7. Summary and Outlook

7.1 Identifying Further Dry-Point Glosses and Dry-Point Gloss Manuscripts

As I have tried to show, the visual difficulties presented by dry-point writing have a negative effect on the study of OE dry-point glosses. Unlike OE ink glosses, which stand a good chance of being detected once an interested researcher autopsies the right MS, dry-point glosses may be overlooked repeatedly, and even after being recognized for what they are, their edition requires more effort than that of ink glosses.

First of all, potential dry-point gloss discoverers must be able to see the scratches or simple grooves in the MS surface that constitute the dry-point writing. As was pointed out above, this is not always possible for practical reasons. If the lighting circumstances are not felicitous and the contrast too low, researchers do not stand a chance of perceiving the glosses visually. Therefore, unless the researchers create felicitous lighting circumstances on purpose – e.g. by finding a library workstation next to a daylight window or by using some sort of adjustable (i.e. focusable) light source – it is usually only the most blatant scratches that reveal themselves by mere chance. However, even if researchers pay special attention to potential dry-point writing, it may happen that the time of the day, the weather and hence lighting conditions or the tiredness of the researchers effectively limit the visibility of dry-point writing. Training and familiarization of the eye with known dry-point material is helpful, of course, and the repeated autopsy of even well-studied MSS slowly increases the chances of an exhaustive edition by way of a continued approximation, so to speak.

Secondly then, discoverers have to realize that what they see might actually be writing. This is by no means obvious. Our eye is so much accustomed to black on white writing that our perception will not readily expect writing with much lower contrast where no writing is supposed to be, namely in between the lines or in the margin. Unless our perception is prepared for dry-point writing, such writing is highly likely to be filtered out along with the myriads of tiny details that our brain continuously keeps from jamming our stream of consciousness.

Thirdly, the person sitting in front of the MS must be interested in the matter to such an extent that she or he is ready to take note of the dry-pointing writing and is ready to go ahead with investigating it. This may sound like a straightforward thing to do, but it is by no means the only possible continuation. Perhaps,
the discoverer is running a tight schedule investigating an altogether different aspect of that MS and just cannot pay attention to the dry-point material at that moment. Perhaps, the discoverer would rather keep the discovery of the dry-point material under wraps for the moment, hoping to find time for it at some later stage, which possibly never happens. Perhaps, the glosses are not in a language that is of interest to the discoverer and even after adding a footnote to a publication, the information never or only much later reaches the interested specialist audience. Perhaps, the person feels she or he does not have the expertise to deal with the matter, but does not know who to turn to, either; the librarian will perhaps be pleased to hear the news and note it down somewhere, where it may go unheeded for many years to come. Perhaps, the discoverer even finds the right person to investigate the matter, but that person is swamped in work, too, and the information is not pursued.

Finally, the actual work on the dry-point glosses has to get started. Researchers have to be prepared to invest time and money, mainly to spend long hours staring at MS pages in dim reading rooms, while the sun is shining outside. Personally, I find it to be hard work, as it is physically exhausting and psychologically demanding, fraught with many motivational setbacks that have to be coped with. What one may think to be an established reading one day, may be put into question the next, when the light is different, and only rarely does a “ray of light” (cf. Sweet 1896: vi) quite literally make everything crystal clear.

Several factors have an influence on the decipherer’s success:

i. A profound knowledge of Anglo-Saxon palaeography will render the identification of individual letterforms much easier.

ii. More than average knowledge of L. is necessary to cope with the often difficult L. prose of the base text.

iii. Intimate knowledge of the base text as a whole will allow for a limitation of potential word fields that a gloss is to be searched in.

iv. A comprehensive knowledge of the OE lexicon will allow the glossographer to make educated guesses after deciphering only some of the discernible letterforms.

v. Detailed knowledge of other MSS of the same text and their often complicated textual affiliations will allow the gloss researcher to identify items of vocabulary that are especially prone to glossing.

In addition to that, there are also physical and mental capacities that are not present in the right combination in every interested individual: good eyes, a steady gaze, the ability to copy the scratches or mere indentations reliably onto a piece of paper while or after looking at the MS page, patience, perseverance and frustration tolerance well beyond average; or as Page (1979: 45) put it suc-
cinctly: “This would demand a student young, keen-sighted, competent, patient and optimistic.”

That being said, it seems to me that the study of OE dry-point glossing is one of the last frontiers of OE studies, as the domain of dry-point glossing is the most likely candidate for the discovery of as yet unknown sizable quantities of OE material. There is good evidence that many more OE dry-point glosses will eventually become known, perhaps slowly yet steadily, once the search for them is intensified and co-ordinated. Virtually all OE dry-point gloss scholars of the last 100 years agree that there is more yet unknown dry-point material to be found and this unanimous opinion should clearly not be disregarded before the evidence has been investigated thoroughly.

Moreover, developments in OHG glossography show that even MSS that have been studied extensively can yield previously unnoticed (or undeciphered) dry-point glosses in quite astonishing quantities (cf. Glaser 1997: 3). There is every reason to believe that the situation is no different in the case of Anglo-Saxon MSS. If we turn our attention to the MSS listed in our Catalogue, we can see that even within that small group of 34 MSS a lot of work is still hidden. An obvious example is provided by London, BL Cotton Cleopatra C. viii [16 / K:145], whose dry-point glosses are mentioned by Napier (1900: xxi), but no edition of these glosses has been produced yet. Page (1981a: 113) also cautions that “there are Old English scratched glosses still to be found even in manuscripts that have been carefully searched already.” Hence, it would be a mistake to set those MSS for which there are no explicit reports about further undeciphered glosses aside for good. The “Boulogne Prudentius” [2 / K:7], for instance, has over a thousand OE ink glosses, but only one OE dry-point gloss has been edited from it, so far. It is, of course, possible that this one OE dry-point gloss is all there is to be found. Yet, Meritt (1959) does not even indicate whether the discovery of this one single dry-point gloss is the result of a careful search or just a chance find. Therefore, it would be unwise to assume that the fact that there are no explicit reports about further dry-point material from this MS is in any way indicative of the fact that there is none. It may well be that both Napier and Meritt saw much more than what they actually noted down; perhaps, because it was not relevant for their purpose, as it did not yield workable material for their lexicographic concerns. Further research is dearly necessary here and in many other cases, too.

