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The Relevance of St Bede  
the Venerable to  
the *Glossa Ordinaria*:  
an Analytical Critique

Charles Berinyuy Sengka

EDUSC



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## INTRODUCTION

In the Medieval Period, no literary piece or volume or tome exerted influence on the lives of the people—learning, culture, religion, more than did the Bible. The word ‘bible’ etymologically derives from the Koine Greek *τὰ βιβλία* (the books). It played a central role in the lives of the people, the hub, the fulcrum, especially in academic circles. Frans Van Liere beautifully captures this vital aspect of the Holy Writ in the period in the following cogent, enthralling assertion:

The influence of the Bible in the Middle Ages was enormous whether read in private devotions, prayed in communal liturgy, commented on in classroom lectures, expounded on in sermons, painted on Church walls, or sculpted in cathedral portals, its influence shaped not only moral and spiritual life but also intellectual, aesthetic, and social life. One cannot understand the medieval world without appreciating the scope of medieval people’s engagement to biblical studies, characters, and images.<sup>1</sup>

Against the backdrop of such biblical prominence, we understand the reason why medieval monasteries and universities got deeply steeped in biblical scholarship and manuscript production and reproduction of commentaries thereof. ‘The strong emphasis on biblical exegesis in university curricula befitted the education of preachers’<sup>2</sup> as these had to make regular recourse to the Bible as starting point.

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<sup>1</sup>Liere, F. A., *An Introduction to the Medieval Bible*, Cambridge 2014, p. xi.

<sup>2</sup>Boynton S. – Reilly D., eds., *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages: Production, Reception, and Performance in Western Christianity*, New York 2011, p. 210.

In the course of the promotion of medieval biblical scholarship, came to birth a biblical commentary, precisely in the twelfth century, called the *Glossa Ordinaria*, that is, the ‘ordinary gloss.’ Though the word *glossa ordinaria* was commonly used in the area of law, referring to the compilation of the tens of thousands of remarks and comments on the code (completed in 1230) made by the Roman Jurist, Accursius (1182–1263), in relation to the Bible, our concern in this work, it refers to an assembly of glosses from the Church Fathers and thereafter, printed in the margins of the Jerome Vulgate Bible and widely used in the education system of Christendom in Cathedral schools from the Carolingian period onward. It was made up essentially of three texts (biblical words, the marginal and the interlinear glosses) intimately related to each other on a page and meant to be read together.<sup>3</sup> For many generations, the *Glossa Ordinaria* was the standard commentary on the Scriptures in Western Europe, exerting enormous influence on Christian theology, biblical exegesis and culture and largely quoted by medieval professors, hence, its common, ordinary use.

Moreover, the English word ‘gloss’ etymologically comes from the Greek *gl’wssa* meaning ‘tongue.’ In the 1617 Douai edition<sup>4</sup> of the *Glossa Ordinaria*, we get the following punning description in the introduction, referring to it as the ordinary or normal tongue of Sacred Scripture, thus: *Ejus ergo est haec collectio expositionum in Scripturam, quam tanti fecerunt posteri ut quasi ordinariam glossam, seu linguam ipsam Scripturae appellarent.*<sup>5</sup> The *Glossa Ordinaria* is variously called ‘The Gloss,’ The *Glossa*, the *Magna Glossa*, the ‘Great Gloss.’ Any of these

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<sup>3</sup>Cf. Matter, E. A., ‘The Church Fathers and the *Glossa Ordinaria*,’ in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West—From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, I, Backus, I., ed., Leiden 1997, p. 85.

<sup>4</sup>The University of Douai (Northern France), dating from 31 July 1559, founded during the progress of the Reformation, to combat the errors of Protestantism, was a prominent centre of neo-Latin literature, contributing also to the dissemination of printed knowledge. In 1617, there was published in this university a facsimile of the *editio princeps* of the *Glossa Ordinaria: Biblia sacra cum glossa ordinaria*.

<sup>5</sup>*Biblia Sacra Cum Glossa Ordinaria, Introduction*, in *Patrologia Latina*, 113.17c., Douai 1617. A loose translation would be: ‘Therefore, this collection of its expositions on the Scripture which so many later (scholars) made was called the ‘ordinary gloss’ or the ‘very tongue’ of Scripture.’

appellations will be used in the course of our work to refer to the same reality.

The *editio princeps*, the first printed version of the *Glossa Ordinaria* is that of Adolph Rusch of Strassburg in 1480/81. It is contained in volumes 113 and 114 of Jacques-Paul Migne's *Patrologia Latina*. There exists no critical edition of the whole of the *Glossa* though some partial critical editions exist: Mary Dove has published the *Glossa Ordinaria* on the Song of Songs—*Glossa ordinaria in Canticum Canticorum*, CCCM 170.22, Turnhout 1997, Alexander Andrée, the prothemata and first chapter of the *Glossa* on Lamentations—*Glossa Ordinaria in Lamentationes Ieremie Prophete: Prothemata et Liber I*, Stockholm 2005, and Michael Scott Woodward, *The Glossa Ordinaria on Romans*, Kalamazoo 2011. A facsimile version has been published as *Biblia Latina cum glossa ordinaria: Facsimile reprint of the Editio Princeps of Adolph Rusch, Strassburg 1480/81*, with an introduction by Karlfried Froehlich and Margaret T. Gibson, Turnhout 1992.

There has been much scholarly debate regarding the authorship of the *Glossa Ordinaria* and the date of redaction as lucidly presented by Suzan Boynton and Diane Reilly:

It is not clear when the *Glossa Ordinaria* received its final redaction and there are strong indications that it was not conceived, or indeed produced, as one complete book; individual Bible books were glossed at different dates, by different authors, and probably in different places.<sup>6</sup>

Before the twentieth century, Walafrid Strabo, the ninth century Frankish monk and theological writer, was falsely acclaimed as the author of the *Glossa Ordinaria*.

As a document that compiles and consolidates writings from the past,<sup>7</sup> 'the *Glossa Ordinaria* is a particularly good example of medieval intertextuality, the conscious borrowing and re-articulating of old mate-

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<sup>6</sup>Boynton S. – Reilly D., eds., *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages: Production, Reception, and Performance in Western Christianity*, New York 2011, p.168.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Marx, C. W., *The Devil's Rights and the Redemption in the Literature of Medieval England*, Cambridge 1995, p. 28.

rial in a new form. There could have been no *Glossa Ordinaria* without the influence of the Fathers.<sup>8</sup>

At this juncture, we refer to St Bede the Venerable (672/73–25<sup>th</sup> May 735), native of the kingdom of Northumbria, pedagogue, computist, biblical exegete, hagiographer, and historian, that ‘foremost and most influential scholar from Anglo-Saxon England’<sup>9</sup> who exerts one of the prominent influences in the Gloss. Since he left no comprehensive personal account of himself and no contemporary wrote a biography of him or hagiography, appearing in no chronicles of the times, nor did he take any part in the government of the abbey or the Church of which he was a member throughout his life; in no way is his mark detected in any official documents of any kind,<sup>10</sup> the only information we have about him, then, is the brief postscript, a kind of summary of his life, monk at the Wearmouth-Jarrow monastery since the age of seven, under the charge of abbot Benedict Biscop, then abbot of Ceolfrith; his entire life from then on was spent in the monastery, dedicating himself to assiduous study of Sacred Scripture, ordained deacon at the age of nineteen and priest at the age of thirty. He notes:

I have spent all the remainder of my life in this monastery and devoted myself entirely to the study of the Scriptures . . . From the time of my receiving the priesthood until my fifty-ninth year, I have worked, both for my own benefit and that of my brethren to compile short extracts from the works of the venerable Fathers on Holy Scripture and to comment on their meaning and interpretations.<sup>11</sup>

Such a thoroughgoing endeavour drove him to write biblical commentaries, borrowing from earlier Fathers of the Church especially Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Gregory the Great and Isidore of Seville. He brought in his own novelty in the interpretations, though. His enormous contribution to the *Glossa Ordinaria* is thus taken for granted. Henry

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<sup>8</sup>Matter, E. A., ‘The Church Fathers and the *Glossa Ordinaria*’ in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West—From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, I, Backus, I., ed., Leiden 1997, p. 109.

