

Victor GENKE & Francis X. GUMERLOCK, editors and translators, *Gottschalk & A Medieval Predestination Controversy: Texts Translated from the Latin*. Mediaeval Philosophical Texts in Translation, Volume 47. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2010. pp. 250. \$29.00 pb. ISBN 0-87462-253-0. Reviewed by [Gregorio MONTEJO](#), Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI 53233

The question of predestination, explored extensively by Augustine of Hippo in his polemical disputations with exponents of Pelagianism, drew strong protests from various other early fifth-century contemporaries, most notably the monks of Hadrumetum and Provence, who balked at the implications of a doctrine which apparently predestined not only the salvation of the elect, but also the reprobation of damned. Although the debate on double predestination seemed to be settled by the Council of Orange in 529, in the Carolingian renaissance of the ninth century a Benedictine monk, Gottschalk of Orbais, brought the most challenging aspects of Augustine's teachings to the forefront of theological debate once again. Indeed, as the editors of this groundbreaking volume of translations explain, between "the Council of Orange and the sixteenth century, very few people dared to apply so radically the predestination theology of Augustine as Gottschalk did" (7).

As with many other ninth-century figures, there is a paucity of information regarding Gottschalk's origins, yet the most significant milestones of his life, particularly those relating to the predestination controversy can be roughly reconstructed and briefly recounted. Gottschalk is thought to have been born sometime around the year 803, and while still a child he was delivered to the monastery of Fulda, an important center of learning since the early ninth century when Rabanus Maurus, a pupil of Alcuin, had become the head of its school. Gottschalk seems to have been a reluctant monk, however, for after reaching his majority he was released at his own request from monastic vows. Sometime around 835 Gottschalk decided to become a monk once more and thereafter began his controversial teachings on twofold predestination. Gottschalk's former abbot, Rabanus Maurus, now archbishop of Mainz, became aware of his former pupil's activities, and wrote two letters recounting his troubling views, which were subsequently condemned by the Synod of Mainz in 848. This synodical body also committed him to his metropolitan, Hincmar of Reims, who in 849 convoked another synod at Quiercy, which anathematized Gottschalk a second time. While some leading theologians of the era, such as Prudentius of Troyes and Lupus of Ferrières, defended the scriptural orthodoxy and Augustinian provenance of Gottschalk's twofold predestination, nevertheless, at the Synod of Quiercy in 853 the doctrine of twofold predestination was repudiated once again.

The discredited Gottschalk died while imprisoned in October 868, and aside from two "Confessions" and a few fragments of some lost works, none of his theological writings were known in later years. It was no surprise then that studies of Gottschalk's predestinarian doctrine languished until the advent of the Reformation, when Gottschalk's views were regarded as anticipating certain Calvinistic principles. Gottschalk studies got a further boost in the first half of the twentieth century, when a considerable number of heretofore unknown Latin writings by him were discovered and published. However, the lack of translations of these works into modern languages has hampered a wider growth of scholarship on the Carolingian monk. It is the express purpose of this volume of translated material by Genke and Gumerlock to redress this scholarly lacuna. To this effect, the editors have assembled not only most of the relevant material from Gottschalk's own pen on the vexatious question of predestination, representing all stages of his polemical career, but have also included a number of related texts from some of Gottschalk's most ardent and vociferous critics, including Rabanus Maurus and Hincmar of Reims.

In the first and most significant section of this volume, the editors provide clear and precise English renderings of several key statements on predestination from Gottschalk himself in chronological order. The selection begins with Gottschalk's early reply, penned sometime in 842, to a treatise and letter critical of Gottschalk's views on predestination written by Rabanus Maurus, and continues with both the shorter and longer "Confessions," as well as with a shot text entitled "Answers to Various Questions," which Gottschalk composed in the aftermath of the council at Quierzy. Perhaps the most important translation, however, is a

collection of testimonies (schedulae) entitled *On Predestination (De praedestinatione)*, which was probably compiled sometime after 849, when Gottschalk was imprisoned at Hautvillers.

While this work is not a systematic exposition of his full doctrine, nonetheless, here one encounters many of Gottschalk's most characteristic teachings, including his central notion that God does not will that all shall be saved, and thus humanity is divided into the elect—who cannot be lost to God—and the sinful reprobate, who are unremittingly lost. It is evident to Gottschalk then that Christ redeemed only the elect, that baptism only liberates humans from past sins and is thus of no avail to the reprobate, and that the grace of the Eucharist is equally inefficacious to those who are predestined to damnation. Hence, God predestined both the elect to eternal life and the reprobate to eternal death, so that, accordingly, predestination is one yet twofold. Moreover, this indicates that predestination of the reprobate is based solely on the basis of God's foreknowledge of the future evil merits incurred by the reprobate. In his valuable introduction, however, Genke wisely cautions readers from anachronistically reading later Reformation ideas about predestination into any possible systematic reconstruction of Gottschalk's theology based on this loose agglomeration of teachings.

If there is any quibbles to be found with this uniformly excellent collection, I would mention that the inclusion of more works by Gottschalk's contemporary interlocutors, such as the important treatise *De praedestinatione* by Rabanus Maurus, as well as several other important letters of Hincmar, would have rendered this important volume even more indispensable for modern-day students of Gottschalk and the ninth-century predestination controversy. Despite this minor critique, I highly recommend this latest addition to the Mediaeval Philosophical Texts in Translation series, and commend the editors for their important services to historical theology in producing this much-needed translation.

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