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DOCTRINAL CONTROVERSIES
OF THE CAROLINGIAN RENAISSANCE:
GOTTSCHALK OF ORBAIS' TEACHINGS
ON PREDESTINATION*

This paper is intended to outline the main areas of controversy in the dispute over predestination in the 9th century, which shook up or electrified the whole world of contemporary Western Christianity and was the most serious doctrinal crisis since Christian antiquity. In the first part I will sketch out the consequences of the writings of St. Augustine and the revival of scientific life and theological and philosophical reflection, which resulted in the emergence of new solutions and aporias in Christian doctrine—the dispute over the Eucharist and the controversy about *trina deitas*. In the second part, which constitutes the main body of the article, I will focus on the presentation of four sources of controversies in the dispute over predestination, whose inventor and proponent was Gottschalk of Orbais, namely: (i) the concept of God, (ii) the meaning of grace, nature and free will, (iii) the relation of foreknowledge to predestination, and (iv) the doctrine of redemption, i.e., in particular, the relation of justice to mercy. The article is mainly an attempt at an interpretation of the texts of the epoch, mainly by Gottschalk of Orbais¹ and his adversary, Hincmar of Reims.² I will point out the dif-

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* The paper was prepared under the aegis of research project OPUS: *The Philosophical Problem of Determinism: from St. Augustine to Alvin Plantinga. Human Freedom and Theistic Hypothesis*, NCN: UMO-2014/2015/B/HS1/00406, headed by Prof. Agnieszka Kijewska, KUL.

¹ Gottschalk was born about 803 in Saxony, in the family of a count named Bernus, and died in October 868. He was delivered as an oblate child, together with his inheritance, to the monastery of Fulda in Charlemagne's lifetime. Fulda was an important educational center, especially

faculties in discussing the issue and outline what attempts at solving this problem have taken place in the following centuries.

I.

The phenomenon of the Carolingian Renaissance is usually defined as a restoration of antique cultural patterns, which largely resulted in the restoration of education (the work of Alcuin of York, teaching within the framework of the *septem artes liberales*—*trivium* and *quadrivium*), and the resumption of theological studies (Sacred Scripture) and philosophical investigations. In the field of theology and philosophy St. Augustine was an unquestioned authority. But insightful reading of the writings of Augustine and other Fathers of the Church by the ninth-century scholars led to the questioning of the inherited Augustinian synthesis at several points and to attempts to interpret it. The new interpretations of the Augustinian synthesis and the research carried out on it, or straightforward attempts to go beyond it, have, however, resulted in controversies. Hence, directly or indirectly, it was Augustine's texts that were the source of the disputes of that era. The three

after 803, when Rabanus Maurus (784–856), Alcuin's pupil, became the head of its school. In Fulda Gottschalk studied Latin, the Bible, the fathers, and the basics of the classical literature. Before 840, deserting his monastery, he went to Italy, and preached there his doctrine of double predestination; Gottschalk of Orbais taught that God's predestination is twofold, that is, before the creation the Creator predestined some men to salvation and others to hell. Reaction of his former abbot Rabanus Maurus and his metropolitan Hincmar of Reims started the 9th century predestination controversy, which was made even more acute by the intervention of John Scot Eriugena. Though many defended Gottschalk's thoroughly Augustinian theology (among others, Lupus of Ferrières, Ratramnus of Corbie, Prudentius of Troyes and Florus of Lyons), Gottschalk was imprisoned at the monastery of Hautvilliers where he later died having several times refused to renounce his views. The theological works of Gottschalk in Latin are the following: *Confessio brevior*, *Confessio prolixior*, *De trina deitate*, *De praedestinatione*. Poetry of Gottschalk: *Ut quid iubes*, *Ad Ratramnum*, *Christe mearum lux tenebrarum*, *Spes mea Christe*, *O Deus miseri misere-re servi* and many others. See *Gottschalk & A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, ed. and trans. Victor Genke and Francis X. Gumerlock (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2010), 7–63; also "Gottschalk Homepage," accessed 8.09.2017, <http://gottschalk.inrebus.com/intro.html>; also *Muza łacińska. Antologia poezji wczesnochrześcijańskiej i średniowiecznej*, ed. Marek Starowieyski (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 2007).

²Hincmar of Rheims (806–882), from 845 Archbishop of Reims, was the main opponent of Gottschalk in the dispute about predestination and in the controversy about *trina deitas*. His criticisms led to the condemnation of Gottschalk's teachings and his imprisonment. Hincmar was the author of several works directed against Gottschalk, including: *De una et non trina deitate* (PL 125, 473–618), *De praedestinatione Dei et libero arbitrio* (PL 125, 65–474), *Epistola ad reclusos et simplices suae dioceseos*. See *Gottschalk & A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 169.

main areas of controversy are the Eucharist, the trinitarian problem—*trina deitas*—and predestination.

1. EUCHARIST

The reason was the vagueness of Augustine's position regarding the actual presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist.³ Nonetheless, the direct impulse to the dispute was given in 843 by Charles the Bald's asking the Corbie monks whether the Eucharistic conversion of bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus is done *in mysterio*, in a symbolic form or *in veritate*, in reality. Two monks from the Corbie monastery participated in the discussion: Ratramnus of Corbie and Paschasius Radbertus. Their answer to both questions (that is, for the latter and the former question) was affirmative, but they differed in their way of explaining the phenomenon. Paschasius gave an explanation in the spirit of material realism, i.e., the true material body and blood of Jesus, which he laid down in his letter *De corpore et sanguine Domini*. Ratramnus, in turn, gave a solution to the nature of the sacrament in a more symbolic and spiritual sense "as a saving food for the soul. To be able to perform such a role, it must be free from all accidents involving space and time, as well as from the proper matter of destruction."⁴ This controversy will find its way into the eleventh century, for example in the dispute of the dialectics with the anti-dialectics (Berengarius of Tour, Lanfranc and others) and will make a career in the Reformation era.

