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Mittelalterliche volkssprachige Glossen

Herausgegeben von
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Internationale Fachkonferenz des Zentrums für Mittelalterstudien der Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg 2. bis 4. August 1999

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Fabrizio D. Raschellà

Vernacular Gloss Writing in Medieval Scandinavia¹

With two figures

I

Compared with the rest of the Germanic-speaking areas, especially with Germany (which – as is well known – presents, particularly in the earliest stages of its literary tradition, an astonishing number of glosses of all kinds, scattered in hundreds of manuscripts), Scandinavia has not left us much evidence of gloss writing from the medieval period. While this fact is in all likelihood due to the considerably later acquisition of Christianity and, consequently, of a Latin cultural background by the Scandinavians in comparison with the other Germanic peoples – whereby the Scandinavians could take advantage of the efforts made over the centuries by their close relatives on the arduous journey towards 'literarization'² –, there is no justification for the feeble attention shown so far by scholars of Old Norse towards this field of research; for, as a matter of fact, the study of glossography very often discloses elements of great importance for the history of culture³.

The present study consists mainly in a summary account of the documentary evidence, i.e. in a provisional inventory and description of the most remarkable manuscript material which testifies to the presence of glossographic work in medieval Scandinavia (until about 1500). Any attempt to evaluate the importance of this material both as a piece of linguistic evidence (I am obviously referring here to bilingual, i.e. Latin-Scandinavian, glosses, which

This is a unified and updated version of two previous works of mine on this subject (see Bibliography below, F.D. Raschellà, in: Percorsi, pp. 275-284; in: Medieval Scandinavia, pp. 229-230).

On the concept of 'literarization' (Ital. letterarizzazione), wider and more complex than that of 'literacy', see e.g. M. Meli, in: Civiltà classica e mondo dei barbari, pp. 185 ff., and P. Scardigli, in: Lo spazio letterario del Medioevo, pp. 70-72 (the latter with particular reference to gloss writing).

The first attempt to present an essential survey of the subject was made by P. Skautrup in 1960 (in: Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for Nordisk Middelalder, cols. 359-360).

represent the bulk of the glossographic production) and as a means of a more intimate approach to new cultural patterns (those of Christian Latinity) is left aside for the moment, until a better and more comprehensive definition of the extant corpus can be made.

What follows is the result of a preliminary investigation largely based, as far as the search of documentary evidence is concerned, on reference works – especially printed catalogues – and other secondary sources. No systematic inspection has been made so far of unpublished catalogues and card-indexes of those libraries and archives where material of glossographic interest is likely to be preserved. On the other hand, careful scrutiny of the manuscripts involved in this discussion has been carried out whenever possible⁴.

H

The earliest records of gloss writing in medieval Scandinavia come from Iceland, where three manuscripts containing Latin-Icelandic glosses from about 1200 have been preserved. One manuscript is the renowned Icelandic *Hómilíubók* ('Book of homilies'), i.e. the codex Perg. 4to no. 15 in the Stockholm Royal Library⁵, showing on fol. 68rv interlinear and marginal glosses to the Latin *Credo* (which is also provided with a contextual Icelandic commentary).

The other two manuscripts, each containing a collection of glosses, are Gks 1812 4to (a miscellaneous codex made up of different manuscript fragments bound together, formerly in the Copenhagen Royal Library, now at the Arnamagnæan Institute of Iceland, Reykjavík) and the fragment AM 249 l fol (also in Reykjavík)⁶. Careful examination of the writing and composition of these two manuscripts has shown⁷ that the sections containing the glossaries were written by one and the same hand, and that they originally belonged to a single manuscript, a collection of computistical and astronomical writings. This identification also applies to the glossaries themselves, which are only slightly later than the main text and may originally have been parts of a