For many of the known OE dry-point gloss MSS there are even explicit reports of further unedited dry-point material. A quick, non-exhaustive survey of the reports and statements about further dry-point material in our Catalogue comprises the following MSS: Nievergelt (2009a: 27, n. 66) for Augsburg, UB Cod. I.2.4 2 [1/K:287*] (cf. p. 97); Page (1979: 30) for Cambridge, CCC 57 [3/K:34] (cf. p. 106); Page (1982: 156) for Cambridge, CCC 173 [4/K:40] (cf. p. 108); Page

It may well be that the edited dry-point material is only the proverbial tip of the iceberg. Page, for instance, after autopsying Cambridge, CCC 223 [5/K:52] notes:

> After long and detailed examination of the manuscript in full sunlight, in various types of artificial light and with the ultra-violet lamp, I conclude that Meritt printed only a small amount of the gloss material that was once in the manuscript, and only a proportion of what can be made out even now. (Page 1979: 34)

For three other MSS from our *Catalogue*, Toon (1985: 321) also reports further findings to be made, namely London, BL Royal 13 A. xv [21/K:266], London, BL Additional 40000 [15/K:131] and London, BL Cotton Vespasian D. xiv, ff. 170–224 [18/K:210]; for the last of them Toon estimates “that there are about a hundred more [dry-point glosses] to be read, but it won’t be easy” (Toon 1985: 321). Unfortunately, no information about the relevant folios is given and no samples are given, either. It is only for London, BL Royal 5. E. xi [19/K:252] that Toon (1985: 324–325) provides a small sample of his newly discovered dry-point glosses. Curiously, Gwara (1993; 2001b) – in his monumental edition of L. and OE glosses to *Aldhelm’s Prosadvirginitate* – does not seem to be aware of Toon’s (1985) edition, as he does not edit some of the dry-point glosses or gloss traces reported by Toon, and Toon’s (1985) article is not mentioned in Gwara’s bibliography, either.

Toon also reports further undocumented and unedited dry-point glosses in London, BL Cotton Tiberius C. ii (BEDA, *Historia ecclesiastica*, sec. viii**), when he notes:
Meritt mentioned that there were a number of glosses here that he could not read. There are, indeed, a number that I am able to read, including some which Meritt read apparently without undue difficulty. On the other hand, this manuscript (and a number of the other manuscripts I am about to mention) has glosses which I can read quite easily, but must have given Meritt trouble, as he does not mention them. I sometimes transcribe what is for me an “easy” scratched gloss only to discover that Meritt missed it, while I might as well have to hunt carefully even to find glosses which Meritt has read with confidence, but I am hardly able to see. I offer these facts not as criticism of Meritt’s work, but as invitation to others who will no doubt see glosses both of us have missed. (Toon 1985: 320)

Unfortunately, Toon does not print any of the material that he mentions. New discoveries in Cotton Tiberius C. ii have not been reported or published since and the circumstances have even changed in disfavour of the study of dry-point material. We can assume that Toon – working in the early 1980s – conducted his study in the old reading room of the British Museum, when he writes: “I reserved work on bright and sunny days to more obvious glosses” (1985: 321). The old reading room of the British Library still featured outside windows, before it was roofed over by Norman Foster’s glass and steel design, which opened in 2000. The MSS of the British Museum, however, were transferred to the St Pancras building of the British Library (opened in 1998) whose MS reading room with its curtained roof windows only features diffuse artificial lighting. Since light plays a very crucial role in the detection of dry-point material, the muddy lighting situation is counter-productive for our purposes. An additional complication is specific to this MS: Cotton Tiberius C. ii [17 / K:198] is listed as a restricted MS and access to it is granted “on one occasion and for a maximum of one day only”¹ and even so only in “exceptional circumstances”. Such exceptional circumstances may well be argued with regard to dry-point material, since conventional, photographic digital facsimiles usually do not reproduce them adequately. However, the time restriction puts a serious brake on their study: With the Pancras MS reading room opening at 9.30 a.m. and with restricted MSS having to be returned at 4.30 p.m., the interested scholar would only have less than 7 hours to examine the MS in total; as a consequence, chance finds are very unlikely to occur now. It is to be hoped that in the not-too-distant future digital procedures will allow for a prolonged study of the MS surface’s three-dimensionality, even after the MS itself has been returned to the vault.

Focusing on MSS that are not yet known to be OE dry-point MSS, it seems quite certain that Anglo-Saxon MSS at large have not yet been searched for

dry-point material systematically in the first place, and it is hard to believe that the known corpus of OE dry-point gloss MSS by pure chance represents the actual corpus of surviving OE dry-point gloss MSS. A number of MSS, for instance, are mentioned by Toon (1985: 321), but since he does not provide any precise statements about the language of the glosses, I did not include them in the Catalogue presented above. Toon reports dry-point glosses for London, British Library Harley 3826 [K:241]\(^2\) and London, British Library Cotton Vitellius A. xix [K:217]\(^3\) and describes the glosses as “[v]ery difficult”; he explains their previous non-detection as follows: “Few of these glosses would be obvious to a casual observer since they are often very faint and require focusing one’s eyes on the surface behind the inked glosses” (ibid.). However, he does not make any statements regarding their number or their position in the respective MS. He also refrains from giving any sample readings, which leaves the reader in doubt whether the mentioned dry-point glosses are OE in the first place. Such reports, I should say, are not good practice: they hide more than they reveal. A footnote giving a rough estimation of the quantity of glossing and listing the suspected scratches with their position in the MS (that is page or folio number and line number, perhaps even the L. lemma if it can be determined) would greatly facilitate the future study of these glosses and would allow for reports to complete the picture slowly yet steadily. Toon (1985: 321) also reports “hints of scratches in several places, but I was unable to read them” in London, British Library Cotton Tiberius A. xiv [G:367], containing Beda, Historia ecclesiastica, sec. viii\(^{\text{med.}}\). This MS was partly damaged in the Ashburnham House fire in 1731 and the excessive heat caused it to shrink and shrivel around the edges. I could not find any dry-point traces in December 2012, when I scrutinized the MS one morning by means of a handheld flashlight; however, the lighting conditions were less than ideal.

When it comes to the identification of OE dry-point gloss MSS that are not included in our Catalogue, it would seem that MSS that are glossed in OE ink are a good starting point for further work. The much more advanced study of OHG dry-point glossing has shown that – similar to texts glossed in ink – certain texts are more likely to attract dry-point glossing and often the same texts attract both ink and dry-point glossing (not only in the same MS, but also across the extant MSS of a certain text). The reasons for this cannot be generalized: in some cases, this may have been the result of the fact that some texts offered more syntactical or lexical difficulties than other texts; this may

\(^2\) Microfiche facsimile in O’Keefe (2003: 7–12 [no. 252]).
\(^3\) Microfiche facsimile in Doane (2007: 35–40 [no. 276]).
be argued for Aldhelm’s difficult *Prosa de virginitate*. In other cases, it may have been due to the preference for certain authors to be used more regularly in the Anglo-Saxon classroom, such as Arator, Juvenicus or Sedulius (cf. Wieland 1985: 153). As a consequence, their texts underwent a more systematic study, which may have resulted in a denser residue of glosses. One of many problems in this connection, however, is that for most occasional glosses, we do not know who wrote them and in what circumstances. Lapidge (1982b), in a very illuminating article, for instance, cautions that we should not too readily identify a book as a “classbook” merely on account of the fact that it is glossed. The overview of extant Anglo-Saxon MSS of texts associated with OE dry-point glossing may serve as a starting for further investigations in this direction.

