

Prosper to have been an anti-Augustinian. By the same token, we are justified in allowing a margin for critical engagement with Augustinian themes in the works of Prosper's contemporaries without treating those contemporaries, among whom Vincent surely stands out conspicuously, as having been anti-Augustinian simply because their reception of Augustine was creative and critical.

## 9 FULGENTIUS OF RUSPE ON THE SAVING WILL OF GOD

FRANCIS X. GUMERLOCK

### The Difficulty of 1 Tim. 2:4 for Augustine and Others

While early Greek biblical commentators experienced little or no difficulty interpreting the New Testament passage which says that God "wills all humans to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4), for Augustine and those who followed his later views on predestination, interpreting this verse became a Herculean task.<sup>1</sup> Augustine's attempt to reconcile divine predestination with this assertion of God's universal saving will resulted in at least five different interpretations in his writings.<sup>2</sup> After

1. H. B. Swete, ed., *Theodori episcopi Mopsuesteni in epistolas B. Pauli commentarii*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1882), 87n11: "Th's statement [on 1 Tim. 2:4] seems to accord with the judgment of the other Greek fathers, who were disposed to accept S. Paul's words in their *prima facie* sense." Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium*, 29. Cited in William G. Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God* (Front Royal, Va.: Christendom Press, 1997), 106; John Chrysostom, *Homily 18 on Hebrews* (NPNF 14: 451); *Homily 1 on Ephesians* (NPNF 13: 52); Andrew of Caesarea in Cappadocia, *Commentarius in Apocalypsin* (PG 106: 403-6); John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* II.29 (NPNF, 2nd series 9: 42).

2. Augustine, *Spir. et litt.*, 58; *cat. rud.*, 26; *opp.* 149.2, 217.6, 226; *corrupt.*, 44-

Augustine's death, Prosper of Aquitaine devoted two entire books *De vocatione omnium gentium* to the explanation of this one brief passage.<sup>3</sup> A century later, Fulgentius of Ruspe, described recently as "the foremost North African theologian of his day," was still grappling with its interpretation.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter demonstrates that, for help in his interpretation of 1 Tim. 2:4, Fulgentius employed classical literary theory, namely, the figure of speech called synecdoche. Synecdoche is that figure in which a part is used for a whole, or a whole used for a part.<sup>5</sup> For Fulgentius, God does not want "all" or the whole of humankind to be saved, but only a part, that is, that portion of humanity divinely chosen for salvation out of all nations and all classes of people. Before analyzing Fulgentius's interpretation of 1 Tim. 2:4, this chapter will first provide a short account of his life and explore in some detail the historical context of his comments. Finally, it will place his thoughts within the larger frameworks of North African biblical interpretation and exegesis in late antiquity.

Claudius Gordianus Fulgentius, more widely known as Fulgentius of Ruspe, was born in 468 and raised in a wealthy, noble

family in the province of Byzacena in Vandal North Africa.<sup>6</sup> Educated in Greek and Latin literature, he became fiscal procurator of the province as a young adult. Around 493, when he was in his mid-twenties, he resigned from his position and joined a monastery in the desert area near his home. Later he served as co-abbot of the monastery. Having relocated to Sicca Venecia and Iddi in Mauritania, afterward he traveled to Syracuse in Sicily and to Rome and lived on the deserted island of Junca off the coast of modern Tunisia. Around 507, Fulgentius was consecrated bishop of the coastal seaport of Ruspe, which is now Koudiar Rosfa in Tunisia. Soon after his ordination, the Arian Vandal king Thrasamund banished about sixty Catholic bishops, including Fulgentius, to the Mediterranean island of Sardinia. From Cagliari, on the southern tip of Sardinia, he and the other bishops founded monasteries. Recalled to Carthage by the same king in 515 to debate the doctrine of the Trinity with the Arian bishops, Fulgentius was sent back to Sardinia in 517 where he resided until Thrasamund died in 523. In that year, he returned to his see in Ruspe where he lived another ten years.<sup>7</sup>

### The Occasion for Fulgentius's *Epistula 17*

Around 520, during the period of his second exile to Sardinia, Fulgentius was dragged into a controversy on grace and free will

6. Recent scholarship distinguishes Fulgentius of Ruspe from Fabius Planciades Fulgentius, also known as "Fulgentius the Mythographer." The reasons for the distinction are delineated in Gregory Hays, "The Date and Identity of the Mythographer Fulgentius," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 13 (2003): 163–252.

7. A main source for the details regarding the life of Fulgentius is the *Vita Fulgentii*, written shortly after his death by a monk who lived in a monastery with Fulgentius in Cagliari. Gabriel G. Lapeyre, *Vie de saint Fulgence de Ruspe par Ferrand (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1929)*. English translation in Fulgentius, *Selected Works*, trans. Robert B. Eno (FC 95), 1–56. On the life of Fulgentius, see my *Fulgentius of Ruspe on the Saving Will of God*, (Lewisohn, N.Y.: Mellen, 2009), 16–22; and Yves Modéran, "La chronologie de la vie de saint Fulgence de Ruspe et ses incidences sur l'histoire de l'Afrique vandale," in *Mélanges de l'école Française de Rome antiquité* 105 (1993): 135–88.

47; *cit.* Dei, 22.1.2; *encl.*, 103; *c. Jul.*, 4.8. Studies of Augustine's interpretation of 1 Tim. 2:4 include A. Hwang, "Augustine's Interpretations of 1 Tim. 2:4," *SP* 43 (2006): 137–42; D. Ogliari, *Gratia et Certamen* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 357–66; Vittorino Grossi, "La cuestión de la voluntad salvífica en los últimos escritos de Agustín (420–27)," *Augustinus* 36 (1991): 127–39; Athanasé Sage, "La volonté salvifique universelle de Dieu dan la pensée de saint Augustin," *RechAug* 3 (1965): 107–31; Jean Chéné, "Saint Augustin enseigne-t-il dans le *De spiritu et littera* l'universalité de la volonté salvifique de Dieu?" *RechSR* 47 (1959): 215–24; Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, "La volonté salvifique chez saint Augustin," *Revue Thomiste* 35 (1930): 473–86.

3. Prosper of Aquitaine, *De vocatione omnium gentium* (CCL 97).

4. Thomas S. Ferguson, "Fulgentius of Ruspe," in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Theologians*, ed. Patrick W. Carey and Joseph T. Lienhard (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2000), 203.

5. E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible: Illustrated and Explained* (London: Messrs. Eyre Sportiswood, 1898; reprinted Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1968), 613. This enduring 1,100-page work was in its twenty-first printing in 1997. A synecdoche is "when a part of a thing is put by a kind of Metonymy for the whole of it, or the whole for a part."



taking place in Constantinople between certain Scythian monks and others in that city. The monks wrote to Fulgentius for his input and he responded with *Epistula 17*.<sup>8</sup> In this letter, Fulgentius gave considerable attention to the interpretation of 1 Tim. 2:4 and the saving will of God.

