impression that in some instances foreign models were copied out by simply replacing foreign glosses with Danish equivalents. Also the preponderant grouping of lemmata according to their semantic affinity (a practice that ultimately goes back to Isidore of Seville's Etymologiae) has close parallels both in the southern and in the western Germanic areas, a fact that strengthens the assumption put forth above: as a matter of fact, very similar or identical groupings can be found, for example, in German and Dutch MSS both older than and contemporary with AM 202 8vo.¹⁷

The codex AM 11 8vo, also dated to the 14th century, consists for the most part of a Latin translation of the Jutish Law (Jyske lov). A number of marginal annotations, including both Latin and Danish glosses, were added to the MS in the 15th century. Given the particular nature of the text, most of the glosses refer to law terms or, in any case, to objects and persons to which law is applied. The MS as a whole, printed once in 1504 (in the so-called "Bishop Knud's edition of Jutish Law", Ribe), still requires a modern critical edition.

Latin-Danish glosses can also be found in the Copenhagen paper MS AM 204 8vo,¹⁸ a miscellany of Latin grammar ("Compendium super Donatum"), philosophical notes, and ecclesiastical computus, dating from the 15th century. The glosses are particularly concentrated on some pages between two of the MS's main sections. Unfortunately, most of them are very faded and therefore difficult to decipher. No edition or study of this MS and of the glosses it contains is, to my knowledge, available to date.

Finally, it may be mentioned -- mainly as a curiosity -- that a single Danish (apparently Scanian) gloss occurs in the

Copenhagen paper MS AM 809 4to (second half of the 15th century),¹⁹ in the upper margin of fol. 180v. Here we read the Latin word VANDAGIUM, probably a miswriting for VENDAGIUM 'sale',²⁰ which is glossed by the Danish, or, more precisely, Scanian term lødtkøp, meaning 'a drink after the conclusion of a bargain' -- as we can see, not exactly the same as the Latin lemma.²¹ Such an incongruity is nevertheless nothing to be surprised at: inconsistencies of this kind were far from infrequent in the work of glossators.²²

3.2. The earliest evidence of gloss writing in Sweden is provided by the oldest extant Swedish MS: the Stockholm codex B 59, a well known MS of the so-called Older West Götaland Law (Äldre Västgötalagen),²³ written in the late 13th century. Short lists of Latin-Swedish glosses, dating from the first half of the 14th century, are found in two different places in the MS (fols. 67v and 77v).²⁴ The writing in both places, already faint originally, is now seriously damaged. The glossaries are for the most part covered by large dark spots, which are certainly the result of the use of reagents employed in times past by some incautious reader. This obviously makes the reading of the glosses extremely arduous, if not impossible (many of them are actually illegible). Particularly interesting is the glossary on fol. 77v, divided into two sections, of which one contains verbs denoting functions and noises of the mouth and the respiratory apparatus, the other names of fishes and other sea-animals. Both groups correspond closely with two analogous lists of glosses in the Danish codex AM 202 8vo previously mentioned (respectively, on fol. 20v and fol. 33r). The words in question are much the same in the two MSS (B 59 is perhaps only more accurate in form). This nevertheless does not seem to imply a direct interdependence between the two glossaries, in the sense that they are not supposed to originate from the same exemplar, nor to be one the copy of the other.

Going on to later attestations, we meet the three glossaries in the early-15th-century codex C 22 of the Uppsala University Library.²⁵ One of them, viz. that occupying the fols. 69r-77v,

is particularly important inasmuch as it represents the earliest extant collection of glosses of wider range from the Scandinavian Middle Ages, comprising some 800 Latin lemmata with their respective glosses -- a veritable dictionary on a small scale. Words belonging to several grammatical classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) and to the most disparate semantic spheres can be found in this list. Not every Latin word, however, is provided with a Swedish equivalent: a considerable part of the lemmata (ca. 1/4 of the total) is glossed by means of a Latin synonym, and in a few cases -- in fact, a negligible amount -- the interpretation is missing completely. It should be noted that, in spite of the remarkable length of the glossary, words are not ordered alphabetically, but are mostly grouped in accordance with the usual principle of semantic affinity. The glossary is in part still unedited.²⁶ The other two glossaries (on fols. 82r and 113r, respectively) are much more unpretentious: the former contains thirteen names of plants, Latin and Swedish, and is closely connected with the pharmaceutical recipes which immediately follow; the latter is made up of no more than six lemmata and presents only Latin glosses.

Finally, mention can be made of a Latin-Swedish glossary appearing on fol. 142v of the Copenhagen codex AM 792 4to, dating from the second half of the 15th century.²⁷ The glosses are distributed over five columns, arranged lengthwise on the page (from the inner to the outer margin). The first four columns contain names of aromatic and medicinal plants, while in the last one we find a list of verbs quite similar to those occurring in the MSS AM 202 8vo and Stockholm B 59 considered above. With the exception of a few cases, the Latin lemmata are the same as in the latter two MSS; only their order appears partly changed. As to the Swedish glosses, a closer resemblance can be noticed between this MS and the Stockholm codex B 59. The verbal forms are edited in Lorenzen 1884 (pp. 74 ff.). No edition of the names of plants is, to my knowledge, available so far.