7.2 New Approaches to Dry-Point Glosses

7.2.1 Digitally Assisted Decipherment of Dry-Point Glosses

Present-day visibility issues surrounding OE glosses are a reality. These issues set dry-point glosses clearly apart from the OE ink glosses and there are no easy solutions to the difficulties posed by them. Creating a pencil rubbing, as is sometimes done successfully with three-dimensional objects in archaeology or art history is not an option at all, as the soft surface of the parchment would not offer enough resistance to confer an image onto the intervening piece of paper. More importantly, the process would effectively damage or even destroy the delicate structures left behind by the stylus. My own experiments with dry-point writing on modern-day paper show that pencil rubbing applied directly to the dry-point writing itself in fact produces surprisingly easily legible results. Being an extremely invasive method of recovery, however, pencil rubbing is completely out of the question for actual Anglo-Saxon dry-point writing, as it effectively damages and destroys the integrity of the writing as such. Meritt (1934: 234) reports that some of the OHG dry-point glosses in Basel, Universitätsbibliothek F III 15c, sec. viii, were rendered illegible after an unidentified person traced them with a pencil in 1932. Such non-reversible imperilment of dry-point writing must hence be avoided at all cost. If a similar method could be applied non-invasively – for instance by applying a “virtual rubbing” (i.e. a suitable graphics filter, highlighting locally prominent elevations and depressions) to a three-dimensional virtual copy of the dry-point writing – the study of OE dry-point glosses would be facilitated quite considerably.

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5 Cf. BStK: 184–185 ([no. 31]).
Graham (2009: 177) claims that the “best way for the modern scholar to search for scratched glosses in a manuscript is to use a fibre-optic cold light source”, mainly because this “light source may be brought as close to the surface of the page as desired without any risk of damaging the ink or parchment.” I can only partly agree with this, though. It is certainly true that the cold light has conservational advantages and the slender tip of the fibre-optic allows for great manoeuvrability, especially along the gutter margin of the MS, where dry-point glosses are often especially difficult to autopsy (cf. Nievergelt 2007: 77). However, in my experience, it would be preferable to have a focusable fibre-optic light source that would allow the gloss researcher to cast a harsh, raking light across the page. It may well be that such devices are available; however, the devices that I worked with produced a soft diffuse light, which was only partly helpful. In a sense, it would be highly desirable to imitate sunlight, not with respect to its intensity of course, but with respect to its perfectly aligned light beams that create sharp shadows.

No apparatus similar to the Japanese kakuhitsu scope (cf. above) is known to me that would have been used in conjunction with OE dry-point glosses (or OHG dry-point glosses for that matter). The Japanese apparatus was designed for paper MSS and would probably not yield the same quality of output with all the various types of dry-point glosses that are found in parchment MSS. Yet, the use of an auxiliary deciphering apparatus sounds like a very interesting approach: Working on dry-point gloss MSS, I often wish I had a third hand: With one hand wielding an adjustable light source, one hand holding a magnifying glass in the right position and one hand taking notes or making drawings of the dry-point material one soon has to realize that the human body has its sharply-defined physical limits. If the light source could be adjusted systematically and in a controlled and reproducible manner, the deciphering work on the MS may well become a little less tiring. Taking pictures in different lighting conditions would be of great help, too, but most libraries do not allow cameras in the reading rooms. Experienced OHG glossographers have assured me, however, that by careful and repeated appeasement of the librarians, the range of what is allowed can slowly be expanded to include taking pictures and sitting in particularly suitable spots within the reading rooms. After all, it is the librarians’ duty to see to it that no harm come to the MSS in their custody and hence it is the dry-point glossographers’ duty to convince their librarians that they are capable of handling the MSS with appropriate care.

More than eighty years ago, Bischoff (1928: 154) suggested that photography might be employed fruitfully in the study of dry-point material, but he considered it to be too expensive and hence proposed that the eye should suffice. Photographic possibilities have developed beyond everything that Bischoff must have envi-
sioned back then and the cost of photography has been decreasing continuously ever since, too. Never in the history of humankind has it been so inexpensive to produce a sheer unlimited series of pictures of an object, while the resolution and photosensitivity of the equipment has developed beyond everything that even the keenest of technology enthusiasts must have considered possible back in the 1920s. Moreover, image processing algorithms that allow for a nearly inexhaustible range of post-processing possibilities are available even to non-specialists. Yet, as far as I am aware, no such technologies have yet been deployed in the study of OE dry-point glosses. If the combination of appropriate lighting techniques and photography could be shown to provide an inexpensive yet reliable way to decipher and document dry-point writing, the dry-point researcher’s difficult work could possibly be facilitated quite considerably. In addition, the possibilities of more advanced technologies, such as multi-spectral imaging techniques have not been exhausted yet. Perhaps, this is among other things due to the fact that skimming light techniques offer the best results with dry-point glosses, and hence an altogether different lighting approach has to be taken than with illuminations, palimpsests or damaged fragments, which are most commonly subjected to multi-spectral investigations. Experiments in this area will have to take this into consideration, and negative reports will have to be scrutinized with respect to the special requirements of dry-point writing, before those technologies are rejected rashly. If dry-point glosses do exist as physical objects, then there must be a way of recording and documenting them by applying some appropriate imaging procedure. Once the right specialists are found, the dry-point scholars will surely be able to benefit from digital approaches, even if traditional MS autopsy will remain the most important tool of the dry-point scholar’s toolbox.

An interesting example of how 3D data can be collected in a corpus is provided by “The Irish Inscribed Stones Project”, hosted at the National University of Ireland, Galway. 6 3D scans of over 300 inscribed stones from Clonmacnoise are available for download in Adobe’s PDF format. For each physical object, in this case an inscribed piece of stone, there is one file. Each file consists of a description of the physical object including an edition of the inscription and a short bibliography. A vector representation of the 3D object is included in the PDF, which can be turned interactively in all dimensions. The user can zoom in on the object, change the rendering of the vector object and change the lighting on the basis of a number of pre-sets. The orientation of the countless ridges and grooves of the objects can then be turned freely so that the light creates shadows in the right spots to allow the user to study the object in great detail without unduly disturbing the original object. The technique could probably not

6 URL: <http://www.nuigalway.ie/irish-inscribed-stones-project/>. 
be applied to dry-point glosses directly, since the structures of the stone surface are scanned with much less detail than those with which the tiny grooves produced by dry-point glosses would have to be recorded. Yet, an adaptation of the methods at a different scale must surely be possible. Hence, it would be possible to have an online repository of OE dry-point glosses where each dry-point gloss is represented both in an interpreted manner – that is in the form of an edition – and in a non-interpreted, objectivized manner – in the form of a raw 3D vector data set, which may be downloaded and fed into whatever computational algorithm may be of interest.

