



Analysis of the Harley Glossary (ms. Harley 3376)

Funded institution: Department of Humanities, University of Palermo

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Description:

The Harley Glossary is preserved in the manuscript Harley 3376, kept at the British Library, and consists of around 55,000 items (considering both entries and glosses). Glossaries are collections of glosses, i.e. translations and interpretations of lexical items found in Latin (or Greek) texts that were difficult to understand or unknown to medieval readers. The ms. Harley was produced in western England; the language used to explain the entries is mainly Latin, but Anglo-Saxon is used – exclusively or together with Latin – for one third of the entries. The entries are taken from works that were circulating at that time: not only literary works, but also e.g. medical or practical texts.

Aims and expected results:

There is one published edition of the Harley manuscript by Robert T. Oliphant (1966), but it contains various misspellings and errors. The first aim of this project is thus to review his edition through an autoptic reading of the manuscript. At the same time, we aim to contextualize the entries and to reconstruct those that are corrupted. Finally, the analysis of the Harley Glossary will allow us to offer a concrete example of the dense network of Latin texts that constituted the cultural background of educated people in the Middle Ages.

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