

“As If Augustine Had Said”: Textual Interpretation and Augustinian Ambiguity in a Medieval Debate on Predestination

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Abstract

In ninth century Francia, a rebellious monk named Gottschalk of Orbais (808-868) ardently defended his theory of divine predestination, much to the vexation of the Frankish Church, whose leaders eventually denounced him as heretical and imprisoned him for the remainder of his life. In an effort to disprove Gottschalk, his perhaps most prominent opponent, Hincmar, Archbishop of Reims (806-882), frequently cited elements of ecclesiastical tradition in an attempt to show that western Catholic orthodoxy opposed the theory of predestination that Gottschalk espoused. While most scholars have analyzed Hincmar’s writings by focusing on his citation of the patristic church father Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430), such an approach ignores the problematic nature of Augustine’s stance on predestination, which was largely ambiguous, hence the ability of both Gottschalk and Hincmar to reference his writings as proof of their argument. While Augustine at times limited his stance to merely suggesting that God had bestowed eternal life on some individuals, at other times he was more explicit, defining predestination in terms of a twofold decree of salvation for some and damnation for others. Such ambiguity created a nebulous definition of predestination by the time of the ninth century controversy and allowed Gottschalk to weaken Hincmar’s arguments by likewise citing Augustine to support his own assertions. This in turn forced Hincmar to extend his arsenal of ecclesiastical tradition beyond citation of Augustine in order to refute Gottschalk. This paper reevaluates a sample of Hincmar’s writings in the 840s and 850s to argue that he sought to make explicit what Augustine had left unclear regarding predestination by appealing to common standards of orthodoxy in the forms of additional patristic authors, conciliar judgments, and liturgical practices. This analysis reveals both the prominence of ambiguity in ninth-century predestination thought as well as the role of ecclesiastical tradition in forming medieval views on orthodoxy, however fluid such a label remained.

Introduction

“We impose perpetual silence on your mouth.”¹ Hincmar, Archbishop of Reims (806-882), claimed to speak for his fellow Frankish ecclesiastical leaders when he uttered these words against the rebellious monk Gottschalk of Orbais (808-868) at the Synod of Quierzy in

¹ Hincmar of Reims, *Sentence against Gottschalk at the Synod of Quierzy*, in *Gottschalk and a Medieval Predestination Controversy: Texts Translated from the Latin*, eds. and trans. Victor Genke and Francis X. Gumerlock (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2010), 169.

849 in northern Francia. After his public flogging, Gottschalk then flung his writings into flames upon the insistence of his accusers.² He subsequently spent the rest of his life in prison where he eventually died in October 868. His crime: “incorrigible obstinacy” in teaching the doctrine of predestination.³

However, Gottschalk did not claim originality in advocating this position. Rather, he presented his argument as synonymous with that of the revered patristic authority, Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430). Interestingly, however, Gottschalk’s perhaps most prominent accuser, Hincmar, heavily relied on Augustine as well to stake his own anti-predestination position. How both Gottschalk and Hincmar could cite Augustine to support their diametrically opposing arguments reveals the ambiguity of Augustine’s writings on predestination. This ambiguity therefore forced both parties to extend their arsenal of ecclesiastical tradition to include a broader array of non-Augustinian sources in order to prove that their own respective stance as orthodox and their opponent’s was heretical. This paper focuses on Hincmar’s approach to this challenge by seeking to reevaluate a sample of his anti-predestination writings of the 840s and 850s. It argues that Hincmar skillfully manipulated a wide body of ecclesiastical tradition, including patristic literature, conciliar judgments, and liturgical practices, to position Augustine within a wider theological context and thus portray Gottschalk’s interpretation of him as heretical.

While most scholars have analyzed Hincmar’s citation of Saint Augustine of Hippo in his anti-predestination writings, such an approach proves incomplete because it ignores the

² Janet L. Nelson, ed. and trans., *The Annals of St Bertin: Ninth-Century Histories*, volume 1 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 67.

³ Hincmar, *Sentence against Gottschalk*, 169.

problematic nature of Augustine's stance on predestination. Although upheld as the perhaps preeminent patristic authority on the subject of predestination, Augustine was in fact largely ambiguous, hence the ability of both Gottschalk and Hincmar to reference his writings as proof of their argument. At times Augustine limited his stance to merely suggesting that God had bestowed eternal life on some individuals, remaining silent on those who were apparently not the recipients of such a gift. At other times, however, he more candidly addressed the subject of those not chosen as recipients of eternal life by referring to a twofold decree of salvation for some and damnation for others. Such ambiguity created a nebulous definition of predestination by the time of the ninth century controversy and allowed Gottschalk to weaken Hincmar's arguments by likewise citing Augustine to support his own assertions. This in turn forced Hincmar to extend his arsenal of ecclesiastical tradition beyond citation of Augustine in order to refute Gottschalk.

This paper first addresses Carolingian intellectual historiography before analyzing recent historiographical preoccupation with Hincmar's use of Augustine to the exclusion of his use of other patristic authors and elements of church tradition. It introduces a condensed overview of Augustine's views on predestination and the posthumously ambiguous reception of his teachings in early medieval western Christendom before providing a condensed narrative of the predestination conflict of the ninth century. It then reevaluates a sample of Hincmar's anti-predestination writings by first noting his use of additional patristic writers followed by his fusion of conciliar and liturgical tradition. This paper thus examines the means by which he appealed to sources beyond Augustine in effort to demonstrate his alignment with western Catholic orthodoxy against the heretical views of Gottschalk.

Carolingian Intellectual Culture

Intellectual life in ninth-century Carolingian Europe experienced growth as an increasing number of scholars came to the court of Charlemagne (742-814), producing an outpouring of scholarly achievements. Richard Dales identified the main actors in this intellectual movement as the second and third generations of Carolingian scholars who came of age, and later to imperial appointment, during the height of Charlemagne's reign and throughout the reign of his son, Louis the Pious. These scholars cultivated a renewed interest in classics, forming a basis for new textual and literary avenues of education.⁴

Although the term "Carolingian Renaissance" is frequently used when referring to the increased emphasis on literacy, reading, and education in ninth-century Frankish culture, one of the perhaps foremost historiographical debates when analyzing the intellectual history of the Carolingian era revolves around to what degree the period can accurately be termed an intellectual "renaissance." Many historians remain skeptical of even using the term "Carolingian Renaissance," as its loaded connotations often prove contentious. Scholarly debate has generally remained divided over the extent to which Carolingians composed their own original arguments rather than merely rehearsing the arguments of authors in centuries past. Older historiography remained deeply suspicious of the notion of an intellectual flourishing of new ideas, preferring instead to label the Carolingian era as merely a continuation of the intellectual contributions of prior centuries. Early strains of this view can be found in the work of Beryl Smalley, whose 1940 work, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, maintained a deep skepticism regarding the

⁴ Richard Dales, *The Intellectual Life of Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 89-90.

originality of Carolingian intellectual contributions.⁵ In 1985, Charles Radding echoed this argument in his book *A World Made by Men: Cognition and Society, 400-1200*, in which he argued “Instead of reasoning independently, the debates quoted authority as a substitute for argument.” While he asserted that the era “will always disappoint those who expect revolutions in education to have a profound effect on thought,” Radding asserted that notable exceptions existed. He pointed to examples such as Boethius’s (480-524) *Consolation of Philosophy*, which challenged prevailing early medieval conceptions of fortune, chance, and the natural order of the physical world. However, Radding maintained that these types of works remained the exception amid a body of intellectual work that favored heavy reliance on patristic Fathers rather than original contributions.⁶

Later historiography, however, has reevaluated this argument and instead asserted that the reformulation of intellectual learning in the ninth century did in fact produce lines of thought original to the Carolingian era. For example, John Marenbon refuted the notion that Carolingian scholars contributed little original thought and rather merely rehearsed what earlier church authorities had stated. He argued more broadly that past questioning of the suitability of the term “renaissance” to the Carolingian era obscured the innovation present in ninth-century intellectual thought.⁷ Similarly, John Contreni was not shy in using the term “renaissance” to describe the cultural and institutional revival of the eighth and ninth centuries in his aptly titled work “The

⁵ Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (1940, reprint Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952).

