Heresy and Orthodoxy in Carolingian Europe: Gottschalk of Orbais' Use of Patristic Texts in a Debate on Divine Predestination

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ABSTRACT

In ninth-century Francia, a rebellious Benedictine monk named Gottschalk of Orbais ardently defended his theory of predestination, much to the vexation of the Carolingian Church, whose leaders denounced him as heretical and imprisoned him for the remainder of his life. His opponents frequently cited ecclesiastical tradition to argue that western Catholic orthodoxy opposed the theory of predestination that Gottschalk espoused. In return, Gottschalk did likewise, primarily through citation of patristic literature. While most scholarship has analyzed Gottschalk’s citation of the patristic church father Saint Augustine of Hippo in order to demonstrate Gottschalk’s orthodoxy, such an approach proves incomplete because it ignores the ambiguous nature of Augustine’s stance on predestination, hence the ability of both Gottschalk and his opponents 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 to 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 his opponents’ arguments by likewise citing not only Augustine but also additional patristic fathers to support his own assertions. This thesis thus argues that Gottschalk utilized the ambiguity of Augustine’s theory of predestination by eloquently manipulating a wide body of patristic literature to skillfully present himself as entirely orthodox and reverse the accusation of heresy on his ecclesiastical enemies. Such an investigation reveals not only the opportunities available to members of the theologically trained monastic community in the Carolingian world to redefine orthodox
tradition, but also the mechanism of resisting ideas that appeared to have departed from a generally accepted doctrinal canon. This analysis will therefore explore the Frankish effort to guard orthodoxy, especially through episcopal authority, and Gottschalk’s effort to present himself as an undisruptive proponent of a truthful and traditional understanding of predestination.
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ARF</td>
<td><em>Annales regni Francorum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCCM</td>
<td><em>Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSL</td>
<td><em>Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPG</td>
<td><em>Clavis Patrum Graecorum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEL</td>
<td><em>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>MGH</td>
<td><em>Monumenta Germaniae Historia</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td><em>Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Latina</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFA</td>
<td><em>Royal Frankish Annals</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td><em>Sources chrétiennes</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>SRG</td>
<td><em>Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum</em></td>
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Gratias tibi domine alma trinitas, inuolabilis fides haec est de praescientia ac praedestinatione

Gottschalk, Confessio prolixior
Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

“We impose perpetual silence on your mouth.”¹ Hincmar, archbishop of Reims, uttered these words against the rebellious monk Gottschalk at the Synod of Quierzy in 849 in northern Francia. After being publicly flogged, Gottschalk then flung the books he had authored into flames upon the insistence of his accusers.² He subsequently spent the rest of his life in prison where he later died in October 868. His crime: “incorrigible obstinacy” in teaching the doctrine of predestination.³

Gottschalk’s radical attempt to redefine orthodoxy serves as a notable example of the opportunities available to theologically trained members of the monastic community within the Carolingian world of the ninth-century. Gottschalk was born into a noble family in which his father Bernus was a Saxon count.⁴ Gottschalk’s father dedicated him as an oblate to a monastery at Fulda in Saxony where the presiding abbot, Rabanus Maurus, “compelled Gottschalk to accept monastic life in childhood,” a charge for which Gottschalk later accused him upon coming of age.⁵ Gottschalk finally obtained

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³ Hincmar, Synod of Quierzy, trans GMPC, 169.
⁴ Hatto of Fulda, Letter to Otgar [Epistola ad Otgarium], MGH, Epist. 5:529, trans. GMPC, 11.
⁵ Ibid., 15, 16.
permission to be released from his vows, after which Rabanus promptly penned his work entitled *On the Oblation of Children*, in which he asserted that those “who studied the sacred letters from their cradles” but later abandoned their monastic vows “think things contrary to the faith of the orthodox fathers” and thus deserved the label of heretic.⁶ Events later unfolded to reveal that Rabanus proved to be one of Gottschalk’s chief antagonists in the ensuing debate over divine predestination. Gottschalk’s disagreement with Rabanus over child oblation demonstrated that the feud between them had an early beginning.

Although Gottschalk obtained release, he soon found himself in another monastery, that of Corbie in northern Francia before eventually relocating to a monastery in Orbais.⁷ As David Ganz noted, the monastery at Corbie possessed a repository of texts by Augustine, Gregory, and Isidore, which partly explains Gottschalk’s later familiarity with their works.⁸ According to Matthew Gillis, it was at Corbie where he “developed a reputation as a *magister* for his teachings on predestination.”⁹ Some time later, after visiting Hautvillers, which later served as the location of his eventual imprisonment, Gottschalk relocated to a monastery in Orbais in the diocese of Soissons.¹⁰ However, he left Francia around 836 to journey to Italy where he began to spread “teachings quite

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⁷ Victor Genke, GMPC, 18-19.
⁸ David Ganz, *Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance* (Singmaringen: Thorbecke, 1990), 66.
contrary to . . . salvation, especially on the subject of predestination.”

In a letter to Noting, the bishop of Verona, written in 840, Rabanus lamented the spread of “the heresy that some people are wickedly defending concerning the predestination of God” [heresi quam quidam de predestinatione dei inique contendunt].

After his stint in Italy, Gottschalk soon traveled to the Balkans, where he served as a missionary and spent time in Dalmatia, likely breaking his Benedictine oath to maintain a stable and non-itinerant life [stabilitas loci].

After returning to Francia around 848, ecclesiastical authorities soon summoned Gottschalk to Mainz, where he appeared before a synod presided over by King Louis the German to determine his punishment for theological error. Here Gottschalk professed a confession of faith before the bishops in which he openly avowed his belief in double predestination, the idea that some were chosen for eternal life while others were appointed to damnation.

After witnessing Gottschalk’s refusal to change his beliefs, Rabanus sent him to

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11 Ibid. Hincmar may have actually authored this denunciation of Gottschalk’s teaching. Although Prudentius of Troyes is the recorded author of this section of the Annals, some scholars aver that his successor Hincmar tampered with several portions of Prudentius’s entries, including those pertaining to Gottschalk. Given Prudentius’s endorsement of many of the same theological views as those espoused by Gottschalk, it seems unlikely that he would have authored such a harsh portrayal. See Prudentius of Troyes, Tractoria, in Francis X. Gumerlock, “The Tractoria of Prudentius of Troyes (d. 861)” Kerux 25:1 (May 2010): 15-18. For a discussion over the proper attribution of authorship for this portion of the Annals, see Nelson’s introduction to her English translation of the Annals, page 14.


14 Gottschalk, Confession of Faith at Mainz [Chartula suae professionis ad Rabanum episcopum] in Lambot, Oeuvres, 38; trans. GMPC, 68; and Benedicti regula (CSEL 75), trans. in Patrick Geary, Readings in Medieval History, 4th ed., (New York: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 182-183. See also GMPC, 25.
Orbais to be under the jurisdiction of Hincmar, Archbishop of Reims.\textsuperscript{15} Hincmar then ordered Gottschalk to appear at the Synod of Quierzy the following year where he condemned Gottschalk for his “incorrigible obstinacy” in teaching the doctrine of double predestination.\textsuperscript{16} Hincmar further ordered that Gottschalk “be confined to a cell,” which resulted in his imprisonment at Hautvillers, where he spent the rest of his life until his death in 868.\textsuperscript{17} At the time of his death, he remained an excommunicant.\textsuperscript{18}

Although often overlooked, the story of this lesser known ninth-century monk and his conflict with church authorities over the issue of predestination offers significant insight into the relationship between textual interpretation, ecclesiastical authority, and efforts to control heresy in the Carolingian world. One of the most significant facets of Gottschalk’s predestination treatises, letters, and confessions remains his frequent citation of patristic literature to reinforce his claims regarding predestination. While most scholarship has focused on Gottschalk’s citation of Saint Augustine of Hippo, this approach to understanding Gottschalk’s theory of predestination proves incomplete because it ignores the ambiguity present in Augustine’s theory of predestination. Since both sides of the controversy frequently cited Augustine as their primary patristic authority, Gottschalk in turn extended his cache of patristic literature to include a wide variety of other church fathers whom he quoted to sustain his predestination arguments.

\textsuperscript{16} Hincmar, \textit{Synod of Quierzy}, trans. GMPC, 169.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} Matthew Bryan Gillis, “Noble and Saxon: the meaning of Gottschalk of Orbais’ ethnicity at the Synod of Mainz, 829” in Richard Corradini, Matthew, Gillis, Rosamond McKitterick, and Irene van Renswoude, eds., \textit{Ego Trouble: Authors and their Identity in the Early Middle Ages} (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2010), 197.
This thesis aims to explore his use of these authorities to demonstrate that Gottschalk skillfully manipulated a number of texts written by additional patristic fathers as a means to legitimize his theory of predestination and portray himself as a loyal follower of true orthodoxy, misunderstood or assaulted by his opponents. Gottschalk thus utilized additional patristic sources to reverse the accusation of heresy upon these opponents, whom he labeled as themselves misaligned with western Catholic orthodoxy. A demonstration of orthodoxy, as it will be argued, became increasingly crucial in the Frankish church seeking uniformity with Roman Catholicism and being unafraid to utilize coercive instruments to ensure it.

Chapter 2 will explore historiographical perceptions of both Gottschalk as well as Carolingian intellectual history more broadly. Chapter 3 will provide an overview of the structure and organization of the Carolingian Church with which Gottschalk found himself at odds in the 840s. It will investigate its intellectual and political culture to determine why heresy mattered to Gottschalk’s contemporaries, who provided the proper instruments of combating it and how this was practically accomplished. Chapter 4 will present the attacks made upon Gottschalk by his opponents, with particular attention to the role of ecclesiastical tradition. Chapter 5 will investigate Gottschalk’s attempted reversal of the accusation of heresy to prove that his ecclesiastical enemies were themselves the ones most misaligned with western Catholic orthodoxy. It will also demonstrate Gottschalk’s skillful manipulation of a wide body of patristic literature to advance his arguments regarding predestination. This thesis will therefore enrich understandings of not only the fluctuating interpretations of patristic literature in the ninth century Carolingian Church, but also the way in which the church’s ecclesiastical leaders
understood and punished heresy in attempt to sustain a society unified around ecclesiastical orthodoxy. It will further demonstrate the opportunities available for theologically trained members of the Carolingian monastic community to participate in the growth of intellectual culture and increased attention to theological minutiae during the Carolingian Renaissance.
Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many of Gottschalk’s works remained missing until Dom Germain Morin’s 1931 discovery of a substantial number of his writings in the Bongars library in Bern, providing a more complete wealth of primary sources with which to understand Gottschalk. Since 1931, multiple historians have sought to probe further into the political, intellectual, geographical, and theological aspects over the Carolingian division of thought regarding predestination contained in the writings discovered by Morin. This review of extant literature seeks to make note of earlier notable contributions to the historiography of Gottschalk, while focusing most intently on post-1931 scholarship.

Within its analysis of twentieth-century historiography, it centers on several historiographical concerns. The first involves Carolingian intellectual history more broadly, analyzing the historiographical treatment of Gottschalk’s use of patristic sources as part of the wider scholarly debate regarding the degree of originality present within Carolingian theology despite heavy reliance on patristic texts. Although it remains undoubted that Carolingian intellectuals cited patristic authors, the degree to which they used such texts to advance their own original arguments remains more polemical among historians. The final area of focus concerns the debate over how to position Gottschalk in the broader historical framework by analyzing whether his theological stance should be viewed as either a continuation of the patristic theology of Augustine or instead as a prefigurement of later sixteenth-century Reformation thought. It will be argued that this
debate, despite intentions to grasp a more complete understanding of Gottschalk’s place within the broader historical framework, ultimately lends itself to anachronistic interpretations. Finally, this review of extant literature will conclude by arguing that while scholarship on Gottschalk’s use of patristic authority has nearly exclusively focused on his citation of Augustine, this thesis aims to extend this analysis by arguing that Gottschalk utilized the ambiguity present within Augustine’s theory of predestination to advance his own position on predestination, demonstrate his alignment with western Catholic orthodoxy, and reverse the label of heresy upon his accusers.

*Carolingian Intellectual Historiography*

Intellectual life in ninth-century Carolingian Europe experienced growth as an increasing number of scholars came to the court of Charlemagne, producing an outpouring of scholarly achievements. 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 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 functioning within the period known as the Carolingian Renaissance composed their own original arguments or instead merely rehearsed 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 of the originality of Carolingian intellectual contributions. 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.” Portions of later scholarship have echoed this view. Dermot Moran’s analysis of a treatise on the origin of the soul written by another Carolingian, Ratramnus of Corbie, likewise mentioned the large volume of Augustinian quotations in his work, noting that the beginning of the work “did little more than assemble a number of traditional texts.”

The bulk of more recent 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, David Ganz noted the originality of the works of not only Gottschalk but also those 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.” In reference to other Carolingian intellectual works, Ganz remarked that they revealed “considerable originality in

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22 David Ganz, *Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance* (Singmaringen: Thorbecke, 1990), 93.
conception and execution.”\textsuperscript{23}

Even more recently, Celia Chazelle and Burton Van Name Edwards produced \textit{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 attention to new commentaries, exegetical methods, and biblical and artistic literature.\textsuperscript{24} In 2001, Celia Chazelle also published \textit{The Crucified God in the Carolingian Era: Theology and Art of Christ’s Passion}, in which she likewise rejected what she saw as the common erroneous assessment that the theologians of the Carolingian era lacked originality and merely restated what the earlier patristic writers had stated, instead arguing that a reformulation of conceptualizing the originality of Carolingian intellectual and theological contributions calls for a complete transformation of the way historians view this period of time. Only when its contributions are seen can historians gain an accurate view of the Carolingian Renaissance.\textsuperscript{25}

In specific reference to the predestination controversy, she argued that the increased reading of patristic texts, notably those of Augustine, forced ninth-century scholars to reevaluate their stances on the earlier Augustinian-Pelagian debate and produce their own original positions concerning the current controversy.\textsuperscript{26} Chazelle noted that Carolingians sought to “attempt their own answers, sometimes of profound intellectual complexity” rather than merely rehearsing patristic literature.\textsuperscript{27} In addition,

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 92.
\textsuperscript{24} Celia Chazelle and Burton Van Name Edwards, \textit{The Study of the Bible in the Carolingian Era} (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003).
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 172.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 300.
Marios Costambeys, Matthew Innes, and Simon MacLean produced an informative analysis of eighth- and ninth-century Europe entitled *The Carolingian World*, in which the authors argued 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.\textsuperscript{28}

In his article, “The Texture of Tradition: The Role of the Church Fathers in Carolingian Theology,” Willemien Otten argued that while the volumes possessed in the Carolingian period were by no means exhaustive of the entire canon of patristic writings, the Carolingian era witnessed a hitherto unmatched revival in locating, reading, and dissecting patristic texts, leading to large-scale intellectual and theological developments within the Carolingian Church.\textsuperscript{29} By creating a theological worldview based on the limited patristic sources available, Carolingians created original contributions. Otten argued that such a “paucity of intellectual resources is finally what makes the Carolingian period a real beginning for Christianity, a beginning totally unlike its actual historical origin.”\textsuperscript{30} This type of new beginning, he contended, arose as a result of Carolingians reading patristic texts with an eye to contemporary intellectual currents. For example, the

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 6.
literature that emerged in the patristic era was largely based on the confluence of divergent philosophies such as Stoicism and Platonism with Christianity. However, in the Carolingian period, scholars often connected theology and anthropology as a lens through which to read patristic texts.

