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To Whom It May Concern:

I write this letter to support Marek Otisk's promotion to full professor. My first contact with M. Otisk was over six years ago at academic conference dedicated to the history of philosophy and methods of research in history of philosophy. Later, we have met at other similar thematically focused professional conferences. I then had more occasions collaborating closely with him, mainly within several editorial boards (book series "Philosophy and Cultural Studies Revisited" by the Peter Lang publishing house, or academic journal "Archive of the History of Philosophy and Social Thought" published by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, the Polish Academy of Sciences). Based on my present experience with him, I have to say, that Marek Otisk is a gifted, creative, inspirational and respectable scholar and speaker, with whom I would be happy to continue to collaborate.

According to my opinion Marek Otisk's scholarly work fully justifies his occupation of the position of professor. The number and quality of his publications meets the requirements of most research universities. I can speak with first-hand knowledge only of his work in English and Polish, but I have no doubt that his work in Czech must be of similar quality. Much of his scholarly work furthers our understanding of medieval philosophy, with particular focus on philosophical, theological, or scientific thinking of the 10th and 11th centuries (especially Anselm of Canterbury and his contemporaries, and Gerbert of Aurillac and his contemporaries or predecessors).

For these reasons I take the liberty of saying that Marek Otisk fulfils all requirements and standards usually used in the process of appointment of somebody to ordinary professorship and fully deserves the position of university professor of philosophy.



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11 December 2021

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

**Re: Doc. Mgr. Marek Otisk, Ph.D.**

I write in support of M. Otisk's application for promotion. I first became aware of M. Otisk when my attention was drawn to one of his published articles, written in English, addressing an issue of the interpretation of the famous *Proslogion* of Anselm of Aosta, Bec, and Canterbury. Since I found his contribution extraordinarily illuminating, I contacted him to discuss it, and that led to fruitful exchanges between us, both of written work and communications via emails and face-to-face via Zoom. In particular, I am grateful to him for sending me the chapter on Anselm from his book, *Na cestě ke scholastice. Klášterní škola v Le Bec: Lanfrank z Pavie a Anselm z Canterbury*. Although I have no knowledge of the Czech language, I was able to have it translated, and found it revelatory.

So that you can appreciate my assessment of his work, I need to provide a little background. Written in 1078, the *Proslogion* contains a proof of the existence of God which has been much discussed over the centuries by both theologians and philosophers. Scholarly interest in this argument has been considerably heightened since the 1960s and currently continues apace, with at least nine full-length books on the *Proslogion* being published in English in the past 12 years. I write as someone who has written three books on this topic over the past fifty years.

However, the purported proof standardly attributed to Anselm, which is the subject of all this debate, cannot be found in the text and is, moreover, demonstrably invalid. That is an amazing state of affairs. On the other hand, the argument which *is* in Anselm's text is demonstrably valid. I contacted Marek Otisk because I discerned that he was rare amongst the commentators on Anselm's writings in providing an alternative interpretation of Anselm's proof which is soundly based on the text, and is radically different from the misinterpretation continually recycled in the secondary literature.

In particular, he is, to my knowledge, the *only* commentator who has *ever* drawn attention to a passage which Anselm himself wrote in response to his first critic which throws an entirely different light upon the character of Anselm's proof. I quote and discuss Otisk's interpretation of this passage in my book, *A Cosmological Reformulation of Anselm's Proof That God Exists* (Brill, 2021), for what he has shown is how profoundly mistaken is the standard misinterpretation. I rank him

amongst a remarkably small number of commentators throughout the whole world today who have an appropriate understanding of Anselm's reasoning. I know of no-one who has made a more significant contribution to this vexed issue of interpretation.

I have also read some of his historical papers, but being a philosopher – not a historian – I am not qualified to assess the quality of those contributions, but they strike me also as impressive.

I commend him for promotion on the basis of the world-ranking quality of his scholarship.



RICHARD CAMPBELL



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OF LONDON

20 December 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to support Marek Otisk's application to be promoted to a professorship in the Czech Republic. I can judge only from his research and from the fruitfulness of our correspondence, and not from his teaching. What I can say is that he has established himself as the leading expert in medieval arithmetic in the West, in the tenth to eleventh twelfth centuries. This was a time of change in both the status and the contents of arithmetic; the former because of the increasing interest in the symbolic value of numbers and the theological value of symmetry (e.g. in church architecture); the latter because of the awareness of the new arithmetic of the Arabs (named the 'algorism' after the most prominent writer about the subject, al-Khwārizmī). At the centre of this history is the figure of Gerbert d'Aurillac (d. 965–1003). Ever since Nikolaj Bubnov's pioneering edition of Gerbert's authentic and ascribed works (*Gerberti opera mathematica*, 1899), studies have been made of his contributions to the abacus (Bergmann), Arabic ('Indian') arithmetic (Folkerts), music (Leclercq) and astronomy (Zucatto), and his letters, arising especially in the context of his ecclesiastical offices (eventually Pope Sylvester II (999–1003) have been published. But Otisk is the first person to thoroughly analyse his contribution to arithmetic, in the light of the teaching and learning of arithmetic in his time (as being the first subject of the seven liberal arts, which formed the backbone to medieval education). Equally skilled as a mathematician and Latinist, Otisk writes with authority, and his book, *Arithmetic in the Thought of Gerbert of Aurillac*, which is about to be published (but of which I have seen the page proofs), I am sure, will be regarded as the 'last word' on the subject that it covers. It is important to realise just how central arithmetic was to medieval Western culture, both at a theoretical level (where 'creatio numerorum, rerum est creatio': 'the creation of numbers is the creation of things' is a leitmotif), and at a practical level, in which calculation (the abacus) and measurement (of time, of the movements of the heavenly bodies) is so important. Otisk evidently has the talents and experience to continue to increase our understanding of medieval mathematics, and fully deserves a professorship.



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