728. Carolingian Commentaries on the Apocalypse by Theodulf and Smaragdus, translated texts and introduction by Francis X. Gumerlock. TEAMS Commentary Series (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2019. Pp. 119. Paperback, $29.95. ISBN 978-1-58044-377-7).

Theodulf of Orleans (750[/60]–821) is perhaps best known for his Palm Sunday hymn, "All Glory, Laud and Honor" and Smaragdus of Mihiel (ca.770–826[/40]), at least among monastics, for his *Commentary on the Rule of Saint Benedict* and *The Crown of Monks*. Here Francis X. Gumerlock has made their Scripture commentaries on the Book of Revelation available in English.

It is important to note that these works are not actual commentary by Theodulf and Smaragdus but their compilations of patristic and medieval texts, owing to the fact that "ninth-century recipients of those texts desired that biblical commentaries not be innovative, but instead be based on earlier authorities" (18). Theodulf's commentary, containing brief annotations on every chapter and verse of Revelation, comprises the majority of the book, while that of Smaragdus, containing commentary on only portions of Rev 1, 4, and 14, is about half as long.

In his introduction Gumerlock provides a succinct but comprehensive description of the life and works of each author, an explanation of their sources, and an overview of their exegesis and eschatology. Theodulf of Orleans was born in Saragossa, Spain, but left there sometime after 778, and by 787 ranked among Charlemagne's leading scholars. Charlemagne appointed him Bishop of Orléans sometime in the 790s and by 798 he was also serving as abbot of Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire in Fleury. He was subsequently made abbot of St. Aignan, St. Mesmin (Micy), and St. Liphard.

Theodulf was a gifted poet and educated in logic, rhetoric, and Scripture. He prepared abbreviated patristic/medieval commentaries on almost all of the books of the Bible; these compilations were to be used by monks for scriptural study. In 810 he had them bound together into what has become known as the Micy Bible. It is from here that his commentary on the Book of Revelation (Apocalypse) is drawn.

Thus Theodulf's commentary is not his own textual interpretation but his abridgement of the late seventh-century Hiberno-Latin

Handbook on the Apocalypse of the Apostle John, which was then attributed to Jerome, supplemented primarily by a commentary from Victorinus of Pettau (ca. 260), and a lost eighth-century text.

Theodulf's commentary is arranged by chapter and verse and is largely allegorical. For example, the commentary on "And in his right hand he had seven stars" (Rev 1:16) reads: "Here 'right hand' is the future life. The 'seven stars' are the seven angels of the future churches" (35). In Rev 5 the seven seals signify either the gifts of the Holy Spirit or seven events in the life of Christ (41). In Rev 12, "a great sign in heaven" is "God who became man or the church in faith." "The moon under her feet" is "the lower church, through which the evangelical word of the ministers traverses" (51). Some allegories also contain a moral aspect. Thus, in Rev 18:16, gold signifies purity; silver, clean speech; precious stones, hard work; fine linen, a clean body; and purple, martyrdom.

Gumerlock tells us that there are occasions in which Theodulf leaves his own mark on the commentary. For example, in commenting on Rev 5:9 he emphasizes the perpetual virginity of Mary; in Rev 6:2, he interprets the white horse as "the body of holy Mary"; and in commenting on Rev 8:8 he references a common method of murder and suicide (9).

Like Theodulf, Smaragdus was born in Spain (770). He became a monk in northeastern France at the monastery on Mount Castellion and was elected abbot in 805. In 824 Smaragdus moved his abbey from Castellion to Saint-Mihiel.

In 812 Smaragdus compiled the *Collections of Comments on the Epistle and Gospel for each Holy Day in the Year* to "gather one book from many, filled with the flowers of allegory, acting both as an abbreviator and a deriver of the tractates and teachings of the great Fathers" (12). It is in this collection that one finds the three "homilies" on Revelation that are translated here. Smaragdus's primary sources are Bede, Primasius, pseudo-Jerome, and Theodulf.

His emphasis is primarily Christological and ecclesiological rather than eschatological. Although homilies for specific feasts, they do not reference these feasts. They are actually explanations of the mystical sense of words and phrases from Rev 1:1–5, 4:1–10, and 14:1–5. For example, the angel and the open door signify Christ; the seven spirits of God symbolize the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit; heaven, the throne, and the 144,000 virgins all represent the church. *The Homily on the Eighth Sunday after Pentecost* contains

commentary by Bede on the symbolism of twelve precious stones. "Chrysophrase is a mixture of green and gold, even bringing forth a certain purple gleam intermingled with golden spots. Moreover, it comes from India. It signifies those who, because of the brightness of perfect charity, deserve the greenness of the eternal homeland, even displaying it to others by the purple light of their martyrdom" (92).

The commentaries of Smaragdus and Theodulf excel in providing allegorical interpretation of the Book of Revelation from early Church writers and Francis X. Gumerlock provides a very accessible translation of them. The text is recommended both to scholars interested in writings from the Carolingian period and to those looking to enrich their *lectio* on the Book of Revelation.

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729. Deep Unto Deep by David Hodges, O.C.S.O. (Caldey Island, Wales: Caldey Abbey, 2020. Pp. 64. Paperback, £9.95).

730. Poems & Counsels on Prayer and Contemplation by Dame Gertrude More, edited and introduced by Jacob Riyeff (Leominster, UK: Gracewing, 2020. Pp. xxxiv, 112. Paperback, $17.95. ISBN 978-0-85244-943-1).

These two poets, one contemporary and one from the seventeenth century, demonstrate something Benedictines are reminded of every day: that poetry is an oral art form, and that saying a poem or psalm out loud is the best way to experience it. Engaging body and breath, we are forced to slow down, instead of mentally racing through words on a page. The reader will be rewarded by breathing the words of these poets in and out.

I suspect that Benedictines, or anyone grounded in the language of the psalms, will find that David Hodges' poems provide a fertile ground for lectio. Speaking of a clear and starry night he writes, "Deep calls to deep, / a night speaking of life without end, /of love beyond recall" (5).

I appreciate Hodges' use of plain language to evoke deep truths. This seems hospitable, giving the reader plenty of room to respond without the distraction of ornate or overly poetic speech. These poems have a wide range, from the splendor of sunrise and sunset to subjects