⁶ Charles Radding, *A World Made by Men: Cognition and Society, 400-1200* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 131.

⁷ John Marenbon, “Carolingian Thought,” in *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 171; and John Marenbon, *Aristotelian Logic, Platonism and the Context of Early Medieval Philosophy in the West* (Burlington, Ashgate Publishing Company, 2000), 308.

Carolingian Renaissance.”⁸ In later years, Rosamond McKitterick explored the original advances made by the Carolingians by noting such innovations as “the book, the evolution of caroline minuscule and the creation of musical script.”⁹ In another of her books, McKitterick described the Carolingian literate elite as a “textual community,” in reference to the increasing prominence of texts, both ancient and contemporary, in Carolingian education.¹⁰ Vivien Law pointed to Carolingian advances in grammar, noting that Carolingians often created new grammatical structures that better fit the linguistic context of the ninth century.¹¹

David Ganz noted the originality of the works not only of Gottschalk, but also of other ninth-century scholars including Hadoard, Ratramnus, and Gislemar, noting that their works “offer unmatched evidence of just how a Carolingian scholar read Cicero and Augustine, and conceived of a synthesis of their thought.”¹² In reference to other Carolingian intellectual works, Ganz remarks that they revealed “considerable originality in conception and execution.”¹³ Even more recently, Celia Chazelle and Burton Van Name Edwards produced *The Study of the Bible in the Carolingian Era*, largely in response to Smalley’s prior work. Countering Smalley’s dismissal of Carolingian intellectual originality, the articles in Chazelle and Edward’s work instead drew

⁸ John J. Contreni, “The Carolingian Renaissance,” in *Renaissances before the Renaissance: Cultural Revivals of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. Walter T. Treadgold (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1984), 59-74.

⁹ Rosamond McKitterick, “The Legacy of the Carolingians,” in *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 319.

¹⁰ Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 26.

¹¹ Vivien Law, “The Study of Grammar,” in *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 92.

¹² David Ganz, *Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance* (Singmaringen: Thorbecke, 1990), 93.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 92.

attention to new commentaries, exegetical methods, and biblical and artistic literature.¹⁴ In another work, Chazelle noted that Carolingians sought to “attempt their own answers, sometimes of profound intellectual complexity” rather than rehearsing patristic literature.¹⁵ In addition, Marios Costambeys, Matthew Innes, and Simon MacLean produced an informative analysis of eighth- and ninth-century Europe entitled *The Carolingian World*. In this work, the authors argue that while Carolingian scholars undertook a large amount of copying, they also created numerous original works, the amount of which has often been overlooked in extant historiography. The authors point to Carolingian exploration of literary genres such as grammar, spelling, philosophy, and theology, as well as forms such as annals and royal biographies, confraternity books, cartularies, and even handbooks delineating priestly duties.¹⁶ Perhaps Paul Edward Dutton summarized this new historiographical outlook best in his assertion, “Whatever scholarly assessment one makes of their renaissance . . . we must, with some amazement, acknowledge the vibrant and profoundly exciting nature of the Carolingian rediscovery of the written word.”¹⁷ Dutton’s more recent work, *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, echoed this argument.¹⁸

While intellectual life within the imperial court has occupied a large amount of extant Carolingian historiography, scholars such as Rachel Stone argued that the traditional focus on the

¹⁴ Celia Chazelle and Burton Van Name Edwards, *The Study of the Bible in the Carolingian Era* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003).

¹⁵ Celia Chazelle, *The Crucified God in the Carolingian Era: Theology and Art of Christ’s Passion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 300.

¹⁶ Marios Costambeys, Matthew Innes, and Simon MacLean, *The Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 145-146.

¹⁷ Paul Edward Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 253.

¹⁸ Paul Edward Dutton, *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader* (Peterborough: Broadview, 2004).

court as a source of intellectual stimulus has given way to newer interpretations of its role. For example, Stone pointed to newer historiographical interest in the court's function in shaping the politics of elite noble culture. She also pointed to recent scholarly research in the idea of the court as a moral problem to Carolingian society resulting from its perception as a bastion of communal corruption and graft.¹⁹ New historiography has also investigated the role of gender in Carolingian intellectual history. Valerie Garver asserted that elite women were sometimes privy to receiving a classical education, pointing, for example, to Charlemagne's daughters. These women often participated in intellectual exchange, and their immersion into the new intellectual culture of the ninth-century at times mirrored that of aristocratic laymen. However, women outside of these elites circles fared considerably poorer in receiving educational opportunities.²⁰ Recent scholarship on Carolingian intellectual history has also explored the intellectual foundations of penitential practices through which Carolingians developed a system of jurisprudence that wedded legal knowledge with theories of penitence, thus transforming Carolingian legal thought, as seen, for example, in Abigail Firey's recent analysis of the relationship between Carolingian legality and theology.²¹ Finally, recent historiography has investigated the role of intellectualism among the laity in Carolingian Europe. A recent collection of essays edited by Patrick Wormald and Janet Nelson covered a broad spectrum of topics that incorporated the roles of class, gender, and literacy in analyzing lay Carolingian

¹⁹ Rachel Stone, *Morality and Masculinity in the Carolingian Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 136-137.

²⁰ Valerie L. Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture in the Carolingian World* (Ithaca: Cornell, 2012).

²¹ Abigail Firey, *A Contrite Heart: Prosecution and Redemption in the Carolingian Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

intellectualism.²² As becomes readily apparent, more recent scholarship has investigated the originality of Carolingian intellectual contributions and its diverse facets including class, gender, morality, legality, and the role of the laity in shaping intellectual culture.

Hincmar's Use of Augustine in Historiographical Memory

A number of scholars have explored Hincmar's Augustinianism as reflected in his ninth-century writings. Lesley Janette Smith noted the large number of Augustinian quotations found in his works by noting that few Carolingians were as well-versed in the writings of Augustine as was Hincmar.²³ In addition to Hincmar's reliance on Augustinian theological writings, some scholars have noted his use of Augustine in the formation of his political thought. Janet Nelson, for example, has examined the degree to which his theory on the restraints of kingship mirrored that of Augustine.²⁴ John Contreni noted the degree to which collecting an adequate number of Augustine's works was a scholarly achievement in the early medieval period. The fragmented nature of most Carolingian libraries' collections of Augustine's works made the endeavor of gathering a large number of them a deed worthy of acknowledgement. He paid particular attention to Hincmar, noting both his prominence as one of the earliest Carolingian scholars to reference Augustine's seminal work, *De civitate Dei*, as well as his realization of what he perceived to be Gottschalk's misguided reading of Augustine's predestination works and his

²² Patrick Wormald and Janet L. Nelson, eds., *Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

²³ Lesley Janette Smith, *Intellectual Life in the Middle Ages* (London: Hambledon Press, 1992), 14.