In 518 or early 519 a group of Latin-speaking monks from Scythia, more specifically the city of Tomi in the region south of where the Danube River runs into the Black Sea, went to Constantinople to seek imperial approval of their "theopaschite" formula.<sup>9</sup> These monks were intent on restoring unity to the church which had recently experienced serious divisions over Christology in the aftermath of the Council of Chalcedon (451). The recognized leader of the monks was John Maxentius.<sup>10</sup>

For almost forty years, the relationship between the sees of Rome and Constantinople had been strained in what is known as the Acacian schism.<sup>11</sup> Many in Alexandria, following the Christology

8. *Epistula 17* is edited in J. Fraipont, ed., *Sancti Fulgentii episcopi Ruspensis opera* (CCL 91A: 563–615). Italian: Fulgentio di Ruspe, *Le Lettere*, trans. Antonio Isola (Rome: Città Nuova, 1999), 391–470. Short excerpts in English are translated in David Maxwell, "Christology and Grace in the Sixth-Century Latin West: The Theopaschite Controversy," Ph.D. diss. (University of Notre Dame, 2003), 218–37, and W. A. Jurgens, trans., *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, vol. 3 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1979), 287–89.

9. Papal delegates were sent from Rome to Constantinople on February 1, 519. They arrived on March 25, 519, the Monday of Holy Week. The Scythian monks were already in Constantinople when they arrived. On the origin of the Scythian monks, William C. Bark, "John Maxentius and the Collectio Palatina," *Harvard Theological Review* 36 (1943): 93–107 at 103–4; and Bark, "Marius Mercator and the Collectio Palatina," Ph.D. diss. (Cornell University, 1936), 104–6.

10. On monks in Constantinople at the time, Peter Hatlie, *The Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople, ca. 350–850* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

11. Primary sources related to the Acacian schism are translated in P. R. Coleman-Norton, *Roman State and Christian Church: A Collection of Legal Documents to A.D. 535*, 3 vols. (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1966), 3: 915–67. Secondary literature on the schism includes J. N. D. Kelly, *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 46–54; W. H. C. Frend, "The Acacian Schism and Its Aftermath," in *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 807–27; Frend, "Eastern Attitudes to Rome in the Acacian Schism," in *The Orthodox Churches and the West*, ed. D. Baker, Studies in Church History 12 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell & Mort, 1976), 69–81; Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Chris-*

of Cyril, claimed that Christ had only one nature and rejected the two-nature Christology of the Council of Chalcedon, believing that it was Nestorian. Rome followed the two-nature Christology reflected in the *Tome* of Leo and the Creed of Chalcedon. The archbishop of Constantinople found it difficult to maintain religious unity with both the patriarchate of Alexandria and the see of Rome.

In an attempt to heal the division, the Scythian monks proposed a solution: those who support the Council of Chalcedon can show that they are not Nestorians by subscribing to the formula, "One of the Trinity suffered in the flesh."<sup>12</sup> This proposal at first met negative reaction, and the disagreement that ensued is called the theopaschite controversy.

Condemnation of Pelagians and "Pelagian" tenets also played a significant role in the theopaschite controversy. Some scholars interpret the condemnation of Pelagians by the supporters of the

*tian Tradition*, vol. 2, part 1 (Atlanta: John Knox, 1973), 236–317; Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 143–254; Francis Dvornik, "Growth of the Idea of Apostolicity During the Acacian Schism," chapter three in *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958).

12. Secondary literature on the theopaschite controversy includes Maxwell, "Christology and Grace in the Sixth-Century Latin West: The Theopaschite Controversy," Grillmeier, "One of the Trinity Was Crucified," chapter one in *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2, part 2 (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 317–43; J. A. McGuckin, "The 'Theopaschite Confession' (Text and Historical Context): A Study in the Cyrilline Re-interpretation of Chalcedon," *JEH* 35 (1984): 239–55; Franciscus Glorie, "Prolegomena" in *Maxentii aliorumque Scytharum monachorum Iohannis Tomitanæ urbis episcopi opuscula* (CCL 85A), xxiii–xli; John Meyendorff, "God Suffered in the Flesh," chapter 4 of *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1975), 69–89; Berthold Altaner, "Zum Schrifttum der 'kyrillischen' (gotischen) Mönche," in *Kleine patristische Schriften* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1967), 489–506; Jean Chéné, "Unus de Trinitate passus est," *RechtRel* 53 (1965): 545–88; Milton V. Anastos, "Justinian's Despotism Control over the Church as Illustrated by His Edicts on the Theopaschite Formula and His Letter to Pope John II in 533," in *Mélanges Georges Ostrogorsky*, vol. 2 (Belgrade: Institut d'études byzantines, 1964), 1–11; Werner Eiert, "Die Theopaschitische Formel," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* (1950): 195–206; M. Richard, "Proculus de Constantinople et le théopaschisme," *RHE* 38 (1942): 303–31; Viktor Schurt, *Die Trinitätslehre des Boethius im Lichte der 'kyrillischen Kontroversen'* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1935); William Holden Hutton, *The Church of the Sixth Century* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1897), 145–48.



opaschism as merely a tactical move by the Scythian monks to gain Western support for their theopaschite Christology.<sup>13</sup> However, historical theologian David Maxwell has recently demonstrated rather convincingly that the theology of grace was an important issue to the Scythian monks from the very beginning of the controversy, and that from the standpoint of these monks Christology and grace were essentially connected doctrines.<sup>14</sup>

In Constantinople, the Scythian monks had a few powerful allies: the high-ranking military official Vitalian, who was a relative of one of the monks and in whose home the visiting monks resided, and various *piissimi principii*.<sup>15</sup> In the spring of 519 Maxentius and his monks were feuding bitterly with Victor, a deacon to the archbishop of Constantinople, over Maxentius's *Capitula*. Having met resistance from Victor regarding theopaschism, Maxentius accused him of being Nestorian. Maxentius then sought audience with papal legates in Constantinople to accept his theopaschite formula. These papal legates had arrived in Constantinople from Rome just before Easter, and effected reconciliation between the two sees, putting an official end to the Acacian schism. Maxentius presented his theopaschite formula in the form of a *libellus*. However, the legates asserted that subscription to the canons and creed of the four councils and to the letters of Pope Leo were sufficient for orthodox Christology, and perceived Maxentius as an impediment to unity. Maxentius's *capitula* and *libellus*, along with their anti-Nestorian

13. Thomas A. Smith, *De gratia: Faustus of Riez's Treatise on Grace and Its Place in the History of Theology* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 3; R. A. Markus, "The Legacy of Pelagius: Orthodoxy, Heresy and Conciliation," in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 214–34 at 223; McGuckin, "The Theopaschite Confession," 245.