<sup>9</sup>Gross, F. L. – Livingstone, E. A., eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, New York 1997, p. 177.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. Ward, B., *The Venerable Bede*, London 1998, pp. 1–2.

<sup>11</sup>Sherley-Price, L., et al., (trs), *Bede: Ecclesiastical History of the English People, with Bede’s Letter to Egbert and Cuthbert’s Letter on the Death of Bede*, London 1990, p. 329.

Wansbrough contends as concerns the Bede-*Glossa* relationship in the following words:

Bede is a vital link in the traditional exegesis of the Church, not only in his reliance on it but also in his furtherance of it. One of the chief ways in which the tradition of the Church was transmitted was through the *Glossa Ordinaria*. This was the standard medieval commentary on the Bible ... drawn from the Fathers. Bede was the latest of these Fathers who could be quoted as an authority, for the patristic tradition was considered to end with him. On several books of the Old Testament, Bede is the principal source of the *Glossa Ordinaria* (Ezra – Nehemiah, Tobit, Proverbs, the Song of Songs) as well as the Gospels of Mark and Luke.<sup>12</sup>

An in-depth examination of Bede's presence in the *Glossa* reveals 716 references clearly ascribed to him, 266 in the Old Testament (37.2%) and 450 in the New Testament (62.8%).

#### OBJECTIVE OF RESEARCH-PROBLEMATIC

The *Glossa Ordinaria* was produced from the twelfth to the thirteenth century and gradually faded into obsolescence in the sixteenth century. Being produced in medieval times, it reflects a methodology akin to the medieval era. Attempting to make use of it, in modern times, reveals a series of defects and shortcomings. Primarily, the Gloss could be said to have various authors divided into three groups: the authors of the various biblical books, the patristic or Carolingian author whose commentary is employed, then the glossator who is more of a compiler. Basically, the glossator indicates the biblical verse under consideration, then abbreviates the name of a Church Father or Carolingian exegete (the supposed origin of the commentary), then presents the commentary, mostly in an abbreviated, modified, paraphrased, incomplete manner, signalled by *etc. usque ad ...*, supposed to represent the omitted words. The text of the commentary in the *Glossa* in almost every case deviates from the parent, original patristic writing and at times the source is not even trace-

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<sup>12</sup>Wansbrough, H., *The Use and Abuse of the Bible: A Brief History of Biblical Interpretation*, London 2010, p. 69.

able altogether.<sup>13</sup> The purpose of this thesis, then, quite a challenging undertaking, is fivefold:

- To identify, compile and expose all the 716 references to Bede in the entire *Glossa*.
- To explore the original passages from which the commentaries are culled.
- To juxtapose the original version vis-à-vis that in the Gloss, eliciting the inaccuracies at the linguistic level, in relation to the content as well as authorship-related discrepancies such as misattribution.
- To analyse the effectiveness of the *Glossa* as a patristic and medieval reference book on the bases of our findings, exposing within a wider framework the drawbacks that impoverish the effectiveness.
- To attempt a modest appraisal, a somewhat justification of the inconsistencies inherent in the production and use of the *Glossa*.

#### METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH AND COMPOSITION

We shall proceed by library research, considering all the relevant works of Bede as the primary sources, then the works of related Church Fathers and medieval scholars pertinent to our subject matter as well as other sources that shed light on the subject of this dissertation. The Latin texts consulted in relation to the gloss references are drawn from the *Corpus Christianorum*, particularly the *Series Latina (CCSL)* and the *Continuatio Mediaevalis (CCCM)*. A few are taken from Jacques Paul Migne's *Patrologia Latina (PL)* and others still from the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (CSEL)*. Details of the editions of the sources consulted are found in the bibliographical material at the end of the work. Nonetheless, in the introductory note preceding the study of the contribution of Bede in each biblical book, we will highlight details regarding the particular edition—the editor(s) and the year of publication.

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<sup>13</sup>Cf. Young, D. J., *The Gloss And Glossing: William Langland's Biblical Hermeneutic*, Birmingham 2011, p. 11.

Furthermore, the footnotes will indicate the particular volume in the *Corpus Christianorum* series, the page and the lines from which the particular citation is culled. Thus, it would suffice for whoever desires to consult the printed version of the texts as published in the *Corpus Christianorum* series to have easy access to the contents.

The work is divided into four chapters. In the first, we shall present a brief survey of the *Glossa Ordinaria*, demonstrating the relationship it has with the Fathers of the Church. We shall consider here especially its definition, question of authorship, format, historical development. A general exposition of the role of the Church Fathers and Carolingian scholars in relation to the *Glossa* will be made. Particular attention will be dedicated to Bede the Venerable, the Church Father whose contribution we set out to analyse in the course of our thesis. Brief reference will be made to his life, his exegetical background and approach, his relationship with earlier Church Fathers (question of originality), the influence in the medieval world and beyond, then the statistical presentation of his presence in the *Glossa Ordinaria* of both Testaments. The second and third chapters will respectively concern themselves with the Bedan references in the Old, then in the New Testament. These shall be analysed by comparing them with the critical editions of original Latin texts found in the *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina (CCSL)* (first eight centuries of Christianity including works absent from Migne's *Patrologia Latina*) and in the *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis (CCCM)* (from Carolingian era to end of Middle Ages) published in the Library of Latin Texts (LLT), the leading database for Latin texts from the earliest Latin writings. In the fourth (last) chapter, we shall present a tabular synopsis of all the 716 references, making brief annotations about each of them. Then, we shall present a synthesis of the shortcomings of the Gloss and lastly consider a concise appraisal of the inaccuracies embedded therein, thus evaluating the trustworthiness of the *Glossa* as a reference document, the medieval *vade mecum* that it was. The work will then end with a conclusion and the presentation of the bibliographical references.





## CHAPTER 1

### A SURVEY OF THE *GLOSSA ORDINARIA* WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE INFLUENCE OF PATRISTIC AND CAROLINGIAN SCHOLARS, ESPECIALLY BEDE THE VENERABLE

The *Ordinary Gloss*, known as the *Glossa ordinaria*, became the standard authoritative biblical commentary for the Western Church as a whole. It had immense authority. The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* describes its importance in the following words:

A designation given during the Middle Ages to certain compilations of “glosses” on the text of a given MS. The earliest *Glossa Ordinaria* is that made of the Bible, probably made in the 12<sup>th</sup> century... Although glosses originally consisted of a few words only, they grew in length as glossators enlarged them with their own comments and quotations from the Fathers. Thus the tiny gloss evolved into a running commentary of an entire book. The best-known commentary of this type is the vast *Glossa Ordinaria* of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries... So great was the influence of the *Glossa Ordinaria* on Biblical and philosophical studies in the Middle Ages that it was called ‘the tongue of Scripture’ and ‘the bible of scholasticism.’<sup>1</sup>

As indicated above, this biblical commentary was highly used in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It continued to be used till the seven-

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<sup>1</sup>Buckley, J. M., ‘*Glossa Ordinaria*’, in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, VI, New York 1967, pp. 515-516.

teenth century when more independent works of exegesis superseded it. We shall examine the authorship of the *Glossa Ordinaria*.