A number of scholars have applied this argument to assert the originality of the participants in the ninth-century predestination debate. For example, in 1974, Peter McKeon pointed to Hincmar’s practice of editing certain portions of Gregory the Great’s writings to suit his own original political or ecclesiastical arguments.31 In addition, Giles Brown pointed to the originality of another actor within the ninth-century Carolingian theological debates, Rabanus Maurus, while also briefly noting his use of patristic authors such as Cassiodorus, Isidore, Bede, and most prominently, Augustine.32 In 2013, J. David Schlosser noted the degree of originality present in the works of Rabanus, who adapted the ideas espoused in the writings of Augustine and other patristic fathers in writing his own work, *The Institutes*.33 Samuel W. Collins argued that the Carolingian figure Amalarius, known for his proposed liturgical reforms, reached beyond Augustine’s ideas of discerning divine meaning by applying it to the liturgy.34 In 2009, in his exploration of Gottschalk’s exercise of power throughout the theological controversy, Matthew Gillis noted the shift in scholarship that has moved toward an embrace of the originality of

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33 J. David Schlosser, “Reading into Christian Teaching: The hermeneutic of love in the Carolingian age” Ph.D. Dissertation (Purdue University, 2013), 277.
ninth-century theologians that is synonymous with their frequent use of biblical and patristic sources.35

**Gottschalk in Historiographical Memory**

Regarding historiography on Gottschalk’s role within this constantly evolving Carolingian world, one of the foremost historiographical debates centers over how to position him in a broader historical framework. Before beginning investigation of twentieth century scholarship, which is the primary focus of this review, an understanding of pre-twentieth century historiography is useful for understanding the progression of thought about Gottschalk. The bulk of the historiographical debate in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries centered around the dispute over the validity of Gottschalk’s theological views. It was largely shaped by theological fissures within early modern Catholicism, particularly among Jesuits and Jansenists. Theologically conservative Jesuits such as Jacques Sirmond, Louis Cellot, and Domenico Bernini published criticisms of Gottschalk’s religious views and perceived departure from Catholic belief.36 However, members of the more radical Jansenist faction such as Gilbert Maugin, Jacques Basnage de Beauval, Johann Jakob Hottinger, and Enrico Norris countered these attacks by publishing defenses of Gottschalk view of predestination.37

While historical controversy that was largely theological in nature marked much of the historiography of Gottschalk in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the nineteenth century witnessed the development of more rigorous historical approaches to understanding Gottschalk’s story within a framework that analyzed not only the theological components of the controversy but also a diverse range of political, social, cultural, and literary aspects as well. Notable nineteenth-century historiographical contributions include Henry Newland’s translation of the letters of Gottschalk’s theological ally Florus, Heinrich Schrors’ biography of his opponent Hincmar, Frederic Gaudard’s dissertation on Gottschalk, Albert Freystedt’s analysis of the legal proceedings of Gottschalk’s trial, and Ludwig Traube’s analysis of Gottschalk’s poetry.38

As stated earlier, Dom Germain Morin’s 1931 discovery of Gottschalk’s works in the Bongars library in Bern, at which time he published his article, “Gottschalk retrouve” in Revue Benedictine, radically altered twentieth century historiography on Gottschalk.39 Among the notable contributions during the twentieth century, there exist analyses of Gottschalk’s poetry by historians such as Norbert Fickerman, Helen Waddell, J.E. Raby, Bernhard Bischoff, Jean Jolivet, Gillian R. Evans, Peter Godman, Otto Herding, Marie-

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Luise Weber, and H. Grabert. Historians such as Maieul Cappuyns, E. Aeggerter, Eleanor Duckett, M.L.W. Laistner, Jean Devisse, Martina Stratmann, and John Marenbon noted the influence of Gottschalk’s theological allies and opponents. Jean Jolivet and George Tavard analyzed Gottschalk’s opposition to Archbishop Hincmar in the Trinitarian debate of the ninth century. Other historians such as Peter McKeon and David Ganz analyzed the controversy from a Carolingian political standpoint. From an


intellectual perspective, scholars such as Charles Radding and John Michael Wallace-Hadrill have contrasted Gottschalk’s theological worldview with the predominantly anthropological worldview of his contemporaries. Mayke De Jong provided useful information regarding Gottschalk’s early monastic life as a child oblate and later adult monk. Rosamond McKitterick argued that the ninth-century predestination debate arose as a result of the general Carolingian revival of Christian learning and education fostered by King Charles the Bald.

More recently, in the twenty-first century, scholars such as Bernard Boller examined Gottschalk’s missionary work in the Balkans prior to his imprisonment. As mentioned earlier, also notable is Celia Chazelle’s work *The Crucified God in the Carolingian Era*, in which she focused largely on the effect of Gottschalk’s predestination theology on the liturgical and Eucharistic debates of the ninth century. Scholars such as Cyrille Lambot, George McCracken, Henry Denzinger, Grayson Regenos, Ronald Hanko, Paul Dutton, Mary Brennan, and Timothy Roberts have also translated a number of primary sources in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Also...
notable in terms of Gottschalk’s predestination works is the collection of translations in Victor Genke and Francis Gumerlock’s primary source collection entitled *Gottschalk and a Medieval Predestination Controversy*, published in 2010.\footnote{Victor Genke and Francis Gumerlock, *Gottschalk and a Medieval Predestination Controversy: Texts Translated from the Latin* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2010).}

Although the array of angles from which historians have approached Gottschalk’s story is diverse, perhaps one of the more frequently reoccurring elements of historiographical conflict has explored how to position Gottschalk within a broader historical framework. This inquiry has resulted in two ways of analyzing Gottschalk, one of which has viewed him as representative of the patristic era, most notably that of the prolific church father, Saint Augustine, while the other has instead seen him as an early sixteenth-century reformer. Although the bulk of this debate has occurred in the years following 1931, two notable earlier scholars deserve mention.

The first is James Ussher, the staunchly Calvinist archbishop of Armagh, Ireland. His defense of Gottschalk largely presented him as a prototype of the sixteenth-century reformers. Perhaps the earliest evidence of his position on Gottschalk is found in his 1631 work, in which he defended Gottschalk’s theological views.\footnote{James Ussher, *Gotteschalci et praedestinatianae controversiae ab eo moyae Historia* (Typographia Societatis Bibliopolarum, 1631).}

At the time he published
his work, Ussher himself was involved in a controversy sweeping the Irish church in the
seventeenth century over the doctrine of predestination. In fact, Ussher’s publication of
his book in 1631 directly opposed the 1628 royal moratorium that prohibited discussion
of predestination, though he strove to prevent his work from being read by the laity by
publishing it in Latin. By upholding Gottschalk as the first of many later ecclesiastical
reformers, Ussher likewise presented himself as synonymous with what he perceived to
be correct theological interpretation. Thus, by positioning Gottschalk as a forerunner of
the growth of predestinarian thought, Ussher ultimately constructed a historical basis for
his own theological arguments.51 Another pre-twentieth century historian who
contributed to this discussion was the German historian G.F. Wiggers. Writing in 1859,
Wiggers, however, rejected any tendencies to view Gottschalk as an early reformer.52
Instead, he contended that Gottschalk should be seen as one trying to defend what he
considered the correct interpretation of Augustine in order to preserve the purity of
patristic theology, rather than seeking to rebel against the Catholic Church.53

This historiographical conversation continued into the twentieth century, greatly
enhanced by Morin’s 1931 discovery of a large number of Gottschalk’s writings. The
following year, Benoit Lavaud joined the debate with his article entitled, “Precursor de
Calvin ou temoin de l’augustinisme? Le cas de Godescalc.”54 In his article, Lavaud
examined Gottschalk largely in terms of upholding Augustinian theology, a conclusion he

51 Gregory Johnson, “A Bibliographical Review of Historiography on Gottschalk: A
Persecuted Medieval Augustinianism” Unpublished paper, St. Louis University, 1999.
52 Johnson, “A Bibliographical Review.”
53 G.F. Wiggers, “Schicksale de augustinische Anthropologie, Funfte Abtheilung: Der
54 Benoit Lavaud, “Precursor de Calvin ou temoin de l’augustinisme? Le cas de
reached through a regional interpretation of Carolingian France. He argued that the continuation of Augustine’s views on salvation was generally more present in southern France than in the northern regions and pointed to Lyons as a prime example of a region in which Augustine’s views on predestination enjoyed a closer following. He drew attention to the generally amicable relationship between Gottschalk and the church of Lyons, which viewed his teaching as in line with that of Augustine.55 Thus, regional variations in interpretations of Augustine resulted in divergent viewpoints on matters of theology within Carolingian France. Lavaud therefore demonstrated how Gottschalk’s Augustinian theology resulted from his connection with regions most receptive to his own understanding of Augustine, such as Lyons. In this assertion, Lavaud demonstrated how ninth-century views of Gottschalk largely depended on regional perspectives.

In a strikingly different interpretation, four years later, Fernand Mourret asserted the existence of similarities between Gottschalk and Martin Luther.56 While Mourret refrained from drawing oversimplified continuities between Gottschalk and Luther and largely framed his analysis on the conditions of the ninth-century debate, he also cited the failure of Gottschalk’s teachings to gain approval as stemming from his defiance to the Church. He argued that many of Gottschalk’s theological principles later surfaced among the Scholastic theologians. However, the difference in the reception to the arguments of the Scholastics as opposed to those of Gottschalk, however, revolved around how Scholastic theologians framed their arguments. Mourret contended that while the Scholastic theologians framed their argument in full submission to the Church,

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55 Johnson, “A Bibliographical Review.”
Gottschalk instead “made the mistake of maintaining it in a tone of disobedience and revolt.”

In 1956, Klaus Vielhaber published his interpretation of the controversy entitled Gottschalk der Sachse. Vielhaber rejected what he perceived to be the erroneous portrayal of Gottschalk as defiant of ecclesiastical authority. Rather, he pointed to Gottschalk’s compliance with his ecclesiastical superiors despite expressing a diametrically opposing viewpoint. Vielhaber drew attention to Gottschalk’s obedience in returning to the monastic life even after obtaining release from his vows. Rather than fleeing from the monastic life, Vielhaber contended, Gottschalk relocated to Orbais. Thus, Vielhaber presented this example of obedience to ecclesiastical authority as indicative of the continuing pattern of obedience throughout Gottschalk’s life. In this manner, Vielhaber argued, Gottschalk cannot therefore be viewed as an early reformer, but rather as an obedient servant of the church who, although disagreeing on theological issues, was in no way attempting to break from ecclesiastical tradition.

In 1966, however, German historian Siegfried Epperlein argued that Gottschalk was representative of Saxon dissent against the Frankish church. Epperlein contended that his resistance to the feudalization policy employed by the Frankish church during the ninth century sparked a mass following that opposed the church’s attempts to implement its feudal policy. Many historians who rejected claims of Gottschalk’s obstinacy

59 Johnson, “A Bibliographical Review.”
60 Vielhaber, 16, 21.
criticized his challenge to prevailing notions of Gottschalk’s relationship with the church. For example, in 1972, Janet L. Nelson countered his thesis by instead asserting that the small amount, if any, of evidence of support among the masses for Gottschalk remained too insignificant a foundation upon which to base any substantive claim. She asserted that the only instances in which evidence exists that the mass population supported Gottschalk’s doctrinal views occurred in Italy and thus discredits any notion of Saxon theological support for Gottschalk.62

D.E. Nineham continued the conversation on Gottschalk in his article, “Gottschalk of Orbais: Reactionary or Precursor to the Reformation?” published in 1989.63 Nineham ultimately concluded that Gottschalk was neither a reactionary nor precursor, but was instead a theologian that should be understood in his own right.64 He drew attention to Gottschalk’s familial background, noting that his father was a Saxon count and that other members of his family had served as Saxon bishoprics, thus revealing that Gottschalk came from a family well known within Saxony, at least to the upper political and religious elite.65 Nineham then noted the relationship between ninth-century Saxony and the ruling Frankish kingdom, arguing that Saxony’s history as a region positioned on what he terms “the outskirts of the Frankish world” created an environment in which popular attitudes toward Frankish rule were decisively

64 Ibid., “Reactionary or Precursor?” 18.
65 Nineham, “Reactionary or Precursor?” 15.
He extended this claim by arguing that many Saxons expressed this hostility by opposing Frankish monasticism and its rulings before then connecting this opposition to Gottschalk’s case by arguing that he indeed had popular support among Saxons and that such support drove a wedge of hostility between himself and the northern Frankish Church.

He also incorporated a regional interpretation by noting that in contrast, the southern Frankish church generally saw him in an amicable light. Noting the opposition to him in the northern church, however, Nineham connected such hostility with Gottschalk’s earlier monastic life. Before pleading to be released from his monastic vows (yet later relocating to the monastery at Orbais), Gottschalk resided at the monastery in Fulda. His abbot there, Rabanus Maurus, later became one of his leading opponents in the predestination conflict. Nineham cited Saxon disregard for Frankish authority as a leading factor in Rabanus’s vehement opposition to Gottschalk. Thus, crediting Gottschalk with support among Saxons, at least among the elite, Nineham incorporated regional and political explanations regarding Gottschalk’s perceived defiance of the Frankish Church.

After shedding light on his interpretation of popular support for Gottschalk, Nineham closed his argument by demonstrating that while similarities exist between Gottschalk and both the patristic and Reformation eras, neither era can adequately prevail over the other as a framework for understanding Gottschalk. He rejected the notion that Gottschalk should be viewed merely as a ninth-century version of Saint Augustine,

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66 Ibid.
67 Ibid., 16.
asserting instead that Gottschalk’s work was decisively original, incorporating a wider range of sources than merely Augustine and also containing his own ideas. However, he also contended that Gottschalk should not be viewed as an early Reformer. He asserted that while Gottschalk held many of the same theological convictions as did the later Protestant Reformers, there also remained a notable distinction between the two. Whereas the Reformers desired to create a permanent division away from the Catholic Church, Gottschalk merely sought to impose what he perceived to be a correct understanding of salvation.