single glossary⁸. A total of ca. 260 Latin glossed words (lemmata), for the most part nouns, with their respective Icelandic equivalents (interpretamenta) are included in the two manuscripts. In the former, they appear in two different places (namely, on fols, 24r and 34v, which are, respectively, the first and the last page of the manuscript's oldest section, a treatise on ecclesiastical computus)9 and are arranged in parallel columns, while in the latter they are inserted in the blank spaces of a calendar (fol. 4rv), also in columns. The referents of the words occurring in these glossaries are extremely varied, ranging from household utensils to agricultural and handicraft tools, from domestic animals to pieces of furniture and parts of the house, from officinal plants to names of stars and planets. A considerable number of verbs and adjectives, equally disparate, are also represented. The lemmata are grouped according to diverse criteria, partly on the basis of semantic and metonymical relationship, partly in consideration of their formal, i.e. graphicphonetic, affinity. So, for instance, in Gks 1812 4to we find word sequences such as the following: officina / smibar hus 'workshop, smithy', serra / sog 'saw', terebrum / nafarr 'gimlet, drill', runcina / greypiiarn 'plane, chisel', tornus / kringiiarn 'lathe', etc. - i.e. a group of words belonging to the sphere of craftsmanship; or pix / bic 'pitch' and pax / fribr 'peace'; nix / sner 'snow' and nox / nott 'night': filum / brobr 'thread' and pilum / har 'hair' - that is, word pairs linked together by alliteration and consonance or rhyme. The co-existence of such different grouping criteria is, among other things, a serious hindrance to any attempt to trace these glosses to a continuous Latin text; rather, they are likely to be jottings made by some student or scholar for personal use - in other words, they may represent vocabulary exercises10.

⁴ For each manuscript mentioned in the following, indication is given of the principal edition(s) and facsimile reproduction(s), if existing; otherwise, reference is made to catalogues and other works in which the manuscript is described.

⁵ Ed. Th. Wisén, Homiliu-bók. Isländska Homilier; facs. reprod. F. Paasche, Homiliu-bók (Icelandic Sermons).

For a description of the two manuscripts and their contents see, respectively, Kat. KB, no. 55, and Kat. AM, no. 400.

⁷ Guðmundur Þorláksson, in: Småstykker 1-16, pp. 79-80.

The (part of the) glossary in Gks 1812 4to was edited for the first time in 1878 by H. Gering. In 1883 L. Larsson made a new and more accurate edition, and in 1914-1916 N. Beckman and K. Kålund published the astronomical terms contained in the glossary's last section; both these works brought not few improvements to H. Gering's edition. In 1988 P. Scardigli and F.D. Raschellà reproposed the glossary with several emendations and additions, and provided it with an extensive commentary; moreover, in order to facilitate cross-references, they arranged the lemmata in alphabetical order. The other part of the glossary – that in AM 249 1 fol – numbers only one edition, made by Guðmundur Þorláksson in 1884 (cf. n. 7 above).

⁹ Ed. L. Larsson, Äldsta delen af Cod. 1812 4to Gml. kgl. samling på Kgl. biblioteket i København.

¹⁰ Cf. P. Scardigli - F.D. Raschellà, in: Idee Gestalt Geschichte, p. 309.

Bilingual glosses are also attested sporadically in later Icelandic sources, as in the 14th-century manuscript AM 671 4to (Copenhagen)¹¹, where, interspersed among Latin marginal annotations in a section devoted to theological matters, there appear the following Latin-Icelandic glosses, translating terms denoting God's benefits (fol. 5r): [beneficium] expectationis / bid-lundar '(the benefit) of waiting, of being patient', iustificationis / rettlæting-ar 'of justification', conservacionis / uardueitingar 'of preservation'.

Finally, a small group of Latin-Icelandic glosses is found at the bottom of p. 120 in the codex AM 242 fol (Copenhagen), currently known as the Codex Wormianus of *Snorri's Edda* (2nd half of the 14th century)¹². The page, originally blank, was filled up by mid-15th-century scribes with miscellaneous Icelandic and Latin verse¹³; the glosses, which are contemporary with the main text, consist of three verbal forms and three adjectives belonging to a Latin hexametric aphorism: attrahe / til drag 'attract', sustenta / styd 'support', stimula / sting 'spur', uaga / reikandi 'wandering', morbida / siuklata 'sickly', lenta / seina (?)¹⁴ 'slow'¹⁵.