### 1.1 AUTHORSHIP OF THE *GLOSSA ORDINARIA*

What normally gives authenticity and credibility to any work is authorship. A work without an author poses lots of difficulties and lends itself to suspicion of authenticity. The *Glossa Ordinaria* has undergone various studies regarding its authorship. However, despite the debates regarding the redaction, it remains a highly credible document, especially as it deals with the Holy Bible and the glosses are picked up from the writings of the Fathers of the Church though in many instances, these citations are quoted with inaccuracy and misattribution, an area we shall examine in the second and third chapter of this thesis dedicated to the analysis of the references made to St Bede the Venerable. Even at the time of the printing of the first edition in 1480/81, so close to the origin of the Gloss both in years and in spirit, the identities of the glossators were unknown to the printers. In the Venice edition of 1495, it is said *à propos* the uncertain authorship of the Gloss:

Illas autem glosas que nullius nomen habent et similiter interlineares addiderunt diversi doctores qui dictas doctorum glosas diversis temporibus ordinaverunt ... et quamvis nesciatur precise quis quam fecerit, tamen omnes semper fuerunt et sunt apud omnes maxime auctoritatis.<sup>2</sup>

It is worth mentioning that the issue of authorship of the *Glossa Ordinaria* is quite a Gordian Knot, a very difficult problem to solve. In this connection, Beryl Smalley holds: ‘The problem of authorship becomes more complicated the more one examines it.’<sup>3</sup> This is worsened by the fact that there is not just one author, one redactor to the *Glossa Ordinaria*, a view lucidly put forward by Hans Herman Glunz in the following words:

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<sup>2</sup>*Biblia cum glossis ordinariis et interlinearibus*: Venice 1495, pp. xvi–xvii.

<sup>3</sup>Smalley, B., ‘Gilbertus Universalis, Bishop of London (1128–34), and the Problem of the *Glossa Ordinaria*,’ in *Recherches de theologie ancienne et medievale*, 8, 1936, p. 48.

The *Glossa* is a collection of extracts from widely different authors, some of them writing after Walafrid's time, so that it is impossible to ascribe it to one author ... long after the ninth century, the copying and extracting of ancient and recognized commentaries was still practised and there is evidence that the *Glossa* in its present-day shape was written in the twelfth century.<sup>4</sup>

Though the gloss may not be the work of one author, for many years, since the medieval times, Walafrid Strabo was held as author of the *Glossa Ordinaria*. We shall briefly consider the background within this attribution of the *Glossa* to Walafrid Strabo.

### 1.1.1 *Walafrid Strabo (c. 808–849)*

Walafrid Strabo was a ninth century monk who became the abbot of Reichenau and was pupil of Rabanus Maurus.<sup>5</sup> He was held since medieval times as the author of the *Glossa Ordinaria*. The first printed document that points to this attribution of the authorship of the *Glossa* to Strabo is found in the work of Johannes Trithemius—*De Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis (On Ecclesiastical Writers)* written in 1494. He himself, like Walafrid Strabo, is German. At the two hundred and sixty-ninth (269<sup>th</sup>) position, he considers Walafrid Strabo of whom he says the following words:

Strabus monachus Fuldensis, natione theutonicus, Rabanni Abbatis quondam auditor et scriba: vir in divinis et scripturis eruditus et in studiis saecularium litterarum nobiliter doctus ... Imitatus itaque magistrum suum Rabanum abbatem

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<sup>4</sup>Glunz, H. H., *History of the Vulgate in England From Alcuin to Roger Bacon*, Cambridge 1933, p. 104.

<sup>5</sup>Rabanus Maurus Magnentius (c. 780–856), also known as Hrabanus or Hrabanus, was a Frankish Benedictine monk, the archbishop of Mainz in Germany and a theologian. He was the author of the encyclopaedia *De rerum naturis*. He was one of the most prominent teachers and writers of the Carolingian age, and was called "Praeceptor Germaniae. Most importantly, he is famous for his commentaries on the Bible, particularly the books of: Genesis to Judges, Ruth, Kings, Chronicles, Judith, Esther, Canticles, Proverbs, Wisdom, Sirach, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Maccabees, Matthew, the Epistles of St Paul, including Hebrews. It was under him that Walafrid Strabo studied at Fulda.

scripsit: In Genesim Lib. I, In Exodum Lib. I, In Leviticum Lib. I, et alia multa. Hic denique Strabus glosam quae ordinaria nunc dicitur super totam Bibliam ex dictis sanctorum patrum primus comportasse memoratur.<sup>6</sup>

The view that Strabo was the sole author of the *Glossa Ordinaria* was equally held by subsequent editions of the *Glossa Ordinaria*. Jacques-Paul Migne maintained the same view, and even the *Catholic Encyclopedia* published in the early twentieth century, precisely in 1907, still maintained this misattribution of the *Glossa Ordinaria* to Walafrid Strabo as when it maintains:

Its author, the German Walafrid Strabo (d. 849), had some knowledge of Greek and made extracts chiefly from the Latin Fathers and from the writings of his master, Rabanus Maurus, for the purpose of illustrating the various senses—principally the literal sense—of all the books of Holy Writ.<sup>7</sup>

The view that Walafrid Strabo was the author of the Gloss, that is, that he himself wrote the marginal glosses to the bible, while the interlinear glosses were a later addition by Anselm, was only dismissed in the mid twentieth century. Worthy of note is the brilliant observation of Smalley in the *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, a German encyclopedia of theology and religious studies, that although recognised as the standard commentary on the Bible, the *Glossa Ordinaria* was basically referred to as *Glossa* until the fourteenth century when it was called *Ordinaria*.<sup>8</sup>

In a bid to attempt a solution to this puzzle, Lesley Smith suspects that Johannes Trithemius must have done this out of Germanic pride, based on the reasoning that the first gloss on Gen 1:1 was taken from Walafrid Strabo's own commentary on the Book of Genesis, as Trithemius rightly

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<sup>6</sup>Trithemius, J., *De Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis*, Basel 1494, 269. A translation of this text would read: 'Strabo the monk from Fulda, from the Teutonic (Germanic) nation, formerly pupil and scribe of the Abbot Rabanus, a man erudite in divine matters and in Scriptures and nobly learned in studies of secular letters . . . He indeed copied his master Abbot Rabanus and wrote: one book on Genesis, one book on Exodus, one book on Leviticus and many other things. Finally, Strabo is remembered the first to have composed the gloss which is now called 'ordinary' on the whole Bible from the sayings of the holy fathers.'