14. Maxwell, "Christology and Grace in the Sixth-Century Latin West," and his "Theopaschites: Ancient and Modern," a paper delivered at the 27th Annual Symposium on Lutheran Confessions, Fort Wayne, Ind., January 2004, 11–14. Another study illustrating the connection between Christology and grace in the early church is Donald Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology in the Early Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

15. Glorie, "Prolegomena," xxvii.

propositions and anathemas, had very Augustinian-sounding propositions on original sin, free will, and grace; and they contained anathemas against Pelagians.<sup>16</sup>

Disappointed by the response of Victor and the papal legates, the Scythian monks left Constantinople for Rome to seek support for theopaschism in person from the pope. They arrived in the eternal city in the summer of 519 and resided there for fourteen months.<sup>17</sup> Maxentius, however, stayed back in Constantinople.

Justinian I, of the imperial family in Constantinople, also involved himself in the controversy while his uncle Justin was reigning as emperor. In June 519 Justinian wrote to Pope Hormisdas, warning him that the Scythian monks were on their way to Rome and that Hormisdas should not receive them.<sup>18</sup> However, shortly thereafter, before Hormisdas had a chance to reply, Justinian wrote again to the pope expressing that the theopaschite formula might reconcile the orthodox and Monophysites. The letter also urged Hormisdas to decide quickly on the formula's orthodoxy.<sup>19</sup> Then a third letter in October of that year from Justinian sought a definitive reply on the theopaschite formula from the pope.<sup>20</sup> In 520 Justinian again, through a letter, pressed Hormisdas to decide on the definition that one of the Trinity suffered in the flesh.<sup>21</sup> In the letter, Justinian defended the formula, citing in support of it Augustine, some of whose writings Justinian had in a *florilegium*, and requested a complete answer from Hormisdas.<sup>22</sup> Hormisdas was

16. Maxentius's *Chapters* and a portion of his *Booklet on the Faith* are translated in my "Fulgentius of Ruspe on the Saving Will of God," 199–207.

17. The Scythian monks were in Rome from June 519 to August 520 according to Isola, *Fulgenzio di Ruspe Le Lettere*, 370; and Antonio Quacquarelli, "Papa Ormisda al vescovo Possessore," *Veterna Christianorum* 30 (1993): 5–15 at 6.

18. CSEL 35: 644–45. English: Coleman-Norton, *Roman State and Christian Church*, 3: 968–70.

19. CSEL 35: 648–49. Coleman-Norton, 970–72.

20. CSEL 35: 645–46. Coleman-Norton, 972–73.

21. CSEL 35: 653–56. Coleman-Norton, 989–91.

22. On the *florilegium*, Alcaner, "Zum Schrifttum der 'skythischen' (gotischen) Mönche," 491–92.



hesitant to accept the theopaschite formula, and withheld ratification of it. In 533, however, Pope John II succeeded Hormisdas; and Justinian corresponded with him about the theopaschite formula, to which the new pope replied in 534 that it was fully orthodox.<sup>23</sup> As for Justinian, from 527 when he became the sole ruler, the theopaschite teaching "was not omitted from any document [of his] related to Christology."<sup>24</sup> The *Codex Iustinianus* made it an essential part of his confession, as did Justinian's confession of faith addressed to the citizens of Constantinople in March of 533.<sup>25</sup>

Back in Rome in 519, the Scythian monks presented their *libellus* to Pope Hormisdas; and it was also read by all of the senators and by a gathering of bishops. Hormisdas, however, was hesitant to make any ruling upon it because the papal legates had written to him speaking negatively about the Scythian monks; and the monks in turn had made accusations against the legates. Hormisdas wanted to wait until the legates returned from Constantinople so that he could sort out the issues between them face to face. Therefore, Hormisdas kept the monks in Rome during the fall of 519 and winter of 520 to await the arrival of the legates.<sup>26</sup>

Meanwhile, the Scythian monks residing in Rome wrote a letter to Fulgentius and the African bishops living in exile in Sardinia. According to Franciscus Glorie, they wrote the letter, a reworking of the *Libellus* of Maxentius, in December of 519 or January of 520.<sup>27</sup> It was taken to Sardinia by a deacon named John.<sup>28</sup> The letter presents the Scythian monks' version of the orthodox faith

to the bishops of the African province, asking for their judgment in the hope that a vindication of their faith by the Africans would strengthen their case.<sup>29</sup> Besides the Christological issues important to the Scythian monks, their letter also touched upon the issue of grace and shows that the Scythian monks had been heavily influenced by Augustine's later anti-Pelagian writings. It is obvious from their letter that they were involved in a controversy on grace, since along with their own views on grace they published the opinions of those who were opposing them.

From later correspondence of John Maxentius, we learn that the ringleader in Constantinople against the position of the Scythian monks on grace and free will was an African bishop named Possessor living in exile there.<sup>30</sup> In Constantinople, Possessor had quite a bit of theological and political influence. He wrote a commentary on the Pauline epistles, which he had given to Pope Hormisdas as a gift.<sup>31</sup> He preached "with great authority" and had a deacon named Justin assisting him with his pastoral duties in the city.<sup>32</sup> Possessor also had connections in high places. These included relationships with the aforementioned *magister militum* Vitalian and Justinian I, both of whom were aware of the controversy.<sup>33</sup> In addition, Possessor

23. Anastasius, "Justinian's Despotism Control," 10.

24. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2, 2: 338.

25. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2, 2: 339.

26. However, the Scythian monks left Rome before the legates returned.

27. Scythian monks, *Epistula Scytharum monachorum ad episcopos* also in Fulgentius, *Epistula* 16 (CCL 85A: 157-72; CCL 91A: 551-62; English: McGuckin, "The Theopaschite Confession"; Italian: Isola, *Fulgenzio di Ruspe. Le Lettere*, 369-90). On its date, Glorie, "Prolegomena," xxxii-xxxiii; and Isola, "In marine a una lettura dell'epistolario fulgenziario," *Sacris Erudiri* 37 (1997): 57-110 at 107; Isola, *Fulgenzio di Ruspe. Le Lettere*, 369-70.

28. Susan T. Stevens, "The Circle of Bishop Fulgentius," *Traditio* 38 (1982): 327-41 at 331.

29. McGuckin, "The Theopaschite Confession," 247.

30. John Maxentius (*Responsio Maxentii Iohannis servi dei aduersus epistolam quam ad Possorem a Romano episcopo dicunt haeretici destinatum*, 40-41 [CCL 85A: 143]) speaks of those who were defending the books of Faustus, among whom the "princeps et auctor est Possessor Africanus episcopus." Possessor was bishop of Zabi or Zabensis, now Bechliğa in Algeria. See W. Geerlings, "Possessor," in *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*, ed. Siegmund Döpp and Wilhelm Geerlings (New York: Crossroads, 2000), 496; Isola, *Fulgenzio di Ruspe. Le Lettere*, 367mo; André Mondouze, *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, vol. 1 (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1982), 889.