A promising technical approach to the visibility issues with dry-point writing has been undertaken by *The Lichfield Cathedral Imaging Project*, headed by William F. Endres. In 2014, they photographed each MS page of the Lichfield Gospels some 45 times, with the light raking at a different angle across the vellum surface each time. They then used *Reflectance Transformation Imaging* (RTI) software to combine the visual information into a high-resolution composite file that allows users browsing their project web page to scrutiny the MS pages at extraordinary resolution in varying lighting and contrast settings without having to travel to Lichfield. Some of the dry-point material can be deciphered quite easily in the RTI images and Endres has been able to detect and decipher previously undocumented dry-point writing, too.

While I am confident that new deciphering technologies will eventually be applied to OE dry-point glosses with great benefit, there are still major financial, organizational and conservational concerns to be tackled. In August 2013, a team under the direction of Dr. Nathanael Busch and attended by the OHG dry-point gloss expert Prof. Dr. Andreas Nievergelt were allowed to take surface scans of several MSS at the Stiftsbibliothek in St. Gallen. One of the MSS that they included was St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek 1394 [32/K:A44] and scans were produced of several OE dry-point glosses on p. 127 of that fragment on my behalf. I was invited to be present during their work and I could catch some glimpses of the images captured, which looked exciting. However, during the post-processing stage it became evident that the procedure would have to be refined much further before the results would allow us to gain new insights. I had hoped to present some preliminary findings here, but there is nothing that I can report. So far, all my plans to establish whether it is possible to produce a three-dimensional scan of something as tiny as the groove produced by a stylus on a piece of parchment have failed. At ISAS 2013, several people were

7 URL: <https://lichfield.ou.edu/>; the web site features interactive RTI images of all four MS pages known to contain dry-point writing (i.e. 217, 221, 226), cf. <https://lichfield.ou.edu/st-chad-gospels/features>.
8 William F. Endres (personal communication, August 8, 2016).
interested in that aspect of the matter, including archaeologists, digital humanities experts and palaeographers, but nobody had any information concerning projects concerned with such small 3D structures.

7.2.2 Dry-Point Glosses and Digital Humanities

The “digital turn” has been one of the hot topics of the humanities in recent years. In philology and palaeography, this turn has perhaps been less pronounced than in other disciplines, yet some very interesting projects have developed in these areas as well, such as “DigiPal” – Digital Resource and Database of Palaeography, Manuscripts and Diplomatic⁹ or “LangScape” – The Language of Landscape: Reading the Anglo-Saxon Countryside,¹⁰ both developed at the Department of Digital Humanities at King’s College London. These digital humanities projects aim at a comprehensive view of their subjects – that is English Vernacular minuscule of the 11th c. and Anglo-Saxon charter boundaries, respectively – by compiling large amounts of data in databases. Such digital databases have both advantages and disadvantages over printed catalogues and handlists. One of the main disadvantages of such large-scale databases is that they inherently run the risk of turning into digital graveyards, once the project duration has ended. Brown (1992), for instance, reports the near-completion of a cross-referenced digital corpus of OE glossaries that he and several assistants and consultants had been compiling in the 1980s. It must have been developed quite some way and contained over 40,000 entries, consisting each “of at least one L. word as lemma, usually followed by a Latin or Old English interpretation (or both)” (Brown 1992: 100). The compilation of the database was driven by the conviction that the complexity of the affiliations between the various OE glossaries called for database management techniques. After all, the human mind is at a clear disadvantage against computers when it comes to pattern recognition across a large and complicated dataset such as the data presented by the extant OE glossaries. Already Henry Sweet had pointed out:

To deal fully and successfully with these glossaries would require a combination of qualities that has never yet been achieved, together with several lifetimes. The investigator of Old-English as a whole – to whom these glossaries are only subordinate sources of information – is therefore often obliged to work by guesswork until some one else guesses better, and to be thankful for an occasional ray of light. (Sweet 1896: vi–vii)

⁹ URL: <http://www.digipal.eu>.
¹⁰ URL: <http://www.langscape.org.uk>.
The database must have yielded interesting finds already in the state that it had reached by the time Brown’s (1992) paper appeared. The compilation of the database had been financed by the National Endowment for the Humanities of the United States Government from July 1984 to December 1985 and the “key-boarding”, as Brown calls it, seems to have been concluded. This means that the database must have existed in some digital form. Brown even mentions that some of the work had to be entered a second time manually from paper print-outs, because some back-ups had been deleted due to a misunderstanding (1992: 101): Fortunately, paper copies of the database had been sent to interested scholars and the information could be entered again on the basis of these print-outs. When I tried to follow up on the good fortunes of the project, however, I could not find a single article or monograph that had resulted from that exciting enterprise. Brown’s (1992) article was one of the last articles that he ever published and he passed away in 2009. When I tried to follow up on the whereabouts of the actual data by contacting the academic staff at Ohio State University, I had to learn that the database was probably not extant, at least no trace of it was to be found, nor did any of the senior staff members know anything about it.

Printed databases, such as Ker’s (1957) *Catalogue* or Wanley’s (1705) *Catalogus*, are much better equipped to withstand the test of time, yet their up-to-dateness and hence completeness necessarily lags behind the developments in the field. Updates, such as Ker (1976) or Blockley (1982; 1994), can mend this discrepancy to some extent, yet the more updates there are the more tiresome it is to keep track of the developments, because the various updates have to be collated to make sure that no information is accidentally missed. Digital databases, on the other hand, such as the German “Handschriftencensus”, which keeps track of some 23,000 medieval MSS containing texts in German in over 1,400 repositories can be updated continuously. For each MS there is a short catalogue entry with bibliographical information – not unlike the catalogue entries I present above. Moreover, users are invited to add information about individual MSS, which is then revised by an editor and put online.  

The digital turn has also reached most MS repositories in Western Europe. Only a few years ago, most MSS (except for a few exceptionally famous ones for

11 Lisa Kiser (personal communication, October 9, 2013).
12 URL: <http://www.handschriftencensus.de>. The quality of the maintenance of the website is quite remarkable: Following up on the whereabouts of Austin, University of Texas, Harry Ransom Center HRC 29 (cf. p. 72, n. 17), I noticed that the pressmark listed in the Handschriftencensus for that MS was probably out-dated, I notified the editor using the in-built commentary function of its catalogue entry and the information was updated within a matter of hours – even though it was a Sunday. Cf. URL: <http://www.handschriftencensus.de/6660>. 

Lizenzierter für Gast am 03.08.2019 um 15:54 Uhr
which costly printed facsimiles were available) could only be seen *in situ* or after ordering a microfilm, whose quality was usually dismal and whose inspection was more often than not cumbersome. Today, a large number of medieval MSS have been digitized in outstanding quality and made publicly available. Out of the 34 MSS listed in our *Catalogue*, 14 MSS are already now available on-line as integral digital facsimiles. For some of the other MSS, digital facsimiles of individual pages are available from the websites of their respective repositories (e.g. from the British Library). It can thus be assumed that the MSS in question have been photographed entirely, and it is to be hoped that these repositories will soon follow suit in adopting open-access policies. If the digitization continues at the current pace, it is not unlikely that there will be online facsimiles available for most of the MSS in our *Catalogue* before the end of this decade.