<sup>7</sup>Gigot, F., 'Glosses, Scriptural' in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, VI, New York 1907, p. 588.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Smalley, B., 'Glossa Ordinaria,' in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 13, Müller, G. et al., eds., Leipzig 1984, pp. 452–57.

admits that Strabo, just like his master Rabanus Maurus, proficiently wrote commentaries on the Bible. His logic was that since the very first gloss on the Biblical text, that of Gen 1:1 was taken from Strabo, then it follows that he was the author of the *Glossa Ordinaria*.<sup>9</sup> Curiously, even still in the Middle Ages, some contemporaries do not consider Walafrid Strabo as the author of the *Glossa Ordinaria*. Jacques-Paul Migne only assigned to Strabo the marginal glosses and the gloss on some books. He did not even include the interlinear gloss. Modern scholars have shown that this misattribution arises from two sources: a misunderstanding, and perhaps also wishful thinking on the part of some, such as the case of Johannes Trithemius. The second view is corroborated by David John Young when he says:

The tradition used to be that the *Glossa Ordinaria* was compiled by the Frankish monk Walafrid Strabo (d. 849), and it is under his name that it appears in Migne's *Patrologia Latina* (volumes 113 and 114). However, the earliest known attribution to him is as late as 1494, and comes from a group of proto-Herderian German humanists, anxious to acquire illustrious predecessors. Though some glosses are by Strabo, the attribution of the whole to him is clearly impossible.<sup>10</sup>

Certainly, the twelfth-century compilers of the Gloss must have used commentaries by Walafrid Strabo among many other sources. 'Strabo, like many other scholars of his day, was not even thought of much by his contemporaries as a commentator and without the Gloss attached to his name, he would have been a real fleeting figure; Mary Dove even describes him as merely an unwitting contributor to the *Glossa Ordinaria*.<sup>11</sup> She continues to maintain that the false attribution to Walafrid Strabo stresses the duality between the ninth and twelfth centuries inherent in the Gloss since later compilers had access to patristic opinion basically through Carolingian *florilegia*.<sup>12</sup> It could thus rightly be deduced

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<sup>9</sup>Cf. Smith, L., *The Glossa Ordinaria, the Making of a Medieval Biblical Commentary*, Leiden 2009, p. 17.

<sup>10</sup>Young, D. J., *The Gloss And Glossing: William Langland's Biblical Hermeneutic*, Birmingham 2011, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Dove, M., *Glossa Ordinaria, Pars 22, In Canticum Canticorum*, Canada 1997, pp. 50–53.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.* *Florilegia* (plural of *florilegium*) in medieval Latin refers to a compilation of excerpts from other writings. It is etymologically derived from the Latin *flos* (flower) and *legere* (to gather)

that the Gloss was to some extent built on already existing commentary material and could justifiably be spoken of as the final synthesis of the ever-growing commentary attached to the Bible from patristic times.<sup>13</sup>

Now, the theory that Walafrid Strabo is the author of the *Glossa Ordinaria* has been dismissed as legendary. This dismissal officially came in the mid twentieth century article of Jean Maurice Marie de Blic published in 1949—‘L’Oeuvre Exégétique de Walafrid Strabon et la *Glossa Ordinaria*.’<sup>14</sup> Following this discovery and dismissal, scholars after 1949 no longer regarded Walafrid Strabo as the author of the *Glossa Ordinaria*. An example is the work edited by Robert Benson and Giles Constable published in 1982 in which they said: ‘The *Glossa Ordinaria* was long considered the work of Walafrid Strabo (d. 849) but recent research has established Anselm of Laon and his brother Ralph as its principal originators and promoters.’<sup>15</sup> With this, we shall proceed to examine the validity of the attribution of the Gloss to Anselm of Laon.

### 1.1.2 *Anselm of Laon (1050–1117) and the Laon Cathedral School*

Anselm of Laon, the French theologian and founder of a school of scholars who helped to pioneer biblical hermeneutics, teacher, together with his brother Ralph, and later dean and chancellor of the Cathedral School at Laon around 1109, should be distinguished from St Anselm of Canterbury, the Benedictine monk, philosopher and Archbishop of Canterbury from 1093 to 1109, considered founder of scholasticism, and noted for exerting notable influence on Western theology. The Laon

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which literally would refer to the collection of fine extracts from the body of a larger work. In the medieval Catholic milieu, *florilegia* were systematic collections of extracts taken mainly from the writings of the Church Fathers and other early Christian authors.

<sup>13</sup>Andrée, A., ed., *Gilbertus Universalis: Glossa Ordinaria In Lamentationes Ieremie Prophete—Prothemata Et Liber I, A Critical Edition With An Introduction And A Translation*, Stockholm 2005, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. De Blic, J., ‘L’Oeuvre Exégétique de Walafrid Strabon et la *Glossa Ordinaria*,’ in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, vol. 16, 1949, pp. 5–28.

<sup>15</sup>Benson, R. – Constable, G., eds., *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, Cambridge 1982, p. 180.

School was renowned for its exegetical expertise. Anselm of Laon himself is famous for the interlinear and marginal gloss he produced on the Vulgate Bible. ‘To counteract the dialectical method, which to his mind was nothing but a childish play on words, Anselm developed a model for theology based on the Bible and the Church Fathers.’<sup>16</sup> The school was marked therefore by a blend of patristic theology and biblical sources—the Fathers and the Bible. Logically, hence, the value of the *Glossa Ordinaria* as a theological book, based on the Bible and the Fathers (commentaries from the Fathers) can easily be appreciated. Anselm and his collaborators brought the art of collecting and compiling close to perfection. The result of this endeavour was nothing else than the *Glossa Ordinaria* on the Bible. The basic study of Scripture and the scholastic method exercised upon the Gloss facilitated the assembly of fundamental knowledge into one source. There was nothing really revolutionary in the subject-matter of the Gloss. The sole intent was to provide a means of simple access and commentary to the Bible text, hence facilitating biblical study. In this respect the project was radical, in terms both of the collection and systematisation of material, and of the manner of its presentation.<sup>17</sup> We need evidence for the attribution of the Gloss to Anselm of Laon.

In 1966, in an article ‘Two Catalogues of Medieval Authors’ written by N. Haring and published in the Franciscan journal, *Franciscan Studies*, a late twelfth century author clearly attributes the *Glossa Ordinaria* together with the marginal and interlinear glosses to Anselm, thus: ‘Anselm clarified the Scriptures by a new type of exposition of both Testaments—an interlinear and marginal gloss drawn from the writings of the Fathers.’<sup>18</sup> Moreover, Beryl Smalley quotes another Medieval text of Peter the Chanter (d. 1197) who maintained in his commentary on the

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<sup>16</sup>Andrée, A., ed., *Gilbertus Universalis: Glossa Ordinaria In Lamentationes Ieremie Prophete—Prothemata Et Liber I, A Critical Edition With An Introduction And A Translation*, Stockholm 2005, p. 15.

<sup>17</sup>Cf. *Op. Cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>18</sup>Haring, N., ‘Two Catalogues of Medieval Authors,’ in *Franciscan Studies*, vol. 26, 1966, p. 208. The original words are: Anselmus Laudunensis scolasticus novo expositionis genere utriusque testamenti Scripturas glosa interlineari et marginali de Patrum scriptis elucidavit.

Psalms that it had been the intention of Anselm to gloss the whole book but other charges permitted him not:

We ought to bewail the fact that master Anselm was not permitted to complete the glossing of the whole of the sacred page, as he began, because the canons of whom he was dean, and many others, often drew him away from his study ... compelling him to become involved in the business of his chapter.<sup>19</sup>

Looking at the comment of Peter, it is evident that the intention of Anselm was to gloss the whole Bible. It is evidenced that he was responsible for the glosses to the Psalms and the Epistles of St Paul, leading to what was called the *parva glossa*. It is equally believed that he compiled the gloss to the Gospel of St John. The task would be to demonstrate the assumption that the marginal/interlinear gloss which came to be known as the *Glossa Ordinaria* is identical to that which was written by Anselm especially the gloss to the Psalms and the Pauline Epistles. In the twelfth century chronicle known as the *Continuatio Praemonstratensis* written in the year of Anselm's death in 1117, it is said:

Anselmus Laudunice civitatis magister nominatissimus, litterarum scientia clarus, vir morum honestate et consilii maturitate venerabilis, obit; qui utili studio et sollerti industria, inter cetera opera sua, etiam in psalterio glosas marginales atque interlineales [sic] de auctenticis expositoribus elimata abbreviatione ordinavit.<sup>20</sup>

All the sources considered in the study of the Gloss seem not infrequently to link the gloss on the Psalter with that on the Letters of St Paul.