2. TRINA DEITAS

In a way, the discussion of the dogma of the Holy Trinity is a continuation of the controversy between Spanish bishops Elipantus of Toledo and Felix of Urgel, the advocates of the Adoptionism,⁵ in the 8th and 9th cen-

³ Jaroslav PELIKAN, *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600–1300)*, vol. 3 (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago, 1978), 74.

⁴ Giulio D'ONOFRIO, *Historia teologii. Epoka średniowiecza*, vol. 2, trans. Wiesław Szymona (Kraków: Wydawnictwo "M," 2005), 91.

⁵ Spanish Adoptionism, or *hispanicus error*, dates back to the eighth century and was the source of a lively theological discussion in the West in those days. Its main protagonists were the archbishop of Toledo Elipantus and bishop Felix of Urgel. Out of the Catholic doctrine of the two natures in Christ, Elipantus of Toledo drew a conclusion discordant with the orthodoxy, that the begotten Son of Mary is not a born Son of God, but a Son of God by adoption through grace. Fur-

turies, where the refinements of the Christological disputes of antiquity, such as Monophysitism and Nestorianism, could be found. In the new episode of the Trinitarian dispute, Gottschalk of Orbais, supported by Ratramnus of Corbie, took on the protagonist's role. The subject of controversy was whether it was correct to speak of a "trine deity"—*trina deitas*. Gottschalk's intention was to find a formula that would not necessarily result in the conclusion that "humanity was assumed not only by the Son, but at the same time by the Father and the Holy Spirit, since it was evidently the divinity that assumed the humanity."⁶ Nevertheless, such an approach, i.e. *trina deitas*, unintentionally had the consequence of concluding that every person of the Trinity had its own divinity and was its own deity, which came dangerously close to tritheism, and was eagerly picked up by Gottschalk's adversaries, like Hincmar of Reims, who was instrumental in condemning the doctrine at the synod of Soissons in 853. The synod's ruling states the inadequacy of ascribing any plural modifiers or any multiplication to the noun *deitas* combining any multiplication statements because *deitas* means one divine substance.⁷

3. PREDESTINATION

The dispute over predestination in the ninth century is a long echo of the teachings of St. Augustine from the discussion with Pelagianism in his late treatises⁸ and a returning reflection of the vagueness of the Church's position worked out at the synod of Orange in 529,⁹ where the defended Augustine's

ther consequences of this reasoning led Elipantus to declare that Christ is not the only son of God, but only the firstborn among many adopted. Felix, in turn, believed that Christ is only God by name, hence his formula *deus nuncupativus*. The opponents of Spanish Adoptionism were, among others, Alcuin and Agobard of Lyon. Spanish Adoptionism was condemned as a heresy by Pope Hadrian I and the synods of Regensburg (794), Frankfurt am Main (794), Friuli (796) and Aachen (799). Cf. Karl RAHNER and Herbert VORGRIMLER, *Mały słownik teologiczny*, trans. Tadeusz Mieszkowski and Paweł Pachciarek (Warszawa: PAX, 1987), 2; also J. PELIKAN, *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600–1300)*, vol. 3, 52 ff.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁷ See G. D'ONOFRIO, *Historia teologii. Epoka średniowiecza*, vol. 2, 90.

⁸ See St. Augustine's treaties from the period of the dispute with Pelagianism: *De correptione et gratia*; *De praedestinatione Sanctorum*; *De gratia et libero arbitrio*; *De dono perseverantiae*; *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum*.

⁹ The Synod of Orange in 529 was convened because of a controversy between the teachings of Augustine and Pelagius. This controversy concerned the responsibility of man for his salvation and the role of God's grace. Pelagians believed that people were born innocent, i.e., that there was no such thing as a sinful nature or original sin. As a result, they maintained that in this life one could achieve a state of sinless perfection. At the Synod of Orange, the Semi-Pelagian

teaching of grace left the imprecise, still ambiguous and sometimes doubtful doctrine of Augustine on predestination from the point of view of Catholic orthodoxy. where the defended Augustine's teaching on grace eliminated or left imprecise, still ambiguous and sometimes questionable from the orthodox point of view, Augustine's doctrine of predestination.

The protagonist and main figure of the last two controversies was the Benedictine monk Gottschalk of Orbais, and his chief adversary Hincmar, bishop of Reims, although the whole scientific world of the West was largely involved in this dispute.¹⁰ According to Hincmar, Gottschalk "has the habit of inventing new and unheard of things that are contrary to the ancient

doctrine was dealt with, that mankind, despite its fallen and sinful nature, was still good enough to be able to obtain the grace of God through an act of the unregenerate human will. By reading the Canons of the Synod of Orange, you can see where John Calvin drew his views on the complete corruption of the human race.