Even though dry-point glosses are usually not visible in digital facsimiles, the availability of such facsimiles still proves to be a great boon during the work on dry-point material, because text collations and general observations about the MS’s layout and composition can be conducted in one’s office, with the desired secondary literature at hand. This facilitates preparations for later autopsies quite considerably, although it will never replace them.

In general, however, despite all these exciting developments, one must say that dry-point glosses have remained basically untouched by the much-quoted “digital turn” in the humanities so far. As of October 2017, there is not even an entry for “dry-point gloss” among the 4.3+ million entries in the English Wikipedia.13 After my seemingly endless praise for the enterprising innovativeness of the German dry-point gloss researchers throughout this study, it will not come as a surprise to the benevolent reader that there has been such an entry in the German Wikipedia at least since 2008.14 Admittedly, the mere fact that there is an entry on a particular topic in Wikipedia is not necessarily an indicator of the attention that the topic enjoys. The absence of an entry, however, surely indicates a general lack of awareness regarding a particular phenomenon.

### 7.3 Desiderata

The field of OE dry-point glosses has never attracted a large amount of attention, and also the wider field of OE gloss studies is characterized by a small, albeit steady number of individual contributions, rather than any concerted global approaches to its issues. With the vivid OHG glossographic scholarly

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community in mind, however, one can easily envision several projects, which would surely provide frameworks that would propel the study of OE glossing to a new level.

7.3.1 A Corpus of Old English Glosses?

Unlike Steinmeyer and Siever’s unified collection of OHG glosses, published between 1879 and 1922 (StSG), no comprehensive collection of OE glosses has ever been compiled. Napier (1900) and Meritt (1945) both included a large number of OE glosses, but they have to be collated with a large number of editions printed in widely scattered publications if one wants to gain something of an overview of OE glossing. Plans to produce some kind of multi-volume compendium were under discussion at least until the 1980s (cf. Dumville 1992a: 61), but they did not materialize, mainly because the interest in glossography moved away from glosses and started to focus on glossing. Hence, the usefulness of list-like collections of lemma/interpretamentum pairs – analogous to StSG or TPH – has become questionable:

It so happens that the very aim and scope of the subject have changed: glossographic studies are no longer practically limited to the Old English glosses, nor will they serve lexicographical purposes only, i.e. provide materials for word-studies and dictionaries. In future they will embrace all manifestations of the glossographer’s activity, considered as a phenomenon sui generis. (Derolez 1992b: 12)

Most (if not all) 19th and 20th-c. gloss editions almost exclusively focussed on procuring lexical material for dictionary makers. As a consequence, the typical layout of such editions consists of a list in which pairs of lemmata and interpretamenta are placed side by side. Meritt (1961) may serve as an example of such an edition:

i. Codicological information is kept to the bare minimum; basically, all there is, is a reference to Ker’s Catalogue, a date for the MS and a date for the gloss. The dates are not justified or even discussed; they are presented as apparent facts (although they were certainly not meant like that).

ii. Palaeographical details are never discussed; the edition does not state what script is used nor does it indicate how the base text is related to other copies of the same text.

iii. The base text is only referred to by its author and title; a critical edition of the base text is sometimes referenced.

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15 In younger years, Derolez had argued strongly in favour of such an endeavour (cf. Derolez 1953: 174).
iv. The passage in which the L. lemma occurs is indicated for each gloss by the corresponding page number in the edition of the L. base text.

v. Basic information about the MS, such as size, origin, provenance, layout, integrity of the MS is completely absent. The presence of L. glossing is only mentioned if it has direct consequences for the interpretamenta, such as OE interpretamenta glossing L. interpretamenta, rather than the L. base text.

vi. The placement of the gloss in the MS is usually not discussed and line numbers are nearly always absent.

vii. Parallel glossing is not indicated systematically: glosses from other MSS are quoted in rare instances, but they are never discussed.

viii. Doubts about readings are only occasionally expressed in the footnotes, but no systematic approach is discernible.

ix. The context of the L. lemma is never quoted; grammatical congruence between the OE interpretamentum and the L. lemma is never discussed; blatant grammatical or semantic incongruence is discussed very curtly in footnotes.

x. No grammatical information about the L. lemmata or the OE interpretamenta are given, unless the editor felt that a footnote is necessary, in which case it often borders on the enigmatic.

xi. Neither the L. lemmata nor the OE interpretamenta are ever given translations.

xii. The manner of entry (ink vs. dry-point) is only marked indirectly in the footnotes, making it rather difficult to distinguish ink and dry-point glosses in the edition.

xiii. There is no systematic indication about how much time was spent on the MS and, more importantly with respect to dry-point glossing, how exhaustive the edition may be.

xiv. Unsuccessful or partial readings are often quoted only by way of summary and there is no list of undeciphered scratches and their location in the MS.

It is not in the least my intention to disparage such editions. All of these properties just listed arguably made sense in the scholarly practice of the time. They ensured a degree of efficiency in the representation of the glosses and allowed for a quick and easy way to look up gloss material. Clearly, the editors of these editions knew so much more about the glosses than what they put in writing, but it simply was not customary to expound more than just the bare essentials. We can get a glimpse of the erudite depth of Meritt’s considerations behind the list-like editions in his highly interesting publication Some of the Hardest Glosses in Old English (Meritt 1968), where the issues surrounding a selection of especially difficult OE glosses are unfurled with great expertise. There is
no question that Meritt would have been able to give translations or discuss the many semantic, lexical, morphological and graphematic nuances hidden in the interpretamenta, but merely presenting the bare outlines of it all was a conscious decision, which was in line with the scholarly tradition. In the light of new and exciting models for gloss editions represented by OHG dry-point editions like Glaser (1996), Nievergelt (2007) or Ernst (2007) or OE ink gloss editions like Richter (1996), however, list-like editions do no longer live up to the expectations that gloss editions have to live up to. It would be preferable to present OE glosses in such a fashion that the editions pave the way for a continuous accumulation of knowledge about OE glosses and OE glossing by supplying as much detailed information about the glosses in their MS context as possible.

If traditional, list-like editions were to be taken as the model for a collective corpus of OE glosses, the resulting collection would simply aggregate the shortcomings of the existing editions. This insight was one of the defining results of the 1986 conference on Anglo-Saxon glossography held in Brussels, as attested by a number of articles published in its proceedings (Derolez 1992a).