<sup>19</sup>Smalley, B., 'La Glossa Ordinaria: Quelques prédécesseurs d'Anselme de Laon,' in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, vol. 9, 1937, pp. 400. The original text goes: *Unde lugere adhuc debemus super hoc quod magister Anselmus non permittatur perfecte glosare omnem sacram paginam, sicut incepit, quia canonici quorum erat decanus, et alii plures eum ab illo studio amoverunt sepe, vel litigando scilicet propter lites suas, vel honorando per adulationem, vel pauperes opprimendo, quorum necessitatibus exigebatur interesse, vel persequendo, quando scilicet compellebant eum interesse negotiis capituli sui.*

<sup>20</sup>Sigebertus Gemblacensis, *Chronica*, *Continuatio Praemonstratensis*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, Bethmann, D. L. C., ed., vol. 6, p. 448, Hanover 1884. The English rendition goes as follows: 'Anselm, a renowned teacher of the city of Laon, famous for his knowledge of letters, a man venerable by his honorable character, and the maturity of counsel, by useful study and industrious cleverness he ordered marginal and interlinear glosses on the Psalter by arranging excerpts from authoritative expositors.'



Regarding the Gloss to the Gospel of St John, it is associated with the School of Laon if not with Anselm himself.<sup>21</sup>

Now, if it can be ascertained that Anselm is responsible for parts of the Gloss, how comes it that by the middle of the twelfth century, already after the death of Anselm, almost the whole bible was glossed? This is the question that inevitably preoccupies the mind when one reads the following words of Lesley Smith:

Although Anselm's death left the rest of the work on the Gloss barely begun, by the mid-twelfth century the Gloss covered much of the Bible. With the exception of the books of Baruch, which seems never to have been glossed, and Maccabees, which was supplied late in the century by copying Rabanus Maurus' commentary in Gloss Format, the rest of the Bible had been glossed in about 1175 . . . Clearly, someone—or some others—finished what Anselm had begun. Two of those who were involved were Anselm's brother Ralph, who worked alongside him at Laon, and Gilbert of Auxerre, known probably because he was a canon lawyer as well as a theologian, as 'the Universal'.<sup>22</sup>

Evidence that the Universal Gilbert glossed the Bible is produced in the 1950 work of J. C. Dickinson who, in turn makes reference to the Parisian twelfth century Victorian chronicle, thus:

Fuit et alius magister Gislebertus cognomento Universalis, scholaris ut fertur magistri Anselmi qui glosavit psalterium et epistolas Pauli, qui Gislebertus ex maxima parte libros veteris et novi Testamenti preter psalterium et epistolas Pauli glosavit.<sup>23</sup>

In all probability, Gilbert is considered to have glossed the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Kings, Major and Minor Prophets, and Lamentations. Gilbert the Universal is the only scholar who personally left evidence as to which books were glossed by him and which glosses he wrote or compiled; furthermore, copies of twelfth Century Gloss to the Book

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<sup>21</sup>Cf. Smith, L., *The Glossa Ordinaria, the Making of a Medieval Biblical Commentary*, Leiden 2009, p. 23.

<sup>22</sup>Smith, L., *Op. Cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>23</sup>Dickinson, J. C., *The Origins of the Austin Canons and their Introduction into England*, London 1950, p. 284. The English translation would read: 'And there was another master, Gilbert, known as the universal, student of the scholarly master Anselm who glossed the Psalms and the Pauline Epistles; he glossed the greater part of the books of the Old and New Testaments, outside of the Psalms and the Pauline Epistles which had been glossed by the scholarly master Anselm.'

of Lamentations as clearly indicated by Alexander Andrée commonly end: ‘Gilbert: Let this suffice for the exposition of the Lamentations of Jeremiah which I, Gilbert, deacon of the Church of Auxerre, have drawn from the wellsprings of the Fathers.’<sup>24</sup> Moreover, Gilbert leaves signed glosses to the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

Scholars have found a few medieval references to other possible collaborators or continuators of the work of Anselm of Laon. There is a note in the manuscript of the Gloss on the Acts of the Apostles credited to magister Albericus, the same person noted in the twelfth century copy of a Glossed Revelation. This could possibly be Alberic of Rheims, one of Anselm’s pupils.<sup>25</sup>

The following table helps us understand the authorship of the glosses of the various books of the Bible, carefully arrived at after industrious work and research of various scholars:

AUTHOR OF GLOSS	GLOSSED BIBLICAL BOOK
Anselm of Laon	Psalms, Pauline Epistles, John, possibly Luke
Ralph of Laon	Matthew, possibly Luke and Minor Prophets
Gilbert of Auxerre (Gislebertus/ Gilbertus Universalis)	Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Lamentations, probably Genesis, Joshua, Judges, Kings, Major Prophets, possibly Minor Prophets.
Alberic (of Rheims?)	Possibly Acts, possibly Revelation
Laon Circle	Job, Song of Songs, Revelation.

The question of the authorship of the *Glossa Ordinaria* goes right to the twelfth century itself where, as earlier on highlighted, Anselm is regarded as the sole author of the *Glossa Ordinaria*. Given the fame of Anselm in the Cathedral School of Laon, some of his pupils and collaborators might have simply attributed the authorship of the entire gloss to Anselm as a matter of respect for him.<sup>26</sup> It is worth noting, though,

<sup>24</sup>Andrée A., ed., *Gilbertus Universalis: Glossa Ordinaria In Lamentationes Ieremie Prophete—Prothemata Et Liber I, A Critical Edition With An Introduction And A Translation*, Stockholm 2005, p. 15.

<sup>25</sup>Cf. Smith, L., *The Glossa Ordinaria, the Making of a Medieval Biblical Commentary*, Leiden 2009, p. 31.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. Smith, L., *Op. Cit.*, p. 33.

the fact that anonymity and pseudonymity are common features of medieval literature. The question of authorship of the Gloss even gets more complicated when one wonders whether someone can really be called an author of the Gloss, strictly speaking, given the fact that the work consists for the most part of commentaries of the Fathers of the Church. The issue of the originality of thought seems thus wanting. It remains difficult to say how much of the material in the Gloss is original and how much is a compilation or collection.

St Bonaventure gives us a clue to the understanding of authorship in the medieval era in the end of his prologue to his commentary on Peter Lombard's Sentences in an attempt to answer the question of whether Lombard could rightly be called an author of such a text. Alastair Minnis in his 1988 work, translates the words of Bonaventure in his prologue to the commentary on the four books of Peter Lombard's Sentences, saying:

The method of making a book is fourfold. For one person writes the material of others, adding or changing nothing and this person is said to be merely the scribe. Someone else writes the materials of others, adding, but nothing of his own, and this person is said to be the compiler. Someone else writes both the materials of others, and of his own, but the materials of others as the principal material, and his own annexed for the purpose of clarifying them, and this person is said to be the commentator, not the author. Someone else writes both his own materials and those of others, but his own as the principal materials, and the materials of others annexed for the purpose of confirming his own, and such must be called the author.<sup>27</sup>

Given the four methods of writing a work, corresponding to various descriptions—scribe, compiler, commentator and author, we would fit the authors of the *Glossa Ordinaria* in the third group, that is, commentators, writing with the use of others' materials as dominant, with one's own ideas more for clarifications. The material in the Gloss is not solely that of the Fathers or other theologians. We also have a lot of commentary in the *Glossa Ordinaria* without any reference to a particular author, which could thus be the work of one of the 'authors' of the *Glossa*.

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<sup>27</sup>Bonaventure, *Commentaria in Quattuor Libros Sententiarum*, prologue, in *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic literary attitudes in the later Middle Ages*, Minnis, A., Philadelphia 2010, p. 94.