²⁴ Janet L. Nelson, "Kingship, Law, and the Liturgy in the Political Thought of Hincmar of Rheims," *English Historical Review* 92 (April 1977), 242.

attempt to counter Gottschalk's theory.²⁵

Perhaps one of the closest analyses of the controversy between Hincmar and Gottschalk over how best to interpret Augustine is found in the third volume of Jaroslav Pelikan's exhaustive work, *The Christian Tradition*. Pelikan was careful to stress that the ambiguity surrounding Augustine's ninth-century reception stemmed not from inherent duplicity in his writings, but rather from the myriad interpretative lenses through which ninth-century thinkers read him.²⁶ Jeffrey Burton Russell similarly noted that it was the later reception of Augustine that was often variously interpreted, arguing "It was Gottschalk's stubborn virtue to refuse to accept the ambiguity about predestination and free will that was the legacy of Augustine."²⁷ Dennis Eric Nineham likewise pointed to the nebulous definition of Augustinian predestination in the ninth century, noting "Augustine's work was so voluminous, and so occasional in character, that one of his statements could be often be played off against another, especially in a matter over which he had changed his mind as markedly as on this."²⁸ Matthew Bryan Gillis noted both sides' use of Augustine as a source of power in which the act of proving theological alignment with Augustinian thought quickly became an endeavor to assert one's power by means of orthodoxy in the ninth-century predestination debate.²⁹ However, David Hogg noted Gottschalk's

²⁵ John Contreni, "Carolingian Era, Early," in *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 125-127.

²⁶ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Volume 3: the Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 80-105.

²⁷ Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 111.

²⁸ Dennis Eric Nineham, "Gottschalk of Orbais: Reactionary or Precursor to the Reformation?" *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 40 (1989), 16.

²⁹ Matthew Bryan Gillis, "Gottschalk of Orbais: A Study of Power and Spirituality in a Ninth-Century Life" (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2009), 20-21.

originality, arguing that he “went where Augustine was reluctant to go, to double predestination.”³⁰

Other scholars have briefly pointed to Hincmar’s use of other patristic authorities aside from Augustine. Peter McKeon pointed to his practice of editing certain portions of Gregory the Great’s writings to suit his own original political or ecclesiastical arguments, and Rachel Stone analyzed Hincmar’s citation of Gregory the Great’s (540-604) hagiographical writings.³¹ Guido Stucco briefly noted Hincmar’s use of other patristic authors in addition to Augustine, such as Gregory, John Chrysostom (349-407), Jerome (347-420), Bede (673-735), and Prosper of Aquitaine (390-455), a disciple of Augustine, as part of an overview of the responses of some of Gottschalk’s most notable enemies.³² James Francis LePree noted Hincmar’s reliance on Isidore of Seville (560-636) in the formation of his political ecclesiology, and James Ginther pointed to Hincmar’s use of the Pseudo-Isidorian collection of writings in his arguments about the proper role of subordinate bishops in his diocese.³³ Additionally, some scholars have even branched beyond his use of patristic texts to analyze his use of other elements of church tradition, such as Susan Boynton, who noted the use of Latin hymns as a facet of theological argument by both

³⁰ David S. Hogg, “‘Sufficient for All, Efficient for Some’: Definite Atonement in the Medieval Church,” in *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective*, eds. David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson (Wheaton: Crossway, 2013), 77.

³¹ Peter R. McKeon, “The Carolingian Councils of Savonnières (859) and Tusey (860) and their Background,” *Revue Benedictine* 84 (1974), 75-110; and Rachel Stone, “Gender and hierarchy: Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims (845-882) as a religious man,” in *Religious Men and Masculine Identity in the Middle Ages*, eds. Pat Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer Ltd., 2013), 32-33.

³² Guido Stucco, *God’s Eternal Gift: A History of the Catholic Doctrine of Predestination from Augustine to the Renaissance* (Bloomington: Xlibris Corporation, 2009), 247-249.

³³ James Francis LePree, “Sources of Spirituality and the Carolingian Exegetical Tradition” (PhD diss., The City University of New York, 2008), 193-195; and James R. Ginther, ed., *The Westminster Handbook to Medieval Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 84.

Hincmar and Gottschalk in the ninth-century Trinitarian controversy, a doctrinal debate that scholars such as Jean Jolivet and George Tavard explored. Louise Reinecke Gustavsson examined Hincmar's use of conciliar power, noting especially his association of Gottschalk with a fifth-century heresy over predestination.³⁴

However, a comprehensive investigation into Hincmar's use of sources aside from Augustine has yet to be undertaken. Although much research has investigated his role in the ninth-century predestination quarrel, there remains a gap in understanding how Hincmar skillfully manipulated sources other than Augustine to utilize the complexity of the canon of church tradition to refute Gottschalk's ideas on predestination. While scholars have generally explored the ninth-century predestination conflict within a framework of Augustinian textual interpretation, few have explored how this framework also included additional patristic, conciliar, and liturgical elements to clarify Augustine's theory on predestination and its consequently ambiguous reception in the ninth century. Such an analysis remains vital, however, to understanding how Hincmar employed a much broader selection of elements of church history and ecclesiastical tradition to advance his argument. Perhaps one of the clearest ways to explore this is by reevaluating a sample of his anti-predestination letters, treatises, and ecclesiastical sentences written in the mid-ninth century.

The reception of Augustinian predestination in western Catholic orthodoxy

Despite the vehemence with which both Gottschalk and his opponents argued against one another in the ninth-century debate, the topic of predestination was by no means a new concept

³⁴ Louise Reinecke Gustavsson, "Gottschalk Reconsidered: A Study of His Thoughts as it Bears on his Notion of Predestination" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1964, reprinted in Genke and Gumerlock, *A Medieval Predestination Controversy*), 174.

to the Carolingians. Rather, the Frankish church was well-versed in the teachings of Augustine, whose works carried more authority in the late patristic and early medieval church than perhaps any other theologian's. After his triumph over Pelagius (390-418) at the Council of Ephesus in 431, Augustine emerged as the seminal voice on matters of not only predestination, but also a wide range of other theological topics related to Christian doctrine.³⁵ Against the "error of Pelagius," the Council of Orange in 529 affirmed Augustinian views on original sin and the bondage of the human will to choose salvation.³⁶ However, the council remained silent about the topic of predestination except to state that God did not predestine man to evil.³⁷

Aside from this declaration, the council made no mention of Augustine's previously championed theory of divine predestination. Doing so would have required the Frankish Church to contradict the espousal of human free will found in the Greek theological legacy of Origen (184-254) and the Cappadocian Fathers, a legacy to which it remained substantively attached at the time of the sixth century.³⁸ Rebecca Harden Weaver argued that the council gave "tacit approval" to Augustine's theory of predestination by offering no argument to the contrary, as well as insisting on the logical ordering of a divine infusion of grace prior to salvation. However, she also noted that an assertion of its approval remains inconclusive because its absence could be construed as rejection, supported by the assertion of man's agency after baptism, as recorded in

³⁵ Council of Ephesus, *Excursus on Pelagianism*, Canon 4, in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: Second Series*, vol. 14, ed. and trans. Henry Pace (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1900), 229-230.