31. Mention of the commentary is in Possessor, *Relatio Possessoris episcopi Affri. Per Iustinum diaconum eius*, Otto Guenther, ed., *Epistulae imperatorum pontificum aliorum* (CSEL 35: 695-96). Cf. PL 65: 489-90. To my knowledge, the Pauline commentary is not extant.

32. On Possessor preaching with great authority, see Maxentius, *Responsio* 41 (CCL 85A: 143): "magnam praedicat auctoritatem." Justin, Possessor's deacon, is mentioned in the title of Possessor's *Relatio* (CSEL 35: 695; PL 65: 489).

33. Possessor, *Relatio* (CSEL 35: 696). In this letter to Pope Hormisdas, Possessor



sor had a following with respect to his views on grace; for Maxentius spoke of "those who agree with" Possessor, and the Scythian monks frequently mentioned their opponents in the plural.<sup>34</sup>

These opponents of the Scythian monks had a catchphrase or slogan that encapsulated their view of how salvation is transacted between God and man: "It is ours to choose, but God's to finish," or in another version, "It is mine to choose to believe, but it is the grace of God to help."<sup>35</sup> The Scythian monks also reported their opponents as saying, "Grace does not come to me unless I first choose it."<sup>36</sup> From these reports, their *ordo salutis* was that human free choice comes first, followed by the grace of God.<sup>37</sup>

Possessor and his theological allies in Constantinople seem to

asks about the authority of Faustus of Riez on matters related to grace and says that Vitalian and Justinian also desire to be informed on the matter. For Hormisdas's reply, see CCL 85A: 115–21; CSEL 35: 696–700; PL 45: 1777–778.

34. Maxentius, *Responsio*, epilogue (CCL 85A: 153). Cf. CCL 85A: 143, 145, 167–68.

35. Cited in John Maxentius, *Libellus fidei* 18 (CCL 85A: 25): "Nostrum est velle, dei vero perficere"; Scythian monks, *Epistula Scythiarum monachorum ad episcopos* 19 (CCL 91A: 558): "Meum est velle credere, Dei autem gratia est adiuuare." Variations of the slogans mentioned previously were circulating in the empire for at least a century. For example, Hilary of Poitiers (d. 368), *Tractatus in CXVII psalmum* (PL 9: 610): "ex nobis autem initium est, ut ille perficiat." "But the beginning is from us, that he may finish." Jerome (d. 420), *Dialogue against Pelagians* III.1 (PL 23: 596): "It is ours to ask, to him it belongs to bestow what we ask; ours to begin, his it is to finish." It also appears in Homily 11 of the Gallic bishop Valerian of C  nd   (d. c. 460) (PL 52: 726): "Nostrum est igitur bonum velle, Christi vero perficere." "Therefore it is ours to choose the good, but Christ's to finish." On Valerian's theology of grace, Carlo Tibiletti, "Valeriano di Cimiez e la teologia dei Maestri Provenzali," *Aug 22* (1982): 513–32. The scriptural basis of the slogan seems to have been Rom. 7:18, which in an Old Latin version the Apostle says: "velle adiacet mihi, perficere autem non invenio." "To choose is present with me; but to finish I do not find." Cf. Ennodius of Milan, *Epistola 56 Constantio* (MGH, AA VII: 71); Origen, *Commentary on Romans*. On Rom. 7:14–25 (PG 14: 1087).

36. Scythian monks, *Epistula Scythiarum monachorum ad episcopos* 23 (CCL 91A: 560; McGuckin, "The 'Theopaschite Confession,'" 253).

37. Possessor and his followers most likely believed that certain graces come before the movement of free will. These graces include Christ's incarnation and death on behalf of humanity, the many graces associated with infant baptism, the preaching of the word of God, God's invitations and exhortations, and the image of God in human nature. What they denied was the necessity of a special enabling grace for believing in Christ and choosing good. See John Maxentius, *Responsio*, 46 (CCL 85A: 145).

have based their soteriological ideas on the concept that human free will lies as the basis of punishments and rewards, a notion that is not necessarily anti-Augustinian.<sup>38</sup> They reportedly believed, in agreement with Faustus of Riez's *De gratia*, that "God awaits the human will, so that there may be an equitable reward in the case of the willing, and a just condemnation in the case of the unwilling."<sup>39</sup> In other words, in order for God to be just in distributing rewards and punishments to people, it is a prerequisite that human actions are done freely. However, their concept of God awaiting a person's will, rather than God first actively converting or liberating one's will with interior grace, was particularly unsettling to the Scythian monks.

It does not appear that these opponents of the Scythian monks put down their opinions in writing. The Scythian monks never mentioned Possessor's commentary on the Pauline epistles or any other writings of their opponents which presented their viewpoint. Rather, on the literary level the opponents of the Scythian monks simply defended the treatise on grace by Faustus of Riez.<sup>40</sup> Maxentius mentions that "those who try to defend him [Faustus] as catholic say, 'But Faustus does not attribute the first part to man, but to the grace of God,'" and that Faustus's defenders cited from his *De gratia* 1.5 to support their point. To this, Maxentius explained that what Faustus means by grace is not an internal work of the Holy Spirit by which a person is made obedient but rather the mere external preaching of the word.<sup>41</sup>

38. Cf. Augustine, *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, 2.

39. Scythian monks, *Epistula Scythiarum monachorum ad episcopos*, 20 (CCL 91A: 559; McGuckin, "The 'Theopaschite Confession,'" 252). Cf. Faustus of Riez, *De gratia* 1.8; 2.12 (CSEL 21: 36, 91).

40. Maxentius, *Responsio* 61 (CCL 85A: 153). Each of their opinions, as reported by the Scythian monks in their letter to the African bishops, are preceded by *dixit*, "they say," perhaps suggesting that the debate was more oral than literary on the side of Maxentius's opponents.

41. Maxentius, *Responsio* 46 (CCL 85A: 145). For a summary of how the writings of Faustus came into the theopaschite-grace controversy, see Maxwell, "Christology and Grace," 147–53.