Conclusively, we hold that the *Glossa Ordinaria* in the form we have it today, composed of commentaries of the Fathers of the Church and earlier medieval theologians, written in the form of marginal and interlinear glosses, only originated with Anselm and the collaborators of the Laon Cathedral School. If in a general sense Anselm of Laon is referred to as the author of the *Glossa Ordinaria*, this is not to be understood in the sense of having glossed the whole Bible but rather from the influence he had on the Laon School in general, others being his pupils and collaborators. Such authorship is not strange even in the Bible. An example regards the authorship of the Pentateuch—that Moses is generally considered the author does not mean that he wrote the whole of the Pentateuch. Another example is that of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah where, since the eighteenth century, sole authorship of Isaiah, son of Amoz (cf. Is 1:1) has been placed under serious scrutiny, leading to the theory that Isaiah himself wrote only the first thirty-nine chapters, leaving one of his students to pen the second part (chapters 40–66) after the Babylonian captivity started, hence leading to the theory of a Deutero-Isaiah. This, however, does not prevent the book from being referred to as the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. Following our foregone analysis on the authorship of the *Glossa Ordinaria*, we agree with Marcia Colish in describing the *Glossa* as ‘composed by Anselm of Laon and his associates and successors between c. 1080 and c. 1130.’<sup>28</sup>

### 1.1.3 *Peter Lombard and the Magna Glosatura*

At this juncture, it is quite apropos that a few words be said about Peter Lombard, author of the famous medieval summa *Quattuor Libri Sententiarum* and his role in relation to the *Glossa Ordinaria*. He is considered by scholars as one who *s'appuie sur les épaules d'Anselme de Laon*, to use the words of Bliemetzrieder.<sup>29</sup> Like any other Medieval scholar such

<sup>28</sup>Colish, M. L., *Studies in Scholasticism*, Hampshire 2006, p. 534.

<sup>29</sup>Bliemetzrieder, F., ‘Autour de l'oeuvre theologique d'Anselme de Laon,’ in *Recherches de theologie ancienne et medievale*, vol. 1, 1937, p. 438.

as St Albert the Great, St Bonaventure, and St Thomas Aquinas, Peter Lombard made extensive use of the *Glossa Ordinaria*. Peter Lombard expanded and expounded on the two Anselmian glossed books, that is, the Psalms and the Pauline Epistles, leading to what was called the *maior* or *magna glosatura*. Marcia L. Colish beautifully expresses the connection between Peter Lombard and the *Glossa Ordinaria* when she says:

Peter Lombard's commentary on the Psalms has typically been seen as standing in the tradition of the *Glossa Ordinaria*, so firmly that it can be regarded as a mere re-elaboration of it. If such were the case, it would be difficult to grasp why his commentary on the Psalms was the scholastic gloss of choice for this part of the Bible. In understanding why such was the case, we need to highlight its differences from the *Glossa Ordinaria*, even though he certainly makes extensive use of it.<sup>30</sup>

Peter Lombard was out to revise Anselm of Laon's gloss on the Psalms and the Pauline Epistles. This differed from the *Glossa Ordinaria* principally in layout. The crucial innovation consisted in using a single set of rules for both the texts of Scripture and the words of the gloss, giving the page an impression of great proportion and homogeneity. Now, to distinguish the words of Scripture from those of the commentator, biblical verses were written on alternate lines and in larger script. Both Bible and gloss ran through the entire width of the column, but later scribes further refined the layout, by placing blocks of scriptural verses on the left edge of the column so as not to interrupt the continuity of the gloss.<sup>31</sup> The *Maior* or *Magna Glosatura* is merely Peter Lombard's expansion of the Anselmian gloss on the Psalms and the letters of St Paul which in no way gives any reason to ascribe the authorship of the *Glossa Ordinaria* to Peter Lombard. In her 1937 article, Beryl Smalley refuted H. Glunz's assertion that the entire *Glossa Ordinaria* was compiled by Peter Lombard.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Colish, M. L., *Peter Lombard*, Vol. 1, New York 1993, p. 170.

<sup>31</sup>Cf. Rosemann, P., *Great Medieval Thinkers: Peter Lombard*, New York 2004, p. 52.

<sup>32</sup>Cf. Smalley, B., 'La Glossa Ordinaria: Quelques prédécesseurs d'Anselme de Laon,' in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, vol. 9, 1937, pp. 365–400.

#### 1.1.4 *Gilbert of Poitiers (c. 1075–1154)*

Gilbert of Poitiers, is also known as Gilbert de la Porrée, Gilbertus Porretanus or Pictaviensis. The issue at hand is the relationship between Gilbert of Poitiers and the *Glossa Ordinaria*, the question phrased by Theresa Gross-Diaz thus:

Where exactly does Gilbert fit into the history of the Glossa—did he have anything to do with its origin, what (if any) was his role in its promulgation, and how does his commentary relate to the Glossa and to the marginal/interlinear gloss written by Anselm?<sup>33</sup>

A late twelfth century manuscript was found with the title: *Psalterium de parva Glosatura Anselmi*. The commentary had its origins in the atmosphere of experimentation which characterised the schools of Laon, Chartres and Paris in the first decades of the century. The exegetical work of Gilbert of Poitiers was merely an expansion of Anselm's *parva glosatura*, and was called *media glosatura*, distinguishing it from that of Peter Lombard called *magna glosatura*. Hence, like Peter Lombard, Gilbert of Poitiers merely reworked the gloss to the Psalms and the Pauline epistles of Anselm of Laon and cannot thus be referred to as compiler of the *Glossa Ordinaria*.

#### 1.2 FORMAT OF THE *GLOSSA ORDINARIA*

Any discussion on the *Glossa Ordinaria* falls short of completeness if it leaves out a deliberation on the format, that is, the layout of the material. The Gloss consists of two sets of material—the biblical text and the gloss or commentary, borrowed from the Fathers of the Church. The Gloss employs a methodology peculiar to itself. The Biblical text and the gloss do not exist as two different books, neither do they exist as two parts of a page. The two are presented together in a page, concomitantly and progressively. There are two characteristic layouts in which the

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<sup>33</sup>Gross-Diaz, T., *The Psalms Commentary of Gilbert of Poitiers – From Lectio Divina to the Lecture Room*, Leiden 1995, p. 126.

Gloss could be found chronologically following on one another. It should be noted that Anselm's commentary on the Psalms and the Letters of St Paul, the so-called *parva glossatura* has retained the old style. They were never made in the new format. The old style, termed 'simple' appears from the 1130s while the second, more complicated one appears from the 1160s.

### 1.2.1 *The 'Simple' Model*

This layout, chronologically preceding the complex format is based on the Carolingian glossed books found in the monasteries and Cathedral schools. Lesley Smith describes this format thus:

Their basic layout is formed by a central text column of unvarying width, with glosses added in the lateral margins or between the lines. The space for glosses is planned for, in that the lateral margins as much as the text column are ruled off for writing. This writing frame envelopes both the text and the glosses, and signals that, although separate, they together make up the Gloss. The framework takes up the majority of the page; there is little extra room for any other readers' notes or additions. The only generally available blank space is the lower margin, which is often quite deep. On each page, the writing space is divided into three distinct columns, each of a different width.<sup>34</sup>

Moreover, the text script is normally larger than the glossing script and set on lines arranged further apart from each other. This layout dates back from the 1130s. There would be approximately two to three lines of gloss for each line of text. The deep lower margin indicated in the above quotation allows for any further continuation in the case of longer glosses.<sup>35</sup> It is uncommon for the gloss to continue into the next page. Later medieval readers had difficulties with the format and felt the inadequacy of such a gloss format as a book for study. There are no biblical lemmata to indicate which part of the biblical text is being glossed or expounded on. To further complicate matters and increase

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<sup>34</sup>Smith, L., *The Glossa Ordinaria, the Making of a Medieval Biblical Commentary*, Leiden 2009, p. 94.