This is illustrated by C. Hodge, a Presbyterian theologian, and therefore a predestinationist, who characterized the controversy over predestination in the following centuries as a reflection of the ever-reviving Semi-Pelagianism, also treating Gottschalk's condemnation as a manifestation of Semi-Pelagianism in the institutional doctrine of the Catholic Church: "Semi-Pelagians agreed, however, in rejecting the Pelagian doctrine, that Adam's sin injured only himself; they admitted that the effects of that sin passed on all men, affecting both the soul and body. It rendered the body mortal, and liable to disease and suffering; and the soul it weakened, so that it became prone to evil and incapable, without divine assistance, of doing anything spiritually good. But as against Augustine they held, at least according to the statements of Prosper and Hilary, the advocates of Augustinianism in the south of France, (1.) That the beginning of salvation is with man. Man begins to seek God, and then God aids him. (2.) That this incipient turning of the soul towards God is something good, and in one sense meritorious. (3.) That the soul, in virtue of its liberty of will or ability for good, coöperates with the grace of God in regeneration as well as in sanctification. That these charges were well founded may be inferred from the decisions of the councils of Orange and Valence, A.D. 529, in which the doctrines of Augustine were again sanctioned. As the decisions of those councils were ratified by the Pope they were, according to the papal theory, declared to be the faith of the Church. [...] The decisions of the councils of Orange and Valence in favour of Augustinianism, did not arrest the controversy. The Semi-Pelagian party still continued numerous and active, and so far gained the ascendancy, that in the ninth century Gottschalk was condemned for teaching the doctrine of predestination in the sense of Augustine. From this period to the time of the Reformation and the decisions of the Council of Trent, great diversity of opinion prevailed in the Latin Church on all the questions relating to sin, grace, and predestination." Charles HODGE, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2005), 167–8.

¹⁰ Gottschalk's appeal to the authority of Augustine and, especially, of Gregory the Great and others, in defending his doctrine of double predestination gained him many proponents among the representatives of the Franconian religious culture, such as Lupus of Ferrieres, a learned philologist, bishop Prudence of Troyes and Ratramnus of Corbie, theologian and eminent expert in *artes liberales*. The opposing theological party, which was formed by, among others, Hincmar of Reims, Rabanus Maurus, Pardulus, Bishop of Laon and John Scotus Eriugena, asked for doctrinal support against Gottschalk. See G. D'ONOFRIO, *Historia teologii. Epoka sredniowiecza*, vol. 2, 86–7.

understanding of orthodoxy,”¹¹ hence “it is not unusual if he says such things—as we have stated above—for since his childhood he has sought innovative ways of expressing his thoughts and is still trying to discover how he could say things no one else says.”¹² Gottschalk, referring to Augustine, taught about the infallible effectiveness of God’s judgment, which determines the saints for the good and the wicked for evil, hence proclaiming theological determinism, more dangerous here since it engaged the authority of St. Augustine. His teaching was first condemned by the Synod of Mainz in 848, at the request of Rabanus Maurus, first the abbot of Fulda, where Gottschalk had previously stayed as a monk, and then bishop of Mainz. Tried and convicted, Gottschalk was sent under the jurisdiction of his bishop, Hincmar of Reims—Gottschalk’s monastery was situated in this bishop’s diocese—and imprisoned in the Hautvillers monastery. It is in that monastery that, already a prisoner, he draws up his writings and from there he distributes them. He defends his claims and simultaneously accuses his opponents of heresy. In these writings, the earliest being *Confessio brevior*, then *Confessio prolixior* and *De praedestinatione*, he formulates the essential theses of his teaching, “how the unity of God’s nature is not harmed by the diversification of the effects of God’s will.”¹³ It is in *Confessio prolixior* that he builds the framework of his theory of double predestination, and in *De praedestinatione* he explains it extensively and defends it.

II.

What is thus the main problem which emerges if we accept the teaching of predestination? Or, formulating a broader and more general question, what are the consequences for the image of man and the world, if we assume the hypothesis of classical theism, that is, the existence of the Christian God with his necessary attributes of omnipotence, omniscience and at the same

¹¹ “Haec autem audiens Gothescalcus, Orbacensis manasterii Rhemensis Ecclesiae pseudo-monachus, tam invidia mei, quem in Ecclesia cantari trinam deitatem vetuisse audierat, quam more suo, qui nova et antea inaudita, canaeque orthodoxorum intelligentiae contraria adinvenire, ac proferre ab ineunte aetate suae vitiosae indolis delectabiliter studuit, et in eodem studio permansit inde plurima scribere, et ad quoscumque potuit, primum latenter deinde quantum sibi licuit, aperte mittere procuravit.” HINCMAR RHEMENSIS, *De una et non trina deitate* (PL 125, 475).

¹² “Et non est mirum, si talia ut praemisimus dicit, qui ab ineunte aetate semper vocum novitates exquisivit, et adhuc semper inquirat, quatenus talia dicens, quae nemo aliud dicit, innotesci et si non de bonis vel pessimis possit.” Ibid. (PL 125, 588).