Francis Gumerlock also analyzed this issue in his article, “Gottschalk of Orbais: A Medieval Predestinarian,” arguing that although Gottschalk certainly made many theological arguments that surfaced again later in the Reformation, labeling him as an early reformer constitutes anachronism. For example, Gumerlock pointed to a dissimilarity arising from the main issues against which each sought to contend, drawing specific attention to the differences between the grievances of sixteenth-century reformers, such as clerical corruption, the abuse of indulgences, the “treasury of merit,” and the theology of justification, and those of Gottschalk, which lacked any substantive complaint about ecclesiastical corruption. Although addressing deep theological divides, his attack did not embrace as wide a scope of ecclesiastical grievances as did the Reformers. He also drew attention to the widely different means used by each to voice their argument, which reveal a broader understanding of the respective relationship between individuals and ecclesiastical authority and how these differed between the ninth

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68 Nineham, “Reactionary or Precursor?” 18.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid., 29.
and sixteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{71} He argued that although Gottschalk certainly made many theological arguments that surfaced again later in the Reformation, labeling him as an early reformer constitutes anachronism. For example, Gumerlock pointed to a dissimilarity arising from the main issues against which each sought to contend, drawing specific attention to the differences between the grievances of sixteenth-century reformers, such as clerical corruption, the abuse of indulgences, the “treasury of merit,” and the theology of justification, and those of Gottschalk, which lacked any substantive complaint about ecclesiastical corruption.\textsuperscript{72} Although addressing deep theological divides, his attack did not embrace as wide a scope of ecclesiastical grievances as did the Reformers. He also drew attention to the widely different means used by each to voice their argument, which reveal a broader understanding of the respective relationship between individuals and ecclesiastical authority and how these differed between the ninth and sixteenth centuries.

For example, Gumerlock argued that in his attempt to defend his theological perspective on salvation, Gottschalk shared his views with the pope in attempt to gain papal approval of his argument. In contrast, the Reformers’ eventual separation from the Roman church reveals that their opposition to the Roman Catholic Church ultimately led to their permanent break from it. In addition, he pointed to the vastly different sources from which each drew to compose their arguments. While Gottschalk relied on patristic scholars, the Reformers instead used the works of late medieval scholastics that emerged

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 29.
from the systematization of theology in late medieval universities. Like Nineham before
him, he ultimately concluded by asserting that Gottschalk should be evaluated within a
ninth-century, rather than patristic or Reformation, context. Doing so allows for an
evaluation of Gottschalk on his own terms, rather than reading anachronistic perspectives
into the history of the ninth-century predestination debate.

Thus, upon analysis of the arguments on both sides of the historiographical debate
as to where to position Gottschalk within a broader historical framework, it becomes
evident that both similarities and dissimilarities exist between Gottschalk and periods of
time both before and after him. As these latter two examples of scholarship demonstrate,
perhaps the most accurate manner of classifying Gottschalk rests not in assigning him to
either the patristic or Reformation era but rather in analyzing him according to his own
time period, that of the Carolingian Renaissance. This analysis of the ongoing debate
about Gottschalk’s function in the historical framework affirms similarities between
Gottschalk and both earlier and later theological thought while also resisting labeling
either of these categories as sufficient for understanding him. Rather, this position seeks
to avoid anachronism by positioning Gottschalk as worthy of historical study in his own
right, and thus endeavors to understand him within his own place in Carolingian Europe.
Scholars such as Nineham and Gumerlock have therefore concluded that Gottschalk can
be labeled neither as a reactionary nor a precursor to the sixteenth-century Reformation,
but instead as a theologian and scholar in his own right. While continuities can be traced
both back to the patristic era as well as forward to the Reformation, greater understanding
can perhaps be gleaned from analyzing Gottschalk within his own time period.

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A large extent of this understanding involves analyzing Gottschalk in relation to the patristic texts that he utilized. Jeffrey Burton Russell argued, “It was Gottschalk’s stubborn virtue to refuse to accept the ambiguity about predestination and free will that was the legacy of Augustine.”\textsuperscript{74} This problem addressed by Russell has yet to be explored in detail and remains an area of Gottschalk’s thought that has received only minor scholarly attention. Perhaps the closest analysis of the controversy over how best to interpret Augustine is found in the third volume of Jaroslav Pelikan’s exhaustive work, \textit{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 early medieval thinkers interpreted him. While Pelikan acknowledged Hincmar’s use of other patristic authorities, he focused his analysis mainly on the reception of Augustine.\textsuperscript{75}

Charting the development occurring over centuries in his overview of predestination thought within the Catholic Church, Guido Stucco touched upon Gottschalk’s reliance on Isidore of Seville’s articulation of the twofold nature of predestination as well as on Fulgentius’s assertion of the limitation of the atonement while noting the refutation of Gottschalk’s use of these writers by his opponent Hincmar.\textsuperscript{76} Stucco also pointed out that while some of the theological arguments of Fulgentius were employed by the Catholic Church in the Carolingian era, they were

\textsuperscript{74} Jeffrey Burton Russell, \textit{Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 111.
\textsuperscript{76} Guido Stucco, \textit{God’s Eternal Gift: A History of the Catholic Doctrine of Predestination from Augustine to the Renaissance} (Bloomington: Xlibris Corporation, 2009), 221-223.
largely “toned down.”

Eleanor Shipley Duckett noted the favoritism shown toward Augustine by Gottschalk during his theological self-study, while also briefly noting his study of some of Augustine’s followers, including Fulgentius of Ruspe. Philip Schaff even argued that Fulgentius of Ruspe inspired Gottschalk’s assumption of the nickname “Fulgentius.” In 2008, Ildar H. Garipzanov discussed Gottschalk’s reliance on both Augustine and Isidore as she noted the perceived threat to the sacramental system posed by Gottschalk’s predestination theology. Even fewer historians have explored Gottschalk’s use of other symbols of orthodoxy, such as the Roman liturgy of the mass or prior church councils, to assert his own validity though Susan Boynton noted the use of Latin hymns as a facet of theological argument by both Hincmar and Gottschalk in the ninth-century Trinitarian controversy.

Both William P. Anderson and Justo L. González drew attention to the use of Augustine as well as other patristic fathers such as Prosper, Gregory, and Fulgentius in the writings of one of Gottschalk’s allies in the predestination quarrel, Ratramnus of Corbie. Timothy Roberts likewise pointed to Ratramnus of Corbie’s use of not only

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Augustine but also a range of other patristic fathers.\textsuperscript{83} Christof Rolker traced the circulation of the writings of both Gregory and Isidore in the region near Reims, France.\textsuperscript{84} Most recently, Brian Matz’s essay, “Augustine, the Carolingians, and Double Predestination,” has explored the influence of patristic legacy within the ninth-century debate, though with nearly exclusive focus on the legacy of Augustine.\textsuperscript{85}

Thus, while most historians have focused on Gottschalk’s relationship to Augustine, arguing that he served as a continuation of his theology, relied on his arguments to legitimize his own, or even instituted a more radical understanding of his basic tenets, comparatively little has been written about Gottschalk’s use of other patristic fathers in his writings on predestination. While some authors have explored the Carolingian treatment of other patristic authors aside from Augustine and a few have touched upon Gottschalk’s use of a few of them in his predestination writings, an in-depth analysis of his utilization of a wide range of patristic authors to ground his theological convictions in legitimacy has yet to be fully explored. Thus, this thesis will examine Gottschalk’s citation of patristic fathers aside from Augustine, noting that he skillfully manipulated a number of texts written by additional patristic fathers as means to legitimize his theological argument of predestination. Therefore, analysis of Gottschalk’s

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use of these patristic authorities will offer insight into the way in which he drew upon this pool of authors to offer a sense of legitimacy to his highly contentious theological view on predestination, demonstrate his alignment with western Catholic orthodoxy, and reverse the label of heresy upon his accusers.

Chapter III
THE CAROLINGIAN CHURCH AT THE TIME OF GOTTSCHALK
The Carolingian Church at the time of the ninth-century controversy over predestination remained one centered around the notion of ecclesiastical hierarchy and authority. This chapter will therefore provide a broad overview of its organization, function, and political and intellectual culture in effort to explain both why heresy mattered to Gottschalk’s contemporaries, who provided the proper instruments of combating it in ninth-century Francia, and how this was technically accomplished. The facets of this system of ecclesiastical organization to be considered include the Carolingian understanding of kingship, papal authority, and the proper roles of bishops in creating a unified Carolingian social order. It will also explore the means with which Carolingians addressed deviation from this social order in the form of heresy, which was addressed by ecclesiastical councils.

Carolingian Notions of Kingship
In order to gain a broad understanding of the church with which Gottschalk found himself at odds in the 840s, it is first necessary to understand the connection between dynastic and ecclesiastical rulership in medieval Francia. Therefore, an analysis of the Frankish Church must also be understood within the context of the Frankish political realm. In surveying the dynastic history of the Carolingian era, many scholars have argued that the revolution that put the Carolingians in extraordinary relations with the papacy began with Pepin the Short whose reign was succeeded by the brief tenure of his son Carloman. However, more widely known is another of Pepin’s sons, Charlemagne, whose coronation initiated a distinct new stage in Franco-papal relations. Charlemagne ruled medieval Francia until his death in 814, as king of the Franks, beginning in 768, king of the Lombards, beginning in 774, and most famously, emperor of western Europe, beginning with his coronation on Christmas Day, 800. This latter act signified an important marker for the Carolingian political and ecclesiastical society that was to develop within the ninth century because it marked the beginning of the Holy Roman Empire, an institution that would undoubtedly steer the course of western Europe for centuries to come.

Charlemagne’s rulership is notable for myriad reasons. One of the perhaps most central offices of rulership in the Carolingian world remained that of king. Although the office of the king had already been largely redefined by Roman ideology through Pepin the Short’s coronation, Carolingian conceptions of the role and function of the king remained significant during Charlemagne’s reign. Although he had earlier become king of the Franks in 768, he became the Roman Emperor on Christmas Day 800. This change in the nomenclature of his authority can be seen in a capitulary he ordered, which noted
Charlemagne’s acknowledgement of his new role, “He has given instructions that in all
his kingdom, all men, both clergy and laity, and each according to his vows and way of
life, who before have promised fealty to him as king, should now make the same promise
to him as Caesar.”86 This capitulary therefore demonstrated Charlemagne’s attempt to use
his authority as Roman Emperor to command universal obedience over the highly diverse
body of his subjects. Although Charlemagne’s rule in many ways embodied the capacity
of the traditional monarch, his imperial office was notable because it signaled the
unification of much of the Christian West that had remained dispersed since the earlier
Roman Empire of antiquity. The capitulary’s author further spoke to Charlemagne’s
desire for not only temporal authority but also cooperation and partnership among
ecclesiastical leaders, stating that the emperor had “selected the most prudent and wise
from among his leading men, archbishops and bishops, together with venerable abbots
and devout laymen, and has sent them out into all his kingdom.”87 By incorporating
bishops, archbishops, abbots, and the laity, Charlemagne conceived of his role as emperor
as one rooted in authority, both temporal and ecclesiastical, thus setting a precedent for
successors who applied this same conception of authority when dealing with dissidents
such as Gottschalk.

Henry Mayr-Harting argued that Charlemagne used the imperial coronation
whereby he became emperor in order to assert the legitimacy of his rule, though Mayr-

86 General capitulary for the missi [Capitulare missorum generale], spring 802,
Capitularia regum Francorum, 1. (Hanover, 1883) nr. 33, pp. 91-99; trans. Patrick
Geary, Readings in Medieval History, 4th ed., (New York: University of Toronto Press,
2010), 297.
87 Ibid., 296.
Harting’s focus particularly emphasized his imperial rule over the Saxon aristocracy.\textsuperscript{88} He focused on Charlemagne’s command of a vast empire stretching to the Rhineland frontier. More than an effort to display political prowess, however, Charlemagne remained intent on using his political authority to transform the pagan Saxons into a distinctly Christian people. A number of his capitularies explicitly threatened death for those still wedded to pagan practices such as spurning Christian baptism, offering prayers to elements of nature, and the dangerous crime of taking counsel with pagans “against the king or against Christian people.”\textsuperscript{89} Interestingly, part of the pre-conversion paganism of Gottschalk’s native Saxony included a strong emphasis on fatalism. Although it did not appear to be a decisively influential ideological factor by the time of Gottschalk’s controversy, it poses an interesting question of to what degree this belief in fatalism lingered into the ninth century and possibly served as a factor that made Gottschalk predisposed to accepting the notion of a fixed and predetermined order. Nonetheless, Charlemagne’s attempt to bring former pagans under his subjection can therefore be seen as his attempt to create a unified spiritual society under orthodox Christianity. This likewise remained an ideological legacy inherited by his successors, who conceived of their imperial role in terms of promoting a unified, orthodox society and punishing dissidents such as Gottschalk who posed a threat to this societal order.

In addition to creating a Christian society rid of paganism, Charlemagne also worked to foster an outgrowth of learning and literacy among clerical and monastic

\textsuperscript{88} Henry Mayr-Harting, “Charlemagne, the Saxons, and the Imperial Coronation of 800” \textit{English Historical Review} 111 (November 1996): 1113.
\textsuperscript{89} \textit{Capitulary concerning the parts of Saxony} [\textit{Capitulare de partibus Saxoniae}], \textit{MGH}, Capit. 1. (Hanover, 1883); trans. Geary, \textit{Readings}, 283.
venues. As with his territorial endeavors, this too had motivations rooted in creating a unified Christian state. The creation of such a state remained important to Charlemagne because he viewed a uniform code of doctrine and law necessary to construct a centralized social order. This desire largely arose from the intellectual flourishing of the Carolingian Renaissance, a period of growth in literacy, textual criticism, and clerical education. However, Charlemagne’s focus was not on mere academic study for its own sake, but rather for the purpose of bettering readers in biblical studies to enforce ideological uniformity. In his On the Study of Literature [De litteris colendis], Charlemagne explained his reasoning for promoting this emphasis on education among clerics and monks, “And so we began to fear that their lack of knowledge of writing might be matched by a more serious lack of wisdom in the understanding of holy scripture.” Revealing his commitment to learning as a key to maintaining orthodoxy, in the following sentence, Charlemagne cautioned, “We all know well that, dangerous as are the errors of words, yet much more dangerous are the errors of doctrine.”

As will be demonstrated, this fear of erring in doctrinal matters remained important to not only Carolingian political and ecclesiastical leaders, but also religious dissenters such as Gottschalk, albeit with widely divergent interpretations of what constituted religious dissent and heresy.

Charlemagne himself often intervened in the process of determining heresy, a crucial imperial duty, such as in his summoning of the Council of Frankfurt to determine the Spanish Adoptionist heresy. The Adoptionist theory, in which Christ was not begotten as the Son of God, but rather adopted, sparked a great deal of controversy in the

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90 Ibid., 290.
Carolignian Church. Under Charlemagne’s authority, Carolignian ecclesiastical authorities chose to “repudiate and with one voice denounce [the Adoptionist theory], and it was their decision that it should utterly eradicated from the Holy Church.” Another issue in which Charlemagne imposed uniform Christian discipline and practice involved the controversy with the Eastern Church over the veneration of images. While the Eastern Church viewed the use of images of Christ or of saints as aids to devotion and piety in worship, the Western Church instead viewed them as distractions from worship at best and idolatry at worst. Charlemagne’s Synod of Frankfurt likewise discussed this issue, stating that western ecclesiastical authorities “regarded as anathema those images of saints . . . and despised all such adoration and service, and argued in condemning it.” As can be surmised, imperial and ecclesiastical intervention in matters dealing with religious doctrine was not alien to Gottschalk’s predestination debate, but stemmed from a rich history of efforts to impose uniform theology in the midst of conflicting doctrinal interpretations and ideas.