4. As a conclusion to this brief and strictly informative account I would like to draw the reader's attention to two points of general import. Firstly, the study of Old Scandinavian glossography is a valuable instrument not only for the knowledge of the process through which the Scandinavian peoples gradually assimilated and elaborated the medieval Latin culture, but also in the domain of language history: as a matter of fact, a considerable number of Old Scandinavian words and names are known only from glosses, that is to say, they do not occur in other texts. Secondly, the great majority of the extant glossographic records from medieval Scandinavia is still waiting to be edited or, in any case, is in need of a thorough revision; this would be, among other things, the first indispensable step towards a comprehensive edition of the Old Scandinavian glosses, on the model of those which have already been available for a long time for the other major areas of the medieval Germanic world.²⁸ Let me therefore conclude with the hope that this serious gap may soon and conveniently be filled.

Notes

¹The first attempt to present an essential survey of the subject was made by P. Skautrup in 1960.

²This is in fact an enlarged version of the entry "Glossography" compiled by the present writer for publication in the forthcoming Encyclopedia of Scandinavia in the Middle Ages (New York: Garland).

³For each MS mentioned, indication is given of the principal edition(s) and phototypic reproduction(s), if existing; otherwise, reference is made to the catalogue in which the MS is described.

⁴Ed.: Wisén 1872; phototypic reprod.: Paasche 1935.

⁵For a description of the two MSS and their contents see, respectively, Kat. KB, no. 55, and Kat. AM, no. 420.

⁶Guðmundur Þorláksson 1884, 79-80.

⁷The (part of the) glossary in Gks 1812 4to was edited for the first time in 1878 by H.Gering. In 1883 L.Larsson made a new and more accurate edition, and in 1914-16 N.Beckman and K.Kålund published the astronomical terms contained in the glossary's last section; both these works brought not few improvements to Gering's edition. In a recent study by P.Scardigli and F.D.Raschellà (1988) the glossary has been re-proposed with several emendations and integrations and provided with an extensive commentary; moreover, in order to facilitate cross-references, the lemmata have been arranged in alphabetical order. The other part of the glossary, that in AM 249 1 fol, numbers only one edition, made by Guðmundur Þorláksson in 1884 (cf. note 6 above).

⁸Ed.: Larsson 1883.

⁹Capital letters are used throughout the present text to emphasize the Latin forms.

¹⁰Cf. Scardigli/Raschellà 1988, 309.

¹¹Kat. AM, no. 1680.

¹²Ed.: Finnur Jónsson 1924; phototypic reprod.: Nordal 1931.

¹³Cf. Edda Snorra Sturlusonar, III (1880-87), xlix.

¹⁴I should like to take the opportunity to point out here that glosses (i.e., interpretamenta) are not necessarily contemporary with the text in which they appear or -- in the case of glossaries -- with the MS in which they, for any purpose, have been inserted. On the contrary, we can observe that they were not infrequently added in later times, even after several decades. Equally often, it appears that we are in the presence of glosses copied out from older exemplars, as can be inferred from the occasional occurrence of miswritings clearly due to inattentive or careless copying.

¹⁵Ed.: Hødnebo 1960, 110-114; cf. also Unger/Huitfeldt-Kaas 1889, 2-4.

¹⁶See, respectively, Kat. AM no. 2415 and no. 2206. The glosses in AM 202 8vo were edited by M.Lorenzen in 1884. Concerning AM 11 8vo, see below.

¹⁷Cf. Lorenzen 1884, 37 ff.

¹⁸Kat. AM, no. 2417.

¹⁹Kat. AM, no. 1941.

²⁰Cf. Du Cange 1883-87, s.v. vendagium: "1) venditio (gall. vente)".

²¹Cf. Lorenzen 1884, 73-74.

²²There are, for example, plenty of such instances in the two Icelandic glossaries referred to above (cf. Scardigli/Raschellà 1988, 309-310).

²³Ed.: Collin/Schlyter ²1976 (Latin-Swedish glosses on pp. xiii-xiv); phototypic reprod.: Wessén 1950.

²⁴A thorough investigation of these glosses is included in Lorenzen 1884, 66-73.

²⁵The MS is thoroughly described in Andersson-Schmitt/Hedlund (forthcoming).

²⁶J.H.Schröder's edition (1845) considers only the lemmata with Swedish gloss.

²⁷Kat. AM, no. 1925.

²⁸I am referring in particular to the standard works of E. Steinmeyer and E.Sievers (1879-1922) for the Old High German glosses and of A.S.Napier (1900) for the Old English glosses.

List of mentioned MSS and other documentary material

Sthm. Perg. 4to no. 15	AM 202 8vo (Cph.)
Gks 1812 4to (R.vík)	AM 11 8vo (Cph.)
AM 249 1 fol (Cph. [→ R.vík])	AM 204 8vo (Cph.)
AM 671 4to (Cph.)	AM 809 4to (Cph.)
AM 242 fol (Cph.)	Sthm. B 59
Hopperstadtafle (Oslo University	Upps. C 22
Antique Collection, no. C 13270)	AM 792 4to (Cph.)

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