Concerning how 1 Tim. 2:4 and the saving will of God entered the controversy, the Scythian monks reported to Fulgentius that the "heretics" were arguing in this manner: If, as you Scythian monks say, no one is able to believe naturally or choose anything good pertaining to eternal life, but rather God makes it so that a person chooses to believe, why then does God not make all men willing, since he is no respecter of persons and "wills all persons to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4)?<sup>42</sup> From this report of their rhetorical question, it can be inferred that the opponents of the Scythian monks believed that God's saving will is universal, and they cited 1 Timothy 2:4 as support. However, human willingness plays a significant role in the actualization of that salvation. For, if it depended entirely upon God who is no respecter of persons, God would make everyone willing. Fulgentius, a devotee of Augustine, had many things to say in response to this.

### The Limitation of God's Saving Will in Fulgentius's *Epistula 17*

Fulgentius's answer to the Scythian monks, preserved as *Epistula 17* among his works, was a synodal letter written in the early part of 520 in the name of fifteen African bishops that were exiled in Sardinia.<sup>43</sup> Chapters 1 and 67 are the introduction and epilogue, re-

42. Scythian monks, *Epistula Scytharum monachorum ad episcopos 20* (CCL 91A: 359; McGuckin, "The Theopaschite Confession," 252). We only have evidence of this line of argumentation as it was reported by their adversaries. It is probable that these views were expressed in Possessor's commentary on the Pauline epistles, perhaps on Rom. 7:18 and 1 Tim. 2:4. However, this question was popular among those who opposed the predestinarianism of Augustine and his followers. Responses to it are in Augustine, *De praedestinatione sanctorum*, 14; Januarius, *Epistula ad Valentinum*; and Caesarius of Arles, *De gratia*.

43. The extent, if any, that the other exiled African bishops influenced Fulgentius's views on the extent of God's saving will is a topic worthy of further investigation. On the date of 520 for *Epistula 17*, Glorie says that the Scythian monks in Rome wrote their letter to Fulgentius in December 519 or January 520. However, the seas were normally closed between October and April. Therefore, the letter carrier, John the deacon, may not have gotten to Cagliari, Sardinia, until well into the

spectively. Chapters 2 through 22 treat Christological issues, while chapters 23 through 66 deal with the subject of grace.<sup>44</sup> Concerning Christology, Fulgentius and the African bishops gave their support to the theopaschite formula, adding a slight clarification so that it read: "One person of the Trinity, Christ, the only begotten Son of God," suffered in the flesh.<sup>45</sup> In the section on grace, Fulgentius explained the damaging effects of Adam's transgression on his descendants, that grace must precede free will in order for a person to believe, and that it is improper to assign the beginning of faith to oneself. Chapters 42 through 66 deal with the extent of God's saving will.

Fulgentius begins to answer the objection that the position of the Scythian monks makes God a respecter of persons. Fulgentius turns the tables on this argument and says that if God gives grace on the basis of his finding a good will in a person, as the opponents would have it, then that makes him a respecter of persons, namely, of those who have a good will. But the truth of the matter, according to Fulgentius, is that God "finds a good will in no one," and that everyone who receives the gift of faith receives it gratuitously. Concerning why God does not make everyone willing, Fulgentius appeals to Rom. 9:21, which says that a potter has power over his clay to make from the same lump one vessel for honor and also another for dishonor.<sup>46</sup>

Next, Fulgentius explains that the belief that faith is a divine gift does not mean that faith is inimical to human nature.<sup>47</sup> He then teaches that human nature is insufficient for performing

spring. But the Scythian monks would have pressed the Africans there for an urgent response, which they could take back to Rome before the arrival of the papal legates coming back from Constantinople. Therefore, Fulgentius's response, *Epistula 17*, was most likely written in May of the year 520.

44. Isola, *Fulgenzio di Ruspe. Le Lettere*, 391; Isola, "In margine a una lettura dell'epistolario fulgenziano," 107.

45. CCL 91A: 576-77. Cf. Bark, "Marius Mercator and the *Collectio Palatina*," 353; Hurton, *The Church of the Sixth Century*, 145-46.

46. CCL 91A: 596.

47. CCL 91A: 597-600.



works that result in justification by God.<sup>48</sup> Concerning why God does not make everyone believe, Fulgentius writes that those who ask the question are trying to scrutinize the "higher things" which scripture forbids (Eccl. 3:22).<sup>49</sup>

A proper interpretation of 1 Tim. 2:4, for Fulgentius, is bound within the truth of divine omnipotence. "Since scripture testifies," he says, "All things whatsoever he willed, he did (Ps. 115:3), there is nothing that he has willed and has not done.... For, it is evil for someone to say that the Omnipotent is not able to do something that he willed to do."<sup>50</sup> With this as a presupposition, Fulgentius rejects the idea that a general will of God for the salvation of everyone exists. Since no one, he writes, should think "that the will of the omnipotent God in some way cannot be fulfilled or that it can be impeded in some way," all whom God wills to be saved without doubt are saved. "Truly, by these all persons whom God wills to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4) are signified not the entire human race completely, but the entirety of all who are to be saved."<sup>51</sup>

To support this interpretation, the exiled bishop interjects the text of Acts 2:38-39, saying that in this passage Peter used the term "all" but then defined it as "as many as the Lord will call." He writes,

And so that we might know more fully who those "all" are, let us listen to the words of the same blessed Peter who, speaking by the Holy Spirit, concluded that Joel's prediction was fulfilled in the exhortation where he says: Repent and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. "For, the promise is for you, and for your children, and for as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38-39). And so he says "all," but "as many as the Lord will call." Also, blessed Paul refers to them as those "called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).<sup>52</sup>

48. CCL 91A: 600-606.

50. CCL 91A: 614.

52. CCL 91A: 611-12.

49. CCL 91A: 606-7.

51. CCL 91A: 610-11.

### 1 Timothy 2:4 Contains a Synecdoche: "All" Means a Part

Fulgentius continues that when the Apostle said that God wills all persons to be saved, he really meant "all kinds" of persons. He explains, "They are called 'all' because divine goodness saves all those from all humanity, that is, from every nation, condition, and age, from every language and from every province."<sup>53</sup>

Fulgentius justified this synecdochic interpretation of "all" in 1 Tim. 2:4, in which "all" means only a part, saying that it is well known that the divine writers sometimes use "all" when clearly the entire human race is not intended to be understood.<sup>54</sup> In support of the notion that "all" in scripture does not necessarily mean the entire human race (and consequently God's saving will does not extend to all of humanity entirely), Fulgentius gives at least six examples from the Bible. These he draws from passages ranging from the prophets and the Psalter in the Hebrew Scriptures to the Gospel and Epistles in the New Testament. From Joel, Fulgentius quotes: "In the last days, says the Lord, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh" (2:28). Although in this passage, Fulgentius writes, the author uses the term "all flesh," Peter showed that this prophecy was fulfilled when the Holy Spirit came with tongues of fire on only one hundred and twenty people in the upper room (cf. Acts 1:15; 2:3, 17).<sup>55</sup>