Ш

As far as Norway is concerned, mention should be made of a small collection of Latin-Norwegian glosses written, presumably by a mid-14th-century hand, in a notebook consisting of wax tablets, found in 1885 in the church at Hopperstad (formerly Hoprekstad), near Vik, in the Sogn district, and therefore known as *Hopperstadtavlene* 'Hopperstad tablets' (Oslo University Antique Collection [Universitetets Oldsaksamling], no. C 13270), but probably originating from the region around Voss, in Hordaland¹⁶. Besides terms belonging to domestic and rural life, we find here names of animals, especially birds. The list is as follows: pila / sopper 'basin', pila / bruar foter 'pillar', pila / buaræ 'stick', fflos / blomster 'flower', erba / gras

'grass', ara / suinsti 'pigsty', kampus / voler 'field', ssepe(s) / vtgarder 'hedge', grakulus / starre 'chough', grus / tranæ 'crane', pauo / pafullg 'peacock', ciconnia / storker 'stork', kamelus / vualdr 'camel'.

IV

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

1. As to Denmark, two manuscripts containing glosses deserve particular mention. They are the codices AM 202 8vo and AM 11 8vo, both in the Copenhagen Arnamagnæan Collection¹⁷.

The former, compiled in the course of the 14th century (its place of origin seems to be Roskilde), comprises a miscellany of notes on Latin grammar and vocabulary. Glosses of all kinds (i.e. marginal and interlinear as well as contextual glosses), mostly translating Latin words taken as examples to illustrate grammatical and lexical items, crop up throughout the manuscript and are, just as the Icelandic records considered above, extremely varied in content. Some of them, however, especially those in the margins, do not bear any relation to the main text, but refer rather to other Latin grammatical works, in particular to Priscian's writings. What is most remarkable in this connection is that the words from Priscian's works that are given here a Danish translation are often the same as those occurring in analogous works written outside Denmark, particularly in Germany, which allows the assumption that Danish glosses of this kind were more or less directly connected with glossographic work in the southern Germanic area. One even has the impression that in some instances foreign exemplars were copied out by simply replacing foreign interpretamenta with Danish equivalents. Also the preponderant grouping of lemmata according to their semantic affinity has close parallels both in the southern and in the western Germanic areas, a fact

¹¹ Kat. AM, no. 1680.

Ed. Finnur Jónsson, Edda Snorra Sturlusonar. Codex Wormianus AM 242 fol.; facs. reprod. S. Nordal, Codex Wormianus.

¹³ Cf. ESS, III, xlviii-xlix, and Kat. AM, I, 214 (no. 365).

¹⁴ Uncertain reading.

Cf. ESS, III, xlix (with an apparent misreading of the last gloss). As for the Latin aphorism – a distich in Leonine hexameters, attested since at least the early 12th century – see H. Walther, Carmina medii aevi posterioris Latina, II/1, p. 188 (no. 63) and P.G. Schmidt, ibid., II/7, p. 231 (no. 995).

Ed. F. Hødnebø, Norske diplomer til og med år 1300, pp. 110-114; cf. also C.R. Unger - H.J. Huitfeldt-Kaas, Diplomatarium Norwegicum, pp. 2-4.

See, respectively, Kat. AM no. 2415 and no. 2206. The glosses in AM 202 8vo were edited by M. Lorenzen, in: Småstykker 1-16. Concerning AM 11 8vo, see below.

that strengthens the assumption put forth above: as a matter of fact, very similar or identical groupings of glosses can be found, for example, in German and Dutch manuscripts both older than and contemporary with AM 202 8vo¹⁸.

The codex AM 11 8vo, also dated to the 14th century, consists for the most part of a Latin translation of the Jutish Law (*Jyske lov*). A number of marginal notes, including Latin and Danish glosses, were added to the manuscript in the 15th century. As is to be expected, most of the glosses refer to law terms as well as to objects and persons to which law is applied. The text as a whole, printed once in Ribe in 1504, in the so-called "Bishop Canute's edition of Jutish Law"¹⁹, still requires a modern critical edition.

Latin-Danish glosses can also be found in the Copenhagen paper manuscript AM 204 8vo²⁰, a miscellany of Latin grammar (*Compendium super Donatum*), philosophical notes, and ecclesiastical computus, dating from the 15th century. The glosses are particularly concentrated on some pages between two of the manuscript's main sections. Unfortunately, most of them are very faded and therefore difficult to decipher. No edition or study of this manuscript and of the glosses it contains is, to my knowledge, available to date.