¹³ G. D’ONOFRIO, *Historia teologii. Epoka średniowiecza*, vol. 2, 86.

time His perfect goodness? This is just a single problem, but a crucial one. Christian philosophy and theology had to face it from their beginnings. The problem, therefore, of man's freedom and the existence of an omnipotent God was all the more burdensome for at least two reasons: 1) the issue was never formulated in this way by ancient Greek philosophy, and hence there was a need to develop a completely new dogmatic solution to the problem of the relation of the freedom of man to God's foreknowledge and predestination (here comes the problem of the so-called *futura contingentia* in its theological version); and 2) the inadequate solution of the above-mentioned problem and, in particular, of the issue of the predestination brought with it great practical consequences for the Christian community: a) it eliminated free will, b) removed responsibility from individuals, and c) questioned Christ's voluntary redemption of sin.¹⁴ Ignoring nuances, if it is assumed that predestination exists, then we eliminate freedom from the world, and if we accept the existence of freedom in the world, we eliminate predestination from the world, the form of God's causal activity in the matters of the world, and specifically in human matters, or at least somehow limit God's omnipotence. Thinkers wishing to remain in harmony with Christian doctrine could accept neither the former nor the latter of the above-mentioned solutions without risking the allegation of unorthodoxy; hence, from Christian antiquity there existed the awareness among Christian theologians and philosophers of the necessity of developing a position that would allow for a safe passage between the Charybdis of theological determinism and the Scylla of the accidentalization of God's knowledge and of limiting the omnipotence of God, in order to save human freedom. Thus Christian antiquity, and then centuries of Western history, have complicated the problem of divine predestination and hence significantly expanded the conceptual grid or lexicon in relation to this issue, especially since the Reformation.¹⁵

1. The primary theses of Gottschalk concerning predestination. So the source of the problem of predestination, and thus the controversy around it, is somehow Christianity itself, or the dogma of faith. Undoubtedly, the overwhelming influence of St. Augustine is present there, because of his authority and influence, and because it was he who clearly set the issue of human free-

¹⁴ Cf. Monika MICHAŁOWSKA, "Spór o predestynację w renesansie karolińskim—'De predestinatione Dei' Jana Szkota Eriugeny," *Etyka* 37 (2004): 49–68.

¹⁵ See Victor GENKE, "Gottschalk of Orbais and the Controversy over his Teaching on Two-fold Predestination," available at "The Lectio Divina," accessed May 29, 2017, http://www.lectio-divina.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=feature.display&feature_id=7.

dom¹⁶ and God's foreknowledge first in the dialogue *De libero arbitrio*, and then extended the issue to the question of predestination and found its first solutions in the treatises of the period of the discussion with Pelagianism.¹⁷ Bearing in mind the overwhelming influence of St. Augustine, or, more generally, the Augustine synthesis mentioned above, for the theological and philosophical reflection of the epoch, it seems that it can be justifiably stated that the problem of predestination in St. Augustine's thought appears as a derivative or consequence of the central position of grace and the emphasis on its primacy in his teaching. From St. Augustine's statement that God works "for the condemnation of the righteously destined for punishment and for the salvation of those destined for grace"¹⁸ is only a small step to drawing the final consequences in the form of the thesis of the predestination of some to salvation and the others to death. These conclusions were drawn and openly proclaimed by Gottschalk,¹⁹ and then also, with more subtlety, by his followers. It is indisputable that the doctrine of double predestination has "somehow" its origins in the inaccurate or simply obscure texts of St. Augustine, who addressed this issue in many of his writings. However, it is also unquestionable that the analysis of the texts by Gottschalk and Ratramnus of Corbie about double predestination clearly indicates that their conclusions are more appropriate for Isidore of Seville rather than for Augustine himself.²⁰

On this Saint Isidore also speaks in this manner: "Predestination is twofold, either of the elect to rest or of the reprobate to death."²¹ For he does not say that there are two predestinations, because there are not. But he says "a twofold," that is, a bipartite one, because you, Lord, spoke once of how by one, but still by a twofold predestination, you both gratuitously justify and eternally save the elect and also rightly reject and justly condemn the reprobate...²²

¹⁶ Of course, the beginnings of reflection on the problem of free will in Christianity date back to the time of the apologists, like Irenaeus of Lyons and his discussion of gnosticism in *Adversus haereses*; nevertheless, it seems that the issues concerning freedom were not considered in a profound and systematic way until St. Augustine.

¹⁷ See footnote 6

¹⁸ AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, *Enchiridion*, 26, 100 (CCSL 46, 103).

¹⁹ J. PELIKAN, *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600–1300)*, vol. 3, 83 ff.

²⁰ Brian J. Matz puts forward a well documented thesis that the direct source of the concept of double predestination was not so much the texts of St. Augustine, as those of Isidore of Seville. See Brian J. MATZ, "Augustine in the Predestination Controversy of Ninth Century. Part I: The Double Predestinarians Gottschalk of Orbais and Ratramnus of Corbie," *Augustinian Studies* 46, 2 (2015), 155–184, esp. 156.

²¹ ISIDORUS, *Sententiae*, 2, 6 (CCSL 111, 103; PL 83, 606A).

²² "Sanctus etiam Isidorus inde sic dicit: «Gemina est praedestinatio, siue electorum ad requiem, siue reprobatorum ad mortem.» Non enim ait: duae sunt quia non sunt, sed gemina id est

Thus, God's predestination in giving grace to certain people results in the following consequences:

- i) eternal life is for the elect,
- ii) the elect are destined for eternal life.