Fulgentius next places two seemingly contrary biblical passages against each other. In the Psalms, the prophet foretold that "all the nations ... will adore before you, Lord, and will glorify your name forever" (Ps. 86:9). However, Jesus said that his faithful ones would be hated by all nations because of him (Matt. 10:22). The question of which passage is true flows naturally from the juxtaposition. Will all nations glorify Christ? Or will all nations persecute Christ? Firm in his conviction that "scripture does not fight

53. CCL 91A: 611.

55. CCL 91A: 611.

54. CCL 91A: 611-12.



against itself with contrary opinions," Fulgentius claims that both are true. The way that all nations glorify Christ, and at the same time all nations hate Christ, is if one understands that all does not mean all entirely. Rather, each "all" represents a segment of people from all nations. All the believers among all the nations will glorify the name of the Lord, and all the unbelievers in those same nations will hate the name of Christ and persecute his people.<sup>56</sup> For Fulgentius, it is clear that "all" nations can be interpreted as a portion of people in all nations. Therefore, when it comes to the extent of God's saving will, although the Apostle used the universal term *omnes*, it is not necessary, according to him, for it to be understood as *omnes omnino*, or "absolutely everyone."

From the Gospel, Fulgentius presents John 12:32: *When I shall be lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all to myself*. He explains that Jesus "did not say that he draws everyone entirely, but that no one is saved except the one who is drawn (cf. John 6:44)."<sup>57</sup> Here again he insists that "all" not be taken to mean all humans entirely.

From the Pauline epistles, Fulgentius brings to the discussion a few passages from Romans, upon which he again tries to demonstrate that "all" cannot be interpreted as "absolutely everyone." In Rom. 11:32, Paul said that God shut up all in unbelief so that he might have mercy upon all, "yet God does not have mercy upon everyone entirely whom he has shut up in unbelief." Rather, he has mercy on some and not others (cf. Ex. 33:19) and mercifully gives the grace of faith to some, but to others it is not given (cf. Matt. 13:11).<sup>58</sup>

According to Fulgentius, in Rom. 5:18 the Apostle mentioned "all persons without exception, and then immediately indicates a certain 'all persons' excluded from the others." In this passage—"Just as through the sin of one man, condemnation came upon all persons, so also through the righteousness of one man,

justification unto life came upon all persons"—everyone who has been condemned through the sin of Adam is not necessarily going to be justified. Fulgentius explains,

For, when the Apostle says, "condemnation upon all persons and justification upon all persons," should we believe that all the people who were condemned through the original sin of Adam are the same as all those whom we believe are going to be justified through Christ, when it stands that there are innumerable deaths of unbelievers, who pass from this life without the grace of justification, and without the sacrament of baptism, and are snatched up into the eternal punishments of the second death (cf. Rev. 2:11; 20:6)? Therefore, it stands that the Apostle does not write it in such a way that we should think that absolutely everyone who is under condemnation is a recipient of the grace of justification. Rather, we should understand that only some from all those who are under condemnation receive the grace of justification. And so all through Adam come under condemnation and are children of wrath (cf. Eph. 2:3); and out of them "some" become "all" the children of grace through Christ.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, in Colossians the Apostle wrote that "all things" have been created through Christ and "all things" have been reconciled through Christ. The first "all things," Fulgentius says, should be interpreted in its normative sense, but the second "all things" cannot be interpreted in a strictly universal sense without impiety. For, if it is believed that all things in heaven and on earth are reconciled through the cross, then even the devil and his angels are reconciled. God forbid! Then, cross-referencing this with a passage from Matthew's Gospel (25:41), Fulgentius says, "If Christ were going to save him [the devil], his fiery eternal end would not have been pronounced by the mouth of Christ."<sup>60</sup> So here the bishop gives another scriptural example of where "all" does not mean all entirely, but is used in a more restrictive sense. Accordingly, he says, the faithful should "altogether preserve" this restricted meaning of "all," and

56. CCL 91A: 613.

58. CCL 91A: 612.

57. CCL 91A: 611.

59. CCL 91A: 612–13.

60. CCL 91A: 613–14.



"from this rule" they should understand the all persons whom God wills to be saved in 1 Tim. 2:4.<sup>61</sup>

For Fulgentius, many scripture passages provide cases in which "all" not only can be, but should be, interpreted as a part. This rule Fulgentius then applied to 1 Tim. 2:4. And upon doing this, the universality of the saving will of God in that passage faded into particularity, and all humanity transformed into merely a part of humanity.

### Synecdoche in North African Exegesis

Most scholarship, including that of Manlio Simonetti, Carlos Tibiletti, and Barthold Altaner, explains Fulgentius's particularist interpretation of 1 Tim. 2:4 by saying that he was echoing the thought of his mentor, Augustine.<sup>62</sup> This is partially correct. Literary parallels, although not direct quotations, between Augustine and Fulgentius on 1 Tim. 2:4 have been established by Tibiletti and Francesco Di Sciascio.<sup>63</sup> However, the idea that Fulgentius was simply mimicking Augustine is weakened by the fact that Augustine had offered five or six different interpretations of the passage in his writings. Fulgentius was undoubtedly influenced by Augustine, but as an exegete in his own right he was selective in his use of the bishop of Hippo for interpreting the passage. What has been overlooked in the literature on Fulgentius is that, in their biblical interpretations, both Augustine and Fulgentius were drawing from the common resource of classical rhetoric.

While there is no lack of secondary literature about Augustine's classical education and its influence on his theology, since Fulgen-

tius is a more obscure figure, it may be helpful to briefly recount his classical training. *The Life of Fulgentius*, written by a friend for the first anniversary of Fulgentius's death, revealed that he had come from a senatorial family and had been educated in the Greek and Latin classics. Praising his intellectual capacities and talents, *The Life* relates that Fulgentius had committed to memory all of Homer and a good portion of Menander before moving on to Latin classical authors.<sup>64</sup> Two recent studies have successfully shown that Fulgentius employed classical literary theory in his biblical exegesis and explanation of theology. Thomas S. Ferguson demonstrated that the author of a series of North African *collects*, whom he believes was most likely Fulgentius, used poesis, aisthesis, and catharsis in his interpretation of the Psalms.<sup>65</sup> And David Maxwell indicated that Fulgentius used the classical rhetorical device of an extended chiasm when he described the relationship between Christology and soteriology.<sup>66</sup> I would submit that Fulgentius was also drawing upon his training in classical rhetoric when he interpreted universal terms in scripture, such as the one in 1 Tim. 2:4, as synecdochic figures of speech.