After Charlemagne’s death in 814, the ascendancy of his son Louis the Pious to the throne marked a transfer of emperorship in which Louis became responsible for upholding his father’s commitment to maintaining a united Christian empire. Pope Stephen consecrated Louis in Reims in 816. Louis’ coronation was significant because he was consecrated by Charlemagne rather than through the usual channel of coronation by the pope. However, slight trouble arose in 833 when a group of bishops were

91 Synod of Frankfurt [Concilium Francofurt], 794, MGH, Concilia II 1 (Hanover, 1906), trans. in Geary, Readings, 286.
92 Ibid.
successful in their attempt to depose him following a series of rebellions led by his sons, prominently Lothair, who attempted to remove him from power and assert the throne themselves, though he was restored to office a year later. This event remains significant in its demonstration of the power of bishops to impose a guilty verdict and severe sentencing upon a king, despite his pleas of innocence. In her article, “Kingship, Law, and Liturgy in the Political Thought of Hincmar of Rheims,” Janet Nelson examined Hincmar’s theory on the legal restraints of kingship, arguing that Hincmar, Archbishop of Reims, advocated the necessity for bishops to hold a certain amount of power over the king. As it relates to Louis the Pious, Nelson explored the ability of bishops to enact penitential discipline upon a wayward king. She argued that during the Carolingian period, bishops already possessed a certain degree of control over the king via the institution of penitential discipline, but they had a difficult time exercising this power because the king often countered that he answered not to bishops, but only to the law of God (iudicium Dei). However, in the case of Louis the Pious, a group of bishops were successful in deposing him in 833, if only for one year, as punishment for what they perceived to be the error of incorrectly governing his realm.94 The bishops’ success in determining the king’s orthodoxy and their severe imposition of penalties demonstrated the power of bishops to wield authority in the Carolingian world. In the case of Hincmar, his argument for a limited role of kingship and subsequently increased episcopal authority led to a significant amount of regional power being allocated to archbishops such as himself. Hincmar relied upon this position of episcopal authority when defending

his fitness for sentencing and punishing Gottschalk.95

After Louis’s death, his son Charles the Bald assumed the throne. His reign was particularly relevant, as it was during his rulership that the predestination controversy reached its climax, in which he took a vested interest. In her article, “Charles the Bald (823-877) and His Library: The Patronage of Learning,” Rosamond McKitterick pointed to the provisions made by Charles in his last days in which he directed the entrustment of his collection of books to his sons, indicating that he perhaps possessed a large quantity of books that he developed into a personal library over the course of his reign.96 McKitterick noted the emphasis placed upon the written word in the Christian social order of the Carolingian era, in which not only the venerated Bible, but also biblical commentaries, treatises, and other Christian literature remained supreme within the imperial court. Beyond mere intellectual stimulation for the learned, however, this program of theological emphasis had implications for the laity as well, argued McKitterick. She stated,

Charles the Bald inherited his illustrious grandparent’s conviction that the cultivation of intellectual and artistic endeavor and the development of the mind were not only highly desirable in themselves but also necessary for the strength of the Christian religion and for the success of Christian society within Frankish lands.97

Thus, for Charles the Bald, intellectual stimulation was a means to the desired end of creating an ordered and structured society in which Christian orthodoxy could be maintained.

95 Hincmar, Letter to Pope Nicholas, [Epistola ad Nicolaum papam]; Lambot, Oeuvres, 44-45; trans. GMPC, 174-175.
96 Rosamond McKitterick, “Charles the Bald (823-877) and His Library: The Patronage of Learning” English Historical Review 95 (January 1980): 28.
97 Ibid., 29.
By encouraging theological education among the clergy, Charles sought to ensure that proper doctrine was instilled in the laity in effort to shape popular belief to correspond with that of western Catholic orthodoxy at large. As Charlemagne, Louis the Pious, and finally Charles the Bald reveal, kingship implied far more than mere claim to political rulership; rather, it carried the responsibility of maintaining orthodoxy throughout the realm. This responsibility was acutely prominent in the case of Gottschalk’s predestination controversy, in which Charles the Bald consulted theologians to determine the proper stance he should take in order to maintain societal uniformity through the mechanism of establishing religious orthodoxy.98

Papal Authority and Administration

As a brief overview reveals, the administration of the Carolingian Church shared an intimate connection with imperial politics, as rulers of the spiritual and temporal realms each vied for power and authority. Although imperial patronage was almost always limited to the practical execution of the ecclesiastical order rather than involved in establishing doctrinal minutiae, the pope and emperor remained in a power struggle over the proper division of power within Carolingian Europe. Before investigating the reign of the specific popes in power during Gottschalk’s time, it is first necessary to understand the broader relationship between Carolingians and papal authority.

Ildar H. Garipzanov argued that Carolingian era witnessed a growing respect for the office of the pope. She pointed to indicators of this change in power relations found in letters written by Carolingians in which they addressed the pope, pointing, for example,

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to the act of placing the pope’s name before the imperial intitulature as well as the practice of addressing him in letters with the adjectives sanctissimo and reverentissimo. These gestures were attempts by Carolingians to express respect through both the organization of their letters and the wording with which they addressed the pope.

Garipzanov pointed to another title often used for the pope: summo pontifici et universali papae, a title that referred to the pope as the supreme pontiff and universal pope. Perhaps one of the earlier uses of this title can be found in reference to Pope Silvester I (314-355), in which he is addressed as Patri nostro Silvestro summo pontifici et universali papae, a title that reflects his position as “our father Silvester, the supreme pontiff and universal pope.” This can also be seen, for example, in a letter addressed to Pope Hadrian (867-872) by Gunther, Archbishop of Cologne, in response to his own earlier deposition for intervening in the personal life of King Lothair II by encouraging him to pursue a contentious divorce from his wife Teutberga. Acknowledgement of papal authority via this title can be seen in the letter’s opening sentence, “I Gunther, before God and his saints, profess to you my Lord Hadrian, highest pontiff and universal pope . . . that I do not object to, but humbly accept, the sentence of deposition canonically given against me by Lord Nicholas.”

Although Pope Nicholas (858-867) had earlier deposed him, Gunther thought it fit to acknowledge his compliance with this deposition when addressing the successor of

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99 Ildar H. Garipzanov, The Symbolic Language of Royal Authority in the Carolingian World (c. 751-877) (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 111.
100 Garipzanov, Symbolic Language, 111.
101 Decretalium Collectio, Edictum Domini Constantini Imperatoris, Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Latina 130:251D.
Nicholas, Pope Hadrian, an acknowledgment intentionally worded to convey respect for papal authority. Finally, as seen in the reference to Pope Silvester, mentions of the pope were often cloaked in paternal language in which those who addressed the pontiff often referred to him as a spiritual father while referring to themselves as spiritual sons under his care. The commonly used titles, “in Christo patri” and “spiritalis filius vester;” respectively, illustrate this reference to the pope as a paternal ruler, endowed with authority to lead the spiritual family of western Christendom. In his own letter to Pope Nicholas regarding the controversy with Gottschalk, Hincmar addressed him as the “Father of Fathers” and “reverend Pope Nicholas” [Patrum Patri, et summa veneratione honorando, reverentissimo papae Nicolao].

At the beginning of Gottschalk’s controversy with his ecclesiastical enemies, Leo IV reigned as pope. During his tenure, he instituted a series of military defenses to protect Rome from the Muslims, specifically Saracen, invasion after the Saracen destruction of St. Peter’s Basilica shortly prior to Leo’s pontificate. Eamon Duffy termed Leo “an energetic monk” who, upon becoming pope in 847, attempted to guard Rome from the threat of encroaching Saracens. Participation in the construction of such ventures promised eternal life, Leo assured, as it signaled an act of piety in protecting the Christian state from pagan invasion, as Paul Kershaw rightly noted. Such a stance on the means to obtain eternal life stood, no doubt, in contrast with that of Gottschalk. Hence, it can be

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103 Ibid.
104 Hincmar, Letter to Pope Nicholas [Epistola ad Nicolaum Papam]; PL 126:25.
inferred that Gottschalk’s radical ideas about predestination perhaps did not find a ready audience with Pope Leo.

Perhaps even more germane to the predestination controversy is Pope Nicholas I, who summoned Gottschalk and Archbishop Hincmar to the Council of Metz to mediate their differences, although the latter’s conspicuous absence made the goal of reaching a resolution rather difficult, ultimately resulting in Hincmar’s lengthy Letter to Pope Nicholas in which he attempted to clarify the misunderstandings caused by his actions. In this letter, Hincmar addressed Nicholas as “Your Holiness” in contrast to his term of endearment for Gottschalk as “this pestilential person.”¹⁰⁷ He then portrayed the council that he neglected to attend as small and inconsequential, a statement that he assumed Pope Nicholas would share. Citing the fact that Nicholas had referred to the proceeding at Metz as a council rather than a synod, Hincmar attempted to downplay the importance of the council and to portray Pope Nicholas as somehow willing to excuse his absence. An exercise in psychological persuasion, Hincmar’s letter reveals that he understood the necessity of remaining in good favor with the pope and made effort to cover his blunders accordingly.

In addition, he also attempted to shift blame to the bishops who originally delivered his summons to appear at the council. These “certain bishops, who had no interest in the matter, since, as they revealed by perfectly clear proofs, neither charity moved them nor did authority compel them, summoned me.”¹⁰⁸ Therefore, according to Archbishop Hincmar, it was the fault of neither himself nor of Pope Nicholas, but instead

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¹⁰⁷ Hincmar, Letter to Pope Nicholas, [Epistola ad Nicolaum papam]; Lambot, Oeuvres, 44-45; trans. GMPC, 174-175.
¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 175.
the bishops who did not properly announce the details of the council to him. In attempt to create a common enemy, Hincmar sought to portray himself as allied with Pope Nicholas against the other bishops who were clearly incompetent, according to Hincmar. This process reveals Hincmar’s attempt to portray his own innocence and proper handling of the controversy surrounding Gottschalk.

Episcopal Power: Archbishops and Suffragans

Archbishop Hincmar’s citation of the failure of the bishops to provide him adequate notice reveals another layer of authority in the Carolingian ecclesiastical hierarchy: the office of bishops. During Gottschalk’s feud with church authorities, perhaps the most prominent source of tension over the spread of his ideas was among bishops, most notably Archbishop Hincmar. As an analysis of Gottschalk’s conflict with ecclesiastical leaders reveals, bishops played a prominent role in governing regional affairs, and remained suspicious of those who attempted to disturb the ecclesiastical unity of the regions under their jurisdiction.

In terms of its ecclesiastical context, the role of bishops in the Carolingian Church must be understood within the wider contexts of its predecessor, the Merovingian Church. As Matthias Becher noted, the Merovingian Church drew upon classical models from antiquity to organize a system in which territories were delineated each by a civitas, which formed the basis for a bishopric to be ruled by ecclesiastical leaders known as bishops. These bishops came to office as a result of the decisions of metropolitans who also governed the synods of individual provinces led by bishops. The ruler of a metropolitan province, known as an archbishop, oversaw suffragan bishops. The latter

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thus remained subordinate to archbishops, a fact that Hincmar in particular rarely let go unnoticed. It was precisely his position as archbishop that allowed him to maintain jurisdiction over Gottschalk.

The basic structure of metropolitans and suffragans remained intact, albeit with slight modification, throughout the Carolingian period. The uneasy relationship that often existed between archbishop and suffragan is explored in Pierre Riche’s *The Carolingians: A Family who Forged Europe*. Riche’s analysis revealed that Hincmar was not alone in his frequent disdain for the bishops under his rule, but rather that this feeling was common among metropolitans, whom Riche referred to as “jealous possessors of power.”¹¹⁰ This can be seen, for example, in another portion of the archbishop’s *Letter to Pope Nicholas*, in which he explained his peculiar authority for being the only bishop capable of punishing Gottschalk. The original authority in charge of correcting Gottschalk’s heretical beliefs was Rothad, Bishop of Soissons. However, after Hincmar summarily deposed Rothad, he ordered Gottschalk to be sent to his own jurisdiction in order that he might be granted privilege to deal with Gottschalk appropriately, an action to be later discussed in subsequent chapters.¹¹¹ Whatever perceived threat archbishops felt from the suffragans under their jurisdiction, the two offices played formative roles in establishing ecclesiastical hierarchy at the metropolitan and local levels.

