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. 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. 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)\(^\text{15}\)

Most (if not all) 19\(^{th}\) and 20\(^{th}\)-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.

\(^{15}\) 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 interpret-
amenta 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 trans-
lations.

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 gloss-
es 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 prop-
erties 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.\(^\text{17}\) 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

\(^{17}\) 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.
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 Secondy, 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 pindo>* > *suþerne wînd* ‘southern wind, south wind’, interlinearly glossing L. *illud p(ro)teruus auster/ Totis utribus 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.
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.

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.