In such interpretation, Fulgentius stood in a long line of early Christians in North Africa who had applied rules used in their study of classical literature for better understanding of the Bible. Some one hundred and fifty years earlier, a North African of Donatist persuasion named Tyconius saw the value of applying theories of classical literary interpretation to Scripture. Among figures of speech used in classic rhetoric, synecdoche was recognized as being especially helpful for interpreting biblical difficulties involving quantity. Tyconius wrote that the mystic significance of specific numbers in Scripture can be understood "through the rhetorical

61. CCL 91A: 612, 614.  
62. Manlio Simonetti, "Fulgentius of Ruspe," *EEChurch* 2: 331; Carlo Tibiletti, "Polémiche in Africa contro i teologi Provenzali," *AS* 26 (1986): 499–517 at 508; Barthold Altaner, *Patrology*, trans. Hilda C. Graef (St. Louis: Herder and Herder, 1960), 589.

63. Tibiletti, "Polémiche in Africa," 508n33–38; Francesco Di Sciascio, *Fulgentio di Ruspe* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1941), 126–29.

64. Pseudo-Ferrandus, *Vita Fulgentii* 1, in Fulgentius, *Selected Works*, trans. Robert B. Eno (FC 95: 7). Fulgentius quoted Virgil's *Aen.*, VI.429 in *Letter* 2.5 (FC 95: 293).

65. Everett Ferguson, *Visita nos: Reception, Rhetoric, and Prayer in a North African Monastery* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 6, 107.

66. Maxwell, "Theopaschites," 14.



figure of synecdoche [*sic*].” “In synecdoche,” he continued, “... either a part represents the whole or a whole represents the part.”<sup>67</sup>

Concerning synecdochic figures in Scripture where wholistic words or phrases are used to designate only a part, Tyconius gave the example of Christ being in the grave for three days and three nights. Between his death on Good Friday and his resurrection on Sunday morning, Saturday was really the only full day and night Christ spent in the belly of the earth. “The first day and the last ... are parts representing the whole.”<sup>68</sup>

Tyconius’s rules, including the use of synecdoche for interpreting scriptural difficulties, were popularized when Augustine incorporated them into his *De Doctrina Christiana*.<sup>69</sup> Augustine himself often interpreted as synecdochic figures words that on the surface seem to convey universality. At several places in his *Tractates on John’s Gospel*, for example, Augustine interpreted the word “world” in the Gospel as only a part of humanity, sometimes signifying the world of the church and other times the world of unbelievers.<sup>70</sup>

In the early fifth century the North African cleric Januarius limited the “all” in 1 Tim. 2:4 to the members of Christ’s body, that is, “all those who will be saved” through divine grace. He explains this in his letter to the abbot at Hadrumetum, Valentinus:

First, this Apostle tells us how to understand “who wills all persons to be saved.” For, here in this manner it is told how “all” is spoken by the Apostle in another passage: “Through a man came death, and through a man came the resurrection of the dead. For, just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:21–22). For, because it is said, “in Adam all die,” it is clear that it is necessary that all people die through him. But because it is said, “so also in Christ all will be made

alive,” here now it does not pertain to all people but to all those who will be saved through his grace.<sup>71</sup>

Januarius continues with his synecdochic interpretation of “all” by citing Rom. 5:18, which says that “through the righteousness of one the justification of life came on all persons.” These “all,” he says, “pertain to his members,” those who are designated “his body.”

Besides Tyconius, Augustine, and Januarius, the fifth-century deacon and later bishop of Carthage Quodvultdeus employed synecdoche in his interpretation of certain universal terms in scripture. In his treatise *On the Promises and Predictions of God*, he offered as one interpretation of the thousand years of Revelation 20 as “a whole from the part.”<sup>72</sup> And on Ps. 2:8, which says, “I will give to you the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession,” Quodvultdeus interpreted the “nations” and the “ends of the earth,” terms that convey universality, as “all of the predestined.”<sup>73</sup>

Thus, when Fulgentius interpreted the “all” in 1 Tim. 2:4 as a part, he was following a well-established tradition of viewing universal terms in some passages of scripture as synecdochic figures of speech.

### Synecdoche and the Saving Will of God in Late Antiquity

It should not be thought, however, that the figure of synecdoche was employed exclusively by African Christians to support predeterminist theology commonly espoused by them. Pelagius himself,

67. Tyconius, *Reg.* V, trans. William S. Babcock, *Tyconius: The Book of Rules* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 89.

68. Tyconius, *Reg.* V (Babcock, *Tyconius*, 91–93).

69. Augustine, *doc. Chr.*, III.117–21, trans. R. P. H. Green, *Augustine, De Doctrina Christiana* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 187–89.

70. Augustine, *Tractates of John’s Gospel* 2.10–11; 106; 110.2; 111.5 (NPNF 7: 16–17, 399–402, 409, 415).

71. Januarius, *Epistle to Valentinus* edited in Germain Morin, “Lettres inédites de S. Augustin et du pêtre Januarius dan l’affaire des moines d’Adrumète,” *RB* 18 (1901): 241–56 at 249–50.

72. Quodvultdeus, *Liber de promissionibus et praedictionibus dei*, “Dimidium Temporis in signis Antichristi,” 4.6 (SC 102: 598): “Mille vero anni aut a parte totum accipiendi sunt.”

73. Quodvultdeus, *Liber de promissionibus* II.55 (CCL 60: 123): “Totus praedestinat.”



who is viewed by some as the heresiarch from whom all free will soteriology flows, made use of synecdoche in his commentary on the Pauline epistles. Pelagius held that there were some people who had lived without sin. When Paul wrote in Rom. 3:4 that "God is true and everyone [*omnis homo*] else is a liar," Pelagius clarified, "Here he uses 'all' for the greatest part, as in '[a]ll seek their own,' and '[a]ll have abandoned me,' Luke alone is with me" (Phil. 2:21; 2 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 4:11).<sup>74</sup> So Pelagius asserted that in at least four passages Paul used "all" or "every" for only a part.

Two vocal opponents of Augustinian predestinarianism John Cassian and Faustus of Riez, considered by some to be the quintessential representatives of so-called semi-Pelagianism, also acknowledged the validity of interpreting certain biblical passages as synecdochic figures. Cassian indicated that synecdoche was helpful for understanding the person and natures of Christ. In *On the Incarnation*, *Against Nestorius*, he wrote that "by the grammatical trope synecdoche in which you understand the whole from the parts and a part is put for the whole," one comes to understand a principle of Christ. That is, whatever can be said about one nature of Christ can be said about his whole person.<sup>75</sup> Faustus of Riez also affirmed that scripture writers often used a wholistic term to mean only a part, but he disagreed with his predestinarian opponents that the Apostle was using synecdoche in the passages they claimed he did.<sup>76</sup> It seems that every faction in the fifth- and sixth-century debates on grace and free will—Pelagius and his supporters, Augustine and his followers, and the Gallic opponents of predestination—recognized that scripture contains synecdochic figures of speech. Their point of disagreement seems to have been over which biblical passages the figure applied.

