On the History of the Study of Old English Dry-Point Glosses

(later in Augsburg), Karlsruhe and Wien in person. This means for our purposes that his OE dry-point readings from Kassel [13/121*] and Köln [14/98*] only rely on Bischoff’s notes.

It was probably also Bischoff who detected the OE dry-point glosses in Paris, BN lat. 9561 [30/K:369] and in St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek 1394, Part IX [32/K:A44], as these glosses were mentioned in CLA before they were later edited by Meritt. Much later, when CLA had long been completed, Bischoff & Löfstedt (1992) edited OE dry-point glosses from St. Paul i. L., Stiftsbibliothek 2/1 [33/K:–]. I have not been able to ascertain which part of the actual work on CLA was undertaken by Bischoff, but there is the possibility that Bischoff did not autopsy many of CLA’s MSS in Great Britain. As mentioned above, Bischoff took up work on CLA in 1933, and CLA Volume 2 was published in 1935. There is evidence that Bischoff autopsied at least a few MSS in Oxford\(^\text{16}\) and in Ely\(^\text{17}\) before World War II, but it may well be that the majority of the work in the British libraries had already been finished by the time Bischoff was hired.\(^\text{18}\)

### 3.5 Raymond Ian Page

Serving as Fellow Librarian of Corpus Christi College’s Parker Library in Cambridge from 1965 to 1991, R.I. Page was very well acquainted with Cambridge MSS and edited a large number of dry-point glosses from them. Like Napier and Meritt a very gifted and tenacious philologist, he united two further properties that allowed him to investigate dry-point glosses very successfully.

It was beneficial that – being the librarian himself – he could choose at will the time of his autopsies, waiting for “favourable lighting conditions which England cannot always guarantee” (Page 1975a: 151). He could also interrupt

\(^{16}\) Stach (1950: 15) lists three MSS from the Bodleian Library in Oxford, in which Bischoff had encountered OHG gloss material that he reported to Baesecke for subsequent examination: Oxford, Bodleian Library Auctarium T. 1. 26 (BStK: 1379–1380 [no. 722 (II)]); Laud. misc. 135 (BStK: 1404–1405 [no. 734]) and Laud. misc. 429 (BStK: 1409 [no. 738]).

\(^{17}\) Stach (1950: 13) lists two MSS in the possession of J.W. Hely-Hutchinson, Ely, formerly belonging to the Phillipps collection (nos. 816 and 16,395), now Austin, University of Texas, Harry Ransom Center HRC 29 (BStK: 158–159 [no. 18]) and Cambridge, King’s College MS 52 (BStK: 299–300 [no. 87]).

\(^{18}\) Unfortunately, there is no clear indication about the exact extent of Bischoff’s contribution to CLA, Volume 2 (Great Britain and Ireland). Lowe writes in the introduction to that volume: “Special thanks are due to the assistants who have had an immediate share in the preparation of this volume, to a great extent my collaborators on the first. I may not name them all, but my indebtedness to Dr. Bischoff is in a class by itself: his wide acquaintance with Latin manuscripts and his keen palaeographical eye have been valuable aids to the enterprise” (CLA 2: [xvii]).
and continue his work on the Parker MSS freely, making lexicographical, phonological, morphological investigations before continuing his work on a difficult reading. If his eyes were weary, he could take a break and work on something else entirely before returning to the MS in his own time, and he could get acquainted with the MS’s idiosyncrasies to his heart’s content. He could work in the first hours of the morning or late in the evening – when the sunlight is of an altogether different quality than during the day – or during the closing time of the library, if the weather was especially favourable. Again being the librarian, he was allowed to sit wherever the library offered the best conditions, and he could use magnifying and lighting equipment at his own discretion:

Scratched glosses are hard enough to read even in favourable circumstances. In the past those in CCCC manuscripts have been rendered more troublesome by the firmness with which, until later and more degenerate times, the college authorities resisted innovation. Only comparatively recently did electricity dispel the library’s darkness: earlier readers had to make the best of such natural light as the fenland day afforded. [...] If I read more than [H. D. Meritt] did it is because I have more opportunity for leisured study of the manuscript and better lighting conditions for the glosses. (Page 1973: 210)

Page noticed the difference in working conditions quite markedly while working on Cambridge, UL Kk. 3. 21 [11 / K:24] as a guest in the University Library: “the diffused light of the University Library manuscript room is unhelpful to this type of research” (Page 1981a: 110). Surely, the fact that he was not at liberty to choose his working conditions in the neighbouring library played an important role in that verdict.