<sup>35</sup>Cf. Smith, L., *Op. Cit.*, p. 100.

the confusion, it is common to observe that an individual gloss begins with an unattributed quotation from another part of the Bible. Some later medieval readers had to assign biblical references to such texts. At times again, interlinear glosses can switch to the margins and vice versa. It is rare indeed for the interlinear glosses to have author attributions, a few cases being those of marginal glosses becoming interlinear glosses. Despite these shortcomings, this simple layout has some advantages as laid down by Lesley Smith:

This form of layout also has the advantage of simplicity for the book producer. Each sheet of parchment can be prepared in advance by a relatively unskilled worker, on a production line. The biblical text can be copied out first, before the gloss is added as a second stage. There is enough slack—blank space—in the layout that omissions can be rectified and measurements do not have to be exact. Gloss and text are easily distinguishable, and the reader has room to add his own notes . . . More importantly, this type of layout is excellent for use in the type of oral teaching from an authoritative text that was the characteristic of medieval schools . . . the text itself is writ large, literally and easy for the teacher to keep track of.<sup>36</sup>

The layout or format indicated above aptly favoured an *ex tempore* method of teaching given the presence of the whole of the biblical text, distinctly and continuously visible.<sup>37</sup>

### 1.2.2 *The 'Complex' Model*

The second format of the *Glossa Ordinaria* appeared from around 1160 and was derived, as noted by Lesley Smith from the three-column type, but with more freedom and invention marked by the fact that both the lines for the biblical text and the gloss were ruled across the page, establishing the fundamental difference between the simple and complex layouts in the following words:

Thus, unlike the simple format, where the individually-ruled glosses mean there is no mechanical ratio between gloss script and text script, this common ruling

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<sup>36</sup>Smith, L., *Op. Cit.*, p. 104.

<sup>37</sup>Cf. Smith, L., *The Glossa Ordinaria, the Making of a Medieval Biblical Commentary*, Leiden 2009, p. 104.



for text and gloss fixes the ratio between them at two lines of gloss for very line of text ... The writing forms three loose columns, but the width of the columns varies, even within one page, depending on the ratio of text to gloss. The biblical text occupies the middle column, but can spread into the left or right columns—or both—for a few lines, if space is needed.<sup>38</sup>

Basically, then, in this particular model, the writing frame is integrally ruled across the whole page with the text column loosely expanding into the gloss columns either to the left or to the right, according to how much extra space is needed.

Margaret Gibson, in her article ‘The Twelfth Century Glossed Bible’ presented at the tenth international conference on Patristic Studies in Oxford in 1987, said the following in relation to this second model:

Eventually—by the 1160’s—text and annotation are on an integrated grid, in which every second line goes straight across the page; the lines in between are limited to the annotation panels to the left and right of the main text.<sup>39</sup> If there are reference-signs, connecting individual glosses to the words in the text, these may well be placed in a narrow column between the annotation-panel and the text. They may be alphabetical, or a random sequence of musical notation, Greek letters, and symbols for weights and measure.<sup>40</sup>

Some details included pricking, the extension of lines to the edge of the page or the use of the upper or lower margins for additional annotation and these could vary from one *scriptorium*<sup>41</sup> to another. In the late twelfth century *scriptoria* the complex format of the *Glossa Ordinaria*

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<sup>38</sup>*Op. Cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>39</sup>Margaret Gibson notes that the earliest known group of glossed Bible manuscripts consisting of six volumes, five of which are from the New Testament, belonged to Prince Henry of France, brother of King Louis VII. These were in Henry’s library in the late 1130s or 1140s. All the other known ‘sets’ are recorded in the second half of the twelfth century or (rarely) later (cf. Gibson, M., ‘The Twelfth Century Glossed Bible’ in *Studia Patristica* vol. XXIII, Leuven 1989, p. 233). Moreover, according to Patricia, the young Prince Henry, on entering Clairvaux in 1146, donated a set of glossed books to the monastery, all decorated in a distinctive style (cf. Stirnemann, P., ‘Où ont été fabriqués les livres de la glose ordinaire dans la première moitié du XIIe siècle?’ in *Le XIIe siècle: Mutations et renouveau en France dans la première moitié du XIIe siècle*, Paris 1994, p. 266).

<sup>40</sup>Gibson, M., ‘The Twelfth Century Glossed Bible’ in *Studia Patristica*, vol. XXIII, Leuven 1989, p. 233.

<sup>41</sup>The word *Scriptorium* was used in medieval times to refer to a room in a monastery devoted to the copying of manuscripts by monastic scribes. However, archaeological excavations showed

was present. A *Scriptorium* such as the one at the St Gall Abbey Library, has seven openings in the wall which acted as windows, lighting the *Scriptorium*. David Ganz mentions that more than seven monks may have been writing at the same time, as they were using portable desks.<sup>42</sup> All this facilitated the progress in the Gloss production. It is generally held by scholars that this degree of sophistication in *scriptorium* practice was a development of the twelfth century or the last years of the eleventh.<sup>43</sup> At times, when the gloss is so much, the biblical text has to be suspended for a few lines with the gloss taking over the entire page. With such layout, every page differs from the other depending on the amount of the gloss material. Unlike with the simple format, the teacher could not easily lecture using this complex layout—‘there is simply too much interplay between text and gloss to be able easily to combine glancing down at the text, reading the glosses, and speaking to students without having to pause to find one’s way through the page.’<sup>44</sup> This shift in layout equally corresponds to a shift in the use of the *Glossa Ordinaria*—from a lecture book (used as an aid for an oral class) to a reference book used outside the lecture room and this particular model made the work of the copyist more difficult.

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that such rooms rarely existed. Modern scholars now use *scriptorium* to denote the collective written output of a monastery, rather than a physical room. With respect to *scriptoria* as rooms for monastic scribes, Fr. Landelin Robling OSB describes its position in the following words: ‘in the cloister the general location of the scriptorium was the north cloister walk, facing the inner quadrangle.’ (Robling, L., ‘*Monastic Scriptoria*,’ New York 2007). Albert Derolez admits that the change from monastic *scriptoria* to secular centres of book production equally witnessed a change in the format. He maintains: ‘Monastic *scriptoria* would continue to flourish into the thirteenth century, but at that time they ceased to predominate and new urban-based centres of book production would take the lead ... The transition from the monastic to the mainly secular centres of manuscript production is paralleled by important changes in the format structure and layout of the manuscript book’ (Derolez, A., *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books From the Twelfth to the Early Sixteenth Century*, Cambridge 2003, p. 56).

<sup>42</sup>Ganz, D., ‘Book Production in the Carolingian Empire and the Spread of the Caroline Miniscule,’ in *The New Cambridge Medieval History II*, McKitterick, ed., Cambridge 1995, p. 791.

<sup>43</sup>Cf. Gibson, M., ‘The Twelfth Century Glossed Bible,’ in *Studia Patristica*, vol. XXIII, Leuven 1989, pp. 233–234.

<sup>44</sup>Smith, L., *The Glossa Ordinaria, the Making of a Medieval Biblical Commentary*, Leiden 2009, p. 114.