³⁶ *Canons of the Council of Orange, 529*, Canon 1, in *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine, from the Bible to the Present*, ed. and trans. John H. Leith (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1982), 38.

³⁷ Council of Orange, Canon 22, trans. in Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*, page 44.

³⁸ Origen, *De Principiis*, book III, trans. Frederick Crombie in *Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 4*, eds. Alexander Roberts, Cleveland Coxe (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885).

the canons.³⁹ At any rate, the strict Augustinian theory of predestination became muddled at the Council of Orange, which allowed for a more relaxed interpretation of Augustine's thought. Gottschalk thus sought to present a stricter Augustinian interpretation of predestination and free will to the ninth-century church, which he perceived had distorted Augustine's intended meaning.

It is against this backdrop that the Carolingian controversy emerged over three centuries later. By the time of the ninth-century debate, nearly three hundred years after the Council of Orange, stances on the proper interpretation of Augustinian views of grace were even less clear. However prolific, Augustine left his readers with a rather vague consensus on the issue of predestination. While it remains undoubted that Augustine wholeheartedly espoused the doctrine that God appointed some to eternal life by his own prior choice, Augustine's stance on God's treatment of the remainder of the unchosen portion of humanity was vague. For example, in his seminal work, *On the Predestination of the Saints*, Augustine defined predestination as "preparation for grace" [*praedestinatio est gratiae praeparatio*], thus implying that it related exclusively to those who have been chosen for eternal life.⁴⁰

However, in other writings, Augustine espoused what is commonly known as "double" predestination, the idea that God predestined not only the elect to salvation but also the reprobate to damnation. For example, in *On Man's Perfection in Righteousness*, he referred to "that class of men which is prepared for destruction" [*eo genere hominum, quod praedestinatum est ad*

³⁹ Rebecca Harden Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency: A Study of the Semi-Pelagian Controversy* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), 231-232.

⁴⁰ Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum (On the Predestination of the Saints)*, chapter 10, 19 PL 44: 975, in *Saint Augustine: Four Anti-Pelagian Writings*, eds. John A. Mourant and William J. Collings (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1992), 241.

interitum].⁴¹ One of the issues surrounding the ambiguity of Augustine's thoughts on this matter stemmed from the way in which he often used the words predestination [*praedestinatio*] and foreknowledge [*praescientia*] interchangeably in his discussions on predestination. While seemingly similar in meaning, the two terms often carried somewhat divergent connotations. While foreknowledge implied passive acknowledgement or recognition ahead of time, predestination suggested a more active sense, implying that God not only was aware of certain individuals or events, but also actively determined their outcomes.

Augustine's equivocation on this matter, whether deliberate or inadvertent, served as one of the central foundations upon which Gottschalk's enemies composed their argument. For example, as Roger Hanko noted, Gottschalk's opponents used Augustine's assertion that foreknowledge was associated with God's intellectual knowledge in the sense that he was merely cognizant of the existence and eternal destination of the reprobate, in contrast to Augustine's other assertion that predestination was instead associated with his active will in which he deliberately caused the eternal destiny of the elect to result in eternal life.⁴² Gottschalk's opponents, notably Hincmar, privileged Augustine's use of the term foreknowledge to argue that it was synonymous with the term predestination. In their minds, God both foreknew and predestined man's eternal destiny only in the sense that he was consciously aware of its outcome, not in the sense that he actively chose it. Hincmar argued that Gottschalk's manner of separating the two terms when discussing the origin of sin relied on faulty logic because of Gottschalk's

⁴¹ Augustine, *De Perfectione Iustitiae Hominis (On Man's Perfection in Righteousness)* 13.31 PL 44: 308, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers First Series, Volume V, St. Augustine: Anti-Pelagian Writings*, ed. Philip Schaff (New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2007), 170.

⁴² Roger Hanko, "Gottschalk's Doctrine of Double Predestination," *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal* 12 (1978), 33.

attempt to argue that God had only foreknown, rather than predestined, sin. According to Hincmar, Gottschalk could not argue that God had both foreknown and predestined man's eternal destiny, on the one hand, and yet assert that he had only foreknown, rather than predestined, man's sin, on the other hand.

Such a dichotomy was impossible, argued Hincmar, whose proposed solution was not to advocate that God had both predestined and foreknown sin, but rather to assert that he was instead merely cognizant that man would invariably sin. For example, in a letter addressed to the "monks and simple folk" [*reclusos et simplices*] of his diocese, Hincmar lamented, in reference to a passage from a work erroneously attributed to Augustine, the *Hypomnesticon*, the manner in which Gottschalk both "incorrectly understood because he wants to make a distinction in this passage as if Augustine had said that God had only foreknown, not predestined sinners," while also teaching the doctrine that God had decreed to eternally punish those who were not chosen. Hincmar then argued that this logic led to a heretical understanding of salvation, such as that argued by Gottschalk, whom he indignantly referred to as "the confuser of foreknowledge and predestination."⁴³ Thus, the idea that God had predestined both the chosen and reprobate was a significant theological error, according to Hincmar. As becomes readily apparent, Augustine's writings on predestination left a large amount of room for both sides in the Carolingian debate to support their respective positions. Thus, the equivocality of Augustine's writings on predestination led to a severe dichotomy within the ninth-century Frankish church on the issues of grace, predestination, foreknowledge, and free will.

⁴³ Hincmar, *Letter to the Monks and Simple Folk of his Diocese (Epistola ad reclusos et simplices suae dioceseos)*, in Wilhelm Gundlach, "Zwei Schriften des Erzbischofs Hinkmar von Reims," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 10 (1889), 258-309, trans. in Genke and Gumerlock, *A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 172.

The Carolingian Controversy over Predestination

In the mid-ninth century, Frankish ecclesiastical leaders accused Gottschalk of spreading “teachings quite contrary to our salvation, especially on the subject of predestination” after he left the monastery at Orbais in Francia in 836 to journey to Italy for mission work.⁴⁴ Around 840, Rabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mainz (780-856), lamented the newfound propagation of “the heresy that some people are wickedly defending concerning the predestination of God.”⁴⁵ After his stint in Italy, Gottschalk traveled to the Balkans, where he served as a missionary and spent time in Dalmatia, presumably continuing to advocate his theory of predestination while there.⁴⁶

After Gottschalk returned to Francia around 848, Frankish ecclesiastical authorities soon summoned him to Mainz, where they required him to appear before a synod presided over by King Louis the German (810-876) to determine his theological error. Here Gottschalk professed a confession of faith before the bishops in which he openly avowed his belief that God actively made a decree to both save a portion of humanity as well as damn the remaining unchosen portion.⁴⁷ After witnessing Gottschalk’s refusal to change his beliefs, Rabanus Maurus sent him to Orbais to be under the jurisdiction of Hincmar. Hincmar ordered Gottschalk to appear at the Synod of Quierzy the following year, where he condemned him for his “incorrigible obstinacy” in teaching the doctrine of double predestination. Hincmar further ordered that Gottschalk “be confined to a cell,” which resulted in his imprisonment at Hautvillers, where he spent the rest of

⁴⁴ Hincmar, *Sentence against Gottschalk*, 169.

⁴⁵ Rabanus Maurus, *Letter to Noting*, MGH Epist. 5:428, PL 112:1530-1531, trans. in Genke and Gumerlock, *A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 165.