Secondly, his intimate knowledge of Anglo-Saxon runic inscriptions provided a great awareness of visual issues surrounding deformational writing. His acclaimed introductory study on Anglo-Saxon runology, *Introduction to English Runes*, appeared just about the same time he started to work on OE dry-point glosses (i.e. Page 1999 [2nd ed.], 1st ed. 1973), so his eyesight must have been in peak shape. Such training is quite essential, especially for faint dry-point material, where the eyes have to distinguish between relevant structures (such as letter forms) and irrelevant structures (i.e. parchment surface itself).

Over a period of some ten years, Page edited dry-point glosses from eight Cambridge MSS and one British Library MS, of which I can only give a short overview here.

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19 Provided the MS was back on its shelf whenever the Caius representatives were invited to inspect the Parker Collection’s integrity (cf. Page’s obituary in *The Telegraph*, 21 March 2012).
(i) Page’s first edition of 1973 presents 121 previously undocumented glosses from Cambridge, CCC 173 [4/K:40] and makes a number of comments on Meritt’s (1936) and (1945) editions of the glosses in that MS.

(ii) Page’s second (1975a) dry-point gloss contribution is hidden in an article, in which Page expounds on several points of criticism about the DOE’s preparations and editorial decisions as presented in Cameron et al. (1970) and Frank et al. (1973). By way of arguing that editions ought to be brought to modern standards before the work on the DOE should proceed, Page also briefly touches upon the subject of OE dry-point glosses and presents a small group of previously unedited OE dry-point glosses from Cambridge, CCC 285 [6/K:54].

(iii) Page (1975b) edits 180 dry-point glosses from Cambridge, CCC 326 [7/K:61] as an addition to those edited by Napier (1900) and Meritt (1945).

(iv) Page (1979) edits OE dry-point glosses from Cambridge, CCC 57 [3/K:34], CCC 173 [4/K:40] and CCC 223 [5/K:52]. He also discusses the discipline of OE gloss studies, and in comparing it to OHG gloss studies tries to show that OE gloss scholars are comparatively unenterprising compared against the “adventurous” (Page 1979: 27) OHG gloss scholars.

(v) In Page (1981a), the focus lies on MSS outside the Parker Library, and Page edits dry-point glosses from Cambridge, Trinity College Library O. 2. 30 [9/K:94] and O. 2. 31 [10/K:95], Cambridge, UL Kk. 3. 21 [11/K:24] and London, BL Cotton Vespasian D. xiv, ff. 170–224 [18/K:210]. Referring to Page (1975a), Page (1981a: 105) explains that he had picked these four MSS to demonstrate that more texts were unprinted than the editors of the DOE project had allowed for. From all four MSS OE dry-point glosses had been previously edited (in Napier 1900, Meritt 1945, Ker 1957 and Meritt 1961) and Page manages to add another 35 OE dry-point glosses, some of them only partially decipherable, though.

(vi) Page (1982) adds a few readings to his (1973) edition of OE dry-point glosses in Cambridge, CCC 173 [4/K:40] and concludes with “a plea for a more varied approach to Old English glossing” (1982: 160). Ironically, the approach taken in his (1982) edition is rather confusing, even though Page shows that he is keenly aware of the qualities of a good edition. For instance, Page mentions the previous work done on these glosses only indirectly, forcing the reader to collate previous findings to make sense of the edition.

After 1982, Page’s scholarly interests seem to have moved away from editing dry-point glosses, but he addresses more general glossographic topics in two later articles.

(vii) Page (1992) critically discusses the feasibility of a printed corpus of Anglo-Saxon glosses in imitation of StSG and TPH, which are both so central to the study of OHG and OIr glosses, respectively. Page entertains many reservations,