

Heresy and Dissent in the Carolingian Empire: The Case of Gottschalk of Orbais. By Matthew Bryan Gillis. Oxford University Press. 2017. x + 277pp. £65.00.

The last decades have seen a flowering of Carolingian studies which have enriched our understanding of this fundamental period of European history. These studies highlighted the impressive achievements of Charlemagne and his successors in the areas of politics, economy and culture and in general stressed the emphasis on the need for order and hierarchy within the Frankish polity. Matthew Gillis, in this highly interesting work, focuses on the other side of the picture by choosing Gottschalk of Orbais as the subject of his book, which enables him to discuss scandal, heresy and dissent in the Carolingian world. Although the book considers the major themes of Gottschalk's life in a broadly chronological order, this is no biography. The sources do not permit the composition of such a work, yet we do still have access to an amazing amount of texts informing us about Gottschalk and about the astonishing number of conflicts he found himself in. His major opponents, Hrabanus Maurus and Hincmar of Reims, two of the towering figures of the ninth century, amply illustrate their problems in dealing with this troublesome monk, priest, poet and scholar. Yet, we are also able to draw upon Gottschalk's own work, some of it even written after his condemnation as a heretic in Mainz in 848 and in Quierzy one year later, thus demonstrating that an imposition of silence was ineffective.

As an oblate monk of noble Saxon descent in Fulda, Gottschalk contested the legitimacy of his monastic vows and was acquitted of them by the council of Mainz in 829. This proved to be only the first of his many challenges to ecclesiastical authority figures such as, in this particular case, Hrabanus Maurus. Possibly because of previous internal problems with young monks in Fulda, Gottschalk was able to find enough support among the bishops gathering in Mainz. His noble descent, as well as his appeal to Saxon law, probably also helped. Because of his remarkable intellectual capacities and literary qualities, as well as his connections in high circles, Gottschalk was throughout his life able to find admirers and patrons who could assist and protect him in his ferocious disputes with the likes of Hrabanus and Hincmar.

After gaining his freedom Gottschalk moved to the west and obtained the patronage of the archbishop of Reims, Ebbo. He studied at Corbie under the powerful Abbot Wala, but got caught up in the political troubles caused by revolts of the early 830s against Emperor Louis the Pious. Wala and Ebbo were among the main victims of the suppression of this revolt and apparently this implicated Gottschalk as well. As a result he was forcibly tonsured and shut up in a monastery, probably that of Hautvillers near Reims, and later upon the amnesty granted by Louis he entered Orbais Abbey, in the archdiocese of Reims, and became a teacher there. It was probably at Orbais that he developed his ideas on twin predestination, elaborating upon the ideas of St Augustine that the reprobate could never be redeemed. From Orbais Gottschalk went to Italy, where his teachings on predestination caused quite a stir. With the backing of the powerful aristocrat Eberhard of Friuli he preached in Dalmatia, Croatia and among the Bulgars. However, in a letter from 846 (or 847) Hrabanus urged Eberhard to put an end to Gottschalk's teaching. We do not know whether Eberhard complied with Hrabanus's wishes, but we do know that Gottschalk appeared at a council in Mainz in 848, presided over by the newly appointed archbishop of Mainz, his old nemesis Hrabanus. The council condemned Gottschalk's ideas

and when he refused to recant, he was condemned as a heretic. Gottschalk, however, seems to have embraced his status as a persecuted witness to the truth, a self-proclaimed martyr, and did not bow to these conciliar decisions. He was sent back to Orbais. In 849 the new archbishop of Reims, Hincmar, who had replaced Gottschalk's former patron Ebbo, convened another synod to discuss Gottschalk's views on predestination and they were widely debated by eminent scholars such as Florus of Lyon and John Scotus Eriugena. As had been the case at Mainz, Gottschalk does not seem to have been given the opportunity to explain and defend his opinions, and was convicted once again. His defiant stance disturbed his opponents and thereby incurred a severe form of punishment: he was flogged, incarcerated in the monastery of Hautvillers, excommunicated and formally silenced. As a monastic prisoner he remained in the monastery of Hautvillers for almost twenty years until his death in the late 860s.

This could be simply a story about the power of Carolingian bishops in suppressing dissenting voices, yet Gillis is able to demonstrate that Gottschalk had considerable agency. The dissenting monk consciously chose and cultivated his role as a persecuted martyr. In doing so, he deliberately caused public scandal in order to impress, intimidate or insult his audiences. His approach seems to have been at least partly successful since he was able to raise considerable support from quite a wide range of people. The synodal decisions condemning his views had not been unanimous. Gottschalk received support from a powerful nobleman such as Eberhard of Friuli, King Trpimir of the Croats, from Florus of Lyon who criticized Gottschalk's treatment at the synods of Mainz and Quierzy, and from the monks of Hautvillers who gave him the opportunity to continue to publicize his opinion even after he had been silenced by the verdict of Quierzy. On his deathbed, possibly in 868 or 869 as Gillis maintains, Hincmar offered to lift his excommunication if he would repent and abandon his – in Hincmar's eyes – heretical views. In a final act of public defiance, Gottschalk rejected this offer. The fact that he was included in the liturgical *memoria* of the monks of Hautvillers demonstrates that he had been able to win the support of the monks in his final place of refuge, who chose to pray for their excommunicated fellow monk rather than obeying their archbishop. Gottschalk could not be silenced, and thanks to Gillis's careful evaluation of his life, his work and his world, we are still able to hear his dissenting voice.

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***The Bronze Object in the Middle Ages.* By Ittai Weinryb.** Cambridge University Press. 2016. xx + 298pp. £64.99.

The study of early medieval metalwork in the anglophone world was once largely framed by two important surveys – Hanns Swarzenski's *Monuments of Romanesque Art: The Art of Church Treasures in North-Western Europe*, written in the 1950s and revised in the 1970s, and Peter Lasko's *Ars Sacra 800–1200*, written in the 1970s and revised in the 1990s. Neither title refers to the materiality of its subject, but rather focuses on artistic style and the functioning of these 'treasures' in a church context. Lasko's book orders its contents chronologically and in terms of provenance, whilst Swarzenski focuses on a particular area of