2. Terminology and Scope

2.1 Vernacular Glossing in Anglo-Saxon England

2.1.1 Additions in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts

Many extant medieval MSS do not only feature a main text (or several main texts in sequence), but also additional written material that can range from a couple of dots in the margins to a complete poem added on a previously empty part of a page. In the traditional terminology of OE glossography, only a particular sub-group of additions is referred to as “glosses”, namely words or short phrases that directly translate or comment on a particular phrase of the (commonly L.) base text. The present study takes the traditional approach and restricts the use of the term “glosses” to additions that are themselves made up of linguistic material, thereby excluding prosodic marks, construe marks and doodles. These other additions are worthy of study, and codicologists, palaeographers and art historians ought to look out for them, but the present study does not deal with them.\(^1\) This approach is in line with the terminology of the traditional study of OE glossography (e.g. Napier 1900, Ker 1957, Meritt 1968, Page 1973, Gwara 2001) and it is in line with the usage of the term Glossen in German scholarly usage (BSTK: 101–109; Henkel 2007: 727), summarized by Gretsch (1999b: 209) as “additions [to L. texts] of translations, synonyms or explanations (usually consisting of no more than a single word)”. This traditional notion is somewhat at odds with the much more liberal approach to Anglo-Saxon glossing taken by Wieland’s (1983) influential study on the L. glossing in Cambridge, University Library Gg. 5. 35 [K:16]. Wieland proposes a much broader definition of “glosses” that also includes non-linguistic additions, such as symbols and “anything on a page which is not text proper, but which is intended to comment on the text” (Wieland 1983: 7), explicitly including illustrations and drawings, too. Wieland’s more generous interpretation of the traditional notion of “glosses” to some extent reflects the needs of L. gloss scholars to subsume the many complex layers of additions that we encounter in many medieval MSS beside the L. main text under a convenient umbrella term. Wieland’s broad interpretation of the term “glosses” also seems to have been directly inspired by Robinson’s (1973) term “syntactical glosses”, which Robin-

\(^1\) A few examples of such additions are discussed below on account of their being entered in dry-point.