There is in fact work here for several generations. It is accordingly important that no more than minimal level of obsolescence be built into editions of gloss-texts. If our vision is sufficiently clear at this stage, texts of such comprehensive accuracy (unencumbered by excessive expressions of mere opinion) can be planned and published that our successors will thank (rather than curse) us and (instead of having to reedit) will pass on to a higher level of understanding, of the corpus and its constituent parts, than we have been able to achieve. (Dumville 1992: 74)

In principle, then, it is feasible to produce a corpus of Old English glosses: in practice arduous. What we need in the coming years, I suspect, is a series of sample attempts at editing passages of glossed manuscripts, to see how their material can most effectively be laid out to give the maximum information without confusion. (Page 1992: 94)

After 150 years of ’selective’ editing, it is time – in my view – to turn our attention to the wider aspects of Anglo-Saxon glossography. (Lapidge 1992: 57)

The “series of sample attempts” that Page envisioned has not yet been realized. While the scholarly quality of OE gloss editions is certainly high, the manners of presentation are still centred on the list.  

In a sense, the *DOEC 2009* can be seen as an existing digital corpus of OE glosses, as it contains the vast majority of printed OE glosses in digital form. However, since the *DOEC 2009* encompasses so much more OE material than just the glosses, the glosses are not contained in a suitably refined manner. During the incorporation of the printed editions in the database, the data had to be simplified to fit the layout of the database, resulting in the traditional list-like representation. In addition to that, the data had to be stripped of nearly all supplementary information and it cannot really serve as glossographic corpus, for which it had not been intended in the first place, anyway.

### 7.3.2 A Corpus of Old English Glosses!

The usability of the corpus of OE dry-point glosses could be greatly improved if the phenomenon of OE glossing was approached more comprehensively and, as I would like to argue, more didactically. L. lemma and OE interpretamentum should not be reduced to their linguistic forms and printed in a list, but rather they should be taken as starting points for excursions into many different aspects of glossing. There is no such thing as a perfect gloss edition, because new research interests will require new categories of classification. Hence, it would be desirable to have an expandable and fluid edition, which can hardly be achieved in a printed book. The possibilities offered by digital, relational databases could be put to great use here, allowing a re-ordering of the information according to criteria that may suit a particular research question. However, we are still far away from such a database and it seems more useful to address the down-to-earth requirements of a good printed edition. Let me do so by fantasizing about the perfect gloss edition, whose description is heavily influenced by OHG gloss editions (cf. p. 55 above) and also reflects Page’s ideas on the topic (cf. Page 1992: 85).

The perfect printed gloss edition is not completely different from the gloss editions that we know, but it deviates decisively in the explicitness of information that is gathered. The individual pieces of information (including factoids) ought to be retained as intact as possible and constantly remain retraceable to their origin. This is the only way to ensure that the “level of obsolescence” (Dumville 1992: 74) can be minimized by making all individual steps of an argument retraceable, too. Editors of dry-point gloss editions must not be afraid to present the complexities of the MS evidence to their full extent.

The MS itself ought to be described in as much detail as possible, which must include the exact number of folios with a detailed listing of the contents, a detailed description of the layout of the MS pages, an estimation of the overall extent of glossing (both L. and vernacular throughout the MS), information
about the collation of the quires, precise information about the integrity of the extant codex, a detailed palaeographical description of the base texts as well as a thorough review of suggested origins, provenances and datings – either neatly quoted from printed resources (relying on a quasi-exhaustive bibliography) or presented as a new, original finding.

Each gloss is presented in such a fashion that the user of the edition can get a clear picture of the context of both the interpretamenta and the lemmata in the MS context. The exact position of the interpretamentum on the MS page – indicated by folio, line number and exact placement vis-à-vis the L. lemma – is crucial for that. The precise spelling of the interpretamentum (with a detailed description of the graphematic and palaeographical realization of it) is accompanied by a suitable phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactical and dialectological analysis of the OE interpretamentum. With difficult readings (i.e. most dry-point glosses), doubts about the reading have to be related in as much detail as possible. Information about part of speech, number, case/tense, nominal/verbal class of the interpretamentum is stated explicitly for each word form. Relevant sources, such as grammars, handbooks, lexical and syntactical studies are quoted to allow the reader to follow up on difficult issues. Palaeographical claims should not be related ex cathedra, either: Arguments about datings and observations about unusual letter forms have to be made explicit; all readers must be invited to make up their own minds by being able to follow up on the relevant literature if they choose to do so.\footnote{Just to exemplify this point: The OE ink glosses in Oxford, Bodleian Library Auctarium D. 5. 3 [25/K:293], for example, are dated “late eleventh or early twelfth century” by Meritt (1945: xvi). Ker (1957: 353), however, states: “probably of s. x”. Of course, opinions may differ. Nonetheless, it is certainly frustrating and – more importantly – detrimental to the advancement of our knowledge that neither of them gives any clues as to what these datings are based on. It is not my place to criticize earlier researchers for their extremely valuable work, but it is to be hoped that the quantification of palaeographical study – as spearheaded by projects like “DigiPal” (cf. above) – will further stimulate and facilitate the objectivization of palaeographical discourse.}

Gloss traces or unidentifiable scratches must be treated with the same precision as easily decipherable glosses. At the very least, their precise position on the MS page ought to be recorded.

Each gloss is documented by means of one high-resolution facsimile picture – shot in grazing light conditions in the case of dry-point writing. The inclusion of black and white facsimile pictures in the printed publication is not particularly useful, as the printing quality in most academic publications cannot meet the requirements of a high-quality printed facsimile. Instead, an alternative may be found in setting up a companion website where appropriate digital data is provided for download. If an online facsimile of the MS in question is publicly available online, it may also be interesting to provide links to the online facsimiles in
such a manner that the gloss in question is centred automatically and displayed at a suitable magnification. In the case of dry-point glosses, a three-dimensional digital object could be provided for download if this technique should prove to be feasible and helpful.

The precise textual context of the L. lemma is to be given both in the original and in a suitable translation. The surrounding sentence has to be transcribed and major deviations from the text preserved in other MS of the same text ought to be identified on the basis of critical editions (if available). Additionally, the L. lemma ought to be described morphologically, syntactically and lexically.

The time-honoured custom of not translating the L. lemmata or the OE interpretamenta into present-day English is harmful for the clarity and usefulness of the produced editions. Traditional editions tend to present the OE data as if everything was clear about it. Admittedly, there would be no need for translations of the L. or the OE material if every gloss scholar involved were perfectly fluent in both languages, which may have been the case in the early days of Anglo-Saxon philology. I know that this is not the reality nowadays. If OE gloss studies want to spur interest, they must become more accessible. Hence, both the L. base text and the interpretamenta must be furnished with suitable translations. Problematic translations must be marked as such. If necessary, the semantic range of possibilities ought to be specified.

Previous editions of the glosses have to be identified and considered accordingly. Incongruities between various readings have to be recorded and explained. This is especially important with respect to dry-point glosses, but it also plays a role with ink glosses.

