Now some of us say no, he didn't, he's not central, he's peripheral. A synthesis is coming over the horizon: He is both central and peripheral to the formation of literary culture in his own age. Thanks to the collegial production of this volume, we can now see how and why we have downplayed the evidence that Alfred's network of friends was curious about diglossia, psychology, theology, and intimacy. Sequestering Alfred in abeyance lets these works, in Treschow's words, "speak more freely for themselves" (384). The paradox is that only then will we come to entertain, in good faith, the possibility that Alfred was, after all, a biliterate mystical psychologist capable of true intimacy with his friends, with God, with the dead, and maybe with us, the yet unborn.

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David Foley, trans., *Peter Comestor's Lectures on the Glossed Gospel of John: A Study with a Critical Edition and Translation*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2024. Pp. xii, 402. $85. ISBN: 978-0-8132-3767-1.
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In this tour de force critical edition and translation of a significant portion of Peter Comestor's twelfth-century lectures on the Glossed Gospel of John, David Foley has made available in comprehensive form one of the great treasures of medieval biblical scholarship and thought. At the relevant time, Comestor was chancellor of Notre-Dame and thus in charge of the cathedral school. His lectures survive in the form of notes taken in shorthand by his students as he spoke. Not surprisingly, the several manuscripts of these notes therefore vary somewhat from one another, such that a substantial part of Foley's task was assembling a highly credible—if by definition tentative—archetype from among the textual witnesses, many of which also contain "accretions" to the original text. Most usefully, Foley provides a carefully detailed description of his methodology in developing a *stemma textuum* and further provides much of the accreted material in appendices in order to maintain a distinction between the lectures and possible later commentary on them.

The lectures themselves are evidence of the vitality of the oral teaching that flourished in the schools of Paris in the twelfth century, and Foley comprehensively explores the complexity of the methodologies reflected in Comestor's own teaching methods. He points out that one of Comestor's principal goals was not only to bring to light (and at the same time help to preserve) patristic and other insights into a given Gospel text, but also to guide students as to how they should read the *Glossa ordinaria* and learn for themselves how one might resolve apparent contradictions among the various "authorities." As a master of the sacred page, Comestor offered his own commentary on and analysis of the glosses, thus providing in effect a newly forged authority, albeit one remaining ultimately subservient to the biblical text.

To be sure, the necessary intricacies of a critical edition such as this—dense with technical apparatus, guidepost sigla, and lengthy variorum texts in Latin—may appear daunting to nonacademic readers at the same time as they are essential to those engaged in parallel academic pursuits. In part, this reflects the highly distinctive form of the *Glossa ordinaria*, with its interlineations and marginalia both interweaving and surrounding the Gospel text, a form as stunningly beautiful in the manuscripts as it must be challenging to any typographer. And yet the work will also be fully accessible to and appreciated by a wider biblical audience for several reasons. First, it arises at a time of increasing awareness of and appreciation for the spiritual depth of the Church Fathers, whose perceptions of multiple layers of scriptural interpretation were too easily disregarded in the wake of the Reformation's often-legitimate emphasis on literal readings. As Foley observes in his lucid introductory materials concerning the exegetical framework of Comestor's lectures, the foundation was always the literal-historical sense, with patristic and later commentary discerning further allegorical,

tropological, or anagogical meanings that were seen not to replace but rather to expand on the literal.

Second, at the heart of patristic theology—and thus at the heart of the *Glossa ordinaria* from which Comestor lectured—was a "whole Bible" understanding, whereby the subject matter of all scripture is Christ. In his examination of the so-called "Master's Preface" to the John Gloss (now persuasively attributed to Comestor's own master, Peter Lombard), Foley thus takes important note of the use there of a passage from the Song of Songs concerning "old" and "new" fruits—correctly cited in his translation as Sg 7:13 (219n1), but incorrectly cited in the introductory material as Sg 2:1 (79)—as a springboard to discuss the ways in which the New Covenant was understood both to reveal the figures of the Old Covenant and to fulfill its promises. The Master took it yet further with reference to the patristic tradition of interpreting the four animals of a vision of Ezekiel's to describe the four evangelists, suggesting that John in the figure of a soaring eagle surpassed the other Gospel writers in his own revelation of Jesus's most profound spiritual teachings.

The lectures are simply filled with elaborations of this sort, and Foley's plainspoken translation will allow many for the first time to have access to material that itself is a fit subject for biblical studies. This brings up one more important point. Because Comestor's lectures were not a simple walk-through of the *Glossa ordinaria* but rather an ordering and commentary on them, a gloss on the gloss, they evidence not only the vitality of the oral teaching tradition then prevailing in the Paris schools, but the living nature of the biblical text itself, the *viva vox evangelii*. Consistent with that view, Foley's analysis of the lectures is laced with examples of Comestor's asides, self-reflections, and references to contemporaries (whether named or not), all creating a vivid picture of a lively teacher drawing on a well of sources (hence his appellation as "Peter the Eater," based on his colleagues' suggestion that he must have "eaten" his sources to have absorbed their contents so thoroughly), thinking on his feet, all while his students busily transcribed his words not only for themselves but likely with a mind to posterity, of which we are now beneficiaries.

The richness of Comestor's glosses on the glosses—largely unmined until now—is even clearer in light of the fact that as comprehensive as this critical edition is, it was necessarily limited by time and length to Comestor's lectures on John 1:1–50 and the glosses thereon. This is not a critique, but rather an indication of how valuable an exemplar the work will prove to be as research continues into such matters as the role of cathedral schools on the eve of universities' creation, the identities of and relative weight given to sources relied on by theologians such as Comestor, and, of course, the nature and scope of theological debates during the period.

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Emily C. Francomano and Clara Pascual-Argente, eds. and trans., *The Iberian Apollonius of Tyre*. (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 84.) Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2024. Pp. 400. $35. ISBN: 978-0-6742-9103-4.
doi:10.1086/740683

This is a most welcome addition to the Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (DOML), whose offerings in medieval Latin, Byzantine Greek, and Old English are now slowly being enriched by the multilingual cultures of medieval Iberia. The volume includes two versions of the peripatetic Apollonius legend: the thirteenth-century clerical poem *Libro de Apolonio* and the late fifteenth-century prose *Vida e historia del rey Apolonio*, which is a literal rendering of the Latin tale found in chapter 153 of the *Gesta Romanorum*.

DOML envisions a "global" (i.e., anglophone) scholarly and general readership. Such generosity places editors and translators in the invidious position of having to balance competing