⁴⁶ Nelson, ed., *The Annals of St. Bertin*, 67.

⁴⁷ Gottschalk, *Confession of Faith at Mainz*, PL 125:89-90, trans. in Genke and Gumerlock, *A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 68.

his days until his death in 868.⁴⁸

Born in the first decade of the ninth century and reared as a child oblate at the Frankish monastery of Saint-Denis, Hincmar soon rose to ecclesiastical power as he served as an advisor to King Charles the Bald (823-877), eventually gaining the title of Archbishop of Reims in 845. Trained in canon law and theology, Hincmar fused these disciplines together when confronted with the ecclesiastical sentencing of Gottschalk after authorities transferred the monk to Hincmar's jurisdiction.⁴⁹ Throughout the predestination controversy, Hincmar manifested an anti-predestination stance against Gottschalk in numerous letters, treatises, and conciliar decrees, which he wrote while simultaneously involved in a series of attacks on his own authority as archbishop. Hincmar spent a good portion of the 840s and early 850s embroiled in an ordination conflict in which he asserted that his twice-deposed predecessor, Ebbo (775-851), lacked authority to ordain bishops, whose collective ordinations became thrown into question upon Ebbo's multiple depositions.⁵⁰ Faced with animosity from the deposed bishops who had come to power during Ebbo's tenure, Hincmar sought to demonstrate his authority within Reims to determine the validity of subjects within his jurisdiction, including both deposed bishops and perceived heretics such as Gottschalk. Both types of subjects played integral roles in the formation, or dissolution, of the orthodox society that Hincmar strived to maintain. In order to further understand Hincmar's views on heterodoxy and its role in a Christian society, it is useful to also understand his perspective on the relationship between doctrine, tradition, and

⁴⁸ Rabanus Maurus, *Letter to Hincmar on the Council of Mainz*, PL 112:1574-1576, trans. in Genke and Gumerlock, *A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 167-168; and Hincmar, *Sentence against Gottschalk*, 169.

⁴⁹ Ginther, *The Westminster Handbook to Medieval Theology*, 83-84.

⁵⁰ Nelson, ed., *The Annals of St. Bertin*, 76. Hincmar's reaction to the deposed bishops is further explored in Nineham, "Gottschalk of Orbais: Reactionary or Precursor to the Reformation?" 7-9.

ecclesiastical hierarchy. For example, in his seminal work *On Predestination*, Hincmar explained,

...whenever something new emerges in the Catholic faith or the divine religion, judgment belongs first to a meeting of the bishops. What, according to their opinion, to the authority of the holy Scriptures, and to the doctrine of the orthodox masters, and in keeping with canonical authority and the decrees of the Roman pontiffs, the vicars of Christ our God and the presidents of the holy Church decree as having to be believed, followed, held, and preached: this must be heartily believed by all for the sake of justice.⁵¹

Hincmar elevated the bishops to a role in which they remained accountable not only for correct orthodoxy, but also for the subsequent order that it produced within society. The most advantageous means to retain such order, Hincmar argued, involved allowing ecclesiastical tradition to dictate responses to perceived heterodoxy. Thus, Hincmar's adamant stance on both the deposed bishops' quest for authority as well as Gottschalk's heretical views reveals his quest to produce a unified, heterodox society modeled on Christian tradition and western orthodoxy. Hincmar pronounced Gottschalk's final sentence at the Synod of Quierzy in the spring of 849, where he confined him to indefinite imprisonment.⁵² However, even after this condemnation, Hincmar continued to address the topic in a series of letters to the laity within his jurisdiction, fellow Frankish archbishops, and even Pope Nicholas (800-867). Within these letters, he included numerous references to patristic, conciliar, and liturgical tradition that extended beyond merely Augustine.

⁵¹ Hincmar, *On Predestination (De praedestinatione dissertatio posterior)* PL, 125, 65C, excerpt trans. in George H. Tavard, "Episcopacy and Apostolic Succession according to Hincmar of Reims," *Theological Studies* 34 (December 1973), 605.

⁵² Hincmar, *Sentence against Gottschalk*, 169.

Hincmar's Citation of Additional Patristic Authors aside from Augustine

Hincmar cited several patristic fathers aside from Augustine in his anti-predestination writings. For example, in his letter addressed to the laity under his jurisdiction, written in 849, the year of his fateful sentencing of Gottschalk, Hincmar relied on patristic tradition by citing *On the Truth of Predestination and Grace*, written by Fulgentius of Ruspe (468-533), a fifth-century North African bishop and theologian, to clarify what he claimed Gottschalk had erroneously misinterpreted regarding the damnation of the wicked, a doctrine he had already established as “horrible blasphemy” in his own work *On Predestination and Free Will*.⁵³ However, rather than merely engaging in esoteric theological dispute, Hincmar sought to display pastoral concern over the threat that dissemination of Gottschalk's errors posed to the laity over whom he remained tasked to protect against false doctrine. For example, Hincmar opened his letter by noting the familiarity with Gottschalk's teachings among the laity of Reims by referring to Gottschalk as a monk “known to you by name, face, and conduct.” He then explained the discrepancy between his parishioners' perception of Gottschalk and the monk's true identity; Gottschalk appeared “it seemed, to your eyes and ears a good man, while cloaking the depravity of his heart,” thus misleading countless members within his jurisdiction with his errant teachings.⁵⁴

Hincmar asserted that the potential results of these teachings signaled consequences too disastrous to be left unchecked. For example, he noted that according to Gottschalk's logic, those who sought to live piously, but were not among the chosen, remained doomed to eternal

⁵³ Hincmar, *On Predestination and Free Will* [*De Praedestinatione Dei et Libero Arbitrio (Praefatio)*], PL 125: 58. “Aperte namque causa perditionis illorum qui pereunt in Deum refertur, si ipse eos ita ad interitum praedestinavit, ut aliud esse non possent; quod sentire vel dicere horribilis blasphemia est.”

⁵⁴ Hincmar, *Letter to the Monks and Simple Folk*, 170.

punishment. Although he refrained from stating this explicitly, the implications of Hincmar's grievances ostensibly suggested that Gottschalk's stance would ultimately result in weakened belief in the merit of good works and pious living, two central pillars of lay medieval religiosity. By presenting Gottschalk in this light, Hincmar thus created a role for himself as a discernor of truth who, with the interests of his parishioners foremost in his mind, sought to untangle the web of heresy spread by Gottschalk.

Hincmar thus directly tackled the issue of what is commonly referred to as "double predestination," the idea that God actively chose the predestination of the elect for salvation and of the unchosen for damnation. Describing Gottschalk as the "confusor of foreknowledge and predestination," Hincmar asserted that this misinterpretation was entirely voluntary on the part of Gottschalk, for, had he wished to distinguish between the two, "according to the holy scriptures and the teachings of the catholic fathers, he would not have had to err."⁵⁵ Gottschalk had indeed correctly read Fulgentius's assertion that some were "prepared to suffer punishments."⁵⁶ However, what he misunderstood, averred Hincmar, was what he referred to as the "distinction between what has been prepared by God, what has been prepared by the devil, and what has been prepared by one's own iniquity."⁵⁷ Hincmar presumably referred to the latter two to account for Fulgentius's assertion that some individuals had been prepared for punishment. According to his argument, either the devil or the individuals themselves, or perhaps the two acting in tandem, made this preparation, rather than God. By presenting Fulgentius's assertion in this light,

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Fulgentius of Ruspe, *On the Truth of Predestination and Grace*, 3.5,8, PL 65: 656A, in *The Fathers of the Church*, volume 126, eds. Rob Roy McGregor and Donald Fairbal (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2013), 205.