Similarly, God's predestination to judge the condemned leads to the following two consequences:

- i) eternal punishment is for the damned,
- ii) the damned are destined for eternal punishment.²³

None of the former effects of God's predestination raised any doubts, because these effects are consistent with the doctrine of faith that God predestines only good things by grace and by the power of judgment. Objections and controversies, however, were aroused by the latter results of God's predestination, because: a) they introduced a certain kind of necessity into God's acts, for if God predestined the elect to eternal life, then he must predestine the rejected for condemnation, b) and consequently this reasoning necessitates God for action in a specific and special way for the life and salvation of the elect and for the death and condemnation of the rejected. These theses clearly led to theological determinism, because they introduced necessity into the work of God, and into the world, and thus eliminated freedom.²⁴ Thus, the negation of freedom struck paradoxically, and contrary perhaps to Gottschalk's intentions, into the doctrine of salvation and redemption, the nucleus of which is the free action of God and the freedom of man who, by virtue of his free will, can enter into the free act of God through grace imparted by Him. Further still, evident in Gottschalk's writings and emphasized by his opponents, is a particular kind of theocentricism, which involves an emphasis on the simplicity of God, and His immutability, accompanied by neglect of the anthropological aspect, i.e., human freedom. Hence Hincmar's objection that Gottschalk teaches the doctrine of grace and neglects the doctrine of free will.²⁵ The doctrine of double predestination was thus the effect of the doctrine of God, his simplicity and omnipotence, as well as his absolute immutability, for if God did not do as he predestined,

bipartita, quia semel tu domine locutus es, qualiter una quidem sed tamen gemina praedestinatione et electos gratis iustifices ac perpetim salues et reprobos quoque merito refutes iusteque condemnes." "Confessio prolixior," 10, in *Œuvres théologiques et grammaticales de Godescalc d'Orbais*, ed. Dom Cyrille Lambot (Leuven: Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense, 1945), 67, v. 2–8; *Gottschalk & a Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 86.

²³ See. B.J. MATZ, "Augustine in the Predestination Controversy," 155–184, esp. 158.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ See J. PELIKAN, *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600–1300)*, vol. 3, 82 ff.

he would have to change.²⁶ This doctrine of God also produces the other consequences of Gottschalk's views, such as the identification of foreknowledge with predestination, and grace with God.²⁷

2. The method of argumentation. The second element to be noted in these introductory notes is the specific character of Gottschalk's argument. Gottschalk seems to be well-acquainted with the rules of dialectics or logic²⁸ and argumentation in rhetoric, but is most likely to use arguments based on the principles of natural language grammar. Where does this come from? According to Gottschalk, who reasons in the spirit of Platonic realism, there is a *close* connection between *ordo rerum* and *ordo idearum*, i.e., between things and linguistic concepts, because both the order of the world and the grammatical rules of language come from God as their creator. The perfection and unchangeable stability of the world is reflected in language and its grammatical rules. "The material richness of this cosmic 'ordo' is not merely formal, because it contains the immutable and eternal correlation between individual deeds and the repayment set for them by God, and in consequence, ethically engages moral values and the destiny of the individual."²⁹ Such assumptions seem to underlie the argument of dual predestination (*praedestinatio est gemina*) and for the controversial term "trine deity" (*trina deitas*). In the first case, the term *geminus* refers to a dual or double predestination, which nevertheless is one, because it exists in the unity of the single God's will, and in the other case the distributive numeral *trinus* is used to express the triple or ternary nature of divine persons that exist in numerically one substance. Therefore, the core of this argumentation is the logical parallelism between language and the world of things. Gottschalk shows here a deep trust in reason and principles of reasoning, which he repeatedly expresses using the Aristotelian schemata of inference, as in *De praedestinatione* quoting Hieronymus' *In epistulam ad Galatas*:

If righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain. (Gal 2:21).

But Christ did not die in vain.

Therefore, righteousness does not come through the law.³⁰

²⁶ See *Confessio prolixior*.

²⁷ See *De praedestinatione*, VII [8].

²⁸ Gottschalk devotes syllogism a whole chapter of *De praedestinatione*. See „De syllogismus,” in *De praedestinatione*, IX [5], 206–7.

²⁹ G. D'ONOFRIO, *Historia teologii. Epoka średniowiecza*, vol. 2, 86.

³⁰ „De praedestinatione,” IX [5], in *Œuvres théologiques et grammaticales de Godescalc d'Orbais*, 207, v. 1–3; *Gottschalk & A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 123.

Or:

If the reprobate have not been predestined to death, they are not destined for it. However, they are destined for it, for it is written: *But you, God, will bring them down into the pit of destruction* (Ps 54:24).

Therefore, they have already been predestined to it.³¹

3. The specific secondary theses of Gottschalk concerning predestination. When trying to present Gottschalk's doctrine of predestination, it would seem most appropriate to present the main areas of controversy or criticism from his adversaries, which can be reduced to four points.

A. The simplicity and immutability of God and predestination

For you would of course have predestined the punishment of eternal death for them without reason unless you had also predestined them for it. For they would not go to it unless they were destined, and they would not of course be destined unless they had been predestined, since you always existed before all ages, because you cannot be mutable in any way even for a moment. And you would be shown to be mutable through all ages thereafter, if—God forbid!—any of the reprobate were destined for that, who had not been predestined.³²

For Gottschalk, therefore, predestination is a necessary consequence of the immutability of God, for, if we do not recognize God's categorical decision in relation to both the elect and the reprobate, it results in a change in God. The consequence of assuming the absolute immutability of God was the abolition of the difference between God's foreknowledge and predestination; God's foreknowledge of sin is the basis of destining a man for damnation,³³ because

³¹ *Ibid.*, 207, v. 23–25; *Gottschalk & A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 124.

³² “Non enim irent nisi destinati neque profecto destinarentur nisi essent praedestinati, quippe cum ipse et ante omnia saecula semper esses, quod ne ad momentum quidem modo quolibet esse potes mutabilis, et per omnia postmodum saecula probareris esse mutatus, si uel ullus quod absit reprobatorum illuc esset destinatus qui non fuisset praedestinatus.” “Confessio prolixior,” 2, in *Œuvres théologiques et grammaticales de Godescalc d’Orbais*, 56; *Gottschalk & A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 75.