Finally, it may be mentioned – mainly as a curiosity – that a single Danish (apparently Scanian) gloss occurs in the Copenhagen paper manuscript AM 809 4to (2nd half of the 15th century)²¹, in the upper margin of fol. 180v. Here we read the Latin word vandagium, in all likelihood a miswriting for vendagium 'sale'²², which is glossed by the Danish (Scanian) term lødhkøp, meaning 'a (formal) drink after the conclusion of a bargain' – as we can see, not exactly the same as the Latin lemma²³. Such an incongruity

is nevertheless nothing to be surprised at: inconsistencies of this kind were far from infrequent in the work of glossators²⁴.

2. The earliest evidence of gloss writing in Sweden is provided by the oldest extant Swedish manuscript: the Stockholm codex B 59, a well known manuscript of the so-called Older West-Götaland Law (Äldre Västgötalagen)²⁵. written in the late 13th century. Short lists of Latin-Swedish glosses, dating from the 1st half of the 14th century, are found in two different places of the manuscript (fols. 67v and 77v)²⁶. The writing in both places, already faint originally, is now seriously damaged. The glossaries are for the most part covered by large dark spots, which are certainly the result of the use of reagents employed in times past by some incautious reader. This obviously makes the reading of the glosses extremely difficult, if not impossible (many of them are actually illegible). Particularly interesting is the glossary on fol. 77v, divided into two sections, one of which contains verbs denoting functions and noises of the mouth and the respiratory apparatus and the other names of fishes and other sea-animals. Both groups correspond closely with two similar lists of glosses in the Danish codex AM 202 8vo discussed above (respectively, on fol. 20v and fol. 33r). The words in question are much the same in the two manuscripts (B 59 is perhaps only more accurate in form). This nevertheless does not seem to imply a direct interdependence between the two glossaries, in the sense that they are not supposed to originate from the same exemplar, nor to be one the copy of the other.

Going on to later records, we meet the two Latin-Swedish glossaries in the early-15th-century codex C 22 of the Uppsala University Library²⁷. One of them, viz. that occupying the fols. 69r-77r, is particularly important inasmuch as it represents the earliest extant collection of glosses of wider range from the Scandinavian Middle Ages, including some 800 Latin lemmata with their respective vernacular interpretamenta – a veritable bilingual dictionary

¹⁸ Cf. M. Lorenzen, in: Småstykker 1-16, pp. 37ff.

¹⁹ Cf. P.G. Thorsen, Valdemar den Andens Jydske Lov, p. 5.

²⁰ Kat. AM, no. 2417.

²¹ Kat. AM. no. 1941.

²² Cf. C.D.F. Du Cange, Glossarium mediæ et infimæ Latinitatis, s.v. vendagium: "1) venditio (gall. vente)".

The term is recorded e.g. in manuscripts of the Scanian town laws (dating from the end of the 14th century) and corresponds to the 'standard' Old Danish form *lidkøb*, which in Kalkar's dictionary is explained as "stadfæstelse af et køb ved, at de handlende drikke sammen" (cf. M. Lorenzen, in: Småstykker 1-16, pp. 73-74).

There are, for example, plenty of such instances in the two Icelandic glossaries referred to above (cf. P. Scardigli - F.D. Raschellà, in: Idee Gestalt Geschichte, pp. 309-310).

Ed. H.S. Collin - C.J. Schlyter, Codex Iuris Vestrogotici, (Latin-Swedish glosses at pp. xiii-xiv); facs. reprod. E. Wessén, Lex Vestro-Gothica Vetustior.

A thorough investigation of these glosses is included in M. Lorenzen, in: Småstykker 1-16, pp. 66-73.

The manuscript is thoroughly described in M. Andersson-Schmitt - M. Hedlund, Mittel-alterliche Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Uppsala, pp. 227-232.

on a small scale²⁸. Words belonging to several grammatical classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) and to the most disparate semantic fields can be found in this list. Not every Latin word, however, is provided with a Swedish equivalent: a considerable part of the lemmata (ca. 1/4 of the total) is glossed by means of a Latin synonym and in a few cases – in fact, a negligible amount – the interpretamentum is missing at all. It should further be noted that, in spite of the remarkable length of the glossary, words are not ordered alphabetically, but are mostly grouped in accordance with the usual principle of semantic affinity. The glossary is in part still unedited²⁹. The other glossary, on fol. 82r, is much more unpretentious: it only contains thirteen names of plants, Latin and Swedish, and is closely connected with the pharmaceutical recipes which immediately follow³⁰.

