

Arnobius against the “Predestined One”:

Arnobius the Younger’s Theology of Grace and
Free Will in His Commentary on Psalm 146

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ABSTRACT

Much of the scholarship on the so-called Semi-Pelagian controversy has focused on episodes in North Africa and Gaul. This paper expands our knowledge of that controversy in southern Italy. Through examination of a selection of Arnobius’ *Commentary on the Psalms*, specifically Psalm 146, this paper brings to light the tensions between Arnobius the Younger and Prosper of Aquitaine in the city of Rome in the decades after the death of Augustine. The paper translates the selection and shows Arnobius’ concern over an accusation against him by one whom he derogatively calls “*praedestinatus*” (the predestined one). This paper argues that his calumniator was most likely Prosper of Aquitaine. In his own defense, Arnobius affirms that grace precedes free will, but asserts that the will is still free with respect to reception or rejection of the saving grace of Christ. Finally the paper offers questions for further study of this episode which has received relatively little scholarly attention.