

# Theophylact, *On Predestination*: the Beginning Found

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IN SPRING 1973 I published in this journal<sup>1</sup> an English translation—the first such to be made—of a short Greek treatise by the Byzantine writer Theophylactus Simocates, dealing with the question whether there are predestined ends for human lives. The treatise is in the form of two controversial speeches followed by a moderatorial. The Greek text, taken from a Jerusalem manuscript, was first published in St Petersburg (Leningrad) in 1910. My version was made from the more recent edition by Dr L. G. Westerink, which was based on the same manuscript and published in 1971.<sup>2</sup> The manuscript lacks the beginning of Theophylact's treatise, and I was accordingly unable to include it in the translation. By a coincidence, however, the beginning of the Greek text has since been discovered. The credit for the discovery goes to Dr Paul Moraux, who located the missing passage in two other mss, namely D (*Paris.gr.* 1302, ff.265 sqq.) and P (*Patm.* 378, ff.136 sqq.) and has now published it together with other material bearing on the text of the treatise.<sup>3</sup> For the sake of completeness it seems appropriate that I should offer readers of this journal an English version of the newly discovered passage, that is, the title and opening of the first speech. It has been made from proof pages of Dr Moraux' article, which he very kindly supplied to me from Berlin. The version runs as follows:

<sup>1</sup>Charles Garton, "Theophylact, *On Predestination*: a First Translation," *GRBS* 14 (1973) 83–102.

<sup>2</sup>L. G. Westerink, "Theophylactus Simocates, *On Predestination*," in F. Cupaiolo *et al.*, edd., *Studi in onore di Vittorio De Falco* (Naples 1971) 535–51.

<sup>3</sup>Paul Moraux, "Le début inédit de l'ouvrage de Théophylacte Simocatès sur la prédestination," *Le monde grec Hommages à Claire Préaux* (Brussels 1975) 234–44.

## I

*Inquiry of Theophylactus Simocates, ex-prefect,  
dramatization of case that there are  
predestined ends allotted for human lives.*

## THEOGNOSTUS AGAINST THEOPHRASTUS

THEOPHRASTUS should have come attired in a circum-spection appropriate to sacred matters,<sup>4</sup> having a garb of right conduct about him, and dressed in the modesty of grave and downcast looks. So clad, he should have been guarding his tongue, to keep it within the proper limits, should have been riding in harbor by means of the anchors of accepted doctrines, and running his race within the boundary of the course. He should not have been shooting wide of the target, nor concerting discordances, nor barking with the harshest din, nor describing his circle without regard to its center or fabricating his absurdities outside of a ruled line. All this he should avoid so as not to legislate what is contrary to the church's usage, to perpetrate a mighty and indeed almighty dissonance, and because of the outpouring of his enterprise to get himself excommunicated<sup>5</sup> from the greatest of sacral organizations. But in fact he is set upon refusing to recognize the public and royal highroads and consequently swoops down towards the less recognized among the paths, where the thistle is lush, where there is no bar to the self-expression of the bramble, where a thicket has grown, where a barrier of thorns<sup>6</sup> has been laid down and there is no smooth<sup>7</sup> or straight proceeding. I shall therefore set about beating him with the rod of this speech and drive

<sup>4</sup> If Theophrastus were to be taken as a monk or in holy orders the word *ιεροπρεπή* might rather be translated as 'appropriate to sacred office'.

<sup>5</sup> *ἀποκυνάγωγος*, cf. *John* 9.22, *al.* The word is adapted in patristic Greek to mean 'excommunicated' or 'unchurched'.

<sup>6</sup> *αἰμασιὰ ὑπεστόρηται*. Of the two accepted meanings of *αἰμασιὰ*, 'wall of dry stones' and 'hedge of thorns', the latter seems to fit the preceding imagery better, but the verb does not sit very well with either meaning.

<sup>7</sup> I translate *λεῖον*, suggested by Westerink. The mss and Moraux give *λήιον* which, in its ordinary acceptance 'standing crop, cornfield', disturbs the syntax. Perhaps copyists assimilated it in meaning to *λεῖον* or thought of it as a variant spelling.

him like a bad money-changer<sup>8</sup> out of the sacred precincts, using a whip I have gotten for myself out of the gospels, to stop him from doing a base trade with his argument and profaning the sacred precinct of the church.

But please do not on this account, members of the court and guardians of the law, pronounce censure upon me for having used the sharp rod of my verbal expressions to measure the heights reached by his audacity. There is a great deal at stake in the contest I enter. I chose today to come before an umpire's place of tribunal directly. For my temperament is not given to litigation or to the ways of Athenians, but rather is devoted to the gospel, avoids subtilizing, and has no liking for courts, inasmuch as it recommends not only not opposing wrongdoers in violence, but actually being compliant-natured to persons who smack us on the face.<sup>9</sup> For I think, if it were not for the fact that I undertook my truly Pharaoh-like stubbornness<sup>10</sup> in opposing with an eye to the boon it would confer—scurvy to satisfy as is the summons which occasions it—I should not have entered this contest nor got myself involved in the dust of the ring. . . .

Thus we now have an authentic title for the work, to substitute for the provisional one supplied earlier by Dr Westerink. We can see also that not very much is missing from the Jerusalem manuscript, and the idea that there might possibly have been a *protheoria* preceding the debate speeches proper is not substantiated. Or rather, Theophylact does imply some previous consideration of the topic by his speakers, but deliberately leaves it to our imagination. He is working dramatically, and plunges *in medias res*. The beginning is in tune with the rest of the discussion except that the Greek is, if anything, even more affected and difficult, so that in one or two places the meaning is open to dispute. I have benefited by discussing it with Dr Westerink, to whom I am also indebted, as the footnotes indicate, for two possible improvements of the text.

One *addendum lexicis* may be noted, namely, the feminine adjective *φαραωνίτις*, 'Pharaonian, Pharaoh-like'. New usages are the middle of

<sup>8</sup> *κολλυβιστήν coni.* Westerink; *κολυβιστήν D*; see *Matt.* 21.12, *Mark* 11.15, *John* 2.15, *cf. Luke* 19.45. *P*, the other ms, reads *κολυμβιστήν*, which Moraux surprisingly accepts.

<sup>9</sup> *Cf. Matt.* 5.39 (Moraux).

<sup>10</sup> *Exodus* 7–15.

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ἐλλιμενίζω, 'ride in harbor', and the active παρηχέω, 'put (sounds) in concert'.

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