³³ Gottschalk's statement in his first letter—his manifesto, *Confessio brevior*, is also symptomatic: “I believe and confess that the omnipotent and immutable God has gratuitously foreknown and predestined the holy angels and elect human beings to eternal life, and that he equally predestined the devil himself, the head of all demons, with all of his apostate angels and also with all reprobate human beings, namely, his members, to rightly eternal death, on account of their own future, most certainly foreknown evil merits, through his most righteous judgment.” *Gottschalk & A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 71.

it is in accord with “predestination which you have unchangeably ordered by irrevocable foreordination.”³⁴

B. Grace, nature, free will

If you look at these texts, then you certainly can also see that, just as no one can say that a creature is greater than the creator or something made is greater than its maker, so no one who thinks healthy thoughts can ever say that nature is greater than grace, since grace is of course God and therefore always omnipotent, but nature without grace is altogether powerless. Is not grace God and omnipotent, which gratuitously sets free and saves whomever it wants?³⁵

Gottschalk in this passage, comparing the creator and the creature, on the one hand, and grace and nature, on the other, clearly indicates the significant disproportion of the latter parts of the comparison to the former ones. The author explicitly points to the identity of grace with God, with his omnipotence and omniscience, and a further consequence of this disproportion is the recognition of nature in opposition to grace—God, for being helpless and in fact almost non-free. The distance between God’s power and freedom and rational minds in Gottschalk’s teaching is so great that it seems to eradicate man’s free choice completely.

Therefore, let nature that is being vitiated, wounded, debilitated, corrupted countless times, even thousands of times fall silent, because nature that is uncorrupted cannot be truly compared nor corrupted nature—God forbid!—preferred to the creator. But neither can the incorruptible nature of the sort that

“Credo et confiteor deum omnipotentem et incommutabilem praescisse et praedestinasse angelos sanctos et homines electos ad uitam gratis aeternam, et ipsum diabolum caput omnium daemoniorum cum omnibus angelis suis apostaticis et cum ipsis quoque uniuersis hominibus reprobis membris uidelicet suis propter praescita certissime ipsorum propria futura mala merita praedestinasse pariter per iustissimum iudicium suum in mortem merito sempiternam [...]” “Confessio breuior,” in *Œuvres théologiques et grammaticales de Godescalc d’Orbais*, 52.

³⁴ “[...] in praedestinatione quam disposuisti incommutabiliter inretractabili praedestinatione.” “Confessio prolixior,” VII [6], in *Œuvres théologiques et grammaticales de Godescalc d’Orbais*, 61, v. 33–62, v. 2; *Gottschalk & A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 80.

³⁵ “Ista si perspicis, profecto simul etiam perspicere potes quod sicut nemo potest dicere maiorem creatore creaturam siue factore facturam sic omnino dicere nemo sanum sapiens potest ullo modo gratia maiorem esse naturam, quippe cum gratia sit deus ac per hoc semper omnipotens at natura sine gratia penitus impotens. Annon est gratia deus et omnipotens quae quoscumque uult liberat gratis et saluat?” “De praedestinatione,” VII [8], in *Œuvres théologiques et grammaticales de Godescalc d’Orbais*, 184, v. 28–185, v. 7; *Gottschalk & A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 110–11.

is in the most blessed angels and that will at some time be gratuitously in us through grace be so compared or preferred.³⁶

The world, in Gottschalk's doctrine, breaks up into two distinct parts: God, omnipotent and immutable, and a variable, corrupted nature. Human freedom is part of contaminated nature, and the restitution of this human nature can only take place through an act of God, and that act is grace. Grace is undeserved and is an autonomous act of the Creator's decision; in the eschatological perspective, grace, which is a condition of salvation, is the principal element of the restitution of the sin-corrupted cosmic order, including the order of human nature, for

clearly that the grace of God undoubtedly is God. For just as the hand of the Lord, the arm of the Lord, and the mercy of God is God the Son, and just as the finger of God, the gift of God, and the heart of God is the Holy Spirit, so the grace of God is either God the Son or God the Holy Spirit. Both the Son and the Holy Spirit are called grace because each of them is given to us by God the Father gratuitously.³⁷

Therefore, Hincmar's objection concerning Gottschalk's teaching that the doctrine of grace is burdened by the lack of the doctrine of free will, seems reasonable.³⁸

C. Foreknowledge and predestination

[...] it is certainly evident and sufficient clear and obvious to anyone with sound wisdom that you have foreknown and predestined instantly, that is, without any interval, that is, at one and the same time before the ages, each and every one of your works, for according to what was said by Isaiah: *You have produced the things that will be.*³⁹

³⁶ "Conticescat igitur innumeris uicibus immo milibus uitata uulnerata debilitata corrupta natura quia reuera creatori non potest incorrupta conferri nedum corrupta praeferi quod absit creatura, sed nec incorruptibilis qualis est in beatissimis angelis et quandoque per gratiam erit gratis in nobis." "De praedestinatione," VII [8], in *Œuvres théologiques et grammaticales de Godescalc d'Orbais*, 185, v. 25–186, v. 3; *Gottschalk & A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 111.

³⁷ "[...] gratiam dei sine dubio deum esse. Sicut enim manus domini dextera domini brachium domini et misericordia dei deus est filius, et sicut digitus dei donum dei et calor dei deus est spiritus sanctus, ita gratia dei uel deus filius est uel deus spiritus sanctus est. Ob id autem tam filius quam spiritus sanctus gratia uocatur quia gratis uterque nobis a deo patre datur." "De praedestinatione," VII [8], in *Œuvres théologiques et grammaticales de Godescalc d'Orbais*, 185, v. 18–24; *Gottschalk & A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 111.