One of the perhaps foremost arenas in which bishops tested and exercised their authority were synods, gatherings of ecclesiastical leaders in which rulings were made on

issues relating to ecclesiastical politics, doctrine, heresy, and other matters relating to the church and its governance. Although they could at times play liturgical roles, a bishop’s main function during synods generally pertained to ecclesiastical politics. While at times they aided in making ruling decisions against heretics or those under penitential discipline, at other times, they themselves came under scrutiny for misdemeanors. For example, the Annals of St. Bertin stated that papal and imperial authority acted in tandem to punish both archbishops and their suffragans for failing to respond accordingly to a papal letter announcing the condemnation of a certain Bishop Formosus. According to the Annals, “the emperor sent in the pope’s deputies to rebuke still more harshly the archbishops and other bishops who the day before had not complied with the emperor’s command.” The next matter raised at the synod dealt with the primacy of Ansegis, the Archbishop of Sens. Regarding this matter, the Annals recorded, “The archbishops one by one replied that they were willing to obey the pope’s decrees in accordance with the rules, just as their predecessors had obeyed his predecessors.” Thus, in both cases, it becomes clear that both suffragan bishops and archbishops remained subordinate to both imperial and papal power, a reality that they ultimately, though perhaps reluctantly, recognized when conflicts arose in synods. However, bishops could also wield their own power, as seen in the case of Archbishop Hincmar. In his reflections on the sentencing of Gottschalk at the Council of Mainz, Hincmar informed Pope Nicholas that Gottschalk had both been condemned by Germanic bishops before being dispatched with a synodal

112 Ibid., 193.
113 Ibid.
letter to remain under the authority of Archbishop Hincmar.¹¹⁴

Likewise, although subordinate to archbishops, suffragan bishops still retained a notable degree of authority and respect as ecclesiastical rulers.¹¹⁵ For example, a bishop serving during the pontificate of Pope Nicholas is described in a contemporary chronicle as “the venerable Bishop Arsenius, envoy and apocrisiarius of the highest holy catholic and apostolic see, having apostolic authority and being the legate of that same Lord Nicholas the apostolic one.”¹¹⁶ As the remainder of the account reveals, Arsenius played a decisive role in governing the political ramifications of the divorce between Lothair II, king of Lotharingia (855-869) and Teutberga, an imbroglio in which the formerly mentioned Gunther, Archbishop of Cologne, found himself on the wrong side, leading to his deposition. Another portion of the account refers to Arsenius as the “close adviser.”¹¹⁷

In this instance, the record of Arsenius reveals that a bishop was at times portrayed as a confidant and direct extension of the pope himself. At other times, bishops were portrayed as representing the king such as in a record from the same chronicle in which Isaac, Bishop of Langres, and Erchanraus, Bishop of Chalons, were noted with the phrase, “From the hands of these two bishops, acting on behalf of King Charles.”¹¹⁸

Bishops could also serve as imperial envoys, as seen, for example, in the prolonged dispute between the sons of Louis the Pious, Charles the German summons a certain “venerable Bishop Emmon” to “beg Lothair in all humility to remember that Charles was

¹¹⁴ Hincmar, Letter to Pope Nicholas [Epistola ad Nicolaum Papam]; Lambot, Oeuvres, 44-45; trans. GMPC, 175.
¹¹⁵ Capitulary, Herstal [Capitulare Haristallense] 779, MGH, Capit. 1.1:46-51; trans. in Geary, Readings, 280.
¹¹⁶ Nelson, Annals, 125.
¹¹⁷ Ibid., 123.
¹¹⁸ Ibid.
his brother and godson; to remember what their father had arranged between them . . . and also to remember that only recently divine judgment had made it clear which side God was on.”\textsuperscript{119} Finally, bishops could also serve as carriers of letters between bishops and the pope, such as in the case of a certain Bishop Odo who transmitted a letter to Pope Nicholas from Hincmar warning him of Gottschalk’s theological errors.\textsuperscript{120}

Bishops’ involvement in political matters can further be seen in their inevitable involvement in dynastic conflicts, such as one over the division of the kingdom among the sons of Louis the Pious. For example, a contemporary account recorded that after Lothair drew arms in Vienne to oppose rival factions to his power, “a large number of men present were ready to use force in support of the father against the son. They flocked with the bishops and the whole clergy into the basilica of St. Denis.”\textsuperscript{121} Finally, in the feuds between Lothair and Charles the Bald, the youngest son of Louis the Pious and later king of West Francia (843-877), bishops were often tasked with establishing order in the chaotic internecine fighting. For example, a contemporary chronicle stated that after one particular battle between the two brothers, “the Christian people began to ask the bishops what they should do in this situation. So all the bishops, acting as one man, came together to hold council.”\textsuperscript{122} Bishops also at times were required to swear formal political allegiance to the king such as at the Synod of Frankfurt in 794 when a certain Peter, bishop of Verdun, was forced to publicly swear that he had not attempted to overthrow

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 158.
\textsuperscript{120} Hincmar, \textit{Letter to Pope Nicholas [Epistola ad Nicolaum Papam]}; Lambot, \textit{Oeuvres}, 44-45; trans. GMPC, 175.
\textsuperscript{121} Nithard’s \textit{Histories}, Book 1[\textit{Nithardus Historiarum Libri Quattuor}, Liber Primus] (Freiburg, Tübingen : Mohr, 1882); trans. in Scholz and Rogers, \textit{Carolingian Chronicles}, 134.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 156.
the reigning king. These incidents, among others, reveals that dynastic conflicts in the Carolingian era involved not only political rulers but also members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, not least of which were bishops. It also reveals the centrality of the bishops’ task to maintain uniformity and orthodoxy within Carolingian society, both in the type of political and dynastic conflicts mentioned as well as in doctrinal controversies such as that involving Gottschalk.

Serving under the jurisdiction of the archbishop, bishops fulfilled a variety of tasks, such as those listed by Anna Jones, to “preach to the people of their diocese; supervise their clergy; ensure correct missals, lectionaries, and other liturgical books; rebuild churches; teach widows; eradicate superstition; and lead by example of their own pure lives.” This can be found in a capitulary from 779 that granted authority for disciplinary roles, such as regulating priestly sexual immorality. Furthermore, a priest who had been disobedient to their bishop was required to make peace with the offended bishop before being allowed to partake of communion again. Bishops also remained the primary authority for instituting clerical and monastic discipline, the latter of which became particularly prominent in the case of Gottschalk.

Abigail Firey investigated attention to the role of suffragan bishops in fostering personal piety within both clerical and lay functions in her work, *A Contrite Heart: Prosecution and Redemption in the Carolingian Empire*. She argued that bishops

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124 Capitulary concerning the Saxons, 797, trans. in Geary, *Readings*, 284.
remained charged with the often unpleasant yet vital task of ensuring that clerical preaching did not align too closely with popular mandate, but remained orthodox in its warning of the danger of unrepentant sin among lay listeners. Stated Firey, “That a priest should be preaching, let alone in open fields, and that his teaching matched the beliefs of his audience in such a way that he had enthusiastic and continued attendance, indicates a breach in the pastoral hierarchy, in which priests are to be supervised by their bishops.”

Additionally, a capitulary from Herstal in 779 also charged bishops with examining priests before they could be allowed to conduct mass as well as regular visitation and supervision of parishes. Thus, bishops were responsible for making certain that clergy did not deviate from required preaching material, despite temptations to diverge into more popular topics. As one capitulary stated,

That each and every bishop give good teaching and instruction to those placed in his charge, so that there will always in God’s house be found men who are worthy to be chosen according to the canons.

Bishops were not immune to the requirement of education, however, as they themselves were charged with remaining abreast of ecclesiastical canons and as well as monastic rules. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, bishops had to enact penitential discipline on local clergy who erred either in their clerical or personal lives. Additionally, the capitulary further stipulated that bishops were granted authority to mediate in disputes

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128 Ibid., 288.
between a member of the clergy and a layman. In this role, bishops served as a type of gatekeeper to Carolingian society at the local level, ensuring proper orthodoxy, teaching, and conduct among clergy as well as punishing those who departed from such norms, as seen in the case of Gottschalk.

**Conciliar Rulings and Heresy in the Carolingian Church**

Therefore, an appreciation for the role of patristic tradition as well as the ecclesiastical structure of the Carolingian Church provides a foundation for understanding how it treated heretics. After being found guilty of teaching errant beliefs, heretics were generally summoned to appear before an ecclesiastical body to give explanation as to their wayward behavior. Although written centuries later, thirteenth-century French edicts lend insight into the medieval perception of the appropriate channels for punishing heretics: “If anyone be suspected of heresy, the magistrate shall lay hold of him and send him before the bishop. If he be convicted, he shall be burned, and all his personal property shall revert to his lord.” Therefore, after being summoned by a local magistrate who observed the offense, a heretic then appeared before a bishop who would decide his fate, as was the case with Hincmar’s sentencing of Gottschalk. If further controversy arose, papal power could intervene, as seen by Hincmar’s summons to appear before Pope Nicholas at the Council of Metz. Such councils, often called by imperial authority, were led by bishops under the supervision of the pope who acted as a governing authority and whose approval was necessary for conciliar decisions to be

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130 Capitulary, Herstal, 779, trans. in Geary, Readings, 288.
Aside from predestination, Carolingian councils often dealt with perceived heresy in the form of debates over the Trinity, the relationship between God the Father and Christ the Son, and even over proposed liturgical reforms. Regarding the earlier mentioned Council of Frankfurt in 794, a contemporary account lends insight into the organization of the council. This council, called by Charlemagne, partly dealt with the Spanish Carolingian heresy of Adoptionism, whereby Christ was the adopted, rather than begotten, Son of God. In reference to one of its most daring proponents, Felix, Archbishop of Urgell, an extract from the council stated,

> Easter was celebrated at Frankfurt, and there a great council of Gallic, German, and Italian bishops met before the king and the emissaries of the Lord Pope Hadrian, two bishops named Theophylact and Stephen. There the heresy of Felix was condemned for the third time. This condemnation by the authority of the holy fathers was written into a book, and all priests signed this book with their own hands.\(^{132}\)

As can be noted from the proceedings, a large number of bishops from diverse geographic locations gathered to make ecclesiastical decisions about heresy and orthodoxy before imperial and papal authority. The finality of the condemnation of heretics, in this case Felix, can be attested by the act of putting the heresy into writing and requiring ecclesiastical leaders to provide their signatures signaling their assent to the accused’s condemnation.

In relation to Gottschalk and his ordeal at the hands of Hincmar, the latter recorded that twelve bishops presided over the Synod of Quierzy, which condemned the monk in 849. As noted earlier, Hincmar called into question the importance of a later

\(^{132}\) RFA, 73.
council composed to address Gottschalk’s heresy, the Council of Metz in 863. Hincmar’s lament that it was bishops who gave him insufficient warning reveals the primacy of episcopal leadership in Carolingian councils in addition to the obvious presence of papal authority, as demonstrated by the recipient of Hincmar’s letter of explanation, Pope Nicholas himself. Therefore, Carolingian ecclesiastical leadership dealt with heresy by summoning councils led by imperial, papal, and episcopal authority, condemning heresy, and then deciding a proper fate for those accused.

Therefore, as can be determined from an overview of the Carolingian Church at the time of Gottschalk’s sentencing, it remained an institution centered around the notion of ecclesiastical hierarchy and authority. Modeled on its Merovingian predecessor, it sought to preserve a detailed form of organization. Temporal rulership often overlapped with spiritual rulership, as imperial authority and papal leadership frequently asserted authority over the ecclesiastical sphere. Papal authority played a perhaps even more central role in the Carolingian hierarchy of pronouncing the distinction between heresy and orthodoxy. Regarded as the spiritual father of western Christendom, the pope’s stance on heresy could be viewed in both authoritative and paternal terms. As supreme ruler of the Carolingian Church, popes could declare a matter heretical in order to provide a clear standard of what constituted orthodoxy and what departed from it. However, papal decisions on heresy also served the dual function of paternal care for those under his jurisdiction, as pronouncement of heresy could prevent endangering the masses from believing erroneous doctrines.

Finally, archbishops and their suffragans played a vital role in the Carolingian hierarchy of authority. Like popes, bishops carried the dual responsibilities of making
decisions in light of both ecclesiastical politics and supervision of local clergy to ensure that they were properly teaching the laity. Hincmar, for example, introduced his sentencing of Gottschalk as necessary both to preserve the predominant ecclesiastical position on predestination as well as to prevent his heretical teachings from spreading to the clergy and laity.

As each of these positions in the Carolingian world reveal, orthodoxy and the quest to determine it was central to the Carolingian ethos of a society unified around doctrinal belief. Patristic tradition remained one of the formative ideological factors to determine orthodoxy and served as one of the hallmarks of the renaissance of spiritual education during the Carolingian era. Determining what the Fathers had said about specific doctrinal matters often became the litmus test for identifying what constituted heresy and what passed as orthodoxy. In the case of Gottschalk, the authorities that opposed him frequently cited Saint Augustine as proof that Gottschalk departed from traditional Catholic teaching on predestination. As will be determined in subsequent chapters, Gottschalk no less relied on patristic fathers, and composed his own arguments based on patristic tradition. The heavy reliance on church tradition reveals that the Carolingian Church sought to present itself as part of a long continuum of orthodox thought modeled on an authoritative system of hierarchy determined to preserve such orthodoxy.

Therefore, ecclesiastical councils functioned as a prime arena in which to display this hierarchical approach to preserving orthodoxy. Involving a wide spectrum of Carolingian authorities, including imperial, papal, and episcopal leaders, church councils convened with the intent to produce a clear distinction between correct Christian belief
and erroneous heresy. For Gottschalk, such a council sealed his fate as both a heretic and prisoner, as the Council of Quierzy condemned his teachings and sentenced him to indefinite imprisonment at Hautvillers where he spent the remainder of his life. As this brief overview has demonstrated, understanding the Carolingian Church and its preoccupation with delineating orthodoxy and heresy remains central to explaining ecclesiastical responses to Gottschalk and understanding the world in which he operated.

Chapter IV

ACCUSATIONS AGAINST GOTTSCHALK: THE ROLE OF TRADITION

Although many of Gottschalk’s opponents considered his arguments regarding predestination radical, 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. 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 to prove their own respective stance as orthodox and their opponent’s as heretical. This chapter 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 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 to 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 merely citation of Augustine in order to refute Gottschalk.

This chapter 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 seeks to reevaluate 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 chapter thus examines the means by which he appealed to sources beyond Augustine in effort to demonstrate his alignment with western Catholic orthodoxy and the contrastingly heretical views of Gottschalk.

*Augustinian Ambiguity and the Carolingian Predestination Controversy*

Despite the vehemence with which both Gottschalk and his opponents argued against one another in the ninth-century debate, the topic of predestination, however, was by no means a new concept to the Carolingians. Rather, the Frankish church was well-versed in the teachings of Saint Augustine, whose works carried more authority in the late patristic and early medieval church than perhaps any other theologian. After his triumph over Pelagius 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. Against the “error of Pelagius” the

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Council of Orange in 529 affirmed Augustinian views on original sin and the bondage of the human will to choose salvation. However, the council remained silent about the topic of predestination except to state that God did not predestine man to evil.

Aside from this declaration, the council made no mention of Augustine’s previously championed theory of divine predestination. Doing so would have required the 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. Rebecca Harden Weaver argued that the council gave “tacit approval” to Augustine’s theory of predestination by both 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 the canons.

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.

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135 Council of Orange, Canon 22, trans. in Leith, Creeds of the Churches, 44; Hincmar, Letter to the Monks and Simple Folk of his Diocese [Epistola ad reclusos et simplices suae dioeceseos], Lambot, Oeuvres, 8-10, trans. GMPC, 169.
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 somewhat 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.138

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 such as in another of his works, *On Man’s Perfection in Righteousness*, where he made reference to “that class of men which is prepared for destruction,” *[eo genere hominum, quod praedestinatum est ad interitum]* or in his *Enchiridion* in which he acknowledged the predestination of the wicked to punishment.

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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 \(\text{praedestinatio}\) and foreknowledge \(\text{praescientia}\) 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. It should also be noted that Augustine himself evolved over the course of his life regarding his stance on predestination, moving from a somewhat moderate position on the nature of free will and human agency to a more rigid defense of the primacy of divine grace in initiating salvation in his later years. Although Augustine affirmed the role of predestination from the time of his conversion until his death, his most radical writings on the topic appeared toward the latter portion of his life.

Augustine’s equivocation on this matter, whether deliberate, inadvertent, or representative of his own evolving stance, 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

\[\text{praedestinavit ad poenam}\],\(^{139}\) 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 \(\text{praedestinatio}\) and foreknowledge \(\text{praescientia}\) 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. It should also be noted that Augustine himself evolved over the course of his life regarding his stance on predestination, moving from a somewhat moderate position on the nature of free will and human agency to a more rigid defense of the primacy of divine grace in initiating salvation in his later years. Although Augustine affirmed the role of predestination from the time of his conversion until his death, his most radical writings on the topic appeared toward the latter portion of his life.