The glosses have to be contextualized beyond the MS, too. Other MSS of the same text have to be listed and checked for parallel glossing. Edited parallel glosses on the same lemmata in different texts have to be referenced and discussed. The possibility of stemmatic affiliation between different glosses has to be investigated. Interpretamenta of the same word family glossing other lemmata in different texts ought to be traced, too, allowing us to fathom how a particular concept is rendered linguistically.

Finally, printed editions ought to be produced with a subsequent incorporation of the data into a digital database in mind. That means that once the data is published in print, the digital data ought to be stored in a format that can be re-used later on during the inclusion of the data in a database.

If I may fantasize just a little further, the next logical step in an open-access approach would be the actual incorporation of the data into a well-planned and suitably maintained digital database. Once incorporated in the digital database, the corpus could later be refined by explicit categorization according to phenomena of interest: Functional classifications, morpho-syntactic congruence...
between the interpretamentum and the lemma, types of merographs, substitution ciphers, *hapax legomena* etc. Such categorization could then be analysed statistically with great benefit for the study of OE glossing. At any time, new categories could be introduced and the categorization complemented across the existing corpus by researchers interested in a particular aspect of glossing. I have to admit this is a long haul, but even the most daunting task can be accomplished one step at a time, as long as there is a framework that holds the many individual achievements that are necessary in the right place. Within such a framework, the documentation of OE glosses could thus be atomized into individual, intricately inter-related facts and factoids, for which hypertext seems to be the perfect medium. Hypertext can easily and reliably be distributed via the world wide web. Thus, users can call up the desired information at a mouse-click and follow the individual pieces of information to their sources. Moreover, hypertext is scalable, expandable and updateable. Such a well-documented framework might just provide the “minimal level of obsolescence” that Dumville (1992: 74) envisions.

### 7.3.3 An Update of Ker’s Catalogue

Ker’s (1957) *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* is still an outstanding piece of scholarship with tremendous importance for the textual and palaeographical study of OE. As I mentioned above, it was augmented in one major update by Ker himself (Ker 1976) and in two minor updates by Mary Blockley (Blockley 1982; 1994). However, it is clearly in need of further updates for several reasons. First of all, new MSS containing OE have been discovered that are not included in the *Catalogue* or any of its updates. From among the OE dry-point gloss MSS presented here, two MSS (namely [23/K:–] and [33/K:–]) have to be added.18 Surely, a number of other MSS should be added, too, such as Paris, Bibliothèque nationale lat. 6401A, which features OE ink glosses that had already been noticed by Bolton (1977: 49, n. 103; cf. Page 2001: 219)19 or a number of MSS mentioned in Bulitta (2009).20 Secondly, fifty years’ worth of

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18 Incidentally, the OE dry-point gloss in St. Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek 2/1 [33/K:–] had already been published in Bischoff & Löfstedt (1992), but it was too well hidden there to reach the Anglo-Saxonist community before the copy deadline of Blockley (1994).

19 The OE ink gloss *suþerne wind* ‘southern wind, south wind’, interlinearly glossing L. *Illud p[ro]teruus auster / Totis uiribus urget* ‘The vehement south wind drives at it [mountain top] with all forces’ (*Boethius, De consolatione philosophiae*, Bk. 2: 4) is visible on f. 22v, l. 21 (centre column) of the digital facsimile (digitized microfilm) provided by “Gallica: Bibliothèque numérique”. URL: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9078393d>.

20 Cf. above n. 72 on p. 53.
new editions, translations as well as codicological and palaeographical works published since the Catalogue came out, are not incorporated, and it would be highly desirable that this information were to be complemented. Thirdly and finally, the internal coverage of Ker’s Catalogue is very uneven. While some items are described at great length and in admirable detail, other MSS are barely mentioned. This holds especially true for the majority of the Continental MSS, because Ker (being an expert palaeographer) relegates them to the Appendix on palaeographical grounds. This, in turn, is especially deplorable for the study of OE glossography, because OE gloss MSS are represented over-proportionally in this inadvertently ostracized group of MSS.

An open-access relational database served via the world-wide-web would provide the perfect medium for such an endeavour by providing (i) accessibility, (ii) flexibility, (iii) scalability, (iv) fluidity, (v) hypertextuality, (vi) interactivity and (vii) interoperability:

i. Users can easily access the open-access resource via their web browser, all they need is access to the world wide web. Anyone who is interested, both experts and students can thoroughly acquaint themselves with these MSS.

ii. The database can be augmented and updated from the point of view of information structure and database design at any given moment if new research questions and hence data fields are required.

iii. New finds can easily be accommodated at all times and the database can be expanded in all imaginable directions with the possibility of adding open-access text data, image data, audio-visual data and even structured data (ranging from simple lists to 3D vector data).

iv. Outdated information, such as claims that have been put into questions, can be marked as such (while keeping the presumably outdated information for future reappraisal) and hence, the users are provided with up-to-date reliable descriptions, reflecting the state of the art.

v. By furnishing the text of the descriptions with suitable hyperlinks, the users can access diverse layers of information by following up on issues that they are interested in within the database. Moreover, all items can be linked to suitable open-access sources throughout the world wide web, such as open-access facsimiles of MSS, digitized library catalogues, teaching resources, online encyclopaedias and dictionaries.

vi. Both expert and lay users can be encouraged to add their thoughts, ideas, suggestions, subjective or objective observations, reviews, bibliographical addenda etc. about the items. It may well be that such additions are not always insightful, yet they surely cannot be harmful, either, as long as they are strictly separated from the editorial sections.
vii. A relational digital database would allow several (explicitly designated and authorized) editors to maintain and expand the actual content of the descriptions.

Such databases are no mere fantasy, as their potential has been recognized long before I ever thought about such an endeavour. The German “Handschriftencensus”, for instance, demonstrates that such databases can be successfully operational in a long-term perspective.21 “DigiPal” is another digital database that is even specifically centred on Anglo-Saxon MSS (albeit restricted to AD 1000–1100),22 but in a project-driven academic setting, the future will have to show whether “DigiPal” will be available as a long-term resource once the funding has run out.23 Only as a resource that is maintained in a long-term perspective, however, a digital Catalogue can outrun the printed resources in the bookshelves. Even if Ker’s (1957) masterpiece may be somewhat dated by now and even more so in fifty years to come, it is by no means certain that the “Handschriftencensus” or “DigiPal” will still be online in fifty years. Ker’s printed Catalogue, on the other hand, will in all likelihood still be an important part of the Anglo-Saxon palaeographical discourse by that time.

### 7.3.4 An Indexed Bibliography of Old English Gloss Studies

A desideratum, which definitely ought to be tackled first, though, is a comprehensive bibliography of the study of OE glossography. Such a compendium seems to have been under construction at least until the late 1980s (cf. Derolez 1992b: 11), however, it did not materialize.24 The flexibility, scalability and hypertextuality of a digital database would provide the perfect carrier for such a long-term endeavour. Anglo-Saxon bibliographical databases, such as the “Anglo-Saxon Newsletter database”,25 already exist and they are an invaluable research tool. However, what is missing, is a bibliography that specifically focuses on Anglo-Saxon glossographic, codicological and palaeographical issues.