³⁸ J. PELIKAN, *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600–1300)*, vol. 3, 82.

³⁹ "[...] liquet prorsus euidenter ac cuius sanum sapienti claret omnino satis patenter praescisse et praedestinasse te mox absque ullo scilicet interuallo utpote simul et semel ante saecula, tam cuncta quam singula opera tua, quippe qui iuxta quod dictum est ab Esaia fecisti quae sunt

For Gottschalk foreknowledge is the same as predestination. This is due to the fact that according to Gottschalk, the subject of God's knowledge is what was, is or will be, and everything that exists, exists through the act of God's will, because God also knows what he wants. All of God's acts have existed eternally and unchangeably in His eternal and unchanging plan.

Therefore, Lord, since your will is everlasting along with your foreknowledge [...] and since with your omnipotence, to foreknow is the same as to will, at least concerning your works [...] and since for you to will is also the same as to have done [...] it is undoubtedly clear that whatever is going to be externally in your works has already been done by you in predestination...⁴⁰

Gottschalk does not notice that foreknowledge is a broader concept, because it includes not only what is, but also what is possible but never will happen, i.e., will not be realized. Identifying foreknowledge with predestination necessarily results in blaming God for the evil in the world. This was one of the main objections formulated by Gottschalk's opponents, Hincmar of Reims and Rabanus Maurus. In his letter to the faithful of his diocese, *Ad simplices et reclusos suae dioecesis* Hincmar directly draws Gottschalk's attention to the deficiency of the distinction⁴¹ between God's foreknowledge, which encompasses equally the knowledge of the good and evil in the world, and predestination, which God employs for the restitution of the order in the world that has been destroyed by human sin; the purpose and the object of predestination are, therefore, the redemption of His creation from the bonds of evil and sin, and the consequence of this effective will of God is the salvation of the righteous, not the punishment of the reprobate, who are individually responsible for their condemnation.⁴²

futura." "Confessio prolixior," 3, in *Œuvres théologiques et grammaticales de Godescalc d'Orbais*, 56, v. 26–31; *Gottschalk & A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 75.

⁴⁰ "Igitur cum sempiterna sit domine cum praescientia uoluntas tua [...] et apud omnipotentiam tuam de operibus duntaxat tuis hoc sit praescire quod uelle [...] manifestum est procul dubio quicquid foras futurum est in opere iam factum esse a te in praedestinatione [...]." "Confessio prolixior," 3, in *Œuvres théologiques et grammaticales de Godescalc d'Orbais*, 57, v. 5–12; *Gottschalk & A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 76.

⁴¹ "[...] confudens praescientiam et praedestinationem dei, docens praedestinos ad poenam quam nullus praedestinos quicquid libet vel quantum libet boni agat potest evadere, et nullus praedestinos ad gloriam quicquid agat mali potest decidere, qui, si sciret et voluisset inter praescientiam et praedestinationem secundum sacras scripturas et catholicam patrum doctrinas discernere non debuisset errare." HINCMARUS ARCHIEPISOPUS REMENSIS, *Epistola ad simplices suae dioecesis*, in *Œuvres théologiques et grammaticales de Godescalc d'Orbais*, 8, v. 13–19.

⁴² Cf. G. D'ONOFRIO, *Historia teologii. Epoka średniowiecza*, vol. 2, 87.

D. The doctrine of redemption—justice and mercy

Let him hear this, who proudly preferred or perhaps still prefers nature to grace. That antiphon that you sing with due reverence concerning the holy cross: “O admirable cross, removal of the wound, restoration of health,” overthrows more clearly than daylight and dispels the error that is fabricated as it were concerning the baptized reprobate having been redeemed by it. For since it is certain that this cross neither ever was nor ever is a “removal of wound” or “restoration of health” for any of them, it is certainly clear that the redemption of none of them was brought about on it, but only of the elect who alone are believed and recognized to be the world redeemed by Christ’s passion, that is, as they as supplicants say to their redeemer.⁴³

For that God did not suffer for the baptized reprobate is clearly seen from the fact that the devil conquers them and subjects them to himself.⁴⁴

Gottschalk’s position on redemption is unequivocal: 1) Christ died only for the elect, because if he also died for the damned, his death would be in vain; 2) baptism cleanses only past sins, so those baptized who are reprobated are not included in the eradication of future sins; 3) the restitution of the order of creation through redemption takes place through the salvation of the elect, and by the condemnation of the righteously reprobated to death, because

that redemption that has been produced by the blood of Christ’s cross is proper to and special for the elect only. It is not temporal like the other, but undoubtedly everlasting [...] Only the elect were redeemed by this redemption, that is, only those foreknown and predestined to eternal life, those called, justified, and glorified.⁴⁵

⁴³ “Audiat istud ille qui nimis tumide naturam praetulit siue fortasse adhuc praefert gratiae. Illa quam de sancta cruce antiphona debita ueneratione cantatis : *O crux admirabilis euacuatio uulneris restitutio sanitatis* clarius luce subuertit et pellit errorem qui confingitur quasi de redemptis in ea reprobis baptizatis. Namque cum constet quod nullatenus ipsa crux fuerit uel sit ullius illorum *euacuatio uulneris* uel *restitutio sanitatis*, patet profecto quod eorum nullius ibi sit facta redemptio sed electorum solummodo qui soli redemptus mundus Christi passione creduntur [...]” “De praedestinatione,” VII [3], in *Œuvres théologiques et grammaticales de Godescalc d’Orbais*, 181, v. 13–12; *Gottschalk & A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 108.