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Augustine’s equivocation on this matter, whether deliberate, inadvertent, or representative of his own evolving stance, 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

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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.\footnote{Roger Hanko, “Gotteschalk’s Doctrine of Double Predestination” \textit{Protestant Reformed Theological Journal} 12 (1978): 33.} 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 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.\footnote{Hincmar, \textit{Letter to the Monks and Simple Folk of his Diocese [Epistola ad reclusos et simplices suae dioceseo]}, in Lambot, \textit{Oeuvres}, 8-10, trans. GMPC, 169-172.}

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. 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” 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 confusor of foreknowledge and predestination.”

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. As a result, when Gottschalk advocated his own peculiar interpretation of these matters, Frankish ecclesiastical leaders accused him 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. Likewise, around 840, Rabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mainz, lamented the newfound propagation of “the heresy that some people are wickedly defending concerning the predestination of God.” 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. 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

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142 Ibid.
over by King Louis the German 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. As part of this confession, Gottschalk quoted directly from Isidore, the seventh-century Archbishop of Seville, in his seminal work, *Sententia*.146 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” before ordering that he “be confined to a cell,” which resulted in his imprisonment and eventual death at Hautvillers.147

*Hincmar’s Attacks on Gottschalk*

As Archbishop of Reims, Hincmar’s involvement in ecclesiastical politics during this period serves as a notable example of the interconnection between ecclesiastical power and desire to construct a society modeled around orthodoxy. 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, 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. 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 lacked authority to ordain bishops, whose collective ordinations became thrown into question upon Ebbo’s multiple depositions. 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 strove 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 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 pontiff…as having to be believed, followed, held, and preached: this must be heartily

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believed by all for the sake of justice.\textsuperscript{150}

Hincmar elevated the bishops to a role in which they remained accountable for not only correct orthodoxy but also 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 reveal 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.\textsuperscript{151} However, even after this condemnation, Hincmar continued to address the topic in a series of letters to both the laity within his jurisdiction, fellow Frankish archbishops, and even Pope Nicholas. Within these letters, he included numerous references to patristic, conciliar, and liturgical tradition that extended beyond merely Augustine.

\textit{Patristic Literature}

Hincmar himself in fact 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 \textit{On the Truth of Predestination and Grace}, written

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\item[\textsuperscript{151}] Hincmar, \textit{Synod of Quierzy}, trans. GMPC, 169.
\end{itemize}
by Fulgentius of Ruspe, 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*.\(^{152}\) 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.\(^{153}\)

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

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\(^{152}\) Hincmar, *On Predestination and Free Will* [De Praedestinatione Dei et Libero Arbitrio (Praefatio)]; Lambot, *Oeuvres*, 36-44; [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].

of lay medieval religiosity. By presenting Gottschalk in this light, Hincmar thus created a role for himself as a discerner 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. Terming Gottschalk 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.”154 Hincmar asserted that Gottschalk had indeed correctly read Fulgentius’s assertion that some were indeed “prepared to suffer punishments.”155 However, what he misunderstood, stated 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.”156 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 individuals themselves, or perhaps the two acting in tandem, made this preparation, rather than God. By presenting Fulgentius’s assertion in this light, Hincmar thus effectively avoided

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154 Ibid.
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 (390-455), a contemporary and disciple of Saint Augustine, 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 in 866, Hincmar cited Prosper regarding what he termed the “law of supplication.” [statuit supplicandi].157

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.”158 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 for his

position toward Gottschalk, Hincmar identified himself as aligned with the Catholic Church at large by delineating the Church’s position toward Gottschalk, “And in the whole Catholic Church, which, in beseeching him on behalf of all people according to the apostolic tradition,” thus aligning himself with what he credited as the desire of the Church as a whole for reconciliation.\(^{159}\) 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 an even more recent Christian authority, Alcuin of York, 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, “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?,” thus demonstrating a position that acknowledged both grace and free will.\(^{160}\) Interestingly, both Gottschalk and Hincmar shared a favor for 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 affording those on opposite sides of the debate to use him to suit their own purposes. In this particular letter, Hincmar’s reference of Alcuin demonstrated his inclusion of recent scholars in addition to those of the patristic era, in attempt to reveal a long continuum of Christian thought that agreed with his own theological premonitions.

Conciliar Judgments

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, to advance his anti-predestination arguments. He often did so by associating Gottschalk with heretics of prior centuries that had been deemed unorthodox by conciliar rulings. For example, in a letter to Pope Nicholas in 863, Hincmar associated Gottschalk with both the fifth-century Monophysite heretic Eutyches (380-456) as well as a spurious group of fifth-century predestinarians.

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 with 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 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.”

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.”

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

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161 Ibid.
162 Hincmar, Letter to Pope Nicholas [Epistola ad Nicolaum Papam; Lambot, Oeuvres, 44-45; trans. GMPC, 176.
163 Letter to Egilo [Epistola ad Egilonem Archiepiscopum Senonensem]; Lambot, Ouevres, 45-46; trans. GMPC, 180.
were the problems posed by Rothad that a year prior to the date of this letter, Hincmar had deposed him 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 in the *Annals of St. Bertin*, described Rothad as “a man of singular madness” [*homo singularis amentiae*] for appealing to authorities beyond his own jurisdiction.\(^{164}\) Although Pope Nicholas restored Rothad two years later, at the time of Hincmar’s letter, he remained deposed.\(^{165}\) Thus, analysis of 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 between not only 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.\(^{166}\) While


\(^{165}\) Ibid., 123.

Eutyches’ position on the single nature of Christ had little direct correlation with the predestination heresy for which the Church accused Gottschalk, Hincmar sought to make the broader comparison of the two heretics in terms of 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.”

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

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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 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 to the position taken by Gottschalk, that of the fifth-century predestination heresy, which he claimed both Pope Celestine I (d. 432) as well as Prosper of Aquitaine, refuted. Prosper, he claimed, disproved the doctrine of predestination in both Africa and among the Gauls. However, this allegation was entirely spurious. Prosper had indeed been involved in a heated dispute with Gallic monks in the fifth century over the doctrine of predestination. 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, “By reversing historical evidence Hincmar attributed to the heretical anti-

168 Ibid.
predestination Gallic semi-Pelagians ideas held by Gottschalk so that he, Hincmar, could blame Gottschalk for resuscitating a matter previously judged heretical."\(^{170}\) 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.

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.\(^{171}\) However, he also moved beyond this assertion to argue that Gottschalk’s soteriological teachings, much as did 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. In the archbishop’s view, it was Gottschalk who placed a limit on divine sovereignty over salvation.

**Liturgical Tradition**

Although his more substantive liturgical reforms occurred in the 860s, after the intensity of the predestination conflict began to subside, he also used facets of the Roman Catholic liturgy to advance his anti-predestination arguments. 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 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.”172 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

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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.173 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 his On Predestination and Free Will, Hincmar referenced two heretics condemned by the church in centuries past, the fifth-century Archbishop of Constantinople, Nestorius (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...

173 Hincmar, Letter to Pope Nicholas [Epistola ad Nicolaum Papam]; Lambot, Oeuvres, 44-45; trans. GMPC, 177. [Dicit quoquo modo, dispari traditione, sed pari errore, quod et veteres Praedestinatiani dixerunt].
had erroneously misinterpreted regarding correct orthodoxy, avowed Hincmar.\textsuperscript{174}

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.”\textsuperscript{175} 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.”\textsuperscript{176} Hincmar’s reference of what he perceived to be Gottschalk’s position on the Trinity reveals that he sought to demonstrate that Gottschalk’s errant ideas extended beyond merely predestination to a wider array of theological concepts.\textsuperscript{177}

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 as well. For example, in his discussion of the atonement and for whom it was efficacious, Hincmar cited a canon of the Roman mass

\textsuperscript{174} Hincmar, \textit{On Predestination and Free Will [De Praedestinatione Dei et Libero Arbitrio (Praefatio)]}; Lambot, \textit{Oeuvres}, 36-44. \textit{[de scripturis authenticis ac sanctorum dictis quaedam interrasisse atque corrupisse prodentibus gestis comperimus].}

\textsuperscript{175} Hincmar, \textit{Letter to Egilo [Epistola ad Egiolnem Archiepiscopum Enonensem]}; in Lambot, \textit{Oeuvres}, 45-46; trans. GMPC, 179.

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{177} For more on Gottschalk’s Trinitarianism, see George H. Tavard, \textit{Trina Deitas: The Controversy between Hincmar and Gottschalk} (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1996).
that read, “This is my blood that will be shed for you and for many.” As part of the Eucharistic liturgy, it dealt with the topic of for whom was the atonement intended. 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 from spreading by 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.” 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 medicine.” Therefore, in regard to the task of ecclesiastical censure of heresy, Hincmar presented his actions toward Gottschalk as not only a product of his personal disagreement with him over theological matters, but more fundamentally, as a fulfillment of his duties as an ecclesiastical authority. To neglect to silence and punish Gottschalk

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would be to shun his responsibility to Carolingian society by allowing his heretical views to fester among the Frankish community, he argued. The fidelity of the Frankish community to orthodoxy about matters of salvation and grace remained vital.

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

DEFINING HERESY: USE OF PATRISTIC FATHERS BEYOND AUGUSTINE

In seeking to clarify the meaning of heresy and thus present his own ideas as entirely outside of its realm, Gottschalk spent a great deal of effort defining, labeling, and identifying heresy in his writings on the polemical topic of predestination. Acquaintance with his predestination writings further reveals that perhaps the chief model to which he looked to shape his views on heresy remained patristic authors who likewise defined heresy in their own writings. As has been discussed, extant scholarship has largely approached Gottschalk’s works by focusing on his frequent citation of Augustine as a means to support his theory of predestination.

However, this approach has overlooked both his use of a broader variety of patristic authorities as well as one his even more fundamental uses of patristic texts: defining heresy. Although Matthew Gillis’s recent work thoroughly demonstrated how Gottschalk relied on Augustine’s thought to frame himself as non-heretical and
contrastingly orthodox, this chapter seeks to expand this claim to reveal that Gottschalk appealed to non-Augustinian sources to legitimize both his theory of predestination as well as his definition of heresy. It demonstrates how Gottschalk defined a heretic according to the criteria established by patristic models while simultaneously arguing that he himself fit none of the criteria in question and thus did not deserve the heretical label with which he had been branded. As becomes evident, the Carolingian concept of heresy lacked definition, instead remaining a fluid and often ambiguous term used by theological opponents to accuse one another of departure from western Catholic orthodoxy. As recent scholarship by Matthew Gillis noted, the label of heretic, while often reserved for foreigners who departed from orthodoxy, remains particularly notable when applied instead to native Carolingians within the Frankish Empire.  

181 Among those labeled heretical from outside the bounds of the Frankish Empire, Spanish Adoptionists as well as Byzantine Iconoclasts served as notable examples during the ninth century. For an analysis of the contrasting label of heresy among foreigners and natives in the Carolingian world, see Matthew Gillis, “Matthew Bryan Gillis, “Gottschalk of Orbais: A Study of Power and Spirituality in a Ninth-Century Life,” PhD Dissertation (University of Virginia, 2009), 21-22.


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to reverse the dreaded label, in an extensive debate over the nature of grace, salvation, and free will.

Analysis of Gottschalk’s choice of patristic models to define heresy reveals that he used a diversity of patristic authors who supported predestination in their own writings including not only Saint Augustine but also Pope Gregory I, Fulgentius of Ruspe, Cassiodorus, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and John Chrysostom, among others. This chapter thus seeks to explore Gottschalk’s citation of patristic fathers aside from Augustine in formulating his definition of heresy. It argues that Gottschalk eloquently manipulated the predestination arguments of a wide variety of patristic fathers who both defined heresy and supported predestination in his attempt to demonstrate that an orthodox definition of heresy and defense of predestination were not incompatible. Although these additional patristic authors were often just as ambiguous as Augustine on the topic of the predestination of the damned, Gottschalk deftly positioned their arguments in such a way as to portray them as supportive of his own view of predestination.

This technique, however, was not unique to Gottschalk, as many other participants in the debate, such as Hincmar, Rabanus, Prudentius, and others, frequently attempted to define heresy on preconceived terms that exonerated their own beliefs. Furthermore, this technique was also not unique to the predestination debate in the ninth century, but also remained a facet of other Carolingian theological debates such as the iconoclast, adoptionist, and Eucharistic controversies, the details of which extend beyond the realm of this chapter. In each of these debates, however, Carolingian participants sought to define heresy on their own terms and in ways that eloquently represented
patristic and ecclesiastical tradition to their own advantage. Thus, Gottschalk’s use of this technique represents a wider Carolingian pattern of textual manipulation and self-representation.\textsuperscript{183}

Analysis of Gottschalk’s stance on the topic of predestination reveals the complexity inherent in identifying conceptions of orthodox predestination versus heretical predestination in ninth-century Francia. Although Saint Augustine’s assertion that God had bestowed the gift of eternal life on certain individuals based upon his divine prerogative generally remained within the realm of acceptably orthodox thought, the idea that God had actively chosen not to extend this gift to others ventured into the realm of heresy. Therefore, Gottschalk’s argument that God had not only chosen to save some individuals but also to damn others stood as testament to his ecclesiastical opponents that he had assuredly departed from an orthodox understanding of predestination and instead adopted a heretical viewpoint that could be supported by neither biblical nor patristic citations, according to his detractors.\textsuperscript{184} In response to the accusation that there existed a dichotomy between an orthodox understanding of predestination and his own heretical view, Gottschalk assumed the task of framing his view of predestination as orthodox according to ecclesiastical tradition by eloquently manipulating specific patristic texts, however ambiguous on the topic of predestination, to portray them as supportive of his view of predestination of both the righteous and the wicked.

\textsuperscript{183} For more on this Carolingian pattern of defining heresy within other ninth-century debates, see Ames, \textit{Medieval Heresies}, 128-130. For a thorough discussion of many of these theological debates within a wider Carolingian context, see Chazelle, \textit{The Crucified God in the Carolingian Era}.

\textsuperscript{184} Hincmar, \textit{Letter to the Monks and Simple Folk of his Diocese [Epistola ad reclusos et simplices suae dioceos]}, in Lambot, \textit{Oeuvres}, 8-10, trans. GMPC, 169-172.
Western Fathers

As Sam Collins noted regarding the centrality of the patristic legacy in the Carolingian world, making direct reference late eighth-century Council of Frankfurt, it “articulated perhaps most clearly what was a Carolingian commonplace: in matters of scriptural interpretation only the fathers could provide sure protection against heresy.”

One of the foremost patristic authors relied upon by Gottschalk to define heresy was Pope Gregory the Great, an adamant defender of predestination whose works *Morals on the Book of Job*, *Homilies on the Gospels*, and *Homilies on the Prophet Ezekiel* all referenced the themes of a fixed and providential order, predestination, and the final judgment, in especial regard for the judgment that God had predestined for the wicked.