⁵⁷ Hincmar, *Letter to the Monks and Simple Folk*, 172.

Hincmar thus effectively avoided affirming a double view of predestination, while simultaneously citing Fulgentius's work as a symbol of patristic tradition with which he sought to align himself.

In addition to Fulgentius, Hincmar also referenced another patristic author, Prosper of Aquitaine, whose appeal for those who remained outside the bounds of orthodoxy to repent and resubmit themselves to the folds of the church mimicked his own appeal to Gottschalk to do likewise, he implied. In a letter to Egilo, the Archbishop of Sens (d. 871), in 866, Hincmar cited Prosper regarding what he termed the “law of supplication” [*statuit supplicandi*].⁵⁸ Analysis of the work in question, *Official Pronouncements on the Apostolic See on Divine Grace and Free Choice* [*Praeteritorum Sedis Apostolicae Episcoporum Auctoritates, de Gratia Dei et Libero Voluntatis Arbitrio*], reveals that article eight, cited by Hincmar, argued for the need to make supplications for a wide range of those outside the church, including unbelievers, idolaters, Jews, and those termed “schismatics.”⁵⁹ Presumably, it was the latter term that Hincmar had in mind when he urged for supplication to be made on Gottschalk's behalf for his errant belief in double predestination.

Thus, in this instance, Hincmar referenced a patristic authority, Prosper, not explicitly to garner support for a particular theological position, but rather to demonstrate that, like Prosper, he himself urged heretics to repent. In further explanation of his position toward Gottschalk, Hincmar identified himself as aligned with the Catholic Church at large by delineating the

⁵⁸ Hincmar, *Letter to Egilo*, 866, PL 126: 70-76, trans. in Genke and Gumerlock, *A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 181.

⁵⁹ Prosper of Aquitaine, *Official Pronouncements on the Apostolic See on Divine Grace and Free Choice* (*Praeteritorum Sedis Apostolicae Episcoporum Auctoritates, de Gratia Dei et Libero Voluntatis Arbitrio*), PL 51:209C, in *Prosper of Aquitaine: Defense of St. Augustine*, translated and annotated by P. de Letter, *Ancient Christian Writers* 32 (New York: Newman Press, 1963), 183.

Church's position toward Gottschalk, thus aligning himself with what he credited as the desire of the Church as a whole for reconciliation: "And in the whole Catholic Church, which, in beseeching him on behalf of all people according to the apostolic tradition."⁶⁰ By stating his stance in these terms, founded upon the patristic authority of Prosper, Hincmar sought to make his position appear reasonable, while simultaneously portraying Gottschalk as the one intent on severing his own ties to the Church.

He then made another appeal to Christian tradition to disprove Gottschalk. However, rather than appealing to patristic tradition, Hincmar relied on a more recent Christian authority, Alcuin of York (735-804), a Carolingian court scholar in the late eighth century whose work *On Faith in the Holy Trinity* included a reflection on the respective roles of grace and human agency in salvation. However, Alcuin's position on this issue was in many ways every bit as ambiguous as that of Augustine; in fact, Alcuin even quoted Augustine's rhetorical questions in his own work, thus demonstrating a position that acknowledged both grace and free will: "For, if there is no grace of God, how can the world be saved? And if there is no free will, how will the world be judged?"⁶¹ Interestingly, both Gottschalk and Hincmar favored Alcuin and referenced him in their respective writings, albeit within widely divergent viewpoints. Thus, like Augustine, Alcuin's stance on the issues of grace and human will remained ambiguous, thus allowing those on opposite sides of the debate to use him to suit their own purposes. In this particular letter, Hincmar's reference to Alcuin demonstrated his inclusion of recent scholars in addition to those

⁶⁰ Hincmar, *Letter to Egilo*, 181.

⁶¹ Augustine, *Letters*, 214.2, PL 33:969, in Alcuin of York, *On Faith in the Holy Trinity*, 2.8, PL 101:28C, trans. in Francis X. Gumerlock, "Predestination in the Century before Gottschalk, Part I," *Evangelical Quarterly* 81.3 (2009), 208; and Hincmar, *Letter to Egilo*, 180.

of the patristic era, in an attempt to reveal a long continuum of Christian thought that agreed with his own theological predilections.

Hincmar's Use of Conciliar and Liturgical Tradition

In addition to patristic and early medieval authors, Hincmar also relied on other elements of tradition, such as prior church councils that dealt with heresy. Such analysis reveals that Hincmar's use of conciliar tradition to disprove Gottschalk remained intertwined with his use of liturgical tradition as well. Although his more substantive liturgical reforms occurred in the 860s, after the intensity of the predestination conflict began to subside, he incorporated parts of the Roman Catholic liturgy in his anti-predestination writings. For example, in a letter to Pope Nicholas in 863, Hincmar associated Gottschalk with both the fifth-century Monophysite heretic Eutyches (380-456) and with a spurious group of fifth-century predestinarians, intermingling these remarks with excerpts from the Roman liturgy.⁶²

Before analyzing the manifestations of these appeals to church tradition in his letter to Pope Nicholas, however, it is necessary to first understand the broader argument Hincmar sought to make in this letter. Outraged by the obstinacy of Gottschalk, he took his concerns beyond the ecclesiastical authorities of Reims, and even Francia, all the way to Pope Nicholas himself. Hincmar's communication with the pope was not entirely voluntary, however. After ignoring a papal summons to appear at the Council of Metz in 863 to address the case of Gottschalk, Hincmar then tried to excuse his neglect in a letter to Pope Nicholas in which he voiced his complaints that the council had been summoned hastily, its directors had failed to provide adequate notice, and its location was inopportune, being over eighty miles away from his own

⁶² Hincmar, *Letter to Pope Nicholas*, 863, PL 126:25-46, trans. in Genke and Gumerlock, *A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 175-179.

location. Hincmar then quickly shifted focus to his own treatment of Gottschalk, drawing specific attention to his role in presiding over the Synod of Mainz where Gottschalk was condemned. He then informed Pope Nicholas of the collective decision made by the bishops of Belgium, Reims, and Gaul to transfer Gottschalk to his own jurisdiction. This decision, Hincmar explained, was predicated on the fact that he himself remained one of the only authorities capable of dealing with such an incorrigible thinker, whom he had earlier termed “a monk in appearance, but a wild beast in his mind.”⁶³

Hincmar further elaborated on his unique fitness for the task of controlling Gottschalk by informing Pope Nicholas that Rothad, the former bishop of Soissons (d. 869), had earlier demonstrated his failure to properly deal with Gottschalk. Although Hincmar provided no detailed account in this letter beyond insisting that he was unable to “resist” Gottschalk, he soon explained why Rothad’s failure was particularly injurious. Hincmar argued that Gottschalk’s erroneous teachings proved especially harmful in the hands of Rothad, whose propensity to follow incorrect doctrine signaled disastrous potential for an overthrow of Christian orthodoxy. Reflecting on his fear of Rothad being convinced by Gottschalk’s teaching, Hincmar took it upon himself to speak to the opinion of the other bishops by asserting, “we were afraid that he who had refused to learn how to teach what is correct might learn how to hold what is perverse.”⁶⁴