⁴⁴ “Quod enim deus non sit pro reprobis baptizatis passus claret illic patenter quod diabolus uincit et sibi subicit eos.” “De praedestinatione,” XI [5], in *Œuvres théologiques et grammaticales de Godescalc d’Orbais*, 218, v. 19–21; *Gottschalk & A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 131.

⁴⁵ “Illa uero redemptio quae facta est per sanguinem crucis Christi propria solorum atque specialis electorum est. Non est temporalis ut est illa sed sine dubio sempiterna [...] Hac non sunt redempti nisi tantummodo electi soli scilicet ad uitam praesciti et praedestinati uocati iustificati et glorificati.” “De praedestinatione,” [XII], in *Œuvres théologiques et grammaticales de Godescalc d’Orbais*, 226, v. 22–227, v. 7; *Gottschalk & A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 137.

In conclusion, it should be stated that the controversy around Gottschalk's teachings originated not from the thesis that God predestines the good of judgment, but that judgment necessarily implies two consequences, namely that: a) punishment is for the reprobate, and b) the reprobate are destined for punishment. The first effect is a logical consequence of the predestination of judgment, and the second is the result of assuming the identity of predestination with God's foreknowledge. So, if the former thesis is true, then the later theorem is necessarily true.⁴⁶ The fundamental problem in Gottschalk's teaching, which eventually caused a collision with Catholic doctrine, was the lack of a clear distinction between foreknowledge and predestination or, perhaps, the direct identification of the two, since Gottschalk often emphasizes the simultaneity of predestination and foreknowledge, which is meant to lead to the thesis about double predestination.

CONCLUSIONS

In the ninth century Western thinkers did not have the instruments and the conceptual apparatus through which the controversy over predestination could be effectively settled. This will be done by Anselm of Canterbury in the 11th/12th centuries, who solved this theological and philosophical problem of predestination in the perspective of the plan or economy of salvation. The relation of justice to God's mercy, and both of them to redemption through Christ's death, was the subject of Anselm's work, in which the doctrine of predestination was developed as part of the general doctrine of salvation (*Cur Deus homo, De concordia praescientiae, praedestinationis et gratiae Dei cum libero arbitrio*). The problem of human and divine freedom and predestination will be taken up by other Christian thinkers, such as Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Luis de Molina and W.G. Leibniz, and seems to find a more satisfactory solution at least from the point of view of Catholic doctrine even in the thought of W.G. Leibniz.

Ideas very similar to Gottschalk's on solving the problem of predestination in the spirit of Augustine's late teachings will return several centuries later in the minds of Thomas Bradwardine (circa 1290–1349), Gregory of Rimini (died 1358) and John Wycliffe (circa 1330–1384).

⁴⁶ See B.J. MATZ, "Augustine in the Predestination Controversy of Ninth Century," 155–184, esp. 164.

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KONTROWERSJE DOKTRYNALNE RENESANSU KAROLIŃSKIEGO —
GOTTSCHALKA Z ORBAIS NAUCZANIE O PREDESTYNACJI

Streszczenie

Artykuł podejmuje próbę scharakteryzowania trzech kluczowych kontrowersji doktrynalnych w epoce renesansu karolińskiego, mianowicie: sporu o Eucharystię, sporu o tzw. *trina deitas* oraz o predestynację. Trzon artykułu stanowi kontrowersja o predestynację, której głównym bohaterem był Gottschalk z Orbais. Artykuł referuje cztery węzłowe kwestie związane z tym problemem: (i) pojęcie Boga, (ii) rozumienie łaski, natury i wolnej woli, (iii) relacji przedwiedzy do predestynacji, (iv) nauki o Odkupieniu, tj. w szczególności stosunku sprawiedliwości do miłosierdzia. Tekst w przeważającej mierze jest próbą interpretacji tekstów z epoki, głównie Gottschalka z Orbais i jego adwersarza Hinkmara z Reims. We wnioskach artykuł wskazuje na trudności w dyskutowanym problemie i przedstawia perspektywę rozwiązania problemu w wiekach następnych.

DOCTRINAL CONTROVERSIES OF THE CAROLINGIAN RENAISSANCE:
GOTTSCHALK OF ORBAIS' TEACHINGS ON PREDESTINATION

Summary

The article attempts to characterize three key doctrinal controversies in the Carolingian Renaissance, namely: the disputes over the Eucharist, the so-called *trina deitas*, and predestination. The core of the article is an exposition of the controversy concerning predestination, whose main protagonist is Gottschalk of Orbais. The article discusses four crucial issues related to the problem: (i) the concept of God, (ii) the understanding of grace, nature and free will, (iii) the relation of foreknowledge to predestination, and (iv) the doctrine of redemption, i.e., specifically the relationship between justice and mercy. The article is largely an attempt at an interpretation of the texts of the epoch, mainly those of Gottschalk of Orbais and his adversary, Hincmar of Reims. The conclusions point to difficulties in the issues discussed and outline what attempts at solving this problem have taken place in the coming centuries.

Słowa kluczowe: predestynacja; wolna wola; przedwiedza; natura; Bóg; potępieni; wybrani.

Key words: predestination; free will; foreknowledge; grace; nature; God; the reprobate; the elect.

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