Gregory therefore held great authority in the eyes of one his most avid readers, Gottschalk, who referenced Gregory’s work, *Homilies on the Prophet Ezekiel* in his own *Longer Confession*. Gottschalk explained that he harbored a deep fear of denying the truth, a fear that prompted him to ensure that his own theological stance did not depart from orthodoxy. However, Gottschalk then admitted that fidelity to orthodoxy did not always guarantee popular approval. He even noted that at times, it could create a scandal.

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among those who voiced disagreement, arguably a reference to his current imprisonment at the hands of Frankish ecclesiastical leaders. He then quoted Gregory’s argument in his *Homilies on the Prophet Ezekiel*, “it is better that scandal is allowed to rise than that truth is abandoned.”  

Gottschalk thus justified his contumacious position by looking to Pope Gregory as evidence that sometimes orthodoxy and popular opinion were not always synonymous.

Using the term “blessed Gregory” in reference to the author whom he cited, Gottschalk sought to demonstrate that Gregory both understood the nature of heresy and viewed predestination as outside of its scope. Gottschalk then argued that he would “rather die a thousand times” than espouse a heretical doctrine. Before citing Gregory yet again in his treatise entitled *Longer Confession*, Gottschalk also quoted a verse of Scripture from Proverbs 22:8, “Do not transgress the ancient boundaries that your fathers have set” in attempt to argue that he did not seek to present a new argument, but rather one that had been deemed orthodox by patristic Fathers of the church. He then incorporated Gregory’s own commentary on the verse, taken from his *Moral Commentary on Job*. Gottschalk quoted Gregory’s assertion,

> The heretics undoubtedly do this, who live outside the bosom of the holy church. They change the boundaries because they go beyond the decisions of the fathers by transgressing, because they also ravage and lay waste the flocks, and because they also draw the unlearned to themselves by perverse arguments and feed them with destructive teachings in order to kill them.

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By offering Gregory’s definition of a heretic, Gottschalk attempted to demonstrate that he understood the danger posed by the threat of heresy. This is especially significant given that Gottschalk penned this *Longer Confession* after Hincmar wrote a letter to the laity within his jurisdiction entitled *Letter to the Monks and Simple [Ad reclusos et simplices suae dioeceseos]* in which he warned the laity of the danger of straying from orthodoxy if they believed the errors propagated by Gottschalk regarding predestination.\(^{191}\) Gottschalk thus sought to counter Hincmar’s warning by insisting that he likewise understood the danger of following heretics, but that his own teachings did not fall under this category. Continuing on his theme of protecting the laity from dangerous and heterodox doctrinal errors, Gottschalk also quoted Gregory’s judgment on heretics who knowingly deceived listeners.\(^{192}\) By likewise condemning such action, Gottschalk sought to align himself with Gregory in attempt to distance himself from what he perceived as the misplaced heretical label given to him by his accusers. In addition, by relying on Gregory’s label of a heretic as those who live “outside the bosom of the holy church,” Gottschalk sought to portray himself as distinctively within the acceptance of the church, despite the fact that he wrote his *Longer Confession* while imprisoned at Hautvillers. While therefore clearly not accepted within the Frankish Church at the time of his writing, Gottschalk sought to make the larger argument that he remained within the bounds of orthodoxy according to the broader concept of the church universal, of which the current Frankish Church that rejected his teachings served as an erring member.

Gottschalk pointed to another of Gregory’s assertions in which he argued that


heretics rely on falsity to promote their message. Gottschalk quoted Gregory’s assertion that heretics, “require the shadows of falsity in order to establish a ray of light.”

Gottschalk argued that while heretics twisted the truth to assert their point, he instead supported his teachings on predestination with both Scripture and citation of patristic fathers deemed orthodox by the western Catholic Church, such as Gregory. In further explanation of the truthfulness of his teaching, Gottschalk referenced Gregory’s assertion that there existed two distinct types of heretics. One type remained ignorant of the truth and thus taught others out of their ignorance. The other, however, knew the truth inwardly yet purposely taught unorthodox doctrines and spoke falsity in order to deceive listeners. Both types were inherently sinful, argued Gottschalk, who somewhat surprisingly made no distinction of the guilt of one kind of heretic relative to the other. Both departed from orthodoxy, whether advertently or out of ignorance, he insisted. In addition to promoting falsity among listeners and fellow men, Gottschalk argued that heretics committed the likewise grave offense of using falsity against God himself. Argued Gregory, “Heretics offer God a deceit since they construct things which in no way please him for whom they speak, and they offend him when they try as if to defend him” thus asserting that heretics’ use of falsity did not go unnoticed by God himself. Gottschalk then quoted Gregory’s further assertion that in return for their falsity, heretics become an enemy of God because they perverted the truth that they purported to teach.

Gottschalk thus used these statements by Gregory to argue that he understood the

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193 Ibid.
195 Ibid.
error committed by heretics who either ignorantly or purposefully spread falsehood. In making this argument, he sought to prove his own legitimacy by demonstrating that he neither spread his teaching of predestination out of ignorance, because he deeply understood the set of beliefs that he taught, nor out of malicious intent, because he realized the potential offense such action posed against not only human listeners but also against God himself. Gottschalk approvingly quoted Gregory who argued that divine punishment awaited heretics for their untruthfulness. By defining a heretic as one who operated on the basis of falsity, Gottschalk sought to portray himself as decisively truthful by relying on patristic fathers such as Gregory. While Gottschalk’s defense of his own orthodox is unsurprising, it remains a notable example of his skillful and eloquent manipulation of patristic texts beyond Augustine to legitimize his own arguments.

Continuing on his theme of falsity as the chief operative characteristic of heretics, Gottschalk incorporated additional references to Pope Gregory in his treatises *On Predestination* and *Longer Confession*, even venturing to pray for the church universal, with an implicit acknowledgement of the Frankish Church in which he was involved, for protection against heresy. By writing this prayer, Gottschalk sought to present his own agenda as aligned with those of his ecclesiastical enemies by attempting to demonstrate that, like them, he desired to rid the church of the threat of heresy. He therefore wanted his opponents to view his teachings on predestination as an attempt to infuse correct doctrine into the church, not to pervert it with errant teachings. In making this prayer, Gottschalk sought to present his teachings as aligned with, rather than opposed to, his

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opponents’ endeavor to reject heresy and pursue orthodoxy.

Following this prayer, Gottschalk then referenced another notable patristic author, Fulgentius of Ruspe, a North African bishop and defender of predestination whose works entitled The Truth about Predestination and Grace as well as letters to contemporaries named Monimus and Euippius espoused the doctrine of predestination to both salvation and damnation, perhaps more explicitly than any other patristic author.197 As Francis Gumerlock noted, Fulgentius argued for the persistence of the literary term synecdoche, in which the word “all” in biblical verses supporting divine will for all persons to inherit eternal life dealt only with a pre-determined selection of individuals, rather than “all” in its fullest sense of all individuals.198

Embracing this interpretation, Gottschalk therefore used Fulgentius as a model for both his defense of predestination as well as his definition of heresy. For example, in his Longer Confession, after writing a prayer in which he defended his theory of predestination, Gottschalk stated that he chose to “openly defend the catholic faith here
clearly expressed concerning predestination." He then quoted Fulgentius’ response to those he perceived as having departed from the faith by stating that he chose to “flee from [them] like the plague and reject [them] as a heretic.” However, he then asserted that he did not undergo this process of disassociation lightly. Rather, it was with sorrow that he applied the term “heretic” to an individual who had strayed from orthodoxy, Gottschalk claimed. This sorrow stemmed from both his aforementioned disdain for the corruption produced in the church by means of heresy as well as his lamentation that certain individuals believed and taught teachings contrary to orthodoxy. In expressing his concern and sorrow over the dangers posed by heresy, Gottschalk thus attempted to portray his goals as aligned with the ecclesiastical leaders of the Frankish Church.

Gottschalk then ventured further in his quotation of Fulgentius by addressing the punishment fit for heretics. For example, in his Longer Confession, he cited Fulgentius’ response to perceived heretics by stating that he denounced those who strayed from orthodoxy as “a heretic and an enemy of the Christian faith and as one who, because of this, should be anathematized by all catholics.” By including the phrase “all catholics,” Gottschalk thus implicitly included himself as a fellow orthodox catholic who shared the collective responsibility of shunning heretics. He then expanded on this topic of avoidance and shunning of heretics by arguing that both actions were the logical means of dealing with heretics who, after repeated warnings to renounce their errant teachings,

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199 Gottschalk, Longer Confession [Confessio prolixior]; Lambot, Oeuvres, 73; trans. GMPC, 92.
200 Fulgentius of Ruspe, On the Faith for Peter [De fide ad Petrum], (CCSL 91), trans. GMPC, 92.
201 Gottschalk, Longer Confession [Confessio prolixior]; in Lambot, Oeuvres, 73; trans. GMPC, 92.
202 Fulgentius, On the Faith for Peter [De fide ad Petrum] (CCSL 91); trans. GMPC, 92.
remained insistent upon their stubborn heterodox beliefs. This type of individual, Gottschalk warned, “should now be avoided by me.”

In making this statement, Gottschalk attempted to portray himself as fully supportive of the practice of shunning heretics by including himself among those who planned to avoid teachers of heretical doctrines.

In another of his works, Gottschalk again referenced Fulgentius’ *On the Faith for Peter* in regard to defining the nature of a heretic. In one section of this treatise, Gottschalk first quoted Fulgentius’ defense of predestination in which he referred to “vessels of mercy” that “have been predestined by God before the foundation of the world.” Immediately after including this quote, Gottschalk then referenced Fulgentius again, this time referring to his warning on the importance of shunning those who departed from orthodox beliefs. By including this reference on shunning heretics immediately after one in which Fulgentius defended the same theory of predestination as did Gottschalk, Gottschalk sought to demonstrate that not only were his teachings about predestination orthodox, but that those who did not agree were themselves the true heretics, as supported by citation of Fulgentius.

In addition to Gregory and Fulgentius, Gottschalk also formed his definition of heresy by referencing Cassiodorus, a sixth-century former monk and later Roman statesman. Though Cassiodorus failed to make an explicit distinction between the predestination of the chosen and the damned, Gottschalk manipulated his writings to

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204 Fulgentius of Ruspe, *On the Faith for Peter [De fide ad Petrum]*, (CCSL 91); trans. GMPC, 125.
frame him as supportive of the same view of predestination as that advocated by Gottschalk. For example, in his *Explanation of the Psalms*, Cassiodorus referred to persecution of the church as necessary “so that the number of the predestined may be swiftly obtained.” In another part of the treatise, Cassiodorus referred to the judging of the nations “which is known to have been predestined before time began as well as frequent references to “those who are predestined.””

In his *Longer Confession*, Gottschalk referenced Cassiodorus, whom he praised for having “very beautifully defined what a heretic is.” He then cited Cassiodorus’ *Explanation of the Psalms*, in which he defined a heretic as “someone who, carried off by ignorance or contempt of the divine law, either a stubborn inventor or new error, or an adherent of someone else’s, wants to oppose catholic truth rather than to be subject to it.” Gottschalk thus relied on Cassiodorus’ argument that a heretic sought to remove himself from under the Catholic Church to insist that he himself sought not to oppose the teachings of the church but rather to restore the doctrine of predestination espoused by the Catholic Church’s patristic fathers. By using Cassiodorus as an example of a patristic father who both defined heresy as well as supported predestination, Gottschalk sought to demonstrate that his theory of predestination was clearly distinct from the notion of heresy.

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207 Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms [Expositio psalmorum]*, (CCSL 97); trans. GMPC, 89.
Although Gottschalk primarily referenced western patristic fathers, such as those discussed above, he also relied upon eastern fathers as well. For example, he referenced the fourth-century Greek bishop, Basil of Caesarea, who, although upholding the legitimacy of man’s moral responsibility in exercising free will, still retained a high view of divine sovereignty over man’s salvation, as exemplified in his *Hexaemeron*. Gottschalk approvingly referenced Basil’s argument that true orthodox Christians chose not to depart from orthodoxy out of fear of corrupting the truth to argue that heretics, in contrast, completely harbored no such fear. Gottschalk thus attempted to argue that if he were a heretic, as his opponents labeled him, he would display little regard for the teachings of Scripture and ecclesiastical authority. However, his avid study of both biblical passages as well as patristic texts on the subject of predestination revealed that he in fact demonstrated a deep concern for orthodoxy, he asserted. In his *Longer Confession*, Gottschalk expressed his concern over the means by which his ecclesiastical opponents, suspect that those are heretics who by your grace necessarily believe and confess this truth of the catholic faith concerning the predestination of the reprobate against those who resist and speak against it and that those who assert the opposite are catholics.

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Such opponents, Gottschalk argued, served as distinct points of contrast to the orthodox Christians described by Basil.

In addition to Basil of Caesarea, Gottschalk also referenced the fourth-century Archbishop of Constantinople, Gregory of Nazianzus. Similarly to Basil, Gregory also upheld a view that emphasized both divine sovereignty and man’s response in salvation, arguing, “it is necessary both that we should be our own masters and also that our salvation should be of God” while qualifying this statement with the assertion that “since to will is also from God, he has attributed the whole to God with reason.”210 Like his commentary on Basil, Gottschalk similarly asserted that heretics demonstrated little regard for Gregory’s statement that “It is a mark of fortitude to persevere in truth, although someone is beaten down in relation to things that are nothing.”211 Gottschalk clarified Gregory’s statement by adding, “But falsehood and deceit are certainly nothing” before explaining that true proponents of orthodoxy chose to “avoid, shun, and abhor” heretics, particularly the falsity that accompanied their teachings.212 In reflecting on this statement of Gregory of Nazianzus regarding the proper response to falsity, Gottschalk sought to distinguish the response of heretics from that of orthodox Christians, placing himself in the latter category.

In addition to Basil and Gregory, Gottschalk also cited John Chrysostom, a fourth-

211 The source of this quotation has not been located.
212 Gottschalk, Longer Confession [Confessio prolixior]; in Lambot, Oeuvres, 71; trans. GMPC, 89-90.
century patristic theologian and Archbishop of Constantinople who advocated a position that acknowledged divine sovereignty as the source of human salvation. Upon reflection of divine choice of some for eternal life, Chrysostom reminded readers, “He Himself has put the faith within us.” Thus, Gottschalk’s use of Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and John Chrysostom reveals that Gottschalk relied not only on western patristic fathers but eastern ones as well, even using the term “blessed Basil” to demonstrate his admiration of the eastern father. Gottschalk’s intent was not primarily to venerate eastern orthodoxy but rather to make the broader claim that his assertions about predestination were not capricious ideas but rather were well grounded in patristic authority, both western and eastern.