However, the transfer of Gottschalk from the jurisdiction of Rothad to that of his own was not Hincmar’s only decision regarding the bishop of Soissons. Rather, so great were the problems posed by Rothad that a year prior to the date of this letter, Hincmar had deposed him

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 176.

for challenging his authority. Rothad appealed this deposition to a council of the provinces of Sens, Rheims, Rouen, and Tours, whose bishops deferred his case to Rome. The failure of the council to honor Rothad's deposition infuriated Hincmar, who described Rothad in the *Annals of St. Bertin* as "a singularly stupid man" for appealing to authorities beyond his own jurisdiction.⁶⁵ Although Pope Nicholas restored Rothad two years later, at the time of Hincmar's letter, he remained deposed.⁶⁶ Hincmar's choice of content in his letter reveals that he sought to convince Pope Nicholas that he was capable of handling heretics, such as he had done at the Synod of Mainz against Gottschalk, and that other rivals to his position, namely Rothad, proved inept. Hincmar thus created for himself a unique role as the guardian of orthodoxy in both the Frankish ecclesiastical hierarchy as well as Carolingian society.

In order to further demonstrate his role in a Christian society modeled on church tradition, Hincmar then sought to establish the distinction not only between himself and rivals to his position, but also between himself and the very heretics whom he punished, chiefly Gottschalk. This then leads to his use of conciliar tradition to identify Gottschalk with heretics of centuries past. For example, in the same letter to Pope Nicholas, Hincmar associated Gottschalk with Eutyches, a Monophysite heretic of the fifth century whom the Catholic Church had condemned at the Council of Chalcedon in 451.⁶⁷ While Eutyches' position on the single nature of Christ had little direct correlation with the predestination heresy of which the Church accused Gottschalk, Hincmar sought to make a broader comparison of the two heretics in terms of

⁶⁵ Nelson, ed., *The Annals of St. Bertin*, 100.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁶⁷ Hincmar, *Letter to Pope Nicholas*, 176; and *Canons of the Council of Chalcedon*, in H. R. Percival, trans., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, ed. P. Schaff and H. Wace, (reprinted, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1955), 244-295.

departure from orthodoxy, in whatever manifestation it appeared. Hincmar translated Pope Leo IV's (790-855) condemnation of Eutyches into his own interpretation, in which Pope Leo conveyed the idea that Eutyches, according to Hincmar, "should have abandoned his opinion as soon as he saw that his foolish ideas were displeasing to catholic ears and not so upset the leaders of the church."⁶⁸ Hincmar thus sought to draw attention to the distinction between Eutyches's erroneous theological position and that of the correct beliefs of the church. In the following sentence, Hincmar then shifted attention back to Gottschalk, asserting his own willingness to refrain from punishment if Gottschalk would agree to recant. However, since, like Eutyches before him, Gottschalk refused to amend his teachings, he had no choice but to administer the punishment Gottschalk deserved for heresy, he argued.

Therefore, by using Eutyches as an example, Hincmar attempted to portray the commonality of departure from orthodoxy among heretics throughout centuries, in whatever form that departure presented itself. He further sought to present the audacity of heretics like Eutyches and Gottschalk who lacked the awareness to forgo any teachings that were not pleasing to the church and thus remained deserving of their punishment. Finally, he sought to present his own reasonable attitude in dealing with Gottschalk by asserting that he would refrain from punishment if Gottschalk would recant. By presenting the ordeal in this light, Hincmar thus assigned the origin of the harsh treatment of Gottschalk to his refusal to recant rather than to his own choice to administer such punishment. Gottschalk left him no choice but to engage in such retribution, argued Hincmar.

He then introduced his second example of a prior heresy that he believed was analogous

⁶⁸ Hincmar, *Letter to Pope Nicholas*, 176.

to the position taken by Gottschalk, that of the fifth-century predestination heresy, which he claimed both Pope Celestine I (d. 432) and Prosper of Aquitaine had refuted. Prosper, he claimed, disproved the doctrine of predestination in Africa and among the Gauls.⁶⁹ However, this was entirely spurious. Prosper had indeed been involved in a heated dispute with Gallic monks in the fifth century over the doctrine of predestination.⁷⁰ However, in this controversy, Prosper actually defended Augustine's predestination theology, albeit in a less radical and arguably modified form, against the anti-predestination arguments of the Gallic monks whom Hincmar instead labeled as avid predestinarians. Despite the unmistakable dichotomy in the views of Prosper and those of his opponents, Hincmar severely revised the controversy, transforming the anti-predestination Gauls into a fictional extremist cluster of predestinarian heretics. As to his motivations for doing so, a number of scholars argue that it was part of an attempt to reframe a portion of past conciliar tradition into one that supported his ninth-century arguments. For example, Louise Reinecke Gustavsson contended that "By reversing historical evidence Hincmar attributed to the heretical anti-predestination Gallic semi-Pelagians ideas held by Gottschalk so that he, Hincmar, could blame Gottschalk for resuscitating a matter previously judged heretical."⁷¹ Whatever his motivation, Hincmar presented Gottschalk's soteriological views as a revival of a doctrine that the church had already deemed heretical. Accordingly, the proper course of action in dealing with its appearance in the ninth-century involved following conciliar tradition by labeling predestination as heresy, asserted Hincmar.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Prosper, *Answers to the Objections of the Gauls*, trans. in *Prosper of Aquitaine: Defense of St. Augustine* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1963), 139-162.

⁷¹ Gustavsson, "Gottschalk Reconsidered," 174.

In further discussion of the alleged fifth-century version of this heresy, Hincmar then noted that it had occurred during the pontificate of Pope Celestine, at which time the Nestorian heresy, which asserted the dual natures of Christ, plagued the church as an equally dangerous example of heterodoxy. After reflecting on the particularly troubled nature of this time in the history of the church, Hincmar then drew a number of comparisons between Gottschalk and the purported predestinarians of the fifth century. Central to the erroneous teachings that Gottschalk taught “against the catholic faith from that old predestination heresy,” Hincmar noted Gottschalk’s assertion that God had predestined some for life and others to death.⁷² However, he also moved beyond this assertion to argue that Gottschalk’s soteriological teachings, much as those of the fifth-century predestinarians before him, implied that God had somehow failed to perform his divine will regarding who could be saved. Hincmar pointed to what he perceived to be the flaws in Gottschalk’s logic by asserting that it led to the conclusion that if some among those whom God had chosen for life were in fact not saved, then God had not performed what he willed. In correlation, if God had willed to save some but could not in fact carry out that salvation, then God was not omnipotent, asserted Hincmar. Thus, he asserted that by teaching that God issued a decree regarding who would be saved, Gottschalk had effectively limited God’s power to carry out his own will. This contradicted divine omnipotence, alleged Hincmar.