Finally, mention may be made of a Latin-Swedish glossary appearing on fol. 142v of the Copenhagen codex AM 792 4to, dating from the 2nd half of the 15th century³¹. The glosses are distributed over five columns, arranged horizontally on the page (from the higher to the lower margin). The first four columns contain names of aromatic and officinal plants, while in the last one we find a list of verbs quite similar to those occurring in the manuscripts AM 202 8vo and Stockholm B 59 considered above. With the exception of a few cases, the Latin lemmata are the same as in the latter two manuscripts; only their order is partly changed. As to the Swedish interpretamenta, a closer resemblance can be noticed between this manuscript and the Stockholm codex B 59. While the verbal forms have been edited³², no edition of the names of plants is, to my knowledge, available so far.

7

As a conclusion to this brief and mainly informative report I would like to draw the reader's attention to two points of general import. Firstly, the study of Old Scandinavian glossography is a valuable instrument not only for the knowledge of the process through which the Scandinavian peoples gradually assimilated and elaborated the medieval Latin culture, but also in the domain of language history: as a matter of fact, a considerable number of Old Scandinavian words and names are known only from glosses, that is to say, they do not occur in any continuous text. Secondly, the great majority of the extant glossographic records from medieval Scandinavia is still waiting to be edited and, in any case, is in need of a thorough revision; this would be, among other things, the first indispensable step towards a comprehensive edition of the Old Scandinavian glosses, on the model of those which have already been available for a long time for the other major areas of the medieval Germanic world³³.

It should be mentioned here that the very same Uppsala collection of manuscripts also includes the largest bilingual (Latin-Swedish) dictionary of medieval Scandinavia: that contained in the codex C 20. The volume, consisting of almost 600 pages, is dated to the 2nd half of the 15th century (M. Andersson-Schmitt – M. Hedlund, Mittelalterliche Handschriften, p. 221; cf. A. Karker, in: Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for Nordisk Middelalder, col. 638).

Törnebladh's edition, Glossarii Latino-Svethici specimen vetustum, considers only the bilingual glosses.

Equally limited in extension are the Latin-Swedish glossaries contained in other manuscripts of the Uppsala C-collection, e.g. those in C 15 and C 19 (15th century), listing not more than ten words each (cf. M. Andersson-Schmitt – M. Hedlund, Mittelalterliche Handschriften, pp. 163 and 216).

³¹ Kat. AM, no. 1925.

M. Lorenzen, in: Småstykker 1-16, pp. 74ff.

³³ I am referring in particular to the standard works of E. Steinmeyer and E. Sievers, Die althochdeutschen Glossen, for the Old High German glosses, and of A.S. Napier, Old English Glosses, for the Old English ones.



Figure 1: Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek Gks 1812 4to, f. 24r

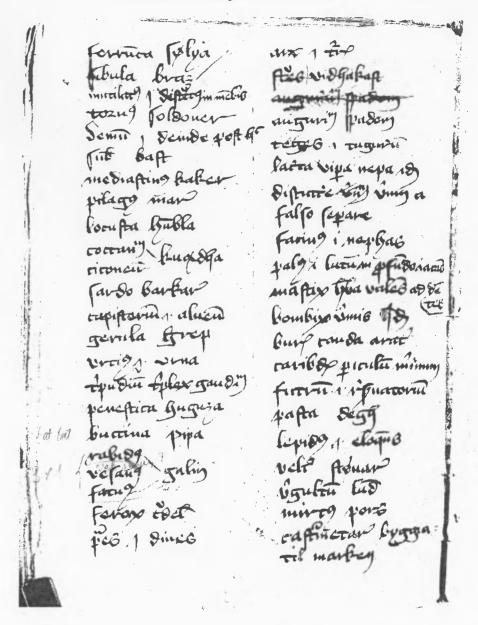


Figure 2: Uppsala, Universitetsbiblioteket C. 22, f. 74v

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