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21 URL: <http://www.handschriftencensus.de>.
22 URL: <http://www.digipal.eu>.
23 According to the “Community Research and Development Information Service” website, the project “Digital Resource and Database of Palaeography, Manuscripts and Diplomatic” (project reference: 263751) runs from October 2010 to September 2014. URL: <http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/96097_en.html>. It is to be hoped that this wonderful digital resource can be salvaged, perhaps even maintained or augmented in some form after that period.
24 One may wonder whether a substantial draft of such a bibliography might be extant in Prof. Derolez’s archives.
By carefully indexing and cross-referencing the MSS and gloss issues that are treated in the items, an indispensable and lastingly helpful tool could be created that would ensure fast access to the relevant secondary literature. It would also provide the interested scholar with a certain security that no important resources in connection with a particular MS are missed.

The digital integration of both such a bibliography and an updated, digital Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon MSS (as briefly outlined above) would constitute a powerful research tool. Complex relationships could be managed and updated, growing both in completeness and in usability over time. Editions, secondary literature, handbook articles etc. could be indexed so that users are able to gain a quick overview of the work done on a particular MS.

7.4 Concluding Remarks

The present study identified and described 34 medieval MSS – both from Anglo-Saxon England and from early medieval Continental Europe – that are now known to contain OE dry-point glosses. This is the first time that such a list has been compiled and it is the first time that the extent of the phenomenon of dry-point glossing in OE has been put into comparative juxtaposition to the well-known practice of ink glossing in OE. Due to the widely differing manners of editions, it is difficult to quote a precise number of dry-point glosses, but we can say that the current tally stands at ca. 3,850 edited OE dry-point glosses. By carefully tracing the history of the study of OE dry-point glosses, we have been able to corroborate what many dry-point gloss scholars had already suspected, namely “how unlikely it is that our corpus of them is anything like complete” (Page 1979: 30). The Catalogue of Manuscripts Known to Contain Dry-Point Glosses given here, therefore, really only may serve as a preliminary appraisal of the phenomenon. It is dearly to be hoped that the Catalogue will soon have become out-dated, as our near complete ignorance of the phenomenon of dry-point glossing in OE will continuously be diminished in the years to come.

To my own surprise, I identified London, British Library Royal 15. B. xix [22/K:268] as a dry-point gloss MS, while compiling the Catalogue. This discovery, which for lack of an edition will have to be corroborated by future research, may serve as a reminder that dry-point glosses are still to be detected in well-known MSS that are not too far off the Anglo-Saxonists’ well-trodden paths.26 It

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26 After getting some odd remarks at ISAS in Dublin 2013, I think it is important to stress that I do not “claim” the dry-point glosses in this MS (or in any other MS for that matter), which would be a ludicrous notion by any means and detrimental to the advancement of our knowledge of dry-point glossing. I shall share my notes gladly with every re-
may also serve as a reminder, though, that the technological advances of the late 20th c. and early 21st c. have not yet reached the reading rooms of MS libraries. The dry-point gloss researchers’ tools are essentially still the same as they were a hundred years ago, namely a magnifying glass, a handheld torch and copious amounts of patience. It is seriously to be hoped that some headway will be made in this direction in the near future.

The compilation and subsequent analysis of the Catalogue has allowed us to see some patterns in the known corpus of OE dry-point gloss MSS. I could show, for instance, that our understanding of early dry-point glossing in OE is dominated by Continental finds, which can be associated with the Anglo-Saxon missionary activities of the 8th c. Early dry-point gloss finds from Anglo-Saxon England, however, are virtually inexistent so far, and it remains to be seen whether the lack of research in that area has skewed our data or whether the practice of dry-point glossing in OE simply was not widespread before the 9th c. in Anglo-Saxon England. I was also able to show that Canterbury, Christ Church Priory and Canterbury, St Augustine’s Abbey may have been monastic centres where dry-point glossing was practised in the late 10th and the 11th c. Again, future research will have to clarify whether this finding can be upheld once our picture of dry-point glossing in OE becomes denser. In fact, one of the most important patterns that seem to be recurring is the impression that OE dry-point glosses have predominantly been found where scholars have looked for them. This, at least, is a promising prospect for the future study of OE dry-point glossing.

The present Catalogue may serve as a point of comparison against which new OE dry-points finds can be assessed. The Catalogue with its detailed listing of OE dry-point gloss editions will hopefully help to prevent duplication of reports and aid researchers in identifying parallels in previous readings with their own readings. I think I have been able to show that the decipherment of dry-point glosses is a cumulative effort. The study of dry-point glossing requires repeated reappraisal and it is therefore of the greatest importance that researchers always juxtapose their own readings with those of their predecessors. Differences should not be glossed over (if you will pardon the pun), rather, they ought to be discussed openly and in detail, because in the long run, this is the only way to deal with this visually difficult material. Many lessons can be learned from OHG gloss scholarship in this respect, whose dynamism may perhaps one day spark new approaches in OE dry-point gloss studies, too.

searcher who has the means to study the glosses in London, British Library Royal 15. B. xix [22/K:268].
I think the compilation of a *Catalogue of Old English Gloss Manuscripts* in imitation of *BSTK*, for instance, might be a worthwhile endeavour. How Ker could compile his *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Ker 1957) all on his own, by way of a one-man-effort, is beyond my mental faculties, however. The compilation of the comparatively short *Catalogue of Manuscripts Known to Contain OE Dry-Point Glosses* presented above took me what feels like an eternity; and this despite the fact that I could rely on the great and wonderfully insightful work done by the likes of Ker, Napier, Meritt, Bischoff, Page, Gwara and many others. The glossographic desiderata that I outlined roughly would have to be tackled as a joint effort by a team of international codicologists, palaeographers, historians, historical linguists and gloss scholars both across geographical and disciplinary borders. Moreover, intensified collaboration with optical engineers may perhaps one day result in improved digital means of deciphering dry-point material on parchment and thus reduce some of the difficulties that the study of this perceptively difficult material poses at the moment.

I have tried to argue that the collaborative compilation of an open-access *Catalogue of Old English Gloss Manuscripts*, of an open-access *Bibliography of Old English Gloss Studies* and perhaps ultimately of an open-access *Corpus of Old English Glosses* would greatly improve the cohesion of the scholarly field of OE gloss studies and allow for a comprehensive view of the subject, which is rendered practically impossible by the fragmented documentation of OE glossography today. Of course, there is no way of knowing whether any of these desiderata will ever be tackled, however, I trust one day they will have to be, because, after all, as Dumville (1992: 12) foresightfully remarks with respect to OE glossing: “There is work here for several generations.”