74. Theodore de Bryn, trans., *Pelagius's Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 77.

75. John Cassian, *On the Incarnation*, *Against Nestorius* VI.23 (NPNF, and series, 11: 602).

76. Faustus, *De gratia*, I.16 (CSEL 21: 48–49): "Sicut in Adam omnes moriuntur, ita in Christo omnes vivificabuntur? Hic dici non potest pro parte totum."

The restrictive interpretation of "all" in 1 Tim. 2:4, as held by Fulgentius, was carried into several early medieval commentaries on the Pauline epistles. A commentary on Paul written by the students of Cassiodorus in the sixth century, the Würzburg gloss which is an Old Irish commentary on scripture dated about 700, and the ninth-century commentary on the Pauline epistles by Sedulius Scottus all gave as one possible interpretation among several that the "all" of 1 Tim. 2:4 expresses a part and that God wants to save people from all nations and all conditions. They read as follows:

Students of Cassiodorus: "For according to the figure of synecdoche here, we ought to interpret 'all' as a whole from a part."<sup>77</sup>

Würzburg gloss: "Or is it *pars pro toto* [a part for a whole], for there is neither race nor nation in the world in which some one shall not have been saved?"<sup>78</sup>

Sedulius Scottus: "Or: 'All men,' that is, every gender, nation, condition, etc."<sup>79</sup>

In the ninth-century debate on predestination, sparked by a Benedictine monk named Gortschalk, theologians interpreted 1 Tim. 2:4 in manners akin to both the restrictive view of Fulgentius and the position where God wants to save absolutely everyone but awaits their willingness.<sup>80</sup> The Council of Tousey in 860, at which

77. The commentary of Cassiodorus's students (pseudo-Primastius) (PL 68: 663): "Nam iuxta figuram synecdochen hic, omnes, a parte totum debemus accipere." On its authorship, see David W. Johnson, *Purging the Poison: The Revision of Pelagius' Pauline Commentaries by Cassiodorus and His Students*, Ph.D. diss. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1989), 8–14.

78. Whitley Stokes and John Strachan, eds., *Theodore Palaeologus: A Collection of Old-Irish Glosses Scholia Prose and Verse*, vol. 1: Biblical Glosses and Scholia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901), 681.

79. Hermann Josef Frede and Herbert Stanjek, eds., *Sedulii Scotti Collectanum in Apostolum II, in Epistolas ad Corinthios usque ad Hebraeos* (Freiburg: Herder, 1997), 663: "Omnes homines, hoc est omnem sexum, gentem, conditionem, et reliqua."

80. On the Gortschalk controversy, Victor Genke and Francis X. Gumerlock, *Gortschalk and a Medieval Predestination Controversy: Texts Translated from the Lat-*



the views of Gotschalk's opponent Hincmar of Reims held sway, brought an official end to the predestination controversy. Its canons simply stated that God "wants all men to be saved and no one to perish."<sup>81</sup>

Today, the universality of God's saving will, based in large part upon 1 Tim. 2:4, is part of Catholic doctrine. Nevertheless, according to Josephine Lombardi, while the magisterium upholds God's desire to save all people, it has not "solemnly defined" the doctrine. Hence, current discussions are ongoing, centering upon the inclusion of people from non-Christian religious traditions in the saving will of God.<sup>82</sup> The extent of God's saving will is also being currently debated within evangelical Protestantism. Those from "Arminian" traditions tend to believe in God's desire to save all people, even if all will not be saved in the end, while others in the Calvinist tradition limit the saving will of God to the predestined and interpret "all" in 1 Tim. 2:4 as "all kinds" of people.<sup>83</sup>

In the sixth century, Fulgentius of Ruspe became involved in

the exchange that was going on in New Rome, between John Maxentius and his band of Scythian monks on the one side and the bishop Possessor and his followers on the other, over the dynamics of grace and free will. Based on the reports of the Scythian monks, Fulgentius sided with them, believing that Possessor and his party were giving undue priority to the role of free will in salvation. For according to the information Fulgentius had received from them, Possessor was making the efficacy of God's saving will dependent upon human freedom and was using 1 Tim. 2:4 as support. For an alternative interpretation of 1 Tim. 2:4, Fulgentius, "the most authoritative and important figure of African Christianity in the late fifth and early sixth centuries," drew upon interpretive theory acquired through his classical education and African theological heritage, including the literary monuments of Augustine.<sup>84</sup> He saw "all" in 1 Tim. 2:4 as a figure of synecdoche, a universal term employed by the Apostle to really designate only a part. Through this interpretation, Fulgentius found what seemed to him the best way to preserve the invincibility of God's will and the complete gratuity of human salvation.

84. Claudio Moreschini and Enrico Norelli, eds., *Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature: A Literary History*, vol. 2, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005), 472.

in (Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press, 2010); Gumerlock, "Gotschalk of Orsha: A Medieval Predestinarian," *Kernos* 22: 3 (December 2007): 17–34; Bernard Bollert, *Gotschalk d'Orshais de Fulda à Hautvillers: une dissidence* (Paris: Société des Écrivains, 2004); David Ganz, "The Debate on Predestination," in Margarete T. Gibson and Janet L. Nelson, eds., *Charles the Bald. Court and Kingdom*, 2nd ed. (Brookfield, Conn.: Variorum, 1990), 283–302.

81. Preserved in Hincmar of Reims, *Epistola* 21 (PL 126: 122–32 at 123): "Qui vult omnes homines salvos fieri, et neminem vult perire."

82. Josephine Lombardi, *What Are They Saying about the Universal Saving Will of God?* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist, 2008), 7; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist, 1994), part 1, art. 2:74 (p. 24); part 1, "Profession of Faith," 851 (p. 223); and part 4.III.2822 (p. 677).

83. On the Arminian side, see Dave Hunt, *What Lane Is This? Calvinism's Misrepresentation of God*, updated and expanded (Bend, Ore.: Berean Call, 2004), 261, 340–44; and Norman Geisler, *Chosen But Free*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Bethany, 2001), 50, 61, 78, 81, 140, 207. On the Calvinist side, James White, *The Potter's Freedom* (Amityville, Ky.: Calvary Press Publishing, 2000), 140, 145. Some with Calvinist tendencies insist on both predestination and a sincere universal saving will of God, for example, John Piper, "Are There Two Wills in God? Divine Election and God's Desire for All to Be Saved," in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2000), 107–31.



# GRACE FOR GRACE

The Debates after Augustine  
and Pelagius

Edited by Alexander Y. Hwang,  
Brian J. Matz, and Augustine Casiday



THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF  
AMERICA PRESS Washington, D.C.

2014