The complex format can be discerned in the glosses of Gilbert of Poitiers and that of Peter Lombard as attested to by Smith when he expounds:

For the Gloss, the crucial step is the move from a page in which only the central biblical text column was ruled, to one in which the entire page is ruled as a whole, with lines geared to the height of the gloss script, with the biblical text written only on alternate lines. This is the case for both Gilbert's commentary and the Lombard's.<sup>45</sup>

The question that comes to mind is then that of the relationship between the formats of the Gloss, that of Peter Lombard or of Gilbert of Poitiers. The question is that of which came first. Did the Gloss precede Peter Lombard's or the other way round or could it be that both were influenced by the formatting scheme of Gilbert of Poitiers. Unfortunately, Peter's manuscripts, including some Glossed books of the Bible and a copy of his *Sentences*, left in the Notre Dame Cathedral have not survived.<sup>46</sup> While some authors see a necessary link with Peter Lombard, others do not. The most important thing, though, is to note the point at which the complex format comes in for it would be beyond the scope of our work to get into details of the involvement of Peter Lombard or Gilbert of Poitiers. We shall now proceed to examine the historical development of this medieval document under consideration.

### 1.3 THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE *GLOSSA ORDINARIA*

From the above consideration of the authorship and format of the Gloss, it is clear that the *Glossa Ordinaria* has passed through many hands and stages, depending on the importance attached to it by various users at various periods of history. It is worth accentuating here that the history of the production of the Gloss is inextricably bound up with the history of its use. Moreover, it is dependent on the history, method and practice of book production at various stages. We have surviving manuscripts dating back

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<sup>45</sup>Smith, L., *Op. Cit.*, Leiden 2009, p. 136.

<sup>46</sup>Cf. Smith, L., *The Glossa Ordinaria, the Making of a Medieval Biblical Commentary*, p. 138.

right to the twelfth century through the sixteenth century. It has known definite stages in its production. Our survey at this juncture is going to involve not only a chronological study but also a geographical approach, owing to the fact that in the history of its birth and development, the *Glossa Ordinaria* assumed particular influences in various geographical locations and schools and each school would have its own tradition as well. Despite the provisional nature of the existing manuscripts, book lists and catalogues in various libraries, some patchy evidence can be gotten. We shall follow very closely the division made by Lesley Smith which appears to sum up and synthesise various divisions made by different authors on the *Glossa Ordinaria* such as Margaret Gibson, Beryl Smalley, Patricia Stirnemann, Alexander Andrée, Mary Dove and the like.

### 1.3.1 *From the Origins to c. 1140*

In her article, ‘Où ont été fabriqués les livres de la glose ordinaire dans la première moitié du XIIe siècle,’ Patricia Stirnemann made an attempt to discover the date and locality of the earliest manuscripts of the *Glossa Ordinaria*, assembling a group of about thirty manuscripts dating to between 1120 and 1140 though from internal or external evidence, none can really be assigned with accuracy a definite date.<sup>47</sup> Her analysis is only based on comparison to other datable material on grounds of style, decoration and other physical evidence, a method considered by Lesley Smith as inexact as he holds:

Dating from this sort of comparison is an inexact science, especially when an argument hinges on a decade or two. Looking at different types of evidence can produce slightly different results. For example, on the basis of the physical appearance of the manuscript, Stirnemann has dated Laon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 74, containing the Gloss on Matthew and the Song of Songs, to between 1120 and 1135. Dove, on the other hand, using this manuscript alongside others

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<sup>47</sup>Cf. Stirnemann, P., ‘Où ont été fabriqués les livres de la glose ordinaire dans la première moitié du XIIe siècle,’ in *Le XIIe siècle. Mutations et renouveau en France dans la première moitié du XIIe siècle*, Paris 1994, pp. 257–301.

whilst preparing an edition of the Gloss on the Song, prefers to date it 'later than earlier.'<sup>48</sup>

According to Stirnemann, the glossed books whose origins have connections with Laon must have been composed there as she expounds: *(Il) nous semble probable que les textes qui figurent dans les manuscrits originaires de Laon y ont également été redigés.*<sup>49</sup> Besides the difficulty of dating the glossed books, there is equally the problem of ascertaining which texts constitute the Gloss at a particular period 'when the texts are so much in flux, an issue which is as yet unresolved.'<sup>50</sup> In the course of the research of Stirnemann is the division of the Gloss manuscripts into two groups: the first group consists of manuscripts associated with the Laon Cathedral School and the second is associated with other areas, especially Paris. She further localizes eleven glossed manuscripts to Laon.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, it is quite difficult to make a straightforward link between the existence of early copies of glossed books from Laon and the fact of their having been written or redacted at Laon.<sup>52</sup>

With few manuscripts associated with the Laon School before 1140, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions since manuscript survival is generally a matter of serendipity; it is not very feasible that something as fragile as a book would survive a thousand years. Though the importance of a text

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<sup>48</sup>Smith, L., *The Glossa Ordinaria, the Making of a Medieval Biblical Commentary*, Leiden 2009, p. 142.

<sup>49</sup>Stirnemann, P., 'Où ont été fabriquées les livres de la glose ordinaire dans la première moitié du XIIe siècle,' in *Le XIIe siècle. Mutations et renouveau en France dans la première moitié du XIIe siècle*, Paris 1994, p. 263.

<sup>50</sup>Smith, L., *The Glossa Ordinaria, the Making of a Medieval Biblical Commentary*, Leiden 2009, p. 142

<sup>51</sup>These glossed books are listed by Smith in his analysis of the work of Stirnemann thus: Genesis, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job (three copies), Song of Songs, Matthew (two copies), John (two copies), Canonical Epistles (two copies), John (two copies). A further copy dating from this period has the Pauline Epistles. It is worth noting that apart from the gloss to the Book of Genesis, the list contains only glossed books which generally have either no or almost no attributions to the authors of the individual glosses (Smith, L., *The Glossa Ordinaria, the Making of a Medieval Biblical Commentary*, Leiden 2009, pp. 142–143).

<sup>52</sup>Cf. Smith, L., *The Glossa Ordinaria, the Making of a Medieval Biblical Commentary*, Leiden 2009, p. 143.

may be judged from the number of its existing manuscripts, luck equally plays a great deal. This first stage of Gloss production at Laon coincides with a moment of great upheaval in the city. In such circumstances, it would be easier for books to be destroyed. Anselm made his glossed books purposefully for lecturing, perhaps constantly updating them. It is only after his death in 1117, about twenty years later, that some manuscripts of the Gloss were found.

### 1.3.2 *From c. 1140–c. 1200 Within Paris*

Unlike the period before 1140, there is a greater number of glossed manuscripts dating to the period after 1140, marking a real shift in the number of copies made. The thirteenth century is prominent in the history of the medieval Bible for three fundamental developments—the number of Bibles copied, the fact that most of these Bibles are pandects (complete in one volume) and the appearance of a new format, the small portable Bible. For the first time in the Middle Ages, the Bible became a book owned and used by individuals, ranging from the students and masters of the new and rapidly growing universities, to the bishops and priests of a Church that was emphasizing its pastoral role as never before, to the wandering preachers of the Franciscan and Dominican orders. Moreover, although the language of the Latin Bible meant its use and study were primarily the province of the clergy, the existence of many finely illuminated copies suggests that Bibles were also owned and treasured by wealthy members of the nobility and urban elite. It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of the number of thirteenth-century Bibles that survive from all parts of Europe. According to the analysis of the view of Christopher F. R. De Hamel by Patricia Stirnemann, Paris was the centre for this expansion and production.<sup>53</sup> A reflection on the twelfth century Paris gives good reason to believe the theory of de Hamel as explained by Smith:

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<sup>53</sup>Cf. Stirnemann, P., ‘Review of C. de Hamel’s *Glossed Books of the Bible and the Origins of the Paris Booktrade* in *Bulletin Monumental* 143 (1985), pp. 363–367.