Patristic Heretics

Beyond merely referencing numerous patristic models on which he formulated his definition of heresy, Gottschalk also explicitly named certain individuals from the patristic era whom he viewed as heretics. For example, Gottschalk identified Pelagius, the fourth-century proponent of a viewpoint that denied original sin and emphasized free will to the exclusion of divine sovereignty in matters of salvation. In a treatise written as a reply to one of his Carolingian theological enemies, Rabanus Maurus, the Archbishop of Mainz, Gottschalk praised Augustine for his refutation of the theories of Pelagius, a

statement on which his Carolingian opponents, including Rabanus, would have likewise agreed.\textsuperscript{214} In another example, Gottschalk named the fifth-century Pelagian bishop, Julian of Eclanum as one example of a heretic. In 417, Pope Zosimus issued his \textit{Epistola Tractoria} against Pelagians. After Julian refused to affirm the \textit{Epistola Tractoria} issued by Zosimus, he was deposed as bishop and made the object of a number of writings by Augustine, including \textit{A Treatise against Two Letters of the Pelagians}\textsuperscript{215} Gottschalk referenced Julian as an example of a heretic in his treatise entitled \textit{On Predestination}, citing Julian’s misunderstanding of original sin.\textsuperscript{216}

Interestingly, when choosing specific individuals to use as examples of heretics, Gottschalk chose those who were unanimously condemned as heretics by all Frankish ecclesiastical leaders. Although Gottschalk charged his opponents with holding what some term as Semipelagianism, a modified view on original sin and free will, there remained a distinction between the Semipelagian views of Gottschalk’s opponents and the more extreme notions of Pelagianism that had been deemed heretical in the fifth century.\textsuperscript{217} Although Carolingian ecclesiastical leaders rejected the radical Augustinianism proposed by Gottschalk, they likewise rejected a radical Pelagian

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viewpoint that denied fundamental catholic doctrines such as original sin. They thus shared agreement with Gottschalk in condemning figures such as Pelagius and Julian. By choosing common enemies, Gottschalk sought to create a mutual understanding in attempt to demonstrate that he too condemned the same heretics as did they. By identifying those already deemed heretics by prior ecclesiastical sentences, Gottschalk also attempted to shift accusation away from himself and identify examples of the proper recipients of the label of heretic, those who denied catholic orthodoxy.

In his Longer Confession, Gottschalk discussed another specific example of a heretic whom Fulgentius had opposed in his writings, Faustus of Riez, described by Gottschalk as a monk at Lérins before becoming a bishop in southern Gaul. Although deceased by the time Fulgentius wrote against his works, Faustus espoused a view of predestination similar to that of Gottschalk’s opponents who placed a great deal of emphasis on man’s free will in salvation. As Matthew Pereira noted, his work, De gratia, represented the southern Gallican tradition in which the relationship between divine grace and human agency was characterized by symbiosis and cooperation between man and God. Gottschalk introduced Fulgentius’ conflict with Faustus by stating that Fulgentius had “argued in a very catholic manner and at great length” against Faustus. Gottschalk sought to not only provide a concrete example of a heretic who held erroneous beliefs about predestination, but also to demonstrate the manner in which Fulgentius countered

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218 Hincmar, Letter to the Monks and Simple Folk of his Diocese [Epistola ad reclusos et simplices suae dioeceseos], in Lambot, Oeuvres, 8, trans. GMPC, 170.
220 Fulgentius, Against Faustus [Contra Faustus], referenced in Fulgentius’ Letters [Epistulae], 15.19 (CCSL 91A:456; and PL 65:442C), but now lost.
such erroneous beliefs. Never one to mince words when criticizing theological opponents, Gottschalk praised Fulgentius’ attack on the ideas of Faustus by asserting, “This same doctor proved him wrong and marvelously crushed the lies of the devil . . . and eliminated the lethal poison of antichrist.” Gottschalk thus demonstrated that Fulgentius had displayed the same type of pastoral care over the church that Gottschalk had earlier discussed by eliminating the threat of doctrinal heterodoxy from within the church.

Gottschalk’s Allies

Gottschalk was not alone, however, in either his arguments for predestination or in citation of patristic texts to support them. A fellow Benedictine monk (and later teaching master) at Corbie shared many of Gottschalk’s ideas on predestination as well as the evidence for such views within patristic tradition. Ratramnus of Corbie authored a lengthy treatise entitled *De Predestinatione Dei*, in which he relied on many of the same authors as did Gottschalk, notably including Gregory the Great as well as Fulgentius, in addition to a copious amount of scriptural references. For example, Ratramnus referenced a passage from Gregory’s *Moralia*, in which Gregory argued that even if those among the reprobate desired to live a lengthy life, their lifecycle remained determined according to the number of days God had predestined for them; “the sinner,” Ratramnus quoted from Gregory, “although in the secret foreknowledge of God, is himself not predestined to a long life.” Ratramnus then added commentary to this quotation by explaining Gregory’s statement, “And here, while he teaches that the days of human life are limited

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by divine predestination, he demonstrates that the acts of a human life serve that divine arrangement.”

Even more explicitly, Ratramnus also cited Fulgentius’s assertion, “He was able, as He wished, to predestine whomever He wanted to punishment. Those He predestined to glory, He predestined to righteousness; those He predestined to punishment however, He did not predestine to the crime.”

Although the contours of this substantial work authored by Ratramnus are beyond the scope of this thesis, a few brief excerpts from it reveal that Gottschalk’s position, though yet a minority within the Carolingian ecclesiastical sphere, remained shared by others who supported his arguments in light of patristic tradition.

Another similar figure was the ninth-century deacon, Florus of Lyons, who authored the notable work, *Sermon on Predestination* in which he argued, “But those whom he foreknew and predestined were going to be evil and impious by their own vice, he predestined to eternal damnation by a just judgment.”

Florus then explained what he considered to be “the faith of the Catholic Church,” in which it remained theologically orthodox to believe that God, in relation to the reprobate, “both foreknew their punishment because he is God, and predestined their punishment because he is just.”

Florus then strongly appealed to the authority of Catholic ecclesiastical tradition, a force that he sought not misaligned with the radical view of predestination espoused by both he

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226 Ibid., trans. GMPC 209.
and Gottschalk. As these two brief examples attest, Gottschalk possessed theological allies within the Carolingian ecclesiastical world. However, owing to the reality that he and his allies belonged to a minority opinion and were deprived of any substantial influence in the realm of ecclesiastical politics, their theory of predestination remained in the minority.

_Heresy: A Reversed Accusation_

In addition to attacking patristic examples of heretics, Gottschalk also made the even more daring accusation of heresy against those among his fellow Carolingians who opposed his teachings. In his _Longer Confession_, after praying for the ability to exhibit the “truest, sincerest, and kindest love against the barking of heretics,” Gottschalk preceded in the same sentence to also pray for the ability to “beat back their teeth and biting falsity . . . whether they like it or not.”²²⁷ In the following sentences, Gottschalk then warned his enemies that if they became angry with him for his theological position and labeled him a heretic, he would not hesitate to return the insult.

He justified his counter attack on his ecclesiastical opponents who charged him with heresy by identifying them as the true heretics, those who denied the predestination of the reprobate. Among his attacks on his opponents, he referred to them as liars, unbelievers, and stubborn resistors of the truth. In addition, after providing an extensive defense of his beliefs based upon patristic citations, he asserted that anyone who did not uphold the same theory of predestination as he did was undoubtedly “blind.”²²⁸ In his treatise _On Predestination_, Gottschalk termed those who did not believe him as “enemies

²²⁷ Ibid., 95.
of the truth,” and thus heretics. In a role reversal, Gottschalk countered his opponents’ accusation of heresy by instead implying that only those who did not agree with his teachings were the true heretics, the “stubborn unbelievers” and “enemies of the truth.”

By framing his argument in this light, Gottschalk defined heretics as those who operated on the basis of falsity and rejected basic claims that fathers such as Gregory the Great had previously deemed orthodox.

Gottschalk also used the method of pointing to common enemies in attempt to accuse his Carolingian opponents of not believing specific doctrinal points. For example, in addition to Pelagius and Julius, Gottschalk also attacked the third-century patristic scholar, Origen, for his views on the power of free will in addition his more radical theories on the nature of the soul and Christological errors. Anathematized at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553, Origen remained an object of mutual loathing among Frankish ecclesiastical leaders. Gottschalk referenced Origen in his argument that those who were not chosen for salvation, the reprobate, were not redeemed. Given that Gottschalk’s ecclesiastical opponents did not agree with his argument that the reprobate had been predestined for judgment, Gottschalk instead approached the topic by arguing that failure to believe his assertion would inevitably lead to a belief in the same teachings of Origen. Gottschalk clearly stated what he perceived as the consequences of believing that Christ had died for some of the reprobate by arguing,

if this is true, then that is also true – God forbid! – which Origen asserts,

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namely, that through a cycle of the years the saints will fall from heaven and the unjust will go from hell to heaven and that they will have this alternation of beatitude and misery.\textsuperscript{231}

By making this argument, Gottschalk attempted to frame his enemies’ beliefs as points on a slope leading toward heresy. Furthermore, by pointing to someone commonly identified as a heretic, Origen, Gottschalk sought to establish a common ground with which to warn his opponents that their theological beliefs drifted toward the very heretical notions that they accepted as anathema. In this extreme role reversal, Gottschalk turned the label of “heretic” away from himself and instead placed it upon his opponents.

Therefore, by citing patristic fathers who both supported predestination, whether explicitly or ambiguously, and wrote extensively about heresy, Gottschalk demonstrated that his theory of predestination was not a heretical doctrine, but rather was a continuation of what orthodox fathers of the church had argued in centuries past. By citing Pope Gregory, Gottschalk defined a heretic as one who posed a danger to the laity, remained opposed to the Catholic Church, and relied on falsity. By citing Fulgentius, Gottschalk added to this definition that a heretic sought to contradict the Catholic faith and thus deserved to be shunned. Similarly, Gottschalk relied on Cassiodorus to argue that a heretic sought to remove himself from the church, an accusation which, along with the definitions given by Gregory and Fulgentius, Gottschalk adamantly described as being wholly unrepresentative of his own behavior. By using Basil’s definition of a heretic as one who portrayed a flippant attitude toward biblical and patristic tradition, Gottschalk contrasted his admiration and avid study of biblical and patristic models with

the carelessness with which heretics treated such subjects. In citing the definition given by Gregory of Nazianzus that presented a heretic as one who could be justifiably shunned, Gottschalk legitimized his practice of shunning or avoiding heretics in order to draw a clear distinction between himself and those he perceived as heretical. Finally, Gottschalk also referenced Chrysostom’s definition that a heretic misled himself into error to argue that he well understood the dangers posed by heretics, not only to others but also to the inner mind of the heretic himself.

In addition to citing patristic fathers, Gottschalk also incorporated examples of patristic heretics in effort to portray his alignment with the church’s conciliar decisions regarding heretical doctrines, identify mutual enemies to establish common ground with his opponents, and to warn his opponents that their rejection of his doctrine of predestination reflected a drift toward the same heterodox doctrines that they accepted as condemned. He thus skillfully reversed the label of “heretic,” terming his own opponents themselves as the true heretics. By using patristic models to define a heretic as one who posed danger to the laity, relied on falsity, deserved to be shunned, sought to remove himself from the Catholic Church, displayed little regard for Scripture or church fathers, and misled himself away from the truth, Gottschalk argued that he fit none of the above criteria and thus did not deserve the heretical label with which he had been branded. Thus, by citation of patristic models, Gottschalk refuted the identification of “heretic” by demonstrating that an orthodox definition of heresy and defense of predestination were not incompatible.
Therefore, as becomes apparent from a close reading of Gottschalk’s treatises, letters, and confessions, as well as the arguments advanced by his enemies in their own series of writings, a unanimous and definitive stance on predestination did not exist in the
ninth-century Carolingian world. While the ecclesiastical leaders of the church denied the theory of double predestination on grounds of lack of evidence in both scripture and church tradition, a minority opinion existed that countered this argument by citing both sources as evidence of a radical view of predestination in which God appointed both some to eternal life and others to damnation. Gottschalk perhaps most demonstrably advanced this minority opinion, which although considered heretical by the Carolingian Church, found support among others within the Carolingian ecclesiastical sphere, such as the monk Ratramnus of Corbie as well as the deacon and theological writer, Florus of Lyons, who each likewise supported their own arguments in favor of double predestination with patristic citations. Though certainly others joined the side of Gottschalk during the predestination debate, Ratramnus and Florus serve as two prominently prolific allies. However, like Gottschalk, Ratramnus, and Florus, most adherents to Gottschalk’s view did not hold any privileged position within Carolingian ecclesiastical politics and thus had little authority to determine either Gottschalk’s outcome or the trajectory of ninth-century predestination thought within the Carolingian Church.

The relative obscurity of this minority position and the figures who supported it thus poses the question of why Gottschalk and his ideas matter within the framework of the Carolingian Church, the reception of patristic ideological traditions, and ninth-century intellectualism more broadly. As this thesis has sought to demonstrate, the answer to this question lies in understanding the ability of monastic intellectuals within the Carolingian world to skillfully manipulate ecclesiastical tradition to advance their own arguments. As the brief overview of scholarship relating to Carolingian intellectualism demonstrated,
new questions have arisen regarding how members of the monastic community participated in and even transformed the scope of theological argument within Carolingian intellectualism. This subject has been discussed in relation to the term “Carolingian Renaissance,” which although traditionally seen as a flourishing among only the clerical elite of the Carolingian world, in fact incorporated monastic intellectuals as well, with Gottschalk serving as a prime example of this phenomenon.

Gottschalk’s quest to proclaim himself orthodox by means of appealing to church tradition represented the opportunities available to monastic intellectuals who both benefitted from the increased circulation of knowledge during the Carolingian Renaissance and then attempted to utilize such knowledge to advance their own intellectual position. Matthew Gillis’s recent dissertation on Gottschalk demonstrated that he used his monastic position to gain power in the Carolingian world through fostering religious dissent and appealing to church authorities. It also provided a stimulating discussion of Gottschalk’s use of Augustine’s writings to advance his position and gain this sense of power. This thesis extends this discussion by examining how Gottschalk eloquently manipulated the very ambiguity of Augustine’s theory of predestination to portray himself as orthodox and reverse the label of heresy upon his accusers. Thus, this thesis has sought to fill this gap in understanding how the ambiguity within Augustine’s writings opened the door for multiple sides to advance their own understanding of predestination in the Carolingian era, and how Gottschalk serves as a notable example of a theologically trained member of the monastic community who did so. Although Gottschalk was not successful in convincing his ecclesiastical superiors of his own legitimacy, his ideas found reinforcement in the writings of some of his theological allies.
and more importantly, his story demonstrates that members of the theologically trained monastic community were able to appeal to ecclesiastical tradition to advance their own arguments and skillfully manipulate such texts to represent themselves as legitimate in the midst of a ninth-century world preoccupied with the complex interrelationship between heresy, orthodoxy, and ecclesiastical tradition. It was Gottschalk’s unrelenting assurance of own his ability to actively participate within this world that made his eloquent and skillful manipulation of ecclesiastical tradition a unique contribution.

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