After quoting a verse from the biblical Psalms declaring God’s power over his creation, Hincmar then turned to liturgical tradition to support his argument that God had power over salvation. He quoted a verse from the thirteenth chapter of Esther, tacking to the end of the verse an antiphon from the Roman mass. He thus added the words “us, we will be immediately set

⁷² Hincmar, *Letter to Pope Nicholas*, 176.

free” to Esther 13:9, with the resulting product reading “In your will, Lord, all things have been placed, and there is no one who can resist your will. If you decide to save us, we will immediately be set free.”⁷³ By citing the *Antiphon on the Introit on the Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost*, Hincmar thus relied on liturgical tradition, coupled with a biblical text, to illustrate his own mastery of correct belief about the relationship between divine omnipotence and the salvific will of God. After this brief interlude, Hincmar then resumed his list of comparisons between Gottschalk and the fifth-century predestinarians. In addition to arguing that God had chosen some but not all persons for eternal life, Gottschalk also made the daring assertion that he had likewise died for some but not all. This assertion of an atonement that saved only those chosen reflected Gottschalk’s manner of voicing his opinions “in some way by a different tradition, an error similar to what the old predestinarians also said,” remarked Hincmar.⁷⁴ Thus, by using conciliar tradition to identify Gottschalk with heretics of centuries past as well as liturgical tradition to employ antiphons from the Roman mass in order to demonstrate his own understanding of correct orthodoxy, Hincmar sought to legitimize his own authority, particularly over heretics such as Gottschalk.

In another example of his use of conciliar tradition to draw attention to his own orthodoxy, in *On Predestination and Free Will* Hincmar referenced two heretics condemned by the church in centuries past, the fifth-century Archbishop of Constantinople, Nestorius

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 177; *Antiphon on the Introit on the Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost*, PL 78:720, translated in Genke and Gumerlock, *A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 177. The antiphonal liturgy used by Gottschalk and Hincmar is also found in René-Jean Hesbert, *Antiphonale missarum sextuplet* (Rome: 1967); see xix-xxv for discussion of the manuscripts. For an analysis of the use of liturgical texts by Gottschalk and Hincmar, see also Gillis, “Gottschalk of Orbais,” 340-353.

⁷⁴ Hincmar, *Letter to Pope Nicholas*, 177. “Dicit quoquo modo, dispari traditione, sed pari errore, quod et veteres Praedestinatiani dixerunt.”

(386-450), as well as the seventh-century Patriarch of Antioch, Macarius (deposed 681). Although the respective Christological controversies with which Nestorius and Macarius became associated had little direct correlation with Gottschalk's predestination theology, Hincmar referenced both of them to demonstrate continuity in the Church's response toward heretics. Not only had Nestorius and Macarius erred in their teachings, but they had also corrupted the authentic writings of the saints whom they had erroneously misinterpreted regarding correct orthodoxy, avowed Hincmar.⁷⁵

Similarly, in a letter to Egilo, after repeating his list of Gottschalk's incorrect trinitarian and soteriological leanings, as well as his own citation of a Roman antiphon added to Esther 13:9 to disprove Gottschalk's logic, Hincmar informed Egilo of the obvious: "From these deadly chapters any catholic and learned person can see the great destructive things that emerge."⁷⁶ Hincmar again relied on conciliar tradition to disprove Gottschalk, this time regarding Gottschalk's Trinitarianism. Hincmar's central concern in this area stemmed from his perception that Gottschalk's assertion of the threefold nature of the Godhead implied a plurality of gods. "He says that the godhead of the holy Trinity is threefold, as there are three persons in the holy Trinity. . . For, if the godhead is threefold," Hincmar explained, "there will be three gods."⁷⁷ While Gottschalk's position on this issue and the complexity of the Trinitarian debate between himself and Hincmar is beyond the scope of this paper, Hincmar's reference to what he perceived to be Gottschalk's position on the Trinity reveals that he sought to demonstrate that Gottschalk's

⁷⁵ Hincmar, *On Predestination and Free Will [De Praedestinatione Dei et Libero Arbitrio (Praefatio)]*, PL 125: 55. "...de scripturis authenticis ac sanctorum dictis quaedam interrasisse atque corrupisse prodentibus gestis comperimus."

⁷⁶ Hincmar, *Letter to Egilo*, 179.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 179-180.

errant ideas extended beyond predestination to a wider array of theological concepts.⁷⁸

Such an erroneous view had already been condemned by the Council of Nicaea and thus was not open for further interpretation, asserted Hincmar. In this same letter, Hincmar again relied on liturgical tradition. For example, in his discussion of the atonement and for whom it was efficacious, Hincmar cited a canon of the Roman mass that read, f“This is my blood that will be shed for you and for many.”⁷⁹ As part of the Eucharistic liturgy, it dealt with the topic of whom the atonement was intended for. According to Hincmar, the “for you and for many” referenced every person, in contrast to Gottschalk’s assertion that the “many” referred only to those whom God had previously chosen to save.

After thus delineating a number of specific points of disagreement with Gottschalk, Hincmar then informed Egilo of the necessity to silence Gottschalk’s views on double predestination, quoting Pope Celestine’s admission of collective ecclesiastical responsibility for maintaining orthodoxy: “If we are lenient toward an error by our silence, the issue rightly points to us.”⁸⁰ Hincmar then cited another papal assertion of the duty of church authorities to prevent heretics from corrupting communal standards of orthodoxy by referencing Pope Leo I’s assertion: “The sins of the lower ranks should be referred to none rather than to lazy and careless rulers, who often foster some unpunished plague when they pretend not to have the necessary

⁷⁸ For more on Gottschalk’s Trinitarianism, see George H. Tavard, *Trina Deitas: The Controversy between Hincmar and Gottschalk* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1996).

⁷⁹ Hincmar, *Letter to Egilo*, 182; and *Canon of the Roman Mass*, PL 85, trans. in Genke and Gumerlock, *A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 182.

⁸⁰ Hincmar, *Letter to Egilo*, 184; and Celestine I, *Letters*, 21.1, PL 50:529A, trans. in Genke and Gumerlock, *A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 184.

medicine.”⁸¹ Therefore, in regard to the task of ecclesiastical censure of heresy, Hincmar presented his actions toward Gottschalk not only as a product of his personal disagreement with him over theological matters, but also, more fundamentally, as a fulfillment of his duties as an ecclesiastical authority. To neglect to silence and punish Gottschalk would be to shun his responsibility to Carolingian society by allowing his heretical views to fester among the Frankish community. The fidelity of the Frankish community to orthodoxy about matters of salvation and grace remained vital.

Conclusion

Exploration of the multifaceted approach taken by Hincmar in the predestination quarrel against Gottschalk reveals that Hincmar appealed to patristic, conciliar, and liturgical authorities beyond Saint Augustine in order to clarify that while some portions of Augustine’s writings could perhaps be interpreted in favor of Gottschalk’s stance on predestination, western catholic orthodoxy as a whole proved otherwise. Hincmar thus sought to argue that too large a body of ecclesiastical tradition existed to allow Gottschalk’s misinterpretation of Augustine to remain credible. A reevaluation of Hincmar’s writings against Gottschalk thus offers a glimpse into the means by which he sought to frame Augustine’s arguments regarding predestination in a wider framework of western Catholic tradition that he viewed as undoubtedly supportive of his own interpretation of the doctrine of predestination. Such analysis further demonstrates the ambiguity inherent in textual interpretation in the early medieval Frankish church and the strident attempts by multiple parties to assert their interpretation as decisively orthodox. As Hincmar’s writings collectively reveal, not least among these attempts was the concern to demonstrate a proper

⁸¹ Hincmar, *Letter to Egilo*, 184; and Leo I, *Letters*, 1.5, PL 45:1763, trans. in Genke and Gumerlock, *A Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 184.

understanding of Augustinian views on grace, supported by centuries of ecclesiastical tradition.